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Multi sunt vocati, pauci vero electi.

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The Naturalist and Big Game Hunter as
Pioneers of Empire.

The naturalist and big game hunter have played a very important part among the pioneers who have left civilization to travel across the deserts, plains, and forests, opening up those dark trackless continents. They have returned, full of the wonder and mystery of the life in the newly discovered regions, leaving their tracks for others, lured into the wilds by the strange and wonderful descriptions of the first pioneers.

The big game hunter and the naturalist, of necessity have been pioneers, for the former has to push on into the unexplored regions for his game, which retreats before the advance of the settlers, and the naturalist, ever seeking new specimens to present to the world, searches in the regions where his scientific brethren have never set foot. In this way, year by year more unknown regions have been opened up by sportsmen and naturalists, and one power or another claims them for part of its Empire.

First among the sportsmen and naturalist pioneers of Empire, were those who discovered the geography of the land, the watercourses, and the means of communication. Humboldt, the famous German naturalist, made a wonderful tour of the northern part of South America in 1800. He explored Cuba, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador, adding much to the Spaniards' knowledge of their

colonies. He also explored the Orinoco and the Amazon, discovering the existence of a waterway between the two rivers. Before his tour, practically nothing was known of the interior of northern South America. Humboldt's books, written when he returned to Europe, contained not only much useful knowledge concerning the fauna and flora of South America, which encouraged other expeditions to further open up the country, but a considerable amount of useful geography.

One of the great African travellers, Georg Schweinfurth found out much about the Nile valley, and the course of the river, while on a botanical tour. In 1868 he travelled up the White Nile and Bahr al Ghazal, accompanying Nubian ivory merchants. He penetrated far south where he discovered the Welle river which turned out to be the chief feeder of the great northern confluent of the Congo, known as the Mubange. So interested did he become in his pioneer quest, that in 1872 he returned to the East for a prolonged tour of northern Africa, Abyssinia, and Arabia.

The big game hunters also contributed to the geographical knowledge of the world. A Boer elephant hunter discovered the important waterway, the Orange river. Sir Samuel and Lady Baker while big game hunting, found the Lake Albert Nyasa in 1864. They afterwards pushed their way up the Nile from Gondokoro, noting its course.

From a very early date big game hunters have been pioneers. About the year 1200 A.D. the kingdom of Kongo, like many other of the negro states of Africa, was founded by a hunter-adventurer, who came among the savages, "with great renown as a

Quotation from

"The Opening up of Africa" hunter of elephants and other big game" He settled among them, teaching them many arts, such as, pottery, metal working, ivory carving and weaving. They developed an advanced religion, and an orderly system of government. Their civilization spread, affecting much of South Nigeria, the Northern Kameruns, West Congoland, and the interior of Northern Angola. When, many centuries later, the Portuguese Empire-builders came, opening up Africa, these civilized tribes readily accepted Christianity and allowed the white men to settle and explore the country, with very little of the opposition afforded by the other ignorant negro tribes, who feared the advance of civilization.

The position of the big game hunter and naturalist is a very responsible one, he can ill-treat the natives and gain their permanent hatred for the white race, or he can wisely treat them kindly, and gain their admiration and respect. If he takes the wise course he will be an unfailing source of help to his country, as an ambassador.

Cecil Rhodes the great Empire-builder of South Africa, was fortunate in having such men to help him in his colossal task of "painting red" the whole of Africa, as far north as the Great Lakes. His friend Jameson, had the good fortune to earn the gratitude of Lo Bengula, the chief of the warlike Matabele tribe by curing him of gonit while big game hunting. This tribe, was at times, troublesome to Rhodes, being the most important tribe in South Africa after the first Boer war. Jameson proved a most useful ambassador to Rhodes, especially when Lo Bengula had to decide between the Dutch and the

English for certain rights in his country, as he usually favoured the English owing to his friendship for Dr. Jameson. On one occasion, Rhodes obtained permission from Lo Bengula, to send a mining expedition to some gold mines, via the Buluwayo route in Matabeleland. He decided on this route despite many warnings from well-informed people, of the treachery of the Matabeles. Many officials were desperate at the thought of so many fine young Englishmen being in such grave danger, when Mr Selous, a big game hunter in South Africa, managed to persuade Rhodes to change his plans, and thereby avert such a probable disaster. At this time, about 1890, Frederick Selous had been a big game hunter up and down South Africa for twenty years. He had left England to study wild animals in their native haunts, being an ardent naturalist, and had hunted in and explored the little known regions north of the Transvaal, south of the Congo, Matabeleland and Mashonaland. During all this time he kept on good terms with the Kaffir chiefs, and won the respect of the natives, many of whom had never seen a white man before. Thanks to Selous, their first impression was a good one. Selous proved to be an excellent pathfinder, for "he knew every track in Lo Bengula's country, and was that chief's trusted friend". Rhodes recognized the wisdom of following the advice of Selous with his vast experience of the native mind. Selous offered to lead the expedition via a little known route that he had discovered while hunting. Rhodes accepted the offer, and Selous brought the party safely to the mines without any harm from the Matabeles. He then travelled north as Rhodes' ambassador, to make treaties with the native chiefs.

Quotation from
" Cecil Rhodes "

His success was almost entirely due to his friendship with them. A year or so later, the Matabele War broke out, and once more Rhodes found a big game hunter very useful. Dr. Jameson, having considerable knowledge of Matabeleland, owing to his big game hunting excursions, took command of the English forces. The Matabeles were routed, and Matabeleland and Mashonaland were annexed for the British Empire. These two states were important stepping stones in Rhodes' aim for the Empire in Africa, which has been previously mentioned. Selous and Jameson are very good examples of the great pioneer work that game hunters can do.

In the 19th century, Africa was the centre of a great deal of European interest, which was increased by the books written by French and Swedish naturalists, on the strange fauna and flora of the continent. Mr Selous, the famous big game hunter and naturalist, wrote such an attractive description of Mashonaland, that Rhodes' quest received much more support from the English than hitherto.

The big game hunter is rarely connected with Livingstone's wonderful pioneer work, but it was through the generosity of an African hunter, Mr Oswell Cotton, that the famous missionary was able to make his first journey into the unexplored regions of the Zambezi basin, in the middle of the 19th century. Mr Cotton accompanied Livingstone, aiding him in his work. During his third journey, Livingstone travelled with a naturalist, the famous Dr. Kirk who has been called the "real originator of the British Empire in East Africa." When they returned from their wanderings, a wonderful account of Nyasaland

was published, which brought out to Africa many elephant hunters to try the excellent sport, but who incidentally effectively opened up the country still more. In this way both the naturalist, and the big game hunter have aided Livingstone in his great pioneer work, which led to the establishment of large protectorates over British Central Africa.

The pioneer work of big game hunters and naturalists has mainly been centred on Africa, but other parts of the world have been visited with good results. Sir Joseph Hooker, the great botanist, became famous for his botanical exploration of the Himalayas, Australia, New Zealand and Palestine, in 1841. He brought back a great deal of knowledge, geographical and botanical, to Europe.

In India and Burmah, big game hunters, penetrating where white men are little known, in the track of elephants or boars, have discovered dreadful evils and diseases among the ignorant, and superstitious natives. Upon returning from their expedition, the hunters have notified the authorities, who have remedied the evils as far as possible. It is chiefly during recent years that big game hunters have been such important pioneers in India. Theirs was a great honour, for it should be the first aim of every Empire-builder throughout the world, to make his Empire as perfect, healthy, and peaceful as possible.

The mineralogist naturalist has played an important part in opening up the wealth of the Empire. By theory he has been able to suggest likely regions for various metals, and by experiments, he has been able to identify them. In 1886, two naturalists

the brothers Staubbien, after experimenting, found the priceless gold measures of Witwatersrand, near Johannesburg. Today, the gold trade of South Africa is one of its most important sources of wealth. Not only were the Staubbien brothers great pioneers in the wealth of Africa, but indirectly they were pioneers in the opening up, and colonization of the country, for after their discovery, thousands of emigrants poured into South Africa at the mere mention of gold.

Naturalist

The botanist also plays his part as a pioneer of the wealth and cultivation of the Empire. In 1748, Michel Andanson, a French naturalist, toured Senegambia for five years. With the aid of some of his discoveries as regard the products of the region, the French were able to develop their settlements considerably.

Henry Wickham

The botanists at New Gardens experimented with wild rubber seed from the Amazon area, and raised a quantity of rubber seedlings, which were sent to Malaya and the East Indies to be planted in plantations. The magnificent result surpassed all expectations, and may be judged by the wealth yearly produced by the sale of plantation rubber. Guine seedlings were also raised from seeds of the wild tree, and sent to Ceylon. The trees grew splendidly in the plantations, today supplying four-fifths of the world demand.

All over the world the pioneer work of the naturalist and big game hunter has been invaluable, but more perhaps in the British Empire, than in any other. Africa has been the chief field of exploration, probably because being so extensive, it contains

more "natural regions" than any other country. The fauna is therefore so varied, that Africa is an ideal country for the researches and sport of the naturalist, and the big game hunter.

Books used in preparing the essay.

The Children's Encyclopaedia.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica.

The Children's Book of Discovery
"Lecil Rhodes"

The Opening up of Africa by Johnston.

The Colonization of Africa by Sir Harry Johnston.