

animal you have shot - these rights are called dastur, or custom, and it never does to ignore them. Waller was tepidly pleased with my performance, and as we made our way back to the Lines gave me some useful tips about shooting that will doubtless stand me in good stead when I am on my own. The hartebeeste's liver and brains, which we ate for breakfast, were the finest dish I've ever tasted. N.B. most white men won't touch hartebeeste meat - I daresay I shan't in time.

December 5th, Kissembi.

I find, in Africa at any rate, that if you don't give your impressions of a place pretty soon after you have first seen it, a description becomes increasingly difficult. I shoved my ideas of Kissembi on one side because the game was an obsession with me till I had drawn blood - now I feel more settled. This is rather a queer place - a man here described it as "the city of dreadful distances", and this it certainly is. It is enormously scattered - one has to travel dreary, muddy miles from the Sub-Commissioner's Office to the P.W.D. ditto, - in fact it's miles from anywhere to anywhere. I am told that in the dry seasons these so-called roads are ankle deep in red dust, and that Kissembi itself is seen as in a glass darkly through the thick veil of red dust which always hangs over it. The town, railway station, and offices of Kissembi are all built on the plain - at the moment this plain is a morass - and each building looks as if it had been dropped quite purposelessly where it stands, its only object being to get as far away from all the others as possible. There is no sort of structure in the laying out of the town, and as the buildings are mostly tin, it is hideous. The only redeeming features are the trees and the flowering shrubs, which an enterprising Sub-Commissioner planted at his own expense. It seems

that everything decent in this country is done in this way. All the roads are lined with trees, and in time the dreary ugliness of the township will be almost hidden in greenery.

The residential part of Kissembi lies on a low undulating hill which skirts the west side of the town. Good bungalows in really top-hole gardens are scattered from one end of the hill to the other. At the south end are the military lines with a polo ground and gymkhana. The north end of the hill runs into the remains of the splendid forest which used to cover the whole place; on the other side of this strip one plunges right into native villages and cultivation. At the moment, when the rains are just about to finish, the hill is really lovely. Roses in such rank profusion I have never seen anywhere - they have taken the whole place by storm, and have flung themselves over the bungalows and gardens, the masses of blossoms quite hiding the leaves. All English flowers seem to do well here, violets, carnations, sweet-peas, holly-hocks - every mortal thing. They bloom beautifully, but Africa seems to have knocked their delicate home scents out of them - they have practically no perfume at all.

There is any amount to do here - much more than at the Coast - games of every sort: footer, cricket, tennis, golf, and polo, and added to these the shooting. All the same it isn't a very sociable place - I suppose it is too big and scattered. No one bothers about you one way or another, and the friendly interest and help you got at Pembi, you don't get here. People just look at you and then leave you alone; and the women-kind, though they all expect you to call, take no manner of notice of you when you have done so. In the majority of cases their husbands don't even shed a card on you.

So far I don't know whether I am to stay on here or not - the opinion is not. There seems to have been trouble with the natives

in various remote districts, and it looks as if I should go to one of these. Out in the direction of the Zara river things have been pretty bad. The new station there, Umbi, still has a military company, and Fort Eliot itself seems in rather a bad way. I only hope I shan't go there. Waller has just come back with his company from Umbi, and has told me some beastly yarns - says it's all thick bush with just native paths through it, and that the natives hide in the bush and shoot poisoned arrows at you as you pass. Of course you can't catch them, they <sup>we</sup> riggle off like snakes before you realize what direction the arrow came from. They also have a pleasant habit of appearing to make friends with you, and bringing you in presents of flour and other dainties, all of them poisoned, and sort-of standing by to see you die in agony after you have eaten them. Waller had twenty-five of his men laid out in this way, and they only pulled through because there wasn't much flour and it had been divided amongst so many men, and mixed with other food before it was eaten. Even so, they remained unconscious for thirty-six hours - it didn't matter what was done to them they neither felt, nor moved. Waller says the natives hate us ( it looks as if they did) and don't want us messing round. But of course as we are a Protectorate we must interfere. He says the only thing to do is to give the truculent natives a real hard hammering - once they recognise you as top-dog they resign themselves, and, more or less, make the best of what they consider a bad job. The reason there is such trouble at Umbi is that a couple of years ago they killed a white man there, and this has given them such swelled heads they almost think they are white themselves. Latterly their colour has been rubbed into them a bit, but they haven't quite realized it yet.

The Wakiki (the people who live all over the Zara River country)

are agriculturists and seem to be rather good at it - they grow every mortal kind of native grain and vegetable, and they appear to be hard working. The friendly ones come in here as porters, and also to work on the roads. They are nasty, morose-looking brutes - they wear their wool in a shaggy fringe, and it's almost the only thing they do wear. Here in the town they are given blankets to cover their nakedness, but shes oux they attire themselves in a sketchy sort of goat skin hanging from one shoulder.

December 2th. Kissembi.

I am ordered to Fort Eliot and start in a couple of days. I sort of felt it in my bones that I should be sent there when Waller first began telling me about it all. Ellis, the District Commissioner at Fort Eliot, is quite alone since he sent all the military to Umbi, and owing to the fact that there is a good deal of unrest in the district, a white man ought to be travelling round all the time. On the other hand it is not desirable to leave the station with only a Goanese clerk and a few police. I am chiefly to look after the station while Ellis is on tour - a pretty mouldy billet, as it means I shall not be able to get out to shoot, and shall practically be alone all the time. I don't find myself extra good company, and though I have fortunately picked up a fair working knowledge of the lingo, I don't seem able to make companions of blacks. Some people are quite happy with only coloured people around, but I can't get used to them. I am sure they are <sup>a</sup>decent lot, but in spite of this their silent, watchful ways make me feel uncomfortable and suspicious. I have noticed that - and I suppose it is owing to my feelings for, or rather against, them - they generally seem uneasy when they are with me: we act and re-act. Their uneasiness makes them

all the more watchful, and I feel that they are not satisfied with me, or, to put it another way, they don't seem to have any confidence in me. We don't seem to understand one another. Well, perhaps when I am alone with them our mutual suspicions will die out. They certainly are wonderful at sizing people up, and their native names for the different white men are masterpieces of brevity and knowledge - they touch the spot like Homosea, and sometimes touch it painfully. Such names as "The Father of Lies", "The Heavy Fisted", "The Destroyer of Women", "The Unjust", "The Waverer", are, to say the least of it, uncomfortable appellations, though it is distinctly comforting to be known as "The Fearless", "The Great-Hearted", "The Defender of Natives", "The Promise-Keeper", or "The Seer". Ellis is known as "Ever-Ready", and Waller says it is him all over: he is so on the spot that it doesn't matter what happens he is ready for it. I wonder if I have a name yet - possibly there is nothing of a sufficiently distinctive nature about me for them to catch hold of. I expect I am probably called after my leggings or my hat, or some rotten thing like that.

December 13th.    In Camp.

I left Kissembi two days ago, and already feel completely cut off from it and the type of life I have hitherto led. I am in a new world from every point of view. Travelling is known as safari in this country, and it has its rigid customs just as everything else has. It is a queer mode of getting about, and, until you know the ropes, not particularly pleasing. In the first place, all your possessions - tent, camp-outfit food, drink, furniture, clothes, every mortal thing - have to be made up in loads weighing not more than 50 lbs. This in itself is a damned nuisance- if you have never done

it before, you are apt to make one box weigh a hundred pounds and the next forty pounds. I have no doubt it oughtn't to be, but it is difficult to remember that books weigh more than shirts, and I was sick of my packing long before it was finished. I had to lay in a supply of tinned foods, sugar, flour, lamp oil, washing soap, and all those wretched things - no one uses in a house and never realises one uses them - and then I suddenly found I had neither table cloths, table napkins, nor sheets. As I have been staying in other people's houses all the time, I never thought of these things. Waller advised me as to drinks - whiskey and lime juice, and a few bottles of fizz for if one's sick. At last, after a good deal of bad language on my part and hard work on the part of the boys, everything was joyfully ready - the loads laid out all in a row. Up till then my Wa-kiki porters had been squatting in a circle, with a police-man and their own head man seeing they didn't do a guy. They looked absolutely indifferent and blind to what was going on, and most of

most of

them sat with their eyes shut. But don't you believe it - nothing had escaped them; they saw which were the lightest loads, which (my tin bath for instance) were the awkward loads to carry; not a detail had escaped them, and when, finally, the word was given for them to shoulder the loads, they made one mad rush and fell upon my property and each other indiscriminately - yelling like maniacs. I was quite upset and thought there was going to be a real row, but the Corporal only smiled and shrugged his shoulders saying the Wa-kiki were savages, and though they looked ferocious nothing would happen - it was their "custom" (this word covers all the personal and racial peculiarities of everybody) to behave like this when carrying the loads of a tenderfoot, and I had best leave them to sort out themselves and their respective loads. After about twenty minutes

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of the most infernal din, a sudden lull occurred, and from what had been a seething, indistinguishable mass of savages and boxes each individual porter emerged with his load neatly tied on his back with a native ream, the loose end of the ream passed round his forehead and holding the load taut and in position. The Corporal saluted and said the caravan was ready, and I gave the word to start. At this moment my cook came up and announced that he had no frying pan, and wished to know how he could cook my breakfast. I could have murdered him - instead of this, however, I explained to him that he had had the buying of the cooking pots and a couple of days to do it in, and if he had forgotten the frying pan he must do without it. I added that if my breakfast was badly cooked he would live to regret it.

My caravan did the first march, about fifteen miles, by itself. Waller lent me one of his ponies, and I rode out after lunch to find my camp pitched and things more or less ship-shape. The porters were chattering and eating (these people seem to eat all day long) round their fires; the Corporal and his men were regaling themselves in a place apart; my cook was hocking over various groups of stones, on which his cooking pots were balanced; and as I dismounted at my tent door, my boy tipped a bucket of piping hot water into my tub. Everything went well till I turned in, and then, for the life of me, I couldn't sleep. This worried me a good deal as I had arranged to start at five o'clock, and I was undoubtedly tired. Whether it was sleeping under canvas for the first time, or whether it was fatigue or excitement, I can't say, but I kept starting up thinking someone was creeping into my tent. There was a particularly vilanous -looking man among the porters I had spotted from the first, and as the night advanced and the camp noises gradually died down, I made certain I heard whispering under the fly of my tent. My mind jumped to

the thought that it was this man bent on mischief of some sort. I lay quite still, and, except for the thumping of my own heart, and an occasional yawn from the guard as he replenished the fire, I heard nothing. Gradually I grew quieter and I must have fallen asleep without knowing I had done so. Suddenly I woke with a start. It was pitch dark, and this time undoubtedly someone was entering my tent - I heard fumbling fingers against the canvas. I dashed out of bed, my revolver in my hand, and made for the door. My foot caught in the ground sheet, and I pitched forward against the door which gave under my weight. I fell heavily to the ground, another body under mine. As I fell my revolver went off and this acted as an alarm and brought the police rushing to my tent. I was dazed and incoherent with the fall and fright, and it was some seconds before I realised that the entire camp was standing in a wondering semi-circle round me and my fallen enemy. The Corporal held a lantern in his hand, and as I raised myself still gripping my victim, I saw by its light that it was my own boy, Hamis, I was half strangling. Imagine my disgust and shame! It was 4 a.m. - pitch dark of course, and poor Hamis was coming to call me. I had said I would start before the caravan. I was horribly upset, my behaviour seemed so ridiculous, and it was almost impossible to explain to the silent expectant crowd what it all meant. Hamis, seeing my difficulty, took the blame on his own shoulders - said I had called him and he had not replied, or some such simple statement. Anyhow he made it all right, and after he had got rid of the audience I called him into my tent and gave him Rs.5. He seemed quite satisfied, but I was so disgusted with myself I could hardly bear to look at him, and when he finally went off to the cook's tent and I heard talking and laughing I felt worse than ever. I cursed myself for a fool, I cursed my



lack of sympathy with these people which made it impossible for me just in a few words to put the whole incident on the right level. For they can and do understand if one can talk to them in the right way. As it was I felt as if I had started my life in this new milieu with an irretrievable disaster.

I dressed hurriedly and before the camp was struck I started off with the gun-bearer Waller had lent me, and one porter carrying my second gun. The natives here are none of them black; their skins are a warm chocolate colour, and sometimes much lighter than this. In the sun, especially if their skins are wet, they look just like bronze statues. The gun-bearer in marked contrast, was a coal black Nubian, a great big fellow called Kaid Ali. His face was thin and gaunt, and scarred with his tribal marks - transverse cuts over his cheek bones - which gave him a somewhat sinister appearance.

We set off at a fair pace along the caravan road, which twisted away in thin beaten curves across the undulating plains. I was still feeling ~~very~~ <sup>jarred by</sup> ~~unset~~ about the fiasco of an hour back, but Kaid Ali and the porter appeared quite apathetic. In this country, that is along the beaten tracks, ones camps are at fixed places, usually about fifteen miles apart. Where water is scarce, the camping grounds must depend upon the supplies and may be only ten or as much as five and twenty miles distant from one another. One does not however reckon ones march in miles, but in hours - a fifteen mile march is called a five hour march. Three miles an hour over fair ground is the average going of a caravan, though nearly always there are stragglers who do not reach camp till an hour or so after the arrival of the main body.

I had told Kaid Ali I wanted to shoot, and by starting before the caravan I had an excellent opportunity of getting what I wanted

actually from the road. We had been going about an hour when I felt a gentle tug at my coat, and, on halting, Kaid Ali pointed silently to a few scattered thorn trees and murmured, "rhino". It took me some time to verify this statement, but finally what I thought were a couple of bushes began to move slowly towards the bare plain beyond the trees. I laid my plans at once - the porter was to remain where he was, but lying down. I would take my .303 and Kaid Ali my double .450. We would make for the line of trees, and trust to arrive there unseen - the wind was right, so that unless the fitful breeze shifted it was literally a question of seeing, and rhino are proverbially blind. I was delighted at the chance of a rhino, especially as one of the two had really good horns. We accomplished the crouching creep to the trees quite unobserved, and when we arrived the rhino were grazing quietly at about 300 yards distance. Kaid Ali was all for crawling after them and not shooting till we had got to about 15 yards of them, but I didn't see the force of this. The bigger rhino was broadside on, so offered me a splendid shot.

I explained to Kaid Ali I meant to fire with my .303 at this distance, and in the event of a charge I could finish matters with the .450. He was silently disapproving, but I disregarded this, and feeling as steady as a rock I took careful aim and pulled the trigger. The smaller rhino boited with his tail in the air, but my beast, after ~~to~~ the blow of the bullet, slewed straight round, and headed off at a hand\_gallop in our direction. I was certain he couldn't see, but the devil was in it, for at this very moment the breeze shifted and the brute got our wind. On he lumbered, kicking up the dust and stumbling every now and then. Kaid Ali assured me he was badly hit and would fall directly, but still he kept his feet and his pace. Nearer and nearer he came until I could see the very wrinkles on his

face and the blood running down his side. Suddenly he saw us, and with a furious and pig-like squeal he came full tilt at us. I dropped my .303 and was making for the nearest tree, but as I turned Kaid Ali's strong hand descended like a vice on my shoulder. He pushed the .450 into my unwilling hands, and commanded "shoot". I turned mechanically, raised my rifle and fired both barrels full at the rhino who was not more than fifteen yards distant. He lurched forward and fell on his knees at our very feet - his great weight seemed to shake the earth, but he didn't make a sound. Rhino frequently pretend to be dead when they're not, and as you approach the supposed corpse it rises up and does for you - this fellow however was dead all right, and naturally I was most anxious to see where my bullets had hit him. Kaid Ali and I set to work to examine him, but what was our amazement to find the only bullet in the beast was the original .303 which was right through his heart - I had missed him with both barrels of the .450 and at fifteen yards! I felt pretty sick with myself, for it proved I must have been hideously unsteady. I'll admit it was pretty nerve-shaking to see that great vicious-looking brute at such close quarters, and every bit of him meaning business - still I ought to have hit him no matter where. It served to convince me of the truth of what I had previously thought were travellers' tales, about the toughness and staying power of rhino. Waller had told me that a rhino was good for a 300 yards' charge after he was fatally wounded, and to all intents and purposes dead. The only two shots which are certain to drop a rhino in his tracks are the neck and kidney shots - his heart, even when pierced, will hold out long enough for him to do for you before he drops.

Naturally I was distinctly pleased that I had bagged the first rhino I'd shot at, especially as his horns were good - the front one

measured twenty-three inches. We left the porter with the corpse and made our way back to the road. Here we waited for the caravan, and on its arrival told the men to load up with whatever meat they wanted, all I myself wanted being the horns and a strip of the hide to make whips. Kaid Ali had cut off the tail - his perquisite - before we left, and I promised him as much of the hide (which is indeed a coveted article) as he liked. He had prevented my doing a bunk, though, as it happened, my staying didn't do much good.

This morning (the 13th) before continuing our march Kaid Ali, a couple of porters and I made our way back to the fallen rhino. We started in the small hours of the morning in order to reach the carcass just before dawn, as I thought we should in this way very likely find lions still feeding. Our arrival was perfectly timed, but we had no luck with the lions - they had been there but unfortunately the moon was almost full, so they finished their meal early and had evidently been gone some time. We approached very cautiously, screening ourselves in the trees as much as possible; the hyaenas had gone, the jackals were moving off still licking their blood-flecked chops, and the carcass itself was invisible owing to hundreds of naked-headed vultures which covered it. It positively looked at a little distance as if the rhino were alive, clothed as his skeleton was in moving, quarelling, deep-hued birds - his outline was defined by their bowed bodies and, added to these, a greedy circle clawed the blood sodden ground round the fallen monster, fighting and flapping their wings, and tearing at the morsels of meat and bones, on which the lions and hyaenas had surfeited themselves. It was a gruesome sight, and it seemed an indignity that these dirty carrion birds should be in possession of so mighty a beast. We walked up to the spot, and only when we were a

few yards distant did the birds reluctantly rise and flap off to the trees hard by, watching our every movement with sinister and greedy eyes. The skeleton of the rhino showed up white in the increasing light - his vast bones were cleanly picked, and little remained even for the vultures. As we moved off the vultures returned to their orgy, and in a few seconds the skeleton was again a clothed and moving mass.

We had no further adventures - the men had plenty of meat and were consequently garrulously happy, so all I did was to shoot a brace of guinea fowl for myself as we neared camp.

December 30th. Fort Eliot.

I have actually been here five days - it feels like five years - and up till now I have not had a moment for writing. I have just managed to get off my home letters, but nothing else has been possible. Before I get too far away from my journey here I had better finish it off - not that there is anything much to say, as the remaining two days were quite uneventful. After crossing the biggest river, the Kipi, which is rather more than half-way ~~house~~ between Kissembi and Fort Eliot, the country changed entirely - the plains were done with and the game much scarcer. From here on it was hilly all the way, the hills being sparsely covered with trees and bush. The grass was <sup>a</sup> good three feet high, and made going very bad as one got soaked with dew every morning. The dew is amazingly heavy - looking at the country one would think from the drenched condition of grass and foliage that there had been deluges of rain. We were in the country of many waters - another big difference from the Kissembi side of the Kipi - not an hour passed but we had a fair-

sized stream or river to negotiate, and as up to date bridges have evidently come under the heading of unnecessary luxuries, some of them gave us a good deal of trouble. The Kipi itself is spanned by a cable way; normally this Blondin-looking arrangement is as good thirty-five feet above the water, though during the big rains I am assured one not unfrequently has to be dragged through the water - in this ratio do African rivers rise. But, after all, this is only on a par with its other excesses. The cable certainly both looks and feels dangerous. One sits on a board, like the seat of a swing, suspended from the cable, and is hauled over, the cable being hand worked. In spite of its insecure appearance, it was better than crossing roaring torrents on a narrow, slippery, tree-trunk, or, when even these primitive methods failed, wading up to your arm-pits. The streams were so rapid that where it was impossible to improvise a bridge we had to put a rope across for the porters to guide and steady themselves by. Even so, more than one of my loads got a ducking, though fortunately nothing was lost. These rivers caused endless delays on our days' marches, and we seldom got into camp under seven hours. I was so tired with hauling and directing that I didn't feel much inclined to tackle further rivers in my search of game.

We reached Fort Eliot on the morning of the 15th. I had sent one of the police ahead the day before telling Ellis I was arriving, and he most kindly rode out to meet me with his spare pony as a mount for myself. The station is very spick and span. The Fort lies on the top of a circular hill, and the ground round the Fort is well cleared for a good hundred yards in every direction, to prevent its being rushed by the natives. The police lines and parade ground are outside the Fort on the South side; the few Indian shops lie to

the East; and well-kept native roads branch off in all directions. Ellis makes the natives keep these roads clean and mended; and he tells me he has all his rivers bridged - the natives bring in the timber and stone, and Ellis himself does the building. The Fort is about eighty yards square; it consists of a dry stone wall about four feet six high, outside which is a deep ditch comfortably strewed with barbed wire. There are three bridges (just planks) into the Fort; - one at the main gate where the guard is; one leading to the Police lines, and one to the servants' quarters and stables, which are just outside, but close to the Fort. Inside the Fort is Ellis's house (which I am to share with him for the present, as the A.D.C.'s house is in process of erection, between the Fort and the Police Lines) the Offices, and the Guard-room. It is well arranged and well kept, and the police are jolly smart. Ellis is an absolute tin god, and by Jove, he has done a lot here! It is an eye-opener to see what he gets through single-handed. He says he is a bit fed up with over-work and under-mannedness, and he's jolly glad I've come. He is a most interesting chap, and though he doesn't talk much, there is damn little he doesn't see. He has taken me round the place himself, and had the Chiefs up to see me, and to explain to them that I am a second edition of himself - I only wish I were. Controlled strength emanates from him - he inspires confidence, and he understands and loves the natives. They and the police just worship him. He has explained his native policy to me in detail, and he wants me to get used to dealing direct with the Chiefs, as in his absence many local matters must be settled by me. The idea is for me to get the hang of everything before he's off on his next tour. He talks to his men and the natives in exactly the right manner - he is never familiar, but he shows his affection for and his trust in

them. The smallest may come to him for help, and his patience and consideration for them are infinite. But ye gods, when he has to punish! Of course he's right - he says punishment is to teach, and the only way you can punish a primitive savage is through his feelings. Make him really feel and he will remember. He never punishes unless it's necessary, but I'll bet his lessons are not forgotten. Gad, he has a tongue too - I'd be sorry to get the rough edge of it! He harangued a policeman found asleep on guard and the man positively curled up. He certainly showed that man the error of his ways, and what might have resulted from his unforgivable carelessness. The delinquent was flogged (twenty-five lashes), put in the chain-gang for three months, and after this term dismissed the service. Ellis says there are two sins he never forgives - can't afford to because either of them might mean entire destruction, or at least individual loss of life: No. 1 is a man asleep on guard, No. 2 is a man throwing away his load on safari. As a result of the latter, Ellis himself lost his assistant. The porter who was carrying the medicine chest threw it away, and Ellis was, in consequence, without the means of dressing the said assistant's wounds. The poor wretch died of septic poisoning. Sin No. 1 may of course cause the station or camp to be rushed and wiped out.

Anyhow I had to see the delinquent flogged, and I didn't like it one bit - it quite turned me up. The sickening thud of the hide whip on the man's naked flesh, and swishing of the whip as it rose and fell, the mechanical counting of the blows as they were given, the writhings of the wretched man (he didn't make a sound though Ellis tells me some of them scream the whole time) - the whole thing was beastly. Yet in spite of its beastliness I can see that it is necessary, as the result of a discriminating judgment.



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Christmas Day. Fort Eliot.

Here's a nice affair! While we were sitting at lunch a runner came in to say that Corporal ~~Juma~~<sup>Asmani</sup> has been killed some thirty odd miles from here, over towards the Soitai hills. He was out with a couple of men to call in an old Chief who lives out there. What exactly happened Ellis can't find out from the runner, who probably does not know himself. Ellis feels pretty certain that ~~Juma~~<sup>Asmani</sup> must have been playing the fool, either with some woman, or possibly grabbing goats. Anyway, the worst of it is that he himself with twenty police and a handful of porters left for the scene of action within two hours of getting the news, and here am I alone and lonely and very sorry for myself. As a matter of fact I'm a good deal worried about Ellis - he is far from fit though he says it is just the usual internal upset one always gets here (comforting look out for me). The water is rotten. It seems queer, with the large and rapid river our water supply is taken from, but apparently all the filth from the villages, the natives, and their herds, drains into the rivers and fouls most of them.

As a compromise Ellis took a hammock with him, but I don't suppose he will use it, and one thing that's absolutely certain is that he won't spare himself. I feel pretty helpless now that he has gone, but I suppose I shall worry along somehow. The worst of it is that Ellis had ordered a meeting of the Chiefs for a couple of days hence - they have been a bit slack about their hut tax, and also about sending in labour, and have got to get a mild slating. I shall have to tackle them now - a job I shan't be much good at. A crowd of natives always seems to get on my nerves (I have accepted the fact that I have got these very unpleasant things). For some reason or other

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I feel as if I had to defend myself - to me the native attitude always seems an accusing one, and the silent, unwavering glances of a mass of coloured people quite puts me off. I hate looking at them.

December 23th. Fort Eliot.

Well it's over, and from what I can gather of the whole affair I made an ass of myself. I was sure I should, because the night before there was a beastly night alarm. I don't mind admitting I was in a funk. I thought the natives had got wind of Ellis's absence and were attacking the Fort. It seemed quite possible - the Chiefs knew they were ordered in for a rowing, and it occurred to me they were taking the opportunity of getting a bit of their own back first. The worst of it is that I gave myself away, for when that beastly alarm started I dashed out of bed and barricaded all the doors and windows, seized my rifle and revolver and prepared to die hard. The police all formed up outside the house and waited for me to appear - meanwhile I was crouching behind my bed. Thank God they couldn't tell what I was doing, and on hearing the Sergeant's voice on the verandah my panic abated, and I was able to pull myself together sufficiently to open the window and ask him what was wrong. I didn't dare to go to the door because I had pulled the table in front of it, and the men would have heard me dragging it away. The Sergeant seemed surprised at my not coming out, but I told him I had been sleeping heavily having had a touch of fever, and I expect he believed this last statement for my teeth were chattering audibly. It seems that the alarm was given by the guard on the cattle boma. A hyaena was hanging round, and he thought it was at least a troop of lions. The Sergeant said he was always extra careful when Ellis was away,

as it was most important not to allow the men to get slack. I com-  
 mended him and said as it was nothing I would not come out. He waited  
 a moment and then said that after an alarm Ellis always dismissed the  
 men himself, having first ascertained that they were all present. The  
 table was my undoing - I made a mental note that whatever happened  
 in future I would never barricade the door, and I told the Sergeant  
 that for this once he must dismiss the men himself, as I did not feel  
 well enough to come out. He saluted silently, turned on his heel,  
 said a few words to the men, and they all pattered off. They began  
 talking volubly as they filed out of the gate, and I uneasily felt  
 they were expressing their surprise at my non- appearance. Directly  
 silence fell again, I crept into the dining-room returned my rifle  
 to the gun-rack, and as softly as possible pulled the table from in  
 front of the door. While I was trying to get it into position some-  
 one turned the handle of the door, and before I realized what was  
 occurring my boy Hamis was in the room. He was carrying a hurricane  
 lamp, and by its light - the room was otherwise only lighted by the  
 lamp in my bedroom - I caught a glance of surprise and curiosity on  
 his face as he looked from me to the table. In an instant the look  
 was gone, and he resumed his normal mask-like expression. He told  
 me that Sergeant Mahomed had roused him saying I had fever and he  
 had better come round and see to me. What should he do? Would I  
 have some tea, and would it not be better if I returned to bed? The  
 table, as if pointing the finger of derision at me, stood defiantly  
 and obliquely across the room. I attempted no explanation, accepted  
 the offer of tea, and went off to bed. Hamis having made the tea  
 and brought it with wonderful despatch, curled himself up in his  
 blanket and made his bed in my door-way. This unfortunately pre-  
 cluded me from opening the shutters ( the windows were usually all

left wide open at night) and re-placing that vile dining room table. What Hamis thought of me and my goings I don't know - he was as respectfully attentive as usual in the morning, asked if I felt better, and suggested quinine, which, to keep up the idea of my fever, I took.

I was out for the seven o'clock parade and felt pretty uncomfortable as I ran the gauntlet of all the men's eyes turned as one pair upon me, and the fire of Mahomed's polite enquiries as to my health. At 9.30 sharp, after I had had an hour in the office, the Chiefs were assembled, and I reluctantly made my way towards them. During the whole of that preceding hour, the din had been over-powering. Each Chief brought his special body guard of spearmen, and these vied with one another in singing (so-called) and yelling, stamping and shaking the metal bells which hang at their knees and round their ankles. In passing the gate, the spearmen formed in prancing, howling circles, and each man deposited his spear and sword just inside the Fort. At big paravers of this sort no one is allowed to carry arms: this is not only as a guarantee of good faith, but because the warriors not infrequently go temporarily mad from chewing mimosa bark, and in this condition they invariably run amuck and try and spear someone.

As I approached the seething crowd of natives, the spearmen all raised their right arms above their heads and let out a hideous yell. They looked horrible - their matted, grease-clogged wool hung in a fringe over their eyes; their naked bodies were smeared with red and white paint; grotesque ornaments, ear-rings, armlets, and bells hung from their quivering bodies; and they stamped, shuffling from one foot to the other, keeping time with their movements as well as with the accompanying bells and yells. I would have given a good deal to have been able to turn back and bolt into the Fort. In time I sup-