



An Afrikaner's Journal

By JOHN A. M. LETHBRIDGE

VIII.—Lion and Rhino in German East Africa—Wandering Boers

IN 1907 I made my first trip to German East Africa, intending to have a good look over the country and if possible have some shooting. This can be had there at less expense and with as good results as anywhere in Africa, as far as I know. The license costs much less than in British East Africa and the restrictions are much less severe.

You may kill as many elephants as you wish to pay licenses for, each of which costs only 100 rupees or, if you prefer, you may give the ground tusk—the tusk which is on the side of the animal which rests on the ground—instead of paying your rupees and you may continue killing as long as you comply with this rule. In the matter of other game you are not restricted in any way. If one is able to speak the language, that is of course a great help, but this is not necessary. The German authorities will be found most willing to assist in every way.

I landed at Dar-es-Salaam and soon got my small outfit together without the least trouble, but then I speak German like a native and naturally this made things easier for me.

For head boy I had a Somali, which may have been a mistake, as Swahilis understand the natives here better and are just as plucky in a tight corner; at least so people say who have employed them. The Somali is always inclined to be a trifle overbearing with the porters and a bit cheeky with his master, and unless this is at once checked, is bound to lead to trouble.

I decided to make my way as best I could to Mount Kilimanjaro, which is practically on the boundary line between German East and British East Africa, intending to cross the line into British territory and to work my way to Nairobi, where I should outfit again for my shoot in that country and Uganda.

After I had been out for a few days, game was to be found everywhere and in much greater numbers than in Rhodesia. The hartebeeste is of a different species, his horns turning in more and being longer. In these parts they are called kongoni and, as in British East Africa, are the most abundant, as in my opinion they are the ugliest of all antelope. The country was hilly and covered with a growth of small timber, but not too thickly, and it was easy to see well ahead and to get within shot of game, which was very far from being wild. I kept steadily

on for some days, doing about ten miles a day which, with porters, is about the average distance in that country. I was able to kill with ease, what was required to keep us all in meat, zebra, wildebeeste and hartebeeste being everywhere. Our only difficulty was for water. It was not scarce, but on the other hand it was



A GOOD RHINO.

by no means abundant. After getting well away, everything changed and we came to great rolling plains, and then again to hills with some timber, but a country entirely different from any I had been accustomed to hunt in. I found having no horse to ride a great handicap and determined to purchase one at the very first opportunity, but that in all probability would not be before reaching Nairobi, as in this country horses are few and far between. I had with me a double-barreled hammerless .303 rifle and a better weapon I never wish to use. It came

up like a gun and for running shots I found it preferable to a magazine rifle. For a big rifle I had my old .450-400 double hammerless.

My first real excitement came after we had been out about three weeks. I was proceeding up a gully, trying to get a kongoni for the camp, and as the bush was fairly thick I was keeping to a game path as far as I was able, when suddenly I came right on a rhino. Luckily the wind was in my direction, but he had evidently heard me and was trying his best to locate me. I had only my .303, which was loaded with soft nose bullets. Foolishly I had no solids with me. Now, a soft-nosed bullet with a rhino is about as much use as buckshot, and the only thing to do was to get out of it as quickly as possible, which I tried to do with haste, but he heard me and down he charged straight in my direction. I ran some yards faster than I have ever done in my life, and coming to another gully, which was nothing much more than a washout, scrambled up that and into thicker bush, and there I remained for over an hour. At last I ventured out and finding the coast clear, made my way back to camp as fast as I could, fearing every moment lest he should follow. When I reached camp I made a vow never to go out without some cartridges with solid bullets, and when in a country where one was likely to find rhino always to have my gun bearer with me carrying my heavy rifle. But then you find rhino everywhere. The next morning I started out with Ali and took the same direction in the hopes of meeting my friend of the night before. This time I was prepared, but although we hunted all day long we did not see him.

The following day I had better luck. I had been out for several hours and as the sun was very hot was on the point of returning to camp, when Ali pointed out two rhino about a quarter of a mile away. They were standing on the side of a small hill, apparently doing nothing but basking in the sun. There was no wind to speak of and to get up to them was easy. I did not care to approach nearer than about fifty yards and there was no necessity for it, as they were in plain sight with nothing in the way. Picking out the one with the longest horn, which stood broadside on and nearest to me, I aimed at his neck, shooting with my .303, using solid bullets. At the shot he moved forward a few steps and I gave him the second barrel behind the shoulder, when he rolled over. The second rhino stood still for a moment and then dashed off into some bush.

For some minutes we were very careful, so as not to be taken unawares by the other rhino, but he never returned. Going up to our fallen beast I was glad to find he was a very good male and with fair horns—quite satisfactory for my first rhino in Eastern Africa. I soon had

the boys hard at work cutting out strips of his hide to be manufactured into kibokos at a future date. The birds had already spotted the kill and when we left the carcass they descended and started making short work of it.

Two nights later we had lions round the camp. They were not grunting, but roared occasionally. I have always understood from people who ought to know that a lion roars when he has fed and grunts when he is hungry. However this may be, these lions did not come very close, although I noticed that the boys kept up large fires, evidently not caring to run any risks. The next morning we hunted, or rather I made the boys beat out all the surrounding reed beds, but without success. For a few minutes there was great excitement. In one we had come almost to the end of it, and by the movement of the reeds could see that there was game of some kind there. I thought of course that they were lions, when out went two large pigs on the far side. They were altogether too quick for me and I did not get a shot.

The lions were around again that night and the next day we did the same thing. Where they laid up during the heat of the day was an enigma which was solved in rather a sudden manner the following day. I had got the porters strung out and well started and went on ahead, as I always do on the march, in order to get first sight of anything worth seeing. On reaching a rise and looking down on the flat, I saw there a bunch of zebra and kongoni all bunched up as if startled, and looking in my direction. I realized that this could be caused only by a lion or a leopard, as they take very little notice of hyenas. In a moment I saw the cause of their fright—a lion and a lioness leisurely walking along not more than 150 yards from me. They saw me as quickly as I did them and were off in a flash, but not before I had a snap at the lion, which was answered by an angry growl, but nothing more, and the pair gaining the shelter of some long grass were lost to view. On getting to where I had last seen them I found a small blood spoor, but very faint, and decided that it was not worth while to follow up a wounded lion in long grass where the odds are in his favor. I suggested that the porters put down their loads and make a drive, but this they declined to do. I could not blame them. In cases like this really good dogs might be of use, but it is hard to be sure.

It was ten days afterward that I got my first lion in that part of Africa and then he stalked out of a patch of reeds right in front of me, giving me an easy shot, and in a part of the country where I never expected lions to be. I had been a long way with Ali, had killed a very good eland hull and we were hurrying back to camp to get the boys to carry in the meat before dark. There was a watercourse which was dry in places and in others were deep pools surrounded by reeds. We were following this down on our way when I saw an animal, which I took to be a pig, disappear in a bunch of reeds half a mile off. I thought no more about it until, as we were going past the spot, out came a lion. On seeing us he stopped long enough to enable me to take aim at his shoulder. He was barely fifty yards off. My first shot knocked him down and I finished him with a second in the head. His mane was magnificent, almost black, and his skin was in the

pink of condition; in fact, he was as good as I have ever seen, but not very large. I have seen many larger, but none whose skin as a trophy was in better condition. We set to work and skinned him ourselves with the result that when we got back to camp it was too late to send out the boys for the eland meat, and the next day there was not a vestige of it left. Hyenas and other beasts had polished off everything. We did not move camp, as I was determined to take no chances on curing the lion skin, and took great pains in having it properly pegged out and dried. Here there were great numbers of those very graceful little antelope or gazelle, *Grantii* and *Thomsoni*, commonly called Tommies. These I had never met with before. They carry very pretty little heads which look especially well when mounted.

A few days after this we met with three Dutch families who were trekking up to the line to cross over to British East Africa. We had a long talk and they told me that they did not like the German laws. They had wandered north all the way from the Transvaal in their wagons, taking years for the journey. They are, indeed, a marvelous race. The Dutch are great hunters, but are a bit inclined to slaughter. I heard afterward that the game ranger met this party at Kilimanjaro and escorted them through the reserve, perhaps fearing lest when they reached the game reserve their natural instincts would perhaps cause them to kill where it is strictly against the law to do so.

As we marched I came across plenty of ostriches, but refrained from shooting them, as I saw no sport in it. There is a great opening in this country, as in British East Africa, for ostrich farming. It pays well in Cape Colony; why should it not do so in these countries where there is land enough and the birds are indigenous? People are usually ready to go into any farming except that to which the country is most suited. Since I left I hear that several ostrich farms have been started and that at present they seem to be doing well.

Kilimanjaro was now in sight, and what a magnificent spectacle it is with its everlasting snow cap. I do not really know whether it is higher than Ruwenzori or not, but Kilimanjaro is 19,000 feet above sea level. On it are some very heavy and large forests where can be killed practically every kind of game. One of the porters told me that there were still many elephants there and so I made my camp with the

intention of hunting for at least a week. Three days passed before we struck elephant spoor pretty high up the mountain. It was fresh and next day I moved my camp higher up, so as to give me more time and chance to hunt, and I was glad enough that I had done so, for I struck the spoor of a herd the next day. Ali and I had started at daylight and had found fresh sign which we followed north. All that day we stuck to it, but never an elephant did we see, and the following day the same thing happened, and as they were now a long way ahead of us we gave it up in disgust. The next day I shot my second rhino. He was alone, and getting up within twenty-five yards of him. I killed him with my first shot. We were now very near the British line, and not wishing to cross over for a few days, I turned south once more.

For one thing East Africa must be given credit; snakes are not numerous, as they are in the South, at least I never have seen many. There are pythons, but they do not appear to be dangerous. I shall never forget how, down in South Africa during the war, I once awoke and found a black mwamba in bed with me. This snake is absolutely deadly. It frightened me so that after the whole thing was over I went out and was sick. Fortunately I was quite ignorant of the fact that it was under the blankets with me and rolled out unconcernedly. Had I known it was there, in all probability it would have struck me.

Here I shot an exceedingly good wildebeeste bull, but secured him only after a long chase. My first shot broke his leg and he led me a dance before I finally got him. I hate to wound an animal and to be unable to bag him. Sometimes it cannot be helped, but one certainly should not give up the pursuit as long as there is a chance of finishing the poor brute off.

I met another Dutchman who was bewailing the loss of an ox that had been killed the previous night by lions. He also was on his way to British East Africa and had started from the Transvaal and been two and a half years on the journey. His family was with him and one child was born on the trip. After a long talk I decided to go on with him and made plans to start in two days. His wife—poor woman—told me that she had suffered a good deal from fever, and in spite of heavy doses of quinine, it kept recurring. She had even run out of the drug. From my little medicine chest I was able to give her what she needed.

Camp-Fire Tales.—II.

By FRED L. BALLARD

MANY years ago we were encamped on Branch Pond in Sunderland, a region inhabited principally by wild animals, in the Green Mountains in the southern part of Vermont. We were on a hunting trip and ready for anything that promised sport. When Lincoln and myself returned to camp one night in winter, we found the remainder of the party considerably excited. About sunset they had

come across the tracks of a bear, and a search had disclosed a den nearby, from which he had come apparently to make an observation of the weather and had then returned. Not having the tools to dig him out, they had filled the entrance to the cave with trunks of dead balsams, thrust in endwise, and proposed in the morning to unearth him.

"If you want that particular bear very bad,"