'TWIXT SIRDAR & MENELIK

AN ACCOUNT OF A YEAR'S EXPEDITION FROM ZEILA TO CAIRO THROUGH UNKNOWN ABYSSINIA

BY THE LATE

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18TH HUSSARS

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poor Gallas of these parts, some of whom—almost starving and naked—were always eagerly waiting to pounce down upon any tiny morsel of food that might perchance be left behind in our deserted camps.

At this period we had reached the limit where dollars could be used, and all transactions had, therefore, to be carried out by exchange of goods. I had received an invitation to pay a visit to Queen Mishery, whose husband, a short time ago, had been king of all the Gallas; but interesting as this visit would have been, I had to forego it, as she dwelt on a lofty hill somewhat off our route, and several of the animals were already beginning to feel the strain of so much climbing. On reaching a place called Busa in Gamo, the centre of a big market, Fitarauri Imani's soldiers returned to their post, and a fresh force was requisitioned for me, by order of the Shum, Gami, and Tawaz, the principal military official. These men were to accompany me nominally as far as the river Womo or Omo. The road beyond Busa continued to run over the hills, in a direction too much to the eastward to suit me, so I explained to the officials that I intended leaving the mountains, and descending to the plains, where I could see good country stretching away in the direction I wished to go. They maintained there was no other way excepting the one over the hills; but I knew that their sole reason for this statement lay in the fact that they had never attempted any other route. Still thinking to dissuade me from my purpose, they argued that, in any case,

the road I wanted to follow was only a track made by elephants, who roamed over the plains. "That is excellent," I replied; "where an elephant can walk, a mule can go." So they laughed and gave way.

The two hours' march down the hills would certainly have been a trying one had I not organized a small pioneer corps, armed with axes and stout poles. Taking the lead myself, I set out with them, in advance of the caravan. By this arrangement, we managed to cut down trees, and remove obstructing rocks, without causing any delay or inconvenience to the caravan. At the foot of the hills we travelled through a primæval forest abounding with tracks of elephants and rhinoceros. My caravan, by this time, might almost have been called an imposing one, for, in addition to my sixty animals and forty odd men, there were quite two hundred Gallas, laden with supplies for us, a flock of sheep, and nearly thirty head of cattle, as well as the fifty soldiers, many of whom were mounted, and their large crowd of Galla bearers. At sunset, three separate camps were formed, when the flickering of innumerable little fires and the indistinct murmuring of so many voices alone disturbed the silence of the night. Most of my Galla bearers wore no clothing at all; muscular, big-limbed fellows as they were, they scarcely ate enough to keep a cat alive.

At first we found the plains unpleasantly hot after the cool hills. After marching across them for two days, it was agreed that the Gallas should return home again, owing to the uncertain attitude of the

tribes in front of us. On the eve of their departure, I sent them a sack of flour, and they, poor fellows, unaccustomed to such treatment, celebrated the occasion by singing loud and long into the night.

After their departure, our next march brought us to an enchanting grassy valley which disappeared among the hills. Close by our camp flowed a clear stream, plentifully stocked with excellent fish, and along the banks grew delightfully shady trees. The neighbouring forest provided a happy home for koodoo, buffalo, zebras, and elephants, as well as vast quantities of guinea-fowl and partridges. From this point, the soldiers wanted to take me by a long, circuitous route over the spurs of the hills, instead of straight across the plains, maintaining that there were no other roads, and that even if there were, we should find no grass or water on the plains. Knowing quite well the hatred Abyssinians have of leaving their hills, and being, moreover, certain that the stream by whose banks we had camped flowed into the valley, I told them that I intended spying out the land for myself, and with that object made a trip to a certain hill some miles distant, from the top of which I could distinctly see green grass and water in the direction of Hammer Koki, whither we were bound. On hearing this, the soldiers, as a last resort, said they knew the waters to be saltish ; but as I was well aware they had never been there to see, I replied that that would suit me admirably, as many of the animals just at that time were much in need of salt. We therefore marched across the plain to the broad shallow flowing water I had seen.

This river flows into Lake Stefanie, or, more properly speaking, Lake Chouwaha, for that is the name by which it is locally known.

Curiously enough, we came upon a dead elephant not very far from the river. It was in a kneeling position, and, to judge from its appearance, it had evidently only quite recently died a natural death. The skin was entire, and a great deal of the flesh still remained. The soldiers said it had been killed by lions, though they could point to no sign proving that such was the case.

Situated west of us, there was a valley bounded by the Hammer Koki range of hills inhabited by certain Gallas who refuse to acknowledge Menelik as king. I took a party of four men to spend a day shooting in the valley, and we soon discovered perfectly fresh tracks of elephants and rhinoceros. As we were about to follow them, we were surprised to hear continual firing from the direction of our camp. Being unable to understand what had happened, we abandoned our shooting, and hastened back with all speed, half expecting to find fighting in progress. Judge of my thorough disgust when I learnt that a large hunting party of Abyssinians, taking advantage of my presence in the valley, had followed in our wake, bent upon killing elephants.

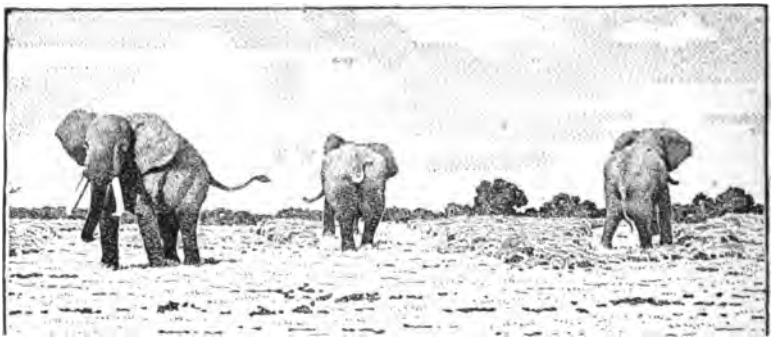
The Abyssinian method of exterminating these fine brutes is quite opposed to our ideas of sport, for from a safe distance an entire party fifty or a hundred strong pepper the victims with volleys, and sometimes meet with success. An Abyssinian who has killed an elephant is looked upon

in the country as a man of some parts. Menelik himself on one occasion shot one, and there were rejoicings in consequence. I was told that he fired the first shot, and then three hundred men fired the second. We must hope that the second was altogether superfluous, and that the first had done its work well. I was naturally annoyed with the people who had thus spoilt our morning shoot, and having quieted them for the remainder of the day, sallied forth a second time. Whilst pursuing elephant tracks, I saw a rhinoceros quietly walk into a thicket unaware of our presence. I had no difficulty in coming up to him, and then fired both barrels at him from a distance of ten yards. With an angry snort, he rushed straight at me like a thunder-bolt. In an instant I had stepped aside, and then saw the heavy monster go thundering on. We had no time left to come up to our elephants, but we saw a giraffe, some hartebeests, oryx, and other game.

We travelled to the foot of the Hammer Koki hills, where dried-up thorn bush, with rocks and flints, predominated. At this spot the mule I was riding, the gift of Duri, without warning, took fright and dashed off at full speed as straight as an arrow. Luckily he ran into the middle of a dense thorn bush, and considering the rocks and trees we so nearly encountered on our mad career, let me off lightly, with a severe scratching.

The independent Gallas who dwelt here, though possessing a few sheep, are exceedingly poor. During the rains they rear a little crop, but only

sufficient to last them for a very few months. In order to supplement this scanty fare, they move down to the riverside and catch fish, besides collecting certain eatable grasses that grow on the banks. Formerly, they were the owners of many head of cattle, but now all have been raided by the Abyssinians. At nightfall they brought for our animals grass which they had cut from some distance off, and in return for their trouble I presented them with cloth, much to the disgust of the Habesha soldiers, who, acting up to their traditional habits, had taken advantage of the strength of our combined force, and seized some sheep from the harmless natives. I was very angry with them, and protested against such cowardly behaviour, telling them that when news of their actions reached the ears of Janhoi, he would put the blame on my shoulders, and that I, on my part, would send him a letter, explaining how the robbery was committed by his own soldiers against my wishes. Once more I warned them that if they wanted to loot they must leave me at once, and do it alone, for I knew quite well they dared not have done so by themselves. They agreed that it was always the custom of the Habesha to loot the Gallas of these parts; but I merely repeated what I had already said, and left them to think over my words. The result was, at any rate, satisfactory, for they forthwith returned the sheep.



CHAPTER XIX

EXPERIENCES WITH THE LAKE TRIBES

The camp at Lake Rudolf—A curious hartebeest—Side excursions—An uncomfortable night—An exciting swim—We provision our camp from across the river—An elephant charge—A deserted Shangkalla—A good bag—Fever and anthrax—New guides.

THIS was indeed a lovely camp, for there were a few shady trees, and the clean, short grass sloped down to a border of pure white sand, over which broke the blue waves of the fresh-water lake, and sometimes, when the wind blew from the west, these equalled the power and noise of sea billows. Along the edge were duck and geese, the golden-crested crane, and an occasional crocodile or hippopotamus. From our camp we could view the country for many miles around, and, with glasses, easily distinguish the various herd of antelope, the solitary rhinoceros, and other game. A fresh breeze would blow throughout the day and night, so that we were always cool and free from the annoyance of mosquitoes and other pests. Amongst the variety of

game at this camp, I saw a snow-white hartebeest. To all intents and purposes he resembled every other hartebeest, excepting in his colour, which was pure white. I made several attempts at shooting this remarkable animal, but he always seemed to be protected on both flanks by another hartebeest of the ordinary type. He seemed to be well aware that he was an uncommonly rare specimen, and to have resolved on that account to expose himself to no danger, and, as far as I was concerned, was most annoyingly successful, for whenever I shot his guardians, others replaced them. I believe the only way of securing this trophy would have been to shoot the entire herd.

This camp was several miles south of the river Womo or Omo, as it is called, at its junction with the water of the lake itself, and as the animals were no longer suffering from anthrax, and most of the men needed a rest, I considered the present spot suitable and healthy enough for a lengthened stay; so leaving the majority of the men under the care of Shahzad Mir, I equipped a small caravan consisting of a dozen men, my Galla guide Kulo, and nine mules, and set out northwards to learn for myself whether or not the river Womo flowed into the lake or took a more westerly course. There had been some controversy amongst those interested in the geography of these parts as to the true course of this river, though, personally, I held the testimony afforded by an experienced and scientific traveller like Dr. Donaldson Smith to be sufficiently convincing; but as there appeared to be still doubt

hanging over the subject, I felt there would be no harm done by merely verifying previous information. Besides, I had gathered from the same traveller that there were certain natives dwelling on the banks of the river who cultivated dhura, and I was anxious, if possible, to buy grain from them, and replenish my own supply, that we might make a fresh start, and feel ourselves independent of any extraneous aid for at least three months more.

Half of my party consisted of Christians, and the other half of Mohammedans, and at this early period of our journey, when food was plentiful, both parties were firm in their resolve to abstain from eating meat which had not been hallaled * by one of their own belief. Thus, as we marched northwards along the edge of the lake, I found it necessary to shoot a hartebeest for each section, from the immense herds that crossed our path on their way to and from drinking, and this made all thoroughly happy. For our first night's camp we selected a piece of rising ground lying about half a mile from the lake, where the remains of some huts were still standing. Here we had anticipated a good night, free from the buzz and bite of mosquitoes, but our hopes were sorely shattered, for not only were we pestered by legions upon legions of most venomous mosquitoes, but we were also completely drenched to the bone by a severe storm of rain and thunder. When morning broke, therefore, and we started on our northward course, we felt anything but refreshed. We passed more deserted karias and came upon

* *I.e.* killed by cutting the throat.

tracks of elephants and rhinoceroses along the jungle and high grass that bordered the lake, and as we proceeded up the banks of the river Womo we saw a few natives, who, in spite of Kulo's calls, fled at once, as though their lives were in jeopardy. As it was now about midday, I camped where we stood, on the very spot that Bottego had formerly camped in. It was almost opposite the village known as Murle on the further bank. The country south of Murle is called Guma. I fancy the villagers used to live on the left bank, but shifted across to avoid the Habesha raiding parties.

As soon as the sun began to set, I took four men and climbed down the steep banks to the edge of the water. It was all very well for our friendly savages on the other bank to tell us to come over to them, but when we noticed that every boat had been taken over to their own banks, and no one would bring them across to us, their simple instructions were not so easy of execution. These boats consisted merely of hollowed-out trunks of trees, and were about twelve feet long and of great weight, and were worked by means of a very long pole. The question was, how to get hold of one. "Well, Mohamed," I said, turning to my Somali, "if you don't care to fetch one of these boats, I'll do it." In a moment this ever ready and plucky Somali had stripped, and regardless of any monsters the river might have held, jumped into the water. As he swam across with all his might, we pelted stones and clods of earth around to ward off any alligator that might show undue affection for the

boy's legs. The river, I should say, was about thirty yards broad and about twenty feet deep in the middle, with scarcely any appreciable current, so Mohamed quickly and safely landed on the opposite bank. The rest was simple enough, for, without any interruption from the natives, we had soon fetched four boats over to our bank. I then crossed over with the four men and Kulo, and having secured the boats, we ascended the steep banks by a track that led to the cultivated land and the villages. My Abyssinians were astonished at my doing this. They said that two hundred Habeshas would never have dared to cross the river with so many Shangkallas on the opposite bank, a statement which perfectly agrees with their method of raiding. "Nothing venture, nothing have," is not altogether in accordance with their custom, which rather seems to be, "Nothing venture, plenty take."

We crossed a field of beans, and then lost sight of everything in the high dhura stalks. On the outskirts of these grew thick bush, and a village stood close by, with others but a short distance off. Round the grass-built hovels that comprised the village, a thick zareba of dried thorn bush had been built, and as we stood outside it, Kulo called aloud to the inmates inside, receiving no reply in return, except from the cackling hens. So keeping watch myself outside with one man, I sent the remainder of the party inside to investigate the interior, and, as I had expected, they found the place completely deserted. In almost every house they found quantities of dhura and tobacco, and from each took

a small amount of the former, leaving in its place some red and white cloth. As we were engaged in these operations, we could distinctly hear the villagers calling to each other in the bush, but, owing to the density of the cultivation and undergrowth, we could only seldom catch a glimpse of any one of them. As soon as we had taken out all we needed, we carried the gombos of grain down to the boats and filled our sacks, and leaving the empty vessels carefully piled up together by the water's edge, paddled across to the other bank. There we safely secured the boats, and carried the goods up to our camp.

Throughout the night we had to keep a very diligent watch over our mules, for they became terribly frightened, and sometimes nearly stampeded, owing to the number of elephants that were trumpeting in the immediate vicinity of our camp. This annoyance lasting throughout the night made me anxious for revenge, so having sent on the caravan with instructions to camp after marching ten miles southward, I took a couple of men with me, and made a circuit by the water's edge, to try conclusions with the disturbers of our slumbers. We had but little trouble in finding them, for they were roaming about in such numbers that they were moving around us on all sides, yet, in spite of this fact, and also of their close proximity (for some of them would come within ten yards of us), owing to the density of the bush it was most difficult to obtain a clear shot at any one of them. The only plan open to me was patiently to follow a herd, and wait till a

favourable opportunity showed itself. There were many tracks which turned and twisted in the most unaccountable fashion, and I hoped to be able eventually to get into such a position that some of the elephants would cross me at right angles, and afford an easy shot at a very short range. The rearmost elephant of the herd I followed chanced to be a female, and the happy mother of a baby-elephant, which walked along in front of her, and as she came behind, she frequently showed her affection for her offspring by stopping and holding up her trunk and sniffing the air from every quarter, till on one occasion she did this too successfully. She had scented us, and round she immediately turned without more ado, and rushed straight upon us. My two followers wisely enough vanished like lightning, and I stopped to fire one shot, and then ran too, but, fortunately for us, the bullet had hit the enraged beast in the head, and had turned her. We followed up a second time, and again the fond mother charged, but we all crawled away into the thick bush, and she continued her angry attack along the empty track. I felt very thankful that elephants, although blessed with useful olfactory organs, are ridiculously blind. In our ignominious retreat, we came across some other elephants moving along another track, and then mutually agreed that the place was altogether too hot for us, so, leaving the monsters victorious for the day, we turned our steps towards camp, and hot, thirsty, and scorched by the midday sun, rejoined the rest of our people soon after noon.

On arrival, the men told us they had seen several Shangkallas in the bush by the water's edge, so I went down there, and found the savages had made off, taking the most of their belongings with them. There only remained a decrepit old lady and her faithful dog, and the poor soul told me to take whatever I wanted, adding that the people had already taken away most of their goods, fearing the Habesha were coming. I told her I had no need of anything, and gave her some cloth to put round her body, and the cold tea from my water-bottle, for both of which little attentions she was evidently grateful, and said she would let her people know that they had no cause to run away from us. They had already deserted their villages, and taken to the bush, and, strange to say, I had quite unintentionally turned them out of their second homes.

We all spent another bad night, for the mosquitoes hovered around us in myriads, and the mules again demanded a deal of looking after, on account of the strange noises kept up by the elephants. The mules, indeed, were more than we could manage under the trying circumstances, for one of them got loose, and ran off to its old home. It was the splendid mule that Fitarauri Duri had given me on the day of my ladies' tea-party, and it is very probable that he reached the home of his former master. He wasn't going to spend any more bad nights in a new country; and perhaps he was right in his choice. When day broke, we all felt cross and unrefreshed, and thought I had no inclination to go elephant-

hunting, still I felt eager to wreak my vengeance on our night enemies, and as the mosquitoes had disappeared with the light of day, my vengeance was limited to the larger fry. We soon came upon a big herd in somewhat less dense jungle; and without drawing on myself the tender attentions of any of them, I crept up to within a dozen yards, and then fired at the nearest, who staggered from the effects, and then toppled over; a second, as he was moving off, I bowled over like a rabbit, with a shot behind the shoulder; and then taking my other rifle, I wounded a third in the head. With the help of the two men who were with me, we had soon tracked him by the blood droppings, and found him at a standstill in a very bad way, so that a second head shot finished him off in an instant. The middle-sized elephant of the three stood ten feet four inches high at the shoulder, having very fair tusks; the other two, owing to the awkward position in which they had fallen, could not be measured. I was exceedingly pleased with my unexpected success, for my Abyssinians had been telling me over and over again how their fellow-countrymen could knock over elephants. They used to say that if I would only take twenty men with me, and let all fire at one elephant, I would then have much more chance of killing, and that it was simply madness for me to try and shoot an elephant alone, for I should never do it. An Abyssinian who has killed an elephant—that is, of course, with the assistance of a large body of armed attendants—is looked upon as a man of some standing in the country, and a man who has killed more

than one is so much elated at his own skill that he will not deign to talk to anybody.

The next morning I was again tempted to try for elephants in the jungle bordering on the lake. Taking my boy Mohamed with me, we soon discovered a large herd grazing and walking in our direction, so we both crouched down in the grass to await their approach and select the largest amongst them. Several passed within a dozen yards of us, quite unconscious of our presence, and then a little fellow came within four yards, and Mohamed whispered, "Geyta, do you wish to be trampled on?" So we rose, and moved a little further to one side, when the entire herd, becoming suspicious, began to shuffle off. I then stood up and fired two shots from my ·303 at the head of the largest elephant, killing him on the spot; then firing again, wounded the second so badly that he ran for only a few hundred yards, and we had no difficulty in tracking him. I found him standing alone in the bushes, and fired at his head, when up went the trunk, and he thundered upon us. We both ran as hard as we could to one flank, and the elephant, sorely hit, went toppling along. Again we went after him, and found him still standing in a very sad way, so, crawling up to very close quarters, I bowled him over, stone dead, with a third shot in the head. I felt sure that the first shot had really done its work effectively, and that had I not gone after the elephant, he would have died where I found him standing.

Late that same evening we returned to our old camp, where I had left Shahzad Mir in charge.

Some of the men had contracted fever during my absence, and three more mules had died from anthrax. The fever had been brought on by bathing in the lake at midday. After this, I never allowed bathing excepting in the early morning or evening, just before sunset. This at once stopped all fever.

It was delightful enough travelling along the shores of Lake Gallop, or Buzz or Baso, by which latter names it is also occasionally known; for the days were cool, never registering more than 105 Fahr., and there was abundance of game. The water of the lake, though very slightly brackish, is, nevertheless, perfectly good for drinking. The lake gave me the impression of having a slight tide.

Besides abundance of meat, we could always knock over plenty of duck and geese, and catch any quantity of fish; yet, in spite of all these luxuries, we were in a very bad way, for our animals were dying at an alarming rate, and those who did not suffer from anthrax had grown very weak and were in very poor condition. I fancy the unaccustomed change, from the hills to the plains, was to a great extent the cause of this falling away. A great deal of the grass, too, by the water's edge provides but little nourishment, and parts of the shore being marshy caused some of the animals to suffer from fever. As soon as we had completed our morning's march, the animals at first were accustomed to go straight down to the water's edge to graze, when they would often lie down and sleep instead; and this, in marshy ground, must have had anything but

a beneficial effect upon their constitutions. I afterwards tried a new scheme, and for the first few hours after halting sent every animal on to higher ground away from the lake, no matter whether the soil was sandy, rocky, or grassy, and after they had enjoyed a thorough rest there in the breeze, drove them down to the grassy edge of the lake, where they all fed greedily. No sooner had I adopted this plan than the animals began to pick up daily. I consider the camel to be the most suitable animal for taking a caravan along the shores of Lake Gallop, as there is almost everywhere excellent food for him.

On the second day after starting south, we caught a man and woman gathering red and black berries from a bush called "awy" by the Somalis, the wood of which is used for cleaning the teeth, and for allaying thirst by chewing. Whether they were a married couple, or brother and sister, I never knew, nor did it matter either, for they willingly agreed to accompany us along the shore of the lake, and show us the best track to follow. We were glad to have them, for our old friend Kulu, and his brother of seven languages, had left us at their own wish, as they did not relish a journey along the uninhabited side of the lake. This new couple belonged to the tribe called Gallopa, most of whom have now crossed over to the other side of the lake to escape the raids of the Habesha. The husband or brother, who was dressed in the garb of Nature, wore a small, oblong piece of flat brass hanging from the lower lip, and was armed with a spear and bow. Both he

and the woman wore beads round the neck, and both possessed considerable intelligence. A third addition, in the shape of their dog, joined our party, and found such good food in her new home, and such valuable companions in Lady and her pup, that, on the departure of her mistress some days later, it preferred to throw in its lot with us, and eventually safely reached Sobat on the White Nile. During their stay with us, they fed well, and, when they left, had become considerably stouter. They were, in fact, so contented with their life that, when we had no further need of their services, they still did not want to leave us.

From the time we reached Lake Gallop, Shahzad Mir and myself always travelled on foot. We were more or less compelled to do so on account of the havoc created by anthrax. Almost every day, as we moved southwards, some animal or other would die, and my store of dhura was given to the survivors, in hopes that a little grain would strengthen them, or, at any rate, lighten their loads. I had been successful in shooting other elephants, and had no desire to shoot any more. My largest elephant stood eleven feet two inches high at the shoulder, and measured five feet ten inches round the circumference of the near foot. He carried a single tusk only, the other one having been broken close off to the head—this one tusk weighed over a hundred pounds. Had he possessed two tusks, I should never have shot him, for we could not possibly have brought them both along. From the same rifle a bullet shot just

behind the ear of a rhinoceros meant instantaneous death.

One afternoon, I strolled out to shoot some sand-grouse for dinner, and, curiously enough, a rhinoceros was standing close to where the sand-grouse congregated. Instead of trotting off as I had expected, he came straight for me, and I had to run for it. Almost everywhere I found rhinoceros absurdly tame, and much given to charging, but at the same time, the brutes' attack was always easily avoided by stepping aside. I shot them only when the men were hard up for shoe-leather.

days of absence. As soon as all the animals had been unloaded, we set about constructing a zareba for the night, that our new friends, the donkeys, as well as the mules, sheep, goats, and ourselves, might be protected. I must confess that that evening I indulged in so many mugs of fresh milk from the sheep and goats that there was no corner left for dinner, and my two dogs, Lady and her pup, fared with equal satisfaction.

The first duty to be carried out the next morning was to hold a saddle inspection preparatory to breaking the new donkeys into carrying our loads. Most of the saddles required mending and re-stuffing, I therefore issued packing-needles and stout thread for this purpose, but noticed, after a bit, that very little headway had been made in the work. I knew quite well that the men were all casting longing eyes on the sheep, of which we had over a hundred, so I explained to them that, as soon as the saddles were finished, the work on the sheep should commence. These words had a magic effect, and in a wonderfully short space of time the saddles presented a very creditable appearance.

We were now camped in an exceptionally lovely spot, particularly welcome after the desolate, barren, and stony country of the last few days. There was a brisk little stream running down from the hills east of us, through a thick coppice of willows surrounded by good turf; around all grew plenty of dome palms and shady gurhas, whilst the blue lake, half a mile away, and below us, backed up by the dim ranges of hills on the further shore, completed a very pretty

piece of landscape. The country, too, abounded in rhinoceros, hippopotami, gazelles, hares, partridges, and the tiny gentle dik-dik, but big and small game alike had no need to fear death from my rifle or gun.

On waking at dead of night on the edge of this marvellous lake, I felt a strange sense of wonder. Excepting the sentry on watch, who moved silently about the camp, both man and beast were sleeping peacefully after the labours and stimulating uncertainties of the day. It was strange to listen, as I lay on the bare ground, to the breaking of huge waves on the sandy shore, knowing all the time we were actually hundreds of miles from the mighty ocean, and in the heart of a vast tropical continent.

The following day being Sunday, we enjoyed, for us, a day of rest. The natives who had helped us in carrying our loads received their reward, and then, of their own accord, offered their services as far as the end of the lake, so pleased had they grown with their novel and unexpected life. But I had no further need of employing them, for our new blood took kindly to their work, and we could pick and choose our animals, as we possessed more than our requirements demanded. These new donkeys thrived in an astonishing way; they seemed to flourish and fatten on the most barren country, but, unfortunately, they had as well, I am sure, a partiality for short grass, and during the night had a habit of nibbling at my crop of hair, labouring under the impression that it was food for them. The Bomi are accustomed to let their animals graze at night-time, though we dared not run the risk of

allowing this indulgence, and our new donkeys, missing their nightly supper, were driven by the pangs of hunger to try and substitute hair for grass.

At early dawn I sent off a small party to inspect the hills lying west of us, to try and find some signs of the Rendile people, for we had seen fires burning in the distance. In the evening they returned, having discovered that the smoke had been caused by a grass fire on the hillside; they had seen nobody, but had merely noticed the locality on this side of the hills, where the Rendile must have recently lived, for there were many signs of camels and houses. This agreed with the information given me by the natives who had accompanied us, that the Rendile used to live close by the hills, but owing to the constant quarrels and fighting with the Bomi, they had, for the sake of a peaceful life, retired to a distance.

As we set out with our new reinforcements, we might have been taken for a small army, to such enormous dimensions had our caravan attained. At this period we marched in the following formation. In front of all was my advance guard of four men, then I came with an attendant and the two dogs, followed by the baggage animals; then the spare animals followed with the sheep and goats, while the cattle brought up the rear. Shahzad Mir and his attendant moved where most convenient for surveying. Looking down on the whole cavalcade from higher ground, I was astonished at the important show we made. The road, after a bit,

camp, saying they had heard our donkeys, and had wondered where on earth they could have come from. They were much astonished at our stopping where we had done, for, as he rightly remarked, there was no water. I told them we had camped because the sun set, and as to the dearth of water, we had brought sufficient with us for the evening.

After having eaten some supper in our camp, they took their departure, assuring me that at daybreak they would come and show me where to find water ahead. Our friends could not have been very early risers, for at dawn there were no Turkana forthcoming. It mattered little, for I had already made up my mind to steer for a big range of hills running north and south, and to follow the river valley at their base, as there would then be every likelihood of getting water.

We had only marched for about an hour, when our Turkana friends of the previous evening overtook us, and conducted us to some good pools; and whilst enjoying our midday halt, several more Turkana turned up, and talked with us about the country. I offered them each a piece of sugar, but could not induce them even to lick it, so suspicious were they of some underhand devilment of the Koshumba, and I am sure that they looked upon me in the same way as I regarded them: as a quite unenlightened being.

We passed on through many karias of the Turkana; there were great numbers of sheep, goats, donkeys, and camels, but we interfered with nothing at all, and nobody interfered with us. I spent

rather an unpleasant night, for I was besieged by hordes of flying beetles, who attacked me by stealth. Instead of flying with a good honest buzz, and a "phut" against my face, they would silently crawl up into my pyjamas. Ten of them lay in ambush under my pillow, and more alongside my body, and many, not contented with bringing their own obnoxious bodies singly, carried droppings of camels and donkeys as well, as though resolved to shift me somehow or other. In this they were finally successful—I was completely beaten.

We worked along the foot of a big range of hills, which I intended crossing at the very first chance that offered itself. The highest peaks appeared to be topped with white and pink sandstone dropping perpendicularly, whilst most of the hillside was green with bush, trees, and grass, with rocks of basalt here and there. We had no more Turkana tracks to follow, so made use of those furnished by the elephants and rhinoceros. It was a lovely country; there was plenty of water below the surface in many of the rivulets that took their rise from the hills; the days were cool, and the mornings cloudy, and we were all in the best of health. Owing to the steep nature of the hillsides, it was some days before we could discover a means of crossing them. I should say that the greater part of the drainage from these hills runs away westward, as, on our side, there was no river of sufficient dimensions to carry off the water that must emanate from such lofty mountains.

At last, one afternoon, we discovered a valley

running westward, and after following it up for some miles, came to a beautiful pond. It bore almost an artificial appearance, for rocks and stones lay evenly along the edges, and the shape was circular. And all around grew fine turf and green bushes. Here we halted for the night, so as to have the whole of the next day before us to negotiate the steep hills that barred our way. Axes and choppers—in fact, all our pioneer implements—were in request as we commenced to climb. Throughout the ascent, we were frequently aided by old elephant-tracks. Yet, there were some places that I thought must baffle my camels, and I quite agreed with my Somalis that the camels of their own country could never have crawled up the steep, stony, and thickly overgrown places that our female camels travelled over. The foliage was so thick overhead that these patient brutes were forced to kneel down and literally crawl along portions of the ascent on their knees. Still, men and animals were determined to reach the top somehow or other, and although all worked with a will, my caravan straggled to an alarming extent.

After waiting on a grassy slope near the summit for the majority of the men and animals to collect, I went ahead with four men to spy out the land, whilst the remainder came along slowly. After descending a short distance down the western side, which afforded us easy going in comparison to the eastern, we saw, in the green valleys of grass and bush beneath us, innumerable camels and sheep dotted about everywhere. Yet, in spite of my field-glasses,

we could discover no people. It struck me that before we found water again we should have to reach this valley, so we pegged away downhill, and very shortly found ourselves in the midst of the beautiful white camels we had seen from above, who made off to either flank on seeing us. We were making for the bed of a river, which we had discovered by reason of the belt of trees along its banks, when the sound of men singing reached our ears. It reminded me very much of the cheerful noise Somalis are accustomed to make when drawing water from the wells in their own land. So I imagined we should find the natives here employed likewise, and we at once turned in the direction of the singing, and came in sight of one of the usual karias, or villages, close to which stood a large and shady tree. It was, doubtless, a favourite spot for midday siestas, for sitting and lying in the shade beneath were a dozen or more fine savages, whom I at once recognized as belonging to the Turkana tribe. In the bushes, too, by the tree, were many others dancing and singing and waving their spears. These were the men who had attracted my attention, but, instead of drawing water, they were enjoying a real good jollification. I walked up with my four men, towards those sprawling in the shade, and although they saw us, they seemed in no way surprised, they neither moved nor made any sign to me. One would have imagined that Koshumbas passed by every hour of the day.

After a minute or two the dancing ceased, and the young bloods joined their elders under the trees. So I walked up to within ten yards of them, not

caring to go any closer, and there I stood awaiting to be addressed, but they neither spoke nor rose. So, hardly knowing what was the best thing to do, I called out, "Gibi, gibi!" which means, "Water, water!" in an interrogative tone, and after a moment's consultation, one man rose, apparently the chief. He was of immense stature, a wonderful man to gaze upon, adorned with the same remarkable hair already described. "Koshumba, koshumba. Gibi, gibi," I repeated, airing the extent of my Turkana vocabulary.

The savage grinned pleasantly, and pointed with his long spear towards the river we had intended reaching, and after a little more signalling and grinning between us, he led the way, accompanied by three other men of his tribe to direct us to the water. There were merely some water-holes dug about two feet deep in the sandy river-bed. Here I selected a shady bush to await the arrival of my caravan, in the mean time amusing myself and my Turkana friends with endeavours to gather from them information of the country and people living around. It was three or four hours later before my rear-guard arrived in camp, but already numbers of Turkana, men and women, had brought vessels of dhura to sell for food.

This spot was so thickly bushed, and the Turkana tribe were in such force, that as soon as my men had eaten, I loaded up with the intention of marching along the river-bed till we found an open spot to pass the night in. Towards sunset we came to more villages. At first the people ran away