

I decided one morning to go across in the barge, two boys punting, to see if there was any shooting of duck to be had. The barge moved slowly along the far bank along which there was tall grass and reeds. Presently in an opening we spotted a few duck preening themselves. The boys stopped the barge and I stepped quietly ashore and fired at a couple of duck. At the sound they rose like a cloud. I was so taken aback that I just stood with my mouth open and did not fire the second barrel. At first I thought I had got a couple until the two boys shouted with joy 'Ming! Ming! And they rushed into the old lands partly under water. Eventually, they came out with, believe it or not, sixteen and we later picked up two in the river. There was one goose, three moscovy, five teal and six mixed. There was great glee when I went back across the river to the house and produced the bag. My Mother has always said there were twenty. When they heard the one shot Vivian said, 'I suppose he has shot a duck'. To some people a wild duck is a delicacy but I must say I have never fancied them, I would rather have a nice pheasant or guinea fowl or just a young chicken. Anyway, as there was a shortage of meat the camp was pleased to have the duck.

Having noticed the duck returning every evening we decided one day to cross the river and wait for them. They were coming over in numbers and I noticed that Midgley, the clerk, was firing and not getting a single bird. I spoke to him and he said he could not understand it. However, he told me he had not done any duck shooting before and I mentioned the fact that they flew faster than one thought and you were inclined to shoot behind them, I told him to allow a bit more for the flight. After that he did quite well.

Mentioning Midgley reminds me of the story of the Crocodile. Col. And Mrs Ellenberger had been up the Zambezi in the barge to Shashek and on the way back shot a couple of Letswe buck. Then on the bank they spotted a croc which the Colonel shot at and hit. It immediately took to the water but floated and so thinking it was dead they drew alongside and the boys tried to attach a rope to its jaw. This they were unable to open so turned it round to fasten the rope to the tail in order to take it down the river. The boys said the creature was not dead. Anyway, they eventually arrived at the junction of the Chobe and Zambezi where I was able to meet them as I was looking for guinea fowl and an Egret or two for fishing bait. We decided to pull the croc, which was a monster, ashore and the Colonel and Mrs Ellenberger would carry on in the barge up the rapids, they are not very bad to negotiate, and bring the ladies down by car the five miles to see the Croc. It was a nice cool shady spot under some big trees and so I settled down and dozed while waiting for their return. Eventually, they came back, had a good look and marveled at the size. Then Midgley was very anxious to take a snap. Unfortunately, there was too much shade so we decided to turn the creature over on its back so that the white belly would show up. Vivian and I with a strain turned it over and believe it or not the croc wriggled back onto its legs and really looked a cruel brute. It had been shot in the eye and evidently only stunned, the boys were right, and the moving revived it. I at first thought someone would be injured but fortunately Vivian had his rifle ready and one shot ended its career. After that Midgley said, 'No more swimming in the Chobe for me'. We had often warned him that it was dangerous. We opened up the old croc but there was nothing of interest, bangles etc only the usual couple of stones that they swallow to help with the digestion of their food. Anyway, it created a bit of excitement. They are repulsive looking creatures, the friends of no man, gruesome looking. A Crocodile's jaws are designed essentially for grabbing and holding its prey.

It is thought by some that a crocodile has no tongue. It has, but quite different from that of a lizard, being broad, flat and fixed to the bottom of the buccal cavity for its whole length. A lizard is able to move its tongue about, and a leguan has a forked tongue which it sticks out. It is strange too that Crocodiles are only found in rivers flowing East and not West, with the exception of the White Nile. That is enough of crocs excepting to say that they usually carry their prey underwater to some shelf or bury it under roots of trees leaving it there for some time until tasty to their liking. Like the Englishman who hangs a pheasant until it drops. Yes, you and I may not fancy game which is slightly off but there are thousands of people who hang their game birds until they begin to go off.

Personally I like /