DARING DEEDS OF GREAT MOUNTAINEERS

DARING DEEDS
OF GREAT MOUNTAINEERS

DARING DEEDS
OF
GREAT MOUNTAINEERS

TRUE STORIES OF
ADVENTURE, PLUCK AND RESOURCE
IN MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD

BY

RICHARD STEAD, B.A., F.R.Hist.S.

AUTHOR OF
"ADVENTURES ON THE GREAT RIVERS," "WILL OF THE DALES,"
&c., &c., &c.

WITH MANY ILLUSTRATIONS

PHILADELPHIA
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY
LONDON: SEELEY, SERVICE & CO., LTD.
1921

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

THE DARING DEEDS LIBRARY

FOR

BOYS & GIRLS

A SERIES OF COPYRIGHT BOOKS DESCRIBING THE ADVENTURES, BRAVERY & RESOURCES OF SOLDIERS, SAILORS & OTHERS IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD.

Square crown 8vo, with many Illustrations in Colour.

DARING DEEDS OF FAMOUS PIRATES. By Lieutenant E. KEBLE CHATTERTON, B.A. Oxon., R.N.V.R., Author of "The Romance of the Ship," "Fore and Aft," "Sailing Ships and their Story," *&c., &c.*

DARING DEEDS OF HUNTERS AND TRAPPERS. By ERNEST YOUNG, B.Sc., F.R.G.S., Author of "The King of the Yellow Robe," *&c., &c., &c.*

DARING DEEDS OF THE INDIAN MUTINY. By EDWARD GILLIAT, M.A.Oxon., sometime House-Master at Harrow School, Author of "Forest Outlaws," *&c., &c., &c.*

DARING DEEDS IN DARK FORESTS. By H. W. G. HYRST, Author of "Romance of the World's Fisheries," "Daring Deeds in Great Deserts," *&c., &c., &c.*

DARING DEEDS OF GREAT PATH-FINDERS. By EDGAR SANDERSON, M.A. Cantab.

DARING DEEDS OF GREAT MOUNTAINEERS. By RICHARD STEAD, B.A., F.R.Hist.S.

SEELEY, SERVICE & CO. LIMITED

PREFACE

It is a curious fact that until two or three generations ago men did not see beauty in mountain scenery. To them the mountains were always forbidding, full of terror, awful, never alluring or fascinating. Towering peaks, rugged glaciers, lofty precipices, dark ravines, stupendous crags were things to shudder at and avoid.

It is sometimes said that the mountains have lost their terrors, and certainly men seek them in our day from pure love of them, undeterred by the dangers and difficulties which must still be encountered by those who would scale their heights, or penetrate into their recesses. The exploits of Alpine climbers are wonderful for the enthusiasm and the daring which they display; and the achievements of others who have braved the same perils in pursuit of science or commerce show a not less adventurous spirit. Of ventures on the high mountains, therefore, the records of travel are full, and the avalanche, the steep and slippery ice-slope, the storm, the exposure to extreme cold, to fatigue, to hunger, to attacks from wild beasts or still wilder men—these and a hundred other forms of danger

will still attract, and not deter, those in whose hearts the spirit of adventure stirs.

The compiler desires to offer his grateful thanks to the various authors and publishers who have kindly permitted him to quote from their works. Full acknowledgment is made in each case at the end of the chapter concerned.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PUBLISHERS' NOTE.—The contents of this book have been drawn from Mr. Richard Stead's larger and more expensive volume entitled "Adventures on the High Mountains."

CHAPTER I

NAPOLEON ON THE GREAT ST. BERNARD

Napoleon prepares to invade Italy—Four Alpine passes—Main body of forty thousand men to take the Pass of St. Bernard—Stores and ammunition sent on in vast quantities—A start from St. Pierre—Napoleon himself remains at Martigny—Heavy toil up to St. Bernard Hospice—Dangerous work for the artillery—Guns encased in split fir-trees—Refreshments at the hospice—A hundred peasants to each gun—Peasants, exhausted, run away—Mules give out—Soldiers harness themselves to their guns—A night with the ordnance on the open snow field—The fort of Bard in the valley below—A formidable obstacle—Unsuccessful assaults—Messengers sent back to Bonaparte—He hastens over the mountains to Bard—Precipitous track over Albaredo mountain, above the fort, repaired and improved—Commander of Bard refuses to surrender—Guns on the heights above—An escalade attempted—Gunners uselessly sacrificed—Light-balls used by the Austrians in the fort—A straw-covered road—Success—March down the valley—Outlet from the Alps defended by Austrians—The Chiusella stream—Austrians dislodged—A stupendous enterprise ends with full and marvellous success.

Amongst the many recorded adventures on great mountains, few excel in thrilling interest those connected with military exploits, whether those exploits be glorious and

successful, like those of Hannibal in ancient, and those of Wolfe in more modern times; or whether they be such as the melancholy and disastrous retreat from Cabul, in those terrible early days of the year 1842. And perhaps no story of them all is more marvellous than that of Napoleon's passage of the Alps, when he led an army across the highest mountains in our quarter of the globe —a stupendous enterprise, perhaps unrivalled in the history of the world.

It was in the May of 1800 that Bonaparte prepared to lead his troops across this almost impassable barrier into the plains of Italy, where, near Turin, lay encamped his enemies, the Austrians. As every one knows, the vast range of the Alps lies between France and Italy, with its towering peaks, its ice and snow, its frightful passes, its rocks and precipices, its avalanches, its thousand and one dangers. The notion of leading a great body of men, with all their stores, their food, their ammunition, their horses — with the necessary guns, tents, pontoons, and other implements, across the tremendous Alpine barrier could enter the brain of none save a madman — or a genius.

There were four passes available for the army, and of these that of St. Gothard was reserved for troops coming from Germany under General Moncey. There remained three—the passes of the Simplon, the Great St. Bernard, and Mont Cenis. None of these had roads over them, as in our days. Napoleon chose for the main body of his army the middle route—that over the Great St. Bernard Pass, because the Simplon entailed a much longer march, and that by Mont Cenis would have led the troops right into

the jaws of the Austrian force before Turin. So through this central pass was to travel a force numbering thirty-five thousand infantry and artillery, and five thousand cavalry, or forty thousand men in all. Smaller divisions of four or five thousand were sent to occupy the other passes, with orders to rejoin the main army in the plains of Lombardy. If all went well, there would in the course of a week or two be massed in Italy an army of no less than sixty-five thousand men, while Napoleon would hold all the passes of the Alps, so that, in case of defeat, he would have several lines of retreat open to him.

Leaving untold the story of his earlier marches from Lausanne to Villeneuve, at the head of the Lake of Geneva, and thence to Martigny and St. Pierre, we may pass on at once to the operations on the mountains themselves. "At St. Pierre the troops began to ascend by paths, covered with snow and bordered by precipices, scarcely more than two or three feet wide, exposed in noonday heat to the fall of frightful avalanches." In all there were fully thirty miles of mountain to be traversed, by passes with nothing like a road, ascending to heights of many thousand feet. Over all this everything had to be carried that was necessary for a numerous army and a campaign on a vast scale.

The preliminary work was in itself enormous. Immense stores of food for man and beast had to be sent on in advance; all the mules the country could supply had to be brought up; workmen in great gangs had to be engaged. Further, guns had to be dismounted and sent on separately on sledges with low wheels, the carriages themselves being taken to pieces and placed on the backs

of mules. Ammunition had to be packed in boxes for conveyance in the same manner, and so with various other stores. A veritable army of workmen carried out all this work on the northern side of the Alps, while a similar body of craftsmen pushed on over the mountains to be ready to put the guns together and to do similar work when the worst of the defiles should have been passed. Napoleon neglected nothing; even saddlers' shops were fitted up at intervals, so that any repairs needed could be done at once on the march.

The great General himself remained at Martigny to see to the dispatch of the stores and the separate army divisions, while General Lannes went on with a strong advance-guard to receive the rest as they arrived. The start was made on the 15th of May soon after one in the morning, in order that good progress might be made before the heat of the sun should bring down avalanches of ice and snow upon the troops toiling through those wild and dangerous gorges. The men were in the highest spirits, though they were heavily laden, having to carry their supply of biscuit for several days, as well as a stock of cartridges. Up the toilsome ascents they climbed cheerfully, and with many a burst of song; they threaded the wild ravines, they stepped cautiously but confidently along the narrow ledges, they risked the falls of snow or rocks. It was heavy work for the infantry, but for the cavalry it was a far more serious affair. On an upward slope progress was fairly safe, if slow, but on the descents the men had to go in front and lead their horses. So narrow often were the ledges on which they walked, that if one of the animals slipped, there was great danger of his dragging

his master with him, down to the frightful depths beneath. A few poor fellows perished in this way, but on the whole no great number of such accidents occurred.

The first stage of the journey, up to the St. Bernard Hospice, was completed in eight hours from the start. There, by previous arrangement with the monks, the soldiers experienced a pleasant surprise, provided for them by the care and forethought of their Commander-in-Chief. Tables had been spread in readiness, with huge supplies of food and drink. Every man halted for a few minutes, and received a ration of bread, cheese, and wine. Lannes and his men then passed on in the best of humours down the descent to St. Remy. There they encamped, to receive the other divisions of the army as they came along. So far everything had gone splendidly.

In similar fashion, each day saw the passing over of an army division up to the hospice, every man receiving from the monks his dole of bread, cheese, and wine, and down to St. Remy. Of course, several days were spent on this work, Bonaparte superintending the start from Martigny; and those who had successfully made the passage to St. Remy were not idle. Every day vast quantities of *matériel* were brought to the spot, and much unpacking, much putting together, much rearranging had to be done. The artillery gave by far the most trouble, and involved most risk to the men. The gun-carriages, indeed, as has been said before, were got over the pass without so much difficulty, though the number of mules available fell far short of what was required; but in the case of the guns themselves the trouble was great. They had, in the first instance, been mounted on low-wheeled sledges; but it

was soon found that there were many parts of the route where the sledges could not be used.

Then some one hit upon another plan. The trunk of a fir-tree was split along its length, and the two halves hollowed out; between these the gun was tightly bound. In this way it was possible to draw the pieces along the ravines without injury. So long as they were ascending, the men in charge of the cannon got on well enough; but each descent was attended with great risk. The pieces could be kept on the track only by sheer strength of arm. The danger of having the gun fall over the precipice, and drag with it men and beasts, was often very great. To make matters worse, both mules and muleteers became exhausted after a few days of this heavy and dangerous work. It was now necessary to try other means. The peasantry of the district were offered a thousand francs for every gun they safely conveyed over the pass, and hundreds of men lent their help on these terms. Every gun required a hundred men to drag it along, and two days to get it to its destination—one day in making the ascent to the hospice, the other in getting down to St. Remy. No farther proof of the arduous and hazardous nature of the task is needed than this, that the peasants at length struck work and disappeared, though still larger offers of pay were made by the French Generals. Officers went in search of the runaways, but in vain; no gain would tempt the country-folk to resume their task.

It requires no great effort of imagination to picture the scene. Men and beasts exhausted, no more to be had; heavy guns left stranded at all points of the route, often amidst wastes of ice and snow. Yet without these guns it

was impossible for the army to venture down into the plains below, for there lay the enemy in all his strength. There was but one way out of the difficulty—to beg the soldiers themselves to drag along the fallen cannon. Few leaders could have called forth from his men such signal devotion; but the leader of the Frenchmen was Napoleon Bonaparte. With such a General and such men nothing was impossible. Harnessing themselves to the guns, in gangs of a hundred, the soldiers dragged along their heavy loads to the sound of inspiriting music, especially in the more difficult places. As an additional incentive, the money the peasants had refused to earn was promised to the soldiers; but they would have none of it, saying that it was the duty of the troops to save their guns. With what worship must the First Consul have been regarded by his army! It is said that certain of the soldiers, finding themselves high up on the mountain when night came on, chose to endure all the rigours of those ice-bound elevations rather than desert their guns, even till morning.

There is a branch of the Po, called the Dora Baltea, which rises high among the Alps, and along its course the French troops passed presently on their way down to the Italian plains. Much of the valley of the Dora Baltea is but a cleft in the mountains, bounded on either hand by towering heights, most of them quite inaccessible. In one part of the valley a huge rock has at some time fallen from the mountain above, almost blocking up the passage. The river runs on one side of this rock and the road on the other. For a short distance the road is lined with houses, forming the town of Bard. The little place was dominated by a fort, occupied by the Austrians, and, though not strong

in itself, it was splendidly situated for defensive operations. To pass this fort on their way down into Piedmont was soon seen by the French to be almost an impossibility. In truth, several of the Generals pronounced the passage to be quite impracticable. Here, then, was an unlooked-for check: the French army had, with untold labour and risk, passed over the lofty and savage mountains only to be stopped by an insignificant fort like this! It seemed all too ridiculous at first sight; but the more the problem was confronted, the more insoluble did it appear. In vain Lannes, never a man to be easily daunted, sent his companies of grenadiers into the town; the fort swept the street with its fire. Other Generals were sent for, but all agreed that the place was impregnable. At last it was necessary to dispatch messengers to the Commander himself, who had not yet crossed the pass.

The news that the farther progress of his army was impossible, and that it was absolutely necessary to bring back all his men and munitions over that tremendous range, was at first staggering to Bonaparte. But he had not brought his army over one of the highest ranges in the world to be stopped by a little hill fortress.

"They will take the fort by a bold dash," he ordered; "or if it is not taken, they will turn it."

He further directed that if the artillery could not be got over, the troops should scale the heights above the Rock of Bard, and proceed without the guns. The French, he said, were both sufficiently brave and sufficiently numerous to fall upon the Austrian artillery and supply themselves with guns. There spoke a military leader of the first rank.

THOUGHTFULNESS OF NAPOLEON

Bonaparte studied his maps assiduously, and messengers were sent flying about the country to the Generals in command of the different divisions of his army. But he did more: presently he was crossing the Alps himself. The prevalent notion that he careered across the Alpine snows on a fiery white charger has no warrant—in fact, the Consul rode a mule. On the way he entered freely into conversation with his humble mule-driver, drawing from the man the story of his life. It is strange that the famous military leader should have had room in his thoughts for such matters at a time when he must have been full of anxiety lest this expedition—one of the greatest the world had ever seen—should come to utter failure. It is worth recording, to the credit of a man in whose character there was only too much that was blameworthy, that he provided for the poor mule-driver, giving him a little farm, and thus enabling him to marry the girl of his choice and settle down in the world. Nor did Bonaparte forget to thank the monks of St. Bernard for their attention to his army: he left with them a magnificent present. Then, descending the slopes to the south, he followed the fashion of the mountaineers, and let himself slide over the snow.

In due time he was before the troublesome fort of Bard, and he at once admitted that all he had been told by his Generals was correct: that Bard was an obstacle hardly to be passed. His mind was soon made up. First, he sent over the precipices leading to the mountain of Albaredo, which overshadows the valley, his infantry, cavalry, and four-pounders. To enable this to be done, it was, of course, necessary to make some sort of a road. An army

of fifteen hundred labourers was soon at work cutting the road, removing obstacles, and bridging torrents. The commander of the fort was much chagrined when he saw the French passing up and out of his reach, while he could do nothing whatever to stop them, and he sent word to his superior that the enemy would to a certainty get down into the plains of Piedmont. He added, however, that he would wager his head they would arrive there without a single gun.

Meantime Napoleon himself, down below in the valley, set to work to take the fort, if it might be, or, if not, to pass it somehow. He began by summoning the commander of it to capitulate. But the Austrian officer was far too sensible of the importance and advantage of his position, and replied that he would yield to nothing but superior force. A few of the artillery, who had scrambled up to the heights above, opened fire upon the fort, but without effect. Then Napoleon ordered an escalade of the outer works of the fort, the only result of which was the loss of a valuable officer and several brave grenadiers. The next move of the French was to attempt to carry past the place a piece of cannon under cover of the night, but the noise attracted the attention of the Austrians within. They threw up light-balls, which lit up the whole locality; then, directing their guns upon the adventurous Frenchmen, they killed or wounded no fewer than seven out of the thirteen soldiers in charge of the cannon. This sort of thing was enough to daunt even the most valiant, and another plan was tried.

"The street was covered with straw and stable dung, and bands of tow were placed round the gun in such

a manner as to prevent the least clash of the mass of metal upon the carriage. The horses were detached, and bold artillerymen dragged them by main strength, venturing to pass under the batteries of the fort along the street of Bard. The plan perfectly succeeded. The enemy, who occasionally fired by way of precaution, struck some of the gunners; but in no long time, in spite of the fire, the heavy artillery was moved to the other side of the defile, and this formidable difficulty, which had caused the First Consul more anxiety than the passage of St. Bernard itself, was thus overcome. The artillery horses had been taken round by the Albaredo path."

Down the valley of the Dora Baltea, with its great rocky sides, the French now marched triumphant. The chief obstacle had been surmounted. And all this while the other sections of the army had been traversing the Alps, each by the pass assigned to it. A vast body of troops was ready to pour down upon the plains of Italy, there to concentrate against the Austrian forces. Lannes, with the advance-guard, now determined to leave the mountains and show himself openly in the plains below. But before this could be done it was necessary that he should dislodge the Austrian General in charge of the outlet from the Alps. This officer, Haddick, had with him a considerable force of infantry and cavalry, and he was well posted near the bridge over the Chiusella, a tributary of the Dora Baltea.

The bridge was strongly defended, and the French found it impossible to take it by assault. Nothing daunted, however, the troops dashed into the river itself, and began to scramble up the opposite bank. Here they

were met by the Austrian cavalry, under General Palfy. A hard fight took place, but when Palfy fell dead from his horse, his troops immediately fled. All the while other Austrian troops kept up a deadly fire against Lannes and his men. General Haddick presently came to the attack with spirit, and for a time the issue was doubtful. Yet the French infantry sustained the onset of the enemy's cavalry with splendid firmness, and held their ground.

A final effort was made by the Austrians. A thousand of their cavalry dashed with tremendous fury against the French foot. Thrice they charged, and as often the shock was sustained and the assault repulsed at the point of the bayonet. The Austrian Commander, after gallant but ineffectual efforts, was now compelled to give the order to retreat, and the French army, after unexampled difficulties and dangers amidst the wild, snow-bound fastnesses of the Alps, was now free to pour forth from the mountain valleys into the rich fields of Piedmont.

Thirteen days only had passed since the first troops had set their faces towards the Alpine slopes at St. Pierre. Now the stupendous enterprise planned by the First Consul had been carried out with extraordinary success. "An army of forty thousand men—infantry, cavalry, and artillery—had passed by unbeaten paths over the highest mountains in Europe, dragging its artillery by main strength along the snow, or pushing it forward under the murderous fire of a fort, almost close to the muzzles of its guns. One division of five thousand men had descended the Little St. Bernard; another of four thousand had passed over Mont Cenis; a detachment occupied the Simplon; and lastly, a corps of fifteen thousand men,

under General Moncey, was on the summit of the St. Gothard. There were thus sixty thousand soldiers and more about to enter Italy; still, it is true, separated from each other by considerable distances, but assured of soon rallying round the principal mass of forty thousand, who had come by Ivrea, in the centre of the semicircle of the Alps."

And, it must not be forgotten, Bonaparte was in possession of all the mountain tracks that led back to his own country, and was thus prepared for retreat should disaster befall his troops. The extraordinary expedition across the stupendous Alpine barrier had been no mere whim of a proud conqueror, but the outcome of a well-reasoned plan, conceived and carried out by a master of the military art.

CHAPTER II

AMONG THE MOUNTAINS OF ABYSSINIA

James Bruce, one of the most noted of British travellers—He reaches Abyssinia — Departs for the interior — Reaches the mountains—A great storm—Wonderful rise of a river—Traces of elephants seen in plenty—Inhabitants of the district live in cages of hide—A troublesome growth of acacias—Tameness of the antelopes—Mount Taranta and its difficulties—Getting the instruments up the heights—Sleep in caves—Dixan, a mountain stronghold—Slave-trading rife—Bruce joins a party of Moors, and becomes the leader of a caravan—An Abyssinian chief, and his methods of horse-dealing—Dangers of the Shangalla country —The "steeples" of the Adowa Mountains—A wicked town—Natives cut steaks out of a live cow—A frightful mountain track—Bruce reaches Gondar—The royal family down with the small-pox—A saint vainly tries magic—Bruce forced to undertake the sick cases—His lucky success—Installed as Court physician—On most intimate terms with the King—Starts for the source of the Nile—Is admitted to brotherhood with the wild Gallas—Given a steed—"No man will touch you who sees that horse"—Arrives at the mountains and village of Geesh—Sees one of the springs of the Nile—His triumphant reflections.

Few British travellers have been more enterprising and more active than the famous Scotch explorer, James Bruce. His journeyings covered an immense extent and variety of country, and many of his adventures and strange experiences were so extraordinary that not a few of his contemporaries were inclined to doubt his veracity. But

there seems to be no reason for distrusting the general accuracy of Bruce's stories. He travelled over most of Europe, a part of Asia, and a good deal of Africa—in Egypt, in Algeria, in Nubia, in Abyssinia—playing many parts.

When Bruce first set foot in Abyssinia, now more than a hundred and thirty years ago, exceedingly little was known of the interior of that far-off land. But it was among its mountains that the mysterious and historic Nile was believed to have its rise, and one of the things to which Bruce looked forward with almost feverish interest was the possibility of penetrating to the long-hidden source of that mighty river.

The traveller had been detained by a chief nearer the coast, but at length he was suffered to depart for the interior. For a short time his route lay over plains, but when he reached the neighbourhood of the mountains he found his way full of difficulties. The ground was rough, steep, and stony, and he was obliged to march along the bed of a mountain torrent. Then, striking off from the stream, he made for a grassy hill, and there pitched his tent for the night. His early experiences among the Abyssinian mountains were sufficiently exciting. A violent storm suddenly came on. The thunder and lightning were terrific, the lightning very vivid and blue in tint, and the thunder-peals tremendous. Up to the beginning of the storm the bed of the torrent had been almost dry, but in an incredibly short space of time it presented a very different aspect. Bruce's own description is worth quoting:

"The river scarcely ran at our passing it. All on a sudden, however, we heard a noise on the mountains above

louder than the loudest thunder. Our guides upon this flew to the baggage, and removed it to the top of the green hill, which was no sooner done than we saw the river coming down in a stream about the height of a man, and the breadth of the whole bed it used to occupy. The water was thickly tinged with red earth, and swelled a little above its banks, but did not reach our station on the hill."

Soon the traveller came upon plentiful evidences of the existence of elephants in the district. Along the tracks by which the animals had marched, many trees were broken in the middle, or thrown down, while in places the ground was strewn with the branches they had snapped off and partly eaten. But none of the elephants were actually met with thereabouts. The people of the locality dwelt for the most part in mountain caverns and hollows, though some of them lived in what might be called cages—constructions made of wood and skins, and built to accommodate two persons. The tribes, strange to say, were copper-coloured rather than black or white. The travelling after this district was left behind became still more difficult, and even painful, for presently the explorer and his men had to push their way through thick groves of acacias, and the prickly branches of the trees tore the flesh and clothing in a cruel manner.

A wild and desolate hill region followed, and the travellers were glad to make a short stay at a station called Tubbo, where the surroundings were much more agreeable. Then on again, the mountains once more very steep, much broken, and full of crags and precipices of a dangerous character. But the ravines were lovely with

abundant foliage and splendid flowers, and delightful with the song of birds. The amount of bird-life, in truth, Bruce found astonishing. He specially noted that the song of the skylark, among these Abyssinian fastnesses, was exactly the same as in England. Game was plentiful, especially antelopes and partridges. The antelopes were evidently quite unused to the presence of man, for they exhibited not the least fear on the approach of Bruce and his following, merely standing aside to let them pass, and gazing at them in wonder.

For some time the party had been advancing towards Taranta, a lofty and conspicuous mountain, but when they actually reached its base, the prospect was one that almost forced them to turn back. "The difficulties which presented themselves were appalling. The road, if it deserved the name, was of incredible steepness, and intersected almost at every step by large hollows and gullies formed by the torrents, by vast fragments of rock which, loosened from the cliffs above by the rains, had rolled down the chasm" through which the path of the travellers lay. Bruce had with him certain valuable scientific instruments, of which his telescope, his quadrant, and his timekeeper were the principal. How to get these things safely to the top of those well nigh inaccessible heights was a puzzle indeed; the servants of the expedition declared it to be an impossibility. Those who carried the quadrant, indeed, coolly proposed an easy way out of the difficulty—namely, by dragging the instrument on the ground! Bruce was not a man to be stopped by difficulties, if a way out of them was possible to human ingenuity and human perseverance. So the explorer himself took charge of the

quadrant to carry, being assisted by a young Moor who had joined the party for a time. After extraordinary exertions, during which their clothes were torn to pieces, and their hands and knees cut in a shocking manner, the two men succeeded in placing the quadrant in safety, far above the stony parts of the mountain. Their companions were by this time thoroughly ashamed of themselves, and set to work on the burdens with a will, each man now striving to surpass his fellows, and thus the rest of the instruments and the baggage were quickly carried up the steeps.

But Mount Taranta was by no means yet done with; in truth, the men had made but half the ascent. They were too tired to attempt more that day, however, and threw themselves on the ground, too exhausted even to pitch their tents. As it happened, this operation would have been an impossible one, the ground being too rocky to admit of driving in tent-pegs. When night fell, Bruce and his companions went off to sleep in some caves in the rocks which they observed near. As a matter of fact, many of the Abyssinian mountains were found to abound in caves. In the morning, when the upward journey was resumed, the path proved steeper than ever, but it also proved on the whole less rugged and toilsome. For two days longer the travellers wandered among the heights and valleys of the same mountain group.

A halt was then made at Dixan, the first considerable settlement they had met with. It was built on the top of a sugar-loaf hill, and was splendidly situated for defence. On every side the ground fell away sharply to the valley, which, like a trench, completely surrounded the hill on which the town stood. The road up into the place wound

round the hill in spiral fashion. The explorer found the people of Dixan a bad set; in fact, they had among their countrymen an unenviable reputation for wickedness, "and appeared fully to deserve it!" The main trading of the place was in slaves, especially boys and girls, whom they stole wherever they could lay hands on them. Most of the poor wretches were bought up by Moorish travelling merchants, and sent by them to Arabia or India. Bruce was not sorry to see the last of Dixan.

By an altogether unexpected turn of fortune he now found himself installed as chief of a large caravan. He had been joined by a number of Moors, who possessed twenty donkeys and a couple of bulls, all laden with merchandise. The Moors were desirous of combining with so strong a force as Bruce's for the additional security thus afforded to them and their goods. A picturesque ceremony took place under a tree, at a spot where they had all encamped for the night. The Moors solemnly elected Bruce as the chief of the combined caravan, promising on oath to stand by him to the end if danger should arise, and to yield him implicit obedience in all lawful things. Next day, as they travelled on, they saw, looking back at Taranta, a terrible storm playing about the mountain, whose lofty summit was covered with the blackest of clouds, from which flashes of the most brilliant lightning could be seen darting forth every moment. The travellers were glad to have left behind so storm-stricken a spot.

That same day Bruce had an odd experience. Whilst he and his following were resting from the noontide heat, there descended from the heights above the chief of the neighbourhood, attended by the raggedest of retinues.

He had with him several horses, to one of which the Scotchman took a particular fancy. It was a handsome black animal of the Dongola breed. So after the chief had departed again to his palace on the hill, Bruce sent up a man to bargain for the horse. The price, twelve pounds, was agreed upon, and the chief promised to send down the purchase. What was the buyer's disgust when he found that the black horse had turned brown, that he had grown old, that he had lost an eye! He at once sent the brute back again, and demanded his rightful property—a proceeding not without risk, probably, in so wild and lawless a mountain district, and amidst the peoples subject to the chieftain. However, after a great deal of disputing and squabbling, the real charger was produced. It had been miserably starved by its master, but under Bruce's care the black horse became a faithful servant and friend, as the traveller gratefully styles him. To this splendid animal Mirza, as it was called, Bruce more than once owed his life.

The caravan was now approaching the country of the Shangalla, or, rather, a district much subject to incursions by the dreaded Shangalla tribes. It was a country of extraordinary fertility, the valleys well wooded and gay with flowers. The wild-oats that covered a portion of the route taken by our travellers were so tall that they swallowed up man and horse together, in much the same way as the jungle grass of India often does. This district might have been a veritable paradise, but the peoples were so often at war with each other, and the country so liable to the inroads of enemies from without, that a good portion of it was left uncultivated. The scanty crops

that were grown were seldom got in without bloodshed, the labourers having to work gun and sword in hand, so to speak. Bruce judged it wise to instruct his men to overhaul their arms thoroughly, and be prepared at any time to defend themselves, in case the Shangalla robbers should appear. Luckily for the caravan, it was suffered to pass unmolested through the country. It is more than probable that the combined party was considered too formidable to be attacked.

By and by Bruce gained a glimpse of the mountains of Adowa, towards which he had been travelling, and early in December he arrived at the town of the same name. The mountains hereabouts the explorer found to be unlike any he had seen in other countries. "Their sides were all perpendicular," he writes, "high, like steeples or obelisks, and broken into a thousand different forms." The town was of no great size, but it was strongly placed and defended. It was so intersected by breadths of trees and flowers, that at a little distance it seemed like an extensive and beautiful park. Within its borders, however, wickedness and cruelty reigned supreme. The palace of the chief, on a commanding height, looked like, and was in reality, a huge prison. It contained within its walls more than three hundred wretched prisoners in irons, some of whom had been there for twenty years and more, the object of the tyrant being to extort more and more money from them. Bruce stayed ten days at this mountain stronghold of Adowa, taking care to visit the ruins of Axum, an ancient place in the neighbourhood, which must once have been a splendid city, judging from its wonderful remains.

He was a witness, not long after leaving Adowa, to a strange and a cruel spectacle. Three men by the wayside were observed sitting astride a cow which they had thrown to the ground. They made a deep incision in the animal's hind quarters. Bruce, supposing they were about to slaughter the cow, began to bargain for some of the flesh for his party. To his astonishment, the fellows declared they were not going to kill the animal. Then, to the traveller's disgust, they proceeded to cut out of the living beast two large steaks. Bruce did not see the actual operation, for he had turned away a little, not wishing to witness the slaughter of the animal. His companions had all gone on ahead. When he came back to the spot, there the steaks were. The wretches then pinned together the portions of skin on the two sides of the incision, put over the wound a plaster of clay, and coolly drove on the poor brute as before.

After a vexatious detention in a miserable hill village, whose chief seemed disposed to put an end to the journey altogether, if not to the lives of the whole party, the caravan proceeded in the direction of Mount Lamalmon, one of the loftiest heights of the country. The path up was arduous in the extreme. Its greatest breadth in any part was not more than two feet. Far over the heads of the travellers towered the cliffs and rocks; below them the precipices dropped away almost sheer down into awful abysses. It tried the strongest head to gaze into those fearful depths. Moreover, the path was much broken up by torrents of water and by fallen rocks. Up such a road as this it was impossible to take the baggage in bulk; it had to be carried up piece by piece, and for

only short distances at a time. The labour was excessive, and the danger to man and beast very great. The mules, generally so sure-footed on steep declivities, kept their footing only with much difficulty, even though they passed up unburdened. The men had themselves to get the baggage up as best they might, the mules being quite useless for the purpose. As in the case of Mount Taranta, Bruce had to take two days for the ascent, resting for the night in the same fashion, exhausted, on the open flank of the hill.

Gondar, the goal for which he had been making all the while, was reached by Bruce in the middle of February. He found a lodging at the house of one of his Moors, and hoped for a period of rest and quiet, after the fatigues and hardships of a long journey over the mountains. He was not left long in peace, however, for as he was sitting reading one evening shortly after his arrival in the town, he was surprised and alarmed to receive a visit from a party of armed men. The leader of the company declared himself to be the Queen's chamberlain, and he went on to say that Her Majesty, having heard of the stranger's great skill as a physician, required him to repair to the palace, where a young Prince was lying ill of the smallpox! Here was a strange part for the Scottish traveller to play. But he went to the palace next morning, when, to his intense relief, he learnt that the Prince had been put under the care of a notable saint from Waldubba. This man's treatment consisted in writing certain characters with ink on a tin plate; he then washed off the mystic writing, and administered the liquid as a medicine. Most unfortunately for the saintly physician, the sick Prince

died that same evening, as also did a Princess of the same royal house.

Just as Bruce was congratulating himself on his lucky escape from all blame in this matter, he was summoned in haste to the palace again, and there he was installed, willy-nilly, as head Court physician! A dangerous post; a post still more dangerous to refuse. By this time many members of the family were sick, and Bruce had a heavy task. But he exerted himself to the utmost and tried all his skill, and so fortunate was he in his treatment of the patients, that they all recovered under his hands, save one. His reputation was made; he became a great man at Court; he lived on the most intimate terms with the King himself, who appointed him Governor over one of his provinces.

Bruce, as we have said, hoped to discover in Abyssinia the long-sought source of the Nile, and he fully believed himself to have succeeded, as not a few others believed with him, for a time. Starting from Gondar, he was introduced by Fasil, a rebel leader, to seven chieftains of the Gallas. Ferocious savages and notorious thieves these fellows were, but they gave him their protection; in fact, they went through the ceremony of admitting him a member of the Galla peoples. Without some such help, it is more than probable that the adventurous Scotchman would never have travelled safely through the country of these frightfully cruel and savage tribes. The Gallas gave him a horse saddled and bridled, with the words, "Take this horse, but do not mount it yourself. Drive it before you, saddled and bridled as it is; no man of Meitsha will touch you when he sees that horse." And so Bruce found it.

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE

It was on the 3rd of November, 1770, that the intrepid traveller came to a triple range of mountains, behind which he was told was the source of the great Nile. He imagined this range to be the Mountains of the Moon, in which he was, of course, mistaken. However, ascending the heights, he was strangely moved by seeing down below the infant river. It was a mere streamlet, with hardly enough water to turn a wheel. "I could not satiate myself with the sight," he writes delightedly, "revolving in my mind all those classical prophecies that had given the Nile up to perpetual obscurity and concealment . . . By the protection of Providence and my own intrepidity, I had gained a triumph over all that were powerful and all that were learned since the remotest antiquity."

He was led into the village of Geesh, hard by, and was there shown a sort of pool in the hill-side, with a piece of green sod in the middle of the water. From a fount in this tiny islet issued the beginnings of the mighty Nile. Bruce was warned to pull off his shoes if he went to the fountain itself, since the inhabitants of the land, though they believed not in God, yet held the river to be a divinity.

"Half undressed as I was, by the loss of my sash, and throwing off my shoes, I ran down the hill and came to the island of green turf, which was in form of an altar, apparently the work of art, and I stood in rapture over the principal fountain which rises in the middle of it."

He goes on to say: "It is easier to guess than to describe the situation of my mind at that moment, standing in that spot which had baffled the genius, industry, and inquiry of both ancients and moderns for the course of near

three thousand years. Kings had attempted this discovery at the head of armies, and each expedition was distinguished from the last only by the difference of the numbers that had perished, and agreed alone in the disappointment which had uniformly, and without exception, followed them all. . . . Though a private Briton, I triumphed here, in my own mind, over Kings and their armies."

Bruce was mistaken in thinking that the branch whose birth he witnessed was the main stream of the Nile, and was also in error in believing himself to be the first European to look upon the sight; yet we may well pardon the exultation of a gallant and successful explorer.

CHAPTER III

ON THE WAY TO SRINAGAR

Mr. Daniell, a noted artist, travels in India, three-quarters of a century ago, in company of a clergyman friend—Through the mountains on the way to Srinagar—The Coaduwar Ghaut—Bad tidings from other travellers met—Mountains on fire—The conflagration extinguished by a deluge—A huge rhinoceros on the path—The artist coolly sketches the beast—An escort arrives from the Rajah of Srinagar—A land swarming with dangerous beasts—Trouble with the Rajah's men—The effect of a sound thrashing—The mountain torrents and their dangers—A man whirled off by one—Palanquins with jointed poles—At the bottom of an awful defile—The stars in broad daylight—A memorable and terrifying thunderstorm — A portmanteau dropped into an abyss—Its plucky rescue at the risk of a man's life—A frail rope-bridge and its terrors—An elk shot—A shooting-party — A bear suddenly appears—Its hostility—"Don't fire!"—A novel plan carried out by the natives—Bear enticed into a tree, then shot into space, as if from a catapult—The tiger country at length reached—One of the brutes reported to be about—A tiger-trap—A fall into the pit—Royal rage of the baffled beast—Desperate attempts to escape—Fearful yells—Seven bullets required to give the tiger his quietus.

It is now almost exactly three-quarters of a century since Mr. William Daniell, a noted artist in his day and a Royal Academician, went on his travels to India. He was accompanied by Mr. Caunter, a clergyman, and the two friends spared no pains to see the great Eastern

peninsula thoroughly. They visited many a notable city, but did not neglect the wilder parts of the country. They traversed interminable plains, and threaded awful mountain passes and gorges; now they were ferried across the wide waters of lordly rivers, and now they were risking their lives in the passage of some frightful mountain torrent.

Not the least interesting of their experiences were those that accompanied a journey to Srinagar, far away among the remotest fastnesses of the stupendous mountains of the north. No reader needs to be told that so far back as the early part of the nineteenth century India was not so well provided as it is to-day with magnificent high roads, fine bridges, wayside inns, and other resting-places for adventurous travellers. Moreover, the wilder parts of the country were often very unsafe, except for a numerous and well-armed company.

As our travellers entered the Coaduwar Ghaut, and thus the mountains proper, they received from men they met a dismal report as to the difficulties of the mountain district before them, and they were especially discouraged by the news that the snow had already begun to fall. Plucking up their courage, nevertheless, Mr. Daniell and Mr. Caunter kept on their way. They had scarcely cleared the first narrow glen when they were surprised and alarmed to see apparently the whole range of mountains before them in a blaze. "The fire swept up their sides to the extent of several miles, undulating like the agitated waves of the ocean when reddened by the slanting beams of the setting sun. It was like an ignited sea, exhibiting an effect at once new and fearful."

The travellers could hardly be said to be in any real danger, situated, as they were, at the bottom of a deep ravine, along which tumbled a brawling torrent. They learnt that these mountain fires are often caused by the swaying of the tall and dry bamboos, the violent and long-continued friction at last kindling a flame. The conflagration was extinguished as suddenly as it had begun, a mighty deluge of rain coming on, and drowning the flames with its floods.

An adventure of a different sort soon came their way. They were in a country filled with all kinds of game, and sheltering not a few dangerous animals. Mr. Daniell and his friend had just turned the corner of a precipitous hill, when suddenly they found themselves in the presence of a huge rhinoceros, the brute being separated from them only by the narrow torrent, though it was on a somewhat higher ledge than that on which the men were standing. To the hunter pure and simple this would have been a godsend. And so it was to the artist. Not less plucky than the hunter, he clambered up to the animal's level, and proceeded coolly to sketch the beast. Strange to say, the rhinoceros stood still, showing no signs of either anger or fear. In short, Mr. Daniell finished his sketch with composure, notwithstanding the risks he ran. Then, unwilling to rouse to fury an animal their guns could not damage, they fired a shot only with the view of frightening the brute away. To their great relief, the rhinoceros did depart, but only with the utmost deliberation.

A halt had to be made in the defiles till permission could be obtained from the Rajah of Srinagar to proceed to his capital. The Prince, in reply to the messengers

sent by the Englishmen, not only granted the required permit, but also sent an escort to protect the party on the most arduous and hazardous portion of the way. Presently, passing a village with a small detachment of troops, they were fairly in the Rajah's territory. This pass, or *ghaut*, the Englishmen learnt, had to be entirely abandoned by the soldiery in the rainy season, the defiles being then infested by an immense multitude of savage beasts which took shelter there—tigers, leopards, bears, hyenas, and other beasts of prey.

Notwithstanding the fact that the attendants and bearers had been sent by the Rajah himself, our travellers soon found they were likely to have some trouble with the fellows. They were a lazy lot, and refused to carry the burdens assigned to them. Before long the majority of them deserted, and left the Englishmen to do as best they could. The situation was a serious one, and the travellers had to supply the places of the deserters without delay. With immense difficulty they succeeded in gathering a few of the country fellows, but what was their chagrin when these also showed signs of defection! Thereupon the Englishmen administered a sound thrashing to the worst of the offenders—a strong measure, and one they were most reluctant to adopt. Strange to say, it had the desired effect, and they were no more troubled by the laziness of their followers, though it was necessary to keep a constant and vigilant watch over them.

The character of the country through which the party passed was such as to baffle description. As they say, "to look down some of the gaping gulfs which arrested our gaze as we passed them required no ordinary steadiness of

brain; and the road by which we had to descend was frequently so steep that we were obliged to cling to the jagged projections of rock, or to the few stunted shrubs that appeared here and there in our path. . . . Impediments began to multiply upon us." Their worst trouble was with the *nullahs*, or mountain torrents, which they often had to cross. The difficulty of crossing some of these was only equalled by the danger. The least slip would have meant great peril, and probably death, for such is the force of the torrent, and so many are the cascades and falls in its course, that a man would be swirled over rock after rock before any attempt could be made to save him, if, indeed, it were possible to save him at all.

In one spot, where the roar of the streams was deafening, and the reverberations amongst the rock-faces absolutely stunning, one of the party was whirled from his feet in mid-stream. For a few moments there was excitement and to spare. The man was carried down at a furious rate, and it seemed as if nothing could save him. As it happened, fortunately, farther down the torrent a tree had fallen across the waters. The drowning man had the presence of mind to clutch a branch of this, and to hang on for dear life, till he could be rescued.

The travellers pursued their journey for the most part "in silence and weariness." Each of them was carried in a palanquin, as a rule; but so wild and dangerous was a good deal of the country, that they dared not make use of the vehicles. In many and many a place the narrowness of the ledge on which they were progressing, and the abruptness of the turns to be made, rendered it impossible

to use poles of the ordinary kind for the palanquins. In those mountain districts jointed poles took their place, making it possible to turn sharp corners; but it may well be imagined that our Englishmen were not very willing to trust themselves to their bearers in such spots.

So far the weather had been favourable, but the inevitable storm was at hand. The cavalcade, if such the travelling party could be called when there were no horses, had reached the most forbidding part of the whole mountain area. They found themselves at the bottom of a ravine shaped like a funnel, to the depths of which the sun never penetrated. There was at the best but a dismal twilight down there; so dark was it, in fact, that as they looked up from the profound depths of the gorge they could see the stars in the sky, though it was the middle of the afternoon. The sky seemed to be "one uniform tint of the deepest purple, while the brilliancy with which the stars emitted their vivid fires altogether baffles description. Nothing could exceed the splendour of the scene."

The brightness of the day above became now suddenly overcast, and almost without the least warning the storm was upon them. The darkness at the bottom of their awful defile became in a moment or two intense. Then the rains began to descend, and the travellers and their servants were fain to take shelter under a huge projecting rock which they found hard by. The lightning was appalling in its frequency and its intensity. From the spot where the men stood could be seen many tall, needle-like peaks above, "which seemed to plunge their tall spires into the skies, and absolutely to prop the firmament." These peaks at every flash were lighted up in a way that would have

been grand had it not been also terrifying. As for the thunder, it resounded from rock to rock, and from flank to flank, till it became, as it were, one continuous and tremendous crash. When there did come a second or two of silence it was so intense as to be absolutely painful. The storm did not last many minutes, and did no damage to the travellers, luckily, but it made on them an impression that would never be effaced. The tempest ceased as suddenly as it had begun, and in a few moments after the skies were bright again.

Continuing their journey, the party found themselves on a narrow shelf; above, the mountain towered to an enormous height; below, the precipice fell away sheer into the depths below. At this point one of the porters dropped a bag or small portmanteau, which, of course, fell into the gulf. The Englishmen looked upon their property as lost for ever, but to their astonishment, and indeed dismay, the man announced his determination to fetch the lost article again. "A stout cord, composed of hair, was passed round the limb of a tree that projected over the precipice. The end was firmly tied to a thick bamboo, about fifteen inches long, upon which the man placed his feet, and, grasping the rope in both hands, was slowly lowered into the void. As the face of the precipice sloped gradually inward, he was not within reach of it during the whole of his descent. When about fifty yards below the summit, he was swayed in an alarming degree by the wind, which, pouring down the chasm and not finding a ready vent, was forced back again in strong eddies that seemed at times to whirl him round with dangerous velocity. He, however, still maintained his hold until he appeared but a speck,

when, the cord slackening, it was clear he had reached his destination. After a short time, upon a signal being given from below by a sudden jerk of the cord, the men above began to haul up their companion, who, from the additional weight, had evidently recovered his burden. They pulled him up much more expeditiously than they had let him down, and he soon reappeared uninjured, with the portmanteau upon his shoulders."

That afternoon the travellers came upon the first of the rope-bridges so common in the mountain districts of Northern India. They gazed with alarm upon the frail apparatus, but there was no help for it, and they resigned themselves to the inevitable. The ropes—there were two —were made of twisted creepers, and were an inch and a half in diameter. A sort of hoop spanned these ropes, and on the lower rim of this the adventurous traveller seated himself; then, holding a rope in either hand, he proceeded to pull himself across. To the hillmen the business seemed easy enough, and not in the least terrifying, but the case was different with the Englishmen. To be thus suspended on such a crazy apparatus, a hundred feet above a boiling torrent, the whole machine vibrating violently in the strong wind the while, tried the nerves of both. Fortunately the passage was made by all the party in safety, and the terrors of it were at once forgotten in the excitements of the chase. The last man had scarce crossed, when an elk, or moose-deer, was started, and a helter-skelter after it at once took place. Finally the elk was shot, and proved to be a very fine animal.

Sport of a more exciting character presently appeared. Mr. Daniell went off with his gun into a side ravine,

in search of jungle-fowl, the birds being fairly abundant in the place, but exceedingly shy. There were with him two of the hillmen, and after a very stiff and risky climb, they had just gained the top of a precipice, when a bear was observed hastening towards them. It was evident the brute was bent on mischief, and Mr. Daniell was about to fire, regretting, however, that his gun was loaded only with large shot. At this moment one of the natives intervened, and begged the master to leave the bear to him, and he would attack it unarmed. The Englishman was astounded, but seeing the coolness and confidence of the hillmen, agreed to let them try their skill, holding his weapon ready, should it after all be needed.

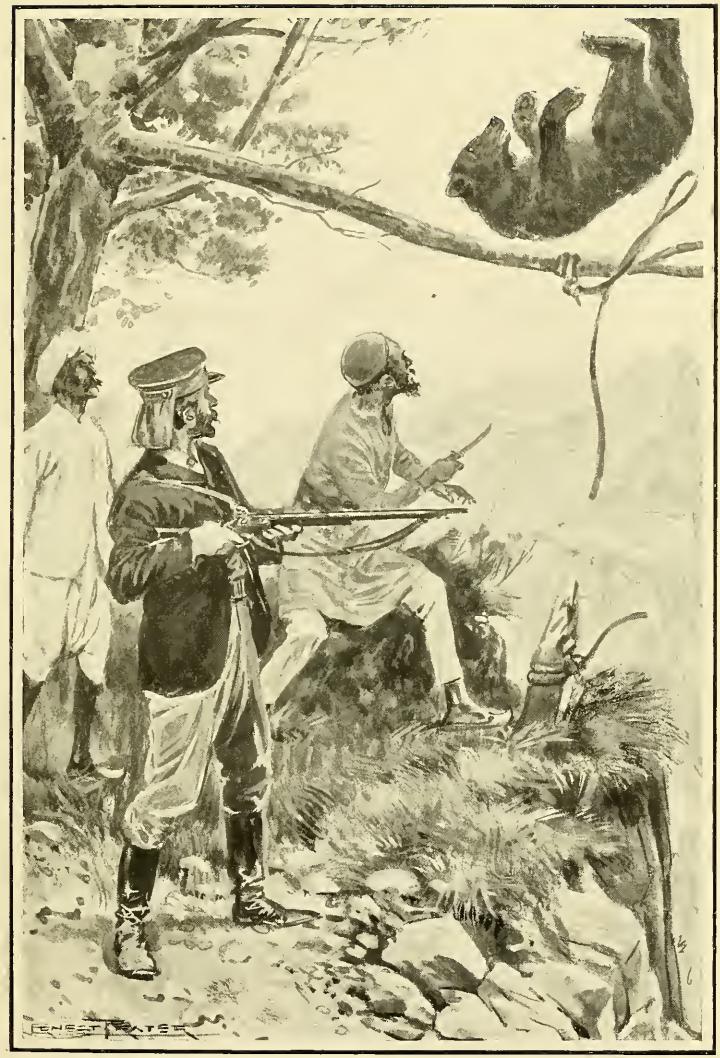
Almost on the very edge of the precipice grew a tree, whose branches stretched over the abyss, and seemed to be very pliant but very strong. Without a moment's hesitation the hillman approached the bear, and, exciting it, drew its attention from the Englishman to himself. In a rage the bear made after the man, who thereupon climbed with astonishing agility into the tree, the bear as nimbly following. The fellow now selected one of the longest of the upper branches, and attaching to the end of it a strong cord, threw the other end down to his companion below. The branch was speedily pulled down with all the man's force, till it projected far over the edge of the precipice.

The chief operator now crept cautiously along the branch as far as he dared, the bear following. Then, seizing the rope, the fellow slid like a monkey to the ground. The bear, thus unexpectedly deprived of its victim, attempted to turn, in order to retrace its steps. No sooner, however, had it relaxed its grasp of the bough

for this purpose, than the hillman suddenly cut the cord, which had been securely tied to the stump of a tree, and the depressed branch instantly gained its original position with an irresistible momentum. The suddenness and vigour of the recoil shook the bear from its hold, launching it, like the fragment of a rock from a catapult, into the empty air. Uttering a stifled yell, it was hurled over the precipice, and, falling with a dull crash upon the rocks beneath, no doubt soon became a prey to the vultures and jackals. The address with which the bold highlander accomplished this dangerous exploit was as astonishing as it was novel.

It was not till after the visit to Srinagar had ended, and the travellers had got almost clear of the mountains again, that they saw anything of the tiger, the most dreaded of all the wild beasts of India. The chief of the district, who showed himself most friendly and hospitable, promised his guests an exhibition of tiger-trapping as performed in the locality. As it happened, one of these animals had been discovered in a wood not far away within the last few hours. So the Englishmen stayed to watch the operations, in which, as the course of events showed, there was little risk to the spectator.

A large hole was dug in the ground, with sides sloping inwards, to a depth of twelve feet, the area of the hole at the surface being about a couple of yards square. The pit was now concealed by a slight framework of bamboo, on which a quantity of grass was strewn. At the approach of evening a goat was tethered on the top of the pit, the covering being strong enough to support its weight, but nothing heavier. Everything being now ready, the



A NOVEL METHOD OF KILLING A BEAR

One of the hill men attracted the bear's attention to himself, then swarmed out on the branch of a tree, to which a cord had been attached. The bear followed, the man promptly slipped back to safety on the rope, which was then pulled so as to make the branch a strong spring. When the rope was cut the bear was shot into space.

watchers concealed themselves behind a few trees to await the result. The night was unusually dark.

It was not till towards morning that their wishes were gratified. "We observed the beautiful beast rush from its lurking-place, and, when within about five yards of the devoted goat, spring upon it with a yell so ferocious that I trembled where I stood, though removed from all chance of danger. The platform instantly gave way with a crash, and the tiger and goat both fell into the hollow beneath. As soon as the former found itself a prisoner, it howled with rage, lashed its sides with its tail, erected the fur upon its back, and exhibited fearful demonstrations of fury. It made the most desperate efforts to escape, springing up the sides of the shaft, and occasionally clinging to the very edge. The earth, however, was so soft that there was no hold for its claws, so that it always fell back; but upon reaching the ground and finding its efforts at release invariably foiled, its fury redoubled. Its yells were dreadful. The goat was quite dead, but remained untouched by its destroyer, which at length lay upon its belly almost exhausted with its exertions. At this moment our host advanced and fired at the dreaded captive as it lay panting and powerless. The ball took effect, but not mortally. The sudden pang only roused the tiger to renewed exertions, in order to retaliate upon its assailant, who deliberately loaded and fired until the excited beast was destroyed." So tenacious was it of life, that it received seven balls in different parts of its body before it finally succumbed.

CHAPTER IV

A SOJOURN IN SOCOTRA

The island of Socotra—Mr. Wellsted, an English scientist and explorer—A very mountainous country—Almost impassable rocks—Camel slips—A hind-foot in a crack—Huge fall of mountain—Extraordinary storms—Into a cave for shelter—A night of tempest—Lost camels—Inconceivable fury of the blasts—Natives puzzled with the strangers—The men hostile—Terror at sight of a Nubian—Attack by four Bedouins with clubs—Impudent and intrusive Arabs—An Englishman's house is his castle—Ali kicked out by John Sunday—Natives afraid of scientific instruments—The sextant "is of the devil"!—Thirty plunderers appear—"What is to prevent us from taking what we want?"—"Only this"—Two bullet-holes—Cave-dwellers—"Teeming with vermin"—No wild beasts in Socotra—An adventure with a snake—A refractory and disloyal guide—"We shall see in the morning"—Ali attacks Sunday with a club—Retaliation—The Englishman to the rescue—Arab swords flourished over his head—A narrow escape—The Cadi and Ali—Hostile Arabs biding their time for revenge—The Englishman and Sunday in danger—Magnificent spot amongst the granite mountains—Buried alive.

Few are the travellers who have visited the island of Socotra—off the East African cape Guardafui—or perhaps it would be more correct to say, who have written at any length on their experiences there. But we have an interesting account by Mr. Wellsted, a Fellow of the Royal Society, and a traveller of some note in his day,

now more than sixty years ago. In the course of his Eastern wanderings, Mr. Wellsted paid a visit of some duration to this mountainous island. For Socotra is very mountainous; indeed, few territories of the size can boast a more rugged surface, and many of its heights are singularly arduous and precipitous, and thus difficult to traverse.

His first inland excursion brought him heavy work, from the very shore, to which in parts the mountains extend. His camels found the smooth limestone rocks hardly passable at all. As for the men, they preferred to trust to their own hands and knees, crawling on all fours past the most dangerous place. They then turned to watch the progress of the camels, which had been left to their own devices. Three of the animals crossed in safety, but the fourth was less lucky. At the worst part of the passage he slipped, and began sliding down the steep rock. It was a moment of suspense for the owner, and it was with relief that he observed the animal put his hind foot into a crack and stop his headlong progress. It was a clever manœuvre on the part of the camel. A few feet more, and the beast would have rolled over the precipice and been dashed to pieces. Many and many a similar dangerous spot did the explorer come across in the heart of the mountains.

A little later on, he was witness to a strange spectacle at the place just mentioned. He had hardly passed the spot when his attention was arrested by a low, rumbling sound behind him. Instantly turning, he beheld, to his great astonishment, a huge mass separate itself from the main body of the hill. "Its first course was but slow,

though down a slope. Its velocity, however, quickly increased, a short projection caught the base, and over toppled the whole hill—for so I may, from its magnitude, term it. The crashing which immediately succeeded was terrific; but a cloud of dust arose, and I could no longer trace its headlong career. The effects, however, were apparent enough as soon as the dust cleared away, and a shock, like that of an earthquake, announced that the main body had reached the sea."

The storms the traveller had to encounter on the mountain heights were frequent and of tremendous severity, and one was not long before it overtook him. He had, luckily, time to run for shelter to a cavern in the mountain-side, from which he watched the extraordinary war of the elements. The gale increased to a hurricane; the lightning flashed among the glens; the thunder rolled among the peaks; the waters descended in the torrent-beds as if they would sweep all before them. Fortunately dry wood was found in the cave, and soon a fire was kindled and a capital stew was cooked. The rocky floor of the cavern made but a hard bed, yet there was at any rate shelter from the pitiless storm without, and there the traveller and his men spent the night. In the morning it was found that the servants, in their hurry to escape from the tempest, had neglected to tether the camels. A whole day was occupied in wandering up and down the mountains in search of the missing animals.

The force of the winds on the heights was at times terrific, and often exposed the mountaineers to no little danger. Mr. Wellsted writes: "The fury of these blasts was almost inconceivable. Pent up by the hills on either

hand, they roared through the valleys with a strength which threatened to carry all before them; even our camels were occasionally compelled to turn or lie down. Branches of trees, sand, pebbles, and even birds were swept along by the current. Water was hurled past in sheets, and we heard from the Bedouins that their cattle, by similar storms, were frequently driven over the precipices." The explorer found that the native Socotrans were always very terrified when there was forked lightning, nor did their frequent experience of it serve to lessen their fears.

The natives of the interior were at first greatly puzzled, and no little alarmed, by the advent of the Englishman and his companions; more than that, the men were disposed to be decidedly hostile. His Nubian servant, who was dressed in European fashion, particularly frightened the women; they took him to be some infernal sprite. On one occasion, having ascended to an elevation of over two thousand feet, the traveller was seated sketching, his attendants having strolled to a distance. Suddenly three or four Bedouins made their appearance, armed with thick clubs. They had been watching him for some time, and were now in a quarrelsome mood. The situation was not a pleasant one, and Wellsted was obliged to have recourse to various little artifices to keep them quiet. It was with no little relief that he saw his servants return.

The Arabs were always more assuming and more arrogant than the native Socotra folk, and the Englishman was much annoyed by their habit of walking into his tent whenever they had a mind. No hints or even remonstrances were sufficient to keep them out. "It is the custom of our country," they would retort; to which

Wellsted replied: "But such is not ours;" and he closed the entrance of the tent. There was one fellow, Ali by name, who would not be said nay. He presently attempted to enter by force. The master thought it was time to interfere, so he directed his servant—John Sunday, the Nubian—to kick the intruder out, which Sunday did with great gusto, and Ali was pitched headlong from the apartment, much as one might have kicked out a cat.

The explorer was apprehensive lest he might suffer losses from the thieving habits of the natives. He was, however, somewhat reassured when he saw how terrified the men all were by his scientific instruments. Nothing would induce one of them to touch the sextant, and as for the telescope, when it was put unexpectedly in the hands of another fellow, it was instantly thrown to the ground with loud cries of horror—"It is of the devil!" But it was evident the minds of the natives were often thinking of possible plunder, and when one day some thirty of them came to the tent, Wellsted determined to read them a lesson. After whispering together for a considerable time, the savages asked coolly what was to prevent them from taking whatever they wanted of his goods. "Nothing more than this," was the quiet reply as he took up his double-barrelled rifle. He levelled the gun at a tree a dozen yards off, and one after the other the bullets passed clean through the trunk, as good luck would have it. "Away scampered the whole party; they probed the orifices with their fingers, looked at each other in mute astonishment, and then quietly slunk away." They could not understand the suddenness of the result, nor how the powder was

lighted. But the lesson was enough, and the gang went empty away.

Mr. Wellsted was surprised to find to what an extent the islanders used caves for dwellings. These caverns were to be found at various elevations and nearly all over the mountain districts. He climbed up to one of the largest, and found it, spacious as it was, crowded not only with human beings, but with sheep and goats. Not content with their tame flocks, the cave-dwellers caught wild goats, using for this purpose nets of special construction, the making of which fell to the lot of the old women of the community. Amongst the irregularities of the rough and blackened roofs roosted a vast number of pigeons and other wild birds. Still more numerous, by a good deal, the traveller tells us, were the insects of various sorts. One and all these abodes were "teeming with an almost incredible quantity of vermin." A curious proof of this was presently seen. As the strangers were resting in the shade near the cave, a woman driving a flock of sheep passed near. With her were two boys, who had their mouths and nostrils covered with square pieces of cloth. On inquiry it was found that the cloth was intended as a protection from a certain noisome insect, which, in the human subject, produced severe inflammations. Wellsted's servants could never be persuaded to remain inside one of these native rock-dwellings; whatever the weather, they preferred to stay outside.

It is a curious fact, as the explorer remarks, that the island of Socotra is entirely without those dangerous wild beasts which so abound in the adjacent and not far distant regions of the African continent and Arabia. He had,

consequently, no lions or elephants or hyenas to fear, nor the rhinoceros or hippopotamus. But there were snakes in Socotra, and the traveller had a narrow escape in one instance. He and his men had climbed up a rugged glen, very steep-sided and narrow, often pulling themselves up by means of the bushes or the roots of trees. After about a couple of hours of this hard work, the Englishman was about to seize hold of what he took to be another bit of root, when Sunday, quick as lightning, snatched his hand away. It was a snake, as was seen a moment later, when the reptile lifted its head to strike. It was probably heavy after a big feed, or the traveller would, to a certainty, have been bitten. This particular snake the natives called a *java*. It is most deadly, and the victim of its bite never survives more than a few hours. Wellsted had in the course of his much wandering been often enough in the way of snakes, but this was his narrowest escape.

He had a good deal of trouble with one of the guides he had brought to the island with him. This Hamed, an Arab, was found out in continual acts of fraud and dishonesty towards his employer. What was of almost more serious consequence was, that the fellow was trying to embroil him and his attendants with the natives. At length, even the good-natured Englishman's forbearance gave way, and he discharged the man. Hamed began to be insolent, and intimated his intention of remaining whether the master liked it or not. This was too much for his employer. "We shall see," he cried, "in the morning. If I then find you here I will break your bones!" When the morning came, there was nothing to be seen of Hamed.

RETALIATION

The discomfited Ali had not forgotten Sunday and his performances, and was waiting for a chance of retaliating on him. One day, a woman screamed to Wellsted: "Why, they are murdering your servant!" Out rushed the master, and found Ali and Sunday on the ground, engaged in a desperate grapple, the Nubian on the top, however, and holding the other fast by the throat. Other Arabs had run up, and would have cut Sunday to pieces if left to their own devices. Wellsted sprang in and separated the two combatants, and directed Sunday to follow him. The Arabs hemmed in master and man; they flourished their swords over their heads in frantic fashion; they abused and insulted the two strangers. Things had reached a dangerous pass, and there is no doubt that if the Arab mob had had anybody to assume the position of leader, there would soon have been an end of the Englishman and Sunday.

The Nubian explained to his master that, while he had been quietly gathering vegetables, the Arab had come up stealthily behind him, and had struck him violently on the head with a club. Thus attacked, Sunday had closed with his antagonist, and a severe struggle had taken place. As it happened, however, the black had learnt to use his fists in the English fashion, and, as his master whimsically puts it, "thanks to his Nubian birth for the thickness of his skull, and his English education for the use of his fists," Sunday would no doubt soon have come off conqueror. But by this time the Cadi had been sent for, and Ali and his friends swore that his wounds were very serious, whereas they were in reality but slight, and what Ali had got he richly deserved. Then a number of the Arabs came to

Wellsted with loud complaints that a Mussulman had been struck by a Christian slave. The Englishman's back was now up, and he gave them a bit of his mind. "None in the employ of the English are slaves, but servants, whom, so long as they serve us with fidelity, we consider ourselves bound to protect with our lives, and any further attempt to molest Sunday I shall consider as addressed to myself."

The traveller says that if anybody is inclined to smile at the lofty tone he assumed on this occasion, it will be because that person does not understand the conditions in which the explorer was placed, and, moreover, does not know the character of the peoples with whom that explorer had to deal. A confident assumption of superiority and authority, so long as it is tempered with judgment, is "one of the best qualities which a traveller can possess." The incident ended, apparently, but it was soon clearly seen that the Arabs were only biding their time, and master and man were compelled henceforth to go out together, and well armed, so as to prevent an open attack. The friendly Socotrans began to be alarmed at the state of things, and told the Englishman they would be glad, for his own sake, when the ship took him away from the island. He determined, therefore, to quit the place as soon as he had completed the surveys he desired to make.

Socotra yields to no part of the East in wildness and romantic grandeur. One spot particularly pleased the traveller. "In the evening we pitched our tent in the centre of an enormous hollow in the mountains, not less than three miles in diameter. At but a few yards distance a beautiful stream murmured its gentle course; not a

breath of wind could reach us, and the wild and plaintive notes of the wood-pigeon alone broke the silence and solitude of the scene. Grey, steep, and towering, the granite spires rose to an elevation of five thousand feet, and the geologist would have derived great interest from witnessing fragments of the lower formation, either borne up between two peaks, or curiously wrapped like a mantle round others. The junction also between the limestone and the granite was beautifully exposed to view, appearing as if a huge mass in a state of fusion had subsided over the lower, which, in spires, reared themselves beneath."

Many of the Socotran caves had once been used as burial-places, but in later times a less wise practice had come into vogue with respect to the disposal of the dead. One day Wellsted noted an Arab leaving a certain spot. Then, to his great surprise, the traveller found an old man lying there in a little hollow that had been scooped out of the sand. Over the prostrate body was a piece of old and tattered cloth, while by his side were a few fragments of food. The old man was all but dead. Then Wellsted learnt that when the aged became unable to work, it was the custom of the island thus to expose them. Food was brought them, however, so long as they were able to eat it, and, when death came, a few handfuls of sand were thrown over the corpse, and that was all the burial it received. Practically no distinction was made between the dying and the dead!

CHAPTER V

A LADY'S ADVENTURES IN MEXICO

Mexico one of the mountainous countries—Madame Calderon de la Barca, a charming lady writer — Travels for two years in Mexico — Execrable roads—Spirited animals — Severity and frequency of the thunderstorms — A carriage in a swollen mountain torrent—A fearful moment—Country infested with desperate robbers—A grinning skull—"The horses climbed up one crag and slid down another"—A zorillo hunt—Apparently bullet-proof—A wolf at the ladies' side—The hot springs of Cuincho—The ladies lost—Escort of cavalry appears—Bivouac in an outhouse — Mosquitoes — An active night among the robbers — The leader of the gang caught — A disagreeable addition to a travelling party—A typical brigand chief—His look scares Madame—Another night in a barn—Nest of scorpions discovered in the morning!—The famous volcano Jorullo —Its first eruption in 1759—Another visit to the hot springs—Lost in the darkness once more—"Three hundred demons" in an Indian settlement—A late hour for ladies exposed to mountain perils and mountain brigands.

One of the mountainous countries of the world is certainly Mexico. Turn in almost any direction you will, there you have, either close at hand or not so very far away, at least considerable hills, and generally veritable mountains. The great backbone of North America, the Rocky Mountains, runs from one end of the country to the other, a succession of lofty peaks, frowning precipices, wild torrents, with more than one volcano of name and fame. An extended

tour, or a series of tours, in Mexico, therefore, especially sixty or eighty years ago, could not fail to bring to the tourist many curious and some exciting adventures, even though that tourist happened to be of the sex that is commonly supposed to be less adventurous.

Madame Calderon de la Barca, a lady of note in her day, and a friend of Prescott, the famous historian of Mexico, went to that country in the year 1839, and made a considerable sojourn there. Though most of her time was spent in the capital amongst the fashionables and notables of Mexico, yet on several occasions she joined in extensive expeditions into the heart of the country, more especially amongst the mountain districts. The travelling was not always easy. Often, indeed, the roads were execrable, while sometimes the accommodation to be had was of the poorest kind. The animals available for riding were not always desirable mounts; they were, in truth, very often but half-broken horses and mules. Thus we read of a beautiful animal she rode, dashing away with her among the hills, and it was only by her own coolness that she kept her seat and saved herself from serious injury. Some of the other ladies of the cavalcade fared not much better, the mules they rode crushing their feet against the trees or throwing their riders over their heads in a fit of obstinacy.

To be caught in a thunderstorm was a very common experience, and a thunderstorm is no laughing matter in Mexico. As Madame de la Barca says: "When it rains here the windows of heaven seem opened, and the clouds pour down water in floods; the lightning, also, appears to me particularly vivid, and many more accidents occur

from it here than in the north. We were drenched in five minutes, and in this plight resumed our seats in our carriage and set off for Guasco, a village where we were to pass the night, in a pelting storm. In an hour or two the horses were wading up to their knees in water." In such a state did the travellers reach the village, only to find that there was no public accommodation or shelter whatever to be had.

They were traversing magnificent mountain districts in a visit to some of the mines, and in fine weather the trip was delightful. But over and over again the thunder-storms came on. It was perilous travelling when the lightning flashed among the trees, and the wind howled furiously; when the way lay along the edge of frightful precipices, down steep and rocky declivities, across raging mountain torrents. But for the skill and carefulness shown by the drivers, the danger would have been still greater. It was the day following such a storm when the party left Tepenacasco for another stage of their journey. The torrents were swollen in a very dangerous fashion, and there were many stories of animals, vehicles, and the men with them being swept away to their destruction. Suddenly the storm came up again, and the day became quite dark. In this state of things the carriage stuck fast in a rushing stream, and was instantly filled with water. "It was a moment of mortal fear such as I shall never forget. The shrieks of the drivers to encourage the horses, the loud cries of *Ave Maria!* the uncertainty as to whether our heavy carriage could be dragged across, the horses struggling and splashing in the boiling torrent, and the horrible fate that awaited us should one of them fall

or falter! The Señora and I shut our eyes and held each other's hands, and certainly no one breathed till we were safe on the other side. We were then told that we had crossed within a few feet of a precipice over which a coach had been dashed into fifty pieces during one of these swells, and, of course, every one killed, and that if, instead of horses, we had travelled with mules we must have been lost."

Many parts of the mountains were infested with robbers, often desperate and reckless fellows. The severest punishment was dealt out to such of these gentry as were caught, but the warnings were little heeded by the rest. In the defiles beyond the city of Toluca, Madame Barca's party travelled with no little trepidation, for at any moment they might be attacked. An object of horror which they passed in one gloomy glen did not help to reassure them. Nailed to a pine-tree was a blackened and grinning skull. It was that of a celebrated robber who had for forty years been the terror of those mountain solitudes. Caught at last, he had been executed, and then fastened to the very tree under which he had committed his last murder. Yet, only just before this visit of Madame to the spot, some unfortunate wayfarers had been plundered, exactly beneath the ghastly skull. Madame was fated to see more than she liked of the robber gang before long.

A few leagues beyond the defile of the grinning skull the country became difficult, even more than any they had before passed through. It was one succession of deep ravines. The horses climbed up one crag and slid down another. At the bottom of each defile brawled a rushing torrent, the crossing of which sometimes involved danger.

Not a bite for man or beast was to be had. There were no trees and no grass; even Nebuchadnezzar, Madame whimsically says, would have found himself at a nonplus. Not a village was met with, not even a solitary house. The mules were weary, and could only be kept going by the wild choruses the drivers joined in perpetually. If they inquired of a chance passer-by they encountered, the men were always told that the village was "behind the next hill."

As there were gentlemen accompanying this cross-country expedition, it may well be supposed that they were now and then on the look-out for a little sport. A zorillo, or *mouffetes*, as the naturalist Buffon calls the animal, crossing the path of the party one cold morning, put all the men on the *qui vive*. The zorillo somewhat resembles a brown and white fox, with an enormous tail sticking up into the air like a flag; his smell is dreadful, the lady tells us. Pell-mell after the beast rushed the men, some on foot, others on horseback; some carrying guns or pistols, some with little in the way of weapons save sharp knives. The zorillo led the hunters a rare chase, uphill, downhill, over torrent, doubling, winding, feigning death occasionally. But the brute appeared to have a charmed life; it seemed bullet-proof. At last it was wounded in the paw, and stopped as if done for. The pursuers, in high glee, rushed forward to seize their prey, sure of getting it; but, to their mortification, the animal slipped them among the long grass, above which his tail showed conspicuously, as if in mockery, and he was lost in the fog.

While the men plied their sport, the ladies had their

excitement, as they stood at some distance. An immense wolf loomed out of the mist, and trotted close up to the ladies. Needless to say, they set up a loud scream, with one accord calling on the gentlemen for help. The cry was too much for the wolf, luckily, for he went off with a rush.

A visit to the hot springs of Cuincho, amidst wild and striking scenery, brought an adventure of a different kind. The ladies were left to enjoy their bath, the mules to be brought for them at a later hour. The bath proved delicious, the water being at almost exactly the same temperature as the body. The bathers were very loth to come out of the spring, but as they had nine leagues to travel before nightfall, to the town of Pascuaro, they were compelled at last to do so. To their surprise the mules had not arrived, and to while away the time of waiting the ladies strolled among the hills in the neighbourhood. It began to grow dusk; the ladies were both alarmed and hungry, but still no sign of the mules. Just as it became dark, however, there arrived an escort of twenty-three lancers, with a Captain at their head; they had been sent by the Governor, to accompany the travellers on the remainder of their journey. It was too late to travel any more that day, in a trackless and mountainous country, and the best had to be made of the situation. The Captain and others of the men caught a tough old hen and put it into a pot to boil for the ladies. Then a little clean straw on the floor of an outhouse furnished a bed for the high-born dames. The cold, the mosquitoes and other animals, prevented anything like sound sleeping, however. They were very eager to kick off the straw in the early

morning, and get on their way again, escorted by the lancers. On the road they learnt strange things from the peasantry. That night, it appeared, had been a most active one with the robbers. Two mules had been carried off with their cargoes, the drivers being left tied to trees; in another case a woman had been robbed, and bound hand and foot. The ladies began to have many misgivings as to the fate of their own mules and their drivers. Presently they came up with the missing party, who, having lost themselves on the previous evening, had stayed for the night at a little settlement in a valley. It was abundantly clear that they had only just missed falling into the hands of the robbers.

The united party, still under the protection of the lancers, received an awkward and a disagreeable addition to their numbers, at Pascuaro, namely, a couple of notorious mountain robbers, who, fast bound, were given into the custody of the lancers to be taken to Uruapa, for execution. One of these was Morales, whose lawless and ferocious deeds had long been the terror of the country. This fellow's last crime had been so horribly atrocious that even the Indians, who all along had refrained from betraying him, had grown disgusted. They had suddenly seized Morales and one of his men, and had carried them to the authorities at Pascuaro. A speedy trial had resulted in the death sentence for the two, and now a favourable opportunity of sending them on to the place of execution, Uruapa, had come. So Madame de la Barca and her companions had to put up with unpleasant company for a time.

The robber leader was a typical brigand chief. Says

the lady, "he was equal to any of Salvator's brigands, in his wild and striking figure and countenance. He wore a dark-coloured blanket, and a black hat, the broad leaf of which was slouched over his face, which was the colour of death, while his eyes seemed to belong to a tiger or other beast of prey!" For years this fellow had been the captain of a band of nearly a hundred mountain robbers, the terror not only of all travellers and villagers in the district, but also even of the camps of Indians themselves. The amount of plunder taken by this gang reached a prodigious figure altogether, whilst the most horrible crimes of other kinds had been committed, the barbarities often being too shocking to relate. It was this lawless band that Madame and her friends had providentially escaped, through the accident which had detained them for the night at the hot springs. Now the rascals had lost their leader for ever. No wonder the lady says she never saw such a picture of fierce misery as Morales. His companion was a miserable tattered wretch, his face livid with fear.

Across the wildest of wild countries the cavalcade made its way, through dark woods, down almost perpendicular precipices, over dashing river and swollen torrent, along mountain flank, and down into deep ravine. Madame de la Barca could not take her eyes from the wretches whom every step brought nearer the place of execution. The two were chained together by the leg, and marched on foot, under the guard of five of the soldiers told off for the purpose. More than once she caught the eye of Morales, and she knew that, even in that desperate situation, he was ever watching for some opportunity of making at least a mad dash for liberty. Once, indeed, she suddenly saw his

face assume such a look, his eye "glaring with such a frightful expression that, forgetful of his chains, I whipped up my horse, in the greatest consternation, over stones and rocks." The place and the look in the eye of the brigand were in perfect unison. The whole scene was "horribly beautiful." The defile was deep and dark, with a prodigious amount of vegetation, which, however, with all its profusion, was unable wholly to conceal the fearful crags and precipices met with in every direction.

It was found impossible to reach Uruapa that day, and a halt for the night had to be made at a wretched Indian settlement on the way. Nothing better than an old barn offered itself as a shelter for the ladies. It was not exactly a pleasant lodging, for the barn was built of rough logs, with innumerable chinks and holes by which the keen mountain air could enter. Outside was a drove of pigs, who were constantly thrusting their snouts through the interstices between the logs, keeping up a loud if not harmonious grunting and squeaking the while. In this miserable hole the ladies had to dispose themselves to sleep as best they might. The soldiers made a fire outside, but quite near the barn, and sat round it. Madame could not help peeping through the cracks at the face of the robber, Morales, who, with his companion in chains, sat with the soldiers. The countenances of the two haunted the lady through the night. But that was not all. In addition to the grunting of the pigs, the *singing* of the mosquitoes presently began, while the piercing blasts blew in at every chink. The party were up betimes, it needs not to say. What was their horror when they found under what conditions they had slept! Above their heads,

in a crack between the logs of the barn, a whole nest of scorpions was discovered, their tails twisted together! "Imagine the condition of the unfortunate slumberer," cries Madame, "on whose devoted head they had descended *en masse!*"

A magnificent view of the volcano Jorullo was obtained from many of the points of vantage along the route pursued, and our travellers were eager to pay a visit to that romantic and notorious peak. But the road was described as being impracticable, and, moreover, as being without shade, so that the journey thither would be insupportably hot, and the ladies were compelled to abandon all hope of reaching the spot. They learnt a good deal of the volcano, however, which as yet was less than a century old. Its birth took place in the year 1759, being heralded by earthquakes for three months previously. Then, suddenly, the ground heaved, and "a terrible eruption burst forth, which filled all the inhabitants with astonishment and terror, and which Humboldt considers one of the most extraordinary physical revolutions that ever took place on the surface of the globe. Flames issued from the earth for a space of more than a square league. Masses of burning rock were thrown to an immense height, and through a thick cloud of ashes, illuminated by the volcanic fire, the whitened crust of the earth was seen gradually swelling up. The ashes even covered the roofs of the houses at forty-eight leagues distance, and the rivers of San Andres and Cuitumba sank into the burning masses. The flames were seen at Pascuaro; and from the hills of Agua-Zarca was beheld the birth of this volcanic mountain, the burning offspring of an earthquake, which, bursting from the bosom of the

earth, changed the whole face of the country for a considerable distance round."

On their way back to Mexico the ladies could not resist the temptation to bathe once more in the hot springs of Cuincho, taking care this time to retain their mounts and servants in the neighbourhood. Yet even now they had some small adventures. They stayed in the water so late that it was dark before they could reach Morelia, for which place they were bound. The fear of meeting robbers was less than it had been while Morales still remained Captain of the brigands. But "the horses, being unable to see, took enormous leaps over every streamlet and ditch, so that we seemed to be riding a steeplechase in the dark. Our gowns caught upon the thorny bushes, and our journey might have been traced by the tatters we left behind us. At length we rode the wrong way, up a stony hill, which led us to a wretched little village of about thirty huts, each hut having ten dogs on an average, according to the laudable custom of the Indians. Out they all rushed simultaneously, yelping like three hundred demons, biting the horses' feet, and springing round us. Between this canine concert, the kicking of the horses, the roar of a waterfall close beside us, the shouting of the people telling us to come back, and the pitch darkness, I thought we should all have gone distracted. We did, however, make our way out from among the dogs, redescended the stony hill, the horses leaping over various streamlets that crossed their path, turned into the right road, and entered the gates of Morelia, without further adventure, between nine and ten o'clock." A late hour for ladies to be out amongst wild mountains, and at the

mercy of the robbers that might be left, for the escort of soldiers was not now at hand. But Madame de la Barca was not only a charming writer—that is seen in a moment from a peep into her letters—she was also a plucky and adventurous lady.

CHAPTER VI

ALBANIAN MOUNTAINEERS

Western side of Turkish peninsula not well known — Mr. E. Spencer, an English traveller—The defiles of the Drin—A world split into shivers—Dangerous bridges and blindfolded horses—The guide Stefa—A mountain inn—Crowded with armed rebels—Angry scowls—A judicious present—"His Serene Highness the Ingleski Bey"—Peace and friendship—A break-neck ride—An appalling hurricane—Berat, on the summit of a rock—In the company of a troop of Albanian insurgents—A terribly difficult country—Berat in a panic—Preparing to withstand the attack of the rebels—Spencer on the road to Avlona—A miserable night above a wild torrent—All the mountain passes seized by the rebels—Terrified flight of officials and citizens from Avlona—Approach of rebels—Soldiers prepare to defend a little hamlet—Two rusty cannon—Spencer in a hayloft, to watch the fight—A useless parley—Cannon brought to bear—One bursts, the other will not ignite—All up with the soldiers—They chum with the rebels—Departure of the whole to Avlona—The risks of the "Ladder"—A bad snake bite—The Englishman as surgeon—Fording the Scharkos—Spencer pulled off his horse by a frightened Jew—Four men in the boiling torrent—Gallant rescue of a Bey by Spencer—The use of a lock of long hair—An attack by water-fowl—An extraordinary adventure.

The western side of the Turkish peninsula is a district of mountain and stream, of towering precipices intersected by fertile valleys, inhabited by picturesque and often lawless and turbulent peoples. In this country, chiefly in the

classic Albania, wandered Mr. E. Spencer between the years 1845 and 1850, meeting with many adventures, such as would be sure to befall so enterprising and daring a traveller in such a land. Even in our own day, the district is not well known to the rest of Europe, but in those earlier Victorian times the collections of small states and their half-wild folk were almost as great a mystery to the majority of civilized people as the interior of Africa itself. There were no roads, and the country was an uncompromisingly difficult one to traverse; there were few guardians of the law; and there were brigands in plenty.

Mr. Spencer left the defile of the Drin, in the course of his cross-country journeyings, and began to ascend the opposing mountain. The ascent was very steep, and the only way up was through a cleft in the rocks, a torrent running down it in the rainy seasons. It was ticklish work to steady the horses in their progress up this rocky trough. Grand oaks overhung the track, but, in the absence of roads, the timber was useless to the inhabitants of the country. The mountains were broken up in an extraordinary way by deep clefts and wild gorges, as if an earthquake had split the world into shivers. Often, indeed generally, the only way of crossing was by frail wooden bridges, from the planks of which the eye looked down in alarm on an "abyss beneath frightful to behold. To cross one of these, without any railing or support, required no little nerve; yet, if we could divest ourselves of the fear, so natural to man, knowing that the slightest false step hurls him to destruction," there is, in reality, no more danger to be dreaded than if the bridge crossed a mere rivulet. The traveller, however, goes on to tell us

that not one of his horses would cross such a bridge unless he were first blindfolded, and then led across by a man he knew well.

The guide, Stefa by name, had a great dread of spending the night out on the open mountain-side, ever fearful lest they should fall a prey to bear or wolf, or, worse still, bandit, all of which prowled about those rugged mountain lands. The Englishman, on his part, knowing only too well the numbers and the pertinacity of the insect tribes in the Turkish inns, preferred to bivouac under the open canopy of heaven. Sometimes they fared worse by going into the haunts of men than if they had camped in some lonely gorge. One of the mountain *hans*, or inns, they found crowded by men armed at all points, under the command of their rebel chief, Julika. A single look was sufficient for Stefa, and, indeed, the angry scowls of the insurgents were enough to frighten a stouter heart. The guide's "ghastly features and trembling limbs" proved how great was his terror in the presence of those wild mountaineers. His master hastened to put all his valuables into the hands of the innkeeper for safe custody, realizing the situation at once. He then sent the shivering Stefa to the rebel crowd with a handsome present of first-rate tobacco and right pungent snuff. Stefa presented these with many a respectful salute, and stated that they came from his master, "His Serene Highness the Ingleski Bey." This manœuvre at once brought the Englishman into the good graces of Julika and his men, and the rebel chief himself hobnobbed with the stranger for the rest of the evening. On parting, Spencer gave his new friend a pair of pistols, and Julika responded by

presenting him with a beautifully-worked poniard. It was not only as a weapon of defence that this latter had its value. "Preserve this as a talisman," the rebel chief enjoined him, for the sight of the poniard would ensure peace and protection at the hands of any of Julika's hardy adherents—a numerous band, and widely scattered among the mountains. The Englishman had come well out of what had seemed at first a fatal trap.

One day, after "a break-neck ride of some hours up a pathway carried along the precipitous sides of a mountain some thousand feet high," in the midst of the grandest scenery, the setting of the sun was accompanied by the outburst of the most violent storm the traveller had ever seen, which frightened even the experienced dwellers among the Albanian mountains. The suddenness of it was astonishing and startling. In a moment or two it grew intensely dark; the wind howled through the trees, and then burst into a perfect tornado. Forked lightning "flashed above, now around, and again beneath us, lighting up an unfathomable abyss, succeeded by peals of thunder reverberating from rock to rock, and from mountain to mountain, with a deafening crash, as if Nature, in convulsive cataclysms, was sinking into chaos, while the rain poured down as if from a waterspout." With great difficulty, and no little danger, the travellers struggled on for a space, the terrific gusts almost sweeping man and beast down the awful precipices below, till at length they were lucky enough to find shelter under a big overhanging rock, where they sat out the hurricane with what patience they could.

When our traveller was approaching Berat, a place

of importance, standing picturesquely on the top of a huge rock, and always in command of a Turkish officer of rank, the disturbed state of the country so distressed and alarmed Stefa, that he refused to go on, unless in the company of another body of wayfarers. As luck would have it, up galloped a well-mounted party of Albanian insurgents, and with these the Englishman and his servants went for some distance. These fellows turned aside near the town and left Spencer to enter the place with his men. A curious sight met the stranger's eyes. The Governor, in preparation for a strong attack that he had heard the rebels were about to make on Berat, had ordered the citizens to bring all their valuables up from the lower town to the citadel. Men and women were struggling to pull huge trunks up the perpendicular cliffs of rock by the aid of ropes, the women vainly attempting to keep their *yashmaks* over their faces the while. Fat and lazy citizens were tugging at big burdens, for want of a sufficient supply of porters. Up in the citadel itself there was a large and motley crowd, camping out in any available spot, their goods around them. The fear patent in every countenance was ludicrous to the Englishman, but the situation was alarming enough for the townsmen. The Governor had had his score of cannon planted so as to command the passes leading to the town, but also so as to be unseen by any who approached. Stefa was frightened almost out of his senses.

As it fell out, the Governor was sending two hundred men to occupy the road leading to Avlona, and with these Spencer and his following travelled on. The way lay through the defiles of Mount Scrapari, and there the

Englishman looked about him with no little apprehension. Had the rebels appeared then, the Governor's troops might have been annihilated in a few minutes. Spencer began to wish himself in other company. The night was miserably spent at a wretched mountain inn overhanging a wild torrent. In the morning the reports ran that Julika had secured every mountain pass in the district; that he was on his way with a very large following to seize Avlona; and that he might be expected at any moment. Stefa, now more than ever alarmed, insisted on taking himself and his horses back to Berat. The Englishman, not to be thwarted in his wishes to go on to Avlona, sprang suddenly upon his steed and galloped off in the direction of that town. The unfortunate guide, tortured between the fear of losing his animal and his almost greater dread of the rebels, was constrained to follow his master. The ride to Avlona, enlivened by Stefa's wild cries and bitter reproaches, came to an unexpected end, however.

"After riding for about half an hour, we met a cavalcade of horsemen, accompanied by a troop of the kavaas (police), galloping furiously, as if followed by a host of demons. We afterwards learnt that this was the Governor and the principal officers of Avlona, who, on the first intimation of danger, had left the town to its own resources, and made their escape to Berat. They were speedily followed by another cavalcade of the citizens, who, with doleful countenances, assured us that Avlona was already in possession of the insurgents." There was nothing for it but to go back to the wretched inn and the troops, which Spencer did with a very bad grace.

After this events marched rapidly. The rebels were seen to be approaching, and the soldiers planted their two rusty cannon, and disposed themselves to defend the spot. Our Englishman, a non-combatant, was yet determined to see all he could. He mounted into a hayloft, removed a tile or two, and had the whole view in front of and below him. A laughable scene followed—Spencer found even the most dangerous situation laughable—the rebels without, who mustered in strong force on the shelving sides of the mountain, were not to be drawn within reach of the guns, and the defenders inside dared not sally out upon the enemy. A few ineffective shots were fired on both sides, and thus the day wore on. It was plain the rebels were only waiting till darkness to cross the torrent and fall on the camp, and the panic-stricken defenders saw this, and sent men to parley with the foe. Nothing came of the conference, and the commander of the troops prepared to take decisive measures, dragging out his two rusty cannon.

"These dreadful implements of war were quickly harnessed, and, with lighted matches, the *tacticoes* (soldiers) commenced their march, when lo! a party of well-mounted cavaliers, who seemed to rise out of the hills, bore down upon them with a horrible yell. The cannon were brought to bear upon them, but, alas! one burst and the other would not ignite! All was now over with the *tacticoes*, and, to save their lives, they fraternized with the rebels, allowing their officers to be made prisoners. The victorious party, with shouts of triumph, firing of guns, and brandishing of weapons, now poured into the village, where they remained a short time refreshing themselves, and then, reinforced by two hundred muskets and ammunition,

AWKWARD ALLIES

One of the cannon refused to ignite and another exploded, leaving the soldiers at the mercy of the enemy.

continued their march to Avlona." Mr. Spencer in his hayloft, and Stefa, probably well hidden somewhere else, were thus suddenly relieved from all fears of a violent death, which had seemed to await them in the earlier part of the day. The Englishman, for all his light-heartedness, was very thankful, and confessed that he had had a narrow escape.

At a later stage of his travels the "Ingleski Bey" was in the neighbourhood of Mount Ergenik, where a certain terrible ascent was well called by the natives the Scela, or ladder. It was a frightful place, especially at one spot where a sudden bend gave a sight of the river roaring far, far below. A jutting crag a little farther on seemed to put an end to the passage altogether, but, by edging cautiously along a narrow ledge which they found, the party managed to round the obstruction. Their troubles were not yet over, for a huge mountain mass next appeared, right in front, seeming to preclude all further progress. But a narrow cleft was spied in the rocks, wet and slippery with the spray from a racing little torrent, and up this the horses had to struggle. Fortunately, no slip occurred, or it would have been certain death for both animal and rider.

Travellers in out-of-the-way places have often to act as surgeons, and Mr. Spencer was no exception. Camping one evening in some ruins, which they found in a wild spot, no inn being available, the men neglected to make a fire—a mistake in such a place. One of them, a Jew, spreading his carpet on the ground, was badly poisoned by a snake, such as are often found about old ruined buildings. The wound was evidently a very dangerous one, and the

Jew's case seemed desperate. But the Englishman was fortunate enough to have attended lectures by the great surgeon, Sir Astley Cooper, and at once applied his knowledge. Bandaging the damaged finger tight above the wound to prevent the poison from being carried by the blood into the system, he anointed it with sweet oil, dosing the patient at the same time with the spirit known as *raki*. A plaster of salt and gunpowder completed the cure, to the intense delight of everybody.

But this Jew would seem to have been a most unlucky person. It was necessary to ford the Scharkos, a rapid and dangerous torrent, full of holes and rocks. In order to keep their legs from getting wet, the men all crossed them on their saddles, while the horses struggled over. As ill-luck would have it, the Jew was perched high, having a good deal of merchandise beneath him; consequently, when the passage was in progress, he swayed about a good deal. At last, full in mid-stream, he suddenly clutched the Englishman to keep himself from falling. In a moment both the men were thrown headlong into the turbulent stream, the Jew yelling lustily. The noise and the splash startled two of the other horses, and in an instant their riders, also, were struggling in the water. One of these, Hadji, was carried off his feet and borne rapidly down the torrent. He was only saved by the gallantry of a fellow-servant, Pietro by name. The other unfortunate was a Bey, and he was so heavily encumbered with his load of weapons—gun, sabre, pistols, and the like—that he was in bad case.

The Englishman, after coming to the surface, gazed eagerly around to see how his brethren fared. He grasped

the situation at once. Telling the Jew to hang on to his horse's tail and he would be dragged in safety to the other bank, he went to the help of the Bey. "Lo!" he says, "all I beheld was a long lock of hair floating on the surface of the water. This revealed to me the danger of the unfortunate Bey, who had fallen into a hole and was struggling for life. To seize his hair and roll it tightly round my arm was the work of an instant, and thus, drawing him after me, I had the satisfaction of conveying my half-drowned companion to dry land." Many jokes did the Englishman make on the usefulness of the lock of long hair which the Prophet had enjoined all his faithful to wear. But as for the Jew, the rest of the party would not have him at any price. They regarded him as the cause of all their mishaps, and refused point-blank to travel further with him. So Ben Isaac had to go on his way alone.

A very singular adventure befell Spencer and his man at another place. There was a vast hollow among the mountains, which was filled with a huge bog. The bog was tenanted by incredible numbers of aquatic birds of every kind. The report of the gun fired at one of these birds brought about a tremendous commotion among the feathered occupants of the marsh. The sound of the gun reverberated far and wide among the mountains, and instantly the air was darkened by dense clouds of birds. Then, strange to relate, great masses of these bore down upon the intruders with the utmost determination and anger. The din was deafening, and, seeing the hostile intent of the birds, Hadji, the servant, became terribly alarmed. He thought his last hour had come, and,

muttering a hasty prayer, with a doleful "Amaan! amaan!" he threw himself under his horse's belly for protection against the attacks of the winged thousands. Mr. Spencer took a more practical view of the situation and fired again, dispersing the enemy. But only for a few moments. With the keenest zest the birds returned again and again to the attack, till at last, as the traveller whimsically says, "I had expended as much powder as would have sufficed to storm a Turkish garrison." But the fowls were strangely persistent, and never left the men a minute's peace till they had seen them fairly off the premises.

Spencer notes two good things that came out of this strange attack: First, the tremendous flapping of wings removed all the steamy heat from the valley, making the air deliciously cool; and next, the expenditure of gunpowder resulted in such a stench that it drove away entirely the hordes of mosquitoes which had before made the place intolerable. Hadji's profound thankfulness caused his master much amusement. It is quite possible, however, that the two men, had they been without weapons of any kind, might have fared badly among such myriads of winged enemies, some of them of great size and undoubted courage.

CHAPTER VII

THE ROBBER REGION OF THE MEXICAN MOUNTAINS

A typical scene in the mountains of Mexico—Mr. Bayard Taylor, an American traveller—Curious and disconcerting experiences —"They are demons!"—Hostility of El Chucho, the dog— Hordes of hungry insects—Approaching the "robber region" —Many warnings to the traveller—All unheeded—The two Indians on the lonely mountain track—Offer to carry the traveller's blankets—Suspicions aroused—A fresh cap on the pistol—The hint is enough—The little town of Magdalena among the hills—"Don't you want a guide?"—A lonely ravine —Suddenly covered by a double-barrelled musket—Horse and man led down into the thickets—Stripped, searched, plundered —"How is it you have no more money with you?"—All taken save horse and papers—A struggle with bonds—"The India-rubber man"—Three robbers on a gibbet—A ghastly spectacle —A military station met with—A policy of masterly inactivity —Cold and exposure at high elevations—A raging toothache— Horse quite knocked up—Arrival in another den of thieves— A kindly padre—Safe in the capital at last.

"I CLIMBED up to the grand Barranca, a tremendous chasm, dividing two sections of the tableland. Two thousand feet below, at the level of the Tierra Caliente, lay a strip of Eden-like richness and beauty; but the mountains which walled it in on both sides were dark, sterile, and savage. Those opposite to me rose as far above the level of the ledge on which I stood as their bases sank below it. Their appearance was indescribably grand . . . the road descend-

ing to Plan de Barranca, a little village at the bottom of the chasm, is built with great labour along the very verge of giddy precipices, or notched under the eaves of crags which threaten to topple down upon it. The ascent of the opposite steep is effected by a stony trail, barely large enough for two mules to pass, up the side of a wide crevice in the mountain-wall. Finally, the path appears to fail; the precipice falls sheer on one side; the bare crag rises on the other."

Such is the description given by Mr. Bayard Taylor, the famous American traveller and writer, of a particular spot, typical of many others, among the Mexican mountains, a district traversed by him in the year 1849, when Mexico was for the most part a lawless country, and most insecure for travellers, especially those who ventured to penetrate to its remoter localities.

Many were the curious experiences, and many the dangers he met with in so wild a land and amongst so lawless and reckless a population. It was in the days when not a few Mexican mines were yielding good supplies of silver ore, though in our own days many a one of those mines is represented, as the phrase goes, by "a big hole and a dead mule." Scores, nay hundreds, of idle scamps lived mainly on their plunderings; the government was hopelessly incapable. Dirt, insect pests, inhospitality, fatigue, exposure, hunger, danger—all had to be endured by Mr. Taylor. Yet he nowhere exaggerates or unduly heightens things in his descriptions; rather is he disposed to make light of the dangers and discomforts by his humorous way of telling his story. A few of his experiences among the mountains are worth recounting.

On one occasion he was staying for the night at a rude hut. When bedtime came, a boy fetched from the loft a sort of woven cane frame. This was placed under the portico, and the traveller, tumbling himself upon it, was sound asleep in a couple of minutes. During the night he was suddenly aroused by a "scream like that of a hundred fiends. The frame on which I lay was rocked to and fro, and came near overturning. I sprang up in alarm, finding my bed in the midst of a black, moving mass, from which came the horrid sound. It proved to be a legion of hogs, who had scented out a few grains of corn in a basket which had held my horse's feed, and was placed under the bed. The door of the hut opened, and the hostess appeared with a lamp. At sight of her, the beasts gave a hasty grunt, cleared the wall at one bound, and disappeared. 'They are demons!' shrieked the woman." Mr. Taylor was disposed to think he would get another visit from the pigs before morning, but they did not molest his sleeping-place again.

On another occasion, when he was passing the night at a highland ranching station, one of the dogs took such a violent dislike to him that it was necessary to put the stranger to sleep on the top of a frail erection used for drying fruit. There, a dozen feet above the ground, he was safe enough from the attacks of the animal; but all night long, at the slightest movement on the part of the traveller, El Chucho, as the dog was called, would set up a vile yell, the rest of the dog tribe howling in concert. At yet another place the people were most kind; "but," says the traveller, "all the fleas in the village, who had been without sustenance for two days, pounced in upon me in

swarms. Added to this, every exposed part of the body was attacked by legions of mosquitoes, so that, with such enemies without and within, I never passed a more terrible night."

But such experiences, though annoying and tiresome enough at the time, were, after all, only incidents to laugh at. Soon, however, there were more serious things to be encountered. Taylor was, in fact, approaching the "robber region," as the district was designated by the Mexicans. Over and over again people expressed the utmost astonishment that he should dream of going all alone across to Vera Cruz. The Americans he met were especially loud and instant in their warnings. The Mexicans, they declared, were robbers to a man; a stranger's life was rarely safe among the mountains; and the hatred of the natives towards the Americans caused all strangers from the States to be subjected to continual insults, if nothing worse. But Mr. Taylor nevertheless went on his way in the best of spirits, determined to believe nothing of all this till he saw for himself.

He had not long to wait; presently he got a foretaste of what was to come later. He was pushing on one evening, his horse becoming more weary at every step, and as yet not a sign of a habitation to be discerned. Then two Indians, mounted on small horses, came down from the heights by a crooked path, and rode just in front of him for a considerable distance.

"Are you not afraid to travel alone?" one of the fellows presently asked.

"What should I be afraid of?" returned the American coolly.

"Why, the robbers."

"Robbers! I should like to see them."

"Rather too bold," muttered the Indian.

The two then began to pity the tired horse, and next praised the traveller's blankets. One of these blankets they were soon trying to beg, and that failing, to buy. At last, as a new plan, they offered to carry the blankets behind their own saddles. All in vain; the American would not trust his property out of his own hands. The Indians trotted on, but at the next bend in the path Taylor found the fellows waiting for him. This kind of thing happening two or three times, the traveller's suspicions became aroused. So he calmly took his pistol out of his pocket, put on a fresh cap, and held himself in readiness for whatever might arrive. His coolness, doubtless, saved him; the rascals were certainly watching him through the trees, for suddenly they started off at full gallop, and were seen no more.

But Taylor was soon to have an experience of a much more serious kind, unfortunately for him. His horse, on reaching the brink of the grand Barranca, spoken of in the first paragraph of this narrative, had had enough of it among the hard hills and thin air of those lofty regions, and a halt was made for the night at an inn at Mochitilte, an immense building, standing up among the gaunt hills like a big fortress. It was a wretched place at which to stop, being bare, dismal, and comfortless. The wind was more than chilly, and Mr. Taylor was glad to cover himself with his horse's blanket.

He slept soundly enough, and was off again by the time the sun showed himself above the horizon. The way led

up, and ever up, for league after league, till he had reached a great height, and had got himself entangled amongst the wild, bare mountains. Then he dropped down to the little town of Magdalena, lying at the foot of a glen, and there breakfasted. "Don't you want a guide?" asked the landlord of the inn as the traveller prepared to start again. "The road is full of robbers." And the man went on to explain that every traveller took a guard as far as Tequila, paying each man of his escort a dollar. The proposal did not commend itself to Mr. Taylor, who made answer that he was not afraid of robbers, and, notwithstanding the host's warning that he would certainly be robbed if he started alone, the American set off.

Soon after leaving the town he met a company of a hundred soldiers, who were in charge of some fifty mules laden with precious ore from the mines. He was not sorry to see them, judging that the presence of so strong a force of soldiery in the district would frighten off the robbers. He needed all the confidence this thought gave him, for soon the road entered a narrow pass, with any number of twists and turns. There, at the bottom of a dry watercourse, nearly twenty feet deep, the traveller plodded on for three leagues. In this very ravine, his friend, Lieutenant Beale, had been chased by robbers only the year before. Not a soul was encountered now.

A startling change of scene next presented itself. Suddenly the pass came to an end, and there, far below him, lay the town of Tequila. Just beyond the place rose the "stupendous bulk of a black volcanic peak." Down an almost impossible rock-wall his animal stumbled to the town. The locality had an evil reputation, and so little

did the traveller trust the folk that he stood by till his animal had eaten his feed of corn, to keep off pilferers. After dark he hardly ventured to stir out of doors. He slept scarcely at all, being almost devoured by the fleas.

A singular occurrence next morning set him pondering. It was at a miserable little hill settlement, at no very great distance along the track. He gave the woman of the house a Mexican dollar to pay for some light refreshment he had had. The woman took the coin to the shop to change, but presently brought it back, saying it was a bad one. A second coin was similarly reported on. When the same tale was told of a third dollar, Taylor lost all patience, and refused to produce another. As he passed the shop on his way out of the hamlet, a little group of dirty and disreputable-looking fellows, who were drinking, offered him wine, which he declined, whereupon one of the rascals shouted after him, "It is the last time." It was not till later that Taylor came to see the meaning of all this: the people of the place were desirous of finding out whether the traveller were a rich man or no.

Before noon he found himself in a dreary and lonely spot on the spur of a volcano. Here he dropped into a rugged defile, with a deep ravine or gorge on the right. He could not help thinking what a place this would be for robber operations, and that he had better load his pistol. "Scarcely had the thought passed through my mind"—to quote the traveller's own words—"when a little bush beside the road seemed to rise up. I turned suddenly, and, in a breath, the two barrels of a musket were before me, so near and surely aimed, that I could almost see the bullets at the bottom. The weapon was held by a ferocious

native, dressed in a pink calico shirt and white pantaloons. On the other side of me stood a second, covering me with another double-barrelled musket, and a little in the rear appeared a third. I had walked, like an unsuspecting mouse, into the very teeth of the trap laid for me."

So suddenly and so quietly had all this taken place that the traveller for a moment or two sat still in his saddle, hardly taking in the situation, in spite of the hissed command of the first robber: "Down with your pistol!" The summons was repeated, this time more fiercely, and the two muzzles were brought nearer to his breast. By this time Taylor was fully alive to what was meant, and he at once threw down his pistol, and got off his horse. The fellows, keeping their victim well covered the while, picked up the fallen weapon, and commanded the owner to bring his beast along. Down into the gorge they led the way, for about a quarter of a mile, and away from the regular track. Here they halted, in a copse of bushes and tall grass, perfectly screened from observation from the mountain road. One of the fellows lay in ambush above, to keep watch over the path.

All the rest now levelled their guns, and a more timid man than Mr. Taylor might have been excused if he had thought his last hour had come. But the American had confidence that he would somehow come out of his difficulties alive. His main feeling was one of shame and disgust that he had allowed himself thus to be trapped. However, he began to strip at the command of the gang, throwing off his coat and vest with the words, "Take what you want, but don't detain me long." The leader of the robbers, the fellow in the pink shirt, eagerly snatched up

the coat, and began to examine the pockets. The look on the man's face was a study when he found that the purse in one of the pockets contained but a very few dollars, and Taylor smiled inwardly, as the phrase goes.

"How is it you have no more money with you?" the scoundrel asked angrily.

"I don't own any more," was the traveller's reply.

At Taylor's earnest request the papers were left him, the leader saying they were worth nothing to them.

All this time the unfortunate wayfarer had been made to lie face downwards; but now, taking the hunting-knife they found upon him, the robbers held it above his head, and threatened to strike if he moved. His hands were in a moment tightly bound together behind his back. The fellows were evidently experienced hands at their trade. His blanket was spread on the ground, and into it the robbers proceeded to put everything at their leisure. A miscellaneous assortment of goods was soon piled up—money, thermometer, papers, card-case, drawing-pencils, oranges, cigars, a bag of ammunition, and even a piece of soap, an article the Mexican cut-throats had probably never used in their lives! They left the owner his papers, as has been said, and one cigar to console him after they had departed.

Their examination continued, and certainly might be described as thorough. They took off his boots and stockings, and searched carefully every article he possessed. There remained only the horse, and the robber leader asked sarcastically whether they should take that also. But Taylor plucked up courage and energetically demanded that they should leave him his beast, without which he

could not proceed on his way. Making no reply, the fellows walked away, leaving the animal behind. The leader, however, turned back after a few yards, and, throwing down an orange and a small cake or two, remarked:

"Perhaps you may get hungry before night."

"How am I to eat it without hands?" indignantly asked Taylor.

But the robber departed with the pleasant remark:

"We have more to carry than we had before we met you. Adieu!"

Here was the traveller, in a lonely thicket at the bottom of a deep ravine, far from the usual mountain track, that track itself for the most part an unfrequented one amongst the wild mountains. He had lost his all, his papers and his horse excepted. He was tightly bound; but he was a man of resource and courage. As soon as his assailants had got out of sight, he began to attempt to free himself. Long he pulled, and tugged in vain, for he was tied with many knots, and the knots were tight. All the while he had an odd fancy that his horse was laughing at him. How he freed himself at length he thus describes:

"After tugging a long time, I made a twist which the India-rubber Man might have envied, and, to the great danger of my spine, succeeded in forcing my body through my arms. Then, loosening the knots with my teeth, in half an hour I was free again. As I rode off I saw the robbers at some distance, on the other side of the ravine."

Taylor rode rapidly on—as rapidly, that is, as the rugged nature of the mountain-track would allow. At the end of about three miles he came upon a startling spectacle. There stood by the wayside a rough gibbet,

on which hung in chains the half-decayed bodies of three robbers. The clothing was dropping in tatters, and the bones protruded from the bodies. Over their heads was an inscription in large letters: "Thus the law punishes the robber and the assassin." It was a ghastly sight, and one that might have tried the nerves of even the boldest of travellers, under the circumstances. Around were several grave-mounds. Later on Mr. Taylor learnt the history of these graves and the gibbet. Some eighteen months before, there had been a camp of soldiers and traders on the spot. They had been attacked by a large body of robbers, and a tremendous fight had taken place. Eleven of the traders had been killed in the affray. This seems to have been too much even for the Mexican authorities of those days, and a hunt was made, with the result that three of the scoundrels were caught, and received the reward of their deeds on the very spot where their victims had been buried. Mr. Taylor could not but rejoice that some of the rascals at least had met with their deserts.

A league or two farther on the wanderer came upon a military station—La Venta. There were plenty of soldiers about. In one place there were thirty or forty together, rolling about lazily or playing idle games in the shade. Taylor promptly reported his adventures in the mountains to the commanding officer, and furnished such close descriptions of some of the robbers as would serve easily to identify them. Naturally, the American imagined that immediate steps would be taken to hunt for and bring to justice the rascally gang; he did not know the Mexican ways thoroughly as yet. The officer merely shrugged his

shoulders, and neither said nor did anything by way of response. The traveller rode on disgusted. As he remarks: "A proper distribution of half the soldiers who lay idle in this guard-house would have sufficed to make the road perfectly secure."

The traveller hurried on, full of indignation. His horse was showing signs of fatigue, but higher and higher he mounted, till the air became very cold and a keen wind swept the mountain track. The robbers had left him little of his clothing, and both man and beast were in pitiable case. Taylor was distracted with a raging toothache, and his horse staggered along, exhausted by fifty miles of toilsome mountain-road that day. Nevertheless, it was necessary to push on to some settlement that night, and the master had to urge on his unfortunate beast with a thick stick. When at last the poor brute stumbled into the town of Guadalajara, he was so spent that another mile would probably have finished him altogether.

Everybody whom Taylor met in the town stared at him and his horse in astonishment. They were evidently surprised beyond measure that a solitary traveller should venture to cross their mountains. Much talk under the breath went on among the folks. At last, a good old *padre* came near and whispered in the traveller's ear: "Begone! What business have you to stop and listen to us? Guadalajara is full of robbers. You must be careful how you wander about after night. Do you know where to go?" Finding that the traveller was a complete stranger to the place, the kindly old man directed him to a house where the people were honest. They were more than honest, and they sympathized greatly with the unfortunate

wanderer, but marvelled that his life had been spared. Taylor passed a night of suffering from toothache and fleas, but, at any rate, he was safe. His troubles were almost over, and before many more days had passed he was in the Mexican capital.

CHAPTER VIII

BIG GAME IN THE CASHAN MOUNTAINS

A bit of splendid scenery—The Cashan Mountains in Southern Africa—Captain Cornwallis Harris, a keen sportsman—He and his men meet a band of Matabele warriors on the mountains—Savages insolent and hostile—A critical time—The Matabele and the Hottentot—"He found his tongue"—Other bands of savages met—Harris shoots a water-buck—Piet stumbles over a lion—Lions prowling around the camp all night—Lingap and his master—Three lionesses asleep—An infuriated rhinoceros—"I threw my cap at him"—A spotted hyena killed—More water-buck—Two miles barefooted over sharp flints—A white rhinoceros rushes the camp—"A perfect panorama of game"—A buffalo charges on three legs—A splendid specimen—Hottentots gorged with flesh—A disgusting spectacle—The buffalo and the captain—A near thing—A tremendous fire—Whole district in danger—A lucky deluge—Every spark extinguished—More hurricanes—Camp flooded—An elephant's footmark—A herd of elephants—A dam shot—A whole valley full of elephants—A sublime and soul-stirring picture—Manœuvring—A parade of elephants pass the Captain—Leader shot—A scene of indescribable confusion—Three other herds—A whole troop crashes through the camp.

"HERE the scenery was beautiful. Three cascades fell brawling over descents of several feet within a quarter of a mile of each other, flanked by stately timber trees of splendid growth and graceful foliage, which, leaning their venerable forms over the limpid stream, were reflected on its glassy bosom. Huge isolated masses of rocks reared

their stupendous heads at intervals, as though cast there by some giant hand in sportive derision of the current which foamed and bubbled round them. Upon the tops of these, cormorants were sunning themselves in hundreds, while scaly alligators were basking on the lower tiers, amid flowering bushes and evergreens."

Such was the kind of country to which Captain Cornwallis Harris went in the year 1852. The gallant officer was no mean naturalist, but probably he would have called himself a sportsman merely. He was approaching the Cashan Mountains, which were destined to furnish him with enough excitements and dangers to last an ordinary man a lifetime. His keenness after game was extraordinary, and was surpassed only by his coolness at critical moments, and his utter disregard of risks and dangers.

He and his men were at the foot of the Cashan heights, and were proceeding towards a rift or pass in the mountains, when suddenly there appeared a band of Matabele warriors, numbering several hundreds altogether. Now, these Matabele had just been engaged in plundering and murdering certain white men, so that when the host closed round the traveller's waggons in hostile fashion there was cause for no little alarm. The manners and the speech of the savages were alike insolent, as they fiercely ordered the drivers to stop, a number of men standing in front to bar the passage. The Hottentot servants of the Englishman were frightened almost out of their wits; and when a number of wounded Matabele warriors were presently borne past on their shields, one of the Hottentots fainted right off. The situation soon

became critical. None of the waggon party knew a word of the Matabele tongue except one gigantic fellow, Andries by name, and he, for some reason, made no attempt to help his master out of the difficulty. Every moment the crowd of savages pressed closer around, and some of them climbed into the waggons, where they turned over and examined every article. What was about to follow it was not hard to foresee. But suddenly there was a turn of fortune. One of the Matabele, a huge, brawny fellow, sprang upon Andries, who in his terror managed to stammer out a few words, to the effect that the Englishman and his companions had just had the honour of being entertained by the King Moselekatse. Marvellous was the change in the attitude of the Matabele at the mention of the name of their King. In a moment they ceased their hostile demonstrations, and even became suppliants, begging humbly for tobacco and beads.

This was not the only band of savages met that day. Parties great and small made their appearance from time to time, till before night the total must have reached six or seven thousand. Presumably the word had been passed round the tribes that the travellers were under the protection of their King, for none of them disturbed the hunter and his men. A camp was made on the mountain near a streamlet, and the Hottentot servants began to fence it in, according to custom. While this was going on, the Captain went out with his gun, and was lucky enough to shoot a water-buck, a rare and splendid antelope; he believed himself to be the only Englishman who had ever shot one of the species. It may be added, by way of parenthesis, that he managed to bring down two

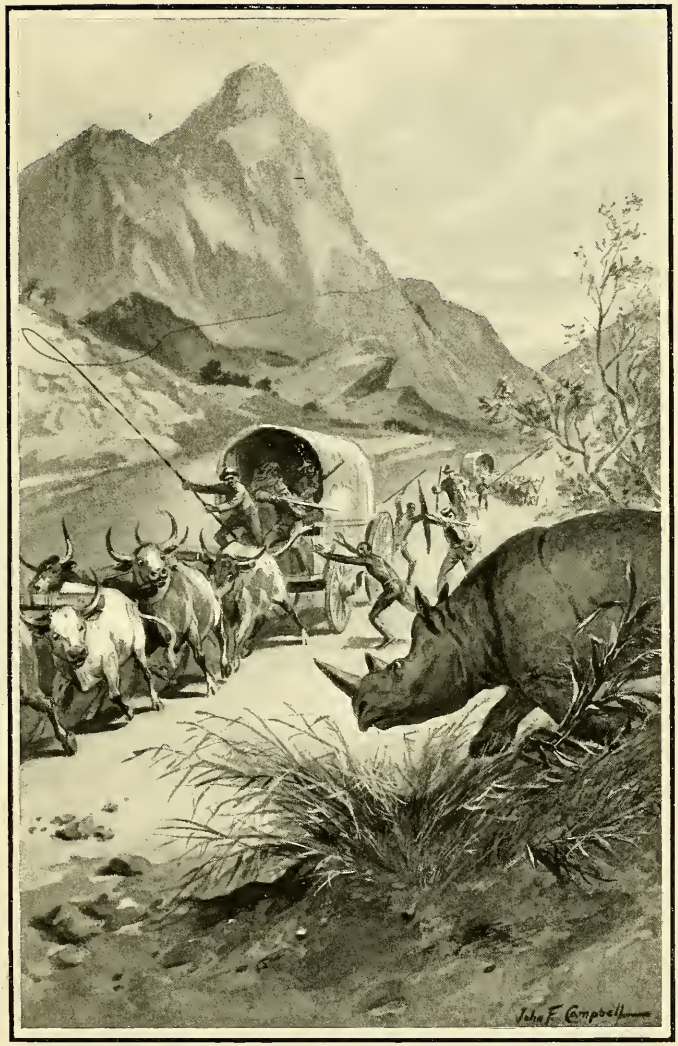
more the next day. The noise of the report disturbed a lion and a lioness which happened to be close by, but the pair slunk into the jungle. On his return to the camp, he found that one of his men, Piet, had also been out to try his luck, and he had actually stumbled over a lion. It was evident that these beasts were particularly plentiful in the neighbourhood, and the leader gave orders that the fence should be strengthened. It was a lucky thing that this precaution was taken, for all night long lions were prowling about outside making efforts to get at the cattle.

One of the best of the Captain's followers was Lingap, a good warrior with assegai and shield, and a good sportsman to boot. The master and he had an exciting time of it on the Cashan slopes the following day. The two men were looking down upon the skeleton of an elephant lying not far below, when Lingap suddenly pointed with his assegai to a bush, and whispered, "Tao!" (lions). And there, in truth, were three lionesses, all asleep. Lingap hid behind his shield, while Harris fired into the middle of the group, immediately afterwards springing behind a tree. Instantly the three animals leapt to their feet, and with angry roars dashed into the bushes. The men scampered in the opposite direction, not unnaturally. A few minutes later several shots were heard not far off, and then "an infuriated rhinoceros, streaming with blood, rushed over the brow of the eminence that we were ascending, and was within pistol-shot before we were aware of his approach. No bush presenting itself behind which to hide, I threw my cap at him, and Lingap, striking his buckler and shouting with stentorian lungs,

the enraged beast turned off. I saluted him from both barrels, and he was immediately afterwards overturned by a running fire from the Hottentots, every one of whom, I now saw, had left the waggons at the mercy of the oxen."

Skirting the mountains in search of grass for the cattle, the hunters found the big game more plentiful even than before. The night was hideous with the horrid moaning sound of the hyena, the dismal yelling of the jackal, and the roaring of the lion. However, at early dawn Harris was astir, and managed to get a little revenge on his disturbers, bringing down a spotted hyena. He was presently following hard after a water-buck, when the sole of one of his boots came off. Nothing daunted, and heedless of thorn and rock, he dashed along barefoot for more than two miles, the ground thickly strewn with sharp flints. He secured his buck, and then made for the waggons, which were moving on towards their next stopping-place. Just before he overtook the waggons an immense white rhinoceros, roused from his snooze, dashed furiously at the first of the vehicles, crashing noisily through bushes and reeds, and snorting loudly. The oxen were half mad with fear, but a volley from the drivers saluted the aggressor, and he turned away into the scrub. He was promptly followed and dispatched.

But Captain Harris had long been wanting to reach the vast elephant grounds, and he made all the advance he could each day. At last the desired territory was at hand, and eagerly he pushed on ahead, taking with him Piet, and leaving the Hottentots to bring up the rear. A fine roan antelope rose before the hunters, but they



AN UNWELCOME INTRUDER

An infuriated rhinoceros, streaming with blood, rushed towards the waggons

refrained from firing. A pair of white rhinoceroses next appeared on the mountain slope directly in their way. These brutes they had a good deal of difficulty in getting rid of. They did not wish to make any noise as yet. But the procession of wild animals was by no means at an end. Presently a herd of wild swine, with whip-like tails erect, came trooping along, and they were followed by two buffaloes. "It was a perfect panorama of game," the Captain exclaims, and difficult he found it to keep his followers from firing. The thing was bound to come sooner or later, and it did. Suddenly a loud report rang out from some of the Hottentots behind, and instantly there was confusion in the covert. A whole herd of buffaloes appeared, and dashed helter-skelter past. Harris could no longer contain himself, but fired, wounding one of the buffaloes in the hind-leg. The hunter immediately mounted his horse, but not too soon, for the buffalo charged on three legs. Two or three times did the wounded beast return to the attack, and Harris had an exciting time of it. At last he managed with a well aimed bullet to bring down his quarry. The buffalo was a splendid specimen, standing sixteen and a half hands at the shoulder, while "his ponderous horns measured four feet from tip to tip, and like a mass of rock, overshadowing his small, sinister grey eyes, imparted to his countenance the most cunning, gloomy, and vindictive expression."

Leaving his Hottentots to gorge themselves on the flesh—always a disgusting spectacle, the Captain tells us—he mounted to the top of the hill, from which point of vantage the view far and near was of the most striking

and extensive character. He marked a big herd of buffaloes quietly chewing the cud under some trees. His first shot brought down one, but the loud report, reverberating among the mountains, alarmed the whole herd. Fifty of them, panic-stricken, and crushing everything underfoot in their mad stampede, made straight for the hunter, and he was within an ace of being trampled to death. It was the narrowest escape. His waggons had been moving on, but, seeing by the smoke where his men had pitched the camp for the night, he bent his steps towards the spot. A spectacle to create loathing and disgust it was that met his eyes. His followers were absolutely *intoxicated* with the gorging of much flesh, and perfectly incapable of any sensible action or behaviour, while the ground around, and the bushes, looked like nothing but a filthy slaughter-pit.

Nor was this all that angered their master. In their senseless folly the Hottentots had set fire to the surrounding grass and bush, and already the blaze had become alarming. For hours before he went to bed Captain Harris sat on the heights watching the progress of the flames below—a splendid spectacle—as the fire rushed along, devouring everything on its course. But he began to fear for his prospects of game if that enormous conflagration should spread over the whole district, a thing it appeared likely enough to do. There was only one hope: a storm was coming up rapidly. The night was dark and gusty. Presently thunder sounded among the mountains, vivid forked lightning was seen, and a few preliminary drops of rain fell. Meanwhile "a strong south-east wind, setting towards the hills, was driving the

devouring element with a loud crackling noise up the steep grassy sides in long red lines, which, extending for miles, swept along the heights with devastating fury, brilliantly illuminating the landscape and threatening to denude the whole country of its vegetation. Suddenly the storm burst over the scene. The wind immediately hushed; a death-like stillness succeeded to the crackling of the flames. Every spark of the conflagration was extinguished in an instant by the deluge that descended, and the Egyptian-like darkness of the night was unbroken even by a solitary star."

Next afternoon, the camp, having moved on a few miles, was pitched under the shelter of an overhanging hill-side, another hurricane having been observed approaching. Hardly was the camp arranged, when "a stream of liquid fire ran along the ground; and a deafening thunder-clap, exploding close above us, was instantly followed by a torrent of rain." The rain came down in continuous streams, and soon horses and oxen were knee-deep in water. The men in the baggage waggons, which leaked, passed a bad night; luckily for him, the Captain's own waggon-cover was water-tight. But sleep was out of the question for master as well as man. "The earth actually threatened to give way under us;" and so vivid and blinding was the lightning, that he was glad to cover up his eyes with his pillow. The results were seen when daylight came: the torrents were swollen and impassable, and the only path onwards, an exceedingly narrow pass in the mountain-side, was full of surging water.

Leaving the floods below, Harris took with him some of his men, and ascended the heights in search of elephants.

Long had he been wanting to reach their feeding-grounds. He gained the highest peak, and gazed around. Not far away he came across the mark of an elephant's foot; it was of enormous size. Eagerly he measured the impression, and then made his calculation, "twice the circumference of the foot always giving the height of the animal at the shoulder." He found that this particular beast must boast a height of twelve feet, which the hunter believed to be the maximum for an African elephant. A tramp of eight miles along the crest of the mountain was required, however, before a sight of the herd could be seen. There, for the first time in his life, the Englishman saw the elephant in his own home. "With intense and indescribable interest" the men looked down at the sight, while the gigantic Andries, with straining eyes and quivering lips, stammered out, "Dar stand de olifant!"

The men now went round to drive, with much rattling of shields, the elephants towards the master. All unconscious of the presence of an enemy, the animals slowly walked in Harris's direction, and soon a report made the hills resound. The first of the herd fell, and the rest of the elephants—they were all females—fled up the mountain slope at an incredible speed. Mounting their horses, the hunters made for the wounded dam. She was furious, and in spite of the sharp rough stones that cut her feet, she made for the aggressors. She was received at each charge she made with a volley, and at length the poor brute fell dead, causing the very ground to shake with the thud.

The Captain had now time to gaze about him a little

more. He found himself, to his surprise, looking into a second valley, whose existence he had not previously noted. The sight that met his eye was one to beggar description, to use a common phrase. "The whole face of the landscape was actually covered with wild elephants. There could not have been fewer than three hundred within the scope of our vision. Every height and green knoll was dotted over with groups of them, whilst the bottom of the glen exhibited a dense and sable living mass—their colossal forms being at one moment partially concealed by the trees, which they were disfiguring with giant strength; and at others seen majestically emerging into the open glades, bearing in their trunks the branches of trees, with which they indolently protected themselves from the flies. The background was filled by a limited peep of the blue mountain-range, which here assumed a remarkably precipitous character, and completed a picture at once soul-stirring and sublime."

What was to be done in the presence of all this marvellous abundance of majestic game? Harris was very anxious to see whether there were any males amongst the enormous herd, and he sent Andries to manœuvre amongst the beasts. The man contrived so that a large number of the elephants filed slowly in front of the master, who had placed himself in a position of advantage on a little ledge above. All that paraded proved to be females or calves. Harris could have killed any one of them had he been so disposed, but he was waiting for the males. Things were precipitated before long, however, by the firing of a gun by some blundering native in the vicinity. Instantly the whole concourse of animals was on the move. Hardly had the

men time to get themselves behind the trees before a score of elephants with their young ones were upon them, filling the air with their loud trumpetings. With the utmost deliberation Harris steadied his rifle against the tree, and dropped the leading elephant instantly. In a moment the other animals rushed upon their assailants, and the men had a risky time of it, dodging behind trees, flying pell-mell over the rough stones, and ever and anon running right up to some group of the infuriated beasts. The scene of confusion that was witnessed, the hunter in his fearless way, calls amusing, but it was about as dangerous a position as could well be imagined. However, after some time of this hurly-burly, all the animals got clear away, except the dam that had been shot. To it Harris and his man once more made their way, and put the creature out of its misery.

The two men now made tracks for the camp—that is to say, they began the search for it, being quite ignorant as to its whereabouts. In the course of their wanderings they encountered no fewer than three other groups of elephants, one of them obstructing their line of route. They chased the herd for a mile over the roughest and sharpest of stones. "Much has been said," writes the Captain, "of the attachment of elephants to their young, but neither on this nor on any subsequent occasion did we perceive them evince the smallest concern for their safety. On the contrary, they left them to shift for themselves." The natives assegaied one calf that was left behind in the flight. The last of the three herds was not encountered till the hunters were near their waggons. On being disturbed, the whole troop rushed down below, and crashed

right through the camp, "causing indescribable consternation amongst cattle and followers. But, fortunately, no accident occurred, and after the fatiguing day's work we had undergone, we were not sorry to find ourselves at home."

CHAPTER IX

WITH GALTON IN DAMARALAND

Where is Damaraland?—Mr. Francis Galton, scientist, explorer, sportsman—Lands at Walfisch Bay — Proceeds towards the mountain region — Damara villages and Damara folk — A covetous crew—Tactless Gabriel—The rhinoceros-hide whip on the chief's legs — Startling result — Mount Erongo — Galton feverish—A hill "built by Cyclopean architects"—Risky paths —The hut of a Damara chief—Hand-to-hand combat with a lion—Lion balked of his supper—Waggons and "sticking-points"—A bit of clever wall-building—The Hottentot rebellion—Galton beards the rebel chief in his stronghold—A plenipotentiary in hunting costume—Want of water—Native disappears with the iron pot—Ill with too much water-drinking —A novel water-vessel—"Tastes very doggy"—A fine collection of mountains in sight—The black fellow and the adder—Galton and the green snake—A hasty jump—Horrible water to drink—The terrible thorn-bush—Progress stopped by it altogether—Strayed oxen and their recovery — Damara cattle-stealers—The black chief in his severity—Men assegaied—The white chief more merciful—A sound flogging.

DAMARALAND, which lies inland to the north-east of Walfisch Bay, on the west coast of Africa, is a country of mountain and plain, of scrub and rough ground, and of streams that often do not run, but are mere dry river-beds. Some of its heights are lofty, reaching an elevation of at least six thousand feet, though many of them are only about half that height above sea-level. It was to this land, then

almost unknown to the civilized world, that Mr. Francis Galton, the eminent scientist and explorer, made his way in the year 1851.

Working eastwards from the coast, he bent his course in a more northerly direction, towards the mountain regions of Damara. He had with him two or three other Europeans, including Mr. Andersson, a Swede, and a servant named Hans Larsen, besides a varied following of natives of one kind or another, oxen and waggons. Starting from the valley of the River Swakop, he found the road very stony and very bad, but the party presently reached an upland Damara village, the inhabitants of which evidently had doubts about receiving the strangers. However, after a good deal of explanation Galton and his men were allowed to rest, and were supplied with some milk. Midday saw the travellers among a second lot of Damara folk, and they found that the headman of the village always took charge of the explorer's cattle for the time being, not much to the owner's liking. Nor did he feel altogether easy in the midst of throngs of armed savages, many of whom were ill-looking scoundrels. "They always crowded round us," he says, "and hemmed us in, and then tried to hustle us away from our bags and baggage. They have an impudent way of handling and laying hold of everything they covet, and of begging in an authoritative tone, laughing among themselves. It is very difficult to keep them off, and the least show of temper would be very hazardous among such a set of people." Yet the explorer admired the build of the Damaras, and calls them a fine-looking lot of fellows.

Quite early in his exploration of the highlands, Mr.

Galton and his party were in a position of very serious danger. One of the servants of the expedition, a lad named Gabriel, was of a very passionate disposition, and utterly reckless. His master was greatly afraid lest Gabriel should involve the party in a squabble with the natives by his quarrelsomeness and his entire want of tact. "If fighting had once commenced," says Mr. Galton, "we should have been as full of assegais as St. Sebastian ever was full of arrows, and our guns would have availed but little." The Damara fellows were crowding round and doing their best to tease the strangers, and with so much inflammable material about, it would have been a marvel if no blaze had broken out. Gabriel it was, of course, who struck the spark. One of the native dogs began to gnaw a leather bag, and Gabriel flew after him with his rhinoceros-hide whip. The brute retreated to his master, the Damara chief. Gabriel followed, and struck out savagely with his whip, missing the dog, and giving a tremendous slash across the chief's legs! "Another instant and Gabriel was prostrate, while the chief, like a wild beast, glared over him; the muscle of every Damara was on the stretch. Every man had his assegai. My gun lay by my side, but I had sense enough not to clutch at it." Galton's splendid self-command had its effect at length, and the black chief allowed Gabriel to get up, taking away from him his whip, however, as a punishment. Even that he gave up before the strangers left, so well did Galton manage to soothe the angry passions of the man. But the scene might have had a different and a terrible ending.

The mountain Erongo was just above them, the escarp-

ment of which ran on for a length of fifteen miles; the height Mr. Galton roughly calculated to be something under three thousand feet. The top was more or less flat, but there was a sort of rent in the middle, as if the mountain had been partly split in two. Towards this depression the leader and one or two of his men prepared to climb, the rest remaining at the foot of the mountain with the oxen and waggons. Next morning Galton sent some natives on in advance to announce the arrival of strangers to the people there—it was a wide table-land—and to ask for guides. He himself was in a state of incipient fever, and lay down all the morning under the grateful shadow of an overhanging rock. In Damara generally there is a sad want of shade. He found the mountain to be composed of enormous white rocks, "often hundreds of feet without a fissure—the hill seemed built by some Cyclopean architect." A good deal of the time the men had to climb without their shoes to prevent slipping. "When we travelled along the side that sloped towards the fissures it was very nervous work, for my feet would not grasp the rock, and if I had tumbled I should have explored much more of the mountain than I desired. The measurement of these slabs is not in feet, but in hundreds of feet." The climb was worth the trouble, however. There were fine views from the top, and the air was deliciously cool to the explorer's throbbing head. He would much have liked to make the place his summer quarters.

He visited the hut of the local chief while on Erongo. It was a very superior sort of residence for those parts, and had even some furniture, a stuffed ottoman being conspicuous in one of the rooms. The chief was quite a

gentleman, and very affable. But he would not sell the stranger any cattle, and to obtain some had been one object Mr. Galton had in view when he climbed the heights. Further, the black chief declared that he was unable to furnish any guides, his men being afraid to venture far away. Moreover, he was not the sole lord of the mountain, but shared his power with two or three other chiefs. He had a very pretty daughter, who was also a thorough coquette, and wore a shell dangling from her front hair; this she could throw over either eye at her choice, the performance being very dexterous and very effective.

When the Englishman reached the foot of Erongo again, he found that there had been lively times during his absence. First, Mr. Andersson had had an exciting brush with a lion. He had been on one side of a bush and the animal on the other—rather too close a proximity. Before the beast could come to closer quarters, its growls were silenced by a well-aimed bullet from the Swede. This might be styled almost a hand-to-hand encounter. When night had closed in, a still more striking scene had been witnessed. On the opposite side of the stream by which they were camping, a lion was observed to attack and kill a giraffe. At once the whole community turned out, every man carrying a fire-brand. Without hesitation the natives ran straight up to the dead giraffe, frightening off the king of beasts. Then, by the light of torches, for it was pitch dark, the fellows coolly cut up the flesh. All the time the lion kept prowling around, baffled and noisy; but, though he kept close at hand, he dared not attack those who were robbing him of his supper.

CAUGHT IN A TRAP.

Mr. Galton's experience of travelling with the bulky and cumbrous ox-waggons was not at all a happy one, and he never liked the business, from the first day he had of it to the last. The progress with them was slow and hampering; the oxen were often very troublesome; there was no proper road; the country was rough in the extreme, especially now the travellers were entirely in the mountain regions, with lofty peaks showing on every side about them. Sometimes the waggons stuck in the numerous rifts and trenches, and it required hours of labour to extricate them from their position. On one occasion "the sticking-point was a deep sand-pitch, of about six feet high, out of the river-bed. The oxen drew the waggon till its fore-wheels reached the top of the pitch, and there it stuck. We tried everything, but the pull was entirely beyond their power; indeed, they were far too wild to exert themselves together. It really seemed as though we should remain fixed there till the oxen had been thoroughly broken by other means, or till the river swept us away." And it was not till Mr. Galton had carried out an ingenious but laborious plan that the waggon was hoisted out of the hollow. He first pinned the front wheels in their position near the top of the pitch, so as to prevent back-slipping; then, levering up one of the hind-wheels with a pole, he placed a big flat stone beneath. The other hind-wheel was treated in like fashion, and then a second stone was placed under each. Thus the process went on, till at last a regular wall had been built beneath the two back wheels, and they had been elevated to the level of the fore-wheels. A vigorous pull now set the waggon on its way again; but its position, tottering on the top of those slab walls,

must have been precarious, to say the least of it, and it was a marvel that no catastrophe occurred.

It was at the time of the Hottentot rebellion under Jonker, whose fastness was not far away, that Mr. Galton was travelling in Damaraland, and he had been asked by the Cape Government to act as a sort of informal commissioner. He was to endeavour to see the rebel leader, and administer to him a severe rebuke, pointing out the enormity of his misconduct, and the extreme displeasure with which it was regarded by the authorities. It was a ticklish appointment, but the unpaid commissioner prepared to do his duty. He donned his red hunting-coat, his jack-boots, his cords, and his hunting-cap. Thus arrayed, and mounted on his spirited ox, Ceylon, he made an imposing figure. The way to Eikhams, where Jonker's stronghold was, lay over very uneven ground, and the journey involved the climbing of a lofty mountain. Hans knew the place, however, and was able to point out Jonker's hut when Eikhams was reached. There was great excitement among the commissioner's followers as the journey neared its end, and even Ceylon caught the infection, and began to sniff the air like a war-horse. Just before the place was reached, there came an obstacle in the shape of a little torrent. "It was rather deep, and four feet wide; but I was in hunting costume, and I am sure Ceylon knew it, for he shook his head, and took it uncommonly well. In fact, oxen, if you give them time, are not at all bad leapers. The others followed in style." Ceylon trotted straight to Jonker's hut, and there stopped short, his head and horns blocking the entire doorway. The apparition of the Englishman in his gaudy hunting dress—

the like of which assuredly no man of those regions had ever seen before—produced an immense effect, not only upon the whole settlement, but upon the rebel chief himself. As Galton, glaring down upon him from the height of his saddle, rated the man in grand and telling style, Jonker dared not once look him in the face. The commissioner went on to insist on an immediate stop being put to the state of rebellion, on a full apology to the proper quarter, and on justice being done to the Damaras, whom Jonker had treated so badly. All this in the very heart of the rebel stronghold, to the very face of the chief himself, and surrounded by the armed and lawless rebel following!

Much hardship was often caused by the want of water. On one occasion the expedition was in sore straits, having had nothing to drink for a considerable time. They had with them, indeed, no vessel capable of holding liquids, except an iron pot. The Damara servants were quite spent, and one of the natives, who carried the iron pot, dropped exhausted by the wayside, while one or two more fell farther on. At night the rest, who had travelled on, came to a supply of water, and in their delight drank and drank till they were ill. "I continued resolving to drink no more," writes the explorer, "and then rewarded my resolution with one more mouthful. One cannot help drinking; the water seems to have no effect in quenching the thirst." They waited for a day in order to see if any of those who had fallen tired by the way would make their appearance, but nothing was seen of them. When the waggons moved on, it was very desirable to carry a little water, for it was doubtful if any more would be reached

that day. But the difficulty was to find anything capable of holding water; even the iron pot was lost to them. In his extremity Mr. Galton bethought him of a useless dog he had, and the animal was killed and skinned. The skin, sewn up, made a water-vessel of a sort, but, as the master tells us, the contents *tasted very doggy!* Strange to say, the death of the poor cur was speedily avenged, for that very night a pack of wild dogs came upon the camp and killed every sheep the expedition possessed! To crown all, the only two goats belonging to the party had strayed away in the night, and were lost. Nevertheless, the journey had to be resumed; but when a halt was made for the next night, to the astonishment of everybody the missing native turned up, the iron pot still on his head; what was more, he drove before him the two lost goats, which he had met with on his way. The black brought his master "a whacking big stick," as a matter of course, with which to beat him for having strayed away from the rest of the party!

Other mountains were visited on the march, such as Eshuameno, while still more peaks were seen around. "In front rose the two magnificent cones of Omatako, each appearing as perfect as Teneriffe. To the far left were many broken mountains, some of which must look down upon Erongo. More northerly lay the long escarpment of another Ghou Damup mountain, Koniati; and to the westward of north a very distant blue hill was seen, which had to be passed on our way to Omanbondé." It was near this place that one of the servants began to make a fire under a bush, when he suddenly started up in dire alarm and made off at full speed. He had noted a

puff-adder in the bush. It was here, too, that the travellers saw the first herd of wild animals, over a hundred hartebeest being observed in one place, and four hundred gnus not far away. Another bit of excitement was caused by the appearance of an animal that Andersson thought to be a puma. Of this animal the natives often spoke. They described it as being a good deal like a lion, but smaller. It was said to be very shy, and seldom seen by anybody. Mr. Galton thinks it might have been a young lion.

Another mountain, Omuvercoom, brought the travellers fresh experiences and excitements, and new dangers, of course. The oxen were left below with some of the Damaras, while the leader and the rest of his followers proceeded to climb to the summit. Some parts of the hill Mr. Galton declares to have been the most rugged he ever climbed. "I was utterly blown, and had just mounted up on a kind of natural step, when, while I was balancing myself, I found that I had put my foot on the tail of a great dark green snake, who was up in an instant, with his head as high as my chest, and confronting me. I had, though used up with my run, just sense and quickness enough left to leap over the side of the rock, and came with a great tumble among the bushes. The snake, too, came over after me, I can hardly suppose in chase, because he did not follow me when we were at the bottom together; but I ran after him a long way, for I was not hurt, throwing stones at the reptile. A Damara, who was some way behind, was carrying my gun, and I had not even a stick."

Two of the greatest plagues to the explorer were the want of water, of which something has already been said,

and the prevalence of the terrible thorn-bush. Of the water, the explorer says it would be a waste of time to enlarge on some of the horrible stuff they had now and then to drink. A shallow pond of only a few yards in diameter may have had wild animals by the score splashing about in the water for hours, and rolling to their hearts' content. The stuff looked, and in fact was, exactly like farmyard drainage. Yet this was all the luckless men had at times to depend upon. Then the thorn-trees: they grew worse and worse as the expedition proceeded, and at last threatened to put a stop to all further progress. Not an ox would face the thorns. Indeed, a single bush terrified them almost out of their wits, and the animals plunged and tossed, and threw their harness into confusion. The whip was quite useless, and, in fact, it made matters worse. So mad and vicious were the oxen that their drivers dared not approach them. As for the men themselves, their clothes and hands were badly torn. One day the caravan laboured among these horrible bushes from eleven in the morning till dark. When the stop was made for the night not a blade of grass could be found for the poor beasts, and when morning came most of them had disappeared, not unnaturally. The blacks went off helter-skelter after the missing oxen, not even stopping to snatch a bite of breakfast before they started. While the men were absent the master made a little exploration of the country around, and found, to his great delight, that only two or three miles away there was a beautiful running stream, with plenty of grass about. Fortunately, the cattle were overtaken at no very great distance and brought back.

DAMARA CATTLE-STEALERS

One of the Damara chiefs, Kahikené by name, was more friendly than the rest, and an incident occurred in which he showed his disposition to behave well towards the Englishman. Some of the waggon-oxen were missing one morning, and on their spoors being followed, it was soon seen that they had been driven away by Damara men. Galton at once went to complain to Kahikené, and the chief promised to see to the matter immediately. Accordingly, he sent a gang of his men after the thieves. A day or two elapsed, but at length the searchers returned, bringing three out of the four cattle, the fourth, the leading ox of the team, as it happened, having been killed. They also brought in six of the thieves. These culprits Kahikené proposed to hang in a row on the projecting branch of a tree. The Englishman protested that the punishment was more than they deserved, and pleaded for the lives of the fellows. To this appeal the black replied that though Mr. Galton might forgive them the theft, yet their chief must punish as he thought fit their disobedience to himself, and he sent the men away in custody. Four of them, Mr. Galton learnt later on, were assegaied; the other two escaped, but one of them was caught again and brought to the explorer. The white chief, more merciful than his black brother, contented himself with giving the thief a sound flogging.

[From "Narrative of an Explorer in Tropical South Africa," by Francis Galton, F.R.S. Ward, Lock and Co. By kind permission of Mr. Francis Galton.]

CHAPTER X

THE WILD HILL TRIBES OF NORTH AFRICA

The Gerdebah range—Mr. Hamilton, an English traveller in North Africa—A wild and difficult country—His wanderings among the highlands—"Les Vesuves"—Arrival, in pitchy darkness, at Siwah—A wearisome cross-examination—Summoned to a meeting of sheikhs—A hostile crowd outside—Ordered to leave the place—A plucky refusal—The *Mufti*—Attack by night on the Englishman's tents—A hairbreadth escape—He sends a servant to the sheikh Yusuf—Attack recommenced—Hamilton slips away from his tent under cover of darkness—Refuge in Yusuf's house—A small cottage opposite assigned to him—A mob of wild fanatics from the outlying hills appears—Attack on empty tents—Letters to Viceroy and British Consul secretly dispatched—Hamilton a prisoner—Repeated shots into the prison-house—Threats and insults—Yusuf summoned for harbouring a Christian—A violent attack on the prison—Yusuf now shares imprisonment—His protestations and adjurations—Desperate situation for the two men—A furious gale from the south alarms the hillmen—They depart suddenly to Arab fastnesses—Some amelioration of prisoners' lot—Arrival of cavalry from the Viceroy—A complete and ludicrous turning of the tables.

Most people are aware that the African continent for the main part has high ground running near to, and more or less parallel with, the coast. This is true even of those shores which are washed by the Mediterranean. As a matter of fact, the elevations are not usually very great. Still, there are ranges of hills which figure on the maps as

"mountains." Such is the line of Gerdoba (or Gerdebah) Mountains, on the borders of Tripoli and Egypt. This is what an aforetime traveller in the district says of them: "These hills ultimately reach a considerable height. Journeying over such ground is singularly fatiguing. . . . They rise on one side in long gentle swells and fall suddenly on the other, forming an angle vertically of about seventy degrees, while eight or ten feet on this, one would say, the lee side, are perfectly perpendicular."

It was in this country that a British traveller, Mr. Hamilton, spent some time more than fifty years ago. He was endeavouring to visit various spots of historic or antiquarian interest, and a difficult matter he sometimes found it, among those remote and semi-barbarous hill tribes. He was riding one evening in a bare and lonely valley, night coming on, and he himself at some distance from the rest of the caravan. A few words from his description of the locality will help to realize the sort of scene before him. "A ridge of round-backed sandhills forms the separation between the Little Gerdebah and the immense range of low dark hills and table-lands which here presents itself. A line of sandstone rocks, with nearly perpendicular sides, bounds the line of road, sometimes closing upon it, sometimes leaving a wide plain on either side. In the basins thus formed rocks rise frequently in the form of low truncated cones, generally in two steps, one rising from the other, so like diminutive craters, that in referring to this day's journey my servant always calls them 'Les Vesuves.'"

Twenty-six hours did it take to cross this range of highlands, and in the mornings and evenings the cold was

considerable; even in the midday sunshine the thermometer was more than once found to indicate only forty-five degrees. Passing over Mr. Hamilton's explorations of various ruins, often fantastic in shape, of ancient temples and the like, we may follow him to the hill-oasis of Siwah. It was pitch dark, and it was only with difficulty his guide could make out the road. Soon, however, the traveller found his horse clambering up what seemed to be the face of a precipice; five minutes later he was riding among walls. The settlement had been reached, and presently he stood before the house of a sheikh. The official proved friendly, and courteously offered to assist the stranger in any way he could. He put Mr. Hamilton through a long and wearisome cross-examination, but in the end made arrangements for him to pitch his tents on a plain to the south of the town. On the left rose some limestone rocks, with a castle, formerly occupied by a garrison. The town itself stood on a big conical rock, the houses completely covering it, while to the west were other cliffs, with many caverns. These rocks were in places lofty.

But troubles began almost at once. The stranger was summoned to the house of the sheikh Yusuf, and was received in a room open to the street. A great crowd was assembled outside, while seated on the floor round the room were several stupid-looking old men, whom Hamilton found to be the sheikhs of the place. Yusuf began a long speech, the gist of which was that the town council and the men of Siwah generally would not permit the presence of a Christian among them. Yusuf tried to soften the force of his announcement by calling the authorities fools.

"They have no sense, no sense!" he shouted again and again.

"They must learn sense, or buy it," was the stranger's plucky reply.

And Mr. Hamilton went on to state that he was an Englishman, that he was inoffensive, that he was armed with a passport from a Sovereign whom even the Sultan Abdul Mejid himself would respect. He ended by throwing upon the sheikhs the responsibility of whatever might come as the result of their hostility and inhospitality.

The Englishman at this point thought it wise to send for his revolvers, which he had left in his tent. Then, mounting his horse, he began to ride away through the crowd. At that moment the Mufti came up, and, at Yusuf's earnest request, Hamilton stayed to describe to that great functionary the object of his visit to the country. The Mufti attempted to explain away the hostility of the townsmen, but was unable to deny that it existed, and to a serious degree. At this juncture one of the fellows in the street, who had from the first been most insolent, began to cry that the Christian should not be allowed to defile with his cursed presence the air of their blessed country, and that the best thing the stranger could do was to get himself out of the territory with all speed. The man went on to say that, not so long before, four hawajahs from Alexandria had come, and that they had been fired on and turned out of the place.

"I'm not a hawajah," the Englishman boldly replied, "and I do not mean to run away."

For three hours Hamilton stood his ground, but at last retired to his tents, his negro cook in mortal terror, since

he had heard the townsmen declare that they were coming to attack the camp in the night. The master himself laughed at the servant's fears, and ate his dinner tranquilly enough. He had settled down comfortably to his pipe, when suddenly three shots were fired in quick succession, the bullets piercing the canvas of the tent and passing just over his head with a shrill whistle. Hamilton took very little notice of even a demonstration of this sort, thinking it was only meant as a rough joke to frighten him. He made a note of the incident and the time in his pocket-book, and then went to peer out of the door of his tent. The night was of pitchy blackness, and apparently all was quiet and still. The barking of a dog presently, however, told him that there were people about, all unseen though they might be. He now thought it best to send a servant into the town to tell Yusuf what had occurred.

Directly the man had left the firing began again. Says the traveller: "I now began to think the affair more serious than I had supposed. I heard one gun hang fire close to my tent, and, turning, saw its muzzle pressed against the wall of the tent on the shadow of my head; I therefore had all the lights put out, and went cautiously out to get a view of my assailants. The night was so black that this was impossible, but it also favoured my evasion. After counting eleven volleys, which gave me grounds to suspect that there was a numerous body of men in the date-trees to the right, I, with my servant, went up to the sheikh Yusuf's house, abandoning the tents to their fate. Moving cautiously across the plain, which separated us from the town, and climbing the steep street which led to the house, we could still see the fire of the enemy's guns, and the more

frequent flashes in the pan, to which we probably owed our escape."

He met on the way the messenger he had sent to Yusuf's, and the man reported that he had been unable to arouse the sheikh; and, in fact, it required some vigorous blows with the butt-end of a gun to awake the sleepy elder. Hamilton related what had happened, and added that he was going to stay till the morning. Yusuf at once sent off some of his fellows to protect the camp. These men found that the tents had not been actually entered, but that they were full of bullet-holes. One shot had passed immediately over the spot where the Englishmen had been reclining; had he been in a less recumbent position, he would doubtless have lost his life.

Morning came at length, and then Yusuf assigned to the stranger a small house of three rooms, opposite to his own. One of the apartments was built out on the flat roof, and occupied a part of it, so that there was a sort of small terrace in front of the room. On this elevated spot Hamilton stood, to take in the view, when he caught sight of a large body of men on the plain below. There were, apparently, several hundreds in the company, and they marched with flags and camels to the tents. It soon appeared that the entire population of an outlying hill settlement had come forth against the Christian dog, bringing their beasts to carry off the plunder.

The procedure of these rascals was curious. They found the tents closed, but believing that the Englishman and his servant were within, they dared not for a long time venture near. The fact was, marvellous descriptions of the wonderful weapons the stranger carried had been circulated about the town, and all stood in mighty dread

of his puissance. It was not till some time after that one of the bolder spirits dared to open the door and peep into the tent supposed to be tenanted by the master. Meanwhile Yusuf had been in conference with his brother sheikhs, to whom he had represented that they would be required to replace tenfold any goods the Englishman might lose by plunder in their town. The result was that some of the authorities went down to the spot, and after some hours succeeded in dispersing the mob. Hamilton rode over to see the condition of the camp. He found everything in the utmost confusion; but nothing had been taken away.

By this time Mr. Hamilton saw that it was high time for him to get himself away from so hostile a people, if it were possible. He intended to go to the Viceroy of Egypt, and beg for an escort of cavalry with which to return. This was a plan more easily conceived than carried out. He found it impossible to procure camels for the journey. He then proposed to hire donkeys as substitutes, but Yusuf declared that without camels it was impossible to proceed across the intervening deserts. Even when, after a weary waiting, the stranger managed to procure three camels, the Mufti warned him against leaving the town, saying that he would undoubtedly be waylaid and murdered within an hour or two of his quitting the place.

In these dire straits Hamilton tried another plan. He wrote a letter to Her Britannic Majesty's Consul-General at Cairo, requesting his interference and aid. It was with much trouble that he persuaded Yusuf to lend a messenger to take the letter, and the sheikh quickly repented of it. Luckily the man had by that time got

well on his way in the direction of Cairo. The commotion among the authorities of the place when they learnt of the dispatch of the missive was very great. They were feverishly anxious to know what the Englishman had said to the Consul. It was not till the messenger had got too far to be fetched back that Hamilton gave them any information on the point.

The luckless traveller was now a close prisoner, confined to the little cabin opposite Yusuf's house, and there he remained for some weeks. The time did not hang too heavily on his hands, he says, for there were excitements not a few. One evening four shots, fired at intervals into his house, kept him sufficiently on the alert. Another day a great mob assembled in arms and announced their intention of exterminating the Christian, and so ending the matter. The danger was somehow averted, and then a deputation of the elders came to suggest that Hamilton should go away in peace, looking over all that had taken place, and carrying no complaint to the Pacha. To this the prisoner made answer that his letter must be already in Cairo, and that consequently all talk about not complaining to the Pacha was useless. Then Yusuf was summoned before the magistrates to answer the charge of harbouring a Christian —a grave offence. Next the townsmen attempted to assassinate Yusuf, setting cut-throats in the dark, narrow lanes to slay him as he passed through. The unfortunate Mussulman was thoroughly scared, and not unnaturally, for his father had been done to death in a similar way.

Things presently assumed an even more serious aspect. A fresh attack on a large scale was planned in the town, and this came to the ears of Yusuf. It was clear that

immediate and vigorous action must be taken for the defence of himself and his guest. His plan was this: entering several of the largest houses in the neighbourhood of his own and of Hamilton's prison-house, he garrisoned them with armed men. Then, with ten companions, he went over and posted himself in the cottage occupied by the stranger, who was fortunately well supplied with arms, and seems to have been quite ready to use them in case of necessity. But before long he begged that the garrisons might be withdrawn from the neighbouring houses, because if the attack from the mob should become furious, there would be a danger of hitting friend as well as foe. Luckily, the threatening demonstration ended in nothing worse than wild yells. The end came, in fact, in an unlooked-for way, for the principal men of the place, thinking no doubt of the penalty they might have to pay should the Pacha interfere on behalf of the traveller, gathered together a force and drove off the savage hillmen, who were the most active and hostile among the furious crowd. The two bodies met at the foot of the rock, and peace was restored without any bloodshed. From that night a regular patrol of the town was kept up by the elders.

Yusuf himself was now practically a prisoner, just as much as his guest, and accordingly the two men remained in the same house together. Not many evenings after, the Christian and his Mussulman friend were on the roof of their dwelling. A great rock overlooked the spot, and on this some persons in the street below, happening to look up, perceived four men with guns creeping along. The prisoners had their backs at that moment turned to the place where the would-be murderers stood,

and saw nothing of the danger till a huge hubbub arose. People from below dashed up the rock with frantic cries. Of the four men two were taken ; the others made good their escape. The defence the fellows made was absurd—namely, that they were crow-shooting—but it was accepted by the authorities. It should be explained that the gall of the crow was reckoned a sovereign remedy for sore eyes.

It would be tedious to recount a tithe of the annoyances, the insults, the threats, the attacks, from which the prisoners suffered. For Yusuf had by this time lost all influence with his fellow-townsmen, and was kept in confinement with the stranger Christian. Even the little children down in the street yelled up ribaldry and insult. Twenty days went by, and still no sign of a reply from either the British Consul or the Viceroy, to whom also Hamilton had managed to send off a letter. Matters did not look promising, to say the least of it.

Yusuf himself spared no effort to convince his brother elders who visited him that they would all have to pay dearly for their conduct towards this Christian. All his representations, his protestations, his abjurations, were thrown away. No one would listen to him. Then, by the strangest and most unexpected of chances, the elements effected in a few hours what Yusuf had laboured for three weeks to bring about. One day a violent hot wind from the south sprang up, and raged furiously for the greater part of a week. This was regarded by the people of the country as an "unfailing signal of some coming calamity." Accordingly, the ringleaders in the anti-Christian tumults, scared and conscience-stricken, to the number of a hundred

and forty, left for the Arab encampments away in the mountains.

In this curious way it came about that Hamilton's lot was made both easier and safer. It was droll to see the way in which the different sheikhs tried to curry favour in his eyes. One by one they would come to him in secret, each protesting that he was entirely innocent of any participation in the late attacks; that, in truth, he was the only innocent man in the town. Then each ended by begging that the stranger would be careful to notify as much to the Consul and to His Highness the Viceroy.

It was exactly six weeks after his captivity had begun that the Englishman was finally set free. One evening some fellows ran into the house, crying, "Baksheesh for good news!" They had witnessed the arrival of a couple of officers, the outriders of a troop of cavalry sent by the Viceroy of Egypt. These two officers proved to be tremendous swaggerers, and gave themselves magnificent airs, after the fashion of Easterns in authority. They proceeded to make huge demands for man and beast on the town, but what they actually got was about a fourth of what they had asked. At Hamilton's wish the requisitions were made only on the hostile part of the people. Never was seen a more complete turning of tables. Hamilton now became a veritable autocrat in the town, giving what orders and dictating what terms he would. His friend Yusuf, and his kindly countenance and assistance all through those unhappy weeks, he did not forget. But he demanded the arrest of several of the sheikhs, of the Cadi, and of the Imaum of one of the mosques. These prisoners he desired to have carried to Cairo, there to answer to the

Viceroy himself. A good word from the late prisoner saved the Mufti from being taken off also. Hamilton made all his demands in writing, and the officer in command of the cavalry seemed to be mortally afraid of anything produced by pen and ink.

Thus all ended well for the traveller, but it might easily have been otherwise. His life had been in the greatest danger all the time of his six weeks' imprisonment, and from no persons more than from the outlying highland tribes of the Gerdebah range who had flocked into the little town.

CHAPTER XI

IN THE ATLAS MOUNTAINS

The Atlas Mountains not well known—An English clergyman travels among them—The Monkey Brook—A road that tries the nerves—A lion lately seen—The Mount of Lions—A hunt after a huge beast—A boy up a tree and a lion below—A lion scare with a ludicrous ending—A tall story of a lion and a soldier—The native dogs and the dangling legs of the English rider—A camel foal and its fun—Robbers plentiful—The French Government and the brigands—A sulky crew—An aneroid and a covetous Arab—A Frenchman murdered by a Morocco robber—Swift justice—Without shelter for the night on the mountains—A pack of ferocious dogs—A bivouac in an Arab stable—Hungry and thirsty—An uncomfortable prospect for the night—An enormous wild boar—A carriage and six—Steeplechases across the rough wastes—Two terrific bumps—Jugglers and magicians—Licking a red-hot shovel—Eating a prickly-pear leaf—Disagreeable tricks—The Englishman's want of faith.

The Atlas range of mountains, however famous, is yet but little known to the civilized world. Most of us are aware that there are really two Atlas ranges, called the Great and the Little Atlas Mountains, although, except in one part, the summits of the Great Atlas are by no means so high as those of the Little Atlas. It is this latter chain of mountains that is best known to Europeans, because it is nearer the coast, and nearer the French colonial city of Algiers, so much visited nowadays. The mountains

throw out great buttresses, as it were, to the very coast.

In the year 1857 an English clergyman, Mr. Blakesley, had a good round amongst these Atlas ranges, both the Great and the Little, though more especially the latter. Up and down the country, and in and out in every direction, he travelled, often in districts where there were either no roads at all, or very indifferent ones. Of serious dangers, perhaps, there were few, but there was one gorge known as the Monkey Brook, on account of the number of monkeys found there, that Mr. Blakesley traversed with considerable alarm. The carriage road runs on a narrow shelf on the cliff wall, and there is no parapet. A sudden swerve on the part of the horses, or an awkward stumble, would precipitate vehicle and occupants into the fearful chasms below. The traveller found it trying to the nerves to sit still in such a place. Moreover, to make matters worse, the rock is very soft, and the heavy rains cut big grooves into the surface of the road, much as a schoolboy might carve notches on the edge of his desk. The authorities take great care to fill up these ugly gaps with lumps of stone as soon as possible, but when Mr. Blakesley passed along this road it had been raining heavily all the night before, and the road-menders had not yet got through the work of repairing. The carriage crossed several of the broken gaps with a lurch. Had an accident occurred, the wayfarer tells us, the world at large would never have heard a word of it.

"Down would go horses, carriage, and traveller into the bed of the Chiffa, far away from any European habitation. In the course of the day some Arab shepherds

would perhaps light upon the wreck, when, in their quiet, impassive way, they would collect the fragments of harness and ironwork with the remark, 'God is merciful,' and leave the mutilated corpses to be devoured by the jackals."

But there were other dangers to be apprehended among those remote mountain districts. The Englishman was not long in observing that most wayfarers there carried a gun. They were not sportsmen, but took the weapons as a protection against wild beasts. In one place he and other passengers were alarmed by the report that a lion had been recently seen, and had devoured two cows belonging to a native farm. The ladies travelling were terribly frightened, but the district was passed without a sight of the prowling lion. All they saw was the skeleton of a slaughtered ox, the bones of which had no doubt been picked clean by the jackals, of which there were many everywhere, after the king of beasts had made his own repast. The panther seemed to be even more dreaded by the Arabs than the lion.

There is one hill which rejoices in the name of the Mount of Lions, though, oddly enough, a lion is seldom seen there. In other places there were rather too many. At Jemappes, in the province of Constantine, a very fine lion, in the full light of day, attacked a herd of cattle and killed two cows. This was just before Mr. Blakesley arrived. The whole population turned out to hunt the depredator, and in less than an hour the brute was killed. He was found to weigh close upon five hundredweight. The flesh was all eaten, and its taste was said to resemble that of beef. Another lion made his appearance in a corn-field which was watched over by an Arab boy of

fifteen. The lad carried a gun, mainly to shoot the wild swine which abounded in the neighbourhood. The lion was probably after the same sort of work as the boy, the slaughter of the pigs. Be that as it may, the youngster climbed into a tree, taking his gun with him, and when the lion came and roared at him underneath, he let fly in the coolest manner. Fortunately for the lad, the bullet went in at the beast's mouth, and probably into the brain, for next morning the lion was found dead not far away.

Sometimes the lion scares ended in a different fashion. Mr. Blakesley was travelling in a sort of carrier's cart, with two or three country-folk as fellow-passengers. On the hill-side, where there was a thick wood, a large animal suddenly appeared standing in the middle of the road.

"It is a lion!" exclaimed one.

"No, it is a dog," replied a second.

"It is a young lion!" cried a third passenger.

The Englishman was naturally in a state of perturbation; the natives, on the other hand, discussed the matter as calmly as if the subject had been the weather or the crops. The stranger hardly knew whether to be delighted or disappointed, when the brute ahead proved to be a very big mastiff.

One of the passengers seized the occasion to tell a lion story, which is too extraordinary to be missed. A couple of French soldiers set off, but not together, to travel between two settlements. The first man was drunk, and, after managing to lose his sword somehow, he fell down by the wayside and dropped into a profound sleep. His mate, quite sober, picked up the lost sword as he followed, and at last came upon the sleeping man, who was lying

close to what appeared to be part of a tree-trunk covered with browned grass. But when he gave the sleeper a kick to arouse him, what was his horror to find that he had kicked, not his mate, but a huge lion which was crouching by his side! The aggressor made off, of course, at his best pace, and the lion did not attempt to follow the man who had so rudely disturbed his slumbers, but immediately stretched himself by the other fellow's side again. When the half-intoxicated man awoke, it was to find himself with a strange bedfellow, and when he rose and walked away, the lion got up too, and accompanied him for several miles through the forest showing no sign of ferocity. At the edge of the forest the lion turned off and went his own way, no doubt to the relief of the man!

No little trouble was caused to our traveller and his attendants sometimes by the viciousness of the native dogs and by the sulkiness of the upland farmers, who seldom made any attempt to restrain them. At one place, where the dogs made a most savage onset upon him, he had to get a supply of stones to throw at them, as he had no suitable or effective whip. His legs were in far more danger than those of his Arab servants, who always rode, not with legs dangling down, but tucked up on the saddle. It was all the traveller could do to keep himself from being severely bitten, his hanging legs proving an irresistible temptation to the dogs. Hardly had the party got clear of these brutes, when they were bothered by an animal of quite a different kind. A young camel foal darted away from its herd, and came up to the mule Mr. Blakesley was riding, evidently bent on fun. The mule did not relish the fun, however, but began to kick

and plunge violently. The rider shouted, threw stones, and did all he knew to drive off the little camel. All in vain; the animal enjoyed the joke, playing about till it was tired. The muleteers were obliged to jump to the ground and seize the bridle of the kicking mule. It was all they could do to prevent the animal from breaking away, and dashing both itself and its rider to pieces. Luckily the troublesome foal ran off at last, and the mule quieted down.

In a country which had not long been under settled and civilized rule, and whose conformation, moreover, was so favourable to brigandage, the roads were anything but safe. The French Government kept up a more or less active inspection of the chief highways, and Mr. Blakesley soon found out that he was in luck when he was able to spend the night at or near one of the military outposts. In some parts the Government had a system of paying the tribes to keep watch over the post-houses where travellers and their animals were in the habit of passing the night. Some of these subsidized natives, however, gave more trouble to the authorities than all the robbers on whom they were paid to keep an eye. When our traveller came across a gang of these fellows, he found them sulky and hostile to a degree. They glared at him with horrid scowls, and would neither return his salutations nor accept his offers of tobacco. There was one young man, however, who was particularly attracted by the sight of an aneroid barometer. He got up to look at it, and it was evident that he was sorely tempted to draw the yataghan he carried and cut down the possessor of the instrument. Fortunately, the Englishman was accompanied by French

soldiers, for the man who coveted the aneroid was the most villainous-looking fellow he had ever seen.

An incident that took place while he was at a military station near the Morocco border showed the rigour of the French officers in repressing crime. A Lieutenant brought in word that a Frenchman had been cruelly murdered, not far away, by a Morocco robber. The Commandant asked on which side of the frontier the murder was, and on being told that the fellow was on French ground, he remarked that the execution would take place that evening. There was no extradition treaty between France and Morocco, and it was the custom to make short work of every Morocco robber caught on the French side of the frontier. The trial of the criminal was short, and his shrift shorter. It was a rough-and-ready way of administering justice, but no doubt the necessities of the case demanded it. Mr. Blakesley observed that whenever any party of travellers in that district was seen by the military authorities, a soldier was always sent out to keep an eye on them till they were out of danger.

Occasionally the Englishman found himself without shelter for the night, an awkward predicament in a country where the men were almost as wild as the animals that prowled around. Once, after a march of thirteen hours, he reached a rest-house late at night, and found it closed and uninhabited, so far as could be seen. Unable to get into the place in any way, he moved off in search of other shelter, when presently he was attacked by a pack of ferocious dogs. He beat a retreat, and was settling upon a spot in which to bivouac, his mules being quite unable to go a mile farther, when to his surprise a door in the

building was opened, and a man invited him in. It proved to be a stable with a sort of courtyard in the middle. Here the belated traveller made himself a fire of artichoke stalks, and squatted down on a mat beside it. But he was half dead with thirst, and famishing besides. He could not make the man understand his needs for a long time, and he was in despair. At last the fellow went off, and presently reappeared bringing a bowl of milk, a godsend. Somewhat relieved, the Englishman proceeded to make himself comfortable for the night, but he determined to keep a night-light burning, for fear of evil designs on the part of the Arab, of whose character, of course, he knew nothing. Just as he was dropping off to sleep, another Arab arrived, and informed the traveller that he had been sent to act as guide, and that he would return in the morning to conduct him on his way. Now reassured, Mr. Blakesley and his muleteers set their minds at ease and slept soundly. Thus a night which had begun unpromisingly ended satisfactorily. But his anxiety had been natural enough, for the muleteers confessed that they were utterly ignorant of their whereabouts, and of the nature of the country and the character of the people.

In one place his party disturbed a wild-boar feeding in a cultivated field. He was an enormous animal—"the largest I ever saw, far bigger than the wild-boars of Germany." The brute did not show fight, as the lion usually does when disturbed, but made off with all speed into the thicket close at hand, and was lost. On another occasion, when traversing the vilest of vile roads on the hills near Tlemçen, at a height of some two thousand feet, his coachman—it was a coach-and-six in

which the Englishman was travelling—suddenly left the ruts of the beaten track and dashed at full speed into the wastes alongside. Crashing through shrubs, lurching over various inequalities or loose obstacles, floundering through quagmires, the carriage sped on its way. It was a marvel how woodwork, wheels, and springs held together, over miles of such country. At length appeared in front a deep ditch, quite a yard wide, masked by a pile of stones. To the traveller's astonishment and alarm, the leading postboy set his animals straight at the double obstruction. The two leaders cleared heap and ditch, and the remaining four horses followed in fine style. The coach gave at each obstacle such a lurch as the traveller had never before felt. The marvel was that "the machine did not seem to suffer, neither was the luggage scattered to the four winds, nor the coachman shot into infinite space." The occupant of the carriage, however, received additions to the many bruises he had sustained in the course of that mad steeplechase. He supposed this style of charioteering in French Africa to have been induced by the habit of driving guns about in mad headlong fashion.

He was fortunate enough to see a good deal of the performances of the native jugglers and magicians, a class of men very common in Algiers at that date, more especially in the remoter and less civilized districts. One remarkable series of performances particularly interested him.

The proceedings began by six or seven fellows taking their seats around a charcoal fire. From time to time the chief performer threw a handful of some substance into the fire, causing a puff of smoke. A sort of tambourine

was beaten with the knuckles the while. At length a young man of the party rose from the ground, threw down his instrument, and then bending over the fire, proceeded to sway his body violently backward and forward. In time he became as if possessed, and danced frantically about, giving vent to hideous howls. The performance now began. First a red-hot shovel was held to the young man, and this he took with another yell and placed on his arms. Then he began to lick the implement with his tongue, and seemed to enjoy the taste of the burning metal. A leaf from a prickly-pear was next thrown to him, and this he picked up with his mouth from the ground, and ate a portion of it.

Other tricks followed which the English spectator found disagreeable, if not disgusting. The juggler apparently pulled his eye entirely out of its socket, a feat which the natives evidently thought a masterpiece, for a special collection was made on behalf of the man. After this the fellow proceeded to thrust an iron rod into his body, bringing the point out at the other side, and feigning all the while to be suffering the most exquisite torture. The stranger watched these performances narrowly, and in both cases perceived how the trick was done, though he was far too wise to say anything on the point, amidst a crowd of ardent believers. But he noted that on the occasion of another exhibition of a similar kind, a little later on, the moment he put his head inside the place the performer stopped. The black looks of the audience, and the one eye half closed—the sure sign of anger amongst the Arabs—convinced him that it would be better for his own safety to beat an immediate retreat.

At another place he was promised a show by a man who, in a fit of possession, would eat serpents and scorpions alive; but this performance the Englishman was fated to miss, the magician being temporarily absent from home. It was perhaps as well, for the stranger's evident want of faith irritated the Morocco Arabs among whom he was staying, and they are the most savage and unscrupulous of their race.

CHAPTER XII

SPORT BEYOND THE SASKATCHEWAN

Sportsmen, and the mountains of the Canadian Dominion—The Earl of Southesk, explorer and naturalist—Magnificent scenery—An Indian baby ill—An informal doctor—Mountain sheep—A clean miss—Rolling boulders down the mountain-side—More sheep—Wonderful feats with an old flint rifle—A "dead" sheep suddenly bolts—The dog and the porcupine—Search for grizzlies—How to manage a grizzly bear—The puma and its dangerous character—A puma up a tree—A very dangerous slope—Critical position of the nobleman—Hunt after a ram—Firing from a very risky spot—The dead body of the ram drops upon the dog—Another grizzly scare—A dangerous climb—"On either side was a tremendous precipice"—Thoroughly beaten—A climb after a forgotten rifle—The Earl belated—A miserable and dangerous walk home through the woods—Travelling becomes harder—A stiff ascent covered with big rocks—Horses dragged up a precipice with ropes—A fall amongst the kettles and pots—Tent falls upon its sleeping occupant—The terrors of the pine-woods—Nothing like leather—The Earl christens a mountain and cairn after himself.

How many sportsmen have been attracted by the boundless breadths of prairie and forest, by the wealth of river and of mountain peak, included within the vast area of the Canadian Dominion, it would be hard to say. And not only sportsmen pure and simple, but the geographer, the naturalist, the searcher after excitement and adventure—all have been drawn Westward. Amongst the band was

the Earl of Southesk, who, in the years 1859 and 1860, roamed over much of the upper portions of the great North American continent. The noble traveller was explorer, naturalist, and geographer primarily, but his taste for outdoor life and the necessity of providing sufficient food on his journeys made him an accomplished sportsman, too.

We may join him at that part of his tour when he was close upon the stupendous range of the Rockies. With wonder and with awe he gazed on the marvels around him, and again and again he breaks out into expressions of delight.

"We continued our march up the river amidst scenery of surpassing magnificence. . . . On the right there is a far higher wall of rock, which is broken by a succession of glorious peaks, while lower precipitous spurs, divided by deep rocky glens, run outwards to the river. . . . The strata whirl in such curious fashion that far-spreading spaces look like vast stores of petrified trees upheaved in the ruin of a dismantled world."

The explorer had met with many curious adventures on his long journey across the continent, but his entrance upon the mountain districts brought him one of a different kind. One of the Indian babies was taken seriously ill. The mother was crying bitterly, the father also weeping. They begged the Earl to take up the case of the child, and relieve its sufferings. He hesitated, and not unnaturally, for if the child should die on his hands, its death would to a certainty be charged to him—a very undesirable thing anywhere and at any time, but ten times more so in his situation. Yet he was evidently expected to do something;

and, besides, his own kindness of heart prompted him to help the miserable family if possible. His resolution was taken, be the consequences what they might. He ordered the baby to be wrapped in many blankets, for it had been almost naked hitherto; he had the futile bit of fire made into a good rousing blaze; and he caused his men to make some hot tea. "I then directed the mother to hold her baby close to the fire, and pour tea down its throat, as much as it could be made to swallow. With perfect confidence in my skill, she took a spoon and began the feeding process, which so greatly disgusted the child that it struggled and screamed, and rejected the tea, till, between its own efforts and the heat of the blazing logs, a little moisture began to appear. Telling them to keep the baby warm, as they valued its life, I left them and returned to my tent, and next morning had the happiness of hearing that the treatment had been a complete success."

The leader had always on his mind the problem of feeding his followers, and consequently, when he found himself in a district abounding in wild sheep, the opportunity was not to be lost. But it was a risky business at times, getting at those sheep. His very first attempt led him along a mountain-side, on tracks that he would have thought nothing but a goat could follow. A sheep was observed high up on the crags, and a stiff climb it was to get up to the spot. The latter part of the distance had to be done on hands and knees, over sharp rocks that cut like a knife. With all his efforts the sportsman could gain no point nearer than a hundred and twenty yards away. He risked his shot, and had the mortification to make a clean miss of it. He and his men were bent on having fun of some

kind, however, on their elevated perch, and nothing better presented itself than rolling big stones down the steep. Down went the boulders, crashing into the groves of fir-trees far below, and snapping off the younger among them like twigs. This amusement was a huge delight to all the men, of whatever age, belonging to the Earl's party.

Fortunately for the larder, the hunt after the mountain sheep was not always so unprofitable. Not long after, the Earl shot a ram and an old ewe, also wounding another sheep, which one of his servants at once finished with his old flint rifle—"a most extraordinary little implement, so short and small, so bound up and mended with leather and brass-headed tacks, and altogether so worn and weather-beaten, as to look like some curious antique toy." Antoine, with his old-fashioned gun, and his master, with a more modern and effective weapon, next dashed down to the bottom of a deep ravine where more sheep were espied. The Earl arrived so blown that he missed with both barrels. He had time to reload, the animals being confused, and soon two or three dropped to his gun, Antoine also bringing down a couple. The two men then began to skin the carcasses, when, just as they were about to lay hands on the first of the sheep they had shot, to their stupefaction the beast suddenly sprang up and disappeared up the mountain-side at lightning speed. Others of the exploring party had had a run of luck also, and the day's stalk produced a heavy bag altogether.

One of the dogs had a curious experience about this time. He had scented a porcupine, and had followed and seized it; but he got more than he bargained for, for his

mouth was stuck through with quills, and he presented a funny and an unhappy spectacle. Some of the quills were so firmly fixed in the dog's cheeks that they could hardly be drawn out again. According to the accounts of the hunters, the porcupine has its quills very loosely inserted in its body, so that the slightest touch will bring them out, if, indeed, the animal cannot shed them at will. The Indians have to be very careful to rid their dogs of the quills they have got stuck into their mouths during encounters with the porcupine, or the dog dies.

Lord Southesk was longing to come across a grizzly bear. At length a man of his company saw one in a valley whither he had gone after rams, and he reported the circumstance as soon as he reached the camp. The bear and the hunter had looked at each other, but neither had cared to show fight, and they had parted company. The master was at first disposed to blame his servant, but a little reflection showed him that even a man with a double-barrelled gun would be unwise to attack a huge grizzly, if he were alone and at a distance from all help, in case of mishaps. An animal like the grizzly bear, so savage, so strong, and so hard to kill, had better be left alone, unless the hunter has well-armed supporters near. Respecting the habits of the grizzly, the Earl learnt some curious facts from his men. It appeared that when a bear spied a man he would make a halt at a distance of about a hundred yards away, rear himself on his haunches, and give a look around. After this he would either at once decamp, or make straight for the man. In the latter case Bruin would stop again at thirty yards' distance, stand

upright, and reconnoitre as before. A final stand was made at ten yards' distance before the brute flung himself upon the man. Now was the hunter's time, if only he had the wisdom and the nerve to stand so long and await the chance. At this last uprising, at such close quarters, the grizzly must be met by a well-aimed bullet, or the man's doom was sealed. Woe betide the hunter if his first ball did not carry instantaneous death with it.

A more savage and dangerous beast than even the bear was said to be found in places among the Rockies—the puma. He can climb a tall tree with the agility and quickness of a cat—a feat the grizzly is unable to imitate. Moreover, the puma is the slyest of beasts, and hunts its prey in the night as well as during the hours of daylight. It will mark out a little party of men, and will follow them secretly but closely for days, always on the look-out in case one of the number should separate himself from his mates. "When all is dark and silent the insidious puma glides in, and the sleeper knows but short awakening when its fangs are buried in his throat." If, on the other hand, the man kills the puma, he has a treat in store, the flesh being esteemed a great delicacy. The Earl was not lucky enough to come across one of the creatures; not even the track of one was perceived. But two of his men had, not long before, while attached to another exploring party, perceived a puma up a tree. They had at once fired at it, not stopping, however, to see the effect of the shots, but bolting away at full speed. "They never felt inclined to go back to claim their trophy, which they most shrewdly suspected might have claimed them, for while the death of the enemy was doubtful, its indignation, if alive, was not."

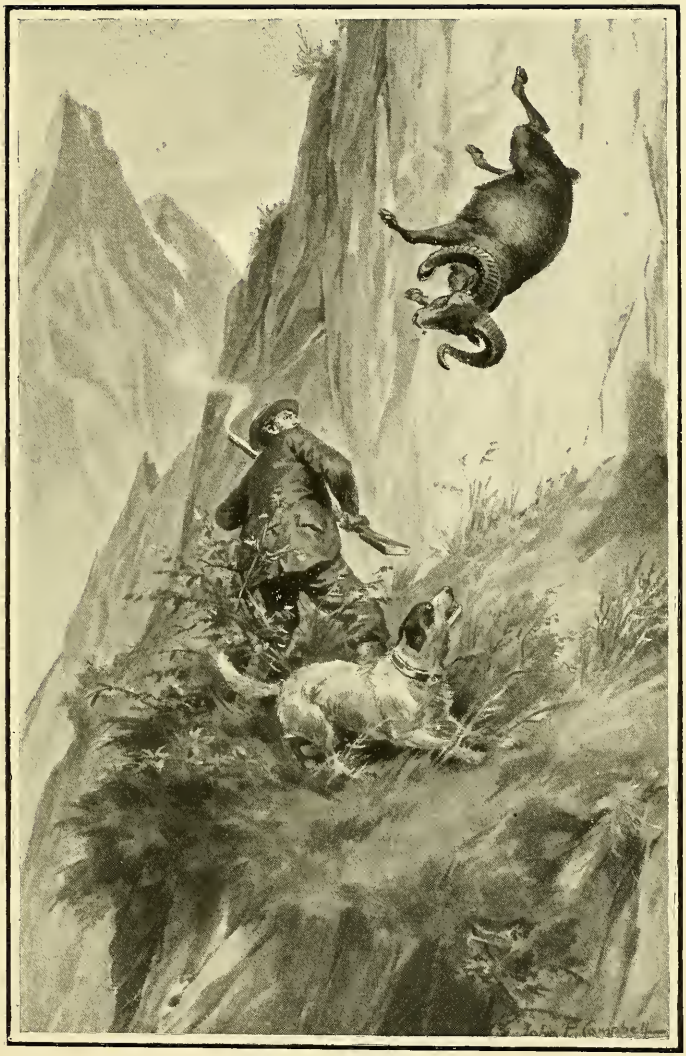
A CRITICAL POSITION

The climbs after game of one sort or another, mainly sheep and goats, brought constant excitement to the hunters. The risks they ran, always considerable, were sometimes frightful. The Earl himself had more than one such. He was following a wounded sheep along a hill-side, when he suddenly found himself in a dangerous position. The steep slope was loose, consisting of pebbles and small fragments of rock. The stuff gave way at every step the hunter took, and of course carried him along with it. Down he was travelling, almost helpless to arrest his course. Below him were depths of the most frightful character. A little more of this slipping, and he would be hurled into the abyss. Even to stand still was death, for the loose shingle would have soon borne him over the edge of the precipice beneath. His dog, whining in terror, stood its ground with the utmost difficulty, showering down into its master's face stones and sand in its efforts. The situation was critical indeed. But the love of life was strong, and the Earl made renewed and most desperate struggles, placing his rifle along the ground wherever there was the least firm projection to support it. Dragging himself inch by inch, but almost without hope of ever escaping, the Earl at last gained solid ground, to his intense relief—and with a lively sense of gratitude to Providence, he tells us.

Meanwhile the ram he was after had placed himself in a position awkward to reach. But the hunter went after him, choosing what appeared to be the safest path, and gained a little ledge of sloping grass. Above him, on the top of a rock-face about thirty feet in height, stood the animal; below the sportsman dropped away a perpendicular

precipice of awful depth—down to the very roots of the mountain itself, in fact. Here he took aim, the ram exactly above him. He missed, and the animal moved away for a moment. Then returning to his former position, the ram gazed down at his aggressor. The second ball brought the poor brute flying from the cliff's edge into empty air. It fell with a crash on the little grassy ledge, almost crushing the dog. The master had dodged the falling body. In his death struggles the ram would have been over the precipice and lost for ever, had not the hunter seized him by the hind-leg and held on till all was over. Even when the animal was dead his body would not rest on the steep slope, but had to be propped up with stones till it could be fetched away by the servants.

There was another report of a grizzly in the neighbourhood, and the Earl went off to search for the animal. Up hill and down dale the men wandered, but all in vain; he was once more doomed to disappointment. He determined, however, to climb to the highest part of the range within sight, in order that he might get a view of what was beyond, and gain some information as to the general plan of mountain and valley in the neighbourhood. It was a particularly toilsome climb, the many rock walls jutting out from the ridge causing endless trouble. There was much snow on the higher portions of the crest. By dint of great exertion the Earl got himself close to the foot of the main cliff, not far from the top of the mountain. There, to his vexation, he was brought to an abrupt stop by a most difficult bit of rock. It was of no great height, but it stood just in the way, where the sharp ridge was at



A Dangerous Moment

Standing on the sloping little grassy ledge, Lord Southesk shot at the ram exactly above him, and hit it. It came tumbling over, and the hunter had to dodge the flying mass, and later to seize it so as to prevent its falling over the precipice.

its narrowest. On either side was a tremendous precipice covered with layers of ice. Twice he tried to scramble up this formidable obstacle, but it was quite impassable. He stood to consider whether he could in any way work round the rock, but he wisely decided to leave it alone; at the best it would be exceedingly difficult, and in case he should have the smallest slip, his destruction was certain; moreover, there was an even worse place farther on. He had to own himself beaten, and scramble down again. He was intensely disappointed not to have gained the summit and a view of what was beyond, but there was no help for it.

He had not yet done with this mountain-flank; when half-way down, he discovered that he had left his rifle up above. A second long and fatiguing climb, on the top of his former exertions, was no light matter, but it had to be done. The result of it all was that night came on before the climber had reached the bottom again. He was at least four or five miles from the camp; he was alone; there was no track; the darkness was deep; he was dog-tired. It was a disagreeable prospect that was before him, to say the least of it. Through dark, sombre woods he plunged on, over cliff and torrent, scrambling or tumbling over fallen trunks, and forcing his way in places through a thick undergrowth of scrub. Besides, he was in the very haunt of the grizzly, and he might at any moment find himself confronted by one of these formidable brutes. And even though the moon presently arose, the darkness in the dense spruce-thickets would have given him a poor chance of using his gun effectively against a bear, had one come his way. He fired off his rifle repeatedly, to attract

the attention of his companions at the camp, but the sound echoed and re-echoed among the mountains in such a way that it could be no guide to anybody. Dead-beaten, the sportsman dragged himself along, till, a mile from home, he was delighted to fall in with a little search-party, who had become alarmed at his absence. To mount a horse and ride the remainder of the distance was a luxury indeed.

The travelling became harder as the mountains grew wilder. At one place it was only by some very clever manœuvring that a way forward was found at all. It was in this wise. First came an exceedingly steep slope, of itself formidable enough. But this particular steep was thickly strewn with great boulders, on an average of the size of a cart, the explorer informs us, and near one another. Between the blocks were deep holes—of course, except in the few instances where smaller stuff rolling down the mountain had filled up the hollow spaces. How the servants of the expedition got the horses up this ugly bank the Earl could not tell; he was himself at a distance at the time, shooting ptarmigan. But a worse bit of going now presented itself: "at the summit was a nearly perpendicular wall of hard-frozen snow, about twenty feet high. Steps were cut, and the horses dragged up with ropes. They ascended without accident, except Blond, who slipped on a sheet of ice just as he got to the top, and fell to the bottom, crushing our pots and kettles, but damaging himself very little, as his packs saved him. Rowland positively refused to go up, so he was taken a long way round, and the men carried his packs up the icy stair. . . . It was an almost incredible feat, though

perhaps less really wonderful than the previous ascent of the hill among the separated blocks of stone."

Of storms the travellers had their full share—wind, rain, snow, thunder, and lightning. On one occasion a tremendous gale sprang up from the north-west, and bore down upon them with incredible fury. The camp happened to be in a very exposed situation, being high up and without shelter of any sort. The Earl's tent was under a severe strain all the time, and at length the centre-pole snapped, and the whole thing fell down upon the body of the sleeper. It was useless to attempt to set up the tent again in such a hurricane, and he was "doomed to pass a most uncomfortable night, feeling much as if beneath a gigantic fan, as the canvas flapped to and fro, and drove eddies of air through every covering I could devise."

A very tiresome thing to contend with on the march was the presence of fallen, splintered, or broken trees. The devastating storms often laid a considerable portion of a wood more or less prostrate. The horses were, as a consequence, kept constantly jumping, the obstacles being too large to be stepped over. Then, while the larger trees often tear the animals, the smaller ones, pointing in every direction, run full tilt at both man and beast, and the rider's legs, as well as the horse's chest, come in for hard usage, the broken branches piercing like spears. The Earl, luckily for himself, had a suit of stout leather, and he found that nothing but leather was an effective defence against the lance-like attacks directed upon his person. Even then his head was sometimes "artistically aimed at," and his beaver cap was sent spinning, if, indeed, the rider

were not jerked bodily off his beast, like an unhorsed knight of old.

The Earl ascended a peak amongst the Rockies that had never before been visited by a white man. He and his companions built there a big cairn of stones. The peak, my lord, with pardonable pride, ventured to christen after his own name, and so Southesk Mount and Southesk Cairn figure on the maps. He well deserved the modest honour he did himself.

[From "Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains," by the late Earl of Southesk. Edmonston and Douglas, Edinburgh. By kind permission of the Earl of Southesk.]

CHAPTER XIII

ADVENTURES IN THE HIMALAYAS

Dr. W. H. Russell, the famous *Times* correspondent—In India after the Mutiny—Joins an expedition into the mountains—The start from Simla—A marvellous country—A fearful road—A wooden bridge with the pins taken out—Minaul-shooting How to get up the steeps—A terrific descent—"Approaching the antipodes"—A festival in honour of a local idol—A pitiful spectacle—Camping out on a mountain ledge—Extraordinary storm—Capture of runaway mutineers—A comet causes the natives intense alarm—Severe rebuke to a Rajah—A fruitless bear-hunt—Leopard and musk-deer—A Himalaya hunter's life a dangerous one—Lord William Hay and the snake—Awful precipices to be skirted by the sportsmen—Another bear-hunt—This time in a wood full of deadly snakes—Babies sleeping under waterfalls—Russell's visit to a Rajah—Balancing on the back of a fidgety elephant—A desperate leap—Alights on the Prince's toes—An affable potentate—Something like a present!

Dr. William Howard Russell, the war-correspondent of the *Times* newspaper, whose graphic accounts of the Crimean and Indian Mutiny campaigns made his name famous, was a remarkable man in many ways, not less gallant and enterprising than the very best of the brave soldiers whose deeds he narrated. Towards the close of the Mutiny he joined a number of officers in an expedition among the Himalayas, and he has described in his vivid way his adventures in that marvellous region.

START FROM SIMLA

The expedition started from Simla, away among the highlands of North-Western India, and a number of distinguished military men took part in it, the leader being Lord William Hay. There was administrative work to be done, and the political side was not wanting, for it was proposed to visit certain Rajahs on the way, especially the Rajah of Bussahir; but the officers hoped also to enjoy a little rest and sport after arduous military duties.

The party travelled from Simla by the wonderful road which leads towards the Himalayas and Thibet. At intervals of about a day's journey there were rest-houses, usually styled bungalows, erected by the British Government for the use of travellers. This road Russell calls one of the most splendid works in the world, and he says that, in the course of time, when the railways shall have made the district more accessible, he will be much surprised "if English tourists do not wander forth through the grand passes of the Himalayas, which dwarf the Alps to nothingness, which abound in game, and are full of novelty and fresh views of life." It was a relief indeed, he tells us, to get away from Simla, "to wind along this charming road, screened by the shadows of the pines, and to gaze, as I rode, on the ever-varying landscape right away to the distant mountains, where the darkening undulations show the course of the Sutlej, thousands of feet below."

At Tioge Lord William Hay was occupied for some time in settling boundary disputes, and dispatching similar business among the hill-folk, and the rest of the officers went on in advance of him. They rode ponies, and got along well enough for a time. Then the road became so dangerous that they had to dismount, "as a false step

would have been the certain cause of a projection of many hundred feet into gaping ravines, filled with jagged cliffs and distorted strata." The road was a strange piece of work, here tunnelling through shoulders of the mountain, and there carried over or alongside sheer precipices by means of stout beams of wood fastened into the rocks. At one spot the party ran a frightful risk, as it afterwards appeared. They had just crossed a platform or bridge, hanging over a tremendous precipice, when it was discovered that many of the iron pins holding the bridge together had disappeared. They had been taken out by the natives of the locality for the sake of the iron!

The officers had a notable day among the game at an elevation of between eight and nine thousand feet. A number of them scrambled up the hill-sides, taking with them a hundred and fifty coolies as beaters, whilst others remained below, at various points in the dells, to bag such birds as came that way. It was an animated and a noisy scene, the movements of the sportsmen and the yells of the beaters echoing among the mountains, giving life to the spectacle. The bird found in greatest numbers was the minaul, and so rapid were its movements, that the men might as well have tried to shoot a flash of lightning, Russell tells us, as to hit a minaul. These birds had a singular knack of dropping like plummets down to the bottom of the valleys, whence, when all was quiet once more, they would run up the hill to the top again at great speed. A brace or two fell to the guns, and Dr. Russell himself went far down into the ravines below and picked up a few of the birds. But so steep were the slopes, that, in ascending again, he was glad of the help of a couple of

coolies, who took each an arm, and hoisted him up in fine style. This kind of thing was considered quite permissible in the Himalayas, and the natives were remarkably sure-footed—far more so than even the Alpine guides. What was more, they seemed never to suffer from shortness of breath, no matter what the elevation of the mountain, or what the steepness of the ascent.

Russell confesses that the descent in one place, down to a mountain lodge of the Rajah's, scared him—at any rate at the start, his feelings when called upon to take the downward path being, as he supposed, something like those of a young sparrow when required for the first time to take a drop from the giddy heights of the water-spout down to the street below. But he had his native helpers, and he had his alpenstock. "And thus, with an able-bodied aborigen holding on by my tunic-tails behind, and Khoom Dass and his nephew acting as a locomotive stair-steps below, I parachuted down, down, and ever down—knee-deep in flowers, thigh-deep in rich clover, underwood, grass, and corn, here forced up a stile, there dropped down a little cataract, till it seemed to me that I was approaching the antipodes. Khoom Dass had no perceptible difficulty with his respiratory apparatus, and descended like a snow-ball; and I am afraid that several times I should not have been displeased if he had slightly sprained his ankle, or had fallen on his respectable Roman nose."

When Dr. Russell and his friends "parachuted" down that alarming slope, they were bound on a curious errand, no less than that of witnessing a great festival that was to be held in honour of a local god. The visitors were not yet at the spot, however, for the idol stood on the top of a

steep-sided and cone-shaped hill that rose from the middle of the valley. It required all Khoom Dass's sprightly activity to get the weighty war-correspondent up to the rendezvous. When the Englishmen arrived at the place they were received with great acclamations by the big crowd of worshippers, and they were given a place of distinguished honour—a seat on the Rajah's carpet. The image itself was a frightfully hideous thing, with seven heads of metal, arranged in the form of a lozenge. Enormous lengths of hair hung down all round, and concealed the lower parts of the idol, as well as the men who bore it about the assembly. When the thing was brought before the Rajah himself, that great ruler bowed, to satisfy his people who stood around, but he had much difficulty, Russell thought, in keeping his countenance through the ceremony.

It happened sometimes that the party did not manage to reach the next bungalow on the road, and they had to spend the night on the mountain-side or in some sheltered valley. On one occasion no level spot on which to pitch the tents could be discerned nearer than a little plateau that could be seen a long way above the road. So deceptive are the distances among such stupendous ranges, that it took an hour's hard climbing to reach that little bit of level. It was a grand position, the peaks towering up into the sky on all sides. The argus pheasant was to be found in plenty, and some of the more enthusiastic of the sportsmen, fascinated by the view, declared that they would take a cold dinner with them, climb to the top of the overhanging peak, and there sleep, so as to be ready for pheasant-shooting in the early morning. The war-

correspondent smiled quietly to himself as he witnessed the start, and all the evening the men kept dropping in, one after another, utterly exhausted, and remarking that they would defer till the morning their visit to the summit. It was as well so, for presently there arose a tremendous storm. "The blinding flashes lighted up the closed tent, inside which we sat as though it were in the focus of an electric light. Rolls of thunder clashed along the hill-side, so that we imagined the rocks were tumbling down upon our heads, and the rain fell with a heavy leaden thud for hours together, till the little spring swelled into a torrent, and dashed away with a great roar into the stream in the valley below us."

Other matters than sport occupied the attention of the Englishmen, however, and especially of their chief. There was a sensation one morning when five or six hillmen brought into the camp two sepoys—runaway mutineers, it was said. They were big, well-built fellows, and carried themselves in a way that immediately proclaimed the soldier. They were placed before Lord William for examination, and told lies glibly. They first pretended to be fakirs from Cashmere, but Khoom Dass, after a little cross-questioning, proved that they knew nothing of the beliefs and duties of a fakir. One of the prisoners admitted that he had been a servant in the 46th Regiment of Native Infantry, and at last that it was just possible he might once have been a sepoy in that notorious band. What part exactly these fellows had played in the Mutiny and its awful accompaniments could not be discovered at that time and place, and they were sent away to Simla for further examination.

ALARMED BY A COMET

Terrible alarm was caused one night among the natives attached to the expedition by the rise above the black outline of the mountain forest of a "bright and wonderful star, which, as it ascended, displayed a tail of a faint rose-coloured hue streaming after it. The natives assembled in great consternation, and gazed upon it with awe and horror, for with them to have the 'Doomwallah' is an omen of most evil import, perplexing nations with the fear of change. It was some moments ere we made out it was a comet, and for hours we watched its fiery seam across the calm blue heavens." So easily are the peoples of that far-off hill-country alarmed by any unusual natural phenomenon.

The members of the expedition had several times seen the Rajah of Bussahir, and had had many curious experiences of him and his people. But at length there came a day which banished the potentate from the British presence. The Rajah paid a visit to Lord William, and got himself into serious trouble by coming in a state of helpless intoxication; he had, in fact, been up all night, drinking hard at brandy and champagne. Lord William administered a severe rebuke, and sent the Prince away in disgrace.

This strange and unpleasant duty did not prevent the officers from going out to hunt in the afternoon, more especially as word had been brought into the camp that the traces of a bear had been seen in the neighbourhood. A big show of beating was made, and the search was close; at one time the shikaree, or huntsman, declared that the beast could not be more than twenty yards away. It was all to no purpose; the bush was so thick that all traces of

the bear were lost. But there was found the carcass of a musk-deer, which had been killed by a leopard and partly devoured. A search was made by the natives for the musk-bag, and it appeared that the leopard always throws away that portion of the musk-deer, probably because its presence gives an unpleasant flavour to the whole of the flesh. Some of these deer were heard crashing through the scrub, but there were no dogs present to assist in the tracking, and the animals escaped.

The life of the hunter in the Himalayas is full of dangers, especially in the case of the native mountain-folk, many of whom devote all their days to this occupation. It is not only the risks from bears and other wild animals they have to fear, but they are liable to be caught in snowstorms and lost, or overwhelmed by avalanches of snow or by falling rocks, to say nothing of the precipices and the frequency with which bad falls are met with. An injured man may lie in agony for days in some remote spot till death mercifully intervenes, and for long afterwards his bleached skeleton may remain a ghastly spectacle to future adventurers. There is also the risk of snake-bites. One day, as the beaters were pursuing their duties with their usual din, suddenly they began a wild yell of "Maro! maro!" jumping violently up and down the while. Lord William Hay began to jump likewise, much to Russell's mystification, who, though but a few yards behind, could not see what the chief was about. All the same, the war-correspondent showed remarkable agility in skipping out of the way also. Lord William banged the bush heavily with a thick stick, and at length cried gleefully, "I have killed him!" It was a snake he had been

attacking, and the natives declared it to be one of the deadliest serpents of the district, and that a man once bitten by it had but a few minutes to live.

Russell breaks out into unstinted admiration of the views to be obtained from all the commanding points on their route. This was the case at a place near the source of the Ghirree, from which was to be had one of the most glorious prospects in the world. But it was an awful place also—so much so, indeed, that "it was enough to make even a man of strong nerves shudder at portions of the path, which is carried with infinite art by most trying curves of mountain and precipice right along the top of this abyss." These precipices were in some places two thousand or three thousand feet in sheer depth, the mountain seeming as if rent bodily in two. Here the hunting-party were met by a whole mob of natives from the surrounding settlements. The fellows were in a state of great excitement, saying that a couple of bears had disappeared into the thick wood lining the bottom of the valley. They begged the assistance of the gentlemen, a request complied with at once and with delight, as it is hardly necessary to say. Into the forest jungle the whole party, hunters and villagers, plunged. They crashed about vigorously for an hour or two, the natives keeping up an indescribable din all the while. At length all farther progress was stopped by the density of the undergrowth. The bears had evidently given their enemies the slip, and the sportsmen retired from the wood, feeling that they had rather been made fools of. Their further feelings may be imagined when they were informed by the natives that this wood was one of the most dangerous

places to be found, for it was thickly infested by terribly deadly snakes. One species was a sort of boa, which was asserted to be forty or fifty feet long, with a body as thick as the trunk of a fair-sized pine. This tall story was not at all credited by the British sportsmen, but they had no difficulty in believing that the other and smaller kind of serpent—the same as that killed by Lord William not long before—was plentiful enough. As it happened, no member of the party had been injured in the scramble amongst the bushes.

A curious custom was found to prevail in one locality. A Thakoor of the district had a little boy, to whom Russell had taken a great fancy, giving him a pocket-knife. This man, visiting the tents one evening, excused himself for not having brought his son by saying that the child was asleep under the waterfall! A little inquiry revealed the fact that the women, whenever they wanted a child to go to sleep, took him to a spot on the mountain-side where stood ready for use a number of miniature waterfalls. A place had been chosen where water gushed forth from the rock, and there a shed had been built, down into which the water was led by means of reeds or other tubes. The children were laid on the ground beneath these spouts, so that a trickle of water descended continuously on the face. "The child closes its eyes and mouth, and falls into a profound, sweet, and healthful sleep, which endures so long as it is left under the waterspout!" And the correspondent declares that though he had seen dozens of children so sleeping, yet he had never heard of any ill-effects resulting from this strange treatment.

Russell had some amusing experiences on the occasion

of a sort of state visit to another of the highland Rajahs. He accompanied Mr. Melville, a Deputy-Commissioner, and seems to have been mistaken by the Rajah for that great official. At any rate, the war-correspondent was invited to ascend to the potentate's howdah, on the back of an enormous elephant. This was how it had to be done: Russell had first to mount a ladder to the top of another elephant standing by, and then to step across the space between the two animals. The day was frightfully hot; the elephants were fidgety; the war-correspondent was heavy, and not exactly nimble, being slightly lame just then; the chasm was of uncertain and varying breadth, and full fifteen feet deep! How Mr. Melville must have chuckled to see his friend balancing himself anxiously as he stood on the back of the unsteady beast, watching for a chance of jumping across in safety!

"There sat His Highness the Rajah, and here stood his lowness the correspondent, afraid, by reason of his lameness, to make a leap; and the bulging sides of the two elephants kept their howdahs as far apart as the main-chains of two line-of-battle ships would separate their hammock-nettings. I could not make an explanatory speech to the Rajah, who sat smiling with extended hand, the finger-tips some good six feet away; and thus I stood, supremely foolish, and very uncertain what to do, till a sudden lurch, a push from behind, a desperate resolution all combined, and with a desperate, ponderous flop, full thirteen stone and ten pounds, I dropped on the Rajah's feet, and took my seat at his side. Dear, good man! Kings have long and unfeeling arms, but I presume their toes are as sensitive as those of most mortal

men. The Rajah never winced, and yet I am nearly certain I alighted, or preponderated, upon his feet; and I am perfectly certain his feet were quite naked, with the exception of some rings of precious metal set round His Highness's most favoured pedal digits."

However, the Rajah was exceedingly affable, and the two had a long conversation together, Mr. Melville acting as interpreter. Before the interview ended, valuable presents were brought by the attendants and offered to the visitors. Russell was pressed to take a magnificent set of precious stones, the value of which, he was afterwards informed, was not less than thirty thousand pounds! He bowed and declined the dazzling offer. He was wise, for etiquette would have required him to make a present of equal value in return!

CHAPTER XIV

SYRIAN MOUNTAINS AND SYRIAN ROBBERS

A famous book of travels—Mr Warburton, the author of "The Crescent and the Cross"—His Eastern tour—Starts over the Mountains of Lebanon—A well-armed couple—A wonderful country—"Torn mountains and black precipices"—Panthers, wild boars, hyenas—A hyena shot—Alone in a robbers' den at night—A masterful assumption of authority—A difficult mountain-path—Ascent of the "Hill of Hermon"—Half dead with thirst—"A precious little rivulet"—Milking the wild goats—Gazelle-stalking—A night on the bare mountain-side—The wild "hill-country of Judea"—Warburton's dragoman missing—The peasant and the gun—A fruitless search—Bishop's men join in it—A cut-throat village—"None who enter come out again!"—Warburton dashes into the place—A surly reception—Exit barred—A group of dark figures at the gate—"Stand clear!"—Flashing steel—A wonderful escape—Servant found—A mountain ride to Beyrout—Englishman pushes on ahead—A terrible track in the dark—Four mounted scouts in the pass—A collection of Arab smuggler-tents at one in the morning—Picturesque scene—But a terribly dangerous position—Three squinting ruffians—A friendly Syrian—"I shot past the smugglers."

Mr. Eliot Warburton, the author of "The Crescent and the Cross," lived before the days of cheap excursions and personally-conducted tourist parties; but, though travel was more difficult in his time, he saw a good deal more than the majority of our present-day holiday tourists manage to do with their superior advantages,

and he described his journeyings in a delightful style which made his book famous.

From Gibraltar he sailed to Egypt, ascended the Nile to Nubia, came back again, and voyaged to Syria and Palestine, and, on his homeward way, contrived to see Cyprus, Constantinople, and Greece. Not the least interesting part of his long round was that which covered the mountains of Lebanon and the Syrian uplands generally, and the "hill-country of Judea." We may take up his narrative at Beyrout, from which he intended to travel over the Mountains of Lebanon, to see Damascus and the ruins of Baalbec, and to visit the sacred scenes of the Holy Land.

His retinue consisted of a servant and a muleteer, both armed in magnificent fashion. The muleteer wore a big belt, in which were stuck almost an armoury of daggers and pistols, while the rest of his dress, "a pair of petticoat-trousers, red slippers, a faded jacket," together with a red cap wrapped round with a Damascus shawl, was certainly picturesque and very much in keeping with his profession and the wild Syrian mountains. The servant was more of a dandy, yet he too presented a formidable appearance, carrying a pair of pistols in the pommel of his saddle, a sabre by his side, and his master's gun slung across his shoulder. For many weeks did the traveller tread the mountains with only these two honest fellows for company and help in time of need. His horse, a beautiful Arab steed, was to him as a dear friend. The state of the country will be understood from the fact that every traveller whom he met on the way was fully armed.

The following description of the scenery of the Lebanon

will stand for many spots besides the neighbourhood of the village of Beteddeen, respecting which it is written: "We broke away over the mountains at a gallop where it seemed too steep to walk. We had sent on our servants early, and soon lost our way; but still we pushed on, though it was a wild country to ride a steeple—or, rather, a mosque—chase in. We came at last upon a beautiful little village, clinging to the side of a precipice, with cascades gushing through its streets and over-arching some of them. . . . Our way henceforth for some hours lay through scenery perhaps unparalleled in beauty. All the picturesque and imposing, all the awful yet winning effect, that hill and vale and water can produce are here. Torn mountains, black precipices, thundering torrents, yawning rifts, soft, sunny glades, pale green vineyards, wide-spreading forests, flat-roofed cottages, sparkling rills, terraced cultivation, and a brilliant sky over all, leave nothing for the painter's, or even the poet's, eye to desire."

Of dangerous wild animals our traveller saw very few. On Mount Carmel, he was told, there were panthers, and wild boars, and hyenas. The goatherds of the district have always to go armed during the day, and have to fold their flocks at night within stone-wall fences. Mr. Warburton managed to shoot one hyena before he left the district, but it escaped with its wounds among the cliffs.

It was the *men* from whom the dangers of the journey, if any, might be expected to come. The wandering Arabs were a wild, lawless, and vindictive set as a rule. Even the Turkish soldiers, who might have been expected to be under discipline, were often awkward fellows to meet with.

AN ENGLISHMAN'S COOLNESS

On one occasion Mr. Warburton had ridden on ahead of his servants when a storm came on. He ran for shelter to some ruined buildings, that looked the very thing for a robbers' den. He was not very greatly pleased to find two armed Arabs in possession of the ruins. The place and the men were alike ugly and forbidding, but it was too late to turn away. And Mr. Warburton was not in the least the sort of man to show the white feather. His plan of action was soon formed. With an air of authority he flung the rein to one of the fellows, and ordered him to lead the horse up and down to cool. The other man was directed to make a fire at once, while the Englishman himself, in the most off-hand way possible, sat down, lighted his pipe, and watched his orders carried out. Strange to say, the Arabs at once obeyed, after glancing at one another for a moment, and by the time the traveller's servants arrived there was a good fire blazing, and the horse was cool. Had the stranger showed any timidity, or had his tone been less masterful, there is little doubt that the Arabs would have plundered him, if, indeed, he had escaped a worse fate.

In many parts of the mountain country the ascents and descents were difficult and even dangerous, yet the servants of the Englishman would take them at a gallop, wherever it was at all possible. Coming down the side of Lebanon on one occasion towards a stronghold of the Druses, he found the way very long, very toilsome, and very dangerous. It was such a path as he describes elsewhere, where nothing but a lizard or a mountaineer might have been expected to venture. Glad were horse and man when at last they reached the valley and a deliciously cool

streamlet. Again, near the village called Ainété the horses could scarcely keep their feet at all on the sides of the naked mountain, and the beasts went on hurriedly and yet fearfully, evidently dreading a catastrophe, and yet desirous of getting away as fast as possible from so unsafe a spot.

Warburton made an ascent of the loftiest and most famous of the Syrian peaks, Djebel-es-Sheikh, the Chief of the Mountains, or, as it is called in the Scriptures, the Hill of Hermon. He tells us that though he had ascended most of the usual mountains, this was by far the most difficult of all. He and his companions left their horses in the village nearest the summit, but it required six hours of the severest climbing after that to reach the top, so long and laborious was the ascent. The party were half dead with thirst, but not a drop of water could be found on all the route. Then, when the summit was reached where the snow was lying, every man rushed to the first patch. They could not satisfy their thirst till their guide showed them how to proceed. Breaking off masses of the frozen snow he held them in the sun, and at length "a precious little rivulet trickled down into our parched mouths." In the traveller's opinion the world does not possess a more magnificent view than that which he beheld from the crown of the Hill of Hermon.

The descent from the mountain and the course among the hills towards Damascus brought a fresh incident or two. Thirst again attacking the party, and no water being in sight, it struck them that if they could catch some of the mountain goats, they might obtain milk. A hard and exciting chase after the animals it was before

one was caught, but when it was milked, on the snow, the draughts were refreshing indeed. Lower down the party tried to stalk some gazelles, but were unsuccessful. It was late when they got down from the mountain, but the Englishman declined the invitation to stop for the night at the village, fearing the fleas there more than the wild beasts without or the robbers roaming the hills. Yet the way was solitary; it was rough and rugged; it was known to be haunted by freebooters. The traveller and his men plodded on till it was pitch dark, however, and they were then compelled to lie down on the bare ground, just where they were, and tie their horses to their feet. The muleteer took the precaution to remove the bells from the necks of the animals, lest the sound might attract the prowling robbers. In this uncomfortable fashion they passed the night on the mountain-side.

An adventure of a different kind awaited the traveller in the mountain-country of Judea, not far from the ancient and hallowed village of Bethlehem. He was riding quietly along when he suddenly noticed that his servant, or dragoman, was missing. He had heard a shot, but took very little notice, such sounds being only too common in a country where everybody bore arms. Going back into the valley to look for the man, he met a fellow with a musket over his shoulder. This weapon he did not hesitate to seize and hold while he questioned the countryman. The peasant said that he too had heard a shot, and had seen a man galloping hard away; he opened the pan of his own gun to show that it, at any rate, had not been recently fired. Up one hill after another did Warburton climb, shouting the name Nicola with all his might, till it was

dark. Making his way to Bethlehem, he went in search of the English Bishop, to beg the assistance of his men in the search. He found the kindly Bishop conducting service in the church, but the good man at once placed his groom and janissary at Warburton's disposal.

Now, among the hills, near the place where the missing servant had last been seen, was a village with a very bad reputation. It was surrounded with a wall, and strangers were hardly ever permitted to enter there; if they did enter, *they never came out again.* When, therefore, Mr. Warburton announced to his men, and to a number of Bethlehemites who had volunteered their services, his intention of going into the village to look for the missing servant, they regarded him with amazement. But he was mounted on a splendid horse, and without hesitation he dashed on ahead down the mountain-side, and was soon flying at full speed through the village street, the hoofs sending out showers of sparks as they struck the road of solid rock. He found only a few sulky groups, every man armed with a formidable knife. In answer to his inquiries, they replied in a surly fashion that no horseman had for many a day entered their town. On this Warburton made for the opposite gate, down a very steep street. This is his own vivid account of his escape from that den of thieves and cut-throats.

"I could see a group of dark figures standing under the archway, and the two nearest of the party had crossed their spears to arrest my passage. I could not have stopped if I would; neither the custom of the country nor the circumstances of the case required much ceremony; so, shouting to them to 'stand clear,' I gave spurs to my eager steed,

and burst through them as if I was 'switching a rasper.' The thin spears gave way like twigs; the mob rebounded to the right and to the left against the wall. They were all armed, and mine was not the only steel that gleamed as a fellow rushed forward to seize my bridle. The next moment my mare chested him, and sent him spinning and tangled in his long blue gown, while I shot forth into the open moonlight, and, turning round a pile of ruins, was in a moment hidden from their view."

The plucky Englishman made the best of his way to Bethlehem again, feeling it useless to continue the search in the darkness of the night. He had a scare on his return journey, meeting a party of armed men. They proved to be friends, citizens who had come out to inform him that the dragoman had been found. When the Bethlehem men learnt that the traveller had actually been into that "den of robbers," and had *come out again*, they scarcely credited the story. The servant was found at the convent, and this was his tale: he had gone back to the Pool of Siloam to fetch his rosary, which he had left there, when an Arab had fired upon him from behind a rock. The bullet had grazed his skin and had torn away part of his collar. Terrified, he had galloped off, in his perturbation missing the road, however, and never stopping till he reached the gate of Jerusalem. To his dismay, he found it closed, and the guards refused him admittance; there was nothing for it, therefore, but to ride back to Bethlehem. On the way he had been met by the Bishop's servants.

To the very end of his stay in Syria and Palestine, Mr. Warburton met with dangers by the way. He was

A Daring Feat

Mounted on a splendid horse, to which he gave spur, Warburton burst through the gateway of a village from which no strangers were ever known to come out, if they were foolhardy enough to enter.

riding along the mountains towards Beyrout, at which place he intended to take his passage on board a homeward-bound ship. He pushed on ahead, having business to get through in the port before the vessel sailed on the morrow. His muleteer in vain begged him not to adventure himself thus rashly by going alone, saying that the district was not only the haunt of robbers, but a hiding-place for smuggled goods. It was a wild and rugged country, moreover, and the very place for lawless deeds. The Englishman attributed all this to a superabundant Eastern imagination, but he was not long in discovering that his servant had spoken the truth for once!

Riding along a very steep and slippery path, he descended somewhat, and, passing through a cemetery, observed lights twinkling at intervals along the hill. He noted that as he approached each one of these lights in turn, it was immediately put out, but only to reappear as soon as he was past. He took it that they were signals to smugglers away on the shore. He now took care to wrap something round the cap he was wearing, the red tarboosh of a Turkish soldier, knowing that the owner of such a thing would infallibly get a bullet through his head before long. As he approached a pass in the rocks four mounted scouts suddenly dashed out upon him, and, reining up close to him, demanded who he was and whither he was bound. "An Englishman travelling to Beyrout," he answered, and, after a moment's consultation, the fellows allowed him to proceed, rather to his surprise.

About a mile farther on Warburton came upon a number of tents. It was one o'clock in the morning, the dead hour of night. To escape from so many men as were

gathered here was practically impossible. Putting his usual bold face on the matter, he rode unhesitatingly up to the largest of the tents and dismounted, desiring one of the Arabs to lead his horse about a little; then, asking for a light for his pipe, he placidly stretched himself out on the tent carpet. The scene was a most picturesque one, he tells us: high mountains frowning all around, the smugglers standing at the door of the tent, all with pistols and yataghans, the dew upon their shaggy beards, a glorious moon shining over all. But how critical was the stranger's position there, at dead of night, high on those lonely mountains, and at the mercy of men of violence who would stick at nothing! No wonder he says of the picture that it was one "on which I gazed earnestly as it might be for the last time. I knew that if they robbed, they would also murder me, as the silence of those 'who tell no tales' was important to them; and yet I lay smoking my pipe with as much calmness, if not indifference, as ever I did under the shelter of the English flag." Thus to assume a coolness he perhaps did not by any means feel was no doubt the traveller's only chance.

Presently three ruffians of most forbidding aspect, and all squinting frightfully, approached nearer and glowered long and closely at the stranger, inquiring at length what had brought him there at that time of night. In answer to the question, he gave the same account of himself as before: he was an Englishman, and his servants were following him, a reply evidently disbelieved by the fellows. At that moment there came a surprise: a young Syrian made his appearance, and, speaking in French, informed Warburton in most kindly terms that he was in the

greatest possible danger, but that he would advise him to stay where he was till the morning. The Englishman thanked the young fellow, but replied that it was his intention to proceed at once on his journey.

"I persisted in departing, and mounted my horse deliberately; as I gathered up my reins, the three Arabs placed themselves in my way, and one attempted to catch my bridle; I well knew then that my only chance of escape lay in resolution; so, saying to my assailant, 'If you move, you die!' the moonlight glimmered on the barrel of the pistol, the Syrian spoke a few hurried words whose meaning I could not catch, and the next moment I was past the smugglers, and out of their sight round a projecting rock." Mr. Warburton had still a weary distance to travel that night, and knew nothing whatever of the arduous country through which his path lay, but he had escaped with his life, and next day saw him take his last leave of Beyrout and the Syrian mountains.

CHAPTER XV

A NIGHT ADVENTURE ON THE BRISTENSTOCK

Spending the night on a great mountain under more favourable and under less favourable conditions—Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Hardy determine to attempt the Bristenstock, an unconquered Alp—A good start—Much time spent on early stages—Glacier, moraine, ridge—Repeated disappointments—Disposed to turn back—The summit spied—A long "twenty minutes"—Stopped by a huge perpendicular precipice—No possible way down—A heart-breaking return to the top—Daylight ebbing out fast—Darkness comes on at five hundred feet from the summit—A dismal prospect—A bed on a narrow rock-shelf—A frugal supper and little sleep—Start half-frozen next morning—Wisdom not yet learnt—A new route—Another frightful precipice—Ridge after ridge attempted—A painful search for the original ridge—The grass slopes and safety at last—The search party met—The English reputation for pluck kept up—A lugubrious story—Enlightenment.

One of the most trying experiences of the mountaineer is that of having to pass the long, cold hours of darkness, when night has come upon him unprepared, far away from human assistance or even human ken, high up on some lonely, storm-swept, and dangerous mountain-flank. To bivouac at a lofty elevation is, of course, no new thing to the experienced climber. Frequently a long and difficult ascent necessitates a start the evening before, when the long hours of night must perforce be spent on the moun-

tain itself, at some spot agreed upon. But on such occasions the conditions are usually on the whole favourable. There may be a hut, which, however rude, is at any rate better than no shelter at all. Often a tent is carried up; at the worst, the spot has probably some defence against the winds and possible storms. The bivouacking party is generally fairly numerous; food and drink there are in plenty; not seldom a fire can be made. But it is quite otherwise when, as often happens, night overtakes belated climbers who are still far up the mountain; who have little or no food, and perhaps but a scanty supply of clothing with them; who, possibly, can find nothing but the merest cornice whereon to rest through the night-watches. In such cases the dangers of the situation are generally great, and often appalling. A thrilling experience of this kind befell Messrs. Kennedy and Hardy, two well-known English Alpine climbers, in the year 1857.

They were staying at Amsteg, on the St. Gothard road, in the Reuss Valley, and they took it into their heads to ascend the Bristenstock, a peak in the neighbourhood which was said to be of only moderate height—something over ten thousand feet, in fact—and it was thought that the summit might be reached in six hours from the hotel. Guides were, of course, pressed upon them, but they both laughed the notion to scorn, quite confident in their own power to find their way to the top of the Bristenstock and back unassisted. As the landlord afterwards admitted, none of the guides had ever been to the top; and, indeed, it was said that only one man had ever ascended the mountain, and he had lost his life in the

descent! An ominous story, but the Englishmen were not to be deterred by any sinister forebodings or ugly tales.

The couple made an early start next morning, at five o'clock, leaving orders for a good dinner to be prepared for them at six in the evening. They were "in light marching order," as Mr. Kennedy puts it, having neither waistcoat nor necktie, and carrying with them only one lump of bread and a single bottle of wine. They meant to enjoy their dinner thoroughly on their return! It was a grand morning, and the ascent was at first easy, while the country was beautiful. Chatting and admiring the splendid views which every fresh turn opened out to them, they made their way at a good speed, among Alpine roses and rhododendrons. The bay of Uri and the St. Gothard road lay far beneath, while from the valley below the sound of church bells floated up to the happy climbers. Everything promised a delightful and successful day.

So fascinated were the two, indeed, that they were disposed to linger too long over this early stage of their work. But at length rousing themselves to the realities of the situation, they put on more speed. Avoiding the glacier which filled the great hollow on the north side of the mountain, they crossed the moraine, and then began to mount the rock-ridge bounding the glacier. The going was hard, the stones being loose and the slope steep. For hour after hour they plodded on manfully, gaining one after another the minor peaks which were ever appearing above their heads. At each of these little summits they hoped they should see the final crown of the Bristenstock, but as often they were doomed to disappointment.

Naturally enough, they began to get a little anxious; for it was now past three o'clock in the afternoon, and the topmost peak was apparently as far off as ever. "It is getting late, Hardy," said his companion; "it would be better to give it up and return, for we have many an hour's work behind us." But just then the other gained a glimpse of the summit, and cried that in twenty minutes they would have achieved their end. To leave the task after such preliminary labours was absurd, he declared. So Mr. Kennedy let himself be persuaded, and the two pushed on. The twenty minutes was found to be a bad guess, and it was almost four o'clock when the adventurous pair stood on the highest point of the mountain. Regardless in their joy of the flight of time, they sat down to eat and drink, and enjoy the prospect and the intoxication of success. Hardy was about to throw away a small piece of bread that was left of their provisions, when the more thoughtful Kennedy admonished him to put it in his pocket.

It was twenty minutes after four when they began the descent; there was certainly no time to be lost. Accordingly, Hardy was inclined to forsake the ridge by which they had safely, if laboriously, ascended, and take to what seemed a far easier way, down a gully. "It's rather foolhardy to try a new route at this time of day," objected his companion. To which Hardy replied: "Don't make bad puns on my name; there's no time for that." In the end they chose the new route. Whether they were "bold and self-reliant," or "rash and self-conceited," Mr. Kennedy declares they have never since been quite able to determine.

However, down the northern face of the mountain they began to pick their way. For half an hour they got on rapidly enough, but presently came a long spell of hard, almost sheer, climbing down. Only one of the men could advance at a time, in a general way, so arduous was the descent. One held the poles while the other got himself down the ledge. Now and then came places where it seemed impossible to descend at all. Nevertheless, Hardy talked cheerfully of the *supper* they would have at the end of their toilsome day; he had long since given up all hope of sitting down to that six o'clock *dinner* at the hotel. For two hours this heavy work lasted, and we can well believe Mr. Kennedy when he states that during the whole of the time their "energies, both mental and bodily, were taxed to the uttermost."

Suddenly they found themselves peering over the top of a perpendicular precipice hundreds—nay, thousands—of feet in height. At the foot of it was a glacier, which, as usual, was separated from the rock by a *bergschrund*. "From the spot where we were standing," to quote Mr. Kennedy again, "the wall of rock appeared to go sheer down to the ice; there was no mode of descent that we could possibly discover, and on neither hand could we discern foothold even for a chamois. I saw that there was nothing to be done where we were, and that it was impossible to remain much longer clinging to the slippery ledges of these precipitous rocks." In short, it was absolutely necessary to return to the very top of the mountain, and make a fresh start on their old path.

A heart-breaking prospect, and at first Mr. Hardy expostulated vehemently. It was impossible, he said, to

reascend many of the rocks down which they had climbed with such difficulty. A return to the summit meant, too, that hope must be given up of supper and bed in the hotel. Mr. Kennedy remarked that if they got down the mountain at all that night it "would be in a way that would leave us no further occasion for these luxuries." Go back, therefore, they must, at whatever cost, and Mr. Hardy soon realized the wisdom of his friend's representations.

The position was an unenviable one, to say the least. Here they were, darkness coming on apace, suspended over a frightful precipice, and their only way out of the pass into which they had got themselves was to climb, climb, till their weary limbs should bring them to the very top of the mountain again. A couple of minutes, however, ended their deliberations, and then they set off with a will, climbing faster than they had done before all the day. But the difficult places were many. Often one man had to cling with all his might to a tiny ledge while his companion climbed up to his shoulders, and so to the next shelf, whence he was able to help to pull up the first. It was dangerous and most exhausting toil.

In order to save time they struck off a hundred feet or so short of the actual summit, and crossed to their line of first ascent. By this time the sun had set, and their chief anxiety was to push on while yet any daylight remained and get down as far as possible. They were by this time well aware, of course, that they would have to spend the night on the mountain. To get down out of the cold as far as they could was then the one thing to aim at. Yet, strange to relate, after all their experience, they once

more deserted the old and certain path, the path by which they had mounted, deeming the ridge neither expeditious nor enough sheltered from the blasts. This time it was the west face of the mountain they selected, overlooking the St. Gothard road far away below.

At five hundred feet from the summit—the elevation still nearly ten thousand feet above sea-level, be it remembered—the light failed, and it was necessarily the end of their day's travel. Here the benighted pair must spend the long, dark, cold hours, with no fire to warm them and no food to speak of to put into their stomachs. Not even a rug or a greatcoat had they to protect them from the severity of the weather and the keenness of the frost. The situation was a deplorable one. It might become far worse than that.

The two were minded to stop here rather than attempt to grope a few feet farther down, by the discovery of a tiny ledge jutting from the rock slope, perhaps the only ledge to be met with on the whole face of the mountain. The shelf was but eight feet long and four and a half wide. From the edge the cliff fell almost sheer down to the valley beneath. On the danger side they built a wall of stones, half a yard high, both to prevent a roll overboard in their sleep and to afford some little protection from the wind. On the flat of the shelf they made as soft a bed as they could with smooth stones, placing bigger specimens for their heads. The piece of bread they had left was small enough in all conscience, yet they divided it into two portions, reserving one for breakfast in the morning. Water was to be had near, and the men turned in for the night.

"We were obliged to use the greatest care in this operation. First one made himself comfortable, then the other cautiously placed himself alongside and endeavoured to do likewise. Although we agreed that, in order to avoid the risk of falling over, we would not both sleep with our backs to the precipice, yet ever and anon as we leaned a little against our fragile wall of stones one or two of them would become displaced and go bounding away into the valley some thousands of feet below. Thus we reposed, locked in each other's arms like the babes in the wood, whom the robins covered with leaves, only in the present instance there were no babes and no wood, and no robins and no leaves."

Long they lay awake, as may well be supposed. Yet they were not inclined to talk much. In truth, each was disposed to reflection rather than to conversation. Never, Mr. Kennedy says, had either of them before felt so immediately under the protection of a Higher Power as they did on that lofty mountain-side. They fully realized how dangerous their position might become should storm or fog come on. They were aware that their very lives depended on their preserving coolness, self-possession, and determined pluck. But never once did they lapse into despair.

The cold increased. Presently it grew intense, and the two were all but frozen stiff. Often they had to get up on their feet, as carefully as they could, to stamp a little warmth into them, and to swing their arms about their chests, as cabmen do in frosty weather. On more than one occasion in his life Mr. Hardy had suffered from rheumatic fever, and he had been warned against exposing

himself too much to the keen night air. It may here be mentioned that, strange as it may seem, that night on the Bristenstock apparently effected a complete cure for him. After that he was more robust than he had ever been before!

But the longest and most uncomfortable night passes, and so did this. It needs little imagination to see the Englishmen rising with alacrity from their cold, stony bed. But so frozen were they both that it would have been mere madness on their part to start at once, benumbed as were their limbs. It required twenty minutes of violent stamping and slapping to get any warmth and feeling into their feet and hands. They ate the last morsel of bread before they got under way, though they had not the slightest appetite, a thing not to be wondered at. Drink they could get none, the little rill being frozen up.

Now, as Mr. Kennedy says, "one might have supposed that the lesson of yesterday would have sufficed, and that we should have taken care to follow the ridge by which we had ascended. Not so, however. Instead of returning to the track which we knew, half wilfully, half carelessly, we suffered ourselves to be tempted by apparently easy places, and thus to leave the ridge at every step further and further to the right." They had to pay the full penalty of their rash unwisdom. They found the work of descending laborious and trying to a degree. They were, of course, much exhausted, and they could get no water till six o'clock, and suffered terribly from thirst.

The wearisome hours passed, and the men began to congratulate themselves that they were nearing the grass slopes, and that easy ground was at hand. Alas! the

ridge on which they were ended suddenly in sheer precipices. They stopped short at the very brink, and gazed down at the River Reuss, a good five thousand feet below.

The travellers here explain that the Bristenstock is made up of thirty or forty main ridges, running up towards the top, of which ridges not more than three or four, perhaps, are practicable. They skirted the mountain till they reached another of these ridges, and attempted to get down by it. In no long time they were stopped by more precipices. They found a running rill, however, and obtained a much-needed drink. A third, and yet a fourth, of these main ridges was tried, but always fruitlessly. Thus the morning was consumed, and noon arrived, the travellers apparently in as great a difficulty as ever.

Mr. Hardy now made a wise suggestion—namely, that they should keep on round the mountain till they reached the ridge by which they had mounted the day before. With joy they perceived, after hard toil, their original track. They found it excellent going after the ground they had had to traverse, yet it was at best but a goat-track, and so steep and risky that the men dared not take their eyes from their work to gaze around. At last, about half-past two in the afternoon, they stood on the first of the grass slopes, to their utter relief and thankfulness.

Up to that moment they had not been conscious of hunger and fatigue, but now that the worst of the descent, and most, if not all, of the danger was over, they became painfully aware of their physical condition. They

were still five or six thousand feet above sea-level, and weary hours from their hotel. Push on they must, however great their weariness. On their way down they spied some châlets in the distance, and joyfully made for them, in the hope of getting bread and milk. They found not a soul there.

Meanwhile, there was no small stir at Amsteg as to what had become of the adventurous and rash Englishmen, and at length a little party of their friends set out to look for them. Guides were engaged to accompany the search party, though, as has been already explained, none of the guides knew any more of the mountain than did the strangers. And, as a matter of fact, the guides on this occasion were found to be quite useless. Whenever they came to a dangerous bit of the mountain they drew back in terror.

One of the first to spy the lost mountaineers was an English lad, who yelled out in delight, "Oh, is that you, Mr. Kennedy? I am so glad!" The meeting between the lost ones and their friends was warm, we may be sure, and a sort of triumphal procession was formed to the hotel. The boy was specially anxious that the reputation of his countrymen for pluck should be kept up, and, accordingly, Messrs. Hardy and Kennedy did their best to maintain their character in this respect. The hotel was reached at five o'clock, or six-and-thirty hours from the start the previous day. Fortunately neither suffered any serious effects afterwards from the long toil and the exposure to cold, hunger, and danger.

It is worth recording that the most strange and exaggerated rumours respecting this ascent got abroad,

and soon spread far and wide in the Alpine districts. A week later, for instance, Mr. Hardy himself and his friend Mr. Ellis were at dinner at the hotel on the distant Faulhorn, when an old gentleman began to tell of the marvellous adventures of a couple of Englishmen on the Bristenstock. The two unfortunates had perished miserably, he said, while attempting their unheard-of feat. "In fact," the old fellow declared, "according to my informant, nothing was found of their mangled corpses except some small particles of blood-stained clothing." "That I can well understand," thereupon put in Mr. Hardy, "for I am one of those unfortunates, and I remember that in many parts of the climb I was obliged to sit down and allow myself to slide over the rocks, so that I afterwards found myself minus a portion of my nether integument, and these, no doubt, are the patches of raiment the discovery of which you relate."

CHAPTER XVI

PEAKS, GEYSERS, AND VOLCANOES

A trip to Iceland not so common fifty years ago—Commander Forbes starts on one in 1860—A jolting vehicle—A marvellous jumble of things—A start for the top of Snaefells Yökul—The guides and their families in tears—The snow-line reached—Also the fog—At an angle of forty-five degrees—A heavy snowstorm—Ropes used—Ugly crevasses—Guides strike work—A halt for lunch—Another climb—Fog worse than ever—A descent necessary—The ponies lost—"Like a bear round his pole"—On the way to the Great Geyser—Yawning fissures and abysses—A tent rigged up near the Geyser—Supper and a final pipe—A scramble to windward just in time—A grand display—The "Strokr" follows suit at four in the morning—Forbes determines to cook the dinner in the "Strokr"—A flannel shirt and a breast of mutton—"My shirt in mid-air, arms extended"—"Done to a turn"—A narrow escape from Davy Jones—Up Hecla—A crawl into the cold crater of 1846—Layers of ice at the bottom—Descent into the active crater—No hole at the bottom—Steam from various parts of the sides—Forbes lights his pipe from the hot ground—On the edge of the crater—A risky crawl—Skaptar Yökul and its terrible work—A too rapid descent.

A VISIT to Iceland, once thought to be quite beyond the reach of the ordinary traveller, is in these days a common enough thing. Not so did Commander Forbes esteem it, however, when, in the year 1860, he made his way thither; for it had been the dream of his life to explore that land of volcano and geyser. His earlier experiences in the

island included nothing more exciting than a few hunting and fishing expeditions, when his dogs managed to worry the farmers' sheep, and the driver of his vehicle contrived to jolt off his gun-case and to smash his salmon-rod. Some of the country farms at which he found a lodging, though owned by the most hospitable of hosts, were not exactly such as even an unfastidious man would desire. The evening meal was not seldom being cooked by "a crone who is not at all calculated to increase one's appetite by her appearance." There was a marvellous jumble of things in the dwellings: "old clothes and spinning-jennies, fishing-nets and cradles (in one a litter of kittens, in another the hope of the family), strings of wet stockings, and dogs at every step. Happily they bark, but do not bite. Coupled with this a darkness thoroughly Egyptian, and an atmosphere which might be cut with a knife, and you have the ground floor." Of the upstairs, or sleeping-floor, entered by a ladder and a little hatchway, the less said the better.

Amongst the important things which the gallant Commander wanted to see in Iceland, quite in the front rank stood the mountain Snaefells Yökul, the geysers, and "Strokr," with the volcano Hecla, and its once more terrible brother Skaptar Yökul. The ascent of Snaefells Yökul was to begin the series. The weather had been as bad as it well could be for a fortnight, but the traveller determined to make the attempt, in spite of it. Guides in the proper sense there were none, for nobody knew anything more than himself of the parts above the snow-line. He managed to get a couple of peasants to go with him, however. The villagers evidently looked upon the expedition as equivalent to committing suicide, and many were

the tears shed, and many the mournful good-byes, when the moment came for the start.

The ascent was very steep for the first two thousand feet, and the way lay through heaps of ashes and pumice-stone, over most of which ground the little ponies bravely carried their riders. As yet there was no lava, but the ground was without a scrap of vegetation. Then, after stumbling amongst volcanic accumulations for two or three miles, the three reached the snow-line. With the snow was encountered also the fog, which threatened to become tiresome. From this point the ponies were of no use, and they were tied head to tail, in such a fashion that they could not get far away, and the men went on without them, first putting on their spiked shoes. The climbers were chilled and stiff after their three hours' ride. Now and then the fog lifted enough to show them the next shoulder of the mountain, but never a glimpse could they catch of the three cones which constitute the summit of Snaefells Yökul. On they plodded, up an icy slope at an angle of forty-five degrees, and took it as a sign of good luck when they found a rusty horseshoe. This was probably a relic of a former ascent, made fifty years before, by Mackenzie.

With the fog driving thicker than ever along the mountain-sides, the men pushed on, having no guide except the upward slope, for the Englishman's pocket-compass was temporarily bewitched, as he says, and did nothing but spin round and round in an extraordinary way. Luckily the ice was free from crevasses, but as they could not see a yard before them, the Commander thought it best to rope, Alpine fashion, a new thing for the Ice-

landers. The steepness increased, and the murmurings of the peasants also. Forbes had frequently to cheer them on, and to give them brandy and snuff to keep them going. After passing one or two ugly crevasses, the Icelanders declared they would go no farther. By this time it was snowing hard, almost blinding the three. So the leader deemed it best to stop for lunch, hoping for an improvement in the weather by the time the meal was over.

Alas! the weather did not improve; and yet, as the cold was unbearable, it was necessary to be on the move again. With difficulty the leader persuaded his men to mount a little higher. He had been careful to make them keep their feet well embedded in snow all the lunch-time—a very necessary precaution, if frost-bites were to be avoided. Soon the three were wandering blindly in a labyrinth of snowdrifts and yawning crevasses, and the adventure began to grow exciting, to say the least of it, for where they were they did not know in the least. The disappointment to Forbes was great and galling, but it had to be faced. It was useless to persevere in the attempt to reach one of the cones of the summit, and they must set their faces downwards. His decision to that effect sent the Icelanders into ecstasies of joy.

Rapidly, and almost recklessly, the three men began to slide down the snow-slopes. Their track of the morning was long since effaced by the falling snow, while the denseness of the fog was such that it would not have been easy to trace the marks had they remained. But Forbes took care of his men, continuing the roping. Quite lost among the hillocks and hummocks of ashes, of lava, of snow, they nevertheless rattled on anywhere, so long as it was in a

downward direction. When at last they got clear of the snow—and the fog with it—they found themselves three miles to the westward of the point where they had left their ponies. But the sun was bright and pleasant, and after a good time spent in the search, the poor beasts were found huddled together, and almost buried in the snow that had fallen upon them. The descent to the village and their reception there were the most cheerful imaginable. Commander Forbes, however, was mightily chagrined by his failure, and for days afterwards he prowled about the foot of the mountain like a bear round his pole. But it was of no use; the weather would not mend, and he had to take his departure from the locality.

Then began his journey towards the Geyser district, and a very rough journey it proved. One pitch-dark night it was necessary to get a guide to see them safely past the "winding fissures and abysses which yawned in every direction." The fissures, he says, were "as numerous and very similar to the cracks in the rind of an overripe melon, only that they are from twenty to fifty feet deep, until the surface of the water is reached, which again, from its azure hue, may be of any depth." Not a thing was visible, and it was only by trusting blindly to the little Iceland ponies that it was possible to come in safety out of such a maze of difficulties.

Fording many an icy cold river, struggling across broad marshes, toiling over mountain shoulders, crossing lava-fields, our traveller at length, rounding a corner of a hill, came in sight of the steam of the Great Geyser. He left his ponies at a farm about a quarter of a mile away. But he had no intention of spending the night there himself;

he wanted to be nearer the scene of action. A couple of tents had been left here by a generous-hearted Frenchman for the benefit of future travellers to the spot, and one of these Forbes ordered to be carried along to the Geyser. Then he himself stumbled over the rough ground to the place. The water was bubbling in the funnel, and clouds of steam were coming off and being driven before the wind, and from every orifice little jets of hot water escaped, while around, "a slough of blue mud was bubbling and simmering, in the neighbourhood of which one was soon ankle-deep in hot clay. Passing the 'Strokr,' in violent paroxysms, I crossed the grass-plat which curiously intervenes, and, ascending its regularly formed cone, stood on the edge of the Great Geyser, full to the brim, bubbling and seething in its centre, and heralding an approaching eruption by repeated subterranean detonations, which vibrated, not only through its immediate framework, but the surrounding soil."

Near this the Englishman set up his tent, putting plenty of dry hay on the floor. It was pitched in such a position that the water and steam would be carried away from it in case of an eruption, but he was not at all easy about it. The farmer declared the Geyser would behave well, and they went in to supper, after which the Commander was left for the night. He had just lit his last pipe before dropping off to sleep, when suddenly "the earth yearned under me to a wild detonating chorus from below. I scrambled out just in time to be enveloped in volumes of steam, and to hear the trickle of the waters which overflowed their limits, and had scarcely groped my way to windward of the basin, when in one frantic effort

it belched forth its boiling bowels in a massive column about sixty feet in height, and, radiating at its climax, showered bouquets of water and vapour in every direction." Then, as if exhausted, the waters sank to rest, and the watcher followed their example.

The Great Geyser made two or three more little demonstrations during the night, but they proved false alarms. About four in the morning, however, the "Strokr," lying a hundred yards or so away, had its turn. It had no cone, the orifice being level with the ground, so that a short-sighted man might almost have walked into it before he was aware. For thirty-seven minutes did the "Strokr" keep up its ornamental display, the forms the water assumed being much more graceful, if less lofty, than those of the Great Geyser.

Now, the "Strokr" is of an irritable nature, and can easily be tormented into angry convulsions. Forbes determined to take advantage of this propensity in a novel way. He invited the parson and the squire to his tent, had brandy and coffee sent in, and then promised his friends a hot dinner. He took his spare clean flannel shirt, and in it he placed a breast of mutton, while a brace of ptarmigan were also tied up, one in each sleeve. His next step was to gather a goodish pile of turf and place it close to the mouth of the funnel. He estimated for a forty-minute dose of turf, he tells us. When all was ready, he kicked in his pile, and then flung his shirt and its contents after the turf. While the cooking was going on down below, the coffee was kept warm by the geyser, and the friends took a little brandy together, Northern fashion.

The forty minutes passed, but no sign of an eruption, and the cook grew anxious about his mutton. He began to get ready another pile of turf to administer. But it was not needed; only seven minutes after time the dinner-bell sounded — to wit, the geyser began to be noisy. Then "came a tremendous eruption, and, surrounded with steam and turf-clods, I beheld my shirt in mid-air, arms extended, like a headless and tailless trunk. It fell lifeless by the brink. But we were not to dine yet; so well corked had been the steam-pipe below that it let out with more than usual viciousness, and forbade dishing up under pain of scalding. After about a quarter of an hour in a temporary lull, I recovered my garment, and turned out my dinner on the grass before my grave guests." The mutton was done to a turn; the ptarmigan overcooked; the shirt not a penny the worse, save that the dye had run.

On his way to Hecla, up which he meant to go, if possible, Forbes had to cross the Thiorsá, the longest and biggest river in the island—as long as the Thames, in fact. The ferryman had to be fetched from a hayfield; then the best of three crazy boats was chosen, and the men got into it. The ponies were to swim behind, if they could be induced to do so. Forbes had with him a farmer and a guide, and hard work it was to persuade their beasts to take the water. They had fairly to be pulled in, and then towed behind. It took the guide all his time to bail out the water, so badly did the craft leak. And there was another danger ahead: not far away the river leapt down a cataract, and the boat was coming perilously near. However, the men managed to ground it on the further shore just in time to prevent men and beasts from going

over. A pleasant gallop of nearly twenty miles, and the fording of another river, brought the party fairly to the foot of the famous volcano, where the night was spent.

Next morning in good time the traveller was on his way up Hecla, accompanied by a farmer of the neighbourhood as guide. As in the case of Snaefells Yökul, the trusty Iceland ponies carried the men to the snow-line; as before, too, the animals were left, tied head to tail, to await their master's return. There was a little mist clinging about the upper parts of the mountain, but otherwise the day was fine. After an hour or two of hard climbing up a very steep face, the two men reached an old cone, now not in action, or, rather, they reached a sort of vent-hole in the side of it. Along this dark tunnel they made their way, till at length the light appeared, and they emerged into the crater. To the Englishman's surprise, there was not the slightest trace of heat about this disused cone of 1846, and, indeed, the bottom of the crater was covered with a considerable thickness of ice. The cup was a hundred and fifty feet deep, and its sides were far too steep to be climbed, so the two men had perforce to make their way back through the same dark hole.

Commander Forbes was not going to be satisfied without a peep into an active crater, so he and his companion continued their steep upward scramble. At noon they had gained the summit of that one of the three cones which was in working order, and standing on the brink of the crater, they looked down into a hollow nearly circular and about half a mile in circumference, the depth being apparently between two and three hundred feet. From various parts of the sides of this vast hole little clouds

of steam were ascending. There was some snow lying unmelted in one or two parts, but the main portion was bare and black.

The Englishman, under the guidance of the farmer, descended cautiously into this forbidding hollow. So much the shape of a funnel was the crater, that at the bottom it came almost to a point. There was no hole down into the bowels of the earth, as, perhaps, the visitor had expected; on the contrary, and much to his wonderment, there was a deposit of dried mud there, with a thickness of ice on the top of it. Yet a glance around showed many smoking portions along the steep sides of the cup. At one such place, about half-way down, and amongst incrustations of sulphur, Forbes began to dig away the crust. He soon found the ground hot enough to light a fusee, and, later on, his pipe. He sat down—in a somewhat cooler place, of course—and, gazing around, began to think that after all it was not in the least a fearful thing to sit in the very crater of one of the chief European volcanoes.

But when he reflected that for nine centuries this same crater had, time after time, belched forth its fires with terrible destruction; that at the last eruption but one—in the year 1766—it had hurled "its red-hot stones to an almost fabulous distance, and powdered the southern and central districts with sand, some of which had almost reached the Faroes"—when he called all this to mind, he was disposed to feel much more respect for the mountain. As for the farmer, he shook his head; he had lost not only property, but ancestors, in eruptions from that very spot where they were sitting.

Now creeping with difficulty up the rough, steep sides, they came out once more upon the edge of the crater, and crawled along it to the northern side of the summit. Their position on this narrow ledge was anything but a safe one. On the one hand, the ground sloped precipitously down to the bottom of the crater they had just left; on the other, for at least a thousand feet, the mountain-side dropped almost sheer. Moreover, the footing was loose and rickety, and only fit for a chamois, Forbes tells us. And when their feet displaced any of the loose stuff on which they were treading, it darted off on its downward way at a terrific rate. They saw the other two cones not far away, but no other crater on Hecla. The eastern face of the mountain to which they proceeded was truly awful, for three thousand feet it was wellnigh perpendicular.

The view from the top of the famous volcano was magnificent. Peak after peak could they see; vast ice-fields stretched over whole districts; other volcano cones stood out here and there; his old friend, the Great Geyser, showed himself in spotless white. But there was one peak on which the stranger's eye rested in fascination—namely, the terrible Skaptar Yökul, which had wrought the frightful destruction remembered by Icelanders then living.

It was in the year 1783 that this fearful eruption of Skaptar Yökul took place, and it was one of the most dreadful catastrophes of the kind in modern times. "In one gigantic effort it destroyed twenty villages, over nine thousand human beings, and about one hundred and fifty thousand sheep, cattle, and horses, partly by the depredations of the lava and noxious vapours, and in part by

famine, caused by showers of ashes and the desertion of the coasts by the fish."

The descent to the ponies came near to having a tragic ending. Forbes began to descend *en glissade*, and the farmer, not to be outdone, attempted the same feat. Alas! he wore moccasins, and thus had no grip on the soft snow. "He was soon making headlong tracks for the lava-field beneath, whilst I with bated breath quivered for the result, and I was inexpressibly relieved when he brought up in a snowdrift a few yards from total destruction."

CHAPTER XVII

WITH TYNDALL ON THE WEISSHORN

Alpine ascents belong to recent times only—Professor Tyndall determines to try the hitherto unconquered and queenly Weisshorn—The start with two guides—The effect of a draught of milk—The bivouac on the mountain—An early morning start—Difficulties—The two rock towers—A fearful cleft—A risky crossing on a snow-covered rock-wall—Avalanches of stones—The peak apparently no nearer—Renewed efforts—Despair—The climbers take heart again—At last the summit within reach—The mountain conquered—An improvised flag—The descent begun—The men stupefied with fatigue—The rock-wall again—Fearful slopes—A difficult precipice—A second precipice—An extraordinary fall of stones—A third precipice—"Where a chamois can ascend a man may descend"—Safe down at last.

A couple of hundred years back the great mountains were objects of dread and horror, terrible and fatal monsters to be avoided. Did fate compel our forefathers to traverse the wild gorge, or to struggle over the lofty storm-swept pass, their sole thought was how they should best and soonest get themselves safely away from such dread spots. The notion of ascending a mighty Alpine peak *for pleasure* had scarce entered the heart of man two or three generations ago. Even forty or fifty years since many of the proud summits had never been trodden by the foot of man —the Weisshorn, the Aiguille du Dru, the marvellous

Matterhorn. Now there is not a giant snow-capped peak among them all which has not been scaled by daring mountaineers.

In these achievements no mean part has been played by our British countrymen. More than one of the most inaccessible and dangerous of the Alps have been first reached by hardy mountaineers from these Britannic islands—a Whymper, a Tyndall, a Conway. And there are many more whose names are worthy to stand with these.

It was in the year 1861 that there came to Professor Tyndall the ambition of ascending the beautiful Weisshorn, "an object scarcely less grand, conveying, it may be, even a deeper impression of majesty and might, than the Matterhorn itself — the Weisshorn, perhaps the most splendid object in the Alps."

Many had been the attempts to master this grand mountain, "by brave and competent men," too, but it had never been scaled, and the difficulties in the way of a successful ascent were said to be enormous, if not insurmountable. It was not that the Weisshorn is the highest of the Alpine peaks; it is a thousand feet lower than the kingly Mont Blanc. But then, as Tyndall says, "height is but one element in the difficulty of a mountain."

The professor started from Randa, taking with him two guides—Benen, one of the most competent and trustworthy of his class, and Wenger. It was an hour after midday, and the party proposed to spend the night on a ledge of rock that had been selected for their bivouac. Tyndall had been not at all well the previous evening, and he was in but indifferent condition for an expedition so

arduous. Luckily, on the way up the lower slopes he was able to obtain from a châlet copious draughts of fresh milk to quench the burning thirst from which he suffered. The effect was as satisfactory as it was astonishing, and the climber went on his way another man, ready for any work that might come to him.

A couple of hours later the resting-place for the night was reached. A ledge jutted out from the rock-face, and it was beneath this the men camped. It was a grand vantage-ground, commanding a full and magnificent view of peak after peak. Their goal for the morrow, the summit of the lovely Weisshorn itself, was not to be seen from that exact spot, but Tyndall and Benen managed before retiring to rest, to get a view of the peak from another standpoint, not far away from the camp. And to tell the truth, this sight of the mountain-top rather dismayed them, so remote and so inaccessible did it appear. However, after a supper of toasted cheese and coffee the men turned in, Tyndall wriggling himself into the two sacks he had had made from rugs. But not to sleep, for hardly once did the professor lose consciousness of what was passing around. The "unspeakably grand" sunset was succeeded by a magnificent display of stars. Then the air grew cold, too cold to admit of sleep—at any rate, for the Englishman. In truth he was presently chilled to the bone, and had much ado to endure till Benen gave the signal to rise.

By half-past three the party had had early morning coffee and were on their way again. Crossing the white, cold drifts and a stretch of tangled glacier, they reached a couloir, which was full of hard-frozen snow. This they

had after a time to leave, to take to the rocks. Then came a saddle of snow, and after that still higher rocks, where they had two hours of severe climbing, "the bending, twisting, reaching, and drawing-up, calling upon all the muscles of the frame." From their ridge they could spy a couple of men far below. Many climbers at Randa had been desirous of accompanying the Englishman, but he had judged it better to go without them. The men below were no doubt two of the disappointed ones.

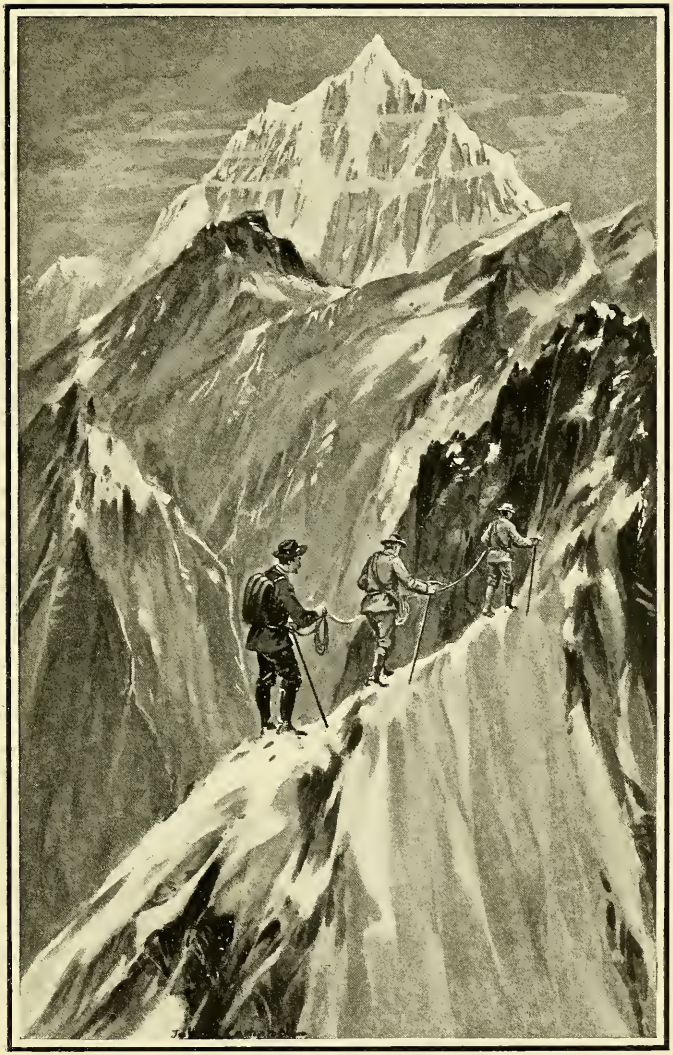
But greater difficulties were at hand. At one point, standing on a sort of rocky tower, they found themselves facing a similar tower, and between the two a deep, yawning gap. It seemed as if all farther progress was now out of the question. But Benen was equal to the occasion. Coiling the rope round his waist, he managed to scramble to the bottom of the great cleft—a wonderful performance. Where one man had gone others might follow, and in due time both Tyndall and Wenger also stood at the bottom. Then came the task of scaling the opposing rock-tower, and a most difficult and exhausting, if not a dangerous, piece of work it was found to be. Once up, the men took to the arête, or a sloping corner ridge of the mountain. A long pull on this at length brought them to a place risky indeed.

The arête had gradually become narrower and narrower, till now it had shrunk to the breadth of a mere wall. The top of this wall was hidden by a covering of snow. Imagine the position. For fully twenty yards this snow-covered ledge ran on, till it reached the next rocks. The precipices on either hand were almost sheer, and ran down to frightful depths. It seemed mere madness to stand on

the knife-edge of snow, which would surely give way in a moment and hurl the adventurer to the abyss below. Tyndall had no notion that any human being would trust himself on such a place. But he was soon undeceived, for, to his astonishment, Benen, first trying the snow with his foot, calmly began to walk across. "Even after the pressure of his feet the space he had to stand on did not exceed a handbreath. I followed him, exactly as a boy walking along a horizontal pole, with toes turned outwards. Right and left the precipices were appalling; but the sense of power on such occasions is exceedingly sweet. We reached the opposite rock, and here a smile rippled over Benen's countenance as he turned towards me. He knew that he had done a daring thing."

And now a danger of a new kind had to be faced. The rocks on the ridge were much shattered and very loose. It required extreme care to avoid setting some of them rolling down the steep. The thing was not to be avoided, in fact, and great masses of rock were from time to time dislodged. These in their flight downwards set in motion others, till at length numbers of them were hissing and booming with ever-increasing speed down the mountain-side, to rest only when they had reached the vast snow-fields, thousands of feet below. The risk to those following, if the first climber set going in their direction any of the loose rocks he met with, was naturally very great. However, with care and success the men toiled on, though the heat was so intolerable as to cause profusest perspiration.

On their way up the mountain they were for the most part unable to see the summit, but now and then they caught a glimpse of it from some coign of vantage. Such



CROSSING THE KNIFE EDGE DURING THE WEISSHORN ASCENT

The foothold was like the top of an immensely high wall. The mountaineers had to walk about twenty yards with almost sheer precipices on either hand.

an occasion came after they had been three hours on the arête,—that is, five hours from the morning start. It seemed not so far distant, and both guides and employer were in good heart at the sight. Never were appearances more deceptive. Three more hours of heavy work on the arête brought another glimpse of the crown. The mountaineers were taken aback; the top appeared not a whit nearer. With keen dismay they gazed on the far-off peak. Benen's face declared his thoughts, while Wenger's condition had become so unsatisfactory that the others proposed to leave him behind while they went on without him. But of this the plucky fellow would not hear, and, indeed, none of the men had the least thought of giving in, at any rate for the present.

On the three went again, therefore, plodding wearily towards another pinnacle ahead, from which they judged they would be able to see the summit once more. With what eagerness mingled with anxiety did they, after long and severe toil, gain the spot! Alas! the summit now appeared "hopelessly distant." Even Benen gave way for the moment to despair.

"Dear sir," he cried, "the peak is still far away up there!"

At this point Tyndall thought it well to intimate that he was ready to abandon the attempt and return to Randa. This he did lest Benen, in his anxiety to please his employer, should be led to go on imprudently. However, Benen took food, and a good drink of wine, feeling wonderfully better at once. He took another look at the far-away peak; hope returned to him, and he cried firmly:

"Sir, we must win it!"

Tyndall was delighted, feeling how like this was to the British spirit which does not know when it is beaten. Such thoughts, he declares, helped to lift him over the rocks.

Then at it again with a will, the course directed towards another eminence in the distance, from which it was believed that yet once more a view would be gained of the top. The toilers had their reward. When once the height had been scaled, "above us, but clearly within reach, a silvery pyramid projected itself against the blue sky. I was assured by my companions that it was the highest point before I ventured to stake my faith upon the assertion. I feared that it also might take rank with the illusions which had so often beset our ascent, and shrunk from the consequent moral shock."

The guides were right, as happily it proved. Wearied, but in good heart, the three crept up the long knife-edge of pure, white snow that terminated in a little point. The point was gained; an eager look around followed; there was no part of the mountain now above them. Their feet stood on the very summit of the queenly and hitherto unconquered Weisshorn! It was a glorious moment, and the guides relieved their excited feelings by mad shouts and yells, again and again repeated. Far below, on a crag, the other two men from Randa could be seen, and shouts of triumph were sent down to them.

Tyndall and his men had no flag, so a makeshift in the shape of an axe-handle with a red pocket-handkerchief attached was fixed in the snow, and it was seen from the Riffel Hotel, some days later, by the professor himself and his friend Mr. Francis Galton.

But it is one thing to get up such a mountain as the Weisshorn; it is often quite another, and sometimes even a more difficult, thing to get down again, and so the three men found it. They had been climbing continuously for ten hours since their early morning turn-out of camp; they were weary and stiff to a degree. Yet the day was advancing rapidly, and it behoved them to make all speed down. Their success at first acted like a stimulant to them; they descended merrily, and fancied they would do the return journey both quickly and easily—a huge mistake, as was subsequently proved.

With stiffened muscles they plodded along, however, almost in a state of numbness, if not of stupefaction. The roar of the stones which they began to loosen in their descent, at length awoke them from their half-conscious state. Then came the narrow band of snow on the top of the wall-like ridge, and this was safely crossed, dangerous as the crossing was in their present condition. A long spell on the mountain-slope followed. Here step-cutting had to be resorted to, though Benen had scarce strength left to swing his axe. The slopes were fearfully steep; they seemed of interminable length; many of them ended in sheer precipices down which a fall would be fatal. "Take care not to slip," the leading guide admonished his companions, as indeed well he might. Oddly enough, Tyndall seems to have greatly underestimated the danger of a slip, imagining that he would be able to recover himself before he shot over the fatal precipice below. But Benen's emphatic "No; it would be utterly impossible!" showed the Englishman how mistaken his belief was. It is certain that had any man

slipped in such a place it would have cost him his life.

An extraordinary variety of difficulties and dangerous feats succeeded for the mountaineering party. At one time they had to drop cautiously from ledge to ledge crossing their path. At another spot Benen, hanging by his hands to the rocks, body in air, felt with his feet for some projection on which he might put his weight, and presently dropped with extreme caution on to a ledge so narrow that the slightest extra movement would have thrown him off, and so to the abysses below. A wet couloir followed; this they were obliged to abandon. Another and drier couloir was tried, but this, too, they found it advisable to get out of with all speed. They were only just in time, for down came clattering a deadly avalanche of stones along the very trough they had left.

Wenger was now sent to lead, because of his long legs, which were likely to set the pace better. But the way became ever more difficult, and at length the party were brought up by what seemed an impossible precipice. It appeared to run like a huge wall all round the mountain, so far as could be seen. It was only after a long detour that a risky, but still a possible, descent was found. In no long time a second, and this time an overhanging, precipice stopped all farther progress. In vain did the men cast their eyes around for a way of escape; it seemed certain they would have to reascend some portion of the mountain-flank. But how in their exhausted and almost demoralized condition?

Whilst the mountaineers were standing here disheartened, if not despairing, they were witnesses of a very

extraordinary spectacle, which, Tyndall says, was one of the most remarkable things he had ever set eyes upon. He describes it in his own graphic way:

"Whilst we stood pondering here, a deep and confused roar attracted our attention. From a point near the summit of the Weisshorn a rock had been discharged; it plunged down a dry couloir, raising a cloud of dust at each bump against the mountain. A hundred similar ones were immediately in motion, while the spaces between the larger masses were filled by an innumerable flight of smaller stones. Each of them shakes its quantum of dust in the air, until finally the avalanche is enveloped in a vast cloud. The clatter of this devil's cavalry was stunning. Black masses of rock emerged here and there from the cloud, and sped through the air like flying fiends. Their motion was not one of translation merely, but they whizzed and vibrated in their flight as if urged by wings. The clang of echoes resounded from side to side, from the Schallenberg to the Weisshorn and back, until finally the whole troop came to rest, after many a deep-sounding thud in the snow, at the bottom of the mountain." And the professor emphatically warns all future climbers of the Weisshorn to avoid that side of the mountain, except on one of the arêtes. "At any moment," he declares, "the mountain-side may be raked by a fire as deadly as that of cannon."

But the three men were still on the top of the fearsome precipice; the day was far spent; how to descend with their lives they knew not. Yet, after coasting along for a distance, they came on a spot where the sheer cliff bevels off into a steep slope. Down this dangerous incline runs

a crack wide enough to admit a man's fingers. Mad as the plan seems to an ordinary person, the three begin to let themselves cautiously and slowly down, inserting the fingers in the crack and carefully lowering the body. The victory is won, and the three then hurry on over glacier, rock, incline, trusting they have done with precipices.

But no; a third and still more formidable rock-wall appears. To Tyndall himself the place seems hopeless. Farther he and his men cannot get, that is certain. Then, to his extreme surprise, his guides lead the way confidently along the crest till they come to a clay ridge running from the top steeply down. The clay streak—for it is no more—presently comes to an end, and the rest of the descent has to be made as best may be. The guides do not hesitate; the rocks are rough, and the scramble down is desperate. In an ordinary way such a course would have been pronounced stark madness, but men in sore straits do not stick at trifles. And, as a matter of fact, the guides had the day before seen a chamois mount at the very spot where they were descending. Where the chamois could get up, they argued, a man might get down. And so it proves. In due time the adventurous three stand safe at the bottom of the terrible cliff, exhausted but triumphant. The proud Weisshorn, one might almost say, had been twice conquered that day.

CHAPTER XVIII

CROSSING THE ANDES IN WINTER

The Andes second in size only to the Himalayas—Major Rickard, an Irish engineer—Starts to cross from Chili to Buenos Ayres—The western slopes of the Andes reached just as winter is coming on—A stiff pull up—The dog in leather shoes—Hundreds of condors—One shot—A big struggle with the wounded bird—A storm of snow and thunder—A terrific wind—Mule refuses to face it—A destructive blast—Mule takes fright and gallops off—Major alone on the ridge, and lost—Burrows in the snow to escape blast—Gives up all hope—Track again espied—Companions come up—Colour-blindness a serious matter—Summit of Cumbre Pass, the worst part, reached—Storm rages with redoubled fury—"Dismount, dismount!"—Mule blown over the precipice—A bottle of port—Eight leagues yet to nearest hut—A puma by the Major's side—The hut, a miserable affair—The effect of a uniform—Wretched night—Negro insensible from the cold—Men bring in a still worse case—The engineer as doctor—A shot at a llama at a thousand yards—Two drunken horsemen and their threats—A rifle brought to the "present"—A hasty retreat—Threats to return—The dangerous *laderos* along the road—a drove of cattle and a very strait path—A narrow escape for the Major.

No reader needs to be told that the vast Andes range is second only to the mighty Himalayas among the stupendous mountain chains on the surface of our globe. To the enormous height of twenty-five thousand feet do the loftiest of the Andine summits tower above sea-level.

In the matter of length, the line of the Andes entirely puts the Himalayas into the shade. The crossing of this great range is at all times a long, heavy work; in bad weather it is attended with constant dangers, and sometimes with risks that are appalling. This was the experience of Major Rickard, an Irish mining engineer, who more than forty years ago held an important position under the Argentine Government. He left Valparaiso, on the Pacific, to traverse the entire breadth of the continent, the journey necessitating, of course, the passage over the Andes.

It was just at the beginning of winter—that is, about the end of April, when he reached the mountains, but he hoped to get over the range before the really bad weather set in. We shall see what his actual experience was.

The hour of two on a dark morning saw Major Rickard and his companions on their way up the earlier slopes. He was warmly clad, as he needed to be. His dog, too, he had shod in leather shoes, as a protection against stones and snow. A stiff pull up, to a height of seven or eight thousand feet, brought them into wild and magnificent scenery, and also beyond the limit of vegetation. After a halt for their breakfast of cold meat and bread, and the coldest of cold water from a torrent, they entered upon a narrow road, not more than two feet wide, along the steep face of a cliff. Along this risky path they toiled without any mishap to the top of a ridge. The view on all sides was truly marvellous; but the point to which the eyes of the travellers were particularly directed was the Cumbre Pass, the chief pass of that region, by which they

were to make the passage of the Andes; it could be discerned, though the distance was still great.

A sight nearer at hand also interested the Major; some hundreds of condors were soaring above his head, waiting to come back to the carcass of a mule from which the arrival of the men had for the moment scared them. Running for his rifle, the engineer took aim at one of the largest, which had alighted on a ledge two hundred yards away. There was a loud, re-echoing bang, and then the whole flock of condors fled terror-stricken—all but one, which dropped almost at the sportsman's feet. The dog was not disposed to tackle so formidable a fellow, for the bird was violent to a degree. Rickard himself dared not approach his victim, and he was just about to solve the difficulty by putting a second bullet into the struggling condor, when one of his men deftly brought his lasso and hunting-knife to bear. From tip to tip of his wings the bird measured eight feet seven inches.

There was now a sudden and most unwelcome change in the weather; everything prognosticated a storm of the utmost violence, and the travellers thought it wise to get over the Cumbre Pass if possible. Snow began to fall, then it fell faster and faster; a howling wind arose, while the air grew dark and resounded with the roll of heavy thunder-peals. The Major was somewhat ahead of his men, but he hurried on, his dog accompanying him. Soon he could scarcely see for ten yards in front of him, and he thought it best to trust to his mule, which was stumbling along knee-deep in snow. Upwards the animal climbed, foot by foot, the storm increasing in intensity each moment. Rickard did fairly well for some distance, sheltered by a

projecting rock; but when he came to the end of the rock and the top of the minor ridge he was climbing, the wind in all its fury caught man and beast. For an instant the mule stood it, and then attempted to turn back. Down on her knees she fell in the endeavour, and the rider was compelled to dismount.

He determined to await the arrival of the rest of his party; but what a place to wait in, and alone! Everything was covered thick with blinding and dazzling snow; moreover, the mule turned round two or three times, and before many minutes were over, the man had not the slightest notion where the track was, or in which direction his route lay. He took out his pocket-compass, and laid it flat on his hand, to try to find his bearings. "I was looking most anxiously at the needle, when another terrific gust of wind, stronger than the first, and charged with sand and snow, came down upon me, carrying away my compass, my hat, and my *poncho*, tearing my overcoat right up the back, and leaving me in tatters. My mule took fright, also, and went off at full speed down the side of the mountain, regardless of road or track."

The solitary traveller was obliged to throw himself down and burrow into the snow, in order to gain a shelter from the all-mastering hurricane which threatened to throw him over the precipice. The dog howled piteously, and crouched in the snow close to his master. Thus the pair remained till the storm somewhat abated. Then, to his great joy, the Major spied the track not more than ten yards away, and, crawling on hands and knees thither, he found better shelter behind a ledge of rock. At last he was able to proceed, but whither? There was but one

answer to such a question: he must try at all cost to find his companions. Down, therefore, he plunged, deep in the snowdrifts at every step, and with difficulty making out the mule-track at all. He had the satisfaction to see them coming along at last, for he was lost, bewildered, and almost dead with the cold. His friends were delighted to meet with him again; having quite given him up for lost.

"I can assure the reader," writes Major Rickard, "that when I even now call to mind—and I can do so vividly—my critical position on that eventful day, *alone*, on the highest range of the Andes, twelve thousand feet above the sea, lost and hopeless, with the probability of never again seeing the face of man—for one whole night passed there would have been sufficient to accomplish such an end, and even during the short time I did spend there I was almost frozen to death—then the probability of tumbling headlong over a precipice into the yawning gulf beneath in trying to find my way, for the snow was so deep and the day so dark that I could not distinguish a safe from an unsafe path—I say, when I think of these things now, it almost makes me tremble."

Another hat and another *poncho* it was easy enough to get out of his portmanteau, but the traveller had unfortunately lost also his blue goggles in the late blasts, and soon he began to find his eyes affected with snow-blindness. Later on the matter became serious; he was unable to distinguish colours. He astonished his men by declaring that his black dog had turned green—with the intense cold, as he presumed. But when he found that the snow appeared yellow, and that scarlet assumed the hue of dirty

purple, his guide advised him to ride as much as possible with closed eyes, or he would lose his sight altogether. As a matter of fact, the Major never did entirely recover from the effects of that winter journey over the mountains.

In spite of all dangers and troubles, however, the little party at length neared the summit of the Cumbre, the severity of the storm having for a while abated a trifle. But just before the crest was reached the tempest swept down upon them with a force far beyond anything they had before experienced. The signal for the renewal of hostilities was a sudden and tremendous peal of thunder exactly over the heads of the travellers, the crash loud as if all the rocks around had been rent to pieces at one blow. "We were now approaching the summit, and the storm, like a giant refreshed by slumber, arose with redoubled fury and strength, and bore down upon us with all its might. 'Dismount! dismount!' shouted the arriero and his men simultaneously, and in a moment we were on the ground with our backs to the storm. . . . The arriero and men, being more exposed and higher up, were left with their clothes in ribands; but this was not the worst. One of the loaded mules was blown over the precipice, and went rolling down the rocky steep, until we lost sight of her in the profound abyss beneath. Some of my principal scientific instruments went with her, and were, of course, lost to me for ever."

Not a moment did the party stop on the summit of the pass, "awfully grand though it was," but sought some sort of shelter where they might partake of a little refreshment. So, cowering behind a rock, they drank a bottle of good port wine, the reviving effects of which

were incalculable. The Major certainly was in need of something to bring back life to him. His nose and ears were utterly without feeling, and his arriero had to rub them briskly with snow to restore the circulation. They had still eight leagues to go before the first hut would be reached—eight leagues of that terrible pass, and in the midst of a winter storm! It took them from noon till eight in the evening to cover the distance. The mules had to be allowed to stumble as they could down the rugged path, and the men struggled after them as best they might, up to their middles, in snow. On the way the engineer was startled by the sudden apparition of a puma, which darted close past him as he was walking at some distance from his companions. The incident was disconcerting, to say the least of it, to a solitary and defenceless man, for he was too benumbed to pull a trigger.

At length, far ahead, was seen a fire; it was by the hut, and when they arrived there, they found two men cowering under a rock, a fire burning beside them. As for the hut itself, it was about as miserable a shelter as could be imagined. The only way into it was by a sort of door or loophole high up in the framework. There was no ladder by which this might be reached, and the Major had to scramble up as he might. When he dropped down into the pitch-dark interior, he stumbled over a prostrate man. He struck a light and found that there were already four fellows tenanting this little shelter. Where the newcomers were to put themselves it was not easy to see. Moreover, there were plenty of vent-holes in the place, through every one of which the wind and the snow came driving furiously. The very limited floor-space, moreover,

was encumbered by a litter of baggage, clothes, saddles, and the like.

But Major Rickard was not the man to be thrust on one side. He immediately removed the cover from his cap, and showed the gold band upon it. It was a uniform cap, and denoted his rank as a high Government official. The sight of this had the desired effect on the fellows occupying the floor, and it only needed an authoritative word from the great man to make them rearrange themselves in a smaller space. The servants now brought in their master's bed and rigged it up in a corner, and made a small charcoal fire in the middle of the floor. Then, after a cup of hot tea, the engineer turned in, tortured by a nervous headache. How long he slept he did not know, but when he was awakened by an uneasy movement on the part of his dog, he sat up and gazed around in stupid amazement.

"The candle was still burning in the opposite corner, and threw a dim, lurid glare over the interior of the hut. . . . I was obliged to drop again immediately, being almost stifled and suffocated with the most intolerable stench I ever recollect having experienced; even the 'seventeen distinct smells' of Rio Janeiro in the Brazils were nothing in comparison. The atmosphere from about two feet from the floor upwards was a thick cloud of steam, ascending and curling, slowly finding an exit by the doorway. On the floor were piled a heap of human forms lying in every position, all apparently sound asleep, and ignorant of, or indifferent to, the pernicious atmosphere they were inhaling."

The Major was informed by his men, later on, that a

fresh party of travellers had arrived during the night, and that no fewer than eighteen persons had slept within the narrow limits of that wretched hut!

The effect of the cold and exposure at such an elevation was serious indeed, so far as some of the travellers were concerned. A black servant of the Major's was found in the morning apparently stiff and lifeless. The negro was made to swallow some hot tea, after which he revived a little, but was unable even to move from his place, much less to continue the journey. A worse case presently engaged the attention of the rest. Four men arrived at the hut, carrying what seemed to be the dead body of a comrade. They said he had shown no signs of life whatever since they had discovered him crouched and insensible beneath a rock. The Major had the poor fellow placed on a mattress in the hut, and then applied stimulants and friction. Before he started on his own way again, about noon, the kindly Irishman had the pleasure of seeing the sufferer come round considerably.

When the party got off, one of them, the negro, had to be wrapped in blankets and carried to his mule, where he sat almost without the power of keeping his seat. All day they trudged on, deep in snow, till at length they reached another hut, to gain which they had to cross a stream and clamber up a steep bank. Luckily this second hut was empty, and a good deal more cleanly, so that after some hot tea the men turned in for a far better night. In the morning preparations were made for an early start, when an incident diverted everybody's attention for the moment. Rickard was standing outside the hut, when with a whiz four huanacos, a species of llama, flew by.

Instantly he sprang towards the door to fetch his rifle, but stumbled, and before he could recover himself and get hold of his gun, the animals were a long way off. The sportsman elevated the sight to six hundred yards, and fired. He wasted his ammunition, for the llamas were probably three or four hundred yards farther away than he had reckoned upon. Seeing them rest a moment on the top of a rock, however, he put up the sight for a thousand yards and once more took aim, though the animals were barely visible. Whether he hit one of them or not he could not be certain, but, looking through his field-glass, he saw one of them leap into the air and then all four fly off like the wind.

They had an adventure of another sort at a later stage of the crossing, when the worst of the mountains had been passed. A loud shouting and hallooing was heard in the valley, and two gauchos on horseback galloped furiously up, and demanded wine, swearing terribly the while. The fellows were half-drunk already, and the Major replied that he had no wine. The rascals scouted the notion that a party of the kind could be crossing the Andes without taking stimulants of some sort. But the engineer was not the man to be trifled with. Seizing his rifle, he shouted to them that if they did not "clear out" immediately, he would put a bullet through at least one of their skulls. His own men were in alarm, saying that the gauchos were terrible fellows with the knife, and would think nothing of cutting his throat. "But was an Irishman," he writes, "with an Enfield rifle in his hand and a revolver in his belt, to be cowed by such 'spalpeens'? Not a bit of it; so I reiterated the threat, accompanying it by bringing the

rifle to the 'present.' This had the desired effect, and the ruffians set off at full speed, yelling out most fearful oaths and threats to return with others and take vengeance upon us. They did not, however, carry out their threats, and we slept sound and unmolested till morning."

The track, even when most of the snow had been left behind, was often of the most rugged and difficult kind; in many places it was fearfully steep; moreover, it was often barely wide enough to admit of a mule and its load passing along. Often the riders had to dismount, especially in traversing the bad and dangerous spots called *laderos*, where the road runs on the top of perpendicular precipices overhanging the River Colorado. At one of these critical points they met a large drove of cattle, which were being taken over the mountains into Chili. The engineer and his party had to return for a long distance before the cattle could pass. Now and then, too, the wind blew with great violence, and at times drove the sand in their faces with such force that they were unable to stand it, and had to wrap their heads in their mantles, and let the mules stumble along as they would or could. A long stretch of spiny thorn-scrub was to be traversed in one locality. Altogether, the road over the Andes was a hard road to travel, and the following incident was but one instance of the Major's many escapes:

"At 4 a.m. we started, and commenced groping our way in the dark, still descending the dangerous and precipitous path. I recollect one part of this road, which, for the first time during the journey (except in the Cumbre), really startled me. It was still dark, and the route led us into a deep gorge, or more properly an immense fissure in the

mountain, the rocks on either side rising perpendicularly to a considerable height. By the sound of my mule's feet I knew there was water beneath, which in some places was frozen, and consequently slippery. In passing through one of these spots my mule came down and I with her, straight over her head, and, had I not held on to the reins with all my might, I don't know where I might have 'brought up,' as the place was a mass of ice, and inclined downwards at an angle of sixty degrees at least. I regained my feet with difficulty, and determined to descend the remainder of the pass on foot."

CHAPTER XIX

IN KAFFIR LAND

Mr. Baldwin, an English hunter—Hoisting a waggon up a stiff hill—Out of control on the downward slope—A leap into a thorn-tree—A bad spill—Foreloper injured—Mr. Baldwin as surgeon—A rhinoceros, and no rifle handy—A plucky youngster—Full tilt downhill—At bay—Almost impaled—Cold on the mountain heights—Three lions watch fire-making operations—Master's shots useless—Man comes to rescue—Lioness biting savagely at the twigs—A harrisbuck lost in the ravine—Twenty-two of the same breed next day—A foot fast in the stirrup—Elephant-hunting excessively hard work—Wounded bull elephant in chase—Thin boots and a steep slippery hill-side—Elephant in grim earnest—A critical moment—Beast careering helplessly downhill—A still closer shave—A race between elephant and horse—Bit and bridle thrown awry by a swerve—A brush past—Cannoning with trees—Breakneck chase down the slope—Just in time—A night visit by a lioness—Shots from the top of a hut—A leap through the air—Head over heels—Darkey knocked off waggon by the recoil of his gun—A cold and irritating vigil—Lion despatched by drivers—The Englishman arrested as a spy—Released, but robbed of most of his ammunition—A lion hunt—Five-and-twenty Masara men with assegais—All the warriors in full flight—Baldwin sticks to his game—An exciting time—Lion on three legs—Loud praises by the Masaras.

The long and terrible Boer War, and the Zulu troubles preceding it, have made us acquainted with details of South African geography of which many of us were

previously very ignorant. Now, Vaal and Limpopo, Stormberg and Drachenfels, are names almost as familiar as that of the fatal height of Spion Kop.

Among those far-off mountains, across those rivers, and athwart those long stretches of veldt and bush and karroo went many a sportsman forty or fifty years ago. Among them was one whose restless longings for excitement and discovery and sport led him into the lands of the Kaffir, the Zulu, the Boer, the Hottentot. Mr. Baldwin, in truth, was a hunter by nature, and many were the strange adventures he met with in South Africa, and many the difficulties he had to face in his wanderings on the mountains there. The guidance of his waggon team up the steep ascents and down the precipitous descents was no easy matter.

One day, by dint of much trouble and some flogging, the lumbering vehicle had been hoisted to the top of a stiff incline. As it happened, the downward slope began at once, and the driver at the head of the team neglected to give the usual warning. Before Mr. Baldwin could realize what had happened, he found oxen and waggon tearing down the steep mountain-side at a terrific rate. That in the course of another moment or two there would come destruction he could see at a glance. To sit still meant serious injury, and possibly death; to jump off appeared only one degree less fatal. But he had no time to weigh the pros and cons in his mind. Seeing a rough thorn-tree close at hand, the hunter threw himself violently upon it, and alighted in the very thick of its foliage and spines! He tumbled to earth with no damage to his person, but with a shirt torn to ribbons.

"I had just got clear of my not too comfortable bed," he goes on to tell, "when I heard the waggon come to a sudden halt. I ran forward, and beheld ten of the oxen round a tree, and one of the Kaffirs wringing his hands and dancing in a frantic manner, roaring out '*Mammo mammi, mammi mammo!*' over the foreloper, who was on the ground, covered with blood and looking as wild as a hawk. What had happened to him I have never yet been able to understand. On closer examination I found that the poor fellow's skull was split on the left side, and it appeared as if the waggon had gone over his right arm. . . . The Kaffirs looked on in awe, but when they saw me take out needle, thread, thimble, etc., to sew up his head, they raised a fearful outcry, in which the wounded man joined. I was therefore obliged to desist from this operation, and content myself with binding up his head as tightly as I could." He was forced to leave the injured driver behind, and proceed with the help of his one other man only, an awkward predicament to be in, seeing the number of cattle to be tended, and the nature of the ground over which they were making their way to the Umgowie Mountains.

On a later occasion, while the hunter was ascending a hill he suddenly found himself facing an old rhinoceros cow which was coming down. Baldwin called frantically to the boy behind, who was carrying his rifle. The youngster did not like the situation, and hesitated for a moment whether to obey the order or to take to his heels, leaving the master to his fate. The boy had pluck in him, however, and, approaching, threw the gun-case towards him, and then darted up a tree with all the

quickness of a squirrel. The sportsman kept one eye on the rhinoceros while he saw to the opening of the gun-case with the other. Just as the brute was charging him full tilt, he lodged a bullet in its breast, with the effect of turning the animal's course, and it disappeared among the scrub. The hunter climbed to the top of the hill, and had just reached the ridge when he found himself in the presence of two rhinoceroses. He shot at one, and evidently wounded it, but both animals made off. The dogs, however, managed to turn one of them, and, without more ado, it came charging down upon Baldwin at top speed. It was touch and go: another second, and the man would have been impaled on the horn of the furious rhinoceros. Baldwin's steadiness of aim was of the utmost value to him here. Keeping a cool head, he dropped the beast just in the nick of time. The second rhinoceros was found at no great distance, and on examination proved to be the one Baldwin had shot lower down the hill.

The Englishman presently found himself traversing a country of mountains, on the higher elevations of which the cold was very trying, although the heavy work of cutting the way through the dense bush was warm enough. He was on ahead of his party, and managed to light a fire, using for his purpose a cap, a couple of stones, a bit of rag, and some gunpowder. While these operations were proceeding three lions came and looked on. This was too much for a man of keen sporting instincts, and at once he set off, followed by Swartz, the only servant he had with him at the time. Singling out one of the animals, a lioness, they managed to detach her from the rest, and went after her in hot chase. A long shot missed

her, and the lioness came to a halt suddenly, and stood at bay among the scrub, five-and-twenty yards away. A second shot was of no avail: the sportsman's arms were tired with their recent heavy labour, and he was unable to take a steady aim. It was well for him that he had with him his man Swartz, who lost no time in using his own gun. The lioness sprang high into the air, and began biting savagely at the twigs and branches, a sign she had been hit. All this gave the master time to reload, and without hesitation he walked close up to the raging beast and put her out of her misery.

The two men found themselves on the top of a very precipitous mountain flank, and as they were making their way with difficulty down it they set up a harrisbuck. They would have eagerly given chase had it been possible, but the buck shot down into the depths of the ravine with astonishing rapidity, and disappeared from view. When the hunters, with more deliberate and uncertain feet, had gained the foot of the steep slope and the bottom of the bush-covered valley, the animal was nowhere to be seen.

They had a similar disappointment another day when they came across a whole herd of the same breed. Mr. Baldwin counted twenty-two feeding together in a long, narrow, steep-sided valley, and the animals, on being disturbed, with one consent set off thundering down the pass. The hunter was mounted, and went in pursuit. With his usual adroitness he succeeded in detaching one fine old bull from the rest, and, by a bit of manœuvring, got within gunshot. At the very moment when he should have fired, his boot became fast in the stirrup, pulling him a little to one side. The shot missed its mark, and the

buck darted off again. The rider was obliged to stop to extricate his boot, and thus lost a moment or two. The next minute the horse all but jumped into a nest full of ostrich eggs, and for a second time Baldwin missed his chance of securing a harrisbuck. But he shot many a one before he had done.

Of all the arduous exertion involved in this hunting among the hills and veldts, and across the rivers and karroos, Mr. Baldwin gives it as his opinion that elephant-stalking is the hardest work to which any man could put himself. That it was also dangerous work does not need explaining. Some of his adventures led him into the most imminent peril. He was hunting on foot on one occasion in the Entumi Bush, and had wounded a huge bull-elephant. The animal gave instant and hot chase. The hunter made straight up the steep hill, in the hope that he would be able to climb more rapidly than the unwieldy bull. But he had on only some very thin veldt boots, without soles, and his progress he found to be very slow indeed. In truth, he slipped back two-thirds of every upward stride he took, and stumbled frightfully, often falling to the ground. The elephant kept on his way in grim earnest, and the situation was fast becoming desperate for the hunter, now himself being so keenly hunted. "Seeing no disposition on my pursuer's part to give up the chase, I changed my tactics, got above a tree, on which I leaned a couple of seconds, to recover my wind partly—a very critical moment, as the brute was not more than four of his own lengths from me—jumped then some ten yards at right angles, and turned down the hill at full speed, the monster screaming and trumpeting in full

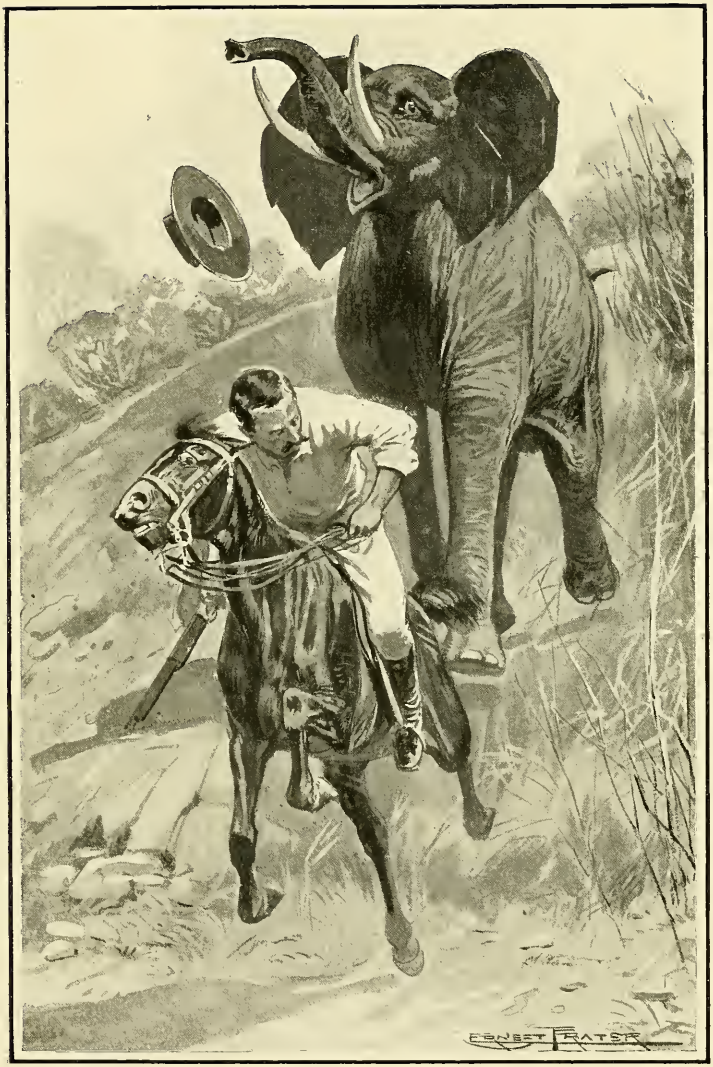
career after me at a tremendous pace. He must have been over me in a few strides more, when I sprang to the right, and down he went in his mad career, crashing and carrying all before him, utterly unable to stop if he wished, as the hill was very steep, and he was under full sail—a tremendous relief to my mind, as it was my last resort." Mr. Baldwin was quite content to let the elephant continue his downhill course, without attempting to follow him up. The hunter resolved that for the future he would always take care to have a good horse at hand, if it were in any way possible.

He had a still closer shave with another elephant, which came suddenly charging down upon him at great speed. It was again on a steep mountain-side, but this time he was mounted. His horse, however, happened to be a new one, and he knew not how the beast was likely to behave. To his horror the steed stood stock still, and there was only just time to fire somewhat wildly. The bullet would seem to have whistled rather too close to the horse's ear, for the animal swerved violently, almost unseating the rider, throwing both reins on one side of his head, and jerking the bit out of his mouth. Instantly the hunter was rendered helpless, and all he could do was to stick his spurs desperately into the sides of his horse. Oddly enough, the steed made straight for the charging and trumpeting bull, and Baldwin thought all was up with him. Horse and elephant brushed close past each other as they met, and the rider had to throw himself entirely on the off-side of his beast to avoid being crushed between the two. Another second and the immediate danger was passed, the elephant being now behind. But

at that moment the horse came in contact with three trees, one of which all but dragged off the rider, hurting his shoulder considerably. It was a fortunate thing for him that he managed to keep his grip of his gun, though how he retained it is a marvel, seeing that he held it only by the trigger-guard, and with one finger.

Along the hill flank the horse now tore, jumping bushes like a buck, crashing through the thick underwood, and in his haste over the broken and cumbered ground almost falling on his nose times out of count. For a little while the elephant kept on in pursuit, but, finding himself distanced, turned at last a different way. Now was Baldwin's time. He quickly put his bridle to rights, and then went in chase of his late pursuer. After the brute downhill the hunter flew like the wind, disregarding the dangers of more than one kind that beset his path. Ten long shots were fired at the retreating animal before he was brought to a stand. The hunter was so exhausted that he was scarce able to move a hand, and it was only with enormous difficulty he could finish off the struggling elephant, to do which three more shots were required. The man sank to the ground almost in a swoon. He could not have put another cap on the nipple, he tells us.

Many of Baldwin's adventures with lions were not a little exciting—some of them too much so, indeed. One dark night he and his men in camp were awakened by the bellowings of an ox, mingled with the roarings of lions. Baldwin sprang up, seized the heavy double-barrelled gun lying between his legs, and dashed outside. He found one of his black fellows on the roof of a rough hut they



A Dangerous Race

Baldwin had fired at the elephant, but unfortunately he missed as his horse swerved, jerking the bit out of its mouth. He was now helpless, but dug his spurs into his horse, which made for the elephant. They almost collided, and after a most exciting race the horse outdistanced its pursuer.

had made. Jumping up beside his man, he fired at a dark-looking object that could be dimly seen a few yards away. Two or three shots he sent in that direction, but no effect appeared to have been produced. Suddenly the lion sprang full at him, its head striking him in the chest with such violence that he flew head over heels from the top of the hut down into the bush. Picking himself up in all haste, Baldwin scrambled through the fence, and sprang up on to the waggon, the black following with no less celerity. There on the top of the vehicle stood the little band of men, unable to do anything. The lion had it all its own way now, and the hunters in the darkness could only listen helplessly while the brute seized a goat and began to make its supper. One of the men presently made a demonstration, but with results that were hardly encouraging. He was standing with some difficulty on the top of the waggon when he drew trigger against the lion, and the recoil sent him spinning to the ground. As luck would have it, he alighted head foremost on the top of the very hut from which he had so lately sprung. This, happily for him, broke his fall; but the master found it a ridiculous sight altogether, especially when the black fellow hurriedly clambered up into the vehicle again. To the chagrin of the little party—there were five blacks besides the master—they were compelled to stay out the rest of the cold night on the waggon, with hardly any clothes to cover them. It was not till daylight began to appear that the beast sheered off, and left the men at liberty to come down from their uncomfortable fastness. Baldwin went at once into his tent to have his interrupted sleep out, but a couple of the drivers

were not disposed to let the enemy off so easily. They gave chase, and in no long time brought down the aggressor. It proved to be a lioness. Proudly the men reported their success, but they were not altogether so pleased when an examination of the dead body brought to light the bullet from the master's big double-barrelled gun.

Crossing the Vaal from the Orange Free State into the Transvaal Republic, Baldwin was taken prisoner as a spy, was charged with selling powder to the Kaffirs, and was threatened with hanging. The greater part of his stock of ammunition was taken from him, but in the end he was allowed to go on his way. He was, of course, soon in the thick of the hunting again, encountering every sort of game or dangerous animal South Africa possessed. His final adventure among the lions nearly cost him his life. It was towards the close of a tiring day, when he had been engaged for many hours in cutting through the thick bush that covered every part of the hill-sides. But he sprang on his horse—also pretty much exhausted—as soon as he heard the roar of a lion close at hand. He had with him five-and-twenty Masara men, all armed with assegais. As he galloped off Baldwin spied a bleached skull lying on the ground, and for the life of him he could not help regarding it as a bad omen, and fancied that his own skull was destined before long to lie in similar fashion. But, throwing off the melancholy that attacked him, he took a shot at the lion from a distance of sixty or seventy yards. He could see the animal drop suddenly to earth as he fired, and naturally supposed the bullet had reached its mark. Remounting

his horse, Baldwin rode up nearer, when, with a frightful roar, the creature sprang up, and in a trice was upon him. The rider had only just time to spur his horse violently on one side, causing it to swerve instantly, before the body of the savage brute was bounding through the air. The lion brushed past, in truth, so closely that his flank all but knocked the man off his beast altogether. It was only by clinging for dear life to the stirrup-strap that he kept his seat.

The horse, carried on ahead by his speed and the steep slope on which he was, careered along at a rapid rate, and it was not till after some seconds that the rider could pull him up. Meanwhile the five-and-twenty Masara men were all speeding away as fast as their legs could carry them, leaving the Englishman to shift for himself as best he might. Nothing daunted, Baldwin followed hard after the lion, and with a good shot at a hundred and fifty yards broke one of his hind-legs. The beast kept on his way, nevertheless, running on three legs. But the horse gradually caught up with the wounded animal, and the rider was able to get in a second shot. This broke the spine, and with a third bullet the hunter gave its quietus to the brute that had so nearly finished him. The Masara fellows now came running back, and began loudly to shout the praises of the master. One of the blacks, a born orator evidently, began a most graphic description of the whole incident, though not a word of the speech was understood by the subject of it.

"I wish my powers of description," writes Mr. Baldwin, pardonably enough, "equalled those of a Masara. I think I never enjoyed a greater treat than to hear one of them

describe this adventure. I did not understand a word he said, but his gestures and attitudes were splendid; his eyes flashed fire, he broke out into a streaming perspiration, and mimicked the lion so perfectly as to make me feel quite cold. It would be impossible to surpass his imitation of the horse galloping, with myself spurring him, and all the other incidents of the chase. I had the satisfaction of seeing that I held the very first place in his estimation."

CHAPTER XX

A TRAGEDY ON THE MATTERHORN

The Matterhorn long the terror of mountaineers—Many early attacks — A distinguished band — Mr. Whymper and Lord Francis Douglas — Joined by two other Englishmen—First night's camp at an elevation of eleven thousand feet—An early start on the morrow—The peak in full view—Exciting race for the top—A dead heat—An Italian party on the mountain beaten—A flag improvised—The descent begun—The order in which the men were roped—The utmost care taken—Mr. Hadow slips—The leading guide knocked off his feet—The rope parts —Four men slide away, three left clinging to the rocks—Over the precipice—A terrible drop of four thousand feet—The survivors paralyzed—A move made at last—An appalling apparition against the sky—"A fearful and wonderful sight"—The night passed on a bare and tiny rock-shelf—Back at Zermatt—Consternation and grief there—A search party perceive the bodies away down on the glacier—An unsuccessful Sunday search—Ultimate recovery of three of the bodies—A victory, but a terrible one!

None of the other great mountain-peaks of Europe had, till quite recently, so sinister a reputation as Mont Cervin, or, as it is more usually called in this country, the Matterhorn. From time immemorial men had gazed on its mighty towering precipices with awe and with terror. From many points of view its huge rock-walls appeared to be frightfully precipitous, wellnigh perpendicular. The mountain, it could be seen, was often swept by terrible

storms; the avalanches of snow, ice, or stones were on the most awful scale. To the simple peasants of the country around, the summit of the Matterhorn was the abode of evil spirits of the most malignant kind, howling demons not to be faced willingly by anything human. That such a monster as this could be conquered by mortals had never entered the mind of man. Thus things continued till a generation or so ago.

Then came the Alpine Club, and a host of climbers from various lands. Peak after peak was assailed and vanquished, even of those that had aforetime been deemed utterly and for ever inaccessible. Yet there remained the Matterhorn, unconquered and, in the belief of most men, even the hardiest of the professional guides, unconquerable. But bolder spirits arose and asked themselves whether the proud Alpine monster, too, might not be trodden under foot by man. Tentative attacks began to be made upon him from all points and by climbers of all nationalities—Switzers, French, British, Italians. So many were these earlier attempts to scale the Matterhorn, indeed, that a full account of them would fill volumes, and, in fact, there has sprung up a whole literature, as it were, on the subject of the Matterhorn ascents. We need only mention two or three of our own countrymen, whose names are honourably and conspicuously connected with those bold, if non-victorious, conflicts with the giant mountain. Occupying a front place in the band is the distinguished scientist Professor Tyndall, and not less famous as climbers were Messrs. Kennedy, Hawkins, Hudson, and Whymper.

In the summer of 1865 Mr. Whymper, who had been very active for some time in the operations against the

Matterhorn, determined on yet another attempt. By this time what may be called the race for the summit of this dangerous but strangely fascinating peak had become very keen. Professor Tyndall was a very doughty rival, and certain Italian climbers were equally bent on gaining the honours that awaited those who should win in the contest. At Zermatt Whymper fell in with Lord Francis Douglas, who was himself desirous of trying the mountain. Hardly had these two gentlemen agreed to go together, when in walked another notable English climber—Mr. Hudson, a clergyman—and with him a friend, Mr. Hadow. As these latter were also about to attempt an ascent, the two parties agreed to join their forces. A start was made next morning in fine weather. The leading guide chosen was Michael Croz, a first-rate man, and with him were two Taugwalders, father and son.

Passing over the earlier stages of their climb, we find them at midday at an elevation of some eleven thousand feet, and at the base of the huge pillar of the peak itself. Here the tent was pitched, the party intending to do no more work that day. Nevertheless, Croz and the younger of the Taugwalders went on a little, to see what was likely to come next day. They were absent some hours, but at length returned in high glee, to report that there was, marvellous to relate, little or no difficulty before them. A merry evening was spent on their lofty perch; everybody was confident, and, consequently, in the best of spirits.

Almost before it was daylight on the morrow the party were ready for the start again. Soon, turning a corner, they could see, towering far above them, the whole of the vast slope to the top, a height of three thousand feet. At

first the going was comparatively easy, but in places step-cutting had to be resorted to, and great caution was necessary. On the men sped, till at length, doubling a nasty corner, they saw before them their actual goal. The rocks from that point were covered with snow, and the ascent was safe and easy.

A feverish excitement now seized on the mountaineers. The race for the top grew breathless. The truth was that another band of climbers—Italians—was on the mountains, having started from Breuil. What if these fellows should have gained the day, wresting the laurels of victory from the intrepid Englishmen! Such a thought was not to be endured. Says Mr. Whymper: "We were tormented with anxiety lest they should arrive at the top before us. All the way up we talked of them, and many false alarms of 'Men on the summit!' had been raised. The higher we rose, the more intense became the excitement. What if we should be beaten at the last moment?"

Mr. Whymper and the guide Croz dashed away from their companions, and reached the highest point exactly together. The race thus ended in a dead heat. The Matterhorn giant had been vanquished; his head was beneath the feet of his conquerors. No wonder the air rang with frantic shouts of delight and triumph.

But what of the Italians? Was it possible they also had reached the summit and had descended again? A hasty search over the whole of the limited area revealed to Mr. Whymper and his friends the fact that the snow was still untrodden. The victory to the Englishmen and their guides was complete. Peeping over the colossal cliff they could just see the Italians like specks many hundreds

of feet below. Hurrah! The victors shouted with all their might down to their honourable but less fortunate rivals. Failing, as it seemed, to make them hear, they began to lever off loose stones from the edge. Such a shower bumping madly down effectually attracted the attention of the Italians, who, probably sick at heart, turned and fled.

It is worth recording, as an illustration of Mr. Whymper's magnanimity of heart, that one of his uppermost feelings in the hour of his triumph was a regret that Carrel could not stand by him at that moment. Carrel was the leading guide to the Italian party, and the ambition of his life had been to be the first to scale the Matterhorn, and from his own valley. Now he had the mortification of seeing dashed to pieces the hope of a whole lifetime.

We need not dwell on the prospect from the top of the Matterhorn. The day, fortunately, was splendidly clear, and the views all around were marvellous. Mountains a full hundred miles distant, or even more, seemed almost close at hand; peerless among them rose the king of mountains, Mont Blanc. The guides had insisted on carrying up one of the tent-poles, so confident had they been of success; this, bearing Croz's blouse, was fixed on the topmost point, and though it was but a small object, it was seen from below. Oddly enough, the folks at Breuil took it to mean that it was *their* party who had proved victorious, and great was the rejoicing—till next day, when the truth came out.

It was high time for the seven good men to think of dropping down again to lower elevations. They were elated, naturally, and full of confidence. Yet they were

well aware that the descent required extreme caution. In places the risk would be very great. Accordingly, some care was taken as to the order in which they should be roped. It is necessary, in view of the terrible sequel, to note what that order was. Croz led the descent, as it was fitting he should. Hadow came next, and after him Hudson, himself almost equal to any guide. Lord Francis Douglas followed; then, in succession, old Peter Taugwalder, Mr. Whymper, and young Peter. Mr. Whymper made the suggestion that a cord should be fastened to the rocks at the worst part of the descent, to serve as an extra protection, but somehow it was not acted upon.

The greatest care possible was taken in the more difficult spots. Only one man moved at a time, the rest holding the rope taut meanwhile. Croz now and then turned round to help Mr. Hadow, who was the least experienced of the party, the guide assisting him to plant his feet firmly in the steps, laying aside for the moment his own axe in order thus to be of service. It was precisely at one of those moments that the fatal slip occurred, resulting in so terrible a catastrophe that it is even yet not to be thought of without a shudder. Probably no one clearly saw what did exactly happen. But we shall not go far wrong, perhaps, if we accept Mr. Whymper's own account:

"Croz was in the act of turning round to go down a step or two himself; at this moment Mr. Hadow slipped, fell against him, and knocked him over. I heard one startled exclamation from Croz, then saw him and Mr. Hadow flying downwards; in another moment Hudson was dragged from his steps, and Lord Francis Douglas immediately after him. All this was the work of a moment. Imme-

A Tragedy of the Matterhorn

"Hadow slipped, knocked against the guide Croz, and they both fell over. In another moment Hudson was dragged from his steps, then Lord Francis. The rope broke between Lord Francis and Taugwalder. So perished our comrades."

diately we heard Croz's exclamation, old Peter and I planted ourselves as firmly as the rocks would permit; the rope was taut between us, and the jerk came on us both as one man. We held; but the rope broke midway between Taugwalder and Lord Francis Douglas. For a few seconds we saw our unfortunate companions sliding downwards on their backs, and spreading out their hands, endeavouring to save themselves. They passed from our sight uninjured, disappeared one by one, and fell from precipice to precipice on to the Matterhorngletscher below, a distance of nearly four thousand feet in height. From the moment the rope broke it was impossible to help them. So perished our comrades!"

Who can picture the position and think the thoughts of the three horror-stricken survivors? Not a single step did they move for a full half-hour. The guides were absolutely paralysed, and though Mr. Whymper himself seems to have kept more free from panic, yet the condition of his trembling comrades was such that he, too, began to fear for his life. So demoralized were the Taugwalders, father and son, indeed, that anything might have happened to the trio. It must be remembered that all the while the Englishman was tied between the two, and could get neither up nor down. For a time young Peter would not attempt to move an inch; he did nothing but sob, "We are lost! we are lost!" At last the old man recovered himself a little and moved from his seat, whereupon the son also came down, and the three scrambled together into a safer place.

And now Mr. Whymper began to examine the rope where it had parted. To his horror he found that it was

the weakest of the three ropes they had with them, and should never have been used at all. It had, in fact, been brought only in case an emergency might arise. On whom the blame rests for using that defective rope has never to this day been satisfactorily cleared up. Whatever be the truth, the result was terrible indeed. Often has the Matterhorn been climbed since that day, but it will be long before the memory of that first ascent passes from the minds of the dwellers in those Alpine regions.

The three men surviving had still to get themselves down in safety, if that were possible, and for long it seemed doubtful whether in the end there would be left a single survivor of the seven to tell the tale. But fortunately we have Mr. Whymper's own account, in all its directness and clearness:

"For more than two hours afterwards I thought almost every moment that the next would be my last; for the Taugwalders, utterly unnerved, were not only incapable of giving assistance, but were in such a state that a slip might have been expected from them at any moment. . . . The men were sometimes afraid to proceed, and several times old Peter turned with ashy face and faltering limbs, and said with terrible emphasis, 'I cannot!'"

To ensure safety as far as it was possible, Mr. Whymper fastened ropes to the rocks in the worst places, cutting them as they descended. The ends, still tied to the rocks, remained for some years, and the Englishman himself saw one of them in 1873, or eight years after the disaster.

A most extraordinary part of the story yet remains to be told. By six in the evening the three men had reached a part of the mountain where no farther danger was to be

apprehended. They had, of course, tried again and again to get a glimpse of their unfortunate companions, but without success. Weary, distraught, utterly cast down, silent, they prepared to finish the last and safe part of the descent—"When lo! a mighty arch appeared, rising above the Lyskamm, high into the air! Pale, colourless, and noiseless, but perfectly sharp and defined, except where it was lost in the clouds, this unearthly apparition seemed like a vision from another world; and, almost appalled, we watched with amazement the gradual development of two vast crosses, one on either side. If the Taugwalders had not been the first to perceive it, I should have doubted my senses."

The guides at once believed that this strange apparition was something unearthly, and that it had a close connection with the accident. Under the circumstances many another person, however little inclined to be superstitious, would have been disposed to do the same. Mr. Whymper stopped short of that, yet he too was puzzled, if not exactly alarmed. He began to think that possibly the crosses might have some relation to their own bodies, but he soon perceived that the figures were unaffected by a change of position on the part of the men. "The spectral forms remained motionless. It was a fearful and wonderful sight; unique in my experience and impressive beyond description, coming at such a moment."

Darkness came on, the three still far from the foot of the mountain and from their hotel. They found a tiny slab sticking out of the rocks, and on this as sole resting-place they passed the night, saying scarce a word to each other. At early dawn they went on, and at length reached

the hotel at Zermatt, Mr. Whymper greeting Mr. Seiler, the host, with the words, "The Taugwalders and I have returned." No more, but it was enough, and the poor man burst into tears. A search-party at once set out, and that same evening perceived the bodies of some of the dead on the snow. It was impossible to recover them that night, however, and the efforts had to cease till daylight. On the Sunday morning, as it was found that none of the Roman Catholic guides would set out on the search till after they had been to early Mass, no time was lost in getting together a party of searchers, several Englishmen volunteering, as well as one or two of the other guides. Their efforts to recover the bodies were not successful, and it was plain that a larger and better-equipped force would be needed for the purpose. The matter threatened to become a public scandal, owing to the supineness of the authorities. Then the commune took action at last, and three of the bodies were brought down from the mountain and buried. They were found without their boots, strange to say. The body of Lord Francis Douglas was not with the rest, and could not be found. It is probable that it had been caught by some projecting ledge of the precipice, and there remained.

The Matterhorn had indeed been conquered, but at what a cost!

[From "The Ascent of the Matterhorn," by E. Whymper. John Murray. By kind permission from Mr. E. Whymper and Mr. J. Murray.]

CHAPTER XXI

SOLDIERING AND SPORT IN THE ROCKIES

Sport in the Rockies forty years ago—Captain Trench Townshend reaches the mountains—Hospitably entertained by American officers—A cold place—Adventure with a buffalo—Lynch law and its work at Laramie—A march of thirty-five miles farther into the mountains—Game very shy—Another trek—A rough country for travelling in—Corduroy roads—Pulling up—Tracks of wild beasts in plenty—Camping at lofty altitudes—A good look-out for Redskin war-parties necessary—Narrow escape of two soldiers from the knives of the Indians—Grand scenery—An antelope-trap—Five animals killed—An odd character met with—A big and wasteful slaughter of deer—Resentment of Indians—A notable hunting day—A herd of more than one hundred and sixty elk—A detour to windward—Crawling on all fours—Too late—A chase—Rest—Magnificent elk spied—A good shot—Night coming on—Camp twenty-five miles away—A late start for home—Difficulties by the way—Bad falls—Man and horse in a salt swamp—Darkness comes on—The brink of a precipice—A stop just in time—Grass fired to light up passage over mountain torrent—Hours of hard and risky travelling—Camp-fires seen in the distance—Safe home!—Lucky escape—Seven *rancheros* scalped.

Forty years ago the big-game hunter in the Rockies was not able to pursue his sport with the ease and comparative safety he now enjoys. The journey to the spot was not so comfortably made then, the Union Pacific Railway being at that time not completed. To make matters worse, the

United States were at war with the Indians; "and the possibility of falling in with a hostile tribe of Sioux or Arapahoes was a prospect which even a strong and well-armed party of hunters could not contemplate without considerable uneasiness."

It was just at this time that an English officer, Captain Trench Townshend, of the 2nd Life Guards, having obtained leave of absence from his military duties, crossed the Atlantic to try his rifle amongst the buffaloes and other game in the Far West. Luckily for him, he carried letters of introduction to certain American officers who were then with their regiments on duty amidst the haunts of the hostile Indian tribes. Through the hospitality shown him by his brothers of the American army, Captain Townshend was enabled not only to enjoy his sport among the mountains in much greater security, but was also given excellent opportunities of seeing camp-life in those remote military stations.

He found it hard at first to realize that he was actually passing over a part of the vast Rocky Mountain system, so gradual was the ascent from the east, and so imperceptible to the eye. Yet when he had arrived at Fort Saunders he was seven thousand three hundred feet above sea-level, and far above the vast rolling prairies he had crossed in mid-continent. On the way, however, he had seen herds of antelopes scampering away, and wolves feeding on the putrid carcasses of buffaloes lying in the ravines. He was therefore delighted when the General commanding at the fort promised him sport in the best part of the Rockies before long. For a time this proved to be impossible, bad weather coming on. It was late in the autumn, and the

elevation was great, so it was not to be wondered at, when the thermometer indicated fifteen degrees of frost, and a great storm of wind and snow fell upon the mountains all around. The comfort of a hut and a good fire was undeniable.

The Englishman had had a little experience of buffalo-stalking already, before the rough weather on the mountains set in. He had been with a small party of hunters when eight buffaloes were descried on a hill a couple of miles off. Each man made for the animal nearest him, galloping helter-skelter across the intervening hollow, Townshend's intended victim leading him over the roughest ground he could pick out, apparently. For three miles the chase went on, before the hunter could get a chance of a shot, and when he did, the buffalo was only wounded in the hind quarters. The animal sped on, but the horseman now gained upon him, and presently, in a ravine, they came abreast, the buffalo on the higher ground. Townshend was about to give him a finishing shot, when, in a moment, the animal stopped, lowered his head, and charged furiously. So unexpected was this attack, that the Captain had hardly time to dig his spurs into his horse and fire, before the shock came. The horse in his fright had stood stock still. "In a moment the bull was on us, catching me with his head and horns just under the knee-joint of the left leg, and tossing me on to the ground several yards off. He then passed clean under my horse's hind quarters, hoisting them up with his back as he passed, but not injuring the terrified animal, which he pursued for a few yards, fortunately not noticing me as I lay upon the ground." Fortunately, also, help was at hand, and the

injured officer was carried off the field, the buffalo escaping. Such was the Captain's introduction to sport in the West.

The visitor saw something of the lawlessness of the district, and of the methods adopted by the "Vigilance Committee" to keep evil-doers in check. At Laramie, a mountain settlement not far away from the fort, he noted the bodies of no fewer than six horse-thieves hanging from the timbers of a partly-built house, while four more were dangling from the telegraph poles. Underneath was a notice to the effect that the Committee was prepared to deal in like manner with all other scoundrels of the same sort. A rough business, this lynch law, the Captain thought, yet many of the stories he heard of the brutalities practised by these lawless ruffians were horrible indeed.

At length better weather arrived, and a company of officers started from Fort Saunders for the mountains, there to enjoy such sport as might offer. The day was bright, but intensely cold, and the mountains were everywhere deep in snow. A march of five-and-thirty miles was that day's work, and then the camp was pitched by a stream in a sheltered hollow. Plenty of antelopes had been seen on the march, but they were very shy, and the total bag for the day was only two of these animals. The cold at night was severe, water inside the tents being frozen into solid lumps.

The party of hunters now made another trek into a more promising district. The difficulties of the route were many and great, the track being a mere Indian trail, and not at all wide enough to accommodate waggons. Moreover, the way led through a dense forest and over the

elevated dividing ridge of the Rockies, and the labour involved was both heavy and tiresome. The growth of trees was so thick, and the number of fallen trunks so great, that a huge amount of timber had to be removed before a wheeled vehicle could pass along at all. In places were swamps, to cross which it was necessary to build a *corduroy* road—that is, a road made by placing transversely and close together the trunks of trees. Without such a contrivance horses and mules would have sunk to their middles in the swamps. Over the whole of the ground lay two feet of snow. For a couple of miles the party had to cut their way through this troublesome forest, till at last they came out at the summit of the pass, twelve thousand feet above the level of the sea. Both men and horses suffered greatly from the rarity of the atmosphere at this lofty elevation, their exertions causing them to gasp for breath. At the summit the snow showed the tracks of several varieties of wild beast—bears, panthers, wolves, and others. The grizzly was becoming scarce, the hunters were told, but the traces of one of these brutes were distinctly seen on the top of the pass.

The day's work was not yet over; descending the other slope, they found it in parts so steep that the waggons were in constant danger of being thrown over and smashed. At length, after a hard day's toil, and a march of twenty miles, the soldiers pitched their tents, long after dark, at the extremity of what is called the North Park; a strange misnomer, as not a tree was found in it. Captain Townshend had on the way spied a number of antelopes and deer pawing at a little frozen lake in a hollow. A shot from the edge of the cliff above brought down a fine

buck antelope, and scattered the rest of the herd in hot haste.

The camp was pitched under five splendid pine-trees, the last of their kind seen for a time. The thick branches had kept the snow from the ground beneath, and the wood lying around furnished an ample supply of fuel for the glorious fires that were kept going. Thus even this lofty perch made no bad camping-ground. But there was another matter that required consideration; the district was known to be infested with Indians. Sentries had therefore to be posted all round, and a good look-out kept, lest the party should be surprised by a band of Redskins. In truth, two of the company present had been not long before assailed by a gang of ten mounted Indians. The two were hunting, and busily engaged in stalking a herd of antelopes, when, without a moment's warning, there rang out on the air the dreaded war-whoop, "Ough, ough, ough!" The soldiers drew up behind a rock, as Captain Townshend puts it, "the cavalry on the right hand, the infantry on the left—one of them was mounted, the other on foot." Time after time the Indians attempted to dislodge the gallant couple, but without success, and the Redskins had at last to sheer off, leaving their plucky foes alive to tell the tale.

While the men were resting for a day, after the heavy labours of yesterday, the American General and the English Captain set out to see what they could bring in for the pot. The sight of the towering Rockies all around was splendid. Says Townshend: "The magnificent range of mountains which surround the Park are unequalled in Europe for extent and height," though, he adds, "they are surpassed

by the Alps in grand and striking scenery." Over mountain spurs, the General and the Captain pursued their course, and down into many a deep ravine, where every two or three hundred yards immense beaver-dams were found blocking the streams. Game in plenty was seen, but the animals were far too shy, and the men had to return to camp almost empty-handed, to learn that those of their comrades who had been out had had a like experience.

On the 2nd of November tents were struck, and a move was made for the other side of the Park, where the River Platte has its rise. While the men went round with the waggons, the officers for the most part took a shorter cut, dropping down into a deep valley. On the banks of the stream at the bottom they came across a large herd of antelopes feeding. At once the hunters spread themselves out, keeping as much as possible under cover, till they had made a line round the herd. There were but two ways of escape open to the animals; they must either swim the river or break through the line of guns. The latter was what they chose, and they dashed past, within ten yards of some of the men. Five fell, and the welcome addition to the larder was duly hoisted on to the waggons when they came along. The difficulty of getting across the river was serious, however, the stream being both wide and deep. Presently, in a gorge with very steep sides, the party came upon one of those strange characters often found in the hunting-grounds—a wild-looking fellow, dressed in the queerest and shabbiest garb. He was calmly drinking whisky, while beside him grazed his tough little mustang. Two companions of his, he said, had gone over to Fort

Steel with the skins and furs they had gathered, the party having had a run of luck. The solitary hunter was relieved when the soldiers assured him that they had seen no Redskins in his neighbourhood.

In one part the gorge of the Platte was found to be so narrow that there was no room even for a beast-track, the mountains on either hand rising almost sheer from the water's edge. The hunters were obliged to proceed along the bed of the stream, which was not deep, though rapid. The scenery was very grand. Whenever the mountain-flank receded a little and left a margin of strand by the river-side, there were plenty of traces of elk and mountain sheep. Running away from the main cañon was a side-cleft. It was in this place, not so long before, that a curious and, in some ways, a regrettable thing had happened. A band of hunters had managed to drive into this smaller cañon a herd of seven-and-twenty elk. The animals were in a trap, there being no outlet at the upper end. The consequence was that twenty-six out of the twenty-seven animals fell to the guns, the remaining elk making a dash through the line of his enemies, and getting clear away. The hour was late and the camp far distant; the men therefore left the carcasses for the night. When they came back next day to fetch up this notable supply of meat, they were surprised and vexed to find that the flesh was already putrid. The whole of the bodies had to be left lying where they were, to rot or be destroyed by wild beasts. We can imagine the Indians who passed that way cursing the greediness of the white man, for the Redskin believes that all the animals of the country have been sent by the Great Spirit solely for the use of himself and his

family. The savage has this to be said on his side—that without such supplies he and his must inevitably perish.

In due time the military sportsmen came into the Elk Mountain neighbourhood, the best hunting district of all, and here they made a considerable stay. All the members of the expedition had good sport, but we must follow the fortunes of the Englishman more especially. "We had just arrived on the brink of a deep cañon," he says, in his account of one of the most remarkable of his experiences, "when we saw on the opposite bank a sight which made our hearts leap. It was no less than a herd, or band, as it is called, of over a hundred and sixty elk, we counted up to that number quietly grazing or lying down. For some minutes they did not notice us; but first one and then another old stag got up and looked uneasily in our direction. They must have got wind of us, for soon the whole herd were on the move, walking off in Indian file, and disappeared into a wooded glen in the mountain."

Nothing could have better pleased the hunters, for they could not have got near to the animals in the open. A long detour was made by the party, with the view of getting to the other side of the elk, and then every man dropped down among the bushes, and crawled cautiously on all fours, gradually approching the glen. A vain labour, as it presently appeared, for to the astonishment of the men, the whole herd of elk was spied on the top of a peak, above and behind them. How the animals had got there was a mystery, but there they were, and staring down as if in wonderment at the strange behaviour of the enemy. Then they took to flight, and the hunters sprang upon their horses and made after them, the object being to turn

the herd, if possible, before it reached a certain deep ravine farther on. But they were too late, most of the elk had got across before anything could be done to stop them. The space between the men and the nearest elk was fully five hundred yards, but a volley was fired into the herd nevertheless. Only one animal was hit, a hind-leg being broken by the bullet. On this some of the hunting party went off after the herd, pursuing at full speed, till hunters and hunted were swallowed up by the dense forest. Captain Townshend, with others, had had enough of it, and dismounted, to seek a shelter from the cutting wind and to deplore their bad luck, as they drank their whisky mixed with snow.

The respite from labour, however, was not of long duration. The Englishman, chancing to look up, spied a magnificent head and horns among the branches a couple of hundred yards away. The elk was evidently staring intently at the party, but as the wind carried the scent away from the animal, he was not unduly alarmed. To seize his gun and fire was the work of an instant for Townshend, and the poor brute paid the penalty of his curiosity. The antlers proved to be the finest the Englishman had ever seen, and he longed to take the head with him. But that was impossible under the circumstances in which the sportsmen were placed.

It was high time, in truth, to think of something besides sport. The day was waning rapidly, and the distance back to the camp was no less than five-and-twenty miles. It was late even now for a start, but half their party had gone off after the herd of elk. To return without their comrades was not to be thought of, to search for them in

that great and dense forest would be ridiculous. It was near sunset before the stragglers all returned, and the united party could set off homewards. The predicament was without doubt an awkward one. Here were they all, between twenty and thirty miles from camp; the intervening ground was of the most difficult and trying description, the horses were weary, the track was only a very indistinct trail at the best; moreover, the time was winter, and winter high up among the Rockies; last, but not least, the district was known to be haunted by Indians. There were but two alternatives, both sufficiently disagreeable: the hunters might endeavour to get back to the camp in spite of the distance, or they might spend the night on the mountain flank, amidst snow and ice, without tents or wraps, and exposed to possible attacks from the Redskins. This latter alternative was not to be thought of so long as anything at all better in the way of choice was left to them.

The horsemen accordingly plunged into the gloomy forest, through which lay the way to the summit of the pass. The fallen timber was a sore trouble, and it was found very difficult to keep the jaded horses going. Moreover, the trees stood very thick, and the branches made havoc of both hands and clothes. Falls were plentiful, some of them nasty ones. One man was thrown from his mount with force against the trunk of a tree. In another case the animal got into a salt swamp, and was up to its head in it before it could be pulled up. The rider was only just in time to drag the poor brute from its dangerous predicament before it was too late. At last ascent and forest ended together, and from the top of the

pass easier going appeared in the shape of descending grass slopes.

By this time it was quite dark, and the rest of the journey promised to be attended with no little risk, if, indeed, it could be continued at all. Presently, by great good-fortune, the horsemen pulled up just in time to avoid destruction. They found themselves on the very brink of a perpendicular precipice, at the foot of which they could hear the rush of a stream. In some way the party managed to scramble by a steep game-track to the bottom of the ravine, but it was only to find themselves confronted by the difficulty of crossing the river, no easy thing when the darkness prevented them from seeing where the passage was most practicable. A halt had to be called to discuss the point, when someone threw out the bright idea of firing the grass. This was done, and, aided by the wind, the blaze soon lit up the whole neighbourhood. The creek was then successfully crossed.

Hour after hour the party plodded doggedly on, game to the end, notwithstanding weariness of body and mind. At last they had their reward. In the distance were seen the big fires which their friends at the camp had made for their guidance. Soon, also, they could hear the shots fired there to attract their attention.

They had been fourteen hours on horseback. The first bit of news they heard from their comrades at home was one that must have made the hunters rejoice more than ever that they had reached camp in safety. A party of Indians, it appeared, had surprised seven rancheros who were feeding their cattle on the mountain slopes, and all

the poor fellows had been scalped. The rancheros had had but one revolver amongst them. As for the Indians, they had gone off, it was reported, to upset the train on the Union Pacific!

[From "Ten Thousand Miles of Travel, Sport, and Adventure," by F. French Townshend. Hurst and Blackett, 1869. By kind permission from Colonel Townshend and Messrs. Hurst and Blackett.]