African hunting, from Natal to the Zambesi

by

William Charles Baldwin

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R. Bentley

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African hunting
from Natal to the Zambesi

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AFRICAN HUNTING,

FROM NATAL TO THE ZAMBESI,

INCLUDING

LAKE NGAMI, THE KALAHARI DESERT, ETC.,

FROM 1852 TO 1860.

BY

WILLIAM CHARLES BALDWIN, Esq., F.R.G.S.

With Illustrations by James Wolf and J. B. Zwecker.

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TO MY BROTHER,

THE REV. T. RIGBYE BALDWIN, M.A.,

WHOSE GREAT INTEREST IN MY WANDERINGS
WAS THE SOLE INDUCEMENT THAT LED ME TO TAKE NOTES,

THESE ANECDOTES OF HUNTING ADVENTURES

Are Affectonately Dedicated by

THE AUTHOR.
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AFRICAN HUNTING.
AFRICAN HUNTING

FROM NATAL TO THE ZAMBESI.

CHAPTER I.

1852.

EARLY LIFE.—LAND IN NATAL.—FIRST HUNTING EXPEDITION TO ST. LUCIA BAY.

When the following pages, taken from my journals, were written, sometimes in ink, but often in pencil, and gunpowder, tea, etc., in Kaffir kraals or wagon bottoms, and chiefly for a brother's eye, I little thought that they would ever come before the public; and it is only now, at the earnest solicitations of my friends, and almost promises made to many I left behind me at Natal, who noticed the once short trips grow longer and longer, till, in my last, 2000 miles of an almost unexplored country had been traversed and the Zambesi reached, that I am now induced, with some diffidence, to publish them.

Conscious that in going ten years back I am necessarily traveling over ground already preoccupied by other sportsmen and travelers, and that the hospitality of my friends in England, and days with the Quorn and Mr. Tailbys, combined with my natural aversion to any set task, have ill fitted me to redeem the monotony inseparable from a journal, or the apparent egotism in that of the lonely traveler, I nevertheless appear before the public with the hope that if
again I should return to the land of my adoption, begin-
ning my travels where I have now left off, I may hereafter
produce something more worth their perusal.

I feel that I owe a few words of explanation to my many
friends in Africa as to the reasons why I went there at all,
with a page of my earlier life which may perhaps be omit-
ted by the general reader. The love of sport, dogs, and
horses was innate in me. From the age of six I had my
two days a week on my pony with the neighboring har-
rriers, until, one unfortunate day, an extra achievement, as I
considered it, brought a kindly and well-meant caution to
my father from the worthy squire, which had the effect of
sending me off to school. There I got on, I suppose, much
as others, and on leaving it, being of a roving turn of mind,
I was placed in the large merchant's office of an ex-M.P.,
with a view of being fitted for going abroad. No doubt I
did my best (though, to say truth, my boats and bull-ter-
rriers, with our beagles and meetings, somewhat militated
against the duties and discipline of the office), till at last,
upon comparing notes with the junior partner, we arrived
at the same conclusion, viz., that quill-driving was not my
particular vocation, nor a three-legged stool the exact
amount of range to which I was willing to restrict myself
through the sunniest part of life. So I went into Forfar-
shire to learn farming—very pleasant, but ending in what
our transatlantic friends term a difficulty with the master.
I changed my location to a West Highland farm, where, on
thirteen miles square of mountain, flood, moor, and lakes,
some two acres of arable land, and two whisky-stills, the
fond parent no doubt imagined that his hard-worked son
was being duly initiated into all the science and mysteries
of light Scotch farming. Be that as it may, what with the
game, fish, and vermin, my dogs, and the round of trysts
with old L——, than whom a better-hearted fellow never
"ELEPHANT WHITE."

"took his morning," I was what might be called master of the situation. I look upon those years as among the happiest of my life. But time wore on, and having no earthly prospect of the command of any thing like a moor or a stud in the Old Country, I cast about me for some land of greater liberty (at least of foot), and had engaged a fine young Scotchman to go with me; but, while debating whether Canada or the western prairies of America was to be my destination, two intimate friends, the sons of a neighboring gentleman, who were going to Natal, advised that colony; and Gordon Cumming's book, which appeared at that moment, and, as I thought, in the very nick of time, settled me at once. My preparations were soon made, my little all consisting chiefly of guns, rifles, saddles, "et id genus omne." Perhaps the only expensive, and, as it proved, useless part of my outfit was seven deer-hounds, purchased from a keeper of Lord Fitzwilliam's; for, though Hotspur and Laddie were as good dogs as were ever slipped, they soon grew useless and died. The younger ones, being better acclimatized, did me some good service for a time, but they, too, soon succumbed to the climate, and taught me never again to take out what the country itself can furnish better.

I landed in Natal, December, 1851, after a ninety-two days' passage. I was most anxious to be introduced to "Elephant White," as he was called, a great hunter; but whether he earned that title from his own elephantine proportions, six feet four inches, or from his prowess with the animal from which he derived his name, I have yet to learn. I believe he had been very successful formerly when elephants were more plentiful, but he had grown idle, and left the hard work to younger hands. This Mr. White was making preparations for a start into the Zulu country, hence my anxiety for an introduction. No such a thing,
however, was needed in the colony as it then was, and my dogs proved sufficient introduction to a brother sportsman. I made, I believe, some ridiculous offer, and joined the party; and such was my keenness for the sport, that I verily jumped at the proposal to sleep under one of the wagons, both of which were crammed full up to the very tent, and one topped up with a boat, keel uppermost. But I would then rather have slept in six inches of water than not have gone at all. This trip consisted chiefly in the slaughter of sea-cows, which abounded in St. Lucia Bay in the unhealthy season, just as if that God-forgotten land, as I have sometimes almost thought it, did not present sufficient drawbacks in itself, or hardships enough to encounter in every-day occurrences, without seeking out death. But so it was; and if older heads had only been placed upon the shoulders of the enterprising and the young, I might not have to tell how, out of nine hunters who went out full of vigor and hope, in all the ardor of enterprise, Gibson and myself alone returned, enervated and prostrate, after months of insensibility in Kaffir kraala. I would gladly forget, and must pass by, some of the details of that trip.

Within three weeks from my landing we started—three wagons, seven white men, and lots of Kaffirs. The powder ordinances being very strict in those days, every wagon searched, and none allowed to leave town or cross the Tugela with more than ten pounds of powder, we each of us shouldered our weapon and carried ten pounds of powder on our backs, done up in a sort of knapsack fashion, till we had crossed the Tugela, the boundary of the colony, seventy miles distant, when we pitched all into the wagons. Near the Umvoti, forty miles from Durban, we each hired a Kaffir to attend upon us individually, it being strictly prohibited to order another man's Kaffir to do any thing for you, as they have a great objection to wait on any but
their own master, whom they generally attend faithfully, honestly, and willingly. When they understand your wishes they are most obliging; but most of the rows between black and white originate from their misunderstanding what you wish them to do. Two more white men joined us across the Tugela—Monies, a Scotchman, a capital and experienced hunter, but rash and daring to fool-hardiness, and Price, as nice and gentlemanly a man as ever lived, and who was, I believe, a son of Sir Charles Price, the London banker. They both died, poor fellows, of fever, together with two others of the party, McQueen and Arbuthnot (the latter a fellow-passenger), within two months of our start. We got on very slowly, no one being in any hurry apparently; and as it was the rainy season, the rivers detained us, and the tracks were very heavy. My occupation, and, indeed, that of all, except the three wagon-drivers, was to shoot game—bucks, ducks, peaus, or any thing we could get for the party, and I soon got into White's good graces by my success and perseverance. It was the very thing of all others I had been longing for, and in those days I worked like a horse, and the older hands were very glad to be saved the trouble. Rietboks were very plentiful, duikers, and, farther on, steinboks, and I could imagine no greater enjoyment than in shooting them, till every bone in my body ached again with sleeping on the wet ground. We had more or less wet every day, and frequently cold soaking rain all night. We tried to make ourselves more comfortable by fencing on the weather-side and cutting a deep trench round between the wheels, as the water came in more from underneath than above; but on wet nights, do what we would, we generally found ourselves in a pool of water in the morning—a lot of Kaffirs at our feet, curled up like dormice in their blankets, and generally sleeping through every thing, and a host
of wet and dirty, muddy, shivering, dreaming dogs on the top of us. The grass, which grew to a tremendous height, was so saturated, that one might just as well walk through a river, so there was no use in putting on dry clothes in the morning. Three were snugly housed in the wagons, and six of us had this fun to endure. Occasionally some of us tried the boat-wagon, but we found it like a cage I have heard of, made by one skilled in the refinement of cruelty, in which there was no possibility of either sitting, standing, or lying, and eventually, I believe, we all gave that up as being, though dry, infinitely worse, for a continuance, than any amount of rain.

On the 7th of January (1852) one of the party killed a sea-cow calf—very good food, tasting something like veal; and I lost myself out buck-shooting on the plains of the Inyessen, but eventually found my way back in the dark, guided by signal-guns fired from the wagons, the plan we always adopted when any of our party were missing after sunset.

On the 12th, while trekking leisurely along early, our whole party were put into a great flurry and excitement by seeing a large bull elephant cross some 400 yards ahead, quite unconscious of any danger. We were in so great a hurry unstrapping our guns from the sides of the wagons, that all of us, except White, forgot to take our bandoliers and more bullets. Four of us went on foot after the elephant as hard as we could run. As he was going up wind on the open, he did not hear us till we were within twenty yards, when White shouted, and he immediately turned half round; snap went White's gun; Arbuthnot and myself shot him behind the shoulder, and Ellis also, with a little twaddling weapon fifty to the pound. White meantime capped again, and, just as the elephant appeared hesitating whether to charge or not, gave him a good shot in
ELEPHANTS AND DUCKS.

the middle of the shoulder-blade. With a terrific scream the elephant turned and went off at a great pace, evidently crippled by the last shot. Eventually Ellis, myself, and Fly brought him to bay in some reeds three miles on, and the former, taking advantage of a commanding rock, on the top of which we were comparatively safe, gave him no less than nineteen bullets out of his pea-shooter (most of which we afterward extracted from the elephant's ear) ere White, whose wind was long since exhausted, at length got up and settled him with the fourth ball. Seeing the spoor of a large troop gone ahead (this old chap bringing up the rear proving that delays are dangerous), we broiled a rasher on the spot for breakfast, hard and tough as a halter, and away on the spoor some nine or ten miles, sending word to the wagons to outspan, and for a relay of powder and bullets; but we never came up with them, and supposed they had taken alarm at hearing the shooting. Got back tired at night to a supper of elephant's heart, very tender and good, and breakfasted on the foot baked in a large hole, very glutinous and not unlike brawn.

14th. Went out duck-shooting at the mouth of the Um-lilas; it being high tide, the wagons were obliged to wait some hours to cross. Had capital sport; heaps of wild-fowl of all varieties, and very tame, and eventually bagged as many as I could hang round my waist-belt. As the sun was going down, and I saw the wagons ascending the opposite hills, having crossed at the drift some miles higher up, I endeavored to cross opposite where I then was, though I had previously seen many alligators in the river. I got more than two thirds across, and was on a kind of island not deeper than my knees, and before me the stream ran deep and fast, about thirty yards wide. I had my gun and ammunition, all the ducks, and a heavy pair of shooting-boots, though the rest of my attire was light enough, con-
sisting only of shirt and gaiters. Still I thought I could manage it, and pushed slowly off, making very short strokes with my arms for fear of losing my gun, as it was laid across just under my chin, and I think I might have succeeded, had I not just at that moment seen the head of a huge alligator above stream, sailing down upon me, leaving

a wake like a steamer behind him. I need hardly say I struck out legs and arms for my life, utterly unmindful of my gun, and in a few vigorous strokes made the opposite bank, breathless and frightened, with the loss of my gun. The following morning Arbuthnot, Monies, Ellis, and myself went to try and recover it, and dived alternately, one firing shots from the shore, meanwhile, to scare the alligators. As the gun was a very valuable one, before relin-
quishing the search we made a capital drag, cut out of the bush like a huge rake, but all to no purpose, and I was obliged to put up with the loss.

18th. The wagons separated, two going to the king's trading, and the other, with five white men, going to St. Lucia Bay sea-cow shooting. Outspanned at the Inseline (a small river); nearly devoured by musquitoes.

I was here initiated in the art of trading with the natives, and bought an ox for four picks or hoes, which the Kaffirs use for breaking up land to sow mealies, and which are worth in the colony 1s. 6d. each. Reached the Black Umveloose, where we left the wagon in charge of a Kaffir chief, and sent the oxen some twenty miles back, the country farther ahead being very unhealthy for cattle, and, indeed, for human beings too, only we did not know it at the time. Got out the boat, which was the innocent cause of many a miserable soaking night to myself and others. The musquitoes were so dreadful on the river banks that we lighted cow-dung fires in every pot we had, and put them inside the now empty wagon, and all turned into it, and had the choice of two evils—to be worried by the musquitoes, or almost stifled with heat and smoke in the wagon. I believe we all preferred the latter, and, as sleep was altogether out of the question, the general wish of all the party was for daylight, when the musquitoes vanish. White-leaded and varnished the boat, and made a sail, and tried a lot of iron bullets I brought out with me; however, they did not answer at all, and I eventually threw them all away, as they were much too light and flew high, though they penetrated to a great depth.

24th. Launched the first boat ever seen in the Black Umveloose, and tried sleeping in a Kaffir hut, but I believe it was out of the frying-pan into the fire; heat and musquitoes intolerable, sour milk and Kaffir beer our fare, without meat of any kind.
25th. Tried a bath to refresh us; three went in with a plunge, keeping, however, close to the bank, while the two on shore shouted, threw in big stones, and fired a shot or two to scare the alligators. Though numerous, they are very timid, and I don’t think there is much cause for fear when the above precautions are taken; but, although the bath refreshed us, none of us could be said to thoroughly enjoy it.

26th. Having drawn lots who was to accompany Monies in the boat, he put the walkers across the river on account of its height, and then returned and packed the boat with Gibson, to whose lot it fell to accompany him. Arbuthnot, Price, and myself walked across country with our Kaffirs and a guide some twenty-five miles, where we staid for the night, and, having forgotten to bring any beads or brass wire, I had to tear up my silk pocket-handkerchief into lengths about two inches wide, with which the Kaffirs ornament their heads by making a sort of band across the forehead fastened behind, to buy amas, beer, and amobella meal to make porridge. Arrived at our destination about 2 P.M. the following day, and Monies and Gibson turned up about 8 the same evening, having left the boat some twenty miles back, not being able to get on any farther in consequence of the alligators having broken the paddles and oars. In drifting fast down the middle of the river, Monies saw an elephant in the reeds; pulled in and shot her dead within fifteen yards, between the ear and the eye, and having axes, they cut out her tusks and her ear and put them in the boat, and continued their journey. The smell of blood most probably made the alligators so savage; and although Monies shot five of them, and three sea-cows, they eventually gained the victory, leaving him nothing but the handle of an oar to scull the boat ashore. They put all their belongings on a sand-bank, and turned the boat over
them keel uppermost, and there left her, to make for more inviting quarters.

Went to the bush, and Price, Monies, and Arbuthnot being very handy fellows, made sculls and oars, and started with eight Kaffirs to carry the goods. On the 29th they found all as Monies had left them, and started again on the 30th for St. Lucia Bay. They pulled above twenty miles through a fine country; lots of sea-cows and wild-fowl of every description; and about midday were forced to go ashore, as the wind and sea were so dead ahead that they found they could make no way, and the boat was at times half full of water; so they about ship and ran before the wind, much to their delight, living on geese and watermelons (capital things on a hot day); spent a very comfortable night before the fires, without any blankets, and reached their destination at 12 next day, having shot two sea-cows on their way up.

I had employed my time by going out with the Kaffirs. I did not understand a word of their language, but by their signs I came to the conclusion that I was to remain by a small thorn-tree, near a corner of the lake full of reeds. Gibson accompanied me. The Kaffirs all left us and I fell asleep, to be suddenly awaked by Gibson, in a great state of alarm, bolting up the hill, and calling loudly to me to follow. As soon as my eyes were open, I saw a huge buffalo bull charging right down the hill toward me, pursued by all the Kaffirs. He came at a headlong pace within twenty yards before seeing me, when he hesitated an instant, dashed into the reeds, and came broadside past me, within twenty-five yards, at a brisk trot, knee-deep in water, making it fly over him in a shower of crystal. I fired, and luckily, for it was a bad shot, broke his spine, and down he fell, bellowing like a bull-calf; the Kaffirs rushed in pell-mell and drove twenty assegais into him, and finished him,
and complimenting me, I suppose, much on my prowess, though little credit was due to me, as I must confess to having felt very much alarmed at the suddenness of the whole thing, not having known in the least what I was placed there for.

31st. Off an hour and a half before sunrise to Monies’s sea-cows, which had been towed ashore, and on emerging quietly through the bush and tall, rank, soaking grass to an open place, I saw some nine or ten alligators high and dry, gorged with sea-cow, and fast asleep. One enormous brute, twenty feet long at least, I wanted to shoot, but Monies would not allow it, as he hoped to get more sea-cows, and he feared a shot would frighten them and spoil our chances. I was not half satisfied, and said, “Well, anyhow, let me have the satisfaction of giving him a kick in the ribs” (I was shod with heavy English shooting-boots) “by way of a memento,” and was just in the act of raising my foot for the purpose, when Monies suddenly drew me forcibly back, saying, “You fool, he’ll crack your legs off like pipe-stumps with his tail;” and that instant he woke up, and I had Monies to thank for saving me a broken bone at least, for I never saw anything like the whirl he gave his tail as he dashed into the water some fifteen yards ahead, and almost immediately floated like a log on the top of the water, taking a cool survey of his morning visitors. Shot my first sea-cow, and we made a lot of sjamboks and whips from his hide, such as are commonly used in Africa for driving oxen. They are very tough and supple when properly dressed and brayed, and punish tremendously. The sjambok is the threat which the Dutchman invariably holds out to a refractory Kaffir. We saw a most amusing chase of a broken-winged golden goose by three alligators. He fell pinioned on the water, and these fellows immediately gave chase, going very fast, and leaving a wake like a ship
HARDSHIPS.—TAKEN SICK.

behind them. When very hard pressed the goose dived, to be worse off than ever, and came up "quack, quack," from abject fear; he managed to flap a bit along the top of the water and get a start, but they came up with him again, and he at last took the land. We were in a boat watching the fun. The alligators did not follow him, and the poor thing eventually allowed me to catch him on land sooner than face his enemies in the water again.

The sea-cow bacon would not keep, owing to the damp weather, and we had many hardships to endure from the incessant rain. At last we made what is called a hartebeest house of very tall reeds, stuck close together in a kind of trench dug for them in bundles, and meeting over head, and they keep off a great deal of bad weather; still we were rarely what could be called dry at nights, and spent three fourths of almost every day all depths in the water, and exposed to scorching suns, towing sea-cows ashore, as we generally provided work for the day before we breakfasted, for the tusks had to be cut out, the best of the meat salted, and all the inside fat rendered down. The pots for that purpose were scarcely ever off the fire until the bottoms were burnt out. We were infamously provided with every thing, and we used the bladders of the sea-cows to put the lard in—necessity being the mother of invention.

It was no wonder, then, that I was taken ill on the 10th (February), with racking pains in my head, and giddiness and faintness, and was left behind at a Kaffir kraal, with a small bag of rice, and my Kaffir, Inyati (Buffalo), a big six-foot fellow, to attend to me. He was very young, and a magnificent specimen of a savage; he looked after me like a child, and nothing could exceed his kindness and attention to all my wants, and he risked his life more than once in my service. Monies told the captain of the kraal to give me milk when I required it, in return for which he would
give him a blanket. The captain promised to do so, but never brought me a drop, and Inyati used to go into the cattle-kraal in the middle of the night and bring me my tin cup full, holding about a pint, and see that I drank every drop, lest they should find him out, in which case his punishment for stealing would most probably have been death, the only punishment they know of. He would pass the day in scouring the country for wild fruits. I had a medicine-chest with me, and took lots of emetics, ipecacuanha, Dover's powder, calomel, etc., but did myself more harm than good, not knowing the quantity, or any thing about it, in fact. I passed a week on my back on a hard cold floor, a Kaffir mat and a blanket being all my covering; got better and joined the rest of the party, who had been having great sport, having killed something like twenty sea-cows each. Monies and Arbuthnot, Price and Gibson, did not shoot, or could not hit anything. They told me I looked as if I had been whitewashed. I found things looking much more comfortable—a sort of camp erected on some high land overlooking the bay, and directly opposite where the River St. Luey runs in, drying-houses for meat, etc., and a large hartebeest house to sleep in, which was moderately dry from above, but terribly wet below, after heavy rain; heard lions and hyenas every night.

As the Kaffirs all round the country were well supplied with meat, they declined any longer to bring us meal, beans, beer, and milk, in exchange for flesh; so, after cutting what we wanted off a sea-cow, we towed her out again into deep water and sunk her. Monies did this on two or three occasions, and the Kaffirs, quite shocked at such a waste of food they are so fond of, ever afterward brought us small baskets of the different produce of the country as presents.

21st. Had a very narrow escape of an upset. Monies wounded a calf, and it bellowed out lustily close to the
boat; the cow immediately rushed at the boat, caught it about the stern, and raised it clean up on end, half filling the boat with water. Monies fired at it, and the shot went into its back and through its lungs, and it shortly died.

Caught some good barbel, and shot a very fine bull; towed him within one mile of camp, and had to leave him on account of a strong wind and sea running against us.

28th. Had great sport at the mouth of the Inyelas. Arbuthnot and Monies each shot two, myself four; saw upward of forty altogether. We sailed down upon them fast, keeping the boat exactly trim, that we might shoot steadily; suddenly lowered the sail (a piece of blue calico) flat, and the sea-cows showed capital heads, being very curious to know what on earth was coming down upon them like that. We shot well that day, and Price managed the boat to admiration; and not the least amusing thing was seeing scores of Kaffirs going in to bring them out. The water at
the head of the bay being shallow, they take hold of each other's hands, shouting for their very lives to scare the alligators, not unfrequently many of the middle ones swimming short distances, but not loosing their hold of one another for a moment. The alligators seemed afraid to attack so large a body, though very far in the lake; the Kaffirs showed great courage, but they never ventured into deep water singly or in small numbers.

On the following day, as it was too rough for sea-cows, we crossed the lake to have a day's shooting in the bush opposite. After lunching on a wildebeest we shot, I left my knife behind, and Monies kindly returned with me to find it, foolishly leaving our guns behind; he walked very fast, and was fifty yards ahead of me, when three lions walked leisurely out of a bush not ten yards in front of him. Monies, having drawn a huge clasp knife, his only weapon, remained perfectly firm and collected, and eyed the lions for a few seconds, when they made off for the bush, 200 yards away. Waited some hours for the wind to go down, and had hard work to get across. I thought we must have been swamped. The sea-cows were making up the river, and Arbuthnot stunned one with a ball, just touching the brain. We fired alternately, three of us putting sixteen bullets, seven to the pound, in different parts of her head before killing her.

March 5th. Thunder and rain like a second deluge all night. Got up like drowned rats. I had my first attack of ague, and Gibson, seeing my teeth chattering in my head, and frightful convulsions, could stand it no longer, and bolted very wisely with two Kaffirs back again to the Black Umveloose, where we left the wagon and some surplus stores, and I have no doubt in my own mind saved his life by so doing.

9th. Edmonstone arrived with a message from White,
saying he was not coming, and we must start the Kaffirs off at once with all the sea-cows, ivory, lard, bacon, etc., and all the spoils of the chase, amounting to fifty-five sea-cows, and only one elephant. Started the Kaffirs off on the 11th, heavily laden, a long string of them, and we pulled the boat round again to the mouth.

12th. Broke up our camp, as usual, with a huge bonfire, and started on foot with thirty Kaffirs carrying; paid them on arrival with brass wire and blue salemore, or calico. I did not arrive till the 15th, dead knocked up, the journey quite overpowering me in my weak state. Inyati, my Kaffir, stalked ahead, carrying every thing but my gun, which I was forced to lug along myself, and many a time during the march, being quite exhausted, I was obliged to knock under, and lay down under a shady tree till I had recovered. After calling and shouting in vain for me to come on, he would leave me, and apparently go on his journey. He could not have been carrying less than eighty pounds' weight of one thing and another, principally a huge calabash of fat, with which they smear their bodies all over, and value it immensely, and therefore could not possibly render me any assistance; but his going away was only a make-believe, to try and induce me to follow, as the faithful fellow always returned to look me up. I at last, however, reached the wagons completely exhausted, and very, very ill, and shall have a wholesome recollection of that walk as long as I live. Found Gibson and Charley Edmonstone very ill, and joined them. Monies, Gibson, and Price arrived the same night without the boat, not being able to pull up against the stream, or to get her carried by Kaffirs. I was very much worn out from the cold and incessant rain.

On the 16th we started for Natal, and I can give from this date but a very poor account of any thing more that
occurred, as I must have had many days' insensibility myself. What I do recollect was that Arbuthnot and Monies joined the wagons again on the 20th, after two very hard days' elephant-hunting on foot, during which Arbuthnot killed one. Arbuthnot complained of being very ill, and threw himself down in the hut, from which he never rose, dying the following day of fever and ague. We made the best of our way to Natal to get advice for the rest of the sick, but on reaching our destination poor Price died also, within forty miles of the town. Monies said behind to bring out another wagon, having never had an hour's illness, when he suddenly took desperately ill, and died next day. McQueen reached Durban, where he died in a few days, though he never went into the unhealthy country at all; Purver, Hammond, and Etty, three elephant-hunters of White's party, also died in the Zulu country about the same time; Gibson, Edmonstone, Charley Edmonstone, and myself eventually, but not for nearly twelve months, got better again. We were all, I think, carried out of the wagons in Durban more dead than alive, and I shall never forget the very great kindness and attention I received from Mr. and Mrs. Tyzack, to whose house I first went on landing in the colony, and where I was now taken. In the course of a few weeks I was able, by the advice of my physician, to go up to Pieter Maritzburg for change of air, where Mr. Collins, the post-master and a fellow-passenger of mine, most kindly took me into his house, treated me with the utmost attention, and forestalled my every want. It is to Mrs. Collins's nursing and care, and all the little delicacies, so grateful and refreshing to a sick man, which a woman's forethought can alone supply, that I am indebted for my eventual recovery, after a very long illness. On first getting into the scales, on being able, with assistance, to get about a little, I only weighed five stone and eleven
pounds, but laid on weight again, shortly after, almost as fast as I must have lost it, and regained strength altogether, on the high lands of the Inanda, about twenty-two miles from Durban and nine from the sea, where I joined White on a 9600 acre farm of Proudfoot's, built a wattle and dab house, and existed there almost alone—I can hardly call it living—for two years or more, I should think, selling cattle to Kaffirs, which White traded in the Zulu country and brought or sent out to me. I have sometimes sold forty or more in one day, and had upward of 600 on the place at one time, averaging, any where in those days before the lung sickness, from 10s. to £2 a head, for which the Kaffirs in Natal always paid cash.

It was a horrid, weary, solitary, monotonous life; not often could I prevail upon any one to come and stay with me, certainly not unless driven to it, as was not unfrequently the case, by having no other home and no money, when they would pay me a visit till something better turned up. Certainly I had no great inducement to offer to them to remain: lean fowls, salt beef and rice, and heavy, ill-baked bread, was our fare, varied occasionally by bucks, partridges, and bustards; tea and coffee our only beverage. I must not, however, omit oceans of milk, most of which the Kaffirs and dogs ran through, and I won't say but that it might have been possible to have been very comfortable; all I can say is, that the experience I had of it gave me such a wholesome dread of the like ever again occurring, that I took to the wandering gipsy life I have ever since led. I was never without two or three horses and a host of dogs, and, though they assisted very materially, together with my rifle and shot-guns, to get through the days, yet the long evenings, the everlasting roar made by my Kaffirs, frequently continuing half the night, rats squeaking, gnawing, and scraping in every room, and almost every thing that I
brought out being long since eaten into shreds by white ants, which were fast undermining the posts and walls of our habitation, made me think another Zulu trip would be preferable to remaining alone any longer; consequently, I shut up the establishment, and went in again the following year.

My nearest neighbors were Mr. Lindley, a missionary from the American Mission Society, a man most deservedly respected and esteemed by all in the colony, his amiable wife and charming family, at whose hospitable house I always felt myself quite at home. I used frequently to ride over on Sundays to Kaffir service, or whenever I could frame an excuse for making a break in my existence, and, after passing an evening with him and his united family, it put me so much in mind of my own home, that I used to feel in a better frame of mind for weeks to come, though the contrast was very great between his cheerful, comfortable house and happy family, and my own solitary, dismal-looking abode—a deal table and a lot of velt stools and wagon chests the only furniture, and myself the only inhabitant.

One day, at St. Lucia Bay, after partly recovering from my first attack of fever, we went sea-cow shooting, and I was landed on a small island among the reeds, knee deep in water, and very warm. After waiting some time for a shot, and feeling very weak and weary, I beat down a big bundle of reeds and sat upon them, my legs dangling in the water, and went fast asleep. Meantime Arbuthnot and Monies were shooting and driving sea-cows, which showed good heads, past my hiding-place, and they could not imagine why I did not shoot, but in the excitement of their own hunting forgot where they had left me, and poor Monies said they hallowed in vain; but he had noticed three or four of the largest alligators swimming backward and forward.
in one place, and close into the island, and on pulling in, found me fast asleep within fifteen yards of these pleasant companions, who, no doubt, would soon have made a meal of me. All the sympathy my unenviable and dangerous position excited was being soundly rated for going asleep and not bagging a couple of sea-cows; but I felt too grateful for being rescued to be angry in my turn.

While on the subject of alligators, I will relate an anecdote that happened to me on the St. Lucie’s mouth, where it runs into St. Lucia Bay. I shot a goose, almost full grown, though a flapper, and he was drifting nicely to my feet, when he unaccountably disappeared. Not taking any particular notice at the time, I thought he might possibly have partly recovered and dived. Gibson was with me at the time, and, disappointed of our intended roast, as we had not breakfasted, I shot another, and he likewise disappeared in the same place and manner. There being plenty, I shot a
third, and, determined not to lose this one, went gradually into the river to meet him, armed with a heavy lancewood loading-rod shod with iron, and had nearly got up to my middle, making a tremendous noise and splashing to scare the alligators, when, just as I was stretching out my arm to reach my goose, he suddenly went under water. I had no fears in those days, and did not know the real danger, so I made a grasp and caught the goose by the leg, striking the water as hard as ever I could. In an instant the goose came in halves, the legs, back, and some of the entrails falling to my share, Mr. Alligator getting the best half, and two or three violent blows on the nose into the bargain. I need hardly say I lost not an instant in getting ashore again, and did not think much at the time (which is often the case) of what a foolish thing it was to do, and what a narrow escape I had had. It is only once in a man’s lifetime he does these dare-devil sort of things, and it is wonderful how lucky he invariably comes off; but a few more years and a wider experience make him as cautious as those whom he once thought timid. It is equally difficult for youth and age to hit that golden mean, which is, no doubt, the best way in hunting, as in other things, to attain the main object—bagging your game.
CHAPTER II.

1853.

HUNTING EXPEDITION INTO THE ZULU COUNTRY.

July 15th. We started on our Zulu expedition from the Inanda with two wagons, Gibson and myself going on horseback across country. We got out of our way, and fell in with a hospitable Scotchman and his wife. On going up a steep hill, leading two horses, I went to touch up one that was hanging back, when my mare took fright, and, after several plunges, succeeded in kicking me in the stomach and arm, though not very severely. I was able to go in pursuit in a few minutes, and, after more than two hours' hard chasing, succeeded in driving her into a Kaffir kraal. At sunset I reached Fuller's, where the wagons had just arrived.

17th. After sundry "doctors," concoctions of rum, eggs, and new milk, we inspanned and got under way to the Tongaart. We loaded the wagons with two muids (360 lbs.) of mealies, Edmonstone's traps, and a host of blankets, trecked on some eight miles by moonlight, and outspanned for the night.

18th. We were delayed in starting by the oxen having strayed. We trecked to the Umslali, saddled up and rode to Maclean's, where we took in a sack of potatoes, and stored our pockets with capsicums. I killed a koran.

19th. Again we commenced the day by losing the oxen, which were not found till after midday. We reached the
Umvoti after dark. I made two nose-bags for my horses, and had some good fun trying to make my mare stand on the velt, every attempt being a signal failure. She set my nooses at defiance, and ended by breaking the bridle.

20th. To-day I engaged two Kaffirs, Jack and Jacob, and bought a muid of mealies for the horses. On coming into a mud sluit, down a steep bank, the sudden check of the wagon threw me off the box, under the near wheel, which passed over above my knee. I rolled out of the way of the other wheel, and fortunately escaped without farther injury than a very severe bruise. Though I had no bone broken, my thigh swelled very much, and the shaking of the wagon increased the irritation, and gave me great pain. It was a wonderful escape, as there were 3000 pounds' weight of picks in the wagon, and nothing but the fact of the ground being very soft where I fell could have saved a broken thigh; the swelling was so rapid that my trowsers had to be slit up with a knife in order to get them off, and for the next twelve hours I had two Hottentot women, the wives of the drivers, rubbing in turpentine and oil, their infallible remedy for bruises. Their beautifully-formed, delicate, diminutive hands, ankles, wrists, and feet, a marked feature in all Hottentots, presented a singular contrast to their repulsive monkey-like faces.

21st. We got as far as the Umvoti, where we joined Gasriot's wagon, which had been waiting our arrival for three weeks; trecked on some six miles, with four wagons and a host of Kaffirs, Hottentots, men, women, and children of all sorts, colors, and sizes, who, having got possession of a case of gin that Gibson had in his wagon, spent the most noisy, quarrelsome, abusive night I ever witnessed.

On the 22d we crossed the Tugela, the boundary of the colony, half a mile wide, without accident, the river being very low, and trecked on about four miles, where we met
Mr. Clifton, of Lytham, a lieutenant in the Rifle Brigade, who was also on a hunting trip, and had been waiting our arrival some days. He was at a low ebb; a friend of his, Mr. Fletcher, having just been killed by a cow elephant, which they were about to shoot, when it charged and killed Mr. Fletcher before a shot had been fired. This was the first they had seen; rather an unfortunate beginning. Mr. Fletcher had only been a few days in the colony.

On the 23d we crossed the Matakoola, and outspanned four miles beyond. The following morning White, Gibson, Steele, and myself mounted at sunrise in quest of elands. We fell in with a herd of about seventeen, and gave chase at a killing pace, very soon overhauling them. Gibson and Steele fired without effect, White giving a bull a shot rather too high up in the shoulder. However, he separated from the herd, and Steele gave him a finisher about a mile off, where he had taken the water and was standing at bay. After a long chase, I brought down the largest bull in the troop, shooting him dead off the pony Billy, being unable to pull up and fire, in consequence of my leg being still very painful. It was his first essay at elands as well as my own, and he proved himself a good one, running very stout and fast. After returning to camp for breakfast, I rode out again with Clifton and twenty Kaffirs to bring the meat home, some five or six miles.

25th. We trecked on to a high hill called the Gun, some ten miles farther; a very cold, raw day, with slight showers. Maclean ran against a bank in going into a sluit, got pitched off the box, and nearly upset the wagon on the top of him. We saw a fine herd of elands, but are keeping them for to-morrow. I made my first attempt at preserving on the head of a cow eland I shot yesterday, and found it a long, tedious job. I engaged another Kaffir, Mafuta (Grease) by name, a strong, likely-looking fellow.