

EAST AFRICA AND ITS BIG GAME

*THE NARRATIVE OF A SPORTING TRIP FROM ZANZIBAR
TO THE BORDERS OF THE MASAI*

BY

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ROYAL HORSE GUARDS

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THOSE OF THE LATTER FROM PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR*

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Caga people who had been stealing the salt, to be found in great quantities, in their territory. H—— had been to witness their reception in the early part of the evening, and described how a bullock was led into the midst of the throng, followed by a Taveta elder, who took a mouthful of milk and spat over it; the chief of the Kahé people then did the same, after which another Taveta man half-killed the animal by a cut about six inches behind the head, and gashed it about the neck; then, after tying up the main arteries, the elders and Kahé people proceeded to suck the blood while the poor beast was still alive. He was so disgusted with this sight that he came away and did not witness the conclusion of the ceremony.

The following day was most eventful and lucky. Early in the morning a native brought in my field-glasses, which I had lost in the jungle the night before, and later on Chandi and the other men came in with the recovered boots. The former reported they had met lots of Masai on the road, but had kept out of their way. In the afternoon a man came in to report that B—— had killed a rhinoceros, which must have been a very tough beast, as he required twenty shots before giving in.

H—— and I stayed only two more days after this at Taveta. Our house making good progress and things getting ship-shape, we decided to encamp with thirty men at big Lanjora for a few days, and then to revisit Taveta before paying our respects to Mandara, chief of Moči, a Čhaga tribe inhabiting the southern

slopes of Kilima-njaro, of whose importance we had conceived a highly exaggerated idea from Mr. Johnston's book, which led us to suppose that it was essential to go and conciliate him before attempting the regular business of shooting.

thorns to keep out the wild beasts at night, or the Masai, in case they should put in an appearance, in the day-time. Lanjora is surrounded by more or less open plain on three sides, and on the south side towards Lake Jipé by thick bush. Our first night's rest was broken by an inquisitive rhinoceros, who poked his ugly nose over the hedge, and so frightened one man that he let off his rifle. We were also somewhat disturbed by lions growling round the camp until the "dawn of morn."

During the three days spent at Lanjora we each made a daily shooting trip in different directions, starting at 6 A.M., accompanied by five or six men to carry our rifles and bring home the meat killed, and returning to camp between 12 and 1 P.M., to avoid the excessive heat of the midday sun. We had very fair sport, and saw abundance of game, zebra, hartebeest, Granti, mpallah, oryx-beisa, ostriches, giraffe, and steinbock, but found all excessively wild and difficult to approach; the hartebeest and zebra were a great nuisance, as, when disturbed, they would gallop about wildly in every direction and move all the other game.

The soil in these parts is very light and of a bright red colour; it is studded with ant-heaps, which in some cases attain the height of eight and ten feet above the surface of the ground and are several yards in circumference. These ant-heaps, the tops of which are perforated with innumerable holes a few inches in diameter, assume most grotesque shapes; in some

and would not let me approach; so I had, in self-defence, though not without reluctance, to shoot it.

This introduction to rhino made me feel very satisfied with myself, and I confess to great elation as I regarded the larger carcass, which from a short distance looked like a mound of brown earth four to five feet in height. From it my men hewed off the fore-feet and horns, and then removed the head of the calf, whose sprouting horns proved it to be about two years old. The skin of the mother was in a bad condition, and covered with sores common to her kind during the dry season, but the horns were very fair specimens. Before shooting, I noticed several rhinoceros-birds perched on her back and head, and it was curious to witness their almost ludicrous efforts at balancing when she broke into a lumbering gallop. These birds, of a light-brown colour, are rather larger than thrushes, and feed upon the numerous parasites which infest the hides of all rhino, so they may be considered as welcome attendants.

I decided to send a fatigue party from Taveta the following day to bring in the meat; so, having seen the trophies securely lodged in a neighbouring tree, I continued my journey. Very soon I viewed a number of eland feeding slowly down a slope towards me, but they showed signs of having sighted me first and stopped short. Feeling sure that any advance would have to be made by me, I proceeded to stalk them, and after a slow and tedious crawl of about four hundred yards through the long coarse grass, managed to get

CHAPTER XII.

My first rhinoceros—Eland—Arrival of C.—A trip to Lake Jipé—Mpallah and water-buck—A good haul of fish—Return to Taveta.

THE day after leaving Moči, H—— returned with the caravan to Taveta, while I descended to the plain, intending to shoot my way leisurely back. Having crossed an open expanse clothed with thick dry grass, I saw a distant herd of eland, and at once began a careful stalk. During a short rest I glanced back and espied a fine rhinoceros cow with a half-grown calf coming down the hill in my direction, so at once giving up the eland and noting the line taken by the rhinos, I ran quickly back to intercept them. I happened to hit off the right place to a nicety, and managed to get up to a small bush just as they were passing by within fifty yards, and was in time to plant a solid bullet from my 577° rifle behind the shoulder of the cow. It evidently struck hard, as she stopped short, gave one snort, and then dashed off at a right angle. Uncertain whether she was mortally wounded or not, I gave her my second barrel; but the first had done its work, as after running at full speed for some two hundred yards she again stopped, gave one final totter, and fell dead. The half-grown calf, about the size of a small bullock, stood by her side, showing signs of fight

CHAPTER XIII.

Game abundant and various—The Useri and their chief—Shameful treachery of a slave-trader—A tough rhino—A capital morning's sport—*Rhinoceros tricornis*—A native scrimmage and feast-dance—Effective charge of a rhino calf.

WE made an early start next morning, and marched about fifteen miles north-east to within a short day's journey of Kimengelia, on the frontier of the Masai country, where we were warned to be careful not to go far from camp without an escort of at least twenty-five men. On this march C——, with a long shot, brought down a fair Granti, and we came across two rhinos. Having won the toss for the stalk, I had crawled up to within thirty yards, when the larger one, disturbed by the birds leaving his back and flying around his head, got up and looked about suspiciously. Fearing he would make off, and being unable to get a clear shot behind the shoulder from the position in which he was standing, I aimed just below his ear, and he fell over most ungracefully, while his companion bolted. I then cautiously approached; but on getting close, as the beast showed signs of returning life, I retired to the shelter of a bush about ten yards off and awaited results. After beating the ground with his great head and wriggling his body after the fashion of

a rabbit shot through the brain, he jumped up and made a furious attack on the bush under which he had been lying, but a second shot from my 577° rifle soon put him to rest for ever. Meanwhile the other rhino, unperceived by me, had trotted back to within eighty yards. C—— went after him, but began shooting at too long a range, as after each shot the beast, instead of running away, made a series of short forward dashes, shaking his head defiantly, as if he meant to charge something, but could not quite make up his mind what to go for. After the fifth shot he moved off slowly, crossing within a hundred and fifty yards off C—— and H——, who bombarded him with five more shots, none of which seemed to have any appreciable effect. The caravan then moved on, while I remained behind to take off the horns of my rhino, which, though thick, were not very long. During the operation a steinbock came feeding within three hundred yards of me, and allowed me to walk quietly up and obtain an excellent shot at a hundred yards.

The grassy plain through which we marched was simply crawling with hundreds of Granti, wildebeest, hartebeest, and zebra, the two last being singularly tame, watching us with idle curiosity, and never attempting to move before we got within fifty yards of them; then with a buck and a bound they started off, stopping every forty or fifty yards to turn and take another good look at us. Having sufficient meat, we did not attempt to molest any of these creatures.

Our new camp was picturesquely situated among

entire absence of clothing, the complete costume of the men being a liberal coating of clay and grease, and a scanty belt of untanned leather which held the inevitable knob-kerry and knife. They were mostly of medium size, active, and armed with small-headed spears of inferior workmanship, oblong hide shields, and short swords. Among the ladies I noticed a few who would have been well shaped, had they not ruined the contour of their arms by heavy coils of iron wire wound tightly round their flesh during childhood. A tiny petticoat, a few beads, with anklets and bracelets of wire, completed their visiting dress, and most were accompanied by some of the plumpest children we had hitherto had the pleasure of meeting. All appeared thoroughly bent on business and comparatively free from curiosity—a rather remarkable fact, as, up to our arrival, their part of the country had only been visited by three other white men.

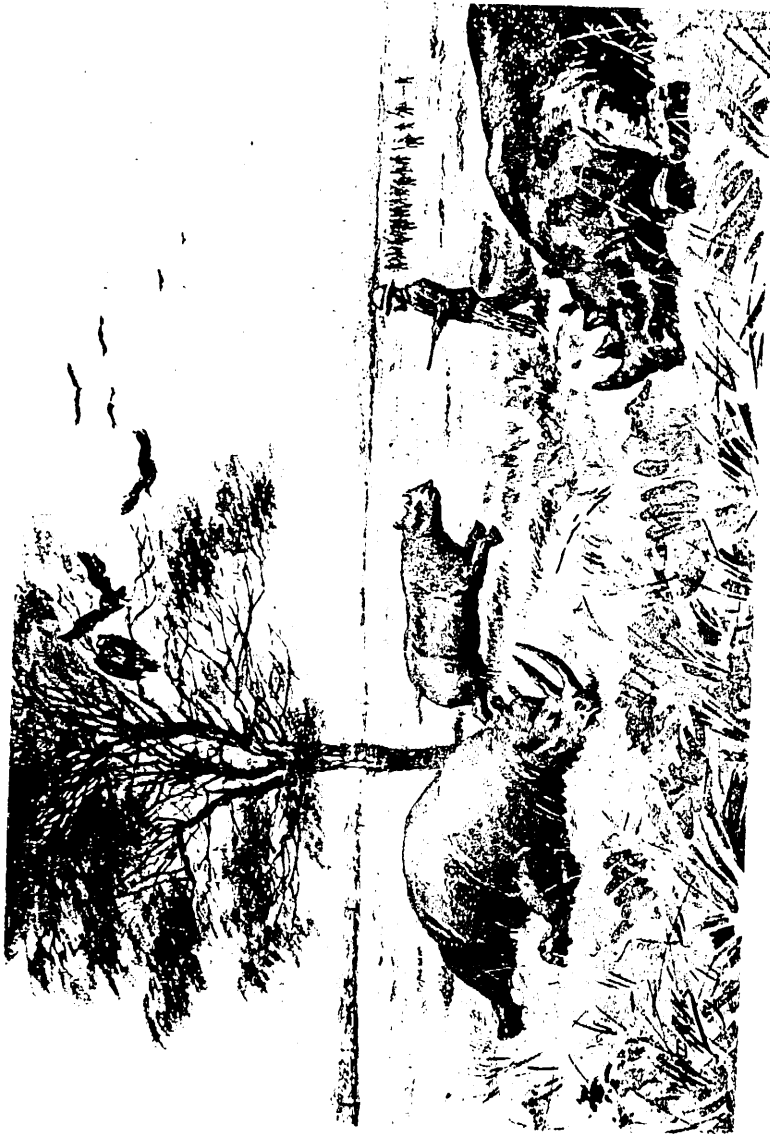
The whole of the eastern slopes, which extend for some forty miles, are, like the southern or Čaga slopes, inhabited to about five thousand feet above the sea-level, and present similar banana plantations and *shambas*: but beyond this point all is dense bush and forest. Before night the chief of Uscru sent down a present of one goat and ten loads of bananas, and in return we promised to send up a load of fancy-coloured cloth and our compliments. We decided not to pay him a visit, as Martin assured us we should be unable to get away if we did before some ten loads of cloth had been handed over, and Martin was by no means a bad judge. He

also told us a personal visit would entail delay, an additional reason for dispensing with the formality, as we were even more anxious to economise our time than our cloth.

During this day, which resulted in a bag of five rhino and one Granti, a curious sight was witnessed by B——. He had come upon two rhino and wounded one severely, whereupon the companion attacked it with great fury and finally knocked it over. The poor creature remained where it fell, with all four legs fighting the air, and B—— thought the *coup de grace* had been given in a way for which he was not responsible; but after a number of violent struggles it regained its feet, the simulated death-throes resulting from its having been cast and wedged between two small trees.

During the next day's sport the game had all the best of it. We started out in pairs, as the Masai were reported to be on their way to demand *hongo* (black-mail), and in strong force at Kimengelia, some four hours' march north of our camp. I only obtained one Granti, shot from the left shoulder, as my right was too bruised and painful from the effects of the double discharge of the previous day. B—— secured a rhino, but neither of us got within fair range of the game, as the ground was much disturbed by parties of natives visiting the numerous game-pits and cutting grass for their cattle. We saw zebra, hartebeest, wart-hog, giraffe, and some moderate rhinos, but all were more or less on the move.

During the night I had a rather sharp attack of



Rhino shooting a dutiful child.

minute, which seemed to me many, they were motionless, and then turned inquiringly towards each other. Seizing the first opportunity of a broadside shot, I bowled the cow over with a bullet behind her ear. The bull ran some twenty yards and then stood, until a shot from my second barrel took effect in his neck, and brought him also to the ground. Wishing to spare the half-grown one, I tried to drive him off; but at twenty yards he came for me, so I had to stop him with a bullet in the chest. Thinking he was done for, I reloaded and approached him, upon which he rose and again charged with a vengeance. I fired my first barrel without effect, but knocked him over with the second when he was within five yards of me. It was, perhaps, fortunate this shot dropped him, as, although I jumped aside after firing, I think it very doubtful whether my activity would have proved equal to his.

I now proceeded to examine my prizes. The cow proved a splendid beast with symmetrical horns measuring twenty-two and twenty-three inches. The bull was also a fine specimen, as well as an anatomical curiosity, for in addition to short anterior and posterior horns, he had developed a third horny excrescence far back, sufficiently distinct to entitle him to be considered as a unique example of the *Rhinoceros tricornis*.

The natives, who had led me to the rhinos, got up a row with some fresh arrivals attracted by the shots and the prospects of obtaining fresh meat. Loud yells, drawn knives, and brandished spears threatened an immediate scrimmage, which I was only just in time to prevent

had once caught sight of an alligator, but how it came there, seeing there is no apparent outlet, he could not explain. We walked round to the south side, and I took several photographs of the lake from different points; but, to my great regret, most of them have turned out badly, especially one, in which I included old Kibo with his white head poking out above a mass of clouds.

After leaving Lake Čala we had a hot march, of about four miles, before reaching the welcome outskirts of Taveta forest. Here we halted under a grand tree some two hundred feet in height, and measuring thirty-two feet in circumference, and, after a short rest, slowly wended our way through the forest until we reached our headquarters.

On the whole, I think we had every reason to be satisfied with the result of our fortnight's shooting-trip. Forty-three rhinos, besides wildebeest, hartebeest, Granti, mpallah, steinbock, oryx, striped and spotted hyæna, wart-hog, and silver-backed fox—a total of seventy-five head.

All the rhino we killed were of the black species with prehensile lips (*Rhinoceros bicornis*). They are in the habit of feeding in the bush during the night, and at about 10 A.M. seek the open plains, selecting a spot, generally a clay puddle shaded by a solitary bush, where they lie down to sleep during the heat of the day. At about 5 P.M. they wake up and move slowly to the bush; therefore the easiest times to spy them are between 9.30 and 11 A.M., and from 4 to 6 P.M.; at these hours they may be found standing still and

staring stupidly about them, or walking leisurely across the plain. I found them the dullest of all the wild beasts I encountered, free from natural vice, and by no means dangerous to any hunter who can keep his head cool. Their charge is easily avoided, even at close quarters, as, though they may come for you at a great pace, they are unable to turn quickly. I believe most of the stories of vicious charges through caravans are greatly exaggerated by the natives and porters, who are, according to my experience, terrified by the smallest rhino; and the majority of those graphically described vicious charges are, I feel convinced, due to the stupidity, and not to the viciousness, of the beast. Caravans a mile long, making, as they all do, a great din by singing and shouting, often pass close to a sleeping rhino. The beast, suddenly awakened by the uproar and having very indifferent visual powers, starts into an aimless headlong gallop; this probably carries him through the line of porters whom he scatters in different directions; but, having accomplished this feat, he shows no disposition to return to the attack unless molested. More than once I have passed a rhino and seen him come charging up-wind after me, out of mere curiosity, routing the gun-bearers right and left, and then, on getting close, sheering off and galloping out of sight as hard as he could go—a clear proof to me of the absence of any vicious intent. On the other hand, I have conversed with several men of considerable experience in rhino-shooting, who assure me they have seen the same species of rhino charge most viciously.

and also return to the charge. One friend instanced a personal uncomfortable adventure in which he was cheived by a rhino for nearly half-an-hour, and only just managed to escape. The conclusion I therefore arrive at is, that at certain seasons, like many other wild animals, including our Scotch red-deer, they are in that condition of "must" which renders them, for the time, vicious and vindictive, their normal condition being the exact opposite.

Most of the men got royally drunk on our return to Taveta, and made night hideous by howling to the strum of their tomtoms; but this, we knew, was an invariable rule whenever they came into headquarters, and a licence with which any interference, on our part, would have been unwise.

CHAPTER XV.

Taveta—Attack on a Swahili caravan—The loss of a wife—Arrival of the Bishop of Mombasa—Domestic troubles—The start for Mount Meru—Abundance of large game—B——'s narrow escape—Kahé forest—The Wa-kahé—Mutinous porters—Short rations—The Mount Meru trip abandoned on account of the Masai—A ludicrous Masai scare—The Sogonoi mountains.

WHEN we paraded our men, the morning after returning to Taveta, to take their rifles into store, half of them asked to be allowed to return to the coast as they declared the work was too hard. They had certainly had a rough time of it, as, nearly every day, we each requisitioned a following fifteen men, in order to get home the meat we shot.

The Swahili porter is an excellent hard-working fellow on a march, and will carry his load day after day for any distance without grumbling; but when once a journey is over and you are settled in a camp, no matter for how long, he expects to have nothing to do beyond making a *boma*, and, if the weather is wet, building his own grass hut: this accomplished, he is only prepared to idle about as a gentleman at large, and to eat, sleep, dance, and sing. Such a programme being quite unsuited to our requirements (for we did not want to travel any very long distances), we explained to them that they must work for us in camp,

some buffalo he was after, and he wanted to know if we could not come to some arrangement which would avoid any such clashing for the future. Of course, we were extremely sorry for the misadventure, and recognising his prior right to the shooting, in that district, wrote back word that we would strike our tents next day.

Accordingly the following morning we moved back to our last camp, which was quite clear of Jackson's beat. The others tried to shoot on the way, but as I was anxious to peg out my lion-skin as soon as I could, I marched with the caravan, and by so doing had a great piece of luck. Having reached the junction of the Weri-weri and Kikavo rivers, I warned Martin I was going on ahead on the chance of getting a water-buck, and I had scarcely proceeded a hundred yards when I discovered a small herd of buffalo in a distant piece of bush. Of course, I began to stalk them, but before I had approached to within eighty yards, a splendid rhino cow crossed the line. Thinking this was clearly "a bird in hand," for which I might well forsake "the birds in the bush," I sent a bullet clean through the heart, and she fell dead.

The buffalo, strange to say, on hearing the rifle-report, and not knowing exactly where it came from, came charging down in a body straight on me instead of making off. I jumped to one side and got behind a small tree, and as they passed exactly over the ground on which I had been standing but a second

before, I gave the leading bull a shot from the other barrel of my rifle; he staggered on some forty yards and then fell, but quickly recovering himself, moved off slowly into the covert. It was easy enough to take up the blood-tracks, so we followed him, for some little distance, until he suddenly sprang up, from under a very thick bush about fifteen yards off, and, confronting us for one second, charged straight down. I did not give him much time, for before he had come three yards I shot him fair in the chest with the eight-bore, and knocked him over stone dead. This was perhaps just as well, for, had I failed to bring him down, I feel convinced he would have had me, or one of my gun-bearers, as there was nothing like a substantial tree within thirty yards of us. He proved a capital bull, with horns measuring thirty-nine and a quarter inches at the widest part.

We then went to look for the rhino, and found her lying in such a natural position, that my men would not believe she was dead, and followed me at a respectful distance while I went up to her. She had, quite recently, been terribly mangled on the flank and quarters by a lion, and great pieces of flesh had been bitten or torn out. I was much surprised at this, and, without the evidence of my own eyes, should have been disinclined to believe that any lion would have thought it worth his while to attack so tough a monster. To bring down a rhino and a buffalo with a right and left, is, I believe, something unique in the history of sport.

APPENDIX I.

LIST OF FAUNA FOUND CHIEFLY IN THE PLAINS ROUND KILIMA-NJARO.

COMPILED BY H. C. V. HUNTER.

LION. *Felis leo* (Swahili, Simba). Common to the open plains fringed with bush and near belts of bush by rivers and swamps. They were generally seen in pairs or troops of four to seven. During our last expedition G— saw ten together. Though heard round the camp nearly every night, they were not often met with. Zebra and buffalo seemed to be their favourite prey.

LEOPARD. *Felis pardus* (Swahili, Chui). Common on the mountain up to about 6000 feet elevation, and in the forests of Taveta and Kahé. They live principally round the villages, killing many goats. I have noticed in Africa that the leopard nearly always puts the remains of his kill up a tree, probably to preserve it from hyenas. On one occasion I saw the skeleton of a fine male lesser kudu hanging from a forked branch, and we have several times seen a leopard descend from a tree. They are extremely bold. One, who had for several days been carrying off undried heads, &c., which were stored in a shed adjoining our house in Taveta, I caught in a lion-trap, during dinner, set within fifteen yards of our table.

FELIS SERVAL. Several times seen and killed in the grassy plains at the foot of the mountain. From Mandara, on the mountain at about 5000 feet, I obtained a melanism of this species, killed by the Wa-čaga. Here melanotic varieties of the serval must be often met with, since they have the name "Nzudu" for it. In the Natural History Museum there is also another

black skin brought from South Africa by Mr. Selous; in his specimen the spots are easily distinguishable in a strong light.

CHEETAH. *Cynaelurus venator*. One was shot by Mr. Jackson near Kahé, only one other was, I believe, met with.

VIVERRA CIVETTA. Seen in Taveta.

GENETTA TIGRINA. Very often caught in traps in Taveta, where it used to make great havoc with the poultry.

THE SPOTTED HYÆNA. *Hyæna crocuta* (Swahili, Fisi). Very common everywhere on the plains, but not extending far up the mountain.

THE STRIPED HYÆNA. *Hyæna striata*. Very seldom seen. One was shot on the plains.

CANIS LATERALIS. Common on the plains.

WILD DOG. (Swahili, Mbwa Mwitù.) Two large packs were twice seen on the plains near Useri, and we once met with them near Maungu on the march down to the coast.

Another small dark-coloured fox is often seen on the plains, generally five or six being together.

HARE. *Lepus capensis* (Swahili, Sungora). Often seen and killed on the plains.

HYRAX BRUCEI (Kičaga, name Kivuburu). Very common in the forest on Kilima-njaro at high elevation. They live in holes in the trees, and are very noisy at night. The Wa-čaga, who catch many of them alive, value their skins very much, sewing several together and making a handsome cloak.

ELEPHANT. *Elephas Africannus* (Swahili, Tembo—more often, Ndovù). In the dry season the elephants live in the thick damp forest of Kilima-njaro from 6000 to 9000 feet. Above this height we never observed any tracks. In the rainy season they descend the mountain, and are then fairly numerous in the thick bush under Sina's or Mandara's, but are then much hunted by the Wa-ramba, who at this season come all the way from U-rambani to hunt, Mandara yearly employing some to hunt for him. They use poisoned arrows. In this bush the sportsman must keep a sharp look-out for elephant pitfalls, which are very numerous and ingeniously concealed;

but from what I could hear, very few elephants come to grief in them. Elephants in the wet season wander along the banks of the Kikavo and Weri-weri rivers to the Sogonoi hills, and to the bush around Lake Jipé. At all seasons of the year there is generally a herd in the Kahé forest.

RHINOCEROS BICORNIS (Swahili, Kifaru). The rhinoceros is particularly common in the plains to the east and north-east of Kilima-njaro, but is also found nearly everywhere. In one day's march we once counted sixteen. They feed principally in the bush on twigs, and lie out during the day on the open plains. They are usually found singly or in a family, consisting of a full-grown bull and cow with a half-grown calf. Their sight is not good, but they have great powers of smell. Although the people of Useri said they did much damage to their banana plantations on the mountain, we never saw their tracks at that elevation.

Every diversity in size and shape of horns is met with, the back horn often being longer than the front one. The horns of the best bull killed measured, front horn 29½ inches, back horn 19 inches; best cow, front horn 32 inches, back horn 21 inches.

BURCHELL'S ZEBRA. *Equus Burchelli* (Swahili, Punda Milia). Very common everywhere on the plains in immense herds, and often seen in the thin thorny bush.

HIPPOTAMUS. *Hippopotamus amphibius* (Swahili, Kiboko). There are several schools, in Lake Jipé, and some are generally found in every large swamp. One was killed by the W'Arusha with spears in the Kikavo river after an exciting hunt. At night they often travel three or four miles to feed.

WART-HOG. *Phacocærus* (Swahili, Bango or Nguruwe). Common everywhere on the plains, principally in the thin thorny bush. Great damage is done by pigs to the Indian-corn crops in Taveta. Whether this is done by a bush-pig or the wart-hog I was unable to ascertain, though Mr. Johnston states that wart-hogs are found on Kilima-njaro up to 8000 feet. We never observed them or saw any tracks of them.

BUFFALO. *Bubalus caffer* (Swahili, Mbogo, and on the coast,

Nyati). The buffalo is very common on the plains, but we ourselves never observed it or saw tracks of it on the mountain; but Dr. Abbott, who spent many months there, told me that he had seen fresh tracks of it at about 10,000 feet. They are generally found in immense herds; but the old bulls are more often found by themselves or in two and threes. During the heat of the day they retire to the thick bush, feeding on the plain in the early morning and evening. The horns generally appear to be much finer than those of the South African buffalo.

GIRAFFE. *Giraffa camelopardus* (Swahili, Twigga). Very common round Taveta, and generally met with everywhere in the thin bush.

ELAND. *Orcas canna* (Swahili, Mpofu). The eland is rather local; there are a fair number to the south of the mountain, and also on the plains to the south of Lake Jipé; perhaps they are most numerous to the north-east of the mountain. They travel great distances from water. Both males and females are all more or less striped. The old males are readily distinguished by their dark slaty-blue colour, and are generally found by themselves. The horns of a bull average about twenty-five inches in length, those of a cow twenty-six inches, the latter being much thinner.

KUDU. *Strepsiceros kudu*. The large kudu was only seen by us on two or three occasions on the Useri river, and was never shot. Mr. Johnston states that it is by no means rare on the mountain, and that it ranges up to 14,000 feet, but though we on several different occasions camped at 9000 feet, ascending to over 14,000 feet, and explored the slopes on the south side in every direction, we never met it. At over 14,000 feet I saw old tracks of a large antelope, and picked up at 9000 feet, by the side of an old disused game-pit, the crumbling core of an old horn, which I took to be that of a kudu. However, it must be very rare, if it exists at all on the mountain, and as Mr. Johnston also states that sable antelope are plentiful, of which species there are certainly none in those parts, it is very possible he may have been again mistaken as regards the kudu.