

# ON SAFARI



ABEL CHAPMAN

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# ON SAFARI

## BIG-GAME HUNTING IN BRITISH EAST AFRICA

WITH STUDIES IN BIRD-LIFE

BY

ABEL CHAPMAN

AUTHOR OF

'BIRD-LIFE OF THE BORDERS ON MOORLAND AND SEA' (TWO EDITIONS)  
'WILD NORWAY' AND 'WILD SPAIN'

WITH 170 ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY THE AUTHOR AND E. CALDWELL  
SKETCH-MAPS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

NEW YORK  
LONGMANS, GREEN & CO.  
LONDON: EDWARD ARNOLD

1908

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ANNO 1920

## PREFACE

SHOULD the title of this work convey no significance, the fact would show that there yet remains "Something new from Africa." That Arabic term "Safari" has no precise equivalent in our British tongue, yet is in daily use throughout British territories six times larger than the home islands. Hence I venture to introduce it to our common language. Its interpretation will presently become clear to those who read this book.

British East Africa forms no inconsiderable asset of the Empire. It has involved the investment of several millions of our national funds, and it possesses a future that should be described as potential rather than assured—none the worse for that. At the moment, this Colony of yesterday consists chiefly of virgin hunting-grounds, as yet largely unknown and unexplored save by a handful of pioneers and big-game hunters.

Any sound and carefully-prepared work—whatever its point of view—that brings this new outlet more clearly under the public eye, is therefore doing a service.

Compare these respective British areas—

	SQUARE MILES.	WHITE POPULATION.
Canada . . . . .	3,750,000	6,500,000
Australia . . . . .	3,290,000	4,120,000
British South Africa . . . . .	1,239,000	1,130,000
British East Africa . . . . .	750,000	3,000
British Islands . . . . .	121,000	44,000,000

The present work treats exclusively of the Faunal aspects of British Equatoria, and especially of its Big Game. Suffice it as evidencing the wealth of the Colony in the latter respect, to say that the author and his brother in two expeditions obtained specimens of thirty-four different species—or, including South Africa,

a total of upwards of *fifty* distinct varieties of big game in three trips. This compares with *fourteen* species, the net result of many years' strenuous hunting in Europe. And, quite recently, three Spanish friends have returned from British East Africa with a total of thirty-five species secured in a single season.

The antelope-tribe alone counts upwards of forty members—from elands of 2000 lbs. to dikdiks of under ten; then there are the beasts of prey, the three great pachyderms, giraffes and zebras, buffaloes, and a mixed multitude besides. Beyond all stand out on the hunter's horizon the elephant and the lion. These two constitute his supreme triumph, being not only the most difficult to encounter, but the most dangerous to attack.

Then these equatorial forests shelter two great wild animals, to the full as interesting as the much-discussed okapi, yet practically unknown, to wit:—that splendid bovine antelope the Bongo, a bull of which has never yet fallen by white hunter's hand; and the Giant Forest-hog (*Hylochaerus*), a first example of which has, I hear, been obtained while these sheets are in Press.

The author's companion throughout nearly the whole of his East-African wanderings was his brother, Walter Ingram Chapman, with whom he had previously completed many hunting-trips, chiefly in Northern Europe, Newfoundland, etc.

The illustrations are drawn almost exclusively from rough sketches made by the author in Africa—some on the actual scene, others in camp immediately thereafter while impression remained vivid on the mental retina. To ensure a higher level of artistic excellence in reproduction, the aid was invoked of Mr. E. Caldwell, himself fresh from a year spent among African game. His skilled and patient collaboration, extending over several months, has evolved this series of drawings, that faithfully depict in life many of the most magnificent wild beasts that to-day remain existent. That none more true have ever before appeared on paper is the



author's honest conviction, and that opinion he has backed by illustrating this work on a scale which, he is told, is not warranted in books of this description.

A number of the author's own sketches have also been inserted—especially of birds. These are naturally rougher, being merely amateur work.

In attempting a rude sketch of the bird-life of this little-known Ethiopian region, the author may perhaps have been too bold. The splendid assistance rendered him, both in Africa and at home, by friends who represent the first authority on the subject, to wit, Mr. F. J. Jackson, C.B., Lieut.-Governor of British East Africa, and Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant, has encouraged this inclusion of his rough ornithological notes. They are, at least, the first that have hitherto been attempted in a popular sense. As such, they may prove useful to travellers, sportsmen and colonists—as well as to the lay bird-loving public—to all of whom the purely scientific works on this subject (though they represent altogether admirable labour and research) are utterly incomprehensible.

In conclusion:—British East Africa affords to-day probably the most glorious hunting-field extant, certainly the most accessible, and this book may suggest to some an expedition thereto. They will not be disappointed. No very special personal qualifications are required. Neither the author nor his brother were skilled in African hunting, and the former, it may pertinently be added, had already long passed the half-century before first setting foot in Equatoria. Naturally an insight into the rudiments of hunting-craft, together with reasonable rifle-practice (since ranges in Africa average double those customary elsewhere), are among the essentials.

ABEL CHAPMAN.

*Houxy, Wark,*  
*Northumberland.*  
AUGUST 1908.



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# ON SAFARI

## CHAPTER I

### AFRICA—SOUTH AND EAST

#### INTRODUCTORY

SOUTH AFRICA when the world was young—that is, when we were young—represented to those who had inherited an adventurous spirit, and in whose breast a love of the wild was innate, something that approached the acme of terrestrial joys. Thereaway, our earlier lessons had taught that, co-existent with the humdrum monotony of a work-a-day world, there yet survived a vast continent still absolutely unknown and unsubdued by man, and across whose vacant space there sprawled, inscribed in burning letters on the map, that vocal word, “Unexplored.”

To no subsequent generation, as this world is geologically constituted, can a similar condition ever recur.

To such temperaments as indicated the rough, free intangible life on an unknown veld, surrounded by savage Nature, and with its concomitants of self-reliance and self-resource, of difficulty, and sometimes of danger, appealed to the verge of—and, in some cases, beyond—the limits of self-restraint. The contemporary writings of Cornwallis Harris, of Baldwin and of Gordon Cumming were read and re-read till almost known by heart. They fired boyish imagination; but in my case circumstances forbade such realisation, since success comes more surely to the plodder than to the adventurer.

A book that fascinated in only less degree was HAWKER, and for five-and-twenty years I followed "the Colonel" in what certainly represents the hardest and most strenuous form of wild sport that is attainable within our British Isles—that of wildfowling afloat.

Then, after a quarter of a century, when there came at length opportunity to visit the far-away veld of South Africa, already its long-dreamt charm had faded. During the second half of the nineteenth century the erewhiles wondrous fauna of the sub-continent had steadily, incredibly melted away before Boer breech-loaders.<sup>1</sup>

It was in May 1899 that the author first landed in South Africa—in those days of deep anxiety and unrest that soon afterwards culminated in war. There still roamed then on the broad bush-veld that lies towards the Limpopo the superb sable and roan antelopes, the koodoo, tsesseby and brindled gnu, waterbuck and many more. The elephant, it is true, had finally disappeared; so had the rhino, buffalo, giraffe and eland—all of these abundant but a generation before.

The first-named, however, all survived in some numbers, together with smaller antelopes which, if less imposing, are no less graceful. To have seen these magnificent wild beasts in their haunts, and to have secured specimens of most—that, at least, was something effected. It was, nevertheless, with a certain undefined sense of disappointment—or, at any rate, of aspirations not fully realised—that, after four months on the veld, I turned homewards. The circumstance and condition of wild-life had perceptibly changed. These were no longer purely pristine. They had lost that ineffable original charm of which I had read, and which it had been

<sup>1</sup> Though the Boers, being the most numerous, were the chief instruments of slaughter, yet other settlers were only less to blame in the proportion of their numbers. The Boers, moreover, never permitted the aboriginal natives to possess firearms; and this, in other territories (especially Portuguese), has been a deadly source of destruction.

my hope to see for myself. I voyaged homewards—forced by the war to the long sea route by Mozambique and Madagascar—oppressed by a brooding sentiment that I had lived too late, that those glorious scenes described by old-time pioneers had vanished for ever from the face of the earth.

These gloomy forebodings have fortunately proved baseless—have been scattered to the four winds by events that followed. South Africa as a virgin hunting-field exists no longer; yet such spectacles of wild-life as fifty years ago adorned its veld and karoo, with all the glory of a pristine fauna every whit as rich, may yet be enjoyed elsewhere in that vast continent. It is no longer to the regions beyond the Zambesi that the hunter must turn attention—those regions where Mr. Selous in my own time (since we were at Rugby together in the 'sixties) has earned pre-eminence among naturalist-hunters of all ages. No, the centre of attraction has shifted northwards, far northward—to the British territories that lie around the equator. There some of Nature's wildest scenes, practically unchanged since the days of creation, may yet be enjoyed. More than that. These new regions are accessible as South Africa never was at its zenith; for these new hunting-grounds are reached by steam all the way, on land and sea—a simple three-weeks' journey by ocean liner and corridor train.

That this renewal of virgin conditions which, it seemed, had disappeared for ever, should, after all, have been renewed to another century, followed on the opening-up of the Uganda railway. That narrow ribbon of steel (though it never reaches Uganda) pierces for 600 miles the heart of Equatorial Africa. After leaving behind the coastal belt of forest and swamp, it surmounts a 6,000-foot mountain-range and traverses all the vast tablelands beyond, affording a tropical panorama that must be seen to be believed. Never before, nor ever again (it is safe to say) will there be presented to the view of casual passenger such spectacles as to-day attend each train on that Uganda railway.

Countless herds of big wild-beasts feed within sight of carriage windows—brindled gnu and zebra, hartebeests and gazelles, with other antelopes great and small, giraffes and ostriches, even, by chance, a glimpse of rhino, buffalo or lion. But all that is a thrice-told tale.

It is that unique railway, and the guiding star that led me thereto, that are the *fons et origo* of this book.

Far-seeing and inspired was the genius that devised that line and (with the courage of conviction) carried out the scheme in face of the cheap rhetoric and narrow horizons of the hour, bounded to thousands by the corner of the street. Although, for the present, that wild fauna is actually a chief asset of our East-African colony, and the big-game hunter is to-day its most profitable customer, it is nevertheless no mere fantastic dream that pictures the equatorial highlands settled-up within measurable period by British farmers and graziers, the game displaced by flocks and herds, and Mombasa competing with Argentina and the Antipodes for the meat-supply of the Mother-land.

Save incidentally, such matters do not here concern us. A feature that gratifies sportsman and nature-lover alike is the treatment of the game in the British Protectorate. The Game-ordinances may not be ideal, nor their execution all we could wish, but they are essentially practical, and evince both a wise foresight and a policy that has raised the whole plane of sport, as practised in British territories, to a level that has never elsewhere obtained in the Dark Continent.

Throughout South Africa hardly even the elementary significance of our British term "sport" was ever understood or thought of. With some notable exceptions, the mounted rifleman of the south, with his after-rider and repeating Mauser, was merely a butcher, a hunter of hides and meat. I served an apprenticeship there before coming here, and remember with loathing such expressions as "wiping the floor" or "cutting stripes through them" applied to some of the finest of animal forms. No sense of respect for game, no admiration of its grace



or beauty, ever penetrated minds debased by decades of slaughter. Game was nothing more than a target; after that, biltong, reims, and so on.

In the south no remedy will now avail. Over vast areas, formerly abounding in game, it is too late, though in the Transvaal a praiseworthy effort is being made by the establishment of a "Game Reserve" in the Lebombo bush-veld.<sup>1</sup>

In British East Africa the contrast is striking and welcome. The game, though wild and alert as the desert-born will ever be, here retains its pristine nobility and self-possession; it is not merely the harassed and terror-stricken remnant of devastated herds.

Our own initial experience in East Africa was unfortunate; for within three days of reaching Nairobi the author succumbed to malarial fever. With reluctance is so purely personal a matter here mentioned, and only because it is essential to the narrative—and besides, the incident may serve to save others from a like ill, so simply contracted, so easily avoided.

Landing at Mombasa twenty days after leaving London, one may reckon on at least a day or two's delay at the terminal port while arranging the final equipment of the expedition. Now Mombasa, lying under the equator, is distinctly hot. There are hotter places—Aden, for example; but at both sea-breezes temper the sun, or are said to do so. However that may be, at any rate when the up-country train finally steams out of the station, the very last thing on earth one is likely to think of as a *necessary*—and hundreds of articles *are necessary* for a three-months' sojourn under canvas—at that melting moment, as suggested, the very last desiderata one thinks of are warm wraps, ulsters and blankets. The mere idea is repugnant.

<sup>1</sup> This is a region expressly adapted by nature for such a purpose, and practically useless for any other. Owing to its low-lying situation, reeking with malaria, it is uninhabitable by human kind, white or black, except only during the dry winter months—June to October. Thirty or forty years ago it abounded with big game of every kind, from elephants downwards.



Yet it was precisely the lack of these necessaries (in the carriage beside me) that proved my undoing.

The Uganda railway, after traversing the 100-mile coast-belt—the low-lying, malarial Taru desert—at once ascends to the highland plateaux beyond. During that first night's journey the traveller is carried up to nearly 4,000 ft. above sea-level, and into a temperature that, by comparison, chills with a marrow-piercing cold. At sundown you are melting; before midnight, frozen. When darkness closes in the scene is truly tropical: there are palms, bananas, papyrus and the rest. When daylight dawns it reveals bramble and bracken, sometimes even hoar-frost.

This night-cold cuts to the bone—*unless* one is provided with the simple necessary wraps, in my case overlooked. The result was an internal chill, followed by colic, terminating in fever.

Cruel was the disappointment. Already, while traversing the Athi Plains, we had witnessed the abundance of wild game, and keenness to get among them passed all bounds; yet now, for a weary fortnight, I was held up with fever and a temperature anywhere around 106 degrees. Lucky, indeed, that this occurred at Nairobi, where there was a medico of sorts, rough though kindly, and where prescriptions were (in those days) dispensed in empty beer-bottles. Nairobi's single wood-built hotel of that epoch (since burnt out), run on the usual free-and-easy colonial lines, compares not with the palatial structures of the modern capital (things move fast thereaway), yet was thoroughly comfortable. More than that, at the hands of the two Miss Raynes—busy as they were with a thousand more important things—I received during this illness a care and attention that will ever remain a grateful memory.

Meanwhile, within an afternoon's walk of the town, my brother Walter had found abundant game—hartebeests and zebra, gazelles, ostrich, cranes and bustard—and had already opened our score. But, so soon as the crisis of the fever had passed, he left me and went on

alone with the "Safari"—as a mobilised hunting expedition is called; for it was obviously inadvisable to keep a crowd of between forty and fifty "boys" idle among the many temptations of Nairobi.

In Equatoria, it should be explained, there is none of that monotonous "trekking-in" by ox-waggon that characterised South-African hunting—trekking that often occupied wearisome weeks ere a game-country was reached. Here the terror of the tsetse-fly has eliminated all that, and transport, away from the railway, is entirely effected upon the heads of native porters. Thence springs the genesis of the "Safari."

A feature in this fever was the rapid recovery. On the day when the doctor told me I might start on the morrow I found myself too weak to stand upright unaided, and next morning required support on both sides to limp as far as the station, though barely two hundred yards away. It seemed madness to go; yet I obeyed and went, with the result that within forty-eight hours I could do a twelve-hours' march and after that was as fit as ever, and remained so during three months' hunting. The experience seems eloquent of the superb climate of these highlands and of its recuperative qualities.

Possibly there may exist, in that combination of equatorial sun-power tempered by high altitude, some health-giving property, an elixir, that yet remains to be defined by medical science. I feel it nothing less than East Africa's due to mention that after each of my expeditions therein (despite the accidental ill-luck of getting malarial fever) I have personally felt reinvigorated and about five years younger! Permanent residence there may, of course, be quite a different matter.

On reaching my destination at Eburu that evening, after seven hours' railway journey, it was both surprising and grateful to notice the evident pleasure shown by our retinue of "savages" at my recovery, though I was, so far, almost a total stranger to them all. They crowded round the carriage, and on seeing that I had

difficulty in descending—there are no platforms in the wilds—lifted me down and almost carried me to our camp, which was pitched on a rugged hillside above. Next morning a smiling Swahili presented me with a stout staff of M'pique wood that I have since carried over thousands of miles in Africa, and which I still use at home. This slight tribute to the savage Swahili shall not be omitted.



SING-SING WATERBUCK—abnormal head.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EQUATORIAL TRENCH

#### HUNTING IN THE RIFT VALLEY (EBURU TO THE ENDERIT RIVER)

THE Equatorial Trench is an old-time geological fissure that bisects British East Africa from north to south. It is stated that the course of the Trench is traceable northwards across the Red Sea into the Jordan Valley in Palestine. However that may be, at least the Trench is visible enough in these latitudes, where it is known as the Rift Valley. Every passenger on the Uganda railway must realise its existence when, shortly after passing Limoru (400 miles from the coast), the train suddenly dips away beneath him, plunging downwards in what appears a mad descent through tropical forest, to a station yecept "Escarpmnt."

Within a mile or two he has been hurled into an abyss, dropping from 7,500 ft. elevation at Limoru to 5,800 ft. on the Enderit River. Those are the engineers' figures; though mere cold numerals convey but little idea of its sense of vastness. And on the opposite side the phenomenon is equally conspicuous. For, after traversing the floor of the Trench (some 40 miles across), the line rises again in gradients hardly less abrupt, reaching an altitude of 8,000 ft. on the Mau Plateau.

The width of the Trench varies from 40 to 60 miles, its floor averaging 2,000 ft. below the flanking mountain-walls that enclose it—Laikípia on the east, Kamaséa on the west.

Within this depression lies the great chain of lakes,

including those few that fall within my own narrow limits, to wit—Nakuru, Elmenteita, Naivasha and Baringo.

Eburu was the spot whereat we had decided to commence our operations. It is merely the name of a rugged volcanic range lying at the verge of the Rift at a point where the hills open out upon rolling prairie and the basin of the Enderit River.

Eburu proved an awkward place to encamp, there being absolutely neither wood nor water; for both of which prime necessities we were dependent on the good-will of the baboo station-master. Since then the station has been abandoned, and Eburu has reverted to primæval desolation.

That first morning in camp, as the grey light strengthened to the dawn, we perceived, high overhead on the mountain-side, what appeared to be columns of smoke. These, for one unhappy moment, suggested that *other* camp-fires desecrated our vale. We were reassured on learning that these were geysers—jets of steam issuing from fissures in the plutonic rock. No other inhabitants, indeed—save baboons, which barked and chattered from the rocks above, and others of savage nature—abused our solitude. The name Eburu, we were told, in the Masai tongue signifies “steam.”

Our object in making Eburu our starting-point was to obtain here specimens of Chanler’s reedbuck, an elusive little antelope that, belying its name and abandoning the marshy habitat of its congeners (save one), elects to live, chamois-like, on rocks and rugged mountain-faces. That one exception is the so-called *Rhooi rhebok* (*Cervicapra fulvorufula*) of South Africa, which, although a true reedbuck, is also, like the present, of mountain-loving habit.

Chanler’s reedbuck is only a small species, weighing some 70 lbs., and was quite abundant on the rocks of Eburu; we found it, nevertheless, a most troublesome trophy to secure. Its head and neck are tawny yellow, yet so precisely does the body-colour assimilate with

its grey-rock environment as to be practically invisible at any considerable distance. The creature, moreover, is the very incarnation of watchful alertness: the



GREY PHANTOMS OF THE ROCKS  
(CHANLER'S REEDBUCKS).

immense ears and full, prominent eyes set high on an elevated forehead bespeak such qualities. Graceful in the extreme and most interesting to watch were these little rock-skipperers as they sprang from crag to crag or filed up precipitous ledges, whistling, and flirting their



white-fringed tails; but they proved "too much" for us. They were in little groups of three or four up to a dozen, and all day the bucks kept beyond my reach, though on several occasions the hornless does were within shot.

Being still weak from fever, I found this hill-climbing rather heavy work, and thought to organise a "drive." This, however, proved a system hard to instil into the savage mind, and though I got one shot, it scored a miss. This was a nice buck, about 100 yards below; but the aggravating bullet splintered the rock some six inches too high. Chanler's reedbuck beat us both here and on other occasions; for



SUNBIRDS

we met with it again on the crater of Meningai, at Baringo and elsewhere. It is common, we found, on every rocky range or series of detached koppies, yet it was not till our second East-African venture that we at length secured a first example.

Another rock-jumper, of which we did secure specimens among the Eburu hills, is the klipspringer—an even smaller antelope, the bucks only weighing 25 lbs. The upright hoofs resemble those of ibex rather than antelope, and the spoor, when crossing soft ground, gives an impression that the animal walks on tiptoe; but among rocks the klipspringer equals the chamois in bouncing agility. Klipspringers, probably from having been but little disturbed at this spot, were less wild than the other rock-antelopes. They seemed to





*Young, Photo., Nairobi.*

MASAI WARRIORS.



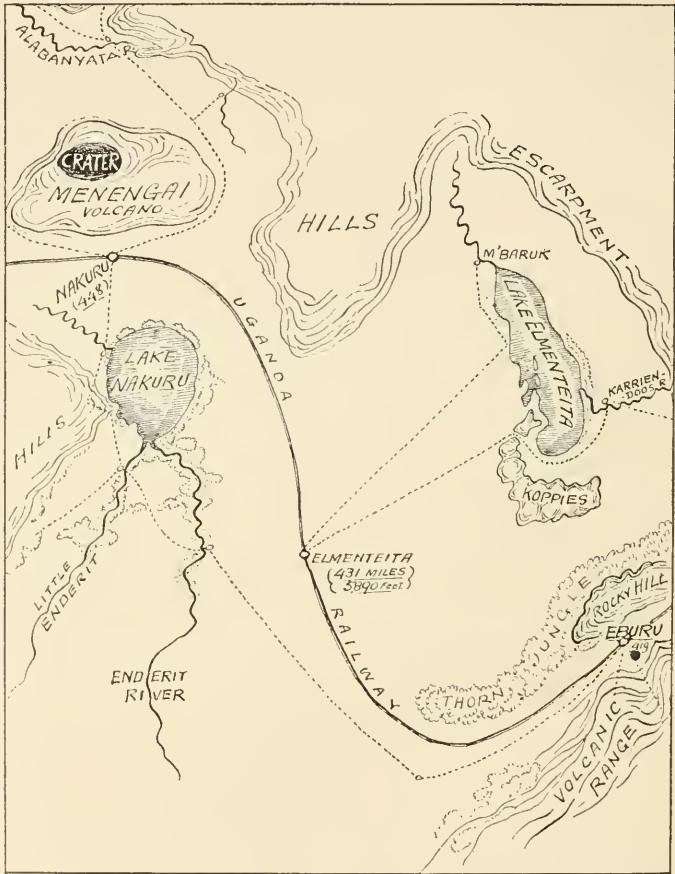
rely on a mistaken confidence that mere altitude in the crag-faces lent security against a rifle-ball. It was, nevertheless, difficult enough to distinguish precisely their small grey forms, 300 ft. above, from the broken rocks that surrounded them.

Next morning, while watching a group of reedbucks on the crags, in hopes of securing an opportunity to stalk, suddenly three impala (one good buck) appeared on the hill above. Then, to our disgust, six Masai walked right across our front, taking not the slightest notice till we hailed them with a request that they would be good enough to go somewhere else. Each of these savages carried the usual double-edged spear and customary ornaments (such as quarter-pound 'baccy tins) stuck in their ears, being otherwise stark naked. Later on we discovered that these were the advance-guard of a migrating tribe, a body of which had spent the night in one of the huge volcanic chasms, where they might have enjoyed warm baths free. It is doubtful, however, whether nomad Masai appreciate such luxuries.

This intrusion was most unwelcome when we needed a whole country to ourselves. Nairobi, moreover, when we left it a week before (July 1904) had been seething with rumours of native unrest, Masai risings, and the like. These, we knew, were quite unfounded, resting on a reported decision of the authorities to move the aborigines back from the railway so as to make room for settlers. Then, as it were lending grounds for such fears, a detachment of 400 "Yaos" (King's African Rifles), arriving in three train-loads—the troopship *Clive* from Berbera had entered Mombasa with us—created quite a small panic. But these good black troops were, after all, only returning from chasing the Mad Mullah! Those who select savage lands for a home should not give way to fears of "excursions and alarms."

The removal of the Masai into the Laikipia "Reserve" was eventually carried out without the slightest disturbance of the peace.

Owing, however, to this untimely Masai intrusion, we shifted our camp a dozen miles from Eburu into the valley of the Enderit River, enjoying during that march some memorable spectacles of wild animal-life.



SKETCH-MAP OF COUNTRY FROM EBURU TO NAKURU.

Beyond the rugged foothills of Eburu stretches a region of open forest which, at this date, literally teemed with game. Herd upon herd of zebras, Neumann's hartebeest, impala and the large Grant's gazelle

filled the view. Further on, where forest gave place to open grassy prairie, all these were literally in thousands, though the impala always frequent the fringe of the covert. We saw no elands at this date, but the plains were alive with herds of the smaller gazelle (*Thomsoni*) darting about and chasing each other in sprightly exuberance. Besides these were wart-hogs, ostriches and



SPOTTED HYENA.

great kori bustards, while crowned cranes in threes and fours stalked sedately through the throng. Jackals loped hither and thither, and, further away, a gaunt hyena, looking big as a lioness, shambled across the plain, its long neck held stiffly forward at an upward angle and tail carried low between the legs.

At one point we counted thirty-one ostriches close together—thirteen in the nearer pack, two of which were big old cocks, and eighteen more a little beyond. Hard by them a herd of zebra were feeding, and in the foreground a group of marabou storks held an inquest over some bones.

Strikingly handsome objects were the crowned cranes just mentioned, big birds of boldly-marked plumage—velvety-black, with rich chestnut wings and



snow-white undersides that showed up in strong contrast as they rose in flight. The curious wood-ibis (*Pseudotantalus ibis*) was also conspicuous among the trees that fringe the Enderit—a big stork-like species with heavy curved beak, naked head and neck of bright orange hue, and of black-and-white plumage, but displaying rosy glints, somewhat like a flamingo, when flying. By a shallow water-splash sat Egyptian geese, some preening, others asleep—strangely unsuspecting for that

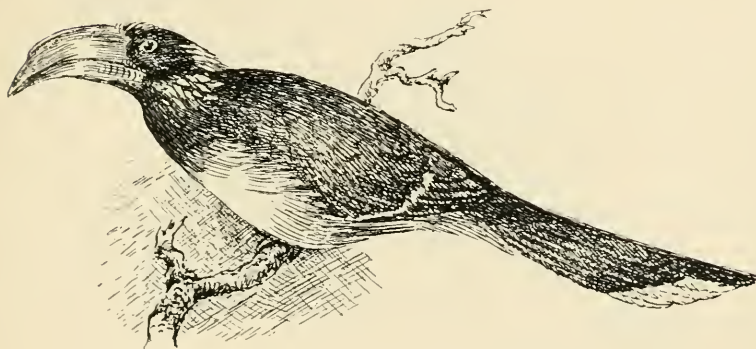


HEAD OF HELMETED GUINEA-FOWL.

watchful tribe. Hard by, however, were a dozen of the noisy spur-winged plovers (*Hoplopterus*), and these, as their habit is, speedily set the rest on the alert. From each patch of covert sprang—or ran—great packs of helmeted guinea-fowl, francolins, quail, and “jumping hares,” the latter bouncing a yard in air at intervals as they sped away. There were quaint hornbills (*Lophoceros*), bee-eaters and bush-cuckoos, while gorgeous little sunbirds fluttered over each flowering shrub. A fantastic bird-form, of which we saw a pair to-day, is the mop-headed touraco (*Turacus*), with a ringing voice that sounds almost human. On the thorny mimosas by the riverside sat white-headed eagles (*Haliaëtus vocifer*) that rose as we passed, startling the echoes with strident cries.

All day long the spy-glass was kept employed, examining some new thing. We were here, zoologically speaking, in a new world—the “Ethiopian Region”—and its wealth of wild-life was bewildering. Intense interest kept us going without desire to kill; indeed, for several marches we shot little beyond what was actually necessary to feed our caravan.

The sun was nearly dipping when, after a twelve-hours' march, we reached our camp, already pitched in a lovely grove by the Enderit—here merely a muddy creek dawdling in the depths of a bush-clad donga. While we dined that happy evening under a spreading mimosa, the evening's peace was broken by our friends the crowned cranes filing overhead in noisy skeins to roost in the tall fever-trees beyond. Ducks were fighting in the gloom up the river, and, ere we turned in, lions commenced to "call" in the woods below.



CROWNED HORNBILL.—*Lophoceros melanoleucus*.



## CHAPTER III

### THE EQUATORIAL TRENCH—(*Continued*)

#### ON THE ENDERIT RIVER AND LAKE NAKURU

OUR camp on the Enderit River was surrounded by park-like country, alternating between bush and broad, open prairie, with part forest and glades of infinite beauty, while everywhere the landscape was bounded by the peaks and scours of distant mountains.

Lovely as was our prospect, yet scarce a sign of its tropical site obtruded on the view, or proclaimed the fact that we sat practically astride the equator. In these uplands, the absence of such evidence is conspicuous. Neither groves of graceful palms, with their troops of monkeys and flights of shrieking parrots, nor tree-ferns with feathery frondage, or other fantastic forms of foliage and plant-life such as one associates with the torrid zone,



DRONGO.

here arrest one's gaze. On the contrary, the landscape of Enderit, as viewed afar, might well-nigh pass for a British scene—not, it is true, in the crowded south or the tame cultivation of the midlands, but rather amid those wilder regions of my own northern home, where Nature yet reigns unsubdued, unfenced, "unimproved." There, as here, a shaggy fringe of self-sown scrub or bush marks the course of winding burns; natural woods

cling to the steeps above or straggle irregular across the plain, while crag and mountain-ridge fill in the background. Species differ, but form remains not dissimilar.

This morning, ere yet the dawn was fully established, a weird melody caught my ear, and, looking from the tent, I saw its author on the topmost bough of an acacia—a glossy starling-like bird with deeply-forked tail. This was a drongo (*Dicrurus musicus*), one of the shrike family, and a warrior to boot, albeit a songster; for never a kite or crow, not even an eagle, venturing near our camp, was immune from its furious onslaught.<sup>1</sup> While sipping the matutinal coffee I could actually see herds of wild animals peacefully grazing within view from my camp-bed! On putting the glass on to these, I found they included zebras and Thomson's gazelles; while further away the ruddy pelts of hartebeests were distinguishable.

The latter, in this district, are the rather scarce Neumann's hartebeest (*Bubalis neumanni*), and to secure specimens of these formed our first and main objective on the Enderit.

The first animal actually shot on the Enderit, however, was a zebra, and, while skinning proceeded, I enjoyed watching that ever-wondrous spectacle of wild African life, the assembling of the carnivora. Life was hardly extinct ere dark shadows passed and repassed on the sere grass hard by. Looking upwards, the heavens were flecked with circling hordes. Soon the smaller vultures (dark-brown neophrons with livid pink faces) descended with collapsed wings, alighting with resonant rush all around us, many within thirty yards. Then the huge carrion-vultures (the African griffon, *Pseudogyps africanus*, deep brown with conspicuous white patches on lower body, and the still blacker Eared vulture, *Lophogyps auricularis*, with red ear-lobes)

<sup>1</sup> A drongo will remain perched by the hour on a bough, watching for passing insects. Presently he darts down, catches one, sometimes two or three in rapid succession, then returns to his post, exactly as our flycatchers do at home.

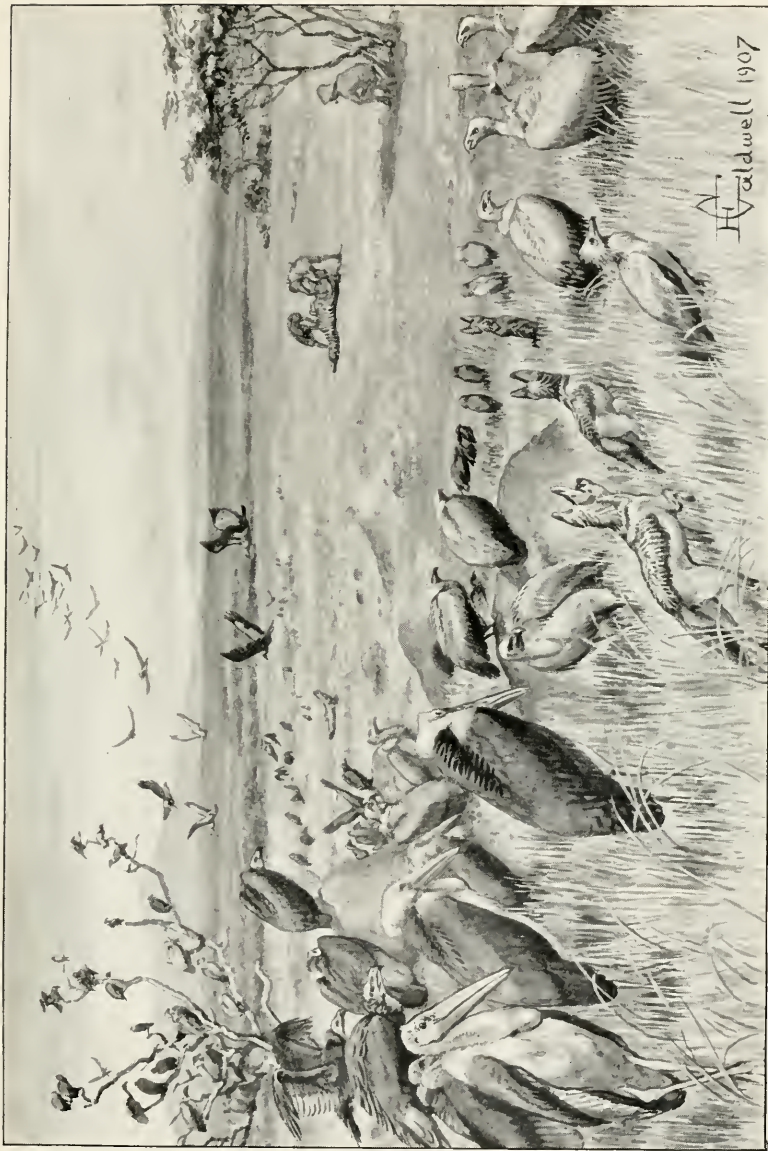
settled in groups further away, forming an outer circle, and amidst these I saw over the grass the sharp cocked ears of jackals. Some crowned cranes also stalked through the group, but these were merely locust-catching, and had no interest in our procedure. The case was different with their congeners, the adjutants or marabou, several of which, dropping from the sky, fell into line with the outer circle of vultures, while others continued sailing overhead. The policy of these latter seemed to be to make sure that the feast would "go round." They wanted to see how much zebra we intended to leave behind. Sailing aloft is no trouble to them, and they did not mean to descend till sure of at least a few mouthfuls apiece. Within half-an-hour the nearer vultures had disappeared. They had not gone, but, being tired of waiting, had squatted down to sleep in the grass. Some jackals had done the same, but others stood sentry. Elmi Hassan (my Somali hunter) now pointed out a new arrival—three hyenas. These, however, kept at safe distance.

On other occasions, vultures have continued circling overhead during the entire process of off-skinning. But ere one has retired fifty yards down sweeps the whole crowd with mighty rush of wing, assembling around the carcase in a surging, seething, tearing mass.

This zebra (*Equus burchelli-granti*) was a stallion in his prime, apparently eight to ten years old, and exhibited (what is unusual in East Africa) the paler, shadow-like stripes interposed between the main black bands. The striping, broad and boldly contrasted, as in all East-African examples, extended completely over the whole body, including the tail, and down the entire leg to the fetlocks. This is the form once differentiated as *E. chapmani*.<sup>1</sup> The further south it is found the less complete becomes the striping of the zebra. In the typical *Equus burchelli* of Cape Colony (now probably extinct) this striping was confined to the body only, the

<sup>1</sup> I notice that Mr. F. C. Selous refers to this East-African form (*in lit.*) as *E. granti*.

THE  
GOLDWELL  
1907



ASSEMBLING OF THE CARNIVORA.

TO THE  
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legs being plain white; and of the legs of two pairs of zebra that I shot in the Transvaal and happened to keep, one is almost pure white from the knee downwards, the second pair being striped to the pasterns. In *A Breath from the Veld* Mr. J. G. Millais shows all his zebra, shot in Mashonaland, with plain white legs. Again, in the true quagga (*E. quagga*—long since exterminated) the striping, half obsolete at best, was confined to the head, neck and shoulders only. This was the southernmost form of all.

It seems obvious that in this case systematists have had the bad luck to begin at the wrong end of the range, since it is from the north that the true aboriginal type of zebra has come, dispersing thence southwards. The largest and handsomest zebra of all—a truly distinct species—*E. grevyi*, is still restricted to the north of the equator; while the southernmost form, typified as true Burchell's, is really a mere degenerate variation of the original, heavily-striped type, *E. chapmani*. Personally I am no advocate for splitting species merely on such grounds as colour-variation, and am not even prejudiced by the claims of a namesake!

During our first week's shooting at this charming spot we obtained good specimens of most of the local game, and the pile of horned heads and pegged-out skins behind our tents made an imposing show. The hartebeests, however, had so far defied our efforts; they were in fair numbers, but excessively wild, and the open plain lent no assistance. Rarely do these large and handsome antelopes trust themselves within forest or bush, and, even if found therein, keep constantly on the move, as though ever conscious of the dangers lurking within covert. One evening (July 27), when my brother and I had gone out together, we descried a dozen *kongoni* feeding by the rushy foreshores of Lake Nakuru, between the water and the forest-belt that fringes it. While engaged on this stalk, I espied beneath the trees on my right an animal that completely puzzled me. It was a great shaggy beast, very

dark, and with horns of a span which, in the gloom of the forest and waning light, almost suggested buffalo. To this I transferred my attention; but the first shot, at about 300 yards, missed, and it looked any odds on a total loss when the unknown beast disappeared, galloping among the timber. We followed fast, and luckily



“GAZING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION” (WATERBUCK).

picked up view as he left the woods, and, changing his course, came cantering back across an open prairie towards our rear. Then, by fortunate chance, he spied my brother, who, with the “boys,” had remained behind. The game pulled up sharp, his magnificent carriage and contour recalling a colossal red stag in Landseer’s bravest type. The intervening plain was dotted with isolated forest-trees, each springing from a bushy



base, and while this splendid animal stood fixedly gazing in the wrong direction, I succeeded, by creeping and running from tree to tree, in gaining a range of just under 300 yards. Then, in happy moment, I dropped him clean with a .303 bullet in the base of the neck.

My prize proved to be a Sing-sing waterbuck bull



WOUNDED WATERBUCK.

(*defassa*), carrying horns of  $28\frac{1}{4}$  ins. What had deceived me was the abnormal breadth of horn. These, not being set regularly, reached the extraordinary span of 30 ins. between tips—a measurement exceeding any given in Rowland Ward's *Records*. I killed another sing-sing bull a few days later, but in that animal, though the horns reached  $27\frac{1}{2}$  ins., the span between tips was under a foot. In his dark, shaggy coat, with which the white collar and facial markings so strongly contrast, the sing-sing is an altogether handsomer animal than the common waterbuck. Both species

are iron-grey in colour, the sing-sing perhaps slightly browner than *Cobus ellipsiprymnus*; but the colour shown in the plate of *C. defassa* in the *Book of Antelopes* (vol. ii, plate xxxvi) is wrong, unless the seasonal range of colour is very great. A white band surrounds each fetlock immediately above the hoof, and is conspicuous at a considerable distance. The dead-weight of this animal would be about 500 lbs.

Waterbuck do not show up by day in anything like the same degree as the other large game mentioned, their habit being to lie hidden in thick covert till towards evening, when they emerge upon the lovely parks and open pastures that fringe the river. One of these spots in particular, adjoining the confluence of the two Enderit Rivers with Lake Nakuru, was indeed a charming picture—perhaps 500 acres in extent, dotted with forest-trees singly or in clumps, and entirely inset among woodland and thick jungle, which fringed the banks of either river. It literally teemed with herds of varied game, and forms the subject of Mr. Caldwell's drawing opposite.

My first sing-sing gave me a lesson of caution in handling these heavy horned beasts. Elmi, finding himself unable alone to administer the *coup de grâce*, asked me to "stand on the horn." This I did, grasping the upper horn with both hands, while Elmi stood on the tip, outside me. Such, however, was the tremendous power developed by the big bull in a final struggle that both of us were thrown yards through the air. I also received a blow in the ribs from the other horn, and, as Elmi then fell on top of me, I got a shaking that I did not forget for a day or two. The incident, however, apparently caused merriment to my brother and the "boys," who came up at that moment. Leaving the latter to bring in the meat, we two walked campwards, and on the way ran into a prowling tiger-cat, which managed to bounce through bush without offering a shot. During the subsequent hunt we lost our bearings, and, as it was now dark, passed a bad half-hour ere we descried





the camp-fires, what time lions were beginning to call.

Next morning I secured my first pair of Grant's gazelle, the buck by a shot in base of neck at over 250 yards. He formed one of a group of thirty or forty



GRANT'S GAZELLES.

animals widely scattered among sparse bush, but his was the only good head. He carried massive annulated horns of 23 ins., by seven in basal circumference, and with the wide span of 16 ins. between tips. The doe I got by a little impromptu drive, killing her with a Paradox ball as she flew past at eighty yards—a lovely creature with horns of  $15\frac{5}{8}$  ins. My brother also brought in a Grant buck, the horns being identical in length with mine, but narrower, the span being only 11 ins. Next day I got a good impala ram after a nerve-trying stalk through open rush-clad straths. These were, however, traversed



in all directions by the curious double spoor of hippopotami—regular roads, by which these huge amphibians came out to graze at night, and along which we could creep unseen. This impala was lord of a harem of no less than thirty-two does, and I thought him the best in our valley; but my brother later on got a solitary ram that beat him by half-an-inch.

These two antelopes, the impala and Grant's gazelle, carry as fine trophies as any game on earth, having regard to their proportionate size. Both species average from 10 to 12 stones in weight—say the size of a red deer hind—yet their horns, massive and beautiful in sweeping curves, run to 26 and 28 ins. in length; "record" specimens reaching nearly 30 ins.

That afternoon, during the midday rest in camp, we were visited by a deputation of Masai. These stalwart savages—absolutely naked save for some ornaments suspended from their ears (I took these things to be ornaments)—each carried a murderous double-bladed spear, long enough to impale three enemies at once. (The blades of some I brought home exceed 3 ft. in length.) After much palaver, we understood our friends' message to be as follows:—That morning a lion had attacked their herds. They had driven him off, and he had taken shelter in some bush, where they had left men to watch till we could arrive to shoot the depredator. We set off at once, and on reaching the place (an hour's walk) found the country quite open, with some thin bush. There was much running hither and thither, and much gesticulation by crowds of excited Masai. This at length resolved itself into general concentration upon one patch of low brushwood barely an acre in extent. Towards this scores of spears now eagerly pointed, but both the Masai and our own "boys" hung severely back. Consequently W—— and I reached the bush alone, each attended only by his gun-bearer.

For a moment, I must admit, I hesitated to walk into that bush with a live lion inside it; but, as our whole line stood halted dead to windward, and within



forty yards of the patch, and nothing moved, I signalled to W—— and we went in. Hardly had we advanced ten steps when I saw a long cat-like form crouching off through the thin tail of the bush some seventy yards ahead. It seemed small for a lion, but I put in both barrels of the Paradox, Elmi, with my second gun, dashing right past me. This was utterly wrong on his



“WHILE I HELD AN EMPTY GUN” (LEOPARD).

part, and a breach of all rules. At that moment, while I held an empty gun, a truly magnificent leopard leaped from the bush within thirty yards, and I was left absolutely helpless, to admire her infinite grace as she silently bounded past my front.

What an unending catastrophe was that business of Babel! Had we only understood at the beginning, amid the polyglot jumble of tongues, that it was *two leopards* we were after, instead of one lion, as we had gathered, then surely both would not have escaped—

possibly neither. Elmi's impetuosity in any case lost me the second. Both shots at the first had missed. I was unlucky with leopards this trip. A few days later I lost another good chance through the same linguistic curse. There were some waterbuck on a rocky ridge. Whilst stalking these, Elmi spied a leopard and explained something which I did not understand, but he was keen, and I followed. We reached a bare grass-opening. A single thorn-tree stood in its centre, and beneath that one tree lay the leopard, in shortish grass, scarce fifty yards away. "Shoot," whispered Elmi; adding, "In the bushes, lying down." Still imagining we were after the waterbuck, which I presumed had moved, I scanned every bush on that koppie beyond—thrice as far away as lay the leopard. At last I saw, but too late. Ere I got my sights the leopard jumped. I waited in hopes he might stand; and stand he did, but not till close on the ridge of the koppie, 200 yards off. My ball splintered the rock a hand's-breadth over his shoulder—a near thing, but a miss. Had Elmi only said, "Under the tree," that beast could hardly have escaped; what he *did* say was misleading in the last degree.



MASAI CATTLE-BELL  
PICKED UP ON ENDERIT.

Although describing this last animal as a leopard, I have since satisfied myself that it was in reality a cheetah, which habitually lies out thus in the open, whereas the leopard never does so. It is a noteworthy circumstance that the cheetah, though in general appearance closely resembling a leopard, and certainly allied to the *Felidæ*, yet possesses a dog-foot—that is, its claws are blunt and hardly, if at all, retractile.

A charming feature of the shooting in East Africa is the bush-stalking. Now, stalking in bush may appear a simple problem, and so, no doubt, with a single animal, when stationary, it sometimes is. Such chances, however,

seldom occur, for the game here, such as zebra, eland, hartebeest, impala, waterbuck, gazelles, wart-hog and grass-antelopes of sorts, are nearly always in herds, and those herds, while among bush, are moving about on the feed. Hence the problem is not simple. Firstly, the stalker must get forward at a fair speed or he will lose touch. Then in a herd, say, of a dozen, there will probably be only one really good head. The other eleven are only so many nuisances and sources of danger. All the eleven must, nevertheless, be held under accurate observation, or else some insignificant little beastie, appearing at an unexpected spot, will ruin the whole operation. Bush-stalking, in short, is an art in itself, affording difficult, but withal very pretty, manœuvring. The hunter who has singled out the master-buck, held him in all his vagaries, avoided the keen view of the other eleven, and finally secured the prize, has done good work.

More often, instead of eleven, there will be forty, fifty or sixty undesired individuals whose gaze it is necessary to shun.

Two difficulties deserve mention. First, the ever-shifting wind, which changes, both in force and direction, with the changing hours of the day. This trouble is common to all tropical Africa, but is specially pronounced in this great Rift Valley, which, though its floor averages 6,000 ft. elevation, is yet shut in by loftier mountain-ranges of 10,000 to 14,000 ft. in altitude, and distant some thirty to fifty miles apart. Hence the light airs move in puffs and eddies, wafting scent one knows not whither. When, after infinite care, one has gained the deadly range, and is scrutinising each horn in the herd to make sure of killing the best, suddenly, without a moment's warning, up goes every head. Some treacherous back-set breeze has betrayed us, and in an instant the game is gone, swift and silent as a thought.

The second danger lies in the presence of so many creatures that lie hidden. I pass over the francolins and guinea-fowl, since they are no worse than the cockling

grouse that scares a Highland stag. Here more serious obstacles confront the stalker, in particular the "grass-antelopes," duikers and steinbucks, dik-diks and such-like, that often start from underfoot precisely at the critical moment, and, by bouncing away, leaping over bush and branch, disturb everything else within sight. Then a great wart-hog, twenty stone in weight, may spring from his lair, grunting and snorting, with all bristles



WART-HOG.

erect and tail upright as a flagstaff, as he crashes through brushwood and thorn. In each case the stalker's labour is lost. But at least in East Africa I have never been thwarted by birds—that is, by the honey-guides (*Indicator*), the louries and social shrikes, that in the Transvaal so often gave a note of warning to otherwise unsuspecting game.

Charming examples of animal-instinct—approximating to reason—constantly occur to the silent stalker. Thus the savage wart-hog aforesaid may dash, snorting and tail erect, through herds of grazing gazelles. Up

in a moment goes every head; but never a glance is vouchsafed at the immediate disturber of their peace, nor in his ultimate direction. Their united gaze is concentrated towards the point *whence he had come*, and precisely where there now lies a mind-tormented hunter. Again, in advancing on one group of game, the stalker may elect to take what appears a safe risk by exposing himself—maybe but for a few yards—to the view of other game far more distant, possibly half-a-mile away. But should these latter detect his movement, they will at once—by standing at gaze—signal to all within view the presence of danger. The nearer game—the objects of pursuit—



GREY LORRY.

though absolutely out of sight of the stalker lying prone in the grass, at once cease grazing or resting, and assume the alert. Their gaze is directed—not towards an invisible foe, but towards the watching sentinels beyond, which had given the alarm, and on whose acute senses they are content to rely for their own protection. Should, however, that distant group, relying partly on their own remoteness, but more largely on the fact that since that one alarming glimpse they have seen nothing more—for during the subsequent half-hour the detected stalker has lain motionless, careless alike of biting ants, spiky thorns and sunstroke—should they either recommence feeding or begin slowly to move away, then the nearer game will also forget their fears and the stalk is resumed.

Following are notes copied from diary—

*August 1.*—Far away on the verge of distant bush,



my eye caught on some reddish object that might, I thought, be an impala. This, on bringing the glass to bear, proved to be correct; but that impala was then seen to be standing in the midst of a troop of zebras, completely surrounded by them! Yet these latter had entirely escaped notice by the unaided eye.

The apparently conspicuous zebra is, in practice, often very difficult to distinguish at any considerable distance among bush. Beyond, say, 500 yards (more



IMPALA.

or less, according to the light) the broad black-and-white stripes blend into a grey monotone almost invisible. In the open, of course, they are visible enough.

Naturally, when viewed against the sun zebras appear dark, while in sunlight they look white. I recollect a single zebra at sunrise resembling a figure of fretted silver as he stood among green bushes in the early horizontal rays. Giraffes also, seen in ordinary light, assume a monotone when beyond some 700 or 800 yards' distance. That quality of colour-protection has, however, a strictly limited value, otherwise the red impala would stand in bad case.



*August 3.*—While stalking a group of three hartebeests, in creeping across a belt of tall grass I detected, through interlacing stalks, a small antelope close in front. Its head was held pressed flat on the ground, its full dark eyes fixed on mine, not six feet apart. By the short upright horns and dark blaze on the face I judged it to be an oribi; but being all anxiety to secure the coveted Neumann bull in front, I declined the chance to add what would also have been a new and interesting species to our game-list, and eventually got neither.

Lions were numerous on the Enderit. We came to regard their opening notes, usually heard at our various camps about 10 p.m., as the signal for turning-in. There is heavy bush along the riverside, and we never saw a lion here by day, though we twice fell in with tiger-cats, and once with a brownish lynx that was probably a caracal. A dark-looking beast that I had thought was also of the felines Elmi assured me was a "Yea," a name which in the Somali tongue signifies a hunting-dog (*Lycan pictus*). It was alone, slowly pottering along, and presently lay down in long grass where I got near enough, but made a bad miss, running, with the carbine. Another animal identified through its Somali name of "Shook-shook" was of the *Herpestes* genus, a big brown mongoose. When first observed it was lying under a thick laurel-like shrub by the riverside, devouring a francolin; but a bullet from the Paradox caused it to emit so overpowering an odour that further interest in the specimen was impossible. It was as large as an otter, with a conspicuous bushy tuft projecting above and beyond the tail. We frequently saw smaller mongoose, especially in the early mornings, inquisitive little beasties, though never observed to run in a string as they do in Spain. Other pretty creatures are the ground-squirrels, ruddy-brown in colour, that remind one of marmots as they sit upright for a moment, watching, before disappearing down their holes.

Besides all these, other beautiful antelopes abounded in our happy hunting-grounds—amidst profusion it is

difficult to do justice to all. Bushbuck inhabited the dense "lion-scrub" that fringed the east river. These, like the waterbuck, are nocturnal. We saw them at dawn; and, shortly before sundown, they again showed up outside the jungle, feeding among the scattered trees. One special buck attracted my attention—coal-black he appeared in his glossy pile. Next evening, punctual to a minute, he appeared with his three does. The river here, to our great vexation, we found impassable owing to the thorny jungle that fringed it. Presently Elmi discovered a sort of tunnel about 3 ft. high—presumably the property of a hippo—and down this we had crawled nearly to the water's edge, when, from our side, something (we could not see what) plunged with sounding splash into the pool. "Big croc," whispered Elmi. It was very tantalising, but the result was that, after ascertaining the depth to exceed a yard, our coveted bushbuck ram was left to feed in peace on the other bank. An intense aversion to reptiles—especially great subaquatic reptiles—possesses most of us, and a recollection of that picture in Arthur Neumann's *Elephant Hunting*, p. 309, does not allay it.

Then there were the "grass-antelopes." Every day as we traversed the bush in search of bigger things, the ubiquitous duiker and steinbuck kept bouncing out from long grass or thin scrub at thirty or forty yards' distance. Both these little antelopes move very high by the stern, and being fat to boot, convey an idea of exaggerated footballs as they dive away through the bush. Smaller still are the dikdiks, also numerous, and all whereabouts of the "Cavendish" species (*Madoqua cavendishi*). A male shot here weighed only 11 lbs., yet was a thoroughbred little antelope at that, with annulated horns a trifle over 3 ins. in length, and tiny hoofs on the end of long legs no thicker than a pencil—a perfect miniature.

One morning on the Enderit, coming round a bend, I "jumped" close by a heavy, thick-set beast that, with horns laid back flat along the withers, crashed away through the brushwood. Not knowing what it was, I

did not fire. Elmi asserted positively that this was an oryx; but now (after seeing both species) I am satisfied that it was a young eland.

A fortnight's hunting had yielded thirty-four selected specimens, comprising eleven different species of big game. But hitherto the intense wildness of our most coveted object, the Neumann's hartebeest, had defied our utmost efforts. Stalking on the open prairie frequented by these antelopes had proved impossible. A carefully-organised "drive" had failed—I will not say through the stupidity of the drivers, but simply because savages could not comprehend the scope of the operation. On our last day but one we adopted a modified scheme of simply "moving" a herd, and this so far succeeded that we each secured a specimen at extreme ranges. Both, unluckily, proved to be females, mine being a fine adult, carrying a head of  $15\frac{5}{8}$  ins., and my brother's a smaller cow. The latter, having only a broken shoulder, led us a long chase, and eventually, after receiving two more bullets (one in the head), entered a patch of thick wood.

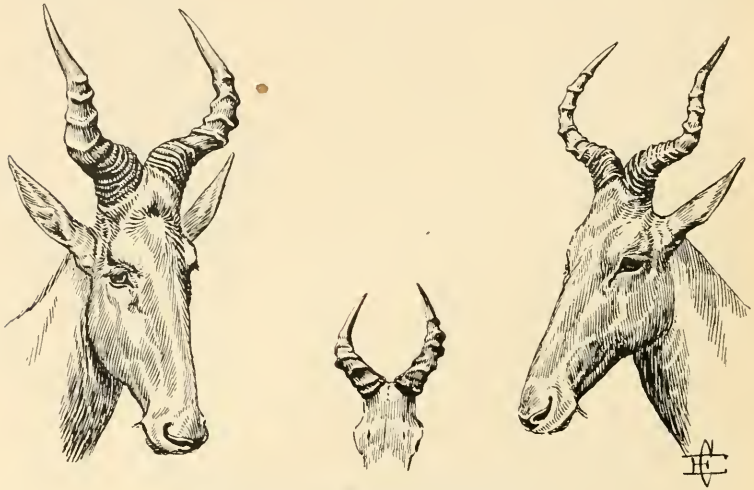
Happening to be the nearest, I followed in and finished her with the Paradox; but the shot was instantly echoed by a succession of such roars as caused me to regain the open with quite unseemly haste—so, at least, it appeared to W——, who was some distance away. On reconnoitring from a safer point, we found that the cause of alarm was a herd of hippopotami.



HUNTING-KNIFE SHEATHED  
IN SKIN FROM AN IMPALA'S  
PASTERN.

This little wood, unknown to me, bordered a creek of Lake Nakuru, and a score of these pachyderms had been lying asleep within a few yards of where I had fired that final shot.

Thus the bull of Neumann's hartebeest, for the present, remained wanting. I had, however, secured an immature example, and the annexed drawing shows the earlier, upright growth in the horns of this species. They belonged to a nearly full-grown calf (female), and



HEADS OF NEUMANN'S HARTEBEEST.

Bull,  $18\frac{1}{2}$  ins. (shot later); cow,  $15\frac{3}{4}$  ins.; immature,  $10\frac{3}{4}$  ins.

measured  $10\frac{3}{4}$  ins. in length along the front curve. How I came to kill this small beast I never quite knew. Possibly the bullet, missing its mark, had struck another; more probably (the distance being great and the grass long) the luckless youngster had been standing in front of a larger animal, which masked the separate outline. Anyway, it lay there dead; and, after all, its horns exhibit an interesting phase of growth.

That evening, close to camp, I saw another leopard. He retreated into heavy bush overhanging the banks of a stream—a favourable place to hustle him out. I had fifteen "boys" with me, Swahilis, but to my surprise not one of them would face the job, and the leopard

escaped through an irrational care for their precious black skins. For a mob of noisy beaters there was no danger whatever.

The nomad Masai were moving towards the lake, and this evening (August 5) we saw in many directions the



GOLIATH HERON—Biggest of his tribe.

smoke of grass-fires where they were burning-off the dead herbage. We next morning walked down together to examine the marvellous bird-life that swarms around the shores of Lake Nakuru. Never have I seen greater aggregations or such variety of water-fowl. These belonged to forms and genera all familiar, yet specifically almost every bird was an entire stranger to me. The



special character that arrested attention was the immense size of many species. There were colossal cranes, storks and herons, perfect giants of the bird-world. There were pelicans in droves; these, of course, are always big. Geese, ducks and flamingoes in thousands filled air and water. Darters (*Plotus*) with snake-like necks and small cormorants perched on half-submerged trees. There were herons and egrets in their many varieties; ibises of both kinds, with plovers and sandpipers, gulls great and small, grebes, and many more. Though I have been an ornithologist all my life, I hardly dare further attempt to describe or define those exotic multitudes. The assemblage, however, certainly included the Goliath heron, tall and grey, standing bolt upright as a Guardsman; another conspicuous monster being the huge jabiru or saddle-bill, with its heavy, up-tilted, murderous beak, red, with a broad black band in centre, both of which birds I have endeavoured to portray. Besides these, there are entered in my notebook—though with due doubtfulness, both on this and other occasions around Nakuru's shore—the whale-billed stork (*Balæniceps*) and the great wattled crane (*Grus carunculata*), a species I had met with in South Africa; but neither bird has yet been proved to occur here in Equatoria.

Two flamingoes that I killed with the rifle were of the European species (*Phænicopterus roseus*), but we saw others that were red all over (*Ph. minor*).

Many hippo lay in the shallows off-shore; one, an immense bull with pink cheeks and neck, showed splendid curved ivory as he opened a cavernous mouth to yawn. He offered a good target, and W—— put in a bullet that told well. The hippo disappeared, and we saw him no more, though we waited all day (watching the birds also) and sent down “boys” next morning. Neither of us fired at hippo again.

That evening we marched into Nakuru and encamped alongside the railway. There is a Dâk bungalow at the station, and, without being Sybarites, we enjoyed an excellent dinner and a bottle of Pontet Canet—a grateful change from the rough fare of the veld.





AFRICAN JABIRU, OR SADDLE-BILL.

## CHAPTER IV

### A LION-DRIVE ON LAKE NAKURU

LIONS were not specially included in our programme or our ambitions when we first landed in British East Africa; for much time expended in vain and many uncomfortable hours endured during my previous expedition (in South Africa) in the effort to bag a lion had driven home the conclusion that to secure the king of beasts was beyond my powers. But *dis aliter visum*. Lions, it may here be remarked, are still sufficiently numerous in British East Africa, especially in those regions where antelopes, zebra and other game so greatly abound, such as the Athi Plains and parts of the great Rift Valley. During our three months' sojourn in East Africa in 1904 we had several camps at which we heard lions calling almost every night, yet never, that year, did we personally see one alive, except on the single occasion which I here propose to relate. In South Africa I enjoyed one glimpse of a lion, and the rough sketch made in my note-book of that sight, which, cursory as it was, must always remain a notable memory, is here translated by Mr. Caldwell.

It is, perhaps, needless to remark that lions do not roar when hunting at night. It would be a very foolish beast that did so. Their note at night is better described as a call—a sort of deep, crescendo, resonant cough—and one hears a second, often a third, cough, each further away than the other, showing that the beasts are hunting in concert in a wide wing, and thus they maintain touch with each other. When lions do roar is on returning homewards full, towards daylight, at

which hour hunters are generally too fast asleep to hear it. The only occasions when I have heard a real roar were when waiting-out at night over a kill. On these ventures one has to spend the long, dark hours on a cartel, or framework, fixed up in the branches of a tree; and, under such conditions, is never so sound asleep but that the magnificent reverberating roar of a lion will speedily restore one to full consciousness.

The herdsman-prophet of Tekoa understood the



FIRST GLIMPSE OF A LION.

habits of lions in this respect thousands of years ago, when he wrote (Amos iii. 4):—"Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing?"

Well, on August 7, 1904, we were encamped alongside the railway at Nakuru, intending to start at dawn next morning on the long march to Lake Baringo, distant some seventy-five miles due north. A message, however, was conveyed to us during the evening that H.M.'s Commissioner (the late Sir Donald Stewart) was expected by train during the night, and it was proposed to organise a lion-drive on the morrow. We had with

us a fair-sized crowd of natives—between forty and fifty human beings, Swahili porters, askaris armed with Sniders, hunters, tent-boys, and the usual components of what is called a “safari,” or caravan. These we thought would make a useful troop of beaters; but they hardly viewed the undertaking with the same enthusiasm. A Swahili has his good points, but he is not a born sportsman, nor is he any longer a true savage. He wears clothes of sorts, drinks when he has a chance, and can reckon up how many rupees go to a sovereign. The true savage, such as the Masai, does none of these things. Any reluctance to act as beaters was, however, soon dispelled by the forceful suasion of our “headman,” Maguiar, the huge Soudanese, whose word, backed by the obvious power to enforce it, was law beyond debate; and after breakfast we set forth amidst deafening din. The regular musical instruments indigenous to Central Africa, such as drums and tom-toms, were supplemented by empty biscuit-tins, gourds filled with pebbles, and other ear-splitting devices quite calculated to alarm even a lion.

The scene of our proposed operations, less than an hour's walk away, was a series of forest-patches which lay nestling along the northern shores of Lake Nakuru, a sheet of water some fifteen miles in length. These woods were of no great width, merely belts of a few hundred yards across, and conveniently divided from each other by natural opens at intervals of a mile or two. Inland from the forest-belt was open, grassy land, sloping upwards to low, rocky koppies, clad with what looked like bracken and brambles. The first two beats proved blank, nothing bigger than “grass-antelopes” or dikdiks being seen. In the third beat I was the penultimate gun on the left of the line, facing the lake, the last gun being posted to command the extreme end of that patch of forest on the lake-shore. I had selected for this work my 12-bore Paradox and an old .450 Express, to which I was long accustomed, as being better adapted for quick-moving shots at moderate

distance than the far-ranging cordite '303. I was lying hidden in long grass about one hundred yards from the covert, and the noisy line of beaters had already approached within half-a-mile, when my Somali gun-bearer, Elmi Hassan, who was lying beside me, pointed into the wood, saying, "See! two lions! You no see?" I certainly did not see. For some time I could distinguish nothing moving whatever; but at length, as the lions came exactly opposite my position, where the wood was rapidly thinning out, I saw them. They were not easy to detect, so low and stealthy was their advance, crouching along under covert of brushwood and rushes. As the lions were completely enclosed, I would not risk the uncertain shot they now offered; in fact, it seemed to me clear that, short of breaking-back, the lions had hardly any choice but to pass out between me and my one left-hand neighbour. They did neither. At a point exactly on my front the two beasts lay down in two green bushes that grew within a dozen yards of each other beneath the last straggling trees.

Hardly had this incident occurred than we became aware, by a chorus of discordant yells from the beaters (some of whom we could see rushing out of the wood), that they had come across something inside that was not quite to their taste. Amidst the din, the word "simba" (lion) predominated, and at once the three guns on my right, including my brother W——, dashed off towards the point indicated. Having my two marked lions in front of me, I remained quietly where I was, and so soon as the coast was clear, beckoned to my left-hand neighbour, told him what I had seen, and arranged that he should advance from the left, while I went straight in to the lions in front.

Naturally, under such circumstances one went in with every sense on full stretch, anticipating and prepared for any contingency; but on drawing nearer and nearer to those two bushes without seeing a sign of movement within, the tension began to slacken. At twenty yards' distance it seemed impossible that so large a beast as a



lion could still be lying in so small a bush without my seeing it. They must, I thought, have slipped away unobserved, and I was walking on almost carelessly until within ten yards of the right-hand bush, when Elmi suddenly seized my arm, pointing the rifle he carried into the base of the bush, and hissed, "See! see! the lion! Shoot—him spring!" Once more I must admit that I could see nothing. Strain my eyes as I would, I could distinguish nothing like a lion in that bush—nothing beyond a very small patch of monotone in the further corner. Yet Elmi was so positive, and the bush so small and so near, that I decided, rather recklessly—and perhaps from some sense of shame that a black man should be so superior in eyesight—to fire. There was no mistaking the response—a growl more savage than ever I had heard in my life before. I also saw, through the thick smoke from the Paradox, the electric convulsion with which the beast pulled itself together for a spring. That movement disclosed the position of the head and shoulder, and before there was any time for mischief I got the second bullet well in behind the shoulder. That knocked out any idea of fight, and the beast, still growling but mortally sick, crawled out beyond. I now saw it was a lioness. Elmi handed me the .450, and a third bullet, raking forward from the stern, stretched her among the grass. My first ball was in the ribs amidships, the second high on shoulder.

While rushing forward to examine the beast, and in the excitement of the moment utterly forgetting the second lion in the other bush, now behind us, I was promptly reminded by shouts and two rapidly-fired shots in that direction. Turning round, I was just in time to see this second beast, also a lioness, bound out, a yellow streak, from the thick covert, growling as the first had done. On seeing me she stopped dead, standing with head erect among the green rushes by the lake-shore, and looking over her shoulder towards us. I remember seeing her white teeth as she commenced another growl—she was only twenty yards away—but that movement



was her last. A Paradox ball on the shoulder dropped her from our sight.

When this second lioness first bounced within sight I had thrown up the Paradox for a snapshot, thinking she was coming straight on; but on her hesitating as described, by an inspiration I glanced along the sights to assure myself that the aim was correct. The gun was then pointing a clear inch *above* her shoulder!



LIONESSES RIGHT AND LEFT.

(By artistic licence grouped nearer than they actually fell.)

Both animals lay quite dead within thirty yards of each other; yet my companion, Elmi, who, while they were yet living, had been as bold and collected as though we had merely been engaged with antelopes, now developed a curious degree of caution. Probably he was right and acting on experience, but he would not allow me to approach till he had collected sundry sticks and stones and thrown several at either carcase.

While Elmi and I were thus occupied, we had heard several rifle-shots away on our right. It now transpired that a third lioness had also been secured by the

guns who (as above mentioned) had gone off in that direction. The first shot was put in by the Sub-Commissioner, Mr. C. W. Hobley. All three lionesses were dragged out of the covert by our "boys," and laid in a row on the grass outside, where a scene of indescribable excitement ensued, the niggers dancing and jumping around the dead beasts to an accompaniment of shrieks, beating of tom-toms and other fearsome instruments, including biscuit-tins.

I measured the two lionesses with which I was personally concerned. The first and larger of the two

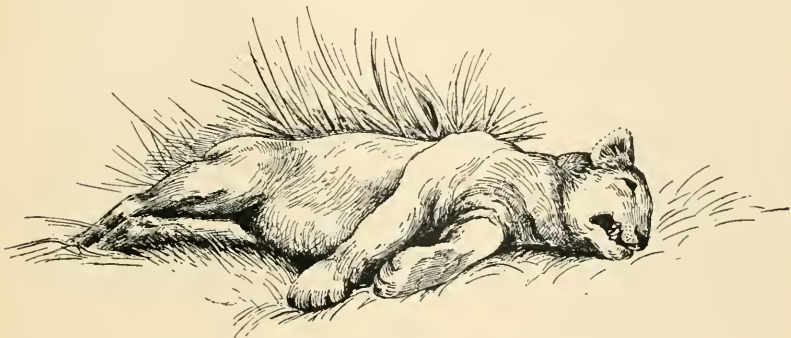


SAVAGES DANCING AROUND DEAD LIONESSES.

taped 8 ft. all but an inch; the second was a trifle under 7 ft. All three had fed the night before on zebra, readily distinguishable by the masses of yellow fat. After skinning the lions, we tried two or three more beats of similar woods along the lake-shore, but without further success so far as lions were concerned. One incident, however, is deserving of mention. My position was in a small open surrounded by dense jungle—a sort of green-room, twenty yards square, walled-in by masses of viewless shrubs, lianas and creepers. One could see literally nothing beyond these narrow limits. There was one gun outside me, by the lake, and to him I had indicated my position. Where precisely the rest were

placed I knew not, nor could they tell where we two were. While the beat progressed I heard some large animal approaching, heard it arrive in the thicket immediately on my front, and stop there. In vain I looked around for a convenient tree to ascend, not so much from fear of a lion as from the risk of promiscuous bullets. Trees there were in plenty, but not one could be climbed by reason of the pendent masses of parasitic plants and prehensile thorny creepers with which each trunk was clad. As the beaters came in the beast broke. It was only a bushbuck; no one fired. But with careless guns there would have been more danger from stray bullets than from the most savage beast that roams the African forest. The evening ended in backsheesh. The "boys" asked for twopence each. I served out thrice that sum, and posed as a benefactor. Next morning we started on the long march to Lake Baringo.

A curious incident deserves record. At the station at Nakuru was posted a written notice that (presumably by reason of some small trouble with the natives) sportsmen were forbidden to proceed "north of the equator," which, the notice added, "might be taken as passing over Molo bridge." Now to me the equator had always been a sort of abstraction—not a concrete thing capable of passing over a bridge, like a donkey or a telegraph-wire. Hence I had mistaken the notice for some tropical joke! Fortunately for us, being that night in the august company of the Government, the error was discovered in time and the necessary permit issued.



## CHAPTER V

### A TWELFTH ON THE EQUATOR

#### NAKURU TO BARINGO

THE four days preceding the Twelfth of August we had been steadily marching through grassy uplands, skirting the vast crater of Meningai. There was but little game here in August; but, in those days, many Masai with their flocks and herds. Eighteen months later (February 1906) the Masai had been "removed" into their Reserve on Laikipia, and game abounded.

This is not the regular route to Baringo, whither we were bound, but we had selected the longer way round in order to avoid the heavy march of twenty-three waterless miles between Nakuru and the Molo River. The deviation involved a lot of "path-finding," picking up landmarks and bearings, coupled with no slight anxiety as to whether we were really holding the right course. We had the company on the first day of Mr. F. R. N. Finlay, the South-African hunter, who kindly undertook to set us our course.

The first evening we had encamped on a tiny rivulet, name unknown; the second on the Ungusori River. On the eve of the Twelfth we had reached the Alabanyata, a rapid muddy stream six yards in width and a yard deep. At midday, hardly had we "outspanned" on its banks, after six hours' marching under an unspeakable sun, when shouts of "Simba" (lion) aroused us from a hard-earned rest. Our men, scattering to collect firewood, had come on the beast close by; but though we turned out at once, hunted a mile down-stream, and then "drove" all the thickets and likely "holts" on



our way, nothing more was seen. The grilling we endured in that noontide-hour's hunt! Vertical rocks reflected an accumulated heat in that deep gorge that was well-nigh suffocating. Thermometers are useless.

The point reached that night we named Equator Camp, believing that that geographical symbol passed between our two tents. Perhaps it did—certainly it ran within a few yards.

These four days we had shot no game, and a gazelle (*granti*, doe) killed this evening came as a perfect godsend to the commissariat. Note that a certain proportion of tinned meat should always be carried for occasions such as these. Strict supervision, moreover, must be exercised over the black cook, otherwise he will recklessly use up these emergency reserves on days when there is plenty of fresh meat at hand. In most camps game is superabundant; but there are long marches and gameless stretches for which a reserve of tinned stuff, such as "army rations," should always be provided. To-night, the diary records, we "dined sumptuously."

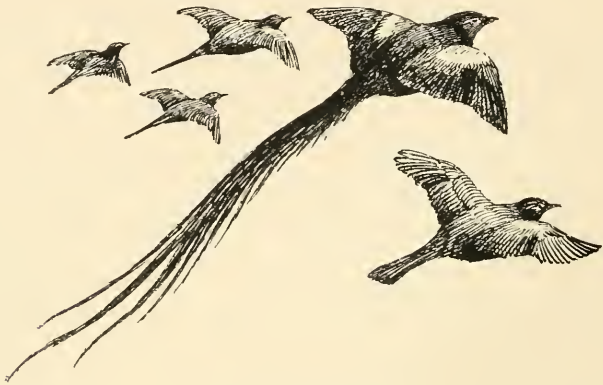
The local Masai, friendly yet finely independent, had refused to trade us a single sheep, or to hire out some of their sturdy donkeys, that would have served us well for transport. Their reasons are intelligible enough. The habits of these naked savages, living solely on meat, milk and blood, needing neither cloth, beads, wire nor anything we could give them, left no medium of exchange. True, they came daily into our camps for medicine and medical advice, but that they expected for nothing—which, it is probable, was about the par value of any such advice we could give.

We visited one of their kraals, strongly stockaded, to inquire the way to the Molo. A score of Masai came out to meet us, each carrying his spear. The chief, an old man, grizzled, reserved and self-possessed, was a splendid savage, standing some seven feet high. In reply to our questions he knelt down, and, by patting the ground with his hand, indicated the direction we should follow.

In August flights of Egyptian geese and pelicans are

here constantly winging their way southward—no doubt from Lakes Baringo and Rudolph to those of Naivasha and Nakuru. The curious “Kaffir-finch,” or King whydah-bird (*Chera delamerei*), with its ridiculously-exaggerated tail, is also characteristic of this veld, as well as the Florican, or Wato bustard (*Trachelotis canicollis*), numberless larks, pipits, doves and ravens.

The distant horizon on this, as on most grassy downlands, was frequently ornamented by the gaunt, upright



KING WHYDAHs.

Males entirely black except the band of crimson and buff on fore-wing.

figures of ostriches feeding about, usually in pairs. On one occasion we witnessed a struthian love-scene. So far as one could distinguish at the distance, the cock ostrich, running in circles in spasmodic, jerky style, with neck dilated and extended in front, executed a sort of wild dance. The beautiful white plumes of wings and tail, expanded like a fan, showed up conspicuously against his jet-black body. The scene reminded one of the performance of an old blackcock in April, or (more appropriate, though less accurately) of the great bustard in Spain. The hen ostrich appeared to be busy feeding all the time.

I also remember seeing once a triangular fight between



three cock ostriches. Despite much brave show and widespread plumes, not one of the three would close. The fight degenerated into a mere demonstration in three acts—defiance, charge (not carried home), flight—and this was repeated again and again.

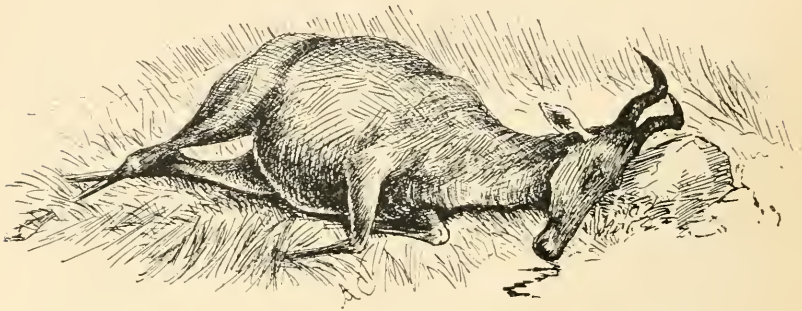
Here, on the Alabanyata, we decided to spend our Twelfth, and made an early start. Down the riverside at dawn were numerous wart-hogs in troops of five to a dozen, besides ostriches, gazelles, small antelope and jackal. Three miles below, the Alabanyata utterly disappears—lost in a great green *vlei*, or marsh, of a league in extent, all choked with tall flags. On the grassy foreshore lay a herd of large animals that, in the distance and early sunlight, certainly looked like eland. On approach they proved to be waterbuck (*defassa*), but all apparently females, lying down. “No horn,” was Elmi’s verdict; but being confident that such a herd would hold at least one fair male, I crept back and presently gained another point of view. From here we were rewarded by discovering a grand bull lying between two groups of cows and half hidden thereby. His horns, laid back along the withers, were also inconspicuous.

The utmost point of cover was still distant just 270 yards from the game—the intervening foreshore being bare short grass, flat as a cricket-pitch, and dotted with enormous wild geese of the spur-winged species (*P. gambensis*). Buff-backed herons also marched about among the sing-sing, relieving the animals of parasites. The cows and calves kept up a low chorus of bleating cries. I half thought of “whistling-up” the bull, but the obvious risk of his form being then covered by the attendant cows was too great, and nothing remained but to take the long, lying shot. A sloping ant-hill afforded a perfect “rest,” and the shot was followed by an answering thud. Hither and thither ran cows in confusion, but beyond them lay one big prostrate form. The bullet had struck the neck.

The horns of this bull taped 28 ins., by  $8\frac{1}{2}$  ins. around the base. One was slightly splintered at the point, and

one ear was bitten through—the result, no doubt, of the fights that had gained him his numerous harem. Dead-weight, as he lay, estimated at near 500 lbs.

While off-skinning proceeded I strolled to some low ridges beyond to survey the country. At first only zebras and ostriches were in sight; but presently the glasses rested on an animal that was quite new to me—a great dark-red hartebeest standing beneath a shady mimosa a mile away. He was a lone bull, bigger, redder and with finer horn than any of his kind hitherto seen. This was my first view of *Bubalis jacksoni*. Him we at once proceeded to stalk.



Again the range was long—sighted for 300 yards; yet so severe was the hit that for a full half-hour we never doubted that this also was “our meat.” Slowly he moved, with frequent halts, but on, on . . . into the low hills that closed the plain, taking ridge after ridge, apparently recovering strength as time went on. Then, on topping a crest, we “jumped” a second lone bull of the same species, and by a bit of superb field-craft gained an advantage that within twenty minutes proved fatal to the game. This hartebeest had dashed away, circling round the rim of a saucer-shaped depression. Elmi, inspired, plunged into this dip, directing our four “boys” to remain standing in full view on the ridge behind. Presently, as anticipated, our horned friend pulled up and stood fixedly regarding those four harmless Swahili,

while we, being in the hollow below his sight, were free to continue our advance. At little over 100 yards the tips of those thick-set back-bent horns showed up above intervening bush, and, firing low through the foliage, judging where the chest would be, a dull echoing response told that another grand beast lay dead.

Jackson's hartebeest is the finest of the genus found in East Africa, and closely related to the red hartebeest (*Bubalis caama*) of the Cape. It is probably the northern form of one species, for in some specimens a trace of the black facial "blaze" characteristic of *B. caama* is found retained in *B. jacksoni*—in this example it extended from above the nostrils half-way to the base of the horn-pedicles. Other specimens obtained later showed no sign of this, and even the dark-red pelt is not an invariable distinction, for one bull shot later was quite pale in body-colour—lighter, indeed, than *B. cokei*. The dead-weight of this animal we estimated at full 400 lbs., against little over 300 lbs. in *B. cokei*; and the horns taped 22 ins., by  $10\frac{1}{4}$  ins. in basal circumference, with a span of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ins. between tips. Irides yellow.

Meanwhile, our previously-wounded bull had disappeared. We made every possible effort to recover him, following for miles and sending out scouts to watch the vultures, but never again was he seen.

Camp was now five miles distant, the white tents mere specks across a shimmering plain, and it was two o'clock ere we reached them.

Numerous ostriches on this plain seemed to challenge an attempt to stalk; but this is an undertaking of no small difficulty. The immense height of these giant birds—they stand about 8 ft.—enables them to see over any ordinary covert. They walk, moreover, when feeding along, faster than one can run—run, that is, all doubled up and obstructed by strong grass and intercepting creepers. My brother, nevertheless, secured here a cock ostrich under the following circumstances. Afar on the plain two ostriches were rolling on a bare patch among the grass—taking a dust-bath. Neither W—

nor his gun-bearer were able to distinguish what that dark rolling object was, and had half concluded it must be a rhino. On their arrival within 200 yards the cock ostrich stood up, and promptly received a bullet through his body. He provided plumes and feathers enough to supply an average family, but, as regards meat, was a complete fraud. There is little or nothing eatable on



OSTRICHES.

an ostrich. Needing no wing-muscles, the sternum has not even the rudiment of a keel, nor is there any flesh whatever on his breast, while the legs are all sinews.

As we had both during the morning "jumped" several small antelope or dikdik of kinds unknown to us, we took Paradox guns that evening with the idea of forming line to walk-up these small buck, or whatever might befall. A very hot day, however, was now succeeded by rain, and, probably owing to the grass being wet, several small animals were seen to break away wild before our advancing line. With a view to cut these

out, I pushed forward on the right, but only succeeded in heading some jackals and small pig, besides seeing a tawny-brown cat or lynx; and, the country becoming wooded, we got separated. Holding on alone, I presently found myself on the same marsh where we had shot the sing-sing that morning. Old spoor of three elephants led along the edge of the *vlei*—it was the first I had seen, and I was horrified by its size!—and several waterbuck cows still awaited their lost lord.

The hour being late, I resolved to remain awhile on the chance of some strange animal emerging from the great reedy fastness at sunset. The idea was vague, but it had a concrete reward. Presently something did appear, and the glass showed this to be a tawny-hued antelope with strong recurved horns—a *new* beast for the second time this day!

At 200 yards he stood, nothing more than a yellow head and neck showing amidst contrasting green flags. I fired three shots with the .303 carbine, each aimed at an unseen shoulder somewhere. I knew not precisely where, beneath. All this time the buck stood statuesque—as it were, hypnotised. The fourth shot, directed at the head itself, went true, striking below the eye with instantly fatal result. Elmi carried our prize ashore from a foot of water—a lovely creature, the East-African reedbuck (*Cervicapra wardi*), quite new to me, and the only specimen we obtained that year.<sup>1</sup>

This is a smaller animal than the common reedbuck (which is not found in East Africa), its live-weight probably not exceeding 80 or 90 lbs.; the pelt is rougher and more tawny than that of the larger species, and the horns more abruptly hooked forwards. They measured in this specimen  $9\frac{1}{4}$  ins., by 6 ins. around the base. This antelope has the broad, fan-like, flirting tail with

<sup>1</sup> We have since found them quite numerous in suitable localities, as is mentioned later in this book. The valley of the Alabanyata, indeed—down which we had just travelled without seeing a single reedbuck—abounded with these antelopes on our next visit, eighteen months later.



white edge, and the bare spot beneath the ear, that are characteristic of its genus. Irides dark.

Darkness was gathering ere we started campwards with our burden, and we suffered a bad half-hour or two, path-finding in the dark through heavy scrub, till we met two askaris with lanterns, whom W—— had



HEAD OF EAST-AFRICAN REEDBUCK.

sent to pilot us in. He had shot a Grant's gazelle, and both of us had struck fresh rhino spoor.

Thus ended our Twelfth on the equator. We had brought in five head of as many different species, and three of them new to us. Plenty reigned once more—we had half-a-ton of meat, on which our men fed like wolves. Presently weird music—chant and song ac-



accompanied by reed-pipe and rude guitar, not wanting in its own appropriate melody—startled the stillness of the tropical night. The final pipe was enjoyed amid wondrous serenade of nightjars and cicadas, ground-crickets and bull-frogs, with a backing of laughing hyenas beyond.

From Equator Camp we resumed our march northwards towards Baringo. One day's travel across low rocky ridges, clad with scattered mimosas, brought us to the Molo River at Ya-Nabanda—a spot where later on we enjoyed some memorable sport. Thence following the river till it diverged to the west at a point known as Maguiolni, we struck due north, three days' hard travelling, entangled all the time in intricate passes through rocky mountains—cruel volcanic lava, hidden boulders overgrown with wiry grass and trailers, horrid with bush and thorn—bad going for the heavily-laden safari, especially when rhinos filled their breasts with frequent alarm.

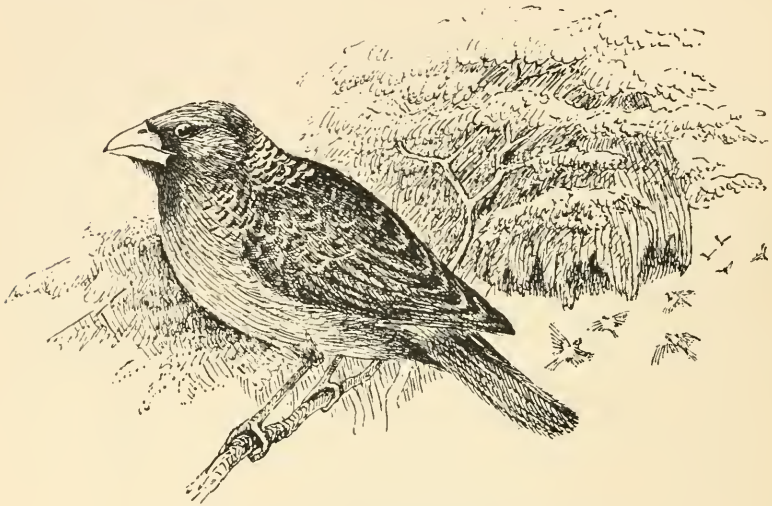
It was our object to explore Lake Hannington, lying among the rocky hills to the eastward, and with that idea we had left the track; but the deviation, with loaded men, proved impracticable. We struck one corner of the lake, nestling amid forest-clad heights, all reflected on the still surface, that recalled the scenery of Norway. The shallows and mud-flats at the head of the lake were brilliant with innumerable herds of rosy flamingoes that hid the water from view.

We were the less disappointed by this failure as the rugged volcanic hills and thorny jungle that surround Lake Hannington did not appear at all likely ground for eland, which we had been told frequented the shores of that lake, and to secure which had been our object in trying to reach it. That rocky country appeared more suitable for koodoo than for eland.

At all these camps, being in the Masai cattle-country, plagues of flies (like ordinary house-flies) tormented beyond bearing. In the morning, luckily, we were away before the demons awoke. At that hour they

formed a solid black mass, inches deep, along the ridge-poles of our tents and in the angles of the roof. But at midday there was no escape. They crawled over hands, face and food alike; swam in shoals in milk or coffee; buzzed in one's ears and down one's neck—one long buzz, buzz, buzz, bite and sting from dawn till dark.

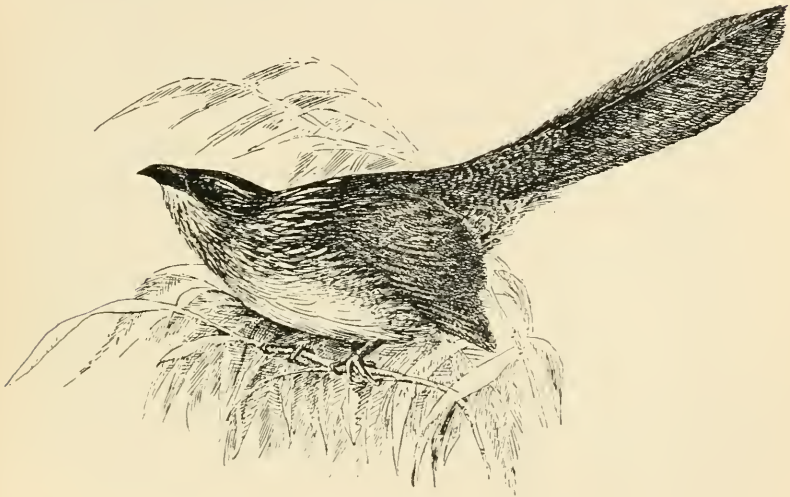
Thence another day's travel took us on to the Baringo Plain. In four marches we had descended from 8,000 ft. at the Ungusori camp to 3,500 ft. here; and



SOCIAL WEAVER-FINCH, with its 100-roomed nest.

the reduced elevation was marked by corresponding changes in the heat, the vegetation and the bird-life, all three here assuming a tropical character. We had descended from regions of bracken and bramble to palm and tree-fern. Birds there were that we had never seen before—birds strange of form, of plumage and of flight; all then utterly unknown to me. There were gorgeous tropical types, as sunbirds and barbets, bulbuls with glorious flute-like note, heard both by day and last thing at night, and weaver-finches that filled whole trees with nests—some containing eggs, others young, in

August. Bee-eaters, of vivid greens and red, flashed in the sunlight; but a yet more brilliant hue was displayed by an azure kingfisher. There were quaint hornbills, rollers and bubbling bush-cuckoos—the latter not heard since leaving Mombasa—eagle-owls, buzzards and hawks of many kinds. A conspicuous genus was that of doves, thousands in numbers, and in every size down to the tiny *Æna capensis*. Insects here became a burden—mosquitoes in particular. At our last camp,



COUCAL, OR BUSH-CUCKOO.  
Known as "Water-bottle bird" at Mombasa.

by a pestilent swamp on the Molo, we were doubting whether death itself might not be welcome when a merciful squall blew up and dispersed them.

Another march across a torrid plain where great red ant-hills towered up in hundreds, tall and thin, looking at a distance like factory chimneys, and amidst which we discovered traces of the mysterious aard-vaark, brought us back to the Molo. There yet remained a mountain-spur to cross, and here troops of baboons, some looking as big as human beings, watched and barked from the crags above. (An "old-man" baboon, by the

way, when actually measured, taped 5 ft. 6½ ins. from nose to outstretched hind-feet—or 5 ft. 2 ins. to the tip



AARD-VARK

of his tail.<sup>1</sup>) A pair of Bateleur eagles soared overhead,

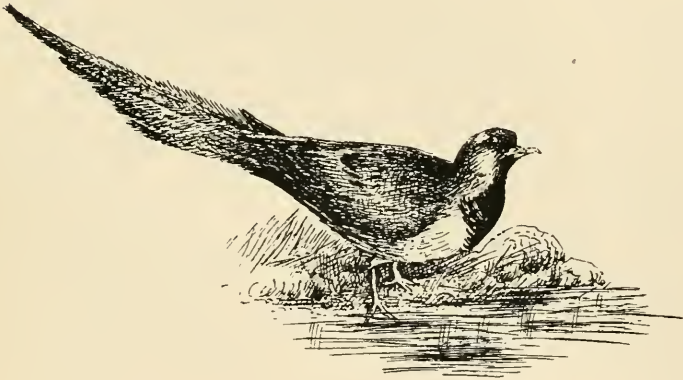
<sup>1</sup> Since writing the above, I find that the baboons of British East Africa are of different species from the common dog-faced Chacma baboon (*Papio chacma*) of South Africa. This Equatorial form has received the title of *P. ibeanus*. The measurements above given were taken from a Chacma baboon.



and we observed in this gorge birds of the rock-sparrow kind (*Petronia*), as well as numberless guinea-fowl of a new species, with a tuft of curious horny bristles set around the gape. These were the Abyssinian helmeted guinea-fowl (*Numida ptilorhyncha*), which swarmed in the thorny scrub, some packs apparently running to fifty or a hundred and upwards.

Beyond that spur we at length descried the fort of Baringo—furthest outpost, in this direction, of British Empire.

At midday on August 17 we encamped on the little plain below the Boma, having spent nine days on the march from Nakuru. Here we presently received a most hospitable welcome from the District-Commissioner (and sole white inhabitant), Mr. Geoffrey Archer.



NAMAQUA DOVE (*Ena capensis*).  
A pigeon no bigger than a Wagtail.

## CHAPTER VI

### AFTER ELEPHANT AT BARINGO

Two bull-elephants having been reported in the neighbourhood, we rested a couple of days at Baringo awaiting further news ; but the native trackers sent out to locate the elephants having failed to do so, we resumed our march northwards. On the night of August 20 we were encamped beneath the conical mass of Njoro-Ilimalo (or Koodoo-Kop, as we called it, owing to the stony mountains around being frequented by these superb antelopes), when at 9 p.m. three "askaris," or native soldiers, came into camp with a letter from Mr. Archer at Baringo, saying that an Njemusi hunter had brought in news of a huge old solitary bull-elephant which had taken up his quarters near Njemps, on the further side of the lake. Archer added that, as he was then proceeding on duty to Njemps, he would be glad to accompany me thither, provided I returned to Baringo at once.<sup>1</sup>

This necessitated an entire recasting of plans, but arrangements were soon made, and an hour before daylight on the morrow, under a waning moon, I left my brother to continue his solitary journey northwards to the Mugitani River, while I set out on return for Baringo. Arriving there (four hours' march) in time for breakfast, Archer and I at once started for Njemps, re-crossing first the mountain-spur, and then the flat plains towards the Molo River. This river, we were told, was only waist-deep, so we proceeded to walk through, sending some natives in advance to shift

<sup>1</sup> See sketch-map at p. 75, *infra*.

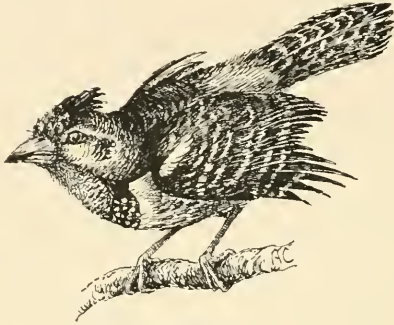


possible crocodiles. With some dismay, however, we found, on reaching what had appeared to be the opposite bank, that we had merely crossed a shallow by-stream, that the apparent bank was an island, and that the main river still ran, broad and deep, before us. There was nothing for it but to swim, and this we proceeded to do, again sending an advance-guard of blacks as a precautionary measure. Our rifles and ammunition came through all right; but, in spite of every care, our clothes (carried aloft in one hand) got hopelessly wet. Even on the equator one does not care to dress in soaking garments, and we therefore both marched into Njemps, three miles beyond, arrayed each in a wet shirt, a sun-helmet and a pair of boots. Here we found the local chiefs all assembled to meet H.M.'s representative, but since no one of them wore anything at all, our scanty attire created no scandal. Njemps is a strongly-stocked village, with many rows of grass-built huts inside its rampart of growing thorns and surrounding moat, and we encamped beneath the historic sycamores where, less than twenty years previous, Joseph Thomson, the first explorer of Masailand, had rested after his adventurous journey.

Here, again, the resonant flute-like song of the bulbul struck me as certainly the most effective bird-melody I ever heard. Specially noticeable was it just before sundown.

That afternoon, while Archer held "shauri" with the chiefs and collected revenue, I went to look for the elephant under the guidance of the local hunters, and soon found his mighty spoor of the night before. This we followed for miles, in and out, always through comparatively open ground and loose forest, highly favourable for our attack had the elephant been there, but he was not. It became evident that, although he might come hither every night to feed, he had some other stronghold to which he retired by day. We saw many waterbuck in these forests, though no really good heads, and a superb pair of white-headed fish-eagles (*Haliaëtus vocifer*) kept screaming and circling overhead.

Both the woods of Njemps and the marshes of the Molo that adjoined them swarmed with strange birds and unknown water-fowl. Gladly would I have spent more time in investigating these, but the major quest forbade. There were squawking bronze-green parrots—I took these to be parrots—an elusive cuckoo with ruddy breast that betrayed his genus by a muffled note, but avoided all save a fugitive glance. There were wood-peckers great and small—some no bigger than creepers ;



BARBET.

Colours gold, lemon and crimson, black and white.

barbets—thick-set, “dumpy” birds, in coloration akin to the last, though so different in habit ; bush-shrikes and babblers ; tiny warbler-like “white-eyes” (*Zosterops*), cousins of the sun-birds ; colies in little parties, and glossy starlings (*Lamprocolius*), the latter nesting in hollow trees as starlings do at home. In the marshes we noticed various herons and egrets, spur-wing plovers, common and other sandpipers, kingfishers azure and pied, rails and chestnut-red jacanas.

Next morning our scouts were away before dawn, but I was glad to be told that an early start was not necessary, since, having tramped over thirty miles the previous day, I wanted an “easy.” At ten o’clock a little wizened savage (the same who had brought the first news to Baringo) came in and reported he had actually seen the elephant at dawn, that he was an

enormous old tusker with heavy ivory, and that he had marked him into his resting-place for the day. Enthusiasm rose to fever pitch, and in five minutes we were off, Archer, having now completed his "shauris" (palaver) with the Njemusi chiefs, being able to accompany me. I was glad of this, for I was totally unequipped as regards weapons for such heavy and dangerous game, my most powerful rifle being a double '303. That the '303 is quite capable of killing the African elephant I am well aware ; Mr. F. C. Selous has



A MOUSE-GREY COLLY (*Colius*) AT NJEMPS.

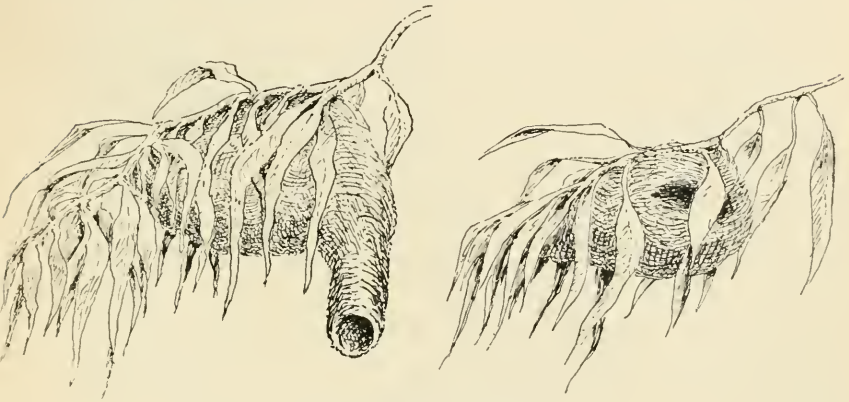
proved that, and for many years my late friend Arthur Neumann "used no other." But these are exceptionally practised hunters, of lifelong experience, and in choosing this small bore they relied also upon choosing their shots. It is a very different matter for an amateur for the first (and perhaps the only) time in his life to withstand the onset of an enraged elephant with so tiny a tool. I speak from knowledge, for I did it, and owe it merely (under Providence) to a flaw in a fickle, shifty wind that I am here to write the experience. Archer, however, had a single '400, a far more powerful weapon.

After proceeding some miles in a northerly direction, I began to perceive a change in the character of the country, forest and scrub giving place to "elephant-grass." Grass? Well, when stuff grows to a height of ten or twelve feet in masses so solid and strong that one cannot force a way through it, such plants should have another name than that of the humble greenery of a lawn. For a time I did not realise the full import of the change, but imagined that these giant clumps through which we were seeking a path were merely a casual local phenomenon, and that we should presently get past them. I soon was undeceived. This was "elephant-grass"; it extended for untold leagues, encircling the southern shores of Lake Baringo, and it was right in the midst of such a fastness that our friend the elephant had selected his stronghold. This grass-forest, full ten feet in height, with tasselled flowering tops towering above that, was absolutely impenetrable to human-kind, save only by following the old tracks of elephant or buffalo, and these in places were almost obliterated. One's progress, moreover, was constantly intercepted by broken-down thorn-trees. How they got there I could not surmise, but one had to climb over or squeeze under them, and not a yard could one see in any direction, save only a narrow crevice of sky above, with the broiling sun right overhead. Naturally the naked, agile savages got through this awful stuff far quicker than we could follow; yet it was absolutely necessary to keep in touch with them—or be lost.

At length the elephant was reported to be within sight, and by climbing a dead tree (infested by biting ants) I indistinctly descried portions of a vast grey bulk beneath some flat-topped thorns, distant 400 yards. Even that last short space gave trouble, for in the depths of that grass-forest we suddenly came on the river Tigerish, a deep, muddy stream, with perpendicular banks like a canal. This, though barely ten yards broad, we had to swim. In the overhanging bushes colonies of weaver-finches had nests, some

of which contained eggs resembling those of our sparrow, but speckled with a violet tinge; in others the young were hatched.

The next view of our elephant was from a thorn-tree at seventy yards. He stood quiescent, his enormous ears flapping to keep off the flies. Omitting details of detours necessitated or suggested by varying airs, at last I found myself watching this giant beast (from a tree) within thirty yards. Only the ridge of his back and huge ears were visible above the tall grass, all in deep shade, and I was debating within myself what was



WEAVER-FINCHES' NESTS.

the right course to pursue, enjoying the novel sight and trying to recollect all that the great elephant-hunters had advised. Already Areher, very rightly, had raised a question of the wisdom of "taking on" a solitary old bull under such conditions; but I only reflected on the forty miles we had come, the rivers swum, the game in view, and had not realised the full import of his remark nor the danger of this venture. The perception was not long delayed. A distinct and continued puff of wind on the back of my neck brought it home. One moment later that ere-whiles somnolent elephant was all alert. Up in air full twenty feet towered the great trunk, its point deflected hither and thither to pick up those grains of scent in the



traitor breeze. The next moment he was gone as by magic, vanishing from sight as silently as a rabbit. I feared he had gone for ever, but instinctively climbed down a branch or two, remaining in a position whence I could still see over the grass, yet could jump to the ground at once.

What really passed through the elephant's mind during the succeeding moments I would dearly like to know. If at first (as certainly seemed to me) he had, for a second, resorted to precipitate flight, that plan was almost instantly rejected, for immediately thereafter the crashing of the jungle told us he was coming, and then the great square forehead appeared, towering above the jungle, as he rushed directly upon us. I had jumped down from the tree; Archer was five yards to my left, with the elephant almost straight above him, when the charge stopped. We presumed the great beast had lost the wind. What now confronted us, some ten yards away, resembled the hoary grey tower of a village church. Under a midday, equatorial sun (almost vertical) there is no shade to define angles and thus indicate the vital spots, nor was there any time to consider. I placed my tiny .303 bullet on the temple as near as I could judge at the point given in the "rules," *i. e.* "half-way between eye and orifice of ear" (though I could neither see eye nor orifice, and the ear was as big as a barn-door). Archer, being directly in front, tried the forehead shot, aiming at base of trunk. These stunning blows at least turned him off us, for the elephant swerved to the left and disappeared. In a way, this was a relief, but it was also disappointing.

Hardly, however, had I got the empty cartridge replaced than the beast was on us again. This time he crashed across us from left to right; luckily he had (very slightly) misjudged his point, and thus passed us a few paces in front of our actual positions. We each put our bullets into the side of his head, almost at the muzzle of our rifles, Archer his single .400 ball, and I my two .303's, followed up by two "solids" from the

THE  
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NEARLY CAUGHT.

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ANBONLAD

·450 (an old black-powder rifle) before losing sight. I had thus placed one ball in the left, four in the right side of his head, Archer one in the latter part and one in the forehead—seven in all. No effect whatever was produced, so far as we saw. But our men, who now climbed into trees, at once reported that the beast was going very sick, and, a minute later, that he had stopped altogether. This we soon verified for ourselves, seeing him at a standstill among the long grass some 300 yards distant.

What should we do now? Never again, after this experience, would I follow him up in that fearful grass, where he has one as in a trap, for a man cannot move a yard to right or left, whereas an elephant goes through it as if walking in a meadow. We decided on a policy of "masterly inactivity," leaving the wounded elephant to die quietly (as we hoped) where he stood, our scouts being posted in trees to watch him, while we proceeded to have our lunch.

Presently our elephant slowly moved into some very heavy thorn-jungle beyond. How he crossed the deep donga of the Tigerish River (which we had to swim a second time) we could not see. Here we had a bit of bad luck. Probably our trackers pressed on too fast; anyway the beast retreated on his heel-tracks, and we lost an hour before recovering the spoor behind us. He now left the grass-forest and entered a stretch of thick, low thorn-scrub, most laborious and painful to traverse. The day was far spent, and of intense heat and hard going I had had enough, and returned to camp at four o'clock. Archer followed on, first into the swampy ground adjoining Lake Baringo, thence wheeling to the left as the spoor turned due west, as if the wounded beast meant to seek refuge in the Kamasea Mountains, which closed the horizon some six miles away. In that case we knew he was lost to us. Next day, however, the tracks showed that he had not dared to face the mountains, but had held to the south some twenty miles down the valley, where he had entered a

huge morass, a league in diameter, choked with reeds and flags, and with water three to four feet deep—possibly far more—and swarming with leeches. To explore this Archer sent men back to the lake to carry canoes hither, twenty miles, and we offered a reward of two cows for the recovery of the ivory.

There ends, so far as our knowledge goes, the story of our elephant. It seemed certain that the sick beast would die wherever he took final refuge, and this conviction was confirmed by a letter sent me a few days later: "The latest news of your elephant is that he was seen, *very sick*, making for Magi-Moto or the swamp beyond. The natives are still on his spoor, so I trust you will have the satisfaction of receiving the ivory on your return here." Yet no monster tusks were ever sent in to the fort at Baringo. Whether the Njemusi really failed to find the beast, or whether they recovered him and said nothing, we could not be certain. But, sad to tell, these primitive savages are already beginning to understand differences in value, and to distinguish between a pair of tusks worth, perhaps, £80 to £100 sterling, and a couple of cows only worth as many rupees.

The sensation of failure, after the prolonged excitement, risk and labour was sickening enough; twice we had been within less than ten yards of one of the grandest beasts in all Africa, and had failed to secure him; yet we could not but feel thankful that we had come out of it unharmed. Both those terrible charges had been full of mischief and malice, and we had only escaped, in either case, through a mere lucky flaw or slant in the wind. My impression was that the danger is more real with elephant (and, in minor degree, with rhino) than with lion. For the big carnivora invariably give one the first chance, and that ought, in their case, with modern weapons and short range, to be decisive; whereas this elephant charged at once, with full intent to kill, before we had molested him in the smallest degree, beyond getting in his wind. Moreover,



though he had just received two cordite-driven bullets in his head, he instantly, within fifteen seconds, repeated his charge a second time, and after all, with some seven balls in his head, travelled upwards of twenty miles almost without stopping.

Subsequently Archer wrote me that, a fortnight later, during his absence on duty, an immense bull-elephant, carrying tusks of 90-lbs. apiece, had come down to the water at Magi-Moto and had died there! It was not, of course, proved that this was our elephant, though the probability amounted to no less than a moral certainty. Unluckily, owing to Archer's absence, the ivory disappeared, falling into the hands of some Swahili traders.

The foregoing serves incidentally to show how easy it is for an elephant—or for a herd of elephants, enormous as is their bulk—to exist unseen; as easy as for a rabbit at home, so dense and far-spreading is the tropical jungle! Another illustration of this fell within my own knowledge. Two Englishmen had gone snipe-shooting on a marsh bordered by comparatively narrow belts of heavy reed. For some hours they had been shooting away merrily, when from these reeds hard by there emerged a whole herd of elephants quietly moving off in search of a less noisy siesta.

A point that struck me during our sojourn at Njemps was the inveterate laziness of the native savages. Each morning, shortly after dawn, groups of them assembled at certain spots, each man bringing a "cracket," or low three-legged stool, whereon he squatted, his spear stuck in the ground within arm's-length; there they sat the livelong day, neither talking, working nor even, apparently, thinking—simply idling away the hours and the days. Those groups which squatted thus around our tents might perhaps be presumed to be in consultation with H.M.'s representative; but all over the village sat other groups similarly "employed." The Njemusi are stated to be a degenerate offshoot of the Masai—"degenerate" because they affect

agriculture, work with which the noble Masai never demeans himself. Here, outside the stockades, there *was* a patch of cultivation whereon I observed a few women and boys working in listless fashion. The outward and visible sign of "work" consisted in their having rude hoes and spades; but two-thirds of the labourers lay sleeping in the sun. Here amidst African wilds one does find in real life that race which Socialist tub-thumpers, with customary inexactitude, delight in denouncing at home as the "idle rich."

## CHAPTER VII

### BEYOND BARINGO

#### (I) AFTER ORYX AND ELAND

Now that Baringo is becoming a favourite resort of big-game hunters, it is interesting to recall that but a score of years ago the region was unknown. The first white explorer to reach its shores was Joseph Thomson, who, writing in 1885, thus described it: "The mysterious lake of Baringo, though long heard of, has been a delightful bone of contention between geographers at home, who have drawn it in various phases with the large and liberal hand characteristic of those who are guided by their inner consciousness and a theoretic eye. Sometimes it was comparable to the Nyanza in size; at other times it had no existence. Then it knocked around the map a bit, being now tacked on to Victoria Nyanza, anon separated therefrom, or only connected by a thin watery line. After all this shuttlecock work, Lake Baringo proves to be an isolated basin, sunnily smiling up at its great parents, the shaggy, overhanging ranges of Kamasea and Laikipia. In extreme length the lake is eighteen miles, and in breadth ten miles."<sup>1</sup>

Baringo has now acquired not only a fixed position in geography, but even a niche in history. A British station was first established on the Ribo Hills to the north of the lake; and this led to bloody fighting. Two-thirds of the native garrison, having been treacherously decoyed away, were surrounded and speared to a man by overwhelming swarms of the Jabtulail and Turkana

<sup>1</sup> *Through Masailand*, p. 533.

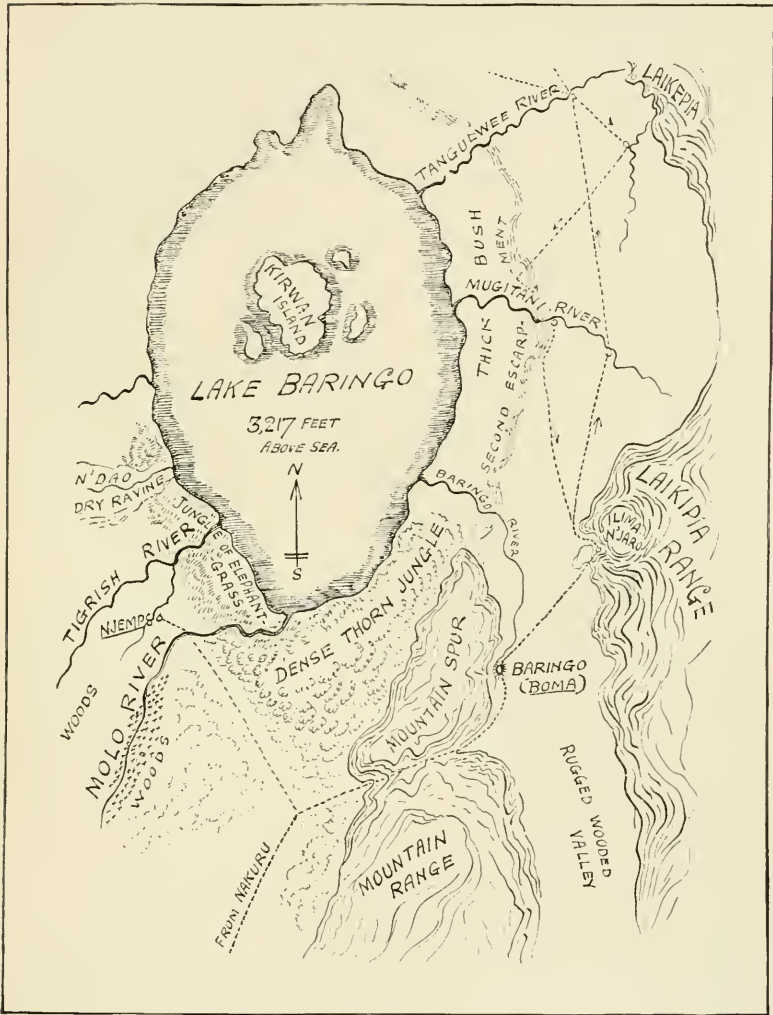
tribes. These, flushed with victory, dashed on the British post; but its solitary white occupant, Mr. Hyde Baker, aided by a handful of Nubian askaris, held the savages at bay for five days, till assistance arrived. Such incidents—merely the grinding of the mill of progress—are, I presume, printed in Blue-books, but seldom reach the average British reader.

Baringo now enjoys the reputation of being one of the most favoured regions in the British Protectorate in respect of its big game. There remains, nevertheless, room for disappointment. For so extensive, and as yet so little understood, are the migratory movements of the antelope-tribe, as also of giraffe, rhino and other game-animals, that a district which swarms with them one month may be found deserted the next. The materials at present available are too scanty either to determine the extent and dates of these migrations, or to correlate them with seasonal or other causes. It is one object of these chapters to contribute thereto such gleams of light as were furnished by our experiences at Baringo and elsewhere in East Africa.

Shortly before leaving England, I had received a letter from Major C. S. Cumberland, who was then at Baringo, that he was disappointed with that district. He wrote as follows:—"Baringo, March 29 [1904]. This is supposed to be a good game-country, but I have seen very little, and what there is, having been much hunted, is very wild. It will give you an idea of what this country is like this year to say that I have not halted in any one of my camps for more than one day. In my opinion the beasts have shifted owing to the drought."

Under the impression that if March were unfavourable, August might prove to be the reverse, we reached Baringo in the latter month. On arrival, Mr. Archer told us that five or six weeks earlier, at the end of the rains, game had been extremely abundant a few marches to the northward. Thus an entry in his diary on July 11 mentions seeing during the morning, while riding

southwards towards the Mugitani River, two herds of 50 and 80 oryx respectively, 11 giraffes and 2 elands;



SKETCH-MAP OF BARINGO.

while the same evening he rode within sight of some 300 elands, 100 oryx, 32 giraffes and 3 rhino, besides

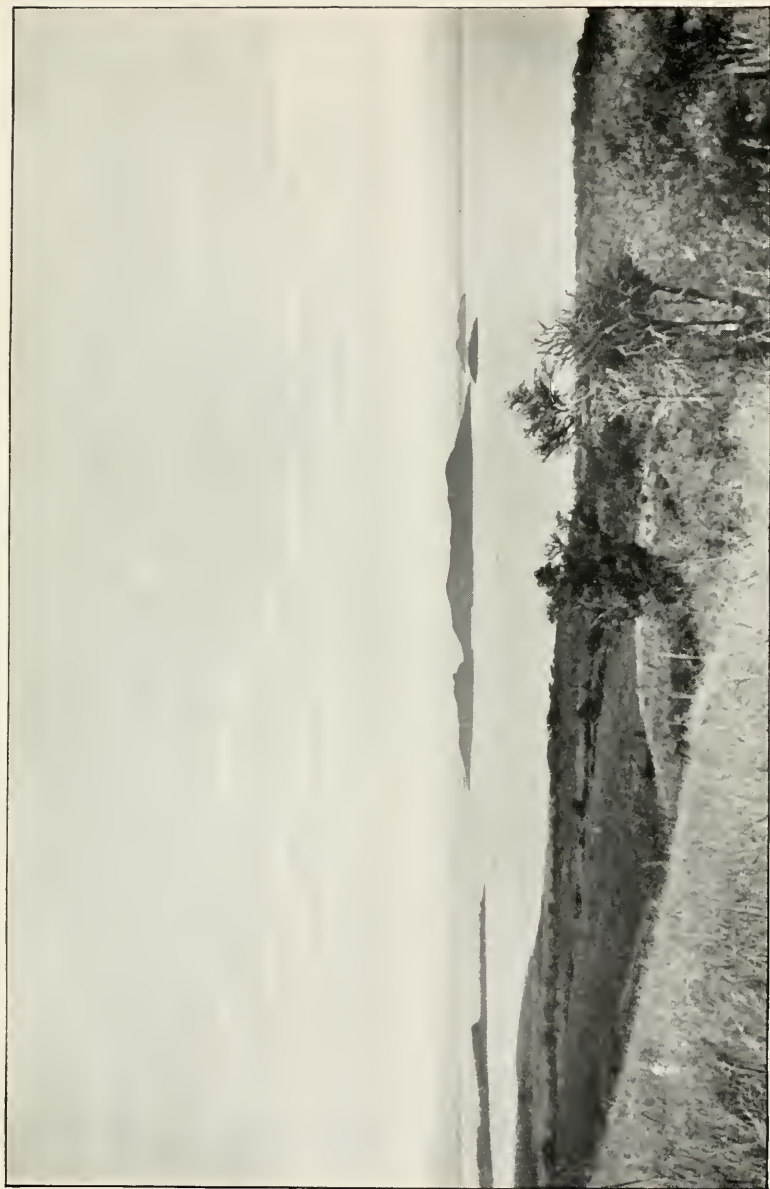


the ordinary game. Our own experiences, five weeks later, were as follows.

To begin with, I fell in with one of those unpleasant adventures that are incidental to African travel. As related in the last chapter, I had left my brother to continue his march northwards towards the Mugitani River while I made a back-cast of thirty miles to Njemps after elephant. Returning thence, on the evening of the fourth day I had reached the neighbourhood of the spot where, by arrangement, I expected to find W—— encamped, when one of those violent thunderstorms characteristic of the equator suddenly burst. Being unable, in elemental cataclysm, amidst roaring winds, thunder and hissing rain, either to find the river or to get response to our signal-shots, I ordered camp to be pitched exactly where I stood. Then a new difficulty arose. The heavily-laden safari, struggling against the storm, had got separated and half lost among the bush, the confusion being accentuated by running into a herd of half-wild Suk cattle, the longest-horned and most truculent beasts I ever saw. One by one, or in scattered groups, the safari straggled in, but, of course, the "boy" with the tent-poles was last to arrive. Thus it was two hours after dark ere I got shelter under canvas, and turned in supperless—bar a tin of sardines and a pint of "emergency" champagne!

The storm moderating at midnight, we got in touch with my brother's camp, which proved to be little more than an hour's march away; and in the morning, to our mutual relief, W—— walked across in time for breakfast. The Mugitani at this point, as we discovered by daylight, is little more than a series of mud-holes connected by subterranean channels. No wonder we had failed to find it in the darkness and stress of the night before.

My brother reported having seen a herd of eland and some oryx, but the latter were scarce and very wild. The only game he had killed were impala, Grant's gazelle (the local race, *G. g. brighti*), a kori bustard, and a zebra for meat. But a notable occurrence had



LAKE BARINGO FROM NORTH-EAST.



befallen. He had come across a gigantic pig which dwarfed the big wart-hogs (animals we saw daily) into comparative insignificance. We had neither of us at that time heard of the existence of the giant forest-hog (*Hylochærus*) recently discovered in these regions, and described, from some fragments of skin and bone, in the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society*, 1904,



KORI BUSTARD.

Male: weight 25lbs., span 8 ft., has head like a bittern.

p. 193, though I now remembered having hastily glanced through these a night or two before sailing. Whether the animal seen here was *Hylochærus*, or otherwise, remains unproven; but the following is my brother's narrative—

“It was on the Mugitani River that I had my first sight of elands. Leaving camp at daybreak, we had traversed the scattered forest that covers the bush-tangled, boulder-strewn hills above that river, and come upon a level plain, a mile across, stretching to the foothills of Laikipia beyond. Upon this plain was a herd of

elande about fifty strong, mostly females and young beasts, but including a single large bull whose brisket appeared to sweep the ground. They had not noticed us, and their onward direction indicated that they would feed past quite near. What slight wind there was blew in our favour, so we lay down in the deep grass and waited. Presently the whole herd filed past from left to right within easy shot. The big bull was, as usual, last of all, and came on very slowly, often stopping. Whether some breath of suspicion were aroused or not, it is impossible to say; but it certainly did happen that before the great bull had arrived opposite our position, first one small beast, then another, quietly dropped astern of the herd and so surrounded his majesty that there remained absolutely no point of his person on which we could get a sight. His massive stubby horns and the line of his back were the only indications of his being there at all. We could do nothing to avert a catastrophe, so lay still, and the elands passed out of the picture in the same slow, dignified order in which they had appeared. They simply faded away within the fastnesses of the Laikipia, and our efforts all that day failed to bring us again within touch of them.

“Next morning, skirting this plain towards the north, we first spotted a bull giraffe, very black, but as he was travelling faster than we could follow, we took no further interest in him. We then entered a glade which traversed the forest, and were approaching its outlet, when my eye caught something moving in the open beyond. Immediately thereafter the glade was occupied by the form of a pig, which for a moment of time stood gazing towards us—long enough for me to see that this was something quite out of the common in the pig line. Reddish-brown as to colour, with head shaped like that of a bush-pig, its dimensions were what arrested attention. Whether by some optical delusion or not I could not say, but this pig certainly appeared to me to stand well-nigh as big as a zebra, say near four feet at the shoulder. It was gone in a moment. We rushed forward to get



another view; but though one other fairly big one and three or four small bright-red pigs dashed across the glade, we never again set eyes on the first monster.

“At that time I had heard nothing of *Hylchoærus*, the unknown species that is said to inhabit the forests of Mau and Laikipia, the first intimation of the existence of such a creature only reaching me when my brother rejoined camp a few days later. The natives assert that these huge pigs are not seen beyond the mountain forests. Possibly the prevailing lack of water—which proved our main difficulty in exploring this region—explained their being driven to lower ground in search thereof.”

The drawing of a forest-hog overleaf has been prepared by Mr. Caldwell from a female specimen recently received from the Mau Plateau at the British Museum. Features that strike one are the unusual size of the nasal disc; the splayed-out, warthog-like tusks; the open tear-duct; and the curious tufts of white hairs on the upper-lip. The body is covered with long black bristles, but the ears are not tufted as in the bush-pigs.

On the following morning I enjoyed my first sight of an oryx, a lone bull moving along the lower slopes; but though I followed him for hours, far into the stony hills, never got within half-a-mile. In case the fact may possess scientific interest, I should record meeting with a hedgehog during this stalk. I would not have noticed it among long grass had it not loudly resented my proximity. In size it resembled our British species, and its spines were of a uniform brown. Well I knew that my duty to zoology involved taking that beast along; but, in the midst of a laborious stalk, it was impossible to carry that spiky specimen. Cactus and barbed thorn are torment enough, without having a hedgehog in one's pocket. The bushy prairies hereabouts swarmed with a species of short-eared owl, very dark in colour, probably *Asio capensis*; from a patch

of heath-like scrub, a couple of acres in extent, I put up over twenty. Quails also abounded; walking along the



GIANT FOREST-HOG (*Hylocherus meinertzhageni*).  
A female from the Mau Plateau.

rushy glades, half-a-dozen would spring at every step. These were *Coturnix delegorgiui*, the harlequin quail, also the Kurrichaine button-quail. Francolins (*Franco-linus granti*) and guinea-fowl of the helmeted Abyssinian

species (*Numida ptilorhyncha*) were as numerous as grouse on a Northumbrian moor.

Our main objective here was to secure the oryx and the eland. The latter, it is true, may be found at less inaccessible points; but nowhere in East Africa can the stately, straight-horned *Oryx beisa* be found within 100 miles of the railway. Its main home is in Somaliland and Abyssinia, and rarely does it range southward of Baringo. We had done that long march expressly to secure a pair of oryx apiece—that being the limit allowed by law. Yet the total number of oryx on the Mugitani at this date (August) was certainly under a dozen. A single giraffe lingered there, while of elands I personally saw none.

We therefore held on to the Tangelwee, a day's march northwards. This river, which forms the boundary of the Sugota Game-reserve (in other words, all beyond it is "sanctuary"), has, for the equator, a fair-sized bed, yet was stone-dry. We were therefore compelled to fall back on another stream, a tiny trickling burn, hardly recognisable save by the croaking of frogs, that issues from the Laikipia Range, and was called, we understood, the Masai—a most unlikely name, as we were now in the Suk country, far beyond Masailand.<sup>1</sup> It, however, provided our prime necessary—water; and from its banks, though game was far from abundant, we enjoyed many memorable days. We were, at this point, the northernmost white men in the British Protectorate, excepting Arthur Neumann, who was still many marches to the northward—away in the unknown by Lake Rudolph, too far distant for an afternoon call.

On reaching camp that evening, our men told us that while on the march they had seen a lion in the act of stalking some zebras feeding near the edge of the bush.

<sup>1</sup> For the beautiful photos in the Suk and Turkana countries here reproduced, my readers and I are indebted to Mr. G. F. Archer, who, as District-Commissioner, controls those wild regions beyond Baringo.

We encamped under a grove of huge umbrella-topped acacias that, at a little distance, remind one of Scotch firs at home.



GIRAFFE BULL AT BARINGO.

The country around our camp was thin forest of thorn and juniper, opening out into low loose mimosa-scrub, easy to traverse; and beyond this, towards the lake, stretched leagues of level grassy plain. It was upon this last that we now got really in touch with *Oryx*



*beisa*. There were not many—only nine or ten; and on the open prairie the task of approach appeared well-nigh hopeless.

For days our best efforts failed. Then (on August 27) I had the luck to find a pair, bull and cow, well within the fringe of mimosa-scrub aforesaid. After a stalk of about average difficulty I fired at the bull, but missed. This shot was taken through the horizontal branches of a thin thorn-bush, and as it was not much



“BEYOND THE LOW ALOES” (ORYX).

over 100 yards, the ball had perhaps been deflected. Not having seen us, the oryx, after one long burst, gradually settled down, and an hour later I came up with them again. They now stood on a perfectly open flat of hard, bare, sun-baked mud. Islanded in the midst of this was one patch of spiky aloes, twenty yards wide and three feet high. Getting this in line, I essayed that terrible crawl, 200 yards of cruel going, over brazen clay studded with flints and dwarf cacti, as bad as broken bottles. Yet the stalk succeeded. I have always attributed that success to a remarkable instance of mistaken animal-instinct. Far out on the flat were grazing



(presumably on flints) a group of Grant's gazelles (*Gazella granti brighti*—to give them their correct title). These, perceiving us, and perhaps mistaking our khaki-clad forms, prone on the earth, for crouching lions, advanced to mob their deadly enemy as small birds mob a hawk. Their short, petulant "wuff, wuff," attracted my attention, and, looking round through eyes near blinded with perspiration, I saw a score of these graceful antelopes within fifty yards, angrily barking and stamping their slender feet. This demonstration was being carried out in full view of our oryx, and I have no doubt monopolised their rapt attention during the fateful minutes while we gained the shelter of the aloes.

Thence, aiming between intervals of the spiky aloe tops, I fired the shot that gave me my first oryx. It was the female that fell, with a bullet high on the shoulder. The bull bounced off, but shortly pulled up, awaiting his consort. The distance was still under 200 yards, and I might at once have secured my pair without further trouble, but for the freak of my gun-bearer, Elmi Hassan. He, being a Somali and good Mohammedan, must needs get his knife into any animal before it was actually dead. Consequently, with all eyes on "meat" and the still struggling cow, but none for the grand bull standing beyond, he was already racing in, thus ruining my chance of a second shot. It was not the first time he had offended thus, but I put the matter in such clear terms that it was the last. This oryx (female) carried horns of 31 ins. in length, span 11 ins. between tips.

As the bull continued to hover about on the horizon, I followed on; but after two hours' pursuit he suddenly changed his mind and went off at speed, disappearing in the distance. During all this time the herd of gazelles had kept in close attendance on the larger animal, and as they now remained alone I directed my attention to them. This was, perhaps, rather unhandsome conduct, seeing the assistance they had rendered me in securing

my oryx; but the herd contained several handsome heads, and, moreover, I was then under a totally false impression that all gazelles north of Baringo were *G. petersi*—a new species to me—and not *G. granti* at all. I had been so assured, and, under that belief, proceeded to pick out, one after another, the four finest heads in the herd. These gazelles apparently realised no danger in the report of a rifle, for they merely continued their stately walk, their splendid horns nodding in unison with each step, while by creeping in the long grass parallel with their file I secured the four best bucks within a space of 200 yards. These four heads taped  $23\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $21\frac{3}{4}$ , 20 and 20 ins. respectively, span of the biggest  $10\frac{3}{4}$  ins., and are as good as any to be seen in the Baringo country.

#### NOTE ON GRANT'S GAZELLE

Grant's gazelle, it is now recognised, is divisible into several distinct local races, varying both in the form of horn and also in distribution of colour, particularly on the rump-patch and in the depth or absence of dark lateral bands. The typical form, *Gazella granti typica*, as secured by us on the Athi Plains, at Elmenteita and elsewhere, carried horns up to 25 ins. in length, with an extreme span between tips of 16 ins. Such are average specimens. Further south, on the Serengeti and Rhombo Plains towards Kilimanjaro, much larger examples are recorded, measuring 28 to 30 ins., and even more. These are all typical *G. granti*.

On the western boundary of German East Africa, a race exists which (while the horns do not reach 25 ins. in length) displays quite an extravagant divergence, the span between tips spreading out to 27 and 28 ins.—a breadth which obviously alters the whole type and appearance of the head, as shown in the annexed plate (p. 87). This latter race has been entitled *G. g. robertsi*.

The Baringo gazelles above mentioned are *G. g. brighti*; while on the Laikipia Plateau to the eastward yet another form is recognised, distinguishable from the typical race not only by its smaller size and shorter, narrower horns, but by a deeper body-colour and more conspicuous lateral bands. These Laikipia gazelles have been separated as *G. g. notata*. All those we shot, of either race, possessed the curious tuft of bushy hair below the fore-knees.

Peters' gazelle (*G. petersi*) is quite a different animal, much smaller (intermediate in size between Grant's and Thomson's gazelles), and is not met with inland, being confined to the coast

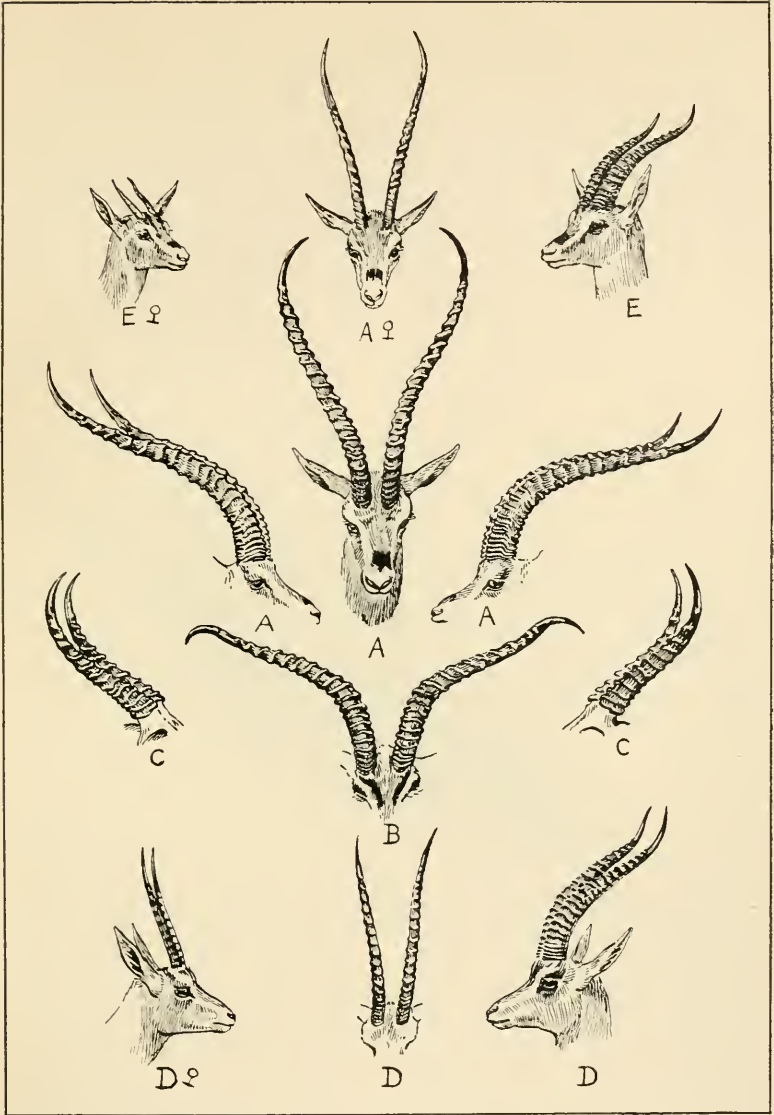
region. This species can always be distinguished by the fact that the fawn colour of the back continues down to the tail, and is not interrupted by the white of the rump-patch, as is the case in all forms of Grant's gazelle.

The horns of Peters' gazelle average from 20 to 22 ins. in length, and are narrow, almost parallel, the usual span being only 6 to 9 ins. between tips, as shown opposite.

The growth of the horns in immature examples of *G. g. brighti* so closely resembles in form the horns of adult *G. petersi* (as will be seen in the drawing on p. 87), that it is hardly surprising if we were mistaken in identifying these species at Baringo.

Next morning three giraffes were visible from the look-out koppie near our camp, but these great animals possessed no attraction for us, and as a single bull oryx was feeding with two zebras in another direction, I made for these. Oryx, however, proved intensely watchful and wild, and defied every effort both of my brother and myself on that and many another day.

August 30 proved my red-letter day. I began with a fairly good impala buck ( $24\frac{1}{2}$  ins.) close to camp, and then, after expending a lot of wasted energy in stalking a zebra that both Elmi and I, in the early light, had mistaken for an eland, we espied a lone oryx bull afar on the open prairie. Beyond him was a second. Stalking, strictly speaking, was impossible; we merely crouched forward, stooping low, and with Elmi's arm around my shoulder. While thus progressing, the two bulls, having closed in, began to fight. I heard their horns crash together repeatedly, but had not much opportunity, while racing ahead, to observe closely their mode of attack. They certainly did not lower their heads to the ground, as they are reported to do in receiving the charge of a lion (and as represented at South Kensington). One such blow, well driven home, must mean death. They rather sparred with their rapier-like horns, each seeking to gain the other's flank. While the oryx were thus engrossed I got in, and at 400 yards (estimated) fired both barrels, each aimed with the utmost care, yet without the slightest effect or any apparent notice being taken. The beasts continued



HORNS OF GAZELLES.

- A, A, A.—Grant's Gazelle—Three males, typical race.  
 A. ♀.—         "         Female  
 B.—         "         Male of variety *G. g. robertsi*.  
 C, C.—         "         Two young males, Baringo race.  
 D, D, D ♀.—Peters' Gazelle—Two males and a female.  
 E, E ♀.—Thomson's Gazelle—Male and female.

fighting. Presently the bigger bull got an advantage, and the other fled. The fighting and the pursuit together had taken us some miles from our original position; we were now close under the foothills of Laikipia. Here at last the champion halted, the vanquished half-a-mile beyond, we double that distance astern. The victor had pulled up just beyond a little



IMPALA.

“Hardly had we left camp in the dawn than a lovely apparition showed up on the sky-line ahead.” (Got him in the neck: horns  $24\frac{1}{2}$  ins.)

string of gazelles that were feeding across the plain. I felt that if only those gazelles would stand I would get my shot. They did stand, and, firing over their heads at 300 yards, I realised the fierce joy of seeing that noble oryx bull drop stone-dead on the plain. The ball had struck the orifice of the ear, entering the brain—not a shot to boast of, as the shoulder had been my mark; yet withal no more magnificent trophy had ever fallen to my lot, nor a keener ambition been satisfied.



Of the many splendid forms that Nature has designed for African antelopes, none surpass that of the oryx. Strength and grace combine in every line. A massive chest and upright neck, deep, yet tapering to the throat, are completed by a beautifully-proportioned barrel and strong though slightly sloping quarters. It is in this latter respect that the hartebeest group fall away, the exaggerated slope giving them—one is loth to apply a disparaging epithet to such fine game—almost an un-

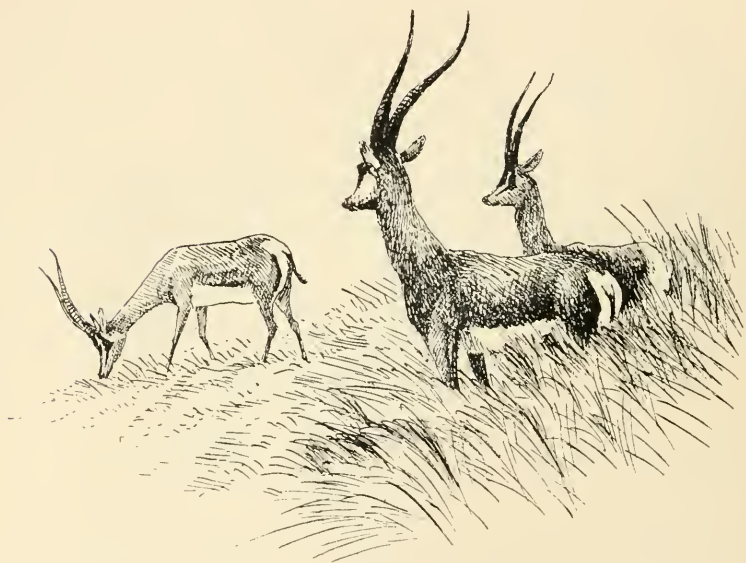


ORYX.

gainly appearance. Of the former type none but the superb sable really compares on equal terms with the oryx, and the roan comes second to this pair. The waterbuck, it is true, idealises massive elegance, but his type is different. His are rather the four-square lines of a red deer on a grander scale.

My prize carried horns of  $31\frac{1}{4}$  ins., with a basal circumference of just under 7 ins. His hide was scarred with wounds from a score of fights, and from the skin of his neck, which was near 2 ins. thick (thus differing from that of the cow, which was quite thin-skinned), I cut an imbedded bullet of some previous hunter. The weight of this oryx bull we estimated at 450 lbs., the female about 400 lbs. Returning towards camp—and

a three-hours' tramp in the midday heat possessed no terrors that morning—a nightjar rose at my feet from its two eggs, lying on bare ground. This was the small African species (I believe *Caprimulgus donaldsoni*) whose loud “hoo, hoo,” awakens the echoes throughout the livelong night.



CHAPTER VIII  
BEYOND BARINGO  
(II) TWO RHINOS

THAT same afternoon when I had secured my oryx bull, after the usual midday rest in camp we went out separately in search of *Gazella petersi*, being still under the false impression that that species was the gazelle of Baringo. While I was busy "glassing" a small herd, Elmi suddenly turned on me, and I knew by the fire in his eye what was coming. "I see rhino," he said. The huge beast was standing about 400 yards away in a grassy glade—a sort of broad grass street bordered on either side by a line of low thorn-bush. I was unprepared, having only five "solid" cartridges with me; but, as it was too late to send back to camp for more, I decided to take on the rhino at once. On reaching the grass street the rhino had disappeared. I therefore proceeded along the windward side of the open, keeping close under the lee of the low thorns, amidst which I expected to find him. It was, nevertheless, a bit of a shock when I found we had walked within twenty yards before seeing him. He was standing facing us, up a sort of side street, or narrow opening in the scrub. Being almost under the rhino's nose, I dropped in the grass, Elmi behind me. The latter, as we lay still, presently remarked (and the words were not reassuring), "Shoot, he's coming!" The expression for a moment conveyed the idea of a charge; but I could see for myself that there was no such danger, as the beast clearly had not seen us, although so near. What Elmi meant was that the rhino was moving our way.

Though not blind, yet rhino use their eyesight but little. All I could distinguish among grass and thorn was an amorphous mass, of a red-brown colour (from wallowing in red mud), with a spiky horn like a smoke-stack at the hither end. No possible shot was presented, and the beast was slowly approaching, feeding on mimosa boughs. We therefore crept away through the grass, and, gaining the cover of the thorns, soon reached the broadside position. Even then, though within less than twenty yards, and full broadside on, I was reluctant to fire, for in the bad light (the prelude to a coming thunderstorm) and the shade of the bush, I could not quite distinguish the vital spots. Presently the rhino raised his huge head to pull down a mimosa branch (akin to eating a mouthful of barbed wire), and the whole outline was fully exposed. I placed a .303 solid at the point selected—one foot behind the ear and slightly below—while Elmi, by my direction, put another, from the carbine .303, between eye and ear. The rhino merely moved two steps forward, turned deliberately round and stood still, with his other broadside exposed. We repeated our salute as before, Elmi this time taking the neck shot, while I tried a point below the ear and slightly forward thereof. The effect this time was unmistakable. The great beast dropped straight to earth, disappearing from view. For some seconds I thought the deed was done, and greatly rejoiced thereat. The joy was premature, for once more that vast red-brown bulk rose above the thorns, and slowly, deliberately walked away.

Only a single cartridge now remained. I followed the rhino, walking some thirty yards behind him, awaiting a chance. Presently he left the bush, and, with head carried low and a dead-sick gait, entered the open grass street. This time I decided to try the heart, presuming that a rhino carries such an appendage (which I now doubt), or, at any rate, the shoulder. The distance, ere I had perfected a thrice-refined aim, was near eighty yards, and I heard the bullet tell.



*Archer, Photo.*

**TURKANA.**

The wild nomad inhabitants of the region towards Lake Rudolph.



*Archer, Photo.*

**KERIO RIVER RUNNING TOWARDS LAKE RUDOLPH.**



1875  
No. 1000

The effect was remarkable. This hitherto apathetic beast, which had so far treated cordite with sluggish indifference, suddenly awoke to life and amazing activity. With a succession of hissing snorts—resounding like jets of steam driving through a safety-valve—he reared on end, spun round again and again, and finally, still shrieking and rearing, bolted back to the covert he had just quitted. He left a track like a runaway wagon, which we followed; but it was now dusk and raining in torrents, with lightning and thunder crackling straight overhead. Nothing more could be done that night. It was a rough job to regain camp.

At break of day I took up the spoor with fifteen boys, following it for hours through thin scrub and thick. The latter seemed to me highly dangerous work, our radius of vision being limited to a few yards. On open ground the rain had obliterated all tracks, and I divided my force into three parties, two circling on the flanks, to cut the spoor ahead when we lost it ourselves; but noon arrived without our overhauling the stricken rhino. The midday heat was more than I could withstand, so I returned to camp, directing the trackers to hold the spoor till night. After sundown they too returned empty-handed. Not a sign of the beast had been seen, though we had followed on for eight or ten miles. Either I or the '303 had failed. After this double disappointment, first with elephant and now with rhino, I decided never again to take on these huge pachyderms with a small bore.

It was at this spot—that is, on the first plateau of Laikipia—that, a year before, a terrible accident had befallen an English sportsman, Mr. B. Eastwood of Nairobi, whom I afterwards had the pleasure of meeting, and who kindly allows me to reproduce his description of the event as follows—

“On Sunday, the 19th of October, I was under way before six, and made straight for the big hill (Njoro-Ilimalo), nine or ten miles away, where I had seen the koodoo tracks. I had gone some distance up the valley,

shooting a steinbuck on the way, when I saw two rhinos a mile away. The country was fairly open, and before I got up they had disappeared in some dry scrub. There was, just inside this scrub, what I took to be a low hillock, and which I purposed using for stalking. But to this my gun-bearer, Sulimani, objected most strongly. He said it was not a hillock, but rhinoceroses. We crouched behind a little bush and waited, but not for long. Hardly were we down before the group opened, and I saw there were seven rhinos in a cluster.<sup>1</sup> Two came rushing in my direction, and at forty yards I fired and dropped one, finding afterwards that the bullet had splintered its nose, and I now have the huge splinter of bone, 18 ins. long, with the horns mounted on it.

“Leaving Sulimani to skin the beast, I went, with one porter, after an oryx that I could see considerably more than a mile away, but could not get anywhere near it. I followed it nearly five miles, passing on the way another rhino, that I marked in case I lost the oryx.

“On the way back I passed an immense herd of eland, fully one hundred, and then returned to the rhino. It was 120 yards away, with its back towards me. I sat down in grass eighteen inches high and waited. After ten minutes the rhino turned round and walked slowly towards me, grazing. The man I had with me became frightened, and after creeping for some distance through the grass, jumped to his feet and ran. This aroused the beast, for it lifted its head and looked after the man, giving me the chance I wanted. I put a solid bullet in the centre of its chest, about twelve inches up; it took two or three short quick steps and went down heavily, head-first, its body slewing round as it fell. It made one futile effort to rise, but did not succeed in even lifting its head, and then lay motionless. I put in a second shot to make sure, but might as well have fired at a rock, as it did not move in any way. There seemed to

<sup>1</sup> As related in a subsequent chapter, the author on one occasion came across a “hillock” of six rhinos in a cluster.

be not the slightest breath of life left in it; so I walked up, wondering what its horns measured, and how I could get it skinned and reach camp before dark.

“All these conjectures were rudely knocked on the head. When less than twenty yards away the huge beast gave a roll and got on to its feet. My rifle was up at once, and I put a bullet into the shoulder; but before I could get in a second shot the brute was charging straight.

“I commenced to run at a right angle to its course, thinking the rhino would probably go on in a straight line, as they usually do; but the first step I took I tripped and fell, and before I could regain my feet it was on top of me.

“I was nearly on my feet when it struck me. It hit me first with its nose, dropped with both knees on me, then, drawing back for the blow, threw me clean over its back, the horn entering the back of my left thigh, and I saw the animal well underneath me as I was flying through the air. It threw me a second time, but I cannot recollect that throw clearly: and then came on a third time. I was lying on my right side when the great black snout was pushed against me. Then I found myself upon my feet—how, I do not know—and staggered off. As I went an inky darkness came upon me. After going perhaps forty or fifty yards, expecting every moment to be charged again, I felt that I might as well lie down and let the beast finish its work without further trouble; so I lay down.”<sup>1</sup>

The spot where the catastrophe occurred was fifteen miles from his camp, and that camp a twelve-hours' march beyond Baringo. The nearest doctor was distant 136 miles—at Fort Ternan. There, on the desert veld, a shattered wreck, with right arm smashed, ribs stove in and broken, and many minor injuries, lay Eastwood all alone, and exposed hour after hour to the fierce equatorial sun and with ghoulis vultures flapping close overhead. Not till late in the afternoon did his men

<sup>1</sup> *Globe Trotter*, March 1907.

find him, and it was near midnight ere they could carry him into camp. By indomitable pluck he reached Baringo, carried in a litter, on the second morning; but it was not till the eighth day after the accident that the doctor arrived and the necessary operations could be performed. Poor Eastwood lost his right arm, but otherwise bears no trace of his terrible experience.

Another rhino incident. Mr. Long-Innes, whom I met close by Baringo, had just had this curious adventure. While passing Lake Hannington on his way up, he suddenly saw the beast lying asleep beneath a dwarf mimosa, and only a few yards from the track. The rhino sprang to its feet in a blind charge. The Kikuyu gun-bearer with the rifle having promptly taken to his heels, Innes had no resource but to bolt the other way, but pitched his white Panama hat behind him as a blind. The rhino momentarily halted at this bait, but, seeing the flying Kikuyu beyond, transferred attention to him, and speedily overtaking him, "chucked" the luckless "boy" over his back, then continuing his course. Curiously, the Kikuyu was not seriously damaged. The blunt horn of the rhino had caught him under the chin—a blow that would surely have broken a white man's neck, but in the savage it merely produced "contusions"!



## CHAPTER IX

### BEYOND BARINGO

(III) ORYX, ELAND, IMPALA, JACKSON'S HARTEBEEST,  
DIKDIK, ETC.

HITHERTO we had not seen more than fifteen or twenty oryx in the whole district, but on the day after securing the second of my pair (the limit allowed by the game-laws) I fell in with a herd of no less than fifty of these stately antelopes. These presented a magnificent spectacle, their glancing horns resembling a forest of fixed bayonets as they moved in from the north-west in a long file, doubtless an arrival on migration. They were accompanied by zebras and gazelles, while several jackals hung on their flanks.

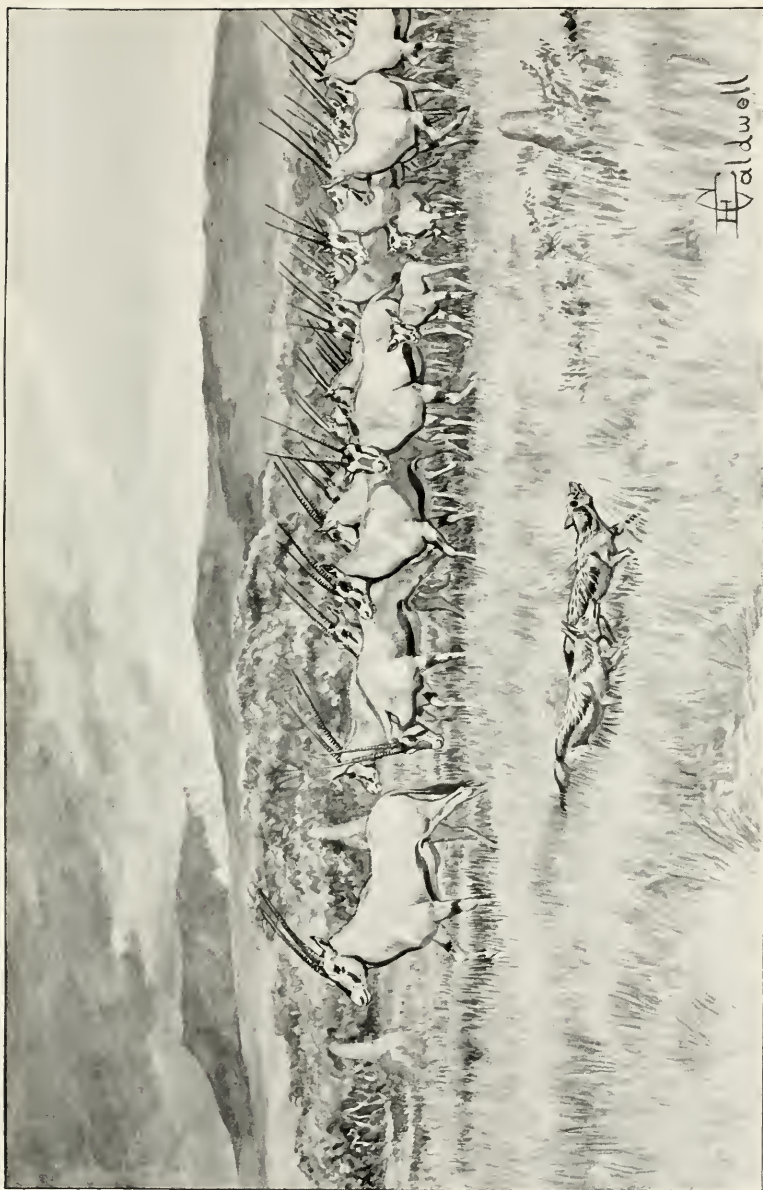
It still remained for my brother to secure his pair of oryx, and a day or two later he succeeded in that object, getting two bulls out of this newly-arrived herd, the best carrying an exceptionally fine head of  $34\frac{1}{4}$  ins., besides bringing in a young male oryx as large as a goat, which he and the men had captured in the grass. At daybreak, when setting out, he had also bagged a big spotted hyena close to camp. The native boys kept shouting, "Simba, simba" (lion, lion); so that after making a good shot, running, at over 100 yards, W—— was disappointed to find he had killed only a hyena.

While W—— was busy with his oryx, I devoted myself to impala, which here carry splendid heads; specimens of 28 ins. are not uncommon, but one I met with appeared to exceed that dimension. Of course it is always the biggest that escape, and that was the case

with my record impala.<sup>1</sup> Still, the incident possessed a moral which may be worth relating. I had "jumped" this animal in open forest, and crippled him so severely with a straightaway stern-shot that I walked up within twenty yards of where he stood disabled, with head down and hind-legs straddled apart. My gun-bearer kept urging, "Shoot, shoot," but I thought it unnecessary, till the buck staggered a few yards into some thicker scrub, when I fired carelessly with the single carbine and missed. Even then the sick beast stood gazing towards us within thirty yards. I covered his shoulder with the double .303, but that rifle was on "safety" (note, that the carbine has no safety), and before I could remedy that bungle, the impala, with a loud cough, disappeared over a ridge. I never saw him again, though I stuck to his spoor all that day and the next, and kept men watching the vultures till we left that camp. Such is the vitality of African antelopes. The moral is, never spare a cartridge while game remains on its legs. While busy puzzling out spoor that night, hearing the same "cough," or sneeze, I approached the spot and got another impala with fine, strong head, but he appeared a bagatelle by comparison. I have seen hundreds of impala, both in South and East Africa, but never a head like the one my folly threw away that day.

We had now secured one out of the two main objects of our trip to Baringo—a pair of oryx apiece. But in the other we had been disappointed. Not a single eland had I personally seen, for certain, in all the beautiful park-like plains of Baringo, where, only a few weeks before, these magnificent antelopes had abounded. This we knew from Mr. Archer, at Baringo Fort, and his assurance was amply corroborated by old spoor. But

<sup>1</sup> From experience, I deduce this result—that the apparent magnitude of a head seen in the field is disproportionately affected by the span of horns as distinguished from their length. Thus, for example, of two impala, each, say, 25 ins., the one with broad head of 20 ins. span will appear double the size of the other which only spans 12 ins. or less.



A TROOP OF ORYX, MIGRATING—BARINGO, AUGUST 31, 1904.

THE  
AMERICAN  
ASSOCIATION  
OF  
UNIVERSITIES  
AND  
COLLEGES

the elands were no longer there, nor did we see a single buffalo, while of giraffe only five or six laggards remained behind. We saw but two more rhinos, one of which, though quite unmolested, made a determined charge on my hunter, Elmi, who, being unprepared and only a few yards from the beast, had a narrow escape. The main bodies of all these animals had temporarily retired, probably from lack of water, and presumably northwards, beyond the Tangelwee River (now dry), into the sanctuary of the Sugota Reserve.

*August 26.*—From midday till dusk a storm of locusts, passing northwards, darkened the sky and covered our camp. Next day, never a locust in sight, but the huge marabous sat gape-full on the trees—actually unable to close their beaks!

I do not know if hartebeests are ever common at Baringo,<sup>1</sup> but this family of antelopes is so numerous and so characteristic of British East-African plains that their absence here was remarkable, the few we saw being all *Bubalis jacksoni*. Members of another group were, however, extremely abundant here, namely, the dikdiks, or grass-antelopes. These small animals, some species of which are no bigger than a hare, lie close in long grass or low bush, and bound away from underfoot in a series of leaps that defy a rifle-ball, even were it convenient to fire one. But on days when we went out expressly with a shot-gun, not a dikdik could we see. One afternoon, while lying half-asleep under a mimosa, resting during the midday heat, I was awakened by a curious whistle close by, and cautiously looking up, observed a small horned animal intently watching me, and secured it with No. 6 shot from the Paradox, which luckily lay within arm's length. This proved to be *Madoqua guentheri*, a thoroughbred little antelope, though its tiny annulated horns only measured  $2\frac{3}{8}$  ins. in length, and the best we have since shot barely exceeded  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ins. The nose is remarkably prolonged and prehensile, extending quite

<sup>1</sup> The Mugitani River practically marks the northern limit of Jackson's hartebeest in the Rift Valley.



an inch beyond the lower lip. I was fortunate in securing a female a day or two later. The male weighed 7 lbs. An even commoner species than this (though I had not an opportunity of shooting one) is of a slaty-grey colour with a white patch on the neck, and this I cannot identify. These were seen in rather thicker bush, and were sometimes remarkably tame.

The configuration of the Baringo Plains, from the summit of Laikipia down to the lake, is a series of giant steps, best illustrated in the following rough diagram—

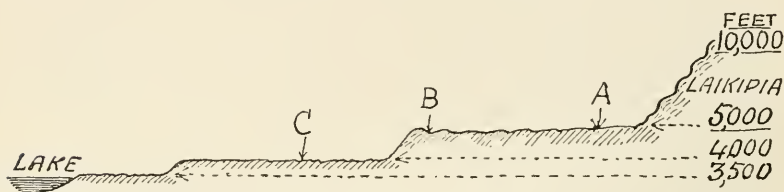


DIAGRAM SHOWING CONFIGURATION OF THE BARINGO PLAINS.

One morning when shifting camp from *A* to *B*, a low koppie on the horizon had been indicated by our Wando-robo guide as the site of the next camp. This landmark, however, as we discovered during the march, was not a koppie at all, but a mountain-peak of the Kamasea Range fifty miles away, beyond the lake. Meanwhile the misled safari at one point, my brother and self at two others, all separate, had descended the abrupt escarpment beyond *B*, and it was on this lower level, a region of far denser bush, that I noticed these unknown dik-diks at the point marked *C*, as well as some superb waterbuck. Having only two gun-bearers with me, and knowing that we were already lost and confronted with the risk of being once more "benighted" (being, besides, again overtaken by a thunderstorm and torrential rains), I did not care to burden ourselves with game. Thus a possible chance of securing a new species was lost; for before finally reaching camp, after hours of anxiety, we had to reascend the escarpment, and never again visited the lower level. Of course one's impression of an animal





merely seen in bush, however near, may be quite erroneous; still, I cannot identify this white-collared, slate-blue dikdik with any of the descriptions or figures given in the *Book of Antelopes*.<sup>1</sup> It is at least certain that two species are found on these Baringo Plains.

The Wandorobo guide just mentioned was rather interesting. He had been lent to us by Archer, and when he came to our camp was stark naked, possessing nothing beyond a spear and a wire anklet. We gave him a blanket; but he never entered a tent, preferring to coil himself up, dog-like, under some bush immediately behind our tents. He kept apart from the Swahili, and if they despised the wild savage, certainly the sentiment was mutual. He made his own fire, cooking scraps of meat and the bones he collected from the different messes, from which he made marrow-soup. But he was distinctly acquisitive. Beginning with an empty biscuit-tin, in which he stored rice and bits of biltong, he gradually accumulated property. On our return to Baringo he carried quite a big roll of "Amerikani" (cotton canvas) containing we knew not what, but clearly full of something. Here, in Equatorial Africa, one realises that "property" may truly be synonymous with robbery!

As a guide he proved a failure, partly owing to his dread of bushy ground, wherein he ever suspected rhino; but he displayed a marvellous instinct for leading us to water in most unlikely spots.

We were now in the Suk country, and occasionally able to obtain milk, etc., from these friendly savages in

<sup>1</sup> The following gives in tabular form the approximate distribution of East-African dikdiks, and may be useful to sportsmen shooting in that country—

SPECIES.	LOCALITY.
Günther's dikdik. <i>Madoqua guentheri</i>	. Baringo.
Unknown " " (?)	. "
Cavendish's " " <i>cavendishi</i>	. Elmenteita, Enderit, etc.
Hinde's " " <i>hindei</i>	. Simba, Makindu, etc.
Kirk's " <i>Neotragus kirki</i>	. Coast region only.

exchange for coloured beads and iron wire. Still, one is always in the main dependent on one's own stores, and the following entry in the diary shows the straits we had reached at this date: "Milk has given out, and coffee also; soups did so weeks ago. There is only one candle left, and one tin of biscuits—nothing else. We now live on venison and rice, drink raw tea, and go to bed in the dark."

Early in September we left the hospitable *boma* of Baringo, that outlying frontier-post of Empire where a single Britisher, by means of a wattle-and-daub house, a few mud huts, seventy native soldiers, and some coils of barbed wire, maintains control and moral supremacy over swarming savage tribes. Marching southward, on the third evening we encamped on the Molo River, beneath the broadest-spreading mimosa I ever saw. The spot, I believe, is called Ya-Nabanda. Here we intended to halt a couple of days to secure a few more specimens of the large Jackson's hartebeest. I had succeeded in shooting two bulls, carrying heads of 22 and 20½ ins. respectively, and on the second evening W—— brought in even a finer head of 22¼ ins., yet withal he was strangely dispirited and despondent.

On comparing experiences, it turned out that a curious coincidence had befallen. We had both that day at last fallen in with eland, animals we had already abandoned hope of seeing. In my own case it was a single eland in company with zebras and small hartebeests. Even at the distant view I saw at once by the square-built stern and heavily-tufted tail, swishing at the flies on its flanks, that this was a new animal to me. On a nearer approach I recognised it as an eland cow, carrying long but poor horns. I crept within 100 yards of the group, and thoroughly enjoyed the scene. But a cow eland was not available game, and I shot a water-buck bull instead.

Meanwhile, to the east of the river W—— had fallen in with a herd of no less than fifty elands, but only including one big heavy bull. This splendid beast he





SUK WARRIORS IN THE FORT AT BARINGO.



IN THE SUK COUNTRY.  
Donkey-transport cut off by river coming down in flood.

To your  
attention

had wounded, but had unluckily been unable to come up with it ere darkness set in. We therefore decided to remain at this camp till we had secured our one bull eland apiece, that being the limit allowed by law. A grievous disappointment awaited us next morning. We had both at this period been suffering from the severe work entailed by the constant crawling after oryx, hartebeest, etc., over the hard, flinty ground. Cuts and abrasions, skinned knees and scarified forearms are the normal condition of the white-skinned hunter in Africa, but to-day (September 8) my brother was totally disabled from walking, one knee being swollen to the size of a pumpkin. Accordingly, I had to start alone, W—— shouting after me in the darkness to get him a bull also, should a double chance occur. Nothing seemed less probable, since after tramping more than two months I had never, up to then, set eyes on a bull eland at all.

Ere the sun was well up I had reached some rocky hills we called Leopard's-Kop (owing to my having missed one of these animals here in our northward march a month previously), and which were not far from where my brother had seen the elands the night before. Here we were watching a concentration of vultures, in the hope that they might lead us to his wounded bull, when Elmi espied three elands afar. Presently the vultures drifted beyond view, and we then turned attention to the fresh game. The elands were feeding in open forest of a kind of dwarf oak, which still carried the tawny leaves of the previous summer, distant two miles, and dead to leeward. This necessitated a long detour—an hour's heavy grind ere we gained the weather-gauge. Then some easy stalking brought me within shot; but so thick and rank was the bush and grass, and so fatally did its sere hues and the hanging foliage tone with the elands' tawny pelts, that I failed to make them out before they moved. I now saw that the trio included one magnificent old bull, a massive beast of blue-grey hue. The exact character of

the other two I could not distinguish. A second stalk (in very much more open country) also failed, and this time the game, I feared, had seen something, for they went off at speed, and we utterly lost both sight and touch of them. Hours of hard work and constant spying elapsed before at length we once more descried our three friends—again far away to leeward. Another long detour followed; but luck this time favoured us. In the first place, the elands were now feeding in forest where broad grassy opens intervened amidst the timber; secondly, after completing our final approach, we found the three feeding towards us across one of the said opens. Moreover, in the long interval that had occurred they had forgotten their suspicions, and grazed towards us in absolute security. First came a big old cow with very long horns; then a grand bull in his prime; lastly, the glorious old patriarch aforesaid bringing up the rear. I was greatly struck by his iron-grey pelt and massive proportions, the heavy pendent dewlaps sweeping the herbage. The trio passed our front within 120 yards, but the shot I made was none too brilliant, though it could not have been more successful. Touching the spine behind the shoulder (a foot too far back), it dropped the big bull on the spot, yet left sufficient vitality to enable him to recover his fore-legs and remain standing so—as a dog sits on his haunches, and as shown in the plate opposite. The other two ran at the report of the rifle; but presently, looking back and seeing their leader still apparently on his legs, they stood awaiting him to rejoin. The distance was not much over 200 yards, giving me a good shot at the second bull. He also was struck too high, but fatally, and hardly moved 100 yards. Both these splendid animals, in fact, stood disabled close by, and within full view.

Sending Elmi to finish the second bull, I walked up to the first, which, unable to move, watched my advance with mild, reproachful eyes, tempering the savage joy of success. He was a veritable patriarch, his front adorned with a mat of dark curly hair, shading off into

PLATE 10  
CATTLE



Haldwell '07

ELANDS.





chestnut laterally, and set off by a white patch at either tear-duct. Though almost bare of hair, the huge blue-grey body still showed the yellow vertical stripes, though indistinctly. The horns were worn down with age, and compared badly with those of the younger bull, which tapered 26 ins. straight. The latter animal was of a bright fawn-colour, with yellow stripes. He lacked the matted forehead and pendent dewlap, but carried a heavy tuft of hair below the neck, which had been almost worn off in the older bull.

Estimated weights in the field are necessarily uncertain, but this younger bull eland appeared to my eye about equal in bulk and weight to a big Norwegian bull-elk. The latter animal I have actually ascertained to scale 1,260 lbs. clean. Should this comparison be correct, the patriarch, with his vastly bulkier frame, and carrying far more fat, may have represented hard by a ton dead-weight as he lay.

The stalking both of eland and Jackson's hartebeest had been true stalking, by which I mean that the game had not seen or suspected the presence of a hunter till receiving the bullet. The approach to oryx, Coke's and Neumann's hartebeest, wildebeest, Grant's gazelle, zebra and other denizens of perfectly open plains is hardly stalking in the strict sense. It is rather out-manceuvring; but our tongue is defective in distinctive terms in venery. Bush-stalking, as already mentioned, is yet another art.

After off-skinning the two eland bulls we were four hours' march from camp, and, curiously, on our way thither I saw four more elands. Ten days later I found these antelopes in some numbers near Lake Elmenteita, where there had been none two months before. Clearly at this date (September) elands were moving into both these districts. I should add that all I saw were comparatively young animals; never again, that year, did I see one of those heavy old patriarchs such as that whose head now adorns my walls.

Besides the game mentioned, we also met with the

following from this camp on the Molo River:—Waterbuck, duiker and steinbuck, a few of each ; ostriches numerous, as were also the big “paau” or kori bustard, while the thorn-jungle to the west of the river held bush-pig.



EAST-AFRICAN BUSH-PIGS.

Following are dimensions of a big bush-pig boar : Length, snout to tip of tail, 5 ft. 4 ins., of which the tail measured 13 ins. ; height at shoulder, 30 ins. ; weight as killed, 270 lbs. The East-African bush-pig can be distinguished from wart-hog half-a-mile away by their white “mane” of heavy pendent hair. Twice I saw

a hunting-dog, a single beast on each occasion. Grant's gazelle plentiful, but of Thomson's we met with only two or three. This is the limit of their northward range, which is practically bounded by the equator. None exist beyond Baringo.<sup>1</sup>

At this point we fell in with two natives, Wandorobo, hunting by means of a donkey. They had fitted the animal with a pair of wooden horns, and by crouching behind, guiding him with a cord to his nose, approached near enough, we were told, to kill hartebeests and even such large game as elands with their poisoned arrows. Their bows were primitive, and appeared very feeble. They used them horizontally, held along the line of the donkey's back.

A curious incident befell while shooting from this camp. I was stalking a little group of four Jackson's hartebeests. Previous to starting on the stalk my brother and I had noticed a single zebra standing fast asleep on a grassy decline beyond. My first shot broke the shoulder of the best bull, but before getting quite beyond range the other three pulled up to gaze, a good bull mounting an ant-heap. I tried the second barrel at him, distance some 300 to 350 yards, and distinctly heard the bullet tell. What was my surprise to see, on jumping to my feet, that that bullet had struck, not the hartebeest aimed at, but the unfortunate zebra 100 yards beyond, whose very existence I had forgotten, and which was actually out of my sight at the moment of firing. He must have been trotting away down the slope when the errant ball struck just by the root of his tail. The zebra was still struggling *in extremis* as we rushed by in pursuit of the lamed hartebeest, but it was hours before we recovered the latter, and on our return the zebra was dead. Our men, in consequence, refused to eat the meat, not having been bled, which would

<sup>1</sup> The correctness of this was subsequently confirmed by our experience on Lake Solai, further east and on the same line of latitude. We saw but one Thomson's gazelle during our sojourn on Solai, though they are plentiful a dozen miles southward.

thus have been wasted but for the hyenas, jackals, vultures and marabouts. Forty-eight hours afterwards I repassed the spot, and not a trace, not even a bone, remained, only a circle of down-trodden grass and a few huge feathers. This zebra was an aged stallion, almost toothless, and much clawed by lions—a fine specimen; but I was annoyed at killing him here, as I meant securing my two specimens close alongside the railway, whereas I was now compelled to carry the heavy skin and head some fifty miles.

*September 9.*—Our young oryx died, despite all we could do. Fresh milk was what it wanted, and this the Masai refused to sell. Yet they came daily into our camp for medicines, the chief wanting his child's chest and his wife's leg cured, and so on. We explained, with some little force, the principles of reciprocity, and they then sent in milk—when too late. However, we gave them Bowe's liniment, Alcock's plasters, fruit-salt, etc., and W—— doctored them all round. Results unknown.

The last march from the Molo River to the railway at Nakuru is twenty-three miles across waterless veld. This long grind we avoided by carrying water from the little Rangai River, which enabled us to camp for the night midway. By placing leafy boughs in each bucket of water the Swahili porters managed to carry them a dozen miles without spilling a drop, and this in addition to their regular burdens.

The following day we marched into Nakuru, through a region of very coarse, sour grass, where we saw little or no game. We had been away thirty-four days on this Baringo trip, and had secured forty-four selected heads of large game, including twelve different species, besides ostrich and kori bustard. Even these figures, imposing as they seem, do not fully represent the faunal wealth of the country, for (as related) some others defied our efforts. There were, moreover, several species of which I had previously shot specimens in South Africa—such as bushbuck, duiker, steinbuck, etc., and which I did not again molest. And a short month's time





From Sketch by Author

JACKSON'S HARTEBEESTS—ON THE MOLO RIVER.



forbids that all the magnificent array of wild-life one sees here should each receive its proper share of attention.

At Nakuru we received a sack of mails—the first home-news for eighty days.



PURPLE-CROWNED COUCAL (*Centropus monachus*).

A reclusive bird, oftener heard than seen.

## CHAPTER X

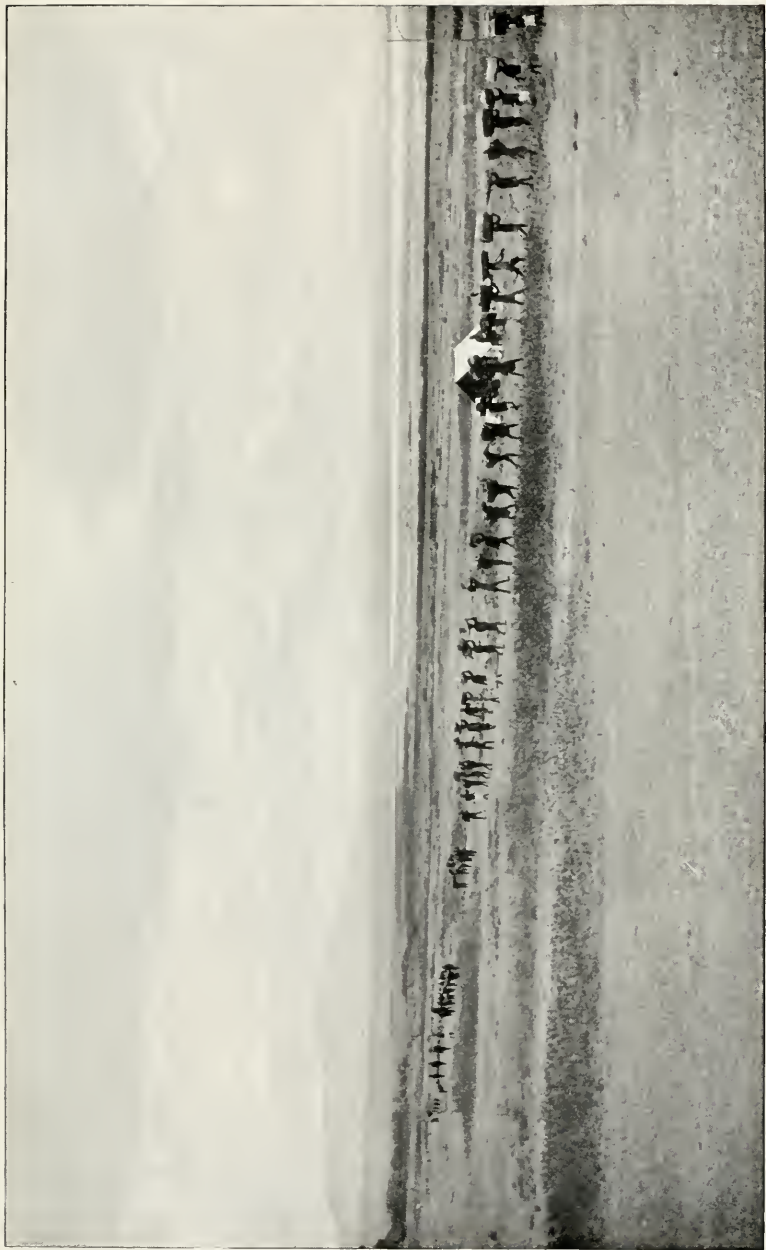
### ON SAFARI

#### A SKETCH OF CAMP-LIFE IN BRITISH EAST AFRICA

THE amenities of camp-life vary with the latitude. Africa, the home of tent-dwellers, affords the ideal; Northern lands, too often, the reverse. Compare the rigours of life under canvas in subarctic regions—especially at high altitudes, as on the reindeer fjelds of Norway, or even in the low-lying forests of Sweden or Newfoundland. There each hunter is accompanied by but a single Achates, whose functions combine both those of gun-bearer by day, of cook and attendant by night. As darkness falls, one returns to an empty camp; fires must be lit—though rain descends in sheets—and dinner cooked ere the day's work is complete. Comfort, or the semblance thereof, is rarely expected, still more rarely found. "I doubled the Horn before the mast," writes my brother, "and that was no bed of roses in the old days of wind-jammers; but it was no whit more unendurable than a fortnight's real bad weather under canvas on the high fjeld."

In Africa, on the other hand, tent-life is a normal condition, and the system and custom of camping in the open have been brought to the level of an art. Discomfort and trouble are, or ought to be, unknown.

Before one's arrival in Africa the whole safari has already been collected, trained men organised to take the field—these being mostly Swahilis. That word "safari," by the way, is quite untranslatable. It has no British equivalent, though in daily use on British territory, the usual rendering of "caravan" being equally



R. J. Cunningham, Photo.

A SAFARI ON THE MARCH.





inaccurate and inadequate. A safari comprises a mobilised expedition organised and equipped to take the field and to travel in any direction, whether for purposes of sport, trading or otherwise. Its component parts include:—(1) the native porters, who carry the tents, camp- and cooking-gear, stores, commissariat, and, in short, the whole outfit; but whose main burden, after all, is the rice for their own consumption. These men carry 60 lbs. apiece on their heads, and their numbers necessarily depend upon the extent and duration of the expedition. Thirty or forty porters suffice for such purposes as ours. Next come (2) the askaris, or native police, each armed with a Snider rifle for protection of the camp by night and day. Their duties involve the night-watch, maintaining fires, etc., but no burden-bearing. Thirdly, come the cook and cook's mates, a "tent-boy," or personal servant for each sportsman—these being usually "mission-boys" who have acquired some slight smattering of English—and syces for ponies, if ponies are used. Lastly, though of first importance, comes the Neapara, or headman, who directs the whole crowd, and upon whose capacity to lead depends largely the comfort, if not the success, of the expedition.

There remain to be enumerated the hunters, each with his attendant gun-bearers. Somalis are usually employed, and, if of the right sort, are by far the best shikaris; but the "hunter" question is big, and can only be mentioned here incidentally.

Enough, however, of such detail. The purpose of this chapter is to sketch in outline the hunter's daily life when encamped on the open veld. Assuming that he has reached his hunting-ground, the point I would place first, as the most essential to enjoyment, if not also to success, is this—Breakfast by candlelight, and be a mile away from camp when day breaks. In Africa there is no hardship in this. When lights are out by nine o'clock, not even a sluggard can complain, after eight hours in the blankets, of turning out at five!

A cup of black coffee in bed at the hour named, with breakfast twenty minutes later, enables this essential to be fulfilled.

The whole joy and glory of the tropical day are confined to its earlier hours. That is the time when the world of the wilderness is amove, when its beauties and infinite variety of forms can be seen and appreciated to the best advantage. Later, when the whole landscape is drenched in a brazen sun-glare that bites like the breath of a furnace, but little, by comparison, will be seen, and exertion becomes well-nigh impossible.



WHITE-BROWED COUCAL, OR BUSH-CUCKOO (*Centropus superciliosus*).  
Crown of head and tail dark ; upper parts chestnut.

From the darkness without, as one sips that early coffee, there resound the bubbling notes of bush-cuckoo and nightjar; the last wail of the laughing hyena, possibly the roar of a distant lion, precede the dawn. Following these, but ere yet a sign of light is apparent, a chorus of infinite doves awakes the day—"Chuck-her-up, chuck-her-up," in endless iteration. "Chock-taw, chock-taw," responds another species. Then the whistling call-notes of francolins and the harsher cackle of guinea-fowl resound from the bush on every side.

Already one is out and away, brushing through dew-laden grass that soaks to the waist. What matter that,

when in a few more minutes the sun will have drunk up every drop of moisture? This hour—that of breaking day—and those which succeed it, say till 10 a.m., are those which we Northerners, we of the thin white skin, can enjoy to the full. Cool, delicious breezes recall a summer's day at home; but here one may see a hundred sights one cannot see at home. There go the creatures of night, retreating before the coming day—perky



AARD-WOLF.

jackals trotting along in pairs, or a grim hyena slouching off to his lair. This is the hour when (if ever) you may encounter some of the "unseen world"—the otocyon and aard-wolf, the ratel and mongoose, great and small. Beyond, on the open veld, are antelopes and gazelles, zebras, and perhaps giraffes, scattered, feeding, far and wide. Later on, in the hot hours, these assemble into troops, resting during the noontide heat, and less conspicuous.

True, during those hot hours, the game, even the sentries, may be less intensely vigilant—more easy of

access. I cannot of my own experience assert that such is the case. Indeed, I have never been able to recognise that mere heat, however great, had any appreciable effect on these creatures of the torrid zone, or caused the least relaxation of their wondrous watchfulness.

However that may be, at least to the hunter, the difference between the two periods is enormous. The cool breeze that rejoiced the dawn has given place to the fiery furnace of a vertical sun. The very earth feels molten; dust chokes the prostrate stalker and perspiration blinds. The reflected heat from below and direct rays from above combine to render sunstroke (followed by fever) quite a possible item among the day's results.

No, be astir with the dawn, spend the matutinal hours abroad, but return by eleven to rest in your tent or beneath those shade-giving mimosas that Nature has provided for the purpose. Thus is conserved the North-born vigour; climatic risks are avoided; and then, towards four o'clock, when rays decline from the perpendicular, you can put in two or three hours' good work in comparative comfort.

Darkness has settled down. A mile or so ahead you catch the glint of the camp-fires. Not as in Norway will Lars and Ivar now have to create a blaze from scant material, and that often wet. Here all is ready to hand. Your tent-boys, Enoch and Shadrack by name, await your coming afar, ready with a "long drink" prepared. It is only "sparklets and lime-juice," but delicious to parched throat. Enoch removes your boots and generally acts valet, while his mate has a bath and dry clothes all ready. Another "boy" stands by with sponge and towel. Luxuries, indeed, in the wilderness that one expects not, nor desires, at home! Half-an-hour's rest and a pipe, the day's experiences compared, diaries entered up, and then dinner is announced. Beneath a spreading acacia stands the table, smart in



clean white napery and brightly-burning lamps. Marrow-soup, followed by cutlets of gazelle and a spatchcocked guinea-fowl, then curried venison and a marvellous pudding (cornflour from Glasgow, peaches from Australia or pine-apple from Natal) form a sample menu—the whole washed down with tea, while a final “tot” completes the feast.

The best potatoes on earth grow in British East Africa; but these, and flour also, are bulky cargo, so that, after a week or two, bread and the tuber are replaced by camp biscuits.

Commotion in the camp presently announces the arrival of the porters carrying in the spoils of the day. Silently, one by one, these emerge from outer darkness, and advancing across the ring of firelight, each deposits his burden of meat. This is placed in charge of the headman, while heads and horns are brought up to us, to add to the ever-increasing Golgotha behind our tents. At once begins the work of preparing specimens, off-skinning, pegging-out hides, rubbing-in wood-ash, etc. The responsibility for this rests with the Somali hunters, aided by any Swahili recruits they may have enlisted and taught this work.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, the rest of the crowd are busy cooking. Frying-pans and gridirons are balanced on three stones at every fire, the fizzling of broiling meat sounds through the camp, and soon all are gorging on unwonted abundance.

In this superb climate appetites, even white appetites scarcely recognisable at home, rapidly rival those of hyenas. The Swahili, it would appear, remain constitutionally at about that standard.

Another constitutional feature noticed in the Swahili,

<sup>1</sup> Many Swahilis display considerable aptitude in this work, and become quite reliable even in the more delicate operations, such as cleaning the lips and eye-sockets, the claws of *felidæ*, etc. They are keen to be so employed, as not only does the accomplishment give them a preference, but it also means receiving two or three rupees a month over and above their regular wage as porters.

in common with indigenous native tribes, was their power of subsisting, as vultures do, on putrid flesh that would certainly poison a white man. For days after the carcasses of elephants or rhinos had passed into that stage when it was impossible to approach within 100 yards to leeward, these savages continued to feast thereon, and one morning we witnessed the ridiculous scene here depicted. As day broke our "boys" descried some



SAVAGES LOOTING "HIGH" RHINO.

natives (presumably Wandorobo) feloniously helping themselves to a "high" rhino which they had regarded as their peculiar property. Chase was instantly given, and the trespassers, on seeing themselves detected, each collared a stinking rib or other loose titbit, and fled. Most laughable was the pursuit; but the agile naked natives, bounding away like wild animals, made good their escape in the bush.

It may be worth mention that antelope venison is excellent, though varying in quality. Waterbuck is

certainly the worst, distinctly coarse and ill-flavoured. This and zebra, however, are fully appreciated by the safari, so need not be wasted. My brother, who tells me he knows, gives the pride of place to the klipspringer; while I have grateful recollection of the tiny dikdiks (Cavendish's and Günther's), their flesh being white and of exquisite flavour. Eland will compare with the best of British beef—perhaps a trifle too fat—and may some day possibly be utilised as such. Oryx also stands in quite the front rank, and so do impala and all the gazelles. Hartebeest is hard and rather coarse, excepting the cut alongside the backbone. Guinea-fowl, francolin and bush-bustard form invaluable adjuncts to the larder.

A simple, careless soul is the average Swahili, strong as a bull, willing, easily led and easily amused. He has, besides, a distinctly musical turn, and it surprises, after his feast, to hear the quality of melody he manages to extract from the rudest of instruments. A single-headed drum does duty as bass, while a wooden "chatty" containing peas or pebbles supplies rhythm and beat. We had two string affairs, something between a guitar and a banjo, the sound-cases being formed of the gourd-like shell of some tree-fruit, with a strip of wood fixed lengthwise across the cavity and furnished with one or two strings. "With these primitive tools," my brother writes, "our 'boys' succeeded in producing music which undoubtedly possessed not only form, but individuality and character. What struck me most was the absence of any element of brightness or joy. All was cast in minor key. Possibly the imperfect scale and inability to modulate may contribute to this effect; but the resultant reiteration of melancholy phrase is apt to grow wearisome. The folk-songs of Northern races are, for the most part, in this minor mode; but that is consonant with environment and character. Why these light-hearted children of the sun should also express in song so much of sadness is not apparent. Possibly

uncounted ages of slavery and savagery have left the impress deep in their breasts."

These simple harmonies, not without their charm, grow upon one as evening after evening they soothe the stillness of the tropical night. Droned out with intervals strange to European ear, those savage ditties have oft recalled the couplets and *malagueñas* we are long accustomed to hear sung by our camp-fires in far-away Spain. Far away, yet there may be a common source. The cross-bred Swahili, half-Arab, half-African, springs in part from a race that has left many another mark on the Spain of to-day.

The Swahili language also rings gracefully and euphoniously, while many of their names for places, animals, birds, etc., are certainly prettier than those we use—often borrowed from uncouth Dutch! Place-names throughout East Africa (though these are not Swahili) also deserve note, such as Elmenteita, Nakúru, Naivásha, Laikípia, Kamaséa. Can any language claim more euphonious form?

Sooner or later, the whole country within reach of any one camp has been traversed in every direction, explored and hunted. Desired specimens have either been secured or proved to be impracticable at this point. It has become necessary to try fresh fields, and the order issues:—"Strike camp at dawn." That next morning you may take "an easy," since much work has to be done before the start, and it is an absolute rule never to attempt hunting while on the march.

On turning out towards sun-up (thus seeing the camp by day-dawn for the first time), already the canvas city of yesterday has disappeared. The circle of tents surrounding a central mountain of stores has vanished. Not one, save your own, remains standing, and everywhere black men are bustling about, each knowing his duty and doing it—packing, strapping, mobilising. Hardly had you quitted the blankets than your bed is seized, dismantled, folded and stowed in its valise.





SOMALI HUNTERS IN MIDDAY UNDRESS.  
(Elmi Hassan on right.)



SAFARI AWAITING THE ORDER TO START—NAIROBI.





While you perform a five-minutes' ablution outside the door, the tent behind you has come down as by magic; and even the canvas wash-basin will be whipped away from beneath your yet dripping person. Breakfast is set out beneath yon shady tree, and ere a hasty meal is finished, the whole camp-outfit is ready to move, packs completed, burdens assorted and assigned, each man knowing his own. The whole operation has been performed with a degree of smartness, method and silent efficiency that surprises. Men such as these represent valuable material.

Similar scenes will be observed on arrival at the next camping-point. Without a word said, one's own tent will have been erected complete—ground-sheets laid, bed set up, table and chairs arrayed in a grove hard by—all within a few short minutes. The brushwood over half-an-acre has been cleared away with "matchets." Meanwhile, the cook and his mates have their fires alight, and dinner preparing; while already one sees a fatigue-party returning with burdens of wood and water.

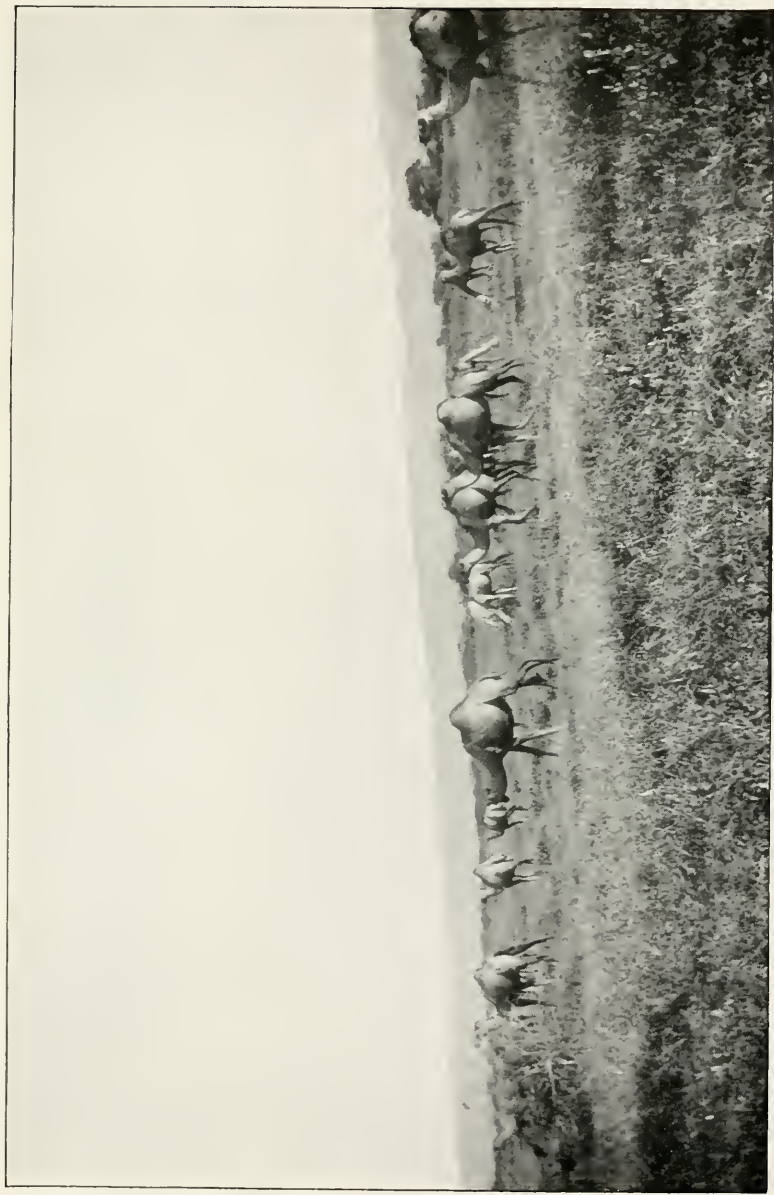
One morning, however, occurs a hitch. The headman desires to see the "Bwana Khubwa" (Great Master). Silently—since we speak not his tongue—he tallies off, with taps of his M'pique staff, thirty-four burdens, all laid out in one straight row. Then he indicates that there are but twenty-six porters. A problem to wrestle with. Threes into two won't go, and never would; and rule-of-three helps no more. There are two plans:—(1) To repack the thirty-four burdens into twenty-six. This proposal is received in speechful silence. (2) To leave the surplus stores here in charge of a porter or two, with a couple of askaris, till we can send back relay-gangs from the next camp to fetch them.

Long ere the knotty point is solved our chairs and breakfast-table have melted into packs, and all its paraphernalia vanished within the spacious "cook-box." "Hurry up," resounds through the camp. "All ready," shouts the swarthy Neapara (the only English words he

knows). "March!" we reply; and, at the order, each man hoists his allotted burden. An askari takes the lead, and, following him, the whole crowd fall in, form line, and file off with serpentine exactitude towards our next destination; while hordes of expectant vultures sweep down to gorge on the débris of a deserted camp.



HEAD OF WHITE-BEARDED GNU.



*Archer, Photo.*

BEYOND BARINGO—TURKANA CAMELS GRAZING UNTENDED.





## CHAPTER XI

### ELMENTEITA

#### (I) IN SEPTEMBER

IN mid-September 1904 I alighted at Elmenteita, a station in the Rift Valley adjoining and overlooking the basin of the Enderit River and our lovely hunting-grounds of six weeks earlier, already described in Chap. III. These latter, in fact, lay within a few hours' march to the southward; but my object in returning was to try the country to the north of the railway—see sketch-map at p. 14.

The special object was to obtain specimens of Neumann's hartebeest (*Bubalis neumanni*), males. As already mentioned, we had each secured a female of this species; but owing either to the extreme wariness of this antelope or, perhaps in greater degree, to deficiencies in hunting-craft, a pair of bulls were still lacking, and these I was determined to obtain at Elmenteita. At the moment, time was an essential element in the enterprise, since homeward-bound steamers in those days were few and often far between, and I had only left myself some eight shooting-days to attain both this object at Elmenteita, and, if possible, a second. The latter, it may be added, was to obtain on the Athi Plains, 100 miles to the eastward, examples of Coke's hartebeest and the white-bearded gnu; but such a programme seemed altogether too ambitious within those narrow limits of time.

It was 3 a.m. when the coast-bound train, carrying away my brother, left me standing alone, in pyjamas, on the rubble stones that serve for a platform at

Elmenteita. Five minutes later, my blankets having meanwhile been transferred from the carriage to the station sleeping-room—a convenience that on the Uganda railway atones for absent hotels—I was in bed again.

Starting, as usual, a little before dawn, we found ourselves at daybreak on a rolling grass-prairie literally teeming with game. This, however, is not the case here at all seasons. In February, for example (as will be shown later), the veld of Elmenteita is comparatively deserted owing to seasonal migration. To-day (September 11) in every direction stood troop beyond troop of zebras, outlined dark against the coming sunrise. A herd of thirty-two elands grazed right ahead, mingled with them being several ostriches and hartebeests, while the nearer foreground was alive with gazelles in scores, and a few wart-hogs and jackals. Away on our right in the sunlight stretched a string of orange-red *kongoni*, while the distant horizon was silhouetted with the galloping ungainly forms of others of their kind. Were these *neumannii*?

Holding forward (since “herd-bulls” are never the best), we desisted a group of three; and beyond, one lone bull. To these we glued attention. The last-named took right away, but after three hours’ work we still kept touch of the trio. The ground was perfectly open—not a scrap of “advantage” or cover. Here and there rose low, graduated hillocks formed of volcanic débris, with broad flats between, on the pools of which wild-geese splashed and preened, and noisy plovers bathed. At times we seemed to walk almost through the herds of zebra, which watched keenly yet undismayed; and we frequently passed gazelles and geese—once even elands—within fair shot. Yet hour after hour the coveted trio held us in check till the heat of the day began to be felt. Then our persistent “sticking-in” told, and suspicion slowly relaxed; but it was high noon before they offered a first chance at a long 300 yards, and a ball in the base of neck sent the best bull staggering to earth. What mattered it then, in those

moments of triumph, to have to suffer four hours of blazing noontide heat beneath a perpendicular sun and not so much as the shade of a bulrush!

Towards 4 p.m. we started afresh, and presently fell in with a herd of ten, two big bulls, one of these a specially grand beast. But every effort to secure him failed. Always first to go, first to stop, yet he ever kept the furthest away. So riveted had my attention been upon the leader, with no eye for his companions during



NEUMANN'S HARTEBEEESTS.

a two-hour chase, that it was only when Elmi pointed out that the second-best bull was within reasonable range that I realised there was another good head among them at all. At 250 yards full broadside the bullet took him one foot behind the heart; half-an-hour later I got in a second, one foot above that organ, just missing the spine. These details are given as further illustrating the vitality of the African antelopes. With these two terrible wounds (which we could clearly discern with the glass) this hartebeest kept ahead of us for another long hour's hard going, and only

succumbed to a *fifth* bullet (in the neck) after the sun had already set.

In a single day I had thus secured two animals that had previously defied our utmost efforts during a fortnight's hunting. The heads of my two first Neumann bulls measured as follows—<sup>1</sup>

	LENGTH.	CIRCUMFERENCE.	TIP TO TIP.
No. 1 .	17 $\frac{1}{4}$ ins.	8 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins.	6 $\frac{3}{4}$ ins.
No. 2 .	16 $\frac{3}{4}$ ins.	9 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins.	8 $\frac{1}{4}$ ins.

The irides were light hazel (those of Jackson's hartebeest being pale yellow), and they possessed a sort of dew-claw between the cleft of the fore-hoofs. Their dead-weight we estimated at 400 lbs., intermediate between *B. jacksoni*, which we put at 400 to 450 lbs., and *B. cokei* at 300 to 350 lbs.

An incident which occurred during our pursuit of this wounded bull deserves note. We were attended, all the time, by a hyena which, scenting blood, trotted along under our lee. He never ranged up alongside the game (which held a 500-yard lead), but kept level and not 100 yards away. I was keen to secure him, as Elmi positively asserted that this hyena was different to the spotted hyenas we had already shot (*Hyæna crocuta*), and I saw myself a distinction. It was probably of the striped species (*H. striata*); but I dare not risk losing our main objective, and before that had been secured we had already lost sight of the hyena in the gathering gloom of night.

Another curious incident: At times, as we passed by troops of grazing gazelles, our attendant hyena trotted through the midst of these without arousing alarm in their timid breasts. So incredible did this appear, that I lay down on an ant-hill, sacrificing precious moments, and brought the glass to bear. There, beyond all doubt, was that great gaunt beast of prey peacefully

<sup>1</sup> These are only average specimens; we subsequently obtained trophies exceeding 19 ins.

traversing herds of gazelles, many of which were close to him, some still grazing, others even playing, but none taking the slightest visible notice.

The main object at Elmenteita having thus been achieved in a single day, I might have proceeded at once to my next proposed venture on the Athi River. Unfortunately, however, by a strange mistake, I lost all the advantages of time saved, and put myself to a vast amount of further trouble all unnecessarily. For, on



STRIPED HYENA.

coming up to my two prizes, I had concluded, quite erroneously, that these hartebeests were *not* Neumann's, but Coke's! There was no excuse for this error, since the two species differ essentially; but I had not, till that moment, handled either animal or seen *B. cokei* at all.

Acting on this erroneous premise, we next morning shifted camp beyond Lake Elmenteita, a long day's march to the north-west. But here, instead of *Bubalis neumanni*, we found the western end of the lake swarming with nomad Masai, whose vast flocks and herds had effectually scared away all game.

During this march I shot six selected specimens of



Thomson's gazelle, choosing the best heads I could see among hundreds. None of the horns, however, exceeded  $13\frac{1}{2}$  ins. in length. These are exquisitely graceful little antelopes, scarcely so large as a roe-deer; it was a lovely spectacle to watch them playfully coursing each other in sheer exuberance of spirits, the pursued dodging and doubling with the speed and resource of a hare before greyhounds. They are confiding little beasties, and can often be approached, by circling around them, within a range of 100 to 120 yards; but even then present but a small mark for a rifle, since, diminutive as they are, they possess the same tenacity of life that characterises their larger congeners, and, unless struck well forward, will carry on for miles though practically disembowelled. Their irides are very dark hazel, and bucks that we weighed scaled from 48 to 57 lbs.

On approaching the north-west end of the lake, we found that between the higher plateau we had been traversing and the actual shores was interposed a lower-lying plain a mile or two in width. The dividing escarpment at this point was abrupt, dropping to the plain below in rugged crags of a couple of hundred feet; and spying from the ridge, we saw many troops of zebra and gazelles, with a few impala dotted about. A single antelope, however, at once arrested attention; though generally similar to the *granti* buck amidst which it was, this animal stood higher on its legs, was longer in neck, and moreover displayed the black lateral band characteristic of *G. thomsoni*, but not of *granti*. A near approach, in full face, was impossible; but a shot at 200 yards, though it struck too far back, appeared completely to have disabled the stranger. Then it recovered and went off across the far-stretched plain further than I could follow with binoculars—further, indeed, than I ever remember to have seen a hard-struck beast go without stopping. Elmi, all along, had asserted that this was an "Aoul" (*Gazella semmeringi*, the common species of Somaliland), and being a Somali, and

a reliable and intelligent hunter to boot, he ought to have known. My own impression of the animal seen, however, but little accords with descriptions of the heavily-built aoul, the only point of resemblance being its habit of "bucking," or bounding, after the style of impala or springbok, whenever it commenced to move. There, for the present, I must leave it.

Lake Elmenteita being salt, it was necessary to camp at its extreme west end, where a lovely stream of sweet water empties into it. This involved a long and heavy grind under the fierce midday sun, during which I was almost knocked over by a wart-hog. The brute must have been sleeping so near the mouth of its den, that when an askari walked over it the boar bolted, snorting and grunting, in a cloud of dust. I was only a few yards behind; consequently the pig was all but into my legs before either of us realised the situation. Luckily he swerved aside in the nick of time, as I had nothing but a stick in my hands.

Once before, in the Transvaal, I had had an even closer shave with a wart-hog. It was the Twelfth of August, and we were holding that festival in the best way available in Africa—francolins taking the place of grouse—when in a patch of bush our dogs gave tongue in a key that denoted something bigger than "grouse." On hurrying up, we found a furious fight raging within an ant-bear's cave. Poor "Flo" backed out bleeding—she was unprepared for what she had found within that hole; but "Chops" (always there when biting had to be done) stuck to it. I had just reached the spot, and was stooping to look down the den, when a great blue-grey beast filled the hollow, his ivory tusks gleaming like a white collar round his neck. That was all I saw, for in an instant he was on me—or rather where I had been; for I had jumped aside, pulling trigger at the same moment, the gun-muzzle within six inches of the beast's back. Through the cloud of smoke and dust I saw the unknown beast pitch forward on his head and roll over, dead. The No. 6 shot had shattered the vertebræ, one

of the wads being driven right through and sticking inside the skin beyond. This boar weighed over 200 lbs., with tusks projecting nearly ten inches from the jaws.

The country here swarmed with guinea-fowl, and was studded with thickets and clumps of euphorbia and of those spiky aloes which form a favourite food of elephants. There was plenty of old sign and spoor of these animals—evidently made during the rainy season—as well as aloes broken down, and lumps of the fibrous portions chewed and disgorged.

A long low ridge impending our camp—the name of the spot was Campi M'Baruk—was strewn with human skulls and bones. Such objects are not an uncommon spectacle in Africa, yet I do not remember to have seen such quantities as here. It was a regular Golgotha—the result, perhaps, of some intertribal fray, or possibly of small-pox.<sup>1</sup>

It was at this point that we met with the Masai hordes already mentioned, their cattle filling the valley. These savages displayed no sign of friendship. While camp was being pitched, a band of a dozen stalwart El-Moran, or warriors, stark naked but for their spears and a coating of red clay, passed close by without deigning to take the slightest notice of the white man. This was lacking in respect for the “dominant race,” so I sent a messenger, bidding them come into my camp and inform me of the whereabouts of the game. They told me the nearest *kongoni* were a day's march to the westward,—that is, towards the crater of Meningai, which was quite out of my course.

It was now obvious that this whole venture was a mistake and a failure: our troubles, moreover, were intensified by Elmi going down with fever, and I had myself “a touch of sun” from the midday's heat. I

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Jackson tells me that, years before, a trading caravan of Swahili, under a man named M'Baruk, was surprised at this spot by Masai, who massacred the entire safari.

decided to fall back upon Eburu, and next morning we struck and retraced our steps along the lake-shore, where I had just shot a one-horned impala; when we descried a single "Aoul" far out on the open plain. He proved hopelessly wild, and after infinite manœuvres, all in vain, we saw him join two others of his kind, when all three made right away down-wind behind us. I have called these animals "Aoul" merely for distinction, and because it was Elmi's name for them, though what they actually were is not proven. They were conspicuously distinct from anything else I saw in East Africa. I searched the same ground again on my second expedition (in February 1906), but without seeing a sign of the aoul.

A few miles to the eastward, beyond and amidst some broken rocky ridges, we fell in with one of those immense aggregations of wild game that it has been my good fortune to meet with on various occasions in this land. Gazelles in vast numbers (mostly does and small bucks) thronged the foreground—literally colouring the landscape—while a couple of elands, looking gigantic among such small fry, stood in their midst. Beyond were numberless troops of zebra, hartebeests, and more elands,<sup>1</sup> the whole assemblage being sprinkled with wart-hogs and ostriches! In one long straggling group I counted over 100 of these giant birds.

The hartebeests were inaccessible; but by aid of some broken ridges, I got well in to three separate groups of elands—about 100 in all—and enjoyed the sight at close quarters; all, however, were females or young beasts, not a single heavy old bull among them. Jackals trotted about and—a curious addition—wild geese (*chenalopex*) fed on the driest plain.

I secured here two of the finest *granti* bucks that we had then obtained: the first in company with half-a-dozen does, while the second had a harem of thirty-four.

<sup>1</sup> Note that we had seen no elands in this district six weeks before—in July—except a single young beast on the Enderit River. Now was there a sign of them when I returned here later, in February.

Their beautiful annulated horns were almost identical, measuring each 25 ins., by  $6\frac{1}{2}$  ins. in basal circumference, and 12 ins. between tips. While off-skinning the second, a tawny eagle (*Aq. rapax*) joined the throng of assembling vultures and marabou, and I secured it with a Paradox bullet. This is the commonest of the East-African eagles, next to it being the Bateleur and the white-headed fish-eagles. I noticed a single vulture which with its



TAWNY EAGLE.

A matutinal "shake-up" before starting the day's work.

pale-bluish plumage and bright-red head resembled the American king-vulture. I presume this would be *Otogyps auricularis*.

An awkward accident occurred with one of these two bucks. Elmi had seized it, somewhat recklessly, by the hind-leg: when it, swift as thought, swung round, and its sharp horn dealt him a severe blow on the shin. Owing to this, and Elmi being extremely weak with fever, we were obliged to change our course and make direct for Elmenteita station, whence I sent Elmi into hospital at Nairobi. This was a heavy loss to me, Elmi Hassan having been my constant companion during three months and a most trustworthy and intelligent hunter.





From sketch by Author.

A CORNER OF THE CROWD—MASED GAME NEAR ELEMENTEITA (SEPT. 1904).



I selected, as gunbearer, a Swahili "boy" named Hamisi, whom we had noted for his keen eyesight and aptness in hunting.

That afternoon (September 14) a tremendous thunderstorm broke with tropical rains. The night, also, was disturbed; first jackals, then hyenas, wailed all around, setting the station dogs barking madly until 11 p.m., when a pair of lions came along and silenced the lot. These last came so near that I loaded the Paradox and went out; but it was a black-dark night, raining, and nothing could be seen. Lions have a great stronghold in the belt of strong bush that lies facing the mountain-range of Eburu. Two Englishmen, we were told, had recently tried for them, tying up a sheep and waiting in prepared shelters on two nights. On both occasions, the lions carried off the bait without being seen in the dark.

Next morning we resumed our march towards Eburu, the safari proceeding direct, while I tried the lovely stretch of woodland lying along the base of the hills, where in July we had seen so much game. Here again, we found ourselves supplanted by the intrusive Masai, who, with their herds, had occupied the whole beautiful strath. Beyond, however, among the foothills, we fell in with hartebeest, and I secured a third Neumann bull, remarkable for his exceptionally massive horns, which measured  $11\frac{1}{2}$  ins. in basal circumference.

After some manœuvres with Chanler's reedbucks, fruitless as usual, we finally reached Eburu—since abandoned as a station. Bad as the lions had been last night at Elmenteita, they were as nothing compared with the rats at Eburu to-night! No sooner were lights out than the brutes were running in droves all over me, gnawing bags, boots, gun-cases, everything. I relit the lamp, but it burnt out, and after the last match had been struck, they were free to eat even the boots that I hurled in a vain effort to keep them at bay. Three-thirty brought relief, for then the early train (running thrice a week) came along and carried us off to Nairobi.

During the four days I had secured the following specimens—

Three Neumann's hartebeest, bulls.

One Sing-sing waterbuck, bull, *as below*.

Two Grant's gazelle, bucks.

Six Thomson's gazelle, bucks.

One impala, buck.

One wart-hog, boar.

One tawny eagle.

Sundry guinea-fowl.



SING-SING WATERBUCK.

## CHAPTER XII

### ELMENTEITA

#### (II) IN FEBRUARY

EARLY in February 1906, eighteen months after the events described in the last chapter, we returned to Elmenteita, our primary object being to set out thence on an expedition among the Laikipia mountains, distant some seventy or eighty miles to the northward. Before starting, however, we intended to spend a few days at this point, renewing the happy memories of 1904.

To all outward appearance, Elmenteita remained precisely as we had left it—the station, a tiny tin shanty standing utterly alone, a speck amidst boundless veld and prairie, across which runs that puny three-foot railway, a mere thread, over hill and dale. Great changes, nevertheless, had occurred—changes that, as foreshadowing development in our new colony, one must regard with satisfaction, though in the breast of sportsman and naturalist a pang of regret will not be suppressed.

The whole of the lands south of the railway line had meanwhile been sold to private owners, and we could only survey at a distance our erstwhile lovely hunting-grounds stretching away down the Enderit River to Lake Nakuru. True, the new owners were said to be obliging enough in granting leave to shoot—some even wanting the game destroyed; but in Africa we ask no man's leave, and it was to the north side we had come to turn our attention.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Only a few months later we read in the Nairobi newspaper *The Globe Trotter*, that all the lands northward from the railway extending to Lake Elmenteita and beyond it to the escarpment, had likewise been sold—so rapid hereaway is the process of colonisation!



The rolling treeless veld that extends northward from Elmenteita, with its game, has already been described (p. 122 *et seq.*). But there was, in February, no such abounding aggregation of wild-life as we had met with here in July, August and September. That circumstance, however, was merely due to the seasonal migrations of the animals, and had no relation to changing ownership. The zebra, for example, leave this region early in December, not reappearing till May or June; while of the other animals that were so abundant in July and August, perhaps a tenth, or less, remained in February. Not that there was any real lack of animal-life even now. The veld, though no longer crowded, was fairly peopled with beautiful creatures. There were no zebras, but a few hartebeests and ostriches still lingered; groups of *granti* moved about with stately gait, and herds of "Tommies" chased and gambolled in their sportive style. Wart-hogs, owing to their subterranean habit, are probably less mobile, and our first day here (February 8), being dull and drizzling, we saw great numbers, including some real monsters. One solitary boar, in particular, our hunters at first mistook for a rhino, and we decided to spend the next day in acquiring his mask. That morning, however, broke bright and hot, and never a pig could we see! They were then all underground.

I shot that day a superb *granti*, a solitary buck, with 25-in. horns; but merely mention the fact to illustrate a phase that is worth note in this African shooting. Though severely wounded by the first shot, the buck held on, on—till it was clear we should never overtake him; never, at least, by following "hot-foot." I therefore recalled my men, much to their disgust, and lay down to watch. The buck then, being alone, also laid down, a mile ahead, and, growing stiffer, at the end of an hour I was able to approach again within 200 yards, when a second bullet (in ribs) further crippled him: but we still had to put in a second thirty minutes, lying patiently in that sweltering heat, ere he would allow



LAKE ELMENTEITA FROM THE NORTH-EAST—LOOKING DOWN KARIENDOOS VALLEY TOWARDS EBURU.



another approach near enough to finish him with a third bullet.

A prize which I regarded with even greater satisfaction this day was a horned female of the Thomson gazelle. This does at best carry very tiny horns, and even those are most difficult to distinguish owing to their horns (only 4 to 5 ins. in length) being shorter than the mobile ears and usually concealed thereby. Then, after closely scrutinising through the glass a hundred does, when one at length detects the special specimen sought, that particular female may be accompanied by a fawn—whose life not only the game-laws, but, far more, a sportsman's instincts render sacred. To-day, however, after many a futile effort, I succeeded not only in finding a horned yeld doe, but in approaching and securing her. Her horns, irregular and of somewhat abnormal appearance, measured 4 and  $4\frac{1}{4}$  ins., and she weighed 32 lbs.

That night in camp we had the usual lion-alarm, and, on turning out, distinctly saw two animals moving about phantom-like in the moonlight at 100 to 150 yards. These we watched for quite half-an-hour, but could never distinguish substance from shadow clearly enough to shoot. In the morning, we found that a gazelle had been killed close by, and the spoor showed that the marauders were leopards.

Beyond the prairies eastwards, a league or two away, rise a series of rugged conical koppies which, we found, were another home of Chanler's reedbuck. These most elusive little antelopes, regular rock-jumpers, ever alert and intensely wary, have generally beaten us, partly owing to their highly-protective coloration. Though their heads and necks are tawny, yet the whole body-colour is as grey as the rocks they frequent—indistinguishable therefrom, especially at long range. This day (February 10), though both scored hits, we were yet beaten by two of the wounded among the crags and steep slopes. The third, however, being severely crippled, betook itself to some rough scrub-clad rocks below, where, after a laborious chase of two hours, I eventually secured

it with my very last cartridge. What strikes one on examining these antelopes newly-killed, are the immense ears and the big prominent eye, set high up in the broad forehead—no wonder they can see and hear! The irides are rich dark hazel, and a narrow black blaze runs down centre of face.

During this cripple-chase, while passing through some terribly rocky ground, I found myself in the midst of a troop of baboons, some running on all-fours, others perched on rock-pinnacles. I shot one of the latter, a



CHANLER'S REEDBUCK (FEMALE).

female of the East-African species, *Papio ibeanus*, which was busy eating a wild fruit like a "devil's tomato," called here by a pretty Swahili name that I forget. The day's bag also included an impala and a pair of Cavendish's dikdik, the male scaling  $11\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. (*Madoqua cavendishi*), with horns  $3\frac{1}{8}$  ins. in length; the female weighed a good pound more than her lord. I saw them feeding outside some

very rocky scrub, stalked the spot, and got both with a right-and-left of buckshot. I also wounded an ostrich, but failed to secure him.

Leaving Elmenteita, we marched round the south-eastern end of the lake, seeing on route several more immense wart-hogs, a few ostriches and other game. The country here is absolutely lovely, park-like, studded with clumps of mimosa, while "fever-trees" like huge beeches, except for their vicious thorns and blood-red inner bark, fringe the lake-shore; there are rugged koppies in mid-distance, and a mountain background to complete the picture. We encamped on the Karriendoos River, on the north side of the lake, and half-a-mile inland from the river-mouth.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See sketch map at p. 14.



A curious example of animal-cunning occurred on this march. Twice I walked on to a sleeping jackal, and on each occasion the animal, after running thirty or forty yards, sprang high in air, repeating the leap a few yards beyond, in apparent anticipation of the advent of a bullet! It was the more remarkable as these beasts are rarely shot at. There are in East Africa two species of jackal—the ordinary fox-like animal with white-tipped brush (*Canis aureus*), and the beautiful black-backed jackal (*C. mesomelas*) with golden-spangled sides, and whose brush deepens to black at the end. Both species are equally abundant. I weighed three common jackals, two females 15 and 16½ lbs., one male 17¼ lbs.

#### A NIGHT WITH PACHYDERMS

Our immediate objective on Lake Elmenteita was to obtain specimens of the hippopotami which frequent that salt lake in some numbers. According to our information, these great amphibians, while spending the day in mid-water, approach the sweet-water rivers to drink at dusk, thus affording the chance of a shot. Our river, the Karriendoos, was quite a small stream, not so big as a Northumbrian burn, and towards evening we concealed ourselves on the point of a rush-clad spit that commanded its entrance. Several hippos were in view in the open water outside and a wondrous scene in tropical wild-life unfolded as evening advanced. Skeins of huge spur-winged geese, black and white, flighted in to drink the sweet water; ducks also of varied kinds—the equatorial representative of our mallard (*Anas undulata*), together with pintail and shoveler, familiar in Europe. There were teal of two kinds, garganeys and pochard (*erythrophthalma*)—all these flew or swam within half-gunshot of our hide. Outside, among the rushes, swam groups of the singular Maccoa pochard (*Erismatura maccoa*), ducks whose plumage is rather a glossy filament like that of grebes, and with long stiff cormorant-like tails which the drakes often carry bolt upright. On the foreshores waded sacred and glossy

ibises, greenshanks, and plovers—specially noticeable being the spur-winged species (*Hoplopterus speciosus*) in its handsome contrasted colours that recall our grey plover (*S. helvetica*) in its summer dress. At the point of a rush-clad spit stood a Goliath heron, stiffly erect and with the silvery neck-plumes finely offset by the dark maroon breast. On another occasion at this spot we recognised a pair of the great African jabiru or saddle-bill. Far out on the lake sat pelicans, flamingoes and grebes.

The hippos, however, though they floated, and splashed hard by, raising vast heads to yawn and



HIPPOS IN LAKE ELMENTEITA.

exposing great curving ivories, carefully kept beyond range. So intensely interesting was the sight that we lingered on till past dusk ere taking our campward way.

The moon being some days past the full, the darkness beneath the forest-trees that fringed the lake was intense—indeed I could barely keep in touch with my Swahili gunbearer, Mabruki, though only a yard ahead.

While feeling our way thus through forest, the stillness of night was suddenly shocked by a loud shrill snort on our immediate front and apparently not fifteen yards ahead. Then, contrary to all orders, Mabruki insanely fired my big .450 into that enveloping pall of darkness. No human eye—not even a savage eye—could conceivably have seen anything to aim at. Mabruki had lost his head.

After the shot, stillness reigned as before. There was no sign of a charge, no crash of a falling or a flying foe—only silence, presently broken by my brother asking from behind, "What's happened?" A few yards ahead, we found thick bush, impenetrable; so, leaving a handkerchief to mark the exact spot, we resumed our course, intending to return by daylight. Little recked we that long before that day should break we were destined to hear that terrible snort once more—but *cras fuge quærere*.

The hippos, we ascertained, had recently been disturbed at this point, which explained their shyness in approaching the waters of Karriendoos. We therefore changed our tactics and decided to attack them by night, when they come ashore to feed far and wide on the grassy veld. The moon being just past the full, favoured this enterprise, and we gave orders for a start at 2.30 a.m. next morning. It was, however, but a little after midnight that we were aroused by the night-watchmen, who excitedly stated that there was already a hippo within sight of the camp. This, on turning out in pyjamas, we at once verified for ourselves. There, not 300 yards away on the open prairie, the great pachyderm was plainly visible in the bright moon-rays. Pulling on coats and camp-shoes, we were ready for action and away within thirty seconds. The intruder deigned no sign of notice, and soon we had slipped in to what looked well within fifty yards, at which point I whispered "That's near enough; let's stop to fire," and had already dropped down in order to rest the '450 on my knee, when our huge opponent at last detected us. Again that terrible hissing snort, and in a moment he had turned upon us. I could not rise, so fired both my barrels, my brother (who remained on foot) only one, realising that we were caught and reserving his second for contingencies. On reaching back for my second gun, I found that the valiant Mabruki had gone—he was already fifty yards away campward. But no second gun was needed. So far as one could

judge in the fickle moonlight, the great beast still continued his forward onrush, but there was another movement—downward : and in five more yards he had gradually subsided, ploughing a trench with his snout ere he rolled over flat on his broadside not thrice his own length from where I sat. Then the sense of relief and of danger averted struck home together : for in that



“FACED ROUND IN THE MOONLIGHT.”

open ground, short of dropping the enemy dead, there could have been but small chance of escape.

To make sure, we put in two more bullets in the heart and presently the stertorous breathing had ceased. Then cautiously drawing in, we discovered that our prize was not the harmless hippo after all, but a gigantic bull-rhinoceros! This fact our men had learned earlier—that snort had enlightened them : it explained Mabruki’s sudden flight, though Ali Yama, my brother’s Somali hunter, had stood firm. This rhino carried magnificent horns, the front one over 28 ins. in length, second 13 ins., while further up was a third



RHINO-BULE—AS HE FELL.



THE THREE-HORNED RHINO'S HEAD.  
Lake Elmenteita in background.





horn, more or less rudimentary. After a cursory examination, we returned to bed at 1.20.

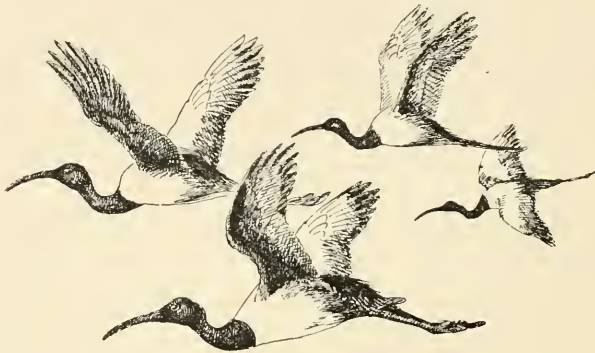
At three o'clock we turned out again, but in five hours' walk failed to find a hippo ashore, though several were grunting and blowing close outside the rushes. I stalked one of these and at about fifty yards fired at his head—so much, that is to say, as was above water, say three inches. The light was most uncertain for fine shooting, for the moon being in zenith, perpendicular, the night-sights lent no assistance. Yet the ball seemed to strike fair and square, since no water flew up: but we saw that hippo no more. He disappeared without leaving a ripple or the slightest clue to guide us. What a disturbance that shot created! From the trees overhead clattered out guinea-fowl in scores, while all the peoples of the wilderness, geese and pelicans, flamingoes, ibis, cranes, and the rest protested in strident cries against that outrage on the decencies of night.

As the dawn broke we thought we heard a lion close by; it proved, however, to be an ostrich, the two notes being singularly alike. Then followed another startling cry, an explosive croak coming from the heavens, twice repeated. It was a Goliath heron, sailing overhead from the forests above. Presently, with set wings, the great bird swept downwards and settled on a rush-clad spit a mile away. Ducks in successive packs (chiefly mallard, pintail and shoveler) were streaming in towards the lake, where we also observed sacred ibis, stilts, greenshanks, ruffs and green sandpipers.

Returning to camp after the adventures of this night, we examined the rhino. All our three bullets, we found, had got well home; but the shot that had actually done the deed was little short of a miracle—Providential. Missing by a hair's-breadth the two great horns as the beast came on headlong, it had crashed into the massive neck between the ears, smashing the spinal column. Had the ball touched either horn, it must have been deflected.

It was my pony, "Goldfinch," we now learned, that

had first called the watchman's attention to the rhino, by whinnying and straining on the picket-ropes. There can be no doubt this was the same rhino we had run into earlier in the evening; for this is not a "rhino country," and there was no spoor or "sign" of their presence. This beast had been travelling along the lake-shore when Mabruki's shot turned him back at 8 p.m., but by 12.30 p.m., midnight, he was back again—probably in bad humour—and this time almost into our camp!



SACRED IBIS.

Here are put down for comparison the measurements of this and of another big rhino bull that I shot subsequently at Simba—

TWO RHINO BULLS.	(1) ELMENTEITA.	(2) SIMBA.
Length over-all, snout to tip-tail . . . . .	12 ft. 8 ins.	12 ft. 7 ins.
Height at shoulder (straight)	5 ft. 7 ins.	4 ft. 6½ ins.
Girth „ „ . . . . .	9 ft. 0 ins.	7 ft. 9½ ins.
Circumference head (behind 2nd horn)	4 ft. 4 ins.	—
„ front horn at base . . . . .	2 ft. 2½ ins.	1 ft. 9 ins.
„ rear horn at base . . . . .	1 ft. 5½ ins.	1 ft. 4¼ ins.
Length of front horn . . . . .	2 ft. 4½ ins.	1 ft. 5¾ ins.

A few days later I heard, for the third time, the

curious hissing snort of a rhino. This time it was repeated thrice in rapid succession and close at hand, my two men at once whispering "Kifaru." We were at the moment after hippo, creeping along the narrow belt of sharp rocks and lava which separates the deep water of the lake from dense impenetrable jungle on the landward side (impenetrable save by creeping along the low tunnels made by hippos). It was no place to take on a rhino. We therefore lay low, passing an anxious quarter of an hour. Afterwards by a detour we picked up the spoor inland; but that rhino had travelled afar.

#### AFTER HIPPO

'Twere tedious to relate in detail all the efforts we made to secure the coveted hippo. Morning after morning we set forth in the small hours, scoured by moonlight every green meadow and grassy pasture for miles around the lake, yet never once did we succeed in finding the great amphibians ashore. Once, it is true, I surprised, close at hand, a half-grown "toto" among the reeds, but him I let depart in peace. As they refused to meet us on land, we next tried to tackle them in the water.

On seeing a hippo near the shore it is possible to reach the nearest point of land by advancing at the moment he disappears, lying low before his eyes again break the surface. While stalking them thus we noticed the curious fact that their snorts and grunts are distinctly audible from far under water, and that although no signs or air-bubbles reach the surface.

The target presented by a hippo when resting at the surface is extremely small. There are his nostrils, represented by the size of a man's hand held flat; a foot or two behind these, often separated by water, rises the prominent upper portion of the cranium, carrying the eyes and little pig-like ears. The total height of this, as exposed, is perhaps four inches; but, to be fatal, the bullet must take only the *lowest* inch. At daybreak on

February 14, I managed to place a .450 solid ball within some decimals of that spot with manifest and immediate results, the huge bull rolling over and over, wallowing in the water for over half-an-hour, all ends up. Now his four stumpy legs were in sight, anon the vast head and fore-end reared up to fall back with sounding splash, churning the still green surface into crimson foam. After thirty minutes of this flurry, this apparent death agony, the beast subsided, though we could still hear grunts and groans from the depths below. I left men to watch for his reappearance, and at five that afternoon was gratified to receive the report, "Him finish."

Next morning we set out at 4 a.m., twenty hands, with ropes and axes and the rest to bring him in. But it proved a day of bitter disappointment—the cup dashed from one's lips! For not a sign of this, or of my other wounded hippo, did we ever see: whether a hippo can recover from such a blow,<sup>1</sup> or whether he goes ashore to die, at least the trophies were lost to me, and no better luck had befallen my brother. After this week of labour, up half the nights and most of the days, struggling through the roughest places on earth, canebrakes, thorn-jungle, cruel rocks and lava, under an equatorial sun, or a waning moon—the hippo had beaten us.

On Lake Elmenteita we noticed the assemblages of swallows preparing for their northward journey. The earliest of these mobilisations occurred on February 14, when they congregated in thousands on the islets, crowding the low thorns. By February 17 all these swallows had passed on; but we observed similar assemblages at various other points up to the end of March.

On the afternoon of February 13, during a heavy shower of rain, we enjoyed quite a chorus of song-birds; but this ceased on the sun coming out an hour or so later. On the 15th a skylark (of sorts) began to sing. Its note was inferior to that of our species; but its

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Jackson writes me: "They do recover." See also his remarks in *Big Game Shooting*, Badminton Library, I, p. 273.



flight and actions, with the fluttering descent, were precisely similar. I also noticed here a tree-pipit descending with the same hovering insect-like flight it uses at home during the nesting-season. Here, however, it was silent. Another of our small British migrants that we noticed on Lake Elmenteita was the wheatear.

Impressive as had been the sight of monster pachyderms still roaming this earth in flesh and blood, and not as extinct mammoths in some geological museum, yet the sight of these tiny British warblers here on the far equator, was scarcely less striking.



AN AFRICAN LARK, OR "LONG-CLAW" (*Macronyx croccus*).  
Throat and lower parts, also eyebrow, golden-yellow.

Following are my brother's impressions of these days and nights on Lake Elmenteita—

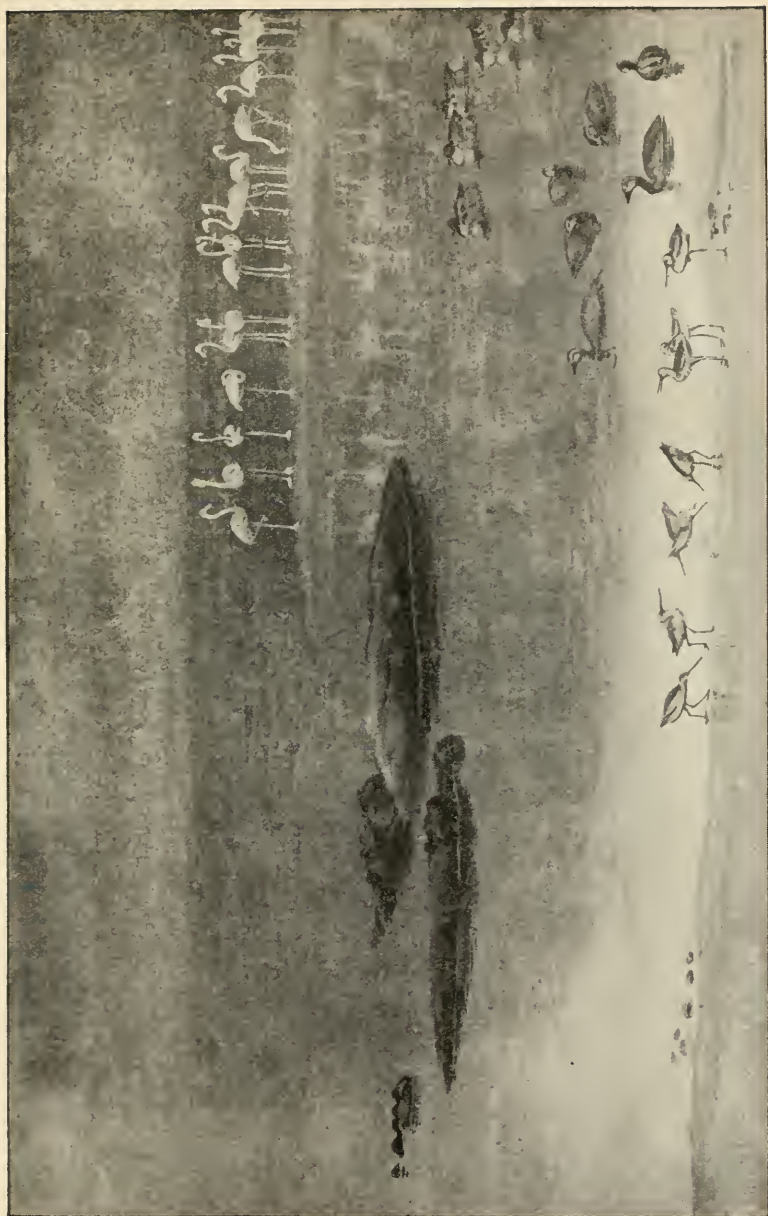
"When the hippo had beaten us by daylight and we tried the alternative of a night-attack, some new sensations were experienced—sensations that cannot, perhaps, be entirely expressed in words unless the spirit of poetry be inborn. How intangible and weird is the environment as one sets forth at midnight with only the silver-fretted light of the moon as a guide! One naturally holds the open ground, avoiding the deep shade of trees or banks, not only to save the risk of falling into pitfall or unseen obstacle, but by an unconscious dread of the unknown that is hidden in darkness. So, too, one imagines that safety is better assured where two or three are gathered together. Few, in fact, would care to face alone the dangers of the wild African

night, since out there the night is very much alive—more so than the day. The rush of something in the bush, a scuffle and clatter ahead, cause a chill sensation to run uninvited through one's nerves; it is probably only some antelope or a bush-pig, or a pack of guinea-fowl disturbed at roost; but it might have been a lion or a rhino. Along the lake-shore, from beyond the fringing reeds, resound the sullen grunts of the hippo, and horrid splashes of water recur—one cannot see where.

“From away to the left comes a long-drawn growl. ‘Lion,’ some one whispers. ‘No,’ mutters a shikari in one's ear; ‘that's a leopard where you killed the waterbuck yesterday.’ ‘Let's go and see,’ we reply, determined to let no sign of ‘nerves’ appear, and out across the moonlit veld we move. There, sure enough, are ghostly shadows retreating and reappearing from out the pall. These are scouting jackals and hyenas; and just beyond we see, glistening in the moon-rays, the white vertebræ and ribs of the waterbuck—all minor anatomical items already devoured or carried off.

“Slowly pass those long dark hours while we explore mile after mile of the lake-shore, examine with night-glasses bay after bay and infinity of calm moon-lit waters. Now it is time to make for our appointed posts ere the sun discovers us. One of us takes position on a reed-clad promontory, the other on some rocks a mile beyond.

“From my covert amidst sedge and flag, a typical African scene unfolds as the sun dispels the mists and mirages of the morn. First, two solitary snipes alight on a rocky islet close in front, stow their long bills along their backs, and go to sleep; a shoveler-drake, with lustrous green head, prods the shore with ungainly beak; then a pair of African mallards (*Anas undulata*) alight alongside the unnoticing snipes, preen for a minute, and themselves go to sleep. The drake's near foot constantly slips over the narrow ledge. This for some time he refuses to notice, but can't stand the



DAY-DAWN ON LAKE ELMENTEITA.

discomfort for ever. Why does he not move an inch inland? No, that is not his way; so the pair depart to seek more convenient quarters elsewhere. Meanwhile, a score of long-legged stilts have arrived. These are not somnolent, but set to work busily in search of breakfast, wading and dabbling among the floating water-weeds.

“Far away beyond, on the open water, the mirage has hitherto distorted every object. I have been watching some great white things that I thought were swans, and was wondering how they got here. Now, as the sunlight



FLAMINGOES FLIGHTING.

strengthens, I see they are pelicans asleep on a shallow, and there is a line of flamingoes beyond. Presently a rushing of water sets me alert, and a hippo cow swims rapidly past not twenty yards away, with her *toto* easily keeping pace. I do not shoot, and they disappear round the point quite unconscious of the danger they have just incurred. A family party of five—one huge bull, with two cows and two *totos*—lie basking near a low rocky islet 200 yards out. For two hours I watched them, but they came no nearer. Then shots resound from beyond the point, so we arise, stretch, and go on to find A—— watching a hippo bull apparently in the throes of its death-flurry.”

While encamped here, on the Karriendoos, one of





THE  
MOUNTAIN  
MONKEYS  
OF  
INDIA



*Macaca*

our porters, a N'yumwezi named Ibrahim, died rather suddenly. The apparent cause was inflammation of the throat, rendering him speechless, nor had we either the knowledge or the means to alleviate it. The first intimation was brought us during the afternoon; we tried such simple remedies as we had, but at seven o'clock, just as we were sitting down to dinner, word was sent in that the poor fellow was dead.

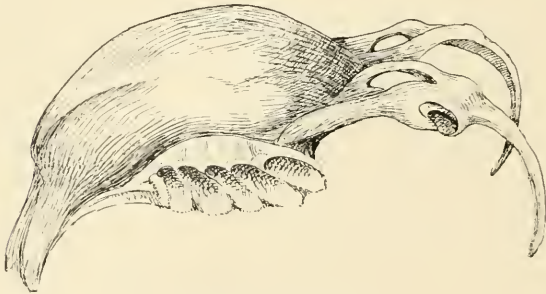
He was buried at dawn outside the camp, the grave being five feet deep and the body, wrapt in his blanket, placed sideways in a narrower trench dug some eighteen inches deeper. This the men covered with piles of thorns and brushwood before filling in the earth, the whole being finally heaped over with stones. That night hyenas and jackals kept up an unearthly concert all around the camp, but the grave remained intact in the morning.

A few days later, having in the meantime been obliged, by an attack of fever, as below mentioned, to abandon our intended expedition to Laikipia, we repassed the spot and found that poor Ibrahim's remains had been dug out by hyenas.

An incident in this connection illustrates what watchful care the Colonial Government exercises over the rights and interests of our black fellow-subjects. Months afterwards, while paying-off our safari at Mombasa, I had entered, on the official discharge form, this man as "dead"; another as "missing—believed to be dead." Objection, however, was taken, and further explanation required, especially the precise dates, lest some balance of wages might remain due to their *executors*. Now the contingency of African savages possessing such modern refinements as "executors" had certainly not occurred to me, and the suggestion almost provoked a sense of the ludicrous. The grim picture opposite gives, I fear, a more practical view of those functionaries. These trustees may truly be said to be "dealing with the whole estate," since on totting up accounts it appeared that poor Ibrahim had not run off his advance-

pay. Hence, presumably, some small balance stood to my credit. But I did not apply to the executors.

On February 17, we struck camp and set out on the long march to Laikipia, a Masai guide having been sent by the kindness of Mr. Hobley. But that expedition was not destined to be accomplished. We ran into a period of tropical thunderstorms. Intense sun-heat all the morning (temperature 98 degrees in our tents) would be followed by a thunder-burst, with diluvial rains and a sudden fall of 20 degrees within an hour. This brought on an attack of my old enemy—fever, followed by dysentery. There was no alternative but to abandon the venture and fall back upon the railway.



STERNUM OF OSTRICH.  
Showing entire absence of a keel.

## CHAPTER XIII

### ELEPHANTS

PASSING over tedious days spent fighting with fever at Nakuru—days while tropical thunderstorms raged every afternoon and I was held up a prisoner in my tent—an incident occurred that altered all our plans. There arrived direct news of elephants—news on which we could rely; the elephants, moreover, were close at hand. Within five-and-twenty miles a big herd had been seen on the Molo River to the westward, and were reported to be moving across us towards the north-east.

Now throughout that season of 1905-6 herds of elephants had been rambling here and there within our British territories, and their presence at various points had already been reported to us. Hitherto, however, all such reports had been more or less indefinite, and in every case the distance considerable. Elephants, we knew, move fifty miles in a night—our own extreme mobility being twenty; hence all seductions had hitherto been declined. But here the case was wholly altered. If the herd now reported—said to number forty—held the line of march stated, we lay almost on their flank, and, by a smart move, might cut them out.

It was a clear chance—the chance, maybe, of a lifetime—and we seized it. Though personally ill and weak, we were into the saddle and away by daybreak. Our plan of campaign was to march direct on Lake Solai, a marshy *vlei* lying some twenty-five miles to the north-east among the outliers of the Laikipia Range, and which was known to be an occasional resort of elephants—in the hope either

to cut their spoor on route, or, alternatively, to find the herd at Solai itself.

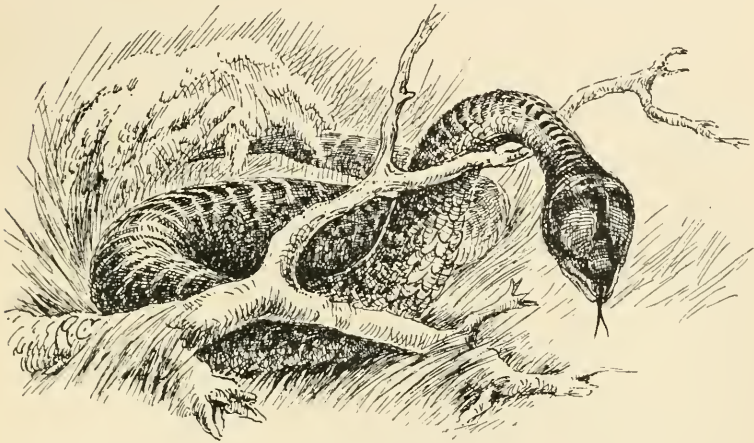
After rounding the crater of Meningai, our course lay up that broad upland valley we had already traversed in 1904 (p. 48), and leaving the safari to pursue the direct path, we deflected with our gun-bearers into the wooded foothills of the northern slopes. Therein, during that morning, we encountered evidence of elephants on a scale the like of which we have not seen before or since. For miles this forest was absolutely devastated—wrecked: huge trees overthrown, one upon another, their limbs rent asunder; cedars and cypress, mimosas and acacias torn to shreds, the tall grass trampled flat; while, amidst the ruin, chewed branches and disgorged masses of bark and fibre everywhere littered the ground. We could plainly distinguish places where several elephants had worked collectively to overthrow some extra strong tree. This destruction had no relation to the herd of elephants we were now in search of; our men reckoned it dated a week previously, and our own judgment confirmed that view; yet we enjoyed the excitement of pushing forward through the wreck, picturing to ourselves a vast pachyderm at every forest-opening! We also struck quite fresh spoor of buffalo, though we saw nothing except waterbuck. In the belt of brushwood bordering the veld below East-African Bohor reedbuck were now numerous, though none were seen here in 1904, and W—— shot a couple. We also killed to-day a puff-adder.

This country, eighteen months previously, had been full of Masai with their cattle, sheep and donkeys. Now these savages had been “removed” into the Laikipia Reserve; their kraals were burnt and deserted, while elephant, buffalo and other game had reappeared.

At midday we halted on the Alabanyata River, intending to push on at 4 p.m.; but to our unspeakable vexation, the usual thunderstorm burst, torrential rains obliged us to encamp, and forbade all hope of further advance that night. A second shock followed. As



dusk fell, we observed through the pouring rain *another* safari approaching up our valley. They presently encamped a mile or so below us. This signified nothing less than a serious crisis. After deep consultation held, we decided that, being ahead, we would maintain that position at all costs, and accordingly gave orders to mask tents, extinguish all fires, and to strike camp at 3 a.m. next morning.



PUFF-ADDER.

Length 4 ft. ; thickset and sluggish, with flat head like a toad ; but its bite is deadly.

*February 23.*—This eventful day began with a two-hours' scramble in black darkness through pathless forest and jungle, and shortly after dawn we struck the spoor of a solitary buffalo bull. This being quite fresh, W—— followed it towards the right, taking my tracker, Kenana (who alone knew the route to Solai), with him. The safari being on lower ground to the left, I rode on alone with my two gun-bearers, Mabruki and Salim, and a syce. Suddenly there recommenced that terrible tropical downpour, driving in our faces on the bleakest and most bitter gale I ever remember in Africa. It was worthy of the Hardanger Vidden at its worst, and in half-an-hour I was seized with a fresh attack of fever.

Being all separate, without means of communication, aggravated the miseries of the moment; spirits fell below zero, and the whole venture, in my then state, now appeared sheer madness—suicidal. Hope was all but dead within my breast when Farra, the syce, stopped and, pointing through the viewless torrent along the hillside, whispered, “Kifaru!” (rhinoceros). The excitement of that word effected wonders, renewing life and hope and pulling me together. After a short stalk I descried a vast bulky form, half hidden amid thorn-scrub on the slope above. The head was not in sight; but indeed through that driving mist and deluge all details were invisible—one could scarce see to distinguish the foresight, and the ball struck very low, behind the fore-leg. The rhino whipped round and vanished as a rabbit might, giving no chance for a second shot, but after galloping 100 yards up-hill fell over, squealing, and was dying ere we reached the spot. This was a female, with only poor horns, though those details could not before be seen. Both lungs were penetrated. These organs, in a rhino, extend low down.

An hour later, while trudging along in flood-water that surged ankle-deep down the valley-floor, we descried three men approaching from the opposite direction. They proved to be my brother, with Ali and Kenana, on their way to Solai. But we also thought we were proceeding thither! Obviously one party or the other was hopelessly astray. But for that purely fortuitous tumble-together I should inevitably have continued walking on in the wrong direction, till finally “benighted”—soaked, ill, without food or shelter; it was a narrow escape. Such are the risks one must take in wild lands.

It was nearly noon when the rocky valley we were traversing opened out into a broad basin, with a shallow reed-embowered lake in its midst, the whole encircled by stony mountains; and we saw, sheltered by a cleft in the western escarpment, our white tents established at Solai.

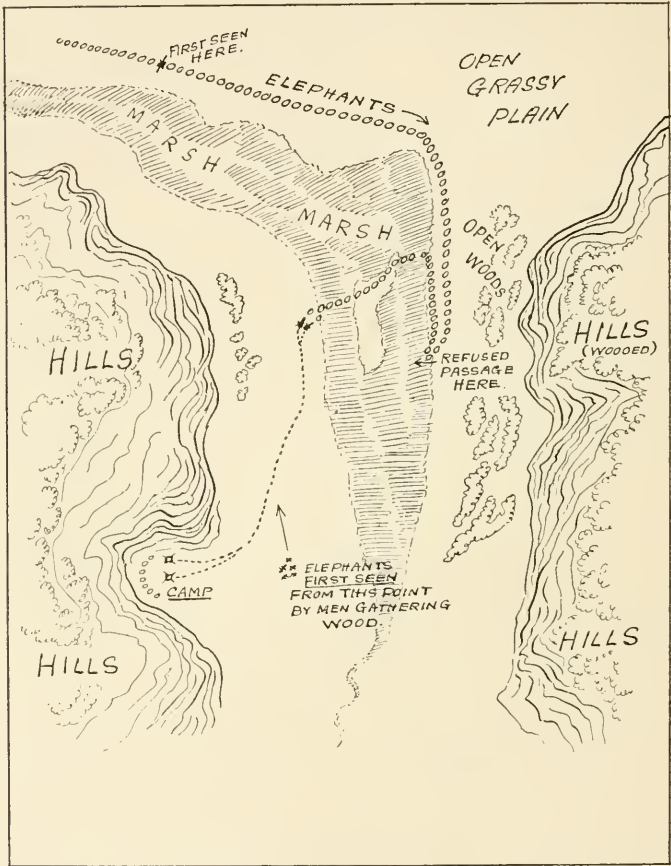
Thankfully we ordered lunch to be ready in half-an-hour, each meanwhile retiring to his tent for a warm bath and change. But during that half-hour the crisis arrived. Within ten minutes, an excited black head had pushed itself through the flap of my tent, exclaiming those magic words—"Tembo! tembo!!" (elephants).

Then from our tent-doors we saw a memorable spectacle—across that hill-girt plain beyond, hard by the gleaming marsh, and not 800 yards away, marched a column of forty elephants.

Hastily we pulled on again the soaking raiment, and within a few minutes were away. The elephants slowly filed across the mouth of our valley; then, wheeling towards us, advanced straight up its centre. Within ten minutes we were only separated from them by the width of a marsh, 200 yards across, which, overgrown with rank green flags, ran down the centre of the strath. Both my men proved so excitable that I pulled them down and placed Ali Yama in sole charge. He was coolness itself, and made a masterly approach. We presently took cover behind a single low bush from the middle of which grew a mimosa-thorn, and some fifty yards from the green flags. A steady breeze blew from the *vlei* straight up the valley, and remained unchanged throughout the entire operation.

Upon arriving exactly opposite this point where we lay watching them, the column of elephants came to a halt, and for several minutes stood there, evidently in consultation—it hardly seems an exaggeration to say in "conversation." Then they resumed their course, holding up the valley; while we followed, keeping level with them, on our side the marsh. Presently they halted again, and, after further conversation, apparently decided that the former spot was, after all, the more favourable to effect their passage of the marsh; for, wheeling on their tracks, they marched back thither in column, and presently, with great deliberation, commenced to cross to our side. We had meanwhile, for

half-an-hour, enjoyed magnificent views of the whole troop, and had made out at least two first-rate bulls, one in particular riveting my attention by the splendid



SKETCH-MAP OF SOLAI, ILLUSTRATING OPERATION WITH ELEPHANTS.

ivory he carried, and which he was wont to display to perfection by jaunty tosses of his head.

The point they had selected for their passage possessed the advantage—we noticed this afterwards—of a half-dry islet midway across.

The huge animals took the treacherous bog in

column of six abreast, the big bulls in the van, and their line extending 100 yards to the rear. Surely a more stirring spectacle in wild-life was never presented to human eye!

We had, of course, regained our former position, and now sat squatting behind that tiny bush within a few yards of the nearest flags. But with that wondrous scene enacting before our eyes no thought was spared to considerations either of tactics or of safety.

Obviously the changed course of the elephants, now advancing directly upon us, had wholly altered the strategical situation. Beyond a doubt we should, at this moment, have retreated to some point at which we should still retain control of operations. By continuing to hold a false position, we presently lost all freedom of action and left ourselves to be enveloped, within a few more seconds, between the masses of advancing monsters.

Lucky it was that the bulls came first. Had the prohibited sex headed the column, it is neither pleasant nor useful to speculate on what might have resulted.

So directly upon our position did the unconscious elephants advance that, upon landing, the head of their column had actually to divide so as to pass our bush, some on either side. Within a few seconds the leading bull on my side (the left) towered over our low shelter not twenty yards ahead. But this first-comer was not the real monarch of the troop. His tusks, though long, were thin and ill-formed, crossing in front. The monster tusker on which my heart was set, I knew, came second. It had been agreed that I should fire the first shot; but at that critical moment, while I waited an instant longer to get a clear sight of No. 2, my wretched gun-bearer, Mabruki, giving way to sheer "funk," fired my second gun close past my ear—deafening and, for a time, half-stupefying me. At the shot, the two great bulls on my front (the nearer being then fourteen yards off) stopped short, raising their heads and spreading their huge ears laterally as a barque sets



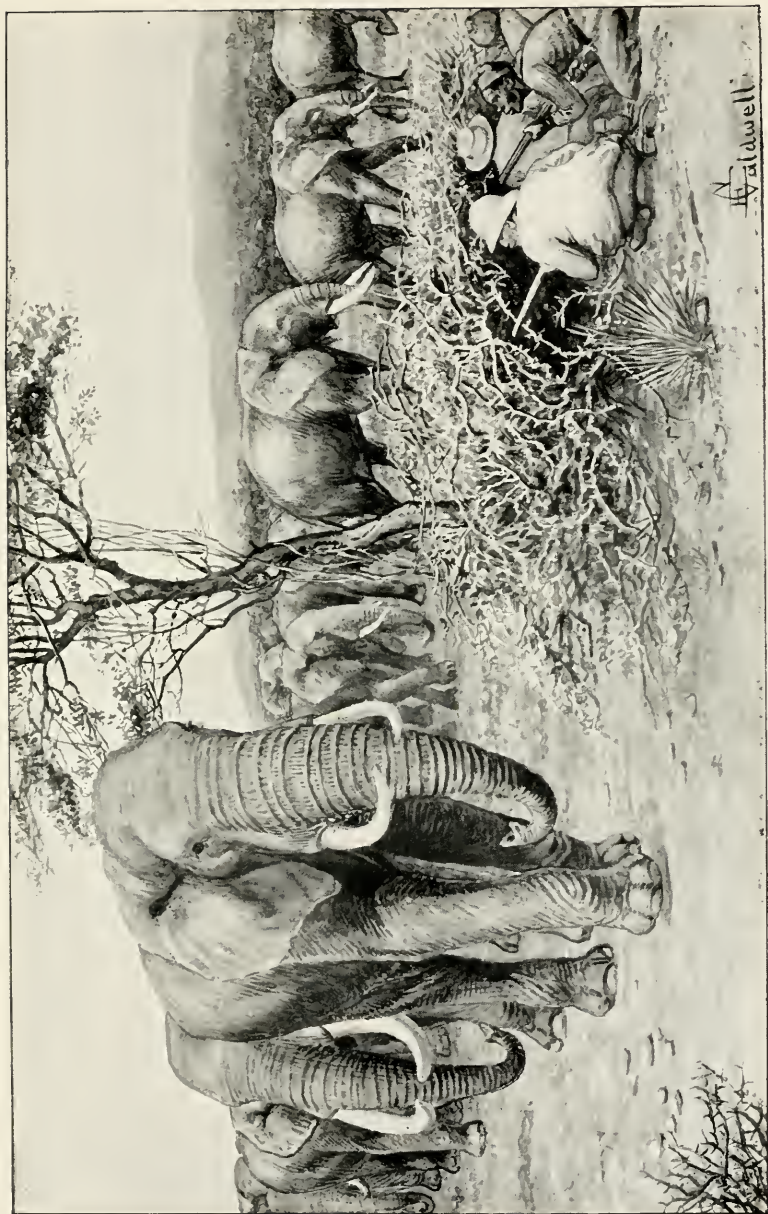
stunsails. For six or eight pregnant seconds they stood still, looking around them with majestic deliberation, and then . . . slowly turned away.

They had not seen us, simply because we were so near. As a matter of fact, the elephants, all this time, had been looking far beyond us—over our heads.

By inspiration, during that crucial interval, we all lay motionless. Then, so soon as the elephants wheeled to retire, I placed my two barrels (.450, solid) into the big tusker at twenty-five yards, aiming rather low behind the shoulder. He staggered and stopped, receiving a third ball a trifle higher up, when he moved slowly towards the marsh. Seeing that he had enough, I placed two more balls in the ribs of the next biggest bull, then moving three-quarters off, when the two retired by themselves to the left, presently entering the reeds alone, beyond the main herd.

My brother meanwhile had devoted all attention to the other big bull, the second best in the company, which had passed on his side of the bush, following the lead of two cows. This grand elephant I now saw sink stern-first among the green flags, remaining upright, dead.

The main mass of elephants were now retiring most deliberately through the bog, on the same track by which they had advanced; but my two stricken bulls, straggling to the left, lagged in the rear of the herd. We followed on through the flags in pursuit, when a badly-hit cow elephant, bleeding at mouth and trunk, turned out on our right, blocking our advance. She stood, full broadside, in front of W——, who dropped her with a single shot in the temple. Running past her, I presently overtook my big bull standing still, stern on, in the marsh. On finding himself pursued, he turned on us with cocked ears and upraised trunk; but in that treacherous bog he was slow in coming round, giving time for a careful aim at about seventy yards. The ball struck close behind the orifice of the ear, and the champion of the troop was mine. His very death



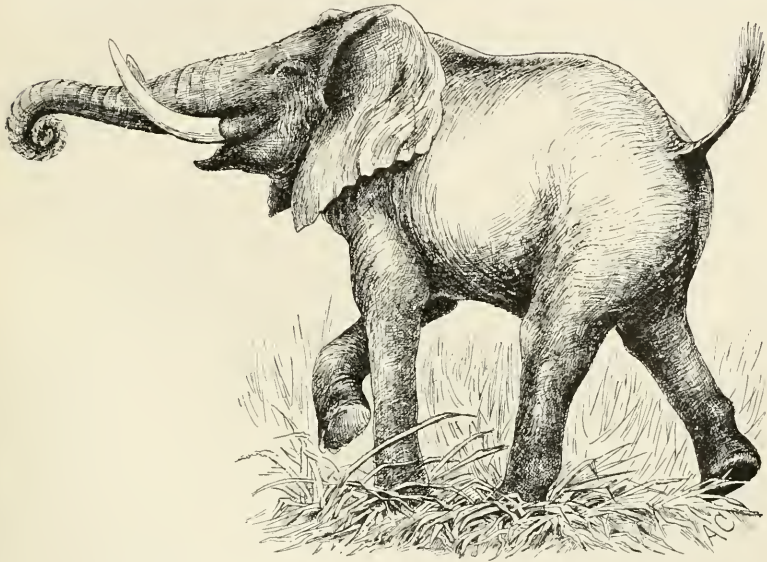
Atawell

ENVELOPED.



was majestic. He seemed to rise up forward, the curved trunk held high in the air; then, with slow sidelong motion, gently collapsed stern-first till he finally fell over, lying like a dark-red mountain towering over the green flags.

Hurrying forward past him—with hardly time even to glance at those glorious tusks—and running easily on



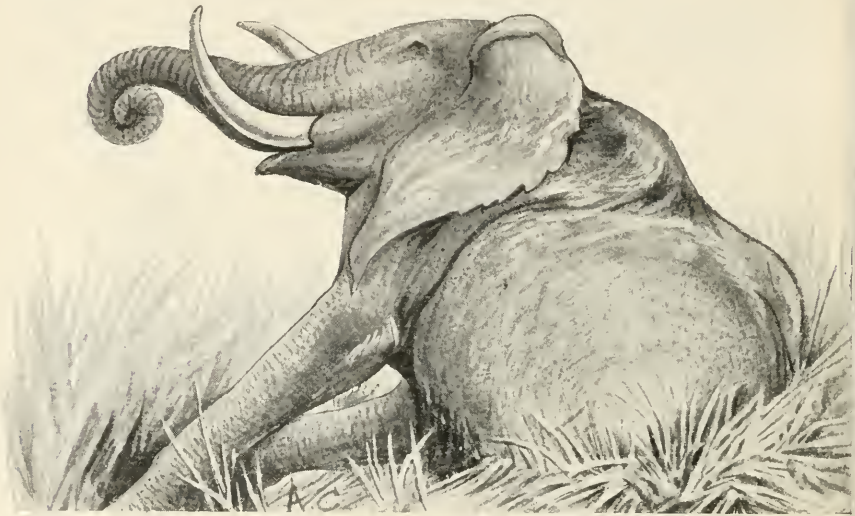
“TURNED ON US WITH COCKED EARS AND UPRAISED TRUNK.”

a broad causeway of broken-down reeds (while the elephants plunged and struggled in bog), we soon overhauled the second wounded bull. He also, at seventy yards, turned on us with cocked ears and a shrill shriek. “Shoot,” said Ali, “he’s going to charge.” But his end was at hand. A ‘450 solid knocked him backwards over—passing through the hollow top of one tusk where embedded in the skull (near the eye). He struggled to regain his feet when W—— gave him a finisher, and he fell with his face to the foe.

Four enormous elephants now lay dead—three behind us, the fourth fifty yards ahead. Of this last,



however, we found it impossible to take possession, owing to the aggressive attitude and dangerous temper now displayed by the main troop, which had ranged up in solid phalanx just beyond the fallen bull. No sooner had they regained firm ground than the whole demeanour of the elephants changed. Instead of retreating passively, they now faced about in open defiance, formed in battle array, ready to take the offensive. With trunks upraised on every side, ears cocked, and a chorus of



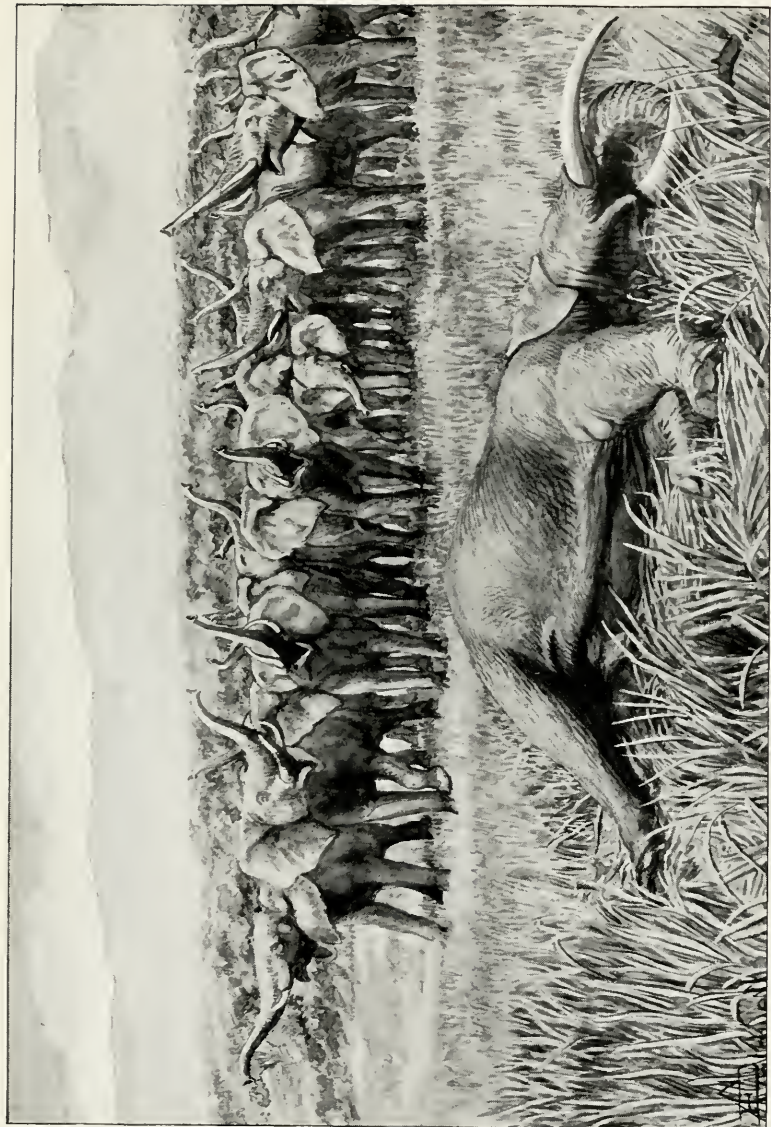
“COLLAPSED STERN-FIRST.

explosive grunts varied by shrieks of rage, there was no mistaking their temper; and after watching the magnificent scene for a few moments, we decided to retire, abandoning our last prize to the enemy. There were, in fact, no more good bulls among the herd; so we retreated campwards—to lunch, passing by the three huge carcasses lying like islands among the reeds.

The affair had occupied probably no more than a hundred crowded minutes—many of these as full as whole epochs of routine existence; and the above pages describe the main facts as such can be put down on



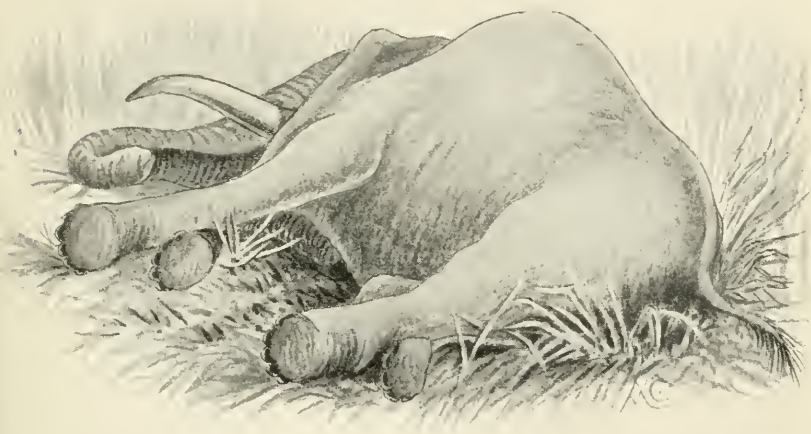
THE  
WORLD  
OF  
THE  
FUTURE  
BY  
J. H. P. ...



FURTHER ADVANCE DANGEROUS—PRIZE ABANDONED TO ENEMY.



paper. The sensations aroused, though they may be realised in imagination, cannot be printed so. Nor can the degree of danger be defined, since the temperament and conduct of elephants differ. No two need be alike. These, for example, retired at the crucial moment; but in my own former experience on Lake Baringo (p. 68), a "lone bull" charged at once on scent alone, though otherwise unmolested; and instantly repeated the charge a second time, after being wounded. Here again, at Solai, only a few weeks before, a fatal accident



had occurred.<sup>1</sup> Beyond all doubt we enjoyed unusual good fortune in thus encountering our elephants, not only in broad daylight, a steady breeze, and open country, but also taken at disadvantage in treacherous bog. Still there was, following on Mabruki's insane shot "into the brown," a period of supreme danger, when for some seconds all our six lives hung in the balance. Had the elephants then seen us—when almost under

<sup>1</sup> An Englishman, as related to us, had found and stalked a single bull elephant, unaware of the presence of six others among bush on his flank, and to whose view he had thus unwittingly exposed himself during the stalk. On his firing at the bull, one of these six at once charged; and, the repeating mechanism of his rifle jamming, the poor fellow was straightway caught and killed.

their trunks—nothing could have saved us. Picking out three bulls from among forty beasts necessarily involves risk.

The day's bag thus totalled—

4 elephants,  
1 rhinoceros.

Estimated dead-weight, 25 tons; actual weight of ivory brought into camp, 300 lbs.; value, say, £200 sterling!

That afternoon and the following day we spent in measuring and photographing our prizes. Of the four elephants, one only admitted of accurate dimensions being taken. This, by good luck, was the biggest bull of all, which lay fully extended on his broadside—the other three having fallen either upright or in such positions in the bog, with legs bent or buried beneath them, that measurements were impossible.

The following figures, taken conjointly with the photographs herein reproduced, should serve to give some idea of the size of this giant of the modern world.

ELEPHANT BULL.

	ft.	in.
Height in straight line (shoulder) . . . . .	11	1
Length, tip trunk to tip tail . . . . .	24	3
Girth at shoulder . . . . .	14	10
„ of foreleg at upper part . . . . .	5	8
„ „ forefoot . . . . .	4	10
Ear, horizontal width . . . . .	3	8½
„ vertical height . . . . .	5	9½

It should be added that an elephant measuring 11 ft. at withers will probably stand 12 ft., or possibly 13, *in front*, when aroused and with head erect, as those two stood before me to-day. Their huge ears, in addition, each spreading out near 4 ft. laterally, give the elephant an apparent width of, say, 10 ft., by a height of 13 ft. ! See frontispiece.

The tusks of my monster bull were a beautifully symmetrical pair, the longer measuring 7 ft. 1 in., by 17½ ins. in girth. They weighed 137 lbs. the pair.



BULL ELEPHANT EIGHT YARDS LONG.



WALTER'S BIG BULL.





Length exposed from gum, 4 ft. 7 ins. ; widest distance apart in curve, 2 ft. 6 ins. ; between tips, 2 ft. 2 ins.

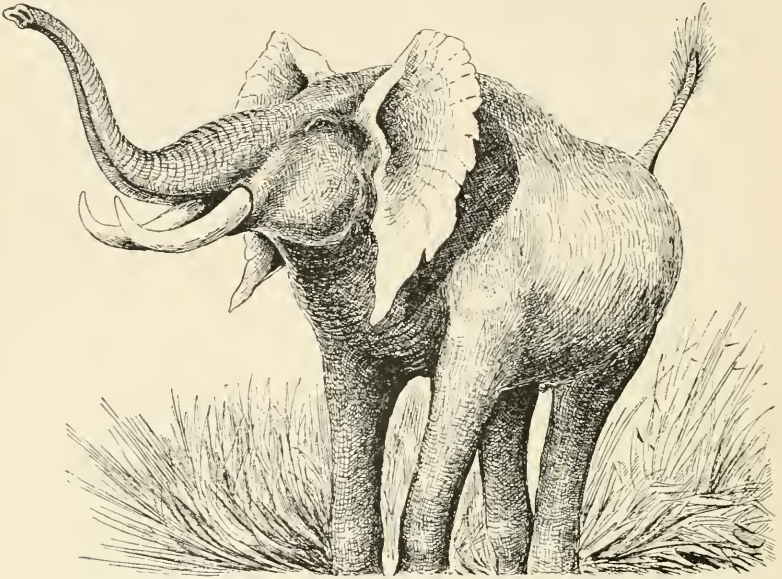
The longer tusk of my brother's big bull measured 6 ft. 2½ ins., by 16 ins. girth. This pair weighed 93 lbs., one tusk being broken at the tip ; those of the third bull 44 lbs., and of the cow 28 lbs. : total, 302 lbs.

With regard to the latter, neither my brother nor I had shot at an animal of the wrong sex, the bull-elephants being easily distinguished from cows, even as seen from astern, by their superior height—towering an apparent fourth over the females. This unfortunate animal had undoubtedly received her wound in the first instance from Mabruki's reckless shot. Grievous to add, she was followed by a well-grown calf, about 4 ft. high. This we endeavoured to capture, but the *toto* proved altogether too big. On our approach, the determined little beastie (it must have weighed half-a-ton!) came on in most savage style, cocking his ears and screaming, till we were fain to leave him alone. We heard him calling during that night, but by morning he had gone.

Immediately the shooting was over, I discharged Mabruki on the spot, taking the rifle from him and landing him a brace, right-and-left, on his snub nose to drive the lesson home. Next time I saw him, six weeks later, he was working in a docker-gang on the wharves of Mombasa. The punishment seemed severe—the fall from gun-bearer at twenty-five rupees a month to labourer at six—and for a moment I relented ; but second thoughts clinched the matter. Mabruki was totally disqualified to act as gun-bearer, and should never have been rated as such. Already, within two months, his want of nerve and self-control had twice placed us in jeopardy, and he should not have the chance of doing the same to others. Nor should East-African shooting-agents “sign on” gun-bearers unless they have reasonable certainty in believing such to be safe and reliable men.

The last view we had of our elephants, they were slowly retiring northwards through the scattered

trees that fringed the drier ground, and with the same majestic deliberation and coolness that they had displayed throughout the encounter; while beyond them, above the tall green flags of the *vlei*, we descried the



ADIEU!

backs of a *second* herd slowly moving towards the east. We regretted afterwards that we neglected to take any steps to ascertain which way they finally went, for heavy rains soon obliterated the trail. But in that moment of supreme triumph we were perhaps too exhilarated—in a state of mental intoxication after those deep draughts of excitement and success.

## CHAPTER XIV

### HUNTING ON LAKE SOLAI

#### CHANCE OR SKILL?

THE operation of extracting the tusks from the massive rocky cranium of an elephant can be effected in two ways. The more expeditious method is to hew them out with hatchets; but this necessarily involves some injury to the ivory, one-third of which is embedded in the bone. By allowing three or four days to elapse, decomposition will have loosened the hold and the teeth can then be drawn out.

Being in no special hurry, we elected to await the latter result, the more readily as we found ourselves in a lovely situation, commanding within reach of our camp both wood and water, mountain, marsh and plain. We decided to spend a week exploring our environment and its wild life.

This decision caused general joy among our men, who were gorging on elephant-meat. Strangely, they preferred the internals, and had driven a "drift" like a mine-shaft through the ribs, thereby entering bodily into the interior and excavating the coveted titbits. We had thought of experimenting on the trunk ourselves, till informed that only after forty-eight hours' cooking would the meat be soft enough to cut with a hatchet. We contented ourselves with the undercut of hartebeest and cutlets from some delicious little steinbucks and oribi that W—— had shot on the hill.

On one of these days I was specially pleased to secure a fine cock ostrich, breaking the thigh at 200 yards—thus killing the biggest bird on earth and the

biggest beast within a short league of each other! We also observed ostrich-poults, half-grown.

Another day, however, was memorable for shattering to atoms any complacent sentiment of self-assurance that success only follows on deserts, or that achievements are always proportioned to skill, perseverance, or other personal qualities. Those who exclude the element of chance from their creed may be interested in some notes from that day's experience. So far as the writer can remember, they stand unique in over forty years of shooting-life.

It was a dull misty dawn, with a wet haze hanging over the marshes, whence resounded the sonorous cries of the great Kavirondo cranes, while all around our camp the bush was alive with the matutinal chorus of doves and francolins and the cackle of guinea-fowl in the thorny-scrub above. Telling my brother I intended to shoot an eland, I set out with my gun-bearers in the half-light. We ascended the hill behind our camp, and were walking in single file towards the west when I espied close ahead a waterbuck bull (*defassa*) feeding in an open glade surrounded by bush. Strangely, with three pairs of keen eyes on the look-out, none had detected him in time; for before the rifle could be handed, the big buck, though unalarmed, had moved forward out of sight, still feeding. Eventually the shot was one of those, in bush, at "horns only," with a conjectural body beneath that may be standing in any conceivable relation thereto; the distance also was much greater, and the result a miss. The direction of the spoor coinciding with our intended route, we followed on; but presently coming on the crest of a sudden escarpment, sighted four hartebeest on the plain far below. After a detour, I got a steady lying shot, and the best of the four (300 yards away and 200 feet below) dropped and lay motionless. It cost us half-an-hour finding a way down those crags, and then . . . that bull was gone! Neither spoor nor blood served us on such ground—half rock, half bush; and we saw him no more. Holding our course, we shortly viewed what we





W — AND DEAD ELEPHANT.



*M. E. C., Photo., at Houxy.*

ELEPHANT'S EAR.



judged to be the missed waterbuck, a mile ahead and on the right shoulder of a gentle pass, or depression in the foreground, which at that point dipped sharply away to lower levels beyond.

On reaching our marks, where the view broadened out on either side, we could see nothing of our water-



WATERBUCK BULL.

buck, though feeling sure he was somewhere on our right and not far away. While spying, a hartebeest bull with fine head showed up on the left, and a shot at the neck dropped him—my hope in thus firing being to secure the supposed waterbuck with the second barrel. There ensued a crash among the bush on the right, and far away the expected animal appeared, halting to gaze, full broadside, as he gained the open. Salim tried to take the smaller rifle (.303) from me and handed me the .450. His reason I did not follow; for at the long

range (350 to 400 yards) my eyesight had failed to recognise that this was no waterbuck after all, but a grand old eland bull! The .303 bullet struck with the sounding "clap" that usually signifies a good hit; the eland plunged forward, staggering almost to earth, but recovering, carried on towards the plain below. The



ELAND BULL.

line he took, however, viewed in relation to the configuration of the mountain-barrier ahead, suggested the idea that we might, by very hard running, cut him out—that is, we could take the chord while he ran the arc of a circle.

There was not a moment to spare—not a second to recover our poor crippled hartebeest: a cruel exigency drove us to leave that splendid animal a prey for vultures and hyenas.

Half-an-hour of the hardest going and we had reached our point—alas! too late. The spoor, crossing a shallow pool, showed where the quarry had passed but a minute before, for on hurrying forward, we caught one glimpse of his bulky form disappearing round a bluff ahead.

Having heard the impact of the ball so distinctly, and having two excellent trackers (Salim and Kenana), I had every confidence in recovering this grand prize; a promise of good backsheesh further stimulated the men, and for three long hours we held the spoor forward, the trackers backing each other beautifully on either flank at each slight check. We were, however, rarely in difficulty, and indeed had made good at least six miles without a sign of the stricken beast ahead, nor had he once laid down.

Towards noon, while passing outside a great conch-shaped recess scooped out of the impending mountain-side above, a sudden snort brought us up, and from some high bush fifty yards ahead there protruded the ugly armed snout of a rhinoceros. The wind was right and he had evidently not seen us, for his head turned to and fro, gazing; so I gently brought my glass to bear. He carried a good head, the two horns being more even in length than in my previous specimen at Elmenteita. Motioning to Salim, he handed me the .450, and with it (thoughtfully) a couple of "solid" cartridges, one of which I directed to the junction of neck and shoulders, though, owing to intervening bush, I could hardly see so far back. The shot was followed by heavy and continuous crashing among the brushwood—presumably the death-flurry; but we were soon undeceived on that point, when two rhino dashed out straight ahead and at full gallop made direct for where we stood in the open. A couple of yards to the left was a thin burnt bush, a mere skeleton, behind which we jumped, and five seconds later the pair (which I now saw were a big cow with long thin horn, and a three-parts-grown calf) passed where we had a moment before been standing, but without seeing us, though so near.



At the same moment I saw there was another pair, both big brutes, crashing through the thicker bush on our left, some thirty yards away, while beyond them was yet another rhino on the inner slope of the conch aforesaid. This last, however, displayed a totally different demeanour. He was either overwhelmed with rage or convulsed by some violent emotion; for he ran hither and thither, rearing up forward, snorting and grunting, and presently reached the sky-line, where he presented a picture of fury spoiling for a fight, wheeling round in every direction and with his stump of a tail stuck vertically upright.

Meanwhile, I had necessarily kept an eye on the first pair, lest after passing us so near they should have got our wind; but after a single halt about a hundred yards away, to my infinite relief, they held their course along the valley.

Salim at this point called my attention to yet another rhino—the sixth—standing quite motionless in full outline on the ridge ahead, but further away, say 200 yards.

Concluding that the enraged rhino on the ridge to our left must be the wounded animal, we proceeded with due caution in his direction—so soon, that is, as the second pair, which had passed between us and him, had got sufficiently far to leeward to leave us a safe road. We had already arrived within sixty yards or so—rather too far to make sure, as the beast still kept constantly on the move, snorting, rearing and wheeling—when we lost sight, and hurrying to the crest the rhino was nowhere in view: nor was there blood on the spoor. That, however, with pachyderms, is not conclusive. An ordinary body-wound is rapidly closed by their solid hides, and no blood is given. Of course, should the lungs be injured, the animal bleeds from the mouth.

To make perfectly certain that a rhino had not fallen dead to the shot, we returned to the original spot, but found nothing there. We then put in another hour

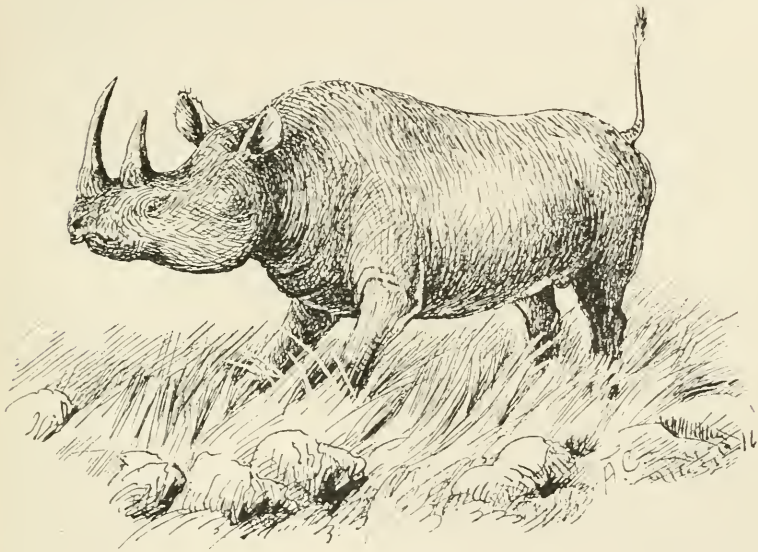


H. Aldwell '07

A CHARGE OF THE HEAVIES.



on the eland's spoor, passing on our way the sixth rhino, still quiescent on his ridge and attended by numerous tick-birds. The eland now led us upwards and westwards, on to open veld where we could see for miles stretching away towards the Molo River, and as nothing was in sight, after four hours' spooring, we were reluctantly obliged to abandon that quest as quite beyond hope.



“SPOILING FOR A FIGHT” (RHINO).

It was now nearly two o'clock. In five shots that day I had wounded four of the finest game-beasts in Africa, and had not got one of them. I concluded it was *Kismet*, and sat down to lunch on biscuits and cold tea while reflecting on the extraordinary events that had just occurred. What was their inner history? What strange frenzy had possessed them, to set all those rhinos charging madly *down-wind*? Wild animals seeking safety in flight, invariably point their noses *into* the wind; that is their safeguard. Naturally one had

concluded, on first seeing their wild rush direct upon us, that they were deliberately charging to the shot—to the spot whence the sound had come—presumably to exact retribution. But their never stopping, their holding that wild career afar, negatived any such solution. 'Twas better so; but it leaves their precise motive, their line of reasoning, a mystery.

Determined to risk no more “regrettable incidents” that day, we set out direct for camp; but finding that the spoor of the angry rhino led in the same direction, as a mere matter of duty we followed on it, though I had lost all faith in my star.

Salim presently stopped, pointing ahead, and I saw among sere grass, 150 yards away, something that appeared yellow. Both my men declared this to be the wounded rhino, lying down. I felt convinced they were mistaken, though rhinos certainly do take extraordinary colours, dependent on the nature of the mud in their latest wallow. We had crept in to 100 yards when something like a big paw slowly stretched heavenwards, then disappeared. “Lion?” I said, but both men persisted in their former verdict. Now it was perfectly open prairie all round, devoid of shelter or refuge of any kind, and in such ground it would be unwise to “walk-up” a wounded rhino—especially such an evil-tempered beast as that we had just been watching, though one need not hesitate to take-on a lion so. While firmly of opinion that the yellow object ahead *was* a lion asleep, I, this luckless day, allowed myself to be overruled by the two hunters, who (with their keener, savage eyesight) were equally positive that it was the rhino—indeed, Salim even explained how the beast was lying.

It was *Kismet* once more. On firing (aiming, as for a rhino, rather low), up sprang a lioness, and within three bounds disappeared in a dip, while all around the veld was full of bouncing lion-cubs as big as setters—six or seven of them, the men declared. The whole family had been lying asleep in the grass, and, had



we crept in, they might have been approached within fifteen yards—though fifty would have been near enough.

By way of concluding this unbroken record of catastrophe, it may be added that a few weeks later I was informed by the Hon. Cyril Ward that he had come across, on the Molo River, a newly-killed rhinoceros corresponding in description to the above, and a couple of days later than the events here described. The distance between the two points would be some ten or twelve miles.

During the campward march, querulous, despondent thought was deflected into new channels by a curious incident. Afar on the veld fluttered some white object. Thinking it might be a signal placed by my brother directing us to a message from him—a back-veld post-office—I rode thither. It proved to be the landmark of a new farm-boundary! Even these remote wilds were being bought up by enterprising settlers. In a few years, presumptively, cattle and sheep will have displaced the lion, the rhino and the eland. Such is British progress, and it is right. At home under “Free Trade”—be it for better or for worse—success in pastoral or agricultural pursuits has long been impossible; such occupations were deliberately sacrificed generations ago, to the interest of manufactures and cognate industries. At home—so long as our islands remain the workshop of the world—the artisan and mechanic may flourish: the farmer and flock-master never. Whether these latter can profitably be translated to equatorial uplands, time and hard experience alone will show. The energy and enterprise are not lacking, as this incident tends to show; but Equatoria presents problems, and perhaps difficulties, which differ fundamentally from those of Canada or the Antipodes. May they prove soluble! The converse a naturalist may be allowed to regret, namely, that when British flock-masters shall have settled-up the African veld, we cannot also translate the displaced elephants and rhinos, the lions, antelopes

and the rest, to wander on the depopulated hills of England.

As a fitting finale to this, the most luckless day of a lifetime, there followed a nightmare. During the small hours there occurred in dreams an attack on our camp by yelling Masai, whose assegais came hurtling through the canvas walls and stuck quivering in the earth around. On awakening I found myself sprawling on the ground-sheet, seeking for a gun. W—— had reported seeing during the day some Masai cattle by the lake-side. Their presence there had puzzled us, as all the Masai should now be in the "Reserve," fifty miles away. Hence these woes.



BUSH-SHRIKE (*Dryoscopus nundensis*)—*Ibis*, 1901.

## CHAPTER XV

### HUNTING ON LAKE SOLAI—(*Concluded*)

#### WATERBUCK, WILD-DOGS, WART-HOG AND RHINOS (RETURN TO NAKURU)

THE following is a note from my brother's diary—

“A special object with me was to procure a good example of the sing-sing waterbuck, small herds of which we had observed feeding both at dawn and dusk on the grassy flats far away beyond the marsh. These antelopes, however, are not seen by day, retiring then into the thicker bush.

“Shortly after daybreak, we marked a herd of eight, including one fine bull, which, it seemed, might be stalked from within the cover of the marsh itself—this being embowered amidst miles of waving rush. This operation we proceeded to carry out, but promptly encountered unforeseen difficulty. For this bog was over knee-deep in clinging mire, overgrown with dense marsh-plants, flags and papyrus, and intercepted with trailers that entangled every step. Moreover, a herd of elephants had recently lingered therein, leaving cavernous footprints half-a-yard in depth and filled with a compound that it would be an injustice to filthy water to describe as such.

“After half-an-hour of these joys, we descried, above the bobbing bulrushes ahead, the tips of those coveted horns. But while trying to secure a better view, despite all our care, the animals took alarm, moved away, and finally offered but a long and difficult shot which produced no result.

“Rejoicing at least to escape from the mephitic

morass, we eagerly plunged shorewards, mired up to the eyes, but looking forward to a few moments' rest on *terra firma* ere resuming the chase. But that was not to be our lot. Hardly had we cleared this purgatory than we found ourselves surrounded by a pack of hunting-dogs that kept bounding up among the bushes on every side. I tried my very hardest to kill one, but they were not easy to hit, so rapidly did they appear and disappear among the covert. Three or four shots produced no visible effect, though, even had one or more dogs been



A PACK OF WILD-DOGS.

killed, they would necessarily have dropped below our sight.

“Presently a big black-and-tan dog, coming out on an open, reared upright to see what was going on, and received a bullet in the head that dropped him ‘all of a heap.’ On running forward to the kill—which involved a long detour and finally plunging waist-deep through a channel of black mire—we observed another of the pack limping away with a broken leg.

“Following on the spoor, which was easily held on more open ground beyond, we had just entered some thin wood, when Ali touched my shoulder, pointing forward through the trees. There, cantering back

directly towards us, came our eight waterbuck ! Sinking behind a friendly boulder, we watched them come with frequent halts, standing to gaze back over their shoulders. It was obvious that they had been startled by the retreating wild-dogs, and, luckily for us, in the presence of this new danger they had forgotten the old. For they were quite unsuspecting of our proximity, and all attention was concentrated on their rear, whence they clearly feared attack. A memorable picture they presented as they trotted past close below, the bull leading—a true monarch, majestic in massive form and stately carriage. It was, however, downright bad luck for him to find a foe at each end of the trail, and a bullet on the shoulder ended his career.

“Though I had never before seen hunting-dogs (*Lycan pictus*) in life, yet I instinctively recognised what these brutes were, partly by their half-white brushes flashing over the scrub as they puzzled out the scent, apparently interested rather than alarmed at our intrusion.”

The photo overleaf shows the big dog above mentioned, a fine adult, clean in fur, and with none of the mange that often disfigures these animals.

Besides waterbuck and ostriches, there were also around Lake Solai a few Jackson's hartebeests, and the marsh swarmed with the East-African Bohor reedbuck (*Cervicapra wardi*). One day, riding together round the *vlei*, we were directed by the vultures to a good male specimen of this latter which had been killed the night before (as the pugs showed) by a leopard. On the hills above we shot steinbuck, oribi, klipspringer and wart-hog.

Every morning at dawn we had sent out scouts in different directions to report on what game they could discover—and especially to locate a good rhino bull ; but no satisfactory information was forthcoming by such means. One day we had together explored a long rock-girt valley that penetrated the hills towards the north-



west, without seeing anything beyond the usual game—a few zebras, ostriches, gazelles, and some klipspringers on the crags—when about ten o'clock we sat down beneath a mimosa and sent our gun-bearers over the rocky range on the west to investigate what lay beyond. Presently to us smoking in the shade they reported three rhinos in the valley beyond, and having scaled this ridge we verified the fact for ourselves, the rhinos looking absolutely pure white (owing to the calcareous mud they had last wallowed in). They were a couple of miles away, down the wind, and moving further in that direction—involving a long detour. The wind, moreover, was shifty and treacherous, so that many changes in tactics became necessary before we gained a commanding position.

The scene of operations was a flat-floored valley two miles across, walled-in by low abrupt hills and overgrown with thin open forest, mostly thorns. Beneath a group of these—shady, flat-topped mimosas—two of the rhinos had, during our long manœuvres with the wind, drawn up to spend their midday siesta. The third we could not see, but knew he was in the bush somewhere near by.

The feature of this stalk was the extraordinary callousness to threatening danger, and its manifold signs, displayed by those two great pachyderms. Owing to the constantly-varying wind, puffs of which came from opposite airts within a few seconds of each other, we had twice unwittingly given alarm to some groups of hartebeests and gazelles<sup>1</sup> that happened to fall under our lee. On one of these occasions several antelopes galloped past within a comparatively short distance of the sleepy monsters, but without arousing their suspicion. Then, during the final approach, when we were already close in, a band of shrieking plovers (*Stephanibyx melanopterus*)—the

<sup>1</sup> These gazelles were all *G. granti*, except a single example of *G. thomsoni*—the only one seen at Solai, which clearly lies north of their range, though they are abundant a dozen miles to the southward.



WILD DOG WITH TWO SPOTTED HYENAS.



*Marq. de la Scala, Photo.*

RHINO.—FROM LIFE.



noisiest bird in Africa—sprang from an intervening marshy patch, rending the air with shrillest and most persistent vociferations. All Nature seemed to join in common warning, yet no heed did those rhinos take.

They stood side by side, the nearer beast (which was the larger of the two) covering the head, neck and part-



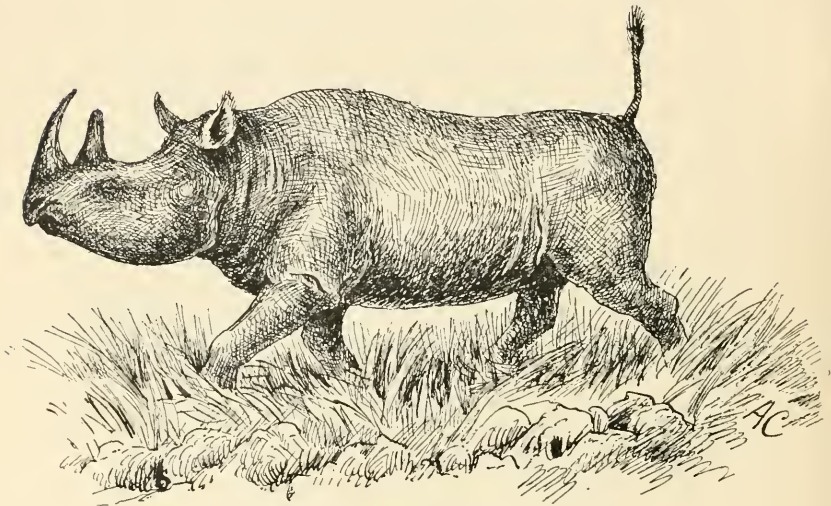
SLEEPING BEAUTIES.

shoulder of the one beyond, while the trunk of the sheltering mimosa concealed from view *both* the central pairs of legs—conveying an absurd appearance of but a single animal, and that about eight yards long! We had crawled in to a thin tree about fifty yards away, and W——, who fired first, placed his ball on the shoulder of the nearer beast, while I, instantly thereafter, directed mine as far forward as was visible of his companion. At the shots, both rhinos whipped round, with snorts and amazing agility, and for several seconds, being at such



very close quarters, matters became lively enough till another shot dropped the bull with a broken hind-leg.

The cow-rhino meanwhile made a determined dash as though to get round under our wind, circling back on the left at a ponderous gallop, and hidden by intervening bush and clumps of tall grass. She, however, gave the situation away by her snorting and the crashing of brush-wood. Running in that direction, I got a momentary glimpse of her between two tall grass-clumps, looking



“THOROUGHLY NASTY.”

thoroughly nasty, with head carried high and tail standing erect. So threatening appeared this rush that (as she was already within short distance of the wind) it was necessary to take some risks, and at the next opening in the bush I gave her a quick shot which fortunately sent her headlong to earth. The .450-solid struck the top of the shoulder, smashing the spine, and she dropped in an upright position. The two rhinos lay dead within some eighty yards of each other.

The third rhino, which, though nearly full-grown, was probably the produce of this pair, showed up outside



the bush beyond ; but after beginning an offensive demonstration, we were glad to see retired whence he came. The two rhinos carried blunt massive horns, measuring around the base, No. 1, 18 ins. (front),  $17\frac{1}{2}$  ins. (hind), and, No. 2, 18 ins. each respectively, the lengths being 15 and  $14\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

We suffered much inconvenience and discomfort at this period from heavy thunderstorms, which deluged our camp every afternoon ; while owing to its marshy environment, it was infested by swarms of jumping frogs, which even invaded our tents. At night the display of electric flash-lights in the heavens was often superb.

Loading up our ivory, skins and other trophies, we struck camp and left Solai on March 1, holding for the Alabanyata, and securing a good female of *B. jacksoni*, with 16-in. head, on the march. On the river named we found General Baden-Powell encamped, and now learnt (to our regret) that it was to the defender of Mafeking that we had unwittingly showed a "clean pair of heels" on the night of the 23rd (p. 152-3). The General rode up as we were off-skinning a grand bull of Neumann's hartebeest, carrying 19-in. horns, that W—— had just shot from the track. The bullet had entered the eye at a very long range, and we were rather surprised when we noticed its species, further west than we had expected to find it.

Riding on together, we presently began to notice, far ahead, large troops of zebras, many hundreds in all, steadily moving up the valley towards us. None having been observed here on our way up ten days before, this was evidently a migratory movement in progress. There were also several kongoni in sight, and "B.-P." presently went after three big bulls on our left. An hour or so later, a retrograde movement among the troops of advancing zebras attracted my attention. Several herds were galloping wildly back in the direction whence they had come. Thinking that it might possibly be a lion that had thus thrown them back in confusion,

I brought my glass to bear: and there, apparently in the midst of the flying zebras, rode the General, who had thus utilised those animals to screen an advance on his three kongoni. It was a clever manœuvre, and he well



BRINGING HOME THE IVORY.

deserved the splendid 23½-in. head of *Bubalis jacksoni* that it produced.

Note that at this point—that is, due north of the crater of Meningai—the range of these two species of hartebeest overlaps. We had, as stated, that morning obtained an example of Neumann's hartebeest (which we had hitherto only found to the east of Nakuru) a league or more to the westward of the spot, near Costello's Shamba, where this Jackson's hartebeest was slain.

This veld is frequented by wart-hogs in considerable numbers. One day as we rode along together, a big solitary boar was observed to disappear in a patch of grass. This grass, on nearer approach, was seen to be of no great extent, perhaps a couple of acres. My brother, accordingly, went round to the leeward, while, with a couple of "boys," I rode through the covert from above. Presently the boar broke away with a rush from under my pony's feet, snorting and grunting. It took the desired direction, and dropping to the shot, lay

apparently dead. As we approached, however, from converging directions, the pig suddenly sprang to his feet and charged on W——, who was within a dozen yards. A shot in the nape terminated this gallant effort. As a rule, the wart-hog, with all his formidable armament, seems less apt to take the offensive than his European cousin. One of these animals, shot by my brother, was entirely devoid of the usual warts on the lower face, while the set of the tusks was upright.

W—— crossed over the rugged shoulder of Meningai in one more effort to secure the elusive Chanler's reedbuck, but again these grey phantoms kept their skins intact.

One day, being near the western summit, we went to look into the crater of Meningai, and an appalling abyss it is—perhaps as big a hole as exists in the crust of our planet. A few hundred yards below the external lip there is a lower rim, and having descended to this, we could look down into the full depth of the chasm, apparently 2,000 or 3,000 ft. The width may be perhaps three miles across, and the sides slope inwards and downwards as regularly as a funnel, the lower depths apparently tree-clad and bushy.

We attempted to descend, being at first deceived by the apparent simplicity of the undertaking. Not for long, however, were we left in doubt. It was the distance that had hidden the terrible rugosity of its depths from view—depths that are practically impenetrable. But we little dreamed (as we have since been positively assured by men who do not lightly accept fabled tales) that that vast abyss is still one of Nature's own sanctuaries. Elephants descend its depths to breed therein, rhinos take their ease amidst subterranean bush, while lions occupy its many inaccessible strongholds. Men, it is said, had descended and been lost—probably eaten! Such, we were told, is the crater of Meningai.

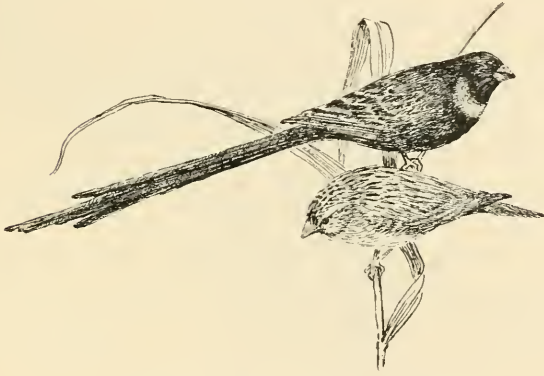
That evening at Nakuru we enjoyed an odd experience—an incident perhaps unique in the process of

colonising even such savage remnants of mother-earth as British East Africa. We were dining at the Dāk bungalow, when two squatters—"new chums"—came in and joined us. They had, so they informed us, walked in from a "farm" they were holding some twelve miles out—that is (if we understood aright), they were, and had been for a fortnight, "personally occupying," within the meaning of the Act, a stretch of land that had been allotted to an absent buyer. Let us hope that that absentee was not a land-speculator, a species which, in these new colonies, should be absolutely debarred from taking root. Well, the first yarn these two new chums told us, with self-evident veracity, was that during their march-in some object lying on a hillock had attracted their attention. On cautiously approaching this, they had discovered from an adjoining bluff that the mysterious object was a lion, asleep, and not over forty yards distant—a sort of "soft chance" that systematic hunters travel hundreds of miles, often in vain search, to fall in with. Our friends, however, after full consultation, decided to withdraw, not being sure of their weapons. "Will a Snider kill a lion?" was their question—the answer to which could only depend upon the man behind the Snider. Probably their prudent decision was justifiable.

During dinner one of the pair, a big powerful young fellow "fra' Glasgie," rather amused us by a woebegone description of his life on the veld, and of the miseries he had endured from the nightly serenade of wild beasts. They had no house, only a tent: and not once, according to his account, had he dared during a whole fortnight to close an eye. For a time, naturally, we thought he was romancing—making a good story of it—but soon enough the vividness of his complaints brought home to us all the state of abject funk to which he had brought himself. As his partner tersely put it, "The fear of death was on the man."

We were, nevertheless, surprised enough the next morning when his pal (Lindsay) came along to our camp

and reported that the poor wretch had bolted—gone coastwards by the midnight train, leaving in the lurch his partner, his engagements, everything! With a huge frame and a tenor voice, but the heart of a mouse, he had evidently concluded within himself that he wasn't the man for Africa, and there he was right.



WHYDAH-FINCHES (*Penthetria ardens*).



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE MAU FOREST

#### AFTER BUFFALO AT KISHOBO

TRAVELLERS on the U.R. enjoy glimpses of equatorial forest when, on passing Limoru, the line takes that headlong plunge of 1,200 ft. down the escarpment into the Rift Valley. Then, after traversing the "Equatorial Trench" by Naivasha, Elmenteita and Nakuru, on the opposite side there begins the other forest-region—that of the Mau.

None can view these forests, even cursorily from a carriage-window, without amazement—such is the density of their growth, aloft and alow. At home, heavy evergreen foliage above stunts, if it does not kill, plant-life beneath. Here both forms flourish, tier above tier, such is the exuberant vitality of the tropics.

But it may be asked, How can animal-life exist amidst matted viewless jungle, and how can hunter penetrate? The hunter cannot penetrate—saving only in limited and laborious degree; while game do not abide therein, except specialised forms such as the yet unknown forest-hog (*Hylochaerus*), said to stand four feet in height, and the almost unknown bongo (*Boöcerus euryceros*)—neither yet shot by white man.<sup>1</sup>

The Mau forests are, nevertheless, a chief stronghold of the East-African buffalo. These, however, live, not in the forest-depths—though they utilise them for shelter and refuge by day—but upon the "opens" that

<sup>1</sup> See subsequent notes on this subject in Chapter XXIV.

characterise the densest and most gloomy jungles, as it is the purpose of this chapter to explain.

Buffalo we had not originally included in our programme, having already fair specimens from the Pungwee River, but decided on devoting a week or two to the Mau forest, where Lord Hindlip had kindly promised to lay us on.

On March 5 we encamped at Kishobo, another "World's View," standing at 7,000 ft., and overlooking



spacious panorama of tropical woodland, waste and wild. In the foreground, apparently close by, though twelve miles away, glisten the waters of beautiful Lake Nakuru, nestling beneath the sombre crater of Meningai; while, far beyond, to the north and east, the great cordilleras of Laikipia and Kamasea pierce the heavens. South and west all is forest, forest, forest.

Readers of *A Lodge in the Wilderness* will recall Musuru, situate in fancy on this same Mau highland. There world-politics in their broader plane were elucidated; here we viewed a more practical stage—the first stage—the rough-hewing, the tearing by violence from savage nature of that dominion allotted to man—to

those men, at least, who can seize it. In East Africa one sees forest and jungle assailed, torn from their age-long sleep, and replaced by stock-farm and grazing, with ordered rows of byres and dairies, tillage and paddock. Such detail passes my own knowledge; but it interested to watch a peer of the realm (and a peeress too) wrestle in handgrips with a fearsome revolving machine—I forget its name, but it produced butter. This by way of half-an-hour's relaxation before dinner.

Surely there are thousands in the Mother islands to whom a strenuous life in the Greater Britain overseas, whatever its risks or prospects, is preferable to dancing constant attendance on poverty and "unemployment" at home, where our rulers, blinding their eyes to plainest signs of world-progress, are content to truckle to sordid "Trades-unions" and such-like (because these control millions of mechanical votes), and elect to follow a mob instead of to lead an empire. "Wake up, England," before the awakening comes from without.

Southward from Kishobo commences a forest-region that extends into the Sotik country, four or five days' march, and I know not how much beyond. This, we understood, was a haunt of buffalo; nor were we misinformed, for hardly had daylight broken than I was on burning spoor. These buffaloes—there were three of them—were less than half-an-hour ahead, as evidenced by "sign."

The spot was one of those "forest-opens" that characterise this region—about 100 acres of short sweet grass walled-in by densest timber. Into this timber led the trail. It could not go elsewhere, and our eyes told us there was no game outside. Not knowing myself intimately the ways of buffalo, I had misgivings as to the safety of following close upon their heels into viewless thicket. Not so my companion, a Somali hunter lent me by Lord Hindlip. He treated buffalo as we might rabbits, and, reassured by his total indifference, I followed in. The beasts had not gone far. All they

sought, apparently, was shelter from the sun; for within 200 yards they were lying asleep. Even that short crawl involved unspeakable labour; but presently I heard stertorous breathing and low grunts apparently not ten yards ahead. It was then that the misgivings alluded to arose in my mind; but my black companion coolly continued to peer and spy into the mural foliage before us. Another yard or two we crawled forward, prone beneath interlacing boughs and brambles, then slowly raised ourselves behind a sheltering trunk. Still we saw nothing. But the buffaloes either saw, smelt or heard us, for there ensued a mighty crash, a bushy tail whirled aloft, there was one glimpse of a broad black stern, the curve of a huge horn—and they were gone.

They did not go far, for four times that morning we overhauled them, each time with a similar result—or worse. For never again, though always close up, did I get even so slight a view as on that first approach—and then it was little more than merely a vanishing tail-piece.

The idea in thus persistently following was the off-chance of finding the game, sooner or later, in more favourable position—that is, being interpreted, that we might see through some lucky crevice in the cavernous foliage sufficient black hide (necessarily almost within arm's length, since we could see no further) to enable aim to be taken.

We had, as stated, “jumped” buffalo four times. On the first three occasions they were the original trio; but the last was a single lone bull whose spoor we had cut, and to whom we had transferred attention. Him we followed till noon, and never in my life have I traversed such jungle or undergone more cruel labour. Words are but wasted in attempting to describe the alternations of crawling, climbing, wriggling and struggling through, over, or under thorny brakes.

Wherever light could penetrate, the bracken grew to ten feet in height (measured). The new growth, now coming, was about three feet.

My brother's experience was similar. The forest, by day, was clearly impossible.

One evening, while yet clear daylight reigned, six buffalo emerged from the forest and were feeding in an "open." We felt that at last our chance had come, and



A HORNBILL OF THE MAU FOREST.

got well in, but alas! all were cows. At dusk we heard another within the bush-wall, and reached a spot to command his exit; but ere he appeared half-an-hour later, at 100 yards, heavy clouds, with solid rain, had obscured the slight moon, and we could not see to shoot.

Obviously these forest-opens afforded our only chance. They varied in size from mere pastures of 100



acres to extensive glades, but everywhere walled-in solid—no interval of scattered trees fringed them. The game never entered these opens till after dark, and quitted them before a sign of dawn had appeared. The alternative was to try by full moonlight, and as that period was due within a few days, we utilised the interval by a journey towards the Sotik country.

This is a region of wondrous virgin wood; but impressions of these Central-African forests can hardly be conveyed in words, though Stanley and other vivid writers have described them. It is the sense that one feels rather than actually sees, since all beyond the narrowest limit is shut out from view by tier upon tier of overarching foliage, pendent, prehensile, parasitic, and upright. Hard by rise the bolls of colossal cedars,<sup>1</sup> half hidden amid enveloping evergreens and lianas; yet their summits, 200 ft. above, are away in another world—a world of sunshine and blue sky beyond our view. Below, all one sees in a half-light is a few yards of the bases, soon to lose themselves, like pillars of the Mezquita, in the vaulted roof overhead.

Hour after hour one rides through these forest-aisles overarched with leafage, dark and eerie as some cathedral crypt, while the rarefied air chills to the marrow, and the altitude, moreover (8,000 ft.), renders breathing oppressive to man and beast alike. In gloomy recesses, shut out for ever from the sun, grow ferns much as one sees at home—bracken and blechnum, polypody, parsley-fern and others; besides brambles, ramps, primroses, thistles and stinging-nettles.

There are moister dells where cedars and forest-trees give place to dense growth of bamboos of such giant dimensions that even *their* summits pass beyond our view, towering up probably eighty feet or more. The grey tree-moss, "old-man's beard," hangs in pendent festoons, while an incessant siss-siss-siss of infinite insects and the

<sup>1</sup> Though they are called cedars, and their wood is reddish and of the same sweet resinous smell as cedar, yet I believe these big trees really belong to the Juniper family.

croaking of arboreal reptiles runs on like a lullaby. Brilliant butterflies flit in sunny glades, but in the forest there is little other sign of life. We saw no game therein, save a chance bushbuck and the spoor



TRUMPETER HORNBILL.

of very large pig. These, our men assured us, carried no tusks. Of the bongo we saw not a sign.

Although unseen, we were, however, conscious, by a recurrent ringing clamour, that there existed living creatures high above—practically in another world. These strident outcries we at first attributed to eagles, perhaps correctly. But presently we realised that other feathered neighbours, hardly inferior in size, dwelt over-

head. These were huge black hornbills. Merely fleeting and momentary were the glimpses we could get with a spyglass; but, such as these were (and the idea was confirmed by those clarion notes), we concluded that these were the great trumpeter hornbill (*Bycanistes*



A HORNBILL OF SOTIK.

*buccinator*), whose portrait is roughly portrayed opposite. Whatever they were, these hornbills were numerous enough in the dense forest. A few days later, in some rather more open country towards Sotik, we enjoyed a better view of quite another hornbill, which sat on a dry branch plunged in reverie. In this case the "casque" was not a semi-separated superstructure, so

to speak; but rather the reduplication of a beak already grotesquely exaggerated—as shown on previous page.

In the Sotik country we also observed many of the smaller kind of hornbill (*Lophoceros*), as well as crimson-winged touracos, dark-olive wood-pigeons (*Columba arquatrix*), bush-shrikes (*Dryoscopus*), black



A TOURACO OF SOTIK (*Gallirex chlorochlamys*).  
The Zambesi purple-crested loury.

flycatchers with pure white breasts, and a few other species quite unknown to me.

To return to the denser forest. Among the few small birds that enliven these solitudes, several were obviously tits—their climbing and prehensile habit and incessant activity assured that identification. But many of these were almost black in hue—as befitted the gloom of this under-world. Their colour-scheme suggested an adaptation to environment; but that view is not borne out by further examination. For the characteristic, it appears, is common to several of the African *Paridæ* whose haunts are not confined to the darkness of the tropical forest.

We were disappointed in seeing nothing of the

beautiful black-and-white Guereza monkey (*Colobus*) in these forests. The only sign of its existence met with was a skin brought me by a Swahili on the Molo.

One night we encamped on an "open" where just previously Lord Hindlip had shot a buffalo bull whose horns measured, between inside bends, 45 ins. We saw nothing beyond a single bushbuck; but the grass here, not having been burnt, was rank and coarse in the extreme, most distasteful to game. The further west we went, the worse this feature grew—the rankness of the grass. At the furthest points reached, it looked as though it had not been burnt for centuries, and the total absence of spoor, old or other, showed that no game frequented that district. We therefore turned back towards the better-burnt "opens" near Kishobo, where we had already proved the presence of buffalo.

On these farthest opens grew lovely lilies, "everlastings," and foxgloves—though these are probably not their correct names.

Although the unburnt grass seemed to indicate a total absence of humanity, even in its lowest forms, yet on different occasions we met with evidence bespeaking the proximity of savage neighbours. Twice we found the forest-trail obstructed by trees purposely felled athwart it; and twice we fell in with native huts in the jungle. More primitive human dwellings could not be; they consisted merely of withy boughs stuck round in a circle, their supple tops bent across to meet over the centre—wigwam style. A few leafy branches served to cover in this frame—width 6 ft., height  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ft. Also, while lying awaiting buffalo at dusk, we both heard, or thought we heard, human voices, and we certainly did see the wreathing smoke of fires. There were savages of some sort in this otherwise lifeless jungle—presumably Sotik or other nomad Wandorobo. The Sotik tribe, it may be recalled, had broken out in rebellion some few months previously, but only made a



poor show of fighting, and were promptly reduced to submission.

So far this enterprise had not resulted in a single shot being fired. There yet remained the one great resource on which we still relied, to wit, the full moon. On returning to Kishobo, we arranged this last desperate effort—whole-night attacks on the buffalo by moonlight.



A TINY WOODPECKER.  
Olive-green above, grey below,  
occiput bright crimson.

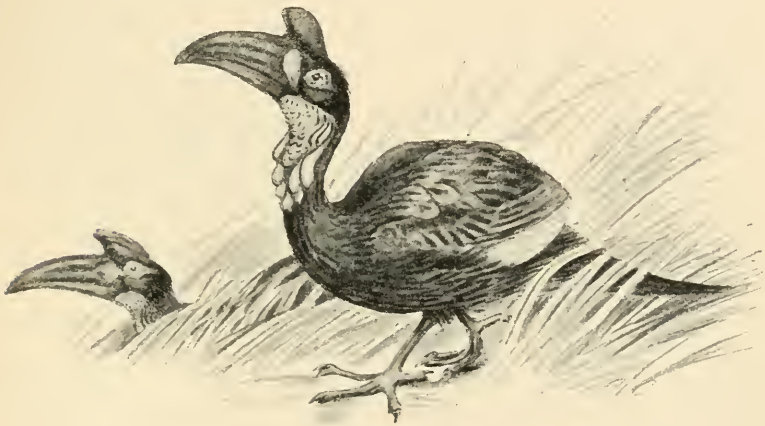
We each separately took light tents, with a couple of "boys" and a minimum of necessaries, and each encamped alone in gloomy forest-corners that commanded conveniently adjacent "opens."

While pitching my lonely forest-camp that afternoon, I noticed close by a curious, sombre-hued small bird with tufted bushy head and long black tail edged with white, that was quite unknown to me. Some tiny woodpeckers shared my grove, and a pair of barbets formed a study in bright hues—gold and crimson, set off by jetty black. Less welcome neighbours were huge millipedes, black and chestnut, with vicious-looking jaws. But there was no time to consider minor evils.

Confidence was not lacking, and hopes ran high; but, alas for this venture, heavy rains now set in, and each night purple-black clouds overcast the moon. Our trusted auxiliary failed. Both had similar experience. Within an hour of sundown that first evening we ran right into the buffalo close by—not fifty yards away, in the open. But nothing even then was visible, and the beasts stampeded, snorting, in the dark. My own diary that night records: "Lighter rains later, but still inky dark. Could see nothing, so returned to camp at ten, and had a pint of Giesler (!). At 2 a.m., thick, overcast

and raining—spoor showed that a big herd had passed the bluff close by, apparently only a few minutes before; followed on and again got close in—could hear them grazing and grunting, apparently within fifty to eighty yards; but no chance to see, much less shoot. Towards dawn fell in again, a herd of seven; but ere we overhauled them the beasts had gained the sheltering forest.”

That evening at sundown, a low booming call close by revived hope—though I feared it *must* be cows. No!



GREAT GROUND-HORNBILLS, ALARMED BY A PASSING EAGLE.

these were great ground-hornbills (*Bucorvus cafer*), big birds like turkeys, with red pendent wattles, strutting towards us. It was curious to observe how they squatted low to earth when a pair of Bateleur eagles passed overhead on their way to roost. A few minutes later night-jars appeared in splendid aërial gyrations. These birds (*C. frenatus*) kept up their “churring” all night, and at dawn our common British willow-wren was in half-song on March 6—the same feeble ditty with which he bids us farewell at home before finally quitting British shores towards the end of August.

It irks to dwell on failures; but there occurred during this period at least six occasions when *one* “turn of

luck," one half-hour of bright moonlight, might have changed all and given us what we sought. No such aid occurred: it was perhaps kismet once more, and this time on the "thumbs-down" side.

The off-chance offered by the full moon was annihilated when her gentle light—never too clear for night-shooting—was obscured by murky storm-clouds, and we could no more.

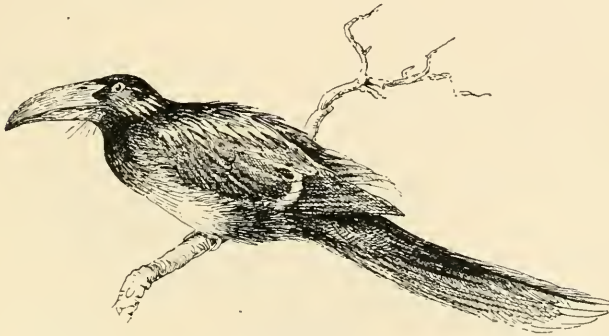
The following are my brother's impressions of this venture:—"I regret now that we did not spend another week or so pushing forward into the Sotik, although I admit that, at the time, it seemed a forlorn hope.

"When one reads of buffalo-shooting in the olden days, right out in the open, truly it astonishes one to think how astutely the great bovines have adapted their habit to modern necessity and developed a secretiveness not naturally theirs.

"Against this, I had the services of a native tracker whose skill in woodcraft was alone worth some sacrifice to watch. Through the densest thickets of these tangled forests wherein buffalo now spend the livelong day, he led me again and again right into the beasts all asleep in their dark and gloomy stronghold. What followed each time was a snort and a mighty crash—they had gone, ploughing a way through bush and brake, and never once had I the luck to see them.

"When the moon waxed full, we tried to cultivate a closer acquaintance on those open glades of natural pasturage which are of such frequent occurrence in these forests, and on which the buffalo feed by night. We spent great part of our nights watching these spots, and a weird experience it was. As darkness overshadowed the scene, the first peculiarity that attracted attention was a succession of hideous shrieks, issuing, it seemed, from various points of the compass. We wondered what animal, or bird, could possibly be guilty of such enormities, and were but slightly reassured on learning

from our tracker that the sounds emanated from Sotik Wandorobo—a tribe of forest-dwellers, one of the lowest of human types. We had previously observed trees entirely stripped of bark, which, we were told, these poor creatures had eaten; and also found their huts in the forest—small, conical structures of green branches stuck into the ground, bent over, and interlaced with smaller branches, hardly bigger than dog-kennels. Each hut had a slightly raised platform at



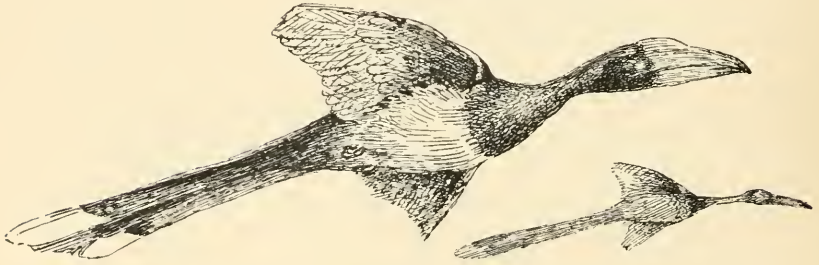
ANOTHER HORNBILL (*Lophoceros*).

the further end inside; so that these wild men of the woods evidently disapprove of sleeping on the bare earth.

“Although these savages were aware of our presence and followed us throughout our nightly wanderings (as we discovered by their tracks covering ours on the dewy grass at dawn), yet they in no way molested us, nor did we ever see them.

“It was into these solitudes that we penetrated, each with a few followers and a light tent apiece, that was pitched amidst foliage so rank as to be invisible at twenty yards from any point of view—never could I have found my way back to mine but for our savage guides.

“Our quest finally failed, as, although shadowy forms of animals were occasionally distinguished by us in the moonlight, yet with an overcast sky and constant heavy rain, it was not possible to specify them. They might be cows or calves, we could not tell.”



HORNBILLS ON WING.



## CHAPTER XVII

### THE ATHI PLAINS

#### (1) FLYING VISIT IN SEPTEMBER 1904

THE rolling downs known as the Athi Plains are familiar to all travellers on the Uganda railway, and I need not stop to describe the spectacle of animal-life that can be enjoyed from the carriage windows throughout a distance of close upon 150 miles. Nowhere else on earth can wild game be seen to such advantage, in all the luxury of a corridor-carriage.

It was merely a flying visit that I paid to the Athi in 1904, since only forty-eight hours remained available for shooting before the homeward-bound train was due at Athi River station; and in that short time my object was to secure specimens of Coke's hartebeest and of the East-African blue wildebeest or white-bearded gnu.

Leaving Nairobi at 3 p.m. (September 17), and being mounted on a riding-mule, we covered that evening more than half of the nineteen miles that separate the tin capital from Athi River. On this march many hartebeests were seen, but all hopelessly wild, and the half-day closed blank.

Starting again before dawn, and riding in advance of the safari, I descried in the half-light some 400 yards ahead an ostrich that certainly had not been in sight five seconds before. This seemed inexplicable, but on riding to the spot, there lay eleven huge eggs scattered at random over a bare spot from which the grass had been roughly scratched away. Four selected specimens furnished excellent omelettes for my whole

retinue! Two other ostrich nests found that year by friends contained as many as twenty-seven and thirty-four eggs respectively. The cock ostrich, being black and conspicuous, sits on the eggs by night only, the brown invisible hen taking the post of danger by day.

As light strengthened the wide prairies were seen to swarm with game, chiefly zebras, gazelles and hartebeests—the latter fearfully wild; yet even at these great distances the striking difference in the form of their horns from those of *B. neumanni* was perfectly distinguishable. The latter diverge at an acute angle resembling the letter V, while those of *B. cokei* spread out laterally before ascending like two capital L's—**L J**—the second reversed.

All the hartebeests carry the head in a rigid upright position—that is, the long face, as viewed in profile, is held almost at a right angle with the earth; and the curious effect is accentuated (especially in *B. jacksoni*) by the set of the horns, which, rising from long pedicles in the same vertical plane, prolong the already extravagant length of the head.

The game being utterly inaccessible and my own time so limited, I resorted to taking some rather reckless shots. With shame I admit firing that morning more cartridges than on any other day in Africa. In the result, I “fluked” a bull with a ball between the eyes, and the next shot gave me a second—both at extreme ranges. Though big bulls, neither carried a first-rate head.

From the spot where No. 2 fell on the ridge of a rocky bluff we looked down upon the Athi River, its course indicated by belts of brushwood and tall forest-trees that fringe the banks. Spying from here, we made out a group of ten wildebeests, standing listless in a green corrie a mile away; but with a single old bull alert as sentry. These also proved wilder than wild, and stalking practically impossible. Though undulated, the sloping gradients of this veld are altogether too spacious, the angles too gentle, to afford any real advantage.

After many laborious attempts—all in vain—as a last resource we tried an appeal to the known curiosity of the gnu. As the string of great shaggy beasts went prancing and capering along a slope 500 yards away, Hamisi and I threw ourselves down flat on the grass just before the animals took a slight fold in the



THE SENTRY—WHITE-BEARDED GNUS.

hill-face. We could then barely see their backs and wildly-whirling tails as they scampered along, half-hidden in the hollow beyond. The ruse, however, so far succeeded that the troop, pausing in mid-career, wheeled half round, dashed up the intervening slope and pulled up, facing us, on the crest.

They now presented a fair shot at 300 to 350 yards; but Nemesis stood at my elbow, exacting the full price for that random shooting of the morning. It had

demoralised me, and now my "sighting" was too high, and the ball passed harmless overhead. Off scampered those weird wildebeests, their bucking heads and whirling tails half seen through clouds of dust. I watched them for miles, and knew that my star had set. In the broiling noontide heat, I walked down to our camp on the Athi.

Under the shade by the river stood four waterbuck—the first of the white-ringed species (*Ellipsiprymnus*) that I had then seen in East Africa. These I left severely alone, having fine examples shot in the Transvaal. There was one bull among them, but his head was poor, as are those of all his kind in Equatoria. For the 30-in. heads of this you must go to the tropic of Capricorn. Here, in East Africa, *Cobus defassa* is the master-form.

Work as I would that evening—and I spared neither my men nor myself—I could not retrieve the bungle of the morning; for, amidst abundant game, not a single wildebeest could we desery. My ten friends had evidently cleared out of the country, and no others remained within our radius.

Throughout these Athi Plains, and in wide areas of the Rift Valley, one notices that where the greatest abundance of game is seen, there exists, at this season (August—September), scarce a vestige of grass or verdure. Yet, hard by, lie stretches of coarse sour grass totally neglected and uneaten, and where no game can be seen. This latter sort of grass, with its flowering heads, resembles a crop of wild oats. Its special utility is not obvious, and it is hard work walking through it. The contrast is remarkable. The sweetness and rich quality of the other kind of grass is attested by the closeness with which it has, at this season, been cropped by the game. On reaching spots where great herds had been grazing, one marvels what they had found to eat on them. There is but naked earth, pulverised by a thousand hoofs.

Towards sunset I succeeded in getting two balls into quite the best hartebeest bull I had yet seen. Darkness

alone prevented our securing him that night, and when we did recover the trophy at daybreak—guided thereto by circling marabouts—the meat had already been devoured by a lion, whose pugs were distinct on the soft soil. Not a morsel remained to reward the thirty or forty vultures that sat around. Two hyenas watched their own interests from a high ridge beyond.

Before leaving camp on this, my last morning, I had



“CLEARED OUT.”

sent out scouts in three directions to spy for wildebeest, with instructions to report to me *here* (by the dead hartebeest) at the earliest possible moment. While we were yet busy with the kongoni, one of these men arrived with the news that a herd of twenty or thirty “Nyumbo” (wildebeest) were grazing one hour’s walk to the southward. Mounting the mule, I set off at once in the direction indicated. This was the first time I had ridden during this whole expedition, and, on coming among game, I at once noticed (1) that game took less notice of a mounted man than of a hunter on foot, and (2) that distance-judgment was simpler and more



accurate from the vantage-height of the saddle. I had scarce ridden a mile than I found myself nearer far to two first-rate hartebeest bulls than I had ever been in all my strenuous hunting on foot! They stood with heads up, watching me, but otherwise showing no signs of alarm. On arriving at a range judged (quite accurately) to be 125 yards, I slipped from the saddle and dropped both bulls with a single ball apiece. The second presently regained his legs, and, though receiving another bullet, moved slowly off some 500 yards, where he lay down. I could just see his angular bracket-shaped horns over a rise in the ground from near where we stood, so decided to leave him to stiffen while we off-skinned the first.

In case it may appear cruel to leave an animal thus in pain, I reply that this was the safest plan to secure him, and thus end his pain. To chase a newly-wounded beast hot-foot is a sure way to lose him.

With chagrin we observed half-an-hour later that twelve fresh animals had joined the wounded one, and that all thirteen were on foot. Hamisi's keen eye, however, saved the situation, for he never lost sight of the dark splash on the wounded bull's pale-coloured quarters, and presently I finished him with a ball in the neck at 180 yards. The three bulls secured this morning were all first-rate specimens of *Bubalis cokei*, their horns taping  $17\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $17\frac{1}{2}$  and  $16\frac{3}{4}$  ins. respectively. The span varied from 11 to 13 ins., and the basal circumference  $8\frac{3}{4}$  to 9 ins. Weight estimated at 300 to 350 lbs. apiece.

The hour was now 7.45, so, leaving some "boys" to bring in the meat and skins, I rode on towards the wildebeests, still two miles distant. Presently we sighted them, feeding beyond a wide grassy hollow. But what was my disappointment to find, on advancing, that in that hollow there ran the Uganda railway, which marks, at this point, the boundary of the Game-Reserve, and all beyond was sacred! For a moment I admit having regarded the situation with mixed ideas that may be

imagined. A minute's reflection and the law-abiding tradition prevailed; besides, am I not a member of the SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE FAUNA OF THE EMPIRE? which (despite the handicap of a long-drawn title) works hard to safeguard threatened creatures and to secure the provision of just such sanctuaries as that which now confronted me and my keenest aspirations.

After a prolonged survey with the binoculars, I left the gnus in peace, but with the determination to return another year to the beautiful plains of the Athi River. With my last shot in Africa I killed a Thomson's gazelle, and reached Athi River station in time to clean and pack rifles and enjoy a last *al fresco* breakfast ere the 12.30 train bore me coastwards. I had a travelling companion as far as Kiu in Mr. J. Donald, whom we had met six weeks earlier. D—— had just secured a lion on the Athi under the following circumstances:—Hearing a roar before dawn, he set out at once, and after daybreak heard it again. The lion was half-a-mile away, moving across the plain. On reaching an ant-hill, whence he hoped to find the beast within shot, as a precautionary measure D—— first peeped round the shoulder of the mound, and there, close at hand, espied the lion crouching towards him—each, in fact, stalking the other. The lion had mistaken the creeping figure of a man for some low-moving game—probably a wart-hog. A .303 bullet rather below the eyes settled the question.

Leaving Mombasa on September 22 by the German East-Africa Line s.s. *Kanzler*, and transshipping to the P. and O. *Marmora* at Aden, I reached home, and was salmon-fishing in Northumberland just three weeks after firing my last shot in Equatorial Africa.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A MONTH ON THE ATHI RIVER

#### (II) IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 1906

FIFTEEN months later, namely, towards the Christmas of 1905, we returned to East Africa, and this year commenced our operations on the Athi Plains. Riding out from Nairobi, we camped the first evening at "Nine-Mile Spruit," where snipe were abundant, also big francolin (*Scolopax nigripennis* and *Francolinus uluensis*); and W—— fired the first shot of the expedition at pelicans. We reached the Athi River, above "Lone-Tree," the following day.

Although the East-African brindled gnu, or white-bearded wildebeest (*Connochaetes albojubatus*), still formed one main objective, yet meanwhile our self-confidence—or pride, whichever it were—had induced us to place the lion in the forefront of our programme. The lioness we had already slain: the lion now formed our first ambition.

The higher plateaux of the Athi Plains usually drop towards the lower levels by the river in a series of broken steps; but this drop, at the point we had selected, is confined to a single escarpment, fairly abrupt and 200 to 300 ft. in height. At intervals of a mile or two, the face of this escarpment is furrowed transversely by deep and narrow ravines, which during the rains form water-courses draining the higher ground, and which also afford *at that season*, a favourite shelter for lions.

Four or five such ravines lay within reach of our present camp, while many more were accessible by shifting its position along the river.

Now, although lions abound on the Athi, yet neither

there nor anywhere else is the lion an easy prize—quite the reverse. The element of luck enters large. Both in South and East Africa men may spend years and yet never chance to see, much less to shoot, a lion. A newcomer, on the other hand, may fall in with a “soft” chance in his first week. There is here a system by which success may be made fairly secure, to which I refer later.

The first ravine we tried held a lion. We two were in ambush at its mouth, and had sent some twenty-five beaters round the flank with specific instructions to go in at the extreme head of the gorge. Instead, they had commenced to enter when only half-way up. From my position (we were commanding the outlet on opposite sides) I saw this lazy move, and at once checked it. The mischief, however, was done. The lion lay not far below the head of the gorge, and, although he remained quiescent till the beaters had arrived within 100 yards, he had fully appreciated the previous false move, and, instead of taking the direct course down the glen, he bounded up the steep bank on the south and gained the table-land above.

A mounted Somali hunter, whom I had placed behind on the chance of his being able to ride the lion to a stand, gave him a bit of a run, but the ground was bad and the start too great.

After this failure we always went one gun with the beaters—or, rather, 100 yards in advance—the other being posted at the outlet of each gorge.

It was exciting work for the advanced gun, standing in front of each dense clump of bush, or tumbled pile of rocks—often when two such holts were being beaten at once—while the crowd of yelling savages swarmed in from above or behind, and showers of stones came hurtling and crashing downwards through the covert. Many of these ravines, moreover, had a most “lionous” smell, which constantly induced a belief that the king of beasts was close by. But this scent was a deception, arising from an aromatic shrub.

During three weeks spent on the Athi we drove

dozens of these ravines, but, except on that first drive of all, never again did we see the coveted beast until the very last. Then a lioness bounding up in front of W—— (who was with the beaters), disappeared amid bush-clad rocks, and, as she never emerged on the lower side, where I awaited her, had evidently gone to ground among the rocks, whence we failed to dislodge her.

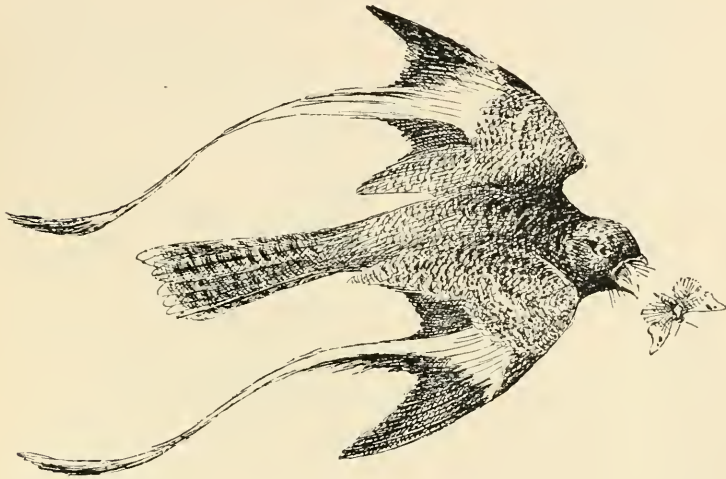
We put up, of course, plenty of other game, such as Chanler's reedbuck, duiker, dikdik, steinbuck and pig. On one occasion, from some huge pinnacled rocks, choked with heavy brushwood, which towered up, island-like, in the neck of a ravine, sprang seven hyenas within fifty yards. For a moment, I thought the great half-seen brutes were lions at last—and rather too many all at once. One of these rolled over to a Paradox bullet, and at the mouth of the gorge W—— made a brilliant shot at a second, killing one of a string of five that filed past at well over 300 yards. His first shot had struck the ground behind, but, by correcting the forward allowance, the second got well home.

Twice during these lion-drives we met with porcupines. The first, a male, was caught alive in a bush-filled donga by Mabruki—the same Mabruki who afterwards proved a source of danger, but who was always wondrous expert in this way; the second, though completely surrounded, managed to dodge a dozen active natives, and, by a series of bounds, and with its quills all rattling, gained refuge in a crevice of rock. The stomach of that secured contained grass, seeds and other vegetable-matter only.

Guinea-fowl and francolins sped down the glens like driven blackcock, and curious nightjars (*Cosmetornis vexillarius*, the pennant-winged nightjar) flicked up and dived back among the scrub, while our common English swallows filled the air. These were constant companions, snapping up, under our lee, the insects disturbed by the beaters. Other small British birds observed on the equator in January included wheatear, tree-pipit, yellow and grey wagtails.



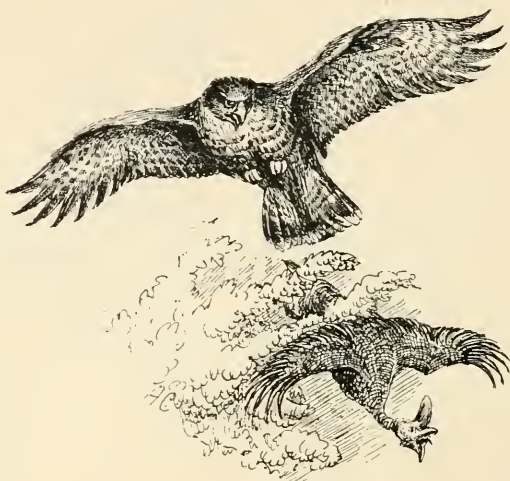
Notable also were the great eagle-owls that came sailing silently down the glen before the beaters—great mottled fellows, grey and black (*Bubo maculosus*), that perched on some boulder, and sat there snapping and seemingly inclined to resent the intrusion on discovering one close by. Either these owls or the still bigger and



PENNANT-WINGED NIGHTJAR.

very handsome *Bubo lacteus* were responsible for most unearthly “hootings” which we heard at times, startling the midnight echoes. There were also two kinds of eagles: the larger, light-breasted and broad-tailed, with short rounded wings, was the crowned hawk-eagle (*Spizaëtus coronatus*), a fierce and powerful species that made magnificent stoops after our startled guinea-fowl—these, however, escaping by tumbling pell-mell among the scrub, the eagle buoyantly sweeping upwards with a little wild cry of vexation. The actual “stoop” was a fine sight—the wings being gradually drawn in at the shoulder till the great bird resembled an arrow-head, and

one heard the rush of air at a quarter-mile (see p. 224). This eagle, on seeing its original aim to be untrue, had the power instantly to check its on-rush; then, after poising a second, to renew the attack on a different line. In Somaliland, our hunters told us, this eagle kills their goats, and also attacks young antelopes and



LOST BY A LENGTH. HAWK-EAGLE AND GUINEA-FOWL.

gazelles. One day, while sheltering in a cave from the noontide heat, a pair of dark chocolate-coloured eagles, with conspicuous white secondaries, after wheeling overhead, uttering piercing shrieks, alighted on the crag opposite, not eighty yards away, and I enjoyed watching them *vis-à-vis* for nearly an hour. They had black occipital crests quite a foot long, which lifted and waved in the breeze. These were *Lophoaëtus occipitalis*, the black-crested hawk-eagle.

One is apt to find strange neighbours during that

midday siesta on the veld—some quite undesirable, as scorpions and great hook-clawed millipedes half-a-foot long; others curious, as the mantis, infinite stick-insects, rhinoceros beetles, and assorted Coleoptera in various sizes, with ants and hairy spiders and other quaint forms. They may be harmless—or not; but, being unknown, are apt to cause a passing qualm when discovered on one's person. For instance, it must give a chill suddenly to meet the cold green eye of a great lizard steadfastly surveying one from a crevice not a foot away. One day, in a grove by the Athi, a reiterated snap, snap, arrested attention, and there, pressed upright against a grey



VIS-À-VIS.

trunk, sat the tiny grey owl whose portrait is here rudely reproduced.



SCOPS CAPENSIS.

Hen-harriers, both the blue males and "ring-tails," quartered the open veld in pairs, and on burnt ground crowds of white storks feasted on singed grasshoppers and locusts. With them were others, smaller and of darker plumage, that I at first took to be black storks. They were, however, *Ciconia abdimii*. Black kites (*Milvus korschun*) abounded up to mid-February, when they withdrew, leaving only their yellow-billed cousin, *M. aegyptiacus*, to scavenge around our camps.

The driest arid plain formed a winter home for four waders, to wit—the Asiatic dotterel, the ringed plover, dunlin and pratincole. The last-named in bands of thirty or forty would spring close by, and, after a short flight, all plump

down together among the wiry grass. I was disappointed in not meeting with coursers—birds I have never seen, and of which several species exist here. Larks were a conspicuous genus, and one small group quite new to me—the bush-larks (*Mirafra*), small and thick-set, with short rounded wings. On February 4 I found a nest of one of these, a rufous-winged little bird, probably *M. athi*, containing a newly-hatched chick. It was on bare ground, slightly sheltered by a low rock. The secretary-bird we observed on various occasions; but these, as well as bustards, cranes, etc., have, I think, already been mentioned.

A fortnight's hard work having failed to produce so much as even the sight of another lion, we decided to try fresh ground.

East of the Athi rise the mountain-ranges of Lukenia with numerous outlying koppies—most “lionous” spots, with splendid shaded caves, many of these showing ample evidence (in tawny hair, etc.) of quite recent occupation. Lions lie up by day, not in the cold recesses of these caverns, but quite openly beneath overhanging shelves of rock outside them. Where these “beds” were exposed to the full rays of the afternoon sun, a second lair would always be found a few yards away—round some projecting angle that afforded shelter from meridian heat. There were rarely any bones about these dens—save indeed those of *mice*, relics of owls and kestrels that also frequent the rocks. In one lion-cave grew a wild fig-tree.

We worked all these koppies for miles along the Lukenia Range, sometimes stalking particular lairs the positions of which were known, at others “driving” some great tumbled pile of rocks, or trying by grass-fires to smoke out secretive denizens. We put out jackals and numberless hyrax, but never a lion. Sometimes when one realised that a beast was coming out by the exit where one held guard, it was almost a relief to observe that it *was* “only a jackal”!



BOLTING LIONS.  
"Only a Jackal."



THE AUTHOR ON "GOLDFINCH."





Early in February—having meanwhile completed an expedition to the Stony Athi—we returned to the main river and tried afresh the whole of the lion-ravines and koppies, including many new spots; but all again proved blank.

Regarded purely as lion-hunters, we had failed, for not a single shot had been fired. But intense interest never flagged, and experiences had been gained as regards the haunts and habits of lions that both explain our failure and may benefit future efforts.

It is *during the rains* that lions seek the shelter of the ravines or rocks described. In November and December, several lions had been shot here by precisely similar operations. At that season one has, of course, to take some slight risk of fever; but that is the time to get lions in these ravines. We, timing our arrival for Christmas (when rains cease), were too late, that is, for lion. For that animal during the dry season needs no shelter, and is content to lie up by day in open grass or any slight covert the prairie may afford—such as the reed-beds, where heavy canes afford shade from the sun and are then dry beneath.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Another English sportsman, shooting close by (Lieutenant Black, 5th Dragoon Guards), had precisely similar experience, never seeing a lion until after leaving the Athi and on his homeward march to Nairobi, when on passing quite a small reed-bed, he sent a dozen “boys” round to drive. A lioness bolted at once; but hearing something else inside he waited, and was rewarded by securing a lion at the eleventh hour.

A year later, Mr. (now Capt.) Black wrote me as follows, from Bloemfontein—

“I did not see even a track of elephants this year, but came on several lions; first two, which, though I got within 100 yards, completely defeated me. Then six, stalking a herd of zebra on the Athi River, when I got a lion and a lioness out of the troop. Next, on Kapiti Plains, I came across five lionesses with cubs. I drove them away from the cubs, which they left, and for ten minutes or so all five lionesses kept walking away from me at about 400 yards. Then, all of a sudden, three of them whipped round and fairly charged. I gave them rapid magazine fire, which stopped them when within some thirty yards; but although I hit two badly, I only picked up one, the other two then retreating, much to my

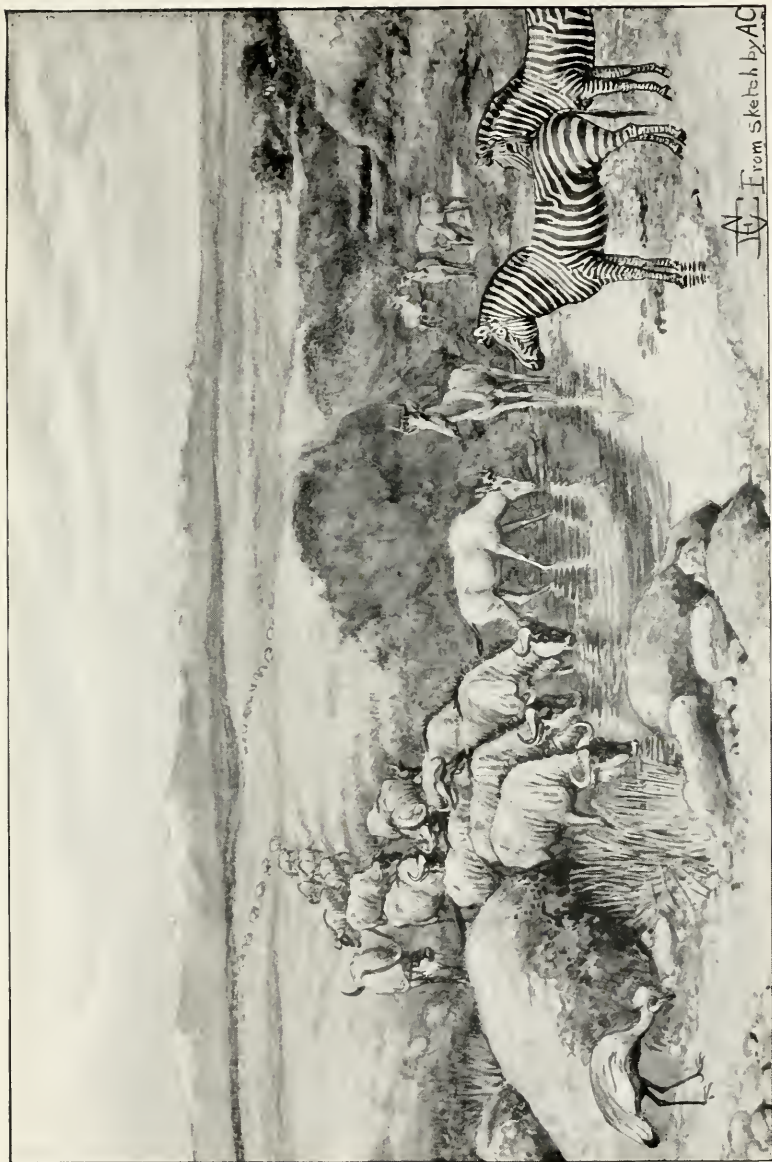
The perception of this radical error in our tactics first dawned upon us on meeting with a man (Mr. Hill) who was engaged riding down young ostriches, for the purpose of stocking an ostrich-farm. Lions, he told us, were a serious nuisance in his occupation: since almost daily he had run into them on the *open veld*. Sometimes they retired peacefully; others resented being disturbed, and, carrying no weapon but a revolver, he had to quit as well as might be. This "riding out" ostriches, by the way, is about as hot a job as white man (originally white, since no trace of that colour survived on H—) can undertake. The process of tiring-out a young ostrich, though scarce exceeding a turkey in bulk, occupies well-nigh a whole day's hard riding; and when, in addition, the ostrich-hunter has, perhaps twice a week, to outride a charging lion, the avocation may be described as strenuous.

The incident noted points a clear clue to assuring success in lion-hunting during the dry season. To a man on foot, on such limitless veld, the chance is all but hopeless: to a mounted hunter that chance expands indefinitely. By riding far and wide each dawn—or, still more quickly, by sending out mounted Somalis in various directions—lions will, sooner or later, be descried returning to their diurnal lairs; or failing that, discovered lying therein. Then, in either case, or however found, they can be "held-up" by skilled riding—not, it is true, without risk or exciting interludes during which hunter and hunted alternately exchange *rôles*.

So soon as a lion, or lions, find that the pursuing horseman has the speed of them, but yet refuses to close; also that, in turn, they are themselves unable to overhaul the flying pony, they will deliberately halt, either lying down in the grass, or sitting on their haunches like so many huge dogs. They then present a target for the rifle; but necessarily distant, since there

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relief. It was a near thing, and I can't understand their finking it at thirty yards after charging over 300. My two gun-bearers (a Somali and a Makumba) both stood by and loaded for me."



DAYBREAK ON THE ATTHI RIVER—GAME COMING DOWN TO DRINK.





is obvious danger in going in within, say, 200 yards—for a lion has a fine turn of speed for a short distance. Nor will it be a simple shot, for hard riding will not have steadied the hand for fine shooting at long range.

Clearly, useful shooting-ponies are a first essential, when the least delay in remounting must involve disaster; the pursuit also presupposes a degree of skill in horsemanship which, alas, in our own case was utterly lacking.

A yet more scientific development of hunting-craft enables the presence of lions far away to be detected by the movements or position of the game on the plains. Thus a wide gap seen among game otherwise distributed regularly, is deserving of attention. This may, it is true, be merely accidental—more probably not; possibly the gap may be caused by some hyenas finishing a carrion meal. But it is always worth ascertaining if a broad vacant space be not cleared by the tell-tale scent of lions lying up to the windward thereof.<sup>1</sup>

There is of course abundance of other game, besides lions, on the Athi. We observed waterbuck, for example, coming out to feed every morning at dawn on the open veld adjoining the river. These were the common “ring-tailed” waterbuck, and one bull in particular appeared to carry quite a handsome head; but when shot by W—— his horns only taped  $22\frac{1}{4}$  ins., by  $8\frac{1}{4}$  ins. in basal circumference, and 12 ins. between tips. In East Africa this fine antelope never reaches the dimensions attained further south.

It was noteworthy that during the first half of January we saw here neither zebra nor wildebeest—usually so extremely abundant. But on January 20 a few zebras appeared; several troops showed up on the following day, and after that date they became numerous. The first wildebeest—two old bulls—were observed on

<sup>1</sup> So successful is our friend Mr. C. B. Perceval, Game-ranger of British East Africa, in thus reading Nature's signs, that sundry native hunters assert that he can “see lions” when lying asleep in the grass at six or seven miles!

January 22, but it was some days before we saw any more. By the end of the month, however, fresh troops



A TROPICAL POOL ON ATHI RIVER.  
Note the hanging nests of weavers.

were coming in daily—all, like the zebras, from the southward.

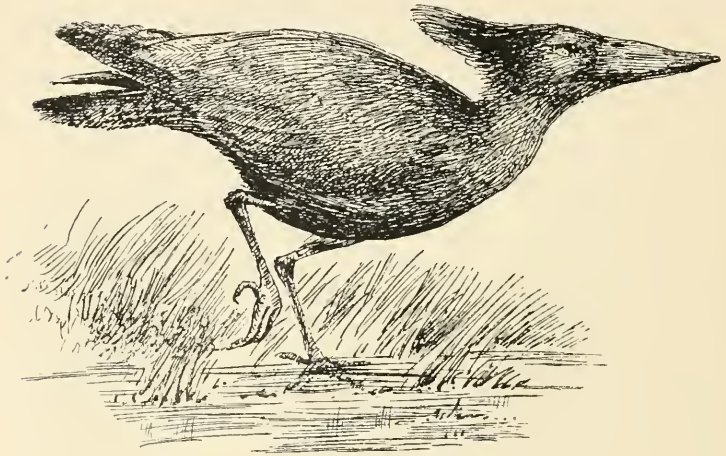
Our main camp lay between the escarpment aforesaid and the river. Behind it arose that abrupt slope,

pierced, within a mile, by the nearest of the frowning lion-ravines; while close in front dawdled the sluggish Athi. Its banks, elsewhere open, here merged in forest-belts, and a deep pool below the camp was embowered in dense scrub, fringed outside with trees. This weird pool abounded in tropical scenes. Amidst a varied population, it harboured, we found, a monster hippo and numerous crocodiles. The tall acacias outside were festooned with pendent nests of weaver-finches, scores on a branch—like a heavy crop of jargonelle pears; inside, also, the bush and palmites overhanging the stagnant water were laden with nests, some almost dipping the surface. These belonged to another species. The pennant-winged nightjar already named above, abounded on the riverside, flicking up at one's feet, sometimes three or four together, and all settling again, often on bare sand, within a dozen yards.

We spent many evenings by that pool in an attempt to secure the hippo—none the less enjoyable in that the main object failed. The bird-life atoned for that. Besides the weavers and an infinity of doves, of kingfishers, azure and pied, there also abode here the singular hammer-head (*Scopus umbretta*), whose huge nest—an accumulation of sticks that would fill a cottage—burdened a waterside fork. Small cormorants (some dark, others buff-breasted), and those extraordinary birds, the darters, with exaggerated snake-like necks, sat perched on protruding snags or dived in opaque green depths. The darters also displayed various hues: yet all belong to but one species, *Plotus rufus*. These birds possessed a joint breeding-colony a mile or two further up the river, their nests being massed on low willows and overhanging bush; while the tall overarching trees above were occupied by a heronry. The latter community included both purple, black-headed and night-herons; while a big separate single nest belonged, I fancy, to a pair of wood-ibis that were always seen hard by. The buff-backed herons maintained a separate establishment of their own—among thorn-trees, in a

rocky ravine near "Lone-Tree." At this date, of course, none of these birds were actually nesting.

Our pachydermatous friend beat us (though his stronghold was but 250 yards long) by never showing above water save beneath the dense fringe of overhanging jungle that projected far beyond either bank. Nor are crocodiles easy to detect, so little do they expose above water, and so absolutely does their slimy armour assimilate in hue with the slimy rocks



HAMMER-HEAD (*Scopus umbretta*).

A monotone in browns, without a touch of contrast or relief.

on which they lie. One that we surprised asleep, though fully 12 ft. long, disappeared without leaving a ripple behind, so gently did he slide off his ledge. Another croc, on receiving a bullet, disgorged dozens of small silvery fish.

Watching silently by these cerie pools, we noticed huge water-turtles emerge from sullen depths and with ungainly wriggle seek to gain the bank. There were also great land-tortoises; two that we brought home measure 24 ins. over the carapace, by  $16\frac{1}{2}$  ins. along the flat belly-plate.



In another forest-girt pool, overarched with broad-topped "fever-trees," Mabruki's wondrous instinct detected a hippo where none save savage eye could surely have espied it. A big leafy tree had fallen half across the river, and it was beneath the sunken boughs of this, all laden with drift grass and wrack, that the hippo at intervals showed up to breathe. Nothing even then was visible save only the snout and elevated cranium, and these concealed amidst leafage and drift. By creeping forward while the hippo was under, I reached a fallen tree within fifteen yards. Presently that weird apparition emerged, silent and ghost-like amid the shadows. I placed a .450-solid fair on the cranium—somewhere: for a resounding crash ensued, yet no water flew up nor was there a ripple to be seen.

Note that the impact of a ball from these powerful rifles on *water* will throw up a solid column twenty feet in height and stun all the fish for yards around. There is therefore no mistaking a miss.

Yet we never saw that hippo again. So absolutely certain did I feel that he must be dead, that when we did not find him floating next morning, thinking he must be held down by the fallen tree, we returned a third time in the afternoon with axes, ropes, etc., and cut the trunk loose. But nothing appeared. The luck of Elmenteita was repeated. I was fated not to get a hippo: yet the undertaking presents not a tithe the difficulty of others in which we succeeded.

The presence of so many ichthyophagous birds and reptiles clearly bespoke fish, and our men caught numbers of a small dace-like species, pale green above, silvery below, which took a bait greedily, and were jerked ashore. Though almost tasteless, fish were welcome enough as a change in our veld fare. We also saw other fish, much larger—apparently several pounds in weight—in the deep pools of the Athi.

The early mornings at this season (January) were cold, still and foggy, with heavy dew. At nine o'clock a breeze set in from the north, increasing during the day

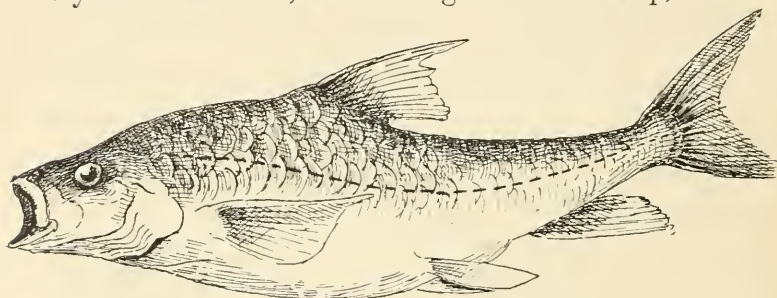


(sometimes half a gale by afternoon), but always following the sun towards west at dusk.

Temperature at dawn, 56 degrees—one day as low as 50 degrees; temperature at noon, 80 to 90 degrees—once or twice as high as 98 degrees in our tents.

On many evenings were magnificent displays of electric flash-lights in the heavens, always, however, at one particular spot on any one evening.

One night shortly after "lights-out," my tent caught fire through my having carelessly knocked out some live tobacco ash. Half-an-hour later, an asphyxiating "stythe" awoke me, and having relit the lamp, I was



THE DACE (*Leuciscus*) OF ATHI.

seeking the cause thereof, when bang went a cordite cartridge at my feet; my khaki cartridge-bag was smouldering, and next moment flames leaped up the canvas wall. I sang out for help, and meanwhile got to work with boots, sun-helmet, whatever came handy, to stamp out the fire. The night-watch was smart enough on the spot, bringing buckets of water, and though amid repeated explosions of cartridges I had already extinguished the flames, the men promptly deluged my bed and belongings! Considerable force is developed by the explosion of a cordite cartridge, even when unconfined in a barrel, for several of the remaining cartridges were bulged and twisted. The bullets, however, of those that had gone off, lay about harmlessly. Note, that there were no ticks or other vermin in my tent after that accident!

We caught, during January, the young of both species of gazelle, about half-grown. All efforts to rear them, however, failed—just as happened with our young oryx at Baringo. Fresh cows' milk is the first essential, and we had none—only tinned stuff. The young of *G. thomsoni* are striped vertically, zebra-fashion, in a darker shade.

February 5.—Rode out this evening to Khoma



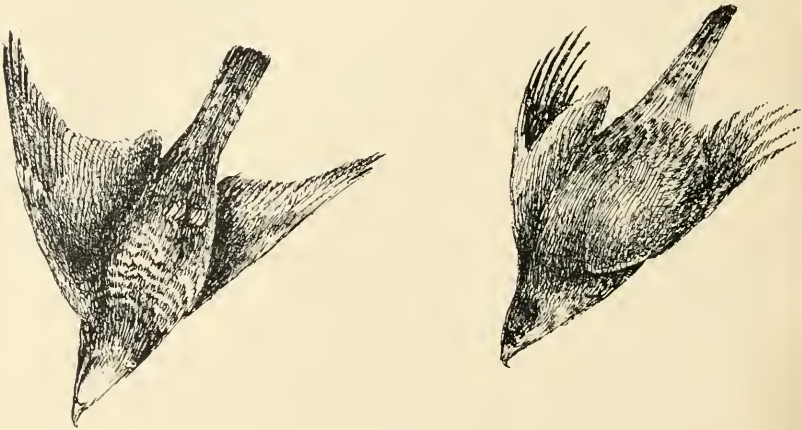
GIRAFFES.

Note that at the distant view (700 yards) markings are indistinguishable. The old bull appeared nearly black.

Koppies, to examine once more all the lion-holts and caves; but again without success, though the spectacle of wild-life enjoyed to-night ranks among the many wondrous scenes I have gazed on in Africa. On open veld below the koppie, half-a-mile from the nearest trees, grazed seven giraffe—one a huge black bull. I watched them put their heads right down, feeding—not actually on grass, but, as I presently ascertained, on the low mimosa-growth among the grass. When standing at ease, the neck is held forward in same plane with

the back, say at an angle of 45 degrees to the ground. Four ostriches fed with the giraffe, and below, nearer the wooded donga, seven waterbuck. Close by stood a hyena.

Besides the above, there were also in sight of where I sat on the high koppie, three great crowds of kongoni—hundreds in all—and several troops of zebra, mixed with which were six wildebeest, while gazelles of both sorts dotted the veld. Overhead soared a pair of the great white-breasted harpy eagles, using their extended feet as equiposes to balance in the breeze. On the koppie hard by, hyrax ran about the rocks, and the evening sky was filled with hovering kestrels. A Bateleur eagle, disturbed from the crags, vainly tried to poise on a thorn-tree below, and skeins of crowned cranes startled the stillness, passing up the valley with resonant cries.



EAGLES STOOPING.

## CHAPTER XIX

### ON THE STONY ATHI

JANUARY—FEBRUARY 1906

NOT having heard a single lion by night since the 18th, on January 23 we shifted camp to the Stony Athi. While the safari held the line of the rivers, W—— and I crossed over by the Lukenia Heights, where in a steep rocky glen we observed a hyena slinking away. Having by a flank stalk reached the exact spot, and seeing nothing of the beast, I feared he had slipped away (though *how* I could not see), and was searching the ground minutely, when he jumped from a wet drain in the hollow below and galloped up the opposite slope, distended with meat to double his proper breadth. After over-shooting with the right, I got him stone-dead with the left, going for all he was worth, at 100 yards. This was a male in his prime, and the best I have seen, being perfect in both teeth and fur, the latter heavily spotted, clean and without the least touch of mange. Length, taped along back,  $57\frac{1}{2}$  ins.; weight, full as he was (we could barely lift him to pose for his photo, see p. 232), reckoned at nearly 200 lbs.; irides dark; inside of mouth, lips and tongue, livid blue or lavender colour.

*Stony Athi, January 24.*—Lions roaring splendidly near camp at 4 a.m., so we set out at dawn, with two Wakamba savages as guides, and tried a great extent of likely cover—wood, scrub and reed-beds along the river—but without seeing anything bigger than a bushbuck.

I shot a zebra for meat, a photo of which (showing

Said Hassan, and Mabruki on the right) is given at p. 236, and W——, not fancying this, added a "Tommy" for our own mess. Though terribly wounded, this little antelope was getting away when two jackals took up the chase, running him one on either flank, and eventually turning the poor wounded beastie and driving him back into W——'s face. They got the gralloch for their share. The zebras of the Athi are striped around the legs nearly down to the hoof, the last inch being black, thus belonging to the sub-species, or form *Equus chapmani*. Their colour, as in all East-African zebras, is of purest white, the bands broad and intensely black.

The following day I at length succeeded in fulfilling one main ambition—by securing my first wildebeest bull of the East-African species. There were four of them in a wide-sweeping basin—impossible of access. Having a good "rest" on an ant-hill, I was constrained to try a shot at some 400 yards. No sound of a hit reached my ears, but within a minute one of the four stopped and lay down, the others halting beyond. There was no mistaking the import of this; yet that stern-chase led us many a weary mile over shadeless plain, ere that great shaggy beast finally succumbed to a fifth bullet just before the sun went under. A wildebeest bull is a noble prize; this one was a fair average specimen, his horns measuring  $22\frac{1}{4}$  ins. between the inside bends. Dead-weight as he fell estimated at near 500 lbs. For days and weeks after this, the wildebeests utterly defied our utmost efforts.

We saw four eland to-day, as well as waterbuck, impala and wart-hog—the latter followed by small young.

The lion still filled our minds. Rock-koppies and ravines alike had failed; but there remained another resource—namely, the beds of heavy green flags that fringe the river (called "tinga-tinga" by the natives), and which the Wakamba assured us held lions. One of the largest of these lies in full view of passengers on the Uganda railway—near mile-peg 300—and hard by



this, on Stony Athi, we pitched camp. Here before each dawn we occupied posts commanding views far and wide over the veld, and eagerly "glassed" every beast that moved in hopes of recognising an approaching lion; but none appeared. Later we tried "driving" the tinga-tinga—a job our men shied at till promised back-sheesh in event of success. We also pushed through the heavy flags ourselves; but that was blind work, and in the result never so much as saw a lion. They might still be there, nevertheless, so dense and extensive was the covert.

It was at this point that, a year or two earlier, our friend Mr. Chalmers Bontein was rather badly mauled by a lion he had wounded and followed into cover.

One evening our men collecting fire-wood rushed in to report a lion close by. It proved to be a hyena, which animals wailed around the camp every night.

Meanwhile a double misfortune had overtaken me. From the start it had been clear that my Somali hunter, Said Hassan (whom I had brought from Aden), was a fraud. He was, moreover, an arrogant self-opinionated ass, who created trouble in the safari. A really good Somali is an invaluable assistant in stalking, their trained eyesight holding in view every movement of the game even when in forest or bush. Such was my Elmi Hassan in 1904, and such my brother's present hunter, Ali Yama. On the other hand, Said's sum total of fieldcraft consisted in half-a-dozen monkey tricks. I therefore packed him back to Aden, having had to pay his passage over 4,000 miles on the faith of "chits" (references) that he had never earned. During the rest of this trip I did my hunting alone, employing the Swahili, Mabruki, as gunbearer.

My experience of Somali hunters is that three out of every four who profess to be shikaris are not worth their "ghee."

The second trouble was worse—a sheer catastrophe. A brand-new, costly, telescope-sighted rifle, the weapon upon which all my reliance was centred, went to bits

within the first week. After half-a-dozen shots, I noticed that the attachment of the telescope to the rib was no longer rigid; there was a distinct lateral movement—in itself a fatal flaw. A few days later, on firing, the whole telescope flew bodily back in my face, laying open my cheek and cutting eyebrow and the bridge of the nose, which still bears the mark. The fault was due to defective mechanism; for the whole jar of recoil, as communicated to the telescope, was received by a tiny screw that held barely an eighth of an inch into the rib.

Being thus crippled, I rode into Athi River station and took train to Nairobi, on the off-chance that such complex repairs could be effected in Central Africa. By the kindness of Mr. Gallagher, the Chief Mechanical Engineer of the U.R., the attachment was made secure; but alas, the precise adjustment of alignment between barrel and telescope was too much to expect in the very best "railway shops," and for the rest of the trip this most important rifle was no more use than so much old metal.

Fortunately, I found a friend in need in Mr. F. J. Jackson, C.B., H.M.'s Deputy-Commissioner (now Lieut.-Governor of British East Africa), who most kindly lent me a .303 telescope-sighted rifle, with which I was enabled to do excellent work.

Returning to the Athi River two days later, I received at the station the following note from my brother:—"You needn't worry about those wildebeest. I've found out how to get them—on their way to water, night and morning. I shot four yesterday in two right-and-lefts, and one 'lone bull' this morning. A snake of sorts jabbed at me among the grass coming back to camp. I let drive and luckily blew his neck off. He was 5 ft. 4 ins., with a sort of hood on his head." [This was a hooded cobra.] "Indians from the Landi assert there are two lions in the tinga-tinga—we must try them on Tuesday, with all hands and backsheesh. Am sending a dozen porters and 'Goldfinch' to meet



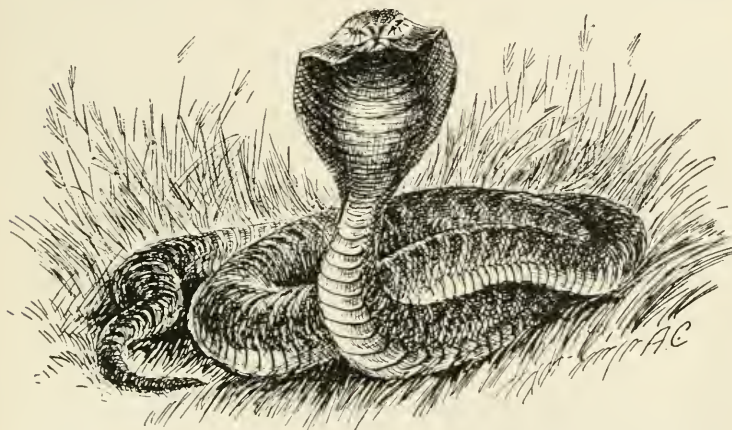


you—I start early myself in morning to watch the nyumbo (wildebeest).”

Following is my brother's description of his almost unlooked-for success with the wildebeests—

“The white-bearded gnu, or blue wildebeest, so familiar to travellers on the Uganda railway, is an excessively wild animal, yet not difficult to circumvent, provided a few easily-applied rules are observed.

“Scattered on open plains in herds, or often singly,



HOODED COBRA (*Naja haje*)—Both strikes direct and also ejects poison.

it is out of the question to approach them by any ordinary stalking, as a very few days' trial will convince. Besides, it's worse than unsportsmanlike, it's criminal to fire at animals at 500 yards. If you kill, it's a fluke, for which you deserve to be kicked rather than complimented.

“I spent three weeks among the wildebeests last year—a fortnight in utterly futile efforts to secure a single specimen. The first really useful observation came to us early one morning. We were seated on a perfectly open plain without attempt at concealment, when daylight filled the scene, and showed us four or five troops of wildebeest standing within view. Knowing so well that they were inaccessible, we remained motionless,



watching, till presently we began to be touched with a gradual sense of wonder at their curious inaction—why should five herds all be standing so precisely alike, neither feeding nor moving? What small desultory movements occurred appeared to be limited to the hartebeests which accompanied each troop. There seemed to be a kind of sorting movement afoot. This alone does not seem to be a very important observation; yet it proved, none the less, to be the key to the whole secret of securing them.

“The wildebeest drink twice daily—at sunrise and sunset; but the hartebeest being the keener-sighted of the two, the wildebeests employ these to pilot themselves past any hidden dangers that may lurk between the uplands and the water below. This acknowledged superiority—the testimony of the greater animal towards the less—leads in a way to the general undoing of the whole scheme.

“The process of making-up the watering-parties is tedious, but at length gradually completed. Then the kongoni steps out ahead, examining the lay of the land and scrutinising every visible feature. As he advances, his confidence increases, and with it a fatal pride of place. He has made himself confident—unduly confident—of the safety of his immediate vicinity, as with head erect and muzzle extended he moves proudly forward, the thirsty wildebeests pressing nearer and nearer on his flank as the water is approached. No ‘monarch of the glen’ exceeds him then in his lordly bearing, and the astonished hunter lies spellbound at the spectacle. The shepherded wildebeests lumber along behind, all muzzles down—what a study in contrasts!

“Under no other circumstances would a hunter now remain unobserved—indeed, it may be added that under no other could he have attained a dominating position.

“Once having observed the line a pilot-kongoni is about to take, that position must be reached; and the long delay of the game in ‘sorting-out’ allows time

sufficient for this. The position, it must be remembered, is one that will cut off the animals as they approach the water; yet it must not be so near as to disturb other animals that may already be drinking there—say from 400 to 800 yards. The configuration of the land—drooping in successive steps towards the lower levels—may assist in acquiring the desired position; otherwise much crawling may be necessary.

“Once having attained this position, no cover is needed, though should there be any, so much the better. The essential now is to remain rigidly motionless. The least movement, especially when the game is yet distant, is instantly fatal—the kongoni spots it. The nearer he comes the safer you are, since he is then looking over you. Once when the pilot approached so directly that he almost looked like treading on us, my hunter in his excitement pinched me so severely that I was obliged to kick him. In doing so, I not only moved, but made a slight noise; yet the kongoni noticed nothing, and a moment later I killed the wildebeest at the muzzle of the rifle.

“Another incident illustrates the comparative blindness of the hartebeests in the pride of piloting their shaggy friends. This time we had reached a position beyond which we dare not advance, the ground in front being burnt and absolutely bare. But we were near enough—too near, as the sequel showed—to their final line of approach. As the game comes in, the hunter must of course concentrate all his attention on the rifle and its aim, since no subsequent movement is possible. At that precise period, say 200 yards away, the pilot was at least fifty yards ahead of his charge. With eyes glued to the telescope-sight, I was of course unable any longer to follow their relative movements. Presently the hartebeest appeared on the object-glass; but scarce had he passed by than the black muzzle of the wildebeest came into the picture, not one yard behind! This so disconcerted me that already the psychological moment for pulling trigger had gone, the bullet struck too far

back, and had it not been for a second barrel a grand bull gnu might perhaps have escaped."

It was 4 p.m. when, on returning from Nairobi, I rode into camp on the Stony Athi. Ali Yama was then already watching a herd of 200 wildebeest assembling some three miles away, preparatory to coming to water. After a cup of coffee, we set out at once. The gnu in long procession, all heads held low, slowly directed their course riverwards. The ground was open and unfavourable; hence we were still 250 yards away when the head of the column (unaccompanied, this time, by hartebeest) reached the river and descended the steep bank. Truly it seemed a "soft job"! I had only to await the disappearance of the *last* beast, and the whole herd were at my disposal. But animal-instinct is not so simple. The astute gnus this evening left a *single* sentry on guard above, and this of course forbade my going in. In the result I was obliged to accept the long-range shot—declined before—as they left the water, and secured a fair bull with 22-in. head.

The following day, further up the river, another chance was presented—the gnu being this time piloted by a single hartebeest as described; but it clearly evidences the tense keenness of their instincts that, on the *third* day, not a single wildebeest came to water, whether up or down river! The chance was over, but with eight splendid specimens we were content.

*January 31.*—Returning to the standing-camp this morning, I got another grand wildebeest bull (the ninth) in this way. We were moving forward in parallel valleys about two miles apart, W——, I observed, pushing before him a crowd of kongoni, with this single big gnu in company. Presently the kongoni, hundreds strong, wheeled towards me, and began streaming across the ridge on my front; when, aided by slightly favouring ground, I got well forward and awaited the gnu; along he came with his prancing gallop, but on seeing many kongoni (which had already passed me, and were in



SPOTTED HYENA.  
(Ali Yama on right.)



BRINDLED GNU, BULL—STONY ATHI.  
(Mabruki on left.)



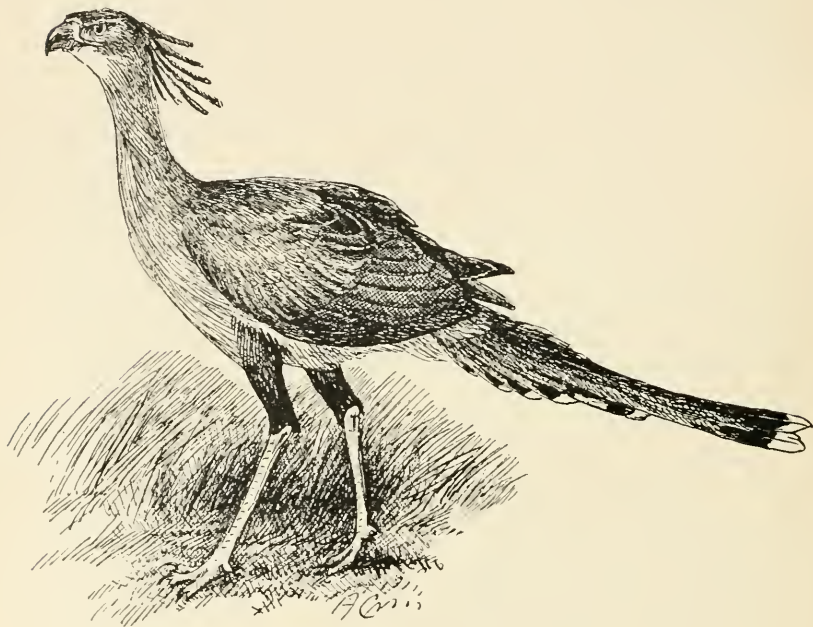


safety, 500 yards off) standing "on gaze" he must needs gaze too. But he, being exactly 245 yards away, thus received a .450 ball in the forehead! The photo on previous page shows him as he fell.

This, and my brother's best bull, each measured over 25 ins. between the inside bends of their horns.

When wounded and at close quarters, the weird and shaggy wildebeest, with his broad horns and fierce eye, can present a sufficiently alarming appearance. The fact was driven home by an incident that occurred in the Transvaal in August 1899. I had succeeded in cutting out a herd of some forty brindled gnus coming to water on the N'guanetsi River, and the second barrel had knocked over a big bull which, however, speedily regained his legs, when the whole herd bunched together and disappeared from view, amidst the fringing bush and forest. The trail they left—like that of a runaway wagon—obliterated all individual spoor; but after following it with my gunbearer, Klaas, a mile or so on to the open grass-veld beyond, a single beast had turned out to the right, and on this trail we instantly detected blood. Five hundred yards beyond, while crossing a stony patch, bare of grass, we were arrested by a roar and a rush in our rear. Not twenty yards behind came the wounded bull, dashing towards us—a perfect picture of fury. We had walked past him; for (as wounded beasts often do) he had turned back on his heel before lying down, but on getting our wind beyond, made this grand effort. Luckily (as I only carried a stick) the bull's strength betrayed his courage. Klaas handed the rifle smartly, skipping behind me in the same movement. But already the acute stage had passed. Within twice his own length, the plucky beast pulled up exhausted, his eyes still flashing and broad muzzle stretched out horizontally towards us, blowing and bellowing. But crimson foam flew from those nostrils, and by stepping two yards to right, I got the shoulder exposed and terminated a memorable scene.

Although when seen cantering at ease the hartebeest gives an impression of being stiff and ungainly, yet when they really stretch themselves out, no animal possesses freer or more magnificent action, very high forward. To-day while this troop were crossing my front at full speed, one beast saw me, stopped dead and



SECRETARY (*Secretarius serpentarius*).

turned broadside to the rest—those following, each at one impulse, leaped clean over his back!

Another day we watched two bulls chasing—their speed being terrific and long-maintained. The pursued, in a quick double, fell, the pursuer at once leaping clear; but in the same instant the fallen beast was up and away back with a clear gain of ten yards!

While lying watching an assemblage of wildebeests, I was much interested to see a secretary-bird catch a small snake while in full view. The bird, while among short

grass on an opposite bluff, made a sudden spring forward. There ensued much fuss and action, the great wings being spread out downwards (as a sparrow-hawk covers over its prey), while some furious stamps of its foot were administered ere the reptile was finally pouched. Also, on the day when I finally secured my first wildebeest bull, after following the blood-spoor for hours—almost to the Kikuyu forest—I chanced, in a lonely group of thorn-trees, on a huge flat stick-built nest. It contained small bones, skulls, and the vertebræ of serpents, others lying strewn beneath. This I thought would belong to some eagle or vulture; but Ali asserted it was a secretary's nest, and was probably correct, as I now read that these singular birds do breed so, in trees.

One must not leave the Athi without mentioning the ticks. They were not so bad in September, but in January they are a terror, attacking all the softest parts of one's body, and burrowing into the flesh, till one resembles a "target." Every day one's tent-boy must remove them. A much larger variety attacks animals, and my poor pony "Goldfinch" suffered severely. These blood-suckers when removed in the morning were of the size of hazel-nuts. They, in manifold varieties, also infest the game, and it has been loosely stated that until the ticks (and the game) are utterly cleared out, no cattle can thrive here. That, however, needs proof. Nature has arrayed more formidable opponents than the tick to man's conquest of the wilds. A first difficulty will be the want of water. Throughout the 150 miles of the Athi Plains, there run but these two rivers—and they largely dry at certain seasons. But the wrack and drifted rubbish lodged high up in the branches of river-side trees, evidence heavy floods at times. It remains to be seen if that flood-water can be conserved and utilised.

A minor nuisance to the hunter is the wait-a-bit thorn. At this season (January) it assumes a soft velvety-green foliage almost inviting to the touch; but woe to the hand that grasps it. An even worse man-trap are its dead thin shoots, hardly distinguishable

among the wiry grass; yet unless distinguished and avoided a great tearing laceration of hand or fore-arm results; and wounds in this climate are slow in healing.

Without insisting too much on the heat—which on the equator goes without saying—one short conversation may be recorded. It was just before “lights-out,” and the morrow’s plans had been arranged.—No. 1. “Let’s make a special effort to-morrow.” No. 2. “All right; but . . . isn’t it rather hot for special efforts?” It was.

One evening on Stony Athi, a Wakamba porter was seized with a severe illness beyond our power to diagnose, though we tried to treat it to the best of our judgment. The poor man was evidently in terrible pain, rolling on the ground. Next day we had arranged to send him to the railway under escort; but, apparently in delirium, he bolted, taking the open veld. We sent out search-parties, but failed to find a trace of him; probably he had found a grave in the hyena’s maw.

During January there occurred an outbreak of “plague” in Nairobi, and a quarantine cordon (against natives only) was drawn around the capital. Consequently, when, on February 6, we finally left the fiery veld of Athi, we had to leave the safari encamped three miles out, W—— and I going on into the town. Next morning word reached us that a mutiny had broken out in our camp. On riding out we found that these simple savages had broken into our stores—particularly into a case that contained our few bottles of whisky—with obvious results. Amidst much heavy lying, we ascertained the main facts, and the retribution that followed was summary and effectual.





HOODED COBRA.



ZEBRA ON STONY ATHI.





## CHAPTER XX

### HUNTING ON THE SIMBA RIVER

“In valleys remote where the Oribi plays,  
And the Gnu, the Gazelle and the Hartebeest graze,  
And the shy Quagga’s whistling neigh  
Is heard by the fountain at break of day.”

PRINGLE.

AMID sultry jungle we pitched camp by the banks of the Simba River. This spot lies 200 miles eastward from Nairobi, and being only 3,350 ft. above sea-level (against 6,000 ft., the mean elevation of the Athi Plains), is apt to be terribly warm. We had, in fact, descended to a tropical zone, as was evidenced in every detail of nature—in the changed trees and shrubs, with their far denser foliage, in the changed bird- and insect-life, and . . . in the heat. This was mid-March.

We had sought this inferno specially to hunt the fringe-eared oryx of East Africa (*Oryx callotis*), which is only found here and southwards therefrom.

The other species, *Oryx beisa*, is confined to Baringo and the Tana River and the regions northwards thence (see Chap. VII.). There thus intervenes between these two closely-allied species a broad belt of country, say 100 miles in width, devoid of oryx of either kind. A secondary object (we always have “objects”) was the lesser koodoo.

Simba, at certain seasons, is a great game-country. In the month of September we have seen its prairies and forest-opens thronged with troop upon troop of zebras and hartebeests, gazelles, ostrich and brindled gnu. But not a single gnu remains in the district in March, and only an insignificant proportion of the rest. This is, moreover, a notable lion-country (the name

*Simba* means "Lion"), as the following extract, in the breezy colonial journalism of the *Globe Trotter* (June 6, 1906), will serve to show—

"The lions of East Africa appear to be watching the progress of civilisation with deep interest, and nothing has done more to arouse their curiosity than the trains on the Uganda railway. The railway from the Indian Ocean to Victoria Nyanza is 584 miles long, and between the terminal points are thirty-nine stations. The line is managed on the system of the Indian railways, and most of the men in the track, train and station service are East Indians. The Indian station-agent is known as a babu, and he leads a lonesome life. Simba, for example, where the lions have been making a special study of the railway station, has only a station building, a water-tank for the engines, and a siding, this being one of the places where trains pass each other on the single-track road.

"The trouble began at Simba eleven months ago—in July 1905—when the traffic-manager at Nairobi one morning received this astonishing telegram from the babu at Simba—

" 'A lion has been bothering me for three nights. He comes up on the station platform and goes to sleep. Then he walks up and down, scratches on the wall and door, and tries to get into the office. Please send cartridges for a Snider rifle by the first train for my protection. I have blank cartridges, but they are of no use against lions.'

"This profound observation has the car-mark of sober truth. Whether the lion desired to buy a ticket or whether a fellow-feeling for the lonesome babu induced him to try to cultivate his acquaintance is not known, but it is quite certain that blank cartridges were not appropriate ammunition, and that bullets were in demand.

"It is to be supposed that these were promptly sup-

plied ; but, if so, they did not make a deep impression upon the lions, for in August another hair-raising telegram reached the traffic-manager, as follows—

“‘Simba, August 17, 1.45 a.m.

“‘ Urgent. To Traffic-Manager.

“‘ A lion is on the platform. Please instruct guard and driver to proceed carefully and to expect no signals in the yard. Tell the guard to advise passengers not to get out here, and to be very careful himself when he comes into the office.’

“ It is not quite certain whether the babu was chiefly solicitous for the safety of the guard or whether he thought that the lion might take advantage of the open door to come into the office. However this may be, the distress-signal from Simba had the immediate result of starting a British sportsman in that direction. He took the next train for Simba, and under the water-tank he and the railway-men erected a platform about ten feet above the ground, where the Nimrod spent several days waiting for the visitors. His patience was at length rewarded.

“The first animal he saw was a lioness, that came walking out of the scrub, very likely for the purpose of quenching her thirst at the little stream that was leaking from the tank. When she was within about fifty yards of the platform the hunter put a cordite bullet into her and stretched her on the ground. The hunter did not leave his perch, for he thought something more would be doing. He was not mistaken. A little later two lions came out of the high grass, and were soon in great mental distress over the strange attitude of the dead female. They kept circling around her body, now growling, then whining. They hit the body with their paws, and at last began to drag it away, perhaps with the idea of awakening her. Just then a bullet ended the life of one of the brutes, and the other, wounded by the second shot, sprang into the bush. For half-an-

hour the sportsman awaited on the platform any signs of life in the bushes, but detecting no movement, he descended from his perch.

“ He had hardly reached *terra firma*, however, before the wounded lion burst out of the scrub and struck the hunter a blow with his paw which tore the flesh off his arm to the bone. The hunter was knocked to the ground, and the lion, which was evidently growing weaker, rolled over on the grass and then dragged itself back into the bush, where its dead body was found a little later. The hunter gave up watching for lions and sought a hospital at the coast, and the poor babu was left alone again in the wilderness. He told the train-hands every day that he could not sleep at nights and that his nerves were badly shaken. There was nothing doing, however, for several weeks after the great day when three lions had been laid low within a few rods of the station. Then came another nervous telegram—

“ ‘ Extra urgent.—Track-hand was surrounded by two lions while returning from signal-box. He climbed a telegraph-pole near the water-tank. He is up there yet. Order train to stop there and take him aboard. The traffic-manager will please make necessary arrangements.’ ”

“ The track-man, however, succeeded in reaching the station before relief arrived. For several days the telegraph wire was burdened only with routine dispatches. Then another episode was proclaimed in the following shape—

“ ‘ To guard and driver of down train.

“ ‘ Carriage of secretary is on the siding, where he shot a lion just now, and others are roaring on Makindu side. Driver must proceed without signals and stop engine opposite station. Guard must not get out of the brake-van.’ ”

“ Later advices have not yet come to hand, but if any station-master is finding life monotonous and longs to



have a dull routine prepared with incident and adventure, perhaps he may arrange to swap jobs with the babu at Simba."

It may here be worth mentioning that, from the higher hills north of Simba, on a clear day, both Mount Kenya on the north and Kilimanjaro on the south may be seen at once.

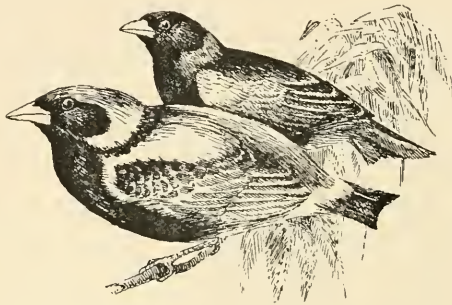
Our own objective being, not lion, but *Oryx callotis*, we devoted scorching days to the exploration of the adjoining veld, especially those lovely inset prairies bordered all round by tropical forest, which are a feature of this region, and the favourite resort of oryx. Here we fell in with herds of giant giraffes, sometimes feeding in the open, at others towering up among the mimosa thorn-tree on which they browse. These great animals, however, have never attracted us, and we left them in peace.

Personally during these days I never set eye on an oryx, and my brother but once—a single animal that, being associated with restless kongoni, proved inaccessible. Next day we sought for him far and wide, but found him not. To leave no chance untried, we even, Simba having failed, travelled back to Makindu, twenty miles, that also proving blank; then thirty-nine miles onwards to Sultan Hamud, where we saw superb giraffes, but not a single oryx at either point. Here, however, I am anticipating.

The Simba River, with its broad forests and dense tropical bush, harbours many waterbuck (*Cobus ellipsiprymnus*), of which we secured local specimens, one bull carrying fair horns, though none are really good. On two occasions, while stalking, we observed monkeys, and many small birds displayed gorgeous colours—especially the weaver-finches, rollers, sunbirds, barbets and bee-eaters; while fireflies on the river by night made a wondrous spectacle.

On March 19, after spending five hours in vain search of oryx, at 11 a.m. I shot a couple of hartebeest bulls in

easy stalking country, as we were requiring meat for the camp. This was an ideal park-like country—a spacious vale whose gentle slopes, decorated with clumps of bush, forest-trees and open grass alternately, dipped away to a gorge far below—the whole being backed by loftier ranges beyond. While the “boys” cut up meat and I smoked in the shade (watching a pair of wood-hoopoes (*Irrisor*) and wondering at their climbing habit, which belied the name) my new Somali hunter, Yama, came up and said, “I see rhino.” The beast was on the opposite hillside, two miles away, standing on a rocky slope where



TWO WEAVER-FINCHES IN BLACK AND GOLD  
(*Hyphantornis textor*, *Pyromelana taha*).

grew scattered thorns. On one of these trees he was breakfasting. Abandoning our two kongoni (except heads and skins), we were soon ready; but meantime “Kifaru,” having finished his meal, slowly turned, and still more slowly strolled along the mountain-side. The thought occurred to me, watching, that perchance he had performed that selfsame walk on the morn of Waterloo.

The descent into the intervening gorge and the passage thereof were of the roughest—broken rocks all intercepted with dongas and terrible brushwood; and ere we emerged the rhino had disappeared. In vain we sought. To the right, in the direction he had gone, a great ravine rent the hill. This was choked with euphorbia, cactus and other humanly-impenetrable

shrubs. Had he entered that, he was lost; but second thoughts negated the probability, for such are not the spots beloved of rhino. Anxious moments succeeded when, on the stony ground, no spoor could be discovered, and I directed Yama to proceed direct to the thorn-tree of the original "view." On our way thither we struck



WOOD-HOOPOE (*Irrisor erythrorhynchus*).  
Brilliant in lustrous reflections of deep greens and purples.

the three-toed spoor, and, following this, soon ascertained that (as anticipated) the animal had shunned the ravine; turning to his left, he had crossed over the mountain-ridge, or "neck," high above.

Beyond this was a saucer-shaped depression full of low trees and bush, fairly thick—not a comfortable spot for tracking, as we could rarely see over twenty yards. Here, presently, we walked right into the rhino in his

boudoir; we stood actually at seven yards before detecting him within. His chamber was a natural arbour, four-square, formed by grouped trees whose foliage overarched it above, while green brushwood walled it in below.

Though so near, we could not distinguish the position of the beast—it was merely the indication of a dark mass that we saw; and for several trying minutes we stood, nervous lest some fickle puff of air might betray us. Then the waggle of a stumpy tail showed that we were right under his stern, the beast standing about two-thirds “off.” Gently we retreated backwards, since such quarters were too close, leaving neither time nor room to act had we been detected; and, besides, we thus gained the advantage of rising ground. When some twenty yards away, and already nearly full broadside, my foot in backing touched a stone, and round came that huge head instantly, the broad, tufted ears deflecting to catch the slightest sound. It appeared as fair a chance as was likely to occur; so I placed a .450-solid six inches below the visible ear. The indication of a dark mass vanished; there was a heavy fall, followed by groans and thumps as of a Nasmyth hammer. These I saw, on running forward (lest the beast was merely stunned), arose from the great head convulsively pounding the earth. The second shot was then placed in the lungs, and within a few moments all was over. This was a huge old bull, exceeding  $12\frac{1}{2}$  ft. in total length—almost identical with that previously shot at Elmenteita, though measuring a foot less at shoulder. Even at the first, distant view, I had noticed that this was an unusually long low beast. The comparative dimensions of the two are given at p. 142. The anterior horn of this rhino was just under 18 ins.

The bedroom bore evidence of long occupation, protruding branches at the sides being all broken off short—whether by accident or design—the floor worn flat and smooth, all made snug and comfortable, as though the rhino had occupied this koppie for a century. Yet the

beast itself was literally infested with loathsome vermin. Ticks in solid layers (like mussels on sea-rocks) clustered inside the ears, armpits and in every fold of the hide; while creeping and crab-like creatures crawled and sidled away—repulsive to the last degree. A few yards outside this main lair, the rhino had prepared a second bed, where he could enjoy an open-air siesta. The home-



PORTERS BRINGING IN RHINO HEAD.

ward march, burdened with that heavy head, besides the two kongoni, occupied three hot hours.

All that evening in camp we had a regular serenade of lions, concentrating, it seemed, about the locality of the two abandoned hartebeests. We therefore decided to reach the spot by dawn, and set out at 4.30 a.m. On drawing near the scene, after two hours' stumbling in the dark, as day broke we observed vultures sitting on the trees above—a safe index that something was at the carcasses. Any doubts thereon were speedily dis-



pelled by the grand reverberating roar of a lion, followed by a whinnying response—both apparently close on our front, though really 250 yards ahead. At this crucial moment, as chance had fixed it, W——, misjudging the distance, and assuming that we were already on top of the lions, pressed forward “to walk them up” on his own. Nothing we could do availed to check that impetuous fatality. Yama implored me, “Stop your brother—stop—not that way—stalk.” It was in vain; signals, whistles, all ignored, it only remained to us to follow on through grass not three feet high. At a long 100 yards the lion stood up, gazed, and turned away. W—— fired, and I then saw the flat head of a lioness appear above the grass. At my first shot she rushed to right; at the second stopped dead, turned and bolted back. W—— shouted that both were down; but that, I knew, was not the case; and, on running forward, I got a clear view of the lion, a magnificent heavily-maned beast, walking majestically with long-swinging stride beyond the river, 500 yards away. Against the low-rising sun he stood out dark, silhouetted as a daguerreotype, his mane all rough and “touzley,” and he walked quite slowly and unconcerned. There was still a chance to shoot—fair, though remote—but so entranced was I with that rare spectacle, that the rifle was forgotten.

It was over—the best chance we had at lion thrown away. My brother, usually most cautious and painstaking, agrees with the facts as above set out, but considers Ali more to blame in misjudging the distance—it was kismet, predestined. As Yama insisted, we might, by a careful stalk, have crept in as near as we cared.

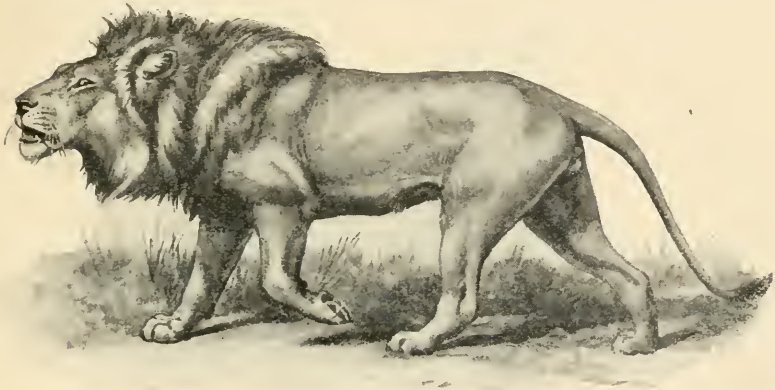
Of course we took the spoor of both lions, assuring ourselves that neither had been hit. Not a vestige of the hartebeests remained beyond the vertebræ and some big bones.

On the campward way we sighted a single oryx (the first of the *callotis* kind that I had seen) in company with hundreds of kongoni. I took the stalk, but failed to approach within 500 yards. At that distance, through

the glass, this oryx appeared distinctly smaller than *Oryx beisa*, of a warmer red in pelt and with shorter horn. Then the restless hartebeests took him right away.

We walked into a genet, which, after a hot chase (once all but run into in the open), escaped by getting to ground.

Button-quails swarmed in the rushy straths, the same little birds we had seen in such abundance at Baringo—the kurichaine hemipode (*Turnix lepurana*)—and the



SILHOUETTED AGAINST THE LOW-RISING SUN.

francolins also differed from those of the Athi. Here among thick scrub we sprang a big dark-brown species, *Francolinus schuetti*, and also observed the large bare-throated spur-fowl (*Pternistes infuscatus*). Bird-life, indeed, was on a wholly different plane, richer, or at least more in evidence than on the higher table-lands. The rollers, for example, were here the beautiful African lilac-breasted *Coracias caudatus*, with elongated tail-feathers (as shown in the sketch), replacing the European roller that we had observed near Nairobi. Similarly, the hoopoes at Simba all belonged to the Ethiopian race, *Upupa africana*, a species new to me, and easily distinguished by its dark, unspotted wing and dull-red body-colour. The British hoopoe, like the British roller,

chooses the higher ground for its winter quarters, although I noticed a single common hoopoe at Sultan Hamud on March 22. An allied family, the wood-hoopoes (*Irrisor*), birds of dark plumage shot with brilliant metallic reflections, and with long cuneate tails, were also noticeable here, and remarkable for the scansorial powers they have developed. Twice we observed them



LILAC-BREASTED ROLLER (*Coracias caudatus*).  
A study in vivid blues, greens and chestnut.

climbing on tree-trunks in search of insects, quite like woodpeckers, as sketched on p. 243. These are noisy birds, attracting one's attention far away in the bush, and then, when disturbed, flying off with discordant cries. Doves and green pigeons (*Vinago*) abounded.

It is, of course, impossible even roughly to describe the bird-life of a wide region on so brief an experience as ours—especially when, during our short sojourn, birds formed but a secondary object. Still one has always

one eye to spare for unknown feathered objects, and the following notes may interest.

One small species specially attracted attention by its strangely vibrant flight, producing a rattling sound as of some insect. This was a bush-lark (*Mirafra fischeri*), and the curious vibrant rustle is a seasonal sign, produced by the rapid clapping of its short rounded wings beneath the body as the bird shoots upwards in spiral flight. The effect is remarkable enough even in March, but during the breeding season (November) this singular "drumming" is audible up to hundreds of yards.



A PAIR OF BISHOP-BIRDS (*Pyromelana sundevalli*).

Gorgeous in orange-red, with velvety-black points and golden-brown mantle.

Another small bird of brilliant canary-like yellow also shoots up in air displaying gorgeous hues in the sunlight, but without the accompanying vibration. This is one of the infinite family of weaver-finches, *Hyphantornis subaurea* by name. An even more brilliantly-coloured weaver was also common along the river, a bird of bright gamboge with orange head—*Xanthophilus bojeri*. Most of the gaily-plumaged finches one sees prove to be either weavers or their cousins, the bishop-birds; yet, in the reverse, many of this extensive family are quite dull in colours—as, for example, the social weaver-finch, commonest of them all. The massed nests of these latter, hundreds under one roof, fill whole trees; others, as



before described, build separate pendulous nests—each a distinct structure, but often hanging by the dozen together. Here at Simba, by the riverside, we found weavers' nests of quite different architecture. These were domed nests with side-entrance, neatly fixed on tall flowering reeds—some on a single stem; others had two or three reeds passing through their structure.



NESTS OF WEAVER-FINCHES ON THE SIMBA RIVER.

There was, of course, the customary profusion of gorgeous tropical hues—bee-eaters resplendent in turquoise and carmine; kingfishers in azure and orange; golden orioles; and, beyond all in brightness, the lovely jewelled sunbirds. Forest-open and flowery glade gleamed with these gaily-feathered atoms as they hovered over some open bloom, alighting for an instant to probe the calyx with long curved bill. One species had an emerald head, set off by dark body; in another the head and back were black, breast bright scarlet, all glancing with



metallic reflections; others were arrayed in crimsons and greens, gold and purples.

Barbets with contrasted colours and ringing voice are always in evidence, and there were woodpeckers and shrikes, drongos, babblers and colies. By the river I got a sight of a bush-cuckoo, and we heard his note at night. But the only other birds I shall specifically mention were the hornbills. These were not the big



A HORNBILL AT SIMBA (probably *Lophoceros fasciatus*).

black fellows of the Mau Forest, but of the smaller family defined as *Lophoceros*—quaint creatures, all bill, wings and tail. From tree to tree they sweep in silent undulated flight, alternating half-a-dozen heavy flaps with long drooping glides. The huge bill, always disproportionate in appearance, on alighting seems to upset equilibrium altogether, and much flapping and balancing is often required to restore it. One species, as roughly sketched, displayed conspicuous white spots on the wings, and also on the outer tail-feathers.

## MAKINDU

This is a country of close scrub and bush, almost viewless, and at this season (March) bare of game beyond a few kongoni, some waterbuck and small antelopes. There was old spoor of giraffe, and also of eland, more recent; but we saw neither, nor any sign of *Oryx callotis*, of which we were specially in search.

This dense bush swarmed with guinea-fowl and big brown francolins (*F. schuetti*), as well as the great bare-throated spur-fowl (*Pternistes infuscatus*), red as cock-pheasants, that clattered as they rose. There appeared to be two distinct species of this latter; and we also observed hornbills, coucal or bush-cuckoo, green pigeons, helmet-shrikes with floppy flight, and most of the other birds already recorded at Simba.

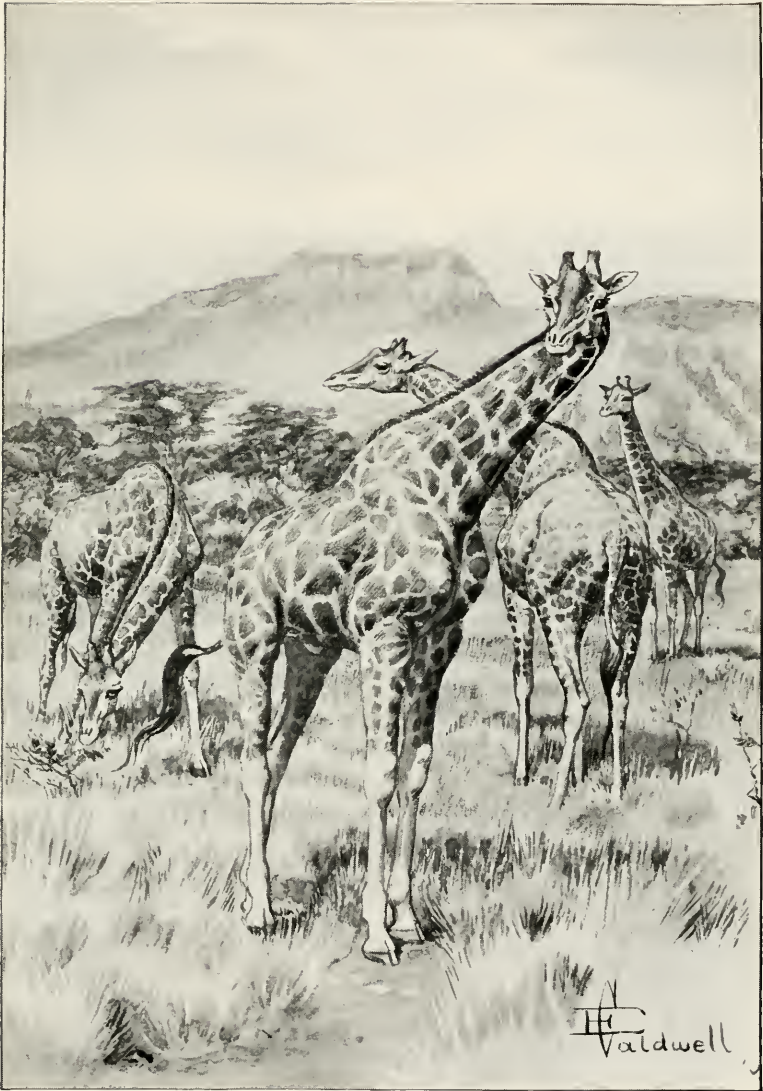
A few miles out, completely surrounded by bush, we came on the Government farm, where cotton, fibre and other produce were growing luxuriantly, and where there was abundant water with a complete system of irrigation. Yet it was abandoned—presumably for some sufficient reason, though none was apparent. Makindu, when it formed “rail-head,” had some little importance, but has now fallen from its (never very) high estate.

Since writing the above, I read in Blue-book, March 1907, that Makindu Farm was finally abandoned on March 31, 1906—a few days after we were there—owing to the extreme unhealthiness of the site, the managers and staff being constantly down with fever, and the whole stock of cattle killed by the tsetse-fly. “The natives of the neighbouring hills,” adds the Blue-book, with fine official humour, “have confined their interest in the farm to raiding most of the live stock.”

## SULTAN HAMUD

A game-like country, prettily situated in a wide gap between enclosing mountains. Herds of giraffe charac-

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GIRAFFES ON ATHI RIVER.

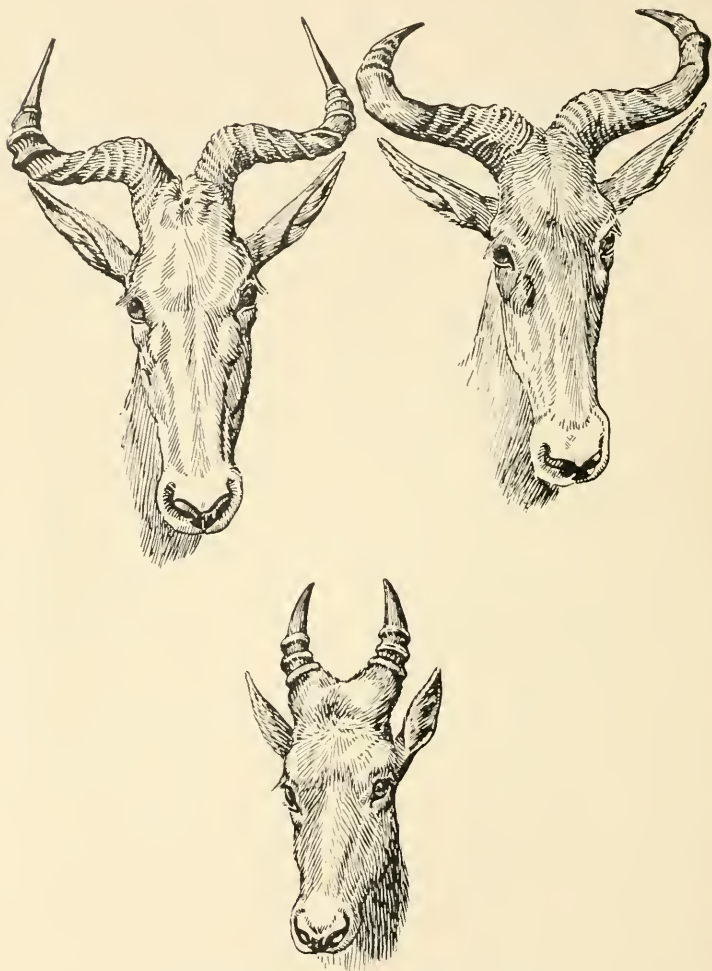


terise this neighbourhood, their chief haunts being on the south—that is, within the “Reserve,” though they wander everywhere. We saw, besides, most of the ordinary game, but not a sign of oryx. A small antelope that I hit among bush, merely breaking a hind-leg low down, gave opportunity for a wonderful exhibition of sporing by Yama and Salim, who held its tiny hoof-marks through the roughest ground and long grass for quite half-a-mile. It proved to be a steinbuck, female, weight  $23\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. clean. To complete our collections, we each shot a hartebeest cow or two here (*Bubalis cokei*), my brother securing an unusually fine specimen, the horns exceeding 17 ins. The Coke’s hartebeests of Simba varied in type from those of the Athi Plains in their darker red pelts and in the form of horn. Those of the Athi animals are distinctly angular and bracket-shaped, whereas at Simba the horns display a more even symmetrical curve, as shown in drawing on p. 254, which also illustrates the upright growth of the horns in an immature example of this species. I shot my second zebra here, a stallion, but smaller than those obtained on the Athi and in the Rift. Several zebra seen here were quite red in colour, the result of rolling in the ruddy soil.

No two zebras are alike in their striping. Not only so, but each zebra differs in pattern on one side as compared with the other. This is easily seen on examining a flat skin. Three such lie before me, and in no single stripe is there regularity or repetition. Though corresponding pairs of stripes start from the dorsal ridge more or less equal—never quite so—yet each individual stripe quickly develops a different form. Should that on the right be carried continuously down to the ventral line, its fellow on the left will either bifurcate or blend with its immediate neighbour, whether in front or behind. Another may break off abruptly, or perhaps be interrupted by a broken white line. Not a single pair runs similar throughout, though a curious co-relation is nearly always apparent.



This by-play is not confined to the main body-stripes, but is specially conspicuous in the network of minor



HEADS OF COKE'S HARTEBEEST—(MALES).

Left, from the Athi ; right, from Simba ; below, immature.

bands on quarters and legs, where Nature runs riot in her wild patchwork patterns, all studiously unequal—a white islanded spot on one side balanced by an open

gulf on the other, or a convolution corresponding with a break. The one consistent feature is constant dissimilarity.

Beyond the rocky ranges to the north are splendid stretches of mixed woodland and pasturage; but these, in March, are devoid of game.

The heat at this period passed description, and the discomfort was accentuated by torrential rain-bursts daily, producing a plague of vicious-biting insects and mosquitoes in millions. We, having mosquito-curtains (mine were rigged here for the first time this year), partially escaped *that* terror; but not a man of our safari could get a wink of sleep at nights, and general discontent prevailed. Yama, moreover, went down with fever; and we suffered also from an irritating red rash—said to be called “prickly heat”—though I attributed it to a plague of small grey caterpillars with arched backs that span webs like spiders and so lowered themselves in shoals from the trees above. We habitually dined and lived *al fresco* beneath these trees, thus becoming an easy prey to these noxious beasts, that caused irritation wherever they crawled. Then we began to dream once more of the cool moorlands of Northumbria and its swirling salmon-streams!

Such were our miseries, that at eight one evening—to avoid delay awaiting the thrice-a-week passenger-train—we fled in a “C.G.,” that is, a covered goods-van, an iron box on wheels, and reached Voi (altitude 1,830 ft.) at 9.30 next morning, after a terrible night’s jolting and shunting on a freight-train. The discomforts of that night were, moreover, accentuated when, as the train started, our “boys” shoved into our truck the (very high) rhino head, which in the darkness had nearly been left behind on the platform.

## Voi

There is certainly a period when *Oryx callotis* frequents this region, and the same applies to Simba and Sultan Hamud. But March is not that period. Hence here again our continued search proved fruitless. Not an oryx was seen. The true home of this species lies further south—towards Kilimanjaro and in the German territory.

Having secured two Wateita guides who knew the bush and assured us they could show us at any rate lesser koodoo, eland, and I knew not what else, we scoured the bush-country lying towards the west below the mountains. It was fairly thick, though opens were interspersed, but at this season almost bare of game save Hinde's dikdik (*Madoqua hindei*) and a few impala.

The presence of game at other seasons was, however, attested by the numerous game-traps devised in olden days by the savage mind.

Strong ramparts of aloes, thorns and other impassable shrubs everywhere traversed the bush. These had probably been planted in the first instance, but were now growing naturally enough, and lying athwart our path, obliged us to seek a passage elsewhere. This, however, proved simple, for presently an opening would be discovered leading through the obstruction. Here was the trap. This narrow passage-way was occupied by a deep pitfall. These were now open and conspicuous enough; but one could readily imagine how fatal they must have been to game when deftly concealed by a treacherous blind of branches, grass, etc.

On the outskirts of the forest lying under the rocky mountain-range to the west we enjoyed our only view of the lesser koodoo. It was but a glimpse, for we "jumped" this beautiful antelope a long hundred yards ahead, and though we spent the rest of that morning following the spoor, we saw him no more.

There was old sign and spoor of eland, and still more

of buffalo—the latter quite fresh—but that was all we saw of either animal. There were chameleons in this bush, and I noticed a kind of squirrel not seen before.

Dining at the Dâk bungalow one evening were three white men, all singularly silent and preoccupied. Various topics were mooted, but all fell flat. At night we were surprised to observe that two of these men went to bed in their boots, and with rifles, swords and such-like lethal weapons at hand. We learned later that one of the three was under arrest for murder, the other two being responsible for his safe-keeping! A more agreeable meeting was with Rev. J. A. Wray, who for twenty-three years has worked as a missionary at Sagalla in the hills above Voi, and with whom we travelled to Mombasa.

Leaving that port by the Messageries Maritimes' steamer *Djemnah*, we reached home towards the end of April.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE UNSEEN WORLD

NONE can wander through this Continent of Africa without being struck with the evidence of things not seen. The things one does see so bewilder in their variety, that to most of us—meaning the average traveller or big-game hunter—there remains scant time for investigating others or even indulging in speculative thoughts concerning them.

For example, not a book, hardly even a chapter on Africa but mentions the ant-hills. These are omnipresent and of all shapes and sizes, varying between conical or sub-rounded mounds to tall shafts like factory chimneys. But how rarely does one see an ant or termite anywhere near them, or building a new one. Did ants really construct all these? If so, why are many of the half-round mounds pierced by dozens of vertical shafts, several inches in diameter, and connecting below (as one can see by working into them, or by injecting smoke) with extensive horizontal galleries beneath—perfect labyrinths? What can ants want with tunnels like these—as big as rabbit-holes? Obviously they belong to some other creature; but you never see him, though you may dig for hours.

Again, those twenty-foot factory chimneys aforesaid are hollow throughout—like the real thing—and thus serve the wandering hunter as ovens for bread-baking. Certainly no ant ever contemplated such a use, yet none ever appears to resent it. One sees no ants near them.



Such questions may evidence crass ignorance ; for beyond doubt the lacking answers will be found printed somewhere, though not on the veld, where I write these notes.

In that sense, at least, I always assured my companion, who, whenever we encountered some noxious reptile or extra-hideous insect, would invariably ask, "Are you sure that *that* has been catalogued?"

Then one cannot walk many leagues over African hinterlands without coming upon holes—immense holes, regular dens. What, in wonder's name, made *that*? you ask. The answer, as a rule, will be, Oh, that's a wart-hog's hole. Possibly it is; that is, it is now occupied by one of those animals. But surely no wart-hog originally excavated it, for a pig is not a digger—he is not "fossorial," which is, I see, the technical term; and has probably adopted a subterranean habitat owing to the facilities here afforded him of securing desirable residences ready-made and no ground-rent to pay in the shape of labour. Jackals also and porcupines live in holes; so, too, do civets, mongoose and the like. But all these are small beasties, and none of them require tunnels of these dimensions. What, I ask again, made that scandalous hole? Having silenced flippant superficial theories in respect of pigs, dogs and cats, at length comes a more serious answer. The excavator was an ant-bear—in Dutch, an aard-vaark or earth-pig. This I have been so often assured that the solution comes to bear a sort of impress of truth. But, if so, what numbers of these beasts there must be! Yet during my three years' wandering amongst them, I have never set eyes on the personality of the said ant-bear, nor met any one who has done so, or could give even the faintest description of what the fabled creature was like if you did see him.

I am not (of course) seriously doubting the existence of our unseen neighbour. Far from that, since indubitable proof lies before me that some one has actually captured a specimen—and dissected him! As witness

the following, which I extract from Flower and Lydekker's *Mammals: Living and Extinct* (p. 208)—

“ FAMILY ORYCTEROPODIDÆ

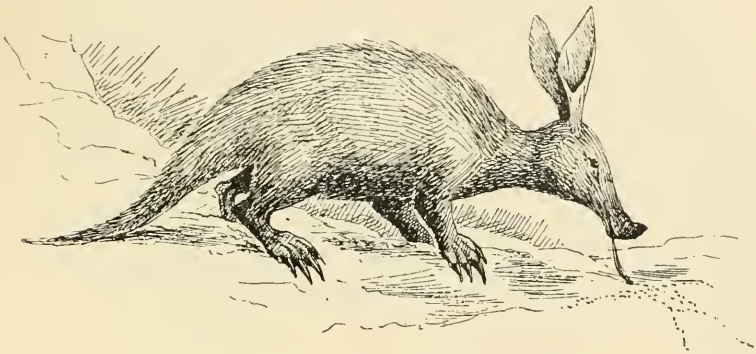
“ External surface scantily covered with bristle-like hairs. Teeth numerous, apparently heterodont, diphyodont, and of peculiar and complex structure, being traversed by a number of parallel vertical pulp-canals. Lumbar vertebræ with no accessory zygapophyses. Femur with a third trochanter. Fore-feet without pollex but all the other digits well developed . . . suited to digging, the plantar surfaces resting on the ground in walking. Hind-feet with five subequal toes. Mouth elongated and tubular. Tongue subvermiform. Uterus bicornuate. Placenta broadly zonular. Feeding on animal substances. Terrestrial and fossorial in habits. Now mainly limited to the Ethiopian region.”

Such descriptions evidence the depth and thoroughness of scientific research, but hardly help one to form any rational conception of what the actual animal resembles in life.

Since writing the above, I have at length met with the aard-vaark—in a glass case in Bergen Museum! Upon viewing his personal appearance (as here roughly sketched) regrets at having missed seeing him in Africa diminished. One almost felt grateful at meeting thus, on neutral ground.

Another creature which, although common, is absolutely and always unseen, is the aard-wolf—earth-wolf, in Boer nomenclature. This again is strictly nocturnal and subterranean in habit. By description of systematists, he is of the Hyænas; yet with the remarkable exception that his teeth are feeble and even rudimentary. Strange are Nature's facts when a hyæna with “rudimentary” teeth has to be conceived, since one never sees the beast in person. This is a handsome animal, as his portrait at p. 113 shows.

There are, however, members of this "unseen world" of which once or twice in a lifetime one may catch a fugitive glimpse. Thus, as above recorded (p. 210), we twice saw and once actually captured a porcupine. Now this animal must be extremely abundant in Africa; yet so rarely is he seen that, on my mentioning the fact just stated to Mr. F. J. Jackson at Nairobi, he told me that never once in his lifelong experience of East Africa and its big game had he so much as seen a single porcupine alive!



AARD-VAARK—SKETCHED IN BERGEN MUSEUM.

Once when "partridge"-shooting over dogs in the South, my two pointers had "set" dead at something which their attitude of quivering excitement—suggesting some slight "funk"—clearly showed was not the harmless francolin of our search. Out bounced a huge brindled civet, looking quite double its natural size owing to the prominent erectile crest which stuck straight up along the whole length of the beast, from nape of neck to tip of tail. Instantly the hunting instinct in both dogs—steady enough on game—reasserted itself. In short, they broke-in, thus spoiling my shot; and after infinite digging, shifting tons of earth from the hole wherein the civet had sought refuge—it made no attempt to "tree"—we were

reluctantly compelled to abandon that prize. The following month, however, our Kaffirs (this was in the Transvaal) brought in another civet which they had killed with assegais—quite how, I never could understand.

Another animal of which one may get an occasional glimpse is the genet, which in East Africa I have twice chased to ground and once to a hollow tree. On the latter occasion the gun-bearer who was with me put in his hand, and though badly bitten, pulled the genet out.



CIVET.

This, however, can hardly be defined as belonging to the unseen world, being partly arboreal, and on one occasion in the Transvaal, my friend Ingle, spying one in the fork of a tree, placed a .303 bullet in its eye, and the skin lies before me now. Then there are the mongoose tribes—swarms of them; yet how rarely one sees these, whether in Africa or Spain. In the latter land, if attended by one who knows, and prepared with pick and spade to shift considerable portions of earth's superficies, one may capture half-a-dozen in a single burrow. In Africa the only mongoose met with are mentioned at p. 33 above.

A reclusive neighbour in South Africa (but not so

common in East) is the ratel (*Mellivora ratel*), allied to the badgers, which is another tenant of these mysterious holes, and which varies a diet of roots and honey by digging from his grave the lightly-buried Kaffir; but which retires long before dawn to the depths of the earth. Our British badger also possesses a "sweet tooth," and in summer digs up bees' and wasps' nests.

The ratel, being short-legged like a badger, has no



RATEL.

speed of foot; and if found in the open, can be run down by an active man. But once it finds itself cornered, it turns directly, open-mouthed, upon its pursuer, in the pluckiest way. Mr. Selous tells me that in his elephant-hunting days he frequently ran them down, and in every case they turned and attacked.

The above are a few—how many more there may be I know not—of the animals whose presence and handiwork is ever in evidence, but which themselves belong to an unseen world.

When the "sportsman" in British East Africa (that is, as so by law defined, the travelling hunter who has paid up his £50 shooting-licence—since otherwise



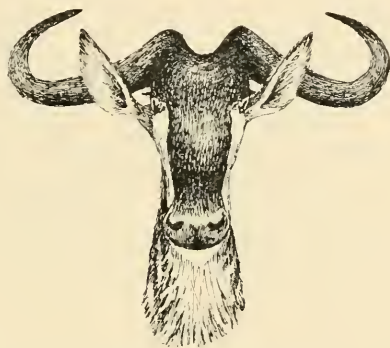
the word is to me almost a term of opprobrium) studies his copy of the Game-ordinances, he notices in the schedules of game-beasts some names that puzzle, others that surprise. The white-tailed gnu, for example, he finds is barred: but that he reads with considerable complacency, knowing that the species does not exist (and never did) within some thousands of miles of the equator; nor will the express exclusion of the mountain zebra and the wild ass from his game-list concern him, since neither of these inhabits the British Protectorate. The mention of "chevrotain" (*Dorcatherium*) may cause a passing qualm; but it is only when he reaches "Schedule III" that he realises to the full the advantages and powers conferred on him. For in that category he finds specified both our unseen friends aforesaid—the aard-vaark and the aard-wolf! True, he is limited to two of each species; but within the space of a brief twelve-month, two might prove more than an ample allowance.

In the next Schedule (IV) the "settler"—as legally distinguished from the "sportsman" aforesaid—is, it appears, prohibited from taking even a single specimen of either of those reclusive beasts. That may possibly be ascribed to one of those bright flashes of humour that are occasionally permitted to illumine official routine. For it seems conceivable that a settler, presuming that he was permanently resident and prepared to devote his whole time to the effort (with pick, spade and shovel), might, within a year, succeed in bringing to the light of day one of these mysterious members of the unseen world!<sup>1</sup>

The African scrub abounds with small cats and a hundred other nocturnals that one rarely or never sees, and whose very existence eyesight alone would never give cause to suspect. At one camp we found ourselves alongside Mr. Vernon Shaw-Kennedy, who, with Mr. Ateley of the Field-Columbian Museum at Chicago, was collecting the smaller mammalia for that great American

<sup>1</sup> The schedules have since been altered, but perhaps my mild banter may stand.

institution. The series of mice-like and rat-like creatures, moles, voles, squirrels and others, arboreal, terrestrial and aquatic, which they had amassed, was a revelation to us of the infinite variety of this unseen world on the minor scale.



WHITE-BEARDED GNU.  
Outside span of horns,  $28\frac{1}{4}$  ins.

## CHAPTER XXII

### BIG GAME AND ITS BIRD-PROTECTORS

WE are apt to consider a task in hand as more difficult than a former object already achieved. Thus in Africa the stalker, crawling over an adamant veld, all but devoid of cover or "advantage," may recall with envy—recall as easy by comparison—the approach to big game on the rugged highlands or sheltering rock-ridges of Europe. He may even sigh for the soft sphagnum through which in Scotland the deer-stalker worms his final advance ; yet, at the time, the latter cannot be said really to enjoy the sensation of moss-water penetrating to his chest.

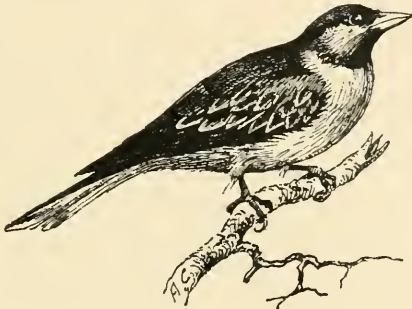
But in Africa—and especially in the South, under the Tropic of Capricorn, to which regions these remarks more particularly refer—there is a specialised difficulty attending the stalker that is unknown in Europe. That difficulty springs from the habits of certain birds, that make it their business to warn game of the presence of danger.

True, in Scotland and in Norway alike, the untimely flight of grouse, or a white hare skipping uphill, may, and often does, give a clue to otherwise unsuspecting game. But that is not the specialised difficulty above mentioned. That is merely incidental, and forms an everyday risk of the still-hunter the world over. In Africa that risk is fully as pronounced as elsewhere ; for here the ubiquitous francolin and guinea-fowl, the spur-wing and various other plovers (with sundry mammals), each and all form extraneous sources of danger to the

stalker. In all such cases, however, the mischief is done by accident and not by design.

That any birds should systematically set themselves to spoil sport by warning wild animals of the presence of man, appears inconceivable; and the motives that actuate different species to give such alarm form an interesting study.

The chief of these bird-nuisances, and the most persistent, is the little honey-guide (*Indicator*), a creature no larger than a sparrow, which latter it also resembles in colour and general appearance.<sup>1</sup> Now this



HONEY-GUIDE.

bird's first object in life is to plunder the nests of wild bees and wasps—not for the honey, but for the larvæ, the grubs and the young which these nests contain. But bees' nests are fortified in strong places—in hollow trees or clefts of rock quite beyond the reach of small birds. The honey-guide, however, has reasoned out this problem to a point conducive to its personal interests. A human being, the bird knows, cares nothing for bee-grubs; but is not averse to a haul of wild honey. He is, it also knows, usually provided with hatchet and crowbar. Hence if that human being can be induced to follow the feathered guide to a bees' nest, he will certainly

<sup>1</sup> The resemblance is merely superficial, for the honey-guide differs essentially from sparrows and all other small birds, particularly in being zygodactylic—that is, it has two toes in front and two behind, as is the case with parrots, cuckoos, etc.

hew open the tree or split the rock, when the bird is assured of its share of the spoil.

The result, in practice, is fatal to the silent stalker. No sooner does the honey-guide perceive him, than up it flies, rattling out a harsh incessant chatter—an invitation to man to share sweet plunder; but a warning of danger to every wild beast within hearing, for all instinctively interpret its precise significance. You cannot drive that feathered fiend away: it follows on from tree to tree; you cannot shoot it for obvious reasons. It will never leave you all day, until you agree to follow it and do its bidding!

The most aggravating phase—indeed humiliating—is when the bird discovers the hunter in the midst of a stalk, or perchance towards its climax. Then all the hard work and, it may be, a coveted trophy is lost. In one moment irreparable mischief is wrought, and the “lords of creation” are powerless against this insignificant atom.

Should the hunter elect to follow his guide, it will almost assuredly lead him direct to a bees' nest. That was my experience in three out of four instances in the Transvaal; in the fourth case it led us to a snake, half-hidden in a hollow tree. The natives, however, assert that the bird will at times deliberately deceive, and I have read that, when refused its due share of the spoils, it will, on the next occasion, lead up to a sleeping lion or rhino, by way of revenge! Such reasoning seems too complex even for the acute wits of Indicator and (I quote from a letter in the *Field*, September 14, 1907) “in East Africa, the Wandorobo deny that the bird ever does this, but assert that it sometimes takes you to a dead elephant that you may get the tusks, or to a dead rhinoceros, especially when the animals have been killed some time and the tusks or horns have not been removed; also that it will take you to a lion's kill, but not to a lion. These savages say that God has given this bird the work of finding for men things that are lost. The honey-guides certainly show discernment in never leading one



to the hollow logs placed in trees by natives purposely to attract bees, such hives belonging exclusively to those who placed them and never being looted by others, etiquette on this point being strict." Property and its rights, it appears, are recognised by these lowest of savage races.

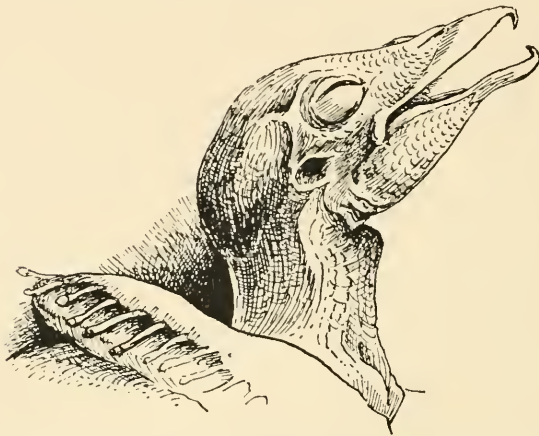
Twice I lost chances to finish wounded beasts through this annoying cause, and once a leopard coming straight in to a "kill," quite unsuspecting, was warned by a honey-guide in the tree above. It being close upon dusk, the bird's object, in that case, was clearly distinct from honey-hunting.

The honey-guides, like some cuckoos (with which bird-group their zygodactylic feet evidence some affinity), are also parasitic—that is, they lay their eggs in the nests of other birds, just as at home the British cuckoo foists its egg upon titlark or wagtail. But in one essential the two cases are not parallel. For our cuckoo, being a larger bird of hawk-like appearance, encounters no difficulty in thus feloniously depositing its egg; while by the same token, the young cuckoo, when hatched, is enabled summarily to eject its smaller companions from the nest. But in this case, the intended foster-parents most strongly resent the intrusion; and that not without reason, since the first object of the honey-guide is to break all the eggs of the lawful owner before depositing its own. The two, moreover, being nearly of a size, fierce fighting frequently ensues. But a truly extraordinary result follows. For should the intrusive honey-guide so far succeed as to introduce its own egg into the disputed abode, and yet fail to destroy the eggs originally deposited therein, Nature steps in with a physical device expressly designed to uphold the wrongdoer. For the young honey-guide, when hatched, is provided with two strong and sharp hooks—regular forceps—one on either mandible, wherewith to destroy and eject its step-brothers and sisters.

The sketch annexed is copied in rough outline from a photograph of a nestling Indicator (*I. variegatus*)

in the excellent *Journal of the South African Ornithologists' Union*, Vol. III, plate i (June 1907), where the following description of the phenomenon is given by Messrs. A. K. Haagner, F.Z.S, and R. H. Ivy—

“The extremity of the beak in the nestling is furnished with a pair of hooks which are hard, strong, and very sharp. These peculiar appendages, which remind one of the reptile-like toothed birds of Jurassic and Cretaceous ages, such as *Archæopteryx macrura*



HEAD OF NESTLING *Indicator variegatus* (SCALY-THROATED HONEY-GUIDE)  
SHOWING THE “FORCEPS” ON MANDIBLES.

from the Middle Oolites, are very curious so far as bird-anatomy is concerned, and one is led to wonder at the reason of their presence. We can only conjecture that they are of use to the nestling when ejecting the young of the rightful owner of the nest; as it would, by means of these hooks, secure a perfectly firm hold of the bird it wanted to throw out.”

The article proceeds to explain that the pirated nests were invariably placed in holes of trees (such as those of barbets, woodpeckers, etc.), where the usual method employed by the young British cuckoo of working itself *under* its victim, and so ejecting it, would not avail: whereas these tooth-like appendages would serve the

purpose perfectly. Lastly, it should be added that these vicious hooks are cast so soon as the young honey-guide attains maturity.

On the whole, it will be apparent from this short life-story of the honey-guide that that insignificant-looking little creature possesses, in fact, one of the most forceful and vigorous personalities in the feathered world. All this, however, is rather a digression.

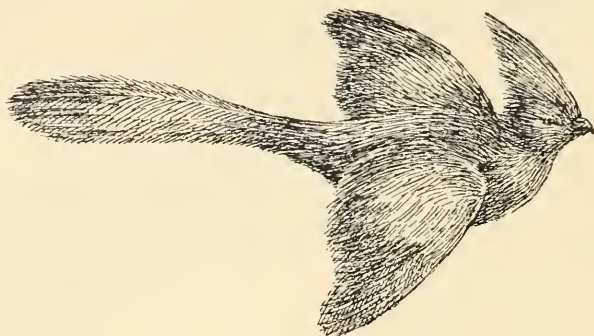


“GO-WAY BIRDS” (*Turacus corythaix*).

Great loose fluffy things with huge mop-heads and no beaks!

Next in order, having regard to the mischief wrought, come the touracos or plantain-eaters (*Musophagidæ*), commonly called “louries” in the Transvaal—and some species of which are also abundant on the Laikipia and high plateaux of East Africa. These are large birds of very extraordinary appearance, with huge head-tufts that almost conceal the short pigeon-like beak, loose fluffy plumage, and long flirting tails. They abound on the bush-veld of the Transvaal, two species in particular—the grey loury (*Turacus concolor*), whose note is a

harsh "Kva, kva," and a resonant musical call, clear as the human voice, "Go 'way, go 'way"; and the handsome purple-crested loury (*Gallivex*) with crimsoned wing; besides the curious mop-headed green loury, *Turacus corythaix*. It is the first-named that is by far the most troublesome. I acquit these birds of any directly malicious intent when perpetrating their mischiefs. Their food consisting of plantains, berries and arboreal fruits, they have no conceivable interest either in the big game or its hunters: yet should one of these birds perceive a human being, it raises an outcry that



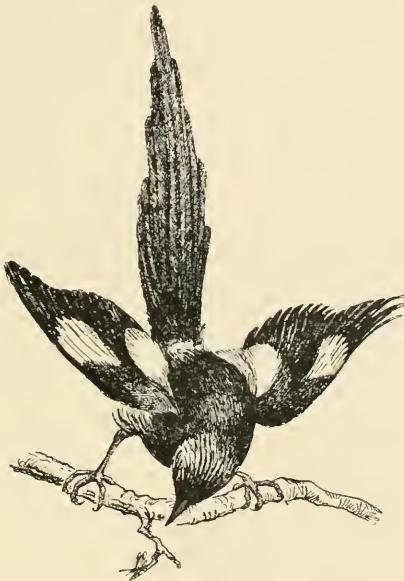
TURACUS CONCOLOR.

speedily brings up any other louries within hearing, all vying with each other in strident clamour. Any game within a mile at once decamps.

Another bird-group equally abundant and characteristic of the South-African bush-veld is that of the shrikes (*Laniidæ*). Far away in the wilderness, one hears a not unmusical chorus; gentle at first, the notes grow louder and wilder till they climax in raucous key, and the performers hurriedly depart, to alight in a mass on some bare tree. Then one sees that they are magpie-like birds, black and white, with very long tails. These are sociable shrikes,<sup>1</sup> and must be counted among the

<sup>1</sup> From a specimen brought home, I find that the correct name is "long-tailed pied shrike" (*Urolestes melanoleucus*).

worst of detrimental. Although, as just indicated, these shrikes hold frequent impromptu concerts entirely on their own account (and which cannot alarm game) yet it is more than certain that they will also insist on "addressing the meeting" precisely at those critical moments of a stalk when their ill-timed chatter spells sure disaster to the hunter.



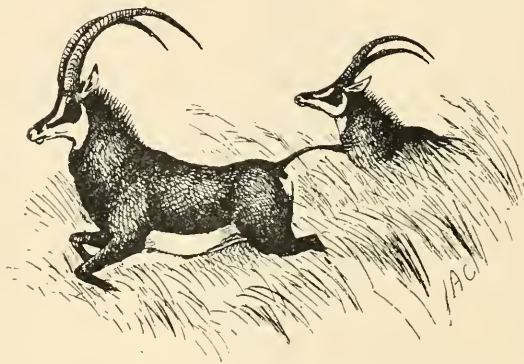
SOCIABLE SHRIKE (*Urolestes melanoleucus*).

The shrikes, being insect-feeders, habitually attend the herds of big game, in order to pick up the locusts, grasshoppers, etc., that are disturbed by the slowly-grazing animals. Obviously many more grasshoppers would be set in motion by a stampeded herd in full flight than by separate beasts sedately feeding. Thus the shrikes have a direct personal interest (if they knew it) in alarming each herd of game. That they have so deeply worked out the problem as to associate the appearance of a hunter with alarm to the game and its resultant feast on grasshoppers, it would not be wise to



assert. But whether these shrikes are actuated by reason or instinct, or whatever their precise motive may be, at least to the stalker the result is the same—a chattering crew of shrikes and the clatter of galloping hoofs.

The tick-birds or oxpeckers (*Buphaginæ*) must also be included in the category of detrimental. My own short experience would not have enabled me so to classify them, since I cannot remember to have lost a single shot through their agency. On one occasion I passed quite close to a rhino, and in full view, when, though the



SABLE ANTELOPE ALARMED BY BIRD-WARNING.

great pachyderm was attended by at least a score of feathered parasites creeping all over his frame, neither bird nor beast took the slightest notice. I might, indeed, almost have been inclined to regard *Buphaga africana* in a friendly light, since the flights of these birds passing overhead at dawn have, on occasion, indicated the presence and direction of game. But the testimony of far more experienced observers has proved conclusively that the little tick-bird possesses a full sense of gratitude towards its hosts, and habitually gives alarm to the animals (especially rhino and buffalo) which may, at the moment, be providing it with a meal.

The avocation of these birds, as indicated by their name, is to subsist on those loathsome parasitic insects,

such as warbles, bots, ticks and other vermin, that in Africa infest all large animals, whether tame or wild. Thereby, incidentally, the birds tend to rid the suffering beasts of a distressing and ceaseless scourge. For many of these vermin, laying their eggs within the hide, are hatched in a living cradle of flesh and blood, where their presence creates intense, often maddening, irritation. The birds themselves are about the same size as our starlings, of no special personality, and are furnished with a strong wedge-like beak, well adapted for digging out their burrowing prey. In colour that organ varies from bright yellow to pale red.

That *Buphaga erythroryncha* is actuated by honest solicitude for the safety of the wild game, appears to be demonstrated by the fact that when feeding on the backs of cattle, or domestic animals, its conduct is quite different. In such cases, no notice whatever is taken of the appearance of a human being, and no warning is given. The bird appears to have reasoned-out the fact that cattle stand in no danger from the hunter.

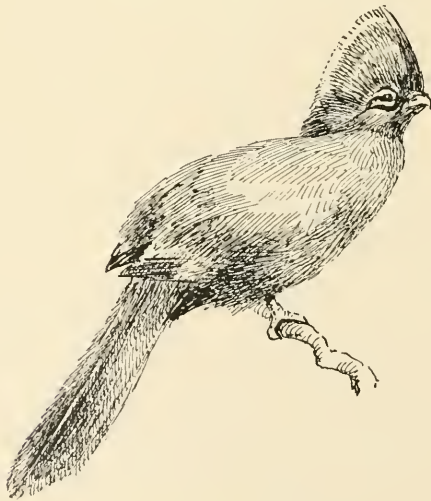
There are several other species of birds which occasionally (whether by design or otherwise) communicate alarm to one's quarry. Among these may be mentioned the glossy starlings, rollers or blue jays, colics and rasvogel. Egrets also and buff-backed herons attend upon game, perching on their backs to feed upon flies and ticks, and should be named, though, being so conspicuous and easily avoided, they never give trouble to the hunter.

In East Africa, one of the most troublesome birds to the big-game hunter is the black-winged plover (*Stephanibyx melanopterus*), a shrieking peewit-like bird with a brazen voice and the lung-power of a suffragette.

Many birds, as is well known, habitually "give tongue" on seeing a strange creature or something they suspect. At home, all are familiar with the uproar that small birds raise on discovering a prowling cat or stoat or snake, or a somnolent owl in an ivied tree. This is, I imagine, the motive—the common impulse to mob any

strange or suspect object—that actuates most of the birds above mentioned to make nuisances of themselves. The honey-guide, as explained, has a clear and definite aim in so doing; while the shrikes may also, as suggested, have an intelligent motive. But with the rest it is merely the “mobbing” instinct. That impulse is all the greater when—probably for the first time in their lives—such birds as touracos, plovers, rollers and the rest observe large creatures like human beings prone on earth and advancing with secret serpentine movement—naturally they sound the alarm.

Bird-nuisances may thus be divided into three classes, to wit: (1) Those whose interference is purely accidental, such as the francolins, guinea-fowls, etc.; (2) those which offend from sheer “cussedness,” such as plovers, louries, rollers and that ilk; while (3) the honey-guides, and possibly also the shrikes, can boast a clear and intelligent reason for their (nevertheless) untimely solicitations.



TURACUS CORYTHAIX.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### FASCICULA

#### I. RETROSPECTIVE

IT may amuse after a completed venture to return to the distant standpoint whence a promised land was first surveyed, and to “reconstitute” the original ideas and frame of mind. This is the way my brother regarded an East-African expedition when first proposed to him in April 1904—

“I have just re-read ‘Jackson’ [*Badminton*—‘Big Game’], and admit to be a bit disconcerted, though of course the railway has modified things since that time. Still he doesn’t speak of the Kilimanjaro country being altogether healthy, and warns against ‘flies,’ which, as you know, are death to me. No doubt there was any amount of game—though, mind, I draw a very distinct line of demarcation between big game and dangerous game. Elephant, rhino, lion, buffalo and all such Noah’s Ark beasts are outside my schedule. The more subtle and venomous beasts of the field, I must just trust to Providence to escape the vengeance of. The giraffe I regard it as a shame to kill at all, and that only leaves me the antelopes. To get the bigger kinds, we shall have to trekk a long way in from the railway, and I do not think either of us can now do very hard work in such tropical heat; and if you go up too high, there is nothing but elephant and they in impenetrable forest! Jackson speaks of the labour [after elephants] being utterly exhausting. Now, I love big game, and can sit on a log and watch for it all day, but . . .

However, I must get the rifle loosed off this year. It doesn't do to keep a weapon that (they say) will drive through twenty-four inches of solid oak, eating its head off."

In a later note:—"Yes, I undertake to see after getting the necessary medical stores, etc., but hardly understand what 'special remedies' you refer to—if by 'horn-pricks' you mean a hoist by a rhino, the only useful article I can suggest is an oak suit with brass mounts."

Well, since then we have twice experienced in actual practice the true degree of all these foreboded risks and ills. The tropical heats, the mountain-forest, the malarial breeze, the savage beasts and the subtle—we encountered them all, and under a gracious Providence, have not required the brass-bound suit.

We encountered, nevertheless, during two comparatively short expeditions (and outside all such risks as fever and the like), several instances of tangible danger from wild beasts, as hereinbefore recorded.

## II. DANGER

What degree of danger is there encountered in African hunting? Many who have not had practical experience, and whose knowledge is confined to reading, are apt to exaggerate it. On the other hand, those who know, perhaps minimise the contingent risks partly through a fear that they may be suspected of extolling their own exploits or personal courage. Then there is that third section—those who do not survive to tell the tale. And one cannot spend much time in Africa without being surprised at the number of "accidents"—many of them fatal accidents—that are always occurring, and of which no word reaches home. The casual wanderer, the adventurous spirits of the hinterland, these meet sudden deaths—or die of wounds or gangrene—and no record remains.

My own impression tends to the belief that there is,



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TROPHIES AT EARINGO—SHOT BY G. F. ARCHER.



in almost every case, an appreciable degree of danger in taking on either elephant, rhino, buffalo or lion. Occasionally, of course, a "soft job" may be enjoyed; but such, with these four, cannot be relied upon. So absolutely dominant, moreover, at the crucial moment, is the *hunter*—or hunting instinct; so concentrated must thought and action be on success alone, that every other idea is eliminated. There is no time to consider those. Therefore when all is over, and the beast lies dead before you, one's mind, occupied with success achieved, is apt to ignore those preceding moments of crucial, vital import that are past, and which, even at the time, received no thought. For all that, those moments may have been critical, dangerous to the last degree. The rifle has triumphed, but the event might well have resulted otherwise—one turn of ill-luck, a second's delay or loss of nerve, an ill-judged movement or false manoeuvre, and the case might have been reversed.

Some of those who have fully realised this latter alternative may not live to record it. But it is scarcely wise entirely to ignore it; nor to give too wide a scope to the admirable British trait of depreciating danger by denying its existence. The point of these remarks is to insist that none should undertake the pursuit of the four animals named, without first realising that it may, in all probability, involve a certain degree of risk.

That degree appears greatest in the case of elephants, since these are quite apt to assume the offensive without notice, and before being molested at all. So, it is true, may rhino; but in their case, the lack of intelligence (and equally of vice) coupled with very defective eyesight, reduces the danger. With buffalo and lion the chief risk only begins after the animal is wounded, though it may then become acute enough.

The lion again is possessed of high progressive intelligence, quite capable of adapting itself to changing circumstance. Thus the new system of "riding lions" to a stand, which is briefly referred to above (p. 216), appears to be developing in the lions of those regions

where it is practised—such as Athi Plains—a clear tendency to attack when unmolested, and especially to attack horsemen, whom they are learning to regard as systematic enemies.

This the following account of a recent fatality on the Athi Plains tends to show. I transcribe from a letter from a friend in East Africa—

“I regret to tell you that Mr. Lucas of Donyo-Sabuk was killed by a lioness last week (May 1906). It happened thus. Lions had for some time been molesting his stock, so he wrote for Capt. Goldfinch, whom you know, to come over and help him. They were riding together on the Athi, when suddenly a lioness sprang upon Goldfinch, rolling horse and rider to the ground. L. at once fired from his saddle, when the brute immediately left Goldfinch and sprang on Lucas, hurling him and his pony over, clawing him in the face, and mauling his arm so badly that he died a few days later in hospital. I should add that Goldfinch, mauled as he was, stood by his friend and fired point-blank into the lioness' ear, giving her the *coup de grâce*. One seldom hears of these brutes attacking unprovoked as this one did. A young fellow has also just been killed at Nyeri by a rhino. He was unarmed, and could not get out of the brute's way.”

Not only are the four animals named capable by sheer strength of almost instantly destroying human life, but they also possess a speed and an activity beyond what might be expected in such ponderous beasts. Hence, should the critical moment arrive at all, it comes in the form of a headlong onset, that, if carried home, may disconcert the coolest nerve.

### III. SNAKES

Of the “more subtle and venomous beasts of the field” above referred to, East Africa is singularly free. During the whole period of our wanderings, including both summer and winter seasons, we did not see a

dozen snakes in all, and the hooded cobra that attacked my brother on the Athi (p. 228) and was shot for its temerity, afforded the only instance of momentary excitement. This snake (*Naja haje*) not only strikes with its fangs, but is capable of ejecting its venom from the mouth.

In that district, during our lion-drives, we saw three or four fairly big black snakes resembling the European Colubers, and probably 6 or 7 ft. in length, presumably black mambas. This was in January, and at the same season we came across one puff-adder above Nakuru. A whippy, adder-like snake, also near Nakuru, but in August, completes our list. It must be added that although we did not happen to see them, pythons are not uncommon, especially at Solai and Baringo. At the latter place Mr. Archer has shot several—one of 18½ ft., which had just killed a waterbuck calf, as shown in photo at p. 290.

In South Africa a very different state of affairs prevails. There, snakes of many kinds abound, including several dangerous species. The green mamba,<sup>1</sup> for example, was specially numerous on the bush-veld of the North-Eastern Transvaal, where three or four sometimes showed up together, their vicious heads all raised vertically a foot or two clear of the grass, while they coolly surveyed the disturber before gliding away in the same half-erect attitude. These mambas appeared to be about 10 or 12 ft. long, of which one-third is carried erect,

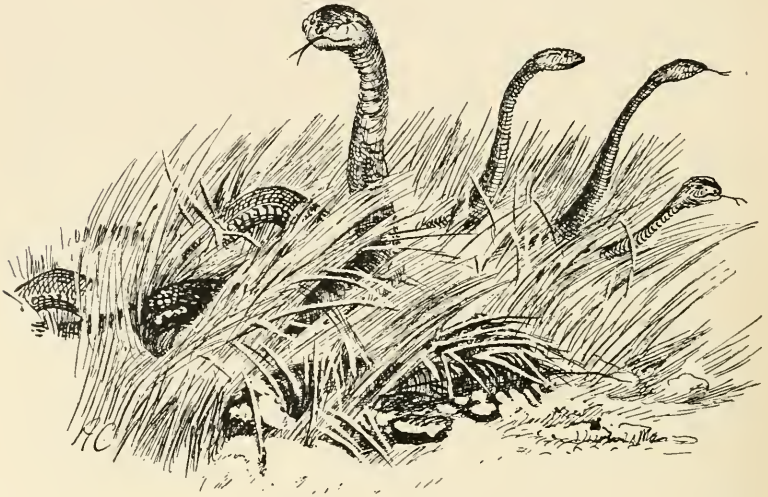
<sup>1</sup> An example of the way in which the more advanced scientists (quite unconsciously, no doubt) work "up in the clouds," high above the heads of humbler students like myself, and of how little assistance their labours thus render to field-naturalists, is afforded by this same "green mamba." By that name the snake is universally known throughout South Africa by black and white, Briton and Boer alike: yet the name cannot be found (or, at least, I failed to find it) in the whole library of the Zoological Society. So effectually is the identity of a well-known reptile concealed under scientific procedure, that I am unable here to give its proper title.

To christen every creature in our own tongue may require the ingenuity of a new Noah; but when a well-known name actually exists, surely it is *criminal* to suppress or ignore it?



the remainder gliding along the ground. In thickness they might be 18 ins. in circumference. Being assured that their bite involves certain death after half-an-hour's terrible agony (though whether this is true or not, I cannot say), one could not but regard those gliding apparitions with a cold shudder and a freezing sensation around the heart.

Puff-adders up to 4 ft. long, very thick, with flat



GREEN MAMBAS.

toad-like heads, are numerous in the Transvaal, though at the period of my visit (June to September) somewhat lethargic. From a female, killed July 2, 36 ins. long, I took twenty eggs, about the size of thrush's. There were also *Ring-hals* = ring-necked snakes (*Sepedon hamachatis*) and other species, not to omit the python. One of these latter which we killed measured 11 ft. 9 ins., but that is far below their full size, for pythons of 22 ft. have been recorded.

On one occasion a Shangani "boy" with me pointed excitedly into a hole leading into one of those labyrinthine systems of burrows, made by creatures of the

“unseen world,” and therein I saw about twelve inches of visible python, a foot underground. The extremities extended for yards in both directions. I borrowed the “boy’s” assegai, jabbed it hard through the beast’s body and deep into the soil beneath—then turned and fled. For one moment, a python’s head appeared at another outlet, then the assegai began to writhe and squirm before finally disappearing for ever!

Here, in the Transvaal, were also big monitors, or iguanas, arboreal and terrestrial, some running to 4 and 5 ft. in length—quite harmless, it is true; yet no one can regard them as congenial companions. We saw no sign of these in East Africa.

The latter, moreover, enjoys a happy immunity even from the major noxious insects—the *minor*, admittedly, are bad enough. I cannot call to mind meeting with a dozen scorpions in East Africa,<sup>1</sup> whereas in the South, each camping-ground had to be laboriously cleared of stones and other shelter—and even then scorpions found refuge under one’s bath! Only once, however, was I stung, and that through the misplaced habit (born of civilisation) of washing every morning. In order to find my sponge-bag in the dark, I used to hang it on a convenient tree, and this particular morning the venomous beast was inside it! The pain is severe for twelve hours, and continues in modified degree for double that period.

#### IV. THE SAFARI

The equipment of a safari—that is, the outfitting of an expedition for, say, three or four months up-country—demands much consideration, forethought and organisation. Both of the first two essentials it is right to say are fairly fulfilled by the efficient arrangements of the Mombasa and Nairobi shooting-agents. The third largely depends on the “Neapara” or headman.

<sup>1</sup> Scorpions are, nevertheless, numerous enough in sandy regions, such as those of Njumps and northward therefrom.

Presuming that it is intended to penetrate some distance back from the railway, a force of at least thirty to forty porters, or upwards, will be required—for in East Africa beasts of burden are not available, owing to the terror of the tsetse-fly.

Add to these a couple of Somali hunters with two gun-bearers apiece, tent-boys, cook and cook's mates, with the requisite number of askaris—as by law required—and you have a fair-sized mob of savages.

Now when one's whole thoughts and attention are absorbed by the primary objects of the expedition, it is in the last degree inconvenient to the leaders to be constantly called upon to settle details of organisation, discipline and the like. Yet these matters must be settled; and upon their efficient execution day by day depends nothing less than the comfort and success of the entire venture.

Nor are these duties any slight or insignificant business. They involve, for example, the provision, superintendence and daily issue of rations, together with their due subdivision among the various "messes"; the apportionment of loads and other duties, both in camp and on the march, to each individual; the setting and relief of watches and work-parties for wood and water, together with the constant maintenance of order and content, and a hundred minor matters.

All this falls—or should fall—upon the Neapara or headman aforesaid. An efficient headman, strong, insighted and forceful, means a contented safari and a smooth-running expedition. On the other hand, a feeble eye-serving neapara wrecks the whole show.

All this, it may be urged, is self-evident. Admittedly so; when put thus in plain words, after the event. But in practice foresight sometimes fails, and one may only come to realise such facts when face to face with an ill-managed mob of half-mutinous savages far away in African wilds. That event may easily occur should your headman belong to the second of the two categories above defined. I speak from experience of both.



"GOLDFINCH" AND HIS NEW OWNER.



OUR HEADMAN (ON EXTREME RIGHT), ELMI TO AUTHOR'S LEFT, ENOCH BEHIND HIM, DEAD LIONESS IN FRONT ESCAPED CAMERA.





Our first headman was a born leader—and he looked it. When first introduced at Mombasa to that huge swarthy personality, vast of frame and truculent of visage, a tremor of fear—let me admit it—would scarce be suppressed.<sup>1</sup> I trust it was concealed. The idea of spending months in the wilds, in company with that savage Soudanee, *did* disconcert for a moment; but no long time elapsed before we came to appreciate the treasure we possessed. Before that iron will (and obvious power to enforce it) difficulties and troubles melted like butter on hot toast—few, indeed, ever dared to confront it. Discipline, in savage Africa, relies first on the moral power; but when that fails, in the next resource force becomes the only law.

Long afterwards when far away “out-by,” at a remote up-country station, our friend the official representative of King and Empire asked us how this headman behaved; and on being told that we were thoroughly satisfied—that, in short, the whole routine-work ran like a machine—replied that he was not surprised; that, in fact, he quite expected it would be so. Naturally we inquired if our friend had ever met this savage chieftain before. “Oh yes; he served his term of years here on the chain-gang!” “The chain-gang! What for?” “Oh, I think it was murder.”

Now to any one holding the ordinary British and altogether admirable respect for the Ten Commandments, a reply like this, uttered more or less casually, gives pause. But on reflection one realises that moral standards in Central Africa possess a wider basis than obtains at home. Other countries, other manners; savage countries . . . well, not savage manners, but manners adjusted to environment. The conclusion I reached—and still hold—is that in Equatorial Africa, at the present epoch, you can't have a better headman than a respectable murderer—a murderer on your own

<sup>1</sup> His portrait appears at p. 284, on the extreme right. Behind the author stands Enoch, his tent-boy; to his left sits Elmi Hassan. The lioness in the foreground unfortunately escaped the camera.

side. Remember that your pet murderer has already expiated his offence and is once more, by law, a free and responsible member of the African community. Acting on this conclusion, I wrote, months before starting on my next expedition to East Africa, urgently requesting our agents at Mombasa to secure for us once more the services of this same headman; or at least, in default of him personally, another precisely such as he. There might, perhaps, be just a spice of devilry in this, for our good friends at Mombasa feebly replied that they would do their best, but that they had never before heard of "assassins at a premium!"

Alas for us, their efforts failed; and our second headman was a poor forceless specimen, with no soul to lead or the power to control. The result involved endless trouble, day by day, in the direction and management of our safari, such discipline as obtained being that enforced by ourselves.

The end, as already indicated (p. 236), was open mutiny; when the forces of moral suasion had necessarily to be replaced by those represented by the sjambok. The desired effect resulted.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### STRAY NOTES ON EAST-AFRICAN GAME

#### I. ON CERTAIN ANTELOPES NOT MET WITH

BONGO.—*Tragelaphus euryceros*.

The fact appears incredible that any large wild animal, carrying, moreover, a splendid trophy, should exist close by—as this does at Eldama Ravine, within twenty or thirty miles of the Uganda railway—and yet defy our best sportsmen. And not the bongo alone, for in these same tropical forests of the Mau and of Laikipia there also lurks unseen and unshot the giant forest-hog, that has been christened (from some fragments of skin and bone obtained from natives) *Hylochaerus meinertzhageni*.<sup>1</sup>

The apparent paradox tones down considerably when one comes to see the chosen home of these two unknown animals. It is what is commonly described as “impenetrable forest;” and thereby, if language means anything at all, the mystery is explained at once. But is any forest impenetrable? I should have doubted the possibility had I not myself seen these forest-jungles of the Mau. Penetrable in limited degree, slowly and laboriously, they may be; anything beyond that must be only for the fullest vigour of youth, when keenness and physical power admit no bounds. That age, in my case, having already been doubled, the uncompromising

<sup>1</sup> My friend Mr. Rowland Ward writes me that one or two examples have quite recently (June 1908) been secured in British East Africa—one by Col. Watkins Yardley in the Kenya district, and a fine boar in the Mau Forest.

epithet must be admitted—to me, those forests *are* impenetrable.

The bongo is a big beast, one of the heaviest of the antelopes, standing 4 ft. at the shoulder and carrying massive upright horns approaching a yard in length. These, from their flattened, abruptly twisted form and curve, clearly demonstrate the owner's affinity with the bushbucks; and the bongo, in systematic classification, stands between that genus and the inyalas, or harnessed antelopes. The existence of this animal was first made known to science by Du Chaillu, who brought home a skin from the Gaboon in West Africa; and a mounted specimen, a splendid bull, obtained by Mr. Isaacs, formerly Commissioner at Eldama Ravine, may be seen in the galleries of South Kensington. This animal was followed persistently by native hunters with dogs and spears till eventually, so densely grew the jungle, that not even a bongo could further go. There it was overtaken and killed. Other specimens have been obtained by the same means; but I believe that Mr. Isaacs did not himself succeed in shooting a bongo. A female has, however, recently been shot by Capt. Stigand, of the King's African Rifles, in the Kikuyu Forest between Limoru and Escarpment—thus extending the known range of the bongo to the eastward of the great Rift Valley—but leaving the bull bongo as yet unshot.

Curious, yet not luminously intelligent, is the popular interest displayed in such subjects. Some little time ago the discovery of the okapi in the Congo forests aroused almost an enthusiasm. Hardly a man, woman or child but knew all about the okapi; yet here in British territory we have two great unknown animals quite as interesting, but it is doubtful if one reader in a hundred will ever have heard of them!

SITUTUNGA.—*Tragelaphus spekei*.

A water-loving antelope, confined to dense swamps and beds of papyrus, chiefly, it appears, in the region of Victoria Nyanza and upon one of the Sesse Islands in

that lake. (See *The Great and Small Game of Africa*, by Mr. Rowland Ward, p. 477.)

GERENUK.—*Lithocranius walleri*.

Remarkable in appearance—with its abnormally long, giraffe-like neck—the gerenuk is equally remarkable in distribution. Its head-quarters are in Somaliland, thence spreading southwards through (British) Jubaland to the Tana River; but there it stops. Broadly speaking, no gerenuk are found throughout the central zone of British East Africa (that is, the line of the Uganda railway). But to the southward, leaving a blank belt of 100 miles or more in breadth, these antelopes turn up again on the Seringeti Plains, south of Voi, and thence westward, skirting the base of Kilimanjaro, and beyond into German territory.

Since writing the above, my friend and Spanish shooting-partner, the Marquis de la Scala, who with Mr. R. de la Huerta and the Duke of Peñaranda, has just returned from a most successful trip in British East Africa, writes me: “We only came across this species once, up north near the junction of the Guaso Nyro and Guaso Narok. I was lucky in bagging the only individual we saw, and it happened to be a male. We heard of several being got near the German boundary; and on our journey back towards the coast, we saw one from the railway carriage window near Sultan Hamud.”

HUNTER'S ANTELOPE.—*Damaliscus hunteri*.

On the Tana River only and northwards therefrom.

TOPI.—*Damaliscus jimela*.

This species we had included in our programme; but were prevented from reaching its habitat on the Mau Highlands owing to the outbreak of the Nandi rebellion. The topi is not uncommon there, but more plentiful on the Tana River and in Jubaland. This antelope, like its South-African relative, the tsesseby, is beautifully



marked with black points, shading away during life into glossy purple reflections like the bloom on a ripe grape. A tsesseby bull happened to be the first big beast that fell to my rifle in Africa, and that lovely coloration remains fixed in my memory.

ROAN ANTELOPE.—*Hippotragus equinus*.

This has always been considered a rare animal in East Africa; yet we might, with luck, have met with it at various points in our travels—say on the Athi, or in the country between Nakuru and Baringo—but such good fortune did not befall. Small herds are known in the Lumbwa Valley, towards Muhoroni and Kibigori; while southwards therefrom, the roan is said to be fairly numerous on the Guaso Nyero and thence towards the lake.

My specimens are from South Africa.

The Marquis de la Scala writes me: "We shot three roan on the Thyka River, left bank—the first at the back of Donyo Sabuk. That herd, however, is very poor, and is now preserved. Other parties got roan, quite good heads for the country (28 ins. and 27 ins.) near Muhoroni."

SABLE ANTELOPE.—*Hippotragus niger*.

Found only in the coastal region, particularly on the Shimba Hills, a few stations up the line from Mombasa; and in no great numbers—two or three small herds and poor in head, 36 ins. being the best. Having much better specimens from the Transvaal, we did not try for sable in East Africa. My two best sable bulls, shot in the Lebombo bush-veld, measured  $44\frac{1}{8}$  and 42 ins. respectively; and I had a female of  $32\frac{1}{2}$  ins. These three, together with many other fine trophies, the results of three months' hunting, I lost through the outbreak of war in the Transvaal—October 1899. My two companions, however, suffered infinitely

worse ; for one brother, Reginald S. O. Ingle, joining the Imperial Light Horse, was shot dead before Vryheid, May 20, 1900 ; while J. C. Ingle was seized and held prisoner in Lydenburg gaol for eight weary months. Escaping thence he did good service as Intelligence Officer with Bethune's Light Horse. But by way of reprisal, the Boers burnt down his house and store,



MY FIRST VIEW OF A SABLE BULL. "JUMPED UP WITH A SNORT."

with all it contained — including my forty-four trophies !

Koodoo.—*Strepsiceros kudu*.

We did not try for this, though Baringo is a well-known locality. Its haunts there are among specially stony mountains—piles of rugged boulders, hidden amidst wiry grass and ornamented with thorny creepers, the hardest of "going." The most deadly enemy of the koodoo in that region is the hunting-dog, which destroys more than all the licensed sportsmen put together.

My own heads are from Mashonaland and the Transvaal.

LESSER KOODOO.—*Strepsiceros imberbis*.

The Marquis de la Scala sends me the annexed photo (together with that of a rhino at p. 178), and writes: "We stayed for three days at Mitito Andei and bagged three of these animals. I only saw one really good head in all the time, for ours are only 24 ins. the best. The great difficulty is in seeing these antelopes before they see you, for their peculiar coloration and the thickness of the bush makes them all but invisible."

## II. ON THE ALERTNESS OF GAME

All wild game are by nature watchful and alert. Never, for a single moment, is the contingency of danger entirely absent from their minds: and this is reflected in every attitude and expression. But in East Africa, where man is but one (and that a minor quantity) amidst numerous more dreaded enemies, those characteristics are accentuated to a degree that, it may be, lies beyond the power of pen or pencil to depict.

Parenthetically may be added the remark that the man who would match himself against such animals must also be alert.

Illustrative of this point:—How rarely does one here see game lying down, or in positions of complete repose? True, during months spent on the open veld, one does occasionally view such scenes; but they are exceptional. One can almost recall to mind each instance.

These remarks, of course, do not apply to the great pachyderms which have nothing to fear—save man alone; and in minor degree to buffalo, which, being nocturnal in habit, lie down all day, but usually in the densest and most impenetrable jungle. The rhino takes his daily siesta quite openly, often lying down beneath some solitary tree in quite exposed situation. Yet, curiously, the elephant never lies down. In all his long experience, Arthur Neumann (if I remember aright



LESSER KOODOO.  
(Marquis de la Scala.)



*Archer, Photo.*

AN 18-FT. PYTHON WITH WATERBUCK CALF IT HAD KILLED.





what he told me) had only *once* seen an elephant lying.

I cannot call to mind ever seeing either wildebeests or zebras do so in East Africa; though several such instances recur to memory in the case of sing-sing, waterbuck, gazelles, and (more rarely) of hartebeests and impala. The habit is more or less casual and accidental—not as in Europe, where one sees the deer (of all kinds), and goats also, regularly lie down by day.

On writing to my brother to confirm or confute these remarks, he replies: "It seems to me quite correct. One never sees game asleep. The best instance I can remember was on the Molo at Ya-Nabanda, where, to the west of the river, I found a company of Jackson's hartebeests all lying down on a bare patch of red soil that exactly assimilated with their own colour. The details impressed themselves on my memory; for when I had stalked to within 250 yards, there intervened a belt of long grass through which I intended to creep close up; but in it there were some zebras feeding. After waiting a long time, as the zebras did not move, I sent Mehemet back, telling him to go round in a circuit to the windward, without showing. Soon after he had gone, the zebras suddenly threw up their heads and cantered off—the hartebeests, of course, also jumping up and moving away. Mehemet was back almost immediately, looking scared out of his wits. He said he had come on two lions stalking the zebras, and on looking in the direction he pointed out, I certainly saw some animal 'louping' away through the grass, but too far to distinguish. This was, so far as I can recollect, the only instance of seeing a herd of hartebeests (though I once or twice saw single animals) lying down."

W—— adds: "That zebra you fluked (see p. 107) was certainly *standing asleep*, and I never did see zebras lying down."

It should, however, be added that during the intense

heat of midday, when game would be most likely to lie down, we, as a rule (but not invariably), retired to our tents and laid down ourselves.

This high development of alertness in East-African game is clearly due—not to the influence of white man, who has only hunted here during the last few years, but to the presence of their innumerable natural enemies.

## CHAPTER XXV

### PROTECTION OF BIG GAME

(SPECIALLY IN RELATION TO BRITISH EAST AFRICA)

A MAIN outstanding danger to big game lies in its abundance. Its very numbers deceive; and especially does that remark apply in Africa, where many of the larger animals live conspicuous on the open plain.

It is not matter for wonder that new-comers, or settlers (men, it may be, who have never before in their lives seen game, great or small), conclude that, amidst abundance, they may slaughter without stint.

But are the thoughtful among us never going to learn the obvious lesson—shall we always blind our eyes to the staring examples of the past? Whole faunas, as rich as those that yet survive, and richer, have been swept off the face of the earth during our generation and under our eyes. Witness that abominable massacre of the bison on Western-American prairies. That was accomplished in a single decade—in the 'eighties. Witness, again, the destruction of the reindeer in Norway in the 'nineties. That piece of barbarism occupied but five years—the five that succeeded the introduction of cordite and cheap repeating-rifles. Witness, thirdly, the tale of ceaseless slaughter maintained during half-a-century on South-African veld—whole genera and families of beautiful creatures decimated or extirpated root and branch by a merciless Bœotian race and scarce a record left behind.

After the mischief has been done the world laments it. Herculean efforts are then made to preserve a few wretched remnants. Crocodile-tears flow in scientific

places. With these efforts and those tears I have scant sympathy. What is wanted is something more practical than tears—the energy to wake up while yet there is time, to assure the safety and well-being of those faunas that still survive, and to render any repetition of such barbarities impossible, at least on British soil.

Practical measures, plus the power to enforce them, are the one essential; and these must be taken in advance. Doctors avail not when the patient is dead.

In British East Africa, along with our highland domain, we have succeeded to a faunal inheritance that is second to none now surviving on earth.<sup>1</sup> That splendid asset it is nothing less than our duty to hand down unimpaired and unencumbered to future generations—subject always, it goes without saying, to the necessities of white settlement and colonisation.

At the moment no very serious danger threatens. The Game-ordinances of the Protectorate are essentially practical, and the one weak point—a shortage in the power to enforce them—is being remedied. These ordinances, it is pertinent to point out, were drawn in the first instance (and amended as circumstances dictated) by men who, better than any other, understood the necessities of the Colony; first, of course, in relation to its white population, while yet in sympathy with the aborigines—whether wild beasts or savage men.

The chief danger to big game in all lands and at all times has been the use of the horse. Riding-down game and then shooting at random into flying herds is the worst of all barbarisms—to say nothing of its being the most wasteful. My own experience demonstrates that for each head of game killed by this method, an average of five or six others escaped wounded, to die uselessly on the veld.

That combination of horse-and-rifle together I utterly condemn. It is unsportsmanlike, since not one man in a hundred can be trusted (or can trust himself) to act

<sup>1</sup> It is equalled, nevertheless, in British Central Africa—in Barotseland, Nyassaland and Northern Rhodesia.

fairly under its circumstance. The system is essentially unfair to game ; and, directly and indirectly, is responsible for the decimation of the Southern herds. I would earnestly urge that this "riding-down" of game be made illegal in our territories. Hitherto, the vice has barely made an appearance ; but it is wise to look ahead, and prevention will save cure.

Personally (though this is, I fear, a counsel of perfection) I would also prohibit the use of repeating-rifles on game. These are military weapons, and should be barred as unfair in the field of sport.

A minor menace to game, ever recrudescing during periods of passing depression, is a tendency in disappointed settlers to grumble at its bare existence. Precisely why game should cease to exist when "things are bad" is not explained. That is merely an evidence of "original sin" in human nature.

Here is a modern instance. But two or three years ago, the traveller-sportsman was received in East Africa with open arms, welcomed as a benefactor and a power ; the newspapers rapturously applauded the coming of this or that Nimrod, recorded all his movements and exploits ; he was, in short, received *en prince*—and charged as such ! As a simple matter of fact, the traveller-sportsman was (and still remains) the best customer of the Colony ; while the game is still its best asset.

But a change has come over the spirit of this dream. Our friends in East Africa have "boomed" overmuch ; their speculations were unduly sanguine, and they are passing through the consequent reaction—financial crises, lack of credit, and that sort of thing. Of course the fault cannot be *theirs* ; a scapegoat must be found, and "the game" will serve the purpose. The local newspapers out there, which, a year before, brimmed over with praise of "the glorious game," now sing in opposite key. They see (or pretend to see) a specific for the ills of over-speculation and faulty foresight, in the destruction of the Colony's one asset of present current value—



the game! They advocate violent changes, relaxation of the game-laws, reduction of "sanctuaries," and so on. The logic of this is sultry, as befits its tropical birth-place; let us turn to lighter vein.

"Of what possible use is the rhinoceros? Like the bull in a china-shop, he is far more dangerous than picturesque; he can walk through a fence as a nigger through a melon-patch, and is far more destructive. What good are such beasts as the hippo, lion, leopard, and buffalo? All can only be classed as the most dangerous vermin"! Somewhat grotesquely, these cogitations are still prefaced by the declaration that "for the preservation of the fauna of this country, none is a stronger advocate than the Editor."

Now, my dear Mr. Editor, have you seriously considered that if you, in a passing fit of "the blues," decide on exterminating the rhino, the lion and all the rest, that that crime will remain irreparable till the end of time? While there is, on the other hand, no evidence of any failure in the race of editors. There are ingrates who might rejoice to see a few more rhinos and fewer . . . say thoughtless scribblers.

Here is another question from the same source: "Why should vast tracts be reserved as sanctuaries for game, and the sturdy immigrant with moderate capital be forbidden to settle thereon?" Well, I will answer that question. Those tracts were delineated years ago (by experts who knew by long years' experience what they were doing) as absolutely *uninhabitable by man*—white or black. The absence of water, the presence of tsetse-fly, malaria and such-like natural causes preclude these regions ever being settled upon. They are useless for any other purpose, and are therefore reserved for game. If you, my "sturdy immigrant," don't know this, it is clear you need some one to tell you for your own advantage. But, quite possibly, you do know it all; yet still want to settle on forbidden ground merely because it is forbidden—out of sheer "cussedness," in short. Again, it is conceivable (to those who have been

there) that some may even wish to settle on waterless Reserves with an idea of getting superior shooting what time that "moderate capital" lasts!

The chief Game-Reserve attacked in these *ad captandum* lucubrations (indeed, the only one, since the others are as yet merely nominal tracts far beyond any present question of white occupation) is the great ATHI PLAINS RESERVE. Now the contention that white men are prohibited, in the interests of game, from settling upon these Athi Plains is childish nonsense, designed in most instances to deceive the ignorant, or—worse still—to create prejudice. For the Athi Plains are uninhabitable by man, whether white or black, by reason of the absence of water. They extend over upwards of 100 miles in length east and west, and throughout that vast stretch there is no permanent water between Makindu at mile 209 and the Athi River at mile 311.

What is the sturdy immigrant going to do here? He could not survive for a week, nor could his cattle. Then how, you ask, do those vast herds of game survive? The bulk of these, I reply, require no water. Nature has so designed her creatures that, for many, the abundant night-dews suffice to quench thirst. These never drink, though some have means of quenching thirst in certain bulbous water-bearing roots that they dig up from underground. The others migrate. The blue wildebeest, for example, and the zebra drink twice daily. Both these species may be seen thousands strong on the Athi Plains one week or one month; the next they have disappeared. Hardly one remains. They have moved away—perhaps hundreds of miles across country—to the nearest permanent water. The sturdiest settler cannot do this. He must stay where he is—and die.

We will assume that our friend the immigrant admits these simple facts as regards the Athi Plains. He abandons that waterless downland, but still contends that he is prohibited from settling in the bush-country

to the east, where water exists in abundance, but which is still within the Game-Reserve.

Let such men read Blue-book No. 519—the “Colonial Report on East Africa for 1905-6” (price sevenpence, Wyman & Sons, Fetter Lane, E.C.). Therein will be found set forth the reasons which compelled the Government to abandon their attempt to farm at Makindu. With all its resources of British credit, that experimental farm utterly failed to succeed: (1) Because the tsetse-fly killed all the oxen and other stock; (2) because malarial fever constantly prostrated both the superintendent and the labourers!

If, before entering on specious argument, people would take the trouble to master these solid facts (ascertained by practical experiment at the public cost), instead of airing their own silly superficial theories, we should hear no more of the cant about game, on the one hand, or “sturdy immigrants,” on the other.

No sane man has ever advocated that the interests of game should take precedence of the interests of white man, or that areas available for settlement should be reserved for game. But there are areas—such as the Athi Plains—not available for settlement. On these it is our plain duty to see that fair-play is extended to God's beautiful wild creation.

Lest I be suspected of partiality, let me quote a recent message on this point from President Roosevelt to our SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE FAUNA OF THE EMPIRE:—“It is perfectly evident to any intelligent man that the people who are protesting against what they call ‘the curse of the big game’ do not know what they are talking about. We have just such people in abundance here in America, and I have for twenty-five years waged war upon them in connection with game-protection.”

I have selected East-African sources for these strictures inasmuch as it is just this sort of rubbish that is copied into our papers at home, with the result of making confusion worse confounded. There follow

puerile questions in Parliament—frequently framed to mask some secondary object—and the replies given at least illumine the outer darkness that reigns in some official minds in Whitehall.

Next we have trotted-out (and, mind you, not as theories or even as honest beliefs, but set forth categorically as solid facts, proven and beyond doubt) all those rule-of-thumb traditions that game transmit diseases or the germs thereof. Statements are made in positive terms that such-and-such a species conveys infection of a particular kind—say “East-Coast fever”—that another contaminates by ticks or similar parasites, and so on. Witness the tsetse-fly, for example, and the acres of theory written on that insect by men who possibly never spent an hour on the study of its life-history and economy.

Now here, at any rate, we touch questions and problems of serious importance; and such shall not be treated in any spirit of levity. None will deny that there *may* exist foundation for such ideas. They may be correct or they may not. But until the questions have been subjected to the test of scientific inquiry, it is mere prejudice to proclaim them as facts.

These are complex points in biology. They involve nothing less than the whole spacious question of human interference with Nature’s balance of life over vast areas never hitherto subjected to the dominion of civilised man.

The determination of these, with other analogous points, is of the first importance to the development on pastoral lines of our dominions in Eastern Africa; and it is the duty of the Home Government towards its African Colonies to appoint technical experts to study these questions on the spot. Such investigation would involve prolonged research—probably extending to years. In the meantime, all opinion is merely speculative, nothing more than guess-work; and to condemn the game beforehand is some degrees more absurd than hanging a man first and trying him afterwards.

I began by saying that their apparent abundance was in the nature of a menace to big game. So it is; for they cannot exist in face of excessive shooting. All experience the world over clinches that fact. Compare the physical conditions of large game with small. The latter, with their large broods and early maturity, increase by three- or four-fold each year; and of that increase the greater proportion is available for human use. Large animals, on the contrary, with their single young, or perhaps two at a birth, and their years of immaturity, increase but slowly; while of that increase at least two-thirds (in Africa) is needed for the support of lions, leopards and other carnivora. The proportion remaining for the use (or sport) of man is necessarily small. It certainly cannot exceed five per cent., and I would not myself estimate it at more than three per cent. per annum on the entire stock. A recognition of these facts by hunters and settlers would go far towards perpetuating the big game of British East Africa. If regarded merely as targets for rifle-practice, the game will go, and that soon.

The future of the game depends largely on the settlers. Now most Britishers possess (more, at least, than any other race) imbued in their hearts the true spirit of a sportsman. Latent it may be, but true none the less, and I venture to ask them to accept from me this definition of a sportsman:—"One who loves game as though he were the father of it."



## APPENDIX

### ROUGH VELD-NOTES ON BIRD-LIFE IN BRITISH EAST AFRICA

IN Equatorial Africa a British, or even a European, ornithologist finds himself transplanted from his (more or less) familiar Palæarctic avifauna and plunged into a totally new bird-world—that of the “Ethiopian Region.”

Strange forms and new families in bewildering variety meet one’s eye at every point. Former knowledge and experience help but little. One must begin the new study *ab initio*.

Under such circumstances, the utility of printing cursory observations made during two limited periods (though these include both the summer and winter seasons) may be doubtful—the more so, as our own main objective having always been the big-game, that alone precluded the handling of bird-specimens. Hence most of these rough notes, and all the sketches, were made solely from observation of their subjects in the open field—never a sufficiently accurate basis.

The assistance of my friends on the spot, Mr. F. J. Jackson, C.B., Lieut.-Governor of British East Africa, and Mr. Geoffrey F. Archer, District-Commissioner at Baringo (now at Mumias), and of Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant at home, have encouraged me to add these bird-notes and bird-sketches, in the hope that (while admittedly valueless to “advanced” scientific ornithologists) they may yet interest and perhaps even instruct ordinary bird-loving readers both at home and in Africa.

Further to increase the difficulty of the subject, it may be added, there are in Equatoria two distinct breeding-seasons, one lasting from October to December, the other in April and May. The bulk of the *Passeres*, however, appear to prefer the former.

Many notes on birds having been already included in the

narrative, I have inserted, in the following list, page-references in nearly all such cases, in order to avoid repetition.

## GAME-BIRDS

### FRANCOLINS

These are the chief Game-birds of Africa, and not appreciably dissimilar from our Partridge and Grouse of Europe, whether in flight or in general appearance. The number of species recognised throughout this continent runs into scores, of which a dozen are found within our limits. We met with the following—

#### TRUE FRANCOLINS

1. Ulu Francolin—*Francolinus uluensis*. This is the bird of the Athi Plains. Interrupted collar of black and white.
2. Grant's Francolin—*F. granti*. At Baringo, a small species.
3. Coqui Francolin—*F. coqui*. In the Rift Valley, found in open country. A small, thickset, short-tailed species, size of English partridge and of equal wing speed; lies close and rises in coveys. This is the "Swimpi" of Transvaal.
4. Schuett's Francolin—*F. schuetti*. Abundant in the thick bush at Makindu, Voi, etc., also at Naivasha. A big dark-brown bird, buff below; with double spurs.
5. Hildebrandt's Francolin—*F. hildebrandti*. Also in the bush-country at Makindu and on the Tana. The sexes differ so much that they were originally described as separate species. The northern form of the "Natal partridge."

Besides these, Mr. Jackson has also recorded the following—

6. Ring-necked Francolin—*F. streptophorus*. Below Mount Elgon. It is distinguished by the ring of black and white feathers round the neck. No spurs.
7. Elgon Francolin—*F. elgonensis*. Shot on Mount Elgon at 11,000 ft. A northern form of the well-known "Red-wing Partridge" of South Africa, but darker.
8. Jackson's Francolin—*F. jacksoni*. Masailand. The largest species of all. Bill and legs coral-red; single spurs.

## SPUR-FOWL

Strictly speaking, the name "Spur-Fowl" is applicable only to an Indian genus, that of *Galloperdix*. It has, however, been adopted in East Africa for these bare-throated Francolins.

9. Cabanis' bare-throated Spur-Fowl—*Pternistes infuscatus*. In thick bush at Sultan Hamud, Makindu, Voi, etc. A big bird, and noisy. Male has double spurs.
10. Humboldt's Spur-Fowl—*P. humboldti*. On Tana.

## QUAILS

Three species are found—

1. European Quail—*Coturnix communis*. Scarce.
2. Harlequin Quail—*C. delegorguei*. Under-parts ruddy chestnut; throat black. Abundant.
3. Kurrichaine Button-Quail—*Turnix lepurana*. On lower levels, as at Simba, Baringo, etc. Abundant.

## GUINEA-FOWL

Four species are found, to wit—

1. Reichenow's Large Helmeted Guinea-Fowl—*Numida reichenowi*. This is the common kind. The huge bony crest or "helmet" stands vertically upright, as sketched on p. 16. Bare skin of face blue, wattles bright red.
2. Abyssinian Helmeted Guinea-Fowl—*N. ptilorhyncha*. From Baringo northwards. Abounds in packs of from 50 to 100 and upwards in the thorny bush on hillsides and on the scrubby plains. All these birds roost gregariously in trees, and at sundown, preparatory to "treeing," awake the echoes with their cackling. A bunch of grey bristles at gape; helmet horn colour. Both the bare skin of face and neck as well as the wattles are blue.
3. Curly-crested Guinea-Fowl—*Guttera pucherani*. The helmet is replaced by a tuft of curly feathers on crown. The naked skin of head is blue, except the throat, which is red. Frequents wooded riversides in the lower country.
4. Vulturine Guinea-Fowl—*Aeryllium vulturinum*. This splendid bird has a bright blue breast and shoulders, the neck-hackles long and plume-like, with bold white shaft-streaks, and a long tail like a hen-pheasant. The naked parts are lead-blue, with a collar of dark-chestnut hair-like

feathers round the occiput. Irides crimson. Localities, Tana, Sabaki, etc.

#### SAND-GROUSE

1. Bridled Sand-Grouse—*Pterocles decoratus*. Small. Black below.
2. Chestnut-throated Sand-Grouse—*P. gutturalis*. The largest of the three. Lower parts deep chestnut.
3. Pintailed Sand-Grouse—*Pteroclorus exustus*. Has long pin-tail. Abundant. Lower parts nearly white.

All three kinds can be seen daily by the rivers coming down to drink half-an-hour after dawn. With their swift flight they afford the smartest of shooting both then and again towards dusk.

[NOTE.—In the Transvaal I found eggs of the Double-banded Sand-Grouse (*P. bicinctus*) on July 1—the seasonal equivalent of our New Year's Day—which shows how "mixed" is the African breeding-season. The incident was impressed on memory because, while carrying the eggs in my shirt-front (we wear no coats thereaway), I walked right into a big waterbuck bull fast asleep under a bush, and was unable to handle the rifle by reason of those blessed oological treasures! We found other nests, each with three eggs, on 20th and 26th of July; but meanwhile, on the 19th, had caught a newly-fledged young bird already able to fly. Its irides were brown.]

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#### PIGEONS

- Olive, or Spotted Wood-Pigeon—*Columba arquatrix*. A dark-coloured Wood-Pigeon, size of a cushat, partially spotted; bill and legs bright yellow. A bird of dense forest, such as the Mau, and Kikuyu Forest, near Nairobi.
- Triangular-spotted Pigeon—*C. guinea*. A Wood-pigeon, maroon-coloured on neck, shoulders, and breast: rump light grey. A bird of open woods, such as those of Naivasha, etc. Settles on ground like a cushat.
- Green Pigeons—Three species as under, all frequenting thin open forest or bush-country—

*Vinago nudirostris*. Common.

„ *wakefieldi*.

„ *delalandei*.

## DOVES—innumerable

- Collared Turtle-Dove—*Turtur semitorquatus*. This is the bird whose everlasting dactylic note “Chuck-her-up, Chuck-her-up,” awakens one every morning throughout the length of Africa. Another, whose note is “Chock-taw,” is, I believe, *T. senegalensis*, the Laughing-Dove, and *T. damarensis* is also abundant, with many other species.
- Namaqua Dove, or Long-tailed African Dove—*Ena capensis*. The smallest of all, no bigger than a Wagtail. Abundant.
- Spot-winged Ground-Dove—*Chalcopelia afra*. This is common near Mombasa. Commander Lynes, R.N., tells me he found these small doves breeding on October 30. Their tiny nest of small sticks, built in turtle-dove style, contained two little opaque cream-coloured eggs, fresh. Sweet little creatures with short tails, displaying on flight a chestnut-coloured wing with pretty metallic green and bronze spots; upper breast vinaceous.

## RAILS AND CRAKES

- Water-Hen—*Gallinula chloropus*. Quite common, breeding on Lake Naivasha and elsewhere.
- Crested Coot—*Fulica cristata*. The same remark applies. Abounds on Elmenteita, and on Naivasha in thousands.
- Kaffir Water-Rail—*Rallus caerulescens*. Observed on Naivasha in May, doubtless breeding, though the fact could not be proved without infraction of law. Three examples, however, were shot by Jackson on Olbolossat Swamp in July, and their breeding thereat was proved by his taking a nestling from the crop of Marsh-Harrier shot close by.
- Black Water-Rail—*Limnocorax niger*. This red-legged black Rail was observed at Njemps—probably common. I obtained it also in the Transvaal. Irides red; bill yellowish-green.
- Corncrake—*Crex pratensis*. Occurs throughout Africa in winter—as far south as Pretoria.

## FINFOOT

- Peter's Finfoot—*Podica petersi*. We did not meet with this and I am not sure that it occurs in the Protectorate; but



mention it here as it was the first bird I shot in South Africa, and an examination of its extraordinary "non-descript" build went far to discourage any further study of Ethiopian ornithology—were all African forms one-tenth so "aberrant," the attempt seemed well-nigh hopeless! This Finfoot was swimming among heavy reed-beds in a marsh near Nel's Spruit, Transvaal, and the following is the note I then made: "Like a Muscovy-Duck so far as it resembles anything I ever saw: but with the beak of a Grebe, though orange in colour; the stiff tail of a Cormorant; the lobed feet of a Coot, but orange-yellow like a Mallard's. Weight about 3 lbs."

## GREBES

Great Crested Grebe—*Podiceps cristatus*.

South African Dabchick—*P. capensis*.

Both these abound on Elmenteita, Naivasha, Nakuru and other lakes.

## WADERS

Curlew—*Numenius arquatus*. Common on coast, winter.

Whimbrel—*N. phaeopus*. Common on coast, winter. No Godwits have occurred within our knowledge.

Redshank—*Totanus calidris*. Mombasa, January—heard once at night.

Greenshank—*T. canescens*. On inland lakes; always solitary.

Green Sandpiper—*T. ochropus*. On inland lakes; always solitary.

Wood-Sandpiper—*T. glareola*. One, Karriendoos, February 13.

Terek Sandpiper—*Terekia cinerea*. With upturned yellow bill like a Godwit's—two shot on coast (Archer).

Curlew-Sandpiper—*Tringa subarquata*.—Common on coast.

Common Sandpiper—*T. hypoleuca*. Common in winter throughout Africa, on river, lake and marsh.

Ruff—*Machetes pugnax*. Precisely the same remark applies; ubiquitous in winter in East Africa.

Turnstone—*Strepstilas interpres.* }  
 Sanderling—*Calidris arenaria.* } Common on coast, winter.

A Sanderling was shot by Archer on Albert Nyanza in December.

Little Stint—*Tringa minuta*. Ubiquitous on all African lakes, as well as on the coast.

Temminck's Stint—*T. temmincki*. On Lakes Baringo and Naivasha, winter. Rare.

Ringed Plover—*Ægialitis hiaticula*. Frequents in winter the upland plains, such as Athi; also observed on lakes and every small marsh of the veld.

Another species of Ringed Plover (I believe *Æ. pccarius*) is resident, breeding on sandhills on the coast and also at Naivasha in May. It there buries its eggs in the dried mud whence the lake has receded; or rather the shallow saucer in which they lie is always carefully covered over with flakes of dry mud when the bird is absent or alarmed. On return, she carefully scrapes these away (F. J. J.).

Asiatic Dotterel—*Æ. asiaticus*. Abounds in flocks on the most arid plains (Athi, Baringo, etc.) during winter. Just before leaving in March, it assumes the full chestnut breast of its breeding-plumage.

Grey Plover—*Squatarola helvetica*. Common on coast in winter; and once observed at Baringo in February (Archer).

Spur-winged Plover—*Hoplopterus speciosus*. A handsome species, in appearance recalling the last-named when in its fullest summer dress. This plover abounds on lake-shores, marshes, etc., where it annoys the wildfowler by warning more valuable birds of the presence of danger.

Rüppell's Lapwing, or Black-winged Plover—*Stephanibyx melanopterus*.

Crowned Lapwing—*S. coronatus*.

These two are birds of the drier plain, quite numerous, and the first-named very noisy, often spoiling a "stalk" by its outrageous cries. It performs the same disservice to the big-game hunter that the Spur-wing does to the wildfowler. It has red legs.

Stilt—*Himantopus candidus*. We found these abundant in winter on Elmenteita, Naivasha, etc. Archer tells me he found a stilt breeding in May on Lake Sugota. This was the Saddle-backed Stilt, *H. himantopus* (F. J.). Both Stilt

and Avocet occur as far south as the Orange River Colony. The latter we did not happen to observe in East Africa.

### SNIPES

Five species are met with—

1. *Gallinago major*—Solitary Snipe. Observed by us on Lake Elmenteita in February—see p. 146. Not common, but Archer tells us he shot several at Butiaba, Albert Nyanza, in November—December.
2. *G. gallinago*. Common Snipe.
3. *G. gallinula*. Jack-Snipe.  
Both quite exceptional in East Africa. Archer, however, shot a single example of each on the Albert Nyanza.
4. *G. nigripennis*—Black-winged Snipe. This is *the* snipe of East Africa, abundant in winter on every marsh or splashy corner. It cannot, I think, be distinguished on the wing from our European snipe, whether by its flight or cry. Mr. Archer tells me that at Butiaba he shot all five species of snipe in one day's march—the fifth being—
5. *Rhyinchæa capensis*—the Painted Snipe.

### COURSERS

I had not the luck to see any of these, though at least two species occur on the Athi Plains, and four have been recorded in East Africa—

1. Temminck's Courser—*Cursorius temmincki*.
2. Hartlaub's Courser—*Rhinoptilus bisignatus*.
3. Banded Courser—*R. cinctus*.
4. Bronze-winged Courser—*R. chalconotus*.

### PRATINCOLES

Pratincole—*Glarcola pratincola*. Found in mid-winter in packs of thirty or forty on the driest and most arid plains of Athi, Naivasha and Baringo. Rising close at hand, they would only fly a few yards before all "plumped" down again in a mass.

Archer found another Pratincole (*G. emini*) breeding

on rocky islets of Victoria Nyanza in August. Two or three nests were found, the eggs being stone-grey with dark blotches.

### JACANAS

African Red Jacana—*Actophilus africanus*. Abundant in swamps, as on the Molo at Njemps, running on the floating leaves of water-lilies and other aquatic plants. They take wing more readily than the Rails.

### STONE-CURLEWS

Observed at several points, but nowhere commonly. Two species occur—

1. South-African Thick-knee—*Ædicnemus capensis*.
2. Vermiculated Thick-knee—*Æ. vermiculatus*.

### BUSTARDS

Kori Bustard—*Eupodotis kori*. This splendid species, with strongly-mottled wing and buff-coloured back, finely vermiculated, and a head more like that of a bittern, is abundant on open or thinly-bushed veld, and affords fine stalking with rifle. It can rarely be approached within one hundred yards. Figured at p. 77.

Despite its broad spread of wing and apparent bulk, the Kori Bustard is comparatively a slim-built bird, falling far below the European Bustard in weight. Those we shot on the Molo and at Baringo never exceeded 25 lbs., and the heaviest weighed by Mr. Jackson was 28 lbs.; whereas *Otis tarda* in Spain commonly reaches 30 to 32 lbs., and one exceptionally heavy old male which I gave to the National Collection at South Kensington weighed 37 lbs.

The expanse of wing of a Kori male, shot at Njoro-Ilimalo, we measured roughly as 14 spans, or say 8½ ft. Stanley's Bustard or Veld Paauw—*Neotis caffra*. This is a true Bustard, and although so much smaller than the Kori, is a compact, solid bird, weighing from 10 to 11 lbs. During

the breeding-time, in April, this species, like its European congeners, exhibits an excessive "display"—as it were, turning itself inside out.

Floricant, or Wato Bustard—*Trachelotis canicollis*. Common on plains of the high veld.



CROWNED CRANE.

### CRANES

Crowned Crane—*Balcarica gibbericeps*. Abundant both on the Athi Plains and in the Rift Valley, frequenting the open grass-prairie in small groups, usually under half-a-dozen, but uniting in packs towards dusk, when, with clamorous cries, they fly to roost in the tall "fever-trees."

[NOTE.—There were huge grey Cranes by Lake Nakuru which I imagined would be the Great Wattled Crane (*Buheranus*



*carunculatus*) of South Africa. I also put down in my notebook the Whale-headed Stork, or Shoe-bill (*Balvaniceps rex*) as observed on that lake; but neither of these species has yet been proved to occur in this part of British East Africa.

The true Cranes, it should be added, are not marsh birds, frequenting the drier lands, like bustards, and feeding on grain and seeds, varied by locusts and the larger insects.]

## HERONS

Common Heron—*Ardea cinerea*. Scarce.

Purple Heron—*A. purpurea*.

Black-headed Heron—*A. melanocphala*. } Numerous everywhere.

Goliath Heron—*A. goliath*. Lake Nakuru, Elmenteita. In South Africa nests in bushes or fallen trees overhanging the rivers; eggs blue. See pp. 37, 138, 141.

Buff-backed Heron—*Bubulcus lucidus*. Abundant; feeding on ticks, flies, and parasites, as it does in Europe, is often seen in attendance on big game, perching on their backs. There is a heronry of these birds in a rocky ravine near "Lone-Tree" on the Athi River. The nests are on low thorn-trees, and the breeding-season from March till July.

Little Egret—*Garzetta garzetta*. Near water only, and usually solitary.

Squacco Heron—*Ardeola ralloides*. Observed on Nakuru.

Night-Heron—*Nycticorax nycticorax*. Observed on Nakuru.

Common Bittern—*Botaurus stellaris*. We put up what we took to be Bitterns in the reed-beds of Stony Athi; but these may have been immature examples of *N. nycticorax*, for Mr. Jackson tells us he never met with the Bittern. It occurs, however, in South Africa.

## STORKS

Hammer-head—*Scopus umbretta*. Common on all rivers where muddy shores and islets afford it scope for wading and poking about in shallows. While watching for hippo on the Athi, I saw this strange bird catch and eat frogs and worm-like things that I took to be leeches. It builds an enormous stick-nest on riverside trees, and (in the

Transvaal) I watched a pair carrying food to their young on June 21. Sketched at p. 220.

Marabou Stork—*Leptoptilus crumeniferus*. At first sight, it surprises one to observe a bird obviously of the Stork persuasion performing the functions of a Vulture—indeed sharing with those scavengers a repulsive meal. But biologists had long ago demonstrated the anatomical affinity that exists between orders apparently so widely separated as the Vultures and the Storks. In their easy soaring flight, floating for hours in high heaven, without apparent exertion, the two possess a common aptitude. The Marabou is really master of the feast, and, stalking into the crowd, sets the huge Vultures flapping aside in dire dismay from that terrible bayonet-like beak. Also gorges on locusts—see p. 99. The Marabou abounds in East Africa.

Saddle-billed Stork, or African Jabiru—*Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis*. Even that tremendous scientific name hardly does justice to this giant among feathered fowl; which, however, despite those murderous mandibles, appears to confine its attentions to frogs and the like “small deer” on the marshy margins of the lakes. We observed it on Nakuru and Elmenteita, and it is sketched at p. 39.

White Stork—*Ciconia alba*. A winter migrant, at times covering the plain in a black and white crowd, doing invaluable service in locust-killing.

White-bellied Stork—*Abdimia abdimii*. With the above were a few of this smaller and darker species that I took at the time to be Black Storks (*C. nigra*), which latter we did not observe.

## IBISES

Glossy Ibis—*Ibis falcinellus*

Sacred Ibis—*I. aethiops*.

Both species common on all lakes.

Hagedash Ibis—*Hagedashia hagedash*. Common.

Wood-Ibis—*Pseudotantalus ibis*. Scattered over the country by wooded rivers. A big bird, stork-like in colour, but with a heavy, curved orange beak. The bare skin of the

face (extending well behind the eyes) is bright red; legs reddish. When flying, the white plumage displays a slight pinkish tinge, like that of a flamingo, but less pronounced. Nests on trees.

### GEESE

Spur-winged Goose—*Plectropterus gambensis*. A huge species, black and white, common and widely distributed. Frequent marshy plains and foreshores, feeding by day, and fighting to open waters at sundown to roost—as our European geese do.

Egyptian Goose—*Chenalopez aegyptiacus*. Frequently met with on the driest grass-prairies by day; also on Lake Elmenteita both by day and night.

Pigmy Goose—*Nettopus auritus*. At Kisumu, on Victoria Nyanza, frequenting the lily-lined shores.

### DUCKS

Knob-billed Duck—*Sarcidiornis melanonota*. A large species, equal in bulk to many of the Geese, and sometimes called the Black-backed Goose. Found on Naivasha, and the commonest of all the ducks on Lake Baringo.

White-faced Tree-Duck—*Dendrocyena viduata*. This is one of the group known as "Whistling Teal," some of which also frequent the coast. Two species, of which *D. viduata* is one, are found on Baringo, the other being probably the

Whistling Duck—*D. fulva*. [Note.—This Duck is found spread over four continents, to wit: both North and South America, great part of Africa (including Madagascar), and, in Asia, throughout India, Ceylon and Burmah.

Its congener last named, *D. viduata*, is also a New-World species, inhabiting South America as well as Africa. But both strictly avoid Europe.]

Yellow-bill, or African Mallard—*Anas undulata*. Common in East Africa and southwards to the Cape Colony. It frequents lakes, such as Elmenteita, in big packs, and "flights" regularly at dusk and dawn, often accompanied by Pintail, Shoveler, etc.

Black Duck—*Anas sparsa*. Differs from the last (though it “quacks” like a Mallard) in being of solitary habit, and in frequenting only hill-burns and wooded streams. A drake shot weighed 3 lbs., bill blue with black patches, feet orange with dark webs. White spots on scapulars; speculum purple.

Pintail—*Dasyla acuta*.

Shoveler—*Spatula clypeata*.

Garganey—*Querquedula circea*.)

} These European species are all abundant in winter.

Hottentot Teal—*Nettion punctatum*. Common on Naivasha, Elmenteita and Nakuru; but only found on the *brackish* salt-lakes.

Common Pochard—*Nyroca ferina*.

South African Pochard—*N. africana*.

Both these are found on the lakes, the latter especially common on Naivasha.

South-African Stiff-tailed Duck—*Erismatura maccoa*. I recognised this singular duck at once on Lake Elmenteita by its obvious similitude to the White-faced Duck (*E. leucocephala*) of Southern Spain. Both are long, low, heavily-immersed diving-ducks; both have the short wing and sheeny plumage of a Grebe, and the long stiff tail of a Cormorant, which both carry at intervals bolt upright—as it were like a “jigger-mast.”

I imagine, though I did not see the present species at its breeding-time, that it also will then have the bill swollen and dilated above.

## FLAMINGOES

Flamingo—*Phenicopterus roseus*. Frequents Lake Nakuru in great flocks; also observed, though in lesser numbers, on Elmenteita and Solai. Lake Hannington, however, appears to be their great rendezvous. In the course of ages, they have so defiled the shallows and foreshores as to render the neighbourhood of that lake intolerable to white men.

Lesser Flamingo—*Ph. minor*. Observed in small numbers on Nakuru. Plentiful elsewhere.

## DARTERS

Snake-bird, or Darter.—*Plotus rufus*. On all large rivers; it posts itself on some dead bough overhanging the water, whence it dives, scarcely disturbing the surface, and returning to sit “spread-eagled” to dry. Sexes differ somewhat in colouring. In South Africa the Darter nests in September in overhanging willows, about six or eight feet above water-level, and often beneath the nests of Herons (*A. cinerea* and *A. melanocephala*) in the higher trees above. Nests lined with willow-leaves; eggs five, of Cormorant-type.

## CORMORANTS

White-breasted Cormorant—*Phalacrocorax lucidus*.

Pigmy Cormorant—*P. africanus*.

Two species of Cormorants occur inland breeding on wooded rivers, as Athi, Molo and others; also on all the lakes, including the brackish—such as Nakuru and Elmenteita—as well as on Naivasha.

## PELICANS

Pelicans—*Pelecanus onocrotalus* and *P. rufescens*. Pelicans were observed in January on the Nairobi River, a few miles from the capital; also on all the big lakes. In August we noticed a systematic southward migration, flock after flock (along with wild geese) passing overhead during three days, and all pointing towards Lake Nakuru.

There are two kinds: the first-named a huge pinky-white bird; the latter much smaller and silvery-grey.

## SECRETARY-BIRDS

Common Secretary-Bird—*Serpentarius secretarius*. Observed on the open grass-prairies, as mentioned at pp. 234-5. Makes a huge nest in low thorn-trees.



## BIRDS OF PREY

## VULTURES

Five species inhabit East Africa. Of these, two are small, Neophron-like; while of the three larger species, one—the white-headed—is rarely met with. Thus, of the swarms of great carrion-vultures that promptly assemble at every kill, all belong to the two species first below named—

1. African Griffon—*Pseudogyps africanus*. A huge bare-necked species, bigger and darker in colour than the European Griffon, but showing conspicuously great patches of white on its lower plumage. Swarms.
2. Eared, or Black Vulture—*Otogyps auricularis*. Much less numerous, though some may always be distinguished amidst the herd around a “kill” by their uniformly darker colour and by the great red lobes, or wattles, on their ears.
3. Hooded, or White-headed Vulture—*Lophogyps occipitalis*. Rare, as stated above.

[NOTE, that though I am here forced to use three separate generic titles for the same number of species—all great carrion-vultures, obviously belonging to a single family—I only do so under protest. I hold that such ultra-refinement of definition is not only unnecessary, but actually prejudicial to the general understanding of ornithology.]

The two smaller East-African Vultures are clearly Neophrons; but the more abundant by far of the two differs essentially from the well-known Egyptian Vulture of Europe (*N. perenopterus*) in that its tail is short and square, instead of long and cuneate; also in that its plumage remains dark brown throughout life; whereas in the other, the plumage—though dark during immaturity—becomes pure white with black wing-points when adult. In Africa, the square or cuneate tail will always serve to distinguish the two species, old or young.

4. White Egyptian Vulture—*Neophron perenopterus*. Comparatively scarce, though least so in mountain-regions. The only example actually handled—an adult, shot at

Baringo in August—showed conspicuous patches of rich bay, with black punctuations, upon scapulars and tertials—features never observed in Spanish specimens. Face yellow.

5. Brown Egyptian Vulture—*N. monachus*. Very abundant. Always dark brown with pink gape and livid blue face. Tail square, as above described. Attends one's camp everywhere, and roosts in crowds in the trees close by.

(In my South-African note-book occurs this remark: "Among hundreds of Neophrons, never an adult shows up: all are brown, and their tails are square—not cuneate. How is this?" The answer is supplied above.)

### EAGLES

Five species came under our observation, as follows—

1. Crowned Hawk-Eagle—*Spizaëtus coronatus*. A fierce and powerful species, as mentioned in narrative (p. 211). Distinguishable by its short rounded wings and broad tail. Usually seen in pairs—Athi, the Rift, etc.
2. Black-crested Hawk-Eagle—*Lophoaëtus occipitalis*. In colour very dark, but showing a broad patch of white on either wing, most conspicuous when seen from above. The long black crest is also visible at considerable distance—see p. 212.
3. Bateleur Eagle—*Helotarsus ecaudatus*. A striking species of powerful sailing flight, the wings held more recurved than in any other eagle. The red legs can also be distinctly seen, extended backwards and projecting slightly beyond the very short tail.
4. Tawny Eagle—*Aquila rapax*. One of the commonest East-African eagles; often to be seen perched on a dead tree close outside camp, and even, occasionally, joining company with the vultures at a carrion-meal. A medium-sized eagle, entirely tawny-chestnut in colour, and feathered to the toes. Sketched at p. 130.
5. White-headed Fish-Eagle—*Haliaëtus vocifer*. Frequents wooded riversides and the shores of lakes, where it sits for hours perched on a tree, at intervals uttering a series of magnificent piercing cries. It also gives tongue when

soaring. One of a pair stooped at a pack of ducks swimming on Elmenteita, but did not pursue when they rose.

### KITES, HAWKS, ETC.

Black Kite—*Milvus korschun*. Abundant during winter, but withdraws by mid-February. Bill horn-colour.

Egyptian Kite—*M. aegyptius* (yellow-billed). Equally abundant, but remains throughout the year. A bold camp-scavenger, swooping down and carrying off scraps of meat (or anything red) from the midst of the men.

Black-winged Kite—*Elanus caeruleus*. Common but local.

Marsh-Harrier—*Circus ranivorus*. Rare; but occurs all the year.

„ „ *C. aruginosus*. In winter only.

Hen-Harrier—*C. cyaneus*. Common in winter on Athi, but none seen there in summer.

Montagu's Harrier—*C. pygargus*. Ruwenzori (Archer), also in B. E. Africa.

Pallid Harrier—*C. macrurus*. Plentiful in Torquel (Jackson).

Buzzards of several kinds were observed, but none of European type. Those recorded are—

Steppe Buzzard—*Buteo desertorum*. Ruwenzori (Archer).

Jackal Buzzard—*B. jakal*.

Augur Buzzard—*B. augur*.

Kestrels of various sizes abound. My Spanish friend, the Lesser Kestrel (*Cerchneis naumanni*) swarmed in winter on the koppies and crags of Lukenia, Athi, etc. Four species have, I believe, been recognised in B.E. Africa.

[NOTE.—A striking instance of the marvels of bird-migration occurs in this group. One species of Kestrel (the Eastern Red-footed, *Cerchneis amurensis*) breeds in North China and Japan, leaving that region in September. Its passage through India is noticed in October—November. But it spends its winter (that is, the South-African summer) well south of the Zambesi. Thence it returns to China in the following spring. Curiously, its passage has not hitherto been noticed in B.E. Africa. That may arise either from the (natural) scarcity of ornithological observers, or possibly because the birds travel direct across the Indian Ocean.]

## OWLS

Spotted Eagle-Owl—*Bubo maculosus*. A medium-sized horned Owl, ash-grey in colour, with black mottlings—closely resembling the grey type of our British Wood-Owl (*Syrnium aluco*), but quite twice as large. It is common in the rocky ravines and bush-clad kloofs of the Athi, and hoots in alarming key at night, though some of those unearthly shrieks may have been due to the following species—

Giant Eagle-Owl, or Verreaux's Eagle-Owl (*B. lacteus*). A huge pale-grey bird, also observed on the Athi on two occasions.

We noticed, in the forests near Baringo, a horned Eagle-Owl, tawny in colour, hunting by day, and apparently of arboreal habit.

Marsh-Owl—*Asio capensis*. This, the African Short-eared Owl, was common among bush at Baringo in August; also among the reed-beds of the Stony Athi in winter (January—February). A dark-coloured Owl, sleeping away the daylight hours gregariously on the ground.

Cape Scop's Owl—*Scops capensis*. A very small grey horned Owl. See p. 213.

## PARROTS

One expects in the tropics to see Monkeys and Parrots at every turn, but in British East Africa one hardly sees either. Our personal acquaintance with Parrots was limited to observing a few on wing near Mombasa and in the coastal region, and again a noisy bronze-green species near Baringo. The following six species have, however, been recorded in British East Africa—

*Pæocephalus suahelicus*.

*P. masaicus*.

*P. fuscicapillus*.

*P. rufiventris*.

*P. matschiei*.

*Agapornis personata*.

## KINGFISHERS

Striped Kingfisher—*Halcyon chelicuti*. A brown-grey bird

only showing blue on the back. As often seen on the dry veld as by riversides.

Pied Kingfisher—*Ceryle rudis*. A large and conspicuous bird, mottled black and white, with an occipital tuft and a dark bar through eye. Observed on Athi, Molo and other rivers, sometimes perched on a dead reed, at others hovering, kestrel-like, over the water.

Giant Kingfisher—*C. maxima*. A handsome black species banded with rows of white spots and, in the male, a warm ruddy patch on the breast. Larger than the last. Observed at Njemps, but rare. More common on Victoria Nyanza.

Malachite Kingfisher—*Corythornis cyanostigma*. Small, bright azure. Common everywhere.

### ROLLERS

Roller, or Blue Jay—*Coracias garrulus*. A migrant, observed in winter frequenting the higher land.

Lilac-breasted Roller—*C. caudatus*. These long-tailed Rollers were common in the lower country at Simba, Makindu, etc., in March. Resident. Figured at p. 248.

### BEE-EATERS

Bee-eaters abound; we noticed the following, besides others that we did not know—

*Merops persicus*—Blue-cheeked Bee-eater. A large species, bright green; and—

*M. apiaster*—the European species. Curiously, this bird breeds both in Spain in our spring, and again in South Africa in our autumn. Whether this applies to individual birds cannot, of course, be known. The notes of these two species appear to be identical.

*M. albicollis* (possibly). } (F. J. Jackson.)  
*Melittophagus albifrons*. }

### HOOPOES (*Upupa*)

The European species (*U. epops*) is rare, but was observed during winter on the higher ground, and once (exceptionally)



as low as Simba at end of March. It migrates northward at that date to breed.

The African Hoopoe (*U. africana*) is abundant, and was also observed at Simba in March, and at various other points. It frequents open bush, and is distinguished by its dark wing (not barred with white as in *U. epops*) and its redder body-colour. Resident.

### WOOD-HOOPOES (*Irrisor*)

These are forest-frequenting birds, without crest, blackish in plumage, with glossy metallic lustre of deep greens and purples, and showing only a single white bar on the wings. Their tails are long, graduated and cuneate, each feather having a sub-terminal white bar. These are noisy birds, attracting one's attention by a harsh discordant chatter within the bush, and then, on being disturbed, flying off with loud outcries.

At Sultan Hamud I watched a pair climbing like Woodpeckers in search of insects on rough tree-trunks, and made the rough sketch inserted at p. 243.

### HORNBILLS

(Usually, but quite wrongly, called "Toucans"—the latter being exclusively a South-American family.)

Great Ground-Hornbill—*Bucorax caffer*. Only found in dense forest, or about the margins or "opens" thereof. Resembles a turkey as it struts along the ground, feeding on small reptiles, insects and everything that crawls, and with great red wattles pendent from its bare blue throat. The flight appears smooth and noiseless as that of an owl, though when disturbed close at hand a loud rustling is audible; it is gently undulated by the intermittent wing-beats, the broad white bands on the wings and the immensely long tail being conspicuous. Always wild and watchful. See p. 197.

In the Mau forests we noticed several large Hornbills, which probably included (besides the above)—

Trumpeter Hornbill—*Bycanistes buccinator* (p. 192).

Crested Hornbill—*B. cristatus* (p. 193).

Besides the larger kinds, there were also at Mau and in the Sotik, as well as all over the wooded districts of East Africa, Hornbills of a smaller genus, distinguished as *Lophoceros*, some of which I have endeavoured to sketch (see pp. 17, 199, 200, 251). These included—

Crowned Hornbill—*L. mclanoleucus*.

Black-and-white Hornbill—*L. fasciatus*.

Red-billed Hornbill—*L. erythrorhynchus*.

All the hornbills, great and small, are very noisy birds. Some species of this group, *Lophoceros*, have the curious habit of imprisoning the female while she is sitting on her eggs. The nest is placed in a hollow tree, the entrance to which the male plasters up with clay, leaving only a narrow slit through which he feeds the incubating female.

#### NIGHTJARS

Pennant-winged Nightjar—*Cosmetornis vexillarius*. Abundant in bush-clad ravines and on wooded river-banks, such as Athi. Several will rise close by, and settle again, often squatting down on bare sand, within a few yards. The long streaming plumes or “pennants” (see sketch, p. 211) are only assumed at the breeding period—April.

Racket-winged Nightjar—*Macrodipteryx macrodipterus*. In this also the long, tufted plumes are only acquired at the nesting-time. The bird then, when flying, gives the impression, in the dusk, of being *three* birds—a big one with two smaller mobbing it. Baringo is one locality; but it is not common.

Salvadori's Nightjar—*Caprimulgus frenatus*. A small Nightjar, common in the Mau and on the highlands, but replaced on Athi and the coast by the

Mozambique Nightjar—*C. fossei*. Abundant from Athi to Mombasa, and audible everywhere after sundown.

Donaldson-Smith's Nightjar—*C. donaldsoni*. A small species, very noisy. Common. At Baringo I found a nest with two eggs, on bare ground, on August 29—unusually late.

## SWIFTS

Swifts of several kinds—including our British species in winter—were observed, some comparatively small.

COLIES (*Colius*)

These mouse-grey birds with tufted heads and very long tails are numerous, darting about in packs with rapid flight. Their long wings and tails at first suggest "Parrakeets"; but on alighting, the Colies are seen to run and climb on trees and move in the style of Creepers or Nuthatches, creeping along boughs or up and down vertical stems in search of berries or buds. For climbing purposes, their toes are so arranged that all four can be directed forwards, and are furnished with sharp prehensile claws. When ascending a sloping branch they appear to use the "knees" also. Figured at p. 65.

Colies breed in November, the nests being untidy grass-built structures like those of Sparrows, placed in bushes or low trees, and with an entrance at the side.

## CUCKOOS

Solitary Cuckoo—*Cuculus solitarius*. Njemps, August.

White-browed Coucal—*Centropus superciliosus*.

Purple-crowned Lark-heeled Coucal—*C. monachus*.

These two are reclusive birds, skulking by day amid thick reed-beds or bush and seldom seen. They are largely of nocturnal habit, and very noisy at night. The first-named Coucal has an extraordinary bubbling note that resembles water gurgling from an inverted bottle, and may be heard all night at Mombasa (where "water-bottle bird" is one name for it). We also heard it far up-country, at Makindu, Baringo, etc.

Both species are also known as Bush-Cuckoos, or Ground-Cuckoos. Sketched at pp. 59, 109, 112.

## TOURACOS

Grey Touraco, or Lourie—*Schizorhis concolor* (South-African).

Purple-crested Lourie—*Gallirex chlorochlamys*.

Purple-winged Lourie—*Turacus hartlaubi*.

These are the "Go-way birds" of South Africa, or Plaintain-eaters. In East Africa they frequent the high-lying forests, as Mau, Sotik and the Kikuyu Forest, and thorn-clad plateaux of Laikipia. Besides its ringing cry, "Go-way," the Grey Lourie has also a cat-like note, uttered as it seemingly tries to balance on a bough, fluttering its short wings and flirting the immense tail.

It is this species which, as described in Chap. XXII, causes infinite annoyance to the big-game hunter in South Africa by giving warning of danger to the quarry.



KING LEOPOLD'S TOURACO (*Gymnoschizorhis leopoldi*).

King Leopold's Touraco (*Gymnoschizorhis leopoldi*), brought from Ruwenzori by my friend, Mr. Douglas Carruthers, is here rudely sketched. Remarkable for its scimitar-like crest and bare, featherless face. Other species of Touracos are figured at pp. 31, 194, 271, 272.

### BARBETS

Woodpecker-like birds, though they do not climb, a score or more of which are found in East Africa. They have ringing voices, not unmusical, nest in hollow trees, and a typical Barbet is sketched at p. 65.

HONEY-GUIDES (*Indicator*)

Several species occur, notably *Indicator major*, and *I. variegatus*, the Scaly-throated Honey-guide, more particularly described in Chap. XXII.

## WOODPECKERS

Many species observed, large and small; but (as with the Barbets) I had no opportunity of identifying these.

*Thripicus schoensis*  
*Mesopicus sodocephalus* } are conspicuous (F. J. Jackson).  
*Dendropicus lafresnayi* }

## SWALLOWS

Our common Chimney Swallow is abundant in winter, and its "mobilisation" in February for the northward journey has already been described (p. 144). Other species, unknown to me (particularly a small kind with speckled breast), were performing a similar function simultaneously.

Another species appears in March—all white beneath, flecked with grey "ticks," but without the black breast-band. This is *Hirundo puella*. Its crown and rump are chestnut, the mantle glossy steel-blue. This appeared to be only one of several species with "flecked" breasts.

## FLYCATCHERS

Spotted Flycatcher—*Muscicapa grisola*. Though not actually observed by us, is recorded from Kibwezi, on the Uganda railway, as early as September 24; and at Teita as late as April 6 (*Ibis*, 1901, p. 87); from Tanganyika (*Ibis*, 1899, p. 375), and occurs in winter as far south as the Transvaal.

In a letter just received (June 1908), Mr. Jackson mentions that Spotted Flycatchers remained in his garden at Nairobi this year up to the middle of April.

In the Mau Forest (see p. 194) we observed black-and-white birds, obviously Flycatchers, but of a species quite unknown to us.

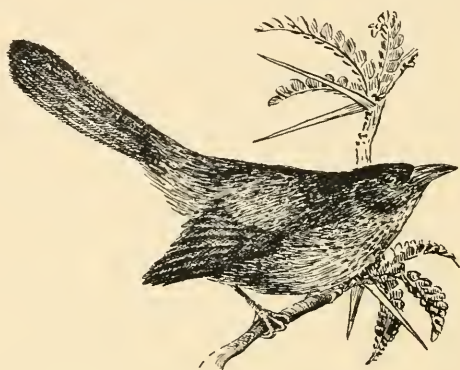


BULBULS (*Pycnonotus*)

The ringing flute-like song of one species (*P. layardi*) has already been mentioned at Baringo—specially noticeable towards night (see pp. 58 and 63). Other kinds warble all day, a rich sweet song, audible afar, even around Mombasa.

BABBLERS (*Crateropus*)

Thrush-like birds which frequent bush, alighting in a mass on some thorn if they think no one is in sight. Otherwise



EMIN'S BABBLER (*Crateropus emini*, ♀).

secretive, more often heard than seen. On one's approaching to see what all the noise is about, the Babblers sneak off quietly through the bush ahead; most difficult to see.

The annexed rough sketch represents one of the Babblers—*C. emini*.

## THRUSHES AND WARBLERS

Wheatear—*Saxicola cinanthe*. Observed by us both at Nairobi and Elmenteita, besides being recorded from Athi and elsewhere, during the winter months, the earliest date being September 26 at Njemps.

Fantail-Warblers—*Cisticola*. Abundant on the marshy flats around Lake Nakuru.

Willow-Warbler—*Phylloscopus trochilus*. Many records in winter. We observed it ourselves and heard it in half-song in the Mau Forest on March 6 (see p. 197). Mr. Jackson records its remaining at Nairobi this year up to May 10.

Sedge-Warbler—*Acrocephalus phragmitis*. Observed in Ukamba in January. This year (1908) remained at Nairobi as late as May 23 (F. J. J.).

Marsh-Warbler—*A. palustris*. Also recorded in January from Ukamba.

Whitethroat—*Sylvia curruca*. We thought we observed this on Athi in January, but, as Mr. Jackson was doubtful, had excluded it. He, however, writes (June 1908): "I think I have since got two or three from Kitui, west of Donyo Sabuk."

Another of our little British songsters, the Garden-Warbler (*S. hortensis*), though not yet actually recorded from Equatoria,<sup>1</sup> goes, in fact, far further south. For my friend Mr. Harold Fry writes to me from the Transvaal: "There are always two or three, sometimes more, in my garden at Bertrams—an unobtrusive little bird, not given much to warbling when he visits us here; but with a fine taste in fruits—cherries, apricots, peaches, grapes, nothing comes amiss. But he is not above taking insects too; and, I have fancied, reveals his Northern origin by continuing to hawk after these even in a drizzle of rain that drives most of our native birds to shelter."

Mr. Jackson sends me the following most interesting note: "Nairobi, May 25, 1908.—Several of our British migrants were remarkably late in leaving these parts. The Spotted Flycatcher remained until the middle of April; the Willow-Warbler as late as May 10; and the Sedge-Warbler I saw on May 23. The Tree-Pipit was in great numbers in my garden up to May 4, but all disappeared during that night, which was very wet and stormy."

Truly the above are remarkable dates, and Mr. Jackson asks: "Did they know you were having Arctic weather in April at home?"

As a matter of fact, these tiny travellers were not only

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Jackson writes: "I have several from the Ravine."

extremely late in reaching England this year, but arrived in markedly smaller numbers than I ever before remember. Thus the Willow-Warblers (and Sand-Martins also) failed to appear in Northumberland till May 1—the former a fortnight, the latter a month, overdue. No Spotted Flycatchers showed up in my garden at Houxty till May 11; while Sedge-Warblers and Tree-Pipits came together four days later—all long past their customary dates. The paucity of their numbers this year was also equally marked. The diminution in each of the four specific cases could certainly not be estimated at less than a full half: while as regards others of our summer-warblers, especially Whinchats, the apparent loss mounted up to quite two-thirds of their normal numbers.

The subject is more fully treated in my *Bird-life of the Borders on Moorland and Sea* (Second Edition), and a possible explanation of such phenomena will be found suggested at pp. 125 *et seq.* I venture to hope that every field-naturalist will have read that work—and in no sense of paltry profit to me, but solely for his own benefit and enjoyment.

### SHRIKES

In Europe we have but five or six species, while Africa boasts a dozen genera—a few of which may be mentioned here—

*Lanius*. An overflow from Europe. Our British Red-backed Shrike (*L. collurio*) occurs right through Africa in winter as far south as Gazaland (inland of Delagoa Bay), and has been recorded from Ruwenzori and elsewhere in British East Africa. Mr. Jackson writes: "Very plentiful in Rift Valley in March and early April." The Lesser Grey Shrike (*L. minor*) also visits Africa in winter; but that continent only possesses one *Lanius* of its own—*L. mackinnoni*.

*Laniarius*. An exclusively African genus, including a dozen or more species, none of which I met with.

Bush-Shrikes—*Dryoscopus*. Also purely African, numbering about twenty species. *D. nandensis*, one of the many new species discovered in East Africa by Mr. Jackson, is figured at p. 174, from the plate in *Ibis*, 1901, p. 41.

## WOOD-SHRIKES

Helmet-Shrikes—*Sigmoidus*. Characterised by tufted heads and wattles around the eye; woodland birds of soft floppy flight, recalling that of the Siberian Jay. This, again, is a purely African genus of half-a-dozen species (p. 252).

Drongos—*Dicrurus*, of which the fork-tailed species, *D. musicus*, is figured and described at p. 18.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the abundance of Shrikes, I never chanced to notice their “shambles” in East Africa.

TITS (*Paridæ*)

These also form a numerous group, fourteen species being recognised as peculiar to the African Continent—thereby breaking through the rigid bounds of “Ethiopia” in zoological geography.

Tits noticed in the forests of the Mau were dark in colour—almost black. This we attributed to their gloomy environment—almost a twilight at midday. But those sombre colours appear to be more or less characteristic of other African *Paridæ* not restricted to dense forest.

## SUNBIRDS

This is a thoroughly tropical—or rather, Ethiopian—group, comprising 80 to 100 species, many of which are typical of British East Africa. Bedecked in gorgeous hues—crimson and purples, greens and scarlet, blues, gold and yellow, each feather of which has a metallic lustre—these tiny creatures glance like jewels in the sunshine as they dart from flower to flower, alighting for an instant to pick off insects and aphides with curved, creeper-like bills. One perches *above* a bloom, bending forward to a perpendicular position to explore the calyx beneath; while another hangs, back downwards, like a tit, below its selected flower.

Towards the end of July, when the brilliancy of some blooms

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ogilvie-Grant tells me that *Dicrurus* should properly have been placed next to *Lamprocolius* at p. 335.

was going back, I noticed a single, later-flowering shrub almost covered with Sunbirds and butterflies. Sketched at p. 12.

Sunbirds appear to breed in April and May.

### LARKS, BUNTINGS, PIPITS, ETC.

These are in strong evidence, over eighty species of Larks and a dozen of the Bunting family being recorded. Both Skylarks and Crested Larks (or their tropical equivalents) abound, and we noticed the former beginning to sing, much as at home, in February. This was during heavy rain.

A group of Ethiopian Pipits are distinguished as "Long-claws" (*Macronyx*), one species, *M. croceus*, being figured at p. 145. Mr. Jackson writes me recently: "In spite of all our troubles I have managed to do a little birds'-nesting at odd moments, and have had the satisfaction of finding here five nests with eggs of the beautiful pink-breasted and pink-throated Pipit, *Macronyx wintoni*. I had always believed it to be a resident which bred in this country, and it is a great satisfaction to have proved the fact (see *Ibis*, January 1905). Hitherto I had never seen it south of Naivasha."

Our British Tree-Pipit reaches the equator in winter, as already mentioned (pp. 145 and 210). Also observed on Mount Elgon (8,000 ft.), February 14 (F. J. J.), and in Toro, Uganda, March 10 (*Ibis*, 1906, p. 559); while this year Mr. Jackson records its remaining as late as May 4 at Nairobi. Two other species are common on open downs—the European Red-throated Pipit, *Anthus cervinus*, and *A. rufulus*, the latter breeding, while the former migrates northwards (to the Arctic) by June.

White Wagtail—*Motacilla alba*. Eldama Ravine, February (Jackson).

Yellow Wagtail—*M. flava*. Common from November to March (Jackson).

Grey Wagtail—*M. melanope*. This we observed ourselves (and I think *M. flava* also) at Nairobi in January, and again at Lake Elmenteita in February. Recorded also on September 30 from Mau (8,000 ft.).



## BUSH-LARKS

Fischer's Bush-Lark (*Mirafra fischeri*) is the thick-set, ruddy-brown bird, with short tail and short rounded wings, that makes the extraordinary vibrating noise already described at p. 249. This was in thin bush-country at Simba, in March; but in its breeding-season in November, Commander Lynes, R.N., tells me he heard and noticed it soaring quite 300 ft. in air with undulating flight, like that of a snipe when "drumming"—but with this difference, that the vibrant rattle was only produced when on the up-grade, whereas snipe produce it only when dropping earthwards. Even at that great height the rattle was clearly audible; indeed, at half-a-mile it sounded as distinct as when the bird was close by. The annexed diagram shows the line of flight.

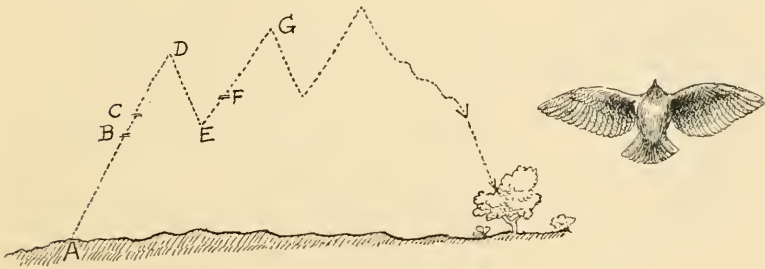


DIAGRAM ILLUSTRATING FLIGHT OF *Mirafra fischeri*.

Starting from the ground at A, the bird mounts quickly to B.

B to C—a few preliminary wing-beats.

C to D—the "clapper" sound is produced. At D closes wings and drops to E.

E to F—preliminary wing-beats repeated.

F to G—"clapper" repeated—and so on.

Finally, *Mirafra* descends to half-way by a series of steep down-grades, and completes remainder of descent to ground or bush by an almost vertical drop of great rapidity.

Duration of "clapper," three seconds; of whole performance, three to five minutes.

Viewed from below, the outline of the bird on the wing resembles that of a Wood-Lark, with rather large rounded wings, the inner secondaries well clear of the body—thus allowing space for the requisite movement of the wing over so large an arc ( $180^\circ$ ) which produces the sound (*Lynes*).

Athi Bush-Lark—*M. athi*. This frequents more open country than the last, including the open grassy plains, where I found a nest containing a single young bird on quite bare ground on February 4, the owner showing rufous-brown wings as she rose (p. 214). We also found it nesting at Elmenteita in September.

Large Buntings with bright yellow breasts, and various Serin-like birds, are conspicuous, the latter specially numerous at Elmenteita and Nakuru.<sup>1</sup>

### WEAVER-BIRDS



A WEAVER.

Africa counts some 250 species, divided into 62 genera, all more or less related to the Finches.

Over the whole country one sees their nests; often every branch of a tree will be bent down with scores of pendent grass-built structures, separate or semi-detached. Favourite sites are palmitis and forest-trees that fringe river-banks, the lower nests almost dipping to the surface as branches sway in a breeze. Even lowly bushes, where they overhang water, are occupied. The eggs, like the birds, are sparrow-like. At Baringo,

nests contained both eggs and young in August.

The Social Weavers (*Philæterus*) build nests which can only be described as confluent, joined together by the hundred under a common roof—see sketch at p. 58. *Republicaines* the French happily term these little architects. Another group (*Hyphantornis*) weave their nests separately on to tall reeds growing in water, as shown at p. 250. Other forms are figured at p. 67.

Weaver-birds of one genus or another nested alike at Mombasa and in every wooded region that we visited—up to the Sotik.

At Mombasa one of the common species is Bojer's Golden

<sup>1</sup> These, I find, are Canaries, of which genus some twenty-five to thirty species are recognised in Africa.

Weaver (*Xanthophilus bojeri*). This breeds in November, the grass-built nest being compacted with fibrous strips of banana leaf and placed in the outer sprays of low trees—especially the Aleppo-like pine.

One striking species has the face and throat crimson, narrowly margined with black, and set off by white on shoulders and breast, the upper parts being dark. Several other weavers are dark-headed, with lighter bodies in various colours.

A brightly-plumaged group are the Bishop-birds (*Pyromelana*), scarlet and black being notable elements in their colour-scheme—figured at pp. 242, 249; while an analogous section is formed by the Waxbills (*Estrilda*).

At Simba in March we observed the males of *Hyphantornis subaureus* spin up vertically in erotic flight, displaying their golden plumage—a habit resembling that of *Mirafra fischeri*, above described, but in this case without the accompaniment of a “vibrant” rattle.

Weaver-birds are not all characterised by brilliancy of colour, for the Social Weavers (*Philæterus*) boast not one feather that can catch the eye.

The only other species we will mention is the King-Whydah (*Chera delamerei*), whose extraordinary development of tail (in the males) has already been figured at p. 50. This bird is found only upon the high veld, and is said, like the Cuckoo, to possess parasitic habits in the breeding-time.

(Mr. Jackson writes: “This I believe to be incorrect.”)

At p. 185 is a sketch of another Whydah-Finch—*Penthetria ardens*—the male of which is jet black with flame-red gorget.

### ORIOLES

Golden Orioles—*Oriolus*—(I believe of two species) were noted in the Rift in August, on the Athi in September, and at Simba in March.

### STARLINGS

Glossy Starlings—*Lamprocolius*. These are conspicuous birds in all wooded districts, sometimes attending our camps

to pick up stray grains of rice. But they do so here in a half-nervous way, and have not yet acquired that familiarity with man which they exhibit in the South.

Glossy Starlings nest in hollow trees exactly as our starlings do at home.

Wondrous assemblages of these birds, together with Rollers, Bee-eaters and Shrikes, Kites and Kestrels—indeed, the whole of the insectivorous tribes—may be seen gathered together at every veld-fire when the natives are burning-off the dead herbage. Feathered crowds dart hither and thither amid smoke and flame: while the luckless locusts and grasshoppers are literally hemmed in between fire and sword. For those few that escape—mostly crippled and singed—forthwith find themselves confronted by an army of Storks and Cranes sedately advancing in rear of the flames so soon as the burning embers permit. Altogether, a veld-fire affords an interesting episode in the economy of African bird-life.

### CROWS

African Rook—*Heterocorax capensis*. Observed on high ground.

White-necked Raven—*Corvultur albicollis*. At Voi, several of these handsome birds, as big as European Ravens and with huge beaks, scavenged quite fearlessly about our camp.

White-breasted Crow—*Corvus scapulatus*. Common.

NOTE.—Crude and incomprehensive as it necessarily is, this List comprises upwards of sixty species of British birds, including nearly a score of our smallest and most delicate summer-migrants.

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ABEL CHAPMAN, F.Z.S.

*Member of the British Ornithologists' Union*

AUTHOR OF "THE ART OF WILDFOWLING," "WILD NORWAY"  
AND "WILD SPAIN"

(The last jointly with WALTER J. BUCK, British Vice-Consul at Jerez)

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