

birds of which there were any number: doves, weaver birds, hadidaas, but one that I used to watch very often was an old Hammerkop who, with his mate, was busy building a nest in one of the big trees on the river bank. It was indeed a very untidy nest but very interesting watching it and later they would go along the river bank feeding with the others. I was not there when they hatched their young. Then I would sit and watch for the rise of trout and later show the old chap where I thought there was a big one for he was a keen fisherman. One day I was in the garden with my catty and my Aunt suddenly appeared, for I am sure she had seen me. Anyhow, she called out "Have you got a catty, Geoffrey?" I feared the worst being like George Washington I said I had. I was relieved when she said "Well, I wish you would shoot some of these birds eating the fruit". What a relief.

Nearly every weekend he would either go fishing for trout, driving out in his old spider to one of the spots a few miles away, or as it was the season then, go quail shooting up in the mountain lands. He lent me a 14 bore shot gun and horseback we would go off. It was great fun and we had some good sport, getting home after a long ride up and down hill, tired out and ready for supper and bed. On the fishing trips, while he used his trout rod and artificial fly - for live bait was not allowed, I made what was called a Bob, that is earth worms threaded on a string, bunched, and with these we fished for eels. This was good fun. Well, after the afternoon's fishing the old man, he was getting on, would be tired and so handed the reins to me to drive home while he dozed. The horses of course knew their way home and so the driving was just a matter of form.

Walking along the river bank one day, it was late afternoon, I came on a trout head left on the branch of an overhanging willow tree. I was not interested in it but my uncle was when I told him about it. It was getting dusk but I had to go round the villiage and invite all the trout-fishermen to the house. When I got back there was the trout head, which I had fetched earlier, on the back of one of his club-easies and each one was marking the length he thought it was. It was apparently a very big trout caught by an otter.

The Wolf river is to the north of the villiage but before joining the Keiskama below my uncle's house, has a deep furrow taken out of it by the Military in the latter part of the 18th century and this runs through the villiage and from it the various gardens are irrigated. Very often the old chap would talk of the old days; of the day he was driving back from Kingwilliamstown in his spider and the natives were crossing the road ahead of him in hundreds but did not interfere with him at all. They were on their way to some area to fight or fleeing from the soldiers, for at that time there was much fighting. "On that huge rock, Sandile with his withered leg would be sitting, watching the impis as they went in to attack the Red Coats in the Boma Pass, just outside the Hoek on the road to Alice, on Christmas day." He would never write anything about his experiences which is most unfortunate. I only hope that in the years to come my family will appreciate my writing - may be.