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Dear Sir,

I have much pleasure in forwarding a copy of A
Woman Alone in Keyna
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Yours faithfully,

J. Cumberlege

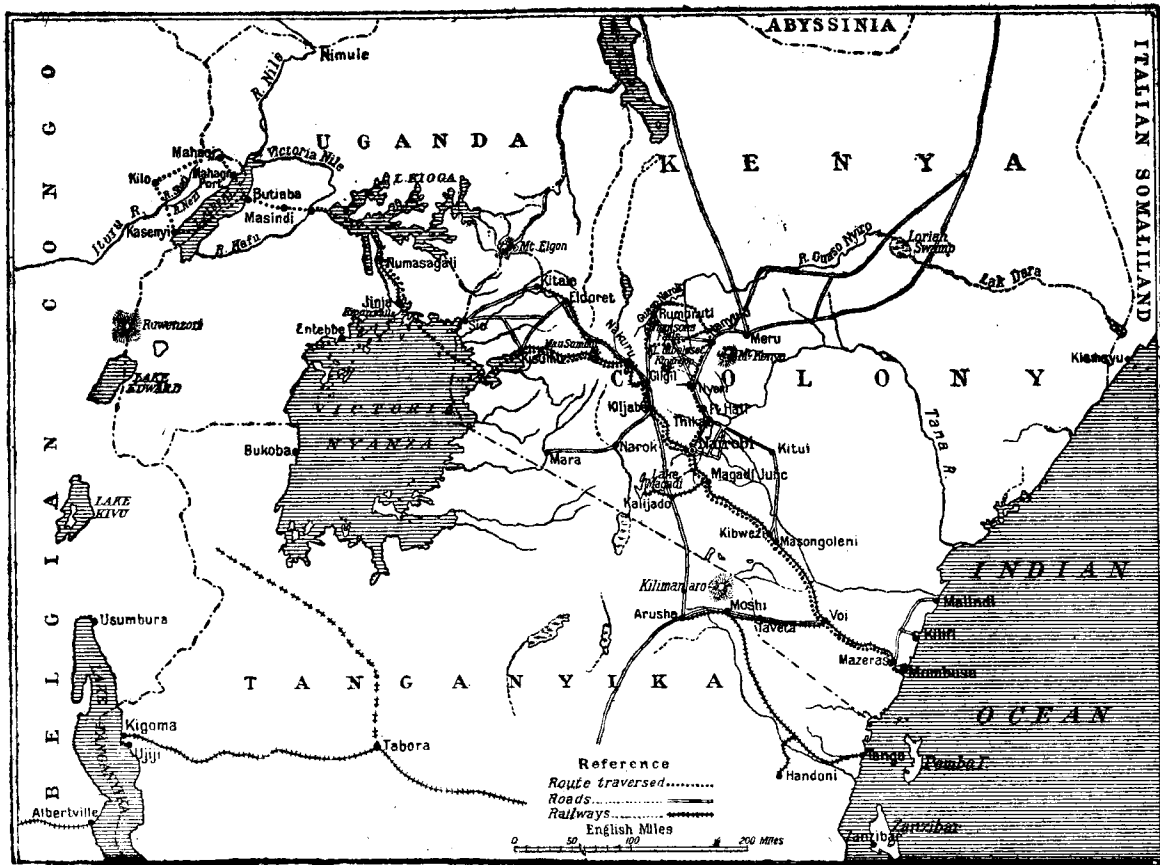
Manager in India

To

The Editor

The Servant of India,
Poona City.

A WOMAN ALONE



A WOMAN ALONE

IN

Kenya, Uganda
and the Belgian Congo

BY

ETTA CLOSE

O.B.E., F.R.G.S.

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I

I WONDER if it is a good thing for women to have travelled much in wild countries in their youth, for it makes it so difficult to settle down later on and grow roots, as their relations obviously expect them to.

It is hard to be content with a few tea-parties and a very few luncheons strictly for "ladies only," to find it sufficient just to be useful to relations, to meet dear Tommy at the station and take him safely across London, not forgetting to feed and tip him en route. To take care of darling Elsie at the dentist's and produce half-a-crown when that tiresome baby tooth is pulled out; and hardest of all to realise that these things are taken for granted, that the relations are simply saying to each other: "A single woman, you know, with nothing in the world to do, of course she ought to be glad to be of use to others." Looking with a disinterested spinster eye on the world, I notice that even when women have the health and the money to be free, they seem to like the feeling of being anchored to somebody, or failing a somebody to something, for those who do not marry a man seem invariably to marry themselves to a garden, or a house, or a dog, and then having

forged their own chains say pathetically, "If only I were free, how I would love to travel and see the world."

In the year of our Lord 1922 I was free, and realised it. Free to go North, South, East or West. "Go to Monte Carlo," said my man of business, who had just come back from there and was filled with pleasant memories of luncheons and dinners and dancing off the effects of both at the Café de Paris, and to Monte Carlo I went and tried to take an interest in the tables. But it was but a faded one, it gave me no pleasure to win and I felt great disgust with myself when I lost. I went over to Cannes and tried to cook up an interest in tennis, then to Mentone where the conversation was about coughs and colds, which was worse than the tennis "shop." I wandered round the gardens in front of the Casino and wondered where to go; a gardener was standing over a big semi-tropical-looking plant plunged, pot and all, into the grass which always looks such a peculiarly vivid green. I stopped and asked him what he was doing. "Madame," he said, "the weather is bad, is it not? The flowers will not come out, in this garden we must have flowers, I make them come out." So saying, he cut along the edge of a bud and putting in his thumbs forced out the reluctant flower inside. "Voilà," he exclaimed, waving his knife and preparing to continue the process. I felt sick, everything artificial, even the flowers not allowed to be natural but forced out into the cold air with the mountains to the north white with snow. It was then that I met a dear and wise friend. "Go to Kenya," she

said. We went and bought a copy of the *Times*. "If there is a ship going to Mombasa soon and there is an empty cabin on her I will go," I answered, being a believer in fate. Together we sent a telegram to the shipping-office; in a few hours came a reply, a ship was sailing for East Africa in ten days' time and a cabin had been reserved for me. My destiny had been decided and I went. I said good-bye to my friend and I bade farewell to the blue and purple sea, and in my mind I said good-bye to the artificial garden and the green baize tables. "When I began to work here," said a croupier to me, "I thought it was Heaven—now I know it is Hell."

I had a busy week in London and then found myself going quietly down the river below Tilbury Docks on board the steamer bound for Mombasa via the Red Sea, and I had that delightful feeling of thrill which even the most hardened of travellers must be aware of when going to a new country.

It was quite a commonplace, dull voyage till we got to Port Said, where a party of undesirable aliens were put on board and it was broken to us passengers that we were to call at the Seychelles Islands where the undesirable aliens were to be landed by request of the Egyptian authorities, those islands being considered a suitable place for them to stay in till they had cooled down a bit in their political opinions.

I believe the Seychelles are the cheapest place in the world to stay in at the present time. We were not allowed to land and it was raining hard. All we could see through the mist were the cocoanut

palms on the seashore, while dancing on the waves by the sides of the ship were small boats full of fruit, doing a roaring trade. Just a few of the inhabitants were allowed on the ship, they had come to meet the undesirable aliens and hear the latest news. I was not impressed with the looks of them. They ranged in colour from café au lait to chocolate, and I am told whisky and rum are very cheap. In consequence no known language is spoken after 5 P.M., but of this we had no opportunity of judging, for after a couple of hours we sailed away, and the next land we sighted was Mombasa, our destination.

The Custom House at Mombasa is supposed to be one of the hottest places in the world; when we arrived there had been no rain for a long time, and the whole place was like an oven. The inhabitants of Mombasa tell you that it is a paradise for nine months of the year, of the other three they say nothing. I suppose we had struck part of "the other three." In the Bank the clerks sat in their shirt sleeves with electric fans playing on them, and the heat was running down the backs of the jinrickshaw boys in the streets. As we got to the railway station the much-wanted, long-expected rains arrived, not in gentle showers, but in a deluge as if poured out of a bucket. From the long drought the wood of the railway carriages had shrunk; when I was conducted to the one I was to share with another lady the rain was blowing in from both sides, while a stream was coming down from the lamp in the middle of the roof adding to the small lake on the floor. I found the only thing to do was to sit huddled up on the driest portion of the seat

and put up an umbrella, which kept some of the rain from running down my back.

It is about sixteen hours from Mombasa to Nairobi, uphill all the way, first through tropical gardens of bananas, cocoa palms and big green mango trees, then through the dry desert full of thorn bushes, where the lions caused such devastation when the line was being put down. I was told in London that the lions were practically extinct now, and the few remaining ones so tame they could be seen begging for buns by the side of the railway. I changed my mind about that when a man told me that he saw a lion close to the line standing over the dead body of a zebra only a few days before I passed through the same bit of country.

In the morning we saw any number of antelopes close to the railway line. Most of them stared at the train with big mild eyes and then went on quietly feeding, the zebra hardly troubled even to look up as we passed, and we saw a big herd of them certainly not more than half a mile from Nairobi itself.

Kind friends met me at Nairobi station and took me to stay with them, but soon after that I moved out thirteen miles to stay on a coffee estate which I made my headquarters for some time.

I had never seen coffee trees before, and now they were all round me, charming shrubs, planted in tidy rows, the bright green of their laurel-like leaves contrasting with the bright red of the true first-class coffee soil they grow in. When they are in flower the scent is delicious, a mixture of orange flower and stephanotis; later on come the berries, first

green and then bright red, at which stage they are picked and after going through many complicated processes finally end up as the coffee we know so well in the shops.

The day after I arrived at the ranch, as its owners call it, I got up early and had a look round the gardens. Two boys (a boy is a boy here whether he is ten years old or fifty) were mowing the lawn between the house and the coffee trees with a bright green mowing machine, one pulling in front, the other pushing behind. Mowing did not seem a popular job and both the boys looked sulky; they were black as ink and dressed in a bit of white cotton knotted on one shoulder leaving the other arm bare. The one in the shafts—so to speak—was a dressy person, he had a string of blue beads round each ankle and a cigarette tin fixed in the distended lobe of his ear. The two were having a heated argument during which of course the machine stood idle. Finally, the point being, I suppose, decided, one seized the rope and began to pull and the other pushed, whereupon all went well for a few minutes, and then the machine stuck. Cigarette tin pulled, the other pushed—and so hard that his large black feet spread out behind him like a frog. The mowing machine took a leap forward right on to the heels of cigarette tin, who danced with pain and of course stopped to rub his ankles and abuse his companion, looking at the mowing machine as if he would like to kill it. They sat down for some minutes. Then suddenly cigarette tin sprang up, quite quickly, grasped the rope and gave a big pull, upon which the mowing machine jumped off the

lawn and buried itself in the soft red soil round the coffee trees. It had to be lifted out and I left the two gardeners squatted one on each side of it, turning the wheels backwards and cleaning out the coffee soil with their fingers.

At first all the servants—the native boys—on the ranch looked to me exactly alike, but soon I began to know them apart. They are divided into two categories—the boys and the totos, or small boys, who wait on the older ones and do the rougher, and, at most times, all the hardest work, until they in their turn are old enough to become boys and have “totos” themselves. All the boys are saving up to buy wives; the only married one so far is the cook. He bought a wife the other day: she was dreadfully expensive, costing six cows, and he only got her at that price after long days of haggling with his prospective father-in-law. He is paying for her on the instalment system, but no doubt finds consolation in the thought that his bride has the reputation of being an excellent worker. Personally I have some misgivings about that, for one day I disturbed a conversation between the pair. The cook had his head out of the kitchen window—a mean advantage—for the kitchen is forbidden ground for native ladies. On the gravel outside stood the bride, she was got up regardless of expense, yards of copper wire wound tightly round her arms and legs. She had not much in the way of clothes, only a skin that had been well soaked in castor-oil to make it soft, while her black bullet head had been scraped clear of wool except for a tuft on the very top of it. I do not know what the cook was saying,

but I think he must have been ordering the lady to go and hoe the family mealie patch which, as every one knows, is a hard and disagreeable job ; at any rate the Bibi, as they call women out here, looked the reverse of pleased, she parted her enormous blue-black lips, she twisted her head about, and played with the gravel with the toes of a flat black foot ; it was all much the same as I have seen in many a ball-room with a little satin slipper. Finally she departed, perhaps I frightened her away, but the cook borrowed a pound from his mistress that evening which makes me think his wife probably said nasty things about being ordered about before she had been properly paid for.

In my ignorance before I came to East Africa I thought a native sold his daughters to the highest bidder and the girls had no say in the matter, but I was wrong. We were at dinner last night, with of course all the doors and windows open ; the dogs began barking and I was startled to look up and see a native standing at the end of the dinner-table. He was outside the circle of light from the shaded lamp and seemed to melt into the darkness of the wall behind him. This was a broken-hearted lover, a victim to unreciprocated affection. Some years before he fell in love with a native girl who would not look at him, nothing he could say or do had any effect on her, she remained adamant. Little by little despair took hold of the lover and he became quite odd and queer in the head, but now he said he had " done with all that," and wanted to go back to his old master and mistress. I was much touched till I heard he had got one wife at least all the time

he was languishing for the other, and the minute he was taken on again he asked for the present of a blanket.

My room here, like all East African guest rooms, is a little house by itself built out in the garden. Just after I arrived the much-longed-for rains began. There was no doubt about it, it poured down in sheets, a couple of inches in twelve hours. I had to borrow my host's rubber wading boots to get to my room, while a boy carried the lantern and held an umbrella over my head. Once arrived he pulled off the waders for me and departed, leaving me with very much of an "alone in Africa" feeling. I lay awake listening to the rain pouring off my roof, when suddenly hyenas howled close to me. I had heard them before in another country, but it certainly is a horrible sound, especially so near. I could even hear the pattering of their feet and their snuffles as they scented me through the wall. I thought of everything I had ever heard about hyenas, and tried to remember if they had ever been known to attack people sleeping in little lonely houses in gardens; all I could recollect was that they follow in the wake of lions and eat up what they leave, which reflection gave me small consolation. However, after a time the howls got fainter and then died away, and I fell asleep to awake just as the sun was rising. I opened my door, it was a glorious morning. There is a tree, some variety of cypress, I believe, just in front of my house: the aromatic scent of it after the rain filled the air. I walked out into the little verandah to look at Kenya, the great snow mountain that

gives its name to this country, said to be 18,620 feet high.

In the early morning just before sunrise it may generally be seen, very cold, very remote, its rocks like the fingers of a dead hand against the steel blue of the sky. Later for about an hour it stands out in perfect beauty. Though fifty miles away the air is so clear that I could plainly see the great cedar forest that clothes the feet and creeps up the sides, then gives way to the bamboos that form a belt round it above the forest, and finally the snow fields and rocks that mark the summit.

By breakfast time the clouds have risen up and hidden the mountain, and except very occasionally for a fleeting moment it is not to be seen again until the following morning.

It is on Kenya that the *Lobelia Gregoriana* is found, and the giant groundsel *Senecio Kenyensis*, that grows to a height of 25 to 30 feet. "Good gracious!" said a friend, "if that is the size of the groundsel, what size must the canaries be!"

The first time I saw Kilimanjaro was in the evening. "Look!" said a woman as we sat at tea, and she showed me in the far distance what I thought was a rose-pink cloud that had got lost from the sunset. "It is Kilimanjaro," she said. I got my glasses and with them could clearly see the great mountain, its mighty rounded summit covered with snow turned pink by the setting sun. Twice the distance from Oxford to London from where we were sitting, it seemed to rise straight from the plain, towering up 19,328 feet above the sea, the most impressive mountain I have ever

seen ; it gave me the feeling that I was watching the hump of a gigantic sleeping animal that might one day wake and shake the earth—and indeed why not ! Kilimanjaro is an extinct volcano, the crater still there—who knows that it may not become again the outlet it once was for the hidden fires in the centre of the earth ?

From the deck of a steamer on the Sea of Japan I first saw Fuji like a fairy mountain dazzling white, its perfect cone high above the clouds,—a most lovely mountain, and surely there can be none more beautiful,—but Kilimanjaro was more impressive. Every evening for a week we gazed at it, and then it disappeared. Like Kenya it wrapped itself up in clouds, and since then I have looked for it in vain.

II

THE country here round Nairobi is low fertile hills, well watered by many small streams, called rivers here, where every brook is dignified by the name of river. They flow down to the plain many miles away, where they join up and, forming two large rivers, eventually find their way into the Indian Ocean. This property here is large; the upper part, where the house is built, is on the hills and round it are the coffee trees. Below is grazing land, and below that again the plain, extending twenty-five miles away, kept by my host as a private big-game preserve. It is a large zoological garden without the cages; for a lover of wild animals quite the most interesting sight that can be imagined. Forming the boundary on one side of the estate is a river: near the house it is quick flowing, full of big rocks and little waterfalls; lower down it flattens out into what would be water meadows at home, and here is a dense papyrus swamp with canes 15 feet high and so thick that one can hardly see a yard in any direction. To own a swamp is a great addition to a property, provided a portion of it has had the water drained off and the papyrus cut and burnt, so that the owner has an ideal kitchen

garden of the richest soil producing fruit and vegetables in the driest season. But a large uncleared swamp has the disadvantage of being a harbour for all sorts of animals. One lady complained to me quite recently that four hippos lived in her swamp and spent their evenings eating her vegetables. Another one told me she had pythons, besides hyenas and leopards, in hers, and that if a dog once went in it never was seen again.

I had only been out here a fortnight when my host asked me if I would like to drive with him to shoot a buck. We drove in a buggy with a couple of mules, and three miles below the house entered the game preserve. It all looked very peaceful; on our right was the papyrus swamp half a mile wide and many miles in length, on our left were gentle slopes with small flat thorn trees, like an English park. We could see zebra feeding in the distance and nearer several beautiful gazelles. We stopped to see where a zebra had been killed by lions a couple of days before and to look at tunnels leading to islands in the swamp where the lions were probably resting during the hot hours of the day. The recent rains had brought the flowers up, and everywhere there were fragile white gladioli, sweet scented, and many other flowers I had never seen before. We drove on always near the swamp until my host saw some kongoni, or Coke's hartebeest, and handing me the reins went off to stalk them. I watched him disappear over a slope, and letting the mules eat the fresh young grass proceeded to wait for his return, thinking over what he had been telling me about the animals on

the estate and especially about his herd of buffalo, next to the lion the most dangerous wild beast in Africa, and by some hunters considered the most dangerous. It was in answer to my thoughts, but certainly not to my wishes, when suddenly, without any warning, out came some fifty or sixty of them from the swamp and not more than three or four hundred yards from where I was. I could hardly believe my eyes; they crashed through the giant papyrus as if it were paper, and in a moment saw me and wheeled round to stare. I was absolutely helpless; there was no tree I could climb up, and the buffalo would be far faster than the mules who had already come so far in heavy ground and had to pull the buggy. I knew to keep still was my only chance, and even if the next few minutes were to be my last I determined I would have a good look, so mounting my Zeiss glasses I stared back. It was a splendid sight, the great beasts looked enormous, in front were some big bulls, their great horns lying flat on their backs as they stuck out their grey noses and glared at me. Some of the younger ones were in a playful mood, prodding each other, butting with their huge heads, blows that one would judge sufficient to knock over an omnibus, though on them they seemed to have no effect. How long we stared at each other I have no idea; it seemed ages to me, but suddenly, for no reason that I could see, the whole mob wheeled across the grass and plunged back again into the swamp. They moved very fast with no apparent effort, and disappeared again as suddenly and completely as they had appeared. I felt as if I

were at a cinema—the whole thing was so dramatic and so quick. Beyond a few white birds which hovered about where the buffalo had disappeared, and which, I believe, eat the insects on their backs, there was nothing to show where they had been; the birds whirled about in the air a bit and then settled down and in a few minutes everything was as calm and tranquil as before. I believe I am most fortunate; many people have been years in this country without seeing wild buffalo alive or dead, and those that saw the live ones and like me were unarmed were very glad to have escaped scot free from the interview, for this herd of buffalo have a bad reputation and charge at sight.

It was this day I first saw the Whydah birds. The whole place seemed alive with them; the cock birds were in their gala plumage, for it was the nesting season, and they had the two long black feathers in the tail, more than twice the length of the rest of the bird, that look so curious; so long were they and so seemingly out of proportion to the size of the wings that several times I saw a gust of wind blow a bird completely round; they could only go in very short flights, the wings fluttering hard all the time and the tail hanging almost perpendicularly down. These birds have a curious habit of dancing during the mating season. They would choose a tuft of grass and make a ring round it by cutting off the grass close to the roots, the ring as a rule being about two feet in diameter. A cock bird would enter the ring and jump about two feet into the air, repeating the process until he had been quite round the ring. The effect when twenty birds

or more are all dancing up and down in different directions is most extraordinary.

There is a wonderful variety of game on this property—lion, leopard, jackal, hyena, ostrich, rhino, buffalo, wild pig, zebra and numbers of different gazelles and antelope. A python 16 feet long has just been shot, their natural home is in these swamps where they grow to a great size; this one was near the river, hanging in great coils on a tree. In my ignorance I always thought a python crushed his victim in his coils and did not attempt to bite it; but a couple of miles from this house down the river is a large hole and in it lives a large python. Just before I came here some boys were feeding cattle near it; they had a dog with them which ran towards the hole; the next minute the boys saw that the big python had seized the dog in its jaws. The boys threw sticks and stones at it, but it would not let the dog go, and still holding it in its mouth disappeared with it to eat it in its lair at its leisure.

My host, talking about pythons, told me the largest one he had heard of measured $22\frac{1}{2}$ feet when dead. He also said he knew of a case where a couple of natives were ploughing near a swamp, the boy leading the train of oxen was attacked by a large python and had great difficulty in getting away, even with the other native there to help him. There are also many poisonous snakes to be found there, cobras, and amongst stones and rocks in dry places the puff adder, but only occasionally does one hear of an animal being stung by one and hardly ever a human being.

I had a horrible fright one day. I had been out

driving with my hostess, and to save the mules I had got out to walk down a very steep hill when, not looking particularly where I was going, I suddenly trod on something soft ; looking down I found I had put my foot on top of a puff adder, one of the most deadly snakes in existence. In my fright I jumped I don't know how far into the air only to find to my intense relief that the snake was dead. A native must have killed it a few minutes before. It was about eighteen inches long and very thick, grey in colour with black markings and very evil-looking.

Playing amongst the papyrus in the swamps you may often see numbers of little monkeys, jolly little things they are. No doubt snakes, python and such like, kill a good number of them. These little monkeys do no harm, but the baboons, of which there are numbers, are very destructive when they get amongst the mealies. They live in the forests and in rocky places and eat the seeds and nuts of the wild trees. Several times when motoring we came across thirty or forty of these baboons. They were not particularly frightened by the car, but scrambled off into the brushwood. Some were brown and some black, the largest the size of a big dog. One day word came that they were eating my host's mealies. We went off to see what damage had been done. The field of mealies was close to the edge of the forest. Carefully we walked up a little hill and peeped over ; there were the baboons, dozens of them, all busy digging up the sprouting mealies with their fingers and filling their jaws. My host fired a shot into the middle of them, which gave them

such a fright that they bundled off into the forest as hard as they could go, the big ones pushing and pinching the young ones to make them go faster. After that two boys were made to patrol the field in the evening and early morning with orders to beat an old petrol tin with a stick if they saw a sign of the monkeys. This succeeded so well that the boys were taken off the job and put on to other work. Alas! the manager going round peeped once more over the little hill and there were the baboons back again, but this time they were taking the ripe mealies and what they could not eat they were stuffing under their arms to take away. The manager killed an old baboon; it was carrying a small one which he brought home. For a long time the little monkey did well; it was very fond of the dogs, playing about with them, chattering all the time and eating the ripe pomegranate fruit that grows on the tree over the kitchen. One day unfortunately the little thing found some poison, prepared I believe for its relations, and died. It was still quite small, but for its size had a huge mouth and a fearful row of teeth.

A man who came to call here told me about an old dog belonging to a friend of his in Nairobi. The dog would sit out on the verandah in the evening though his master tried to make him come into the house for fear of leopards, but as the house was in the middle of the town it was thought after all there was but little danger and the dog was allowed to do as he liked. However, one day a leopard did come, seized the dog and was carrying him off when the other dogs raised the alarm, and they and the servants

rushing out frightened the leopard, which dropped the dog and disappeared in the darkness. The poor dog was dreadfully mangled, though thanks to careful nursing it recovered, but nothing would cure it of its habit of sitting on the verandah. Three weeks later the leopard came again, they saw the marks of his pads afterwards. This time the poor dog disappeared and was never seen again, and this happened in the middle of Nairobi only a month or so ago.

Another man told me he had an adventure with a leopard whilst motoring at night in Uganda. They had strong head-lights but were not going particularly fast; the leopard sprang at them from the side of the road and bounded clean over the car, only missing the heads of the two men in it by a few inches.

These leopards are very bold. I was told another story about two men out on a shooting expedition—on *safari* in fact. They had a tent in which they both slept. Just outside the tent they tied up their two dogs with a lighted lamp hanging over them, which they thought would be sufficient protection from any wild animal. In the night a leopard came and carried off one of the dogs from right under the lamp, and the dog was never seen again. Furious at their loss, the two men determined to kill the leopard, so they tied up the one remaining dog in the same place the next night and sat up themselves with guns, but the leopard never came. They sat up till one o'clock in the morning, when, tired of waiting, they took the dog into the tent with them and went to bed. In the early morning

the leopard came again right into the tent ; there was a fearful scrimmage, the dog taking refuge under one of the beds and the leopard trying to scrape him out, while neither of the two men dared to shoot for fear of hitting the other.

Another time I heard of a dog chased by a leopard taking refuge inside a room in which there were several men and one woman. The leopard followed the dog right into the room ; in the panic that followed somehow the door got shut and the lamp overturned. The extraordinary part was that nobody was hurt, not even the leopard, for directly the door was opened it ran out and disappeared.

Below the hill on which this house stands is a large piece of swamp planted with sugar-cane quite ten feet high, growing so thick it is impossible when in the middle of it to see more than a couple of feet in any direction. Word came up a few evenings ago to say there was a big leopard in the cane—would the manager come down with his dogs and try and kill it. I was not in the house at the time and did not see what happened, but heard all about it later. A farmer walking with his dogs the other side of the river and unarmed, put up what he thought was a wild cat ; his dogs ran after it and then he saw it was a leopard, and a large one ; the brute made for a big tree on the river bank, and the farmer, to his horror, only then noticed that a native boy was standing between the leopard and the tree he was making for. The farmer thought the native was doomed, but with great presence of mind the boy pressed himself tight up against a banana-tree and stood absolutely still ; the leopard passed

within a few feet of him and never touched him ; it climbed up the tree as easily as a cat and stood in the fork of the branches twenty feet from the ground growling and snarling at the dogs which were barking round the foot of the tree. The leopard however did not stay there, but jumped clear over the heads of the dogs towards the sugar-cane, another leap and it was safely amongst it. It was then that the manager was sent for. My host went down himself, but quickly saw that it would have been suicidal to go into the cane or to let the dogs go in. A leopard, from his great weight and size, could force his way through cane where a man and dogs would be helpless. So the leopard is still at large and my host is very nervous about his pigs, having on one occasion had thirteen killed in one night. I think, considering how this country swarms with leopards (the boys say they hear them constantly), it is remarkable that they do not do more damage.

III

OF the natives on this estate Gerogi is the one I always look out for ; however hot the day he walks about in an ancient khaki overcoat, worn over nothing at all, while on his top he has a dilapidated hat which he puts across his head so that he looks like a caricature of Nelson. With a little cane under his arm he struts about filled with his own importance, for he is the head boy in charge of the Bibis, the women workers on the estate. It might be thought this is a wearing job for him, but not at all—Gerogi enjoys every moment of it. He is most amusing when we go to watch the coffee picking : then he shows off, orders the women about, and if they are not quick enough smacks them with his little cane, which, as the cane is small and the skin clothes of the Bibis thick, makes a lot of noise and does not hurt in the least. The women laugh and chatter ; Gerogi with the air of an admiral on his quarter-deck, the rags of his overcoat flapping against his ankles, now and then stopping to take a pinch of snuff, home made and exceedingly strong, gently arranges his hat which is so old that he has to be careful or it would fall to pieces. He then hitches his cane under his arm and with a severe look—he

is about five feet nothing—marches proudly down the line of coffee trees and runs his eye over his company of ladies. The “ladies” under Gerogi’s charge are of all ages, some of the young girls really exceedingly pretty; they all have their heads shaved and wear bands of coloured beads across their foreheads, besides strings of them round their necks, wrists and ankles. For clothes they wear skins plentifully rubbed with red earth and castor-oil, as are the bodies of the wearers, and the smell when the sun is out prevents my staying long in their company. The elder women take their babies with them when they go coffee picking, but so far I have not seen any baby with its head daubed with oil and red earth, so I am afraid my theory that the natives rub their heads with the red soil so that the colour may keep off the dangerous rays of the sun will not hold good. I have seen babies tied on their mothers’ backs broiling in the sun for hours, with nothing on their heads but their own scanty supply of wool, and seemingly taking no harm. All the women wear loops of pink beads threaded on wire like small bracelets fixed in the lobes of their ears. Many wear twenty or thirty in each ear, and horribly uncomfortable they must be. The men too have the lobes of their ears immensely distended, often hanging below their shoulders. It is wonderful how elastic they are, and I have often wondered if European ears would stretch to the same extent. A Kikuyu carries his treasures in the lobes of his ears—a small dried pumpkin full of snuff, an old cigarette tin, or a treasured safety pin kept to take jiggers out of his feet, and much valued in

consequence. An empty cigarette tin is a valuable present here, and not one is to be found in the house—all disappear in a most remarkable manner, while a dust-heap covered with old tins, such a familiar object at home, is unknown out here.

I have been asking about the price of native girls, if all were of the same value in the matrimonial market, and am told the fair ones, by which copper colour was meant as opposed to black, commanded a much better price—more cows—than their darker sisters. A native with several “fair” daughters is considered to be a most fortunate man and to possess a sort of walking bank balance on which he can draw at any time to his great advantage. It is a curious thing that a fair complexion should be so universally admired. One would imagine that in a black country a really inky one would be considered the right thing. Instead of a love-sick swain talking of his lady having a complexion of milk and roses, out here he might be imagined comparing her to ebony and boot-polish, always supposing he had ever heard of either. In Japan and China he might be expected to say in raptured tones: “My angel, you are too beautiful to-day, your complexion is the colour of the outside of a ripe melon.” But I remember when I was there noticing that all the pictures of Chinese goddesses depicted them with dead-white faces, while the high-class ladies had their faces covered with white powder. Probably the very ancient cult of sun worship has something to do with it. “The Light of his Countenance,” meaning a god who radiated light, would of course necessitate a pale surface,

and from that might come the association of a light complexion with a higher type. I wonder if this can be so.

A neighbour near here employs Uganda natives in her house and likes them very much better than the Kikuyus. Her head boy was very distressed when she broke to him she was going to take her children back to England in the spring, and did his best to try and get her to change her mind. "But this is such a good country for children," he said; "see how fat they are! Consider the ladies who are your friends. Look at Mrs. M., see how miserably thin she was when she came out here, and see how beautiful and fat she is now—like a cow! Consider Mrs. N., she can hardly get into her motor car now—she is like a young hippo!" He went through a list of the neighbours according to his point of view, and we agreed it was fortunate some of them had not heard him.

I never hear the hyenas howling at night without thinking of the skull we found in the grass the other day. I nearly trod on it. Then I heard how the natives here, when any of their relatives get old or are very ill, carry them out and lay them near a little fire with a supply of wood handy. If the sick person is strong enough to keep putting wood on the fire, the hyenas will keep away; but should the fire go out, the hyenas do the rest and only the poor skull will remain to tell what happened. The extraordinary thing is, why do the hyenas leave the skulls? Yet they never touch them. It cannot be because the bone is too hard, for hyenas are supposed to have stronger jaws even than lions.

Nobody knows. It does not do to think of these things, but one hopes the old native is too ill to realise when he is carried out for the last time.

Should a native die inside a hut it is immediately deserted, whether for fear of infection, or because of a belief that the departed spirit may still be within it, nobody seems to know. Perhaps there is no particular reason, only orders from the witch doctors.

A lady who lives on the edge of a large native reserve has been telling me about these witch doctors; they have had a "Shaurie" on lately, as they call it here, and the witch doctors have been round the native reserve casting spells and making incantations to keep the evil spirits off the crops and ensure a good supply of mealies. Only a few of the old men were allowed to go round with the witch doctors, while the women were kept shut up in their huts for two days. A boy was very late in arriving at my friend's house—asked why, he explained that nobody could walk for two days on the ground over which the witch doctors had cast their spells, that in consequence he had had to go round quite a long way. I was told further about a farmer, a neighbour of the lady who told me, whose mealie (Indian corn) crop was being eaten by grubs; the owner was in despair when his head boy came to him and said if only he would have the witch doctor all the grubs would go and he would have a fine crop. The witch doctor was sent for and quite a young native appeared. He went round the farm making tiny fires at intervals, too small for the smoke to have any effect on the corn, he also

filled his mouth with grubs and chewed them, spitting them out at intervals on to the ground. The extraordinary thing is the grubs did go; the farmer had no further trouble with them. He was so delighted with the result that he had the same witch doctor again a year later, and again the result was excellent; he sent for him a third time, but he never came. It seems no witch doctor is allowed to practise so long as his father is alive. This young man's father was alive but a very old man, so old he would never leave his hut. However that was not allowed as an excuse, and the young man was shut up in his hut as a punishment and not allowed to go out by orders of the witch doctors, and when the farmer sent for him he was still shut up, and for all he could find out may be shut up still. The power of these witch doctors is very great, and there seems no doubt that they have got further in thought suggestion and many of those obscure subjects some of us are trying to grapple with now than we have any idea of. I cannot hear that they have many cures for diseases, but am told that they have certain ointments that are wonderful in some cases of skin trouble.

Native cures are most interesting—I do not mean only those in this part of the world but everywhere; upon inquiry people may be found with special knowledge about the properties of certain herbs, or who have had the secret of remedies for special diseases left to them. Lately I have been asking about the ivory cure for tuberculosis, and find it is known here. I heard of it first from Johannesburg in South Africa. The cure consists of taking the

ivory chips, the small particles left over from making ivory backs for brushes and so on. This ivory dust is carefully washed in clean water and then boiled and strained. The residue will be found to be a strong jelly which can be flavoured in any way the patient fancies, and a spoonful taken twice or three times a day. I went once for some of this ivory dust for a sick man. On explaining to the foreman of the factory what I wanted he was most obliging, and further told me this jelly was known to be a cure for rickets in children, and women from many parts of London came to the factory to ask for ivory chips. I am told the only known cure for sprue is founded on a prescription that belonged to an old Chinese in Java. The old man died taking his secret with him, but some of his "medicine" was analysed, and all the component parts but one were discovered, but the want of that one prevents the cure now being complete, which is sad.

During the war I came across an officer who had been cured of dysentery by a native. He came down to Pretoria from up country very ill and went into hospital; the best doctors did all they could but had to tell him his case was hopeless. He stood over six feet and was reduced to half a small glass of milk per day. A doomed man he went out of the hospital and met his little bushman driver who said to him he could cure him if he would only let him try. The officer, feeling hopeless, asked the little man what he wanted. "A chit," was the reply, "to go five days into the veldt." The chit was given, and on the fifth day the little bushman

returned, and gave the officer a lump of what looked like dry gum with bits of green leaf floating about in it. He was told to keep it in his pocket and break off and eat a morsel whenever he thought of it. The result was extraordinary, in a week he was a different man and at the end of ten days was able to sit down to a big helping of beefsteak, and what is more has since then had no return of the malady. There are many such cures when they are looked for. The sad thing is they are being lost or forgotten; what a splendid thing for a rich person to go round and collect these cures and save them for poor sufferers. What an interesting work it would be, and it would earn the undying gratitude of the whole world.

Not long ago a native working on this estate came in with a big cut two inches long just over one eye; he said he had been knocked down by a furious cow; whatever may have been the cause, the cut evidently was long and deep. My host had to put in four stitches to bring the wound together; in a week the boy was practically well, in a fortnight there was hardly a sign to be seen of the cut. I was there while the wound was being dressed. When finished the boy simply grunted and walked off, neither then nor later did he attempt to thank his master, or show the least gratitude for what had been done for him, and I believe the experience of others with this particular Kikuyu tribe is the same. They are very ungrateful.

IV

THERE are any number of birds round this house, where they are carefully preserved. I have been watching a number of small ones very like canaries in size and colour ; they were playing about amongst the flowers of the morning glory at the end of the tennis ground, and charming they looked in the bright sunshine amongst the big blue flowers of the convolvulus. While I was looking at the happy party into the midst of them dashed a stranger, scattering the canaries in all directions. He was quite small, his breast a marvel of ruby feathers, truly as if he had pierced his heart upon a thorn, while the back of his head was peacock green and he gleamed like a jewel. A more beautiful bird one could not see. But alas ! like some other handsome persons he had an evil temper. Swinging head downwards from a slender spray of the convolvulus, he dashed suddenly at the nearest " canary," giving it a dig with the sharp curved point of his long slender bill, and sent it bundling off. Then he attacked another and another until he had driven them all away, whereupon, having satisfied himself he had routed the lot, he flew from one flower to another, drinking the honey from each. I had seen

the bird before, stuffed and in a glass case, and when I looked at the beautiful live one the thought made me quite unhappy. The commonest birds round this house are about the size of sparrows, grey-blue in colour, with brown wings that look a size too small for the plump blue waistcoats underneath. They remind me of the pictures of Mr. Pickwick and the old gentlemen of those days in small swallow-tailed jackets.

There are also a number of much smaller birds—can they be wrens?—with red breasts and brown wings and tails. A pair of these tiny creatures were making a nest in the summer house, we watched them flying up and down with bits of feathers, for they were not the least afraid of us. One day they disappeared and never came again; what happened we don't know, but we suspected Jezebel had something to do with it. Jezebel was a spider almost as big as the little birds, with a fat body and a most evil expression. She lived behind a Masai shield hung in a corner, and her web was a yard across. We protected her, for we thought she ate the mosquitoes and flies, but now we think she eats the little birds as well. At any rate we did not protect her any more, and she and her web were swept away the next time the boys dusted the summer house.

I have scratched up an acquaintance with a cuckoo, at least he looks like a cuckoo, who is almost always to be found in an unromantic spot at the back of the yard where they dry the clothes. When I say he is an acquaintance, I mean he will let me stand quite near him without flying away; he sits

at the top of a post at the corner of the fence and keeps so absolutely still and is so much the same colour that he might almost be mistaken for part of the post. He is not particularly good-looking, the most remarkable part of him being the white rings round his eyes. I have watched him for two minutes at a time absolutely motionless, then suddenly he would dart off, catch a fly in mid air and swallow it, then back he would come and stand as before. Time after time he caught his fly in the air and ate it, and really I don't know if it was the effect of the white ring round his eyes or only my fancy, but once I really believe he winked at me.

A pair of hornbills lived in the avenue here for some time, not the large variety but about the size of rooks; they make their nest in a hole in a tree, and when about to sit the cock plasters up the entrance with mud, leaving a hole through which he feeds the hen inside. One day—I had not seen the hornbills for some time—I heard a most melancholy call from the tall thin eucalyptus trees at the back of the house; going to look what it was I saw perched on a slender branch almost at the top of one of the trees the cock hornbill. His head was hunched up on his shoulders and his big beak outlined against the sky, and he swayed about, for the tree was bending before the wind; every now and then I could see him open his beak and another lamentable cry would rend the air. I watched him for quite a long time and ended up by feeling quite sorry for him; surely there must have been a tragedy in his life, some dreadful sorrow. I wondered if it could be that he had interned his wife and then

forgotten where. Surely it could not have been only the swaying of the tree, and his feelings those of a sea-sick passenger on a rough day.

There are numbers of weaver birds near the swamp, very gay in their yellow plumage; they are most sociable, nesting together in the same trees, some of which are quite laden with their nests. They build these nests at the extreme ends of the branches, with the entrance hole below to keep off snakes and keep the nest dry. I believe their nesting season is at the end of the long rains, but here, with no particular winter or summer and two wet seasons a year, things are very muddled up, and many of the animals and birds do not seem to have any particular breeding season. Once or twice I have seen another yellow bird with a black back and bright yellow waistcoat. He comes when the berries are ripe on a tree in the garden, at other times he gives us the cold shoulder; he is a fine fellow and so far as I can judge rather larger than an English blackbird. One day I was riding some way below the house and saw a mass of snow white in the middle of a stretch of black mud at the edge of the river. It looked like a white table-cloth put out to dry. Much exercised in my mind as to what it could be, I mounted my glasses and found it was a flock of lesser egrets feeding. There must have been sixty or seventy of them. They were close together with their heads buried in the mud, sucking up young eels or frogs, but whatever they were eating they never raised their heads, only those on the outside sometimes shifted about, trying, I suppose, to get a better place. There are quite a

number here also of the larger egrets, melancholy-looking birds to my mind and not so sociable as the other variety.

By far the most beautiful and interesting birds here I think are the Kavirondo cranes, splendid big birds with black and white plumage and a crown of yellow feathers on their heads. A pair had a nest in a swamp about a mile off and I often saw them. Once I saw seven all together, and of course they are often in much greater numbers than that. I have never yet had the luck to see them dance, but I believe it is a most interesting and amusing sight. The gentlemen cranes dance before the ladies in the mating season, jumping this way and that, and putting their wings out and turning their heads. Sometimes they pick up a stick or a bit of reed and dance with it in their beaks. I hope the lady cranes are appreciative. They must be hard to please if they are not. I heard about a tame pair of these cranes kept by somebody out here. They walked about the garden and never failed to turn up punctually for tea, only if they were not given cake quickly enough, or in what they considered sufficient quantity, they showed their displeasure by pecking vigorously.

Of course the largest birds here, or indeed anywhere on the globe in these days, are the ostriches. There are numbers of them on this property, but I am always disappointed with them. The cock bird is handsome with his fine black and white feathers, but the hens are not, and they have such silly little heads at the end of their long bare necks. Ostriches are dangerous if they attack you, ripping out the

whole of the inside of a man with one blow of their claws. If attacked and unarmed the only thing to do is to lie down; all the ostrich can do then is to jump on you, which he probably will do. I believe it's fearfully uncomfortable but not fatal.

Many years ago going out to South Africa, on the ship with us was a young man, now a most respected Judge, who was going out to take up an appointment on the East coast. While our ship was coaling at Cape Town he and a friend decided to take the opportunity of seeing Mr. Cecil Rhodes' wild animals at Groote Schuur. Off they started, and to save time went across country. They scrambled over a high fence and were well in the middle of a field when, gaily dancing towards them, came a big cock ostrich; that he was angry was obvious, for his neck had turned bright red and he had his wings spread out. The two young men ran their fastest to get to the fence, the ostrich in full pursuit; the Judge was the slower of the two, his companion reached the fence first and wriggled safely through a hole near the ground. The Judge threw himself on his face and tried to follow, but dreadful fate, he stuck half-way! History relates that the ostrich had started jumping up and down on his legs when, with frantic efforts and much pulling, his companion managed to drag him through.

One day the news came that an ostrich's nest had been found not far from this house. My host, taking the mules down in the gharry to bring up some of the eggs, asked me if I would like to go with him. It was a cloudy day and cool enough for a tweed jacket, but sun or no sun one always has to wear a

sun helmet or a double felt hat. I prefer the first as I find the double felt so heavy. We sat in front, on the floor behind was a boy holding a rifle and shot gun, and a black imp about seven years old, dressed in a scrap of hide, to show us the nest, while squeezed in between the two was a hot and excited spaniel. We were not going straight to the nest but were going to take a turn round first to look for birds for the pot, especially for snipe. These most delightful birds sometimes come in large numbers during the wet season. My host one day killed sixty, feeding in the swampy places on the estate, and as fat as little puddings. An authority on birds in this country says these snipe rest here on their way to nest inside the Arctic Circle, in the far north of Siberia. What an amazing flight for these small birds! We had only gone a short way when a big grey and brown bird got up just in front of us, a lesser bustard; with a few heavy flaps of his wings he rose to come down again a hundred yards away. My host flung me the reins and taking his gun was soon after him, and a few minutes later the bird was dead; it was about the size of a guinea fowl and was very good eating, but didn't seem much of a sporting bird. We then went on to one of the smaller swamps, in which grew a quantity of dwarf rushes now going to seed. Through this my host walked with the boys while I drove along the edge. He had not gone far when up got a couple of snipe, and my host bagged them both with a neat right and left. I helped from the side by marking where they fell, but the grass was as high as my head as I sat in the cart and it was difficult for me to see. My host bagged

eight snipe with eight consecutive shots. Then I missed count, for one of the mules got her tail entangled in a dead branch covered with big thorns; before she had time to begin kicking the gharry to pieces I drove her over a low green bush that luckily was handy, the bush pushed the tail out and by leaning over the front of the cart I was able to reach the branch and pull it clear of the mule's quarters. Three more snipe were added to the bag and then it was time to get the ostrich eggs if we meant to be back in time for luncheon. Directed by the small "toto" we drove to the nest, which was in the centre of a flat stretch of grass a few acres in extent, and large as the nest was, and big as the hen bird was, she was impossible to see a short way off. Even when only a few yards off she might easily have been a dead bush or bunch of rushes. To prevent her attacking us we drove round and round the nest, each time getting a little nearer, and at last when about twenty-five yards off, she left it and ran only a short distance, when she lay down again in the grass and we could see her long neck and head sticking up as she watched us. There were thirty-four eggs, but eight were lying outside the nest which was made of soft grass, those we took as likely to be fresh. It seems three or four hens and sometimes more lay in the same nest. A hen sits on the eggs during the day but the cock at night, for, being the stronger bird, he is better able to protect the eggs. Hyenas do great damage, sometimes destroying a whole nestful of eggs. Nothing comes amiss to hyenas, but they are particularly fond of ostrich eggs and do not mind if they are high or well

sat on. One ostrich egg is equal to twenty-four hens' eggs, and in an omelette I thought them excellent.

The most gorgeous birds here are the jays. Orange underneath, they have dark blue backs, their wing feathers being pale blue with dark blue tips. Almost equally gorgeous are the blue birds, as they call them here, which are blue and black; and the kingfishers, of which there are numbers and all lovely.

I awake here at five, and then open my door and the gate of my verandah, and stand on the steps for a few minutes to look at the sunrise and listen to the birds. In the dry season that is the only time to hear them, in the rains they sing till ten or eleven in the morning and most delightful they are. I won't say they can be compared to our English birds in the springtime, but only those who have never heard them dare to say—as they do—that there are no singing birds in Africa.

For quite a long time I have been wondering what bird it is that has just one single note, and that note not a tuneful one. Rather like a cheap penny whistle, he never stops. In the late afternoon he begins, and goes on all night. I now have found out it is not a bird but the dog-eared bat, which explains his nocturnal habits. One night I did not sleep very well and there must have been one in the trees just beside my house, for the penny whistle was going strong and I found it most annoying. Finally I invented a story and felt better. I imagined that years ago the bat was a bird with a beautiful voice, but too lazy to use it, and to punish

him the gods turned him into an ugly bat. 'And the reason he squeaks all night is that he hopes to melt the hearts of the gods by his energy and that they will turn him back again to what he was before.

V

LIFE is so quiet here I almost forget the wild animals: certainly the hyenas howl round us nearly every night, but one gets used to them. I mean I forget the fierce cats, the lions, leopards and cheetahs that lie hidden all day and in the evening wake up, stretch themselves, yawn with great gaping mouths and, I suppose, make up their minds where to go for their evening meal. But at times something happens that brings me suddenly back to earth and reminds me forcibly where I am.

About half a mile from here, in a nice damp place with plenty of water, is the coffee nursery where the young coffee plants are grown from seed to supply the requirements of the estate. There is also a big plantation of sugar-cane, and numbers of pine-apples grow in the most friendly manner close to the cabbages; carnations and violets, one mass of bloom, sheltered by banana trees, and lettuces, turnips and carrots muddled up with arum lilies—a mixture of tropical and European things that strikes one as most extraordinary until one gets accustomed to it. Almost every evening we walk down to this garden to give the dogs a run. The path is narrow through the sugar-cane, and we have

to walk one behind the other. I happened to be the last and heard grunting amongst the cane. I listened again and heard distinctly a mixture of coughs and grunts that I thought must be wild pig. I called to the others and luckily I did, for it was leopards. Quickly we called in the dogs and got out of the cane. The native boys working in the garden said, when asked, that they knew there were a couple of leopards in the sugar-cane, they had been there some days, but they never thought of warning us.

Another day we had been out shooting pigeon. At the edge of the swamp below the house is a clump of trees. When the seeds are ripe the birds come in hundreds to eat them. These are the green pigeons, beautiful little birds more like parrakeets than pigeons, for they have bright green feathers and red legs and are very quick on the wing. We had finished our shoot and were walking back through the grass near the house when up got a leopard close to us. The eight dogs we had with us went for him at once, and with a snarl he made off. Probably had we only had a couple of dogs with us he would have attacked them, but eight were too many for him.

Only a short time ago the manager was out on his motor bike and met two leopards face to face on the road ; he was unarmed and the beasts refused to move, sitting tight and lashing their tails ; he had to make a big détour to get past them.

I think motor-cars going along the road at night kill quite a number of snakes. I have seen several dead on the road, one a big cobra, but considering

how many there are and how dangerous, there are very few accidents. Since I have been here I have only heard of one. A lady arrived in a car with a dog that had just been bitten. The cobra had taken up its abode under her house, a stone one. The dogs found it out and attacked it, and one had been bitten before she realised what was happening. She put permanganate of potash at once on to the bite, and came to us to ask for more, which luckily we were able to supply, and the dog recovered.

Up country near Mount Kenya two men told me about a huge cobra they came across one day. It was coiled up under a tree and directly it saw them it reared itself up and spat at them; the venom carried ten feet but luckily missed them. They told me the hood on the cobra's head was quite twelve inches across. Unfortunately the men had no gun with them so thought they had better clear off. One who had been many years in India said that never had he come across a cobra like it before in all his experience, and regretted deeply he had not been able to secure it for a museum.

There are numbers of most beautiful butterflies here, not only during the wet season when the ground is covered with flowers, but six weeks later, when the dry season had commenced and most of the flowers had gone, there were still quantities of them. The commonest are the swallow-tails, big black and yellow and black and grey fellows, some so big and strong on the wing that one day I mistook one for a bird. There are also numbers of a rich deep brown colour and about the same size as our Peacock at home. One of the most lovely and most common

is pale yellow with a black line round the wings and a bright splash of scarlet near the head. There are also numbers of bright yellow ones, not so large but more sociable, for while the big pale yellow ones are generally alone, the bright yellow ones are in companies, and I have seen six or seven flying about together. More rare is a fine dark fellow almost black with a circular patch of bright blue on each wing. I can't bear killing these lovely creatures or I would start making a collection, but I should like to have a few fine wire cages in which to keep some of the caterpillars and to see what they eventually become. There is one quite four inches long, striped black and red. I feel sure he must turn into something wonderful, but I suppose many are eaten up by the birds before they have a chance of turning into anything at all.

The largest moth I have seen was quite six inches across from the tip of one wing to the tip of the other, grey in colour with pink markings. I found three one morning on the ground much dashed by the rain that had poured down in the night. I put them in a shady place out of the sun and hope they survived all right.

Of blue dragon-flies there are plenty, but I had never seen a red one till the other day. It was not very large but bright crimson, and I don't think it is very common.

Of dangerous insects out here the tarantulas and scorpions come first. There are numbers of both in the country, but I personally so far have only met the first named; they are fond of living among stones; and stone houses out here, unless carefully

pointed, often become infested with them. I was staying with a friend when, coming in to breakfast, I happened to glance down at my skirt and there, walking slowly up it, was a tarantula the size of a saucer. It was brown in colour with horrible hairy legs curved in like a crab. The bite is not usually fatal, but a man bitten on the hand was so bad that they feared his arm would have to be amputated. When asleep he had let his hand touch the floor, and the tarantula bit him on the finger.

When first I got here I was surprised to be told that a boy always has to sleep in the stable with the horses because of the ants. I was told that at certain times in the year they go on a journey, on *safari*, as they call it here, and once on the move nothing will stop them, that they go through or over anything they meet, and their bites drive animals quite mad. They are brown in colour and are carnivorous and do not hesitate to attack. If a stable happens to be on their road the only thing to do is to take out the horses and wait till it pleases the ants to move on elsewhere. I heard of a family who had to leave their house and camp out till the ants chose to leave. The one benefit they bring is that not a rat nor a beetle nor anything alive is left behind them.

Another story was told me by a man who was present. A very distinguished party of well-known officials went to inspect a particular portion of forest land; they struck a regiment of ants on the move, walked on to the top of them before they saw what they were doing. Immediately the ants went for them, digging in their nippers and causing

excruciating pain. It was not to be endured, not even by distinguished officials, who then and there tore off every garment they had on and betrayed themselves to my friend, who had been more fortunate, in their birthday suits, dancing with pain and making frantic efforts to dislodge the ants from various parts of their anatomy. So strongly do these ants hold on that the natives use them to bring together the edges of wounds; they hold the ant against the wound until it has fastened its pincers into the desired edges, the body of the ant is then pulled away but the pincers continue to hold. I believe the natives in Australia use the ants there for the same thing. I remember very well being bitten by a bulldog ant near Sydney. I was helping my host to weed his garden, and picked up the ant by mistake. It fastened on to my thumb, and, though I pulled off its body, the head with its pincers remained embedded in my flesh and required a good pull before they could be got off, and a good application of ammonia for me before the inflammation went down.

I have seen several parties of ants on *safari* during the last week. In one place they were crossing a road in a stream two inches wide. I had been along the road the day before and then there was no sign of them, yet from the working of the numberless little feet they had worn down a track quite half an inch deep. Of course the road was not a metalled one, but still it was hard-trodden earth. These ants have scouts out when they march. Those I saw were six feet and more from the main body. When they want to cross a stream I am

told they take advantage of a bit of stick or a reed lying in the right direction ; where there is nothing but open water one ant holds on to another until they form a bridge stretching across to the far side, the other ants crossing over their bodies.

The white ants are quite different. They cannot bear the light and make little round tunnels wherever they go. They are very destructive ; all wooden houses have to be built on piles of mahogo wood to keep them off. Mahogo wood is a variety of sandalwood which they will not eat. I was told the other day of a house built of stone of which one of the floors suddenly collapsed ; it had been eaten away by the white ants who had built a nest under the floor so high that it reached the boards which they at once demolished. However, these ants have one good point, they are excellent scavengers and eat up any dead animal that happens to be lying about in the grass. Up country these ants make themselves castles of mud, sometimes seven or eight feet high, and so hard that the rains have no effect on them. In some parts of Africa the natives make a hole in them, empty out the ants and use the shell as an oven.

The worst enemies the ants have are the ant-bears, who, with their strong claws, dig right into the ant-hills and eat up any they can find. Unfortunately the ant-bears only come out at night, but their holes are all over the place and are very dangerous for horses.

Besides the ant-bear holes there are many others made by the porcupines. My introduction to the porcupine family was one night when I heard a most

extraordinary sound. It reminded me of the noise small boys make with a stick rattled along the area railings in a London street. In the morning I went to investigate and found a porcupine quill. Evidently one had been trying to get on to my verandah, and the sound I heard was his quills against the rails. We never see the porcupines here. They, too, only come out at night. Years ago a party of us went to the London Zoo after dinner and spent most of the night there, looking at the animals. The porcupines were most lively and most amusing; they put up their quills as a peacock puts up his tail, and showed off to each other, dancing about and seemingly most friendly, but out here I think the males must fight a good deal. I so often see their quills lying about amongst the coffee trees. They tell me roast porcupine is delicious, it tastes like young pork, and after all they are nearly related to the pig tribe, so I don't see why they should not be good to eat. The next time one is killed on the estate we are going to try it.

VI

IN the course of a long and varied experience I have always found that in every establishment there is one particular person round whom the whole solar system of a house, so to speak, seems to turn. Years ago at home in England it was a mysterious person known as the odd man. The butler called him Samuel, to everybody else he was "Sam"—*pur et simple*. All the jobs that were not markedly somebody else's business were thrust on to Sam; he was bullied by the "ladies" in the housekeeper's room, whom he waited upon at meal times, and he was patronised by the footmen; but to us children in the schoolroom he was a much beloved person, an authority on sick ferrets, white mice and such like small fry, and always ready for a rat hunt with the terriers in the wood shed, a delightful way of spending a wet afternoon; besides which he could be depended on to get a meal for a dog when none of us dared ask anything of so lordly a person as "Monseer," as the servants called the French cook.

The "Sam" of this African house is Carabbe, the dog boy. He is exceedingly ugly, with a huge mouth and a squint. When he first came his sole and only garment was a bit of once white calico;

after a few days he was promoted to a pair of khaki shorts, which were always slipping down, and to this day he is continually hitching them up like a sailor. Carabbe, however, had social aspirations; he went to his mistress and complained that one pair of shorts and a strip of calico were not worthy covering for so honourable a person as the chief dog boy, so now he is promoted to a shirt as well. Personally I consider him the most illusive person I have ever met; Sam could always be found, you had only to draw the back-yard and look in that mysterious place known as the boot-hole and you were sure to find him. Not so Carrabe, who melts away into thin air. His duties begin in the early morning when he lets out the puppies who immediately begin to fight over treasured old bones, relics of the day before, while Carabbe's voice can be heard uplifted in a vain attempt to keep order. As I said before, the house is raised on piles because of the white ants. The puppies have discovered a hole in the wire netting surrounding it, and through this they scramble and bark defiance at Carabbe, only condescending to emerge when there is prospect of food. Later in the day Carabbe is required to pick the ticks off the older dogs, who hate him, and dreading the detested operation try to hide themselves. "Bongo," calls Carabbe in dulcet tones. Bongo is deaf to all blandishments of that kind, and disappears; after a considerable time spent in hunting for her she is found and carried off to a table under a superb shower of purple bougainvillea in the back-yard; there, armed with a comb and an old tin half full of paraffin, Carabbe, with his nose almost

touching the dog, goes through every inch of her coat, or is supposed to, the completeness of the hunt depending much on whether one of us is present or not.

The rest of the day Carabbe apparently spends in sleep. "Carabbe," you shout, having found a hideous bloated tick on the back of one of the prize Airedales whom he is supposed to have "gone over" only an hour or so before. "Carabbe," shouts the cook; "Carabbe," calls the horse boy from the end of the yard; finally Carabbe appears, slowly; with an indignant finger you point out the loathsome object. Carabbe's mouth opens larger and larger till it becomes like a crack in his head, his eyes focus on the tick which he removes, he stares at the dog, then turns and silently and slowly melts away again into the blazing sunshine and I suppose resumes his interrupted slumbers.

In a rash moment, little knowing what I was undertaking, I offered to look after the dogs while my host and hostess went into Nairobi one day. Assuring them in a light-hearted manner that I was sure I could manage quite well, I waved them good-bye, saw them disappear, and, full of confidence, turned to the table devoted to the dogs and so romantically placed under the purple bougainvillea. There were the tins of Keating, much required; bottles of boracic and water for the dogs' eyes, for the fine coffee soil often produces inflammation; iodine for cuts or torn skins; a gruesome tin of paraffin in which jiggers and ticks find an unlamented grave; besides combs and brushes and other oddments. Everything there is ready except the dog

boy. "Carabbe," I shout; after waiting five minutes and seeing no sign of him. At last he appears, with a sort of a condescending smile. "Bring Gipsy," I say in my finest Swahili. "Gippersee," calls Carabbe without moving. Of course no dog appears. "Gippersee," calls Carabbe again, and slowly moves off in the direction of the stables. In the meanwhile I have secured Tony and am beginning on his toilette. "Gippersee," calls Carabbe in the distance. "Be quick," I call in my turn, "hurry up." I go on brushing and combing Tony, but there is no sign of Carabbe and Gipsy. So tying Tony to a leg of the table to prevent his getting away I go off in pursuit. Behind the stables near the pump I find Carabbe deep in conversation with one of the grooms who is bathing a pony's leg. I give him my opinion as strongly expressed as my knowledge of Swahili will allow as to exactly what I think of him and, ordering him once more to find Gipsy, I return to Tony to whom I put the finishing touches. Just as I have finished, up comes Carabbe in triumph, leading Pat! With indignation I ask why he has brought the wrong dog; quite kindly, as if he were speaking to a child, he replies he can't find Gippersee, but Pat will do just as well. "Go and look behind the dairy," I say wrathfully, catching hold of Pat and beginning on her, knowing if I don't there will be no chance of finishing all the dogs before lunch. I am hard at work when there is a howl from the neighbourhood of the dairy and out shoots Gipsy; like a flash she is across the yard and makes a dash into the kitchen; there is another howl and out

she comes again propelled by the indignant cook, and disappears behind the stables, Carabbe in full pursuit assisted by a horse boy who also joins in the chase. I feel unable to cope with the situation and, with some dexterity cutting off and catching two other dogs who had turned up in hopes of a fight, I concentrate my attention on Pat. At last Carabbe appears leading Gipsy. I am putting the finishing touches to Pat who, smart and dapper, is standing on the table fully aware how nice she looks.

Instead of showing any contrition for having wasted half the morning, Carabbe does nothing, but stands surveying Pat, then with a beaming smile turns to me and says, "Pat mizouri." I feel it is heaping insult upon injury to be complimented by the dog boy on doing his own job, so in halting Swahili I say as much in the most withering tones at my command. Carabbe's enormous blue-black lips fall apart, he opens his cavern of a mouth and stares at me, then with the manner of an amiable keeper conciliating a lunatic, he expands into a bland smile and repeats, "Pat mizouri, mizouri Sana." Words failing me I seize another dog, and this time Carabbe too begins on one. There is silence for a short time and then a rustle behind me and a strong smell of castor-oil makes me look round to find a native woman, a Bibi, dressed in the usual skins and beads with a basket of eggs for sale. For some time past Carabbe has been the medium through whom his numerous relations sell more or less fresh eggs at top prices to my amiable hostess, reaping much advantage thereby. Evidently he now scented a poacher in his private preserves, for

he fell on the Bibi with a torrent of Kikuyu. Waving the dogs' brush in one hand and the comb in the other, while the Bibi, quite able to hold her own, jabbers back again, they go at it hammer and tongs: everything else is forgotten in the heat of the argument. Gipsy realising the fact jumps off the table, upsetting the tin of paraffin, and disappears, leaving a pool of oil and dead ticks behind her. The sun is boiling hot, the smell of mingled paraffin and rancid castor-oil is more than I can bear. Carabbe and the Bibi show no signs of stopping; I feel vanquished, I give it up. Without my departure being even noticed I leave the field of action, calling in at the kitchen door to tell the cook to go and look at the eggs; I retire to my own little house and throw myself exhausted into an arm-chair, feeling convinced that Nero, Caligula and various other historical personages, whose reputations are black, were really much-maligned persons, while as for slave-drivers the whole lot of them had my entire sympathy.

Of the other servants about the place, most of them were born on the estate in the native huts that are scattered over all the upper part of it; there are too many wild beasts in the lower part to make it agreeable to live there. I think these boys are extraordinarily adaptable when it is remembered that a native hut consists of a mud and wood wall, with a thatched roof, the furniture a few skins to sleep on, a cooking pot or two and a few gourds. What a difference between these huts like big brown mushrooms and a settler's house with all the thousand and one things a European requires!

Of course considerable patience has to be exercised, but if a master or mistress will take the trouble to teach them, there is no reason why one should not have native servants almost equal to white ones. "Why do all the other Europeans out here have good servants and I only incapable ones?" cried a long-suffering missionary to his Indian boy. The boy wagged his head knowingly. "When Master he say plenty d—n and Missie she say plenty pig, then we very good servants," was his explanation.

No doubt it is an art to manage servants, but a woman who has good ones in England will have good ones out here. To me it is wonderful these boys should be the excellent servants they are. Only twenty years ago this country was constantly raided by the slave dealers; the parents of these boys were savages; the whole of our system of life, our habits, even our food and the cooking of it—all is foreign to them. They have everything to learn and that they do learn so well and so quickly shows their extreme adaptability. Certainly funny things do happen. The other day the savoury—sardines on toast—appeared after the soup. The cook was right, fish ought to come after the soup—how should he know sardines on toast were an exception?

Of course there is another side and a disagreeable one to these boys. For instance, to them the "innerds" of an antelope are the most appreciated part, and it is not nice to see your cook stuffing his mouth with these choice morsels from a newly killed beast without taking the trouble even to warm them at the fire; but then I have seen wood-

cock at a ball supper that had really only flown through the kitchen, and venison served in Scotland in such a state that when it came into the room I went out !

I remember in India years ago the youthful secretary to an Indian potentate was showing us the sights of his master's town. In the carriage with us was his friend, a young Indian dressed in loud checks, who stared in a dreadful unwinking silent manner, till it really became oppressive. At last the young secretary became aware of it. With a wave of his hand he said, "Excuse please my poor friend, he no benefit of conversation."

It is the same here. No board schools, no benefits—so called—of any kind. When I read in the papers of a drunken man kicking his wife to death—an unknown thing out here—I wonder, and keep on wondering, who is really the savage, and if our much-vaunted education is the untold benefit it is supposed to be.

Quite lately a new boy was taken into the house here, M'Ungaye is his name, and he has my entire respect. After lurking in the background for a short time he was promoted to the position of footman, but alas ! was immediately afflicted with shyness ; in his hands the potatoes shook on their dish and the sauce out of its boat ; however, by carefully avoiding to notice those things or looking at him, his nerves began to recover, and now he is a most excellent servant, always polite and clean, and not even a jelly shows a tremor in his hands.

Last night I was walking home late in the evening. I had been in the forest and had watched

the sun setting in scarlet and gold till the big grey clouds came up and closed over it like the eyelids of evening. There was a hush over all, only the little breeze of evening came sighing up from the plain sorrowing for a lovely day that was dead. The warm air and the scent of the mimosas were almost intoxicating and added to the charm and mystery of this fascinating country.

At the bottom of the hill at the end of the avenue are a few native huts. Before I reached them I heard the sound of native music and saw the glow of fires and knew it to be an N'Goma—a mixture of religious rites combined with dancing, and as much native beer as the company present can afford. I stood still and watched. I could see the dark figures dancing round the fires, the steps being the fox-trot beloved of London ballrooms, only the dancers danced alone and varied the monotony by leaping into the air at intervals. They seemed to me to keep perfect time, as did the musicians who never stopped. Gradually as I watched one of the dancing figures seemed somehow familiar, and lo! fox-trotting and leaping with the best of them I recognised M'Ungaye the admirable, efficient footman, who was enjoying an evening off duty, dressed in half a blanket dancing round a fire to the music of a tom-tom. I wondered if he would turn up all right the next morning or be suffering from the effects of the previous night's refreshments, but at breakfast time there he was, admirable as ever, and spent the rest of the morning squatting in the yard, the blazing sun full on his shaven head, as he cleaned the family silver.

VII

ANY evening at six o'clock you may see a big brown bird flying up the river : not very interesting to look at nor particularly handsome, but so punctual that you can almost set your watch by him. This is the mudlark going home. Farther up the river is a mass of reeds the size of a dog kennel, built in a tree hanging over the water ; this is the mudlark's house in which he rears his family and where he sleeps every night. The entrance is underneath and as to ventilation there is none, but the manager here, who climbed up the tree, tells me the nest is decorated with bits of shiny stone and little treasures the mudlark has brought home with him. I have a strong conviction that the mudlark is the reincarnation of a City clerk who in a former state caught a train at exactly the same hour every night, and the habit still remains. In this nest Mrs. Mudlark hatches out two chickens a year, and it makes one shudder to think what the atmosphere must be like inside the nest when all the flourishing family are at home. This question of fresh air interests me much.

The cook here, as I said before, is a married man

and has a hut not far from this house, that is to say officially it is for him and his wife and child, but goodness knows how many lodgers live there besides, not to speak of chickens and goats. The only ventilation is the door, and often on a warm evening with the thermometer marking 80 in the shade I have seen a dozen people in that hut squatted round a fire. Some may have been neighbours paying an afternoon call, but on the whole I am inclined to think most of them were paying guests of the cook—at any rate they all looked perfectly well and jolly, and yet they must sleep every night in an atmosphere little short of suffocating—for directly it is dark the natives shut and bar their doors carefully for fear of wild beasts. The goats and chickens sleep inside the huts also, and yet they, like the natives, seem perfectly healthy. I cannot believe a warm fug at night is unwholesome, it is so universal amongst primitive people and animals. When sleeping in the open as my boys did when on *safari* they were careful to wrap up their heads in their blankets, while most people who worked near the trenches during the war must have noticed how much warmer the wounded men on stretchers were when their heads were covered up.

A family of rabbits in a hole cannot get much air—while I remember years ago crossing Russia and Siberia in the middle of winter, there were double windows carefully sealed up and the train was crowded with passengers, yet I never felt better in my life. Altogether I don't believe much in those people who come down to breakfast with red noses and talk about the snow drifting in through

their open windows. The verdict of the rest of the world is against them, at least of all those who live an open-air life during the day-time.

One of the chiefs of a tribe from the Nandy district up the line between Nairobi and Uganda has been on a visit—he came with his son ; both were fine-looking men, but the son much inferior in every way to his father. The chief was old, quite six feet in height, but he walked like a young man and held himself like a king ; he wore a rug made of blue monkey skins wrapped round him and had leather sandals on his feet. He was taken round the house and shown the petrol gas for the lamps, which pleased him much ; then he was presented with a large cup of English honey, a great treat, so he at once sat down on a seat in the garden and finished the whole then and there—eating quite properly with a spoon. Before going he was given three or four waterproof capes, some big knives and aluminium cooking pots—presents greatly appreciated. Both father and son were good examples of native tribes only a very few years ago absolute savages.

There are a number of boys from Nandy working on this estate. A native is a “boy,” let me repeat, whatever his age. Some of them have a few hairs on their chins, the nearest they ever get to having beards. They are evidently very proud of the said hairs, which are carefully gathered into a little tail and glued tight with red earth and castor-oil. They wear a blanket knotted on one shoulder, and all have ornaments, bracelets made of brass or copper wire round the upper parts of their arms. Empty cartridge cases are much appreciated ; fixed into

holes pierced in the upper part of each ear, they are considered very handsome ornaments.

Christmas Day was a holiday for all. Two oxen have been killed for the farm boys, and there were great rejoicing and much eating. In the evening the boys from Nandy were invited to come and dance on the lawn, and the other boys from this neighbourhood insisting on coming also. There were about one hundred boys in all; those from Nandy being greatly superior in type to the others. They stood about 5 ft. 10 in. and were splendidly built. They marched up for the dance in a double column, carrying their spears and keeping perfect step. Then they formed a circle on the grass and, squatting on their heels, listened while two self-appointed masters of the ceremonies stood in the centre and addressed them at length on their respective parts in the dance.

I found it difficult to follow when the dance began. We were told it was the Lion dance, and the first part was evidently setting out for the hunt. The Nandys formed two columns and advanced with a curious sort of dance step, singing, and with a quick turn of the wrist throwing their spears up and catching them again; then having seemingly found the lion, they formed a circle round him, gradually narrowing it in till finally they were able to run him through with their spears, which is the way they kill lions in their own country—the Nandy boys being great hunters. After the killing there was a lot more stamping and shaking of spears, I suppose rejoicing at the death of the foe—altogether a performance most effective and interesting. After the Lion dance we had the Crane dance, also

performed by the Nandys in which they imitated the Kavirondo cranes in the mating season. For that they formed a circle, two of the dancers taking it by turns to enter the ring and jump round each other. Two or three of the boys leaped quite three feet into the air, shaking their spears at the same time.

The other boys not to be outdone also gave a dance in their turn, but they were a poor lot in comparison with the Nandys and had evidently an eye to the cigars that were handed out by the Bwana and much appreciated.

The evening ended up with much tom-tom playing—just a simple home-made skin drum thumped with a stick. The sound carries a long way and at first I wondered if I liked it. Later I was sure I did, in fact it grows upon one. The musician had more variety than one would imagine, sometimes the rhythm was one long thump followed by two short ones, sometimes two long and then two short, but whatever it was he stuck to it for hours at a time. I tried to find out where lay the charm. It may be that the constant reiteration of the same thing produces a soothing effect on the listener and later almost a mesmerising one—or can it be that the rhythm unconsciously synchronises with the pulsations of the heart? I did not think of the latter explanation till quite lately, and since have not heard any native music, so have been unable to time the beats.

I remember when crossing Siberia by rail something must have been slightly wrong with the mechanism of our railway carriage, for there was a

thump somewhere in the under part at regular intervals. It had the same effect on me as the tom-tom, it sent me to sleep.

I thought then it was because of the constant repetition. I wonder if it is because clergymen so constantly repeat themselves, that sermons are so conducive to slumber? But I am getting into deep water and had better stop.

An elderly Colonel called here yesterday on his way to Nairobi, who told us his son had just shot a lion and was very pleased with himself. The young man in question killed a zebra which was dragged to a place where the lions were said to be and, having built himself a shelter with thorns and branches, the sportsman sat up all night over his kill. Sure enough at about one o'clock in the morning the lion appeared, but in his excitement the young man put a cartridge into his gun by mistake and peppered the lion with No. 5 shot. "I know I hit him," he said, "for he made such a noise"; and indeed no wonder! The lion made off, but the sportsman waited and about an hour later the lioness came; this time he made no mistake and killed her. He suggested he and his father should go out the next day and try and find the lion, but the father said nothing would induce him to go, and he was quite right.

I read somewhere once upon a time that all the characteristics of the animal world can be found in the vegetable one and *vice versa*. Certainly this is the case out here with the python and the wild fig, for just as the python is said to crush and squeeze its victim to death, so does the wild fig kill the mahogo

tree in its deadly embrace. The mahogo tree is, I am told, the sandalwood of the Bible. It is slow growing but a very valuable forest tree, being impervious to white ants, excellent for firewood and gives out a delicious scent when newly cut or when burnt. The wild fig leaves other trees alone but can be seen in every process of strangling the mahogo, from the first shoot of the fig, something like an ivy, clinging to the bark and wrapping itself round the mahogo, to the last stage when the poor tree has almost completely disappeared, and only a few dead branches sticking out at the top show where it has been, while below the parasite has spread into a large and handsome tree with thick dark green leaves giving welcome shade in hot weather. This fig is a near relation of the rubber plant and when cut exudes a thick white juice. This must be poisonous, for having taken some orchids off a tree that had been blown down, we fastened them onto other trees in the hopes they would grow—which they did excellently well, excepting some that we fastened onto a wild fig. Directly the young roots of the orchid touched the bark of the fig they shrivelled up and died, showing there was something poisonous in the contact.

It is October 4 to-day and very hot. The colour of the country has changed from bright green after the rains to tan colour. The flowers have gone but several trees—new to me—have come into bloom. One has white flowers which come out in a mass all over it so that from a distance one might almost mistake it for an English hawthorn. But best of all there is a tree with oval dark green leaves

just now covered with small white flowers with a scent not quite like jasmine or tuberose or gardenia, but like a mixture of all three. There are few things more delightful than when you are riding quietly along suddenly to catch the scent of this tree. Every time it comes as a fresh surprise and a fresh pleasure, for a scent is a queer elusive thing one cannot recall as one can a view or a song, while there is nothing like it for bringing back recollections.

I always associate the scent of Balsam poplar with Norway, pine needles and resin with the German forests. The smell of India is to me like hot butter and pepper mixed, while I shall never forget coming on deck early one morning as we were nearing Ceylon, and the scent of the warm damp air laden with spices—an aromatic smell, a bit heavy and enervating perhaps, but so delicious.

Who can forget the scent of the heather in bloom on a hot sunny day in Scotland? or the gorse in Cornwall? And what is more characteristically English than the scent of the lime trees in bloom on a summer's day? One could go on for a long time thinking of the different scents of other parts of the world, but I cannot describe the scent of this part of Africa. For one thing it is mountain air, for we are 5000 feet above the sea, so there is always the freshness of the Alps, a lightness in the air that you only get in high places. But in the evening just at sunset it is different—a breeze comes up then from so far away that it brings with it the mingled scents of all Africa, yet never once have I smelt that horrid suffocating odour of rotting vegetation which one associates with the tropics and

with a mangrove swamp and malaria and mosquitoes and other evil things.

I am careful where I ride just now, for two lions have taken up their abode in the sugar-cane about three miles from here. Quite lately a farmer only a few miles away heard a noise in his cattle boma about 3 o'clock in the morning. He went out with his rifle and, seeing something moving about, fired. It was a lion cub. As he fired there was a roar and the lioness sprang at him and leaped clean over his head, missing him by a few inches.

A Major who is staying here tells me he rode past a lion the other day, only five yards from it, but his mule was quite unaware of it, and showed no concern whatever. The Major was riding round his estate and was unarmed, when he came suddenly upon the lion. To turn round and gallop away he knew would bring the lion thundering after him, so he tried the only alternative—to face the danger and, with a nerve which I admire immensely, he rode past the lion, who sat up like a dog and looked at him but did not attempt to attack him or to follow him. The Major thinks that at times animals have no scent, and just as a sporting dog will pass a nesting partridge and be unaware of her, so his mule was unaware of the lion. I wonder if anybody else has had the same experience.

I have just been hearing about an attempted murder here. It seems a man we will call Mr. B. became infatuated with another man's wife. He probably got a touch of the sun as well, for he went clean off his head about her, and it seems determined to kill the husband and take away the lady. With

that intention he lay in wait for the husband, who, all unconscious of his impending doom, was bicycling home along a lonely road. Mr. B. armed with a knife fell upon him but only succeeded in wounding him; the husband in his turn then drew a revolver and killed Mr. B. There was a trial, and the husband would have had great difficulty in establishing his innocence but for a fact that came out in evidence that Mr. B. had bought and worn on that particular evening a pair of gloves with some mad idea apparently of preventing finger-print identification.

VIII

A NEW country like Kenya is not necessarily an easy one in which to travel about ; there is but one main line which goes straight through the country from east to west, there are but few hotels and the main roads may be counted on the fingers of one hand, the others being like the curate's egg, good in parts during dry weather and perfectly awful in wet. I had only been a few days in East Africa when some friends took me out a fifty-mile run from Nairobi to stay at the country-house of the one millionaire in Kenya. The going along the main road for the first twenty miles was excellent, then we branched off and crossed some flats of black cotton soil which I looked upon with distrust, having seen something of the same in Australia. Soon after we arrived at the house it began to rain, a deluge poured down as if a heavenly reservoir had burst ; the second day a boy cheered us up by announcing at breakfast that the bridge had been washed away, our one link with Nairobi. We paddled down in the rain to have a look and were thankful to find that though the water was dangerously high the bridge was holding out bravely. It was still raining when we left on our return journey. Alas ! when we got

to the first flat we stuck hopelessly and were invited to get out and help to push the car. We were in the middle of what looked like a small lake, with a few bushes and clumps of rushes sticking out above the water like islands. Cautiously I put out one leg, expecting to find about six inches of water. I found it was up to my knees. We had three dogs with us, and they swam out to the nearest bunch of reeds and sat there shivering, while we broke off branches and stuck them under the wheels, then pushing behind for all we were worth we got through the first mud flat. Four or five times did we go through the same performance before we reached the main road. By that time we were soaked through, and never shall I forget the smell of wet carriage cushions mingled with the smell of wet dogs. However, this was exceptional, as a rule the climate in Kenya is delightful, and the rain may be tiresome for travellers but is hailed with delight by the farmers, for it means big crops of coffee and plenty of grass for stock.

For a long time I had been wishing to see more of this enchanting country—especially I wanted to go and see—not to shoot—the wild animals in the north of Kenya, something like 200 miles from Nairobi.

For people with larger banking accounts who want to shoot, it is easy enough. A letter a few months ahead to a firm in Nairobi, and when the sportsman arrives he finds everything ready for him—tents, an excellent cook, well-trained boys, everything he could want from *pâté de fois gras* to boot polish, also last but by no means least, a hunter

to go with him. These gentlemen, at least those I have met, are charming companions, with intimate knowledge of the country and the wild animals in it and of course dead shots. If it is lion the sportsman wants, they take him to parts where they are known to be, but there is a great deal of luck about that. Finding traces of lion the hunter kills a zebra, makes a boma near it of thorns and in the evening the sportsman and he take up their places in it. In due course the lion comes—or ought to—the sportsman shaking with excitement shoots and misses, the hunter a second after and as cool as a cucumber fires and kills the lion—this process is repeated *ad lib.* Later on the hunter goes to his home with the £100 a month he has justly earned, and the happy sportsman back to England, where he sends out invitations to his friends to come and see his lion skins. All this was much too grand for me who wanted something cheap and modest, besides which, though brought up to sport of all sorts, I had never shot anything and did not wish to; all I wanted was somebody to come with me to shoot a few duck and guinea fowl for the pot, and to protect me in case of danger.

How I was to find the person I wanted I had no idea, but quite a little thing sometimes changes one's whole life. Major Armstrong came to stay at the farm where I was; he was ill and my host and hostess looked after him. My hostess was a noted breeder of Airedales, two of which were to be shown at a big dog show at Nakuru, where eventually they got every prize they could, including the championship. As the day of the show got nearer it was obvious

that somebody would have to stay in charge of the Major who was too ill to be left only to the boys, while my host and hostess naturally wished to go to the show. Seeing the difficulty I volunteered to stay and look after the invalid, which I did. During the few days I was in charge a neighbour of the Major's came down to see him, Mr. Chater by name, of the Royal Navy, who in fact was managing the Major's farm during his absence. Mr. Chater talked to me about the game country. He told me about his farm which is just on the edge of it, and of the wild animals he saw constantly. I was captivated by the account of the wild country beyond Mr. Chater's farm, where there are no settlers and the wild beasts have it all their own way. The more we talked the more I longed to go and see those things for myself, and I consulted Mr. Chater asking him if he had any idea how I could get there—did he know anybody who could take me? To my delight he said yes, that living near him was a Dutchman, the owner of a farm and a wagon and a team of oxen. This Dutchman, he said, could be hired, wagon, oxen and himself complete, for having a large family he was glad of an opportunity of making a little money; that he was absolutely trustworthy, and in fact was exactly the sort of person I had been trying to find. It seemed too good to be true. Here was the very chance I had been longing for. I quite realised there would be a certain amount of risk, a certain degree of what some people would call danger, a possible broken leg miles away from a doctor and so on. However I was prepared for that, and asked Mr. Chater if he thought the Dutch-

man would be likely to be free to take me in about three weeks' time, for then the weather was supposed to be at its best, but very hot, in fact the hottest time in the year, just after Christmas. Mr. Chater thought the Dutchman would be free just about then, in fact he knew he would be, for the Dutchman had mentioned the fact to him only a short time before. I was delighted and at once fell to settling details with Mr. Chater, who most kindly said he would fix up the whole thing for me. "You," said Mr. Chater, "will sleep in the wagon at night, and the Dutchman will sleep on the ground underneath it, that is the usual thing."

I thought of the Dutchmen I had seen in South Africa, huge hairy creatures, with big pipes of horrid-smelling Boer tobacco; my soul revolted at the thought. "I really couldn't have him sleeping under the wagon," I said, "I should smell him all night, and I feel sure he would snore and keep me awake." Mr. Chater agreed, but added, "you must remember where you are going there are lots of lions, and if the Dutchman is under your wagon and one does attack you, there is the advantage that he would be eaten first."

However, reluctant as I was to furnish a meal for any animal, on that point I stood firm, and it was decided that I was to have a tent, and that the Dutchman was to sleep under his wagon, the advantage being that from there he could shoot in any direction. Finally Mr. Chater invited me to stay with him and start my *safari* from his farm, there being a public service of motor-cars which would take me almost there, 190 miles over a pretty bad

road. I settled the date and all details I could with Mr. Chater, who then went back to his farm promising he would see to everything and interview the Dutchman whose name was Mr. Trout. Then I began my preparations and found it humiliating to think how many things one lone woman requires. Two ladies did certainly think of going with me, but when they heard about the lions in the part I was going to they cooled off and I was left to go alone. As soon as I could I sent off my heavy luggage, which went a short distance by rail and then bumped the rest of the way in an ox-cart.

I naturally relied on the Dutchman to provide me with game, and bought him plenty of cartridges, but for fear of accidents I also bought a side of bacon, besides plenty of tinned milk, sugar, flour and so on. I was too old a traveller to rough it more than I could help, and took plenty of clothes.

The advantage of having a wagon with 14 oxen was that a couple of boxes more or less made not the least difference—while for company I was taking my little black cocker spaniel Suzanne, then only a few months old. I was offered a prize Airedale, but did not dare take him, for unless most carefully trained they will "go for" any leopard or wild pig or oryx they come across and are almost always killed.

Finally the day came when I was to start and the public motor called to pick me up. My heart sank when I saw it, it was exactly like a Noah's ark piled up to its canvas roof with packages of every size and description, out of which stuck the heads of the driver and another passenger who was holding on

to a mangy fox terrier. I wondered where I was going, and my luggage, but somehow a hole was made for me in front, and my luggage was tied with wire on to the foot-boards. I trusted nothing would happen, for once in I could not possibly have got out until some of the packages had been moved.

For the first 20 miles the road was excellent, past coffee estates and plantations of sisal—a variety of hemp—then into the native reserve, a large tract of valuable country kept entirely for the Kikuyu tribe. Here the scenery got prettier and the road worse, it seemed to alternate between 6 inches of dust and 18 of mud. My whole attention was taken up trying to save the puppy on my knee from the dreadful bumps—alternately I was thrown from one side of the car to the other, till I got tired of apologising to the driver for butting heavily into him.

At last after going 85 miles we stopped for the night at a place called Nyeri, where I had my dinner and Suzie had hers. I had brought her food with me and gave it to her in my bedroom, a round hut with a grass roof out in the garden—alas! I had forgotten that Nyeri is renowned for the number of its hyenas, and after Suzie had eaten all she could I threw the remainder of her food into the black darkness outside—where for half the night the hyenas fought over it and kept me awake—weary as I was.

We had 54 miles more of bumps and thumps the following morning and then got to Nanyuki, the farthest point, where Mr. Chater was to meet me. Nanyuki might be considered by some to be at the outskirts of civilisation, situated as it is about

200 miles from anywhere, but they would be wrong. Really it is a most gay and lively place—polo once a week, race meetings, gymkhanas and of course any amount of shooting and fishing, an ideal spot for poor people; on £500 a year a couple can live well and enjoy themselves—on £700 a year they can keep polo ponies and go in for a modest amount of racing; and the hotel is surely unique for the line of the Equator runs absolutely through the public dining-room! Considering it is only 16 years since the first settler came here, I think the progress is wonderful.

I was very glad to get to Mr. Chater's farm, and felt I had got into another world—gone were the coffee trees, in these parts they go in entirely for stock, large herds of cattle everywhere—gone were the big trees, instead there were numbers of dwarf mimosas, all of them covered with thorns, while close to and towering over the whole country was the ever beautiful Mount Kenya, only now I faced another side of this mountain and could plainly see the cedar forest and the giant trees which are felled daily to make pencils.

Surely you could not find anywhere more delightful country to live in. Mr. Chater's house was of cedar planks, and the scent was delicious. As we sat at dinner an elderly native waited upon us who made the most extraordinary sounds whenever he moved, but at first I did not like to say anything, for it sounded as if he had swallowed a quantity of stones and they were rattling inside him: there was nothing else that I could see to account for it. At last I could stand it no longer and asked for an explanation

—“Two empty cigarette tins fastened to the back of his knees and a few pebbles in them,” replied Mr. Chater—“he has music, you see, wherever he goes.”

The next morning I was up early getting ready to start—Mr. Chater helping me to pack 8 dozen eggs in two petrol tins. It sounded a lot but I found I wanted every one, and wonderful to say, though the wagon went over the most fearful country, hardly one was broken.

Of course I was trusting to Mr. Trout to provide me with plenty of birds to eat, Dutchmen being generally such good shots—but alas! later on I was to find out that he was an exception and, but for the side of bacon I took with me and the eggs we should almost have starved.

In the afternoon the wagon arrived, 14 very fine oxen and Mr. Trout riding at the head of them on a woolly white mule with a cunning eye, called Camera, and followed by a job lot of boys and dogs. We were solemnly introduced by Mr. Chater, and I had a good look at him, while I was quite aware of a pair of small shrewd eyes like gimlets summing me up. I had only time to realise that Mr. Trout was a nice-looking man of about fifty with a brown moustache and no pipe, when he asked me suddenly in very broken English :

“Vat time you like to get up in ze mornings ? ”

Luckily I had thought over that question beforehand.

“What time do you loose the oxen for their morning feed ? ” I asked.

“Five o'clock,” he replied promptly.

"Then at five I shall get up," I said.

As a matter of fact I knew sleep would be out of the question for me once the camp was roused—"And you like to stop about 10 for breakfast?" then asked Mr. Trout.

"No," I replied, "I like to have my breakfast before I start"—my previous experience having been that otherwise breakfast had a way of merging into luncheon, and the two being eaten at tea-time.

"Zat is good," said Mr. Trout, "zat is vat I like to do myself."

Evidently I was beginning well.

"There is no water" (he called it "vater"), said Mr. Trout, "only in the rivers, we shall have bad trouble, the land is dry, very dry, and the rivers have very little water too, they should be very big and they are very small because there has been no rain."

This melancholy information was interrupted by Mr. Chater, who broke the news to us that there was no sign of the cook, an ex-servant of his who had been sent for to the native reserve, nor was there any sign of the messenger who went for him. What was to be done? I do not mind cooking, but to washing up I have the very strongest objection—was there anybody else who could take on that horrid job in the absence of the cook? I asked. Mr. Chater disappeared, and returned a minute later with two native boys, at a guess about 14 or 15 years old; they were both ugly and resembled monkeys in no small degree—but one was decidedly more hideous than the other.

Mr. Trout looked them up and down with a cold eye, then he pointed to the ugliest—"Zat," he said, "is not a boy, zat is a baboon."

Mr. Chater explained that the boys had run away from a Somali trader who beat them, and had turned up at the farm that morning asking for work.

"You want a baboon to do zat," said Mr. Trout, "a monkey to work."

"We only want them for washing up," I said, hastily afraid lest Mr. Trout should raise more objections, and I asked what wages they got. "Six shillings a month and their food," said Mr. Chater, and I engaged them both on the spot.

"If his mother was not a baboon, his father was," said Mr. Trout gloomily. "I shall call Mongi by his name, but that one," he said, pointing to the ugly one, "I shall call him Baboon, because he is a baboon, and you want a baboon to wash up the dishes—we shall see," said Mr. Trout, and off he went to look after his oxen, shaking his head as he went.

I had my first introduction to lions the next morning, a big one with a black mane killed a buck not 300 yards from where Mr. Chater and I were sitting at breakfast. We never heard a sound and knew nothing till a boy ran in to tell us. I was very glad I had spent the night under a roof instead of in my tent.

That day we only went 8 miles to Major Armstrong's farm, but the following morning we were up at 5 and, having said good-bye to kind Mr. Chater, started at 7. The first day it always takes longer to get off.

Mr. Trout was riding his own woolly white mule, and I rode on a brown mule called Nicodemus, kindly lent to me by Major Armstrong. Nicodemus found out in less than two minutes that I was no good at riding astride, also she had the greatest objection to leaving her home, so she went as slowly as she possibly could, trying constantly to bolt back to the farm. Finally Mr. Trout lent me one of his rusty spurs, which had such a wonderful effect that I nearly fell off as the mule rushed forward.

Behind us came the wagon with Mr. Trout's boys and the two "washers-up" Mongi and the Baboon, one of whom was allowed to sit in the wagon and hold the puppy Suzanne, which was considered a great treat and much appreciated.

We rode amongst mimosa trees, curious flat-topped thorns about 14 feet high: near us was the river, the banks covered with brushwood and trees—many of them the wild olive with small shiny dark green leaves, and growing much like the olives in the South of France. We had been told to follow this, the Nanyuki river, until we struck a place where the wagon could cross, you could hardly call it a ford. Once on the other side we were to make for two curious-looking hills, pass between them and strike the river again on the far side, where there was supposed to be another so-called ford.

We recognised the hills easily enough, from a distance they looked like the mounds of sand which children make on the seashore, but nearer they turned out to be quite two or three hundred feet high and consisted of huge boulders of rock, the size of cottages, tumbled together one on top of the

other. Playing about at the foot of the rocks were hundreds of baboons, which delighted Mr. Trout, who made many jokes at the expense of the boys, who, however, did not mind, and seemed much amused. The baboons were not frightened at the sight of us. They climbed up the rocks and sat in rows looking at us and jabbering. What they lived on I could not imagine, for we had left the thorn trees behind us, and there was nothing but a bare plain covered with grass for miles in every direction. Only straight in front of us could we see the tangle of trees that marked the course of the river. Mr. Trout told me baboons travel many miles in search of food and probably they went as far as the river.

It was very hot and I was both tired and hungry, for we had nothing when we started but a cup of tea. It seemed to me a very long time before we struck the river. As we got nearer to it I saw oryx for the first time, about thirty of them feeding about half a mile away. They were beautiful, I think the most graceful antelope there is, with their long straight horns on their aristocratic little heads. These antelope are very dangerous for dogs, and because of them I only took little Suzanne with me for company. If attacked by a dog an oryx does not run away, but faces the enemy with its head down and its horns along the ground, and when the dog gets near enough the oryx lifts its horns and runs the dog through with the sharp points. Many dogs are killed this way by them.

We found the ford eventually and decided to camp near it. Except at the ford itself the banks of the river were high and a jungle of matted vegeta-

tion. The wagon was pulled up at the top of the bank. The oxen were let loose to water and feed, the two mules knee-hobbled and let loose also. The boys lit a fire and got sticks and water, while I seized the frying-pan and proceeded to cook eggs and bacon. I had been debating in my mind about asking Mr. Trout to have his meals with me; the absence of the cook helped me to make up my mind and we sat down amiably together. Luckily I was much too hungry to have any qualms at the sight of Mr. Trout shovelling most of his food into his mouth with the assistance of his fingers and his knife.

Long before we reached the ford we had noticed far away on the opposite bank a little shining tin shanty which Mr. Trout took to be the farm of a soldier settler. A most lonely little place it looked, and so deserted. With my glasses I could see no sign of life round it, just a speck it was on a hot and bare hillside. We decided that after lunch Mr. Trout should ride there and ask about our route for the next day, while I looked forward to going down to the edge of the river and trying to catch a fish.

Mr. Trout was full of energy, going about giving orders, "You go down and fish," he said to me, "I will see all is vell here, ven you come back the tent vill be ready and all ze things clean." I waited to see Mongi and the Baboon start on the washing up, and left them sitting opposite each other, squatted on their heels, holding down a plate with one forefinger while they slowly rubbed it up and down with the other.

Unfortunately I had not brought any fishing tackle with me from England and had to depend on what I could buy in Nairobi: all I had was a six-foot rod, a reel of medium line and some plain hooks mounted on gimp. The latter was rotten and a good fish invariably broke me. The fish in these rivers are the African barbel, *Cyprinus Hindii*, and give really excellent sport,—not of course equal to brown or any other trout, but better than any of our English coarse fish. I baited my hooks with grasshoppers which they took freely, but I was afterwards told it requires a run of fresh water to make the big fish take well.

All the time I was on these rivers they were very low, and even if the big fish were taking—and they run up to 20 lb. and more—I could not have landed one with the tackle I had. I believe some people have had good fun casting for these fish, but unless a gang of boys were put to clearing off the tangle of brushwood on the banks I do not see how it would be possible to get a fly unto the water, at least in those parts where I have been. Of course, there were some clear places, such as the ford near our camp, but there the water was too shallow for anything but small fish.

It was very quiet down there by the water where I was. I kept a good look-out for snakes but saw none, only a number of parrots very busy with the seeds of a tree kept up a chatter over my head. The water was thick and muddy and nowhere could I see the bottom. I guessed the fish came round in shoals, for often I caught two in quick succession and then none for quite a long interval. I had got

about half-a-dozen of about half-a-pound in weight when Mr. Trout came back from the farm, and I went to meet him, and we walked up the bank together. He told me that he had found the soldier settler at home, and had ascertained from him how to cross the Guaso Nyiro river which we would strike the next day. We were to follow the tracks along the bank made by the settler's wagon a year before and cross the river where he had crossed it. It showed how dry the country was that we should be told to follow wagon tracks twelve months old.

As we got near the camp I saw the boys had put up my tent some distance from the wagon; it was under a tree and close to the tangle of vegetation at the top of the river-bank. At the sight of it Mr. Trout broke out into voluble Swahili mixed with Kikuyu, and pitched into his head boy. Then he turned to me. "You see what those niggers do if I turn my head! Now they put your tent so far away a lion can come and take you out of it, and I will know nothing—nothing at all. I tell ze boy to put the tent near the wagon where I can shoot the lion when he come, and he put ze tent just where it is best for the lion to come and eat you—and now it is too late, we cannot move the tent any more."

While Mr. Trout had been telling me this my heart had been turning to butter, as the Kaffirs say. I looked at the tree with a view to spending the night in its branches, but it was covered with big thorns. The top of the wagon was a mass of boxes, spare harness, etc., and there was nowhere to go or I should have gone, quickly. "Perhaps," I said, trying to be cheerful, "perhaps there are not many

lions in this part." "Yes, there are," said Mr. Trout, "zat man," and he indicated the farm with his thumb, "tell me they are up and down the river every night, and two days ago they kill some of his cattle. All ze lions are near the river now, 'undreds of them, and now it is dark and we cannot move the tent," and again he scolded the boy.

It was all very well to scold the boy, but what about me! Perfectly helpless, I could plainly see for myself my tent had been pitched in just the most convenient position for a lion to carry me off. I did not like to show the white feather, but how thankful I should have been for any alternative to sleeping in that horrible tent.

In the meantime in this country where the sun does not set, but just tumbles over the edge of the world, it had become pitch dark and a wall of ink—for there was no moon—seemed to close us in all round.

Mr. Trout tied the two mules to the wagon where they stood eating their supper of mealies, the oxen had come in by themselves, knowing, poor things, the dangers of the night, and were tied close together to the wagon-pole. Under the wagon was Mr. Trout's bed, and just behind the wagon were the camp-fires round which the native boys would pass the night. The whole scene was lighted by many hurricane lamps, each hung from three sticks. "Never mind," said Mr. Trout, "we 'ave plenty of lamps, you shall have one in your tent all night, and I will give you my shot-gun, then you wait till the lion is very near and shoot him in the eye!"

Good gracious, I thought, wait till he is very

near in a tent ! Why, once in a tent he is on you. I know enough about lions for that, and what I knew gave me no consolation, especially as I had seen Mr. Trout's gun, a single-barrelled thing dating from the Victorian era and looking as if it kicked most horribly.

We had more eggs and bacon for dinner, and the boys filled the big tin bath for me with hot water, boiled in petrol tins. "Is there anything more you want?" asked Mr. Trout, who had fastened a lamp to the pole inside my tent, and handed me solemnly the old single-barrel and four cartridges. I thought there was a good deal more I would like to have, but I said there was nothing, except that I would like another lamp hung in the tree beside my tent, and promising he would see to it Mr. Trout departed. I then had my bath and took my precautions for the night. Luckily the bath was a full-length tin one; I dragged it across my tent and used it to fill in a horrible hole, where owing to the ground-sloping away there was a gap of quite 12 inches under the edge of my tent—another gap I filled in with my suit-case, using my tin water basin and any small odds and ends for the same purpose. I felt it was useless, but it somehow gave me a feeling of more security. Finally I fastened up my mosquito net to the tent-pole and, putting the old gun near my pillow, went to bed with Suzanne at my feet, and feeling with the mosquito curtains round me much like a canary in a cage with the kitchen cat walking round.

It is not easy at first to sleep with a lighted lamp just over your head, nor with the talking that was going on round the camp-fires, but that gradually

died away and I was just dozing off when there was a fearful clatter, the oxen blowing and snorting, and Mr. Trout yelling. "Lion," I said to myself. I sat up in bed clutching the old shot-gun and getting mixed up with the mosquito net as I pushed in a cartridge with trembling fingers. The noise outside got worse. "What is the matter?" I asked. "An ox has got his head under the chain, and ze others do not like it," came back the reply. No wonder the others do not like it, tied up so near each other that if one ox starts to kick and jump about of course it upsets the others.

After a time peace was restored and putting down the gun I composed myself once more for slumber, but not for long. This time Jolly the lion dog started to bark furiously, and a fearful din began again—even little Suzanne on my bed sat up and with her little black nose in the air barked her best, adding to the uproar. "What is the matter now?" I called out to Mr. Trout. "Lion, but not very near," came back the reply. I was tired and dead sleepy: "not very near," did that mean a mile away or a hundred yards? I had no idea. Was it worth while getting the gun again? I decided it was not. Kismet! I would leave it to fate. If it was written I was to be killed by a lion—but there I fell asleep, and it seemed to me I had only closed my eyes for ten minutes when I was awoken by Mr. Trout calling the boys, again I asked what was the matter. "It is five o'clock and I try to wake up the boys." It was another day and I was still alive. Heaven be thanked! I would have given anything for another hour in bed.

Getting up by lamplight in that cold hour before the dawn is always most disagreeable. Through a crack in my tent I could see the stars still shining; however, I felt it was up to me to set a good example and proceeded to dress.

I was nearly ready when a boy brought me some hot water and a cup of hot coffee, it was full of sugar and tinned milk, both of which I hate, but oh! how good it tasted then! This was followed later by more bacon and eggs, a good solid breakfast and then away again into the blue.

We crossed the Nanyuki river without any difficulty and headed for the Guaso Nyiro—Guaso meaning river out here. Mr. Trout led the way on Camera, followed by a boy carrying a gun, he himself always carried a rifle. I followed next and behind came the wagon and our retainers—such as they were.

Mr. Trout threaded his way amongst the clumps of brushwood, so near the river the soil was damp and the growth luxuriant. I noticed a curious parasite, something like a climbing mistletoe, on many of the bushes—almost every tree out here has its particular variety of parasite. Later on I noticed a beautiful one, red and orange in colour and growing in big bunches on some thorn trees. Quite suddenly we came upon the fresh tracks of a rhino, so fresh that there was no doubt he was quite close to us, but it was impossible to see far in any direction. We rode along hoping he would not rush out upon us or the wagon, for owing to the dense scrub it would have been very difficult if not impossible to get out of his way, and all would have depended on Mr. Trout and his rifle.

As we rode quietly along we saw four buck cross an open glade ahead of us, not in the least afraid they stopped a little way off to look at us, almost under the shade of a big tree. Mr. Trout threw himself off Camera and giving her to the boy, said to me, "I am going to shoot one, the boys are asking for meat." I felt sorry, they looked so beautiful, standing there. Mr. Trout took deadly aim, there was a report and the four buck galloped off so far as I could see untouched. "I think he is dead behind the tree," said Mr. Trout, getting on to Camera and going off at a great rate. I followed, we soon arrived at the tree, but there was no sign of a dead buck, or of a wounded one. "I think that time I must have missed," said Mr. Trout. I made no answer, for it was quite obvious that he had; also I began to have regrets and to wonder how long a side of bacon would last at the rate of three meals a day. We now struck the track the soldier settler told us of, and it was quite true that the marks of the wagon wheels could still be plainly seen. At places where the brushwood was very thick a path had been cut, which made the going much easier for us.

To take a wagon straight across country as we were doing is no easy task and I was full of admiration for Mr. Trout and his boys. Constant practice, for Mr. Trout had been a transport driver for years, had taught him to an inch what a wagon could do. To realise the difficulty it must be remembered that a team of oxen is 64 feet in length, counting from the noses of the oxen in the lead to the tails of the wheelers, and the wagon is 12 to 15 feet

more added on to that. For a transport wagon with a full team of oxen three tons is the recognised load. Mr. Trout estimated the load now on his at under one.

It is the business of a small boy to lead the ox team when on trek, and ours followed Mr. Trout carefully, especially when the going was bad, which meant nasty turns or big stones or mud-holes. The driver, always a head boy and a most important person, walks up and down the line (the oxen are, of course, in pairs), yelling at the top of his voice and calling on the oxen by name, a call which if not responded to is followed by a smack from the whip. Occasionally when the head driver got a thorn in his foot or was very tired the small boy was allowed to drive. The head driver yelled enough, but nothing in comparison to the small boy, whose howls were piercing. I remarked gently on the quality of his vocal cords to Mr. Trout after a more than usually penetrating succession of howls. "Yes," replied Mr. Trout, "he talks to the oxen very nicely, they like it, it is a very good thing, bad drivers are too lazy to talk, they only whip, that is bad."

I took great interest in our oxen, they were a valuable lot, the whole 14 having been inoculated against East Coast fever—pleuro-pneumonia, rinderpest and anthrax, and having mystic letters meaning this branded upon them, besides native brands mostly in stripes across their noses. In an ox team the two fastest walkers are put as leaders, the two strongest and biggest as wheelers, and in the centre near the driver and his whip the lazy ones. Poor Ishmael was one of these and his name

was constantly to the fore. One of the wheelers and I became great friends, he loved salt and I used to feed him out of my hand; he knew me by sight and used to follow me about till sometimes I had great trouble in getting rid of him.

It may be guessed how difficult it is to steer the leading oxen so that the wagon, 64 feet behind, may clear a big stone or a tree or anything of the sort that happens to be in the way. Also branches of trees, or a bank that might upset the wagon sideways—often in a bad place, round an awkward corner. I have seen the oxen taken in one direction till the wagon was in the right position and then the team brought back on their tracks and taken in an opposite one—14 oxen all huddled up together with their pulling chain, their yokes, their long horns, and their 56 legs making a tangle which I sometimes thought could never come straight, but in some wonderful way Mr. Trout and the boys managed it. In a situation like that Mr. Trout drove himself, and it was curious to see that the oxen obeyed him better than any of the boys.

After some time we struck the Guaso Nyiro, a deep sullen-looking river flowing between high banks. The track we were following led upstream to the place where we were to cross. There was no question of crossing anywhere else, that was impossible. Mr. Trout told me that he had gone 3 miles along the edge of these African rivers without being able to get near enough to fill a can with water, because of the steep banks and the dense mass of creepers and trees upon them.

Finally we reached the place where the soldier

settler crossed before, and a boy was sent in to wade across and see if it was all right, a most disagreeable job as there are crocodile and all sorts of horrid things in these rivers. However, the boy got across all right. We followed on the mules and I was able to get a snapshot of the wagon as it climbed the opposite bank.

It was a desolate bit of country on the other side—stones and rocks and a few trees and shrubs all armed with a different thorn, generally inches long and inflicting a nasty wound if touched. We saw no game, but with glasses saw both impala and water-buck on the side we had just left.

We continued going upstream looking for a camping-ground where the mules and oxen could get down to the water, and finally between 11 and 12 o'clock found a lovely little glade sloping right down to the edge of the river—at the bottom of which were a herd of buck feeding, who fled when we approached.

I rode alone to the edge of the river, Mr. Trout waiting to direct the wagon. At the edge of the water was a strip of mud and sand and on it were the fresh footprints of a lion. I felt like Robinson Crusoe when he saw the footprints of Friday on the sand. It was a thrilling moment—besides the spoor of the lion there were those of rhinos and antelope and many other animals. This was an open spot with no cover to hide a potential enemy and was therefore a popular drinking-place. It seemed selfish of us to take possession of it and to push the others out, but after all it was only for the night.

Just above the strip of sand with the spoor of the lion was a little waterfall, and above that a big deep pool evidently full of hippo. We did not see any, as hippo are shy animals, but the papyrus on the edge of the water was crushed and flattened down by them, and there were several deep trough-like places where they had got in and out of the water churning up the mud, and, evidently, where they came out to feed at night.

Mr. Trout and I had just finished inspecting the hippo pool when a boy came running to tell us that my brown mule had slipped its knee-hobbles, had crossed the river and was making hard for its home at Major Armstrong's farm. Mr. Trout saddled the white mule and went after it, while I, unable to run after the mule on foot, got my rod and went to try for fish. Those barbel boiled are almost uneatable as they are full of small sharp bones, but Mr. Trout knew how to cook them (he described it as "frying them dry," in fact frying them until the bones were cooked and could be eaten with the flesh). I found them excellent, and a welcome change from the eternal eggs and bacon.

I had caught eight nice ones, the largest about 1½ lb., handsome fish with big scales like a carp, and was putting down a night-line in a likely place for eels, when walking along the river where we had come in the morning, appeared a native—got up to the nines according to native ideas, which meant he had on a shirt, a pair of shorts and a pair of puttees. In one hand he carried a big spear and in the other a pair of boots. This person turned out to be the cook, who arrived it seems just

after we left and had been sent off to follow us, but, unable to catch us up the first day, he had spent the night in a tree, and here he was.

Thinking he might just as well begin at once to make himself useful I showed him the Dutch oven, gave him some flour and set him to make bread for us. He was doing this when Mr. Trout appeared, followed, as I was thankful to see, by a boy leading Nicodemus. "What is zat?" said Mr. Trout, indicating the cook with one finger, and evidently not much pleased with the sight of him. I explained. "Zen I do not like him," he said. "When a boy is dressed fine like 'im, they are never any good. You shall see." "He spent the night in a tree and saw two lions," I said soothingly. "Zat," said Mr. Trout, "is not true. I do not believe anything he say," and then he held out his hand and pointed again. "Vat is zat?" he said in a horrified voice. "Vat is zat on the spear?" "Those," I said, "are the cook's boots." "Vat," cried Mr. Trout, "a cook in boots! Send him back, we do not want him, he is no cook, send 'im 'ome." This was the last thing I wanted to do, as already I was tired of trying to teach Mongi and the Baboon the gentle art of washing plates. I thought I would change the conversation so I said cheerfully, "Look at my tent, Mr. Trout, this time you see I have chosen the place for it myself, close to the wagon." Mr. Trout surveyed it gloomily—"A rhino I see he come down this way to the water every night, I hope he not walk over the tent and kill you flat," he remarked. This was a danger I had never thought of. "Rhinos is very stupid," continued

Mr. Trout, still with the gloom of an undertaker. "Zey walk straight over everything, but perhaps Jolly keep him away," he added with a ray of cheerfulness. With all my heart I hoped so too, and decided to risk it, and that night I crawled into bed feeling happier than the night before. Alas! history repeated itself, for, just as I had gone to sleep, I was awoken by a fearful noise. Jolly was barking furiously at something or other and the oxen, thoroughly upset and frightened, were backing on to my tent, the tent-pole swaying from side to side. Every moment I thought it would come down and with it my lighted lamp and my mosquito curtains—frantically I clung to it and yelled for Mr. Trout, while the oxen, with their hind legs tangled up in my tent-ropes, kicked and struggled outside—the noise of their chains adding to the general clamour.

In the midst of it all I heard the voice of Mr. Trout shouting out, "I think it is the rhino and I can't find my boots." "Never mind the rhino," I yelled back, gasping with the exertion of holding on to the tent-pole, "the oxen are knocking down the tent." I suppose Mr. Trout found his boots, for the struggles outside ceased, though the barking went on all night.

In the morning we found both lion and rhino had been round the camp during the night; the rhino I suppose wanted his evening drink in the river, and had been headed off each time by the gallant Jolly.

We were up as usual at 5. I dressed by the light of my lamp and very cold it was and pitch dark

outside. I could hear Mr. Trout rousing up the boys who, with many grunts and groans, let go the oxen, who had spent the night tied to the long chain they pulled on during the day.

To protect the oxen from the lions Mr. Trout has quite a good idea—lions always attack from the front at night, he says, so he ties the first couple of oxen as near the wagon as possible, the next pair close to them and so on. Of course they are then much nearer together than they are during the day and a long stretch of chain and their yokes are left on the ground. A lion coming with intent to kill comes quietly from the direction farthest from the wagon, which means over the yokes and chains lying on the ground. The oxen hear or smell him coming, and at once try to get away and pull and jerk their heads, this of course pulls the chain and moves the yokes, while the lion feeling something knock against his feet often takes fright and clears off.

We were now going to leave the Guaso Nyiro and make for the Guaso Narok river. On the map there is another river marked in between them, but Mr. Trout had been told that it was dry and the only water to be had on that 50 odd miles of country was at a Dutchman's farm, which we were to make for. Mr. Trout had a sort of hazy idea where to find it.

In this country oxen and mules will only drink after the sun is well up. They were taken down to the water just before we started in the hope of making them drink, in view of the long hot trek in front of us before we could hope to strike the Dutchman's farm, but they refused. Unfortunately there were too many for it to be possible to cart

water for them on the wagon—for ourselves we took two petrol tins of water, well corked with bunches of grass.

The going, once we left the river-bank, was awful. Why the wagon did not break in pieces I could not imagine, as it crashed and bumped over the stones. The only signs of vegetation were a few straggling thorn trees and clumps of brushwood.

As we were going along Jolly put up a rabbit which looked more like a hare as it dashed into some bushes. "You like rabbit?" shouted Mr. Trout. "Yes," I shouted back, delighted at the idea of a change from eggs and bacon. "Zen I vill shoot him," called back Mr. Trout. He seized the old shot-gun and with Jolly went to one side of the bushes, a boy going to the other to put out the rabbit; out it came, about 5 yards from Mr. Trout: bang went the gun. "I tink I shoot out some of his hair," yells Mr. Trout; whether he did or not I don't know, but it certainly made no difference to the rabbit. "Never mind," yelled Mr. Trout, "Jolly catch him." Good old Jolly was certainly doing his best, when the rabbit popped down a hole. "Now we get him," shouted the undefeated Mr. Trout, "now we will dig him out." We went to the hole where Jolly was standing guard. Mr. Trout poked about with a stick and two of the boys dug, only to come on a big stone and find it was hopeless. It gave me to think as the French say, and I wondered what would happen in the exceedingly likely event of a lion coming to attack us, and Mr. Trout my only protection.

All this time we were crawling up a hillside and,

once on the top, there was a superb view for miles. We could see right to the blue mountains on the Somaliland frontier, but it was fearfully hot and dry, not a flower to be seen except one acacia tree loaded with pale yellow sweet-scented flowers and buzzing with bees and butterflies. Where they came from I don't know, but certainly from many miles away.

At 11 we stopped for an hour and had tea and eggs and bacon. I wonder if I shall begin to cackle or grunt; I am sure with this diet I shall do one or the other. The oxen were allowed to graze with the mules, and seemed to enjoy the grass which was dried up to the consistency of hay, which really I suppose it was. I wondered how the animals could swallow it without water.

At 12 we inspanned and went on again, the sun burning down on us. Not a drop of water, the ground a dull brown colour and always the thorn trees looking as if they had a hard struggle for life. Farther on they became more numerous and the grass less dry and we began to see quantities of game, zebra, oryx, Grant's gazelle and eland, and a lot of wild pig, which trotted away when they saw us, and to my surprise went without an effort as fast as the zebra alongside of them.

Then when we least expected it we came upon a lioness. She sat up like a dog and watched us from the shadow of a little thorn tree—as we got nearer she bounded away in great leaps 10 feet at a time, and I hope may live many years and have many little lions as graceful as herself.

Shortly after seeing the lioness the flat hill-top

we had been on for miles began to slope down towards a narrow valley, which appeared to have steep sides, very awkward for the wagon. The valley was about half a mile below us and Mr. Trout took my glasses to have a good look as to how best to cross it, for the slopes were covered with big rocks with the usual thorn trees and bushes. While we were looking and speculating as to the best place to get the wagon across, Mr. Trout suddenly said, "See! buffalo." On the farther side of the valley there were thirty-five of the wicked-looking black creatures—what luck to see them like this! There were bulls and cows with calves, they were moving slowly along the side of the hill, some picking at the grass, or pulling at the leaves of the shrubs as they went along. It was so interesting watching them I could hardly tear myself away, but we had to move on.

Mr. Trout was evidently very vague as to the whereabouts of the Dutchman's farm and we must find water for the beasts. Getting the wagon down the side of the hill was no joke. I made the cook lead little Suzanne, who would have been jolted to death on the wagon. It was almost worse at the bottom, evidently in the rainy season a river flowed through it, now it was bone dry and full of holes and ridges, besides trunks of dead trees and branches, and clumps of bushes. We got through, however, and then began to climb up the other bank. Mr. Trout was in front on his mule, the leading pair of oxen just behind him, when out of a clump of brushwood just in front dashed a dozen buffalo. I noticed one huge big bull and several cows and calves.

Mr. Trout pulled up at once just in time to let the buffalo get across ahead of us. They were evidently part of the big herd we had seen, and if we had got in between them and the others there might have been a bad mix-up—we just escaped them.

Once on the other side of the little valley we found ourselves again amongst the little thorn trees, and our luck was great, for about four miles farther on we came across a rhino. The wind was blowing strongly towards us, so we were able to ride to within 200 yards of him and have a good look. He was an extraordinary-looking creature and somehow most unreal. I could hardly believe that if the wind changed and he could smell us he would be on us with the speed of a racehorse, for a rhino is very blind and trusts entirely to his nose, and charges immediately on catching a scent regardless of what may stand in his way. I found him fascinating to watch as he stood there facing us, evidently conscious something was wrong, but unable to make up his mind as to what it was. He kept on moving his huge head from side to side showing up his long horn. Mr. Trout said he was a bull. Huge as he looked he was so unlike anything I had seen before outside a Zoo, that I felt he must be stuffed and that on nearer inspection I would see a handle somewhere with which he was wound up.

It was here that one of Mr. Trout's head boys caught us up; he had been sent back for my chair that had fallen off the wagon, and had had a nasty time too with the buffalo. He had seen the big herd and the smaller one with the big bull, but not two young bulls that had charged him at sight.

Up to then they had been hidden in a thicket. The poor boy had run for his life, getting his feet full of thorns, and had managed to scramble up a tree just in time. There he waited till the buffalo took themselves off, when cautiously getting down he had followed us again and finally caught us up when we halted to look at the rhino.

By this time the oxen began to look very weary, it had been a long, very hot day with no water, and I was grieved for them. Mr. Trout went on ahead and coming to a sort of ditch rode up it and found a small pool with some dirty water, and here we decided to camp.

Directly they were let loose the oxen threw themselves into the so-called water, and drank greedily, soon churning the whole thing into mud. Along the edges of the ditch grew a nice lot of fresh grass which the zebra and antelope had not dared to eat for fear of the lion; this the oxen fell upon, and I was glad to think the poor things had the benefit of it. Nothing is more fascinating in this country than the footprints of the wild animals: round that mud-hole there were the tracks everywhere, the place was cut up with them. Mr. Trout showed me giraffe for the first time, and there were lion in plenty.

The next morning when we moved off we came across the tracks of a lioness and two cubs. I could see where they had trotted after their mother, their little footprints about the size of a two-shilling piece. Farther off were a lot of vultures, some in some trees, others wheeling round in the air. Mr. Trout gave the place a wide berth as he thought it most probable the lioness had killed there the night

before and the vultures knew it, and that probably having eaten as much as she could, the lioness was now lying up in the bushes with her cubs watching the kill, and in the evening would finish it off. †

As we went along we saw a quantity of zebra, hundreds of them and quite close to us. This time Mr. Trout was successful and killed one, much wanted for meat for the dogs and also for its hide to make sandals for the boys, who must have some protection for their feet for the thorns everywhere are fearful.

I took a photo of the dead zebra, and then left while the boys fell upon it and cut off the skin. What a pity it is zebra skin cannot be tanned. It is not leather like any other hide, it never gets soft, or at least nobody yet has discovered a way of making it so. The stripes are so ornamental and the skins would make most charming rugs for the floor if only they could be cured, also there are far more zebra in the country than any other animal; all the more pity they cannot be made use of.

That day we reached the water holes on the Dutchman's farm, a horrid series of small pools, mud, with 6 inches of water on the top and absolutely full of wild duck. The poor oxen drank till they could drink no more, then ate till they could eat no more, and then it being evening came of themselves to the wagon to be tied up for the night.

IX

THE next morning we rode up to the Dutchman's farm to make ourselves known to him and to ask if we might camp another night on his land. I found him and his wife most kind, they insisted on giving us fresh butter and milk, would not hear of payment, begged us to stay as long as we liked and hoped we would kill all the duck we required, as they never ate them. They also told us that at least three lions had been roaring the night before, and from the direction we gathered they must have found the zebra which we had killed. We are going to look on our way back to camp.

At this farm I was introduced to a most delightful pet—a baby rhino, absolutely tame. He was about three feet high, but so strong the Dutchman could ride him. He was too young for his horn to have grown yet, but otherwise exactly like a big one, only in miniature. The Dutchman told me rhino are very frightened of dogs, that he had turned his pack on to the mother of this little thing and she had run away and left it. The little rhino was very fond of brown bread and ate any amount out of my hands; unfortunately being short-sighted he had mistaken his master's best khaki shirt for something

to eat and had gnawed it to bits the day before. The most amusing thing was to see him being fed. Twice a day he had a pot of mealie porridge, and he knew the whole process quite well: the pot was cooked out of doors by one of the boys, the little rhino standing guard, trying to poke his nose into the pan and giving excited little squeals and grunts. If any of the other boys dared to come near he went straight for them and hunted them off, but curiously enough he let me stand close to him and take his photograph. When cooked the porridge was mixed with milk and given to him in a bottle, his little pig eyes shining with pleasure as he shuffled about on his queer-shaped feet to show his joy. After his meal he prepared to take a siesta, and finding it pleasant to be tickled under the chin, decided to lie down near me. Very carefully and very slowly he did so, a joint at a time, then giving a big sigh he shut his eyes and suggested resting his huge head on my knee, a delicate attention I was forced to decline. I left him sound asleep. Poor little rhino, I fear he will end his days in a Zoo, probably in America. However, I do hope he will be happy wherever he is, at any rate I think he will be sure of getting plenty to eat, for of course he is worth a big sum of money.

Besides the little rhino the Dutchman had a cheetah in alas! a very small cage. He caught it by running it down; a cheetah goes exceedingly fast for a short distance, I believe it is said to be the fastest animal there is for a couple of hundred yards; it then climbed into a tree and the Dutchman, giving it a stick to bite, tied its legs together and brought it back; he catches quite a number

this way and sells them for a big price to Indian princes for hunting.

He also showed me a splendid lion skin, rough dried ; it measured twelve feet and the owner valued it at £40. It was cream colour and huge round the body. He had shot it a short time before. He also told me he had killed thirty-four lions to his own rifle on his farm alone during the nearly three years he had been here, and this is not counting a large number he has killed elsewhere.

The country here is full of zebra. I have seen herds of two hundred and more every day I have been out, and all as fat as prize animals at a show. Where there are zebra in quantity there you are sure to find lion, for zebra meat is no doubt the favourite food of lions. All the same they do not object to eating beef when they can get it. This Dutchman has had a lot of his cattle killed by them. A valuable bull was killed in broad daylight in the middle of the afternoon. The bull had strayed away a short distance from the herd and was taken at once. All the cattle and sheep in this part of Kenya, and indeed in almost every part of the country, are driven into bomas at night, enclosures surrounded by high and thick thorn fences. I am told twelve feet is none too high for safety, and as much through. Mr. Trout tells me he knew of a case only a short time ago where a lion jumped into a boma more than twelve feet high and made of solid trees sunk three feet into the ground. The lion killed several cows, and throwing one over its shoulders tried to jump out with it but could not manage it. The cattle boys-who sleep inside the

bomas then threw lighted sticks and so harried the lion that he dropped the cow and leaping easily out again made off.

The Dutchman tells me he relies more on his dogs than his bomas for the safety of his animals. He leaves the dogs loose at night and if he hears them bark goes out himself with a strong carbon lamp fixed on the top of his head ; the light reflects back from the eyes of the lions which gleam a bright green colour, he aims at the eyes or at least a little below them and gets the lion through the chest and heart. He told me a little while ago he and his brother were in another part of the country and found themselves in the middle of a troop of thirty lions ; in less than half a minute they killed six, all the others making off quickly.

On our way back to our camp we rode round to where Mr. Trout killed the zebra. I wanted to take a photo of it "before and after the lions" sort of thing, but when we got there we found hardly a bit of it left, there was nothing to photograph, all that remained was a big bone, gnawed completely in half, a few smaller ones and a couple of bits of hide. All round was the spoor of the lions. I was thankful they had evidently been too busy with the zebra to bother about us.

As we got near the camp we saw a lot of duck on the little ponds. Mr. Trout took the old shot-gun, and getting off his mule and keeping well behind a bush succeeded in killing two. They were beautiful little birds with bright red beaks and as fat as butter. We ate them later spatchcocked over hot embers. They were delicious. Mr. Trout was very proud of

himself and with his mouth full of duck and waving a knife and fork he gave me his opinion on shooting. "Vat I like," he said, "is a good sit shot. I wait till three or four duck are close together, then I shoot and I have three or four all dead. Vat," he said with great scorn, "is the good of a fly shot? If you are very lucky you get one duck, if you are unlucky you get nothing at all, and the cartridge he is quite gone."

Nicodemus my mule is most tiresome, it is continually slipping its hobbles and making off for its old home, dreadfully dangerous in this country infested with lions. It went off again while we were at this camp, and half the boys and Mr. Trout went after it to bring it back. Of course the Baboon went also, but while Mr. Trout found Nicodemus within an hour or so, and headed it off amongst some rocks, the Baboon succeeded in getting lost. When evening came there was no sign of him. I was very anxious but Mr. Trout was quite unmoved. "Nozzing vill 'appen to 'im," he said, "for he is an animal himself. I am quite sure his father was a baboon." Sure enough the next day the hideous boy turned up all right; he spent the night in a tree, he said, and heard a lion but it did not come near to where he was, but a leopard passed close to the tree he was in. Luckily the wind was the right way and the leopard never scented him. The boy has more sense than I gave him credit for, one does not expect much from an object with no forehead to speak of, a black button of a nose, and an enormous mouth with blue-black lips nearly an inch thick. He made a great fuss the other night,

one of the other boys dared to call him Baboon as Mr. Trout and I do ; he was indignant : " I will not be called Baboon by any one who is the same colour as I am," he said. We were having our breakfast one morning when Baboon was sent for water ; we watched him slowly wading through the mud, he is always fearfully slow, holding up the petrol tin in one hand and his one scanty garment with the other, the water—such as it was—being in the middle of the pond. Just as he got well over his knees in mud and water he fell splash on to his back. Everybody laughed. The Baboon picked himself up and wringing the water out of his bit of Americani he calmly said, " One must expect these accidents to happen when one is on *safari*."

To-day being Sunday we do not trek, instead a lot of odd jobs are done. The head driver takes the wheels off the wagon and greases them well. The cook helps me with my washing ; he collects three stones, one he sits on, he places my garment on the second and bangs it hard with the third. Needless to say I wash most of my things myself, but how satisfactory it is when they only take a few minutes to dry in the sun.

Though it is Sunday we are all up at the usual time—5 A.M. At 6 we set off on our mules to try and get some more duck, again Mr. Trout killed a couple which Jolly retrieved. That dog is invaluable but not beautiful to look at, his father is supposed to have been an Airedale, his mother is known to have been a spaniel, so he is fast after game and will retrieve, but he is most peculiar to look at, dark grey in colour with odd bits of long hair hanging about

him in unexpected places ; he has been getting fat on zebra meat of which we boil a big pan every evening for the dogs. Mixed with potatoes, of which we have a big sack, it makes excellent food for them.

Later on in the day Mr. Trout rode up again to the Dutchman's farm and found them very busy, getting ready to receive the Dutch clergyman who is coming to stay with them.. I wondered where they would put him, for their house is only a grass hut with two rooms in it, and besides the clergyman there were a Dutchman and his wife and child coming also. Mr. Trout tells me this Dutch pastor is appointed for two years only, six months of each year he spends in Tanganyika territory, the other six in Kenya, so he is moving about the whole time. He is always accompanied by a farmer or some person appointed as representative of the people in the neighbourhood where he happens to be. This elder settles where the pastor is to go, and lets those members of the flock who want to be christened or married know when and where they can be "fixed up." Mr. Trout did not approve of the pastors. "Zey get five hundred pounds a year for nozzing but to get fat. You shall see! This one he is young but everywhere they give him a soft bed and much food, and everywhere he go in a motor or a wagon," he said. "Zis time my friend Mr. Vandervesty bring him in a car and I think zey will stick in the mud, for I go to see the way they come and I see the mud myself and it is deep." Sure enough later on in the day Mr. Trout, who had eyes like Argus, announced he saw somebody

coming. "It is my friend Mr. Vandervesty," he said. "They are stuck in the mud and he come to ask me to pull them out." The idea appealed much to Mr. Trout's sense of humour; all the same he told his head boy to bring up the oxen. Mr. Vandervesty was short with a big black beard; there was much hand-shaking and much talking in Dutch. I was introduced, and then we all went to the rescue of the motor party, accompanied by a dozen oxen. Sure enough the motor was up to the floor in black sticky mud. Inside was a fat, oily-looking young man, an equally fat woman, the wife of the elder, and a child. It took all the oxen to pull out the car, the lady inside screaming out instructions the whole time to which nobody paid the least attention.

"You see him?" asked Mr. Trout, when the motor party had gone safely on their way. "He never got up till eight o'clock, and zat is a shameful thing, and to-night zey have a little pig for dinner and a little pig is a very good thing," and poor Mr. Trout heaved a sigh and went to look up the cook whom he much dislikes and who is always catching it for something or other. "But to eat much pig and stay in bed in ze morning make him very fat," he repeated as he disappeared.

I wondered how a motor could get to a farm as remote as this, but it appears there is a sort of track, originally a native path, not far away, along which a Ford car, that most wonderful of machines, can make its way in the dry season, and along which the young Dutchman takes his wagon when he has to fetch stores or anything for the farm.

The stars were still shining when we drank our coffee and started off for a long, hot trek to the Guaso Narok river, another long stretch of waterless country. According to the map we ought to cross a river, but it has dried up long since and is now only a donga with no water in it.

Once away from our camp the country was all the same; in the distance it looked like thick wood, once in it we found it was stunted thorn trees growing wide apart with parched and brown grass growing below. Though so burnt up there must be a lot of feed in that grass, for we saw any amount of zebra, all in absolutely first-class condition. Later we came on to high country with fewer trees and big open spaces of down-like land with none. From the top of one of these ridges we could see in the distance the now dry donga, the line of it marked by large trees. I stopped my mule and putting up my glasses said to Mr. Trout, "I am going to have a good look round for giraffe." As I said these words he called out, "There goes one," and sure enough on the other side of the donga, walking slowly up the slope beyond and browsing as they went, were several of those extraordinary-looking animals I so much wanted to see. We hurried down to the donga, but by that time the giraffe had reached the top of the opposite slope and were disappearing over the other side. The wind was just right for us and the rise hid us from them. We rode up to the top and there only a short distance away were nineteen big and little; there may have been more, but I counted nineteen. The lightest one in colour and certainly the largest was a big bull; he stood

perfectly still and stared at us with his big mild eyes, his ears pushed forward and his funny little horns standing out on the top of his head. The herd were amongst a lot of the usual low thorn trees with flat tops, and the effect of their heads and long thin necks bending over the tops of the trees was most peculiar.

The dark markings were much more conspicuous on some than on others. I wondered if they got lighter with age. I noticed three young ones, each ten or twelve feet high, the big bulls being twenty feet high. Though they saw us they were not frightened, most of them continued to feed, nipping off the ends of the young shoots of the thorns upon which they live,—shoots covered with formidable thorns, notwithstanding the fact that they were young. The skin of a giraffe's lips and tongue must be wonderfully tough.

I had time for a long look before the herd moved off, which they did at an ungainly trot. It looked slow but it takes a fast horse to keep up with them. The three young ones brought up the rear, none of the others seeming to worry about them; they were even stiffer in their action than the old ones and gave one the impression they had little control over their legs and suffered from rheumatism in every joint. We watched till they had quite disappeared, and then, as the wagon was coming up behind us, we chose the most shady tree we could find and, pulling up the wagon, the oxen were loosed to feed while we had a meal of sorts of the eternal eggs and bacon.

My rule on *safari* is never to drink unboiled water, so we made a little fire for tea; the difficulty was

to prevent setting fire to the grass around us. Had we done so the fire would have raged for miles. We were always careful to see our fires safely out before we left. We could only rest for an hour and then had to push on again. In the far distance we could see with glasses a dip in the hills at the bottom of which was the river we were making for. It was one of the hottest rides I have ever had to get there. The whole surface of the ground was vibrating from the heat and seemed to be dancing up and down. Of course we were absolutely on the equator, riding along at the hottest time of the day in the hottest month of the whole year. On the top of the ridges of the hills there was a breeze, but when it came to riding down into the valleys there was none. At last we got to the summit of the last hill and saw a big swamp below us; at the end of it on our right, still far away, was a tiny blue speck, the tin house built by a young ex-soldier who was given some land here at the back of beyond by a grateful Government for services rendered during the war.

The ride down that hillside to the little house was exhausting; we had been ten hours on trek, with one hour's rest for luncheon, under a tropical sun blazing down on us. Though heat does not affect me as a rule I found it too much combined with such a long ride.

When we got to the little tin house we found the owner was away but had left word that anybody who called was to be offered tea. How grateful I was to that kind man for his hospitable thought. By the time the tea had been made and Mr. Trout

and I had drunk it, the wagon arrived and we pushed on to camp and to give the animals a drink.

I was relieved when we got to the river to find the oxen were not so thirsty as I expected; they drank greedily, but were not mad for water as I feared. The watering-place and also the place where we crossed were just below the swamp, the papyrus ending where the river ran over rocky shelves, but beginning again about fifty yards further downstream.

The first thing we saw on the other side of the river was a dead zebra: crossing over we found traces of lion everywhere. The head of the zebra was hardly touched, there were claw marks on its nose and a great gash where the lion had seized its neck in its jaws and broken it. The lions had eaten the inside of the zebra and part of its hind quarters. Mr. Trout gave it as his opinion that the lions who had killed it were then lying in the papyrus close to us and in the evening would return to finish their meal. With this in my mind I did not much appreciate having to camp within a hundred and fifty yards of the dead zebra, but there was no help for it. The oxen and the boys, besides ourselves and the mules, were too tired to push on farther, so we had to make the best of it and pitched our camp under a tree, Mr. Trout remarking with satisfaction that the grass round about was nice and short with no bushes or holes near to afford cover for a lion coming to attack us, while the fact that there was still a considerable amount to eat on the zebra was a good thing, for the lions would certainly finish that off before they came for us.

That evening I sat a long time until it got too dark to be able to see, watching the wild things coming down to drink. I sat just outside my tent and felt as if I were at a cinema show. In front of me was a level stretch of short grass right up to the edge of the river, on it was the dead zebra, and I could see one of its legs sticking up and some of its ribs. Then came the water, and then on the far side a steep bank covered with stones and rocks, along the top of which and down its sides came a regular procession of animals to the shallow place where we had crossed, but they were too frightened by our camp to come down to the river and drink, and moved off elsewhere. I counted ninety zebra in one mob; they looked delightful, for the evening sun was shining upon them; I could count their stripes and mark every movement. First I would see a zebra at the top of the bank, evidently an old mare and one of the leaders of the troop. She would see our camp at once and stop dead, a minute after another zebra would join her, and then another, and one could see they were having a consultation. Sometimes they would turn back and go off without coming any farther. Others more bold would cautiously come down the bank, the old lady scouts leading the way as before. When they stopped the main body behind immediately stopped also, and did not attempt to move on till the leaders gave the word by moving on themselves. Baby zebras are delightful fluffy-looking little things; they followed their mothers, but others a little older would dawdle behind playing and then hurry up like anything to join their elders. We saw

ostriches, Grant's gazelle, and a delightful little steinbok who played about, feeding amongst some low bushes for quite a long time. The Dutch named this little buck the stein or stone buck, for it is never to be found away from rocks and stones. It is a lovely and most graceful gazelle, its little legs being no thicker than my finger. Mr. Trout looked at the steinbok, then remarked it was very good eating and asked me if he should try and kill it. But of course I said no. I cannot bear killing things.

It was with mixed feelings that I went to bed that night, wondering what was going to happen. We all huddled together as usual for protection. My tent I trusted just out of reach of the heels of the mules and oxen. Mr. Trout lit fires and hung lamps round us till I said we looked like a charity bazaar. With the darkness came the lions, growling and snarling over the remains of the zebra, while the dogs barked and the usual din began. One could imagine what was going on so near us just on the river bank. I wondered how long the zebra would last, and devoutly hoped there was enough high meat to satisfy the lions and that they would leave us alone. Mr. Trout as usual fired off his gun, and I, putting on my mosquito boots and a motor coat and clutching the old shot-gun, poked my head out of my tent but of course could see nothing; to me it is one of the most frightening things in Africa, that wall of darkness that surrounds one when there is no moon. I was too sleepy and tired to wait very long, so went back to bed, and though the noise went on all night I slept through it all.

The sky was red and yellow with a superb sunrise when I got up; soon after we walked down to the kill to find the lions had dragged it clear away, not a bone remained, which showed there must have been several. It was quite amusing to see the vultures; they had arrived the day before and had spent the night sitting in some thorn trees waiting for a nice breakfast; they were obviously most dreadfully disappointed. While we were eating our breakfast a jackal turned up and he too went empty away. He was a handsome beast with a fine fur coat and a big tail like a fox, or should I say brush? He was very different from the mangy-looking scavengers I had seen elsewhere.

I decided we would not move camp till later in the day as I wanted to fish and the cook had to make bread. At 7 A.M. we went down to the river. I took my rod, Mr. Trout a pole cut from a tree, a length of string, a bottle cork for a float and a hook I gave him, but we only caught three little fish. However, we had to wait for the bread to be ready which the cook was baking in the Dutch oven. At 10 A.M. when we came back the sun was already very hot and the inside of my tent was one dense mass of flies, the common house variety.

The herd boy had a good smacking, his yells were enough to make you think he was being killed. He is rather an attractive boy, as they go out here, his most conspicuous features being his teeth and his feet—he takes out-size in both. His business is to watch the oxen while they feed, to see they don't stray or get lost. The boy, thinking Mr. Trout was safely away fishing and the driver washing

clothes, had left his charges and joined the other boys round the fire, only to be caught by Mr. Trout and then and there soundly smacked. The oxen were completely lost for over an hour. Mr. Trout estimates the value of his team at £170. Even if only one ox is killed it is a severe loss for the owner, as the others dislike a newcomer and he has to be introduced to them gently, let out to feed with them and so on, till they get used to him, besides which he probably has not been through the proper series of inoculations to make him proof against disease, all of which mean time and money. No wonder Mr. Trout smacked the boy; it was a serious affair for him for it is not at all unknown for lion to attack stray cattle in the daytime. I too was delighted to see the whole fourteen return safely to camp.

X

THIS swamp on the Guaso Narok is the largest I have seen out here. It is supposed to be quite twelve miles long and two or more wide. But nobody they say has been across it. It is covered with dense papyrus sixteen to twenty feet high. In places there must be islands, as one can see from the edge the trees growing on them, and from the top of a high bank one can also see spaces of open water which are the happy hunting-grounds of big herds of hippo. About half-way up the side of the swamp an enterprising young farmer has built himself a couple of huts and is starting to rear stock and to farm generally. He took out a water furrow for a patch of mealies but told me he has to send a boy almost every day to clear it out, the hippos imagine it has been cut for their edification to roll and play about in at night. He showed me the skin of a seventeen-foot python which he killed as it was taking a stroll out on the grass at the edge of the swamp; he told me others have been seen up to thirty feet in length, and he was told of one of forty-four but that was non-proven !!

This swamp is a weird place, quite uncanny. Its vast extent of many square miles, the height

and thickness of the papyrus and, except for the sighing of the wind through it in the evening, the dead silence, all tended to make it most mysterious. I felt I quite believed the forty-four-foot python might live in it, or a thirty-foot crocodile—in fact that anything wicked and slimy would naturally make that swamp its home.

Mr. Trout had been there before and had shot a hippo in an open pool, one of three just on the edge of the swamp. We walked down to the place just as the sun was setting, the pools looked black and deep and absolutely motionless. The giant papyrus on the edge bent down till the plumes touched the water, in places there were tunnels through it made by the hippo, and the edge where we stood was trampled by their feet getting in and out of the water, for at night they come out to graze. Hippo are shy and timid things and any unusual noise frightens them away. I expect our advent had been too much for them, for we did not see any. That night was a quiet one, notwithstanding our having been told that eight lions were seen a week before close to where we were camping; we were not disturbed and heard nothing except hyenas.

The next morning we saw a pretty sight. We rode ahead of the wagon and on to the top of a little hill so as to have a look at the country. Below us was a bit of flat grass land and then the edge of the swamp. On the flat space were three jackals, so far as we could judge a female and two half-grown cubs. The young ones were having a great game, just like fox cubs at home. Lying flat on the ground they would suddenly jump up at each other, race

round the old one and then pretend to hide again. As I watched them through my glasses something really frightened them; in a moment they sank absolutely out of sight amongst some reeds and lay there perfectly still. After a minute or so, finding it was a false alarm, up came the three heads; they took a good look round and then bounding out of the rushes began their game again. They were fine-looking animals, with good coats and thick brushes, evidently in the pink of condition.

Farther away from the little hill we were on, and yet quite close to us, were four wild pigs, all the same size, about half grown, dark grey in colour with a fringe of black hair on the top of their necks, you could hardly call it a mane; they were going down to drink at the swamp and looked very busy, trotting along on their quick little feet and getting over the ground at a surprising rate. On the other side of us were two waterbuck feeding on the grass at the edge of the swamp. Altogether I should like to have spent the day on that coppie, the wild life all round was so intensely interesting, so wonderful was it to see these wild things at home living as Nature intended them to live. But the old wagon was thundering on behind, would soon catch us up, and we had to get on to find a suitable place for our camp for the night, water and grass for the animals, and if possible a bit of shade for ourselves.

We spent the rest of the day along the edge of that endless swamp. We were of course at the bottom of a valley, the papyrus kept off any breeze there was on our side, and the high bank covered with bushes on the other side radiated back the

heat of the sun till we were baked. At eleven o'clock we came to a few trees with some fresh grass under them, also to a gap in the papyrus where the oxen could get to clear water. We halted for four hours and I don't remember ever being so hot before. Mr. Trout said he had never felt anything like it, and drank Eno's fruit salt and water till I thought he would blow up. Curiously enough, neither the mules nor the oxen nor the dogs were very thirsty; they had a good drink, then the mules and oxen had a good eat, and then they all lay down in the shade of the trees until we had to rouse them to go on again.

If it had been possible we would have spent the night where we were, but just a few mosquitoes were buzzing about even during the heat of the day, and we knew that later the place would be simply alive with them, so we determined to push on.

After going about five miles farther we struck a tiny collection of houses which figures in big letters on the map as Rumuruti, but consists of a D.C.'s office, otherwise a District Commissioner, a store, two or three more houses that may perhaps be occupied by Europeans, a police office and a few native huts. The D.C. kindly suggested we should camp on a plot of ground near the "town," but I have a strong dislike for old camping grounds, and asked how far it was to the river; we were told two miles farther on we should strike it and find some nice trees under which to pitch our camp. Cheered by this information we decided to push on. We rode at least two miles along a track that perhaps by a long stretch of imagination might be termed a

road, but there was no sign of a river. The "road" was closed in on each side by a mass of low trees; we could see nothing, nor could we even hear the river, every minute we expected to come upon it, but it was at least five miles before, dusty, weary and very tired, at last we found it. Water, indeed, there was in plenty but nothing for the animals to eat. Luckily a couple of native boys turned up; they had a mealie patch not far off and were glad to sell us bundles of fresh stalks. How the oxen loved them! They and the mules ate steadily half-way through the night, while I rolled into my bed and, lions or no lions, slept like a log. However, it seemed lions, like the poor, were to be always with us, for in the very early morning Suzanne woke me by poking her cold little nose against my cheek and licking me; she was delighted when she saw I was awake, and putting her head on one side she told me to listen, and then in the distance I heard a lion roaring; it was a long way off and up wind and I could hear dogs barking as well, so I supposed the lion was near a cattle boma we had passed on our way a couple of miles back. After listening for a bit and finding the roaring did not come any nearer I decided not to wake Mr. Trout and went to sleep again. Lions when they are hunting are generally silent; a silent lion is a dangerous one and means business; they seldom roar in the dry season—which it is now—and although we have had lions close to us, in fact all round our camps ever since we started on this trip, this is the first time I have heard one.

Poor Mr. Trout was not too well the next morning; the day before he had scratched the back of his hand

going past one of the innumerable thorn trees. What he described as "the sun having got into it" had rendered it swollen and inflamed and very painful. However, I bandaged it up and gave him an old glove, and by cutting the palm of it we managed to make it large enough to cover the back of his hand, and after a day or two it was well.

I have been asking Mr. Trout how hot he thought it was yesterday down by the swamp. He had no idea beyond being sure he had seldom if ever felt anything like it before. When we were at Major Armstrong's farm I noticed a thermometer hanging against a wall on the shady side of his house; I looked to see what it stood at and found it was at 80° and I was not aware of it being a particularly hot day, nor did Mr. Trout think so either. It makes me think it must have been very very hot yesterday.

We are now following the Narok river up into the Aberdare mountains where it rises. All the morning we have been going steadily up what is politely called a road. I sat on a roll of bedding in the wagon with the hood over my head to keep the sun off and Suzanne on my knee. In places the jolting was awful, and I noticed the same tendency in the wagon that I used to remark in a bicycle, that it seemed to have an attraction for the worst stones and to go over them on purpose. A sort of malign influence seemed to induce it to pick them out. Like fate nothing stops oxen when once started. I could see a rock far ahead of the leading oxen—would the wheels go over it, or would we just miss it? Nearer and nearer it would come, then slowly the wagon would be heaved on to the top

of it, there it would seem to hover for a brief moment and then crash down the other side, the whole performance of course to be repeated by the hind wheels. The bad bits on the "road" were in patches and the going improved as we went higher up the hills.

After rain the flowers must be lovely in this part. Now they are all dried up, only an abutilon with the usual yellow bell-like flowers was in bloom. Yesterday by the edge of the swamp I managed to collect the seed of a charming plant. From its habit I should take it to be a dwarf shrub; when the leaves fall the flowers come, white, about four inches long, something like a small *Lilium Harrisonii* and delightfully scented. I trust I shall be able to grow it in England.

After climbing steadily uphill all the morning we came out of the forest and on to rolling hills covered with grass, burnt up by the sun till it was the colour of hay, which indeed it was. Here we found a spring of water and a bush that gave a little shade, and having been on the march since early morning decided to outspan for the day. We were high up and could see a long way right over the forest we had just left to the swamp far below, looking bright green amongst the brown of the rest of the country. The bush behind me was a sort of shrub jasmine with long thorns and a pretty pink flower delightfully scented. Mr. Trout, who looked at everything with a view to eating or its value for sale, told me the berries that follow the pink flowers make a delicious fruit pudding. I spent the afternoon watching the wild animals. Mr. Trout spread a large red handkerchief over his head to keep off

the flies and went to sleep, the dogs and the boys went to sleep in the shade of the wagon, and the mules and oxen, having eaten and drunk well, lay down in the grass near the spring. It was very quiet and very hot. The spring is in a little hollow just below us; on the farther side of it is a low rise, behind it is another hill and on that one were eight zebras and five Jackson's hartebeests feeding together. They were there when we pitched our camp and did not seem to be the least frightened, in fact they stayed in the same place all the afternoon. The hartebeest are big, as large as red deer at home. Sometimes two of them would lie down, and then they were very hard to see, seeming to melt into the brown of the grass. Never did all the five lie down together, always one stood on the look-out for danger. On our left was another ridge, very stony; on that two steinbok played and fed till dark. I felt almost impertinent watching those wild things when they were so utterly unaware of me—as if I had lifted the roof off the house of a charming family and were peeping in all unbeknown. When Mr. Trout woke up he was a little anxious, for there was a big grass fire burning about a mile off and the wind having changed it seemed to be coming in our direction. These fires are started sometimes by accident by the natives who are very careless, sometimes on purpose to burn off the old grass before the rains come to bring up the new. These grass fires move very quickly, and should it come in our direction we might have difficulty in getting away before it caught the camp. We watched while we ate our tea; the other side of the

ridge on which were the zebra and hartebeest was evidently on fire, yet they were not afraid though the smoke was rising in dense columns just behind them and we could smell it where we were. Only when the fire came over the crest of the hill and the flames were licking up the grass quite near them did they move off to our left in a leisurely manner. They had disappeared when quite suddenly we saw a splendid sight; over the crest of the hill now black from the burnt grass came two hundred zebra full gallop; they came straight towards us as hard as they could go, and charged right through the flames of the burning grass and down the hill towards the spring, when suddenly they saw the camp and divided, half going to our left and the rest to our right, while behind, very lame, was a baby zebra trying to keep up with its flying relations and far, very far behind them. We watched it limping sadly till it disappeared after the rest that had gone to our left. In the meantime the lot that had gone to our right had pulled up about a mile away, or perhaps a little more, all except four who, screaming continually, had stopped much nearer to us. They were evidently very anxious, trotting first in one direction and then in another and looking back continually towards the fire from the direction whence they had come. "Lion," said Mr. Trout, "they are running away from lion and one has been caught, no, he has not, for here he is," he added. And over the crest of the hill came a solitary zebra, galloping hard amongst the black ashes and the smoke. The other four saw him and there was great excitement; they called and the solitary one replied,

the four going off at a fast trot to meet him ; we saw them join up and the five go off together after the big herd.

Mr. Trout was certain they had been disturbed by lions. " They would not gallop so fast for anything else," he said. In the daytime, when they can see, zebra gallop off keeping more or less together, but at night when they can scent the lion but cannot see him they separate, galloping off in all directions. When the danger is past the head stallion of a herd calls repeatedly so as to tell his harem where he is and collect them together again.

-In the meantime the fire had come near us but was passing away to our left and the locusts and grasshoppers were having a bad time. Some of the locusts are fine fellows, three inches long and bright green, showing wine-coloured wings when they fly. On the wing they look like big butterflies, and much more attractive than they do at close quarters. Every sort of bird had collected to eat the insects ; there were little ones, either swifts or swallows, after the small flies and moths. Higher up in the air were hawks little and big and at least a couple of hundred storks. The storks arrived in a big flock all together, and regardless of the smoking ashes marshalled themselves like a regiment at right angles to the fire and began a systematic hunt amongst the embers for the singed and half-cooked locusts. At first the storks kept a perfect line, advancing like soldiers in open formation a regular distance apart, but as the excitement increased discipline went to the winds and the birds ran to and fro catching the delicious morsels. They stayed on the battlefield all night

and in the morning were still there. I could see by their contour lines what a splendid time they had had, indeed it was plain they could hardly find room for another mouthful; still they would languidly walk about hunting the ashes, for there were evidently quite a number of insects left.

Most of the Kikuyu natives do not eat meat, but five of our boys do and complain bitterly when they don't get it. One of the head boys found a small buck drinking at the spring when he went down for water; he came back in great glee for Mr. Trout who killed it, the boys eating up every morsel the same evening. I always insist that when a poor little buck is killed the necessary cleaning should be done a good distance from the camp. Alas! Suzanne with the horrible talent of a puppy for finding horrors, aided by an excellent nose, discovered where the inside of the buck had been hidden, and in the night dragged it into my tent; it was very cold but I got up. The moon was only two days old so I could see nothing, only the line of fire where the grass was burning and the pale light of the stars. The zebra stallions were calling all round us, and evidently there were lions about. Jolly was excited and kept barking at intervals. With the aid of my walking stick I removed the horror well outside the radius of the camp. Alas! Suzanne was delighted, thought it was a new game and bounding off into the darkness brought it back again. The native boys sleep like logs, and all this went on not six feet from where they were lying and not one of them moved. I tried to rouse one to help me, not one could I wake up. It was Mr.

Trout who woke eventually, and the horror was taken away and put on a bush well out of the little dog's reach.

These natives depend entirely on the dogs and the white man to protect them. They argue that the white man is there, he has a gun, he will see they are not killed, why worry ?

A mile from our camp the next morning we came across a new saw-mill put up by two ex-soldiers for cutting the cedar trees on the Aberdare mountains for making lead pencils. Though the mill has only been running a short time they are doing very well and are going to enlarge the place and double the machinery. There was an intelligent young Scotsman in charge. He told us that a couple of hours before we turned up he went to the cattle boma to see after the oxen and came face to face with a big black-maned lion ; he was unarmed and stood still staring at it. The lion stared back till he got tired and bounded away into the wood. So Mr. Trout was right, there were lions about last night ; no wonder the zebra were agitated.

I thought the cedar forest disappointing ; the trees are not the least like the cedars of Lebanon we have at home. They are tall melancholy-looking trees, their branches wreathed in grey moss ; they grow straight up and close together. I believe they belong to the juniper family, the sparse foliage looks like it but the scent and the wood are like the cedar we know, and I grieved to see the great logs rolling into the mill. The young Scot told me they are planting trees to take the place of those they cut, but it will be years before they will be of any use ;

he estimated the trees they were cutting then to be about a hundred and fifty years old, they were about three feet in diameter; he told me there were many much larger in the forest, but they had to wait for larger saws before they could deal with them.

I think we must have climbed up a thousand feet that day all through dense forest. When we came out at the top the view was superb. We saw right over the hot plains we had been in such a short time ago. We could see the line of the Narok river with its swamps and trees, and far away the line of the Guaso Nyiro. Mr. Trout says we are about nine thousand feet above the sea: I can quite believe it. Last night I put a big fur motor coat on my bed and was none too warm. I find it a good plan always to take some warm clothes to hot climates and some thin ones to cold. How glad I have been for thin things in a Canadian hotel in winter, with the heating arrangements full on and all the windows hermetically closed up. Crossing Siberia the thermometer in the middle of winter was at 70 inside our railway carriage and at goodness knows what below zero outside. Here on the equator I am thankful for a fur coat and so glad that, notwithstanding all my friends could say, I insisted on bringing one.

In the afternoon we reached Thomson's Falls. All this time we had been making our way up the Narok river towards Lake Olbolossah where it rises, and which I much wanted to see. There is no sort of indication of the falls till you come right upon the edge of them. After leaving the lake the river

runs sleepily between beds of papyrus and reeds, with bare downs on either side, and without any warning suddenly hurls itself over a precipice said to be two hundred feet high. The face of the rock is so straight that the water falls in one solid mass from the top to the bottom, where it flows on in a narrow gorge with the same precipitous sides. At the bottom there was a mass of tropical plants and numbers of little birds flying about on the edges of the water. For a long time I stood gazing at it; I have seen many but I do not remember a waterfall more beautiful, and what added so much to the charm, quite unspoilt—no old bottles and rubbish and picture post cards. Long may it remain in its untouched beauty.

XI

WE pitched our camp in the shelter of some trees not far from the river at the top of the falls. We had just finished when one of our boys came to say that there were the remains of a zebra killed by a lion lying in the rushes close to us, and as the kill appeared quite fresh it had probably been done the night before we arrived. It is extraordinary how many times we have had to camp close to a fresh lion kill. Any sportsman going out after lion would consider it wonderful luck; Mr. Trout said if I had wanted and had shot moderately well I ought to have got at least five or six by sitting up over these dead zebras. As it was I always felt a little uncomfortable, and would much rather the lions had killed and eaten their dinners a bit farther away from my tent.

At the top of the falls was a small outpost of five Askari or native soldiers, who came at once to see Mr. Trout with a long story of how a band of Masai warriors had taken possession of the woods and were plundering people of their cows and sheep; the Askari had got the wind well up about it, and of course our boys listened open-mouthed and got the wind up also and made up their minds that the

whole lot of us would be robbed and murdered. Mr. Trout tells me he is going to take precautions, but is not inclined to believe much in the story. I don't see what precautions we can take further than what we already do for the lions. Mr. Trout has no opinion of the Kikuyu tribe, either individually or as a whole. He considers one Masai equal to a hundred Kikuyus, and one Englishman equal to a hundred Masai. The Kikuyus are a craven lot, for generations before the white race took over this country the Masai had persecuted them and raided their country, taking off their women and cattle and burning their huts whenever they felt inclined, which the Kikuyu have not forgotten, and the name of Masai even now fills them with terror.

This country we were now in once belonged to the Masai tribe, who were moved not many years ago—bag and baggage—to the lands south of the railway. We often came across their old camping grounds. The Masai do not cultivate or grow crops; they depend entirely upon their herds of cattle, living on milk and blood and meat, and are the richest race of all, their herds of cattle being very large and very valuable.

In the course of the evening five natives turned up full of stories about the evil deeds of the Masai; they begged to be allowed to sleep near our fires with our boys, which of course was granted. There was no necessity to remind our boys to keep up good fires, without the telling they collected a big heap of wood which they took in turns to pile on the fire during the night. The cook made himself a sort of lair behind a big tree, and armed with his

spear proposed to sleep there ; I fancy he thought the Masai would not find him. " But a leopard will," said Mr. Trout grimly, " but I do not mind ; that cook he is ignorant and he is lazy, it is a good thing if a leopard take him." The head driver slept under the pole of the wagon regardless of the feet of his charges. He said he felt safer there. Mr. Trout said they could sleep where they liked, only in case of a disturbance they were to stay quiet, not move or they would probably be shot.

Really we have a thrill every night ! However, after all nothing happened. I cannot say we had a quiet night for the noise was awful, but not from the Masai. Our camp was in a delightful spot on the edge of the forest, behind us were numbers of very old cedar trees, most of them nearly dead and covered with grey moss. In these hollow trunks live small animals with brown fur who only come out at night, according to Mr. Trout, who also told me the male and female make different noises, as I could hear for myself only too well. The male began the concert with a row like a policeman's rattle, the females responded from all sides with a shrill clatter, and the duet continued till dawn, sometimes over our heads and farther away as well. I advise bad sleepers to avoid this spot. I found out afterwards this animal is the Tree Hyrax, *Procavia Crawshayi*, and is common in forests in this country but very seldom seen, as it is nocturnal and very shy.

In the morning our five guests departed, and another one arrived, this time a Lumbwa boy, one of the best tribes for workers they have out here ;

he was a dandy, his head plastered with red earth and oil and his wool divided at the back of his head and half drawn forward towards his nose in a little plait, and the rest in a short pigtail down his back, the whole kept in place by a row of beads round his head. Round his ankles he had a fringe of monkey fur, and he carried a heavy and very sharp spear and a bow and three arrows. Altogether he was a most effective savage and had a nice intelligent expression.

The Baboon is a most extraordinary mixture of stupidity and shrewdness. Mr. Trout heard him say that before he did not think much of himself, but now he thought a great deal. When the other boys asked why, he said, "Because now you make me work so hard. I must therefore be very clever and very useful."

The next day was Sunday and a day of rest. It was also pouring wet, the first wet day we have had, but I could see from the moss on the trees that it must be very damp here. Wet weather on *safari* is most uncomfortable. To begin with everything feels damp,—your clothes when you put them on in the morning and so on. Then the hood of the wagon has been so torn by thorn trees that it is no longer any protection from wet; a big sheet was stretched over most of the things on it, but those in immediate use were piled into my tent, including our chairs, the table for our meals, spare food and so on. Then the amiable Suzanne, after amusing herself hunting in the wet grass, springs on to my bed where she proposes to rub herself dry on my blankets and is disgusted when

I cover them up with a waterproof and suggest she should sit on that instead.

It rained all day and was very cold, so cold that towards evening I got out my one and only bottle of whisky and I invited Mr. Trout to have some with me, mixed with hot water and lots of sugar, and hoped with all our hearts that the next day would be fine. As generally happens in cold and wet weather one of the totos announced he was ill with a pain in his leg. Mr. Trout and I went to prescribe, there did not seem to be much the matter, but there certainly was a lump probably caused by a poke from an ox, or a fall. The cook, however, was a man of action, he said he knew exactly what to do; to my horror he seized a stick from the fire and held the red-hot end to the big toe of the offending leg. The patient did not seem to mind, and the cook, highly pleased with himself, announced the boy was cured. However, Mr. Trout insisted on a big dose of Epsom salts and "saw it down." Half an hour later I gave the boy a tin of hot tea with sugar in it, which caused the Baboon to remark that it was worth while having a pain in one's leg to be allowed to do nothing and drink sweetened tea.

A leopard coughed round us most of the night, but did no harm; at any rate he did not kill the cook, but I am not sure that the cook spent a second night behind the tree; I think he found it too cold and a bed near the fire more to his taste.

It was pitch dark when I got up in the morning. My lamp, which I still have burning all night, was nearly out; by its feeble light I groped for my

garments amongst the crowd of things stored away in my tent to keep them dry. Outside I could hear Mr. Trout trying to rouse the boys, yelling at them to get them to wake up; they crawled out only half alive like flies on a cold morning, huddled over the fires, rubbed their numbed limbs and did nothing at all. The oxen go off at once to feed, also the mules, and are not fetched up till the wagon is loaded and we are absolutely ready to start. We have a cup of hot coffee each at about 5.30 followed by breakfast, more hot coffee, bread and butter and boiled eggs at six, and as soon as possible after that we move off. Thank goodness, it was a lovely morning. When once the sun was up the soaking grass steamed like smoke from a fire. We trekked up the river, now very sluggish, covered in places with reeds and papyrus and spreading out into pools where evidently every sort of animal goes to drink. On both sides of the river stretched a wide plain covered with high grass, and behind that again were slopes covered with brushwood and cedar trees, not particularly large but I should say very old, waving their branches from which hung long strands of grey moss, like the witches in *Macbeth* waving their arms and tattered rags, looking just as weird. Behind these hills rise still higher heights of the Aberdare range, the highest point, Kinangop, 12,772 feet, being most days covered with cloud. We saw quantities of game feeding near the river, and finally camped at the edge of a little lake, stopping there for the good reason that we could not see how to get any farther with the wagon.

In the afternoon Mr. Trout and I rode out to prospect, to see how the wagon was to get along the following morning. On our left was the hillside which had grown steeper and higher during the last five miles and was one dense mass of shrubs, high grass and trees. Growing over the shrubs was a climbing jasmine in full bloom, long sprays of white flowers each as big as a shilling and delightfully sweet.

Coming down this hill slope was a little stream evidently from a spring higher up, it spread out into a small swamp at the bottom and supplied the little lake farther on. Away on our right was the end of Lake Olboloset (or Olbolossah as it is often spelt), its flat edges covered with thick reeds, extending as far as we could see in the distance. There was no perceptible outlet from the little lake towards the big one, but a nasty-looking bog which I looked on with distrust but Mr. Trout said he was sure was all right, and after settling the camp, seeing the oxen watered and finishing our own lunch, Mr. Trout and I got on our mules and set out to cross over it. We rode down to the edge and the more I looked at it the more I disliked it, having been bogged many times before in different parts of the world. However, having so little experience of Africa I did not like to say anything more and plunged in after Mr. Trout, and plunging it was! The mules were soon up to their girths in the black mud. Luckily there were clumps of reeds in places, on to which we dragged the poor things to let them get their wind. It took us nearly an hour to get through that horrible bog. My mule burst its

girths in its struggles. I was soaked with mud and water and so was Mr. Trout, while except for its head and the top of its back Camera had changed from a white mule into a black one. It was quite obvious there was no possible chance of getting the wagon through that way, and we were lucky I thought to have got through ourselves. Once safely on the other side we rode for about an hour till we got to Lake Olboloset itself. The lake is fifteen miles in length and is very shallow ; there is no doubt it is gradually drying up. The reeds that ought to mark the sides were fifty yards from the water with a stretch of black mud in between. Everywhere there were signs of hippo but we saw none. On the water were quantities of duck. We saw also the larger and the lesser egret and numbers of a charming little plover. The duck were too far away for Mr. Trout to get a shot at them, and as we did not know how long it was going to take us to get back to camp we had to tear ourselves away and go home empty-handed.

To cross the bog again was impossible, so we made for the hill. After hunting about Mr. Trout found a tiny path made by animals coming down to drink. Up this we scrambled, under branches, over blown-down trees ; Mr. Trout really was wonderful, and how he found the way I cannot imagine, and of course it takes a very bad place indeed to stop a mule ; ours, poor things, were just as anxious to get back to camp as we were and followed close on our heels. We finished up by going down a sort of tunnel under the bushes, made by buffalo, Mr. Trout said, and with my hair nearly

torn off my head by the thorns arrived safely back in camp.

That night we were eaten up by mosquitoes and midges. Mr. Trout under his wagon was at their mercy, I with my curtains could keep mosquitoes out, but nothing would keep out the midges. The mules and oxen were worried dreadfully and stamped, switched their tails, shook their heads and kept up a clatter till daybreak ; huddled up so close together as we were at night, my tent close to the oxen, there was no getting away from the noise, and I felt exceedingly reluctant to get up the next morning when Mr. Trout roused the camp. However, I was determined I would not stay another night to be eaten alive at that camp, and hurried out to have a consultation with Mr. Trout about cutting a way for the wagon through the forest on the side of the hill.

After a quick breakfast, we all, including every boy who could be spared from the camp, went out to help to cut a road. At first I thought it impossible that any amount of cutting of trees and moving of rocks would make a road on which a wagon could get along, but Mr. Trout tackled the problem in a masterly manner, telling the boys what to do. All of us helped to roll the largest rocks out of the way and send them thundering down the hill, some of the boys cut the brushwood and small trees, and others dragged it out of the way or used it to fill up gaping holes ; at the end of two hundred yards we came across a large mud hole ; it had to be filled in with brushwood to prevent the wagon wheels sinking in. After nearly three hours' hard work Mr. Trout

announced it would do. Personally I thought the wagon would tip over sideways because of the steep angle of the hill. However, Mr. Trout was willing to risk it, and we went back to lunch and to pack the wagon ready to attack the new road in the afternoon.

It was most exciting and amusing. We all of us had different jobs. I was to come last to pick up anything that fell from the wagon and to lead my mule. The Baboon led Camera, the cook was deputed to look after the big brake at the back of the wagon, it only meant turning a handle when Mr. Trout told him to, but he lost his head at one of the most exciting moments and, turning the handle the wrong way, nearly succeeded in upsetting the wagon.

Mr. Trout drove the oxen himself, and a nasty job it was to walk alongside and keep out of the way of their horns and hoofs. I think the team must have thought their master had gone mad when their heads were turned towards a steep bank covered with stones and they were urged to scramble up it.

Once there was a sudden halt and, poised on a big rock, I saw one of the oxen had almost disappeared in a hole, only his head was to be seen and there was a lot of pulling and hauling before he scrambled out. I really thought his tail would come off in the process. Why that wagon was not upset I do not know. We got safely through, but the head driver announced, when it was over, that nothing, no, nothing, would induce him to go back that way whatever happened.

We had to camp in a horrid place that night ; it

was getting late, and counting on getting tolerable water in Lake Olboloset we camped near it, Mr. Trout going off with two boys to bring back water for ourselves and to find a place to water the animals. He took his gun with him hoping to get a good "sit shot" at duck. He came back later on to say he could not get near the duck, and broke it gently to me that "he was afraid the water was not very good, and he thought cocoa would probably be better than tea."

There was a high wind blowing and it was bitterly cold. I had been looking forward to a hot drink of anything, but the water he brought was impossible, disgusting, worse than any frog pond water I have ever seen. It was thick and a dirty green, and full of salt. Up to then I had been sorry for the hippo in the Zoo, his bath looked so horrible, but it is only exactly the same as one of his favourite lakes in his native land, and minus the salt at that!

Mr. Trout agreed with me that the water was undrinkable, so, tired as he was, he went off again taking the cook with him as being the freshest of the boys. Luckily after going a couple of miles they met a native who showed them a little spring and they managed to bring back enough clean water to last us till the next morning. Mr. Trout was so cold when he got back that he could not move his hands, he was stiff from the bitter wind. I spent the time sitting in my tent wrapped in a fur coat, varied by going out to see my tent pegs driven in farther, for the wind threatened to blow the tent down on the top of me.

I boiled some of the clean water and inviting Mr. Trout into my tent we had our second drink of hot whisky and water and lots of sugar, and felt better though still very cold. We had dinner inside my tent as it was some protection from the wind; we had the same old bacon and eggs, tinned kippers and chutney, the latter a suggestion of Mr. Trout's who thought it would be warming, the whole washed down with hot tea, the remains of which I used to brush my teeth, to save our water supply. How cold it was undressing in that wind! I was in bed before eight and, judging by the snores, the rest of my party were not only in bed but asleep as well. The wind was still blowing a gale, and I decided, as I piled everything warm I could find on my bed, that a lion would have to be very near and the danger very great to get me out of my tent that night.

The following morning the wind had dropped, but with the sun came the midges, thousands of them. To get away from them we hurried over breakfast and hustled away the moment the wagon was ready. It was a glorious morning and we were nearing the top of the lake where the native the night before had told Mr. Trout all the hippos were congregated, the water in the lake being deeper at the upper end. We found a delightful camp near a little stream, it was up the slope of the hill and we could see for miles. On both sides of the lake there was plenty of game, mostly oryx, eland, zebra and ostriches. I found a solitary ostrich's egg in the grass and Mr. Trout pronounced it to be fresh. There turned out to be enough in that one egg to

make two large omelettes for Mr. Trout and me, besides half put aside to be mixed with boiled potatoes for the dogs. As Mr. Trout said, it was perfectly fresh and probably laid by a young hen ostrich, who often lay their first eggs anywhere on the veldt before they realise the advantages of a nest.

Mr. Trout is longing to kill a hippo ; almost every evening he tells me of the excellence of a hippo steak ; according to him no other meat can compare with it. Once a year, he says, he takes his family out for a holiday, the whole lot of them ; his wife who weighs sixteen stone and his ten children. He puts them into a wagon and a couple of carts, and off they go to some place where hippo are to be found, for, excellent man ! he has a great idea of combining pleasure with a little profit. The last time he took his family out they went to a big swamp. Mr. Trout had carefully made a note of the place in advance. Leaving his family behind he crept down alone to a pool by the edge of the swamp and there, lying in the water with their eyes just showing above, were two hippos. Mr. Trout took deadly aim and killed one (he says) with his first shot. The hippo disappeared, but that is always the case—an hour later it was floating dead as mutton on the top of the water. Mr. Trout swam out to it and fastening a chain to one of its legs he hitched on his team of oxen and dragged it out on to the grass. In the meantime Mrs. Trout, whose value to a working man must be above rubies, had got ready two empty casks and had armed herself and the children and native boys with

knives of every size and description. Directly it was pulled out they fell upon the body of the hippo. They filled the two casks with the fat. I forget how many pounds of soap Mrs. Trout made out of it, but enough to last a whole year, besides keeping a quantity for cooking. Mr. Trout was much moved when he told me about it. As a rule he is not of a poetical turn of mind; a sunset leaves him cold, except perhaps as an indication of what the weather is likely to be the following day; he looks on birds with a view to the pot, and flowers do not move him in the least, but when it came to describing the fat on that hippo, he became eloquent almost to the point of poetry. He described how they cut it off in slabs. "It was beautiful, beautiful," he said; "then we eat him all, every bit of him—me, my wife, ze children, ze boys and ze dogs, we finish him—nozzing was waste, only a few bones remain. Zat hippo steak, I remember so well, it was so good, ze best you can 'ave—ah! how I vish I 'ave one now!"

Mr. Trout has three topics of conversation—his wife, food and lions. He is very inquisitive and asks me innumerable questions, generally regarding people's incomes; occasionally we touch on bigger subjects, and I am asked questions about other countries, difficult at any time to explain and doubly so to a person who believes China and Japan to be portions of the same country and the inhabitants of both to be cannibals.

Mr. Trout is not a great reader, still he has brought a library of sorts with him. It consists of two copies of a newspaper, a sort of evangelical

Tit-Bits, giving interesting information in Dutch as to how many different languages the Bible has been translated into, how many missionaries had been cooked and eaten, and so on. The remainder of the library is a copy of Spurgeon's sermons in Dutch. So far as I have been able to see, Mr. Trout, who reads it on Sundays, has not got beyond the first page. Invariably after a few lines his eyes close, there is a loud snore, the book falls to the ground, and Mr. Trout, good man, is asleep.

XII

THE cook is the most dressy member of our party. He owns five garments and rings the changes on them in a manner that commands my admiration, aware as I am of the deficiencies in my own wardrobe. He wears a khaki shirt, a pair of shorts, a pair of putties of which he is very proud, and a pair of boots which he carries with him and never puts on at all. They, however, cause him great anxiety, and when it looks like rain he gathers dry grass and makes a little thatched roof over them to keep the precious things dry. His fifth garment is a cut between a towel and a handkerchief, a neat thing in cotton with a black and white check and a bright red border. In the early morning, when it is exceedingly cold, the cook wears it round his neck; later in the day, when the sun is up and it is hot, it is rolled into a turban and wound round his head; while at dinner-time, when he puts forth what gastronomical talent he has—and it is not great—he wears the invaluable garment round his waist to keep his shorts and putties clean. I have a large tin box and a suit-case devoted to my clothes, and compared to my cook am exceedingly shabby, in fact I am shabby even when not compared to

anybody. Not one of my many garments will act in more than one capacity, and many are not very good even at that.

Our camp is in a delightful spot, a glorious view in front; behind, the hillside covered with trees, one big one close to us being covered with mistletoe, a variety with red berries hanging in big bunches five feet long. We have just been a long ride round the head of the lake and found hidden in a cleft in the hill a little shanty made of reeds, near it a couple of boys' huts, while beyond were some cattle grazing. It appears this is a soldier's settlement farm, just taken up by an ex-soldier; and explains why we have seen no hippo, nor recent tracks of them. They are very shy and have excellent noses, and the scent of the cattle and boys—for the white man is not here himself—has sent them over to the other side of the lake. The boys with the cattle told us that, though they can hear them roar at night, they never see them.

We rode down to the edge of the lake, at least we rode as far as we could with any comfort. Evidently the hippo used to come out here in large numbers to graze, for the ground was churned up by their feet. Since then the lake has dried up and the mud also, leaving the ground in a horrible state for walking. Finally we left the mules with a boy and went along on foot, but though the duck were literally in thousands they were in the middle of the water well away from the shore. After plunging about amongst reeds and evil-smelling mud I got tired and went back, leaving Mr. Trout, who was still hopeful of getting a shot, to go on

alone. But he soon gave it up and we started off to ride home.

There were three little streams coming down the hillside by the soldier's farm, each almost hidden by native shrubs and flowers in bloom, so refreshing and lovely after the parched-up state of the rest of the country. There were several things I had not seen before; a shrub, almost a tree, with orange flowers which I felt sure must be a buddleia. There was also a very handsome shrub with trusses of mauve flowers a foot or more across, looking from a distance like large chrysanthemums. Growing everywhere too, was a thistle which I did not know, three feet high, its flowers the size, the shape and the colour of lawn-tennis balls, with remarkably prickly leaves. I have not seen any cedar trees lately, but instead have noticed some fine old trees of what Mr. Trout calls yellow wood. One we measured roughly at six feet from the ground was twenty-one feet in circumference. It was wreathed in grey moss and, though I looked for orchids on it, I saw none. It was very unfortunate for me that the rains have failed this year, I would so much have liked to see in this country the mass of flowers there ought to be.

The cattle boys told us they have seen no lions here for some time, for which I am most thankful, for our last three camps have been pitched amongst high grass in which it would have been impossible to see twenty lions. In many parts the grass was well over five feet high, and all round us, as I write now, it is three to four feet.

For the first time to-day I saw Colobus monkeys,

three of them in a dead tree ; their long white hair makes them so unlike any other variety. They have never been able to bring one of these monkeys to England because they suffer so dreadfully from sea-sickness and always die, poor things, from exhaustion before they get to land.

When we got back to camp we found we had visitors, two inky-black gentlemen armed with spears, who it appears are the postmen between Gilgil and Rumuruti, their badge of office being a jacket, considerably the worse for the weather and adorned with what once were a red collar and cuffs. It is to be hoped the people in Rumuruti are in no hurry for their letters, for the postmen arrived at three and do not show the slightest intention of moving on before to-morrow morning, and really I do not blame them ; company and a big camp fire must be nice in a country like this infested with dangerous animals. For the last hour they have been sitting on their heels, quite silent, staring at me with the unwinking relentless stare characteristic alike of savages and young babies.

When water is available I always have a hot bath the last thing before getting into bed ; last night after I had finished I called to the boys to pull the bath out of my tent and empty it, which they did, but too lazy to drag it even two yards they upset it at the door of my tent. I heard a yell, the water had poured down straight on to the top of Mr. Trout asleep under his wagon. There were sounds—let us say expressive of annoyance—such that, beyond shouting my regrets, I left Mr. Trout to deal with the boys and pretended not to hear.

What a glorious night it was! The wind always falls towards evening and there are soft shadows cast by the young moon. In the middle of the night Suzanne heard something and rushed out of my tent. I went after her, afraid of leopards. The boys and the postmen were lying like logs round the fires and never moved, there was just a little breeze enough to make the big bunches of mistletoe sway on the old tree, and all round me there was the sound and the feeling of something continually passing on the night air. I wondered if it was so, and if it were the shades of people long since gone, who disliked great cities and loved these great empty spaces. If they are allowed to come back and see them as they knew them, as God made them, unspoilt, clean and utterly beautiful, I felt somehow so sure it would be here and to places like this that those people would ask to go back to, and that they would pass up a valley like this on to the top of the great mountain beyond, where there is nothing between them and the stars.

The problem now is how to get out of this valley without going back the same way we came. Mr. Trout and I went out early to prospect, and settled that we first must climb up the hill behind this camp. To get up ourselves would be easy, the difficulty is to get the wagon up. We decided probably the best way would be to go up one of the elephant paths. In the distance they look like roads. They date from the time when vast herds of elephant used to come down these hillsides in the rainy season to drink at the lake. A couple of hundred elephant coming down a hillside when the

ground was soft would soon cut a path, and we had noticed many of these roads as we trekked up the side of the lake. We took two boys with us and were half-way up the hillside by eight o'clock. It proved much steeper than it appeared to be from below. The track was one mass of stones over which we scrambled, leading our mules. It got worse as we got higher up. I slipped badly as I had riding boots on with, of course, no nails in the soles. It was steeper than going upstairs, and once slipping backwards I landed on the head of poor Nicodemus below me, but she did not seem to mind and climbed after me like a cat.

Mr. Trout said it was about a thousand feet to the top. There we met the full force of the wind, for it was a bare plain covered with grass but without a tree. We saw no signs of water, and though there was any amount of feed, no game but a few zebra and one kongoni. We had a fine view of Kinangop, the highest point of the Aberdare mountains, too low for snow and too high for forests. The upper part looked sterile and bare, and I felt no inclination to climb up it. We rode a long way over this high plateau and then looked for a way down to the valley again, for to return the way we came was impossible even for mules. After some hunting Mr. Trout announced he had found an old elephant path and a good way to get down. Before I attempted it I had a stout stick cut for me, and then we started off. The first bit of the way was not so bad, through grass up to our shoulders and very slippery, and several times Mr. Trout and I measured our lengths on the ground.

A little farther on the angle of the slope got much steeper, the grass stopped and instead we seemed to be in the middle of a dense tangle of brushwood and trees. "I will go in front, you follow me," said Mr. Trout, going ahead with Camera. I followed with Nicodemus, pushing and fighting our way through the thorns. So thick was it that much as I wanted to hand my mule over to a boy it was impossible for one of them to push his way up to me from the rear. "I am sorry," came a voice from somewhere in front of me, "but you must crawl." At the same time the hindquarters of Camera, all I could see of her, disappeared as if she had fallen down a chimney: she seemed to me to be standing on her head at the bottom.

There was no question of going back; I was obliged to follow. Down a precipitous slope of red mud I went, the thorn bushes so low over my head that I could not sit up, but had to slide down on my back, leaving the mule to follow me as best it could, and devoutly praying it would not land on the top of me. Somehow or other we got to the bottom, going under the bushes all the time. I was plastered with mud, torn to ribbons, and rather hoped and expected some sort of compliment on having arrived safely, but all Mr. Trout did was to look at me and remark, "Your hat, he is quite broke this time." Alas! only too true, my sun helmet was torn and broken to pieces, and no wonder.

When we reached camp we found another visitor there—the local honey hunter. There are numbers of wild bees' nests on the hillside up and down

which we scrambled to-day. This person finds them, generally with the help of the honey bird, who leads him to the nest and then waits for his share of the honey. The honey when mixed with water and fermented makes a beer much loved by the natives. I suppose it must be very like the mead that English people used to drink in the good old days.

Our visitor was not an attractive object ; dressed in a few rags, with a bit of the skin of some animal on his head, shiny and sticky with honey, his very ugly face was made even more so by one eye being bunged up by bee stings. He had the honey in a leather bag, an unappetising mass of wax, young bees and old and fresh honey all mixed together. I was anxious to taste the honey and bought some of the mixture for 2s., the price the man asked for it. Upon which there was a howl from our boys who thought I had been charged too much. Whereupon the honey hunter gave me another big spoonful to make up and took his departure.

I knew how to extract the good honey, which is quite simple ; heating the mass over the fire makes the wax and dead bees float on the top, and I was able to run off a couple of pots of really excellent clear honey in a very short time. I found the flavour delicious, it was not so sweet as either clover or heather honey, but had a peculiar aromatic taste of its own. The boys fell upon the saucepan and asked if they might have the skimmings I did not want. They mixed it with water and left it till morning, when the two head boys finished off a large saucepan full of the so-called beer before we left the camp.

Mr. Trout and I are convinced that if two more dry years come in succession Lake Obolaset will cease to exist except in name; even now the mud flats caused by the drying up of the water look like the mouth of the Thames at low tide and are a nursery for mosquitoes, midges and so on. Luckily owing to the bitter cold at night we are not troubled by them at this camp. This morning there was hoar frost on the wagon, and our butter supply is always frozen hard.

We have given up the idea of getting the wagon up the hill behind here as hopeless and are trekking back the way we came as far as the little lake; the hill is lower there and Mr. Trout thinks we may be able to get the wagon up it. It is tiresome going back over our old tracks, but it can't be helped.

This morning there was a tragedy I don't like to think of. Crossing a dried-up watercourse I saw a black and white thing leaping about in some reeds. "A Colobus monkey," called out Mr. Trout, who was some way in front of me, and calling to Jolly galloped after it. I followed. When I got near I saw Jolly jumping round the monkey who was trying to defend itself. It looked at me with imploring eyes begging me to help it. Before I could do anything Jolly sprang on it and half killed it, Mr. Trout finishing it off. I was so sorry and can't get rid of the thought of those pathetic eyes. "They always look like that," said Mr. Trout, who has no regrets, except that little Suzanne was not there to enjoy the fun! The monkey was an old one, its teeth were yellow with age, it had a lovely coat with long white hair on its back. Mr. Trout

thinks it was looking for water, for otherwise these monkeys hardly ever leave the forests; they are very quick amongst trees but nearly helpless on grass.

We then saw seven cock ostriches, together they looked handsome, but we would rather they had been hens and we had found a nest of eggs. We still remember with joy the two omelettes the other egg made for us.

When we got to the little lake Mr. Trout could not resist going once more after duck. I went also; we pushed our way through the reeds to the edge of the water. The duck were still there, heaps of them, bobbing about in the middle of the lake well out of range of a gun. Near us were about thirty of the lesser egrets, beautiful snow white birds; they were feeding close together on a bank of mud. "Are zey good to eat?" whispered Mr. Trout, looking at them with a bloodthirsty eye and clutching the old single-bore; horrified at the thought, I whispered back they were not. Quite uneatable, made you ill, I said anything I could think of. "Zat is a pity," said Mr. Trout regretfully. "Zey make a very nice sit shot."

After a good bit of prospecting Mr. Trout has found a possible way for the wagon to get up the hill. At any rate he has decided to risk it, for as he says, with fourteen oxen and nothing to speak of in the way of a load, he can get up places that otherwise would be hopeless. He has had a good bit of brushwood cut down and many stones moved by the boys. The oxen have been watered in a muddy hole by the lake and are now feeding, as are the mules. The boys are having a rest and the dogs are

asleep and Mr. Trout and I, sitting in the coolest place we can find, which is under the wagon, are waiting for the sun to go down a little before making a frontal attack in force on the hill, for we hope to camp on the top of it to-night, and disappoint the midges and mosquitoes. Even now at 1 P.M. odd ones are flying about, the vanguard of the army that would have devoured us to-night.

While waiting Mr. Trout told me about a family he knows well called Wellmans, they came to Kenya from South Africa and I expect are Dutch. He told me the two boys of the family aged nine and sixteen went out alone on *safari* to shoot lion. The first day they killed a zebra and making a boma of thorns near the carcass they waited for the lions to come. During the night they killed three. The next day they continued their *safari* and came across a lioness with some small cubs; she made off when she saw the wagon but the boys followed her and chased her into a clump of bushes. The eldest boy went in after her, the nine-year-old remaining outside. Walking round the clump of thorns he saw a tail sticking out and told his brother. "Get hold of it," was the reply from inside the bushes. "It must be one of the young ones." The nine-year-old child did as his brother told him and caught hold of the tail, but lo! it belonged to a half-grown lion which they had no idea was there. "Let go," cried the lad inside the bush, but that was just what the other, whirling about at the end of the astounded lion, could not do, and he stuck to the tail for dear life. Luckily the older boy wriggled out of the bush just in time to put a bullet through the lion's

head, saving his brother's life. Mr. Trout told me he saw the skin of the lion when the boys returned, it was considerably larger than a leopard.

The father of these boys is also a great lion-hunter and has killed over a hundred and thirty since he came to this country. He had what Mr. Trout described as "a bad time" with one. It seems he was sitting up alone over a dead zebra waiting for lion. He had made a boma round a hole in the ground, a stout fence of thorns and branches with just one opening on the side nearest to the kill to enable him to shoot. The hole was not large but rather deep, and the opening through which he was going to shoot near the level of the ground. A big lion came and Mr. Wellmans shot it, breaking its back; in its struggles it rolled towards Mr. Wellmans on to the top of the thorn hedge just where the opening was, crushing down the branches on to the top of Mr. Wellmans. He crouched down in the hole which was just large enough to hold him, the branches bending over making a sort of roof over him with the wounded lion lying on the top. In the meanwhile the lion was roaring and what Mr. Trout described as "kicking up a great noise," which brought another lion to the spot who immediately attacked the first one and killed it; the two of them fighting on the top of Mr. Wellmans. "And what could the poor man do with two lions on the top of him?" said Mr. Trout. The second lion quickly discovered the man underneath and tried to claw him out, but the weight of the other lion held down the branches and he couldn't. Mr. Wellmans in describing the adventure to Mr. Trout said almost

the worst part of all was the fearful smell as the lion puffed and blew in his face as he lay helpless underneath. Luckily the branches were too many and too tough, and do what he would the lion could not get at Mr. Wellmans. After some time the lion moved a little, and the man making a desperate effort managed to pull round his rifle and fired it off as he lay on his back, the bullet going through the second lion's jaw and up into his brain. Though both the lions were now dead Mr. Wellmans could not move, and lay there till morning when his sixteen-year-old son, who had been left with the wagon, thought something must have gone wrong and came to look for his father. He had to harness a pair of oxen to the dead lions and pull them off that way before he could get Mr. Wellmans free. The father and son had gone out quite alone, taking no boys with them—always a risky thing to do.

As I said before, Mr. Trout was a transport driver during the war and used regularly to trek out to Archer's Post near the Somaliland frontier with supplies for the troops doing outpost duty there. He and another white man with some black boys used to take up six or eight wagons, each wagon having fourteen or sixteen oxen. It is a bad part for lions, so the wagons were drawn up side by side at night, the oxen tied to the pulling chains in front, with a lamp fixed on three sticks at the head of each team. Another lamp was fixed on the top of the hood of each wagon and the camp fires were behind. One night Mr. Trout and Mr. Vandervesty, the other white man, had their two wagons side by side and were asleep, each under his own wagon, when a dog

rushed in and in a panic tried to take refuge near Mr. Trout, who woke up and said to Mr. Vandervesty, "I think there must have been a lion after that dog; you are on the outside, lift up the tarpaulin and look if you can see anything." Mr. Vandervesty had fixed up a tarpaulin to keep off the wind and rain, and had hung it from the side of the wagon. He lifted it up and as he did so came face to face with a big black-maned lion. Needless to say he dropped the tarpaulin pretty quick, but when he had got his rifle and lifted it again the lion was gone.

Another night, when doing transport work, Mr. Trout heard a commotion amongst the oxen and sent a young white man, who was working with him, to see what was the matter. The young man crept forward quietly, rifle in hand, and there, sitting on his hind legs like a poodle, was a big lion playing with the mosquitoes that were flying round the lamp at the head of the team. The lion was sitting right under the lamp, trying first with one paw and then with another to catch the flies. I don't remember what happened to that lion, but I hope the young man did not kill him. It sounds so nice that one would have liked to keep him as a household pet to scare off tramps and frighten away burglars.

XIII

AT half-past two we girded our loins and tackled the hill and found it not so bad as I expected. Once or twice I thought the wagon must turn over, but it did not. The great thing with oxen is that they never get excited; often they had to be stopped in the most awkward places, but they did not seem to mind. Several times I saw an ox with his hind legs on the top of a bank or a log and his front ones so low that he seemed to be standing on his head, but he did not make any fuss, just waited till the word was given to move on. Near the top of the hill the grass was so high that only the horns of the oxen showed above it. The grass hid the trunks of blown-down trees which was very awkward, but the wagon crushed over them somehow. We had to go very slowly, letting the oxen stop continually to get their wind. At last we arrived at the top and landed in a long glade with splendid feed for the beasts and old cedar trees in clumps,—what Estate Agents call “park-like scenery,” but alas! terribly dry, no water anywhere. Far below us was the little lake we had just left looking very blue and clean, farther on the bog, and still farther away the big lake with its borders of mud and rushes, the long stretches of

brown-paper-coloured grass on the far side and in the blue distance forests and mountains.

Mr. Trout left me in the camp while he went off to find our road for the following day. We are anxious about water. Oxen and mules can stand a day without it, in fact as a rule they only drink once in twenty-four hours, but cannot last longer without distress. He stayed away a long time and I had horrid qualms lest he might have missed the way back to camp, and was thinking out a programme of firing guns, lighting smoky bonfires, etc., when he turned up, very pleased, and reported that two miles away he had come upon a wagon track, probably about nine months old he thought, and by a series of deductions felt sure that by following it up we should strike a road, and later on a farm, which he knew to be somewhere on the mountain slope south of where we were. He said it would be difficult going in the morning, the trees were so thick, but thought we could get through somehow.

The supply of muddy water we had with us was doled out in the evening and morning, and I was careful to save my feelings by not looking at the process of washing up. As a privileged person I had an extra cupful to wash in, just enough for my face and the tips of my fingers, and really came to the conclusion there is a lot of affectation talked about washing. After the first half hour, which is unpleasant, you feel much the same whether you have had a bath or not, and I remembered what an old monk said to us once in Italy that English people must be very dirty to require so much washing,—which after all is one way of looking at

it. Mr. Trout has a bath once a week, so the absence of water does not affect him much. Also, since we got to these high regions and have encountered this high cold wind that is ever with us, he has given up shaving; he told me he found it disagreeable, and now with a stubby white beard he is not an attractive object to look at.

Really I am rather astonished we have had no sickness amongst us, no chills or colds. Though it is most disagreeable getting up in the morning in a gale of icy wind, it has done me no harm. Living a simple, wholesome outdoor life one does not get chills and colds, but then I am always careful about one thing, to have enough blankets under me when sleeping on a camp bed. The cold that comes up from the ground at night is far worse than any other, and will effectually stop sleep and give bad chills unless guarded against. The only thing I have suffered from is cracked lips; notwithstanding rubbing them constantly with lip salve they have been most painful, the edge of a hot tea-cup bringing the tears into my eyes. The natives suffered as much as we did, but we got better as soon as we left the high lands round Lake Olboloset.

Mr. Trout was right, the going was really bad the next morning; he roused us before five and we got off very soon after the sun was up. A fire had raged some time back through this part of the forest and our way was blocked with stumps of trees, holes, stones, every kind of obstacle and all hidden in the five-foot-high grass. The wagon had to stop continually while Mr. Trout and I on our

mules rode round to find a way through the trees ; we were always afraid of being blocked completely by a clump round which there was no way.

The cook had the softest job of all, he followed the wagon leading Suzanne, walking delicately like Agag so as to preserve his putties from getting torn. Goodness knows why he wears them, for he has nothing below them on his feet and very little above, and it cannot be because he is cold. Mr. Trout, who hates him, says it is pure "swank," and to show other black gentlemen that he is absolutely "It."

After several halts the cook was heard to remark with something like a groan, "It will be by the blessing of God if we find a road this day." When in more senses than one we literally got out of the wood and on to the open plain, he scrambled into the wagon and sat there holding the little dog and contemplating the beauty of his putties, and he fell into an agreeable state of coma. Mr. Trout never warned him that the wagon had got to the edge of a dry watercourse and as the front wheels bumped heavily into it the cook shot backwards only to fall nearly out the other way when the same thing happened to the hind wheels. "One day," said Mr. Trout grimly, "I tink to see the cook fall out altogether. I shall laugh to see zat."

Presently we hit off the ancient wagon track ; it was very faint and sometimes disappeared altogether, then Mr. Trout and I did a bit of scouting work and rode round till we picked it up again. We saw no game, no monkeys, only a secretary bird walking slowly over the grass looking for snakes,

and in the meanwhile filling himself up with grasshoppers of which there were thousands.

As Mr. Trout predicted, the wagon track led us to a road, by going down which we knew we were pretty sure to strike the farm we had heard of, so felt much happier in our minds. We soon got to fine timber, not the gnarled weather-beaten trees covered with moss we had been amongst lately, but fine fellows, seventy feet high and straight as arrows. We saw no water but evidently the ground held more moisture. Later we got to places where all the big trees had been cleared off, but what is so sad is that young ones do not push up at once to take the place of those that are gone. I believe these cedars are not capable of sowing themselves like other trees, but the seed has to be germinated, in the crops of birds most probably.

At last we got to the farm belonging to another Dutchman. Mr. Trout rode up to introduce himself and ask for water; he came back to say the poor farmer and his wife were in great distress over the illness of their baby; that is the tragedy of life out here, to be far from help in case of illness. He said there was only one tiny stream on the whole farm of three thousand acres; they have had no rain for five months, the land is dust dry and there is no water where there ought to be any quantity. When the man bought the farm he saw three fine streams of water on it; now there is only a little trickle in one.

A bit of bad news is that we have got an eighteen-mile trek before us without a drop of water and no means of avoiding it. To-morrow being Sunday

we should have stayed here and given the animals a rest, but as Mr. Trout says it is no kindness to rest them on Sunday and kill them with a very long day on Monday, it is decided that we will give them as much water as they will drink at mid-day to-morrow—that is their natural time for drinking; then we will inspan and trek for three hours, then outspan for the night and away as early as possible the following morning, when we ought to reach water by eleven or twelve.

The average pace of a laden oxen wagon is two miles an hour, but this team, having practically nothing to pull, do two and a half; but so much depends on the going, and allowances have to be made for stoppages, bad places in the road and so on.

Mr. Trout could not mark Sunday morning by having a bath, but he did produce his volume of sermons, sat very square in his chair and began. Reading must be a very tedious process when you have to follow every word with your finger and find it easier to understand when you pronounce each word aloud as you come to it. It is also conducive to slumber. From personal observation of Mr. Trout I can recommend that excellent volume to bad sleepers with the utmost confidence.

Mr. Trout has had very many years of experience now with Kikuyu natives, and he says the more you have to do with them the less you like them. They are horribly cruel to animals for one thing. This I saw for myself, for near Rumuruti we came across a cart with four mules sent by a farmer to the store for pocho—ground mealies. It was in charge of two natives who were too lazy and cruel

to take the harness off the mules or the bits out of their mouths, but sent off the poor brutes to eat what and how they could, while the men who were supposed to take care of them were sitting talking and carefully preparing their own supper.

Mr. Trout says gratitude is almost unknown amongst them; you can nurse a native when he is ill, look after him if he is hurt, he will take all you can give him and one day disappear without a word. They are lazy too, and that I also have remarked. Every time we move camp it is the same story. Mr. Trout stands at the top of the wagon and packs the various boxes, etc. on to it as they are handed up to him. The boys know the routine perfectly well, but not one will stir unless ordered to do so; then after handing up a chair or a table will try and slip off to sit over the fire, hoping he will not be missed and that the others will do his work. Again, if you are out shooting big game it is useless to give your second rifle to a Kikuyu to carry, for at the least sign of danger he will throw it away and fly up a tree or anywhere where he thinks he will be safe. The warlike Masai know this and treat the Kikuyu accordingly. Quite different too are the Kavirondo and the Lumbwa natives. They are meat-eating tribes who pasture large herds of cattle, and are brave and much more trustworthy. They make excellent cattle boys, but are not much good for other work, such as picking coffee or growing mealies, which they consider beneath their dignity and fit work only for women.

The Dutchman here says that it is quite true that a band of Masai have broken out and invaded

this part, stealing and murdering. Settlers getting news of them are asked to let the authorities know at once. I trust they will leave us alone.

Mr. Trout has gone to the farm to buy some pocho (meal) for the boys, taking the cook with him. The two kitchen totos are supposed to be washing up. "Where ignorance is bliss," etc., but I cannot help seeing that the one who is supposed to be cleaning the frying-pan is doing it by scraping the inside with his fingers and then licking them, while the other is holding an empty sardine tin upside down and letting a stream of oil pour into his cavern of a mouth. I console myself by thinking what one of our French cooks told me about the cockroaches in one of our smartest restaurants in London, with a reputation for its excellent cuisine—a description so horrible that I refused several invitations to dinners and suppers there, and I daresay missed several enjoyable evenings in consequence.

After all we managed to avoid the eighteen-mile dry trek. The Dutchman came down to see us at the camp; after a lot of talking with Mr. Trout, assisted by gin and water, another way has been discovered. To-morrow we are to make for the upper reaches of the Suguroi river and come down it to the same point we should have struck had we gone direct. But was it not Nero who said, "Time was made for slaves"? I am out for pleasure and a few days one way or the other will make no difference, and I do not care about those long tiring days and seeing the animals suffer for nothing.

The Dutchman told me he sees plenty of both buffalo and elephant; in the wet season they come

right on to his farm, but in the dry season they keep to the forests. He told us the wagon tracks we followed on the heights above Lake Olboloset were his; he had been up there ten months before after elephant. One might rightly describe it as an unfrequented part of the world.

The next morning, after sending up to ask after the baby, who is much better, we started off for the Pace river, on the far side of which we shall strike, with luck, the Suguroi river. It was rather a dull trek, no game though there was splendid feed grass knee high everywhere, and very few birds. The one thing we did come across was a hole full of lumps of some sort of spar that looked like green jade, semi-transparent and coated with a thick layer of white stuff which we thought was lime. We wondered what it was and had no idea if it was valuable or not.

The Pace river is a delightful stream, more like an English one than any other I have seen out here, deliciously cool and clean. It was the first water fit to drink that we had come across since Thomson's Falls. As we got there pretty early the cook and I did some washing. Luckily one does not bring one's best things on *safari*, so I watched him pounding my garments on a stone quite calmly and unmoved, but I must say my linen riding jackets were a queer shape afterwards. The sun shone so strong that my tin basin in a few minutes became too hot to touch, and I dropped my soap box pretty quickly. It was as hot as the proverbial hot potato. Mr. Trout came up with a beaming face saying he had had a bath and was now "done for a week."

The Baboon was heard by Mr. Trout to say, "This is a very rich *safari*." Asked why, he replied because of the quantity of empty tins. "And as everybody knows, empty tins are very valuable things," he said. I know there is a horrid sack full of them on the wagon, the joint property of all the boys I believe. Mr. Trout collects empty bottles and is himself not averse to rubbish of all kinds.

He told me to-day that a few nights ago he heard a pack of wild dogs. I so much wish I had heard them, really I do not suppose that had I done so I should have known what they were, for the cry they make is not in the least like that of domestic dogs. He tells me they hunt in packs of thirty or forty or more; they stand as high as a table, have long bodies and legs and are black in colour with brown spots on their legs, and have white tips to their tails, besides a white spot on the chest. He told me he had an adventure with a pack of them about eight years ago. He was on *safari* with a lot of wagons near Nyeri and had his family with him. He had just got up at daybreak and was drinking a cup of coffee, the rest of the family being still asleep, when his native boy showed him a waterbuck hunted by two of these wild dogs coming towards them. The poor buck rushed into a little swamp close to where Mr. Trout was standing. Just as the poor thing reached it one dog sprang on its back, the other being close behind. With the idea of helping the buck Mr. Trout seized his rifle, ran to the little swamp, and killed the dog who was worrying the buck and the one behind it; but the buck was already dead. Then for the first time he realised

that there were thirty or forty more wild dogs all round him at the edge of the swamp, and he was in the centre of the circle with only five more cartridges. He tried to back his way out, killing four or five of the dogs as he did so ; he tried putting his own dogs on to them, but they only wagged their tails and refused to fight them, recognising members of their own family. Mr. Trout would have been in a bad way had his nine-year-old boy not woken up and seeing his father rushed to him with more cartridges and another rifle ; the boy shot three dogs before he could join his father, and after the two had together killed several more the rest of the pack cleared off.

Mr. Trout had to go to get meat for the boys ; they are grumbling because they have not had any for some time. Just beside the Pace river there is a strip of forest land, beyond on the far side the plain begins again, with the usual scattered clumps of dwarf thorns. There the grass is eaten down till there is nothing left to look at but stumps and dust, and yet it is alive with game, impala, oryx, zebra, Grant and Tommy, more than I have seen during the last ten days. They seem to like this short dried-up-looking feed. Mr. Trout came back having shot a kongoni, two boys following him staggering under the load of meat on their backs. There was great joy when they appeared, more fires were lighted at once, the boys singing with joy as they warmed—it could not be called roasting—the meat over the embers. They eat it half raw, and at 11 P.M. were still gorging it, as Mr. Trout predicted they would.

Late in the evening hundreds of baboons came out of the wood and disported themselves on the grass plain. We could not make out if they were eating or not; Mr. Trout thought they probably found beetles and grasshoppers in the grass and ate them. He had a theory that owing to the dry weather the reserves of water amongst the rocks where they are generally to be found had run out, and thirst had obliged them to leave and come near a river.

Before turning in for the night I had another look at the boys stuffing themselves with meat, sitting before the fires each with a lump on the end of a stick and gnawing off big bits with their teeth. Mr. Trout looked at them too and dismally shook his head. "Now zey eat all zey can 'old," he remarked, "to-morrow zey vill be ill, every one of zem. I shall give all of zem a big dose of Epsom salts." So saying he turned on his heel and disappeared.

Next morning our way—I cannot say road, for there was none—led us near the remains of the kongoni Mr. Trout had shot the night before. There was no difficulty in finding the kill. I counted fourteen vultures, and there were probably more, close to it. Two were perched in a little thorn tree, hardly big or strong enough to hold them; they only flapped heavily off when we got quite near. It was plain even to me that lions had been there, for the head and horns, in fact all the remains of the kongoni, had been carried off except one big leg bone, and that had been bitten clean in half. Not a bit of skin remained, all cleaned up. The edge of the

forest was about a mile off ; no doubt there in a nice cool spot near the river the lions were sleeping off their meal, but the poor old vultures would have to go somewhere else for theirs.

All day we saw nothing but little thorn trees and the same stunted short grass, but the zebra were there in hundreds, and it did not require glasses to see that they were in splendid condition, as fat as could be. An intelligent farmer's wife in the Nanyuki district said to me, " It does not matter how dry the land is here both for stock and for game so long as the rivers do not dry up." There is no doubt the rivers are the crux of the situation out here. We had an object lesson in this when we reached the Matara river. It rises in the Aberdares, and where we camped is a most delightful little stream, the sort of brook poets write about, purling and gurgling its way under trees and over stones, sometimes under steep banks and again widening out into shallow pools where the wild animals can drink. A few miles lower down the Matara ceases to exist, it enters a large papyrus swamp and there it disappears. In wet seasons there is an outlet, a sort of overflow as it were ; but none in a dry season, and with the end of the water comes the end of the possible farms. Some day no doubt the rivers will be diverted from these swamps, channels will be dug and the water carried along the sides of them, so that it is not wasted and can be carried on to water other farms lower down. But that will require capital, and the Government like everybody else has none to spare just now.

After leaving the Matara river we began to strike

a more populated part and came across alas ! several deserted farms, taken up under the Government soldiers' settlement scheme. They had been found to be hopelessly dry and given up in consequence. Even Dutch people coming here from South Africa have been taken in ; cute and intelligent men, they have been to see their farms in a good season, have taken them on believing they had streams of permanent water on their land, only to find, after a couple of dry seasons, that all they had left was a little trickle of inferior water, barely enough for themselves and their stock and none to spare for a mealie patch or a little garden. One sees plainly that the number of settlers here will be regulated by the amount of available water. Sheep of course require but little, twice a week is enough for them, but cattle require a drink once every twenty-four hours and therefore cannot be driven out to feed far from a river. Only giraffe and some antelope, which are able to travel long distances quickly, are to be found far from water. Like the farmers the wild animals too are mostly to be found near permanent supplies. It is curious that out here in the wildest parts of Kenya there are far fewer eagles and kites to be seen than near Nairobi in comparatively civilised parts. At first I was nervous about Susie, afraid of her being carried off, but later on I let her go anywhere she liked, not that she ever strayed more than a few yards from the camp. Once when living near Nairobi I went out for a walk with a black cocker spaniel, a middle-aged lady and fat as spaniels are apt to be when getting on in age. The dog was hunting about in the grass ahead of me when a

splendid eagle suddenly swooped down and I thought was going to attack her, instead it flew up into a tree quite near and sat there watching us. Not being pushed for time I called in the dog, making her stay near to me, and had a good look at the eagle. He must have been quite three feet high from his claws to the top of his small cruel head, but what was so curious was the way he watched the dog first with one eye and then with the other, turning his head right round each time. Of course a bird having its eyes set on the side of its head is obliged to look sideways, but why do they turn their heads and look first with one eye and then with the other unless they see differently with each? I have noticed the same thing with geese and ducks, clever birds, they constantly turn their heads if there is anything interesting to look at. The eagle evidently was hungry, and the cocker, as I said before, was fat. Whether he would have attacked her I cannot say, for a boy coming along frightened him off. He just spread his great wings and without an effort sailed away into the blue. I fancy that like other animals the birds rest during the hottest hours of the day. Once during the hot weather I watched a bird like a jackdaw, black and about the same size, prepare for his midday siesta. He flew into a big wild fig tree, nice and shady, and immediately set to work to scatter a number of small birds that were already there. Being satisfied that he had the tree pretty well to himself, he selected a nice branch, scratched his head with his claw, then twisted his tail round and put a feather tidy, moved a few inches up the branch to see if it was more comfortable, found it

was not and moved back again ; finally he fluffed up his feathers, his head seemed to sink into his shoulders and, so far as I could tell through my glasses, appeared to go as sound asleep as any bird ever does during the daytime. An hour later he was still there in the same position. Then I went in to luncheon and when I returned he had gone.

To watch the habits of birds one must remain some time in the same locality. Constantly on the move as I am now I get no chance of seeing them properly. One day I noticed numbers of storks, some flying, some standing on the flat branches at the top of the mimosa trees. I wondered how they managed to settle quite easily and comfortably amongst thorns inches long and as thick as pins in a pincushion. What would be truly enjoyable would be to choose a nice camping ground and stay there for a week, only I think then the risk would be considerably greater of being attacked by lions. "Familiarity breeds contempt" in animals as well as human beings, and I think we have escaped up to now thanks to constantly moving to new camping grounds, for Mr. Trout could tell from the spoor that they were different lions who prowled round us each night.

XIV

No one who has ever smelt a civet cat will ever forget it. We were sitting in the moonlight finishing our dinner one evening when something ran across the grass close to us. Jolly and Mr. Trout gave chase followed by all the boys. There was great excitement, much barking, then I heard the voice of Mr. Trout calling off the dogs and telling the boys to go back, which they did, except one, the Baboon. When Jolly came near me it was more than obvious he had been hunting a near relation of a skunk and almost as smelly. Even puppy Suzanne on my knee lifted her little black nose with disgust: never in the five months of her life had she smelt anything like it. When the Baboon came back the other boys quickly found out that he had touched the dead cat, and refused to have him at their fire. Even negroes draw the line somewhere. He was forced to make another for himself, and sat at it alone grumbling loudly, with Jolly, equally objectionable, for a companion.

This was not my first acquaintance with a wild cat. To keep my little house cool at Kaniti Ranch there was a space left between the ceiling and the roof; in this nice quiet retired spot lived the cat,

as could be seen from the marks of its dirty paws on one of the posts of the verandah up which it climbed to get to its lair. It was evidently a disreputable animal with several addresses and had not been to these particular lodgings for some time, for the marks on the post were old. However, the lodgings were not unoccupied, for the cat being away a big rat had taken up its abode there, as I was quite aware, for I could hear the patter of its feet overhead as I lay in bed. At first Tony, a prize Airedale which slept in my room, was greatly excited, but once it had convinced itself it could not get at the rat, both the dog and I became quite reconciled to its existence and ceased to notice it. One night I was awakened by a furious scratching on my verandah. I was convinced some animal was trying to get through my door, rather a thin one, and as I had no weapon of any kind my hair stood on end with horror. Tony too was frantically excited and begged me to open the door, which I dared not do, for one dog is helpless against a leopard, and a leopard I thought it was. The scratching continued until I heard a bump on the top of my ceiling, then I remembered the wild cat and the paw marks on the post and felt relieved. Of course, the next thing that happened was that the cat found the rat: backwards and forwards they raced over my head while Tony barked and jumped about below, adding to the noise. Every moment I thought the ceiling must give way and the whole thing—rat, cat and all—fall upon me. In the end the poor rat was killed and I expect eaten, but, whether the cat remained in its lodgings I do not

know, I never heard it again, nor did I smell it. On this present occasion, as I went to bed, I got a whiff now and then which told me the conscientious Jolly was patrolling the camp, and notwithstanding the smell I was glad, for when Mr. Trout handed me the old single-bore as I turned in, he said, I thought a little anxiously, "Come quick to the wagon if Jolly barks. I am afraid of rhino, they come this way to drink, and if they come to-night they will go over the tent." However, nothing happened and again the birds sang quite delightfully for half an hour just before the sun rose. There is one bird with the full sweet notes of a blackbird. I never hear it at any other time, only for those few minutes in the early morning. Many people will tell you there are no song-birds in East Africa, but that is because they are never awake at the right time to hear them. To my regret I have only numbered a very few poets amongst my friends and acquaintances, and I do not remember that any of them were conspicuously early risers. Can it be—horrid thought!—that nightingales and larks are specially honoured in verse because they happen to sing at hours when poets are awake to hear them?

Mr. Trout is exceedingly sociable; to-day he was much excited; in the far distance his lynx-like eyes detected a wagon crawling slowly along amongst some scattered trees. Nothing would do but we must go and see who the people were. Till we reached them he spent the time trying to guess who they could be, where they were likely to be going and so on. When we got near, a white man came to meet us and to his joy Mr. Trout recognised a

Dutchman he had once met. I was introduced and taken up to the wagon to be presented formally to "the Missus." There was a hood over the wagon, from under which stuck out two remarkably well-developed legs, encased in yellow cotton stockings. In course of time a plump young woman was presented to me; she bowed as well as she could, for she was sunk in the middle of a feather-bed from which stuck out the top halves of two small children. The lady with the yellow stockings had very little English, so our conversation languished till, fumbling in the feather-bed, she produced a baby for me to admire. The family were going to Gilgil—a week's trek, but beyond the feather-bed, two not over large bundles, and a couple of cooking-pots, there was no luggage whatever that I could see, but the party looked the picture of health and perfectly clean.

Out here, more than in any other country I know, there is a remarkable jumble of different types of white people. A so-called smart set, moulded on the latest novel dealing with fashionable fast men and women—these women go in for wearing men's clothes, but most of them cannot resist sticking to small pretty women's shoes, the result being they look very like Chinese. Then there is the ultra-feminine type, the clinging-ivy sort of woman; one, who had been here two years, appealed to her husband to tell her if she had ever seen sugar-cane! Then there is another type—the old couple, frugal and hard-working in their youth, who now have made money and are rich, and yet cannot find it in their hearts even to spend enough to be moderately

comfortable. You may see them shaken to pieces in a broken-down car painfully making their way to a neighbouring store, the old lady on the edge of the seat clutching a cotton umbrella, her flat feet tucked under her, and a large pink bow like a chest-protector under her chin. She scorns a sun helmet and wears a rakish little hat on the top of her head with one pink rosebud to match the bow, balanced on the brim. They spend Sunday grinding out hymns on a hurdy-gurdy. Their money is loaned out at fifteen per cent to a struggling farmer next door.

Then there is the rich Englishman who, when his manager died suddenly, buried him in a blanket in a hole on the farm without a coffin or a service of any kind over his dead body. Not that it mattered so far as the boy was concerned—he was hardly more than that—but it is a pity to scandalise the Dutch neighbours, who think such a lot of these things, and especially amongst natives not to show more respect to an Englishman dead or alive.

Here you find the younger sons of good families, sent out to make their fortunes, which, to give them credit, they often do. Many, in fact most, at any rate make enough to be very comfortable and are able to go home on a visit to the old country when they feel inclined, and, what is most important of all, they can marry whom they like, for this is a country to which no man need hesitate to bring out a lady.

The saddest are the failures; failures at home, their relations pack them out to a colony to get rid of them, to make good, which they do not.

You can see them in Canada by the hundred, driving cabs in towns on the west coast, washing bottles all day and playing the piano at night in a cheap dancing saloon ; or you can see them reeling along the streets of the big towns in Australia after the bars are closed. If they are failures at home, why should they be supposed to prove a success in the colonies, where they have the same temptations—often more temptations—and without the incentive of friends and relations to keep them straight ? To send a boy out to learn a job on a farm, to send him out to friends or to people who are known to his friends and relations, is a different thing. How cruel it is to bring up a boy the same as his eldest brother, at a good public school and so on, and then when he is somewhere about twenty give him an allowance of a couple of hundred a year and send him out to a colony, knowing nothing about local conditions and at the mercy of the first " bad hat " who picks him up.

We have been trekking lately down the side of what is called a river, now reduced to a little trickle of water which sometimes threatens to run out altogether. We camped at a place where a Dutchman had banked the water up and made a little pool, a nice camping ground but swarming with house flies ; the roof of my tent was black with them. The way to get rid of them is to go round with a basin of boiling water ; the steam stupefies them and they can be swept into the water by the thousand.

I hoped for a quiet night, but quite near us Mr. Trout found the spoor of a big male lion, so it did not seem very likely. While we were still at our

evening meal the zebra stallions began calling all round us, a pretty sure sign lions are about. Later on the hyenas began howling. It was one of the worst nights we had during the trip. My mule, always disagreeable, began the evening by kicking violently at the two nearest oxen; luckily it was too close to them to be able to do any real harm, but the oxen pulled and strained to get away and backed on to my tent. Mr. Trout had to get up from under the wagon and move Nicodemus. Was it Minerva who sprang from the head of Jupiter fully armed? So does Mr. Trout spring from his bed. "I slip with my rifle on my arm," he explained. Except for his boots he is fully dressed. However, we had not finished with Nicodemus; in a short while there was more fuss and moving about. "Nicodemus eat my bed," said Mr Trout in answer to my questions. In the meanwhile the zebras were more excited than ever and calling loudly. Then Suzanne and Jolly began barking furiously, but the lions never made a sound; they are nasty and dangerous when they are silent. Personally I do not mind so much when there is a moon; I am afraid when the African darkness, like a wall, stands up against you, the feeling then is one of utter helplessness.

At the beginning of the war we found the station-master's wife at home in floods of tears; she explained that her nephew was a sailor and had just been ordered up to join the Navy. A ship she said was such a dreadful thing to be on, for there was nowhere to hide and no one could run away. Really it quite expressed what I felt that night.

In the morning Mr. Trout said, " Everything made a noise last night, I not slip at all. I go to bed to-day at six." He also said he thinks several lions were round us during the night. I went with him and saw the spoor of them in the dust ; after very little experience it is easy to tell the difference between the footprints of lion and hyena. The former are larger and show no signs of toe nails. We could see where the lions had walked round the camp and my heart went out in gratitude to the faithful Jolly, and I felt glad I had looked after his food myself.

At our last camp I carefully hid in a bush the worn-out remains of two pairs of silk stockings. The cook has just brought them to me and asked if I had lost them ! I explained that I do not want them any more, upon which he asked if he might have them. Of course I said, " Yes." A few minutes later four of the boys appeared each with a stocking on his head, the foot part hanging elegantly down his back. With great presence of mind I produced a pair of scissors and suggested cutting off the foot part and making a little knot ; this was thought an excellent idea, so now the four have skull-caps with a knot at the top of each, and I flatter myself nobody would recognise their original vocation.

Nothing really disappears on *safari* ; the old tins remain with us, even the kongoni still appears ; what the boys could not eat of the meat they cut into strips and hung on a string in the sun. Where or how these horrid morsels travel I do not know and do not ask, but so soon as we stop out comes the string with the lumps of meat, more dusty daily but

equally attractive to the flies. If they hang long enough the strips of meat will become biltong, but the boys cannot resist the sight of them and daily they get smaller. I shall be glad when they disappear altogether.

A big crane has been fishing, or I suppose frogging would be a more truthful word, all day in the shallow pool close to this camp. I feel as if he were an old friend, for I am sure I remember seeing his relations in the Zoo. He is grey and black with long thin legs, and a long beak pale pink in colour melting into blue; he seems to be a bachelor, for he is quite alone, and spends his time walking up and down in the water, continually poking his beak into the mud; only once did I see him throw up his head and swallow something; he is a melancholy-looking bird and reminds me of the old men in Paris who pick up waste paper at the end of sharp sticks. Whenever Mr. Trout shoots at a duck the crane flies off, but only for a few minutes, he is soon back again and pays not the least attention to Suzanne who at first barked at him till she got tired and now sits on the bank and watches him.

Mr. Trout is very tiresome; he has now come in to complain about the cartridges I brought him, says the shot is too fine and only fit for quail; the truth is he is a real bad shot himself and cannot hit a haystack. He now says he won't try shooting duck any more and is going off to kill a "female Tommy." "Why a 'female'?" I asked. "Because zey are so good, so tender, I myself will cook it over the fire, you shall see," he replied, and went off, while I joined Suzanne and watched the old

crane, and a couple of delightful little grey plover running up and down a bit of mud on the far side of the little pond. They do not seem to be feeding and I cannot make out exactly what they are doing, but they are very busy and much exercised in their minds about something—perhaps it's a nest.

The Baboon, invigorated by a Sunday's rest, is fighting one of the other boys ; they went at it hard till one of the head boys turned up and cuffed the heads of both of them soundly. Always after having a good "blow-out" of meat the totos take to fighting, while the Baboon was heard to remark that, if he could have as much meat as he could eat every day, he would fight every boy in the camp. The etiquette amongst the boys is very funny, the head boys eat alone, the totos having their food apart from their elders and betters. So much for social equality unknown even amongst negroes.

What with flies and lions we had another horrible night. I think it is the warmth of the lighted lamp I have in my tent that keeps the flies lively. There are so many lions about that I dare not put out my lamp or set up my mosquito curtains, as any minute I might have to get up and do what execution I can with the old single-bore ; tied up in a curtain I cannot get out of bed quick enough. So all night the flies fall off the roof of my tent on top of me, crawling half alive over my face and getting tangled up in my hair. Of course the lions came round again, and poor Mr. Trout was up half the night. Lions prowled round us all the time and Jolly barked with hardly an interval from eight till three. Occasionally Mr. Trout fired his rifle. He says he

once saw a black object amongst the small thorns and thinks it was a hyena, but we neither of us heard one, which was unusual. Suzanne was much agitated, she sat at the top of me as I lay in my camp bed, barking her best to help Jolly. Once very cautiously she went out and joined Mr. Trout as he went the round of the camp with his rifle, but returned hurriedly to my tent; evidently she had come to the conclusion that it was not a small cocker spaniel's job to fight lions. When things are very lively I put on my boots and fur coat and clutching the old shot-gun put my head out of the tent, but never yet have I seen anything, only the intense black of the shadows of the trees in the moonlight, which makes one realise the perfect protective colour of the zebras during the most dangerous hours for them in the twenty-four.

I asked Mr. Trout why he does not insist on the boys helping him to keep watch when there are lions about; he says he has tried several times. The head boys refuse to move, and lie like logs round the fire, regardless of the noise of Mr. Trout letting off his rifle.

Wrathfully he shook them into life, and said to the head driver, "Why don't you wake up? Don't you hear there are lions about? It would serve you right if a lion carried you off and ate you." The boy replied quite unmoved, "Why should I wake up? I know a white man is there, he will not let me be eaten up, why should I trouble myself?"

The next day we trekked towards Nanyuki. We have turned our heads towards home. During the morning we passed not far from another Dutch farm; the sociable Mr. Trout insisted on taking me

to call. They are great talkers these Boers; Mr. Trout never stops, and one and all are terrible gossips. When we got to the farm we found the owner—a widow—at home, also one of her daughters. Her husband died many years ago, leaving five young children; the widow managed the farm entirely alone, looked after the stock and the native boys, made money for her children out of butter and cheese, and when I saw her she was superintending the building of a solid stone house. She struck me as a most capable woman in her own line, but curiously uneducated according to our ideas. I asked her if she took in a newspaper, for I was thirsty for news, not having heard any for over a month. The woman replied that she took in a newspaper but had not looked at it, for if the news was bad it upset her, so she preferred not to know what was going on and she thought her paper was lost.

Mr. Trout was loud in her praises as we rode away, asking me if I had noticed how strong she was, what big arms and hands like a man. Of course I had,—big and florid, abstemious, hard-working and as saving as the French. These women as a type are just the same as in the days when Henry VIII. talked of Anne of Cleves as a big Flemish mare, but no doubt these women and their men are ideal colonists for these outskirts of empire. To be totally lacking in imagination is an advantage when you live surrounded by danger. In my mind I compared her and her big lusty sons with our fragile-looking, high-strung English boys, to whom my heart went out so often during the war, who go out to live in lonely grass huts at the back of beyond, where, with

no previous training or experience, they work themselves to death, or give it up and disheartened return whence they came.

My mule Nicodemus is perfectly aware that it is going in the direction of home ; we are trekking back a different way from the route we followed when we first started off, and so far as I know my mule had never been in this part before. Yet it evidently knew quite well where it was, and I warned Mr. Trout if it got the chance it would give him the slip and make off home.

I know the homing instinct of mules is very strong, but a story Mr. Trout told me is almost too much even for me. He says he believes it to be perfectly true, though he never met the man himself. Six Australian mules were taken by a man to Cape Town by sea. When they arrived he used them in order to drive about the country buying cattle. Finally he sold the six as a team in the Northern Transvaal. The mules ran away from their new home and two months later all six were found together on the quay at Cape Town where they had landed from Australia. Certainly some mules have wonderful instinct, especially Australian ones !

We had now another long trek before us with no water, so it was decided that we should not strike camp till one o'clock because of watering the oxen. We rode over dust-dry country without a drop of water anywhere, only parched-looking thorn trees and occasionally a shrub with bright green leaves like a laurel. It was refreshing to see it amongst the universal brown ; I wondered how it managed to keep so green.

We camped amongst the thorns in the afternoon, Mr. Trout knee-hobbling both the mules, Camera and Nicodemus, himself, and setting them free to graze. Alas! half an hour later the alarm was raised—both had gone. It was the head boy who saw them making off. Nicodemus, he said, had got one fore leg free but the other was still hobbled, and was making for the Nyiro river, on the other side of which, far away, lay home. In the meantime the white mule Camera had gone off in another direction. Half the boys went after one and half after the other, only the head boy was left with the oxen and a toto who was getting firewood. I stuck to the camp, knowing I could not help, and as the cook had gone after Nicodemus, occupied myself in getting some food ready for dinner. Presently my retainers began to straggle back. The white mule had completely disappeared, the boys who went after it saw it in the distance going at a fast canter, so gave up the chase and returned. Nicodemus, with the cook in hot pursuit, had disappeared totally and neither had returned to camp when night came on.

Mr. Trout spent the evening abusing Nicodemus, which he declared had led Camera astray. I felt inclined to tell him it was entirely his own fault for hobbling them so badly; if they were so likely to make off, why did he not tell a boy to watch them? We had plenty of boys available, and one could easily be spared.

In the night I heard Jolly bark, and lifting up the flap of my tent I peeped out into the moonlight. In the distance there was a lion roaring somewhere near the river. I wondered if he had just made a

good supper off poor old Nicodemus, and felt very annoyed with Mr. Trout, who after all, poor man, was not feeling too happy about his own mule.

There was no help for it. The next morning I had to crawl into the wagon and be thankful I had not to walk now both the mules were gone. Just as we were moving off up came the cook with a long story of how he had followed Nicodemus till he saw it almost at the river, then it got too dark to find his way back to camp and he spent the night in a tree, seeing two lions and hearing more. Mr. Trout, who is always having a battle with the cook, said he was not speaking the truth, but having heard one lion during the night I was inclined to believe him. Though I had a seat carefully arranged for me with a pillow and my cork mattress, yet the wagon bumped dreadfully going across country. The oxen—like fate—preserve the even tenor of their way through or past anything. You see a big hole coming sixty-four feet away by the leading oxen and can spend the intervening time in anticipating how bad the bump will be when finally the wagon reaches it, suffering many minor bumps in the meantime. We were amongst the dwarf thorn trees all the morning, and most disagreeable they are when one is in a wagon, for the hood catches the lower branches which are generally dead, and a shower of dusty twigs, thorns and brown ants descends on the top of the wagon in general and on oneself in particular.

This variety of thorn tree, growing only in the warm parts of the country and in dry places, has numbers of peculiar growths, hollow and about the size of an egg, growing on the branches. Each has

a couple of thorns about an inch or more in length growing on the outside and is full of little brown ants which go in and out through a small hole always to be found on the under side, this hole being present in green growths as well as in old and dry ones. I would much like to know the reason for this peculiarity, which I have not seen on any of the other varieties of thorn. I imagine the ants live on the juices of the trees, for many times have I seen and collected big lumps of gum caused, I should think, by some injury to the tree. The reason for the ants being there is plain, the tree furnishes both food and lodging for them, but where is the advantage to the tree of having the ants living on and in it? That there is some reason is certain, and one guesses it has something to do with fertilisation. If so, one wonders why only one variety of mimosa has these particular growths, while all have much the same flowers, which one would think means the same process of fertilisation. I opened many of these growths, both fresh and old and dry; all were empty except for the ants, and I saw many trees with seed pods with ripe seeds in them. They seemed to have no connection whatever with the growths I speak of.

XV

Two things always surprise me in this country. The first is—the more eaten-down and bare-looking the grass, the more game does one see. Another thing is, how different herds of game vary. One herd will let you get close to them before they move, another will gallop off at half a mile distance. This day, as we slowly and noisily crawled along, one mob of zebra, numbering quite two hundred, let us get so near to them that I could almost hit them with a stone. They looked beautiful, so at home in their surroundings and so plump and well. Though they are the favourite food of the lions and continually hunted by them, still it does not spoil their condition; of the hundreds, probably thousands, I have seen on this trip I do not remember one who looked poor.

We are making for the Guaso Nyiro, not where poor Nicodemus tried to get over last night, but higher up, where Mr. Trout thinks there is a farm and probably a ford. I walked a great deal in the morning, getting into the wagon for a rest at intervals. It was very hot as we began to go downhill towards the river; we could see rain clouds on the mountains and the sun had that fierce heat that means rain somewhere. Though the oxen had had

no water since one o'clock the previous day, they were not distressed, but personally I was very glad when Mr. Trout announced we must be near a farm, for he could see a herd of cows. A short time after we came across a track evidently made by game going to water, and following it came upon the river. We had now struck the Guaso Nyiro considerably higher up than where we crossed it before, but in character it was much the same, in fact all these African rivers resemble each other in that they have high banks covered with a tropical tangle of creepers and trees, only occasionally opening out into shallow places free from high reeds where animals dare to drink. We managed to get the wagon down the bank and camped near the water.

We had not arrived many minutes before we had a caller, the head boy of an English officer who had bought a farm on the river, which alas! was not a success. The officer had left it in the care of his boy and had gone to work elsewhere. The boy in consequence was full of importance and dressed according to his ideas of what was worthy of so great a person. On a boiling hot day he wore an ancient khaki military greatcoat that had evidently belonged to his master, for it was quite three sizes too large for him and was worn over nothing at all. On his feet he had a large and dilapidated pair of boots tied with string, and on his head an old cloth deer-stalking cap adorned with an old and dirty white ostrich feather; he stalked along with a walking-stick, his boots flapping as he went; they were enormous, and the torn tails of his greatcoat trailed on the ground. Behind this object at a

respectful distance came his underling, a native boy-dressed in a blanket and carrying a spear, and looking so incomparably nicer than the other. The head boy spoke English and the first thing he told us was that there were many lions about, that two zebras were killed by them close to our camp, that they had killed some sheep a day or two before in broad daylight, and were not put off by the yells of the boys in charge nor by the stones which they threw at them.

In the evening we tried fishing in the river and caught a number of those little carp-like fish, but none of any size. We tried meat and grasshoppers and Mr. Trout put on a frog for bait ; the frog was quite small, white with a pink mouth and pink fingers, a horrid sight, something uncanny about it. I could have imagined it many sizes larger living in a dark cave and eating anybody rash enough to go near it. However, we found the best bait to be *pocho*—cooked mealie meal mixed with a little flour to make it stick on to the hooks. I had a short rod but Mr. Trout with a long crooked stick did better. The great difficulty was to get near enough to the river to be able to drop in the bait ; there was always a dense growth of brushwood and trees, all with thorns of different degrees of length and sharpness. I measured the largest thorns I could see on some of the mimosas, they were five inches long. Below the tangle of rushes and creepers was the water, thick in colour and flowing so slowly that a leaf on it hardly seemed to move, occasionally there were clumps of papyrus with heavy, absolutely immovable heads ; in fact the silence and the still-

ness was awesome, and when Suzanne wriggling and playing on the bank fell in, it was almost as startling as if a bomb had gone off. Only the voice of Mr. Trout roused me. "Susan, come out quick, I fear for the crocodiles." And no easy task was it to rescue her, she had to be made to swim back to one particular spot where we were able to haul her out; there was no place where even a little thing like her could scramble out alone.

We saw no trace of hippo, though both higher up and lower down the river there are numbers of them.

There were very few flowers, the most conspicuous being a small convolvulus with white or mauve flowers which grew in masses and covered some of the trees like a mat. There was also a curious climber with fruits like small melons, and a shrub like a jasmine with formidable thorns and pretty sweet-scented white flowers tinged with pink. I was surprised to see no water-lilies, the rivers near Nairobi are full of them. I saw a pool near the Fort Hall road covered with blue flowers, a lovely sight. The water in these rivers ought to suit them, but here there are none. I came to the conclusion that the lilies must have sun, and under these high banks and trees it is too shady for them.

We had a quiet night; after all the boy told us about the lions we were not bothered by them. That they were about was obvious, for the zebra were so anxious, the stallions calling all the time. About midnight two or three hundred zebra stampeded past us, on the top of the bank, just above our camp; it sounded like a cavalry charge. After they had passed there was again silence and but for

the zebra and the usual hyenas there was a delightful and unusual peace.

In the morning we had splendid news—both the mules were safe. Nicodemus, unable to get over the river where it first struck it, had travelled upstream looking for a ford and fell in with some native boys watering cattle; they caught it, and coming across our boys who had been sent out again to look, it was safely brought into camp. I nearly cried with joy when I saw its big head and huge ears. Camera, the white mule, had struck the farm near our camp, and finding an amiable old mare with a foal had made friends, and the farmer had shut it up in a box pending inquiries. Later on we went to the farm in the wagon to thank the farmer and secure the mule.

I was much struck with this very nice young Englishman and his wife, quite the best type of young farmer I have seen; he is a good judge of sheep and has a fine flock of half-bred merinos that are doing well, and owing to the cheaper shipping rates he is able to get more money for his wool than South African sheep breeders. He told me the tendency of all wool here is to get finer with time, so a cross with the robust and coarser native breed is all to the good. The attractive young wife had three children and told me that she does all the work of the house herself with the assistance of an old native woman for the household washing, and a toto for the scrubbing of the floors and washing up of the china. She told me she thinks the women who grumble and complain in this country are those who leave everything to the native boys and do

not attempt to look after their houses. They get bored because they have nothing to do. She gave us an excellent cup of coffee and forced upon us a bottle of milk and another of cream, some eggs and a small cheese ; neither she nor her husband would hear of our paying for them.

It was here that Mr. Trout said to me, " Do you mind if I put a ship on ze wagon ? " " A ship," I replied, wondering what on earth he meant. " What sort of a ship ? " I asked. " A half-bred merino," said Mr. Trout promptly, and I realised he meant sheep, and in due course a young ram, a present from the young farmer, was hoisted into the wagon and became a member of our party.

The whole family came with us as far as the ford over the river. It was a very steep bank down to it and almost equally steep up the farther side. It is a horrible feeling when a big wagon takes a dive down one of these banks, it seems as if it must turn over. It hesitates—or seems to, then appears to make up its mind, drops heavily on to its front wheels, and then there is another pause before it decides to risk its hind ones.

All the morning we trekked along the river-bank ; zebra we saw in plenty but not much of any other sort of game. Again we camped by the river, not a nice place but the best we could find and very hot ; near us was a large ant-hill which I photographed, and below it the river where we decided to fish.

These African rivers fascinate me. I am repelled and attracted at the same time. They are so silent, so sinister and so intensely secretive,—so quiet that there seems to be no movement anywhere,

so secretive that you feel the muddy water would close over the dead bodies of an army of men and show no sign. As you look down you expect any moment to see the hideous head of a crocodile. Where a tree has fallen down into the water the giant creepers stretch almost across the river. You look at the twisted loops and you wonder if they belong to the creeper or if it is a python hanging there waiting, watching. How different it all is from an English stream, so crystal clear that you can count the stones at the bottom of it. Here the rivers are like the native life round you. It waits on you, cooks your dinner, you can see it, feel it, but you have no idea of what it is thinking, you only see on the surface. The native mind is just as secretive as its rivers and as impenetrable as its jungles.

To-day being Sunday there was no end of a fuss. Mr. Trout was going to have a wash. Too afraid of crocodiles to get into the river he borrowed my bath, found a nice place hidden under a tree, had the bath placed ready and told the Baboon to fill it with water, giving him particular directions as to where to get the water for fear of his falling into the river. The Baboon took the petrol tin, but instead of getting the water where he was told to go, with great cunning thought he was doing a clever thing and could save himself trouble by filling the tin at a deep pool nearer the camp. There was a splash and ear-piercing yells; the Baboon was as nearly as possible drowned, only being hauled out just in time by the united efforts of Mr. Trout and one of the head boys.

Mr. Trout was quite ill in the afternoon from the

heat, the high banks rising a hundred feet each side of the river kept off the little breeze there was and the sun boiled down on the camp. It is curious that Mr. Trout, used to heat all his life, should feel it much more than I do. He had a bad headache and only felt better after bleeding violently at the nose. I think people in a hot country after a time get saturated as it were with heat ; I noticed that men coming from Queensland and very hot places like that to fight in France did not seem to feel the cold much the first winter, but suffered dreadfully the second. Coming from a cold country I have not yet got really warmed through by the sun, it takes a year or more ; in the meantime I feel quite comfortable when Mr. Trout is feeling really ill.

We had a long dry trek before us the next day, so had to wait till twelve before moving camp. It is tiresome of the oxen refusing water in the morning and the evening. I tried to catch some fish before starting but only got a few small ones, still they are a welcome change from the everlasting eggs and bacon. Before we had gone many miles we saw the clouds coming down on the mountains, the sun which had been so burning hot clouded over and it began to blow hard and pour with rain. It was no use our going ahead of the wagon, first because there was nowhere to go as it was our home ; then, because as usual we were going straight across country and Mr. Trout had to steer the wagon across many particularly awkward places.

Thus it happened that I was sheltering under a tolerably thick tree, my mule with her tail to the wind and both of us streaming, when I heard what

sounded like a church organ being played a long way off. A big gust of wind and I heard it plainly, dying away and coming again. I was amazed and could not understand what it could be, till I found it came from the mimosa trees round me. They were thick with the peculiar hollow growths I mentioned before. I found that the little hole on the under side of each growth gave out a note as it caught the wind, the combination of many hundreds swelled into organ-like sounds. Though I have been riding amongst these same thorns now for weeks, this is the first time I have heard this music; I think the moist atmosphere may have something to do with it, for this is the first time that I have been amongst these mimosas on a rainy day. We had rain before, but that was on the mountains and these thorns are not found there. We settled to camp under the "three sisters," three coppies so close together that they form one hill with three peaks. Mr. Trout christened them, and very illusive sisters they were. Sometimes for a short while they seemed quite near, only a few minutes later to appear as if they had moved back a couple of miles.

However, we arrived at last and found a good camping-place near a great rock the size of a cottage which leaned over on one side and gave us a dry spot on which to light our fire. Just behind us was the hill, and a big hyena on a rock near the top of it, while just as we arrived on the spot we saw a dozen guinea-fowl feeding under some trees. Mr. Trout went after them but as usual failed to bring one to ground. Every day we see quantities of

game birds—partridges, spur fowl, guinea-fowl and duck in hundreds. It would have made a great difference to me had Mr. Trout been even a moderately good shot.

In the evening the rain cleared off and Mr. Trout and I climbed the hill, taking a boy with us to carry my coat. At a guess the coppie was about two hundred feet high. The lower part was easy to get up; near the top it became nothing but a *mêlée* of enormous rocks as if hurled one on the top of the other, leaving deep black holes in between and under them, which it was evident were the favourite lairs of all sorts of animals, for there were bones lying about and traces of hyenas and lions, but the horrible and overpowering smell prevented too close an inspection. I sat myself on one of the largest rocks at the summit and looked down at the country at our feet and watched the game. About half a mile off there were numbers of zebra, some lying down, some feeding. Nearer were three Grant gazelle. The zebra were very sociable, all close together, but the Grant were feeding quite a distance apart from each other and seemed to be making for a patch of black earth near the foot of the coppie which Mr. Trout thinks must be a salt or soda hole. But I was captivated by a baby kongoni, otherwise Jackson's hartebeest. There were two buck and two does, and the little one, who seemed to be about half-grown, was most playful. It would put its little head down and buck with all four feet together; it pretended to be frightened and shied at some imaginary object, ran back to its mother and then off again bucking and kicking.

I do not know how long the kongoni family would have stayed near us, but one of our boys hunting for firewood disturbed them, and off they went, they in one direction, the Grant in another. It is tiresome when our own boys disturb game like that, but one could hardly blame them, for they are afraid of these coppies knowing that they are full of lion, providing nice, quiet resting-places where they can retire to sleep off a big meal. I think to collect enough wood to keep big fires burning all night was the only thing we did not have to tell the boys each and every day.

Mr. Trout told me at dinner-time that hyenas are not to be feared anywhere except in the native reserves; there, owing to the horrible native habit of putting out dying and dead persons to be eaten by them, the hyenas have ceased to fear human beings and are dangerous. He told me of an experience he had some years before not very far from Fort Hall. He was taking a number of ox wagons from Nanyuki to Thika and had to pass right through the native reserve. One night it was pouring with rain and a native came to him and asked permission to sleep near his fires, explaining that he was walking to Thika and was afraid of sleeping out alone. Of course Mr. Trout gave him permission, upon which the boy asked if Mr. Trout would allow him to sleep inside a big skin which happened to be under one of the wagons. Mr. Trout told him he might use the skin for the night, but was to return it the following morning before he left. This the boy promised to do, and rolling himself up in it like a sausage he lay down

by one of the fires and went to sleep. In the night a big hyena came, it seized the skin with the boy inside and had carried off both some fifty yards before the boy slipped out of the skin on to the ground and rushed back to the fire yelling at the top of his voice.

That night my tent was pitched amongst the big rocks, and before getting into bed I had a careful hunt for the deadly puff adders ; these stony places are where they are generally to be found. The old hyena prowled round us all night on the look-out for any odd bits of meat there might be lying about. But otherwise my last night under canvas was quite peaceful.

It made me sad to think my little *safari* was coming to an end, for I had enjoyed it much. Mr. Trout had managed very well for me and had brought me safely through some rough places. I had been exceedingly fortunate with the exception of elephant and hippo. I had seen at close quarters all the large animals to be found in that part of Africa. Many people have spent large sums on an expensive *safari* and have not had the luck I had, but I promised myself that, before going into lion country again, I would take care to arm myself with a rifle—not that I anticipated I could do much execution with it, but I so disliked the feeling of being helpless, especially as I had not much confidence in Mr. Trout, and we might have come off badly had the lions attacked the camp.

I had been away in the wilds over a month and the side of bacon and the eight dozen eggs just lasted Mr. Trout and me to the end, helped out by

sardines and some potted meat I had taken with me, besides an occasional bit of antelope. Tommy, otherwise Thomson's gazelle, is the best to eat in my estimation. The eggs kept perfectly fresh, they were packed in mealie meal, and amazing to relate, hardly any were broken. There was but little variety in my food all the time, which was the more annoying as there were quantities of game birds wherever we went, all of them excellent to eat. Perhaps Mr. Trout's gun was in fault—of that I was no judge, but I know I was exceedingly hard up for food at times and was not altogether surprised when, in Nairobi, my friends told me that I was thin. The native boys ate mealie meal which they cooked themselves and of which we took a supply with us on the wagon ; this was varied by any meat Mr. Trout was able to kill for them. They were very good on the whole about my stores, but they could not resist sugar, which disappeared at a remarkable rate. Luckily I had anticipated this and taken a double supply with me. Soap also disappeared very quickly, but that I did not mind, in fact was only too glad the boys should keep their clothes clean, cotton rags as they were.

I am told I am the first woman who has been out " on her own " with a Dutchman into the game country. The risk of course was a possible accident to Mr. Trout or myself, miles away as we were most of the time from help of any kind. This is a risk anybody undertaking an expedition of this kind must be prepared for, otherwise all the pleasure is gone. Also a woman going alone as I did must know how to take care of herself. It never entered

Mr. Trout's head to help me in any way. I scrambled up and down the most horrible places, getting along alone as best I could. According to Mr. Trout's simple creed those women were most to be admired who were most capable and gave least trouble. That he approved of me I gathered from the fact that he was so anxious to take me on another expedition as soon as it could possibly be arranged, while he described me to Mr. Chater as a very godly person, a compliment that was not less appreciated because it happened to be the last thing I should have said about myself.

Altogether I would say to a woman going to a wild country to learn never to be hungry unless there is something to eat, never to be thirsty unless there is something to drink, and never be sleepy and tired unless you know your bed is ready for you. When you have mastered these three simple rules go out on *safari* and you will enjoy yourself.

At Mr. Chater's farm I bade good-bye to Mr. Trout, and paid off the cook, Mongi and the Baboon. I was allowed to give a bit extra to the washers up, but nothing would induce Mr. Trout to allow me to tip the cook; he stood over me to the last for fear my heart would melt and I would give the cook something behind his back. The next day I climbed into the public motor once more and was bumped back the two days' motor run to Nairobi.

XVI

It was accident that took me to the Belgian Congo, —a luncheon in Nairobi and the chance remark from the editor of a newspaper about the gold mines of Kilo, and the supposed beauty of the country.

“It would be very interesting to go there,” he said, “so few English people have been.”

“Why don’t you go?” I asked.

“It is a long way off and the Belgians do not encourage visitors,” was the reply. “In fact it is exceedingly difficult to get into the country at all.”

In my heart I felt pretty sure the principal difficulty was probably a want of knowledge of the language. I had been brought up by a succession of expensive foreign governesses from whom I had learnt nothing except a working acquaintance with French, so that difficulty would not stand in my way. I went back to my hotel and thought over all I knew about the Belgian Congo, which was not much, and the more I thought of it the more I wanted to go there. It was the lure of the unknown, all the stronger because of the supposed difficulties that lay in my way. I went to see my friend the editor and he took me to call on a most charming person, the American Consul ;

he had been just as far as Lake Albert, and what he told me made me want more than ever to go and see the country for myself. Happily or unhappily, as the case may be, there was nobody to be consulted, no one to say nay, the only thing that could stop me going would be an overdrawn banking account, but there again I was all right ; it seemed as if fate had decided for me, had moved away any possible difficulties there might have been in my path. I decided to go.

Ever since I had landed at Mombasa I seemed to have been dodging about the line of the equator, sometimes north, sometimes south of it. Roughly speaking, I was now going to follow it across Africa, in fact going due west, my route lying across the Victoria Nyanza, across Uganda and Lake Kiogo to Lake Albert, the east side of which belongs to Great Britain and the west to Belgium. This last forms the highlands of the Congo, and the watershed—a range of mountains that may be described as the backbone of Central Africa, for they run pretty well north and south, draining on the west into the Congo river and on the east into Lake Albert which itself is one of the sources of the Nile.

I made up my mind to go alone, not from choice, for there is no doubt a pleasant companion adds enormously to one's enjoyment, but simply for fear of accidents. I was going to what was to me an unknown country, reputed to be very unhealthy. So far as I was concerned it was a matter of perfect indifference as to whether I left my bones in Africa or Kensal Green, in fact on the whole I preferred Africa. Also in the event of anything happening

to me, there was nobody to worry. I felt that if I were to take a woman with me, it would not only add to the expense, but would prove a great anxiety, while, unless she spoke French well, or some of the native dialects, she could not be of the least use, and such a paragon was not easily to be found. For the same reason it was no use my taking a servant from Kenya or Uganda; he would not know the native dialects of the Congo and I might have difficulty in getting him into the country.

I even decided to leave little Suzanne behind, and that was a dreadful blow. I was afraid of not being able to get proper food for her.

Whichever country I go to, I invariably come across exceptional weather: it is either hotter or colder, wetter or drier, than that dreadful liar, the oldest inhabitant, has ever remembered before. When I left Nairobi on my way to the Belgian Congo it had been raining in sheets at the rate of an inch a day for nearly a week. The clouds lay on the mountains like wads of grey cotton-wool, and every gutter and little stream overflowed with thick brown water. I was in the train, presumably an express, that runs through Kenya from Mombasa on the coast to the Victoria Nyanza, where begins Uganda. On my way I was to leave Suzanne at her new home; in the meantime for the first part of my journey we were to go together.

The air was hot and moist and very stuffy; when it was not actually raining I opened every window of my compartment. Each was provided with a wire-gauze frame for keeping out mosquitoes, a glass for day and a wooden shutter for night. Suzanne, like

most dogs, took an intense interest in the journey ; at the first stop she planted her hind legs firmly on the carriage cushions, her front legs on the window ledge, and took a long survey of the platform. At once she discovered an Airedale in the next compartment doing exactly the same thing. The interest the two dogs took in each other induced their respective mistresses to put out their heads and a conversation followed, in the course of which it was discovered that the Airedale answered to the name of Jane, and the further information was given that there had been a wash-out farther up the line and it was doubtful if the train would be able to get through. This I was not surprised to hear, for owing to the exceptional rainfall great holes had been washed out in many of the main roads and several bridges had given way. However, after some delay on we went. By this time it was getting dark and very soon it was impossible to see out of the windows. On the Uganda railway it is usual for passengers to take their own bedding with them, while at intervals the train stops at stations for them to feed. It was now six o'clock and two long hours lay between me and dinner. I turned up the light and tried to read, but it was impossible. Then, like Suzanne, I closed my eyes and tried to sleep, but not for long ; with a bump the train stopped, and putting my head out I saw we were in a station and that Jane's master had got out and was walking up the platform. " My husband thinks we shall have to stay the night here ; he has gone to find out," said the lady next door. " If so, I advise you to go to the hotel. It is close to the station, there is no

refreshment room here." I looked at the train, dimly lit by three or four lamps; I saw a long vista of platform shimmering with water, at the back the outline of a shed which I took to be the ticket office. Right in front by our engine were a couple of hurricane lamps swinging about in the hands of officials, beyond that I could see nothing whatever. Presently out of the gloom appeared the robust form of the man from next door. "Out you get," he said to his wife, opening the door of her compartment. "No getting any farther to-night, we had better go to the Smiths', they will put us up." Out tumbled Jane on to the platform, while her master, after helping his wife, turned to me and helped me out also. "I have got a boy here; he will carry your bag," he said, "the rest of your things can stay here. The station-master will lock up the compartment for you till the train goes out in the morning. By that time the line will have been repaired. We will take you to the hotel; it is on our way and we can introduce you to Madame, she will see after you." "Madame who?" I asked as I walked along the platform with my kind friends. "Oh! I don't remember her name, she's French, you know, we just call her Madame," was the reply, and my heart rejoiced, for I have spent many happy hours with French friends. "We used to live here," began Jane's mistress, as we stumbled in the darkness down the steps from the platform to the road. The rain had stopped but we were ankle deep in mud. Further explanations were put an end to by her husband announcing that he thought we were off the road and if so might fall into one or other of

the deep ditches at the side. Sure enough as he spoke we saw the gleam of water five feet below us. In another moment we should have walked straight into it. "Here comes somebody with a lamp, we had better wait," said the husband, following up the remark with a resounding "hulloo." This was promptly responded to by the bearer of the lamp. "Bless me," he said. "Is that you, Frank? I recognised your voice." Whereupon followed much talking and many explanations and, lighted by our new friend, we proceeded towards the hotel.

That there was something doing there was obvious before we got inside. The road was blocked by half-a-dozen motors, all of them caked with mud. There was also the sound of a husky gramophone evidently suffering from the damp weather, while round the door were clustered a group of men each with a glass in his hand of something that was not toast and water. "Big doings to-night, big feed on—a dance too—Freemasons—old Mooney come for it—you remember him, Frank? big gun at this game," explained the bearer of the lamp. "Where's Madame?" he asked of the group at the door. Two or three tumblers indicated she was to be found inside. Our friend of the lamp led the way calling vigorously for her, while the other two stopped in the doorway shaking hands with the many friends they found there. While Madame was being hunted for I looked round. The hotel had not been built with much eye for beauty. A bungalow with a flat iron roof, it was about as ornamental as a packing-case and much the same shape. We were in a passage which did duty both as entrance hall and

bar, for on one side was a door and a window opening-ornamented with tumblers, inside which was a stout man pulling corks out of bottles. On the right I could see into a room where to the music of the husky gramophone three worried-looking young men were dancing with three young women, ploughing their way round on a floor covered with cocoanut matting. On the left were two stairs and a little room not much larger than a cupboard. I caught sight of a long table with a double row of dinner napkins, obviously the scene of the Freemasons' banquet we had been told about. While I was gazing at this pleasant prospect of food the doorway was blocked by a plump female figure and a voice called out, "You vant me, Mister Brown," and Madame's jovial face beamed down upon us. Whereupon there were more explanations and I was formally introduced. Lowering herself carefully down the steps one at a time, giving us more than a glimpse of white cotton ankles and small shiny shoes, came Madame, and when she discovered I spoke French she then and there took me, figuratively speaking, to her warm and expansive heart. "I 'ave no rooms, but I make one for 'er," declared Madame, as with grateful thanks to my friends of the train I was formally handed over. "You, Mister Brown, will sleep on a sofa, she will 'ave your room." I looked with consternation at Mr. Brown, our friend of the lamp; he had a jolly pink and white face like an elderly baby, and his well-nourished proportions looked most unsuited for repose on a sofa, but he was kindness itself. "All right, Madame, I will find a bunk somewhere, don't you worry about me,"

he said, and while Madame went to see about my sheets he led the way into the little room like a cupboard where we sat side by side on the only piece of furniture, a small and bony sofa, with Suzanne squeezed in between us, while Mr. Brown did the honours of the hotel. "We are going to have dinner in there presently," he said, indicating with a tumbler the room with the cocoanut carpet. The gramophone had stopped and several native boys were pushing tables in through the windows, having found it hopeless to get past the owners of the tumblers who were crowding in the doorway. Cheered by this information, for I was famished, I asked about the Freemasons' dinner and was told that for two days farmers had been coming in for it from places thirty or forty miles away. The elect were at that moment practising the mysteries of their craft elsewhere, but were expected to turn up for dinner at 8.30. "Those," said Mr. Brown, indicating the group hanging round the door and the bar window, "come here most nights." While he was speaking I noticed particularly one man who, obviously "oiled up," as the Australians say, was standing in the middle of the passage swaying slightly from side to side and eyeing the open doorway between us and him. His clothes were disreputable, in one hand he clutched a tumbler half full of whisky, in the other a half-smoked cigarette, yet for all his rags there was something gentleman-like about the man, a hint of better things. As I looked, the scarecrow, he was really no better, began to move, and still gazing with a fixed eye at the doorway he tacked with infinite care round a chair and a

flower-pot ; he evidently intended coming up the two steps into the little room where we were, but thanks to the presence of the stout Mr. Brown—stout in both senses of the word—I felt no fears. Slowly the scarecrow climbed up the steps and advanced into the little room ; he stood swaying slightly in front of the bony sofa, then with a bow, as deep as was compatible with keeping his balance, he said, “ Excuse me, please, but I heard you speaking French to Madame ; could you oblige me with the date of the death of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, one gets so infernally rusty out here, I’m damned if I can remember.” To say I was surprised hardly expressed what I felt. I pulled myself together and replied to the best of my remembrance. The scarecrow bowed and thanked me. “ Can’t remember anything now,” he said, passing a hand with fingers black from cigarette smoke across his forehead. “ Couldn’t remember—simple prop—Euclid—just now. I say, Brownie, give us a light.” Mr. Brown did as he was asked, lit a match and held it to the cigarette. “ What do you want with two ? ” he asked. “ You’ve got a lighted one in your hand now.” The scarecrow looked at the cigarette in his hand, took the one out of his mouth and looked at that, then remarking something about getting a drink stumbled down the steps and staggered back to the bar. “ That chap,” said Mr. Brown, “ came into £50,000 not long ago ; he had plenty of money before that, he’s got a farm about thirty miles from here, comes in every six weeks and drinks himself blind ; nice fellow when he’s sober, been to Oxford and all that.”

A few minutes later I was sitting with Madame enjoying the excellent dinner that was on the table, while Suzanne enjoyed an equally welcome one under it. Poor Madame! how delighted she was to speak her native tongue and how she lamented over the spoilt dinner, ordered for 8.30 and it was now an hour late and still no sign of the Masons. Presently Mr. Brown joined us—an old friend of the house as Madame said; full of guile he directed the conversation so as to oblige unsuspecting Madame to pronounce English words beginning with H for the pleasure of hearing her skip them out, as she invariably did. At 10.30 the Freemasons turned up, fifty-two of them, and tired out I escaped to my room. Alas! it was only separated from the dining-room by a thin partition wall; for an hour there was a clatter of plates and knives and forks, then much stamping on the wood floor, the speeches had begun. Seven times did I listen to the singing of "For he's a jolly good fellow," followed by more stamping. Then I think I dozed off only to wake with a start. There was a fearful noise going on outside, voices and motor horns mixed. By my watch it was 4 A.M. The voices and the noisy horns melted into the distance and again I tried to sleep, only to wake with a start at six under the nightmare delusion that my train had gone off without me.

As I dressed I heard the voice of Madame rousing the house boys in voluble Swahili; soon after I joined her. "Are they not impossible, those men?" she cried. "At four of the morning they go to the Club to eat a breakfast of bacon and eggs!" I

went out to have a look at the road down which we had come the previous evening. Perfectly straight, at one end I could see the railway station, at the other it seemed to melt away into grass and space. On either side were the ditches deep and dirty, backed by a row of pepper trees. Two other roads precisely the same cut it at right angles; they also melted away into space. A few tin bungalows raised off the ground on fat stumpy legs, and that was all.

"This is not beautiful this town," cried Madame, "and behold here comes one—alas! he is not recovered. I say to him—see, I will send a boy to carry your valise, but no, he refuses, he is here." Together we watched one of the previous night's revellers tacking from the hotel to his car. The ditch lay in between, certainly there was a bridge with which to cross it, wide enough for most, but not for one who had spent the night not wisely and only too well. After several false starts, several pulls-up on the very edge of the ditch, he finally got across, only to run into a motor that had just come up with what I thought for a moment must be two Indian ladies in it, one dressed in pale yellow and one in pale blue. They scrambled out and I recognised Mr. Brown and a friend, lightly clad in pyjamas and dressing-gowns. They had been on a spin round just to clear their heads. My train was due to leave at ten; in the meantime we sat amiably in the entrance passage cum bar, the stout man dispensing tumblers of brandy and ginger beer mixed, with which the pyjama-clad gentlemen were beginning the day. I asked after the scarecrow and was told that he had spent the night in an

armchair dead to the world. Just before I left for the station he turned up with a half-empty bottle of whisky under his arm. Very carefully he backed up against the doorpost and then took off his hat most politely. Unfortunately once started he could not stop. As I walked up the road, my last sight of him was of a man still in the rags of the night before clutching his bottle in one hand and taking his dilapidated old hat off with the other, while, with the pale blue pyjamas on one side of her and the yellow ones on the other, Madame stood waving her hand and calling out "Au revoir." Altogether it had been one of the oddest evenings I had ever spent and most amusing.

A little later I parted with Suzanne; she was going to what I knew would be a very happy home, but all the same I left a bit of my heart with the dear little dog. For a time—after the parting—I could take no interest in anything, but gradually I found myself absorbed in looking at the country out of the railway-carriage window and later on at my next-door neighbours.

The country was beautiful, and owing to the recent rain the grass was luxuriant; great stretches of pasture like an English park and quite as green, varied with woods, sometimes native forest, at others acres of eucalyptus or black wattle trees for supplying wood for the railway engines. The train crawled slowly up to the highest point on the line, the Mau summit, 8321 feet above the sea, and then went quickly down the farther slope that falls away right down to the Victoria Nyanza 5000 feet below. The air at 8000 feet was decidedly

chilly even with a bright sun shining, and I quite-believed the white people living there required thick English clothes and big fires at night. What amazed me was the way the natives stood the cold, clad only in a bit of cotton or a few skins. Like most primitive people they evidently loved going in the train, but had to be locked into the railway carriages to prevent them jumping out and committing suicide on the line in their excitement. They were squeezed into the carriages as thick as they could go; once in they sat with faces of ecstasy talking hard the whole time. It was very funny to watch them at the railway stations. A dozen or so clutching their spears would run wildly up the platform, their skin cloaks streaming behind them, in fact very little cloak in any sense of the word; frantically they would try to get into a locked compartment already full of their friends; defeated they would run all the way back again; after running several times up and down, the guard would stroll up calmly, unlock a door, and the spears and their owners would tumble in and sit there until the guard chose to let them out again.

Once while we were waiting at a station another train came in going the opposite way to ours. It drew up with a compartment opposite to where I was sitting; in it was an Indian family of some distinction. The principal member was an elderly person, very fat, with a hooked nose and three double chins; he wore a tight black frock-coat with straining buttons over dirty white cotton trousers. With him were two small boys with yellow faces, and a dreadful young man with a short

black beard like a frill under his chin ; he too wore white cotton, none too clean, but was further adorned with a pair of socks in wrinkles round his ankles and a shiny pair of black dancing pumps. This interesting family were having luncheon. A servant of sorts brought in a tray of what appeared to be rice and meat, he put it down in the centre of the party who fell upon it, shovelling it into their mouths with their fingers ; they did not appear to possess a spoon or fork between them, nor to require one. It was not a pretty sight and I was glad when my train moved on.

As we got nearer the Victoria Nyanza, big black storm-clouds formed behind us. My first sight of the lake reminded me of a fjord in the south of Norway, there were the same little islands and low hills, but no little white houses on them. Over the water was the long line of an angry red sunset, and behind me a sheet of grey rain coming down the valley and the distant sound of thunder.

I wanted to leave my things in the station cloak-room and with just my suit-case for the night get to the hotel before the storm finally broke. But oh ! the slowness of that Indian clerk ; it seemed to me he dawdled on purpose. However, I got to the hotel before the rain began ; it was like a large meat safe, for verandahs and all were entirely caged in with wire gauze to keep out mosquitoes.

Soon after I got there torrents of rain and fearful thunder and lightning shook the place as, by the feeble light of one candle, I tried to make myself tidy for dinner.

The next morning I was early on board the

steamer and watched the passengers arriving by the through train from Mombasa. One little girl, plump and dark and about seventeen, seemed to be in difficulties with the black boys carrying her baggage. I asked in English if I could help her, a small sad voice replied in French that alas! she knew not a word of English. This was a Greek girl going out to marry a young man settled in Uganda. Until we parted at Jinja, where I handed her over to the care of another Englishwoman, she never left me. Poor little girl! she was going to marry a young man whom she had only seen three times, taking with her a white satin frock and a wreath of sham orange blossom in a most insecure-looking box. I hope she is happy.

The Victoria Nyanza to me was a disappointment; a maze of small islands made night travelling dangerous I suppose, for the ship tied up at 10 P.M. till daybreak. At 5 A.M. I went on deck to see Mount Elgon, too far off and too low on the horizon to be impressive. One could still at a great distance see the distinct outline of its crater. The islands in the lake were low, vivid green with sprouting grass after the rain; they appeared to be deserted, most of the inhabitants wiped out by sleeping sickness; the survivors had been moved by the Government to more healthy parts of Uganda. Now as the islands are supposed to be healthy once more, the natives are to be moved back.

The Victoria Nyanza, at least the northern part of it where I was, is shallow and the water muddy-looking, at any rate in the wet season. At Jinja, where I was to land, the waters of the lake rush

over the Ripon Falls and as the Nile begin the long long journey to the Mediterranean. When I arrived at Jinja the train was waiting for the steamer. I had no time to see anything, but bag and baggage was rushed into my compartment by an energetic station-master while the guard waited flag in hand.

As I had still a very long way to go to get to Lake Albert I thought it best to take advantage of what appeared to be something like a through connection, really I believe from later experience it was nothing of the sort, but a kind of lucky accident. In the meantime I was in a first-class railway carriage with a four hours' run before me and no means of getting anything to eat. Luckily an angel of kindness in the shape of a Deputy Commissioner came to my rescue; I was invited into another compartment where an excellent lunch was spread out, which helped most pleasantly to spend the time till we had crossed the big bend of the Nile and passed the rapids and joined it again where it spreads out into a big papyrus swamp and becomes known as Lake Kioga.

The country we went through in the train was mostly a jungle of small trees and high grass, with very few natives, very little cultivation, and to my surprise hardly any flowers to be seen,—far fewer than in Kenya.

When the train pulled up we were almost alongside the Nile, with a funny little steamer waiting for us, only drawing three feet of water, and to my unnautical mind looking exactly the same fore and aft. My friend the D.C., who was also going on board, introduced me to the captain, a tall, very

thin man with a small pointed beard of the American, Uncle Sam type. Soon after I was invited to come to dinner, which was served in a wire enclosure like a very big bird-cage on the deck, the wire being to keep out the flies and mosquitoes, of which there were millions. It was then that I made a dreadful *faux pas*. We were only three at dinner and, escorted by the captain and the D.C., I was invited to sit down. I inquired where the captain sat. "At the head of the table," he replied in chilling tones, but which was the head of the table—how was I to know? I reasoned quickly that at any rate a ship cannot, or at least does not, go sideways, so took the only place laid at the side of the table, and to my great relief apparently did the right thing. I was unreasonable enough to ask for a bath before going to bed that night; wrapped up in a dressing-gown I was shown the way by a boy belonging to the ship; we squeezed past the boilers, then past the kitchen, stepped over several natives asleep on the deck and finally crawled down a steep ladder into a dark hole, on one side of which was the bath. Unfortunately I asked for hot water and suggested the boy should turn it on for me. There was an explosion somewhere in the pipes and out came a rush of inky-black cold water and a family of the largest cockroaches I have ever seen; they were brown and two inches long, and had two hair-like whiskers on their heads the length of their bodies. I was so engaged in dodging them that I forgot the pipe, and the boy and I were nearly wet through, when the rush of cold water stopped suddenly and then burst out again, this time boiling hot.

We spent twenty-four hours on Lake Kioga. Why "lake" I cannot imagine, for it is only a bewildering tangle of waterways in an enormous papyrus swamp. Once the little steamer stopped to allow the cook to buy fish for our dinner. Against the side of the papyrus wall that seemed to hedge us in on both sides was a native in a dug-out, a canoe made of the hollowed-out trunk of a tree. He paddled up to the side of the steamer absolutely in his birthday suit and hideously ugly, yet he understood the value of a coin, no strings of beads for him. Several fish, each four pounds or so in weight, were transferred from his canoe to the steamer and then on we went.

Masindi Port looms large on the map, really it consists of a couple of tin huts, a few native ones and a small landing-stage which, when the so-called lake is high, is under water so that the steamer gaily passes over it and up the road beyond, runs up against a telegraph pole or anything that is handy and lands cargo.

Some of the valuable machinery for the Kilo gold-fields in the Belgian Congo goes this way, and strewn on both sides of the road were quantities of iron and steel wheels and other things rusting away and already useless. It seemed a pity to see these costly things, representing so much money, having got so far, ruined for want of proper transport arrangements.

It was very hot on Lake Kioga and still hotter at Masindi Port. When I landed there a blazing sun cast a shimmer over everything, while three Ford cars, their hoods off in an effort to keep them

cool, throbbed near the landing-stage, while a small crowd of natives, shining with heat, struggled with the cargo.

A run of thirty miles on the best road I had yet seen in Africa landed me at Masindi itself the same afternoon. The driver of the Ford car was an ex-officer, a major in the British Army and also owner of the one and only hotel between Lake Kioga and Lake Albert, or beyond for the matter of that. He was also a sportsman, for on our way we saw a couple of guinea-fowl on the road. Out jumped the Major and shot one. "There is our dinner tomorrow," he said, as he put the bird into the back of the car. A little farther on we disturbed a lovely little gazelle; again the car was pulled up, but before the Major could get out his rifle his dog, perched up behind on my luggage, jumped out of the car and gave chase. The little gazelle fled up the road but could find no opening in the dense wall of grass five or six feet high on the edge of the road. Doubling back it tried to dash past the car, but here was the chance for the dog. The little gazelle was caught by the leg, the Major rushed up with a knife and operated in the ditch, while I felt very sorry and rather sick.

As ever there was a sad lack of wild flowers. I saw none. On each side were low hills, small scrubby trees and rank grass, bright green, and waving handsome tufts of flowering heads, like giant oats.

Several times we saw the tracks of wild elephant, where herds had crossed the road quite recently and cut a track like a steam-engine through the grass.

A more dangerous country in which to hunt big game I have never seen, and I was not surprised to learn that quite recently a well-known sportsman had been killed by a wounded buffalo.

Masindi is the headquarters of a small band of European officials who run an enormous tract of country ; they were even more kind and hospitable than most of the officials I had met, which was saying a great deal. They live in trim little bungalows with little gardens full of European flowers placed in a circle round a golf course and two lawn-tennis courts, the one and only hotel to which the Major took me being not far off.

I was eating a delicious tea, consisting mostly of clotted cream and pineapple, when a young Belgian official, the only other occupant of the hotel, presented himself to me, delighted to find somebody to talk to, for he "had no English." The poor thing was bored to death, being held up at Masindi by the fact that the largest of the two steamers on Lake Albert was out of action, and the whole work had devolved on the other, a tiny steam launch no larger than those that take family parties of six or eight for day trips on the Thames. Of course I was held up for the same reason, and for a week M. Malherbe and I enjoyed the hospitality of the kind officials of Masindi except for two nights when I went to bed with a chill and, merely as a matter of precaution, sent for the doctor. "Malaria," said he, poking a needle into my finger and taking a blood slide. "I think not," I ventured to remark, giving my reasons. "Have you ever had malaria?" asked the doctor in acid tones. I had

to confess no. "Ah!" said the doctor, and I dared say no more. All one day I stayed in bed while the doctor searched the slide under the microscope. Thankful I was when he had to confess he had found no malaria microbes. "You had better come and see me again on your way back from the Congo," he said cheerfully; "you are sure to have acquired a satisfactory collection of them by then."

While the microbe hunt was going on there were three new arrivals at the hotel—missionaries, said the hotel boy who brought me my tea. "Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix," sang a voice from a room on my left in a robust tenor voice. "Say, Felix, what is 'bring hot water' in Swahili?" said a voice on my right. "Missionaries?" I thought to myself, "not much." I went into breakfast the next morning full of curiosity. M. Malherbe was the first to come in; he had spent the evening playing bridge, had lost ten shillings and was feeling depressed. Then came in a dapper little lady and her husband who turned out to be an oil magnate from U.S.A. touring the world. Close behind them came a remarkable figure whom the oil magnate introduced as a Count—doing Africa on behalf of a Balkan newspaper, "who give to me £20,000 to write many articles," added the Count. "I thought you told me 20,000 shillings," corrected the oil magnate. "20,000 francs," replied the Count in a sad voice, helping himself to eggs and bacon. He was about thirty-five, I should say, short and broad-shouldered, and dressed most unsuitably for equatorial Africa in a thick tweed

shooting coat, green velveteen breeches and pigskin gaiters, and wore an enormous gold signet ring the size of a two-shilling-piece bearing the arms of the family he adorned. When later he added a pith helmet with a bright blue feather at the side of it, had stuck a big knife into one of the gaiters, and carried a walking-stick in size and weight like a young tree, he was indeed an object that filled the eye.

"We met at Nimule on the Upper Nile where the Count shot fifty-seven lions in one day," continued the oil magnate, who seemed to act as a sort of showman to the Serbian. The Belgian, who knew Nimule well, showed signs of polite surprise. "Vat for you say I not speak the truth," said the Count, addressing the American and rising like a fish to a well-baited hook. "I write much for the newspaper—good—they think of Africa and lions—lions and Africa—good—I go to Africa, therefore I must kill lions—more good. I write them I kill fifty-seven in one day, why not? Fifty-seven is a good number, good for me, good for everybody—*voilà*." It sounded unanswerable.

In the evening the Count sang to us, tenor songs from the Italian operas. He sang till the rafters rang and the bats whirled round frightened by the volume of sound. "You know what to live for here—now?" asked the Count. "Killing lions," I replied, thinking of the fifty-seven. "No—love!" said the Count, thumping his chest with the gold signet ring. "Serbian?" asked the American. "No, Spanish, I speak Spanish very good, I can say 'I love you' in twelve languages, but I say it best

in Spanish. I write a book. I will show you." The Count disappeared and returned with it. "Adventuras Amorasas," I read on the front page, by the "intrepido exploratore," then followed a name to me both unpronounceable and unspellable, and a list of the countries in which the "intrepido exploratore" had had the adventures, including Manchuria and Afghanistan! I felt the fifty-seven-lion episode must shrink to nothing compared with the contents of that book.

The following morning after an hour of weighing of luggage and counting of change by an Indian Babu, M. Malherbe and I got into a Government motor lorry for a forty-mile drive through Uganda to Butiaba on Lake Albert, the two Americans and the Count coming to see us off and wishing us *bon voyage*.

XVII

THE road was excellent but the day very hot. Our way lay through plantations of bananas, tapioca and coffee. Often we went through forests so thick with the undergrowth that it was impossible to move off the road unless a path was cut with knives. Where there was no cultivation there was high grass, and in the distance were low hills and small trees; no flowers and few butterflies, but several times we saw most lovely little birds, bright scarlet, like sparks of fire, looking like big butterflies as they fluttered about in the sunshine. Quite suddenly we reached the top of the escarpment overlooking the lake. A hundred miles long by twenty to twenty-five in width, it lay below us pale blue under the tropical sun. On the far side opposite to us was the Belgian Congo, a range of high mountains of a deeper blue.

The motor lorry thundered down the hill where in places the road had been partly washed away, and we arrived on a flat bit of land. There we found a few native huts, an Indian store, and three little European houses by the edge of the water, their corrugated iron roofs dazzling bright and looking fearfully hot. This is Butiaba that looms so large

on the map and is the headquarters of the Lake Albert Marine. A Commander, head engineer and second ditto—white men all of them—control and direct two little steamers, one of which was sitting at the moment solidly on dry earth, waiting for wood and iron to be sent out from England for repairs, which from what I was told had some sort of chance of being completed in about twelve months.

My friend the Belgian was on his way to take up an appointment in the Belgian Congo on the opposite side of the lake. From what I could make out he was to fill in himself the rôle of five Government officials with the pay of one; he had a friend at Butiaba, a compatriot, who combines in himself the double capacity of Belgian Consul and representative of the Kilo gold-mines. He, most kindly, had sent word by a boy that directly M. Malherbe and I arrived we were to go to his house. It was only a short distance away, but the heat of the sand as M. Malherbe and I walked to it nearly burnt the shoes off my feet. We had a most kind and hospitable welcome, but it was a shock when the Consul told us that the little steam launch due back the day before had not arrived and that nobody knew where she was nor what had become of her. There was no other means of getting across the lake, no hotel, no rest house. For two nights I was obliged to impose myself on the kindest of men and camp out in his spare room, until the launch at last chose to put in an appearance.

There was absolutely nothing to be said in favour of Butiaba except perhaps that there was no lack of fresh water from the lake. Just a few stunted

trees in the distance, a few tall palms rattling their leaves like dry bones in the hot wind that came up the lake with the sunset. Clouds of mosquitoes and burning tropical heat, sticky and damp, and this I was told was the cool season of the year.

Finally the little steamer made her tardy appearance and word was sent us, as the only passengers, that she was to leave at 4.30 A.M. the following morning and that we were to be very punctual.

In the darkness of the early morning before day-break we stumbled along the narrow path to the landing-stage, the Belgian Consul coming with us, for he too had business on the other side of the lake. The little launch had a tiny upper deck on which I could not stand upright with my hat on my head, and one tiny cabin below into which the four of us, the two Belgians, the engineer and I, squeezed ourselves to eat a meal of bacon and eggs. At the back of the boat, behind a pile of wood for the boilers, lay a dozen natives rolled up head and all like sausages and sound asleep, and behind that again two barges we were to tow across the lake.

Though we were punctual to the moment we did not leave Butiaba until two hours later. The little launch puffed and snorted, and the two barges got mixed up with the landing-stage and required much talking and much pushing with poles to get them free. When finally we got off we went due south, seeing no islands, no fish, no birds except one pelican and some fishing eagles. Always a range of mountains on each side of us, higher on the Belgian side than the British, and culminating at the extreme southern end of the lake in the huge block of

Ruwenzori, the snow-topped "Mountains of the Moon," then as generally hidden under clouds.

It was late afternoon and slightly cooler when I first set foot on the soil of the Congo. Accompanied by the two Belgians I scrambled up a steep bank on the top of which were the three houses that constitute Kasenye. Again there was nowhere for me to stay, the rest house being then used as a temporary store. However, I was introduced to a tall and portly gentleman with a short black beard, and was told that for the time I was to consider myself his guest. We walked together towards one of the three houses while he talked to me in bad French mixed up with much Italian, and told me he was a Sicilian, and for ten years had lived in this tiny place, for most of the time entirely alone, acting as Doctor, Juge de Paix, Port Officer, and goodness knows what else besides. He told me that, when he first came, it was jungle right down to the water's edge; he had to clear a space himself on which to build a grass hut. Later he built the house I stayed in. It was made of bricks that he had made and burnt himself. The walls only went up half-way to the high grass roof, like all the houses out here for the sake of coolness, and the windows were round at the top like those in Italy. There was one large room, the sides covered with shelves on which were rows of bottles and drugs of all kinds, and a general smell everywhere of a chemist's shop, for my host was principally occupied in combating sleeping sickness which was very bad in this part. On other shelves were numbers of books, almost all the classic authors were there,

mostly excellent French translations of the Greek poets.

The first night we had a little dinner party, for the Director of the Mines at Kilo had come down to meet the Belgian Consul. The director had had an accident on his way down to the lake and had broken the axle of his car; he did not seem to be particularly fortunate in his chauffeur, for he had another accident on his way back the next day; while during the day two more cars belonging to the mines succumbed either to the bad roads or the bad driving or a mixture of both. It was owing to these accidents that I was detained at Kasenye, for all the motors on the one road in the country belong to the gold-mines, and it was thanks to the director that I was able to get to Kilo.

I do not recommend Kasenye as a health resort; it is very unhealthy, full of mosquito and tsetse fly and frantically hot. My camp bed was put up for me in the only available place, a spot remarkably like a cellar and exceedingly dark. Half the space in it was taken up by bags of rice, coffee and flour, hung by ropes from the roof to keep off the rats which it did not do, for one came regularly every night for a meal of rice and in the intervals played with my slippers on the brick floor. There were plenty of beetles as large and as nimble as those on Lake Kioga, and the bats flew backwards and forwards all the night long but seemed to make no difference in the clouds of mosquitoes.

I always got up at sunrise to look at Ruwenzori, the only time in the day to see it. High above the lake the snow peaks would be the first to catch

the sun and turn rose pink, later I could see the blue outline of the whole of the mountain. It looked sad somehow, as if it had shed big tears and they had worn the deep furrows down the sides. Later in the morning white cotton-wool clouds would rise from below and slowly creep up until they hid the peak. It is only in the wet season that Ruwenzori can be seen as a rule, so I was very fortunate.

To leave the house between 8 A.M. and 4 P.M. was almost impossible, the heat was prohibitive. I sat in the big room, while a stream of natives came for treatment and were attended to in the verandah outside, but refused the doctor's kind invitation to come and see some particularly interesting case. I have no love for horrors and avoid nasty sights unless I can be of use. The doctor and his orderly were mostly occupied in making up injections for sleeping sickness and malaria, both of them coming in and out of the big room, and moving about swiftly with bottles and syringes.

At about 8 A.M. the doctor and I had a cup of black coffee and a banana, at 11.30 or 12 an excellent luncheon of Italian dishes cooked to perfection by a native trained for years by the Sicilian. Between 1 and 3 was the daily siesta. The cats and dogs and the servants curled up in the coolest places they could find, the cocks and hens drooped in the shade. There was a silence and a hush over everything. Even the lake turned into a shimmer of grey as if the sun had burnt all the colour out of it, and the mountains seemed to fade away. Only the bats in the darkness of the high grass roof ceaselessly flew to and fro, and big black flies, the size

of hornets and as dangerous, darted in and out and searched the walls with a view to making their nests.

Between 7 o'clock and dinner time the doctor would read aloud; with his massive frame perched on the edge of an insecure-looking chair he would roll out his favourite bits from Tacitus, Ovid or Euripides with a very pronounced Italian accent, stopping every now and then to say "Dieu, que c'est beau." I sat huddled up trying to be appreciative and polite, and only too miserably aware of the mosquitoes that left my host alone and concentrated on me. Nearly suffocated by the heat when muffled up sufficiently to defy them, I alternated between mummy-like wrappings and frantic waving of my handkerchief. At 8 we dined—hot soup and meat cooked with vegetables, followed by cheese and cucumber. In tropical heat digestion is much slower than in cold countries, and two meals a day seemed ample. After dinner I made a clean bolt of it and with many apologies said good-night and took refuge under my mosquito curtains, going to sleep to the horrid little tune sung by the defeated blood-suckers.

Twice a week there is a small local market. It takes place on the level space in front of the Sicilian's house. The principal commodity was salt. The soil in certain parts of this country is strongly impregnated with it. This the native women wash out with water and dry in the sun, making up the salt into neat little balls tied up in grass. Much salt also comes from Uganda and reaches the Congo *via* the southern end of Lake Albert. The other things for sale consisted mostly of dried fish, manioc

roots and sweet potatoes. The fish came from the lake, generally only half cured and exceedingly smelly. I saw no particularly large fish, but they have been caught up to two hundred pounds in weight and over, and at the proper season take a bait freely. But the would-be fisherman must arm himself with strong tackle or it will be broken every time. They told me the proper tackle is the same as that used for tarpon fishing. Manioc is a rough variety of tapioca and forms an important crop here.

I noticed considerable difference between the Uganda natives and those this side of the lake, living under Belgian rule. The first, rich, well dressed, have an independent air with more than a hint of defiance about them. The Congo natives, not so tall nor so well clothed and much darker in the skin, have the puzzled look of intelligent monkeys. In old days they were badly treated, but under the present king all that is changed, and many Belgians will tell you the natives are spoilt now and that they are suffering from swelled head. That they are quick-tempered was obvious, they were quite ready to spring at each other's throats during the market; only the big Sicilian walking about constantly amongst them and roaring at all and sundry served to keep the peace. The day after I got to Kasenye, coming suddenly round a corner, I came across my host administering justice with a bamboo on a soldier lying flat on his face before him on the ground. Feeling I was not wanted I took myself off at once, but so far as my experience went I should say the natives are kindly treated now by the Government authorities.

In many parts of the Congo there is a lot of preventable disease amongst the natives, but so there is also in Uganda and Kenya. It was introduced years ago by Arab traders from the north and Europeans must not be held responsible for that.

The country round is full of buffalo and lion; there are also plenty of antelope, reed buck I fancy from the description. I heard no lion while I was on the shores of the lake, but one killed a half-grown buffalo close to Kasenye while I was there. The natives found the carcass before the lion had had time to eat much of it. They put the remainder into three barrows and brought the pieces with great joy to show to the Sicilian, kindly offering him a bit; though the buffalo had only been killed the previous night the meat was already exceedingly high and I was glad when the barrows moved on.

It was so fearfully hot at Kasenye that I was pleased when a Ford motor arrived to take me away. I sat in front with my luggage at the back and perched on the top of it my newly engaged boys, a head boy to wait on me as my personal servant and a small boy to wait on him, which I was told was necessary and the usual thing. I did not like the looks of either of them, but at the time there was no choice.

When we started I wondered how we were going to get up to the top of the mountain, two thousand feet high, that stood up like a wall in front of us. Kasenye is roughly about three thousand feet above the sea; Kilo, the headquarters of the gold-mining industry, about two thousand more. This range of

mountains forms what one may call the backbone of Africa, for once on the top it is thrilling to notice the rivers flowing east and west, east into Lake Albert and west into the Congo. It was a fearful struggle for the little car, the road cut in the face of the mountain, in places out of the solid rock, zigzagged up, with never a level space; constantly we had to stop to pour in water, for the car got so hot, while oil was poured in by the quart.

At the top the view was superb. I could see right across the lake into Uganda, while to the south lay the head of the lake and the river that joins it up with Lake Albert Edward and forms part of that chain of lakes and rivers that stretch from Lake Tanganyika to the Nile. At a little grass house on the side of the road we stopped as usual for more water for the car; out came an exceedingly good-looking young man who in admirable French asked me to come in and have some coffee. As it was very hot and I was very thirsty I was glad to accept, and sitting in the verandah drank some delicious café au lait and had a talk with the young man who now spoke to me in English with a perfect accent and more accurately than I did; he asked me at once about the political situation in England, telling me he took in several magazines including the *National Review* to keep up in what was going on. I was amazed, and wondered what turn of fate had sent this intelligent young Frenchman—for he was no Belgian—to work as a transport officer in this remote spot.

It is a hundred kilometres between Kasenye and Kilo; it took us eight hours to do it. The whole

way the views were superb, range after range of mountains covered with luxuriant grass, enough to feed thousands of heads of cattle and said to be excellent for sheep. Too high up and too cold for the tsetse fly, it seemed a pity to see that grass going to waste. Only occasionally did I see a few native cattle and a few goats, while in places the grass was being burnt off by the natives to allow them to plant sweet potatoes. In the valleys between the hills were rushing streams and fine trees and in the far distance to the west I could see forest, the outskirts of the great Congo forest stretching away to the western ocean.

XVIII

AT first we met but few natives, but later came into a thickly populated district ; they were the darkest negroes I had ever seen, black and shiny, looking to my eyes more like the black of a newly polished kitchen range than any natives I had ever seen before. For the most part they wore some sort of a rag fore and aft, or a bunch of leaves, but many were absolutely naked and all exceedingly ugly. Twice I saw women with hideously deformed upper lips ; in old days this was done on purpose to prevent them being taken as slaves by the Arabs. The upper lip is pulled forward until it projects quite two or three inches from the teeth ; to keep it thus a pottery or wood plaque is inserted into the lip and remains there for life. Only elderly women are seen thus disfigured now ; thanks to quieter and more settled times the young girls have given up the horrid custom.

Many are the tales of the gold hidden in the ground of this beautiful country. Personally I consider the wealth of it can hardly be exaggerated, though several Belgians told me that in their opinion these gold-fields will be worked out in fifty years' time.

It was some seventeen years ago that the Belgians first discovered extraordinarily rich deposits of alluvial gold at a place now known as old Kilo. Money was put up half by private persons in Belgium, half by the Belgian Government, and the exploitation of the country was taken in hand. The methods of working even now are exceedingly primitive; galleries are dug in the sides of the lovely hills and the soil is carried down to the sides of the rivers where the gold is washed out in wooden cradles; it is then treated with quicksilver which is evaporated by heat and the pure gold sent home to Belgium *via* the Congo, twelve cases weighing forty kilos each being sent twice a month from Kilo alone. There is no such thing as a cyanide vat in the country, in consequence a large amount of gold must be lost. Nor is the quartz touched at present; they have found the reef, and one four-stamp battery was expected to arrive shortly after I left. It sounds ridiculous when one thinks of Johannesburg and the number working there. Whether this amateurish way of dealing with the gold is caused by want of capital or by a wish to limit the output I am at a loss to say, but it is obvious that a selfish policy is being carried out; strangers are not only excluded from working in the mines but everything is done to keep foreigners out of the gold area. Visitors are entirely dependent on the officials for transport either by car or with porters, and there is not such a thing as an hotel in the country.

When I was at Kilo in June 1923 I was told that from fifty to sixty white men and between five and six thousand natives were employed in the mines,

the natives being recruited by agents from all parts of the Congo ; they are paid at the rate of nine francs a month, plus five francs per month for food. There is great difficulty in getting enough workers and they are constantly running away. The labour question is likely to become more and more acute ; for there is no rest for the unfortunate native, he works on Sundays as well as week-days, while too great familiarity with one sex, combined with too much hard work for the other, on the part of the officials, does not help matters.

The history of the Belgian Congo has never been a particularly happy one. Certainly conditions have improved very much lately and the type of official is infinitely superior to that of ten years ago. In Uganda and in a slightly lesser degree in Kenya the impression to the outsider is that the British official considers himself to be put there to champion the cause of the native ; indeed he openly says so, the British settler coming in a bad second. In the Congo everything is done with a view to the mines, the native works in them, and they are carefully guarded from outsiders, while traders are not encouraged, and foreigners, trying to take up land for cultivation, are faced with endless difficulties.

A Belgian estimated the size of this gold-bearing region at four hundred square kilometres. My impression is three hundred is nearer the mark, for from the top of the mountains above Kasenye I could see the end of the hilly country and the plains extending south and west that lay beyond, while the northern limit is not more than a hundred miles at the most from Mahagi, possibly less.

Resulting from the wasteful methods employed here, four mining engineers are constantly prospecting in the neighbourhood of Kilo ; when these report a rich deposit a camp is formed, so that the workings are continually shifting. Already the headquarters of the Director of the Mines, who is in supreme control, has shifted three times from Old Kilo to New Kilo, ten miles away, and lately to Nezi about twenty miles south-east of New Kilo where I saw a large amount of material of all kinds.

North of Kilo, nearer the borders of the Sudan, are the gold-mines of Moto, about a ten days' march from Kilo. They are exceedingly rich and are under the supreme control of a director who, like the one at Kilo, is unassisted by a board or committee of any kind. The mines of Moto are served as regards transport, etc., from Port Sudan on the Red Sea, but I understand the gold from here goes home to Belgium *via* the Congo.

Almost all the material used in the mines at Kilo came before from Belgium, *via* Mombasa, the cost of transport being high, involving as it did seven transshipments from boat to railway or road and *vice versa* during the journey across the three Lakes—Victoria Nyanza, Kiogo and Albert. Also most of the officials used to be sent by this route because of the saving in time, but few go now, nor does much material come this way, the cost of transport having increased so much. It seems as if something must be wrong somewhere that it should be cheaper to send things all the way from Belgium to the west coast, then a thousand miles up the Congo, and finally forty days on the heads of porters through

the great forest, rather than by the Mombasa route. But it gives some idea of the value of the gold taken from this district that it should be able to meet all these heavy expenses and still pay a dividend said by some to be over a hundred per cent.

I was given a most gorgeous house to stay in at New Kilo. Built for the Director of the Mines, it must have cost a fortune, and reminded me of a casino at a smart Continental watering-place, the rooms were so large and had so many big glass windows. Now it is deserted, and my little camp outfit looked very funny as I picnicked in a corner of one of the big rooms. The white men connected with the secretarial work of the mines have comfortable houses built for them in New Kilo. I both lunched and dined with one of the most important officials and his particularly charming wife, one of the five white ladies there. Except for the beef and potatoes everything at those meals had been imported from Belgium, and in Kenya the farmers tell you they can get no market for their butter and cheese.

One day I walked down to the only store in the place to buy food, for I knew I should have but little to live on after I left Kilo. I was surprised at the quantity and price of the things available. The store was packed with tins of all descriptions, quantities of the ever present sardines, English biscuits, unsweetened milk at 1 fr. 50 for a small tin, at prices that compared favourably with Nairobi, and Dutch cheeses, red, the size of cannon balls and almost as hard, which could not be put up in tins and were to be had at 45 frs. each.

Outside was a long queue of wild-looking natives, each carrying two or sometimes three gourds full of palm oil. They had come from the north-west Congo, a three weeks' journey, carrying the oil, which was being weighed and paid for by a white man sitting on the verandah. Those who had received their money were squatting on their heels watching three natives working sewing-machines and giving directions about the making-up of some black cotton with a magenta pattern on it, much in request for the wives of these nearly naked savages. There was not much cut about the garments when finished, just a sack-like arrangement with holes for the lady's head and arms, but the natives were looking on with absorbed attention. I suppose on the effect produced depended their reception by their wives after another three weeks' march through the forest back to their homes.

The one and only motor road in the country ends at Kilo, so I sent in a request for fifteen native porters to carry me and my luggage the hundred miles' journey north-east of Kilo where I hoped to strike Lake Albert again, at its northern end this time. One morning a note was brought me saying the fifteen were at my disposal, and soon after they appeared marshalled up by a superior person in a shirt and a pair of shorts, the porters wearing nothing but a few bits of rag. There also appeared another inky-black personage dressed in a spotless suit of white duck, who had been sent to ask if there was anything else I wanted; he informed me he was from Uganda and disliked the Belgians and their country. He was most intelligent and spoke

good English and tolerable French. The porters were miserable specimens, undersized and, apparently, also underfed. Eight of them were supposed to be going to carry me in a chair, four at a time ; but when I saw them and thought of the hills we had to climb I realised I would have to depend on my own feet most of the way, though I had settled in my mind to make the marches short and had promised them all higher wages than they had ever had before.

The next day I was to start. At 4.30 A.M. I was up ; at 5 the porters arrived. My various bits of luggage had already been packed into convenient bundles, one for each man, each as nearly as possible of the same weight. These were taken out on to the verandah, at once the porters fell upon them, fighting for those they thought looked lightest. Finally we got off, my bath proudly leading the way on the head of a particularly short porter. Towards the end of the line came my carrying chair, just ahead of me and conveniently handy should I want to get into it. Behind me walked my head boy and personal servant, and last of all the kitchen boy playing on a native harp. It was a perfect morning, fresh and cool ; our way lay down a little native footpath into a ravine. On each side there were ferns and grasses sparkling with dew and sending douches of cold water down my back and into my boots as we passed along. There were but few flowers, a pink balsam with single blooms about the size of a shilling being the prettiest.

At the bottom flowed a river deep and swift, coloured red from the gold washing farther up-

stream. The principal rivers just here are the Nezi and the Shari ; they join not far from Kilo and flowing into the Ituri river eventually reach the Congo. Each little valley had its own particular stream flowing down it, its course outlined by the trees growing on the banks, like veins all flowing towards the heart of the Congo. As they get nearer the trees join up and become woods and the timber becomes larger, till it ends up in the monster trees of the real tropical forest extending right away to the sea on the west coast.

Once started the routine each day was much the same. At daybreak I had my breakfast, afterwards I walked for the first two hours when it was generally cold and damp. Later I took to my chair for a bit, getting out and walking whenever the going was particularly bad or the mountain very steep. Hour after hour we twisted and turned and I slipped and tripped up on the little native paths, the surface of them shiny from the soles of bare native feet. It was always either climbing up hill or sliding down, but mostly the former. At times we passed workings where the ore was being taken down in wheelbarrows to the rivers to be washed, but this was within two days' march of Kilo ; after that we saw no signs of mines, abandoned or working.

Everywhere the native grasses were superb. Often ten feet high, they arched over the little paths like slender bamboos. They were in flower and the heads were often a yard long, some like giant oats, others something like ears of barley and about six times as large. Everywhere was elephant grass, which is a slender bamboo and grows quite twelve

feet high. Why it is called elephant grass I do not know, for I am told elephants never eat it.

The first night out from Kilo I spent in a grass house pathetically called a club. It was once a local bureau for the mines, but was given up, and now the seven or eight white men working in the district meet there once a week for a game of tennis. I put up my camp bed in what was called the ladies' room, though there was but one white woman within miles and she was ill. Still there was a faded dressing-table with a cracked looking-glass, and a forlorn-looking box of pearl powder.

A Belgian living not far off at once came to see me and have a talk; he was young and of course connected with the mines. It was curious to listen to him. "Madame, I hate the country, I hate the natives, I hate everything here," he said. "I am cruel, I beat them, because I have an antipathy to them that is *plus fort que moi*." He told me he thought the time not far distant when the native population will rise and wipe out the white men. In any case he thought fifty years would see the end of the Belgian occupation of the country, for by that time he thought the gold in it would be exhausted. "And why should anybody stay here after that?" he asked. Of course he was exactly the type of person who ought never to have been sent to this country, and it was men like him, cruel from racial antipathy and fear, that in old days gained a bad name for the Belgians in the Congo, from which they suffer still.

Curiously enough I had met a native of Uganda in Kilo who also told me he thought the natives

in the Congo would revolt before long. - He spoke of miserable wages and high prices and labour recruited by threats in remote parts ; he told me he received four hundred francs a month and found it hard to clothe and feed himself, and said that all the natives in the district were diseased.

The opinion of a Government official was quite different. He thought the natives not averse to working in the mines, and said thirty francs per month were the average wages earned by them. Moreover, he declared that a paltry three million francs represented the joint net earnings of Kilo and Moto, or a bare $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the capital sunk. He said the expenses were enormous and the wages paid to the hundred and twenty white men employed, sixty at each mining centre, out of all proportion to the earnings, but necessary to induce the home-loving Belgian to leave his native land. He spoke of thirty thousand francs a year as the salary of one of the two Directors of the Mines and of others in proportion. These men were all intelligent, all I believe quite genuine. They struck me as amateurs, destitute of any experience of other countries outside their own, and their opinions therefore are not of much value.

My pessimistic friend stayed a long while, evidently very glad to have somebody to talk to. He was certainly not a cheerful person, for he told me a leopard generally came snuffing round the club directly it got dark, and that the last person who had slept there had to turn out in the middle of the night, for a lot of *safari* ants had come and taken possession of the place. He recommended me to

turn out also, adding cheerfully that he had seen a lot of them about that day. There was no lock on the club door and I wondered why I was not more frightened when my boys left to sleep in some native huts some little way off and I was left alone for the night. However, nothing happened and the following morning I was up before the sun and early away with my porters, the kitchen boy as usual walking behind me playing his harp.

The view that day was even more lovely than before. I was steadily mounting higher and higher, so that at times I could see for fifty miles range after range of mountains, the highest peaks eight thousand feet above sea-level. One saw no precipices, no rocks, but steep grass slopes and narrow twisting valleys, with brown native huts like straw beehives half hidden amongst bananas. That night I camped at 6420 feet, 3400 above Lake Albert. All day I was over 5000 feet and the thin fresh air and bright sunshine combined with the glorious views to make the *safari* enchantingly delightful.

At about 11 A.M., when I had finished my march for the day, I got to a large village of native huts on the top of a high hill. Here I was met by an extremely pleasant young Belgian, who heard I was coming and had come to meet me. He took me to a hut that he had built, for it seemed he was engaged in clearing a way for a Government road that is one day to link up Kilo with Mahagi Port on Lake Albert.

The farther I got away from the mines the greater the improvement I saw in the physique of the natives. In this village called Goli-Kidoko they were superb, like bronze statues. M. Maes

had about four hundred working under him from four different tribes, all of whom up to six months before had been at war with the Belgian Government. They were splendid fellows six feet high, the finest coming from the mountains lying to the east. The tradition amongst these natives is that five generations ago they migrated here from Uganda and beyond; they came round the north end of Lake Albert, where they crossed the Nile and entered what is now the Belgian Congo.

With some slight modifications they speak the Masai language; like them they are herdsmen; they are rich and own large numbers of cattle; like the Masai they live on blood and milk, they bleed their cattle regularly by opening a vein in the neck, the blood is caught in a gourd and drunk fresh mixed with milk, forming, I am told, an almost perfect diet from the medical point of view.

Unlike most tribes they are increasing in numbers and have plenty of children. One chief has seventy-seven, another has thirty-seven boys and has lost count of his daughters. All the men and women are tall and beautifully made. One man from these tribes is a corporal in the native police, he is just under seven feet in height and is not exceptionally tall amongst his own people.

The natives working on the road pay no taxes, their work counting as such. Once cleared, the natives in the villages along it have to keep the road clean. I asked if any of these natives were cannibals and was told that up to quite lately some used to eat their enemies killed in war, not for the sake of the food but so that the courage of the dead

man might enter the eater and make him very brave.

The clothing of the workers on the road as well as the natives in the village was reduced to the absolute minimum. To all intents and purposes it was nil, except that the women wore a bunch of grass at the back, fastened to a string round the waist, which hung down almost to their ankles, and looked exactly like a horse's tail: swaying to and fro as they walked it gave them a most curious appearance. Unfortunately they were very wild, many never having seen a white woman before. They thought my camera "bad medicine," nevertheless I got a snapshot of two of them. I was also introduced to the local chief, an amiable-looking party; in virtue of his high degree he wore an old shirt and a straw hat, half the brim of which hung over one eye and gave him a most rakish look. He was taking keen interest in the distribution of buffalo meat. Trained native soldiers shoot a wild one or two twice a week for the road-makers, a nasty, dangerous job in the high elephant grass.

This nice young Belgian told me the country swarms with both buffalo and elephant; only the morning before I arrived he saw eighty-four elephant cross his new road. There are no lion but plenty of leopard, and he showed me some fine skins. He also told me there are numbers of all kinds of monkeys in the trees by the rivers, Colobus in two or three varieties, chimpanzees and the tiny apes with little hairless faces so easy to tame and such delightful pets. He told me he had one but the natives stoned it to death, for they believe that, if

they are touched by them, they must die. I only once saw a monkey in the forest, a pair of hairy arms round a tree and a brown face peeping at me.

The rivers here are too rapid for crocodiles and there are but few hippos. The whole country swarms with snakes, particularly a very poisonous black variety that grows to a large size. I saw one killed by my porters, who are very frightened of them and are most careful to beat the grass with sticks before walking in it, especially near the forests.

I was really sorry when I said good-bye to the Belgian, after getting all sorts of directions from him as to which way to go. He told me where he had built rest houses for himself on the route of the future road, and in these I decided to stay; especially I was to look out for a Swiss who was engaged clearing a section of the road. This man I met the next day. He told me he had come out for the first time ten years before as a Government employé. Later he had taken up farming, but though he sold his butter for high prices he had to send to Kilo for anything he wanted, a week's journey each way in the dry season, and also he had great difficulty in getting any boys to work for him. We had supper together, the Swiss having one room in the little rest house while I had the other. Like most of them the walls were made of elephant grass bound together with raffia, or something that looked like it, while the roof was grass. We were just at the edge of a great forest, and all night a leopard grunted and roared near the hut. What with the noise it made, coupled with something going wrong with

the legs of my camp bed (three times it collapsed and tipped me out on to the mud floor) I did not get much sleep. At five I was up and at six well on my way, the Swiss walking the first mile with me. I was glad of his company, for my porters had been casting sheep's eyes at Tuju, a village off my route where there is an excellent native market. Once there, probably they would have refused to go any farther and have decamped for home, as is their pleasing custom if they take a dislike to you, or if food runs short; the unfortunate traveller being hung up until he or she can get other porters, which may be a matter of weeks. However, to my great relief they proved quite amenable when we got to the turn, and the Swiss, having told me all and sundry the horrible things that would happen if they were to leave me stranded, went back to his work and I went on alone.

The whole of this day's march was spent in the virgin forest. Several times I had passed through outlying portions of it, but this, my first experience of the real thing, was wonderful and delightful. I went along the clearing made by M. Maes for the new road; the giant trees lay everywhere. M. Maes told me he spent ten days with twenty men cutting down one tree alone. The trunks of several, as they lay on the ground, were more than six feet in diameter. I roughly measured some that were lying near the path; they were eighty feet from the base to the spring of the first branches. Most of them had orchids growing on them, none alas! in flower, also strands of grey moss three feet long.

In the twilight of the deepest part of the forest

there was little undergrowth, but where the sun could reach the ground a tangle of creepers, bracken and ferns. I saw plenty of *Gloriosa superba lutea* in bloom, and a myosotis with small blue flowers quite six feet high. Of birds I saw but few, for all the life of the forest was on the tree-tops far out of sight of travellers below, but now and then I got to a clearing, perhaps on a hill, from which I could look down on the trees extending in a solid mass as far as I could see with my glasses, and floating in the air above them were great eagles, while I heard parrots screaming but could not see them.

Constantly we came across traces of elephants, their feet making curious round holes in the soft earth. The Swiss told me that shortly before we met he had counted six hundred elephant in one herd, but that is an unusual number even here where there are so many. Being unarmed I was not at all anxious to meet any of them, fearing they might charge us, but the noise my caravan made coming along must have frightened them off, for we saw none.

Many times I regretted being obliged to march in the rear of my party. In front I should have seen many more wild animals, but I did not dare risk it, for, if frightened, my porters would be pretty sure to fling down their loads and bolt for home, unless I was there to stop them. I suppose being carried in a chair sounds a comfortable way of getting about a country. As a matter of fact it is not. Excellent no doubt for the liver, I dislike the constant joggle, though it did not make me feel sick as it does some people.

As a rule the porters were very careful, but once they dropped me from sheer terror. That was close to Kilo in civilised parts. A motor suddenly appeared, and the next moment I was on my back on the path and the boys, frightened out of their wits, were hidden in the grass. Luckily the Ford car pulled up at once, it was going very slowly, for it is neither an easy nor a graceful process getting quickly out of a *chaise à porteur*. What I found really trying was the scent wafted to my poor nose from the boys carrying me. Not all the bottles of eau de Cologne in the city of that name could have disguised it, especially when they got hot.

That night I had to sleep in the worst rest house I have yet seen. Two small rooms like cellars and as dark, the walls of wattle and daub, round which the rats ran all night knocking off the mud on to the floor. There were no doors, only a frame of light bamboo leant against the openings; it was very damp and very cold and the dust on the mud floor one mass of fleas.

Much the most serious thing, however, was the absence of sweet potatoes for the porters. In wild places the natives only grow just enough for their own wants, and in this particular village the chief either would not or could not spare me any. Instead a number of pumpkins were brought and put in a row one before each porter, who announced at once that nothing would induce them to blow themselves out with such unsatisfactory food, and really I could not help agreeing with them, but was distracted to know what to do. It was very hot and the porters were streaming, they sat in a long line,

the pumpkins in front of them ; some were scraping themselves with an old table knife, not an attractive sight, the others were looking at me and jabbering, now and then poking the despised pumpkins with a black forefinger to show their disgust. Finally we compromised on beans, but they only ate them under protest and because there was nothing else. I was very anxious, not knowing how I was going to get on in the future, in fact after that day I had constant difficulty with the food question and it spoilt a great deal of my pleasure.

XIX

FEARFUL of the porters leaving me I was careful always to be the first up in the morning. Generally there was a thick grey mist as in Scotland that hid everything till 7 o'clock when the sun came out. How beautiful it was! All day we alternated between high hills and valleys with trees and streams, seeing many villages of prosperous-looking people. Until quite lately they defied the Belgian Government and even now refuse to work in the mines. Those that are rich enough to be able to pay for them have several wives, but the Government are trying to discourage that by charging no tax for one wife, five francs for two, ten for three, twenty for four, and so on. The girls in the villages wore the usual tail hanging down behind them, but here made of love-lies-bleeding, the same plant we have in England. They eat the seeds made into a kind of porridge. Another favourite food is a large fungus about six inches across, esteemed a great delicacy. They grow wild in the grass. Whenever my porters saw any they dug them up with great joy.

Most of these tribes acknowledge a chief, but others only a medicine-man or witch-doctor. On my way I was shown a high hill with several big

villages on it. This is the mountain of the rain-makers. In time of drought the villagers go to them with offerings, as they are rich and own large herds of cattle. To bring rain they make certain incantations, but are careful to guard themselves in case of failure by saying they will not guarantee that some other persons may not be making stronger magic than they.

This day I managed to get sweet potatoes for my porters, but on the next I could get nothing. It was only towards evening that I managed to buy half a sackful of maize. Thankful I was to get it. The porters too were delighted. They made a big fire in a native hut, and the whole seventeen of them shut themselves up in it with a big cooking pot and the mealies, and there they remained until they had eaten every grain. In the morning they came out and sat grinning at me, looking more than ever like a lot of elderly monkeys. Slowly scratching their fronts they announced that they had an agreeable sensation of repletion inside. Each one looked as if he had swallowed a melon, for with no clothes on it is impossible to dissemble your contour lines. I suppose they must have felt quite comfortable, at any rate they looked happy enough.

It had been a dull grey morning, later on the mist turned to rain. Quite suddenly I came upon a white man who turned out to be a small trader in the cheap cotton line, the first I had seen in this country, where the Government seems to do all it can to discourage such persons. The trader and I had a talk and I asked him about food. He spread out his hands, shook his head, and announced there was

none. "What would you, madame?" he said. "These people grow nothing, nothing; if they have a good crop of millet, they make beer and the whole village is dead drunk for a week. See! I myself am thin, I have not enough," and he showed me his belt in proof of the truth of his words. It really is true, the people here live absolutely from hand to mouth.

It was depressing news, and I felt very dismal, especially so as I was pretty nearly wet through. Luckily we came across some native huts and into these my porters plunged, loads and all, and to prevent being drowned I followed them. The hut I was invited to enter was large. At first I could see nothing, so thick was the smoke from a fire in the centre of the floor; there was no chimney of any kind and the only light came from the door just about three feet high and the same in width. I made out nine of my porters huddled round the fire taking turns to smoke a pipe. A gourd is filled with water, through this the tobacco smoke is drawn with much sucking. When the smoke arrives the smoker fills himself with it, and shutting his eyes gasps and chokes and shows all the symptoms of semi-suffocation, after which he coughs and spits liberally, announces that he feels much better and hands on the pipe to his neighbour.

A very good-looking young woman, one of the wives of the owner of the hut, was sitting on the floor making one of the little hoods of split bamboo that the women use here for young babies. The baby firmly fixed on its mother's back is entirely hidden under the hood, only its little legs and arms

can be seen sticking out. The young woman was not the least upset by our advent, she went on with her work, while I, once I had got used to the smoke and darkness, could not take my eyes off her, but kept watching the play of her muscles under her brown skin, for she was in figure a Venus de Milo, and as always when there is perfect symmetry one was not conscious of a want of clothes.

Later on we made another start, and again my thoughts were centred on the food question. However, my luck was in. As we got nearer to the rest house I saw a crowd of porters and a white man, who, astonished to see a white woman, came to meet me. This was the D.C. of the district, and thankful was I to see him, for I knew he could order up the food I wanted with one wave of his hand, as indeed he did. The D.C. had his wife with him ill with malaria, so he and I dined alone together; he told me the thunderstorms at certain times of the year are terrifying, and are worse still in the centre of the Congo forest; some men and many women cannot stand them and have to go back to Belgium, their nerves give way entirely. Seldom, said the D.C., does a thunderstorm pass over the country where we were then without at least one native hut being set on fire and somebody killed. He told me I had been exceedingly lucky having struck what they call the short dry season, a few weeks, generally about a month in June, after which the rains and thunderstorms begin again and last until November, when there are three months of dry season without a drop of rain, many dust storms and not a blade of green grass anywhere to be seen.

Certainly the climate of the Congo cannot compare with that of Kenya.

The next day I arrived at Mahagi. In the rest house there I found a Belgian miner who was on his way back to Nezi. He was a superior sort of person and told me he was the first to strike the reef there; he said the gold quartz is exceedingly rich and there is enough gold in sight now to keep a big working going for thirty years; at the present rate for one hundred. The gold seam is only from a hundred to a hundred and fifty metres from the surface and the workings are quite dry. He said he had no trouble with the natives working in the mines, but had difficulty in getting enough timber properly cut for pit props and so on.

This man seemed to me to know more about his work than any of the others I had met. He said he hated the Congo and had only been induced to return there by the promise of a big salary. Like the French these Belgians have intense love for their native land, and ask for nothing better than to spend their lives there. It strikes me more and more that it is the English who are truly the nomads of Europe.

At Mahagi I paid off my porters; they were dreadfully frightened at the idea of the "big water" and refused to go anywhere near it. When it came to the point I was quite sorry to part with them, they were just big black children. I shall always think of them squatted before me ceaselessly demanding sweet potatoes, while that irritating child, the cook's boy, invariably chose that moment to begin playing his harp. I paid them well and

consider it was a compliment—I am sure it was meant as such—when they announced they were pleased with their money and felt fatter than when we left Kilo.

The next day I was to have other porters to take me to Mahagi Port, so that I should not fail to catch the little launch due twenty-four hours later to take me across to Butiaka.

When the new road is finished and travellers begin going along it I do hope for their sakes the rest houses put up by the road-makers will be burnt down with their inhabitants, and that new ones will be put up in their place. All the way I have been tormented by the fleas. As the Frenchman said, "*Ce n'est pas la piquûre, c'est la promenade qui m'agace.*" Out of the cracks in the mud floor they came in regiments and battalions, and tired as I was they often prevented me from sleeping. Keating had no terrors for them, even splashing the floor with water until the dust upon it was turned into mud did not do much good. Luckily they are only tiresome and unpleasant, not dangerous. The rest houses in Uganda are infested with a variety of tick that carries the microbe of one of the most deadly fevers. Luckily this high country is too cold for them, and I saw no mosquitoes. Another disadvantage from an English point of view was the difficulty of getting water for my bath.

These native villages are almost always placed on the top of a hill, for observation and for the better discomfiture of enemies tempted to attack them. The new road and the rest houses are also on the hills, often a quarter of a mile or more from a stream.

The ordinary Belgian does not worry about these little things, but to those used to a daily tub it is a deprivation.

Again a serious consideration is the lack of food, not only for the porters but also for Europeans. Practically everything has to be brought from a distance. At certain times in the year eggs are plentiful. When I was there they were hard to get, and but few chickens were to be had. There was no white flour in the country ; there had been none for three months. Vegetables too were not to be had except from a private garden, some of the white men growing things for their own use, but the majority are too tired when they come in from long hours in the mines to have any inclination for work elsewhere. A few private people, generally ex-miners who have decided to remain on in the country, have tried farming with a view to selling to the authorities at Kilo, but they do not seem to succeed. One who had a contract for the supply of beef told me they made some complaints as to the quality of the meat he supplied and refused to pay. As the Kilo mines are to all intents and purposes a Government affair he had no redress and got no money, and now the beef is supplied by native tribes through the local D.C.

It seems a short-sighted policy this snubbing of the small traders and farmers ; without them there can be no permanent settlement in this country. If the gold-mines of Kilo and Moto were shut down to-morrow I believe in a short time the Belgians would quit the country, and in ten years' time it would lapse back to the same state in which they

found it when they first took it over. At present the natives show none of the trading spirit of the Uganda people or even of the Kikuyu and Kavirondos. I noticed my porters were curiously indifferent to money, their minds were concentrated on the food itself, and they were quite ready to sacrifice their pay and make off without it when the supply showed signs of failing.

There is only a native path twisting in and out of the mountains, up and down steep hills for the fifty kilometres between Mahagi and Mahagi Port. I made a push to get through in one day, I was so anxious not to miss the boat. The view in the morning was as beautiful as ever, and later as I got lower down and nearer the lake it got much warmer—a perfect African night—the fireflies flitting about in the tall grass, and quantities of glow-worms on the ground. I did not know then that there are plenty of lion just about here, and should not have felt so happy had I known a woman and a boy had been killed on this path only a fortnight before, and another woman so mauled that she had died soon after. I went through many villages with fine-looking men and women; the girls had given up the long tails of love-lies-bleeding and here wore three or four strings of what looked like leather bootlaces hanging down behind, while nearer the lake they wore nothing at all. I had ceased to remark on the absence of clothes, having become so used to people with none, until I saw a girl (one postage stamp was about the extent of her clothing) meet a native boy “dressed” about the same. They stopped, bowed most solemnly and shook hands,

just as if they were in Piccadilly. It struck me as exceedingly funny.

At last late in the evening I arrived at Mahagi Port ; all I could see in the darkness was the outline of a grass house and in front of it a European eating at a small table. By the light of his lamp I saw he was very small with an enormous crop of hair ; it stuck up inches high at the top of his head, and his bushy beard reached his waist. He introduced himself to me as a sleeping-sickness doctor temporarily acting as Port Officer, Custom-house official and head postman, in fact he was the only European in the place. In my turn I introduced myself and explained I had come to catch the little steamer the following day. Then I got a shock, for I was told the launch had come in the previous day in charge of the Belgian Consul instead of one of her proper officers, and was afterwards going to fetch the Governor of Uganda from Nimule on the Nile, and nobody knew when she would next call at Mahagi Port. There was nothing to be done, no other way of getting across the lake. I realised I had just to make the best of it and wait till the launch chose to come for me, all the same not feeling too happy, for the shores of Lake Albert are infested with tsetse fly and malaria, and it is the last place where anybody would choose to stay.

The next morning the doctor and I had breakfast together, not much of a meal, only black coffee and a couple of hard-boiled eggs each, no bread for there was no flour to be had anywhere. The view from the rest house was superb. Eight hundred feet below was the great lake, far away on the other side

of it the hills of Uganda misty and blue. On the left the end of the lake melted into the Nile, and still farther to the west was the low hill that marks the northern boundary of the Belgian Congo and the beginning of the British Sudan.

Below the rest house the slope appeared to be as steep as the side of a house, and at the foot of it is the so-called Port, which really does not exist, all there is to be seen being a pile of stones that represent the landing-stage, a shed, and a few native huts. Soon after breakfast a café-au-lait-coloured gentleman turned up with the longest, thinnest legs I had ever seen and armed with a most peculiar-looking gun; it seemed he and the doctor had arranged to go out shooting and I was invited to go with them. In a rash moment I accepted and off we went. The path down the mountain side was horrible, only a track, and in the wet season a watercourse; it was a mass of loose stones and very steep. How the natives, laden with heavy bits of machinery for the mines, manage to get up it I cannot imagine, and then they have fifty kilometres of almost equally bad going before they get to Mahagi and comparatively level ground. Somehow I got to the bottom, to the so-called Port, and then the shoot began. First went the doctor with his forest of hair and with his native boy behind him, looking like the pictures of Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday; then came the café-au-lait gentleman, carried by four porters in a hammock with his long thin legs considerably higher than his head. I in my chair came last, in what I thought was the safest place, for I looked on both the sportsmen with deep distrust, and

was no better pleased when a native policeman reputed to be a dead shot also joined the party with his gun. Besides these there were at least thirty natives, some had spears, some only sticks, and all in a great state of excitement and talking at the top of their voices. Altogether we looked a most imposing cavalcade as we straggled along through the tall grass at the edge of the lake, effectually frightening away any wild animal within hearing. Lying out in the lake were eight hippo well out of range. The sight of them delighted me, for though I had been near them so often this was the first time I saw them as they lay in the water with just their heads sticking out, while nearer us, in fact all over the place, were the hideous heads of crocodile. Presently there was a pause, a crocodile had been seen close to the edge; off went the doctor and the gentleman in the hammock, with the native policeman they stalked the crocodile in true Red Indian fashion. There was a fearful row, all three guns went off, the crocodile lashed about in the water and then disappeared. The next day it was found quite dead, it was twelve feet long.

We then continued the chase, and got to the edge of a forest as the doctor called it. I should have said a small wood, about half a mile in extent. The sportsmen hunted about and found a beautiful Colobus monkey in a tree; there was much stalking, more guns were fired, but, to my great relief, the monkey went off untouched. We then went after hippo through giant reeds at the edge of the lake, but found nothing, though there were traces of them all over the place. Instead we saw lots of crocodile

—hideous brutes, I did not mind their being killed.

We also saw several birds looking like large black cranes. Both sportsmen took deadly aim at them as they stood at the edge of the water, but missed them clean. The doctor had killed one a short time before. He showed me its head which he had kept. The bill was black, curved, and about six inches long, on the top was a curious lump of horn like a toucan, black like the rest of the bird. I also saw several of the lovely little scarlet birds I had noticed at Butiaba. Flying about too, everywhere, were black dragonflies with the usual transparent gauze wings, looking exactly like miniature aeroplanes—pretty things; I believe they eat the mosquitoes of which there are millions. There were also most beautiful kingfishers, purple in colour, and many little black and white birds who, the doctor told me, have a spur on their wings, and he believes they catch small fish with them, but I found that hard to credit. I watched some carefully with my glasses and they seemed to me, at least, to catch the fish in their beaks.

It was most interesting watching the natives fishing in the lake out of dug-out canoes with tackle and hooks they had made themselves. While one man stood on guard with a spear in his hand to protect them from the crocodiles, the other fished with a line and a float attached to the end of it. They took good care to keep out of the way of the hippos, who sometimes go for "canoes," tearing great holes in them and drowning the natives or letting them fall victims to the crocodiles. I also saw wickerwork baskets about a yard across

coming to a point at the top. A native wades into the water up to his knees, it is dangerous to go deeper than that, and immediately he sees a fish he drops the basket over it, putting in his hand from the top to pull it out.

At last it got too dark to see, so we turned towards home, the boys pushing and pulling me up the terrific hill to the rest house, eight hundred feet by my aneroid. A beautiful young moon was shining and numbers of fire-flies flitting about, while the old hippos were roaring defiance from the lake below. The whole scene was most picturesque. Personally I felt thankful nobody had been shot, for taking it all round I had seldom if ever been out with a more dangerous party.

The following day the doctor announced that he had to return to his hospital to look after his eighty-four patients, all suffering, poor things, from sleeping sickness. After that he intended returning to Mahagi Port to resume his duties there pending the arrival of the launch. He kindly suggested I should go with him, a proposal I accepted gladly, for I did not like the idea of being left alone with the gentleman of exotic extraction who spoke no language known to me, and was camping in a native hut not far away. Also my head boy had turned out most unsatisfactory; he was a hemp smoker, a vile drug, which sends natives quite mad. I was glad to pay him off and see the last of him, the harp-playing kitchen boy electing to go with him. Besides I was glad of the opportunity of seeing more of the country.

The doctor tells me his district extends about

fifty miles along the side of the lake and about thirty miles inland. He showed me a mountain about eight miles off and told me his hospital lay the other side of it. There were three ways of getting there: one along the edge of the lake is too risky as it is infested with tsetse fly; another path ran straight over the top of the mountain and down the opposite side; the third path lay round the foot of the mountain on the land side, and this was the way we were to go. As usual I was carried in my chair, and glad I was not obliged to walk, for the path—if you can call it a path—was very rough. It ran along the side of a river, up and down the most dreadful places. I had to hold on with both hands to prevent falling out of my chair, my feet often higher than my head as my boys carried me up a particularly steep place.

At times we had to cross the river; the bridges consisted of a few round poles without a vestige of a hand-rail of any description. Each time we crossed I had my heart in my mouth and felt sure I was in for a cold bath, but nothing happened. There were high hills on each side of the valley and a dense mass of tropical vegetation by the river—palms, bamboos fifteen feet high, and ferns in quantity, besides groves of bananas.

The doctor told me there had been two miners prospecting in the river bed, who told him it was paved with gold, but nothing further had been done. The doctor repeated what I had so often heard before that this country is full of gold everywhere. The Belgians hardly know what they have got themselves, and have as yet barely scratched the

surface of the country. I myself saw gold many times where the rain had washed across a native path; it could be seen shining. Often Belgians would show it to me. "Copper!" I would say cheerfully. Indignantly they would assure me there was none in the country, nothing but iron and gold. The natives also would pick up a handful of soil and show me little bits of glittering yellow and tell me it was what the white men dug out of the earth.

Until the doctor took this valley in hand it was full of fly; most of the inhabitants had died, and the survivors had been afraid to remain, but now they were beginning to come back.

There were evidently many leopards about, for we saw so many traps for catching them. The bait is a live goat which the leopard does not get, but instead finds himself inside a strong cage of heavy logs where he is pounded to death by the natives with sticks and stones.

As we got nearer to the hospital we began to see native huts and plantations of manioc; out came crowds of delighted natives to greet the doctor, the women with shrill screams of welcome, and the men drawing my attention to the fine crops of native food all planted by him on land that before had been infested with fly. The doctor's house was on the top of a high hill, the hospital a little farther away. Escorted by a number of natives my chair was pushed and pulled on to the top. I am never tired of remarking on the beauty of this country, with the solitary exception of Japan the most lovely I have ever seen. All round were ranges of moun-

tains and two thousand feet below the blue waters of the lake.

The doctor's house was a long low building with the usual grass roof; at one end was my room, its whitewashed walls adorned with horrible drawings in red and blue chalk done by the doctor to instruct his hospital orderlies in the rudiments of anatomy. At the other end were the doctor's bedroom and the surgery, and in the centre the living-room with big doors opening on to the verandah.

No sooner had the doctor arrived than the local chiefs came to call, followed by a mob of their retainers; they brought their own stools and sat for hours talking to the doctor. They brought presents too for him, and the floor of his sitting-room was littered with eggs, bananas, unfortunate live chickens, and bowls of butter. Outside sat the lesser fry, one and all they were discussing the doctor's new wife, for like all savages they had at once come to that conclusion about me, aided by the cook who, going ahead of us, had announced my coming and further imparted the information that the doctor had paid thirty cows for me. The general feeling seemed to be that the doctor had been "done" over the bargain; at any rate it was decided that he ought to have begun with the offer of one cow, the usual price, and gone up by degrees. The cook was flattering enough to say I might be expensive but I was worth double the only two other white ladies he had ever seen, upon which the audience stared at me harder than ever, and I suppose speculated as to what the other two were like. The cook is an unmarried man and is saving

up to buy a wife, so I think it was really very nice when he went quietly to the doctor and said he was distressed to think of the great expense the latter had been put to seeing that he had but two cows and the price he had to pay was thirty, and offered four goats as a loan towards meeting the deficit.

Natives never seem to tire of watching white people. As the doctor and I sat eating our evening meal at least twenty sat on their heels at the edge of the verandah gazing at us. Only the flash of a set of white teeth, or a voice out of the warm darkness showed our audience were there. One of the chiefs remained all dinner time; by virtue of his rank he sat on his stool inside the room exchanging what I imagined to be very broad jokes with the doctor, but of which I understood not a word.

The next morning I heard a lot of talking, and peeping through my shutters saw the poor sleeping-sickness patients being injected by a hospital orderly under the eye of the doctor. The disease first shows itself by the presence of small glands feeling like peas floating under the skin on the inner side of the collar bone near the top of the shoulder. The parasites then attack the nerves of the spine, beginning at the lower end and working upwards. When they reach the base of the skull the case is hopeless, for the sufferer goes mad, the so-called sleep being only a state of coma which alternates with a sort of frenzy at the last. All the patients had come over for treatment except four who were not expected to recover. They were a pitiful sight; turned out of their villages, they had come themselves to the hospital, their only hope. Many seemed

very bad, shaking and trembling, and the tears pouring down their cheeks, but the doctor was confident he would cure them. Twice a week they are injected in the big vein on the inside of the elbow. They did not seem to mind it in the least and kept their eyes glued on a handful of salt which each was given afterwards in a bit of paper. This they love, and lick the paper carefully for any grain that may remain.

At the other end of the garden were more sufferers, mostly from skin diseases. Directly all the sleeping-sickness patients had been disposed of, the little table was moved over to them and they were taken in hand. Having no stomach for horrors I avoided that part of the garden and instead went to see a boy trying to milk the doctor's cows. Very reluctantly a cow was pushed by main force into a complicated sort of cage of bamboos, which the doctor flattered himself prevented her kicking. With much hard work the boy succeeded in getting about one teacupful of milk, the cow struggling and plunging about the whole time.

All day visitors and patients poured in. I had great difficulty in making out which were which. All day the head orderly injected natives in the first stages of sleeping sickness, who come in from their villages for treatment. Only the week before a poor woman had been brought in with her baby, both nearly dead from starvation; they had been pushed out of their village by the other natives and were found only just in time to save them. All day the little doctor rushed in and out of his surgery or sitting-room, the floors littered with chickens, pea-

nuts and natives; in the intervals of dosing his patients he explained he was packing, otherwise putting a muddle of surgical instruments, food and clothing into big native baskets, including several sections of bamboo filled with live tsetse flies and corked up with a few bits of grass and leaves—most insecure in my opinion.

There are three varieties of these flies: the smallest confine their attentions to human beings only; the second variety, rather larger in size, are dangerous to both animals and human beings; while the third variety, the largest, only attack animals. They are much the same to look at, dark grey in colour and very like English horse-flies. They are easily distinguished from the ordinary horse-fly, for when in repose their wings fold in along the sides of their bodies and do not stick out at all.

Leaving the doctor and his visitors I walked up and down outside watching a rainstorm coming up the lake below me. The day was grey and stormy, but now and then a gleam of watery sunshine would light up the mountains, while in the distance were black clouds and distant thunder and lightning. All combined made a wonderful sight. Later on the storm grew worse and the wind became a gale. As I lay in bed I wondered if the roof would stand the strain or be blown clean away, while the lightning showed up the horrid pictures on my walls and the thunder echoed amongst the hills. I think it was about ten when the dogs began to bark, the storm having slightly subsided. "Leopards," I said to myself. I heard doors open and expected to hear a shot but there was none. The next morning I was

told one of the poor mad things from the hospital had crawled up to the doctor's door to die there. "They always do that," he said. It seemed so pitiful that just at the last the instinct of the poor crazy brain should take it to the door of the one friend it had known. "They tell me I ought to put them into strait-waistcoats," said the doctor. "See! they are going to die, there is no hope for them, why make them more unhappy than I can help? They have always been free, and I let them die free—voilà!"

There was a fearful and awful state of chaos the next morning when we started on our return journey to Mahagi Port. The doctor insisted on taking back a large glass of honey; this a boy carried on his head and led the way with it. Behind him came the other porters carrying the oddest collection of things. The doctor in his chair had a crowd of villagers walking beside him, while I was a great source of interest and amusement to a lot of young girls; they ran beside my chair and shrieked with delight when I patted them on the head or shoulder. We were going back a different way, over the big mountain and down the other side of it. I did not realise what we were in for; perhaps it was as well.

The first part of the way was through native villages, all very tidy, no rubbish lying about near the huts, and fine crops of millet, manioc and mealies. Farther on were trees and high grass, not particularly fine timber, but many of those curious trees with seeds like giant cucumbers hanging by long strings from the branches. When we got to the foot of the mountain we had to walk, for it was fearfully steep,

the path absolutely straight up with never a zigzag to make the going a little easier. There was no sun but still I was hot and tired when I reached the top. It was too dull for much of a view, but the doctor showed me the dim outline of a large forest about twenty miles away on the side of the lake. In this forest live a tribe of which very little is known, except that they are very wild and very dangerous, and are wonderful shots with poisoned arrows. The doctor believed they were a small race, but had never seen any of them, and indeed told me very few people have, for they never leave their forest and nobody knows whether they grow crops or live on wild fruits and roots and any animals they are lucky enough to kill.

While on the top of the mountain a storm came up from the lake, and though I had a waterproof and a rug I was soon very wet, for nothing will really keep out tropical rain. Unfortunately the way down on the farther side was even worse than the way we had come up,—big inclines of bare rock so steep and slippery from the rain that it was dangerous to try and walk down in boots. The natives with their bare feet could cling like limpets, and uncomfortable as it was in my chair I did not dare to get out of it. Many times I was lowered down a face of rock like a wall, and I had no eyes for anything but the dangers ahead of me. Thankful I was when we got into trees and long grass. As usual there were but few flowers to be seen, but I saw several times a beautiful shrub which I feel sure must be a yellow poinsettia.

At last we finished with the mountain and crossing

a big river arrived at the side of the lake. The hippos had been having a jolly time there amusing themselves by demolishing three native canoes drawn up on the side. I noticed the villages we passed had fences round them to keep off the hippos, but we only saw about half a dozen lying on the top of the water some way out on the lake. The doctor fired at them, and though he did not hit them they were dreadfully frightened, rushing backwards and forwards in the water, seeming uncertain as to where the danger came from. It was dark when we got to Mahagi Port and we had still the steep pull up the hill to the rest house. Worst of all, still no news of the launch.

There was no doubt I got a chill that day from the wetting on the mountain. I felt ill that night and the next day felt no better, but was able to crawl to the door to see what we estimated then to be five hundred hippos charging up the lake. We concluded the Governor of Uganda was combining a little shooting with his other duties, and these hippos, frightened out of the Nile, were taking themselves off elsewhere. They were a fine sight as they swam up the lake, their big square noses sticking out and their feet churning up the water into waves.

That evening I fell down on the floor with a temperature of 105°. The doctor picked me up and what happened after that I do not know, for I was clean off my head, with malaria aggravated by a chill, and when the launch did arrive was too ill to go on her. News travels in Africa with a rapidity that is simply amazing: the district D.C. miles away heard about me and sent an American missionary

doctor to see me. He arrived after I had been ill about a fortnight, and thanks to soaking me in cold water and injecting me with forty grains of quinine per day got me well enough to be carried down and put on the launch. It was a hot journey across to Butiaba, still worse were five hours in a motor lorry after I got there, prone on a stretcher unable to move. The army doctor at Masindi thought I was going to die on his hands, and after five days there pushed me into another lorry and sent me down to Masindi Port where I was carried in a blanket on board the steamer. How kind the people on board were to me! two Englishmen and two Belgians, they carried me on and off the steamer, on to the train at Numasagali and off it again at Jinja. There I found a hospital, a first-rate doctor and a nursing sister. The hospital is close to the Ripon Falls on the Nile where there are plenty of hippos and crocodile, and lion live on the opposite side of the river; often I heard them roar.

"What a noise the hippos made last night," I once said to the doctor when he paid me his morning call. "Yes," he replied. "So tiresome of them walking on the golf course and spoiling our putting greens." After seventeen days in hospital I was well enough to go on to Nairobi and later to Mombasa and take a ship for home. "Bless my soul! I am glad to see you," said a man on the railway platform, grasping my hand. "Do you remember me helping to carry you in a blanket? When we put you on a stretcher at Jinja I said to my friend, 'There is a poor lady going west, let's go and drink a bottle of beer.'"

The Belgian tsetse-fly doctor kept most of my

things, my Zeiss glasses, my aneroid, etc., thinking they would not be of any further use to me, I suppose, and that he might as well have them as anybody else. Of course it is an annoying thing having one's demise anticipated, in fact it's exceedingly annoying, but after all there are other ways of looking at things than through Zeiss glasses.

I went to Africa intending to stay three months and I stayed eighteen. It was bad luck getting malaria on Lake Albert, but we have heard of influenza in England! One pays for everything in this world. The question to ask is—was it worth it? And I reply—a thousand times yes. Whatever may happen afterwards one's recollections are for ever one's own. Those who have felt the charm of Africa will hear her calling, calling; and those who have drunk of the waters of the Nile go back there.

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