

HUNTING AHEAD OF ROOSEVELT

IN
EAST
AFRICA

A Lonely Trek After Gemsbuck and Lions

By Percy Selous

Wherever guns are made and sold and game is hunted for the sake of the sport of it the name of Selous is familiar. The stories of his achievements circle the globe and tens of thousands of lesser hunters feel honored to have hunted with him on occasion or to have crossed his track or followed his trail. A confirmed nomad, a soldier of the chase by irresistible predilection, he has spent his life hunting, trapping and traveling, sometimes in the Canadian woods, sometimes in the forests of the Andes, sometimes in the passes of Central Asian mountains, sometimes in the northern ice, sometimes in the African jungle, and the story of his hunting experiences is a romance of fact and adventure. A member of this famous family of hunters is accompanying Theodore Roosevelt into the jungles of East Africa.

WE had trekked some dozen miles during the cool night, and, having outspanned near the River Molo, were busy making a skerm—a task always more or less arduous, for “wait-a-bit” thorns are not easy to manage, though they are invaluable as material. The boys had gone down to the river to fetch water, and I, taking a temporary rest, was scanning the veldt with my glass. I could make out some springbuck, also a few hartebeeste; but what riveted my attention was a small bunch of gemsbuck in the far distance. We did not need meat, and there did not appear to be any bushmen just then about to warrant any sheer destruction of game; but gemsbuck, although fairly plentiful away in the interior of the desert, are hard enough to get, and to see them was to want a head. My horse was in hard condition and had had some stiff gallops recently, so I saddled him up at once and determined to give chase as soon as the “boys”—my two Kaffirs—returned. Telling them to get on with the skerm, I set out at a canter, keeping well to the right to get the advantage of the wind. The veldt was so open that stalking would have been hopeless, whereas, by the aid of my horse as a kind of blind, I might possibly get a shot before the gemsbuck took the alarm, even though they might see us, so long as they did not catch my taint. However, I had to go more directly towards them than I wished, for fear of stampeding the hartebeeste into them. These latter took the alarm and ambled leisurely away when I had proceeded about half a mile.

A Kill at 300 Yards.

Where the gemsbuck were feeding was much rockier ground than that intervening between my camp and them; this was all sandy veldt, studded with the everlasting ant-hills, which, however, got sparser as I neared the game. I therefore slipped off my horse, getting him between myself and them for another 100 yards. The increasing anxiety of the animals, however, warned me that if I wanted to shorten my gallop by crippling one of them, I must lose no more time. Accordingly I halted, though the distance must have been a good 300 yards, and, taking careful aim over my horse's withers at the one with the longest pair of horns, I fired. The horse stood like a rock, and I knew my aim had been good, even if the animal had not stumbled forward at the shot. It quickly recovered, though, and went away with the other four, just as if nothing had happened, at a good pace, heavy animals as they were, taking through and over the rugged boulders as easily as camels. I knew, however, that the heavy army bullet would tell its tale. Instantly on firing I had vaulted into the saddle, and followed in pursuit. This was more easily attempted than done, and my surefooted horse was not able to negotiate the villainous country. I therefore pulled up, lest we should break both our necks, and as I did so had the satisfaction of seeing the gemsbuck drop in its tracks and remain there; whilst its companions only seemed to scamper for the faster. On coming up, I found her, for it was a fine cow, stone dead. The blood was only beginning to trickle from the wound, and I had not noticed a spot anywhere on the ground she had gone over. On examination I found that the bullet had completely torn away the apex of the heart, and yet she had galloped at least a hundred yards as great a speed as her companions, practically without bleeding a drop—another instance of the extreme vitality of such creatures, which I have found even still stronger in the Cervidae proper than in the antelope. She had a prettily marked head, with a length of horns of three feet eight inches. It was out of the question thinking of bagging any of the rest of the herd, so I threw the carcass across my horse and started back to camp.

A few days afterwards, as I was perched on the wagon box scraping at the skull of the gemsbuck, I hardly paid any attention to a pair of secretary birds which were sailing right overhead. Their appearance, however, suggested snakes, and sure enough, there, as I looked around, among a few odds and ends, impervious to the irrepressible ants, was a large puff adder. It had crept through the fence of thorns, and in evident excitement was surveying its novel surroundings with body half raised. I did not like the look of this particular reptile a bit; but I did not intend that he should escape and be in the vicinity, though probably the secretary-birds would have seen to that; neither did

I want to spoil his beautiful skin. There was, however, not help for it; I could see no object around sufficiently handy, so was constrained to put a charge of small shot into him, and I felt more comfortable after he had ceased wriggling.

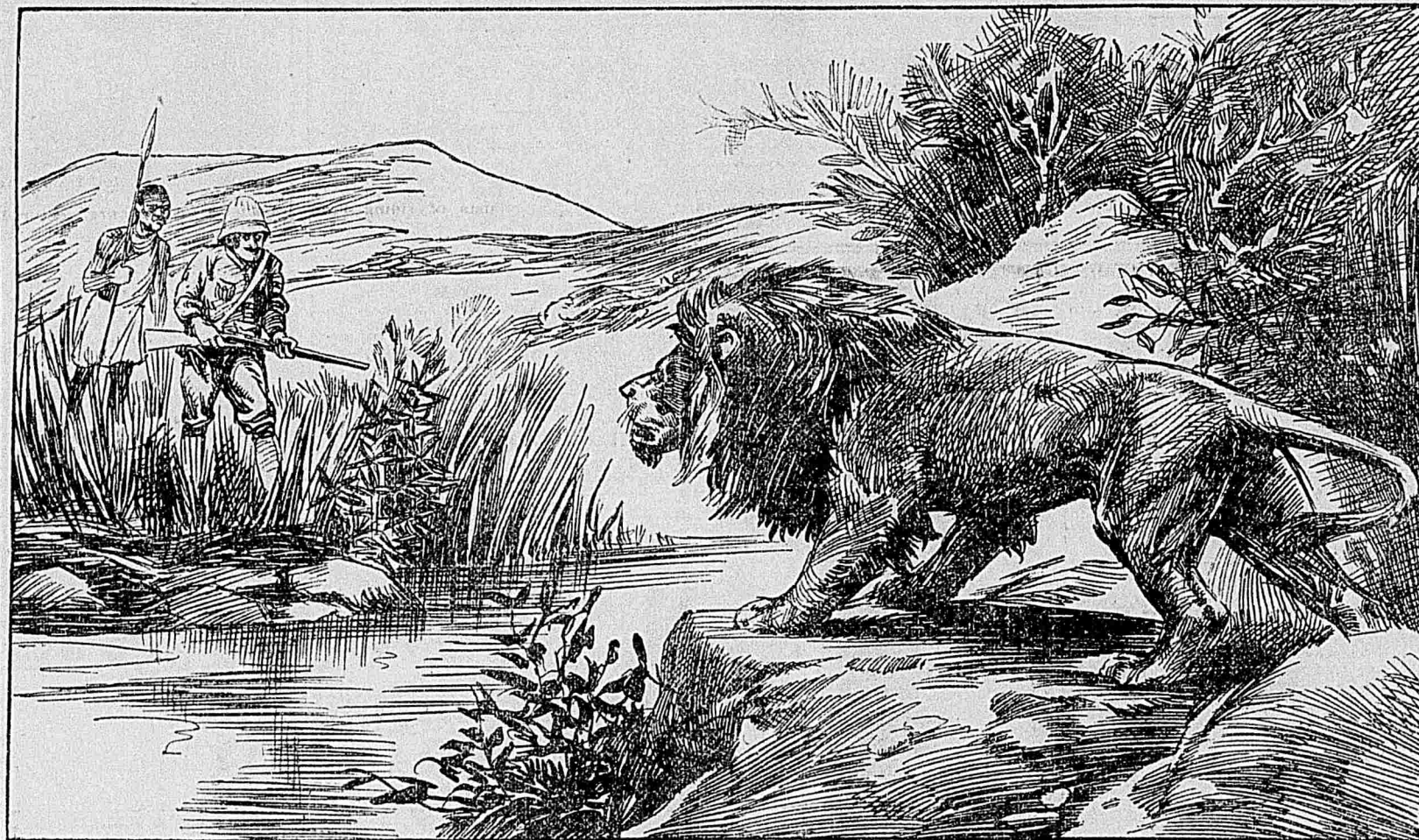
Menaced by Lions in Camp.

One night I was awakened by the dog barking and the uneasiness of the oxen. I grabbed my carbine hastily and endeavored to make out what caused the disturbance. By the meager light diffused by the new moon I could just distinguish the forms of three large animals on the ridge above the camp. I could see that they were lions, and shook up already awakened Kaffirs to make up the fire. I had half a mind to shoot, but thought it safer not to do so, the distance being too great; so I waited until morning, and as the flames began to shoot up and brighten the surroundings the lions became less plain to view. I distinctly saw them, however, move away over the ridge. The remainder of the night I sat up in case of any emergency arising, for the animals kept snorting and shifting restlessly, whilst every now and again came that rumbling roar, once heard a natural never to be forgot. I was conscious of some creature prowling close around. The roar of the lions kept all the while sounding more and more distant, and as dawn began to break it ceased altogether. As soon as it was light enough to see to any purpose, I stepped out, and as I did so, a large hyena jumped up from some bones lying near by and made off. I fired at him and rolled him over, and before he could recover or

I went back for my horse, and leaving the dogs behind set out towards the herd which I had now made out to be hartebeeste. The shimmer of the heat on the veldt is the most trying to the sight and often misleads even the experienced eye. Objects assume quite different aspects and coloring. It is a fact well known to hunters, but has no reference to “mirage.” For instance, anyone would imagine that so brightly-marked an animal as the zebra would always be discernible on the sand; that the black stripes would be obvious. Nothing of the sort. It is at times almost impossible to distinguish this animal at all, even though you know for certain it is there, so cunningly does all merge itself into a whole.

A Lucky Shot.

Noting the exact location of the game, I judged that by careful maneuvering I might keep out of their line of vision, especially as the wind was in my favor. By threading in and out the clumps of thorns—not always an easy matter on horseback—I eventually got to within a couple of hundred yards, and by a lucky shot bowled over one with a bullet through the neck, killing it instantly, and saving my horse the stiff gallop I had anticipated, for these creatures are as swift as any of the genus. Throwing the carcass just as it was, without opening, across the saddle, I took it to a spot which would give me a chance of a telling shot, if a lion should make its appearance. But although I watched the best part of the night, nothing came of my vigil, the jackals reaping the benefit of all my careful preparations. The fact was, as I sub-



MEETING A LION WHILE AFTER GEMSBUCK.

the dogs get up, luckily got another bullet into him, this time right into the head. I fear he would have made short work of the dogs, for such a pair of jaws would have cut them in two at one snap. A hyena is never beautiful, and this one was simply hideous. Just for curiosity's sake I went to where he had been feeding on the remains of an eland cow, which I had driven to within 100 yards of the camp two days previously, and I found he had cracked up the thigh bone just as if it had been gristle.

On examining the ground, I discovered that the lions had not approached any nearer than the ridge on which I had seen them. After having breakfasted, I returned again with the dogs and followed the spoor as far as the sand lasted; but, when the ground became rockier, I could no longer hold it, and the sun getting higher, burnt up all the scent, so that the dogs could make nothing of it, and I therefore reluctantly gave up further pursuit. Away to the east some antelope were visible, nearly against the bush belt lining the river, but as I had left my glass in the wagon, I could not make out just what they were. I thought I would try and get one, however, in order to use it as a bait in a good position, considerably nearer the wagon, in hopes that the lion might return and give me a chance of a shot under more favorable conditions. So

sequently found out, that they were lions in their prime, and it is not often that such can be decoyed by a carcass which they have not themselves destroyed.

Next morning I was, of course, about looking for signs; but could make nothing out as to lions. On going down toward the river some half mile from camp, my attention was attracted by the unusual conduct of a leopard. He was cutting all sorts of capers; at one time ploughing along the ground with his head; at another rearing upright and tearing at his throat with his fore paws. All this was curious, it was also my opportunity, and I lost no time in putting a couple of bullets into him, the second of which laid him out nicely, without giving me the trouble which usually falls to my lot when tackling these great cats. On proceeding to investigate the reason for such a strange performance, my wonder ceased. Having tackled a porcupine, with more gusto than discretion, one of the latter's quills had got inserted under the root of the leopard's tongue, and was working deeper and deeper. The torture the poor animal endured must have been awful, and I do not imagine it could have survived. No dead “porkey” appeared to be around, so, thinking him in his absence, I took the beautiful spotted skin. Next day I was laid up with an attack of fever

which kept me idle for some time. My two boys, however, attended assiduously to my needs, and in due course I got about again. The lions had, during my sickness, once more appeared in the neighborhood, and seemed to hang around indefinitely, but there being plenty of game about they did not molest us in any way.

Lion-Hunting as a Fine Art.

He was wide awake enough, however, and the instant he knew I had seen him he started up and bounded away, giving me no time, in my nervous condition, to get a good shot; I fired, but as soon as I touched the trigger I knew I had missed him—perhaps it was all the better for me that I did so—and the next moment he was out of sight among the rocks. Walking on a little farther, I came upon the half-consumed carcass of a hartebeeste, evidently killed the night before, the trail by which the lion had dragged it pointing towards the veldt. Here, then, was a chance too good to be lost; better than laying out shot game, though I confess I would just as soon the spot had been a little nearer to the wagon, which was, in fact, more than a mile away. But I made up my mind at once to take advantage of this piece of luck and re-

ditions—evening found me duly ensconced among the boulders this side the half eaten body, at a distance of about 20 paces and looking directly towards the route taken by the lion when I had previously disturbed.

For a couple of hours I had waited, occasionally changing position to ease the cramping of my limbs. “Everything comes to him who waits,” and at last, over a rock beyond, appeared the lion, gradually rising into full view. In the dim light he appeared monstrous as he stood, chest full on; and then, as he gave vent to a sonorous roar, which echoed and re-echoed from rock to rock, the effect was grand, and beyond any power of expression. It is under such circumstances as these that one sees the lion at his best. Night-time is his day, and in the sunlight he is more or less at a disadvantage. He must have stood a full minute like this; a sore temptation to me to fire, and I believe I should have killed him stone dead had I done so. Having apparently satisfied himself that things were all right, he walked leisurely down to his prey, and, again uttering a roar, stood facing me. This time I did not hesitate, but pulling both barrels nearly simultaneously put both charges into his chest, and the lion fell forward almost without a sound.

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A Soldier's Big Game Hunting

By Lieut-Gen. R. S. S. Baden-Powell, F. R. G. S.

Through all the world the name of Baden Powell, soldier and scientist, is celebrated and but few people know that he has the ability to shine by right of his pen and brush as well. The hero of Mafeking and a dozen other campaigns filled in the gaps between military engagements with hunting and this “Sport in War” contains some dramatic adventures sprinkled with bits of rare humor and caustic comment. A most unusual feature is the reckless way in which he hunted with military arms instead of the customary weapons for big game.

“WHAT kind of sport did you have out there?” is the question with which men have, as a rule, greeted one on return from the campaign in Rhodesia; and one could truthfully say, “We had excellent sport.” I am about to tell of facing lions with a small caliber military rifle, an adventure to thrill army sportsmen.

In the first place, scouting played a very prominent part in the preliminaries to major operations. This scouting, to be successful, necessitated one's going with the very slenderest escort—frequently with one man only, to look after the horses, and for long distances away from our main body, into the districts occupied by the enemy and by big game. Thus, one was thrown entirely on one's own resources, with the stimulating knowledge that if he did not maintain a sufficient alertness of observation and action, he stood a very good chance, indeed, not only of failing to gain information which you were desired to seek, but also of getting himself wiped out, and left in stress on the veldt.

“Snoring,” or tracking, was our main source of guidance and information and night the cover under which we were able to make our way about the enemy's country with impunity.

The pleasures of the pursuit of game were all the more enhanced by the knowledge that the meat was really necessary to us, and especially by the fact that we often carried out our sport at the risk of being ourselves the quarry of some sneaking band of rebel warriors.

Dangers of Camping in the Lion Country.

Moreover, to all our fun a seasoning was added in the shape of lions, whose presence or propinquity was very frequently impressed upon us at night by deep-toned grunts or ghostly apparitions within the halo of our watch-fires. In defiance of the rules of war—which forbid the use of fires by night, as guiding an enemy's night attack—we had a ring of bright fires burning round our bivouac to scare away the lions. Frequently our sentries fired upon them as they kept a waiting watch, prowling from point to point outside our line of men.

By day we saw them, too. One patrol, indeed, came upon a group of nine lying dozing in the bush; and when the nine arose and yawned and stretched their massive jaws and limbs, the patrol, remembering the old maxim concerning the relations between discretion and valor, changed the course of their advance and took another line.

One time, when I was patrolling the bank of the Shangani river with three men, the massive form of a lion was seen slowly moving over the boulders of the river-bed. The corporal and I jumped off our horses in a moment, and fired a volley a deux, at about 180 yards. One shot thudded into him, the other striking the ground just under his belly. He sprang with a light bound over a rock and disappeared from our view. Posting one man on a high point on the bank to watch the river-bed and leaving the other in charge of our horses, the corporal and I made our way down to where we had last seen the lion. We were armed with Lee-Metford carbines and we turned on our magazines in order to have a good running fire available should our quarry demand it.

Meantime our main body, coming along the opposite bank of the river, had seen our maneuver, and an officer and one man had come down into the riverbed from their side to help us.

Gradually and cautiously we surrounded the spot where we guessed the lion to be—cautiously, at least, as far as three of us were concerned; the fourth, the man who had come from the main body, was moving in a far freer and more confident manner than any of us could boast; he clambered over the rocks and sprang with agility into the most likely corners for finding a wounded lion lying ambushed, and his sole weapon was his revolver—for he was a farrier. Such is Tommy Atkins; whether it is the outcome of sheer pluck, or of ignorance, or of both combined, the fact remains that he will sail gayly in where danger lies, and as often as not sail gayly out again unharmed.

However, to continue; at last we were on the spot, but no lion was there—an occasional splash of blood, and here and there, where said lay between the rocks, the impress of a night paw showed that he had moved away after being hit. But soon all traces ceased, and though we searched for long we could find no other sign of him.

Outwitted by the Jungle King.

We halted on the river-bank during the intense heat of the day, and be-

fore resuming our march in the evening we sallied out once more to search the river-bed and an islet grown with bushes, where we hoped he might be. And while we searched the hussar, who had been assigned to me to hold my horse, and who was the man who, in the morning, had been posted to watch the river-bed, asked: “How many lions are there supposed to be here?” I told him “Only the one we fired at this morning.”

Whereupon he grimly said, “Oh, I saw him go away up the river when you went down it. He was dragging his hindquarters after him.”

It appeared that the man thought he had been posted to guard against surprise by an enemy, and did not realize that we, being down among the rocks, could not see the lion which was so visible from his lookout place. And so we lost that lion.

But I had better luck another time. It stands thus recorded in my diary:

“10th October.—(To be marked with a red mark when I can get a red pencil.) Jackson and a native ‘boy’ accompanied me scouting this morning; we three started off at 3 a. m. in moving round the hill that overlooks our camp we saw a match struck high up near the top of the mountain. This one little spark told us a good deal. It showed that the enemy were there; that they were awake and alert (I say, ‘they,’ because one nigger would not dare to be up there by himself in the dark); and they were aware of our force being at Posselt's (as otherwise they would not be occupying this hill).

“However, they could not see anything of us, as it was then quite dark. And we went farther on among the mountains. In the early morning light we crossed the deep river-bed of the Umchinge River, and, in doing so, noticed the fresh spoor of a lion in the sand. We went on and had a good look at the enemy's stronghold; and on our way back, as we approached this river-bed, agreed to go quietly, in case the lion should be moving about in it. On looking down over the bank, my heart jumped into my mouth when I saw a grand old brute just walking in behind a bush. Jackson did not see him, but was off his horse as quickly as I was, and ready with his gun; too ready, indeed, for the moment that the lion appeared, walking majestically out from behind the bush that had hidden him, Jackson fired hurriedly, striking the ground under his foot, and, as we afterwards discovered, knocking off one of his claws.

“The lion tossed up his shaggy head and looked at us in dignified surprise. Then I fired and hit him with a leaden bullet from the Lee-Metford. He reeled, sprang round, and staggered a few paces, when Jackson, who was using a Martini-Henry, let him have one in the shoulder. This knocked him over sideways, and he turned about, growling savagely.

Bagging a Royal Prize.

“I could scarcely believe that we had got a lion at last, but resolved to make sure of it; so, telling Jackson not to fire unless it was necessary (for fear of spoiling the skin with the larger bullet of the Martini), I went down closer to the beast and fired a shot at the back of his neck as he turned his head momentarily away from me. The bullet went through his spine and came out through the lower jaw, killing him.

“We were pretty delighted at our success, but my nigger was mad with happiness, for a dead lion—provided he is not a man-eater—has many invaluable gifts for a Kaffir, in the shape of love-potions, charms against disease or injury, and medicines that produce bravery. It was quite delightful to shake hands with the mighty paws of the dead lion, to pull at his magnificent tawny mane, and to look into his great deep, yellow eyes. Then we set to work to skin him; two of us skinning while the other kept watch in case of the enemy sneaking up to catch us while we were thus occupied. We found that he was fat, and also that he had been much wounded by porcupines, portions of whose quills had pierced the skin, and lodged in his flesh in several places. Our nigger cut out the eyes, gut-bladder, and various bits of the lion's anatomy, as fetiche medicine. I filled my carbine-bucket with some of the fat, as I knew my two ‘boys,’ Diamond and M'lini, would very greatly value it. Then, after hiding the head in a neighboring bush where we could find it again, we packed the skin on to one of the ponies and returned to camp mightily pleased with ourselves.”

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Elephant Ivory and How It is Obtained

recent events of South Africa's kaleidoscopic history, being in turn spy, military detective, engineer, censor, dispatch carrier and propagandist. In this article he sets down some of his adventures while hunting in the territory that Ex-President Roosevelt will cover.

by Captain Fitz Duquesne will appear as the next of this African hunting series. Captain Duquesne, it will be remembered, took a very conspicuous part in the