

TRAVELS AND RESEARCHES
AMONG
THE LAKES AND MOUNTAINS
OF
EASTERN. & CENTRAL AFRICA.

FROM THE JOURNALS OF THE LATE
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H.B.M. CONSUL AT MOZAMBIQUE.
LATE OF THE 96TH REGT., AND A.D.C. TO LORD STRATHNAIRN.

EDITED AND COMPLETED
BY H. B. COTTERILL.

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

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ment lost us a great deal of time, and at last I had to turn my steps homeward, much against the grain, where I arrived just before sundown, completely done; bathed, sent on board for some dinner, had a short talk with Dr. S., who is in a tent on shore and I am sorry to say very ill, and lay down refreshed but very wearied.

Oct. 6th. Dr. S. as yesterday. Every one was eager to be after the elephants, so we started at 7 A.M., and soon took up yesterday's spoor. But we were followed by a number of Wanyassa elephant hunters, armed with bows and enormous spears, heavily weighted, and they suggested our taking back up the Karoro, and through the inner range, and we gave way to their guidance. It was a charming journey up through the valley to the higher ground and into the vegetation of Natal and mountain uplands, and the spot where we bathed and breakfasted by the clear cold pools of the rapid Karoro, upon great rocky boulders, gave one a healthy sense of refreshment and enjoyment. Cotterill turned back from here, having hurt his knee on the 4th. We tramped along the mountain sides until the lake was again reached near Pakambwera [a headland north of Chombe]. Here we realised that we had possibly been misled by our guides, for their party during our absence had fired the grass in the Kitimbu valley, so that our last chance of finding the wounded elephant was over. Rhodes and Hoste shot a rhinoceros (black) at the mouth of the Karoro on the way home. He took six shots. They did not get back to camp till late—very tired, but very "fit"; and so are all of us, excepting Dr. S., who is really ill. I decided to let the men at Livingstonia return to Quillimaine, and forego his offer of a return trip of the steamer. Time flies, and the rains are close at hand.

Oct. 7th. Sunday. Dr. S. better. Strong easterly swell, evidently from wind during the night. It comes up in a few minutes on the lake in this way, as in the Mediterranean. A wild pig came down to look at the camp in the afternoon. Koodoo and buffalo have shown, as well as pallah, in its vicinity; hyenas and a leopard pay nocturnal visits.

Oct. 8th. We do not start to-day. Dr. Stewart is much better, but a day's rest will do him no harm. Rhodes and I started off to the head of the bay to look for the elephants, crossed the Karoro, and worked from the base of Pakambwera Point, making good the country by cross beats. There was fresh spoor on a streamlet, but it was soon lost in the grassy bottoms and bamboo jungle. At 8.30 we breakfasted on cold tea, sardines, and biscuit, by a stream near which we had seen a big buffalo on the 6th. Thence we struck the lakeward range near marshy pools and forest clumps, and there, as Bilali rightly judged, the elephants had been with "the morning star" (*alfajiri*). The spoor was clear on the freshly-burnt grass, and led us along the mountain spurs into the upper valley of the Kororo, the game being on the feed and halting frequently. We had been perhaps 1½ hour on the trail when we crossed the river. Here the elephants had loitered. The water splashed on the boulders, where they had forded, had not been dried by the sun. Ten minutes' silent spooring and we sighted the herd. One or two were dozing under the shade of trees, others were engaged in munching branches, one was taking a sand-bath. We crept silently up to within 10 or 15 yards of them, but the great stalks of burnt grass were so thickly interlaced that I would not venture to leave the path. It was as well that we remained stationary, for a few minutes later, after a consultation of gruntings, by common consent the elephants

shifted ground, following the path, and we joined their line of march. They only took us 50 or 60 yards, and then scattered a little under a large mopané tree, the biggest tusker standing lazily blinking under its shade right across the path. Now we had a splendid chance, and moving rapidly forward, and firing together, we planted two bullets behind his shoulder. He trumpeted, staggered, ran forward, and tripped in the dry rocky bed of a small nullah, where the entire herd got confused by making for the one crossing-place. From the edge of it their huge backs formed immense targets for our bullets ; but we confined our attentions in the first instance principally to the big one. He got across, and then fell, trumpeting loudly, but got up again to fall for good, with two bullets under the ear and one behind the shoulder, crashing down on his right side with one leg doubled under him in a second small nullah, not 20 yards beyond the first. It was half an hour before we pursued the herd, leaving men with the dead elephant. It did not take us long to catch it upon a hillside in the mountain gorge, when the next biggest elephant—a cow with a calf—deliberately charged out of the herd at me. I let her come pretty close—within about 3 yards—and then gave her a forehead shot, which twisted her round directly, and Rhodes put in one from the big gun, which doubled her over like a rabbit under a big tamarind-tree, whence she never rose again. Now there followed a hot chase through the long grass after the rapidly retreating herd, Rhodes running wide on the right and putting in another shot, I toiling and panting at the tail of the hindmost fugitive. Up hill and over boulders I could nearly match their pace, and on the rise of the pass I got within 3 or 4 yards of the last of the line, and shot him a few inches under the tail. He trumpeted to the shot, and on the very top of the pass stumbled on to

gorged with their loathsome feast, had scarcely power to flap away into the lower branches of the magnificent forest trees which adorn the once peaceful Usango valley. The stench was fearful; indeed, I shall wonder if there is not a pestilence to follow in the wake of the siege. By screaming and abusing the Wasango sentries the Machinga first succeeded in obtaining an audience in all the look-outs, and then brought out the wretched prisoners and speared them one after the other, promising to serve the garrison in the same way when the "boma" was captured.

Nov. 6th. I passed a wretched night, from the effects of the food on which we were living. It affects us all in different ways. I was glad to be off with my rifle before it was light, and get into the fresh air away from the putrid odours of the boma and its disgusting surroundings, and pushing on eastwards, on the path of the retiring Machinga, shot a fine young *nswala* buck, and afterwards wounded two zebras. One of them rolled over and over, but got up and went off. On my arrival at camp I found Cotterill had shot another *nswala*, so we were able to be generous and gave two halves to Merere and Suleiman. I must say I enjoyed a meat breakfast, after a bath in the Ruaha.

Whilst we were eating it a pursuing party returned. It went out yesterday, overtook the enemy at four hours' distance, attacked their stragglers, killed eight and captured a Msango deserter, who says the Machinga had a good many wounded and were quite demoralised. They are said to have broken into groups and had taken different routes, "sauve qui peut." One poor girl they murdered yesterday about an hour's distance from here. I put up two hyenas from her body. It lay by the broken pot she had been carrying, and had let fall. Her leathern apron and beads

had been torn off her. The hands of the slain were brought back as usual. Merere is much pleased. The Wabena now say they will come in and do homage again. Mafira and Mbango should be here to-day, to start in pursuit.

In the afternoon Cotterill wounded a zebra, and Downie, after a long run, finished her with AAA cartridges.

About five o'clock ammunition, provisions, and goods arrived from Mazote's with a letter from Rhodes. It is most satisfactory to hear that all is well. They must be tired to death with waiting; but they have been better off than we have been of late. Merere and his chiefs held a great dance of rejoicing over the retreat of the Machinga, and drank much pombé. The great chief was a little unsteady on his pins when he saluted me as he passed. But Suleiman says he is not given to drinking. We rejoiced on soup, salt, nswala, coffee, and our own tobacco once more.

Nov. 7th. At daylight Cotterill and Downie started shooting. I settled about the present for Merere, and then opened a meat shop in the street and bought a lot of grain, wood, &c., with the zebra flesh. The new moon was seen last night, and the month is to be a fortunate one—so say the Wasango and Suleiman. The latter did not forget to utter an appropriate and pious ejaculation on first describing it.

I paid Merere a visit of ceremony and gave him his present—a double gun, two blankets, two pieces of checked cloth, and 30 yards of Merikano. He seemed very pleased, and apologised for the reception we had met with, and his want of hospitality. We were unfortunate, he said, in visiting his country in a time of adversity: “but,” he added, looking rather proudly towards his councillors, “you may, I hope,

return when all this is changed." Every one nodded assent, and grunted in approval of the speech.

Cotterill returned, having bagged four zebras; Downie with an *nswala*. He had the bad luck to wound and lose a rhinoceros. We gave two zebras to Merere, who is delighted at the prospect of feeding his big men.

Suleiman's Makua hunters bagged two rhinoceros in the hills to the east.

The arrival of meat gave us a very unpleasant day, crowds of Wasango kicking up the dust through our open doorway, and making it hot and uncomfortable.

Nov. 8th. Much cooler, and we all find ourselves better for the change of food, and refreshed by the prospect of a speedy departure. Rejoicings over the conclusion of the siege still continue. A contingent arrived from Mbango's with provisions and one of Merere's wives. They were received at the Ruaha by an escort, and drummed into camp, where the head-men were introduced to Merere with as much ceremony as would be seen at a European court. Subsequently Merere himself led the drum band. They play excellently a variety of tunes, and keep wonderful time. They are the claret-glass shaped drums, seen to the westward, with a foot to rest upon the ground, and are held with one hand and played in a most vigorous manner with a thin, hard stick, terminating in a small knob. This drumming continued nearly all day. It appears that none of the Wabena tribes joined the Machinga, as Merere feared at first; and now his allies and vassals are coming in. His prestige will be probably increased by the fact of his having sacrificed his town as untenable, and having subsequently forced the enemy to retire with loss. He burnt it by Suleiman's advice.

Cotterill and I went out together, separating on the

“Zebra Flat.” I saw little or no game, but on meeting C. again near the Ruaha, we found ourselves on the edge of the game country—spoor of every description, elephant, rhinoceros, hippos. and buffalo. [Hippopotami come up from stream from the Ruaha lake.] Cotterill had killed a zebra and lost a wounded buffalo. The river here is about waist-deep, and running swiftly. A canoe could probably work down to the Rufiji, looking out well for snags and fallen trees. [This too was at the end of the dry season.] After refreshing myself in the shade of a high bank and spreading trees on a shingly slope, where elephants drank last week and ibises were roosting, I kept up the left bank homeward bound, but within ten minutes there was a crash and a clatter of dry reeds, and down the opposite bank flopped a big buffalo right into the river. Unluckily I had given my rifle to Bilali, and there was a little delay in getting it—he standing amazed with the gun in his hand at the critical moment. However, I got a shot in that staggered him, and made him bellow as he got into the reeds again and up the bank; but here I lost him. The “matete” [reeds] were so dense that it was like hunting for a needle in a hay-stack. As the sun was going down I saw two boars drinking, and shot one—a fine fellow—who showed fight when I finished him with a spear. He would have given one a grand run with the old “Tent Club”; better than any Indian boar. [This is the *Vlakke Vark* or *Phacochoerus Æthiopicus*, a brute of most formidable appearance, and armed with immense tusks.] I left the men with the body, shouldered their two guns and my own, and started for home. I chose a rapid and broad place to cross the Ruaha, for the sake of the bath, and had to make a separate crossing for each gun, so the young moon was shining brightly by the time I reached the “boma,” having been misled to the left by fires and a mob