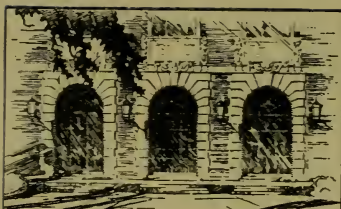


823  
R27gi  
v. 1



LIBRARY  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF ILLINOIS

823

R27gi

v.1















THE GIRAFFE HUNTERS.

VOL. I.

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY WOODFALL AND KINDER,  
MILFORD LANE, STRAND, W.C.

# THE GIRAFFE HUNTERS.

BY

CAPTAIN MAYNE REID,

AUTHOR OF

“THE RIFLE RANGERS,” “THE SCALP HUNTERS,”

ETC. ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON :

HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,

13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET,

1867.

*The right of Translation is reserved.*



823  
R279i  
v. 1

# THE GIRAFFE HUNTERS.

---

---

## CHAPTER I.

### ARRIVAL AT THE PROMISED LAND.

IN that land of which we have so many records of early and high civilization, and also such strong evidences of present barbarism—the land of which we know so much and so little—the land where Nature exhibits some of her most wonderful creations and greatest contrasts, and where she is also prolific in the great forms of animal and vegetable life—there, my young reader, let us wander once more.

21 Jan. 54. Clark.  
Gordon P. of 18912 B. and L. 7. 307

Let us return to Africa, and encounter new scenes in the company of old friends.

On the banks of the Limpopo brightly blazes a hunter's fire, around which the reader may behold three distinct circles of animated beings. The largest is composed of horses, the second of dogs, and the lesser, or inner one, of young men, whom many of my readers will recognize as old acquaintances.

I have but to mention the names of Hans and Hendrick Von Bloom, Groot Willem, and Arend Van Wyk, to make known that "The Young Yägers" are again on a hunting expedition.

In the one in which we now encounter them, all the parties are not inspired by the same hopes and desires.

The quiet and learned Hans Von Bloom,

like many colonial youths, is affected with the desire of visiting the home of his forefathers. He wishes to go to Europe, for the purpose of making some practical use of the knowledge acquired, and the floral collection made, while a "Bush Boy" and a "Young Yäger."

But, before doing so, he desires to enlarge his knowledge of natural history by making one more expedition to a part of South Africa he has not yet visited.

He knows that extensive regions of his native land, containing large rivers and immense forests, and abounding in a vast variety of rare plants, lie between the rivers Limpopo and Zambesi; and before visiting Europe he wishes to extend his botanical researches in that direction.

His desire to make this new excursion

amid the African wilds is not stronger than that of Groot Willem, who, ever since his return from their last expedition, six months before, has been anxious to undertake another, in quest of game such as he has not yet encountered.

Our readers will search in vain around the camp-fire for little Jan and Klaas. Their parents would not consent to their going so far from home, on an excursion promising so many hardships and so much danger. Besides, it was necessary that they should become something better than mere "Bush Boys," by spending a few years at school.

The two young cornets, Hendrick Von Bloom and Arend Van Wyk, each endeavouring to wear the appearance of old warriors, are present in the camp.



Although both are passionately fond of a sportsman's life, each, for certain reasons, had refrained from urging the necessity or advantage of the present expedition.

They would have preferred remaining at home, and trying to find amusement during the day with the inferior game to be found near Graaff-Reinet—not that they feared danger, or were in any way entitled to the appellation of “cockney sportsmen;” but home has an attraction for them that the love of adventure cannot wholly eradicate.

Hendrick Von Bloom could have stayed very happily at home. The excitement of the chase, which on former occasions he had so much enjoyed, now no longer attracts him half so much as the smiles

of Wilhemina Van Wyk—the only sister of his friends Groot Willem and Arend.

The latter young gentleman would not have travelled far from the daily society of little Trüey Von Bloom, had he been left to his own inclinations.

But Willem and Hans had determined upon seeking adventures further to the north than any place they had yet visited; and hence the present expedition.

The promise of sport and rare adventures, added to the fear of ridicule should they remain at home, influenced Hendrick and Arend to accompany the great hunter and the naturalist to the banks of the Limpopo.

Seated near the fire are two other individuals whom the reader of “The Young Yägers” will recognize as old acquaintances.

One is the short, stout, heavy-headed Bushman, Swartboy, who could not have been coaxed to remain behind, while his young masters, Hans and Hendrick, were out in search of adventures.

The other personage, not mentioned by name, is Congo the Kaffir.

The Limpopo river was too far from Graaff-Reinet for the young hunters to think of reaching it with waggons and oxen. The journey might be made, but it would take up too much time; and they were impatient to reach what Groot Willem had long called the "promised land."

In order, therefore, to do their travelling in as little time as possible, they had taken no oxen, but, mounted on good horses, had hastened by the nearest route to the

banks of the Limpopo,—avoiding, instead of seeking, adventures by the way.

Besides their own saddle-horses, they had six others, furnished with pack-saddles, and lightly laden with ammunition, clothing, and such other articles as might be required.

The camp, where we now encounter them, is a temporary halting-place on the Limpopo. They have succeeded in crossing the river, and are now on the borders of that land so long represented to them as being a hunter's paradise.

A toilsome journey is no longer before them, but only amusement, of a kind so much appreciated, that they have travelled several hundred miles to enjoy it.

We have stated that, in undertaking this expedition, the youths were influenced by

different motives. This was, to a great extent, true; and yet they had a common purpose, besides that of mere amusement.

The Consul for the Netherlands had been instructed by his Government to procure a young male and female giraffe, to be forwarded to Europe.

Five hundred pounds had been offered for the pair, safely delivered either at Cape Town or Port Natal; and several parties of hunters, attempting to procure them, had failed. These had shot and otherwise killed camelopards by the score, but had not succeeded in capturing any young ones alive. Our hunters had left home with the determination to take back a pair of young giraffes, and pay all expenses of their expedition by this, as also by the sale of

hippopotamus' teeth. The hope was not an unreasonable one. They knew that fortunes had been made in procuring elephants' tusks, and also that the teeth of the hippopotamus were the finest of ivory, and commanded a price four times greater than any other sent to the European market.

But the capturing of the young camelpards was the principal object of their expedition. The love of glory was stronger than the desire of gain, especially in Groot Willem, who, as a professed hunter, eagerly longed to accomplish a feat which had been attempted by so many others without success.

In his mind, the fame of fetching back the two young giraffes far outweighed the five hundred pound prize to be obtained ;

though the latter was a consideration not to be despised, and, no doubt, formed with him, as with the others, an additional incentive.

## CHAPTER II.

## ON THE LIMPOPO.

DURING the first night spent upon the Limpopo, our adventurers had good reason for believing that they were in the neighbourhood of several kinds of game they were anxious to fall in with.

Their repose was disturbed by a combination of sounds, in which they could distinguish the roar of the lion, the trumpet-like notes of the elephant, mingled with the voices of some creatures they



could not remember having previously heard.

Several hours of that day had been passed in searching for a place to cross the river,—one where the banks were low on each side, and the stream not too deep. This had not been found until the sun was low down upon the horizon.

By the time they had got safety over, twilight was fast thickening into darkness, and all but Congo were unwilling to proceed farther that night.

The Kaffir suggested that they should go at least half a mile up or down the river, and Groot Willem seconded the proposal, although he had no other reason for doing so than a blind belief in the judgment of his attendant, whether it was based upon wisdom or instinct.

In the end, Congo's suggestion had been adopted, and the sounds that disturbed the slumbers of the camp were heard at some distance, proceeding from the place where they had crossed the river.

"Now can you understand why Congo advised us to come here?" asked Groot Willem, as they listened to the hideous noises that were depriving them of sleep.

"No," was the reply of his companions.

"Well, it was because the place where we crossed was the watering-place for all the animals in the neighbourhood."

"That is so, baas Willem," said Congo, confirming the statement of his master.

"But we have not come a thousand miles for the sake of keeping out of the way of those animals, have we?" asked the hunter Hendrick.

“No,” answered Willem; “we came here to seek them, not to have them seek us. Our horses want rest, whether we do or not.”

Here ended further conversation for the night, for the hunters, becoming accustomed to the chorus of the wild creatures, took no further notice of it, and one after another fell asleep.

Morning dawned upon a scene of surpassing beauty.

They were in a broad valley covered with magnificent trees, among which were many gigantic baobabs (*Adansonia digitata*). Wild date trees were growing in little clumps, while the floral carpet, spread in brilliant pattern over the valley, was observed by Hans with an air of peculiar satisfaction.

He had reached a new field for the pursuit of his studies, and bright dreams were passing gently through his mind,—dreams that anticipated new discoveries in the botanical world, which might make his name known among the *savants* of Europe.

Before any of his companions were moving, Groot Willem, accompanied by Congo, stole forth to take a look at the surrounding country.

They directed their course down the river.

On reaching the place where they had crossed it, they chanced upon a tableau that even a hunter, who is supposed to take delight in the destruction of animals, could not look upon without unpleasant emotions.

Within the space of a hundred yards were lying five dead antelopes, of a species Willem had never seen before.

Feeding on the carcasses were several hyenas. On the approach of the hunters, they slowly moved away, each laughing like a madman who has just committed some horrible atrocity.

By the "spoor" seen upon the river banks, it was evident that both elephants and lions had visited the place during the night.

While making these and other reconnoissances, Groot Willem was joined by Hans, who had already commenced his favourite study by making an acquaintance with the floral treasures in his immediate locality.

On getting up with Groot Willem, the

attention of Hans was at once directed to an examination of the mutilated antelopes, which he pronounced to be elands, but believed them to be of a new and undescribed variety of this animal.

They were elands ; but each was marked with small white stripes across the body, in this respect resembling "koodoos."

After a short examination of the spoor, Congo asserted that a troop of elands had first visited the watering-place, and that while they were there, four bull elephants, also in search of water, had charged with great speed upon the antelopes.

Three or four lions had also joined in the strife, in which the only victims had been the unfortunate elands.

"I think we are in a place where we had better make a regular kraal, and stop

for a few days," suggested Groot Willem, on his return to the camp. "There is plenty of feed for the horses, and we have proof that the *drift* where we crossed is a great resort for all kinds of game."

"I'm of the same opinion," assented Hendrick; but I don't wish to encamp quite so close to the crossing. We had better move some distance off; then we shall not prevent game from coming to the water, or be ourselves hindered from getting sleep. Don't you think we'd do well to move a little farther up the river?"

"Yes, yes!" was the unanimous answer.

It was therefore decided that search should be made for another camping ground, where they could build themselves a proper enclosure, or "kraal."

After partaking of their first breakfast upon the Limpopo, Groot Willem, Hans, and Hendrick mounted their horses and rode off up stream, accompanied by the whole pack of dogs; leaving Arend with Swartboy and Congo to take care of the camp.

For nearly three miles the young hunters rode along the bank of the river without finding any spot where access to the water could be readily obtained.

The banks were high and steep, and therefore but little visited by such animals as they wished to hunt.

At this point, the features of the landscape began to change—presenting an appearance more to their satisfaction.

Light timber, such as they would require for the construction of a stockade, was



growing near the river; which was no longer inaccessible, though its banks appeared but little frequented by game.

“ I think this place will suit admirably,” said Groot Willem. “ We are only half an hour’s ride from the drift, and probably we may find good hunting ground farther up stream.”

“ Very likely,” rejoined Hendrick; “ but, before taking too much trouble to build ourselves a big kraal, we had better be sure about what sort of game is to be got here.”

“ You are right about that,” answered Willem; “ we must take care to find out whether there are hippopotami and giraffes. We cannot go home without a pair of the latter. Our friends would be sorely disappointed, and *some I know* would have a good laugh at us.”

“ And you, for one, would deserve it,” reiterated Hans. “ Remember how you ridiculed the other hunters who returned unsuccessful.”

Having selected a place for the kraal, should they decide on staying awhile in the neighbourhood, the young hunters proceeded farther up the river, for the purpose of learning something more of the hunting ground, before finally determining to construct the enclosure.

## CHAPTER III.

## A TWIN TRAP.

Not long after the departure of Groot Willem and his companions, Arend, looking towards a thicket about half a mile from the river, perceived a small herd of antelopes quietly browsing upon the plain.

Mounting his horse, he rode off with the intention of bagging one of them, to serve for the day's dinner.

Having ridden to the leeward of the

herd, and getting near them, he saw that they were of the species known as “duyker,” or diver.

Near them was a small “motte” of the *Nerium Oleander*—a shrub about twelve feet high—loaded with beautiful blossoms.

Under the cover of these bushes, he rode up close enough to the antelopes to insure a good shot; and picking out one of the largest of the herd, he fired.

All the antelopes but one rushed to the edge of the thicket, made a grand leap, and dived out of sight over the tops of the bushes—thus affording a beautiful illustration of that peculiarity to which they are indebted for their name of “divers.”

Riding up to the one that had remained behind, and which was that at which he

had fired, the young hunter made sure that it was dead.

He then trotted back to camp; and despatched Congo and the Bushman to bring it in.

They soon returned with the carcass, which they proceeded to skin and make ready for the spit.

While thus engaged, Swartboy appeared to notice something out upon the plain.

“Look yonner, baas Arend,” said he.

“Well, what is it, Swart?”

“You see da pack horse dar? He gone too much off from camp.”

Arend turned and looked in the direction in which the Bushman was pointing. One of the horses, which had strayed from its companions, was now more than half a mile off, and was wandering onward.

“ All right, Swart. You go on with your cooking. I’ll ride after it myself, and drive it in.”

Arend, again mounting his horse, trotted off in the direction of the animal that had strayed.

For cooking the antelope, Congo and Swartboy saw the necessity of providing themselves with some water ; and each taking a vessel for that purpose, they set out for the drift—that being the nearest point where they could obtain it.

They kept along the river bank ; and just before reaching a place where they could descend to the water, Congo, who was in advance, suddenly disappeared !

He had walked into a carefully-concealed

pit, dug for the purpose of catching hippopotami or elephants.

The hole was about nine feet deep; and, after being astonished by dropping into it, the Kaffir was nearly blinded by the sand, dust, and other materials that had formed the covering of the pit.

Congo was too well acquainted with this South African device for killing large game to be anyways disconcerted by what had happened; and after becoming convinced that he was uninjured by the fall, he turned his glance upward, expecting assistance from his companion.

But Swartboy's aid could not just then be given.

The Bushman, amused by the ludicrous incident that had befallen his rival, was

determined to enjoy the fun for a little longer.

Uttering a wild shout of laughter, that was a tolerable imitation of an enraged hyena, Swartboy seemed transported into a heaven of unadulterated joy.

Earth appeared hardly able to hold him, as he leaped and danced around the edge of the pit.

Never had his microscopic mind been so intensely delighted; but the manifestations of that delight were more speedily terminated than commenced; for in the midst of his eccentric capers he, too, suddenly disappeared under ground, as if swallowed up by an earthquake!

His misfortune was similar to that which had befallen his companion. Two pitfalls had been constructed close to-



gether; and Swartboy now occupied the second!

It is a common practice among the natives of South Africa to trap the elephant in these twin pitfalls—as the animals, too hastily avoiding the one, run the risk of dropping into the other.

Swartboy and the Kaffir had unexpectedly found a place where this plan had been adopted—and, much to their discomfiture, without the success anticipated by those who had taken the trouble to contrive it.

The cavity into which Congo had fallen, contained about two feet of mud on the bottom. The sides were perpendicular, and of a soapy kind of clay; so that his attempts at climbing out proved altogether unsuccessful, thus greatly increas-

ing the chagrin of his unphilosophic mind.

He had heard the Bushman's screams of delight; and the sounds had contributed nothing to reconcile him to the mischance that had befallen him.

Several minutes passed, and he heard nothing of Swartboy.

He was not surprised at the Bushman having been amused, as well as gratified, by his mischance. Still he expected that in time he would lend assistance, and pull him out of the pit.

But as this assistance was not given, and as Swartboy, not satisfied with laughing at his misfortune, appeared also to have gone off and left him to his fate, the Kaffir became frantic with rage.

Several more minutes passed, which to

Congo seemed hours, and still nothing was seen or heard of his companion.

Had Swartboy returned to the camp?

If so, why had not Arend, on ascertaining what was wrong, hastened to the relief of his faithful servant?

As some addition to the discomforts of the place, the pit contained many reptiles and insects that had in some manner obtained admittance, and, like himself, could not escape. There were toads, frogs, large ants called "soldiers," and other creatures, whose company he had no relish to keep.

In vain he called "Swartboy" and "Baas Arend." No one came to his call.

The strong vindictive spirit of his race was soon roused to the pitch of fury; and

liberty only became desired for one object; that was revenge—revenge on the man who, instead of releasing him from his imprisonment, only exulted in its continuance.

The Bushman had not been injured in falling into the pit, as may be supposed.

After fully comprehending the manner in which his amusement had been so suddenly brought to a termination, his first thought was to extricate himself, without asking assistance from the man who had furnished him with the fun.

His pride would be greatly mortified should the Kaffir get out of his pit, and find him in the other: that would be a humiliating *revanche*.

In silence, therefore, he listened to Congo's cries for assistance; while at the

same time doing all in his power to get himself out.

He tried to pull up a sharp-pointed stake that stood in the bottom of the pit.

This piece of timber had been placed there for the purpose of impaling and killing the hippopotamus or elephant that should drop down upon it; and had the Bushman succeeded in taking it from the place where it had been planted, he might have used it in working his way to the surface of the earth.

This object, however, he was unable to accomplish; and his mind became diverted to another idea.

Swartboy had a system of logic, not wholly peculiar to himself, by which he was enabled to discover that there must be

some first cause for his being in a place from which he could not escape.

That cause was no other than Congo.

Had the Kaffir not fallen into a pit, Swartboy was quite certain that he would have escaped the similar calamity.

He would have liberated Congo from his confinement, and perhaps sympathized with his misfortune, after the first moments of his mirth had been exhausted; but now, on being entrapped himself, he was only conscious that some one was to blame for the disagreeable incident, and was unable to admit that this some one was himself.

The mishap had befallen him in company with the Kaffir. It was that individual's misfortunes that had conduced to his own: and this was another reason why he now

submitted to his captivity in profound silence.

Unlike Congo, he did not experience the soul-harrowing thought of being neglected; and could therefore endure his confinement with some degree of patience, not possible to his companion. Moreover, he had the hope of speedy deliverance, which to Congo was denied.

He knew that Arend would soon return to the camp with the stray horse, and miss them.

The water-vessel would also be missed; and a search would be made for it in the right direction.

No doubt Arend, seeing that the bucket was taken away from the camp, and finding that they did not return, would come towards the drift—the only place

where water could be dipped up. In doing so, he must pass within sight of the pits.

With this calculation, therefore, Swart-boy could reconcile himself to patience and silence, whereas the Kaffir had no such consolatory data to build upon.



## CHAPTER IV.

## IN THE PITS.

As time passed on, however, and Swart-boy saw that the sun was descending, and that the shades of night would soon be gathering over the river, his hopes began to sink within him.

He could not understand why the young hunter had not long ago come to release them.

Groot Willem, Hendrick, and Hans should have returned by that time; and

the four should have made an effectual search for their missing servants.

He had remained silent for a long time under very peculiar circumstances.

But silence now became unbearable, and he was seized with a sudden desire to express his dissatisfaction at the manner fate had been dealing out events, a desire to be no longer resisted. The silence was at last broken by his calling out,—

“ Congo ! you ole fool, where are you ?  
What for don't you go home ? ”

On the Kaffir's ear the voice fell dull and distant, and yet he immediately understood whence it came. Like himself, the Bushman was in a living grave !

That explained his neglect to render the long-desired assistance.

“ Lor, Swart ! why, I waitin' for you, ”

answered Congo, for the first time since his imprisonment attempting a smile. "I don't want to go to the camp and leave you behind me."

"You think a big sight too much of yourself!" rejoined the Bushman. "Who wants to be near such a black ole fool as you. You may go back to the camp, and when you get there, jus' tell baas Hendrick that Swartboy wants to see him. I've got something particular to tell him."

"Very well," answered the Kaffir, becoming more reconciled to his position. "What for you want see baas Hendrick? I'll tell him what you want, without making him come here;—what shall I say?"

In answer to this question, Swartboy made a long speech, in which the Kaffir

was requested to report himself a fool for having fallen into a pit—that he had shown himself more stupid than the sea-cows that had apparently shunned the trap for years.

On being requested to explain how one was more stupid than the other, both having met with the same mischance, Swartboy went on to prove that his misfortune was wholly owing to the fault of Congo, by the Kaffir having committed the first folly of allowing himself to be entrapped.

Nothing, to the Bushman's mind, could be more clear than that Congo's stupidity in falling] into the first pit, had led to his downfall into the second.

This was now a source of much consolation to him, and the verbal expression

of his wrongs enabled him for a while to feel rather happy at the fine opportunity afforded for reviling his rival.

The amusement, however, could not prevent his thoughts from returning to the positive fact that he was imprisoned—that in place of passing the day in cooking and eating *duyker*, he had been fasting and fretting in a dark, dirty pit, in the companionship of loathsome reptiles.

His mind now expanded under the exercise of a startled imagination. He became apprehensive. What if some accident should have occurred to *Arend*, and prevented his return to the camp? What if *Groot Willem* and the others should have strayed, and not find their way back to the place for two or three

days? He had heard of such events happening to other stupid white men, and why not to them? What if they had met a tribe of the savage inhabitants of the country, and been killed, or taken prisoners?

These conjectures, and a thousand others, flitted through the brain of the Bushman, all guiding to the conclusion, that should either of them prove correct, he would first have to eat the reptiles in the pit, and then starve.

It was no consolation to him to think that his rival in the other pit would have to submit to a similar fate.

His unpleasant reveries were interrupted by a short angry bark, and, looking up to the opening through which he had descended, he beheld the countenance of a

savage creature—the “wilde honden” of the Dutch boers.

Uttering another and a different cry, the animal started back; and from the sounds now heard overhead, the Bushman was certain it was accompanied by many others of its kind.

An instinctive fear of man led them to retreat to a short distance; but they found out that “the wicked flee when no man pursueth,” and they returned.

They were hungry, and had the sense to know that the enemy they had discovered was, for some reason, unable to molest them.

Approaching nearer, and more near, they again gathered around the pits, and saw that food was ready for them at the bottom of both.

They could contemplate their victims unharmed, and this made them courageous enough to think of an attack.

The human voice and the gaze of human eyes had lost their power, and the pack of wild hounds, counting several score, began to show signs of taking some steps towards satisfying their hunger.

They commenced scratching and tearing away the covering of the pits, sending down showers of dust, sand, and grass, that nearly suffocated the two men imprisoned beneath.

The poles supporting the screen of earth were rotten with age; and the whole scaffolding threatened to come down, as the wild dogs scampered over it.

“If there should be a shower of dogs,”



thought Swartboy, "I hope that fool Congo will have his share of it."

This hope was immediately realized, for the next instant he heard the howling of one of the animals that had evidently fallen into the adjoining pit.

It had gone down, but, fortunately for Congo, not without injuring itself in a way that he himself had but narrowly escaped. The dog had got transfixed on the sharp-pointed stake planted in the centre of the pit; and was now hanging on it in horrible agony, unable to get clear!

Without lying down in the mud, the Kaffir was unable to keep his face more than twelve inches from the open jaws of the dog, that in its struggles spun round as on a pivot; and Congo had to press

against the side of the pit to keep out of the reach of the fierce creature yelping close to his ears.

Swartboy could distinguish the utterances of this dog from those of its companions above, and the interpretation he gave to them was, that a fierce combat was taking place between it and the Kaffir.

The jealousy and ill-will so often exhibited by the Bushman, was not so strong as he had himself believed.

His intense anxiety to know which was getting the best of the fight, added to the fear that Congo was being torn to pieces, told him that his friendship for the Kaffir far outweighed the animosity he fancied himself to have felt.

The fiendish yells of the dogs, the unpleasant situation in which he was placed,

and the uncertainty of the time he was to endure it, were well nigh driving him distracted, when just then the wilde honden appeared to be beating a retreat—the only one remaining being that in the pit with Congo.

What was driving them away?

Could assistance be at hand?

Breathlessly the Bushman stood listening.

## CHAPTER V.

## AREND LOST.

IN the afternoon, when Groot Willem, Hans, and Hendrick returned to the camp, they found it deserted.

Several jackals reluctantly skulked off as they drew near, and on riding up to the spot from which those creatures had retired, they saw the clean-picked bones of an antelope.

The camp must have been deserted for several hours.

“What does this mean?” exclaimed Groot Willem. “What has become of Arend?”

“I don’t know,” answered Hendrick; “it is strange that Swart and Cong are not here to tell us.”

Something unusual had certainly happened; yet as each glanced anxiously round the place, there appeared nothing to explain the mystery.

“What shall we do?” asked Willem, in a tone that displayed much concern.

“Wait,” answered Hans; “we can do nothing more.”

Two or three objects were at this moment observed, which fixed their attention. They were out on the plain, nearly a mile off. They appeared to be horses—their own pack-animals; and

Hendrick and Groot Willem started off towards them, to drive them back to the camp.

They were absent nearly an hour before they succeeded in turning the horses and driving them towards the camp.

As they passed near the drift on their return, they rode towards the river to water the animals they were riding.

On approaching the bank, several native dogs that had been yelling in a clump, were seen to scatter and retreat across the plain.

The horsemen thought little of this, but rode on into the river, and permitted their horses to drink.

While quietly seated in their saddles, Hendrick fancied he heard some strange sounds.

“Listen!” said he; “I hear something queer. What is it?”

“One of the honden,” answered Willem.

“Where?”

This question neither for a moment could answer, until Groot Willem observed one of the pits, from the edge of which the dogs appeared to have retreated.

“Yonder’s a pit-trap!” he exclaimed, “and I believe there’s a dog got into it. Well, I shall give it a shot, and put the creature out of its misery.”

“Do so,” replied Hendrick; “I hate the creature as much as any other noxious vermin, but it would be cruel to let one starve to death in that way—kill it.”

Willem rode up to the pits and dismounted. Neither of them had as yet

spoken loud enough to be heard in the pits, and the two men down below were at this time silent, the dog alone continuing its cries of agony.

The only thing Willem saw on gazing down the hole, was the wild hound still hanging on the stake; and taking aim at one of its eyes, he fired.

The last spark of life was knocked out of the suffering animal, but the report of the great gun was instantly followed by two yells more hideous than were ever uttered by "wilde honden."

They were the screams of two alarmed Africans, each frightened to think that the next bullet would be for him.

"Arend," exclaimed Willem, anxious about his brother, and thinking only of him, "Arend, is it you?"



“No, baas Willem,” answered the Kaffir, “it is Congo.”

Through the opening Willem reached down the butt-end of his long roer, while firmly clasping it by the barrel.

The Kaffir took hold with both hands, and by the strong arms of Groot Willem was instantly extricated from his subterranean prison.

Swartboy was next hauled out, and the two mud-bedaubed individuals stood gazing at one another, each highly delighted by the rueful appearance presented by his rival.

Slowly the fire of anger that seemed to have all the while been burning in the Kaffir's eyes became extinguished, and a broad smile broke like the light of day over his stoical countenance.

He had been released at length, and was convinced that no one was to blame for his protracted imprisonment.

Swartboy had been punished for his ill-timed mirth, and Congo was willing to forget and forgive.

“But where is Arend?” asked Willem, who could not forget, even whilst amused by the ludicrous aspect of the two Africans, that his brother was missing.

“Don’t know, baas Willem,” answered Congo; “I been long time there.”

“But when did you see him last?” inquired Hendrick. Congo was unable to tell, for he seemed under the impression that he had been several days in the bosom of the earth.

From Swartboy they learned that soon after their own departure, Arend

had started in pursuit of one of the horses seen straying over the plain. That was the last Swartboy had seen of him.

The sun was now low down, and without wasting time in idle speech, Hendrick and Groot Willem again mounted their horses and rode off towards the place where Arend had been last seen.

They reached the edge of the timber, nearly a mile from the camp, and then, not knowing which way to turn, or what else to do, Willem fired a shot.

The loud crack of the roer seemed to echo far through the forest, and anxiously they listened for some response to the sound.

It came, but not in the report of a rifle. or in the voice of the missing man, but in

the language of the forest denizens. The screaming of vultures, the chattering of baboons, and the roaring of lions were the responses which the signal received.

“What shall we do, Willem?” asked Hendrick.

“Go back to the halting-place, and bring Congo and Spoor'em,” answered Willem, as he turned towards the camp and rode off, followed by his cousin.

## CHAPTER VI.

## SPOOR'EM.

THE last ray of daylight had fled from the valley of the Limpopo, when Willem and Hendrick, provided with a torch, and accompanied by the Kæffir and the dog Spoor'em, again set forth to seek for their lost companion.

The animal answering to the name Spoor'em was a large Spanish bloodhound, now led forth to perform the first duty required of him in the expedition.

The dog, when quite young, had been brought from one of the Portuguese settlements at the north, purchased by Groot Willem, and christened Spoor'em by Congo.

In the long journey from Graaff-Reinet, this brute had been the cause of more trouble than all the dogs of the pack.

It had shown a strong disinclination to endure hunger, thirst, or the fatigues of the journey; and had often exhibited a desire to leave its new masters.

Spoor'em was now led out, in the hope that he would do some service to compensate for the trouble he had caused.

Taking a course along the edge of the forest that would bring them across the track made by Arend in reaching the

place where the horse had strayed, the spoor of Arend's horse, as well as the other, was discovered.

The tracks of both were followed into the forest, along a well-beaten path, evidently made by buffaloes and other animals passing to and from the river.

This path was hedged in by a thick thorny scrub, which, being impenetrable, rendered it unnecessary for some time to avail themselves of the instincts of the hound.

Congo led the way.

“Are you sure that the two horses have passed along here?” asked Willem, addressing himself to the Kaffir.

“Yaas, baas Willem,” answered Congo; “sure da both go here.”

Wil'em, turning to Hendrick, added,

“I wish Arend had let the horse go to the deuce. It was not worth following into a place like this.”

After continuing through the thicket for nearly half a mile, they reached a stretch of open ground, where there was no longer a beaten trail, but tracks diverging in several directions.

The hoof-marks of Arend's horse were again found; and the bloodhound was unleashed, and put upon them.

Unlike most hounds, Spoor'em did not dash onward, leaving his followers far behind. He appeared to think that it would be for the common advantage of himself and his masters that they should remain near each other. The latter, therefore, had no difficulty in keeping up with the dog.



Believing that they should soon learn something of the fate of their lost companion, they proceeded onward, with their voices encouraging the hound to greater speed.

The sounds of a contest carried on by some of the wild denizens of the neighbourhood were soon heard a few yards in advance of them. They were sounds that the hunters had often listened to before, and therefore could easily interpret.

A lion and a pack of hyenas were quarrelling over the dead body of some large animal.

They were not fighting; for of course the royal beast was in undisputed possession of the carcass, and the hyenas were simply complaining in their own peculiar tones.

The angry roars of the lion, and the hideous, laughter of the hyenas proceeded from a spot a few yards in advance, and in the direction in which Spoor'em was leading them.

The moon had arisen, and by its light the searchers soon beheld the creatures that were causing the tumult.

About a dozen hyenas were gibbering around a huge lion that lay crouched alongside a dark object on the ground, upon which he appeared to be feeding.

As the hunters drew nearer, the hyenas retreated to some distance.

“It appears to be the carcass of a horse,” whispered Hendrick.

“Yes; I am sure of it,” answered Willem; “for I can see the saddle. My

God! It is Arend's horse! Where is he?"

Spoor'em had now advanced to within fifteen paces of where the lion lay, and commenced baying a menace, as if commanding the lion to forsake his unfinished repast.

An angry growl was all the answer Spoor'em could obtain; and the lion lay still.

"We must either kill or drive him away," said Willem. "Which shall we try?"

"Kill him," answered Hendrick; "that will be our safest plan."

Stealing out of their saddles, Willem and Hendrick gave their horses in charge to the Kaffir, and then proceeded to stalk.

With their guns at full cock, they ad-

vanced, side by side; Spoor'em sneaking along at their heels.

They stole up within five paces of the lion, which still held its ground.

The only respect it showed to their presence was to leave off feeding and crouch over the body of the horse, as though preparing to spring upon them.

“Now!” whispered Hendrick; “shall we fire?”

“Yes—yes! Now!”

Both pulled trigger at the same instant, the two shots making but one report.

Instinctively, each threw himself from the direct line of the creature's deadly leap. This was done at the moment of firing; and the lion, uttering a terrific roar, launched itself towards them, and

fell heavily between the two, having leaped a distance of nearly twenty feet.

That effort was its last, for it was unable to rise again.

Without taking the trouble to ascertain whether the fierce brute had been killed outright, they turned their attention to the carcass.

The horse was Arend's, but there was not the slightest trace of the rider.

Whatever had been his fate, there was no sign of his having been killed along with his horse.

There was still a hope that he had made his escape, though the finding of the horse only added to their apprehensions.

“Let us find out,” counselled Hen-

drick, "whether the horse was killed where it is now lying, or whether it has been dragged hither by the lion."

After examining the ground, Congo declared that the horse had been killed upon the spot, and by the lion.

That was strange enough.

On a further examination of the sign, it was found that one of the horse's legs was entangled in the rein of the bridle.

This explained the circumstance to some extent; otherwise it would have been difficult to understand how so swift an animal as a horse should have allowed itself to be overtaken upon an open plain.

"So much the better," said Groot Willem; "Arend never reached this place along with his horse."

“That is true,” answered Hendrick; “and our next move will be to find out where he parted from his saddle.”

“Let us go back,” said Willem, “and more carefully examine the tracks.”

During this conversation the hunters had reloaded their rifles, and now remounted, for the purpose of riding back.

“Baas Willem,” suggested Congo, “let Spoor'em try 'bout here little more.”

This suggestion was adopted, and Congo, setting on the hound, proceeded to describe a larger circle around the spot.

After reaching a part of the plain where they had not yet been, the Kaffir called out to them to come to him.

They rode up, and were again shown the spoor of Arend's horse leading away from where its carcass was now lying,

and in the opposite direction from the camp.

It was evident that the horse had been further off than the spot where it remains now rested. It had probably lost its rider beyond, and was on its return to the camp when killed by the lion.

Once more Spoor'em started along the track, Congo keeping close to his tail, the two horsemen riding anxiously after.

But we must return to the camp, and follow the trail of the lost hunter by means more sure than even the keen scent of Spoor'em.



## CHAPTER VII.

## THE LOST HUNTER.

As Arend came up to the horse that had wandered from the camp, the animal had arrived at the edge of an extensive thicket, and was apparently determined upon straying still further. To avoid being caught ~~and~~ driven back, it rushed in among the trees, taking a path or track made by wild animals. Arend followed.

The path was too narrow to allow of his heading the stray; apprehensive of losing

it altogether, the youth followed on, in hope of coming to a wider track, where he might have a chance of passing the runaway, and turning it towards the camp.

This hope seemed about to be realized, as the truant emerged from the thicket, and entered upon an open plain clothed with low heath, the *Erica vestita*, loaded with white blossoms.

The hunter was no longer obliged to follow upon the heels of the runaway, and, spurring his own steed, he made an attempt to get past it.

But the horse, perhaps inspired by a recollection of the pack-saddle and its heavy load, broke off into a gallop. Arend followed, increasing his own speed in like proportion.

When nearly across the plain, the runaway suddenly stopped, and then bolted off at a right angle to the course it had been hitherto pursuing. Arend was astonished; but soon discovered the cause of this eccentric action in the presence of a huge black rhinoceros—the borelé—which was making a straight course across the plain, as if on its way to the river.

The runaway horse had shied out of its way; and it would have been well for the horseman if he had shown himself equally discreet.

But Arend Van Wyk was a hunter, and an officer of the Cape Militia; and as the borelé passed by him, presenting a fine opportunity for a shot, he could not resist the temptation to give it one.

Pulling up his horse, or rather trying

to do so, for the animal was restive in the presence of such danger, he fired.

The shot produced a result that was neither expected nor desired.

With a roar like the bellowing of an angry bull, the monster turned and charged straight towards the horseman.

Arend was obliged to seek safety in flight, while the borelé pursued, in a manner that told of its being wounded, but not incapacitated from seeking revenge.

At the commencement of the chase there was but a very short distance between pursuer and pursued; and in place of turning suddenly out of the track and allowing the monster to pass by him—which he should have done, knowing the defect of vision natural to the rhinoceros—the young hun-

ter continued on in a straight line, all the while employed in reloading his rifle.

His mistake did not arise from any want of knowledge or presence of mind, but rather from carelessness and an unworthy estimation of the abilities of the borelé to overtake him.

He had long been a successful hunter, and success too often begets that over-confidence which leads to many a mischance that the more cautious sportsman will avoid.

Suddenly he found his flight arrested by the thick scrub of thorny bushes, known in South Africa as the "wait-a-bits," and the horse he was riding did wait a bit, and so long, that the borelé was soon close upon his heels.

There was now neither time nor room to turn either to the right or to the left.

The rifle was at length loaded. There would have been but little chance of killing the rhinoceros by a single shot, especially with such uncertain aim as would have been taken from the back of a frightened horse. Arend therefore threw himself from the saddle.

He had a twofold purpose in doing so. His aim would be more correct; and there was a chance of the borelé keeping on after the horse, and leaving him an undisturbed spectator of the chase.

The field of view embraced by the eyes of a rhinoceros is not large, but, unfortunately for the hunter, as the frightened

horse fled from his side, it was he himself that came within the limited circle of the borelé's vision.

Hastily raising the rifle to his shoulder, he fired at the advancing enemy, and then fled towards a clump of trees that chanced to be near by.

He could hear the heavy tread of the rhinoceros as it followed close upon his heels. It seemed to shake the earth.

Closer and closer he heard it, so near that he dared not look around.

He fancied he could feel the breath of the monster blowing upon his back!

His only chance was to make a sudden deviation from his course, and leave the borelé to pass on its impetuous charge.

This he did, turning sharply to the right, when he saw that he had just escaped being elevated upon the creatures' horn.

This manœuvre enabled him to gain some distance as he started off in the new direction; but it was not long maintained, for the borelé was again in hot pursuit, without any show of fatigue; while the tremendous exertions he had himself been making, rendered him incapable of continuing his flight much longer.

He had just sufficient strength left to avoid an immediate encounter by taking one more turn; when fortunately he saw before him the trunk of a large baobab tree lying prostrate along the ground. It had been blown down by some mighty



storm, and lay resting upon its roots at one end, and its shivered branches the other, so as to leave a space of about two feet between its trunk and the ground.

Suddenly throwing himself down, Arend glided under the tree, just in time to escape the long horn, whose point had again come in close proximity with his posterior.

The hunter had now time to recover his breath, and to some extent his confidence. He saw that the fallen tree would protect him. Even should the rhinoceros come round to the other side, he would only have to roll back again, to place himself beyond the reach of his terrible horn.

The space below was ample enough to

enable him to pass through, but too small for the body of the borelé.

By creeping back and forward he could always place himself in safety.

And this was just what he had to do, for the enraged monster, on seeing him on the other side, immediately ran round the roots and renewed the attack.

This course of action was several times repeated before the young hunter was allowed much time for reflection. He was in hope that the brute would get tired of the useless charges it was making, and either go away itself or give him the opportunity.

In this hope he was doomed to disappointment. The animal, exasperated with the wounds it had received, appeared implacable, and for more than an hour

it kept running around the tree, in vain attempts to get at him.

As he had very little trouble in avoiding these, there was plenty of opportunity for reflection, and he passed the time in devising some plan to settle the misunderstanding between the borelé and himself.

The first he thought of was to make use of his rifle. The weapon was within his reach, where he had dropped it when diving under the tree, but when about to reload it he discovered that the ramrod was missing!

So sudden had been the charge of the borelé at the time the rifle was last loaded, that the ramrod had not been returned to its proper place, but left behind upon the plain. This was an

unlucky circumstance, and for a time the young hunter could not think of anything better than to keep turning from side to side, to avoid the presence of the besieger.

The borelé at last seemed to show signs of exhaustion ; or at all events began to perceive the unprofitable nature of the tactics it had been pursuing.

But the spirit of revenge was not in the least weakened within it, for it made no move towards taking its departure from the spot.

On the contrary, it lay down by the baobab, in a position to command a view on both sides of the huge trunk, evidently determined to stay there, and await the chance of getting within reach of its victim.

Thus silently beleaguered, the young hunter set about considering in what manner he might accomplish the raising of the siege.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## RESCUED.

THE sun went down, the moon ascended above the tops of the surrounding trees, yet the borelé seemed no less inspired by the spirit of revenge than on first receiving the injuries it was wishing to resent.

For many hours the young hunter waited patiently for it to move away in search of food or any other object except that of revenge, but in this hope he

was disappointed. The pain inflicted by the shots would not allow either hunger or thirst to interfere with the desire for retaliation, and it continued to maintain a watch so vigilant that Arend dared not leave his retreat for an instant.

Whenever he made a movement, the enemy did the same.

It was a long time before he could think of any plan that would give him a chance of getting away. One at length occurred to him.

Although unable to reload the rifle with a bullet, the thought came into his mind that the borelé might be blinded by a heavy charge of powder, or so confused by it as to give him an opportunity of stealing away.

This seemed an excellent plan, yet so simple, that Arend was somewhat surprised he had not thought of it before.

Without difficulty he succeeded in pouring a double quantity of powder into the barrel, and in order to keep it there until he had an opportunity for a close shot, some dry grass was forced into the muzzle.

The chance soon offered, and taking a deliberate aim at one of the borelé's eyes, with the muzzle of the gun not more than two feet from its head, he pulled the trigger.

With a loud moan of mingled rage and agony, the rhinoceros rushed towards him, and frantically, but vainly, exerted all its strength in an endeavour to overturn the baobab.



“One more shot at the other eye,” thought Arend, “and I shall be free.”

He immediately proceeded to pour another dose of powder into the rifle; but while thus engaged, a new danger suddenly presented itself.

The dry grass projected from the gun had ignited, and set fire to the dead leaves that were strewed plentifully over the ground.

In an instant these were ablaze, the flame spreading rapidly on all sides, and moving towards him.

The trunk of the baobab could no longer afford protection. In another minute it too would be enveloped in the red fire, and to stay by its side would be to perish in the flames. There was no alternative but to get to his feet and to run for his life.

Not a moment was to be lost, and slipping from under the tree he started off at the top of his speed.

The chances were in his favour for escaping unobserved by the rhinoceros. But fortune seemed decidedly against him.

Before getting twenty paces from the tree, he saw he was pursued. Guided either by one eye, or its keen sense of hearing, the monster was following him—at a pace so rapid that, if long enough continued, it must certainly overtake him.

Once more the young hunter began to feel something like despair. Death seemed hard upon his heels. A few seconds more and he might be impaled on that terrible horn. But for that instinctive love of

life which all feel, he might have surrendered himself to fate; but urged by this, he kept on.

He was upon the eve of falling to the earth, through sheer exhaustion, when his ears were saluted by the deep-toned bay of a hound, and close after it, a voice exclaiming, "Look out, baas Willém, somebody comes yonder!"

Two seconds more, and Arend was safe from further pursuit. The hound, Spoor'em, was dancing about the borelé's head, by his loud, angry yelps diverting its attention from everything but himself.

Two seconds more, and Groot Willem and Hendrick came riding up, and, in less than half a minute after, the monster, having received a shot from the heavy

roer, slowly settled down in its tracks—a dead rhinoceros.

Willem and Hendrick leaped from their horses, and shook hands with Arend in a manner as cordial as if they were just meeting him after an absence of many years.

“What does it mean, Arend?” jocosely inquired Hendrick; “has this brute been pursuing you for the last twelve hours?”

“Yes.”

“And how much longer do you think the chase would have continued?”

“About ten seconds,” replied Arend, speaking in a very positive tone.

“Very well,” said Hendrick, who was so rejoiced at the deliverance of his friend, that he felt inclined to be witty. “We know how long you are capable of running.

You can lead a borelé a chase of just twelve hours and ten seconds !”

Groot Willem was for some time unspeakably happy, and said not a word until they had returned to the place where the lion had been killed.

Here they stopped, for the purpose of recovering [the saddle and bridle from the carcass of the horse.

Groot Willem proposed they should remain there till the morning; his reason being that, in returning through the narrow path that led out to the open plain, they might be in danger of meeting buffaloes, rhinoceroses, or elephants, and being trampled to death in the darkness.

“That is true,” replied Arend; “and it might be better to stay here until daylight, but for two reasons. One is that I

am dying of hunger, and should like a roast rib of that antelope I shot in the morning.”

“And so should I,” said Hendrick; “but the jackals have saved us the trouble of eating that.”

Arend was now informed of the events that had occurred in his absence, and was highly amused at Hendrick’s account of the misfortunes that had befallen Swart-boy and Congo.

“We are making a very fine commencement in the way of adventures,” said he, after relating his own experiences of the day; “but so far, our expedition has been anything but profitable.”

“We must go further down the river,” said Willem. “We have not seen the spoor of either hippopotamus or giraffe:

we must keep moving until we come upon them."

"I never want to see another lion, borelé, or elephant."

"But what is your other reason for going back to camp?" asked Hendrick, addressing himself to Arend.

"What would it be?" replied Arend; "do you suppose our dear friend Hans has no feelings?"

"Oh, that's what you mean, is it?"

"Of course it is. Surely, Hans will by this time be half dead with anxiety on our account."

All agreed that it would be best to go on to the camp; and after transferring the saddle and bridle from the carcass of the horse to the shoulders of Congo, they proceeded onwards, arriving

in camp at a very late hour, and finding Hans, as Arend had conjectured, overwhelmed with apprehension at their long absence.



## CHAPTER IX.

## AN INCIDENT OF THE ROAD.

NEXT morning they broke up their camp and moved down the river, extending their march into the second day.

After passing the drift where the Limpopo had been first crossed, Groot Willem, accompanied by Congo, was riding nearly a mile in advance of his companions.

His object in leading the way so far ahead, was to bag any game worthy of

his notice before it should be frightened by the others.

Occasionally, a small herd of some of the many varieties of antelopes in which South Africa abounds, fled before him; but these the great hunter scarce deigned to notice.

His chief object was to find a country frequented by hippopotami and giraffes.

On his way he passed many of the lofty pandanus, or screw pine trees. Some of these were covered with parasitic plants, giving them the appearance of tall towers, or obelisks.

Underneath one of these trees, near the river, and about three hundred yards from where he was riding, he saw a buffalo cow with her calf.

The sun was low down, and the time had therefore arrived when some buffalo veal would be acceptable both to the men and dogs of the expedition.

Telling Congo to stay where he was, the hunter rode to the leeward of the buffalo cow, and, under cover of some bushes, commenced making approach.

Knowing that a buffalo cow, more especially when accompanied by her calf, is easily alarmed, he made his advances with the greatest caution.

Knowing also that no animal shows more fierceness and contempt for danger while protecting its young, he was anxious to get a dead shot, so as to avoid the risk of a conflict with the cow, should she be only wounded.

When he had got as close as the cover

would allow him, he took aim at the cow's heart, and fired.

Contrary to his expectations, the animal neither fell nor fled, but merely turned an inquiring glance in the direction from whence the report had proceeded.

This was a mystery the hunter could not explain. Why did the cow keep to the same spot? If not disabled by the bullet, why had she not gone off, taking her young one along with her?

“I might as well have been stalking the tree as this buffalo,” thought Willem, “for one seems as little inclined to move as the other.”

Hastily reloading his roer, he rode boldly forward, now quite confident that the cow could not escape him.

She seemed not to care about retreating, and he had got close up to the spot where she stood, when all at once the buffalo charged furiously towards him, and was only stopped by receiving a second bullet from the roer that hit right in the centre of the forehead. One more plunge forward, and the animal dropped on its knees, and died after the manner of buffaloes—with legs spread and back uppermost, instead of falling over on its side.

Another shot finished the calf, which was crying pitifully by the side of its mother.

Congo now came up, and, while examining the calf, discovered that one of its legs had been already broken. This accounted for the cow not having attempted

to save herself by flight. She knew that her offspring was disabled, and stayed by it from an instinct of maternal solicitude.

While Willem was engaged reloading his gun, he heard a loud rustling among the parasitical plants that loaded the pandanus tree, under which he and Congo were standing.

Some large body was stirring among the branches. What could it be?

“Stand clear!” shouted Willem, as he swerved off from the tree, at the same time setting the cap upon his gun.

At the distance of ten or twelve paces he faced round, and stood ready to meet the moving object, whatever it might be.

Just then he saw standing before him a tall man, who had dropped down from

among the leaves, while Willem's back was turned towards the tree.

The dress and general appearance of this individual proclaimed him to be a native African, but not one of those inferior varieties of the human race which that country produces.

He was a man of about forty years of age, tall and muscular, with features well formed, and that expressed both intelligence and courage.

His complexion was tawny-brown, not black, and his hair was more like that of a European than an African.

These observations were made by the young hunter in six seconds; for the person who had thus suddenly appeared before him allowed no more time to elapse before setting off from the spot, and in

such haste that the hunter thought he must be retreating in affright. And yet there were no signs of fear accompanying the act. Some other motive must have urged him to that precipitate departure.

There was ; and Congo was the first to discover it. The man had gone in the direction of the river.

“Water! water!” exclaimed the Kaffir, “he want water.”

The truth of this remark was soon made evident, for on following the stranger with their eyes, they saw him rush into the stream, plunge his head under water, and commence filling himself in the same manner as he would have done had his body been a bottle !

Hendrick and Arend, having heard the reports of the roer, feared that something



might have gone wrong, and galloped forward, leaving Hans and Swartboy to bring up the pack-horses.

They reached the scene just as the African, after having quenched his thirst, returned to the tree, where the young hunter and Congo had remained.

Without taking the slightest notice of any one of the others, the man walked up to Groot Willem, and, with an air of dignity natural to most semi-barbarous people, began making a speech.

Grateful for having been relieved from his imprisonment, he evidently seemed to believe that duty required him to say something, whether it was understood or not.

“ Can *you* understand him, Congo ? ”  
asked Willem.

“Yaas, a little, I can,” answered the Kaffir; and in his own peculiar manner he interpreted what the African had said. It was simply that he owed his life to Groot Willem, and that the latter had only to ask for whatever he required, and it should be given him.

“That is certainly promising a good deal,” exclaimed the sarcastic Hendrick; “and I hope that Willem will not be too greedy in his request, but will leave something for the rest of mankind.”

Hans and Swartboy at this moment came up with the pack-horses; and selecting a spot near the place where the cow had been killed, the party encamped for the night.

For some time all hands were busy in gathering firewood, and making other pre-

parations for their bivouac, among which was the skinning and cooking of the buffalo calf—duties that were assigned to the Bushman.

During his performance of them, the others, assisted by Congo as interpreter, were extracting from the tall stranger a full account of the adventure to which they were indebted for his presence in the camp; and a strange story it was.

## CHAPTER X.

## MACORA.

IN the manner of the African there was a certain *hauteur* which had not escaped the observation of his hearers. This was explained on their learning who and what he was,—for his story began by his giving a true and particular account of himself.

His name was Macora, and his rank that of a chief. His tribe belonged to that great nation of the Makalolo, though living apart, in a “kraal,” by themselves.

The village, so called, was at no great distance from the spot where the hunters were now encamped.

The day before he had come up the river in a canoe, accompanied by three of his subjects. Their object was to procure a plant which grew in that place, from which the poison for arrows and spears is obtained.

In passing a shallow place in the river, they had attempted to kill a hippopotamus, which they saw walking about on the bottom of the stream, like a buffalo browsing upon a plain.

Rising suddenly to the surface, the monster had capsized their canoe, and Macora was compelled to swim ashore, with the loss of a gun, which once cost him eight elephant tusks.

He had seen nothing of his companions since parting with them in the water.

On reaching the shore, and a few yards from the bank, he encountered a herd of buffaloes, cows and young calves, on their way to the river. These turned suddenly, to avoid him, when a calf was knocked down by one of the old ones, and so severely injured, that it could not accompany the rest in their flight.

The mother, seeing her offspring left behind, turned back, and selected Macora as the object of her resentment. The chief retreated towards the nearest tree, hotly pursued by the animal, eager to revenge the injury done to her young.

He was just in time to ascend among the branches as the buffalo came up. The calf, with much difficulty, succeeded

in reaching the tree. Once there, it could not move away; and the mother would not leave it. This accounted for Macora's having been found among the branches of the pandanus. He went on to say that, during the time he had been detained in the tree, he had made several attempts to get down and steal off; but on each occasion had found the buffalo waiting to receive him upon her horns.

He was suffering terribly with thirst when he heard the first shot fired by Groot Willem, and perceived that assistance was near.

The chief concluded his narrative by inviting the hunters to accompany him the next morning to his kraal, where he promised to show them such hospitality as was in his power.

On learning that his home was down the river, and at no great distance from it, the invitation was at once accepted.

“One thing this man has told us,” remarked Willem, “which pleases me very much. We have learnt that there is or has been a hippopotamus near our hunting ground, and perhaps we shall not have far to travel before commencing our pre-meditated war against them.”

“Question him about sea-cows, Congo,” said Hendrick; “ascertain if there are many of them about here.”

In answer to the Kaffir’s inquiries, the chief stated that hippopotami were not often seen in that part of the river; but that a day’s journey farther down, there was a large lagoon, through which the



stream ran; there sea-cows were as plentiful as the stars in the sky.

“That is just the place we have been looking for,” said Willem. “And now, Congo, question him about camelopards.”

Macora could hold out but little hope of their meeting giraffes anywhere on that part of the Limpopo. He had heard of one or two having been occasionally seen; but it was not a giraffe country, and they were stray animals.

“Ask him if he knows where there is such a country,” demanded Willem, who seemed more interested in learning something about giraffes than either of his companions.

Macora could not, or would not, answer this question without taking his own time and way of doing it.

He stated that the native country of himself and his tribe was far to the north and west; that they had been driven from their home by the tyranny of the great Zulu king, Moselekatse, who claimed the land and levied tribute upon all the petty chiefs around him.

Macora further stated that, having in some mysterious manner lost the good opinion of Sekeletu and other great chiefs of the Makalolo—his own people—they would no longer protect him, and that he and his tribe were compelled to leave their homes and migrate to the place where he was now about to conduct his new acquaintances.

“But that is not what I wish to know,” said Groot Willem, who never troubled himself with the political affairs of his own

country, and therefore cared little about those of an African petty chief.

On being brought back to the question, Macora related that he was only giving them positive proof of his familiarity with the camelopards, since nowhere were these more abundant than in the country from which he had been expatriated by the tyranny of the Zulu chief. It was his native land, where he had hunted the giraffe from childhood.

Swartboy here interrupted the conversation by announcing that he had enough meat cooked for them to begin their meal with; and about ten pounds' weight of buffalo veal cutlets was placed before the hunters and their guest.

Macora, who to all appearance had been waiting very patiently while the cutlets

were being broiled, commenced the repast with some show of self-restraint. This, however, wholly forsook him before it was finished.

He ate voraciously, consuming more than the four young hunters together. This, however, he did not do without making an apology for his apparent greed, stating that he had been nearly two days without having tasted food.

The supper having at length come to an end, all stretched themselves around the fire and went to sleep.

The night passed without their being disturbed, and soon after sunrise they arose; not all at the same time, for one of the party had risen and taken his departure an hour earlier than the rest.

It was Macora, whom they had entertained the evening before.

“Here, you Swart and Cong!” exclaimed Arend, when he discovered that the chief was no longer in the camp, “see if any of the horses are missing. It is just possible we have been tricked by a false tale, and robbed into the bargain.”

“By whom?” asked Groot Willem.

“By your friend, the chief. He has stolen himself away, if nothing else.”

“I’ll bet my life,” exclaimed Willem, in a more positive tone than the others had ever yet heard him use, “that that man is an honest fellow, and that all he has told us is true, though I can’t account for his absence. He is a chief, and has the air of one.”

“Yes, he is a chief, no doubt,” said Hendrick, sneeringly. “Every African in this part of the world is a chief, if he only has a family. Whether his story be true or not, it looks ugly, his leaving us in this clandestine manner.”

Hans, as usual, had nothing to say upon a subject of which he knew nothing, and Swartboy, after making sure that no horses, guns, or other property were missing, expressed the opinion that he had never been so mystified in his life.

Nothing was gone from the camp, and yet he was quite certain that any one speaking a native African language understood by Congo, could not be capable of acting honestly, if an opportunity was allowed him for the opposite!

Having allowed their horses an hour

to graze, while they themselves break-fasted upon buffalo veal, our adventurers broke up their bivouac, and continued their march down the bank of the river.

## CHAPTER XI.

## MACORA'S KRAAL.

AFTER journeying about three hours, the young hunters came to a place that gave unmistakeable evidence of having been often visited by human beings.

Small palm trees had been cut down, the trunks taken away, and the tops left on the ground.

Elephants, giraffes, or other animals that feed on foliage, would have taken the tops of the trees, and, moreover, would



not have cut them down with hatchets,—the marks of which were visible in the stumps left standing.

Half a mile further on, and fields could be seen in cultivation.

They were evidently approaching a place inhabited by a people possessing some intelligence.

“See!” exclaimed Arend, as they rode on; “there’s a large body of men coming towards us!”

All turned to the direction in which Arend was gazing. They saw about fifty people coming along the crest of a ridge, that trended towards the north.

“Perhaps they mean mischief?” said Hans. “What shall we do?”

“Ride on and meet them,” exclaimed Hendrick; “if they are enemies it is

not our fault. We have not molested them."

As the strangers came near, the hunters recognized their late guest, who was now mounted on an ox, and riding in advance of his party.

His greeting, addressed to Groot Willem, was interpreted by Congo.

"I have invited you to come to my kraal," said he, "and to bring your friends along with you. I left you early this morning, and have been to my home, to see that preparations should be made worthy of those who have befriended Macora. Some of my people—the bravest and best among them—are here to bid you welcome."

A procession was then formed, and all proceeded on to the African village,

which was but a short distance from the spot.

On entering it, a group of about a hundred and fifty women received them with a chant, expressed in low, murmuring tones, not unlike the lullaby with which a mother sings her child to sleep.

The houses of the kraal were constructed stockade fashion—in rows of upright poles, interlaced with reeds or long grass, and then covered with a plaster of mud. Through these the hunters were conducted to a long shed in the centre of the village, where the saddles were taken from their horses, which were afterwards led off to the grazing ground.

Although Macora's subjects had been allowed but three hours' notice, they

had prepared a splendid feast for his visitors.

The young hunters sat down to a dinner of roast antelope—*biltongue*—stews of hippopotamus and buffalo flesh, baked fish, ears of green maize (roasted), with wild honey, stewed pumpkin, melons, and plenty of good milk.

The young hunters and all their followers were waited on with the greatest courtesy. Even their dogs were feasted; while Swartboy and Congo had never in all their lives been treated with so much consideration.

In the afternoon Macora informed his guests that he should give them an entertainment; and in order that they should enjoy the spectacle intended for them, he informed them, by way of prologue, of

the circumstances under which it was to be enacted.

His statement was to the effect that his companions in the canoe at the time it was capsized by the hippopotamus had reached home, bringing with them the story of their mishap; that the tribe had afterwards made a search for their chief, but not finding him, had come to the conclusion that he had been either drowned or killed by the sea-cow.

They had given him up for lost; and another important member of the community, named Sindo, had proclaimed himself chief of the tribe.

When Macora reached home that morning, Sindo had not yet come forth from his house, and before he was aware of the chief's re-appearance, the house had been

surrounded, and the usurper made a prisoner.

Sindo, fast bound and guarded, was now awaiting execution: and this was the spectacle which the hunters were to be treated to!

It was a scene at which none of the young hunters had any desire to be present; but yielding to the importunities of their host, they accompanied him to the spot where the execution was to take place. This was on the outskirts of the village, where they found the prisoner fast tied to a tree.

Nearly all the inhabitants of the community had assembled to see the usurper shot—this being the manner of death that had been awarded to him.

The prisoner was rather a good-looking

man, apparently about thirty-five years of age.

No evil propensity was expressed in his features; and our heroes could not help thinking that he had been guilty of no greater crime than a too hasty ambition.

“Can we not save him from this cruel fate?” asked Hans, speaking to Groot Willem; “I think you have some influence with the chief.”

“There can be no harm in trying,” answered Willem; “I’ll see what I can do.”

Sindo was to be shot with his own musket. The executioner had been already appointed, and all other arrangements made for carrying out the decree, when Willem, advancing towards Macora, commenced interceding for his life.

His argument was that the prisoner had not committed any great crime—that had he conspired against his chief for the purpose of placing himself in authority, it would have been a different affair. Then he would have deserved death.

Willem further urged that had he, Macora, really been lost, some one of the tribe would have become chief, and that Sindo was not to blame for aspiring to resemble one who had ruled to the evident satisfaction of all.

Macora was then entreated to spare the prisoner's life, and the entreaty was backed by the promise of a gun to replace the one lost in the river, on condition that Sindo should be allowed to live.

For a time Macora remained silent, but at length made reply by saying that he



should never feel safe if the usurper were allowed to remain in the community.

Groot Willem urged that he could be banished from the kraal, and forbidden to return to it on penalty of death.

Macora hesitated a little longer; but remembering that he had promised to grant any favour to the one who had released him from imprisonment in the tree, he yielded.

Sindo's life should be spared on condition of his expatriating himself at once and for ever from the kraal of Macora.

On granting this pardon the chief wished all distinctly to understand that it was done out of gratitude to his friend, the big white hunter.

He did not wish it to be supposed that the prisoner's life had been purchased with a gun.

All Macora's subjects, including the condemned man himself, appeared greatly astonished at a decision so contrary to all precedents among his fellow-countrymen.

The exhibition of mercy, along with the refusal of the bribe, proved to the young hunters that Macora had within him the elements of a noble nature.

Sindo, accompanied by his family, immediately took his departure from the place, going off to seek a home among kindred tribes, where his ambition would no doubt be exercised with greater caution.

During the evening, Macora provided a varied entertainment for his guests. It included a grand feast, with songs and dancing, the latter done to the sounds of the tom-tom drum and one-stringed African fiddle.

All retired for the night, with the understanding that the hunters should the next day be conducted to a place where hippopotami were plentiful.

## CHAPTER XII.

## SPYING OUT THE LAND.

EARLY next morning, after the hunters had reciprocated Macora's hospitality by giving him the best breakfast they were capable of cooking, they started off on their search for sea-cows.

Macora, accompanied by four attendants, acted as guides, while fifty others were to follow, to assist in the chase.

The pack-horses and all other property were taken along with them, as they did

not intend to return to the kraal, although the chief earnestly requested them to remain, and make his village their home so long as they remained in the neighbourhood.

For more than a mile their way led through small plantations of maize owned by Macora's subjects, and cultivated by the women and younger people of the tribe.

Our adventurers had seen many kraals of Bushmen, as also of Bechuanna and Kaffir tribes, and were surprised to observe such evidences of civilization so far removed from the teachings and example of the Cape colonists.

On their way down the river, buffaloes were observed in small droves, as also herds of koodoos and zebras. They had reached

a land that gave good promise of the very adventures they were in search of.

About five miles from the village, they came upon a small open space, thickly covered with grass. Here Macora suggested that they should make their hunting camp, as the thick growth of timber seen farther down the river was the resort of every species of game to be found for many miles around.

Macora's suggestion was adopted; and his followers soon constructed a stockade enclosure, or kraal, to protect the camp. While this was being done, the young hunters were not idle.

On the open plain beyond some antelopes were seen grazing, and Hendrick and Arend went after them for the purpose of providing Macora's people with food.

Groot Willem, on the other hand, preferred going towards the timber, where he had been told there was larger game; and, accompanied by Macora and four attendants, he started off, leaving Hans, with Swartboy and Congo, to take care of the pack-horses and other *impedimenta*, as also to superintend the building of the kraal.

Not far from the river bank, Macora with Willem entered a dense forest, standing in a tract of low, marshy ground.

They had not gone far before they came within sight of some riet boks (red bucks, *Antelope Eleotragus*, Schreber).

These were not more than three hundred yards away, and from the unconcerned manner in which they continued their occupation, Groot Willem saw that they

had never been hunted by men carrying fire-arms, although so near to a village of the Makalolo.

The innocent creatures were unworthy of a shot from his roer, and he passed on without molesting them.

He was soon upon a path that showed signs of being nightly trodden by large animals, on their way to the water.

Amongst other spoor, he was pleased to observe that of the hippopotamus. Several of these animals had evidently left the river only two or three hours before, and were then probably grazing in the neighbourhood. They had been so little disturbed by man, that, contrary to their usual custom, they came out upon the land to browse by day.

Willem was satisfied that they had



reached a place where they would be content to stop for awhile; and without proceeding any farther, he resolved to commence business by bringing down one of two buffaloes he saw lying at some distance off, under the shade of a clump of trees.

Leaving Macora and his men in care of his horse, and three dogs which he had brought with him, he passed to leeward of the game, trying to get between the buffaloes and the forest, to head them off, in case of their retreating to the cover.

Willem was too much of a sportsman to think of stalking upon the buffaloes, and shooting at them while asleep; and after gaining the desired station, he whistled for his dogs, for the purpose

of giving the buffaloes a bit of a chase, and trying a shot at them while on the run.

His signal was scarce given, when he heard loud yells from the natives, and the report of Macora's musket.

Something had gone wrong, for he saw that his own horse was loose and galloping over the plain, while the natives were scampering in different directions—evidently under the inspiration of fear.

The ox upon which Macora sat seemed trying its speed with his horse.

The three dogs had answered his call, and were coming towards him.

They were pursued by something—by a creature that passed over the ground in a succession of long, low leaps; and yet so much time was lost in gathering

strength for each spring, that it did not much lessen the distance between itself and the animals it was pursuing.

The buffaloes had started up, and gone off at full canter towards the timber, passing within less than fifty paces of the spot where Willem stood.

He allowed them to escape unmolested. A creature more deserving of his attention was rapidly approaching from the other side.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE FAITHFUL "SMOKE."

As yet, the dogs did not seem aware that an enemy was after them. They had heard their master's whistle, and, having been released from the leash, were only intent on obeying the command.

When the buffaloes were roused from their repose, the dogs probably thought that they had been called for the express

purpose of pursuing and destroying them ; and, heedless of all else, they followed upon the heels of the great quadrupeds, passing close to the hunter, who in vain endeavoured to call them off.

He was soon otherwise occupied.

The creature in pursuit of the dogs, and which had caused the flight of Macora and his attendants, was a large leopard.

It was a female, and rapidly there passed through the hunter's mind a conjecture of the circumstances under which the animal was acting.

It had left its young in its forest lair, and had been on a visit to the river for water or food. It had not pursued Macora, or his attendants, as its solicitude was for its young ; and the dogs

were now running in the direction where these were concealed.

At sight of Groot Willem, the leopard desisted from its pursuit of the dogs; and, crouching low upon the ground, crawled towards him, not slowly, but with a speed only checked by instinctive caution.

As it advanced, its whole body was covered by the head, its eyes being the highest part of it presented to the view of the hunter.

The felida was now within ten yards of him, and rapidly drawing nearer. Something must be done. The roer was raised to his shoulder, and with a steady hand and eye, nerved by the perilous position he was in, he drew a fine sight at the creature's snout, and fired.

The shot took effect, for the leopard rolled over, rose up, turned around two or three times, and for a while seemed to have lost all consciousness of what had transpired.

Its young and its enemy were for a time apparently forgotten, in the agony it was suffering from a broken jaw.

This, however, was but for a few seconds, for the sight of the hunter soon after aroused it to a perfect realization of all that had taken place.

Willem, after firing, had run off to about fifty paces, and then stopped to reload.

While so engaged, he kept his eyes fixed upon the leopard. It was again coming towards him—no longer with the caution it had before exhibited, but in

a manner that showed its whole animal nature was absorbed by the spirit of revenge.

By the time he had placed the bullet in the barrel of his gun and driven it home, the brute was close upon him.

There was not time for him to withdraw the ramrod, much less to put on a cap.

Grasping his roer by the barrel, he prepared to defend himself, intending to use the weapon as a club.

The enraged creature was about to make a spring upon him, when assistance came from a quarter altogether unexpected.

One of the dogs, a large bulldog, called "Smoke," had not followed the buffaloes to cover.



It had obeyed its master's command when called back from the chase.

Just as the leopard was crouching upon the earth to gather force for the final spring, Smoke seized it by one of the hind legs. Not a second of time was lost by Willem. One more chance for life had been thus given him, and he hastened to avail himself of it.

The hammer of the lock was thrown back, and a cap placed on the nipple in less time than nine out of ten well-drilled soldiers could have performed the same feat; but by the time it was done, and the gun brought to his shoulder, poor Smoke was lying in his death struggle along the grass.

The felida had turned to renew the attack on its human enemy.

One second more, and its huge body would have been launched against him, its sharp claws buried in his flesh.

He pulled the trigger, and sprang backwards. A cloud of smoke rolled before his eyes, and as this cleared away, he saw the leopard laid out along the earth by the side of the wounded dog, like the latter, kicking out its legs in the last throes of death.

On looking for his companions, Willem saw that Macora and his men, having stopped at a distance of about five hundred yards off, had witnessed his victory. The chief was now hastening towards him on foot, and was soon by his side, when, pointing to the ox about half a mile away, he tried to make Willem understand that that animal had carried him, unwillingly, away from his friend.

Perceiving all danger was over, the others came up, when, by signs, the big hunter gave them to understand he wanted the hide taken off the leopard.

The four attendants went to work with their short assegais, in a manner that told him he would not have long to wait for a beautiful leopard-skin as a trophy of his victory, as also a memento of the danger through which he had passed.

He himself turned his attention to the wounded dog, which was still moaning on the ground, and looking at him with an expression that seemed to say, "Why do you not first come and assist me?"

Poor Smoke had sacrificed his own life to save that of his master.

The creature's back was broken, and it was otherwise severely injured. It was

evident that nothing could be done for it. The dog must die, and the great heart of Groot Willem was sorely afflicted.

Turning to Macora, he observed that the chief had reloaded his musket.

Willem pointed to the dog's head, and then to the gun.

The chief took the hint, and raised the weapon to his shoulder.

Groot Willem turned away, with his eyes full of tears, and went off in pursuit of his horse.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE LAGOON.

ON returning to the camp, they found that Hendrick and Arend had been successful in their chase of the antelopes, and the greater part of two were cooking over a large fire.

A quantity of felled timber had been brought to the ground for the construction of the kraal, and the work of building it had already commenced.

For the labour of his followers, Macora

would accept nothing but a small quantity of coffee, a bottle of Schiedam, and some tobacco; and in the evening he took his departure, after seeing his friends safely established in their camp.

Three of his people were left with the hunters, with orders to make themselves useful in whatever way they could be employed.

This addition to their company was, however, a source of great annoyance to the Bushman. Any communication made to them required the assistance of his rival, Congo.

Congo had others under him,—people to whom he gave instructions and commands. Swartboy had not, and was therefore very discontented with the arrangement.

“ You and I must do something to-day,” said Arend to Hendrick, as they were eating their first breakfast at the new camping place.

“ Yes,” replied Hendrick, “ Willem has one day the start of us in adventures, but I dare say fortune will favour us ere long.”

“ She has favoured us all, I think,” said Willem. “ How could we have a better prospect of success? There is apparently an abundance of game; and we have found people willing to assist us in getting at it—willing to perform most of the toil, and leave us all of the sport.”

“ You are quite right,” said Hendrick, “ our brightest hopes could not have been crowned by a more favourable commence-

ment, although two days ago we were repining."

"What do you say, Swartboy?" he added, turning to the Bushman, "are you content?"

"I berry much content, baas Hendrick," answered Swartboy, with an expression that did not confirm his words.

That day the young hunters, leaving Swartboy and the Kaffir in charge of the camp, made a visit to the lagoon, where they expected to find hippopotami.

They passed by the place where Groot Willem had killed the leopard, and observed that the bones of that animal, mingled with those of the faithful Smoke, were scattered over the ground, clean picked of their flesh by the jackals and hyenas.



Half a mile farther on they reached the lagoon; and while riding along its shore, they all pulled up to listen to an unfamiliar and indescribable sound, that seemed to proceed from two dark objects just visible above the surface of the water.

They were the heads of a brace of sea-cows.

The animals were making towards them, uttering loud cries, that could not be compared with anything the hunters had previously heard.

Any attempt to kill them in the water would only have resulted in a waste of ammunition; for with only the eyes and nose above the surface, there was no chance for a bullet to strike them with fatal effect.

The monsters showed some intention of coming out and making war ; but on getting nearer they changed their design, and, turning about, floundered out of reach.

Before proceeding many yards farther, they saw three other hippopotami, this time not in the water, but out upon the plain. They were browsing on the grass, unconscious of any enemy being near.

“ Let us get between them and the water,” suggested Willem ; “ by that means we will make sure of them.”

Riding forward at a sharp pace, the hunters succeeded in their design ; and for a time the retreat of the hippopotami appeared impossible.

Instinct does not lead these animals to flee from a foe. They only make for the

water, without regard to the position of the enemy.

On the first alarm, therefore, the three hippopotami started for the lagoon, going at a heavy, rolling pace, and much faster than might have been supposed possible for creatures of such ungainly shape.

As they ran in a direct line, the hunters were compelled to glide out of their way, or run the risk of being trodden under foot.

Hans and Groot Willem were together; and as soon as the broad side of one of the hippopotami was presented fairly before them, both fired at it, taking aim behind the shoulder.

Hendrick and Arend fired about the same time at another.

Onward rolled the immense masses to-

wards the river ; but before reaching it the one to which Hans and Willem had devoted their attention was seen to go unsteadily and with less speed.

Before arriving at the bank, it gave a heavy lurch, like a water-logged ship, and fell over upon its side. Two or three abortive efforts were made to recover its feet, but these soon subsided into a tremulous quivering of its huge frame, that ended in the stillness of death.

Its two companions plunged into the water, leaving Hendrick and Arend a little chagrined by the failure of their first attempt at killing a hippopotamus.

Hans and Groot Willem had no pretensions to military prowess, and the first was generally absorbed in some subject connected with his botanical researches. But

he could claim his share in killing a hippopotamus, under circumstances no more favourable than the two who had allowed their game to escape.

## CHAPTER XV.

## HIPPOPOTAMI.

HERODOTUS, Aristotle, Diodorus, and Pliny, have all given descriptions, more or less correct, of the hippopotamus, River-horse, or Zeekoe (sea-cow) of the South African Dutch.

So great has been the interest taken in this animal, of which European people have long read, but which, until lately, they had never seen, that the Zoological Society cleared £10,000 in the year of the Great

Exhibition of 1851, by their specimen exhibited in the Gardens at Regent's Park.

Hippopotami, procured from Northern Africa, were not uncommon in the Roman spectacles. Afterwards, the knowledge of them became lost to Europe for several hundred years; and, according to the authority of several writers, they entirely disappeared from the Nile.

Several centuries after they had been shown in Rome and Constantinople, it was stated that hippopotami could not be transported alive to a foreign country; but the progress of civilization has refuted this erroneous hypothesis, and the harsh, heavy sound of its voice, since May, 1851, has been familiar to the frequenters of a London Park.

According to Michael Boyne, the hip-

popotamus has been found in the rivers of China.

Marsden has placed them in Sumatra, and others say they exist in the Indies; but these statements have never been sustained by well-authenticated facts, and the creature is now believed to be exclusively a native of Africa.

M. Desmoulins describes two species—one the *Hippopotamus Capensis*, or the hippopotamus of the Cape; and the other the *Hippopotamus Senegalensis*, or the hippopotamus of the Senegal River.

How the animal obtained its name would be difficult to imagine, since a quadruped more unlike a horse could hardly exist.

When in the water, the hippopotamus can place its eyes, ears, and nose on a level with the surface, and thus see, hear, and



breathe with but little danger of being injured by a shot.

It is often ferocious in this element, where it can move with much ease; but on dry land it is unwieldy, and, conscious of its awkwardness, it is rather timid, and sometimes cowardly.

These huge creatures are supposed to serve a good purpose by uprooting and destroying large water-plants, that might otherwise obstruct the current of the stream, and hinder the drainage of the surrounding country.

The hide of the hippopotamus is used by the natives for many purposes. Although soft when stripped off, it becomes so hard when thoroughly dry, that the Africans manufacture shields and spears of it.

Many of the Cape colonists are very fond

of what they call "leekoe speak," which is a portion of the flesh, salted and preserved.

The greatest value the hippopotamus has in the eyes of man is found in its teeth, its large canine tusks being the finest ivory known, and much prized by the dentist.

It keeps its colour much better, and lasts longer, than any other used in the manufacture of artificial teeth.

Tusks of the hippopotamus are sometimes found sixteen inches in length, and weighing as much as a dozen pounds.

Travellers have even affirmed that some have been seen measuring twenty-six inches in length; but no specimens of this size have as yet been exhibited in the museums of Europe.

The hide of a full-grown hippopotamus is thicker than that of the rhinoceros: otherwise, it very much resembles the latter.

Its thickness protects the animal against the poisoned arrows and javelins of the natives. But for this, it would soon become extinct in the rivers of Africa, since, unlike most animals, there is no difficulty in approaching the hippopotamus within bowshot distance.

It can only be killed by the natives after a great deal of trouble, combined with ingenuity.

The plan generally adopted is by digging pits in places where the hippopotamus is known to pass, in leaving the water to feed on the herbage of the neighbouring plain. These pits have to be dug in the

rainy season, when the ground is soft, for during the dry months the earth becomes so hard as to resist the poor implements used by the natives in place of spades.

The pit is concealed with much care; and as months may pass without a hippopotamus straying into the trap, it may be imagined how strong an effort of perseverance and patience is required in capturing one of these amphibious creatures.

Another method of killing them is by suspending heavy, pointed beams over the paths by which they proceed from the river to the meadows adjoining.

These beams are elevated, thirty or forty feet high, by a line which extends across the sea-cow's track. This line is connected with a trigger, and when rudely dragged by the force of the moving body, the beam

descends upon the animal's back, burying the sharp point in its flesh.

The use of fire-arms is now becoming general among the natives of Africa, and as the value of hippopotamus ivory well repays the trouble of procuring it, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the ungainly animal—now one of the commonest sights in the rivers of Southern Africa—will soon become one of the rarest.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## HUNTING HIPPOPOTAMI.

THE hippopotamus killed by Groot Willem and Hans was a fine specimen—a bull, full-grown, and with teeth and tusks large and perfect.

Measuring it with the barrel of his roer, Willem pronounced it to be sixteen feet in length, and he estimated its circumference round the body at about one foot less.

Leaving it where it had fallen, they rode to another part of the lagoon.

The five hippopotami they had seen, inspired them with a cheerful prospect for the future, as far as hunting that species of game was concerned; but a still brighter one was in store for them.

Not half a mile from where the first was killed, they reached a small pool, about four feet in depth. Seven hippopotami were wallowing within it, and others were seen grazing the low swampy ground, not far away. They had been so little molested by man, that they were not afraid of feeding by daylight.

Those in the pool were wholly at the mercy of the hunters, for they had not the courage to leave it; and the water was not of sufficient depth either to conceal or protect them.

For nearly half an hour the young hunters stood by the side of the pool, loading and firing whenever a favourable opportunity presented.

The seven huge creatures were then left dead or dying, and the hunters returned to their kraal.

Macora was waiting for them, having come over for the purpose of making a "morning call."

As a present to the young hunters, he had brought them a milch cow, for which they were very thankful.

The cow was consigned to the keeping of Swartboy, who had strict injunctions to look well after it.

"That cow is worth more to us than either of the horses," remarked Hendrick to the Bushman, "and I would not trust



it to the keeping of Congo ; but I know it will be safe with you."

Swartboy was delighted.

When Macora was told that they had that morning killed eight hippopotami, he became roused to a state of tremendous excitement.

Two of his attendants were despatched immediately to his village, to convey the pleasing intelligence to his people that an unlimited amount of their favourite food was waiting for them.

Having done enough for one day, the hunters reposed in the shade of their tent, until about two hours before sunset, when they were aroused by the arrival of nearly three hundred people—men, women, and children, of Macora's tribe, all anxious to be led to the bodies of the hippopotami.

Groot Willem was afraid that the disturbance made by so many people would drive every sort of game from the neighbourhood, and that they would have to move their camp. But knowing this argument would not be strong enough to convince several hundred hungry people that so large a quantity of good food should be wasted, no objection was made to conducting them to the scene of the morning's sports.

Groot Willem and Hendrick, attended by Congo, were soon in their saddles, prepared for a night's shooting at the lagoon.

They started off, accompanied by Macora and all his following, leaving Hans and Arend with Swartboy, to take care of the kraal.

On reaching the place where the first

hippopotamus had been killed in the morning, a flock of vultures and a pack of jackals were driven from the carcass; and several of the natives stopped to prevent these carnivora devouring any more of the animal's body, by appropriating it to themselves.

In compliance with the instructions of their chief, Macora's followers had brought with them long and stout rheims—that is, cords made of rhinoceros' hide—and, on reaching the pool in which the seven dead hippopotami were lying, Macora gave orders for the carcasses to be hauled out.

This work, under ordinary circumstances, would have been next to impossible; but taking into consideration the flatness of the ground, and the united strength of

some hundred and fifty men capable of handling a rope, the thing was soon accomplished. The task of skinning and cutting up then commenced ; while the women and children kindled fires, and made other preparations for a grand banquet.

Until a late hour of the night, the natives remained at work.

All the flesh not required for immediate use was separated into long slips, to be dried in the sun ; and thus converted into *biltongue*. While the whole of the *teeth* were retained, as the sole property of the slayers.

The two hunters, Groot Willem and Hendrick, on that night, had not far to travel in order to obtain a sufficiency of their favourite sport.

Attracted by the odour of the slain pachyderms, lions, hyenas, and jackals came prowling about the pool, loudly expressing their disapprobation of the fact that they themselves had not been invited to partake of the feast.

Notwithstanding the large number of human beings collected upon the spot, the hyenas came close up, and, with deafening roars, threatened to make an attack.

The guns of Groot Willem and Hendrick were for a time kept constantly cracking, and the ugly brutes at length grew more wary, betaking themselves to a safer distance.

The hunters had no desire to lose time or ammunition in mere wanton destruction of life.

They only desired to kill such game as

might contribute towards remunerating them for the long journey; and they soon ceased firing at hyenas and jackals.

Leaving the pool, they walked along the shore of the lagoon, towards the ground where they had seen the hippopotami during the earlier hours of the day.

Night being the usual time for those animals to feed, the youths calculated upon making an addition to the list of their prizes—nor were they disappointed.

Half a mile from the spot where Macora and his tribe had been left feasting, was an open plain, lit by the beams of a brilliant moon.

Ten or fifteen dark objects were seen moving slowly over its surface; and, leaning forward in their saddles, the hunters

could see that they were hippopotami. They rode gently towards them.

The animals, entirely unacquainted with the dangerous character of those who were approaching, neither stirred from the spot nor took any notice of the horsemen, until the latter were within close range of them.

“That seems to be one of the biggest of them,” whispered Groot Willem, pointing to a large bull that was browsing at less than a hundred paces off. “I shall make sure of him. You, Hendrick, take another, and let us both fire together.”

Willem, as he spoke, raised the heavy death-dealing roer to his shoulder. Taking aim for the centre of the head, he fired.

The next moment the monster was seen staggering backward, drawing its shattered head along the ground.

It was not thinking of a retreat to the water—of retiring through fear of further danger, or of anything else. It was in the agonies of death.

This manner of action was not long sustained, for after trailing about ten yards from where it was struck, it fell heavily on the earth, and turned over on one side, to move no more in life.

Hendrick had fired almost at the same instant of time, but for some seconds the creature to which his attention had been directed, made no acknowledgment of the favour.

It started off, and, along with the others, made straight towards the lagoon.

For a time, Hendrick was again chagrined to think that the rival hunter had been more successful than himself.



His chagrin was not destined to long continuance, for on their way to the water, one of the hippopotami was observed to tumble over in its tracks.

After loading their guns, the horsemen rode up to the prostrate animal, and found it struggling to rise.

The bullet from Hendrick's rifle had penetrated its right shoulder, and another from the same gun now put a period to its struggles as well as existence.

The two hunters, not yet contented with their success, took cover under a cluster of trees, and dismounting from their horses, lay in wait to see if the hippopotami would again oblige them by coming out upon the plain.

Neither in this watch were they disappointed. Occasionally they could hear

the harsh bellowing of the animals, as they came to the surface of the water, and before long, the bodies of three huge monsters were seen moving towards them.

Reserving fire until one came within a few yards of their position, both hunters discharged their pieces almost simultaneously.

With a cry that resembled the combined snorting of a hog and the neighing of a horse, the "zeekoe" faced back towards the lagoon, but instead of moving off, it commenced turning slowly round and round, as a dog may be sometimes seen before laying himself down to repose.

In a similar fashion did the hippopotamus lie down—to rise no more.

Three others were shot on that same

night, making fourteen hippopotami killed within twenty-four hours.

This was a greater number, so Macora said, than had been killed by his own people during the two preceding years.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## TO THE GIRAFFE COUNTRY.

AFTER passing some four or five weeks in hippopotami-hunting, Groot Willem became anxious to engage in the real business for which he had undertaken the expedition.

They had collected more than seven hundred pounds weight of the finest ivory ; but this success did not hinder them from becoming weary of a pursuit that was no longer amusement, but business.

From several conversations held with Macora about giraffes, they had learnt that the young of those animals could not be taken alive without the greatest ingenuity and trouble.

Where camelopards are discovered, they can easily be run down and shot; but to secure the young unharmed, is a different affair, and an undertaking of which, from Macora's account, promised to occupy all the time that the hunters wished to remain away from Graaff-Reinet.

Groot Willem was anxious to secure the name, fame, and reward now depending upon the delivery of the two young giraffes to the Dutch Consul. Hendrick and Arend wished to return to their sweethearts, and Hans was longing to undertake his intended voyage to Europe.

Under these circumstances, a proposal from Willem, that they should make a move, was well received by all.

When the intention and object of their leaving was made known to Macora, the chief seemed in much trouble.

“I cannot allow you to go alone,” said he; “there would be danger in your journey to my native land—perhaps death. Instead of capturing camelopards alive, you might leave your bones to bleach upon the plain.

“You must not go alone. Though we may not procure what you are in search of, I shall be your companion, and my best warriors shall attend you.

“The tyrant Moselekatse may destroy us all; but I will go. Macora will not allow

his friends to encounter the peril without sharing it with them. To-morrow I shall be ready with all my men."

Such was the substance of Macora's speech, as interpreted by Congo, and the young hunters, much as they respected the chief for his many acts of kindness towards them, were gratified by the new proof of his friendship.

He proposed to forsake his home, and undertake an expedition of nearly two hundred miles, in which he had nothing to gain, and everything to lose.

This he was willing to do, out of gratitude to one whom fate had brought to his assistance through the merest accident.

Macora's offer was not rejected; and

preparations for the journey were immediately commenced.

The ivory obtained from the hippopotami was stored away for safe keeping until their return.

This was about the only preparation for a departure our adventurers had to make: but such was not the case with Macora's warriors.

Poisoned arrows had to be prepared—bows and shields repaired, and assegais sharpened.

On the morning of the next day, after Macora had determined on the journey, he led forth from his village fifty-three of his best men, and a start was made towards the north.

Several oxen were taken along, laden with dried hippopotamus' flesh, crushed



maize, and other articles of food, to be used on the journey. Several cows were also driven along, to yield a supply of milk.

One of the pack-horses belonging to our hunters had been placed at the disposal of the chief; and on this he rode, generally keeping close by the side of Groot Willem.

Owing to the nature of the country, and the inability of the oxen for fast travelling, their progress was but slow.

They found plenty of game along the route; but none of it was pursued for the sake of amusement.

Only a sufficient quantity was killed to provide the camp with fresh meat; and no time was lost in procuring it, as antelopes were constantly coming within shot of the

hunters as they moved along the line of march.

Only one incident, worthy of notice occurred during the journey. In their camp of the sixth night after starting, one of the Makalolo had risen to put some fresh faggots on a fire burning near him.

Placing his hand upon the ground for the purpose of picking up a bit of wood, he suddenly started back, at the same time uttering a cry of terror.

Several of his companions sprang to their feet; and for a moment a scene of confusion ensued that baffled every attempt on the part of the young hunters to obtain an explanation of it.

At length it transpired that a snake had caused the commotion,—one of about eight feet in length, was dragged up to

the light of the fire and submitted to examination.

It was writhing in the agonies of death. Its head had been crushed by a blow. Its colour, which was nearly black, left no doubt in the minds of the natives as to the nature of the reptile they had killed.

“Pickahola ! pickahola !” exclaimed several at the same time ; and their attention was immediately turned to the man who had first made its acquaintance.

He exhibited two deep scratches on the back of his right hand ; on beholding them, his companions uttered a cry of commiseration, and stood gazing at the unfortunate man with an expression that seemed to say, “*You must surely die.*”

His colour soon changed to a deeper brown. Then his fingers and lips began to

move spasmodically ; and his eyes assumed a fixed and glassy expression.

In about ten minutes from the time he had been bitten, he seemed quite unconscious of anything but agony ; and would have rolled into the fire had he not been held back by those around him.

In less than half an hour he was dead—dead, while the body of the serpent, with the mangled head, was still writhing along the grass.

The Makalolo was buried at sunrise—three hours after death ; and so virulent is the poison of the pickahola, that, ere the body was deposited in the grave, it was already in a state of decomposition !

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## A GIRAFFE CHASE.

ON the evening of the twelfth day after leaving the Limpopo, they reached a small river, which Macora called the Luize. He informed the hunters that one day's journey down the stream would take him to the ruins of the village where he had been born, and had lived until within the last two or three years; and now his desire to see his native place was about to be gratified.

On one thing Macora could congratulate himself. The chief Moselekatse, by driving him from his country, had profited but little.

All the Makalolo cattle, and other objects of plunder, had been safely got away out of the reach of the robber-chief. None of Macora's people had remained in the land; so that there was no one to pay tribute to the conqueror; and the country had been left to the undisturbed possession of the wild beasts.

Macora's tribe were not now living in a conquered condition; nor were they now prevented from paying a visit to their former home.

The plan proposed by the Makalolo chief for catching the young giraffes was to build a *hopo* or *biap*, in some con-

venient place, where a herd of giraffes might be driven into it, the old ones killed, and the young ones secured alive.

No better plan could be devised than this, and it was unanimously adopted.

A site for the *hopo* has to be chosen with some judgment, so that labour may be saved in its construction; and, satisfied that the chief would act for the best, the hunters determined on leaving to him all the arrangements regarding it.

A suitable place for the trap Macora remembered having seen, a few miles down the river; and thither they repaired. On the way, they passed the ruins of the deserted village, and many of the natives recognized, amid the heaps

of rubbish, the places that had once been their homes.

Five miles farther down, they reached the place which was to be enclosed as a *hopo*.

It was a narrow valley, or pass, leading from a large forest to the river-bank, and the variety and quantity of spoor over its surface proved that most animals of the country daily passed through it.

The forest consisted chiefly of mimosa trees, whose leaves are the favourite food of the giraffe. Plenty of other timber was growing near, such as would be needed in constructing the required enclosure.

Macora promised that his people should go to work on the following day, when



pits should be dug, and trees felled for the fence of the *hopo*.

Willem inquired if they had not better first make sure that giraffes were in the neighbourhood, before expending their labour in constructing the *hopo*. This Macora declared was not necessary. He was quite certain that they would be found by the time the trap was ready for receiving them.

He also advised the hunters to refrain from molesting any giraffes they might see before the enclosure should be completed, which, according to his calculation, would be in about two weeks.

The hunters now began to understand the difficulties of the task they had undertaken, and were thankful for the good fortune that had brought

them the assistance of the Makalolo chief.

But for him and his people, it would have been idle for them to have attempted taking the 'giraffes alive.

Well mounted, they might ride them down, and shoot as many as they pleased : but this would have been but poor sport ; and even Groot Willem would, in due time, have got tired of it, It was not for this they had come so far.

Next morning the work of making the *hopo* was commenced ; and, to inspire the young hunters with the hope that the labour would not be in vain, Macora showed them the spoor of a drove of giraffes that had visited the river during the night.

The chief would not allow his guests to

take any part in the toil; and, unwilling to be idle, Groot Willem, Hendrick, and Arend determined on making an excursion down the river.

Hans remained behind, content in the pursuit of his botanical studies, joined to the amusement of killing antelopes and other game, for the use of Macora's workmen. Swartboy remained with him.

Wishing to be as little encumbered as possible on an excursion intended to last only for a couple of days, Willem and his companions took with them but one horse besides those for the saddle. This was in the care of Congo, who, of course, followed his master, "baas Willem."

Nothing could be more beautiful than the scenes passed through on the first

day of their hunt. Groves of palms and other trees, standing over flower-clad plains, on which gnoos, hartebeests, and other antelopes were browsing in peace.

A flock of gaily-plumaged birds seemed at home in every tree; and everything presented to their view was such as fancy might paint for a hunter's paradise.

On that day our adventurers had their first view of the lordly giraffe.

Seven of those majestic creatures were seen coming from some hills that stretched across the plain.

“Don't move,” exclaimed Hendrick; “and perhaps they will stray near enough for us to get a shot before we are discovered.”

On came the graceful animals across the sunlit plain, like living towers, throwing long shadows before them.

The trees in the perspective seemed lower than their crested heads.

When within about two hundred yards of the hunters, the latter were discovered by them.

Turning suddenly in their tracks, the giraffes commenced a rapid retreat.

“Our horses are fresh, let us run them down,” exclaimed Willem. “In spite of what Macora has said, I must kill a giraffe.”

The three leaped into the saddles; and started in pursuit of the flying drove, leaving Congo in charge of the pack-horse.

For some time the horsemen could not

perceive that they were gaining on the camelopards trotting before them in long, shambling strides.

They were not losing ground, however, and this inspired them to greater speed.

When the chase had been continued for about four miles, and the horses began to show signs of exhaustion, the pace of the giraffes was observed to have also become slower.

They also were distressed by the rate at which they had been moving.

“One of them is mine,” shouted Willem, as he spurred forward in a final charge.

A huge stallion, exhibiting more signs of distress than the others, had fallen into the rear.

The hunters soon came up with him,

and, separating him from the herd, they fired a volley into his massive body. Their shots should have brought him down, but instead of this, they seemed only to reinvigorate his wearied limbs, and he strode on faster than ever.

The hunters only paused long enough to reload, and then resumed the chase, once more overtaking the giraffe.

Another volley was fired, Groot Willem taking aim just behind the animal's shoulder, the others firing skyward, towards its head.

The giraffe stopped suddenly in its tracks, and stood tottering like a forest tree about to fall. Its head began waving wildly, first to the right and then to the left.

A shuffle or two of its feet for a time

enabled it to maintain its equilibrium, and then it sank desparingly to the earth.

Proudly the hunters dismounted by the side of the now prostrate, but once stately, creature, once a moving monument, erected in evidence of its Creator's wisdom, but now with its form recumbent upon the carpet of the plain, its legs kicking wildly in the agonies of death.



## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE CAMELOPARD.

THERE is perhaps no animal living more graceful in form, more beautiful in colour, and more stately and majestic in appearance, than the camelopard, now generally known by the French appellation of giraffe. Measuring eighteen feet from the hoof of the fore-leg to the crest of its crown, it stands, as an American would express it, "the tallest animal in creation."

There is but a single species of the giraffe; and from the elegance and stateliness of its shape, the pleasing variety and arrangement of its colour, and the mildness of its disposition, its modern appearance in Europe excited considerable interest.

Although this animal was well known to the ancient Romans, and, indeed, played no inconsiderable part in the gorgeous exhibitions of that luxurious people, yet, with the ultimate overthrow of the Roman empire, the camelopard finally disappeared from Europe, and for several centuries remained a perfect stranger to the civilized world.

It is not until towards the close of the fifteenth century that we again hear of the giraffe's appearance, when it is related

that Lorenzo de Medici exhibited one at Florence.

The first of these animals seen in England was a gift from the Pasha of Egypt to George IV. It arrived in 1828; but died the following year.

On the 24th of May, 1836, four giraffes were exhibited in the Zoological Gardens, at Regent's Park. They were brought from the south-west of Kordooan, and were transported to London at an expense of £2,836 3s. 1*d.*

From a casual glance at the giraffe, its fore-legs would appear nearly twice as long as the hind ones: but such is not the case.

This difference of appearance is caused by the great depth of the shoulders as compared with the hips.

In proportion to the rest of its body, the camelopard has rather a small head, upheld by a neck nearly six feet in length, gently tapering towards the crown. The animal's height, reckoning from the top of the head to the hoofs of the fore-feet, is about equally divided between neck, shoulders, and legs. Measured from the summit of the hips to the hoofs of the hind-feet, it rarely exceeds six and a half or seven feet.

The head of the giraffe is furnished with a pair of excrescences, usually called horns, although very unlike the horns of any other animal.

They are of a porous, bony texture, covered with short, coarse bristles.

Naturalists have as yet failed to determine for what purpose these osseous

protuberances are provided. They cannot be either for offence or defence ; since they are too easily displaced to afford any resistance in case of a collision.

The eyes of the camelopard are worthy of all praise.

They are of large size—even softer and more gentle than those of the far-famed gazelle—and so placed that it can see in almost every direction without turning its head.

All its senses are very acute ; and being an animal of timid habit, it can only be approached by a man when mounted upon a fleet horse.

The camelopard feeds on the leaves and blossoms of an umbrella-shaped tree—a species of mimosa, called mokaala by the native Africans, and kameel-doorn (*camel-*

*thorn*) by the Dutch settlers of the Cape.

As a grasper and feeler, the tongue of the giraffe is used as the trunk of the elephant, and its great height enables it to gather the leaves of the mokaala,—far beyond the reach of the latter.

The camelopard's skin is exceedingly thick—often as much as an inch and a half—and so difficult of penetration, that frequently twenty or thirty bullets are required to bring the creature to the ground.

These wounds it receives and suffers in silence ; for the giraffe is dumb.

Unlike that of most other animals, its hairy coat becomes darker with age.

The colour of the female is somewhat

lighter than the male, and she is also of much inferior stature.

The camelopard can only defend itself by kicking; and it uses its heels in this way more effectively than any other creature—the horse not excepted.

The prominence of its eyes enables it to see behind, when directing its heels against an enemy, and so secures its taking a certain aim; while the blow it can give will crash in the skull of a man, or leave him with a couple of broken ribs.

If unmolested, it is among the most innocent of animals.

A creature so strangely shaped, and possessing so much speed and strength, was certainly designed by the Creator for

some other use than browsing upon the leaves of mimosa trees : but that use man has not yet discovered.



## CHAPTER XX.

## A RACE FOR LIFE.

LEAVING the body of the giraffe very reluctantly (Groot Willem having a strong desire to take it along with him), the hunters started off in search of the river.

Much to their gratification, the Luize, or another stream equally as large, was seen not far from them, and they rode along its bank for the purpose of finding a place where they might water their horses, now

thirsty after the long run they had made in chase of the giraffe.

For about half a mile they found the stream inaccessible, by reason of the steepness of its banks; but a small pool was discovered a short distance from the river; and by this they halted, to give their weary horses a little rest.

These also needed food, and it was the intention to give them an hour or two upon the grass, that grew luxuriantly around the pool.

So the saddles were taken off, and the horses turned out to graze.

“ I suppose Congo will have sense to pack up, and follow us ? ” said Hendrick.

“ Yes, ” replied Groot Willem, “ I think we may expect to see him here within two hours. ”

“ But are you sure that he can find us ?”

“ Certainly he can,” replied Willem ; “ he knows that we are bound down the river, and the stream will guide him. If not, he has Spoor'em along with him. We should probably meet him on his way, if we were to go up the river.”

“ But we don't want to go up at present,” answered Hendrick ; “ our way is down.”

“ Then we had better stay here till he comes.”

While they were thus talking, there was heard a dull, heavy sound, accompanied by a real or fancied vibration of the earth.

The trees in a neighbouring grove appeared to be shaking about, some being

upset, as if a violent hurricane was sweeping down among them.

The horses took the alarm; threw up their heads, snorted, and galloped to and fro, as if uncertain which way to retreat.

Next moment, from among the moving trees, emerged a herd of elephants; each or most of them uttering trumpet-like cries as they entered upon the open plain.

The horses galloped off the ground; and the hunters, believing that their lives depended on recovering them, started in pursuit.

Almost on the instant this purpose had to be relinquished. One of the elephants, in advance of its fellows, was charging upon them; and they would have enough to do to secure their own retreat.

The others went after the horses, and all seemed to have gone mad, with the exception of three or four that remained by the pool.

The situation of the hunters was now one of imminent danger.

A well-directed volley might stop the charge of the elephant rushing towards them, and put the others to flight. This seemed to be the idea of all three: for each took aim at the same instant of time, and fired in the same direction. The volley was delivered in vain. The elephant, with a louder roar and longer strides, came thundering on, only infuriated by their attempt to check its course.

There was no time to re-load, and all three retreated, with a terrible apprehension of being overtaken, and that one or

other of them would fall a victim to the gigantic pursuer.

They ran towards the stream. To have gone in any other direction would have been to impale themselves upon the tusks of the other elephants, now also coming towards them, aroused to rage by the cry of their wounded companion.

They succeeded in reaching the bank, and thought of throwing themselves into the water, when a shout from Arend counselled them to a different course.

“Follow me!” cried he; and the next instant he was seen upon the trunk of a cotton-tree that had fallen across the stream.

So close was the enraged elephant at this time, that Groot Willem, who was hindermost, felt the tip of its trunk touching the

calf of one of his legs, as he scrambled on to the tree.

The top of the tree was several feet lower than the bank of the river, where its roots still adhered ; and, in descending the trunk, they had, as Hendrick said, "to climb downwards."

The branches had lodged on some rocks in the middle of the stream, which had prevented the tree from being carried away by the current, that ran rapidly past the spot.

For a while, they considered themselves safe ; and, although their situation would have been far from agreeable under ordinary circumstances, they experienced the indescribable emotions of happiness that are felt only after a narrow escape from some great peril.

The elephant was tearing at the upturned roots of the tree, and making other impotent attempts to get at them.

They were besieged; but in no danger, for a time, of a closer acquaintance with their besieger.

On examining their place of refuge, they saw that the rock on which the tops of the tree rested, was not more than thirty feet in circumference at the water's edge, and not half that at the top, which was about ten feet in diameter.

There was but little more than room for them to stand upon it; but as the branches were large and long, they had plenty of room to move about, proceeding much in the same manner as monkeys would have done in a similar situation.

From the behaviour of the enemy, he



seemed to have come to a perfect understanding of the position in which they were placed ; and for a minute or two he appeared to be meditating whether he should abandon the siege or continue it.

Meanwhile the hunters, after resting for a few moments from their late severe exertion, commenced reloading their rifles, and preparing for further hostilities.

As though aware of their intentions, the elephant quietly walked away.

“He is off, now,” said Groot Willem, “but we had better not be in any hurry to follow him. I can endure a little more rest.”

“I hope we shall not have to make a longer stay than will be agreeable,” remarked Hendrick ; “but we must not leave here until the whole herd has taken its

departure. Unlike any we have seen before, these elephants do not seem to be the least afraid of us."

The position in which our hunters were placed was several feet below the level of the river-bank, so that they were unable to see anything of the plain above.

Arend proposed returning up the trunk of the tree, and giving the enemy a parting shot, should the animal be still within range.

To this Groot Willem and Hendrick objected.

They were willing the elephants should depart, if so inclined, without further molestation from them.

A few minutes passed, and Arend again proposed going up to see if their enemy was near. This was also opposed by the

others. "No, not yet," said Willem; "let us not show ourselves on any account. He may be still watching for us, and seeing you, may think we are impatient to get away. That would encourage him to remain. We must be as cautious as if we were dealing with a human enemy."

Half an hour passed, and then Groot Willem ascended the tree, until his head was on a level with the bank.

One glance was sufficient; and with a grave countenance he looked back to his companions.

"It is as I thought," said he; "the brute is still there. He is watching for us. He wants revenge, and I believe that he will have it. We shall be hungry before we get away from here."

"Where is he?" asked Hendrick.

“At the pool close by, giving himself a shower-bath; but I can see that he keeps constantly turning his eye in this direction.”

“Is he alone?” inquired Arend.

“Yes; the others appear to have gone off. There is only himself by the pool. We have wounded him; but for all that he is able to move rapidly about; and we shall have to kill him outright before we can pass him upon the plain.”

To this there was no answer, and Groot Willem again returning to the rock, all three laid hold of their guns, and prepared to attack the enemy.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## A CREATURE HARD TO KILL.

GROOT WILLEM again ascended the tree—this time armed with his roer, and followed by his companions.

The elephant was still at the pool, and to make him leave it and draw nearer, Willem showed himself on the bank.

This plan did not succeed.

The elephant saw him ; but with reason or instinct that seemed almost human, it was evidently waiting until they should

leave their retreat, before again renewing hostilities.

“It’s of no use my firing from here,” said Willem; “I must endeavour to get nearer. Don’t be in my way, for in all probability there may be another chase.”

The distance from the tree to the pool was close upon a hundred yards, and, after walking from the bank about one-third of that distance, Willem came to a halt.

The elephant coolly and philosophically awaited his approach, apparently satisfied to let him come as near as he pleased.

The position in which the animal stood was unfavourable for Willem to make his favourite shot; but as it would not move, he was obliged to fire at its head. The

report of his gun was answered by a loud roar, and an impetuous charge.

Willem instantly made for the tree, and secured his retreat, with the elephant but a few paces in his rear.

At the same time, and without evincing the slightest acknowledgment, the huge beast received two further shots from Hendrick and Arend.

While the guns were being reloaded, the monster again retired to the pool. There it was saluted by seven more balls, without even once attempting to approach its tormentors in their place of retreat.

It now wanted but two hours to sunset, and dark, heavy clouds were descried rolling up from the south-west.

Thirteen shots had been expended on

the elephant, and to all appearance it was still uninjured.

There was a prospect of compulsory confinement before them. They might have to remain in their aqua-arboreal retirement the whole night, under the pelting of a pitiless storm.

Three more shots were fired, without any apparent result.

The rain soon came down—not in drops, but dishfuls.

Often as they had been exposed to heavy showers, none of them could remember witnessing anything like that.

All their care was devoted to keeping the ammunition and the locks of their guns dry; and any attempt at breaking the blockade to which they were subjected was for a time relinquished.



By the last light of day, Groot Willem made another reconnoissance, and found the elephant still patiently waiting and watching.

A night so dark that they could not distinguish each other by sight now mantled the river, and the heavens above continued pouring forth their unabated wrath. They might now have stolen away unknown to the besieger; but they had no longer the desire to do so. Confident that the animal could not keep its feet till morning, after the rough handling it had received, they resolved upon staying till it fell, and securing its fine tusks.

Two or three hours passed, and still the rain kept falling, although not quite so heavily as at first.

“I don't like this sort of thing,” said Hendrick; “Swart and Cong in the pits could not have been much unhappier than we are. I should like to know if the enemy is still on guard. What do you say to our going off?”

“We must think of it,” counselled Arend. “Even if the elephant be gone, we cannot find our horses in such a dark night. If it be still waiting for us, we could not see it five paces off. We had better stay where we are till morning.”

“Your advice is good, Arend,” said Willem. “I don't believe we have a gun among us that could be discharged; if attacked as we are now, we should be defenceless.”

Arend's suggestion was adopted; and

they resolved to remain upon the rock till morning.

During the night the rain continued to pour, half drowning them in their exposed situation. The hours passed slowly and wearily. They began to have serious doubts of ever seeing day again; but it came at length.

Just as the first faint gleams of the Aurora appeared in the east, they were startled by a sudden crashing among the branches of the tree; and the next moment they saw the bridge by which they had reached the rock in the act of being carried away by the current.

“Look out!” shouted Arend. “The tree is off. Keep clear of the branches, or we shall be swept along with it.”

All rushed together to the summit of the rock—reaching it just in time to avoid the danger thus indicated; and in another moment their communication with the mainland was entirely cut off.

The dawn of day found them on an islet of stone, of such limited extent that there was barely standing-room for the three.

The river, swollen by the flood, came close up to their feet, and was threatening to rise still higher. There was the prospect—not a very pleasant one—that they themselves might be carried away after their treacherous bridge.

The elephant was no longer a cause of the slightest anxiety. The means by which they might have placed themselves within the reach of that danger had been

removed; and, like Promëtheus, they were bound to a rock.

The banks on both sides were too high for them to effect a landing, even should they be able to stem the velocity of the current.

All three could swim; and it might be possible for them to reach the shore by swimming down stream to some place where the banks were on a level with the water.

But to this method of getting out of their difficulty there were several objections.

Their guns would have to be left behind, and could not be recovered. A distant view of them lying upon the rock might be all they would ever have. To abandon their arms was a thing not to be thought

of. Their hunting would be over for that expedition.

Besides, they were in a part of the river where the current was swift, strong, and turbulent. It would carry them down with irresistible force. The rapids were full of rough, jagged rocks, against which their bodies might be crushed or lacerated; and the chances were that some of them might never succeed in reaching the shore in safety.

“And there is another reason why I don't like taking this water-trip,” said Hendrick. “I noticed yesterday, just as we came forward here, a couple of enormous alligators. In all likelihood there are scores of them.”

“Then I say, stop where we are for the present,” said Arend; “alligators are

always hungry, and I don't relish to be eaten by them."

"I am not so hungry as to leave my roer behind me, therefore I second your proposal," said Groot Willem.

It was carried *nemine dissentiente*.

They did stay where they were, but not very patiently.

The sun ascended high into the heavens; its beams seemed concentrated upon their forms,—on the spot where they were standing.

They never remembered having experienced a day so hot, or one on which all felt so hungry.

Hendrick and Arend became almost frantic with the heat and the hunger, though Groot Willem still preserved a remnant of calmness.

“I wonder if that elephant is watching for us yet,” said the latter. “If so, he is what Swartboy calls Congo,—‘an ole fool.’ I’m sorry we can’t oblige him by paying him a visit, and rewarding him for his prolonged vigil.”

Willem’s attempt at being witty was intended to cheer his disconsolate companions; but it was a sad failure. Neither could reply to it—even by a smile.



## CHAPTER XXII.

## A SEPARATION.

ALL day long did they stay on the islet of stone. They were no longer apprehensive of being swept away by the flood. They saw that it had reached its highest; but its subsidence had not yet commenced.

The sun was already in the zenith, hotter than ever, literally roasting them upon the rock. The situation was intolerable.

“Shall we have to stay here another night?” impatiently asked Hendrick.

“It looks deucedly like it,” answered Willem.

“And to-morrow — what shall we do then?” inquired Arend. “There may be no better chance of getting off then than there is now.”

“That is true,” said Willem. “We must think of some way of getting out of this disagreeable prison. Can either of you think of a plan?”

“I have a proposal to make,” said Hendrick. “Let one of us take to the water, and look down stream for a landing-place. If he succeed in reaching the bank in safety, he could come up again, and by swinging out one of those long climbing plants we see hanging to the trees, there

would be some chance of the other two catching it. By that means we may get off."

"That's not a bad idea," rejoined Arend, "but which of us is to run the risk of the swim? For my part, I'm quite willing to incur it."

"There is certainly great danger," said Hendrick, "but there is also danger of starvation if we stay here."

"Quite true," rejoined Arend. "But for my part, I would rather feed a crocodile than die of hunger myself. So I'm willing to risk the swim. If you don't see me on the bank within three or four hours, you may conclude that either the crocodiles have eaten me or that I've been shattered among the rocks."

The others would not listen to Arend's

self-sacrificing proposal; and for a time it was debated among them as to who should run the risk, each protesting—what under other circumstances he would scarce have done—that he was a better swimmer than either of the other two.

As each insisted on taking the peril upon himself—and none of them would yield the point—a proposal was made to cast lots.

This was done; and Hendrick, the proposer of the plan, was the one chosen by fate to carry it into execution.

“I am glad of it,” said he, after the affair had been decided. “It is but just that I should be permitted to carry out my own proposal. So here goes!”

Hastily throwing off his clothing, he shook hands with Arend and Willem,

dropped into the flood, and was away with the rapidity of an arrow.

Anxiously the others gazed after him; but in less than three minutes he was no longer under their eyes, the rough rapid current having carried him clear out of sight.

Two hours passed, which were spent by Arend and Groot Willem in a state of anxious suspense. Two hours more, and it became terrible.

“Night is fast approaching,” remarked Arend. “If Hendrick does not return before night, I shall swim after him.

“Yes, we may as well, while we have the strength to do it,” answered Willem. “If you go, so will I. We shall start together. How long do you think we should wait?”

“Not much longer. Certainly within a mile he ought to have found a place where he could land. That distance he must soon have made, at the rate he was travelling when he left us. He should return soon now, or never.”

Another hour was passed in anxious suspense, and still no signs of their absent companion.

“Remain you, Willem,” proposed Arend, “and let me go alone.”

“No!” replied the great hunter, “we go together. I once thought that I should never abandon my gun as long as I lived: but it must be. We must not stay here any longer. I grow weaker every hour.”

The two were taking off their boots, and preparing to enter the water, when their

ears were saluted by the sound of a familiar voice.

Congo was seen upon horseback on the bank of the river, just opposite the rock.

“Nebber fear, baas Willem,” shouted he, “I come back by-and-by.”

As he said this he galloped away. The loud roar of an elephant proclaimed the cause of his sudden departure.

“Oh, Heavens !” exclaimed Arend. “How much longer must we stay here ?”

“Until to-morrow, I expect,” answered Willem. “Congo cannot return to the camp and be back before morning.”

‘But do you think he will go off without trying to assist us ?’

“Yes ; what can he do alone ?—Nothing. He knows that, and has gone for help. By himself he could not kill the elephant ;

and even if it were not there, he could do nothing to get us off the rock. The distance to the bank must be twenty yards. Of course there is a way by which we may be got ashore, but it will require a rope. The climbing plants would do, but Congo has not noticed them. I believe that he understood at a glance the difficulties to be overcome, and has gone to the camp for assistance."

"I hope so," replied Arend; and if such be the case, we need not fear for ourselves. We have now only to endure the annoyance of waiting. My sole anxiety is for Hendrick."

Willem made no reply; but by his silence Arend could perceive that he had but little hope of ever seeing Hendrick again.



Slowly the sun went down, and the night once more descended over the rolling river.

Their anxiety would not allow them to sleep, even had they not been hindered by hunger.

Of water they had a plentiful supply—too much of it—although this was not obtained without some difficulty, as they had to dip it up in one of their powder-flasks, emptied for the purpose.

Another morning dawned ; and the sun made his appearance, again red and fiery, his beams becoming fiercer as he ascended the cloudless sky.

They had but a few hours more to wait, until they might expect the return of the Kaffir : but would he surely come ?

They knew that travelling in Africa was

a very uncertain business. Their present position was proof that some accident might occur to hinder him from reaching the camp.

By this time they were almost certain that some serious misfortune—perhaps death itself—had befallen Hendrick.

As if to confirm them in this belief, just then three large crocodiles were seen swimming around the rock, and lingering there, as though they expected ere long to get their sharp teeth into the flesh of those who stood upon it.

The great hunter became angered by the sight. It suggested the probable fate of their companion, as it might in time be their own.

He seized hold of his roer, and drawing the damp charge, reloaded the gun.

Aiming at the eye of one of the hideous monsters, he pulled the trigger. The loud report was followed by a heavy plunging in the water, and the behaviour of the crocodile gave evidence of the correctness of the hunter's aim.

After springing bodily above the surface, it fell back again, and commenced spinning around with a velocity that threw showers of spray over those who stood watching its death struggles.

Its two companions retreated down the river; and as the brothers saw them depart, the thoughts of both were dwelling upon the same subject.

Both were thinking of Hendrick.

We also must go down stream, and see what has become of him.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## FROM BAD TO WORSE.

ON finding himself in the water, as he parted from his companions, Hendrick had not much exertion to make. A gentle motion of the limbs sustained him on the surface; and he was borne onward with a velocity that promised a speedy termination of his voyage.

Some place must soon be reached where the banks would be low enough to ascend, and the current not too

quick to hinder him from crossing to the shore.

He was "spirited" past several rocks, one of which he only avoided with great difficulty, so swiftly did the current carry him along.

When about a mile from his companions, as he supposed himself, he saw that the banks on both sides were shelving; and he tried to reach the shore.

The current was still rapid as ever; and for each foot made in the direction of the land, he was borne several yards down the channel of the stream.

The velocity with which he was moving awoke in his mind a vague sense of a danger not thought of before starting, and altogether different from those that had been taken in calculation.

His voyage so far had been successful. He had escaped unharmed by rocks or crocodiles; but he had evidence that a danger as much, if not more, to be dreaded, now threatened him.

The water seemed gliding down an inclined plane, so rapidly was it sweeping him on; and beyond this, directly before him, he could hear the roarin of a cataract!

What at first had been only a conjecture, soon became a certainty. He was going at arrow-like speed towards the brow of a waterfall.

Throwing all his energies into the effort, he struggled to reach the shore at a point where the bank was accessible.

He had nearly succeeded.

Ten feet nearer, and he would have been able to grasp the overhanging bushes. But that distance, little as it was, could not be accomplished; and on he glided towards the engulfing fall.

On the brink of the water precipice he saw the sharp point of a rock jutting about three feet above the water.

More by good luck than any guidance on his part, he came within reach of it as he was hurried onward. Reaching out, he caught hold; and hugging it with both arms, he was able to retain his hold. His body was swung around to the leeward of the rock, until his legs hung dangling over the fall.

Although the force of the current was partly broken by the interposition of the rock, it required him to exert all his

strength to save himself from being washed over.

After a time he succeeded in gaining a footing.

There was a little ledge on the rock, but just large enough for one foot, while the other sought support on the pointed apex.

To have attempted to swim ashore could only end in his destruction. Although almost within leaping distance of the bank, he had no place to spring from, and to have fallen short would have been fatal. He could do nothing but remain as he was.

Hours passed, and the torture of standing in one position—irksome at that—became unbearable.

He could only obtain relief by getting



into the water again, and hugging the rock with both arms, as he had done before.

But this method of resting himself— if such it could be called— could not be endured longer than two or three minutes, and he was compelled soon to return to the upright attitude.

“There is not the slightest danger of crocodiles here,” thought he, while in the water, hanging on the rock. “Should one pass this way, it would not have time for touching me, even though it were starving.”

All night long did he continue in that dread position.

Morning dawned, and once more he had to endure the agony of gazing on the bank, within a few feet of where

he stood, though as unapproachable as if miles of moving water separated him from it.

Fortune seemed determined to torture him to the last extreme.

There was no hope of him gaining the bank above; and it now occurred to him to look below.

Craning out as far as he could, he made an inspection of the fall. It was about thirty feet in the clear descent. Below, the water ran frothing away, and soon became smooth and tranquil, as if reposing after the violent leap.

Should he allow himself to be carried over the cataract? That was the question he now commenced considering.

If he could only have assured himself that there was deep water underneath, he

would at once have decided to commit himself to the descent. But there was the probability that he might be precipitated upon jagged rocks, and of course killed by the fall.

Moreover, he saw that the banks below were steep on both sides; and he might have to swim for a long distance, before being able to land. After a descent of thirty feet, he might be incapable of continuing above the surface of the water; at all events, he would be in no condition for a long swim.

After long and earnestly debating the question in his own mind, he gave up the thought of making the too perilous attempt.

Notwithstanding the agony arising from his own position, he was not free from

concern for his comrades left upon the rock.

Willem and Arend would in all likelihood come after him, if they had not already done so. One or the other, or both, might have left the rock, and been carried over the cataract in the night, unseen by him during the darkness.

As the time passed on, his sufferings approached the point of despair.

They at length became so great, that once or twice was he tempted to put a termination to them, by giving his body to the cataract, and his soul to Him who had bestowed it.

But the demon of temptation was driven out of his mind by a mental vision of angelic loveliness.

The remembrance of Wilhemina Van

Wyk came before him like some fair angel commanding him to hope and wait. He obeyed the command.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## REUNION.

TIME was passing; they upon the islet rock were getting very impatient for the return of Congo.

They were certain he would bring assistance, with as little delay as possible; but most of his journey would have to be made in the night—dangerous time for travelling.

He had now been gone long enough to reach the camp and return.

“Sister Ann” on the watch-tower of Bluebeard’s castle could not have gazed more earnestly than did they for his reappearance upon the bank above them.

Their anxious vigil was at length rewarded.

Near the hour of noon, their ears were greeted by shouts, and shortly after they saw Hans, Congo, and Macora, standing on the bank above them.

The chief was accompanied by about a score of his followers, carrying long ropes, by the direction of Congo.

“Where is Hendrick?” was the first question of Hans, asked in a trembling voice.

“We cannot tell,” was the reply. “He swam down the river, in the hope of being able to make the bank below. We have

great fear that some misfortune has befallen him.”

While the three Yägers continued the solemn conversation, Macora took a number of his people a short distance up the river.

Near the bank was found the prostrate trunk of a tree, about fifty feet in length. It had long been down, and was quite dead and dry.

After making the lines fast to one end of it, it was pushed into the stream, and directed in such a manner as to drift down to the rock on which the two youths were standing. The other end of the rope was firmly grasped by several of Macora's men.

Swiftly the log, carried by the current came in contact with the rock; when the



men, keeping the rope on a taut stretch, prevented it from going farther.

With the nimbleness of a couple of cats, Willem and Arend sprang on it; and sitting themselves astride, were hauled to the bank, where both were at length safely landed.

The first thing they saw was the body of the elephant at which they had fired so many shots. The animal had at length succumbed, sinking into its eternal sleep in spite of its implacable anger.

As the hunters were no longer in any anxiety for themselves, their apprehensions became all the more keen for the fate of their missing friend.

Although suffering greatly from fatigue, as well as the want of food, Willem and

Arend would not stay even to eat, till a search had been made for him.

There is no sentiment of the human mind, unless it is self-esteem, that is capable of resting on so unstable a foundation as hope. Hendrick had now been absent more than twenty-four hours. The chances were a hundred to one against their ever seeing him again, either dead or alive; and yet they had hope.

Provided with food to eat along the way, they started down the river—many of the Makalolo very unwillingly.

They had just performed a journey of near thirty miles, in only a few hours' time, and of course they were weary.

But this was not the only reason why their exertions were prolonged with some reluctance.

They had been told of the manner in which Hendrick had left his companion; and guided by reason—instead of a strong feeling of friendship—unlike Hans, Willem, and Arend, they had no hope of seeing him again.

From their acquaintance with the country, they knew of the cataract, and were confident that Hendrick must have been carried over the falls, thence a shattered inanimate mass, rolling onward to the ocean.

When little more than a mile down stream, Groot Willem discharged his gun.

The report echoed afar along the banks. Every one paused, and stood listening to hear if there should be any response.

It came.

Faintly and from afar they could distinguish the sound of a human voice.

Uttering a shout of joy, the three hunters rushed forward; and soon after, when Hans shouted "Hendrick," they heard from the river the words "Here, this way!"

A minute more, and they were standing within a few feet of the object of their search, and had a full comprehension of what had hindered him from returning to the succour of his companions.

As the Makalolo had come out well provided with comestibles, the hungry hunters were fed to their full satisfaction; and then all went back to the place where the elephant had breathed its last.

Then forming their camps, they kindled fires, and made ready to pass the night;—the followers of Macora feasting upon one

of their favourite dishes—baked elephant's foot.

Congo had still his tale to tell.

When deserted by the others in their pursuit of the giraffes, he had waited two or three hours, expecting them to return.

He then started off along their spoor, but being hampered by caring for the pack-horse, he progressed but slowly.

Night overtook him by the body of the dead giraffe.

Unable through the darkness to follow the trail any farther, he remained by the carcass till morning.

By that time the heavy rain had obliterated the spoor so completely, that even Spoor'em, the hound, could only follow it with great difficulty.

After a time, Congo saw that the horse-

tracks separated, going in different directions.

He followed one set of them for some time, till the horse himself was found, but without saddle, bridle, or rider.

This was Willem's horse, that had taken flight on the approach of the elephants.

Congo had gone the wrong way for finding his master, and he now returned upon the horse's tracks.

This of course brought him to the place where the elephants at first charged; and on reaching the bank of the river and looking over, he saw the situation in which the hunters were placed. But the wounded elephant was there, and this charging upon him, hindered him from continuing the observation. He had seen enough, however, to know that he must go to the

camp for assistance, and this was just what he did.

They passed the night by the pool pleasantly enough. The joy at once more being together would have deprived them of sleep, had it not been for their extreme weariness. But Hans and the chief seeing the other three so exhausted, did not insist on hearing the details of the dangerous adventure, and at an early hour the camp was buried in the silence of slumber.

Two horses had been lost. This, under the circumstances, was a serious misfortune; but their own lives had been miraculously preserved, and none of them was now disposed to find fault with fortune for anything that had occurred.

Next morning they started back to the

place where the giraffe-trap was being constructed. On reaching it they found Swartboy impatiently waiting for their return. His expressions of joy at seeing them once more safe and sound, were accompanied with the declaration that they had been more fortunate than he had expected, considering that they had gone forth with only Congo for their guide.



## CHAPTER XXV.

## MISTAKES OF A NIGHT.

As nearly two weeks would be required for constructing the *hopo*, Groot Willem determined on making another hunting expedition.

There was plenty of game in the immediate neighbourhood, but the chief strongly protested against the firing of guns, lest the sounds should betray their presence in the place.

Several giraffes had been seen in the

mimosa groves, and the banks of the river were marked with their spoor.

Macora objected to their being alarmed, as it would drive them away before the pen could be got ready for them.

Groot Willem was a hunter, and out on a hunting expedition. This being the case, he could not remain for two weeks idle; and taking Hendrick and Congo along with him, he left the camp to visit a river which, according to the chief's account, lay about thirty miles to the north-west.

They expected to reach it in one day, and could have done so but for a large drove of elands which was encountered upon the way, and the pursuit of which delayed them.

They encamped that night, as they sup-

posed, about five miles from the river; and the next morning continued on to reach it.

A ride of between ten and fifteen miles was made: but no river was arrived at.

Early in the afternoon, they came upon a tiny rivulet running out of a pool or "vley." Supposing it to be a tributary of the river they were in search of, they concluded that by following it down, they should reach the main stream.

This, however, they were in no haste to do, since the country around the pool appeared to be the best sort of hunting ground.

The fresh tracks of many varieties of animals could be seen in the mud; and Willem proposed that they should stay over night and lie in wait by the vley.

To this Hendrick agreed; and the horses were tethered out to graze.

A suitable place for a pit was chosen, twenty paces from the pool; and in less than an hour two excavations were made, in which the hunters might conveniently conceal themselves.

Early in the evening, leaving Congo at some distance, under the protection of a large fire, they repaired to the pits, and there commenced their silent vigil.

The first animals that made their appearance were antelopes of a small species, and as the hunters were not in want of food, no attempt was made to hinder the little creatures from having their drink and retiring.

Suddenly there was a commotion in the herd, which ended in a rush from the pool.

A leopard had pounced on one of them; and as the others left the ground, the "tiger" was seen shouldering its victim, with the intention to carry it off.

As it turned side towards them, Willem fired; and the large heavy bullet from the roer went crashing through the creature's ribs.

With a loud roar it sprang upwards—then, standing on its hind feet, it walked forward a few paces and fell.

The shot had been discharged at random, through the dim light; but a better could not have been made with the most deliberate aim, and in the light of day.

After this the pool was visited by hyenas, jackals, and various other creatures not worth the powder that would be required in killing them.

Some time elapsed, during which the hunters had nothing else to interest them than listening to the snarls, laughter, and growling of the carrion-eaters assembled around the pool.

“ I can't say there's much sport in this,” muttered Hendrick, discontentedly; “ I've hard work in keeping awake.”

Another hour passed without their seeing any game worthy of their sport; when Willem, too, became weary of inaction.

They were thinking of vacating the pits and rejoining Congo by the camp fire, when something heavier than hyenas was heard approaching the spot.

With only their eyes above the surface of the ground, they gazed eagerly in the direction from which proceeded the sound.

Two large animals appeared through the darkness, evidently approaching the vley.

“Quaggas!” whispered Willem, as he strained his eyes to assure himself of their species.

“Yes,” answered Hendrick. “Let us knock them over. They’re not much good; but it will serve to wake us up.”

Doubtful whether a shot at anything better might be had that night, Groot Willem was nothing loth, and was the first to fire.

The animal at which he had aimed fell forward, and they heard a heavy plunge, as it rolled over into the pool.

Its companion was about turning to make off, when Hendrick fired.

There was no apparent interruption to its flight, and Hendrick was under the

impression that his shot had missed. He was soon undeceived, however, by hearing the animal fall to the earth with a dull, heavy sound; at the same time uttering a groan, which did not seem unfamiliar, and yet was not the cry of a quagga.

Without saying a word, both leaped out of the pits, and hastened towards the fallen animals, with a strong presentiment that there was something amiss.

The animal brought down by Hendrick was first reached.

It was not a quagga, but a horse!

“A horse!” exclaimed Willem, as he stooped over the carcass to examine it. “It is not mine, thank God; nor yours, neither.”

“That is rather a selfish remark of yours, Willem,” said Hendrick: “the



horse belongs to some one. I can see a saddle-mark on its back.”

“ May be,” muttered Willem, who thought nearly as much of his steed as his great roer. “ For all that, I’m glad it is not mine.”

They then proceeded to the vley, where the other horse was still struggling in the shallow water.

As it was evidently unable to get to its feet, and wounded to the death, another shot was fired to release it from its misery.

Wondering to whom the two horses could belong, they returned to the camp fire, both under the impression that they had destroyed enough of animal life for that night.

Early the next morning they left the pool ; and continuing down stream, within

two hours reached the river they had been in search of.

Here they determined to stop until next day, and their horses were again tethered out; and as they were somewhat wearied, they lay down to take repose under the shade of a mokaala tree.

From this they were startled by the loud barking of Spoor'em, and the calls of Congo.

Springing to their feet, they found themselves surrounded by a party of about forty Africans, some armed with spears, while others carried bows and arrows.

From the hostile attitude of the new comers, the hunters saw that they meant mischief; and seizing their guns, they determined to defend themselves to the last.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## CAPTURED.

RUSHING in front of Groot Willem, Congo entreated him not to make resistance ; and so strong seemed his desire they should surrender without making an effort to maintain their freedom, that he caught hold of the gun which Hendrick had already brought to his shoulder.

“Poison ! Arrows and spears all poison,” shouted the Kaffir, who appeared well nigh scared out of his senses.

Both Willem and Hendrick had heard, seen, and read enough of the African tribes who use poisoned spears and darts, to feel something of Congo's alarm.

They were not cowards, but they saw before them several men carrying weapons more deadly at a short distance than their own fire-arms.

Only one drop of blood had to be drawn by the point of one of their javelins to cause certain death, accompanied by horrible agonies!

They could not expect to conquer thirty or forty men without receiving a scratch or two in the encounter, and knowing this they took Congo's advice and surrendered.

When the Kaffir saw that the capture of himself and his masters had been effected without a battle, he recovered his self-pos-

session, and demanded of the natives the cause of their strange conduct.

An individual then stepped forward, who appeared to have some influence over the others, and by his eloquence Congo became a little wiser, and a great deal more alarmed.

The African spoke in a language which only the Kaffir understood: he stated that he had lost two horses,—both of which had been killed at a vley, where they had gone to drink.

Although grieved at the loss of his horses—both of which he had received as presents, he was quite happy in having discovered the party whom he believed to have wilfully destroyed his property.

The hunters directed Congo to inform him that the horses had been shot by mis-

take—that they very much regretted the circumstance, and were quite ready and willing to make ample compensation for the damage he had sustained.

This the black chief declared was all he required, and the hunters were invited to accompany him to his village, when they would talk over the terms of compensation.

All started up the river; but the behaviour and methodical division of their escort, convinced the hunters that they were considered as captives.

“This is very unfortunate!” said Hendrick; “we shall have to part with something we can ill spare; they will not be satisfied with trifles, and, perhaps, will want our horses in exchange for those killed.”

“They shall not have them, then!” re-

joined Willem, with an air of determination, forgetting at the moment that he was a prisoner, and the horses already in possession of their captors.

About a mile from the place where the Africans had come upon them, they reached a small collection of huts, from which issued a large number of women and children. It was evidently the kraal of their captors.

The leader of the party lost no time in proceeding to business. He was anxious to have his claim settled, so also were Groot Willem and Hendrick. Congo was again called to act as interpreter.

The black chief desired him to inform his master that the horses he had lost were of immense value; they had been given to him by an esteemed friend, a Portuguese

slave merchant, and he declared that in his opinion they were the best horses in the world—no others could replace them.

“Very well,” said Groot Willem, when this communication had been made; “ask him what he expects us to pay.”

“All this ceremony is not for nothing,” remarked Hendrick, while Congo was again talking to the chief. “We shall have some trouble in getting off from this fellow, unless we surrender everything we’ve got.”

“He mustn’t expect too much,” replied Groot Willem, “or he will get nothing at all. We have performed a very silly action, and expect to pay for it.”

“Those are brave words,” answered Hendrick. “But I don’t think we have



power to act up to them. It will be they who will dictate terms; and what can we do?"

The chief, before making known his conditions, desired it to be understood, that a mistake having been committed, on that account, he would not be hard upon them.

He would not punish them for what they had done, more than to require compensation for his loss, which he at the same time gave them to understand was wholly irreparable.

From the appearance of the horses they had killed, the hunters believed the animals had been left behind by some slave-trader, too merciful to take them any farther.

They had evidently been used up by a long journey; and the chief had probably

been thanked by their former owner for allowing them to die a natural death in his dominions.

The amount of damage was at length declared by the plaintiff, who was at the same time acting as judge.

“Tell them,” said he to the interpreter, “that all I require by way of compensation will be their own horses, along with their guns and ammunition.”

“What!” exclaimed Groot Willem, jumping to his feet in a rage, “give them my horse and roer? No, not for all the horses in Africa!”

Hendrick was no less surprised than enraged at the attempt to extort from them; and seeing the folly of continuing the parley any longer, the youths, without saying a word, walked off towards

their horses, intending to mount and ride off.

This intention was opposed by the chief and others of the tribe, when an affray ensued, in which Groot Willem measured his strength against half a score of the natives.

In their attempt to take his gun from him, several were hurled to the earth, and amongst them the chief himself.

He did not desire to discharge the piece. A shot could only have killed one, while his enemies were legion.

Whether they would have conquered him without taking his life, or not, was doubtful, had not one of the Africans, more cunning than his fellows, adopted an ingenious expedient to terminate the struggle.

Seizing a large cone-shaped basket used for catching fish, he ran behind the great hunter and clapped it, extinguisher-like, over his head.

The basket was immediately laid hold of by two or three others, by whom the giant was dragged to the earth, and held there until they had bound him with thongs of zebra-hide.

Before this feat had been accomplished, Hendrick had received a blow from one of the natives that prevented him from making any resistance, and he, too, was trussed up for safe keeping.

Congo had not interfered in this outrage on his masters ; but, on the contrary, he seemed rather pleased at the turn events had taken.

This, however, did not prevent the

Africans from tying him like the others.

The rage of Hendrick, on awakening from a brief period of stupor, and finding himself fast bound, would be difficult to describe.

There can be no greater agony to a brave and sensitive man, than to find himself helpless for revenge after having undergone a deep humiliation.

Groot Willem, no less brave, but of a different temperament, was more resigned to the indignity they were enduring.

His anger had been aroused by the attempt to take from him a thing he greatly prized—his gun.

He had been defeated in trying to retain it; but now that it was gone, and along with it his liberty, he determined

to exert some degree of philosophy, and patiently await for what would happen next.

Congo, who had appeared indifferent to seeing his masters bound—in fact rather pleased at it—now looked sad enough while submitting to similar treatment.

His fellow-captives could have no sympathy, since his behaviour had not failed to beget suspicion of his ingratitude.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



























UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 084218962