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ADVENTURER'S PARADISE

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KANGAROO SHOOTS MAN

MURDER À LA MOZAMBIQUE

ANIMAL HEAVEN

Adventurer's Paradise

by

ALASTAIR SCOBIE

With 22 half-tone illustrations



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PROLOGUE

On a rise overlooking the Matthew Range of Kenya's Northern Frontier District the Samburu *moran* named Laitikitik stands, watching his cattle graze on the yellow, dusty Leroghi Plateau. He holds his spear with an almost effeminate gesture of his long-fingered right hand, his slim arm twisted round the wooden haft, fingers spread along the blade. His hips are swung to one side of his body, his left hand resting on his left hip, a graceful, easy posture he will maintain for hours. On each cheek are two broad chevrons of bright orange paint. His copper-coloured skin is liberally decorated with ochre. He wears ear-rings of bone, anklets of brass, bangles of celluloid purchased in some Indian trading store.

Laitikitik's one garment is his *shuka*, three yards of cheap crimson trade cloth wound around his tall, thin body. At night he will remove the *shuka*, which he wears in any case more for ornamentation than for modesty, wrap it around his head and sleep naked in the cold air of the plateau, and be warm.

He is a war leader of his clan; his hair is worn very long, carefully combed on to his shoulders, thick with sheep's fat and red ochre. He thinks of women, of grazing rights, of water and of cattle. Mainly of cattle.

He is, somehow, Africa in a single figure; beautiful, courageous, deadly, cruel, pitiless, unthinking, uncaring Africa.

Yet you may have seen Laitikitik. He marched, smart in his jungle-green uniform, in the Victory Day parade in London, probably with his Bren-gun across his shoulder in the position in which he carried it for so many weary

miles in the Burmese jungles when he was a sergeant in the King's African Rifles. He knows about the rush-hour at Piccadilly, he knows how to put sixpence into a ticket machine and get change, he can drive a heavy truck and do most mechanical jobs in its maintenance. He is a marvellous shot with a rifle, he can keep buttons clean and press his trousers neatly with a knife-edge that a guardsman would not despise. Laitikitik knows which bus goes to Oxford Street from Hammersmith Broadway. He can read a little English and, like most African soldiers, speak much more English than he will ever admit to.

Yet he wants no part in civilization as we know it. He wants his spear (*m'kuki*, he calls it), his *shuka*, his girl, his cattle. Nothing more. He wants to sit in the cow-dunged village called a *manyatta*, and talk to his friends whilst they comb out his long hair, to eat six pounds of meat a day, when he can get it, and drink hot blood and milk, mixed. He will play the ancient game of Africa, the game no European can understand, that is played from the Cape to the Sudan, with two or four rows of holes, and a number of stones representing black cattle and white cattle. He will spear an elephant as nonchalantly as ever he shot a Japanese infantryman, he will pit his strength against a lion and his wits against the Game Warden. He needs no other life, no other possessions, besides the spear and the *shuka* and the decorations in his hair and ears.

Laitikitik is Africa, the problems, the wonder, the amazing juxtaposition of the new and the ageless. The drawing of a bull he has made on his *shuka* has been done with a ball-point pen. It could have come from the caves of Altamira or the rocks around Kondoa Irangi.

Africa is Adventurer's Paradise only for those who will wander along the little tracks that link village to village and tribe to tribe. A fast car can take one from Nairobi to

the Cape in three days—it has been done in a tiny eight-horse saloon, a piece of typical modern tinware, in two and three-quarter days. But Africa is a slow, secret continent, and to know the pulse that beats in her old, wicked breast you must suit your pace to the camel or the donkey, or the feet of a man walking, walking over the long plains or the steep passes, ankle deep in volcanic dust, under a white, blinding sun.

There are no architectural wonders here in East Africa, there is nothing between the grass hut and the cheaply built, concrete office building, the corrugated iron shanty that serves as a shop, the architectural excrescence imported from Streatham or Sunbury which the white man builds and calls home.

Africa is new, brash, cheap and shoddy, or she is old, singing with the voice of the Nile before the Pharaohs built a city or a pyramid. Even her cruelty seems without sin, the cruelty of a savage child, the sadism of a kitten with a mouse.

There is a Masai word: '*N'gai*'. Europeans who flash by in their cars, and who mistranslate most things, talk of '*N'gai*' as 'God'. The Masai have a god, but he is an insipid sort of chap, and nobody pays much attention to him, although he lives in the snow on top of Kilimanjaro and Mount Kenya and the clouds are his cattle, drifting to the heavenly salt licks of his ranch. But '*N'gai*' rules the mountain, and '*N'gai*' means 'the Unknown'. The inside of a motor-car is '*N'gai*', the aircraft roaring over on the skylines of Africa are '*N'gai*'. But the herdsman sings in the night to keep away the fear of '*N'gai*', not of 'evil spirits' but of the terrible, unknown things that might happen to a man on those ancient plains.

We will presently go in search of '*N'gai*'.

Central Tanganyika. After a hard, hot run, with a couple of tyre bursts and a bent track-rod. Filthy,

sweating, in a bad temper. There is a pub in the usual 'town'; the word meaning a row of Indian stores called *dukas* (properly, I suppose, *dukani*, in Kiswahili), two Indian garages, a pile of broken-down cars, a Government *boma*. Dust, heat, a mud-walled African slum.

It is night. The mosquitoes are singing like bullets outside the pub. There is a line of parked cars, mostly hunting trucks or box-bodies. Men are talking inside behind the fly-mesh screens.

The owner serves behind the bar. He is a fat Greek and he looks sad, as though he has tried for many years to cope with Africa and Africa has beaten him. His bar is dirty, less with actual dust than with a feeling of long neglect and careless acceptance of the fact that in a hot land drink will sell, whether it is served on polished mahogany or ring-stained wall-boarding.

In the bar is a cross-section of the men who get their living from the strange country outside. There is Demon Eddie, the crocodile hunter, Mac, the Game Ranger, who is on a lion-control job (shooting lions, that is, to keep the numbers within reasonable limits). There is Smitty, who farms up the mountain, tobacco and coffee, mostly; there is Jim, once a very promising and very well-known actor, still remembered for his magnificent performances in Shakespeare at the Old Vic, now a hide buyer for a big tannery.

There is Jack Jones McGuire, the man who trades with the Masai for meat and hides, who is married to the daughter of an English nobleman. They say he lives in a native hut with a priceless collection of paintings from the family home in Sussex standing round the walls. They say he lives entirely on chicken, that he has become a Muslim, that he insists on his golden-headed son being named Abdu Mahomet, that white ants have eaten his famous Rembrandt . . . but they say all sorts of things, and usually the more fantastic they sound the truer they are.

And there in the corner is Dutch Willie, who digs bat guano out of the caves. ('To the bats is no more good. To me is bread and butter.') He lives in a constant odour of bat manure. He says:

'Alastair, my friend, we are having argument. I am telling this man cheetah is a cat. He is saying is a dog. You are big game expert. Tell me, is cat or is dog?'

I explain that the cheetah is a cat, with some of the features of a dog. (It has non-retractile claws.) The man arguing with Willie breaks in. 'How can it be a bloody cat if it has a dog's claws? Now be reasonable.'

We drink far too much, and next morning I drive away past splendid Kilimanjaro towards the Ruaha Swamp.

We stop the car to see the dawn rise over Kilimanjaro. The great flats of Amboseli are silent. Over towards the mountain an elephant herd moves slowly away against the trees that fringe this treeless, vast plain. (What a high-speed test track it would make, this flat sandy plain!)

Dawn comes dramatically. Night rolls up in a straight line like a theatre curtain. The mountain stands revealed. It is very quiet, with no bird song, just a faint wind over the plain that sings quietly in the car's metal nostrils. Everything is light, steel grey. There is the smell of Africa, of sand and thorn trees, coming from the mountain. Then the sun strikes the snow cap and the glaciers glitter, gold and pink. The mountain throws a great shadow across the plain. The shadow shortens visibly as the sun bounds energetically towards his zenith.

In two hours it will be hot as hell.

CHAPTER I

THE GREAT RUAHA FLATS

We stopped the hunting car at the village of Mopogoro and talked to the chief and the game scout. It is a small, Muslim village and the chief—or headman, more properly—was very fat, dressed in a white *khanzu* and a scarlet turban. There was a sort of palaver tree, a huge mango tree with its branches growing to the ground, each branch supported by a long, neatly cut length of wood, so that the tree was like a pillared courthouse. On one of these wooden pillars was a nail for, I was told, 'the Queen's portrait'.

I discovered that the court is not in session here in Mopogoro until the picture of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second is displayed. Anything said when the portrait—a rather horrible lithograph in colour—is absent is accounted 'off the record'. But if the picture is hanging in its place one speaks officially; the D.C. doffs his *topi*, the elders deliberate in measured voices.

The game scout was a tall, buck-toothed black man (many of these Wahehe are buck-toothed—why, I wonder?), who boasted of the man-eating lions he had killed. It is true that the interior of this great country of Tanganyika is one of the few places in Africa where the man-eater is common and a real menace, and, paradoxically, a hunter thinks much less of bagging one here than in Kenya, where the man-eater as such is virtually unknown, except for the occasional diseased or elderly lion, or bold corpse-eater in the Masai country. I only doubted the game scout's stories later when I found him

to be an execrable shot. He missed a rhino at forty yards. A rhino is not a small animal, and to miss one is rather like missing the proverbial barn-door.

I did not want him on my safari, particularly as he was equipped with a ·404 rifle of German make and some age. It was a low-velocity rifle and probably deadly in the hands of an expert. Our game scout was no expert. Besides which he waved it around whilst loaded and cocked in the most disheartening fashion, and whilst one might wonder if the rifle would prove lethal in his hands against elephant, there was no doubt whatever that it would make the most ghastly mess of a man's head at three feet. All the time we drove towards the river in the hunting car I was constantly reaching over my left shoulder and pushing the large muzzle away from the back of my head.

There is nothing pretty about this countryside. Underfoot is yellow, sandy soil. The vegetation, away from the occasional tributary of the Ruaha, is tangled thorn bush (*Nyika*, in fact). It is not green, but light grey in colour, brittle to the touch, the sort of thorn bush that is always covered in small, dry, brittle black balls, each ball being full of tiny black ants. There are many snakes here, and that morning we caught a magnificent copper-coloured cobra which I later sold to a collector.

This particular cobra, *Naja melanoleuca*, to give him his Latin name, lay sunning himself on the hard dirt road, and when we stopped the truck he 'threw a hood', by erecting the first few feet of his length at right angles to the ground. It is this action, the preparation to strike, which spreads the skin of the neck into the famous 'hood'. I flapped a sack at him and he ran, but Kinimai, my snake boy, headed him off with another sack and he spat venom into the folds of the sack three separate times. Then we threw the sack over him, and when his deadly little head emerged I grabbed at it and dropped him into

another sack, held open by Kinimai. Whilst all this was going on the game scout decided to explore the immediate neighbourhood. It was then he saw the rhino and fired at it, luckily missing it. I say luckily because my own rifles were screwed into the gun racks of the hunting car; my big revolver might turn a rhino (I believe it would), but is hardly the perfect weapon for the job. Also I had my hands too full of cobra—almost literally at one point—to do much to help the game scout with his rhino.

In his defence it must be said that rhino had proved a nuisance that year. Two women had been charged and killed on the road by (or so the game scout said) this very beast. Food crops had been severely damaged, and the rhinos were getting *kali*—an excellent word meaning angry, hot or sharp, according to its context. *Kali* is a permanent adoption from Kiswahili (although it is originally Hindustani) into English. Another such is *shenzi*, meaning savage, uncultured, badly made, rough or rude. In return Kiswahili has taken from English the immortal words 'bloody fool', which can be heard in almost any market-place where Swahili is spoken.

The Game Department had sprung to the defence of their rhinos, for this *kali*-ness is a certain sign of tribal hunting. There was, I believe, a wonderful official letter in reply from a District Commissioner saying, 'In this matter my sympathy is to some extent with the rhinoceros, yet I would urge that the Game Department tempers its favours towards *Diceros bicornis* with some regard for the more deserving species *Homo sapiens*.'

It was, I believe, as a result of this letter that the buck-toothed game scout with the ·404 fired at the rhino.

Buck-tooth was an excellent tracker, a man with an exuberant temperament and unfailing good nature. If he was a bad shot he at least stood his ground without flinching when we were charged by elephant later that day.

I had better explain what I was doing on the Great Ruaha flats in the first place. The impetus had come, like so many good things, from an office in one of those incredible skyscrapers of Manhattan Island. A television company providing programmes advertising some tobacco or other (I think it was tobacco) wanted some 'jungle thrills', and had sent a film unit out to get them. The said film unit had not the slightest idea of how to go about it, having shot one valuable tame leopard whilst trying to make it 'charge' (the leopard losing its temper in the end and providing the wanted action with far too much steam up to satisfy the somewhat exacting director).

I was doing very little at that moment apart from trying to keep the Mau Mau away from my small herd of cattle and the red ants away from my chickens, with little success in either case, and succumbed to the temptation to earn some of the greenbacks flourished liberally by the head of the television crew in Nairobi.

In the Equator Club one Saturday night I met a large Afrikander, with muscles like steel bands and a backside like the rear end of a London taxi.

'Man,' he said, 'if you want to shoot a elephant with good tusks or a rhino with a five-foot horn, or a lion like no lion you ever seen outside a zoo, go to the flats of the Ruaha River. Go down to Iringa and get a local wog to show you the road the loggers used to use into the *maninga* forests, then talk to the headmen and they'll show you the good waterholes in the river-bed. Don't go in the wet season, man, or you'll get stuck for ever. Go in the dry, and don't be afraid to walk. Sis! There's all the big game in the world, and the niggers, some of them, have never seen a white man.'

This last I found to be a half-truth. There were villages in the forest which no white man had ever visited, yet the men had been into Iringa or Mbeya and knew all about cars and gramophones. Yet the women,

the old men and the children had never seen a white man. When we entered some of the villages we would find the women rushing off behind trees to hide, and refusing to come near us. At one village we found the men smearing the faces of the tiny children with white clay. 'Is it some initiation ceremony?' I asked. The kids were far too young for circumcision.

'No,' replied a bashful, buck-toothed warrior of six foot three, 'they want to play white men.'

Tanganyika has almost anything one wants to find in Africa, but it is not accessible to the hordes of young men who flash past on yet another 'Cape-to-Cairo' expedition. (Incidentally, a much over-rated pastime. I have done the run twice and have found it, on the whole, a dull business. There is very little adventure to be had from it, unless it comes as a result of serious mechanical trouble; the road is too well marked and the surfaces on the whole too good to be in any way typical of Africa.) The tourist anxious to see 'Darkest Africa' would do well to stick to the usual run: Congo Belge for elephant, pygmies and the Tutsi (those pleasant, thin giants usually and erroneously called the Watussi); Kenya for Nairobi and hunting preparations, for good hotels and the taste of the settler's life; and a quick run through Tanganyika, visiting the Masai or the Serengeti for lion pictures, or lion skins, according to taste, not forgetting Kilimanjaro, the Ngorongoro crater, Oldonyo Lengai, if it happens to be in eruption. Then down to Southern Rhodesia for the Victoria Falls, the graves of Cecil John Rhodes and Leander Starr Jameson in the tumbled fastnesses of the Matopos Hills, to Fort Victoria for a wander round the Zimbabwe ruins, and on to Johannesburg, to Pretoria, to the fabled Kruger National Park and Zululand, thence to the Cape, with its wonderful headlands, its wine-like air, its Coon Carnivals and its sunshine.

On this run one can see every type of native, from the

Tutsi and the Ituri pygmies to the Masai, from the Wahehe to the Zulu, from the Xhosa to the Kikuyu, from the Hottentot to the colourful N'debele bead makers. Of course, one well-planned Sunday afternoon at one of the big Johannesburg mine compounds will show you many of these tribes without the trouble of going off a bus route. But once Africa gets into the bloodstream one is no longer satisfied with such things. There is the itch to get behind the dances and see their significance, to meet the ritual cannibals of the Tanganyika-Portugese East African border, to explore the huge, silent forests of the central provinces of East Africa and see the native gunsmith fashion a striker for a Tower musket of the pattern of 1860 on a primitive anvil.

You hear that there is a village near Lake Tanganyika's northern end where women specialize in making one kind of pot only, the huge beer-pot, as tall as a man, and there is a market where only pots are sold, pots of all shapes and sizes brought in by various artisans from many miles around. You hear of a ghost town left by the Lupa gold rush or a strange landscape where tall, timid natives live in stilt houses in a swamp.

Or you read of the Samburu of the Northern Frontier District of Kenya and their progress under the guidance of a benevolent administration, or of the Maragoli of the Nyanza Province who are doing well by growing maize as a cash crop, or of a rock that overlooks a waterhole where great elephant herds come to drink, or a cairn of stones erected by the Masai to mark the grave of an Englishman speared by the great-grandfathers of the present warriors of the tribe after he had fired his last shot and killed over fifty spearsmen with his twin revolvers. You hear of these things, and you itch to be off, to smell the sweat and the woodsmoke and the ochre once again, to bathe naked in a swift, warm river, to sit at sunset and watch the antelope herds moving over the

long plains as the sun goes down and the lions are grumbling in the first days of the grass rains when the white moon is full.

And if a benevolent American in New York wants thrills for the television screens of the city-dwellers, and is willing to pay good money for a man to wander in East Africa finding the thrills for him, then the last barrier to travel is pulled aside. For money is unhappily very necessary even in the bush, and petrol, film, ammunition, cameras, rifles and trucks must be bought.

On the Tanganyika safari I wanted to film crocodile-harpooning by the natives on Lake Rukwa, to see the Watusi who live in stilt houses on the Malagarasi Swamp, and to meet some of the 'old sweats' of Tanganyika, German and British, and find out what they had to tell me of the country.

My excursion on to the Ruaha flats was a search for big game pictures. I wanted to film one of those elephants with the big tusks the Afrikander told me about in the club that night, to see the districts where the lions drove people from their villages and the leopards were casual in their depredations against men. In Iringa I had collected a small party of Africans to travel with me and carry my various bits and pieces when we had at last to leave the truck.

There was a Wakwave named Oloytion, a tall man dressed in the manner of the Masai. His tribe is Masai in its language and culture, and the name means 'the Traders' in Kiswahili. What did they trade? Cattle? Perhaps. I rather think the Wakwave traded slaves, although I know nothing definite about their history. It was the custom of the Masai tribes to use their standing army to intimidate the Arab slavers, then to capture and sell natives from other tribes to the invaders. Less than a hundred years ago the game was going strong. The strength of the Masai was in the fact that they were

not Bantu, they were themselves invaders from the north-east; they were not a disorganized rabble, but a people of relatively high cultural attainments. Now Oloy-tion, a proud, sensitive dandy in the late twenties, is a sort of unofficial gunbearer and tracker. He can be relied on not to run away, even from a charging lion.

Once, in Dar-es-Salaam, I saw a woman tourist from one of the Union Castle ships in the harbour focus her camera on a Wakwave woman. The Wakwave woman had just come from a chemist's shop where she had been purchasing all sorts of medicines and patent foods for her baby—the tribe is rich from cattle-selling—and she stood there in all her finery, accompanied by her very-near-naked husband, who was more gorgeously arrayed than any Masai dandy ever dreamed of being, in ochre and ear-rings, sword and spear. The tourist worked over the reflex camera, looking up just in time to dodge the full force of the ten-shilling bottle of somebody-or-other's Soothing Syrup for Restless Infants which the Wakwave woman flung with very good aim indeed.

They are proud people and dislike being 'put upon'. Several of these cattle-dealers have bank accounts, and whilst they cannot sign their names, they have fairly large deposits in the Dar-es-Salaam banks, and know all about cheques and bank statements. This reminds me of the man in Somerset Maugham's famous story, 'The Verger', about Albert Foreman who amassed a consider-able fortune in trade because of the lucky fact that he could neither read nor write. Had he been possessed of these accomplishments he would have been, not a rich man, but '. . . verger of St. Peter's, Neville Square'. So it is with the Wakwave; but for their complete lack of education they would probably be clerks and lorry drivers, for they are intelligent folks; as it is they trade cattle and do very nicely, thank you.

I have three Wahehe in my little safari, and again,

they are interesting people. The Arab penetration into Tanganyika has made Muslims of most of them—although many of the Wahehe Muslims would be hard put to tell you exactly what the Koran was or what their religion is all about. Their chief is Adam Sapi, possibly the most advanced and intelligent leader of an African people between Cairo and the Cape. He has studied in Europe, he is an educated man, yet he is of his own people; a leader of his own people. And only those who know Africa can understand what a compliment that is.

So many petty kings and chiefs are Europeans with a different skin pigmentation, and yet the European pose does not sit upon them with dignity. The Rolls-Royce seems a bit of senseless ostentation, the cocktail parties never quite come off, because there is always a headman or relative who will break out into the habits of the loincloth and the thatched hut under the influence of drink; the European-style dress hangs badly after a while. It was always something the same in India; it is difficult to be patronizing to a man in a cotton dhoti who can talk your language and understand your philosophy ten times better than you could ever learn to understand his. Put him in a lounge suit and he is openly and obviously copying you. Is that the secret? Perhaps it is, and perhaps Mahatma Gandhi was most aware of it, for his real power began when he changed the lounge suit for the dhoti. Adam Sapi wears a white robe and a turban, and his people revere him greatly, both for his own wisdom and leadership, and for being the son of his father, and grandson of the great Mkwawa.

It was the Wahehe who defeated the Masai. They are big, powerful men, skilled in the use of iron, fine fighters and almost insanely brave in the face of danger. Under their Chief Mkwawa they ambushed a German expeditionary force at Lugalo, north-east of Iringa, in the

1890's, and utterly routed it. There is a German war memorial in Iringa to this day bearing the names of the officers and men who were killed in that battle.

Germany decided to subjugate the tribe entirely in defence of her East African empire, and sent a large force to Kalenga, Mkwawa's main fortress, destroying it utterly. Against superior forces Mkwawa fought a stubborn guerrilla war, refusing to capitulate, dodging and twisting away from the German forces and their native auxiliaries, all eager to earn the price of 5,000 rupees on Mkwawa's head. But the reward was never earned, for Mkwawa, forced at last to give up hope, shot himself and his last remaining follower rather than surrender. The dead chief's head was cut off and exhibited by the Germans as a lesson to their African subjects, but Mkwawa was not forgotten by his people, and with the true story of his life became interwoven a mass of legends and folk-tales that made of him an almost supernatural being.

By the time the British took Tanganyika in 1918 a great movement for the return of Mkwawa's skull had begun amongst the Wahehe. They claimed that the skull of their warrior-chief and national hero had been removed to Germany, and was still there. They gave the new British administration no peace with their demand for the return of Mkwawa's skull, and a reference to the skull even appears in Article 246 of the Treaty of Versailles. Germany's reply to all this was simply that the skull had been lost, its then whereabouts were not known, and attempts had been made to find out what had happened to it without any great success.

Now nothing happened further in the matter of Mkwawa's skull until Tanganyika was lucky enough to have as Governor Sir Edward Twining, a man with a great sense of humanity known to all the world, behind his back, as 'Twinks'. Sir Edward is possessed of a lively sense of curiosity. He does not sit in Dar-es-Salaam and

make occasional State forays into his domain; he may suddenly appear at your elbow, be you black or white, in Mbeya or Dodoma, Korogwe or Tabora, and demand what you are doing and why the hell you are doing it. Government servants, knowing this, are apt to make sure they are doing something useful most of the time. The Governor displays a lively interest in the country's new industries, also in things as traditional as lion-spearing and cattle-raiding. He is a large man, and he wants to know things. His ability to coin a humorous phrase, even at the cost of his official dignity, is only equalled by his determination that such-and-such shall be done and his perseverance in paper-chasing memoranda and ringing up subordinates until he is satisfied. If Tanganyika is an oasis of peace in the internecine struggle of Africa, he must be given due credit for his share in making that peace possible and preserving it with humour, yet with sudden ruthlessness when necessary. Mau Mau made an appearance in Tanganyika. Once . . .

It was this man who pigeonholed in a corner of a very busy brain the matter of the return to the Wahehe of Mkwawa's skull. He wrote, he researched, he talked to old German settlers. At times he would come hot on the trail, at times the scent would go cold, or the business of government obscure the search; until at last Sir Edward heard tell of a skull in a Bremen museum that might be the skull of Mkwawa. The Wahehe waited almost breathlessly for news of this relic of a warrior-hero who had become a legend in his own lifetime. Sir Edward took the opportunity, whilst on official business in England, to travel to the Museum of Folk Lore in Bremen and examine a sun-dried African skull with a bullet-hole in it. It seemed to him to match the known characteristics of the old chief's head, and he went back to Tanganyika with a whole sheaf of notes and photographs which he passed over to Adam Sapi, Mkwawa's grandson.

Once Sapi had examined these pictures he was convinced that the skull was that of his grandfather, and, the Director of the museum willingly agreeing, the sole relic of the famous chief came back to Africa in a plastic, transparent box.

Thousands of tribesmen gathered on June 19th, 1954, near Kalenga, the tribal capital of Uhehe, when the skull was uncovered and handed to Adam Sapi by the Governor, then carried in procession to a mausoleum designed to receive it. And there it rests, and the elders will always regale the visiting tribesmen, come to do homage, with tales of the great Mkwawa and his prowess. After fifty-six years in Germany Mkwawa had returned to his capital. It is such incidents that give a colony strength and unity, the human, friendly interest of a Governor in his people. Twenty thousand Wahehe tribesmen saw Mkwawa's skull returned, and Britain had strengthened the bond with twenty thousand of the Queen's bravest subjects and firmest friends.

This, then, is the background of the Wahehe, and I am glad to have them with me. Abdi, another of my men, is a tall, thin Somali who is just out of jail, having being convicted of trying to cut his brother's head off after a squabble about the title deeds of their house. Luckily he did not succeed, for he is an engaging scoundrel and always up to some mischief.

Final member of the party is a very old Wazaramu from the coast who greeted me with the greeting of a slave for his Arab master, '*Shikamu.*' ('I touch your foot.') Luckily I knew the answer, '*Marahaba.*' Slavery is not a very ancient memory here in Tanganyika, where the slaving dhows shipped off tens of thousands of Africans a year to the Hadhramaut. Even the mango tree is not native to this dry, inhospitable soil, but was imported to grow along the slave routes and feed the caravans returning to the coast.

There, then, are my six Africans, companions into a strange land.

Tanganyika is a country so far very little developed. There is a certain amount of white settlement, but most of the country is left in the hands of the various native tribes.

The roads are uniformly very bad indeed. Even the main Cape–Cairo road, the famous 'Great North Road' of Africa, is a corrugated horror for most of the year and a swamp for the rest. The motor sports enthusiasts of East Africa have a magnificent yearly race, the 'Coronation Safari'—strictly it is a trial or a rally, and not a race—over these main roads, and sometimes a dozen or more cars fail to complete the course, bits dropping off, or wheels sinking into sand and/or mud. The road climbs and drops, twists and snakes on itself, nine hundred miles of it between the borders of Kenya and Northern Rhodesia, a reasonably fast road none the less which should not worry a good car, driven carefully.

The railways seem to have been dropped into Tanganyika haphazardly and for no good reason; one runs from Tanga to Arusha and joins up to a branch of the Kenya line running from Nairobi to Mombasa; another starts at Dar-es-Salaam and wanders through Tabora, the old slave market and clearing house, to Kigoma on Lake Tanganyika, with a branch-line running to Mwanza on Lake Victoria. Mwanza produces crocodile skins, but little else I ever heard tell of.

But no man in his sane senses would take the railway if he could possibly avoid it, although the little train from Tanga with its wood-burning locomotives (since, I believe, switched to oil burners) and tiny, ancient carriages is worth taking for the sheer novelty. One travels in the past, on a railway of fifty years ago.

Most of the haulage is done by lorry, great ten-ton

trucks with native drivers scaling the passes, the volcanic dust, fine and white, rising in choking clouds around them as they go. If one books a railway trip anywhere it is quite likely one will travel mainly by bus. I have made three Tanganyika railway trips; one necessitated a bus journey between railheads, and on the other two the train was derailed (at a sedate five m.p.h.) and buses were hustled up from the nearest depot to take the traffic. Even these conveyances were so very slow that I switched to a native bus with a driver dressed as a cowboy from high-heeled boots to stetson, with a gun-belt holding two toy pistols. But he certainly could make that old bus shift, and we made Nairobi whilst the official railway buses were still wandering about in convoy somewhere in the wilds.

From the map you can see how barren of communications Tanganyika really is. The coffee grown up in the Southern Highlands, around Iringa, Tukuyu and Njombe, is carried by lorry for hundreds of miles, and the farmers swear their products stay for months in the depots and lose weight on the journey. The trouble seems to be that the railway is a government monopoly and nobody cares whether it is efficient or not. The same applies in Kenya, and despite magnificent advertisements telling the country how wonderful the railway is, to use it for transport of goods or self is to be enmeshed in a muddle of inefficiency that would not be tolerated anywhere else in the world—or that is my own experience.

There is a brisk little air service, an offshoot of B.O.A.C., and one or two charter airlines operate in the territory.

But once off the main roads in Tanganyika you are really deep in the bush. Roads cease to exist, you follow the elephant tracks, knowing the elephants are the finest road surveyors alive, with an uncanny feeling for a gradient. Usually travel by car becomes impossible, ex-

cept on the great central plains, for the elephant has wonderful feet which prevent him sinking into mud, and a car has not. Besides, much of Tanganyika is covered with black cotton soil, and a car sinks up to the axles in wet weather and is battered to pieces by the rock-hard, ridged surface in the dry. Even jeeps, Land-Rovers and hunting cars, whilst possible for this type of travel, are usually best left beside the track once the surface gets really bad. Spares are impossible to get in Tanganyika, except in the towns, and once a car has seriously broken down it is likely to stay broken down.

Incidentally, if anyone wants a good Dodge coupé with five new tyres, a kit of tools and a jack, I left one by the roadside not two hundred miles from Tabora in 1954. Collection is impossible, and the engine is somewhat blown up. I have been meaning to fetch that car for some time. . . .

On this particular safari the car got what the natives described as a 'sick foot' on the Ruaha crossing. In fact a stub-axle broke when the wheel fell into a pot-hole concealed under the fast-running water between two islands. We off-loaded the stores and rifles, then took a cable from the winch to the nearest island and hauled the car over. This took quite a bit of help from the boys, who hauled all morning and sang a song about the car with a broken leg as they did so.

No African minds hard work once he sees it cannot be avoided, and my lads pulled with a will, the winch turned, the engine overheated and boiled, and slowly, slowly the hunting car was dragged on to the island.

We were then faced with a teaser—the disabled car, a two-ton truck chassis with a light wooden body after the usual style, had to be got over a long mud-bank by these pulley-hauley methods. The usual way is to lay down branches in front of the car, then drive in second gear until you stick, dig the car out and start again. It

may take an hour to cover a hundred yards, it may take a day or a week; it is difficult to judge these things. In any case, it is part of the safari and cannot be avoided.

We had to build a road by cutting down trees and laying them on the muddy sandbank. That took one day. That night we all stripped and washed in the warm, fast-flowing river, watched by a couple of dyspeptic-looking crocodiles who made no move to intercept us. Next day the winch was rigged by fitting an alternative propeller shaft from a secondary gear-box (one must be something of a mechanic in Africa) and the car was slowly cranked across, sticking from time to time.

Then one of the Wahehe went back to Iringa, club on shoulder, at a fast lope, for a replacement part. I sent him to the shop with the sign 'DUKYA SPEA PATIS', which, translated, reads, 'Spare Parts Shop'. I may say here that the part was unobtainable, as there was no Dodge agent in town, but that a local blacksmith made a very serviceable replica. We went on into the bush on foot.

Up until this time we had seen no great concentrations of game: a few buck, a lion or two lazing in the afternoon sun, two elephants in the distance, two rhinos on separate occasions. Even the Ruaha banks were deserted. This did not seem the game paradise described by our friend the Afrikander; yet the boys assured me that usually there were great herds of game along the river. It was all rather mysterious. We walked on for an hour or so at a fast, swinging pace and then stopped to have food on the bank of a dry river. The mosquitoes were bad here and the tsetse flies stung like red-hot needles. This is all tsetse country, and the natives can keep no cattle. They live on maize, beans, eggs and scrawny chickens and their lives are made miserable by malaria and low fever.

The river we stopped on must have been one of the many tributaries of the Ruaha that meander over the

plains. It was a deep, tree-fringed gash in the earth with a solid sand bottom, and after we had eaten we climbed down the steep bank and walked along the river-bed. It was cool there and easy walking, although the yellow sand had been torn up by every kind and species of African animal—there were elephant tracks, lion tracks, rhino tracks, the spoor of hundreds of antelopes, the small prints of hyena and jackal, as if all Noah's Ark had promenaded down-river.

Coming rather suddenly round a curve we almost ran into a rhino that hurried off into a 'side road' where the river—when there had been a river—branched off. We did not molest the rhino as he was about his business and not very interested in us. He was very big and very old. I stopped a moment and loaded my camera, screwed on the 'unipod' I use instead of a tripod for big game filming, and ran up the bank to head him off. I got a beautiful shot of him coming towards me, swinging his head, then stopping and facing down-wind, trying to find out what was wrong. He must have caught the sound of my camera although, having had some previous experience in this type of filming, I had silenced the 35-mm. Arriflex by fitting it into a lightweight fibre box lined with sorbo rubber.

Half an hour later we found an excellent waterhole; not a pool, but literally a hole in the sand dug by some enthusiastic elephant or other with his tusks. There were great churnings of sand around the hole, and obviously a large elephant herd had watered there, together with many other animals. I would have liked to see if the elephants waited their turn to water, or fought for trunk-room at the hole, which was about two feet across and had cool, dark, but very dirty, water not a foot down from the lip of the pool.

Our Wakwave found the elephant herd tracks and we followed them at a very fast walk indeed. The bush was

thicker this side of the river, still grey thorn, but never opening for much more than twenty yards. The thorn bush had a dusty smell and the sun was directly overhead so that there was no shade and no shadow, each bush standing directly on a little black pool of shade. The light conditions are apt to be dazzling when the sun is directly overhead, and elephants merge in so well with this sort of bush that it was really not to be wondered at that the first clue we had of their existence was the sight and sound of a cow charging us at full tilt with her trunk upraised.

Now an elephant does not usually charge on sight, and even in this rhino-infested bush I was not carrying my rifle with a shell in the breech. I like a double-barrelled rifle with a fairly short barrel for this sort of work, but I do not hunt for sport or for a living, and several hundreds of pounds sterling can be put to better use as capital than reposing in velvet-lined boxes in the form of rifles. So I was carrying a ·375 magnum rifle by Cogswell and Harrison, Oloytion was carrying my shotgun (in the hope of seeing guinea-fowl which we might roast on a spit for supper), and one of the Wahehe my other rifle, a ·22 Hornet, for small buck.

We were at a serious disadvantage, for the elephant was not picking her way carefully between the bushes, she was coming straight across country and she was in a tearing rage about something. We did not know what, then. It was not good country for running, I didn't want to shoot an elephant if it could be avoided, and I doubted my ability to get off a stopping shot—or I doubt it now. With that huge grey monster roaring at me through thorn bush, squealing like a damned soul in hell, her trunk straight in the air and her ears spread out, I don't suppose I considered the facts of the situation. I did what all but a few very skilled hunters would do. I took to my heels.

Perhaps there were too many of us, and we scattered

in so many directions that the elephant could not make up her mind exactly which human to follow. Anyhow, she gave up in the end, after roaring round in a tight circle and tearing up thorn bushes with her long trunk. She was old, but had short tusks. After a time she wandered off back to join her herd.

Ten minutes later *another* cow elephant charged us. This was really unfortunate and unusual. Again we scampered off, and she came to a halt, swinging her trunk, picking up trunkfuls of dust and blowing them in the air in a rather frightening way.

This business of unprovoked charging usually means that the local tribes have been out hunting the animals, sometimes after crop destruction; but even the game scout, who had stood stock-still with his ·404 at the ready on the occasion of both charges, and obviously was itching to kill something, did not know of any elephant hunting by the local Wahehe. He said he had just come back from leave, but would have heard from his informers had there been any serious game law infringements. It was all rather mysterious. Firstly, the game all on one side of the river; secondly, almost every animal apparently ready to charge a man on sight. Why? I felt like a man opening a detective story at random. There were no clues.

That night I made camp in the edge of the forest at a village called Korognoi. The people were apathetic and I saw two cases of sleeping-sickness, so moved my camp. Callous? Perhaps, but there was nothing I could do, and no point in my getting the disease. Some of the men came along late in the evening asking for *dawa*, but I didn't have much medicine with me, only some disinfectant and aspirin. It is foolish to camp too near to native villages, especially deserted ones; there is considerable risk of infection from tick typhus. I got this beastly disease in this Wahehe country in 1952, and it took me many painful months of injections to get rid of it.

When I say I camped, I mean I pulled a ground-sheet and a blanket out of my pack, laid the ground-sheet on the earth, lay on it and rolled myself in the blanket. We went supperless to bed, but next morning I had the luck to bag eight guinea-fowl on the ground with the shotgun, and to shoot a Tommy gazelle before noon. One of the Wahehe told me a story which I had the opportunity to check later and found to be true.

There was, he said, a woman drawing water at the little hole on the bed of the stream, the one we had passed earlier, when something passed from behind her and entered her calabash, and she was startled to see it was the trunk of a very large elephant.

'A person of any intelligence,' said the Wahehe scornfully, 'would have kept quite still and the elephant would have drunk his fill and gone. But not this foolish woman. She bolted, and the elephant caught her. It tore her in two little pieces.' And with the inexplicable humour of the African he said, 'I saw her afterwards!' and started to laugh almost uncontrollably. I am still wondering what is so funny about the pieces of a woman dismembered by an elephant.

CHAPTER II

REFLECTIONS AND RHINOS

When we found a fallen tree with its branches nicely raised above the ground we stopped by it and made a fire below it, roasting the guinea-fowl on the twisted limbs of the fallen thorn tree. The birds were excellent, tasty and tender with beans and a sort of turnip we bought from the village.

I found myself reflecting, as I sat eating with these men, on the matter of colour prejudice. The Wakwave didn't eat the flesh of birds, he said, but the others did, and enjoyed it. I was to them the '*bwana*', the white man, the boss, the man who could read and write and understood what it said in papers and on signboards, the man who could strip a rifle and clean it properly and who washed and wore clean linen. I was the man who came from far away, where they made aeroplanes and cars and guns and boats. They were men who lived in simple huts and washed seldom, they lived simply on vegetables and did not read or write, they had little mechanical aptitude and no ambition one could discover.

What the man in Britain must understand is that the East African native is not ready for any sort of equality. That is not the 'old settler's usual cry', it is fact.

Consider these men. If I say to them, 'You are as good as I am'—which is probably true; in some situations they are better than me—they will not agree. 'No, *bwana*. We are foolish people. You white men have intelligence. Do you not have a bottle of stuff in your pack that will heal a wound and stop it going bad? Do you not have powerful

ammunition that will kill an animal at a great distance? Could we make a motor-car? Could we write books?"

There is little really blind colour prejudice on the part of the East African settler. He will meet educated Africans at parties and functions without a qualm, and I—and I am not a madly liberal member of the community—like most people with African acquaintances, have no hesitation in asking them to dinner.

The gulf is a great gulf of different cultures, of racial differences, of different levels in evolution. In five hundred years the African negro may rule the world, for all I know. At this moment, to talk of equality between a bush native and a white man is to talk like a fool. And that has nothing to do with colour. Reflecting on the whole affair I remember that I—like most Europeans—am much more at home with Sikhs and Muslims than with Hindus, because the Muslim religion and outlook, and to a lesser degree that of the Sikh, are so much more like my own than those of the Hindu, whose philosophy invades every part of his life, a philosophy I can neither accept nor bear with. I have Hindu friends, but most of them have no great regard for the Hindu teachings and are completely Europeanized—as Europeanized as a Hindu-born can ever be, that is.

These six Africans are inferior to me. Not perhaps in the eyes of God or Eternity, but in all practical matters. In the tying of a shoe-lace (or even the wearing of shoes), in any matter calling for thought, leadership or decision they will look towards me instinctively as their leader. They will come to me for medicine, advice and consolation. They are at present hewers of wood and drawers of water. Which does not prevent them being my good friends, nor us sitting and chatting on any number of subjects as man to man. I am much better fitted to survive, even here in the heart of their own country, than they are, and if they decided to murder me, I am pretty

sure they would go each to his own version of the hereafter before I did. And that is what tells in the long run. But do not reproach me with colour prejudice. If I talk amongst my friends from time to time of the sins and exasperations of the 'bloody wogs' I do so as a man of my time and place, much as the Romans in Britain must have talked of 'these damned natives'.

Finally, I would rather have an old Afrikander farm manager who talks of the 'accursed Kaffirs', beats them, abuses them with his tongue, yet talks their language fluently and will give them tobacco, joke with them, sit down with them and take food from their pots, than some of the bright sparks who have been coming over from Britain recently, who love the native so much that they drip smug patronage over him and, claiming equality with him, accept their own superiority without even questioning it.

A man who will sit down to feed with a native without understanding his language or his customs is a fool. A man who will use the situation in Africa to make political capital in England, where the most ignorant black man one meets is as an Einstein to our natives, is a scoundrel whatever his party. The danger to Kenya from Mau Mau was never from the Kikuyu—I have Kikuyu friends who call on me at my house when they feel so inclined. It was from the British politicians who spoke without any knowledge of Africa or African problems, and I include idiots from both sides of the House in that remark. The Labour Party men were more to blame, not because they are socialists (or say they are), but because they were in opposition and had the damned audacity to air their ignorance in public because any stick was good enough to beat the Conservative dog. That sort of attitude to a serious problem, a problem that will become more serious as time goes on, is the attitude of an opportunist and a rogue. The sins of politicians really should be

punishable, and it is only in a distant colony suffering from internal strife, where native men, women and children are being butchered by a gang of ritual murderers inspired by witchcraft, that one can appreciate the opportunist attitude of British politicians, seeking to make party gain or loss out of a situation such as Mau Mau. No one ever stopped for a moment to consider the poor, damned Kikuyu, who bore, and still bear, the brunt of this business.

That is how one often thinks in Africa, sitting watching the distances and the heat shimmer above the plains, with a crowd of friendly and relaxed Africans around one. I remember that day stubbing out my cigarette and starting to pack my few eating irons, ready for another trek on towards an unknown goal, feeling these men were my friends and the only friends I wanted or needed at that moment. We pulled ourselves together and walked off into the heat.

We were promptly charged by a rhino.

Before I go any further I must explain that I later was told in some detail, with many a lurid oath, by Dirty Paddy Riordan himself, just what had happened to make the Ruaha big game animals so *kali*. A German (or Swiss) expedition had been given permission to trap four baby elephants, and had done so by throwing sticks of dynamite at the elephant herds from fast trucks, chasing and 'beating up' the herds until the calves strayed off through terror or exhaustion, and could be safely roped and loaded. These methods of game catching are illegal and cruel, and the expedition got out a jump ahead of a warrant, or so I am unofficially informed. However, they had made the place untenable for human beings—not only the odd white man, be he District Officer, surveyor, or camera hunter like myself, but for the hundreds of Africans living in the neighbourhood. Some of the cow elephants, grieving for their calves, had to be shot, as

they were menacing human beings at every opportunity, and two natives were killed in incidents with enraged cow elephants.

It was this expedition which made my first few days in the Ruaha country so very, very lively! No wonder everything on four legs came pounding at us on sight!

Now this rhino was unlucky. He was a four-year-old, at a guess, in prime condition, without even a wound behind the shoulder as most rhinos have, and he was full of fire and murder. By all accounts he should have turned off in his charge, but he did no such thing; he came straight at us. Usually a rhino faces up-wind, and charges when he scents danger, or what he thinks is danger. He will normally 'make a demonstration', veering off at the last minute and rushing past you, especially if you stand quite still. But this particular rhino came very fast, out of thick bush from about thirty feet away, straight at us. I had no chance at all of learning his intentions, so I got my rifle to my shoulder and shot him.

Remember this was in very thick thorn bush, and I didn't see him for many seconds in all. Before I could get in a second, more careful shot, he had vanished into thick bush once more.

He was 'chugging', as rhinos do, making a noise like a runaway shunting engine, and we heard him, but did not see him, in the bush quite near us. After a time, the 'chugging' stopped. I guessed what had happened. I had aimed at the heart, missed, hit him in the lungs, and he had taken five minutes to die. In the meantime he ran round and round like a crazy thing whilst he choked in his own blood, poor devil. We found him, shot six inches behind the heart, lying quite dead in a patch of thorn bush, his belly crawling with beautiful black and gold ticks. He was in excellent condition but his horns were small.

Nevertheless, the fibrous rhino horn is worth quite a bit

to the Arabs, who sell it to the Chinese, who make an aphrodisiac from it. The horns would help to pay the cost of the game licence one must take out, so the boys cut them off with a chopper and a sharp knife. The rhino did not smell particularly strong, he had an animal scent all his own, rather pleasant, like a huge cow. I had the usual picture taken sitting on him, and cut a strip of hide from him with my hunting knife to make a *sjambok*.

Whenever I have to shoot one of the larger animals—a rhino, an elephant, a lion—I have first a feeling of primitive exaltation, then a feeling of guilt. I think most hunters have, even those who hunt for sport. But in that district at that time a rhino or an elephant was a good target, and a lion an even better one. The natives were suffering cruelly from crop damage and lost lives, and the district officers' reports from the outlying districts had incidents like the following in them:

SIR,

I have the honour to write to tell you of what happened in the neighbourhood of my village of Ruahini on Saturday last. Eight elephants attacked the maize shambas, and we set fires to drive them off, also shouting and banging tins, etc. But they did not go, and indeed began to picking up the firing grass and tossing it on to our huts, etc. One hut was burned down. Then the elephants broke deeply into our crops.

Koloki, our best hunter, laid in a tree and speared one in the back with a spear and it fell dead, and he then took two other hunters, one with a musket. They fired the musket and struck one elephant, then Koloki speared it in the trunk and Matsuhu speared it well in the side and it died after killing Matsuhu by tramping upon him.

Koloki and Ruhili, the other man, then speared two more, one being wounded and one dead. The wounded

one was trumpeting loudly and scared off the herd and we were left in peace.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

JOSHUA KITINI (school-master)

Incidentally, the excellent English of the letter, considering that the man has never been to any other than a small Mission school and teaches his small charges in their own language, is most unusual.

I will refrain from quoting 'funny letters' from Africans, but to leave out the police report I saw in Iringa would be shameful. I was reporting to the Inspector there after my car had caused chaos and confusion by charging across a newly metalled piece of street—it was dark and there were no lights, poles or other warning, so I was exonerated, but that is by the way. Whilst waiting for the Inspector I picked out a card 'advertising' a wanted man, and this is what was written in very careful, spidery writing:

WANTED FOR THEFT: Chuki, son of Ikoli. *Sex:* Male. *Height:* Not grown up quite. *Colour:* Brownish. *Distinguishing Features:* Smells pretty bad. Itches all over.

CHAPTER III

RADIO MAGIC

We left the corpse of the rhino to the vultures and went on into the bush. Now the land was sloping down towards a river (in fact the Ruaha itself once more) and great trees were standing here and there in the sandy soil. We came to a village and I made camp half a mile away, sending the boys in to get eggs and water. We roasted the Tommy over an open pit fire and distributed meat to the villagers, keeping what we required for ourselves. After a time the villagers began to straggle out to see me.

The women came behind their menfolk and hung back in the trees, making sure I was harmless. To amuse them I got my tiny portable radio from one of my boxes and turned it on, but the sound was not very loud because I lacked an aerial. I really carry the radio to hear the safari messages after the news. A service is run by the East African branch of Cable and Wireless, Ltd., who operate Nairobi's radio station, to enable important news to be got to hunters; much as the S O S service is operated by the B.B.C. In East Africa generally, reception is too bad once one is outside Nairobi for anyone to get much enjoyment from listening to the radio, although some very good programmes are available.

I searched through my kit for an aerial, without success. Then I had a brainwave, and told two of the larger buck-toothed Wahehe to hold hands and gave the short aerial lead to one of them, and it worked like a charm.

Music poured out, African music on the Kiswahili programme from Nairobi. The village went mad. Beer was brought, and the women crept towards the circle, carefully, like animals towards a meal, ready to take fright and vanish at the first hostile move.

At last the music stopped, and then there was the news in Kiswahili. This was an enormous success. Not one of the villagers had the faintest idea of what the announcer was talking about and the incidents he recounted might have been stories about happenings on the moon or in Ancient Greece as far as they knew. But an African was speaking out of a box. That was the most amazing thing that they had ever heard, and will, I am sure, go down in story and legend over the years. They were very primitive and very simple people.

When the programme went off the air they wanted it repeated, and were resentful when I told them I couldn't repeat it. One or two of the men had seen a gramophone, a *kinanda* (the word really means a sort of stringed native instrument, but is always used to indicate a gramophone or a radio, or any European musical instrument), and they knew records could be repeated, but radio was something new to them.

There was a sequel next morning. The two big Wahehe who had been holding the wire to make a living aerial turned up at my headquarters under a *maninga* tree, and they did not look pleased.

'What is wrong with you chaps?'

'Aha,' one said hesitantly, 'we are in serious trouble, in witchcraft trouble.' Witchcraft is serious indeed in the backlands of Africa.

'It is no affair of mine.' That was the way to deal with it.

'But, sir, you have filled us with music.'

I sat up. After all, this was the latter half of the twentieth century and I was not living in a Rider

Haggard romance. 'What the devil do you mean?' I demanded.

'Oh, sir, things are bad. The witchman says you have filled us with music, and he demands much from us. A sack of beans each and a chicken each, to remove the music that is in us.'

'Don't talk bloody nonsense,' I said shortly.

'But, sir, it is true. We are full of music.'

I had, apparently, to remove the music from two buck-toothed savages. 'Send your witchman to me,' I said.

He came. He was, for once (most of them are saucy young devils and perfect sea-lawyers), the authentic old-timer of fiction, complete with stringy body, long, impossibly thin thighs, and a necklace of teeth.

It was then I realized that I had passed out of the Muslim belt. That here off the beaten track there were no tiny mosques made of mud-and-wattle, no *muezzin* towers of rough wood leaning drunkenly over the hot, narrow roads. This was pagan Africa, and I had offended its gods by filling men with music. Or so the witchman said.

I took him firmly by one scrawny arm, rather expecting it to come off in my hand. I turned on the radio and found a programme of records being played somewhere. I stuck one sharp end of the aerial wire into him until he squealed, and I filled him to the brim with 'Birth of the Blues', 'Why Can't It Happen To Me?' (appropriate, somehow), and a tango, the name of which I didn't catch. I then spake words of great wisdom, as follows:

'You are a horrible, scrawny old bastard. You are not worth kicking. You will soon be dead and the world will be a better place. But if I hear of you asking these men for tribute I will, on my return here, kick your backside all round the Ruaha district. Do you understand?'

'Yes,' he said, half-sobbing, 'but please take the music out of me. . . .'

I then held a great 'cleansing' ceremony, accompanied by static and morse from the radio set, and announced that all music had gone out of the three men. They went back to the village, jabbering together and highly contented.

We walked on into the cool forest, and the ground sloped and the tall trees shaded us from the sun. And I realized I was more or less lost. The Ruaha twists and turns and curves all over the place once it 'forgets that bright speed it had', as Matthew Arnold said of the Oxus, and finds itself a sluggish wanderer on the flats. I knew I had to keep bearing left to strike the river again, but did not know how far it would be until we came up with it. I looked at my map and the map looked back at me, and neither of us could have meant very much to the other, so I decided to leave the shade of the forest's edge and walk towards the river over the hard golden plains that lay to my left.

Soon we were traversing a white-gold landscape, a place of intense heat and intense lassitude. Somewhere was the strange sound of water in front of us. Trees were small and green, the soil had changed from the firm sand of the forest. I saw a reedbuck and fired at it with the ·375, needing fresh meat, but missed. How I missed I cannot say, but I think a bead of sweat ran cold into my left eye as I squeezed the trigger. We walked on. I became alarmed.

Not that there was any reason for alarm. We could easily go back the way we had come, and a relief party was expected with my hunting car—I had sent a note to Iringa with the Wahehe, asking for a mechanic to fit the new stub-axle and drive the car in my wake, if possible. But we were coming into marsh country where the mosquitoes would be bad, and already the ground was spongy underfoot and there was tall march grass and

pith trees not unlike balsa wood before us. We went forward gingerly, and it was at this time I nearly sent Dirty Paddy Riordan to join his ancestors, who were probably Kings of Ireland. It is certain that no man ever looked more like a King of Ancient Ireland than Dirty Paddy.

CHAPTER IV

DIRTY PADDY—ADVENTURER

Above the tall reeds I saw a bushbuck's horns moving, and at the same time came upon the river, shallow, gurgling sluggishly amongst the reeds. I took the rifle from the Wakwave—this was a sitting target. I shucked a cartridge into the breech, raised the barrel . . . and then the bushbuck stood up. It was a most extraordinary animal. It had a red beard and wore a strange garment and without its horns it must have been all of six feet and two inches tall.

'Would you be shooting a man?' it asked.

'What the hell are you doing in that rig?' I asked in turn, shocked with the relief of not having shot Dirty Paddy.

'I'm shooting the wily crocodile, me boy. It's like this. If it was you shooting him, he'd be off and you'd see not a scale more of him. But he don't get away from Dirty Paddy that aisy.' Dirty Paddy removed the fantastic head-dress that vaguely reminded me of John Gielgud's crown when he was playing Macbeth to Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies's Lady Macbeth. Certainly Dirty Paddy looked, if not like a King in Ireland, then like a very musty old Druid about to sacrifice something-or-other to the sun. His only garment was a boiler suit with the sleeves cut out and the trousers cut off six inches above the knee. He wore no shoes.

Looped on the belt of his garment was a long and wicked hunting knife, made from file steel by Paddy himself and sharper by far than most razors. He carried in

one hand an ancient Mannlicher, his pockets jingled with spare shells, and there crept up to him his two attendants, tall, quite-naked men smeared liberally with crocodile fat and carrying spears. He was red-headed as well as red-bearded, his hair very long and caught up with a red ribbon behind his neck. His eyes were bright blue, and his accent so strong it sounded like stage Irish.

'The likes of youse spoil a man's living. You come clumping and thumping along the banks and every crocodile in sight slides into the water and away. But me? Now d'you see, this headgear makes me look just like a bushbuck. And what does the wily ould croc think? Does he think, there's Dirty Paddy, coming to give me a whack on the head or a bullet for meself? Devil a bit. He says, "There's a fine bit o' steak on the hoof for me supper!" and he swims over an' comes for me. An' me, being smothered in croc fat meself, he doesn't smell. So I out and give him a crack across the head with the butt if I'm lucky, or a bullet costing one shilling and twenty cents in the gob if it so happen he takes fright.'

I may say that later, when I saw Dirty Paddy at work, I was amazed at the ease with which he killed crocodiles. His favourite trick was to sneak up to a sleeping croc and hit him with a light stick just behind the eyes. The crocodile simply gave a convulsive shudder and died, whilst Dirty Paddy stroked its backbone. At first I was touched by this gesture. I thought it showed the chivalry of the killer towards the slain, but, 'Devil a bit,' says Paddy, 'you see, the crocodile is the strongest, dirtiest, most primitive thing that lives. Now if I was not to stroke him he'd be off into the water, dead as he is, thrashing with the nerves in his spine twitching, but just stroke his back along the spine there and you straighten him out in a tick.'

'Come along to me camp,' he said then, on our first meeting, 'and meet the wife.'

Dirty Paddy is one of the band of happy adventurers who are always just about to make their fortunes. They wash for gold in the rivers of Africa, they find gold, but there is always a reason why the gold is not 'payable'. They dig for diamonds in unlikely places—Dirty Paddy once had a diamond mine in the back yard of a pub in Nairobi somewhere, and he did find diamonds, enough in two years almost to pay his hotel bill and prospector's licence. These men hunt professionally, and sooner or later there is trouble with a client who finds he has gone 'on safari' in a circle round some *duka* (a trading store—preferably one selling beer!) for six weeks or so. Or there is some *shauri* over an elephant that happened to fall dead with 100 lb. of ivory right in the lucky hunter's track. The Game Warden frowns and the hunter's licence is taken away. They have great schemes for trading round Lake Victoria in a schooner, but the schooner sinks, or has been bought on such a complicated arrangement that sooner or later the (usually Indian) owner takes it back. They own little bars, they start bus companies, they get timber concessions or the financial backing to start a cheese factory or a pork butchery or some such, but never have quite the ability to get the pigs or the milk actually to the factory. They dodge writs and summonses with the ease of expert boxers dodging a slow punch and sooner or later they take to crocodile hunting. It offers the bush life they love, it holds out the lure of a fortune.

Which is not to say that men do not make money out of crocodile hunting, or that all croc hunters are ne'er-do-wells. Some organized companies, large and small, make a very nice living, thank you very much, from hunting the crocodile. But it is a way of life that attracts the man anxious to get rich quick. The belly skin of a big crocodile in good condition is worth nearly eight shillings per square foot. That works out at £5 per crocodile. If you only shoot one big croc per day, reason the boys, you will

be doing well! Of course, they go off on a croc-killing jag, get a concession, make themselves £100 or so, spend it on whisky, and begin to find crocs less and less plentiful on their concession.

Walk down Bond Street and you may pause in your perambulation to gaze in the windows of an exclusive shop that specializes in 'real crocodile' goods. There the end-product sits upon a white silk cushion—a pair of shoes, a handbag, a vanity case, guaranteed to last almost for ever, for crocodile skin is next to indestructible. If it is good leather it is an almost certain bet that it has come from one of the lakes or rivers of East Africa, has been through the belching tanneries at Nairobi, then shipped, deodorized, trimmed, fashioned and polished, the end-product of Dirty Paddy's light stick or ever-ready rifle.

The man who makes money from crocodile hunting is a sober, level-headed, respectable sort of chap with a good business head and enough capital to outfit his camp and hunters properly and to tide him through bad periods. He is satisfied with a regular income, not perhaps a fabulous fortune, but a fair return for the discomfort and danger of the job. He treats crocodile hunting as he would any other business, and keeps one eye firmly fixed on his profit and loss account. Dirty Paddy Riordan is none of these things. He is instead a man of immense enthusiasms, and for him the rainbow is always worth following in case the story of the pot of gold at its foot might somehow be true after all.

I discovered much later that Dirty Paddy did not even have a concession to shoot crocodiles, but was poaching on the concession of a gentleman named Jake Van Vogel. It is reported that when last seen, Dirty Paddy had not only taken a shot at Jake's crocodiles, but had actually shot at Jake himself after an altercation in which words and feelings ran high, and that Jake had in the end to come to some agreement with Paddy because Jake's truck had

broken a universal joint and Paddy's amazing Model 'A' Ford was the only way of getting out of the Ruaha Swamp before the rains. Jake had been waiting in vain for another gentleman named Yussuf the Chinaman, a polite little man with slant eyes and a hunting car, but somebody had seized Yussuf's truck for debt and he was not able to come to the rescue of his partner. But that is gossip from the Iringa bars. I cannot believe Paddy would shoot at anyone—and miss!

Paddy's Ford is an amazing vehicle, and could its history be verified, it would be worth placing in a museum as an example of what an automobile can do and still live. Paddy drove it up from Rhodesia with his wife and two children aboard in 1926—it was second-hand then. It has since been used on two gold rushes, it has been turned into a hunting car, has been dismantled to run a gold mine as motive power, it has been turned over too many times even to count, it has rolled 290 feet down an almost vertical cliff. That was one smash it could not drive away from, it had to be winched up by Paddy himself with a block and tackle. Then the back axle had to be found and fixed into place. Then the car went. . . .

When I first saw it it looked like a road accident mixed up with a gipsy caravan. Its body sagged, its bonnet had assumed the curve of the back of an old and patient cab horse. It had been many colours and they had all faded, leaving it a sort of washed-out magenta.

'There is nothing needed to keep that car on the road save a little string, some oil, and now and then a drop o' petrol,' said Paddy proudly. White ants had eaten the wooden rim of the steering-wheel, and one drove by using the spokes as handlebars. Yet it started with a swing of the handle—which was, of course, not the original handle but something Paddy had fixed up.

The car was neither licensed nor insured and I am certain that it has not existed legally since the early 1930's.

It serves Paddy well, for it is not only his means of transport for himself, his wife and his skins, it is their only home. The car is parked on the swamp, clever natives weave two long lengths of matting from its roof, and these serve as bedroom and living-room for Mr. and Mrs. Riordan. It was to this camp I travelled with Dirty Paddy.

Arriving, he called, 'We have company, my love,' but nothing happened. 'Likely she's gone for a walk,' Paddy said. He stripped off his single garment, and emerged as naked as the day he was born save for his great red beard. He then proceeded to rub himself all over with liquid crocodile fat, which stank most abominably, and spoke thus:

'Now this may seem like some crazy notion to you, the rubbing of a man all over with the crocodile's fat, but faith, if you'd suffered my rheumatics you'd know better.

'I tell you there is nothing in this world as good for a man as the fat of a good crocodile. And I'll tell you another thing. I'll yet be riding in me Rolls-Royce whilst you are sitting on your bum trying to film bloody grasshoppers or whatever it is you do. From what? Crocodile fat and *merinda*. The two of them will make me rich. Just think of it—in an exclusive shop in the West End o' London there you have it on the shelves, bottle after bottle, a guinea a time. "Doctor Riordan's crocodile fat brought at great trouble and expense from the livin' heart o' Africa." I tell you every bitch of a dowager with a touch o' the screwmatics would say, "To hell with the stink, I'll try it," and she'd rub it on as if t'were lilies o' the valley.

'And there's no doubt she'd be doing herself more good with that bottle of crocodile fat than all the damned quacks in Harley Street stuck end to bloody end could do her.'

Ginger Paddy finished his ghastly toilet.

'Now I'll lay me down and bake a while,' he said, and lay down naked in the full heat of the blazing sun.

I looked around me. The scene was yellow and brilliant, a yellow of an almost unbelievably high key. Yellow sky, yellow reeds, yellow water gurgling over yellow mud. The whole place stank of dead crocodile. Further down the shelving, yellow beach, natives worked naked, skinning and slashing with their knives. Some were salting-down crocodile skins. Dirty Paddy's adventure was less a trading expedition into the interior than a rapid guerilla raid, to bag as many skins as possible before his presence was discovered. I did not appreciate that at the time, of course.

There was the sound of a woman singing 'She'll be coming 'round the mountain', and Mrs. Riordan appeared.

Mrs. Riordan needs a book to herself. It was Mrs. Gladys Riordan who boxed the ears of a native writ-server who gave her a writ on a Saturday morning. 'I am doing nothing,' he said, 'it is my job. If I did not give you the paper another would!' And Mrs. Riordan replied:

'I didn't hit you for giving me the paper. I hit you for spoiling my week-end. You could have kept it until Monday.' The boy had been trying to serve that one for five months, and had pedalled fruitlessly from one friend of Paddy's to another, and one would say, 'Paddy? He's gone long since. Take your bike and ride to Lake Tanganyika, to *Bwana* Smithson's camp. *Bwana* Paddy's working there.' And Smithson, sensing what was in the wind, would say, 'You've just missed him. He's in Iringa, working in the Indian garage.' And the Indian mechanic shook his dark head sadly and told the boy, '*Bwana* Riordan was here, but left a month ago for Nairobi. . . .'

Gladys is tall and stately and has very blonde hair. It is so peroxided that in some lights it seems green. Gladys smokes native cigarettes in a very long holder, she drinks gin only neat, and she was dressed, on this occasion, in

sober black. Black lace, black silk and a trimming of black beads. She smelt horribly of crocodile fat.

'It's so nice of you to call,' she said in a small voice. 'As a matter of fact I've wanted someone to examine my wrist. It hurts, rather, but Paddy tells me to rub it with croc fat.' I examined her wrist. It was fractured. . . . I splinted it and she said, 'Oh, thank you so much. I used to sing, you know, professionally.'

'Really? In England, I suppose.'

'No, in Johannesburg, at the Kitkat Club. Of course that was when Jo'burg was a rip-roaring town. About 1923.'

'Don't you find it very dull here when your husband is hunting?'

'Not really. I hunt too. At night, you know.'

'But surely you can't shoot with that wrist?'

'Not shoot, exactly. I steer the boat. That's most important. I have to keep one thumb over the side. If my thumb gets wet I know we're sinking. Tell me, have you ever tasted crocodile eggs?'

'I've never had that pleasure.'

'Oh, but you must. Really you must. They're a great delicacy.' She raised her voice to a yell that must have been heard in Iringa.

'Mwangi, you lazy black bastard. Fry croc egg for *bwana*, *mara*-bloody-*moja*.'

The crocodile egg was pleasant but very fishy.

Paddy came into the 'awning' or the 'living-room', call it whichever you like.

'I've just had a thought, me boy. You an' me get on. Perhaps you've a bit o' money you'd like to sink in helping me make a fortune exportin' crocodile fat to London?'

'I'm sorry, Mr. Riordan, I'm broke.'

'And you a film man? To blazes with the Mr. Riordan stuff. Call me Dirty Paddy. Here, have a drink.'

'What is it?'

'It' was a clear liquid in a dirty bottle.

'If you must know, it's wine. Bamboo wine. Well-fermented and perhaps distilled a trifle. I buy it from Yussuf the Chink and he buys it from the wogs. It's good stuff, a mite fierce, but good as any whisky.' I tasted it carefully. It was not unlike a mixture of 100 octane spirit mixed with paint remover. I coughed, my eyes watered, I handed the bottle back. 'Ladies first, you awful old bastard,' Gladys said, kissing her husband, and Dirty Paddy handed her the bottle with a courtly bow. With his hair restrained by its ribbon there was something distinctly eighteenth century about that bow. The period clothes one could imagine, easily, for he was stark naked.

'I'll tell you what,' Paddy suggested, 'two rifles are better than one at this game. Come with me to-night and have a morsel of sport, and then I'll give you a grand film sequence of crocodile catching to-morrow. That's a fair exchange.'

I agreed immediately.

'Have you got a coat?'

'No, but the nights are warm.'

'Nights be beggared. The mosquitoes don't bite you here, they carry you into a dark corner and go straight for your throat. I'll lend you a coat.'

Gladys tilted the bottle and half the spirit disappeared.

'They don't bite me,' she said, 'or if they do they stagger off and die from alcoholic poisoning.' She handed the bottle to her husband, who finished it. 'A shilling a bottle and as good as Scotch. I've got two cases of it. Come and see my boat.'

CHAPTER V

A MOONLIGHT CROCODILE HUNT

The boat! Ah, that was a beautiful sight indeed. If the motor-car had been wonderful the boat was sheer, undiluted fantasy. The intrepid men who designed and built the Kon-Tiki raft would blush with modesty when confronted with a boat the like of that made by Dirty Paddy. It was roughly boat-shaped, with a freeboard of about one inch. At one end was an outboard motor of uncertain vintage, at the other a tall sort of goalpost with two huge motor headlamps (from the Ford) mounted on it. On deck there was a foot-switch to work the headlamps from a battery which the patient Ford charged up each day. Water bubbled into the boat even as it lay at its moorings.

'It's sinking, isn't it?' I asked doubtfully.

'Devil a bit. Y'see, this is not built of any ordinary wood, me boy, but of a stuff that's going to make me a fortune. Look here.' And Paddy lifted up one side of the boat with one hand. 'The lightest wood in the world. *Merinda*, they call it, and it's half the weight of balsa. Examine it for yourself. Imagine the fortune there is in it, eh?'

'But it's hardly more than a light pith,' I protested. The wood was like balsa but even lighter and less workable.

'Listen to me. Some people have to have the brains in this world, and the sense to see an opportunity when it's presented to them. Take a sheet of this and stick it in a lifebelt instead of cork, eh?'

'I don't think they use cork now, in any case.'

'They do so. And how much lighter this is. Anyway, imagine it. You have a case of champagne to pack. You don't need any specially shaped wooden rest for the bottles. Just take a sheet of *merinda* and press the bottles in, see? There, like that.' Paddy pressed the empty jungle-juice bottle into the wood and sure enough it left a neat impression of itself. 'Imagine, me boy, heat insulation, cold insulation, sound insulation, any kind of bloody insulation you like. Fill the forecastle of a ship with it and the bloody thing is unsinkable. You can steam it, mould it, press it. Suppose you and me was to set up "The Merinda Exporting Company of Central Tanganyika, Ltd.", eh? What about it?' But he didn't even wait for a reply. He gave up selling me the idea of the commercial value of *merinda*. He just liked salesmanship. Ten minutes later he was looking at a herd of elephants through his old field-glasses and telling me of the fortune to be made out of elephants' ears. 'Cigarette cases, covered lighters, hip-flasks, and all that. And a man could sit down with that beautiful material, the softest and most supple made, and think of a thousand things to do with it. Golf jackets, ladies' dresses . . . no end to it. . . .'

It was then he told me of the foreign expedition and I understood at last why all the animals on the Ruaha flats were bad-tempered and charged on sight.

Late that afternoon we saw a little group of people walking through the swamp. There were four or five well-built men and three women. The women carried household goods and cooking-pots, the men had axes and a huge, two-handed saw.

We hailed them and asked them where they were going.

'Back to our village. We worked for *Bwana* Harvey, but he has bad fever. We are pit-sawyers and these are loggers and we were cutting *maninga* wood.'

Maninga is a hard wood, very beautiful when worked and white-ant proof. It is one of the few good building timbers Tanganyika possesses and is very valuable. However, the best forests are practically inaccessible, and here again the practical man with a truck comes into his own. Harvey's method was to hire a gang of 'boys' to cut the timber, then, in the dry season, come into the woods with a huge ex-army truck and an equally huge trailer and make trip after trip hauling the wood out until the rains came again.

Harvey was a trier. A little Cockney, he worked, worked until he almost dropped. He was his own mechanic and gang boss, and he always had to raise the money to pay his labourers whilst he was selling the timber, for so 'Heath-Robinson' was his sawmill and his means of transport that not even the Government would contract with him for timber until it was cut and delivered in their yard in ordered lengths. I found out later that Harvey had gone down with tick fever, and was so ill that he was out of commission for a year, and so lost his timber concession. Africa is always cruel to the loser, no matter how sporting the loser is, no matter how hard he has fought. The unfortunate go to the wall, and that is all there is to it. There is no 'dole', no sickness benefit. You work, or you connive, or you starve. Unless you belong to that trades-union of free men, the adventurers, who help one another liberally, and demand only that the fallen brother drink with his benefactors, and that he remember to push the boat out when next he is in funds.

It was nothing unusual in Tanganyika to see Harvey's fantastic old truck fighting up an escarpment with its trailer and its huge load, in four-wheel drive and bottom low, driving through an extra gearbox Harvey had fitted, at one mile an hour, coughing and boiling up a steep grade. Harvey thought nothing of fitting new bearings

by the roadside or stopping to regrind his valves when they burned out. 'Get the wood back' was his motto. He sometimes had to live on the level of the Africans themselves whilst he scraped round for money to finance his next trip. His real profession, the job he had left in London to come out and try his luck in Tanganyika, was a shock to anyone who knew him. He had been a ladies' hairdresser. . . .

Incidentally, I was always impressed with the African pit-sawyers. The axe-men fell a tree, and then dig a pit next to it. They use two small trees as a rest for the trunk, once the branches are lopped off, then the sawyers come along and trim the logs to a square. They next mark it off in planks, one inch perhaps, or whatever the order calls for, and cut these planks with uncanny accuracy, one man standing in the pit below the log, the other above him, standing on the log itself. They are immensely muscular men, and as they saw they sing. It is wonderful to hear their deep voices sounding through the quiet woods, to the snort of the saws. The loggers who fell the trees have their own songs, and they chant most beautifully as they wield their great axes. The Wahehe blacksmiths make these axes in their bright charcoal fires, singing as they, in turn, let their hammers rise and fall, and the children dance a sort of hornpipe on the board that works the sheepskin bellows that blow the primitive furnaces to a suitable heat for the work.

The loggers we met that day near Dirty Paddy's camp were off home. 'We have not been paid, but that is because the *Bwana* must be sick. He is a good man and would pay us before he bought food for himself. We have seen him pay us, and then feed with us on *posho*. He is a good man, and he is ill. We have sent two of our people to town to see him, but he pays us a bit at a time, so much per cubic foot we cut.' They spat reflectively into the ground. 'He built us good houses. He is a very good man.'

'Then why not live in the good houses?' Paddy asked them. 'You have vegetables there, you can keep cows. It is in the forest and is cool. Why go back to the river and to malaria and the tsetse fly? Live there and cut wood, and *Bwana* Harvey will come soon and pay you.'

The biggest of them, a pit-sawyer named Njiwa, with rippling muscles and a body as black as night, shrugged. 'We have lost all our cattle and two *totos* to the lions, *bwana*. I speared two lions, Kelehi there speared one. But our friend Waluga has died of blood-poisoning because the lion clawed his arm. And this woman lost a son, and that one a daughter, both tiny children. . . .' The Wahehe seem to love their children more than most Africans. '*Bwana* Harvey left us a rifle, but now we have no ammunition. We have guns, but no shot. Our friends will bring back some lead and we will make shot. But there in the forest . . . no, the lions are too strong for us.'

'Wait here,' I told them, 'and I will come back with you in a day or two. I will take you in my truck, and we will see what can be done. Then I will see *Bwana* Harvey for you.' It was not entirely the wish to be helpful on my part. I had this book in mind, and I wanted to see something of these famous man-eaters of the Tanganyika interior, and to get a film-sequence if possible. Yet I was sorry for the men. They were decent, honest, hardworking. They were owed some £30 apiece by a white man—a small fortune for a backveld African—yet they did not grumble or complain. They knew he was honest and must be prevented somehow from paying them. They had been attacked by lions and fought them until they had to acknowledge themselves beaten. Anything I could do I would do.

The chief weapon the Wahehe use against the lions is the muzzle-loading musket copied from those carried in the 1860's by the Arab slavers.

As I have indicated, the mortality amongst motor

vehicles in Tanganyika is very high, and it is from the shambles of wrecked and scrapped vehicles one finds behind the Indian *dukas* that the natives find the material for their guns.

First a barrel—a steering column is the obvious answer. Then odd bits of workable metal to make the 'action'. Suitable scrap is taken to a blacksmith who shapes the whole into a fair copy of a Tower musket. This must be taken to the D.C.'s office, where the barrel is stamped to show tax has been paid, and a licence is then issued to enable the lucky owner to buy powder and shot.

The favourite ammunition is lead ball, made by melting down the plates of old car batteries. But when this source of ammunition is exhausted then a handful of scrap iron moulded into a clay plug, or an iron ball, serves more or less as well.

That is why the hunter in Central Tanganyika will do well to keep his rifle loaded and in his own hands, not those of his gunbearer. A wounded rhino, lion or even elephant may charge out of thick thorn bush from five or six feet away, and no gunbearer born is going to stand whilst the *bwana* takes his gun and aims. A short-barrelled double rifle ready loaded with ammunition of not less than ·450 calibre, carried on the shoulder, is ideal. Any big game animal that has been wounded by soft lead ball ammo., or by a 'shrapnel' charge of old nails, will not be in a good temper. Besides, the laws of the jungle are very cruel; a wounded animal is prey to the carnivores, and is better put out of its misery.

As I have already said, I do not carry such a rifle only because I do not hunt for sport and cannot afford one for the possible emergency. Perhaps one simply must get used to a favourite weapon—I know Game Wardens who use the ·303 service rifle (a lethal weapon—to the hunter—in the hands of the inexperienced), the ·30 '06 Springfield, or even a ·256, against all kinds

of game in all circumstances. But they, of course, are experts.

Many hunters rail against the authorities for allowing the Africans to have these crude weapons at all, but after all, these Tanganyika natives have to live in the middle of country teeming with dangerous big game, and are entitled to some protection. That there are many abuses is quite obvious, and that the local 'sportsmen' often go out after elephant armed with muzzle-loaders and spears, manage to bag some ivory and let two or three wounded bulls escape, is a matter of frequently recorded fact. Yet they run the major risk, and they are entitled to their weapons. Incidentally, the richer natives often do own good rifles, and on this very safari I found one old chief with a very excellent double Holland and Holland rifle that had cost him £200, secondhand.

The Wahehe loggers settled down in camp with Paddy's boys, and we drank tea and waited for night to fall.

There are several ways of killing crocodiles. The simplest is to walk along a river bank with a magazine rifle and go quietly and warily. When you see a crocodile, shoot him. The trouble is that the croc very often gets into the water and sinks, and by the time he rises and you locate his corpse, the skin is spoiled. Besides, the crocodile is a timid and wary beast, and with much shooting he moves his *ménage* to another part of the river. You can crack him on the head with a piece of wood. Morea—whom you will meet later in this book—has two children, and once, when living on the shores of an African lake, she was horrified to find they had a secret sport; crocodile killing with a lump of rotten bamboo. They were then aged seven and nine, and managed to get a fair bag of crocodiles before mother found out what her dear little ones were up to on their morning walks.

Crocodiles can be clubbed from canoes, speared or harpooned, but this is only feasible in very low water. They can be trapped or netted, and a combination of netting and clubbing often brings good results on the shores of shallow lakes.

Incidentally, the crocodile is a pest and there are far too many of them around. Mortality amongst Africans from the crocodiles is very high. In Lake Victoria, native mechanics have been snapped up whilst refuelling the flying boats B.O.A.C. used to use for their African run just after the war. How many Africans die each year in the jaws of the crocodile will never be known—there are no statistics compiled; just as with snake-bite, nobody knows how many people are killed by the cobra. I have personal knowledge of five fatalities from crocodiles. An old woman was taken from a canoe on the Ruaha whilst I was there; a fisherman placing nets in Lake Victoria had been killed the day before I arrived in 1953, and I saw parts of his body that had been recovered; a child was snapped up on Lake Tanganyika where I was camped in 1954; a man was taken from the Nile bank on the boundary of the West Nile district in 1951 when I was looking for pythons there; and an elderly woman was taken, together with her water-pot, from the bank of the Zambesi when I was filming there in 1947.

In this last case the husband turned up at the local police post and indignantly demanded the return of the water-pot.

Where the natives use fish traps on the great lakes and spend hours in crocodile-infested water setting and mending them, fatalities are very high indeed.

The Game Wardens have organized anti-crocodile campaigns on the known breeding grounds, uncovering the eggs which are laid in shallow sand and covered by the mother croc, and destroying sometimes tens of thousands per year. The monitor lizards help, and there are

organized shooting and poisoning campaigns, but there are still far, far too many crocodiles. One useful method of destruction is to place a really badly decayed animal carcase on the shore of a lake where there is an off-shore wind. Sometimes dozens of crocodiles will turn up to investigate, and, as they do not seem easily frightened by lights, a team of good riflemen can do enormous damage amongst them, using electric torches.

Crocodiles like their meat high, and live largely on buck and small animals that come down to drink at the rivers and lake shores. The crocodile snaps at the animal's nose and drags him into the water, drowning him, then stores the corpse under the bank until the flavour is right.

Some hunters swear that, weight for weight, the crocodile is the strongest thing in the animal kingdom, but my prize would go to the python. I have seen a dozen natives trying to straighten out a big python so that Alan Tarlton could 'force-feed' him, and the fifteen-foot snake would shrug a coil loose and drag the men off their feet without much trouble. However, it is certain that the crocodile is immensely powerful, and his weapons, his great jaws and his brutal tail, coupled with his scaly armour, make him a deadly brute to encounter, especially on a dark night.

Dirty Paddy's crocodile raiding methods were extremely simple, as I was to discover. When darkness fell, we put on coats, and Paddy donned, instead of his buckhorn head-dress, a rakish bush-hat with a leopardskin band and a fine sweep of ostrich feathers at one side. This made him look like Robin Hood, his lean, fighting face, his jutting beard and the feathered hat giving him an incredibly romantic appearance.

Gladys wrapped herself in an ancient duffle-coat, put another ten-a-penny cigarette in her long holder and settled herself at the tiller. I was clad in a borrowed coat stiff with crocodile grease. It almost made me sick to wear it, but the Riordans were right about the mosquitoes,

they sang in the damp air like bomber squadrons, and they attacked unceasingly. There was no good slapping at forehead and cheeks. My beard helped—one reason why I wear it—but we sprayed ourselves liberally, again and again, on the expedition with some stuff called 'Gimp', which was really an excellent repellent.

After a certain amount of abuse and bad language the outboard motor started, six natives climbed aboard the raft, and we pushed off, chugging into midstream in the shallow water. The night was loud with the croak of frogs and the chirring of marsh insects, and there was the gurgle of water under our non-existent keel. There was a high, white half-moon and many stars, and visibility was only restricted by the tall reeds and grasses and swamp trees that grew above our heads. The Ruaha wound in its meanderings across the flats and we chugged along, swinging from time to time along new courses, past floating islands, on to broad reaches, into narrow causeways amongst the chuckling reeds. The bottle of jungle juice (a new one) passed from hand to hand. Suddenly it was cold there in the swamp and I drank the revolting concoction with something like relish. Gladys sang a rather bawdy music-hall ditty as she steered with her hand (with its broken wrist!) resting on the tiller. The other hand trailed in the water to show if we were sinking.

Suddenly Paddy gave the 'thumbs-up' sign. The engine was cut. The Africans got out long poles and started to punt us through the reeds. Paddy extinguished his ten-a-penny cigarette, then quietly worked the bolt on his rifle. I followed his example. By the white light of the moon we moved silently amongst the reeds of this strange river in Africa, round bend after bend; until quite suddenly we came out on a broad reach with shelving mud banks now mottled with moonlight and purple tree shadow.

Paddy stabbed his foot at the switch controlling the headlamps and the night was alive with red eyes that started to move towards the water even as I watched. My surprise was cut short by the roar of Paddy's rifle and I started firing myself, just behind the eyes. Two crocodiles lay thrashing in the headlamps my side of the river, another, wounded, was dragging itself off towards the water. A native leaped off the raft and swam fast amongst heaven knows how many frightened crocodiles, reached the strand, ran up to the wounded monster and clouted it across the brain-pan with his club.

Paddy had shot five—a crocodile with every bullet. One lay still and dead, but for an occasional twitch, high on the bank. Two others thrashed around, the final two had managed to make the water. Two other natives were in the water, swimming towards one of the crocodiles Paddy had hit. They reached it, and I saw they were towing a large lump of *merinda* with a heavy hook attached. They hooked the crocodile and left him to float. He was dead. The other bobbed up beside the launch and covered us in water and foam, thrashing his tail on board. Gladys had been knocked into the river only two nights before during a close-quarters fight aboard the launch. On this occasion one of the natives grabbed the failing monster's tail and Paddy clubbed it with the butt of his rifle. We had shot eight crocodiles and made certain of them in about six minutes from start to finish.

The carcases were dragged up on to the bank, and one of the Africans was left to scare off hyenas or prowling lions. We moved on, motor running, for another mile, then cut the motor and poled along until Dirty Paddy guessed we were on to something, the lights snapped on, and once again the muzzle-flashes stabbed the night, the roar of rifle shots echoed over the flats, and we had bagged another three.

That night—admittedly a good one with one expert shot and one fair marksman, both trying hard—we bagged fourteen crocodiles.

We came back in the faint yellow light of early dawn.

There was little of interest on the trip except one huge bull elephant that paddled in the water near the shore and trumpeted wildly at us as we passed, but made no attempt to interfere with us. There was a school of hippos near the camp, blowing and snorting, rising and falling in the water. And I still do not know how a hippo manœuvres his big bulk in the water, how he arranges things so that he can rise and fall at will.

I spent three days with Paddy and got some magnificent pictures of crocodile catching in daylight. He put on a fine show for me. The negatives were all lost when the Mau Mau burned down my store at the farm, with thousands of feet of precious film material on African customs, and a library of several hundred still negatives.

At the end of the three days my truck arrived, and I collected the Wahehe from Harvey's logging camp and drove off. The last I saw of Paddy was his hat, waved to me on the muzzle of his rifle, above the tall grasses.

CHAPTER VI

TANGANYIKA TOWNSHIP

I found Harvey at Mbeya. He was very ill and very weak. He was living like a native in a mud house on the bank of a river a little way out of town. It was a rather pathetic story, for Harvey had been taken by the sad plight of a tiny Wahehe boy he had found in one of the villages. The boy, Kinoki, was much loved by his little playmates, but though seeming bright enough and certainly full of high spirits, did not understand what was said to him. Harvey discovered that the boy was deaf and dumb, and had brought him two hundred miles by truck to see a doctor.

'Funny thing was,' said Harvey, 'the wogs wouldn't let him go, at first. They all loved him. They had the craziest arguments. They said, "But what happens if you die? How can the boy find his way back?" In the end I took his father with me, a strapping great bloke called Erikwon or something, damned nearly six foot six tall and muscled like Joe Louis.

'He came along with a throwing club over one shoulder, tough as you like. The boy worshipped him, you could see that. And all the kids in the village gave Kinoki toys made out of wood. It was touching, if you know what I mean.

'Well, my bloody wog turney-boy is a skilled mechanic, but he must have been thinking about his latest tart, or something, for the damned fool put a tin of paraffin in the sump instead of motor oil and I seized up and had to stop and fit a set of bearings—luckily Chevs. take shell bearings and I travel a set on safari.

'Anyhow, I must have camped on the site of an old wog village, and there I got this go of tick typhus. I'm weak as a cat. There's an old German bloke we call Simple Hans gone out with money and my truck to pay off my boys at the mill and the cutting in the forest.

'Matter of fact, the poor kid didn't get over the deaf and dumb trouble, because there wasn't nothing the doctors could do. I was too sick to drive back, and him and his dad were in tears, because they'd been expecting so much. They walked away together, him and his dad, along the main road towards the forest. Two hundred miles to go. Like the way Charlie Chaplin used to end his films. The two of them, hand in bloody hand. I damn nearly cried, I tell you.'

I gave him the *habari* (the news) about his boys and the man-eaters. 'Tell George Rushby,' he said. George Rushby is a Game Warden with an almost incredible number of man-eating lions to his credit. However, George was not in town, but on safari somewhere. Basil Reel, one of the great elephant hunters who once poached ivory and now is (or was when I last heard of him) Game Observer for the Tanganyika Government, had been through Mbeya, but had been hurried off to deal with the evacuation of the Watussi of the Malagarasi Swamp. There was a bad flood there and the cattle were drowning and the people threatened with starvation. Basil Reel somehow evacuated the cattle. I tried hard to get hold of him, or find out about this herculean feat; but nobody knew much about it and nobody seemed to care. Such things were, if not common, at least to be expected of men like Reel.

So, as I had little else to do, I filmed around Mbeya and then pushed off in the direction of Harvey's logging camp, leaving my own safari boys and taking the loggers with me.

Mbeya is a strange town with a railway station, a

platform, a level crossing gate, a station master and no railway. I took a photograph of this interesting phenomenon. It is really a truck depot, disguised as a railway station. The Indian *dukas* are like all the Indian *dukas* in Africa except that some of them seem very old, and, in spite of their flimsy construction of mud, wattle and corrugated iron, some of them have intricate Eastern decorations above their doors.

There was the usual crop of amusing notices. One shop advertised 'Laddies dresses for evenin and street-walking'. Another: 'We mek suitis and gauns.' A third: 'Sunshin Happy Place Come an Drink here in Blue Ankor Bar.' What genius decided to call a bar as near to the Kalahari Desert as to the sea, 'The Blue Anchor'?

There is a constant stream of traffic through Mbeya from Northern Rhodesia and towards that colony. It is a great town for eccentrics and 'types'; one or two famous from the days of the 'Happy Valley' in Kenya, with their histories of marriage, divorce and mistresses still like a halo about them in spite of advancing age, have settled there. But most of Mbeya's eccentrics came with the gold rush to the Lupa River in the 1920's.

The story of Mbeya district is lack of transport to take the produce of the fertile soil to the coast, and lack of a market for any quantity of produce. I met one man who had a magnificent farm just outside the township. He had organized it perfectly; there were piggeries and a bacon factory, there was a bakery, where pork pies, bread and so on could be made. He had utilized every drop of his allotted water from the river by building brick channels, with sluice gates and control wheels, so that he could irrigate as and when he chose. He grew peaches, marvellous flowers, plums, strawberries, pears, apples—all kinds of fruit, of superb taste and lushness. His little herd of cattle could produce milk and cream enough to keep himself and his wife in comfort on the monthly cheque . . .

he had worked, persevered, and now he was trying to sell the property.

'I can't get reliable transport,' he said. 'When I buy trucks the natives smash them, or smash the fittings. The railway is impossible. What can I do?'

Mbeya, when I was there, was taken up with politics —not surprisingly, for white settlers in Africa are super-political animals. But there was a long-term gleam in Mbeya's eye. Straddling the only north–south road in Africa, Mbeya hoped for riches. It was whispered that American capital was forthcoming to rebuild that Great North Road and, with the increased traffic, Mbeya must increase.

Besides, was not Mbeya the geographical centre of the territories marked out to become the new Capricorn Federation?

Now the supporters of a Capricorn Federation reason thus: if Capricorn Africa becomes a fact, and Mbeya is the exact geographical centre of that Federation, then Mbeya stands a good chance of being the capital city. . . .

Useless to argue that Capricorn Africa has little chance of becoming fact, that London is not the geographical centre of England, or Nairobi of Kenya. The enthusiasts are certain that Capricorn Africa is to come, and that if and when it comes they will find the value of their land increased a hundredfold.

I drove out of Mbeya down the dusty road that leads north, and turned off a little before Iringa to cross the country between the road and the Ruaha River, this time along a track Harvey's boys had built. Unfortunately, they had built it by simply following the elephant roads, and the elephants had not recognized the right of the trucks to usurp their ancient right of way. So the elephants had continued using the road, which was largely of black cotton soil—the result was a ruined,

twisted, broken track that would simply smash any car chassis unless the greatest care was exercised. Some of the elephant footprints were a foot deep, made in the rains, and great herds had travelled this road.

There were two or three steep *karongas* to cross, old river-beds also torn up by elephant, buffalo and rhino. How Harvey ever manœuvred his lorry and trailer across this sort of thing I could not imagine. It was the most I could do to stop my own car turning over on the steep descent of the bank, and it was worse on the tricky and perilous ascent. My boys pushed, we took *pangas* and cut down the bank as best we could, we cut trees and made rough roads, following the trail of the indomitable Harvey into the interior of this strange country.

It took me two days' hard driving to cover a hundred and fifty miles, and at last we came into the forest.

A strange, silent place. The elephant did not appear to frequent the forest, although we saw one pile of rotting bones there, the huge skull like a painted wooden model of an elephant skull.

The trees were tall and sunlight filtered through them in bright, dusty rays. Here and there one could see the work of the loggers—a fine, straight tree had been felled, sawn and removed. There were the pits the sawyers had used, deserted now, the flat, sand floor of the forest littered with sawdust and wood shavings.

And at last, following the tracks of the ancient lorry Harvey had been using as a tractor, we found the camp. And around the camp, lion tracks.

CHAPTER VII

MAN-EATERS

I stopped the car in the camp and lit a cigarette. The light had gone by now, and there was a huge white moon low on the horizon. The moon hardly illuminated the forest, but shone on the thin night clouds that were gathering, making them gleam like snowbanks behind the trees, and the great, low stars shone through like the friendly lights of a nearby town. It was lonely suddenly, there in the great, silent, beast-haunted forest. Then the loggers started to chatter and sing as they piled out of the truck.

They were grateful and happy. They liked the camp better than their village. They could keep cows, for here there did not seem to be any fly infestation. There was little or no fever, and they had good houses, wood framed and roofed with leaves. Unlike most Africans they preferred these to their own huts, and enjoyed having decent beds and smokeless rooms. They seemed a much more intelligent and civilized crowd, for all their obvious 'savagery', than the Johannesburg or Nairobi natives, who ape the white man yet are content to live in hovels, and would prefer a low-roofed hut to a decent house.

Before long a fire was going and a haunch of a buck I had shot the day before was turning on a spit for their supper. I had steak, grilled on a hardwood spit and eaten with a hunting knife, after the fashion of the Masai. No vegetables, no bread. I ate four or five pounds. It was my only meal that day. Then I went out to a nearby waterhole with the ·375 and shot a zebra stallion, using the

bright moon to shoot by. We disembowelled him, poor fellow, and dragged him from the waterhole to the camp. His end was at least quicker and more merciful than a lion would have given him.

His corpse we left under the trees out to the right of the camp, in a moonlit glade. I lit a pipe of Njombe tobacco and settled down to watch the night. There was little point in taking special precautions or camouflaging my position in case the lions took fright; these brutes had only contempt for men, puny, stupid men who tried to spear them.

So we sat there in the shadow, with the fire burning low, Njiwa with his spear, Kelehi with spear and dagger, Ikohu with a Masai-type spear with a heavy iron blade, and Ikweli with spear and bow and arrows. Ikweli was a good bowman; not a patch on the pygmies of the Ituri who can fire a bow like a small machine-gun, releasing another arrow before the first has found its target, until, with five or six bowmen, each with a handful of arrows, the air is full of a hailstorm of steel points; yet Ikweli could fit his arrows clean and fire smoothly and quickly and with amazing accuracy. Some of the bowmen of Africa are amazingly poor shots, but they are usually tribesmen from peoples like the Masai, who are expert with the spear, thrown or used to stab. With them the bow takes second place. A M'kamba, however, is a bowman first and foremost, and amongst the Wahehe are many good bowmen, although I do not remember seeing the bow used much as a regular weapon.

I had learned a great deal about lions since writing *Animal Heaven*—about other beasts, too. I have been surprised to find strong characteristics amongst animals varying in the same species from district to district. These are both physical and mental. For an obvious example, a lion in scrubland will have little mane, as the thorn bushes pull out the hair and thus keep the mane short.

But there are other reasons for differences; a lion born and bred in a country poor in game will be stunted in growth and yet vicious, a wicked killer, a snarling, cowed wretch when cornered. He has always gone hungry, and is stunted in mind as well as growth, perhaps as slum children are sometimes warped by their environment. Yet there are other strong differences between animals of the same species, which may even occur from district to district within the same area.

On Mount Kenya, for instance, the buffalo herds display, probably as a result of inbreeding, different physical characteristics on (roughly) the four sides of the mountain. Some are enormous beasts, with heavy horns, often as much as sixteen inches across the boss alone, with down-swept points. A few miles away and the buffalo are small and agile with light horns, and a hunter will mistake the bulls for cows, because they are so small. In a third area on the mountain slopes the herds are all composed of largish beasts with a small boss to the horns but a magnificent span, the horns curving out in a flat plane from the boss, whilst in the fourth district the horns are slender and long, but have little span measured from point to point, because of the acute curve in them.

All this is vital to the professional hunter or the man out for a good trophy who wishes either boss or length of horn on his study wall.

Lions vary in size, weight and build from district to district, but most of all they vary in their nature. The lions in the great game reserves are at once almost tame and very dangerous. They do not fear Man, so they do not particularly want to attack him—if they have no taste for the flesh. But human flesh contains salt, and a human being is easier to kill than an antelope, and the lion runs no chance of his quarry escaping. Even a Tommy gazelle can outrun a lion if he gets a fair start. Often the prides hunt scientifically—or so it seems, the

younger lions and the females driving game towards the heavier males, the proven killers. But generally the lion must have two or three misses for every kill he makes, and must go hungry many a night when he is outrun by a fleet antelope.

A man, though, is easy prey. A man has no natural weapons at all. He is puny and easy to kill, and even his spear is as nothing to the claws and teeth of *Simba*. It is surprising, however, just how brave people can be when attacked by lions. One Somali woman drove off a lion which was attacking her son with nothing more than a cooking-pot which she smashed over the brute's head, and a little Muganda boy speared a lion which was attacking his herd, single-handed, with what amounted to a toy spear, driving it home to the heart in one superb thrust. On the other hand one of the best-known Game Wardens in Uganda, a man experienced in all the art and craft of lion hunting, was mauled to death by a lion he had wounded. You can never tell with lions.

For my part I am no expert. I don't shoot for sport, I find little sport in killing a lion using the modern method of a hunting car and a powerful rifle. There is a certain danger and quite a lot of courage required, but the lion goes down easily if you are so scared of him that you make sure of your shots. It is through carelessness or sheer bad luck that hunters get killed. Familiarity, says the true old saying, breeds contempt. Even the mighty Carr Hartley was, as I will relate, badly savaged by a lion simply because he thought he could use up some old ammunition whilst out on a lion-shooting mission for the Government. Yet if one takes no chances at all there is no sport. The best elephant hunters have lived to tell the tale whilst they numbered their kills in thousands. Karamoja Bell, who died only recently at a ripe old age, used a light rifle for elephant shooting, and 'Deaf' Banks of Uganda seemed to take any rifle that was going. One

thing they didn't take, these two, was chances, according to their own descriptions of their various hunts.

On this little outing I was not anxious to shoot lions; I had my job to do and would rather have filmed them. But I could hardly shrug off the brave Wahehe who were being driven out of house and home by the prides.

Water was very short and so plains game was very scarce. A lion is inclined to stick to his favourite hunting ground as long as he can, and with no small game to kill he must turn his attention to Man. In these forests the prevalence of the tsetse fly makes the keeping of cattle impossible, or no doubt these big cats would have turned to cattle raiding.

Again, the tribe most used to lion killing are the Masai, and they have the answer, both to the lion and to the invader, in their superb military organization. A warrior class is kept as a standing army and it is their job, acting under their war captains, to deal with the lions, as they dealt with the Arab slavers and the first European explorers. The Wahehe lack this organization.

I have had very little experience of shooting big game with a rifle. It is much easier than with a camera, for a decent picture of a wild animal entirely in his natural surroundings is very hard to take indeed, unless you have exceptional luck. But with a rifle there is always the danger of a determined charge by a wounded animal. However, my own prowess was not put to the test that first night, for the lions simply did not come.

Next morning I thought very seriously about the situation.

This was not the case of a man-eater known as a killer and marked out by the natives for extinction. Almost any lion in the neighbourhood was likely to turn man-killer. It seemed the local lions wanted a very severe lesson in the rights of Man, and besides that the prides needed thinning out. I did not want to turn lion hunter, but it

seemed I must do what I could to restore the forest to normal. After all, I had one thing the Wahehe lacked, a precision rifle and the ability to use it. Having decided to blot out as many lions as I could in the next few days there remained only one difficulty. So far I had not as much as heard a lion.

And in the next two days, for all I saw and heard of lions I might have been in Surbiton. On the morning of the third day a Wahehe of about sixteen came running into camp to say that a woman had been killed in his village eight miles away, so we went to investigate.

The woman had not been killed at all, although how she had escaped remains one of those mysteries. She had had the luck of the very Devil himself.

Water is scarce in that part, so that the villages tend to lie near the streams and rivers which become lost in the swamp, which in turn seems to drain underground and feed the great trees of the forest. (The soil in the forest is very good for some crops, and maize and beans do well there if there is enough sunshine. So it must be watered somehow.) The natives do not, however, build the villages right on the rivers themselves, for to do that is to court more than the usual attention from the mosquitoes. Another thing for the Wahehe of the forest to take into consideration when siting a village is the tsetse fly, and there is nothing quite so good as a broad clearing for your site, as the tsetse live amongst low scrub and bush and do not enjoy crossing wide open spaces, even in search of victims. Why the natives do not chop down the bush round the village rather than go traipsing round looking for a clearing is one of the things no man will ever quite make out about the African. These Wahehe are tough people. They suffer more than most tribes from the usual enervating African diseases—hookworm, low fever, malaria, tick typhus, yaws and so on—but the men seem remarkably strong, and there are few of them who

cannot lift and carry more than a European of comparable build—or as much, anyway. This is unusual in itself, for the African generally is a wonderful stayer, but he is not capable of such direct physical effort as a European. Different diet may explain it to some extent.

In any case, the woman's little collection of friends and relatives had found a pleasant enough place for their village, half a mile from a little stream and quite near one of the logging roads to the camp, so that it was easy for the men to live at home and walk to their work each day.

The woman who had been attacked had been collecting firewood when she had seen what she took to be another woman at the stream. It was a bad guess, but light was failing and she really saw only a movement, and, knowing one of the women had gone down for water, she naturally assumed that it was the woman who had moved. She called to the woman, casually, and, on receiving no reply, she slung her bundle of firewood on her back and started for the village on her own. She was wearing the black robe of the women of these parts, which shrouded her head, and she did not see the lion approaching her from her right. Examining her tracks and the pug marks afterwards I found that they met almost at right angles. (There had been a pride of about a dozen lions at the stream, but only this one had detached himself from the group and made the attack.) He had jumped on her back, and I can only conclude he sank his teeth into what he expected to be human flesh and discovered was firewood, for he had then scattered the bundle of wood in all directions with a swipe of his paw. The woman had managed to retain some presence of mind, which is more than I could have done, unarmed, against a great brute of a lion, and she had picked up a branch and thrown it at him. He was probably standing there puzzled, wondering why the thing he had 'killed' was still alive and why

it was made of wood, when a branch thrown by a hefty Wahehe housewife struck him bang between the eyes. He lifted his tail and got out of there as fast as his lolloping great paws could carry him.

I looked around for another zebra to shoot, but game seemed very scarce, although we were still only on the forest's edge. But I did spot two Tommy gazelles and managed to drop both of them, one for food and the other for lion bait. One was a female and I felt very guilty, but it just had to be done. The other chap, with a ·375 Magnum bullet in him, kept running for over fifty yards before he fell, which gives you some idea of the amazing stamina of these little chaps. Not even a lion could do that, mortally wounded.

I had intended to wait for night, and so pulled the big hunting car off some half a mile and went to sleep on the long bench-type front seat, the Africans doing the same in the back of the car body.

It was very hot and very silent, and I awoke to find myself alone but for Ikohu, who was washing in the river a hundred yards away. I stripped and joined him, and the water was warm and refreshing. Dressing in a leisurely way I asked where the rest had gone, thinking they had probably gone off to look for a village where they could get eggs or beans to go with their meal. No, said Ikohu, they had gone to look at the kills and see if the lions had come back.

Now their armament was not very large. They had a muzzle-loading smooth bore with one lead ball and a charge of black powder behind it, three spears and two bows. Their arrows were not poisoned, and even had they been, a poisoned arrow is a slow killer, and no arrow made could kill a charging lion except by a sheer fluke. (I have met bow-and-arrow merchants from England anxious to have a go at lion hunting, but after they had examined the difficulties every one of them decided

to stick to smaller game. I believe an expert American archer armed with a steel bow and special arrows made quite a sport of lion hunting, but I have not met him, and have only heard of his exploits at third and fourth hand. One American, however, came out with an immensely powerful catapult and a collection of different size ball-bearings, eager for the hunt. When he found that an accurately aimed ball at full power would hardly kill a guinea fowl at five yards he gave up and took to a rifle.)

I asked Ikohu if they intended to try their luck with the pride, should the lions make their appearance, and he laughed shyly and said no, he didn't think so, they were only scouting.

When I had dressed I checked the ·375, put a bullet in the breech, and snapped the safety catch on, fixing the rifle in the spring clip on the dashboard of the truck. Then I lit a cigarette and wondered lazily if it would be a good idea to drive down towards the kills and see what could be done. The sun was still high, and I did not expect the lions until sun-down, as they usually spend the heat of the day lying up in shade, and do not move until the European resident feels it is about time for the first gin of the evening. Then they stretch, yawn, lick one another, sometimes make love, roll about a bit and go hunting.

I finished my cigarette, got into the truck with Ikohu beside me and drove quietly down towards the kills. When I was about three hundred yards away, screened by a sand-hill from a sight of the kills, I heard the roar of the muzzle-loader. I slammed my foot hard down on the accelerator and we bounded forward, straight through the thorn bush, knocking down small trees like a miniature tank. I found a battle royal in progress.

Ikweli was on the ground with a lion on him, a big male growling horribly and tearing at the boy's throat,

one great paw holding the head back. Both were covered in blood, and I stood up in the car before it came to rest and fired over them, hoping to scare the lion off. The other two boys were close in to the struggling man and beast, and I jumped down and ran towards them. As I got near, Kelehi drove a spear into the lion, right through the shoulder muscle, the entire two feet of the iron blade disappearing into the shoulder, and the point apparently bending inside the big brute's body—for it did not protrude the other side.

Njiwa jabbed his light spear into the lion and it turned savagely and left Ikweli, giving me the chance of a shot. I was ten feet away and fired the rifle from the hip, hitting the brute somewhere in the body. He left the Africans alone and started to spin round, biting at his hind legs, and I fired again, this time from the shoulder, hitting him in the skull and knocking him down. He was still alive, however, the bullet having passed through the front of the skull without, apparently, having destroyed the brain. The big brute was unconscious, of course, and probably as good as dead but I gave him a bullet from my revolver to make sure and ran to Ikweli. Ikweli was dead. I think he was dead even when I was witnessing the 'struggle', and what I had mistaken for his movements were the jerkings of a corpse in the big brute's mouth. His back had been broken by the forepaw of the lion.

All that night I sat up over the dead body, but nothing came near but the hyenas, two jackals and a crowd of horrible-looking marabout storks, when dawn came. We removed Ikweli's body to the other side of the hill and left him for the beasts and birds—that is the custom of the villagers. The dead lion I tied behind the truck and did some gyrations, hoping the powerful stench of his carcase would bring his friends. He was not enormous, but a prime beast in excellent condition. As far as I could see, teeth, claws and coat were perfect.

Kelehi had a very bad claw-scratch on his forearm, and I cleaned and dressed it, then drove the boys back to their village. The remaining three were anxious to accompany me but I decided to take only Njiwa, who seemed the least likely to go looking for trouble. They did not, incidentally, seem greatly upset by the death of Ikweli.

'He had bad luck,' Kelehi said, 'he shot the lion and the lion killed him. I wish we could get his gun straightened.' The gun, its barrel made from the steering column of an American car, was twisted up into a neat semi-circle—one blow of the big paw had done that whilst Ikweli was trying to push the empty gun down the lion's throat. Even Ikweli's widow did not seem to mourn him. She packed her things and left for her father's village, accompanied by some friends.

It was not that the woman did not feel grief, she was too used to life on the edge of the great forest to be much disturbed. Life was always held loosely, it was the law of Africa, kill and be killed, eat and be eaten, fight or die. I watched them walk off through the late afternoon, the woman, two male friends or relatives, both armed with spears, her three children clutching at her black skirts. Then I filled the truck with petrol from the drum I carried, and drove back to the kills once more.

I settled down for the night to watch from about fifty yards. I could have had any amount of hyenas, jackals and wild dogs, but absolutely no lions. They killed this night somewhere the other side of the stream, and next day we set out to look for them. The victim had been a zebra and the bones were picked almost clean by the lions and their attendant scavengers—the kill was covered in vultures when I arrived. We went back to the river and loaded the carcase of the Tommy on to the hunting car, then drove gingerly across the stream to the lion kill. With a tow-rope I made the body fast to the car and drove up and down the veld for a little while laying a

drag for the lions to follow if they felt so inclined. Then I towed the dead Tommy back to the zebra kill.

The Tommy lay not far from a thorn bush—about seven or eight feet—and as I was looking around for a likely tree to shoot from I remembered what an old hand had once told me in Kenya. 'If you want to kill lions and make sure of 'em, set out a kill, then dig a pit as near as you like. Shoot from three or four yards and you can't miss. And at night they don't know where the firing is coming from.' There was another thing I had seen myself which, although against the game regulations, seemed suitable to this situation. I have found lions quite undisturbed by lights. They will never fear to walk into a lighted camp if there is no one about (and sometimes if there is!). Even fire does not scare them as much as people would like to think on those dark nights when the prides are hunting. I'd never read or heard of anybody illuminating his shooting area when after big game, except by a pocket torch on the barrel of his rifle, but I determined to try something new, so I got the pressure lamp from my own camp, filled it to the brim, and when darkness was falling I lit it and hung it from a tree behind me and not far from the kill. The villagers and my own little crowd were busy digging a pleasant pit for me to lie in, and as evening settled down over the forest I found myself lying on my stomach with the heavy rifle, my pistol beside my head, about eight feet from the dead Tommy, who was now beginning to whiff rather powerfully. Apart from that minor inconvenience I was so comfortable I could have gone to sleep.

Had I been able to choose another gun I should have had an automatic shotgun for preference, or a Paradox with lethal ball in one barrel and Triple 'A' in the other, or even a twelve-bore loaded with Triple 'A'. However, there it was. I was not a professional hunter and I am probably the worst shotgun exponent in the world. I

would miss a lazy duck at ten yards on a windless day. So I had only the ·375 and the big pistol.

Light failed—except for my 'artificial moon' that hung in the tree and made just the same sort of noise as the crickets.

First on the scene was a hyena, who looked suspiciously into my face and fled when I spoke to him. I was relying on the whiff of dead Tommy killing my scent, and the hole was down-wind from the kill in any case.

For an hour nothing else came near me and of course I started worrying. If a leopard should come and jump me from behind, what then? Or if the lions came from behind and decided I was a better bet than the dead Tommy? After all, they were man-eaters. Again, lions do not hunt every night, and they had had a pretty good feed off the zebra, from what one could judge by examining the carcase. So I was probably wasting my time.

It was quite dark and the lamp seemed very bright now, burning steadily in the still night and throwing long bars of shadow in a semi-circle in front of me. I was well hidden by the shadow of the bush.

I did not even see the first lion arrive on the kill. He walked straight up one of these bars of shadow, silent and no doubt wary. The first thing I heard was the crunch of his great jaws. I kept where I was with my head down, reached out very quietly for the rifle, which was ready to fire, and got my elbows comfortable in the soft sand under me.

The head of another lion joined the first. But at the end of an hour there were only three lions on the carcase. The expected pride had not arrived. I might miss anything at fifty yards, but I could hardly miss a lion's head at eight feet, I thought—or could I? The pit I was in was rather too deep and the lions were actually a little above me; the head of one was obscured by the buck. On the

other hand one stood out in profile, a big chap with a fine mane, as he was tugging at a hind leg and worrying it like a dog with a bone. The third lion was right opposite me, lying down and eating sideways with snatches of his head, his tail switching.

Then the chap who had been partly obscured stood up.

I hesitated. It seemed impossible that now the time had come for action. The night stank with lion, the raw, putrid smell of an animal that lives on dead flesh. There they were, my enemies, like three enormous cats with a dead rat. I took a very careful aim at the eye of the lion that had just got to his feet and squeezed off. Of course there was something I had forgotten. I am not a target shot and have never been on a range in my life and had never shot before from a prone position. The kick of the big rifle—which I was very used to firing—was agonizing as it recoiled against my shoulder-blade. It almost spoiled the whole party. But I managed to shoot the second lion, then I simply had to get to my feet. With the first two shots my right arm felt half-paralysed, and I couldn't shoot again. Once on my feet I was looking straight at a lion standing staring at me in wonder and amazement, seven or eight feet from me. I shot him through the head. It would have been almost easier to have reached out and hit him with the gun.

All three had dropped stone dead, brain shot, dead before they stopped twitching. Behind me the lamp burned on.

When I woke next morning my shoulder was very sore. I had thought vaguely about the difficulty of shooting from a prone position at an almost-upwards angle, but had imagined taking the recoil on the ball of my shoulder. Through my hunting jacket this would have been perfectly possible. But the rifle had jumped straight against the edge of my shoulder-blade and I had a nasty

bruise. Just one of those things, but I'm certain it would not have happened to an expert.

There was a guard over the lions I had shot and I went out to examine them; all were male, one was skinny but the other two seemed in remarkably good trim and not at all undernourished. One had a particularly fine mane. He is now a driving robe, poor fellow. We skinned them and salted the skins out, whilst scouts went out from the village to locate the rest of the pride or any other lions that might be trackable. Meanwhile people started gathering from the neighbourhood and examining the lions. By noon I suppose there were thirty or forty villagers squatting round the corpses. And the woman who had been caught with her firewood came out and spat at them. 'I am alive,' she said, grinning and squealing, 'they are dead! Look at them! They don't look so frightening now, do they?'

I was enjoying a siesta when I heard the noise of an engine and found Simple Hans looking at my lion skins, pegged out and salted. He looked at me and then at the lions.

'Good shooting,' he said. 'Every one brain, *nicht*? You are marksman!' I didn't think it essential to explain that I had shot them with the aid of a pressure lamp from eight feet away.

'Coming here,' he said, 'I see many on the other side of the stream. Maybe when you have rested we go, eh?'

Simple Hans had the reputation of being weak in the head. In fact he was nothing of the sort. He is a German nobleman of very high birth who came to Tanganyika in 1912 on a hunting trip at the age of twenty-two. He went back to Germany, and at the end of the war he was a Colonel of Uhlans, and desired nothing more than to take up life in Tanganyika, where he had decided to settle on his first visit. Things were difficult for an 'enemy alien', and Hans was not allowed to buy a farm. So he

became a professional hunter, his social position enabling him to take out many of the European noblemen who wanted a shooting holiday, but so many of them were his personal friends, from whom he refused to take money, that he did not exactly prosper.

By 1939 Hans had taken British nationality, and had also made up his mind to become a missionary, and had started quite a large mission school. He had been violently anti-Hitler, and always in trouble with the more nationalistic German settlers because of it, and so he was not interned or in any way interfered with by the British Government.

'That the German nation should have followed a common labourer,' Hans would say and shake his head, 'not even a real labourer—a labourer who liked only light labour! Paper-hanging! Now my country is split in two and the Bolsheviks have stripped us bare. All for the dream of a paper-hanger!'

And he would raise his voice and sing a hymn in German. He had a fine bass voice. He was a thin, powerful man, with his strength latent and unsuspected until you saw him lift a *maninga* log or knock down a Wahehe who had cheeked him. 'Not for to be cheeky,' he would say, 'naughty boy.' And I have seen him teach a class of forty loggers, who were supposed to be Muslims and were in fact pagan savages, an old German hymn *in German*. 'They understand not,' Hans said mournfully, 'but Gott, he understands.'

That day he was dressed in faded khaki drill and a huge *topi* that must have come out with him in 1912.

'I will get my rifle,' he said.

He produced a beautiful Mauser that had been made to his order in 1911. It was a very long-barrelled gun with an ivory-tipped foresight. The barrel was chased and inlaid with silver, and along it was the German motto which he translated as 'Be honest as I am, and strike as hard'.

Hans took a keen delight in hunting. That afternoon we did everything properly, stalked correctly and worked up to our quarry, working from bush to bush until we were within fifty yards of a rangy lioness, who lay under a bush in the shade, and her mate, a shaggy-maned brute who rose to his feet, and Hans stood to take his shot. I watched, my rifle at the ready. Simple Hans shot the lion through the heart, shifted his position carefully and shot the lioness through the head. The lion twisted, gave a coughing roar and charged. Hans did not shoot, and I, too, held my fire, watching him. The lion crumpled as he ran and fell dead twenty yards from us.

'Thanks be to God,' said Hans, 'Who has made Man so that he can overcome the savage beast of the field. May we dwell in His kingdom eternally.' And he raised his *topi* as though saluting a friend.

We found no more lions that day, and next day were visited by an Italian priest with whom Hans had complicated discussions on philosophy and morality which I did not understand, and I am sure the priest understood just as little.

'Not so?' Hans would say. 'If such wickedness can co-exist with goodness, does not this prove the over-riding power of good in the hearts of man? For we are here. Not so?' And the priest would nod his head and say, '*Si, signor.* Now about the lions. . . .' He had come from a mission station and had been visiting some parishioners fifty miles away when an African had told him of our presence in the district. He had never been across the river and into the forest, but he was game for anything.

'I have come, and I have come armed.' Unlike many Roman Catholic priests in East Africa, who dress in ordinary clothes for journeying about the countryside, Father D. wore a white cassock. 'When I visit I think it right they should see me for what I am. I am a priest, let

them see me as such.' Under his cassock he wore a 9-mm. Luger with a detachable holster-butt. 'Not for protection, friends. I have been in Africa seventeen years and no man has ever shown me violence. I carry this for the sport!'

Father D. was a complete teetotaller—Hans was not. Father D. had a typical drunkard's red nose and a large corporation. Hans, who swallowed whisky like a thirsty barful of Scotsmen, looked lean and ascetic. Put them both in mufti and ask someone else to spot the priest and Hans would have been chosen. He could have stood in, with his balding head, for Savonarola.

Hans wanted to sing hymns whilst Father D. only wanted to pot at bottles. He prided himself on his quick draw and shooting from the hip. He was, in fact, very good.

We went hunting the next day, three men of different nationalities who were, according to the natives, the only white men ever to visit that village or hunt that district. Between us we killed seven lions, two of them going to Father D. with his Luger. As few things are more tedious than accounts of just how lions are shot, unless there is something fairly exceptional about the affair, I will leave it at that, except for telling you about the beautiful moment when Father D. fell over a large lion and bit it. Hans had put down one member of a pride of nine when Father D. rushed forward to get in a shot at the fleeing beasts. One member of the pride, his stomach full of meat, had been sleeping in the long grass and never stirred, not even the shooting waking him. He must have been very astonished to find a large priest land on him with—I must admit it—an extremely clerical remark. He rushed off—the lion, not Father D. who had done enough rushing for an afternoon—and Father D. stooped to retrieve his false teeth. They were clenched on lion hair.

I later visited his mission and found it a delightful spot on a high plateau, with an Italianate church and a fine school, and a lot of little African children lisping Piedmontese at me! Father D. and a rosy-faced sister who looked typically English and proved to be from Rome, showed me around, and I was very impressed indeed with the needlework and the basketwork, the standard of education and the fine dormitories the pupils had built themselves. Father D. is a good man, and a man with his feet firmly planted on the earth. I met an Italian priest much later in the Mau Mau country of Kenya wearing a conspicuous 9-mm. Luger with a distinctive holster-cum-butt. 'Did you get that from Tanganyika?' I asked.

'Indeed I did. My good friend Father D. sent it, saying I had more need of it than him.'

What a wrench it must have been!

If I leave Kenya for good, as I may be driven to do by sheer economic pressure, I will send Father D. my Colt. No man ever deserved a weapon more.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GOOD-NATURED GOLD RUSH

You leave Mbeya by a wide dust road over the Mbeya mountain, a road over the clouds, where the volcanic ash rises under your wheels as you drive along a ledge crossing the very crest of the mountain, looking down on the land seen through a magnificent cloudscape. The pioneers walked this road when it was a native track, not more than twenty years ago.

Regaining the plateau you twist and turn for a while, then the wide road straightens and with your face a mask of dust you speed up along the flat pink surface until a board says: 'Speed Limit Thirty M.P.H.'

It is astonishing. Why on earth should there be a speed limit in a rock-strewn desert? There is no danger signal. And then, wonder of wonders, you enter a town, larger and more spacious than Mbeya itself. It is a town of rough brick buildings and shanties, admittedly; a town of rows of white-fronted Indian *dukas*. Yet there is the two-storied Barclay's Bank with the golden metal letters marching across its impressive red-brick front, 'Dominion, Colonial and Overseas', there is a hairdresser's shop, a cinema, a hotel.

When I entered the township of Chunya only two dogs moved in the streets. Then a lorry ambled to a petrol pump and drove on, on the long haul to the railhead at Itigi, over three hundred miles from Mbeya. The *dukas* were shut. The bank was not only closed but a glance through the windows showed cobwebs across the tellers' grilles. Two natives wandered up the wide road.

A bus pulled into the forecourt of the hotel and two ancient men emerged, white men who looked like old prospectors or backveld farmers. They went into the hotel. At least that seemed to be open. It was.

The Goldfields Hotel bar was ready for business with a good supply of liquor, and the gold scales for weighing dust stood silent on the bar. You can still pay for a drink in gold dust.

Jock Harris, the proprietor, came to East Africa first as mate on a sailing ship. He landed and wandered, and at last his feet brought him to Chunya, this new, yet deserted ghost town set in a desert. There were other centres of this Lupa goldfield, there was Piccadilly Circus where someone built another hotel. Now there is only a crumbling brick wall in the veld to show white men were ever there.

There is still gold in them thar hills. Take a pan and some water and you can probably wash enough gold from the sandy soil in front of the hotel to pay your bill at the end of the week. If you are lucky, if you can get the water. That is the snag.

When the news got around in 1926 that gold had been discovered the company of adventurers whose name is legion assembled from all parts of the world—the son of a Greek ambassador to the Court of St. James's, a Polish nobleman, the daughter of an English milord, a dour Scottish ex-minister, a defrocked R.C. priest, the noble and the damned, cheery lads out to turn the pink sand into gold, and the riff-raff of the world that turns up wherever anything is doing.

Stories abound about the Lupa rush. They start almost every evening in the bar at Mbeya. '. . . When I was on the Lupa . . .' It was a typical endeavour of the 1920's; although for a time drink had to be imported across a mountain by pack-mule it seems to have flowed pretty freely in the diggings. Yet nobody was shot, nobody was

done to death for his nuggets, everybody seemed to have a wonderful time.

'You ought to go and see Harry Clough-Vardon-Squires' (or some such name), said mine host at the Goldfields Hotel. 'Him and Joey Battersea know most about the rush. Harry lost everything and Joey made a packet. Joey was always a waster and Harry an "Honourable" and a trained geologist to boot.' Jock Harris sighed. 'I've seen Harry drive up to this pub in a big green Bentley, brand-new, with three nuggets worth sixty or seventy quid each in his pocket and a nigger mistress beautiful as sin, dressed in the latest short dress from Paris, giggling and spitting on the floor, with big ear-rings made of solid gold in her distended ear lobes. And I've seen them walk away after a poker game. No nuggets, no gold ear-rings, no Bentley. Back to the diggings for another turn at the wheel of fortune. And Joey was just a drunk. He actually married a native woman. You should call on him, too. Poor old Joey.'

I called first on the 'Honourable'. He was living in a deserted tobacco barn with a mistress—this one blonde, sleazy and undoubtedly from Hoxton—and he was very proud that he had just got a sufficiently large cheque out of his family to buy her a piano. 'Joyce always wanted a piano,' he told me in melancholy and measured tones, wiping his eyeglass on his torn shirt-tail. There was the new piano in the barn, there was a beautiful dining-table, six antique chairs, a real Renoir hanging on the wall, priceless paintings, silks and antiques stacked in trunks and packing-cases around the walls. There was a made-up bed of rough wood and ox-hide reims in one corner with a pile of grubby and disordered blankets on it and nothing else. There was no running water, no toilet, no windows. Joyce unconcernedly rouged her cheeks, sitting on the bed, by candlelight. The candle was thrust into a glorious Georgian silver candlestick.

'Let me order dinner,' said the 'Honourable', and to his yell of 'Boy!' came the servant, a buck-toothed and savage Wahehe dressed in a red *duka* shirt and nothing else.

'Chicken pie,' ordered the 'Honourable', 'and make enough for four.' He uncorked a bottle of whisky. 'He makes rather good chicken pie,' he muttered. 'Or was that the other chap? I can't remember. They come and go, you know, they come and go.' He poured out five fingers of whisky for each of us and looked mournfully at the depleted bottle. 'Have we any more food, Joyce?'

'Half a case,' said Joyce, past a cigarette in one corner of her mouth. She sat down at the piano and played 'Tiger Rag' very badly. Then she yawned and lay on the bed, reading *True Detective Stories*. She seemed magnificently content, with the contentment of a large, tawny cat that needs only warmth and something soft to lie on.

'You want to know about the Lupa? Well, there isn't much to tell. No water, that was the trouble. Somebody started a great scheme for dry blowing of gold dust, but the recovery of gold dust from the blowers wasn't high enough to make it profitable. So the whole scheme went phut. And most of the chaps drifted away. Crocodile shooting, mining in Kenya, working on the Jo'burg mines and so on. Some of the luckier ones bought farms. It was rather a good life, one way and another.'

'What do you do now?' I asked him.

'A little mining now and then, or prospecting. I'm working for a South African company at the moment who have a great scheme for gold recovery on a large scale. Given enough capital it just might pay well. But given enough capital one can start a chain-store or a boat-building business or a money-lending company. Why come to a ghastly hole like this? People are beyond me!' .

He told me various incredible stories about the Lupa,

including the one about Joey, the 'poor old Joey' of the hotel-keeper's story. I visited Joey next day. His house was large and well-ordered, his pantry was well stocked, his tobacco farm seemed huge. A new car stood outside his front door and he was alone, reading the latest travel book from Britain. 'I'd like you to meet the wife,' said Joey, 'but she's gone shopping in town. You know the way women are.' I said I did, but could hardly ask him if she was the same wife, the black one. It just isn't done, even 'on the Lupa'.

But the 'Honourable' assured me Joey was still married to his native girl. 'She's forty, now, but well-preserved. Christian, of course. And she wears huge, gold ornaments. Otherwise she dresses like an English country-woman, usually in tweeds.' (Tweeds, in that climate!)

This was the story he told me about Joey.

Joey, it seems, was one of the lads about the Lupa. He was a live wire, and he had some money when he arrived. He did not have it for very long, for he discovered he also had a very large number of extremely thirsty friends. But he had a good claim staked out and the dust was coming in well. Natives were not allowed to hold prospectors' licences. (To digress, this is one of the reasons for the decline of the Lupa goldfields. Now all natives can hold licences. They wash a little gold, sell it to the Asian gold smugglers, and go home to live in the kraal once more with the cattle and women the gold has brought. Naturally they will not work for white men. So there is little labour to be had, and what gold there is finds its way largely into the 'black market'.)

In Joey's heyday the natives were just learning to wrap their emaciated bodies in blankets against the cold, to put rough wheels on their primitive farm-carts (which were simply sleighs—one of the sources of Tanganyika's soil erosion problem), and to decorate their hair with safety-pins and such-like European marvels and wonders.

So there was labour a-plenty. Not all the gold washing in creation could give Joey enough money for his poker playing and his drinking, though, and he went slowly down the drain. The pretty English girl he had been living with went off with another man to become a respectable married woman; wife, eventually, of a newspaper editor in London—where I met her later.

Joey refused to look at the native girls, even at Kalega, a sultry temptress from the local mission station (!) with a golden body and a liking for the white man's money and the white man's whisky. As is the way with women, Kalega threw herself rather hard at Joey's head; he threw her out of his camp, rather harder, with the toe of his boot to encourage her. This, to her primitive mind, could be nothing less than a demonstration of affection, for what man ever noticed a woman sufficiently to kick her if he was not madly in love with her?

Kalega hung round Joey. When his claim petered out and he went to work for another miner, Kalega still drifted near him like a golden star in the orbit of a rather unsteady planet. She was drinking heavily, and so was Joey. He lost his job and went to work in the newly opened mine where one of the big syndicates had managed to locate the tricky Lupa reef and was mining it, as they are to this day. On more than one occasion Joey threw Kalega out of his quarters by force, and for a time she disappeared, and people thought she had given Joey up as a bad job, particularly when she drifted into Chunya in tow with a half-caste Wahehe-Asian character who was a notorious gold smuggler.

Joey was thrown out of his job for getting drunk and fighting the manager. The manager was sadly damaged in the encounter and tried to drive Joey off the Lupa. Joey was found guilty of assault and locked in the local hoosegow.

On his release, Kalega came to him with a twenty-bob

note in her hand and said, 'Joey, darling, buy us a drink. I am a native and they will not serve me.'

It was then that Joey, broke, and with only the clothes he wore to his name, gave in. He took the twenty bob, added two he borrowed from a friend, and bought two bottles of brandy. He and Kalega sat by a thorn bush and got very tight. And it was then Kalega proposed to him.

'Will you marry me, Joey? I am Christian.'

'I don't care if you're a sun-worshipper,' said Joey irreverently. 'I'll never marry a black woman if I live to be a hundred and the richest man in Chunya.'

'But, Joey, I can make you the richest man in Chunya, now.'

'Don't make me laugh!'

'Listen, Joey,' said the golden-skinned temptress. 'I have a boy friend. His name is Sidi Oman, and he is native. He cannot hold a licence and if they find him with gold he will go to jail. But I got him drunk and I know where there is a huge nugget. The police are watching Sidi, so he can't touch it. But if you were to find it on your claim. . . .'

'Lead me to it!' commanded Joey.

'But first you must marry me.'

Joey and his conscience struggled together for a long time, and at last a native mission preacher married him to Kalega and was paid a bottle of cheap rum for the service.

'Now,' said Joey, 'the gold, and if you've tricked me . . .'

But Joey had not been tricked. Next day Kalega turned up smiling with the gold, and Joey borrowed a car to drive them into Mbeya where he could dispose of it. They gave a lift to the wife of another miner on the way and she asked, womanlike, 'What's in the parcel?'

'A goose,' said Joey.

'It's a heavy goose.'

'Well, as a matter of fact, Martha, it's a nugget.'

'A nugget that size?'

'Yes, why not? I suppose it's worth two or three thousand.'

Martha fainted.

Well, Joey had the nugget crushed and separated, and it realized over £3,000. It was one of the biggest ever to be found on the stony Lupa. And he kissed Kalega in delight.

'I'll buy you all the dresses you ever wanted, kid. We'll go back and give the Lupa the biggest party it's ever seen. I'll get a new car to-day and we'll take it back full of bottles, eh?'

'No,' Kalega told him, 'that money is mine as much as yours. I am a Christian and your wife. I helped you steal the gold from Sidi Oman, although it was not his, anyway. You will do as I say. You will buy a tobacco farm and give me a nice house European-style. You will buy a cheap car and put money in the bank. From now on you will be a respectable man.' She sighed. 'That is the dream of my life,' she said, 'to be married to a nice, hard-working, respectable European-style husband. Now do as I say.'

Meekly, Joey did. He has been doing as Kalega (re-christened July) tells him ever since. They have prospered. They own four farms. She goes to Europe every year and has seen television, which is more than Joey has done.

This yearly visit to Europe gives Joey his chance. He descends on Mbeya like a thirsty giraffe on a waterhole. He gives a party that lasts the whole two months July is away. By the time she returns he is ready for a rest, for he is no longer as young as he was.

When July is at home there is no drink in the house, for she is a stern and God-fearing woman. She goes

shopping with her husband for household supplies once a week and whilst he is drinking in the bar of the hotel she buys her groceries.

On her return she sits at the wheel of the car blowing the horn until even Joey's nerves cannot stand it any longer and he has to join her. Then they drive home.

'Poor Joey,' sighed the 'Honourable', telling me this sad epic of the bushveld.

It was not long after this tale that the chicken pie turned up. It had been made in a wash basin but was probably none the worse for that. The crust looked excellent, and had risen well. My mouth watered.

Joyce came languidly to the table, threw her cigarette on the floor (which was, of course, earth) and cut the pie. It was just a crust, supported on four silver candlesticks surrounding a small, dry chicken boiled native-fashion in plain water. Joyce regarded it sadly and dropped it on the table. That chicken bounced a foot. She yawned. 'Let's have a drink instead,' she suggested.

'Jolly good idea,' my host agreed. 'If you're hungry, old chap, there's some tins of sardines and stuff in that suitcase.' He rubbed a hand on his bald head. 'Must have been the other chap who made such damned fine pies,' he said disinterestedly.

I spent some days in Chunya, repairing a broken clutch rod, then drove on past the lonely New Saza mine, out in the veld, down to Lake Rukwa, where I was welcomed by Mrs. Bousefield, whose husband helps his brother run a profitable crocodile-hunting business. They had had one nasty piece of bad luck at Lake Tanganyika where a new boat overturned with many hundreds of pounds' worth of rifles and equipment on board. When I visited them they were well established again under the able leadership of Jack Bousefield, a professional

hunter of great reputation, known from end to end of East Africa, and something of an expert on the country and on native affairs besides.

Rukwa is a strange, lonely lake, with an uncertain rainfall, which affects the crocodile hunting; one season the lake may be high, and hunting must be in the rivers with rifles, whilst next season the rains may fail and the lake will be nothing much more than puddles and sludge and soda dust, and the croc hunting takes on a different aspect.

It was so when I visited them, and they were busy harpooning, clubbing and spearing the big monsters in the shallow ooze of the lake itself, using dug-out canoes for the purpose. It is a crazy and exciting business, with the white man in charge of the boat throwing the harpoon into the chosen croc, which naturally enough goes crazy and tries to tow the canoe elsewhere. The Africans then club him to death, usually with a well-directed blow across the head, and there are more handbags for Bond Street.

I could not help but admire the courage of pretty Mrs. Bousefield, who lived in a comfortable house by the lake, with mosquito screens instead of doors and windows, with her small baby; defying the mosquitoes and flies, the loneliness and the hot, damp climate, whilst her husband and his brother worked hard at their strange occupation.

I went hunting crocs myself there with a movie camera, and actually fell over one. He was hidden in reeds and vanished with a great snort and a swish of tail and jaws into the river. It is an even bet as to who was more surprised and annoyed, myself or the crocodile.

But it was a sad trip, for the hippos had found there was little water in their lake, and had wandered up the rivers in search of a pool to lie quiet until the rains came again. Their search had been in vain. There was no haven for them, and they died by the hundred, gasping their

lives out in the shallow mud that was hardening into an iron surface under the blazing sun. We shot those we found; it was a horrible job, but it relieved their suffering. They were like old Africa herself, her ways disturbed, staggering on and on into the forgotten corners in search of a place to live undisturbed, and dying out there, ancient, terrifying in her last, writhing agonies.

As I drove back to relative civilization up the steep road that leads to the level of the Ufipa Plateau—3,000 feet above Lake Rukwa itself—I stopped the car, seeing a dust-storm start on the dried-out bed of the lake. Great swirling clouds of dust went chasing across the lake-bed, soda dust, grey-white and stinging as it swept by me, a whirlstorm of dust. The air currents rising from the lake carry these dust-storms all over Tanganyika and they may descend like smog anywhere on the high veld.

One thing—the weather prophets say a dust-storm means heavy rain to come. And with heavy rain the rivers draining into Rukwa will pour their torrents down to swell the water of the lake until it rises again, and the fishing boats will go out in deep water. And all next year great islands of reeds and grass will float on the lake and hide the entrance to the rivers, and the crocodile hunters will have a hard job to find their quarry.

CHAPTER IX

GIN AND WITCHCRAFT

I am almost certain that when Marco Polo got to China, and was thrilled at being the first European to do so, very full of his own importance and his bravery and daring, he met a small Italian gentleman who must have said, 'The Great Wall? Oh, I go there on Tuesdays and Fridays. Why not come with me when I travel over to collect my wife? She's staying with a mandarin friend of ours for the week-end.'

And when he wrote of his travels Marco did not mention the small Italian, because to do so would have robbed his book of much of its appeal. So it is with us writers who make some sort of a living scribbling about Darkest Africa. Invariably you are on your stomach in a gorilla tunnel or running away from a rhino when you meet a small Englishman, usually unromantic, buck-toothed and wearing braces, who says, 'Going to so-and-so? No, I don't exactly live there but my sister has a shop there.' Or something of the sort.

In this category was my experience in Tanganyika with a Mission Lady. I dare be no more explicit because of the sad end to this tale. On this occasion I was travelling with two fellow-adventurers in a Fiat truck which we called 'Hotel Fiat' because we always seemed to sleep in it. We went off on a long and fairly hazardous safari (from the motorist's point of view only) from Dar-es-Salaam to Mombasa and back via the coast. There isn't much of a coast road at all for most of the way—one is supposed to loop up through Central Tanganyika and then join the

main Mombasa road. From Bagamoyo on, the coast is more or less impassable to motor-cars. So we went.

We came to little harm, except for a little minor damage to the truck, like turning it over twice, smashing the oil cooler that lives under the sump, breaking the rear axle and hitting the radiator with a large and irate cow. This latter accident was entirely the fault of the cow. We drove, hauled, pushed and ferried that poor truck over impossible native cattle tracks, through loose sand, over fields of solid hippo spoor cast in black cotton soil that was like concrete, across rivers and creeks and inlets. Hotel Fiat had a hard time. Once we drove straight through the middle of a huge elephant herd simply because oil was leaking so fast we dared not stop. We found a village in the end where there was a blacksmith making spears. He had some solder and we soldered the sump. Any Fiat representative reading this has my permission to shudder. And he need not think this an adverse commentary on the performance of Fiats —we have a little 500 van now that has done 75,000 miles WITHOUT OVERHAUL (but will not do much more). However, I am taking that little van from Nairobi to Cape Town before these words are dry in the print-shop because I dare not take my big Lancia or my hunting car as the rains have set in. Many English cars are equally good. I like Lancias myself, but I by no means despise the Ford Anglia and some of my toughest motoring has been done in one, whilst the Austin A.40 has the Yanks licked for tough work as long as you strengthen the front suspension and give the poor little devil an overhaul from time to time. To demonstrate that I am not an Italophile in the motoring sense, I have been unlucky with a Fiat 1100 because of its very light construction and have had excellent service from a Fiat 1400 and an ancient Alfa Romeo. But that is by the way.

To return to that terrible coast trip.

The only thing completely unfixable was the radiator which the cow had attacked. It leaked, and one afternoon we sought a river to replenish the small army of cans which had to be filled to get the truck anywhere. So it was that I set out on my weary way with my two companions for the tall grass and palm clumps which invariably mean water. The truck was dry and the engine had given up hissing and steaming and was making a suspicious crackling noise. It was also red-hot in places. So we left the truck and, carrying a can each, set off on foot.

Imagine us. Filthy, dressed in dirty shorts and ragged shirts, miles from nowhere, out of sight of the white man, lost in impenetrable bush which, so far as we knew, had never been invaded by the European.

We were dog-tired and footsore by the time we reached the river, which seemed to move further away as we traipsed towards it. We were armed only with two revolvers and a bottle of gin.

At last the river. We sank down and drank the muddy brown water like real explorers.

When, blow me! Round the bend of the river came a small flotilla of dug-out canoes, and in the first a formidable lady of undoubted Scottish extraction, who wore an impossible *sola topi* with a veil on it, carried a red parasol and actually had a Bible in one hand.

I swear to this. I have two witnesses. That fifty-year-old Scotswoman was a trained nurse and a preacher of no little fervour, and she was converting the heathen rapidly with medicine, the Word and an occasional prod from her umbrella when they dabbled in witchcraft, wearing a costume that would have looked good on her mother in the pioneering days.

'Ah,' said she, 'you're going to the Mission!'

We told her our car had broken down, etc.

'But you look so tired, dear boys. Now hop in the canoes and come and have lunch with me. It's not far.'

With visions of pulling up at the mission landing-stage and having lunch under a shady tree watching the river bubbling along, we piled into the rather shaky-looking canoes. The one I was in had a definite hole in the bottom through which one could see the water. Crocodiles slid off the bank at our approach, and the dear Mission Lady kept up a commentary at the very top of her not inconsiderable voice.

We travelled a mile by water. Then we climbed out and walked three. It only goes to show what clean living can do. That righteous soul walked us off our feet. At the head of the safari, with her faithful, if villainous, bearers behind her, she set off at the pace of a cross-country marathon walker. By the time she called a halt it was two in the afternoon, we were famished, in need of a drink and exhausted.

'A drink?' said she. 'I'd rather you didn't drink beer or anything before my Boys.' She thought a bit. 'I tell you what, let's have some *madafu*.' *Madafu* is excellent stuff. It is the milk of the unripe coconut, and soon a nasty-looking blighter christened Simon, who looked like one of Ali Baba's faithful forty, was shinning up a palm tree and showering us with young coconuts.

Another dangerous-looking specimen split them with a *panga*.

Now coconut milk mixed with gin is a potent and terrible beverage. Tom, my right-hand man on the trip, slipped the bottle of gin out of his hunting jacket and topped up three likely-looking coconuts. He just managed to put the bottle away when the Mission Lady turned up.

'This will do us good,' she said gaily, and picked up . . . wait for it . . . the *wrong coconut*. 'Lovely,' she said, smacking her lips, 'such a nice tang to it.' And we solemnly drank her health, the other two scoundrels in coconut milk with a treble gin in it, myself with harmless, delicious (bah!) coconut milk on its own.

The other two miles of that foot safari will remain in my memory. We rested, then took the trail.

Admittedly she started singing hymns. We felt pretty bad about the whole show. But by the time half a mile had gone under that blazing sun she was well into a music-hall repertoire of the '20's. Then she sat down under a tree and told us about her late husband, who had been a drinking man. I sneaked off and had a stiff gin myself—I needed it. The Mission Lady waltzed the rest of the way. She told us the scandal of the mission, and if she was speaking truth these mission stations must be pretty warm places!

When we reached the mission eventually (it was a collection of mud huts on the top of a simply precipitous hill) she said she had a headache, collapsed and had to be carried off to bed.

It served her right for waylaying hardened adventurers and making them walk! Incidentally, there was no lunch and we had bread and dripping and walked back. May I say that the hospitality at most missions is almost overwhelming? And that had we not got the lady three sheets in the wind I have no doubt lunch would have been forthcoming? Anyway, we never saw her again, thank goodness.

It was on this trip I saw a woman witch-doctor of the coast at work for the first time. I do not know the tribe, either Wazaramu or an off-shoot, I suppose. The women wore coloured store cloths on their heads, the sort of Birmingham product that is scarlet and yellow with words on it in Arabic and English. 'I am of the Faith', 'Kiss Me Again', and so on. There was one hell of a shindig going on in one of the villages we passed and I stopped the Hotel to see what it was all about. One poor woman was seated on the ground, her head covered in a cloth, screaming and protesting loudly. Three others hit

her on the head with empty condensed-milk tins, each with pebbles in it, and these three yelled and howled and struck and hopped like dervishes. Another woman writhed on the ground and sobbed, making tracks in the sand with her body. She did all this writhing with only her stomach muscles. The uproar was frightful. I tackled an onlooker and asked the reason for this strange performance. It turned out the writhing one was a witch-doctor and the three with the tins were her assistants, and the one under the cloth the patient.

'She has a little baby, sir, and her milk has dried up. The witchwoman has asked the spirits and they say the woman is possessed of a powerful devil. So they are driving it out with much hitting.' I'll say they were.

Which reminds me that I was recently in Zanzibar, driving to a place called Bububu (one wag said he'd like to live in the middle 'bu'), when I passed a crumbled building that looked of fairly recent origin. I asked the taxi driver what the place was. 'A mission,' he said.

'But it looks fairly substantial. Why is it in ruins?'

'It was deserted.'

'But in heaven's name why?'

He shrugged. '*Uchawe*,' he said simply, 'witchcraft.'

Zanzibar is witchcraft island. The witch-doctors come from all over the East African coast to Zanzibar and Pemba to consult the leaders of the profession, the rain-makers, witchmen and sorcerers.

The spirits are very powerful there, I am told, and you can raise ghosts and devils very easily. Knowing Zanzibar, old as sin and with a history as bloodstained as any island in the world, I can well believe it.

But the best witchcraft story I have ever heard was told in the bar of the Zanzibar Hotel and it made my blood freeze.

We were discussing witchcraft and magic; myself, a blonde woman of about forty who was obviously a tourist

off one of the ships in the bay, and a natty gentleman who has his being on Zanzibar itself.

'Is there really anything *in* it,' the woman asked vacantly, 'I mean can they really *do* things?'

'I had a friend who had a haunted drum,' said the natty gentleman. 'He didn't hear it, but his little daughter did. It scared her stiff and they had to get rid of it. Belonged to a witchman who was hanged for cannibalism. Chap traced the whole history of it. It was a divination drum. Witchman asked questions of the spirits by tapping this little drum and a big drum in the forest used to reply.'

'Was it really the spirits replying?' asked the lady.

'Bless my soul, of course not, it was the witchman's assistant, banging away in the fetish house.'

'And yet the drum was haunted?'

'The little drum, not the big drum. Maybe that was haunted, too. But this friend of mine only had the little drum. Bought it in a curio shop in Nairobi. After the witchman was hanged it used to haunt this chap's little girl.'

'She heard it beating in the night?'

'Oh, no,' said the natty man, 'it didn't beat. I see I haven't explained the thing very well. This chap found out the witch-doctor was hanged for killing a Christian African and eating his heart. The ends of the little drum were made from the skin. The drum used to *scream* in the night.'

The lady went very pale and said she felt like bed.

I won't swear the man didn't wink at me, and I've often wondered what the wink meant. But surely no one can invent a story as good as that one? Anyway, he did me a good turn, for I twisted the episode into a short story I called 'The Witch-doctor's Drum'. I am by way of being a picker-up of unconsidered trifles.

Zanzibar is a wonderful place to buy brassware, silver jewellery (most of it worked with the central theme of

the clove leaf, Zanzibar's symbol, since the island is the greatest clove producer in the world) and carpets, if you know anything about buying carpets. You buy the carpets on board the dhows, sipping tiny cups of black coffee the while, and if you are more adept at flattery than the *nakhoda* of the dhow, know anything about sailing or speak even a little Arabic, there is a chance you will get a bargain. Otherwise you will be charmingly, courteously robbed.

The island is also famous for its dancing girls, and they are indeed a sight to see, if you are lucky enough to get in on the real thing. They dance as naked as any Paris cabaret star and much better, by the light of paraffin flares, with the eager eyes of the dhow sailors on them. There is a study in facial expression enough to excite any film director to make an epic on the spot. But I doubt if it would get past the censor. The women are very lovely, very young and probably insanely virtuous. (Though I doubt it.) They are not as good as some of the oasis dancers of the Sahara, however.

The pest of Zanzibar is the common or garden bicycle. All the streets are narrow and filled with wonderful shops full of Indian silk and ivory curios and men making jewellery, and there are spice shops and great offices with huge, carved doors. But when you want to drift along in the spell of the timeless and mystic East some Easterner in a hurry roars round the corner on his bicycle ringing his bell like a fiend of Eblis (supposing one rode a bicycle), and you jump for it.

And the clock on Zanzibar Cathedral is six hours slow. It was a gift from the Sultan and he made the gift on condition the clock kept Arabic and not English time. Subtle, don't you think?

There is one tribe of ritual cannibals on the East African coast who are pretty unapproachable, in more

ways than one. It is difficult to get a car anywhere near them. They are called the Mawia, and the women can be identified by the tattooing on their faces and by their quaint habit of wearing a chromium-plated nut and bolt (or one of the little doodahs sold for the mending of pots and pans) through the top lip. They have several unique features besides the occasional habit of eating babies; the men have masks made for their 'coming of age' party. At the circumcision ceremony the tribal mask-makers make each man a portrait of himself, hollowed in light wood. The masks are extremely good, and each one is very lifelike, a good portrait of its owner.

Of course they don't wear the masks over their faces, but on their heads, and when they do certain dances they dance some of the time with the face of their 'better self' showing. At least I think that is the idea when they dance with their heads down, showing the mask-face.

Is this the only example of the African working as a portrait maker? I have not come across another. And the style of work is strange for Africa. But then, they are strange people with a strange story.

In some of their dances they dress in straw and the effect is rather like that of Elizabethan doublet and hose. Which is exactly what it is supposed to represent. They are aping the first white men they ever saw, the Portuguese sailors of the sixteenth century. And these strange people can be found on the Tanganyika coast, near the Portuguese border.

They have only comparatively recently started coming into the sisal fields to work as labourers—you see mostly the women there, but some of the men come down and can be identified by their curious hair-cuts. They get into a lot of trouble over their habit of sacrificing and eating babies—usually other people's babies—but most D.C.s shrug rather helplessly when faced with anything as primitive as the Mawia. I have not penetrated far into

their country and know about them only what I have been told by the experts. They look Bantu—but if they are Bantu, where did they get their extraordinary customs? One of the many, many mysteries of Africa. Probably they owe their strangeness to their mountain home. They are cut off, and have been for centuries, from the general trend towards uniformity amongst the tribes. Even as only a few decades ago there was discovered in the Tennessee mountains, I am told, a tribe of people of English and Scottish descent, speaking pure eighteenth-century English, who had evolved a religion of their own; the worship of a 'Great Feathered Bird'. It is indeed a curious world.

One of the most curious of all worships in Africa is the Masai snake-worship. As I have never read an account of it in print I will tell you what I know about it. The Masai are, of course, the great Hamitic tribe, the main branch of the copper-skinned, straight-nosed nomads who drifted down from Eritrea or thereabouts in various directions, Lord knows how long ago. I have described in some detail my stay amongst the Samburu of Kenya's Northern Frontier District elsewhere in this book, and most things that apply to the Samburu apply also to the Masai.

They have very little religion. People are led astray by their talk of '*N'gai*' living on the top of the snow-covered mountains, Kenya and Kilimanjaro, but so far as I have been able to discover '*N'gai*' really means 'the unknown'.

They have a legend of four gods, two bad, one good and one middling, and the chief of these gods lives on the mountains. The gods are coloured; there is a red one, a blue one, a yellow one and a white one, if I remember correctly. But they do not pray to or sacrifice to these gods.

However, every man of importance amongst the Masai —and every family of importance—has a snake. The

spirit of some important ancestor is said to live in the snake, and you can tell, roughly, whose snake it is by its colour and so on.

When a man marries he has to take his wife and introduce her to the family snake, and caution her not to harm it or molest it, and when there is a drought the snake will go to the waterhole and bite the cattle of the other clans who wish to water there.

To kill or injure your 'totem' snake is a very terrible sin, and only the very worst luck will follow. But when a man is in trouble he consults his snake, and if the snake is not around he issues forth a magical formula that will summon it from whatever pleasant hole it has found for itself. Then he will tell the snake all his troubles.

White men who have known the Masai for a long time swear the snake actually comes in response to the call, but I cannot vouch for the truth of this. And the snake is not supposed to speak in reply to the man. It listens and goes away. But the snake contains the spirit of a great Dead One, and the snake will glide off to exert its influence amongst the Shades on behalf of its earthly relatives.

Commoners do not have snakes when they die, nor are they buried under a cairn of stones. An important man is buried under such a cairn; the commoner is not buried at all, he is left on the veld for the vultures and the hyenas. And often he is not quite dead. . . . The Masai are a people of intense realism and no sentiment at all.

CHAPTER X

BACK TO KENYA

The road back to Kenya. After a day of heat and dust climbing the volcanic passes we stop at an hotel. It is frankly filthy. A very old, very small hotel. Some people are drinking rowdily in the bar. A superb Italian sports saloon with a body by Pinin Farina stands outside. It is sleek and low . . . suspiciously low. I look and see that the tyres are gone. Cobwebs span the interior. It has been there a long time. The very fat Greek owner of the hotel shrugs. 'This man is saying will collect. That is three year ago before I come 'ere. He no collect. Now I figure he never collect. . . .' Three thousand pounds' worth of motor-car with a smashed inlet manifold on the Great North Road.

Otherwise there are the usual dusty saloons and pick-ups with Africans sitting in the back waiting for the *bwanas* to finish drinking and go home. Africans never seem to get bored. Of course they cannot read or write, most of them, they have no cinema-going habits, and they usually spend their time in contemplation, leaning against a hut and observing life. Strange, how many of the real European old-timers, men born in East Africa fifty years ago, have managed to get the same habit and seem to have no initiative. They have plenty of time to stand and stare and they never get bored just sitting. They drive other folks crazy but they have an inner contentment that is wholly African. One white hunter I know will sit for hours whistling gently and staring into space.

Inside the bar the mosquitoes are humming like bullets.

A small man like a withered nut is complaining of his lot. 'Look what they done to me,' he says. 'Look at the job I held. An important government post. And have I got a pension? I tell you they ought to be ashamed of themselves. Us old settlers shouldn't be left in want.' He swigs another brandy. 'One of these days,' he says, 'one of these days I'm going to *do it*.' He points a forefinger at his head like a pistol and clicks his thumb. 'Then they'll remember me and all what I done for 'em. They'll think of me then.' He sighs and has another brandy. Then walks unsteadily into the darkness. There is the noise of his car starting.

'Who is he?' I asked the Greek.

'Who? Sandy? Some local character.'

'Did he hold a government job?' Sandy's remarks have not been addressed to the barman but to the world at large.

One of the men further down the bar says, 'He was the hangman. They say he used to hang niggers for a quid, Europeans for a fiver and Indians free. But I reckon he got paid for the Indians.'

The rooms are too filthy to be slept in so we press on down the bumpy, dusty road, with the great Carrello headlamp beams like two white bars on the road before us. The engine turns over slowly in top gear, the night is dry and the sand smells of heat and the desert.

Recently an American girl wrote to me about my last book and asked, 'What is it like to live in an adventure story? Tell us what it feels like, and what kind of people you meet, and the ordinary things. Not just the animal stories.'

Well, this is what it feels like, the good times. A winding road, a big car, going from somewhere to somewhere else. Soon there will be an adventure. And indeed there is, as I cross a flat plain, turning off from the road in the hopes of seeing game at dawn. There, before me, the

night rolls up like a theatre curtain, exposing the mightiest mountain in Africa, Kilimanjaro, crowned with glaciers and lit by the low rays of the rising sun. Two elephants wander off in a misty glade under the peak. Three Masai spearmen driving a little herd of cattle greet us merrily.

Later in the morning we breakfast at the Gethins' place, the Namanga River Hotel, eggs and bacon and coffee. The road to Nairobi lies temptingly ahead.

Kenya these days would like to convince the world that it is a serious-minded place full of serious-minded people, busy about the world's business. Kenya fails miserably to do so.

Many of Nairobi's businesses are Asian-owned and/or controlled. Many of the white settlers are heavily in debt to the Asian. Otherwise capital comes from overseas, from Britain, from Italy and from Greece; there are heavy investments by men who have never seen Kenya and don't want to, or men who have never seen Britain and couldn't care less. There are few white settlers who could not do better with their capital elsewhere, especially the farmers, whilst the wage-worker in Nairobi, if he is European, has a slightly higher standard of living than he has in Europe but must suffer for it in debts and worry.

Kenya attracts men and women who love personal freedom, wide open spaces, travel and a shrugging off of the conventions. There is a growth of little suburbs outside Nairobi and the emergence of a staid, middle-class and professional population, but I somehow don't think they will last. Kenya develops eccentrics by allowing eccentricities full rein.

The man who always wanted to wear a monocle in England can wear one in Kenya without anyone accusing him of having an inferiority complex. I believe if one

pranced up to the New Stanley on a white horse wearing a Roman toga one would create a sensation only amongst the visiting tourists and film companies. The old Kenya hands would hardly take their noses out of their beer.

Not so many years ago there was an astonishing organization called 'The Kenya Cowboys Club' in which young men called each other by well-known cowboy-story names (Hopalong Cassidy and so on), wore six-guns, chaps, sombreros and high-heeled shoes, and even carried lariats. Which accounts for the high percentage of rope artists and crack revolver shots amongst middle-aged Kenyans. When Mau Mau started they simply looked out the old holster and cartridge belt and swaggered into the town to dismay the African gangster and stagger the British correspondent.

I remember one correspondent describing the Kenya settler as 'swag-bellied, gun-toting, arrogant and impecunious'. An old-timer came up to me practically frothing at the mouth.

'We gave this young pup of our best,' he said, 'we entertained him royally. This is hardly playing cricket. It's so damned *true*.'

Even the Mau Mau manages to give some rein to the settler ego, and I saw one old gentleman with a huge Luger in one hand literally roaring through the forest, blazing away at a gang, falling into pig holes, being shot at, stumbling through thorn bushes and eventually tripping head-first into an ice-cold river. He enjoyed every minute of it.

'You bastards,' he used to roar at Mount Kenya every dawn, standing on the lawn in pyjamas, 'I'm just going to count my cattle, and if any are missing, may God help you!' He would wave the Luger at invisible Mau Mau hosts and stump off.

He was an out-and-outer, a 'Kenya for the White Race' man, and I saw him ceremonially burn Michael

Blundell's picture, meanwhile repeating the oath, 'May God Almighty *do something* to all politicians.'

Then there is the petite lady who was losing a great deal of stock from her farm and so put her prize Jersey bull in the cattle *boma* one night. She was awakened by screams, yells of rage and fear. A gang had driven off a nice herd of cattle, and the bull had driven off the gang. Two were dead, one dying and one in a tree begging mercy when she arrived with a sawn-off shotgun.

Perhaps the most amusing thing of all is the spirited defence of the Kikuyu by the Kenya settlers.

'Damn it,' a red-faced ex-colonel will roar, sweeping magnificently into a police station, 'you've taken my house-boy. Nicer chap never lived. Been with me twenty years. Let him out, d'you hear, or I'll 'phone the Governor.'

'But, sir,' a young and callow inspector fresh out from England will explain, 'he has confessed to being an oath administrator. . . .'

'Nonsense,' the colonel will say, a little shaken. And later in the Long Bar he will shake his head mournfully.

'Can't understand it. Boy was like one of the family. With us twenty years. If he'll murder you, who are you to trust?'

And the rest shake their heads and say it shows you there isn't a single Kikuyu that is really loyal. 'Hang the bloody lot,' they say, 'one from each lamp-post all down Delamere Avenue. Except my cook, Njeroge. Great chap, Njeroge!'

A lioness wandered, poor thing, from the National Park into Nairobi one day, and immediately the Great Nairobi Lion Hunt started. Men with everything from Sten guns to pistols shot at the lioness until somebody eventually despatched her. But let anyone suggest opening a reserve or sanctuary for hunting and hear the scream that goes up from these self-same people. 'Animals have a right to live. How dare they touch the Reserves!'

It was at the height of the Mau Mau trouble when the Public Works Department suggested taking water for Mombasa from a spot called Mzima Springs.

Now Mzima Springs is in the Tsavo National Park and is the famous hippo pool on the Mzima River where so many people go to watch the big water horses splashing, submerging and bobbing up once more in the cool, palm-fringed, clear and delicious water. The scream that went up in the Kenya Press could be heard even in England. To hell with Mau Mau, and to hell with Mombasa and its water supply. 'Hands Off Our Hippos' wrote one peppery correspondent, and there were protests and all sorts of things. It was only when the P.W.D. promised that the hippos would not be driven off that the uproar subsided. 'You will never guess we've been here at all,' promised the engineer in charge of the scheme, and, grumbling, Kenya went on with the job in hand.

Of course some people are doing well in Kenya. The coffee farmers are buying themselves new Jaguars and Mercedes and building houses around Limuru and Kiambu. But one is inclined to be jealous and forget that some of those farms have done no more than pay a meagre living to their owners for the best part of thirty years, though some men have put thirty thousand pounds into Kenya coffee to be driven out at last, when destitute, by the land speculators, who are now reaping the benefits of the other man's hard work and investment.

What is the country like? It is like every landscape I ever saw. 'Dominion over palm and pine,' wrote Kipling. Queen Elizabeth has dominion over palm and pine within a few miles of one another on the road from Nakuru to Kisumu. Pass Equator and Timboroa, the highest railway station in the British Empire at over nine thousand feet above sea level, and one has frost and pine trees of a sort. (I think they are ordinary pine trees but I am no expert. They are 'sort of pine trees' to me.) Then the road dips

in its switchback to Kisumu and suddenly there are tall palms at a river crossing, and one shower of rain on the black cotton soil and travel becomes extremely difficult. It often rains in just that hollow and nowhere else.

Kenya, on the plateau above the Rift Valley, is a vista of rolling uplands and beautiful trees. Here even the thorn tree grows to a great and graceful umbrella. Climb out of the green Kikuyu Reserves, where the bananas and the maize flourish, into the White Highlands and you find great cedar forests and wheat farms, high rainfall and bitter cold, with a long dry spell when the green uplands turn brown and the smoke of bush fires trails across the sky.

Go north and you get cattle ranching country, long, flat horizons, stony ground, poor grazing but plenty of it, a tiny rainfall that is inclined to come in a lump. Go further through the Northern Frontier District, down into the valley that runs up the spine of Africa, and you find hot, low plains, camels, fierce nomadic tribes and water shortage everywhere until you reach the great wells where water is handed up forty feet or more, man to man, in giraffe-hide buckets, to water the camels and herds of thin scrub cattle. Then there is the desert until the Abyssinian foothills begin, and water is a matter for tribal war to this day in those hot, unvisited regions.

Travel south towards Mombasa from Nairobi and your car will speed over an awful road that is still a main road. You will hardly notice that you are passing through a waterless desert of low thorn scrub scattered with the lava of long-dormant Kilimanjaro, over a hundred miles away to the south. Until at the coast all is lush and green and Mombasa is a tourist paradise. There is fruit a-plenty and palms everywhere, but water is short, and a few miles away live tribesmen who have never been visited by a white man to this day.

I have written before of the half-way house on the

Mombasa Road, Mac's Inn, which was once Mac's Camp, run by the genial Mac MacArthur whose scowl, combined with a fulmination against authority which is pretty powerful even for an old settler, hides not only the conventional heart of gold but a fund of exact and scientific knowledge about the country and its animals. He has eyes like the lynx itself, has 'Old Mac', and when you travel with him he will stick out a huge, sausage-shaped finger and say, 'Bat-eared fox', and you will look and see a bat-eared fox, or 'Lioness', and there in the tall grass is a lioness, hidden to any but the bush-trained eye.

It was at Mac's Inn that I was confined to my bungalow one night, when I wanted to get to the bar, by two lions, a male and a female, making love in the sandy earth that passes for a garden and caterwauling like all the cats in creation caught in one sack.

As one drops from the central plateau one finds cactus and candelabras, thorn and great, green trees from which the natives extract the best arrow poisons, replacing the luxuriant growth of the high veld. There is the baobab with its twisted limbs and the palm where there is water. And there is a cloudless blue sky and a concentrated heat, dry and light.

There are landscapes like England at its best, west of Nairobi where the coffee grows on the uplands; there are landscapes like the Painted Desert down in the Rift a few miles away. Vast climatic changes occur within a few miles, and one can sit at Thika and watch the rain falling ten miles off at Kiambu, knowing that no rain will come your way across the dusty thorn bush.

I am typing this on the veranda of a little house in the forest above Naro Moru on the slopes of Kenya Mountain. Above me, rising like a painted scenic background, is the great white fang of Batiaan, the peak named for the fierce old chief who made the Masai a nation. Here the rainfall is very good, but the slopes are really too steep

for agriculture, and we live in the heart of a dense cedar forest that stretches as far as eye can see up the slopes that lead to the peak itself. Every kind of flower grows in our garden in magnificent profusion, roses of every colour, great lilies as large round as a dinner plate, violets and narcissi, fuchsias of all sorts and varieties, carnations, and . . . but there is no need to sound like a seed catalogue. Everything grows here, fruit, flowers, vegetables. There is good soil, sun and plentiful rain. A few miles away (two as the crow flies) is a barren plain turning yellow with lack of rain. Across the plain rises the Kinanagop and the Aberdares, with their green, well-watered slopes.

The house I live in is built from the forest out of cedar wood, the mellowed silver bark making a lovely contrast to the shingled cedar roof and the clear pink wood of the door frame. Inside is cedar again, rough stripped and tooled for living-room and dining-room, with a bedroom panelled in cedar bark laid flat on the walls to waist height, then painted flat walls of pale lilac and pale green. With the early light striking through the rambling roses outside the window, the bedroom is delightful to wake in.

Below the house the steep lawns slope away to the forest, and a hundred yards down the slope is a rushing trout stream, ice-cold, fed from the glaciers of the peak.

Fifty years ago no man came to this haunted forest. It was left to my lord the elephant, who still walks unhurried along his original tracks, and to the great buffalo herds, to the leopards and the otters. And you will still see all these creatures in the forest if you keep an eye open for them. But now the Mau Mau gangs lurk there, and since they have taken to sniping blind through the curtains at night I think I may pack and leave shortly. I must write, and write hard to keep the farm. The farm will never keep me in these days of cattle raiding and murder.

I will be driven out by economic necessity. Which is what some people in Kenya want—the people who have their greedy eyes fixed on the one small district set aside for European settlement, the place they would have bought out long ago had the law not forbidden it; the White Highlands. Soon the whole of Kenya may go to the Asian. I hope not, for he will despoil it and ruin it and destroy it.

On my wall hangs a map of East Africa drawn in 1885 by a well-known pioneer. Nairobi is not shown on that map, for Nairobi was a swamp where the Masai watered their cattle, then.

Only two routes into the interior are shown, one from Bagamoyo into what is now Tanganyika Territory. This is laconically labelled 'Main Slave Route' on my map. There is no place name before Tabora, the junction of the slave caravan from Lake Tanganyika with the caravan trail from Lake Victoria, this route going as far as Kampala, and the Ripon Falls (where the great hydro-electric scheme has just been instituted).

The main caravan route from Tabora goes on to Ujiji, famous as the meeting-place of Stanley and Livingstone. Kilimanjaro is not shown.

Mount Kenya is, however ('Reported snow' says the map), for from Mombasa the track leads through the Taru Desert ('Waterless'), through Taveta ('Hostile Tribes'), and the road peters out near Kilimanjaro with the remark, 'Here is a desert covered with nitrate of soda.' But before Taveta is reached a road goes northwards over the 'Ongolea Mountains', which I suppose might be translated as the 'Watch-out-for-yourself' Mountains. Then there is a note, 'Reported water', and nothing until one comes to Machako's, '25 days march from Mombasa'.

The mountain Ol Donyo Sabuk is shown as Oldonyiro Sabuk, and translated as 'Mount of the Elephant', which I believe to be correct although nowadays the name is universally translated as 'Mountain of the Eland' or of

the buffalo. I believe the Masai call an elephant 'Oldonyiro Sabuk'.

Above where Nairobi is to-day is shown Fort Hall, now the hot-bed of Mau Mau activity, and the neat hand of my pioneer has written, 'Tribe here Gikuyu. Very treacherous and untrustworthy.' A road goes off to 'Mumia's Kraal', now the frontier post between Kenya and Uganda. Then the road straggles round the east shore of Victoria Nyanza to Port Florence—Kisumu to-day. Here it joins the slave caravan routes.

And that is all.

Just seventy years ago, the life of a man. And from that small beginning modern East Africa has sprung, a great land of power stations and mines, farms and homesteads, schools and churches, mosques and temples. Of towns and railways and motor roads and garages and retail shops. A market and a source of raw materials. Still hardly developed, still, most of it, in the pioneering stage.

And there are loonies in England who talk of 'keeping it in trust for the Africans' and handing it 'back' to the tribes who never owned it. There is room enough for everybody in East Africa, but for many years to come the country must stay under European domination, or it will tumble into the limbo of tribal war and exploitation by the Indian shopkeeper class.

Kenya's trouble is a warning to the West, and an indication that the good old days are over and done with. But Kenya is a beautiful country and a potentially rich one, and to give it to a crowd of savages would surely be the silliest thing any British Government could do.

Meanwhile, here is something of my own life in Kenya, the life of a roving cameraman in search of screen thrills. To perdition with politics, anyway.

CHAPTER XI

THE TAME ONES

Still the film units come to East Africa and at times the lounge of the New Stanley Hotel looks like Wardour Street at noon on Friday. Nairobi has got used to film people as it gets used to everything. Some of the Nairobi regulars have even joined film units and become all sorts of things from camp managers to actors, and at least one white hunter goes around looking gravely at the daily scene and saying, 'Not much actinic value in this light', and shaking his head, whilst another has turned actor and celebrates the change of occupation by wearing strange apparel that even Hollywood would blink at Instead of two six-guns, a sombrero and a checked shirt worn outside his jeans—an ordinary and dull sort of costume—he now wears sky-blue pants, moccasin shoes, a Palm Beach sports shirt and smokes cigarettes in a long holder. The town is quite upset. And instead of telling everybody of the record elephant he shot on the Guaso Nyiro in 1926 (or was it '27?), he now bores them stiff with stories of 'my greatest performance'.

The film crowds themselves are the usual orderly, stolid, businesslike people working in one of the most exacting of all the professions and certainly the least rewarding, and they continue to talk the usual film talk about horse-racing and football and whether there will be a chance to claim double-overtime if there is any night shooting.

Nobody knows exactly why they have come, except the producers. It is cheap to make films in Africa and one can work at least some 'background stuff' in. That means

animal filming, and every producer is on the look-out for somebody with a tame lion, a tame rhino, a tame hyena or a tame crocodile. The hunters, or rather some of them, get inflated ideas of the value of things, and one optimistic gentleman possessed a rhino for which, he said, he would charge £1,000 per half-minute of screen footage taken. He found no takers, but held on so long that by the time he lowered his charges the big, splendid Hollywood units with the millions to spend had folded their literal tents and more or less stolen away, leaving the field to the documentary boys, the television merchants and the 'B' picture producers; all of whom have but two things in common, they somehow keep going and they are invariably broke.

But there are folks around the landscape who will be glad to oblige with a tame animal or two. How it is that so far (touch wood) no cinematographer has disappeared into the inside of a 'tame' lion or a 'pet' leopard no one will ever know. It is one of the miracles of this world, and proof that God looks after drunks, mugs and tenderfeet.

One cameraman was inspired to take a picture of a tame leopard springing on to the camera. The animal sprang on to the cameraman instead and after a little whirling around the leopard was shot by a white hunter who said, 'I didn't know which was of the greater value to the picture, the leopard or the cameraman, but I had to think fast!' On another momentous occasion a small unit was filming a 'tame' lion attacking cattle, this on a well-known farm in Kenya. They put the lion back in his cage after he had sullenly refused to perform, and then discovered they hadn't got the door for said cage. Whilst they were trying to decide what to do about this unfortunate situation the lion yawned, stretched, decided it was his supper-time, made one mighty bound off the lorry on which his doorless cage stood and killed two cows before anybody could stop him.

Then there was my own experience when shooting a scene with a 'tame' rhino. The rhino kicked his way out of his pen, and disappeared into the landscape, going like blazes. Finding a rhino in a thorn-bush landscape with night coming on is like hunting for the proverbial needle in the haystack. But we tried, and I have grim memories of that night, bucking over the surface of the veld in my old Dodge truck. And of calling on a missionary who was encamped beneath a tree prior to reading the Good Book to the assembled Kikuyu next day. I blew my horn twice and when the missionary appeared, clad in a glorious night-shirt, I yelled, 'If you see a rhino don't shoot him. He's tame.' He did, poor man, see a rhino. At first I believe he thought I was a more or less harmless drunk, as I went roaring off in low gear with my swivelling spotlight sweeping the bush. But later that night the rhino tried to get into his tent. Thirty-five minutes later only the flickering remains of a camp-fire showed where the Man of God had encamped. He had pulled his tent down single-handed, flung it, his bed, his stoves, his lamp and himself into his big American truck, disappeared over the nearest horizon and was known to the district no more.

I remember scattering a Kikuyu circumcision ceremony that night under the moon and yelling, 'Come and spot my rhino—the man that sees him gets a hundred bob!' The Kikuyu, like the missionary, sought fresh fields and pastures new, and to the newly-circumcised young warriors who ran like merry hell for the nearest stumpy thorn trees that year must surely go down in history as 'the Year of the (tame) Rhino'.

Probably working these 'tame' animals is the most dangerous task in making animal films. At least you are wary of a large elephant in the bush, and well aware of the fact that he may take it into his sinful old head to grind you into the dust; but with a lion which everybody calls 'Charley' and fondles you are in rather a spot. Too

many precautions and people will think you are a coward, too few and Charley may take it into his leonine head to remove an arm.

Not many years ago I had a whole film unit, fresh out from England, on one of these parties with a tame lion. There was a young director, a continuity girl, a cameraman and a sound mixer and his crew, all amazed at the sight of a lion that could possibly be so tame. The lion was on his best behaviour. He would not, of course, let anyone touch him, but he was docile, fairly friendly and let the crew get their scenes without much trouble. I only told them afterwards that he had savaged a native to death two weeks before, and that the hunter had had a gun trained on him every moment we were working with him.

But sooner or later all serious film makers come to the one man who has studied the art of working animals for films with the same thoroughness he has devoted to catching animals and taming them for life in captivity: Carr Hartley.

There have been many stories of the legendary Hartley, and he is indeed a man things happen to. His most surprising encounter was with a huge, black-maned lion some years before he started his big-game business, when he was shooting on lion control. He was using old ammunition and he struck a dud cartridge, wounding the lion only superficially. It promptly sprang on Hartley, knocked him down and began to maul him with claws and teeth. Carr hit it with a straight right, and scrambled to his feet, hitting the brute again as it pressed home its attack, but this time he was being savagely clawed around the belly whilst the lion's great jaws reached for his head.

Hartley did not hesitate. He stuck his hand down the lion's throat—his arm was savaged, but he saved his head, and, incidentally, his life. Hartley's gunbearer did not know what had happened, and grabbed up what he

thought was a useless rifle and started to hit the lion over the head with it. His bravery deflected the attack from Hartley, and the lion sprang on the boy. As it savaged the gunbearer, Hartley levered himself to his knees, bleeding terribly, picked up the rifle and shot the lion dead.

Then he felt his stomach where the terrible claws had ripped him. He said, 'I think I'm finished,' to the gunbearer, feeling something that could be a roll of intestine protruding from his wounded stomach. The boy looked and spat.

'*He mafuta, tu, bwana,*' he said. 'It's only fat!'

The incident happened, of course, in a matter of minutes. But that would have been enough for some people. Not for Carr Hartley. He walked back to his camp, was bandaged, walked back again to the lion and had his picture taken holding his rifle, with one foot on the brute and a grin on his face—then he went to bed and ran a temperature.

Another day Carr became one of the only men to go for a ride on a rhino's horn and live to tell about it. He told me he does not remember quite clearly what happened after the charging rhino caught him, but he thinks that as he was carried along on the wicked front horn he grabbed an overhanging tree branch and fell clear.

I met him later with some fingers missing and asked what animal had got him this time! 'The only animal that could really make an impression,' he said, 'a pump engine!'

Hartley's farm is at Rumuruti, on the edge of the Northern Frontier District, 22,000 acres of bushveld studded with stunted thorn trees, a flat landscape dominated by Mount Kenya towering above the plain. This country is only good for cattle-raising, and Hartley has a big herd of cows—I think about 2,000 head. The big-game business is something of a sideline with him, but

a sideline that takes almost all of his time. He insists, though, that he is a stock-breeder by choice; the big-game farm was a hobby that developed into a business.

I shall never forget my first visit to Carr Hartley's ranch, for the rains had come early, it was night, starless and wet, and my headlights could do little against the driving rain. I turned right at the Rumuruti cross-roads as I had been told, and went on across a flooded road—I was warned I might have to—cautiously. I then realized it was Hartley's or nothing, for the dirt surface of the road was like melted butter and the chances of turning a heavy car round were nil. I was driving my favourite safari wagon, the 1934 Dodge with its utter reliability, high clearance and big wheels, perfect for mud. I chugged along until I came to what seemed a lake—a lake of swift-moving water that stopped further progress. This was the 'road', the only snag being that the road went over a bridge, and the water was so deep that it was impossible to tell where the bridge was, so that one might keep to the bridge and find the fast-moving flood only up to the axles, or drive off it and go under. I could not guess the normal depth of the river that was roaring down in spate. I stopped my engine and lit a cigarette. The water sounded fast, sullen, menacing and very cold. I felt in my pocket and found a coin, flipped it. Heads we stay here until morning, tails we press on. It came down tails. I started the engine, changed into second gear and pressed forward at fifteen miles an hour into the flood, fast enough to keep way on the car, slow enough to be able to stop if absolutely necessary.

I soon found I had missed the bridge. The water swirled into the car, over the floorboards, gurgling and cold. The engine did not falter. I realized I must keep the engine running steadily or I risked getting water up the exhaust pipe and stalling, and the current was trying to push the car sideways down the river. The back wheels

started to slip, but luckily I had fitted four new tyres before setting out and somehow they gripped the river-bed. Then came the climb. I found the opposite bank by purest accident, and the nose of the car rose a little. I gave her more throttle and the wheels started to spin, so I eased off, and she climbed steadily into a mere eighteen inches of water, chugging unconcernedly up out of the drink with water running out of her. Then we were on 'dry' land, and driving steadily through the rain to the farm. Carr was sure we would not risk the journey, and he was astonished to see the Dodge chugging into his flooded car-park.

I remember him running out with a lantern in one hand, saying, 'What the devil . . .' then, 'Come in and get dry, you lunatic!' All next day he was busy with his trucks pulling one car after another out of that blamed river.

The British motorist who goes in for 'scrambles' and the 'autocross' does not know what he has missed. I have forgotten to mention that I spun round three times that evening on the main road between Thomson's Falls and Rumuruti and ended up facing the way I had come. That sort of thing is not at all unusual on murram roads under heavy rain.

The first thing I noticed at Carr Hartley's farm was the car graveyard. Everything from a Dodge power-wagon to big Bedford trucks and Chevrolet pick-ups was in that park. There were ex-Army four-by-fours and hunting cars, all in the same state of dilapidation. Mechanics were working on them, welding, fitting, overhauling. Looks didn't count; make a strong job and that is all that is required, says Hartley. For chasing big game over the veld is hard on cars, and the graveyard is an eloquent testimony to the fact that Hartley does not make money for nothing!

In amongst the wrecked trucks rootled two baby hippos,

roly-poly little chaps, absolutely tiny, like strange, black pigs trotting round. Beyond, a native boy in a blanket with feathers in his hair was unconcernedly driving a flock of young ostriches out to graze, and a hyena loped around with a big grin on its silly face.

This hyena, Horace by name, has acted in one film to my knowledge, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* . . . and of course in my own *No Rain at Timburi*. Horace is a lovable animal with much of the character of a big, stupid dog. Hyenas are rather like dogs in many ways, they develop an attachment for men, and love to be made pets of and allowed to live around the house. I know more than one old settler who has a hyena for a watch-dog in these difficult Kenya times. Their drawbacks are their steely strength, bounding good nature and terrific jaws. A glance at a hyena will show you the power of his bite, great, white teeth that can crack the shoulder-blade of a giraffe or tear the skin from a crocodile. In the wilds, hyenas smell horribly, but this is, of course, because they feed on carrion. They can even be bathed! I wonder just why they are always called 'laughing hyenas'? I have heard one give something like a laugh, but only once. Usually their cry is mistaken by the new boy for a lion's roar; it starts with a little sort of howl and ends with a deep-throated grunting growl. Their heads, however, are broad, and they have huge mouths that turn up at the corner, giving one the impression that they are grinning a little foolishly at themselves. I think it is this that has earned them their jovial reputation.

Horace is a wonderful chap, he frisks and frolics and leaps around his master, he whines to be petted and jumps up on one at the first opportunity. So he is often kept locked in the yard; for a steel-muscled hyena jumping up on you, however playful he may feel, is apt to be disastrous. He usually lives in a huge pen in the animal stockade, and when you visit him he chases his tail with

delight and runs madly round, giving short, barking howls.

Once Horace knows you he will greet you by taking your hand in his huge, white teeth and biting it gently without breaking the skin. He is a very lovable beast.

Another chap who wanders round the farm is Peter the Cheetah, a friendly cat with a cruel face. Cheetahs are very difficult to rear in captivity—all the cat tribe are. The lynx, the civet, the genet, the very much larger cheetah—all are inclined to get distemper and cat 'flu, and die very easily, whilst the cheetah often suffers from a strange sort of rickets; some people say he should be fed his game with the fur and feathers on it, but this does not seem to effect much of a cure. Carr Hartley seems to have no trouble with his cheetahs, feeding them scientifically and taking endless care over their quarters and their welfare. Peter the Cheetah is another film star. He has acted in all sorts of pictures, very often 'doubling' for a leopard in close shots where it would be dangerous to use a real *chui* in fight scenes. From this work he has grown to be a pet, and he wears a collar proudly and sits sunning himself, his cruel eyes watching the chickens and the puppies in the yard. But he has been taught from a baby that private hunting in the compound is not allowed and is discouraged by a hard slap over the nose.

Cheetahs make good pets, but many people hate them because of their habit of killing tiny animals, baby buck and so on—it is as sensible to hate a cat for killing mice, or a terrier for hunting cats. The cheetah is not a brave animal, he is frail and relies entirely on his speed of attack to live. He is too light in weight to bring down a heavy buck; everything about him is fined down for speed, and he can move at a remarkable pace in his native bush. Working them, I have found they cannot be used too much in direct sunlight, for they tire very quickly and have to relax, panting, in the shade for an hour or so

before they can be used again. The danger of keeping a cheetah as a pet is solely that he likes his meat high and scraps of it may lie in his non-retractable claws. When he plays he is inclined to scratch, for despite his claw peculiarity he is really all cat, and plays like a cat. Those poisoned claws can be dangerous, and I once met Carr Hartley in Nairobi looking groggy after a series of anti-tetanus injections which a playful game with Peter the Cheetah had made necessary.

Chui, Carr's delightful tame leopard, is alas with us no longer. He got a habit of playing at attacking people and one day played a little too energetically. The native he played with went to hospital and Carr sadly had to shoot poor Chui. Another favourite was the huge black-maned lion Monty, one of the finest specimens of the breed I have ever seen. He is a majestic animal, but these days he lives in a roomy cage. For months Monty would stroll at his leisure around the farm, and call in at the kitchen for his food, which the cook would give him. Then one day breakfast was late in the Hartley establishment and it was found that Monty had tried to eat the cook as well as his breakfast. These two sad experiences have made Carr very careful with the larger cats, and they are not allowed to stray free, no matter how tame they seem, after they have reached the 'dangerous age'.

When using animals for filming Carr takes all precautions—not only to save the film crews from attack, but to save his animals from having to be shot. Always there are two or three experienced European animal handlers present, and there is never any cruelty practised on the animals. If they refuse to work Carr will not try to force them to do so. Next day they may be in a better mood, and the most he will do is to hold back an animal's food for a few hours so that the brute does not actually go to sleep when he is being worked.

Of course filming is by no means Carr's main business.

He supplies animals for zoos, and he is constantly on safari catching and trapping more animals for this purpose. It may be noted that very strict rules are enforced by the Game Department in the matter of catching animals, and licences are needed before any man can start up as a trapper. And these licences are very, very hard to get.

Not only big game is in demand—antelopes of all kinds, from the rare bongo to the oryx and Thompson's gazelle, are constantly required. Giraffes are often ordered and the black rhino is a sure sale. Leopard and lion are asked for by zoos the world over, and as Carr is the largest supplier of these animals on the African continent, so far as I know, he catches as many as his licences allow. His farm has great enclosures for birds, vultures of all the types and varieties found in Kenya, crested cranes and secretary birds, storks and ostriches, eagles and egrets. . . .

Then there are his rows of cat cages, with every type of small cat in Africa, from the huge wild cat that looks like a large, contented tabby and growls and spits its hatred of man on your approach to the shy, wicked lynx.

The wild cat can be domesticated. Morea had one as a faithful friend and companion for many years, and the way she acquired it is well worth recording. Morea goes round collecting all sorts of animal strays, from a scabby native dog to a lost sheep. (The lost sheep grew up to be a fat, enormous sheep with more sense than sheep are supposed to possess, and had its own armchair and its own dish and lived on a diet of roses. It was house-trained and played with the kids in a most wonderful way. It used to love bouncing on spring mattresses and still drank from its original bottle-cum-teat as an occasional treat until its death. It was an anti-social and sybaritic sheep and was once given away to the Masai in desperation, but it broke from the sheep kraal and came running home, baaing loudly every foot of the way. The sheep,

named Dopey, had a love of mechanical transport and excitements, and one of its greatest joys was the sewing-machine. When Morea started to treadle her machine Dopey would come a-running and jump on to the treadle. There he would lie and be jogged up and down in blissful ease. It made sewing rather difficult, however.) Morea adopts everything she feels is in need of a home. She once possessed fifteen dogs, two bushbabies, a snake, an ant-bear and a dreadful, dangerous, long-toothed dog baboon which mounted guard over her and refused to let anyone else approach as he picked the salt from her skin and scalp in the way monkeys have.

The wild cat saga is a typical Morea story. She was living with her brother for a little while up in the forest near Thomson's Falls and the wild cat was a constant thorn in his flesh. It would caterwaul in its powerful voice all night, and he would rush out and blaze away at it with a shotgun. He is a marvellous shot, and it simply demonstrates the rapidity of a wild cat that he never hit it. Now the wild cat would come near the house in daytime, and Morea, who is crazy that way, said, 'Poor thing, it is asking for help.'

'You try to give it help and you'll get a devil of a mauling,' she was warned, 'those things are living hellions.'

But Morea put out a saucer of milk each day for the cat.

He was a huge tom, and he came delicately out of the forest with slavering jaws and each day slunk a little nearer to the milk whilst Morea watched from the window of the house.

Then, much as the first wolf must have allowed the cave-man to seduce it from the wilds with a juicy dinosaur bone, so the cat came to the saucer, crouched, tail swollen, full of fear, but anxious for that milk. Morea noticed the way its jaws ran saliva, and she concluded the cat had diphtheria or distemper.

'I think you'd better shoot the cat,' she told her brother-in-law. 'He can't eat or drink very easily, and he's running at the mouth.' Now he came daily to his saucer and he made an easy target. But the man-about-the-house now said, 'I just can't, Morea. The cat is so darned tame I haven't got the heart. Maybe it will get better.'

Morea then tried to approach the cat when it was drinking. It ran off into the forest at every approach, until, patience having its fabled reward, one day it lingered, growling, near the dish. Morea stretched out a hand. It spat and ran. Next day, without any warning, the cat walked straight up to her. This wild, hurt thing seemed to have decided she was a friend, and it needed a friend. Remember, this was a jungle animal, bigger than the biggest and ugliest Tom on any street, and very dangerous.

He came to her and opened his mouth, piteously, and she saw an ancient and decayed bone lodged across the palate. She patted the cat, then stroked him. He came nearer. She put a hand to his head and he did not struggle. She put one hand in his mouth, but the putrid bone was too stiffly lodged to move it. So she hooked two fingers behind the bone and tugged hard, the cat screamed, the bone came loose. The cat streaked off for the woods.

But in five minutes it marched back. Its tail was erect. It finished the milk and walked to the veranda, and there it lay down. It had adopted her. It was home.

They called it, simply, 'Cat'. Cat often went off hunting, but he always returned. He was a match for any dog, and he came at last to sleeping at the foot of her bed.

Patience is the one thing which will win the love of an animal. I have seen how Morea tackled our killer Alsatian, who had been living in a hole under a farm-house

when his first mistress left him and went to England, refusing to come out, facing every man with hackles erect and a growl in his throat, slinking out for food and attacking harmless natives without so much as a warning bark. I have seen how she first managed to pet him, then fed him by hand, until at last he became a great, sloppy idiot of a dog who followed her around from room to room and made friends even with other dogs, chickens and natives. That was a small miracle of patience.

But Carr Hartley, with hundreds of animals in his care, cannot give attention to every one. He has made remarkable conquests, though. One was Brock, the honey-badger. Sometimes he is called a ratel, and his Latin name is *Mellivora Capensis*. He is a tough, powerful, courageous and truculent brute, like a big European badger; his skin is pretty, a grey back, white flanks and a black face; he has tough, loose skin and powerful claws, and his ears are covered by his skin—but he hears well for all that.

The honey-badger lives on insects and dislikes snakes; his skin is so thick that not even the cobra can kill him, and he makes short work of any snake with his hooked, steel-sharp claws. He gets his East African name from the fact that he loves honey and tears into the trees to get it. No native bee-hive is safe from him and on the farm we have cursed his kind for stealing chickens. Wire netting won't keep him out and no dog will come to conclusions with him. It would be a sad day for the dog if he did. He has one strange habit—he follows the bird *Indicator* to a hive, guided by the bird's calls. *Indicator* is called a 'Honey Guide', and even the natives follow him to find honey.

Carr's badger even learned tricks, and his best trick was to roll over on command. 'Over,' Carr would say, and Brock would roll like a circus animal, over and over like a fat little barrel, to please his master. Incidentally, I

once met a native who had been attacked by a honey-badger (I believe he was taking the honey from a hive and drove the badger off with a stick) and had been crippled for life by the tough little brute's attack; he had been lucky to escape alive, so badly had he been mauled.

Within a few days of their capture at the end of his lasso, Carr will have wild giraffes eating from his hand, and who will forget the baby elephant and the little rhino which played with Ava Gardner in *Mogambo*? Those two were inseparable, and once, Carr told me, when the little elephant started squealing with rage on the set because he was not being given another banana (he had had a bunch by then), the rhino tried to break out of his pen and go to his friend's assistance.

But Carr Hartley's most remarkable possessions are his two white rhinos, Mitzi and Gus. These rare creatures were caught, I believe, in the Sudan. If I remember correctly, Carr had to catch four and give two to the government as the price of being allowed to trap and keep the two he has. The animals are almost literally priceless, and no shooting or trapping of this very rare animal is normally allowed.

The differences between black and white rhinos are marked, and it has often been pointed out that the name 'white' does not come from the skin colour. I suppose people have seen black, or darkish 'white' rhinos, but I must confess I never have; those I have seen in Uganda have been of a much lighter shade than the black rhino —but I am prepared to agree that this may be because they had been rolling in light-coloured earth. However, Carr's gruesome twosome are strangely light in shade. The white appellation is usually said to be from the Afrikaans word for 'wide' and to refer to the snout. In the pictures you can clearly see the difference between white and black rhinos. The white ones are also much

bigger animals, of a different structure, being bulkier and somehow heavier altogether than the common black variety.

This pair have gambolled through films together until they are quite well known to the public even in England! But Carr is limiting their screen appearances just now because he hopes to breed from them—never has a white rhino calf been born in captivity. As he believes Mitzi is in a certain delicate condition she is being allowed to take things easily. Last time I saw her she made a very determined effort to charge Carr himself, but he, remembering that an expectant mother can be excused a lot, simply lifted his fist and clouted her alongside the nose. Even Carr's enormous fist can have little effect on a rhino, and Mitzi snorted, shook her head and went back to cropping grass. Carr, shaking his hand slightly, went on talking to the Army officer who had called with his armoured car to have a Christmas-card picture taken. The insignia of his squadron was the rhino, and what better for the purpose than a rhino standing by the car?

He had several surprises, though, for the leopard, Chui, insisted on getting into the car, sniffing it delicately all over first, and emerged with a nice Army boot which he would not put down. I don't know if the *askari* ever got his boot back.

Mitzi and Gus have grown up from calves on Carr's farm, and I have seen one frantic rush for penicillin when it was thought Mitzi had some illness or other. Carr usually acts as his own vet and I have seen him doctor a bull giraffe, more than half-grown, which was in great pain from a growth on the leg. Carr received a terrific kick on the knee for his pains, but he banged in the necessary injection, after lassoing the giraffe and having it spread-eagled by a veritable army of natives. He is scarred, bruised and bitten all over his arms and legs where his pets have proved fractious, often during

medical treatment—and some of the worst injuries have been inflicted by animals genuinely trying to play with him.

Catching game with Hartley is great fun. It is also rather strenuous. He rides the animals down in a fast truck, and lassoes them. There are two opinions about this use of trucks for catching game. One school says it is more sporting to work from horseback, and less strain on the animal. A giraffe, for instance, may die from fright when caught and a cheetah from the sheer fatigue of having been run down. (Incidentally, it is possible to run down the swift 'hunting leopard' on foot. The bushman can do this. They also do it with very fast buck; they just keep trotting after them, allowing them no rest, until the quarry is tired out. The cheetah tires very quickly if he is harried.)

But Hartley always uses a truck. He says he is not out for sport, but to catch the animal in as good condition as possible. He maintains that the quicker an animal is lassoed the better condition it is in, and the better it can withstand shock. He keeps a syringe of coramine or other heart stimulant ready, and the first thing he does when an animal is caught is to inject this if it shows signs of dying from fear or shock. He loses very few animals.

The chase itself is frantic and you can see why the truck graveyard is so full. Even the Dodge Powerwagon, the best bet, in so many ways, for this game, is not fast enough or tough enough to stand much of the hammering, and every now and then Carr's Powerwagon will be in dock, having bits welded on to it. This is no criticism of the Powerwagon, for a thirty miles an hour chase over broken bush country is not exactly what the vehicle was designed for. The nippy little four-by-four ex-Army trucks do very well, and Carr uses them sometimes for catching, sometimes for driving game. Often he works from his Chevrolet pick-ups, or a big three-ton

Bedford truck with a strengthened chassis. But whatever he uses, each safari ends in a tow job almost certainly. Trucks turn over, break front axles, hit trees and rip their sumps out on stumps. It is hardly a quiet sort of life, this big-game farming, for the job of catching and securing a half-grown rhino once you have roped him is never easy, and very often he will break the ropes and disappear over the horizon, when the chase is on again.

Usually Carr catches with a lariat, but sometimes less orthodox methods are used by members of his family, as witness the case of Mrs. Carr Hartley. Daphne Hartley saw a cheetah getting away and bagged it by throwing first her mackintosh and then herself on to the animal. It was gratefully secured by the male members of the family. Incidentally, Daphne Hartley, a brisk, almost frail-looking woman, accompanies Carr on all his catching trips. Recently she walked into camp in the pouring rain, having gone out for supplies in a powerful Chev. truck.

'Where's the Chev.?' asked Carr, amazed.

'Turned it over,' replied his wife, 'the road's sticky as blazes. But I brought your orange juice.' Carr does not smoke—he says animals do not like the smell of tobacco —and he will drink for companionship only, a little vermouth in a big glass of orange juice. When the school holidays are on, Carr's four large sons come catching with their father and mother. When they were younger they used to have all manner of animals to ride; the youngest boy was often to be seen prancing around the veld on a young giraffe, and the two white rhinos, although terribly slow, could always be pressed into service.

There is always a stream of people coming and going from the Hartley ranch, as can be expected, despite the distance, for every youngster in Kenya wants his father to take him to see 'Carr Hartley's animals'. Carr now makes a charge of two shillings for taking people round

and donates the money to charity, but of recent years the matter of visits has become quite a problem. Carr, however, cannot find the heart to ban people altogether, despite the ferocious notices saying 'Keep Out'.

But big-game experts from all over the world come to buy game and to study game on the farm, and in the picture of Carr and One Other riding on the two rhinos (when young—the rhinos, not the riders) the second rider is Jumo Hayashi, curator of the Tokio Zoo, who came to Carr's farm to negotiate a huge shipment of game for his far-off country and stayed for months studying with Carr. Jumo was very popular in Kenya—his name, incidentally, means 'Laughing Boy Forest'.

Most of the Japanese order was easy to fill. Rhinos, lions, giraffes and buck are usually 'in stock' at Hartley's, and last time I visited him he had fifteen lions for sale. But some of the rarer buck had to be trapped specially, and Jumo went out on several expeditions into the bush for this purpose. The weeks slid by, and the native-style hut that does duty as an office on the Hartley farm was bulging with orders when Jumo finally had his whole contingent of animals. These animals had to be crated, taken by lorry nearly forty miles to the nearest railway station at Thomson's Falls, then loaded on to a special train and slowly carried the six hundred miles to Mombasa.

But first a ship had to be found *en route* for Japan and with a captain willing to take this strange cargo, and this was not easy, despite very liberal offers by Hayashi.

So Jumo sat down to more weeks of enforced idleness.

And at last satisfactory arrangements were made and a captain agreed to take the entire livestock consignment. Orders were given, cages were prepared, East African Railways and Harbours were alerted to provide special accommodation for an animal train, cables flew between Rumuruti and Tokio, all was ready.

Then foot-and-mouth disease struck at the cattle on

the next farm to Hartley's, and the entire Operation Animal had to be called off. All animals, from domestic cattle to the three little black rhinos that fought each other all day and night and used to love kicking cages and pens into splinters, were ordered into strict quarantine.

Then one of Carr's animals, a giraffe, went down with the disease. It was only by a herculean feat of special penning and isolation amongst his stock that Carr confined the outbreak to that one case. The entire Hartley family, Jumo, and, I believe, a zoo curator from Germany, worked night and day to stop the outbreak spreading, and so it was that at last Jumo left for Tokio, months after his scheduled time for departure. He took with him an excellent colour film shot on a Japanese camera in Japanese colour film, and the good wishes of all of us who met him here in East Africa.

Hayashi had been away eight months in all, his slender frame had filled out terrifically with Mrs. Hartley's cooking, his cans were full of exposed film, and his notebooks of thousands of hieroglyphs of his notes on the trip. I believe he wrote and lectured extensively on his tour when back in Japan. But the M.V. *Tjitalengyka* sailed on time with a cargo worth over £10,000, all alive-oh and on the hoof, and a muscular hunter, one Hayashi, going back to his neglected zoo. He had everything from a rhino to a tortoise and cast longing glances at the two white rhinos—but they were not for sale.

CHAPTER XII

WHITE HIGHLANDERS

Each one of these tales must start with a journey—a car and a dirt road. When I set out to produce and direct the film *No Rain at Timburi* (which was, naturally enough, held three weeks behind schedule by the heaviest rains the N.F.D. had had in years, and early rains at that), the journey was from Nairobi down the excellent tarmac road that leads into the Rift Valley, through Naivasha with its beautiful lake and spectacular and defunct volcanic hill, Longonot, on down the straight road to Gilgil, turning right on the road to Thomson's Falls through the White Highlands where the Mau Mau gangs were active.

On the right as you approach Thomson's Falls over a wonderful mountain road is Ol Kalau and the Wanjohi Valley, the famous 'Happy Valley' of the old days of Kenya where men are said to have gambled for each other's wives and fought duels on the soft green lawns of their homes, 8,000 feet above sea-level in some of the loveliest country in the world. I remember the Wanjohi Valley well when I cleared the Kikuyu squatters out (me and five hundred other chaps). Of course the young bucks had fled into the high forests and left their huts burning behind them, and we had to evacuate only the women, the weeping children, the old, feeble people who piled into the lorries with a look of bewilderment on their faces. Lost, homeless, displaced. Sent back to their own reserves where some of them had not been for thirty years, poor, friendless old souls. . . . Yet they were the people who fed the gangs, whether from choice or through threats; they gave what little money they had, and the

women, used to carrying weights of up to two hundredweights on their backs with a strap round the forehead to help support the load, were notorious as food carriers and ammunition runners; even the children had been pressed into service as a means of getting past the troops that guarded the forests. So the valley was cleared.

And Ol Kalau was, when I last saw it, a district where grim-faced farmers fought Mau Mau cattle thieves every night with pistols, shotguns and automatics. One man had had his livelihood destroyed when his whole herd was either stolen or hamstrung and left to die by the gangsters.

Past Ol Kalau and you come to Ol Joro Orok on the left with the road leading off to Nakuru, a thriving town with its salt lake and factories, over the mountains.

Thomson's Falls is a busy little place, hardly more than a shopping centre; a post office, a bank, a chemist's shop, butchers, grocers, and the usual street of Indian *dukas* catering for both the European and the labourers from the farms around. I bought there two shirts for ten shillings each, both quite good and both from Hong Kong, a very fine tie, imported by an Indian from Hungary to Kenya (work that one out), a pair of shoes from Northampton, American ammunition for my Colt, and a jack for my car. The jack had been manufactured in Hamburg.

The settlers around Thomson's Falls are often called 'The Thomson's Falls Crowd', and whilst by no means all of them are in the famous 'set', the district is known to produce some hard-riding polo players who are apt to be hard-drinking, hard-gambling and hard-fighting men as well. I once lost £28 in an hour's play at poker dice at the club. The week I was there somebody had killed the local policeman outside the bar of the hotel after an argument. In all fairness I must say the killer was found at his trial to have acted in self-defence and was discharged. But I was there on the day of the occurrence

and a party was nicely in swing by ten in the morning amongst one or two of the tougher locals. Everybody totes a gun in these parts—the district is infested with Mau Mau gangs, is heavily wooded and perfect for ambushes.

Thomson's Falls shows you a glimpse of what the old Kenya must have been like, and it is a fine, friendly place. Tame it and you remove the tough, pioneer spirit of the White Highlands that goes hand in hand with a dash of recklessness and a ready gun. But these people are hard-working farmers in the main, and what they spend or gamble away is money hard earned. The strain of living constantly under threat of attack has something to do with the spirit of 'The Falls'. The Falls themselves are magnificent, a great curtain of water hanging over a deep, gloomy chasm, drifting lazily down, it seems, to smash in foam on the rocks below.

Four miles out of the Falls on the way to Rumuruti—where Carr Hartley has his big-game farm—I turned left to visit Bill Ryan.

Ryan was the man who spoke—in English and Kikuyu—Kenya's Christmas Message to the world over the B.B.C. in 1953. He and his sister came to Africa when Bill was twelve. Their father was a farmer and a transport rider way up at Rumuruti, and at that time—about 1918 if my arithmetic is good—there was no railway to the Falls, but only a wagon train now and then. The district was isolated and thought of as deep in the darkest interior of Africa. Which in fact it was.

Imagine a little boy and a little girl in Mombasa, fresh off the ship from England, waiting for Daddy to meet them—not knowing that Daddy was down with a bad go of fever on the road to the Northern Frontier District, and that the friend he had sent to meet the children had been laid up with dysentery at railhead.

The little boy looked at the little girl and said, 'What shall we do?' They were on this strange continent for the

first time, fresh from England, and must have felt very lonely and not a little scared. But they were, it seems, sensible kids and 'asked their way' the best part of a thousand miles by train and ox-cart and donkey-back to join their father.

To-day Celia Ryan is married to Nat Kofsky, one of Kenya's leading musicians, and a violinist of international repute. She must lead the civilized and hurried life of the wife of any concert performer, certainly she is a charming hostess and a leading member of Kenya society. She must look back with amusement on those days when she and her brother ran wild on the edge of Kenya's Northern Frontier District, when the sight of a Samburu raiding party was more ordinary than the inside of a classroom, and the long horizons of the grazing lands of the frontier her daily vistas.

Bill, now in his forties, prematurely grey, is a crack pistol shot—amazing in that he is right-handed, for his right arm was terribly mauled by a lion when he was a youngster. He won the Boy Scout medal for gallantry by pulling a lion from the back of another youngster and saving his life by so doing.

To-day Bill is the sort of man one finds only in Kenya —he is either rushing off to a board meeting or going to Thomson's Falls to interrogate Mau Mau prisoners or read letters found on the bodies of terrorists killed by the security forces. He is not only a wonderful linguist in several African tongues (Kikuyu amongst them), he is also a marvellous mimic, which enables him to get the exact accent, the pauses, the slang terms just right. Or Bill may be off to play polo at Nyeri or engage in a gang battle, or hunt buffalo, or sort out a dispute in the sawmill or fight a forest fire—Mau Mau induced or otherwise. He is an adventurer *par excellence*, an adventurer with a good business brain and an ability to control men, run a large business and fight a war part-time as well.

His troubles are by no means light ones. Whilst he probably has in his labour lines high in the Marmanet Forest more Kikuyu than are to be found in one place in any white-settled area in Kenya, he used to employ all Kikuyu sawmillers and *fundis*—technicians, that is. To-day he has to train other tribes, with the result that the output of the mill is low and profits seriously curtailed.

However, Bill has a sense of humour and a store of human compassion. He speaks of the Kikuyu as the 'poor, damned Kyukes', realizing how much they have suffered in the Mau Mau rebellion. And he lives in a house of cedar logs with the front door open on the forest, and at night he sits alone, reading, smoking, listening to the classical music he loves so much, with his ·38 Special by his right hand and his Sten gun on the floor. He is, naturally enough, surrounded by a gang of loyal and humorous servants, one of whom, his *askari* Machuki, a ferocious-looking Kipsigis tribesman, armed to the teeth, has constituted himself Bill's personal bodyguard. Once, when the truck in which they were travelling turned over, Machuki crawled out, crying, 'Look after the guns, *bwana*. Don't for Pete's sake lose the guns!' The truck caught fire eventually, and the Sten gun ammunition, secreted in a hiding-place, exploded, round by round, the local settlers turning out in the hopes that a battle was raging in the vicinity.

Another of Bill's retainers is a Kikuyu houseboy named Koinange, an aimless sort of chap who is one of the best cleaners and pressers in Kenya and an excellent servant to boot, but has the manners of a butler in an Edgar Wallace thriller.

'Boss, are you going out to-night?' Koinange will ask.

'Yes, why?'

'Well, it's none of my business, but I think somebody might try to burn the mill down. I don't know, mind you, I have a feeling.'

'Come on, Koinange, you've got some information. Out with it!'

'Me, boss? Information? Never. I just think it might happen. And your dress shirts are all frayed at the cuffs, and everybody will say I'm not looking after you. I wish you'd get some more, you look a sight!' And Koinange ambles off, looking more stupid than usual.

When I was staying with Ryan, Koinange came into the room without knocking and cleared his throat to attract his master's attention.

'Yes, Koinange?'

'I thought you might be interested. When there are two leopards in the forest, what does the wise dog do?'

'Why, he keeps out of the forest.'

'A good answer to a riddle, master.'

'So what? This dog has a Sten gun.'

'Does the leopard come calling to fight or does he spring from a tree?'

'You mean there are two armed Mau Mau in the forest waiting to ambush me?'

'I didn't say so.'

'How are they living?'

'Like hyenas in Thomson's Falls.'

'You mean, round the dustbins of the white man, eh? So you're feeding them from the kitchen?'

'Do you want your shirts washed? Do you want your bed made? I am a good houseboy, and if I die, then who will look after you?'

It was not long after this conversation that the papers reported the death of two terrorists in the Thomson's Falls area. . . .

Bill Ryan's right arm is stiff from the lion mauling and lacking an elbow joint, but the fact has never kept him out of trouble (or a game of polo or golf, a horse race or a hard day's work in the forest). He went to the mill one morning and found a M'kamba and a Kikuyu fighting.

The M'kamba was trying to push the Kikuyu's head into a whirling saw; apart from that it was a good, clean scrap, except for a little knife work and some biting and gouging. Bill Ryan separated these two antagonists, fairly gently, when the M'kamba again rushed the Kikuyu. Bill laid the M'kamba out with one beautifully timed swing to the jaw. When the M'kamba came round he grumbled. The *bwana* had struck him and he demanded to see the Labour Officer and have the *bwana* fined.

So Bill got out his Peugeot truck and drove the boy to Thomson's Falls and they got before the Labour Officer, who looked sternly at the boy and said, 'What is it?'

The boy did not speak very distinctly—his jaw was broken.

'This man hit me,' he said.

'What for?'

'For . . .' and the African sense of humour broke through and the man grinned a painful grin. 'For being a bloody fool,' said the M'Kamba and took his leave.

Outside Bill turned on him. 'I'm a busy man, you know that. Why did you waste my time? Go on, push off, or I'll give you another smack on the jaw.' Bill had spent an hour fixing up the broken jaw and had later taken the man to hospital, where the doctor said the M'kamba must have been hit with 'a blunt instrument'. 'Yes,' said the M'kamba. 'It was a very blunt instrument —it was the *bwana's* fist!'

Now the M'Kamba looked sheepish. 'You are short of good sawmillers, *bwana*. Take me back.'

'Very good, but you can *walk* back to the mill for wasting my time.'

'I'm not feeling so well, *bwana*.'

'Oh, all right, get into the truck.'

The M'Kamba still hesitated.

'What is it now?'

'Can you lend me five bob, *bwana*, and wait whilst I buy some snuff?'

Bill lent him the five bob—and waited.

But life on the mill can sometimes be grim, without Mau Mau or fights. The timber handled is cedar, and teams of fellers work in the forest dropping the great, grey trees. Then tractors haul them to the two mills, which turn them into pencil slats, for shipping to England and making into lead pencils. The outsides of the trunks when the slats have been cut are excellent building material and my house in Naro Moru—also in a cedar forest near Kenya's peak—was built from cedar offcuts.

Cedar has one danger, it burns very easily.

A fire in cedar woods runs blazing from tree to tree as the resinous wood catches—with a heavenly smell, incidentally—bursts and scatters flame around it. Even the greenest cedar will burn fast, and when a fire starts in the dry season Ryan takes a labour team of four or five hundred men and goes off to cut fire breaks to stop the advancing flames.

In one such fire recently many acres of forest were destroyed before the fire was got under control by the gangs. One Kikuyu was killed by a falling tree—he was a brave man, and disobeying strict orders he ran in to try to save some equipment that was in danger from the fire. Many of the newcomers, raw tribesmen from the nomadic tribes of the north, panicked and ran—to their own peril. Bill drove them back to the job with his fists and they turned on him. 'Are you our father that you should strike us?'

And it was the despised, the rebellious Kikuyu who answered, 'When you were in need of work he was your father, when you wanted to borrow money he was your father, when you need medicine and have bad cuts he is your father—now be men and admit he is still your father!' The gangs went back to the fight.

There are the dangers of elephants in the forest, of course, and leopards are a nuisance, especially when they come down after the dogs Ryan loves dearly. He has not lost a dog to a leopard yet—but one of his guards shot a beloved dog one night, mistaking its blazing eyes in his torchlight for the eyes of a leopard. Now and then, when the herds are too large and the Game Warden is willing, Bill will shoot buffalo for meat for his camp, and it was on one of these expeditions, whilst reloading his rifle, that he had to shoot an angry buffalo with his pistol at over thirty-five yards. He dropped it as dead as Queen Anne's late lamented cat. (So much for the 'experts' who say a pistol is not worth packing when out after dangerous game!)

And there was another occasion in Bill's quiet life when he volunteered to be dumped (late at night when his green eyes could not be seen by the gangsters) into a prison camp with a crowd of desperate Kikuyu recently caught in a raid, and, with his face darkened, spoke their language so well that by morning he had much valuable information from them.

His favourite African people are Kikuyu—nevertheless, his formula for dealing with the emergency is one which the Government hardly seems to dare to put into force—strike hard and spare only the palpably innocent: the sooner the rebellion is smashed the sooner the innocent can live in peace.

Ryan has never been a hunter from choice, he likes animals too much to slaughter them unnecessarily. But when he has to kill he is probably better than ninety per cent. of the professionals. He is a dead shot with a rifle, and a master horseman. And he is one of the best-loved men in Kenya, by black, white and brown men alike. The Indians like nothing more than to hear Ryan imitate a *duka wallah* trying to sell a settler a useless car or a sack of sugar that is mainly sand. His friends are legion.

I spent a fortnight with him on that occasion, and at night when the forest was alive with the voice of insects and frogs croaked in the *vlei* below his house, he told me of the early days in Samburuland, when old Cardavillis, Ryan senior and the Somalis, led by one Issa Mohammed, were the leading traders to the tough little Samburu nation, bringing them salt and beads, cloth and iron, cooking pots and trinkets, in exchange for hides and cattle on the hoof.

He told me of the time when he brought back a young Police Officer, badly mauled by a lion, on a mule cart, with his wounds hastily bandaged, all the way from Rumuruti to Thomson's Falls in search of a doctor; of the tough tribesmen who were always dangerous to the traders because of their uncertain natures; and of the great hunting days when the foot-safaris went through Rumuruti singing, the white hunter at their head, rifle on shoulder, to return months later, each porter laden with tusks instead of provisions, still singing, but now of the mighty prowess of their *bwana*, and the women and drink they would find when they reached Nairobi at last.

And it was Bill who advised me never to 'talk down' to the Samburu. 'Say what you mean, tell them what you want, and they will do it,' he said. 'They are proud people and intelligent, and they have no use for a man who is unsure of himself.'

It was from Bill Ryan's place I went north into the Frontier District to meet the Samburu, past Ol Arabel, the 'Place of the Quarrel', when the Samburu, Njemps and Turkhana used to fight over the grazing rights, past the little administrative post at Rumuruti, out into the blue, on the long road to the frontier.

There was a barrier and an armed guard, a book to sign and an inspection of our permits, for the N.F.D. of Kenya is a 'closed district', and visitors without some good reason are not welcomed. This is largely because

any large-scale tourist invasion would reflect on the very meagre water supplies of the country, but also because the Samburu are not really 'tame' people. They cannot always be relied upon in an emergency, with an outsider. Besides, it is their country, and they have the right to seclusion.

The first Samburu warrior I saw was standing on a tussock of grass near the Kisima salt lick, watching his cattle. His ear-rings were green (he wore a different set every day, I found later), his slender body was wrapped in a scarlet *shuka*, his hair was elaborately set in a 'home perm' and his face and shoulders were decorated with ochre and orange clay. He spoke to me in English, directed me on the main road to Maralal and said, 'By the way, how is Piccadilly?' He had been a trooper in the Victory Parade of the King's African Rifles in London. I found out also that 'By the way, how is Piccadilly?' was an English phrase he had learned very carefully from a subaltern in his regiment—he was not really such a good linguist!

CHAPTER XIII

MEET THE SAMBURU

Maralal is built on several hills. You come upon it suddenly after passing Circumcision Hill on your right; that is the ritual hill of the Samburu and stands out from the chain of low, purple hills behind. On each hill is a house. There is the D.C.'s house, where, from his veranda, he can see the dust of a car smoking up from the road or the flash of a windscreen in the sun that tells him he has visitors. One would imagine the D.C. of an N.F.D. would be a lonely sort of chap, but in fact the life in Maralal is very democratic, and besides, what with Government committees, commissions, Very Important Persons, itinerant film units and friends from the outside world, the guest rooms at the D.C.'s bungalow are seldom empty.

Below the D.C.'s house lived, when I was there, Mr. Garnett Seed, the Agricultural Officer, who is a very proficient hunter in his off moments—when I was there he shot a leopard in his own garden. Then to the right is the policeman's house. On another crest is the house of Jean Besson, the genial Frenchman who came to Kenya to sell brandy, so long ago he has forgotten quite when, and has remained ever since. He is known as the 'Works Foreman'; he builds roads, bridges, houses and all sorts of things with a gang of Turkhana labourers—the Samburu do not as yet take to manual labour. Jean is everything a Frenchman ought to be, jovial, plump, muscular, a wonderful linguist and a great joker. He hails from Lyons and has a problem—or had, when I was in Sam-

buruland. He is building a house, and has been building a house for a long time, but he can never get enough men from road building, enough timber, doors and plumbing up into Maralal to complete the house. Always there is something of greater importance than poor Jean's house, so he lives in a temporary shack overlooking his uncompleted mansion. The shack stands on a platform, from which more than one high Government official has been known to tumble into the mud after a session at Besson's, when looking for the non-existent stairs.

Over on another hill is the Livestock Officer's house—burly, bearded Hector Douglas was doing the job when I was last there. He is in some ways the most important man in Samburuland for the Samburu live by and worship their cattle to the extent of painting names and designs on their best beasts, and at a stock sale it is Hector Douglas's job to price the cattle offered to the Government.

Many of the cattle bought are prime beasts and instead of being sent to the slaughterhouse they are fattened and bred at the Samburu Ranch, and sold back to the Samburu for improvement of the herds.

There is a Forest Officer—but his house is locked, for he is usually away on safari in his beloved forest, on the slopes of the distant Matthew Range. Soon, there will be a District Officer down at Wamba, on the hot plain on the rift floor; at present there are two young policemen guarding a Kikuyu detention camp for the worst Mau Mau types down there. And over at the ranch, ten miles from the 'capital', there is another European ranch foreman.

And these men, most of them with wives and families living with them, constitute the entire European population of Samburu. Except for John Cardavillis.

John has known Maralal since he was a boy and came with his father's mule and ox caravans, before he set up

his store that is the hub and centre of the 'capital'. He is a genial, amusing man of Greek origin, and owns property all over Kenya. He could live in a fine house in Nairobi, but he loves the N.F.D., and he loves Maralal. The other white residents call him the 'Mayor of Maralal', and certainly the parlour of his shop, which contains his desk, typewriter and adding machine—all he needs to control his wide interests—is the scene of some gay functions. With John Cardavillis in the chair and Jean Besson as toastmaster Maralal will never be dull, and some of the parties there are amazingly well attended, for settlers will travel a hundred miles to a Maralal party, one or two hunters will drift in, and, if he is in the vicinity on safari, Merrell (Gerry) Dalton, the Game Warden of the vast Marsabit National Park, which takes in much of Samburuland.

'If your damned warriors,' I heard him saying to Terence Gavaghan, the D.C. at Maralal, at a barbecue we gave in the glade where our film unit was encamped, 'would leave my elephants alone there would be enough water for them all. But if the *moran* go spearing my elephants there's going to be trouble!'

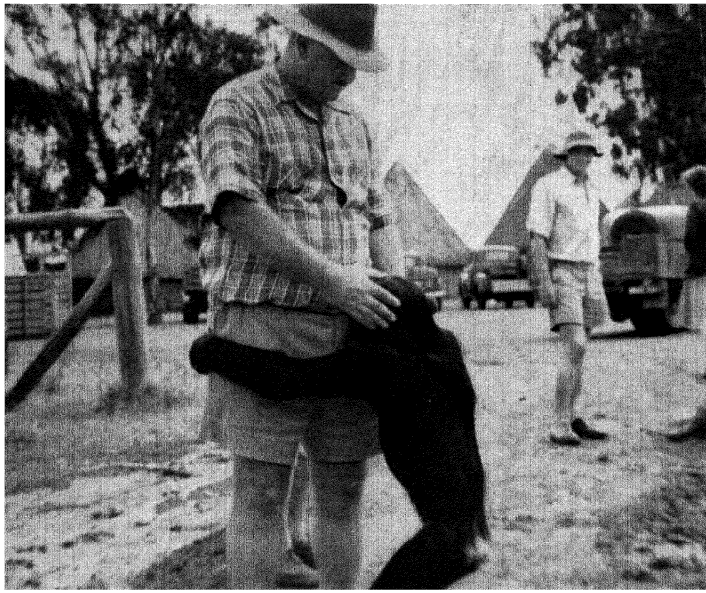
'Well, kindly instruct your elephants to give the water-holes used by the tribe a miss,' Terry replied, 'for the *moran* are only human, after all, and they don't like being trampled to death.'

It was good to be in Maralal. And when we travelled out along the glades of green, beautiful trees that produce the best arrow poison in Africa, and the elephants strolled through the thorn forests on the slopes above us, it was grand to be alive.

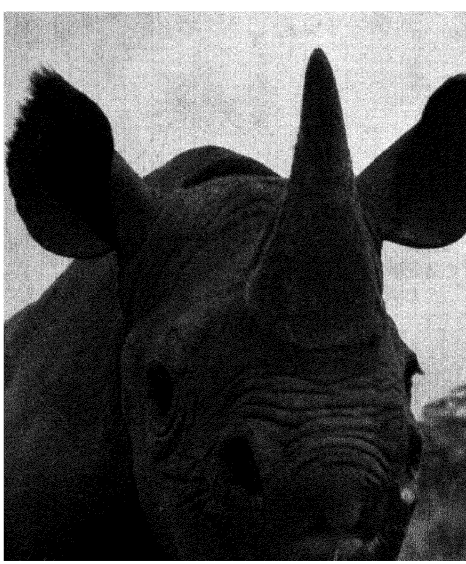
And perhaps this is the place to thank Terry Gavaghan and his *locum tenens*, Geoffrey Hill, who took over when Terry was on leave in England, for all the help and encouragement they gave us when we were making the film. Without the active co-operation of these two



Indian *dukas* at Sultan Hamud on the Mombasa Road



Chimps develop a real affection for human beings—Carr Hartley with Jock



They can be menacing at close range—black rhino

District Commissioners we would never have made the film at all.

Gavaghan was doing wonders in Samburuland: the stock form, grazing control and control of the salt licks were all going to produce a better grade Samburu stock, there had even been a honey factory imported piece by piece by truck from Nairobi and the Wanderobo honey hunters had turned their feckless wanderings into an industry of some considerable importance to Samburuland. Everywhere there was progress, bustle, prosperity, despite poor rains—although when we arrived to make a film about a drought the heavens opened. Great things were doing in Samburuland—viewed on a world scale they may seem small, but it was grand to see this little people being led along a road of progress which interfered so little with their own tribal customs.

They were being encouraged, though in no way coerced, to go out and work on the European farms as labourers, and to learn agricultural methods, tractor driving and good care of stock whilst on the farms.

It is difficult to persuade a Samburu who has for years fought for the best water that things can be arranged so that everybody gets a share of the grazing and everybody can be fairly prosperous by co-operation. But they are clever people and learn quickly.

However, if they do not, the D.C. will punish heavily for infringements of the grazing regulations, and so good grass is appearing in Samburuland. Jean Besson's teams are building dams, water is being conserved, cattle actually sold to European farmers.

Whilst the Samburu warriors still dress in their traditional costumes, the elders and chiefs mostly wear khaki drill and old Army greatcoats. One I saw was resplendent in a coat that had once belonged to a London busman, complete with leather patches, red piping and London Transport badges.

When a big *baraza* is to be held you see them in Maralal, lounging round John Cardavillis's store, or opposite, in the little *duka* of Issa Mahommed, who knew Bill Ryan when Ryan was a little boy. Issa is present at every Maralal party—one might almost call him the deputy mayor—and he usually brings delicious mutton curries or *samoussas* made by his wife. He has two or three trading stores in the Samburu outposts, this cheerful and amusing old trader, and most of the coloured beads worn by the Samburu women come from his shops.

But the very heart-beat of Samburuland is water, and outside Maralal, ten miles by road, are the wells. You drive through the great cattle herds going to the wells, each one attended by the superbly arrogant young warriors, posing like figures from an Egyptian frieze as you go by. There is the bed of a dry river, a bed of powdery grey soil, and in this bed pits have been dug, many of them nearly twenty feet deep. Of course these are not as spectacular as the wells farther into the frontier, where chains of warriors pass the giraffe-hide buckets up fifty feet or more, but they are an indication of how scarce is water in Samburuland, where the D.C.'s tank is padlocked and he bathes in three inches of water every night.

Women, singing in sweet, high voices, pass the water up from hand to hand using carved wooden buckets. In the bottom of the well a little pool of muddy water almost covers the ankles of a young beauty who dips her bucket and smiles as she passes it up to her next-in-line.

On top of the wells are calf-skins laid out on branches to make water troughs, and to these the cattle are allowed to come in carefully regulated formation, each cow to drink just so much before she is pushed aside by the herdsmen and another takes her place. On one side of the wells stand the great herds awaiting water, looking thirstily at the troughs, held back only by the sticks of

the herd boys. The Samburu seem to thrash their cattle mercilessly—in fact, they use a lath of special wood which cannot break the skin, and the savage beatings which the beasts seem to undergo leave them undisturbed.

A cattle sale in Maralal or Wamba is an event, and the young warriors turn up at their smartest, stick their spears in the ground and settle down to a good, hearty discussion about cattle, cattle prices and cattle grazing. The herds come in for the sale, and when more than a hundred and fifty head go through the cattle crush, branded and sold to the Government, D.C. and Livestock Officer look at one another with a pleased grin —that is a great day!

Then the *moran* go to buy at the stores, for they are paid spot cash by the D.C. And as evening comes on they dance. These are not 'war dances', although travellers might like to think so. The warriors may only be singing: 'Oh, my cow was bigger than Rukaruk's cow', or, a favourite song:

> Mother, my mother,
> Go round all the *manyattas* of the tribe,
> Find me a wife, a good wife,
> A young wife who knows how to build a hut.

These people are primitive, so primitive that they have no drums. If one has travelled in South Africa and knows, say, the Venda people, who dance to *timbilas* (xylophones tuned by water-filled gourds beneath the wooden sounding boards), to the *marimbas*, the little drums gripped between the knees, to the *ngomas*, the big drums that have given the word *ngoma*, meaning a dance, to all Africa, to the *tshikona* flutes, each of the seven flutes tuned to a different note and all blending in together, with the tuned tongues of the hardwood resonators sounding above the water-filled gourds and the drums beating rising and falling rhythms behind, with dancers in

gorgeous costume whirling in intricate patterns to the polyphonic tunes; then these Samburu seem primitive indeed.

Their only rhythms are created by their voices and the stamp of their feet, and, in the war songs, the deep 'hough-hough', sounding like a pig grunting at the back of the throat, of a warrior maddened to the killing pitch.

But the Samburu men dancing a suggestive sex dance, with the women dancing backwards before them, deep male and high female voices blending as the bodies blend in rhythms, perhaps at the wedding of a warrior or a chief, is a wonderful thing and never to be forgotten.

A word on their famous diet of meat and blood and milk—of course no vegetables will grow in Samburu, even in the gardens of the European homes in Maralal (a terrible trial for the European mothers, incidentally), and the few wild vegetables are kept for the children of the tribe, and regarded with scorn by the blood-drinking warriors.

CHAPTER XIV

BATTLE SCENE

Primitive tribesmen in savage battle! See the Samburu and the Turkhana meet with spear and *simi*! Never before filmed or shown on any screen. You can imagine the boards outside the cinemas. And if you see the rather spectacular battle scenes you may wonder how they were filmed. Did you but know the temper of the Samburu and the Turkhana fighting men, you would wonder a great deal more.

However, apart from being badly bruised when a jeep turned over on me on the long road to Samburuland, and getting sunstroke on the plains at the Kisima salt lick, I suffered nothing from filming the battle. At times things got undeniably tricky, I will not dispute it, but there was no loss of life or limb.

Incidentally, I am always asked how to pronounce African words. *Moran*, for instance, do you pronounce it as written? The answer is that the English do, the Samburu do not. A *moran* is a man of the warrior group and he calls himself a 'murrun'. But remember the English have great difficulty with the letter 'r' and cannot roll it with any success—they simply cannot speak Kikuyu, Samburu or Masai and make themselves fully understood. I am sorry for the infuriated D.C.s, 'expert' Masai speakers, who read this, but it is the truth. The Scottish and the Irish are usually perfectly able to pronounce these languages with some degree of success, the English never. The Kenya-born, of course, speak these languages best, and even seem to manage to roll an 'r' when

speaking Masai when they could not even start on the traditional statement that 'it's a braw, bricht moonlicht nicht the nicht'. On the other hand there are men born and bred in Kenya and past middle-age who have never bothered to speak a native language and pronounce even Kiswahili indifferently. They have little interest in their surroundings and so long as they can say, 'Get tea', 'Run my bath', 'The motor-car needs pushing', and 'I have a foot without air' (a flat tyre), they are perfectly happy and will remain so until the day of their death. It is these arrogant, pig-headed people the Africans love and do not attack. It is the good Kikuyu speaker, who genuinely loves the people, who may get killed. Because the native *knows* the white man is his superior and is amazed to find any white man saying different. If a white man thinks himself on a level with Africans, say the tribesmen, he is no *bwana* but a white kaffir, and easy meat for butchering!

But to get back to the pronunciation of native names.

The most select suburb of Nairobi (you can even mispronounce that, it is a Masai word meaning either 'a swamp' or 'clear water' depending on how well you like Nairobi. The Masai call it Naih'rrobai, roughly, the white man . . . well, you've heard a B.B.C. announcer at it) is called Muthaiga. This is Kikuyu and they call it 'Mudhygha'. I am inventing my own phonetic spelling as I go, but pronounce it gutturally in the back of the mouth and you're getting near it. The white man calls it 'Moothayga'. Thika is another case in point. The Kikuyu says 'T'aigka', in one syllable, suggesting the first 'h' but hardly pronouncing it. The white man says 'Theeka'. But why the white men should call Kisima 'Kiseema' baffles even the Samburu themselves.

In Samburuland the Englishman doesn't stand much chance. The 'capital' is 'Murrl'll'. The white invaders write it Maralal, and pronounce it to rhyme with a

terribly affected young poetry reader trying to say 'parallel'.

The Kikuyu are badly served in this matter of pronunciation. Everybody calls them Kikuyu, they call themselves 'Aghikhuyu' and hardly open their mouths when they say it.

In fact, of course, all these languages are phonetic, and until the Dutch settlers established themselves in Africa, calling themselves, defiantly, 'Afrikaaners' and their language, with its importations from the local Bantu dialects, 'Afrikaans', there were no people between the Cape and Cairo, save the Arabs and Egyptians, with a written language. So that the early missionaries, eager to teach the savages to read and write, had first to provide a written version of a native tongue. As these missionaries have been German, Italian, Scottish, Irish, English and even Scandinavian, a certain amount of chaos has prevailed. It is impossible, without inventing a phonetic language for the job as some students do, to render the strange clicks, grunts, 'ghk's' and guttural throat clearings of the African tongues.

Samburuland itself is very beautiful. The high veld is known as the Leroghi Plateau, and has always been dominated by the most powerful Samburu clans because the best grazing is there. Then the Great Rift Valley makes its inevitable appearance and a twisting road, commanding views of great beauty and magnificence, leads down to the low veld. The view is dominated by mountains as you drop towards the low veld. Mount Kenya is framed, at one turn in the road or another, in jagged rocks, thorn trees and candelabras, with a thousand tumbled little ranges of foothills between the plain below and the final, great peak. And on the counterturns of the dirt-surfaced hairpin bends lies the strange beauty of the Matthew Range of mountains, enchanted country inhabited by the N'derabo Samburu, the elephant poachers

par excellence. When I drove down to Wamba in the low veld I knew there was only one white man in all that splendour of mountains, a forestry officer patrolling in the Matthews. It was strange to see what appeared to be a moving heliograph and to realize that it was, in fact, the wind-screen of his big truck, reflecting the African sun from ten miles away or more as he bumped down the roadless escarpment of the mountains.

The Samburu have never been conquered. They still retain remarkable independence—they have murdered one D.C. and manhandled another in the past thirty years, and they can get a killing hysteria upon them more easily than most African tribes. They are of Masai extraction, but where the Masai proper have suffered from mixing their nomadic blood with that of the Bantu Kikuyu, these Samburu have intermarried with the Rendille and the Suk, both fierce, nomadic peoples, and the Samburu is a fine figure of a man.

Two things he needs to live, his *shuka* and his *m'kuki.* The *m'kuki* is the long, slender spear, wood hafted and with an iron blade made by the tribal smiths. To balance the spear-head there is a long, sharp iron point which the *moran* sticks into the ground when he is resting (he is usually resting). There is quite a ritual about this, and if one *moran* is standing admiring the view another will join him, thrusting the long point of the spear into the ground with a grunt, 'Ugh!', will twine his right arm gracefully round the haft, the hand closed over the spear-head, then drape his lean body against the spear.

His *shuka* is his dress, a simple piece of red cloth which he wraps round his body; more for ornament than for warmth or decency. When the *shuka* slips a little the *moran*, regardless of the company, simply opens it and re-wraps it. If it rains he undresses, wraps the *shuka* round his head and runs for it, naked as the day he was born, but with his hair-do intact.

These Samburu are remarkably good artists. Mostly they depict cattle, and on the *shuka* of Rukaruk, the Liegwinnen of the Ermassola, the largest of the Samburu clans, was a beautiful line-drawing of a bull, painted by the man himself, reminding me of nothing more than the cave-drawings at Altamira. Most of their artistic desire for self-expression is, however, diverted into their hair-style and decorations.

When a boy passes into the circumcision age-grade before becoming a *moran*, and is under instruction by the war leaders of his clan, his head is shaved and he paints head, ears, neck and chin with red ochre, leaving only the oval of his face. This is an awe-inspiring decoration, he looks savagery personified. Then a tuft of hair is allowed to grow from the centre of his head, and by the time his hair has grown towards his shoulders he is a full warrior.

The hair is then caught up and plaited, strand by strand, with sisal fibres, and dressed according to one of two main styles, à la Masai or à la Samburu. Masai style, the front hair is caught into a peak on the forehead; Samburu style it juts in a fringe over the eyes. In either case it is larded thick with red ochre and dressed according to the taste of the wearer. Some like ringlets at the back, or tasteful loops, others go in for long, straight braids. In any case they stand like beautiful bronze statues combing each other's hair at every opportunity, using a sharpened stick for the job.

'But how,' the visitor asks, 'can they sleep with such an elaborate hair-style?' The answer is simply that they sleep with their neck resting on a wooden pillow and the head hanging down. When no pillow is available they find a flat rock, and hang their pretty heads over the edge of it.

You will find them sleeping by the great herds they guard, these warriors, in the intense cold of the Leroghi Plateau, heads hanging from a rock or stone, bodies

naked, their heads wrapped in their *shukas*. Breathing into the *shuka*, they say, keeps them warm.

Now, how do they fight?

You might imagine, as I did, that the Samburu and their enemies, the Turkhana, would simply run at one another with savage screams, and try to murder as many of their opponents as possible. You would be wrong, as I was. Battle is immensely formal, and many of the wounds inflicted are in the backside. To explain this I had better give you a full account of a battle.

A herd boy comes running into the warrior's *manyatta* where the young men are just waking beside their pretty little companions, the unmarried girls of the tribe, and yells that the Turkhana have slaughtered his two friends and stolen the cattle, and are driving off towards Turkhana country at full speed. A war party goes racing out, hoping to find the marauders and bring back the stolen herd, but discovers they have gone off into Turkhana country and it is dangerous for a small party of spearmen to follow. So the Samburu *moran* go back to the *manyatta* and send messages to the chief of the clan and the war leaders call the army together.

They gather, the warriors of the left-hand and right-hand, according to their circumcision ages, and the war leader dons his frightening head-dress of ostrich plumes or lion mane and addresses his troops.

They are brave Samburu warriors, he explains quietly enough. Their tribe has suffered a grievous loss and a deadly insult at the hands of those hyenas, the Turkhana. They must have vengeance. No skirmish is possible. The answer must be war. A battle must be faced. All, all, all (the word *poghi* occurs again and again in his oration) must fight bravely. He goes on talking and he works himself up into a frenzy and his warriors with him. Then, headed by the fighting leaders and the witchmen, the army, maybe two or three hundred strong, goes off on its deadly mission.

They move off into Turkhana country and find and spear one or two herd boys, capture some cattle and feel much better. The word goes back to the Turkhana and their army turns out, the war leaders dressed in leopard skins, the warriors with their heads decorated with blue and white clay into smooth, rather terrifying 'buns', their faces painted with white clay, rings through their lips, spears at the ready. And the two armies meet, usually facing one another on opposing hills.

The Samburu then begin to dance. Plumes waving, the Samburu start the dance. This consists of a sort of march, a tripping step march a few yards one way, a turn, a march the other.

As they march they sing a song of their valour and bravery. They sing what they will do to the enemy. They rest and cough and spit, quite calmly, and go on singing, led by the war leader. This can go on for half an hour or more.

Then, as they march back and forward with their strange, bounding step, one warrior will leave the ranks, take several springing steps forward, bounding a series of jumps straight into the air. Another follows, then another, and soon the whole army is jumping straight into the air like Jack-in-the-boxes, yelling like lunatics.

At this stage they start throwing fits.

One man will fall to the ground screaming and go spinning round, frothing at the mouth, howling like a dog, only to be restrained by his fellows. Another follows, and soon thirty or forty men will be writhing on the ground.

Soon they face the enemy and begin . . . the battle? Oh, no. Lots happens before the battle.

At this stage comes the 'shouting of insults'.

The *moran* form into a rough battle formation and the war leader prances down the hill with a hop-skip-and-jump routine, then pauses and tells the opposing army

exactly what he thinks of them, their mothers and fathers and their behaviour. Also what he will do to them. Other warriors follow until all are dancing madly backwards and forwards and the air is thick with screamed insults. More fits follow.

Now this stage of affairs gives the war leaders a chance to sum up the enemy. If he is in greater strength or looks too ferocious, the battle will probably end there. The *moran* will go home and boast how they frightened the enemy so much they didn't even have to fight him. However, if there seems a fair chance of victory, the battle will commence by the next stage—the spear-throwing.

They throw spears at the enemy? Oh, no. The armies have come much closer now, and they throw the spears on the ground between them. After some more fits and a lot of insults mingled with the spear-throwing the two sides meet in battle. The Samburu, singing their attack song, pour down their hill and meet their opponents in the valley between. They draw their sharp iron swords and they swing their hard-wood clubs and they fight hand-to-hand. What happens then decides the course of the battle itself.

For instance, both armies may be in good spirits, the rains may have been good, they may not feel particularly murderous. Then the spears may lie on the ground and only a few stab wounds and broken heads will result. But if the warriors are in a blood-crazed, killing mood, then someone will stoop for a spear and blood will be shed in earnest—but mainly from the buttocks! Although many a spear will find a target in an opponent's body whilst the Samburu yell their killing song, berserk with the sight and smell of blood, it can be imagined that the best time to wound an enemy is whilst he is actually reaching down for a spear. At that moment the most exposed part is the backside. Imagine the sheer joy of prodding your hated enemy in the buttocks as he bends, the wrath with which

he will straighten up. Then imagine throwing a spear at another man, bending for a fresh weapon . . . and getting prodded yourself. The rage, the mortification!

So the battle continues until one side or the other takes to its heels, no doubt limping slightly. Which is why a doughty warrior, asked to show his scars, will remove his *shuka* and expose his rear to your startled gaze!

The modern District Commissioner will break up such a battle promptly if he can reach the spot in time. He will take a truck-load of *askaris*, but it will not normally be necessary to use rifles to bring the tribesmen to their senses—a jeep driven at high speed amongst the struggling warriors is all that is needed. But in the very recent 'good old days' of the Frontier District no D.C. worthy of his salt would interfere with such a break in the monotony as a battle. He would probably set up a dressing station and sit, monarch of all he surveyed, in his truck, watching with great interest the progress of the fighting, perhaps laying odds with his District Officer on the probable outcome.

Again, all the old-time District Officers will deny with virtuous indignation that this sort of thing ever took place. Unfortunately too many stories of the kind are told to be all untrue.

This Northern Frontier District was, when D.C.s were chosen from the old hands who had been farmers or hunters, a sort of paradise for the eccentric. Some of the old hands will tell you of the famous Yacht Club at Wajir where there is neither sea nor lake nor puddle capable of supporting a toy rowing boat. Every Saturday evening, it is said, the D.C. and his guests would go yachting in a large packing case with several bottles of Scotch for provisions, and the D.O. would supervise two *askaris* who poured buckets of water over the brave sailors. And when the D.C. yelled 'shipwreck' the *askaris* would tip the packing case up into a large tin bath full of more water.

Then there is the old story which is sworn to by several sourdoughs along the N.F.D. trail of the District Commissioner who welcomed the new District Officer with the demand, 'Do you play cricket?' The D.O. said he did, and the D.C. heaved a sigh of relief.

They were the only two white men in a thousand square miles of Africa and to keep sane they organized things to a nicety. They worked together quite normally, but neither visited the other's quarters without a formal invitation. They dined after a card with 'R.S.V.P.' on it had been brought from D.C. to D.O., and they dressed to dine—and drink.

On Saturday they had a cricket match. The teams were captained by the two officers and were composed of long-term prisoners. Because of the lack of an audience the D.C. felt the game was not going as well as it should, so he sent out an edict to the local chief that every Saturday fifty men and fifty women must report for special duty —to watch the cricket. The match finished, the men would take tea together and part until Monday morning, unless the engraved card was brought from the D.C. to his junior in the meantime. Their evenings, before sun-down signified drinking time, were spent teaching prisoners to play cricket.

Now better (but not good) roads, reliable fast cars and radio have brought the shadow of the Nairobi Government much nearer to the N.F.D., and there seems to have evolved a breed of young, keen District Commissioners who drink very little. They are still all quite mad, of course, but that is to be expected.

But I have seen with my own eyes a senior District Commissioner deep in the heart of the N.F.D. call a native chief on to his veranda and say, 'Chief, you have been a naughty old bastard.' A great grin from the chief, who was once in the Army and understands English very well. 'At the last two *barazas* you have been drunk. Now

here are three bottles of whisky, and to-night you will be my guest. And if you are drunk at the *baraza* in two days' time I will acknowledge you as a better man than I am.' The D.C. walked to bed, the chief was carried by half his standing army. He was never drunk at a *baraza* again.

Had the incident happened in Samburuland I would have put money on the Chief. Old Lengerasi, Paramount Chief of the Samburu, can down a bottle of sherry faster than any man I have seen. When we had filmed our battle we wanted to record noises to go on the sound-track, screams, yells, war-cries, howls of the dying. The young warriors were far too self-conscious to do this properly. Lengerasi it was who came up to us, nearly eighty years of age, withered, stooped, and gnome-like, and said, 'These youngsters are not warriors! We, the elders of the tribe, are the only people who know about war. We will make the noises—for a shilling each and one bottle of sherry—for me.'

And make them they did. I never in my life heard such a blood-curdling concatenation. And when it was over I gave Lengerasi his sherry and watched it disappear like water into the kitchen sink. . . .

Only a few nights later two tough young *moran* had an argument outside Lengerasi's hut. He told them to be quiet, but they went on arguing in loud voices. 'Can't a poor old man get some rest?' Lengerasi demanded. He came out of the hut in nothing but his old Army great-coat, knocked the first *moran* unconscious with a blow of his fist and set about beating up the second. When reinforcements turned up, horrified at the expected sight of their chief being given a drubbing, they found Lengerasi astride the young man with both thumbs pressed into his windpipe. It took two strong men to force Lengerasi's hands to relax their grip.

Another true story of Lengerasi was his demonstration

at a *baraza* given by a new D.C. On this occasion there was an opportunity for the sub-chiefs to 'try it on' and find if the new man was soft and would stand for their nonsense. They trotted out every grievance that had distressed them for the last twenty years, they discussed grazing rights, cattle-thefts, taxes and the new Government ranch. They talked for two and a half hours, whilst the D.C. sat impassively using his lion-tail fly switch, without an expression on his face.

At last Lengerasi rose unsteadily to his feet and addressed the assembly thus:

'I am an old, old man. In my lifetime I have seen many changes. In my lifetime three impositions have been visited on the Samburu nation. First came the Government; next the Turkhana' (certain grazing ground disputed between the tribes had been given to the Turkhana); 'lastly the N'derobo were allowed to live in the Matthew Range.

'The Turkhana and the N'derobo we could clear out to-morrow with our spears, but the Government is with us for life, even though we didn't ask them to come here.

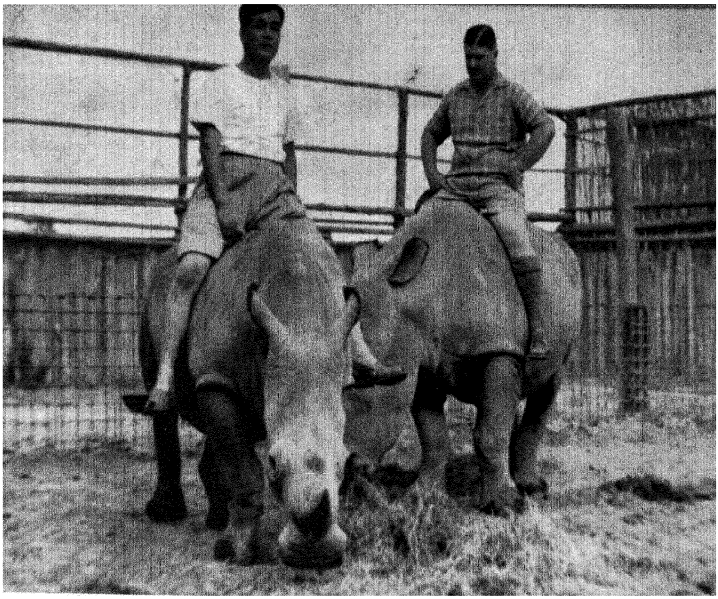
'That man, our new D.C., is the Government. Does he look a fool? Will he be impressed by this howling of jackals? Tell me, will you do as he says in the end?'

'Of course we will,' replied the surprised chiefs.

'Then for God's sake do it now and let's have no more silly words.' Lengerasi sat down amid applause and for the first time the D.C. could not hold back a grin. Lipuipui, tough as a steel rail and senior chief of the N'derobo Samburu, then got to his feet and said, 'Anybody who wants to do any more talking can do it to me —outside!'

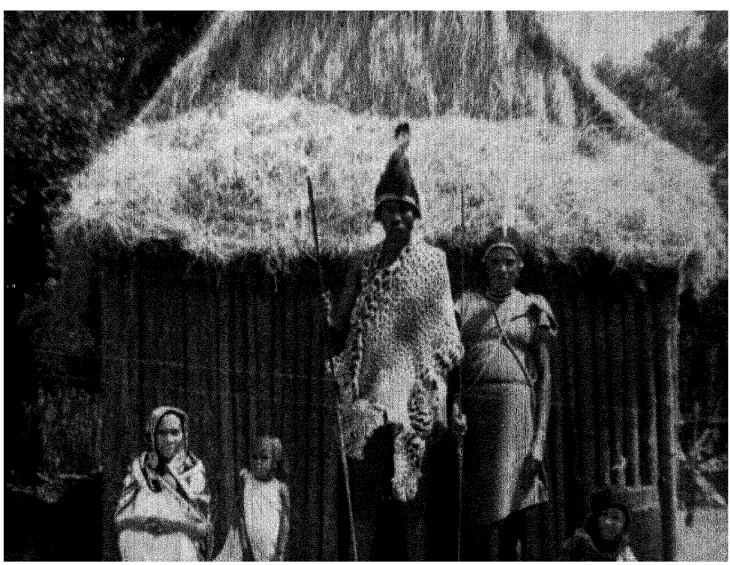
There was silence in the *baraza* hall.

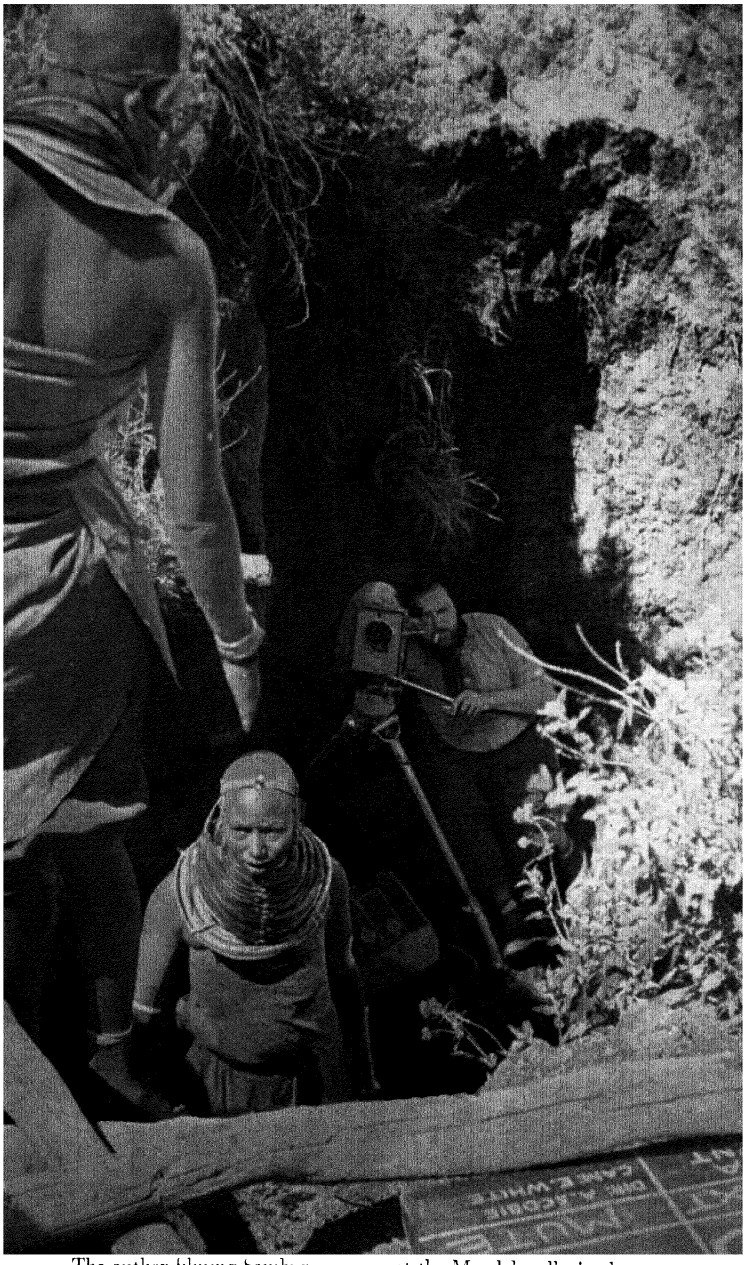
Another Lengerasi story which is probably apocryphal concerns the struggle against planned grazing control which the Samburu put up when the Agricultural



The white rhino is amenable to discipline Jumo Hayashi and Carr Hartley ride Carr two white rhinos, Mitzi and Gus

Kikuyu in a remote village





The author filming Samburu women at the Maralal wells, in the Northern Frontier District of Kenya

Department decided planned grazing was necessary if the great herds were to be saved from drought. It is said the Agricultural Officer was badly beaten, and the D.C. was roughly handled by indignant young *moran*. This was many years ago. It is also said that Nairobi was about to send troops to quell the riot when somebody had the idea of giving the Paramount Chief a case of sherry. Lengerasi is (no doubt erroneously) reported to have stopped the incipient revolt by promptly hitting the *moran* leader over the head with an empty sherry bottle and chasing the army for its life down Maralal High Street.

'The Government are bad fathers to the Kikuyu,' Lengerasi told me. 'This Mau Mau is a bad thing, and should be got in hand. A good father knows when to chastise his children.'

'How would you deal with the Mau Mau rebellion?' I asked the old man.

'I? Oho, I am not a wise man. I am not like the Government. I would send out the army to catch five thousand Kikuyu men and three thousand Kikuyu women and I would hang them from lamp-posts in Nairobi and let them die struggling. If the revolt was not finished next day, I would catch another five thousand, and so on.'

'What, innocent as well as guilty?'

'Ah, young master, no doubt I am a fool. But it is the innocent Kikuyu who send guns and money to the guilty ones. Besides, the Mau Mau kill many innocent people. Let the Government stop the whole thing now and they will never have trouble again. The Kikuyu will be quiet as elephants in the forest and dangerous as dik-diks. Otherwise, your loyal Kikuyu will cut your throat tomorrow. But I am an old fool, and you waste your time listening.'

The trouble with the filming of a Samburu battle is simply that the warriors may take things too seriously.

They get little chance of warfare these days, and are apt to seize any opportunity for throwing a fit. These fits are a most curious feature of the behaviour of the Masai and allied races. The victim starts to shake, then suddenly, with very little warning, froths at the mouth and rolls on the ground grunting or howling. Or else goes kill crazy and tries to murder the nearest person he thinks of as an enemy. The trick to avoid being butchered by a *moran* in a killing fit is simply to look somewhere else. Never meet his eyes. If you do a bond is formed as between victim and killer, and you are on his list, right at the top. In times of peace each warrior has two friends detailed to watch out for his fits and collar him quickly before he can hurt himself or anyone else, and every warrior is thus both a possible victim and a possible helper. The moment a *moran* throws a fit in normal dancing, for instance, his two friends are on to him, holding him down, stretching his arms out until the worst of the spasm has passed, then pillowing his head on their knees and allowing him to jerk and grunt until he recovers.

There have been many theories put forward to explain this habit of fit-throwing on the part of the young *moran* —their extraordinary sex-lives, for instance, have been blamed. They are allowed to sleep with the young girls of the tribe but must never make them pregnant. However, I investigated and discovered the Samburu are very well-versed in birth control, and this is no good explanation.

The administrators in charge of the Kenya Masai will tell you they are very highly strung—they are, but not so highly strung that they must throw fits between the ages of fifteen and thirty. Most warriors, of course, retire in their early twenties, 'drink the milk', put off their long, dandified hair-styles, marry and settle down to the pleasant job of watching their wives work.

The extraordinary thing about these fits—hypnotic killing trances, if you like—is that they affect only the

moran. No elder ever had a fit of 'the shakes', as old-timers call them. So it would seem that 'the shakes' are entirely self-induced fits, hypnosis, aided by the rhythm of the dance.

We were warned by the old-timers not to let the Samburu charge the camera, fight with one another in mock show for our film, or sing any of the forbidden 'killing songs'. We were told, 'If you do, they will get out of hand, and it will end badly. Last year the Masai were in a film, and they were supposed to "charge the camera". They did. They started the charge with grins on their faces, but by the time they reached the cameras they were crazy killers, and the cameramen were forced to take to their heels with a mob of yelling savages out for blood behind them. Luckily the elders calmed the Masai warriors down before real harm was done.' I listened to all the tales of Masai and Samburu throwing fits, charging strangers, spearing D.C.s and so on, then I inquired into how the filming had been arranged.

'Never tell them what they are supposed to be doing,' I was advised by the 'experts' amongst the old N.F.D. hands. 'Just say, "run this way", or "throw your spear that way", that's the only way they'll act for you.'

I thereupon decided, after consulting the D.C., to tell the Samburu warriors everything about the film beforehand through Lipuipui, my interpreter, and let them work it out for themselves. And I asked them for acting performances. At one point I had three hundred Samburu counted into two parties and made them charge one another. The result was a great success, one fit, nobody speared, a highly successful film scene. These people are intelligent and not half as neurotic as most white men think. It is true they must be handled with care, but not to the point of becoming frightened of them. They sense fear the way animals do, and it seems to excite them. In some ways they are extraordinarily like animals—when

they are tracking, the Samburu remind one of nothing more or less than hunting dogs, heads pointing at the ground, running in short, excited little steps, finding a fresh trail, giving tongue and hurrying off after it. When they 'lose a scent' they will literally run round in circles until they find it again.

I paid the warriors well: three yards of red cloth for a new *shuka* to each man, five pounds of meat per day per man—they do not eat vegetables at all, but live, like the Masai, on meat and a mixture of milk and fresh blood drawn from their living cattle. The meat was not brought in the butcher's van, but delivered on the hoof, and the *moran* themselves did the rest. At night, on the Kisima salt flat, the smoke spiralled up from their cooking fires; they were at rest, happy, contented, well-fed. The stars got as much as thirty shillings for the picture.

I can imagine outraged protests from some of my British readers. What! Pay a poor African thirty shillings for a job that a European actor would get £5 a day for? Disgraceful! The worst sort of exploitation! But this is not the case.

One very large British company visited East Africa and paid the Africans large salaries as 'extras' and as actors, insisted on breaking down the colour bar, so that (some of the) European technicians found themselves sitting at table with raw bush Kafirs and Arab stevedores. I do not question the motives or high principles of this sort of thing, but the human wisdom necessary in dealing with raw coloured folks is lacking. This is proved by the fact that when the unit packed and went on its self-righteous way to England, it left behind some black-skinned human beings who were doomed to disaster. Money, good living on the European scale, had made them quarrelsome, strutting peacocks, too good for their own people and detested by the white man, rightly or wrongly. Most of them ended in jail, the Mau Mau, or both successively.

Sometimes men must suffer that Mankind may advance; if I may digress after my usual fashion for a moment, to tell you the story of Peter, my Kikuyu camera assistant, the lesson may be made plain.

Peter was born Michiri son of Njeroge, in a hut somewhere in the Kikuyu Reserve. He became a Roman Catholic at the age of twelve, after several years at a Roman Catholic mission. He studied hard, desperately anxious to justify the good Fathers' faith in him, and became an excellent electrician. I mean an excellent electrician, not a 'wog with a screw-driver' who can fix a fuse nicely until one day he forgets to switch the current off and electrocutes himself. Peter could wire a motor or check through a complex circuit for a fault, he could read diagrams and if necessary plan the wiring for a house. Nothing in the world, even in East Africa, to stop him becoming a very useful member of society.

But no employer is going to pay a 'native' £80 a month, white man's rates for an expert craftsman. This is largely because the native is seldom reliable, and if one pays him £80 in September he will spread it over several months and reappear at work in the following April. Or he will 'get a little drunk and land in jail' as the famous Robeson ditty has it. But he will certainly not be at work during October. That is as good as certain.

Peter, however, was the exception which is said to prove the rule but probably explodes it. A good, careful, conscientious workman. Quietly dressed, intelligent about money, honest and well-spoken. A paragon. So he did land several extremely well-paid jobs, for an African. When I first knew him he was getting £40 a month and overtime.

Yet he wanted more. He wanted the friendship and trust of his co-religionists *as a person*. He was a Christian, he tried to do the right things, he tried to live by his religion, and he received snub after snub from the

Europeans he came into contact with. Which is not their fault. Any European, almost, coming to Africa as a greenhorn, meets one of these 'exceptional' natives sooner or later, tries to help him and gets robbed.

At last Peter got a job with the film unit I have been mentioning. He was so good at his work as electrician that he almost caused a strike amongst the British technicians until he was paid 'the rate', and started taking home £17 a week. Some of the technicians accepted him as a friend, some cut him as a 'nigger', and for the life of me I don't know which did him the more harm, for the friendship was condescending and he was unused to it. He had few subjects of conversation in common with these sophisticated workmen from England; they did not care to discuss theology or electrics with him, and on any other subject he was incredibly naïve. They soon regarded him as 'just another black man', and he was neglected by them.

So he began to steal. It does not need Professor Freud to tell us a man often steals because it is the only way he can attract attention to himself. Frequently petty thieves are anxious, subconsciously at least, to be caught because otherwise they are helpless nobodies, passed by and brushed aside by their fellows. Peter stole from a feeling of inferiority. His thefts were always petty and ridiculous; a cap, a packet of cigarettes, a lighter, a bottle of beer; the things people leave about behind them. He was invariably clumsy until even his employers threw him out.

He came at last to me, neurotic, unhappy, a black-white man with none of the 'culture' of the normal white artisan and none of the cheerful servility of the African. Perhaps one wants to find people in pigeon-holes. I personally had no objection to Peter—he was a nuisance and a trouble-maker, but he tried hard not to be. I recognized (or think I did) the source of his discontent

and refused to fire him. Even when he stole my pen and wore it in his pocket I pretended not to notice at first, then when the matter was brought sharply to my notice by other sufferers, gave him the pen, refused to discharge him and tried to talk to him. But I was busy, I had work to do. He left at the end of the production under a cloud. Everybody hated him. He sneaked on his own people to the white men, and sneered at the white men before his own people.

And on the unit he got into bad company. There was one smartly dressed gentleman who later became one of Jomo Kenyatta's lieutenants and went to trial with the 'Burning Spear' at Kapenguria and followed his master to jail. (This man always wore the smartest and latest European clothes and ran a car; at Kapenguria he appeared in a ragged blanket, the 'poor native' oppressed by the white man!) Another of Peter's cronies was a Basuto seaman who had jumped ship at Mombasa—a fact I discovered much later—and lived by petty theft.

Peter and the Basuto got a job with a large company retailing electrical appliances, and used to go round fitting these appliances in European houses. They were very well paid, but a series of burglaries in the houses they had attended soon led to their arrest. They were caught red-handed with articles stolen from some of the houses and were both jailed.

Where is Peter now? At a guess he is in a camp with other Mau Mau suspects. But I don't know. He may be in the Kikuyu Home Guard. Wherever he is his mentality makes him dangerous.

But there will come a day when the African does become a fully-fledged craftsman; I have seen Kikuyu fitters doing intricate filing on instrument work that would shame many a European fitter, and they are excellent turners and mechanics. Peter is one of the unfortunate mission boys whose early training does not allow him

to fit in with either black or white society. He could have become, for instance, a trades-union leader. I feel the day of the African trades-union is close at hand, and whether it is a good or a bad thing is another matter. (It is surely better than Mau Mau!) He could have worked amongst his own people for their educational betterment, got himself a job (which was offered him) at a training centre for Africans. But he hated and despised his own people. He is a victim of circumstance. His trade and his religion did not match his cultural level. He had no pigeon-hole in life.

The Samburu are a different proposition; paradoxically, many of the gentlemen in the ochre wigs and *shukas* have much more experience of the world and of life than poor Peter. The Samburu are one of the great military races, and they contribute more men than their fair share to the King's African Rifles, and there are ochred warriors in Samburuland who have been in London, Burma, Abyssinia, Mauritius and Madagascar with the forces and retired to the life they love most—the spear and the cattle.

To distribute several hundreds of pounds amongst these people as 'wages' would upset the balance of the whole tribe; so we arranged for small money payments to them, and a share of the profits of the film (if any) to go to the Samburu African District Council to assist general tribal betterment.

So it was we got our film warriors, and an engaging crowd of scoundrels they were. The smell of a Samburu is not unpleasant, sweat, ochre and cow-dung predominate; it is a clean, wholesome, animal smell. But the smell of three hundred Samburu *moran* gathered together in one windless place would knock most folks for a back somersault. Only those definitely used to Africa need apply!

The Samburu women acted one little scene for us, and we paid them with beads. These trinkets—cheap little

packets of gaudy red, white, blue and yellow beads from Issa's store at Maralal—were received with shrieks of delight, for it is by the decorations of a Samburu woman that you know whether she is rich or poor. These women shave their heads except when they are pregnant, then the woolly hair is allowed to grow in ringlets. One soon becomes accustomed to the shaved heads and they do not strike one as out of place. The forehead of a woman is decorated with a triangular bead ornament—beautifully and neatly made as all their ornaments are. In her ears are long leather strips—sometimes more than a foot in length—decorated with beads in pattern. They are by no means as intricate as, say, the Ndebele of South Africa, nor have they the same dashing colour sense, but except for their lighter build and colour the Samburu women rather resemble their beadmaking sisters down south.

It is around the neck that the Samburu woman achieves her greatest adornment. Ring after ring of beads, strung on wire and stiffened with red ochre, reach from just under the chin to her shoulders, and if the men have difficulty in sleeping with their fantastic head-dresses, the women have their collars to keep them awake, and these are never removed, from birth to death. I don't think they could be removed except with a pair of wire cutters. What accumulation of red ochre lies beneath the great collars can be imagined, and the whole ponderous mass is very heavy. But I suppose a woman will do almost anything to beautify herself. At any cost.

Just as there was a high casualty rate in Britain during the war amongst those girl machinists who refused to wear protective caps over their pretty hair, so the Samburu woman sometimes pays a terrible price for beauty. Her leg rings and arms rings are of brass, and are put on her when she is young. The growing legs and arms are bitten into by the long brass bracelets, and she is unable to run fast.

Every year brings its casualties. For the Samburu, remember, share their waterholes with the elephant and the lion, and the poor woman who goes to fetch water may find a herd of elephant awaiting her. Lions they do not fear greatly, for they can make a row and frighten the big cats off. The trouble with yelling at an elephant is that there is no way of knowing which way he will run —at you or away from you. But the Samburu woman would rather die than take off her leg rings.

It must be strange to live in a polygamous society, where every rich man takes one or more women to wife, the lesser wives helping the senior wife with the chores about the *manyatta*. But I have seen an old chief, once a famous and twice-decorated sergeant in the K.A.R., visit the village store at Maralal to buy beads for his wives, all five of them, and the party was as happy as a band of sisters out shopping in Bond Street. Despite the assumed superiority of the Samburu male (and a subchief at that), he was no match for his wives, for no sooner had he begun to distribute the packaged beads than they quarrelled—not bitterly, but like children with a bag of sweets—over who should have which colours. He yelled at them, the senior wife yelled at them, he threatened to beat them—all to no avail. So he did what many a European husband with one bit of trouble only would do under the circumstances—threw the beads on the ground for the women to fight over, then went off to splurge seven bob on a bottle of sherry and play the old African game with his cronies.

The game has as many names as there are tribes. In the south they call it Nsoro. It is played with slight variations from the interior of Abyssinia to the Cape. Probably West Africa knows it, too. It is played with three or four rows of holes or shallow depressions, rather like an outsize cribbage board. The holes are sometimes cut in a board and some of the boards are very beautifully

made—I have one I bought in Uganda, where every hole is in itself a little cup, and there are forty little cups carved from the solid wood until the whole looks like some extremely complicated musical instrument. Otherwise the players simply make holes in the earth or carve them in a convenient fallen tree. I have seen them in a prison yard, where some crafty prisoner has made himself a board that will endure by forming the holes whilst the concrete was still wet.

The game itself is played with stones, and the stones represent black and white cattle, and you have to corral a different number of cattle to your opponent. Odd against his even number in opposing holes wins you a cow. But how the game is played and why one player suddenly yells like a kid playing 'Snap' and moves a counter unfalteringly through a couple of dozen holes I have no idea. Neither had any other white man I ever met, although Professor Leakey is said to know how to play the game.

But all African tribes play it, from the sophisticated Zulu and the slick Kikuyu to these nomads of the Frontier District. (Incidentally, Samburuland was moved from the province of the N.F.D. to the Rift Valley Province Administration and then moved back again. 'We couldn't stand the Rift Valley summers,' cracked the D.C.)

So the angry husband went to play the game, and one of his opponents was a man who had come home on long leave from the King's African Rifles. A tall, tough sergeant, with his uniform spick and span, his cocked hat at the right dashing angle on his head. He was a machine-gun instructor on duty. The first thing he did when he got home was to take off his uniform and don a *shuka*, throwing his heavy ammo boots to one side. Then he took his spear in his hand and covered his hair in red clay. Next day I saw him in full *moran* array, including

the hair-style. It shook me, I thought his hair had grown overnight. 'No,' he said, 'I bought this in Arusha on the way through. It is a Masai wig, made for the tourists—but perfect for us soldiers.'

Later I met an old Masai who makes a nice living buying the hair the warriors cut off when they 'drink the milk' and plaiting it up into wigs, which he sells to the sophisticates who like to wear short hair in town but would not dream of appearing in their own country in anything but full *moran* fig. Did I say something just now about the vanity of women? I withdraw, humbly.

When the game finished the old sub-chief gathered his now-laughing wives and they chattered round him as they went homewards. They came to a hill and they began to sing, a sweet, high, strange little song. 'They sing so to keep off the evil spirits of the evening,' Rukaruk told me.

It is the job of the women to get water, but usually they do this on donkeys, each donkey having a basket-work pannier on him that is soon filled with home-made leather calabashes the women shape and decorate with beads. They go off from the village in a long line every morning, travelling as much as five miles to water in the dry season, making a picturesque frieze against the blue sky of Samburuland. They usually sing as they go, of water and children, of marriage and of their men. The things that matter. There seems to me to be an unusual affection between the Samburu men and women. I do not mean that a warrior would not spear a woman who saw him eating his meat. This is taboo, and the unlucky woman who comes on a meat-eating party of young *moran* was in the past (I wonder about to-day . . .) put to death instantly. That was the custom. But there seems a tenderness between the warriors and their young girl friends, a flirtatiousness and a sexual banter and give and take unknown in the agricultural tribes. Perhaps it

is my imagination, yet I saw much of it, an easy demonstration of love and of kindness. I have seen a couple of strapping *moran* jump down into the wells when the water was low, calling, 'Women, the work is too heavy. Get out, we will water the cattle.' This is unthinkable amongst the Kikuyu where a woman has to do her work if and until it kills her and no man would raise a hand to help.

The dress of the women is a sort of skin petticoat, really a length of calf-skin draped around her, coloured with red ochre. The blanket has not penetrated here—those brilliantly dressed Ndebele women of the far-distant Transvaal must have looked very much more like the Samburu before the traders brought them the blankets striped in broad lines of scarlet, blue, green and yellow which have become their national dress.

Another job of the Samburu women is to build the houses, and an intricate business it is. They bend long laths of wood into rough hoops, then lash others into a framework, using tree fibre for the binding. As they work they sing—remember they are pastoral people and move with the rains and the grazing. If the rains are good and they are moving to the lowlands their song will be happy, but if the rains are poor they will sing sadly of the drought and the dying cattle.

Sometimes the site of their building is a traditional one; if so, the ground will be thick with cow-dung, which smells, to the Samburu, like the most beautiful aromatic and heavenly perfume of all. If not, the cow-dung will soon come, for in the centre of the village the cattle kraal will be built, and in it the herd will spend the night, sometimes three or four hundred beasts packed almost shoulder to shoulder. The reason for this practice of having the cattle always in the centre of the village is that the cattle must be protected from lions.

Usually the huts are built round the sides of a rough

square, and the huts themselves are roughly square, with walls of mud and low roofs of mud and cow-dung mixed. They have an opening facing on to the village 'square', each hut having a little wind-breaking screen in front of its doorway. Fires are built inside the huts, and the smoke finds its way out through the door, for all cooking is done inside. The smell of the inside of a Samburu hut cannot be described, but they find it homely enough and comforting. One hut near the entrance of the thorn zariba surrounding the village—it is called a *manyatta*—is set aside for the *moran* guarding the cattle. There are separate warriors' *manyattas*, but it seems the practice to have a few men on duty with each herd, and *moran* on the move from place to place always need somewhere to pass the night.

One quickly gets used to the cow-dung smell in the villages, excepting after a shower of rain—then the place becomes really pungent, and one's feet sink deeply into the dung floor of the *manyatta*. And the flies . . . It took two assistants with Flit bombs and switches to keep the flies off the camera lenses sufficiently to allow filming to go on. A fly before the camera becomes a huge, moving blob as he walks over the surface of a lens. And five hundred flies on a sound-track, looping, diving and rolling past a sensitive microphone, designed to pick up sound at a distance of fifteen feet or more . . . those flies sound worse than jet planes at full throttle.

We had to screen the microphones with gauze and then spray the gauze with insecticide before the flies would leave us alone even for the five minutes or so needed for an actual film take.

Miss Carol Raye, who starred in this film, was most gallant; making up at a table in the bush and bravely entering the *manyattas*, waving the flies away as she went, managing not to screw up her nose, and to talk naturally to the crowd of Samburu women who were her

'co-artistes' on this natural 'set'. The women, like the men, proved natural talent personified. They were wonderful. But the great moment of all for them was when Carol brought out her make-up box and the make-up man prepared her for the camera. They gathered around with excited squawks and cries and handled the pots, tubes and sticks with awe and admiration. And the rest of the day they would play at making up with twigs and mud mixed in a paste. They were delightful, simple creatures, many of them very beautiful, even by our standards, with their bodies trim with hard exercise and their young faces pert and pretty, great brown eyes looking out over the enormous bead collars.

If the women are beautiful the men are gallant and great athletes, as can be expected. Yet they look feminine; lean and dandified, they are constantly striking attitudes which would make any Englishman raise his eyebrows if he saw a chorus-boy in a London café adopt them. Their hand movements as they talk are graceful and girlish, and they stand sometimes with one hand on the hip, their perfectly featured faces raised imperiously and the other hand with the wrist thrown back holding a spear as though they were principal boys in a pantomime.

Yet homosexuality amongst them is almost unknown, and when cases have been heard of and investigated it has proved to be an importation from the other tribes or from some European met on their travels.

They are magnificent high-jumpers, great runners, javelin- and discus-throwers. The *moran* hold several Kenya records and one high-jumper has beaten a world's record, using, however, a little rise in the ground to give him a 'jump-off'. When a *moran* throws his spear he looks more feminine than ever. He prances up to the mark, lets the wrist of his right hand drop back, gives the bones of the wrist a little jerk so that the spear quivers like a live thing (this is an impossible knack for the

European to acquire, these Samburu have extremely supple wrists) and then the spear flies effortlessly, and will—if it is a good spear—go through a plank of wood half an inch thick or drive through the shoulder muscles of a lion. Incidentally, the spears are of two patterns, the heavy Masai killing spear, and the dainty Samburu one favoured by the administration because it can do a little less harm. Their spears were taken away, recently, after some nasty inter-clan fighting, and are only now being given back slowly and gradually, first to the war leaders, then to the favoured few. A man can, however, carry a double-spiked spear with no blade and decorate it with a pom-pom, if his spear is forbidden him.

CHAPTER XV

TIMBA!

Frederick Mutesa, ex-Kabaka of the Buganda, sipped his cocktail and thought about pythons. 'Yes,' he said at last, 'there are very large pythons in my country, but I don't advise you to try to catch one. It is very bad luck to interfere with a python.'

I asked him if he really believed this and the slight, amusing young ex-king laughed. 'I only know that it has been so with me. When I go elephant hunting, if my men are foolish enough to kill a python we have no luck with the elephants—I am not superstitious, and when we have killed a big snake I still continue with the hunt. But I lose interest, I'm afraid. I just feel we won't have luck. It has happened once or twice that way.'

It was on one of the occasions that 'Freddie', as he is known to his friends, had come back from a political discussion in London, and he was staying privately with friends of mine just outside Nairobi. They have a very pleasant house, but by no means a mansion, and it was full, not only with the Kabaka and his brother and their small retinue, but with a police inspector who had dropped in unannounced for the week-end, and a friend in Government service. There was simply no spare corner for another guest, when up rolled a hundred or more loyal subjects of Freddie's, eager to present him with ducks, chickens, piglets and all sorts of things. When he came out on to the steps they bowed, but obviously they didn't think much of European hospitality; after all, when your king is staying at a friendly kraal, you go to

visit and are entertained with the best of everything your host can provide! So some of them sat for a while on the running-board of the Kabaka's second-best Rolls (inlaid with his own ivory from elephants he has shot, I am told) then wandered off disconsolate.

At that time I did not know I was going chasing pythons at all, and when I did go to Uganda later that year no thought of pythons was in my mind.

But film producers are odd people—especially American film producers. There was a time when one saw good films with intelligent stories, just as one read intelligent stories in magazines. Now the search is all for a formula. 'The kind of short story the public likes,' said Erskine Caldwell, who has written enough to know, 'is the kind of short story a magazine editor knows the public won't like.' I quote from memory. What he meant was simply that once the public is found to enjoy a certain type of story—say the story of a little boy whose parents are parting and his sadness at the approaching divorce, and how he unites them once more—then for ever afterwards the editor will plump for stories of little boys etc., etc., etc. I know it isn't easy for editors. They have their circulation to think about, and they don't like taking risks. But let an editor take a chance and publish a story about Men from Mars; if the public lap it up he will buy several stories solely because they are about Men from Mars, and turn down one about a boxer who suffers from a possessive grandmother, or something. Which is what the public really wants, having enjoyed the Mars story and being eager for something new. It is much, much worse in the film business. In fact it is so bad that the attitude of the producer to stories is killing films stone dead. More than television. And no producer will realize that the public demands to be *told a story*. If the story is good enough they do not care whether it is one-dimensional or four-dimensional or whether it is in colour, or even

if it is a sound film or not. They demand a gripping story.

But the oldest saying in the film business is that a moving picture should *move*. Also it should pander, as all good fiction (or even fact retold in words or pictures) does, to the escapist desire of every one of us to get away from his own life for an hour or two. If an audience wants to see a stage play they presumably go to the theatre. If they want to read a book they presumably borrow it from a library or even buy it, supposing the book has had enough publicity. They may not know it, but the members of the audience do *not* go to a cinema to see a book or a play. But there have been plays and books that made great films, so the formula is now that all films must be made, if possible, from books or plays. The original film story, written for the film, or even better, told in film without being written at all, stands little chance.

So the cinema is dying for want of a little fresh material.

Because of the appeal of any fast-moving, open-air subject the American producers have found that cowboy films pay well. Horses, shooting, good heroes and bad villains—these appeal to most of us, and the film is not really the medium for subtleties of characterization. And in the late 1940's Hollywood re-discovered Africa and opened the ball with *King Solomon's Mines*, starring Deborah Kerr and Stewart Granger.

I think this was because some of the documentaries made in Africa, particularly *Savage Splendour*, one of the Armand Denis films, had such a wonderful reception from audiences. Or it may have been the appeal of animal films made years ago and shown on American television. No doubt about it, they got audiences, *Simba*, *Bring 'em Back Alive*, the Cherry Kearton movies and the rest; dry celluloid picked out of rusting cans and distributed by the latest electronic medium into millions of homes got the viewing public. So, said the film

producers, the public likes African animal stuff. O.K., give 'em African animal stuff plus stars!

I would have suggested to these gentlemen that they read African history very carefully. That they read of John Boyes, 'King of the Wakikuyu', who set up his little empire in the 1890's and was arrested by an *askari* for usurping the British flag, and had to provide his arrester with a guard through the hostile Kikuyu country he ruled and carry his own warrant in case the *askari* lost it! Or there is the life of Lord Delamere. We read so often of the man sanctified with the halo of the pioneer and agricultural experimenter (and he did more than any man dead or alive for East Africa), that we forget what a colourful character he really was.

It was Delamere whose revolver put more than one hole in the back wall of the Norfolk Hotel bar, Delamere who wore outrageous clothes and loved the early, crazy race meetings in Kenya and sponsored them, Delamere who, when presented with some new and even stupider-than-usual Kenya Government legislation, bade his men bring firewood and pile it under the then-wooden Government offices. When he started striking matches the legislation was withdrawn. . . .

Now the Kenya Government has many vast, stone offices and it threatens to usurp every office building in the capital. Ordinary businessmen are forced to erect more and more office buildings which are, in their turn, taken over by the Minister for Froth-Blowing or Stamp-Designing. To-day pomposity gets away unchecked and unmocked. There are no brilliant political cartoonists to point the magnificent stupidities that roll unchecked from the Kenya legislators. Kenya is being killed by fools, and no man lives to raise his voice and says so, with faggots, as Delamere did.

If the film men want stories let them read the life of David Livingstone or Henry Morton Stanley or Speke

or Baker or any of the other explorers or missionaries. Krapf, or Thompson, or the elephant hunters lately and sadly deceased, Karamoja Bell or 'Deaf' Banks. Karamoja Bell even wrote a couple of wonderful books, one of which abounds with ideas.

However, a film Africa has emerged in which every rhino charges and every lion is a killer, every elephant dangerous and every explorer accompanied by a silly, if beautiful woman for no good reason. And the public are getting sick and tired . . . of African films? Lord, no, of the formula!

I had sent off to America some rather nice shots of a python, climbing a tree, eating a dead buck, being trapped by natives. I thought it was good stuff. But the usual cable came from Hollywood. 'PYTHON MATERIAL GOOD BUT MUST HAVE FIGHT STOP PREFERABLY WITH LEOPARD BUT IF NOT WITH A MAN.'

Now a leopard is a strong, murderous and swift killer. Beside a big python he is like a pussy-cat beside a wolf. Besides, the python-leopard fight has been tried. You can get a magnificent fight if you use a stuffed python and an equally-stuffed leopard, editing shots of the real, live animals taken nowhere near one another, and then 'animate' a fight between two stuffed animals. Unfair to the public? Not really, if the film is frankly fictional. The picture of Deborah Kerr stepping on a crocodile in *King Solomon's Mines* was no less exciting because the crocodile was a stuffed alligator, nor, to be frank, was the picture of Stewart Granger smacking down the spitting cobra with his veld hat more thrilling because a real, live cobra full of venom was used (as, in fact, it was). A live crocodile would have been dangerous and would not have 'acted' so well, a stuffed snake would have looked no less real, in my opinion.

Long before this book is published the public will have seen on the screens the films made by those wonderful

animal photographers the Melottes, husband and wife, who had lived with wild animals. They took a caravan, specially constructed for the job, they took every device modern cinematography could offer them. They took no Africa servants or huge safaris. They waited in the bush, for months when necessary, until they got what they wanted. I have not seen the result yet, but I am told it is magnificent. It is an animal picture with no fakes and no silly acting. And it was backed and produced by that superb showman Walt Disney who, whilst critics disagree on the merits of this or that film, is the greatest film showman of our age and is afraid of nothing, be it symphony music or animal films, new angles on cartoon subjects or slick presentation of ordinary 'period' thrillers. If genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains the Melottes are geniuses. I think genius lies much more in the ability to see clearly and without prejudice whilst other creative artists are bound by fashion and a terror of their public, and on this definition also the Melottes score heavily.

But unless a fight between a leopard and a python actually happened you will not see it in a Melotte film.

One famous producer who shall be nameless worked with a white hunter to produce a python-leopard fight. They starved the two beasts for some time, then let them into a ring together. Cameras equipped with short and long focus lenses were trained on the ring, and Round One of the battle was all set to commence. In fourteen seconds the python had killed the leopard by crushing him to death. Another leopard was procured. He cowered in a corner until the big snake killed him. This time it took nearly a minute, but the cameramen could get nothing of the action, the snake's coils obscuring the leopard.

Even a film company gets disheartened after a time, and so the project was dropped. For my part I had no intention of trying anything so silly as a python-leopard

encounter. But with a man the thing was possible, for a strong man can slip the snake's coils as they settle on him, and if you have several pretty hefty chaps standing by in case of trouble the thing is not frightfully dangerous. I wouldn't recommend it for a dull Sunday afternoon instead of a visit to the movies, but to people who are used to working with big game it is not as frightening as it may sound.

So we went looking for a python.

The herpetologist calls the python *Sebae*, in Kiswahili it is named *Satu*, but the Buganda call it by the rather jolly name of *Timba*, and when they did get down to looking for a big snake for us their calls were reminiscent of a lumber camp hard at work. Timba is an interesting chap. From his skeleton it is obvious he once had legs and walked. A big python measures from fifteen feet upwards. He is non-poisonous, crushing his food to death in his coils before he kills it. The record length is between seventeen and eighteen feet, and a big snake is thicker than a man's thigh. Whilst the African python is no match for the giant anacondas and boas of South America, he is still a bit of a handful to meet on a dark night.

I have seen a tame python being forcibly fed and the sight is a ludicrous one. The snake-keeper stood at one end with a huge bowl of meat and a pair of long, surgical forceps, and fifteen feet from him was the last native holding the tail of the snake. Between him and the snake-owner were fourteen other Africans, holding the giant stretched in a long, straight line. Now and then the snake would exert all his strength and get a few feet of himself loose, and the boys would be thrown off and a bulge would appear in the snake. This dealt with, another coil would kink out of line. Meanwhile the owner crammed meat down the python's throat with the forceps, then his wife and two children massaged the food down into the snake's belly. Once there they got a tourniquet round

the snake to hold it down, massaged a bit more and applied another tourniquet and so on, until the poor old chap was allowed to swim in a great bath of water, a tight tourniquet holding his meal down in case he decided to sick it up. He looked like a burst pipe that has had first-aid treatment.

Pythons in captivity often refuse to eat, and only this forced-feeding saves their lives. But once every six or eight weeks is enough to keep a big fellow well and fit, so the routine is not impossible, if a little trying.

I received the fateful cable from Hollywood in my room at the Speke Hotel in Kampala. It was raining, and I had never felt less like looking for a python in my life. I was on my way to the Mountains of the Moon to film gorilla for another company (if I could find any gorilla) and was drinking with a mining engineer from one of the big chrome mines high on the range. 'I tell you they're like baboons, only bigger. You'll see them in the road, hanging about just like baboons. They cross in front of your car. The thing is easy.'

'And the pygmies?'

'Easy. One old pygmy chief called Kaku helped me when I was prospecting, he provided guides and the lot I've seen them drive gorilla—I can lay that on for you.

It seemed all right. It always seems like that—at first. People are helpful, arrangements are made, everything goes swimmingly—at first. I once travelled a thousand miles over horrible roads to film some tourist attractions laid on by an anxious speculator who (I discovered only too late) was anxious to sell an estate as a great site for a tourist hotel. At the end of my drive I found nothing. Nothing at all. Except good hospitality, I must add. But the promised buffalo and elephant hunting, the excellent displays of local native craftsmanship, the natural wonders and grand views simply did not exist outside of the gentleman's letter. So one must be wary of these invi-

tations where everything is said to be perfect. Often the informant simply aims to please you and talk for a pleasant hour. He does not imagine you are going to leap straight into a car and roar off in search of the wonders he has been depicting. Most people in East Africa seem to think things over for at least six months before taking any action at all.

But my search for the wily gorilla was diverted to a search for the almost equally wily Timba.

There is a routine in these things. One sets up camp, then one sends for the *saza* chief, who in turn sends for the *gombolola* chief. The *gombolola* chief comes along and drinks half a bottle of Scotch and thinks the whole thing out, then calls for volunteers, and you get an African team out after the animal you seek. They know the district, they can recognize the signs in the sand and the mud. They will ask their neighbours and soon the *habari* goes out that a stranger is sitting under a tree to the sun-side of Kampala thirty miles from the hill that looks like an elephant's back, waiting for somebody to tell him where to find a python. So it was that I drove out to the best district, guided mainly by the wisdom of English-speaking African *duka* keepers and the occasional Indian.

Incidentally, the Indians are both richer and more humble, it seemed to me, in Uganda than in Kenya. There are, of course, educated and cultured Indian gentlemen by the score, but the ordinary about-the-village fellow is much more shirt-outside-the-trousers, much dirtier, much friendlier and possessed of a blowsier wife and filthier children than the common run of Kenya Asians. Kampala itself is a city built on seven hills, and its building programme is more hurried even than Nairobi's, but the city seems less muddle-headed, more go-ahead and less 'couldn't care less' in its attitude. The buildings look better and are better planned—except for

one or two of Nairobi's office blocks—and the plans I have seen for new buildings will certainly put Nairobi well in the shade. Watch Uganda. Watch Kampala. Big things are happening around that neck of the woods. Largely because of the mineral wealth of Uganda.

So I set out for a certain district to the south of Kampala and set up my camp. In the meantime I almost made £50 for nothing. There was an Indian with a recalcitrant motor lorry which he was kicking on its left foot in sheer exasperation. I asked him what was wrong. 'It snorts,' he said, 'but it goes not. I have seen is petrol, I am cleaning plugs. All these things I am doing, but it goes not. Is broken dreadfully inside itself.' I looked at the engine. It was a Ford V8, of 1940 vintage, and it had not been cleaned since it was bought new. There is a wholesome respect bred in one for some of the American machinery one finds in Uganda. This truck was in a condition of abject want. I suppose he put oil in it now and then, but that was all the servicing it ever got.

'Have you checked the distributor points?'

'Am checking. Am telling you is like new!'

I looked again at the truck, examining it from a fair distance. It had a load of about ten tons of cow hides. It sagged like an old sofa. It smelled like hell. The Indian wore pyjama trousers and a shirt outside them, a collarless shirt, very old and dirty. I found later he was very, very rich.

'How much is it worth to fix this truck?'

'If I am putting in garage am paying pifty pounds. You are mending, am giving you pifty pounds.' And he produced a great wad of notes, which could be deprived of 'pifty pounds' and not look much thinner.

'Then go away behind those bushes and smoke a cigarette. I must have peace for such a difficult mechanical problem.'

He looked at me suspiciously and did as I told him. I

removed the plug leads and replaced them in the correct order. I got into the cab, waggled the piece of stick that served as a gear lever, pressed the starter, and the engine roared into noisy, feverish life. The Indian came back.

Now I thought, I will see some bargaining! I have done the job, now let us see the colour of your pifty pounds.

'There you are,' I said, 'I had the know-how, that's all.'

'For this I am paying,' he said. 'I offer, you do, I pay.'

And he handed me fifty quid.

I know I should have taken it. To-day, how I could use that money! But I waved it away. 'Don't be silly,' I said, 'it was nothing.'

'I promise, I pay.'

'I was only joking.'

He thanked me profusely and offered me some curry from an unclean brass pail. I declined. It was horrible, bright-yellow vegetable curry.

'All the time I am buying trucks. All the time breaking down. This one is good truck. Ten year more life.'

He vaulted into the cab and roared off, obscuring the country with smoke.

But Uganda is the country of the jalopy and Kampala has entire streets of African garages selling, servicing and providing spares for vintage American cars. A 1926 Ford front axle? Certainly, sir. Twenty bob. Or would you like to buy a good Dodge, 1932, excellent condition? £50? Somehow they work. String and insulation tape play their part in keeping the Black Hinterland mobile, but mobile it is.

The *gombolola* chief arrived at my camp in just such a jalopy, an ancient Chevrolet with wooden artillery wheels, painted crimson with a tasteful yellow line. He was a tall, melancholy man, and he invited me to take tea with him and discuss the matter of pythons. The trouble with the *gombolola*, if one leaves out his unquenchable

thirst, was that he believed himself a speaker of very good English, and so refused to speak Kiswahili. This led to all sorts of difficulties, for he could only say, 'Good morning, how are you?' and 'Good night, it has been nice to see you.' He had a smattering of other phrases. 'Please to take tea?' This was whisky. 'I am of help to you.' This was a statement, not a question. He wasn't. Not a bit. But perhaps it wasn't his fault. All sorts of wonderful people turned up at his request. They all smelt like bananas, but then as their staple diet is bananas that is not surprising. They had been to market, they explained. Would I like to see the market?

It was indeed an impressive sight when we arrived, and our little cavalcade of jalopies, led by my stately 1934 V8 Lancia weighing the best part of two tons, swept into the nearby field and parked neatly in two lines. The Vintage Sports Car Club had nothing on us. There was a 1925 Rugby with rear-wheel brakes ('But where do you get spares?' '*Bwana*, I don't need spares!'), a 1927 Packard and an ancient Model 'T' Ford which boiled and whistled like a tea-kettle. We, the *élite*, descended and examined the goods for sale, the most interesting of which was a large quantity of real bark-cloth. It was then I discovered bark-cloth making was quite an industry in Uganda. It was strong cloth of a rather pleasant russet colour and I am sure it would be the fashion hit of the year in Europe. It drapes beautifully and can be rolled up tight into, seemingly, no space at all. I saw one man pack a vast stock-in-trade on to the carrier of his bicycle. They showed me the market, with its piles of bananas and cooking-pots, then they showed me a bark-cloth factory. This was a thatched roof supported on poles with a specially shaped log in the middle, and on this log the bark-cloth was made, the bark being soaked, then beaten out again and again with wooden tools into a thin sheet of cloth.

All they did not show me was a python. That was difficult. I went back to camp and it rained like the devil and I sat playing the radio to myself and staring at the green, wet landscape. Eventually I went to sleep and awoke bitten from head to foot by a horde of hungry mosquitoes. I was a mass of swollen bites for days afterwards, bites added to nightly, for I had omitted to make sure my net was intact, and through every little hole poured the mosquitoes, until there seemed more inside the net than there were outside.

Next day I drove again to the *gombolola's* house. It was a good house, and many a European lives in much worse, but remember he could not read or write so he had no books, and he was not a rich man, so he had little furniture. His sitting-room had a table, two chairs and a picture of the Queen. In his bedroom he and his two wives and various kids lived native fashion, cooking on flat stones laid in the hearth, and the living-room was kept for visitors. It was at his house I first found out the wonderful things you can do with bananas. You can make bananas taste like anything except a steak and two eggs. Banana porridge, banana 'potato cake', banana dessert, banana fried in ringlets, banana stewed and roasted. After a few days I hated bananas. And I was no nearer finding a python. The *gombolola* and his friends were ready to drink with me, to talk to me, and to show me the local sights, but not to take me to the one thing I wanted —a python.

When I brought the subject up they would get into a huddle and talk together in Luganda. Now this language takes some understanding as much of the conversation goes like this:

'Eeeeh!'

'Ugh. Hunhn?'

'Ehe.'

'Eeeeh.'

'Ehe?'

'Huhn?'

These grunts are spoken very slowly with much deliberation between. They give an impression of remarkable wisdom and prescience. On the whole a conversation carried on without words at all is likely to be impressive. But one thing was clear—either the *gombolola* did not know the whereabouts of a python, or he knew and was not telling me. I thought the second assumption to be much the more likely one.

One morning a woman came to see me, a decent body in a red dress of voluminous proportions with a white cap on her head. She had with her three spivs. They only needed a cigarette dangling from each pair of protruding lips and they would have been perfectly in character. I found I was to supply the cigarettes.

'I am Mohutu and these are my sons, Kwatulu, Sitara and Muhena.' They took off their 'Humphrey Bogart' hats. They shuffled their suède shoes.

'They tell me you look for a Timba. How much will you pay?'

'I will pay two hundred shillings. If the snake is over fifteen feet long I will pay twenty shillings per foot. But under twelve feet long the snake doesn't interest me.' There followed a long family conference carried on in grunts. Then they vanished. An hour later they all bobbed up again, Mohutu still in her red dress, the sons in old trousers and dirty shirts and barefoot. Ready for work.

'We must go to the swamp. There a great snake lives in a hole. We will show you, but you must catch him, not us.'

I spent the next three hours traipsing through muddy water up to my knees. 'Timba swims here,' the woman whispered. It was likely enough, every python loves to swim. At last we came ashore and, not finding the python

in the water, we approached his home, cautiously. If it was a female she might be sitting on her eggs; pythons lay up to fifty in a clutch and sit on them until they hatch, and the little snakes cut their way through the shell with a special tooth nature provides on their snouts—the tooth grows off in a week or two.

But I did not find the snake in the hole, for there was not just one hole. We discovered, instead, a labyrinth of porcupine holes and chambers under the ground and it was useless to dig, as every chamber dug out revealed three more. The sun was setting when we decided to give it up. I gave Mummy and the boys twenty bob and they seemed delighted. They had been working on a 'no Timba, no cash' basis.

We were walking away towards that loathsome swamp when up came a deputation from the local government; an old man in bark-cloth and two friends in blankets. They said something to the woman in her own language that made her turn pale. The boys looked sheepish. Then the old man produced a large axe and tried to cut the oldest boy's head off. I said I thought this was a little unsporting and backed up my statement by waving my ·375 Magnum at him. He dropped the axe and broke into Kiswahili.

'Did you see the little village on the right side of the road before you enter the swamp?'

'I did.'

'Well, it is deserted.'

'So I noticed.'

'The fields are ruined, the place is overgrown, the poor people have had to move, all of them. Did you see that?'

'I saw the village was empty.'

'Empty, ruined, deserted. Why? Because their python was killed by hunters. Now you want to come and kill our python! Our homes are small and poor, but they are our homes, mister. You shan't take our python, and these

bad people shall not show you our python. If they do I will kill them, all of them.'

It was then I had my brainwave.

'But I do not wish to harm your Timba. All I wish to do is take his piksha.'

'*Eeeeh! Wewe na taka piksha indani ya camela yako? M'zuri sana*, he!' They laughed. They slapped one another on the back. We were all friends again.

'How much for piksha?'

I repeated my prices. It seemed cheap for the local god.

'*M'zuri sana*,' said the oldster. '*M'zuri kabisa*.' Everything in the garden was lovely. All we had to do was find the python. That was all. We made a date for the morrow. I went back through the swamp to another battle with the mosquitoes.

In the meantime I had acquired a partner in crime, a young man called Pete. I believe Pete was a deserter from the Kenya Police, but perhaps I am doing him an injustice. He was very proud of the stupefaction of the immigration man on the Uganda border when he had arrived.

'Are you coming to Uganda on holiday?'

'No, I'm getting a job here.'

'Sorry, old man, it isn't easy to enter Uganda for purposes of employment. I'll give you a two-week pass, then you must move on.'

Pete played a big card.

'But I was born in Uganda. . . .'

'So I see,' smiled the official, 'but you see you're a European, and there is a special law applying. . . .'

'I'm no European,' said Pete, 'I'm Muganda. Subject to the Kabaka only. Now move over and let a man into his own country.' And the official did.

Pete's job in all this was a simple one—he had to wrestle with the python. He thought it all rather fun.

'If it gets too hot for me I'm going to duck and bloody

well *taroka*,' said Pete. He had a wonderful gift of speaking a dialect all his own, interspersed with Kiswahili words when they were more expressive than English, and indicating the tenses of the verbs by simply adding English suffixes.

'This bloody wog come up with *habari* that Dick was *kujaing* to-morrow. So I says *m'zuri* and slips him some *bukshishi*. No sooner do I get settled down to a cuppa *chai* than I discover the beggar has *kwendaxed mara moja* with my bloody *kofia*. So I chase him. I catches him going *madukani* and *pigas* the bastard with my boot, then discovers I'd left my *kofia* in the *gharri*. Poor beggar.'

So Pete described his chase of a native who had come with the news that his brother, Dick, was expected next day. Pete tipped him, but discovered that the native had apparently stolen his hat. So he ran after him and caught him near the stores, whither the native was bound, and kicked him, only to discover he had really left his hat in the car.

'I *fikiri* we ought to *kula* some *tembo*.' So Pete would announce that he thought it was time for a drink. To Pete it was usually time for a drink. Pete had an amazing servant named Osheshu. Osheshu was 'straight out of the bloody *porini*'. Straight from the bush. When Pete took him on Osheshu had never seen such things as books or tins of food. He knew nothing of packing suitcases or pressing trousers, and Pete had not the inclination to teach him. To Osheshu the idea of folding his master's clothes to pack them was completely unknown. He would simply open Pete's huge, battered suitcase and throw everything in. Pairs of kippers, tins of food, books. (Pete was an omnivorous reader of the best of fiction. He could discuss the subtleties of differences in style, and even the sensual impact of different sentence constructions was not lost on Pete. Thomas Wolfe, John dos Passos, Hemingway and Steinbeck were his gods. A dozen or more volumes

would be pitched into the suitcase with clean clothes, ammunition, biltong and perhaps half a cooked chicken to keep them company. I suppose Osheshu was about fourteen. And it was typical of such a 'nigger-hater' as Pete was, or boasted to be, that with Osheshu he was patience itself.

'Oh, you silly little black thing,' he would say wearily when Osheshu mixed tinned peaches and tinned Irish stew for Pete's lunch, 'you utter and impossible little clot. You're fired. Get out of my bloody sight.' And then to me, 'He's a bloody scream, isn't he? Nice bloke, though, old Osheshu. I pay him thirty bob a month, *bado*.' *Bado* or *bado kidogo* means the same as *mañana*—'in a little while'—and East Africa has often been described as 'the land of *bado kidogo*'.

Pete was one of the irrepressible company of East Africa's adventurers. Lean, sun-bronzed, muscular and tough as nails, he was supposed to be a farm manager by profession. He did anything. He supervised the building of roads, he ran sisal factories, he (inevitably) hunted the crafty crocodile, he tried to sell a new brand of beer to *duka wallahs*, he worked in garages and stayed with farmers doing odd jobs.

'Best job I ever had,' said Pete, sitting over the campfire roasting guinea-fowl he had poached with his ·22 rifle and smoking Uganda cheroots, 'was managing a farm for a bloke who had a proper *maliya* of a wife.' A *maliya*, in plain parlance, is a whore. 'It was a grand job, but this blasted *ngombe* chased me all the time. He loved her, poor devil, and used to warn me against being found with her. "I'll put a ·45 slug in you," he used to say, "if I find you with Charlotte. She's only a kid, mentally, and doesn't know much about men. You watch out." Know about men! Great God, she'd slept with everything in trousers between Thomson's Falls and Nairobi. I wouldn't have touched her with somebody else's barge-

pole. Every time I come to the *nyumba* for a drink or a meal she'd be there, and every time he went out of the room, she'd land in my lap. I got mad one night and clocked her one, and she run straight to him and said I was trying to make her misbehave herself, and he came roaring in with his *bunduki* cocked and loaded, all ready to blow holes in me. So I clipped him under the jaw and took it off him. I walked out that night. Best job I ever had, too.'

It was with Pete and Osheshu I went python catching next day. We were armed with pistols, a burlap bag, a black silk evening sock and a dozen bottles of beer in case we had to wait for Timba.

The old headman met us with six or seven of his merry men, and we walked in silence, in single file, through the incredibly green countryside of Uganda.

It was a landscape of banana palms clattering their leaves in the stiff breeze that promised more rain, under a blue sky against which floated dark grey, drifting clouds and towering white cumulus. The wind sang in the bamboo by the swamp as we forced our way through. A little buck took fright and fled before us, and great birds rose from the swamp and flapped off, crested cranes, ungainly in the first hundred yards of their flight, to turn into soaring, lonely, beautiful things as they gained height and sailed above us.

It was here we came upon the secretary birds killing a puff-adder.

The puff-adder, *Bitis arietans*, to give him his Latin name, is a sluggish, dangerous snake. He has not the terrible venom of the cobra, but a bite from his freshly charged fangs can kill a man, death coming after hours of agony. I once watched a Masai in Tanganyika treat a puff-adder bite by slashing open the wound on his own arm and sucking, sucking, sucking at it. On that occasion I had some anti-venin at my camp and I hared off in my hunting car to get the snake-kit. When I returned

the Masai was unconscious, but an injection of the antivenin restored him to life in under an hour.

The puff-adder gets his name from his habit of puffing himself up and hissing before he strikes. He is a fat snake, light brown with chocolate markings, rather beautiful to look at. The female does not lay eggs, but bears live young, and the usual diet of the snake is mice and small birds. He is a fat chap, the puff-adder, a big one going over five feet in length. Some experts claim that the puff-adder seldom exceeds four feet, but I have actually seen specimens measured shortly after death (I cut one's head off with a *panga* in my own garden) which went to nearly six feet. He is a slow sort of chap, as thick through the middle as a man's arm, and he blends in so well with the yellowed grass and reeds of Africa that there is a real danger of stepping on him. He gives warning before he strikes—hissing venomously—and when he strikes it is with lightning speed.

His opponents, on this occasion, were five secretary birds, called by the ornithologists *Serpentarius Saggitarius*, long-legged, wise-looking fellows with quills behind their ears and horrible, red-rimmed eyes. These birds are the natural enemies of the reptiles, but they looked like mournful Bob Cratchits, who had been working hard all night penning letters and now were taking the morning air. They looked very old and very evil with their long beaks and red-streaked eyes.

We did not see the snake at first, only the birds, and it was the old headman who held up his hand for silence. We stopped then and watched the drama.

In the grass lay the fat, sluggish snake, apparently asleep, his beautifully marked head lying inert on the ground. The birds did not seem to notice him. They walked around, moving their heads, bobbing their necks and raising their long legs stiffly like old men tired out walking.

Then one of the birds struck. He moved sideways without warning and he hit the puff-adder with the 'sole' of his foot. That horny foot, propelled by the long, powerful leg, sounded like a boxer's blow. It was exactly the sound of a good heavyweight getting in a right to the body, a crisp, hard blow.

In turn, the snake struck. His squat head raised, darted up at the bird's body with all the speed he could muster. The bird shifted effortlessly and the blow missed him, and again he slammed in a crisp punch to the snake's body. The puff-adder fell back and the birds left him. They walked around some more, apparently deep in thought. Then a second bird did his fast step sideways, his terrible claw hitting in three fast, crisp punches. The snake rose a moment, writhed, then the bird struck again, this time a flurry of hard blows with both feet as he raised his wings. It was all over. The adder's back was broken and the birds rose in agitation as we approached them. They ran off on their long, ungainly legs, like obscene ballet-dancers dancing whilst drunk. Their great wings beat air, then the legs were dragged up. Airborne they rose, hovered, waited until we had passed, then planed down on to their quarry and soon the terrible beaks were ripping the carcase of the snake to pieces. It was old Africa, living before our eyes her eternal law . . . kill and be killed, eat and be eaten. The law of the jungle is only the law of strength. The strong prevail and the weak must submit. That is what Africa understands.

CHAPTER XVI

IN WHICH WE BORROW A GOD

We came out of the swamp into a green glade with tall grass and the red, hard pinnacles of ant-hills everywhere. It was noon and very hot and silent. Warily we moved forward.

And there was Timba. He was big, very big. I had no chance to measure him, but he must have been at least our required fifteen feet.

Before this operation we had practised a drill for python catching, and now it came into operation in earnest. As we ran forward Mr. Timba decided to get somewhere else. He made for his hole. Now so powerful are a python's muscles that once he has a couple of feet of his length into his hole nothing short of a car and a tow-rope will dislodge him. So I ran to cut him off, throwing myself on him and feeling the great coils start to bunch under me. Pete was on to his tail with the rest of the *watu* with him, stretching the snake out. He reacted with all his enormous power—the strongest thing, weight for weight, in the whole animal kingdom. It was a great length of moving steel we had in our hands.

I let go of him and grabbed the evening sock, and managed to get it over his head. Almost immediately he went quiet and limp. For he had reached the darkness, and in the darkness there was safety. Then he seemed to feel the hands on him, and twitched his tail, throwing off the men who held it. I got the bag round his head and realized he could see a little through the sock. But he went into the bag as fast as he could, coil by coil, squeez-

ing his great bulk into the welcome darkness. And he lay still in the bag as we dragged his great weight to a background of bamboos where we could stage our fight.

Pete and I sat and smoked whilst the *watu* went off for the cameras, which were packed in two boxes and could hardly be mistaken by anyone.

I had a moment's trouble with Pete, who got temperamental and wanted to be filmed stripped to the waist and showing his tattoo marks in his wrestling match with Timba.

The wrestling match went off so well that there is very little to tell about it. Timba, released from his bag, did not want to wrestle anybody. There was a large ant-bear hole down by the swamp, and he, poor snake, wanted to get into it. He had no intention of being filmed if he could help it.

However, the dauntless Pete (in the film story he was the poor chap dropped on by the wicked snake as he wended his unsuspecting way across the veld in search of his father's cattle) grabbed the python just behind the head and the struggle was on. The coils went round him like lightning. No wonder a leopard was killed in less than thirty seconds!

Pete kept one strong arm on the second coil, like a man trying to play an animated euphonium, and the snake's grip slipped. But he knocked Pete to the ground and got a second coil round him.

Now it was either the film or Pete, for the big Timba, who was nearly as thick as my own waist at his fattest part, threw another coil round a tree-stump. That gave him the leverage to crush Pete to death. I yelled, and the *watu* grabbed the python's tail and unhitched it. The python uncoiled at that. My camera was on the *watu* fighting the tail, now I switched back to the head. Pete was struggling with the coils round him. He got an arm out and pushed one great length of snake away. Inexorably I moved in for a close-up.

I had fifteen seconds of screenable material of a fight between a man and a python. Now I changed lenses by swinging the camera turret and got some long shots. Poor Pete! When at length I finished filming he was black and blue.

We prised Timba away and the offended snake, who had never wanted to fight a man in his life, went almost whizzing off to his hole.

It was then that I told Pete how lucky he was not to be bitten, for a python's teeth are very sharp, and meant for giving the *coup de grâce* to his victim before his jaws unhinge and he swallows. . . .

Some months after this event I saw the film. Where Pete was by then I cannot even guess. If I had to, I would hazard a guess that he was working up on one of the mines on the slopes of the Mountains of the Moon, for the pay is good and the hours are short and the drinking at times is fast and furious.

But I saw him on the screen, 'being' a well-known actor for twenty seconds whilst the snake's coils closed on him, intercut with close-ups of the Hollywood actor's horrified face as the coils of a (stuffed) anaconda closed on him.

I don't know what the audience felt, but to me it brought back the sharp smell of a swamp and the glitter of the blown bamboos, the noise of the high wind and the feel of the steel-strength of the snake's body under my hands. And if anyone recognizes that film, and remembers coming out of a cinema into a wet London night with the neons reflecting in the shiny pavements and the traffic snoring past, and remembers saying, 'Of course it was all faked,' he is wrong. In one way he is wrong. A man risked his life for those shots. And wherever you are, Pete, may the gods of adventure be good to you.

I think they will be, those dark little gods. They work some strange tricks on their worshippers, yet somehow,

when a man has put himself into their hands, they will never let him starve, and they will always provide him with what he asks. The price can be heavy, for they are not philanthropists, but the little jungle gods will give a man what he demands. Only later will they present the check; then you must smile and pay up, in fever, in loneliness, in heartbreak, in jail, in death itself. When the bill comes in, pay up and look cheerful, for if you are of their worshippers they have served you with the goods as ordered, and only demand their just dues.

As a footnote to the above I might mention that the old headman was not a fool, and was taking no risks. He had led us to *somebody else's python*. We had borrowed, I discovered, the local god of an unsuspecting village just over the hill. It was really rather a nice double-cross!

CHAPTER XVII

THE JUNGLE PEOPLE

Up there in that strange valley they are mining chrome. There is the blasting and the rattle of rock drills, the roar of crushers and the clatter of laden tubs. At night you may be on your bunk and look far over the Congo to the red blotch that shows the position of the volcanoes at Namalagira.

A girl secretary trips past on her way from the dance at the mine club. She will have a hot shower before she turns in. Breakfast will be at six-thirty in the cold, mountain morning.

Dennis Northern is a Canadian, like so many of the mining experts who have come to Ruwenzori, the 'Mountains of the Moon', to earn good money. He is more, however, than most, he is a geologist and a mining engineer, and if he put all the right letters after his name they would stretch off a sheet of notepaper. Once he was paid £1,500 for his opinion—just like that. Three days' survey, an opinion in writing, and he got £1,500. As a result of which somebody invested £500,000 in a mine up here in the rain forest.

'Gorilla?' he said. 'Oh, sure; there are gorilla here. Trouble is this, can you be sure of filming 'em? I mean you can't exactly pose them in front of a camera.' He thought. 'We ought to go and see Chief Opik. He might lay something on.'

I thought gloomily that if I did get a wonderful picture of a gorilla in his native haunts Hollywood would probably ask why it wasn't smoking a pipe or fighting with a lion.

We stood together in the clear, blue air on the steep mountainside by the mine, with the dust drifting like smoke from the crushing plant. 'One way it's civilization,' Dennis said, thoughtfully, 'the other way, why, it's just Africa.' He nodded to the feathery bamboo. 'Opik lives up there. You'll come to his village—if you know the way to go. I'll give you a guide.'

In some ways this was the queerest of all the transformations I had seen in Africa, this mine in the strange forest. For here was industry and big business with telephones and tractors, fleets of trucks and dictaphones, setting up shop in a haunted fairy-land. Nothing is real here. There are great peaks, but you do not see them, only the swirling mists, until one bright morning the landscape opens for you and there is revealed a vista of tumbled, rugged, snow-capped mountain ranges. Then the mist closes silently and you cannot remember the shape or the configuration of the peaks. In a little while you begin to doubt if they ever existed. There are elephants, rhino and buffalo up here, great herds of buffalo and some very old elephants. On the way up from Fort Portal I had seen some mossy-backs that looked as old as time. Great beasts swinging noiselessly along a deserted road in the cold dawn light, with ivory tusks that were huge and curved like a scimitar.

'Do you see gorilla often?' I asked the Canadian.

'Fairly often. They're supposed to be very rare and all sorts of protective laws apply to them. But, hell, they tear the guts out of the native *shambas*. They're very shy, so you usually see them when you're driving. Come across them suddenly. You'll see a whole family sitting by the road and before you know it they're away, with the youngsters in the trees and the old man running through the bush on his short, bowed legs. But you can never guarantee it.'

You could never guarantee anything with gorillas.

Travel further up these strange peaks and you come into a lunatic world where groundsel grows twelve feet high and strange, spiked plants flourish in the eternal drizzle of rain from the peaks. Below this is the bamboo forest, where the tough-stemmed bamboo cuts out the sun and restricts your passage up the steep slopes. It is in this half-lit world the big apes live. They eat the shoots of the young bamboos, they make their nests here. And they travel through strange tunnels driven through the forest, the big monkeys going crouched, fingers trailing as they move.

That night I lay listening to Paris on the radio. There was a girl singing 'Mon cœur est un violon' and I remembered Lucienne Boyer, and my mind turned to the Stavisky affair, and Paris before the war, the warm evenings and the little bistros and the food and the good talk and all the things one remembers about Paris. And the song ended, and I remembered I was going up to a pygmy village next morning to interview a chief not four feet tall about a meeting with the shyest animals on earth. I sighed. I would have loved to have heard French spoken again that night. True, I could hear it over the Congo border easily enough, but I longed for France. I didn't dream then that within three months I should be bathing in Mauritius, Britain's French island, and living in a completely French atmosphere. The film business is delightful only in that it is full of travel and surprises.

Next day my guide arrived. He was a 'pygmy', the sort of pygmy the tourist meets, a mixture of pygmy and Bantu blood, small, crafty, avaricious. He was called, of all things, Charles, and he was a verminous little brute who hated the true pygmies of the mountains and the deep forests as only a half-breed can hate. They had always been, he said in Kiswahili, the slaves of his people (he meant the full-sized Bantu tribes), but whilst this was so in a way it would be truer to say the pygmies were

under the protection of the Bantu tribes and in exchange for that protection gave certain services.

They are not nice people to fall out with, these tiny men, for they know far too much about arrow poison and shoot far too well with their small bows.

Opik, unlike my verminous little friend, was a gentleman. He was very small, very dirty and very naked, but every inch of him was a chief. To me he was neither condescending nor servile. He met me casually yet warmly, offered me beer, told me to sit down on a log and called his hunters.

He was a man of about fifty, I suppose, looking older, about 3 feet 6 inches in height, grey-headed, pot-bellied and completely naked, but for a string of thongs round his waist. He was poor, with the poverty of a man who has no possessions save his tiny house and his little patch of ground growing beans, his bow and his arrows. As I talked to him I thought again of the Heikum bushmen who had been a people and were now 'labour', by order. May Opik be spared that, be spared seeing his home taken away and his hunting forbidden and his soul thrown aside as a thing of no importance. May he always live in his fairy-land and never meet the wrong sort of white people.

God knows, I have travelled enough and met people enough, but I have only recently realized the villainy of man to man as a living truth. I have only recently seen and known the cities, coming back to them from the bush, seen the smart boys out to make a swift buck. I've driven into Jo'burg and read the morning paper with its heart-breaking advertisements for commission salesmen and touts, knowing what that means in terms of human misery, degradation and suffering. Surely the devil-take-the-hindmost attitude of modern civilization is less 'civilized' than the grave deliberations of a naked savage like little Opik?

The weakest go to the wall in Africa—but even the witch-doctor believes his own remedies. He does not deliberately set out to palm off on sufferers rubbish that cannot cure them by smart advertising. One reads the papers and sees the glowing reports of medicines that will make fat women thin (why should they want to be thin? No reason, but let's make them self-conscious so we can sell our muck), or thin women plump, or bald men hairy. One is sickened by the rat race of a big city. The lion kills, the leopard kills, the crocodile rends his victims, the red ants murder mindlessly, the savages steal cattle and love the sight of blood. But at least in the bush no man pretends to be better than another because he is more 'civilized'.

No, this is not sour grapes. I can hold my own in a rat race or with a revolver with the next man. I can sell soothing syrup or cough mixture or toothpaste and invent better lies than most of the people at present in the field. Love, affection, happiness, pride—these are the 'weaknesses' in people to be battened on and exploited. The natural feeling of inferiority and the natural self-consciousness of a young man or a young woman are no longer to be regarded as rather lovely stages of growth, something to be smiled at by us older people. No, they are prickly with 'sales points', let us exploit them and to hell with the damage it may do.

An alternative is to ban certain types of goods and certain types of advertisement, but banning anything is bad.

And there is no good advocating that civilization should return to the honesty and morality of Opik. Too many London businessmen of my acquaintance would look silly in nothing but a few leather bootlaces worn round the waist!

Whilst I am wandering in this fashion let me bring to the notice of advertisers a new angle on 'B.O.'—that much-flogged horse on which the manufacturers of deo-

dorants and their shareholders ride. In Africa the smell of a man or a woman is part of his or her attraction to the opposite sex. Why not, advertisers, reverse the process and publish ads. like the following: 'Stink like a polecat and your boy will love you! Use PONG, the wizard African love-potion, and be the centre of male attraction. You can't go wrong with PONG'? There could be a tasteful drawing of a group of girls saying, 'She smells like nothing on earth—but watch the boys go for her!' No more crude or basically untrue than the usual ad.

But all this is nothing to do with hunting gorillas. However, that, too, takes a knowledge of psychology. You or I would think that the way to drive gorillas to where you want them to go would be to bang drums and make threatening noises. But the pygmies don't do that.

To start at the beginning, why do the pygmies want to drive gorillas at all? To kill them. That is the sad answer.

They want to kill them for the same reason a sheep farmer in Australia wants to kill rabbits. It is either the gorillas or the pygmies. The forest is not big enough to hold both. And as the pygmy is higher in the scale of evolution he calls the tune. The gorilla destroys his primitive crops, right, he destroys the gorilla. Just as I, when I was a farmer, forgot my love of wild things, threw off my hypocrisy and shot every baboon I could see. It is excellent, if one is in a position where baboons, elephants or lions cannot harm you or your way of making a livelihood, to be a one hundred per cent. preservationist, and say that the farmer who shoots, say, elephant on his land is a swine who should be horsewhipped. But if the elephant are destroying the farmer's living, or even the new car he hoped to buy next year, the farmer will rightly judge the elephant must go. And he will take his rifle and shoot as many as he can of the elephant as dead as Queen Anne's cat. And more power to his elbow. But there is a growing, unfortunate tendency to regard the

rights of big game as more important than the rights of tribesmen to make their living. If lions are killing cattle, then the lions must go, for one cannot judge such matters in the light of eternity. *Homo sapiens*, poor sap, must come first. A native must not be forbidden to defend his home or his herds or his crops. That is the sort of situation we must guard against where a 'rare' animal like the gorilla is to be 'protected' at the expense of Opik and his friends. If the Government want to protect the gorilla let them compensate Opik. Not hand the power to some Game Warden who loves his animals and who will legislate against the native on behalf of the animals. That is manifestly unfair and unjust, but it is happening in Africa to-day, and must be guarded against.

Opik is breaking the law with his drives against the gorillas, yet Opik and his tribe will starve if he does not take action to reduce their numbers and scare them off his crops—and a big male, weighing 600 lb. or more, can take some scaring by little hunters, most of them not four feet high.

The trees press in on Opik's village, trees festooned with creepers and lichen, and the tiny, pointed huts cower under their branches. Bamboo thickets guard the steep slopes of the approach from below, and there is a strong smell of wet vegetation, almost of mildew, in the clearing. As I sat there talking with Opik, using my guide as an interpreter, Opik's people crept out of the huts where they had been hiding. Fine-muscled little men and shapely little women, most of them, but with disease and malnutrition evident on their bodies. They hunt buck up in the forests, and meat is the chief item in their diet; however, when they kill an animal they are committing an offence against the game laws. Not that anybody bothers them. At least the white man displays some sense in his actions, if not in his legislation.

Yes, Opik said, he would be delighted to put on a gorilla

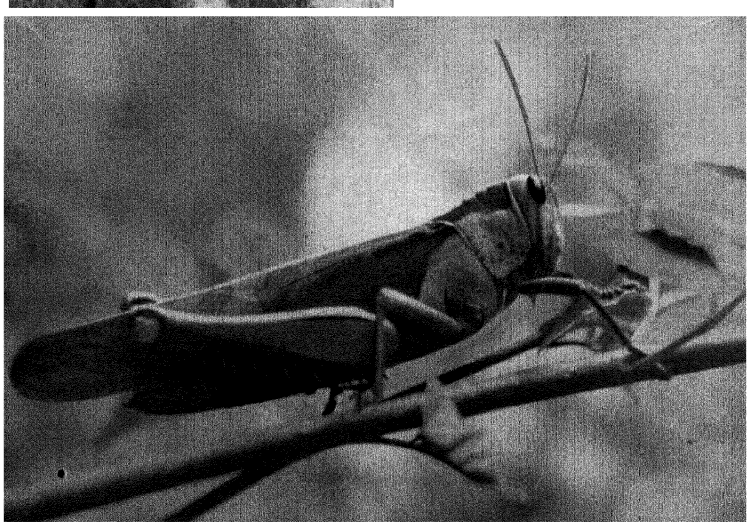


Lipupui and Rukaruk



Little Suzanna Erasmus with her tame python, Jezebel

Lone shot of a locust



drive for me, provided I kept my mouth shut. His people would want paying in money, in salt and in meat. Could I shoot buffalo for them? I said I would do so, if they sent trackers out with me and people to carry the meat in. So next morning I set out with two pygmy trackers from Opik's village, carrying my faithful ·375, which seemed as unmanœuvrable as a barge-pole in these thickets. Butterflies danced in the glades, the world was all mist and sunshine, a green wet world, and we almost ran down the steep slopes into the sparser forests where the great buffalo herds graze.

As trackers, the pygmies are unbeatable. They have the ability to tell how long ago an animal passed from a bent blade of grass, and when hunting elephant they can give you a very good idea of the age, weight and condition of a beast by studying his spoor. They have a photographic memory for footprints, and they will identify a tusker after years by a swift examination of his prints.

They got on to the buffalo by 'sweeping' one area until they found tracks, then 'pointed' like excited hunting dogs and ran mechanically up the slopes, working down-wind of the herd.

So that they brought me out in the perfect position for shooting, below the herd slightly, but less than fifty yards away, with the wind and light perfect. They know this business backwards, do Opik's little people.

A great deal of nonsense is written about buffalo shooting. One would imagine from the reports that every buffalo hunt was full of exciting risk and every animal likely to charge, to lay in wait for the hunter, to savage him to death at the first opportunity.

The truth is that tens of thousands of head of buffalo have been killed in East Africa in the last ten years, and I suppose less than a dozen European hunters have been killed by them. The men who get killed are usually the experts who are so used to buffalo shooting that they get

careless. They sooner or later take one risk too many with a wounded beast and that is their hard luck. Of course, in the case of a charge a cool head and a certain amount of skill with a rifle is essential, for the buffalo seems to have enormous reserves of energy and once he has been hit without fatal results he is the very devil to put down. Yet a heavy bullet will usually knock him off his feet, and in the case of my ·375 Magnum I have never seen a bullet 'splinter on the boss of his horns'. A ·375 bullet goes through the boss of a buffalo's horns like the proverbial knife through butter. And I have seen a skilled pistol shot, shooting meat for his camp, kill three from a herd with three head shots at fifty yards with a ·375 Colt Magnum revolver.

Killing only for food, one wants to select two or three prime young bulls and put them down with the least possible disturbance. Experience alone teaches you how to sense in which direction a herd will break, although frequently a buffalo herd will stand its ground, puzzled, whilst you pick off two or three bulls.

On this occasion I put a young bull down with a shoulder shot, selecting the beast farthest away from me, and saving the nearer, easier shots for later. As he fell I sighted on a bigger bull only forty yards away. He was tossing his head and wondering what the noise was about and I brain-shot him without any trouble. With my third shot the herd stampeded and I did not want to spend a weary day tracking buffalo through bamboo thickets, so I let them go, although sorely tempted to have a crack at another bull as they thundered off with much snorting and tossing of horns. The three animals I had shot were quite dead, and Opik's men got to work with their sharp little spears, cutting up the meat and skinning.

I reloaded my rifle, took one pygmy as a guide, and started back for the village.

Opik was still naked, but he was wearing a hat—a hat

made for a woman in about the year 1926, a sort of motoring helmet of soft Russian leather with a bunch of cherries on one side. It was fetching. Opik then startled me by addressing me in English. 'Bloody good, eh?' he said. When I told him meat was on its way he nodded. He knew already. This was not done by any mysterious bush telegraph; a pygmy hunter had called the news to a friend bound for the village and he had shouted it on to some women working a quarter of a mile away, and they in turn had passed it up the slope to a party gathering edible roots, who had called it in to the village.

Preparations were immediately got under way for a feast and a dance; pots of boiling water soon bubbled on the fires and women cooked vegetables and roots whilst the men who were not on Operation Buffalo began to decorate themselves for the evening's festivities—buck horns on the head, feathers round the face, white clay smeared over face and body and made into a pattern with the fingers and red clay on the legs, spotted in imitation of the leopard. Opik marched out of his hut early in the afternoon as I sat making notes, astonishingly decorated with coloured feathers and wearing a cloak of gorilla fur, the great head hanging loose on his back.

I rose and stretched and walked off into the forest, taking my rifle (one is not allowed to import pistols into Uganda without special permission). There were orchids in some of the trees, many of them strange and beautiful waxen blooms clustered about the high branches, but also hundreds of different species with speckled leaves, strange, non-flowering orchids. There was one great plant which looked like a fly-trap, with sticky flowers, palest pink with deep-red markings on the curling petals. I threw some dust on it, and the petals dutifully curled, closing the flower entirely. I suppose it is quite common, for I am no botanist, but at the time I was quite excited. I have never seen one of these things in Africa before or since.

By this time I was getting quite used to ducking down the tunnels made by the gorillas and the rhino through the bamboos. It had naturally occurred to me to wonder what happened if you met a rhino and/or gorilla ducking down them the other way, but I had seen no sign of gorillas and rhinos do not move a great deal in the heat of the day. So I ducked down one ragged path through the bamboos that met over my head, seeing another green glade beyond. Ahead of me I heard a rustle and a crackling noise and I hurried forward simply because I had gone too far to turn back and did not want to be caught by anything in that thick cover. I emerged in time to see a family of gorillas take flight through the trees, the youngsters already branch-borne, mother running lightly over the ground not a hundred yards from me, and father, a large dog with that terrifying expression gorillas have, moving after them, looking over his shoulder from time to time. They disappeared, leaving me looking at the crushed place in the bamboos where they had lain and the half-chewed remains of their meal of bamboo shoots. They had been in view less than thirty seconds.

The dance that night was an amazing affair. The little people of the forest sang in their high, strange voices and the syncopated drum-beats echoed the rhythm of the song.

It was a song of triumph, a song of meat. It echoed out like the firelight, falling on the tall trees of the forest and being lost in the bamboos, the voice of primitive man, victor over the jungle, victor over the powers of the animal kingdom. Only a few miles away the great mine slept, the dynamos snoring in their sleep, and the club would be closing. The ore lorries would be rattling off through the dark towards railhead. To the south-west the Congo lay under the night like a Kafir under a blanket—the uranium mines and the lost, riverine villages, the busy towns and the great forests where the bongo and

the okapi lived still. And like a beacon the volcanoes of the Congo painted the clouds red with their fires.

Under the peaks of the Mountains of the Moon the pygmies danced, danced to the old drum-beat and the sweet, raw song of the chase. They danced the death of the buffaloes, they danced the death of elephants, they danced the gorilla drive. Tiny feet stamped the raw, moist earth, each hand held a bow or a quiver of poisoned arrows as they mimed the chase, and the kill. And at length I crept into my tent, with the noise of the dance still in my ears. At dawn they were lying where they had fallen, men and women. It had been good, they said. They were gorged with meat and ready for any mischief. So we went out driving gorillas.

The pygmies drove nine gorillas into a clearing and butchered them with spears and arrows. They have a method of driving that is surely unique. They get upwind of the big apes and let them smell their human bodies. The gorillas move away, not panicked, but ever watchful. The pygmies close in and once more let the gorillas get the human scent. The apes move on. So the game goes on, methodically, silently in the great forest. When the gorillas try to double back the bowmen are waiting for them. They do not eat gorilla meat, these pygmies, although I am told it is considered a delicacy by other indigenous tribes. So once a poisoned arrow has gone home the pygmy ranks open and let the gorillas through; they will die somewhere in the forest. No use risking lives chasing them.

I was footsore and exhausted, following the swift, silent little bowmen, my heavy movie camera and its batteries weighing me down, my suède boots slowing me, making me stumble where they ran nimbly, barefoot. But the most we saw of a gorilla was a sudden flash of him running ahead in the bamboo tunnels. Visibility was practically nil.

Once a rhino broke cover and went smashing off, blowing like a steam engine in deep, angry snorts of breath. We leapt aside and let him go. More than once buck came leaping from the bamboos, and the 'whispering death' of the little arrows struck them down.

Then the pygmies halted. A man ran forward to scout out the land. Three lines of hunters, working a roughly triangular area, had converged on a clearing. In the clearing were nine gorillas, the hunters said, three males, two females and four babies. I hurried forward and tried to set up my camera. I was tired to death, my hands shook from the climb and the altitude. I could still see nothing of the gorillas. Then the pygmies went in.

They ran forward yelling, firing their bows as fast as strings could be pulled and arrows fitted. The amazing thing was that they missed one another. I followed them with the camera, but the scene I witnessed could not be filmed. The stricken apes rushed at their tormentors and the pygmies hurled spears and shot arrows at the big brutes, then rushed in in a frenzy of hatred for their huge enemies, stabbing the dying monkeys again and again, howling like madmen as they cut the corpses to pieces.

There was a dance that night but I did not see it. I was safely ensconced in the mine club and my hand was firm about a glass of whisky. There are some things in the jungle it is not good to see.

CHAPTER XVIII

A BAD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL!

A few weeks ago I received a letter from a small boy who asked, 'What was the worst thing that ever happened to you in the jungle? And how frightened were you?'

I have had four really bad frights, and only one of them was to do with animals at all. Two were firearms accidents and both were entirely due to my own carelessness.

The first one was when on Mau Mau patrol in the Aberdares I ran through a farm gate and caught the exposed hammer of a borrowed ·38 Special revolver on the gate-post. The gun was fitted with a rebounding hammer and should not have gone off. However it did, and the immensely powerful slug missed my foot by about an inch. I had to sit down for a moment to get over that. Had I been using my own hand gun this could not have happened as I load only five chambers.

On another occasion we were chasing a gang near Naro Moru in thick bush and I had expended all the ammunition in my favourite gun, my ·45 Frontier Colt, and switched to a Colt automatic with a four-inch barrel. I was running like blazes when a terrorist fired at me from behind a bush to my right and missed me so closely my ears were singing from his bullet for days afterwards. I then saw I had run into an ambush, and fired back at the first man, missing him, doubled on my track to be tackled by a second man, this one armed with an Italian rifle, obviously smuggled in from Eritrea. He fired and

missed me, I fired and hit him more than somewhat. He fell down and I jumped over him as I ran away from the converging fire of two of his friends. It was one of those hot moments! However, up came reinforcements in the shape of a friend with an automatic shotgun. This is the most terrible weapon ever made for close fighting in bush, much more effective than a Patchett gun or a Sten. My opposite number demolished that ambush very fast, and I came back, stepping over the man I believed I had killed, in case there was any mopping up to be done.

The 'dead' chum grabbed me by the ankle and a struggle for my automatic ensued. It only went on for a few seconds, for I dropped the gun and went for him with my hands rather thoroughly. I knocked him out, and went to pick up my ·32 automatic. Now I have always been used to a heavy revolver, the powerful and effective Frontier Colt or the very useful ·455 Webley. I was no doubt shaken by the scrap, and I did what I should not have done, picked the gun up by the barrel. Remember the automatic had been fired, which meant that there was a shell in the breech and the safety was off. Those who know the Browning-pattern Colt will remember there is a safety device in the butt, and you must squeeze the butt as you squeeze the trigger or the gun will not fire. But this automatic caught in the coarse grass and fired itself.

Now here is the bit which is true but hard to believe. The ·32 shell with a very powerful charge behind it *touched my knee*. Not hard enough to be more than a hard knock, but hard enough to leave a smear of lead on my trousers, and a slight bruise on the leg itself.

What infinitesimal amount of deflection would it have needed to put that slug straight through my kneecap? A shattered patella in a forest many miles from a hospital is not fun.

I remember sitting there by the (dead, I found later) terrorist and trembling.

Incidentally, have you ever read those mystery stories, usually written by the tougher school of writers, in which a killer 'shucks back the jacket of the automatic to make sure it is cocked and loaded'? If it was cocked he would eject the shell in the breech. Besides, he could tell from the position of the safety-catch, supposing he were so dumb as not to remember loading and cocking the beastly thing!

My third terrible fright was when I was apparently about to be murdered by some coastal types on the turn-off from Handeni to Bagamoyo.

I was bound for Dar-es-Salaam from Nairobi to see an old friend, and at Handeni it is usual to travel on the overland route that takes you at last to the Dar-es-Salaam turn-off. It is always a bad road, corrugated and tough on a car, whilst the Handeni–Bagamoyo road is quite good, so long as there has been no rain on the surface. I had been warned not to take the turn-off because it was so lonely, but it cut off over a hundred miles and the main road was in a shocking state. Besides, it was busy with lorry traffic to and from Kenya, and no lorry driver could possibly hear a car hoot behind him as his truck buck-jumped over the ruts of the main road. So that one drove at thirty miles an hour in a cloud of dust for most of the way, behind some heavily laden truck or other.

I was a fool to take the turn-off because my carburettor had been giving trouble and the entire car, an old Dodge of about 1939 vintage, was in no shape for a difficult safari in the first place—but I did not know that, then.

So I set off gaily along the switchback road that dropped to the coast, falling steeply, climbing steeply. There had been just enough rain to make the road tacky and give excellent tyre adhesion. My tyres were new and I was rather stepping on it, enjoying swinging the big, old

coupé into the curves, certain, as the road was fairly open, that nothing was coming the other way; until I hit a patch of wet mud at one of those blasted little bridges over the innumerable rivers of Tanganyika and slid into a tree. Inspecting the car it seemed at first that I had got away with the thing completely, but when I tried to drive out of the soft sand into which the car had dug herself I discovered the track rod was bent like a bow. I tried my old trick of straightening it in the fork of a tree, but there was nothing tough enough around. So I began to bash it out with a hammer I had with me, a fairly heavy one I carry for removing recalcitrant tyres and re-fitting them when in a hurry. I straightened out the track rod and found the sand was too deep to drive out, so I moved the car over by jacking it up and pushing it off the jack several times. This got the wheels a grip. Then I discovered the entire rear spring was smashed into fragments. In fact it had been smashed for years and wrapped up carefully by the wily oriental gentleman who had sold me the car, in a spring gaiter, over bound string. There was nothing to be done. I could not walk away because I had my camera equipment in the car, and I was thirty miles from Bagamoyo. Night was falling.

Then along the road came a party of Africans. There were seven men and four boys, the men all sturdy chaps with bare bodies and their legs wrapped in *lunghyis*, turbans on their heads Muslim style. One was old and of villainous aspect and I was not armed. The old one exchanged greetings and sympathized with me. At the same time he spoke a few words to his merry men, and two of them loped off in the direction from which they had come, at high speed.

'It was foolish to come on this road,' said the old one, 'there are many bad men, and wild beasts, too. Many, many elephants. It is easy to get killed on this road.'

And he laughed. I did not like his laugh, there was

something horrible about it. Then the rest laughed. It struck me that they were laughing not with me, but at me.

I had a box of biscuits open on the seat. The little boys suddenly darted in and grabbed a handful each. They stood far back munching the biscuits and laughing.

Now that is not like African children. Usually, if they are very, very bold indeed, they will hang about expecting a gift, but more often they will stay behind their fathers' legs and refuse to take a gift directly from the white man. Nobody made any attempt to scold the children for stealing the biscuits. It dawned on me slowly that there would be no more cars along that road that night. There might not be a car for forty-eight hours—or more. And these people must belong to the tribes of thieves I had heard about.

I dished out biscuits.

They took the biscuits greedily, laughing rather unpleasantly. The trees were very still and the long, last shadows crept across the road. One man sat down and made a fire. The rest did not move. They stood eating biscuits in a semi-circle, cutting off my retreat. And the old man had a nasty-looking Tower musket. The rest had daggers, every one of them. From time to time they laughed.

It was then I had an inspiration. In the boot of the car I had three bottles of Choffi's Mogadishu gin which I had picked up in the N.F.D. and was taking to a friend—a Somali—in Dar-es-Salaam. He was a smuggler who always lent me his motor launch to go cruising at night. I used to take a Swiss waiter who would get sentimental, sit on the bows and yodel . . . but that is another story. Sufficient to say I had this gin, a bottle of whisky, a present for a European friend, and a bottle of brandy, a present for myself. I broke open the cellar, as it were, and started the party going with the gin.

Except for one man who fell down and coughed until I thought I had killed him, they took it rather well. I then plied them with the brandy, and by that time it was dark, with firelight flickering on the trees, and they had started singing a Kiswahili version of 'My Old Kentucky Home'. As a last, defiant gesture, I then opened the Scotch and passed that around. I thought that if the mixture didn't kill them, unaccustomed as they were to good hooch, nothing ever would.

But I had forgotten the two men who went off for reinforcements, and here they came, staggering through the dark. They had brought pots of—beer! And then came women with *charpoys* made from hide strips, and more firewood, and a good meat stew that had been brought all the way from that distant village. And, miracle upon miracles, the last man into the clearing had a tin-can radio, brand-new and worked off a battery. I fixed it on my car battery, found what food I had and we settled down to a party. When I got a lift into Bagamoyo next day they said, 'You were lucky, master. You might have met with thieves on that road!'

'I might at that,' I replied gravely, thanking them.

But for all its comic ending I will never forget that grinning circle, munching biscuits and just watching me as the shadows stole down across that lonely road. I was very, very scared.

The fourth meeting was with a very angry elephant. This was on another Mau Mau patrol 'up the mountain', and the R.A.F. had had a Lincoln bomber over after the gang we were chasing (but didn't find), a gang supposed to be commanded by Dedan Kimathi himself. We were licking our lips at the prospect of taking the Mau Mau 'Field-Marshal' prisoner, and practically spending the reward. It kept us going up through the bamboos on those tough slopes.

Incidentally, one seldom sees the Mau Mau gangsters

at all. The patrolling does a good job because it harries them and restricts their movement. They can withdraw faster than you can chase them, and the only real scraps we have had (I speak only for myself) were when intercepting cattle-raiding parties and food-stealing parties when alerted by the farm warning system, each farm having a siren or klaxon to sound when a gang is spotted. The gangs are most frightened of the Kikuyu Home Guard, many of whom have lost relatives to Mau Mau and are not at all gentle when they meet up with a gang. They are good chaps, but savages also, and they do not take prisoners if they can help it. From time to time they administer savage beatings to suspects and behave like the tribesmen they are, but all the same they are excellent trackers and keen as mustard. The Special Branch of Intelligence uses the Kikuyu a lot, and it is through their own tribal brothers that Mau Mau is slowly being brought under fire. Next to the Home Guard the Mau Mau dislike the Kenya Regiment, manned and officered by Europeans (with African *askaris*), mainly Kenya born and bred. They have known the Kikuyu from childhood and know exactly how to catch him and deal with him when caught. The gangs dislike the Kenya Police Reserve, staffed by settlers, and have a good laugh at the expense of most of the European regular police officers, most of whom are imported from England on short-term contracts and are naturally at sea in dealing with tribesmen. The King's African Rifles are a handful for Mau Mau, and the *askaris* of other tribes quite naturally love knocking hell out of the Kikuyu, just as the Kikuyu would happily join in any war against the Kipsigis or the Maragoli. Unfortunately all *askaris*, police, army and prison service men alike, make no strong distinction between 'loyal' Kikuyu and Mau Mau. A *kyook* is just a *kyook* to them, and they are not greatly troubled by the white Government's finicky insistence that men who

have stayed loyal to the Crown should not be picked up and shoved in jail on principle. But that is a weakness of the African tribal system, not of the Government!

However, on this bright afternoon in the bamboo forest the big Lincoln was blowing up bushes with great thoroughness. I don't suppose they killed many, if any, gangsters, except by the occasional lucky hit, but they certainly kept them on the hop. They also disturbed the game in the forests, unfortunately. Buffalo herds used to come whistling down from the high levels going like determined little tanks, and no amount of shooting or shouting could stop one of these stampedes, whilst we were once scattered by an old rhino who had had his Sunday afternoon nap disturbed by a spot of low-level bombing.

But when the Lincoln came over we were thinking much more about the surprised face of Mr. Kimathi than about big game. I was moving up a difficult slope in thick bamboo, slippery underfoot with rainwater running from the mist-shrouded slopes above, when I heard a squeal of rage and an elephant hurtled at me. I started off down that slope that had taken so long to climb like a rock-rabbit. I don't think I touched ground with my feet until I reached a substantial tree. By the time I got to that tree I was travelling fast downhill on my bottom, clutching a Sten gun in one hand and a spare magazine in the other. The elephant and I arrived at the tree practically at the same moment. I admit I was in a state of sheer, animal terror. (So, probably, was the elephant, having been missed by a load of fifty-six pounders farther up the slope.)

I skidded to my feet and shot round the tree as he stopped nimbly in the mud and reached out a trunk for me. I would have given everything I possessed for a rifle instead of the useless little Sten at that moment. It was not designed for spraying angry pachyderms and my only

other weapon, the ·45 Frontier, was in its holster under my coat. And I was moving, rapidly. Then, ahead of me, I saw two running figures and another elephant. Our patrol had been ignominiously stampeded by a herd of elephant, themselves stampeding. Luckily my elephant, who I'll swear was not simply running away from the bombs but had a personal interest in seeing me in small pieces, preferably trampled into the mud, caught on that the rest of his pals were going somewhere else in a hurry, and he joined the gang. They went simply racing down the slope, smashing down bamboos and small trees without even bothering to uproot them, like a squadron of runaway heavy tanks.

I once saw a Churchill tank on test run away on a steep hill backwards, cross two fields, run through a little copse and end up in somebody's saloon bar. I had the same helpless feeling that Charlie Chaplin mimed so beautifully in *Modern Times* (remember it?) when he found the piece of wood he was looking for, and it happened to be the wedge holding a half-built boat on the stocks. Charlie knocked out the wedge and the boat ran quietly and inevitably into the water and sank. So it was with that Churchill, and so it was with the elephant herd. Something terrible was bound to happen; it did. The herd ran slap into a platoon of British infantry toiling up the hill in full battle kit.

A sergeant, wearing the Military Medal on his chest, took one look and said, 'OmiGawd,' very quickly. These chaps were wearing army boots, not sneakers as I was. They had no choice. They could not run, they could not turn on the clayey slope.

The sergeant did what a professional hunter would have done. He deserves two more M.M.s for that bit of thinking. He raised his Bren gun and gave the leading tusker a squirt in the brain, nipping smartly out of the way as the big chap rolled down the slope, then he and

his men got behind the dead elephant as the rest ran round the body. When the herd had departed the sergeant got to his feet.

'Something this country,' he said feelingly. 'Something all niggers and all white settlers and all something elephants. Why anybody should want to settle in the something place beats me! Bloody jungles! Bloody niggers! Bloody wild beasts!' He stopped. He said, slowly, 'And it is still the deadest place *I've* ever been in.'

I pity the British soldier in Kenya—although a few of them love it. They are hopelessly underpaid, many of the best bars and hotels are out of bounds to Other Ranks—but this does not apply to the Kenya Regiment boys who simply refuse to stand for that sort of nonsense. Many of the settlers harbour a ridiculous resentment against the British soldiers because they appear to put up such a bad show against the gangs. These fools of farmers will never realize that the British conscript has nothing much to fight for in Kenya, especially if he is not made welcome by the white population, and that he is not trained to dodge elephants and muck about on steep slopes eight or nine thousand feet above sea level. By the time he has become acclimatized he thankfully goes home.

Let me say that much open-handed and free hospitality has been given to the British troops, but still not nearly enough. I know one Lieutenant-Colonel in Kenya who keeps open house for any conscript private who wants to walk in and pour himself a drink. But he is a very rare bird, and the condescending attitude of many settlers to the British soldier is rather nauseating.

One thing—most (though by no means all) of the settlers are rabidly Conservative in their politics, and many of the British lads are naturally Labour Party supporters. They trot out some of the Labour arguments on the Kenya question, arguments completely nonsensical

—not because they are put forward by Socialists but because, apparently, the Socialists have never bothered to examine their own teachings and are actuated either by a desire to do down the opposition or by a feeling of sheer brotherly love. The most liberal settler, even if he is a Socialist, will not himself stand for any nonsense about self-government for Africans, not because he is a Fascist or a ruthless exploiter, but because he knows just how far from self-government in any modern or civilized sense the African is.

All this arises from sheer misunderstanding of the situation on both sides, but it does not make the supporters of Attlee or Bevan very popular in East Africa. Not, let me emphasize, because of their politics, but because the premises they base a colonial policy on are completely wrong.

But I feel the British soldier could have been a worthy friend of the white settler in East Africa—many are, but the settler has missed his strongest chance of getting the truth known at home by refusing to listen or discuss matters with the rifleman who says, 'Why shouldn't the niggers have their country back, anyway?' and goes off belligerently to N.A.A.F.I. to drink with his pals, turning his back on the settler and all he stands for.

And talking of dangerous moments, I wonder if I was not just a little frightened for my life whilst entertaining a sergeant of the Buffs when a peppery old Major came around to ask me out for a drink.

'Why,' the sergeant was just asking, 'can't the blacks go into the hotels if they want to? Seems to me you people are behind the times. We have blacks in some places in England and they behave themselves all right.'

The Major went red. I felt at that moment he would explode and shower us with the pieces. But at last he said, quietly, 'Would you serve the *posho* and beans on plates or in calabashes? And what would you do when the floor

got crowded? And remember they like their meal prepared at their own fire. Now would you let them into the kitchen or would you let them light fires in the dining-room?'

In two minutes all was peace and the sergeant and the Major were hammer-and-tongs at a stimulating argument which probably did their livers no end of good.

To end this book here is, in my opinion, the big-game story of all time. I have verified it and find it to be entirely true.

Mrs. X is the wife of a Kenya settler who does much duty in the Kenya Police Reserve, and as Mrs. X was expecting a baby it was thought wise to leave a manager in charge of their isolated farm whilst Mr. and Mrs. X lived with her brother on a farm near Ol Kalau. This is a dangerous area but not half so dangerous as the original one, which was in the woods Nyeri way.

The first night, Mrs. X, whose husband was chasing a gang somewhere in the neighbourhood, went off to her guest house near the main farm-house after dinner. A fire had been lit for her, and she found the guest house warm, so she opened her bedroom window. There was a wire mesh screen fitted inside the window, secured to the window-frame by four bolts, as an added precaution against terrorists. Mrs. X read for a while, then switched off her light and opened the curtains. She could see in the bright moonlight the distant peak of Mount Kenya, and the rolling countryside between. It was very tranquil and very lovely.

Somewhere not far away she could hear the yapping of a pack of wild dogs, those Cape hunting dogs which are such a terror to buck and small game. But she had been warned they were about and was not alarmed. In fact, never having seen one of these loathsome brutes, she went to the window to try to spot one. She saw their

ridiculous heads and ears popping up above the grass. They were looking at something.

Then the lady did get a fright. For there, in the garden, so near to the house that she had overlooked it entirely, sat a full-grown leopard on a flower-bed, chewing the carcase of a buck . . . and she realized that the leopard must have been there as she walked from the main house.

However, she was Kenya-born and used to game, so in a moment she got over her natural agitation and watched the outcome with interest. The dogs, big brutes the size of small Alsatians, were closing on the leopard. At last one made a determined lunge forward and sprang at the leopard's flank. The big cat killed it with a stroke of the paw and turned, growling, on the pack. But far from being intimidated by the swift, savage *chui* the grinning dogs closed in, panting and slavering. The leopard took a swipe at another dog, then backed away from his kill. The dogs ran to the kill, but one of them completely missed a forty-foot-deep well in the garden and went down head first.

As was natural enough, the dog started screaming blue murder. The leopard lost his head completely and ran twice round the house in a panic. The dogs gave chase and there was hell let loose, barking, baying and howling whilst the one down the well yelled his fate to his comrades.

The leopard came back to his original position on the kill, looking desperately around him for a tree to climb. He saw the (apparently) open window, and dashed for it, and poor Mrs. X realized in a stricken flash that some wire mesh and four bolts was all that separated her from *chui*. And all the doors in the guest house were locked. The leopard hit the wire mesh, which gave. But he had expected no resistance to his body at all, and rolled outside the window. He then picked himself up and streaked

for the forest like a string of animated spots, dogs after him.

The farmer, an excellent shot, came out of his house on hearing the uproar and managed to kill five of the dogs, plus the one down the well, with his revolver.

After that, there is no more to be said. Anything else would be an anti-climax.

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