

S.S. Yangtse. Red Sea. September 4th ~~1914~~

It was all very well for Muriel to tell me to keep a diary, and to write down my impressions of the people I meet and the places I see, but it seems to me a pretty hopeless task. For instance, the people on this boat are much the same as those one meets anywhere, — they may look healthier, more sunburnt, and as if they lived out of doors always, and they strike one as being more ⁱⁿ⁻⁾ ~~dependable~~ ^{and} and self-reliant. This description applies to the decent sort — there are others, confounded young pups with swelled heads, going out for the first time, or very young in the service. There are of course lots of French~~men~~, men, women and children, all bound for Madagascar. The men are nearly all ^{soldiers} ~~military~~, and are never out of their uniforms — such uniforms too! Since we left Port Said they have all burst into what they think is khaki — the favourite shade is mustard, but every man suits his individual fancy. All the same they are a very decent crowd, and most of them have had a pretty tough time. The women hardly appear, till we were safely in the Canal, since when they go about in shapeless cotton garments (I'm told they're called peignoirs) and sun helmets. The children scream and fight all day, it's difficult to know to whom they belong as their ~~own~~ parents completely ignore them, except when they fall on them once or twice a day to give them a smacking they always deserve. A lot of the little wretches look like half-castes, not a bit like jolly English kids.

As to the places, well, I'm no hand at descriptions. Even a journalist couldn't convey Port Said — it's a little bit of everywhere, and that little bit is dirty. Noise, smell and colour are what struck me most. All the blacks, some of them dressed in their fine native togs and some of them in Piccadilly garments, jabber

English, French, any language at all. They all want you to ride donkeys, (all the donkeys are called Mrs. Langtry) buy ostrich feathers, cigarettes, and Turkish delight, and go to see the town (sic) with them!

After leaving Port said one's in a new world - certainly the heaven and earth are both pretty different from anything one sees in Europe. It rather gave me the blues. Miles and miles of pale yellow sand, lumpy sand making little hills and valleys, just that and nothing else. Dreary, dry monotony - I was glad to get away from it. The only living thing we saw was a jackal, and he seemed starved out - he stood on the bank and looked as if he would like to get on board.

Djibouti is a strip of sand with a Post office, an Hotel, a few European houses, and a native town on it. The Somali's are fine handsome men (lots of the kids have their hair - wool - bleached pale yellow) - they look a bit too arrogant, and they don't seem to fancy the Frenchies. They behaved quite decently to all us English, but they evidently suffer from swelled head. You can get lots of drinks (and flies) in Djibouti, and the French are making a railway. All the same, it's a God-forsaken place.

Port Edward. September 10th.

We got here at 8.30 yesterday morning. There was only sea - The Indian ocean - between Djibouti and this. It was uncommonly blue and rather rough, not much "smiling" about it or most of the passengers. The women were nearly all sick - they lay about on deck and entirely disregarded the elementary decencies. A wretched boy went

about with a mop and a pail of water all day. I actually heard one woman, as he passed, tell him to come back in five minutes. He was fortunately punctual, for he was badly needed. It was pretty disgusting, but no one seemed to think anything peculiar was going on, and all the Frenchies, even the sick ones, managed to eat enormous meals.

I'm not sorry the voyage is over, though I quite liked it. One man I really liked on board - a doctor, Irish, called O'Brien. He knows the country inside out, and gave me lots of tips. He seems to have been everywhere and done everything. In some things he was a trifle too imaginative for me, and his enthusiasm about natives struck me as a bit out of place. He made one remark I couldn't fathom at all - he said all people who went to tropical Africa voluntarily were a bit queer otherwise they couldn't stand it. According to him it is no place for the absolutely sane, - they take things too literally. Now I've always fancied myself absolutely sane, yet I can't see why I shouldn't have come here. I expect sanity is just what's needed.

All this time I meant to describe my arrival at Port Edward, but somehow O'Brien would obtrude himself - I expect it's because I've just said good-bye to him. He went off up country this morning to some out-of-the-way station with a name I can't write or pronounce.

We dropped anchor in a really fine harbour, big enough to hold most of the British fleet. The entrance is rather narrow but very deep. Two coral reefs, one from the mainland and the other from the island of Pembi, run out a long way, and make navigation a rather ticklish affair. There's no pier, - one lands on a mole, and rows a fair distance in small boats to reach it. We lucky Govern-

ment officials (sounds very superior!) had all the dirty work of the customs etc, done for us by a transport man who met us and looked after everything - a very decent chap. He said he had arranged for me to stay in the Police officer's bungalow as he (the Police officer) knew John when he was in the West Indies. It's a piece of luck for me, as though there are hotels I was not exactly drawn to them after the lurid accounts that had been given to me on board - it appears to be the custom for several visitors to use the same bath water, among other similar trifles.

I'm being done top hole by ^{Captain} Roberts (~~Captain of that ilk~~) and couldn't be in better hands. Roberts was in the Police lines when I arrived, but everything was ready for me in his bungalow - hot tub, breakfast, etc. His servants ("boys" they are called here) are surprisingly efficient, and as the head boy speaks English there were no difficulties. The houses are mostly one storey, and all the rooms open into one another - this line of rooms is surrounded by a large latticed verandah, which being the coolest and lightest place is invariably used as a sitting room. The kitchen and the boys' quarters are separate buildings, at some little distance from the bungalows. If you want anything you just shout "Boy" and one of the servants turns up. Bells are an unknown quantity - so is electric light, oil-lamps with punkah tops (the wind makes these latter a necessity) are the only method of lighting. Mosquito nets are de rigueur, the mosquitoes swarm, particularly in the evenings, and make even mosquito boots necessary.

Roberts turned up just before lunch, looking ^{very} ~~golly~~ smart after the Frenchies on board, in his khaki uniform and dark blue putties. He's a decent sort and made me feel quite at home. I must admit

that I had not appreciated taking possession of another person's house, and ordering his servants about when I didn't know him from Adam. He told me a good deal I wanted to know—first, that being an administrative officer I should have to stay here on the coast for a fortnight to attend the courts and learn something about legal matters. It appears that once an administrative officer is in an out station, he has to do every mortal thing, from building his own house, and drilling the Police, to trying cases in Court. I suppose it is ~~all right~~ ^{all right}, but it sounds a big order. After I have done my time here I shall get my marching orders, and then I shall know my fate. If I do go up country, Roberts says I ought to have a pony. He approves of my guns though he says I am not likely to use my .450 except for elephant, rhino, or buffalo. I only hope I have the luck to go to a good game district. The tales Roberts has told me of man-eating lions and rogue elephants are enough to raise the hair off one's head.

After lunch Roberts went to bed till two o'clock (apparently everybody does this here) and then back to his lines. He returned a little after four o'clock, got into flannels and took me off to the Sports Club to tea. Here I met all the rank and fashion of Port Edward. I forgot to say that one goes about in small covered trollies on wheels. A light, narrow-gage line runs all over the island, and the trollies are pushed by a couple of boys. They certainly do lick along. It struck me as distinctly dangerous, but each trolley has a brake, and can therefore be stopped pretty quickly.

The Sports Club is in the middle of enormous mango trees, a very slap-up pavillion, plenty of tennis and badminton courts, and a good cricket ground. Lots of people were there, about a dozen

ladies among them, some playing games and some looking on. Roberts introduced me to a good number, and to-morrow I shall have to pay some calls. In the morning I go to the sub-Commissioner's office to see him, and in the afternoon I have to call on his wife and one or two other people - Judges and so forth. I played a couple of sets of tennis. No one seemed to mind the heat - it's a fairly equable temperature of about 84° day and night. Fortunately the monsoon blows pretty hard most of the day, though they say the nights are, after about 10.30 p.m. very still. We had iced drinks in the Pavilion after we'd finished playing - the sun sets at 6 p.m. and it's quite dark by 6.30 - and then toddled off to THE CLUB. This celebrated building is in the town, and most people, ladies as well as men, turn up there at 6.30 every evening, and gossip and drink. The ladies invade the reading room, so reading isn't a possibility - still on the whole they don't seem to talk more than the men. A billiard handicap was on and the row was terrific, everyone was immensely excited over it, and quite a lot of money had been staked. No one dines before eight o'clock, and most people don't leave the Club till then. Roberts and I ^{left} ~~toddled off~~ fairly early as he had a couple of men to dinner and bridge. He didn't get to bed till past midnight. Though I was dog tired, it wasn't easy to sleep. With French windows and doors wide open, and nothing between oneself and the black African night, the strangeness of it all kept me awake. The sentry padded up and down on his naked feet, and somewhere far away a drum was being beaten - a monotonous rhythmic^{so} sound, persistent and unending that it really annoyed me. It beat and drummed away in my head like some beastly insect. Just as I thought I had got level with it, a hyaena howled, so close that it sounded as if it was on the verandah. It was a vile noise, and it went on, fortun-

ately going further and further away, for quite a long time. No sooner had I disposed of the drum, and the hyaena had disposed of its revolting self, and I got comfortably asleep than I was flung wide awake again. This time it was a bugle call - the Alarm, the first time I had heard it in real earnest. It is a crawly affair - talk of a native drum, it's a chicken to the alarm. It begins, rises, falls, rises and never ends, and the damned thing sounds as if it itself were afraid and calling for help. Before the first call was through Roberts was out, and patter, patter came bare feet in every direction till the whole force was assembled. Absolute silence, just the click of a rifle and the heavy breathing of the men told they were there, but otherwise the black night might have been empty. Of course I tumbled out, but honestly I didn't like it - it was uncomfortable. In a few minutes Roberts came on the verandah full of apologies - the Alarm had been pre-arranged; he had his suspicions that certain of the men were not sleeping in their quarters, and wanted to catch them out. In this way the culprits were discovered. He had meant to tell me not to worry before we turned in etc. etc. We stayed together for a few minutes chatting after the men had been dismissed, and then went off to our beds again. I didn't sleep much after this (it was 2 a.m. when the alarm went) as the silence which filled the empty compound seemed somehow more bothering than the previous noises. The fact is I was over-tired - the newness of everything had thrown me out of gear.

September 18th.

The last days have been so full up that this wretched diary has had to be left on the shelf. I wish I could leave it there for good

and all, but a promise is a promise even when it's a stupid one - so here goes. I did my duty by the sub-Commissioner and got ~~by~~^{my} temporary orders from him. My mornings are spent in the High Court, and from two to four in the sub-Commissioner's office, where I am learning how to draft despatches, keep files, and also the hundred and one details of office work. I like it, and I can't help hoping I shall be left here. After all, one does have some sort of a time here - there are quite a ~~lot~~^{number} of decent people of both sexes, and one has one's fill of games, sailing, and target shooting. Somehow, the more I hear of up country life, and life in out stations, the less I like the idea of it. It can't be much of a catch to be quite alone, just with black people, or perhaps with one other white man, miles away in the bush. The responsibilities of such a position, when one knows little or nothing of the country and natives, seem to me an unfair demand.

I'm rather bothered because the Sub-Commissioner told me today he had had a private letter from the Secretariat, saying I should most likely be wanted up country. Anyhow it's not much good worrying - if I'm ordered I have to go, but I don't feel competent. Natives are such queer brutes. They look at one out of their uncanny black and white eyes, and seem to see all one's peculiarities in a few moments. They are jolly cute at understanding what one means, but all the time they seem to be taking one on trial - sort of weighing one in the balance. It's to be hoped they won't find me wanting. I've been swatting a good deal at the lingo, and as I did a certain amount on board I'm not doing so badly. From six to eight every morning I have a teacher; he sits on the floor of the verandah and talks to me and I try to do the same to him. He's a rum sort of beggar, he never appears to look at me, but if ever I

look at him suddenly, I find his beady eyes fixed enquiringly on my face. If he hasn't made more of me than I have of him, he hasn't got very far. I wonder how long it will take me to get used to the servants sneaking about barefooted. Roberts has got me a very decent boy - he's a quite first rate valet and has excellent manners - but somehow it always makes me uncomfortable to find him suddenly standing behind me just as if he had risen out of the floor without a sound. Just as I finished that remark I began to feel uneasy, and turning my head half round I saw Hamis standing by the wardrobe, a pile of well brushed clothes on his arm, his hand raised to open the door, his eyes fixed on me. I'm off!

September 21st.

Roberts and I don't see ~~as~~ very much of one another these days - now that I am working too, we keep more to ourselves. There has been quite a lot of going out, and I must say the people here seem very decent as well as amazingly hospitable. I have been to dinners, teas, bridge parties, picnics and all sorts of festivities. The women-kind do make a difference. After living in a bachelor establishment, where everything is more or less anyhow, to go into a pretty veran-
 dan or drawing-room, with ~~easy seats~~, carpets, cushions, and pictures, and mem-sahib ^{at} a dainty ^{tea table,} ~~white frock~~ looking as cool as a cucumber, makes a man want to be married and have a pretty wife and home of his own. All the same I expect a good many of the women have a fairly mouldy time out here. Most people are not too well paid and lots of them have ^{children} ~~kids~~ at home. It must be pretty beastly for a woman to leave her kids - it's a horrid idea, and when I have kids I won't

let anyone but myself bring them up. Africa doesn't seem much of a place for a family man. Roberts is a cynical fellow - when I say nice things about the women here, he says they are only decent to me because I've got money (I don't suppose they even know this interesting fact) that if I hadn't, they would take no notice of me, for as an Assistant Collector I am of no importance and don't count. He also says that before long one of them will want to attach me to herself and trot me round as her latest young man - her property in fact. According to him they all expect the men to make love to them, and have no use for a man if he doesn't. I expect he has been hard hit, and that's why he's so gloomy. Anyway, I am quite sure the half dozen women I have met are not that sort. They are sympathetic and natural and take a real interest in one's work. Roberts says the way the Wa-pussies (wa means "people" in the lingo - the "cat people" is a fair translation) as he calls them fight among themselves is typical. He says there's always some row on because Mrs. B. went into dinner before Mrs. A. and that this is the sort of thing they never forgive, though it stands to reason the hosts or hostesses are to blame and not the reviled individual. The table of precedence, he says, is their creed. This seems pretty rotten, and I'm sure is an exaggeration. I have seen the women folk at the Sports Club and the Club, as well as in one another's houses, and they always seem on the best of terms. Of course one occasionally hears them making rather pointed remarks about someone who isn't there, but the men are much worse and the scandal they talk over their evening drinks at the Club is really fairly hair-raising. It is pretty obvious that certain of the heads of departments fancy themselves to such a degree that they don't even recognise that we of the small fry are in existence. They merely talk to a few people of their own standing,

and ignore the rest. Naturally, the really decent men don't do this, and many of the quite big pots behave as if they were nobody, and help one in every possible way.

October 1st.

It is curious how time flies here seeing how alike all the days are. One does the same things at the same time, one sees the same people - the only difference consists in one's own thoughts. These are bound to change considerably, for as one gets to know and understand the life and people better, one unconsciously revises one's first impressions. I have got ^{into} my own rut now, and I belong to it all - I'm no longer an on-looker; I am a part, a small one certainly, of the complicated machinery of this country. I am beginning to find my feet, and I don't get so ^{troubled} worried when important looking people come into the office and ask all sorts of impossible conundrums.

It seems more likely I shall be left here for a time. My fortnight in the Courts is well over, and, so far, there has been no hint of my move. The Sub-Commissioner says that if I am left here he will send me out to travel in the district next month. The P.W.D. (Public Works Department) man has to go down the coast to inspect buildings, and I am to go with him and rub the vileness of the roads and the absence of bridges into his thick head. The idea here is that the P.W.D. make the roads and the natives of the districts through which the roads run keep them clean and repaired. So far the P.W.D. haven't bothered to make the roads, so inter-communications is pretty difficult especially during the rains.

October 10th.

Five days ago the Admiral arrived on his blessed Flagship - the "Circe" came along too as a sort of escort. We have been having a high old time in consequence. Luckily I'm for it all, as I act as a Sub-Commissioner's A.D.C. so get asked to everything. A lot of the officers including the Admiral have gone up country shooting. They went off in a special yesterday, but there are quite enough officers over to keep us pretty busy looking after them. Before the Admiral and Co left we had cricket, sailing and shooting matches, and the Admiral gave a big dinner and At Home. On his return the Club is going to give a dance. All the ladies have come out in their smartest frocks, and there is great competition as to who can give the smartest tea at the Sports Club. The said ladies are having ~~a jolly good~~ ^{the} time ^(if their lives -) there are so few of them compared with the men, that they (even the unattractive ones) are very much in request.

October 25th, In Hospital.

I have had a horrid bit of bad luck - at one of the numerous pic-nics given the lobster salad was made of tins, and I, and quite a number of other people got ptomaine poisoning. No one was really bad except myself, I must have got the most tinny bit, and for a couple of days the doctor seemed to think I was likely to be translated. The pain was so vile I didn't seem to think of anything else - not that I want to be snuffed out; I don't. I have only just begun things, and the awkward part about it is one doesn't even know whether it would be snuffing out. I must frankly state I like this wicked world, and have no leanings towards another either better or worse.

October 27th. Still in Hospital.

I couldn't even go to the Club dance last night. Roberts has been in and told me it was quite successful but that the supper left a good deal to be desired. He is apt to think rather too much of His Little Mary. I wish I hadn't to think of mine so much these days, but it's been much en evidence. I wish O'Brien were here to look after me; the local medicine man, Rogers, is very gloomy about everything, oneself in particular. He says this is a wretched country, chock-a-block with the very worst diseases known, tropical and otherwise, and he can't understand why we are not all dead. He stands by one's bed looking as if he expected one to pop off at any moment, - seems rather disappointed when one doesn't.

There is a German trader with Blackwater fever in the next ward to mine - he's dying poor chap.

October 28th. Roberts' bungalow again.

The Blackwater man and I both left hospital today - he died at midnight yesterday and was buried at 8 a.m. I didn't leave till after lunch. That poor German hated dying, and for about two hours he was begging them to save him, and crying like a ^{child.} ~~girl~~. It quite turned me up, as I couldn't help hearing most of what went on. He begged them in broken English to put him on board a German boat in the harbour, and let him go home to the Fatherland. Sister Alice was the only one he seemed to want, and he kept her there, holding her hands and entreating her to help him. As the night wore on he got weaker and weaker and finally died quite quietly. After poor Sister Alice had done all there was to do she came in to me and broke down completely. She said so many people had died lately

that she was going all to pieces. I felt a bit that way myself - it isn't much of a catch to be a nurse in a place like this where you know all your patients personally, and when one dies you lose a friend as well.

November 4th.

My knell has struck. I have got to go up country. No orders as to where, but I am to proceed to Kissimbi at once. My final orders will be issued after I have seen H.E. I am very sick about it, but the general opinion is that I am a lucky dog. As a matter of fact the medicine man says I need a change - I've been a pretty fair worm since my poisoning. For the first time in my life I have been depressed, and I don't seem able to shake myself free from all sorts of queer feelings and thoughts. That dying German crying, and then the nails being driven into his coffin, the actual bump of the coffin at the corner of the verandah staircase, the exclamations of the boys carrying it, and finally the trolley rumbling off, the noise getting fainter and fainter in the distance - I suppose it is because I was sick myself at the time. Everyone says this country is all right if you are well, but it gets on your nerves when you are seedy. It has got on mine right enough.

November 9th. Kissembi.

Here I am in the highlands, and so far I don't yet know whether I am to remain at Kissembi or to be sent off into the wilds. The journey from the coast here takes about thirty hours. One leaves Pembi early one morning, and arrives here by mid-day the next day. Everyone told me I ought to have quite a clean journey, as the rains

are on, but when we had got about forty miles from the coast the whole country was as dry as a bone, and there were no signs that it had ever rained in its life until we were within thirty miles of Kissembi.

They gave me a top-hole send off from the station at Pemb; I'm sorry to have left them and the coast. I feel sort of cut off from everything, and this means beginning all over again with work as well as with friends.

Notwithstanding the dirt, I thoroughly enjoyed the journey. The railway carriages are not the most comfortable I've ever struck, and the lighting arrangements (wretched stinking oil lamps which go out altogether after about two hours) are too rotten for words. You take your own bedding, and while you are at dinner in a dâk bungalow at a station about a hundred miles from the coast, your boy ^{comes} ~~puts~~ in and makes your bed. Food, of sorts, is provided at dâk bungalows at the hours the train is supposed to be there - and luckily we were up to time. I am told that if there's a wash-out or anything to delay the train, such as a rhino charging it, you get no food at all. As likely as not you reach the dinner place at midnight and the breakfast place at 2 p.m. The moral of this is, always take a plentiful supply of both ^{food} ~~grub~~ and drink with you. The country through which we passed is about the ^{grossest} ~~weirdest~~ you could strike. Fifteen miles from the coast all the amazing luxuriance of that belt stops - just as if it had been sliced off with a knife - and the three hundred and odd miles of the rest of the journey you don't see a trace of fertility of any sort, except just along the banks of the few rivers. For some time there was nothing but coarse grass dotted with weird looking flat-topped thorn trees - then gradually there was less grass and more thorn trees, till one suddenly found oneself in a tangled

wilderness of distorted, leafless trees and bush. It looks as if neither man nor beast could possibly find a way through it, and yet very few years ago every single caravan that went up-country had to fight through the seventy odd miles of this waterless and evil-looking wilderness. Poor devils, lots of them never arrived but died a hideous death, eventually driven mad from thirst and dying by agonised inches. I am told that the old caravan road is strewn^d with the bleached bones of those who fell by the way. Once you fell sick or wandered from the ribbon-like trail you were done for. Your companions were powerless to help you; of necessity it had to be each man for himself, - and the devil did indeed take the hindermost. The horrors and hardships of those pioneer days were rubbed into me as we puffed and groaned through this hideous tract of country. It lay in unbroken waves of colourless grey thorns, a brazen blue sky above it, and the burning brick-red earth - every blade of grass burnt and gone - below it. After some hours, faint blue blurs showed up in the distance; these were the hills from whence came help in the old days. The water-holes lie high up on these hills, but these were dried out during some dreadful seasons, and the caravan had to drag itself another twenty miles before the river was reached. If one realizes in any degree what all this meant it makes one feel pretty sick. The amazing thing is that numbers of quite ordinary men have been through without apparently thinking anything of it - or themselves. I suppose most humans have latent possibilities for achievement or failure that they know nothing of till they are put to the test.

It was a relief to wake up in the morning and find oneself in more natural surroundings. Green hills, green grass, green trees - not the green of the coast, and not anything particularly beautiful,

but anyway it was fairly ordinary. Just after sunrise I saw my first big game - a herd of thirteen giraffe. They were close to the line so I could stare my fill at them, and by Jove, I did! Such monsters and so ungainly with their huge long necks and silly-looking little heads on top. They looked exactly as if they were waiting to be marched into the ark. By degrees the hills melted to the outside edge of the horizon, the trees grew fewer and fewer and finally disappeared altogether, the grass, close and green, filled up the whole space in every direction; just endless rolling plains, and on these plains a whole world of beasts - not hundreds but thousands of them. Great herds of sleek, fat zebra, stamping, barking, and tossing their painted-looking heads; countless strings of uncouth Wildebeeste, gambolling along in single file, their heads down and their tails twirling round and round like flails; hundreds of bright-red, long-headed hartebeeste; numbers of the graceful Grant's gazelle, and even greater numbers of Thompson's gazelle, their little white-lined tails wagging unceasingly. Occasionally a herd of water-buck stood out, almost black, and looking very like stags; or a group of ~~porcupine~~ Impalliah were motionless for a moment before breaking into a series of the most graceful leaps and bounds, a running line of red against the more sombre colouring of the other beasts. It is a sportman's paradise, and to see these animals wandering about wild and happy, when till now one has only seen a few sad and mangy-looking specimens in Zoos or Museums, is the most wonderful thing in the world. These plains run right up to Kissembi, in fact part of Kissembi is built on them, and the beasts not infrequently wander into the town and into private gardens. I had the luck to see two rhino, but not near enough to get any impression other than of two moving black blots. I must get out for a shoot before I am

much older, but curiously enough no one I have met here so far seems very keen.

November 30th. Kissembi.

I have shot my first beast - only an ugly lantern-jawed old hartebeeste, but I feel as pleased with myself as if I had downed half a dozen elephants/ and a rhino or two. No one who hasn't shot big game knows anything about it - the complete pleasure of first using your brains in laying your plans for stalking your animal, the intense physical pleasure (though its damned uncomfortable really) of the stalk, and the ^{elation} ~~ecstatic~~ triumph when, answering to the thud of your bullet, the animal drops dead. Well, mine was quite an ordinary affair, but all the same it was an era-making performance for me. I got Waller (a soldier man) to go with me/ as he knows the ground well. Instead of making for the plains we cut back to a broken tract of country lying between Kissembi hill and a range of hills known to the natives as the "Five Fingers". ~~(the name explains itself)~~. These Five Fingers are visible at an incredible distance and/ wherever they are seen from/ they appear to hang over Kissembi like a hand uplifted in protest. Here there was a certain amount of cover, and after walking sharply for about half an hour we saw what looked like a herd of animals behind a thin screen of trees on a small open plain beyond. Waller silently mentioned me to take my rifle, and to our gun bearer and the porters (these latter were to carry back the meat) to squat down and remain where they were. He and I proceeded warily to the edge of the trees, from behind which Waller examined the quietly grazing herd to see which was the best head. Having decided this knotty point/ he showed me my line of stalk.

(For my own satisfaction I must say it was what I had decided on myself while he was watching the herd). I was to crawl about sixty yards to the cover of an ant-hill - the Almighty in making these otherwise coverless plains has fortunately strewn numbers of ant-hills over them, or shooting would be impossible - arrived there I was to lie quite still till I had recovered my wind, and felt as steady as a rock. I was then to raise myself silently and cautiously to a sitting position, fire with my 100 yards sight up, and aim at where the beast's foreleg joined its body. Waller told me to be sure to keep my hat (a wide-brimmed terai) on, as the animals recognise the un-covered head of a human as such, since the natives seldom cover their heads. He told me he had often bagged a beast quite unexpectedly in this way, because it stopped and watched him, not recognising, owing to his hat, that he was a man. Well, I gripped my rifle tight, lay down and wriggled off for my ant-hill. Of course my heart was thumping like mad, and equally of course I wriggled much too fast, for after I had gone about twenty yards I was so blown that I had to lie still and recover a bit. I noticed during this interval that I was ~~crawling~~^{covered} with ticks - literally hundreds of them, of all sorts and sizes. After I had got my wind I continued much slower, and in what seemed like at least two hours I found I'd fetched up all right at the ant-heap. I took a good long rest, then examined my rifle to see that it was O.K. and finally, when there was no further excuse for any delay, I raised myself very slowly to the desired sitting position. I very nearly bossed the whole thing because I found another beastly hartbeeste, a good bit nearer than my chap, staring hard at me, and I was almost flustered into biffing off at him. However, I pulled up in time, and having spotted my beast I obeyed Waller's orders, though I don't mind confessing I

thought they were all wrong both as regards distance and the place to aim at. After holding on till I felt like the Rock of Ages I pulled the trigger. I made sure I had missed, but when I had collected myself a bit I saw a red mass struggling on the ground/ and the rest of the herd loping away as hard as they could lick. Waller waved to the men, and directly I realized my beast was down I rushed madly at him. It may have been stupid to feel as delighted as I did- I felt as if I had accomplished one of the finest acts in the world. My gun-bearer was up and had cut the beast's throat (Mahomedans won't touch meat unless the animal has had its throat cut in the prescribed manner, so there's always a rush to arrive and do the cutting before the last kick is out of the animal). Before I realized what he was about, and in an incredibly short time, the beast was skillfully skinned, cut up, and each porter had his load ready to carry back. For one horrid moment, as the gun-bearer rushed at the animal brandishing his knife and yelling with joy, I thought he was coming for me - why I can't think, and I went quite sick. I suppose it was the reaction of my own excitement. Anyway it was ~~fairly~~^{pretty} beastly. It gave me such a start that I was within an ace of raising my rifle and firing at the man. Thank God I didn't do this. Anything more awful than killing a man in cold blood I can't imagine, and an innocent man too. Not so long ago a fellow did shoot one of his own men much in this way - he had got jumpy with being alone too long, saw a native, as he thought, prowling round his house at dusk, and loosed off and killed his man stone dead. It proved to be one of his police who had been returning some tools to the store. The white man was so out up he left the service.

I learnt that your gun-bearer, and the man who does the throat cutting business have a special right to certain portions of the