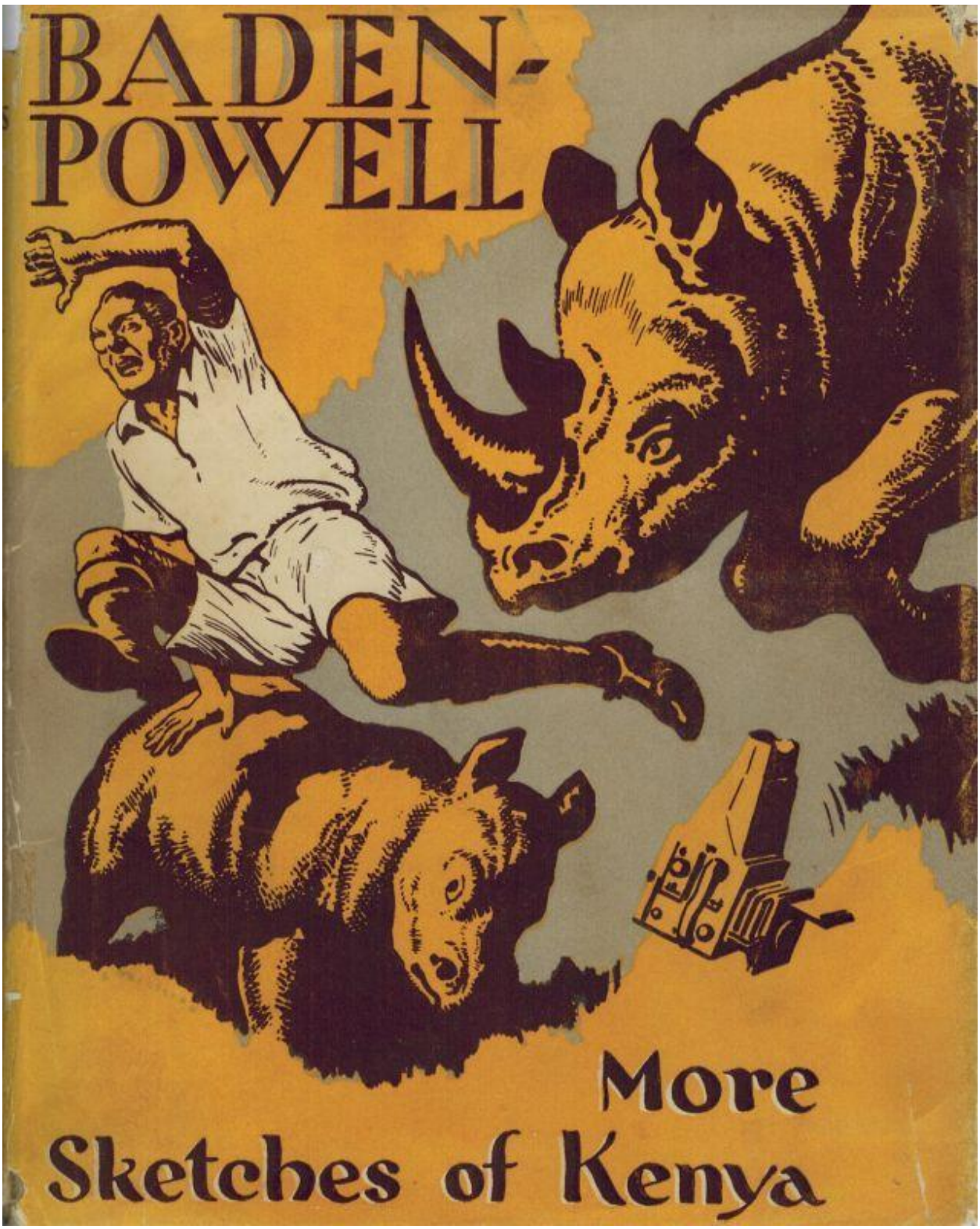

BADEN-
POWELL
More
Sketches of Kenya

Editor's Note:

The reader is reminded that these texts have been written a long time ago. Consequently, they may use some terms or use expressions which were current at the time, regardless of what we may think of them at the beginning of the 21st century. For reasons of historical accuracy they have been preserved in their original form.

If you find them offensive, we ask you to please delete this file from your system.

This and other traditional Scouting texts may be downloaded from the Dump.

MORE SKETCHES OF KENYA

MORE SKETCHES OF KENYA

By

LORD BADEN-POWELL
OF GILWELL, O.M.

Chief Scout

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1940

FOREWORD

"Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee."

This is written in the Book of Job, and you will find that it comes true if you take an interest in animals and birds. By watching their ways and doings you can learn a lot from them. The more you become friends with them the more they will be friendly with you, and this is as it should be, since, after all, you are all fellow-creatures, having been created by the one Creator.

In this book you will find a few odd yarns about the birds and beasts of Kenya which I hope may interest you.

BADEN-POWELL OF GILWELL.

Kenya,

22 February, 1940

CONTENTS

A LAND FOR ANIMAL-LOVERS

"The Nearer you are to Nyeri, the Nearer you are to Happiness."

Well, I am in Nyeri, close to Mount Kenya (which gives its name to this country of Kenya), and certainly I am happy here.

Mount Kenya has a snow-clad craggy top, but its side and lower slopes are covered with thick forest. And such beautiful forest too. When you walk about in it you have to watch your step lest you tread on an elephant – er – well, I mean the other way about, of course.

We went the other day to see the forester in charge. He lives in a charming cottage on the top of a high bluff in the forest, with magnificent views in all directions, up the mountain peaks and down across the sunny plains for miles and miles.

He was formerly in the Coldstream Guards. What a change from Chelsea Barracks to this mountain home in the forest! He looks every inch the Guardsman, but he is ever inch the forester, proud of his trees and proud of his wild animals.

"Elephants? Oh yes, sir, they come into the garden now and then. One stood this morning outside the gate wondering whether he should come that way or through the hedge. He chose the hedge because it was the shortest road to the potato patch. He didn't care about flowers, nor would he touch carrots, and to turnips he'd turn up his nose. But potatoes! They were a very different pair of shoes."

If every you want your potatoes dug, the forester said, send for an elephant. This is how he digs. He uses the double tip of his trunk as if it were two big fingers, then he blows a strong blast down his trunk and blows away the earth round it.

The elephant also likes the taste of young buds off trees; these he breaks off carefully with the delicate tip of his trunk. But one bud would not be much use to him, so he cleverly contrives to curl his trunk round so as to hold these little twigs till his "two-fingered" tip has collected enough to make a mouthful.

Another delicacy that an elephant is fond of is a rose. He twiddles his trunk round the branch of a rose-bush and strips all the leaves as well as the flowers off it and eats the lot. He doesn't seem to mind the thorns. He says to himself (the elephant is very poetical, you know):

"As for them prickles
They only just tickles."

I have often wondered what scientific gentleman could see in the elephant that made it a relation – as they say it is – to the little hyrax. I see the connection now. It is that both the elephant and the hyrax like eating roses. Whenever there's a bowl of roses on the table Hyrie goes to it and helps himself. Even if we put it away on a topmost shelf he'll get there.

He can climb any old where. We have a big polished telescope on high legs and Mr. Hyrie's delight is to climb this "greasy pole" and sit on the top of it.

I have told you about the hyrax in at least two other books. He is rather like a small rabbit, but without the long ears, and he has no tail at all. He has very short legs with little hands instead of claws or feet. So he can climb easily.

I told you, too, that people who are clever and know everything about animals say that he is related, not only to the elephant, but also to the rhinoceros and the horse. I suppose this is because he is no more like a horse or a rhino than he is like an elephant! But I do see a certain likeness to the rhino because, like him, the hyrax often gallops off, then stops to think, then wonders why he was in such a hurry and where did he mean to go.

Anyway, our Hyrie is a delightful pet. He is very tame and will sit for hours contentedly in one's lap or on one's shoulder. He favourite food, as I have said, is a rose, but he is also glad to eat apple-peel, carrot-tops, mulberry leaves, cigarettes and chocolate. Besides these he attacks us eagerly first thing in the morning for a cup of tea. He doesn't want milk – that is kitten's food; he like the more grown-up drink of tea with sugar in it.

So if he is related to the elephant because they both like roses, he must be related to us too – because we all like tea!

HOW TO CATCH AN ELEPHANT

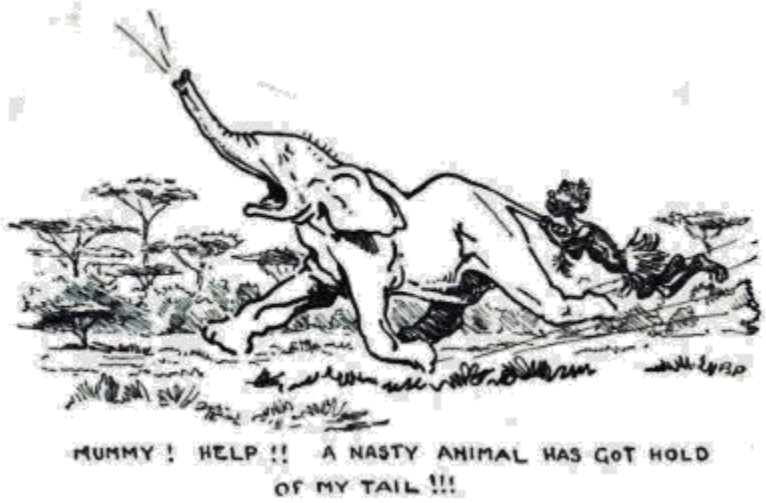
My friend here, Tommy, went out last week with an elephant hunter and about a dozen native hunters, to capture an elephant. They caught three. Many people will tell you that the African elephant cannot be tamed like the Indian elephant, but that is all my eye and Betty Martin (whoever *she* was).

In the Congo country they have a school for training wild elephants, and they have caught and tamed over a hundred there. The fun is catching them. In India, you know, they capture them by means of a keddah, that is, a big circular stockade into which the herd of elephants is driven by beaters, through a wide entrance.

But here in Africa they do it in a far simpler way. They don't bother about stockades or an army of beaters; they just go straight to the elephants and catch them. Quite simple!

Believe it or not, on this occasion Tommy actually saw a native catch a young 'phant by the tail, and though the beast ran away with him he was continually rounded up by the white hunter (who was mounted) galloping in front of him and firing his revolver into the air and thereby turning the runaway back to the other hunters, who soon had him secured. Their tame elephants came up and quickly comforted the youngster, and in a very short time he was quite happy and friendly with his captors.

The hunters are all very plucky fellows and good runners. They don't wear very much in the way of clothing beyond a rope wound round their waist, for tying up an elephant when they have caught him.

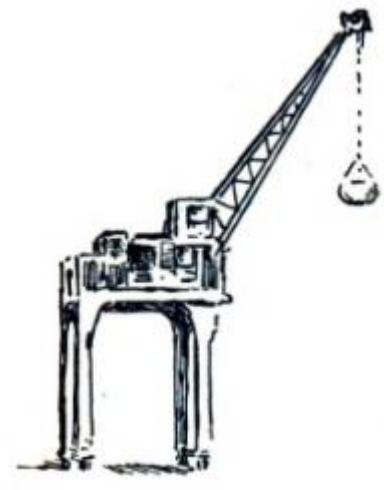


When hunters sight a herd of elephants they rush at it shouting and yelling. The herd, surprised, dashes away in alarm, closely followed by the hunters. The older beasts run so fast that the younger ones can't keep up with them, and soon get left behind with the hunters close at their heels.

The hunters only want to catch young ones, as they are the easiest to handle and to train. So the separate two or three of the young stragglers and surround them, put their ropes round their legs, and tie them up to trees until their own tame elephants come up. The young captives are delighted to see these elephants, and as soon as their ropes are undone they join with them and trot off contentedly to camp with them.

The hunters had to run about four miles before they succeeded in surrounding their three young elephants. They had no sooner successfully placed these among their own animals than they were suddenly surprised by a big bull elephant who had gallantly turned back to find out what had become of the youngsters. When he found the hunters had them he was furious, and charged them, with his great ears pricked forward, looking terribly fierce.

It was open country, and there was no escape for them; the only chance to safety lay in shooting the elephant. So, as he rushed upon them, one of the hunters took a good aim with his rifle and killed the gallant monster with a single well-placed shot.



IN HIGH SOCIETY

You know the story of the little girl who rushed into her mother's room crying, "Mummy, Mummy, there's a cow tossing Daddy!"

"Don't be silly, dear," replied Mummy, "that isn't a cow, it's a bull."

Well, if that little girl had been with me yesterday when I was having my picnic lunch out in the bush, she would have cried out to me, "Whatever are those ships' cranes doing out here in the bush?" and I should have replied, "Don't be silly, dear, those are not cranes, they are giraffes."

But I am bound to say that they looked exactly like the cranes you see at the docks.

Yes, there they were, five of those dear absurd great beasts, and as we sat silently munching our grub they took no notice of us but just loitered about in a leisurely way. They were evidently a family party. The old bull was a fine proud-looking fellow, a good seventeen feet high – a Colonel, I should think, by the look of him. Then there was his wife, Mrs. Giraffe, a nice easy-going, lazy sort of person, lagging behind the rest of the family. Then there was a jolly little young one, all legs and neck, who we thought must be called Geraldine. The elder sister, Ermyntrude, was practically grown-up, about as tall as Mamma, but very lively and skittish; and with her was her boy-friend Erasmus, a very handsome young fellow who rather fancied himself in his bright coat dappled with big brown blotches.

The Colonel had gone a good way ahead of the others. It was his lunch-time, and he had arrived at a tree not quite as tall as himself, so that his head appeared above it while his body and legs were concealed in its shade; and there he was eagerly gathering the topmost leaves with his tongue and chewing them with the greatest gusto. Between each mouthful we could almost hear him saying, "Come on, Matilda, this is an excellent lunch-bar!! Geraldine, where are you? Come here, dear, there are some very good lower branches for you."

But Matilda, a long way behind her family, lay down and groaned, "I can't go any further, my sore throat is worse."

Well, when you have a throat that is eight feet long, you may bet that when it is sore you suffer from a pretty considerable ailment.

Geraldine said, "Poor Mummy! I'm so sorry, but I really can't come and rub it again. I'm quite stiff from doing it this morning and Daddy is busy at lunch. Why not get up and try a bit of lunch?"

"Well, but where is Ermyntrude? Can't she come and help me?"

But Ermyntrude was busy. She and Erasmus – and this we actually saw – were standing side by side, their muzzles together as if kissing, and they were gazing tenderly at each other with their large soft eyes.

Suddenly the voice of Mamma broke in upon their dream. "Ermyntrude! Ermyntrude! How could you! In public too!"

As we saw that Ermyntrude had, in some curious way, twisted her head round Erasmus' neck – a kind of tangle which was put a stop to by Mrs. Giraffe laboriously rising to her feet and leading the family off to join the Colonel at lunch – her sore throat forgotten in the prospect of a good feed.

DAVID *v.* GOLIATH

There is a quaint little ruin of a stone building near here. You could hardly call it a house, since it was only the size of one room. I have often wondered what it had been.

The other day one of the early settlers here in Nyeri told me about it, and of an exciting adventure he had had there.

A friend of his, also an early settler in this part of Kenya, had built it. He was determined to have a stone house, rather than the usual wattle-and-daub hut that most settlers used. Even if it had only one room it was built of *stone* and was therefore a "house" – and, anyway, what was the use of having more than one room? You couldn't be in two places at once!

So he had his one-roomed palace and was happy. He carried out a good Scout motto: "Make the best of what you've got and don't go crying for the moon."

One night my friend went to have dinner with him, which conveniently acted as kitchen, dining-room and sitting-room. After dinner the two were sitting smoking their pipe contentedly

and swapping yarns at the fireside, when suddenly there dashed into the room the fox-terrier, and close behind him a great leopard, eager to catch him.

To a leopard a little dog is what a good stick of chocolate is to a boy.

The leopard forgot his "chocolate" when he suddenly found himself in a room with two men and a fire. His one aim then was to get out of it against as fast as he could! But in his confusion he had forgotten where the door was. He dashed from one side of the room to the other in a frantic state. The two men meantime took up chairs to defend themselves.

At last the beast found the door, but he found it the wrong way round – for he rushed at it from the back and so slammed it shut. And there he was, with two men and a dog, all shut in together, and he furiously angry. It was a high old jamboree for all of them!

My friend knew that when you are having a tough argument or a quarrel with anybody it is good business to leave a way open to your opponent to get out of it, so he saw that the best way to settle the leopard – since he had no gun handy – was to give him the chance of a get-away.

It was a pretty risky job, but he faced it and made a dash to open the door; but as he did so the animal leaped at him and caught his head in its claws.

The natives here say that the leopard's way of attacking is to tear your scalp from the back of your head and drag it over your eyes, so as to blind you for the rest of your fight – which then won't last long. (N.B. Having learned this stunt don't go and use it when next you have a fight with anybody, as it is only a thing for leopards to do!)

So when my friend was in the claws of the leopard, the owner of the room, keeping his eye on the leopard, put his hand out behind him and felt for a burning log in the fireplace, meaning to thrust it down the leopard's mouth. But meantime the gallant little dog, seeing his master attacked, rushed into the fray and seized the enemy by the hind leg, and gave him such a nip that he let go of the man and turned on his small assailant – a sort of David and Goliath game.

This diversion gave my friend the chance he had needed, and in spite of the shock of being attacked and the loss of blood from his torn scalp, he kept his wits about him and, dashing to the door, he flung it open.

The leopard, seeing the opening, was not slow to take it and fled out into the night, with his small tormentor still nipping at his heels.

My poor friend was in a very bad state. There was no doctor within a hundred miles, but with great difficulty he was transported to the town, and there he lay in the local small hospital and was tended by an Indian compounder for three or four months before he was cured of his wounds, of which he bears the scars to this day.

My friend had complained, just after the leopard had gone, that he had somehow damaged his hand, as it was very painful. When they examined it they found no scratches, but when reaching behind him for a blazing log he had seriously burnt his fingers.

The native servants in the neighbourhood were asked why they had not come to the rescue. They must have heard something of the rumpus that went on. Yes, they said, they had heard that all right; but when the door had slammed shut and the noise went on, they thought the two bwanas (white men) were having a fight, and it was generally best to let white men settle their quarrels in their own way. The servants had not the ghost of a notion that there was a leopard around!

An amusing point about the adventure was that the newspapers got hold of the story, and an illustrated magazine in England published a picture of it, showing the two tough settlers dining together, in full evening dress, white ties and “tails” complete. So likely!

MUSICAL BEASTS

When I was staying with Major Crum in Scotland some years ago (I need not introduce Major Crum to Scottish Scouts because every one of you knows him), he had, as usual, a whole pile of Scouts camping in his garden. They showed me one thing that was not at all usual in a Scout camp, and that was a cow who came and listened to music.

Of course I didn't believe their yarn when the told me of it. But there was the cow, grazing in the paddock. The boys fetched out their gramophone and set it going near the fence which separated the camp from the paddock. Directly the cow heard the noise – believe it or not – she stopped grazing and came and poked her nose against the fence and listed to the music with all her ears.

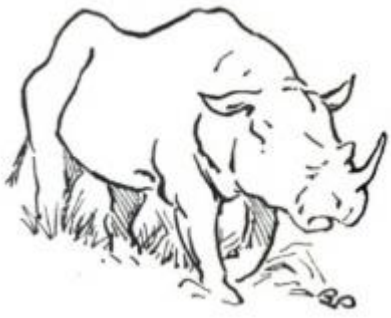
Well, that incident has just had a sequel here in Africa. A scientific gentleman, much interested in zoology, went up a few nights ago into our tree-top look-out to watch the animals visiting the salt-lick. He took with him two musical instruments – namely a gramophone and a mouth-organ. We wanted to see what the animals thought of them – if anything.

He had to wait until nearly midnight before any rhinos appeared, though there were plenty of buck, wild pig and hyaenas. But he wanted to see the effect on the bigger beasts.

At last there appeared Father and Mother Rhino, shortly followed by three younger ones – quite a good audience for his concert.

So when they were all assembled on the salt-lick, sloshing happily in the mud, he turned on the gramophone with the latest jazz dance.

Father Rhino had scarcely time to utter, "Great Scott! What was that?" before the whole family fled in a panic-stricken stampede into the darkness.



Our funny man averred that as they disappeared into the forest he was almost sure that two of the younger rhinos were "doing the Lambeth Walk".

Be that as it may, the concert so far was not what you would call a success.

But later on in the night Mother Rhino returned quietly to the lick. Now was the opportunity for our zoologist to try another form of music on her. So very softly he played "Home, sweet home" on the mouth-organ. She at once stopped golloping her food, looked up and came nearer, listened for a moment or two, and then sadly turned away and went slowly back to the jungle.

Funny man swore that in spite of the darkness he (almost) saw tears trickling down her nose as she went.

I was reading this week of an experiment very like this one, where a man took a gramophone with him into the unexplored forests of Brazil and watched the effect of the music on natives who had never heard music before.

When he turned on homely tunes and classical music they loved it – but when he changed the record for jazz they hated it and showed that, wild untutored savages though they were, they had good taste.

WOLF-CHILDREN AND A BABOON BOY

You know Kipling's story of Mowgli, the boy who was a real "Wolf-Cub" because he was brought up amongst wolves. That story was an invention of the author, but lately a true story has been published, by Bishop Pakenham Walsh, of two children who were brought up by wolves a few years ago in India. This was the story.

The Rev. J. A. Singh, a missionary of Midnapore, heard of a terrifying animal which had been seen by the people of a certain village. So he went to enquire about it and found that the creature lived in a big hole in an ant-heap, where also some wolves had their den.

So he had a *machan*, that is a sort of platform, rigged up in a tree overlooking the hole (on the same lines as our "Tree-top Hotel" here), and there he went with two friends, armed with guns, to watch for the beast.

Towards evening two wolves came out, followed by two wolf-cubs. Then there came a fearsome creature with the body and limbs of a human being but with a ghastly-looking head of long matted hair and piercing black eyes. It jumped out of the hole and was immediately followed by another, just like it but a good deal smaller.

The men raised their guns to shoot, but Mr. Singh stopped them in order to watch the creatures. These rand on all fours and scampered away after the wolves into the bush. The next evening the same thing happened, so Mr. Singh asked the villagers to come and dig the animals out in the day-time. But the villagers said no, thank you, nothing would induce them to face these awful creatures. However, he managed to get some men from another village who had never seen them. They dug away heartily till, in the middle of their work, out came Father Wolf, who dashed past them into the jungle. Then came Mother Wolf, but, instead of dashing away, she went for the diggers, determined to protect her home and young ones. She was so savage that one of them, armed with a bow and arrow, shot her.

On digging further they found two cubs and the two "monsters" all hugging each other in terror and snapping and snarling at anyone who tried to separate them. Finally they were captured by throwing cloths over their heads. The cubs were given to the villagers, who afterwards sold them. The missionary took charge of the two "monsters".

These proved to be Indian girls about eight and four years old, with their hair grown into long and tangled manes. They were perfectly wild, like animals, and could not talk or even walk, being accustomed only to howl or growl like the wolves and to move about on all fours.

The missionary and his wife devoted the greatest care and kindness to them in endeavouring to tame and educate them, but it was a very difficult job.

During the day they hid in corners and slept a good deal, curled up together. But in the night they were wide awake, walking on all fours round and round their room and howling. They could see well at night but were half blind in sunlight. They could not bear to wear any clothes, or even a blanket at night. They had a keen sense of smell, especially for meat. They could smell meat at a distance of seventy yards and got excited, since meat was the only food they had ever had.

But they were never given meat now for fear of making them more savage. They were fond of milk and lapped it up with their tongues just as dogs do. They ate biscuits because they were hard like the bones they had been accustomed to crunch. They had their manes cut off, but they did not like the bath when they were washed, and they simply dreaded fire in any form, whether in a fireplace or a lamp, and a match terrified them.

They were put among other children in the orphanage and though the children were kind to them they kept away from them as much as they could.

This went on for a year before they got accustomed to their new life, but it was three years before they could be taught to stand up on their feet and walk, or to wear any kind of clothes.

After a time Amala, the younger one, fell ill and died. Kamala, the older one, could not understand it and was in a frantic state when she found she could not wake her sister, and howled mournfully when she was taken away to be buried.

After more years of patient care, Kamala gradually began to learn to speak and to behave herself properly. But even when seventeen she was only like an ordinary child of six in intelligence. Then, perhaps fortunately, she, too, died.

It was never known where the two children came from or how they got into the care of the wolves. Very many cases have happened in India where wolves carried off babies in the night and killed and ate them, but it was a strange thing for wolves to take one child and care for it and then later to come and take another and be kind to both.

Well, now, that was in India. But I am going to tell you another story something like it. Here in Africa a small native child got into the hands of a troop of baboons. The baboons thought he was a young monkey (some Scouts ARE like that!). The boy evidently thought that the baboons were other, rather hairy boys. So they got on well together. The boy learnt their ways, went about on all fours, climbed tree, talked their language, such as it was, and ate their food.

One day he and his friends had raided some crops, and two policemen came with revolvers to drive them off. Seeing this strange human-looking creature among them, they managed to capture him and bring him into Grahamstown. He could not speak except with grunts and calls such as baboons make. It took some years of kind treatment to tame him and teach him to talk.

He then told them how he had lived with baboons ever since he could remember. He ate their food, which was principally wild fruits, corn, wild honey, crickets, and ostrich eggs. He

remembered getting a jolly nasty kick from an ostrich when he was robbing her nest; and also he had often been stung by bees when pinching their honey. As he had not clothes an encounter with bees was not much fun – for him. No doubt the bees enjoyed it all right.

This story has a happier end than the other. The boys has now become quite civilised and can talk both English and Dutch and is working on a farm.

I wonder if he can still talk to baboons when he sees them, or can run up trees and leap from branch to branch as they do. What a jolly accomplishment that must be! I wonder whether any "climber" Scout could do what he had done in that line. If one boy could do it others should be able to – if they practised and stuck to it.

THOSE BABOONS

Talking of baboons, it would have made a cat laugh if he had been with me when I saw them the other day. I was in the middle of the forest when I saw a single old baboon walking along on all fours his silly little tail cocked up with the tip hanging down as if it had been broken or badly bent in the middle.

He was walking very solemnly with his chin tucked in, evidently thinking very seriously about something. His long black nose made him look almost as if he was wearing a gas-mask.

I said quietly, "Look, there's a baboon." I ought not to have said it, I ought only to have whispered it. His sharp ears caught the sound of my voice and in a second he bounded up into a tree, giving a short loud bark, almost like a dog, as he went. Then he sat himself on a branch and went on barking and staring in our direction, though he could not see us, as we were well hidden and sat quite frozenly still.

I had heard that bark before and knew that it meant the "alarm" to others of his kind. Once in South Africa I was out riding and I saw an old baboon strolling about by himself, so I thought, "I'll make you hop it, old boy, and see how fast you can go." So I cantered after him and he scooted away at a great pace, barking furiously as he went. He got to a pile of rocks and skipped up to the top of them and there stood on all fours making nasty rude faced at me while he continued to bark. He looked pretty dangerous with his great yellow fangs showing. Within a minute or two he was joined by three or four other baboons, all barking and displaying their horrid teeth. Looking round I saw more and more baboons galloping up, and as they gave no sign of running away – but rather the opposite – I thought how nice it would be if they came on in a crowd and clambered over my horse and on to me, and at the same time how much nicer it would be to be safely at home and out of reach of baboons. My horse agreed with me and – well, we went home.

So on this occasion, in the forest, I knew that that bark meant that there were other baboons about and it would be as well to keep quite quiet. So we did that.

Presently from out of the undergrowth there came a big hairy baboon, very slowly and suspiciously looking about him and staring a good deal in our direction. He had a very ugly look and was evidently no coward, for he came forward looking everywhere for the enemy about whom the other chap had been barking. At last, finding nothing to be afraid of, he turned and looked at the barking sentry and evidently told him to "dry up" as the coast was all clear.

The sentry stopped barking but remained up at his post on the look-out, while out of the bush there trooped a whole crowd of baboons, big and little, who started to play about and pick up food. Baby baboons rode on their mothers' backs just like small boys riding on donkeys, or, in other cases, they hung under their mothers' tummies. Some of the older ones galloped about chasing each other, jumping up into the trees, and from branch to branch, squeaking with laughter as they went, and stopping now and then to have a good swing on a bough.

Older people went about picking young blades of grass and sitting down to eat them just like you and me – or rather, like me, because they used both right and left hands while most people use mainly their right.

When they were thirsty they went to the pool, knelt down, and leaning forward put their mouths down to it and drank heartily. Some of the older ones went off by themselves and sat down to think, and sat like that for ever so long, just thinking, like the old fellow who said. "Sometimes I sits and thinks and sometimes I just sits."

After about half an hour's entertainment of us, the old leader stood up and evidently wirelessed his orders, for he made no sound, and the whole family – some twenty altogether – fathers, mothers and babies – moved off quietly into the jungle, some in the trees, others on the ground, old grandpa coming last, taking care that none were left behind and that no enemy was coming along after them.

The Inniskilling Dragoons, when in South Africa, used to have a pet baboon. He was a fine fellow, but he had one weakness and that was that he could not bear natives. He was so strong, and so nasty about natives, that he had to be kept chained up.

Another weakness that he had was that of playing with empty bottles. He was happy as a lamb so long as he had bottles to play with. If one of these happened to roll out of reach beyond

the range of his chain, it was most amusing to see the various contortions he would go through to try and reach that bottle. The soldiers used to roll his toys out of reach purposely and would roar with laughter at his antics in trying to recover them; and I believe that he was laughing too, for he never seemed to lose his temper but enjoyed the fun.

BUT – let a native come round the corner to see what was going on and he would be up on his hind legs in an instant, his face contorted with rage, and he would seize up one bottle after another and fling them with all his force at the native who dare to be there. And he flung them a pretty long distance and with jolly good aim.

So natives soon learned to give him a pretty wide berth.

Once, in the Boer War, a baboon's alarm bark was of great use to me. When camped close under the Magaliesberg mountain I heard the call high up in the crags above us. Looking through my glasses for the cause of the baboon's warning, I saw two Boers ensconcing themselves among the rocks overlooking our camp. I quietly called four god Scouts together and we sat down in the open as if playing cards, while I told them not to look up, but that close to the solitary pine tree on the crest above us two Boer spies were watching. The men were to stroll away casually through the camp, in pairs, going east and west till they had gained cover round the corners of the bluff, and they were then to climb up it from the rear, using the tree as their landmark, to capture those men.

And that was just what they did, all thanks to the baboon's warning.

ARE YOU THERE?

One of the many blessings about living in Kenya is that you don't have to shake your boots before putting them on – as you do in India and South Africa and many other countries – in order to make sure that there is not a small snake or a centipede lurking there to bite your toe.

No, Kenya, like New Zealand, is very clear of these pests. But it has ants – and, my aunt, aren't they awful! Soldier ants go in a huge army of thousands and nothing will stop their march. Twice this week friends of ours have been turned out of their beds and out of their houses. Hordes of these vicious little beasts have invaded them, swarming all over the furniture, climbing the walls, and creeping all over the people themselves in their beds and nipping them with their sharp jaws.

There is only one thing to be done, namely, to skip out of the way as fast as you can and if you have a bath handy jump right into is and sit there till rescued.

As in most countries overseas, we have the white ants, destructive little devils, who eat up everything that comes in their way. You put away your best suit of clothes neatly folded in your cupboard. A week or so later you want to go to Jerry's wedding…and you open your cupboard. The whole flor of it has disappeared in dust; the white ants have eaten it and have made a big tunnel right through all the folds of the clothes so that the suit when unfolded is mostly holes held together by shreds of cloth.

The white ants here in Africa do one useful thing. You know how, in the South Seas, millions of tiny insects set to work together, and gradually build up coral rocks until they make a whole big island.

This just shows what can be done if a whole lot of people join together in doing a big work – as the Boy Scouts try to do by practising friendliness and goodwill one towards another, so that one day all the nations may be friends.

Well, these tiny little white ants get together to build their nest, and by burrowing into the ground and piling up the earth which they have dug out, they make a heap like a mole-hill, but ever so much bigger. It is often as tall as a man and taller.

"But how does that do any good to anyone?" you ask.

Well, it is this way. Supposing you want to stalk some animal, say a buck. You creep up behind one of these ant-heaps. Or if you find an animal, say a lion or a buffalo, stalking you, you can take refuge behind an ant-heap, and play that most exciting game of "Are you there?" with the animal.

It is great fun – for the onlookers. And there are millions of onlookers in the ant-heap, so that the whole heap enjoys the sight!

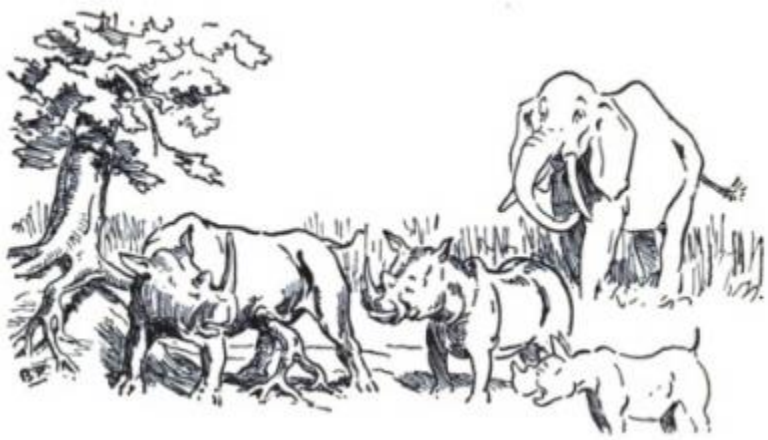
JUMBO PUTS HIS FOOT DOWN

One night the place where I was watching was invaded by a party of rhinos. I think they must have been drinking, they were so rowdy and quarrelsome. The only quiet one among them was a mother rhino – Belinda we called her – and her calf. She was quite unmoved by the row that was going on all round her.

Suddenly there appeared on the scene a very big and angry father rhino. He evidently said, "Here, what's all this about? Get out, the whole lot of you."

And they tucked in such little tails as they had and bolted.

Then he turned on Belinda and said, "Now then, you clear out too." But Belinda stood up to him and said, "Now , Dad, don't be a fool. You're a disgrace, quarrelsome and covered with mud. Clean yourself and come along home."



There was a tree close by, with a big root stretching out between two and three feet above the ground. Daddy, grumbling to himself, went and put his forelegs over this and gave his tummy a regular scraping on it. Belinda was watching him critically, while young Albert was grinning at Father being put in his place and Father was helplessly cursing Mother over his shoulder, when suddenly there appeared on the scene a very tall and stately elephant, looking like a bishop or a

police inspector, as he slowly advanced and in dignified terms expressed his displeasure at their bickering and desired them to return quietly to their home forthwith.

The rhinos didn't stop to argue with such an authority but quickly faded out into the forest.

Next morning, in broad daylight, when most of the jungle animals were supposed to be in bed, an officer of high rank was showing his son and daughter the pathway made by the elephants through the thick undergrowth, when suddenly they were confronted by two rhinos coming down the path towards them.

"Hullo," says No. 1 Rhino to the other. "I do believe there are some people on our path."

"Oh," says No. 2, who is a stupid old thing.

Rhinos are very short-sighted, so they walked a bit nearer to the humans to get a better view of them.

"Yes," says No. 1. "They are humans, and I do believe one of them is His Excellency."

"Whose Excellency?"

"HIS Excellency – and the worst of it is he has got his eye on us."

"Has he only got one eye?"

"No, two."

"Which eye has he got on us, then?"

"Both of them."

"Whereabouts on us has he put it?"

"All over us."

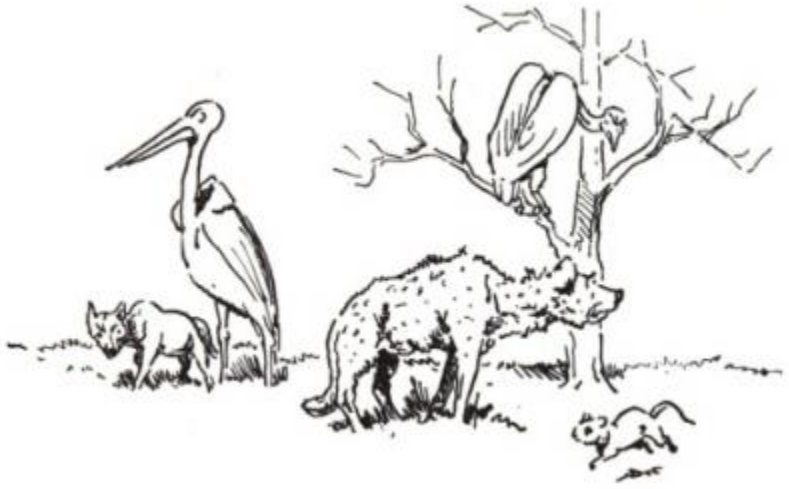
"Oh."

"I don't like the look of it – I think we'd better go back."

"Oh, back where?"

"Home."

So they slung their heavy old heads round and waddled off back into the shadow of the forest.



NOBODY LOVES THE HYAENA

I have told you before what an unpleasant fellow the hyaena is; nobody in the jungle like him.

Well, I came across one lying dead on the road, freshly killed. I suppose somebody had shot him to protect his flock. It was not far from the spot where I had arranged to have my mid-day meal.

After eating this I lay down and thought how I might do a good turn to some other animal by showing him where he could get a square meal. Good idea! I was pondering over it when – who should come quietly stalking along but a lion?

Well, I know a lion will generally behave all right if you behave all right to him, so I said:

"Afternoon, Mr. Lion. Are you inclined for a snack?"

"Always willing," he replied with a grin.

"Well," I said, "I know, sir, that you don't as a rule like you meal killed for you; you generally prefer to kill it yourself."

"That is so," he replied. "Only in very exceptional cases do I accept killed meat – p'raps the leg of a zebra which has jus been killed and has scarcely ceased kicking."

"Well," I said, "just over the rise alongside that tree you will find a tit-bit that I think you will like – quite freshly killed."

Mr. Lion hastily turned and eagerly pressed forward over the hill. Then suddenly he stopped and stared before him.

His mane seemed to stand on end, and his back bristled. For a long moment he gazed, then, springing round in his tracks, he snarled at me: "You dirty dog! I've never been insulted like this before. You – you – no, I'll never speak to you again nor to any white man."

And he stalked away into the bush in a rare temper.

Just then there came, sailing overhead, a great lean-headed vulture. I hailed him, just as you do a taxi. Try it next time you see one. He swept gracefully round and landed at my feet.

I said, "Sorry to interrupt your flight, but I wondered whether you would like a snack!"

"Would I not?" he replied, snapping his beak. "There's nothing in the world I wouldn't eat – from a drowned rat to an elephant that has been dead for ten days!"

"You're my bird," I said. "Come along," and he waddled and hopped alongside me as we walked towards the feast.

But as we topped the rise he suddenly stopped, stretched his skinny old neck as if it were an indiarubber tube, and his eyes bulged till I feared they would fall out.

For a few minutes he stood like this, staring at the dead hyaena, then he gave a great hop, flapped out his broad wings, and in a second he was sailing up into the sky, exclaiming as he went, "Ugh!" with a shudder of disgust which shook ever feather in his ugly body.

I watched him soaring gracefully up over the clouds, and a harsh voice behind me said, "An unpleasant bird, that, sir."

I looked round and there was the hideous snout of a hyaena peeking about, his crouching hind legs seeming to follow his body as he moved.

"An unpleasant bird," he repeated, "though sometimes I have been associated with him in the matter of feeding."

I was not particularly inclined to be friendly with this gentleman, still I knew that HE would stick at nothing in order to get food – and would probably eat his own grandmother quite willingly. So I said: "I have a bit of lunch to offer you if you don't mind pot-luck, nothing very high-class, you know."

"Show me any old meal," he said," and I will eat it."

"Even an elephant dead for ten days?"

"Just my form," he replied eagerly.

"Well, I can offer you something fresher than that. Look under that tree, just over the rise there."

He trotted up, his jaws dripping in anticipation; and then, when he saw what was there, he turned aside and was violently ill. He lurched away in a hurry, coughing dismally as he retired empty to his jungle home.

I suddenly felt a strange ticking on my bare knees, and looking down I saw a small family of young field-rats trotting after their mother.

"Hello, Mother," I said, "would you care for a dinner for your young family?"

"Oh, thank you kindly, sir. We would indeed be glad of a meal."

"Well, just over that rise, alongside the tree, you will find enough for you all."

"That is good of you, sir, thanks awfully." And off they trotted, eager for the grub.

"At last," I thought, "somebody is glad to accept my hospitality."

But at that moment there was a hurried, horrified cry from Mother Rat. "Come back, children. Come away at once. No, Johnnie, not even a look. Come away!"

And I felt again the pattering feet over my knees.

. . . . .

When I looked down the ratlets were not there – they had quite disappeared – and instead a number of ants were cruising about on me.

I looked again for the rates. Not a sign of them. Could it have been that I had dreamed that they were there?

COULD IT BE THAT I HAD DREAMED THE WHOLE THING?

I got up hastily, and looked over the rise. No, the dead hyaena was there all right.

And the true part of the story is that none of the usual scavengers of the forest will touch a dead hyaena – nor do they very much love a live one!

LOCUSTS!

If you were with me at this moment, sitting in our sunny verandah, looking out on this vast view of hill and dale, forest and plain, up to the slopes and crags of Mount Kenya, you would say there CAN'T be war with all this peacefulness.

And yet – surely it is snowing down there in the valley! But it can't be in this warm sunshine. Still, a heavy bombardment is going on. There is a drumming on old kerosene tins, accompanied by the excited shouting and jabbering of natives.

The "snow-storm" is actually an endless swarm of flying locusts, big grasshoppers shimmering white in the sunlight. Like a flood they come streaming down the valley, without ceasing, for hours, dimming the distant view with their numbers. When they choose to settle there will, in a few hours, not be a leaf or blade of grass left.

To the natives and farmers this is tragic. It means the destruction of their crops and the loss of their harvest; and so they are out, every man, woman and child, to try and prevent this terrible host from landing in their fields.

But it looks a hopeless task when you see, far and wide, high up in the sky and low down along the surface of the crops, this endless fatal cloud – almost like a cloud of poison gas.

The drummers are getting tired, the shouters are getting hoarse, but still fresh waves of the never-ceasing tide keep flowing in, and will do so for hours to come.

Each locust goes on to greed more. She lays her eggs in the ground, and when these hatch out the young locusts have no wings at first, and for some days they march in a vast swarm on foot. Then is the time to catch them. It used to be the duty of my police, the South African Constabulary, when a swarm was reported, to hurry out and dig trenches across their intended line of march. Into these trenches they tumbled head over heels in thousands and were there killed by the poison sprayed on them. They were brutes and deserve no pity.

Once, however, we were glad to see them and that was when we were besieged in Mafeking. A big swarm settled in the place though there was not much for them to eat there; but there was still less for us, so we all sallied out with empty sacks and beat them to death. Then we collected their remains, dried them in the sun, pounded them up and made our dinners off them.

Another time when they came to Mafeking, I didn't like them a bit. I was riding round to visit our outposts when a vast cloud of locusts blew in. At the same time the Boers spotted me and opened fire on me with a pom-pom, a quick-firing gun which sent a rapid hail of small shells. I didn't wait for them to hit me. I didn't want it at all! I put spurs to my horse and sent him along as fast as I could. But the pace wasn't very great after all, for we met the whole force of locusts coming at us with the wind behind them. The effect on my horse and myself was just as if a thousand boys were throwing pebbles in our faces, which was not encouraging; but those pom-poms behind us made us push on for all we were worth.

BUFFALO HUNTING

They are funny creatures, are buffaloes.

They are said to be the most dangerous creatures in Africa – and so they are when wounded. They are worse than leopards, and these are worse than lions or rhinos or elephants.

So when you come out here to Africa and go shooting buffalo, make sure that you shoot straight and kill them outright, otherwise – well, look out!

They are cunning and brave. If you follow up a wounded one in the bush keep a look-out *behind* you as well as in front, because old Buff has a habit of darting off his path, and, big though he is, he can hide himself so that you don't notice him till suddenly he pounces on you after you have passed him and punches you into a jelly. So inconvenient!

In hunting a buffalo it is often a question of whether the man is hunting the buff or the buff is hunting the man.

But I don't believe in buffalo being so dangerous when they have not been wounded or attacked. Like most wild animals – including snakes – if they hear or see or smell you coming along they prefer to sneak quietly away. I don't know what it is, whether we look nasty or smell worse, but animals have no desire to make our close acquaintance.

A gallant Colonel, felling specially gallant when he heard that a lady had been attacked by a buffalo, set out to settle matters with her assailant.

This particular buffalo was well known and well hated in the district. He had already killed three men. He had been shot at and wounded in the neck so that he carried his head cocked on one side, which made him look rather silly, and he knew it and was very nasty-tempered in consequence.

Well, the Colonel marched out to find the beast, who was said to be four miles away, but the beast had in the meantime set out to meet the Colonel – and they met.

"Dammit," said the Colonel, "here he is! Give me my gun." And he quickly fired a couple of shots into the buff. But, as he said himself, "the bullets had not more effect in stopping the

animal than mistletoe berries would if you flung them at a window!" As the buffalo rushed at him he jumped to one side, but the animal swung round and knocked him down and tried to gore him. But with his stiff twisted neck he found it difficult to aim his horns the right way and several times got them entangled in the bushes or stuck in the ground. Seeing this, the Colonel did a clever trick and one which you would do well to remember next time a bull gets you down and tries to gore you. He caught hold of the buffalo's foreleg above the knee and held himself close up to it, so that, do what he would, the buff could not twist his head low enough to horn him and could only say, "Get off my leg, will you."

The Colonel had started out on his expedition with a party of native hunters, but these suddenly remembered that they had an engagement elsewhere and hurried off to keep it. Only one remained and he poked the buffalo with his spear, but the buff was too busy with the Colonel to notice it. So the man asked the Colonel what orders he had to give. The Colonel replied, "Pick up the gun, you owl, and shoot the beast."

"But, sir," the man pointed out, "if I shoot I might hit you, which would be sad; and if I hit the buffalo he would fall on you and squash you, which would be sadder."

"Shoot and be blowed," retorted the Colonel, "and when you shoot I will jump clear."

And so they did that.

The buff fell dead, and the Colonel found himself practically unhurt, barring a black eye and a number of bruises and scratches. As he described it, "I was no worse off than if I had been in a football scrum."

Where I have my little trout stream here I have been warned that there is an old buffalo loafing in the bush: but I have no fear of him, for I am sure that if he saw me or niffed me (not that I am so *very* bad!) he would be off to some other part of the jungle.

But once a buff has been attacked by man he is inclined to remember and resent it.

Only the other day, on the high road near Toro, a buffalo appeared. Someone had thrown a spear at him, and he came out on the road feeling a bit peevish and looking for someone on whom to vent his peeve. He saw an old lady (native) sitting at the door of her hut, and he promptly went for her and killed her, and very nearly killed two men who came to her rescue.

I don't know whether, now that he has had his revenge, he will be more polite to people. At any rate I don't intend to try!

THE BITER BIT

I remember how my daughter, Betty, in Northern Rhodesia, once got some veal for lunch by following up a crocodile which had killed a calf.

I have just heard of another case rather like it. The passengers on the steamer arriving at Masindi, on the Upper Nile in Uganda, saw an exciting fight going on between a buffalo and a crocodile. The croc had got hold of the buff when he was drinking and tried to drag him into the lake to drown him, meaning to have a good meal off him later. But old Buff said, "No. Just let me get my horns into you and I'll learn you not to go for buffaloes."

Some natives, seeing what the croc was at, thought it rather a good idea for them to follow up. So they rushed to the spot in canoes and joined in the fight with their spears. The croc politely gave up trying to get his lunch when he saw that the men wanted it, and slide away.

The "lunch" started swimming for the shore, followed by the canoe men jabbing at him with their spears. A buff has a very thick skin so he took very little notice of them till he got ashore. Here he found a lot more natives waiting for him with more spears. One mand was particularly keen on killing the buff, and the buff got quite a dislike for him; so he ran at the man and very promptly knocked him down. The man's friend rushed with fury at the buff and hurled his spear at him with all his strength. Unfortunately he made a boss shot of it and missed the buff and transfixed the friend he was trying to rescue!

The buff must have laughed at this, and he went on and knocked down two more men in spite of their having stuck a lot of spears in him. Finally he pushed his way past them, and was found dead about a mile further on.

But he had the satisfaction of knowing that three of his enemies had to be carted away to hospital and so didn't get their share of him for lunch.

STALKING THE BUFFALO

I have been painting a lot of lovely "masterpieces". That's what I call them, though nobody else does. They are big pictures of wild animals in Kenya in their natural surroundings. I have so far drawn an Elephant, Lion, Giraffe, Hippo, Rhino, and Oryx. But I had not done a Buffalo. So I consulted the Colonel, who is a neighbour of mine, as to where I could go with the best chance of seeing buffalo. The Colonel is a celebrated big game hunter and naturalist, and has been employed by various museums in Europe and America to supply them with specimens of different kinds, such as tigers or butterflies or wild duck. Besides getting their skins, he also takes the most wonderful photos of them in jungle. This means more careful stalking, which is much more difficult than stalking as you do when shooting because you have to get so much closer to your quarry in order to take his photo. The Colonel has seen active service in India and Mesopotamia and has been awarded the D.S.O. (Distinguished Service Order), the M.C. (Military Cross) and the

O.B.E. (Order of the British Empire). Also he has been an explorer away up in Tibet. By the way, like most men who do big game hunting and scouting, he does not smoke, and he told me that two men who went with him to Tibet were smokers, and when they had to go over mountain passes, 18,000 feet high, they both collapsed. Their hearts, weakened by smoking, gave out, and one of them died.

(The moral is – as I have often warned you – DON'T SMOKE, if you want to do scouting.)

The Colonel is a tremendously strong and active man and was said to have wrestled once with a rhino! As a rhino weighs about a couple of tons, I could not believe the yarn, so I asked him about it. He told me that the rhino with whom he had had a difference of opinion was only a baby rhino, which attacked him when he was trying to photo its mamma. He had to use all his strength to push it off, and then had to vault over it to get away from the mother, who was coming back to see what was the trouble.

Well, when I asked the Colonel if he could tell me where to go to see buffalo, he not only told me but said he would take me to the spot. So off we went, taking tents and food and native servants, in moto-cars, to Embu, fifty-seven miles from Nyeri. There we went out into the jungle and pitched our camp. From a kraal not far away there came a deputation to welcome us. The "Mayor", as we called him, wore a blanket and a metal collar and that was all. The "Town Clerk" wore next to nothing beyond what had once been a pair of shorts, but which by wear and, especially, tear, were little better than a lot of holes held together with shreds of cloth. A third man was the Master of the Hunt. He wore a towel and a spear, and a feather. They were most friendly, and told us the buffalo were near by in thousands. That was good news; but we did not carry on the conversation very long, not because it wasn't interesting but because the deputation had evidently not had a bath since they were born and we had not brought our gas-masks with us.

After this aromatic deputation had left us, there was still a very gruesome smell about the camp. We thought they must have been very high indeed till we discovered that it wasn't them but some big ants who inhabited the site and who gave out an appalling scent; it was rather like what you could brew by taking a dog that had been drowned three weeks ago and mixing him with

some onions and burning indiarubber. Try it and you will understand why we were glad to get out of it on to the sweet-scented grass of the prairie.

The jungle consisted mainly of grass downs dotted with trees and bushes and occasionally thick clumps of forest. It was not long before we came across a small herd of water-buck, handsome fellows, standing proudly, very like red deer at home. Then we saw numbers of Impala, smart elegant creatures with very pretty horns. They stand about as high as a young donkey and are as lively and active as kittens.

Smaller than these were the little Oribi gazelles, and finally, as big as a horse and not unlike one in appearance, were the Hartebeest. Their stiff canter, though it looked slow, took them over the ground at a surprising rate, a good thirty miles an hour.

Then came the beast who never fails to raise a laugh among onlookers – the War-Hog. He IS ugly – there's no denying it. His heavy head has huge curved tushes sticking out like white moustaches on either side of his mouth. Then below his wicked eyes are two big warts which add largely to the unattractive appearance of his face and give him his name. When he runs away he *runs*, he does not gallop, with his tail stick straight up in a most ridiculous way.

Our native car-driver has the keenest eyes I have ever met with. He is always the first to see game when we are driving along. On one occasion when he was fully taken up with steering the car between tree-stumps and big holes made by ant-eaters and pigs, he suddenly stopped and jumped out to examine the ground. He had spotted the spoor of a lion.

We were about a mile form a curious great rocky hole with water at the bottom. It is called the Lion Pool, because till a short time ago it was the haunt of lions. Looking at it through our glasses someone cried, "There's a lion there."

My wig! We did get a thrill till the Chief Guide, who has very sharp eyes, flopped our excitement by saying, "No, it's an eland."

And so it was. A fine great bull, very like an English farmyard bull and about the same size. However, we soon got another thrill to console us, for, rounding a patch of bush, we camp upon two great fat rhinos. They were as surprised as we were, and instead of going for us, they started with an explosive snort and lumbered off in a great hurry like a couple of motor-lorries.

We got another thrill when we startled three cheetahs (like lanky leopards) lunching off a young hartebeest they had just run down and killed. The poor mother hartebeest was standing on a nearby ant-heap watching the tragic end of her child.

Yes, we had thrills galore in those delightful two days' hunting although we did not get what we had come out for – namely a buffalo.

TOUGH NUTS

To-day I have had news of a plucky act which I think you will all agree deserves, as a reward, that the hero of it should be called a "Tough Nut". He is Mr. Adamson, the Game Warden in the northern part of Kenya.

Game wardens, of course, are protectors of the wild animals in the country to see that people don't go and shoot them or trap them without proper licence, and also to act as policemen to the animals and see that they don't go and hurt people or damage their crops. So you may imagine that a Game Warden has an interesting and adventurous time, just what a Scout would enjoy, living out by himself in camp in the jungle, ready at all times to deal with wild animals or wild men. It often means hardship and sometimes danger, as Adamson's latest adventure shows.

He had had complaints from natives that a lion had killed one man and mauled two others. So he camped in the neighbourhood for a few days, and one day, strolling near his tent, he came upon a big lioness, the man-eater. He had a quick shot at her as she dived into a patch of high grass, but only wounded her. He climbed a tree to try and see where she had got to, but as she did not show up he came down again and walked cautiously round the bit of jungle in which she was hiding.

Suddenly she came out. He fired but missed her; but this didn't disturb him as he was using a magazine rifle with lots of cartridges in it. She charged him suddenly and as he tried to shoot her his rifle jammed and failed to fire.

In a second she was on to him, dashed his gun down and seized his right arm in her powerful jaws and mangled it. He fell over and the lioness then got hold of his leg and bit it badly. Then, sickened by her own wound, she left him, and he managed to crawl to his tent. A native undertook to go for help to the nearest white man, over a hundred miles away. A hundred miles seems a long way to have to go for help, especially when a man has been bitten by a lion, as such wounds are

apt to get dangerously bad in a few hours. But natives can run long distances when put to it. I knew of a Zulu who was sent sixty-eight miles with an urgent message. He did it in a day, slept part of the night, and got back with the answer by sundown next day. Some going! Could you do it? One hundred and thirty-six miles in twenty-six hours on the road!

In the case of Mr. Adamson, the native runner – not a Zulu – took nearly tow and a half days to do the hundred miles, which brought him to the camp of the District Commissioner. The Commissioner at once repeated the news to Headquarters by telegraph, and started with a motor lorry to go to Adamson's assistance.

When he arrived near the place he was astonished to see a big bull elephant lying dead about a hundred yards from the Game Warden's tent. It appears that Adamson, lying awake and in great pain on his camp bed, heard a disturbing noise outside his tent. With difficulty he got up and looked out and found himself face to face with an angry elephant! The elephant had evidently said to himself: "Here's that hateful Game Warden pretty well knocked out. Grand chance for me to finish him off."

But he soon found the Warden too tough a nut for him. Adamson managed to get his rifle with his left hand and to push in a cartridge and then to raise and aim the gun. This was difficult with his right arm useless – still he was of the breed whose motto is, "Never say die till you're dead". He gritted his teeth and faced this new danger. He managed to support himself against the tent-pole and to aim and fire his gun – with the result that the elephant staggered away a few yards and fell dead.

The Commissioner brought him safely back to his camp in the lorry. There two R.A.F. aeroplanes arrived with a doctor and presently carried him off to hospital in Nairobi, two hundred and fifty miles away. I was in hospital there myself a day or two later for a small operation on my eye, and found that Adamson, though in great pain, was smiling like a true Scout and determined to get well again in spite of his injuries and his nerve-wracking experiences.

He is surely a "Tough Nut".

BOUNCING BIRDS

Going across an open grass plain to-day I saw, in every direction, small black birds jumping up and down. Wherever one looked there they were, bouncing; not one or two but at least a hundred of them, all keeping at it as if it was a kind of physical training.

Years and years ago there was a song which was very popular: "I'm the Cure, the Cure, the perfect Cure," and while you sang it you kept your whole body and legs stiff, and went on and on and on till you could go on no longer. It certainly was a jolly good form of exercise and most comic to watch: it would truly be a cure for any weakness in you.

But the word "cure" in those days also meant an idiotic kind of ass, and that is what you looked when performing the dance.

Well, those bouncing birds certainly looked very idiotic as each sprang some three feet into the air and plumped down on to the ground only to bounce up again at once.

These birds were what I had always thought were called "Widow" birds, because they were black and had immensely long tails like the long black veils which widows wear in some places. But I was quite wrong; their name is "Whyda" birds, which people pronounce as "wider" – and hence my mistake. And don't they look odd when flying, with that huge tail three times as long as themselves waving up and down behind them.

They were so earnest and persistent about this bouncing business that I went quietly closer to one or two of them to see what they were at. I found that each bird had stamped down the grass in a circle about six feet across, leaving a tuft of grass standing upright in the middle. They did

not use this for building their nests or for any other purpose. They were all cock birds and always, in the spring-time, they go through this bouncing dance before the mating season.

Talking of the "Cure", I can remember what a sensation the dance made years ago. The man who did it bounced high in the air and bounded from side to side of the stage without apparently moving a muscle.

I told you, in *Paddle your own Canoe*, about a similar dance by the Kikuyu natives here, but they move their arms, whereas the Cure keeps his arms, legs and body quite stiff all the time.

It is, as I've said, a grand exercise for keeping you fit, but also, judging by its popularity in the old days, it should make a very good public show for a patrol or troop of Scouts, if well rehearsed and well performed. All the more effective if the performers wear masks and flowing hair to flop up and down.

It might begin with a regular drill with boys in line bouncing; after every fourth bounce change into two deep in four bounces; then fours right, right about, and so on. All without word of command, each change done after the fourth bounce. Then break off to do free bouncing in all directions, where some fellows will show high or wide or twiddle dancing. Of course it should all be done to music and in exact time together. Music could be supplied by singing or by drumming on a kerosene tin or drum: Ti-tum, Ti-tum, Ti-tum.

THE NEW BIRD CLUB AND ITS CHUCKER-OUT

The Bird Club has moved to new premises and they are very fine. The picture shows you what they are like. See the fellow at breakfast on the verandah? Well, that's me. The steps leading up the verandah are the dining-room of the Club: the snack bar is alongside my feet on the floor of the verandah; and the bathing-pool is the shallow end of the lily pond with its fountain. Most birds like bathing – especially the policeman, who now bathes every day and goes in at least three times.

(If you have read *Birds and Beasts in Africa* you will know all about him and the other birds who use the Club.)

Some of the birds prefer a shower, which they get by flying through the spray of the fountain. The very small birds prefer the paddling pool, which is just a puddle left by the spray on the paved path.

Sun-bathing and drying is done on the perches on either side. Note the policeman drying himself on the right.

The new Club has brought a lot of new members of different kinds to it. There are, besides, our old friends Mr. and Mrs. Waver and the fiery old Colonel, very smart in his bright yellow and black uniform, and several other weavers. There is a new couple, very big and very important and bright yellow all over – like overgrown and puffed-up canaries they look, but about the size of a starling.

You remember Master Plum, the page-boy? Well, he is no longer page-boy, he has become a member of the Club because his married brother and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Plum, have joined. But Mr. and Mrs. Plum don't like being connected with one who was page-boy, so whenever he comes into the Club his very unkind brother goes for him and tells him to get out.

Otherwise Mr. and Mrs. Plum are the sweetest little things you ever saw, about the size of a wren but with beautiful plum-coloured plumage, and so tame.

Encouraged by such small birds being admitted as members, a whole lot of tiny birds have now joined; two families of them, one of seven and the other of eight, so that when they come together for breakfast there are fifteen of them. They are handsomely marked, with black heads and white waistcoats and brown bodies, almost like tiny miniature cock sparrow. Miss Stripes comes by herself; she is about the size of a very small canary, yellow, with black stripes from head to tail.

Then there are the honey-birds, two pairs of them not related to each other, for one pair wear dark green, very shiny coats with long tails, while the others dress in sober grey. I played a practical joke on Mr. and Mrs. Honey Green. They go to a big yellow flower and put their long beaks into it to get sugar from it, so I tied a bunch of worsted of the same colour on a twig and put honey over it, and do you know, they were thoroughly taken in by it and came and sucked away at it as if it were a real flower.


SNACK BAR
DINING ROOM
PADDLING ONLY
DRYING PERCH
BATHING POOL

Then our old friends Mr. and Mrs. Bulbul are regular attendant at lunch-time. They are so nice, and when they arrive they spread out their wings and sing a cheery little call, asking, "Is that lunch never coming? Hurry up, we're hungry."

I'm sorry to say that our old friend Mrs. Rickets, the dove, is not popular in the Club. She has brought her husband there, and also her friend Mr. X. (I won't mention his name, he might have me up for libel.) But these three always come together and invariably start quarrelling, which is very annoying to the other members. Only yesterday I overheard these remarks among some of the doves: "Who is this, Mrs. Rickets?" asked one, evidently referring to Mr. X. Mrs. Rickets did not answer, but Mr. Rickets did, saying very gruffly "He's a fascist, he's a fascist."

"Daddy, get your stick, Daddy, get your stick," shouted an excited young dove, while another joined in with "Better to hit than to think, better to hit than to think."

Yes – the Rickets have become so obnoxious that the Club have engaged a chucker-out, Mr. Hyrie.

I must explain that when our cottage was being built in Nyeri, while we were in England, the builder told us that it contained sixteen doors. Well, we looked at the plan: my half of the house, with its bedroom, bathroom, etc., had six doors: and my wife's half also had six, and the sitting-room two. That made fourteen and we could not account for the sixteen until we actually saw the house. Then we noticed a tiny sort of ladder leading up the front wall to a tiny door four inches square. This led into a little hole left in the wall about six inches square, which had a second little door leading into our sitting-room. So the sixteen doors were accounted for.

"But this little chamber, what's that for?"

"That? Oh, that's for your hyrax to live in."

So Hyrie has a room of his own, with his own, with his own front and back doors.

He is supposed to be a night animal but he always goes fast asleep at night – not in his own bedroom but on my wife's bed. He gets up early, comes on to my bed, eats his share of my apple and then promptly goes mad. He tears round the place, climbs on top of the chairs, leaps off, springs on to the bed, and pursues and attacks one's trailed handkerchief. When he sees a tow waggling under the blanket he dashes at it and bites it, and then rushes up and lies on his back to have his tummy tickled; and presently lies still, tired out with his gambolling.

In the middle of his brown back there is a tiny tuft of white hair, and it is funny to watch, when he is angry or alarmed, how this tuft suddenly swells up into quite a big one – just as a dog's hackles go up when he is angry.

BUT – you ask – what has all this got to do with the chucker-out at the Bird Club?

Well, I must go back for a moment to those doves, Mr. and Mrs. Rickets and Mr. X. You know how, when they come into the Bird Club and carry on their noisy quarrels there, it upsets the other members.

They were carrying on like that the other day when there was a sudden swoop on to them by the shrike policeman, and though he was only one small bird against three big ones they fled in all directions. Like a single policeman tackling a lot of roughs.

The other birds were all delighted and came crowding in to enjoy their lunch and their bathing in peace.

But someone had been quietly watching and taking in the whole scene – Mr. Hyrie.

When the policeman had gone away to lunch at his larder, where he had hung up a lot of beetles and grubs for himself, the dove party came back, flapping their wings and hoarsely cursing each other, right in the "Snack Bar" (our verandah).

This was too much for Hyrie. Looking out from his cubby-hole, high up on the wall, he watched them for a moment, and then with his white tuft standing on end with anger, he took a flying leap, right off the top of his staircase, shouting as he went, "Get off my verandah"; and away flew the doves, frightened out of their lives.

The Club members were, of course, delighted, and they immediately appointed Hyrie to be the Club Chucker-out.

And, there he sits, continually on the look-out, and the moment a dove dares to show himself near the premises, Hyrie is after him like an arrow from a bow.

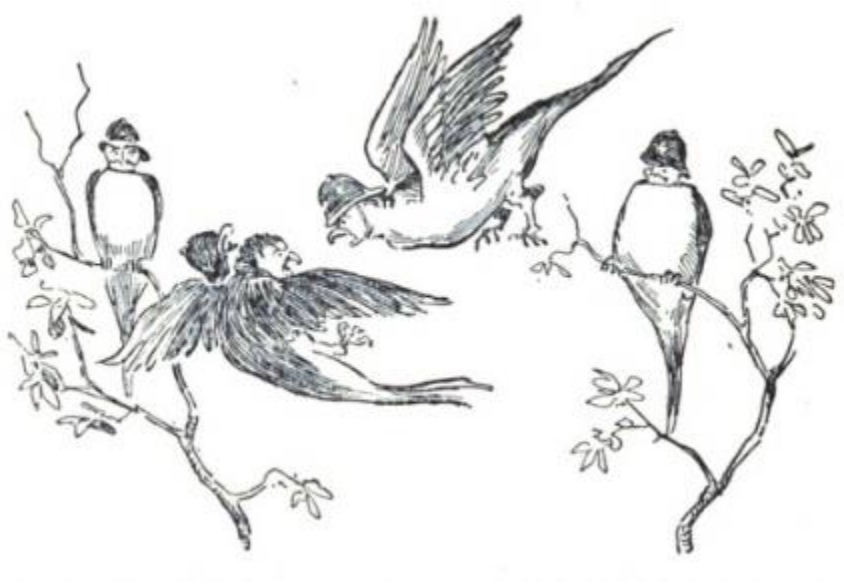
Yes – Hyrie is very brave against those birds, though they are as big as himself – but yesterday he got a shock which showed that in spite of his courage he has got nerves. Our wireless was bringing news to us from England when suddenly the chimes of Big Ben boomed out as loudly as if Big Ben were in our room. "My goodness!" exclaimed Hyrie, "whatever was that? Was it an explosion? I'm off." With his white tuft erect with alarm he rushed for the door of the bedroom. It was shut. "Oh, lor!" Out into the verandah he tore and found that that door was shut too. "Oh, it's like a bad dream. Hah, the window." And in he popped, up on to the bed, and in under the bedclothes to safety.

STRANGE BEHAVIOUR OF THE POLICE

This morning while I was at breakfast in the verandah there was a loud bang, and I found our policeman lying insensible at the foot of the big glass screen which protects us from the wind.

The stupid fellow had evidently been in a hurry and blundered into it without seeing it was glass. Luckily the screen was not broken, but his head it was that suffered. He lay gasping there evidently stunned – if no worse.

So we lifted him up and laid him on the steps in the open air hoping that this might revive him. Do you know – before he had lain there a full minute another policeman was on the spot, evidently surprised and agitated. He sent out a shrill call repeated several times till a distant reply was heard, and in another minute a third policeman joined us. At the same time we could hear the police call going on in the distance. Evidently a fourth policeman was coming. I never knew before that there were so many cops in our neighbourhood.



Then policeman No. 2 went to work in a strange way to revive No. 1. He attacked him violently as he lay on the steps. It seemed brutal of him, but it certainly had the desired effect, for No. 1 roused himself enough to say, "Here – drop it! What are you at?" and he tried to get up. But No. 2 went at him again, so that No. 1 forgot his injuries and got on to his feet. "Just stop that, will you? Confound you," he said. "Take that and that," and staggering a bit, he went for No. 2 as well as he could.

No. 3 was looking on all the time, rather enjoying the scrap as he hovered round the combatants. Then Constable No. 4 appeared on the scene, and with No. 3 sat by like a couple of seconds for the fight. Then No. 1 made his way to the bar to get a drink of water, but our old gardener came along at that moment to see what was the matter, and No. 1 jumped up and flew away with Nos. 2, 3 and 4 after him, all attacking him and even knocking him down to the ground once or twice. I couldn't tell whether it was meant in kindness to keep him roused or whether they

want to complete the job and kill him. At any rate, that's the last I saw of them as they flew into the bushes. "Flew?" Yes – oh yes. Didn't you know? These were birds I've been talking about: the "Policeman" shrike of our Bird Club.

Alas! I'm afraid that crack on his head against the screen has affected his brain and he has gone a bit dotty. You know he used to watch the Bird Club from his post (as described in *Birds and Beasts in Africa*) and now and again would make a raid upon it, swooping down and driving off all the members in a panic. But now he is completely changed. He comes into the Club and sits with the members in almost a friendly way, and what is more, he eats the kind of food which they eat. He used not to do that: his meals were made on beetles and caterpillars and what are called "dudus" here – that is big insects. These he held in his claws while he ate them. But now he picks up seeds and crumbs like the other birds and tried to hold them in his claws while he bites at them.

Yes – I'm afraid he has gone a bit barmy, but he seems quite happy and the other birds don't mind him.

WHITE MAN'S MAGIC

We have just been to a jumble sale here. It was not quite the same as a jumble sale in a village at home, because here there were motor-cars or parts of them, books, donkeys, electric kettles, harness, gramophones, any old thing that the neighbouring farmers had got no more use for.

The oddest thing was the extreme hurry with which the auctioneer carried out the sale. No sooner had he knocked down the last bid than he bustled off with "So long, boys," jumped into his car and was off amidst cries of "Good luck" from the crowd.

I then found that a lion had paid two visits this week to his farm and had killed a cow each time; and he was not going with a rifle to make sure that it didn't take another cow to-night.

This auctioneer was rather like our hair-dresser, who comes once a month from Nairobi to dress the ladies' hair here. Like most people in a colony like this he turns his hand to various things, so, besides being a polite hair-dresser, he is also an adventurous elephant hunter.

It is said of him that he was doing a lady's hair one afternoon and when he was half-way through with it he said, "You will excuse me, Madam, I have to go away now before it gets dusk, to shoot an elephant a few miles away. I will finish your perm when I come back next month."

Yesterday I met another man with two strings to his bow. He is for one thing a Game Warden, that is, he is in charge of all the big game in the district, to see that nobody comes shooting the elephants without licence from the Government. But there's a good deal of poaching done on the sly, especially of elephants. It sound rather a big thing to poach. A poached egg is one thing, but a poached elephant is rather another matter!

Their reason for killing an elephant is not so much to get his meat, for many of the tribes here are like me and don't eat meat. No, they kill him for his tusks, which are work a lot of money as ivory. A pair of tusks weighing sixty pounds apiece may bring in sixty pounds in money, a big fortune for a poor native.

So Mr. Game Warden, in addition to his other work, has to be a detective and by noticing small signs he finds out where ivory has been taken and hidden.

One way the natives have for poaching an elephant is for a big number of them to form a wide circle round him, each man carrying a torch with which they set fire to the jungle. An elephant is afraid of fire, and whichever way the hunted one runs he finds his escape cut off by flames. The circle rapidly closes in on him and from all sides the hunters rush in and kill him with their spears.

In some parts a single hunter, armed with a heavy sharp sword, steals up behind the elephant and deals him a tremendous cut into the tendon of his hind leg. An elephant injured in one leg like this will not attempt to move, and so falls an easy prey to the hunters. But it needs a pretty sharp man, as well as a sharp sword to do this stunt.

(Try it one day when you are in Africa and send me a postcard afterwards to say what it feels like to have an elephant kneeling on your chest and driving his tusks through you!)

Our detective friend calls at a native kraal to have a chat with the head-man about the game in the neighbourhood. Meantime the tail of his eye wandering round notices the tail of an elephant hanging up, evidently about to be made into a sheath for a knife. So he remarks to the head-man, "My little bird tells me that an elephant has died near you lately. Is that so?"

"Oh, yes, poor thing, it was very ill. Rheumatism, I think. It just lay down and died."

"How sad! Take me to the place. I should like to see the remains."

"Oh, sir! You couldn't go there. The smell is too awful."

"That doesn't matter. I put up my hand like that and with white man's magic it acts as a gas-mask and I smell nothing. So lead on."

As they get near the place the detective notices signs of fire all round, and then the remains of the elephant, very much dilapidated.

"You must have made a good meal off him."

"Oh, no, sir. It was the hyaenas and jackals that ate him."

"Wonderful animals! And they lit fires all round him and ATE HIS TUSKS?" (for no tusks were there.)

Then came the job of finding these. Of course the common hiding-place with natives is in the thatch of the hut, but this is so well known that ivory poachers resort to other dodges. A tusk browned in the fire can, if properly placed, be made to look like the root of a tree partly showing above ground, or a branch; or it can be pushed home into a rat-hole in the river-bank. There are dozens of ways in which a wily poacher can hide his treasure till he gets a sale for it.

But an equally wily detective can often play on the reputation which the white man has of being able to practise magic, and once he begins to threaten this on a village some member of the tribe is pretty sure to come to him secretly in the night and give away the hiding-place of the ivory.

My friend, the Game Warden, showed me yesterday, with much satisfaction, a nice elephant tusk which he had just unearthed, and he was pretty certain where he was going to find two more.

He did not tell me what "magic" he used for finding them.

Here is a case of "white man's magic" which actually happened in Rhodesia. A white officer in charge of a mission had to go and interview a rebellious native Chief. He, the officer, had lost a leg and went about with a wooden one, and curiously enough one of his companions had lost an eye and possessed a glass one.

When they found the Chief unrepentant after much argument, the officer said, "Sorry, we shall be obliged to put white man's magic on to you. We are all magicians. Watch now. Mr. A will take out one of his eyes. There. Now Mr. B will take out all his teeth." Mr. B displayed his dentures.

"And now I will take off one of my legs," and he proceeded to drag off his imitation limb.

"That's enough," cried the Chief, as well as his terrified people. "We can't stand against such magic. We give in."

ODD BIRDS

We have been out again to look for giraffe. They take a lot of looking for before you find them. You might think that great big animals like these, standing seventeen feet high and coloured white and yellow and brown, should be easy enough to see. But they're not. They like to be among small trees, over the tops of which they can look around while their bodies are hidden away among the branches, and their legs, so long as they stand sill, look like tree-stems. Also, their dappled skins take the colour of the yellow grass spotted with shadows of the trees.

We were unlucky in our search, for we only found one giraffe, and he was dead.

We had noticed several vultures gliding down out of the sky and circling close over the trees. These birds have wonderful eyesight and appetites as big as school-boys'. If one of them, away up in the sky, sees a dead animal, or even a dying one, he glides down on him at once. The

sharp eyes of other vultures still higher up in the shy have spotted his move, and they come shooting down to join in the feast. The marvel is not only that they have this wonderful eyesight, but that there are such numbers of these birds hovering and circling up there so high above the earth that they are out of our sight until some chance of a dinner shows itself, and then down they come, hoostling in corkscrew circles at a great pace, without flapping a wing, till they glide down on to a carcase they are aiming for.

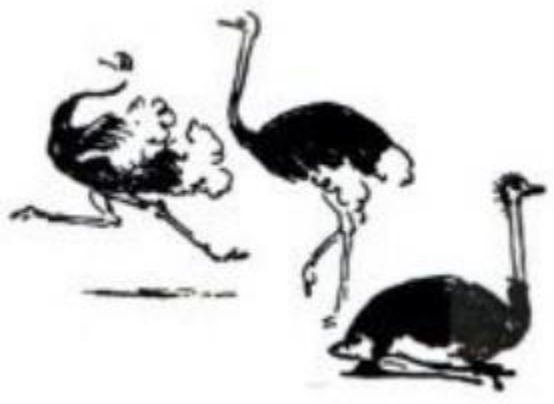
They are hideous birds with their bald heads and scraggy necks and their cruel beaks – but I'd like to be a vulture all the same, to be able to see like that and to sail away high in the sky without any effort.

Well, when we came to the spot where they were landing, we saw a queer-looking object. We couldn't make out what it was till we got closer, and then we saw that it was a crowd of about a hundred of these great birds, all standing together in closely packed rows like soldiers on parade. When we shoved them away they got up lazily, flapping their huge wings, and only flew a few yards before they settled on neighbouring trees. They did not want to leave their banquet, but they were so gorged with what they had devoured that they were in a state of the boy at the school feast who, when asked if he could eat some more, said, "Aye, I could eat some, but I couldn't swallow it."

And then we saw the sad sight of the remains of a fine giraffe, stretched upon the ground, with most of his skin and flesh gone, but his big bones of legs and neck and head all complete, too big a mouthful for the birds.

The next morning, when we passed that way again, there wasn't a bone left – the hyaenas and jackals had seen to that.

Vultures were not the only curious birds we saw in our two days' trek. Before we came to these towards the end of our journey we had seen quite a lot of wild animals, such as a hundred and fifty zebras, over a hundred oryx – handsome great buck about the size of a small horse, with long, straight, dangerous-looking horns – dozens of smart little antelope of different kinds, and a number of others.



Then, of strange birds, we saw from time to time about twenty-five ostriches strolling in looking silly – like small boys who think they'd look manly by smoking cigarettes.

Then, too, we came across half a dozen hornbills. They were rum-looking customers, waddling about with their long necks and long

beaks which make them appear to be searching for something. And I think they were, for they are very inquisitive beggars (like boys) who are always asking questions.

They were not afraid of people or of motor-cars. We were told of one of these birds coming up to a car and walking all round it, carefully inspecting it as if thinking of buying it.

They have a curious way of hatching out their eggs too. Mother lays the eggs in a suitable hole in a tree. Then Father goes in and sits on the eggs. That's his job. To ensure that he does it and doesn't shirk by running off to see a friend at the Club the hen bricks him in with clay, leaving a hole by which he can be fed. And there he sits, doing the broody. His wife and neighbours come and give him food from time to time, until the happy day comes when he can announce, "They're out and tickling my tummy." The wall is quickly demolished and he emerges from his prison and introduces his progeny to their mammas.

Penguins, you know, have an odd way also of hatching their eggs, or, rather, egg – because the hen only lays one egg. She doesn't make a nest. Straw is such an expensive article in the Arctic. It would take her a year to find a bit. So she just puts her great flat feet underneath the egg to prevent it from resting on the ice and squats with her tummy on it to keep it warm. When her feet get cold the male bird comes along and takes over the egg on to his feet. And so they take it, turn and turn about. The funny thing is that Father considers his job as nurse as a very important and dignified one. A case occurred lately when a mother bird declined to hand over to Father. "Come off it," he said. "It's my turn now." "Go and put your head in a bag and flour it," she replied. On that he hit her a clout with his flipper and knocked her over. Then with his strong beak he brutally dug a hole in her head and the place where her brain should have been – if she had had any.

"In my opinion," he said, "that'll larn her," and he tenderly nursed the egg until in the end it produced a son and heir to him.

CHARGED BY A RHINO

Yesterday was a great day for me: I was charged twice. No, not before a magistrate, silly, but by wild animals.

The first was in the morning when a rhinoceros ran at me; and then again in the afternoon an elephant showed that he didn't like me. So I have had some nice thrills.

In the morning we were motoring across a great dried-up lake. It was fifteen miles long and five miles wide; as flat as your hand, without a hole or a mound anywhere – a grand place for John Cobb on which to make some more motor records…and what a splendid course for the Scouts' Soap-box Derby!

Besides the lake, the country round it and round our camp was flat for miles, with belts of thick tree jungle between open grass glades. So we were able to go everywhere in a motor-car looking at wild animals.

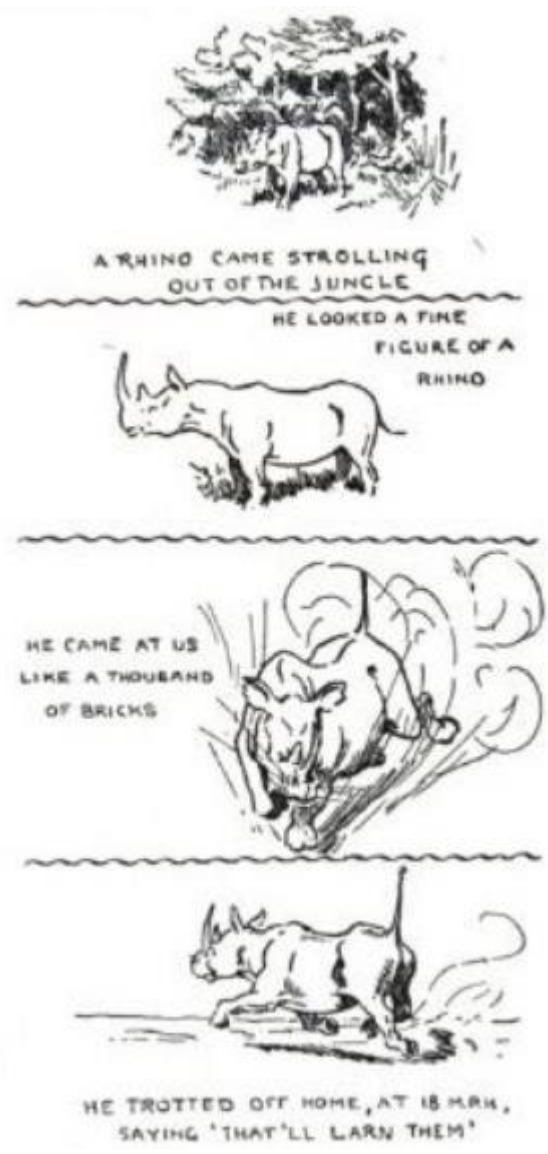
We were out on thee open plain, when we saw Uncle Rhino emerge from the jungle. Funny old beggar! he strolled out slowly, peering about, considering which way he should go. We were a good half-mile away, so he did not see us at first.

A rhino, you know, is very short-sighted, though he can scent you a long way off if the wind is blowing towards him. Also he is very quick of hearing. So we switched off our engine and sat mighty still as he slowly came on towards us.

He wobbled his old head from side to side, and walked in a zig-zag course: couldn't make up his mind which way to go. Then when he got fairly near to us he stood still, a fine figure of a beast, thinking hard. A great powerful body, and two long horns on his big heavy nose. For some time he stood, and we, like Brer Rabbit, "lay low and said nuffin'."

Presently he turned his head towards us. If he had been a wearer of spectacles he would, I am sure, have put them on at this moment to look at us. As it was he said to himself, "Do I see another rhino there, or what is it?" And he came shuffling along towards us to see.

Then it evidently occurred to him, "Why, that is surely one of those beastly motor-cars in which the still-more-beastly men ride about. What do they mean by coming on to my ground? I'll larn them."



And with that he sprang with marvellous quickness into a rush at us, with an ear-splitting snort, and kicking up a cloud of dust as he came, head down and tail up, to smash us.

I had just time to think, "What if our self-starter doesn't work?" But it worked promptly and we whizzed round just clear of him as he came on.

Seeing us go he said to himself, "Yes, that'll larn 'em! Now for home." And he started off at a wonderfully brisk trot for so heavy an animal, heading for the jungle some five miles away.

We ran our car parallel with him and timed him on the speedometer, and found that he was doing eighteen miles an hour. We continued to watch him as long as he was in sight. He was still trotting determinedly along, tail straight up in triumph. Grand old boy!

Eighteen miles an hour – the same pace as the winner of the Scouts' Soap-box Derby at Brooklands.

I told you in a former book the rates at which some kinds of animals and birds go. Here are a few more which I saw quoted by Mr. Gordon Cooper in the *Daily Telegraph*. (He also says that if you don't get your hair cut it will grow sixteen inches in a year; what an awful sight you would look! And if you didn't cut your nails they would grow two and a half inches in a year.)

Elephant shuffles along at	25	miles an hour
Carrier pigeon flies at	40	" "
Greyhound runs at	36	" "
Hen walks at	12	" "
Boy going to school	1	mile an hour
Boy coming home	4	" "
Boy doing Scouts' Pace	6	" "
Sound travels	790	" "

Light travels 186,325 miles in one second, so you can work out for yourselves how many miles per hour that is; and also you can work out how many hours it takes a snail to go a mile when it takes him a day to cover fifty inches.

But I was going to tell you about the adventure with the elephant.

CHARGED BY AN ELEPHANT

Just as we were sitting down to tea a native scout came in to say that there were some elephants in the bush about a mile away. "Which is it to be, tea or tembu (elephant)?"

"TEMBU." So, tealess, we jumped into the car and buzzed off along a rough track through the jungle with our Masai tracker clinging on the running-board. Presently he signalled us to stop, as we were on the spot where he had seen the animals. He crept ahead into the jungle and we thrust the car along after him, and when we could get it no further we got down and followed as noiselessly as possible on foot. No sign of the 'phants.

Presently we were thrilled by hearing the harsh trumpeting of an elephant, but at some distance from us, in the direction of where we had started from. Soon this call was repeated and echoed by another elephant. Bellowing at each other, they were evidently having a bit f an argument, and soon it was obvious that the argument was getting heated and one of them let out a shrill scream of rage.

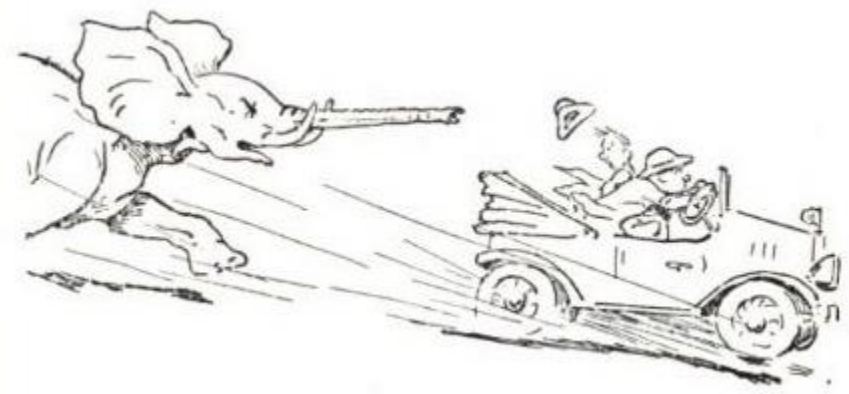
Now we thought it was time that we intervened in the quarrel, so we bundled into our car again and rattled our way back till we reached the main road at our camp. Scorning our tea we ran on to the sound of the quarrelling. Suddenly, only half a mile further on, we found ourselves alongside a big bull elephant. He was a fine beast with great tusks and of a light brown colour, being coated with dust.

He was standing there sulking behind a bush, only nine yards from us (I measured the distance afterwards.) We moved on a bit to turn round and get a better view of him and then gently approached him again as he sullenly moved away from us.

"Hullo, Elly," I said tactfully. "How are you, old boy?"

"Keep your old-boying to yourself and don't call me Elly," was his response.

"Oh, a bit touchy, aren't we, to-day?"



"Get out of this – pronto," was his reply, as he suddenly turned on us, shook his great head violently and, cocking his vast ears, like giant butterfly wings, he came at us with a crashing rush through the bush.

At that precise moment we remembered that our tea must be getting cold, and luckily for us there were no traffic cops on the road, as we beat all records for the half-mile back to our camp, thrilled to the bone with our little adventure and leaving a very surly old 'phant behind us.

ELEPHANT YARNS

Elephants love crashing about in the jungle, smashing down trees and cracking dead sticks under their big feet, or tearing down overhead branches with their trunks, making an appalling amount of noise. Yet when they like they can go perfectly silently without cracking a twig.

I was up in our tree-top look-out the other night watching rhinos and listening to the crashing and rumbling of a lot of elephants near by. After a time they moved off, and the rhinos waddled away to bed. Even the frogs had gone to sleep and the forest was all quiet and still.

It was two o'clock in the morning. I was almost thinking of going to sleep myself, but the beauty and peacefulness of the scene in bright moonlight kept me awake.

Suddenly a flash of white caught my eye through the branches right below me, and a few seconds later the great bulk of an elephant loomed out into the open, his long tushes gleaming in the rays of the moon; and there he stalked solemnly and majestically across the scene, but without making the slightest sound. It was quite uncanny to see this tall black figure moving as silently as a picture on the old-time cinema screen.

A few days ago two rowdy young elephants thought it would be a good idea to go and play old Harry in a coffee plantation close by our village. They made such a hash of the place that the planter sent an urgent message to the Game Warden to come and see about it. When you send for the Game Warden in this country it is like sending for a policeman at home when some toughs are burgling your house. Instead of the policeman's truncheon the Game Warden carries a rifle; and that put an end to the raid and to the elephants.

The worst of a dead elephant is that he is too big to bury or burn. I knew a dead elephant once in Afghanistan: it was fifty years ago but I still have the smell of that elephant in my nostrils. He died on a road, and we had to make a new road round him – at some distance to windward!

Luckily, here in Kenya, the natives were glad to get this big supply of fresh meat; and what they couldn't finish the jackals and hyaenas very soon disposed of for them.

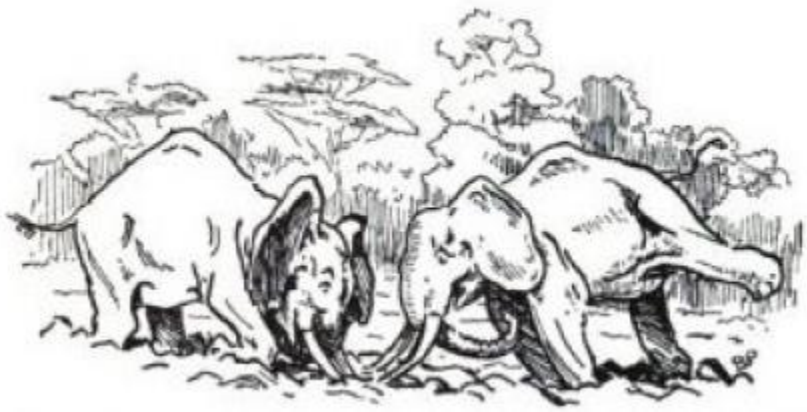
I have just read a report by a former magistrate of this place in which he tells of an elephant doing much the same sort of raid as I have described above within a mile of this village. This time he went for a banana plantation, and an elephant in a banana plantation is worse than a bull in a china shop. In half an hour he can destroy the amount of fruit that would keep a whole family for a year.

The magistrate therefore hastened to rescue the villagers and hurried to the spot with his rifle. There he saw a big elephant wandering among the huts and playing old Goomerandel among

the banana trees. ("Goomerandel?" I don't know who he was or what the word means. In fact I had never seen or heard of the word before I wrote it down just now.) But that's what the 'phant was doing when up came the magistrate with his little gun, and with one neat shot he brought the monster head over heels to the ground. The animal lay kicking and the magistrate advanced very cautiously to put him out of his pain, taking care not to get within reach of his trunk or his great feet. But he was forestalled by his orderly who was carrying his second gun. This man, tremendously excited by his master's success, rushed forward, jumped on top of the elephant and fired a charge which killed it. But the poor beast gave one final heave which sent the orderly flying head over heels backwards, to the added delight of the villagers, who were thoroughly enjoying seeing the end of their marauder.

Talking of elephants, last night at the tree-top lookout two herds of over a dozen each made their appearance. It was difficult to count the second herd, because it was largely made up or mothers and calves – and these little fellows were so hidden between their big mammas that you couldn't see them all at the same time.

The 'phants came there because the ground has a lot of salt in it and they will go anywhere to get salt. It was a funny sight to see them going down on their knees to dig up fids of earth with their tusks, and then chewing the stuff as if it were so much chocolate.



Still funnier was the sight provided by one old elephant who, I think, must have been suffering from rheumatism in his knee, because he would not kneel down to dig but instead stretched out a hind leg behind him in order to balance himself when he leaned forward to stick his tusks into the ground.

One morning when I was half-dressed there came a messenger on a bike to say that there were elephants on the high ground between this place and Nairobi, and not four miles away from us. Needless to say we didn't stop to titivate but jumped into the car and away we went, hoping to see the fun.

We said as we raced along, "Of course, when we get there we shall be told that they have just gone," butt suddenly we came upon a group of natives standing on a bank at the roadside.

It reminded one of a hunting day at home. Instead of "Have you seen hounds?" we asked, "Have you seen elephants?"

"Of course," was the reply. "There they are."

And there they were, as large as life, not three-quarters of a mile away. Five of them, four tuskers and a smaller one, calmly eating away in a field of maize; quietly meandering about, flapping their great ears and tossing up mouthfuls in their trunks, with their long white tushes gleaming in the sun.

It was fascinating to watch them peacefully loafing about, in no hurry to go on to their goal, the big forest on Mount Aberdare some twenty miles away.

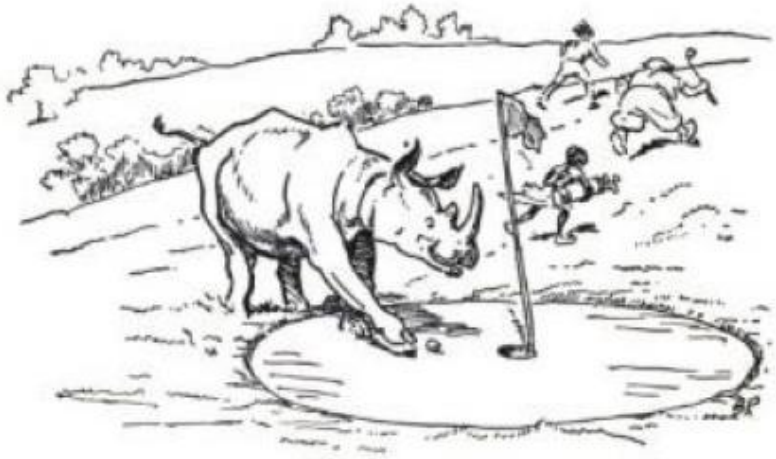
It all looked so peaceful and natural – but tragedy underlay it. In the little valley between us and them a dead man lay, just killed by one of the elephants, while another native had crawled away badly injured. The unfortunate men had brought the trouble on themselves. As an Indian said to us, "It was not the elephants' fault." The men, anxious to protect their crops, had foolishly attacked the elephants with sticks, and had been round on in consequence. The elephants then went on calmly feeding as if nothing had happened.

Though sorry about the men one could not but admire the great dignified beasts as, without anger or hurry, they gradually disappeared into the bush leading towards their mountain home.

There is a frequent passage of elephants across our valley from the forests on Mount Kenya to those on the Aberdare Range, but they generally make their journey by night, so we considered them still in the open broad daylight. And a charming and interesting picture they made.

But in the evening we were depressed at hearing that somebody, because a man had been killed by one of the elephants, had sent an urgent message to inform the Game Warden of the district, who had come along with his rifle, and in a few minutes all five elephants were shot down – dead.

A troop of elephants once passed through the barracks of the native police in our village, but they did no harm and they took no notice of the policemen. The policemen, like the wise fellows they always are, took no notice of the elephants, since they were not rowdy or disturbing the peace. So all passed off well; but it showed that elephants are not afraid of people and are not dangerous provided that people behave well to them.



There is an elephant going about now in a village in Kenya who does no harm to anyone, and has learned not to damage crops of maize and bananas. The villagers are not afraid of him and are friendly to him.

Frank Melland has just written a book about elephants showing that if you go openly among them, not creeping or stalking them so as to make them nervous and suspicious, they will take very little notice of you.

A lady lived for six months in a hut on Mount Kenya and used to sit watching and sketching the elephants and found them quite friendly to her.

Then a farmer near here found a couple of rhino grazing among his cattle. These silly old rhinos, finding the cattle good companions, have made themselves honorary members of the herd and come into the farm-yard at night, and have become quite tame and friendly to people. One arrived on the golf-course here one morning.

At another farm there is a pet zebra, who is quite tame and strolls in and out of the house. Oh! I could tell you dozens of other cases of wild animals and birds becoming tame where people are nice to them and treat them as comrades.

So carry out the Scout law of being a Friend to Animals, beginning with your animals and birds at home, so that when you come out into the jungle you will have the joy of finding good companions even among the wilder animals.

THE PANGA

Seeing that this book is mainly concerned with animals you will say to yourself, "Whatever sort of beast is this that the Chief is writing about? I've heard of the Bongo and the Giant Panda, but I wonder what the Panga is like."

Well, the Panga is not an animal at all. It is a sort of a kind of a big knife.

Every native here carried a panga, not for murder or for defence, nor even for cutting his food or sharpening his pencil. (One reason for this is that he doesn't use pencils.)

But, apart from these things, his panga does everything else. If he wants to cut down a tree he says, "Where's my panga?" If he wants to dig a hole to plant a tree, "Where's that panga of mine?"

When he wants to carve a wooden doll or ornamental staff, or to pick his teeth, he uses his panga for the job.

When he cuts his corn (no, silly, not the one on his toe, but the stuff growing in the fields), he does it with his panga.

He depends on his panga for every kind of job; without his panga to help him he might as well be dead.

Well, that's why I say a panga is like a good Boy Scout – a good SCOUT, mind you, not merely a good boy.

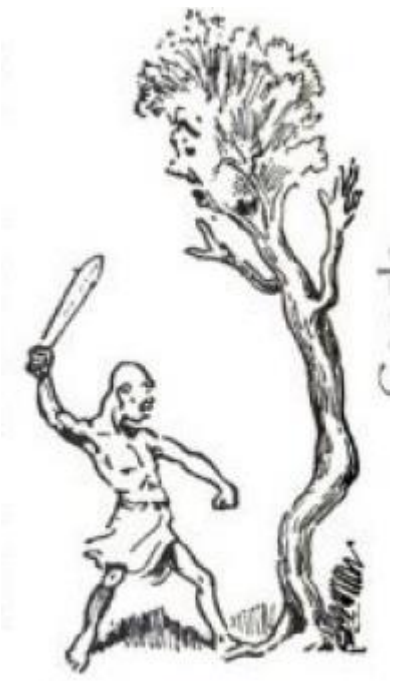
A panga is useful in so many ways and so is a Scout.

Are you, as a Scout, also strong, sharp, bright, straight and reliable? Can you, like the panga, turn your hand to almost any kind of job when needed?

If so, you are a SCOUT, my son.

Where would Great Britain be now, in the warm, if she hadn't got the Scouts to help her behind the scenes?

She might as well be dead, don't you think?



GITHATHI – THE DEATH STONE

This is a stone which the natives round here treat with great respect and terror. I have just been having a look at it. It is a round stone, about the size of your two fists put together, and it has several small natural holes right through it. So it looks almost like a sponge. Harmless-looking enough, but any native will tell you that there is death in it if you tell a lie. As they are rather given to lying they naturally avoid that stone if they can.

It is like a Scout's honour.

I say to a boy, "Did you do this?"

He says, "Oh, no, sir. I wouldn't do such a thing."

I repeat, "ON YOUR HONOUR AS A SCOUT, did you do this?"

"Oh, since you put it that way – well, yes, I did do it."

It is the same with the Githathi: it obliges a man to speak the truth.

A magistrate near here had a difficult case to try. It was one of a kind that is very usual here. A man, we'll call him Jokko, had divorced his wife and, according to the custom, had sent her back to her father, old Max. Jokko told the magistrate that when he married the girl he had paid Max the usual fee of so many cows and goats, and now he claimed that these should be returned to him.

"Well, Max, what have you to say about this?"

"Oh, your Magistrate," replied Max, "you know that this country is full of liars, but though I regret to say it of my own son-in-law, of all the liars in Kenya he is far the worst. You need not believe a word he says."

"But did you or did you not receive from him the number of cows and goats that he says he paid you?"

"I may have received a few, but nothing like the number he mentions. I'll take my oath of that. You see, sir, you can't believe a liar like Jokko."

"Quite so," replied the magistrate. "You shall take your oath as you suggest – you shall take it on the Githathi."

So the Githathi was set up. A bundle of sticks was planted in the ground and on top of these a sort of bird's nest of grass was made in which the holey stone was laid, and beside it a small bone of an elephant.

Then Jokko and Max each pushed a thin stick through the stone, each holding his stick while he gave his evidence. Max was trembling. Everybody believed that if you told a lie while holding such a stick you would, within the next few months, be a case for the undertaker. You would go dead.

So when Jokko had told his story of the number of cattle he had paid, the magistrate asked, "What about you, Max?"

"That's right, sir. I remember now, that *was* the number."

So, thanks to the Githathi, he had to pay up and look pleasant!

THE ORDEAL BY HOT KNIVES

I have just heard of another method of trial which was carried out by a medicine man for a neighbour of mine. My friend had had some things stolen out of his room and suspected that the theft must have been committed by one of his native servants. But when questioned they all denied it.

So he sent for a "medicine man", that is, a man who had a wonderful influence over other natives by making them believe he had the power of bewitching them and bringing them bad luck, or had equally the power of doing them good if he liked. They believed in him a lot and were also jolly well afraid of him.

So when he came along to find out who was the thief, they were all dithering and readily agreed to any test he liked to put to them. He gave the order to light up a very hot fire and then produced a big knife. This was stuck into the fire until it was pretty near red-hot. The servants were all formed up in a line and each one in turn had to lick the whole of the blade with his tongue. A nasty job, don't you think?

But nobody shirked it. If a fellow had refused, it would of course have looked as if he were the guilty party and afraid to go through the test. Mind you, the knife was heated up afresh for each man to lick. But nobody funked it; all fully licked the blade and none seemed any worse for it. Even some boys who were looking on volunteered to come and lick it too.

When all had had their lick they held out their tongues while the medicine man went round and examined each. He only found one man with a small blister on his tongue and pointed him out as guilty but not *very* guilty. The owner, knowing the man was a very good old servant, did not punish him. He remembered that one of his men, the night before, had hurriedly asked for leave of absence because his mother had died, so he had let him go; it now occurred to him that that man was most probably the thief and did not want to face the ordeal.

But how is it that men, so long as they were innocent, could lick a hot iron and not feel it, and yet if guilty their tongue would be burnt and blistered? How do they do it?

Well, I don't know, but I can make a guess.

Once, in India, I had a lot of money stolen out of my bungalow. I thought it must have been done by one of my servants. (In India you have a lot of servants because each will only do his own particular job. Your groom will groom and feed his horse, but another man has to bring its hay and yet another has to bring its water.)

So I had up all my servants, but none had any knowledge of the theft. The only thing to be done was to get a medicine man to put them to a test. In this case the test they had to go through was for each to chew a handful of rice, but without swallowing it. Then, when the medicine man gave the order, after a couple of minutes' chewing, every man spat out his mouthful on to his plate and the medicine man went round and examined each mouthful. If it was wet from the chewing the owner of it was judged to be innocent; but if it was dry in spite of the chewing that chewer was guilty.

As it happened, in this case all managed to moisten their rice, so all were innocent; but the medicine man told me that I must look again to make sure whether the money had been stolen or not, and that I should look particularly in my gun-case. This was a place where I never hid my money, but I looked – and there it was!

Of course, the thief, whoever he was, had funked the ordeal when he heard it was to come off, and had quietly replaced the money in this odd place and had bribed the medicine man.

But now, how could chewing rice or licking a hot knife-blade show up a guilty man? Well, I don't know that I am right, but I think it is this way. When a man is in an awful funk, his mouth gets dry, he has no saliva in it to moisten it. So long as his tongue is wet he can lick a hot iron. (Try it yourself if you want to, but don't blame it on me if you burn your tongue. I only THINK that is the reason!) If he is nervous his tongue goes dry and gets jolly well blistered on a hot knife-blade. The same reason makes a guilty man unable to moisten the rice in his mouth because the saliva won't come and wet it.

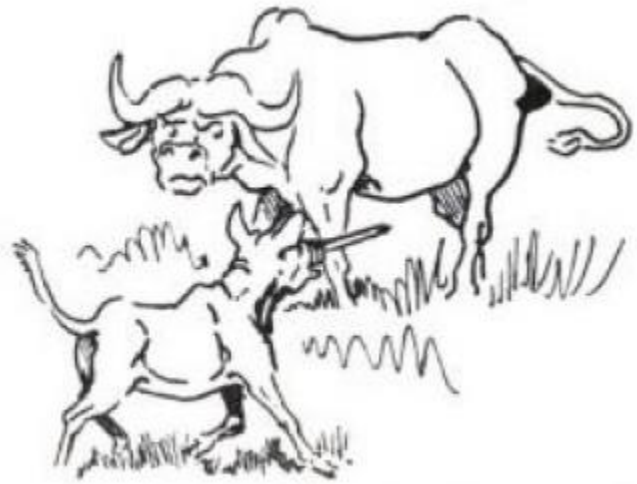
If these natives only understood, as Boy Scout does, what is meant by being "on their honour" to speak the truth, they might save themselves and their pals from the unpleasant ordeal of having to lick red-hot knives.

THE CHAMPION BUFFALOES

I heard a rather nice story the other day about a certain tribe a savages – well, not exactly savages, you know, but rather nice people who don't wear any clothes to speak of and who have no objection to eating Grandma if she is fairly fat and tender.

Their native name meant "Champion Buffaloes", and this his how they gained the title.

These fellows had a quarrel with a neighbouring tribe about the ownership of a certain bit of land, and they went to war and fought each other like Billy-o about it. In the middle of the trouble there stepped in a sort of native Mr. Chamberlain, and he said very wisely, "Here, stop it, you fellows. What's the good of losing your hair and slaughtering each other over a rotten little bit of land? Here's another way of settling the question. Each side should produce a water-buffalo (a big kind of ox of those parts), and let them fight, and the one that winds gains the land for his side."



"Right-o," they said. "That's a bright idea." And they brought up their buffs. The first to come on the scene was a monster! A great big angry-looking beast. The other people hastily stopped their animal before he came on to the ground. They saw that for him it would be a one-minute round and a knock-out. "Not good enough," they thought.

So they did the canny. They got hold of a young calf and fastened a long knife to his nose, so that he looked like a baby rhinoceros. Then they brought him into the arena to oppose the big champion. It was a case of David and Goliath or Jack the Giant-Killer over again.

The calf had never seen any other buffaloes except his mother, and when he saw the huge fellow opposite to him (he was feeling very thirsty at the time), he shouted to himself, "What ho, here's *some* milk-bar," and rushed in headlong to get a drink. But he forgot the knife on his nose and as he rushed in he ripped open the bellow of the champion, so that he died.

Little David had won the battle for his side and had given them the proud title of "Champion Buffaloes."

THE ELEPHANT AND THE HARE

The poor old elephant, honest and trusting as he is, seems to get his leg pulled a lot by the other animals.

The hare and the elephant were strolling along together one day, talking about nothing in particular, when they saw in front of them a cow and a bull who had evidently strayed from their herd.

"You take the bull," said the elephant, "and I'll take the cow."

"Right-o," said the hare, and he went up to the bull and politely offered his services as guide.

The bull, thinking the hare was leading him back to the herd, followed him along till he led him to the cave where he lived. Mr. Hare fed the bull so well and made him so comfortable that he was glad to stop there and did not want to go back to the herd.

Mr. Elephant, strolling about one morning, met Mr. Hare. "Morning, old boy, and how's your bull?"

"Oh, he's doing well. Eats a lot, but he's useful as he keeps away foxes and hyaenas and things, which I don't like. And how's your cow?"

"Fine, She give me lots of milk every day, so I am quite repaid for the food I give her."

Well, months passed by and one day the cow produced a fine calf. When Mr. Hare met the elephant he said, "I say, old boy, you scored off me when you chose to take the cow. My old bull does not present me with anything like that!"

More months passed and again the cow calved. But this time she produced twins.

Mr. Hare went and called on the elephant. "You know, old man, this is a bit thick, you scoring off me like this. When you chose the cow and I chose the bull, nothing was said about calves. I know you always like to be fair and I think it would be only fair if we divided the calves between us."

Mr. Elephant thought it over; he was always good-natured and he quite saw the hare's point. Finally he said, "It would be a bit difficult to divide three calves between us, unless, of course, we cut the third into two halves, and what's the good of half a calf to either of us? I think the fair way would be for me, as biggest, to take two calves and for you to take the third."

"M'yes," said the hare. "I'd like to think this over." So he went and sat apart for a bit thinking hard with his ears cocked two ways at once and his chin resting on his hand.

After a very long think, his two ears pricked forward and he jumped up and said, "Yes, old boy, that's a good idea of yours. The question is, which calf should I take? I have thought of a good way to settling the question. I should not like to take a calf and then find that he did not like my home and would be always trying to escape. So my

idea is, if you see no objection, for your cow to bring her three youngsters to my place. Then you come and fetch her away again, and if one of her calves lags behind and does not want to leave me, that will be the one I should keep. What do you think of that as an idea?"

"Splendid," roared the elephant. "Go ahead. Take the whole bilin' of them to your cave and I'll come along later to fetch them home: and we will see then which one wants to stay with you."

So Mr. Hare strutted off, leading Mrs. Cow and her three young ones. When they got to his cave, he took them all inside and showed them round, and they liked it very much.

By and by Mr. Elephant came along and called for them. Mr. Hare said, "Oh, come in, 'Phantie."

"That's all very well," replied the elephant, "but your door is so small I can't get in."

"Oh," said the hare, "you can easily make it bigger, just as I had to make it big enough to admit the cattle. I did it by butting the rock with my forehead and knocking bits off till the doorway was sufficiently large."

So the elephant banged the rock with his forehead once or twice, but without producing much effect. The hare shouted to him: "It's no use just PATTING the rock like that; go at it and use your huge strength and weight and you will make a doorway good enough for a dozen of your. Go on. Charge the blooming thing."

So the elephant retreated a few paces and then charged at the rock full split. And it *was* a case of full split, for the poor silly old elephant split his skull open and fell down dead and that was the end of him.

And Mr. Hare grinned and lived happily every afterwards in possession of bull, cow, three calves, and dozens more that came later.

At least that is the story the natives tell each other here in Kenya!

MAKING MEN IN KENYA

Among the Zulus, as I have told you in *Scouting for Boys*, when a boy reaches the age for becoming a man they put him through an exam. Not an exam in reading, writing, and arithmetic, but an exam to see whether he is brave, able to look after himself by day and night in a strange country, able to catch and kill and cook his food – in other words, whether he is manly enough to be a useful man for his tribe.

In order to carry out this exam he is painted white with bismuth, which won't wear off for some weeks, and he is turned loose with only a shield and an assegai (appear), and told that if anyone sees him while he is white they will kill him. So he had to hide himself in the jungle and live as best he can by stalking game and digging up roots, and keeping all the time away from other men.

All over Africa, and also in Australia and the South Sea Islands, and till lately among Red Indians in America, the boys have been put through some sort of test of their courage and endurance before being recognised as men fit to be warriors or men of the tribe.

It is just what we do in the Scout movement. Any boy who tries to be a King's Scout, working up through all the stages of Scouting, is bound to be a good man for his country in the end. Fellows who haven't the pluck to face the difficulties of rising, and are content to remain Second Class Scouts, are not so likely to make successful men afterwards.

Here in Kenya, the boys have to go through a very curious kind of ceremony.

When the festival is near for entering them into manhood, fathers of boys between fifteen and eighteen years of age introduce them to the Elders of the tribe as anxious to become men of the tribe.

The boy and his father and mother have to go through a ceremony in their own home as a first step. They kill a goat and mix his blood and entrails with water and take a bunch of herbs which they dip into this mixture and sprinkle themselves with it, beginning with their left toes and up the body to the head, and then again from the right toes and up. Afterwards they mother brings water and they wash themselves clean. This is supposed to purify them for the ceremony.

Then all the candidates attend a lecture by an Elder of the tribe, who tells them their duties and behaviour as men, now that they are entering into manhood.

All the people of the district come together for the occasion and make merry with feasting and war-dancing for some days. The witch-doctor, who is always a great man in the tribe, goes

out along into the bush and selects a tree which he blesses, but no one knows which tree it is that he has made sacred. A special hut is built in which the candidates have to live during the week of the ceremony.

Their first test is when they parade before the Chief Elder and take their solemn oath that they will faithfully go through the whole ceremony. Then they are given a vile-tasting mixture to drink, but they must not wrinkle up their faces or make any sign that they dislike it. They have to prove that they can stand something unpleasant without moving a muscle.

Then the witch-doctor leads them out to the sacred tree, each boy being armed with a stick. The doctor tells them the devil is in that tree, so they attack it violently with sticks and bash down the branches. These they collect and bring back to their parading-ground. The branches then form their seats during the rest of the ceremonies.

On the third day is the great test, when another witch-doctor comes along grotesquely got up and heading a procession which is loudly cheered by the onlookers. He is a terrifying sight as he approaches the boys. But they are closely watched to see if they show any signs of fear.

Then the witch-doctor takes out of his pouch a knife and, taking each boy in turn, gashes him with it. If a boy should show any sign of pain he would be derisively laughed at by the crowd. He has to stand the ordeal unmoved and then go to the rest-hut to recover.

After this the crowd enjoys itself by singing and dancing till midnight. For the boys the next step is to parade before the Elder and to have their heads shaved by their mothers and a friend of their mother – a sort of godmother. The hair shaved off must not be allowed to fall on the ground, or it would bring awfully bad luck; it has to be carefully taken away and burnt. Again the boys are given a beastly mixture to eat, and their faces are watched to see whether they are manly enough to remain unmoved by what is disagreeable. An Elder then sprinkles them with a jolly mixture of goat's inside and honey! A second Elder comes and squirts more of it on them with his mouth.

Then everybody offers them congratulations and good wishes, and they are considered men, after which they retire to their hut and are given food. But they must not touch it with their hands, or it would bring them bad luck. So they eat it out of a banana leaf.

The following day is a day of rest, and after it the boys sally forth to show that they can make light of their wounds, and they go out to "make war", that is to hunt any game they can find, even squirrels or birds, etc.

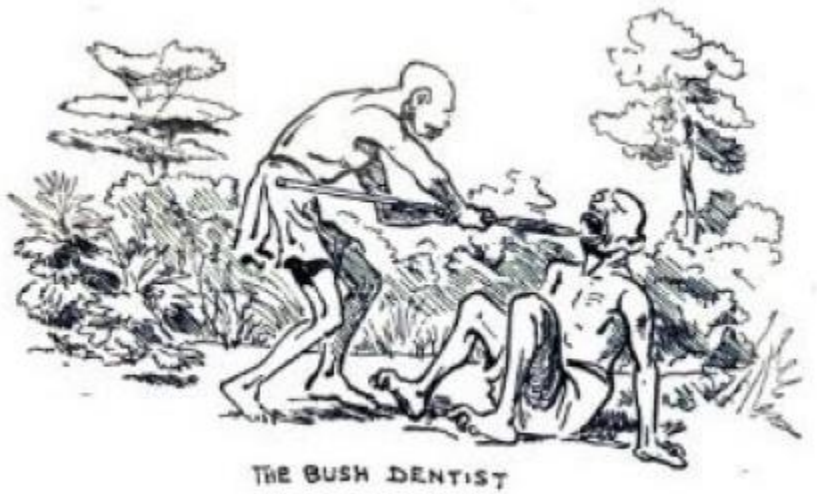
The day after this they go separately on expeditions – like our First Class Journey for Scouts – visiting friends and distant kraals just to show that they are able to fend for themselves in spite of the dangers of travelling alone. When they reach their friend's house they must not go under his roof but must receive his welcome and congratulations outside his entrance gateway. Then they return back the same night to their ceremonial hut.

On the seventh day of the initiation ceremonies each boy has a wooden disc inserted in the lobe of his ear by the Elder. This is to show that he had passed his test for manhood.

The eighth and last day of the festival is a very rowdy one for all, and a banquet is given to the boys.

Very early the following morning each boy returns to his home to be welcomed as a grown-up man by his family. But they must not leave the sleeping-hut by the door: they have to make a hole in the back wall through which to depart, and once they have gone out they must not on any account return to the hut. When they have cleared out the hut is burnt.

(These and many more details are given in a book called *The Akikiyu*, by Father Cagnolo of the Italian Mission at Nyeri.)



THE BUSH DENTIST

Another unpleasant test they have to go through is a visit to the dentist. Well, most boys have to go through that – but you fellows are lucky who can do it comfortably in a nice armchair with anaesthetics for preventing the pain.

How would you like to have it as these native boys do, when the dentist bring along a big knife, or short spear, and digs out a tooth after some minutes of "genuine fun without vulgarity" (as the Concert advertisement says)?

A JUNGLE VARIETY SHOW

I was sitting in the front row of the stalls in the Jungle Theatre last night, or, in other words, I was completely ensconced in a tree overlooking the salt-lick and drinking-pool near Nyeri. Illuminated by the full moon, some comedies were performed by the jungle folk which I don't think they could have staged had they known that man was looking on.

After some curtain-raisers by a number of handsome water-buck, a colobus monkey, and a delightful performance by a family of Forest Hog, there came upon the scene a find young rhino and his wife. Slowly and quite silently they waddled down to the pool, and at once began lapping up the muddy water with loud sucking and occasional snorts to recover their breath. Their gurgling grunts seemed to say:

"Good soup this, what, Araminta!"

"Lovely, isn't it, Charles – a little thick perhaps. But you should try some of this salted mud, it's really first-class."

"By gum, yes. That's the stuff for me."

And so they guzzled away, talking only occasionally as they golloped down the mud for a good quarter of an hour. Then, well filled, they sploshed out of the pool with loud sucking of their feet as they drew them out of the mud.

After standing for a little while, almost hesitating whether to go back and have some more, Charles started to walk slowly homeward. But he had not gone many yards before, to his astonishment, he met a burly great rhino on the path. They met nose to nose, their respective nose-horns clattering together as they did so. And there they stood, nose to nose, without moving for four or five minutes. I could not quite hear what they were saying to each other, but it sounded like this:

CHARLES: Oh! Good morning.

THE COLONEL: Who are you, sir? And what might you be doing here?

CHARLES: Well, as a matter of fact, I've just been having a snack down there. Very good soup, a little on the thick side, but the sale was –

COLONEL: Are you aware, sir, that this is MY pool?

CHARLES: Oh, I'm sorry – I thought it was open to the public.

COLONEL: Well, you thought wrong: it is NOT open to the public. I consider it a somethinged piece of impertinence –

At this moment Araminta, scenting trouble, joined the two gentlemen, and there the three of them stood, heads together, so that seen from above they looked like three motor lorries formed up in shamrock pattern.

CHARLES (*nervously*): I don't think you know my wife.

COLONEL: That your wife? (*To her.*) Good mornin' – fine day. (*To Charles.*) So that's it. Not content with coming here yourself to scrounge my soup, you go and bring your whole family.

CHARLES and ARAMINTA: Really, sir, we're very sorry, we didn't mean –

COLONEL: No, you didn't expect to find *me* here. Good day.

And with that he waddled down to the pool and started sucking loudly at the soup as a sign that he had had enough of them. But Charles and Araminta stood there looking disconsolately at him, and without a move for a good three minutes. Then Araminta timidly, inch by inch, drew nearer to the irate Colonel and murmured, "Really, sir –" The Colonel stopped eating, took a fierce look at her, and roared, "WILL YOU GET OUT?"

Charles and Araminta hastily withdrew towards home, and as they went I could just hear Charles whisper to her, "Testy old beggar!" to which she replied, "He's a snivelling swine of the worst sort, if you ask me."

So they went their way while the Colonel continued his repast, but in a very restless grumpy mood and grumbling all the time about those blamed interloping bounders who had spoiled his soup.

In the midst of this who should appear upon the scene but Belinda, a well-known rhino matron, with her toto (young son). Now, thought I, there'll be a nice old shindy; but not a bit of it. Belinda walked straight into the pool with a quick "Good evening, Colonel," and calmly proceeded to lap up the soup right under his nose.

"Blast!" snorted the Colonel. "This is too much," and he plunged through the mud and out of the pool and strode off in a towering rage into the forest, snorting like and engine blowing off steam.

Belinda, smiling to herself, went on serenely with her supper, while her toto, who was not yet a soup-eater, browsed about on the bank. Belinda, if not greedy, was at any rate hungry, and she went on and on feeding herself for the better part of half an hour. Then poor toto could stand it no longer; he was dying for a drink. He began trotting impatiently about the place, whining in a tiny voice like a cat mewing. At last Mamma had to yield to his tears, and she came out and stood on the bank to let him have his milk. But with her heavy body and short legs it became a problem for the toto how to get his drink; however, he was clever enough to solve it by lying flat on the ground and wriggling himself into a position favourable to his purpose.

When the toto had satisfied his appetite (and that was not accomplished in a moment) Belinda turned her attention to a second course of feeding in the pool.

Toto calmly laid himself down on the bank and went snugly off to sleep.

Meanwhile, there sauntered on to the stage a great hairy black boar, known to zoologists as the Giant Forest Hog. Knowing how in India the boar allows no one, not even the tiger, to drink in his pool, I expected to see this bigger cousin of his go and turn off Belinda. But not a bit of it: Belinda went on feeding quite unconcerned, and the boar contented himself with standing near, waiting for an opportunity of taking his turn. Belinda came out of the pool once or twice to take breath, and the boar immediately moved towards the "soup," but his move was instantly checked as Belinda returned to have another gulp.

On one of these excursions she noticed to her evident displeasure that Master Toto was sleeping the sleep of the well-fed sybarite; so she walked up to him and gave him an upheaving dig with her horn which put him on his feet and startled him into life again. As she went back to her grub Toto looked around and saw the new arrival, the Great Hot; so he advanced towards him, quite eager to have a friendly game with him, evidently saying, "Hullo, cocky, who are you?" But "cocky" wasn't for it; to the eternal shame of the pig tribe and to the destruction of my belief in the tough courage of the boar, cocky hurriedly skipped out of the way of the harmless toto. After a few repetitions of this Belinda suddenly called to Toto that it was time to go home, and off they strolled into the bush, leaving the boar at last to have his supper.

Then there appeared on the scene a solitary doe of the Bushbuck family, but so nervous it was painful to watch her. "My dear girl," I said, "you ought to see a nerve specialist without delay." She wanted to eat, and wanted to drink, but before she got her head down to do either she flung it up again, her great ears pricked in apprehension as she looked round first this way and then that. Then suddenly she was gone, bounding away, her white scut gleaming in the moonlight. Then came the cause. We had heard him some time before when the forest re-echoed with his harsh roar: "OOO-at". Now he appeared, looking like a down-at-heel attorney, a hyaena, nose well forward and cringing hind-quarters following, as he sneaked across the stage. But he was not the only cause for the panic of the doe. Creeping slowly from the bush came what looked exactly like the homely black cat of the back garden, but on a far bigger scale – the Black Panther.

A beautiful sight she presented, as dawn came on, with her graceful sinuous form moving easily and with cruel intent to find a victim among the sometimes careless monkeys. She was as fascinating a sight as she was a rare one in this country. In Malaya it is different and the question, "Can a leopard change his spots?" has there been answered in the affirmative; the spotted leopards have been crossed with the black until now the black are the more common. But our black friend, although she captured no prey, gave us a beautiful exhibition of her ability to conceal herself in spite of her conspicuous colour. Then the sun rose, and she, with the rest of the night's pageant, faded out – and we went in to breakfast.

That afternoon the stage was taken by two herds of elephants of about twenty in each, tuskers, dams and totos. For two hours they disported themselves in complete freedom.

One little incident showed them different in a way from their Indian cousin. It was said in Nepal that where a rhino is an elephant dare not stay.

In the present case, when the elephants were enjoying their revels, a sturdy old rhino pushed his way among them till he reached the pool to get his share of the "soup" (now thick as glue!). But the elephants, unlike their Indian relations, showed no sign of fear of him and merely accepted him as a vulgar nuisance. I had gone home when this "extra turn" took place, but I heard about it from others and I quote it with the rest of the day's performance as showing that although here in Kenya we are debarred from the pleasures of a Gaumont Cinema, we have at any rate, within five miles of us, this Nature's theatre with its nightly entertainment of comedies and varieties.

THE END

PRINTED BY PURWELL AND SONS, LTD.
PAULTON (SOMERSET) AND LONDON