

TO ABYSSINIA

THROUGH AN UNKNOWN LAND

AN ACCOUNT OF A JOURNEY THROUGH UNEXPLORED
REGIONS OF BRITISH EAST AFRICA BY LAKE
RUDOLF TO THE KINGDOM OF MENELEK

BY

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"THE QUEEN'S OWN" ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT

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OF BRITISH EAST AFRICA," &c.

WITH THIRTY-SIX ILLUSTRATIONS
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Later in the evening the Turkana chief, an intelligent-looking little man, called Lôngellich, came in with some warriors. They were fine-looking fellows, but not so big as former accounts of the Turkana would have led one to imagine. One could hardly call them "a race of giants." I only saw one tall, thin youth who was my own height; but the wonderful head-dresses, and the contrast between them and the usual small native of five foot six or so, makes them look perhaps taller than they really are.

The head-dresses are most curious and varied, consisting of the hair of their dead ancestors matted together with red earth, and plaited on to their own hair. The most popular style is that of the old-fashioned chignon, only rather exaggerated, as it sometimes reaches down the back almost to the waist. In this are poked a few ostrich-feathers, while at the end is often a long bit of wire, which curls backwards and upwards over the head. Some of these can be seen in the photograph.

The Turkana said that they had some donkeys, and would consider the question of selling to me. In the evening I secured some meat for the men.

The Baragoi plains resemble those of Laikipia, and are quite unlike the barren country through which we had passed. Grazing is good and game plentiful, consisting of lion, rhino, buffalo, oryx, eland, giraffe, and ostrich. The natives said that a lion had just killed an ostrich there, and after that two sheep. This is the only time I have heard of an ostrich being killed by a lion.

The Samburr brought in some sheep as a present, while the Turkana brought a bull. As the latter ran back to the kraal every time his attendant went away, I had finally to return it to them.

Next day they brought in three donkeys, which I bought for iron wire, calico, tobacco, and beads. This enabled me to send my Samburr donkeys back, so, giving the guides presents for the donkeys' owners, and messages for the *Legwanan*, I sent them off.

I was then asked to settle the dispute between the Turkana and the Samburr. The chief, Legarbes, of the Samburr, with his old men, sat on one side, and Lôngellich and his old men on the other, while Abdi interpreted, and I sat at the door of my tent. I said : " You have asked me to settle this dispute of yours, and if you wish I will do so, but first I must tell you that I am only a traveller who has come to see your country ; I am not the man at Nairobi (the Governor), or even the man at Laikipia (the nearest District Commissioner). If you want my judgment as a white man who favours neither the Turkana on the one side, nor the Samburr on the other, then I will give it you."

" Now I have come to this country, and wish to be friends with you both, and my judgment will be clearer than yours, for you are just as children or animals to me. To me it is just as it might be to you to settle the dispute between one and another sheep of your flocks. However, before I trouble myself with your affairs, you must promise to abide by my decision, or my work will be in vain."

To this they agreed.

Then I listened patiently to long dissertations on grazing grounds, ancient rights, etc., first from one side and then from the other. After each side had exhausted itself I sat awhile in silence to impress them, and also wrote a little in my pocket-book. Then I gave judgment, and said : " Listen to my words. War is a bad thing, and there is no need for war over this matter. There is much grass

in this place, and the water suffices for both. God gives grass that the cattle of man may feed and grow fat, and no man may say, 'This is my grass, and not yours.'

"Yet if two peoples live in one place, there will always be war and strife. Now, if there is strife here, the white men will not recognize that one party is the aggressor; they will look on you as both bad. If you see two dogs fighting, do you say, 'This one is right, and that wrong?' No; you beat them both, and they leave off fighting. If there is strife here, then may the white men come and say, 'These are bad people; let us beat them both.' So desist from strife between yourselves.

"Now, if one man has two wives in the same house there is always dissension in that house, so if two tribes have cattle on one grazing ground, and kraals in one place, so will there always be dissension in that place. It may arise over a big matter, or it may be over a small. It may be that two children quarrel over a small thing, and war is brought about between two tribes. Therefore I say to you, O Turkana, you must not cross this stream and build your kraals on the same side as the Samburr, and I charge you, O Samburr, that you do not move your kraals likewise to the west side of the stream.

"Now, this is my decision: You, the Samburr, graze your cattle on the east side of Baragoi, and when you come to water, approach from the east, and water your cattle from that side, and do not let even one lamb cross over to drink from the other side. You, the Turkana, graze your cattle on the west side, and likewise water from that side, and not one man or animal must cross to this side.

"Now as to grazing grounds, take this stream as your boundary, and after the stream take this big tree of Baragoi and the rocky peak of Ol doinyo Ngiro you all

see before you, and let this line be a boundary to you that neither tribe may cross to the other side.

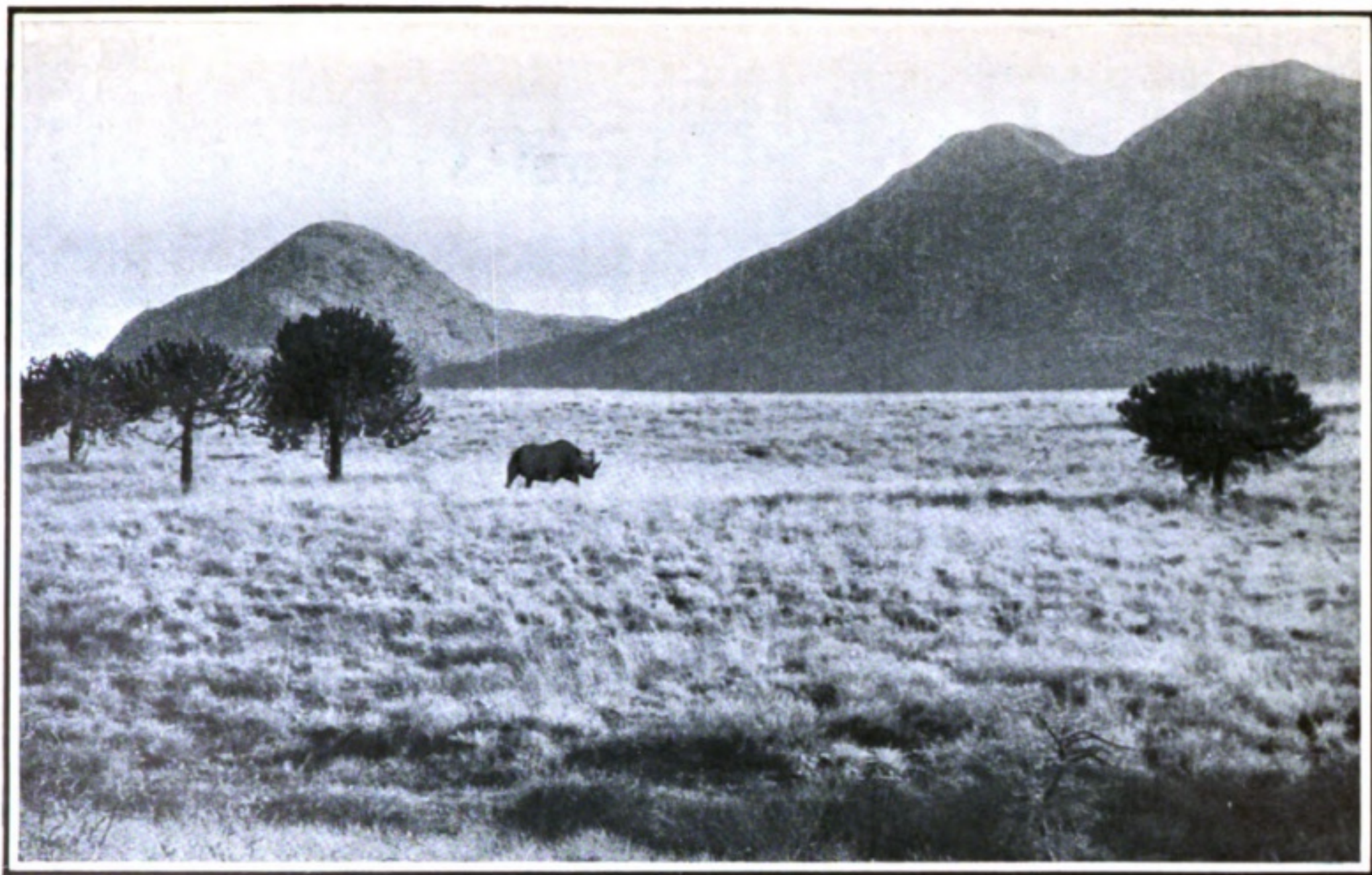
“And during the time of the rains, when you move back from Baragoi, let the chief of the Turkana bid good-bye to the chief of the Samburr, and when you return again after the rains you must greet each other again, and renew the friendship and agreement you will make this day. What say you to my words—are they good or bad?”

The two chiefs both agreed that they were good, and shook hands, and swore eternal friendship in my presence.

Having settled this dispute, the rival chiefs both said that they had heard about the Abyssinians, and feared aggression on their part. What were they to do? I replied that the Abyssinians were old friends of the English, and that we should be seriously annoyed if they embroiled themselves with these people. However, there was no fear of this, as we were about to open a station at Marsabit, and so any complaints they had to make against the Abyssinians they could take there, and they would be settled.

I then said good-bye to the Turkana and Samburr, and made for the east side of Ol doinyo Ngiro, which rose up to our front as a great, square, flat-topped mountain, about ten thousand feet high.

I was in front of the caravan as usual with Tengenenza, while my two boys were close behind, when we met an old rhino strolling towards us. We had seen a good few that day. I beckoned to the men with me to stop, and I went on alone towards him till I got within a hundred yards. As he was still advancing, I awaited him here with my camera. When he got to within fifty yards, I took the portrait here reproduced.



RHINOCEROS

He came advancing towards us all unsuspecting till one of my men made a noise which he heard. He then galloped off. The black rhinoceros, wandering about in the open as it does in British East Africa, falls a ridiculously easy victim to the rifle of the sportsman. This photograph was taken on the plains north of Baragoi.

So we had to bivouac there, but as we were all fearfully thirsty, and had nothing to drink, I said that we would start on again at moonrise.

The guide said that there was no use in starting then, as we should arrive in the middle of the night, for Laipera was quite close at hand; in fact, that if there had been a kraal here, the water-camels would load up, go to the well, draw water, and be back before the other camels left the zariba. As camels go out about 8 or 8.30, this meant that Laipera could not be more than an hour distant, and the guide thought it would be quite early enough to begin loading the camels at sunrise.

I did not wish to subject my men to even an hour of the burning sun, as already by seven it is very trying, especially as it strikes on the forehead. Moreover, we were all so thirsty that we did not feel like facing even the sunrise before we had had something to drink.

The atmosphere of this country is extraordinarily dry, and an hour or two after one has drunk one's mouth gets parched, and after going for half a day without water all the body seems to dry up. Our condition was worse, as the last water we had drunk had been brackish. This being the case, I decided to start loading the camels directly the moon rose. Although there was meat from the gazelles I had shot, it remained untouched, as it was, of course, impossible to eat anything in our present condition. I was glad, however, to think that there would be some ready for the men when we reached water.

While we were bivouacking here in the Elges there was a sound as of distant drumming. Although I had often heard native drumming, I had never heard any with quite the same rhythm or sound. The latter was very

marked, being in two keys. One had plenty of time to notice this, as we heard it at intervals through the night whenever the breeze freshened from that direction.

I heard two of the men solemnly discussing whether this was caused by a devil or not. Their conversation ran something as follows : " This waterless, uninhabited part is a very bad country ; there cannot fail to be bad devils here." " Yes, there are always bad devils in such places." " But this drumming—do you think it might be a Rendile kraal ?" " Who would live in a place like this ?" " Oh, the Rendile live in bad places ; but this is not like any human drumming." " No ; no one but a devil could play a drum like that."

At moonrise the night watchman woke us, and by 2.30 a.m. all the camels were loaded, and we proceeded. We continued till dawn without seeing any sign of the well. I waited for the men to close up, and by the faint light of dawn could see them patiently toiling along under their loads or leading the camels, without exchanging a word with each other. The perfect silence of the generally noisy, garrulous porters impressed me more than anything else could have done with a sense of their sufferings.

As I led the way on again, accompanied by the guide, a rhino came trotting towards us. If he had passed to a flank, I should have left him alone, but he was coming directly at us, and I did not want my tired men and camels to be disturbed by having to bolt out of his path, so I fired at him with my Mannlicher. He rushed about twenty yards, hit through the lungs, and then stopped, when another shot made him collapse in a kneeling position.

This seemed to have an inspiring effect on the men, as they immediately began to talk. When they came up,

the rhino was still just breathing, and Tengenenza called out : " Bring a knife to *halal* him."

As many of the men were Muhammadans, the meat would not be considered lawful unless the throat was cut whilst the animal was still alive. With a rhino this is generally a farce, as they make certain that he is dead first, and then cut his throat and pretend that he is still alive.

One of the camel-men, a tall Mnyamwezi called Majaliwa, came up with a knife, thinking that it was dead ; but as he came near, the rhino gave a sigh, and he ran back. I asked what he was waiting for, and he said : " It is still alive." I said : " Of course it is. Who would think of *halaling* an animal which was dead ?"

Some of the other men called out, " Go on, go on ! Don't be afraid," but he still shrank back. Knowing that the animal would never rise again, I took hold of his anterior horn with both hands, and said : " Now cut his throat while I hold him for you." He came up and commenced operations, and at the same time I swung the head round towards him. He started away and drew back hurriedly.

I said : " Well, what is the matter ?" Majaliwa replied : " Oh, he is still alive !" " Of course he is, but I am holding him for you."

Majaliwa again advanced, and again I moved the head, rather less this time, as if the animal had grown weaker. He withdrew again, but by now the men standing near had seen through my little joke, and said : " Go on ! Can't you see that the *bwana* is playing with you ?" Majaliwa looked rather silly, and the men all laughed at him.

When the throat had been finally cut, we left the rhino

lying there, to be sent for later, and moved on. By this time the sun had risen, and I felt very glad that we had not taken the guide's advice and started now instead of earlier.

However, this little incident bucked up the men, and they were even friendly disposed towards the guide, whom they had been cursing the night before. He had proved himself a most willing youth, and worked as hard as any three other men at loading the camels, rushing from one to another to see if they were properly tied up, being the only expert in this matter with the party. However, in time and distance he was as vague and inaccurate as most of these people, a circumstance for which he could hardly be blamed, as these considerations, so vital to us, are of no account to him and his people.

We had now reached a lava country, but the way was still quite good. After an hour's march we came to some lava nullahs. The whole country looked most forbidding ; there was not a spot of green anywhere, and it did not seem possible that there could be any water near.

I was some way in front of the men, when suddenly I came over a lava ridge, and saw a gladdening sight, which I shall always remember. Just below me was a valley of black lava, without a twig or leaf of any kind of vegetation. At the bottom of this valley were a number of loaded camels kneeling in a semicircle, while about them were bustling Rendile women. As I looked closer, I could see that they were rushing backwards and forwards with *hans*, which they received from a hole in the ground, and fastened on the camels.

This hole was Laipera Well, bored out of the lava rock, the water being about ten feet below the surface. The curious thing is that this is not the lowest part of the

CHAPTER XI

TUMEPONA WATER-HOLE

OUR own position I had worked out on the map, and as the position of Lake Rudolf was known, it was possible to measure the distance as the crow flies. The part of the shore for which I intended to steer was the little bay just south of Longendoti Mountain.

Although one knew the distance and the direction of the point to be reached, it was impossible to guess what kind of country lay between us and the lake. Assuming that it was fairly good going, and that the men kept up their spirits and marched well, I calculated that the water we could carry would give us each two small bowls a day, with a little extra for the porters carrying loads. In a temperate climate such a small ration of water per diem would have been no hardship, but here it was miserably inadequate.

A serious consideration was the nature of the country. Fortunately, the moon was nearly full, so that we could take advantage of practically the whole night for marching; but if we met with very broken country, with steep lava escarpments and ravines, it might not be possible to proceed at night. As a long march during the day was out of the question under such a powerful sun, this would effectually stop us.

Still, I had another resource to fall back upon, and that was, should we meet with such country, to leave all our loads behind us, and try to make the lake with just our water-tanks. Having arrived there, we could then send back the camels and a small party, with all the tanks, to fetch in our loads. Such a course would, however, entail serious delay, and might be fatal to our food-supply.

The chief difficulty to contend with was the slowness of the men and camels picking their way at night over loose stones or through dust and volcanic débris. This made the fatigue and length of time of the marches actually performed out of all proportion to the ridiculous little distance they appeared when plotted off on the map. My great fear, too, was that the men would lose heart, in which event we most certainly should not reach our destination.

I knew that nearly all the men and Omari were in favour of taking the guides' advice and going back. Abdi, however, was, as usual, quite ready to do as I wished, and, I believe, almost as anxious as I was to push through to the journey's end at all hazards. Besides being pleased at Tumbo's resource in making the water-skins, I gathered from this that Abdi had imbued his men with the proper spirit.

Before starting, I did my best to cheer up the men, and make them put their faith in me, addressing them as follows :

"You have heard the guides say that we cannot reach water northwards, and we have tried that country, and it is bad. Of the country westwards they know nothing, and admit that they have never been there. Even if they had, of what use would they be, for they

could not even find the water at this place, where they say that they themselves used to live ?

“ They did their best to cause us trouble and suffering in coming here. Of what use are the guides of this country ? Do you not remember how in the Elges they told us that we should reach water on one day, and we did not ? Now I have sent these two guides away, and have decided to become myself the guide of this caravan, and lead you of my own wisdom.

“ The place to which I have decided to go is Em-bassu Narok (Lake Rudolf), for there is much water. If you say, How can I know the way, when I have never yet been there ? I tell you that the wisdom of the white man is greater than you can fathom.

“ Had I wished to go there from the first, I could have led you there, for other white men have been there, and the way is written in books of learning. The reason I came here was that no white man had yet been here, and I wished to find a new country.

“ We have found a new country here, and now I have measured the stars, and find that there is a way to Embassu Narok. But I will not deceive you : the distance is great, and there may be bad country in the way. If I told you that it was near, and that we should have plenty of water in the way, then would you recognize my words as those of a fool.

“ No ; we shall have but little water in the way, but much water when we reach there. This is my plan, and when you hear it you will recognize that my words are spoken with wisdom. We will leave here this evening, when the strength of the sun is but little, and will march all through the night and as long as we may to-morrow morning, making but short halts on the way.

“ All this we must do on the water that is in our water-bottles, but when we halt to-morrow, then each one will have a bowl of water, and those that carry loads will have a bowl and a half. In the evening we will have another bowl to put in our water-bottles, and will march on all through that night. Next day will be the same, and we will march through the next night.

“ On the following morning you will not have water, but you will have the sight of Embassu Narok to gladden your hearts, and we will march that day until we reach it. And the place that we shall reach on the lake will be the old camp of another white man, and I will give you a sign by which you may recognize it from afar. There will be white sand, and thick bushes like those called by the Kikuyu *nyambura*.”

This last touch was put in from Von Höhnel's description of their camp, which was amidst what he called “succulent bush” growing in sand. This succulent bush I afterwards learnt was the shrub called by the Swahilis *msuaki*, already referred to.

The preparations for the journey were soon made. I looked up the declination of the moon in the nautical almanac, selected the equatorial stars which would serve our purpose, and jotted down their declinations in my pocket-book. I also noticed a rocky peak in the distance, which might serve to guide us, as our direct route passed under its southern end.

The new water-skins and other water-vessels were filled, the only remaining *han* was put aside for the use of the mule, and two bottles were filled for Narok, to last her till the first issue of water, when she would draw the same rations as everybody else, or a little more if she showed signs of great exhaustion.

Finally, the camels were loaded, and after a last drink from Horr *garba*,* we started.

The first part of the journey led over sandhills, and then we struck a sandy watercourse, where we rested for a little, and continued over an absolutely flat plain, composed of level, smooth rock. We had lost sight of the rocky peak soon after starting, but as the night wore on I hoped to see it against the sky-line.

In the early hours of the morning we struck a belt of bush and another watercourse. On arrival here I was immediately aware by the scent that there had recently been elephant at this place, and, looking carefully, I discovered their spoor by the light of the moon. As we pushed through this bush patch in the utter stillness of the night there was a sudden loud crashing sound, and then the familiar "puff, puff" as a rhino we had disturbed crashed through the bush in front of me and blundered off.

I was glad to emerge from this bush patch and reach the open plain again, as the way was easier, and the chance of large pachyderms careering round in the dark gave both myself, the men, and the camels the jumps.

The non-appearance of the peak had puzzled me, but presently the reason for this became apparent, for a long black form loomed up in front of us. As we came near it rose higher and higher, till we could see a long lava escarpment, running north and south, silhouetted against the sky-line, and concealing from view the setting moon.

At the base were game tracks, and I felt certain that under this escarpment, either to north or south, must be water—probably water-holes of the same type as those under the escarpment we had left behind us. However,

* Horr *garba* is the Borana name for the Sokota nearest our camp, meaning the "rush (grown) Horr."

a search for these would entail camping here, and if the search was unproductive, or the water proved salt, we should then be compelled to return to Horr, and so waste valuable time.

Behind us the plain was still lit up by the moonlight, but here under the escarpment we were in shadow, so that our way up was difficult. I selected a spur, and began climbing this. The escarpment was composed of masses of loose bits of lava thrown together, but here they were rounded fragments, whereas on the other side of the plain the lava was sharp and jagged.

As I was getting near the top of the slope I suddenly stopped, for I was semi-conscious of something moving just in front of me. Seeing nothing, I lay down, to get a better view, and then made out a shadowy form against the sky-line, moving diagonally across my front.

Tengeneza, who had been just behind me, came up and lay down beside me, and as he did so the form separated into two, and we could see two long bodies advancing obliquely across the spur to the left. Then they passed into a depression, and were lost to sight.

I stood up to try and get another glimpse of these figures, and at the same time Tengeneza caught hold of me, and pulled me back, so I knew that he had formed the same opinion as I had. He whispered to me: "There are no horns, so they must be either lion or rhino;" to which I replied: "I don't think that they are rhino."

Presently we advanced up the spur, and from the nullah below us on our left we heard a rasping purr repeated a couple of times, which told us that they were lions.

We waited for the men and camels, then proceeded to the top of the escarpment, and found that the moon was setting. After travelling a short distance, our path being

made difficult by the loose boulders of lava, we came to a steep nullah across our path. As it would have been impossible to get the camels down this in the dark, we had to stop here till the dawn. Forming the camels into a circle, we made them kneel down, and unloaded them, and we lay beside them on the rocks to get what rest we could.

I gave out a little water to the porters who had been carrying loads, but the others had to do without. I had just settled myself down when Abdi came to me, and said that three lions were sitting down close by on the other side of the camels. He was sure that they were lions. I said : " If that is the case, we will fire a volley at them." This may sound rather unsporting, but I could not afford to run the risk of losing a camel, or having the men disturbed, when they wanted all their strength for the morrow.

I went and lay down where Abdi directed me, and certainly saw three forms, but what they were I could not tell, as they appeared perfectly stationary. I said to Abdi : " I don't believe that those are lions, for they do not move." Abdi said : " No, not now, for they are sitting watching us ; but I saw them move before you came here." As he seemed so certain, I gave the order to fire, and a volley was fired, but the three objects still remained stationary. I gave the order to advance, and we advanced about fifteen yards, and lay down again. The three objects were gone.

We returned to our first position, and there they were again ! How small we felt ! The objects we had been firing at were three little tufts of grass not ten yards from us. I went back to lie down, cursing Abdi and myself for being two excitable fools.

After an hour and a half's sleep dawn broke, and we

loaded up the camels again. The going was bad, but we could now see how to pick our way. We proceeded till, as the sun became unbearably hot, we saw a valley below the escarpment, and some thorn-trees, which would afford a certain amount of shade.

We descended from the escarpment, and struggled on till we reached the shelter of these trees. On the way a curious object appeared in the distance, which I at first took to be a Waller's gazelle, but which through glasses proved to be a tall, thin, white ant-hill. We had not seen one for perhaps two months, and I remembered that Von Höhnelt remarked on meeting with white ant-hills for the first time near Longendoti. So I pointed this out to the men, and said: "There is a sign that we are in the right way, for it is written in a book I have here that there are no white ant-hills along the Embassu Narok until the camp is reached for which we are making."

When the camels had been unloaded and turned out to graze, we dealt out the ration of water from "Tumbo's babies," as the men called the water-skins. One had leaked on the way, and both had rotted, and the smell of the water was vile. The men did not seem to mind it much, although it nearly made me sick to smell it. Tumbo's sage remark was: "The water itself is quite good and sweet; it is only that it has the smell of the skin in it." Fortunately the skins were emptied before it came to my turn, so I did not have to drink this water.

After having had their ration of water, the men lay down, and immediately went to sleep, food being, of course, quite out of the question, as our mouths and throats were so dry that it would have taken gallons of water to wash down the least fragment of food. I was not so lucky as the men, as I could not sleep, and lay on

the sand, moving about to try and keep in the small patches of shade from my tree, with head and eyes burning from the heat and thirst. Narok kept me company, and moved with me from one patch of shade to the other with her tongue out. Every now and then she would go and lick her empty water-plate, and look at me beseechingly.

Before we started on I made an effort to go out and see if there were signs of water to be found anywhere in the valley on one side, while Omari went in another direction.

In the afternoon we loaded up again, and after a ration of water had been given out to last through the night, we proceeded. As there was a steep escarpment to be ascended on the other side of the valley, I proceeded to choose a good route for the camels to climb. I also wanted to see what the country was like on the other side.

I reached the top, and, leaving Tengeneza to mark the way for the camels, went on, and hit on an old elephant-path leading westwards. As this was the direction in which we wanted to go, and would, moreover, avoid the worst country, I was overjoyed, and determined to stick to it through the night for as long as possible.

The men were a long time coming up, and then progress was painfully slow, as they straggled tremendously. Every quarter of an hour or so I had to wait for them to close up, and threaten them with all sorts of punishments if they did not step out. The camels lagged up the escarpments, and the men struggled on listlessly, hardly noticing what I said.

The moon was bright, and the elephant-track proved very fair going. As we trekked along we suddenly came on a circular wall of stones, showing that at one time there must have been inhabitants here, perhaps Turkana.

Then two other elephant or rhino paths converged with the one we were on—a favourable portent.

Suddenly we dipped down into a little nullah, and as we reached the bottom I heard a lapping sound from close by. I rushed to the spot, and found Narok with her nose poked down a long crack in the lava, and there was water the whole length of this crack, which was about ten yards long by a foot broad.

I immediately knelt down to try the water before informing the porters, for it might have been salt, and I did not wish to disappoint them. It was sweet and pure, but I did not wish to show any unseemly joy at finding water, or let them think that I was at any time uncertain as to whether we should ever reach Rudolf. So when the leading porters came up, while the sais was calling out, “Water, water!” like a maniac, I said, “If anybody wants any water, there is some in that hole there.”

The porters hardly believed at first, but when they realized they threw themselves down beside the water, crying out: “Tumepona bwana tumepona!” (We are saved, master—we are saved!). Whilst they were drinking I went on and inspected the sandy bottom of the valley beside the lava crack, and found fresh traces of elephant—in fact, so fresh that they must have been digging in the river-bed as we came up. There were one or two holes scooped out in the sand. At the bottom of two of them was a little muddy water.

I came back to the men, and said: “I think we will camp here; we have, of course, plenty of water to go on with, but as there are elephant here, it would be rather a good thing to stay.”

On the other side of the sandy watercourse we found a little ring of thorn-trees round a nice level place for the

camels to kneel on, so, after the porters had drunk their fill, we unloaded here, and food was given out. We had had no food since leaving Horr, so I now gave out a full ration, and promised to obtain some meat for the men on the morrow in addition to their ration.

After having fed, I had just got to sleep, when I awoke with a start, and seized my rifle. The camels were standing up, and some of them were gurgling, which meant danger, and at the same time the night-watchman rushed up to me, and said that there was a rhino in the middle of the camp. I hurriedly shoved on my boots, but before I could get up I heard "puff, puff, puff" going off into the night, so, after taking a turn round to reassure the camels, I went to bed again.

Camels make excellent sentries at night, as they are quick of ear and scent, and always stand up if there is any danger about. Somalis say that the only things an old male camel will stand up and gurgle for at night are a lion, a rhino, or a strange man. If it is only a strange woman, they take no notice. They always seem wonderfully tractable with women, and allow strange women to load them, whereas they are often afraid of a man to whom they are not accustomed.

After these doings there was not much left of the night, but we slept till after sunrise. I decided to stop here to-day, and start next afternoon, as it was necessary for the camels to get some grazing, for on the march they get little or nothing. It was also necessary to obtain some meat to buck up the men, and help eke out the rations. An elephant would have suited us nicely, but my first duty to the men was to shoot anything I saw, at the risk of disturbing any elephant in the vicinity with my shots.

There was little to be obtained in the neighbourhood

except gazelle, and the occasional elephant and rhino who visited the water. The gazelle were not plentiful, they were very wary, and there was not much cover under which to stalk them. The result was that I spent a very long, hot, tiring day stalking and crawling on my stomach over hot lava rocks, but managed to bag five gazelle, to the joy of the men.

During the day I saw a party of five cheetah, but they saw me first, and bolted off. No fresh elephant or rhino tracks were met with.

An examination of the watercourse showed that there was no other place up or down stream at which water came to the surface, so our luck was great in striking it here.

By the tracks in the river-bed it appeared that rhino often visited the water-hole at night, and one of the men said that during the night he had gone to fetch a drink, and saw two rhino there. So after dinner that night I crept out to the water-hole, and had not been there very long before I saw two great forms coming down the dry river-bed.

I crept back, and waited opposite the water, but presently heard them digging in the sand above me. When I tried to approach them, my boots made such a noise amongst the stones of the nullah that I returned to camp, changed to a pair of rubber-soled boots, and came out again. As I pushed through the bush just behind camp, I saw the rhino dimly outlined on the other bank. They had evidently heard something to alarm them, or seen or smelt the camp-fires.

As they were about to depart, I crept across the river-bed, and got them outlined against the sky. I could not see my sights, and should not have fired, but I thought

what a blessing so much meat would be to make up our short rations, and so was tempted to try a shot just as they were going. The result was that I sighted too high, as one generally does at night, and the bullet passed over them.

They bolted, and presently I heard something else coming through the bush. Thinking that it might be another, I sat still in the river-bed, but it was only Kitabu and the night-watchman. I asked them what they were doing, and where they were going to, and they said: "Oh, we heard you fire, and came to see if you were all safe."

I was much touched at the solicitude of these good, faithful souls, especially after the way I had been swearing at them the night before to get them along.