

## CHAPTER V

Filming handwork—Dance of death at the Sultan Hassan's—Flight from a disease-infested region—An anxious journey through swamp and morass—Gnop—Hurricane and cloud-burst—Trapped—Escape—Fever—Return journey—Nuer hunting elephants—Barter—Photographing game—African animal idyll—Nuer mentality—Downstream again.

ONE day when the bank of clouds at sunrise seems thinner than usual I hurry as quickly as I can to the smith, armed with all my apparatus. He is fortunately at his forge (Fig. 64). The fire is burning and he is pouring molten iron into a mould. After we have exchanged greetings he pulls out a finely prepared brass bar and proposes to forge the armband I had ordered. But I want to see how he manages to melt metal with his primitive little fire and I ask him to begin with smelting. He is evidently annoyed, so that I am afraid he will refuse to do the work altogether: even in Africa artists are temperamental. I therefore try to account for this wish. "I need a lucky ring for one of my favourite wives," I tell him. "I am going to put a spell into it which shall protract her youth for many years and also check her too lively tongue. But that I can only do if I can be present from the start. I shall then turn the spell with my machine while you are working." He clearly finds this quite understandable, and when I speak of the too lively tongue a smile of sympathy spreads over his features. With this excuse I have also happily introduced my camera. Finally, a cigarette seals the restored peace.

The smith now goes to the village to fetch fresh brass, his companions meanwhile get the long double crucible

ready. Clay and cow-dung are the ingredients out of which it is kneaded. The lid is provided with a hole in which a cork-shaped stone is fixed. The master returns with a brass rod and asks if the weight will do. I look at the lump, which weighs a pound, and declare myself satisfied. He asks for the size of my wife's wrist. I measure my own exactly, subtract the width of two fingers and mark the point on the brass measure. He takes it carefully and goes to work. In the meantime I have set up my camera and start turning. The master's original fear of the apparatus is quite gone and the work progresses. He heats the brass to a glow, then beats it to small pieces on a large stone which serves as anvil (Fig. 65). The fragments go into the crucible, the inside of which is powdered with charcoal dust. The lid is put on, the joints are carefully caulked up with clay and the stopper loosely fitted into the hole in the lid. The crucible now goes into the charcoal fire and the tiny bellows come into play. The sweat pours from the men's foreheads; they take turns and even the master lends a hand. Like a monkey he contrives to use both hands in turn and at the same time to scratch himself all over. Then he asks if I have any special wishes. I give him to understand that I leave him, as a great master, a free hand, only the ring is to be exceptionally beautiful. There will be no trouble about the price. The artist is pleased to hear this, he grows merrier and merrier and cracks jokes, but keeping his eye on the fire all the while. More than two hours pass before the glowing crucible is pulled out of the fire and the stopper removed from the lid. With a stick the master satisfies himself that the pieces of metal are thoroughly molten. Shortly before the crucible has cooled he throws the metal into water standing ready, tests the temperature with his hand and begins to work the mass with his little iron mallet. A few minutes later the brass is completely cold. Now for hours on end it is heated red, cooled and worked again and again till in this

laborious fashion the lump slowly turns into a flat-edged bar. By now it is evening.

As the sun does not appear next day I cannot, unfortunately, finish my "spell," that is, I cannot film any more. The smith's work is really worth seeing. He bends the rod by hammering it, when warm, round the curve of a piece of wood. With a chisel of soft iron he begins the ornamentation. He cuts deep parallel grooves and fills the spaces with decorative designs. The ring is then polished somewhat with bark so that the incised patterns stand out dark from the rest. The artist proudly hands me his work. It is astounding how much taste he has shown with such simple tools. I ask the price, which turns out to be very modest. Without haggling I tell Gasmasid, my factotum, to pay it. But that goes against the grain; he considers me *magnum* (crazy) and hands the smith less than half. I reproach him, so he asks if the master is not satisfied. Oh yes, he has no complaint to make and thanks me again for paying so generously. Gasmasid throws me a look, while I take a friendly leave of the artist.

Towards noon I take a turn along the river. The sound of drums and negro pipes greets my ear. Where can there be dancing in the middle of the day? "There is a feast at Sultan Hassan's," they tell me. Good. Into the car, pack the cameras and off to the Sultan! In a short time we are there. The road leads into the middle of the large village. When the car arrives, the dance is interrupted for a little while but I am soon witnessing a magnificent performance. Several hundred warriors from the neighbourhood have come with their young favourite wives. All are in full war kit, the girls are oiled for the festival as well as painted with ochre and powdered with seeds. Although the orchestra is augmented by one big drum and two small ones, their sound is overwhelmed by the pandemonium of a dozen negro trumpets and three score rattles. "The Sultan's brother died a year ago and the funeral feast is now begin-

ning," I am told. I set up my camera. No one pays any attention to me, for everything is well under way. There is no trace of the common round dance. Girls and warriors chase round the drums in a circle, taking curious high leaps into the air in time with the music. The smallest circle is that of the blowers, who, while jumping from one foot to the other, hold their trumpets with the right hand and beat their rattles on their heads with the left. All the dancers utter shrill cries. After a while the warriors suddenly swarm out and with wild yells the whole troop floods the village. They scamper round the huts, execute mock fights and mimic an attack. The girls continue to dance round the drums till at a mad pace the warriors return. This is repeated several times. I am in continual danger of being run over, for the supply of *merissa*, which stands in numerous jugs in every hut, has helped to lift the people into the seventh heaven. Louder and louder beat the drums, wilder and wilder grow the movements of the dancers, shriller and shriller their yells. All at once the warriors, instead of returning to the girls, make off to an enclosure with a *tukul* in the middle. The shouting increases and for some minutes they all dance round the straw hut. I run as quickly as I can to the entrance of the enclosure and set up my camera before it. The troop reappears, not irregularly as before but in a long procession, in the centre of which they are leading six masks. With tiang horns on their heads these masks look like our devils. The music takes on quite a new rhythm. As the procession draws near to the girls the hubbub rises to such a pitch that the drumming, the yelling, the blowing of negro trumpets are indistinguishable. At a given signal they all fall on the "demons" with upraised, threatening weapons and force them to the ground. The whole scene makes the impression of a wild witches' sabbath and is so striking that one is swept away against one's will by the excitement of the masses of people. The procession forms again and with

the masks in the middle advances to the drums and encircles them. Everyone now joins in the dance. Many Sheikhs from the neighbouring villages are present. They have laid aside their khaki clothes and are dressed like their fellow-tribesmen. One can even make out the Sultan himself in the tumult, accompanied by his three favourite wives. The individual figures vanish in the general ferment and only a tangle of shining limbs, weapons, heads stiff as though hypnotised, single lances, dark feet with white strips of hide on their ankles, goes whirling past the onlooker.

I am fagged out. It is oppressively close, every inch of earth seems to exude moisture. The endless running about with the heavy cinema camera and the strain of attention while filming called for all my strength and I must now think of the return. But first I should like to buy one of the pretty *rahat*, the sole article of clothing worn by the girls. Next time the Sultan appears near me I seize his arm and tell him what I want. He signs to a girl and translates my request to her. She naturally refuses, but when the Sultan presses her she decides to yield. Although the *rahat* is very short and conceals nothing, the girl's features express great perplexity. I understand what is the matter and hand her a piece of cloth, with which she hurries into a *tukul*, smiling gratefully. She is out again in a moment, the cloth tied round her waist, the *rahat* in her hand; she takes the payment and vanishes immediately in the mad rout.

We are anxious to travel further, but the condition of the roads gives us serious concern, for the rainy season has properly set in. Our fears are only too soon confirmed. The roads are completely waterlogged and just before Tali we come upon very bad patches, although this stretch is still being used by the Government's cars. At Gnop, however, the traffic stops. Our prospects are therefore pretty poor. For a while the way is still passable, then we reach sandy soil with a humus subsoil and the devil begins to

have his sport with us. The wheels sink in over the rims and only with the severest strain does the engine drag us along at a snail's pace. The water in the radiator is boiling, but I dare not stop for fear the car should utterly refuse to go on. Hour after hour passes, the ground gets worse and worse and finally we have to halt to fill the radiator. We have to use our last water, but it is not enough. We pour in the contents of our canteens as well and only then is the radiator filled. There is only one canteen of drinking water left for the whole lot of us. Gasmasid cranks up the engine but it will not fire. I try every conceivable trick, but it will not budge. I have the car unloaded. With our united strength we try to push it empty and the engine starts! The rattling of the machine is sweeter than music to our ears. On we go as before. How long will the petrol last? If we are to cover the whole distance at the first day's speed, we shall not even reach Gnop, still less Shambe. The last car that came this way passed through a fortnight ago, according to the natives at Tali. It belonged to an inspector who was going to Europe for a holiday. If our petrol gives out, we shall be forced to spend the rainy season here. When the roads are nice and dry again the inspector will perhaps be coming back from his leave.

At last we reach the first well. It is already late. Shall we stay the night here? It does not look like rain any more, but if it should rain unexpectedly during the night, then the journey is over and we are caught in a mouse-trap. We hope to find a better road on the other side of Gnop, where pure sandy soil predominates. That stretch is in use. So we go on. Shortly before the village we have to cross the river. The water rises to the step, but we get through all right. Dead tired we arrive at Gnop. The rest-house was last used by the inspector a fortnight ago and no car has come through since then. But to-morrow some motor lorries are due, bringing goods for the last time from Shambe. Our anxiety is allayed. Our supply of

petrol is very much reduced and we have long tracts of flooded country with stiff mud before us, but we hope that the lorries will be able to let us have some petrol. My bed is, as usual, set up under the open sky and I am soon sunk in deep sleep. About four in the morning we are wakened by a strange roaring. The sky is completely overcast and a storm is rolling up from all sides. The roaring grows louder and louder, drowns every other sound and swells to a hurricane. Trees are rooted up, branches, grass and lumps of earth fly through the air, and then a furious downpour sets in. The torrential rain abates into a steady drizzle over the whole land which lasts the entire day. The lorries whose arrival was announced do not appear and I see no chance of going further. Machulka says, "Herr Bernatzik, take a wife here and let us plant durra. When the second child is born we can proceed."

We hold a council of war. However we may rack our brains to find a way out, there is nothing for it but to wait for the rain to stop. If wind rises, we can try to go on in a day or two's time. If it rains again meanwhile, then we are simply caught. At last, towards evening, the rain stops. I go out to inspect the scene. At every step one sinks up to the ankle in the soft mud.

We have to spend the second night unfortunately in the rest-house, which is fouled by the droppings of countless birds. The rafters are entirely occupied by birds of all kinds. Their cheerful whistling, chirping and chattering fills the grey morning air. I recognise old friends like house-martins and swifts among them. In the morning the country reminds me of the Albanian swamps in autumn. Thick white ground-mists drift across innumerable ponds and pools that have formed in the soft morass. Instead of the wind we had hoped for a complete calm reigns and it is damp and stifling like a greenhouse. The sun remains hidden behind thick clouds, but slowly the pools dry up and I decide to risk it. At first the going is very bad, but

then the road improves and we can even cross a river again without hesitation. Later it is broken by boggy patches some forty yards wide, in whose stiff mud we are in danger of sticking fast. I try to get through the swamp at the highest speed I can even if it flings a wave of mud over us. My driving is put to a severe test. Still, we advance slowly and the petrol lasts out till we reach rest-house number two. The old policeman is there and tells us that now, after the first rain, plenty of game is about. *Abu Garn*, the white rhinoceros, is to be found at one of the pools, and two days before a large herd of elephants wandered across the road so that a caravan of porters did not dare to go on their way. The roar of lions is to be heard at night quite near and a troop of them actually tore a buffalo to pieces the preceding night. We had heard similar accounts at the first rest-house, and as there are elephant tracks everywhere and we meet natives laden with buffalo meat we can trust these reports. We plan therefore to put up here for some time in order especially to observe *Abu Garn*. Then we propose to visit the friendly inspector at Yirrol again and photograph the Southern Dinka, the finest natives in Africa, among whom the girls are particularly remarkable for a rare symmetry of limb and a splendid figure. I had already decided on my way up to devote several days to these handsome people. But first of all we must go to Shambe to replenish our stocks. We arrive there at last very exhausted.

I am thoroughly tired and knocked up. I pull myself together with difficulty to clean the guns, a job which even in the tropics I always do myself. Then I have to take another rest; it is more than I can do to put the cameras in order for the planned expedition. I have no appetite for supper and a leaden weariness possesses my limbs. At Amadi I had always gone about properly dressed (for reasons of prestige), but on the return journey I had again worn bathing drawers all day. The only conclusion I can draw



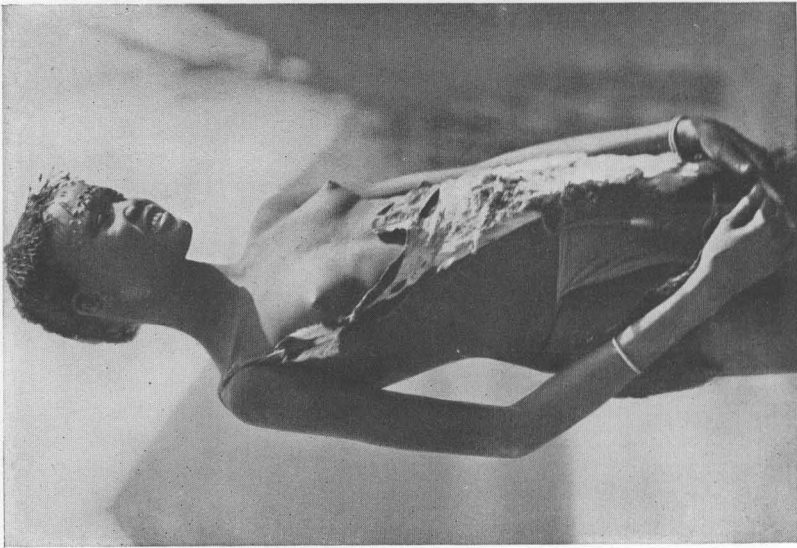
is that I have got a slight sunstroke, especially as I feel rather giddy. The plague of gnats is particularly bad to-day, so we light a fire in a tin pan beside the table to enable us to eat our supper. The draught spreads the smoke all over the place. The fire gradually brightens up and its warmth does me good. All the same I nearly collapse with fatigue and retire about seven o'clock. The floor begins to heave under my feet, icy cold sets my teeth chattering audibly, one frosty shiver after another goes through me. I take my temperature and find I have a high fever. I still believe that the exceptional exertions of these last days together with the often inadequate food have conduced to sunstroke. I take some aspirin and try to sleep. Only now does the fever reach its height. There is a roaring in my ears. I am at sea, I hear the great breakers of the North Sea and am hunting seals in a collapsible boat. The waves crash over it and threaten to tear the thin canvas to rags. The boat breaks in two, the frothy crest of a huge wave rises above me. It is going to swallow me up. But what is that dancing there? A large rat-trap! And did anyone ever see one like it? It has a face, it grins mockingly at me and finally slams its doors with a clash. Disaffected Dinka have taken me prisoner, fettered me and tied me to a tree. One of them is slowly driving a long, sharp wooden peg into my skull with a club, blow after blow. His companions sit round me grimacing—devilish faces with queer bulging eyes. Nearer and nearer they come. But they are not Dinka, they are Azande. They are going to roast and eat me and that is why they are hammering on my skull. Mists drift before my eyes, I recover consciousness for a moment and see what these blows mean. Gasmasid is preparing *kahwa* and is pounding the beans in a wooden mortar. Almost at once I sink into another world again. Days that have passed arise before my eyes. People I loved, now long dead, come and go. In their company I enjoy an improbably lovely and happy



70. Shilluk ambach raft.



71. Shilluk village on the White Nile.



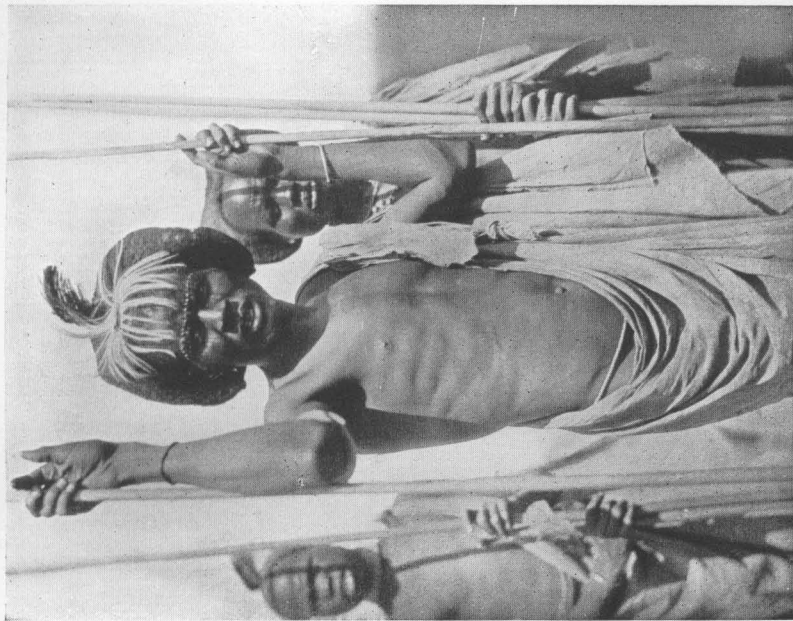
72. Young Shilluk girl from the White Nile in typical costume.



73. Like the Nuer, the Shilluk straighten and dye their hair with wood ash and cow's urine.



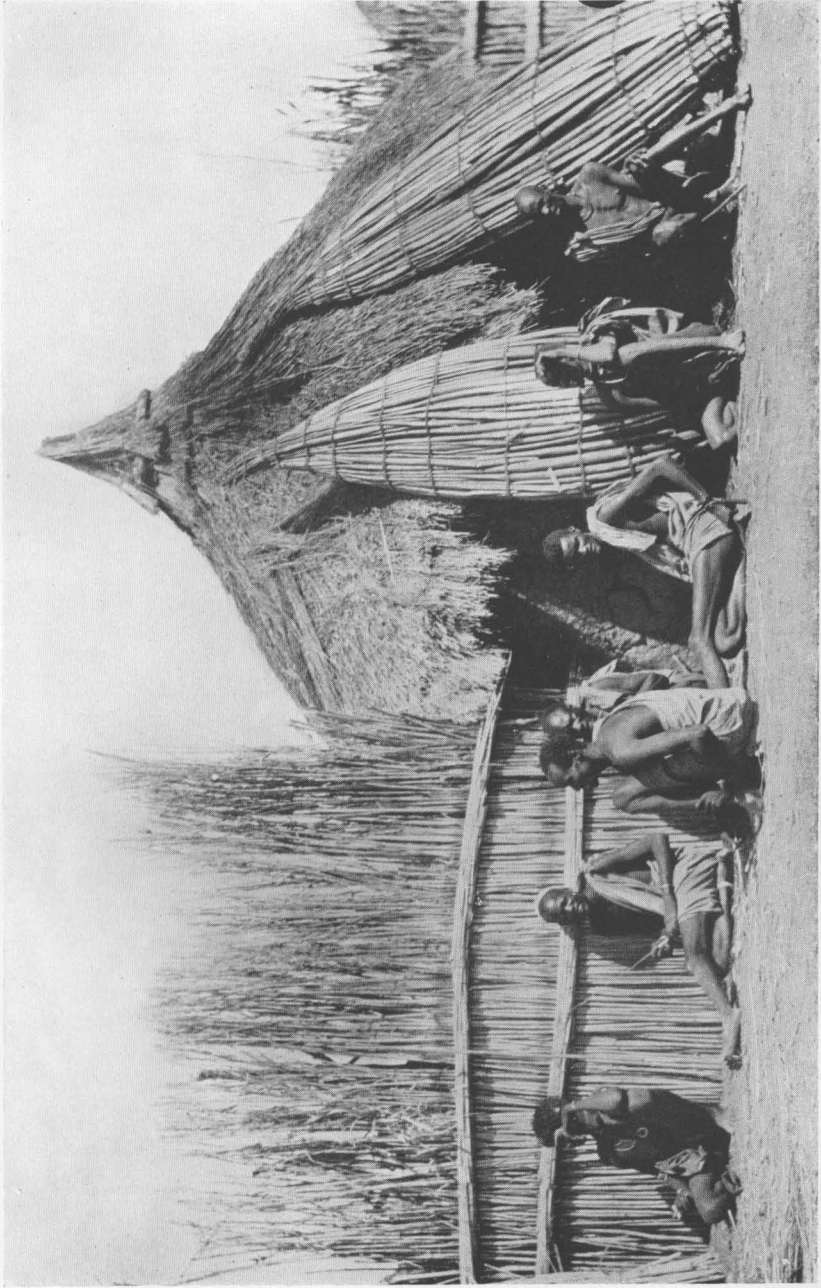
74. Girls with the characteristic tribal emblem, wart-like tattooing on the forehead.



75. A Shilluk warrior has plaited ostrich feathers into his hair.



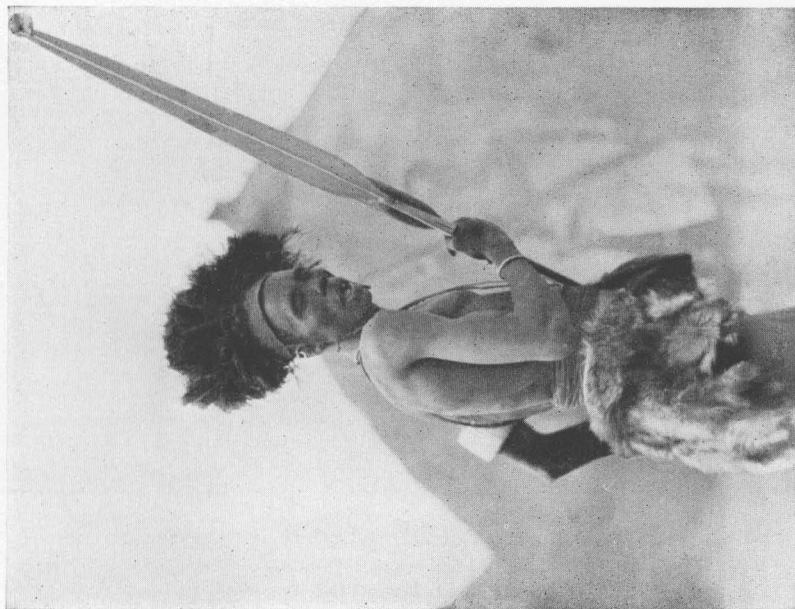
76. Shilluk surgeon letting blood. The patient's head is shaved, the surgeon slits the skin of the head and lets the blood from the wound run into a little trench.



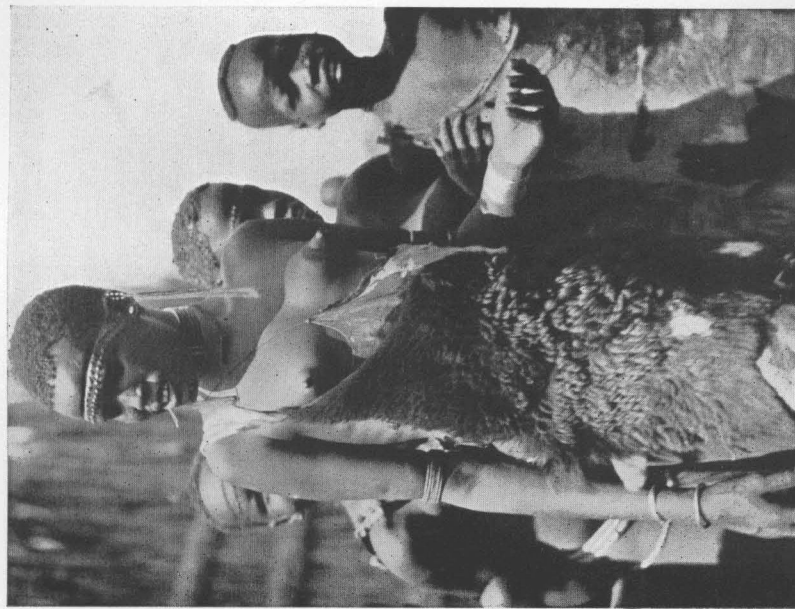
77. In a Shilluk village. Two ambach rafts have been put up against the house on the right to dry.



78. Hundreds of small dark pelicans nest in the top of a monkey-bread tree.



79. The Shilluk warrior storms the grave with half-closed eyes. (Funeral feast at Tonga).



80. Shilluk girls and women in their skin clothing.





81. The abdim storks begin nest-building when the rainy season sets in.  
An eyrie in the top of an acacia.

time. Aroused again to consciousness I cannot grasp the reality and take enormous trouble to control the wanderings of my mind. At first I seem to succeed, but then lose command of my will again. I start to whirl round, quicker and quicker. Harsh flashes of lightning strike the earth with a loud whizzing sound; red, green and blue fumes coil upwards. I am suffocating. I am going to be quartered. It is a little town in Spain. People in ancient costume press upon me, the sun is scorching and I am parched. My ankles are hurting; they have been twisted. Hangmen approach in blood-red gowns, out of which only their eyes shine, like glowing coals. A church clock is striking. Boom! Boom! Boom! I count the strokes: twelve—thirteen—fourteen. The clock has gone mad too! Oxen are brought to tear me in pieces. But they are Nuer bulls with a hump and enormous horns and decorated with favours. Hands with long claws stretch out after me and all the time the church clock continues its heavy, sullen strokes. A giant's hand encloses my chest and crushes it slowly. I am dying. Then of a sudden I come to. Even now the church clock is not silent and every stroke vibrates through my whole body. It is my heart beating rapidly, loudly, hard, monotonously. My eyes are aching terribly and I feel unspeakably sick. I think sunrise cannot be far off and ask the time. A mere twenty minutes have passed since I last woke.

So the hours go by, day after day of tormenting illness. I have lost all count of time. I am getting to know Africa's other face only too thoroughly. Food tastes musty and squelchy and my gorge rises at it. The clear water of the Nile seems to me worse than that filthy liquid from the Jur's pool.

It can only be one illness, tropical malaria, which however it is quite possible to treat. Every day, in spite of fever and sickness, I swallow a gramme of quinine and with repugnance stuff food into myself. But as the thermometer

shows nearly 104° F. on the fourth day and the fever maintains the same level without fluctuating, I gradually begin to doubt my malaria diagnosis. It might be relapsing fever (*typhus recurrens*). Against that fever quinine is utterly useless and I have no arsenic preparation or salvarsan with me. I ought to try to get to a doctor as promptly as possible. Easier said than done! If we are not held up by a head wind we can make Malakal in three weeks. That would mean that I should just have finished the second attack of fever. The attacks mostly last a week and there is generally a week's interval between them. Whether my sadly reduced physique can stand these fourteen days is another question. In any case the expedition to Yirrol is ruled out. I am much too weak; in fact I can hardly sit upright. So, feeling pretty well beaten, I give the word to break up and move northwards. Good-bye, you elephants, buffaloes, rhinos and lions! And you pretty girls will have to wait for someone else to immortalise your charms!

While I lie in a high fever, the anchor is weighed and silently, almost imperceptibly, the return journey begins. The sun is blazing like a fire, there is absolute calm and the water of the Upper Nile carries us slowly northwards. My condition at first refuses to improve, although I have taken three grammes of quinine on the first two days and now swallow a gramme daily. At length, on the sixth day, the fever abates and I can slip in a three days' rest from quinine. Extremely weak though I am, I am consoled to know that I have only fallen a victim to tropical malaria. Everything is not yet lost.

Eventually we reach the first Nuer on the Zeraf. They are out on a hippopotamus hunt, using a special method of their own. Two men in a dug-out canoe stalk a sleeping hippo and harpoon it. A very tough rope, plaited out of hippo hide, is attached to the harpoon; at the other end is a brake on which a man sits to add his weight to its resistance in the grass. As the fleeing animal drags him through

sedge, one can imagine the state he is in after a successful hunt. As soon as the animal's powers flag, the Nuer deal it its death-blow with their long spears. From the number of teeth offered for sale it is evident that this sort of hunting pays. We ask the Nuer if there is anything they would like and they request a mosquito-net! Unfortunately we cannot give that up, so we invite them to have something to eat. They eye the three plates suspiciously and Tudj has to taste the food before their eyes because they are afraid it might contain onions, which they detest. Even then they are not convinced but offer us a piece of cooked crocodile meat, which we decline with thanks. I cannot work up any enthusiasm for milk in gourds either, knowing as I do that the Nuer wash out their milk vessels with urine. I should dearly have loved to photograph some aspects of these people's life, but I am still too weak to visit the villages which lie far from the river. Shortly afterwards we pass a troop of kob antelopes (*Adenota mariæ*) on a small island. Some of them advance with incredible skill on the floating plants with the help of their long toes. We sail slowly past the beautiful animals, which among the Shilluk are kept for the king. The Shilluk hunt them, it is true, but they only kill the black bucks. The skin is taken to the king, who adorns his numerous wives with it.

The oppressive heat continues although the sun rarely shows itself, and soon the rain begins again. Here too, apparently, the wet season is setting in four weeks too early. As the head wind makes progress difficult, I have the sailing-boat tied to a large swimming island which tows us slowly down-stream, like an extra and highly original barge-horse.

One evening another Nuer settlement comes in sight. Tudj calls out to his kinsfolk "Gari-Gari," the greeting of the desert. Firelight in the palm jungle and the weird shapes of these swamp-dwellers form a scene of elemental nature that compels admiration.

I have had two days free of fever. Time goes by. Life

on board rolls on before my eyes day after day. One evening rather a large crowd of Nuer attract our attention. As the villages here are far away in the interior, the appearance of so many natives is odd. They are approaching the bank. On the other side of the river a second troop is approaching and in the twilight we can make out a quantity of smaller parties streaming from all sides to the river. I call a halt and we spend the night on the spot. The Nuer have lighted a large camp fire not far from us. Before sunrise the black men collect on both sides of the Zeraf and try by shouting to make themselves understood. I tell Tudj to find out what it is all about, and he brings me the report that the negroes have killed an elephant and that it is lying hidden in the reeds somewhere near here. As the belt of sedge is not too wide we go slowly downstream on the look-out and soon come upon the dead animal. It is a bull with some thirty-five pounds of heavy tusks. According to the negroes, they had started it at a khor far away in the interior and then pursued it for days. On the previous evening it had tried to escape in the sedge, but the Nuer put out and attacked it with their long spears. The elephant defended itself, as the wide circle of trampled grass proves, but must have bled to death from its many spear wounds. First of all I get my people to take possession of the elephant and explain to the Nuer that they must have patience till the position of the ship enables us to watch the cutting up of the animal. This calls for a lot of explaining to the excited negroes, who have scented meat and are coming nearer and nearer in their hundreds with spears. In this critical situation I ask for the Sheikh. A negro as tall as a maypole and stark naked presents himself. I invite him on board, give him tea and promise him salt and generous baksheesh if he will do what we want. I do not really expect much from his intervention because the Nuer Sheikhs, unlike the Shilluk chiefs, are often very wealthy but seldom have much authority. I am astonished

therefore to see the Sheikh leap in among the wildly gesticulating negroes with a stick and lay about him right and left like Old Harry. In a short time he has reduced them to order and they now group themselves at a suitable distance round the elephant. With considerable difficulty we tug the heavy boat through the sedge till we are in a position to watch all that happens as from a stage. My people now release the elephant and the negroes fling themselves like a tidal wave on their prey. The thick hide is slit up into pieces in a jiffy by the broad spears, whose heads are now taken off to cut up the meat with. That apparently nobody gets hurt in this perilous rabble surprises me. But before long the Sheikh sends three people aboard to us to be bandaged up, which shows that the danger is more than a seeming one. As long as they are all busy carving up the meat, good-fellowship reigns. But then they begin to throw the pieces of meat backwards to the women, who have gathered with baskets and been eagerly waiting for this moment. Like vultures they all pounce together on the meat and soon a free fight is in progress. The men also join in. The next thing will be resort to spears. But fortunately it is not to go so far as that. Some of the girls throw wet grass over the fighters, others try to cool their ardent spirits with water, and soon everybody is laughing and splashing everybody else.

It is unbelievable with what ease these people are able to move in the swamp. Like the kob antelopes they run about on the floating water plants and *um suf* roots without breaking through or hurting themselves. Even the women and girls have attained an astounding agility at it. The Sheikh has meanwhile come on board, followed by a whole mob of warriors, and soon our gallant ship is transformed into a Nuer camp (Fig. 68). Thus by a happy chance we have made a closer acquaintance with these otherwise inaccessible people.

Our journey goes on without incident and with only

brief stops. Suddenly such a strong, steady north wind blows against us that we have no choice but to put in to a landing-place and wait for better weather. Before long two Nuer are standing by the boat as though they had shot out of the earth. They were at the slaughtering of the elephant a few days before and have recognised us. I had on that occasion bought several objects of ethnographical interest and they have now come to offer me various trifles. Later some more join them, including women, and some lively bartering starts between the little group and ourselves. A fine iron ring takes my fancy—old negro work, probably of African iron. But the woman who owns it will not part with it. “How shall I beat the other women when we have a row if I give away the iron ring?” she says to Tudj, who is admiring it. We have time and at last talk her over. There are also pretty strings of ostrich eggs and shells, cut with unspeakable trouble with the spear. The owners aver that they have only borrowed the strings and the real owners do not want to sell them. But I have heard this story often enough before and after a few hours the ornaments pass into my possession. All sorts of things are offered us. I cannot honestly feel much enthusiasm for cow-hide, even if a hide only costs five piastres (hardly a shilling), but I am glad to buy several very fine plaited *merissa* filters.

The bargaining drags on while the ship drifts slowly down-stream. At a bend of the river negroes from the neighbouring villages are waiting for us, also eager to do business. A Nuer with three pretty girls hails us, but unfortunately they have only brought inferior stuff. All the same we present the belles with a handful of glass beads each, for who could resist such lovely, longing eyes? The downcast faces brighten up and the whole party spring gaily ashore. Others are waiting, all agog to trade, but we have grown particular. A very handsome goatskin decorated with beads is not to be bought and our guests’

spears, all of them made in Omdurman from European iron, are exactly what we have brought ourselves to barter with. Finally, we are shown two interesting spears. They are not Nuer work but have come from their southern neighbours, the Aliab Dinka. They are good old negro work and very desirable, and we have to lie several hours at anchor before they pass into my hands.

We spend some days in a *zeriba* which Machulka has built and I feel much better and am only occasionally overcome by a slight attack of weakness. The *zeriba* stands out like a castle in the boundless prairie that is overgrown with termite hills and nothing else. A large number of birds, who take little exception to the building, are there and I can watch them drinking. Plenty of other animals also arrive in the evening and I am able to take a number of photos.

A troop of some forty kob antelopes approach. Then an ancient tiang. It watches suspiciously for a full hour without daring to come near. At length it mounts a termite hill to get a better view, and there it stands, its four feet drawn close together, looking like a chamois on a rock. When the tiang sees the other animals drinking, it comes down in a few jumps and joins them at the water. Some bustards arrive later. Next day in the early hours I try to spy on the drinking birds. Hardly are the cameras in place when a hawk eagle appears, then falcons and vultures fly down, and towards eleven several secretary birds strut gravely about and let me photograph them, although in general they are among the shyest of birds. Then there is a long pause, the wind drops, the sun beats down on my unsheltered hiding-place as though it had to heat a baker's oven. The time passes slowly and at last two kobs show themselves on the horizon. They are coming straight towards me, but turn aside before they get to the drinking-place. A queer pair now approach. A tiang buck, old and morose, has taken to himself a young female kob. It



is a touching picture, how the old fellow takes care of his lady, continually looks round to see if she is following, climbs the termite hill and makes sure that the air is clear.

Once I have the good fortune to see three eagles come down together quite near the water. Steppe eagle, hawk eagle and Numidian crane sit peaceably side by side. I have often tried in vain to come within a stone's throw of a hawk eagle or a Numidian crane. As there is no other game about I seize my small-calibre rifle. But at that moment the Numidian crane spreads its wings and suns itself with such an expression of enjoyment that I cannot prevail on myself to kill it here, unsuspecting at the water. The gun sinks slowly to the ground and for a long time I watch the three birds stretching themselves, scratching, drinking, resting. The Numidian crane in particular, with its brilliant red beak and brightly coloured wings, is a glorious picture.

On one occasion I have a long conversation with a Nuer, Tudj acting as interpreter. "Have you any cows?" he asks. "No," I answer. "I thought as much. The Europeans who have cows come in the steamer and have donkeys and lots of people with them. But you come like a trader in a sailing-boat." "Yes, but we have a motor-car," the interpreter says in our defence. "Oh, have you? Well, why don't you hunt the elephants with this machine?" asks the Nuer, who has seen a *mudir* with such a vehicle at Fangak. "That isn't possible. We can't go through the thick bush." "Then you haven't got a decent one. A good car can go anywhere." After a while he asks again suspiciously, "Are there any cows at all where you come from?" Glad to play a trump card I answer, "Are there cows! I should think there are, but not such mangy beasts as only give two quarts of milk a day, like the Nuer's cows. Our cows sometimes give eight of these full," and I take up a gourd holding about half a gallon. For a while there is silence, then comes the retort, "That isn't true. Some friends of

mine were in Khartoum and have told me that the cows there are so miserable and thin that no Nuer would look at such half-dead beasts." "Our master doesn't come from Khartoum, but from much further away, from another land." "Yes," I add, "and there even the goats give as much milk as the Nuer cows here." But the negro is not to be put out of countenance. "That can't be," he replies; "all Europeans come from Khartoum and your goats don't give any milk at all; they are only good for supplying you with skins for prayer-mats." And so it goes on. Say what one will, he does not believe a word.

Other Nuer come along and offer crocodile eggs for sale—they have collected five hundred. An odd people, excessively shy and suspicious and inhospitable even to their own kin. The Nuer always stay near their villages. They never make hunting expeditions that would lead them far from their accustomed paths, as do the Shilluk for example. They are intelligent, but very quarrelsome. Almost every feast at which there is much dancing ends up with manslaughter and murder. In dealing with them one has to be on one's guard and especially to avoid killing any totem animal. To kill a snake may bring upon one the deadly enmity of a whole village. The Nuer also have medicine-men, people with quite a remarkable gift of observation and unusually high intelligence, as are nearly all such sorcerers. An inspector was on very friendly terms with one of them, who knew how to make rain. The negro called on him one day in his office. "Well, you cunning old bird, how are you and what are you up to these days?" the Englishman asked. "I have just made rain," was the answer. "Have you just? And when have you ordered it for?" the *mufetish* twitted him, looking at the cloudless sky and settled north wind. "One hour before sunset there will be thunder and lightning and you will have water enough." The inspector laughed, but he had no inclination to laugh again when actually at the appointed hour a terrific storm

broke out with a pelting downpour that left everything under water. The natives, admirable observers of Nature, are able to foretell the coming of rain from the behaviour of insects, birds and the like. But they have never revealed anything of their art to a European. It is handed on from father to son.

At last, one evening after supper, we make ready to travel further. The large tent which was pitched on shore to protect the people from the sun is folded up and stowed away on board. Before sunrise the wind is bearing us down-stream.