

ELEPHANT HAUNTS:

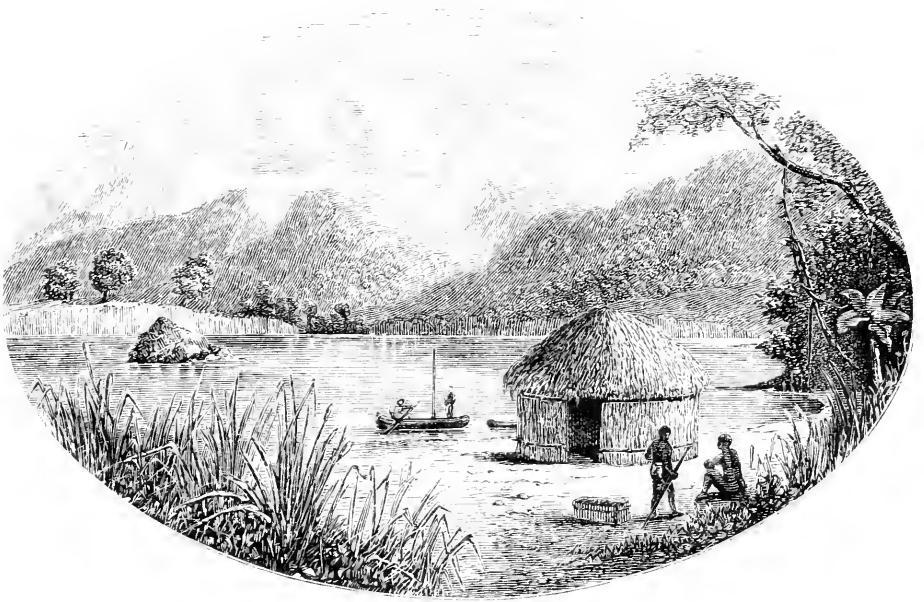
BEING

A Sportsman's Narrative

OF

THE SEARCH FOR DOCTOR LIVINGSTONE,

WITH SCENES OF ELEPHANT, BUFFALO,
AND HIPPOPOTAMUS HUNTING.



Camp at Matiti, near Murchison's Cataract.

BY

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both my former shots had taken effect. He was a fine beast, with long and perfect horns.

As the heat was most intense, I made for the boat again. On the way I saw two female waterbucks, and as the men from the village begged me to shoot "more meat" for them, I fired at the larger, and, to their delight, luckily shot her dead through the neck, at about a hundred and sixty yards. We were soon on board and off again. At sunset we came to a village where, as the chief was civil, bringing us a present of eggs and flour on landing, we halted for the night. Here we found a small enclosure of water in the river, made by the natives for bathing in, a strong fence of stakes being driven down close together to keep the alligators out. The clear water ran through it, and I enjoyed a delightful bath. While I was in the enclosure an enormous brute of an alligator swam round and round it. No doubt he would have liked the treat of a bit of white meat! I slept on the bank, but the mosquitoes prevented much enjoyment in sleep.

Taking a man from this village as guide, I turned out early next morning for the jungle, game being reported very plentiful. Within half a mile of the boat we found fresh spoor of elephants, and in ten minutes we came up with a small herd in some long reeds by the river side. The native who accompanied me would not come up to the elephants, confessing that he was afraid. However, with Chinsoro, who followed me, carrying two guns, I crept cautiously on with the gumtickler. The herd was standing still. The first I came on was a cow. Passing to the left of her

I moved in amongst the herd—Chinsoro at my heels, trembling like an aspen leaf. The next I saw was a fair bull, standing three parts from me, and offering a splendid shot behind the ear. A couple of steps brought me within ten yards of him, and in another instant the guntickler bellowed, and the bull fell dead. At that moment another of the herd bore straight down on the fallen one, and seeing it prostrate, stood a minute with extended trunk over its companion. It was full on to me, and the head being lowered, gave an opportunity to the second barrel of the big gun. In another instant two elephants lay dead side by side. Fortunately both were bulls; but though their tusks were fair, they were not anything like the length or thickness of some I had killed higher up the country. The remainder of the herd were off like lightning.

It was some time before I could find the frightened guide, but when eventually he did come, trembling and shaking, he went frantic with delight at the sight before him. Returning to the boat for the men and axes to take the ivory, on the way back I wounded a fine waterbuck, which I subsequently lost through not having time to follow him up. However, a small ourebi (*scopophorus ourebi*) was added to the bag by a lucky running shot at eighty yards, the ball passing clean through the brain. At 3 P.M. the tusks arrived, and bidding adieu to the natives of the village, who looked on me as a god for giving them so much meat, I left, and continued my course down the river. The heat was most oppressive—not a breath of air.

At 5.30 we passed Dombo Island, and shortly after we ran ashore on a sandbank in the middle of the river. Here we stuck fast, and all attempts to get the boat off proved of no avail for half an hour, when a passing canoe full of natives luckily came to our assistance and got us off. Camping at 7 P.M. by the river side, we again became the unhappy victims of millions of mosquitoes. Daylight saw us off next morning, as we were anxious to reach Morumballa before night. In the afternoon it blew a heavy gale of wind for a couple of hours, and gave us plenty to do in the little craft, which was very deep in the water.

At six o'clock we reached the village of Chimbazó, situated on the west bank of the Shiré, under the north end of Morumballa. The chief very civilly came to see me, bringing the customary present. The scenery along the last few miles of the river was indeed a happy change from the horrible marshes. As we approached the mountain under whose base the Shiré flows, winding and turning in every direction, the land, which was considerably wooded, became high and undulating on the east side, while the park-like appearance of the fertile plains on the west, which were studded with groves of trees and villages, added to the improved appearance of the landscape.

As the chief informed me that the rhinoceros was to be found up the sides of Morumballa mountain, I determined to have a trial the following day; and a guide, who knew the haunts of those animals, was promised. It blew and rained all night, in consequence of which I accepted the offer of a hut, and was very comfortable. The people seemed as if

they had known me all my life, and were very kind. They said they knew the English well, and the names of Waller, Bishop Mackenzie, and others, might be heard every now and then during their conversation. I remarked that they were very badly clad—indeed, worse so than any natives I had seen in the country, save some who did not pretend to wear any clothes at all. Most of the old women wore nothing but a piece of roughly-made matting; and altogether I was struck with the general appearance of poverty in a place where the English missionaries had spent so much time. The good and kind hearts of the people, however, shewed that though not improved as regards their apparel, their minds had been raised above the low level of the savage, through the influence of those good men whose bones now lie as witnesses of the cost—the great cost at which, comparatively speaking, so little good has been effected.

Shortly after crossing the river next morning with two stalwart and swarthy guides, we found the spoor of a rhinoceros, and immediately took it up. The animal had been down to the river for water, and was now evidently going home for the day. For six hours we followed the tracks, which led us zigzag up the side of Morumballa mountain, sometimes amongst densely-wooded ravines and dells, through most of which little streams of water ran down the steep declivities to the Shiré, and where the rank vegetation afforded shelter to myriads of mosquitoes; then up some precipitous ascent, so steep that it seemed a marvel to me how the animal ever got up. After a long pull up a hill so steep that I often slipped back,

I stood to breathe the cool air (for the heat below, and even in the hollows of the mountain, was intense).

Here the scene was truly lovely. Below us, some three thousand feet, lay the Shiré valley, and only now did one really know the extraordinary way in which that river twists and turns about. Its confluence with the Zambesi was plainly to be seen, looking to the southward.

While admiring the landscape, suddenly a rhinoceros was heard to bolt, with a grunt, from some long grass in a swampy ravine, about a hundred and fifty yards to my right. Hurrying on the track with all possible speed, I soon viewed him climbing the mountain above me; but he was on the alert, and the stony ground and open forest rendered the chance of coming to close quarters with him but a bad one. However, getting within eighty yards, I gave him both barrels of Rigby 10 behind the shoulder. As each bullet struck his tough hide it sounded like hitting a rock. The beast staggered a moment, then charged down the hill close by me, but the men (as usual) had bolted with my guns. Reloading the breech-loader, and calling to the natives to follow, I hurried after him, and in a quarter of an hour, on emerging from a deep ravine, saw him ascending a spur of the mountain quietly, and within fifty yards. Running as fast as I could up the hill after him, I got to within some forty yards of him, when, hearing me, he turned round. As he did so I again fired at the shoulder, and another charge slap down hill followed the report. Fortunately the hill was very steep, for, as I stepped on one side, the

brute, seeing he was foiled, tried to turn after me, but the impetus prevented his succeeding, and I gave him the second barrel at four yards as he passed, rolling him down the hill like a rabbit. When I got down to him I found he was not dead, but a shot in the head put him out of pain. This was the first rhinoceros I had ever killed, and the only wild one I had seen. I roared "Waffa! waffa!" (dead! dead!) and in an instant the sides of Morumballa, which had scarce yet finished echoing the report of the last shot, resounded with the triumphant and demoniac yells of my stout companions, who were soon on the spot, and no longer in the least afraid of the rhinoceros.

The mosquitoes here were intolerable, though it was little more than two o'clock P.M. On my way home, passing along the plain at the foot of the mountain, and not very far from the river, I saw a fine waterbuck on the hill-side a long way off, looking at us. Seeing no chance of getting closer, I put up the two hundred and fifty yards sight and fired. However, the elevation was not enough, for the bullet struck a rock just under his body. This caused him to run about fifty yards higher up the hill, when he again stood and stared at me. Up went the three hundred yards sight, and again I fired. I heard a hit, and the buck, rearing up, fell back dead.

My men, who were some distance behind, now came running up, and requested me to hurry home, as the mosquitoes were eating them. On my asking them to come and see the spot where the bullet had hit the rock, they objected, saying it was a long way

and a steep walk, but when I began the ascent myself two of them followed me. On reaching the spot where the buck had stood when first I fired, I showed them his footprints and the bullet-mark on the rock, telling them that I would follow his tracks and see where the second shot had given. "Oh!" said they, "that's of no use, we all heard it hit the rock also."

It was very nearly dark, and though within five yards of them, none saw the dead buck, which was almost of the same colour as the ground on which he lay. Telling them to look about for the bullet-mark on the ground, I stood and watched them. At last one "twigged" the beast, and all were astonished at the distance at which I had killed him. Few rifles would have done such a feat; but Rigby's 10 bores are true and strong.

On reaching the river, we were nearly eaten alive with mosquitoes, while waiting for the boat from the other side. Dancing, singing, and general rejoicing prevailed in the village all night. As the chief, who was very civil, begged I would kill some meat for him, I went out next morning, and without going very far succeeded in bagging a male and female of the water-buck family, quantities of which are to be seen wherever the eye turns. Another night's rejoicing followed, and the chief begged I would join in a dance, which I felt compelled under the circumstances to do. However, being introduced to rather a nice partner, I managed to pull through the performance, though I fancy once or twice I rather disgusted some of the old

hands by clapping mine out of time. This lasted too long, as I was anxious to turn in, but a heavy storm of wind and rain soon broke up the party. At 11 A.M. the following morning I left Chimbazo, and was much struck with the regret exhibited by the natives at my departure. The river under the south end of Morumballa is excessively pretty, winding amongst the spurs of the mountain in the most wonderful way.

At the request of a large party of natives I landed at the village of Cassenga, and nothing could exceed the civility with which that chief (who was a leper, without hands or feet) received me. I was no sooner in the village than I was surrounded by about two hundred men, women, and children, all eager to hear where I had been, and what I had seen. They said they had asked Mr. Young to come ashore as he passed, but he had taken no notice of their invitation. Pombé, flour, eggs, &c., were presented, or brought for sale. Having thoroughly enjoyed an hour with these people, we left, and literally flew down the river, with a favourable wind and current, till we ran into the Zambesi at 4.30 P.M., and bivouacked for the night on the eastern bank, where the mosquitoes did not annoy us.

As I was anxious to reach Shupanga with all haste, in order to have some shooting there, the next dawn saw us under weigh. We passed several Portuguese residences as we went down the river. One José came down to see me, and sat a long time in the boat. He was a most intelligent man, and took great interest in my maps and charts. He said he had known Livingstone at Kebra-bassa Falls on the Zambesi, and, like all

who have known him, sang his praises. He brought down a beautiful musical-box, which was highly prized by him, and in return I had to play him a tune on the cornet.

At 2.30 P.M. we arrived at Shupanga, and built a hut over the bank, directly under Shupanga House. In the evening we crossed the river to buy provisions; and here again found the people in great want, both of clothes and food. On our return to camp by moonlight, we heard that Johnghiti had nearly recovered from the terrible wounds he had received while elephant hunting, but was still unable to stir.

I remained three days hunting here, and enjoyed capital sport. The forests on the west bank swarm with all kinds of antelopes. My object in shooting them was to leave a supply of meat with the families of the Shupanga men, who were really badly off even for food, and consequently nothing was spared. The bag, when leaving, consisted of two sable antelopes (*agocerus niger*), magnificent beasts, five hartebeests, seven bush-buck, a sassaby (*damalis lunatus*), and two pigs. In one day I bagged eight of these. A very fine waterbuck was killed by one of my men. The Shupanga men were delighted.

The day after my arrival at Shupanga, Mr. Young passed through on his way down to Senna, and reported the death of a very fine bull hippopotamus. During my stay I received some present daily from José, such as pork, cakes, wine, &c., and twice he came to see me.

On the 8th November we left Shupanga for the Kon-

goni, and shortly after starting passed a large Portuguese boat, *en route* for Senna. The skipper saluted my white ensign, and I dipped mine in acknowledgment. Three days more saw me at the mouth of the river. Every evening I amused myself, after coming to anchor, by shooting waterbuck, or other antelopes, and on nearing the sea, on the 11th November, we overtook and passed the *Search*, and directly afterwards sighted the bar.

Here a canoe, with two small boys, came out of the reeds, and I was implored by the smaller of the two to take him with me, as he said he wanted to get down to the sea-shore. I complied, and on examining him as we went along, found that his father had sold him to a Portuguese, from whom he had run away, because he used to beat him much. His home, he said, was a long way off, but where he did not know. I brought him down, and landed on the same spot where I had first touched the soil last August, arriving a quarter of an hour before the other boats. Mounting an elevated spot, I looked with my glasses carefully all along the sea horizon; but no vessel was in sight.

As soon as Mr. Young arrived all hands went to work to build huts, there being every appearance of rain. Having determined to reside by myself, I soon had a very respectable hut of my own, with the British flag floating above it, to which I gave the name of "Kongoni Castle!"

Twenty-two days passed before a ship called for us. Every morning the horizon was anxiously scanned. Heavy rain and terrific thunderstorms were of