

climbed along the branch and with the help of two others brought the poor chap safely to land. When he eventually returned to camp he reported to my Dad that I had saved his life. My Dad told me that, for such a young lad, I had taken a chance. However, all had ended well. I saw a lot of this chap he always greeted me with thanks.

On our arrival it was our first experience of thick bush country and the Bech Protectorate is certainly well-covered, pretty well over a large portion of the country. And what a variety: calethorn, some very big, Boabab or Cream of tartar, Mopani in the thick sandy country - elephant's food, the Haakdoring or as sometimes called the Wag-n-bietjie. The camelthorn has long pairs of thorns like an ox's horns, the Haakdoring has, as the name indicated, hooked thorns which, though small certainly do stop one. The country is mostly very flat with occasional hills. The course of the river, though just a sand river until the rains, edged by large trees which are greener than the surrounding country. The reason is that the sand in the river bed retains a certain amount of water, for if one digs a few feet water will be found. Some of the animals which require water, elephants etc know this and in the dry season dig for water in the river beds. Certain trees bear fruit, some of which is edible such as the Marula which the Elephants like. Then there is a wild orange with three or four large pips but very little fruit. The Boabab trees which grow to a tremendous size have fruit like a large mango, which a hard outer covering and inside the cream of tartar pips. One could go on naming any amount of other trees and wild fruits.

Of birds there is a large variety from the old Gom Pouw - a bustard, the Secretary Bird with its long legs which enables it to kill snakes without being bitten, the numerous game birds, guinea fowl, pheasant, red-head partridge, the Schrimpy which I have mentioned, the old Korhaan with its noisy call as it flies about. On the vleis one finds duck and wild geese and many other game birds to mention the quail which arrives from the North in October, and the sand grouse which arrive in hundreds at water holes to drink of an evening. There is the old tucan which I will mention later as I will the Macwa or go away bird. Of birds of colour there are very few: the red breasted shrike and the blue and purple jay. Crows and hawks by the hundreds and of course there are the scavengers, the vultures and others.

All these birds have their own type of nest buildings, the dove which simply lays a few sticks, the weaver birds with their hanging nests etc. But I always think the most wonderful is the society bird. They are very small but hundreds of them combine and build one very large nest of grass, which must take months. Here they breed and have tenants, for one will often see a green egg eating snake hanging out of a nest. They probably feed on the young too. Of animals there are very many varieties: the elephant, buffalo, rhino, hippo and crocodiles. The largest of the buck is the stately Eland, the Kudu with its long twisted, spiral horns and smaller buck too, duiker, stembuck, Bush, Water and Reid buck to mention a few. Of the flesh-eaters which hunt the other animals are the Lion, cheetah, leopard, wild dogs, jackals and several kinds of wild cats.

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