

to learn new things, and wonderfully bright and intelligent. He is untiring on the march, often a reckless hunter, and will stand by his master splendidly." And again, "I have made many jungle trips in India and elsewhere, yet in no country have I had such obedient and cheerful followers and such pleasant native companions, despite their faults, as in Somaliland."

This estimate is every bit as true as the other. The Somali of the interior is not, as a rule, dishonest, though he can be an exasperating liar on occasion. And he is usually decent in his dress. Naturally indolent, he prefers to see the women do the work, but he has plenty of energy when he chooses to give it exercise, and in this respect is seen at his best on a shooting trip. And there is no doubt of his courage.



A Mahomedan of the Shafai Sect, the Somali is sometimes very particular about his religious observances, but the Arab despises him as not a true Mahomedan at all.

There is no occasion to detail the principal tribes, which are split up into innumerable sub-divisions. But mention must be made of the *Midgáns*, an outcast tribe of professional hunters. They hunt with bow and poisoned arrow, sometimes with dogs, and are wonderful trackers.

As to the provision which the country makes for the hunter: the principal game to be met with in Northern Somaliland comprises Elephant, Black Rhinoceros, Lion, Leopard, Chita (hunting-leopard),

Warthog, Ostrich, and twelve species of Antelope, to wit, Greater and Lesser Kudu, Oryx (Beisa), Swayne's Hartebeest, Sömmering's Gazelle (Somali-*Aoul*), Waller's Gazelle (*Gerenúk*), Clarke's Gazelle (*Dibatag*), Speke's and Pelzeln's Gazelles (both *Dhero* in Somali), *Baira*, Klipspringer (*Alakút*) and Phillips' Dik-dik (*Sákáro*). Two other species of dik-dik are to be found in Ogádén, the Abyssinian territory immediately south of the western Haud.

Of the above the shooting of elephants, which have grown scarce, has been entirely prohibited the last few years. The rhinoceros, not uncommon in Ogádén, sometimes in the summer travels as far north as the Protectorate border, but one must not expect to find any in British territory, except perhaps in one or two localities further east which are out of the sportsman's usual beats.

Among the antelopes the greater kudu affords the finest trophy, while the *dibatag* and *baira* are the rarest. The commonest species are the *aoul*, *gerenúk*, Speke's gazelle and oryx, with the little dik-dik everywhere except on the open plains. The lion is no longer abundant, but is still not very uncommon in some districts, while the leopard abounds, especially in the hills. The chita is not often met with. Of animals that hardly enter into the category of game the most prominent is the Spotted Hyæna (Somali-*warába*), and a pest he is at times; the smaller Striped Hyæna is rarer. Two species of Jackal are common. As to small game there are several species of bustard, guinea-fowl, partridge, sand-grouse and an occasional hare.

On my present trip I might hope to meet with any of the above game except elephant, rhino, hartebeest and *baira*. Further inland, in the Southern Ogádén, are to be found the Somali giraffe and Grévy's zebra, and on the banks of the Webi Shabeleh the Somali bushbuck and waterbuck and the hippopotamus: all in Abyssinian territory and considerably beyond our border or the reach of a short expedition.

These introductory remarks have given the caravan a good start on its first day's journey. It is time to follow.



me this fine fellow inevitably betrayed his humble origin. Whether in his walk, his flight, his attitudes, his general behaviour, or his language, once a myna always a myna. And yet, if I only knew, he has probably even dropped the old family \* name, for fear of calling to mind the tinned grasshoppers that paid his tailor's bills! I think I like old John Company Myna best.

Another familiar acquaintance was the drongo—the Indian king-crow—who don't care nothing for nobody, but sits on the donkey's back encouraging that placid creature to flush its rider's insect prey as effectively as ever two-legged beater flushed quail for Master. Then a discordant scream of rage, and the glossy black plumage and long forked tail flash in the sunlight as we turn to see what has evoked the sudden outburst of wrath. Among the thicker trees vanishes the silent shape of a dark grey buzzard, and the little champion returns from his pursuit in triumph. The king-crow is a pal of mine, though his usual discordant note is the reverse of musical.

They told me that Mandera was a good place for leopards: it was not long before I had evidence of the fact. A not inconsiderable acquaintance in India with the leopard (or panther as we call him there) has impressed me with a decided respect for his character and abilities, and this my meetings with his African brother have not decreased.

Tracking down a light-footed beast like a leopard in the Somali hills is, from the nature of the country, a more than difficult undertaking. It is usually, moreover, impossible to obtain a sufficiency of beaters

\* *Acridotheres* = Grasshopper-hunter.

when wanted. Hence the marking down of one in his hiding place and driving him out, as frequently done in India, is rarely practicable. The usual recourse then is a bait at night. But there is generally no convenient tree to sit in, so the sportsman has resort to a zariba. Best a zariba occupied by a Somali encampment with their sheep and goats, for any leopard of the neighbourhood is certain to be aware of their presence, and as likely as not will come prowling round under cover of darkness in search of an opportunity of annexing one of the flock. The flock one might imagine was fairly safe within the thick thorn fence, some  $4\frac{1}{2}$  or 5 feet in height, and with several human beings sleeping alongside. But supply the leopard's activity and daring with the stimulus of a little hunger, and he makes nothing of a leap over the thorn-fence into the enclosure and another leap out again, this time with a sheep. So it comes about that if a Somali *karia* (encampment) occupies a zariba for any length of time, a single leopard will sometimes quarter himself upon it and exact his toll with the utmost regularity two nights out of three, or even oftener. The tax would seem an unbearable one, but it is rarely that the Somali will take the trouble to try and circumvent the marauder. His whole wealth consists in his flocks, but an individual sheep costs little, and spite of his avarice the Mussulman fatalism of his nature endures the robbery, until one day he thinks of counting up the sheep he has lost, then curses all the robber's ancestral relatives and hurriedly shifts his encampment! From this it can be understood that the Somali will probably welcome the Sahib who

comes to shoot a leopard from his zariba ; but he will show no gratitude, and will demand an exorbitant price for a goat to be used as bait.

The *modus operandi* consists in making a loophole in the zariba fence about two feet from the ground, tying a goat up immediately outside and waiting for the panther to come. It is not a sporting method, but being the only one usually possible, it has to my thinking a sufficient excuse in the amount of damage to stock caused by the depredations of leopards. And, as will be seen, it is not nearly so simple a business as it sounds ; which fact, with the darkness and the nature of the beast with which one has to deal, combine to provide an element of excitement that makes the affair not quite the cold-blooded butchery that it might at first appear. While if the leopard is only wounded, one may have some nervous work in following him up next morning. As to the use of a live goat as bait, I confess I have no scruples. The goat objects at first to being tied up outside the zariba, but it certainly does not, as I once heard stated by a man with no personal knowledge of the subject, spend the time in a state of terror. While if the leopard is killed, the sacrifice of one goat means the saving alive of many.

On this occasion at Mandera my luck was out. I was sitting at a loop-hole in a neighbouring zariba at about 9 p.m., when suddenly the goat stiffened and tugged at its rope with the peculiar sneezing snort the goat tribe go in for when alarmed. I knew what that meant, had heard just one faint foot-fall. Next moment there was a rush, a gurgling scuffle, and the goat was gone ! The leopard's charge—he must have

from a mere "eye for country," which uncivilised man so often, though not always, seems to possess—in common with the domestic cat—has always been a marvel to me, but I have never seen it so developed as among these Somalis. The Haud, for instance, is absolutely flat and only varies according as long grass or thorn bushes predominate, stretching for miles and miles in every direction without any sort of distinguishing landmark whatever. Yet on this occasion when we had tramped more than twenty miles, in anything but a straight line, after that tireless brute of a lion, and I asked where our camp was, Elmi pointed without hesitation; he was not quite sure about the distance, guessing sixteen miles (it proved to be about thirteen), but he had no doubt whatever as to the direction and led straight back on to our zariba, which was perhaps thirty or forty yards in diameter. When I say he guessed sixteen miles, I mean that he said five hours; they reckon distance, like the Arabs, by time, the calculation I found being based on a marching pace of about three miles an hour, or a shade more. When, however, as sometimes occurs, a Somali's estimate has no apparent basis whatever, this method is apt to be exasperating to our ridiculous European desire for comparative accuracy.

The following night I lost one of my two donkeys in an unexpected fashion. One was tethered as usual just outside the zariba, the other and a sheep were tied up at likely spots a couple of miles away; in the case of the latter animal, with a man in a tree above to scare off hyænas. This precaution did not seem to be necessary in the case of the donkey, not knowing

the *warába* then as well as I do now ; so I was correspondingly disgusted in the morning to find the poor beast had been killed and devoured by hyænas, having apparently been attacked by three at once. Elmi said he had never known of such a case before, and Drake-Brockman says these brutes seem to have a great respect for the donkey and he has never known them attack one. Mr. Selous, however, has mentioned similar cases.

Another change of camp. This was our furthest point, about 160 miles from the coast. Here I saw in ground which had been marshy in the rainy season, the dry imprints of the feet of a rhinoceros which had been there some months before.

The move brought no change of luck and the time had come to turn our steps to the north again. I got another *gerenúk* and two more *dibatag* however, both standing shots again, as the long *durr* grass, whose neighbourhood they are fond of, effectually prevents one from getting down on the knee or sitting, as I like to do where possible.

The *dibatag's* description, which I have omitted, may as well go in here. Having some affinities with the *gerenúk*, the *dibatag* is yet a distinct type, constituting a genus by itself. Smaller than the *gerenúk* it nevertheless stands high for a gazelle and has a long neck, like the former species browsing on the acacias and rarely, if ever, grazing. The buck alone has horns which, though small (ten inches is good), are handsome, curving forward in the reed-buck style. The coat is an uncommon colour, pretty purplish-grey, with the face markings a handsome red-brown. A



complain to the District Officer ; but they knew they had no case, and presently climbed down, upon which I let them have as much water as we could spare.

It is an axiom in lion-shooting that *karias* attract lions, but the lion does not like the neighbourhood of too many human beings. Fresh *karias* kept coming up from the south and drove most of the game away, so we decided to move south a short way into the Haud. We ought really to have taken this course a week earlier, but I had been hoping for the arrival of my Abyssinian permit, intending as soon as it arrived to march straight across the Haud into Ogádén. However, a mail had arrived without it, and it looked as if I must perforce give up the Ogádén with the rhinoceros I had counted on getting there.

After hiring four additional water camels we started on the 16th August, leaving some stores at Kotunwein as before, and camped on the following day at Billeil Tobani, within the Haud, a few miles short of the Abyssinian border.

