

strange, and was distinctly annoying. The fern, having been recently burnt off, was of too short a growth to hide such a huge beast, if he should happen to be lying down. We knew no one could possibly have shot him without making such a song about it as would have gone from one end of the settlement to the other, and it was not the least likely that he had voluntarily left his new found harem.

There was of course the chance that he was in the bush a few hundred yards behind the other cattle. If so, he might appear at any moment, for they were busily feeding. We waited where we were until our patience was exhausted, and then decided to work our way warily round the scrub that bordered the bush, getting as near the cattle as possible, and there to await results. We felt that we could safely ride some distance farther as the manuka was high enough to hide ourselves and horses, when it ended we should have to dismount and creep quietly on foot through the heavier bush where the twining supplejack prevented the passage of our horses.

Once let the cattle get sight or wind of us, they would be off into the bush like redshanks. We had dogs with us, but they would be useless as far as bailing up the cattle went. We could certainly rely on them following the scent of some of the mob, and by this means we might possibly have got within shot of them after a long trudge through the bush. But wild cattle invariably split up when chased, and we might, more likely than not, find ourselves following the trail of any of the others rather than the bull. No, we were not in the humour for that sort of amusement. We meant to get the old gentleman in the open, or as near it as possible.

We therefore proceeded to carry out our plan. In single file we urged our horses along through the thick scrub. Bob was riding in front. I always allowed him, or anyone else that hankered after it, that privilege in rough country. It

is just as well to do so, one is so much better able to avoid hidden holes or swamps when one sees one's comrade flounder into them.

But it was no hidden morass which made Bob draw rein suddenly, and signal excitedly but silently to me to do the same. What could it be? I was not kept a moment in suspense.

Bob's gun was up to his shoulder in a jiffy. A loud report, a mighty roar of pain, a heavy crashing followed by a dull thud which shook the ground like an earthquake. Simultaneously, a few paces only in front of Bob, I caught a glimpse of a huge black body rear up in the tangled scrub, and fall heavily on its side, mowing down the tough manuka for yards around.

"By gum!" said Bob. "Lucky I spotted him! The old warrior must have been dozing, or he'd have heard us coming. Just caught sight of the white part of one of his horns glistening through the bushes, and popped where I judged his forehead would be. Cripes! if I hadn't seen it, another moment and the old moke would have been on top of him, and there'd have been the devil to pay and no pitch hot, in a hole like this, with no room to slew round!"

We pushed our horses on a yard or two, and Bob threw his leg over the pommel of his saddle to slip off in leisurely manner as was his custom, exclaiming: "Stone dead, by the Lord Harry! It was a great shot considering I only saw his horn. Clean between the eyes. If his head hadn't been well dropped, the bullet would have glanced off even at that distance, the beggar's skull is like the side of an iron-clad."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when, with a sobbing husky apology for a roar, in which defiance rang superior to pain, the mighty head was raised. Indomitable fury filled his bloodshot eye, blood-streaked foam fell from the wide-spread nostrils, and blood poured from the round hole in the