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SPORT
IN
EAST CENTRAL AFRICA

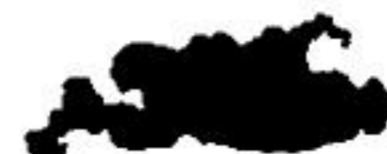
BEING AN ACCOUNT OF
HUNTING TRIPS IN PORTUGUESE AND OTHER
DISTRICTS OF EAST CENTRAL AFRICA

BY
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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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under water, and when rising and sinking, than usual, yet to all appearances they tilt themselves backward in the same style. Hippos often wander great distances overland to their feeding grounds, and when moving from one river or pool to another; it being common to find their tracks from six to eight miles distant from water, while some years ago a case came under my notice where a hippo bull left the Sabi river, Eastern Transvaal, and marched overland to a point thirteen miles distant in a direct line. Some natives followed him and spored him down to a pool about fifteen yards across and twenty in length, the stream of which it formed a part being only a few inches deep elsewhere. The boys left him there—unwatched—and came to inform me, but by the time I arrived the animal had decamped, and travelled another seven miles overland to the nearest river, doubtless his point from the first.

BLACK RHINOCEROS (*Rhinoceros bicornis*).

The range of this rhinoceros extends throughout the Mozambique Province, and the regions north of the Zambesi, at any rate, as far north as Tete; while it is fairly numerous in the Chiringoma range, Portuguese East Africa. It is remarkable that the so-called keitloa variety is seldom met with north of the Zambesi; personally I have only seen one, an enormous bull, which I killed near the Lioubu river, as related in Chapter III., but last year I saw a pair of horns at a village on the Namatimba river, the beast which carried them having been shot not far distant on the Lualwa river. These measured, anterior horn, $29\frac{1}{2}$ inches, posterior, $19\frac{1}{4}$ inches; but I was unable to purchase them in the owner's absence. The Northern Zambesi form seldom carries an anterior horn of over nineteen or twenty inches, the posterior being from six to nine or ten inches. I have been disappointed in not meeting with the square-mouthed rhino in the Mozambique Province, as I had expected to do, for there is no doubt that much of the country is suited to its habits; but I think it may be taken for granted that the Zambesi river is the extreme northern limit of its range. Wherever met with, the rhino always exhibits the same characteristics—marvellously developed powers of scent, quickness of hearing but poor eyesight, a morose and solitary disposition, a coarse and uncouth manner, great irascibility, unbounded curiosity, and singularly nervous excitability.

Rhino drink twice during the day, about an hour before sundown and at dawn, at which time they frequently wallow; their feeding-grounds, as a rule, lie at a considerable distance from their watering places. They are seldom seen moving about after 9 or 10 a.m. except in cloudy or wet weather, when I have seen them browsing throughout the day. They lie up in all sorts of places during the heat of the day, at times choosing dense thorny cover, at others the shade of some solitary tree, or a large rock on the open savannahs, and I have often put them up from their lair in ordinary grass-jungle in the blazing heat of noonday. They generally lie stern-on to the wind, and when disturbed run down wind

a short distance, then turn up wind; a wounded rhino may run in any direction at first, but will eventually go down wind, and continue to do so as long as he has any suspicion that he is being followed. They are excessively active in rough, rocky ground, going downhill at a tremendous rate, though but slowly up. I do not know how frequently the cows give birth, but the calves are born in the Mozambique Province during the rains, probably about two months earlier than in more southern regions.

BURCHELL'S ZEBRA (*Equus burchelli*).

Zebras occur throughout the regions under notice, but during the dry season are seldom met with in the interior of the Mozambique Province, migrating to the eastward for about five months of the year. Its habits are too well known to need description, but I may say a few words about its relation to other zebras. I am most thoroughly in accord with Sir H. H. Johnston's remarks* as to the fallacy of accepting *E. burchelli* as the type of the big zebras of the plains. He is an imperfectly marked beast, and throughout South-eastern Africa is rarely seen; in fact, he is by no means typical of the plain zebras of that portion of the continent. The so-called *E. burchelli chapmani* is unquestionably the most commonly met with, though I cannot concede that it has any greater claim to be considered a type—owing to its imperfections—than *E. burchelli*. Regarding *E. burchelli chapmani*, I am surprised at the evident lack of complete knowledge of the subject displayed by so many scientific and observant men. In the *Royal Natural History*, vol. ii. p. 504, I find it stated that in Chapman's variety the legs and tail "may both be striped, though the stripes never extend to the pasterns." Mr. H. A. Bryden in *Nature and Sport*, p. 173, writes:—"Cases often occur in which the legs are striped nearly down to the hoofs." Now I state without hesitation, having seen many thousands of these animals, (1) that throughout South-eastern Africa not one in a hundred agrees with the so-called type, *E. burchelli*, in having the tail and legs devoid of stripes; (2) that the var. *chapmani* is far more frequently met with; and (3) that these are frequently striped right down to and upon the pasterns. The amount of intermediate variation is great, and for the true type we must look for something more constant, and unquestionably the most, nay, the only typically perfect beast, is the beautiful Central African zebra, for which Sir H. H. Johnston suggests the appellation *Equus tigrinus*. The faintly duplicated stripes between the broader black ones, which invariably occur in *E. burchelli* and *burchelli chapmani*, are absent from this animal, the ground colour of whose hide is light fawn, and the stripes, which are jet black and bold, extend to the hoofs. I have not myself examined a sufficient number of skins to enable me to affirm that the stripings to the hoof are constant; such has been the case in all that I have examined, however, and Sir H. H. Johnston's remarks leave little doubt upon the matter.

* *British Central Africa*, by Sir H. H. JOHNSTON.