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the record of an expedition through Kikuyu to Galla-land in east equatorial Africa; with an account of the Rendili and Burkeneji tribes

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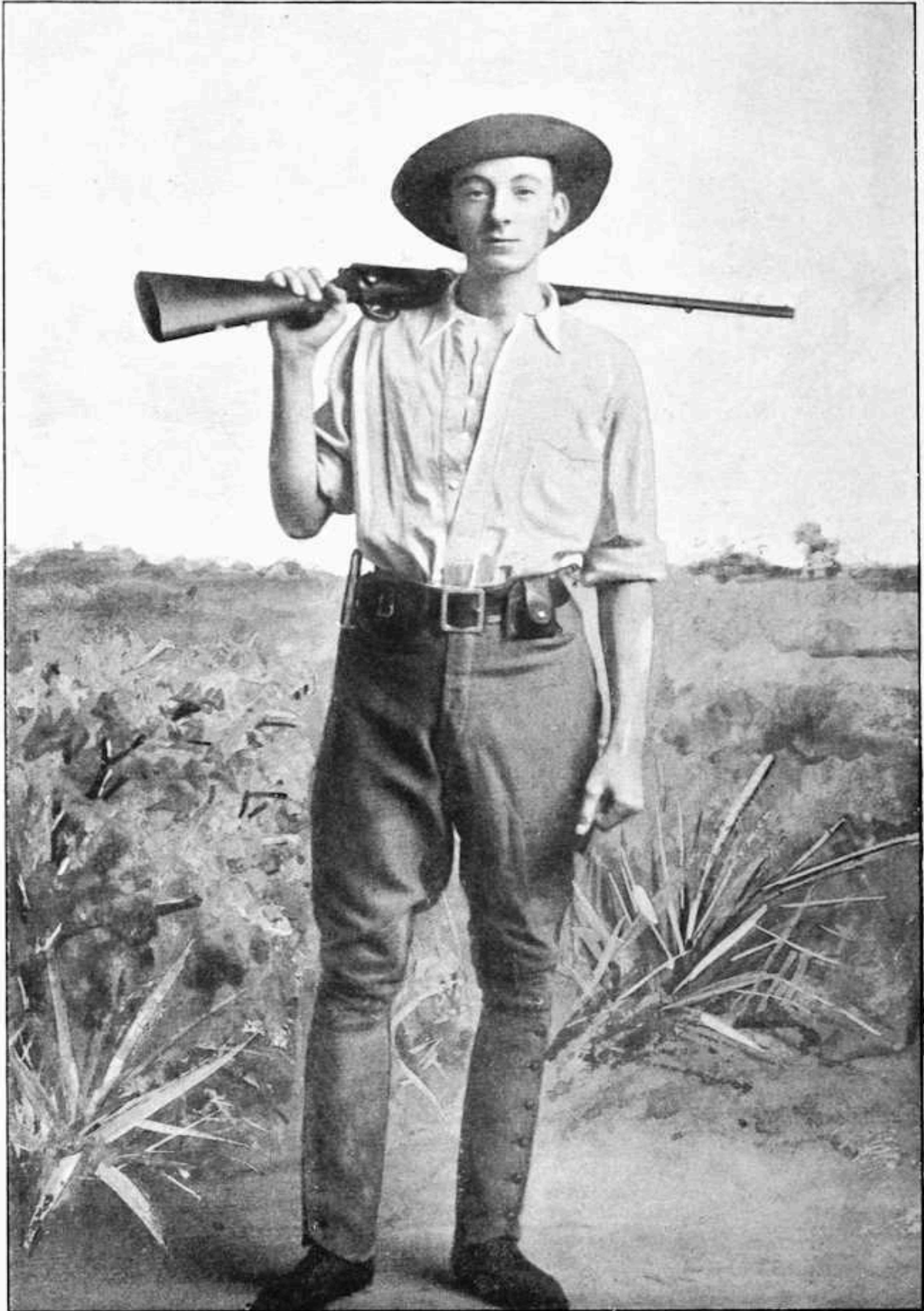
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AN IVORY
TRADER IN NORTH KENIA ***

AN IVORY TRADER IN NORTH KENIA



THE AUTHOR.

AN IVORY TRADER IN
NORTH KENIA

THE RECORD OF AN EXPEDITION THROUGH
KIKUYU TO GALLA-LAND IN EAST
EQUATORIAL AFRICA

*WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE RENDILI AND
BURKENEJI TRIBES*

BY
A. ARKELL-HARDWICK, F.R.G.S.

*WITH TWENTY-THREE ILLUSTRATIONS FROM
PHOTOGRAPHS, AND A MAP*

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

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To

COLONEL COLIN HARDING, C.M.G.
OF THE
BRITISH SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE

TO WHOSE KIND ENCOURAGEMENT WHEN IN COMMAND OF
FORT CHICKWAKA, MASHONALAND
THE AUTHOR OWES HIS LATER EFFORTS TO
GAIN COLONIAL EXPERIENCE

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED

PREFACE

Although there may be no justification for the production of this work, the reader will perhaps deal leniently with me under the "First Offenders Act." Among the various reasons which prompted me to commit the crime of adding a contribution to the World's literature is the fact that little or nothing is known concerning certain peculiar tribes; to wit, the Rendili and Burkeneji. They are a nomadic people whose origin is as yet wrapped in mystery. In addition to this, an account of the trials and difficulties to be encountered in the endeavour to obtain that rapidly vanishing commodity, ivory, will perhaps please those into whose hands this work may fall who delight in "moving accidents by flood and field."

It has been to me a source of lasting regret that a great many of my photographic negatives were in some way or other unfortunately lost on our homeward journey, and as usually happens on such occasions, they were those I valued most, inasmuch as they included all my photographs of the lower course of the Waso Nyiro River and also those of the Rendili and Burkeneji peoples. I am, however, greatly indebted to Mr. Hazeltine Frost, M.R.P.S., of Muswell Hill, N., for the care and skill with which he has rendered some of the remaining badly mutilated negatives suitable for the purposes of illustration.

In the course of this narrative it will be observed that I name the people of the various countries or districts through which we passed by prefixing Wa- to the name of the district they inhabit. This is in accordance with Swahili practice, as they generally designate a native by the name of his country prefixed by an M', which in this case denotes a man, the plural of M' being Wa-. The plural of M'Kamba, or inhabitant of Ukamba, is therefore Wa'Kamba, and an M'Unyamwezi, or inhabitant of Unyamwezi, is Wa'Nyamwezi in the plural. Doubtless a hypercritic would argue that this rule only applies to the Swahili language, and consequently the names of those tribes who are in no way connected with the Swahilis would be outside the rule. He would be right; but I am going to call them all Wa- for the sake of convenience and to avoid confusion.

I have endeavoured to place before the reader an account of the incidents, amusing and tragic, as they appeared to me at the time. Should the narrative prove uninteresting, it will, I think, be due to faulty description. The incidents related were sufficiently exciting to stimulate the most jaded imagination, and they have the rarest of all merits—the merit of being true.

A. A.-H.

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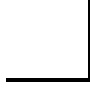






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MAP

PART OF BRITISH EAST AFRICA

To fold out at end of book

ERRATA IN MAP

For NGARI NAMUKI *read* NGARE NANUKI.
” GUASO NAROK ” WASO NAROK.

ERRATA

- Page 135, line 16, *for* “M’gomba” *read* “N’gombe.”
- „ 135, lines 17, 18, *for* “due north of Mathara” *read* “north of the Jombeni Mountains.”
 - ” 136, line 19, *for* “Guaso” *read* “Waso.”
 - ” 136, line 23, *for* “Gwarguess” *read* “Wargasse.”
 - ” 147, 148, *for* “Koromo” *read* “Karama.”
 - ” 178, lines 9, 10, 13, *for* “N’gomba” *read* “N’gombe.”
 - ” 183, line 2, *for* “sassi” *read* “sassa.”
 - ” 213, lines 30, 32, *for* “Van Hohnel” *read* “von Hohnel.”
 - ” 264, line 30, *for* “M’Nyanwezi” *read* “M’Nyamwezi.”

THROUGH KIKUYU TO GALLA-LAND

INTRODUCTION.

My friend, George Henry West, and myself left Cairo in the latter part of the year 1899, with the intention of proceeding to Uganda *viâ* Zanzibar and Mombasa. George was an engineer in the service of the Irrigation Department of the Egyptian Government, and had gained a large and varied experience on the new works on the Barrage below Cairo, then being concluded, and in building, running, and repairing both locomotives and launches. As a profession I had followed the sea for three years, leaving it in 1896 in order to join the British South African Police, then engaged in subduing the native rebellion in Mashonaland. At the conclusion of hostilities I wandered over South Africa, and finally found my way to Egypt, where I met George West. A year later, accompanied by George, I was on my way southwards again, *en route* for British East Africa.

When George and I left Cairo, our idea was to go up-country as far as the Lake Victoria Nyanza, as we considered it extremely probable that there would be something for us to do in the engineering line, either in building launches or in the construction of small harbour works.

We reached Mombasa in due course, and from there proceeded to Nairobi by the railway then in course of construction to Uganda. Nairobi is 327 miles from the coast, and is an important centre, being the headquarters of both the Civil Administration of the Protectorate and the Uganda railway. On our arrival, George received an offer, which he accepted, to go up to the lake with a steamer, which was then on the way out from England in sections, and on his arrival at the lake with it to rebuild it. I remained in Nairobi.

In course of time I met the personage referred to in these pages as “El Hakim,”^[1] whom I had known previously by repute. He was said to be one of the most daring and resolute, and at the same time one of the most

unassuming Englishmen in the Protectorate; a dead shot, and a charming companion. He had been shooting in Somaliland and the neighbourhood of Lake Rudolph for the previous four years, and many were the stories told of his prowess among elephant and other big game.

It was with sincere pleasure, therefore, that I found I was able to do him sundry small services, and we soon became fast friends. In appearance he was nothing out of the common. He was by no means a big man—rather the reverse, in fact—and it was only on closer acquaintance that his striking personality impressed one.

He had dark hair and eyes, and an aquiline nose. He was a man of many and varied attainments. Primarily a member of the medical profession, his opinions on most other subjects were listened to with respect. A very precise speaker, he had a clear and impartial manner of reviewing anything under discussion which never failed to impress his hearers.

He was a leader one would have willingly followed to the end of the earth. When, therefore, he proposed that I should accompany him on an ivory trading expedition to Galla-land, that vast stretch of country lying between Mount Kenia on the south and Southern Somaliland on the north, which is nominally under the sphere of influence of the British East African Protectorate, I jumped at the chance; and it was so arranged. He had been over much of the ground we intended covering, and knew the country, so that it promised to be a most interesting trip.

About this time I heard from George that he was coming down country, as the steamer parts had not all arrived from England, and consequently it would probably be months before it would be ready for building. He had also had a bad attack of malarial fever in the unhealthy district immediately surrounding the lake at Ugowe Bay, and altogether he was not very fit. I suggested to El Hakim that George should join us in our proposed expedition, to which he readily agreed; so I wrote to George to that effect.

To render the prospect still more inviting, there existed a certain element of mystery with regard to the river Waso Nyiro (pronounced Wasso Nēro). It has always been supposed to rise in the Aberdare Range, but, as I shall show, I have very good reason to believe that it rises in the western slopes of Kenia Mountain itself. The Waso Nyiro does not empty itself into the sea, but ends in a swamp called Lorian, the position of which was supposed

to have been fixed by an exploring party in 1893. But, as I shall also show in the course of this narrative, the position of Lorian varies.

The upper reaches of the Waso Nyiro were visited by the explorer Joseph Thompson, F.R.G.S., on his way to Lake Baringo during his memorable journey through Masai Land in 1885.

In 1887-1888 a Hungarian nobleman, Count Samuel Teleki von Czeck, accompanied by Lieutenant Ludwig von Hohnel, of the Imperial Austrian Navy, undertook the stupendous journey which resulted in the discovery of Lakes Rudolph and Stephanie. Count Teleki, on his journey north, crossed the Waso Nyiro at a point in North-West Kenia near its source, while Lieutenant von Hohnel went two or three days' march still further downstream.

A few years later, in 1892-1893, Professor J. W. Gregory, D.Sc., of the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, made, single-handed, a remarkable journey to Lake Baringo and Mount Kenia, and in the teeth of almost insuperable difficulties, ascended the western face of that mountain and climbed the peak.

At the same time, in the latter part of 1892, an American, Mr. William Astor Chanler, accompanied by Count Teleki's companion and chronicler, Lieutenant von Hohnel, started from a point in Formosa Bay on the East Coast, and made his way along the course of Tana River to North-East Kenia, intending later to go on to Lake Rudolph, and thence northward. He and his companion, deceived by the reports of the natives, which led them to believe that the Waso Nyiro emptied itself into an extensive lake, and fired by the idea of the possible discovery of another great African lake, made their way down to the Waso Nyiro, and after a fearful march, enduring the greatest hardships, eventually reached Lorian. To their great disappointment, it proved to be nothing more than a swamp, and they turned back without examining it. A few weeks later, Lieutenant von Hohnel, having been seriously injured by a rhinoceros, was sent down to the coast, his life being despaired of. Shortly afterwards Mr. Chanler's men deserted him in a body, and returned to the coast also, thus bringing his journey to a premature conclusion; a much-to-be-regretted ending to a well-planned and well-equipped expedition.

As Mr. Chanler was returning to the coast he met Mr. A. H. Neumann coming up. Mr. Neumann spent the greater part of 1893 in shooting elephants in the Loroghi Mountains, after going north to Lake Rudolph. He also crossed the Waso Nyiro at a point north-east of Mount Kenia.

During the time Mr. Neumann was shooting in the Loroghi Mountains he was obliged to make periodical visits to M'thara, in North-East Kenia, in order to buy food from the natives, and on one such excursion he met Dr. Kolb, a German scientist, who was exploring North Kenia.

Dr. Kolb ascended Mount Kenia from the north, and then returned to Europe. An interesting account of his ascent of the mountain is published in Dr. Petermann's "Mitteilungen" (42 Band, 1896). Dr. Kolb then returned to Kenia in order to continue his observations, but he was unfortunately killed by a rhinoceros a couple of marches north of M'thara.

Lorian, therefore, with the exception of Mr. Chanler's hurried visit, was practically unexplored. At the commencement of our trip, El Hakim proposed that, if an opportunity occurred of visiting Lorian, we should take advantage of it, and endeavour to supplement Mr. Chanler's information. As will be seen, an opportunity did present itself, with what result a perusal of this account of our expedition will disclose.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] *Anglice*, "The Doctor."

CHAPTER I.

PREPARATIONS AND START.

Engaging porters—Characteristics of Swahili, Wa’Nyamwezi, and Wa’Kamba porters—Selecting trade goods—Provisions—Arms and ammunition—The Munipara—Sketch of some principal porters—Personal servants—List of trade goods taken—Distributing the loads—Refusal of the Government to register our porters—Reported hostility of the natives—Finley and Gibbons’ disaster—Start of the Somali safaris—We move to Kriger’s Farm—I fall into a game-pit—Camp near Kriger’s Farm—Visitors—The start.

One of the most important items in the organization of a “safari” (caravan) is the judicious selection of the men. Choosing ours was a task that gave us much trouble and vexation of spirit. El Hakim said that for all-round usefulness the Wa’kamba were hard to beat, and thought that we had better form the bulk of the safari from them, and stiffen it with a backbone of Swahilis and Wa’Nyamwezi, as, though the Wa’kamba were very good men when well handled, in the unlikely event of hostilities with the natives it would be advisable to strengthen them with an addition from the lustier tribes. To that end we proposed to engage a dozen Swahili and half that number of Wa’Nyamwezi. Porters at that time were very scarce; but having secured one or two good men as a nucleus, we sent them into the bazaar at Nairobi to bring us any other men they could find who wanted employment.

The Swahilis are natives of Zanzibar and the adjacent coasts. They are of mixed—very mixed—descent, being mainly the offspring of various native slaves and their Arab masters. They were originally a race of slaves, but since the abolition of slavery they have become more and more independent, and they now consider themselves a very superior race indeed. They call themselves “Wangwana” (freemen), and allude to all other natives as “Washenzi” (savages). They are incorrigibly conceited, and at times very vicious, lazy, disobedient, and insolent. But once you have, by a judicious display of firmness, gained their respect, they, with of course some exceptions, prove to be a hardy, cheerful, and intelligent people, capable of enduring great hardships without a too ostentatious display of ill-feeling, and will even go so far as to make bad puns in the vernacular upon their

empty stomachs, the latter an occurrence not at all infrequent in safari work away from the main roads.

The Wa'kamba, on the whole, are a very cheerful tribe, and though of small physique, possess wonderful powers of endurance, the women equally with the men. We calculated that some of our men, in addition to their 60-lb. load, carried another 30 lbs. weight in personal effects, rifle, and ammunition; so that altogether they carried 90 lbs. dead weight during one or sometimes two marches a day for weeks at a stretch, often on insufficient food, and sometimes on no food at all.

The Wa'Nyamwezi are, in my opinion, really more reliable than either the Swahili or Wa'kamba. They come from U'Nyamwezi, the country south and east of Lake Victoria Nyanza. We had six of them with us, and we always found them steady and willing, good porters, and less trouble than any other men in the safari. They were very clannish, keeping very much to themselves, but were quiet and orderly, and seldom complained; and if at any time they imagined they had some cause for complaint, they formed a deputation and quietly stated their case, and on receiving a reply as quietly returned to their fire—very different from the noisy, argumentative Swahili. They appear to me to possess the virtues of both the Swahilis and Wa'kamba without their vices. The Wa'kamba's great weakness when on the march was a *penchant* for stealing from the native villages whatever they could lay their hands on, being encouraged thereto by the brave and noble Swahilis, who, while not wishing to risk our displeasure by openly doing likewise, urged on the simple Wa'kamba, afterwards appropriating the lion's share of the spoil: that is, if we did not hear of the occurrence and confiscate the spoil ourselves.

We had pitched our tent just outside the town of Nairobi, and proceeded to get together our loads of camp equipment, trade goods, and provisions: no easy task on an expedition such as ours, where the number of carriers was to be strictly limited.

In the first place, we required cloth, brass wire, iron wire, and various beads, in sufficient quantities to buy food for the safari for at least six months. Provisions were also a troublesome item, as, although we expected to live a great deal upon native food, we required such things as tea, coffee, sugar, jam, condiments, and also medicines. The question was not what to

take, but what *not* to take. However, after a great amount of discussion, lasting over several days, we settled the food question more or less satisfactorily.

During this time our recruiting officers were bringing into camp numbers of men who, they said, wanted to take service with us as porters. Judging from the specimens submitted for our approval, they seemed to have raked out the halt, the lame, and the blind. After much trouble we selected those whom we thought likely to be suitable, and gave them an advance of a few rupees as a retaining fee, with which, after the manner of their kind, they immediately repaired to the bazaar for a last long orgie.

There was also the important question of arms and ammunition to be considered, as, although we did not expect any fighting, it would have been foolish in the extreme to have entered such districts as we intended visiting without adequate means of self-defence. We concluded the twenty-five Snider rifles used by El Hakim on a previous trip would suffice. Unfortunately, we could get very little ammunition for them, as at that time Snider ammunition was very scarce in Nairobi, one reason being that it had been bought very largely by a big Somali caravan under Jamah Mahomet and Ismail Robli, which set out just before us, bound for the same districts.

We, however, eventually procured five or six hundred rounds: a ridiculously inadequate amount considering the distance we were to travel and the time we expected to be away.

With regard to our armament, El Hakim possessed by far the best battery. His weapons consisted of an 8-bore Paradox, a .577 Express, and a single-barrelled .450 Express, all by Holland and Holland. The 8-bore we never used, as the .577 Express did all that was required perfectly satisfactorily. The 8-bore would have been a magnificent weapon for camp defence when loaded with slugs, but fortunately our camp was never directly attacked, and consequently the necessity for using it never arose. The .557 was the best all-round weapon for big game such as elephant, rhinoceros, and buffalo, and never failed to do its work cleanly and perfectly. Its only disadvantage was that it burnt black powder, and consequently I should be inclined, if I ever made another expedition, to give the preference to one of the new .450 or .500 Expresses burning smokeless powder, though, as I have not handled one of the latter, I cannot speak with certainty. El Hakim's .450 Express

was really a wonderful weapon, though open to the same objection as the .557—that of burning black powder. It was certainly one of the best all-round weapons I ever saw for bringing down soft-skinned game. It was a single-barrelled, top-lever, hammer-gun, with flat top rib. The sights were set very low down on the rib, to my mind a great advantage, as it seems to me to minimize the chances of accidental canting. Its penetrative power, with hardened lead bullets, was surprising. I have seen it drop a rhinoceros with a bullet through the brain, and yet the same projectile would kill small antelope like Grant's or Waller's gazelles without mangling them or going right through and tearing a great hole in its egress, thereby spoiling the skin, which is the great cause of complaint against the .303 when expanding bullets are used.

I myself carried a .303 built by Rigby, a really magnificent weapon. I took with me a quantity of every make of .303 expanding bullets, from copper-tubed to Jeffry's splits. After repeated trials I found that the Dum-Dum gave the most satisfactory results, "since when I have used no other."

I also carried a supply of .303 solid bullets, both for elephants and for possible defensive operations. For rhinoceros, buffalo, or giraffe, I carried an ordinary Martini-Henry military rifle, which answered the purpose admirably. A 20-bore shot-gun, which proved useful in securing guinea-fowl, etc., for the pot, completed my battery. George carried a .303 military rifle and a Martini-Henry carbine.

It was essential that we should have a good "Munipara" (head-man), and the individual we engaged to fill that important position was highly recommended to us as a man of energy and resource. His name was Jumbi ben Aloukeri. Jumbi was of medium height, with an honest, good-natured face. He possessed an unlimited capacity for work, but we discovered, too late, that he possessed no real control over the men, which fact afterwards caused us endless trouble and annoyance. He was too easy with them, and made the great mistake—for a head-man—of himself doing anything we wanted, instead of compelling his subordinates to do it, with the result that he was often openly defied, necessitating vigorous intervention on our part to uphold his authority. We usually alluded to him as "the Nobleman," that being the literal translation of his name.

Next on the list of our Swahili porters was Sadi ben Heri, who had been up to North Kenia before with the late Dr. Kolb, who was killed by a rhinoceros a couple of marches north of M'thara, Sadi was a short, stoutly built, pugnacious little man, with a great deal to say upon most things, especially those which did not concern him. He was a good worker, but never seemed happy unless he was grumbling; and as he had a certain amount of influence among the men, they would grumble with him, to their great mutual satisfaction but ultimate disadvantage. His pugnacious disposition and lax morals soon got him into trouble, and he, together with some of his especial cronies, was killed by natives, as will be related in its proper sequence.

Hamisi ben Abdullah was a man of no marked peculiarities, except a disposition to back up Sadi in any mischief. The same description applies to Abdullah ben Asmani and Asmani ben Selim.

Coja ben Sowah was a short, thick-set man, so short as to be almost a dwarf. He was one of the most cheery and willing of our men, so much so that it was quite a pleasure to order him to do anything—a pleasure, I fear, we appreciated more than he did. On receiving an order he would *run* to execute it with a cheery “Ay wallah, bwana” (“Please God, master”), that did one good to hear.

Resarse ben Shokar was our “Kiongozi,” *i.e.* the leading porter, who sets the step on the march and carries the flag of the safari. He, also, always ran on receiving an order—ran out of sight, in fact; then, when beyond our ken, compelled a weaker man than himself to do what was wanted. I could never cure him of the habit of sleeping on sentry duty, though many a time I have chased him with a stirrup-strap, or a camp-stool, or anything handy when, while making surprise inspections of the sentries, I had found him fast asleep. He was valuable, however, in that he was the wit of the safari. He was a perfect gas-bag, and often during and after a long and probably waterless march we blessed him for causing the men to laugh by some harmless waggish remark at our expense.

Sulieman was a big, hulking, sulky brute, who gave us a great deal of trouble, and finally deserted near Lorian, forgetting to return his rifle, and also absent-mindedly cutting open my bag and abstracting a few small but necessary articles. Docere ben Ali, his chum, was also of a slow and sullen

disposition, though he was careful not to exhibit it to us. When anything disturbed him he went forthwith and took it out of the unfortunate Wa'kamba.

Of the Wa'kamba I do not remember the names except of two or three who particularly impressed themselves on my memory. The head M'kamba was known as Malwa. He was a cheerful, stupid idiot who worked like a horse, though he never seemed to get any "for'arder." Another M'kamba, named Macow, afterwards succeeded him in the headmanship of the Wa'kamba when Malwa was deposed for some offence. We nicknamed Macow "Sherlock Holmes," as he seemed to spend most of his leisure hours prowling round the camp, peering round corners with the true melodrama-detective-Hawkshaw expression in his deep-set, thickly browed eyes. He would often creep silently and mysteriously to our tent, and in a subdued whisper communicate some trifling incident which had occurred on the march; then, without waiting for a reply, steal as silently and mysteriously away.

I must not conclude this chapter without some mention of our personal servants. First and foremost was Ramathani, our head cook and factotum. Ramathani had already been some three months in my service as cook and personal servant, and a most capable man I had found him. My acquaintance with him began one morning when I had sent my cook, before breakfast, to the *sokoni* (native bazaar) to buy bread, vegetables, etc. As he did not return I went outside to the cook-house in some anxiety as to whether I should get any breakfast. Several native servants were there, and they informed me my cook was still in the bazaar, very drunk, and most likely would not be back till noon. Of course, I was angry, and proceeded to show it, when a soothing voice, speaking in very fair English, fell upon my ear. Turning sharply, I was confronted by a stranger, a good-looking native, neatly dressed in khaki.

"Shall I cook breakfast for master?" he inquired softly.

"Are you able?" said I.

"Yes, master."

"Then do so," I said; and went back to my quarters and waited with as much patience as I could command under the circumstances.

In a quarter of an hour or so Ramathani—for it was indeed he—brought in a temptingly well-cooked breakfast, such as I was almost a stranger to, and at the same time hinted that he had permanently attached me as his employer. My own cook turned up an hour or so later, very drunk and very abusive, and he was incontinently fired out, Ramathani being established in his stead.

Ramathani had two boys as assistants, Juma and Bilali. Juma was an M’kamba. His upper teeth were filed to sharp points, forming most useful weapons of offence, as we afterwards had occasion to notice.

Bilali was an M’Kikuyu, and a very willing boy. He was always very nervous when in our presence, and used to tremble excessively when laying the table for meals. When gently reprovved for putting dirty knives or cups on the table, he would grow quite ludicrous in his hurried efforts to clean the articles mentioned, and would spit on them and rub them with the hem of his dirty robe with a pathetic eagerness to please that disarmed indignation and turned away wrath.

Having finally secured our men, it only remained to pack up and distribute the loads of equipment, provisions, trade goods, etc. We did not take such a large quantity of trade goods as we should have done in the ordinary course, as El Hakim already had a large quantity in charge of a chief in North Kenia. The following is a list, compiled from memory, of what we took with us:—

UNGUO (CLOTH).

- 2 loads Merikani (American sheeting).
- 2 ” kisuto (red and blue check cloths).
- 2 ” blanketi (blankets, coloured).
- 1 load various, including—
 - gumti (a coarse white cloth).
 - laissoes (coloured cloths worn by women).
 - kekois (coloured cloth worn by men).

UZI WA MADINI (WIRE).

- 2 or 3 loads of

seninge (iron wire, No. 6).
masango (copper wire, No. 6).
masango n’eupe (brass wire, No. 6).

USHANGA (BEADS).

2 or 3 loads of

sem Sem (small red Masai beads).
sembaj (white Masai beads).
ukuta (large white opaque beads).

2 loads of mixed Venetian beads.

When all the loads were packed, they were placed in a line on the ground; and falling the men in, we told off each to the load we thought best suited to him. To the Swahilis, being good marching men and not apt to straggle on the road, we apportioned our personal equipment, tents, blankets, and table utensils. To the Wa’Nyamwezi we entrusted the ammunition and provisions, and to the Wa’kamba we gave the loads of wire, beads, cloth, etc. Having settled this to our own satisfaction, we considered the matter settled, and ordered each man to take up his load.

Then the trouble began. First one man would come to us and ask if his load might be changed for “that other one,” while the man to whom “that other one” had been given would object with much excited gesticulation and forcible language to any alteration being made, and would come to us to decide the case. We would then arbitrate, though nine times out of ten they did not abide by our decision. Other men’s loads were bulky, or awkward, or heavy, or had something or other the matter with them which they wanted rectified, so that in a short time we had forty men with forty grievances clamouring for adjustment. We simplified matters by referring every one to Jumbi, and having beaten an inglorious retreat to our tents, solaced ourselves with something eatable till everything was more or less amicably settled.

Nothing is more characteristic of the difference in the races than the way in which they carry their loads. The Swahilis and Wa’Nyamwezi, being used to the open main roads, carry their loads boldly on their heads, or, in some cases, on their shoulders. The Wa’kamba, on the other hand, in the narrow jungle paths of their own district find it impossible, by reason of the overhanging vegetation, to carry a load that way. They tie it up instead with a long broad strip of hide, leaving a large loop, which is passed round the forehead from behind, thus supporting the load, which rests in the small of the back. When the strain on the neck becomes tiring they lean forward, which affords considerable relief, by allowing the load to rest still more

upon the back. There were also six donkeys, the property of El Hakim, and these were loaded up as well. A donkey will carry 120 lbs., a weight equal to two men's loads.

Finally, we had to register our porters at the Sub-Commissioner's office, as no safaris are allowed to proceed until that important ceremony has been concluded, and the Government has pouched the attendant fees. In our case, however, there appeared to be a certain amount of difficulty. On delivering my application I was told to wait for an answer, which I should receive in the course of the day. I waited. In the afternoon a most important-looking official document was brought to me by a Nubian orderly. In fear and trembling I opened the envelope, and breathed a heartfelt sigh of relief when I found that the Government had refused to register our porters, giving as their reason that the districts we intended visiting were unsettled and, in their opinion, unsafe, and therefore we should proceed only at our own risk. We did not mind that, and we saved the registration fee anyhow. The Government had already refused to register the Somali's porters, and they intimated, very rightly, that they could not make any difference in our case.

Jamah Mahomet, who was in command of the Somali safari, started off that day. He had with him Ismail Robli as second in command. A smaller safari, under Noor Adam, had started a week previously. Both these safaris intended visiting the same districts as ourselves. We were fated to hear a great deal more of them before the end of our trip.

In the evening I received a private note from one of the Government officers, informing me that we were likely to have a certain amount of trouble in getting across the river Thika-Thika without fighting, as the natives of that district were very turbulent, and advising us to go another way. My informant cited the case of Messrs. Finlay and Gibbons by way of a cheerful moral.

Finlay and Gibbons were two Englishmen who had been trading somewhere to the north of the Tana River. They had forty men or so, and were trading for ivory with the A'kikuyu, when they were suddenly and treacherously attacked and driven into their "boma" (thorn stockade), and there besieged by quite six thousand natives. From what I saw later, I can quite believe that their numbers were by no means exaggerated. During a

night attack, Finlay was speared through the hand and again in the back, the wound in the back, however, not proving dangerous. They managed to get a message through to Nairobi, and some Nubian troops were sent to their relief, which task they successfully accomplished, though only with the greatest difficulty. It was not till six weeks after he received the wound that Finlay was able to obtain medical assistance, and by that time the tendons of his hand had united wrongly, so that it was rendered permanently useless. This was a nice enlivening story, calculated to encourage men who were setting out for the same districts.

The following day I received a telegram from George to say that he had arrived from Uganda at the Kedong Camp, at the foot of the Kikuyu Escarpment, so I went up by rail to meet him. He looked very thin and worn after his severe attack of fever. We returned to Nairobi the same evening, and proceeded to our camp. El Hakim, who was away when we arrived, turned up an hour later, and completed our party. He had been to Kriger's Farm about seven miles out. Messrs. Kriger and Knapp were two American missionaries who had established a mission station that distance out of Nairobi, towards Doenyo Sabuk, or Chianjaw, as it is called by the Wa'kamba.

El Hakim, being anxious to get our men away from the pernicious influence of the native bazaar, arranged that he would go on to Kriger's early on the following morning, and that George and I should follow later in the day with the safari, and camp for the night near Kriger's place. Accordingly he started early in the forenoon on the following day.

George and I proceeded to finish the packing and make final arrangements—a much longer task than we anticipated. There were so many things that must be done, which we found only at the last minute, that at 3 p.m., as there was no prospect of getting away until an hour or so later, I sent George on with the six loaded donkeys, about thirty of El Hakim's cattle, and a dozen men, telling him that I would follow. George rode a mule (of which we had two), which El Hakim had bought in Abyssinia two years before. They were splendid animals, and, beyond an inconvenient habit, of which we never cured them, of shying occasionally and then bolting, they had no bad points. They generally managed to pick up a living and get fat in a country where a horse would starve, and, taking them altogether, they answered admirably in every way. I would not have

exchanged them for half a dozen of the best horses in the Protectorate. One mule was larger than the other, and lighter in colour, and was consequently known as n'yumbu m'kubwa, *i.e.* "the big mule." It was used by George and myself as occasion required. The other, a smaller, darker animal, was known as n'yumbu m'dogo, *i.e.* "the little mule." It was ridden exclusively by El Hakim.

After George's departure I hurried the remaining men as much as possible, but it was already dusk when I finally started on my seven-mile tramp. Some of the men had to be hunted out of the bazaar, where they had lingered, with their loved ones, in a last long farewell.

There is no twilight in those latitudes (within two degrees of the equator), so that very soon after our start we were tramping along in the black darkness. I had no knowledge of the road; only a rough idea of the general direction. I steered by the aid of a pocket-compass and a box of matches. After the first hour I noticed that the men commenced to stagger and lag behind with their lately unaccustomed burdens, and I had to be continually on the alert to prevent desertions. I numbered them at intervals, to make sure that none of them had given me the slip, but an hour and a half after starting I missed three men with their loads, in spite of all my precautions. I shouted back into the darkness, and the men accompanying me did the same, and, after a slight interval we were relieved to hear an answering shout from the missing men. After waiting a few moments, we shouted again, and were amazed to find that the answering shout was much fainter than before. We continued shouting, but the answers grew gradually fainter and more faint till they died away altogether. I could not understand it at first, but the solution gradually dawned upon me. We were on a large plain, and a few hundred yards to the left of us was a huge belt of forest, which echoed our shouts to such an extent that the men who were looking for us were deceived as to our real position, and in their search were following a path at right angles to our own. I could not light a fire to guide them, as the grass was very long and dry, and I should probably have started a bush fire, the consequences of which would have been terrible. I therefore fired a gun, and was answered by another shot, seemingly far away over the plain to the right. Telling the men to sit down and rest themselves on the path, I ordered Jumbi to follow me, and, after carefully taking my bearings by compass, started to walk quickly across the plain to intercept them.

It was by no means a pleasant experience, trotting across those plains in the pitchy blackness, with the grass up to my waist, and huge boulders scattered about ready and willing to trip me up. I got very heated and quite unreasonably angry, and expressed my feelings to Jumbi very freely. I was in the midst of a violent diatribe against all natives generally, and Swahili porters in particular, which I must admit he bore with commendable patience, when the earth gave way beneath me, and I was precipitated down some apparently frightful abyss, landing in a heap at the bottom, with all the breath knocked out of my body. I laid there for a little while, and endeavoured to collect my scattered faculties. Soon I stood up, and struck a match, and discovered that I had fallen into an old game-pit, about 8 feet deep. It was shaped like a cone, with a small opening at the top, similar to the old-fashioned *oubliette*. I looked at the floor, and shuddered when I realized what a narrow squeak I might have had; for on the centre of the floor were the mouldering remains of a pointed stake, which had been originally fixed upright in the earth floor on the place where I had fallen.

“Is Bwana (master) hurt?” said the voice of Jumbi from somewhere in the black darkness above.

I replied that I was not hurt, but that I could not get out without assistance; whereupon Jumbi lowered his rifle, and, to the accompaniment of a vast amount of scrambling and kicking, hauled me bodily out.

We were by this time very near to the men for whom we were searching, as we could hear their voices raised in argument about the path. We stopped and called to them, and presently they joined us, and we all set off together to join my main party. We reached it without further mishap, and resumed our interrupted march.

It was very dark indeed. I could not see my hand when I held it a couple of feet from my face. One of the men happening to remark that he had been over the path some years before, I immediately placed him in the van as guide, threatening him with all sorts of pains and penalties if he did not land us at our destination some time before midnight.

I was particularly anxious to rejoin George, as I had the tents, blankets, and food, and he would have a very uninteresting time without me. We marched, therefore, with renewed vigour, as our impromptu guide stated that he thought one more hour's march would do the business. It didn't,

though. For two solid hours we groped blindly through belts of forest, across open spaces, and up and down wooded ravines, until somewhere about eleven p.m., when we reached a very large and terribly steep ravine, thickly clothed with trees, creepers, and dense undergrowth. We could hear the rushing noise of a considerable volume of water at the bottom, and in the darkness it sounded very, very far down.

I halted at the top to consider whether to go on or not, but the thought of George waiting patiently for my appearance with supper and blankets made me so uncomfortable that I decided to push on if it took me all night. We thereupon commenced the difficult descent, but halfway down my doubts as to the advisability of the proceeding were completely set at rest by one of the men falling down in some kind of a fit from over-fatigue. The others were little better, so I reluctantly decided to wait for daylight before proceeding further. I tried to find something to eat among the multifarious loads, and fortunately discovered a piece of dry bread that had been thrown in with the cooking utensils at the last moment. I greedily devoured it, and, wrapping myself in my blankets, endeavoured to sleep as well as I was able on a slope of forty-five degrees. A thought concerning George struck me just before I dropped off to sleep, which comforted me greatly. "George knows enough to go in when it rains," I thought. "He will leave the men with the cattle, and go over to Kriger's place and have a hot supper and a soft bed, and all kinds of good things like that," and I drew my blankets more closely round me and shivered, and felt quite annoyed with him when I thought of it.

At daylight we were up and off again, and, descending the ravine, crossed the river at the bottom, and continued the march. On the way I shot a guinea-fowl, called by the Swahilis "kanga," and after an hour and a half of quick walking I came up with George.

He had passed a miserable night, without food, blankets, or fire, and, to make matters worse, it had drizzled all night, while he sat on a stone and kept watch and ward over the cattle. The men who had accompanied him were so tired that they had refused to build a boma to keep the cattle in. He seemed very glad to see me. We at once got the tent put up, a fire made, and the boma built, and soon made things much more comfortable. In fact, we got quite gay and festive on the bread and marmalade, washed down with tea, which formed our breakfast.

El Hakim was at Kriger's place, about a mile distant. We had to wait two or three days till he was ready to start, as he had a lot of private business to transact. We left all the cattle except nine behind, under Kriger's charge; we sent the nine back subsequently, as we found they were more trouble than they were worth.

In the evening I went out to shoot guinea-fowl; at least, I intended to shoot guinea-fowl, but unfortunately I saw none. I lost myself in the darkness, and could not find my way back to camp. After wandering about for some time, I at last spied the flare of the camp fires, halfway up a slope a mile away, opposite to that on which I stood. I made towards them, entirely forgetting the small river that flowed at the foot of the slope. It was most unpleasantly recalled to my memory as I suddenly stepped off the bank and plunged, with a splash, waist deep into the icy water. Ugh!

I scrambled up the opposite bank, and reached the camp safely, though feeling very sorry for myself. El Hakim and George thought it a good joke. I thought they had a very low sense of humour.

On the following morning George and I sallied forth on sport intent. George carried the shot-gun, and I the .303. We saw no birds; but after an arduous stalk, creeping on all fours through long, wet grass, I secured a congoni. Congoni is the local name for the hartebeeste (*Bubalis Cokeri*). The meat was excellent, and much appreciated. El Hakim joined us in the afternoon, accompanied by Mr. Kriger and Mr. and Mrs. Knapp, who wished to inspect our camp. We did the honours with the greatest zest, knowing it would be the last time for many months that we should see any of our own race.

The day afterwards El Hakim and I rode into Nairobi, accompanied by some of the men, and brought back twelve days' rations of m'chele (rice) for our safari, as we intended starting the following day. Kriger and Knapp decided to come with us on a little pleasure trip as far as Doenyo Sabuk, a bold, rounded prominence, rising some 800 feet above the level of the plain, the summit being over 6000 feet above sea-level, lying about four days' journey to the north.

CHAPTER II.

FROM KRIGER'S TO MARANGA.

Oil to Doenyo Sabuk—Troubles of a safari—George takes a bath—The Nairobi Falls—Eaten by ticks—My argument with a rhinoceros—The Athi River—Good fishing—Lions—Camp near Doenyo Sabuk—We find the Athi in flood—We build a raft—Kriger and Knapp bid us adieu—Failure of our raft—We cross the Athi—I open a box of cigars—Crossing the Thika-Thika—Bad country—We unexpectedly reach the Tana—The *détour* to the Maragua—Crossing the Maragua—In Kikuyuland.

Kriger and Knapp joined us on the morning of June 7th, and at 2 p.m. we set out on our eventful journey. It was rather a rush at the last moment, as so many things required adjustment. It was impossible to foresee everything. I stopped behind as whipper-in for the first few days, as the porters required something of the sort at the commencement of a safari, in order to prevent desertions, and also to assist those who fell out from fatigue.

On the first day I had a lot of trouble. The donkeys annoyed me considerably; they were not used to their loads, and consequently they kept slipping (the loads, not the donkeys), requiring constant attention.

The porters also were very soft after their long carouse in the bazaar, and every few yards one or another sat down beside his load, and swore, by all the saints in his own particular calendar, that he could not, and would not, go a step farther. It was my unpleasant duty to persuade them otherwise. The consequence was, that on the evening of the first day I got into a camp an hour after the others, quite tired out. It was delightful to find dinner all ready and waiting. To misquote Kipling, I "didn't keep it waiting very long."

The next morning we crossed one of the tributaries of the Athi River. It was thickly overgrown from bank to bank with papyrus reeds, and we were consequently obliged to cut a passage. The donkeys had also to be unloaded, and their loads carried across. We got wet up to the knees in the cold, slimy water, which did not add to our comfort. We passed a rhinoceros on the road, but did not stop to shoot him as we were not in want of meat.

Crossing another river an hour or so later, we made the passage easily by the simple expedient of wading across up to our middles, without troubling to undress or take our boots off; all except George, who was riding the mule. He declared that he “wasn’t going to get wet!” *we* could be “silly cuckoos” if we liked! *he* was “going to ride across.” He attempted it; halfway across the mule slipped into deep water, plunged furiously to recover itself, broke the girth, and George and the mule made a glorious dive together into ten feet of water. Jumping in, I succeeded in getting hold of the mule’s head while George scrambled ashore, gasping with cold. In the mean time Kriger and Knapp with El Hakim had got some distance ahead, leaving George and myself to see the safari safely across. When we reached the other side we found ourselves in a swamp, through which we had to wade for over a mile before reaching firm ground. Then the porters struck in a body, saying they were done up and utterly exhausted, and could go no further. I eventually convinced them, not without a certain amount of difficulty, however, that it would be to their interest to go on.

Soon afterwards I got a touch of sun, and my head ached horribly. I then fastened the saddle on the mule with one of the stirrup straps, and rode some of the way. We reached the Nairobi River towards the close of the afternoon, and crossed by clambering over the boulders plentifully strewn about the river bed. Just below were the Nairobi Falls, which are about 100 feet deep, and extremely beautiful.

At the foot of the Falls the river flows through a deep, rocky glen, which in point of beauty would take a first prize almost anywhere. Great water-worn boulders, clothed with grey-green and purple mosses, among which the water trickled and sparkled in tiny musical cascades; ferns of rare beauty, and flowers of rich and varied hues, gave an artistic finish to the whole; an effect still further accentuated by the feathery tops of the graceful palms and tree ferns that grew boldly out from the steep and rocky sides of that miniature paradise.

We found the others had camped a few yards away from the Falls. Kriger and Knapp had been fishing, and had caught a lot of fine fish; Kriger had also shot a congoni. I had my tent pitched, and immediately turned in, as I felt very tired and feverish. Walking in a broiling sun, and shouting at recalcitrant porters for eight and a half hours, on an empty stomach, is not calculated to improve one physically or morally.

After a good night's sleep I felt much better, and decided to walk when we made a start next morning, handing the mule over to George, who had been very seedy ever since we left Nairobi, the result of his recent severe illness in Uganda. When the tents were struck, we headed due northwards to Doenyo Sabuk, which was now beginning to show up more clearly on the horizon. It was about twenty miles distant, and we calculated that two days' further marching would take us round it.

Soon after we started Knapp shot a guinea-fowl. He used a Winchester repeating shot-gun, a perfectly horrible contrivance, of which he was very proud. When the cartridges were ejected it clanked and rattled like a collection of scrap iron being shaken in a sack.

During that march we had a maddening time with the ticks, with which the Athi plains are infested. They were large, flat, red ticks, similar to those I have seen in Rhodesia (*Ixodes plumbeus?*). They clung to our clothing and persons like limpets to a rock. We should not have minded a dozen or two, at least not so much, but they swarmed on us literally in thousands. We halted every few moments while Ramathani brushed us down, but, so soon as we were comparatively cleared of them, we picked up a fresh batch from the long grass. They bite very badly, and taking them by and large, as a sailor would say, they were very powerful and vigorous vermin; almost as vigorous as the language we wasted upon them.

About an hour after we started we sighted a rhinoceros fast asleep in the grass, about three hundred yards down wind. George and I examined him with the binoculars—the others were a mile ahead—and as we were not out looking for rhinoceros just then, we passed on. We had proceeded barely a quarter of a mile when a confused shouting from the rear caused us to look round. The sleeping rhinoceros had wakened, and proceeded to impress the fact upon the safari. Having winded the men he incontinently charged them, and when George and I glanced back we saw the ungainly brute trotting backwards and forwards among our loads, which the men had hurriedly dropped while they scattered for dear life over the landscape. It was certainly very awkward, as it looked very much as if I should have to go back and slay it, which, I will confess, I was very loth to do, as Ramathani was some distance ahead with all my spare ammunition. The magazine of my .303 contained only half a dozen cartridges, with soft-nosed bullets. I diplomatically waited a while to see if the brute felt disposed to move; but it

was apparently perfectly satisfied with its immediate surroundings, and stood over the deserted loads snorting and stamping and looking exceedingly ugly.

The cattle and donkeys, which were under Jumbi's charge, were also coming up. Jumbi came as near as he dared, and then halted, and waited in the rear till it should please the Bwana (meaning me) to drive the "kifaru" away. The rest of the porters having scuttled to what they considered a safe distance, sat down to await events with a stolid composure born of utter irresponsibility.

I felt, under the circumstances, that it was incumbent upon me to do something, it being so evidently expected; so I advanced towards the rhinoceros, not without some inward trepidation, as I greatly distrusted the ·303. Walking to within fifty yards of the spot where it was stamping defiance, I shouted at it, and said shoo! as sometimes that will drive them away. It did not move this beast, however, so, mentally donning the black cap, I took careful aim, and planked a bullet in his shoulder! If it was undecided before the beast soon made up its mind then, and, jumping round like a cat, came straight for me at a gallop, head down, ears and tail erect, and a nasty vicious business-like look about the tip of his horn that gave me cold chills down the spine. I don't wish to deny that I involuntarily turned and ran—almost anybody would, if they obeyed first impulses. I ran a few yards, but reason returned, and I remembered El Hakim's warning that to run under such circumstances was almost invariably fatal. I turned off sharply to the right, like the hunters in the story books, hoping that my pursuer would pass me, and try one of the porters; but he wouldn't; he had only one desire in the wide, wide world, and that was to interview me. I, on the other hand, was equally anxious not to be interviewed, but I must admit that at the moment I did not quite see how I was to avoid it. He was getting closer and closer at each stride, so there being logically no other way, I stopped and faced him.

I therefore knelt down and worked my magazine for all I was worth, fervently hoping that it would not jam. In less than ten seconds I put four bullets into the enraged animal at short range. All four took effect, as I distinctly saw the dust spurt from his hide in little puffs where they struck. At the fourth shot he swerved aside, when within fifteen yards of me, and as he turned I gave him my sixth and last cartridge in the flank to hasten his

departure; and very glad indeed I was to see him go. He had six bullets in various parts of his anatomy; but I expect they did little more than break the skin, though the shock probably surprised him. He disappeared over a rise in the ground a mile away, still going strong; while I assumed a nonchalant and slightly bored air, and languidly ordered the men to take up their scattered loads and resume the march.

An hour or so after we reached and crossed the Athi River. It was a hot and dusty tramp. Kriger being some miles ahead, had, with a laudable desire to guide us, fired the grass on his way. The result was hardly what he anticipated. The immense clouds of smoke gave us our direction perfectly well, but the fire barred our progress. Quite half a dozen times we had to rush through a gap in the flames, half choked and slightly singed. Once or twice I thought we should never get the mules or donkeys through at all, but we chivied them past the fire somehow. The burnt ground on the other side was simply horrible to walk on. I fully realized what the sensations of the "cat on hot bricks" of the proverb were. Kriger meant well, but, strange to say, neither George nor I felt at all thankful. As a matter of fact, our language was at times as hot as the ground underfoot, not so much on our own account as on that of our poor barefooted men.

The Athi was not very wide at the point where we crossed, but a little distance lower down it becomes a broad and noble stream flowing round the north side of Doenyo Sabuk till it joins the T'savo River about 120 miles south-east of that mountain, the two combining to form the Sabaki, which flows into the sea at Milindi. The Athi is full of fish, and we saw fresh hippopotamus' tracks near the spot where we camped at midday.

After lunch George and I went fishing with Kriger and Knapp: net result about 40 lbs. of fine fish, a large eel, and a mud turtle. Afterwards Kriger and I went out shooting. We were very unlucky. Out on the plains towards Doenyo Sabuk we saw vast herds of game, including congoni, thompsoni, zebra, impala, and water-buck, but the country was perfectly flat and open and the wind most vexatiously variable, so that, do what we would, we could not get within range. I managed to bag a hare with the before-mentioned piece of mechanism which Knapp miscalled a shot-gun. Soon afterwards we were traversing some broken rocky ground when Kriger suddenly exclaimed, "Look, there are some wild pig!" We started after them, and got within a hundred yards before we discovered that the

supposed wild pig were a magnificent black-maned lion and four lionesses. They spotted us almost as soon as we had seen them, and when we tried to get near enough for a shot they walked into a patch of tall reeds and remained there growling, nor would they show themselves again. We did not think it good enough to tackle five lions in thick reeds, so we reluctantly withdrew.

Kruger had shot a lion some months previously, and was attacked and badly mauled by the lioness while examining the prostrate body of his quarry, his left arm being bitten through in several places. He struggled with her for some minutes, forcing his arm between her open jaws, and thereby preventing her from seizing his shoulder or throat. His life was only saved by a sudden fall backwards over a bank which was concealed by the undergrowth. The lioness was so surprised by his complete and utterly unexpected disappearance that, casting a bewildered look around, she turned and fled.

We continued our hunt for game, and presently Kruger wounded a congoni. It appeared very badly hit, and we followed it for several miles in the hope that it would drop; but it seemed to get stronger with every step, and finally, to our great disgust and disappointment, joined a herd and galloped away, while we sat down on the hard cold ground and bemoaned our luck. On the way back to camp—and a weary walk it was—we shot another solitary congoni at three hundred yards' range, and fortunately hit him; but we put three bullets each into the beast before it dropped, so remarkably tenacious of life are these animals. We returned to camp at dusk, thoroughly tired out. I retired to rest immediately after dinner, thus concluding a not entirely uneventful day.

We did not march the next day, as El Hakim wished to examine the surrounding country from a farming and stock-raising point of view. He and Kruger rode off on the mules after breakfast with that intention. Knapp and I went fishing, while George—sensible chap—laid himself on the grass in the shade and watched us. Knapp caught one very fine fish weighing over 9 lbs., while I caught only two small fish and a sharp attack of fever. I returned to camp and climbed into my blankets. In an hour and a half my temperature rose to 105°, and I felt very queer indeed; but towards evening I recovered sufficiently to eat a little. El Hakim and Kruger returned at 6 p.m., having explored the adjacent country to their satisfaction, and on their

return journey they shot a zebra and a congoni. Zebra meat is excellent eating, especially if it has been hung for three or four days. When cooked it is firm and white, in appearance somewhat resembling veal. We always secured the strip of flesh on each side of the backbone, called by the Swahilis "salala" (saddle), and also the under-cut, or "salala n'dani" (inside saddle), for our private consumption. The kidneys are very large, as big as one's fist; and they, as are also the brains, are excellent eating when fried in hippo fat.

We started at 7 a.m. on the following morning, El Hakim, Kriger, and Knapp going a long way ahead, leaving George and myself with the big mule, to look after the safari. George was still so queer that he could hardly sit on the mule. He was constantly vomiting, and at every fresh paroxysm the mule shied, so that poor George had anything but a cheerful time. I did not know the way, and depended wholly for guidance on the spoor of the others who had started early.

Soon after starting, a pair of rhinoceros charged us, scattering the safari far and wide over the plain in a medley of men, loads, donkeys, and cattle. I went back with the 8-bore, which I had kept close to me since my experience two days before, but before I could get near them they made off again, nearly getting foul of Jumbi in their retreat. He had hidden himself in the grass, and they passed within a dozen yards of him without becoming aware of his presence.

I have mentioned that I was depending for guidance on the spoor of that portion of the caravan which had preceded me, so it can be imagined that I was exceedingly surprised to come upon a party of the men who had left camp before me, sitting down waiting for me to come up. On being questioned they stated that the "m'sungu" (white men) were "huko m'beli" (somewhere ahead), but as they had lagged behind, and so lost them, they had waited for me to come up and show them the way. I was in something of a quandary, as, the ground being very rough and stony, no tracks were visible. After a moment's consideration I decided to make for the north end of Doenyo Sabuk, which was quite near, as I knew the others intended going somewhere in that direction. On the road I stalked and shot a congoni, but my Swahili aristocrats refused to touch the meat, as I, and not they, had cut its throat, consequently it was "haran" (*i.e.* sinful, forbidden).

They were much less fastidious later on, and ate with avidity far less palatable food than freshly killed congoni.

After a solid eight hours' march I came up with the others. They had camped on the right bank of the Athi, which at this place is very broad and deep. It makes a vast curve here from due north to south-east, so that we were still on the wrong side of it, and would have to recross it in order to reach the Tana River. Kriger and Knapp were, as usual, fishing, and had caught some magnificent fish, averaging 9 lbs. to 10 lbs. each. On our arrival in camp, George and I had a refreshing wash and a cup of tea, which revived us considerably. In the evening I shot a crested crane (*Belearica Pavonina*) with the .303. George went to bed early, as he was very weak and exhausted; I did not feel very bright either, after the smart attack of fever I had had the day before, coupled with that day's eight-hour tramp in a blazing sun.

We did not move on the following day, as El Hakim wished to examine the surrounding country. He and Kriger accordingly saddled up the mules and made another excursion. They saw a leopard on the road about a mile out of camp, but the man who was carrying their guns was, unfortunately, some distance in the rear at the time. I believe El Hakim used bad language, but I could not say for certain, though I do know the gun-bearer looked very sorry for himself when they returned to camp in the evening. They saw some very pretty falls on the river lower down, situated in the midst of a very lovely stretch of park-like scenery. El Hakim was quite enthusiastic about them.

We spent the next day looking for a place to cross the river. It was from this camp that Kriger and Knapp were to return to their station, and our journey was really to begin. We examined a ford that Kriger knew of, two hours' journey up the river, but found the river in flood and the ford deep water. On the way back El Hakim shot a congoni, which gave us a much-needed supply of fresh meat. As there seemed no other way out of the difficulty, we decided to build a raft. We found it a very tough task, there being no material at hand, as the wood growing near was all mimosa thorn, so hard and heavy when green that it will hardly float in water. We spent all the afternoon, waist-deep in the river, lashing logs together with strips of raw hide cut from the congoni skins. When the raft was finished, just before sundown, it looked very clumsy and unserviceable, and we had very grave

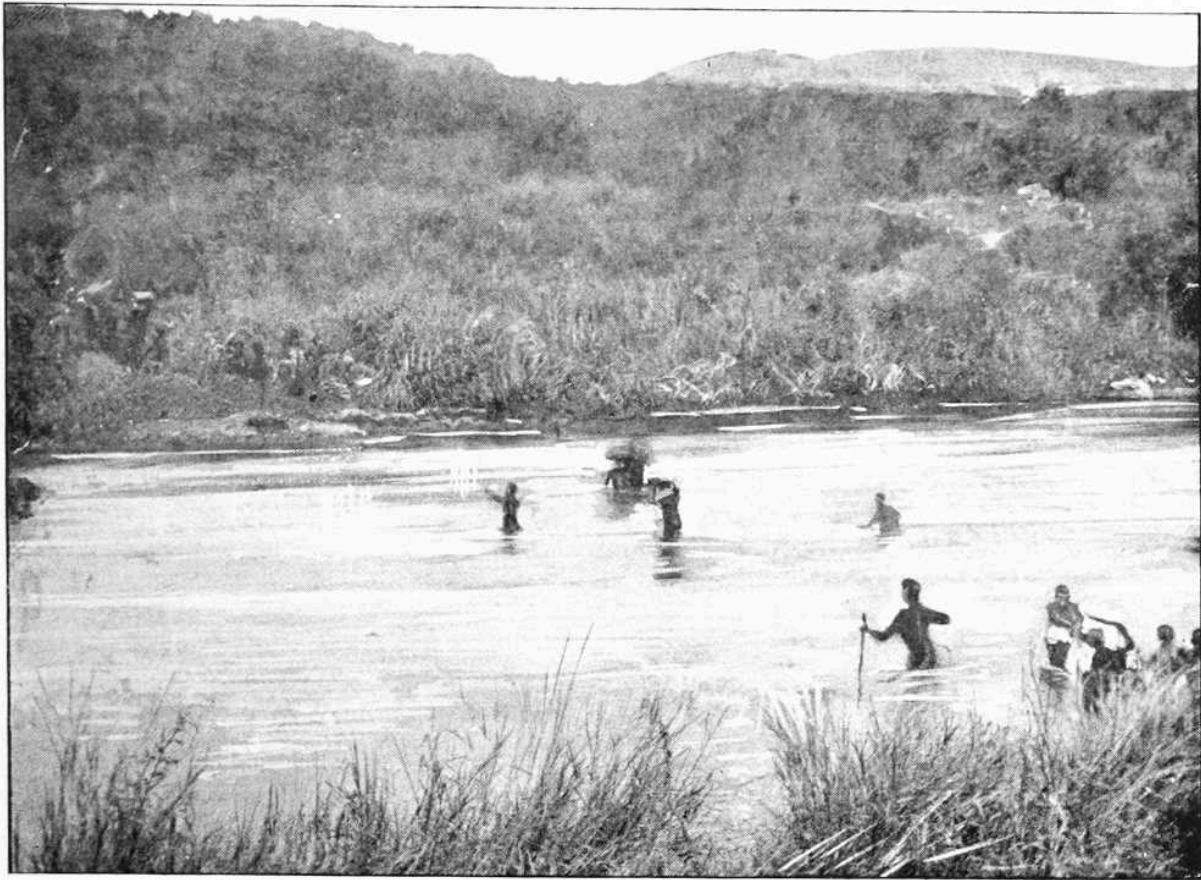
doubts of its utility, as the volume of water in the river was very great, and the pressure on such an unwieldy structure was bound to be enormous—much more than any rope of ours would stand. However, that was a question that the morrow would decide; so we moored the raft to an island a few yards from the bank, and went back to camp for dinner.

We dined on the crane I had shot two days before. It was as large as a small turkey, and splendid eating, though my .303 had rather damaged it. El Hakim and I sat up late into the night, making final arrangements and writing letters, which Kriger was to take back with him next morning, when we intended to make a determined effort to cross the river *en route* for Mount Kenia and the “beyond.”

Kriger and Knapp returned to Nairobi early on the morning of June 14th. They took our remaining cattle back, as we found them too much trouble, and El Hakim had others at Munithu, in North Kenia, which we could use if we required them for trade purposes. We bade them adieu, and they returned the compliment, wishing us all kinds of luck. They then departed on their homeward journey.



THE ATHI RIVER NEAR DOENYO SABUK.



CROSSING AN AFFLUENT OF THE SAGANA. (See page [50](#).)

We found our raft waterlogged and almost entirely useless, but we determined to try what we could do with it. We had great difficulty in persuading the men to go into the water, but managed it at last, and got a rope across the river with which to haul the raft over. We put two loads on it, and though they were got safely across they were soaked through, and once or twice very nearly lost. When we tried to haul our raft back the rope parted, and the unholy contrivance we had spent so much time and labour upon drifted rapidly down-stream, and was lost to sight.

We abandoned the idea of crossing by raft—especially as there was then no raft to play with—and so we prospected up the river-bank for some little distance, and eventually discovered a place that promised a better crossing than any we had previously seen. There were two or three small islands near the hither bank of the river, which narrowed it to more manageable proportions, and by lunch-time we had rigged the rope across the main

channel. After lunch we all stripped, and prepared for an afternoon's hard work; nor were we disappointed. The stream, breast-deep, was running like a mill-race. Its bed was composed of flat slabs of granite polished to the smoothness of glass by the constant water-friction. Strewn here and there were smooth water-worn boulders with deep holes between, which made the crossing both difficult and dangerous. By dint of half wading and half swimming, holding on to the rope for safety, we managed with incredible labour to get all the loads across without accident.

Getting the mules and donkeys across was a still more difficult task. They absolutely refused to face the water, and had to be forced in. Once in, though, they did their best to get across. The mules and four of the donkeys succeeded after a severe struggle, but the other two donkeys were swept away down-stream. We were unwilling to lose them, so I swam down the river with them, trying to head them towards the opposite bank. I succeeded at last in forcing them under the bank a quarter of a mile or so lower down stream; but at that place it was perfectly perpendicular, and there we stood, the two donkeys and myself, up to our necks in water on a submerged ledge about two feet wide, on one side of us the swiftly rushing river, which none of us wished to face again, and on the other side a perfectly unclimbable bank, topped with dense jungle. I thought of crocodiles, as there were, and are, a great many in the Athi River, and I went cold all over, and wished most heartily that I was somewhere else. I shouted for the men, and presently heard their voices from the top of the bank overhead; they could not reach me, however, as the jungle was so thickly interlaced as to be impenetrable. They tried to cut a way down to me, but gave it up as impossible; besides, they could not have got the donkeys out that way, anyhow.

I grew more than a little anxious about the donkeys, as I was afraid they would lose heart and let themselves drown. Donkeys are like that sometimes when they are in difficulties. I clung to the ears of my two, and held their heads above water by main force. I got cold and chilled, while thoughts of crocodiles *would* come into my head. Once a submerged log drifted past beneath the surface, and in passing grazed my thigh. I turned actually sick with apprehension, but it went on with the current, and left me shivering as with ague. I ordered some of the men to get into the river and swim down to me, and presently they arrived. I immediately felt much

better, as I reflected that my chances of being seized were now considerably lessened.

When I had got half a dozen men down, we took the donkeys by the ears and tails, and half towed, half pushed them up-stream against the current, and successfully landed them, though certainly they were more dead than alive.

I found that El Hakim and George had got the tents up, and that dinner was being prepared by the indefatigable Ramathani. I dried myself, and, putting on some clothing, went out in search of something edible in the way of meat. I saw no antelope, but I made a good shot with the .303 at an adjutant stork (*Leptoptilus marabou*). The tail feathers, the Marabout feathers of commerce, were magnificent. This bird is a carrion-eater, and consorts with the vultures, so it was therefore not suitable for the pot. I cut off the large bag attached to the throat, in order to make a tobacco-pouch of it, but the dog sneaked it and, I believe, devoured it.

We sat down to dinner in the moonlight, all three of us thoroughly tired out, but pleased at having conquered the formidable Athi. Now, I had in my possession a box of particularly atrocious cigars, which I had bought in a hurry on the day we left Nairobi as a surprise for El Hakim and George. They were somebody's "Morning whiffs." As far as the others were concerned, the surprise was complete, but they surprised me also, though I was half expecting something out of the common.

I remember the first one I smoked that night. I remember it distinctly, though I would much rather forget it. We had just finished dinner, and were sitting at the table in semi-darkness. It was a beautiful evening. The stars shone brilliantly in the unclouded firmament, and the cool breeze softly played and whispered among the palms. The men were happy and contented, and all was peace and harmony. Suddenly remembering those cigars, I went into my tent and took three out of the box. I put two of them in my pocket for the others, and proceeded to light my own before going outside again. The first puff knocked me backwards, but I strove gallantly to recover my scattered faculties, and, dashing the tears from my eyes, made another attempt. It was hard work, but I persevered, though I admit I perspired freely. After a little practice I found that if I took a cautious draw or two, sandwiching deep long draughts of fresh air between each, I could

manage to get along. Then I went outside and sat down at the table where El Hakim and George were quietly and happily conversing.

Presently George said, "Funny smell, isn't it?"

"Yes," El Hakim replied. "I have noticed it for the last two or three minutes. I hope those men have not set fire to the grass."

"Have you noticed it?" said George to me.

"No, I can't say I have," I answered. "What is it like?"

"Great Scott! your nose must be out of order," said George. "It reminds me of a brickfield. I wonder what it can be?"

"Oh, you fellows must be dreaming," said I. "I can't smell anything extraordinary."

"Can't you?" said El Hakim, turning in his chair to look at me. "Hullo! what are you smoking?" he added.

"A cigar, of course, and a jolly good one too," said I, puffing away vigorously as a proof of my enjoyment, which very nearly proved my undoing. "Have one?"

El Hakim rose slowly to his feet, and gazed sorrowfully and reproachfully at me; then giving one or two distinctly audible sniffs, he walked slowly to the edge of the camp and gazed silently over the plains, followed a moment later by George, who made some almost unintelligible remark about "he could stand a good deal, but that——" and, shuddering visibly, he too vanished.

I threw the remains of the cigar into the river, where it probably continued its nefarious career, doubtless doing a lot of harm. George, with a lofty disregard of my feelings, euphoniously christened them "stinkers," and neither he nor El Hakim could ever be persuaded to smoke one.

I got hardened to them in time, but I only smoked them on special occasions or in default of anything better. I used to smoke them after George and I had turned in for the night. It did not matter whether George was asleep or not; after the first half-dozen puffs he would turn over in his blankets, and, giving vent to a resigned and massive sigh, get up, and, uttering no word the while, he would with great ostentation and an

unnecessary amount of noise, open the tent-flaps at each end, thus letting a fierce draught through. He would then go back to bed again, and shiver violently with the cold, and cough pathetic little coughs, till in sheer self-defence I would discontinue smoking and close the tent, but I would have my revenge in the morning while we were dressing, as I would then relight the end left from overnight. George said the smell took away his appetite for breakfast, but that must have been mere vulgar prejudice, as I never noticed anything wrong with his appetite.

We were off again next morning, and in two hours reached the Thika-Thika, the next considerable river on our route. It was the inhabitants of the country adjacent to this river about whom we were warned in Nairobi; but, in consequence of our *détour* north-eastward to Doenyo Sabuk, we struck the river much lower down than the presumably hostile districts.

It was a rather narrow but deep stream, full of water, with a very swift and powerful current. We could not find a crossing-place, so we tried to bridge the stream at the cataracts which we discovered lower down, at which place the channel narrowed to something like twenty yards. There was a large tree standing on the bank, and we cut it down in the hope that it would fall across the river. It was a long and tiresome task, and somehow the tree fell the wrong way; so we thought we would not built a bridge, after all. We then went higher up the river, and at one place found two dead logs, which we lashed together to form a raft. The raft completed, we called for a volunteer to take the line across. As Asmani ben Selim was a good swimmer, we ordered him to volunteer. He did so, and got the line across without accident. He then hauled the raft across with another line attached, by which we were enabled to haul it back again, and then, having satisfactorily demonstrated the practicability of our idea, we adjourned for lunch.

After the meal we went down to the river again, and amused ourselves all the afternoon by pulling the raft to and fro across the river with two loads on at a time. We had all the loads safely across by five o'clock in the afternoon, and then proceeded to get the men across by the same means. Some of them had not sense enough to sit still, and on three separate occasions they managed to upset the unstable craft in midstream, and were hauled across clinging to the overturned raft, feeling very miserable indeed,

which feeling was in no way alleviated by the gibes of their more fortunate companions who had got across without accident.

It was dark by the time the last man had crossed, and the animals were still on the wrong side of the river. We accordingly camped on the bank, and sent a guard of three men back again to look after them during the night.

At daylight next morning we proceeded to get the animals across by the simple expedient of tying one end of the rope round their necks, when a team of a dozen men on the opposite bank of the river soon hauled them, kicking and struggling, across. I admit that they made the passage for the most part under water; but still, there was no other way, and the objections of the animals themselves, though very strenuous, did not count for much.

That business concluded, we struck camp and continued our march. We followed no road, and, being without a guide, we travelled by compass in a north-easterly direction. By so doing we hoped to strike the upper waters of the Tana River at Maranga. We saw great numbers of antelope on the road, and there were also numerous herds of zebra and brindled gnu (*Connochactus taurinus*). We were in want of meat, but the game was very shy, and while stalking a herd of zebra I had the ill luck to startle them somehow, and they went off at a gallop. I took a long shot—200 yards—at the leader of the herd, and, as luck would have it, brought him down.

We went on till 10 a.m., when we halted for breakfast, and did ourselves very well on grilled zebra liver. We made a “Telekesa” march (*i.e.* a march resumed after a short halt for refreshment), usually necessary in localities where water is scarce and water-holes long distances apart—so by soon after midday we were on the move again.

The country was now getting very nasty. We could see low ranges of steep hills ahead that promised to be very inconvenient. At dusk we ascended the outlying spurs, finding it very hard work, and soon after we camped for the night. I shot a congoni during the afternoon, which kept us in fresh meat for a day or two. That the estimate we had formed of the natural difficulties to be encountered was a correct one, we had many opportunities of verifying during the next two days. It was a perfectly horrible piece of country. It seemed to be a collection of rocky hills thrown down just anyhow, without the slightest regard for order. Long coarse grass and rank vegetation did their very best to impede our progress. We were

retarded every half mile or so by steep descents, down which we toiled slowly and painfully, only to find a roaring rushing torrent at the bottom, that needed the most careful negotiation. Our poor donkeys suffered very much by the constant loading and unloading of their burdens, rendered necessary in order to cross some particularly obnoxious ravine, while the men's patience was severely tried.

In the early morning it was still worse, as the dense undergrowth was then soaked through with the heavy dew, which descended on us in icy showers as we forced our way through, thus adding to our other miseries. There was no game to speak of. I shot one solitary congoni at our first camp in this uninhabited wilderness, and on the same day we inadvertently walked on to a sleeping rhinoceros, which livened things up a little.

El Hakim was riding at the head of the safari, and George, on the other mule, was close behind him. I was walking a few yards behind George. Suddenly I saw El Hakim stiffen in his seat and kick his feet free of the stirrup-irons; a fraction of a second later he was out of the saddle and behind a bush, while George emulated his example with a promptitude that could only have been rendered possible by the most urgent necessity, George being, as a rule, extremely deliberate in his movements, as befits a heavy man. At the same instant, with a rush and a snort, a large black rhinoceros galloped blindly at us. I took up an unobtrusive position behind an adjacent tree, with as little delay as possible consistent with my dignity, and the rhinoceros rushed past and disappeared. It appeared annoyed at being disturbed.

On the afternoon of the third day after leaving the Thika-Thika we got into some very dense scrub, and fairly lost ourselves. The bush was absolutely impenetrable, except for the low tunnels made by wandering hippopotamus, which indicated the presence of water not far off. These tunnels gave the scrub the appearance of a gigantic rabbit-warren, in which we had to walk bent double in order to make any headway at all. It was exceedingly hot and dusty, and we plunged about in the bewildering maze of tunnels till we were tired out, while seemingly no nearer to the opposite side. Presently the tunnel in which we were burrowing at the moment abruptly dipped downwards, and a few yards further on we emerged unexpectedly on the edge of a broad and noble river, which flowed swiftly and serenely past our delighted eyes.

We had no doubt that this was the Tana which we had not expected to reach for another day at least; a surmise which proved to be correct. It is called here the Sagana, or more rarely the Kilaluma (*i.e.* firewater). It is a very beautiful river, with very high perpendicular banks clothed in the most lovely verdure. Tall water-palms (*Raffia* sp.?) reared their stately heads far above the surrounding luxuriant vegetation; while tropical trees of many species formed a playground for troops of monkeys. Birds of brilliant plumage darted hither and thither like diminutive rainbows, and completed as charming a picture of tropical beauty as could be found in Africa.

The river itself was about eighty yards broad, and very deep, with a four-miles-an-hour current. We had struck it at a point about two days' march above the Carl Alexander and Sweinfurth Falls. It is full of hippopotamus. George shot at one in the water, but it sank immediately and disappeared from view.

Our men skirmished round, and discovered a small clearing, in which we camped. Some of the Wakamba porters informed us that farther up the river there was a bridge, and beyond that the "shambas" (plantations) of the A'kikuyu. We were rather sceptical about the bridge, as they used the word "dirage," which is the Swahili word used by the Wakamba either for a bridge, a boat or raft, or a ford, though the Swahilis themselves have separate and distinct words for each.

We ascertained one fact. A large river, called the Maragua, joined the Sagana two hours' march up-stream, and we should have a much better chance of a successful crossing if we crossed before the Maragua joined forces with the already swollen Sagana, though such a course necessitated crossing two rivers instead of one.

Early next day we set off up-stream in a westerly direction. Travelling was like an excursion over the roofs of a row of houses. The jungle was very dense everywhere, and we were also in constant danger from the numerous hippopotamus-traps which had been set by the natives, who sometimes hunt this side of the river. These traps consisted of a heavy log of wood, probably thorn, about 18 inches long and 9 inches in diameter, with an iron blade 8 inches long firmly set in one end. This was suspended blade downwards over the centre of the path, and connected with a cord stretched across the path an inch or so above the ground. When the

unsuspecting hippopotamus passed that way it kicked the cord, thereby releasing a catch, and down dropped the heavy log, armed with its keen blade, into the unfortunate victim's back, usually severing the spine. We had to keep a very sharp look-out for these traps, sending men ahead of the safari to search for them and release the suspended log before we passed.

We lost sight of the Sagana altogether in an hour or so, as here it makes a big curve to the north before flowing down again to the Mumoni hills. We reached the Maragua in due course, and found that our men's information was correct, and that there was a genuine bridge. I discovered later that it was built by Gibbons on his ill-fated journey to M'bu. It was very well built, some small islands in the channel being utilized as piers, upon which were laid the straight stems of the water-palm which was growing at hand in great profusion, and answered the purpose excellently. It was, however, partly destroyed by fire, and required great care in crossing. We could not trust the animals on it, so we had to fall back on our rope, and haul them across a little higher up the river, where the water was deeper and the current consequently less violent.

Just below the bridge were a series of magnificent cascades, which filled the air for a long distance round with their stupendous roar. As we intended making another march that day, we went on again after a short halt. The men had had no food for three days, except the remains of the insignificant quantity of meat I shot a few days before. We were therefore anxious to reach the cultivated country in order to buy fresh supplies for them.

After a weary walk from eleven in the morning to four in the afternoon, we were relieved to find ourselves among the shambas of the natives. We camped beside a small stream close to a village, and immediately opened a market, and when the natives appeared we bought a small supply of maize and sweet potatoes, which were at once served out to our hungry men.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE TANA TO M'BU.

We reach and cross the Tana—Maranga—The abundance of food thereof—We open a market—We treat the Maranga elders to cigars, with disastrous results—Bad character of the Wa'M'bu—We resume our journey—A misunderstanding with the A'kikuyu—We reach M'bu.

Early the following morning we struck camp and travelled due north, following native paths. Ascending a low hill, we were unexpectedly greeted by the paramount chief of the district, who rejoiced in the name of Kinuthia, and several of his elders. He presented us, by way of an introduction, with a gourd containing about half a gallon of fresh milk, which we much appreciated, signifying the same in the usual manner. When we regained our breath once more, Kinuthia handed us a note given him by Mr. Hall, a Government officer, who had been up there a month before in order to select a site for the new Government station for the Kenia district; which stated that Kinuthia was a friendly chief, and desired to be recognized as such. We immediately recognized him as such by enlisting him as our guide to the Sagana, which we expected to be able to cross that day.

After a short conversation he took the lead, and on we marched again. He led us across some very rough country for an hour and a half, when we reached a small, swift river, an affluent of the Sagana. We crossed without much trouble by the timely aid of the ragged-looking A'kikuyu noblemen in attendance on their chief. Another two-hour tramp followed, when we at last reached the Sagana, which is really a noble river, abounding in hippo here, as indeed it does everywhere. We saw no crocodiles, though we inquired most anxiously after them.

Kinuthia informed us that the Somalis' safari had crossed three weeks or a month before. One of Jamah Mahomet's cows, while fording the river, had been seized by a crocodile and the poor beast's shoulder torn right out. We did not feel more comfortable on receipt of this intelligence, but we were assured by the natives that they had since poisoned all the crocodiles for a distance of half a mile or so each side of the ford, though they thought it likely that a stray reptile or two might have escaped the general

poisoning. We had no choice, however; so we stripped and waded, chin-deep, to the opposite side, about eighty yards distant.

The current was immensely powerful, and the bottom very pebbly and slippery; but we were assisted by some of Kinuthia's aristocracy, and made the passage in safety. Our men were tired and rather nervous of the current, so for three "makono" (about 1½ yards) of cloth each, we induced fifteen of the aforesaid A'kikuyu noblemen to carry their loads across for them—a task they successfully accomplished, Kinuthia himself not disdaining to discard his royal robes (a goatskin) and earn his piece of cloth.

We breakfasted on the bank, and then made another move, as Kinuthia impressed upon us the fact that an hour's journey further on was situate the village of Manga, the chief of the Maranga, whose people had an abundance of food for sale, and where we should be able to buy all the supplies we needed without any trouble. He said he would accompany us and introduce us, which we thought was very good of him.

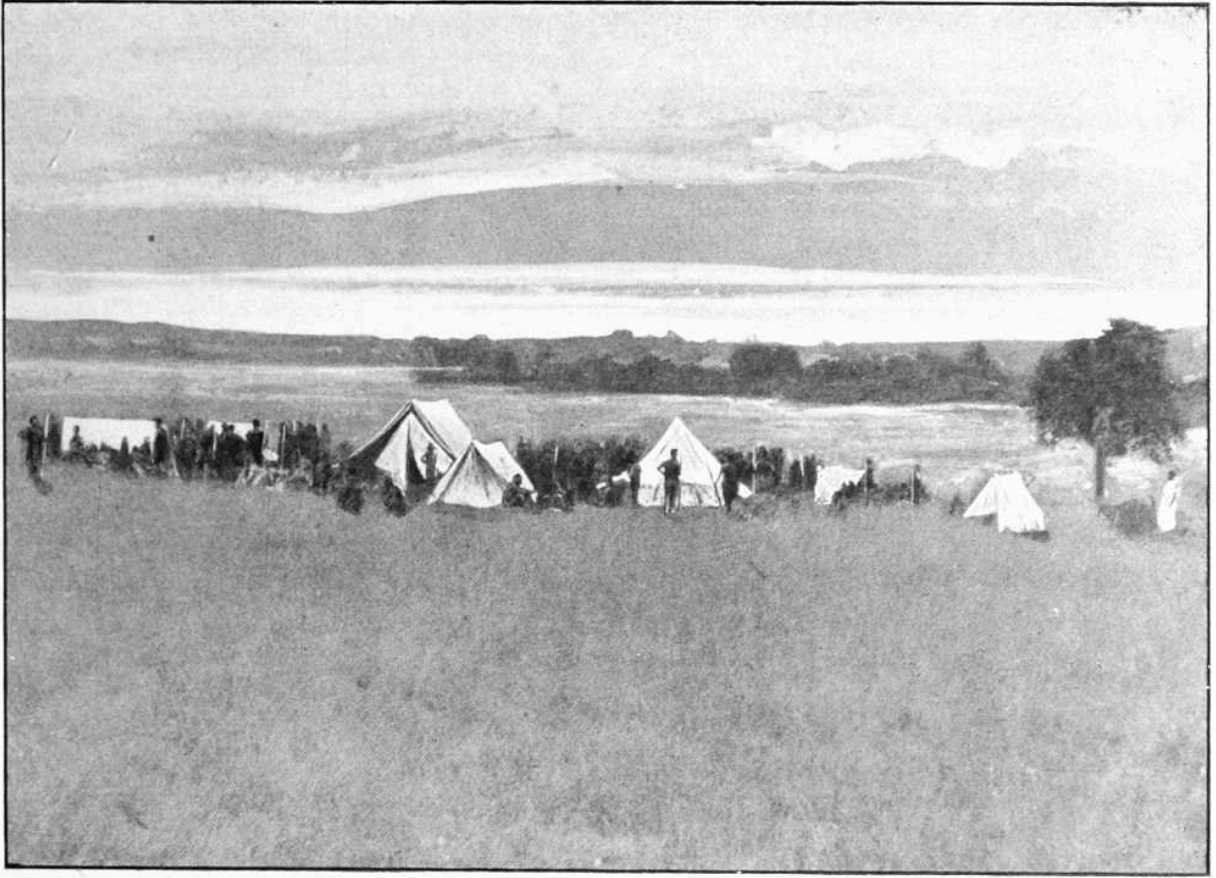
Our way lay through dense plantations, which fully bore out friend Kinuthia's assertions as to the richness of the district in food-stuffs. In an hour we reached a gently sloping hill, covered with short green grass, on which we pitched our camp. We sent for the chief, who shortly afterwards made his appearance. He seemed a very decent old fellow, and anxious to assist us. We stated our requirements, and he immediately commanded his people to bring us food for sale, and did everything in his power—short of giving anything away himself—to show us that he was friendly and well-disposed towards us.

His son, Koranja, a rather good-looking young fellow for a native, had been down to Mombasa with a safari, and spoke Kiswahili fairly well. He seemed very intelligent. Some of the old men of the tribe also spoke Kiswahili, which, we presumed, they had picked up from passing Arab or Swahili safaris. Kinuthia bade us adieu and returned to his own village the other side of the Sagana, having received from us a suitable present of beads, etc., to gladden his heart, or rather the hearts of his wives.

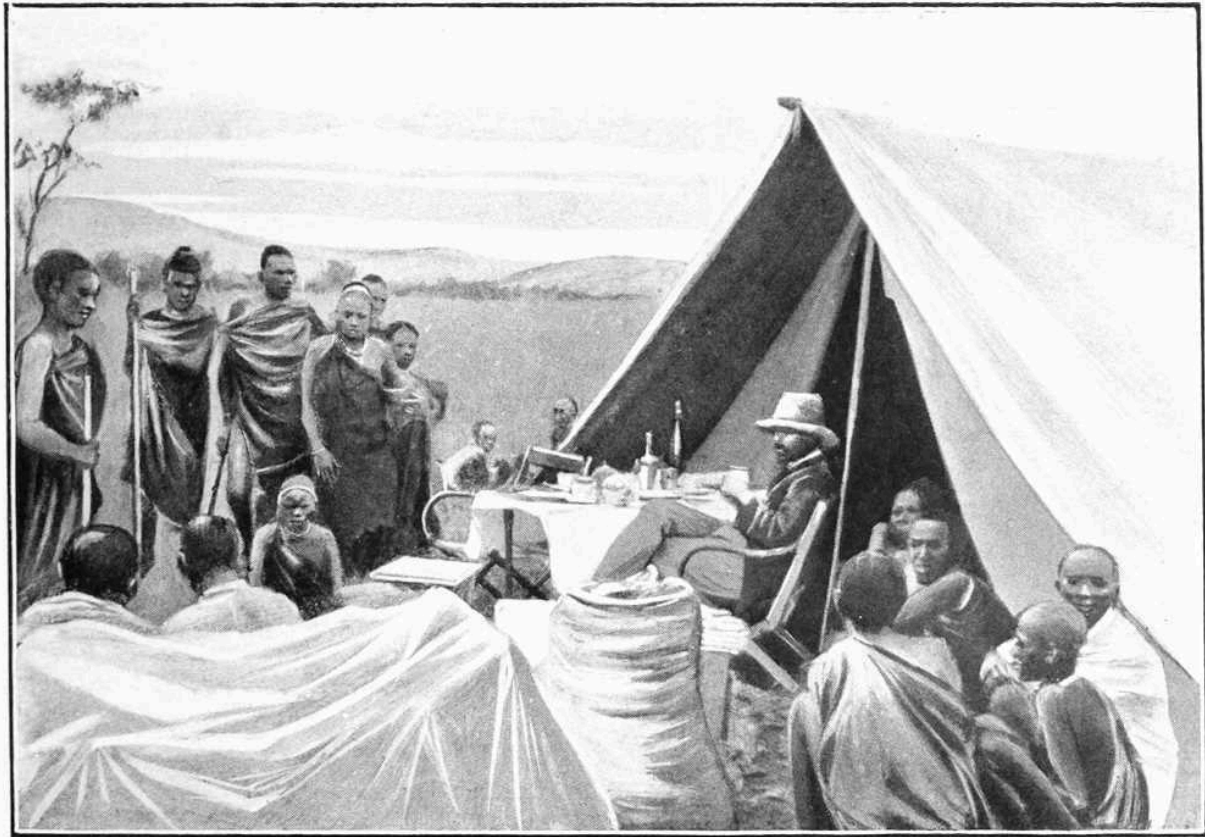
Large quantities of food then began to arrive, and we decided to stop where we were for a day or two, and buy at least ten days' rations for the men, before resuming our journey northwards. We retired that night a great

deal easier in our minds about the commissariat than we had been for some days.

Next morning the camp was fairly buzzing with natives of all ages and both sexes. Most of them had brought food to sell, but many of them came merely to look at us. Not that we were much to look at; in any civilized community we should have run a great risk of being arrested as vagrants and suspicious characters. El Hakim and George both wore embryo beards, and our appearance generally was rather that of tramps than otherwise. El Hakim had a great affection for a pair of moleskin trousers and a leather jacket, both of which had seen much service. His hat, too, had known better days; but it was an idiosyncrasy of his to wear his clothes on safari work till they were absolutely beyond further mending and patching. On one occasion he was reported to have tramped about the Lykipia plateau for months, clad only in a coloured cloth and a pair of brown boots, with a towel twisted round his head turban-wise, he having lost his only hat. I can vouch for the comfort of such a dress in a good climate such as obtains on the Waso Nyiro, as I tried the experiment myself.



THE CAMP AT MARANGA.



BUYING FOOD AT MARANGA. (See page [54](#).)

As soon as we had breakfasted, we went about the important business of marketing. Maranga, as is Kikuyu generally, is extraordinarily rich and fertile. All kinds of grain are exceedingly plentiful. Among those brought to us for sale were millet (*Panicum Italicum*), called by the natives “metama;” *Pennisetum spicatum*, known as “mwele,” a seed resembling linseed, which grows on a close spike like a bulrush flower; *Eleusine corocana*, known as “uimbe;” and “muhindi,” or “dhurra” (maize). A large variety of edible roots is also cultivated, the most common being “viazi” (sweet potatoes), “vikwer” (yams), and “mahogo” (manioc). Sugar-cane was very largely grown, and is known to the natives as “mewa.” The stalks of metama, which are called “kota,” are also chewed by the natives on account of the sweetish sap. The half-grown stalks of the same plant are known as “metama m’tindi.” “N’dizi” (bananas) are also extensively cultivated, but we never ate any, as they are never allowed to ripen. The natives pluck them while they are green and hard, and roast them in hot ashes. When cooked

they have the appearance and taste of a floury potato, though with a slightly astringent flavour. Wild honey was procurable in moderate quantities. It is called "assala," evidently derived from the Arabic word for the same substance, "assal." The Masai name for honey is "naischu," the word generally used in Kikuyu. At certain seasons of the year the staple diet of the natives is "kundu" (beans), of which we saw two varieties, viz. "maragua," a small white bean like a haricot, and "baazi," a black bean which grows in pods on a small tree like a laburnum. They also grow several kinds of gourds, named respectively "mumunye," which resembles a vegetable marrow in size and appearance, "kitoma," a small, round kind, and "tikiti," a small water-melon. It will be observed that we did not lack variety.

We bought large quantities of m'wele, which our Swahilis at first refused to eat: they said it was "chickens' food." They knew better afterwards. We also procured some "mazewa" (fresh milk) for ourselves. Food was comparatively cheap. A "makono" of cloth or a handful of beads bought several "kibabas" of grain or beans. A kibaba equals about a pint. The term "makono" (meaning, literally, a hand) is applied to the measure of the forearm from the tip of the elbow to the end of the second finger, generally about eighteen inches. Four makono equal one "doti" (about two yards), and twenty-five yards or so make a "jora" or "piece" of cloth.

The beads most in demand were the small red Masai beads known as "sem-sem." We did not part with any wire, as we wanted it for the districts farther north.

George and I went out in the forenoon to try and shoot hippo in the Sagana, which was only an hour's walk from the camp. On reaching a likely pool, I sat down on the bank to watch. George had turned very sick again on the way, and laid down under a shady tree. I shot two hippo in the water, but they sank, and though I sent men down the river to watch the shallows, I never saw any more of them.

There were a lot of guinea-fowl about, so I sent back to camp for my shot-gun. George was feeling so queer that he went back also. When my gun arrived, I had a good time among the guinea-fowl, securing eight in an hour or so. I also got a partridge, which turned up in a—for it—inopportune moment.

When I got back to camp, I found that El Hakim had been highly successful in his marketing, and had obtained a large quantity of food, mostly mwele, muhindi, and some viazi. For our own consumption we had laid in a stock of muhindi cobs, maragua beans, and some butter. The butter was snow-white, but, being made from curdled milk, was very acid and unpalatable.

The natives always drink their milk sour; they do not understand our preference for fresh milk. Another thing that tends to make their milk unpopular with European travellers is the dirty state of the vessels it is kept in. They are made from gourds which have had the inside cleaned out by the simple process of burning it out with hot ashes, which gives the milk a nasty charred flavour. The finished milk vessel is called a "kibuyu." I have been told that they stir the freshly drawn milk with a charred stick from the fire, to preserve it, but I never saw it done. The Masai especially are very bad offenders in this respect. The old women who milk the cows invariably wash out the empty vessels with another fluid from the same animal, certainly never intended by nature for that purpose. If the milk is intended for sale to the "wasungu" (white men), it is more often than not adulterated in the same nauseous manner.

We lunched on some of the guinea-fowl I had shot in the forenoon. Ramathani somehow boiled them tender. Afterwards we held a "shaurie" (council), at which old Manga and many of his elders attended. We wanted all the information we could obtain about our road northward, the districts we should have to pass through, and the position of the various streams and camping-places.

We were smoking Egyptian cigarettes, a box of which we numbered among our most precious possessions, and it was rather a nuisance to have to pass a freshly lighted cigarette round the circle of natives squatted in front of El Hakim's tent for each to take a whiff. They could not properly appreciate them, and it seemed to me very much like casting pearls before swine. In addition, when the cigarette was returned, the end was chewed about, and a good smoke thereby spoiled. If we lit another, the same process was repeated. The native gentlemen called it etiquette. I considered it downright sinful waste, an opinion in which El Hakim evidently concurred, as, after we had had several cigarettes spoiled in this provoking manner, he

turned to me and said, "Get out your box of 'stinkers,' Hardwick, and let's try the old gentlemen with those."

I thought it was a splendid idea, so I brought out two of them, and, lighting one myself, handed the other to old Manga. He glanced at it suspiciously, turning it over and over in his grimy paws. He had apparently never seen a cigar before, but seeing me smoking a similar specimen, he at last ventured to light it. It seemed to grate on him a little, but he said nothing, and puffed stolidly away for a moment or two, though I could see his powers of self-control were being exerted to the utmost. After a game struggle the cigar scored a distinct success, and Manga, deliberately passing it on to the elder on his right, rose slowly, and, stalking with great dignity out of camp, disappeared behind a clump of bushes.

The old man to whom he handed it gazed wonderingly after him for a moment, then, placing the fatal weed between his aged lips, he took a long pull and inhaled the smoke. A startled look appeared in his dim old eyes, and he threw a quick glance in my direction; but I was calmly puffing away at mine, so *he* said nothing either, and took another whiff. In a few short moments he in his turn was vanquished, and, handing the cigar to his next neighbour, retired with great dignity to the clump of bushes, where he and old Manga offered up sacrifices to the goddess Nicotina with an unanimity that was as surprising as it was novel.

It was only with the very greatest difficulty that we managed to control our risible faculties. We were inwardly convulsed with laughter at the facial expressions of the old gentlemen before and after tasting the fearsome weed. The looks of delighted, though timorous, anticipation, the startled realization, and the agonized retrospection, which in turn were portrayed on the usually blank and uninteresting countenances of Manga's Ministers of State, was a study in expression that was simply killing. One by one they tasted it; one by one they retired to the friendly clump of bushes that concealed their exaltation from prying eyes; and one by one they returned red-eyed and shaky, and resumed their places, inwardly quaking, though outwardly unmoved.

We also had to get up and go away, but not for the same purpose. If we had not gone away and laughed, we should have had a fit or burst a blood-vessel. It was altogether too rich. *We* returned red-eyed and weary also, and

I believe that the old gentlemen thought that we had been up to the same performance as themselves, though they could not understand how I resumed my cigar on my reappearance, and continued smoking with unruffled serenity. I made a point of finishing my smoke to the last half-inch, and all through the “shaurie” that succeeded I became aware that I was the recipient of covert glances of admiration, not unmixed with envy, from the various members of that little band of heroic sufferers in the cause of etiquette.

When the “shaurie” was at length resumed, we gained a lot of interesting information. We found that the people who had attacked Finlay and Gibbons were the Wa’M’bu, who live two days’ journey to the north of Maranga, on the south-east slopes of Mount Kenia. They had a very bad reputation. The Maranga people spoke of them with bated breath, and remarked that they were “bad, very bad,” and that if we went through their country we should certainly be killed.

Jamah Mahomet’s safari, numbering nearly 100 guns, had refused to go through M’bu, and had turned off to the west from Maranga, to go round the west side of Mount Kenia and thence northward to Limeru, as the district north-east of Kenia is called by the Swahilis.

There are many different peoples between Maranga and M’thara, the most northerly inhabited country, though they are all A’kikuyu in blood. Beyond M’thara the desert stretches away to southern Somaliland and Abyssinia, with Lake Rudolph in the foreground about twelve days’ march north-west of M’thara.

The Maranga elders entreated us very urgently to go round west of Kenia by the same route as Jamah Mahomet and Co., but we did not see things in the same light at all. We were three white men with twenty-five guns; and, as El Hakim observed, we were “not to be turned from our path and our plans disarranged by a pack of howling savages, however bad a reputation they might have”—a decision we conveyed to our Maranga friends forthwith. They heard it with much raising of hands and rolling of eyes, and clearly regarded us as persons of unsound mind, who really ought to be kept in confinement; but still, they said, if we were determined to court a premature end in M’bu, why, they would do all in their power to help us—

an ambiguity we indulgently excused in consideration of the evident sincerity of their wish to advise us for our good.

We were informed that all the people northward were “kali sana” (very fierce), and we should do well to use the utmost precaution in passing through the various districts—a piece of advice we did not intend to disregard. To go round the other way meant quite a fortnight more on the road to M’thara, in addition to which El Hakim was very anxious to see Mount Kenia from the east side, as, indeed, were we all, as no white men that we knew of had been round that way before. Perhaps the fact that the Somalis funked the M’bu route had something to do with our decision also.

We gathered what information we could of the topography of M’bu and the adjacent countries, which afterwards proved exceedingly useful. We packed up our goods and chattels, and made our preparations for a start on the morrow. One of our men, Hamisi, had a severe attack of dysentery, and we made arrangements with the old Manga to leave him behind with enough cloth for his keep for some months. Manga’s son Koranja and some of the old men signified their intention of accompanying us part of the way. It appeared that for two days’ journey we should be among friendly tribes. After that, the Wa’M’bu!

We started the following morning as soon as Koranja appeared. The country was extraordinarily rich and fertile. The soil is bright red, and produces, in conjunction with the constant moisture, a practically unlimited food-supply. The ground was very hilly and well watered—too well watered for our comfort. There were no large trees, but the undergrowth was very rank and dense. We saw large quantities of the castor-oil plant (*Ricinus communis*) growing wild. The natives press the dark-coloured oil from the seeds and smear their bodies with it.

Several times on that morning’s march we saw Koranja, who was leading, dart hurriedly to one side, and, leaving the path, plunge into the undergrowth, making a devious détour round something, followed, of course, by the safari. We asked the reason of his strange conduct, and the answer more than satisfied us. It was the single word “ndui” (small-pox). We passed quite half a dozen villages which were entirely depopulated by the scourge. Now and again we saw a solitary emaciated figure, covered with small-pox pustules, crouching on the side of the path, watching us with

an uninterested and vacant stare. On a shout from Koranja and a threatening motion of his spear, it would slink mournfully away into the deeper recesses of the jungle.

We reached a small clearing about midday, and camped. We were unable to build a boma round the camp, owing to the absence of thorn trees, or any reliable substitute; so that we were in a measure defenceless against a sudden attack. Large numbers of armed natives soon put in appearance, and swaggered in and out with great freedom, and even insolence. We cleared them out politely, but firmly, and they then congregated outside and discussed us. They talked peacefully enough, but it was more like the peaceful singing of a kettle before it boils over. We ate our lunch, and retired to our tents. George and I went to our own tent, and, taking off our boots, laid down on our blankets for a quiet smoke. Our men seemed very much upset by the stories they had heard in Maranga concerning the warlike qualities of the Wa'M'bu, and their condition could only be described as "jumpy." To put it plainly, they were in a pitiable state of fright, and needed careful handling, if we were to avoid trouble with the natives through their indiscretion; as trouble would come quite soon enough of its own accord without that.



GROUP OF A'KIKUYU.

To resume, George and I had lain down, perhaps, half an hour, and were quite comfortable and half asleep, when a terrific altercation caused us to jump up and rush outside. We were just in time to assist El Hakim in forcibly disarming our men. Some of them were placing cartridges in the breeches of their rifles; a few yards away a vast crowd of natives were frantically brandishing their spears and clubs and yelling like demons. If a shot had been fired, we should have been in rather a tight place, for, as I have said, the camp was quite open, and practically defenceless. If the A'kikuyu had rushed us, then the chances are that another fatality would have been added to Africa's already long list. As it was, by much shouting and punching, we induced our excited and frightened men to put down their weapons in time, and so regained control over them.

Koranja, shaking visibly, went up to the Kikuyu chief and smoothed matters down, after which mutual explanations ensued. It appeared that an M'kikuyu warrior had indulged too freely in "tembo" (native beer), and had

run amuck through our camp. Our men, in their already fidgety state, jumped to the conclusion that they were being attacked, seized their rifles, and were about to use them, when our timely appearance on the scene prevented a very pretty butchery. The natives professed to be very sorry for what had occurred, and, seizing their drunken companion, hurried him away, and peace, if not harmony, was restored.

We did not trust them, however, as they seemed very sullen over the whole business. Koranja was also very nervous, and showed it, which did not tend to reassure our men. We ate our dinner at dusk, to the accompaniment of howling and shouting from A'kikuyu concealed in the surrounding bush. We doubled the guard at sundown, just before we went to dinner, giving them the most precise instructions in the event of an alarm. At the conclusion of the meal we were startled by a volley from the sentries. The whole camp was immediately alarmed, and symptoms of a panic manifested themselves. We restored order with a little difficulty, and, on investigation, found that the sentries had fired on some natives skulking round in undue proximity to the camp.

We now made every preparation for attack, and made arrangements for one or the other of us to be on guard all night. I took the first watch from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m., and El Hakim the second from 10 p.m. to 12 a.m.; but everything remained quiet, and El Hakim did not think it necessary to call George at midnight, the rest of the night proving uneventful, with the exception that our fox-terrier gave birth to six puppies, of which she seemed very proud.

At daylight we struck camp, and were away before the sun was fairly up. The country was much the same as on the day before, though, if anything, the jungle was more dense. The shambas were filled to overflowing with unripe muhindi and pumpkins, while sweet potatoes and beans were growing in great profusion on every side. Travelling in the early morning was decidedly unpleasant, as the dew collected on the shrubbery was shaken down upon us in showers, wetting us through to the skin. We crossed two or three small rivers, and at midday reached and camped at a place called Materu.

The chief soon put in an appearance, and we purchased a further supply of food, in the shape of potatoes, beans, muhindi, and a little honey. We also

obtained further information of the road through the notorious M'bu country which, I must confess, did not seem to have any better reputation the nearer we approached it.

Our Maranga friends, under Koranja, appeared very frightened at their close proximity to the dreaded Wa'M'bu, and intimated their intention of returning to Maranga. We answered that they might go when we gave them permission, but for the present we required their services; with which answer they had perforce to be content.

The next morning we again travelled through much the same densely populated and cultivated country as that hitherto passed, though it seemed to get more mountainous. We had not as yet got a view of Mount Kenia, as the sky had been for days covered with a thick curtain of grey clouds. Koranja informed us that two hours after starting we should reach a river called "Shelangow," which was the boundary of M'bu. We said the sooner the better.

At midday, after some hours' steady march, we appeared to be as far from the "Shelangow" as ever, though we had been informed that it was "huko mbeli kidogo" (only just in front) for over three hours. As the men were very tired, El Hakim decided to camp, in spite of Koranja's energetic protests that the Shelangow was "karibu kabissa" (very near). The country was very wet with the constant drizzle and mist, which made the steep clayey paths exceedingly slippery, while between the shambas the way led through thickets of brambles and stinging nettles, which caused the porters endless discomfort. On halting, we built a boma of shrubs; not that we thought it would be of any use in case of an attack, but to give the men confidence. We wrote letters and gave them to Koranja, on the remote chance that they would get down to Nairobi, and thence to England. (They did get down four months later, and were delivered in England five months after they were written.)

In the evening Koranja and his friends then bade us an affectionate and relieved farewell. They remarked in parenthesis that they would never see us again, as the Wa'M'bu would certainly kill us all; a belief that probably explained why they helped themselves to all our small private stock of sweet potatoes before they left; a moral lapse that—luckily for them—we did not discover till next morning. Our men sent a deputation to us during

the evening, pointing out the perils of the passage through M'bu, and saying that we should of a certainty be killed, and most likely eaten. This statement we received with polite incredulity, and dismissed the deputation with a warning not to do it again.

Next morning I was very queer, a large lump having formed in my groin. This is a very common complaint in East Africa and Uganda, supposedly due to over-fatigue and walking, though I think climate and diet have something to do with it. George had two very bad ones on his way down from Uganda. It was my second experience of them, and the oftener I suffered from them, the less I liked them, as they are exceedingly painful. The only cure seems to be complete rest, and hot fomentations applied to the swelling.

We did not travel that day in consequence, but occupied ourselves in buying a little food and getting what further information we could about the road ahead. There were not many natives or villages about—a fact easily explained by the contiguity of the M'bu border. The place where we were camped was a sort of neutral territory, or “no man's land.”

Next day, soon after daylight, we set out for the Shelangow, which was reached after a couple of hours' march over very steep country. It proved to be merely a mountain torrent, which we easily crossed. On the other side rose a very steep hill, to the top of which we climbed, and found ourselves at last in the country of the dreaded Wa'M'bu.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM M'BU, ACROSS EAST KENIA, TO ZURA.

First sight of Kenia—Hostile demonstrations by the M'bu people—We impress two guides—Passage through M'bu—Demonstrations in force by the inhabitants—Farewell to M'bu—The guides desert—Arrival in Zuka—Friendly reception by the Wa'zuka—Passage through Zuka—Muimbe—Igani—Moravi—Arrival at Zura—Welcome by Dirito, the chief of Zura.

In order that there should be no misunderstanding on the part of the Wa'M'bu as to our calibre, El Hakim determined to pursue an aggressive policy, without, however, committing any overt act. We accordingly pitched our camp in the middle of one of their shambas, and helped ourselves freely to anything we fancied in the way of muhindi, etc. Their natural line of reasoning would be that a safari which had the effrontery to act in that way must be very powerful, and should therefore be approached with caution.

The result entirely justified our action; which was only what we expected, as with bullying natives, might is *always* right.

No natives came into our camp—a bad sign, though we saw many skulking round in the bush. They seemed very morose and sulky, but so far showed no signs of active hostility. We put on a double guard for the night, and went to sleep in our clothes; but we were not disturbed.

We did not travel the following morning, as we were without guides; and as no natives came into camp we resolved to capture one on the first available opportunity. At sunrise we got our first glimpse of Mount Kenia, and a wonderful view it was. Kenia is called “Kilimaro” by the Swahilis, and “Donyo Ebor” (Black Mountain) and “Donyo Egere” (Spotted Mountain) by the Masai; so called because of the large black patches on the main peak, where the sides are too precipitous for the snow to lodge.

Thompson^[2] describes his first impressions of Kenia thus:—

“As pious Moslems watch with strained eyes the appearance of the new moon or the setting of the sun, to begin their orisons, so we now waited for the uplifting of the fleecy veil, to render due homage to the heaven-piercing

Kenia. The sun set in the western heavens, and sorrowfully we were about to turn away, when suddenly there was a break in the clouds far up in the sky, and the next moment a dazzling white pinnacle caught the last rays of the sun, and shone with a beauty, marvellous, spirit-like, and divine; cut off, as it apparently was, by immeasurable distance from all connection with the gross earth. The sun's rays went off, and then, with a softness like the atmosphere of dreams, which befitted the gloaming, that white peak remained as though some fair spirit with subdued and chastened expression lingered at her evening devotions. Presently, as the garish light of day melted into the soft hues and mild effulgence of a moon-lit night, the 'heaven-kissing' mountain became gradually disrobed; and then in its severe outlines and chaste beauty it stood forth from top to bottom, entrancing, awe-inspiring—meet reward for days of maddening worry and nights of sleepless anxiety. At that moment I could almost feel that Kenia was to me what the sacred stone of Mecca is to the Faithful, who have wandered from distant lands, surmounting perils and hardships, that they might but kiss or see the hallowed object, and then, if it were God's will, die."

While I am unable to rise to the dizzy heights of rhetorical description, or revel in the boundless fields of metaphor so successfully exploited by Mr. Thompson, I fully endorse his remarks. The first sight of Kenia does produce a remarkable impression on the traveller; an impression which does not—one is surprised to find—wear off with time. Kenia, like a clever woman, is chary of exhibiting her manifold charms too often to the vulgar gaze. One can live at the base of the mountain for weeks, or even months, and never get a glimpse of its magnificent peak.

We, however, could not stop to romance, as the enemy were even now clamouring without our gates; and we were reluctantly compelled to turn our wandering attention to a more serious business. It appeared quite within the bounds of possibility that we should "die" without even "kissing" the "hallowed object" so ably eulogized by Mr. Thompson; as the irreverent Wa'M'bu were making hostile demonstrations in the thick bush surrounding our camp, regardless of our æsthetic yearnings. They were apparently trying our temper by means of a demonstration in force, and such awful howlings as they made I never previously heard.

Our men became very nervous, and fidgeted constantly with their guns, looking with strained gaze into the bush without the camp. El Hakim was, as usual, quite undisturbed, and George and I succeeded in keeping up an appearance of impassive calm, and condescended even to make jokes about the noise, an attitude which went a long way towards reassuring our men, who watched us constantly. Any sign of nervousness or anxiety on our part would have been fatal, as the men would have instantly scattered and run for the border, with a result easily foreseen.

The morning passed in this manner, the Wa'M'bu continuing their howling, while we went through our ordinary camp routine with as much nonchalance as we could command.

We had lately lived largely upon vegetables, and now determined to give ourselves a treat, so we cooked our only ham, and made an excellent lunch on ham and boiled muhindi cobs. During the meal the war-cries of the Wa'M'bu increased in volume, and our men were plainly very much disturbed. They kept looking in our direction as if for orders; while we appeared as if utterly unaware that anything untoward was happening.

Presently Jumbi came up with his rifle at the shoulder, and saluting, stood a yard or so away from the table. El Hakim was busily eating, and studiously ignored him for a moment or two. Presently he looked up.

“Yes?” he said inquiringly.

Jumbi saluted again. “The ‘Washenzi,’ Bwana!” said he.

“Well?” interrogated El Hakim again.

“They are coming to attack us, Bwana, on this side and on that side,” said Jumbi, indicating with a sweep of his arm the front and rear of the camp.

“All right,” said El Hakim, “I will see about it after lunch; I am eating now. You can go.”

And Jumbi, saluting once more, went off to where the men were nervously waiting. His account of the interview, we could see, reassured them greatly. They concluded the “Wasungu” must have something good up their sleeve to be able to take matters so calmly.

At the conclusion of the meal we instructed our men to shout to the enemy and ask them as insolently as possible if they wanted to fight. There

was a sudden silence on the part of the Wa'M'bu when they realized the purport of the words; but in a little time a single voice answered, "Kutire kimandaga" (We do not want to fight). We then invited their chief to come into camp, an invitation he seemed very slow to accept, but after long hesitation he mustered up sufficient courage, and walked slowly into camp, accompanied by one other old man.

He was a fine-looking, grey-haired old chap, and carried himself with great dignity. Negotiations were opened with a few strings of beads, which after a moment's indecision he accepted. We then talked to him gently, but firmly, and asked the reason of the unseemly noise outside.

"Do you want to fight?" we asked aggressively.

He replied that the *old* men did not want to fight, but the *young* men did.

"Very well," we said, still more aggressively, "go away and tell the young men to come on and fight us at once, and let us get it over."

He then added that the young men did not want to fight either.

This was our opportunity, and, seizing it, we talked very severely to him, intimating that we were much annoyed at the noise that had been made. We did not consider it at all friendly, we said, and if there were any more of it, we should not wait for the young men to come to us, we should go to them and put a stop to their howling.

He appeared much impressed, and after a while returned to his people, and evidently delivered our message, as shortly afterwards the howling ceased.

We mustered the men in the afternoon, and inspected their arms and ammunition, as we were not at all trustful of the Wa'M'bu. We trebled the guards during the night, but contrary to expectation, everything remained quiet.

Early on the following morning the two old gentlemen returned to camp, and we immediately made them prisoners, informing them that they were now in our service, *pro tem.*, as guides, and if they played us false they would be instantly shot. Our object, we told them, was to get through their country as safely and as expeditiously as possible, and it rested with

themselves whether our object was accomplished without inconvenience to the inhabitants.

They both protested earnestly that they were our friends; so at 9 a.m., having struck camp, we commenced what, by the general indications, bade fair to prove the crucial march of the safari.

The country was very rugged, and most densely cultivated. M'bu seemed to be prodigiously rich in food. We saw thousands of acres planted with muhindi, stretching as far as the eye could reach. There were no boundaries between the shambas. It occurred to us that perhaps the Wa'M'bu, unlike the other tribes of A'kikuyu, owned the ground in common, but we had no opportunity of deciding this point, as the Wa'M'bu did not appear to us to encourage any degree of intimacy. Indeed, soon after the start we had proofs that they meant to make matters lively for us *en route*.

When we left camp, El Hakim with one guide took the head of the column, and George and I brought up the rear with the other. At every cross-path great crowds of warriors, fully armed, watched our passage in ominous silence. As soon as we passed they closed in on our rear and followed at a distance of two or three hundred yards, their numbers being continually augmented by other bodies who joined them on the road. The path lay through narrow valleys, and on the heights on each side were more bodies of natives who shouted at us, and informed us in a most insulting manner that they were coming to kill us. They really did seem inclined to try conclusions with us, and things looked very nasty for a time, whilst we needed all our wits about us to preserve some sort of discipline among our men.

George and I especially had a very difficult task in the rear, when crossing the small rivers, or spruits, of which there were many in the road. It was no easy task to keep off the armed bands of natives simply by moral force, without firing a shot, whilst we unloaded the refractory donkeys, and half pushed half dragged them unwillingly across a rocky little stream, and loaded again on the other side. In the meantime, in consequence of the delay, the main safari would have moved on and left George and myself alone with the six donkeys and as many men, and with something over three or four hundred aggressive Wa'M'bu within two hundred yards trying to make up their minds to attack us.

At such times George and I, leaving Jumbi to get the donkeys across, would face round with our rifles at the ready, and direct our reluctant guide to inform his bloodthirsty friends that if they came a step nearer the Wa'sungu would slay them with their guns. Our determined attitude, no doubt, prevented an actual collision, but we had an exceedingly anxious time, being within measurable distance of a violent death on several occasions during that memorable march. If we had relaxed our vigilance for one single instant we should undoubtedly have been attacked, and at a tremendous disadvantage. It could only have had one ending—an ending which would have effectually prevented this description being penned. I am still undecided as to the reason why we accomplished that march without a fracas. The Wa'M'bu, being a numerous and *united* people, are, therefore, very dangerous to tackle in their mountain fastnesses. The weak spot in most of the other tribes of that region is the fact that they are ruled by numerous petty chiefs, and have no cohesion and consequently no real strength.

El Hakim had no inconsiderable task in the van of the safari, as he had to keep his eye upon the other guide in order to prevent him from leading us into an ambush, and had also to verify his course by compass.

This nerve-wearying march lasted till sundown, when we reached a partially cleared shamba on the crest of a rounded hill, and pitched our camp. There were no materials for a boma, so that we were obliged to depend for safety during the night on constant watchfulness. We trebled the sentries, and slept in our clothes, keeping our weapons within easy reach; but we were not disturbed.

I do not think the Wa'M'bu quite understood us. We played a game of pure bluff throughout, and, strange to say, it answered perfectly, though personally I have no wish to repeat the experience—at least, not without a much larger quantity of ammunition than we then carried. They were strong enough to have utterly annihilated us, though no doubt they would have suffered in the process; and it speaks well for the prestige of the white man that we three were able to pass unharmed through the most difficult part of their country, literally surrounded by thousands of their fighting men. Our forty men did not count for much in the eyes of the Wa'M'bu, as they knew them to be natives like themselves, and comparatively easily disposed of in spite of their guns.

After pitching our camp we interrogated the two guides, and found that another hour's march would take us out of M'bu altogether, and into another country called Zuka, with the inhabitants of which the Wa'M'bu were at enmity.

As we were not pining for the further company of the Wa'M'bu, we were up and moving before daylight on the following morning. In these cold misty highlands the natives do not turn out till the sun is well up, so that by starting early we were perfectly safe from their unwelcome attentions, and were over the border before they realized that we had departed hence.

To our disgust, we found that one of the two guides had managed to escape during the night; but we kept tight hold of the other, who was presently joined by another of his friends, so that we still felt safe about the road. After a difficult tramp, lasting over two hours, through thick jungle, we unexpectedly emerged on the edge of a vast ravine, one of the largest I have seen round Mount Kenia. It must have been several hundred feet deep, and perhaps half a mile across. The sides sloped sharply down at an angle of 120° , so that descent was quite impossible. One could fancy from its appearance that it had been cut clean into the lower slope of Kenia by a Titanic sword-stroke. At the bottom was the foaming torrent which served as the boundary between M'bu and Zuka.

Having learned from the guides that further down the river there was a place where we should be able to cross, we resumed our march in that direction, and, forcing our way through the jungle, skirted the crest of the ravine until we found the crossing. Though the sides of the ravine were still terribly steep, we scrambled down somehow, and at the bottom found a rude bridge thrown across the stream. It was simply a tree-trunk, but with a little care the whole party got safely to the other side. The animals we swam across, first taking the precaution to tie a rope round their necks. We then pulled them over to the other bank, and landed them safely, unappreciative perhaps, but alive and most certainly kicking.

As it was then about ten o'clock, we sat down and breakfasted, passing the time of day with a small crowd of Wa'M'bu, who had by this time collected on the slope on the side of the ravine we had just quitted.

At eleven o'clock we resumed the march. If the jungle in M'bu was bad, this side of the ravine was ten times worse, being one impenetrable wall of

vegetation. The heat at the bottom was terrific, and we all felt its effects severely. Palms grew on every side, intermingled with giant forest trees, which were in their turn covered with exotic creepers, orchids, and climbing plants, thickly interlaced with rattans, which formed a solid wall extending right up to the summit of the ridge.

Our two guides now went on strike. They demanded to be released, as they declared that they would be killed on sight by the Wa'zuka. We offered to protect them from such an untimely fate if they led us safely to the top of the ridge; and we promised to send an escort back with them to M'bu. They seemed satisfied, and were permitted to go in front to find a path. A moment later there was a rush and a scuffle, and then dead silence. George and I hurried up, and found El Hakim swearing softly to himself over their sudden disappearance. It seemed that they had suddenly slipped round a tree-trunk, and vanished before anybody knew what had happened.

We looked blankly at each other, and wondered how on earth we were going to reach the top. However, wondering would not transport us there, so we called up two or three men with axes and knives, and set them to cut a path. In a few moments they discovered the remains of an old path, which was so overgrown as to be almost obliterated. In places it had been deliberately blocked up with tree-trunks and logs, evidently by the Wa'zuka, as a defence against raids by their warlike neighbours, which defensive preparations certainly gave us a vast amount of trouble.

Upwards we toiled in the broiling heat, streaming and half blinded with perspiration. After two hours' hard work we had climbed about a third of the way up, and reached a little open space a few feet square, where, tired out, we sat down to rest, while some of the men were sent on to search for a path. All egress, however, was barred by heavy logs and trees. We then formed a working party with axes, and set them to cut a way through, while we had fires kindled and partook of a little food.

In an hour or so we heard glad shouts from our men, mingled with the vigorous blows of their axes; and then the voices of natives shouting encouragingly to them. We went to see what was happening, and found that the Wa'zuka had become aware of our presence, and, being also at enmity with the Wa'M'bu, were for that reason welcoming us warmly. They came

down to us, and assisted our men to demolish the barricades, the path, by their aid, being soon cleared.

We resumed the march, and after another half-hour's upward toil reached the top. Several times on the way up we passed mouldering corpses of a party of Wa'M'bu, who had made an ill-advised attempt at raiding some days before.

When we arrived at the top a scene of wonderful beauty lay spread out before our eyes, glowing red in the rays of the setting sun. Gently rolling uplands, covered with smiling plantations of muhindi and sugar-cane, dotted with the figures of women and children completing their daily task, stretched as far as the eye could see. The valleys between were already in twilight, and slowly filling up with the thin grey mist that envelopes these highlands at sunset, there remaining till the advent of the sun on the morrow.

The scene seemed so peaceful and still that I became absorbed in contemplation of its beauties as we strode along. Presently I kicked something as I walked, and, looking carelessly down, started and shuddered as a mutilated human head rolled out of my path. A glance round, and an unmistakable odour, showed me a little pile of corpses, partially devoured by the vultures and hyænas, which lay in the corner of the little plantation we were crossing, relics of the aforesaid Wa'M'bu raiders. A few yards away from the putrefying heap a group of women, with babies strapped to their bent backs, were planting beans and weeding their gardens, assisted by the elder children; while the younger ones played and prattled among the dirt, unconscious of the tragedy a yard or two away. It was a striking object-lesson of the native's callous disregard of the presence of death.



GROUP OF A'KIKUYU WOMEN.

At sunset the friendly Wa'zuka conducted us to a camping-place, and some of the elders brought us presents of sugar-cane and bunches of green bananas, which were divided among our men. The sugar-cane was excellent, and George and I consumed quite a large quantity. Before leaving they promised to send us a guide by the first thing in the morning.

I fancy the Wa'zuka, though they were so friendly, were anxious to pass us along to the next district as quickly as possible, and so be rid of us. They evidently did not trust us, and, in fact, regarded us with not a little fear, as, having passed through M'bu without being hurt, they naturally concluded that we must be very strong indeed, and that it was advisable to treat us with due respect, which, after all, is the proper frame of mind for a native. The knowledge of our security gave us a better night's rest than we had enjoyed for some time.

As the promised guide had not made his appearance at seven o'clock next morning, we set out without him, and of course lost ourselves in consequence. The path we followed wound in and out of extensive plantations of sugar-cane, and eventually brought us to the edge of another of the vast ravines that radiate from their common centre, Mount Kenia. It was much too steep to descend, and we were forced to retrace our steps. We were now overtaken by our dilatory guide, who led us by a good path in a more north-westerly direction. We spent the morning dodging in and out of the plantations of sugar-cane, muhindi, and m'wele. As the sugar-cane was just ripe, and of good size and splendid quality, George and I and the men quite enjoyed ourselves. Large areas of the country were given up to the cultivation of bananas, but the fruit was as yet green and hard.

Late in the afternoon our guide informed us that we were now out of Zuka and on the border of the Imbe country. He further remarked that the Wa'Imbe were "very bad people," and would be sure to make things uncomfortable for us. The prospect did not alarm us, however, as, after our experience in M'bu, we considered ourselves equal to any little tribe thereabouts; so we dismissed our guide with a present.

We had been vegetarians for a couple of days, so that when I shot a partridge, while the tents were being pitched, the addition to our larder was greatly appreciated, though one small bird between three hungry men does not go very far.

On the following morning we packed up, and, having consulted our compass, cast about for a path. A faint track was soon found leading approximately in the direction we wished to travel. For some hours we followed it over very rough gravelly and rocky country, with here and there outcrops of white quartz.

Late in the afternoon we came to a deep, swift stream, rushing tumultuously between grey granite walls, as perpendicular and smooth as a dock-wall. This narrow gorge was spanned by a rude bridge, consisting of three rough—very rough—hewn planks. El Hakim was ahead, and dismounting, walked across leading his mule. Halfway across the mule slipped and fell, and in endeavouring to recover herself, slipped again, and finally plunged with a terrific splash into the stream 20 feet below. She turned over as she fell and struck her back on a projecting knob on the cliff

wall. Fortunately, the saddle saved her back from being broken, though the saddle itself was badly ripped. She disappeared beneath the surface, and remained under for some time. We feared she was drowned, but presently she rose to the surface, shaking her head in a very disgusted manner, and started swimming bravely against the current. One or two of the men jumped off the bridge and joined her, and succeeded in turning her head down-stream; and about half an hour later they turned up with her quite unharmed. They had swum down-stream till they found a ford, where they had scrambled ashore. The rest of the animals were sent down to the ford, and were got across without difficulty. There was a large hill with a flat summit a few hundred yards away, and we camped on the top.

The day had been exceedingly hot and dry, and we found that all the puppies, except one, that were born in Maranga were dead. The man who carried the bucket containing them had put his blanket over the top to keep the sun from them, and they had been suffocated. Their mother however did not seem to be much concerned.

We saw a lot of natives hanging about on the adjacent heights, but did not encourage them to come any nearer, bearing in mind the warning of our Zuka guide. We were now fairly in the Imbe country, and the next day would decide whether they were inclined to be friendly or otherwise.

The next morning on resuming the march the character of the country again changed. The quartz boulders and gravelly stretches gave place to pretty woodland scenery. Lovely stretches of greensward occurred at intervals, dotted with stately trees. Magnificent baobabs and tall sycamores (Egyptian fig) were numerous. The sycamores are called by the Swahilis "Mikuyu." Unfortunately, they were not in fruit. It was quite refreshing to see the smooth green grass dotted with the gigantic stems of the baobabs, which gave us the idea of being in some beautiful park.

Presently we encountered some of the Wa'Imbe headed by their chief, who, to our astonishment, welcomed us most ostentatiously. They insisted on helping our men to carry their loads, and on learning that we wished to camp, the chief pointed out an open space that appeared to be the market-place. Our tents accordingly were pitched beneath the grateful shade of a group of sycamores, and we made ourselves as comfortable as possible, inwardly wondering what prompted this more than usually friendly attitude.

After we had eaten we held a “shaurie,” and the mystery was explained. It appeared that some three months before, the Wa’Igani, who are the neighbours of the Wa’Imbe on the north, arose in their might and smote the Wa’Imbe sorely, spoiling them of many sheep. The Wa’Imbe were not strong enough or not courageous enough to make reprisals, and hailed our arrival with great joy as possible avengers. They calmly proposed that we should accompany them, attack the Wa’Igani, and recover their lost property, and incidentally anything else we could lay our hands on that was worth annexing. We dismissed them with a diplomatic answer to the effect that we would consider the matter.

That night I felt very queer and feverish, and turned in early. I got no sleep, and when we started off early the following morning I was very ill indeed. I had great difficulty in sitting on the mule, while my eyes were so affected that I was hardly able to see. We traversed much the same country as on the day before, but being only half conscious, I did not take much interest in the scenery. El Hakim had a touch of fever also, and in consequence we made a comparatively short march, and halted and camped at midday. I went to bed immediately, and the rest of the day was a blank as far as I was concerned. The following morning I was too ill to move, and so the day was passed quietly in camp. I grew better towards evening, and went outside and lay in a blanket on the grass under a baobab tree.

The Wa’Imbe chief made us a present of a sheep, which was very acceptable, as, with the exception of that solitary partridge in Zuka, we had had no fresh meat for six days.

The next day, though very sick and dizzy, I was so much better that we resumed our march, and travelled for three hours, when we halted and breakfasted. After an hour’s rest we went on again. At four o’clock in the afternoon we discovered that we were in Igani. We saw natives hurrying hither and thither among their shambas, but though they were rather noisy, they showed no signs of open hostility. When we camped they came and visited us in large numbers. Once in our camp they appeared rather more ready to quarrel, and made a deal of noise; so much so that we were compelled to use force to clear the camp, our men belabouring them soundly with the butts of their rifles, which had a very salutary effect, as they at once grew much more respectful and well behaved. They went away, and returned later with some bunches of green bananas and a jar of

very fair honey as a present. They came back early the next morning with a sheep, and desired to make “muma” (blood-brotherhood) with us; an honour we declined for the present, apparently to their great disappointment.

We then departed, and travelling rapidly, shook the dust of Igani from our feet. The next little kingdom on our route was Moravi, which we crossed in an hour or two, and finally entered Zura, where El Hakim was well known. We were now in the Limeru district, which comprises the whole of North-East Kenya, and contains numerous small districts, each ruled over by its petty chief. In the immediate vicinity of Zura are G’nainu, N’dakura, Munithu, Katheri, and Karanjui. To the north-east lay the Jombeni mountains, which are inhabited by the Wa’Embe. Between the Jombeni mountains and Karanjui was a small range of hills called variously “Chanjai” or “Janjai,” and between Chanjai and Embe resided the Wa’Mthara.

The destinies of Zura were presided over by a Masai named “Dirito,” who was a great friend of El Hakim’s. He had even then some cattle belonging to El Hakim in his charge. We were presently met by Dirito himself, a fine-looking man with a good reputation as a fighter, who appeared very pleased to see us, and welcomed us warmly. We camped just outside his village, which was surrounded by a very strong stockade, and soon afterwards he brought us a quantity of honey and some milk for our refreshment.

FOOTNOTES:

[2] “Through Masai Land,” by Joseph Thompson, F.R.G.S., p. 222.

CHAPTER V.

ZURA TO M'THARA, AND A VISIT TO EMBE.

The Somalis suffer a reverse in Embe—We reach Munithu—Karanjui—El Hakim's disagreement with the Tomori people—Arrival at M'thara—N'Dominuki—Arrival of the Somalis—A war "shauri"—We combine to punish the Wa'embe, but are defeated—Death of Jamah Mahomet—Murder of N'Dominuki's nephew by Ismail—Return to camp.

In the afternoon Dirito came over to our tent to discuss the "habari" (news). Among other things he told us that the Somalis under Jamah Mahomet had arrived at Munithu, an hour's march distant; that the smaller safari under Noor Adam had arrived some days before the big one; that Noor Adam had been attacked in Embe, and had had many of his men killed, and that the combined Somali safaris were now contemplating reprisals.

As I was still very shaky and weak from my attack of fever, I remained in camp next morning, but El Hakim and George rode over to Munithu to interview the Somalis and verify the news we had heard. They returned in the afternoon, having seen Jamah Mahomet and discovered the truth of what had occurred in Embe. It appeared that the smaller safari, which consisted of about thirty porters under Noor Adam, Bhotan, and Abdallah Arahalli, reached Limeru a few days before the other. They bought what food they required, and then went on to Embe. They were, by all accounts, welcomed by the Wa'Embe, who even made blood-brotherhood with them. The next night without warning their camp was treacherously rushed by a large force of the Wa'Embe, some of their cattle and trade goods being looted, and nine of their men killed outright. They managed to make good their retreat with the remainder of their caravan, and at Munithu met Jamah Mahomet and his party coming up. They asked their assistance, and Jamah Mahomet, having somehow received news of our approach, advised them that El Hakim and the other two Wasungu would be at Munithu in a few days, and suggested that they should wait and consult them, so they had waited. El Hakim heard their account of the affair, and after promising to consider the matter, he and George returned to Zura.

After breakfast the following morning we moved bag and baggage over to Munithu, where we were well received by the chief, old grey-headed Bei-Munithu, an old friend and ally of El Hakim's. The Somalis had started the same morning for M'thara, so we did not see them. We lunched just outside Bei-Munithu's village, conversing meanwhile with the old rascal. He brought us some splendid thorn honey. It had a very pleasant acid taste, which we much appreciated. Munithu is about 5000 feet above sea-level, the climate being very moist and warm, though cold at night. Bei-Munithu had a large quantity of trade goods belonging to El Hakim stored at his village, over forty loads in fact, besides two or three dozen head of cattle and some donkeys.

After lunch we started for Karanjui, which is a sort of halfway camp to M'thara. In an hour or so we reached the forest that stretches in one unbroken belt right round Kenia. It was almost impenetrable, but fortunately El Hakim, on a former expedition, had cut a path through it, which we now followed. It was a weird and gloomy-looking forest, the trees being twisted and tangled in every direction with out-spreading branches which, growing low down, made riding impossible. One would look in vain for a straight tree-trunk or branch. Nature had apparently amused herself by twisting them into all sorts of curious and fantastic shapes. The men crept through with silent footsteps, and only the rattle of a rifle or the feeble twitter of a solitary bird broke the intense stillness of the semi-twilight. On the way I noticed some black-and-white hornbills. Presently we reached Karanjui, an oval depression in the ground, perhaps 700 yards long and 500 yards wide, and perfectly clear of trees. In the rainy season it is swampy, but at the time of our visit it was quite dry except for a pool at one end, and covered with coarse grass. All round it and beyond stretched the silent forest. Here we camped for the night.

Near Karanjui live the Tomori people, with whom El Hakim had had a difference of opinion some months before. After our evening meal we persuaded El Hakim to tell us the yarn. Briefly it was as follows:—

Travelling from Munithu to M'thara, he was passing through the forest belt, intending to camp at Karanjui. On his arrival there he found that two of his porters were missing. He thereupon sent his head-man and some other porters back into the forest to look for them. They returned an hour or two later with the mutilated bodies of the missing men, which were

perforated all over with spear-wounds and also horribly hacked and chopped about with “simes” (native swords). Their loads had disappeared altogether. El Hakim gave directions for the safari to go on with their camping arrangements, and, selecting four men, immediately set out for the village of the Tomori chief. Arrived there, he stood outside and summoned him. That worthy soon swaggered out, accompanied by fifty or sixty warriors as a bodyguard, and insolently demanded the M’sungu’s business. El Hakim, through his interpreter, quietly stated his grievance, and asked that the young men who had murdered his servants should be given up to him for punishment; also that his missing trade goods should be restored. The chief laughed in his face, and turning to his admiring followers, derisively repeated the M’sungu’s demand, which was received by a shout of laughter, accompanied by threatening gestures in El Hakim’s direction. The chief again turned to him, and in a most insolent manner, shaking his spear, bade him begone, accompanying his words with contemptuous gestures. El Hakim never moved a hair, but quietly repeated his demand, adding that if the murderers were not given up he would hold the chief personally responsible and deal with him accordingly. When this warning was interpreted to him, the chief worked himself into a rage and proceeded to violently harangue his warriors. Suddenly he turned and, with uplifted spear, made a rush at El Hakim, who forthwith shot him. His four men simultaneously poured a volley into the excited crowd of warriors, who immediately fled to the shelter of the village, from which point of vantage they peppered El Hakim and his escort with poisoned arrows. Walking round to the back of the village, El Hakim discovered his missing loads at the foot of a tree, where they had been hurriedly thrown on his appearance. He promptly recovered possession and started for camp, but had gone barely a quarter of a mile when the warriors, reinforced by others from a neighbouring village, made an ugly rush from the rear upon his little force. Telling his now frightened men to go on to camp with all speed, he sat on an ant-hill and put in some fancy shooting at short range, which was rightly interpreted by his assailants as a hint to keep away and not crowd him, a hint they wisely acted upon with considerable promptitude. He then rejoined his men, and they proceeded on their way to camp. Several times during the next hour the natives tried to rush the little party, but whenever they got unpleasantly near El Hakim repeated his former tactics with continued success, until the crestfallen warriors realized that they were

getting more kicks than halfpence out of the game, and sullenly withdrew with the loss of twelve killed and wounded; El Hakim returning to camp, perfectly serene in the knowledge that he had come out of a bad business in a very satisfactory manner.

We left Karanjui early next morning and re-entered the forest belt, the second part of which we were not quite three-quarters of an hour in crossing. The character of the country now changed considerably, the dense bush and coarse, rank vegetation of east Kenia giving way to open plains with small rocky hills scattered here and there. The level of the country now descends slightly, M'thara being situated about 4500 feet above sea-level, 200 feet less than Munithu. To our right rose the succession of rounded prominences known as Chanjai, which are inhabited by a tribe who, though really A'kikuyu, show many marked Masai characteristics. They are warlike and treacherous. In front, some miles away, rose the frowning heights of the Jombeni range, inhabited by the Wa'Embe, with whom we were shortly destined to become better acquainted. On the slopes, at the foot of the Jombeni Mountains, and to westward of them, reside the Wa'Mthara people, who gave Mr. Chanler^[3] so much trouble when he visited Kenia in 1893, and to whom we were making our way.

We were now about 4500 feet above sea-level, and not more than ten miles north of the Equator. The heat during the day was very great, varying from 100° to 110° Fahr., but a cold north wind blew in the evening and during the night, and the temperature dropped to about 60°, a variation which made an overcoat comfortable after sundown. The ground was of a gravelly nature, and cultivated only in patches. We had said good-bye at Karanjui to all the shady forest trees, *coniferæ*, etc., which were replaced by the inhospitable thorny acacia or umbrella thorn, and farther north, the Doum palm, which two were henceforth to be our constant companions. The men all turned to and made themselves sandals, it being impossible to walk barefoot where the umbrella thorn flourishes. The thorns are white, several inches long, and wonderfully sharp. They stick out from the branch in all directions, so that when a twig is broken off by the wind or any other cause, the fallen twig lying on the ground resembles a miniature *chevaux de frise*, as some of the spines are always pointing upwards, lying in wait for the bare foot of the unwary.

The chief of M'thara is an old man named N'Dominuki. In his youth he had a great reputation as a warrior, and was commonly credited with the slaughter at various times of thirty-five men with his own spear. It is uncertain whether he joined in the attack on Mr. Chanler's expedition; at any rate, no mention is made of him by name in that explorer's book; his first appearance in print being in Neumann's book,^[4] he being a great friend of Neumann's, having, in fact, made blood-brotherhood with him. Neumann had had a very large experience of natives, and soon reckoned up Mr. N'Dominuki. At the outset of their acquaintance, he very plainly intimated to that worthy that friendship and fair dealing with the white man would certainly pay, and, on the other hand, treachery and hostility would as certainly not. N'Dominuki, being no longer in the first flush of youth, was old enough and wise enough to take the hint, and as will be seen, he was by far the most honest and trustworthy old savage that we ever had dealings with. He had a very great admiration for his blood-brother Neumann. On one occasion he told us that Neumann was "a very good white man, he always spoke the truth, and he told me that other white men who might come here would treat me well if I were friendly to them and gave them food and guides; and it is even as he said. I have always spoken truly and helped the white men, and, behold, now I am a rich man."

El Hakim had had dealings with N'Dominuki on several occasions previously, and was very friendly with the old chief, who had a number of cattle belonging to him in his charge. El Hakim seemed to have cattle and trade goods scattered all over North Kenia in charge of various natives. He had also a score or so of loads of brass, copper, and iron wire buried on the Waso Nyiro. I mentally likened El Hakim's head to Aladdin's lamp. If we wanted cattle or cloth or wire, El Hakim would, metaphorically speaking, rub his head, and lo! after a moment's cogitation, he would announce that buried in such and such a spot a few days' march away, or in charge of such and such chief not far distant, were the identical articles we required.

We reached an acacia forest at 10 a.m. Inside, about half a mile from the border, was a clearing somewhat resembling Karanjui, in which we pitched our camp. An hour or so afterwards old N'Dominuki himself, hearing of our arrival, came down and welcomed us warmly. The Somalis had not yet arrived, they apparently having diverged at Karanjui to Chanjai. N'Dominuki confirmed the news of the mishap to Noor Adam's safari, and

was curious to know what steps we intended taking. We did not satisfy his curiosity, not wishing to express an opinion until we had heard all the available evidence. The old chief stayed with us until the evening, then withdrew to his village, promising to return on the morrow with his people and bring us food. The old man was at one time the paramount chief of the turbulent Wa'Mthara, but with increasing age his power had gradually weakened, so that he now exercised complete control only over his own village and the people living immediately around. His influence, however, was still appreciable, and his knowledge of passing events absolute.

Our camp we found most inconveniently windy. A strong gale blew night and day, and made things very uncomfortable. The tents had to be fastened down very firmly and additional guy-ropes rigged, and even then they thrashed and shook in a most alarming manner, threatening every moment to blow bodily away. It was when we sat down to meals, however, that the real fun began. The aluminium plates were now and again whirled right off the table by a sudden fierce gust, and disappeared in the grass many yards away. The cups were kept down by the weight of the liquid in them, but one would sometimes forget the saucer for a moment when lifting the cup to one's lips. Away would go the saucer on the wings of the wind, upsetting a bottle or something, in its hasty flight. In the confusion which ensued, the half-poised cup would be tilted a trifle and some of the contents spilt, which would be instantly dissipated in a fine spray, drenching the unfortunate person who happened to be to leeward. We were annoyed until the humour of the situation struck us; but even then we got tired of it however, and put the table inside El Hakim's tent, and there the thrashing of the tent prevented conversation except we shouted at the very top of our voices.

We decided to stay at M'thara for some days, as we wished to purchase an adequate supply of food for the safari before going into the inhospitable uninhabited wastes northward. There was also the Embe affair to be settled one way or another. We were sadly inconvenienced by this trouble in Embe, as we had intended going through that country on our way to the Waso Nyiro. It is very rich in food, and we should have been able to get a much greater quantity there than we could hope for in M'thara; and again, the Embe route would have shortened our journey over the desert to the Waso Nyiro by at least two days. However, the Wa'Embe, always a sullen and treacherous people, were now actively hostile; their hostility towards the

Somalis would be extended to us, as natives do not discriminate between one safari and another in matters of this kind. Another factor which influenced our deliberations was, that if no steps were taken to punish the brutal and unprovoked attack on Noor Adam's safari, we should be in a position of some personal danger. With these natives, as with all others, and sometimes even among civilized peoples, a policy of "masterly inactivity" is an acknowledgment of weakness. These savages are civil to a safari only in direct proportion to their idea of its power of reprisal. Once it enters their heads that they are the stronger, that safari is in imminent danger of attack, and would need a very resolute defence, backed with a large quantity of ammunition, to prevent its extirpation.

If that were the worst we had to fear, we could have afforded to let matters go, as we need not have gone near Embe; but all the neighbouring tribes had been closely watching events. If we failed to restore in some way our lost prestige, we should have all the natives, even those who were at present our friends, down on us also, and in that case we should be in a very awkward predicament. It is not often that these natives get a chance to plunder a caravan which, to them, seems to be laden with incalculable riches. When I say *our* lost prestige, I say precisely what I mean, for, as I have previously remarked, these ignorant savages do not discriminate between one safari and another, whether it is European, Arab, or Swahili; and neither do they wish to.

The combined Somali safaris reached M'thara at midday on the day following our arrival. They proceeded to camp near us with much noise of shouting and blowing of "barghums" (kudu-horn trumpets). It was amusing to see the enthusiastic greetings between our respective porters. Friends long separated vehemently embraced each other amid cries of "Yambo" (greeting), with loudly shouted inquiries as to each other's health. For instance, Jumbi recognized a distant relative among the crowd of the Somali porters, who, at the same instant, recognized him. They rushed into each other's arms, then vigorously shook hands. "Yambo," said Jumbi, and the other answering "Yambo!" they again shook hands. Once more Jumbi said "Yambo," and was again answered "Yambo." They embraced again; "Yambo sana," continued Jumbi. "Yambo sana," answered the other once more. They embraced yet again. "Yambo sana sana," again said Jumbi. "Yambo sana sana," answered the other; and so they continued for quite

five minutes, interrupted only by intervals of embracing and handshaking. As they were only one couple out of many, the noise may be faintly imagined.

As soon as the Somalis had built their boma and put their camp in order, we received a message to the effect that they were coming to visit us. Soon afterwards they came over in great state. Arrayed in all the dignity of snow-white turbans and flowing robes, beautifully coloured vests richly embroidered with gold, praying-beads of amber, sandalwood or ebony in hand, and decorated with numerous watch-chains and jewelled charms, they presented a most picturesque appearance. Jamah Mahomet alone wore European clothes. He was in khaki serge with puttees to match, and wore a double "Terai" hat. He had been in the service of the Government, and had also accompanied Mr. Cavendish on his late expedition through Somaliland to Lake Rudolph. He was a tall, sinewy, well-set-up man with clean-cut, regular features, extremely intelligent, thoroughly trustworthy, honourable, polite, and hospitable—a man whom it was really a pleasure to meet. He was about thirty years of age.

Ismail Robli was a short stout man with a shifty eye, and decidedly prognathous jaws, very plausible, and, when he had an object in view, very hospitable; but he hid a craven spirit under a show of bluster and bullying. Noor Adam was a little slim man, with narrow eyes and ferret-like features. He was reported to have shot some of his porters on his journey across West Kenia, for attempted desertion. He somehow provoked an instinctive feeling of dislike, and we never got on with him. His two partners, Bhotan and Abdallah Arahalli, were much of the same kidney. All three were Ogaden Somalis, a tribe who have not the best of reputations. There were sundry other lesser lights who are not of sufficient importance to deserve notice.

When they came into camp we received them with due ceremony, and asking them to be seated, interchanged greetings in the Mohammedan manner. For a moment the air resounded with such remarks as "Sabal Kheir" (God bless you), "Salaam Aliekoum" (Peace be on you), and "Aliekoum Salaam" (And on you peace), mingled with the Swahili "Uhali ghani? Habari ghani?" (How are you? What news?), till etiquette was satisfied. We then got to business, and discussed the Embe affair in all its bearings. El Hakim cross-questioned Noor Adam and some of his men very

severely, but could find no discrepancy in their various accounts. We discussed the matter very fully, and finally, for the good and sufficient reasons I have already enumerated, we determined to punish the Wa'Embe in co-operation with the Somalis. We instructed them to provide thirty-five men carrying Snider rifles, while we undertook to supply twenty-five men similarly armed, which, with ourselves, made up a strong force of sixty-three men, a number we considered amply sufficient for the purpose in hand. We despatched a nephew of N'Dominuki's to Embe as a spy, to find out a good road and the position of the villages, etc., and he started the same evening.

On the following day we held another "shaurie" with the Somalis to discuss the *modus operandi* of our projected expedition. N'Dominuki's nephew had been instructed to return from Embe within two days, and we decided to start on the afternoon of the next day—by which time, barring accidents, he would have returned—and march immediately on receiving his report. We intended to start just before dusk, pass through M'thara in the darkness, and be over the Embe border unperceived at midnight. A short rest and a dash on the Wa'Embe at dawn would complete the operation. It was a good plan, and would have answered admirably but for one of those little accidents that make "the best-laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft agley." As will be seen, it suited *the enemy* admirably.

Embe on this side (the west) consists of a range of steep mountains, where it rains nearly all the year round. It has, therefore, a very moist climate and fertile soil, and its steep slopes and deep valleys are covered with dense jungle interspersed with banana plantations, making it a very nasty country to fight in, especially against natives who know every inch of the ground and every turn of the paths. We did not tell N'Dominuki of our plans—a very grave oversight that nearly cost us our lives and those of the whole expedition.

On the following morning, as we really could not stand the wind any longer, we shifted our camp to the inside of the forest, and while we were about it we fortified it as well as we were able by felling thorn trees, etc. We were much more sheltered in this new position, though, to be sure, it was rather damp. This wind had a nasty cold nip with it night and morning, which was the reverse of agreeable.

When we had our camp satisfactorily settled, we made our simple preparations for the expedition to Embe. We took one tent with us in case we were away more than a day or two. A loaf of bread and a hind quarter of boiled mutton were also included; and, of course, a plentiful supply of ammunition. The men had thirty rounds of Snider cartridges each, which was all we could spare. The Somalis' men had fifty rounds each, and they, in addition, had a reserve chest of six hundred rounds for emergencies.

At 5 p.m. we started. The natives in our immediate vicinity had, with their usual unerring instinct in such matters, smelt a row, and about fifty of them turned up armed with spears and shields. We did not want them, but could not very well turn them away, and at the last moment it occurred to us that they might prove useful as scouts, and we therefore allowed them to remain. When our force had assembled, it made quite an imposing array with the sixty men with rifles and the fifty others with spears. Altogether, we commanded upwards of a hundred men, and had no doubt but that we should teach the Wa'Embe a severe lesson.

N'Dominuki's nephew had not returned, and we concluded that he had been discovered and killed, and were consequently rather nonplussed for the lack of a guide. At the last moment a Masai warrior came forward and volunteered to guide us. On the Somalis saying that he was known to them, we accepted his services. Soon after we started, N'Dominuki's nephew unexpectedly returned and joined us, and he and the Masai took the head of the column. Darkness had fallen as we marched through M'thara, the road continually ascending. The path at last grew extremely difficult, and on several occasions El Hakim expressed doubt as to whether we were going right. However, we were now committed to whatever the Fates had in store for us; it was impossible to withdraw.

Onward we stumbled in the darkness, now up steep hillsides, and anon down deep and gloomy valleys clothed in thick jungle where the deep booming note of a mountain torrent growled hoarsely from somewhere out of the pitchy blackness below. Soon the path became so narrow that we could advance only in Indian file, which weakened us considerably, as our fighting line was thereby stretched out for some two hundred yards, being consequently out of our immediate control, while the jungle, meeting overhead, blotted out what little light the stars provided. It was impossible, on account of the denseness of the vegetation, to place men out on our

flanks, and in addition we were counting on taking the Wa'Embe by surprise, and so did not wish to make too much noise. At 10 p.m. we were well within the Embe border, and we then looked for a place to rest awhile and prepare for our rush at dawn. We could not find a suitable spot, however, and eventually decided to halt on the path. A drizzling rain came on, which did not improve matters. One of our men found a place a little distance from and below the path, that did not slope at such an acute angle as the rest of the landscape, and we as noiselessly as possible pitched the tent. El Hakim, George, and I partook of a frugal meal, but we were without water, and naturally we felt ever so much thirstier than we would otherwise have done. We placed sentries, Jamah Mahomet doing the same where he had halted on the path. We three Wasungu then dropped off to sleep.

Somewhere about midnight we awoke with a start, reaching for our rifles as the sound of a shot floated down to us from where Jamah Mahomet's sentries were posted. It was followed by a second, and then a third. Then all was silent again, except for the subdued hum of suddenly wakened men. On sending for explanations, we found that some Wa'Embe, coming down the path, had stumbled right on to the sentries, and were instantly fired upon. All hope of a surprise was thus abolished, but on consultation we decided that if we started an hour or so earlier, possibly 3 a.m., we might take the enemy at a disadvantage. Accordingly, at that time we once more set out.

It was dark as Erebus. As we noiselessly formed up on the path, a sort of half sense of impending disaster seemed to have fallen on the men. We did our best to dissipate it, and apparently succeeded. The Masai guide and N'Dominuki's nephew led the way; next came four of the Somalis as advance-guard; then Jamah Mahomet, who was wearing a waterproof coat over his khaki costume; finally George, El Hakim, and myself. A few yards farther on we found a spear in the path, probably dropped by one of the Wa'Embe in their flight, when fired at by the sentries. If possible, the path grew worse as we advanced, and presently we reached a deep ravine with a swift torrent roaring and tumbling at the bottom. It was spanned by a single tree-trunk, which served as a bridge. Beyond the ravine the path sloped upwards with many twists and turns. On each side the jungle prevented anything being seen more than a yard or two away.

We advanced slowly and cautiously in the order described, when a shot rang out almost under our feet; another followed; and then a volley from the

advance-guard showed that something serious was toward. A terrific howl and the long repeated *U-u-u-i* (the A'kikuyu war-cry) showed us that we were very skilfully ambushed, and the realization was not pleasant. The firing at once became general all along the line. It was a very fierce fusillade while it lasted; the reports of the rifles and the cheers of our men, mingled with the war-cries of the enemy, sounding weird and ghastly in the dense blackness of the early morning (it was then 4 a.m.).

For a few moments pandemonium reigned supreme. Neither El Hakim nor I could see a single native. George, though only a yard or so away, was hidden from us, both by the darkness and by a turn in the path. El Hakim clutched my arm and dragged me into a sitting position on the ground as the whirring, hissing rush and plaintive whine of bullets in unpleasant proximity to our ears warned us that we were in considerable danger of being shot by our own men. Owing to the serpentine winding of the path, they were firing towards every point of the compass, and we were therefore much safer on the ground. In a few moments the war-cries of the enemy died away as suddenly as they came, and the spiteful crackle of the rifles lessened a little. As soon as we were able to make ourselves heard, we gave the order "Cease fire," and endeavoured to find out what damage had been done. I called to George, and, to my great relief, he answered me.

El Hakim and I then advanced, and turned the corner. We could then dimly discern George amid the gloom. He came towards us saying that Jamah Mahomet was wounded, and was lying on the path a yard or so away. Hastening to the spot, we saw Jamah stretched upon the ground, moaning pitifully. He had a great spear driven right through him. A native had concealed himself in a pit dug on the side of the path and lain in wait, letting both the guides and the advance-guard go past him in the hope of bagging one of the Wasungu. In the darkness he mistook Jamah Mahomet's tall form, clad in European clothes, for George, and as Jamah passed he thrust upwards with all his strength. Jamah instantly fell. George, who was only a yard behind, saw the thrust, and, raising his rifle, he shot the native through the stomach, but did not drop him. This was the shot which gave us the first alarm.

El Hakim made a hasty examination of the stricken man, and pronounced the wound fatal. The broad spear-blade, over two feet in length, had entered the right side just below the ribs, and, passing through the body, emerged

just under the left arm, protruding several inches. Jamah was semi-conscious, and apparently in great pain. Grouped round him, on the alert, were the four Somalis who formed the advance-guard. As El Hakim concluded his examination, Ismail Robli, Noor Adam, and others of the Somalis, came up. When they learnt what had happened to Jamah, such a wail of grief and dismay went up as I hope never to hear again. Ismail behaved like one demented. He wept and cried upon "Allah" in the most frenzied accents.

As we were crowded together in the path over the dying Jamah, N'Dominuki's nephew crept out of the bush, and, with shaking limbs and horror-stricken countenance, approached El Hakim, attempting to say something which his trembling lips refused to utter. The other guide had disappeared. El Hakim seized him, and was trying to understand what he was saying, when Ismail Robli caught sight of the palsied wretch. His face changed instantly from an appearance of pious supplication to one of demoniacal fury, and, crying "This man is a false guide; he has caused Jamah's death," placed his rifle, a .577 express, against the other's side, and, before I could raise a hand to interfere, pulled both triggers, literally blowing the poor wretch to pieces.

It was a hideous and revolting exhibition of savage ferocity. Ismail did not even put the rifle to his shoulder—we were too crowded for that—he simply pushed the barrels past me and fired from his hip. The murdered man collapsed in a writhing, moaning heap on the ground. Ismail turned away and reloaded his rifle.

It was no time for recrimination, as at the report of Ismail's rifle, a fresh burst of firing broke from our men in the rear, which we instantly quelled. It was a dastardly act on Ismail's part, even though at the time he was almost frenzied with grief at Jamah's injury, as we had no reason to believe that the unfortunate guide had played us false. As we found out afterwards, the real culprit was the Masai volunteer, who, it appeared, was a native of Embe, who had been sent for the purpose of betraying us. At the same time, N'Dominuki's nephew had neglected to warn us, or point out that we were going by a bad road. A great deal remained to be explained, but his untimely end put further explanation out of his power for ever.

However, there we were in the dark, stuck on a path eighteen inches wide, with a wounded man and no guides. The question now was how to get out without further loss. We called a council of war, first posting the Somali advance-guide a few yards up the path. We decided to wait till daylight, as we could not move while Jamah was living, and he was too far gone to be carried. It was a ghastly wait. After the firing and shouting, the silence could almost be felt; it seemed absolutely deathlike. We strained our ears to the utmost at the slightest rustle of a leaf, as, for all we knew, the bush might be swarming with natives waiting their opportunity for a rush.

A curious sight we should have presented to a spectator. The Somalis, led by Ismail, were grouped, praying, round the dying Jamah, who was sinking fast and moaning softly at intervals. El Hakim, revolver in hand, stood bolt upright, and intensely on the alert, his face showing faintly white through the gloom. Beside him stood George, drumming with his fingers on his rifle—a habit of his—softly humming an air from “Cavalleria Rusticana.” Crouched down on the path were the men, motionless as bronze statues, conversing in low whispers now and then, while they strained their eyes in the endeavour to pierce the surrounding bush. A yard or so away lay the dead body of N’Dominuki’s nephew; his dirty cotton waist-cloth smouldering where it had caught fire from the explosion of Ismail’s rifle, nearly choking us with the smell of singed flesh and the pungent odour of burning cloth. We tried several times to put out the cloth, but we had no water, and it was in vain we attempted to smother it; so it smouldered all night, and uncommonly unpleasant we found it.

We were parched with thirst, having had no water since the previous afternoon. Once in a while the flash of a sentry’s rifle would momentarily light up the surrounding jungle, and the sharp report stabbed the silence. I laid down on the path and slept—fighting sometimes affects me that way—and woke up at dawn, just as Jamah died. We were exceedingly sorry, as he was one of the best of his race we ever had to do with. At the first glimmer of daylight we dug a grave on the side of the path, and he was buried with all the ordinances proclaimed by Mohammedan law that were possible under the circumstances. Prayers and lamentations in Arabic resounded on all sides from the deceased’s assembled compatriots.

There being now no signs of the enemy, El Hakim, George, and I were for continuing the advance and pulling the fat out of the fire somehow, but

Ismail and the other Somalis would not hear of it. They said that the enemy were now fully prepared for us, and instanced the numerous freshly dug pits that had been found on each side of the path when digging Jamah's grave. Another argument they employed was that our respective camps were almost entirely unprotected, and it was more than likely that the Wa'M'thara or the Wa'Chanjai would attack and loot them in our absence, more especially as they (the Somalis) had a large number of cattle, which are particularly tempting to a native. In addition, we were now entirely without guides, while the path ahead seemed worse than ever.

We saw the force of this reasoning, and common prudence directed that, for the present at any rate, we must abandon the attack; which decision, though gall and wormwood to we Englishmen, we were reluctantly compelled to admit was the wisest possible under the circumstances. We made up our minds, however, that we would return under more favourable auspices, and wipe out the disgrace of our defeat, for defeat it was, and so with that understanding we acquiesced in the retreat, and gave the necessary orders to retire.

It was with very mixed feelings that we travelled back over the difficult path we had trodden a few hours before with such confidence. We found out afterwards that our sudden retreat disconcerted the Wa'Embe, who were massed in force further along the path at a place where they had dug a large number of pits, in which they had kindly placed sharpened spikes for our reception.

At eight o'clock we were met on the road by an M'thara man named Koromo, who handed us a jar of honey as a present. When we got within a mile or two of our camp large numbers of fully armed natives slunk past us, going towards Chanjai. They were coming from the direction of our camp. Hurrying on with sinking hearts, we soon arrived at the camp, and to our great relief found all safe, though Jumbi was full of some report or other about armed natives who had been round the camp during the night. We said he could tell us about it afterwards, as at present we wished to eat. It was then one o'clock in the afternoon, so we set to and made a hearty meal, and afterwards retired to our blankets and slept the sleep of the just until dinner-time.

FOOTNOTES:

[3] “Through Jungle and Desert,” by William Astor Chanler, A.M. (Harv.), F.R.G.S., pp. 168-177.

[4] “Elephant Hunting in East Equatorial Africa,” by Arthur H. Neumann, pp. 42, 43.

CHAPTER VI.

OUR MOVEMENTS IN M'THARA AND MUNITHU.

Attempt of the Wa'M'thara to loot our camp—"Shauri" with Ismail—The Somalis accuse N'Dominuki of treachery—He vindicates himself—That wicked little boy!—Explanation of the Embe reverse—Somalis lose heart—Attacked by ants—El Hakim's visit to Munithu—Robbery of his goods by the Wa'Gnainu—I join him—We endeavour to recover the stolen property from the Wa'Gnainu—The result.

Ismail's apprehensions for the safety of our respective camps seemed to have been well founded. Jumbi, whom we had left in charge of our boma, reported that on the evening of our departure for Embe he had noticed that large numbers of armed natives were concealed in the surrounding bush. He unostentatiously put the camp in as good a state of defence as possible, and kept his few men moving about inside the boma to give an appearance of numbers. He then noticed that the long grass in the clearing was also crowded with concealed warriors, to the number of several hundred. Presently some of them showed themselves. He shouted to them, asking what they wanted. They answered by inquiring if the "Wasungu" were in camp. He, with ready wit, shouted back that one of the Wasungu had gone away somewhere, but the other two were in camp. Did they wish to see them? They apparently did not, and he saw no more of them, though they still remained within easy distance; and consequently he passed a very anxious night. Our unexpected return next morning disconcerted the warriors, who hastily retreated. They were the fighting men we had passed on our way back. Jumbi said they were Wa'M'thara, which, if true, was a very serious matter.

The men in charge of the Somalis' camp made a similar report. Without doubt the natives' plan was to wait till news arrived of our defeat and massacre in Embe, and then to rush and loot the camps, after spearing the few defenders. These preparations seemed to indicate a deep-laid plan on the part of some one, and some one, also, who was sure of success.

Ismail Robli, with several of the other Somalis, came into our camp in the afternoon showing every sign of terror, which they endeavoured,

unsuccessfully, to conceal. They asked for a “shaurie,” and when we granted their request, they came out with a ridiculous story of treachery on the part of N’Dominuki. They declared he was a traitor, ignoring the fact, which we pointed out to them, that N’Dominuki had been kept in ignorance of our plans. They further stated that he was even now preparing to attack us at the head of the Wa’M’thara, reinforced by a strong body of Wa’Embe. We refused point-blank to believe a word of it. On questioning them as to their source of information, they said that a man from Chanjei, who had come into their camp to sell food, had told them. We were disgusted with their credulity, and said as much. El Hakim told them that he had known N’Dominuki for years as the most trustworthy of natives, and so had other Englishmen before him, and he would not believe that he had turned traitor, on the more than doubtful word of a casual native, whom nobody knew, and who was of no consequence or position.

Ismail was obstinate. He persisted in his assertion that N’Dominuki was a traitor, and instanced the armed Wa’M’thara who had concealed themselves round about our camps the night before, as proof of his words. We were a little troubled, as, though we would not for a moment believe N’Dominuki to be the traitor, we did not know what his people might do without his knowledge, or in spite of him. At all events, the presence of armed men round our camp needed explanation. As we did not quite understand matters, we sent for N’Dominuki, asking him to come to our camp, as we wished particularly to see him. Our messenger returned in the course of the day with a message to the effect that N’Dominuki was suffering from fever, and was unable to come. We sent up again, with some medicine, asking him to come if possible. He again returned an answer that he was ill, but would come to-morrow.

His non-appearance seemed proof positive to Ismail and his following that N’Dominuki was actively hostile. They were, in consequence, in a perfectly frantic state. Of course, had N’Dominuki turned traitor we should have been in a very bad fix, though it was only what could have been expected after the double reverse in Embe. However, we were very loth to believe it of him in the absence of direct and conclusive evidence.

Ismail returned to his own camp, but visited us an hour or so later with a fresh budget of news to the effect that N’Dominuki had received the Embe chief in his house, and had killed a sheep in his honour. Once more we sent

to N'Dominuki, this time detailing the charges alleged against him, and saying that, although we did not believe them, we should be obliged if he would visit us as soon as possible. He sent back to say that he would come to-morrow without fail.

All these conflicting accounts caused us considerable anxiety. As for the Somalis, they were in a most pitiable state; that is, it would have been pitiable had it not been so thoroughly contemptible. They appeared panic-stricken, and worked with feverish energy in strengthening their boma, felling huge trees and cutting thorn bush till long after sundown. We ourselves did not neglect obvious precautions, and strengthened our boma a little, more especially for the purpose of reassuring our men, amongst whom the Somalis' stories had created something like alarm. We then sent a peremptory message to the Somali camp, warning them that if their frightened sentries, through a false alarm or any such cause, fired in the direction of our camp, we should not hesitate to return the fire with interest. This message had the effect of calming their nerves a little.

Next morning they again came over to our camp, still with the same old tale of N'Dominuki's treachery. These repeated allegations against N'Dominuki caused us to suspect some ulterior motive. Still another urgent message was sent to N'Dominuki, and this time he sent back word that he was coming with his people, bringing food. He arrived an hour or so after the message, and sending for Ismail and the other Somalis, we held a big "shaurie."

First we asked N'Dominuki why he had not appeared in answer to our frequent messages the day before. He replied that *he and his people had fled to the hills with all their cattle and goods, under the impression that we were going to attack them!*

We inquired who gave him that idea, and he said that *a boy from the Somali camp had told him so.*

Then we began to see daylight. We inquired where the boy was. N'Dominuki replied that as far as he knew he was still in the Somali camp, so we ordered Ismail to produce him. In a few minutes he was delivered, bound, at our feet. A cross-examination of the Somalis elicited the fact that the boy had deserted from their camp, taking with him one of their sheep. On being again questioned, N'Dominuki stated that the boy had come to

him for shelter. He had told the boy that he would not allow him to stop there, but would send him back to his masters, but the artful little boy said, "I have done it for *your* sake, N'Dominuki. I wished to warn you that the Wasungu and the Wa'Somali are about to attack you." N'Dominuki believed him, and fled forthwith.

In a little while the boy, not liking the life with the natives, and yearning for the flesh-pots of the camp, returned to the Somalis, after having concocted a satisfactory explanation of his absence. He made out to the Somalis that he had gone as a spy on N'Dominuki, who was an "el moruo torono" (a wicked old man), as he had heard that he was hostile to his dear masters, and that at great risk and personal inconvenience he had carried out his plan successfully. He then solemnly warned them that N'Dominuki was preparing to attack them. He counted on the gravity of his announcement averting any unpleasant inquiries about the stolen sheep—a ruse which was completely successful.

Now we had got hold of the truth. Small boys will be small boys all the world over, whether white or black, and this little untutored specimen of his genus had kept a hundred and fifty armed men, in two camps, in a state of intense anxiety for two days, and had driven a tribe with all its cattle and goods in mortal terror into the hills for the same period, in order to cover his impish escapade. He was treated in the same way as from time immemorial other small boys have been—for equally reprehensible escapades, and forthwith received the thrashing he so richly deserved.

We gently chided N'Dominuki for believing "that little vulgar boy," and asked him why he had not come into camp and found out the truth for himself. He was afraid, he said, that we should bind him and kill him at our leisure! El Hakim represented that it was very unkind to think that of *him*, who was such an old and proved friend. N'Dominuki's only reply was "*The boy told me so!*" That is a savage all over! They believe the first story that comes to hand, even against their better judgment. In N'Dominuki's case, although his experience of white men had always been of the best and pleasantest, he had met them late in life, and had never quite lost the savage's innate distrust of strangers.

We dismissed the crestfallen Somalis, and advised them to give less credence to casual reports in future. They seemed very sulky, and were, we

were beginning to believe, rather sorry that N'Dominuki had successfully vindicated himself.

From that old savage we afterwards gathered a great deal of information, which threw considerable light on the recent events in Embe. It was now shown beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Masai volunteer guide was an Embe native who, while spying round, had seized the opportunity offered him of serving us to our disadvantage. The Somalis were greatly to blame for saying that they knew him. So they did, but in the hurry of the moment they had neglected to tell us that they had merely seen him knocking about their camp for a day or two.

When we passed through M'thara in the darkness we were observed by some of the Wa'M'thara, who were friendly to the Wa'Embe, and who immediately sent off a runner with the news of our advance, thus giving the enemy time to skilfully prepare the nice little trap into which we all walked. Our escape throughout was due more to good luck than good management, as the party who ambushed us and killed Jamah Mahomet were only an advanced post of the Wa'Embe, the main body being posted a mile further on, where they had dug numbers of pits in the path, in which they, with great forethought, had placed sharp-pointed stakes. It was their intention to attack us when we were floundering about in these pits.

We had sadly underrated the skill and courage of the enemy, and altogether had had a very narrow escape from irretrievable disaster. If we had underestimated their capabilities, however, they had also paid us the same compliment. The terrific fire which instantly greeted their first onslaught must have surprised them greatly. It certainly daunted them, and probably considerably disarranged their plans, preventing them from bringing their main body up and surrounding us. Before they had formed any fresh plan we had made good our retreat, which, in the light of subsequent knowledge, proved to be a wise, if somewhat humiliating step.

N'Dominuki said we should have told him of our plans. He only heard of our intention to attack Embe after we had passed his village, and it was then too late to warn us. He offered, if we wished to renew the attack, to personally guide us into Embe by a much better path, with open country on either side; the road we had followed being the very worst one we could have chosen. His proffered assistance was gladly accepted, and we

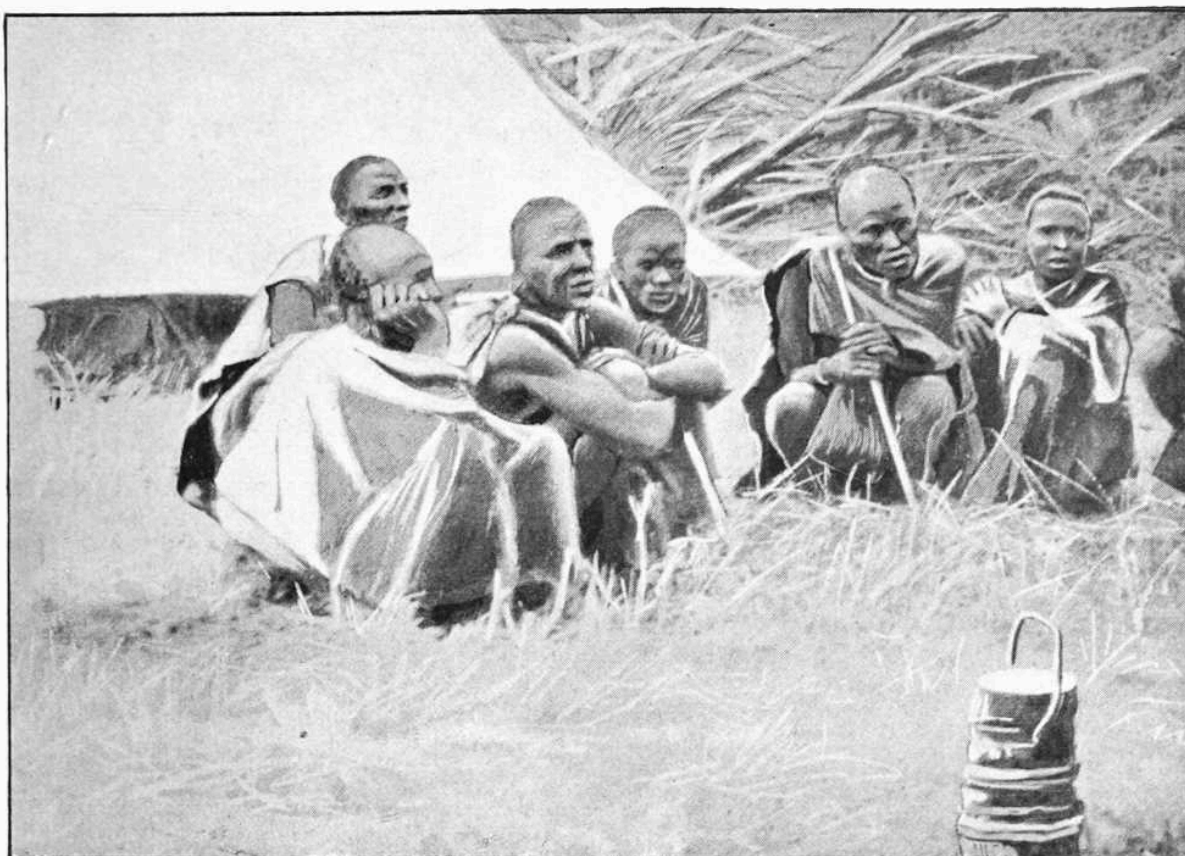
communicated with the Somalis, expecting they would jump at this opportunity of avenging the death of their leader. To our intense surprise, they did nothing of the kind, but replied that they only wished to buy food peaceably, and go their way northward. We were simply astounded, and could not at first believe that Somalis, above all people, could be so craven-spirited; besides, a successful punitive expedition had now become a vital necessity if we were to preserve the lives of our party, and render the country safe for those travellers who might come after us.

Already there were ominous mutterings among the surrounding tribes, begotten of our reverse in Embe, but we could not get Ismail to see the matter in the same light, argue as we would. Jamah's death seemed to have thoroughly discouraged him. We reasoned, we begged, but to no purpose. George and I went over to his camp in the evening in order to make a final effort to rouse a little spirit in him. George has a wonderful knowledge of Arabic, and he used it then with vigour and fluency. I also possess a rudimentary knowledge of vituperation in that language, and employed it to the utmost; but in vain. We argued, threatened, cajoled, and insulted, but could get no response, beyond the statement from Ismail that he was a man of peace, and wished to go his way and trade. I pointed out to him with some emphasis that it was not because he was a "man of peace" that he did not fall in with our views, as I had had ocular demonstration of the fact that he was the very reverse when he felt inclined. The reason, I told him, that he did not wish to avenge the blood of Jamah, which was crying aloud for vengeance, was a cowardly fear of a few naked savages, who were not even Mohammedans. I called Allah to witness that he was a traitor to his blood and his religion, and that Jamah, from among the "houris" in Paradise would look down and curse him for "an unclean dog without religion."^[5] He smiled a sickly smile, and repeated that he was a peaceful trader, not a man of war. I then spat upon the ground to show my utter contempt for him, and left him.

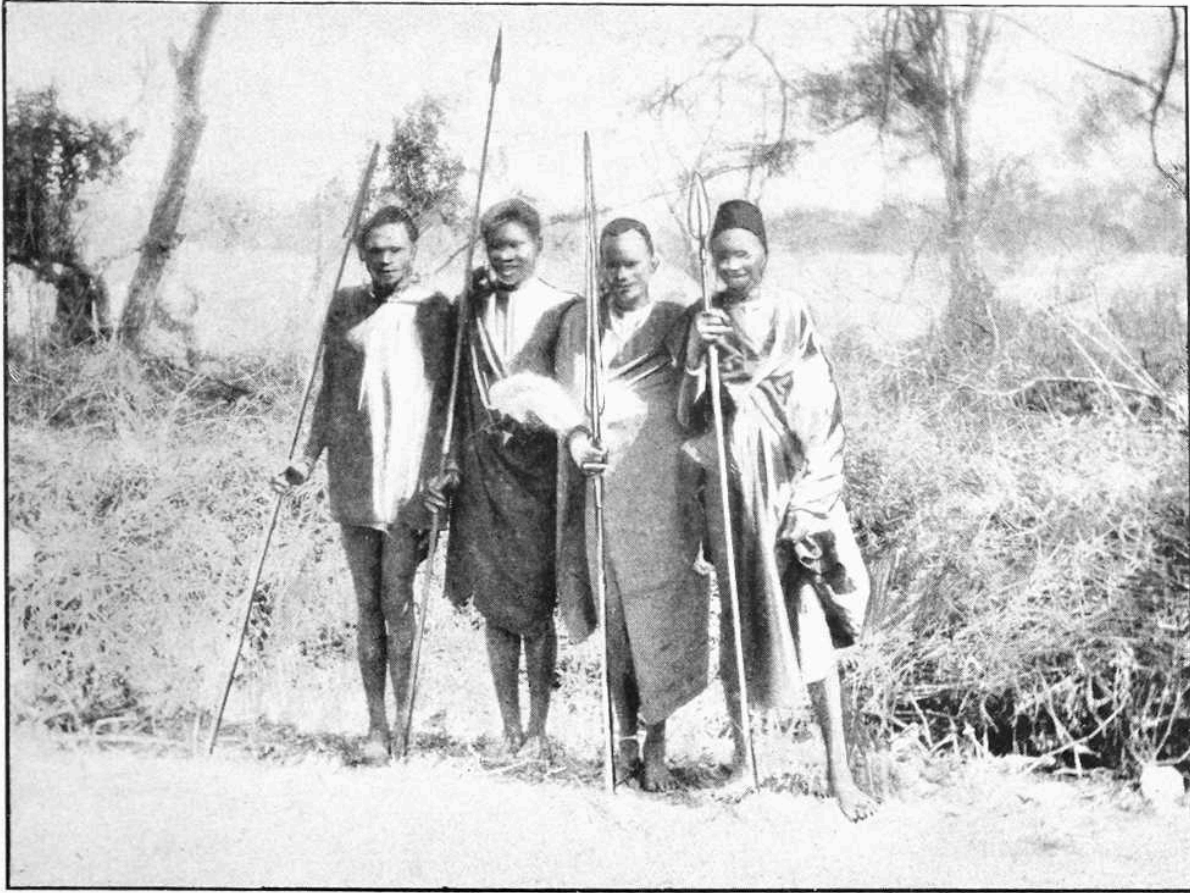
The following day we bought a large quantity of food from N'Dominuki's people, and packed it in loads in preparation for our march to the Waso Nyiro. In the afternoon Koromo, the man who met us with the honey when we were returning from Embe, came into camp with N'Dominuki and requested the honour of blood-brotherhood with El Hakim, and that interesting though disgusting ceremony was accordingly

performed. That night George and I had a very disagreeable experience. We and the puppy had gone to our tent for a good night's sleep after the worry and trouble of the last three days. The pup was very restless, and ran whining about the tent in a most annoying manner. At first we thought it was only his "cussedness," and scolded him well; but he got worse instead of better, and finally rolled frantically on the ground, yelping most dismally. Suddenly George said "D——n!" in a loud voice, and sprang up from his bed, which was on the ground, and after a little searching pulled a black insect from some part of his anatomy. He at once examined his blankets, and found that they were literally covered with tiny black ants, which, in spite of their small size, bit most ferociously. I also turned out and found the ground under my bed was a seething black mass of ants, which instantly attacked the unprotected portions of my person with an earnestness and attention to business which, under other circumstances, would have commanded my highest admiration. Mine was a camp-bed standing a foot off the ground, and consequently there were comparatively few on my blankets. We turned our attention to the agonized puppy, and found that the poor little brute was black underneath with the tiny pests, who had bitten into his flesh and held on like limpets. We brushed him free and put him out of harm's way, swept out the floor of the tent, getting innumerable bites on our naked feet and legs in the process, and sent for some ashes, with which we liberally sprinkled the ground, and also spread them in a circle round the tent, which to some extent mitigated the nuisance. I did not suffer so much, as my bed, as already explained, was some inches above the ground, and consequently George, who slept on a heap of rushes, bore the brunt of the attack. I was aroused several times during the night by a muttered exclamation from the darkness on his side of the tent, followed by the slap which signalled the hurried exit of another of our tiny enemies from this world of woe. We found in the morning that we had not been the only sufferers. Round all the men's tents a broad band of ashes testified to the defensive measures they had been compelled to adopt. The cry of "siafu" (ants) in camp is at all times a signal for instant action. Red-hot ashes are hastily gathered and sprinkled in the path of the advancing horde, and the greatest excitement prevails till the foe is finally vanquished. I was compelled to shift our tent during the day to another spot some distance away. By first beating down the earth into a hard concrete-like floor and

then strewing it with ashes, we hoped to prevent a recurrence of the attack of the previous night, an arrangement we found to answer admirably.



ELDERS OF M'THARA.



DIRITO AND VISELI (on the right) AND TWO FOLLOWERS. (See page [132](#).)

The same day the Somalis left M'thara for Chanjai, where they desired to purchase food. They promised that on their return in four days' time they would accompany us on another expedition into Embe—a result I should have attributed to my eloquence of the night before had we not been perfectly aware of the unreliability of their promises. El Hakim, however, decided to wait on the off-chance of their returning, and resolved to fill in a day or two by a journey back to Munithu to collect food, and also to try to get news as to how far our Embe reverse had affected native feeling towards us in those districts. He took eight men with rifles with him. I amused myself all the morning trying to make toffee from native honey and butter. The resulting compound, though palatable enough, could not be induced to harden, so we were compelled to devour it with a spoon. George gave in at midday to a nasty touch of fever. I administered a couple of

phenacetin tablets, and sweated him well, which towards evening reduced his temperature. Next morning he was decidedly better, and together we made a tour of inspection round the camp. We saw a peculiar striped rat in the boma, which we nicknamed the zebra rat. It was mouse-coloured with black stripes, but as we had not a trap we could not secure a specimen. At midday George was down again with the fever, and I dosed him once more. At 12.30 two men came back from El Hakim with a note for me. He asked for some fresh bread and a bottle of milk, also for six more men with rifles. It seemed that the Wa'G'nainu, the people of a district west of Munithu, on hearing of our Embe reverse, had come down and looted some of the trade goods which El Hakim had left in Bei-Munithu's charge, and that he intended to try to recover them. He also asked for my company if I could leave camp. As George was so queer I did not feel justified in leaving him, but on his assurance that he was quite able to look after himself while I was away, I decided to go.

I took no baggage or blankets, and with six men and four donkeys, which were required to bring back the balance of El Hakim's goods still remaining with Bei-Munithu, started at one o'clock, intending to try to reach Munithu the same evening, though it had taken the safari two days to reach M'thara from Munithu on the outward journey. At sundown, after a toilsome and seemingly interminable march, my party and I arrived at El Hakim's camp outside Bei-Munithu's village, where El Hakim, pleased at our rapid journey, forthwith ministered to my material wants in the way of towels, soap, and supper. After our meal he summoned Bei-Munithu, and bade him recapitulate for my benefit the story of the pillaged goods. Briefly it amounted to this: A large party of the Wa'G'nainu had come on a friendly visit to Bei-Munithu. During their sojourn with him a report came to hand that the Wasungu had been driven out of Embe with great loss, and one of them had been killed. The news caused some excitement, and, as was only natural, the assembled natives discussed in what way the Wasungu's supposed misfortunes could be turned to profitable account. It was already well known that Bei-Munithu had one of his huts filled from floor to roof with the trade goods and equipment of the chief Wasungu, and it did not require much persuasion to induce that venerable humbug to exhibit the contents to his guests. The sight of so much riches naturally inflamed the already excited cupidity of the Wa'G'nainu. The next step was easy. In spite of Bei-Munithu's lukewarm remonstrances, they helped themselves

liberally and departed, exulting, to their villages. The next day El Hakim unexpectedly arrived, and, entirely unaware of what had taken place, asked that his trade goods should be brought out for his inspection, as he wanted to take them over to M'thara. Bei-Munithu, with many excuses and much wringing of hands, detailed the events of the preceding day. El Hakim was exceedingly wroth, and he there and then wrote me the note which had brought me over.

After Bei-Munithu had retired to his village we talked matters over. El Hakim was very much annoyed at the turn of affairs, and assured me that this was only one of the unpleasant results of our reverse in Embe. What others were in store for us, time alone would disclose. We decided before we turned in that we would go early on the morrow to G'nainu and demand our goods. We wished to proceed on the principle of *suaviter in modo* rather than *fortiter in re*, but if the former failed we were determined to apply the latter without hesitation. El Hakim had taken an inventory of the missing goods, and found that more than four loads had disappeared. Bei-Munithu's conduct in the affair was not above suspicion, but we could not afford to quarrel with him just then.

At night a bed of banana leaves was made up for me on the ground in El Hakim's tent, which, with the addition of a couple of blankets, made me as comfortable as possible under the circumstances. My well-earned rest, however, was soon disturbed by the field-rats, which used me as a playground, and continually skipped and jumped over my body and face, to their own infinite amusement and my extreme discomfort. Two or three times during the night I woke up and found a large rat curled up fast asleep in the hollow of my neck or under my arm. El Hakim awoke at my frequent and somewhat profane exclamations, and gently inquired what was the matter. When I held forth on the drawbacks of slumber in the savage wilds, he feigned polite incredulity, and remarked, "Shocking, shocking! Most unfortunate delusions! Very regrettable, Hardwick, *very*;" and turning over in his blankets, he added insult to injury by chuckling audibly at intervals for an hour afterwards, in a most aggravating manner.

At four o'clock next morning we roused our fourteen men, and set out for G'nainu, some twenty or thirty of Bei-Munithu's men accompanying us. It was rather a rough tramp, the country being very hilly and much cut up by ravines and streams. We crossed the river Kazeta (which flows in a south-

easterly direction through Zura at an average altitude of 5000 feet) by a tree-trunk bridge, and at seven o'clock reached the first village of the Wa'G'nainu and halted outside. Our men waved green branches as a sign that we came in peace, but got no answer, the village, which was very strongly fortified, seeming to be entirely deserted. It was situated on the crest of a forest-covered hill, and was surrounded by a very massive outer stockade of roughly hewn tree-trunks with pointed tops. Inside there were two additional stockades of pointed logs, and the huts within were also stockaded one from the other, the whole forming a position almost impregnable to an enemy without firearms. We waited for a while, but were unable to get any answer to our signals, and held a consultation to decide on our next move, but in the middle of the discussion a shower of poisoned arrows from the surrounding bush winged their destructive way into our midst, killing three of Bei-Munithu's men outright; at the same time the now familiar war-cry rose on all sides, and resounded from hilltop to hilltop in a manner which showed us that we were fully expected.

The natives, we found afterwards, had driven off most of the stock, which, with all their women and children, was safely out of the way on the hills, while their husbands and fathers contentedly settled down to a comfortable day's fighting with the Wasungu, with the prospect of a nice little massacre afterwards as a fitting conclusion to a most enjoyable day.

We were compelled to quickly decide upon our course of action, as the Munithu men were wavering, and their desertion would have meant disaster, they alone knowing the paths. Retreat was not to be thought of, as, taken in combination with the Embe reverse, it would have confirmed the natives in their opinion of our helplessness, and our prestige would be hopelessly lost. Our men summarily settled the question by firing a volley into the surrounding bush in reply to fresh showers of arrows. We were now in for a large-sized quarrel, and as we did not see any immediate prospect of recovering our pillaged goods by pacific means, we determined to avail ourselves of the opportunity to recover at least their value, and also to punish the treacherous Wa'G'nainu for their unprovoked attack. Accordingly we gave the word of command, and our little force advanced at the double and captured the village without encountering any serious opposition. Inside were a few goats and sheep that had been left behind in the general stampede which occurred when our arrival was first signalled.

The enemy had drawn off for reinforcements, and meanwhile contented themselves, after the native fashion, with shouting insulting remarks, together with a list of the various surgical operations they later on intended performing upon our persons.

El Hakim mustered our men in the village, and divided them into two parties, one of which he placed under my command, with orders to forage round for more live stock, while he, at the head of the other, held the village as a fortified base.

When I was about to select the men I required, we discovered, to our consternation, that there were only nine instead of fourteen! Questions elicited no information as to the whereabouts of the absentees. It was that firebrand Sadi ben Heri and three or four of his particular cronies who were missing. I had seen them only ten minutes before, but where they had gone after we captured the village I could not ascertain; however, we trusted they would turn up all right. I took five men of our own and about a dozen of the Wa'Munithu to try to capture some more stock in order to balance our account with the Wa'G'nainu.

They certainly made me work for what little I captured. They disputed every plantation and every village till I began to run short of ammunition. Two or three of my Munithu contingent were killed, so when I reached the next village I burnt it, just to show the enemy that they had in no way intimidated us by their opposition; a proceeding which heartened my men wonderfully. It was very hard work. Every village was perched on an eminence, and in most cases reached by only one, or at the most two, almost inaccessible paths. I proceeded all the time at the double, so that my men should not have time to think about the danger, and after racing up and down several hills as steep as the roof of a house, I was fairly pumped and streaming with perspiration, in spite of the comparatively low temperature. I captured a few head of cattle and a hundred or so sheep and goats in the course of an hour or two, and burnt four villages in the process; which proceeding greatly facilitated my safe retirement to the base held by El Hakim, when I was forced both by lack of breath and ammunition to turn my footsteps thither.

During my retirement the enemy concentrated in force along my route, but a few well-directed shots from my .303 persuaded them that it was safer

to scatter and take cover. I rejoined El Hakim, and found that he had also gathered a couple of dozen or so additional goats and sheep, and three or four head of cattle. It was then nine o'clock in the morning. There was no sign of the five missing men. The war-cries and howls of the enemy were increasing rapidly in volume, and it became more and more evident that a determined effort was to be made by them to prevent our return. Our Munithu contingent showed unmistakable signs of wavering, so we concluded that in the interests of our own lives and those of our remaining men we had better put on a determined front, and fight our way back to Munithu. We therefore burnt our temporary headquarters, and retired in good order, trusting that the misguided Sadi ben Heri and his equally misguided companions had already safely retired by another route.

After leaving the village the path abruptly descended into a narrow valley and ascended the opposite slope, winding amid thick bush, in which large numbers of the enemy had congregated. Our first view of them was by no means encouraging. The bush seemed alive with them. We were at once greeted with a shower of poisoned arrows at long range, which, though they did no bodily harm, badly shook the nerves of the men; but El Hakim and I put in a little fancy shooting at 200 yards, and order was soon restored. We got safely through that particular part, but several times in the next mile or so we were greeted with showers of arrows from concealed natives. A few shots, however, generally persuaded them that discretion was the better part of valour.

After a tiring march, with intervals of skirmishing, we reached Munithu with our captures intact. When we reckoned them up, however, they barely covered the value of the trade goods stolen, to say nothing of the expenditure of ammunition and the personal risk entailed in the collection. We were very tired and very hungry, but before eating we dispatched native spies to try to obtain news of the missing men. After lunch we retired for an hour to sleep off the effects of our unusual exertion.

FOOTNOTES:

[5] Should the reader be inclined to consider my language to be somewhat theatrical, it must be remembered with whom I was dealing. I knew my man, and

pointed my remarks accordingly.

CHAPTER VII.

RETURN TO M'THARA.

An ivory "shauri"—Death of Sadi ben Heri and his companions—Purchasing ivory—
El Hakim and I return to M'thara—A night in the open—George ill—The
Wa'M'thara at their old tricks—Return of the Somalis from Chanjai—They
refuse to return to Embe—I interview an elephant.

In the afternoon Bei-Munithu paid us a visit in order to hear our version of what had happened at G'nainu. He listened attentively to our recital without making any comment. When we had concluded he informed us that he also had sent spies back to G'nainu, as, in addition to our five men, eleven of his own who had accompanied them were missing.

We learnt further that the natives of a village about two hours' march distant wished to sell us a tusk of ivory. We heartened considerably at that, and asked Bei-Munithu to bring the owner along to talk it over. He thereupon withdrew, presently returning with a very aged and decrepit man, who tottered forward by the aid of a staff, whom he introduced to us as the owner of the tusk. We politely begged the venerable gentleman to seat himself, and waited till it pleased him to open negotiations. In a few moments he had collected enough energy to speak, and producing a reed some six feet long, indicated that that was the measurement of the tusk.

"Very well," we said. "It seems a good tusk. How much do you want for it?"

After a little thought he remarked that one cow and three sheep would be considered a very fair return.

"All right," said we; "if the tusk is all it is represented to be, we will give even the price asked, in order to save the trouble of a long 'shauri.' But first let us see the tusk."

He assented to this, and in a little while rose and retired, presumably to bring the tusk. For over two hours we waited expectantly, but he did not return, and we were just thinking of sending over to Bei-Munithu for an explanation when that gentleman himself appeared, leading forward a

native still more ancient than our former visitor. This latter individual slowly seated himself in front of our tent and solemnly chewed a twig which he drew from a bundle of similar ones carried in his belt.^[6] The ancient gentleman munched away for some minutes, and finally condescended to speak. He announced, between chews, that he owned a tusk of ivory which he wished to sell us. We, metaphorically, hugged ourselves. Two tusks in one afternoon! But we received a rude shock when the interpreter informed us that the old gentleman was referring to the same tusk.

“Why,” we explained, “the owner has already called upon us, and we have completed the bargain.”

“Oh no,” said the old savage, “that was a young man sent to bargain with you” (practically testing the market). “I am the owner.”

“Very well,” said we. “We don’t care whom it belongs to so long as it is sold to us; and the sooner the better.”

“But,” said the old savage, “I want a cow and *four* sheep!”

We grew heated, and told him to go to Heligoland, or words to that effect; but he refused to depart thither.

“The other man,” he said, “like all young men, was very rash, and exceeded his instructions. I myself could not think of letting such a beautiful tusk go for less than one cow, a *good* cow, and four sheep.”

We remained firm, however, and he finally agreed to let us have the tusk at the original price. He then retired, while we wiped our perspiring foreheads and took a nice long drink of brackish water.

At that moment a messenger arrived from M’tbara with a note to me from George, asking me to return as soon as possible, he being very ill with fever. El Hakim had intended returning on the morrow, since we were still waiting for news from G’nainu of our missing men, though we had lost all hope of their being still alive.

Next morning, therefore, we rose early, and sent a messenger over to the people who had the tusk, inquiring why they had not sent it over the day before as they had promised. The messenger returned saying that they were close behind him bringing the ivory. We waited with what little patience we

could muster till nearly midday, when a deputation of elders turned up leading a withered, tottering skeleton, which on closer inspection proved to be an extremely ancient native. He looked more like a fossil than a human being, but, as we found, he still possessed, in a high degree, the native cunning and keenness in a bargain. The deputation carefully seated the fossil before us, and, grouping themselves respectfully round it, relapsed into a dead silence, only interrupted by the clicking of their jaws as they chewed their everlasting twigs. The fossil moved, woke up, and for some time gazed at us out of its bleared eyes, expectorating thoughtfully at intervals, while we in turn looked at it with some interest. After we had satisfied our mutual curiosity we spoke to the fossil, politely inquiring its errand. It gazed at us once more, expectorated, coughed, and announced that it was the owner of the much-disputed tusk, and had come to arrange the purchase price!

“What!” we cried, “is this tusk owned by a syndicate? We have already had two ‘shauries,’ and wasted two days over it. Who *is* the owner, anyhow?”

The deputation assured us, with the utmost simplicity that *this* was the *real* owner; the other two were *only friends*. We resigned ourselves to the inevitable, and prepared to engineer yet another bargain.

The fossil again condescended to speak, and declared that the precious tusk should not go out of his possession except in exchange for one very good cow, and three female sheep with lambs! We refused to entertain any such advance on the original price, and the matter was discussed with considerable animation and some heat for an hour or more. At the end of that time, when our patience was almost at vanishing-point, we agreed on a compromise. We argued that we had not yet seen the tusk, and consequently did not know if it was really as good as it was represented to be. We would therefore send a man over to their village, and on his return with a favourable report would give the price last demanded. On the contrary, if it were not such a good tusk as we had been led to believe, we would only give the original price asked. This plan they eventually agreed to. Resarse ben Shokar was ordered to accompany them to their village and report on the ivory.

The deputation then rose and withdrew, taking the fossil with them. We retired to our tent, but had not been seated more than a few moments when the sound of excited exclamations from the men caused us, ever on alert for news of our missing men, to spring to our feet. We rushed outside and saw an excited, heaving group of our men volubly discussing some object in their midst. I shouted an order, and the group separated and led towards our tent a man apparently in the last stage of exhaustion. Commanding silence, we called Ramathani to interpret. The man straightened himself, and we were horrified to observe a great gaping wound in his right arm, that looked like a sword-cut, which had been roughly stitched up with fibre. He announced amid breathless silence that he was the sole survivor of our five Swahilis and the eight native allies who had accompanied them. Our men groaned and wept at the news, but we again commanded silence, and bit by bit, by dint of careful questioning, we extracted the whole wretched story.

“Your four Zanzibaris,” said the native, “Sadi, Hamiz, Abdullah, and Marazuki, and one M’kamba, with eight of we Munithu people, slipped away from Wa’sungu so that we might collect cattle and sheep. We went very far and got many cattle. Presently we crossed the border of G’nainu into Nimbere, and there Sadi ben Heri, who commanded, seized many cattle and sheep from the Wa’Nimbere, who at once attacked us; but your men drove them away with their guns. We could not turn back, as the Wa’G’nainu were behind us, and Sadi ben Heri said, ‘Let us go on through this country, and so come to Munithu, where we shall be safe.’ We therefore crossed Nimbere, being many times attacked by the ‘Washenzi’ (savages) on the way, but the Zanzibaris always drove them off with their guns; but afterwards they had not many cartridges left.

“We then got into N’dakura, where there are many people, and there Sadi ben Heri said, ‘Let us take even more cattle and sheep from these people.’ So we took many cattle and sheep from the Wa’N’dakura, who then attacked us very fiercely; but your men again drove away the Washenzi with their guns. But their cartridges were very nearly finished, while the paths were narrow and the bush very thick. The Wa’G’nainu and Wa’Nimbere were behind us, and the Wa’N’dakura were in front. They came so close that we had to leave all the cattle and sheep that we had taken, so that we might try to save our lives. The enemy came closer and closer to us in the plantations and the bush, and then your men fired their

last cartridge. Soon after that Abdullah was speared in the stomach, then Sadi was killed with spears, while the M'kamba was killed with a sword, and Marazuki and Hamiz were also killed with spears. There were very many of the 'Washenzi.' I was cut on my arm with a sword, and I ran away and hid in the forest. The other seven Munithu men were killed while trying to run away. Some were killed with spears and others with swords, and some with arrows. I waited till it was night, and then I came here."

Such was the story of the missing man, and a ghastly business it was. It was entirely due to the disobedience of Sadi and his companions, and also to their stupidity in not confining their operations to the people with whom we were fighting. As it was, they had now given offence to two powerful tribes who had hitherto been friendly to us. In addition, four of our rifles were in the hands of the enemy, which might well be a source of bitter trouble to us in the future; as, indeed, it turned out.

At the conclusion of the narrative we sent the wounded man away, with orders that his wants should be attended to, and talked the matter over. It was then dusk, and much too late to think of starting for M'thara.

A few moments later Resarse arrived in camp from the village where the ivory was, and delivered his report. He informed us that it was a fair-sized tusk, and would weigh perhaps 50 lbs. An hour later the fossil and his friends turned up, and after a mild discussion we agreed to pay the price demanded, viz. a cow and three ewes with lambs—on the condition that they were to let us have the tusk very early on the following morning, as we explained that we were greatly desirous of starting early for M'thara; I, for one, being a little anxious about George.

Therefore at sunrise next morning we despatched Resarse to the fossil's village with a cow, together with a message to the effect that he (Resarse) was to bring back the tusk with him, accompanied by one or two of their men, to whom we would hand over the balance of the purchase price due to them, *i.e.* the three ewes and their lambs.

Partaking of an early breakfast, we next packed up the tent and the numerous loads belonging to El Hakim which had been in Bei-Munithu's charge, though we had to leave some of them behind. There were about fifteen loads of various beads, a 300-yard Alpine rope, ten or a dozen loads of mardūf (English drill), about six loads of iron, copper, and brass wire,

some “bendera” (red cloth) and “kiniki” (blue cloth), and also some loads of camp equipment, medicines, and ammunition; which, together with some signal-rockets and gamekeepers’ flares, totalled up to some forty odd loads. The donkeys gave some trouble at first, as they were very fresh, and strongly objected to being loaded again after twelve days’ idleness. Finally, somewhere about ten o’clock we were ready for our long-delayed return to M’thara.

All this time there were no signs of Resarse or the ivory. Half an hour after we had finished packing he was descried approaching the camp, but was still driving the cow; there were no signs of the tusk. Our disgust and annoyance can be imagined when we heard that the fossil had hidden the tusk and run away! Bei-Munithu was peremptorily summoned, and we angrily demanded the reason of this treatment, expressing our displeasure in sufficiently severe terms. Bei-Munithu, much disturbed, departed to find out.

We simmered for another two hours till his return. From his account it appeared that there were *two* tusks, and the owner, seeing Resarse approaching with only one cow, thought we intended to cheat him, and incontinently fled. Bei-Munithu, however, had now persuaded him that we were honest, and he was now on his way to camp with the two tusks. Again we sat down and waited, with as much patience as we could command under the circumstances.

We unloaded the donkeys, and tried to rake out something eatable, but failed, as there was nothing cooked. At two o’clock in the afternoon we were still waiting. At that hour one of Bei-Munithu’s men came into camp with the information that the fossil and his friends had *run away again, taking the two tusks with them*. El Hakim exploded at this aggravating news. He sent for Bei-Munithu once more, and fairly made the old reprobate shake with fear, though, as far as we knew, it was no fault of his.

“Go at once,” cried El Hakim, “and tell these people that I have waited two days on their account. I will wait no longer. If they do not bring that ivory within two hours, I will come and burn their villages and destroy their plantations to the last muhindi stalk.”

Bei-Munithu became greatly agitated, and implored El Hakim to have a little patience while he himself went to see the fossil and his friends, in

order that he might try to convince them of the error of their ways.

He returned late in the afternoon, accompanied by the fossil and the other two ancients, with whom we had bargained, bringing with them the two tusks. We gave them a piece of our minds and the price agreed upon, and allowed them as a special favour to pick their three ewes, a proceeding which occupied the greater part of another hour.

The tusks were only medium specimens, weighing 90 lbs. the pair. We thanked Bei-Munithu for his efforts on our behalf, although we had more than a shrewd suspicion that he had caused the whole delay from first to last, though for what purpose we could not be very certain.

It was very late in the day when we eventually started for Mathara, and there seemed very little hope of reaching it that night, though we determined to try, notwithstanding our many loads and our miscellaneous collection of cattle, sheep, goats, and loaded donkeys, all of which seemed to have contracted a malignant type of perverseness, inasmuch as they would not keep to the path, needing constant care and watchfulness and frequent halts in order to recover stragglers. Fortunately, Dirito and one of his tribesmen volunteered to accompany us and “chunga” (drive) the animals, an offer which we gladly accepted.

We made fair progress until we reached the strip of forest described in the account of our first march to Karanjui, on the borders of which we arrived just before dusk. We were joined there by Viseli, one of the headmen of Chanjai, and one of his people, who proceeded to assist Dirito in driving the animals. In this manner we reached Karanjui, and El Hakim proposed that we should camp there. I was averse to such a plan, however, remembering George’s note, so we pushed on.

Traversing the further belt of forest, we crawled out into the open plain which stretches away to Mathara. The sun had already set, and the wind became bitterly cold. The porters were tired and beginning to straggle, but as there was no water nearer than a stream an hour’s march on the hither side of our own camp, we had no choice but to proceed in spite of the darkness. On we went, Dirito and Viseli with the tired animals keeping close to us, while the porters were strung out in an irregular line in the rear. It grew pitch dark, and a cold wind, increasing in violence, nearly froze us.

Hour after hour we pursued our hopeless way in the blackness of the night, until somewhere about 8 p.m., when we reached the small stream. It was useless going any further, so we camped. We called for the tent to be pitched and firewood brought, but to our surprise met with no response. We could not understand it. We called again, but beyond Diritto and Viseli and their two henchmen with the animals, there were not more than three or four men with us, and they were carrying loads of cloth. The others were scattered somewhere in the darkness along the path by which we had come. We were in a nice predicament, our small party being perched on a bare, bleak hillside, exposed to the full fury of the icy blast without a tent, a blanket, or a thing to eat, though nothing had passed our lips since our hasty meal at daylight that morning. However, there was nothing to do but to make the best of it, so we ordered a large fire to be made, to try to mitigate in some degree the freezing horror of the icy gale. Another disappointment awaited us; there was absolutely no firewood to be had. Our few men searched diligently for an hour, and brought back two or three handfuls of brushwood, which by dint of a wasteful expenditure of matches, coupled with no small amount of profanity, were transformed into a puny apology for a fire.

Presently, to our great joy, we heard shouts from the other side of the stream, and soon we had the satisfaction of beholding a small body of our porters approaching. We eagerly examined their loads, but alas! they consisted, of course, of brass and iron wire, and, by the irony of fate, one load of cooking and table utensils.

El Hakim and I resigned ourselves to a night of discomfort, and crouched down over the miserable spark we dignified by the name of a fire. An hour later a solitary porter struggled into our midst, and, lo and behold, he carried the fly-sheet of the tent. We hastily uncorded it, and found the tent-pegs rolled up inside; these were at once sacrificed for firewood, and we soon had a moderate blaze going. Then Ramathani discovered some pieces of raw meat among the cooking utensils, the remains of a sheep we had killed two days before. We very soon had them out, and cutting them into chunks, toasted them in the frying-pan, which formed a nourishing though somewhat indiarubber-like meal. El Hakim then spread the canvas fly-sheet out on the ground, and we both crept under it and tried to forget our discomfort in sleep.

The gale blew with great violence all night, blowing our protecting fly-sheet up at the corners, and sending an icy draught up our trouser-legs in a most disagreeable manner; so that, altogether, we were unfeignedly thankful when the first grey streaks that heralded the dawn appeared in the eastern heavens.

We arose and stretched our stiff and frozen limbs, and calling up the few men who, huddled to the leeward of the animals, resembled so many corpses under their scanty linen cloths, we started for our camp at Mathara, which, having struck the right path, we reached in an hour.

George had not yet risen, but, hearing our arrival, wrapped himself in a blanket and came out of his tent. I was very disagreeably surprised at his appearance. He was quite yellow and very thin and haggard, the effect of a severe attack of fever, which, coupled with anxiety on our account and differences with the Wa'Mathara in camp, had given him a very bad time indeed. He looked more like a ghost than a living being, but "all's well that ends well," and our arrival safe and sound contributed in no small degree to his speedy recovery. The Wa'Mathara, it appeared, had again been up to their old trick of surrounding the camp with armed men, and on one occasion they had actually attacked some of our camp followers while on their way to the stream for water. In fact, George was compelled to get up from his bed, where he lay racked with fever, and, seizing his rifle, sally forth accompanied by four or five men in order to drive off the enemy, who, however, fled at his approach without further hostilities.

We now commenced preparations for our move northward to the Waso Nyiro River, selecting what trade goods and cattle we should require, intending to leave the balance with N'Dominuki. Food had also to be bought and packed into loads, as, after leaving Mathara, there were no other cultivated districts in the direction we intended to travel, and we should have to depend for sustenance entirely upon the food we were able to carry with us, and on any game we might be able to shoot. An inventory of the contents of our food-boxes showed that there was no reserve salt, and beyond an ounce or two in use, there was absolutely none in the safari. I mentioned the disconcerting fact to El Hakim, but he consoled me with the assurance that we should certainly be able to obtain salt at a crater, marked N'gomba on the map, a little to the south of the Waso Nyiro and due north

of the Jombeni Mountains. Our supply of English flour was also finished, and we were then living on the native M'wele and Metama.

In the afternoon I took a rifle, and, leaving camp, struck in a northerly direction in search of game. Crossing the thorn forest, I came out on to a gravelly highland, covered with thorn scrub, and here and there isolated Morio trees. Underfoot a few small aloes with red flowers grew in the patches of earth between the blocks of white quartz plentifully bestrewn everywhere.

The Morio (*Acocanthera Schimperii*) is a curious-looking tree with its bare stem, averaging about six feet in height, formed of several thin stems twisted round each other after the manner of a vine. Surmounting the bare stem is a spherical crown of leaves, giving it the appearance of those little toy trees supplied to children in Noah's arks. It has a small leaf and small pink-and-white flowers, which have a delightful scent. The A'kikuyu and Wa'Ndorobo use the distilled sap of the roots for poisoning their arrows. It is also used by the Somalis for that purpose combined with the sap of another variety of the same species (*Acocanthera Ouabaio*) which grows in the Arl mountains of northern Somaliland. The resultant poison is the celebrated "Wabaio" of the Somalis. No other plant or tree will grow near the Morio, consequently they are met with only in little groups or as isolated specimens.

About two miles from camp I reached a small stony hill. On the summit I discovered a small rudely constructed fort, built of flat stones, containing small huts of stone roofed with brushwood. It faced to the north, and I afterwards found that it was used by the A'kikuyu as a watch-tower when expecting a Rendili raid. From the top of this fort I obtained a good view of the surrounding country. To the north the ground sloped away in a long incline to the Waso Nyiro, the bed of which lies more than a thousand feet lower than M'thara at the point in its course due north at that place. Beyond the Guaso Nyiro showed dimly the shadowy outlines of Mounts Lololokwe and Wargasse, 7750 feet and 10,830 feet in height respectively. Further away to the north and east lay the desolate sandy wastes of Samburu or Galla-land.

To the north-east beyond the Doenyo lol Deika (a hog-backed ridge 6200 feet above sea-level) the great plateau of Lykipia stretched as far as the

highlands of Kamasia and Elgeyo. At the foot of the Kamasia highlands lies Lake Baringo, distant a hundred and twenty miles, the southern end of which is inhabited by the Wakwafi of Nyemps. Fifteen miles south of Baringo is Lake Hannington, discovered by, and named after, the late Bishop Hannington, who was murdered by the natives of Usoga in 1885. The water of this lake is lukewarm, and, being impregnated with mineral salts, is very bitter. The Lykipia Plateau is terminated on the north by the Loroghi Mountains, and on its eastern side by the Elgeyo escarpment, which, together with its southern continuation, the Mau escarpment, forms part of the eastern wall of the great "fault" in the earth's crust which extends from the sea of Galilee, over 33° north of the Equator, down the valley of the Jordan, thence down the Red Sea, and southward through North-Eastern Africa to Lake Tanganyika, 10° south of the line, and which is known to geographers as the Great Rift Valley.

South-west of my point of vantage rose the lofty peak of Kenia, veiled as usual by its curtain of cloud. To the south-east, and on the eastern side of Kenia, lay the route we had just traversed, extending through M'thara, Munithu, Zura, Moravi, Igani, Wuimbe, Zuka, and M'bu back to Maranga on the Tana River. The first stage of our journey was safely accomplished. Who could tell what Fate had in store for us in the unknown regions to the northward?

On the way out I met with no game, but on my return I saw two or three impala antelopes, at which I could not get a shot, chiefly owing to the noise I unavoidably made in approaching them over loose pebbles and quartz blocks. I returned to camp unsuccessful in consequence.

We learnt from George that during our absence at Munithu one of the donkeys had fallen sick and died. When El Hakim asked where the carcass was, George told us that our Wakamba porters had *eaten* it. They did not ask for permission to do so, possibly because they feared the ridicule of the "M'sungu," but the same night, when all was still in camp, they sneaked out one by one, and, cutting up the carcass, brought it into camp and cooked and devoured it during the night. It became a standing joke against them with the rest of the safari, who at once nicknamed them "Fisis" (hyenas) for the remainder of the trip. When any of the Swahili porters felt particularly jocular, they would sing out, "Nani amakula punda?" (Who ate the donkey?) which earnest inquiry would be immediately answered by a

ringing shout from the rest of the Swahilis, “Wakamba fisi” (the Wakamba hyenas), followed by a shout of laughter, accompanied by cat-calls. The Wakamba themselves would smile a contented, cheerful smile, and think lovingly of the magnificent gorge they had enjoyed, and, I believe, rather pitied the Swahilis for their fastidious prejudices.

The morning after our arrival from Munithu, the Somalis returned from their sojourn in Chanjai, where they had been purchasing food. They intended to start from the Waso Nyiro on the following day, and, as we had expected, absolutely refused to entertain the idea of another expedition into Embe. I concluded a little “deal” with Ismail during the morning, exchanging twenty cartridges for a little coarse salt.

Just before noon I went out alone with the 20-bore shot-gun, with the intention of shooting guinea-fowl for the pot. I wore rubber shoes, and in jumping a stream, strained my instep badly. The pain was severe, but I tried to walk it off. I got into the thick forest between our camp and M’thara, but saw no birds. Noiselessly threading my way along a narrow game-track, while on the look-out for partridges, I suddenly saw a large brown mass looming through the openings of the foliage. Only small patches of it were now and again visible, and, as I had not the least idea what it was, I cautiously crept closer in order to get a better view. It was quite stationary, and at first I thought it was a large hut, though what it was doing there I could not imagine. I cautiously approached to within ten yards, and then halted and watched. Suddenly the mass moved, a low rumbling noise was heard, and then an enormous head swung into my field of vision, flanked by vast outspread ears and a pair of magnificent tusks. There I stood gazing straight into the face of the largest bull elephant I had ever seen, with only a 20-bore shot-gun and No. 6 shot with me! After a few seconds’ suspense I regained the use of my scattered faculties, and it immediately occurred to me that this particular part of the forest was not a good place for guinea-fowl, and at once decided to look somewhere else. I am modest by nature, and deprecate ostentation; therefore I made as little noise as possible on my backward journey—at least till I was quite a quarter of a mile from the elephant. I did not wish to alarm him. I took the bearings of the place, and limped back to camp for a rifle. El Hakim immediately went back with me, but we could not find the elephant. He had evidently winded me on my first visit, and retreated into the deeper recesses of the thorn forest.

On my return to Cairo, I happened to mention this encounter with the elephant to an American friend of mine. He listened with a twinkle in his eye, and remarked, "Why, if that isn't strange! Do you know, 'most the same thing happened to me last Fall; when I was huntin' in the Rockies with my brother. We had gone out pretty early one morning to try and shoot a few by-ids. After a smart tramp along the river-bank, through a lot of bushes, we were pulled up with a jerk, as, on coming round a tree, we spotted an old grizzly b'ar reared up on his hind legs, feedin' on something in the bushes. As we were only loaded for by-ids, we drew back and watched him. Pretty soon 'old grizzly' turned around and looked us straight in the face. My brother thought it must be nearly breakfast-time, so we started for our camp on the run! As we dodged among the bush we could hear the pit-pat of the grizzly's feet in our rear, and I tell you we ran good and hard. Presently the sound of pursuing footsteps grew fainter and fainter, and, taking a quick look round, durned if 'old grizzly' wasn't runnin' hard's he could the other way! What?"

FOOTNOTES:

[6] The sap of this wood possesses certain stimulating qualities, and is extensively chewed by the natives of North Kenia. I tried it afterwards, and found it of a somewhat peppery flavour. Its effect upon me was rather nauseating, and it afterwards gave me a slight headache.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE START FOR THE WASO NYIRO.

Some of El Hakim's experiences with elephants—I am made a blood-brother of Koromo's—Departure from M'thara—A toilsome march—A buffalo-hunt—The buffalo camp—Account of Dr. Kolb's death—An unsuccessful lion hunt—Apprehension and punishment of a deserter.

Early the next day the Somalis left for the Waso Nyiro. Soon after their departure we were aroused by a sound of altercation in our camp. On sending to inquire the cause, we found that four of the Somalis had returned, and were busily searching the tents of our men for deserters from their safari. Summoning them, we asked by what right they entered our camp and searched it without even asking permission. They were so impertinent that I lost my temper, and abused them soundly, and ended up by kicking them out of the camp. The looks they bestowed on me, an Infidel, who had dared to raise his foot against a follower of Mahomet, boded ill for my personal safety, if it should ever chance that opportunity favoured them.

We were not quite ready to march, as our loads gave us more trouble than we had bargained for. N'Dominuki came to see us in the morning, accompanied by a large number of his people bringing food. We purchased about a fortnight's rations, as we did not intend to be away more than a month in any case, and we could easily eke out the rations with game. We only took a month's supply of tinned stuff, soap, candles, etc., for ourselves, leaving two cases behind with N'Dominuki as a reserve store to take us back to Nairobi. We also left behind twenty loads of beads, large-bore ammunition, and odds and ends of equipment, and all the cattle, except eight or nine head which we intended to take with us. N'Dominuki had five young camels belonging to El Hakim, which we also took along, as we thought they might be useful for buying ivory from the Rendili.

I wished to go out again to look for my friend the bull elephant, but I was unable to put my foot on the ground in consequence of my injured instep. After our evening meal, which we had taken under the trees outside the tent, George and I had an interesting chat with El Hakim about elephant-hunting,

upon which subject he was a veritable mine of information. He had shot elephants persistently for the previous four years in Somaliland, Galla-land, and the country round Lake Rudolph, having killed over 150, on one occasion shooting twenty-one elephants in twenty-one days—a fairly good record. Commenting on the size of the tusks obtainable in the districts north of the Waso Nyiro River, he mentioned that his largest pair weighed just over 218 lbs., and measured 9 feet in length.

Naturally, exciting incidents, when in pursuit of his favourite quarry, were numerous. Once he sighted a solitary bull feeding in the open plain some little distance away from his camp. Snatching up an 8-bore rifle and two or three cartridges, he started in pursuit. On proceeding to load his weapon, he found that in his hurry he had brought away the wrong cartridges! They were by a different maker than those usually used in the rifle, and there was a slight difference in the turning of the flange, which caused them to jam a little. He forced them in, and, by an exercise of strength, closed the breech.

After a careful stalk he reached a favourable position for a shot, and, taking aim, banged off. The rifle exploded with a terrific report, the barrels blowing off in his hands, fortunately without doing him any injury—the explosion of 10 drams of powder being too much for the incompletely closed breech-locking grip. There was El Hakim with the butt of his rifle in his hand and the barrels in the other, vaguely wondering in what manner the beast would kill him, and, no doubt, feeling very much *de trop*. The elephant, who was hit in the shoulder, turned towards him, and, after regarding him with a prolonged stare, turned away again, and moved slowly off as if a bullet in the shoulder was of little or no consequence, leaving his discomfited assailant considerably relieved.

Another time he took the same 8-bore—which, by the way, had not been repaired—and started in pursuit of a herd of elephants. He loaded the weapons, and, after closing the breech, bound it round and round very tightly with a leather bootlace. On the first discharge, stock and barrels again parted company; whereupon he handed the useless weapon to one of his bearers, and, taking an old Martini in exchange, rushed off after the herd, and bagged three more elephants.

In Somaliland, one of the favourite amusements of his party was riding out, mounted on light Somali ponies, to bait wild elephants. Their *shikaries* would perhaps locate a couple of the animals in a small clump of trees, where they were resting during the heat of the day. One of the party would then ride up and fire a pistol at one of them. The result, of course, would be a scream of rage, and a furious charge by the insulted animal. Horse and rider would at once make themselves scarce. The elephant would seldom charge more than 100 yards or so away from cover, but at that distance, or under, would halt and then slowly return, thus giving another member of the party a chance. With a wild shout another horse and rider would gallop at full speed across the elephant's path, just out of reach. Round would come the huge beast in another attempt to put an end to what it justly considered a nuisance—an attempt foredoomed to failure. One after another the horsemen would gallop up to the now thoroughly infuriated beast, shouting and firing pistols, provoking ugly rushes first at one and then another of them—for all the world like a lot of schoolboys playing touch. Sometimes one or other of them had a narrow escape, but somebody would nip in at the critical moment and divert the elephant's attention. A slip or a fall would have meant a horrible death from the feet and tusks of the enraged pachyderm; but the ponies were as agile as their riders, and enjoyed the fun every whit as much.

We had no ponies, and playing with elephants in that manner would not have been sufficiently amusing when mounted on a mule, which had a habit of violently shying whenever it was urged faster than a moderate trot. El Hakim once had a very unpleasant experience through this mule's aggravating peculiarity. He was riding ahead of the safari, when he noticed a herd of elephants feeding a mile or so in front. Taking his rifle from the bearer, he trotted after them. The elephants moved slowly on, and disappeared over a ridge some distance ahead. El Hakim urged the mule faster, but, in spite of his efforts, on gaining the top of the ridge, he had the mortification of seeing his quarry moving off at an ever-increasing speed. Fearing that he would lose them after all, he jammed his spurs into the mule, and raced away down the slope for all he was worth.

It was fairly steep, the ground being covered with loose stones, some of which, displaced by the mule's hoofs, rolled and clattered downhill after him, and so frightened the animal that she incontinently bolted. El Hakim's

whole energies were now concentrated on keeping his seat, his rifle, and his presence of mind. Just as he felt that he was gradually succeeding in getting his agitated steed under control, she shied at a clump of cactus, and shot him clean out of the saddle, and over the cactus, into the clinging embrace of a well-developed wait-a-bit thorn which was growing on the other side. When the men had finally cut him out, he had quite given up the idea of shooting elephants that day, turning his attention instead to his numerous abrasions. Besides, the elephants were by that time miles away.

After the evening meal, when we generally sat in front of the camp-fire smoking, George and I used, figuratively speaking, to sit at the feet of El Hakim and listen for hours to his yarns of elephant-hunting. It was very seldom we could get him to speak about his experiences, but when in the mood to talk, his tales were well worth listening to.

We had some hazy idea that elephants were shot at something like a hundred yards' range with a powerful large-bore rifle, which mortally wounded them at the first discharge. Once I asked El Hakim, off-hand, at what range he generally killed his elephants.

"Oh," he replied, "anything from five to twenty yards!" and went on to explain that it was much safer to shoot big game at short range.

"Always stalk your beast carefully," said he, "and get close enough to be certain of your shot; then hit him hard in the right place, and there you are!"

It certainly sounded very simple, and I must say that El Hakim puts his own precepts into practice with conspicuous success; but a beginner does not find it so very easy. The temptation to fire at say eighty or a hundred yards, is well-nigh irresistible. It seems so much safer, though in reality it is much more dangerous—a fact which is rather difficult of assimilation by the novice.

"Besides," El Hakim would remark in conclusion, with the air of one propounding an unanswerable argument, "it is more sportsmanlike."

Another advantage of the short-range shot is this: Suppose a herd of elephants is located. If the conditions of wind, etc., are favourable, one can, with ordinary care, get right up to them, near enough to pick out the finest pair of tusks, and drop their owner with a bullet through the brain. If a .303 is used there is no smoke, while it makes a comparatively small report,

which is most likely attributed by the rest of the herd to the effect, and not the cause, of their comrade's fall. A second and even a third elephant can often be obtained under these circumstances, before the herd realizes what is happening and stampedes.

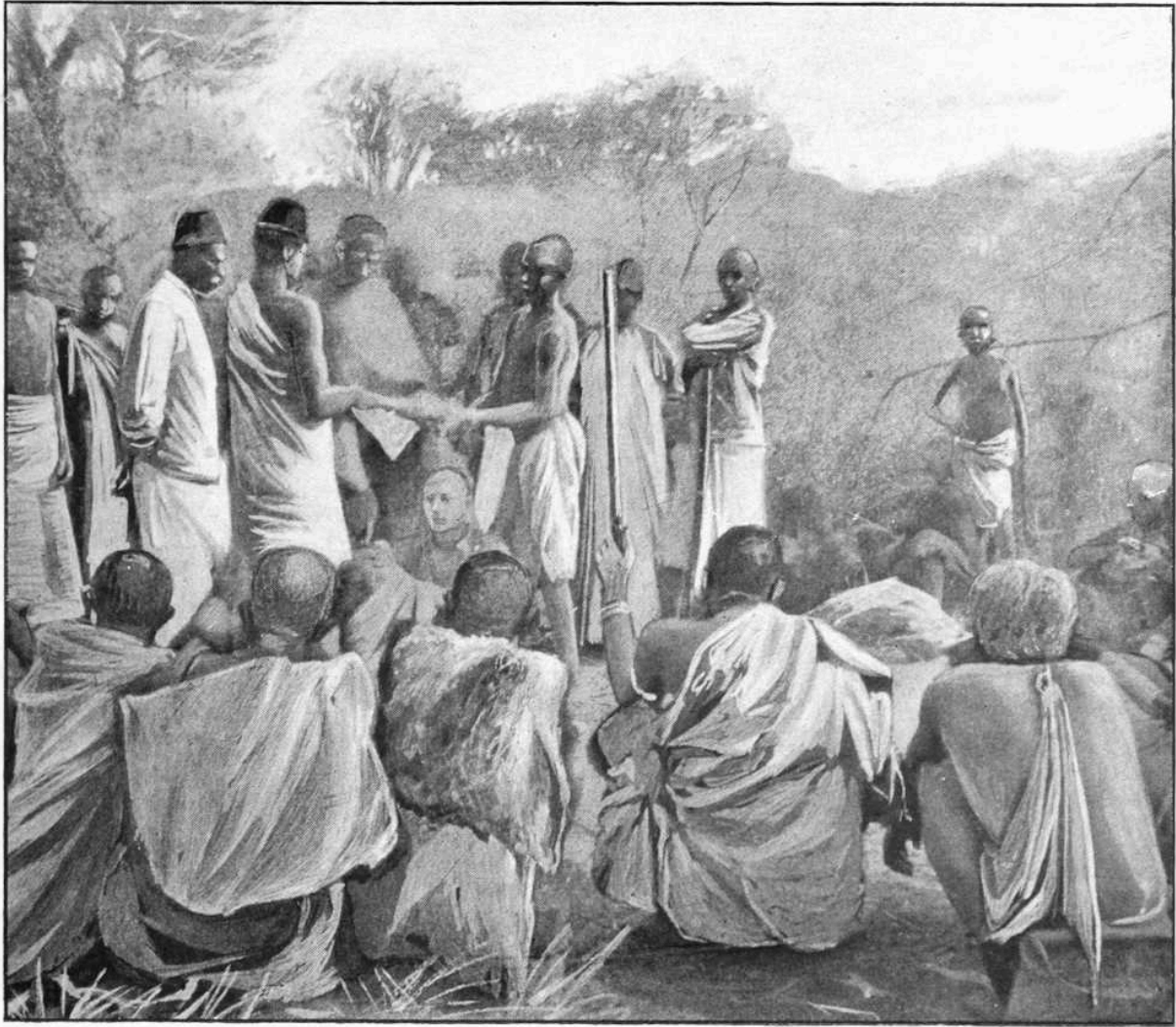
This rule of careful stalking till near enough to make the result of the shot certain holds good with all big game, though there are certain other factors to be considered, such as the angle to your line of sight at which the beast aimed at is standing, and also light, etc. One can go into any club or hotel billiard-room in those parts of Africa where big game is to be found, and listen to conversation on, say, lion-shooting. The chances are that nine out of ten men present have "had a shot at a lion;" but only a very small percentage have actually bagged their beast. In these days of small-bore, high-power rifles, a man can shoot at a stray lion at six hundred yards, and he may be lucky enough to wound it or even, perhaps, kill it; but surely that is not "playing the game."

On the afternoon of the day after the Somalis left for the Waso Nyiro, N'Dominuki came into camp with a chief named "Karama," who wished to make "muma," or blood-brotherhood, with me, to which I consented. It was rather a long affair. They brought a sheep with them, which was killed, and the liver cut out and toasted. Karama and I then squatted on the ground facing each other, while our men on the one side, and Karama's friends on the other, formed a circle round us. A spear and a rifle were then crossed over our heads, and N'Dominuki, as master of the ceremonies, then took a knife and sharpened it alternately on the spear-blade and the gun-barrel, reciting the oath of "muma" meanwhile. It was a long, rambling kind of oath, amounting in fact to an offensive and defensive alliance, with divers pains and penalties attached, which came into operation in the event of either or both the blood-brothers breaking the said oath. At the conclusion of N'Dominuki's speech the assembled spectators shouted the words "Orioi muma" three times. Three incisions were then made in my chest, just deep enough to allow the blood to flow, and a similar operation was performed on Karama. N'Dominuki then ordered the toasted sheep's liver to be brought, which, on its arrival, was cut into small pieces, and a piece handed to both Karama and me. A further recitation of the penalties of breaking the oath was made by N'Dominuki, and again the spectators shouted "Orioi muma." Karama and I then dipped our pieces of liver in our own blood, and

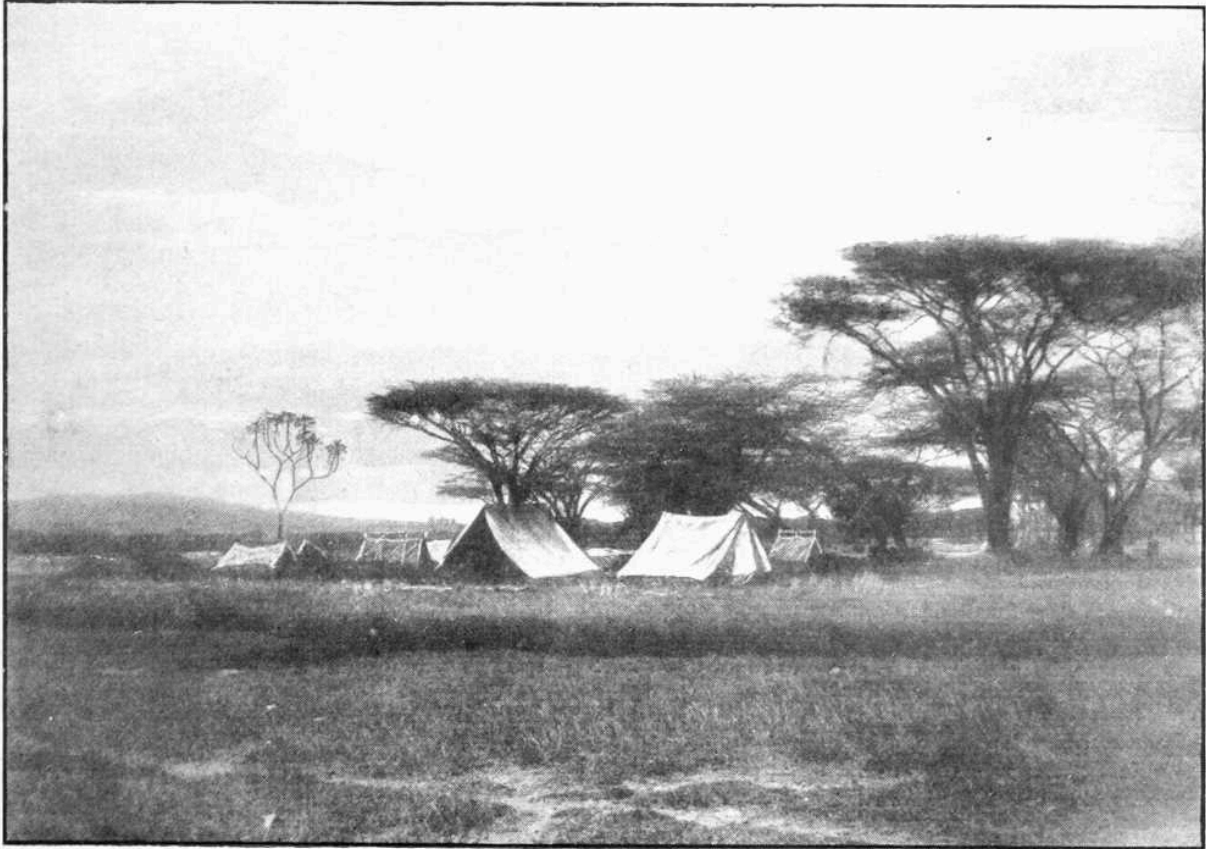
amid breathless silence exchanged pieces and devoured them. This was repeated three times to the accompaniment of renewed shouts from the spectators. The remainder of the liver was then handed round to the witnesses, who ate it, and the ceremony was concluded, it only remaining for me to make my new blood-brother a present.

The next morning our final preparations were completed, and N'Dominuki having come over early, we turned all the animals we were leaving behind over to him. He bade us adieu, with a wish that we might return safe and sound, and, what is more, he sincerely meant what he said.

After leaving our late camp we plunged once again into the thorn forest, which we soon crossed, emerging into the sparsely vegetated highland I have mentioned before as extending to the northward. The sun was very hot, and travelling slow and laborious, not so much from the nature of the ground, perhaps, as from the soft condition of the men after their long rest. The ground, nevertheless, made walking a wearisome task, as the loose pebbles and quartz blocks turned our ankles and bruised our shins.



THE AUTHOR MAKING BLOOD-BROTHERHOOD WITH KARAMA.



THE "GREEN CAMP." (See page [162](#).)

After two hours' toiling we found ourselves on the edge of the tableland looking down a sharp declivity to the plain beneath, which stretched out in desolate barrenness as far as the eye could reach. It was a dreary khaki-coloured landscape, with peculiarly shaped hills in the extreme background. In the middle distance were belts of dusty-looking thorn trees, while here and there mounds of broken lava reared up their ugly masses to add to the general air of desolation. Somewhere ahead of us, about four days' march, was the Waso Nyiro; and beyond that lay the desert again, stretching away up towards Lakes Rudolph and Stephanie, and thence onward to the hills of Abyssinia and Somaliland. The country we should have to cross in order to reach the Waso Nyiro was, as far as we knew, waterless, with the exception of one tiny brook, which flowed northward from M'thara, probably emptying itself into the Waso Nyiro. We followed it, therefore, in all its multitudinous windings, as, without it, we should have been in a sorry plight indeed.

As we descended to the plain the heat appreciably increased. We met several rhinoceros on the road, but we discreetly left them to their meditations. Apparently there had once been grass on the plain, but it had been burnt, and during the passage of our safari a fine, choking black dust arose, which, in combination with the dust from the dry red soil, formed a horrible compound that choked up our ears, eyes, noses, and throats in a most uncomfortable manner. For four hours we marched, and then camped on the banks of the stream.

Innumerable rhino tracks crossed in every direction, leading us to suppose that we were camped at the place where the brutes usually drank. George, hearing the shrill cries of some guinea-fowl from the opposite bank, sallied forth with the shot-gun, and soon the sound of many shots in quick succession showed that his energy was reaping its reward. He returned presently with eight birds, which were a very welcome addition to our larder.

We turned in early. During the night I was awakened by the sound of torrents of rain beating down on the tent. I rose and looked cautiously out. A noise from El Hakim's tent at once attracted my attention, and gazing in that direction I saw El Hakim himself, clad only in a diminutive shirt, busily engaged in placing the ground-sheet of his tent over the stacked loads. He was getting splashed considerably. I did not disturb him, but retired once more to my blankets, perfectly satisfied that the loads were being properly looked after.

In the morning the sky was as clear as crystal, while the parched earth showed no traces of the heavy shower that had fallen during the night. We travelled over the same kind of country as that traversed the day before, dry brown earth, burnt grass, and loose stones being the most noticeable features, if I except the ubiquitous rhinoceros, of which truly there were more than "a genteel sufficiency." In fact, they proved a terrible nuisance, as we had sometimes to make long *détours* in order to avoid them. They were not only capable of doing so, but seemed only too anxious to upset our safari. The men were mortally afraid of them, and much preferred their room to their company.

After a couple of hours on the road we saw in the distance a large swamp, which we had not previously noticed, surrounded for a radius of a mile or

so by thorn-bush, which grew a great deal thicker than on other parts of the plain. The quantity of game we saw on the road was simply incredible. Vast herds of oryx, zebra, and grantei, roamed over the landscape; ostriches and giraffes were also in sight, and, of course, rhinoceros. It is a sportsman's paradise, and as yet, with one or two exceptions, untouched.

When we reached the swamp the safari was halted to allow the stragglers to come up. While waiting I saw something sticking out of the grass a hundred yards away, to which I called El Hakim's attention. He observed it attentively through the binoculars for a moment, and then turned to me with an exclamation of satisfaction, softly observing, "Buffaloes, lying down." Taking his .450 express, and motioning the few men with us to be silent, he started to stalk them, followed by myself with the Martini rifle. We crawled down very cautiously to leeward, and after half an hour's careful stalking, during which we advanced only fifty yards, we ensconced ourselves in a favourable position in the reeds fringing the swamp. We were considering the advisability of a further advance, when our fools of men who had been in the rear reached the spot where we left the others, and on learning that a whole herd of the dreaded "mbogo" (buffalo) were in such close proximity, promptly climbed the adjacent trees, from which safe and elevated position they carried on an animated discourse on the merits of buffalo meat as an article of diet. As a consequence we had the mortification of seeing the old bull prick up his ears and listen, then slowly rise and sniff the air. The indications were apparently unsatisfactory, for the whole herd rose slowly to their feet, and, after a preliminary sniff, moved slowly off over a rise in the ground, and out of range. Words would not express our feelings!

El Hakim and I vehemently consigned our indiscreet followers to the hottest possible place known to theology, but even that did not comfort us. We decided not to give up, but to go on and follow the herd, although it was extremely unlikely that they would allow us to get within range, as the buffalo is a very keen beast, especially when once alarmed. However, to our surprise and delight, we found, when we had breasted the rise, that the herd (about thirty head) had halted about two hundred yards away. We then noticed several very young calves among them, which at once explained why they were so deliberate in their movements. They were, however, on the look-out, and directly we appeared they saw us. The cows with their calves took up their station in the centre of the herd, while the bulls faced

outwards, something after the manner of soldiers forming square. Most noble and majestic they appeared, with their huge, powerful bodies and immense frontal development of horns. They had an air of savage grandeur and ferocity about them that commanded my highest admiration.

There were a few stunted thorn trees standing about, and we took up a position behind one of them. As I have said, we were about two hundred yards away, and as they showed no disposition to run, we thought we might venture to walk boldly to another tree some distance nearer to them. There was a certain amount of risk of being charged in so doing, but we chanced it, and were perfectly successful in our design, though our quarry were manifestly uneasy. Sitting down, we waited patiently in the scorching sun for over an hour, in order to let them settle down again, so that we might approach still nearer. They gradually resumed their feeding, but not without much sniffing of the air on the part of the bulls, coupled with many suspicious glances in our direction.

El Hakim thought that the best thing to do would be for me to go to another tree a hundred yards to the right. Once there we would both crawl gradually within range, and then act as circumstances might direct. I started off for the tree, and arrived without accident, although the old bull, the guardian of the herd, sniffed severe disapproval. They were evidently getting used to our presence, but it was highly improbable they would tolerate our nearer approach, should they observe it. We again waited, and then, watching El Hakim, I saw him crawl stealthily on his stomach towards another tree fifty yards nearer the herd. I followed suit on my side, suffering considerably in so doing.

The vertical sun beat fiercely down, and, flattened out as I was, I felt its full effects on my back, which was protected only by a flannel shirt. The ground was covered with sharp pebbles and quartz crystals; and the long sharp thorns, blown down from the trees, pricked me cruelly, while I was tormented by a raging thirst. That fifty yards' crawl took us twenty minutes; it seemed an age. When I arrived, panting and gasping, at my tree, I was bleeding freely from numerous cuts and scratches on my chest, elbows, and knees.

However, we were now within easy range of the herd, and after resting a few minutes to steady ourselves, we prepared for action. Looking over to

my left, I saw El Hakim raise his rifle, so, taking aim at the largest bull I could pick out, I let drive, followed a fraction of a second later by El Hakim. My beast jumped, staggered a few paces, with the blood streaming in showers from his mouth and nostrils, and then toppled over dead, shot through the lungs. El Hakim's beast also staggered a few paces and went down, evidently mortally wounded. We had neither of us shot at the big bull, as at the moment of firing he was behind some of the other animals. We had then two magnificent beasts down, and did not want more, but the herd would not move away. They smelt the two carcasses stamping and pawing the ground, but did not budge an inch.

The big bull gazed round, seeking an assailant; but we were well under cover. Suddenly he turned, exposing his shoulder. Two rifles spoke simultaneously, but he did not go down. Once more we fired together, and again he was struck, but still kept his legs. Yet again we fired, and had the satisfaction of seeing him settle down on his hind quarters. To our great delight, the herd then moved off, and we were able to walk cautiously up to within ten feet of the big bull, as he sat propped up on his fore legs, bellowing defiance. Such a spectacle of impotent rage I had never previously witnessed. He made most herculean efforts to rise, but being unable to do so, he rolled his blood-shot eyes, while foam dripped from his massive jaws. He was the very picture of helpless though majestic rage. I took pity on the noble beast, and planted a Martini bullet in his neck, smashing the spine, thereby finishing him for good and all. We carefully examined him, and, an instance of the splendid vitality of an old bull buffalo, found all our six bullets planted in his left shoulder, so close together that they could have been covered with an ordinary-sized plate. Three were mine and three were El Hakim's. We could easily distinguish them, as, though our rifles were of the same bore (.450), those from El Hakim's Holland and Holland were clean-cut and symmetrical, while my heavier Martini bullets, propelled by half the charge of powder used by El Hakim, made a more ragged hole. We tossed for the head, and I won.

Four men were required to carry it into camp, when it was severed from the body. The horns were magnificently proportioned, and in perfect condition. The horns of my first beast also were quite up to the average.

As by this time it was long after midday (our stalk having lasted three hours), we determined to camp near the edge of the swamp. We dubbed it

“Buffalo Camp,” and decided to stop there the next day in order that the men might cut up the dead buffaloes and dry their meat into biltong. We left their entrails where the beasts had been shot, with men to protect them from the vultures till sundown, in the hope that during the night they might attract lions.

Jumbi reported in the afternoon that two of the porters had deserted on the road, and, worst of all, they were carrying, one a load of food, and the other a load of the Venetian beads which were to buy us food from the Rendili. We sent Jumbi with six men back to endeavour to apprehend them.

Our camp was situated only about half a mile or so from the grave of Dr. Kolb, whom Mr. Neumann met at M'thara. In reading Neumann's book^[7] a pathetic paragraph (in the light of after events) met my eye; it ran thus:—

“Here I had the honour of introducing my companion (Dr. Kolb) to my esteemed brother N'Dominuki, and to the rhino, an animal whose acquaintance he had not yet made. He had shot hippos in the Tana, but felt rather desponding about his chances about bagging a ‘faro.’ However, I promised him that he should have that satisfaction, and my pledge was fulfilled the first time he went out with me. After that he shot many. He was, I believe, a first-rate shot, though somewhat hampered in the bush by the necessity of wearing spectacles.”

Soon after those words were written Dr. Kolb was killed by a rhinoceros under particularly affecting circumstances. El Hakim was travelling in company with him at the time, but on the fatal morning he was some half hour's march in the rear, and arrived only in time to see the end. I got the story from El Hakim, and can vouch for its truth as far as he was concerned in it.

It appeared that Dr. Kolb was walking at the head of his men, when he saw a half-grown rhinoceros in the path. He was carrying a Mannlicher rifle, the magazine loaded with soft-nosed bullets. He immediately fired, dropping the rhinoceros dead in its tracks. The mother rhino then sprang up from the grass, where she had been lying until then unobserved and probably asleep, and charged down on to Dr. Kolb and his party. She caught his gun-bearer first, and tossed him two or three times, her horn transfixing both the man's thighs. Dr. Kolb meanwhile was pouring magazine fire into her, but failed to stop her, and she charged him in turn. He turned and fled,

but was overtaken in a very few yards, and hoisted into the air, falling behind the rhinoceros, who passed on and disappeared. Her long sharp horn entered the lower part of his body from behind, and penetrated upwards for some distance. His men carried him into the shade of a bush, and there El Hakim found him half an hour later. He was quite conscious, and in no pain. El Hakim urged him to permit him to examine his injuries, but Dr. Kolb assured him that he was fatally wounded, and, like a true scientist, detailed his symptoms for El Hakim's benefit. He was quite calm and collected, and asked El Hakim for a stimulant, and brandy was immediately supplied. Dr. Kolb then referred to his watch, and calmly remarked that he had twenty minutes more of consciousness and half an hour of life, his prognosis proving correct in every particular.

The next morning as we were occupied in superintending the manufacture of the biltong, a shout of "Simba! simba!" (Lions! lions!) caused us to eagerly examine the landscape. Trotting unconcernedly past our camp, not more than four hundred yards away, were a superb lion and lioness. El Hakim, George, and I followed at once, and discovered them loitering about some distance from the buffalo entrails. We laid down near the remains, hoping they would come for them, and so give us a shot, and watched them for some time.

They were a magnificent pair. Although the lion is known to be rather a skulking brute than otherwise, there is such a suggestion of latent power combined with careless grace in its carriage, that it compels one's admiration and causes lion-shooting to appear an eminently desirable method of passing one's time. These two lions came gradually nearer, evidently attracted by the buffalo meat, but when they were about two hundred yards away, in spite of our caution, the lioness spotted us, and she immediately growled, and so put her lord and master on the alert. Presently, to our great disappointment, they turned and walked slowly away, stopping now and again to look round and growl. We followed them, and at times when they halted a little longer than usual, we almost got within range—almost, but not quite, they invariably moving on again when we approached closer than they judged expedient.

This game continued until we were several miles from camp, and, notwithstanding our ardour, we were getting tired. Eventually they retired to a patch of bush, but just as we were making arrangements to beat it, the

lioness emerged, and laid down in the grass out of range, being presently joined by her mate. The old game of follow-my-leader then recommenced, and after six hours of this we got rather sick of it. On the way they were joined by another male, a beautiful black-maned brute, the sight of which revived our flagging energies, and we continued the chase, but to no purpose. In spite of our efforts they kept a long way ahead, and finally went on at a trot, leaving us far in the rear, quite out-distanced, and extremely disgusted. We returned to camp after a fruitless tramp of about seven hours.

Jumbi returned in the evening with one of the deserters; he had been unable to secure the other. The captured culprit was the man who had carried the load of food, which he had *deliberately burnt*. It was really wicked. Food which was so hard to obtain, and which before long would be so sorely needed by our men, had been deliberately destroyed, and for no object, that we could ascertain, beyond sheer perversity. The delinquent was ordered a flogging—and got it. The other deserter, who had not been recaptured, had also burnt his load of Venetian beads, which were particularly valuable in view of our proposed stay among the Rendili.

I had the three buffalo heads buried in a large ant-heap against our return, as we were unable to carry them about with us, and to have hung them in the trees would have exposed them to theft from wandering Wandorobbo or stragglers from the Somali caravan. The ants were very large, being quite an inch in length, and of a bright scarlet colour; they died on exposure to the air and light. They bit very fiercely, drawing blood whenever they fastened their immensely powerful jaws. The men who buried the horns suffered considerably about the legs, but I was consoled by the thought that the horns would be safe from the hyænas while in charge of such powerful little warriors.

FOOTNOTES:

[7] “Elephant Hunting in East Equatorial Africa,” by Arthur H. Neumann (1898), p. 126.

CHAPTER IX.

JOURNEY DOWN THE WASO NYIRO.

Arrival at the Waso Nyiro—The “Green Camp”—The “cinder-heap”—The camp on fire—Scarcity of game—Hunting a rhino on mule-back.

Next morning we continued to follow the course of the little stream which issued, greatly diminished in size, from the opposite side of the swamp. The country grew more barren as we advanced. Great gravelly areas alternated with brown earth, and now and again an outcrop of quartz or lava occurred. The universal thorn tree was the only member of the vegetable world that seemed to be able to draw any sustenance from the arid soil, with the exception of a few cacti and small aloes. Rhinoceros there were in plenty, and several giraffe loomed on the horizon. We were also greatly excited to observe elephant tracks, two or three days old, trending north-eastward towards the Waso Nyiro. In the distance we could see frowning cliffs of pink gneiss, and due north, some peculiarly shaped hills, one in particular being an almost exact replica of the Great Pyramid of Cheops at Ghizeh. Another to the left of it consisted of a pyramidal base, surmounted by a columnar peak that by some agency or other had been split vertically into two unequal portions, which remained sticking boldly upwards like a couple of gigantic teeth. Standing out prominently to the north-north-west was the massive outline of Mount Lololokwe, 3000 feet above the level of the surrounding plain, while behind it, one point more to the westward, Mount Gwarguess reared its stately head 2000 feet higher.

To our great annoyance and dismay, the little stream we were following, which had been dwindling in size for some miles, now disappeared completely into a subterranean passage. It was eleven o'clock in the forenoon, so we crept into the scanty shade afforded by some thorn trees, and rested in preparation for a long march to the Waso Nyiro in the afternoon.

The heat was intense, and the atmosphere most remarkably dry and clear. Small objects at long distances stood out with remarkable distinctness. The

hills, at the foot of which flowed the Waso Nyiro, seemed not more than an hour's march distant.

About two o'clock, having rested sufficiently, we once more forged ahead, bearing more to the north-east than in the direction we had hitherto followed. We encountered the same soft crumbling brown earth, with loose stones on the surface. Aloes, morio trees, and thorn trees were the only vegetation, and even they were only sparsely distributed. The country was formed of long rolling ridges, which we traversed at right angles. It was a weary and tiresome march. Each time we climbed a ridge we looked eagerly forward for a sight of the longed-for Waso Nyiro. Again and again we were disappointed, each ridge exactly resembling the last. At four o'clock in the afternoon we entered a small belt of thorn trees and dodged a couple of rhinos who were love-making just inside, and would no doubt have resented being disturbed. When we once more emerged from the thorn belt we gazed over a broad plain which sloped gently down to a range of dun-coloured hills some miles away. The Waso Nyiro, we knew, flowed at the foot of these hills, and once more we pressed forward, momentarily forgetting our fatigue in our eagerness to reach the desired goal.

I was walking with my Martini over my shoulder, when I was considerably startled by a noise from my left, which caused me to hurriedly bring my rifle to the ready. It was a long-drawn growling grunt, and my first thought was of lions. Closer attention, however, solved the mystery. It was the cry of a zebra, one of a herd of Grevy's beautiful zebra which were congregated over half a mile away. The cry of the zebra is very like a long-drawn growling whistle, and in the distance, when too far off to hear the whistle, the growl very much resembles that of a lion. There were large herds of oryx in sight, and a few rhinoceros and water-buck.

The sun sank gradually lower in the western heavens, and we were still apparently no nearer the range of hills we were making for, so deceptive are the apparent distances in the clear atmosphere. But just as dusk had fallen, our eyes were gladdened by the sight of a large clump of Doum palms growing in the centre of an open green space a mile away. We made towards them, and feasted our weary eyes on the beautiful green expanse stretching out before us.

A spring emerged from the earth here, perhaps the same stream we had followed in the morning, and which had so disappointed us by suddenly disappearing. The water was quite warm, and impregnated with mineral salts; so much so as to be almost undrinkable. It welled up into a hole in the rocks about 20 feet long and 12 feet wide by 4 feet deep, forming a lovely natural bath, overgrown with varicoloured mosses and ferns. The overflow meandered through the grass for 100 yards or so in a little stream a foot deep with a pebbly bottom fringed by dark green rushes, and then spread out into a swamp overgrown with tall papyrus reeds 10 or 12 feet high. There were two or three acres of good green grass on one side of the swamp, to which our animals rushed with whinnies of delight the instant they caught sight of it, and ate and ate as if they would never stop. We crossed this little stream, and pitched the tents under some large thorn trees. We christened the place "Green Camp." It was about 3500 feet above sea-level, and over 1000 feet lower than M'thara.

There was a splendid specimen of the Doum palm on the other side of the camp, which can be seen in the photograph of the Green camp. The Doum palm (*Hyphaene Thebaica*) is called m'lala by the Swahilis. It is a very graceful palm, and grows to a great height on the Waso Nyiro, and was to be found everywhere along the banks of the river. The stem divides into two branches a few feet from the ground, each branch again and again dividing and being crowned with its canopy of broad, flat, fan-shaped leaves. The fruit, about the size of a potato, is mostly hard uneatable kernel, with a layer of moist fibre, about half an inch thick, contained in a reddish bitter rind. It reminds one of eating chopped cocoanut fibre, with a sweetish, slightly astringent flavour. George and I ate quantities of it later on, as also did the men, when we were without other vegetables.

While we were pitching the tents a rhinoceros emerged from among the papyrus, where he had been wallowing in the swamp, and trotted towards us. A shout soon caused him to change his mind, and off he went full gallop for the Waso Nyiro, which, I should have remarked, was about half a mile distant.

The country outside the camp was covered in places with large white patches of mineral salts, principally carbonate of soda and sulphate of magnesia; but we searched in vain for any common salt. There was very little soil, and the men who were driving in the tent-pegs struck rock three

or four inches below the surface. A violent gale of wind came on at sundown, and it needed the most extraordinary precautions, in the way of extra guy-ropes to the tents, to prevent them being blown bodily away.

After supper we held a consultation to decide what form our plans should take. First and foremost, we wished to find the Burkeneji and Rendili peoples, in order to trade for ivory. These people are nomads, and wander at will over the immense tract of desert country bounded, roughly, on the north by Southern Somaliland, on the south by the Waso Nyiro, on the west by Lake Rudolph, and on the east by the fortieth degree of longitude. They have one or two permanent settlements, notably Marsabit, some eight or ten days' journey to the north of the Waso Nyiro, and at Mount Nyiro, situated some two or three marches south of Lake Rudolph. There was every sign that there had been a long drought (we found afterwards that no rain had fallen for three years), and it was more than likely that they had come south to the Waso Nyiro, as was their habit when water was scarce in the arid country to the north.

After a little deliberation, therefore, we determined to follow the course of the Waso Nyiro down-stream—that being, of course, to the eastward—in order to try to discover the Rendili, whom we were very anxious to find.

We started soon after daybreak the following morning. The weather was perfect, being dry, warm, and clear; we felt it a pleasure to be alive. We followed the river, as there was, of course, no other water. The course of the Waso Nyiro is always clearly defined by the belts of Doum palms that fringe the banks, and by the greater greenness of the vegetation in its immediate vicinity. At first we thought that if we followed the general direction of the river, viz. eastward, we should never be far from the water, whether it was in sight at the moment or not. Two or three days' journey, however, undeceived us on that point. The river, as a matter of fact, winds about in a most extraordinary manner, and on several occasions when, thinking we were near the river, we halted for the purpose of camping, we found, owing to an utterly unexpected turn, that it was really miles away. Consequently we adopted the more fatiguing but safer course of following it in all its windings.

Just such an experience befell us on the morning we left "Green Camp." Away to the eastward of that place, and about ten miles distant, was a mass

of gneiss rock known as Mount Sheba, towering 500 feet above the plain, and 3500 feet above sea-level. We knew the river flowed within a mile or two of it, but on which side, whether to the north or south, we were uncertain. We therefore made for the north end of the mountain, as, if the river flowed to the south, we should necessarily meet it, while if it went to the north we should still be going right.

The first hour's march was fairly easy. Level stretches of sand covered with patches of mineral salts, and dotted with stunted thorn trees, offered no great impediment to our progress. Several rhinoceros were browsing about, one brute being right in our path. We cautiously approached and shouted at him, but he did not seem disposed to move. On approaching nearer we saw that he was wounded, a great hole in his ribs showing that he had been fighting his brother rhinoceros, and had, apparently, considerably the worst of the argument. Rhinoceros are inveterate fighters amongst themselves; and of all the animals shot during the expedition there was not one who did not show healed or partially healed wounds somewhere in the region of the ribs. As this particular beast would not move, I started forward with the intention of shooting him, but he suddenly awoke to the exigencies of the situation, and quietly trotted out of harm's way.

As we proceeded, smooth patches of black lava showed themselves above the surface of the sand, and quartzose rocks occurred here and there. Half a mile further on rose a plateau about 25 feet high, apparently composed of some black substance. It lay right in our path, and we pushed forward towards it in order to more closely examine it. When we arrived at the foot, we found, to our dismay, that it was composed of blocks of black vesicular lava, varying in size from a football to an ordinary trunk. It stretched in either direction, left and right, as far as the eye could see, and there was no alternative but to attempt to cross over the top, which we were very loth to do, although we consoled ourselves with the thought that it would only be for a few hundred yards. We therefore scrambled to the summit, and only then got a faint idea of what was before us.

The whole country round was covered with loose blocks of lava to a depth of 30 to 50 feet. The surface was not even fairly level, but was irregularly disposed in heaps, forming little hills and valleys of loose and often insecurely poised stones. There was a great and ever-present risk of a careless movement bringing two or three tons of stuff rolling down, and

obliterating the unfortunate individual who had disturbed the *status quo*. The hard slag-like blocks were perforated by innumerable holes caused by air-bubbles when the lava was fluid, giving them the structure and appearance of a dark brown, or black, petrified sponge, the ragged edges of which soon reduced our boots to ribbons. The men who were wearing sandals suffered severely, as did the animals. It was, of course, impossible to ride, the mules having painfully hard work even to get along alone.

Imagine a tiny ant endeavouring to clamber across a newly laid, unrolled cinder-track, and you will have our position precisely. There was, however, no help for it; the cinder-heap, as we dubbed it, had to be crossed. We advanced slowly and painfully for over two hours, but, to our inexpressible disappointment, saw no signs of nearing the other side. The heat of the sun was terrific. Its rays, beating vertically down, were readily absorbed by the lava, seemingly almost causing it to glow in the intense heat, which, radiating afresh from under our feet, gave us the feeling of being slowly baked in an immense oven.

At the end of the second hour we halted for a space, dead beat. Sitting still in the sun we found was much worse than walking, so we resumed our painful march, climbing slowly and wearily over the interminable lava-heaps, following a faint track made by wandering rhinoceros. Here and there a few stunted thorn bushes made a pitiful struggle for existence, though how they managed to live we could not imagine, seeing that the closest scrutiny failed to show any traces of soil, their roots seemingly going straight down between the blocks of lava. As we walked, El Hakim suddenly jogged me in the ribs with his elbow, thus calling my attention to a couple of giraffe which were standing about fifty yards ahead watching us. Strange to say, they did not exhibit the least alarm, but watched us till we had approached to within twenty yards, when they turned and shambled off, with their ungainly heads swaying to and fro like the masthead of a ship in a seaway.

A few minutes later we walked round a corner right on to a rhinoceros. He faced round, and we instantly scattered. I made for the lee side of a convenient lava-heap, and loaded my .303; El Hakim and George following suit. The slight noise we made in doing so scared the brute, for he suddenly turned and trotted away over the loose lava as if it were a lawn, and, notwithstanding his bulk, without a sound.

We toiled onwards for another couple of hours, when our hearts were gladdened by an appearance of smoothness underfoot. It was only temporary, however, and soon we were again continuing our unequal struggle with nature. Slowly and mechanically we toiled along, El Hakim, George and I, and our personal servants; the rest of the safari had long since tailed off, and were scattered in twos and threes along the path in our rear.

The sun rose higher and higher as the morning advanced, and scorched us till it seemed as if we had not a single drop of moisture left in our bruised and wearied bodies. I feebly wondered if we were doomed to be a sort of modern edition of the “Wandering Jew,” with Dante’s “Inferno” as the sphere of operations. When I suggested the idea to my companions in a vain attempt at a joke, it did not provoke even a smile. Our boots were ruined, and our feet sore and cramped from springing from one piece of loose rock to another. The lava rolled and slipped from under us, bruising our ankles; we were parched with thirst, hot, dog-tired, and altogether in a most miserable plight.

Suddenly George gave vent to a feeble hurrah! El Hakim and I gazed wonderingly at him, trying to grasp the reason for such a singular demonstration. He indicated by a gesture that we should look ahead. We did so, and immediately endeavoured, as well as our parched and swollen tongues would permit, to follow his example, though the attempt was more or less a failure. There before us was a sharp dip; at the foot stretched one of the familiar, gravelly, sandy plains covered with thorn trees. We had grumbled enough at them heretofore, but after that terrific “cinder-heap” the thorn-covered plain seemed a veritable paradise.

As if to make amends for our sufferings, we at that moment caught sight of Mount Sheba, which was our objective on leaving camp that morning. It was, alas! still some miles distant, but it meant water.

Away we went at a quick walk, animated by only one desire—the desire for water. There were no signs of our safari, but we knew that they could easily follow our tracks, so we hurried on. Hour after hour we pushed on, now walking and anon half running, in our eagerness to reach the river. We met several rhinoceros, but such was our hurry we did not stop to speak. Suddenly a group of the thrice-blessed Doum palms appeared at the bottom of a valley. We raced down the slope, and there at the bottom lay a pool of

beautiful, cool, clear, sparkling water. Ye gods! what pen can hope to adequately describe the supreme delight of a long, long draught of cool, pure water, after hours of such a sun as we had been exposed to on the “cinder-heap?” We lay down on our stomachs, and, plunging our faces beneath the surface, drank our fill of the life-preserving fluid. When we were satisfied, we laved our chests, and, playing with the water, watched the sparkling crystal drops drip from our fingers and fall with a musical splash into the parent pool. It was not such a long time, after all, that we had been without water, but the sun was terribly fierce on the heaps of lava, and, in addition, the horrible uncertainty as to whether we were not going further and further away from water, increased our thirst to quite an abnormal degree.

Afterwards we despatched the two or three men who had accompanied us on the backward track, to communicate the joyful news to the rest of the safari, and to relieve of their burdens those on whom the long and arduous march had had most effect. In the course of an hour or so some of the men began to arrive in twos and threes. The others, we found, were not far behind, so we went on, and in another half-hour reached the river.

Whether it was the contrast to what we had just undergone or not, the river appeared to us to be as near an approach to Paradise as it is possible to get in this world. The swift water rushing past, here over rocks in miniature cataracts, and there over smooth gravel beds, gave forth a musical murmur in the highest degree conducive to slumber. As our tents, eatables, and, indeed, all our personal equipment were somewhere behind, halfway between the river and the “cinder-heap,” we slumbered accordingly under the grateful shade of the palms.

A curious fact which I have often noticed on a long and fatiguing march is that, as in this instance, when the first of one’s men get into camp, they are invariably the men who are carrying the loads of trade goods, the cloth, or, unkindest cut of all, the cooking utensils!

Towards evening the rest of the safari staggered in, some of the men having been twelve hours on the road. One man had fallen from exhaustion and died on that awful “cinder-heap,” his load having been brought on by Jumbi. We had made, I suppose, about six miles in a bee line from our last

camp, though how much ground we had actually covered in our laborious march it is difficult to say.

At the conclusion of our breakfast-dinner-supper we turned in, thoroughly tired out; but, as it happened, we were destined not to enjoy a quiet night's repose. First Ramathani came into the tent; he held an egg in his hand—a guinea-fowl's egg.

“The men found this, Bwana,” said he.

Now, I fancied an egg very much, so I awakened George. “I'll go halves with you,” said I, when I had induced sufficient wakefulness in him to understand what I was saying.

Ramathani was accordingly ordered to boil the egg. I lent him my watch, so that he should boil it for exactly three minutes, neither more nor less. Meanwhile I secured two spoons and the pepper-box, and we waited expectantly till Ramathani reappeared bearing the precious egg cooked to a turn. I took it and rapped it with my spoon. Hardly had I touched it before it exploded with a loud report, and flew to pieces. It was empty inside, at least it appeared empty; a second after it blew up George looked blankly at me, and I returned the compliment, and we were still gazing at each other when the after-effect, so to speak, struck us. Then, choking, we made a dive for the open air. Hastily summoning Ramathani, we bade him penetrate to the interior of the tent, open both ends, and then wave a blanket till the sewer gas, or whatever it was, had dispersed, a proceeding which occupied some time. We then turned in again, and slept peacefully, though odorously, till somewhere about midnight.

Suddenly a cry of “Moto! moto!” (Fire! fire!) rang out, accompanied by a terrible roaring and crackling. Out we rushed, clad only in our shirts—the night was warm—to find one portion of the camp in a blaze. We seized blankets, sacking, anything we could get hold of, and furiously attacked the flames.

The dry grass and reeds burned like paper, but the great danger lay in the palm trees. If once they caught fire, our tents, stores, and, in fact, everything, would be utterly destroyed. We fought, therefore, for our very existence. Fortunately we managed, by the most strenuous exertions, to keep the flames clear of the palms, and, after an hour's hard work, to

entirely subdue them. Our bare feet and legs were slightly burnt, and my shirt was scorched, but beyond that no serious damage was done. We turned in again at 2 a.m., and slept undisturbed till 7 a.m., when we once more resumed our march.

We intended to go only a short distance, in order to give the men a rest after their fatiguing exertions of the previous day. The country was by no means level, and here and there showed a tendency to produce more lava-blocks, but we met with nothing that seriously impeded our progress. We saw a herd of zebra in the distance, but they were very shy and wary. Our men, with that reckless improvidence which distinguishes the Swahili "pagazi" (porter), had already consumed the twelve days' store of grain and flour which we had brought from M'thara, and had now (six days after leaving that place) only a few pieces of buffalo-meat left. It was imperative, therefore, that we should shoot some meat for them.

Smooth patches of sand, interspersed with bare rock, now became the predominant features of the landscape, and game was very hard to approach in consequence.

The river, which we sedulously followed, was distinguished by the line of palms which fringed the banks. It flowed in places at the foot of frowning cliffs of gneiss, their rugged scarps inhabited by countless monkeys and baboons which chattered incessantly, skipping from ledge to ledge, apparently the only animated creatures in the whole sun-baked, dun-coloured landscape. I successfully stalked and shot a grantei, which, in my opinion, is the very best eating of all East African gazelles. Saddle of grantei, after being hung two or three days, is a joint fit for a monarch. We were very anxious to shoot a rhinoceros for the men, which was probably the reason why we saw none, notwithstanding that they had been so indecently numerous during the previous few days.

We camped at ten o'clock in the forenoon on the bank of the river, which here flows over gigantic boulders of gneiss, and sometimes white sandstone or granite. In the afternoon we saw large herds of game a mile or so from camp, principally oryx, zebra, and grantei. They were strangely shy, and, the country being perfectly open, I found it impossible to get nearer than 800 yards to them.

The following day we were off again soon after sunrise. El Hakim shot a small grantei soon after starting. We also saw a herd of buffalo, but could not get within range, as they took alarm, plunged into the river, and, swimming across, retired to the safety of the country on the other side. We also saw some giraffe on the opposite bank, but this portion of the river was unfordable. El Hakim went out in the afternoon to try to shoot meat for the men, but could not get within range of two rhinoceros, the only animals he saw. Food for the men was getting rather a pressing question, and when we resumed the march on the following morning, George and I took a different path from that of the safari, but parallel to it, in the hope that we might see game.

During the whole march we never saw a single head, and we arrived at the place where the safari had halted, thoroughly tired and disgusted. As we got in, El Hakim had just sighted a rhinoceros, and, seizing his rifle, he mounted the mule and gave chase. The rhinoceros, however, retreated, followed at full speed by El Hakim, while George and I had an opportunity of enjoying the unique sight of a mounted rhinoceros hunt. When it came to speed, however, the rhino was an easy first, and El Hakim returned, hot, weary, and, worse still, unsuccessful.

CHAPTER X.

RETURN TO THE "GREEN CAMP."

The "Swamp Camp"—Beautiful climate of the Waso Nyiro—Failure to obtain salt at N'gomba—Beset by midges—No signs of the Rendili—Nor of the Wandorobbo—We decide to retrace our steps—An object-lesson in rhinoceros-shooting—The Green Camp once more.

On account of the animals, El Hakim had directed that the camp should be pitched on a tongue of grass-land adjoining a large swamp. This swamp extended over an area of quite two square miles, probably more. The water, being impregnated with mineral salts, was so brackish that it was absolutely undrinkable. A hundred yards from our camping-place the Waso Nyiro foamed and tumbled past at the bottom of a deep gorge, which, in the course of countless centuries, it had cut through the solid rock (gneiss). The sides of the gorge were perfectly perpendicular. Two or three little streams, emanating from the swamp, drained over the summit, falling in clouds of spray upon the rocks a hundred feet below. There were several wild date palms (*Phœnix* sp.)—the only specimens I saw in the whole of North Kenia—growing at the side of the cliff; they were bearing fruit, which, however, was quite green and very small. The Swahilis name this palm "m'tende," and the fruit "tende." We found the side of the gorge extremely precipitous, and had to go up-stream for quite a quarter of a mile for a suitable place to descend.

The weather was glorious. It was so dry that the intense heat of the day passed almost unnoticed. The evenings I shall never forget; they were simply idyllic. As the sun set, a cool breeze sprang up; cool, yet not cold. After our frugal supper, we usually donned our pyjamas, lit cigars, and sat out in the open air, now carrying on a desultory conversation, and anon sitting silent, wrapt in contemplation of the manifold beauties of the tropical night. The atmosphere was so dry that no dew fell, and it was perfectly safe in that beautiful climate to sit out in the open air when only partially clothed. The clearness and purity of the deep blue-black of the heavens, studded with its myriads of brilliant stars, was such as I have seen only in Egypt and the Southern Seas. At such times the only sound which broke the

stillness was the far-off musical roar of the Waso Nyiro, as, hurrying to its unknown destination, it tumbled over its rocky bed; or the murmur of subdued conversation from where the men sat round their fires, resting after the toil and labour of the day. As the evening advanced the animals lay down one by one, an example soon followed by the men. Presently, our cigars finished, we also would reluctantly retire, not at once to sleep, however, but instead, opening both ends of the tents to the fullest extent, to lie down and gaze out into the calm and silent majesty of the night, drinking in the beauty of the scene with its atmosphere of restfulness and peace, and requiring, for the moment, nothing further from the Author of all things.

In the morning the order of things changed somewhat. As the first signs of dawn appeared in the eastern heavens, Jumbi aroused the sleeping porters with his cry of “Haya! haya! safari! safari!” Ramathani next arose, and, blowing into a blaze the embers of yesterday’s fire, proceeded to boil the kettle for our matutinal coffee—that is, when we possessed any. A rattle of buckets outside our tent, as the boys poured fresh water into our wash-basins, roused us, and we waited with half-closed eyes for the appearance of the boy Bilali with our freshly greased boots.

Juma waited on El Hakim, and sometimes he was a little slack in the performance of his duties. George and I, quietly dressing, would hear something like this from El Hakim’s tent—

El Hakim (*in a muffled voice*): “Juma!”

No answer.

El Hakim (*in raised accents*): “Juma-a!”

Still no answer.

El Hakim (*in a very loud voice*): “Juma-a-a!” (Sotto voce): “Where the devil *is* that boy? Oh! *here* you are. Wapi viatu?” (Where are my boots?)

An interval of silence.

El Hakim (*evidently getting angry, and alternating English with the vernacular*): “Ju-ma-a! Have you got those boots yet? Eh? Wapi viatu? Eh? Wewi sedui? (You don’t know?) What the dickens *do* you know? Tafuta sana, maramoja!” (Search well at once!)

(A moment's silence, broken by sounds of searching among kit-boxes, etc., followed by an indistinct murmur from the unhappy Juma.)

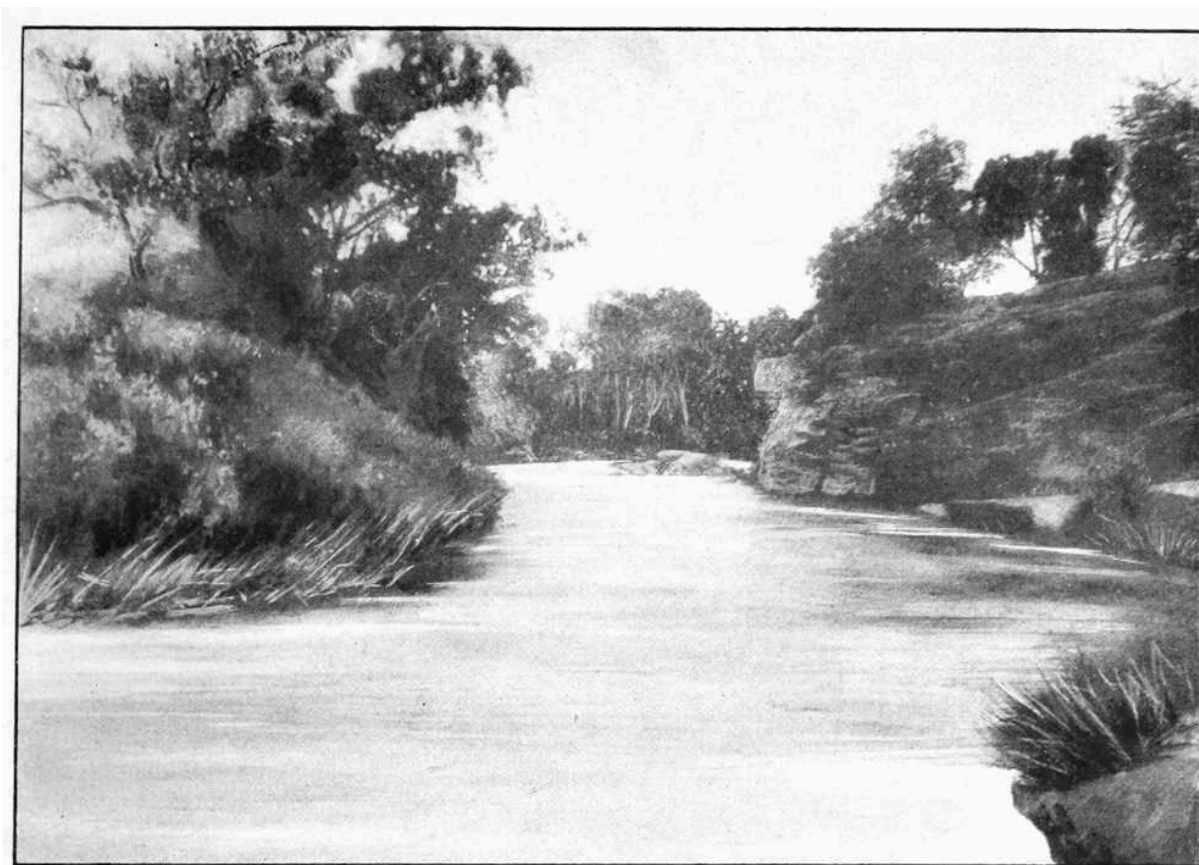
El Hakim: "You can't find them, eh? Now, I'll tell you what I'm going to do with you! I'm going to give you a hiding! Wewi sikia? (Do you hear?) Wha—at! They're under my bed, where I put them last night! Hum—m—m! Nenda Kuleta maaji! Oopace! (Go and get some water, quickly!) If you don't do better than this in future you shall carry a load!"

After we had washed and dressed, the tent-bearers, who were already waiting, pulled up the pegs, and in a trice the tents were lying flat on the ground, leaving the blankets and kit exposed, waiting to be packed up ready for the march by Ramathani's deft fingers. Donkeys trotted skittishly round, colliding with everything and everybody, waywardly declining to be saddled and loaded by the perspiring Jumbi and his assistant, and skilfully evading all attempts at capture. The command, "Funga mzigo yako!" (Tie up your loads) having been given, the men selected their loads from the pile in which they had been stacked overnight, and proceeded to bind their effects to them with lengths of rope of native manufacture, either of skin or fibre. El Hakim, George, and I having finished our tea or coffee, and seen that the tents and kits had been properly packed and ready for the march, prepared in our turn. Ammunition was slipped into side pockets, water-bottles filled, and weapons examined. When Jumbi reported that the donkeys were ready, I raised my voice, "Watu wote tayire?" (Are all the men ready?) "N'deo! tayire, Bwana" (Yes, all ready, master!) would be shouted in reply. A last look round to see if anything had been forgotten or overlooked, a critical examination of the donkeys' pack-saddles, or a dispute between two porters summarily disposed of by the judicious application of a boot, and "Chikua mzigo yako!" (Take up your loads) would ring out. Immediately after Jumbi, shouting "Haya! haya! safari twende!" (Hurry up! hurry up! go on your journey!) would "chunga" his donkeys, and El Hakim, mounting his mule, would set out, followed by the porters, George and I staying behind to see the last man out of camp, and safely on the road; thus another day's march commenced.

We made up our minds to stop a day or two at this "Swamp Camp," as we called it, in order to give the animals a much-needed rest; there were also sundry small matters which required attention, and which could not be done very well on the march.

An hour or two after the camp was pitched we despatched Jumbi, accompanied by three other men, to Mount N'gombe to look for salt. Mount N'gombe was placed on my map as due north of Mount Sheba, which we had passed two days before. It is really some thirty or forty miles to the east of Sheba, as it (N'gombe) lies some thirty miles south-south-east of our "Swamp Camp," which was itself some twenty miles due east of Sheba. It was also marked on the map as a salt crater, and in it lay our only hope of obtaining salt during the next four months, the small supply I obtained from Ismail Robli, in M'thara, being already finished.

In the afternoon George and I went down to the river and indulged in a most delightful swim, in spite of the supposed presence of crocodiles. Towards evening the mosquitos troubled us somewhat, and prevented us sleeping at all well.



VIEW ON THE WASO NYIRO, NEAR "SWAMP CAMP."



CUTTING UP A RHINOCEROS FOR FOOD. (See page [190](#).)

We were up very early on the following morning, but it was not our own fault. At sunrise we were assailed by myriads of midges; they were very, very small, but they possessed a most venomous sting, the mosquitos being, in fact, quite harmless by comparison. They settled down in clouds on man and beast, and drove us all nearly frantic. Our faces, necks, and arms were soon covered with innumerable bites, which itched with a malevolence beyond anything I had hitherto experienced. George and I seized our rifles and fled from them as from a pestilence. We were out all the morning looking for game, and never once caught sight of a single animal. The men were badly in want of food, and we ourselves were in great need of raw hide wherewith to repair our boots. George and I had each attempted to buy an extra pair before leaving Nairobi, but there were no boots our size in the town at the time. We had been walking with our feet showing through those we were wearing, which were almost dropping to pieces. The country was

so rough and stony underfoot that a long march was an event to be painfully remembered.

Jumbi and his companions returned in the evening from M'gomba, having discovered no traces of salt! They brought us samples of carbonate of soda, which, they said, was the only kind of salt there, but there was plenty of that. They had seen no natives, which was both surprising and disappointing, as there are generally a few Wandorobbo wandering up and down the Waso Nyiro. We were the more anxious to meet some of these people, as they generally have news of the Rendili.

The Wandorobbo are a nomad tribe of native hunters, who wander round the country at their own sweet will in search of wild honey and elephants. One or two Wandorobbo are to be found living in or near all the permanent settlements of both the Masai and the A'kikuyu. They live entirely by hunting; cultivating nothing. They are very skilful hunters of the elephant, which they kill with a poisoned spear. This spear consists of a heavy shaft about five feet long with a socket in the top, into which the poisoned barb is loosely fitted. Stealthily approaching his unconscious quarry, the naked hunter, with poised spear, watches his opportunity. At the right moment a quick movement of the arm launches the heavy spear, and the keen barb penetrates the elephant's vitals. The hunter instantly dives into the bush; sometimes he is caught and killed. Accidents will happen, but I do not know that such an occurrence spoils the appetites of his companions. The elephant on receiving the thrust generally rushes away through the bush, and the spear-shaft, falling off, leaves the poisoned head in the wound to do its deadly work. They spear hippopotamus in the same way, but leave the rhinoceros severely alone unless they happen to catch him asleep. The origin of the Wandorobbo is still somewhat of a mystery. It is generally supposed that they are the offspring of degenerate Masai, with admixtures of other tribes. To a certain extent this is the case, but there are pure-blooded Wandorobbo who, in the opinion of Professor Gregory as recorded in his book,^[8] are of very different descent. He says, "I suggest that they should be called the Wa'doko, for they agree in habits, appearance, and position with the tribe thus named by Harris^[9] and Avanchers.^[10] The Doko were said to occur on a high, cold, misty plateau in the neighbourhood of dense bamboo forests. Their home is about six weeks' march from Mombasa, and between a snow-covered mountain called Obada and Lake

El Boo or *Bari*. The mountain must be Kenia, and the lake Baringo. Hence it seems safe to conclude that the Doko or Wa'berikimo of Harris, Avanchers, Krapff,^[11] and Rigby^[12] are the elephant-hunting Negrillos on the plateau of Lykipia and the district to the north."

When discussing the Wandorobbo with El Hakim, I learned that the Wandorobbo have a language of their own, though it is only spoken among a few of the tribe on Mogogodo (a hog-backed ridge north-west of the Doenyo lol Deika), where some of the pure-blooded Wandorobbo—or Wa'doko—have a permanent settlement. They were very unwilling to let strangers hear it, a fact also mentioned by Prof. Gregory. El Hakim had heard scraps of it, and it was unlike anything else he had ever known. He was ignorant of the language of the South African Bushmen, and therefore could not say if there was any resemblance.

As we had now been two days at the "Swamp Camp," and had seen no natives, and consequently had no news of the Rendili, we thought it unlikely that they were encamped down-stream as we had supposed. We decided, therefore, to retrace our steps to the "Green Camp," and from thence try up the river in the direction of Lololokwe and Wargasse, and thence onwards to Koma and Seran. Having once been over the ground between our present camp and the "Green Camp," we were to some extent familiar with the topographical aspect of the intervening country. We calculated, therefore, to be able to make several short cuts, thereby making the return journey in a day or perhaps two days less than we had taken on our journey hither.

The next morning we started very early, being encouraged thereto by our implacable little foes, the midges. They made matters very unpleasant for a while, and we were quite half a mile on our road before finally getting rid of them. Taking a short cut across the mouth of a big curve made by the river hereabouts, we travelled to our camp of July 31st, missing the one of August 1st, passing on the way the remains of a vast Rendili encampment several years old.

Soon afterwards our men were gladdened by the sight of a rhinoceros accompanied by a *m'toto* (young one), and El Hakim and George immediately set off in chase of her. Suddenly, to our astonishment, we heard the sound of a shot from the other side of a ridge in front. The chase

of the rhinoceros was at once abandoned, and we raced up the slope, expecting we knew not what. Nothing! absolutely nothing! met our eager gaze; the country stretched at our feet was the usual gravelly, stony abomination studded with the thorn trees we were so accustomed to; the course of the river showing in the distance as a darker green line in the brown landscape. Strain our gaze as we might, nothing in the way of a safari met our eyes. It was inexplicable. We could have sworn we heard a shot, and so also could the men; but nevertheless the landscape appeared absolutely deserted. I fired a shot from my own rifle, but, beyond the multitudinous echoes, there was no response. We treated the occurrence as we would any other riddle, and gave it up, and once more proceeded on our way.

Presently another rhinoceros hove in sight, and El Hakim started for him. He had almost got within comfortable range of the brute, which, unconscious of its danger, was busily feeding, when the men, discovering what he was after, raised yells of delight at the prospect of a feed at last, and to El Hakim's intense annoyance startled his quarry, which made off at a gallop. He returned in a towering passion—"Wewe Kula mejani sassa" (You can eat grass now), said he. "I'm not going to be made a fool of when I am trying to shoot meat for you," and mounting his mule he resumed his place at the head of the safari.

Towards evening we reached our old camp of July 31st, and on arrival we immediately sent men back to try to discover if there were any signs of another safari in the neighbourhood. One of the men also was missing, together with his rifle and a valuable load of cloth. We thought that he might have sat down to rest and fallen asleep, and let the safari pass on, so we sent Jumbi up the summit of a lofty hill near the camp, with a gamekeeper's flare which burnt for five minutes with a brilliant blue light, and would be visible in that clear atmosphere and at that height for several miles. As he did not turn up that night or the next morning in spite of the most diligent search by the parties of men we sent out, we concluded that he had deserted and gone back to M'thara. The other men whom we had sent to look for and report on the possible presence of another safari in the neighbourhood returned, stating that they had seen no signs of a safari whatever. We questioned the men as to whether any of them had fired the

shot, but they each and all denied it; besides, the shot had seemed to come from the front. It was a mystery which we never solved.

Next morning I left camp half an hour before the safari, in order to try to shoot some meat before the caravan, with its varied noises, frightened the game away. A mile or so out of camp I saw a solitary oryx (*Oryx beisa*) feeding in the open. There was no cover, and the need was urgent, so I sank my scruples about shooting at a long range, and crawling to just within two hundred yards I let drive at it with the .303. My bullet struck it in the ribs, but failed to knock the beast over. A second shot clean through the shoulder did the business, however. I waited till the safari came up with me, and joined them. The flesh of the oryx is tough and tasteless, and when dried the hide is extraordinarily hard, and as stiff as a board.

At the end of a two and a half hours' march we reached the camp at which we had such a narrow escape from destruction by fire on July 30th. It was now completely burnt out, having evidently caught fire again after our departure. The fire had spread very much, the palms for over two miles along the bank being reduced to a collection of mere blackened poles, in many places still smouldering. Camping was out of the question, so we went on again for another hour and a half. As we were crossing a small sand river which ran across our path, a herd of water-buck dashed out from among the palms forty yards ahead, racing across our front in fine style. It was a chance not to be missed, and raising my .303 I took a snapshot and brought one down with a bullet through the shoulder. Two or three hundred yards further on I unexpectedly came upon a small herd of grantei, and another lucky shot laid low a fine buck; not at all a bad morning's work in a district so devoid of game as that through which we were passing.

Soon after I shot the water-buck we deviated to the right, and, entering the belt of palms, selected a shady spot a few yards from the river and halted for a meal which we called breakfast, though it was past midday. At three o'clock in the afternoon we were again on the road, and remembering the "cinder-heap," kept close to the river-bank. It was no use, however, as we discovered to our intense disgust that the lava came right down to the river, and there ended abruptly, as there were no traces of it on the opposite bank. Its difficulties, were, however, modified to a great extent by the fact that it was possible at intervals to descend to the water's edge, and march for sometimes a quarter or even half a mile along the smooth sand.

After more than two hours' wearisome tramp, we got into the open plains stretching away to the "Green Camp." It was then growing dusk, and as we had still some miles to go, we hurried forward. Presently a solitary rhinoceros appeared, quietly feeding, about three hundred yards away to our right. El Hakim inquired if I would shoot it, but as I was hot, tired, and perhaps a little short-tempered, I declined, hinting that I was anxious to see him put his precepts on short-range shooting into practice. It was an ungracious speech, and El Hakim would have been quite right to have ignored my remark. As it was, he merely sniffed, but dismounted, and taking his .577 from Juma pointedly asked George if he would like to accompany him, an offer George accepted with alacrity. El Hakim walked down, followed by George, and, then advanced cautiously to within twenty yards of the unsuspecting rhinoceros. He then raised his rifle, and, pausing a moment to aim, pulled the trigger. A puff of dense white smoke appeared, followed an instant later by a heavy report. The stricken rhinoceros jumped, then galloped madly away, with a bullet through the lungs, falling dead before it had gone fifty yards.

It was a pretty exhibition, and it looked so absurdly simple that when, on the report of El Hakim's rifle, a second rhinoceros jumped up from the grass between us, where it had been lying unobserved, I snatched the Martini from Ramathani, and slipping a cartridge into the breech, ran up to within sixty yards of it, and kneeling down banged off at its shoulder. I admit that sixty yards was a long and unsportsmanlike range, but I was anxious to bag the beast before El Hakim, who was approaching it on his return from the dead rhinoceros, in a direction at right angles to my line of fire, could get within range. Of course my rhino, when hit, behaved quite differently to El Hakim's. It galloped madly, it is true, but in my direction. It came straight for me, its head lowered and tail up, and I slipped another cartridge into my rifle, fully expecting to see fireworks within a very few seconds. Nearer and nearer it came, but just as I braced myself up for the shot that should decide my fate, my antagonist swerved aside and commenced what Neumann calls the rhino's death-waltz, which consists of backing round and round with its head in the air, until it succumbs. In another moment he was down, and as I surveyed my prostrate quarry I mentally patted myself on the back for what I considered a good performance.

My self-congratulations, however, were rudely dispelled by El Hakim, who had come silently behind me, remarking in his quiet voice, "H'm-m, just the sort of thing you would do," thereby covering me with confusion; I ventured to remonstrate, and he then asked me where I had hit the beast. I showed him: the bullet had missed the shoulder and struck the neck, severing the main artery and the wind-pipe—cutting the beast's throat, in fact. "Does not that emphasize what I have told you?" he inquired. "If you had gone close enough to be certain of placing your bullet in the shoulder, you would not have run the risk you did. As it is, it is a very lucky thing for you that your bullet struck the artery; so you see you owe your freedom from accident more to good luck than good shooting."

I admitted the justice of the rebuke, and determined to manage things better next time.

On the next occasion I tackled a rhinoceros I endeavoured to put into practice the lesson I had learnt, though it could hardly be considered a happy attempt. This time the fault lay in carelessness due to over-confidence. It was in this way. We were going across a piece of open country in the near neighbourhood of the Waso Nyiro, when we saw a rhinoceros just within a fringe of stunted thorn bush, some four hundred yards to the right. El Hakim looked at me inquiringly. I nodded, and, taking the Martini, placed a couple of cartridges in the pocket of my shirt and set out, never doubting but that one cartridge would be sufficient. By careful stalking I got to within fifteen yards of the rhino, and aiming at the shoulder pulled the trigger. To my horror I saw the blood appear on his withers, the bullet striking too high up, just wounding sufficiently to annoy, but not disable him. The rhino at first stood still, and then slowly walked away. I was unwilling to risk my last cartridge on a doubtful shot, so I remained passive. Presently he stopped again a few yards further on, and loading up again I made a move to try to get nearer. In so doing I unavoidably made a slight noise on the loose stones underfoot, which was apparently what the rhino was waiting for, as he came round like a flash and charged me. I went hot and cold by turns as I remembered how much depended on my solitary cartridge, and as further disguise was useless, I dashed to leeward of a small heap of stones two or three feet high, which lay a yard or two away on my right. Round came the rhinoceros after me, and I dodged to the other side, and, a favourable opportunity presenting itself, I put my bullet fairly into

his spine, dropping him dead not three yards from me. I breathed a great sigh of relief, and walking back to El Hakim and George, who had been watching the performance, assumed an air of great nonchalance, and casually asked El Hakim for a cigar. That gentleman gazed steadily at me for a moment, but said never a word, and we resumed our interrupted march in silence.

Having now bagged two rhinoceros, we determined to push on to the "Green Camp," though darkness had already fallen and the bulk of the safari were still some distance behind. Leaving the mules in charge of Ramathani, El Hakim, George, and I pushed forward on foot. We marched on and on, but no sign of the camp we were looking for appeared, and we were inclined to think that we had mistaken our way in the darkness. At seven o'clock in the evening, however, we reached it. It seemed almost like coming home. I had been on my feet since half-past five in the morning, and was thoroughly done up. El Hakim and George were not much better, as riding a mule at a walk becomes very tiring after some hours in the saddle. We three gathered some dry wood and lit a large fire to guide our men, who presently straggled in two or three at a time, till all had arrived, with the exception of Jumbi, his assistants, and the animals. As they had not turned up at ten o'clock in the evening, we got out a large signal rocket, and after some searching found a suitable stick and set it off.

Something, however, went wrong, as instead of ascending the rocket described a low curve in the air and then pitched into the dry grass in front of the camp, instantly setting it into a blaze. We had to bestir ourselves *then*. It took us an hour of hard work coupled with some small amount of profanity to get the flames subdued.

The humour of the situation then struck us, and we laughed till our sides ached, to the great astonishment of our poor perspiring men, who could not see anything funny in it at all. Another rocket was then sent up with better results, as it ascended to a great height and burst most satisfactorily with a loud report and a shower of multi-coloured stars. It answered its purpose, as half an hour afterwards Jumbi and his assistants came in with the animals, all dead beat, having been over fourteen hours on the road.

FOOTNOTES:

[8] Professor J. W. Gregory, D.Sc. Lond., “The Great Rift Valley,” pp. 322 and 325 (1896).

[9] W. C. Harris, “Particulars concerning the Great River Gochol and the Countries adjacent thereto from Native Information collected in the Kingdom of ‘Shoa.’” *Trans. Bombay Geog. Soc.*, vol. vi. (1844), pp. 63, 64.

[10] Leon des Avanchers, “Esquisse Geographique des pays Oromo ou Galla.” *Bull. Soc. Geog. Paris*, ser. 4 (1859), map and p. 164.

[11] J. L. Krapff, “Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours, etc., in Eastern Africa” (1860), pp. 43-45.

[12] P. Rigby, “Remarks on the North-East Coast of Africa, and the Various Tribes by which it is Inhabited.” *Trans. Bombay Geog. Soc.*, vol. ii. (1844), p. 80.

CHAPTER XI.

DOWN THE WASO NYIRO ONCE MORE.

We send to M'thara for guides—Sport at the “Green Camp”—Non-return of the men sent to M'thara—Our anxiety—Their safe return with guides—We continue our march down the river—Desertion of the guides—We push on—Bad country—No game—We meet some of the Somalis' men—News of the Rendili—Loss of our camels—In sight of the “promised land.”

Early on the morning following our arrival at the “Green Camp” we despatched three men to M'thara with a message to N'Dominuki, asking him to send us a couple of Wandorobbo guides from Embe, as we wished to go across country to Lololokwe, and, if we deemed it necessary, further north to Mount Nyiro, at the south end of Lake Rudolph. The rest of the men went back to the two dead rhinoceros to obtain a supply of meat. George went out during the day and shot three grantei. In the afternoon El Hakim also went out shooting. He took the .450 Express, as he intended shooting grantei only. He secured four. On his way back to camp he was annoyed by a rhinoceros which had the temerity to stalk him, so waiting for his pursuer he neatly planted a bullet in the creature's brain, at a distance of about ten yards. I have read that the skull of a rhinoceros is invulnerable, especially from the front, but on examining El Hakim's beast, I noted that it had been shot from the front, the bullet entering the temple and penetrating the skull at precisely the proper angle, reaching the brain. There was no blood, the bullet-hole being so clean-cut that the skin closed over the wound in such a manner as to make it difficult to discover where it *had* been hit. It was as neat and workman-like a job as I have ever seen.

We stayed at the “Green Camp” for some days, occasionally shooting game to supply the larder, cleaning our weapons, mending our clothes and boots, and otherwise occupying our time to good purpose. A zebra which I shot supplied us with hide, and we repaired our travel-torn boots by the simple process of stitching a piece of raw hide over them with a surgical needle and thread, and then hanging the boots out in the air. The hide shrank on as it dried, and formed a fairly well-fitting though clumsy covering; but it was only a temporary arrangement at best, and required constant

renewing, as over rough, stony ground the hide would wear through in three marches.

On the plains to the eastward of the camp roamed vast herds of game—zebra, oryx, water-buck, and grantei. Rhinos were disgustingly frequent, El Hakim shooting two more that had evinced an impertinent curiosity regarding his movements, when he was taking a walk abroad one afternoon. The rhinoceros were all of the black or prehensile-lipped variety of the *Rhinoceros bicornis*, and we found that they had, on the average, much smaller horns than other specimens of the same family south of Kenia.

We all kept in splendid health, George and I in particular being burnt almost black by the fierce sun; and we felt that we should be content to remain where we were for an indefinite period. Game was more than plentiful, the climate was glorious, and we were free as the pure air we breathed. Only those who have been placed in similar circumstances can appreciate the full value of that word “free.” We did precisely what seemed good to us in our own eyes. We rose early, bathed in the warm spring, ate our breakfast, and then went shooting, or, if disinclined for that, we sat in a folding-chair in the shade of the trees and read, or mended our clothes, ever and anon raising our eyes to watch the herds of game walking steadily past our camp on their way down to the river to drink. In time we got to know the various herds, and even to recognize individual members of the same herd. The different herds also had their regular times for drinking, which never varied by more than a few minutes. The water-buck were the earliest; they came down just after sunrise. At ten o’clock precisely the graceful grantei would come down in herds, scouted by the young bucks. They were followed at midday by the oryx; and at four in the afternoon the zebra arrived in their turn. The rhinoceros, on the contrary, went down at all times, whenever they felt inclined, though they usually drink at night.

It was a perfectly Arcadian existence, which we left with very real regret when the exigences of travel compelled us once more to resume our weary march over the sun-scorched desert country down-river.

During our stay my shot-gun was not idle. In the evenings there were numerous doves in the vicinity, which made a welcome change in our menu; and now and again I secured a few grouse. Hares, too, were always obtainable with a little trouble. One night, about eleven o’clock, we were

called out of bed by the sentry, who put his head into our tent, and in an awestruck whisper ejaculated, “Kuja kutasamo m’bogo, Bwana” (Come and see the buffalo, master). We went outside, where we were joined by El Hakim, who had also been called. It was a brilliant moonlight night, and the country was almost as clearly visible as in the daytime. On the bank of our little stream, just opposite the camp, a mighty herd of buffalo was marching along, utterly unconscious of our proximity. They showed up wonderfully distinct in the brilliant moonlight, as they stalked majestically past. A passing cloud covered the face of the moon, and the weird sense of power and grandeur was further heightened by the temporary obscurity, as the now dim and ghost-like procession moved past. We gazed at them with a feeling that was half exultation and half awe, as we reflected that to us had been vouchsafed a sight at once so impressive and now, alas! so rare.^[13]

As on the fifth day after the despatch of the men to M’thara there were still no signs of them, we began to grow anxious, and sent Jumbi and another man back to investigate, with orders to return in three days at the utmost. Our provisions were also growing short, as we had finished all our sugar; the mustard also had given out. Two days later, as neither Jumbi nor the three men first sent to M’thara had put in an appearance, we made arrangements to pay a flying visit to M’thara on the morrow, to find out what had become of them, as we were more than a little anxious about their safety. The next morning, therefore, the absentees having made no sign, we started for M’thara, leaving two or three men in charge of the camp. We took no tents or baggage—nothing but a blanket each and some food, together with a good supply of ammunition. After two hours on the road, to our great relief we met the laggards returning with two Wandorobbo guides. They explained that N’Dominuki had experienced some difficulty in procuring the guides, and they were consequently detained. We were too thankful that they had rejoined us in safety to critically examine their story, so we let it pass, and at once retraced our steps, arriving at the “Green Camp” at three o’clock in the afternoon.

The guides were typical specimens of the Wandorobbo hunter, and greatly resembled each other in appearance. They were both elderly gentlemen, with grey and grizzled hair. Though of medium height, their backs were bowed, partly by age and partly by the stooping, creeping posture they adopt when walking. They trod softly as cats, their heads thrust

forward, nothing on the road escaping their observant gaze, though seemingly they were lost in abstraction. Each carried a small bow, a bundle of arrows, tipped with poison, and a walking-staff. A strip of goatskin, tied over the left shoulder, descending as far as the waist, a bead necklet, and an armlet or two completed a by no means superabundant costume. Their luggage consisted of a small skin bag, containing a knife, a couple of pieces of wood for making fire, and a few pieces of string; and in addition each carried four or five pounds of Kikuyu tobacco, wrapped up with banana leaves into spherical parcels.

From them we learnt that the Rendili were a long distance down the river—much farther down than we had been. This intelligence revived us somewhat, and next morning we set off once more on our journey down the river. The “cinder-heap” was once more crossed, but, thanks to the guides, by a much better road than the one by which we had made our toilsome march. The going was still bad enough, in all conscience, but in comparison to our first experience our progress seemed wonderfully easy. Besides, we knew the extent of the lava-belt now; before we did not know what was in front of us, and the uncertainty had contributed to no small extent to the magnifying of the horrors of our position.

We halted for breakfast on the other side of the lava-belt, and at 2 p.m. were preparing to resume the march, when Ramathani approached us in a very hesitating manner, evidently wishing to communicate something which he found unpleasant. Questioned as to what had happened, he blurted out, “Bwana, *the guides have run away!*” We were absolutely nonplussed. It is difficult at all times to fathom the motives that influence a savage; but whatever could have induced those guides to come three days’ journey to us, delaying us seven days meanwhile, only to run away again on the first march, we could not possibly guess, nor could we even faintly imagine.

We were now in a precisely similar position to that in which we had been placed a fortnight before, with the single exception that we now had certain information (for we saw no reason to doubt it) that the Rendili were down the river. After a consultation we decided to push on, guides or no guides, and trust to luck. We therefore resumed the march, and, after a long hot tramp, reached our old camp of July 31 and August 4, where we remained for the night. A peculiar incident, that I have never been able to understand, occurred on that day. Before we resumed the march, after the desertion of

the guides, I went out of camp alone in search of game. The country was very rough, being intersected in every direction by steep "kloofs" and "dongas," interspersed with gravelly mounds. Loose blocks of quartz were scattered everywhere, mingled with flakes of rock-crystal and smaller pieces of quartz of a greenish colour, due to the presence of epidote. Stunted and misshapen thorny acacias and a few aloes formed almost the only vegetation. I was laboriously climbing a gravelly slope, when suddenly there was a rush and a roar as of a mighty whirlwind bearing directly down upon me. I looked round in some alarm, as it is very unpleasant being caught in one of these dust-devils with nothing solid handy to hold on to. To my intense surprise I could see nothing whatever. Not a leaf or a branch stirred, and not a particle of dust or sand rose. The rushing, tearing sound increased in volume, and drew nearer and nearer, finally seeming in full blast not more than twenty feet from where I stood. But nothing stirred; the air was perfectly clear, and everything else remaining still as death. It was a most uncanny sensation. I abandoned the idea of a whirlwind, thinking perhaps there might be a blow-hole in the vicinity for escaping volcanic gases. I searched the neighbourhood carefully under that impression, but found nothing of the sort. Finally, the sound died away. Two or three times after that, during my walk, the same thing occurred. On one occasion I seemed to be standing in the very midst of the whirlwind. It rushed and roared round about me, and I involuntarily gripped a tree-trunk to steady myself against the expected shock. But nothing happened; nothing moved. I am not a nervous person, and my reason convinced me that there was a perfectly natural explanation for the phenomenon, but, nevertheless, I had a very nasty sensation in the small of my back. I was irritated, also, at being unable to discover the cause of the noise.

The next day we marched over the now familiar desert country to our old "Swamp Camp." Remembering the midges, we did not stop there, but pushed on for another mile, and camped on the top of a cliff overlooking the river. Opposite us the cliffs of red gneiss rose to a height of over 300 feet. The face of the cliff was inhabited by thousands of monkeys and baboons, who chattered excitedly over our arrival, an excitement which was not allayed by a bullet I sent through a group of them, which flattened itself against the cliff wall with a sharp smack. They at once scattered to various places of safety behind the rocks, and from thence made rude remarks in monkey language.

We went out after lunch to make a short survey of the route ahead. The result was most discouraging; a more barren and desolate landscape I had never seen. Soft brown earth, into which we sank over our ankles, was strewn with volcanic *débris* in the shape of our old enemy the lava blocks. Vegetation was scarce, and game conspicuous by its absence. It seemed rather a hopeless task to attempt to cross such country without guides, but we determined to make a supreme effort.

We were now beginning to suffer a little for want of salt. I had a nasty sinking feeling in my stomach, with a tendency to vomiting, and I always felt empty inside, even immediately after a very full meat meal; but this wore off after a week or two. We were restricted to a few ounces of native meal (m'wele) per diem, which our *chef de cuisine*, the indispensable Ramathani, made into little flat cakes, fried with meat, which was the only other item on our menu.

For some days we ploughed over the rotten brown earth just described. It was a painful experience, as the sharp blocks of quartz and lava bruised our ill-shod feet. The sun was intensely hot, and distant objects danced and shimmered in the heat-haze.

On the morning of August the 15th we had camped for breakfast on the river-bank, when we were greatly excited by a sight of two sheep grazing peacefully further down the river. Our men immediately started in pursuit, and captured them after an exciting chase. They were of the fat-tailed variety, and were Rendili sheep beyond a doubt. All that afternoon was spent in searching the country round, but we saw no signs that led us to believe that the country was inhabited. El Hakim shot a rhinoceros while we were out. It was feeding in the open. He was carrying the .577, and proceeded to stalk it, accompanied by George, who carried the .450 Express. When within thirty yards of the rhino, El Hakim motioned to George to remain where he was; he himself crawled thirty yards to the left, so that hunters and hunted formed a triangle. El Hakim fired, and the rhino, on receiving the shot, charged straight down upon George. It was then that I had an opportunity of observing a wonderful exhibition of nerve and true sportsmanship on George's part, begotten of the confidence we both placed in El Hakim's skill. Holding his rifle at the ready, George awaited the wounded beast's mad rush without a tremor, refraining from firing in order not to spoil El Hakim's second barrel—a confidence which was fully

justified by the result, as that individual's left barrel spoke when the enraged rhinoceros was within a dozen yards of George, dropping it dead with a bullet through the heart. George afterwards declared that he could not have stood the strain much longer, and would have fired in a few seconds more. We had now sufficient meat for our immediate needs, and were still determined to push on, though the country seemed almost entirely devoid of game, and feeding ourselves and our men was getting to be quite a serious problem. A rhinoceros only lasted the men two days, as, in spite of its huge bulk, it cuts up very badly, there being a good deal of waste; and, in addition, the men, who even at ordinary times were tremendous meat-eaters, in the entire absence of cereals, developed a carnal appetite that can only be described as monumental.

Returning to the spot where we had lunched, we resumed the march, going another mile down the river before camping. When the tents were pitched, Ramathani busied himself in cooking our unpalatable meal of grantei-steak fried in an insufficiency of fat. Soon afterwards we heard an excited shriek of "Afreet! afreet!" (Devil, devil) from Ramathani and some of the other men near him. He rushed up to me and implored me to bring my "bunduki ya n'dege" (literally, "bird-gun") and slay the "afreet." I laughingly inquired where the "afreet" was, and he pointed upwards into the branches of a large tree, whose branches spread laterally over the fire at which he was cooking. I could not see anything, and was about to turn away, ridiculing him; but the men appeared so genuinely terror-stricken that I paused and looked up again. Judge of my surprise when I discovered that the "afreet" was nothing more than a large water-lizard stretched out on a branch. A dose of No. 6 shot on the side of the head brought it down with a thump on the ground. Examination showed that none of my shot had penetrated its skull or body, it being merely stunned by the shock. None of the men could be induced to touch it under any pretext whatever, saying that it was highly poisonous, and its bite meant instant death; so, seizing it by the tail, I carried it over to our table. It woke up while I was carrying it, and, squirming upwards, attempted to bite me, causing me to drop it hurriedly, to the intense amusement of the men. I killed and dissected it. Its heart beat for quite half an hour after I had removed it from the body. The reptile was four feet in length, and over a foot in girth.

The next morning we divided the men into small parties and sent them out to search the surrounding country for inhabitants, while I climbed a hill near the camp and minutely examined, with the binoculars, the whole country round; but in vain. There was no sign of any inhabitants; the country seeming to be deserted by man and beast alike, and lay under the scorching sun “the abomination of desolation.”

I returned to camp at midday, the search parties returning at the same time reporting that they had seen no signs of the Rendili nor indeed traces of anybody whatsoever. We therefore resumed our march down the river at half-past two in the afternoon. The vegetation had almost disappeared, with the exception that along the river-banks a few rows of thorn trees here and there indicated the position of lines of depression in the earth’s surface, probably the beds of sand rivers; the rest of the country was strewn with stony *débris* which converted a march into a painful and difficult pilgrimage.

At sundown we pitched the tents, but found that it was impossible to drive the pegs into the rocky ground, so the guy ropes had to be made fast to huge boulders collected and piled for the purpose. To add to our discomfort, a strong cold wind sprang up as the sun set, and blew great guns all night, the tents thrashing and thundering in a way that precluded sleep, and threatened every moment to blow bodily away. Firewood also was scarce, and the men spent a most miserable night in consequence. The two Rendili sheep, which we had been keeping for our own consumption, escaped during the night, and we never saw them again. We did not linger long in that inhospitable spot, but at sunrise again resumed our weary march down-stream.

Game was absolutely non-existent, and the men, having finished the last of the rhinoceros, were in great need of food. Where it was to be obtained we could not imagine, unless we were to kill one or two of our cattle, which we were very loth to do, except as a very last resource.

After a solid four hours’ march we camped on the river-bank under a clump of palms, and determined on the morrow to make one last effort to find the Rendili by means of search parties, and then, if there were still no signs of them, to make the best of our way back to the game country by forced marches.

The animals were sadly out of condition for want of proper and sufficient nourishment, and we were afraid that if we went further and were still unsuccessful in our search, they would all die before we could get back. "It is a long lane that has no turning," however, and about four o'clock in the afternoon one of the men, whom we had sent out to look for game, came into camp, shouting excitedly that he had seen "many people." El Hakim and George at once saddled up the mules and investigated. The "many people" turned out to be eighty of the Somalis' men, bound for Dhaicho (a trading settlement on the eastern side of Embe) in order to buy food. Most important of all, they told us that Ismail, with the main body, was camped among the Rendili, who were *five days' march further down the river*. This news cheered us up wonderfully. Resting our men for the remainder of the day, we were on our way again on the following morning long before daylight, led by a guide lent us by the Somalis. We pushed forward as fast as our men could travel, and we had every reason for haste, as they were entirely without food. We halted at ten o'clock in the forenoon for breakfast. At least *we* breakfasted, the men having nothing to eat at all, while we had little more. At two o'clock we were again on the road, and at four o'clock camped for the night, the men being exhausted. Jumbi, and Malwa, the head-man of the Wa'kamba, did not come in with the others. Inquiries elicited the fact that, owing to either Jumbi's or Malwa's carelessness, the five camels had strayed on the road and were lost. El Hakim was very much annoyed, as he had always been very proud of his camels, nursing them tenderly, and taking great pains to ensure their health and comfort.

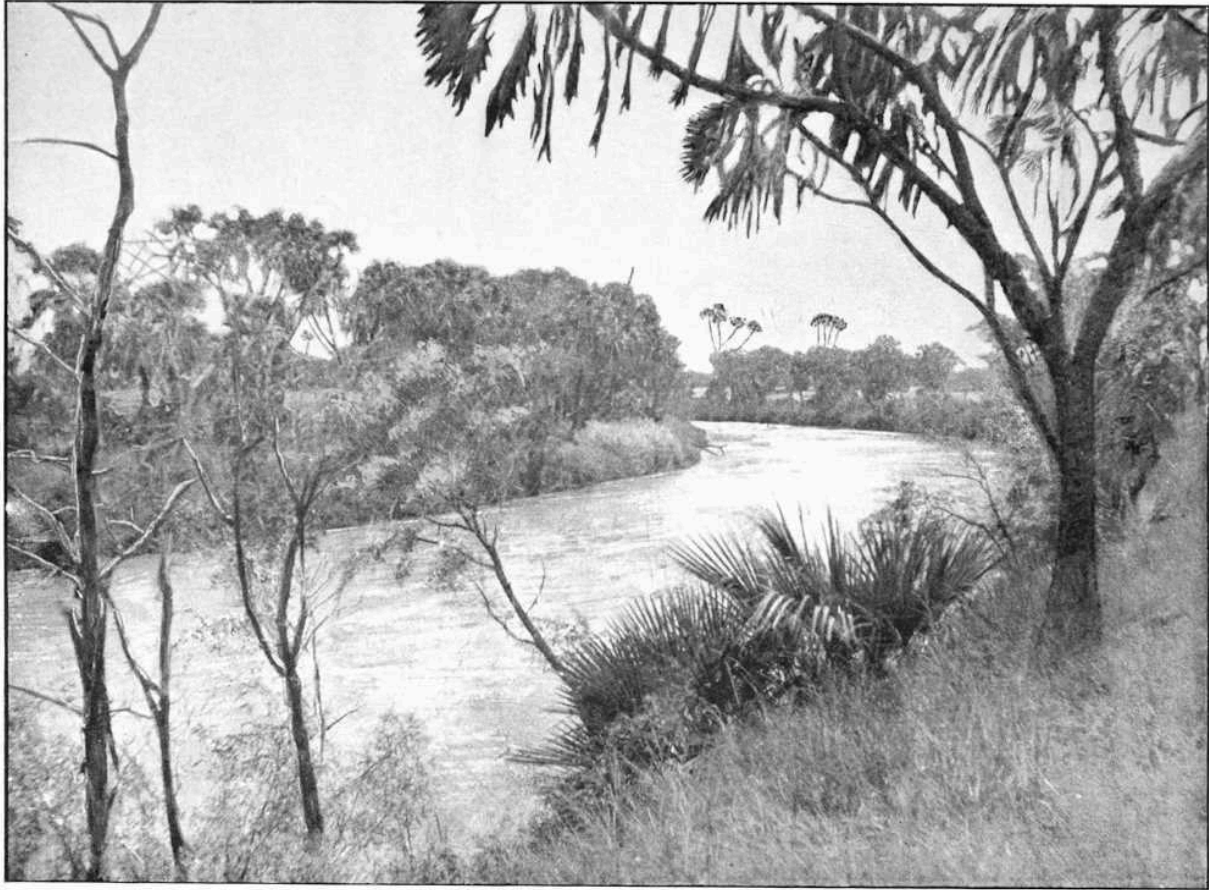
The next morning the camels had not turned up, neither had Jumbi nor Malwa. El Hakim, being eager to reach the Rendili encampment, pushed on with nothing but his tent and a little food, leaving George and me behind with the bulk of the safari to send search parties out after the camels. At eleven o'clock Jumbi and Malwa came into camp *without* the camels. They were very frightened, rightly dreading El Hakim's anger, and were considerably relieved when they found only George and me in camp. At that moment some of the men, whom we had despatched earlier in the morning in search of the missing animals, came in and reported that they had seen the tracks of the camels leading away to the south straight towards the hills, some days' journey distant, which proved to be the extreme north-eastern end of the Jombeni range, inhabited by our *bêtes noires* the

Wa'embe. I immediately despatched Jumbi and Malwa, together with the men who had seen the tracks, to follow them up, instructing them to find the camels if possible, but if not, to return and follow me, as I was going on after El Hakim. After they had rested awhile they departed on their errand, and at two o'clock in the afternoon, George and I, having forded the river—which was quite easily done, as it was very broad and came no higher than one's middle—marched steadily and rapidly down the north bank of the river in El Hakim's wake. We marched for four hours, passing the falls discovered by and named after Mr. Chanler, an hour after starting. The vegetation was now somewhat more dense, the wait-a-bit thorn becoming quite inconveniently frequent; the country also tended to become gravelly underfoot, and the very reverse of level.

Late in the afternoon we arrived at a range of rocky hills some three or four hundred feet in height, which extended for some miles at right angles to the river, and consequently right across our path. So far we had seen no signs of El Hakim, so I decided to push on at all costs, and with great difficulty we climbed to the summit of the range.

When we reached the top a beautiful and welcome sight met our weary eyes. Away to the right, curving round the end of the range, ran the dark green line of the Waso Nyiro. A day's march further on it branched out into numerous broad shallow channels, spreading over a tract of country perhaps ten miles long and four miles wide. Innumerable Doum palms covered this tract with a beautiful mass of greenery, interspersed with patches of pure white sand. Immediately outside the palm region the country changed sharply to desert again, which stretched dazzlingly white and perfectly level to the encircling horizon. I had no doubt but that we should find the Rendili encamped near the palms. The river emerged from the other side of this fertile tract, and winding round the southern spur of a vast and lofty tableland, which showed dimly in the distance, disappeared from view on its way to the mysterious and unexplored "Lorian." The plateau I recognized as the Marisi el Lugwazambo. It can be imagined with what joyful emotions we gazed on the mass of vivid green spread at our feet, after so many scorching days of brown earth and bare rock. I could quite realize the sensations of Moses as he gazed on the "Promised Land" from the summit of Mount Pisgah.

It was almost time, too, that we reached our long-desired goal. Our men had not enjoyed a full meal since El Hakim shot the rhinoceros four days before, and they were almost famished. We ourselves were little better off, having tasted nothing for two days but a few miserable M'wele cakes, no larger than a five-shilling piece. We could not stop on the summit of the hill for an indefinite period, however, much as we admired the view—our needs were too imperative; so with a last long look at the beautiful scene, we turned and cast about for a path by which to descend to the plain below. To our dismay, we discovered that the cliff dropped sheer down for two hundred feet without foothold enough for a goat. After trying two or three places without success, we were eventually compelled to force our way along the crest of the ridge, in the hope of finding some sort of path nearer the river. It was a terrible scramble, and I should think it very unlikely that even natives had ever been on to the top before—certainly no white man ever had. The wait-a-bit thorns grew together in an almost impenetrable wall, necessitating constant work with our knives to free ourselves. Great boulders barred our progress, and gravel and pebbles slipped under our feet, so that by the time we had covered a mile we were tired out.



PALMS ON THE WASO NYIRO.

Just before sunset George spotted a possibly likely place for the descent. It certainly looked desperate enough, but by this time we were beyond counting the risks. We scrambled down, therefore, leaping from boulder to boulder, and every few moments having to stop in order to cut ourselves free with our knives from the clinging embrace of the ubiquitous “wait-a-bit.” Our clothes and skin suffered terribly, but we were determined to reach the bottom somehow, and plunged and scrambled downwards, regardless of minor personal injuries. Halfway down we heard a shot from among the greenery near the river, which I recognized as El Hakim’s .450. I answered it with another shot in order to apprise him of our presence, and continued the descent. Finally we reached the bottom, breathless and bleeding, our clothes literally in ribbons. The donkeys and cattle followed us, scrambling down in some remarkable manner, though how I could not stop to inquire. Most probably they, like ourselves, were induced by the sight of the green

vegetation and the smell of water to attempt a descent which at any other time they would never have faced.

Another three-quarters of an hour over the flat brought us to the spot where El Hakim was already camped. The report we had heard had been the death-knell of a Waller's gazelle (*Lithocranius Walleri*), which was at once divided among the men, so that they had at least a taste of meat to go on with—we ourselves dining on two guinea-fowl, one of which I had shot on the road, the other having been secured by El Hakim. We were all tired out, and turned in immediately we had finished eating. The tents were not needed, the climate being so mild. Indeed, from now onwards, till we were once more at this point on our way back to Kenia, we did not need to use the tents at all, except for the sake of privacy.

FOOTNOTES:

[13] The rinderpest has all but exterminated the buffalo and the eland in British East Africa, as elsewhere on the African continent.

CHAPTER XII.

IN THE RENDILI ENCAMPMENT.

Narrow escape from a python—Arrival among the Burkeneji and Rendili—No ivory
—Buying fat-tailed sheep instead—Massacre of the Somalis' porters by the
Wa'embe—Consternation of Ismail Robli—His letters to Nairobi.

At sunrise next morning we were awakened by the twittering of innumerable song-birds, and by the raucous screams of the guinea-fowl and francolins calling to their mates. It was a perfect morning, the bright, clear sunshine and soft balmy atmosphere reminding one of a summer morning in the Mediterranean. Our spirits responded instantly to the cheering influence of the soft sunshine, which quickly dispelled the gloomy spectres of famine and desolation which had haunted us for so long. We resumed our journey with a cheeriness and sprightliness to which we had long been strangers.

On the road I had a good time among the guinea-fowl, which here were of the Vulturine variety. They were exceedingly plentiful, and I managed to bag five in a very few minutes, all large and very handsome birds, with long tails and beautiful light blue breast feathers. They are at times most difficult birds to shoot, as they will very seldom rise, but run over the sand at a great rate, keeping just out of effective range. In the absence of a dog, the only way to shoot them is to run after them at full speed, till, by gaining on them—no easy task—they are compelled to rise. The moment they get up, one has to stop instantly and let drive at them. Even then they will not always rise together, but in groups of two or three, necessitating very accurate shooting if a bag is to be obtained; which is not always possible when one is puffed by a two hundred yards' sprint, and consequently panting heavily.

Yellow-throated francolins were fairly plentiful. They dodged in and out of the roots of the shrubbery with great agility, and were correspondingly difficult to hit. Pigeons also were very numerous.

While following the guinea-fowl I had rather a narrow escape. I was crossing a patch of long, dry, coarse grass, which grew in a small depression. As I forced my way through, my eyes upon the birds, I heard a rustle at my feet. I instantly looked down, and, quick as a flash, jumped

back three or four feet, shivering violently. A large bright yellow snake, mottled with gamboge, about ten feet in length and as thick as my arm, glided away into the tangled grass and disappeared. I supposed it was a python, though I did not see much of it, nor was I anxious to investigate.

We halted for breakfast at ten o'clock. At half-past twelve El Hakim went on ahead with four men and his tent, as we were only one march from the Rendili, and he was anxious to meet them. George and I were to stay behind with the men and animals and start later, as they were not sufficiently rested. We waited till half-past two, and then followed him.

Soon after starting we lost his tracks, but pushed on nevertheless, following the course of the river. We soon reached the point where the Waso Nyiro divided into the numerous channels we had observed from the hilltop the previous evening, and there we first met the Burkeneji. We had temporarily lost sight of the river, and, striving to regain it, we struggled through a dense belt of Doum palms, eventually emerging to find ourselves in the bed of a sand river. We followed its course, and in a few minutes reached one of the channels of the Waso Nyiro. It was not more than a foot deep at this place, flowing smoothly over a soft bed of sand. We stopped to drink, and while in the act were confronted by a few natives, who suddenly emerged from the bush on the other side. I put on my most amiable smile, and walked into the river a little way. After a moment's hesitation one or two of the Burkeneji—for it was indeed they—did likewise, and we met in midstream. I held out my hand and said "yambo," on the chance that it would be understood. My *vis-a-vis* answered immediately "serian" (peace), shaking my hand vigorously. I repeated the word after him in a very hearty manner, not at all assumed. This appeared to be precisely the right thing to do, as other natives now came across the river and fraternized with our men. They were fine, clean, wholesome-looking negroes, very much resembling the Masai in appearance, but, unlike them, were habited in cloth instead of skins. A chorus of "serian" resounded on all sides.

One of our Wakamba named Mumbo could speak a little Masai, and through him we learned that El Hakim had passed near there an hour or two before. We left our new-found friends, and departed amid another chorus of "serian," well pleased at our first meeting with the tribes we had braved so much to find.

We went on in the direction pointed out to us by the Burkeneji as the path taken by El Hakim, but saw no traces of him. Keeping to the river as being the best possible guide, we travelled another eight or nine miles. Just before sundown we reached an acacia thicket, where I decided to camp, continuing the search for El Hakim on the morrow. The donkeys were off-loaded, and Ramathani busied himself in preparing a meal. George strolled out of camp, and while “fossicking” round discovered a Burkeneji village in the acacia forest about three hundred yards away. Taking Mumbo with us as interpreter, George and I went over to the village. No one appeared to meet us, as the men were out bringing in the cattle and sheep for the night. Two or three young women stood about with empty milk-vessels, evidently waiting for the herds to come in. They were quite fearless, and approached us, laughing merrily at the curious figures George and I must have cut in our tattered shirts and trousers and clumsy boots covered with zebra-skin. They were well built, plump, very pretty, and undeniably saucy, and were clothed with a small, very small, piece of cloth about their middles, and numerous small bead necklaces and brass wire armlets. They stood a yard or so away, and discussed our personal appearance with great freedom and animation, now and then pointing out to one another some new item in our make-up not previously noticed, and breaking into a hearty laugh. George came in for more than a fair share of their attention. He is a fine, big chap, and the girls always do pay him more attention than he deserves; both white and black, though, to do him justice, he was never conceited in consequence.

As we stood there waiting for the return of the Burkeneji men, the description of the Anglo-Saxon as the “heir of all the ages” occurred to me, and I chuckled inwardly at the spectacle of two ragged “heirs of all the ages” standing outside a little negro village, the helpless butts of the saucy tongues of a group of little negresses of a tribe who have no ambitions beyond their daily wants, and no ideas beyond supplying them; and who, as far as I know, are not yet definitely classified by ethnologists.

Presently a tall, dignified native strode up, followed by several others. He was certainly not less than six feet in height, and proved to be the chief of the village. At his approach the women ran away—not very far, however, but remaining in the background, they continued their frivolous remarks. The chief did not seem at all respectful either; in fact, he appeared rather

bored than otherwise. We exchanged the usual "serian," and then, through the medium of the interpreter, I inquired the location of the Somalis' camp. The reply was that it was "quite near." I suggested that the chief should guide us thither. He acquiesced, and returning to the camp we loaded up the donkeys again, much to their disgust, and followed our new-found guide.

In half an hour, when it was quite dark, the guide halted, and said that we had better camp, as the Somalis' camp was "quite far." I was very annoyed at this turn of affairs, and expressed my intention of going on whether it was dark or not. We started once more, but I could see that the guide was very unwilling and sulky. Presently I heard the bleating of sheep and goats in the darkness to the left, and ascertained from the guide that the sound came from a Rendili village. I resolved to camp there; but he objected. I insisted, however, and finally he reluctantly led the way. I pitched the camp just outside the village, so that I might be sure of obtaining a guide in the morning.

The Rendili in the village then came out to us, and offered fresh goat's milk for sale. We bought about a gallon for a few red beads, and in exchange for five yards of merikani I also procured two sheep, which were immediately slaughtered for the men, who raised a hearty cheer thereat, as, with the exception of the tiny portion of Waller's gazelle the night before, it was their first regular meal for four days. The milk we boiled, and George and I partook freely of it, too freely perhaps, considering the state of our stomachs, as, after drinking about a quart each, we both felt very queer. Our heads swam, and we were very dizzy and weak, the effect being similar to that produced by alcohol.

At daybreak we secured a couple of Rendili youths as guides, and proceeded through a belt of bush on our way to the Somalis' camp, near which I felt convinced we should find El Hakim.

This bush belt was quite a mile wide, and owed its existence to the large proportion of earth that the desert sand had not yet thoroughly covered, coupled with the close proximity of the Waso Nyiro. The bushes grew in clumps, with smooth patches of ground between. They were a beautiful vivid green, thickly covered with longish narrow leaves and blue-black berries, and averaged eight feet to ten feet in height. These berries greatly resembled black currants in appearance. They contained a large, smooth

spherical seed, covered with a layer of glutinous pulp, which was hot to the palate, and something similar to nasturtium seeds in flavour. The guinea-fowl were particularly fond of these berries, and were in consequence to be found in large numbers in the bush. Every few yards little ground squirrels, like the American chipmunks, darted across our path; while the tiny duiker—smallest of the antelopes—now and again scurried hurriedly away to the shelter of a more distant bush. Little naked sand-rats were very numerous, the tiny conical heaps of excavated sand outside their burrows being scattered everywhere. At intervals, clumps of acacias of large size afforded a certain amount of shade from the vertical rays of the sun, a fact fully taken advantage of by the Rendili, as we noticed that where such a clump existed we were certain to find a village.

After tramping for about an hour through this charming and refreshing scenery, we arrived at Ismail Robli's boma. El Hakim's tent was pitched two or three hundred yards away from it on the left. A moment later El Hakim himself appeared to welcome us. We did not build a boma, but pitched our camp under the shade of the palms some two hundred yards from the river.

During the morning George and I went down to bathe in the river. Divesting ourselves of our clothing, we ventured into the shallow water near the bank, keeping a sharp look-out for crocodiles meanwhile. I had not advanced many steps before I uttered a yell, and jumped wildly about, to the intense astonishment of George. He was about to inquire the reason of my extraordinary conduct, but when he opened his mouth, whatever he intended to say resolved itself into a sudden sharp "Ouch!" and he commenced to dance about as wildly as myself. Something (which I afterwards found to be leeches) had attempted to bite our legs, and especially our toes, causing anything but a pleasant sensation. Bathing, consequently, was only indulged in under difficulties. We were compelled, for fear of crocodiles, to bathe in but a foot of water, and even then our ablutions were only rendered possible by keeping continuously in motion, so that the leeches were unable to fasten on to our persons. The instant we discontinued jumping and splashing, half a dozen nibbles in as many places on those portions of our anatomy which happened to be under water, would remind us of their presence, and we would either make a dash for the bank or recommence jumping. The spectacle of two white men endeavouring to

bathe in water a foot deep, and at the same time performing a species of Indian war-dance, would doubtless have been extremely diverting to spectators of our own race, had any been present; but the Rendili and Burkeneji, who also came down to bathe, merely eyed us in astonishment, probably considering our terpsichorean efforts to be a part of some ceremonial observance peculiar to ourselves; or they might have put it down to sunstroke. The Rendili and Burkeneji bathe with frequency and regularity, seeming to derive great enjoyment from the practice. This is another very marked characteristic which distinguishes them from the other tribes we had met with—the A'kikuyu and Masai, for instance. Parties of the young men would go down to the river and run about, splashing and shouting in the shallow water for an hour or two, with every manifestation of pleasure.

When we returned to camp we found several of the Rendili elders visiting El Hakim, chief of whom was an old man named Lubo, who is, probably, at present the most influential as well as the most wealthy man among the Rendili. There were also two other chiefs named Lemoro and Lokomogo, who held positions second only to Lubo.

In his account of Count Teleki's expedition, Lieutenant Von Hohnel gives a short description of the Rendili, which he compiled from hearsay, which, as far as it goes, is remarkably correct. Von Hohnel is a very exact and trustworthy observer; his maps, for instance, being wonderfully accurate. I carried with me a map issued in 1898 by the Intelligence Department of the War Office, which contained several inaccuracies and was therefore unreliable, and consequently useless. Unfortunately, I did not at that time possess one of Von Hohnel's maps, or we should have been saved many a weary tramp.

In 1893 Mr. Chanler found the Rendili encamped at Kome, and stayed with them two or three days. He appears to have found them overbearing and intolerant of the presence of strangers, and inclined to be actively hostile. He made an extremely liberal estimate of their numbers, as he says that they cannot amount to less than two hundred thousand, and that he had heard that if the Rendili were camped in one long line, it would take six hours' march to go down the line from one end to the other. He considered, moreover, that a large force was necessary if a prolonged visit was to be made to the Rendili; but we found that our small party was quite sufficient

for our purpose. Since his visit the tribe had suffered severely from small-pox, which may have curbed their exuberant spirits somewhat, as we found them, apart from a few little peculiarities hereafter described, an amiable and gentle people if treated justly; very suspicious, but perfectly friendly once their confidence was gained.

We did nothing in the way of trade that morning, but spent most of the time in satisfying our neglected appetites by regaling ourselves upon boiled mutton, washed down by draughts of camel's milk. Afterwards we held a consultation to decide on the best way of disposing of our goods. To our great disappointment we learnt that ivory was out of the question, as we were informed a Swahili caravan, which had accompanied a white man from Kismayu, had been up some two months before, and had bought up all the available ivory.^[14] We decided, therefore, to invest in sheep, and proceeded to open our bales of cloth, wire, and beads, in readiness for the market. I returned to the village at which George and I had camped with the safari on our arrival the preceding evening, taking with me half a dozen men and some cloth, wire, etc. When I arrived there everybody was away bringing in the flocks, so I was compelled to wait for a while till they returned.

It was most interesting to watch the various flocks come in at sundown. Till then the village is perfectly quiet, but soon a low murmuring is heard some considerable distance away, which gradually swells as the flocks draw nearer, till it becomes at last a perfect babel of sound with the baaings and bleatings of sheep, and the beat of their countless little hoofs. They presently arrive in flocks numbering two or three thousand each, kicking and leaping, and raising a vast cloud of dust. The women of the village, who have been waiting, then come out with their milk-vessels, each with a kid or a lamb in her arms, which she holds on high at the edge of the flock. The little animals bleat loudly for their mothers. Those mothers, far away in the body of the flock, in some marvellous manner each recognize the cry of their own particular offspring among the multitude of other and similar cries, and dash towards it, leaping over the backs of the others in their eagerness to reach their little ones. The woman restores the youngster to its mother, and it immediately commences its evening meal, wagging its little tail with the utmost enjoyment. The woman then goes to the other side of

the mother, and draws off into her milk-vessels as much of the milk as can be spared.

The price of a good “soben” (ewe) was six makono of cloth, or about one and a half yards; but the market was not very brisk, as there was such a great amount of haggling to be gone through before the bargain could be considered satisfactorily completed. A man would bring round an old ram and demand a piece of cloth. When I gently intimated that I required a “soben,” he would scowl disgustedly and retire. In a few minutes he would be back again, dragging by the hind leg a *female goat*, and demand the piece of cloth once more. An animated discussion on the difference between a sheep and a goat would follow; my prospective customer maintaining that for all practical purposes a female goat and a female sheep were identical, while I contended that if that was the case he might as well bring me a sheep, as under those circumstances it would make no difference to him, and I myself had a, doubtless unreasonable, preference for sheep. Finally a very sick and weedy-looking ewe would be brought, and again the same discussion would go merrily on. I would not give the full price for a bad specimen, and my customer would persist that it was, beyond a doubt, the very best sheep that was ever bred—in fact, the flower of his flock. “Soben kitock” (a very large sheep) he would observe emphatically, with a semicircular wave of his arm round the horizon. I would point out that in my humble opinion it was by no means a “soben kitock” by shaking my head gravely, and observing that it was “mate soben kitock.” Finally he would bring a slightly better animal, and I would then hand over the full price, together with a pinch of tobacco or a few beads as a luck-penny. I returned to camp the next morning, having bought about a dozen sheep. In this manner we spent some days buying sheep. It was very tiring work, but I varied the monotony by building a large hut, heavily thatched with the fan-shaped leaves of the Doum palm. It was open at both ends, and served as a capital council chamber and market house.

There was a great demand for iron wire, and El Hakim and I discussed the advisability of my journeying up the Waso Nyiro to a spot two days' march beyond the “Green Camp,” where El Hakim had some twenty loads of iron wire buried. We eventually decided that it was not worth while, and the matter dropped.

Some days after our arrival among the Rendili, Ismail Robli came into our camp, bowed almost to the ground with grief. His tale was truly pitiful in its awful brevity. I have mentioned the party of eighty of his men whom we had met five days up the Waso Nyiro, and who had lent us a guide to bring us to the Rendili. It appeared that after they left us they lost their way somewhere on the northern borders of Embe, and were three or four days without water. Eventually they found some pools, at which they drank, and then, completely exhausted, laid down to sleep. While they slept, the Wa'embe, who had observed them from the hills, descended, and, taking them by surprise, pounced upon them and literally cut them to pieces. Only sixteen men, who had rifles, escaped; the rest, numbering sixty-four in all, being ruthlessly massacred. We were horrified at the news; and as for Ismail, he seemed completely prostrated.

As a result of the massacre, he had not nearly enough men remaining to carry his loads, and he was therefore compelled to considerably alter his plans. He now intended to buy camels from the Rendili, and thus make up his transport department.

We were really grieved about the men, but felt no pity for Ismail, because, as we took care to point to him, if he had only gone back to Embe with us after our first reverse, we should have so punished the Wa'embe as to have precluded the possibility of such a terrible massacre. As it was, the unfortunate occurrence was the very worst thing that could have happened for all of us, as such a signal success would without a doubt set all North Kenia in a ferment, which would probably culminate on our return in an organized attack by all the tribes dwelling in the district. The surmise proved to be only too well founded, and, as will be seen, it was only by the most vigorous measures on our part on the return to M'thara that the danger was averted.

As it was no use worrying ourselves at the moment over what *might* happen in the future, we once more turned our attention to our immediate concerns. El Hakim thought it possible that there might be elephants down the river, and I agreed that it would be a better speculation for me to go down-stream on the chance of meeting them, leaving El Hakim to buy the rest of the sheep, than to occupy a fortnight in journeying up the river after the twenty loads of iron wire, which might possibly have been dug up by Wandorobbo in the mean time.

On the following day Ismail Robli came to see us again, bringing with him a present of a little tea, and a little, very little, salt. The object of his visit was to get me to write a letter for him to his partner in Nairobi. I insert it as I received it from his lips, as an object lesson in the difficulties encountered even by native caravans in the search for ivory.

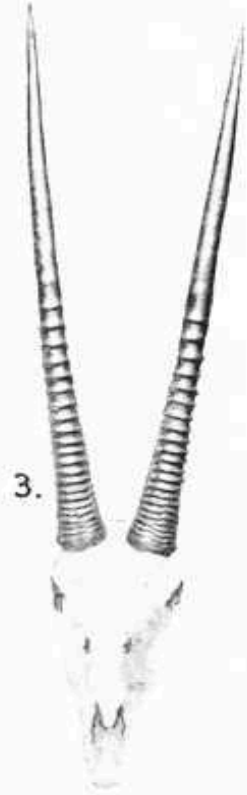
“Waso Nyiro, August 26th, 1900.

“TO ELMI FAHIER, NAIROBI.

“Greeting.

“Mokojori, the head-man, said when we started, that he knew the road, and took us to Maranga. After we left Maranga he said that he did not know the road, and took us to some place (of which) we do not know the name. Our food was finished (meanwhile). We asked the head-man if he knew where Limeru was, and he answered that he did not. We packed up and followed the mountain (Kenia)—not knowing the road—till reached Limeru, where we found Noor Adam, who had reached there before us. He had been into Embe, and was beaten by the Wa'embe. He came back and asked us to go into Embe with them. We went, and Jamah was killed. In Limeru we did not get much food, but the head-man said, 'Never mind, I know the road, and I will take you to the Wandorobbo, and in fifteen or sixteen days you will be able to buy all the ivory you want.' When we left Limeru to find the Wandorobbo, the head-man took us eight days out of our road to the north of the Waso Nyiro. On the eighth day we found some Wandorobbo, who said they had no ivory. We waited and looked about, and found what they said was true. We then asked the head-man where the ivory was, and he said he did not know; so we came back south to the Waso Nyiro, having to kill three cows on our way for food. When we reached the Waso Nyiro we found the Rendili camped. Then we asked the head-man where was the food and the ivory, and he said, 'You are like the Wasungu. You want to buy things cheaply and then go away. When Swahili caravans come here, they stop a year or more.... But I know where there is food. If you give me the men and the donkeys I can get food in twelve days.' We gave him eighty men and seven donkeys, with six and a half loads of trade goods, and they went away to get food. They followed the river for three days, and then went across country southwards. There was no water, and after going one day and one night without water, the head-man halted them, and told them to wait where they were for a little time while he went a little way to see if there was any water in a certain place he knew of. He went away, and did not come back. The other men then went on for three days without water, and on the afternoon of the fourth day after leaving the river they found water. They drank, and then laid down to sleep. While they slept the Wa'embe attacked them, and killed nearly all of them, only six Somalis and ten Wa'kamba coming back. The donkeys and trade goods and seven guns were taken by the Wa'embe. Now all the Somalis are together in one safari—except Jamah, who was killed—and are with the Rendili trading for ivory. Salaam.

“(Signed) ISMAIL ROBBI,
“Faragh.”



1. Brindled Gnu.
2. Waterbuck.
3. Oryx Beisa.
4. Congoni.
5. Rhinoceros skull.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[14\]](#) We found afterwards that the caravan referred to was that under Major Jenner, Governor of Kismayu. It is now a matter of history how, in November, 1900, the caravan was attacked during the night by Ogaden Somali raiders, and the camp rushed, Major Jenner and most of his followers being murdered.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RENDILI AND BURKENEJI.

The Burkeneji—Their quarrelsome disposition—The incident of the spear—The Rendili—Their appearance—Clothing—Ornaments—Weapons—Household utensils—Morals and manners.

This chapter contains a short account of the Rendili and Burkeneji, compiled from a series of disconnected and incomplete notes taken on the spot. They will, however, serve to give the reader some idea of that peculiar people, the Rendili. Their utter dissimilarity from those tribes hitherto encountered, such as the A'kikuyu, Wa'kamba, and Masai, is very striking. Who and what they are is a problem the solution of which I leave to abler and wiser heads than mine.

The Rendili and Burkeneji are two nomad tribes, the units of which wander at will over the whole of Samburuland. They have, nevertheless, several permanent settlements. Von Hohnel speaks of Rendili inhabiting the largest of the three islands in the south end of Lake Rudolph, the other two being occupied by Burkeneji and Reshiat. He also speaks of settlements of mixed Rendili and Burkeneji in the western portion of the Reshiat country, at the north end of the lake, though very possibly the latter were only temporary settlements. The Burkeneji also inhabit the higher portions of Mount Nyiro, where they have taken refuge from the fierce attacks of the Turkana. With the single exception of Marsabit, a crater lake situated about sixty miles north of the Waso Nyiro which is always filled with pure sweet water, there is no permanent water in Samburuland. Elephants were at one time very numerous at Marsabit, but we learnt from the Rendili that they had disappeared during the last few years. The lake is the headquarters of the Rendili, from whence they move south to the Waso Nyiro only when the pasturage, through the scarcity of rain or other cause, becomes insufficient for the needs of their vast flocks and herds.

At the time of our visit there had been no rain during the previous three years, and in consequence the pasturage had almost entirely disappeared. Even on the Waso Nyiro it was very scanty.

We found the Burkeneji a very sullen people. The young men especially, very inclined to be pugnacious, and, not knowing our real strength, were haughtily contemptuous in their dealings with us. The majority were apparently unaware of the power of our rifles, though one or two of the old men had seen shots fired at game. The Burkeneji and the Rendili together had, some time before, fought with the Ogaden Somalis, many of whom were armed with old muzzle-loading guns, using very inferior powder and spherical bullets. The Rendili declared that they were able to stop or turn the bullets with their shields. The following incident shows the serio-comic side of their belief in their own native weapons.

A party of Burkeneji warriors were in our camp one day when I returned from an unsuccessful search for game. They noticed my rifle, and one of the party put out his hand as if he wished to examine it. I handed it to him, and he and his friends pawed it all over, commenting on its weight; finally it was handed back to me with a superior and contemptuous smile, while they balanced and fondled their light spears with an air of superiority that was too ludicrous to be offensive.

The Burkeneji are very like the Masai or the Wakwafi of Nyemps in appearance, wearing their hair in a pigtail in the same manner, while their clothing and ornaments are very similar. Owing probably to long residence with the Rendili, however, they are gradually adopting the dress and ornaments of the latter, a large majority of them having already taken to cloth for everyday wear. They appeared to be very fond of gaudily coloured "laissos," quite unlike the Rendili, who will wear nothing but white. The Burkeneji speak Masai, but most of them understand the language of the Rendili.

They own large numbers of good cattle and grey donkeys, and also large flocks of sheep and goats, the latter mainly looted from the Rendili. This little failing accounts for the nickname "dthombon" (robbers) given them by the latter. Their donkeys were beautiful animals, in splendid condition, being sleek, glossy coated, and full of fight. It was risky for strangers to approach them while they were grazing. They seemed inclined to take the offensive on the one or two occasions on which I endeavoured to get near enough to examine them; and to have had to shoot one in self-defence would probably have led to serious trouble with its owner. Besides which, such a course seemed to me to savour too much of the ridiculous. They

were more than half wild, and many were wearing a particularly diabolical twitch, otherwise I suppose even their owners would have had some difficulty in handling them. This cruel instrument consisted of a piece of flexible wood a foot in length thrust through the cartilage of the nostrils, the ends being drawn together with cord, so that the whole contrivance resembled a bow passed through the nose.

The Burkeneji were very unwilling to trade; in fact, they refused to have anything to do with us. On one occasion this bad feeling led to friction between some of our men and the young warriors of one of their villages. We had sent a small party of five or six men to this particular village with a supply of cloth, wire, and beads for the purpose of buying sheep. Our men were from the first badly received, and after a while the warriors commenced to hustle them. They put up with it for some time, but presently a spear was thrown, happily without fatal result, as the M'kamba at whom it was launched received it on the butt of his Snider, where it made a deep cut in the hard wood. Our men, with commendable prudence, refrained from using their rifles, and returned to camp amid the jeers of their assailants.

On their return El Hakim decided that it was absolutely necessary that the matter should be stringently dealt with, and to that end issued orders that on the following morning a party of our men were to hold themselves in readiness to accompany us to the village for the purpose of demanding a "shaurie." These preparations, however, proved superfluous, as at sunrise we were waited upon by a deputation of elders from the village in question, who had come to try to square matters. As a sign of our displeasure, we kept them waiting for some time, and after the suspense had reduced them to a sufficiently humble frame of mind, we condescended to appear and listen to their explanation.

They prefaced their apology by a long rambling statement to the effect that "the Burkeneji were the friends of the white man." "It was *good* to be friends," said they, "and *very bad* not to be friends," and so on. After they had quite exhausted their limited powers of rhetoric, we put in a few pointed questions.

"Do friends throw spears?" we asked.

"Oh, *that!*" said they, in tones of surprise that we should have noticed such a trivial occurrence, and they forthwith plunged into a maze of

apologies and explanations to the effect that young men *would* be young men. It was, of course, extremely regrettable that such an unpleasant incident should have occurred to mar our friendly relations, but they trusted we would take a lenient view of the conduct of the foolish young man, the more so as he had already been driven away from the village as a punishment for his offence. “And,” they added, with a charming naïveté, “would we give them a present and say no more about it?”

El Hakim declined to take such a lenient view of the case. To have done so would have been construed into a confession of weakness, and probably have led to more serious complications. He therefore demanded that the young man should be delivered up to him for punishment, or, failing that, a fine of ten sheep should be paid by his father.

They answered solemnly that the white men had very hard hearts; furthermore, the young man, having already been driven out of the village, could not now be found, and they were in consequence quite unable to give him up.

“Then,” said El Hakim, “his papa must pay the fine.”

They protested that the wicked young man had no papa, or, indeed, any relatives whatsoever; in fact, that he was an outcast whom, from charitable motives, they had allowed to stop in their village. We declined to believe such a preposterous story, and remained firm on the subject of the fine. After a time, finding remonstrance useless, the elderly deputation sorrowfully withdrew, after promising that the fine should be paid.

The next day six sheep were driven into our camp, and the old gentleman in charge stated that they were all he could afford, and would we consider the matter settled. We were inexorable, however, so soon afterwards the balance of the fine was brought into camp and handed over.

It was the old, old story, which can be paralleled in any town in the civilized world. The story of a young man sowing his wild oats, who, for some breach of the peace or other, comes within the grasp of the law, when ensues the police court, and the fine paid by papa, anxious to redeem his erring offspring.

We were truly sorry for the good old Burkeneji gentleman, who paid the fine in order to keep the peace which his son had so recklessly endangered;

but our sympathy did not prevent our sense of justice—in this case more than usually acute, as the safety of our own persons was threatened—nor did it prevent us from exacting the full penalty.

The Rendili we found to be of very different behaviour, though they have a very bad character from Mr. Chanler. He describes them as overbearing, quarrelsome, treacherous, and haughtily contemptuous towards strangers. He met them at Kome in 1893, and stayed with them two or three days. Since his visit, however, they have been, as I have already remarked, terribly decimated by small-pox, and possibly that has toned them down somewhat.

They are tall and well built, with slim and graceful figures and light, clear skins. They have an appearance of cleanliness and wholesomeness which was altogether wanting in the other natives whom we had previously met. Their distinctly Semitic features bear little resemblance to those of the typical negro, with his squat nose, prognathous jaws, and everted lips. There were many members of the tribe with good clean-cut features, well-shaped jaws and chins, and pronounced aquiline noses. They somewhat resembled high-bred Arabs in general appearance, and, if clothed in Arab dress, they, with their fine, straight, close-cut jet black hair, could not be easily distinguished from that aristocratic race.

At one time they wore a rough, coarsely woven garment of sheep's wool, but at the time I saw them they had entirely taken to trade cloth to the exclusion of the home-made article. They then wore large mantles of this cotton cloth, made by sewing together two three-yard lengths of cloth, thus forming a large square piece. The edges of this are then unravelled to form tassels, which are further ornamented with small red and white beads. This they draped round them somewhat in the manner of a Mexican "serape." They and their clothes were always scrupulously clean. Unlike the Burkeneji they will never wear anything but white cloth. "Coloured cloths," they remarked contemptuously to us on one occasion, "were only fit for women and Masai." They prefer the English drill, called "Marduf" by the Swahilis, to the lighter and commoner "Merikani" (American sheeting).

They wear a good many beads as ornaments, which are carefully worked into necklaces and armlets of artistic design, and not put on haphazard, as is the custom of the surrounding tribes, and of those south of the Waso Nyiro.

The beads are usually strung on hair from the tail of the giraffe, which is as stiff as thin wire. With this they make broad collars and bands for the arms and ankles, the beads being arranged in geometrical designs, such as squares and triangles, of different colours, red and white being the favourites. The demand for *seninge* (iron wire) was extraordinary, though *serutia* (brass wire) ran it a close second. Copper wire, strange to say, they would not look at.

They are circumcized in the Mohammedan manner, and, in addition, they are mutilated in a most extraordinary fashion by having their navels cut out, leaving a deep hole. They are the only tribe mutilated in this manner with the exception of the Marle, who inhabit the district north of "Basso Ebor" (Lake Stephanie), and who are probably an offshoot of the Rendili.

The Rendili women are singularly graceful and good looking, with arch, gentle manners and soft expressive eyes. They wear a good many ornaments, principally bead necklaces and armlets of coloured beadwork. Their hair is allowed to grow in short curls. One or two I saw wore it cut very close, with the exception of a ridge of hair on the top of the head, extending from the centre of the forehead backwards over the crown to the nape of the neck, which was left uncut. Whether they were Turkana women who had intermarried with the Rendili or not, I am unable to say, it being the custom of the Turkana women to dress their hair in that manner; though, on the other hand, the fashion might have been merely copied from them by the Rendili women.

The Rendili women also wear cloth. Their garments were of much less generous proportions than those of their lords and masters; but they wore more ornaments, the Venetian beads we carried being in great demand for that purpose. They also wore armlets and leg ornaments of brass and iron wire, the iron wire especially being much sought after. They do not use skins for clothing, though they cure them and use them for sleeping-mats, and also for trading with the Reshiat and Wa'embe. The skins are cured by the women, who, after the skin is sufficiently sun-dried, fasten it by the four corners to a convenient bush, and scrape the hair from it with a broad chisel-shaped iron tool, afterwards softening it by rubbing it between the hands.

El Hakim bought several cornelian beads from the women, evidently of native manufacture. They were roughly hexahedral in shape, and were cleanly pierced, with no little skill, to admit of their being strung on a thread. We could not discover from whence they had obtained them. It is possible that they may have filtered through from Zeila or Berbera on the Somali coast, where they had been brought by Arab or Hindoo traders.

The Rendili women, unlike the Masai, are remarkably chaste, the morals of the tribe as a whole being apparently of a comparatively high standard. Polygamy is practised, but it is not very much *en évidence*.

A point which struck me very much was their fondness for children. For some reason, perhaps on account of the small-pox, the birth-rate by no means equalled the deaths, and children were consequently very scarce. What children they possessed they fairly worshipped. Everything was done for their comfort and pleasure that their adoring parents could devise. This love of children extended to the offspring of other tribes, and they were perfectly willing to adopt any child they could get hold of.

Both Lemoro and Lokomogo—two of the principal chiefs—asked us on several occasions to sell them two or three of the boys who acted as servants to our Swahilis, but we declined to do so, as it was, to our minds, too much like slave dealing. We gave some of the boys permission to stop with the Rendili if they felt so inclined, but only two of them tried it; and they came back a few days later, saying the life was too quiet for them.

Ismail Robli, we had good reason to believe, sold some boys to Lemoro, and we were afterwards the means of rescuing one little chap, who came into camp saying that Ismail had sold him to that chief, though he did not want to stop with the Rendili. We protected him during a somewhat stormy scene in our camp with old Lemoro, who said he had given Ismail two camels for the boy. When we taxed Ismail, he, of course, denied it, saying that the boy had deserted to the Rendili, and that the two camels were only a present from Lemoro. However, we kept the boy, who belonged to M'thara, and had left there with Ismail's safari as a servant to one of his porters, and on our return to M'thara sent him to M'Dominuki with an account of the affair, and he was ultimately restored to his home. After this incident Ismail tried to do us what mischief he could by causing friction

between ourselves and the Rendili, but was happily unsuccessful, though he nevertheless caused us some anxious moments.

The Rendili have no definite religion so far as I could ascertain. Mr. Chanler mentions a story current among them about a man and a woman who settled somewhere in the north of Samburuland a very long time ago, and from whom the Rendili are descended; very similar to the Biblical story of Adam and Eve. They show traces of contact with Mohammedans by their use of the word "Allah" as an exclamation of astonishment, though seeming not to know its meaning.

They have apparently no regard for the truth for its own sake, lying appearing to them to be a most desirable form of amusement. It is on this account rather difficult to obtain information about themselves or of their country, as in answer to questions they will say only what they think will please their questioner, whether it is right or not. When one finds them out they do not betray the slightest embarrassment, but regard the matter rather in the light of a good joke.

They will tell the most unblushing lies on all and every subject under discussion, and if, as sometimes happened, circumstances disproved their words to their very faces, they would smile an amiable self-satisfied smile as of one who says, "See what a clever fellow I am."

On one occasion I inquired of the people of a certain village some two hours' march from our camp if they wished to sell any sheep. I was informed that the inhabitants of the village in question were simply yearning to sell their sheep. I came down to plain figures, and inquired how many they would be likely to sell.

"Very many, quite as many as that," said my informant, indicating a passing flock of sheep that numbered some hundreds.

Knowing the vast numbers of sheep possessed by the people of that particular village, I thought it not unlikely that I should be able to buy at least a hundred. However, when I went to the village, joyfully anticipating a good market, I found that they did not wish to sell any sheep whatever, and, moreover, never had wished to. I was eventually compelled to return disappointed—not having secured more than two or three—and very much annoyed with the elderly gentleman who had so deliberately misled me. He

knew at the time that the people of the village did not wish to sell any sheep, but being unwilling to disappoint me by telling me so, he lied, with the laudable but mistaken idea of sparing my feelings.

They are probably the richest natives in Africa, calculated per head of population. Some of them own vast numbers of camels, sheep, and goats, and since the small-pox has nearly exterminated this once powerful and numerous tribe, it is not uncommon to find a village of eight or ten families, numbering not more than thirty persons all told, owning flocks of over 20,000 sheep and goats, and large numbers of camels. Old Lubo, the *doyen* of the Rendili chiefs, personally owned upwards of 16,000 camels, besides over 30,000 sheep and goats. The Rendili live almost entirely on the vast quantities of milk they obtain from their flocks and herds, for they milk their camels, goats, and sheep with equal impartiality. They do not hunt as a rule, but sometimes the young men spear small antelope. They are very unwilling to slaughter any of their animals for food. They must do so occasionally, however, as I have once or twice seen them eating meat. Furthermore, the old women of the tribe used occasionally to bring a grilled bone, or a bladder of mutton fat into camp, for sale to our men. Meat would seem to be quite a luxury to them, as a bone to which a few scraps of meat were adhering was offered for sale at an exorbitant price, with an air as of conferring a special favour.

We ourselves lived almost entirely on milk during our six weeks' stay among the Rendili, with the exception of the twelve days occupied by our journey down the river in the search for Lorian. El Hakim, George, and I drank nearly two gallons per day each. It formed a pleasant and, from a dietetic point of view, a useful change from the exclusively meat diet on which we subsisted, from the time of our arrival at the "Green Camp" till our return to M'thara, a period of over two months. The camel's milk was very salt, which to some extent compensated for the absence of that mineral in the ordinary form. El Hakim informed me that a little to the east of Maisabit a large extent of the country is under a layer of salt, two or three inches in thickness. It required one day's journey to cross it, which represents a vast quantity of pure salt, and it was principally from this that the animals of the Rendili obtained such salt as they required.

The milk we required for our own use we bought with the Venetian beads. We, of course, boiled every drop before using it, and rendered it still

more palatable by the addition of a tabloid or two of saccharin from the medicine chest, so long as they lasted. The milk often curdled in boiling, owing to the vessels it had been brought in not having been cleaned since the milking the night before, and we were compelled to eat the solid curds with a spoon. We served out an allowance of beads to the men every day, with which they bought milk, fat, and occasionally meat.

El Hakim heard that many years before, the sheep and goats of the Rendili, with the exception of Lubo's, which were camped in another place at the time, had been swept away by a pestilence. In such cases the custom of the tribe appears to be that the owner of the surviving flocks must give the others sufficient animals to enable them to recommence breeding; but he has the right to take them back, together with their progeny, provided that his own needs require it. Old Lubo, therefore, was practically the owner of all the vast flocks of the Rendili, which could only be numbered by hundreds of thousands. The confidence between the animals and their owners was very noteworthy, even the sheep allowing themselves to be handled freely for milking, and for purposes of examination. They are of the fat-tailed variety, some of the tails weighing as much as thirty pounds. This fat tail is another object lesson of the way nature provides her creatures against all emergencies. The Rendili sheep in times of plenty develop and store a large reserve of nourishment in the fat of their ponderous tails, so that when, as often happens, their pasturage becomes exhausted through want of rain or other causes, they have a store to draw upon, sufficient for their needs for a considerable period. Another store of fat is also formed, in the case of the Rendili sheep, in a large pouch or dewlap under the throat, and also on the breast-bone, where the fat is often a couple of inches in thickness.

As an instance of the ignorance and denseness of the average Swahili, as regards anything outside his own particular sphere, I will mention a little incident which occurred one day. El Hakim sent Jumbi and three or four men with a supply of cloth and beads to buy sheep at a Rendili village. He was instructed to buy "soben," *i.e.* ewes, in good condition. He returned next day with a dozen or so of the raggedest scarecrows that the Rendili had been able to rake out. El Hakim reprimanded him, and asked why he had not obtained better animals, as those he had brought had no fat tails at all, but merely shrivelled-up skin. Jumbi answered that it was true that the

Rendili had brought sheep with much fatter tails to him, but he had rejected them, their tails being so large that *he thought the sheep would not be able to travel!*

The Rendili own donkeys, but not so many as the Burkeneji. They also own horses, which the Burkeneji do not, and which they probably procure from the Borana, who are reported to own vast numbers of them. The Borana are a very powerful and numerous tribe living in north-east Gallaland. They are fierce fighters, and it was formerly quite the correct thing for any warrior among the Rendili who yearned for distinction to lead a raiding party against the Borana, who as often returned the compliment.

The Borana fight with two short, broad-bladed spears, while for defensive purposes they carry a small round shield made from the skin of the hump of the oryx. They wear cloth—a small cloth round the loins and a larger one thrown over the shoulders completing their costume. They possess large numbers of cattle, sheep, and goats, and vast herds of half-wild horses. They are a sullen, inhospitable people, very unwilling to receive strangers. They, like the Rendili and Burkeneji, wear sandals, the thorny acacia, so plentifully distributed thereabouts, being even too much for the naked feet of savages.

The Rendili ride their horses with a saddle something like the native Somali saddle. It is made of wood, covered with sheepskin, and is fastened by a girth knotted to rings in the saddle. The stirrups are similar to those of the Somali, consisting merely of two iron rings, into which the rider thrusts his big toe, his sandals having been previously removed. A breast-plate and crupper are used to keep the saddle in place. They use a very crude iron bit, of a particularly cruel form, attached to strips of undressed leather which do duty for reins.

The Rendili are among the most persistent beggars that I have ever met with. The Egyptian beggar, with his oft-reiterated “backshish,” is hard to beat, but the average Rendili could easily give him long odds and a beating. It grew to be quite a fashionable amusement with them to come down to our camp, often some hours’ journey, and spend the day in begging for small articles. When El Hakim, who slept outside his tent, awoke in the morning, he would find a number of them squatted round his bed, and as soon as he opened his eyes a murmur of “Mate serutia?” (Is there no brass wire?)

greeted him. He would answer "Mate! mate!" (No! no!) and retreat hurriedly to the interior of the tent. But it was of no use; a moment later he would be again approached by his questioners, who would softly inquire, "Mate serutia?" having apparently forgotten his emphatic negative to the same inquiry five minutes before. Again El Hakim would answer, "Mate serutia!" (There is no brass wire!). So, gazing reproachfully at him, his tormenters would leave him and come to me.

The same succession of beseeching inquiry and stony refusal would be gone through, and when they were convinced that I was as hard-hearted as El Hakim, they would leave me and try George. He also was adamant; but they were not discouraged. Back they would go to El Hakim, and repeat the whole performance.

This happened every hour of every day during the whole period of our sojourn among them; it almost drove us frantic on occasions. To do them justice, the cry was sometimes varied; sometimes it was "Mate serutia?" and other times "Mate tumbao?" (tobacco), of which they are inordinately fond, probably because they can obtain it only on the rare occasions when they come in contact with the Wa'embe, and the Reshiat at the north end of the "Basso Norok" (Lake Rudolph).

Lubo himself often sat for hours in front of the temporary hut of palm leaves we had erected as a council house, begging for a few beads or a small piece of brass wire. We ridiculed him once, saying that we were surprised that he, who was such a wealthy man, should beg for a few beads. He was amazed!

"Is it not good to give?" he said.

"Well, then, why do you not give us something?" we inquired.

"You have never asked me!" he answered simply.

If we had been a wealthy exploring caravan, rich enough to have bestowed munificent gifts on the Rendili on our arrival, doubtless their value, or near it, would have been returned to us in kind, but we could not then have been certain of getting what we needed, as the return gift might have consisted of camels or some other commodity which we did not require, and which we would be unable, from the nature of the case, to refuse. We preferred, therefore, the slower and more sordid process of

bartering for what we wanted. We had, of course, bestowed presents on arrival, but nothing large enough to warrant the gift of perhaps half a dozen camels in return.

Their begging was at times particularly aggravating; for instance, after a hot and weary morning passed in trade “shauries” and discussions with the various elders respecting presents to be given and received. Having lunched on a quart of milk or so, we would retire for a smoke and a siesta. Just as we were dropping off into a delicious doze, a dusky countenance would be thrust into the hut, and a gentle voice would softly utter, “Mate serutia?” accompanied by a touching smile and insinuatingly outstretched paw. At such times language failed us, and we could only glare. But glaring did not seem to have any effect; the intruder did not mind it in the least, so the services of Ramathani had to be requisitioned, and as he led the culprit gently away, we would compose ourselves once more to sleep to the accompaniment of the plaintive murmur of “Mate serutia” sandwiched between the voluble remonstrances of our faithful henchman.

But five minutes later, the whole performance would be repeated!

The Rendili villages consist of low, flat-topped huts constructed of bush and reeds arranged in a circle a hundred yards or so in diameter. In the centre they construct a circular enclosure for their flocks. Outside the whole a strong thorn “boma” is built, with generally two gateways on opposite sides, which are closed at night. In consequence of the great reduction in their numbers by small-pox, most of the villages were very short handed. Women and little children acted as shepherds in place of the now extinct warriors, whose duty it had been before the scourge removed them. So much was this the case that in some villages the inhabitants, even when reinforced by the women and children, were still too few to be able to drive all their animals to water daily. They were therefore reduced to the expedient of driving their sheep and goats down one day, and the camels the next, and so on alternately.

Their household utensils were few, and simple in construction. Their milk-vessels were either of wood, hollowed and shaped, or of plaited string, made watertight with gum. Some of the vessels of plaited string were further strengthened by a covering of raw hide stitched with gut. They were made in all sizes, ranging from a tiny measure holding scarcely a pint to

large vessels holding two or three gallons. They also construct a rude spoon from plaited string. They possess a few gourds, doubtless obtained by barter from other tribes. They use the bladders of animals for the purpose of holding fat, and for other purposes, such as satchels and bags.

The pack-saddles for their camels and donkeys are made of wickerwork. They are very light and strong, and answer the purpose admirably. The donkey pack-saddle consists of two elongated oval frames of bent wickerwork laced with strips of hide in a similar manner to the gut in a tennis racquet. These frames are then connected with two broad bands, which are fastened to their lower edges and pass over the donkey's back. The forage or household effects, or whatever has to be carried, is packed on the donkey, being kept from slipping by the frames, which are then tied with cords on their upper edges, one to the other, thus making the package complete and snug.

Their weapons consist of spears, shields, and bows and arrows. The spears are very light, and do not look at all dangerous. The blade is of the usual laurel-leaf shape, common to the Suk, Turkana, and Kamasia tribes, though one or two of Somali pattern are occasionally seen.

Their shields are also of the shape peculiar to the Suk and Turkana. Made of buffalo-hide, they are of a very narrow oblong shape, with a peculiar curve when seen in profile. They are ornamented with a tuft of feathers at the top. They are now usually constructed of ox-hide, as, since the rinderpest, the buffalo is very scarce, and a buffalo shield is valued accordingly. There are also a few of the wickerwork shields of the Reshiat in use among them.

Their bows differ in shape from those of the A'kikuyu and Wa'kamba, in that they are turned forward at the ends, in a similar manner to the conventional Cupid's bow. So far as I could ascertain, their arrows are not poisoned.

They do not use clubs as weapons; at least, I saw none that could be used as such. The only club they carried consisted of the kernel of the doum nut fastened on to the end of a slight stick some eighteen inches in length, a hole being bored longitudinally through the nut, and the stick inserted. The kernel was in many cases ornamented with small coloured beads, which

were inlaid when it was new and comparatively soft, the whole then finished off by being covered with a thin layer of gum.

That the reports of the powers of the Rendili in warfare were not devoid of foundation was borne out in a striking manner by facts which came under our observation. Many of our visitors showed livid scars on the left forearm and breast. Inquiry revealed the fact that the warriors who wished to be accounted brave in warfare dispensed with their shields altogether, receiving on their left forearm those spear-thrusts they were unable to avoid. This is, as far as I know, a unique characteristic among African savages, though I am open to correction on that point. The fact that the Rendili, besides attacking the Borana, have also successfully raided the Wa'embe and the A'kikuyu of north-east Kenia speaks well for their courage and enterprise. Most of the elders we met showed great scars on the arms, breasts, and thighs—relics of spear-thrusts received in the sanguinary conflicts of their hot-blooded youth. The tribe now shows only the merest traces of its former greatness, depending mainly on the Burkeneji for protection from outside interference, though they are still by no means to be despised.

The Burkeneji, noting the ravages of the small-pox on their once all-powerful neighbours, were not slow in profiting by the lesson. When the scourge appeared, they sent their young men away to separate camps, and so preserved them. They were able to do so without inconvenience, as they did not own such numbers of animals as the Rendili, who would not send their youths away, as they wanted them to look after their flocks and herds—a short-sighted policy which cost them very dearly.

Now, the Burkeneji were perfectly willing to protect the Rendili, but in return they considered that they ought to be allowed the right to help themselves from the Rendili flocks whenever they felt so disposed; and to do them justice they fully acted up to this idea, without fear of reprisals. It seemed to me a very peculiar state of affairs. The two tribes lived together, that is, their villages were intermingled, and they travelled together; yet the Burkeneji constantly raided the Rendili, and though the Rendili did not seem to like it, they never openly resented the depredations.

Old Lubo once complained to us that he had been raided during the afternoon—as a matter of fact, the raid took place not five minutes' walk

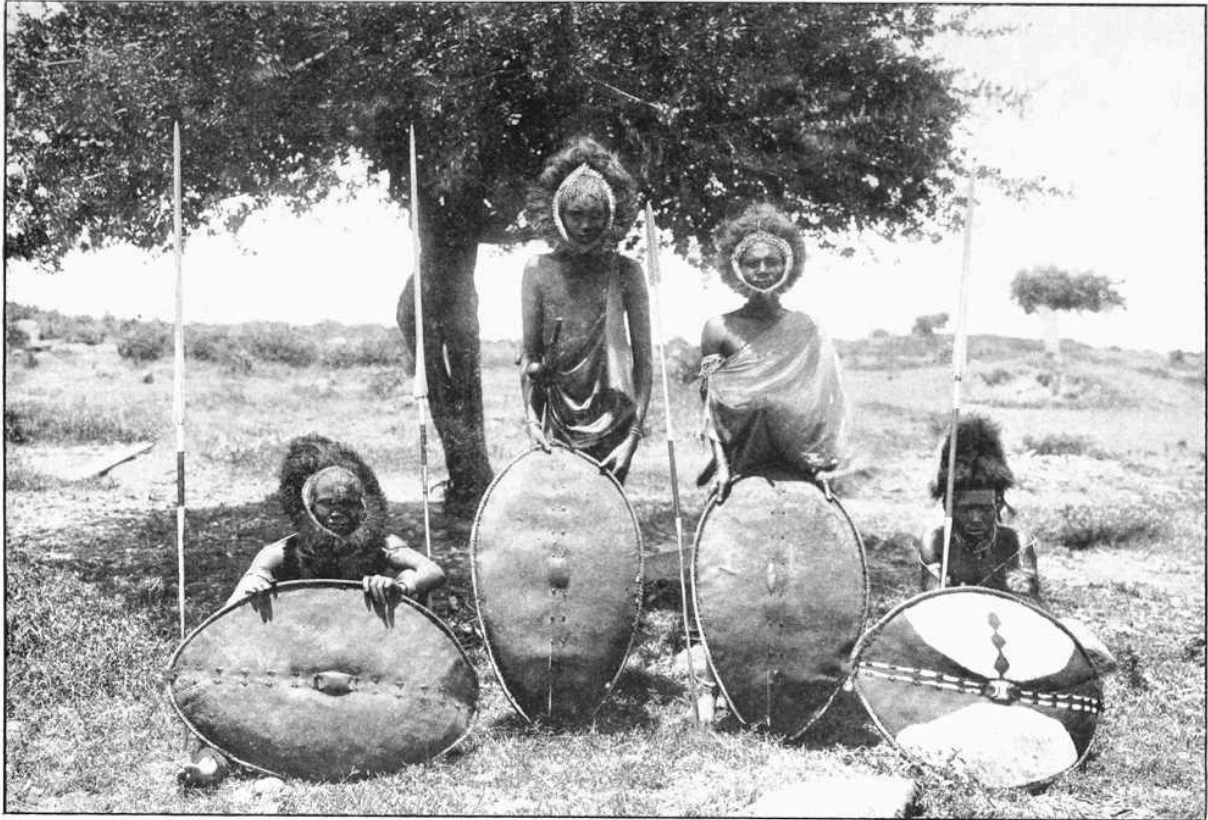
from our camp—and a few score of sheep and two women had been looted from him. We inquired why he made no attempt to recapture them. He opened his eyes widely at the novelty of the idea.

“We do not fight between friends,” he said.

Notwithstanding their fighting qualities, both the Rendili and Burkeneji were very anxious about the Masai. They seemed to live in dread of them. We were frequently asked if we had seen any Masai on our march up, and whether we thought they were coming to the Waso Nyiro. Large parties of Masai “elmoran” (warriors) had occasionally attempted to raid the Rendili, but were almost always unsuccessful, the principal reason being the inaccessibility of the country and the nomadic habits of the tribe.

On the march the Masai elmoran carries next to nothing in the way of provisions, trusting to find cattle on the road, which he can use for food, after massacring the owners. Thompson describes the ceremony of the departure of a Masai war-party thus—

“For a month they devoted themselves to an indispensable, though revolting preparation. This consisted in their retiring in small parties to the forest, and there gorging themselves with beef. This they did under the belief that they were storing up a supply of muscle and ferocity of the most pronounced type. This strange process being finished and the day fixed on, the women of the krall went out before sunrise, with grass dipped in the cream of cow’s milk. Then they danced, and invoked N’gai for a favourable issue to the enterprise, after which they threw the grass in the direction of the enemy. The young men spent several hours at their devotions, howling out in the most ludicrous street-singer fashion, ‘Aman N’gai-ai! Aman M’baratien!’ (We pray to God! We pray to M’baratien!). Previous to this, however, a party had been sent to the chief ‘lybon’ of the Masai—M’baratien—to seek advice as to the time of their start, and to procure medicines to make them successful. On their return the party mustered and set off!”



MASAI ELMORAN IN WAR ARRAY.

It will be seen that under these conditions it was a very difficult matter to successfully raid a tribe like the Rendili, to reach whom they had to cross uninhabited and desolate country for ten days or more, and generally to arrive at their prospective victims' camping-ground starved and emaciated with their rapid and difficult march, to find that the Rendili had withdrawn with all their flocks and herds still further into the depths of the wilderness. Weakened by want of food, and fatigued almost beyond endurance, there would be nothing for the war-party but to retrace their steps, it being quite hopeless to attempt to find the Rendili in the desert, in which they were quite at home. So, sadder and wiser, the crestfallen elmoran would return, many dropping by the way from hunger and exhaustion, till a pitiful remnant of the once proud and arrogant war-party would totter home, to rest and recuperate before starting on another raid on the A'kikuyu, where the prizes, if few in number, did not entail so much inconvenience in the collection.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SEARCH FOR LORIAN.

Exchanging presents with the Rendili—El Hakim bitten by a scorpion—We start for Lorian without guides—Zebra—Desolate character of the country—Difficulties with rhinoceros—Unwillingness of our men to proceed—We reach the limit of Mr. Chanler's journey—No signs of Lorian.

The climate was still all that could be desired. The heat in the daytime was terrific, but the air was so dry that it was quite bearable. No dew fell at night, and sleeping in the open was, in consequence, an unmixed pleasure. Our camp was about 1200 feet above sea-level, and the temperature during the day could not have been much less than 120° Fahr., which dropped at night to from 85° to 90° Fahr.

I made several short trips into the surrounding country in search of fresh meat, but except a solitary grantei or wallerei at intervals, the country was devoid of game. The flocks and herds of the Rendili roamed so far afield in search of pasture that all the game within a day's march had been driven away. The guinea-fowl were very wild, and I found my 20-bore was unable to deal with them, as it would not kill far enough. Also we considered it unwise to do any shooting in the near vicinity of the Rendili or Burkeneji villages, as the women and children, being unaccustomed to firearms, were very much frightened by the explosions, and it might possibly have proved a cause of friction, which we of course wished to avoid.

About ten miles away to the north-east was the "Marisi-al-lugwambo," or Zambo Plateau. It was of a most imposing-looking formation, its sides being as steep and clean cut as if they had been shaped with a knife. The sandy plain extended right up to the base of the plateau, which rose fully 500 feet above the level of the surrounding country. The plateau was composed chiefly of gneiss rock, with large blocks of lava liberally sprinkled on its surface and sides. It is about twenty-five miles long, with an average breadth of five miles.

A few days after our arrival Lubo came into camp with a present of fifteen sheep. In return we gave him some coils of brass and iron wire and

about thirty yards of marduf, with which he professed himself very pleased.

In and around our camp there were large numbers of centipedes and scorpions, and it was quite exciting sometimes when a centipede was discovered snugly ensconced in the blankets, just as one was going to turn in. El Hakim, while turning over some pieces of cloth, when making up Lubo's present, was stung in the hand by a large scorpion. It was pure white in colour, and consequently lay unnoticed among the folds of the cloth. His arm soon became very painful, the armpit and chest being immediately affected. Before the pain became too severe, however, I injected a solution of morphia with a hypodermic syringe, which relieved him greatly. The following morning the pain had almost entirely subsided, and in a couple of days no further ill effects were noticeable.

In the course of conversation with some of the Rendili elders, we were surprised to hear that Lorian was only *two days' march* distant. We were very much surprised, as Mr. Chanler made it at least forty-five miles' march over extremely difficult country, beyond the furthest eastern spur of the Zambo Plateau, which itself lay some fifteen to twenty miles distant from our camp. We expressed our incredulity, but we were assured that the Rendili could reach it in two days. We concluded, therefore, that, making every allowance for characteristic Rendili exaggeration, Lorian was much nearer than we had thought, and we had half decided to make an attempt to reach it, when a statement by the assembled Rendili to the effect that there were "plenty of elephants down there," clinched the matter. We asked for guides, and as Lubo promised that they should be forthcoming, we made our preparations for a journey to the mysterious Lorian.

The next day, as no guides had put in an appearance, El Hakim and George went over to Lubo's village, to find out the reason for the delay. Lubo, excusing himself, said that he was looking for guides, but so far he had not got hold of any one who knew the way. Two more days passed, but still no guides were forthcoming. Lubo was full of excuses and promises, but as far as he was concerned the matter was allowed to drop. Eventually we determined to make the journey without guides. We could always follow the river, which of course would be a more tedious journey, but there seemed no other way out of the difficulty.

On August 30th, therefore, we made a start, taking with us only a dozen men, and leaving Jumbi and the bulk of the men in charge of our camp, with instructions to continue buying sheep. The tents were left behind with most of our other impedimenta, as we intended travelling as lightly as possible. We took with us merely a blanket or two, the necessary culinary utensils, my camera, some spare ammunition, and a change of clothing apiece.

On leaving camp we skirted the north bank of the Waso Nyiro for some miles, deviously threading our way among the palm trees. It was a glorious excursion, this tramp through the cool dark glades beneath the palms, where the remnants of the bright sunshine which filtered through the leafy canopy overhead gave the scene the appearance of the interior of a vast cathedral dimly illuminated by rays of sunshine through stained glass windows. The effect was heightened by the occasional glimpses between the palm trunks of the smooth shining surface of the river, over which numbers of brilliantly coloured kingfishers darted to and fro like the falling fragments of a shattered rainbow.

Presently we emerged on the river-bank at a likely looking spot for a crossing. As we did so, a sliding, slipping sound, followed by a dull splash, warned us of the presence of crocodiles, and an examination of the bank showed us that three or four of the loathsome reptiles had been basking in the sun at that very spot. The tracks were, however, those of comparatively small ones, probably not more than six or eight feet long. Across the river several others of about the same size, as yet unaware of our presence, were basking on the sandbanks. The noise made by the porters soon roused them, and they also disappeared, with a wriggle and a flop, beneath the swirling stream. The river not being very deep, scarcely four feet at the deepest part, we entered the water and waded across, the men shouting and splashing with great vigour, while casting many a sidelong glance at the turbid current. Once across, our search for Lorian had commenced in good earnest, and setting our faces to the eastward, we strode forward on a course parallel to the south bank of the river.

An hour later we saw a herd of zebra, and George and I, after a long and careful stalk, secured four. They were in prime condition, and very plump, yet, strange to say, the country appeared to produce nothing more nourishing than occasional clumps of coarse grass, or rather straw, as it was

burnt yellow by the fierce rays of the sun. These four zebras were a veritable windfall, as they not only enabled the men who accompanied us to lay in a few days' supply for our journey down the river, but by sending a messenger back to Jumbi he was enabled to send for the remainder, which was sufficient to feed the men remaining in camp for some days.

We camped on the river-bank, which we had some difficulty in regaining, having to cut our way with knives and axes through the densely interlaced bush and creepers which fringed the water's edge. The weather was delightful, though the heat in the open was terrific, this camp being situated within one degree of the equator, and not more than one thousand two hundred feet above sea-level.

On starting the following morning we found that the river curved away to the northward, rounding the easterly spur of the Zambo Plateau. As we proceeded, the luxuriant tropical vegetation gave way to scattered acacias and patches of burnt-up elephant grass. The soil underfoot also changed in character, the rocky outcrops and boulders of quartz and gneiss almost entirely disappearing. In their place were vast stretches of smooth shining sand, alternated with patches of loose brown earth, as soft and crumbly as starch, which made travelling a matter of great toil and difficulty. Game was very plentiful. I shot a grantei during the morning, and when we halted for lunch I secured three water-buck.

After we had eaten and rested awhile we resumed the march. The aspect of the country grew worse and worse. The brown crumbling soil gave way under our feet; it seemed so rotten that it was unable to bear our weight, and at every step we sank into it over our knees, our passage raising a brown impalpable dust which choked our eyes, ears, and nostrils in a most uncomfortable and disconcerting manner. The mules suffered even more than ourselves. It was impossible to ride them, as at every stride they sank up to their hocks in the rotten earth, and floundered about in a most pitiful and distressing manner. The sand, which seemed so smooth and firm on the surface, was also honeycombed underneath by some agency or other. I had a nasty fall from this cause during the afternoon's march. I was riding the big mule, when the sand suddenly collapsed under her forefeet and she went down on her chest, afterwards rolling over on my leg, pinning me to the ground. In her struggles she kicked me in the side several times, inflicting severe bruises. Ramathani secured her head, and I was pulled from under

her, feeling badly shaken and very faint. The mule then broke away and raced across country, kicking her heels in the air in delighted freedom. She was not caught for over an hour, during which I had to stumble along in the burning sun as best I could, with my head spinning like a top, and my temper considerably above the boiling-point. We concluded a weary march by sundown, and again camped under the palms on the river-bank.

These palms formed a home for large troops of baboons and little monkeys, who chattered unceasingly. After our meagre meal of fried meat we retired. The moon was in the first quarter and shed a little light after the sun had set, and we laid back in our blankets and, gazing up at the palms, spent an hour or so in desultory conversation, or perhaps discussing our route for the morrow. As the sun set the night-birds appeared, and tuned up, preparatory to their usual concert, lasting from sunset to sunrise. One bird in particular went regularly up and down the scale, starting from D, and mounting by leaps and bounds over a couple of octaves, descended again. This performance was repeated with maddening insistency during the greater part of the night.

At sunrise on the morning of September 1st we were again on the road. We saw several herds of water-buck on the banks of the Waso Nyiro, but they were very shy and most difficult to approach. The river ran in a direction almost due north. The further we followed it to the north and east the scarcer became the vegetation. Rhinoceros became once more unpleasantly numerous, and during that morning's march we dodged several who at one time bade fair to disperse our little company. I suppose that they have their uses, though they are inconvenient at times. I know of nothing better for livening up the monotony of an otherwise uninteresting march, than a crusty old rhino who has just been roused from a refreshing nap. A lion does not create half so much excitement. El Hakim and George had to bestir themselves on one occasion during the morning, in order to prevent accident. It was in this wise. I was marching ahead, and contemplating as I went the manifold beauties of nature. A few yards behind me rode in silence El Hakim and George, also contemplating the beauties of nature—or were they thinking of the approach of lunch time? Anyhow, we were some few hundred yards ahead of the men when an agonized yell from Ramathani, who was in the rear, caused us to look round. There, not forty yards away, were two rhinoceros, a mother and a half-grown young one,

coming straight for us with speedy but noiseless footsteps. I instantly took up a strategic position on the opposite side of an adjacent bush, and became an interested spectator, taking the precaution, however, to slip a cartridge into my rifle in case it should be needed. El Hakim and George dismounted with such rapidity that they almost seemed to fall off. Letting go the mules, who dashed away at full speed, they also selected a bush from which to view the procession, both of them being unarmed. The rhinos were by that time hardly half a dozen yards behind them, and scarcely had they slipped behind their respective bushes when the brutes charged right between us and went on. Not twenty seconds could have elapsed from the time Ramathani's warning shout reached us to the time the rhinos passed, but to us it seemed nearer twenty minutes. I give this instance—one of many—to show how pleasantly one is kept on the *qui vive* in the districts where the rhinoceros abounds, be the landscape ever so monotonous, or the march ever so weary.

After a march lasting from sunrise till ten o'clock in the forenoon we halted for breakfast, or lunch, as we variously called our first meal, according to the time of day at which we made our halt. The continuous meat diet was getting very monotonous and unpalatable, chiefly owing to the absence of sufficient fat for cooking purposes. Our tobacco, of which, owing to some inadvertence on our departure from the Rendili camp, we had brought only a very small supply, gave out on this day, and we were thus deprived of another solace in the midst of the trials and difficulties of the journey.

After we had breakfasted we made our simple preparations for resuming the march, but to our dismay we found that the mules had disappeared. The man in charge of them while they were grazing had carelessly let them wander, and they were not to be found. We eventually discovered their tracks leading back over the path we had traversed in the morning, and we immediately sent some of the men in chase. They returned in an hour with the refractory animals, and we set off once more on our journey down the river. We saw immense herds of game on the road, including giraffe, buffalo, rhinoceros, grantei, and water-buck, and now and again we passed old elephant and lion tracks.

To the south and east the shining desert extended away to the horizon, with only a few thorny acacias to relieve the general appearance of

sameness. Troops of baboons squatted on the sand or skipped about like children at play, their hoarse barks being interpreted by our little puppy as a challenge, which, however, he wisely declined to accept. At sundown we camped under a clump of palms, and turned in early, thoroughly tired out. For myself, during the whole of our journey to Lorian and back, I slept in paragraphs, so to speak, waking at intervals all through the night, a result contributed to in no small degree by the up-and-down-the-scale-two-octaves bird I have already mentioned.

The following day we were on our way again at sunrise. An hour afterwards we entered the most desolate region it had so far been our ill luck to traverse. Trees and palms disappeared, and their place was taken by coarse dry elephant grass eight or ten feet in height. The country bore unmistakable signs of having been under water not so very many seasons before. It was pitted in every direction by elephant, rhinoceros, and hippopotamus tracks, which must have been made when the earth was very soft, as they averaged from a foot to eighteen inches in depth. These caused us great inconvenience, as, being hidden by the long grass, we stumbled in and out of them in a most unpleasant way, jarring our teeth and our tempers with great frequency. In our endeavours to find some sort of a path we lost the river, leaving it as we thought on our extreme left, and in searching for it, to our intense surprise, we walked nearly into it. It was flowing between perfectly perpendicular banks about six feet in height, and in a direction at right angles to its course at the commencement of the morning's march. It was now little more than a large ditch, and required to be followed very carefully, as there were no trees on the banks to mark its position. This immense dried swamp is called by Mr. Chanler the Kirrimar Plain. Personally I am of opinion that in wet seasons, or after a series of wet seasons, that portion of it immediately adjoining the river forms part of a swamp or chain of swamps, to which the name Lorian is given. My reasons for this supposition are given in the next chapter.

We followed the river very carefully, as, in the event of its taking a sudden curve, we should have been absolutely lost, and in that case must inevitably have perished. Indeed, the men were already very frightened, and grumbled openly. They declared that we had got to the end of the world, and had much better turn back before worse befell us. The presence of numbers of rhinoceros had very much frightened them. We encountered

over thirty of them on one march; and quite half a dozen times had to warily circumnavigate some ungainly member of the species who was grazing directly in our path. We paid no attention to this display of insubordination on the part of the men, but pushed on, every obstacle to our progress only serving to encourage us still more to persevere in our effort to reach the much-desired goal. The heat on this open plain was tremendous; it must have been above 120° Fahr. We were only a matter of about 800 feet above sea-level, and consequently encountered the full force of the vertical rays of the equatorial sun.

At midday we halted, and, creeping under a bush for shelter, ate our frugal meal of broiled meat, lying at full length on the ground. During the meal a whisper of “ungruwe” (pig) from Ramathani brought El Hakim to his feet. Seizing his rifle, he stepped outside and shot an old boar, who, with two or three sows, was quietly feeding about fifty yards away, utterly oblivious of our presence. His flesh was tough and tasteless, not in the least resembling pork.

Several of the men came to us during the halt, to inquire how much further we were going, as they thought that we had got into the country of the “Afreet” (devils), and it would be advisable to go no further. We assured them that two or three days at most would see us at the end of our journey. The country looked so desolate and barren that I do not wonder its appearance worked on the superstitious minds of our men. We laughed at them, but they were only half reassured. We started again, and continued to follow the river, which was now not more than ten yards wide. Large crocodiles swarmed on every mud-bank, some of them immense brutes, even El Hakim declaring that he had never seen larger. One ugly reptile which started up and plunged into the water at our approach, must have been fully twenty feet long or more. El Hakim appropriately called him “the father of all crocodiles.” This loathsome reptile, with its blunt and massive snout and immense scaly body, reminded me of the “Mugger” of the ford, in one of Kipling’s stories. The largest crocodiles were dark-brown in colour, but there were multitudes of smaller ones, some bright green and others bright yellow, two of which I shot during the afternoon. When we camped that evening we built huge fires between ourselves and the water, in order to prevent the possibility of any of our party being seized during the night by the hideous reptiles.

The following day was merely a repetition of the previous one. We advanced through the same dried-up swamp, with its innumerable pits, hidden by the same coarse grass and reeds. If anything, the landscape seemed to have acquired an added tinge of desolation. Rhino were a drug in the market, owing to the increased supply, but zebra and grantei stock advanced several points during the day. We followed the river very closely, not only because it was our only guide, but because the hippopotamus, which abound in this portion of the Waso Nyiro, had, in wandering from pool to pool, trodden a rough path on the crest of the perpendicular bank of the river, which made walking much easier than if we had forced our way across the plain in endeavouring to cut across curves in the river-bed, though it necessitated a longer walk. This path was also a favourite sleeping-place for wandering rhinoceros, and on several occasions we walked almost on to them, as they were hidden by the tall grass. A shout generally brought the sleeping brute to his feet with a snort and a stamp, and he would scurry away over the plain the picture of indignant reproach.

During the march a slight misunderstanding between El Hakim and myself came very near to landing us both in an extremely perilous position. One rhino we came up with did not wake so easily, and as he lay right across the path, we had to shift him by some means. Standing fifteen or twenty yards away, we shouted, but he did not move; so El Hakim stole softly up to within three or four yards of him, and, stooping, he broke off clods of earth from the edge of the river-bank and threw them at the sleeping beast, just as a small boy might chivvy a cat with stones. Even that did not move him, so I stole softly up to El Hakim with his .577, which I handed to him. Instead of taking it, he seized my small-bore rifle, and I, thinking he meant me to try my luck with his, proceeded to cock it; but while I was doing so El Hakim let drive at the brute's head with my rifle. If he had warned me of his intention, I should have told him that my .303 shot very high at short range, but he fired before I could do so, and missed its brain altogether, only drilling a clean hole through the ear. Up jumped the rhino and faced us. I waited for El Hakim to fire again, while he, it afterwards appeared, waited for me to put in a shot with the heavier weapon. The rhino, meanwhile, made a rush at us, and we were both prepared to slip over the bank into the river and chance the crocodiles, when the brute changed its mind, and, swerving aside, galloped away across the plain. Mutual explanations ensued, and we proceeded on our

momentarily interrupted journey. In cold print it would seem as if we had both betrayed some indecision, but the reader must bear in mind the fact that from the time El Hakim fired the shot from my .303 to the time the rhino swerved and galloped away, an observer could not have counted more than four or five seconds.

The river still diminished very much in volume, as a large amount of water must of necessity be absorbed by the surrounding dry country, while the loss by evaporation must be enormous. According to our calculations we should now have been almost in sight of Lorian, having travelled quite sixty-five miles down the river from our Rendili camp.

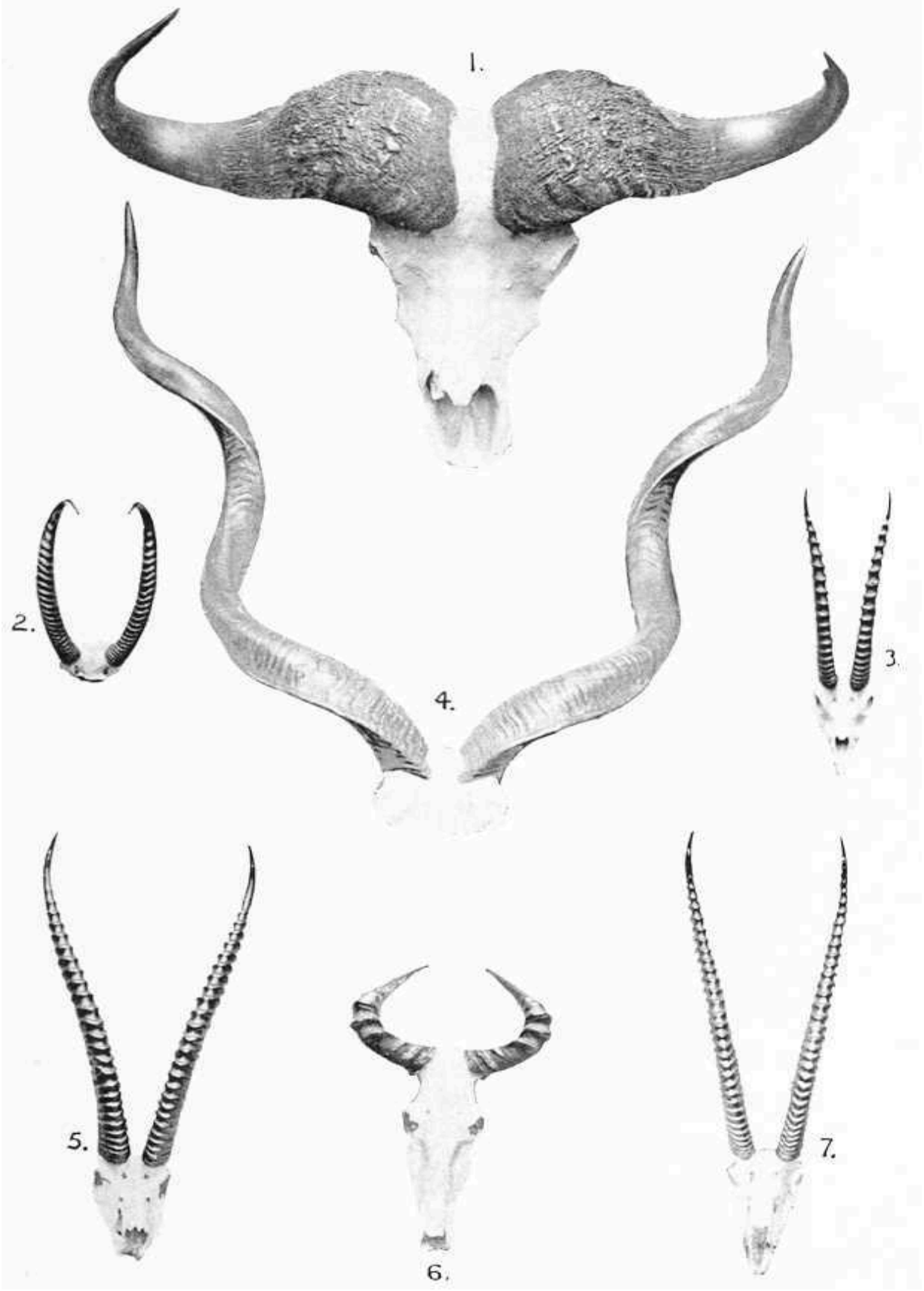
On reaching a pool situated in a bend of the river, we came upon a school of hippopotamus wallowing in the mud at the water's edge. We hid ourselves on the bank about ten yards away, and watched them for some time, as one very rarely has a chance of seeing them, unobserved, at such close quarters. Presently one of them rose, and, climbing the bank, walked slowly towards us, grazing as it came. El Hakim sat down—his favourite position for a shot—and dropped it dead with a bullet through the neck. At the sound of the report a terrific splash from the pool announced the alarm of the other members of the school, and with one accord they dived to the bottom, whence they reappeared at intervals to breathe, accompanied by much blowing and snorting. With shouts of joy our men instantly pounced upon the fallen hippopotamus, its meat being greatly esteemed by them as food. We also were badly in need of fat, which the dead animal supplied in great abundance. On cutting it open we found layers of rich yellow fat, a couple of inches thick, between the skin and the body. Great fires were at once lit, and for the next hour or two the spot resembled the deck of a whaler when the blubber is being boiled down. The men got a plentiful supply of fat for themselves, and, after an hour's boiling and rendering, we also obtained two buckets of rich fat congealed to the consistency of butter, which it resembled in colour.

At this stage the men again wished to turn back, but as we could not have been very far from Lorian, we thought it would be a pity to give up the search; so we announced our intention of proceeding, a decision which they received with every sign of discontent and even terror.

At one o'clock in the afternoon, having disposed of the remains of the hippo, we once more made our way down-stream. Just before sunset we sighted the immense sycamore tree which marked the limit of Mr. Chanler's journey, and from whence he sighted Lorian. Pushing forward with renewed vigour, we finally reached it, and looked round with eager eyes, fully expecting to get a glimpse of our long-sought-for goal.

Not a sign of the swamp could be seen! The river, scarcely half a dozen yards in width, meandered eastwards, flowing smoothly and sluggishly between its low banks. On every side stretched the silent plains, in some places perfectly bare, and in others covered by patches of dried reeds, while a few solitary thorny acacias stood like ragged sentinels amid the general desolation.

Lorian had vanished!



1. Head of old bull buffalo. The horns are very rugged, one being broken at the tip.
2. Waller's gazelle.
3. Thompson's gazelle.
4. Greater Koodoo.
5. Grant's gazelle shot south of Kenia.
6. Lichtenstein hartebeeste.
7. Grant's gazelle shot near the Waso Nyiro.

CHAPTER XV.

RETURN FROM THE LORIAN JOURNEY.

An interrupted night's rest—Photography under difficulties—We go further downstream—Still no signs of Lorian—Sad end of "Spot" the puppy—Our men refuse to go further—Preparations for the return journey—Reasons for our failure to reach Lorian—Return to our Rendili camp—Somalis think of going north to Marsabit—Ismail asks me to accompany him—I decline—The scare in Ismail's camp—Departure for M'thara.

We were bitterly disappointed at this unexpected turn of affairs, but, after a short consultation, determined to proceed on the morrow still further downstream, in the hope of reaching the tantalizing swamp. In our eagerness to reach the sycamore tree we had outstripped our half-mutinous men, and they were slowly coming into camp in twos and threes long after our arrival. Two of them had deserted during the march, an M'kamba and the ruffian Sulieman, who happened to be carrying a small black portmanteau which contained all George's and my kit. This he had cut open and had abstracted therefrom my matches, fishing-line, and the whole of my stock of needles and thread, so that we were left without the wherewithal to repair our clothing. These desertions were the more serious in that they necessitated our sending two of our remaining men back to the Rendili camp so that Jumbi might apprehend the deserters, or, failing that, to at least prevent him being deceived by a spurious message purporting to come from us, to the effect that he was to hand over a quantity of trade goods to Sulieman on the pretence that we required them—a trick often practised by Swahili deserters from a party operating away from their main camp. Sending these men away reduced our already weak party by four men, whose loads had to be distributed among the remainder; a proceeding which still further increased their discontent.

That evening we dined on the hippopotamus tongue, which proved a right royal dish. It was wonderfully fat and tender, and, as it weighed about seven pounds, it afforded a substantial as well as a very pleasant meal. We turned in early, and as I wished to change the plates in my camera, I manufactured an extempore dark room by throwing a blanket over a bush and creeping beneath it. I could not, however, use it with safety till the

moon had set, at 2 a.m., so I instructed the sentry to call me at that time, and, getting out my package of spare plates, placed them, together with my collapsible ruby lamp, beside me, and endeavoured to sleep. We had arranged our beds at the foot of the sycamore tree, and, as it turned out, right in the path used by the hippopotamus and rhinoceros in their nightly wanderings along the banks of the river.

We had slept for perhaps two hours, when a shout of alarm from the men was followed by a stampede, as the two mules broke from their picket ropes and bolted. Waking up with a start, I was surprised to see El Hakim and George, clad in the very scantiest attire, come flying across my bed as if they were practising the high jump. I glanced round, and an instant later rose hurriedly from my blankets and joined them. A rhinoceros, coming along the path, had rushed among our sleeping men and charged through, scattering them right and left. He then rushed at the fire and stamped on it, and when I awoke was coming down with the speed of an avalanche to the spot where we had been sleeping. We, however, with a sudden access of modesty, due perhaps to the knowledge of our attire, bashfully retreated to the other side of our friendly sycamore tree, where some of our men were already perched among the branches, while the rhinoceros passed on without further demonstration. Inquiries revealed the fact that none of the men were hurt, with the single exception of Docere ben Ali, who had grazed his shin. *He* said the rhinoceros did it, but I rather inclined to the belief that he did it himself in his haste to climb the tree at the commencement of the stampede. We retired to our blankets, thanking our lucky stars that nothing worse had happened. Not more than half an hour later, when I had just got comfortably to sleep again, I was once more aroused by El Hakim uttering my name in an intense whisper. In an instant I was wide awake, and saw him and George standing on their blankets gazing intently into the darkness. A cloud had temporarily obscured the light of the moon, and it was at first somewhat difficult to distinguish objects a few yards distant. When my eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, I became aware of the presence of a herd of hippopotamus standing irresolute within a dozen yards of my bed. One, ahead of the others, was slowly advancing in a line that would bring him right across our blankets, and was at that moment not five yards away. We stood undecided; we did not wish to alarm them, as they might have stampeded over us, and in that case we might just as well have stayed at home and died an easier death beneath a steam-roller. It was too dark to use

a rifle with any effect, while it was open to the same objection. Meanwhile the herd was slowly advancing and the situation was becoming more and more strained, when our dog sprang at the foremost with a snarl, while "Spot," the puppy, yelped defiance in his shrill treble. The herd paused, turned, and disappeared like a flash in the opposite direction, with a thundering of feet which constituted an unpleasant reminder of what might have happened had they come in our direction. The puppy took all the credit of the affair to himself, and came up to be patted and stroked, wagging his diminutive tail in a manner expressive of the utmost contempt for wild beasts in general, and hippopotamus in particular. We turned in again and tried to sleep once more.

I was called when the moon had set, and proceeded to rig up my *al fresco* dark room. During the two alarms either El Hakim or George had trodden on my ruby lamp and had stamped it out quite flat. It took me some time to bend it back into something of its former shape, while the sentry stood by and struck matches to enable me to see. Finally the lamp was more or less satisfactorily adjusted and the blanket placed in position. In the middle of the operation an excited whisper of "Faru, bwana," caused me to drop my apparatus and scramble hurriedly out. I took one glance round, yelled to El Hakim and George, and we all three hastily took up our position behind the tree, while the oncoming rhinoceros danced through the camp at fifteen miles an hour and disappeared.

We began to think that these visitations were becoming too much of a good thing. The men, too, manifested an anxious desire to emulate the fowls of the air and roost among the branches of our friend in need, the sycamore tree.

Returning to my dark room, I completed the operation of changing the plates, and once more sought my blankets, in the pious hope that we should not be disturbed again.

But it was not to be. On two other occasions during that eventful night we were compelled to rise hurriedly from our blankets and betake ourselves to the shelter of the friendly sycamore, while a too impetuous rhinoceros whirled past; and the dawn discovered us blear-eyed and weary from the effects of our nocturnal gymnastics.

When the usual time for starting the day's march arrived the men flatly refused to go a step further. We argued the point with them, and finally induced them to make one more march, promising that if we did not find the "Siwa" (swamp) then we would return. With that understanding we set out, marching at a good pace, as the ground was rather firmer underfoot than hitherto.

Just before midday we passed a small herd of grantei, and I managed to secure one at long range. An hour later a couple of bull buffaloes were seen, quietly feeding on the opposite side of the river. El Hakim put in some pretty shooting at fifty yards, bringing them both down. We crossed the river and camped beside the carcasses.

It was here that we sustained a loss which we all felt very deeply, and which even now I cannot recall without a sigh. "Spot," the puppy, who had endeared himself to us all by his lovable disposition and pretty ways, had gone to sleep in the grass while El Hakim was engaged with the buffaloes. When we crossed the river he was forgotten, and not until we were making our arrangements for camping, did a shrill bark from the other side of the river call our attention to the small owner thereof. We immediately sent a couple of men across the river to bring him over, but they had to go fifty yards or so lower down to do so. The gallant little chap would not, however, wait for the men, but plunged boldly into the stream and swam towards us, wagging his tail in infinite delight at his own daring. He had scarcely got three-parts of the way across when he gave a sudden sharp yelp of pain and disappeared under the surface with a jerk, leaving us standing on the bank speechless with consternation and distress. Ramathani ran up with a rifle, but I waved him away in despair. A hundred rifles could not have restored our gallant little dog to us, the crocodile which had seized him having never shown itself above the water. There was nothing to do but to turn sorrowfully away and console ourselves as best we might.

We called the men together after we had eaten and asked them if they were willing to go on still further, but they were unanimous in their determination not to go a yard further down the river. "Takufa yote, bwana" (We shall all die, master); "Mangati tele hapa" (There are many wild beasts here); "Afreeti winge hapa" (There are plenty of devils about here); and "Tu'nataka kurudi, bwana" (We wish to return, master), were among the remarks which greeted our ears at the mere suggestion that we should go

further down-stream. Finally we compromised. We asked for two volunteers who would go down the river, there and then, for some hours' march, and see if they could see anything of Lorian. If they discovered it they were to return, and we would all go on together there, but if they saw nothing of it, we would return to our Rendili camp on the following day. This was agreed to, and two of the men, Asmani ben Selim and Kati (an M'Nyamwezi), accordingly started off.

They returned late the same evening, and reported that they had been some miles down the river and had seen no signs of the swamp. We were greatly disappointed, but in accordance with our agreement made arrangements to commence our return march on the following day. We could not have done otherwise, as if we had signified our intention of proceeding further to the eastward in defiance of our promise, the men would have deserted in a body during the night, and gone back to the Rendili camp.

It took Mr. Chanler nine days, starting from a point opposite our Rendili camp, to reach the sycamore tree under which we had slept—or rather tried to sleep—the night before, while the same distance only occupied us five days, which is easily explained by the fact that we had already a general idea of the course of the Waso Nyiro, while Mr. Chanler had to feel every mile of his way. We were now a march beyond the sycamore tree, which formed the limit of his journey, and our men had been some miles farther still down the river and had not seen the swamp. The only hypothesis I can advance which will account for our failure to find Lorian at the place where Mr. Chanler saw it on January 7th, 1893, is this.

In very wet seasons, or after a series of wet seasons, the Waso Nyiro overflows its banks and covers a portion of the Kirrimar Plain, forming a vast swamp, or more probably a chain of swamps, to which the name of Lorian has been given by the natives. That the portion of the Kirrimar Plain immediately adjoining the river is at times under water, is beyond a doubt, as I have already mentioned in the previous chapter. After a long drought, by which the supply of water brought down by the Waso Nyiro would be materially curtailed, these swamps dry up, those lying up-stream, owing to their higher level, naturally drying up first, and consequently the western edge of the swamp, or swamps, called Lorian, would gradually recede more and more to the eastward as the drought increased. At the time of our visit

in September, 1900, there had been no rain in Samburuland for three years, according to the Rendili, and it is therefore quite reasonable to suppose that Lorian, for the reasons enumerated, had receded many miles to the eastward of the point at which Mr. Chanler turned back, having satisfied himself that Lorian was merely a swamp and not a lake as he had supposed. It is quite possible that the swamp seen by Mr. Chanler may not have been Lorian at all, but may have been only one of the chain of swamps to the west of it and higher up the river, and which had dried up prior to our visit. The evaporation in that terribly hot climate (scarcely one degree north of the Equator, and not more than 700 feet above sea-level) must be enormous, and would be sufficient to dry up even a large lake providing it was not well fed with water, as in the case of Lorian. A shallow body of water with a very large surface-area, such as this swamp, would be very easily dried up in one season if its river-borne water-supply was much reduced.

On the morning of September 5th we reluctantly turned our backs on the elusive Lorian, and retraced our steps. Nothing of interest occurred on the return journey beyond the usual weary marches over the desolate country already described, punctuated at intervals with a rhino charge or a hunt for meat. I remember one rhinoceros which amused us very much. We were making our way across a belt of bush which somehow managed to draw sustenance from the sand, when the familiar but subdued shout of "Faru" caused us to glance hurriedly round. Facing us ten yards away a large rhinoceros was stamping and snorting. In a few seconds he made up his mind to investigate, and charged down upon us. Something impelled George to place his fingers in his mouth and send forth a shrill ear-piercing whistle. The charging rhinoceros stopped suddenly in mid-career, so suddenly, indeed, that he almost sat on his hind quarters. Such a look of porcine surprise came over its ugly features that we involuntarily burst out into a roar of laughter, which apparently completed the ungainly brute's discomfiture, as it turned and galloped away with every symptom of fear. We also shot every crocodile we could get at on the return journey, as a set-off against the loss of our lamented pup, but it failed to afford us any satisfaction.

On the fifth day after we started on our return journey we arrived half-starved and footsore at our Rendili camp. In the light of this experience I can quite believe that the Rendili were right when they asserted that they

could reach Lorian in two days, always supposing Lorian to be in the position roughly assigned to it, viz. read $1^{\circ} 5' 0''$ N. lat. and $30^{\circ} 30' 0''$ E. long. A native perfectly acquainted with the country would abandon the Waso Nyiro altogether, and cut across the big curve which the river makes to the north and south-east, and travelling across the desert in a direction east-north-east from the Zambo Plateau, he would only have a fifty-mile march before him—by no means a difficult matter for a native, as he would only require to make two marches of twenty-five miles each in forty-eight hours. If I ever make another trip down the Waso Nyiro I shall certainly adopt that plan myself.

The moment we reached camp we ordered a sheep to be killed, and when it was cooked the three of us sat down and finished it. We were very hungry, and it was only a small sheep. While we were satisfying our material wants, we summoned Jumbi that he might give an account of his stewardship. It appeared that he had bought a couple of hundred sheep in our absence. The Somalis under Ismail Robli had moved their camp one march up the river, following the Rendili and Burkeneji, who were moving their villages upstream, the adjacent pasture being finished. There was a recrudescence of small-pox among the Rendili, and many were dying daily. Such was the news.

On the following morning I rode over to Ismail's camp to hear what he had to say. I found the Somalis very despondent. Business was decreasing, as, owing to the presence of two safaris, the market was glutted with trade goods. They were buying camels, which was necessarily a very slow process, as the camels could only be bought for so many sheep. These sheep had first to be purchased for cloth or wire, and Ismail was finding out that between the value of a sheep he wished to buy, and that of a sheep he wished to sell, there was a wide difference.

Ismail also informed me that a party of Wa'Embe had come to trade with the Rendili and Burkeneji, and had stayed at a Burkeneji village further up the river. When the Wa'Embe heard that the Somalis were camped among the villages of their hosts, they inquired of them why they had not attacked the Somalis and speared them. "We have beaten them twice," they said, "and killed many of their men with our spears. Their bullets did not hurt us. Why do you not spear them?" This advice was not lost on the Burkeneji, and they would have probably acted upon it in the near future; but Ismail,

hearing the news from his spies, went forth to attack the mischief-making Wa'Embe, who forthwith fled without giving battle.

The next day we also moved our camp up-stream, and pitched our tents afresh on a spot a few yards from the river-bank and 500 yards or so from Ismail's boma. We understood from Ismail that he intended going north to Marsabit, and for some reason he was very anxious that I should leave El Hakim and George to return alone and accompany him northward. He was very pressing in his invitation, which, however, I consistently declined. If Jamah had been alive, nothing would have pleased me better than an opportunity of penetrating further northward to Marsabit and perhaps Reshiat and Marle at the north end of Lake Rudolph, but I entertained such a hearty contempt for Ismail, that the prospect of some months' journey in his company did not offer sufficient inducement to warrant me in altering my arrangements.

After we had settled down in our fresh camp we concentrated our attention on exchanging the remainder of our cloth for sheep, so that we might start on our return journey to Nairobi. El Hakim wished to get back to Nairobi in November for personal reasons, otherwise we should have gone back to M'thara, and after buying a fresh supply of food there, and getting the forty odd loads of beads which were in N'Dominuki's charge, we had intended journeying to Lake Baringo and thence northward into the country of the Turkana.

Business was very slack until El Hakim hit on a bright idea. He called the Rendili chiefs Lubo, Lokomogo, Lomoro, and other lesser lights together, and pointed out that although we had dwelt amongst them for almost a month, so far only one of them, Lubo to wit, had brought us a present. "It was well known," continued El Hakim, "that when 'friends' visited the Rendili they were always presented with many sheep, and even camels, as a token of good-will." He was therefore reluctantly compelled to conclude that we and the Rendili were not friends, a state of affairs which filled his heart with sorrow. But still, it was not yet too late, and if those who had not yet brought sheep as a present did so within the next few days all would be forgotten and forgiven.

The effect was magical. Early the following day Lokomogo stalked into camp, followed by a couple of men driving a small flock of thirteen sheep,

which, after much circumlocution, he introduced as his present. El Hakim immediately made him a return present of a quantity of cloth, wire, and beads, of the value of something like twenty per cent. above the market price of the sheep. Lokomogo was delighted, and departed with his present with every sign of pleasure and good-will.

The other chiefs must have been waiting to see how Lokomogo's present was received, as the next day, finding it had been satisfactory, the presents came in thick and fast, every present consisting of exactly thirteen sheep, neither more nor less than that brought by Lokomogo. Each donor received a return present over and above the market value of the sheep, and business fairly boomed, everybody being satisfied. Had we offered treble the value of the sheep in the ordinary way of business, we could not have bought any, as the market was glutted with trade goods. El Hakim, however, touched them on their weak spot when he made a ceremonial transaction of it, and the result fully justified his claim to a certain amount of insight into the working of the native mind.

About this time I was prostrated with a very severe toothache, which confined me to my tent for some days. By the time I was about again our scheme for the exchange of presents had worked so well that our cloth was almost exhausted, and we were nearly ready to take our departure for M'thara. We had now upwards of 500 sheep, and it promised to be a tedious task to transport them safely to Nairobi; more especially as we were extremely doubtful of our reception by the A'kikuyu of north-east Kenia.

Late in the evening two days before our departure from the Rendili settlement, a couple of the Somalis came into our camp exhibiting every symptom of alarm. They brought a message from Ismail to the effect that the Burkeneji warriors had killed and eaten three sheep^[15] preparatory to attacking him and us. The attack was to take place during the small hours of the same night. His information emanated from some friendly Rendili.

We had already retired for the night, but we donned our clothes and went over to the Somali camp to see Ismail.

The Somali camp was in a great state of excitement. Ismail himself was serving out ammunition to his men with a lavish hand, and others of the Somalis were cutting bush and otherwise strengthening the boma. We did not quite believe their story, but as it would do no harm to take ordinary

precautions, we returned to our own camp and proceeded to put it into a state of defence.

It was already well protected on two sides by a thick belt of bush, so thickly interlaced as to be impenetrable, and by a large fallen thorn tree, which, while easily seen through, formed a barrier as impassable to naked savages as a barbed wire entanglement. More thorn-bush was cut down and a strong barrier erected on the river side. On the opposite side, where the men's tents were situated, we built another thorn fence, leaving the tents outside with the fires burning as usual, in the hope that in the event of hostilities the apparently unprotected tents would draw the first attack. We did not think that the enemy would feel inclined to make a second.

The men all slept under arms in the centre of our boma, with the exception of the sentries, whom we posted some distance outside the camp. The 8-bore, loaded with slugs, was placed handy, together with half a dozen of the blue flares, which would instantly light up the scene for a hundred yards round with an intense radiance as awe-inspiring to the enemy as it would be useful to ourselves. When our defensive preparations were completed we retired fully dressed to our blankets, and endeavoured to snatch a little sleep, with such success that we did not wake till sunrise.

We temporarily demolished the "boma" on the side on which the men's tents stood, so that we should not give our scheme away should we be visited during the day by any of the Burkeneji, as, for all we knew, it might yet prove useful.

The Burkeneji were undoubtedly restless, as we found that they were moving their villages *down* the river again, some of them going as far as the eastern spur of the Zambo Plateau.

The next night we took the same precautions as on the previous evening, but still nothing happened.

On September 20th we had finally disposed of all our stock, and were now quite ready to leave for M'thara. Ismail informed us that he was going north to Marsabit, and bade us good-bye.

When we retired that night we took the same precautions against surprise. About eight o'clock in the evening we were aroused by the report of a rifle from the direction of the Somali camp. After a short interval we

heard another, then another, and then a sound of rapid firing mingled with shouts and yells. We sprang up and got our men under arms and waited events. A dead silence succeeded the former pandemonium, nor did we hear another sound. We concluded that the Burkeneji had attempted to rush the Somali camp, and, finding them prepared, had abandoned the attack.

Next morning we packed up in preparation for the start. While we were thus engaged we were visited by Ismail, who came over to explain the cause of the disturbance of the preceding night.

It appeared that the Somalis, as well as their men, were still very nervous on account of the supposed hostility of the Burkeneji. After they had gone to sleep, their cattle, which were corralled in a small enclosure in the centre of their boma, were by some means stampeded. Breaking out of their enclosure, the frightened animals rushed hither and thither among the sleeping porters, who, waking up under the impression that the Burkeneji were upon them, were immediately stricken with panic, and crawling under blankets, bushes, or anything that afforded them the slightest cover, they yelled dismally for mercy, thus adding to the general confusion. Ismail and his lieutenants seized their rifles and rushed out of their tents, to find some of their men trying to break out of the boma, some crawling about on their hands and knees, crying for mercy, while others were brandishing spears and shouting defiance. They likewise jumped to the conclusion that they were being attacked, and that the enemy were actually within the boma; and under the influence of a panic, no whit less than that of their men, they without further ado raised their rifles and fired into the confused groups of men, seen dimly in the flickering light of the camp-fires. After a time order was restored, and it was found that there had been no attack at all. Two of their porters were shot dead in the confusion, and one Somali received a Snider bullet in the forearm; while a horse which Ismail had bought from the Rendili, and of which he was very proud, received a bullet in the chest and another in one of its hoofs. The cattle were probably stampeded by the scent of a lion which had been prowling round the boma, and which, some days before, had actually, in broad daylight, seized and killed a cow belonging to Ismail.

Congratulating Ismail on the state of his nerves and on the discipline of his camp, we bade him adieu once more. We then shook the dust of the

Rendili settlement from our feet, and started amid the joyous shouts of our men on our journey up the river *en route* for M'thara.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[15\]](#) It is the custom of the natives to kill and eat meat before setting out on a warlike expedition.

CHAPTER XVI.

RETURN TO M'THARA.

Departure from the Rendili settlement—Ismaïl's porters desert—The affray between Barri and the Somalis—Ismaïl wounded—A giraffe hunt—Ismaïl's vacillation—Another giraffe hunt—Journey up the Waso Nyiro—Hippopotamus-shooting.

We marched steadily for nearly three hours, and then, selecting a suitable spot, camped on the river-bank. *En route* we noticed several stone cairns, which on inquiry I learnt were the burial-places of the Rendili. Unlike the Wakamba, A'kikuyu, and Masai, they do not leave their dead or dying relatives outside their villages, to the tender mercies of the hyænas. They, on the contrary, dig a hole in the ground, in which the corpse is placed in a sitting position. Stones are then piled over the body till a cairn is formed, and finally a spear is placed upright on the summit. In view of the utter dissimilarity between the Rendili and the ordinary negro, and the lack of definite information concerning their origin, it is to my mind a curious coincidence at least that they should bury their dead in almost precisely the same manner as the people who at one time inhabited the banks of the Nile in Upper Egypt.^[16]

I remember hearing in Cairo, in the early part of 1899, that Professor Flinders Petrie had unearthed some graves which were supposed to be those of a people so ancient as to be unacquainted with the use of metals, and who buried their dead in a sitting position, afterwards covering them by inverting a large earthen jar over the body and then filling up the grave. These facts, taken in conjunction with Mr. Seton Karr's discovery of flint implements in Somaliland resembling, I believe, those discovered by Professor Petrie in Egypt may, in the hands of an antiquarian, throw an interesting light on the antecedents of this remarkable people. It would be interesting indeed could it be shown that the Rendili are the modern representatives of the primitive race who manufactured clay pottery and worked in flint on the banks of the Nile before the pyramids were built.

When we had constructed a boma for the sheep, George and I went down to bathe in the Waso Nyiro, a feat we successfully accomplished to the

accompaniment of the usual eccentric dance on account of the leeches.

In the evening a young Somali, named Barri, came into camp. He wished to return to Nairobi with us, and as he was not bound to Ismail in any way, not receiving any pay, we consented to his doing so. He was, indeed, a small trader on his own account, and with a couple of cattle had accompanied Ismail in order to try to exchange them for two tusks. This purpose he had not been able to carry out. He therefore sold them to some of the other Somalis who accompanied Ismail's caravan on the same conditions as himself, and, unknown to Ismail, proposed to return to Nairobi with us. We did not know at the time that Ismail was unaware of the proposed change, and as Barri had formerly been a personal servant of El Hakim's, and a very good man, we gave him permission to accompany us on condition that he made himself useful.

Before sunrise on the following morning, Barri went away from camp to try to procure some fresh milk for us at an isolated Burkeneji village some little distance away. He borrowed my Martini and half a dozen cartridges, as he had no more ammunition for his own weapon, a carbine of Italian manufacture, and set out. An hour later, as we were preparing to start on our march, Ismail Robli, who had travelled all night, accompanied by a strong party of Somalis, all fully armed, strode into our camp. He stated, none too politely, that most of his remaining porters had deserted, and he had reason to believe that they were accompanying our safari. Ignoring his discourtesy, we politely informed him that such was not the case, nor had we seen his men; but if it would in any way ease his mind he had our permission to look through the camp. He proceeded to do so, and of course found no traces of his missing porters.

In the meanwhile Barri was returning with the milk he had purchased, and was approaching the camp, all unconscious of this new aspect of affairs. He was sighted by two of Ismail's armed guards, who, slipping cartridges into their Sniders, rushed towards him, demanding his instant surrender on pain of death. Barri's reply, more forcible than polite, was a shot from the Martini, which sent them helter-skelter to the cover of the nearest bush. From that comparatively safe position they held a parley with him, under cover of which they sought an opportunity of shooting at him. He, however, was aware of their amiable intentions, and, standing with his rifle at the ready, threatened to shoot the first man who raised his weapon.

One of them tried it, but Barri instantly fired, which, though he missed his man, effectually stopped any further attempt at such treachery.

Ismail, busily searching for his absent porters, heard the shots, and, momentarily desisting from his search, rushed out of camp to see what was the matter. Fifty yards away he saw Barri with uplifted rifle covering the two Somalis, who were cowering behind the bush. If ever I saw murder written on a man's face, I saw it then on Ismail's, and remembering what he was capable of, I went after him, followed by El Hakim and George. Ismail was carrying a 12-bore shot-gun loaded with ball cartridges, and as he ran at Barri he unslung the weapon from his shoulder. Barri turned in the nick of time, and without a second's hesitation fired point-blank at him. Ismail collapsed into a writhing heap on the ground, while Barri turned and fled with the speed of a deer into the surrounding bush.

These events happened in such rapid succession that we had no time to interfere and prevent the catastrophe, as we were only just outside the camp when Ismail fell. Of the two Somalis who had brought Barri to bay, one followed him, but, apparently very half-heartedly, he soon returned, and the other ran to assist Ismail. That swashbuckler and would-be assassin had struggled into a sitting position, and was groaning with great vigour, punctuating his howls at intervals with supplications to Allah, mingled with bitter curses on the head of his assailant. We immediately examined him to ascertain the extent of his injuries. He had sustained a nasty flesh-wound on the inside of his right leg a few inches above the ankle. The bullet had cut away the flesh and laid bare the bone, but fortunately had not fractured it. El Hakim dressed and bound the wound, while I superintended the construction of a litter in which Ismail could be conveyed to his own camp.

His removal took place soon after midday. El Hakim accompanied him to his camp, and, on arriving there, again dressed the wound, returning to our own camp late in the evening. Ismail's wound was by no means serious, and would be quite well in a week or so, and as many of his porters had deserted, he seemed inclined to accompany us back to Kenia, and we decided, therefore, to make very short marches for the next few days, primarily in order that Ismail could communicate with us if necessary, and secondly, to gradually accustom the sheep to marching in preparation for their long tramp to Nairobi.

We did not pity Ismail in the least, as neither he nor any of his men had a right to threaten Barri or in any way to control his movements, and, in addition, I had ocular evidence that Barri had acted purely in self-defence. Nevertheless, knowing that Ismail's safari was now numerically very weak, and the Wa'Embe, as already stated, were in communication with the Burkeneji, we were strongly disinclined to abandon his safari to perhaps further misfortune. This feeling, I must admit, did not extend to Ismail personally, as he had shown himself to be a vacillating bully, and a man of evil passions, which at times entirely mastered him. But he had still some forty or fifty porters who deserved a better fate, and in addition, a mishap to one safari naturally mischievously affected any other which happened to be in the district at or near the same time.

During the night we were much troubled by lions round the camp. They were not roaring, or we should have had no apprehensions, as Leo does not roar till he has killed. It was the peculiar low whining grunt, which is so modulated that it is extremely difficult to estimate the brute's distance, or even locate his direction. The sheep were very uneasy, and it required the utmost exertions of our men to prevent them from stampeding. The fires were stirred up and fresh wood piled upon them, but all night we were kept constantly on the alert, though fortunately nothing untoward happened. Next morning we struck camp, and wandered up the river, camping again before the sun was well above the horizon. This programme was repeated for the following six days.

During this time we received almost daily reports from Ismail by the hands of special messengers. These reports were couched in his usual vacillating terms. One day he would send word that he was coming on the following day with his safari for the purpose of accompanying us back to Kenia, while the next message would state that he had determined to buy more camels and go north to Marsabit. We did not alter our six-day programme, but marched slowly on.

For one thing, we had great difficulty in feeding the men, game being scarce. We were naturally unwilling to kill sheep for food except as a last resource, but turned our attention instead to shooting.

On the afternoon of the third day I was lucky enough to hear from a party of Burkeneji that a few giraffe were in the neighbourhood. I saddled up the

big mule, and, taking the Martini, sallied forth, accompanied by a couple of men.

After a ten-mile tramp in a direction almost at right angles to the river, I discovered a herd of seven or eight giraffe quietly feeding at the base of a hill half a mile distant. I dismounted and examined them through the binoculars. They had not observed me, but there was no possible chance of my reaching them from where I was, as the plain was quite open between us, and, in addition, I was dead up-wind. Leaving the mule in charge of the two men, I made a long *détour* on foot, which occupied me nearly an hour. Finally, by careful stalking, taking advantage of every scrap of cover afforded by dongas and thorn-bush, I got to leeward of them and about 250 yards distant. There was a gentle dip in the ground between myself and my proposed quarry; I had reached a point on the summit of the rise, while they were halfway up the slope on the opposite bank. In spite of all my care, they were evidently aware of the presence of danger, though they had not as yet located it. As they showed an inclination to stampede, I determined, unsportsmanlike as it was, to risk a long shot. I picked out the largest bull I could see and banged off at him. They immediately made off, and though I had distinctly heard the thud of my bullet, I saw no sign of weakness on the part of the beast I had hit. They galloped away to the top of the opposite rise, and from there sighted the two men with the mule. They doubled sharply back, and bore down straight for the spot where I was glued to the earth behind a small tuft of grass. When they had approached to within thirty yards, they became aware of my presence and turned off to my left. As they did so, the old bull gave me a capital shoulder shot, of which I was not slow to take advantage. He seemed to take no notice whatever of it, but, to my great disappointment, disappeared with the others among the trees which covered the lower slopes of a small hill on my left. I set off in chase, but before I had gone many yards I heard the crash of a heavy body, breaking trees and branches in its fall. Hurrying to the spot, I found my giraffe, dead. There were two wounds in its body, one in the stomach, evidently my first shot, and the other fairly through the shoulder. I found, on cutting the beast up, that my second bullet had smashed through the shoulder-blade and ribs, and then, having been slightly flattened, had passed clean through the heart, tearing a great hole in that organ, and then passing through the ribs and shoulder-blade on the opposite side, it lodged under the

skin, where it formed a small lump, which was distinctly visible from the outside.

In spite of the extensive nature of its injuries, the stricken giraffe had galloped over a hundred yards without giving any sign that it was hurt. With regard to the injuries themselves, I do not think the most expensive express rifle made would have done better. Certainly the Martini is a wonderfully useful all-round weapon.

As my two men with the mule had not turned up by the time I had concluded my examination of the giraffe, I went to look for them. They were not on the spot where I left them, neither could I get any answer from them, though I shouted myself hoarse. I therefore made my way back to the small hill I have mentioned and climbed to the summit. From there I got an extended view of the country, but nevertheless I could not see a sign of the men. I shouted, but my voice was lost in space. I had a syren whistle with which I was in the habit of summoning the men; but though I hooted and screamed through it like the cry of a lost tug-boat, nothing resulted.

I gazed round the empty landscape with a feeling akin to desperation. The sun was sinking fast, and I stood a very good chance of passing the night ten miles from camp and supper, alone on the hillside with the body of the giraffe. Once more I wailed on the syren whistle, but there was no answer beyond the chirrup of a frightened bird.

At length I saw them loafing around about 800 yards away. I redoubled my shouting and whistling, but they did not seem to hear me. As a last resource, I laid down, and, taking aim with the Martini, planked a bullet in the sand within fifty yards of them. Their attention was immediately aroused, and they gazed about trying to locate my direction. Another shot gave them the information they required, and they immediately started to rejoin me. Leaving one man safely ensconced in the branches of a tree as a guard over the giraffe, I returned with the other to camp, which I did not reach till long after night had fallen.

On arrival, I despatched half a dozen men, with water and the means of lighting a fire, to guard the dead giraffe from the hyænas, and possibly lions. Barri, I found, had returned to our camp and thrown himself on our mercy. He was informed that he might be perfectly easy in his mind, as we should not give him up to Ismail on any account, for which consideration he

was extremely grateful. During the night we were troubled again by lions, who prowled round the camp, doubtless attracted by the sheep.

We moved up the river a little further on the following morning, and, camping early, sent the majority of the men to cut up the giraffe. We found the meat horribly tough and tasteless, but we struggled with it somehow. Even the men did not take kindly to it. The marrow bones, which were very large, we first roasted over a fire, and then, breaking them with an iron bar, ate their rich marrows with a teaspoon. It was very well flavoured, and much appreciated.

On the opposite bank of the Waso Nyiro was a small village of mixed Rendili and Burkeneji, the elders of which paid us a visit during the course of the day. They brought us four sheep as a present, and in return we gave them the remainder of our stock of beads and some cloths, with which they were delighted. They left us in the evening, and as a special honour, and to secure them from the attacks of crocodiles while crossing the river, El Hakim lit a blue flare, and giving it to the awestruck chief, he and his followers departed. It was very amusing to see the way the chief held it. He was half afraid of it, but did not care to show as much before his followers, so he held it at arm's length, shuddering with apprehension every time it dropped a few sparks.

On the morning of September 29th, it being the sixth day subsequent to Ismail's accident, we considered our obligation to linger in the district at an end. Scarcely had we come to that decision when a messenger from Ismail brought word that the Somalis had finally decided to go north to Marsabit. On hearing this message, we sent our blessing to Ismail, which, I expect, got the messenger into trouble—that is, if he ventured to deliver it, which I doubt—and we started for M'thara in earnest. We passed the hill which had occasioned George and myself so much trouble on our journey down the river, passing between it and the river by a narrow path which wound round its southern scarp. We halted at a boma that we found near the river, which had been built by Ismail on his journey to the Rendili.

The men reported a hippo in a pool some way up the river, and we accordingly went forth to slay it. We found the pool at the lower end of the rapids, which extend from the foot of the Chanler Falls for nearly a mile below. We found the hippo there, and George banged at it with the 8-bore. It

was the first time this weapon had been used during the trip, and George, being unfamiliar with the sighting, missed the brute's brain, merely drilling a hole in its skull and stunning it. It never gave us another chance, so we had to leave the pool without our hippo.

On the way back to camp we sighted two giraffe on the other side of the river, which were coming down to the water's edge to drink. I took a shot at 200 yards with the .303 and wounded the foremost, which immediately dashed away, followed by its companion. Being unwilling to let it go, I jumped into the river, which, though the current was very swift, was at that point not more than four feet in depth. Followed by two or three of the men, I waded across and resumed the chase of the wounded giraffe. I found it a few hundred yards further on, and planked another solid bullet into it, which had the effect of once more starting it off at a gallop.

This went on for a mile or two, the giraffe stopping every now and then for a rest, and on receiving another shot, making off again. Finally it forced its way into a patch of thick bush interlaced with a large number of prize specimens of the terrible wait-a-bit thorn. I did not attempt to penetrate this bush in like manner, but went round it instead, seeking for a more favourable entrance. While doing so, I heard the familiar crash of a falling body, and being then satisfied that my quarry had at last succumbed, I attempted to retrace my footsteps.

In the excitement of the chase I had carelessly neglected to take any bearings, leaving that part of the business to the men who accompanied me when I dashed across the river. When I turned to speak to them, I found that not one of them was near. The long chase not being to their liking, they had turned and sneaked back long before. Two little A'kikuyu boys had alone remained, so I directed them to take me back to camp by the shortest route. They protested they did not know the way, however, so I was compelled to take the lead and to try to find it myself.

It was fast growing dusk, and as I hurried on I pictured to myself the discomforts attendant on a night passed in the fork of a tree. I was once lost in the bush for twenty-four hours while after sable antelope in Mashonaland, and I had no wish to repeat the experience. After an hour of climbing and scrambling, I once more reached the river, but alas! at a point far below our camp. The river at this place flowed through numerous

narrow channels between great boulders of pink gneiss, and it seemed as if there would be a possibility of crossing by jumping from rock to rock, though it was rather a dangerous proceeding, the rocks being rendered as smooth and polished as glass by the constant action of the water. However, I stripped and attempted the crossing. When I say I stripped, I mean that I removed my boots and socks, as I had not much else on in the way of clothing; a thin cotton vest, and a coloured cloth worn petticoat-wise, completing as airy and cool a costume as one could wish for in that beautiful climate. I slipped and fell once or twice, though fortunately I sustained no injury, and half an hour later I reached camp, tired but happy, and dined sumptuously on a guinea-fowl.

At daylight the following morning we sent the men to cut up the giraffe; but they returned in an hour, saying that they were unable to find it. Judging from the way they complained of the other one I shot, I do not think they were over-anxious to do so.

Setting off once more on our march up the river, we camped soon after midday, and sent men out to search for game. Presently one man returned with the report that a solitary hippo was disporting itself in a rocky pool a little distance away. We adjourned to the spot, and on our arrival sat down to watch. In a moment or two a faint ripple disturbed the surface of the water, and under an overhanging rock on the opposite side of the pool appeared two red nostrils covered with coarse black hair. We held our breath and waited. In about twenty seconds they disappeared as suddenly and as silently as they had come into view. We waited for over an hour in the hope that the brute would expose its head and thus give us an opportunity for a decisive shot. But nothing occurred beyond the periodical appearance and disappearance of the nostrils on the water-line to indicate the presence of the huge body below. At length, as the head did not emerge, we held a whispered consultation, and El Hakim and I decided to cross the river in the hope of obtaining a shot from the opposite bank, leaving George on the look-out. We accordingly made our way down-stream to where the river, running over gravel banks, became shallower. Stripping to our shirts, we waded across breast-deep. Arrived on the other side, we cautiously made our way to a spot opposite George, and directly above the place where the hippo came to the surface to breathe. Half an hour passed while we stood still and silent as statues, with our soaked shirts flapping round our bare

legs. Suddenly, unnoticed by George and myself, the hippo came to the surface a little further out in the pool. El Hakim, however, saw it instantly, and quick as thought sent a .577 bullet through its head. He had not time to place the rifle to his shoulder, and in consequence his finger was torn by the heavy recoil. He succeeded, however, in his object, which was either to kill or momentarily stun the hippo. Presently the water in the pool became violently agitated, and soon the immense beast rolled over on the surface, and I immediately gave it its quietus with a bullet through its brain.

Our waiting men gave vent to a yell of delight, and rushed down to secure the carcase; but, to their dismay, before they could reach it the current washed it away and wedged it tightly between two rocks at the top of the small waterfall which gave exit to the pool. The pressure of the water on the body was very great, but the men needed food so badly that we made the most Herculean efforts to dislodge it by the aid of ropes and poles. After an hour's hard work, we managed to free it, only to be thrown into the utmost consternation by the body sinking immediately to the bottom of the next pool. The men flatly refused to go into the water to look for it, as there were all sorts of queer holes in the rocks into which one could have been washed by the current and crushed or drowned, and in addition, there was the ever-present fear of crocodiles.

We sounded with poles till our arms ached, and were about to give up in despair when one or two of the men, bolder or more hungry than their fellows, jumped in and attempted to dive. Suddenly one of them came to the surface with a joyful shout, saying he had found the carcase at the bottom of the pool in ten feet of water. We gave him the end of a stout line in order that he might dive again and make it fast to one of the feet. This he attempted to do, but after repeated trials he confessed himself beaten.

There being no other help for it, I undertook the task myself, and at the third attempt, after a lot of manœuvring in the swift current, I succeeded in making the line fast round one of the legs just above the foot. Success at last seemed certain, and by dint of pulling gently on the line, we at length raised the body slowly to the surface. The excited men raised a shout of joy, which died away in a wail of bitter disappointment as the frail rope parted and the hippo sank once more to the bottom of the pool. I was by this time almost exhausted and shivering with cold, but again I essayed the task of making the rope fast, and eventually succeeded, and at length, by steady

and persistent pulling on the untrustworthy line, we drew the body ashore just as the dusk fell.

The men at once set to work with their knives, and very shortly the cooking-pots were bubbling merrily away, and our hungry followers proceeded to gorge themselves on the meat; a congenial occupation which commanded their earnest attention until the early hours of the following morning.

FOOTNOTES:

[\[16\]](#) The Bongo of the Bahr el Ghazal also bury their dead in the sitting position, covering the body with logs and branches instead of stones.

CHAPTER XVII.

ARRIVAL AT M'THARA.

In sight of Kenia once more—El Hakim and the lion—The “Green Camp” again—
The baby water-buck—El Hakim shoots an elephant—The buried buffalo horns
destroyed by hyænas—Bad news from M'thara—Plot to attack and massacre us
hatched by Bei-Munithu—N'Dominuki's fidelity—Baked elephant's foot—Rain
—Arrival at our old camp at M'thara.

On resuming the march up-river next morning, we found the road much better than on our journey down the opposite bank. It lay over firm gravelly ridges, littered with quartz *débris* dotted here and there with scattered thorn bushes. Now and again we crossed patches of mineral salts, some of which we boiled down in the endeavour to obtain some table salt, but the resulting compound tasted more like the nauseous mixtures administered by the family physician in our childhood's happy days than anything, and was in consequence utterly useless for table purposes.

During the next few days we did not keep rigidly to the Waso Nyiro, but cut across many of the curves, occasionally camping miles away from the river, obtaining the necessary water by digging in the beds of the numerous sand rivers, when it was generally found not far below the surface, in small quantities it is true, but sufficient for our needs if we dispensed with washing. This was the easier as we were quite without soap, and a wash without soap is an unsatisfactory performance anyhow.

Once or twice we caught a glimpse of Kenia far away to the southward. It seemed like an old friend, and its appearance was always greeted with a cheer from the men, followed by a spasmodic burst of energy, for, resettling their loads on their shoulders, they would step out with renewed vigour, as if anxious to reach it at once, but after a few minutes their suddenly awakened enthusiasm would vanish, and they would relapse once more into the listless but steady gait of men wearied by continuous travel.

The appearance of Kenia at that distance was grand beyond the power of expression. The wonderful peak, crowned with patches of purest white snow, sparkled like an immense diamond in the brilliant sunshine, an effect

further accentuated by the perfect background afforded by the deep clear blue of a cloudless sky. Even were I gifted with the pen of a poet or the brush of an artist, I should hesitate in the attempt to adequately depict that magnificent temple of nature, rearing its stately head heavenwards, and bearing a silent and convincing testimony to the glory of the Creator.

On October 3rd we crossed the Waso Nyiro once more. Game was still scarce, an occasional water-buck or rhinoceros forming our only sustenance. Even that limited selection failed us at times, and we were compelled to kill some of our cattle for meat. We yearned for vegetable food, as only those who have lived for the best part of two months exclusively on meat, without salt, can yearn. The monotony of boiled meat, roast meat, fried meat, and boiled meat again, must be experienced to be fully understood.

Two days after crossing the river we passed our old “Swamp Camp,” where the midges so annoyed us. We made a “telekesa” march on that day, however, and our second march took us beyond the swamp. We camped at sundown on a spot very close to the river—only a few yards from the water’s edge, in fact. We disturbed a pack of wild dogs in so doing, and they dashed off with the speed of greyhounds. George banded at them and wounded one, but it got away, though it was very probably devoured by the rest of the pack soon afterwards. They were jet black in colour, with long bushy tails tipped with white. They appeared to be very well-formed, speedy animals, and in the pink of condition.

As usual we built a boma for the sheep, and George and I had our tent pitched, but El Hakim preferred to sleep in the open, so his bed was placed a yard or so away from our tent. After we had eaten we retired to rest, posting a sentry a few yards away. At about 2 a.m. George and I were aroused from sleep, and considerably startled, by a yell from El Hakim, followed by a rushing sound as the sheep broke down their boma and stampeded, amid the excited shouts of the awakened men. Rushing out of our tent, we saw El Hakim, rifle in hand, peering into the darkness on the left, the tails of his shirt, his only garment, fluttering in the breeze. It appeared that he was peacefully sleeping and doubtless dreaming of home and beauty, or maybe of the two boxes of provisions we had left at M’thara, when an agonized whisper from the sentry smote upon his ear. He awoke instantly, and opening his eyes ... gazed full into the face of a full-grown

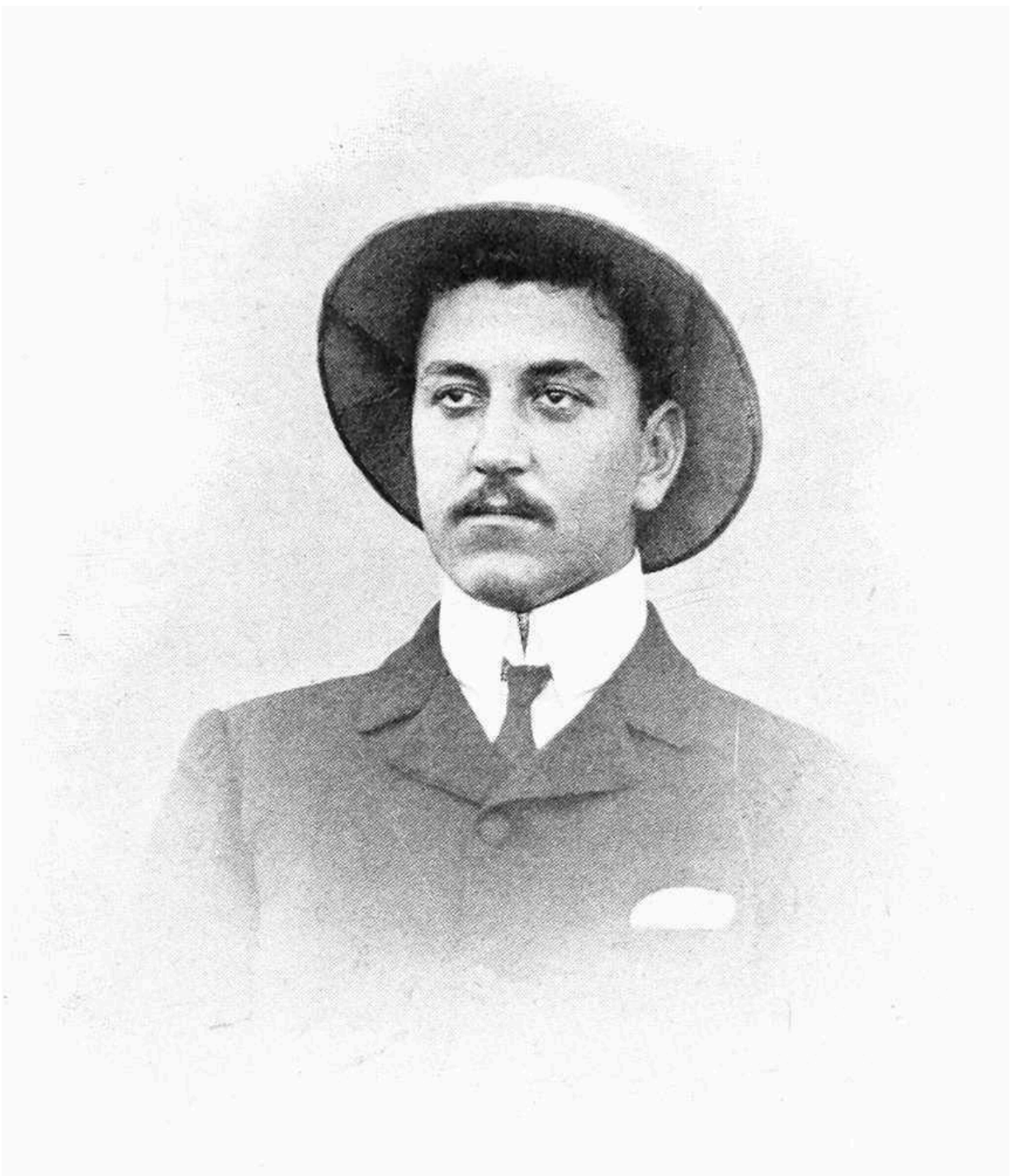
lion which was standing by the side of his bed critically examining him, probably from a gastronomical point of view. El Hakim, with a rapidity born of long experience, rolled out of bed on the opposite side and groped for his rifle, at the same time uttering the startled cry which had aroused the camp. When George and I appeared, the lion had already fled, and we found El Hakim bemoaning his luck at not getting a shot, instead of being profoundly grateful that the lion had not taken him with him when he departed.

It took the men a couple of hours to get the startled sheep together again. On examining the lion's spoor, we found that it had walked right through the camp, having apparently carefully threaded its way among the recumbent bodies of the sleeping porters.

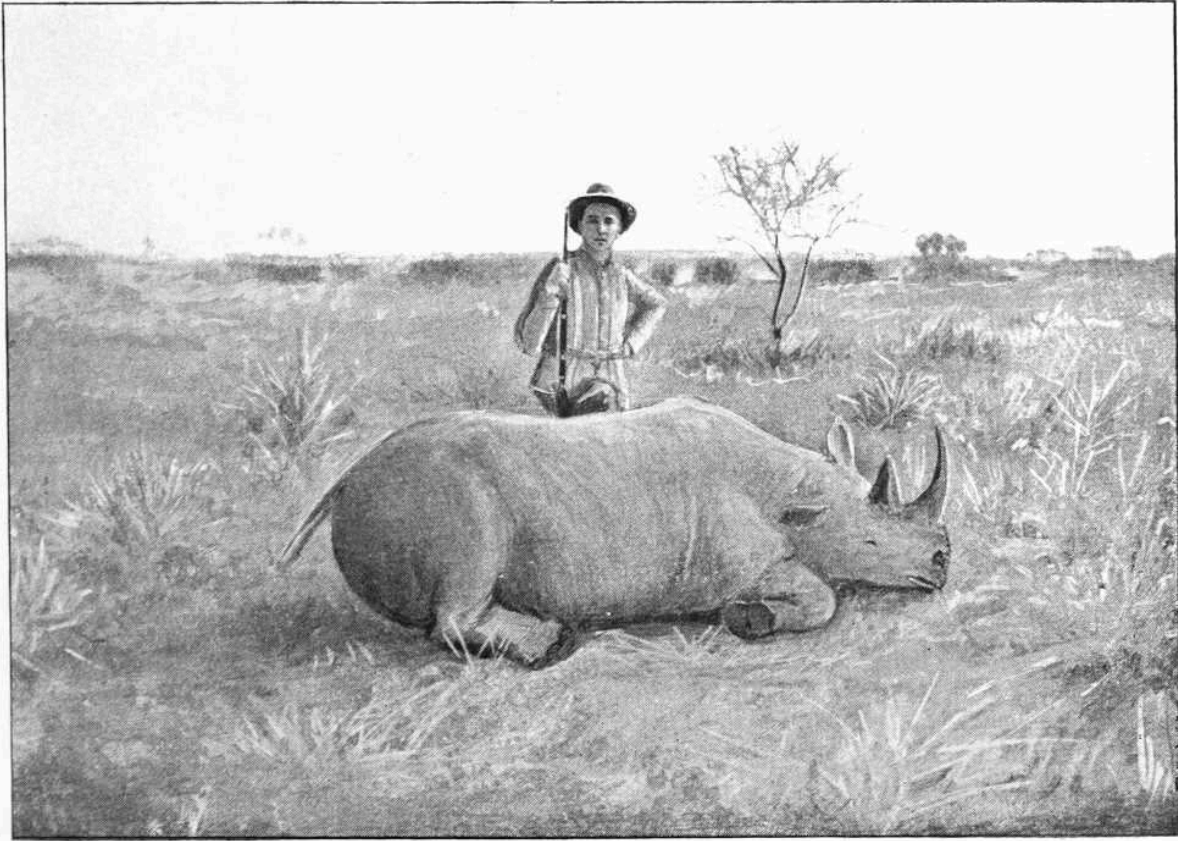
On the next march the sheep showed signs of fatigue, so we camped early. We sent a couple of men on to M'thara to report on the attitude of the natives, and also to come back and meet us with the two provision boxes. On the following day we once more negotiated the "cinder-heap," and just before sundown reached the "Green Camp," after a rather forced march. Ramathani surprised a baby water-buck asleep in the grass, and after a smart chase ran it down and captured it. He proudly brought it to El Hakim, who determined to make an effort to rear it. He therefore extemporized a feeding-bottle from a tumbler and a piece of rubber tubing from his surgical case, while the ink-filler of his fountain pen provided both a piece of glass tube and a teat. The stupid little beast did not appreciate his well-meant efforts, however, and absolutely refused to suck. It was eventually provided with a meal by the combined efforts of the three of us. I held it still, George forced its mouth open, while El Hakim poured the milk drop by drop down its throat with a teaspoon, though during the operation it did not seem at all grateful for the care so lavishly bestowed upon it.

During the afternoon George shot a rhinoceros. I also wished to shoot another rhino or two, and determined to stay in the "Green Camp" for another day for that purpose, while El Hakim and George went on with the bulk of the safari and the animals. By making a forced march I could overtake them on the second day at our old "Buffalo Camp." In addition, I was anxious to shoot a few grantei, and so lay in a stock of meat for the use of the men until we were able to purchase food in M'thara.

Accordingly, the following morning El Hakim and George went on, while I sallied out on sport intent. Crossing the little stream which flowed round two sides of the camp, I made my way towards the Waso Nyiro. Five hundred yards away from camp I reached the path usually taken by the game when going down to drink at the river. The grantei, as I knew from previous observation, usually came down at ten o'clock in the morning; so at a quarter to ten I concealed myself behind the trunk of a thorn tree, stretching myself out at full length upon the ground, a most uncomfortable position, as the ground was strewn with little knobs of rock firmly embedded in the soil. When I did venture to remove some loose pieces that inconvenienced my elbows and knees, I disturbed a few colonies of tiny ants, which, although they did not bite, crawled all over me in a most uncomfortable manner. I had lain there about half an hour, when my patience was rewarded by the sight of the advance guard of the grantei army advancing steadily in my direction. They were led by a noble-looking buck, who displayed a magnificent pair of horns. He was a little suspicious, and hesitated whether to come on or not. I was very carefully concealed, and as I kept perfectly still, he finally conquered his distrust, and once more advanced, followed by the remainder of the herd. Waiting my opportunity, I banged at him at forty yards, and dropped him with a dum-dum bullet through the heart. The others ran this way and that, not knowing from which quarter the danger had come, as I still kept carefully out of sight. The consequence was that I secured two others, as handsome as the first, with the expenditure of only two more cartridges. As I now had enough meat, I stayed my hand, and did no further execution, though, had I been so disposed, I might have secured at least a dozen from the herd before they finally recovered from their confusion and took to flight.



MR. G. H. WEST ("GEORGE").



RHINOCEROS SHOT BY GEORGE. (See page [293](#).)

Of course, as I particularly wished to secure a couple of rhinoceros, there were none to be seen, though at the “Green Camp” they were usually as plentiful as could be desired. After a fruitless search, I returned to camp at midday, and then despatched half a dozen men in as many directions to look for one. The afternoon passed without result, but just as the declining sun approached the horizon two of the Wanyamwezi came in and reported a rhinoceros feeding about a mile away. Taking Barri with me, I started off in pursuit. In a quarter of an hour we got the beast’s spoor, and followed it till it led us into a belt of trees and out the other side into an open space in the bush. In the centre of this open space was a small eminence, and on the top of the eminence stood our rhino, who had evidently heard or scented us, and now stood snorting and stamping in preparation for the opening of hostilities. Taking the Martini from Barri, I worked round to one side of my quarry and took up a position in the open within forty yards. A couple of seconds later a bullet caught her—it was a female—fairly in the shoulder,

but a little too far forward. Round she came and charged me, but another shot in the face caused her to change her mind. As she swerved a third bullet took her in the ribs, and she set off at a gallop, squealing like a gigantic pig. She ran for a matter of a couple of hundred yards, and then stood quite still in an attitude of profound thought; finally, she laid down as if she had resolved to sleep, as the result of her cogitation, and when I got up to her she was dead. The horns were fairly long, but badly scratched and chipped, she being evidently a very old beast. Her body was covered with the scars of numerous conflicts with others of her kind. After a struggle I succeeded in hacking off the horns with my hunting-knife, El Hakim having taken our only remaining axe away with him in the morning.

When I got back to camp, I found five men who had been sent back by El Hakim to carry any meat I might have shot. They told me that El Hakim had shot a solitary elephant they had met on the road in the morning. The next morning I started early, and, after a stiff march, reached the place at which the others had camped on the previous evening. The remains of their fires were still hot. I passed the body of the elephant on the way. It appeared to be a young bull, and the hyænas and vultures between them were making short work of the carcase. After a couple of hours' halt I resumed the march, and after another hard tramp lasting three hours I reached the "Buffalo Camp," tired out. George had had a slice of luck, as he had secured a very fine impalla (*Apyceros melampus*) on the road. The horns were slightly over twenty-eight inches, which is, I believe, as good as it is possible to obtain.

A great disappointment awaited us here. On going to the ant-hill in which I had buried the buffalo horns, we found that, in spite of the ants, the hyænas had disinterred and utterly destroyed them. My large pair were gone, and also the other two pairs buried with them, there being nothing left beyond a few splinters of bone. The baby water-buck died in the evening, having steadfastly refused to feed since its capture, and resisting to the utmost of its power our well-meant efforts to help it.

During the next day's march we met the men whom we had sent to M'thara four days before. To our immense satisfaction, they bore the two boxes of provisions which had occupied our thoughts for so many weary days. They were about to tell us something concerning hostile natives at M'thara, but we had motioned them away, desiring that nothing, especially

bad news, should interfere with our first civilized meal, and so detract from our enjoyment. Ordering a halt, we got to work with a screw-driver while the tents were being erected. Ramathani exerted himself, and in an incredibly short time a steaming pot of oatmeal porridge awaited our attention. After two months of meat, that oatmeal tasted as never oatmeal tasted before. When it was finished, Ramathani brought us some broiled zebra collops, and with mustard, pepper, and a bottle of Worcester sauce, they made a dish fit for a monarch. There were also biscuits, jam, and a couple of tins of butter, and as a wind up, we opened a pound tin of mincemeat, and, passing the tin round, ate it with a spoon. To crown our enjoyment, a box of cigars and a bottle of vermouth were discovered, and as we inhaled the first smoke for weeks we would not have changed places with anybody.

At the conclusion of the banquet we felt sufficiently fortified to hear the news brought by our men from M'thara. They were therefore summoned and cross-questioned for over an hour. The result of the examination was even worse than we had anticipated, and sufficed to change our thoughts from the optimistic attitude they had assumed to one of most anxious and gloomy foreboding. Summed up, the situation was this. We required a large quantity of food for our journey round North and West Kenia, which is uninhabited. There was, we discovered, a famine in M'thara, as, unfortunately, the bean-crop had utterly failed for want of rain. There was, on the other hand, plenty of food in Munithu and Zura, as the famine did not extend to those districts. In the ordinary course of events we should have bought food there, but to our amazement and indignation we heard that during our absence on the Waso Nyiro both Dirito and Bei-Munithu had turned traitors, and were now bitterly hostile to us, absolutely refusing to supply us with food. Their change of front had the effect of bringing together all the other chiefs in North-East Kenia, with the single exception of N'Dominuki, and they had, in solemn conclave assembled, formed an offensive and defensive alliance against us. The reasons for this attitude were not hard to find. Our reverse in Embe, and Jamah Mahomet's death, followed by the death of Sadi ben Heri and his companions and the capture of their guns in N'Dakura, and, lastly, the terrible massacre of the bulk of Ismail's men on the road to Dhaicho, had occasioned a great loss of prestige, and prepared the native mind for what was to follow. During the deliberations, and while matters hung in the balance, one of our men who

had deserted on the Waso Nyiro turned up, and when taxed by Bei-Munithu with being a deserter he denied it, and declared that the Wasungu were all dead, having been killed in a fight with the Burkeneji, and only a few porters had got away with their guns and some of the trade goods, and were now returning to M'thara. Some colour was lent to his story by the reappearance in Embe of the three camels belonging to El Hakim, whither they had wandered after straying from us nearly six weeks before. This was considered by Bei-Munithu to be a capital opportunity to annex the numerous loads deposited in N'Dominuki's charge. That true friend, however, refused to entertain the suggestion, saying that he did not believe the Wasungu were dead, in spite of the deserter's story, and the circumstantial evidence of the camels. He stated, furthermore, that he did not intend to give them up, even if the Wasungu were dead, as other white men would soon come into the country and demand an account of the loads in his charge. Bei-Munithu then formed a coalition of all the petty chiefs of North-East Kenia, for the purpose of waylaying and massacring any safaris who should in the future endeavour to enter the country, a plan to which N'Dominuki steadfastly refused to lend his aid.

From an agreement to attack our supposed surviving porters, to another agreement to attack the Wasungu themselves, should they be alive, was but a step, and an easy step at that. Bei-Munithu was evidently the moving spirit of the combination. He was reported to have said that the Wasungu's bullets did not hurt, and as he had formerly been the friend of the Wasungu, he was supposed to speak with some authority on the subject. "Even if the Wasungu are not dead," said this wily old reprobate, "we can just as easily take their goods when they do return. If they are dead, so much the better; and if they are not, they soon will be," he continued; and in that case the question of the annexation of our goods would have been speedily solved. It seemed that this course was eventually decided upon by the A'kikuyu. Without a doubt things all round looked uncommonly gloomy, the only bright spot in the whole murky aspect being N'Dominuki's unswerving fidelity. The situation required great firmness and tact in handling, as we wished to get out without further fighting, the Snider ammunition being almost exhausted. On consideration, we determined that if we were compelled to fight, we would make a good fight of it, and punish the enemy as heavily as we knew how, otherwise the next unfortunate safari coming into the district would stand a very poor chance.

An incident in connection with the strayed camels occurred at M'thara, which, while it amused us at the time, had its serious side also. When we left M'thara for the Waso Nyiro, we had left an M'Kamba porter, who had injured his leg and was unable to walk, with N'Dominuki. He retained his gun and half a dozen cartridges for protection. When the camels strayed into Embe, some of the inhabitants brought them down to N'Dominuki and offered them for sale. He recognized them as ours, and refused to have anything to do with them. Our gallant M'Kamba, however, demanded that they should be given up to him, as the Wasungu's representative, which proposal the Wa'Embe treated with scorn. The M'Kamba thereupon brought out his rifle and fired into them, shooting one man through the thigh. The serious side of the question now obtruded itself, inasmuch as it was not an Embe man whom he had so rashly wounded, but a native of M'thara who happened to be standing near; and old N'Dominuki had to pay one of our cows and two of our sheep in order to square the injured man and his indignant friends and relatives!

As we had heard and also read much about the excellence of baked elephant's foot, we thought we would give it a trial. To that end El Hakim had preserved one of the feet of the elephant he had shot two days previously. To the best of our knowledge, the proper way to cook this alleged delicacy was to dig a hole in the earth and build a fire in it. When there was a sufficient quantity of hot ashes, the foot was placed in the hole among them, covered up with earth, and left for a few hours. Ramathani was therefore instructed to dig a hole and build a fire, which he accordingly did, and when the ashes were ready the foot was placed inside. It was disinterred in time for supper, after it had been cooking some eight hours, but to our intense disgust and disappointment it was quite uneatable. It was of the most indiarubber-like consistency, and after blunting my hunting-knife on the knuckle-bones in our efforts to carve it, we gave it up as a bad job. I tried to cut it afterwards with an axe, but could make no impression on it worth mentioning, as the axe bounced off. We concluded that it was not sufficiently cooked, and determined that there should be no such mistake in our next attempt—always supposing that we caught another elephant.

Some smart showers of rain made their appearance during the evening, which did not tend to improve the condition of the sheep. They had

experienced no rain for three years, and we were very doubtful of the effect of the wet and the attendant cold on their constitutions.

Our next march, we calculated, would take us right on to our old camp at M'thara. On the following morning, after two and a half hours' tramp, we halted for breakfast. As we were preparing for another move a terrific thunderstorm came on, and in a very short space of time drenched everybody and everything. We took shelter under the trees from the blinding torrents of rain, hoping that it would soon cease. It did nothing of the kind, however, and after we had endured it for over an hour we decided to put up the tents and camp for the remainder of the day. Getting the tents erected was a terrible task. They were soaking wet and heavy as lead, and the violent gale which accompanied the storm caused them to thrash and flap about in a most aggravating way. The rain poured harder than ever, and soon converted the surface of the ground into a filthy bog. The water dribbled down the backs of our necks and up the sleeves of our coats in a manner we found most exasperating. After an hour's hard work we got both tents up and trenches dug round them; and then, of course, the rain ceased, the wind dropped, and the sun appeared from behind the clouds and shone brilliantly. It was, however, too late to think of making another start, so we stopped where we were. It rained hard again during the night, and several of the sheep died. At daylight we made another attempt to reach our old M'thara camp, and after an hour's tramp through the thorn forest we had the satisfaction of once more emerging upon our old camping-ground. It was just as windy, and rather more swampy than before, but it was surrounded by masses of restful green vegetation most grateful to the senses after the blinding deserts and arid wastes of the Waso Nyiro.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN ELEPHANT HUNT AND AN ATTACK ON MUNITHU.

We shoot an elephant—Gordon Cumming on elephants—We send to Munithu to buy food—Song of Kinyala—Baked elephant's foot again a failure—The true recipe—Rain—More rain—The man with the mutilated nose—The sheep die from exposure—Chiggers—The El'Konono—Bei-Munithu's insolent message—A visit from the Wa'Chanjei—George and I march to attack Munithu.

On arriving at our M'thara camp we were agreeably surprised to find recent elephant spoor all over the place. Some of the tracks were very large—possibly those of the old bull I had encountered in the thorn forest. Jumbi, with some of the men, was at once despatched to N'Dominuki to inform him of our arrival, and to bring back to camp the loads of equipment and the stores and cattle left in his charge.

About two o'clock in the afternoon a native came into camp with the news that a couple of elephants were feeding in the thick bush only a few hundred yards from our camp. Snatching up our rifles, we hurried out in pursuit. El Hakim carried his .577 Express, George the 8-bore, and I my .303. Advancing cautiously through the jungle, we came up with the animals about 200 yards from camp. It was a very bad place in which to shoot elephants, as the bush was so thick and dense as to be almost impenetrable, and it also concealed our quarry from view. Now and again among the leaves we caught sight of a patch of brown hide or the tip of an ear, but nothing showed up well enough to justify a shot, though we were well within twenty yards of our quarry.

After a long and breathless wait we held a whispered consultation, and came to the conclusion that we might perhaps have a better chance from the opposite side. Leaving the native who had warned us of their presence safely ensconced in the fork of a thorn tree to watch the elephants, we, accompanied by Ramathani, succeeded in circumnavigating them, being lucky enough to reach the other side without being winded. There we found a small ant-hill, from the top of which we were able to see over the undergrowth. The elephants were then in plain sight about 150 yards distant. They were both bulls, one of them a magnificent old fellow with a

very large pair of tusks. The other was a younger animal, with rather smaller ivories. The old bull was not the one I saw in the thorn forest before, as I had at first supposed, his tusks being of a different shape, being longer, but thinner, and not so discoloured. In spite of El Hakim's knowledge of woodcraft, we were unable to get any nearer to them, the bush being too thick and solid. We waited, therefore, for some time, hoping they would come closer, as they were now between us and the camp, and what little breeze was stirring was blowing directly from the camp on to them; and we calculated that on scenting it they would come down wind, and so nearer to the spot where we lay concealed. However, they did not seem to mind the proximity of the camp, although, even from where we were, we could distinctly hear the men talking.

For two hours by the watch we waited, not daring to move, or venturing to speak above a whisper. At last we sent Ramathani by a circuitous route back to camp to call out the men, with instructions that they were to surround the elephants on every side except that on which we had taken up our position, and, by making slight noises in the bush, endeavour to drive them gently down in our direction. These instructions the men carried out; but to our great alarm the elephants showed a disposition to break through the line of beaters on the camp side. Fearing that we should lose them altogether, El Hakim, contrary to his usual practice, took a shot at the big bull at a little over a hundred yards. Bang! went the .577, and a steel-tipped bullet crashed its way into the elephant's shoulder. Turning instantly, he charged in our direction, followed by his companion; but when within forty yards the left barrel spoke, and they turned aside, and, smashing through the forest to our left, disappeared, followed by another shot from El Hakim, which caught the smaller elephant somewhere in the stern. We set off at top speed in their wake, but at first they outstripped us, though their tracks were plainly visible in the soft earth, and at intervals on the path we saw tiny flecks of blood. The stricken elephant was evidently bleeding internally.

At the end of an hour's hard going, we could see by the freshness of the footprints that we were once more getting closer to them. It therefore behoved us to proceed with great caution, as an old bull elephant who has been wounded is apt to make himself unpleasant if it so happens that in the ardour of pursuit the hunter gets at all careless, and it is most disconcerting, on rounding a bush, to find the elephant's head when one expected to see

his tail. Suddenly, as we were creeping silently along, we heard a quick shrill scream of rage, apparently from the other side of some bushes twenty yards away. Thinking the wounded beast was about to charge, we hopped aside out of the path and behind the adjacent bushes with a celerity only to be acquired under similar circumstances. It was, however, a false alarm, as, on peering round the bushes, we saw both elephants standing in the jungle about a hundred yards distant, looking at us.

As soon as we made a move they turned and plunged once more into the bush, with us in hot pursuit. They, however, crossed a small stream that flowed through the bush a few hundred yards further on, and disappeared. When we reached the stream we found it to be so swollen by the previous few days' rain as to be unfordable. We therefore returned to camp and despatched Barri and two others to follow the elephants, and to send word back to camp when they stopped once more.

On our return we found N'Dominuki in camp. He greeted us with every sign of pleasure, and we were just as pleased to see him, as his conduct during our absence was of the very highest order, and we regarded him as a very real friend. We had a long talk with him, and he confirmed the unpleasant news we had heard about the scarcity of food in M'thara and the hostile attitude of Bei-Munithu.

Just before dusk a report from Barri came to hand to the effect that the two elephants, after working round in a circle, were now not far from camp. Once more we set out, and after half an hour's walk we reached the place where they were reported to be resting. Creeping stealthily up, we found that the big bull had succumbed to his injuries, and lay stretched out on his side quite dead. The other elephant, very much on the alert, was standing a little way off in the bush, and George and I immediately set out to try and bag him. He was, however, much too wary, and aided by the gathering darkness succeeded in eluding us in the thick bush, so we returned to camp in the hope that he would return during the night to his dead companion.

Early next morning, therefore, George and I set out in search of the other elephant, but he was nowhere to be seen, having evidently cleared out of the district for good during the night. After breakfast we went to the spot where the dead elephant lay, in order to chop out the ivory. He was a magnificent beast. I measured him with the tape as accurately as possible, and the

following are the measurements which I jotted down in my notebook at the time:—

The distance between two spears planted vertically in the ground, one in a line with the sole of the foot and the other against the shoulder as he lay, measured 10 feet 8 inches, which may be taken as his height. From the forehead to the root of the tail the tape marked 13 feet 3 inches. Round the girth he measured 18 feet 8 inches; while the circumference of each fore foot totalled up 4 feet 8 inches, though, on measuring the tracks, I found they were fully 5 feet in circumference, an increase due to the expansion of the foot under the enormous weight of the animal. The tusks weighed 75 lbs. and 65 lbs. respectively, the lighter tusk having had a piece about 18 inches in length broken off from the end.

On cutting him up we found the steel core of a .577 bullet in his chest, which might, from its appearance, have been there for years. It was of precisely the same pattern as those used by El Hakim, and as Mr. Neumann, the only man who had shot elephants at M'thara before, did not, so far as I know, use steel core bullets we came to the conclusion that it was a bullet which had been fired some two years previously by El Hakim at the same elephant, which had got away after being wounded. El Hakim said he had lost one or two elephants in this bush about that time, after wounding them.

The bush round North Kenia is very bad for elephant-shooting. It is terribly thick and leafy, and the elephants themselves very wild. Neumann, after a fortnight's unsuccessful hunting in this place, became altogether disheartened, and, after a thorough trial of the district, came to the conclusion that he was wasting his time and strength, and gave up the task as hopeless. I was much interested in reading in Mark Twain's "More Tramps Abroad" an extract from Gordon Cumming's account of his experiences with an elephant which he gives in that book. It is such a quaint account, and is in such contrast to the modern sporting methods and ideas, that I make no apology for inserting it here:—

"Having planted a bullet in the shoulder-bone of an elephant, and caused the agonized creature to lean for support against a tree, I proceeded to brew some coffee. Having refreshed myself, taking observations of the elephant's spasms and writhings between the sips, I resolved to make experiments on vulnerable points, and approaching very near, I fired several bullets at

different parts of its enormous skull. He only acknowledged the shots by a salaam-like movement of his trunk, with the point of which he gently touched the wounds with a striking and peculiar action. Surprised and shocked to find I was only prolonging the suffering of the noble beast, which bore its trials with such dignified composure, I resolved to finish the proceeding with all possible despatch, and accordingly opened fire on him from the left side. Aiming at the shoulder I fired six shots with the two-grooved rifle, which must have eventually proved mortal, after which I fired six shots at the same part with the Dutch six-pounder. Large tears now trickled down from his eyes, which he slowly shut and opened, his colossal frame quivered convulsively, and falling on his side he expired.”

The next day the bulk of the men were still busily engaged in cutting up the carcase of the elephant, slicing the meat into strips, which they dried in the sun or in the smoke of their fires. As we were badly in need of grain food, we decided to send a party of men to Munithu and Zura to try to buy food, and also to bring back the few remaining loads of trade goods still in Bei-Munithu’s possession. Our purpose, as much as anything, was to test the temper of the natives there, and to see whether Bei-Munithu, now that he had heard of our safe arrival, was still determined to put his treacherous plans into execution.

In the mean time the men were busy gorging the elephant meat. A little M’kamba boy named M’waniki composed a song, which was sung with great success by a lady named Kinyala, who, with many others, had on the previous day joined their fortunes to those of our porters, in many cases deserting their husbands and homes in M’thara that they might follow the safari to Nairobi, which, to these poor creatures, was a vast and distant city of a splendour beyond their wildest dreams. Jumbi had strict orders not to allow any women in camp, but in spite of our frequent “drives” some of them managed to conceal themselves and escaped the general clearance. Kinyala attached herself to the modest and respectable Ramathani, and as she possessed some personal charms—to the mind of a native—that individual made no very strenuous objections. Well, Kinyala sang the song I have already spoken of, and it “caught on” tremendously; and, as a consequence, it was dinned into our ears day and night. It ran thus:—

SONG OF KINYALA.

(Solo) “Wasungu kwenda wapi?”

(*Omnes*) Kwenda kwa Rendili.
(*Solo*) Kwani kwenda kwa Rendili?
(*Omnes*) Kwa sababu ya n'gamia.
Wasungu wa'ntaka n'gamia;
Wasungu wa'ntaka kondo ya mafuta;
Huko kwa Rendili n'yama tele-tele."

TRANSLATION.

(*Solo*) "Where are the white men going?
(*Omnes*) They are going to the place of the Rendili.
(*Solo*) Why do they go to the place of the Rendili?
(*Omnes*) Because of the camels.
The white men want camels;
The white men want fat-tailed sheep;
There in the place of the Rendili is very much meat."

The above is a specimen, with a somewhat free translation, of the half song, half recitative, so dear to the native heart. It is generally impromptu, and contains at times a certain dry humour and caustic comment on current events that is quite unexpected.

Thinking that this was a good opportunity of making another trial of baked elephant's foot, I caused a large hole to be dug in the centre of the camp, and a party of men were sent into the forest to gather sufficient fuel. When the fuel arrived, an immense fire was kindled in the hole. All day long it burnt, and in the evening we were rewarded by the sight of a glowing pit filled to the brim with red-hot ashes. With much trouble (the foot weighed nearly forty pounds, and the furnace was very hot) we placed the bulky tit-bit in the ashes, and then, building a large bonfire over it, we considered that we had done our part of the business, and hopefully awaited developments.

Several times during the ensuing twenty-four hours El Hakim or I carefully poked the fire with an iron bar in the endeavour to ascertain whether the foot was cooking properly. We were absolutely certain that, if it were not burnt to a cinder, it would be at least sufficiently cooked, and it was in high hopes that we should at last partake of the reputed dainty, that we disinterred it from the miniature crater on the following evening. Alas and alack! in spite of all our toil and trouble it was as indiarubber-like as its predecessor. Twenty-four hours in the fire had burnt the outside and reduced

the foot somewhat in size, but the rest was as uncooked as if it had never been near the flame. This result, however, was entirely our own fault, as, on looking up the subject since, I find that we were entirely wrong in our method of cooking it. The true recipe, as given by Mr. Foa,^[17] is as follows:

“Take an elephant’s foot, preferably young and very fresh; remove the white flesh which covers the bone, and cut it into strips the thickness of your finger, reminding one of sticks of *pâté de guimauve*. Place the appetizing strips for two days in the sun to dry, and collect the pure fat which exudes from them in the form of clear oil. To make the dish known as *mwendo wa nzou*, take one of these strips, cut it into small pieces, put it into a saucepan containing a little water, place it on a gentle fire, and renew the water several times. When a jelly has formed, add to it the oil in which you have browned a few onions, a little thyme, etc., or an equivalent aromatic plant, one or two very strong chillies, and let it cook gently for twenty hours, still adding water when necessary. Serve hot, with manioc flour or grated biscuit separately.

“N.B.—This dish keeps several days, and only requires re-warming.”

So far, so good; but as our friend N’Dominuki did not keep a general store where we might have been able to purchase the few onions, thyme, and chillies, etc., required, it would not have helped us much even had we possessed this recipe at the time.

The weather now changed considerably for the worse, the fine, clear, sunny weather of the Waso Nyiro being succeeded by heavy rains and cold winds. These rains were nearly two months late, and the inhabitants of M’thara were half starving in consequence; but they came now with a vengeance, though they were too late to do any good to the bean crop. Day after day we endured a steady downpour, which killed off the sheep by twos and threes every night. Of the men whom we had sent to buy food in Munithu, half returned two days later. They reported that Bei-Munithu had refused to sell any food, though he had more than plenty, and he had also refused to give up the loads still in his possession. Furthermore, he had secretly planned to attack them during the night and put them to death. They had, however, received timely warning from a friendly native, and so

escaped; some of them coming back to us, and the remainder going on to Zura to see how matters stood at that place.

A strange Swahili accompanied them. He had been one of Dr. Kolb's porters, and had been left behind, sick, at Munithu. He asked permission to return to Nairobi with us, which we readily granted. He also confirmed the news of Bei-Munithu's hostility, and his statements threw light on several little matters which had puzzled us. It now seemed more than probable that the whole of the G'nainu affair had been planned by that old rascal in conjunction with the Wa'gnainu, which would explain why those people were so completely prepared for us on the morning when we went into their country to demand our trade goods; and why they opened the attack without listening to what we had to say.

This Swahili was a peculiar-looking man, as at some time or other the end of his nose had been bitten off by a hyæna. The voracious brute had actually dashed up to where he was sleeping with other men round a fire, and, seizing him, had tried to drag him away. His companions awoke at his cries, and drove his assailant off with fire-brands. When the hyæna seized him, it had bitten his face and taken the end of his nose clean off. When rescued, he searched for and found the piece, and, sticking it on again, he secured it with a length of hair or fibre, which he passed over it and tied at the back of his head; however, the piece slipped and finally grew on to his face an inch to the left of its proper position, so that he had one nostril complete and in its right place, while the other grew apparently out of his cheek. He still kept the piece of fibre tied round it, and could not be induced to remove it, though the piece of nose was firmly united to his cheek. El Hakim offered to perform an operation in plastic surgery and replace it in its rightful position, but he steadfastly refused, and El Hakim did not press the point. This man turned out to be a very good drover, and rendered valuable service in that way on our march down country after leaving M'thara.

On the 18th October, after six days' continuous downpour, the rain ceased for a couple of days. Thirty of the sheep had succumbed, and the others were very sick, as a large number of them were suffering from the effects of the unaccustomed exposure. As the men who had gone on to Zura had not returned, we sent Jumbi with several men to see what had become of them. We were very anxious to leave M'thara, but we could not venture

round West Kenia without a supply of food in hand, as game might be scarce. The camp already commenced to smell very badly, as the rain had soddened the earth and converted it into a bog. The quantity of meat drying in the smoke of the fires was already six days old, and though it was relished by the men, we ourselves found the effluvia offensive.

During our stay large numbers of natives came into camp for medicine to cure the ulcers caused by "chiggers." The chigger (*Pulex penetrans*) is a species of flea which is in the habit of selecting the sole of the foot or the flesh under the toe-nails as a place of residence. Once safely ensconced under the skin, the female chigger proceeds to lay large numbers of eggs, which are disposed in the form of a round bag, the size of a pea. The irritation produces a troublesome ulcer, amidst which the young larvæ appear. Some of the natives of M'thara had lost many of their toes through these pests. It was especially sad to see the little children with their feet horribly lacerated, who were brought into camp for treatment by their despairing mothers. Under El Hakim's direction, I made a large quantity of ointment by mixing iodoform and powdered boric acid with hippo fat, and this was freely dispensed among the sufferers, their expressions of gratitude amply repaying us for any trouble we incurred in relieving them. I myself had been crippled for three weeks on one occasion by chiggers, and was therefore in a position to feel for the unfortunate wretches.

An "elkonono," or native blacksmith, came into camp one day, and we got him to manufacture a few knives and ornaments for us from iron which we provided. He took up his quarters, together with a couple of his wives, in a shelter which we had built for the mules. His tools were very simple, consisting merely of a flat stone for an anvil, and a piece of round bar iron, 1½ inches in diameter and about 8 inches in length, slightly flattened at one end, which formed his hammer. He also possessed a very crude pair of iron pincers.

His forge, which was fed with charcoal, was formed by a hole in the ground, into which the air was forced from bellows through a short pipe of baked clay. The bellows consisted of a couple of goatskins with a clay nozzle at one end. The other end was open, the sides being sewn to two flat pieces of wood, to which small straps were attached. One of the blacksmith's wives thrust her fingers through these straps, and, opening her hand and at the same time raising her arm, she filled the goatskin with air.

The hand was then closed and the goatskin sharply compressed by a downward stroke of the forearm, and the air contained in it was driven out of the nozzle through the clay pipe into which it was inserted, and so into the glowing charcoal. She worked a bellows with each hand alternately, thus providing an almost continuous draught.

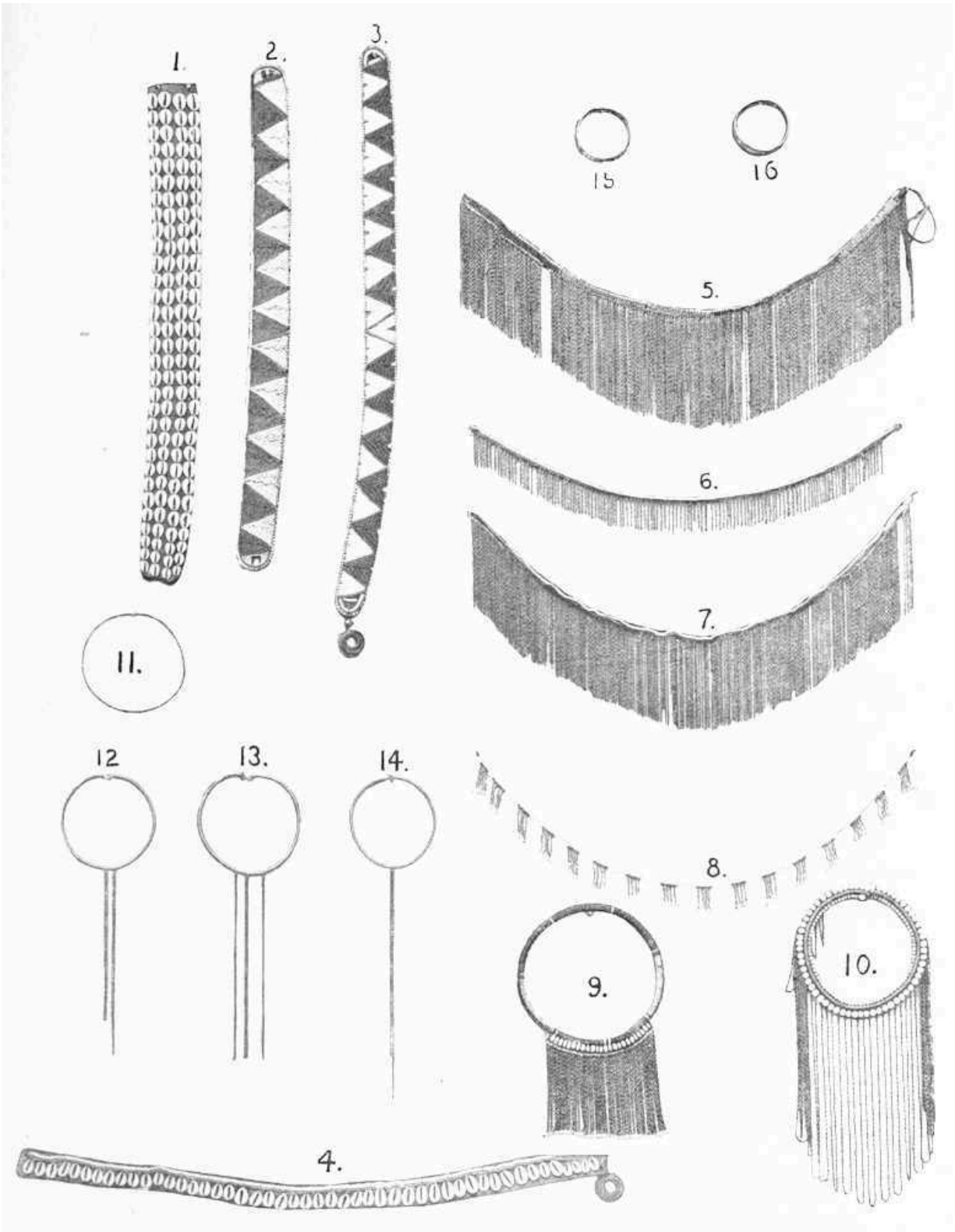
Our “elkonono” set to work and toiled away for three days “from rosy morn till dewy eve,” and at the end of that time had manufactured two knives and a couple of ornaments. We asked him if it was not rather slow work, and to our great disgust he remarked, “Yes, it is true I have not made much for you, but” (proudly) “I have made knives for all your children!”

On inquiry we found that whenever our backs were turned, our porters had gone to the “elkonono” either to have a knife made or repaired, and as a result he had done ten times more work for them than he had for us, though we were paying him and he was using our material. Our simple “elkonono,” however, professed ignorance, saying that he thought that in doing these little jobs for “our children” he was serving us; which might or might not have been the truth.

A deputation from the Wa’Chanjei came into camp on the 17th of October. They came ostensibly on a friendly visit, but really to see how the land lay. After they had spent an hour or two in our camp, they evidently came to the conclusion that we were quite able to take care of ourselves, and politely and silently withdrew.

On the 19th of October the rain ceased for a while, to our immense satisfaction. During the morning Jumbi returned from Munithu and Zura with the remainder of the men. He had seen Bei-Munithu and demanded that our loads should be given to him. He was met by an insolent refusal. In addition, Bei-Munithu sent an insulting and threatening message to the effect that “If the Wasungu themselves came to the door of his house with their guns, he would not give up the loads!”

Jumbi also reported that food was extremely plentiful in both Munithu and M’thara, but the inhabitants of those places, acting under instructions from their chiefs, point blank refused to sell us any.



ORNAMENTS WORN BY A'KIKUYU WOMEN.

1, 2, 3, 4. Leather belts ornamented with beads and cowrie shells.

- 5, 6, 7, 8. Girdles of iron chain and beadwork.
9, 10. Collars of iron chain and beadwork.
11, 12, 13, 14. Necklaces of twisted iron, brass and copper wire, with pendant chain.
15, 16. Armlets of thick brass wire.

The situation was now serious, and after dinner that evening we held a consultation to decide what was to be done. Leaving M'thara without a supply of food was out of the question, and to stay in M'thara was to court disaster. I therefore proposed to El Hakim that I should proceed to Munithu on the morrow with an armed party, leaving him in charge of the camp, and make a demonstration in force at Munithu, and see if that would not bring old Bei Munithu to his senses, and George volunteered to accompany me. As both El Hakim and I considered that such a proceeding would not entail any serious risk, he acquiesced in my proposal. We therefore determined that El Hakim should stay in command of the camp with one or two men—who, with himself, would, he hoped, be sufficient to defend it should it be attacked in our absence—and that George and I, with all the men who could be spared, should go over and endeavour to convince Bei-Munithu and Co. that we were better as friends than enemies.

Accordingly at noon on the following day George and I started for Munithu. We had sixteen men armed with Sniders, but we were terribly short of ammunition, possessing not more than seven cartridges per man, a fact which made the undertaking rather more hazardous. Considered afterwards, in cold blood, it seems to me to have been foolish in the extreme to have attempted to penetrate into a hostile country, so thickly populated as Munithu, with so few men and so little ammunition; but at the same time there was no help for it. Luckily, both George and I had a fair number of cartridges. I, as usual, carried my .303, but George, whose rifle had once or twice missed fire, did not see the fun of risking his life with a weapon which might fail him at a critical moment; so he carried my 20-bore shot-gun with a supply of ball cartridges. These ball cartridges contained 2½ drams of powder, which propelled a spherical leaden bullet about the size of an ordinary marble, and a double-barrelled gun using them was a very ugly weapon up to a couple of hundred yards.

We pushed on till sundown, and camped at a distance from Bei-Munithu's village, and turned in early, as we needed all our energy for the

morrow.

FOOTNOTES:

[17] “After Big Game in Central Africa,” by Edward Foa, F.R.G.S.
(Translation from the French by Frederic Lees), 1899, pp. 59, 60.

CHAPTER XIX.

FIGHT AT MUNITHU AND DEPARTURE FROM M'THARA.

Attack on Bei-Munithu's village—Poisoned arrows—The burning of the village—The return march—Determined pursuit of the A'kikuyu—Karanjui—George's fall—Return to the M'thara Camp—Interview with Bei-Munithu—His remorse—Departure from M'thara—Rain—Hyænas—A lioness—Bad country—Whistling trees—A lion—Increasing altitude—Zebra.

An hour before sunrise we arose, and, giving the men the most precise instructions to husband their ammunition to the utmost and leave any shooting to George and myself should it become necessary, we marched on to Bei-Munithu's village. The moment we sighted it, where it stood on the summit of a hill, we rushed forward with a cheer, and, swarming up the side of the hill, we succeeded in getting into the village before the inhabitants knew what was happening. It was captured without a shot being fired, the natives fleeing out at the other end and into the bush. Instructing the men to collect as much food as they could carry, I took three or four with me and made for the huts where our goods were stored. Breaking them open, we soon had the loads out, and I then proceeded to Bei-Munithu's hut. Bei-Munithu himself was nowhere to be seen. On searching his hut I found a large quantity of our goods stowed away in odd corners, and I was not at all surprised to find that some of them were a portion of the goods which were supposed to have been stolen from Bei-Munithu's charge by the Wa'gnainu, and in which that old arch-traitor had evidently gone shares. I also found and promptly confiscated an old muzzle-loading musket, which was among his most treasured possessions.

By this time, as the men had collected all our loads of trade goods and also a few loads of food, I gave the command to retire. As I did so the phwit! phwit! of poisoned arrows aroused our attention, and a few of the tiny feathered shafts fell into the village and stuck quivering in the ground. It was very evident that the A'kikuyu did not intend to let us get away without a struggle. The men had also collected a few head of cattle and a large number of sheep and goats; and as it seemed that we should have to fight, I determined to make a running fight of it, and make it a good one

while we were about it, and so teach the enemy a lesson, though we were sadly handicapped for want of Snider ammunition.

When I had got my little force together, I first set fire to the village, and then formed them up outside. As the enemy would most likely harass our rear, I took the rearguard myself, putting George in command of the bulk of the men, with the loads and the captured stock. I asked him at the same time to see that the men did not fire a shot till it was absolutely necessary. Barri, the Somali, took the advance guard of our little column.

By this time the smoke of the burning village and the cries of the fugitive inhabitants had aroused the whole country-side, and from the manner in which the war-cries resounded over hill and dale on every side, we discovered that we were in for a rather rough time. Our little force therefore moved off in the order described at ten minutes to eight in the morning, on the return march to M'thara.

The first hour's march took us through a number of scattered villages, the inhabitants of which fled on our approach and joined the ever-growing force which threatened our rear. The villages were built in the midst of extensive banana plantations, and it was here that the first symptoms of serious opposition manifested themselves. A number of warriors concealed among the bananas commenced to pepper us with poisoned arrows at very short range, though fortunately none of the men were hit. One bold warrior let fly an arrow at George at not more than thirty yards, and then, catching my eye, he subsided behind a banana tree. He did not take into account the penetrative power of a .303, and I think he must have been a very surprised native indeed when my bullet passed through the pulpy stem of the banana. Another let fly an arrow at the mule, which was being led, and missed her by an inch. George caught him with the 20-bore, dropping him, and then, swinging round, stopped another adventurous warrior who was creeping up to him with the other barrel, to the native's intense discomfiture.

After a little more light skirmishing of this description on the route, we reached a small clearing, and on coming out into the open were cordially greeted with a shower of arrows from a large number of the enemy concealed in the bush on the opposite side. A smart fusillade from our men put a temporary check on the proceedings of this informal reception committee, and we continued our advance. Another warrior, who recklessly

exposed his person in order to make insulting remarks with greater effect, retired precipitately with a much better idea of the theory of projectiles than he had hitherto possessed; and another who received a spherical ball in the leg at 200 yards from George, ceased to take any further interest in the proceedings. After this interchange of civilities the enemy kept out of range for awhile, and allowed us to cross the remainder of the banana plantations in safety, and into the thick bush on the other side; however, they were merely gathering reinforcements and preparing to attack in earnest.

It being, I believe, an axiom of warfare that “a retreating column should resemble a scorpion and carry its sting in its tail,” I picked out Resarse ben Shokar and Asmani ben Selim as being two of the coolest men, and they, together with a boy named Koranja, who carried my cartridge-bag and binoculars, formed my rearguard. George, with the main body of the men, had his hands full in preventing them firing away their few cartridges at the scenery, and then throwing down their loads and bolting—a proceeding which would have resulted in immediate and overwhelming disaster.

When we got into the thick bush the enemy tried several times to rush us, but the bush was as much in our favour as theirs, as it was too thick for them to use their arrows, for which providential circumstance I was devoutly thankful. Once or twice some of the bolder spirits advanced openly along the rearward path in the endeavour to rush my two men and myself, and cut us off, but the Lee-Metford is a beautiful weapon under such circumstances, and they abandoned the attempt. The enemy were constantly increasing in numbers, and the noise they made with their shouting and war-cries was terrific. I think they did it to keep their courage up, but it is a terrible waste of breath. They soon afterwards concentrated in force on our flanks and rear and tried another rush, but we were able by judicious shooting to keep them from getting too close.

The bush now ended in a ravine, at the bottom of which was a small stream. On the opposite bank of the stream was the edge of the thick forest which I have previously mentioned, and which extended as far as the open space called Karanjui, an hour’s journey further on. While George superintended the crossing of the men and animals, I and my two men squatted down in the bush at a turn in the path, about a hundred yards in the rear, and prepared a surprise for the enemy. They were howling in a most unmelodious key, and between the howls they informed us that they were

coming to kill us, a piece of news which seemed to me to be quite superfluous under the circumstances; they added the interesting information that they were going ahead of us into the wood, and were there going to ambush us. I had already guessed that such was their intention, but I determined that such an awkward situation should not occur if I could prevent it. Our men in their turn inquired why, if they were coming to kill us, did they not come and carry out their intention? It appears that these exchanges of repartee are part of the ceremonial of A'kikuyu warfare, though at the time it seemed to me to be very childish. The enemy then shouted, "Resarse kutire mwaka," literally, "Your bullets have no fire;" meaning to say that they did not hurt—evidently Bei-Munithu's teaching. They were asked to "come and see," an invitation they accepted. My little ambush worked perfectly, and they were within twenty yards when I opened fire. Two of them were put out of action at the first discharge, and the others retreated in disorder, having learnt a wholesome lesson.

A message from George then reached me, informing me that all the men and animals were now safely across the stream, so I followed him. Just as I got across the stream in my turn, some of the enemy, who had crossed higher up, made another rush, one of the most dangerous they had so far attempted. They got close enough this time to throw spears, one of which killed an unfortunate goat. I used my revolver, and George his gun, and they once more retired. One of the A'kikuyu who threw a spear was shot with an arrow by one of our Wakamba, who carried a bow and arrows which he had found in Bei-Munithu's village. The M'kikuyu's arm was still uplifted in the act of throwing the spear when our man's arrow caught him in the side of the chest, under the armpit. The light arrow went halfway through his chest as easily as if he had been made of butter. If I had not seen it myself, I should not have credited their tiny arrows with such penetrative power. After crossing the stream we were beyond the boundary of the Munithu district, and I did not think it probable that we should be followed any further, as these people do not as a rule go into the territory of another tribe; but in this case I was mistaken.

During our march through the forest they made one or two abortive attempts to close with us, but finally contented themselves with howling, and, between the howls, threatening what they would do to us when they got us to Karanjui. It was my intention to try to reach Karanjui first, so that

we might have a reasonable chance of crossing it before the enemy surrounded us. This we succeeded in doing, and we were halfway across when the leading warriors, forsaking the cover of the forest, trooped out into the open about 300 yards away. Asmani and Resarse, for whose conduct I have nothing but praise, waited behind to assist me in delaying the A'kikuyu, and so enabling George with the men and cattle to get across and into the cover of the forest on the other side. One of the enemy, bolder than the others, climbed on an ant-hill 70 yards distant from me, and danced at us in derision, making obscene gestures and insulting remarks. He desisted, however, on receiving a message from the 303 that he was unable to disregard.

The next move of the enemy was to try to work round the western edge of Karanjui, which was about 500 yards away, and so get ahead of us. I took a few long shots at them, and wounded one man (who I afterwards found out to be a nephew of Bei-Munithu) in the leg, and soon stopped that game. George and the others were by this time once more in the forest, so I retired from my place in the open, and with my two men took up a fresh position at the entrance to the path leading into the forest. The enemy could not then see me, and, supposing I had gone on, they all came out into the open. When I saw their numbers I fairly gasped. "Wow," said Resarse, "Watu winge, bwana" (There are many people, master), while Asmani merely grunted. They poured out of the forest paths in never-ending lines, till I thought every native in North Kenia was present. The plain soon became fairly black with them, and as they shouted and danced with their gaily painted shields and glittering spears flashing in the sun, I thought that a very short time indeed would see the end of my career. If "Captain Kettle" had been present at that moment, he would have considered it a particularly appropriate time to have composed a short piece of poetry; for myself, I simply broke out into a profuse perspiration, and proceeded to count my ammunition. It was with a horrible sinking feeling in the region of the belt that I discovered that I had only twenty rifle cartridges left, with about eighteen revolver ditto, and for a moment my nerve almost failed me as I realized what a really serious position we were in. It was only for a moment, however, and shouting to George to hurry on with the men as fast as possible to Chanjai, and bidding the boy Koranja go on with them, I settled down with Asmani and Resarse in a last desperate endeavour to turn the pursuit.

My plan was to expend my twenty cartridges in long-range rifle practice, and then hurry along after George, and trust to my revolver *en route*. After the first shot or two I found the range, and dropped one man at 300 yards, and then, as his companions scattered, I wounded another at 500 yards. The result was extremely gratifying, as the whole body of the enemy, and there must have been at least a thousand of them, then took cover and grovelled on their faces in the grass. I breathed freely once more, as I felt that I had got the enemy in hand. Soon a few of them rose to their feet again, but I waited till most of them had done so, and once more started in with the rifle. Down they all went again as regularly as clockwork. Asmani and Resarse shook with laughter at the sight. It really was too ridiculous to see the plain, which one moment would be covered with fierce black figures, and then on the sound of a shot the whole crowd disappear as one man, and nothing would be seen but the yellow tint of the waving grass.

After an expenditure of ten cartridges in this manner the A'kikuyu seemed to come to their senses, and they shouted that they "did not know the Wasungu were present," but they now acknowledged their mistake, and added something to the effect that they were now quite convinced that the rifles of the Wasungu were not made solely for ornament. Without replying, I and my two men hurried on in George's wake, and soon came up with him. I found that he had forty cartridges left, so that we had still a reasonable chance of getting back to camp.

We were not attacked in the second belt of forest, and on reaching the next open space we found to our infinite relief that the pursuit had almost entirely ceased; only a few natives following us, and those taking good care to keep out of range. We crossed another bush-belt and came out into the open plains at the foot of the Chanjai hills, and there the enemy finally abandoned the chase.

After a few minutes' halt to rest, we resumed our march to camp. George now mounted the mule, intending to ride for an hour and then give me a turn, as we were both rather tuckered up. We had marched for perhaps half an hour, when the mule suddenly shied, and, the girth breaking, George was thrown heavily to the ground. He fell on the back of his head and lay still. I hurried up, but before I could get near he was picked up by a couple of the men. When I finally reached him I asked if he were hurt, and he answered in a strange hollow sort of voice that he was "not hurt, only badly shaken."

This statement he repeated several times in a most aimless manner. I shook him a bit, but could get nothing more out of him. Suddenly he asked me if he might lean on me; he appeared to keep his feet with difficulty. In a few moments he seemed to be sufficiently recovered to ride again, and as the men had now caught the mule, I readjusted the saddle and helped him up, advising him to watch the mule closely in case she shied again. "All right," he said, still in the same strained voice, and he went on again, while I resumed my position in the rear. Ten minutes later I saw him stop and wait for me to come up. When I reached him he asked in his natural voice what had happened? He had *absolutely no recollection* of his fall from the mule or the events immediately following it till he came to, and found himself on the mule quite ten minutes later. I told him what had happened, though he was manifestly incredulous. Beyond a few bruises and a headache he was not much hurt, and he never felt any serious after-effects.

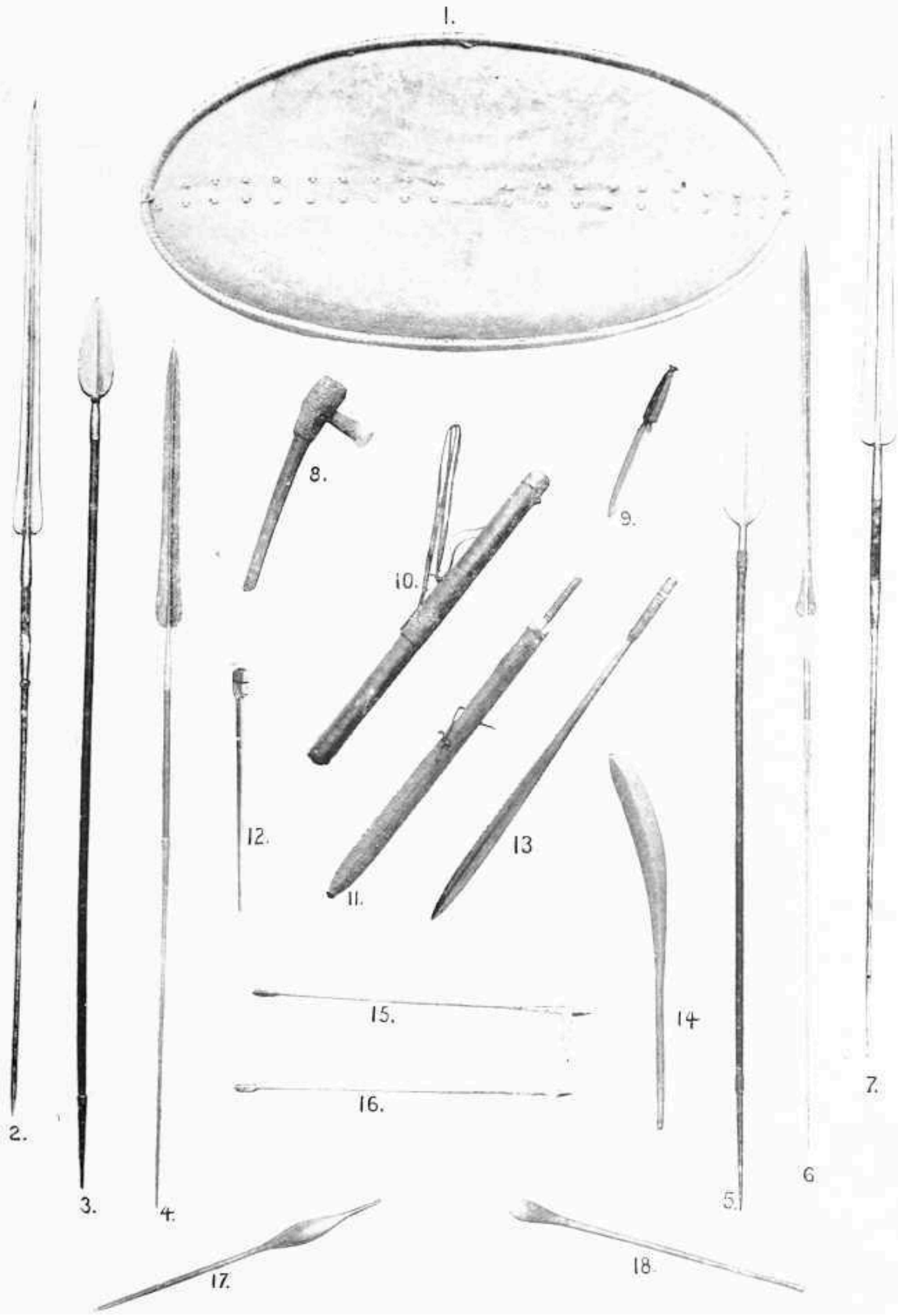
We reached camp at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, after a solid seven-hour march, three hours of which were spent in continuous fighting. I did the whole distance on my feet, and by the time we reached camp felt pretty well done up.

The casualties on the enemy's side, so far as I could ascertain, amounted to about nineteen. On our side we had one goat killed; a marvellous escape, all things considered.

When we got into camp we found everything safe. El Hakim was very surprised at our account of the persistent manner in which the natives had followed us, and expressed himself in warm terms on the way in which we managed to get away without any serious mishap.

Soon after our arrival we were surprised to see old Bei-Munithu come into camp. He had come to beg our pardon, and to swear eternal friendship in future. He bore no malice, which, to my mind, is a most engaging trait in the Kikuyu character. The A'kikuyu know when they are beaten, and a few hours after a life-and-death struggle with one, in which they had been vanquished, they will come into one's camp and talk over it with a primitive frankness which I think delightful. Of course, should matters go the other way, they would just as cheerfully dance over your dismembered corpse, and should a favourable opportunity arise they would not hesitate to attempt any underhand trick; it is all the same to them. If their traitorous intentions

are discovered and frustrated, they reason among themselves, “This is a very sharp and clever M’sungu. Let us go and see him, and eat food in his camp;” and away they go on a visit to their erstwhile enemy, and, after eating and making merry at his expense, they bid him a cordial adieu and perhaps attack him again next day. It is all so delightfully childlike, and primitive, and savage, that one cannot find it in one’s heart to bear any malice.



A'KIKUYU WEAPONS.

1. A'kikuyu shield.
- 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Spears in use among the A'kikuyu.
8. Axe.
9. Knife.
10. Leather quiver for poisoned arrows.
11. Sword in leather sheath.
12. Iron club formed of two iron nuts from the railway.
13. Sword.
15. Poisoned arrow, showing leather wrapping to preserve the poison.
16. Poisoned arrow, unwrapped.
- 14, 17, 18. Wooden clubs.

To return to Bei-Munithu. That old savage admitted that he had been very foolish, and had only been treated as he deserved, and undertook in future to treat all white men who came into his district with the greatest consideration. In the mean time he would like to make blood-brotherhood with George and myself. He was sorry, he added naïvely, that he had not done so on our way up. I told him that I hoped it would be a lesson to him, and pointed out that N'Dominuki, who had remained faithful, was now reaping his reward in the presents we showered upon him. Bei-Munithu then returned to his village, escorted by Jumbi and half a dozen men as far as Karanjui, in order to prevent the possibility of the Wa'Chanjei waylaying and murdering him.

As we had now a moderate quantity of food, we proposed starting on the following morning on our march round Kenia. The rain, however, once more descended in torrents, and drove us to the shelter of our tents for the next two days. We occupied ourselves during that time, partly in arranging and distributing loads, and partly in dispensing ointment to the constant stream of women and children who came into camp, suffering from chiggers. We also bought a few live fowls, which we carried with us.

Apropos of fowls, and as an instance of the ignorance often displayed by natives about anything outside their own particular concerns, I give an experience which once befell, El Hakim at Nyemps, the settlement at the south of Lake Baringo. On one occasion when visiting that place El Hakim took with him a dozen or so live fowls. Leaving there on one of his

periodical excursions after elephants, he placed them in the care of an old man in Nyemps. Owing to unforeseen circumstances he did not return for six months. On his arrival there at the end of that time he inquired after his fowls. The old man who had been charged with their care led the way outside and pointed them out. As El Hakim did not see any chickens he concluded that the old man had eaten the eggs, and inquired if such were the case. After a little the old man seemed to understand, and, shaking his head, beckoned El Hakim to follow him. He led him into a hut, and displacing a stone which covered a hole in the centre of the floor, he proudly exhibited to El Hakim the six months' collection of eggs, which were stored in the hole against his return. Asked why he had not eaten them, the old fellow looked amazed; he was apparently quite ignorant of the fact that they were eatable. He immediately called some of his cronies to him, and explained the seeming wonder to them. Their eyes glistened when the name of food was mentioned, and they immediately begged El Hakim to give them the eggs, which he did. They then doubtfully proceeded to test the truth of the M'sungu's words, a proceeding which, as the eggs were some months old, led to the most disastrous results, and they became more than ever convinced that El Hakim was a most terrible liar. Further inquiry showed that they were perfectly ignorant of the nature of eggs, and of the part they played in the economy of nature.

At eleven o'clock in the morning of the fourteenth day after our arrival at M'thara from the Waso Nyiro the rain ceased, and taking advantage of the sunshine, we made hasty preparations for a start.

A number of Wakamba who had wandered from their own country during the famine, desired to return with us, and we allowed them to do so. This necessitated a rearrangement of the loads. There was, of course, a quarrel over the ivory. Resarse seized the 75-lb. tusk, and held it against all comers, until he was allowed to carry it. His previous load weighed barely 60 lbs. This was a striking illustration of the force of training. For centuries the Arabs, for interested reasons, have instilled into the mind of the Zanzibari that it is an honour to carry the largest tusk; with the result that it is now a part and parcel of safari "dasturi" (custom), which is like unto the "laws of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not." However, after the usual squabbling, everything was arranged more or less satisfactorily, and bidding N'Dominuki farewell, we started on our long tramp to Nairobi.

Scarcely had we been an hour on the road when down came the rain again. It was impossible to get the sheep or cattle to travel in the rain. All they would do was to turn their backs to it and stand motionless. The rain soon converted the narrow path into a gutter, and when the downpour finally ceased, just before dusk, we were splashing through water over our ankles. We only made a little more than an hour's ordinary march, and even then some of the sheep did not get into camp until long after dark. The hyænas were very bold, and in spite of the extra men whom we sent to the assistance of the drovers, they got among the sheep in the darkness and killed several.

All night long it rained in torrents, and we awoke in the morning to find over thirty sheep stretched out lifeless on the sodden earth. It was really most disheartening.

We made a start again at ten o'clock and marched in a westerly direction, the country gradually ascending as we progressed westwards.

From our camping-place the following evening we looked down on M'thara and Embe, while the temperature was appreciably lower. On the next day's march we crossed over country of a rocky and gravelly formation, dotted everywhere with the peculiar whistling trees, which made a very weird and mournful sound in the breeze. It was a small thorny tree from four to eight feet in height, the leafless branches of which are covered with hollow spherical seed-pods, black in colour and the size of a plum. An insect bores a small hole in this shell, which, when the wind blows, causes it to emit a musical note, similar to that produced by an Eolian harp. These whistling trees covered the country for miles, and whistled in all keys at every breath of wind; the sound now increasing in volume, and anon dying away in a mournful wail that sounded almost uncanny.

We saw a solitary lioness on the road, but as soon as she saw us she made off at top speed over the open, before we could get within reasonable range.

We camped at some water-pools which the rain had left in a depression in the rocky surface. The men informed us that they had heard in M'thara that there was no water beyond these pools for ten days' march; but though there were no rivers marked on my map, we felt convinced that there must be some rivers on the north side.

Joseph Thompson says, "A very few streams, and those of the smallest, rise on the east and north side" (of Kenia).

On the contrary, we had found the east of Kenia exceedingly well watered, though there were certainly no very large rivers, and as events proved, Thompson was equally at fault as regards the north side. But then he never visited north or east Kenia, his knowledge of those parts having been derived from native sources.

However, we felt certain that we should find water, so we pursued the uneven tenor of our way in spite of the maps.

We were still ascending, and the air began to get very cold at night; though the sun's rays, when it was not raining, beat down during the day with undiminished vigour. Owing to the formation of the country, walking was by no means an unmixed pleasure, sand, gravel, and loose blocks of lava, and fragments of white quartz, making travelling both tiresome and fatiguing.

There was no game, and even the vegetation was very scanty; a few stunted thorn trees, and a species of aloe with red flowers, and some isolated Euphorbias forming the sole representatives of the vegetable world. The giant-branched Euphorbias (*Nyikæ pax*), presented a peculiar appearance with their huge cactus-like stem and vertical branches, which gave them the appearance of an immense candelabra. Some of them were thirty feet in height, with a stem six or eight feet in diameter. Great ravines, similar to those of east Kenia, but without their luxuriant vegetation, traverse the country from south to north. They required careful negotiation. Some of them had to be followed for miles along the edge before a suitable crossing-place was discovered. They all have considerable streams of water in the bottom, which flow north, and eventually join the Waso Nyiro.

We saw another lion, and stalked him for awhile, but he retreated into a patch of bush near one of the ravines and could not be found, nor could we waste much time in looking for him.

Late in the afternoon, on October 27th, we crossed a large ravine, and on climbing the opposite slope we emerged into open green country. As far as the eye could see the grass-grown surface rolled away in undulating ridges, without a tree or a bush to relieve the eye. It reminded me very much of

portions of the Downs in Sussex, from which the trees had been removed. A herd of zebra disported themselves on the plain, and after a careful stalk I secured one of them for the men, who were already growing short of food. We camped that night on the grass, the air being very much colder, the temperature being certainly not more than 55° Fahrenheit.

CHAPTER XX.

ROUND NORTH AND WEST KENIA TO THE TANA.

The primeval forests of North Kenia—Difficult country—Ravines—Ngare Moosoor—Rain—Ngare Nanuki—Cedar forests—Open country—No game—Upper waters of the Waso Nyiro—Death of “Sherlock Holmes”—Witchcraft—Zebra—Rhinoceros—Sheep dying off—More rain—The A’kikuyu once more—Attempt of the A’kikuyu to steal sheep—Difficult marches—Rain again—Maranga at last—The Tana impassable.

For the next day or two we travelled over rolling grass-land, scarred by ravines, the sides of which were clothed with magnificent forests. These forests are very beautiful, and convey a welcome sense of restfulness and peace to the tired and weary traveller who enters their dark and silent precincts. The contrast from the glare of the sun-baked lava plains, dotted with the glittering quartz blocks, which were visible to the north, was exceedingly grateful; and the easy walking over the soft yielding moss was most delightful after the loose pebbles and stones and stiff yellow grass we had stumbled over for the previous few weeks. Tall junipers and podocarpus reared their stately heads towards the sky, the masses of grey beard-like lichen, pendant from their massive boughs, giving them a hoary and venerable appearance that accorded well with the deep silence of these forest glades, whose solemn aisles are seldom, if ever, disturbed by man. Even the birds and insects seemed unwilling to break the universal silence, and the soft hum of some flying insect, or a subdued chirp from a solitary bird were only occasionally heard. That most irreverent of animals, the Zanzibari porter, hushed his speech to a soft murmur, impressed in spite of himself by the grandeur and solitude of these primeval glades. On the first day’s march over the grass plains we crossed three good-sized streams, and finally camped at some pools we discovered in the bed of a sand river, which sufficed for our own requirements, the animals having drunk all they required during the march. On that day I shot another zebra, but found they were increasingly difficult to obtain in this open country. They were very wild, and would not let me approach nearer than 600 yards. I risked a shot at that distance with the Martini, and as luck would have it, I dropped one

beast with a bullet clean through the heart. On short rations we found that it required one zebra per diem to feed the men.

The next day we reached a large ravine, at the bottom of which flowed a large river, called the Ngare Moosoor (Egg River), which took us an hour and a half to cross. No game was to be seen, but luckily the men had enough food to last them for another day or two, as they still had some of the grain left which they had brought from Munithu.



MOUNT KENIA FROM THE NORTH.
(Distant about 12 miles.)



MOUNT KENIA FROM THE SOUTH WEST. (See page [349](#).)
(Distant about 30 miles.)

It rained hard during the night, but cleared up again at sunrise, and we resumed our march over the grass-covered downs. At midday we reached yet another ravine, the largest we had seen so far. Its sides were clothed with the same forest, but the undergrowth was thicker than usual. Not finding a place to cross the ravine, we threaded our way through the jungle in a direction parallel to it. It was extremely hard work, we having to cut our way with knives and axes for considerable distances. The *simés* of our Wakamba proved exceedingly useful at this work. The undergrowth was loaded with raindrops, which soon drenched us through, and at this considerable altitude (over 8000 feet) it was very cold in the shade, which rendered us still more uncomfortable in our soaked condition. Finally we found a Wandorobbo path, which led us to the bottom among some of the wildest forest scenery I ever beheld. A river flowed at the base, but we

could not discover its name. It rained very hard in the afternoon, so we camped in the cedar forest on the opposite summit of the ravine.

The next morning we found many of the sheep had died during the night from the cold and exposure. After a short march we reached the Ngare Nanuki (Red water), wrongly spelled on the map as the Ngare Nyuki, and we crossed and camped on the further bank. No game was to be seen on the road, so we were compelled to kill ten of the sheep for food for ourselves and the men. The next march took us to a large river, called the Sirimon, which we crossed, though not without some difficulty, as the swift current swept the sheep away, so that the men were compelled to stand in the water and hand them across. The cedar forest on the other side was exceedingly beautiful, but the weather was very cloudy and uncertain, and this circumstance detracted somewhat from our enjoyment of the scenery.

We camped on the further bank of another stream, half an hour's march beyond the Sirimon. We were then at an altitude of about 10,000 feet. To the south of the camp a huge cloud bank indicated the position of Kenia. Presently this cloud bank showed signs of dispersing, and I took the camera out into the open in the hope of obtaining a photograph of the peak of Kenia from its northern aspect. For over an hour I waited patiently while the cloud bank swirled hither and thither, at times disclosing a small portion of the peak in a most tantalizing manner; but just as I was beginning to despair of getting a chance before the light failed, the clouds parted for a moment, and to my great delight I secured the coveted exposure, which, though yielding a far from perfect negative, was as good as I could expect under the circumstances.

We were compelled to kill more of the sheep for food, as no game whatever was to be seen; the effect, I suppose, of the rinderpest. We saw thousands of skulls of cattle scattered over the plains of North Kenia, the remains of the vast herds of the Masai, who at one time used this stretch of country as a grazing ground. Some few of the remains were no doubt the tracks of parties of Masai elmoran, who, from their settlements at Kinangop and Naivasha, used this road on their raiding expeditions to M'thara, Munithu, and north-east Kenia generally.

On the following day, which on consulting my diary I find to be the 2nd of November, 1900, we started at eight o'clock in the morning, and an hour

later reached a small stream. Crossing this without much trouble we marched for another two hours, at the end of that time reaching the upper waters of the Waso Nyiro.

The Waso Nyiro has always been supposed to rise in the Aberdare Range, and to flow in a north-easterly direction till it is joined by the Ngare Nanuki, and then to flow northward. This is a mistake, so far as it is supposed to rise in the Aberdare Range, as the Waso Nyiro really rises in the western side of Kenia itself, the comparatively small and muddy stream hitherto supposed to be Waso Nyiro being merely tributary to it.

At the spot only a few miles from its source, where we crossed the Waso Nyiro, it was already a fairly large and deep stream, with a very swift current. It lies at the bottom of a large ravine, which we were at first unable to cross, but after searching the crest for an hour we discovered a broad elephant path which took us down to the bottom, across the river, and up the other side. At the crossing-place the Waso Nyiro flows over dark coloured rock; the water was icy cold and most remarkably pellucid. Objects such as small stones, etc., in the bed of the stream, were surprisingly distinct; and but for the swiftly flowing current that distorted their outlines a little, it would have been difficult to believe that they were being viewed through from four to six feet of water. Taking this into consideration, I am in no way surprised that it is called the Waso Nyiro, literally *clear water*. Till that time the name had seemed to me to be somewhat of a misnomer, as the Waso Nyiro, for the 140 odd miles of its course that we had traversed, was a yellowish muddy stream, which belied its name.

The Masai from Gilgil and Naivasha, in their raids on North-east Kenia, most probably used the route we were then following—as instanced by the bones of the cattle—and would cross the river at the same spot. With their gift for appropriate nomenclature they, to my mind, could not do otherwise than name it the “Clear water,” in the same way as they named the Ngare Nanuki the “Red water,” on account of the apparent colour given to the water by the red gneiss rock over which it flows in that part of its course which lay on their route to and from North-east Kenia.

The Waso Nyiro rises on the west of Kenia; and, on reaching the base of the mountain, turns sharply north, being then joined by the stream which

drains the eastern face of the Aberdare Range, and further on by the Ngare Nanuki.

We camped on the opposite side of the ravine, amid some of the loveliest scenery imaginable. The ground was covered with short green grass, resembling a well-kept meadow. Lelele bushes grew in clumps on every hand, forming some of the prettiest glades one would wish to see. The elephant path led through this bush belt, and out into the open ground to the westwards towards Kinangop. These elephant paths are the finest roads in Equatorial Africa. Almost human intelligence seems to have been displayed in the selection of their curves and gradients, while their solidity is beyond cavil.

Poor "Sherlock Holmes" was prostrated with tetanus at this camp. El Hakim said he could do nothing for him. When we marched the next day we were compelled to leave him behind with another man who was sick, in charge of Jumbi, who was to take care of them until we sent men back from the next camp to carry them on.

During the march another man, an M'kamba, deserted. On inquiring the reason for such an extraordinary desertion in such an inhospitable region, we were informed by the other men that they had intended to kill him because he had cast a spell on "Sherlock Holmes," and so caused his illness; but he had got wind of their amiable intentions, and cleared out. Asked in what manner he had cast the spell, the men replied that he had gathered leaves of a certain plant and had strewn them on the path, and when his unsuspecting victim walked over them he was immediately smitten with disease. The reason for this deadly animosity appeared to be a purely domestic one, and had something to do with the deserter's wife, to whom the sick man had paid more attention than her husband had considered desirable or necessary. We endeavoured to explain that there was no such thing as witchcraft, and their companion's illness was more probably due to the cold and damp we were then experiencing, but without result, the men being firmly convinced that a malignant spell had been worked by the unfortunate husband upon the disturber of his domestic peace.

We were now travelling in a south-westerly direction towards N'doro, and hoped in a couple of days more to reach the inhabited districts. Game

once more appeared in the shape of a solitary rhinoceros and a herd of zebra, which we saw grazing on the plains just outside our camp of the 3rd of November. I went after the zebra, while El Hakim and George tackled the rhino. I could not get nearer to the zebra than 400 yards, and I tried a shot at that range, but unfortunately missed. They never gave me another chance, and I returned empty-handed to camp.

In the meantime the others had worked down wind of the rhino, and then laid down on the plain in the brute's path and waited until it almost walked over them. When he was quite close El Hakim put a bullet into its shoulder. The rhinoceros immediately charged, but the left barrel of the .577 got home, and it turned and fled in a direction at right-angles to its previous course. El Hakim then took a running shot at the beast, smashing its front horn, but it continued its flight. As it was by that time quite 200 yards away, George took a shot at it with his .303, and once more hit it, with the result that it only fled the faster, and they finally had the mortification of seeing it disappear in a belt of bush a couple of miles distant. They therefore gave up the chase and returned to camp. On their way back they were caught in a terrific thunderstorm, and got into camp half-drowned, much chagrined at their non-success.

It rained all night and until half-past nine the following morning, when we made another start. Some more of the sheep died during the night, which the men used as food. Latterly the sheep had been dying in batches of ten or twelve every night, and their numbers were now greatly reduced, with, of course, a corresponding reduction in our prospective dividends; so that, what with the weather and other things, we did not feel so cheerful as we might otherwise have done.

“Sherlock Holmes” died on the 4th, and we buried him beneath a heap of stones, in spite of the energetic protests of his companions, who desired that he should be left to the hyænas—the usual Wakamba funeral—as, strange to say, they appear to have a violent prejudice against burial.

We only travelled an hour on that day, as the rain once more descended in torrents and put a stop on our further progress. The country hereabouts was absolutely open, not a tree or a bush showing up anywhere, so that we were unable to build an enclosure for the sheep, or even, for lack of fuel, to light fires. On our right hand rose the lofty heights of the Aberdare Range, and

behind them again the isolated mass of Kinangop reared its stately peak 13,120 feet above the level of the sea.

The next day or two were among some of the most miserable we had spent so far. It rained morning, noon, and night, and the poor sheep succumbed in ever increasing numbers. We were out of fresh meat. Mutton had grown distasteful to us, so we lived on beans boiled in hippo fat—a nourishing but monotonous dish.

On the 5th of November we once more reached the Tana at a place near its source. It flowed in a south-westerly direction, at the bottom of the usual deep ravine. It is here known as the Kilaluma, *i.e.* “fire water.” In the afternoon El Hakim was fortunate enough to knock over a Thompson’s gazelle, and we dined sumptuously. The sun also showed itself for an hour or so, and quite cheered us up. It, however, rained hard all night, killed twenty more sheep, and prevented us starting till after ten o’clock in the morning.

An hour later we crossed a small stream and found ourselves among some good native paths which led into nice-looking open bush country. Three hours later we camped, and sent men out to look for villages so that we might purchase food from the inhabitants, though as they were A’kikuyu, we were rather doubtful of our reception.

A rhinoceros charged through the camp while we were pitching the tents, scattering the men in all directions, though fortunately doing no harm, and disappeared into the bush on the opposite side of the camp.

At dusk a great crowd of A’kikuyu swaggered into camp, making a most infernal din, and waving knob kerries about in a very reckless manner. At first they seemed aggressive, but when we intimated our willingness to present sheep as payment for a few days’ supply of muhindi, they changed their tune, and the bartering then went on amicably enough, though accompanied by a terrific amount of noise, without which the A’kikuyu seem to be unable to conduct even the smallest business transaction. To the great delight of the men we secured five days’ supply of muhindi and a quantity of sugar cane, besides a little honey.

On inquiry we learnt that Maranga was four days’ journey to the eastward. The path lay through thickly populated country the whole way,

and we anticipated some difficulty in traversing it without losing any of the sheep, as the A'kikuyu are expert thieves. We were on the south bank of the Tana, and consequently we should be compelled to cross it, as the country on the south bank, though comparatively uninhabited, was a mass of rugged hills, and practically pathless. We were not anxious to cross the Tana, as it would necessitate our re-crossing it at Maranga, and with the amount of rain which had recently fallen, we were very doubtful whether the ford would be practicable. We secured a guide for the following day, promising him a sheep if he took us safely to Maranga. We heard further that Mr. Hall, the Government officer, had established a station at Mbiri, a couple of hours' journey from the south bank of the Tana opposite Maranga. This was, indeed, good news, as we were yearning to see a white face once more, and incidentally get something decent to eat. Another white man, whose name we could not ascertain, was stationed with Mr. Hall. He was the officer in charge of the Nubian troops who garrisoned the station.

At nine o'clock the following morning we broke camp and started. Half an hour later we crossed the Tana, here about six yards wide and waist deep. There was a very strong swift current, and this occasioned some difficulty when getting the sheep across. During the operation numbers of A'kikuyu volunteered to assist, but we considered it prudent to keep them at a distance. The road on the other side was very bad, consisting merely of a narrow footpath winding along the steep slope of a rounded hill, about halfway up. On each side of the path the grass was very thick and three to four feet high. Many A'kikuyu had concealed themselves in this grass, and endeavoured every now and then to quietly seize a sheep by the hind leg as it passed and then sneak away with it. This necessitated constant watchfulness on our part, as the sheep, owing to the narrowness of the track, were compelled to travel in single file, and were stretched over a quarter of a mile of path, so that it was impossible with our few men to guard the whole line at once. Small groups of natives followed us. They appeared very friendly, too friendly in fact, and they displayed quite an alarming desire to assist us in driving the sheep, though we consistently declined their kind offers, to their evident disappointment. It took us three hours to travel two miles, so we halted and camped. Luckily the rain kept off. The guide, on being questioned, promised us a better road on the morrow.

It rained a little in the night, and prevented our starting till nine o'clock. As the guide had predicted, the road was very much better. Another river, the Mogoroni, a tributary of the Tana, was crossed during the morning, and after a three-hour march, we camped once more.

On the way we passed through many villages and extensive plantations; indeed, from here to Maranga the country was very densely populated, and food was more than plentiful. At the various camps the natives brought us cow ivory for sale, but we were unable to buy it as cow ivory is confiscated by the Government. It seemed rather a shame to leave it, but under the circumstances we could not do otherwise.

At this camp we were visited by the paramount chief of the district, a Masai named Kwa-Ngombe. He was accompanied by many of his elmoru (elders) and some Wandorobbo. Kwa-Ngombe strode haughtily into camp and demanded a cow as a present. We promptly refused to accede to such a preposterous demand, and after he had repeated it, and was still met with a decided refusal, he stalked out of camp the picture of offended dignity. He himself had not brought even so much as a sweet potato, so that we were the more abrupt in our refusal. After his departure some of his elders and the Wandorobbo stayed with us for an hour or so for a chat. They gave us the general news of the district, and among other items of more or less doubtful veracity, they included an impossible yarn about some cannibal dwarfs who had visited Maranga since our stay in that place. They described them as "watu wafupi sana" ("very short men"), and indicated, by holding their hands that distance above the ground, that they were about four feet in height. They further stated that these dwarfs came to Maranga to buy people that they might eat them. We cross-examined them closely, for we did not at all believe their story. They were asked where these dwarfs came from. That question rather stumped them, but after a few moments' cogitation they hit on the furthest place they could think of. "They came from *beyond Mombasa!*" said they.

On receiving this reply, we were convinced that the story was a pure fabrication, and said as much. They only smiled and changed the subject. We inquired at Maranga afterwards, and were confirmed in our opinion as to their untruthfulness. It is very strange that they should find so much amusement in such senseless and purposeless lies, though, to be sure, the practice is not wholly confined to the African native.

It rained hard all night, and the whole of the next day, so that travelling was impossible. We spent the day playing dominoes, going outside at intervals to watch the sheep die, and to grumble at our bad luck. It rained also all the next night and the greater part of the next morning; but it cleared sufficiently at midday to enable us to proceed. We therefore made a three-hour march and again camped. The clay paths were very steep and extremely slippery after the rain, causing us no small amount of trouble, while the sick and wearied sheep stumbled about in a most distressing manner.

After we had camped, I and the guide went on ahead for an hour or two in order to prospect the morrow's road. To my great delight I saw Doenyo Sabuk, away in the distance to the south-east, and further to the south I saw the summits of the hills behind Nairobi, which lay rather less than sixty miles away. It seemed very strange to me to reflect that I was standing in the heart of Kikuyuland amid a would-be hostile people, to all intents and purposes as far away from civilization as if I was at the North Pole, and where at any moment a dispute over a stolen sheep would resolve itself into a desperate and pitiless fight for life; while there, scarcely sixty miles away, and on this side of the range of hills which seemed so near, lay Nairobi with its houses, its railway workshops, locomotives, Baboo clerks and ticket collectors, and all the varied and busy life of a modern colonial town.

During the night it rained again, and killed off some more of the sheep. We started early in the morning in the hope of reaching Maranga the same day, a hope, however, we did not realize.

The A'kikuyu made themselves rather obnoxious on the road, and one or two shots were fired by our men. A calf and sheep were stolen, the thieves getting clear away with their booty into the thick bush. If we had let the matter pass we should have had further trouble on the next march, so when we camped we sent for the chief of the district. When he appeared we informed him of the circumstance, and intimated at the same time that we should like to see him stay in our camp until the stolen property was restored. This apparently did not at all coincide with his ideas, as he immediately made a dash for liberty, meanwhile shouting to his warriors, of whom there were a great number in the camp, who disappeared into the surrounding bush like shadows. We had, however, anticipated just such a move on his part, and at a signal from us, Barri, the Somali, seized the chief

and secured him, and I was under the painful necessity of handcuffing him to the tent-pole and putting a sentry over him. He then took quite a different view of the case, and despatched messengers, whom we had allowed into camp for that purpose, to the people who had stolen our animals. An hour or two afterwards the messengers returned with the missing beasts, and they were handed over to us with profuse apologies. We thereupon released the chief, telling him not to do it again, though, as a matter of fact, he did not know of the theft till we ourselves so abruptly informed him of it. We could not, however, but hold him responsible for any indiscretion committed by his people. On his release, in order to show him that we bore no malice, we presented him with a bead necklace and a coloured cloth, and asked him to bring us some sweet potatoes and yams, and anything else in the vegetable line that he might wish to present to us, which he promised to do. He accordingly returned in the evening with a supply of vegetables and a dark brown fat-tailed Kikuyu sheep as a present. In return we presented him with a couple of Rendili sheep, with which he was delighted.

The chief informed us that Maranga was only one march away and that the road was good, and, in addition, he himself would accompany us thither, in order to prevent any more of our property being stolen. He was as good as his word, and at eight o'clock the next morning we resumed our journey. Just before we started I took a photograph of Mount Kenia as it lay fully exposed to view in the half-light of the early morning of a dull day. The result is not all that could be desired, but it will give a very fair idea of the aspect of the mountain from the south-west.

We found the road as steep and slippery as on the previous day, and it tried the animals exceedingly. For that reason we made a short march and camped at half-past ten.

Soon after the tents were pitched, our old friend Manga and his son Koranja appeared. They had heard of our approach and had come to meet us. They greeted us very heartily, expressing delighted surprise at our safe return. We spent the rest of the day in discussing the news with them.

During the afternoon the chief of the surrounding district who answered to the name of Simba (lion), came into camp, and, following the example of his neighbour, our friend of yesterday, brought with him a sheep and some

vegetables as a present. He received a couple of Rendili sheep in return, and we parted with mutual good wishes.

The next morning we marched straight into Maranga and camped beside a brook, which ran into the Tana about half a mile further down. Owing to the heavy rains we surmised that there would be a lot of water in the Tana; even in this small brook the water was breast high, with a current almost powerful enough to sweep one bodily away. The natives affirmed that it would be impossible to cross the Tana for at least three weeks, and perhaps longer. Accordingly after lunch I went on to the Tana accompanied by two men, in order to see for myself. My first view of the river was a revelation. It was extraordinarily high, the constant heavy rains having greatly swelled its volume; and it is not a small river at any time. The ford was under six feet of water, with a muddy brown current swirling and eddying past at a speed of between four and five miles an hour. It would have been utterly impossible to cross with our loads and animals until the flood had considerably subsided, and meanwhile the rain showed no sign of ceasing. I returned to camp thoroughly dispirited.

On the way back I passed a magnificent waterfall which I had not previously heard of. The whole volume of the river roared and tumbled in great masses of foam over the naked black rock, plunging down some twelve or fifteen feet in a yeasty smother, accompanied by a thunderous roar which effectually precluded any attempt at conversation in the immediate vicinity. At the foot of the fall the water boiled and swirled in a great pool. Waves several feet high were thrown against each other by the violence of the water, which was seemingly gathering strength for its fierce mad rush through the only outlet from the pool, a narrow channel with perpendicular sides, and about 60 feet across, cut through the solid rock. Large rugged trees hung over the falls and round the edges of the pool, their leaves dripping moisture from the hissing clouds of spray cast high in the air upon every side, the whole forming a scene of savage grandeur, wonderfully impressive, and not easily forgotten.

CHAPTER XXI.

(CONCLUSION.)

FROM THE RIVER TANA TO NAIROBI.

Arrival at the Tana river—A visit to M'biri—Crossing the Tana—Smallpox—I give Ramathani a fright—Peculiar method of transporting goods across the river practised by the Maranga—Kati drowned—The safari across—M'biri—Disposal of the sheep—We resume the march—The Maragua once more—The Thika-Thika—The swamps—Kriger's Farm—Nairobi.

Early the next morning we sallied forth from our tents and spent an hour and a half in the water of the brook, getting the sheep across. They were unable to face the stream, and each separate animal required to be passed across from hand to hand, the labour involved being very great. We then went on to the Tana and camped beside the ford. In the afternoon we got our Alpine rope out, and with considerable trouble and some risk succeeded in getting one end of it across the river and made fast to a tree on the opposite bank, Jumbi with two or three other men and myself swimming across the river for the purpose.

It was not until I was actually in the water that I realized the tremendous power of the current. We had to go a long way up stream before plunging in, as the swift current carried us rapidly down river, and, but for this precaution, would have swept us past the only landing-place on the other side. This made rather a long swim of it. I was horribly afraid of the presence of crocodiles, but fortunately they were conspicuous by their absence.

When at last, after many failures, we had got the rope across, it was not of much assistance, as the water was too deep for the porters, and the animals would not face it alone on any consideration. Another circumstance which added to our difficulties was there being only one landing-place on the opposite bank, a little gully about four feet wide in the steep bank, made by the hippopotamus who formerly came ashore here to feed, and afterwards widened by natives using the ford. If by mischance anybody had

been swept past this landing-place they would almost certainly have been drowned, as there was no other place to land for a long way down the river.

Failing a bridge, our chances of getting across the Tana for another month were very slender, and as I was anxious to reach Mr. Hall's station at M'biri in order to get a few newspapers, some tobacco, and provisions, I sent word to the chief's son, Koranja, that I required a couple of guides. These he had great difficulty in procuring, the natives declaring that it was impossible to cross the river. However, on the promise of a heavy reward of cloth, I prevailed upon two of the Maranga natives to accompany me. We three then swam the Tana together, with my clothing done up in small bundles on our heads. I was unable to get my rifle across, so I went without it. Once on the other side, I dressed as speedily as possible, and we set off at a good pace for M'biri.

We reached the Marathwa, another fair-sized river, an hour later, which necessitated stripping again. The crossing safely accomplished we resumed our apparel, and set off once more, reaching the station at midday, after a couple of hours' rough tramp over the hills.

Mr. and Mrs. Hall were away shooting for a day or two, but Captain Longfield, who was in charge of the troops, made me very welcome. He invited me to stay with him until Mr. Hall's return, an invitation I gladly accepted. I sent the two guides back to the camp with a supply of newspapers and provisions, and then sat down with Captain Longfield to one of the most satisfactory luncheons I have ever enjoyed. It was such a pleasing change to eat once more from earthenware plates, with a real white tablecloth and glass tumblers on the table, and a properly furnished cruet-stand. It is only after one has been separated for a time from the minor conveniences of civilization that one discovers how much they contribute to one's comfort.

One of the most peculiar effects of our late experiences was noticeable when I retired to rest that night. It was the new and strange sense of security. It seemed so utterly unbelievable that I could go to sleep and sleep as soundly as I liked, without fear of being rudely disturbed by hostile natives, or by prowling beasts of prey. It was positively difficult to realize at first.

On the afternoon of the second day of my stay at the station Mr. and Mrs. Hall returned. Mr. Hall had done wonders with the station during the short time (about two months) that he had been established there. A very large and solid stone wall surrounded the various buildings and offices, and a ditch had been dug outside, making it, perched as it was on the summit of a hill, a very strong and secure position. The huts were lofty and well built, and in the centre of the compound a large and handsome flagstaff carried the flag of the East African Protectorate.

Next morning I returned to our camp on the Tana, where I found that El Hakim and George had succeeded in getting a good many of the sheep across, having employed a number of the Maranga to swim them over, two men to one sheep—a very slow process at best. The river had fallen a few inches, but it would need to fall at least another foot before the men could attempt the passage with their loads.

The day after, as the river was still falling, we got the remainder of the sheep to the other side. Almost before they were across, the river commenced to rise again, and consequently we could not attempt to move the cattle or loads.

In the afternoon about seventy Wakamba, driven northwards by famine, came to the opposite bank of the river and attempted to cross over to Maranga by means of our rope. They were extremely emaciated, and so weak that three or four of the first dozen were washed away from the rope and drowned. Suddenly the Maranga who were watching them raised a shrill cry of “Ndui! Ndui!” (small-pox), and rushing at those of the Wakamba who had already landed, they drove them into the water and across the river again. It seemed hard to repulse the poor starving wretches, but the Maranga have already suffered so heavily from the small-pox that they had no wish to repeat the experience. There were quite a dozen of the Wakamba in an advanced stage of confluent small-pox. From our camp we could hear them moaning and wailing all night, for several nights. In the daytime they used to come down to the only place at which they could reach the water, a large flat rock a little way up stream, which was just awash, where they would sit for hours laving themselves with the cool water.

Three days later, on November 22nd, we found that the river had gone down some six inches, and we made a determined effort to get the loads and cattle across.

Stripping to my shirt, I swam across the river to superintend operations at the landing-place on the opposite bank, I took four or five men, and we stood in the water up to our breasts, under the bank, where the current was a little less violent, and took the loads from the porters, who were exhausted by their struggle with the powerful current, as they brought them across. Young Koranja annoyed me by bringing my camera across under water, but then he was not very tall, and consequently received a ducking every time the rope surged. If he had not had my camera, I should have been highly amused at his predicament.

The better to shout instructions across the river, I climbed a large tree that grew on the bank, its topmost branches hanging out over the water for some yards. I found such a comfortable seat in the fork, about twelve feet above the surface of the water, that I stayed there for awhile to rest after the laborious work at the landing-place, and also to get a bird's-eye view of all that was going on.

Presently I heard some one swimming, with much puffing and blowing, down the river, and almost underneath me. Peering through the leafy screen that surrounded me, I saw that Ramathani, though evidently in mortal terror, had at last faced the river, and was swimming slowly and cautiously down stream to the landing-place. The current was bringing him directly under my perch, though he had not observed me, and I derived much amusement from the anxious expression on his usually calm and expressionless visage. As he passed underneath something suddenly impelled me to jump out of the tree, and I did so, landing with a terrific splash right upon my unfortunate servitor. He gave a fearful shriek, which was almost instantaneously stifled in a gurgle as he disappeared beneath the surface. When he came up again his face wore such a look of terror that I half repented of the joke. The way his face changed when he found me swimming quietly by his side, smiling cheerfully, was a perfect study in expression.

“Oh, it was you, Bwana?” he gasped out. “I thought it was an afreet” (devil) “or a kiboko” (hippopotamus).

I then challenged him to a race across the river, but he declined, though ordinarily he was a good swimmer. He had had enough of the water for one day, he said.

When I got down to the landing-place, I found that most of the loads were across, our men having been reinforced by some of the Maranga. These natives disdained the rope, and, strange to say, though many of them could not swim, they could carry a 60 lb. load across a ford 6 feet deep, though their own height rarely exceeded 5 feet 6 inches, and usually a great deal less. They surmounted the difficulty in a rather ingenious manner, which at the same time required no small skill.

They held the loads over their heads the full length of their arms, and then walked into the river, some little distance up-stream. When they got out of their depth *they walked on the bottom*, giving a jump which brought their heads above water, when they wanted to breathe. The heavy load held above their heads enabled them to keep steady, in an upright position, in the swift current. They consequently crossed the river in a series of jumps, the current meanwhile carrying them down stream, while between the jumps they walked a step or two towards the other side. It was a very curious sight from the bank to see a large box or a rolled-up tent, clasped by two black hands, apparently crossing the river of its own accord. Our own men would not attempt this method at any price.

The loads were got across before midday, but it was extremely hard and hazardous work, one of our best men, an N'yamwezi named Kati, being unfortunately washed away and drowned.

In the afternoon, all the loads being across, George and I and a dozen of the men unshipped the rope, and taking it further up-stream, we prepared to get the cattle and donkeys across. After chasing away the small-pox patients, we took up our station on the flat rock already mentioned, as it was the most suitable place that we could find, at which to land the cattle. By means of our old device of tying a rope round the necks of the animals and hauling them bodily across, we safely accomplished the task, though the labour was enormous. Several of the cows were nearly drowned, and after we had hauled them out of the water, lay on the rock to all appearance dead. Some one suggested that perhaps artificial respiration would facilitate their recovery, but as neither George or I knew how to perform artificial

respiration on a cow, we were unable to put it to the proof. They eventually recovered without such aid, and rising slowly and with difficulty they walked away, though I must confess that they were very groggy on their pins.

At nine o'clock next morning, having thus, after a delay of only eight days, safely negotiated the Tana, we started on our final march to Nairobi. We crossed the Marathwa below M'biri, where it was breast deep and very swift, camping on the opposite bank. We stopped there four days, during which time we sold the sheep to some Somalis who had a store just outside the Government station.

El Hakim went on a visit to Mr. Hall, and stayed a day or two with him. I took to my blankets on the third day with a slight touch of fever, which, considering that I had practically lived in the water for four days, was not surprising.

On the morning of November 27th, we broke camp and resumed our march, exceedingly thankful that we were no longer handicapped on the march by the presence of the sheep. I was still rather shaky after my touch of fever, so I rode the big mule for the first time since leaving the Green Camp on the Waso Nyiro. The next day we reached the Maragua, where we found a rough bridge, which had been constructed by Captain Skene, who was on his way to M'biri to relieve Captain Longfield. The latter had been ordered to Kismayu to take part in the Ogaden Somali Expedition which was to avenge Major Jenner's murder. We crossed safely, and camped on the other side. Three cows were stolen during the afternoon by the A'kikuyu, but we sent Jumbi and half a dozen men immediately in pursuit, and they recovered them without difficulty.

Four days later we reached the river Thika-Thika. Congoni once more appeared on the scene, and we were able to shoot several for food, and I also secured a roan antelope, the first we had seen during the trip. Besides congoni there were numbers of zebras, wildebeeste, wart-hog, grantei, and thompsoni; and George and I, taking turns with the shot-gun, managed to secure some guinea-fowl, and occasionally a wild duck.

Very heavy rain the night before we reached the Thika-Thika delayed us a little. We reached the river at midday and found it full of water, but the

current was comparatively sluggish. We saw a couple of hippo, and any number of crocodiles.

At a place where a fallen tree projected some way over the water we constructed a rude bridge, resting the centre of the structure upon a small island in the stream. It was not beautiful to look upon, neither was it over strong; but it sufficed, and during the afternoon the whole safari crossed by its means. The cattle were driven further down the river to a spot where the banks shelved somewhat, and they were then swum across, luckily without interference from any too inquisitive crocodiles.

The next day was George's turn to have a touch of fever, which, though slight, made him very uncomfortable. We were now entering a very marshy piece of country, traversed by numerous rivers and streams, which drained into the Athi River.

Congoni were again numerous, and we were able to shoot sufficient meat to feed the men. The congoni is remarkably tenacious of life, one beast in particular giving me a lot of trouble. I put two .303 soft-nosed bullets into it; and although one hind leg was broken, and it was also badly wounded in the shoulder, it made off at a good speed. Taking the Martini, I followed it, and, when it once more stopped, I put a Martini bullet into it from behind, at a hundred-yards' range. The bullet struck it in the hind quarters, and ploughed its way through almost the whole length of the animal's body. The beast was unable to advance, but still kept its feet; and as I was unwilling to waste another cartridge upon it, I walked up to it and threw it down by seizing its horns and jerking its head sharply sideways, but not until its throat was cut did it expire.

On December 5th we reached a papyrus swamp, about two hundred yards wide, but apparently continuing indefinitely east and west, so that we could not march round it. The men, therefore, were sent to cut a path through it, and by laying the cut reeds and a quantity of branches of trees across the roots a precarious roadway was constructed, perfectly practicable for the men and loads, but impossible for cattle. Jumbi, who was sent out prospecting for a suitable place to get the cattle across, returned in the evening, having discovered a place some miles away, which he thought they might safely negotiate. Accordingly, before sunrise next morning, he was sent with the cattle to make the attempt, while the porters and loads crossed

by the temporary path we had constructed the day before. It was rather ticklish work, as in some places there was over six feet of water under the reeds, we having to depend for support on the elasticity of the cut reeds laid transversely across the roots, the weaker places having been strengthened by the addition of branches and brushwood well trodden down.

Jumbi was perfectly successful in getting the cattle across, and they were on the other side of the swamp and opposite us some time before all the men had crossed; but we were all across by ten o'clock, and, resuming our nether garments, we proceeded. In an hour we had reached a narrow river, flowing swiftly between two upright walls of rock. A mile up-stream we discovered a crossing-place at a spot just above a magnificent waterfall. This fall was quite 100 feet deep, and the water foamed and splashed into one of the most beautiful glens imaginable. We did not stop to admire the scenery. Personally, I was perfectly willing to exchange the prettiest bit of scenery thereabouts for a sight of the Nairobi Post Office.

After we had left the river a few miles behind, we were confronted by another wretched papyrus swamp. Yesterday's experience was repeated, a road having to be constructed in precisely the same manner. It was not finished till sunset, so we camped for the night. It rained hard in the evening, and during the night the mosquitos drove us nearly frantic.

The next morning we crossed the swamp. It was rather deeper than the other, and we had to strip to the "altogether" in order to get across; the reeds often giving way under our weight, letting us down with a splash into the ice-cold, dirty water. We got across, however, without any serious mishap, and resuming our clothing we again went on.

Three quarters of an hour later we struck yet another swamp. Off came our clothes once more, and we waded it breast deep. The water was very cold, and unspeakably stagnant and filthy. It took us an hour to get across. Half an hour's march further on, another swamp appeared. Once more we had to strip and wade. This one was not so cold, as the sun was by this time well up, and moreover the water was cleaner; but there were a lot of horrible flies, like horseflies, which bit most ferociously, and attacked every unprotected portion of our anatomy, drawing blood at every bite. However, that was the last of the swamps, and by four o'clock in the afternoon we reached our old camp near Kriger's farm, only seven miles from Nairobi.

We camped for the night, and the following morning George and I started for Nairobi. We left El Hakim in camp, as he wished to go over and see Kriger during the morning. George and myself, with the bulk of the men, therefore started on our seven-mile tramp. On the way we critically examined each other, and a more ragged pair of scarecrows one would not wish to see. The sole of one of my boots had parted from the upper and flapped as I walked, while George lacked a sole altogether on his left boot, and was walking on his sock, which soon wore through, causing him so much inconvenience as to materially impede our progress.

Such trifles, however, were unable to damp our ardour as we tramped along in the direction of Nairobi. Each well remembered spot recalling some incident or other. Here was the place where I fell into the river the second night out. Further on was the clump of trees where I shot the guinea-fowl, and beyond that, again, was the game-pit which had bidden fair to put a summary end to my career over six months before. What hardships they seemed at the time, though subsequent events had dwarfed them into insignificance. Even our stirring experiences on the Waso Nyiro and our long weeks of anxiety in Kikuyuland seemed to suddenly recede into the limbo of the past. Everything else was forgotten in the intoxicating thought that at last we were almost home, and as we approached nearer to Nairobi a feeling of elation impossible to describe took possession of us. Pain, difficulties, anxieties—all were momentarily forgotten. Our emotions were shared by the men, and when the first galvanized roof appeared on the horizon a cheer broke forth, and we hurried forward at increased speed.

Presently the railway station hove in sight, and a locomotive shunting trucks in the goods-yard sent forth an ear-splitting whistle. Never was there such a musical sound as that erstwhile discordant speech. At length, to cut a long story short, we arrived, much to the surprise of our friends, who had heard that we had all been killed in Embe, the news of the Somali's disaster having in some mysterious manner filtered through.

I have only once since experienced such a sense of relief as I felt on our arrival in Nairobi, and that is now, as I finish this account of our journey; and my only hope is that it will not have wearied the reader half as much as it wearied the writer.

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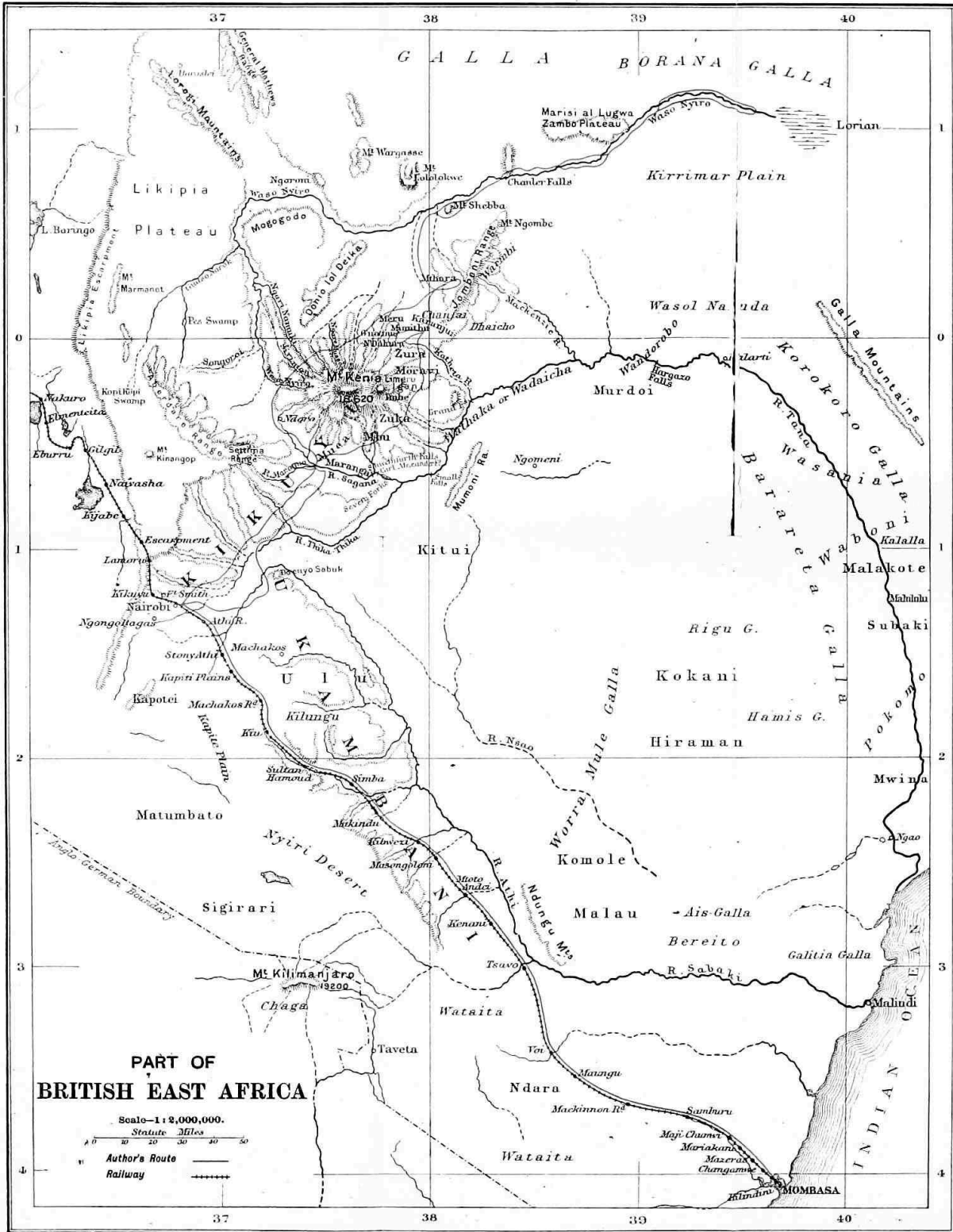
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THE END.

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Transcriber's Notes

- pg 223 Changed: I endeavoured to yet near enough
to: I endeavoured to get near enough
- pg 316 Changed: A deputation from the Wa-Chanjei
to: A deputation from the Wa'Chanjei
- pg 317 Changed: These ball cartidges contained
to: These ball cartridges contained
- pg 329 Changed: an experience which once befel
to: an experience which once befell
- Errata changes from page [xvi](#) have been made in text.

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