

HUNTING BIG GAME IN EAST AFRICA

Hunting the Dangerous African Buffalo

By H. A. Bryden

H. A. Bryden, the co-author with Percy Selous of "Travel and Big Game," is a man who was born to the chase. From his youth it has been his ruling passion and he has gone with his rifle all over the world. In every continent his fame as a Nimrod is known, and he has a modest direct style of presenting his adventures, tinged with a little touch of poetic sentiment here and there, which is very pleasing indeed. If any fault at all could be found with him it would be that he was overmodest and inclined to boast for others instead of telling his own story.

An incident highly indicative of the extraordinarily dangerous character of the African buffalo is related by Mr. Ainsley Williams, the gentleman scout of the famous Niger watershed exploring party.

I had missed him from his accustomed stations and on his reappearance he was generally bandaged up and one leg was in splints. It appears that one late afternoon when the shadows in the brush were growing to the point of almost complete darkness though the sun still illuminated the tops of the trees, he was returning to camp alone save for a Senegambian gun bearer noted for his bravery. Both were mounted on native ponies, wiry and keen of senses. Suddenly Williams' pony began to snuffle and snort and both stood stock still refusing to advance into the darkness of the foliage-arched trail. Williams quickly unslung a double barreled ten gauge Parker with which he had been after fowl. He meant to slip in a buck shot cartridge, but before he more than had his gun across his pommel, with a grunting bellow the huge form of an old bull buffalo rushed out of the darkness ahead and charged the two with all ferocity.

It was impossible to turn out of his way and all that Williams could do was to lean forward and pull both barrels point blank. The massive horns and frontal bones must have shielded the beast from any injury, save enough to infuriate it more than ever. The next instant Williams' pony was disemboweled with a side swipe of the bull's horns and the rider was pitched into the brush with a broken leg. On over the dying pony rushed the buffalo and his charge drove the second pony end over end on top of his Senegambian rider. The two rifles he carried flew into the brush and one fell near Williams. It was the Winchester forty-four. Williams dragged himself over to it and found it uninjured, but a tragedy was transpiring meanwhile. Giving the poor gun bearer no chance for his life, the bull swept first one tip of his mighty horns and then the other into the jumble of horse and man and in his blind fury knelt on them and stamped on them. This happened in the fraction of a minute of course, and was terminated only when Williams, mustering all his strength, rose to his knees and began pumping soft-nosed pellets into the bull's flank, raking him forward into vital parts. The murderous creature fell on top of his victims and when searchers attracted by Williams' cries, found them, horse, bull and Senegambian lay dead in one heap.

Most Dangerous Game in Africa.

It is agreed upon all hands by experienced hunters in Africa that the buffalo is one of the three most dangerous four-footed foes that man can attack. Most men class this animal with elephants and lions, as game that requires the highest attributes of skill, courage and caution to bring to bay. As a matter of fact, it may be laid down that more deaths and dangerous accidents happen annually in Africa in hunting the buffalo than in the chase of any other species of heavy game. In regions where large numbers of these splendid beasts still wander, in troops of three hundred, four hundred and even more, and where they have been little disturbed, the

hunter has no great difficulty in shooting as many as he requires. In fairly open country, where scattered covert exists, and where they can be readily approached—for they are by no means keen-sighted creatures—a man may, he begins to think, shoot buffaloes as easily as he can shoot oxen. But, directly a buffalo is wounded and his blood-spoor has to be taken up, and the hunter has to follow him into the dense coverts to which he retreats, the business is entirely changed. Then you may prepare to look out for yourself, to take up your heaviest and most reliable weapon, and to follow the track of your game with every sense alert, and your rifle handy for an instant and most deadly charge.

You will find, too, that the native spoiler, who trotted in front of you readily enough on the blood spoor of elephant, and even lion, will now greatly prefer to follow in your rear, and leave you to take up your own person the first and dangerous risk in the dark and shadowy thickets into which you are advancing. He knows—none better—the dark, evil fury and the lurking, noiseless ways of the beast of which you are in search. The buffalo, so soon as he is wounded, seems, indeed, to think of little else than a bloody revenge. Unlike most other game, which, when wounded, will almost invariably take to themselves in flight as far from the pursuer as possible, he usually retreats some distance into the densest bush, and then either hides up in some dark corner, where the shadows are deep and dense, or, turning upon his line, takes a parallel path back, and so waits for his foe; or he will even follow back upon his own spoor and conceal himself. Sometimes he will stand lurking amid the dark thickets; at another time, if badly wounded, he will lie down; in either case prepared and determined to inflict a bloody revenge for the hurts under which he is smarting. Year after year fatal accidents happen in South African buffalo hunting, year after year men, if not killed outright, are terribly mangled; and, until the buffalo is completely exterminated, he will

rest of the day was spent in skinning and cutting up the game. Part of the natives were sent back to the Boer camp, laden with as much meat as they could carry—the Boers requiring not only fresh meat for immediate use but enough to make a supply of "biltong" (salted sun-dried flesh); the remainder of the flesh was bestowed upon the native villagers who were with the expedition.

Large numbers of buffaloes were still reported a little further ahead, among the lagoons and marshes of this region, and the Dutch hunter, therefore camped for the night, ate a hearty supper by the roaring fire, and slept soundly till early dawn. Before sun-up the party were again stirring. In less than two hours' time the natives had led the way to a broad, marshy lagoon, or "vlei," as the Boers call it, surrounded by drier ground, upon which grew bush, acacia trees, and a few tall palms. Part of this lagoon was shallow open water, the remainder consists of a dense bed of tall reeds, which led to further swamps and lagoons beyond. The sight that met the Dutchman's eyes, as he and the natives crept cautiously towards the edge of the "vlei," and surveyed the scene from behind a screen of bush, was a wonderful one. In and about the "vlei," stood a troop of not less than two hundred buffaloes, some rolling in the shallow, some drinking, some standing belly-deep in water, dark and motionless. The buffalo birds (a species of starling—Buphaya Africana) those watchful allies of these animals and rhinoceroses, were flying hither and thither, many of them packing and feeding on the ticks and parasites which infest the buffalo. A number of small white herons, too, were about the "vlei," some of which were also to be seen actually perching on the broad backs of the great game. In any case the stalk required caution, and, with these watchful "buffel-vogel" about, extreme care was, as the Boer saw, essential. Concealed behind a thick mass of bush, to which he and the Hottentot had crept, the Dutchman waited patiently

and was determined to finish off his task. As soon as the reeds were reached, the blood spoor was easily to be followed. The heavy bullet had evidently raked the lungs, the bull was bleeding freely, and large patches of crimson marked its path. The reeds were very tall—twelve or fourteen feet—and thick, and the spooring seemed so dangerous an operation that the Hottentot, who was carrying a second gun—a Martini Henry—fell behind, leaving his master to take the first risk with his heavy eight-bore. At every step—they were wading knee deep in water—the hunters stopped to listen. They had not penetrated fifty yards through the avenue of broken reeds, afforded by the passage of the bull, when in an instant, and without warning, the beast was upon them. The Boer was knocked flat upon his back by the charge; the bull had miscalculated his distance, had no doubt, charged for the sound, and had struck his enemy with his nose, which was held high, as is the habit of these brutes when charging. Galloping over the prostrate Boer, the Buffalo went straight for the Hottentot a few paces behind. This unfortunate the brute struck with his horn and tossed on one side some yards into the reeds. Then, continuing its career, the bull passed on out of the "vlei" and took shelter in some thin bush, where it was afterward found dead. The Boer, all the while, severely bruised, picked himself up, retrieved his rifle, which was flung yards away, and then sought the Hottentot. The unfortunate servant lay among the reeds and water, a terrible wound gaping just below his chest, to the left—breathing his last. He lived only a short time, and died a pathetic and unwilling object lesson in the risks and dangers of following a wounded buffalo into thick covert.

Some Perils of Buffalo-Hunting.

Occasionally hunters have been attacked by a solitary buffalo which has charged them before a shot has been fired, and without apparent provoca-



ONE WILD LUNGE LIFTED HORSE AND RIDER FROM THE GROUND.

be found as savage and as dangerous as the lion himself, and, withal, far more revengeful.

Stalking a Buffalo Herd.

I cannot better illustrate the character of these determined and plucky animals than by an adventure narrated to me not long since in the hunting veldt by a Boer hunter from the Transvaal. He had been tracking with some other compatriots far to the northwest of Lake Ngami. Flesh was badly wanted in camp, and as tsetse fly was prevalent in the marshy country, north of the Okavango river, on which they were outspanned, and the natives reported large herds of buffaloes, he left his horses behind him, ferried across the river, and spent the next two days in hunting. He had with him his own Hottentot servant, a good and reliable hunter, and a fair shot, and he had as well several natives of the district who were anxious for meat, and ready to show him the game.

On the first day the Dutchman came across some fifty buffaloes grazing in fairly open veldt. Getting behind some good and convenient covert, and with the wind in the right direction, he had little difficulty in shooting two fat cows and a young, fresh bull. The cows were pretty easily secured; but the young bull, although shot through the lungs, jumped on his legs from some long grass and bush, then walked up, charged fiercely at the spooring party, and was only killed within a few feet of the hunter. The

till the troop moved and a fair shot offered.

Attacked by an Enraged Buffalo.

At last several fat cows, for which he had been waiting came, together with a tremendous old bull, within 30 yards. Selecting the best cow, the Boer aimed behind the point of the shoulder, and brought her down. She fell instantly to the shot, struggled a little further, and soon lay dead. The Boer had hoped and expected to bring down another cow. His intentions were frustrated, however, by the bull, which charged upon the instant directly towards the rifle smoke. Within ten yards, the Dutchman, who was kneeling, fired again, hitting the grim beast in front of the chest, and turning it. Meanwhile, at the sound of the firing the whole immense herd floundered out of the "vlei," and went off crashing through an angle of the reed beds, and thence far into the bush. As they fled the Boer shoved in another cartridge, took aim at a retreating cow eighty yards off, and by a lucky shot, broke her back. She fell bellowing, and was quickly dispatched. Leaving the natives to skin and cut up these carcasses, the Dutchman now took up the pursuit of the wounded bull, which he had marked in his flight through a dense patch of reeds to the right of the lagoon. The beast had turned off alone, and the greatest care had to be taken in following it through such covert. But the Dutchman had hitherto always had great luck with buffalo,

in such instances it has usually been found either that the animal had been previously wounded by some other hunter, or had been clawed by a lion; in either case its naturally morose temper having been rendered yet more dangerous.

No hunter ought to attempt to tackle a buffalo with a rifle of lighter calibre than a 577 double express.

Once plentiful all over Southern Africa wherever water was to be found, the buffalo has now to be sought far in the interior. There is one singular exception to this statement. Many years ago the Cape government passed an act protecting under severe penalties the buffalo—as well as the elephant—in Cape colony. In the forest and densely bushed regions bordering the coast line, some strong troops of buffaloes are still to be found between Mossel bay and the Kowie river. A few years ago, during a great drought, some of these fine beasts were to be seen drinking in the river within a few miles of the town of Uitenhage. These animals can only be shot in Cape colony by a special permit from the governor, and on payment of the sum of ten pounds for each specimen obtained. Beyond Cape colony the sportsman has to travel nowadays several hundred miles before he can hope to find buffalo. Perhaps the best country existing at the present time is the low and unhealthy region lying in Portuguese territory between the Sabi and Zambezi. Upon the Busi and Pungue

tributaries, and about the tributaries of the Zambesi, on its easterly course, large herds of buffalo are still to be found. This country, however, is only accessible during the African winter—April to October—unless the risk of deadly fever be taken. There are still buffaloes to be found, to about the Chobe river, in the far-off swamps and marshes of the Upper Okavango. In these regions the tsetse fly is certain to be found in the buffaloes' haunt, and the hunter must perforce do all his work on foot.

As the African buffalo is one of the toughest and most difficult of all game animals to bring to bay, so that handsome creature, Burchell's zebra (*Equus Burchelli*), the zebra of the plains, is by far the most easily destroyed. A single 450 Express or Martini-Henry bullet will at once turn this fleet and handsome animal of the troop, an easy victim (if not a easy killed outright) to the hunter's next shot. With a broken leg the zebra is instantly helpless; with a broken limb, and a shot through the body to boot, one of the larger African antelopes, such as a hartebeest or brindled gnu, will often run for miles, and finally escape the hunter altogether. As an almost invariable rule Burchell's zebras are hunted on horseback; they are fleet and enduring, and even a first-class South African hunting pony must be in very good form, and upon hard even ground, to carry his rider within half of them. Most usually these animals are to be met with feeding on open grassy plains, or in open bush, where large glades and clearings are to be found. In a tall-on end chase across flats, with a fair start, they can usually gallop clean away from the mounted man. If it were not for a habit of curiosity, they would, indeed, be "kittle cattle" to come up with on the great plains. But their curiosity is often their undoing. I have many times galloped steadily behind a troop of these zebras, and then halted for a moment. The zebras would then wheel quickly round in line and stand for a minute to have a good look at the pursuer. This was the time to put in a steady shot. Sometimes, even when the hunter is galloping, they will turn round and stand for a moment, apparently out of sheer curiosity.

Exterminating the African Zebra.

In semi-bushy country, where their view is more circumscribed, these zebras are without much difficulty shot. In Mashonaland large numbers of these zebras have been shot within the last few years by the pioneers and settlers. I have found that by making a long "our an" getting between them and the bush to which they run for shelter, these animals when feeding in the open can be driven about and shot pretty much at will. They seem for the time to become clustered, lose their heads, try to make short cuts past the mounted men, and so fall victims. In former days these magnificent beasts ran in immense numbers in all the open country from the Orange river to the Zambesi. They are still to be found in large troops in the Namaland country, in remoter parts of Mashonaland, and in still larger numbers east and northeast of Mashonaland, toward the coast. Beyond the Zambesi they are widely distributed in Africa, becoming exceedingly plentiful again upon the great plains between the east coast and Uganda. South of the Orange river they seem seldom, if ever, to have ranged. Burchell's zebra is not to be confounded with the more asinine black and white mountain zebra (*E. Zebra*), which is perfectly striped all over. The Burchell's zebra is best known to the British public of all this handsome group, good examples being always on view in the Zoological society's gardens.

As a general rule this zebra is not perfectly banded down the legs—as is its mountain cousin—but a variety, sometimes called by scientists "Chapman's zebra," is to be found in the interior, with the white legs pretty generally banded as far down as the fetlocks. The average European sportsman, having shot a few of these beautiful creatures as specimens, will usually stay his hand and spare them, unless meat for his followers is absolutely needed. The Boer and native hunter, on the contrary, shoot them whenever they get the chance, merely for the price of the skin—a matter of a few shillings up country. And so the species becomes exterminated. It is a thousand pities! Of all sights in the fair veldt—and there are many to charm the eye—I know of few nobler than a good troop of Burchell's zebras, creatures which seem to have been created for on other purpose than to adorn the wilderness. Whether feeding quietly among the herbage; or resting in the heat of mid-day; or fleeing across the plain, their striped coats, as clean and shining as a well-groomed race horse, gleaming in the sunlight; brisk, beautifully proportioned, and full of life and spirits; these zebras represent the highest perfection of feral life. True children of the sun-drenched plains, long may they yet flourish to decorate the African veldt!

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Worldly Wisdom.

As there is a worldly happiness which God perceives to be no more than disguised misery; as there are worldly honors which in his estimation are reproach, so there is a worldly wisdom which in his sight is foolishness. Of this worldly wisdom the characters are given in the Scriptures, and placed in contrast with those of the wisdom which is from above. The one is the wisdom of the crafty, the other that of the upright; the one terminates in selfishness, the other in charity; the one is full of strife and bitter envyings, the other of mercy and of good fruits.—Blair.

FEW CARESSES IN HER LIFE

Infinite Pathos in Remark Made by Little Philadelphia Child of the Slums.

Dr. Herman L. Daring, superintendent of the Philadelphia City mission, has for many years devoted his life to the poor. Dr. Daring is the inventor of the pretzel test for street beggars. When a street beggar pleads starvation, you buy him a big German pretzel at the nearest stand. If he eats the pretzel, he is honest; if he refuses it, he is a fraud.

Dr. Daring in his work among the poor has learned many odd, quaint things that he relates superbly, for he is a born story-teller. In an address at Bala, apropos of the hard, rough lives of the children of the poor, he related a dialogue between two little girls in Rum alley.

"Maggie, wuz y ever kissed?" said the first tot.

"'On'y wunst in me life wot I kin remember," said the second. "When I wuz in de Honnyman hospital wid a broken arm one o' de lady nurses kissed me, an' I blushed like a child."

BRIGHT IDEA.



Miss Citykid—Oh, Willie, wouldn't it be lovely if we could catch one and take it home and tame it?

Standing Fad.

The wandering agent who was selling cigar-bands found Remus sitting on the porch mending his fishing lines.

"Do you have any fads down here in Dixie?" asked the agent.

"What am them, mister?" inquired Remus, curiously.

"Why, take the collecting fad. Do you make any collections of anything down here?"

Remus laughed. "Oh, yess, sah," he chuckled, "de same collections we've always made. De collection of pickaninnies in dogs, sah."

A Boomerang.

At a small country boarding-house sort "down in ole Virginitie," this past summer, the girls decided to give a dance in the town hall on the mutual benefit plan, so to speak. Half of the expenses of the hall, music and refreshments, it was planned, should be borne by them and the other half by the men. The fair chairman of the refreshment committee, in exhorting the prospective dancers to make no mistake in the details agreed upon, wrote:

"The girls will furnish the sugar and the men will bring the lemons."

Laundry work at home would be much more satisfactory if the right Starch were used. In order to get the desired stiffness, it is usually necessary to use so much starch that the beauty and fineness of the fabric is hidden behind a paste of varying thickness, which not only destroys the appearance, but also affects the wearing quality of the goods. This trouble can be entirely overcome by using Defiance Starch, as it can be applied much more thinly because of its greater strength than other makes.

Work for the Young Man.

There is a place for you, young man, and there is a work for you to do. Rouse yourself up and go after it. Put your hands cheerfully and proudly to honest labor. A Spanish maxim runs: "He who loseth wealth, loseth much; he who loseth a friend, loseth more; but he who loseth his energies, loseth all."

The Main Thing.

Poeticus—What age do you think most charming in a woman?

Cashit—A rich heritage.

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