

MARCH 6, 1910.

With McCutcheon In Africa:



The Colonel Writes Up His Adventures While They Are Hot

Colonel Roosevelt Kills Three Elephants For Field Museum.

But When the Two Parties Break a Long Drought in Celebration of the Kill "Bwana Tumbo" Gracefully Refuses to Dismount From the Water Wagon



The Colonel Carries a Book With Him and Improves Each Shining Hour

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By JOHN T. McCUTCHEON.

IN the afternoon of Nov. 14 a little cavalcade of horsemen might have been seen riding slowly away from our camp on the Nzoia river. One of them, evidently the leader, was a well built man of about 51 years, tanned by many months of African hunting and wearing a pair of large spectacles. His teeth flashed in the warm sunlight. A rough hunting shirt incased his well knit body and a pair of rougher trousers, reinforced with leather knee caps and jointly sustained by suspenders and a belt, fitted in loose folds around his stocky legs. On his head was a big sun helmet, and around his waist, less generous in amplitude than formerly, was a partly filled belt of Winchester cartridges. His horse was a stout little Abyssinian shooting pony, gray of color and lean in build, and in the bloodstained saddlebag was a well worn copy of Macaulay's 'Essays' bound in pigskin. Our hero—for it was he—was none other than Bwana Tumbo, the Hunter-Naturalist, exponent of the Strenuous Life, and ex-president of the United States.

If I were writing a thrilling story of adventure that is the way this story would begin. But as this is designed to be a simple chronicle of events it is just as well at once to get down to basic facts and tell about the Roosevelt elephant hunt, the hyena episode, and the pigskin library, together with other more or less extraneous matter.

Col. Roosevelt, his son Kermit, Leslie Tarlton, who is managing the Roosevelt expedition, and Edmund Heller, the taxidermist of the expedition, came to our camp on the 14th of November to have luncheon and to talk over plans whereby Col. Roosevelt was to kill one or more elephants for Mr. Akeley's American museum group of five or six elephants. The details were all arranged and later in the afternoon the colonel and his party left for their own camp, a short distance from ours.

Col. Roosevelt Trails Elephants.

Mr. Akeley, with one of our tents and about forty porters, followed later in the evening and spent the night at the Roosevelt camp. Early the following morning Col. Roosevelt, Mr. Akeley, Mr. Tarlton, and Kermit, with two tents and forty porters and gunbearers, started early in the hope of again finding the trail of the small herd of elephants that had been seen the day before. The trail was picked up after a short time and the party of hunters expected that it would be a long and wearisome pursuit, for it was evident that the elephants had become nervous and were moving steadily along without stopping to feed. In such cases they frequently travel forty or fifty miles before settling down to quiet feeding again.

The country was hilly, deep with dry grass, and badly cut up with small gullies and jagged outcroppings of rock on the low ridges. At all times the ears of the hunting party were alert for any sound that would indicate the proximity of the herd, but for several hours no trumpeting, nor intestinal rumbling, nor crash of trunks against small trees were heard. Finally, at about 11 o'clock, Tarlton, who, strangely enough, is partly deaf, heard a sound that caused the hunting party to stop short. He heard elephants. They were undoubtedly only a short distance ahead, but as the wind was from their direction there was little likelihood that they had heard the approach of the hunters. So Tarlton, who has had much experience in elephant hunting, led the party off at a right angle from the elephant trail and then, turning, paralleled the trail a few hundred feet away. They had gone only a short distance when it became evident that they had passed the herd, which was hidden by the tall grass and the thickly growing scrub trees that grew on all sides.

Party Studies the Herd.

The wooded character of the country rendered it easy to stalk the elephant herd, and with care-



The Colonel Exhibits His Pigskin Library

ful attention to the wind the four hunters and their gunbearers advanced under cover until the elephants could be seen and studied. Each of the four hunters carried a large double barreled cordite rifle that fires a 500 grain bullet backed up by nearly a hundred grains of cordite.

As was expected, the herd consisted solely of cows and calves. There were eight cow elephants and two "totos," or calves, a circumstance that was particularly fortunate, as Col. Roosevelt was expected to secure one or two cows for the group, while some one else was to get the calf.

For some moments the hunting party studied the group of animals and finally decided which ones were the best for the group.

Two of the largest cows and the calf of one of them were selected. It is always the desire of collectors who kill groups of animals for museums to kill the calf and the mother at the same time whenever practicable, so that neither one is left to mourn the loss of the other. It is one of the unpleasant features of group collecting that calves must be killed, but the collector justifies himself in the thought that many thousands of people will be instructed and interested in the group when it is finished.

Elephant hunting is considered by many African hunters as being the most dangerous of all hunting. When a man is wounded by an elephant he is pretty likely to die, whereas the wounds inflicted by lions are often not necessarily mortal ones. Also, in fighting a wounded

lion one may sometimes take refuge in the low branches of a tree, but with a wounded elephant there is rarely time to climb high enough and quick enough to escape the frenzied animal. In elephant shooting also the hunter endeavors to approach within twenty or thirty yards, so that the bullets may be placed exactly where their penetration will be most instantaneously deadly. Consequently a badly placed bullet may merely infuriate the elephant without giving the hunter time to gain a place of safety, and be much worse than if the hunter had entirely missed his mark.

Ex-President Kills Three.

Among elephant hunters it is considered more dangerous to attack a cow elephant than a bull, for the cow is always ready and eager to defend its calf, hence when Col. Roosevelt prepared to open fire on a cow elephant accompanied by a calf, at a range of thirty yards, in a district where the highest tree was within reach of an elephant's trunk, the situation was one fraught with tense uncertainty.

Col. Roosevelt is undoubtedly a brave man. The men who have hunted with him in Africa say that he has never shown the slightest sign of fear in all the months of big game hunting that they have done together. He "holds straight," as they say in shooting parlance, and at short range, where his eyesight is effective, he shoots accurately.

This, then, was the dramatic situation at about 12 o'clock noon on Nov. 15, eight miles east of the

Nzoia river, near Mount Elgon: Eight cow elephants, two "totos," one ex-president with a double barreled cordite rifle thirty yards away, supported by three other hunters similarly armed, with native gunbearers held in the rear as a supporting column.

The colonel opened fire; the biggest cow dropped to her knees and in an instant the air was thunderous with the excited "milling" of the herd of elephants. For several anxious minutes the spot was the scene of much confusion, and when quiet was once more restored Col. Roosevelt had killed three elephants and Kermit had killed one of the calves. It had not been intended or desired to kill more than two of the cows, but with a herd of angry elephants threatening to annihilate an attacking party sometimes the prearranged plans do not work out according to specifications.

Kermit was hastily dispatched to notify our camp and the work of preparing the skins of the elephants was at once begun.

Camp Lifts the Lid.

In the meantime we at our camp, eight miles away from the scene of battle, were waiting eagerly for news of the hunting party, although expecting nothing for a day or so. It seemed too much to expect that the hunt should have such a quick and successful termination. So when Kermit rode in with the news late in the afternoon it was a time for felicitation. We all solemnly took a drink, which in itself was an event, for

our camp is a "dry" camp when in the field. Only the killing of a lion had been sufficient provocation for taking off the "lid," but on the strength of three elephants for the group the "lid" was momentarily raised with much ceremony and circumstance.

The burden of Kermit's message was "salt, salt, salt!" and porters and second gunbearers to help with the skinning. So "Jimmy" Clark, who has been connected with the American Museum of History for some time and who is with us on the Mount Elgon trip, started off with a lot of porters laden with salt for preserving the skins. It was his plan to go direct to the main Roosevelt camp, get a guide, and then push on to the elephant camp, where he hoped to arrive by 10 o'clock at night. He would then be in time to help with the skinning, which we expected would be continued throughout the entire night. Kermit stopped at his own camp and gave Clark a guide for the rest of the journey, after which he went to bed.

Otherwise Kermit Was All Right.

At 11 o'clock the sound of firing was heard some place off in the darkness. The night guard of the Roosevelt camp, rightly construing it to be a signal, answered it with a shot, and, guided by the latter, Clark and his party of salt laden porters once more appeared. They had traveled in a circle for three hours and were hopelessly lost. Kermit was routed out and again supplied more guides—also a compass and also the direction to follow. Unfortunately he made a mistake and said northwest instead of southeast—otherwise his directions were perfect.

For three hours more Clark and his porters went bumping through the night, stumbling through the long grass and falling into holes. The porters began to be mutinous and guides were thoroughly and hopelessly lost. It was then that they one and all laid down tall grass, made a fire to keep the lions at bay, and slept soundly until daylight. Then the situation was little better, for they were still at sea. About the time that Clark decided to return to the river, miles away, and take a fresh start he fired a shot in the forlorn hope of getting a response from some section of the compass. A distant shot came in answer and he pushed on and soon came up with the colonel and Tarlton returning home after a night in the temporary elephant camp. The colonel gave him full directions, and at 9 o'clock the relief party arrived at their destination.

Beats All Nature Fakes.

In the meantime we had left our camp on the river at 6:15, gone to the Roosevelt camp, and with Kermit guiding us proceeded on across country toward the elephant camp. On our way we also met the colonel and Tarlton, the former immensely pleased with the outcome of the hunt and full of enthusiasm about the adventure with the elephants. But the most remarkable thing of all, he said, was the hyena incident. He told us the story, and it is surely one that will make all nature fakers sit up in an incredulous and disbelieving mood.

During the night, the story goes, many hyenas had come from far and near to gaze on the carcasses of the elephants. Their howls filled the night with weird sounds. Lions also journeyed to the feast, and between the two they mumbled the bones of the slain with many a howl and snarl. Early in the morning the colonel went out in the hope of surprising a lion at the spread. Instead, to his great amazement, he saw the head of a hyena protruding from the distended side of the largest elephant. It was inside the elephant and was looking out, as through a window. A single shot finished the hyena, after which a more careful examination was made.

Theories—Take Your Choice.

There are two theories as to what really happened. One is that the hyena ate its way into the inside of the elephant, then gorged itself so that its stomach was distended to such proportions

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