

**A WHITE WOMAN
AMONG THE MASAI**

PATROLLING IN PAPUA

By W. R. HUMPHRIES

With an Introduction by the Hon.
J. H. P. MURRAY, Lieut.-Governor
of Papua.

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This book reveals what is going on to-day in the heart of Papua, one of the least known countries in the world. It deals with tribes hitherto unheard of by white men, and illustrates the beautiful and amazing country in which they live.

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THE AUTHOR WITH OBADIAH.

[*Frontispiece*]

A WHITE WOMAN
AMONG THE MASAI
By MARGUERITE MALLET

ILLUSTRATED

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TO MY NEPHEW

MR. J. R. TYTE

OF KAMPAR, PERAK, F.M.S.

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

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CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

Hors de combat—Submarines—Lisbon—The markets—Marseilles—Tram-cars—Naples—Sta. Carmina—Dromedaries—Water-football—Sudanese—Port Sudan—Unloading cargo—Sudanese porters—Aden—Arab school—Tropical storm—Mombasa—Club.

NOTHING like travel for rubbing off one's insularity. So I thought when, after sitting in solemn silence the greater part of the way to Tilbury Docks religiously refusing to speak to each other (although the only occupants of the carriage), my travelling companion and I simultaneously discovered by glancing at our respective labels that we were both bound for the *Berwick Castle* en route for East Africa, and further, that we were to see a good deal of each other during the ensuing weeks, actually sharing the same cabin. Many were our conjectures as to whom our third companion would be, and we were not kept long in suspense, for, on being shown to our cabin by the attentive stewardess, a forlorn individual was discovered in possession. She introduced herself as Miss S., and together we sat chatting until tea-time.

It was the first voyage for all of us, full of possibilities and bristling with excitement at such a time. Then the horrors of sea-sickness were discussed, and we thought how inconvenient it would be if we were all ill together. Such a catastrophe was unthinkable, so,

having discussed the topic in all its bearings, we unanimously agreed to nurse each other, should the calamity overtake us. For, as Miss S. said (and she had been on the boat exactly one and a half hours, and was in a position to know), there was only one stewardess, and it could not be expected that we should receive much attention from her, so it would be better in every way to wait upon each other. Personally, she did not expect to be ill; she had been in a swing lots of times, also in a toboggan, in later years, and she did not intend to allow herself to think about it. It was dwelling on the subject that upset one!

Mrs. P. and I said nothing, but we feared quite a lot. However, we made a very good tea, also dinner, when we saw the remainder of our fellow-voyagers, and afterwards retired to rest.

Certainly there was none too much room, although we had the largest cabin on the ship, with an extra unused berth, on which we deposited numerous packages.

The amount of water for ablutions left much to be desired, and the bath-water was even worse. What matter? It was war-time, and we were prepared to put up with any amount of inconvenience as a consequence. True, sleep was almost impossible at first owing to a man in the next cabin having a nasal obstruction—sonorous indeed were the sounds that issued from the adjoining berth, separated only by a thin partition—but at last we fell off one by one and, I suppose, slept soundly.

Towards morning, however, we were awakened by a crunching, grinding noise which told plainly that we had really made a start at last. After an hour or so we dropped off again, to be awakened by the stewardess bringing our early cup of tea, and the news that we were in a thick fog. Nobody takes any notice of fog on a first voyage, and we were quickly dressed and up on

deck, only to find we could distinguish nothing. So down we came again, a little disappointed it is true, but then there was quite a lot to do the first day, and, directly breakfast was over, we set to work arranging our belongings and making plans as to going ashore at every possible opportunity, the *Berwick Castle* being a cargo-boat.

We were quite pleased with ourselves and everyone else. Fortunately, we had taken to each other at first sight, and that went a long way towards comfort on a voyage that was to last nearly eight weeks, although we did not then know that.

When we retired that night we devoutly hoped the man next door would at least moderate his noise, so that we might enjoy a little uninterrupted slumber, but it was not to be. He kept up a solo that would have been audible anywhere in a concert-hall. Next to myself, separated by a thin partition only, listening to it amounted almost to nervous agony, lying hour after hour, hoping for sleep which would not come, or if it came, was rudely disturbed by a blast more terrific than before.

I think we talked ourselves to sleep at last—I know we all felt worn out—only to wake with the strangest of all strange feelings. Personally, I remember feeling much as I did when, as a child, a sister much older than myself gave me a ride on a roundabout, and the whole world seemed to be going round. I glanced at the man who owned the wretched thing, but was swiftly carried past him. Never mind, I should see him again, and impress him with the fact that I wanted the instrument of torture stopped! The horse, too—surely no horse before ever leaned in such a disreputable manner. Ah! now he was coming closer. I gazed straight at him, and murmured “Stop,” only to receive a stony stare in reply. The next moment I jumped off, and a

severe bump on the forehead was the result on that occasion.

I clutched the sides of my berth wildly, and gazed at my companions, only to catch a look of awe on the face of one and consternation on the other.

"Do you know——" I began faintly.

"Yes! Isn't it awful?" from Mrs. P.

"Oh, dear! I really believe I'm going to be ill," from Miss S. Certainly she looked it, but then she had given us to understand that she did not intend to dwell on the subject, which was the only means of escaping the affliction.

"This is not what we arranged," I said.

"Which of you is going to nurse me?"

"Oh! if someone would only stop the ship for a minute!"

Groans were the only response I got. There for three days we lay, three never-to-be-forgotten days, whilst the sea played battledore and shuttlecock, but at last even the sea seemed to tire, and for a time at least we had a respite.

When we went on deck again, the sun was shining brilliantly, and the Captain, with a smile on his face, came to greet us.

"Feeling better, ladies?" he said. "Here's a lovely morning—just the morning to make you feel glad to be alive."

"Which is more than we have been doing for the last three days," I retorted.

"Ah! that's nothing—nothing at all," he responded.

"We did so much want to see the last of old England," remarked Mrs. P.

"Be thankful that you see anything," replied the Captain. "Do you know the officers and myself

have not been to bed since we started ? But for the fog, I much doubt if I should be talking to you ladies now. Have you ever heard of a submarine ? ”

Of course we had, and said so.

“ Well, you nearly had a more intimate acquaintance with one ! ” And with a nod, which conveyed much, he was off.

Many were the pleasant days that followed, broken at intervals by the wretched complaint of which Miss S. refused to think, but of which, nevertheless, she was the suffering victim. The Bay of Biscay found us all *hors de combat* again. How thankful we were when the boat stopped ! It seemed like the direct intervention of Providence.

We all went ashore at Lisbon. The parks looked their best, new washed, fresh, and sweet-smelling. Big, handsome women, hands on hips, great baskets of fish on their heads, passed and repassed us. We followed in the direction they were going, and it brought us to such a quaint old market, where fish of every variety, known and unknown, were displayed on slabs.

They were very quick to notice the foreigners, and presently fish of every kind and description were thrust in our faces. We did not want fish. Then joints of meat were hastily brought to our notice, horrible-looking joints, and we found that the meat-market adjoined. Never did I see such ghastly-looking pieces. A pig, which must have met its doom several days before, appeared to have died in agony, so twisted was it ; and there were three animals at least for which we could find no name. They resembled nothing we had ever seen displayed for food before.

“ What can they possibly be ? ” we queried.
“ Sheep ? ”

“ Quite impossible.”

“ Goats ? ”

Not even the widest stretch of imagination would make them goats.

“Dogs?”

Horrors! They certainly were more like dogs than anything else. We fled to something more enticing.

“Flowers!” Ah! yes, and such flowers! We returned to the boat laden.

Gibraltar was our next stop: for three days we remained stationary, gazing at the solid rock, for no one was allowed to land. It was very disappointing.

Just before we reached Marseilles we once more retired to our cabin, lying quiescent, watching the waves dash against the port-hole, which we were bound to keep closed, badly though we needed air; and once more the boat was still, still for three rapturous days, when we were ashore from morning until night. What a cosmopolitan town it was during that first year of the war! I think in those three days I caught a glimpse of every known race under the sun, save Red Indians.

Of course we ate *bouillabaisse*, which may have deserved all the praise I had heard given it, but we found other things far nicer in this bustling, merry seaport. How natty the women were, even the poorest! A woman was sweeping a crossing, her hair as neatly dressed as a society lady's, her apron as clean as any pert waiting-maid's. Soldiers, of course, were everywhere, and what a number of women we met carrying funeral wreaths, what a number, too, clad in black from head to foot! The churches were full of them, all kneeling, some weeping bitterly.

The trams were quaint, horse-drawn vehicles that looked as if they belonged to the long-forgotten past. One day a horse fell down, and in its struggles soon pulled its companion down beside it. It was a small, underfed animal, and we were not sorry to see

it taking an impromptu rest. We were the only three ladies in the tram. All the men got out and began to give advice. After struggling for a minute or two, the horses gave it up, closed their eyes, and awaited events. About a quarter of an hour elapsed, no one did anything, save shake their fingers in their nearest neighbour's face, with much chattering, varying the performance with occasional cries of "Hé! la! Hé! la!" to the horses, who took not the slightest notice. Then two men appeared with two poles, which they used, in a half-hearted way, as levers, without any result.

This went on for another quarter of an hour. Then several spectators tried their skill, with indifferent results. Then the poles were returned to those who had originally borrowed them, and the "Hé! la's!" began with renewed vigour.

Meanwhile the horses slept placidly on, quite oblivious of the gesticulations taking place all round them, and, as we saw nothing to give us any hope of being able to move in the near future, not at least till the horses had finished their siesta, we got out and walked.

I much doubt if the French have anything like our R.S.P.C.A., for never did I see horses so disgracefully overworked. I remember on one occasion meeting a heavy cart loaded up with military uniforms. At first sight it presented the appearance of a cart moving slowly forward of its own volition, but on scanning it closely, four skinny legs and a tail were observable. The head and back of the poor animal were completely covered, the uniforms being placed across a board, which quite hid the animal from view.

On again until Naples was reached. We anchored just outside the bay. How thankful we were for another respite! As I went on deck after the throbbing of the engines had ceased, a fairy-scene met my view.

Tiny lights twinkled everywhere, for it was night. We could make out the long avenues, hung with lamps, and even the shape of some of the tall buildings. After the stuffy cabin, how delicious the cool air felt! We sat down and prepared to enjoy it to the full. There the genial Captain found us some hours later. I complained of the hard luck that appeared to be ours. Did everyone suffer as we were doing? Would it continue throughout the voyage? We had understood that once the first bout was safely over, there would be no recurrence.

"That is where you are mistaken," laughed the Captain. "You ladies seem so constituted that every time a wave lashes your port-hole, down you go; and from what I can see of it, unless we can spare sufficient oil, you'll keep it up till the end of the voyage."

Soon after breakfast the next morning we were off to take our first glimpse of Naples by daylight. Sundry small boys crowded the decks, shouting: "See Naples and die!" When about the seventeenth had shouted this in my face, flourishing a bill-head under my nose at the same time, I waved him away, saying, "My dear child! I don't want to." The child in question gave a chuckle and called to another urchin, "She no want—she no want." Evidently he could not understand why the soil of Naples did not appeal to me as a burying-ground.

For three days we drove about Naples, coming back to the shelter of the *Berwick Castle* at night, very tired, but full of admiration for all we had seen. We spoke of the *Berwick Castle* as "home" now. Already the old boat had a warm place in our hearts.

How full of colour the streets were and full of life! Pompeii was a never-to-be-forgotten dream, realised at last, the Museum only second in favour. Driving to the top of the hill which overlooked the city, we were

struck by the number of churches. Indeed, there is hardly a street in Naples that cannot boast of one. Some we went into. Very ornate they were—one, a scheme of different-coloured marbles, white, grey, green, brown, and red.

A service was being held in Sta. Carmina ; there must have been hundreds of worshippers, rich and poor, kneeling indiscriminately side by side, rags and silk jostling each other on the mosaic floor. It was the festival of the saint.

We said good-bye to Naples and moved slowly towards the Red Sea.

Visions of three figures prostrated with heat presented themselves, but fortunately were not realised, the only casualties being three stewards who fainted and did not appear for two days.

Here we caught our first sight of dromedaries, who appeared to have nothing better to do than snap spitefully at each other. A little farther on we came upon a number of English " Tommies " playing water-football. We were the cause of a temporary stoppage to a very exciting game, for one and all made for the land on purpose to cheer their hardest ; cigars and cigarettes were flung to them, and a wild scramble in the water was the result.

Under some palms a number of Sudanese, in long, flowing white garments, were engaged in a weird dance. It seemed to consist in a stately circling round and round, accompanied with much play of arms and hands (in fact, the onlooker might have supposed them to be using dire threats to each other), and attended by wild songs and shouting.

Then Port Sudan came slowly into sight. Immediately we were boarded by a set of muscular savages, three-parts naked. Huge cranes creaked and groaned, and with the assistance of the same savages our hold was

made to give up much that, until then, we had been unaware had been underneath us.

The *Berwick Castle* became a veritable pandemonium. Huge holes yawned everywhere; black creatures of indescribable ugliness loomed all around us. In dismay we fled hastily, scrambled into a boat, and were quickly taken ashore. We had a delightful dinner at the Port Sudan Hotel—Mrs. P. and I with a Captain in the Belgian army, on his way to join up in the Congo, and another man who was going some distance into the interior.

How deliciously cool the hotel was! We lay back in long, low chairs sipping our iced drinks, whilst birds in gorgeous plumage flitted in and out, and big Sudanese waiters, enveloped in white garments, moved noiselessly about.

When we returned to the *Berwick Castle* it was night, and the scene was past description. We heard that the unloading would go on all night and probably all next day. The yawning holes were now lit up by powerful lamps; black, perspiring figures, looking more fiendish than ever by lamplight, emerged, struggling and panting. As it seems impossible for an African to do any sort of work without shouting and yelling, the noise added to the creaking of the cranes was deafening. Miss S. met us as we crossed the deck.

“It is going to keep on all night,” she announced sharply. “How anyone is going to get a moment’s sleep is more than I know!”

“It is hardly worth while attempting it, is it?” I returned. “Personally, I think I shall sit up all night, and watch the fun.”

“Fun!” ejaculated Miss S. “Well, some people have queer ideas as to what is funny. Think of something better.”

“Shall we all go on shore and sleep at the hotel?”

“ Yes ! and wake to find the horrid Captain and the boat had gone away and left us ! One can never be sure.”

Evidently the noise was getting on Miss S.'s nerves. I took her arm and drew her to the side of the boat.

“ Don't you call that funny ? ” I said.

About eighty men were waiting to relieve those who were now working. They were careering wildly round in a circle, every now and again turning to face the men immediately behind them, snapping their fingers in their faces, or hunching themselves up, and going through all sorts of contortions, the head stuck forward, the body wriggling and writhing, like gigantic black snakes. Hour after hour it went on, accompanied by yells and shouts. A collie dog travelling with us (destined to die on reaching the Congo) added his voice to the din, in a series of barks, howls, and wails. Poor fellow ! he could not bear the sight of a black face, so he was securely fastened, but his lamentations were truly grievous. The whole scene reminded one of Dante's Inferno.

Aden was the next town at which we stopped. Oh the heat ! oh the smell ! and oh the deformities paraded before us ! We sat down to luncheon. At least twenty “ boys,” who had nothing whatever to do with the establishment, came and watched us eat, keeping up a continual chatter all the time. They assured us they would make “ very good personal ‘ boys ’ ” ; there was hardly anything they did not understand, from cooking to polishing boots, including laundry-work, bed-making, and waiting at table. We declined their offers. It was all no use. All had excellent characters, they assured us, which they had left at Mombasa. If we would take them to Mombasa, they would show us the *baruas*, which were “ very good.” When one seized my handbag to show how useful he could be, it was too much.

He got sharply rapped on his knuckles with my parasol for his pains.

I visited an Arab school, where, however, the boys were being taught English as well. All stood and "salaamed" as I entered. In the first room there were boys from about six to nine, in the second those from about nine to fourteen, and in the third those from about fourteen to sixteen. With the last I spent an hour hearing them read and recite in English, and a very creditable performance it was. The well-known poem "Breathes there a man with soul so dead" was one I remember particularly, as I wondered if the boys really understood what they were reading, or if it were a mere "parrot-like" repetition. I asked permission for two boys chosen by myself to paraphrase the poem, and after waiting a short time two excellently written papers were handed me, which showed a complete knowledge of the meaning of the words and would have done credit to an English schoolroom.

Once more we moved slowly away, to complete the last part of our voyage. We were not the only ones sleeping on deck; by this time more than half the passengers seemed to have availed themselves of the privilege. Rugs and blankets were laid neatly just outside the first-class cabins; some distance off, the Belgian officers, seven in number, had found an anchorage, whilst the other passengers were sprinkled about anywhere their fancy took them. The heat was terrific, but after the second night out from Aden the temperature cooled down, the sky became leaden, and a chilly gale began to blow. The ship, from which by this time the Sudanese had contrived to extract many tons of goods, rolled fearfully. Needless to say, my two companions and myself were again *hors de combat*, but never, never before so badly as now. Mrs. P. and Miss S. retired to the cabin. For myself, I prepared to



NEAR MOMBASA.

stay and face the elements rather than descend! All I needed was ice, ice, and again ice. All canvas was hastily taken down, sea and sky seemed actually to meet as the boat lurched and rolled. One small piece of canvas alone was left over my head as a protection. Occasionally the stewards came and brought me the ever-welcome ice. One passenger, herself confined to her berth, sent me Horlick's malted milk, and upon this alone I subsisted for five days.

On the third day the Captain, a huge figure in oilskins, came to interview me.

"You only think you're bad," he announced. "Why don't you have something to eat? Can't expect to get well if you don't eat."

"Oh dear! I wish thinking were not so realistic," I sighed.

"Well, I cannot allow you to remain here to-night, anyway. There is going to be a storm," was his answer.

As the rain was coming down as if from a hose-pipe, I should have said we were experiencing a storm then, but I am not well up in nautical matters.

It was with an extreme sense of satisfaction that we anchored two days later at Mombasa. How delightful it was to walk ashore and feel we had really seen the last of the sea! Mrs. P. and I were handed over to the care of a resident, who undertook to see our luggage through the Customs. First we must have a trolley ride—the chief means of locomotion in Mombasa—then on to his house for tea. Such a pretty bungalow, with spacious and airy rooms, and cool verandahs on all sides, set in the midst of a lovely garden. Then we must see the Club, overlooking the sea, where we were introduced to the mysteries of "Nile water," a remarkably potent beverage composed, we afterwards heard, of champagne, soda-water, and Chartreuse, with a dash of lemon. Then to do some

hasty shopping, and back to our kind friend's house for a hurried and very appetising dinner; then a quick drive to the station, where all was bustle and excitement, and where a large crowd had congregated. At length we were off on the last stage of our long journey, with many thanks to our host for all the trouble he had taken on our behalf, and many inquiries as to whether he had placed soda-water in our carriage. Yes! he had—soda-water and lemonade—or, at least, had ordered his "boy" to place them there.

CHAPTER II

FIRST AFRICAN DAYS

No water—Beds—Natives—An important letter—Mombasa—Obadiah.

WHAT a pity we had arrived at night, when nothing was to be seen! Well! we could not have it all ways. There were two days in the train, and darkness had to be put up with sometime. So we arranged our belongings to our satisfaction, tested the let-down beds where we were to sleep, and then decided that a wash was of the first importance. I entered the small room set aside for that purpose and struggled vainly with the tap for some minutes. I turned to Mrs. P.

“Will you try if you can make an impression here?” I queried.

“Press it if it won’t turn,” replied Mrs. P., who was having difficulties with the window.

“I have pressed and turned; neither seems much good.”

Mrs. P. also pressed and turned, turned repeatedly, without any result, and finally we came to the conclusion that no water was obtainable, and we felt *so* dirty. Never mind, we would get water at the first station!

When we got to the station, for some minutes not a white man was to be seen, and for the first time we realised our helplessness. We did not know how to ask for it! Some “boys” passed with gourds which we plainly saw contained water. We signed to them—and they came. We explained that we wanted water. They handed the gourds, shouting “One rupee!—one

rupee!" Just then the train began to move, and the next moment they had swung themselves into the adjoining compartment. We poured a little of the water—about two quarts in all—into a cup to test it. Horrors! it was of a warm khaki tint!

"Well, thank goodness we do not need to drink it!" ejaculated Mrs. P.

I suddenly remembered that I had not seen the soda-water, and said so.

"Oh! it must be somewhere," returned Mrs. P., turning over boxes and baskets as she spoke.

"Are you sure you haven't it on your side?" she asked presently. "I have looked everywhere. It must be somewhere. He distinctly said he had put it in the carriage."

"Did he say so? Or did he say the 'boy' said it was in the carriage?" I corrected.

"Well, it is just the same, isn't it?"

"I'm afraid not," I replied.

That was our first initiation into the little ways of "boys," our first trustfulness ruthlessly dispelled!

"I feel dreadfully thirsty." Mrs. P. gazed disconsolately at me.

"Of course you do, when you know there is nothing to drink."

A moment or two of silence.

"I wonder if that water has settled. It really cannot be that colour—a little sediment, I expect." She eyed the water in the cup critically.

I also looked. "Two mosquitoes, at least," I remarked, pointing to two floating bodies.

"Do you really think they are mosquitoes?"

"They are insects, anyway—and the water is still buff-coloured."

She nodded in the affirmative. "I really am awfully thirsty."

"I heard of a man drinking water like that, and getting a dose of malaria straight away. You had far better remain thirsty," I added conclusively. "Why, that water looks hardly fit to wash in." I emptied the contents of the two gourds into the basin as I spoke. The water assumed a brick colour, in which floated animalcules, quite observable to the naked eye.

"There, do you think you could drink that?"

Mrs. P. slowly shook her head, a look of disgust spreading over her face.

Presently the train began to slow down.

"We are coming to a station, I think; perhaps we may be more fortunate this time."

"Two rupees!—two rupees!" from the two black faces thrust in at the window.

"You wait a moment, you black images," I responded, catching sight of half a dozen other black creatures who had come to see what was going on.

"Oh! pay them quickly," urged Mrs. P., looking apprehensively at the window, "or we shall have all Africa here."

Really, it seemed possible, judging from the number already swarming round the carriage.

I was in the act of handing over the two rupees when I caught sight of one of the men who had accompanied us to the hotel at Port Sudan walking leisurely down the platform. At a sign from me he accelerated his pace, and, pushing the "boys" on one side, he demanded, "What is wrong?" I explained, handing him a sample of the water. He took the gourds from me, returned them to the "boys," and told them all to "Clear off," which they were not long in doing.

"But you haven't paid them yet," I expostulated. "They want two rupees," and I held out the money to him.

He waved it away. "Don't you give them a cent

without letting me know," was his comment. "Why, you will be ruined before you get to Nairobi!"

He spoke a few magic words and the soda-water appeared, followed by a "boy," who emptied two pails of clean water into the empty cistern. We were indeed grateful.

Then, as the light was not good enough to read by, had we felt so inclined, we prepared for bed. We let down the shelves provided for the purpose, and essayed to mount. For Mrs. P. it was comparatively easy, but for myself it was another matter. Mrs. P. was very tall, but I boast of few inches, and for several minutes I swung from the suspended ropes, then tried some gymnastics, much to the delight of Mrs. P., who, having ascended in safety, could afford to laugh at the less fortunate. At last I stopped my exertions to take breath.

"Do you know, if I have to mount up here, I don't believe I shall get to bed to-night!" I ejaculated.

"Nonsense! you don't half try," from Mrs. P., and the gymnastics began again.

Just as I was about to give it up, Mrs. P. controlled her laughter for a moment, just long enough to put her feet over the side, catch me on them, and the next moment I was being used as a human football. Then she let herself go and laughed long and loudly and, my exhaustion over, I joined her.

"You looked excruciatingly funny," was all she said, when her hilarity had subsided.

We slept well, in spite of the movement of the train; but trains here must not be compared with trains at home—one could run every bit as fast.

We were awakened quite early, having stopped for breakfast; then on again until my destination was reached, Mrs. P. having to go on a few stations farther than I. Stations, I say, but as a matter of fact I

was dumped down with all my belongings beside the line, having been told to ask for Mile 13/448. I had not the faintest idea what it meant. It sounded like an intricate problem in vulgar fractions. The driver of the train, however, seemed to understand the cabalistic figures. So there I was surrounded by grass and trees, but not a house of any description visible and not a human being. The train was two hours late (nothing unusual out here), and my friend with whom I was to stay—let us call her Mrs. Smith—having waited some time, had gone home again.

I sat down on a trunk, and also waited. Presently three black figures appeared. They were not of a prepossessing appearance. A few feathers in their woolly hair, which was smeared with grease, and something I then took to be red ochre. A few beads round their necks and a wisp of dirty cloth completed the costume—if one excepts a circlet of brass wire on the wrist.

They gazed at me and at the trunks alternately. Then, with a series of grunts, they seized the two smallest and proceeded to carry them away. In a moment I was on my feet.

“No, you don’t!” I clutched the trunks in desperation. Was it likely that I was going to allow three unknown savages to walk off with my possessions without a word?

The three underclothed creatures took to their heels, chuckling and chattering, and again I was left in solitary possession.

I told myself I should not be alone much longer. If those “boys” had really been deputed by Mrs. N. to make off with my boxes, she would speedily be here herself.

I went over the events of the journey, not the least of which was the sight of wild creatures running along

beside the train or munching placidly at the long grass : antelope of various kinds who hardly troubled to rise as the train passed ; ostriches who easily outstepped it ; zebra in numbers also, and wild pigs frequently. Once we caught a glimpse of a rhino, who seemed to hesitate as to the safety of charging the train, and who ultimately, thinking discretion the better part of valour, dashed off into the bush.

Next minute I was recalled to myself by a voice by my side. Mrs. Smith had come with four "boys," forming a rear-guard, to whom I handed over my possessions, with the satisfaction of knowing that they really belonged to someone, so all was well.

For five months I remained with her—five idle months whilst I got used to life in Africa and to the weird "boys" with the scantiest of clothing and quaintest of customs.

The birds were a source of pleasure, all day and every day ; their wonderful and often gorgeous plumage, their quaint cries, and, alas ! almost entire lack of song, together with the strange habits some of them affect ; make them objects of intense interest.

I well remember one day seeing a "boy" ruthlessly throw a stick, and a beautiful orange-and-black bird fell lifeless. In my very imperfect "Swahili" I endeavoured to make him understand the wickedness of his action, and as a result, the next day he appeared, and smilingly deposited fourteen little feathered beauties at my feet—all dead of course. In desperation I hurried to Mrs. Smith, and begged her to lecture the "boy" severely, which she did, but explained that the "boy" was under the impression, possibly because I had carried away the poor little victim on the previous day, that a dozen or so would be acceptable. So much for my attempt at Swahili.

The language filled me with positive dismay. About



A WILD DOG.



ZEBRA.

the sixth day of my stay, a "boy" came with a letter for my friend, which caused her to make hurried preparations for a journey to Nairobi. Her sister had been taken suddenly ill. Here was a predicament.

"However shall I get on?" I queried.

"Oh, you will manage all right. Use signs; they will understand. When you want anything to eat, just say 'Chakula.' When you want a 'boy,' say 'Kuja hapa'; and if you want him to go, say 'Kwenda.' That is all you will need until I come back."

"I am sure I hope so," I replied pessimistically.

The next day was Sunday. I was placidly doing my hair at an open window, drinking in the lovely air, and revelling in the glorious scenery, when I had an awful fright. A semi-naked savage, with his hair drawn into a pigtail, and enclosed in a few yards of what looked like horribly dirty bandaging, pushed his head and shoulders through the open window, and thrust a long cleft stick containing a letter into my face.

I took a step or two backwards, and shouted, "Kuja hapa," "Chakula," and "Kwenda" all in a breath. The "boy" looked mystified, but still held out the stick. His eyes wandered round the room, and finally rested on my person. Hastily I threw a towel round my shoulders, and at the same time shouted, "Sh-h-h! Oh! will you go?"

Still the dreadful creature's eyes travelled over my person, from my hair to my shoes, from my shoes to my hair. Finding him obdurate, I advanced towards the stick, which he held out, and gingerly took the note from the cleft. It was addressed to my friend's husband, who had left home the day before I arrived, and whom I had never met. Well, I had full instructions to open all letters and act as I thought best. Judge my surprise on reading the following:

“ DEAR SMITH,—

“ Herewith ‘ gombe,’ please note if it is in good condition. I told that d—— ‘ boy’ to drive it carefully, but it was a matter of close on three miles, and she is a very heavy milker, as you will see. No, I won’t sell her—she is too valuable—but will just lend her to you for three months, until your own are in milk again, as I know you need it for the ‘ toto.’ Just give an eye to her yourself. Don’t let those d—— ‘ boys’ have much to do with her, for they just take hell out of cattle.

“ Yours,

“ D. S.”

Now, what was a “ gombe ” ? A cow, I presumed, from the remainder of the letter ; and if so, I must go and see her at once. Once more saying “ Sh-h-h ! ” to the “ boy ” and waving my arms, which he apparently understood, for he vanished, I completed my toilet and hurried out. There stood the “ gombe,” which I now knew meant cow, and a very fine specimen she was. I know something about cows, and quietly examined the animal, coming to the conclusion that she had been carefully driven and was in first-rate condition, so I sent a note to that effect—just, “ Cow arrived safely, in splendid condition,” and attached my initials, and dismissed the “ boy ” with the note.

Now, what was to be done with the cow ? Why had she come ? We had gallons of milk, so I felt puzzled. Evidently the “ boys ” were puzzled too ; but as my knowledge of Swahili was limited to “ Kuja hapa,” “ Chakula,” and “ Kwenda,” and I was far from certain to what they applied, conversation on the subject was impossible. By saying “ Boma,” which I knew applied to a cattle enclosure, the cow was safely housed, and almost every half-hour found me at the boma, seeing that every attention was given our valuable visitor.

For three days her advent still remained a mystery. A "toto" followed her wherever she went, like an ayah after an infant; meanwhile I anxiously awaited my friend's return. On the third day the "boy" who had brought this valuable cow once more appeared, bearing another letter, again inserted in a cleft stick, and I thought information was required as to the cow's health. However, I was quickly undeceived. The letter ran as follows:

"What the blazes are you keeping my cow for? Can't you read? Haven't you any common sense? Didn't you see that the letter was addressed to Mr. D. Smith and not F. Come over here and I'll teach you the difference between D. and F. You know you've got no 'toto.' If any damage accrues to that cow, through disease or over-driving, I shall see you jolly well pay.
"D. S."

To say I was amazed faintly describes it. I sat down, boiling with indignation, and penned the following:

"SIR,—

"What on earth possessed you to send your cow here? We do not want it. Yes, I have plenty of common sense, which was what prompted me to keep the cow instead of sending it on a few miles farther. No, I did not see that the letter was addressed to Mr. D. Smith. I defy any living soul to say what the initial is, certainly none between A and Z, so it is useless for me to avail myself of your kind offer of tuition. On the contrary, if you came here, there are one or two things I might be able to teach you, viz. that an unknown lady is always addressed as Madam, and I might be able to instil into you some slight knowledge of calligraphy.

"There is no disease on Mr. F. Smith's farm, and as

to driving—you should procure the services of a reliable man, not a cross between a savage and a monkey”—and I signed my name.

Two days later my friend returned, and I related the incident, much to her amusement; but it was not until the arrival of her husband that explanations were made. It seemed that his brother, who lived about three miles off in another direction, was badly needing a constant supply of milk for a three-months-old baby, so the cow had been sent. The sender, subsequently hearing that the cow had been delivered to us in mistake, and knowing my friend's husband to be away, had written this peppery note to his manager (who, it happened, was in hospital at the time), little dreaming it would fall into the hands of a lady. Needless to say, apologies were made and accepted, and we were none the worse friends for the little "war of words."

The weather by this time was glorious. My friend and I had most enjoyable rides in the early morning, before the mist had cleared away, coming home with clothes that presented the appearance of having been in a downpour, so heavy were the mists before seven o'clock. However, we never suffered in any way from these soakings, although had either of us had any tendency to rheumatism, I suppose it would quickly have made itself felt.

One morning we surprised a hyena, who at once made off, with a "dik-dik" in his mouth. Probably he had had an unfortunate night and found nothing, and had come on this in the early morning; anyway he was not parting. We rode hard after him, but at last he disappeared with his find into the bush.

Altogether it was a most enjoyable time, if a quiet, uneventful one, in which I became gradually acquainted with the natives and their vocabulary, and

the hundred-and-one queer customs and mannerisms which now became part of my daily life. One institution only I felt I never should be able to tolerate, and as I felt then, so, after nine years, I feel now. The unexpected entrance of a "boy" into my bedroom, bearing the early-morning tea, was repugnant to me from the first; indeed, on the first occasion, when I became fully awake to the fact that a "boy" was standing beside the bed, having no words to hurl at the offender, I hurled a boot instead, and never since then has one entered my room until I was fully prepared for his advent. Having once established an understanding on this point, I was prepared to take everything as I found it, although at that time I had not the faintest idea of the many happenings which were to befall me.

October saw me in Nairobi, about which town it is needless to speak. A brief stay here, and then a lengthier stay at Mombasa; the old town, as at my first visit, had a strange fascination for me, only Mrs. P. was absent this time. There had been rain at Mombasa, and everything was looking delightfully fresh. The flamboyant was a blaze of colour, hibiscus and bougainvillea everywhere, whilst the waxy petals of the frangipani strewed the ground and filled the air with their heavy scent.

Of course, the great thing at Mombasa is the bathing, although the facilities for enjoying it are not great; and on one occasion at least, having clambered down the rocks and on to a tiny strip of sand on which to unrobe, the problem arose what to do with my clothes? A cactus bush conveniently near seemed the only thing that offered, and on this I deposited them. I was accompanied by a friend who had brought out her little Pomeranian dog. How delighted he was! How he splashed in and out of the water, enjoying it as much as we did, until suddenly he gave an ominous growl

which caused us to look up. There, standing on the rocks immediately overlooking our bathing-spot, was a party of young fellows, each carrying a towel, and evidently bent on bathing like ourselves. There was no other way of approaching the sea save by clambering down the rocks as we had done, and after remaining a few minutes longer in the water, we reluctantly prepared to leave and make way for the new-comers.

Hastily we emerged and prepared to dress, the young men watching us enviously. I crept stealthily towards my cactus bush to retrieve my garments, but a thousand prickles held them fast. The wind had flung them hither and thither over several of the spiny plants. In vain I pulled, in vain I tried to disengage first one article and then another, conscious of five pairs of eyes on me all the time. A last despairing wrench, and one article of apparel was in my hand, not in its original condition, but almost in shreds.

How I ever got into it still remains a mystery! To their credit, be it said, the young men turned their backs and became interested in some heavenly phenomena unseen by ourselves, and we were able to make our way up the rocks again, hoping we were unrecognised.

There were several violent thunderstorms during our stay. Suddenly the sky would become overcast, and before one had time to seek shelter, there was a deluge. In less than three minutes one would be drenched, as was a native whom I one day watched from the verandah of my hotel. Being caught in one of these impromptu soakings, when the roadway, after five minutes of this tropical downpour, had assumed the appearance of a swiftly running stream, he slowly and solemnly divested himself of his one and only garment, a very dirty loin-cloth, immersed it in the water, gave himself a dubious although much-needed wash in the brown water, wrung out the cloth, and replaced it, no doubt feeling the

truth of the proverb that "Cleanliness is next to godliness."

How hot the nights were! One lay without any covering, unless a mosquito-net can be called one, and even then sleep seemed impossible. My friend Mrs. D. and I were the only ladies in the hotel at the time. One evening, just as we were sitting down to dinner, the manager informed me that a visitor who had come down for the benefit of his health seemed worse than usual. I went to inquire if there was anything I could do for him; he thanked me and said, "No." Scarcely had I left the room when his "boy" came shouting after me. The unfortunate man had broken a blood-vessel. Hastily we sent for a doctor, who, when he came, could only inform me that the patient would not last through the night. They were short-handed at the hospital, no nurse could be spared, but he would send ice. All through that dreadful night I remained by the bedside. The heat was terrific, the mosquitoes, owing to the continuous hæmorrhage, came in millions, my muslin blouse being but scant protection against their bites. At five o'clock the poor man died, and I, utterly worn out with the events of the night, went to bed.

When I woke some hours later my head seemed splitting. My friend advised a bathe in the sea, and together we set off; but even bathing failed to relieve me, and, feeling wretched, to bed I went once more.

On my second awakening I felt an indescribable feeling that the whole world was trying to escape me. I got up and tried to cross the room, but only succeeded in walking backwards. I had bought a tiny lemur some few weeks before, and he was now fastened to an upright rod that supported the mosquito-curtain. Being strictly a nocturnal animal, his great delight was running across the top of the curtain and catching moths and beetles that settled there while I slept.

Again and again I tried to cross the room, but ineffectually, and at last fell at the foot of the post to which my little lemur (Obadiah) was tied. When, some minutes later, I recovered consciousness, he was busily engaged trying with his little fingers to open my eyelids. Here let me say that lemurs—although many people will tell you to the contrary—can be easily tamed, although perhaps never quite safe for a stranger to handle. My little Obadiah, whom I bought at Mombasa, but who had come from Madagascar, was about two months old when I bought him, and he has shared in my wanderings over a good deal of Africa, and a very interesting little companion he has been.

To resume, I felt unable to rise, and Mrs. D., coming into the room shortly after, found me. A doctor was sent for, and I was quickly placed in a car and conveyed to the hospital, at that time full of officers, for it was war-time. For several days I hovered between life and death, Mr. and Mrs. D. coming daily to see me, and it was not until a week later that I recognised them. How weak I felt, as I lay and watched the ocean, so gloriously blue, from the wide-open door of my bedroom! Butterflies flew in and out, gorgeously beautiful. To my confused brain they seemed part of the general scheme—butterflies, white room, white pebbly beach, blue sea and bluer sky, even white nurses.

At last there came a day when I was able to totter to the waiting carriage and make my way back to the hotel, there to lie for another week, whilst strength returned.

How delighted Obadiah was to see me again! He was now fastened to the chair near my couch, but frequently jumped on to me as I lay, and tried, by every means in his power, to entice me to play with him. He would seize my handkerchief and hide behind it to induce me

to take it from him. A piece of paper was always a source of delight. He would tear it in tiny pieces, and scatter them broadcast, and then change his methods by placing them in the front of my blouse. My handkerchief, freshly sprinkled with eau-de-Cologne, afforded him great pleasure, whilst my lack of energy appeared to puzzle him greatly.

At the end of a week I felt able to travel, although still weak, and as Naivasha had been recommended for its bracing climate, Obadiah and I found ourselves at last comfortably settled in the train with the prospects of remaining in it for a day and a half.

For him, his travels had just begun.

CHAPTER III

NAIVASHA

Naivasha—Leopard—Car in bog—Jabini—Medicine-man—South African wagon—Christmas dinner—Naivasha forest—Baboons.

AT Voi, friends, to whom I had wired beforehand, met me, with a dainty dinner specially prepared, but it failed to tempt me. One of them kindly accompanied me the remainder of the journey.

At last Naivasha was reached. How cold it was, after Mombasa! How keen the wind felt! I have experienced warmer nights during spring in England. Captain and Mrs. F. met me, and with them, for the next few months, I was to make my home. It was too dark to see anything of my surroundings, and I was not at all averse to retiring early. A day and a half in a train is very fatiguing, even if you are sitting still. With the morning, delight awaited me—the still waters of the beautiful lake stretched in front of the hotel with hills on either side, the great Rift Valley between, stretching right away into distant Abyssinia. It was really a wonderful panorama and hard to realise that we were in Africa, it so reminded me of Westmorland.

As the fever had left me so very weak, Captain and Mrs. F. suggested that a three weeks' stay at their other residence at the foot of the Aberdares would possibly benefit me, so later on in the day we started, and a most enjoyable time I spent with their daughters, just doing nothing all day except getting strong. It would have

been almost impossible not to do so in such a bracing atmosphere.

It was a very bright and a very cold morning when we made our start for Jabini by motor-car, Captain F., myself, and a "boy" seated behind holding two loaded guns, in addition to which I had given him strict injunctions to take particular care of Obadiah, who was fast asleep in his cage. Slowly we climbed, higher and higher, always on the look-out for wild animals, although, on this journey at least, we were not able to see any; but as we crossed the plateau the bones of numerous zebra and, in one case, the half-eaten carcass of a kongoni spoke only too plainly of what had happened the previous night. Captain F. told me that some little time before a rhinoceros had all but succeeded in killing his daughter, who, with a little dog in her arms, was taking a walk with her husband on the plateau. All but fainting with fright and fatigue, she at last dropped the little dog, which at once commenced barking and running around the great beast, and so drew its attention to itself and gave her husband the opportunity he was seeking of placing a well-directed shot which finished its career.

The plateau was the only straight run we had. It was all uphill for many miles, until we came to a bog about eight miles from Jabini. Here Captain F. had given orders for a team of oxen to be in readiness to pull us through, and sixteen fine animals stood waiting. Down we sank into the mud, the wheels still slowly revolving, the engine throbbing laboriously, but not the slightest headway did we make. The oxen were yoked to the car. How they struggled and pulled! The "boys" shouted and cracked their whips, the slimy mud reaching well above their knees, all to no purpose. It seemed that we were doomed to stay there. It was now about twelve o'clock and intensely hot. We had made our start

soon after six o'clock, and the jolting over huge stones in our upward journey, almost throwing us into each other's laps at times, had tired us beyond words. The "boy" seated behind had fared no better, and the muzzles of his guns rested sometimes in my ear, sometimes in the back of Captain F.'s neck as he swayed hither and thither, and our oft-reiterated "Boy, angalia bunduki" ("Boy, take care of your gun") met with but scant attention. The knowledge that these same guns were loaded hardly added to our comfort; as for poor Obadiah, his cage had been tossed from side to side of the car, and he must have imagined himself on another voyage and wondered where he was destined to land this time.

However, for the time we were stationary, with a tropical sun beating down on us and not a vestige of shade, but I can hardly say it was a change for the better. Again the "boys" renewed their efforts, again the poor oxen pulled frantically, and at last we felt a slight movement of the car and, after about half an hour of frenzied shouting and much whip-cracking, we emerged with a twisted steering gear and minus the bonnet, which was somewhere in the affectionate embrace of the mud. Still, we were out of it, and that was the main point, the poor oxen being just as glad as ourselves, I am quite sure. Once more the bumping began, but we were nearing our destination and it would soon be over. The vegetation had quite changed, trees giant in height, festooned with long, pendent wreaths of what looked like Iceland moss, but in which I was told the seed-vessels reposed, now formed the greater part.

Then we came to a bridge over a rushing torrent. "Bridge" I call it, for want of a better name. "I hope you are not frightened," my companion remarked. "Not the least bit," I replied. It was useless to cause anxiety, certainly it would not help matters; and

Africa is a fatalistic country, and I think before long one becomes imbued with her fatalism, so I was prepared, having come, to accept whatever was in store for me. Nevertheless, that bridge did not inspire confidence. Originally made of wood, which may have been of the stoutest kind, it now presented the appearance of a disused corner in a builder's yard, where one would expect to find stray planks tossed indiscriminately. Handrail there was little or none. Involuntarily I closed my eyes as the loose planks jumped and the frail structure vibrated as we rushed across, catching but a fleeting glance of the green water swirling rapidly past. When we had safely negotiated the crossing, it was comparatively easy going, but, none the less, we were more than grateful when, at three o'clock, Jabini and home came in sight.

Then ensued days of *dolce far niente*, only to be fully appreciated by one recovering, as I was, from the weakening malaria that, sooner or later, attacks almost everyone who visits Africa.

The early mornings were bitterly cold and it rained almost incessantly during my stay. Huge fires were the order of the day, and even then a warm coat indoors was by no means to be despised.

On the few fine days I experienced, excursions were made into the surrounding forest, and beautiful as a child's dream of fairyland it proved to be. Firs, cypresses, and bamboo trees, for the most part enormously tall and wonderfully beautiful, towered heavenward in intense silence and solitude, broken now and then by the chattering of monkeys as they swung from bough to bough, apparently little disturbed by our presence. A waterfall added not a little to the charms. Mosses and lichens abounded. It seemed such a pity that there were so few days when we could venture to enjoy all this loveliness.

One day we came suddenly upon a medicine-man. Walking unsuspectingly along, our dog suddenly began barking, and before I could recover myself I was stumbling over an object on the ground. It proved to be a very ancient specimen of the genus *homo*, unclothed save for a wisp of cloth, with sparse white matted hair, and, strange to say, a beard of inordinate length, if twelve to twenty hairs of about fourteen inches in length could be called a beard. He was crouching over a small fire of sticks, blowing feebly at several small strands of grass and cotton material attached to the aforesaid beard, which appeared to be drawn towards the fire with each successive puff. Now and again he varied the performance by stirring something in a calabash. Apparently he believed in himself, if no one else did, for, although we stood for quite ten minutes watching this strange performance, he never deigned so much as to glance in our direction. It was not until I had walked round so as to face him that I discovered he had only one eye and about the most repulsive features it has ever been my lot to behold. Even my presence did not seem to rouse his curiosity, for he kept up a persistent blow until the several strands of his beard danced again.

Ten minutes was sufficient time to watch the antics of this weird object, and it was with a shudder of disgust that we left him. Judge of our surprise when, next day, standing about ten yards from the house in the pouring rain, holding out a native basket, was this same object. Evidently the one eye was of more service than I had thought, or its owner of a more inquiring turn of mind than I had given him credit, for not a living creature but he and the monkeys had been present when I had stumbled over him, so either he must have seen me when gazing intently at the fire or, failing this, have inter-locuted his tribesmen as to who I was and where I

came from. Hastily seizing the remains of a loaf, I tossed it to him with a few cents, at the same time urging him to depart, and that quickly.

A leopard visited the sheep during my stay, killning two and placing the remains in the fork of a tree. A trap was set, and on the first night unmistakable proofs in the shape of nearly half a paw told us that he had again favoured us with his presence. Whether he had worried his foot to free himself, or whether his mate had bitten it for him, we were unable to say; but the fact remained that two more sheep were killed, and the leopard had again escaped, leaving part of his paw in the trap as a memento of his visit.

The next night great care was taken over the setting of the trap, and we did not retire as usual, but sat awaiting events. About two o'clock in the morning our patience was rewarded. Hurrying to the trap, we were in time to see a fine leopard struggling and snarling, but a shot from one of our party quickly gave it its quietus, and on examination it proved to be our friend of the previous night, one of the fore-paws being badly mutilated.

At this altitude, 8,000 feet, flowers, such as sweet peas, carnations, roses, and chrysanthemums, grew and flourished as well as in England, and, in the case of sweet peas, I think even better, the size of each bloom and the number of heads on each stalk exceeding anything I have seen in the Old Country.

All too quickly the three weeks at Jabini came to an end, and with much regret I said good-bye to Captain and Mrs. F. and their lovely garden, with the lofty Aberdare Mountains, which I felt I might never see again.

We travelled back to Naivasha in typical African style, packed into a big wagon, with a span of sixteen

oxen, and a bumpy, jolty journey it was. At one point I remember coming to a most dangerous corner; there was just sufficient space for the great lumbering wagon on the roadway, which had a sheer drop of over one hundred feet. It seemed impossible that the sixteen oxen could turn that corner without an accident, slipping and sliding as they were, for, to add to their difficulty, it was all downhill. How the "boys" shouted and screamed! how they tugged at the leading oxen! and how, wedged against a wall of rock on the one side, they endeavoured to crack their whips, and eventually ended by prodding the oxen with the handles, this, of course, making the poor beasts swerve to one side, and I, making sure we were as good as gone, unfastened the door of Obadiah's cage, and shut my eyes, not daring to face the fate I felt certain was in store for us! A second or two later, feeling we were going at an even accelerated pace, I opened them, to find we were comparatively safe, and the road widening, and it was with a feeling of thankfulness that the remainder of the journey was safely negotiated and Naivasha reached.

Very tired and rather sore, I retired to rest, to awake next morning feeling none the worse for my somewhat thrilling experience. The sun shone brilliantly and invited a walk to the lake on which thousands of wild ducks congregated. Hippos, also, were plentiful, but these I did not see until later.

Numbers of Somali live at Naivasha, and they impressed me as being a haughty, swaggering crowd, as they promenaded the streets, fingering their beads, quarrels and free fights being not uncommon.

I shall always remember Naivasha, because there I spent Christmas Day of 1916, and the Christmas dinner was a splendid affair, wonderfully served. There were about twelve of us, and we sat down at 7.30. Everyone was in the best of spirits, which was just as

well, or the dinner might have been somewhat of a trial. The soup was excellent—really I forget the name given to it; then mutton cutlets, also good, were served, at which we wondered, since the menu led us to expect salmon mayonnaise. However, no one made any comment. This was followed by oyster patties, for which we searched the menu in vain. Close on its heels came wild duck, likewise not catalogued, and we began to wonder further. In quick succession followed guinea-fowl, mince pies, roast beef, tipsy-cake; and then, brought in by the cook, who, I grieve to say, was in a state bordering on collapse (not on account of his arduous exertions, but from the quantity or quality of potation he had indulged in), a huge Christmas pudding well alight, and falling in little spluttering masses from a dish held at an angle of 45 degrees. Holding the dish well away from him, the cook beamed on us all and endeavoured to wish us all a Happy Christmas, until dish, cook, and pudding—what there was left—sank in a heap on the floor. Several of our party scrambled to retrieve our pudding, others to assist the cook; and the arrival of the manageress and expulsion of the cook in a summary manner brought the episode to an exquisitely funny end. Yet hardly the end, for the manageress, having deposited the cook in a place where his thirst would remain unalleviated, returned, and with many apologies asked if the dinner had been eatable. We reassured her, told her it had been excellent, and served in a style quite modern and novel, but which in time we had no doubt would become general, as it had much to recommend it. Then we learned that another dish yet remained, with which we should have been regaled—sucking pig! Two or three of the more boisterous members of the party demanded that pig, and nothing would satisfy them until it appeared; and full justice they did to it, judging by the appearance

of the remains that were taken away. Altogether it was the funniest, if not the jolliest, Christmas dinner I have ever sat down to.

Boxing Day we were all busy, getting hampers ready for a picnic in the forest, and very enjoyable it was. Such quantities of lovely ferns, many rare flowers, and most exhausting climbs from which wonderful views could be obtained, until, luncheon disposed of, most of the party pleaded fatigue, and begged to be excused from further exertions for an hour or so. However, one other restless spirit and myself wandered off to explore alone, and were well repaid. For a long time we sat watching the antics and gambols of numerous families of baboons. Sharp, angry barks heralded their approach, and, all at once, from behind a dense thicket of leafage the ungainly crowd appeared, led by a huge, shaggy individual; they were of all sizes, both sexes, walking on all-fours, stopping every now and again to gaze around suspiciously with sharp, penetrating glances. We took cover behind a huge rock and watched the proceedings, our heads only appearing above the top. Happily we were unseen (for what method of warfare we should have adopted, had our presence been revealed, I know not), and so were able to observe their movements in real or fancied security, for angry baboons are hardly the animals one would choose to meet at close quarters. Angry they most certainly would have been at this intrusion on their privacy, for this was evidently their pet playground, a lovely stretch of grass surrounded on one side by rock and on the other three by dense thicket. Many of the females clutched babies, or rather the babies clutched them. As nearly as I could tell, there must have been between seventy and eighty, but accurate counting was impossible, owing to the constant movement amongst them.

For fully an hour we watched them, not daring to

move, not more than fifty yards separating us, and we without a weapon of any kind. Then they shambled off, to our great relief, and we continued our exploration, inwardly wondering what our next encounter would be. Fortunately, although we came on many pig and hyena holes, we did not see their occupants, which was just as well, as already we were beginning to feel somewhat weary and running would have been out of the question.

Indeed, we had to take a rest under a densely foliated tree, the sun here in the tropics at this time of the year being almost frizzling. I think we must both have fallen asleep, certainly our watches said so. Our wills were good, but our bumps of location were hopelessly at fault, if indeed we possessed them. We tried endless paths, fancying we recognised this or that, all to no purpose, and finally had to force a way through the wood, as the sun was rapidly sinking and neither of us fancied a night in the forest. My companion presented rather a Rip Van Winkle-ish appearance when we at last emerged, and my face and arms looked as if I had encountered a wild cat at least; but these details sank into insignificance when we realised that deep silence reigned everywhere and no reply came to our repeated shouts. On we trudged, at last coming to the rocks up which we had travelled in the morning to reach the forest. Vainly we searched for the cutting up which we had come, only adding to our scratches and tears, and at last in desperation slid down the face of the rock (and by no means a smooth face either), to find a search-party with guns and lanterns starting from our hotel in order to find us.

"A most disreputable pair," was everyone's comment, and we fully indorsed it when, an hour later, we stood before our respective looking-glasses; but what do a couple of torn frocks matter here in Africa, or a few

cuts and scratches, weighed in the balance against keen enjoyment and intense freedom after long years in which one has been "cribbed, cabined, and confined"?

The next morning some of our party strolled down to the lake, where wild duck is plentiful, and came back to report that not only had they got wild duck, but had almost stumbled upon two hippopotami.

Our small party was now to break up, each going a different way, my future way perhaps being the most adventurous of them all, for was I not bound for the land of the Masai and was not a long-felt wish about to be gratified?

CHAPTER IV

TO MASAILAND

Kijabe, the start—Alfresco meals—My first shot—Lions—Obadiah in the river—Wagon broken—Orobids—An African Noah's Ark—Nights alone with Nature—Hector and the lion—Our mule goes—Revenge—Pythons—Dragonflies, monkeys, wildebeeste—Snake—Wild pig—First sight of Masai—My mule praised (?)

A FEW days later I joined A. at Kijabe, from which place we were to start for "home." It was a cold morning, and thick mist enveloped the hills, as we stepped from our tent to view the preparations for our journey.

About fifty bullocks stood quietly munching the short grass, three wagons were being loaded to their utmost capacity. A buckboard car was drawn on one side, waiting to receive us, the four mules to draw it being tethered a short distance away. "Boys" ran here and there, shouting as they ran, almost every "boy" seemingly being named "Jerogi" or "Kamau." The Lumbwa drivers were busy arranging the yokes, skeys, and ox-chains, placing them in long rows ready to receive the bullocks; dogs were everywhere. Three kittens and Obadiah slept on in the tent, oblivious to everything else. Two spare mules were harnessed ready in case of emergency. These we were to ride if any accident befell the buckboard—a contingency by no means to be overlooked. A couple of sharp little "totos" held the bridles, and were to lead them until required.

At last all was ready for the bullocks to be yoked

in. The tent was struck, and everyone's attention was turned to the animals; bustle and confusion reigned everywhere. The quietly munching animals suddenly seemed to become possessed. With tails erect and heads down, they rushed hither and thither, intent only on escaping the yoke. They all appeared in the pink of condition, showing what a week or two of rest and feeding had done for them. The last refractory beast was caught and yoked, the last drop of oil applied to the wagon wheels, and our journey began, the Lumbwa drivers giving full play to their lungs in their ear-piercing shrieks to the bullocks. It is a weird, prolonged yell, and must be heard to be fully appreciated.

Lumbwa natives make far and away the best drivers, and a whip that reaches the full length of the eight pairs of oxen is manipulated with wonderful dexterity. In the hands of a really good Lumbwa driver this whip seldom touches the animals, but twists in snake-like contortions over the heads and along the sides of the bullocks. Each bullock has its name, and the driver relies to a great extent on his persuasive (let me say, for want of a better word) language quite as much as upon the whip. Thus one will hear, "Meru! have you not breakfasted enough?" "Sotik! are your legs sticks, that you cannot move them?" Both of which interrogations are generally accompanied by the ever-green English "damn." Then one or two oxen are always favourites and never do you see the whip applied to them. If you inquire why, you are told, "Oh! very good bullock!"

For the first three hours all went well: the animals pulled well, the "boys" sang merrily, the sun was not overbearingly hot. For myself, I was feeling satisfied with myself and with everybody; I had really made a start for the country of the great Masai.

Then the ground began to get sticky, later on boggy, and finally a small river, or so it seemed, presented itself. There had been quantities of rain, but we had hardly expected to find the ground in this condition. We scrambled down and mounted our mules, but the going soon became very difficult. The mules sank in the bog and could hardly extricate their feet. Finally, mine stood still and refused to move. I tried coaxing (waste of time on a mule); A. tried whipping; the boys tried a mixture of whipping and bad language: nothing had the smallest effect. Then a big Kavirondo, naked save for a loin-cloth, waded in, lifted me from the mule's back, and carried me safely across, my mule following behind with an air of extreme satisfaction. Once again I mounted, and all went well until we rested for luncheon.

For the first time I experienced the joy of preparing a meal in the open away from everyone, answerable to no one, nothing to do but live for the moment and enjoy it to the full. Quickly fires were started all round, kettles were soon boiling, and tinned sardines, tongue, peaches, and pears were disposed of, Obadiah walking up to have his share of the latter. A. took quite a fancy to him and at once dubbed him our mascot, while some of the smaller "totos" ran about collecting grasshoppers, these being esteemed a great delicacy by Obadiah.

Meanwhile, the oxen had been unyoked and were having a good feed. A. managed to take several snapshots, all of which were, unfortunately, lost in the Masai rising.

Luncheon finished, an hour's rest, then on again until evening, when we camped in a truly beautiful spot and preparations were made for dinner. Once again it was a busy scene; darkness was fast coming on. We had done only sixteen miles—little enough, you will think;

but sixteen miles without a breakdown on the first day of one's "safari," with heavily laden wagons, is not so bad. Black figures ran about everywhere, tents were hastily put up—one to be used as a temporary bathroom, two sleeping-tents, and a hastily arranged canvas, more for protection against wind than rain, under which we had dinner. Soon fires were lighted and pots of every sort, kind, and description placed over them. A. having shot a buck, a few were greatly excited in the anticipation of something more than porridge made of mealie meal. One buck, however, goes but a very little way. This time the Lumbwa drivers, who had had a very trying day, were the favoured ones.

A little way off "boys" were collecting thorn bush to make a "boma" for the cattle, and fires on three sides, kept up at intervals, were considered sufficient. At present we had not to reckon with lions. Obadiah was fastened to a tree, in the branches of which he deftly caught moths and beetles; the kittens were taken from their basket, much to their joy; the dogs all excitement to follow us on our rounds and see all safe for the night. After a two hours' feed, the oxen lay down peacefully in the "boma"; mules and donkeys were tethered near-by; the only sounds were occasional snatches of song from the "boys," which gradually ceased as the singers fell asleep one by one; then, dinner finished, a last walk round. Oh! the joy of it all, the softness in the air, the deep silence, the shadows cast by the flickering fires, the knowledge that the worries of everyday life had been thrown aside for a time, the anticipation of unknown pleasures to come, all filled me with unspeakable delight, and I was almost sorry when a voice at my side said, "Maji tayari, Mem-sahib," or "The water is ready," meaning my bath awaited me. Then a long, dreamless night,



ORYX.



GRANT'S GAZELLE.

the precursor of many such, to wake, feeling ready for any emergency, and it was well that I did.

"You must take some shooting-lessons when we next stop," A. remarked, and I assented, somewhat dubiously.

At first my targets were trees, and when I showed myself sufficiently proficient, A. suggested moving animals.

"But I shoot quite well," I returned; "I don't think there is any real need."

"Shooting marks on a tree is one thing, shooting moving objects quite another," was A.'s response.

How I hoped there would be no moving objects! The mere thought of wounding a deer was most distasteful to me.

Then one morning the place seemed alive with deer of every description, chief among them being "Tommy," Grant's gazelle, and kongoni.

"Now is your chance," said A.

"Yes, but I am going to see about breakfast first," was my reply.

"Never mind breakfast, bring your gun. Breakfast can wait."

Oh! how unwillingly I went for that gun! Never was task so distasteful.

"Now," said A., as I brought my gun to my shoulder, "select your animal. Take no notice of any other. Are you right?"

"Yes," I faltered; "but I think I smell the bacon burning."

"Don't see how you can; I happen to know it is ham." A. regarded me superciliously. "I don't believe you've the pluck of a rabbit," he observed tauntingly. "What would you do if you met a lion or a leopard?"

"Why, shoot, of course. That would be different," I retorted.

"I rather think it would," he remarked dryly. "Come, pull yourself together. Don't be a 'toto,'" he urged. "Now, are you ready?"

Then I fired. The next instant a poor little "Tommy" struggled on the ground. A. also fired, and a "Grantie" fell to his gun. Like a flash they were off, leaving the "Tommy" and "Grantie" behind.

"Call the dogs off! Don't let them touch it! It is not dead; no one is to kill it! Wait until I come!" I ran hard all the time I gave vent to these disjointed sentences, and I arrived breathless as the "Tommy" tried to rise.

"Will it die?" I asked.

"Well, didn't you want it to?" queried A.

"No, of course I did not. Look! it is only its leg; it will get over that," and I handed the struggling creature to a "boy." "That was not the one I selected," I say penitently.

"Well, I'm blowed," was A.'s terse remark.

When we arrived at the tent, I bandaged the leg, afterwards placing the "Tommy" in the wagon. In a fortnight it was healed, and the leg as good as ever, save for a slight limp.

So ended my first and last attempt at shooting deer. Lions and leopards, as I told A., were quite another matter; with them I had no scruples—which was just as well.

About a fortnight after we had commenced our "safari," I was fast asleep when a terrific noise suddenly awoke me. At first I thought the bullocks must have got out of the "boma" (for one had to be constructed every night, wherever we stopped) and were indulging in a free fight; then, as another blood-curdling roar sounded in the stillness, A.'s words came back to me vividly:

"It is more than likely you will hear, or perhaps see, lions to-night." I had hastily jumped out of bed, but on this second and unmistakable roar hopped in again with marvellous celerity.

"Are you awake? Hope you are not frightened," from the other tent, and I heard A. moving about.

"Not at all. Isn't it wonderful?"

I had come on this "safari" knowing well that I should probably, nay certainly, see and hear lions—had looked forward to it, dreamed of it, and was not going to acknowledge myself beaten because a lion had roared. As quickly as possible I dressed and seized my gun, but as roar succeeded roar, I knew perfectly well that it was as useless as a pipe-stem: how could one shoot, shaking as if one had the palsy?

A. meanwhile was calling to the "boys." Soon fires were replenished and flames shot up everywhere, and extra lamps were hung round the thorn "boma," where the bullocks were bellowing, the donkeys and mules straining at their ropes, and the dogs making a perfect pandemonium. Lantern in hand we walked round our camp, assuring ourselves that all was well, and gradually the roars became more indistinct. As we once more prepared to find our beds, A. took a glance at me, and remarked:

"You will get plenty of this kind of thing, but really I would not get up. Of course, there is a certain amount of danger, but it is of no good getting up to meet it, is it? Shall I tell the 'boys' to make some coffee, or would you like a glass of whisky?"

Then I knew my face must have betrayed my feelings.

"Please let us understand each other," I said. "I have come on this 'safari' anticipating everything, and I am not going to remain in bed or behind it at any time if I can render the smallest assistance."

This was my introduction to lions, and although it

was some time before their roar ceased to unnerve me, like everything else, familiarity, if it did not breed contempt, at least conduced to a feeling of indifference. Every night for the remainder of our "safari" the something happened, save when the moon shone brightly. On moonlight nights we were not troubled, and could sleep on uninterruptedly; but the slightest sound was sufficient to wake me now, and seldom a night passed, without something breaking my repose. I think that which terrified me most, and perhaps with less cause than anything, was porcupines.

One night I awoke with a start to hear a most extraordinary noise on the sides of my tent. It sounded as if somebody were running their fingers up and down Venetian blinds, or a boy running a stick over garden palings. I sat up in bed feeling horrified. What fearful and wonderful beast could this be? Again it came, rattle, rattle, rattle. I went over the list of beasts I had been told I might expect to see. It fitted none. Now the dogs were barking, and rushing round my tent. Thank goodness!

"Anything wrong?" A shout from A.'s tent. I explained, while getting my clothes on. Once again A. was first. I stumbled after him, gun in hand, guided by the dogs. A shot rang out, and there lay the disturber of my peace—a full-grown porcupine. In the morning I had a box of quills with which I intended doing great things, and which eventually went the way of much else.

The going now became more difficult. We just crawled along, huge boulders had to be negotiated, and at last a river crossed. Such a river! Not particularly deep, perhaps eight feet at most, but swirling rapidly; a big slippery slope to descend, another to ascend. This would try the resources of the Lumbwa "boys," and test what metal they were made of. The loads were re-

adjusted and "boys" sent to find the best and shallowest place to make the crossing. At last a place was decided upon, bush and small trees were cut away, and the descent began. The bullocks stumbled and slipped; I fully expected to see a leg broken. The "boys," one and all, yelled at the tops of their voices; the whips cracked, now and again coming into contact with some recalcitrant beast; the loads swayed continuously. All at once there was a jerk, and Obadiah's cage lurched over and was seen no more.

"Save Obadiah!" I screamed—woman-like, you will say.

"What is that?" demanded A.

"Obadiah is in the water," I replied.

A dozen "boys" were busy searching; A. slipped his coat off and joined them. "One rupee for the 'boy' who finds him—two rupees—three rupees—four rupees—five rupees"—and Obadiah was fished up covered with mud, just as I had given him up. Quickly we pulled off the thick canvas covering, to find Obadiah unharmed, save for a few great lumps of mud, while he blinked at us with inquiring eyes, evidently wanting to know what all the fuss was about. Never again, I decided, should he be carried on a wagon; he must travel with me on the buckboard!

Again we turned our attention to the struggling bullocks. Half were now in the water, the remainder struggling for foothold on the bank, Rabsah, the Lumbwa driver, a smile on his face, plied his whip vigorously. Once a "boy" went down, as the bullocks tugged and strained. The young Lumbwa leader, holding the two foremost bullocks, sat and stood alternately, every now and again being swirled off his feet by the rushing waters. Rabsah led them a few yards downstream, then a few yards upstream, then faced the opposite side once more; hands seized the wheels, Rabsah

applied the whip, all yelled their loudest, the bullocks one and all floundered in the water for a moment, then, stumbling and slipping, the ascent on the other side was made, Rabsah still smiling, here, there, and everywhere. His whip, never still, sometimes writhing like a snake in mid-air, gave a cluck of satisfaction as the first wagon came to a standstill, and he, unwearyingly, turned to help up the second. What a marvel that "boy" was! Never once did I see him lose his good temper, no matter how trying or difficult the conditions.

Now it was my turn. The mules and donkeys had been led across. A big Kavirondo stood out, clutched me without ceremony, and the next moment was wading through water, breast high, with me in his arms. I gasped, then held my breath, for the swirls of the water seemed to reach me, held just above them though I was. The Kavirondo had no means of steadying himself, and the loose boulders, plainly visible before, were now completely hidden in the thick yellow flood, churned up by the struggling bullocks. With a chuckle of satisfaction he dumped me on the opposite bank, and I was helped safely to the top.

On again until a truly delightful spot was reached, but, alas! another river. Rabsah seemed everywhere, giving orders, shouting to oxen, tightening chains, fixing loads, in all of which A. helped and worked like a Spartan. I can see that river, or rather stream, now. A. said it had not existed before the rains came, and I can quite believe it. It is simply marvellous how fresh water-courses are made during the rains. One sets out on a "safari," is away perhaps three months, and returns, to find rushing torrents where dry land previously existed. Here, as before, the earth had become detached and great boulders lay in mid-stream! There seemed no gentle slope anywhere. It seemed impossible that wagons could negotiate it. Up and down the "boys"

ran, all to no purpose; there was nothing for it but to make an attempt. Picks and shovels came into play, sides were made less steep, and at last a gentle incline was achieved.

The width of the stream had to be taken into consideration. Could it take the body of the wagon? Yes! and about three feet to spare. It was decided to risk it. I glanced at the boulders, and then at the still sufficiently steep banks, and turned my back. How I pitied those poor bullocks! There were the usual yelling and cracking of whips—Rabsah with his perpetual smile, dancing like one possessed—a rumbling sound as the wagon slowly moved forward—then a bump and a crash. The wagon had snapped somewhere.

Hastily the bullocks were unyoked and allowed to graze, and nearly everyone descended into the stream to find out the extent of the damage. "It will take two hours to put right," A. at last announced.

As it was nearly twelve o'clock, and we were in one of the loveliest spots possible to conceive, I called three "boys," told them to light a fire and help to prepare luncheon. It was as if we had camped in a huge basin of grass, as green as an English meadow, the sides sloping very gradually upwards, and, save for the cart-track down which we had come, forest on either side. The wild flowers were wonderful in their profusion; one especially stood out in masses, quite twelve feet high, *Romnya coulteri*. I had treasured a small plant of it at home, which certainly reached two feet and then died. Here they grew in thousands, with blossoms quite six inches across, a deep yellow with a lovely velvety chocolate throat.

I could not help being struck with the growth of the trees. They ran quite straight for about eight feet, then suddenly curved out horizontally for about another eight feet, then straight again. Really it looked as if

Providence had especially designed them as resting-places for the numerous leopards that swarmed around, and how difficult they would be to discern in such leafy shelters! Later I learned that, for all its beauty, its wonderful charm of restfulness and peace, its wealth of flowers, and—here in Africa, perhaps greater than all—its cool, sparkling stream, this spot was one of the worst possible to conceive at night, being given over to the ravages of lions and leopards; indeed, we never sent a “safari” out but toll was taken of “gombes” (bullocks), and not infrequently dogs paid the penalty also. Looking back, I can safely say that never have I enjoyed an alfresco meal as I did that one, in spite of the broken wagon.

The pleasure of fetching water from the stream, amid all the wealth of flowers, not omitting orchids, can hardly be described. Many times I stopped, kettle in hand, as a new bloom caught my eye, many times the “boys” came to rescue those same kettles.

Time simply flew, as none but a keen horticulturist or botanist will perhaps understand. The “boys” detected signs of insanity. Why should any sane person perch in the fork of a tree, with a tiny pink-and-white flower in her hand, oblivious to all else? Why should she willingly scratch her face and hands and toil up crags in order to become possessed of an *Eremurus* root? And why should she go into raptures over clumps of *Amaryllis belladonna* growing near the stream, and immediately commence grubbing them up, regardless of hands, frock, and everything? Inconceivable! They were no good to eat; still, if her madness took that turn, it was harmless, so they would lend a hand. Quickly they were on the spot with “jembes,” and digging commenced, but they were astonished at the depth they had to go. Still, a few cents each and they were amply repaid.

" Ah ! you will find heaps of those quite near home." And so I did, and had two borders of them, each a quarter of a mile in length, leading to my own garden.

At last the wagon was repaired. Once again we made a start. I scrambled across boulders, after the donkeys and mules, when the last wagon was safely over, but not before much levelling of banks and cutting of trees, to give them a foothold, had been accomplished.

For the rest of the journey our guns were never out of our hands. Kongoni, wildebeeste, Thompson's gazelle, Grant's gazelle, wild pig, and occasionally zebra were shot for food for the " boys." In fact they had meat in plenty at every meal. It was all anticipation and realisation, almost in the same moment.

One morning A. woke with a slight touch of fever. I advised a day's complete rest, and indeed we all needed it. We had camped overnight in a rather pretty spot, which, though not to be compared with the other, was still quite pleasant.

Towards evening A. heard some guinea-fowl, and, feeling better, decided to try to procure some. I thought I would remain in camp ; there was some mending to do, and shooting birds did not appeal to me. He had gone about an hour when I heard a singular noise. At first it sounded like nothing I was acquainted with ; then I decided it must be bull-frogs in the water at the foot of the hill. One always camps near a stream, if only a muddy one, and the noise sounded exactly like the booming of frogs. Then it got louder and still louder, and I decided that no earthly frog could make a noise anything like it. I laid down my work and called a " boy."

" What is that noise ? " I asked.

" Wildebeeste," he replied.

I was sitting about thirty yards from the hillside, and

all at once, turning the corner, a huge head and shaggy mane appeared, very like a yak in appearance, for it was a big bull. It was quickly followed by another, and another, until something like three hundred must have passed; they gazed at me, snorted, stood still, and finally went round the hill to the stream at the bottom. I got up and went to the edge of the bush, where I had heard shots being fired, and called A.; but getting no response, I went back to my chair. Almost immediately a long procession of Grant's gazelle, Thompson's gazelle, and kongoni, followed by zebra and eland, then wild pig and tiny dik-dik, passed slowly to the drinking-place, barely pausing to notice me. It was just like Noah's Ark on a magnified scale. Readers will think I am exaggerating, and I know it sounds like it; but ask anyone who has visited British East Africa, and they will tell you such sights can still be seen by the wanderer in uninhabited parts. It certainly was a wonderful sight. There must have been thousands in all. Probably they had never seen a human being before, so knew no fear. A. said he had often seen something like it, and was not at all as excited as I had expected he would be.

One afternoon, while walking beside the wagons for a change, gun in hand, of course, we came upon a lion and lioness devouring a bullock. It could not have been later than 4.30, although we both forgot to look at our watches at the time. The mules and donkeys immediately became restless, and it looked as if they would stampede; the bullocks rushed heedlessly on, forgetting the loads behind them. What a babble there was all in a minute! I seized my mule and hung on, but the creature was frantic, and it was well that the "boy" came to my assistance, or it would have been too much for the "toto" and me to manage. By the time we had got the maddened animals



HYENA IN A TRAP.



KONGONI.

in hand, the lion and lioness had slunk off, leaving their meal for some more auspicious occasion.

We walked warily after this, for every mile took us farther from civilisation.

Another lovely stream ; but A. was taking no risks, and at once set the " boys " to work with " jembes " levelling the banks, while I explored.

There were lots of natural arbours, enormous cacti, lovely ferns, and flowers everywhere, to say nothing of gems of tiny orchids hanging from the trees.

Again I was carried across. Twice more did this happen, until at last I began to look for my Kavirondo, much as a child looks for its nurse.

" How many more of these streams ? " I asked.

" Only one ; to-morrow we shall be home," A. replied.

I must confess I felt thankful. Still, it had been a wonderful " safari," and I had enjoyed it, in spite of its numerous drawbacks.

Towards evening we came to another stream ; the water was delightfully cold and clear, almost as if iced.

" Do camp ! I can't imagine a more lovely spot," I say enthusiastically ; " it is just perfect."

" Just perfect as far as lions and leopards are concerned," growled A. " However, it is early yet, so the ' boys ' can build a substantial ' boma.' "

It did not take me long to dismount, to gather soap, towels, and all the other accessories together, and wander off to find a quiet spot in which to perform my toilet. What joy to get rid of dust and dirt amid such surroundings ! When I returned, I felt like a new woman.

" It was simply glorious," I said. " You go and try it."

A. eyed me critically as he readjusted a tent rope. " Hope you will be able to say the same of your night's rest ! However, as well here as anywhere, I suppose."

"Don't be such a wet-blanket!" I observed. "Go and try what a wash and brush up will do. I will have tea ready by the time you return."

He followed my advice, and presently I had meat sizzling over a bright fire, potatoes boiling, prunes stewing, and water ready for the tea the moment he should appear.

When the meal was over, how pleasant to sit quietly, with the solace of a cigarette, and watch the sunset fade in shades of crimson, purple, soft blue, and gold! No sound but the ceaseless chatter of the "boys," who had been removed to a distance, and were busily intent on their suppers. The fitful leap and play of their fires, round which they sat or lay in every conceivable attitude, the dim outline of the "gombes" placidly munching, the soft breeze just rustling the leaves, and at last, to turn in, very tired, but quite content with things as they were, and with this wonderful country of Africa and all its possibilities! Dwellers in towns, with your picture-palaces, your dances and dinners, your little social gossipings, you know nothing of the quintessence of joy to be derived from life in the open; but then I suppose you must be to the manner born, or it will not appeal to you. You must have the feeling, deep down in your very being, that you can ask nothing better of Fate than to go on and on, away from the fret and turmoil of life with its petty littlenesses, farther and farther into the great, free, open wild, just yourself and Nature in her many and varying moods.

How I slept in those days! No sooner had my head touched the pillow than the world faded into oblivion. True, my sleep was sometimes rudely broken, as it was to be that night; but that only added to the intense pleasure, gave it an extra fillip, as it were.

I had slept about three hours, when a terrific roar broke rudely in on my slumbers. This time I

was wide awake instantly, the experience of previous nights was not yet forgotten; the impression made was far too lasting. I had no hallucinations as to whether it was "gombes" or not, or, if I had, they were quickly dispelled, for the cry "Simba!—simba!" (lion) rang through our peaceful camp. Strangely, I felt none of the fear and trembling of only a few hours before; instead the wildest excitement seemed to take possession of me.

"That's the style," was A.'s answer to my interrogation. "Where are they?" Even he appeared to realise a change in my demeanour. I was no longer the quaking morsel of humanity of a few nights past.

On occasions such as these one gets an insane feeling of having a grievance against the moon. What right has she to absent herself just when she is wanted? Utterly ridiculous! Lions close handy, which you can hear but cannot see. Of what use a hurricane lamp? One burst of moonlight would be worth a dozen lamps. You almost forget that if there were a moon, there would probably be no lions.

Stampeding "gombes" and another thunderous roar took us quickly to the "boma." Still we could see nothing. The fires were kicked into life, black figures danced weirdly against the flames, dogs rushed madly backwards and forwards, as roar succeeded roar. Evidently our sudden activity made them think they were to be balked of their prey. How maddened the "gombes" were! Would they force their way through the "boma"?

It was hopeless trying to restrain the dogs; their barking alone told us where the brutes were stationed. Then there was a howl of pain, and Hector, a big dog and utterly fearless, crawled in, laid down, and died. That caused every vestige of fear left in me to evaporate; all I longed for was revenge. Revenge certain and sure, on the brute who had robbed us of so faithful an ally.

There was no time for wasting platitudes on the dead ; the living now needed all our attention.

How many of the creatures were there ? Just exactly where were they situated ? Branches well alight were taken from the fire and thrown in the direction from which the roars appeared to come, and three big forms were distinctly seen.

Quickly we decided. The "boma" was between us ; we must go outside and stand by the circle of fire.

"Don't come if you don't feel sure of yourself," counsels A.

But I did ; there was nothing I should like better. Anyhow, I could not remain there in uncertainty.

Then a scream of pain reached our ears from the other side of the "boma."

"One of the horses," said A., hurrying off, and I after him, as quickly as the faint light from the lantern would allow, but all too slowly.

The horses were mad with terror when we arrived on the scene. A mule, led in case of accident, to serve as a mount for either should we need it, had disappeared. Which way to go ? It was hopeless trying to follow in the dense blackness, and by this time the mule was probably dead.

"Remain here by the horses. Fire if you see anything. You will hardly hit, but you may succeed in scaring it," and A. was gone.

Later I heard his shots, which, accustomed though the horses were to shooting, only seemed to intimidate them more. The "boys" had great difficulty in restraining them at all.

Then A. came back, followed by a shouting, laughing crowd, so quickly does the native forget danger when real or fancied security prevails.

"It was impossible to shoot with any degree of accuracy," explained A., "although I think one fellow



A GOOD KILL.

got it. Still, it has scared them for the time being. No ; I hardly think it will be safe to go to bed again. I expect they are still hanging about. In the morning I will try to trace the mule. We are a bit too close to the stream. Still, it might have happened anywhere."

So all the rest of the night we sat, gun in hand, listening to the roars, now faint, now louder, as the beasts circled round and round the "boma," or trailed off in the distance. What a blaze of light there was from the fires ! Surely nothing would approach within measurable distance of them. The "boys" sang and shouted, danced and capered as they threw fresh fuel into the blaze. Once or twice we heard the grunt of a "chui" (leopard), and A. remarked that it was a good job we had no sheep with us.

"Good gracious !" I said, "then we should have our hands full."

The morning broke, with pale amber and saffron lights which soon turned to orange ; then the sun appeared, and all was again activity. How glorious those early-morning sunrises were ! Breakfast finished, A. marshalled the "boys," and we set off to trace the mule. At first this was quite an easy matter. For some distance there was a mark, as of some heavy body drawn over the ground ; then bush and scrub hid the tracks. Still we went on, an occasional broken branch alone denoting the lion's progress. A huge boulder of rock at last confronted us, more bush and scrub pressing close on to it on the farther side.

"Go carefully," warned A. sibilantly. Then glancing at me : "You would have been better at home ; this is no work for a novice."

"Novice, indeed, after last night," was my indignant response.

"Have your gun ready, but do not move." And A., with three "boys," wormed his way through the scrub.

Then a big euphoria almost blocked the way, and I saw A. and the "boys" crawling on hands and knees. Again they rose, then stopped short.

Have they found the mule? I wondered. I was not left long in suspense. One of the "boys" who had accompanied A. suddenly stood beside me. He was a good shot, and no coward at that.

"I am to remain with you, mem-sahib. We have found the mule; perhaps the lion is inside asleep. Oh! the 'Bwana' will be all right; he is just behind another big rock—no, not as big as this one—and the Bwana knows how to shoot," he chuckled softly.

The minutes passed slowly; each one seemed an hour to me. If only I could have seen what was going on, it would not have been so bad, but there I could see nothing.

Then all at once there was a sharp report, instantaneously followed by a hideous roar.

Where was A.? If only I could see! Perhaps I might be able to help, although my shaky hands belied me.

Another shot and yet another, a moment of tense excitement, then shouts from the two "boys." The next instant I also scrambled through the dense undergrowth, to find A. standing beside what remained of our poor mule, the dead lion about twenty paces away.

"My first bullet fetched him out; he was too gorged to show much fight," remarked A. "Yes, he is a big one."

So, leaving the "boys" to do the skinning, we returned to camp, I to sit down and mend a jagged rent in my riding breeches caused by my scramble through the thorn, after first doctoring a nasty gash across my hand from the same cause.

"May as well have luncheon before we start; it will be close on eleven o'clock before the 'boys' have finished with the lion," said A.—which exactly fitted in with my

wishes. It was such a lovely spot ; I was just longing to explore.

" Well, don't go far away," admonished A. " No, I am going to sit still and smoke. Your botanical rambling would only bore me, seeing I hardly know a rose from a radish. Take a dog with you, and don't forget your gun."

" Not likely ; I have had too many lessons to neglect that"—although I devoutly hoped I might not need it.

I followed the stream down its many convolutions, and came on huge clumps of lovely *Amaryllis belladonna*. What great bulbs they had made ! It would be almost impossible to get them out, and yet my potential garden—how its beauty would be enhanced if only I could obtain a few ! Calling the " boy " who had carried my gun, with pointed sticks we set to work clearing away the earth. Oh ! what work it was, and every minute it got hotter ! Our progress was slow indeed. We sat back and wiped our streaming faces, the " boy " evidently wondering how much farther he would have to dig.

" Do you want them for lunch ? " he queried.

" Want them for lunch ? " I repeated. " They are not to eat."

" Then why all this work ? What good are they ? "

He eyed me critically as he spoke, evidently wondering what he had been working so hard for all this time, and I, unable to explain, could only sign to him to go on digging. Not that either of us appeared to have made much impression ; surely the ground had been undisturbed for centuries. Then, as if by magic, our sticks dropped from our hands, as a yell of pain, followed by others in quick succession, broke on our ears.

The " boy " was the first to find his feet, and I quickly followed. We made our way into the dense vegetation bordering one side of the stream, and there judge my horror, for Nero, who had come with me, was fast held

in the coils of a gigantic python. To seize the gun held out to me, and fire, was the work of a moment, but the coils never relaxed. Again and again I fired, getting close to the reptile in my excitement; and at last, just as A. reached me and I was frantically hitting out with the butt end, I had the satisfaction of seeing the creature's muscles become flaccid, and a minute or two later poor old Nero, very sore from his experience, was liberated, although it was some minutes more before he could limp back to camp.

"Now, I think you have done enough wandering for one morning," grumbled A. "Just sit down quietly, if you can, and discuss your luncheon."

"Yes, but those lovely amaryllis," I ventured.

"Amaryllis be—— Well, I'll send some 'boys' with 'pangas,' and tell them to get up two or three," was A.'s response.

"Two or three," I expostulated. "There are hundreds. I want twenty at least."

"With roots as long as my arm," retorted A. "We've no time to start a horticultural college. Three only."

With three I had to be content, and they took long enough to get up, even with "pangas."

By this time the lion's skin was ready, and once again a start was made. We rode for about an hour, when we suddenly came into the midst of countless dragonflies, that hit against our faces, settled on our dress or our horses with placid impartiality, whilst a low droning buzz and a rapid whirr of wings were distinctly audible. For fully ten minutes we rode our hardest, before we found ourselves free from these winged pests, who, if they do no harm, are decidedly objectionable, and seemed to question our right to encroach on their solitude. Truly they had chosen a sylvan retreat and one well worth guarding.

Later we came to a plain strewn with rocky boulders as if by some giant hand. Acacias, then in bloom, spread



MASAI WOMEN DANCING.



PYTHON.



BLACK-MANED LION.



A WILDEBEESTE.

leafy arms, their white blossoms giving out a delicious perfume. From behind each boulder, as if touched by a magic wand, numberless deer rose, and one caught sight of hurrying forms in every direction. A. succeeded in bringing down two, to the "boys'" great contentment, but not without a sigh from myself, that death had overtaken such beautiful creatures in the full enjoyment of life. Hastily they were placed in the wagon; there was much time otherwise expended this morning to be made up, and there could be no more stopping until camp was reached that evening.

Farther on, the chattering and screaming of monkeys made the dogs dart into the forest, to emerge a few minutes later in hot pursuit of a leopard, who bounded with feline grace out into the open; then, catching sight of us, doubled back with marvellous celerity, still holding on to the poor little creature she held in her mouth. Now we knew what all the commotion was about. Given a sufficiency of monkeys, a leopard seldom troubles about anything else.

The dogs, however, were not to be deterred. Having lost the leopard, they turned their attention to the monkeys, and for several minutes there was a regular pandemonium of screaming, chattering, and barking, until at last one dog came out with its head badly mauled and had to be doctored on the spot.

It is astonishing the amount of punishment an animal so inferior in size can inflict on quite big dogs—the gashes they make must be seen to be believed. Yet I think my sympathies were always with the monkeys; the careless ease with which they swung from tree to tree, the happy freedom, and evident enjoyment of life always made me feel I must say, "Serve you right," even while doctoring the dog who had become the victim, instead of the prey he had been chasing.

That evening we camped right out in the open in order

to prevent a recurrence of the previous night's adventure, and as a consequence had a really undisturbed night, except for the ubiquitous hyena. I think I can safely say that not a solitary night in Masailand went by undisturbed by these repulsive creatures. But I was getting used to them now; they had ceased to fill me with shuddering apprehension as at first.

Morning broke gloriously and we rode on until we came on a herd of wildebeeste. Two big bulls stood out as sentries, some distance from the herd. They caught sight of us, tossed their heads, stared, and commenced pawing the ground. Then, heads down and tails erect, they careered off, only to return and take another good look at us. Truly their antics were most grotesque, yet they can be intensely savage when at close quarters. At the same time they are amusing to watch at a safe distance. They are such big, ungainly beasts, and when, as then, annoyed at the sight of strangers or anything they do not understand, they rush hither and thither, the mass of hair on shoulders, neck, and tail floating in the breeze, apparently without rhyme or reason in their movements, for they frequently cannon into each other in their frantic rushes. At such a time a wildebeeste looks absolutely humorous, and a stranger might well be pardoned if he thought them indulging in a weird kind of romp.

"Keep the wagon slowly moving," said A. "I must get a shot. Now, I suppose your natural antipathy does not include wildebeeste."

"No, I don't think so; anyway I am going to have a try." And I got down, handed the reins to a "boy," and took the gun in my hands.

"I am sure to hit something," I said optimistically; "they are so big and there are so many."

"Well, select your animal; don't try to hit a dozen," admonished A.

He fired just a second or two before I followed suit.

"Good!" he said approvingly as a wildebeeste dropped on one knee. "A little higher next time."

I tried again, not without an inward qualm; then as it showed evident distress, I said, "Finish it quickly; I can't bear to see the animal suffering."

But that wildebeeste seemed possessed of nine lives, and it was quite three minutes before it died—three minutes that to me seemed thirty.

Dogs and "boys" were quickly on the spot, and the skinning began, the tail being handed to me. Meanwhile I went in quest of more wonders in the floral world, and A. followed, gun in hand.

All at once there was a scream from one of the "totos" accompanying us. "Nyoka!" ("Snake!") he cried, and clutched his foot.

Quicker than I can write, A. had seized the boy, amputated the toe and bound it up—indeed so quickly that I hardly knew what had happened, which was just as well. Then, as the child became unconscious, A. sent a "boy" back to the wagon in hot haste for some brandy, which he poured down the invalid's throat. Then two "boys" seized his arms, and he was made to run, willy-nilly, for quite half an hour, then placed in the wagon. The next day he was himself again, but for the limp caused by the amputated toe.

After that my eyes were seldom off the ground, and I went in constant dread of the wretched creatures. Whether on horseback or on foot, one has to be constantly on guard, for it is just as likely to be your horse as yourself; indeed, I am sure I suffered more apprehension on account of snakes than was ever caused me by either lions or leopards. At one time or another I was fated to come across many, and very beautifully coloured some of them were, awaking admiration and aversion at the same moment, and more than one

“boy” owed his life to my quick eye. Twelve months before it would all have been unbelievable. Then it became part and parcel of the day’s happenings.

We came on another big herd of wildebeeste, and the same exciting chase began, the “boys” clamouring for meat as usual. Then a wonderful crowd of zebra, “Tommies,” and “Grants.” The farther we went the greater the number became. Again the “boys” were imperative in their demand for meat, but A., who had already killed a wildebeeste to satisfy their importunity, would hear no more, and the deer, much to my gratification, were allowed to go on their way unmolested, “the boys” casting lingering eyes in their direction.

Then we came on a wild pig, or rather sow, with her litter of nine well-grown youngsters.

“Think I will have a shot,” said A. “Here, get behind this clump of bush.”

“What for?” I asked, as he assisted me to the ground, and a “boy” took my horse. “Surely there is nothing to fear from a pig?”

“No, but this is different bacon from the home-grown article,” A. replied facetiously. “Hurry up, there! Where’s my gun?”

At that moment an old boar suddenly made its appearance, and an ugly enough specimen it was.

“Keep well behind cover,” said A. as he proceeded to stalk the boar, and the sow went grunting into safety.

As soon as the boar divined A.’s intention, it followed her at a brisk trot, but it had reckoned without the dogs. Quick as a flash they were after him, and after a three-minutes’ sprint he turned and faced them, making savage lunges first at one, then at another. One dog seized its hind leg; the next moment it was on its back, and, but for the intervention of another dog, it would have gone hard with it. Poor beast! six dogs worrying it,

snapping here, biting there—no wonder it showed signs of distress, although not until two of the dogs had retired from the fray discomfited. Then A. managed to get a shot in, although how he accomplished it without injuring one of the dogs was a mystery.

“They shall have pork for dinner, as a reward,” said A. when the boar was finally dragged from them. “Pigs are nasty things to tackle,” and he pointed to the two dogs, who both bore wounds as evidence of the part they had taken in the proceedings.

Some of the boys remained behind, to assist in the disjointing and carrying of the meat, while we resumed our ride, the remainder following.

It was a glorious day. A. pointed out several well-remembered spots. Here he had killed a lion; here he had rescued a woman from a hyena; here he had come on a leopard devouring a freshly killed sheep; and here again he had been charged by an old wildebeeste bull. The whole place teemed with incidents. Was my future life to be as full? I inwardly wondered. Time would show; for the present the wonderful panorama stretched before me, the great expanse of grassland, the massive rocks bordering one side, the tender green of the thorn-trees, each and all claimed my attention. Then I caught sight of another limpid stream, winding over a pebbly bottom, in and out among the trees, and I gave vent to a cry of delight. The sunlight and shadows played over the water, making a picture for an artist's brush, which was hardly marred by the sight of four absolutely naked mites bathing, or rather standing knee-deep in the cool waters.

“Masai,” announced A., and I felt that our journey was indeed almost at an end.

Then they caught sight of us, and immediately vanished, only to reappear, their numbers considerably augmented by the addition of many adults of both sexes, and “Targwenya—Targwenya!” was heard on

every side. Clearly A. was well known, and evidently well liked.

Then it was my turn. Who was I? Where did I come from? How long was I going to stay? How many children had I? These were but a few of the questions asked, and replied to more or less truthfully. Then one or two girls were dragged forward, and an old woman sat down almost under our horses' noses, and exhibited a leg which appeared little else but bone, and on which was a big swelling just under the knee. She was told to go on ahead; we should soon be home, and she would receive attention. It was useless; she would not stir until something had been done for her. Then the girls were alternately pushed and dragged forward, and we were invited to turn our attention to their infirmities. One had a cataract in one eye, and the other was so badly inflamed it must have been a difficult matter to see at all. We dismounted owing to their persistency, and I found lotion for the eye, bandages for the other girl, who had a nasty cut on one arm, and liniment for the old woman, and one and all went on their way rejoicing.

"We shall have all the tribe round us to-morrow, rest assured," A. announced.

We mounted once more and resumed our journey, fast nearing to a close. Guinea-fowl rose in a cloud on our left, A. brought down two. "Something for dinner," he observed, "instead of the eternal game. One does get rather tired of it. Don't you think so?"

"Perhaps, but the birds look far and away too pretty to kill; I would far sooner see them flying about."

There was a funny little round dumpling of a child whose father was one of the principal "boys." Never shall I forget that quaint little object. Whenever a meal was prepared, he armed himself with a large piece of bread, and came stolidly towards our table, where A.



MASAI ON THE MOVE.



MASAI WOMEN AND CHILDREN
ON THE MOVE.



MASAI WOMAN.



MASAI "MORANT."

always had a pot of jam in readiness. Seizing the pot, he peered inside, then grunted approval and held the pot and bread out to A., who spread it on liberally. Having disposed of this, he returned and, standing on tip-toes (he could not have been more than two years old), cast his eyes over the table until he saw A.'s cigarette case. This he also seized, and, holding it out, grunted for a cigarette, which, being given to him, he promptly demanded a light, and went off smoking as stolidly as if he had been twenty, instead of two.* It was a quaint little morsel of humanity.

We had camped close to some small Indian "dukas" (shops), and while preparing our food, the proprietors came and sat silently watching our labours. Presently one spoke to A.

"A fine mule that," he said, pointing to the animal.

"Yes," replied A., "not bad."

"Goes well?" continued the Indian.

I thought of the place where it had stood stock-still, and had my own opinion; still, it does not do to disparage your own property, so I said nothing.

"Oh yes, very well," returned A.

"Mem-sahib is very brave," remarked the Indian meditatively.

"All Englishwomen are brave," retorted A.

"But mem-sahib is very brave."

"Why?" queried A.

"She rides that mule."

"Nothing very brave about that, is there?"

Here I must remark that my mule had an unmistakable white splash across one leg, exactly as if a whitewash brush had been applied. To this splash the Indian dramatically pointed.

"That was my mule once. . . . It broke my arm."

Well, Indians out here are not particularly good riders, so I was not greatly upset at the information.

When we resumed our journey and had travelled perhaps seven miles, another Indian stopped us and asked for a box of matches. These having been given him, he made almost the same remarks as the first, only the finish differed slightly. There was still the same dramatic pointing to the offending leg, only this time it was a leg the animal was accused of breaking, and it was the speaker's leg into the bargain.

"Sounds funny!" said A.

"Don't believe it," was my response.

When, however, we reached Garra Narok, a party of Indians came and stood round the animal. I could see their eyes fixed on that whitewashed leg, and began to wonder. Presently one spoke :

"A very fast animal," he observed.

"Pretty good," replied A.

"Always the same, very reliable?" said a second.

"Yes, much about the same—a good animal," was A.'s reply.

"Quiet and good-tempered?" queried a third.

"Quiet enough, yes. Why do you ask?" A.'s tone was testy.

"Only because it was mine once; it threw me and broke my collar-bone!"

"I expect you are wanting to buy a mule cheaply," retorted A.

"Not that one," and the Indian smiled.

"Well, you are not going to ride that brute again," said A. when the Indians had gone; and in spite of my treating the whole thing as a joke, the mule was sold to a Somali shortly after we reached home.

It was evident that the last stage of our journey had been reached, for small parties of Masai appeared at intervals, and seemed delighted to see A., who had been absent some months. How many dirty hands he grabbed I cannot say, nor yet how many times we were

ordered to stop and hold "shauris" (palavers, or affairs). Where had he been? What had he done? What had he seen? Had he brought beads and knives? Had he plenty of sugar?

A bag was opened and I placed some in the hand of every "toto" (child) present. The news spread like wildfire. Talk about the telegraph! . . . it was nothing compared with the speed with which this was conveyed, and soon children of every size and age could be seen running towards us.

Again we stopped, and the sugar distribution began once more. Really I think I caused almost as much diversion as the sugar. Who was I? Why had I come? What was I going to do? How long was I going to stay? These were only a few of the questions asked. Others were far more personal. One I remember was, How many children had I? A. unblushingly told me that he had credited me with nine. It was well that I did not understand the language, or I am afraid I should have refuted this libel.

CHAPTER V

THE DEATH OF TROJAN

Arrival home—My vegetable garden—Forest—Lion attacks bullock—Trojan and Sampson die.

ABOUT midday we arrived at home. Such a funny ramshackle old place, with black Minorca fowls literally everywhere. Plenty to employ me for the next month, I thought—and indeed there was, and for some months after. The rest of the day was spent unpacking, and I saw little of my surroundings for the next three days.

Then A. insisted on my going out, if only to see the "shamba." It did not surround the house as most gardens do, but was about ten minutes' walk distant. I gave a little cry of surprise, it was so delightfully pretty. Imagine about two acres of ground, naturally fenced in by tall trees; a stream running from end to end and losing itself in the forest beyond; hills on every side; grassy slopes leading upwards. It really was as nice a spot as could have been chosen. Everything looked flourishing. We picked heaps of wine-berries, and piles of vegetables lay ready for us to take home. Then A. said I must see the forest. It was only a little farther on.

We followed the stream, and, stooping down, entered at once into a different atmosphere. Anything more delightfully cool it would be impossible to imagine. Outside all sunshine and heat, inside like entering another country. As we pushed aside the creepers and lianas, which formed a veritable network, a vision of beauty

met the eye. Tall conifers and cypresses spreading mighty arms abroad, and numerous other trees, with whose nomenclature I confess I am unacquainted, towered above us, and coyly hanging, half hidden in the branches, were countless orchids.

The sun just filtered through the trees, giving one delightful peeps at things which otherwise must have remained unnoticed.

Ferns, ferns, and again ferns, ten or twelve different varieties, they clustered thickly on both banks of the stream, which wound in and out with many convolutions. A kingfisher, sitting on a gigantic branch of a fallen tree thickly covered with moss, flitted silently past. Heavy winged birds spread their pinions and sailed away at our approach, but beyond that and an occasional croak all was as silent as the grave.

Such a vast silence too—truly we were alone with Nature. In all probability, in fact almost certainly, no human being had ever trespassed here before. On we went, still following the stream, sometimes crossing the fallen giants of the forest, where lianas blocked our progress, every spot revealing new wonders, until it turned sharply off and was lost in dense vegetation. Here one could go no farther; it was as if Nature had shut the door abruptly in our faces and said, "Thus far; no farther."

What secrets had she hidden away in the innermost recesses of this great forest? We sat down to meditate in this cool, sylvan retreat, and to make plans. We would have the forest cleared on either bank of the stream, avoiding all unnecessary cutting away, in order that we could gain access more easily, then picnics *à deux* would be possible.

Twenty minutes and we were there—it would take no more. Instantly we saw possibilities of luxurious siestas when the heat got intense. Then the ferns!

My quaint, many-cornered house should become a veritable Titania's bower; there should be ferns everywhere. How delightful this solitude was! Not the faintest sound, save the murmur of the stream. How grateful this dense shade, after the scorching heat outside!

What was that? Instinctively A. grasped his rifle. I had left mine at home. It had come from the dense forest behind us.

"Get up," A. said quietly, and we began as noiselessly as possible retracing our steps—rather a difficult matter when one had to step over mossy tree-trunks half submerged in water.

"What was it?" I asked, when our "shamba" was almost reached.

"I did not want to frighten you," was A.'s reply. "There is a big herd of buffalo in the forest, though they seldom come so near the 'shamba' in daylight."

Then I knew what the peculiar snorting noise was. It was well for us that not the slightest wind prevailed at the time. Buffalo are ugly customers to meet at any time; lions are certainly preferable. We glanced at our watches. Five-thirty! How time had flown!

"Never come even to the 'shamba' unarmed or alone," said A. "It is most unsafe. Six months ago I thought there would never be a 'shamba.' The buffalo tramped over it every night, then two or three times the 'boys' threw down their 'jembes' and came running to tell me leopards were there. As a matter of fact, I shot five at different times. Now I think the only things that frequent it with any degree of regularity are monkeys and porcupines."

Small wonder I almost held a brief for the monkeys and porcupines; certainly it showed their good taste. Then he went on to tell me the difficulties he had encountered before the "shamba" presented the appearance I now beheld. How a huge bog had to be

drained, how two unfortunate bullocks had sunk down, down into the treacherous swamp, how "boys" had to be rescued with ropes, and what heartbreaking work it had been, but now he felt amply repaid. Never did I see tomatoes grow as they did there, never lettuces with such a girth, while peas . . . well, there, I will say no more ; you will think I am romancing.

Every day we spared an hour for our forest retreat, sometimes longer ; many were the picnics we enjoyed, besides which I got through quite a quantity of needle-work, fancy and otherwise, which was to remind me, so I thought, of this delightful fairyland in years to come. Alas ! where is it now ?

One morning we were all peacefully employed in our several avocations when, all at once, there were cries of "Simba ! simba !" (lion). Immediately every "boy" dived into his hut, produced a long spear, and disappeared as if by magic. A. came running into the house. "My gun—quick !" he said.

"Where is the 'simba' ?" I gasped.

"Gombe 'boys'" (bullock or cow "boys") "have just run in to say it is among the bullocks. Coming ? Perhaps better not," and A. disappeared also.

From a busy camp of perhaps forty people it was suddenly reduced to one, and that one I. Even the dogs had gone ; only one remained at my feet, an old dog, bearing many scars honourably won in battle with these same beasts. He followed me everywhere. Like the rest, he was a cross between a Great Dane and an Airedale.

"Shall we go, old chap ?" I interrogated.

Instantly he was on the alert, so I also took my gun and followed in the wake of the shouting throng. By now they were some distance ahead. I scrambled across the stream, crawled on hands and knees up the slope, dragging my gun carefully after me. Nothing to be seen,

not a sound to be heard, save the voices in the distance. I was just wishing I had been a little quicker and joined the rest, when suddenly Trojan bristled and stood still. Then the sound of a terrible struggle reached my ears. I was on the edge of a deep depression, it might almost be called a natural pit. Thickly overgrown with creepers, a massive tree had fallen over the mouth, still in full leaf, as one so often sees out here. I crawled a little way and peered between the branches. There, in its death-struggles, was our biggest and best bullock, an animal that had done yeoman service, and on its back, its teeth fastened into the poor creature's hide, was an enormous lion—a great black-maned brute. It was only about ten feet below me, and I was hidden by the branches. So intent was it on its kill, it never turned, until Trojan, with an angry snarl, began making his way down the almost perpendicular sides. Now or never!

Boiling with rage at the loss of my favourite bullock, gentle as a kitten in spite of its great size, half choked with excitement and trembling with fear, I raised my gun. As the beast with an angry growl and gleaming fangs turned on poor Trojan, I fired right into its extended jaws—once, twice; then the gun slipped from my hand and I remember no more until A., alarmed at shots, came back to find that I had fainted.

“Your first kill,” he said, “and a big one at that. Are you not proud?”

My first thought was for the poor bullock, lying dead below.

“Oh! the brute—the brute!” I said. “Poor old Samson! he will never come for sugar again!” and I glanced at the big black muzzle and sleek hide I should never caress again.

But what was that I saw? Surely not! Yes, at that moment, as the “boys” dragged the carcass of the big

lion to one side, underneath lay poor old Trojan. The game old dog had gone to fight his last fight single-handed, and the lion in his death-leap had overpowered him. We buried him where he fell.

“ Poor old dog, you came of a gallant stock, and left many a gallant son behind you, some of whom met your fate ! ”

How I hated lions from that day! Previously I had felt somewhat apathetic, dreading them, and knowing sooner or later I should encounter them. Now they had given me cause to hate the whole brood. Possibly that, possibly the knowledge that my first attempt at lion shooting had been a success—though never again should I have such a wonderful chance—still, from that day I lost much of my nervousness, and they became beasts to be exterminated at any cost.

CHAPTER VI

MASAI DAYS AND WAYS

Stupid or cunning—Juliet—Hailstorm—Manibura and the pudding—Masai women's n'goma (dance)—Masai dress—Diseases—Child with head burnt—Eye trouble—Want of gratitude—Masai bargainers—Looking-glasses—Privacy—Dress of the Morani—Distorting the ear.

A "BOY" presented himself one day and asked for work—he was a squat, ugly specimen, and I was not impressed. However, as the ordinary rank and file came and went, and there were always odd jobs to be done, I told him he might stay. He asked for a blanket; I told him I would see what he could do first. He said he could work on the "shamba," so to the "shamba" I sent him, first asking his name. To my surprise he replied, "Majingo." Now Majingo means "stupid." I said it after him to be sure. I had not made a mistake. Again he reiterated, "Majingo," and with that I had to be content. He stayed about two months, and whenever I paid a visit to the "shamba," I found Majingo busy eating little raw tomatoes, peas, onions, or wine-berries. I can honestly say I never saw him work.

One day, when all the "shamba boys" but he had been sent to cut grass for thatching, I walked down to the "shamba," accompanied only by two or three deer and a dog or two. Majingo lay stretched out underneath a hedge.

"Hard at work, Majingo?" I said.

For reply, he brandished a "jembe" in my face, and shouted, "Give me rupees—give me rupees."

A. was away at the time, as Majingo well knew.

"How much work have you done?" I answered to gain time.

"Give me rupees," he answered, capering round me. He appeared to be insane, and I, being utterly alone, knew I must try to pacify him.

"Well, Majingo," I said, "you know I have no money here; let us go and get some from the house."

"Come then!—come!" He still flourished the "jembe" uncomfortably near my face, but I tried to appear unconcerned, and called the dogs who had followed me. He snatched at my hand, and, still the "jembe" uplifted, alternately casting one eye on the dogs and one on me, we walked to the house.

"How many rupees is it, Majingo?" I asked.

"Thelathini—thelathini" (thirty), he replied.

"Oh yes," I said. "Come along."

To say the other "boys" looked astonished to see me coming, my hand held firmly by Majingo, who strutted along beside me, furtively gazing about him, the "jembe" still uplifted, hardly expresses it.

"Blanketi!—blanketi!" he shouted.

"Oh yes—a blanket certainly."

"Sign—sign," he said, using the Masai term for beads.

"Yes, and 'sign,'" I affirmed.

By this time the "boys," thinking there was something wrong, had gathered round us. Majingo laughed and flourished the "jembe," shouting, "Rupia thelathini! Blanketi! Sign!"

Just then Rabsah joined us. A look from me was sufficient. Quick as lightning he flung himself on Majingo, and the next moment there was a struggling mass of "boys" on the ground, and a mad howl from Majingo, who was at last overpowered, bound, and conveyed to Garra Narok—not the least unpleasant of my experiences, I can assure you.

What glorious rides we had in the cool of the evening! A. bought me a pony, accustomed to the gun, and quite a pet she became, occasionally walking into the house to find me, when she fancied a piece of cake or sugar, and I really believe enjoying her evening scamper as much as I. Such an intelligent little creature she was. Frequently, after long rides, it would be quite dark before we returned, having had a wounded wildebeeste to follow up, or perhaps an eland or an elusive "Tommy," and our return was always in the dark. There was nothing for it but to trust to Juliet, and although I often went cold with apprehension, as her feet slipped on a loose boulder in mid-stream, or failed in their grip up the slippery banks, never once did she really stumble, and never was she at fault as to the right way, however far we went. Sometimes her intelligence seemed almost human. Nothing turned her but the scent of those dreaded lions. Then Juliet went off helter-skelter, and I, unable to hold her in, went with her. Poor little Juliet! I wonder if she had the gift of second sight! It seemed almost like it.

On one occasion we were caught in a hailstorm—a real one, not an apology, strange though it may seem. As usual, we were out after game (there were so many mouths to feed, that every night found us on the same quest). All at once, without warning, down came the hail. I was soaked—"not a dry thread on me" would have been superfluous—I leaked at every corner, and it simply poured out of the tops of my boots. I urged Juliet on, but when the hailstones became the size of filberts, they stung, and Juliet turned round rather than face them. Once, twice, thrice, I turned her round. It was no good. With a funny little snort, denoting displeasure, off she went at a gallop, the darkness gathering fast, A. on his already tired mount trying to overtake us. I should see as much of the Masai as I wanted to-night, I

thought, always supposing I kept my seat, and by gracious permission of his Majesty the lion. We must have covered several miles before A. managed to come up close enough to lay hands on the bridle and pull her up. Oh! how cold I felt on the return journey! A. held the bridle all the way, so there was no more excitement. About two miles from home we met about twenty "boys" who had come with lanterns to find us. It was quite dark by then.

"Wapi nyama?" was their first cry ("Where is the meat?").

"About three miles out, on the plains," A. replied, and with a grunt they went to their huts to prepare a meal of porridge, unadulterated.

How thankful we were to find hot baths, a bright fire, and a hot dinner awaiting us! The meat lying out on the plains did not offer sufficient inducement to the "boys" to-night, especially as they would in all probability have had to contest the ownership with one or more of the feline tribe. Usually a three-mile walk to fetch in their supper was thought nothing of; the "boys" who accompanied us, of course, helping themselves to the tit-bits first.

By this time I had collected quite a number of pets, brought me by the Masai—a young zebra, an eland, a baby cheetah, a young leopard, a lion cub, five cats, three "Tommies," an owl, several rock rabbits, and two baby monkeys, all of which required much attention. The "Tommies" especially were particularly exacting, for although they were out feeding all day, nothing would induce them to come in at night to be shut up. Sometimes we would walk as far as the "shamba," when a quantity of meat had been procured overnight and safely stored on the roof of the house against leopards, and then the "Tommies" would caper along beside us, literally enjoying running races with the dogs, and return

cropping the grass as they came. Then by strategy I would induce them to go into their house, otherwise it became an evening amusement to find and corner them, preparatory to leading them off, for, of course, we never dared leave them out at night.

At this time I had a "house-boy" named Manibura, and for willingness and good temper no other "boy" has anything like approached him—and the "boys" I have had in this country, oh dear! their name is Legion. He was simply a marvel with the animals. That was my only trouble, when we stayed out after dark, that the animals would not be safely "put to bed." Then, on my return, Manibura would meet me, his face all smiles, and say, "Yote kwenda lala, mem-sahib ("All gone to bed"). He would then go into details as to the amount of food each one had had, and proudly point to the cage in which the five cats were shut at night, saying, "Ah, mem-sahib, parka m'bia sana" ("The cats are very bad"), meaning the trouble he had been put to in catching them. Only one at this time he would not venture to interfere with (although later the lion, cheetah, and leopard would be approached by no one but myself)—the owl, a big fellow in a cage as large as a fair-sized room, made of bamboos with a thatched roof. I always fed him myself, but then time was of no consequence. So long as he got his food, any time did, after dark.

I can see Manibura now, a perfectly raw savage, coming into camp naked, save for a triangular piece of skin which flapped before and behind. It was not more than six inches across at the widest part and dwindled away to nothing.

A tall boy about fifteen he looked (but one can never be sure), wet and miserable, for it was raining hard the day he came. Even then he smiled, and his pleasant face appealed to me. Instead of sending him with those



ELAND.

who had accompanied him, to herd "gombes" or work in the "shamba," I decided to take him into the house, and never regretted it. I can still see him struggling into the "kanzu" (long cotton garment) I gave him. He held it with its sleeves up, he held it with its sleeves down, and tried putting his legs into it; finally, as if an inspiration had suddenly come to him, he threw it across his back, tied the sleeves round his neck, and came to me radiant. Willing, patient, merry Manibura, I wonder where you are now?

He asked to be taught cooking, and would follow me into the storeroom and busy himself getting together the ingredients for a cake. A wonderful cake it would have been if I had used them all! Spice, sugar, sultanas, he was sure about, but cayenne-pepper, Worcester sauce, Friar's-balsam and Day & Martin's blacking in a bottle were a few of the many things he placed ready for my use. I never could persuade him that Keating's insect powder and white pepper were unequal in raising qualities to baking powder, or that chocolate powder was not as efficacious as crushed linseed for a poultice. It took time and patience to make anything of a cook of Manibura, and yet in time I accomplished it, in spite of the fact that on one occasion, when we wanted golden syrup placed on the table, he brought it in a soup-plate, and set it down with a smile of satisfaction, while it ran over the table-cloth and down on to the lion's skin underneath. What of that? Manibura had not touched a spoonful: witness the soup-plate quite full to overflowing! On another occasion I made a plum-pudding for dinner, placing it on the fire at 1 o'clock luncheon-time and giving Manibura strict instructions to keep it boiling until I asked for it, intending to have a blanc-mange I had made the previous night for luncheon. Judge of my surprise when, on asking for the pudding, a sticky, half-warm, unthinkable dish was

produced and placed before me triumphantly—my plum-pudding, which had been in the pot exactly half an hour.

On another occasion Manibura came hurriedly into my bedroom, while I was doing my hair. I reprimanded him and told him never to enter my room without knocking. He stood like one bereft of his senses; then it dawned on me that his eyes were fixed on my hair. Never had he seen hair that length! I spoke sharply to him, and he moved towards the door and commenced knocking.

“ Will you go, Manibura ? ” I said crossly.

“ Mem-sahib, I have not forgotten; I am knocking to go out, ” was his reply.

One morning A. informed me that a lot of the Masai women had come to give a “ n’goma ” or dance in my honour. I had seen many Masai by now; they had come in twos and threes, stared hard, giggled, and given utterance to the peculiar “ O’we ” that always accompanies astonishment. Now they had come in full force.

I went out to meet them, and a weird crowd they were, their faces painted white in grotesque pattern (for all were the same). Undressed skins, fastened over one shoulder, leaving the neck bare, fell almost to the feet; their ears through which rings of many descriptions were run, some with beads attached, some without, some with fine brass or copper chains passed through, and hanging down to the breast, with numerous ornaments attached; girdles of beads, worked in really pretty designs, as also strings of beads on their heads; their arms, from elbow to wrist, encircled in brass wire, and the same from elbow to shoulder; their legs cased in the same metal from ankle to knee. These are put on when they are quite young, and as they grow older, and in most cases get much bigger, fearful sores result; but nothing will induce them to take these instruments of torture off.

They came forward tittering and giggling, and all shook hands.

"Targwenya !—targwenya !" they all ejaculated ; and I, previously instructed, replied, "I'ko."

Then I came in for general inspection, my rings, my wrist-watch, my dress, my shoes and stockings. One woman even went so far as to raise my dress, but was promptly told to desist.

There were constant cries of "O'we !" as each article came under notice, and not until every detail had been discussed did the dance begin. Dance, I call it ; really it was a series of posturings and occasional twirlings, with much marching in single file, the head thrust forward, the same action taking place in ring form. One woman constituted herself mistress of ceremonies, and took her stand either in front or in the centre, a switch in her hand, which she did not forget to apply when one displeased her.

The whole was accompanied by singing, in what appeared to be a high falsetto, an almost tuneless dirge. Long before they arrived this long-drawn-out wail preceded them, and continued until the dance was finished. Then they demanded "backsheesh," which took the form of tobacco, sugar, and tiny beads, which they call "sign."

I distributed these to one and all in turn, and never from that day was I free from them. They would bring their children and themselves with every conceivable ailment that flesh is heir to, and sit for hours, laughing, chatting, and eating.

I can safely say, I think, that I never once saw a Masai woman whose jaws were not working on something, either tobacco (they are inveterate chewers), sugar, or the pith of some tree or shrub. Naturally, expectoration follows, and they are not at all particular where. When it was pointed out to one that she had

expectorated on my shoe, she looked surprised that I should take objection to such a proceeding, but wiped it off with the corner of her leather apron.

Oh! the terrible complaints they suffered from. Two hours every day did I spend doing my best to alleviate their sufferings. My store was a regular chemist's shop, iodine, vaseline, iodoform, glycerine, ipecacuanha, lysol, permanganate of potash, bitter aloes, calomel, quinine, and Epsom-salts forming the basis. Needless to say, both time and medicine I gave freely, nor did I ever receive anything but three lambs in exchange, and these were for doctoring three baby boys.

One had been laid close to the embers of a fire and part of its head had been burnt away. Three months' constant attention it took, and the amount of carron oil and bandaging was unthinkable. Every day the nice clean bandages I had placed on the previous day had disappeared, and the child was carried seven miles for my ministrations on its mother's back, its head rubbing continually against her filthy skin covering. Small wonder it was three months before it healed; the marvel to me was that I ever accomplished anything.

That was by no means the only case of head-burning, though perhaps the most serious. To see me bathe the dirt off before applying treatment filled them with horror. I remonstrated about the daily removal of my bandages, pointing out that if they were allowed to remain, the washing would be unnecessary. The next day the child was brought with a filthy piece of rag, taken from a child's leg suffering from a bad abscess, tied on its head. I recognised it as being a piece of fine muslin torn from an old under-garment of my own. Naturally the pieces of bandages I had placed on the child's head were too good to be thrown away, and were doubtless taken off the moment the camp was out of sight.

There may be, there doubtless are, people elsewhere suffering from such terrible complaints as were brought to my notice, but it seems hardly possible. My syringes, large and small, were constantly in action. Almost every other woman suffered from cataract, sometimes in one, sometimes in both eyes, and very many men. Lion and leopard mauls were very frequent both on man and beast; we doctored either indiscriminately, using quantities of perchloride of mercury.

One day a child was brought literally without eyes, nothing but two red, sightless holes. I was requested to put eyes into the poor mite. What could I do? I wrung cloths out of boracic acid and bandaged the child. There was nothing else to do. The men also suffered terribly from syphilitic diseases—small wonder, considering their moral standard.

I cannot attribute to the Masai feelings of gratitude or generosity. They have neither; even the lambs of which I have just spoken were in all probability motherless. In any case, I had to bring them up on the bottle, and very interesting pets they became. Two others were also brought from a like cause, and their value demanded in sugar and tobacco. I brought all up the same way, and it was extremely funny to see these five rushing for the house, or for me, whenever it became time to put the rest in the "boma." Never would they go until I took them personally, each munching a piece of bread.

Anything and everything to be given away the Masai is willing to receive, but gives nothing. In fact, one must keep a sharp eye on them, or small articles will inevitably disappear. The women, especially, are the most atrocious bargainers. I have seen a woman stand for three hours haggling over the price to be paid for a hide. Rs. 3 were offered for a small hide—quite a good price; she stood out for Rs. 3.50, then for Rs. 3 and one rupee worth of sugar; then

she would be satisfied with two handfuls of tobacco ; and finally, after three hours' arguing, took her hide back home, a distance of seven miles, only to return the next day, when the whole business was repeated. One could always get the better of the men—fine specimens of humanity for the most part they were, but terribly addicted to kleptomaniacal tendencies.

They were always willing to make exchanges, and many a lovely monkey-skin kaross have I obtained by this means. Beads, tobacco, knives, sugar, flour, were of course the principal items ; but buttons, of which I had a large and varied assortment, were greatly prized, as also a very large hook and eye, reels of cotton, needles, or anything I had worn and cast aside. I well remember seeing a number of women searching a dust-heap where a pair of my old shoes reposed. Cinderella's slipper never created half the exertion and competition that that pair did ! Nearly every woman present tried them on, without result, and finally a child, presumably nine, shuffled proudly off. Someone had annexed the shoe-laces, and she came to me to beg for more. An old hat gave supreme pleasure, and hours were spent trying it first on one head, and then on another.

Perhaps the greatest pleasure of all was afforded by a huge mirror, hung up for their special benefit, to keep them out of my house, for they never could understand the meaning of privacy. Why should one want to be alone ? Why, when one possessed so many treasures, should one not be pleased to exhibit them ? Clearly it was past their comprehension !

A small Indian cabinet I happened to have, filled with buttons and other odd trinkets, always gave intense pleasure, men and women crowding round to look or touch. When they got very tiresome, I used to give a " boy," the cabinet, and holding him responsible for its

safe return, tell him to take it under a tree and exhibit its contents to the noisy crowd, or as an alternative, hang a small looking-glass on a tree outside. This never failed to please; hour after hour they would stand, posturing, grimacing, dancing, and screaming before the glass. The purchase of a dozen tiny ones sent them into raptures. What would they not exchange in order to become the happy possessor of such a treasure!

One very hot day I threw the doors open in order to get all the air possible. I was standing at a table ironing. Never, even in Masailand, did I ever neglect my personal appearance, in so far as neatness and cleanliness were concerned. How my dresses were so invariably white and creaseless was a source of constant wonder to them. Of course I had to get them up myself. Even the painstaking Manibura failed to grasp the mysteries of clear-starching, although he washed beautifully. To and fro my iron went, I thinking of the cool forest and wishing my table and all appertaining to it could be transported there, when "Targwenya sengigi" burst on my ear. I responded, as expected. "I'ko." They began to make themselves at home, gazing at the numerous skins on the walls and floor, the easy-chairs, the table on which Manibura had just placed tea-cups, the photographs. There were a thousand-and-one objects to interest them, and last, but by no means least, my ironing operations. When one got up and desired to be allowed to try her hand (such a dirty hand too), I showed them all the door and shut it. Alas for my hopes of a cooling breeze!

I had quite a quantity of chocolates—chocolates being my pet weakness—and they were delighted beyond measure with these, although, strangely, the children did not seem to care for them.

Sometimes the men would give a "n'goma," or dance, that was worth seeing, fine fellows all who took

part in it! What leaps they took in the air! Standing perfectly rigid, with hands at their sides, they tried to outdo each other in the length of time this could be kept up and the height attained. There was no stopping for breath or rest, but one continual leap, leap. One would almost have thought india-rubber balls were tied on to their feet. I have counted as many as fifty consecutive springs, and they have still been going strong! When they feel they can do no more, they give a yell and sink on the ground. Sometimes the others stand round, keeping up a low chant, and joining in the yell when fatigue overcomes the leaper. Like the women, they march in single file, now and again turning to face each other. How full of life and agility their movements were, not unlike the stealthy walk of a cat!

Their dress at such times was well worth seeing, and will always remain in my memory. Their heads well greased and covered with a kind of yellow clay called "dongo," their bodies smeared with the same compound—not only smeared, but literally running with grease. Mutton fat is used for this purpose. Then all sorts of patterns are traced with the fingers on the legs and arms, so that a series of black lines run or zigzagged up and down. When finished, they present the appearance of Red Indians, or perhaps a trifle redder in tint than Red Indians. A collar of beads goes round the neck, and hanging from this is suspended a long strip of leather, reaching to the centre of the abdomen. This is always handsomely beaded in really intricate designs and different colours. The legs are adorned just under the knees with hair from the colobus monkey, long, white, and silky. A three-cornered strip of leather sometimes hangs from the waist downwards, a matter of twelve or fourteen inches at the back. The ears are pierced all round the upper portion, and small sticks driven through. The upper part of the arm has



MASAI WATERING CATTLE, TUROKA
GORGE.



MASAI WOMEN CLEANING A HIDE.



TROUGH PREPARED BY MASAI FOR
WATERING CATTLE.



RHINOCEROS AT OLOITOKITOK.

a heavy band of wood, from which two upright prongs ascend to the shoulder. The lobe of the ear is torn and distended to such an extent that one-pound jam-jars might be inserted with ease. In the older men this lobe, much elongated, is thrown up over the upper part to prevent its getting torn in two.

Masailand is no place for a young unmarried woman, for her delicacy would not be respected in the least. Every day they came to either A. or myself—it did not matter which—and begged the loan of a hide. This obtained, the next thing was to purchase “dongo,” place it in the hide, which had been previously spread on the ground, mix it with water, and apply it to every portion of their body. That I might be going or coming did not trouble them in the least; their own women, young and old, sat round and chatted to them—it was an everyday happening.

They were at this time a jolly crowd, well able to appreciate a joke. One almost forgot the extreme treacherousness of their nature. Many and many were the curios they brought me, from arrows to beautiful skin karosses, but of course everything was paid for in money or kind. I was the first white woman to live amongst them, and at the time the only one.

Everything was new and filled them with wonder. A seal-skin coat with deep collar of skunk, which I had almost decided to leave at home, but took at the last moment, filled them with amazement. They stroked it, examined it for seams, and decided it must be one big animal.

Did that animal live in Masailand?

“No.”

Where then? “In Ulia?” (England).

They seem to have no notion of any other country. We were only ten miles from the German border, and of course they knew of the “Dutchies,” as they called

them, but apparently in their minds they were a degraded class of Englishman, much as the Wanderobo are in relation to themselves. They were more astonished still when I told them there were a number of little animals in the coat, and that these same animals lived in the water. All the response I got was, "O'we." They thought I was telling a falsehood, and telling it badly too.

CHAPTER VII

MORE LIONS

Lions again—A night in a tree—Lions amongst Somali cattle—Another night in a tree—Theft of rupees—Snaks "shauri" (affair) to find thief—Kissi objections—Masai give evidence.

ONE day the Masai came over from their "man-yatta" (a collection of huts) about seven miles away, and begged us to go and shoot some lions who were taking toll of their bullocks. The next evening we rode over and took up our quarters in a tree, I being pushed and pulled into position with some difficulty. It was not long before it became dark. The Masai had disappeared, like rabbits to their burrows; nothing was to be heard save the occasional jingle of the cowbells or the bleat of a goat. A young moon looked down for a short while, then disappeared. The last few spirals of smoke went up from the Masai fires, then died away. The Masai themselves were obeying instructions implicitly; no singing, no laughing, to-night.

A fretful wail, soon hushed, from one hut broke the stillness. Tiny quadrupeds, denizens of the forest, came forth, searching around the Masai abodes for offal. Night-hawks gave their rasping cry. I put out my hand and touched A.; it was something to feel him near, although I could not see him. "Feeling creepy?" he asked. "No, hardly that; but I was wondering if pythons were night animals, or rather reptiles?" Incidentally, the memory of a twenty-two-foot python, that A. had shot two days previously, flashed through my mind; and I recalled the walls

of our house, with neat frescoes of this same beast encircling the rooms, brought in by the Masai. Inwardly I compared the two, which was the more fearsome? —lions versus pythons? “I would give anything for a cigarette,” whispered A. as the hours crept on.

He was an inveterate smoker, and to spend wakeful hours without a smoke was simply purgatory, I well knew. Then a happy thought came to me. Had I not emptied a whole tin of chocolates into my pockets prior to our start? Joy untold! Hastily I dived my hand in, brought out a quantity, and handed them up to A., rather smashed, it is true, but still eatable.

What a good thing I had insisted on outside pockets in my dress! How often have I found just the very thing that has saved hours, away in their recesses—string, packing-needles protected by cork, small folding scissors, pocket-knife, small pieces of chain, a few nails, nippers, a small file, and much else. Really A. was not far wrong when he said I reminded him of an old shop that used to stand at the corner of St. Martin’s Court, London, and bore the legend “Anything from a needle to an elephant.”

We sat and munched, while the hours crept slowly by. How cold it became and how cramped I felt! But for the difficulty of getting up again, I really think I should have got down and stretched my legs. I was in a fork, where, as A. said, I just fitted. He certainly had room to turn.

“It must be nearly one o’clock,” said A. “Be on the alert now.” And again came the whispered sigh, “Oh for a smoke!” This, of course, was out of the question.

Another half-hour crept by. I stifled a yawn! All at once the cry of a hyena sounded, then another, then another. Instantly I was awake, for in all probability they were following in the footsteps of the lion,

scavengers for anything he might kill, any remains he might leave.

"Be ready!" A.'s tone was sibilant and tense.

"Ready!" I replied, and strained my eyes through the darkness, but could see nothing. Again came the wail of the hyenas, nearer now. Would it never get light? Here in Africa it is daylight almost instantly, just as there is no twilight, but almost instantaneous darkness.

Our tree was situated just over a weak spot in the cattle "boma," where the lions had entered the previous night, purposely left weak now as an invitation. Straight downward at this gap our guns were pointed; but if the beast came now, it must be but a haphazard shot, for as yet we could see nothing. Nearer came the hyenas, their numbers swelled by now. What an uncanny sound it was in the stillness of the night! A bough cracked in an adjacent tree. Horror! My blood froze. Are we two being stalked by a leopard? Will daylight never come?

"Oh!" I gasped, "did you hear that!"

A long-drawn-out "Sh-h-h!" was my only answer. I looked through the enveloping branches, down towards the gap in the "boma," and, indistinctly it is true, but still discernible, were two shadowy forms. The crackle of the thorn-bush told us they were forcing their way through.

"Quick," from A. Two shots rang out simultaneously, followed by two more, and yet two again, fired right into the struggling mass below.

Instantly the Manyatta was alive; out the Masai swarmed with cries of "Chui—chui!" ("Leopard—leopard!"), as a huge beast leapt from the tree in which I had heard the bough break and disappeared, and, in the next breath, as they crowded to the "boma": "Simba—simba!" ("Lion!—lion!").

It was then daylight, and the breath scarcely out of the bodies of the two dead brutes, who had doubtless accounted for so many Masai oxen.

Almost quicker than I can write it, A. was on the ground.

“Dead?” he queried.

“Dead,” was the reply.

“Oh! are you still up there?”

Of course I was, and likely to remain unless someone assisted me. They helped me out of my cramped position, and when it was sufficiently light, we took photographs of the lions—a male and female. Two more skins to decorate our walls. We waited until they were skinned, the Masai bringing us milk to drink out of a calabash; but as their drinking-vessels are always cleaned with wood smoke, and no other way, these articles had a decidedly smoky flavour, to say nothing of the particles of charcoal which floated on top. A. tasted it, so as not to give offence. I declined. The “Mem-sahib” only drank tea, he explained.

Then we mounted and rode home, Juliet being particularly restive, the smell of the lions not being to her taste. Shouts of excitement greeted us as we arrived in camp, Manibura rushing out, frying-pan in hand, doing an impromptu war-dance. Had not his father been killed by one of these same beasts?

A few days elapsed, and then the Somalis, of whom there were about thirty camped near-by, came running in. Their herdsmen had been out with the “gombes,” and a lion had rushed in and killed a bullock.

When had this happened?

Only a few minutes earlier; it was still eating the bullock. This was at three o'clock in the afternoon.

In less than five minutes we were riding beside the Somalis, our escort numbering about twenty, fierce-looking characters all of them, with gaudy turbans

and multi-coloured shawls. At last we came to a clearing in the forest, lovely grazing grass that would have done credit to an English landscape. There, sure enough, lay the dead bullock, a fine Uganda beast, with enormous horns ; but the lion was nowhere to be seen. Evidently he had not long taken himself off, for Juliet scented him, and nothing would induce her to stand still, so we fastened her to a tree. A. also dismounted, and left two " boys " in charge, while we searched, with the Somalis, on foot. Nothing came of it, however, and A. gave instructions for a " boma " to be built all round the dead bullock. That night we again waited up a tree. This time it was not directly over the animal, the nearest tree being 80 feet away : still, we should stand a good chance, if only it were sufficiently light. The " boma " was made with two entrances, A. giving instructions that the animal was not to be moved or touched, and a good sprinkling of sheep's manure was spread all round the " boma." The Somalis, brave though they undoubtedly are, were not going to meet trouble half-way, and decided to remain at home.

There was a good moon, and although the lion seldom shows himself on moonlight nights, yet an animal already killed, and only waiting to be eaten, was too great a temptation for the gentleman to resist. This time I was fairly comfortable, far less nervous, and the moonlight made everything plainly visible. We had not long to wait. In single file they came, two beauties, with their attendant pack of hyenas. A. fired ; one wounded beast turned and faced us menacingly, eyes flashing, fangs bared, emitting a savage roar. Again A. fired ; the beast crouched and clawed up great pieces of earth. What on earth had happened to my rifle ? Again and again I tried to fire—it was useless.

" What is wrong ? " A. interrogated, again firing, and giving the beast its quietus.

"Heaven only knows ; I don't," I replied.

By this time the other lion, or lioness, had made off, and the hyenas had slunk away.

"Let me have it." A. reached out his hand for my rifle. Holding it up in the moonlight, he was able to discern a small piece of thick sappy liana wedged under the trigger ; evidently it had been torn off in my ascent of the tree.

"A good thing it was lions, and not leopards at close range," was his comment. I thanked a merciful Providence who had decreed that lions should not climb trees !

The next thing was to set guns in the two entrances to the "boma." All had been prepared beforehand, and it only remained to place the guns in position. We scrambled down and got to work, my pockets yielding the necessary string, etc. Then, neatly covering them with thorn-bush, we went home to bed, the "boys" carrying the dead lion slung on poles. Two "boys" were told to be there at daybreak, in order to retrieve the guns, or the Somalis would get the first look-in, and then good-bye to our weapons. When we woke, a lion and a striped hyena were lying outside, both of which animals had fallen as a result of our strategy.

What a source of pleasure my poultry were to me ! At one time numbering close on two hundred black Minorcas, they more than kept us in eggs, of which, in some shape or form, we partook at every meal. The Masai were almost as much interested as I was in the birds, and when feeding-time came, the birds ran to my call, perching on my head, my arms, my shoulders, and on the dish of food, until the weight became so great I had to drop it hastily.

Then the daily inspection of their houses and nests, to see all was clean and comfortable, three "totos" being in close attendance. It was wonderful what a few

cents for any special attention given, did, and how each one tried to outdo the other in his care of the birds! On two occasions I all but put my hand on a snake in the nests (black Mambas). These are most deadly reptiles, and unfortunately there were many about.

I shall never forget a snake "shauri," as it was called. Three of the "boys" buried some money in the ground—a very usual practice among the natives—and on going to dig it up, found it had vanished. With woebegone faces they came to me. Would I permit a snake "shauri"? That would be sure to find out the thief. A. was away at the time.

"How long will it take?" I asked.

"Oh, not long," I was assured. A snake "shauri" never took long. Oh no! the thief would soon be found out!

"Quick about it, then," I said.

Next, would I give orders for every "boy" in camp to come in? I did so, and they formed a half-circle on the grass in front of the house, the accuser, and a man who had seen him bury the money, so he said, taking up a position at my side facing the half-circle. One old man slipped away; he knew where there was a snake. Almost instantly he returned, holding out a black "Mamba" recently killed, on a stick. Scarcely anything will induce them to touch even a dead one, so great is their fear, and in every case when one has been killed near the house I have had to remove it personally.

The accuser, after calling on "Mungoo" (God) to witness he was telling the truth, took the snake in his hand. This indeed must have tried his nerve, and made me at least believe his tale. Then after a long speech, in which he stated that he had placed the money in the place indicated, naming the time at which the deposit took place, and that now, on going to look for it, it was no longer there. In order that all might know he

was speaking the truth, he would now bite a piece off the snake, and if no harm came to him, they would know he had spoken the truth. Suiting the action to the word, he raised the reptile and bit a piece off its head, then its tail. I looked round the circle of faces, and saw horror plainly written on each. They firmly believed that every portion of the snake was equally poisonous, and for a man deliberately to bite a piece off the head and tail really appalled them. It made me feel intensely sick.

Now it was the turn of the circle. The snake was handed to the first "boy." Never shall I forget his face. He vowed he had never taken the money. They would not believe. He pretended to feel ill. They dragged him into a sitting position again. He lay on his face on the ground, but they turned him round, opened his jaws, and closed them on the snake. How he spat and spluttered, finally running off to the river, followed by shouts and yells of delight.

Now it was the next "boy's" turn. Beyond a look of disgust he gave no sign, but threw the snake down as if it had been red-hot and rushed to the river. The next eight or ten did likewise. Then about six "Kissis," of whom Manibura was one, came to me and asked if it was my wish they should take part in such a dirty affair ("shauri chafu")? It most certainly was not; but what could I do? I explained to them that if they did not, the rest would certainly think the theft lay at their door, so they had better do as the rest were doing. They saw the force of my remarks, and returned and sat down, but I felt so sorry for them! By this time the snake had grown considerably smaller, about twenty having had a bite off it. Inwardly I wondered what would happen when all had gone. Should I be expected to provide another?

At that moment two Masai in our employ, who really

did nothing but parade about in their finery, but whom we kept partly as interpreters, as they spoke Swahili and Masai fluently, showed themselves. Instantly the others rose,

"Call them," they said. "They must come and sit down! They must come and bite the snake."

I called the Masai, telling them what was required of them. They withdrew a short distance and talked together. Presently both returned. Meanwhile the snake had diminished considerably.

"We want to say something. Let this 'shauri' cease," they rapped out in an authoritative manner.

Instantly everyone was all attention.

"We saw the 'boy' who stole the money!"

Everyone left his place and clustered round the two Masai.

"The day after this man put his money in the ground, we were resting in the tall grass. The grass was so tall, we were hidden—no man saw us; then as we rested, all at once the sun became dark before our eyes; then we looked and saw a man between us and the sun. He stooped down and began to dig with his 'panga.' Soon he made a big hole, into which he thrust his hand, bringing up many rupees. He took the rupees away. What he did with them we cannot say."

"Who was the 'boy'?" The interrogation came from a dozen different voices at once.

The Masai replied, "Chipkowet," this being the name of a Nandi herd "boy" we had for the sheep. A more harmless, inoffensive "boy" it would have been impossible to drop on. I, at least, saw through this ruse. The Masai, not relishing the snake "shauri," and not feeling particularly anxious to be made partakers of the snake, had invented this tale, and poor Chipkowet was the victim. Of course he was sent for, and equally of course he protested his innocence, and I firmly believed him.

There was nothing for it but to demand twenty rupees to be paid to the loser at once. His eyes nearly bolted out of his head. Twenty rupees? Why, he had never possessed such a sum all at once! To settle the matter, I produced the money, telling Chipkowitz before them all that he would have to refund it. Needless to say, I did not exact such an obvious extortion. And Chipkowitz heard no more of it. I glanced at the horrid, mangled remains of the snake; about three inches only were left.

CHAPTER VIII

ON "SAFARI"

A journey to Siana—Another leopard—No water—Lion, not a hut—No lamps—The pleasure of being stalked—The elusive stream—Home at last.

THE hills around were particularly fascinating, and often our evening ride was taken up one or the other, zigzagging up the whole way, until it became too steep for the horses to climb any farther; then, leaving them in charge of a "boy," A. and I made the ascent alone. What glorious views we obtained when the top was reached, well repaying our exertion in getting there! There were always deer of some kind to be found, and once we surprised a leopard, or rather the leopard surprised us. He quickly slunk away into the undergrowth before either of us could fire. How wonderful the vegetation was! I never returned home from the excursions but a "boy" was loaded with plants, which, I am sorry to say, seldom survived when removed from their natural habitat.

One day A. suggested a "safari" to a place called Siana, right on the German border. I quickly fell in with his suggestion. It would only take a day if we started early. Then we could camp there for a night or two, give the mules a rest, have a look round, do some shooting, and return.

The next day I began to pack the buckboard. By the time our tents, blankets, comestibles, bath, cooking-utensils, and numerous odds and ends, not to mention

Obadiah, were safely stored away, there did not seem much room for us, certainly not with any comfort. So we decided to ride our horses. A. said it was about thirty-three miles. If he had said a hundred and thirty-three, I would have quite believed him.

It was a scorching day when the start was made, although the first few hours were most enjoyable. Seven o'clock saw us in the saddle, and we rode on steadily until eleven o'clock; then the horses needed rest and food, so we dismounted. The way so far had been all downhill and rather easy going. We sat under the shade of a big tree and took our lunch. Then a short siesta, and again we mounted.

Evidently Juliet was none the worse for her exertions, for she refused to be caught, and it was not until I approached her quietly with a handful of sugar that this was accomplished. One "boy" was acting as guide; he had been to Siana lots of times, he said. It was a most uninteresting road for the greater part of the way, and I was not at all sorry to dismount again at 4.30 for tea. I have not the faintest idea how many miles we had accomplished, but I was beginning to feel intensely weary, and longing for A. to say, "We will camp here."

"Another two hours, and we shall be there," was his reply, when I suggested it.

Only an hour's rest that time.

Five-thirty saw us off again. Very soberly this last part of the journey was made. All the frisk had gone out of Juliet; she paced quietly along by the side of A.'s horse, Major.

At six-thirty A. interrogated the "boy": "Well, how much farther to Siana?"

"Only a very little farther."

On again we went in the fast-gathering darkness. A "boy" ran on ahead with a lantern; the horses were

evidently jaded. A. dropped the reins on Major's neck, and rode gun in hand.

"Had we not better camp?" I queried.

Again the "boy" was called, and further interrogation elicited the fact that he did not know where he was.

"Is there any water near-by?" A. asked. The "boy" thought there was, just behind that ridge of trees. We went towards them.

"I don't think it would be wise to go any farther," remarked A.

"Eight boys take a 'debe'" (tin can; kerosene tins are nearly always used) "and get water."

One and all refused. They said, the "boy" was not sure that there was any water; they did not believe there was. There was only one thing they were certain about, and that was lions; there were plenty of those, they knew.

Here was a predicament. Only sufficient water had been brought for the day; our horses needed water badly. So, for that matter, did we. We told the "boys" there were eight lanterns available: would they not venture with these? Eight sticks, banged hard on eight "debes," accompanied by eight raucous voices and eight lamps, could surely scare a lion. At last they ventured; the din they made was horrible. Fortunately we had brought some corn for the horses, so they did not go hungry. Drink was the main thing. While the tents were being put up, A. examined the water-supply—two "debes" only were left.

"We won't boil kettles, at least until the 'boys' come back," said A. I was just gasping, so was poor Juliet, I knew.

After waiting three-quarters of an hour, back they came, their "debes" empty; no water, no sign of water. There were twelve "boys," ourselves, Juliet, Major,

and the four mules who had drawn the buckboard. Sternly A. distributed the water from the two "debes." A quarter of a pint for each horse and mule, the rest for ourselves. Surreptitiously I gave Juliet half of mine, and she was still thirsty.

When the tents were in position, the horses and mules were tethered to the tent-posts, the "boys" in a circle on the outside, a bank of hastily constructed fires beyond them. Twelve hand-lamps hung from the tent-poles and improvised posts.

We opened a tin of pears; those demolished, a tin of peaches followed. Why were they so sweet? It was drink we wanted. A. gave a last injunction to the "boys" to keep the fires up, and retired. Sleep for me, at least, was impossible. A. would sleep under any circumstances.

We were perilously near the bush, but what could we do? The "boy" had been so confident of the way. About midnight, the horses began straining at the tent-ropes. I spoke to them, but failed to reassure them; in fact, I wanted reassuring myself. A harsh, grunting cough. The next moment I was out of bed, had seized my gun, and was shouting to A., "Do get up; there is something outside."

The "boys" too were shouting "Chui!—chui!" as they tried to restrain the frightened horses. We could see nothing, but I knew something had rubbed against my tent. We went out and walked round, spoke to the horses, saw the fires made up, and warned the "boys" to take turn and turn about in order to attend them.

Once more we returned to bed—A. to sleep, I to toss restlessly about. About two o'clock the same grunting cough as before; this time it sounded between A.'s tent and mine. Again I seized my gun and called to A., walking to the door of my tent in order to do so. Just



WART HOG.

as I reached the door, a great spotted creature jumped the tent-ropes and was gone. A. sent a shot after it into the darkness, then two or three more, in order to warn off anything that might be lurking about, and again we retired.

About three o'clock I was surprised to hear a shot fired from A.'s tent. Possibly I had dozed and heard nothing until then. On hastily running outside, I found A., gun in hand, standing over a leopard, no doubt our previous visitor. "The beast was walking into my tent," he announced. "Well, one more trophy." We decided to sit and smoke cigarettes until daylight. How we should have liked a cup of coffee, but you can't make coffee without water.

The "boys" were not long in getting the tents down, and an early start was made, soon after six o'clock, in fact. I felt horribly tired and had a bad headache; still, it was no one's fault, I suppose, unless that stupid "boy" was to blame.

Soon after our start, we met some women with the inevitable babies on their backs, and also many "bombas" of tobacco. This is tobacco locally grown, tied up in banana leaves, and the packet weighs anything from four to eight pounds. When I tell you some of them carried eight, some ten, "bombas" and a baby perched on top, you will understand the weights these poor women stagger under.

We asked the way, and learned we were still five miles from Siana, having come the wrong way. Never had a place seemed so far off! Juliet seemed to have no go in her. Major would not even trot, or only for a short distance, added to which the ground became very cobbly and made progress difficult. Then for about two miles it was uphill, and at last we reached Siana.

The first thing we asked for, on dismounting, was

water. They brought some half-tepid liquid, and not at all clean at that, but Juliet's soft nose went deep into it at once. For ourselves we had to wait until the kettle boiled, and surely never was kettle so long in boiling. Then it turned out that every drop of water had to be carried a distance of three miles, from the nearest waterhole. No wonder the water was spared grudgingly. After a rest, we sent our "boys" for "debes" to get sufficient for ourselves, and to return that which we had taken. Then we went into our tents to dress. They told us that Siana was a hotbed of mosquitoes, though, there being no water near, I could not understand it; anyway, it seemed a wretched place for fever, and we decided to return the next day. I don't think the "safari" had been enjoyed by either of us; anyway, I can speak for myself.

How intensely hot it was!—not a breath of air. Late that afternoon we went for a walk, but dare not stay out after dark. It was very uninteresting, whichever way we went. True, I saw some rare plants, but had learnt wisdom, and did not burden myself.

The next morning we made an early start. We were to return another way, where we should not only find water, so they told us, but the whole way was "mzuri sana" (very good). In case of accidents, A. had all the "debes" filled. If we found water, well and good; if we did not, we must drink this unspeakable stuff.

Quite true, it was not only good going, but exceedingly pretty also. About twelve o'clock we came to a delightful stream and decided to have luncheon. How glad the animals were, to be sure! Juliet behaved like a two-year-old, instead of a lady of the mature age of seven years. We had been informed that this was the shortest way, so did not hurry particularly, and it was two o'clock before we got off again. Before long we struck the place where we had branched off on coming.

Now we knew where we were, and for the rest of the way it was uphill. Still, there was plenty of time.

About four o'clock the horses showed signs of distress, and for half an hour we dismounted and walked. Then A. said, "Come, we must be getting on." Neither of the horses seemed much inclined to do more than a walk, and I most certainly would not urge Juliet uphill, so walk they did. By half-past five A. decided that if we were to get home before dark, we must "get a move on," to use his own words. We sent the buckboard on ahead; it was useless leaving it behind, for the lamps and a tin of kerosene were in it, and once we let them lag behind, nobody knew when we should see them. All went well for a time; then all at once, without rhyme or reason (unless he smelt a lion), one of the mules became unmanageable. We rode up just in time to see the buckboard lurch over into a ditch, one of the mules being lamed; and we had to leave the buckboard.

Each mule was given over to the care of a "boy," and the next thing was to find lamps. Out of twelve lamps, only seven remained whole, and little enough oil in them.

"Fill the lamps at once," said A.

Easier said than done. Where was the kerosene? In vain we hunted. Then some of the "boys" jumped into the ditch. "Iko, Bwana" ("It is here"), triumphantly, and in the next breath the short, sharp staccato, "Ha! ha! ha!" which denoted disappointment. There was the tin, but where was the oil? Here was a pretty predicament: still a good four miles from home, no moon, and very little oil. A. and I mounted again.

"Keep close beside us," he said to the "boys." They needed no second telling, but we had to go so slowly on account of the injured mule.

When we had done about two more miles, and it had

taken over two hours, I suddenly saw a dim light in the distance.

"Had we not better leave the mule at that hut for the night?"

It lay right in the path we were walking, and it seemed to me it would be kinder not to make the poor creature exert himself farther.

"What hut?" asked A. laconically.

"Over there!" I said, indicating the direction with my riding-whip.

"There is no hut about here," he said. "Where do you mean?" Then, tersely, "Good heavens! that is not a hut; it is a lion."

At that moment I saw two lights, not one. Quicker than I can write, we were off our horses, grasping our bridles.

"Shout!—shout!" A. said to the boys. "Swing your lamps!" With all their might they shouted. The hurricane-lamps swung hither and thither, and for a brief moment the lights disappeared.

On we stumbled, our hearts, or mine at least, beating a tattoo. Now the balls of light were at our side; beyond that and the immediate space around us we could see nothing. Then A. put his hand into his pocket and pulled out a box of matches. "Strike these," he said. "Fling them from you when well alight."

I did as he said, striking one about every three minutes. The balls of fire were now behind us. Never have I felt so horribly frightened. I went icy cold, colder than I have ever felt on a winter's day in England, and I shook so that I could hardly walk. The horses and mules had got wind of the beast also, and were increasingly difficult to hold.

I had given Juliet over to A. when I started striking the matches, and now, instead of throwing them forward, I had to throw them behind. On came the eyes,

steadily stalking us—nearer now. There is nothing that appeals to a lion so much as a mule (unless it is a donkey), and we had four, one lame at that.

Would that night of horror never end? Should we never get home? Surely we must be near the stream now? I had just three more matches. Oh, why had the mules been so mulish? One match went; the eyes were gaining on us. Then the cry of the hyena rent the air—one, two, three, four, in ever so many different keys.

If Juliet were only safe! My second match flared for a moment, spun through the air, and went out.

“Only one more,” I breathed. How near the eyes were! and oh, how cold I was! If only one could see, the horror would not be so great; and to have that dreadful spectre crawling after us, getting nearer and nearer, to know that any moment the rush might come, and then . . .

The stream at last! How thankful I was! How more than thankful! My last match flared and then died out, like the rest; but the rest had others to follow them, this was the last. Some of the “boys” ran along the banks, searching for the crossing. Three lamps went with them. Up and down the banks they went; we could see their lights like will-o'-the-wisps through the trees. The eyes were stationary now, like ourselves. The “boys” redoubled their shouts. One of the four lamps, which had been giving a barely perceptible light until now, went out, the others were the merest flickers. A. pulled Juliet nearer to me and took my hand.

“Why! you are icy cold,” he said; and then, “Poor little woman!”

“Will they never find the crossing?” I said.

Almost simultaneously came back an answering shout, and a “boy” with a lamp giving an apology of a light said, “Come quickly; the light has almost gone.”

Down the slippery bank we crawled, helping the weary beasts. How sorry I felt for the lame mule, for endless were the big stones lying at the bottom. Then up the other side. We could hardly see at all now, so faint was the light given by the lamps. I turned and again looked for those unblinking balls of fire; once I fancied I saw them through the trees, then they vanished for good. Half an hour later we were safely home.

Never was dinner so welcome, never the shelter of a house so much appreciated as then! We had been houseless and exposed to all and everything, and then were at home. For Obadiah the day had just commenced; he knew nothing of our dangers, and jumped from one to the other, snatched pieces from our plates, and behaved as if life were a huge joke.

"Our little mascot," said A., caressing him. I gave thanks to a different and higher Power.

CHAPTER IX

LARGELY ABOUT LEOPARDS

Juliet goes on "safari"—Alas! she meets her death—Juliet is avenged—Lioness and cubs pay the penalty—Saladin—Pig hunting—"Simba Narok" ("the black lion") ripped up—Lucky's escape—Episode with the leopard—Cyrus mastered—A sleepless night.

FOR a time we were quite satisfied with life at home—our daily walks to the forest, my poultry, my needlework, the care of the house and garden. There was plenty to do, and I knew A. was equally busy; then the evening rides were always events to which we looked forward. A big tobacco "shamba" had been started, in which A. was keenly interested, and it took up quite a lot of his time.

Then it became necessary for him to go away on business; the name of the place slips my memory, and all my notes are destroyed. It was wretched weather, the long rains had set in, everywhere the ground was sticky and sloppy; I dreaded to think what the water-course was like. However, A. had promised to be there on a certain date—and go he would. It was raining steadily when he started; the skies overhead were like lead. Everything looked miserable; my poultry looked as if nothing short of wringing would do them any good. The dogs tried to crawl wretchedly into the house, and I had not the heart to turn them out, and we might expect weeks or months of this. Almost I began to long for civilisation.

"I wonder if you would do something, if I asked you nicely?" said A.

"Of course I would," I replied readily.

"Well, I was going to suggest that you let me take Juliet. You know how plucky she is. This weather will depress the others dreadfully; I shall get nothing out of them. You know how she always puts heart into the rest."

I did know, and almost regretted it.

"Very well!" I said. "Take her, and be very, very careful of her, won't you?"

"You know I will," was A.'s response.

I went out into the drenching rain, slipping and sliding at every step, armed with sugar, biscuits, and other dainties such as Juliet loved. Major also had his share, although, had not Juliet been going, I am afraid he would have gone short.

"Take care of her," I said again. "When do you expect to be back?"

"In four days, now that I have Juliet."

I returned to the house, and I am bound to say a feeling of horrible depression came over me. Not a living soul to speak to, save the "boys"; and with this weather continuing, I should have to remain indoors nearly all the time. The prospect was not cheering. Manibura came in with a small parakeet in his hand. He had just caught it in the bush.

"Very pretty, Manibura," I said, "but let it go."

"Don't you like it?" Manibura looked disappointed.

"Yes, very much; but I like to see them flying."

"What a funny creature I was!" Manibura's attitude said plainly, although his tongue did not.

The four days slipped away somehow, surely with forty-eight hours in each. I had a nice dinner ready, but A. did not come, and I went to bed somewhat disconsolately. With the early morning he arrived. I was so pleased to see him, and there was such a lot

to talk about, relating to the business which had called him away, that I quite forgot to ask about the welfare of the horses, and it was not until after breakfast, when the sun burst out for a while and A. suggested a short walk, that I remembered.

"How is Juliet? How is Major? How did Juliet behave?" I asked all in a breath.

"Major is jolly, I did not hurry them particularly, and I don't think he is any the worse; but it was a wretched journey."

"And Juliet?" I queried.

"Oh! I left Juliet at N'Dangasera; she wanted a rest."

Juliet wanted a rest? I could not imagine it.

"Did you ride her all the time?" I am afraid my tone was indignant.

"No. Still, she seemed a bit done up; the road was awful."

"Do you mean she seemed ill?" My eyes searched his face.

"Well, to tell you the truth, Margaret, she is a bit lame—trod on a splinter of wood or something."

Oh, men, men, how badly you lie!—or at least the majority of you. I seized his arm.

"A.," I said, "tell me what is the matter with Juliet?"

For a moment he was silent, and I saw something very like tears in his eyes.

"She is dead! I know she is dead! . . . Oh! why don't you speak?"

"Come inside, and I will tell you," was all he said.

"Last night I got into N'Dangasera soon after eleven o'clock; I wanted to get here quite early, as I knew you would be worrying. I was soaked through and told the 'boys' to put the horses into a 'boma,' intending to have a look when I had finished my supper, and see all was well. Scarcely had I commenced when I heard

a dreadful roar, followed by something very like a scream; then the 'boys' ran to say that a lion had leapt on Juliet while they were making the 'boma.' She was dead when I got out. It was only a matter of a few minutes; she could hardly have felt anything. I went out and fired at the brute, and it made off. No! I did not hit it; I wish I had."

So Juliet was gone. For a moment I sat utterly at a loss. No more pleasant evening scampers, no pretty muzzle thrust through the door and a soft whinny for sugar. It was all over. I should never see Juliet again. Then my rage overcame my grief.

"I am going to kill that lion," was all I said. Already I had my riding-boots on; they were the only possible wear for such weather as this.

"I will ride a mule," I said shortly.

"Look here, Margaret! I have done everything possible. I have given orders for a 'boma' to be put up over the remains, and have ordered two entrances, the same as the one we made over the Somalis' bullock. This afternoon I am going to ride back, and set two guns, and am certain to get the beast to-night. Will you leave it to me? The weather is impossible—just look!"

At that moment down came the rain again. Reluctantly I reconsidered my determination.

"I will leave it to you," I said. "Don't come back without it."

"I promise you I won't; you can make your mind easy on that score."

I went to my room and, womanlike, had a good cry. It seemed impossible that Juliet would never again defy us to catch her, never again rub her soft muzzle on my shoulder, never again take food from my hand. Well! that was one of the penalties of living in Masailand. Oh! how I hated the name of lions!

That afternoon A. went off to N'Dangasera again, my last injunctions ringing in his ears :

“ Bring me back that lion, to-morrow if possible, but bring it.”

A sleepless night, during which the brutes, as if to mock me, roared round the house. I had no fear for the “ boma.” That was as safe as human hands could make it, every weak spot being strengthened daily, until it was quite six feet through and twelve feet high. I defied the whole brood. The hundred bullocks inside could sleep peacefully. The smaller “ boma ” was equally well constructed, proof against lions, but not, as it turned out, proof against leopards, as the poor sheep knew to their cost.

About ten o'clock next morning A. was home again, with the skin of a big lioness, and three cubs, also a striped hyena. He had caught the lioness and hyena first, the cubs had slunk off at the sound of the gun. He had hastily reset the traps, and the cubs were the result. What was the good of venting my senseless rage on the skins ? I had the feeling that death by shooting was far too good for the wretch that was answerable for Juliet's death. Still, this was Masailand. I took the tail, which A. held out to me, with a choking feeling ; the feet were to be mounted for me.

“ I will buy you another horse, Margaret, when I see a good one,” he said.

For a time I rode Major on our evening excursions, A. having to be content with a mule.

On one of the rides he shot at, and wounded, what he took to be a leopard, but turned out to be a cheetah.

“ Poor creature ! What a pity ! ” I said when A. returned.

He had followed it some distance, in order to give it its death-shot, having only wounded it. Meanwhile, I had awaited him, Major grazing quietly by my side.

“ Why, whatever have you got there ? ”

A. held out both hands. “ Yes, I am sorry. I mistook it for a leopard,” he reiterated.

I came closer and examined it. “ Oh, what little darlings ! ” I took the three newly born cheetahs in my hands. “ Oh, what a pity—what a pity ! ” I said again.

“ Yes, there were five of them ; she dropped them as she tried to get off. I had to kill her ; she was badly injured. I think one or two may live.”

One succumbed even as I held it, and one a little later on. The third was never out of my arms, until it got too big to carry. Saladin, I named it, and what a beautiful animal it grew to be ! At nine hours old it was purring quite loudly, and took milk readily from a spoon. Soon it was the most affectionate little animal possible to imagine.

One evening we were out, as usual, trying to feed a number of hungry mouths, when all at once the dogs, of whom six accompanied us, started barking—short, snappy barks, and now and again an angry snarl.

“ Wonder what they have got ? ” said A.

When we arrived on the scene, nothing could be seen save clouds of dust.

“ Pig,” said A. tersely.

The dogs, on seeing us come up, gained courage, their tails wagged, they jumped hither and thither, from side to side, and their barks were incessant. Denser and denser grew the clouds of dust. It was as if the pig meant to blind them, and so get away.

One dog yelped and came towards us.

“ Sambo has been too venturesome,” said A.

An ugly jagged wound showed on its shoulder.

“ Get up the nearest tree,” said A. “ Here is one, not too difficult. Wild pigs are ugly beggars to meet on foot.”

Soon I was safely in the branches, exactly opposite the pig's hole.

"Shoot if you get a chance," said A. "Mind the dogs."

A very necessary precaution, but how could I mind the dogs? They were here, there, and everywhere, never still a minute. Now a column of dust went up, high in the air, and obliterated everything. The dogs became a squirming mass, with no distinguishable form. The yelps grew louder and more frequent. Simba Narok ("the black lion"), one of our dogs, had rushed in and seized the creature; the next moment out rushed the pig, and down towards the river it went. I scrambled down from the tree, and quickly went to poor Simba Narok, only to find his face and all one side were ripped up by the pig's tusks.

He was a pitiful spectacle. Far and away the pluckiest dog we possessed, never waiting for assistance, tackling anything and everything single-handed.

I did the best I could. I could not get to the river to bathe it; the wretched pig was there, the "boys" shouting and the yapping of the dogs kept me informed of that. Everyone had left me. I found some lint in one of my pockets, but it was insufficient to staunch the flow of blood. Poor Simba was getting exhausted. Hastily I searched for my scissors, and tore off a goodly strip of my under-garment, and bound it tightly round.

"Make haste," I said as A. returned, followed by the "boys" dragging the pig. "Someone must carry Simba."

"Is he as badly injured as that?" inquired A.

One glance was sufficient.

"Hurry up, there!"

A blanket was taken from underneath the saddle, and Simba lifted into it.

"Now get home as quick as you can!"

That night the "boys" had pig for dinner, while I fed Simba with milk out of a spoon. For days he lay barely moving, moaning faintly at first. For days I bathed him with lysol, until at last he began to mend, and I had the satisfaction of seeing him about again.

"Now I hope that will be a lesson to you, not to interfere with pigs again," I admonished.

"Not it; you can take my word for it," said A.

They were all the same, utterly fearless. I never saw braver dogs. Seldom did a wagon go off on "safari" but one or more were brought back injured. I said it would be necessary to build a small hospital. One at least never returned, and we heard how it had held a lion at bay for some minutes, enabling the wagon to move off; then as the lion did not follow nor the dog return, its fate could only be conjectured.

Another poor animal, rightly named Lucky, had the narrowest escape of any. A wagon had been sent out, Lucky accompanying it. The wagon returned; not so Lucky.

"Perhaps she will come in later," I said, for the dogs knew their way for miles in any direction.

A fortnight went by; another wagon went the same route, and the "boys" picked poor Lucky up, at the side of the track, all but dead. They brought her home. Never did I see such a spectacle—her bones all but through her skin, her eyes sunk in her head, slashes and clawmarks everywhere.

"Whatever could have got hold of her?"

A. said pigs, because a "chui" would never have let go, but would have eaten her, once he had caught her. Anyway, there was no time for weighing possibilities and probabilities, if I wanted to save her. I found two large pillows, and placed Lucky on them. I damped her tongue, which was almost black and terribly swollen, with milk; down her throat it would not go. All day

and all that night I sat beside her, doing my best to save her. Her wounds had been dressed, but Lucky gave no sign. Then the second day towards evening she gave a slight moan and slowly licked her lips. I felt overjoyed.

"We are not out of the wood yet," croaked A.

"No," I said; "but we soon shall be, I hope."

"Nothing like optimism," he remarked.

I had Lucky carried into my room, for the all-night watching had tired me a good deal. One cannot stand the strain of sleepless nights in this country, although my rest was almost always broken. Whenever I woke, out of bed I got, and administered something; towards morning she began to swallow naturally. After that, although it was six weeks before I could say Lucky was convalescent, she mended steadily, but never again to be the old Lucky. She seemed to be indifferent to everyone and everything.

Was she brooding over those dreadful nights of suffering, alone on the plain at night, scorched by the sun all day? Why had not hyenas picked her up? How had she lived? Had her thirst gone unalleviated? We could only wonder; we should never know. I never saw Lucky wag her tail again; never saw her express the slightest pleasure at anything. She only emitted a low growl if one of the other dogs came near her.

When we went out hunting, Lucky always came, and on one occasion we saw her tackle a pig. I was dreadfully frightened harm would befall her, and begged A. to call her off. He might as well have called to a post. Round and round that pig Lucky went, always avoiding the tusks, fangs gleaming, getting many a savage bite at its hindquarters, until the pig, much discomfited, ran off, and I expect found its hole. Did she remember? Was she paying off old scores? Really it seemed so.

Monkeys the dogs never let alone; they would fly

off directly they saw these creatures, and trace them long distances, often following them into the forest and getting considerably mauled in consequence. In the forest, auxiliaries came up, and the dogs stood a poor chance.

Another short "safari" for A. It was unavoidable. Would I go too? No, I thought not. It was too soon yet. Memories of the last one were too fresh in my mind. I would wait awhile; besides, it would only take three days at most, and really was not worth while. So A. went alone.

This time I made up my mind to get several jobs done that had required doing for some time, and the days would go quickly. Still, there was always the feeling that one was miles from civilisation, and that the nearest white man was eighty miles off.

The first day soon slipped away, and it was towards evening of the second that a nasty incident occurred.

I had a leopard which I had brought up from a baby—a dear little thing it was at first. When it got too big to carry about, I used to take it out on a collar and chain. Soon it got restive, and whenever it passed a "boy," snarled and showed its teeth. Then one day Manibura said he did not like feeding it.

"It is 'harli sana,' Mem-sahib" ("very cross").

I said I would feed it, which I did.

A very strong cage was made for it, and its food dropped through a hole at the top. Now it became too much for me to exercise; it almost pulled me over. Strangely enough, with A. it never seemed at ease, although most animals took to him.

"We must have a proper house made for it," I said—"a big one."

"Who will feed it?" demanded A.

"Why, I will, of course. You don't think I would ask a 'boy' to do so?"

“ Better let the creature go,” said A. “ There comes a time when these animals become unsafe. You would not like to know he was in a cage always, fretting his heart out, would you ? ”

I confessed that I would not.

“ Well, we will see when I come back. I want to go to Garindi. We can go by way of Bardimat ; it will be new ground, and you will enjoy the ‘ safari.’ We can take Cyrus ”—meaning the leopard—“ with us, and let him go on the way, miles away from anywhere. I know you could not bear to shoot him.” And so it was settled.

That second evening after A. had gone, about five o’clock, I was busy in the garden, trying to arrange stones in one corner to form a rock-garden. Manibura came to me.

“ Mem-sahib ! will you feed the ‘ chui ’ now ? ” he said.

I glanced at my watch—five o’clock ; by six o’clock it would be dark. There was still much to do.

“ Manibura,” I said, “ don’t you think you could manage to feed Cyrus to-night ? Just drop the meat in, and shut the lid quickly.”

“ O’we ! ” was Manibura’s exclamation, borrowed from the Masai, and with a laugh he went.

I went on with my work. In less than five minutes I was startled by screams, “ boys ” came running from all directions, dogs barked. Masai women, who had been standing about watching my (to them) senseless labours, snatched up their belongings and flew, screaming “ Chui !—chui ! ”

I got up and walked towards the house. There a sight met my eyes : the leopard out of its cage, darting about everywhere. Within an ace of catching a dog, it bounded away to seize one of my pet monkeys, which, uttering shrill screams, was soon on the roof, then after the “ boys,” who had fled indiscriminately. Backwards

and forwards it went, now reaching out and clawing viciously, as a cat flew past it and climbed a tree in haste.

“Cyrus!—Cyrus!” and again “Cyrus!” I called. Two eyes flashed at me, but Cyrus gave no sign that he had heard. I seized a whip and slashed out at him. With a bound he was in the house, and made straight for my bedroom, where he was soon snarling under the bed.

What was to be done? No “boy” would venture into the room, nor did I wish it.

“Come with me,” I said.

Five or six “boys” followed me.

“Pull out that packing-case.”

A big packing-case was dragged out, the “boys” evidently wondering what I was going to do with it.

“Put it across the door,” I said.

“Yes, a very good plan; but, Mem-sahib, we would rather not venture.”

“Don’t be silly; all I ask you to do is to place the case there.”

They hung back, and I dragged the case forward until it was in the required position.

One board had become loose and had been removed.

“Fetch me a leg of mutton,” I said.

Off ran Manibura; it was getting exciting now. The leg of mutton I placed inside the case tied tightly to a thick piece of string, which string I drew across the gap in the case and fastened firmly round a nail on the outside.

“Now, I want you, and you, and you”—I indicated five “boys”—“to fetch your spears and stand beside the box. If the leopard attempts to leap the box, you are to spear it, but not unless. Do you understand?”

They said they did, but I saw plainly that dis-



WATERBUCK.



MY PET LEOPARD (CYRUS).

that it formed a tourniquet on his throat, and dragged him to the door. Willing hands helped him the remainder of the way to the cage, and he was dropped in and the leg of mutton thrown in after him. I sat down and panted.

Cyrus had to go; there was nothing else for it. When A. returned, he quite agreed with my decision.

"Poor old Cyrus! Not your fault, old boy—just nature asserting itself."

It still rained heavily at times. That year we were having more than enough. In a week A. would want to set out for Garindi. If the weather did not clear, I should be unable to go. It was very disappointing. He expected to be away a fortnight. I should be rather sick of myself by that time, if I had to remain. However, so it turned out.

"The roads will be a perfect quagmire; you won't enjoy it a bit, Margaret."

Thus A., glancing at the leaden sky, from which the rain descended uninterruptedly.

"Oh, I have quite given up hope," I responded.

So A. started alone in a downpour. As if by magic, the next day the sun shone gloriously. The next, there was a shower in the morning, and then fine again. After that, the weather was perfect.

It was too bad, so I fretted and fumed, all to no purpose. The next night was a sleepless one. I retired early, after locking up the fowls, counting the sheep and bullocks, giving out the "boys'" meal, seeing the mules and horses rubbed down (A. had bought me another), walking round the "boma" to see lamps were properly hung, chasing and finally cornering the deer, feeding the owl, the leopard, the lion, seeing the dogs had their supper, giving the cheetahs theirs, and romping with them—all of which took up time; then I shut myself in, and suppose I slept about two hours. Then a gun

went off. The traps were set, all round the house and "boma," as a protection every night. Out of bed I sprang.

"Where was it?" I inquired.

"Over there."

Already "boys" were coming out of huts, armed with spears. We reached the trap, only to find a nasty hyena.

"All this trouble over a hyena," I thought, as I reset the trap and the boys dragged the carcass away.

Once more I went to bed and tried to sleep. No good. I wondered where A. was now, the weather glorious, and I left at home. I was just dozing when off went another gun. Sleepily I got into my clothes, and went out again. The animal must be removed, whatever it was, and the trap reset.

"Another hyena?" I called down. Well! hardly benedictions on the heads of hyenas, great and small. Do I want the skin? Of course I don't—nasty, smelly things! Back to bed again.

Here let me add that A. made it a rule to give every "boy" who answered when a trap went off 50 cents. It was more than worth it, when the beast turned out to be a lion or a leopard, but 50 cents were thrown away when it turned out, as at present, to be a hyena.

Still, it was safer to have assistance at hand if the creature was only wounded, as once or twice happened. Then the trail had to be followed, and, if possible, the animal killed; but generally it meant almost certain death to any animal putting its head in; its fore feet, immediately they touched the spring, firing the gun, the bullet entering at the base of the skull. You will naturally ask what inducement there was for an animal to enter the trap? Well! some traps were made with any old piece of meat, laid inside a head of some beast killed for the "boys'" consumption, or the entrails were

cretion would be the greater part of valour, and should the leopard leap, the "boys" would assuredly run.

We waited some minutes, I calling in as matter-of-fact a tone as I could manage, "Cyrus! Cyrus!" and then again "Cyrus, come along, boy. Good old Cyrus."

My blandishments were of no avail. Presently there was a movement, then a pair of flashing eyes glared defiance, a rush—the box was almost gone, the leg of mutton quite. What was to be done now? Manibura suggested another leg of mutton.

"Don't be foolish," I said. "We must get that one away from him." Time was going on, and it would soon be dark. Out he must come at any cost.

I couldn't go to bed with a leopard in the room, however much of a pet he might have been. He had on a thick collar, the one with which I always took him out. I armed myself with a "kiboko" (small whip of rhino hide) and a thick stick with a crooked handle, pushed the box slightly on one side, entered the room, and replaced it.

"Mem-sahib, what are you going to do?" Manibura asked concernedly.

"I am going to get that leg of mutton, and the leopard too, if possible," I replied.

Then I used first cajoling, then strategy—neither was of any use. I tried the "kiboko."

"Don't forget, if he tries to jump, use your spears." I glanced towards the five "boys."

"N'dio—n'dio" ("Yes—yes"), they answered.

Again I tried the "kiboko," but it failed to reach him, and what was more, he was getting more indistinct, the light was rapidly going. An angry snarl was the only response. Again I slashed. This time I must have touched him, for there was a rush, five spears were pointing at him; he turned, faced me, crouched, and at the same time I hooked the stick into his collar, turned it so

that it formed a tourniquet on his throat, and dragged him to the door. Willing hands helped him the remainder of the way to the cage, and he was dropped in and the leg of mutton thrown in after him. I sat down and panted.

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sufficient in many cases. Then other traps had to be set, with a goat tied up inside.

This is not so cruel as it sounds. Never once did we lose a goat; in fact, some goats walk off and take up their position in the trap as a matter of course. One old goat regularly slept in a trap, and I can assure you, if any cruelty had been practised, I should have called out very quickly.

The method is as follows: A circular enclosure, about seven feet across, and the same in depth, sometimes longer, is constructed of thorn-bush. Thorn must be used, as neither lions nor leopards will try to force their way through, with thorns two and three inches long to face. They will walk round and find an entrance. This entrance is purposely made just large enough to admit a lion or leopard, hardly large enough for the shoulders to go through, the idea being to catch the animal just at the base of the skull. Really nothing more than the fore feet and head ever enters.

The goat, meantime, is tied securely at the farther extremity of the trap, with just sufficient rope to admit of its lying down, no more. Beyond the slight shock the noise of the gun produces, the goat knows nothing.

On one or two occasions we have had to fasten pups there. When a leopard has once caught and eaten a pup, nothing but dog will satisfy it.

Some time ago, so I was told, Kisumu was dogless; the leopards had eaten every one. Heads, tails, feet, insides, or indeed the whole animal, if dead, are almost useless where leopards are concerned; the quarry must be alive, or the leopard has no use for it. Lions will eat almost anything in the meat way fresh or several hours old; it is all one to them. I do not mean that the flesh must be stinking (that is where the jackal and hyena come in), but a lion has no objection to meat a few hours old, as the return to beasts previously killed

by them, after twelve hours have elapsed, amply proves.

No ! the goat, or even sometimes sheep, selected was made as comfortable as possible ! A soft bed and plenty of food provided.

The old goat mentioned I provided with a collar—quite a smart collar too—so many leopards had he been the means of procuring.

Back again to bed. This time no hope of sleeping, so I took a book. After a while the book dropped from my fingers, and once again I slept. I dreamt I heard a gun go off. Then there came a knocking at my door, although it was some time before I realised it.

“ What is it ? ” I asked crossly.

“ Chui, Mem-sahib,” the voice reiterated.

“ Will you go away ? ”

“ Chui, Mem-sahib.”

“ Where ? ”

“ Here ; we have brought it.”

“ Put it inside the door and go,” I said ; so my door opened, or rather the door of the house. There were heavy footsteps, then my door was pushed open and a big leopard rolled inside.

Scarcely had they gone when another gun went off, and a quarter of an hour later a second leopard lay beside the first.

I had lost interest in “ chui ” and everything else ; I only wanted to sleep, and worn out, I dropped off again.

In the morning those two beasts gave me a fright, as my eyes rested on them for a moment on waking. Then the events of the night slowly recurred to me. Well, they were two beauties anyway. Something to show A. on his return !

Four days had passed since he went, another possible ten, perhaps fourteen, before he would be back—one

could never be sure. So much may happen: a horse or mule go lame, accidents to the wagon, difficulty in crossing rivers, and much else has to be taken into consideration.

The next morning was glorious, but I could settle to do nothing. Why should not I follow A., and, if nothing else, go as far as Bardimat, and await him there? With me to think is to act. True, it would be rather unusual, a woman travelling alone; still, with plenty of "boys" and plenty of dogs, all should be well. I called Rabsah and one or two of the older ones. What did they think? Would it be possible?

For a moment they stared at me, opened-mouthed; then they laughed. If Mem-sahib wanted to go, why, she must go. They would take care of her.

So it was settled. The next day I spent in preparations. A. had a wagon and his riding-horse; I also would take a wagon and my horse, and in case anything went wrong, I would take the buckboard and a mule besides. The wagon I would fill with hides, as an ostensible excuse for my journey, handing them to A. to sell when I met him.

The next morning I was up early, giving final instructions and allotting work to be done during my absence.

Manibura would look after the animals, I knew. "Cyrus," the only trouble, had gone with A., and by this time was no doubt enjoying glorious freedom. Obadiah was safely stowed into the buckboard, and my journey to Bardimat began.

CHAPTER X

A FOOLHARDY JOURNEY

I start on "safari" alone—A tramp over the mountains—Blissfully unconscious—Lions roaring—Hope all but given up—Kindness at the hands of Indians—Mrs. L. to the rescue—Lions again—A near shave.

HOW I enjoyed it all! The weather was all one could wish it to be. My horse was splendidly fit, the "boys" full of spirits, and the oxen not too heavily burdened—in fact, they, with their load, formed the excuse for my journey. N'Dangasera was passed, with memories of Juliet. What a desolate place it was! Nothing but thorn-bushes for miles, then a vast plain of nothing but cacti, all in flower then, flaming crimson which gave life to the otherwise dead-looking sandy soil. Tortoises, tortoises, and again tortoises, from some no bigger than a two-shilling piece to old stagers a foot and a half across. Three or four little two-shilling-sized ones were placed in the buckboard. Really I should have a Bostock and Wombwell menagerie directly.

Farther on, crowds of birds circled overhead: vultures, crows, hawks, and marabout storks, rapidly rising and descending. A carcass somewhere evidently. We came to the spot and the bleaching bones of a zebra met our eye. Probably the poor creature was one of a herd of many only a night ago; again the lion had exacted his toll! Here the ground glistened, and minute particles of mica became observable in some places, even reaching two or three inches across.

One came on masses of pale pink convolvuli, huge

in size, each bloom being quite four inches across and having a delicate smell like vanilla. The air all round seemed saturated with the perfume. Farther on were trees with clusters of flowers not unlike jasmine, and many more exuding gum-arabic. I was told that another kind of lemur—and I possessed one later—fed exclusively on this gum. Needless to say, his diet with me was largely varied, custard and bananas forming the principal diet, and greatly he appreciated the change.

We camped at last, not far from a stream, in as open a space as we could find. What a temptation it was always, to see shady trees, and to know that you must not pitch your tent under these, but on the dry sandy soil! To do so would be to invite the attention of leopards and lions; there must be nothing in the shape of cover for them near you.

I had about seven dogs with me, seven being the number that has always brought me luck, and four undisturbed nights we had, quite unusual in these parts. Then, when nearing Bardimat, we suddenly came on a stream. Never shall I forget it! If I were to tell you the size of those boulders lying at the bottom, of the steepness of the ascent, you would say "Nonsense! it could not be done," but it was, although I was not there to see how. How beautifully clear the water was! I took a long, refreshing drink.

"Is there no other way to Bardimat?" I asked.

Yes, there was another way across the mountains, perhaps twelve miles. When once you got to the top it was quite easy. That was the cutting, facing me. I decided to take it.

Rabsah declared his ability to get wagon, buckboard, "gombes," and my horse and mule safely across, but the wagon would have to be unloaded first. That meant time, and I am not patient.

"Who will come with me?" I asked. "I want someone to carry Obadiah."

Two or three volunteered.

"No; one will do. Rabsah will want as many as possible to help."

Up the cutting, followed by the "boy," I went. What was twelve miles? I could have my afternoon siesta as usual, and then get in by four o'clock: it was still early, and I am a good walker. At twelve o'clock we sat down to rest and have some refreshment.

It had taken some time longer than I had anticipated getting to the top. We could only rest for one hour; then, doing three and a half miles an hour, we should still be at Bardimat by four o'clock. But in this country one can be sure of nothing until it really happens. Four o'clock found us wearily looking for someone to show us the way. The "boy" who had protested that he knew it perfectly, having been born near here, now acknowledged that he knew nothing of it. Just what I might have expected! On we trudged; never a soul did we meet until a quarter to six. Then we met two women and a man with two children. Could they tell me the way to Bardimat? To see the surprise on their faces almost made me laugh. Evidently they had never seen a white woman before. Then a lengthy conversation took place between them and my "boy."

Who was I? Where did I live? Was I married? Was my husband out here? Where was he? Was I travelling alone? Why? What did I want to go to Bardimat for? What was I doing in Masailand? How long was I going to stay? How many children had I? And so on.

It was some time before I could get him away.

"Now," I said, "which way do we go? and how many miles off are we?"

"Three miles," he replied. It seemed to me that we had come thirty already.

How tired I was! I began to wish I had remained with the wagon. My pace got slower and slower; then a sensation of giddiness came over me and I became unconscious.

"Mem-sahib! Mem-sahib!" a voice sounded in my ear, "don't go to sleep; look at the lions' spoor. Mem-sahib, it is getting dark. Wake up."

With an effort I rose and continued my journey. Lions' spoor there certainly was, and leopards' also. Then he began to tell me that this footpath was the one always used by lions to go to the water-hole, about three miles off.

"Look, Mem-sahib," he said again; and I did look, and I was quite prepared to believe his version. The footmarks crossed and recrossed in bewildering succession. Big and little, they seemed to dance before my eyes, and once again I fell senseless, only to be recalled to myself once more with the oft-repeated "Mem-sahib! Mem-sahib! don't go to sleep."

It was no use; I staggered on a few yards and had to give in. I could do no more. I sat down and leaned my head against a tree.

"We cannot be far from Bardimat now," I said. "You walk on quickly, and tell the Indians there that your Mem-sahib is here, and they must come and fetch her. Take Obadiah, and if I am not here when you come back, you are to let him go. Do you understand?"

"But, Mem-sahib, 'simba,' 'chui,'" he remonstrated.

"I cannot walk any farther," I said. "Go at once; tell the Indians they must come and carry me."

With a quick stride he was off, and I watched his retreating figure with something like regret, resolving that, should I get out of this safely, I will never again in this country undertake a journey alone.

Twelve miles I must have walked—nearer eighteen. Then once more all became blurred, and I knew nothing. When I came to, it was quite dark. Myriads of grasshoppers were chirping; it sounded almost like the whirr of machinery in the distance.

A hyena uttered its complaining note. Nearer there was a short, sharp yelp of a jackal; and a night-hawk swooped down on noiseless wings a stone's throw away.

What was that? I strained my ears to catch the sound. I had not long to wait. The roar of a lion, unmistakable as it was inspiring. Hardly had it died away, when an answering challenge rang out on my right, quickly followed by another and yet another.

I found myself conjecturing the distance the sound had travelled. A lion's roar can be heard a distance of five miles, A. had said only the other day. Was that five miles off? I wondered. I thought not. If so, how long did it take a lion to cover that distance? Again roar upon roar as if calling each other to mortal combat. No, certainly it was not five miles; perhaps three, perhaps less.

The next roar left me no longer in doubt. One mile at the most. I tried to rise; my legs refused to support me. Of what use, I thought, when I had not the faintest idea which way to go. How close it sounded! Involuntarily I shuddered. What would A. say? Well, I had had my wish; I had seen Masailand and Masai, seen more than millions of other women would ever see. "What is to be, will be." I supposed it was Fate, inexorable Fate. I shivered from head to foot as the hideous roars reverberated and died away, only to be taken up and hurled back again. Then the hyenas yelled in hideous chorus. Why did I not become insensible again? If only I could! Instead, every nerve seemed strung taut, every sense wide awake.

I wished I had not seated myself so close to the path, not more than ten yards away, in fact. If only I had

my gun! Then common sense asserted itself. Of what use was a gun? How near!—that was surely not two hundred yards away, and that! . . . I grew icy cold, as a gleam penetrated the darkness and visions of our journey from Siana appeared before me. Again I seemed to hear A. saying, "That is not a hut; it is a lion."

Nearer it came, nearer still. Thank heaven! I heard voices. It was a lantern, not eyes. The Indians had come at last, and brought a mule. Hastily they helped me up, and with two lanterns leading the way, two bringing up the rear, and one Indian leading my mule, at last we were at Bardimat. They brought me food—I could not eat; but a cup of tea I drank greedily, then another; finally they took me to a tent, where I was afraid I deprived someone of a bed, on which I lay down just as I was, boots and all, and slept heavily till morning.

Here let me pay a tribute of gratitude to those Indians, men whom I had never seen before, whose names I did not know. They were kindness itself. Never shall I forget it.

In the morning I was myself again. They brought curry and rice and tea in abundance; then, as no tidings had come of A., my "boy" was sent off to the house of the District Commissioner, Captain L., about ten miles off. Captain L. was away from home, but Mrs. L. kindly sent a mule and escort to fetch me to Garindi. There for three days I stayed as Mrs. L.'s guest—three very happy days, doing nothing but rest. How good it was to see a white face again, and that a woman's, a refined, educated, travelled woman, who could talk on many subjects and yet with such a quiet, restful manner, and so homely!

At the end of the three days A. arrived. It was as I had expected. Four of his oxen had become sick, and finally died; he was fearful for the rest. More had to be purchased, all of which took time. He was glad I had

brought the buckboard. Now we could return without the oxen, which he proposed leaving behind, with two "boys" to look after them, as he was much afraid the four he had lost had died of rinderpest, so many carcasses of wildebeeste had he passed on the road. "They lay there in hundreds," he said. In any case, it would be well that these should not return for a time.

When I told him of the fearful time I had spent coming over the mountains, he said a good deal that I would rather not repeat, the least being that women were such mad-brained creatures, one could never be certain what their next move would be. In my own case, I'm afraid he was right!

We left Garindi soon after luncheon, so did not get far that day. We camped about half-past four, near an old "manyatta." Manyattas are never far from streams of some description, and this one was no exception to the rule.

"I'm afraid we shall be disturbed," A. said as we were discussing dinner.

"Lions?" I queried.

"Yes," A. replied. "They are pretty bad here."

I thought of what I had gone through a few nights before, but said nothing. At that moment there was a noise outside; on investigation, it proved to be my "boy," who had now overtaken us.

Rabsah also had met with adventures, his wagon had broken down, and he had had to repair it. Without A.'s assistance, I wonder he had not remained in the bed of the stream. It said something for Rabsah's ingenuity.

Now there seemed no help for it, A.'s "gombes" and those I had brought were fraternising. The whole lot would probably have to remain behind. However, to-night a "boma" must be built to contain all the bullocks, as well as mules and horses. Quickly the thorn-bush surrounding the "manyatta" was pulled

down and a temporary "boma" constructed. A kongoni which A. had shot was given to the "boys" and a "Tommy" got ready for the dogs.

Big fires were soon alight, and the "boys" compared notes on the journey. My gun was taken out of the buckboard and inspected.

"We must have it ready to-night, in case we want it," remarked A.

Lamps were filled and placed all round the "boma," one hung on each of our tents, just over the entrance.

Dinner over, we prepared for bed, giving the "boys" final instructions to keep the fires up before we retired. Oh! what a night that was! We were both tired out and soon fell asleep.

All at once we were startled by shrieks from the "boys." We rushed out, in time to see a great beast vanish with what appeared to be one of the "boys" in his mouth. We both fired. The lion turned and faced us, crouching to spring. Again we fired. It had dropped the blanket (for so it turned out to be) which it had seized, and came towards us, mane bristling, jaws distended, fangs glistening. I can see it now, as it advanced straight towards A.

"Fire, Margaret!"

I pulled myself together, and my shot and A.'s rang out simultaneously. A rush of air, a swirl of dust, and a huge form lay almost at A.'s feet. We exchanged glances.

"A near shave that," A. said quietly.

"Water, just a minute."

"Anything in it?"

"No."

"Yes, I insist," and a dash of brandy went into it.

"I thought it was all up with you," I said.

"Yes, I thought I had got to hand in my checks," replied A.

Then we turned to the "boys," who were huddling frightened behind a tree.

"That is my blanket," a voice quavered, and the owner stepped gingerly out to retrieve his property.

"You may thank your lucky star you were not in it," retorted A.

"But I was."

It was said so deprecatingly that we had to laugh. The "boy" had fallen asleep by the fire, his blanket in a heap at his back, keeping the wind off, and the lion had snatched at the blanket, thinking the "boy" was inside.

"Well," said A. "You can take his skin off now, seeing he took yours." The "boy" thought it was a huge joke.

We turned in again, but I could not sleep. The sight of those gleaming fangs, those fiery eyes, had got on my nerves. I pulled the lamp closer and tried to read. An hour went by. I glanced at my watch; another half-hour and I would try to sleep. At the end of that time I laid down, leaving the lamp beside me. A noise in the "boma." Instantly I sat up and listened, gun in hand. I next went to the door of the tent, only to see the fires almost out, the "boys" sound asleep. They had finished skinning the lion, and, tired out, had fallen asleep, while they talked round the fire. Would they never learn wisdom? I shouted and shouted with all my might, but did not succeed in waking either them or A. Now the oxen were getting restless; a horse neighed; there must be something about. How I would have liked to go out and shake them all! But that would have been unwise. At that moment there was a mad rush in the "boma" and, unable to restrain myself, I fired in that direction. This woke the "boys," who jumped up and seized their spears, just in time to see a leopard vault over the "boma" and disappear.

By that time A. was also awake, and together we went to the "boma," to find the bullocks in a state of frenzy, and one badly clawed on the throat and shoulder. But for my timely shot, no doubt it would have been killed. This time fires were lit all round the "boma," the "boys" sleeping inside. We deputed two to keep awake for an hour, then to wake another two, I telling them that I should shoot if I heard anything, so they had better shout to let me know they were awake and watching. Would you believe it? Before the hour had expired, the two were asleep, and it was I who had to do the shouting.

"Put wood on the fires—put wood on the fires."

"N'dio, Mem-sahib."

How many times that night I reiterated that command, really I do not know. Suffice it to say that every "boy" slept within a quarter of an hour of taking his turn on guard, and it was I who had to do the watching. How thankful I was when my watch said five o'clock, and I knew it would soon be daylight.

As I settled down, a roar broke on my ear, not so far off either—then another, and another, followed in quick succession. Were they coming here? I had not got over my fright of a few hours before, and felt another visit from those wretches would be more than I could stand. Nearer they came. Surely they would wake A. Still he slept on, and so did the "boys," every one. Then there seemed a veritable pandemonium, roar succeeding roar, and, as I strained my eyes in the darkness, one, two, three, four—yes—five indistinct forms loomed out.

Was I losing my senses? Again I counted. Five! There was no mistake about it. They had come to within two hundred yards when, as nearly as I could make out, they sat down and low growls took the place of the previous roars. Would nothing on earth wake A.? Would the "boys" wait until eaten up alive? It

sounds too absurd to be true, I know, but being accustomed to the roars of lions every night, I myself slept through it all when at home and safely fastened up indoors. Here it was a different matter. Nothing but sheer exhaustion could account for this lethargy. I opened my tent at the back, looked out, and crept about six yards to A.'s.

"Will nothing wake you?" I shouted. "Do you want to be eaten?"

"Hallo! What is it?" was A.'s somewhat senseless answer.

"Lions," I replied—"dozens of lions." Then as A. prepared to go outside, "Go easy," I said; "there are five."

"Five?" A. gave an expressive whistle. "Boys!" he shouted, giving his voice full play.

"N'dio, Bwana." Instantly they were stirring.

The lions got up and, still growling, moved towards the "boma." Instantly a circle of fires were kicked into life, and wood piled on, until it was blazing all round. The "boys" were keenly alive to their danger now; so were the bullocks and horses. We could hear them running round and round the "boma." The wounded one had been removed and fastened close to A.'s tent, the smell of blood appearing to terrify the remainder: backwards and forwards paced the lions.

Every minute seemed an hour.

"They won't dare to rush the fires," said A. reassuringly.

"What had we better do?" I asked.

"Well! five to two is rather thick; we had better try firing into the air," said A.

"If that does not do, and they will have it, why then they must."

"Keep your head, Margaret! Now!"

A report from both guns, quickly followed by another,

and two lions began walking away ; the remaining three seemed undecided. Meat in plenty—it was worth trying for.

“ Ready ! ” said A.

Two more bullets whizzed through the air, just over the lions’ heads. Instantaneously the three made off, without waiting for more. A. sent a last shot after them ; two more to accelerate their speed, and that was the last we saw of them.

“ Make haste and get some coffee ready,” A. said to the “ boys,” and by the time we were dressed, it was all prepared.

“ I want to get home,” was all I said.

A. laughed. “ You would come,” he remonstrated. “ Don’t you wish you were back in Nairobi ? ”

Even then I could truthfully say I did not.

CHAPTER XI

CHEETAHS AND OTHERS

Wydah birds—Cheetahs' characteristics—My bathing-pool—Leopard meets its death—Poverty-stricken "manyatta"—Wildebeeste—Lucky in trouble again—Masai warriors.

HOW lovely it was, that ride in the early morning! We passed lots of rings on the grass, with "wydah" birds dancing—displaying, I believe, is the right word—small, glossy-black birds with crimson heads. During the mating season they grow very long tails, which describe half-circles and look just like bunches of *bébé* ribbon tied on. In the early morning and at evening they dance or hop in circles on the grass, which they previously cut, leaving a little in the centre about a foot in height. It is exceedingly quaint to watch their manœuvres as they spring from the ground, head bent backwards, wings distended, rising and falling.

Numbers of guinea-fowl were busily feeding; a wild pig, or rather sow, trotted along with a litter of seven little ones. How beautiful the mimosa was! How sweetly the jasmine trees smelt! Jasmine I call it, for want of a better name. How gloriously the sun shone! Big, ungainly kongoni and oryx crossed our path. The zebra in numbers thirty, forty, fifty, rushed past us, and our horses followed suit. We let them have their fling, the events of the night almost forgotten in the joy of the morning.

What was that in the distance?

"Wait here," said A. "I won't be long."

A minute or two later I heard the report of his gun. Even now I could not make out what the animal was ; in any case he missed it. Then I could make out another lying on the ground. After a wait of about twenty minutes A. returned.

“ What was it ? ” I inquired.

“ A wretched hyena had killed, and partly eaten, a kongoni that had just given birth to a young one, and I missed the brute.”

O Nature, how cruel you are !—everything preying on something else, and we by no means the least offenders.

For some time we rode without incident. A. shot a hartebeeste, and later on a Grant's gazelle and an oryx. The “ boys ” had sufficient food. I was riding somewhat carelessly, for the horse I now rode was far from being as capricious as Juliet had been. Although a good goer, still, it never seemed averse to walking when given the opportunity. Then it suddenly gave a buck, worthy of a circus horse, and I almost came a cropper. A.'s horse also went off at a gallop. What could be the matter ? I hardly had time to think when a big spotted creature rose out of the undergrowth and came straight at me.

“ Bunduki, boy,” I shouted ; but the “ boy ” who always carried my gun and ran beside my horse had vanished and the gun also.

In a flash A. turned his unwilling steed to face the creature, and was just about to fire when I sang out, “ It is only a cheetah ; don't fire.” A few bounds and it was out of sight, so marvellously quick are these animals, and never did I know one charge. They always appear to act on the defensive, not offensive, and so harmless are they that I have never felt any desire to kill them ; even this needs qualifying, I suppose. I know a man who owns two, and who would, until a

few days ago, have said they were absolutely harmless, tame, and quite domesticated. A friend called to see him, and the two cheetahs were called into the house to be admired. They went to their master first, and then bounded across the room to the stranger and immediately set on him, gnawing his arms savagely. Like all wild animals, they are not to be trusted, although I certainly think that animals possess a sense which tells them, directly anyone approaches them, whether or not that person fears them. In fact, I am almost certain of it. Take a horse. I believe the moment one mounts it, if they feel afraid, that fear is at once, by some invisible means, transmitted to the horse, and almost immediately the horse shows signs of being aware of the fact.

When I was, a few months back, in the Nandi country, all sorts of animals were brought to me, always bound tightly round a small pole or thick stick so that it was impossible to move. The look of consternation on the faces of the Nandi when I at once unbound the poor creatures was comical to behold. In fact, in course of time, seeing I was never bitten, the Nandi averred that I had a "shauri with the Mungu," or a "little understanding with God." However this may be, I have always had a liking for the graceful, agile cheetah, which made A. and I, by common consent, spare their lives; and the tiny mite now reposing on the buckboard, that A. had brought me only a few weeks before, when he inadvertently killed the mother, had only strengthened this feeling.

This time the "boy" was well reprimanded. Had it been a leopard, this book would never have been written; he was told, if he left the horse's side again, the whole of his "m'shabara" would be cut—in other words, the whole of his wages would be taken, and, as every "boy" we had, had signed on for six months, and received no pay until the end of that time, in his eyes, at least,

it would have been something considerable. You are bound to provide them with cooking-utensils, a blanket, and meal for porridge, and when, as in our case, they get meat every day added to it, they consider themselves very well off. Then, again, living in the wilds as we did, and being so utterly dependent on the "boys," A. was always quick to notice anything in the nature of services rendered over and above what was expected of the "boy." For instance, small "totos," who instead of sleeping at every opportunity hunted for grasshoppers for Obadiah, always got recompensed for their trouble, and the competition was keen on that account. Rabsah, for careful driving and for mending the broken wagon, was presented with a big overcoat, and very proud he was of it, walking about with it on when the sun was blazing down fiercely and I was just panting and longing for ice-creams!

Farther on the undergrowth got thicker. We threaded our way in and out through the trees. There must be a stream somewhere near. This country was new to A. as well as myself. On we went; we would camp and have luncheon when the water was reached. It was close on twelve; we had been in the saddle since half-past six. A fringe of trees, vine-covered; monkeys chattering and peering at us from the branches, as if disputing our right to disturb their solitude; big clusters of amaryllis, which I never saw growing save near water; ferns, ferns everywhere, and there we were. The horses seemed quite relieved when they were unsaddled, and at once commenced having a delicious roll. Then straight away to that clear, cold water. The "gombes" were not long after them. They all stood in it, flicking their tails, displaying the keenest enjoyment! Seldom had water been so welcome, never so refreshingly cool—not only cool, but absolutely cold: we drank and drank again.

Then, going farther upstream, A. sought one leafy retreat, and I another, and had a luxurious bath. Surely mine was made on purpose: the ground sloped gently down, forming a natural basin, the water was crystal-clear, you could count every pebble at the bottom. A moss-covered log lay across one side, inviting one to sit down. Tiny blue and yellow ground-orchids were everywhere, and overhead fragrant mimosa-trees cast a pleasant shade. It was an ideal bathing-spot. A little farther on a great tree had fallen, casting huge limbs downwards, as if guarding the entrance to this fairy pool. What a giant it must have been! and what sights it must have seen from its point of vantage during a long life! What a procession there must have been nightly to those clear, cool waters lying below—lion, leopard, giraffe, wildebeeste, impala, kongoni, Grant's gazelle, oribi, Thompson's gazelle, rhinoceros, zebra, dik-dik, cheetah, and many smaller animals must have quenched their thirst in this cool stream. So I meditated until A.'s call roused me.

"Don't you want some luncheon?" he said.

Indeed I did, and I was not long before I joined him, and a very pleasant meal we had.

Then A. went off to try to get a bustard, of which we had seen several. "I won't go far," he said, "for we must get off."

So I sat still and played with Saladin. How he had grown!—already he was as big as a half-grown cat. The "boys" and dogs had gone off with A., two "totos" alone remaining. They were washing up in the quick-running stream. I wandered off, holding Saladin in my arms. How still it was, how peaceful! As usual, I began searching for flowers. At the foot of a tree, half hidden, I came upon *Iris palestrina*, its brown blotched spathe hardly observable among the surrounding foliage. After that I found several and called the "totos" to come

and dig them up. We were all busy when one of them got up to find a sharp stick. "Mem-sahib," he called—"Mem-sahib," and there in the distance were a female giraffe and young one. For some time I stood watching the quaint antics of the little one, running round its mother, its legs splaying out in all directions—such a quaint little beast with such grotesque actions. Then the "toto" clutched my arm. "Mem-sahib! Look!" His tone was one of horror, and he pointed to the long grass immediately in front of us. At first I could see nothing; then, through a broken piece, scarcely four yards away, a big spotted head appeared and two angry yellow eyes glared up into my face, fierce teeth were bared and a spiteful hiss hurled at me as the leopard rushed past and was hidden. My first thought was for my gun! Once again (perhaps just as well) "boy" and gun had disappeared—both gone with A. We made our way back to the camp, looking cautiously round us all the way.

About ten minutes after A. returned. I told him of the incident of the leopard. "You will insist on wandering about alone," was his comment. "You will do it once too often."

He gave orders to saddle the horses again and put the oxen in, but the oxen were a bit refractory. Like myself, they did not like leaving that delightful spot, and it took some time to put them in again. I strolled off to take a last glimpse of my bathing-pool, this time making the "boy" who carried my gun keep beside me. I stood a few minutes taking in every detail: the clear running water, the wealth of ferns, the tiny orchids, the gigantic limbs of the huge fallen tree; then I raised my eyes still higher to the branches festooned with vines and clinging ivy.

Instantly I became frozen to the spot; it was as if I were suddenly mesmerised, for two eyes had found mine,

and straight into their gleaming depths I stared, unable to move. Right along the arm of the tree he lay, stretched out, following me every moment. Mechanically I reached out my hand for the gun, but the "boy" by that time had also caught sight of the leopard. "Quick, Mem-sahib!" he said, and quick I had to be, for the beast was just about to spring. The next instant he had fallen into the clear water beneath. Before he could recover, I fired again; he hit out desperately, gave a convulsive shudder, and all was over.

In two minutes A. was beside me. "Well done, Margaret!" he said. "All off your own bat!"

This caused another delay, for the leopard had to be got out of the water and skinned, so altogether we were there about three hours.

"Well, we can keep on till six, unless we come to a likely spot sooner; anyway the 'gombes' are in now, so we had better make a start," A. said—and on we went again. Soon the ubiquitous thorn made its appearance. Thorn and ant-hills, some of them ten feet high, it was the dreariest place possible to imagine and depressed me frightfully.

At five o'clock there was still no sign of a camping-ground, thornbush everywhere, nothing else. Another half-hour, and we came upon a miserable "manyatta." There might have been fifty people in it all told. Never have I seen such miserable wretches, utterly unclothed; they came out and stared at us in a semi-idiotic way, but no word did they say. What they were, I cannot say: but never in this country have I seen such abject poverty. They presented the appearance of mere skin and bone and seemed eaten up with disease. They put their hands to their mouths to indicate they wanted food. This we could readily believe. A. left a sack of mealie with them, although we felt that it would be little good, and asked to see the headmen. Two dreadful-looking objects came

to the side of the buckboard and A. tried to talk to them, as also did some of the "boys," but could make nothing of them. They were filthily dirty, and a few starved-looking goats seemed all they possessed. I was quite glad when we moved on. Had it been anything of a "manyatta," we should have camped near it; as it was, I thought it best to put some distance between us.

By six o'clock, although we had got out of the thorn-belt, we saw no place suitable for a camping-ground, and, as darkness was fast setting in, A. said we had better camp where we were. The first thing to do was to build a "boma," but never did I see a place so bare of trees of any description. The "totos" and I went in one direction looking for wood for a fire, two or three others went off in another; the net result was enough for one fire or just enough to boil a kettle. However, the "boys" had some cooked meat and plenty of water; we had filled every available article that would hold water at that cool stream before leaving, and water is the main thing in this country. The animals were the difficulty; there was no possibility of building a "boma;" so we must depend on the lamps. The "gombes" were put between the buckboard and the wagon, our tent came next, and the horses and mules were hobbled near-by. There was no food for the "gombes," but they had fed to repletion earlier in the day, and could go without for a few hours. We hung lamps wherever possible, and tired out, I expect we all slept, including the "boys" set on guard. Strange to say, nothing disturbed us all night, which was rather marvellous.

The next day we struck a familiar path and the going became easier. The next night the lions kept us up all night, roaring round the camp, but did not come near enough for us to get a shot. I was not sorry when we reached home, and Manibura came running to meet us,

three "Tommies" and the young zebra running in front.

The next day the "boys" who had been left at home were most anxious for us to go out shooting; they had had no meat since we had been away. About four o'clock we started off, the dogs all delighted to be together again. After riding some distance and sighting nothing, we rode into a herd of wildebeeste, the big bulls, about half a mile from the herd, standing as sentries. The moment they caught sight of us, off they rushed to warn the rest, first standing to gaze at us, then, with heads down and tails erect, off they went, every now and then turning to gaze again. Really they are the most awkward beasts when alarmed, and their contortions (it amounts to nothing else) give rise to much amusement; yet they can be savage enough when it comes to close quarters, as that day was to prove.

After about an hour's hard riding, A. managed to hit a big bull, and, knowing the creature was wounded, we devoted our attention exclusively to it. This sounds easy enough, but it is surprising the number of incidents that occur to take one's attention off a particular animal. Wildebeeste and other animals cross and recross so frequently before one, as if to distract attention, and it is really difficult to keep one's eye on the selected quarry. On this occasion three water-buck suddenly appeared, one of which A. was able to shoot.

At last A. was able to fire again, and this time it was hit in the leg; for a moment it stumbled, then went down on its head, and it looked as if it was coming for us; then, once again, it turned and continued its former course. Then we put our horses to the gallop, A. carrying his gun. Right under a tree with great pendent branches we went. I ducked my head, but misjudged the distance—a branch caught my hat, and away it went. I heard a "boy" shouting behind us as he picked it up, but it

would have taken more than a hat to stop me then. The next shot, as the bull turned and faced us, went right through its chest; it dropped immediately. The dogs, mad with excitement, thinking it was done for, rushed up and began worrying it. A. called to them, but it was useless, and Lucky, less wise or more vindictive than the rest, seized its ear. The next moment she was flying through the air as the great animal caught her on its horns. She dropped and lay quite still. A. put the last shot into the wildebeeste, then we dismounted and turned our attention to Lucky. Was she dead or only stunned? A. examined her. "Stunned," he said. "Ah! she will get over that." We left the "boys" to deal with the wildebeeste and took Lucky home.

The next day her face presented the appearance of no animal on earth, unless it might be a baby hippopotamus, so swollen and distorted was it. Fortunately she missed the horn and had been caught by the full force of the wildebeeste's great head. At first I wondered if her jaw were not broken. Again I nursed her, and at the end of some time Lucky was herself again, not the old playful Lucky of long ago, still, as well as ever she would be; but as I said before, Lucky's disposition had completely changed. At this time a friend in Nairobi, whose husband was going to be away for some time, wanted a dog as a guard, and thinking Lucky had had enough of life in the wilds, we sent her in. The next we heard of Lucky was that she had pinned a would-be burglar down and prevented a robbery.

A few days later we had news that there was to be fighting between the Purgos and another Masai tribe. It was shortly after the circumcision ceremonies and the taking of the spears from the old men and presenting them to the young had taken place. A. did not seem greatly impressed and we took no notice. He said this was a thing that happened more or less frequently on such

occasions. However, the next morning I was standing at the bottom of the "shamba," which had a long row of trees running the whole way outside. All at once I had quite a fright. The first thing that I thought was, "My gun!" A. had told me never to go there without it, and there I was unarmed. Then I looked again, and instead of the lion I had expected to see, there came along in single file, with springy steps, hundreds of warriors in full war-dress: lions' heads superimposed on their own, some with the entire skin from head to tail hanging down their backs, others with collars of hawk and vulture feathers standing out all round like Elizabethan ruffs, all hideously painted with grease and ochre or "dongo" till they assumed a red-ochreish tint. Breastplates of leather much beaded, colobus monkey skins dependent from their legs, red belts and long sheath-knives suspended from their waists, in one hand the long Masai spear and, fastened on the left arm, the big painted shield. How often I had tried to imagine a Masai warrior; never in my wildest dreams had he presented this startling appearance. I went outside the "shamba" in order to see them better; there was a look of grim determination on all their faces, and I might have been an insignificant insect for all the notice they took of me. The merest glance was all they vouchsafed me. On they went, with their light springy step, casting searching glances on every side. It was the sight of a lifetime and one which perhaps no white woman will ever see again.

I went home and told A. of my adventure. "Really, you are too venturesome," he remarked. "You never know what their mood may be; at such times it is never safe to run against them."

"I would not have missed it for anything," was my retort. "Why, such a sight may never be seen again!"

A few hours later a "boy" came running in with a

letter, such as their custom is, in a cleft stick. It was from the District Commissioner at Narok, nearly eighty miles away. You must come in at once, was its purport; the Masai have risen and it is unsafe for white people to remain out there.

"What a storm in a teacup!" I observed. "I am certain they would not touch us."

"Possibly, had I been alone, they would not have sent out," replied A. "But now I have you, it is a different 'shauri.'"

"Well, can't I put on a khaki shirt and shorts?" I queried.

"I am afraid not," A. remarked grimly. "No; we shall have to get in."

Much against my will, the buckboard was got ready, a few articles of attire hastily thrown in, and off we started. On the way some Masai met us; there had been a fight, they said, and many killed. The fourth day of our journey another runner met us. A detachment of Askaris had been sent out and peace restored—we could go back; so we turned the mules round and started for home, nothing loath, I can tell you.

"I told you it was only a storm in a teacup," I remarked.

"Yes; but one never knows where these affairs are going to end," A. replied.

CHAPTER XII

A NIGHT IN THE FOREST

Masai help to dig for bulbs—Leopard for dinner—Visit from the Provincial Commissioner—Visit to a "manyatta"—A night in the forest—Leopard in the "boma"—Pet leopards—Rhinceros out for a constitutional—Hut on fire—Deaths of Wallace and Psyche—Motherless puppies.

FOR a short time after that we stayed quietly at home. The tobacco "shamba" was doing splendidly; A. was delighted. I proposed a day should be given over entirely to collecting bulbs and plants for my garden. A. readily assented. My garden, by this time, was really a thing of beauty, and many hours I spent in it, much to the amusement of the Masai, who could not understand anybody taking the trouble to work hard in order to grow things which were of no good to anybody for anything. You could not eat them, then why grow them? We set out accompanied by a dozen or more "boys," and both deer and zebra had to be shut up until we were well away or they would certainly have come too. As we went along quite a number of Masai joined us. Where were we going? What were we going to do? When we explained that our object was to get more flowers for my garden, they thought that both A. and I were a little mad and expressed their astonishment in the usual manner, "O'we—o'we," with much gesticulation. Then the "totos," tiny naked mites, save for a string of beads with a charm attached, sewn up in leather, thought they might

help, and an odd assortment of weeds they brought me, for which they received biscuits as a reward, but afterwards I had to throw away the weeds. However, they were delighted. Finally, we came on vast quantities of *Eremurus*, and digging began in earnest. What hot work it was! I was having a lazy time, watching everybody else, and continually finding something fresh. Even the old Masai men took a hand with the "jembes," the "jembe" being used everywhere for garden work, but, I noticed, it was only when a root was nearly up that they asked for the "jembe," and then, when they handed it to me triumphantly, they each and all asked for "backsheesh": the Masai neither does nor gives anything for nothing. As the only coins out there were rupees and half-rupees, equal to about two shillings and one shilling at home, this threatened to become expensive, and I made a diversion by saying we would have luncheon. The "boys" brought a basket well filled, and we sat down on a hillock to have it, the Masai squatting a little distance off. Not so the children; they were everywhere, and persistently demanded biscuits spread with ham-and-tongue paste, until I shut up the basket and declared everything finished.

Then A. sighted some guinea-fowl, and with the "boys" went off in search of them. I sat there nursing Saladin, and playing with a tiny "toto" whose mother was a little distance away, most of the men having gone off with A. All at once there was shouting, and I caught the sound "Chui!—chui!" and there, bounding into the open, came a leopard, A. and the "boys" following it. To snatch up the child and Saladin was the work of a moment, and I sank down with my burden the other side of the hillock, the child having almost slipped from my grasp, so thickly was it covered with grease from head to foot. I heard afterwards that the "chui" had actually run over the spot where I had been sitting,

when a shot from A. brought it down. The mother took the child from me as if nothing had happened and, singing, went off with it on her hip.

Another hour or two were spent in collecting, and then we turned homewards, A. managing to secure a wild pig after little trouble. Saladin and I sought refuge in a tree while the chase was going on. Both "chui" and pig were taken home to be skinned. "I wonder if the dogs would eat leopard's flesh?" said A. "I think I will find out," so a leg of the "chui," unknown to me, was taken into the kitchen to be prepared for the dogs. A leg of the pig also found its destination there, A. saying he fancied pork for dinner. Here let me say that I am a vegetarian, and have been for the last thirty years, in fact, ever since my schooldays, when, willy-nilly, I was forced to eat underdone mutton. To this day I abominate the smell of mutton. However, this did not prevent me going into the kitchen and preparing all the food of which A. partook. I seized what I took to be the leg of pork, prepared the stuffing, inserted it, and put the meat into the oven. Meeting Manibura as I came out, I said, "Let the meat cook slowly, Manibura; it is pork, and you know pork wants cooking well and slowly."

"N'dio, Mem-sahib," Manibura replied, "mem wejua" (in other words, "Yes, I know").

Half an hour elapsed, and then Manibura burst into the room in which A. and I were sitting. "Mem-sahib," he began, his eyes almost dropping out of his head—"Mem-sahib, Bwana kula chui!" ("Master eat leopard").

"Certainly not," I replied.

"But you have made the 'chui' eat the stuffer," he expostulated, in his horror lapsing into imperfect English.

Hurriedly I got up and went to the kitchen, Manibura

extracting the offending joint from the oven. "Look!" he said.

I did look, but it certainly looked far more appetising than the pig, which, Manibura averred, he had covered over to keep the "dudus" (flies) off. Needless to say, the resemblance being so close, I wondered if Manibura was sure about which joint was pig and which "chui," and it ended in the dogs getting the benefit of the doubt.

Once again A. went off, I preparing to remain at home, where every day new interests sprang up, and which I now began to love exceedingly. What a pleasure it was to watch the garden sending out new blooms daily, where two years ago nothing but stones and weeds had existed! What joy the poultry also gave me! I had now nearly 150, with tiny chicks, and I had also the various animals, who did their best, by signs at least, to repay me for all my trouble. Even my various duties when A. was away became distinct pleasures. The counting of the sheep and bullocks every night before shutting them in the "boma," what work that was! One, two, three, four; out of the line would step five, to rub a muzzle on my hand and receive a piece of sugar; then on again, up to fifteen perhaps, and the same thing happens again; he is hastily pushed through the entrance and nineteen perhaps reached; up come three to be caressed, jostling and pushing the rest; the others break through, and the count is hopelessly lost, confusion reigns; all the other bullocks have to come out again and the counting begins once more. The same with the sheep, my five pets breaking away from the rest and jumping up like dogs when they reach me. How can one count with such a boisterous crowd around?

One day, quite unexpectedly, Mr. and Mrs. W., the Provincial Commissioner and his wife, with their "safari," stopped just outside our house. How pleased I was to see a white woman again! We all walked over

to the "shamba," and later I took dinner with them in their tent. Mrs. W. had just returned after a stay in London, and had much news to impart, which, however, did not make me at all anxious to wend my way "homeward." The endless standing in procession for a small quantity of meat, the fabulous price of chickens, the improbability of getting butter, whatever price one was willing to pay, and eggs at sixpence apiece, made me thankful to be in Africa, and in the wilds at that, with eggs galore, milk in plenty, and meat for the shooting, did I need it. Coal, again, appeared to be unthinkable, and here we were, taking dinner in January under the stars, clad in thin muslin dresses! What a contrast! I went home, the "boys" carrying lamps, although I hardly needed a light, so bright was the moon, so radiant the stars, shining in the deep velvety vault above. The strong scent of vanilla, given off by some unseen flower, rose to my nostrils; the cry of a night-bird reached my ears; around all was silence, save the rippling of waters in the stream, across which we should make our way; and the charm of Africa gripped me and held me tight, as perhaps it only does those who have lived alone and revelled in its vast solitudes.

The next day a Somali came to see me. Would I sell my sheep? At that time we had somewhere near four hundred, and I knew A. intended sending them in to Narok on his return. That was sure to mean a loss, apart from the toll taken by leopards on the journey across country. There is a percentage taken by the "boys," who tell you, on their return, so many have died, and as a proof show you the skins. Of course, a few may die; but you can safely reckon on two a day, and sometimes three, and these the fattest and the best, finding their way to the "boys'" hungry jaws. Taking this into consideration, I thought it best to sell them, so, after making some demur, I consented to let him see them.

They were out in the pasture, and I accompanied him to the grazing-ground.

On our way we passed a deserted "manyatta." I had long wanted to enter one; now was my opportunity. The Masai had only left three days before, their cattle having consumed the greater part of the grass. Having disposed of my sheep, the "boy" being left in charge of my five pets only until we acquired more, I dismissed the Somali and betook myself to the "manyatta." This one consisted of about forty huts, built close together in a circle, the only break being at the entrance, which was covered at night with thorn-bush. The houses or huts were all circular in shape, the tops daubed with cow manure, which hardens in the sun. This is kept in repair by the women, and continual applications keep it water-tight. The centre of the circle is used for cattle and sheep, and the whole of the exterior is protected by thorn-bush, piled up to a height of ten feet or more. This "manyatta" included a large living- and sleeping-room in each hut, the sticks which had formed the beds being still in position covered with eucalyptus leaves and grass, and a circle of stones in the centre, over which a pot could be suspended. Attached to this was a smaller room, evidently used for lambs or calves. The whole was indescribably dirty, and it was impossible to remain for more than two or three minutes, for the fleas swarmed in millions. How the Masai put up with them is more than I know. A few broken calabashes or "kibois" were all that remained of their late tenants.

It was not long before the restless feeling took possession of me again. It always did when A. was away. The nights were glorious now, with the moon at the full, almost too warm to sleep indoors, yet one dared not sleep out. I had a happy thought. Why not pass a night in the forest? I told a "toto" of my

resolve and asked him to come with me. Evidently he thought my madness was taking a new form.

"Do you want to shoot, Mem-sahib?" he asked.

"No, Nabo; but I want to watch the animals," I replied. "Of course I shall take my gun, but shall not shoot unless obliged. There will be two rupees for you in the morning," I added as an afterthought.

Nabo wavered a moment, as if weighing the chances of a night in the forest with a madwoman against the ownership of two rupees, and the rupees gained the day.

"Yes, I will come," he said.

"You are not to tell anyone, Nabo," I insisted. "If you do and I find out, there will be no rupees."

Nabo looked impressed. No, he would not tell. So it was settled.

That night I saw to the setting of the traps as usual, gave the "boys" their mealie flour, counted the oxen, and performed my other duties as usual. Then, dinner finished, and the "boys" in their own huts, I quietly fastened the door, took my gun, and with Nabo trotting beside me, we made our way to the forest. It was a gorgeous night, the moon a big disc of silver, the stars in all their myriads, shining out of a carpet of soft velvety blue. Not a leaf stirred, not a sound broke the stillness, save the chirp of grasshoppers. One could see every twig, every pebble, in the path, until the forest was reached. Then the scene became one of even greater beauty, the soft rays of the moon penetrating the leafy shade and throwing into relief the giant trunks of the great trees. Even the tiny orchids stood out snowy-white against the denser background, and the lianas, flecked with silver, reaching almost to the ground, made it a veritable picture of fairyland. For a moment I longed for someone at my side, someone who could see with my eyes and appreciate this to the full, as I did.

Not a ten-year-old black boy, who at this moment was no doubt soliloquising, "Well, of all the crazy creatures, these Mem-sahibs are the worst I have ever met, to come out here at night, when they might be sound asleep in bed."

We climbed a tree, previously found by Nabo, and took a seat that might have been prepared on purpose. Then I placed my gun across my knee as a precaution. We had taken up our position in one of a line of trees forming a natural avenue, and being, I well knew, a track leading out of the forest to the stream, so that my opportunity for seeing wild animals was unquestionable. First, looking from side to side, came a serval cat in the moonlight. Its spots could be distinctly seen as it passed down the long streak of light immediately underneath us. Next, a procession of rats moved across the track, one, two, three—I gave up counting; they were innumerable. I no longer wondered at the trails crossing and recrossing; now I could understand that the passage of rats in these enormous numbers could wear down hard ground until little furrows, without a blade of grass, alone remained to give one a faint idea of their number. From my perch they appeared to glide rather than run.

Then, heralded by much squeaking, almost tumbling over each other, came tree-hyrax, looking not unlike guinea-pigs. Up and down, crossing and recrossing, now and again giving funny little leaps in the air, they too at last vanished, to be followed by a long procession of deer. How graceful they were!—many accompanied by their young, who frisked round their mothers, these meantime gazing timidly around, their feet hardly seeming to touch the ground. Two oryx had a pitched battle right before my eyes, both sleek, big, handsome antelope. It lasted quite twenty minutes, and then something startled them and they bounded off, though, even as I watched them, down went their heads again

and I heard the clash of their long horns, though I could no longer see them.

Nabo had curled himself up and fallen asleep soon after getting into the tree. His head now rested on my lap. A mongoose, with long, bushy white tail, gave a few little leaps, then seized a rat and disappeared with it. It was so quick, the rat did not stand a chance. Then there was a rattling noise—surely I had heard that before? Yes, I was not mistaken: into the shaft of moonlight, fussing and snuffing about, came four porcupines, two only half-grown, their quills rustling along the ground as they walked, like bundles of twigs. A genet cat and two kittens played at the other end of the avenue for some minutes, then they too went off at a fast trot. Bats almost brushed my face in their never-ceasing gyrations. A huge bird for a moment cast a complete shade over me as it sailed away, and I heard in the distance shortly after its deep booming cry, "Hoo! hoo! hoo!"—a pause after the first "hoo," the others in quick succession. I believe it was the greater hornbill, but as A. was not with me, could not be sure.

Then a wait of perhaps half an hour: another mongoose, more cats, and all the time rats and rats and rats. Something stirred at the back of me, then fell, right on the sleeping Nabo's face. It was only a chameleon, and did not wake him or disturb him in the least. With a whisk of its tail it was off before I could put out a hand. Hyenas, spotted, grey, and striped, I counted thirty-seven between ten o'clock and two, horrible, fiery-eyed brutes, uttering their incessant wail as they slouched along.

Bounding down the avenue with much grace, agility, and freedom of action, came two cheetahs; I always entertain feelings of something near akin to affection for these beasts, so virile, so careless in their movements are they. Nothing of the calculating, stealthy

tread of the leopard, nothing of its venomous hatred for mankind. They never attack human beings, rather avoid them, and when tamed make most interesting and affectionate pets. Down this fairy glade, stepping lightly, fitting accompaniment to this sylvan scene, came a small herd of blue duiker, perhaps the prettiest of all the deer family. Tiny legs, no thicker than the fountain-pen with which I write, beautiful blue, or perhaps slate, silky bodies, small graceful heads set on such slender throats, and big lustrous eyes, they look only fitted for such surroundings as these, such absolute stillness and peace. By twos and threes they came, scarcely deigning to touch the ground. I almost held my breath for fear I should startle them. Smaller than a hare, some of them, infinitely more graceful, they filed out into the moonlight, beauty personified. Oh the mystery, the wonder of it all! The tropical moon gazed down on it, as she has gazed for untold ages, and as I hope and pray she may for years and years to come. This scene alone was worth the coming for, and will remain in my memory while life shall last.

A snarling grunt; as if by magic they were gone, and I felt a thrill of expectancy, mixed with regret. I had not long to wait; with stealthy step and sinuous gait, casting fierce eyes here and there, walking warily, lest his tread might give notice of his whereabouts to some helpless creature, stalked a big male leopard. Instantly my hand went to the trigger of my gun. How I loathed the creature! What a shuddering dread it sent through me up there, safely hidden though I felt I was! Fortunately there was not a breath of air. Almost I fancied the beast must hear my heart beat; but no, he wormed himself in and out the bracken, only standing in the moonlight for a brief moment, and I lost sight of him. Inwardly I wondered where the pretty blue duiker were then—safe out of harm's way, I hoped and trusted.



LEOPARD.



TAKING A MULE ACROSS A RIVER.

Yet he must live—mentally I said it. Nature has ordained it so, the strong preying on the weak, the great taking their toll of the small. Somehow one's sympathy never goes out to the leopard; it stands for lust and cruelty, I think, even more than the lion. A lion kills to eat; a leopard never seems to have his fill of blood—he kills and kills wantonly for sheer love of killing.

Let me explain what I mean. A short time after the events of that night, after A. had returned, there was a terrific noise in the "boma." We were sound asleep at the time, but dressed quickly and hastened out. Bullocks were rushing wildly about, sheep huddled together in one corner; fortunately at that time we only had about twenty, I having disposed of the rest as before mentioned, and those were newly acquired. The "boys" ran hither and thither, as if demented.

"What is it?" A. demanded.

"Chui—chui! Bwana," was the reply.

"Any damage?" asked A.

"Mem-sahib's sheep."

I made my way into the "boma" quicker than it takes to tell the tale, but A. intercepted me.

"No good looking, Margaret," he said; "come away."

However, I had seen enough. Of my five pets, one was gone, one lay stretched out just gasping, the rest dead. They always lay in one particular spot in the "boma," and fresh grass was spread there nightly and a lamp hung immediately over them; but a leopard cares nothing for lamps, very little for fire, if he thinks he can leap it.

I felt choked. "Brutes!—brutes!—brutes!" was all I could say. "Why must it have singled out mine? Surely it might have taken some of the others."

"A leopard always takes the fattest and best," said A.; "but we will have him to-night." So the trap was set at the very spot where the leopard had

broken through, the old goat, with my collar round his neck, took up his position, and by ten o'clock the next night we had the murderer. I was only sorry that his death had been such a painless one.

When the Masai heard of it, a number of young lambs were brought in and exorbitant prices asked. A. picked out five of the prettiest, all brown and white with big dewlaps, and bought them for me. They were commencing to feed themselves, but still came to me to be fed with a bottle three times a day. When I had to fly from the Masai, they were big, handsome sheep.

Speaking of the leopards brings a tale to my mind that was told to me by the Game Warden in Nairobi. A friend of his, who had a pet leopard, if those creatures can ever be called "pets," camped in the open. The leopard was fastened on a chain, without possibility of escape. One day, another man on "safari," passing by, was prevailed on to stay the night and put up his tent close by. They sat chatting for some time, and finally retired to bed.

About two hours after the visitor was awakened by the other man rushing into his tent and shouting, "For Heaven's sake, give me a drink!" The visitor quickly did so, inquiring, "What's wrong, old chap?"

"I thought my leopard had got loose," was the reply. "I woke up to find the big beast standing over me. I got my 'kiboko,' which was under my pillow, and lashed out at it. It showed fight, and I hit it with all my might. I knew it was either he or I. Finally, I struck it across the eyes and drove it to the door, where it disappeared in the darkness. Then I went to the place where I always keep it chained, and—judge my surprise—my leopard was still there. It must have been a wild one that had got in and I did not know it."

He was badly clawed, but that was all; whereas, had he known it was a strange beast he was tackling,

his nerve would have left him and the leopard would have proved his master. This bears out what I have previously said, that most animals are possessed of this indescribable intuition, and know, as well as you do yourself, as soon as you approach them, whether they need fear you or whether you already fear them, and behave accordingly.

One night, when the moon was only a thin crescent in the sky, we had retired early, having had a tiring day. A. had been busy in the "shamba," where the tobacco was now requiring all his attention, and I fully occupied with my garden and poultry, in addition to which we had been disturbed quite early in the morning by a Masai begging the loan of a bullock-wagon to bring in a friend who had lost the use of his legs. I told him we were not "medicine-men," so could not be sure that we could do him any good, but, if he liked to bring him in, we would try. It was barely daylight when he came. However, we got up and had been at work ever since, the custom which prevails in this country of taking an afternoon siesta not in any way appealing to either A. or myself. A new hut had also been finished for a Lumbwa driver, who was to return that day, A. himself superintending in order to get it finished.

About noon the wagon and sick Masai came in, A. having placed a hut at their disposal, stipulating that the friend should remain to give him food. From his symptoms as he described them, I considered he must be suffering from muscular rheumatism, and gave the friend a bottle of mustard oil and a bottle of Elluman's embrocation to be used in turn as a massage.

So many Masai came in with the wagon, attracted by the novelty of a ride, that A. gave them an old tent in which to sleep, many of them being quite old men. In the middle of the night we were wakened by the

barking of dogs and the yells of the Masai. Going out, we found the tent on the ground, like a collapsed balloon, and the Masai, one of whom had been trampled on, hardly able to believe they were still alive. A rhinoceros, out for a constitutional, had found the tent in his way, so had walked through it, the result being one man's face badly injured and the ear all but off. I dressed and bandaged it, and again we retired.

Scarcely had we gone to sleep again when more yells and shouts disturbed our slumbers. Whatever could it be this time? On opening the door, the first thing we saw was flames, and the "boys" leaping about all round them.

"Why, it is Kiptoi's hut," said A.; and so it was. Although expressly forbidden, he had taken the oil left over from that which he had used on the "safari" into his hut, then made up a big fire, and the oil had caught alight. The new hut, that A. had been so careful to have made strongly and well, gone the first night it was used!

"Well," said A., when the fire was safely out and once more we sought repose, "you can find time and materials to build yourselves another hut, or go without."

Should we ever be permitted to sleep? I wondered as I drew the curtains over my doorway.

"Inshallah," was A.'s reply.

Just after midnight off went a gun. "Was that a gun?" asked A., half awake.

"I think so, but really I am not sure," I answered sleepily, making my own way to the door.

I was not long left in doubt. Cries of "Bwana!—Bwana!" fell on my ear.

"Get up," I said; "you are wanted." A. seemed hours getting into his clothes, I awaiting him, his gun and my own in my hands.

"What is it?" he asked of the "boys" as they came running to meet us. "Simba or chui" (lion or leopard), "we don't know which. He has got out of the trap."

If it were badly injured, it might not have gone far, and it would be a bad job for anyone to go near it unknowingly, as they almost certainly would; and there was the "boy" who would be herding the sheep and the "boy" who would herd the "gombes"—both would cover a good quantity of ground next morning.

"Yes," said A., examining the ground with the aid of a lantern, "we had better follow the trail."

There was quite a lot of blood on the ground; evidently it was badly injured, and probably not far off.

"You go back to bed, Margaret," he advised. "We shall soon find the gentleman."

"Indeed I shall not," I returned.

"Yes, please go; this night-work is not for a woman; it is too risky," and he gave the "boy" a lantern, telling him to see me to the house.

"If I do not come with you, I shall come after you," was my reply, so A. gave in and said no more. I took the lantern from the "boy," preferring to carry the light myself; but lantern and gun proved too much, so I returned it.

A., following the trail, was soon some distance ahead. The "boy" with the lantern persistently held it low, so that we also might see the trail, and as persistently hid the light with his own body. I was just about to take it from him again, when down I went into a great hole we had been excavating in order to obtain material for bricks. How it was my gun did not go off was a miracle, for it flew from my hands as I fell. When I picked myself up, feeling just a bit stunned, I was minus two front teeth. With the aid of the "boy" I scrambled

out, and he was threatened with all the pains and penalties possible to conceive if he did not keep beside me, and not in front. I looked at A.'s receding figure and hurried on, feeling a little sore from my disaster.

Fortunately, A. appeared to have stopped, and by the barking of the dogs and general excitement appeared also to have found his quarry. I hurried up.

"Take care! It is a lion, and a big one at that; it is feeling pretty sick too."

Ominous growls now reached my ears, proceeding from the thick bush. A pool of blood showed where it had lain for a moment before entering. Herod and Cæsar, two ferocious wolf-coloured dogs, were worrying their way through; Bruce, Wallace, and Llewellyn quickly followed, the last three brothers, sons of poor old Trojan, who had met his fate as perhaps these were now to do. Angry roars and fierce growls told of the struggle going on within a few yards from us. Out crawled Wallace, staggered and fell at my feet. Oh the rage that took possession of me at that moment! Trojan, Juliet, and Wallace all had met the same fate, dealt out by these merciless monsters. If only I could kill it! Even that would not satisfy me, I knew. We could see nothing, but knew, from the sounds that met our ears, that a fierce battle was in progress.

The Masai had now joined us, one only being a Morani, the rest oldish men. The Morani had the usual long spear carried by the young men. He wound his blanket round his left arm and stood, with his spear poised in the air, ready to strike the moment the lion made its appearance. Two more dogs, or rather bitches, Juno and Psyche, now rushed up, with long strands of rope hanging from their collars. I had told the "boys" not on any account to let them loose. Both had pups at the time. Before anyone had time to clutch the ropes, in they went, after the rest. The din was deafening.



MASAI "MORANI."



HEADMAN AND MASAI "MORANI."



A GREATER BUSTARD.



ON "SAFARI."

Just as we were all getting desperate, a huge, shaggy form sprang from the bush, to be met with the Masai spear and bullets from A. and myself, the Masai spear being broken with the force of the impact.

The tension was over, the dogs, one by one, emerged, and I said over their names as they came to be caressed : " Herod ! Cæsar ! Bruce ! Llewellyn ! Juno ! Psyche ! " " Psyche ! " I called. There was no answer. Then A. called " Psyche !—Psyche ! " and the boys took up the cry. We listened. Not a sound was to be heard. The bush for several yards would be pretty safe now. The " boys," many of whom had brought " pangas " as well as spears, cut away the thorn, and at last we reached the scene of this last desperate struggle. Poor Psyche, her skull split in two, lay dead. It must have been almost instantaneous. A big hole was dug and she was buried out of reach of the hyenas. The " boys " remained behind to skin the lion, who had been shot through the lungs when the trap had gone off. The huge head had failed to effect an entrance, so the lion had evidently turned it slightly sideways and the bullet had sliced a piece off his nose, then travelled downwards to the lungs.

I went home, fastened Juno securely, gave each dog a piece of meat, and took the six motherless puppies into my own room. Just three weeks old, it would fall to my lot to bring them up, and never was task undertaken more willingly. It was three o'clock by this time, so we had some coffee made, and placed the gramophone outside for the " boys' " edification, the record of the " Man who bought a house-boat " causing roars of laughter, for although no words were understood, the noise was the great thing !

The little amount of sleep I had in Masailand has often given me food for thought ; never was there a night when my sleep was not broken. Frequently, as

on that night, it meant getting up and going out for an hour or two, yet I was exceptionally well the whole time; in fact, I never remember to have had even a headache. Do we have too much sleep? It almost seems so.

CHAPTER XIII

SNAKES AND INSECTS

Fight amongst Somali—Encounter with rhinos—Masai badly mauled by lion—Native girl bitten by snake—Masai method with old or sick persons—A "safari" in the rains—Food and bedding soaked—Visitation of beetles—White ants—Big spiders—Bees—Grasshoppers—Caterpillars—Tree frogs—Chameleons—Ticks—Shrikes—Monkeys—Pythons.

A FEW nights later we were aroused by some Somalis, fierce-looking, gaudily-clad men with flashing, restless eyes, and hands for ever fingering their murderous-looking sheath-knives. They carried one of their number, who really seemed to be at the point of death. There had been a quarrel and a free fight, knives being freely drawn and many minor injuries inflicted. This man, so A. was informed afterwards, had his leg, from buttock to knee, ripped up. It was marvellous that he was still alive, and more marvellous still, thanks to A.'s ministrations, that he recovered.

I did not see him; I had no love for the Somali, and felt little inclination to help such a cruel, bigoted, quarrelsome crowd as they proved themselves to be. Their attitude to women was specially obnoxious, their proud and arrogant bearing more than I, at least, could stand. I remember on one occasion when, the door of our house being open, they all crowded in, to the exclusion of myself, I being just behind them. I ordered them out, and told them that in my country no man would think of entering a lady's house unless asked to do so. They came out quickly, but I heard their

derisive laughter as they walked away. However, from that time they were more guarded in their behaviour where I was concerned, and would always make way for me to pass—a thing they had never done before; but thy were far from friendly, and I never trusted them.

With the Masai it was different. There was always an understanding between us; in fact, the women came to me with troubles small and great and, as far as lay in my power, I did my best to help them. There were continual fights, on a small scale, among the Somali, and many were the bandages and much the liniment and ointment handed by me to A. for their use, but, personally, I gave them nothing. It was a source of great satisfaction to us both that their camp was the other side of the river, which, to some extent, acted as a boundary line.

I felt sorry I had not seen the rhino, when it charged the tent. That and the elephants were about the only beasts I had not yet encountered, but my chance came, most unexpectedly, shortly afterwards. We were out, as usual, after game, and reached the banks of a stream in which a small quantity of water still remained after the long summer's drought. We had just had a hard gallop after wildebeeste and were quietly walking our horses home. Viceroy, the new horse A. had bought me, stopped at the approach to the stream and sniffed at the water eagerly.

"We may as well let them drink here," I remarked, as I prepared to descend into the stream.

A. followed suit, but, quick as lightning, seized my horse's bridle and pulled it back. Not a moment too soon. Four piggy eyes had already seen us, and their owners were almost at the top of the incline before we turned and faced them. A. fired two bullets in quick succession, neither of which appeared to hit the beast. Then, while he reloaded, I fired also, but our horses



BUFFALO.



RHINOCEROS.

were unaccustomed to this sort of game, and tried to run away, so small wonder we hit nothing. The calf got up close by the mother and, for a brief moment, it seemed as if she were about to charge. Then, suddenly changing her mind, down went her head, she turned awkwardly and set off at lightning speed in the opposite direction, followed by the calf. A. sent a bullet after her, to accelerate her speed, if that were possible.

"How do you like rhinos?" was A.'s query, when the beast had become a mere speck.

"Not at all; I don't care if I never see another," was my fervent reply, and, save at a distance, I never did.

For so heavy a brute, it was simply wonderful to see the way in which it cleared the ground; our horses, fagged as they were, would have found it no easy matter to outstrip it. The calf looked a funny little round barrel, but was quite big enough to have given trouble, and its wicked little eyes said plainly that if mother had said the word, it was quite ready. We wondered how the "boys" would fare who remained behind to skin the wildebeeste. We learnt later that they had just shambled off, barely looking at them.

When nearly home we saw two giraffes quietly browsing off the tender shoots of the mimosa, but they caught sight of us and were gone instantly.

The next day the Masai came bringing a man and a child who had been badly clawed by a lion. The man had been tending the oxen when the beast had sprung on him. He was just a bleeding mass of humanity, nothing more. If ever I needed nerve I did then; the mere thought of the awful spectacle that unfortunate creature presented even now makes me shudder. One eye was entirely destroyed; his face was like a map with the water-courses well defined; his arms were ripped up; right across his chest, extending to the abdomen,

were claw-marks like furrows; his legs were badly lacerated and the right shoulder badly bitten. I fairly gasped, wondering where I should begin.

Big bowls of warm water and lysol, enough bandaging to make a good-sized sheet, plenty of perchloride of mercury, a terrific dose of Epsom-salts, and, enveloped like a mummy, the man retired to our tent, another Masai remaining to attend to his wants. There for three weeks he remained, both A. and I dressing and bandaging every day. To let him return to the "manyatta" could not be thought of; it would have been sheer madness, in fact his death-sentence, so filthy are their habits and surroundings. Why, the thought of such an amount of clean rag as the poor old chap had round him would have made him worth robbing the instant he had entered his hut. The man who accompanied him had the left arm badly lacerated, but he, a big, handsome Morani, had rolled his blanket round his arm and driven his spear absolutely down the lion's throat, a favourite method of the Masai of despatching lions.

It will hardly be believed, I know, but ultimately the badly wounded man recovered, although the left arm seemed to have lost much of its power. Of course, the scars would always remain, and when, on leaving us, A. jokingly remarked that he could not give him back his good looks, he waved him aside. Good looks! What did he want with good looks? As long as he lived the Masai would point to him and say, "That is a brave man. Look, all of you: he fought a lion."

The child, who, it appeared, had handed the old man a spear (plucky little mite!), had been pretty well scalped. He was a nice, bright little boy, and stayed with us about three weeks, when I gave him one of poor Psyche's pups, to his great delight, telling him to let me see it every week, and that if he did not look

after it, I should take it back. It came much more often than once a week, and certainly was a credit to the way in which the Masai treated it.

The lion's skin they also brought in, a great big, tawny-maned brute it was. Evidently not the only one, for a succession of "gombes" came in shortly after, all of which we treated, and badly mauled they were, one and all. Some recovered, some we could see from the first were past help. Nevertheless, we treated all alike. It satisfied the Masai.

Numerous were the python skins brought to us, twenty-two and twenty-four feet being quite common, and black "mambas" by the score—the country must swarm with them. The daughter of one of the headmen was bitten and brought in about two hours after. They could not describe the snake properly; certainly from their description it was not a mamba; we were inclined to think it was a puff-adder. "Of course it is hopeless," A. declared as he went to the store in order to get some permanganate of potash. The girl was then in a comatose condition, but, although we told them she was sure to die, they would not be satisfied until we had administered some "dawa" (medicine). So A. cut the black flesh away and placed some crystals of permanganate in the wound, while I tried to administer brandy. It was all of no avail, the girl was evidently dying; so, as no one would touch the body when dead, we asked them to take her away. This they did, but to no great distance, judging from the time they were gone, for in half an hour they were back again asking for tobacco. We asked them where they had put the girl, but they only gave evasive answers and went off chewing, as if nothing had happened.

This is the ordinary method among the Masai; when they consider a man is about to die, they carry him to the bush and leave him to be devoured by the

hyenas. It is considered most unlucky for anyone to die in a hut; in fact, the hut will be pulled down at once. When the Masai are on "safari," or journey, to another pasture-land and one of their number falls sick, if unable to walk, a calabash or "kiboi" of milk is placed beside him and he is left to fate—in other words, wild beasts.

The same system prevails among most African tribes, and a Nandi "boy," whom I had in Mombasa, seemed greatly surprised when I told him he would have to bury his baby, which had just died, like the Swahilis did. This appears to justify the presence of the hyena; its use as scavenger cannot be doubted, nor its repulsiveness. It is a most cowardly animal, only attacking the sick, the feeble, or the very young. Of course, there are exceptions to this, as to everything else, and cases of hyenas attacking women are not unheard of; in fact, they will even seize a man when asleep and unprotected; yet they are wonderfully powerful beasts and apparently do not know their own strength. Their cry, uttered in ever so many different keys, is most creepy, and the laugh, when once heard, is not soon forgotten.

One "safari" we took to Endeledi remains in my memory still. It started to rain soon after we got there, and before we could get the tents up everything was soaked. It was the most miserable "safari" possible to imagine, and the only one in which we had wet weather when I accompanied A. I set to work, trying to get my camp-bed up. Oh, the job I had! If everything had not reeked with wet, really I should have lain on the ground. Everyone was busy, the fires would not light, there was only a miserable bit of pasture for the "gombes" and no thorn-bush to make a "boma." The rain had got into the meat, which looked a sodden, uneatable mass. A tin of jam, a packet of Quaker oats, and a tin of condensed milk had become inextricably

mixed. Then, in dragging the bedding off the wagon, the cords round the mackintosh that enveloped the whole had become loosened and the lot reposed in the roadway. Fortunately there were two dry travelling-rugs, and with these and our waterproofs we had to be content. Then the "boys" gave the fire up as hopeless, there were so few sticks, and they no sooner caught alight than they were out; so we went to bed, but not to sleep. We had chosen a spot where the soil seemed more sandy than the rest and where the ground sloped away on either side. We were very tired, and, speaking for myself, no sooner was I in bed than I lowered the lamp in the hope of getting some sleep. Immediately something crawled across my forehead; I brushed it off and again closed my eyes. Then there was something in my ear; hurriedly I shook my head. Next a long-legged creature scurried across my lips. In disgust I turned up the lamp to see what manner of beast was disturbing my rest. If one can imagine black ladybirds—that was exactly the size, shape, and general appearance of the beasts. They came in tens and twenties; they came in hundreds; they came in thousands, in battalions, in armies, in huge concourses; trillions would be but a few compared with the countless host that swarmed over the bed, covered my nightdress, and darkened the walls of the tent.

In the next tent I heard A. alternately slapping himself and muttering vindictive "d—s." I realised the futility of any action on our part, and as quickly as I could, dressed myself again. A. lay and smoked without ceasing until morning. The rain came down as if it never meant to stop. Oh, but how cold I felt! I wrapped the rug tightly round me and tried to read, but the wretched insects swarmed all over the page and I had to give it up. Never was morning more welcome, and with it the sun returned. The "boys" ran in all

directions searching for wood, and at last got the kettle to boil and brought us some welcome coffee.

The animals are by no means the greatest pest in this country; mosquitoes are to be met with in a greater or less degree in most parts. White ants will permit a wooden house to stand perhaps twelve months, consequently all houses are built off the ground on stone columns or on poles saturated with tar. They carry up minute quantities of earth until tunnels are formed on the exterior, and inside these they work, gradually mounting upwards, eating their way as they go. A big trunk was placed on the ground. At the end of a week, when lifted up, the contents (also eaten in part) tumbled out. There was no bottom to the trunk, a new solid leather one. A big piece of wood crumbles into sawdust after remaining a short period exposed to white ants.

Spiders are enormous. The tarantula is fairly common. I have seen several caught in gardens in Nairobi. One specimen, like our garden variety to be seen everywhere at home during the autumn (the one with the huge brown body), has a cousin out here, whose girth is indeed enormous. I caught one in Masailand with a great fat body two and a half inches across. I kept the dried specimen, hoping to take it to South Kensington one day, but, like many other things, it was destroyed.

Speaking of ants recalls an incident when the "boys," in the middle of the night, had to vacate their houses and run. Their houses had been taken possession of by parties of safari ants, who drove everything before them. In the morning they were still pouring in, and not until we searched and found the hole through which they were streaming up out of the ground and emptied buckets of hot carbolic into it did we stop the countless columns. The fowls had a luxurious feed afterwards.

Bees, too, in some localities, do considerable damage. They seem to affect certain districts, and when they make their appearance man and beast alike fly from them. On one farm alone eighty fowls were stung to death.

Grasshoppers I have heard in countless millions making their chirping noise. It was impossible to hear oneself speak, and even the horses took fright and ran away from this volume of sound. In many parts one sees caterpillars in long columns, head to tail. At Naivasha once, on looking out of my window, I saw what at first I took to be a very attenuated snake, green in colour and about three yards in length. Going cautiously out, armed with a stick, I was surprised to find my snake was only a succession of caterpillars, all fastened together in a long column, apparently stationary on the ground. On observing them more closely, I saw that they were green and white, hairy, and about the thickness of one's little finger.

The tree-frogs were the quaintest things to be seen at Naivasha. They principally affected the geraniums, lying close to the leaf, in fact they seemed to exude a liquid from their bodies which glued them firmly to the leaf. When I tried to detach one, it immediately sent out a frothy exudation which almost covered it. There were white frogs, grey frogs, pink frogs, buff frogs, and slaty-blue frogs, all with pink legs and feet, none of them more than two inches in length, some considerably less.

The chameleons were a source of much excitement to the cats. In Masailand they seemed to be everywhere. If you looked up a tree, stretched along its branches you beheld a brownish-grey creature intently watching you, which, if you went closer, immediately turned green, then a most brilliant blue. There were holes in every depression in the ground, as in every tiny hillock, out

of which heads popped at intervals. What sport the cats had! Their whole lives seemed devoted to catching these chameleons and bringing them into the house for me to rescue. When it was not chameleons, it was lizards.

The ticks are a scourge alike to man and beast. They attack everything and stop at nothing. Bullocks are particularly susceptible. Horses, dogs, and cats, all fall victims to the pest. When I first saw the wretched things, it was on a blue Persian cat whose ear appeared to me to be filled with a growth resembling an abscess. It was exactly the colour of the cat's coat. When I was told they were insects, I could not believe it. Brown before they attach themselves to an animal, they commence drawing blood from it and swell to ten times their ordinary size, becoming slate-blue in colour, and then fall off, gorged to repletion. When once their mandibles become firmly fixed in an animal, pulling them off only results in a sore place. They should be snipped with scissors, but, so repulsive are they, it requires some courage to do this. Dogs become frequently so weakened that death results; nothing but constant watchfulness or, if this is possible, dipping is of any use. Our own dogs, when at home, were dipped every week; and directly dogs returned from "safari," straight to the dip they went.

Milk formed a large portion of the Masai diet. The Masai brought us in quantities of milk daily in their evil-smelling "kibois." They took tobacco in exchange, we first assuring ourselves that the milk was good. It was all boiled and mixed with the dogs' meal and meat. Anything and everything they will exchange for tobacco. On one occasion they brought me a number of shrikes, or butcher-birds, to exchange for tobacco. Of course, the birds were dead, but, objectionable as the butcher-bird is, I could not encourage this wanton

killing, so gave them nothing. I cannot say that I have ever seen small birds impaled by these shrikes, although insects often are, a thorn-bush covered in grasshoppers and winged insects of all descriptions killed by the birds being a frequent sight.

News came to A. that a number of monkeys had invaded the "shamba" and were stripping the pea and onion beds. We hurried off at once, intent on giving the marauders a lesson. What a time they were having! Really, had it been anyone else's "shamba," I think I should have said, "Let them stay just for a few minutes." Never did I see creatures enjoy themselves as these did. Mother monkeys cramming the baby monkeys with peas; old monkeys pulling up onions; one sedate old creature sitting down, a tomato in each hand; others busy at the raspberry bushes. Soon there would be nothing left.

A. fired, and a female monkey was unfortunately killed. She had a tiny monkey clutched in her arm at the time. Poor little mite! it was pitiful to see the way in which it clung to her when she dropped, but when the "boys" attempted to drag it away it bit savagely and made off with the rest. I determined that never again would I be present when monkey shooting was to take place. It is too human.

For some time now we had not been in the forest, so much had claimed our attention—the garden, the "shamba," the poultry, the house. Clearing, however, had been going on, and we decided to give up an afternoon to seeing what progress the "boys" had made. We rode up on our horses, went over the "shamba," where the depredations of the monkeys were only too apparent, then entered the forest. There was a nice wide grass path on one side of the stream now, the other side had not been cut away, but there was no longer danger of one hanging oneself. Rank grass and

vegetation had been cleared away and the ferns were now all clearly visible, some of them nearly as high as myself. A partridge had actually made a nest under the broad frond of one fern, and we had great difficulty in keeping the dogs from chasing her. How delicious it smelt! how beautiful and cool after the outside glare! The junipers were thick with berries and gave off a fresh piny scent; only in one or two places had we difficulty in getting along now.

The "boys" had, indeed, worked well. We crossed and recrossed out of sheer enjoyment, as some fresh plant met our eye. At last we came to the tangled mass of vegetation which shut in the dense forest from view, although, even here, the "boys" had cleared a considerable amount since our last visit, as the dead branches, piled on either side, testified. A big tree invited us to sit down, and a boy spread our luncheon, after which A. went to sleep and I took out a book and read. So quiet were we that a tiny dik-dik sprang out beside me and bounded off. I glanced at my watch—three o'clock; we must be thinking of returning! I sat musing for a few moments before waking A. I was always loath to leave this lovely spot which really seemed to belong to us, so free were we from intrusion.

Juno and Bruce had followed us and were fast asleep also, their heads resting on my lap. I would give A. ten minutes more. I got up, the dogs following, and was standing beside the stream, watching the movements of a water-rat, when all at once there was a yelp and a scream. I turned round to find Bruce in the embrace of a big python, Juno barking her hardest and every now and then getting a bite at the great slithery reptile. I seized my gun, fired at its head and missed, at the same time calling to A. Poor Bruce! the big coils were winding closer round him now; he screamed in his agony as both A. and I fired again at the creature's head, Juno

never ceasing in her endeavour to free her companion. The big muscles suddenly ceased writhing, another shot, and we could see them become flaccid, although it was some minutes before our united efforts succeeded in extricating the poor dog, who sank exhausted to the ground. At first I feared his ribs were broken, as, indeed, they would have been had we not succeeded in killing the monster; as it was, for fully half an hour A. and I massaged the dog, and at the end he was able to slowly follow us home. We sent some "boys" to skin the beast and bring its skin home, I remarking that soon our house would be nothing else but reminders of dead or injured pets.

On one other occasion only was I really frightened by a snake, although many were the numbers I saw, both in the Masai and Nandi countries. A. and I were going for a ramble one afternoon. Several "boys" were taking instructions as to the strengthening of the "boma," and, as A. talked, one of the dogs slept. A big yellow Persian cat had followed me, and all at once I saw it become rigid, every hair on its body became erect, its tail, always bushy, assumed extraordinary proportions, and a low growl escaped it. There, coming towards us, slithering quickly through the grass, was a black mamba. It was heading for the space between the cat and the sleeping dog, leading straight to the forest. Quicker than I had ever moved in my life, I seized the cat by the tail and flung him several yards away. "Panga—panga," I shouted. Each of the "boys" had one for the purpose of cutting the thorn-bush, and A. must have seized the nearest at my cry. When I turned round, after binding my handkerchief round my arm, which was badly clawed, it was to see about two inches gone from the dog's tail.

"Put that 'panga' in the fire and get it red-hot," A. said. "Quick about it!" Then, seeing my look of

consternation, he explained, " I was not quick enough ; the brute bit old Juno."

" Well, that was quick work anyhow," I remarked, pointing to the discarded tip.

" Just got hold of the ' panga ' in time ; was trying to hit the snake, in fact." So Juno's tail was cauterised and she seemed little if any the worse. My arm gave me some trouble, however.

CHAPTER XIV

BULLOCKS AND THEIR WAYS

Buying oxen—Lumbwa herds kill bullock—Blua comes to stay—Masai donkeys—Start for Sotik—Nights in Masailand—Another leopard—Giraffe—Buffaloes.

HOW well I remember my efforts with regard to "gombe" (bullock) buying. Of course I had been present, times and times again, when the Masai brought in bullocks for A. to purchase, and knew pretty well how to choose, and within a little how to arrive at a "gombe's" age. Whenever the Masai have to pay a fine for lawlessness in some shape or form they dispose of a few "gombes," or when a "gombe" has been bled frequently and shows signs of age, they try to dispose of it. Needless to say, we had no use for these latter. If you can get them at a reasonable figure, it is an exceedingly profitable business if you have, as we had, plenty of clever "boys" to break them in. The Lumbwa are the best for this purpose, and when Rabsah was not on "safari," this was his principal work. I see him even now, tall, lithe, active, good-tempered, patient—and oh! what patience is needed!—the long whip in his hands, cajoling, coaxing, and sometimes punishing the recalcitrant bullock whose education he had taken in hand. Hour after hour, daily, for nearly a fortnight, he would pit his strength and patience against the animal's evil temper and obstinacy, and mostly came off conqueror. Not always, though; some bullocks it is impossible to train; they will die sooner than be

yoked. Then there is nothing to do but sell them for what you can get.

I could never bear to see the training operations; the animal going through the mill always seemed to punish himself so unnecessarily, now rearing upwards, then throwing himself heavily on the ground, now getting his head fixed under the yoke, now a leg inextricably caught in the chain, now dragging another bullock down with him or lying on the ground, with fixed eyes and protruding tongue, then, presto! a short fortnight and he was a docile, tractable beast. Whenever an animal has been more than usually obstreperous, a rupee generally found its way from my pocket to Rabsah's blanket. One always admires qualities in other people which, one is painfully aware, one does not oneself possess, and certainly patience is not my strong point. One could buy a bullock for Rs. 12, anything to Rs. 20 for an extra good and strong one, and when trained, they fetch anything from Rs. 90 to Rs. 150. Of course I am speaking of a few years ago, now it may be different; but the profits are large in any case.

It happened that some Masai had been fined, on one occasion when A. was away, and, as usual, brought in some bullocks to sell. Straightway I assumed the expression of a judge awarding prizes at an agricultural show at home, and mercilessly derided all the animals' good points, which the Masai were careful to insist upon. Finally, the "gombes" came down from Rs. 25, the starting-price, to Rs. 16; and, after much "talk" and the distribution of tobacco and "magadi" (soda)—for the Masai always chews his tobacco and nibbles a piece of soda with it, during which operation I retired to avoid the expectorations—I paid the latter price and saw the "gombes" safely turned into the "boma."

The next day, five Masai brought another bullock. They were Morani, or fighting men, and came around

with spears and other paraphernalia ; I rather wondered, as it is usually a job for the old men, who do everything in regard to herding, buying, and selling cattle. However, one glance at the bullock explained matters. He stood some distance off, a big black creature, alternately tossing his head and pawing up great clods of earth. He looked the most magnificent specimen of the bovine tribe I had as yet seen. Somehow an infuriated black bullock always looks more impressive than any other colour, at least that is how it strikes me, and I did not attempt to go any nearer. Something had evidently put him out. The Masai asked Rs. 25, which, of course, they knew they would not get, and I at once commenced to depreciate his qualities until one would have thought he was only fit for a knacker's yard.

All this time the "gombe" kept up an incessant snorting, pawing, and bellowing until, the "shauri" finished between its owners and myself, Rs. 18 had changed hands, when I ordered it to be taken into the "boma." No one seemed in any hurry to comply with my order, a matter which caused me no surprise, so I told the Masai to take the beast there themselves. Then they discovered some very pressing matter required their attention elsewhere. "Come," I said, "you can spare a moment or two; just drive the 'gombe' to the 'boma' before you go." Without more ado they wrenched their spears from the ground and commenced to make off. "What," I said, "so you are 'ditos' " (girls)—"five girls, come to take care of each other." This was more than the Masai could stand. Nothing touches them more quickly than any comment derogatory to their bravery. Without a word they spat on the ground, gave me a glance hardly expressive of affection, and advanced towards the bullock.

Then we experienced a lively quarter of an hour. They encircled the animal and essayed to drive it with

their spears. The bullock walked backwards a few paces, then made a charge at one of our own "boys," an interested onlooker. Instantly there was a yell from one and all, the noise only serving to infuriate the beast still more. All who could gave the animal a wide berth, only two or three Lumbwa drivers remaining with the Masai, Rabsah among the number. Again the Masai used their spears and the Lumbwa their "rungas" (knobbed sticks). Every now and again the animal made a dash at one or the other, only to be instantly confronted with a spear. By this time it was foaming at the mouth, and I wishing the Rs. 18 back in my pocket and the "gombe" at Timbuctoo or elsewhere. For a moment or two it remained quiet, and I really believe the beast was thinking how to score an advantage. The five nine-foot spears looked ugly, the "rungas," dexterously applied, sufficient to stun even a bullock. It was just as if he were weighing the pros and cons. He appeared to be looking straight over Rabsah's head. All at once, quicker than I can write, he charged straight at Rabsah, knocking the spear from the hands of one of the Masai as he did so. Rabsah flung his "runga" and then ran. Never did I see a "boy" run like it. I held my breath as the huge creature, head down, tail almost erect, shaking the foam from him as he cleared the ground, followed on Rabsah's heels. "Wazimu!—wazimu!" ("Mad!—mad!") yelled the "boys," and mad I believe it was. I was standing under a tree and Rabsah made straight for it. "Bunduki, Mem-sahib" ("gun"), he gasped as he caught at the branch nearest him and swung himself up, barely out of reach, however.

Instantly I measured the distance from the house, quite a hundred yards. Should I be in time? Rabsah's red blanket hung down, and as my feet flew I turned, only to see the beast trampling it underfoot. Then,

from where I did not know, a shot rang out, the beast swerved, stumbled, and, before it could recover itself, another shot followed and it rolled over and A. rode up, his face full of inquiry.

Rabsah dropped to the ground ; his face had lost its smile.

“ Rehearsing for the cinema ? ” asked A. laconically.

“ Thank goodness you came,” I replied and told him all about my purchase and the result.

“ Eighteen rupees,” he said, looking at the dead bullock—“ rather expensive riems,” meaning the skin cut into strips.

“ Chakula mzuri sana ” (“ Very good food ”), piped a small voice at his elbow, and a “ toto ” smiled at everyone. So that was the end of my purchase.

Afterwards I was more careful, and unless a “ gombe ” would allow me to walk round him, I refused to buy.

Rabsah ruefully picked up his blanket, and the “ boys ” shrieked with delight as A. said it was more hole than blanket. The next day found Rabsah the possessor of a new one.

It was the only time I ever met a really vicious “ gombe.” As a general rule they are exceedingly docile, as also are the eland, very near akin to the bovines, yet exceedingly gentle, very easily trained, and they make most satisfactory pets, albeit somewhat cumbersome, being rather larger than a full-grown bullock. I had one, bought from the Masai when quite a small animal, which followed me like a dog and was almost full grown when, unfortunately, it succumbed to rinderpest, and gave us a few days’ worry and anxiety for fear the whole of the “ gombes ” with whom it had associated would be down also. It is generally supposed that eland are much more susceptible to rinderpest than cattle, and on this account owners of stock never welcome the appearance of eland in their vicinity.

Nevertheless, a herd of eland are a sight worth seeing, especially if you are fortunate enough to catch them unawares, and so get an opportunity of studying the beautiful animals at leisure. They are extremely wary, however, and, once disturbed, are gone almost before you know it, so great is their speed.

I had for a long time wanted to visit Sotik. A. said it would be a long journey and that, before it was over, I should be tired and wish myself at home again. We often talked about the possibilities of it, but it was not until a small "toto" joined our camp that it took definite shape. A queer, merry little thing he was, I should think about eight years old, although it is almost impossible to tell. At first he attached himself to the herd "boys," then one day, when a bullock was lost, he distinguished himself by saying it was not lost at all, but a certain "boy" had sold it to a Masai for six rupees. It was through this information that we ultimately recovered the bullock.

After that he was out of favour with the "gombe" "boys," so he left them and attached himself to the sheep herds. Here he, again, gained notoriety by telling me that three sheep had been beaten until they died in order that the "boys" might feed off the carcasses. This, in a camp where the "boys" got meat and plenty of it, one might almost say every day, was too much, and A. administered the "kiboko," the whipping, to my mind, not being nearly adequate to the offence. We changed the bullock herds, Lumbwa "boys" now taking the place of the Kavirondo.

One day this little urchin was up a tree getting a parakeet's nest for me under the impression that I should be pleased with it, and from his post of vantage saw one of the Lumbwa strike a big black ox with a "runga" (heavy knobbed stick) on the legs, which he broke as a consequence. The Lumbwa then moved the

herd away and left the unfortunate creature to itself. Sliding stealthily down the tree, the boy made his way to us, bearing the parakeet's nest in his hands. It contained two eggs. I was very angry and told him he would have to replace the nest where he had found it. The imp laughed, and said "All right," adding, "Mem-sahib come with me." At first I declined, then, thinking perhaps it would ensure the nest being returned to the tree, I said, "Come, then." This did not appear to satisfy him. He said, "Bwana come." A., having nothing else to do, also prepared to go.

As we went along, the "toto" remarked, "'Boys' will have a good feed of 'gombe' to-night."

"Have they bought some from the Masai?" A. inquired. Frequently when a Masai bullock was sick or very old, they killed it and brought pieces of the meat in to sell.

The child laughed. "No," he answered; "they will eat the Bwana's big fat bullock." A. asked him what he meant, and he described what he had seen in the tree. At first we could not believe him. The bullock in question we had only bought three days before, and it had never been trained to the yoke. We were hoping great things of it when it had been broken in, and were giving it time to settle down with the rest and get accustomed to the "boys" before training it. When we came to the spot, there, sure enough, lay the poor "gombe," and it was not long before we found it was impossible for it to rise. It seemed positively wicked to have to shoot such a fine animal. I begged A. to sling it, as is sometimes done, but he said it would mean so much work, and require appliances which we had not at the moment, and entail so much more suffering for the poor creature, that I said no more.

The Lumbwa, by this time, were wending their way homeward in another direction. So A. put a bullet

through the poor "gombe's" brain, and we also went home, leaving the "toto" to watch the dead animal.

When we arrived, the Lumbwa "boys" met us and told a tale of how the big "gombe" had suddenly become playful, jumped up, and fallen on two big stones which they thought had broken its legs.

A. said it was unfortunate, but it would make a good supper for everyone that night.

The Lumbwa "boys" quite agreed, and said it would make "chakula mzuri sana" ("very good food indeed"). Then they asked if they should go and kill it.

"We will all go," said A.

This was hardly what was expected. Perhaps it would be better, they thought, if they went first as it was "kali sana" ("very angry"), they were more accustomed to it than A., and if it proved to be very "kali," then they would kill it and the "Bwana" could come after.

"We will all go," A. repeated, and I knew by his tone, if they did not, that he was inwardly boiling.

They did not do a great deal of talking on the way to the spot, but quite suddenly appeared to have become thoughtful. When they caught sight of the "toto" standing there, an impish grin on his face, they began to scent trouble, and on seeing that the "gombe" was already dead, they became absolutely nonplussed.

"Where are these very big stones?" asked A.

"Only one stone, Bwana," replied the "boys."

"Only one stone," repeated A. "Then that must be a very big stone to break both legs. Where is it?"

They happened to have pastured the animals in a really good spot on that day, grass everywhere, but not the vestige of a loose stone, either big or small.

"Where is this stone?" again queried A.

Perhaps the "toto" had moved it. The "toto's"

answer was an expressive "Ah! Ah!" followed by a chuckle. Then A. called to four big Kavirondo and told them to seize the two Lumbwa "boys."

When we got back to the camp they were fastened up for the night, and in the morning sent off in charge of the Kavirondos to Narok, the residence of the District Commissioner. They also had a letter stating the nature of the charge, and were accompanied by the impish "toto," who gave his testimony.

There they got the punishment they richly deserved, and for some days after his return the "toto" was the centre of attraction, giving ocular demonstration of the punishment as he had seen it administered. As he now took up his abode with us, doing odd jobs, and really doing them well, A. asked him if he would like to stay and have certain work allotted to him. He seemed delighted at the prospect, but did not wait to be given any specified work, but at once attached himself to me. He would look after the "kukus" (fowls). I already had two "boys," but one was getting too big for the job, so I handed him over to A.

Never was there a "toto" so assiduous as this one. Punctually at six o'clock every morning we were awakened by a small shrill voice calling through the window that the "kukus" wanted their "chakula." When he was not hunting for eggs, which seemed all the time—in fact he barely gave the poor fowls time to finish laying before he appeared before me with an egg—he was sweeping, or he was making fresh nests. He gloried in discovering a fowl with a few insect pests on it, and would come in triumphantly, the fowl under his arm, shouting "Wap i dawa?" ("Where is the medicine?"), "dawa" being the name given to most things they do not understand, such as baking-powder, insect powder, disinfectant, or spice. He was delighted when a hen brought off a young brood, and I had to present him with

a saucepan all to himself in which to boil his eggs for the young chicks, so persistent was he in his demands in the region of the kitchen. He always spoke of the kitchen "boys" as "those shenzi Kisii" ("wild uncivilised"). To what tribe he belonged, I never could find out, but I fancy his mother was a Wanderobo and his father a Lumbwa.

The Wanderobo are considered the most uncivilised of all the tribes. They live by hunting and trapping, wear next to no clothes, and their huts are hardly worth the name. Many were the beautiful skins brought to us by the Wanderobo, who came and went and had nothing to say to anyone. They took in exchange mealie-flour and sugar. Quantities of honey they also brought in, receiving tobacco in exchange. Certainly there seemed a good deal of the Wanderobo latent in my "kuku boy," he appeared to know the haunt or home of every living thing. "Come, Mem-sahib," he would say; "I have something to show you"; and off he would go like a young deer, I hardly able to keep up with him. Sometimes it would be bushy-tailed mice, sometimes hedgehogs, at others mole-rats or civet-cats, or again porcupines or mongoose, and once it was a clutch of ostrich eggs.

He said his name was Blua, and that was the name by which he was called, but he always answered when you called anyone else. Altogether he was a mystery, but, if anyone wanted watching or anything ferreting out, then you could rely upon Blua. He had his own methods with regard to sitting hens. He would dart out, seize a hen, who was thinking of nothing in particular, place her on a clutch of eleven eggs, invert another box over her, leave her all day, and never once did the hen refuse to sit. The other poultry "boy" took his orders from Blua, although twice his size. I gave him a blanket to wear, disapproving of his state of absolute nudity,



A WANDEROBO.

but he seldom wore it, using it as a weapon of self-defence, much to the discomfiture of the other "boys" who tried to wage war on him.

Blua it was who fired my desire to see Sotik. He spoke of it in glowing terms. Did he know Sotik? Of course he did! Had he not walked from Sotik to Masailand! How long had it taken him? Blua did not know, but the Moon was hiding from her master the Sun when he started, and she had just hidden herself again when he got here, from which I concluded about a month.

I had a long talk with A. and said how much I would like to go; would it not be possible to combine business with pleasure? A. thought it would. At last it was settled, and the following week we were to start. It would take us about six days to get there, so there was a good deal to think of. Blua was to go with us as guide. Fancy trusting ourselves, a dozen "boys" and sixteen "gombes," to say nothing of the buckboard and four mules, to a child of eight! But Blua was no ordinary child. He gave his orders to the other "kuku boys" like an Eastern potentate, and spoke of his return, and the dire penalties awaiting that "boy" if the said orders were not carried out.

In the meantime, some officers, sent from headquarters, had arrived. They had come to demand donkeys from the Masai. At our invitation they pitched their tent close to our house and we entertained them, giving them all the information possible and helping them as far as lay in our power. The headmen were sent for from the different "manyattas." How many donkeys had they? Their answers were compared with the information given by us. A fixed sum was laid down to be paid for each donkey, and they were told to have them sent to a certain point on a particular day, when this money would be paid them. There was great

dissatisfaction among the Masai, for a Masai values his donkey far more than he does his wife, and this matter affected not one donkey but hundreds. Then, too, it immediately followed an order for five hundred of the Masai, Morani or young men, to be used during the war. Such an order was unheard-of, and would require much talk before it could be complied with; in fact, the Masai flatly refused to supply them.

So matters stood at the time of our departure on our "safari" to Sotik. There was much to prepare; Blua was here, there, and everywhere, and contrived to remind me of much which I should otherwise have forgotten. He was full of suggestions, too. I must certainly take my "simba" coat, so he called my seal-skin. I asked why? surely it was not so cold at Sotik. Cold? of course not; but everyone would think I was a great "bibi" indeed if I took it. I overruled that suggestion. I certainly would not take it. When it came to the animals, he wanted to put all the cats into the wagon, and at least two monkeys. Again I said no. Obadiah and Saladin only.

When the morning arrived, he was as full of instructions as myself, darting into the house at the last moment and demanding a tin of biscuits to give Viceroy and Major, as he had seen me do whenever I took them any long journey, although on this occasion they were to be left behind. When the start was made, Blua sat in the driver's seat on the ox-wagon, a long black cock's feather behind each ear, a new red blanket fastened round the waist with yellow cord and tassels off an old dressing-gown of A.'s, and a wildebeeste's tail or fly flicker in his hand. From his elevated position he smiled at the Masai assembled to see us off.

The sun shone in a cloudless sky, everyone was in the best of spirits, and everything promised well for our "safari." The boys sang their quaint songs, which

seemed nothing but endless repetitions. The Lumbwa cracked their whips, as they urged the "gombes" forward. Our own mules were decidedly fresh, added to which I had considerable difficulty in curbing Saladin's exuberance of spirits. Obadiah alone slumbered on and gave no trouble.

By night we had covered some miles, and the "boys" cheery "Qua heri, Bwana; qua heri, Mem-sahib" ("good night" or "good-bye"), when we went round to see all was well, told us that they were looking on it as an enjoyable holiday.

I loved those nights when we were on "safari," although that was but a small one—the "gombes" lying so peacefully, chewing the cud, the mules rolling luxuriously on the ground, the "boys" seated round the camp-fires, feeding out of a big common pot, or laughing and chatting under their blankets, until they fell asleep. Then we would take our camp-chairs and enjoy the solace of a cigarette, with no light save the fitful flames of the "boys'" fires and the glorious moon overhead, Obadiah, wide awake then, jumping from a branch to the ground after some unfortunate insect, and, on one occasion, coming into violent collision with Saladin. What romps they had!—Saladin, a big, heavy animal then, never quite quick enough to catch Obadiah, who always took refuge in a tree, and looked down, with fiery eyes, at Saladin's evident discomfiture.

Ah! those nights in Masailand, how wonderful they were! How they stand out when much else is forgotten! how they will linger in my memory when all else fades!

Then perhaps our reverie would be rudely broken by the roar of a lion. "Simba, Bwana—simba" from the "boys," and A.'s quiet "Mewa sikia" ("I hear") putting them at rest. Looking back, I feel that it was worth while, living through all the dangers, the excitements, the expectations, as I did, in order to realise, to the

full, the beauty, the glamour, and the entrancing charm of nights alone with Nature in her sublimest mood.

Off again, soon after daybreak, but not before Blua had found time to ferret out a litter of young serval kittens. They were not more than three or four days old, to judge by appearances, so as their eyes were not opened, and I had no means of bringing them up, I placed them back in the hole and we made a hurried return to camp, an angry serval cat being the last thing I wanted to encounter. Blua certainly was a little marvel; he seemed able to locate the whereabouts of almost any wild creature, and now took a positive delight in pointing out their haunts and homes to me. He had learnt, by this time, that I had no love for dead animals, but took the keenest interest in anything new or strange. I never could make him control his fear of chameleons; he simply would not touch one, although he saw me handle them every day; yet he never seemed able to say what there was about them that he dreaded, all I could get out of him was "M'bia sana" ("Very bad indeed").

The scenery became flatter and far less interesting. Quantities of Cape gooseberries grew on either side of the road, and thousands of buff gladioli, striped with brown. We stopped long enough to allow Blua to gather a big bunch to decorate our dinner table. Thousands of white and pink flowers studded the grass, not unlike Narcissus, but shorter on the stalk, and without the delicious scent of the narcissus, yet very lovely in such a setting and with such a background, for the greater part composed of tall, glaucous green, lanceolate-leaved trees with big bunches of white flowers, giving off a strong perfume of vanilla. Then, as we went down the hill, these gradually ceased and a belt of cedars took their place. Blua was never still an instant, now on the wagon, now sliding to the ground, to gather something

he thought might take my fancy. Suddenly we came on patches of brilliantly coloured Ranunculaceæ.

We were just stopping the wagon, to enable Blua to hand them up to me, when his eyes, ever on the alert, caught sight of something moving in the branches overhead. The next instant his shrill voice rang out, "Bwana, chui." At first we could see nothing, then, following the direction of Blua's outstretched finger, we were able to make out, first the head, then the whole sinuous body of the big beast. The sunlight played on his sleek coat as he crouched along the arm of the tree, now throwing the spots into bold relief, now showing two fiery eyes. Presently his tail began to lash, and Blua, with the agility of a monkey, was inside the wagon. Not a moment too soon, for even now, with an angry snarl, the leopard drew itself together for the spring as A.'s gun went off, and it tumbled to the ground, almost turning a somersault, the whole incident taking up perhaps three minutes. We drew a bit out into the open, while the "boys" skinned the animal, as we did not know what other surprise the foliaged cedars might hold for us. As it took some time, A. suggested stopping for luncheon. We were soon down, the "gombes" out feeding, Blua off with Saladin on a chain, and in a very short time luncheon was ready. At last, once more we made a start. "No more stopping until dinner and camp this evening," announced A. The boys sang all the way, songs in which there were frequent allusions to the "chui."

Then one of them said in sibilant tones, "Hist!" and pointed with his whip ahead of us. Ten, twelve, thirteen, fifteen beauties, with stately tread they came, feeding daintily on the mimosa trees. We called the dogs to the side of the wagon and stopped the crack of the "boys'" whips, so that we should not disturb them, and for fully ten minutes were within seventy

yards of this herd of giraffe. Then they moved off with the same stately tread in one direction and we in another.

Then the vegetation grew denser. On one side of us was a small forest where monkeys screamed and chattered in the trees; the dogs were evidently chasing them, judging by the barking that went on. All at once one of the latter came limping out—Victor, quite a young dog, who evidently had yet to learn his lesson—with a big gaping gash, such as only monkeys give, in his shoulder. He had probably rushed after one and been set on by half a dozen. On examining him, we found more wounds on his stomach, one a very bad one. Fortunately, we had plenty of water with us, so I got down, and we proceeded to bathe and bandage him. When we came to look for lysol, the medicine-chest was packed underneath the bedding and waterproof sheeting. It would mean unpacking the wagon to get at it. Then I had a happy thought. Why would not carbolic do? Quickly I searched in the small bag of toilet requisites I always carried with me and found a tin of tooth powder. It was all that I had that was get-at-able, so I emptied the contents of the box into the gaping wounds and bandaged the poor animal, who was lifted into the wagon, out of harm's way.

Barely had we lifted Victor in, than we heard a hoarse bellow, and, almost before we realised what happened, a big bull buffalo came crashing through the trees. "Bunduki!" shouted A. "Bunduki!" I screamed ("Gun! Gun"). Rapidly they were handed to us from the buckboard, and, quicker than I can write, A. fired, and then my shot rang out immediately after. Both shots entered the head, for the ugly beast, head held down, was throwing up great clods of earth, and in another moment would have charged. It sank on its knees, and as it attempted to rise again, another shot

from A. finished it. It was just forty yards from us at the time. Evidently it resented the intrusion of the dogs.

What was to be done? The skinning would take some time, and we did not want any more interviews with buffaloes, which we probably should have if we remained. At the same time, buffalo hide makes excellent riems, which we badly needed; then there were a pair of very fine horns; and last, if not least, there was some undeniably tasty meat on that buffalo. So it was decided to move the wagon on about a mile, into the open, and start the "boys," then and there, making a good thorn "boma." There was no help for it; we had got as far as we should get that day.

Blua said there was water about a mile farther on, and that helped A. in his decision. He also said we had better fill everything that would hold water, as we should get none next day. "None at all?" we queried. "None at all." So the "boma" was constructed all around our tent, the "boys," the "gombes," and the mules round that, with a circle of fire on the outside. About five o'clock the skinning was finished and the "boys" came into camp with huge lumps of raw meat, which they quickly sliced into pieces and laid on the glowing wood-fires. Other portions were carefully packed for the next day, as the farther we got from water, the less likely we were to find game. All night the hyenas kept up a wailing concert round the remains of the dead buffalo, but, beyond that, we heard nothing.

CHAPTER XV

A THIRSTY JOURNEY

Thorn-bush—Scarcity of water—Jackdaws—Good water at last—Masai warriors again—Lumbwa country—Lack of animal life—Blua finds his brother—Magnificent scenery—Fever—Indian hospitality—A real English meadow.

NEXT morning we were quickly on the move. Gradually we left the mimosa and cedars behind, and with them a stream of cool, clear water. Every available article that would hold water was used for that purpose, the "gombes" and mules having long drinks at the same time. Then we entered a belt of thorn-bush, as far as one could see, thorn, nothing but thorn, the ground beneath one's feet sand, into which the wheels of the wagon sank heavily. The going was most difficult. Thorn scratched the sides and bottom of the buckboard. The mules and "gombes" stepped most gingerly, drawing the two vehicles in zigzag fashion all the way in order to avoid the terrible spines. Would it never end?

In the far distance three hills, merging one into the other, faced us. Which was Sotik? Blua pointed to the second. "Two days' journey," said A. "Perhaps three," corrected Blua. Was he sure of the way? Of course he was. Had he not travelled it alone?

Looking at the size of the child, it hardly seemed possible, yet we were relying on him absolutely.

On we went, still on; it was useless thinking of luncheon, there was nowhere to sit. A. gave the "boys"

the "chupatties" made that morning and opened a tin of biscuits for ourselves. We sat and munched them and drank water. I could have drunk twice as much, but A. gave everyone a pint and no more. This was to last till evening. The dogs had the same allowance, I sharing half mine with poor Victor, who seemed parched. Still on, the "boys" quiet for once, no singing, no whip-cracking. The strain was beginning to tell. Slower and slower moved the patient beasts, the zigzag motion being almost unbearable. Thorn, thorn, still thorn, and so the hours crept slowly by. At last, when it seemed impossible that we could keep up much longer, a ridge of earth, clear of bush, with a depression on one side, came in sight.

"Water!" said Blua.

"Water!" screamed the "boys."

"Ndio, kidogo sana" ("Yes, but very little"), replied Blua.

The "gombes" were pulled up and we dismounted. Never shall I forget that place! I have not the faintest recollection where it was, or what it was called, but it looked like an evil dream. Imagine, if you can, a vast plain, covered with nothing but thorn-bush: thorn with spines two and three inches long, covered with big black balls, which, if crushed, exuded millions of ants; a mound of reddish-coloured earth, about forty feet by twelve feet, rising as if by direct intervention of Providence, out of the midst of this awful prospect.

Where was the water? Plainly there was water, but a little, a very little. Sternly A. made the "boys" stand back.

"I have enough for everyone to-night; the animals must have this," he said.

So the mules, the "gombes," and the dogs went down to the circular hole, where a small quantity of water still remained, greenish in colour, but still water.

It was only four o'clock, but everyone was dead tired. The thorn-bush seemed interminable ; this at least would admit of pitching our tent and giving the animals sufficient room to lie down, so pitch the tent we did. Never shall I forget the scene of desolation as I stood on top of the mound and looked round ! It looked like a picture out of Dante's *Inferno*. Then it made me think of Charles Dickens's description of the landing of Mark Tapley on the piece of swamp land. I tried to cultivate his spirit of cheerfulness and failed miserably. It fairly made me shudder.

There was only one bright spot about it, and even that became monotonous. A thorn a good deal higher than the rest suddenly became black with jackdaws, hundreds of jackdaws. They circled, they rose, they fell—circled, rose, and fell. It was a tree full of life and movement. Where they came from, or what they came for, is more than I can tell. Certainly not for water, for there was none or next to none at all. I should say certainly not for food, and most certainly not for comfort, for apart from the prickly nature of the resting-place they had chosen, there was barely sufficient room for one hundred to perch, let alone five or six hundred, as there almost assuredly must have been. Caw ! caw ! caw ! for three or four hours they kept it up, until I fell asleep to the refrain. Before daybreak next morning they were off.

If the place had looked deserted and forlorn in the evening, it looked ten times worse in the morning sunlight. While they were packing the wagon and yoking the "gombes" I walked round the mound that had afforded us a resting-place overnight—half stone, half earth, with the circular depression where still a small quantity of greenish water remained. All I came across during my exploration, of any interest, were three lizards of a different species from any I had yet seen. Indeed, I

should hardly have expected them to be like an ordinary lizard, seeing they were domiciled in this spot, when they had the whole of Africa to choose from. Yes! now I come to think of it, there was saxifrage clinging to the rock-surface, and very starved it looked. Then I walked over to the thorn-tree, to find out, if possible, what had been the attraction for the jackdaws the previous evening, but could find nothing. There was more thorn ahead of us, as we moved off. Two hours later found us still in the full enjoyment of this prickly prospect, then a little grass appeared, and, later on, trees became visible in the distance.

At last we came to an ideal spot for luncheon, and—joy untold!—water. Water, clear and cool, rushing over a pebbly bed. We had finished the last drop we had before starting, and very refreshing it was. The poor "gombes" and mules had not been at all satisfied with the small drop of greenish liquid that had been their portion. When A. had doled out half a pint each to ourselves and the "boys," there remained half a pint over, which I at once commandeered for Victor. It was then twelve o'clock and the heat intense. The "gombes" needed no invitation, but waded into the stream and remained there, flicking the flies off, until hustled out by the "boys" to feed. How enjoyable luncheon was! Again my memory is at fault as to the name of the place, but to us it seemed a perfect Eden. No one seemed in any hurry to move. We were almost hidden on one side from passers-by, had there been any, the ground rising to a considerable height on our right, and we had taken shelter under a fringe of trees overhanging the stream. The "boys" were lying about, in all sorts of attitudes, and no sound but the birds disturbed our peace. All at once, in the distance, through a gap in the trees, I caught sight of a fantastic figure, then another and another, until something like one hundred

and fifty Masai in full war-paint passed before our eyes. Not wishing the "boys" to see, for some unknown reason, I whispered to A., "Look there!" He turned round. "Are they not in full war-dress?" I asked. "One can hardly tell at this distance," was his reply. "They get themselves up regardless of expense at their circumcision feasts; I expect that accounts for it. There are no tribes at war at present."

So the incident passed, I thinking no more of it at the time, although later it recurred to me.

We were just about to wake the "boys" when a leopard suddenly sprang from a tree only a few yards away and made off at lightning speed.

A. and I looked at each other. "Well, I'll be blowed," was all he said.

"I thought this peace and quietness was too good to last," was my reply.

We roused the "boys" and recommenced our journey.

"Now we are in Lumbwa," announced Blua. "Soon, perhaps to-morrow, we shall be in Sotik."

All that day we passed through wonderful scenery. Meadowland with luscious grass, fringed with trees on either side, invited us to linger a while, and it was hard work to withstand the temptation to do so. Every now and again we passed lovely tree-lupins, in many shades of blue. One thing only seemed a drawback to all this beauty—not a solitary animal of any sort, kind, or description did we see, not a bird winged its way across the azure dome overhead! It was absolutely still and lifeless. As we went on uphill, A. and I got down and walked, but not a solitary rat scurried across the path; not even a lizard, ubiquitous as they are, did I see. I remarked on this lack of animal life to A. He could only account for it by saying the Lumbwa were, and always had been, so keen on animal food that he expected, in process of time, they had cleared off every-



A MASAI WARRIOR.

thing. It was most remarkable. The more so as there was every inducement for animals, great and small—grass, trees, forest, all were there, water in plenty, Blua said, only a mile farther on, and yet it seemed absolutely lifeless !

Soon we passed fields of mealies, where women, wearing no clothing of any description, were hard at work. Then plantations of bananas. Children came out and peeped at us, then ran off, evidently frightened. The women whom we met were the same. We spoke to two or three, but they made off as fast as their legs could carry them. Very finely built they were, for the most part, although there were many instances of surplus avoirdupois and of charms that would have been better hidden. Three ladies, less bashful than their sisters, clothed, literally, in a bead necklace and a wisp of cloth, bubbling over with smiles and titters, made me feel quite uncomfortable, so persistently did they keep beside the buckboard, when, at least to my thinking, they would have been better at home awaiting the administrations of a medical attendant.

Saladin caused quite a commotion. Oh ! these M'zungus, they doubtless thought, the "bibis" especially, what queer creatures they were ! Here was one with a "chui" sitting beside her !

Seeing the quantities of mealies grown by the Lumbwa, A. thought it would be a good chance to buy some and send the wagon to fetch them. He interrogated the first crowd of natives who came to gaze at the strangers. Whose fields were these ? Had they any mealies to sell ? How much did they want for them ? The end of it was that two or three ran off to find the owner of the mealies, and presently returned, accompanied by a strapping young Lumbwa. In appearance he was about thirty years of age, better clothed than the majority and having a decided air of superiority. Really, he

was almost good-looking, and very tall, even for a Lumbwa.

Meanwhile, Blua had been chatting away with several of the bystanders as if he knew them, but we did not understand their language so knew nothing of what was being said. Immediately the tall Lumbwa came up and caught sight of Blua, he seized him, Blua struggling to get away. A. told him, rather sharply, to keep his hands off the boy, but he at once declared he was his brother, and had a perfect right to chastise him. Then explanations followed, the big Lumbwa stating that he had beaten Blua for stealing, their father being too old to do so. Blua, it seemed, was the child of the fourth wife, the brother a child of the first. All they had known was that, after the beating, he ran away, where they did not know. Now he wanted Blua to return with him.

Such being the state of the case, A. remonstrated with Blua and insisted on his returning home with his brother. Blua flatly declined. He was nobody at home; with us, by sheer force of character, he had become someone. At last A. effected a compromise. Blua was to bring a big sheep to him and he would buy it, and then make Blua a present of it. Then Blua could return home with the sheep and his father would be pleased. Blua considered for a minute. Then he said; Could he bring a " memba " sheep? (a sheep near lambing). Would the Bwana buy that? A. signified consent. Blua was off at a run, A. meanwhile negotiating for the purchase of a field of mealies from the brother. Presently Blua returned with a woman dragging a big sheep. How much did she want? She named her price. A. paid; and Blua, highly delighted, dragged the sheep away. Not, however, before he had jumped up into the buckboard to shake hands with me, and pat Saladin, assuring me that he would soon be back again with us. He was a fascinating study, if an impish one. You were never

sure what his next movement was going to be. I knew that I should miss Blua, if no one else did.

The next morning, after spending a delightfully quiet night, the brother came to make final arrangements, and brought me a couple of fowls and about three dozen eggs, A., in return, giving him a blanket. Then we went on to Sotik to make further arrangements for the grinding of the mealies, whenever they were ready. A. wanted to see the Indian mill owner and make a "shauri" with him to have the mealies sent first to him to be ground. We left this very pleasant camping-ground to come to another, uphill all the way, for the sake of the mules A. and I walking again. There was much to take my attention in the plant way, so beautiful was the scenery; I longed to have just a small house here, so that we might occasionally come and have perfect rest and quietness. I could have gathered heaps of rare plants, but what was the use? We were six days' journey from home. They would never have survived.

Still up, up—certainly the hills were something to negotiate in Lumbwa! I was beginning to feel very tired. One hour's rest only, at twelve o'clock, or we should not be in by five o'clock. Here the scenery was simply gorgeous. We climbed up to an elevated, overhanging shelf, thick with trees, forming natural arbours, in one of which, as if specially constructed, we had luncheon—rather a hurried meal, it is true, and personally, I did not feel much inclined to eat. In front of us was a queer native bridge, crossing a rather rapid stream; beyond, the ground sloped gradually downwards for a short distance, then up again. I rather dreaded that hill. To sit and gaze at it, and the many and varied trees on either side of the road, was one thing; to climb it quite another. Just then I did not feel like climbing, but would not have said so for anything. Too soon the hour was up, and we went on again.

"Four hours, and we should reach Sotik," said A.

"I hope so," said I.

"Feeling tired?" asked A.

"Just a little," was my reply.

"Why don't you ride?" A. insisted.

I pointed to the buckboard crawling slowly up the hill, the mules painfully zigzagging across from side to side of the road.

"I know it is rather a stiff climb," responded A.

How hot the sun was! Then, all at once, I began to shiver. Was I going to be ill? Nonsense! I told myself. Tired!—that was all.

At three o'clock I mounted to the buckboard; I could walk no longer. Fortunately the hill was not nearly so steep by this time; and at five, or soon after, when camp was reached, my bed was the first thing that was put in position, and, almost before the tent was up over it, I was lying down. A. had everything to see to; I could do nothing but just lie and shiver, while my head fairly boiled. The fever which I had contracted at Mombasa was reminding me that I had a friend who would stick by me through life and never forsake me.

In the morning I got up. A. advised me to remain in bed. That was the last thing I intended to do. I had taken quite fifty grains of quinine since five o'clock the previous afternoon and should soon be all right. Besides, I had caught sight of numerous pairs of eyes applied to the flap of my tent, and thought I should like to see the bodies to which they belonged. When I at last emerged, fifteen to twenty urchins, with hardly enough clothing on to make a pocket handkerchief between them, stood gaping at me. They scurried off like rabbits the moment I appeared. Up the hill they went, our tent being pitched at the foot, and there they stood and watched me between the trees.

It was as pretty a spot as anyone could wish to see,

almost amounting to grandeur in its wild beauty, but I was not feeling so intensely appreciative as usual. I opened a tin of sweet biscuits and held them up to the children, perched far above me. It was no good. Then I called a "boy" and told him to take some up the hill to the "totos." How carefully they inspected them! It was not until my "boy" had eaten one that they were reassured. Before long I wished I had not been so generous. My tent was besieged with "totos" in a state of absolute nudity and smelling none too sweetly.

I put on my hat and went with A. to the mill owner. It was a longer walk than I had anticipated, so whilst A. made his arrangements I sat down. Then, all at once, everything began to multiply, even to the heads on people's shoulders; then all became blurred; then darkness, and I was unconscious.

When I recovered myself, I was lying on a native bed, and an Indian woman, with gold rings in her nose and a robe of soft blue and gold enveloping her from head to foot, was sprinkling water, out of a brass bowl, on to my face. She spoke to me, but, of course, I did not understand. I only knew that her voice was soft, musical, and restful. Again I closed my eyes: why keep them open? Nothing mattered—nothing at all. How long I lay like that I do not know. When once again I looked round she was still there, holding a cup of tea this time. What pretty hands she had, the nails dyed red! I drank the tea greedily. How nasty it was! There must have been a heaped tablespoonful of sugar in it at least, and two-thirds milk! Then she glided softly out, and A. was beside me.

"I say, Margaret, do you feel very ill? I knew this journey would be too much for you! Do you think you can manage to get to the buckboard? I have sent for it."

"Of course I can; it is only a wretched turn of fever I have got, I shall be all right to-morrow," I explained.

So when the buckboard arrived, I managed to crawl to it, and back to camp we went, and for the rest of the day I remained in bed taking quinine and cups of tea. Every time I opened my eyes it was to meet the steady stare of numerous others, glued to the flap of the tent. But they did not trouble me. The next morning I was myself again, but for a feeling of weakness, which soon passed off.

A. had quite a lot of business in Sotik, so suggested moving our camp to a more convenient spot which he had seen that morning. We rode for about half an hour, Saladin so full of spirits it was with difficulty I controlled him. Then we arrived at what, in England, one would describe as a beautiful green meadow. On three sides it was enclosed by forest, the fourth open to the road, but sheltered by an avenue of tall, beautifully foliated trees. Instantly I felt at home.

We drew the wagons in, put up our tents, spread rugs on the ground, and I, at least, prepared to have a real lazy time. There was no need to move far, A. could see everyone and transact his business there. And so he did. Never did I spend three happier or more restful days! We read, I did needlework, every now and then exploring the forest for a short distance. Many and various were the ferns I found, very beautiful the orchids; the only thing I had to be careful about was the snakes. Just outside this meadow, for so I must still call it, were plenty of blackberry bushes, which helped to swell our dinner-table. There were quantities of crimson, blue, and yellow flowers for the picking. Our tents became quite artistic.

Just a few steps beyond the blackberry bushes one came on a lovely waterfall, the water from which flowed rapidly along under a crazy bridge. Anything more soberly built would have been out of keeping with the surroundings. It consisted of huge trees sawn in

halves and placed across, with many gaps through which the water, foaming and churning, could plainly be seen. Other trees, equally large, overhung both sides of the swirling torrent; birds such as I had not seen before sang in the branches. Monkeys occasionally showed themselves. Two askaris stood outside little sentry-boxes. There was rinderpest in Sotik, and no oxen might cross that bridge to leave the place. It was the most delightfully picturesque scene possible to imagine. Times and times again I wandered down and sat there, just doing nothing but drinking in the surrounding beauty or lazily picking pebbles from the bed of the stream. I am sure the askaris had long talks about who I was and what I wanted there, doing nothing at all, day after day. Then one day Saladin accompanied me on his chain. That was the climax! They stared at me in stony astonishment, and, I know, summed me up in one word, "Wazimu"—"Mad, undoubtedly mad"!

At last A.'s business was transacted, and we began to pack our belongings. The "gombes" and mules were looking the better for five days' rest, and I, whether I looked so or not, certainly felt so. Never, I can honestly say, never in all my life did I leave a place so regretfully as I left Sotik. We had experienced long, peaceful nights, such as we had not had for months. The days, for me anyway, had been one long *dolce far niente*; even A. had relaxed and let things go pretty much as they pleased. Saladin and Obadiah had revelled in the long grass, until, wearied out, they had fallen asleep, bathed in moonlight.

A picture of the sleeping camp as I saw it one night, when, waking and feeling thirsty, I could find no water and went to the place which served as our kitchen to get some, remains clearly in my memory till this day. No fires, no "boys" on guard, everyone lying about,

just as sleep had overtaken him, the "gombes" forming a circle by themselves, the mules just turning to look at me as I passed, the dogs stretched out, never moving a muscle, and a brilliant moon shining down on all.

For fully half an hour I lingered at the door of my tent, something very like a premonition of evil days to come stealing over me. Why must one leave it all? Why not spend the rest of one's days the world forgetting, by the world forgot? I pulled myself together, re-entered my tent and closed the flap. The next day we were to start for home again. The natives had grown accustomed to us by this time and came to the tent to smile and shake hands before we went. I divided a big box of chocolates between six "totos," who fairly shrieked with excitement. The last rope was adjusted, the last box safely stowed away, and slowly we made our start, I almost on the verge of tears.

"I'll tell you what, Margaret; I will purchase a small piece of land somewhere about here and put up a couple of comfortable huts, then we can come over occasionally. How will that do?"

It would do very well indeed if only it could be; but again that ugly premonition forced itself upon me, and I said nothing.

CHAPTER XVI

THE MASAI RISING

Rising of the Masai—We leave Siana—Arrival at N'Dangasera—A ride across the plains—Another night in the forest—Major shot—Flying Indians—K.A.R. to put down the rising—Patrol duty—"Boys" decide to go to Nygara—More stores burnt—Return of K.A.R.—Half the tins in Africa—We await the Masai—Hundreds of hyenas—We leave Garra Narok—Viceroy sold to the Game Warden.

THE journey back was almost uneventful, and I, at least, was not in such good spirits as before. Then we reached Siana, and put up at a store owned by A. for the night. The "boys" welcomed us effusively, but their news was far from good. The Masai were about to rise, so they said; already they had been insolent in their manner.

"Much the same affair as the last, I expect," was all I said when A. told me.

"I don't know," said A. "This 'shauri' of wanting the young Morani, and then taking the donkeys on top of that, seems to have upset them."

"I expect it will blow over, as the last affair did," I replied.

"We will hope so," said A.

Then A. had a long talk with the "boys," the result of which was that they were unanimous in their opinion that the natives would not be molested, so they could carry on the store as before.

"You really think you will be quite safe?" queried A.

"N'dio," was the answer. "Wanataka we-we na Mem-sahib" ("They want you and the lady").

The fact was that, we being the only white people available, they seemed to have formed an idea that we could be held as hostages until they brought the Government to reason, from their point of view, and had their donkeys returned. On the principle that "a woman's advice isn't worth twopence to anybody, but the man is a fool who does not take it," I suppose A. asked what I advised under the circumstances.

"Well," I said, "I think I should be on the safe side and take stock. It will necessitate our staying here longer than we otherwise should; still, I think it would be wiser." So take stock we did.

During the process a Somali, a well-educated man, who had been to England at Sir N. M.'s expense, came in.

"What! you here?" he exclaimed.

"Why not?" queried A. "It is my own store."

"Have you not heard? Have the 'boys' not told you? The Masai are rising."

"Yes," replied A. "We are now taking stock."

"Is the Mem-sahib with you?" asked the Somali.

"Inside," said A., pointing to the door.

"Take my advice, and get away as quick as you can," said the Somali, "Will you come with us? Nine of us are starting as soon as it is dark."

"I thought it was only the Mem-sahib and me that they wanted," said A.

"Yes, I know," responded the Somali; "but when the Masai rise, there is no stopping them, and we are taking no risks. Will you come?"

"One moment," said A.

I, in the inside room, had heard all the conversation, so there was no need to repeat it. "What do you say?" said A.

"Thank him very much for his offer," I replied, "but we shall go alone."

"You think it is best?" said A. "So do I."

“ In the first place,” I said, “ so large a party will be the more exposed to danger ; in the second, are the Somalis absolutely reliable ? We have never found them so yet, and our dealings with them have been large. Who knows ? They might hand us over to the Masai, if they received a promise from them that they and their goods would be respected.”

“ Which is exactly what would happen, if half a chance presented itself,” retorted A.

So he returned to the shop and told the Somali that the Mem-sahib thanked him very much, but had much to see to before she would be ready, so they had better not wait.

That night we left Siana, and went on to another store also owned by A. There was no moon, and we had to go very cautiously, the boys being warned that no whip-cracking was to be allowed and no singing. I thought of our last journey from Siana ; perhaps this one would be even worse, and mentally I weighed the two, Masai versus lions. The Masai were all very well when they were trading or receiving gifts, but at the present time things wore a different complexion. I knew that they were absolutely devoid of gratitude, and felt that all the medicine and attention which I had given them would be clean forgotten, now that their anger was roused.

One thing helped us considerably. The Masai were under the impression that we were still at Sotik, or had been until this evening, when one or two had seen A. in the store. Doubtless the roads to Sotik were watched, so how we managed to scramble through was a mystery. Then the procession of Masai warriors, which we had seen on our way out, recurred to me. I mentioned it to A. “ Very likely,” he said, “ they were on their way to join the main body.”

That night I had secured all the lamps, and seen

that they were all filled before we started. Each "boy" walked with one in his hand. Every now and then the moon clouded over. Light we were bound to have, whatever risks we ran.

With the morning we came to N'Dangasera. There the tale was the same. Yes, it was just the Bwana and the Mem-sahib who were wanted—no one else. The Bwana had better go quickly; the store, and everything in it, would be quite safe. A Masai had been there only a few hours before and asked the price of everything. The "boys" had told him, when the Masai had replied, with a laugh, "To-morrow, if we do not get the Bwana and Mem-sahib, we will come and take everything."

"I thought the store would be quite safe," said A.—
"at least, so you said."

"Yes; it is you and the Mem-sahib they want," was their reply.

So it amounted to this: the stores would remain untouched if we voluntarily gave ourselves up.

One "gombe" walked a bit lame, so A. decided we must remain overnight to enable him to take stock and give them a rest.

"Have any of the Masai seen us?" I asked.

"Yes, two or three old men—which reminds me, I have not seen a Morani since we have been here. Usually they are so anxious to come and shake hands. News soon travels!"

"Don't you think they will soon make the fact known?"

"Yes," said A. "I have got to think out a plan."

He went outside and gave orders for the tents to be put up as usual; then he had some boxes and papers overturned in both, one stocking and one shoe of mine left at the entrance, as if dropped in our hurried departure, a hat and fly-whisk on the floor in his tent. Next the

“ gombes,” mules, and wagons were taken off and hidden in the forest, the “ boys ” spending the whole day building a “ boma,” for it was there that poor Juliet had been killed. Then at five o'clock, we shut the door and A. took stock, I resting the greater part of the time.

At eleven o'clock he had finished. “ I really must lie down,” he said ; “ I feel dead-beat.” There were several sacks of rice resting against the wall, and on these he lay. “ Just two hours only—then wake me, won't you ? And you had better have your gun ready ; you may need it. There is a small crack against the door through which you can see what is going on outside. If you see anything suspicious, or any of those beggars come about, wake me at once.”

I promised, took my gun, sat down on a pile of blankets, found the crack which commanded a good view of our tents, and prepared to keep my watch.

Twelve o'clock—by the light of a match I glanced at my watch, then all was dark again. At half-past one I struck another. Were two hours and a half ever so long before ? A cricket kept up a continual chirping close to my ear. Beyond that, no sound. I could not even hear A.'s breathing, so soundly did he sleep. How were they getting on at home ? I wondered. Had the Masai already carried out their threat ? If they looted everything, how would my poor animals get on ? Manibura would do his best for them, I knew, but what was Manibura against a host of Masai ? Another match—a quarter-past three. How sleepy I felt ! But A. should sleep until five if possible.

Our tents had been put up exactly opposite the store, and now, into the faint moonlight, came three figures that froze me instantly. Morani without a doubt. They stood out straight and clean-limbed in the shaft of light. Then one entered A.'s tent, then another and

another. Soon they were joined by more, until the tent must have been full. They emerged carrying A.'s hat and the fly-whisk. Then they made a dash into mine, where the shoe and stocking soon attracted their attention ; finally two spears received these mementoes. They had a long talk outside the tents, pointed to the store, and hesitated whilst I shuddered within twenty yards of them, my hand on the trigger of my gun. Then, with a hasty glance back at the tents, they made off. Apparently they were satisfied we had gone. Not for them the honour of escorting us to the "manyatta" ! A shoe, a stocking, a hat, and a fly-whisk were all they had to show for their night's raid.

At five o'clock I woke A. It was still pitchy dark in the store.

"Now you go to sleep, Margaret !" he said.

"Get the horses and 'gombes' in at once," was my reply ; "it is five o'clock."

"Why did you not wake me earlier ?" said A.

I told him the Masai had been in our tents ; hurrying out, the missing articles proved my words.

By six o'clock we were on our way home again. What should we find when we got there ? Bitter rage swelled up in my heart against these Masai, for whom I had done so much, without any thought of recompense. Well, this was how they recompensed me for all the many kindnesses I had shown them. They were a thankless, ungrateful crowd.

Presently, winding round a corner, came a long procession of "gombes," hundreds of "gombes," probably eight or nine hundred, followed by sheep. Of these latter there must have been over a thousand. Old men and boys brought up the rear of the "gombes." They were quite close. I called out "Targwenya," their salutation on meeting. There was no reply. Again I called "Targwenya," and all I received in response

were scowls from one and all. The old man even went as far as spitting on the ground—a favourite way of emphasising a curse. With the last of the sheep came women and young children; they smiled derisively as we passed; some of them also spat.

“Things look ugly,” I remarked to A. His answer was a command to the “boys” to accelerate the pace of the bullocks. I turned and looked at the disappearing bullocks and sheep. They were winding their way up the slopes of a high hill where, at last, they were lost among the trees, only the lowing of the oxen and the bleating of the sheep revealing their whereabouts. Not a single Morani did we meet. That alone spoke volumes.

Across the plain we went, the cacti making a blaze of colour. On our way to Sotik I had planned sending for some of the cacti to outline the approach to the house; now, there was no knowing, I might not want them. The tortoises moved slowly out of our path. How we had delighted in their strange movements on our journey out! Now they were barely noticed! There were other and graver matters to consider. Saladin slept, his head resting on my knee. I drew him closer to me, as some presentiment of coming parting took possession of me. How fond I was of him! He had become my property in such a strange manner—surely no one ever had obtained a cheetah under stranger circumstances—and I had managed to bring him up until now. I looked at him, fast asleep, as big as a bull-terrier. No fear of losing him now, unless . . . There was a tightening at my throat; no, I would not think about it!

At last the dreary journey was at an end. About four o'clock we sighted home. When we had crossed the river, news was taken to the house, and in a few minutes Manibura was beside us, with many of the “boys.” A. made room for Manibura, who scrambled into the buckboard.

“ Well, what news, Manibura ? ” A. demanded.

It was the same old tale. “ Don’t stay here, Mem-sahib ; you and Bwana go away quickly.” Yes, the animals were all well.

We passed another wretched night, taking stock, left last instructions with the “ boys,” scrambled together a few of our belongings and, mounted on our horses, set off. Two donkeys followed behind—big Catalonians. The buckboard carried our blankets, water, lamp, and oil. Two “ boys ” came with us. The Catalonians could draw the buckboard thus lightly loaded. There had been a most painful leave-taking of all the animals, two dogs and Obadiah alone going with us. I had taken most of them into my arms for a brief moment—Saladin, the deer, the zebra, the cats, the monkeys. Should I ever see them again ? Should I ever feed the fowls again ? How would my garden look when I next saw it ? These and many such thoughts filled my brain as we rode along.

That night we slept in the open without fires, or even a “ boma,” the risks being great, but not greater than the risk of the Masai sighting us. Fortunately nothing but the cries of hyenas disturbed us. The next night was the same ; but as the district was more densely clothed with trees, into the shelter of which we crept, A. allowed two lamps. I never slept a minute that night. Every leaf that stirred seemed full of unknown dangers. Every twig that snapped, as possibly a squirrel or monkey stirred in the branches, was a dreaded Masai. Never was morning more welcomed than that one was.

Manibura had inquired which direction we intended to take, and I had thought it wiser to deceive him. Someone might worm it from him.

A. had said, prior to our start, “ Which will be the best point to make for ? ”

I, still full of regret for the beautiful place we had so lately left, at once said, "Let us go back to Sotik."

"I am afraid that is impossible," A. replied. "You know all approaches to Sotik are now watched. I think it will be best to go straight in to Garra Narok."

So there we were on our way. Should we ever reach it?

The moment we had finished breakfast we were off again, one "boy" being sent on ahead to give warning of danger, by suddenly throwing up his arms, should he catch sight of Masai in the distance. "We must reach Garra Narok to-night," said A.

Hardly had he said the words than Major, on whom he was riding, suddenly put his foot into an old hyena or pig hole, overgrown with grass. Down he came and A. shot over his head.

I was down beside him instantly. "Are you hurt?" I inquired anxiously.

A. stared about him in a half-dazed kind of way, and then said, "No, I don't think so." He got up and we turned our attention to Major. The poor horse lay where it had fallen. We tried to get it up, but there was a scream of pain, and we realised what was wrong. Both front legs were broken. Major would never carry A. again. I stroked the soft brown muzzle, took a last look into the soft eyes, then turned my back.

"You must shoot him," I said quietly.

"It will let the Masai know our whereabouts if I do," responded A.

"You must shoot him, or I do not move from this spot," I said decisively.

A. hesitated.

"Boy, bunduki," I said.

The gun was brought and handed to A. I did not turn round, but walked on a few paces. Presently I heard a shot. Major would feel no more pain; it was

all over. A. joined me, I put my horse's bridle into his hands, and I got into the buckboard, neither of us saying a word.

It would be hard luck if the Masai came now, for we were only about fourteen miles from Garra Narok, but the road was by no means easy, and there was still forest on either side, behind which Masai might be hiding. A mile farther on we were met by a runner, coming out from Garra Narok with a letter for A. from the District Commissioner. It was in reply to one he had written from Siana, some days before, asking if it would be advisable for us to come in. Fortunately we had not waited for a reply, but taken the initiative, fully realising that they at Garra Narok were not so well posted in the doings of the Masai as ourselves. The letter said: "Come in, leave everything." No need to tell us that; we should have been mad to try to bring anything with us.

A mile farther on we passed a party of Indians, all well known to us, who galloped along as if pursued by demons or the Masai. We knew afterwards that they must have arrived in time to find their place in flames. Only another ten miles! We began to breathe more freely. Viceroy was beginning to show signs of fatigue. He was not up to A.'s weight, and had done seventy miles in the last two days over the hardest ground possible, mostly through forest, infested with pig and hyena holes; still, I hoped he would be able to manage.

We had now begun to feel we were practically safe. Only about five miles remained. The Masai never dare come so close. We little knew the Masai! Then Viceroy got lame, his pace got slower and slower, and when we were three miles from Garra Narok, A. decided to leave him and send a "boy" back for him. So, giving one of the "boys" who were with us instructions, Viceroy was led off the road and fastened to a tree.

The "boy" was to return for him when we got in. He was a beautiful horse, a lot of Arab in him, with long, heavy mane, and a tail which almost swept the ground, typically a lady's horse, but no longer young. Still, he hardly felt my weight, though A.'s was a different matter.

At last we were in, thanks to the two Catalonians. Major D. came out to meet us. He and a number of K.A.R.s were just off to put down the rising. Would we go into the "boma" (meaning the enclosure) in which lived the District Commissioner, the A.D.C., and the officials? It was a big compound, encircled by three strands of barbed wire. A large tent was placed at our disposal. We should probably have to remain there some days. There were four white men, including A., and about twenty-five "askaris"; the rest had gone with Major D.

The first night was one of anxiety and torment unspeakable. With us was a "boy" whose mother was a Masai woman, I forget to which tribe his father belonged, but I think he was a Swahili. In any case, he spoke English badly, also Masai and Swahili well, and was devoted to A., who some years before had been instrumental in saving his mother from a lion.

Every morning this "boy" would go outside the "boma" to get news. The second morning he came back with the report that the Masai were going to attack the "boma" that night.

"Yes," said A. "The Morani or the Lioni?"

"The Lioni," was the reply.

"How many?" asked A.

"About eight hundred," said the "boy."

The Lioni are the very young men, who fight only with bows and arrows, which are very nearly always poisoned. The Morani, as we knew, were away somewhere eating meat and drinking blood until they worked

themselves into a frenzy of excitement, and then they would take some handling. So the Lioni had been deputed to attack the "boma."

The A.D.C. in charge, quite a young man, did not seem to grasp the seriousness of the situation. The second morning A. asked if there were no other protection than the strands of wire. The A.D.C. said he thought that would be sufficient. There were miles of barbed wire lying about. A. asked permission to strengthen the existing wires, which was given. The D.C. had gone with Major D. to enforce submission from the Masai.

All the natives and the Goanese residents in Garra Narok were told that they had better come into the "boma" that night, and at six o'clock we were joined by as motley a crowd as ever I set eyes on—Goanese, the women, at least, attired in much finery, representing the shopkeeping element. With them came their dogs, great and small. There were already five or six in the "boma," the property of the D.C., the A.D.C., and assistants, to say nothing of our two, Juno and Troubador, big Airedale and Great Dane cross-bred dogs, who would tackle anything. There must have been twenty-five or thirty altogether, and one can imagine the fighting and quarrelling that took place each night.

Then came the native element. Men, women, and children, they simply poured in. If ever a crèche was needed, it was there, for the wail of the infants was positively nerve-racking, when one's nerves were already strung almost to breaking-point. The twenty-five "askaris" were distributed round the "boma," but, to me, it seemed a totally inadequate protection, so great was the distance between each one. A's wire entanglements got on but slowly, for want of labour, and each night saw A. and me with our guns doing patrol duty, feeling all the time it would be as much



ASKARIS SENT TO PUT DOWN MASAI REBELLION.



A GATHERING OF MASAI.

good as nothing if the Lioni did attack. A cloud of poisoned arrows would make short work of us!

"I wish I could get those wire entanglements finished," said A. "The dogs go in and out under them, and where a dog that size can go, a man can go also."

"I don't see that it will be much protection if the Lioni do come," I said; "they can shoot from a distance."

"True," said A. "But we will hang the wires so thickly with cans of every description that the clanging noise will be enough to frighten them these dark nights. They will wonder what all the noise is about, and think we are fairly strong. Our guns should do the rest."

"It depends how many are left to hold a gun after the first shower of arrows," I replied.

Late that afternoon the Masai "boy," who had been absent all day, returned.

"What news?" asked A.

"All the stores are burned," he replied.

"What?" I gasped—"what did you say?"

"The Masai have burned all the stores."

"Not at Nygara," I said. It was so far off, so unget-at-able, I felt that the full extent could not yet be known, and no news is good news. The Masai would not, they simply could not, touch our home, where they had always been made welcome, where they had received so many unrequited kindnesses. Now they would doubtless show their generosity and save our house and the animals. The store—yes, perhaps they might burn that, but not our house, not the poor inoffensive animals.

"Who told you? Did they mention Nygara?" I demanded.

There was no news from Nygara. I breathed again. A wagon, the only one left to us, had come in from Nairobi that day, and would have gone to Nygara had this not happened. Now it stood outside the "boma," the "gombes" placidly feeding.

I turned to A. "Tell the 'boys' to go and get the animals," I said. "It may not be too late. I don't want anything else, really and truly. You know what the Masai are when their blood-lust is uppermost; they will wreak their vengeance on anything. Fetch the animals and tell Manibura and the rest to come in and leave everything."

A. looked at me without speaking for a moment. Then he said quietly, "I don't think you have considered everything, Margaret! How can I tell the 'boys' to go to Nygara when we are not sure the Masai may not be there already?"

"Ask them," I said—"ask them if they are willing to go? There is the wagon. If the animals were put into their cages, all could be brought; the dogs, of course, could walk."

Still A. seemed undecided. I grew impatient. "Do ask them," I urged.

A. called the "boys," and explained what I wanted done. Did they think there was any danger so far as they were concerned?

"None at all," was their prompt reply. How delighted I felt!

"Then you will go?" I said.

"N'dio, Mem-sahib—n'dio," came the quick response. Ah! the relief I felt!

Then A. began to give instructions. They were to keep hidden as much as possible, not to go by the regular track. It would mean a longer journey, but what of that? "Touch nothing in the house," said A. "Tell Manibura to get all the animals into big boxes. Turn the deer loose—we can get more," he said. "The zebra"—he paused—"I suppose it is too young to turn out yet."

"Far too young," I replied. "So are the lion cubs, and the young leopard, and Saladin. I must have Saladin."

"Very well," said A.

The fowls were to be put into crates. The two monkeys were to be allowed to go free, as also the rock rabbits and eagle owl. About the cats, five in number, there would be no difficulty. And so it was arranged.

"Touch nothing in the house," reiterated A., "and do not go near any of the stores. The Masai will doubtless consider them their property."

A tin of kerosene oil was put in the wagon with the lamps, all of which were well filled, and, with the promise of much backsheesh when they returned, they went off, really delighted, I firmly believe, that they would see something of what was going on.

The next night the "boys" came in from Siana, and, in the morning, those from N'Dangasera. Three of our stores were burned, they reported, and many belonging to the Indians. Had they heard anything of Nygara? No, nothing. That morning the "boys" helped A. put up the barbed wire; by night four more strands had been added. The Lioni had not kept their word—the Masai "boy" could not say why. Perhaps they were waiting for others to join them.

That day we received news that the telegraph wires had been cut; there was no communication now with Nairobi. Every night, as we went our rounds, gun in hand, we said "Good-bye" to each other, for there was no knowing if the morning would see us alive. The "askaris," stretched on the ground, slept or stirred uneasily; the children kept up a continuous wail; so the long nights dragged through until dawn. It was fortunate that the rains were not on, or some of us must have been soaked through.

Before going on sentry-go I always put a bottle of veronal inside the bodice of my dress—that, and a tiny bottle of port wine in which to take it. The Masai should not take me alive.

The next morning a big dog crawled into the "boma" and lay down under a tree, close against our tent, the big one lent us by the A.D.C. As we were using it to take our meals, and sit in during the greater part of the day, I noticed that the dog appeared to lie always in the same attitude. Another thing that struck me was its resemblance to our own. It was evidently a Great Dane and Airedale cross. "I did not know anyone else had dogs like ours," I remarked to A. As I spoke I got up and went over to the tree. The dog appeared to be asleep, but was breathing so heavily that I turned it over. What a horrible sight met my eyes! The poor creature had a deep gash in its throat; it looked as if it had been gored. I called the "boys" and had it carried into the tent.

"Either gored or a spear-thrust," was A.'s verdict, when he saw it.

"Surely I have seen that dog before!" Then it dawned on me that it was a brother of Troubador's, whom I had given away to an Indian some months previously. The two dogs could hardly be told from one another.

For ten days I did all I could for it, then, when it was almost well, the Indian to whom I had given it came in. Yes, it was a spear-thrust given it by a Masai at the time his store was burnt, when the poor brute tried to defend his master's property. By then I knew the worst. My own animals had met with a worse fate.

On the seventh day the "boys" we had sent with the wagon returned. I saw them in the distance, and called to A. "Of course it is my imagination," I said, "for there is no wagon, so it cannot be our 'boys,' but it looks just like Manibura's walk."

A. looked, then took my arm and led me into the tent. "Stay there; I will go and see," he said.

I could not stay, so went out again and watched the "boys" as they greeted A. Then I saw how grave he looked and, as they came nearer, saw how worried was the expression on the "boys'" faces, and lost all hope. At last they were inside the "boma," inside the tent—twelve of them. They sat on the floor and told their tale.

I listened like one frozen. They had reached Nygara safely. They had taken the animals and put them on the wagon; one of the deer, that had struck up a friendship with the zebra, insisted on following. When they got as far as N'Dangasera, two of the "boys" had said what a pity it was to let all that flour and sugar fall into the hands of the Masai.

"But I thought it was already burnt," said A.

No, not then. The Masai had warned the "boys" in the store that it would be burnt, and told them not to touch anything, and had gone away and left everything behind. Then, when the "boys" tried to drag the bags out, the Masai had come down the sides of the hill like ants and taken it from them. They also cut the traces of the wagon and lashed the "gombes" until they ran away. Then they took the can which held the oil and turned it over the boxes in which were Mem-sahib's animals, and burnt them all. The deer and the zebra they speared to death; then they opened the cage in which was Mem-sahib's animal Saladin, and speared him until he died.

"The dogs?" queried A.

Some were killed, others ran away.

"The house?" he asked.

Burnt, so the Masai had told them. They had come away, so did not see it.

And so the narrative went on. Much of it I did not hear, or, hearing, did not understand. What a death! my poor animals, all gone! Every one of them so docile,

they had never experienced unkindness, and to meet such a death! It was unbelievable.

Manibura laid a hand on my knee. "What could I do, Mem-sahib? I was 'peke yako'" ("alone"). Poor boy! one against a host!

They got up and went out, and A. gave them food. I sat still, trying to realise the dreadful tragedy. My animals and my home, all gone! All the little treasures one collects about one, they could never be replaced; but I hardly gave them a second thought at the time, my thoughts were all for the poor dumb creatures that had trusted me so implicitly. This was the way the Masai showed their gratitude! At that moment, in the bitterness of my heart, I wished them every evil that could possibly befall them—men, women, and children.

A. re-entered the tent. "Come, Margaret! It is a bad business, still, it is useless to dwell on it."

I took my gun and went out to act as sentry. How I hoped they would come that night and give me the chance to account for one or two of them?

The next day Major D. returned. There had been a fight; the big guns had done execution among them, much to their consternation. How could guns, which could not be seen, nor yet the men who held them, possibly hurt? Yet some of the Masai were killed, some wounded. The K.A.R.s returned with many trophies—shields, spears, and the much-decorated breast-plates and headdresses. There was no longer any need for us to act as sentries.

The next day our "boy" returned with the news that the Lioni would attack that night. Everything was settled. They were now one thousand strong.

A. had finished the wire entanglements; nothing much bigger than a kitten could get through. Our "boys" had scoured the place for tins, and never did I see such a heterogeneous collection—condensed-milk

tins by the hundred, fish tins, meat tins, coffee tins, jam, marmalade, and golden-syrup tins. Surely Garra Narok must be the dumping-ground for half Africa! They rattled, clinked, and clanged against each other with every breeze that blew.

When night came, silence was imposed on everyone. There must be no talking at all.

One of the K.A.R.s came and examined our guns. A. asked for another one. It was brought to him. "When mine gets too hot to hold, you can load this one for me," said A. "No! it's no use your having another; your shoulder will never stand it. You will do more good loading mine." So it was agreed.

The natives simply poured in; all seemed to have heard that the Masai meant to attack. Whatever had kept them from doing so the previous nights, we did not know, but we were more than grateful that they had waited. They would get a warm reception if they came. We had nearly one hundred K.A.R.s, all of whom had done service in German East Africa, to say nothing of nine Europeans, some of them crack shots.

Silently ammunition was served out; the K.A.R.s had taken their meals at the posts they had occupied all day, and excellent meals they were. A. and I sat at the door of our tent, our guns resting on our knees.

"How I wish they would come and get this awful uncertainty over," whispered A. "Have you the veronal?"

"Yes! Don't worry," I replied.

"I am awfully sorry I allowed you to come; it has been no life for a white woman. I blame myself more than I can tell you," A. went on.

"Don't say another word," I replied. "I have never known what life was until I came out here. It has been perfect every minute until a fortnight ago."

" Well, shake hands, Margaret! You have been a real good pal."

That from A., I knew, was the highest praise I could have. I wanted no more. We lapsed into silence, the wail of a child, the low growl of a dog, alone breaking the intense quiet.

How still it was, and yet there, in the " boma," were hundreds of human beings—alert, some of us at least were ready for our friends the Masai, and hoping, more than words can tell, that they would come and end the life of uncertainty and suspense. It was dark as pitch. How one longed for just a flash of lightning to illuminate the outside blackness for a moment! I shivered. A. felt it as I sat beside him.

" Cold? " he asked. " Put your coat on. Here, I'll get it."

" You'll be clever," I replied. I had no coat and little enough else.

" D—— them! " A. muttered, sitting down again, " Inshallah! they shall have something, if they come to-night, the devils! "

In my heart I replied, " They shall!—they shall! "

The breeze was getting up; instantly all the cans began a faint tinkling, which soon became a perfect jangle.

" That ought to scare them," whispered A.

" It is rather defeating its own ends, don't you think? We don't know whether the Masai are touching the wires or what."

" No; one hardly reckoned on a wind like this."

Listening for the tins to jingle was ridiculous. We listened to it, and nothing else, for hours, or so it seemed.

" I wonder what the time is? "

" Don't know at all. Think I will run into the tent and strike a match—take my gun," said A. and disappeared, presently to return. " Half-past two," he said.

At that moment there was a long-drawn howl in the distance, then another and another. Closer they came.

"Lions about," I remarked.

"Sounds like it," said A. "Well, that is all that is needed to complete our happiness. Lions, and we must not shoot!"

"That is about the size of it. I suppose they could easily jump the wires?"

"Rather!"

There were no horses or mules in the "boma." My thought travelled to Viceroy, left tied in the forest. What had become of him? When the "boy" had returned, he was no longer there. We did not know what to think.

The hyena chorus was swelling, as they came nearer. There must have been twenty howls in twenty different keys. Twenty!—there must have been sixty. No! not sixty—a hundred!! Never shall I forget that night. We could see nothing, only imagine, and the din outside became deafening. Groans, howls, wails, anything more grim or uncanny it would be impossible to describe. Certainly it sounded as though there were a thousand hyenas at least! It might only have been two or three hundred, but that number, at least, without a doubt, there were. Closer they came, the awful notes gaining in volume. Now high, now low, now shrieking like lost souls. It was a nightmare. The dogs joined in the general clamour, answering with angry snarls the yells without. "The beasts will never get through, will they?" I negatived and queried all in one. For a moment of time they appeared to have surrounded the "boma"; there were wails from the children, shrieks from the women, the very air seemed thick with yells and snarls. Oh! if we could only see! If the night would only end! Then the din grew less and gradually

faded away in the distance, and the bark of the dogs became a subdued growl.

Had it been a dream? With the first faint streak of light the K.A.R. guard laid down their guns and stretched themselves; then, as an order was given, got up and went to their quarters. The tension was over, for one night at least.

Two more nights we spent in the same way—dead silence, complete darkness, nerves strained to their utmost—but never again were we overwrought as on that night.

“Were they hyenas, or were they Masai, do you think?” I asked A. later.

He shook his head in a non-committal kind of way.

“I have heard Masai make worse noise than that,” was all he said.

The strain was beginning to tell on both of us. Days of forced inactivity, nights of sleeplessness, suspense, uncertainty, and the knowledge that all we had possessed had suddenly been taken from us—all were beginning to make themselves felt.

“I think I shall go mad, if we stay here much longer; I wonder if there is any chance of our getting out?” A. spoke moodily. “I think I will inquire.”

The verdict of the D.C. was that it was not yet safe; there were still small bodies of belligerent Masai about. If A. left, it would not be with his consent.

Another day, another night; in the morning there came a small procession of Masai headmen, all bearing the fluffy ostrich peace balls on the end of their spears.

A. would wait no longer. Permission or no permission, he was going. So the two Catalonians were put in the buckboard, and “good-bye” said to Garra Narok.

We kept a sharp look-out all the way, travelling by very easy stages, for we were dependent on the two

donkeys then. No horses, the mules no one knew where, the minimum of clothing, next to no possessions, accompanied by a long string of "boys"—at last we reached Nairobi. How different from our start, two and three-quarter years before!

After much delay, much weary waiting, the Government gave us compensation. What could compensate us for the agony of mind and body to which we had been martyrs? Nothing could give me back the animals I had lost; nothing replace the treasured possessions which were gone. Small things, you will say—mere sentiment. Perhaps so; but a woman is no woman to whom sentiment, in some shape or form, does not appeal. A ring, a pendant, a book, a bracelet, a photo, a hunting-crop—oh! the thousand-and-one things that recurred to me, full of memories one and all. Even now, strange though it may seem, I go to a drawer or cupboard to get something which I remember to have possessed for years and years; it is not there.

Many months after, when everything was settled, I met a Frenchman, who had been as far as N'Dangasera, and had come on the charred remains of what had once been a wagon, a few heaps of charred feathers, a half-eaten zebra skin, the crinkled remains of the skin of a cheetah—poor Saladin!

About three months after reaching Nairobi, a Somali one day came into the garden. "What did he want?"

He had brought Mem-sahib's horse.

"Brought my horse?" I repeated.

"Yes. Will the Mem-sahib pay the expenses and I will bring it round?"

"Pay expenses," indeed! I was so overjoyed to know the animal was safe that I willingly paid, although I suppose I should have given him in charge for misappropriation. No doubt he had made good use of the horse in the meantime.

So Viceroy was returned to me. The only link with the past, save Obadiah.

A. and I had taken a small house in Nairobi temporarily. Many were the pleasant rides I had on Viceroy. He became almost as great a pet as Juliet had been. Then, one day, a bolt fell from the blue. A. said he must return to Masailand. It called and called persistently, he said. Would I care to go with him? No! Masailand was, and always would be, full of painful memories for me. I would remain in Nairobi.

Then a week before he started, one evening as we sat talking, he said suddenly, "Margaret, I don't think you should ride alone while I am away."

"Why not?" I laughed.

"I don't think it is quite the thing, is it?"

"What nonsense!" I said. "Surely I am old enough to take care of myself."

"Yes, I know; but a woman going about alone on horseback soon gets a name."

I could only look at him wide-eyed. "Well, of all the senseless remarks——" I began.

"I know; but still I feel I am right."

Well, the end of it was that I promised to dispose of Viceroy until such time as his "Masai craze" was over.

"I don't expect I shall stay long this time; it will not be the same," said A.

So Viceroy was disposed of to the Game Warden, on the understanding that, when A.'s crazy fit, as I called it, was over, the horse was to be returned. For six months I went about in my rickshaw, and a very tame affair it was. Then A. came back, and we went to the Game Warden's office. Could he spare Viceroy? If so, we should like him again.

He looked at A. for a moment, then said, "I have only just come back from Athi River."

"Yes?" said A., when he did not go on.

"I only got back yesterday," he continued.

"I see," responded A. ; "you think Viceroy wants a rest? Well, he shall have it! We don't want him to ride for a few days."

"Of course not," I said.

"I don't think anyone will ever ride him again," said the Game Warden quietly.

"Why, what has happened?"

"A lion sprang out of a bush and landed on his back, just behind me. I rolled off quicker than I am telling you. It is a bad job. I am awfully sorry. It was the nearest shave I have ever had."

So the last link with Masailand was gone. No! I still had, and I still have as I write, Obadiah. Getting old now, rather short-tempered, not altogether trustable with strangers, yet still Obadiah. Did ever lemur have such vicissitudes as he?

"Poor old Viceroy!" said A. "We really have been unfortunate with all our animals; it only wants Obadiah to go, and then I shall feel our luck is dead out."

"There does not seem much wrong with him," I replied.

Little did I think, as I spoke, who was to be the next. The following week A. was preparing to take a short "safari" to Nyeri, when he became suddenly unwell, and the journey was put off. On getting better, the old restless mood again took possession of him. He felt he "must keep moving." So preparations were again made, this time on a large scale. He would go to Lake Rudolph. This was something of an undertaking. Still, he had been there before, and was most excited about going over the old ground again, in spite of it being rather a hot-bed of fever. Finally, the start was made, and A. got as far as Kisumu, when suddenly, without warning, he was summoned to take that long, long journey from which there is no return.

CHAPTER XVII

IN THE NANDI COUNTRY

Nandi country—Wealth of flowers—Nandi war-dance—Nandi medicine-men—"A little understanding with God"—Woman struck by lightning—Inside a Nandi hut—Recovery of woman—A very rare lemur—Loss of Obadiah—His return—Caterpillars—Gathering of weeds and grass—Mad woman—Nandi customs—Cattle disease—Nandi devil—Nandi curses—Nandi prayers—Nandi superstitions—Marriage customs—Punishment for murder and theft.

IT was some time before I could make up my mind as to what I was going to do. Should I return to England? Should I go farther afield? There was no one but myself to consider. Finally, I decided to avail myself of an invitation, given me some months previously, to visit friends in the Nandi country. Two days after, I was in the train, speeding towards Kisumu.

Very soon I began to realise what a really beautiful country it was, in spite of the almost continual rain. Really, I think the country owes much of its beauty to the incessant rainfall, which keeps it always so green. Never have I seen such forests as in the Nandi country—grand beyond words, revealing new charms and fresh surprises on each succeeding visit. One could not help observing the immense number of trees evidently struck by lightning. The storms in the Nandi country, once experienced, are seldom forgotten. They are awful in their grandeur and sublimity. Nearly every day it rained, the rain being preceded by heavy squalls. It generally came on about three o'clock and rained until

six or seven, the forenoon being excessively hot and steamy.

Naturally, everything grows there as nowhere else. Forest land, ploughed and planted in December, yielded an abundance of vegetables in March. The trees are taller, greater in girth, than any I have seen in British East Africa. One quaint tree I remember (we called it the sausage tree, for want of a better name) had great big pendulous fruits about fourteen inches in circumference and sixteen to eighteen inches long. How fond the monkeys are of this fruit, stripping the pods with their teeth and taking out the seeds. Then there was the Nandi flame-tree, with upright, bell-shaped flowers. A vivid scarlet in colour, it stood out everywhere against a dark green background, making wonderful patches of colour.

Never did I see so many flowers, and so varied in hue, as there. It was a paradise for the botanist and the entomologist. Gorgeous butterflies flaunting gaudy wings tried to outdo in brilliance the feathered songsters, and in the Nandi country the birds really did sing.

The women of that tribe were often fairly weighed down with beads and ornaments. There is a similarity between their language and the Masai. Among both tribes the salutation is the same, "Targwenya," to which the reply is "Iko" or "Igo" ("Go away"). "Targwenya" means "to laugh," so that it looks as if the literal translation were: "Laugh when you meet a friend, and having laughed, to show all is well, you may go away." Strangely, the song sung at the Nandi war-dance is in the Masai tongue, and Nandi medicine-men are chosen from a clan of Masai, the position of medicine-men being hereditary.

As I have said before, the rainfall in Nandi is abnormal; in fact, if it did not rain, a Nandi would look up

and say, "Ka-rat-arat" ("The heavens are fastened.") On one occasion I remember a Nandi coming to me and saying, "Bibi" (Mem-sahib is seldom used), "I want to go over to that hill. I do not want it to rain until I get home. Talk to the rain 'Muungu,' and tell Him not to send it down until I get home."

"That will be no use," I expostulated. "I cannot persuade 'Muungu' to hold the rain back!"

"Oh yes, you can!" was the reply. "You have a 'shauri' with 'Muungu'; if you ask Him, He will keep the rain back" (meaning that I had an understanding with God and, if I asked, He would withhold the rain for as long as I wished).

This belief came about in a singular way. One day, when a storm was raging and the lightning particularly vivid, a Nandi woman was struck. A number of men came running to the house and begged for some eggs.

"What do you want them for?" I asked.

"Abdulla's bibi is dead; the lightning has killed her," was the answer.

I gave them the eggs, but did not credit their tale.

Half an hour elapsed, and the storm showed signs of abating, although it still rained in the best Nandi style. I said to my friend Mrs. D., "I think I will go as far as Abdulla's house. I don't suppose there is any truth in the tale, but the woman may have been struck."

Mrs. D. replied, "I should wait until the rain ceases. The Nandi are so easily frightened, possibly the woman may have recovered by now."

"I think I will put on my mackintosh and go," I said; and go I did, taking a small bottle with some brandy in it. It might be of use, one never knew.

Walking was no easy matter; there were small rivers on either side of the road, and one sank into the red clay soil at every step, until there were no boots to be seen, nothing but an immense amount of earth. I lifted my feet

with difficulty, the rain pelting down in true tropical fashion all the time. After half an hour of this exercise, we arrived at the foot of a steep hill.

"Up there," said one of the Nandi, who had accompanied me.

"Up there?" I repeated. "I am sure I cannot; it is impossible." The water had already made deep furrows in the sides of the hill and was streaming down from a dozen points at once. "No! that I certainly cannot."

For a moment I stood irresolute; then, almost before I realised what had happened, a tall Nandi picked me up in his arms, and, slipping and sliding, we at last reached the top.

There was a solitary hut, which I entered at once. At first I could see nothing for the smoke from some damp wood with which someone had attempted to light a fire. When my eyes got accustomed to the dim light, I discovered four or five goats, as many sheep, and the same number of children or perhaps more. I could not turn them out; there was nowhere for them to go, and it still rained heavily.

The woman, a very fine specimen of her race, quite six feet tall, was stretched on a native bedstead. There was no bed. The hut was now filled with the seven or eight men who had accompanied me. The atmosphere was stifling.

I tried a small mirror first, but the surface remained undimmed. It was quite an hour from the time she had been struck until now. It seemed hopeless, nevertheless I knelt down and commenced kneading and pummelling until the perspiration rolled off me. The woman had not a vestige of clothing on, and at first I felt like turning the men out, but the rain was coming down with redoubled fury and I desisted.

"She is dead, Bibi—quite dead," they said from time to time; and really it appeared like it.

After quite twenty minutes of real hard work, just as my breath was giving out and my arms refused to continue, she heaved a tremendous sigh, rolled over, vomited, and then struggled into a sitting posture.

I administered brandy, covered her with a blanket, which I took from a man standing by (there would be one less to follow me home, anyway), and telling them to be very quiet and let her sleep, I came away. All the while I had been kneading the woman a goat had been surreptitiously chewing my hair, occasionally stretching out a long lip to draw in my ear also. I was quite glad to get out into the rain again, but the getting down promised to be far worse than the getting up.

The manner of the men had quite altered now, and I caught frequent allusions to "Shauris with Muungu." In fact, for the remainder of my stay, about six months, there was nothing else talked about, and I was at once spoken of as having supernatural powers. Added to this, my fondness for animals and my readiness to pay for all they brought me was, to them, non-understandable. They always brought the poor creatures bound to a pole, and when I cut the cords and took the poor beasts into my hands their astonishment knew no bounds.

There was a very rare lemur brought to me on one occasion, in shape exactly like a small bear, but with hands and feet like a monkey, there being extraordinary width between the thumb and forefinger. You will hardly be surprised when I tell you that anything that got within the grasp of those paws, or hands, emerged only with the greatest difficulty. As I unfastened the cords that bound it, judge my surprise to find a young one clasped in its arms, a pretty little soft grey mite, with a coat exactly like a chinchilla. For some time it smelt atrociously; then, as the change of diet began to take effect, this smell entirely disappeared. It would lie all day, the baby beside it, watching my movements with

big, almost stationary eyes. It let me stroke it and the eyes travelled to my face, but beyond that there was no response. I found out it was the species known as "Bate's Potto." It was not at all like Obadiah, although, like him, it was nocturnal.

Obadiah I used to fasten outside my house when evening came, but this creature I wanted to study. Oh, how cross it was! I tried every blandishment, and all failed. Then, one very wet evening, Obadiah had to remain inside, so the "Potto" was fastened one side of the room and he the other. Both had small chains on them, but the baby I did not chain. I thought I might be able to make it quite tame. I left the room, and was away, perhaps, half an hour. When I returned, mother and child had both disappeared, and, though we all joined in the search, we never found either of them. It had evidently used its hands to some purpose.

Another one was brought me, very savage indeed; this I also fastened, giving him a long length of chain. One evening, on going to bring Obadiah inside, preparatory to retiring, to my dismay I found he also had gone. The Nandi forest was not more than a dozen yards from the house, and I felt I should never see Obadiah again. After all we had gone through together! I offered a pound reward—an enormous sum to the Nandi—yet, although everyone searched, nothing came of it. I doubled the reward; it was useless. Nearly six years from the time I purchased him, a tiny, half-starved morsel, until now! Well, it was no use fretting; after all, perhaps he was far happier now that he had got his liberty—at least so said my friend Mrs. D., and I tried to think so.

The new lemur in no way filled Obadiah's place. As I said before, I had been given to understand that the gum oozing from so many of the trees in Nandi was its food. I fed it on bananas, custards, rice, and milk,

all of which it ate greedily. In fact, I would not have believed an animal that size could have had such an appetite.

About a fortnight later, one night just as I was going to bed, I caught sight of something sitting on my pillow, busily engaged in washing itself. I just glanced at it as I entered, thought it was a kitten, and proceeded to do my hair. A minute later something dropped on to my shoulder. It was Obadiah! Anyone might have borrowed a ten-pound note from me at that minute, so delighted was I. I threw on a dressing-gown and woke my friends the D.s. "Obadiah has come back," I said. I will not say they were astonished—that hardly describes it. To think that an animal could have its freedom for a fortnight, a grand forest to roam about in, and then voluntarily return to captivity, was unthinkable.

Here let me add it was not the first time Obadiah had deserted me. Once in Masailand, before our house was built, when I was sleeping in a hut, Obadiah got through the roof, pulling the thatch off to effect an exit. On that occasion he was away three days. The first night a cake left on a small table looked as if rats had been at it, in the morning. The second night a tin of biscuits had evidently been visited; crumbs lay about everywhere. On the third night A. was rudely awakened by some creature seizing his nose. He jumped out of bed, just in time to see Obadiah scaling the sides of the hut, and brought him down in a butterfly-net. Then he called to me, for no one cared to handle him when he was thwarted in one of his pet schemes, for Obadiah's bite was something to beware of. Yet at any other time A. could do anything with him, like myself.

One evening, when it had rained exceptionally hard, we had a fire lit, and were sitting beside it, Obadiah enjoying himself every bit as much as ourselves, when



NANDI WARRIORS.



LIONESS AND CUBS.

the door opened and in came the cat with a nice plump rat. I was just about to show her the door again, but Obadiah was before me. Jumping off my lap, he seized the cat, gripped her round the neck, took the rat from her and promptly ate it.

Another thing the Nandi could not understand was the butterfly-net. What did I do with it? Of what use were the butterflies when I had caught them? Caterpillars, too! Oh well, no doubt I ate them! It could not be expected that anyone having "shauris" with the "Muungu" would eat the same food as other people. So they brought me caterpillars by the score, by the hundred, all of which I took, giving them a few cents to encourage them to bring other things, and then threw them away.

One day, seeing they still stood there after receiving the money, I said, "Go away! What do you want now?"

"May we see you eat them?" was the reply, and one handed me a dirty scrap of paper in which reposed a grimy piece of salt. A fitting accompaniment, they thought!

When I tried to explain to them that a butterfly was a caterpillar before it became a butterfly, their amusement was worth watching. Ah, yes! but I did not want them to see me eat them, so this was the tale I told! One of them even went so far as to suggest to my friends the D.s, in a tentative kind of way, that if they had any "tembo" (strong drink), it would be as well to keep it locked up.

"Do you think so?" inquired my friend.

"Yes," was the reply; "we saw her this morning gathering weeds." By this he meant wild flowers.

Who would not have gathered them!—lovely blue gladioli, hemerocallis, narcissi, and orchids. One had only to reach out one's hand to pluck them.

This gathering of weeds and grass is a common custom among the Nandi. One sees it frequently. People who have lost their wits (as in my own case, I suppose), or who have no property—in other words, beggars—or who have through disease or infirmities become unable to support themselves, go about with long poles, to the end of which is tied a long bunch of grass and weeds, so that the benevolent may give them food.

There was a half-witted woman among the Nandi who came regularly. Bits of string, bits of grass, strips of hide, dangled from her person. She was exceedingly ugly without these ornaments; with them she became grotesque, especially as, when I first saw her, she was executing a dance, in which string, grass, and hides stood out at right angles every time she jumped or twirled. The moment she saw me, she made a rush, stopping her gyrations to do so, and sank on the ground, grasping my boots. Of course this was the signal for a wild shout from the Nandi. Their belief was verified before their eyes! Mad people being specially protected by the "Muungu," of course she had at once recognised a person with whom the "Muungu" had "shauris"! There was nothing more to be said, nothing more needed.

After that, whenever she caught sight of me, she followed closely behind; "mopping and mowing" as she walked, to the intense delight of onlookers. My friends told the Nandi to take her away, but they said she was harmless, unless it might be that she had a fancy for burning huts, twelve or fourteen Nandi having been rendered houseless by the lady at different times. On one occasion I came upon a woman giving her a sound thrashing, the poor wretch shrieking meanwhile. Of course I intervened, the woman explaining that the mad woman had that morning burnt her hut down. After that she followed me like a dog. Many times,

on seeing her in the distance, I have had to turn round and go in another direction.

The nights were glorious in Nandi, although one could not enjoy them to the full : leopards had always to be reckoned with. One morning I saw thirteen sheep dead and dying, the victims of a couple of leopards, who had found a small hole in the wall of a hut and deliberately scratched their way inside. On dark nights one had to be particularly on one's guard. When there is no moon, the Nandi say that the sun, who is supposed to be the husband of the moon, has killed her. Others say " No ! he has only beaten her, and she has gone away to hide, but will come back presently." They believe that the spirits of the dead live under the earth. They give them the name of " Ouk." The spirit of an adult is supposed to live in his shadow, which comes up out of the earth sometimes. A child is not supposed to have a spirit.

In many parts of Africa there are steam jets issuing out of the earth. These are generally supposed to be the spirit peep-holes, through which they can see all that is going on. These spirits are prayed to, the Nandi saying, " Spirit, take care of us ! You were not murdered, you died quietly and naturally, so watch over us ! "

Like the Masai, the Nandi expose the bodies of the dead or dying to the hyenas, hence my Nandi " boy's " astonishment when, in Mombasa, I told him his child would have to be buried. The Nandi, as a whole, seem very fond of their children, and very pretty, in most cases, the young children are. The Nandi believe in humouring children, a favourite saying among them being " Ngi rep e lakwa rotua ke kene je ket," which means : " If you take a knife from a child, give it a stick or stone to play with."

The chief medicine-man is supposed to remove his

head when any of the Nandi are at war, and send it to the seat of operations. The medicine-men as a body are known as "Orkoiyot." There is nothing that a medicine-man cannot perform, if sufficient backsheesh is given him.

Multitudinous are the ceremonies performed should disease break out amongst the cattle; and many and various are the diseases to which cattle seem prone in this country.

First the cattle are driven to a fire, milk poured over them, and prayer made to Asis by the customary method of taking beer and milk in the mouth, ejecting it, and calling the attention of Asis to the condition of things. They have a devil, called Chemosit, who has a residence on earth and also a predilection for children. Not at all a fatherly interest, however, as he at once, on catching sight of a child, devours it. Very nimble he is supposed to be, in spite of the fact that he has only one leg, and is half man, half bird. His mouth, too, appears like a big flaming fire, so children naturally run towards it and instant destruction follows. In spite of having his mouth always open, he sings beautifully—another inducement for the children.

No attempt is made at cultivation by the Nandi—at least, not amongst those with whom I came into contact—and they are frequently on the verge of starvation on that account. They are quite a pastoral tribe, and a lazy one at that. Bullocks, cows, goats, and sheep they possess in numbers; but it does not seem to occur to them to kill and eat them, so they increase and multiply, and, except to look at, seem little or no good. Always, when parting with cattle, as when buying a wife, a handful of grass is given—otherwise the cattle would die. The wedding ring does not exist, but bracelets of grass take its place. They always hold grass in the hand when an ox is bled for the first time.

In this respect they are very like the Masai, as also in frequent spitting. They spit when they smell anything nasty, they spit when they make an agreement. All Nandi spit when they meet a European, and also when they meet their "totem." They spit, for luck, at marriage ceremonies, as also when cursing anyone or anything. Their curses are very ready and quite to the point. To a woman would be said, "May you die in labour!" "May you be eaten by hawks!" or "May you become thin!" the Nandi being much averse to thin women, although the men are tall and slim and decidedly refined in feature.

They are a very timid people, quite unlike the Masai in this respect. It was quite a long while before they would come near us, while the sight of our horses filled them with the greatest alarm. That much-talked-of "Nandi devil," that fearsome beast which attacks all and sundry that it comes across, I never saw, although they say it certainly exists, but lives right in the heart of the densest forests, from which it seldom emerges. I am quite of opinion that there still exist animals in the forests of Nandi as yet unknown. As at present it is impossible to get into the heart of the forests, one can only look from the fringe, as it were, and surmise.

To see the monkeys in a Nandi forest is something past believing. I have stood quite still in the midst of the vast silence, great trees, sixty or seventy feet high, towering above my head, gorgeous butterflies flitting past me or hovering over a bubbling spring, and the monkeys have come nearer and nearer to inspect this pigmy. Little brown monkeys, big grey monkeys, the beautiful black-and-white Colobus monkey, monkeys with red tails, blue monkeys—I have seen thousands at once, peering at me from the branches overhead.

Lovely little starry orchids are in almost every tree, and on one occasion I found a small cluster of pink

cypridium! There were five of them, and I never came across them elsewhere.

I think, on the whole, the Nandi are a much more lovable people than the Masai. Of course, it is impossible to speak after an eight months' acquaintance only, but that was how they struck me, the children especially. They are not nearly so grasping as the Masai, much more gentle in their ways, much more ready, when their natural shyness is overcome, to do any little thing required of them, and certainly much more light-hearted. They are exceedingly intelligent, and the men at least exceedingly proud.

Anything above a five-cent piece they had no use for. At that time a five-cent piece was worth about a penny. One and all said the same, "Give us cents, or the Indians will not give us value; if we take this large piece of money, we shall get no more than if we took a small coin." On our journey out we stopped to obtain water for the motor-car. Women ran and filled "ki-bois," and as we had nothing smaller than ten-cent pieces on us, they refused to accept anything.

When we became better known, a child would often slip up and put a hand in mine; but it required an immense amount of courage, as I could see from the admiring looks of the crowd. There was none of the rude touching and examining to which I had been subjected in Masailand.

Altogether, my short sojourn amongst them lingers as a pleasant memory, without any unpleasant incident to mar or disfigure the picture. Their country is a dream of loveliness. Hot, relaxing, and very humid, I grant, but undeniably lovely. They have a good deal in common with the Masai, as I said before, but do not like to be associated with them, although they are always ready to listen to everything relating to them. What were their dances like? What did they wear? How

did the men dress when they were going to fight? These, and many other questions, I had to answer.

The Nandi believe in a God; probably the Sun, to them, is His representative. They pray "Asis! give us children. Asis! give us flocks and herds. Asis! let our health be good." Or, again, "Asis! are you listening? Hear that which I ask for? Give me what I want. Don't say you are tired of listening." There is a good deal of command about their prayers.

Women always resort to the medicine-man when they want children. Apparently they take nothing for granted, but prefer to see something tangible before they make a request. These medicine-men are nearly always requested to give charms.

When a child is born, it is not washed, as with ourselves. Four months must first elapse. Then a sheep or goat is slaughtered and the child's face washed with the undigested food in the animal's stomach. There is a good deal of ceremony about this washing. Beer and milk are held in the mouth for a moment, then spat out at the Sun, the Nandi meantime calling the attention of the Sun to the honour thus done him. "Asis! do you see this beer and milk? Then make the child strong and healthy. Protect him from harm!"

They imagine that spirits exist in the water, the trees, and the air. If you ask them how everything was created, they will tell you that a union took place between earth and sky. They have a great objection to felling trees—big ones, at any rate. Supposing the tree squeaked as it fell—that would show conclusively that you had broken into the heart of a spirit, which would be most unlucky, as misfortune would be sure to follow your footsteps for the remainder of your life.

Here is a story to show the intensity of their superstition, which the Masai, and probably many other tribes, also share. My personal "boy," a Nandi, the

other day informed me that a murder had been committed and that no one knew who the murderer was. Personally he knew that the doctors at the hospital had run short of medicine ("dawa") and wanted blood to make more! I could not shake his belief. Some few months ago murders were committed in Nairobi, and the same belief attached to them. To such an extent was it carried that no rickshaw was obtainable after 7 p.m., as at that time it was dark, everyone being put to great inconvenience as a consequence.

A Nandi may not marry indiscriminately—I mean not into another clan; and every clan has a "totem." This "totem" takes the form of an animal which becomes sacred to the clan—a deer, monkey, hyena, leopard, etc. A Nandi belonging to a class of which a deer was the "totem," would not dream of killing that animal.

A man's wife must be chosen from his own clan. To take a wife from another clan would at once cause the woman to prove sterile and be disastrous in other ways, so that the strictest inquiries are always made first, the price paid being, in most instances, one bull, one cow, and ten goats. Still, wives can be obtained on the instalment system, so much down, the remainder to follow.

Nandi women paint the face red before marriage, and very ugly they look.

A woman who has borne twins is considered unclean for ever after, as also a child who imitates the cry of a hyena, the hyena generally proving the sepulchre of the dead; like the Masai, Nandi corpses are generally thrown out into the forest.

A girl whose sweetheart dies is also accounted unclean.

A woman's house, after she has given birth to a child, must be washed out with cow manure daily for a month,

she also being unclean, as everything with which she comes into contact during that period.

A Nandi starting on a "safari" would return immediately if a guinea-fowl should cry, or a dog climb on to the roof of a house—a thing by no means impossible, considering the heaps of rubbish allowed to accumulate outside: such an event would be most unfortunate, and would without doubt foretell the death of the owner.

Never draw a Nandi's attention to a shooting star or a comet, unless you wish him all the ill-luck possible; the sight of either would be most disastrous.

Never wake a Nandi roughly: a pillow or other missile thrown at his head, accompanied by "Get up, old thing," would mean that his soul would instantly take flight.

The Nandi are not particularly honest. In my own case, I have found them quite the reverse; however, they will sometimes try to hide a theft, as if it were something to be ashamed of. A Nandi found in possession of a goat accounted for its possession by saying, "It came into my house just as I was throwing this knife. How was I to know it would hit the goat and cut its throat?" Again, a Nandi found with a fowl belonging to someone else explained the matter thus: "There were rats in the basket where I keep my 'mahindi' [corn]. I took the cat to catch them; the fowl was the other side of the basket pecking at the corn, and the cat caught it."

When women bring in grain to sell, it is customary for them to shake hands, meaning that they will not touch the corn in another's basket.

Sometimes after a quarrel, when the parties make peace, a dog is chopped in pieces. Each member of the party then takes a piece in the hand and says solemnly, "Let him who breaks the peace, now made, be even as this dog."

Morality is an unknown virtue among the Nandi;

they appear to have none. The only thing to avoid is breaking the eleventh commandment, "Thou shalt not be found out."

A man actually came before the magistrate, when I was in Nandi country, and tried to enforce payment of grain from another, to whom he had loaned his wife and who had promised him the grain as a *quid pro quo*.

At the same time they seem to expect something like morality from their women, the unmarried girls at all events. If an unmarried girl should have a child, she can never hope to be a "first" wife, nor must she even glance towards a granary, to say nothing of going inside. Here they differ from the Masai.

Murder is looked upon as deserving punishment, and very severe the punishment is. If the victim happens to be a man, the murderer will find himself mulcted in five bulls, five cows, and thirty goats, and in about half that number should it happen to be a woman.

They are great believers in obtaining something from one's person, as that gives them great power over that person whose property it once was. Hair is certain to work magic. They have only to hold the hair of an adversary in the hand and wish, and there is nothing that cannot happen!

With regard to stealing, the eleventh commandment must be rigidly observed; on no account must you be "found out." A man caught stealing must pay in kind (they have little or no money) four times the value of that which he stole. If this fails to cure him, he will probably be tortured; and if after this he continues his sinful ways, he will be strangled. Cords are fastened round his neck; everyone who can seizes a cord, fifteen or twenty, "the more the merrier"; all pull different ways, and, I think, in some cases, he is afterwards clubbed.

One would think that was sufficient, but frequently

his heirs have to hand over any bullocks, sheep, or goats he may possess.

If women or children are caught stealing, they are well whipped with stinging nettles to teach them to mend their ways.

There seems to be no punishment for adultery ; this does not appear to be a crime.

If a Nandi goes on "safari," on reaching a hut he will at once inquire to what class the occupant belongs. Should it by chance happen to be his own, everything is done for his comfort, and after much fraternising the owner will prepare to leave the hut, abandoning his wife and all his belongings. She at once cooks food for the visitor and remains the night with him.

Grass plays a part in many ceremonies. Grass is held in the hand at marriage ceremonies ; grass is handed to the other party when an agreement is made ; grass is tied on the end of a stick when a person can no longer make his own living in order that the charitable may know.

When a warrior is away on a raid, he must never be spoken of by name, but the name of a bird, previously agreed on, is given him, and by this he is known until his return.

The Nandi can never be got to tell their own name to a perfect stranger. If you inquire, you will most likely be told, "Oh! while the thunder roars," "Born by the river," "When the hyena came," "When the leopard caught the sheep."

As I said before, the hyena is the cemetery of most of the relations of the Nandi, as it will almost certainly be their own. That is why no one would imitate the cry. Should a child, however, so far forget itself, a goat would have to be killed and its excrement well rubbed all over the child, after which it might be well slapped. The greatest respect is shown for this horrible animal ; for

all one knows, you may be looking at your own grandmother or even your husband.

Should several children in a family die, the next to be born is placed in a path directly leading to the water, or from a hyena's hole (as hyenas are well known to have intercourse with spirits), so that they may inform them that this child's life must be spared to the parents.

CHAPTER XVIII

MASAI CUSTOMS

Batian, the great medicine-man—Making use of the Wanderobo—Unmarried girls—Circumcision—Customs as regards warriors—Bleeding cattle—The lot of young boys—A warrior's headdress—Chewing bark of trees—Fines for injuries—Distorting the person—My Nandi "boy" and Chemosit the devil.

THE records of the Masai, as far as I could glean, were as follows: Many years ago the ruler named Batian died, leaving two sons. He was generally acknowledged a great medicine-man. Twice yearly he made medicine, but what went into the composition of this medicine was known to himself and a few members of the royal house only. Very nasty and very uncanny this medicine was, no doubt. Having made it, the next ceremony was a drinking-bout, when, having become properly or improperly inebriated, he held forth at great length, and foretold many things that would happen in the future. As that which he foretold mostly came true, especially about the various raids in which the Masai took part, there is no doubt whatever that he was greatly helped to form conclusions by the secret service which exists among the Masai.

On one occasion, when the usual medicine-making had taken place, Batian had it conveyed to a tree, and informed his sons they could now search for it.

The two sons were named Sendeyo and Lenana. Sendeyo, so the tale runs, was not particularly straight in his dealings, and of a very quarrelsome disposition, and from all accounts, Lenana was the favourite, so it

was not astonishing that Lenana should find the medicine. Batian, on receiving the news, at once took off his sandal and placed it on Lenana's foot, unbuckled his sword, without which no Masai would feel dressed, and gave this also to Lenana, as also a strip of leather torn from his own garment, to signify that all he possessed now belonged to the favourite son.

About this time Batian was living at a spot near Kiliman N'jaro, and here, having called all his warriors together, he again commenced to prophesy. The Masai tell you they all flocked to Batian and sat round him in countless numbers, or, to use Masai words, "like flies when the rains are on." Well, I have seen flies clustering on a single Masai, and can only say their numbers must have been enormous, if that could be taken as a simile! "Father Batian," they continued, "sat amongst us. We sat in a half-circle like the moon when it is young. Father Batian pointed to the hills, all round us. 'Look,' he said, 'I can see no one. My people are all gone, their cattle are gone, their sheep are gone too. The land is bare.' Then he pointed to where the water is. 'Can you see strangers?' he asked. 'White of face are they; but fear them not, they come to protect you. Put your spears into the ground; do not run away.'" (A Masai always thrusts his spear deep into the ground while talking or if intending to remain.) "So the white man came, as our Father Batian had said, and, after that our Father Batian died. Ten moons passed away, our cattle died; more moons passed, and more cattle died." Rinderpest broke out and accounted for hundreds of cattle in 1890-91 and 1892; shortly after, famine made its appearance, to be followed by smallpox. The Masai, like the Nandi, do not cultivate, so the loss of cattle, almost the only means of subsistence, was keenly felt.

After the death of Batian there was constant fighting

between Lenana and Sendeyo, sometimes one side having the advantage, sometimes the other. Lenana is said to have had a truly marvellous gift, as had Batian his father, in finding out what was happening or was about to happen. This was put down to the N'Gai (God), or by some to magic. There seems no doubt, however, that the secret service again was doing excellent work, as in the past.

Among the Masai only the chiefs are buried, the hyena acting as cemetery for the rest, as among the Nandi. Of course, Batian was buried, and a great cairn of stones erected over him, as was customary.

Now Lenana, thinking to obtain great power, took his father's skull and hid it away. The Masai say they have searched and searched, but have never found it. Unless Batian's skull was abnormal, and they could swear to it when found, I can quite credit this, seeing the number of skulls one sees lying about in Masailand!

At one time, members of another tribe were not permitted to visit, certainly not to live with, the Masai. A Masai was not permitted, no matter how poor, to take service with anyone else. If he did anything so derogatory, he was on no account allowed to return to the tribe again.

The Loita tribe, amongst whom I lived, suffered very heavily in the rinderpest outbreak, yet at the present time the number of cattle owned by them is enormous. Of course the Government taxed them very heavily after the raid, and no doubt thinned the numbers considerably.

The Masai use tobacco in great quantity; they not only buy tobacco, but are always willing to exchange goods for this article. Much of it is chewed, mixed with potash and soda, but a great deal is ground into snuff, which they carry in horns round the neck, sus-

pended by chains, or in small wooden boxes much ornamented with beads.

One of the reasons given by the Masai as to why they do not bury their dead is that corpses taint the ground and spoil the grain. Seeing how little they do in the way of agriculture, this could hardly matter.

Of course their clothing is never washed, and they themselves seldom, if ever. They rely solely on grease, which is frequently renewed, and as a consequence have a strong muttomy smell (mutton fat being used) which is extremely unpleasant.

They are extraordinarily active and fleet of foot—quite remarkably so. We had two Masai who not infrequently ran messages for us to Garra Narok, a distance of eighty miles. They always returned on the third or fourth day.

Their shields are curiously painted, the designs being somewhat crude, red, black, and sometimes yellow, being the colours chosen. They do not make them for themselves, another tribe, the Wanderobo, being employed to do this work. Curiously, they look down on the Wanderobo, who are hunters and not warriors, and whose duty it is to prepare the skins with which the shields are covered. Nevertheless of late years the Masai, to bring fresh blood into the tribe—which was sadly needed, the tribe having deteriorated through immorality—have intermarried with the Wanderobo women, greatly to their benefit, although a Wanderobo man would not be allowed to take a Masai woman to wife.

A Masai warrior, or Morani, may give any order he pleases and he must be obeyed. Fowls are taboo among the Masai. The crowing of a cock would undoubtedly betray their hiding-place to an enemy.

When a Masai reaches the age of eight years, he is circumcised. There is also circumcision for the girls, whose faces are watched closely for any signs of pain.



TWO OF THE WANDEROBO TRIBE.

If such a sign is given, she is taunted for ever after. Among some tribes a vessel is filled with water and placed on her head, so that, if a drop is spilled, they may know she has winced.

The "ditos," all young, unmarried girls, live with the warriors, who are not allowed to marry until their period of service expires. Their ages are anything from eleven to fifteen. A warrior selects the "dito" he fancies, and gives a present to her mother; but as it is no marriage, he does not give cattle, sheep, or goats, this being reserved for the marriage ceremony.

These "ditos," many of whom are not bad-looking, although not nearly so good-looking as the men, wear an enormous amount of jewellery, and also a three-inch belt, decorated with beads, generally in V pattern, white, blue, and red beads being most in favour; some have the edges outlined with small brass nails. Should a "dito" have a child, she at once returns to her mother; until then, she lives with the warrior in the "manyatta." He may be given the option of marrying her when his time of service expires, although this is not at all compulsory, and, I should think, seldom happens.

This child-bearing in no way deters her from marrying someone else; in fact, it is rather an inducement.

A Masai cannot have too many children. If they are boys, they will work for one; if girls, they will eventually bring a dowry of sheep and cattle. That which has happened is not looked upon as detrimental, but as a natural consequence to a legalised custom.

Directly a wife becomes pregnant, she retires to her own hut, where she remains, alone, until the child is weaned, possibly at two years.

They have no religion, everything incomprehensible is referred to as N'Gai (the Unknown or God). Superstition is rife, as with the Nandi.

A warrior having completed thirty years (counting ten

months to the year) of active service is granted permission to marry. This is a somewhat expensive matter. He must give to the nearest male relative two cows, a sheep, two bullocks, two goats, some honey to make "tembo," or beer, for the marriage-feast, and sundry other things. One man making a present to another may, as an acknowledgment of the gift, have the loan of the other man's wife; but a woman may not commit adultery without her husband's sanction.

A woman's position in Masailand is that of a chattel, although she does take part in discussions outside any matter connected with the tribe. She is a keen bargainer, and will sit for hours and hours on end disputing over a handful of tobacco, more or less; a pound of tobacco, in Masailand, being worth about sixpence of present currency. She will argue and argue the price of a sheep or a goat, when the man would be satisfied and walk away. Womanlike, she will have the last word, and that sheep or goat will come back again the next day and the next, until you begin to look upon it as an old acquaintance and the animal recognises some pet particular tree, to which it always walks as a good scratching-place. Then perhaps, after a week or two of travelling backwards and forwards, she suddenly gives in and takes the sum originally offered, with a broken strand of beads thrown in as backsheesh. Backsheesh, in some shape or form, she must have, if it is only a spoonful of honey, or she does not consider she has made a good bargain.

There is a peculiarity about Masai cows; they seem to have complete control over their milk. The loss of a calf, to us, would not mean much; to the Masai it means a great deal, for not a spot of milk will they get afterwards, and on blood and milk they principally live. Now, additions are made to this diet, sugar, flour, and rice being added.

The bleeding of an animal is performed in the following manner: an ordinary broad-bladed arrow is passed through a flat piece of wood for about three-quarters of an inch. This arrow is then shot from a bow at close quarters into the jugular vein, the wood preventing serious injury, which without this precaution would certainly result. Sometimes a hide was brought in from which a number of pieces of skin hung like short tails, where the animals had been bled and the wound tied up until healed.

Cow's blood has the reputation of curing dysentery. Quite a number of herbs are known to the Masai, strengthening and aperient and preventatives of fever and ague. These are mixed with the food, and wonderfully effective they appear to be. External or fetish medicine prepared by the medicine-man is fastened securely in pieces of skin and hung round the neck, which pieces of skin are never renewed. In some cases they are decorated with beads. If required they will also make medicine to sprinkle round about the village, and all men taking part in the distribution of this medicine wear a strip of goat-skin, which hangs or stands out on the finger.

The old men are much given to the drinking of fermented spirit made from honey and sugar, which quickly makes them intoxicated. A small quantity was brought for us to taste. However, the look and smell were quite sufficient! The Morani are not allowed to drink, but all men and women chew tobacco.

There is practically no salt to be found in Masailand, and, knowing how necessary it is for the cattle, they purchase large quantities.

Like the Nandi, they expectorate frequently. When vowing eternal friendship they spit; at the ceremony of blood brotherhood they spit, as also when shaking hands. On entering a house it is customary to spit

north, south, east, and west to ensure good luck ; and when an infant is born, it must be spat upon to ward off illness.

No man or woman must be referred to by their own name after death.

No warrior is allowed to have any possessions. He belongs to the Masai, and until his period of service ceases can call nothing his own. At the expiration of that time he may take a wife and own property. Everything taken by him in raids must be handed to his father, or, failing his father, the chief.

A boy, until he becomes a Morani, has a wretched time. He is required to milk goats, help old men herd cattle, clean cooking-pots and also "kibois," fetch water, cut wood and carry it, but if, by chance, there is an old woman attached to the village, she relieves him of a great deal of the work. Very often he gets beaten ; this helps to harden him. A few boys are allowed to live in the "manyatta" with the "ditos" and Morani, and they are expected to do any work required of them.

A warrior's head is a curious sight. The hair is drawn back into a long pigtail, then greased and well "dongoed" (red-clayed). This pigtail is slipped into a leather sheath, or perhaps bound round with strips of calico, these also partaking of the grease and red-clay treatment. So thickly are the warriors covered with this about the head, face, and neck that the grease positively runs down in small rivulets. Possibly these pigtails are some trouble to manipulate, for, once dressed, they are allowed to remain six or eight weeks without being touched. The headdress of a warrior on the warpath is a wonderful structure, often quite three feet high and two feet broad, formed of the feathers of the vulture, or perhaps marabout stork, or it may take the form of a lion's head and mane fastened round the

neck, with only the eyes, nose, and mouth of the Morani visible—an object to strike awe into anyone seeing one for the first time.

A warrior's outfit weighs from eighteen to twenty pounds. When on the warpath they frequently chew the bark of the mimosa-tree. This is thought to give courage, but more frequently it does nothing more than bring on symptoms of delirium. When on these raids it is unwise to speak to them, or indeed to cross their path, as at such times they are more or less mad and quite irresponsible for their actions.

When a warrior's fighting-career is over, his spear is taken from him and a short one given him instead. He may now marry and have as many wives as he can afford to keep. I do not think there is any stated limit. He need do no work for the remainder of his days; the wives do all that. He just sits still, smokes, drinks, and herds cattle, with the help of small boys: a "rest-on-his-laurels" sort of business.

If the lot of the old men is an enviable one, that of the old women almost makes one weep. Initiated into the mysteries of married life at an age when other children are playing with their dolls, then later, when still a child, chosen by some old man, old enough to be her grandfather, as a wife, an old man of whom she knows nothing and cares less. After that, a few weary years of child-bearing, and then she suddenly finds herself supplanted. A younger woman has taken her place. Old now, and undeniably ugly, when in England she would still be in or very little past her prime, she becomes the household drudge. She collects firewood, builds the houses and the "boma" encircling them, carries loads (anything up to 80 lb. is placed on her back); she is, in fact, no better than any other beast of burden, given food and a sleeping-place, and thought far less of than the donkeys belonging to her lord and master. At any time during

her married life she may be divorced. If, according to her husband's finding, she prove lazy, or her temper does not exactly fit in with his, or should she fail to give him children, then she is quickly turned out and has no redress.

In the event of a man injuring another, no matter whether premeditated or not, if he injures an arm or a leg, he must pay eight cows, if a tooth he must pay one cow, and two cows if more teeth. For injury to the reproductive organs twenty cows must be paid. I never heard any fixed number given for injury to sight.

That the Masai can bear an immense amount of pain is undoubted. Take the case of women : the brass and copper wire which encircles the arms and legs is put on them when quite young, no allowance being made for growth. As the arms and legs reach maturity, the wires sometimes actually cut into the flesh ; but although the women will come to you for treatment, they will never do as you suggest and have the cause of trouble removed. Frequently you will see bits of filthy rag inserted between the flesh and the circle of brass or copper, but never do you see it entirely removed.

Again, the fly scourge must be simply awful to bear, yet you never see anyone, although literally covered with these pests, do more than lazily flick them off with a fly-whisk. The tail of a wildebeeste is much prized for this purpose. Children, whom I have seen so covered as to be quite invisible, never flicked an eyelid or raised a hand to disturb the intruders.

The Masai, once in every seven years, with much ceremony hand over the care of their country to the young Morani or fighting men, and these, swollen with pride at the confidence placed in them, at once go off to try conclusions with another tribe. Of course there is much praying to N'Gai (the Unknown) and to the

spirits of their ancestors before this is undertaken. Needless to say, it is now almost a thing of the past.

The Lumbwa are said to have gained their name through the opprobrium in which they were held by the Masai, the word meaning, "Those who have given up warfare and taken to agriculture."

The Masai are certainly the worst offenders I have seen in the matter of mutilating or disfiguring their bodies. Their ears make one shudder. At first a hole is drilled in the lobe, then a small stick is inserted; this gives place to a piece of wood, about the size of a pint-bottle cork, and so it goes on, by gradual stages, until a pound jam-pot could easily be accommodated inside. Sometimes the piece of wood has two upright pieces which stand up before and behind the ear, while the large circular piece remains in the lobe. These uprights are decorated with beads. Sometimes you will see older people with the lobe caught up and hung over the upper portion, where it hangs flabbily. Or again, one may see chains, passed over the head, brought through the lobes of the ear, hanging down on to the breast and suspending ornaments of brass or iron or, it maybe, a charm.

The traditions of centuries will take centuries to remove. Take my present Nandi "boy." Again and again I have questioned him respecting the devil "Chemosit," laughed at him, reasoned with him, all to no purpose. "Chemosit" is as real to him as if he had seen it. Only to-day he went through some queer gestures trying to describe its appearance to me. "It is as big as a tree, Mem-sahib," he said. "Its mouth is like"—he paused for a simile—"it is like the fire in the kitchen. It spreads its wings like this"—and he extended his arms—"and it takes children by the back of the neck and they are dead. Ah! it is a fearful beast!" and Ali or Labozo went to the window to spit.

“ But Ali,” I remonstrated with him, “ how can it ? If it is so big, how can it stand on one leg always ? ”

“ It does, Mem-sahib ! it stands like this,” and Ali placed one foot against the opposite knee and stood for me to see, that being a favourite position with the Masai.

I have questioned him also about the animal which is generally believed to exist, and he says its name is “ Chemarke ”—that animal, he says, shakes the ground when it walks. And yet this “ boy ” lives amongst civilised people, a civilised life, but nothing will shake his belief ! I expect the Nandi saying, “ However clever you may be, can you see down the back of your neck ? ” often occurs to him, and I am sure he pities my ignorance.

To-day my life among the Masai and Nandi is a thing of the past. Much is, of course, forgotten, but I have written of just a few of the happenings as they occurred to me. All my notes and nearly all the photographs taken were burnt with our house and stores.

Already the “ old order changeth,” although only four years have elapsed since the events set forth in this book took place ; one school, if not more, has been opened to Masai pupils, and soon we shall see Masai girls at needlework, mending sheets and shirts, and Masai boys doing vulgar fractions and speaking English fluently. Let us hope that one of the first things instilled into them will be that a woman is something better than a beast of burden, and that girls have an equal right with themselves in the matter of choosing a partner for life ; and let us hope that the march of civilisation will not completely overwhelm this brave and fearless people, and will not utterly annihilate them, as has been the case with the equally gallant North American Indians.

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