



# A NATURALIST

IN

# MID-AFRICA

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF

*A JOURNEY TO THE MOUNTAINS OF THE  
MOON AND TANGANYIKA*

BY

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the banana often growing up to the level of about 6,200 feet.

These Wakamba, who number probably a million, can make rough pottery and work native iron. They can also manufacture bags from *Sansevieria* fibre. Any number can be got to work for two rupees a week.

They grow during the rains two crops of maize, millet, and other cereals; and, in the same year after the rains are over, obtain two further crops of sweet potatoes.

Here I was, as usual, kindly treated by Mr. Ainsworth, and rested a few days for Mr. Watt's party, with whom I went on to Kikuyu. Mrs. Watt and her five little children were most plucky in coming to settle so far from any human habitation.

From Languru to the beginning of the Kikuyu bush is a very gradual ascent, and forms the well-known Athi plains. The abundance of game is still extraordinary, in spite of the amount of extermination which has been practised by certain persons. A tale of 380 head in three months fell to one "sportsman," which, considering that a little antelope meat is a great blessing to the caravans on this road, seems quite inexcusable.

A curious feature is the abundance of the *Kongoni*, or hartebeest, the most timid as well as the ugliest of them all. This *Kongoni*, like the gnus and the majority of antelopes which

hill, from which there is probably a long gentle descent to the flat valley which leads to the Kagera.

It is probably some 220 miles from Tanganyika to the Victoria by this route, but this is not a matter of much importance. I know nothing of the country between Uriji and the Victoria; but they appear not to be in connection with one another, besides which there could be no competition with the Kagera route.

Game in Karagwe is usually conspicuous by its absence. The most important animal is the rhinoceros. The day I left Karaingy lake and followed its shore, passing over numerous little ridges and alluvial bays extending from it, until I camped on the shore of the next lake at Kangemnyi, was remarkable on account of the number of these animals. On starting early in the morning we saw two of these creatures looming large in the mist. I at once sallied forth to shoot, and had advanced within 100 yards when my enthusiastic little dog spoilt everything by rushing in and barking. It will scarcely be credited that these huge beasts, after running wildly to and fro for a minute or two, fled precipitately, with little Bobby barking courageously after them for a quarter of a mile.

After proceeding a short distance we came across another, which did not wait for us. I was walking behind my guide and crossing a flat valley studded with ant-hills, when I was surprised by his sud-

denly springing back nearly upon me and pointing at an ant-hill. I went forward, looked over it, and was surprised by the sight of a rhinoceros lying asleep on the other side, so near that I could have touched it. Unfortunately I had not a rifle with me, and before one could be produced the animal awoke and went off.

We saw two more near the end of the march and went after them. I was just kneeling down to get a good aim, when one of my men, who wore a white shirt, rushed forward, and the animal saw him and charged us both. We both fired and the discharge turned him. After we had fusiladed him, and he had been charging us with an activity which I should never have suspected, during perhaps 20 minutes, he had had sufficient exercise and went off to some quieter place.

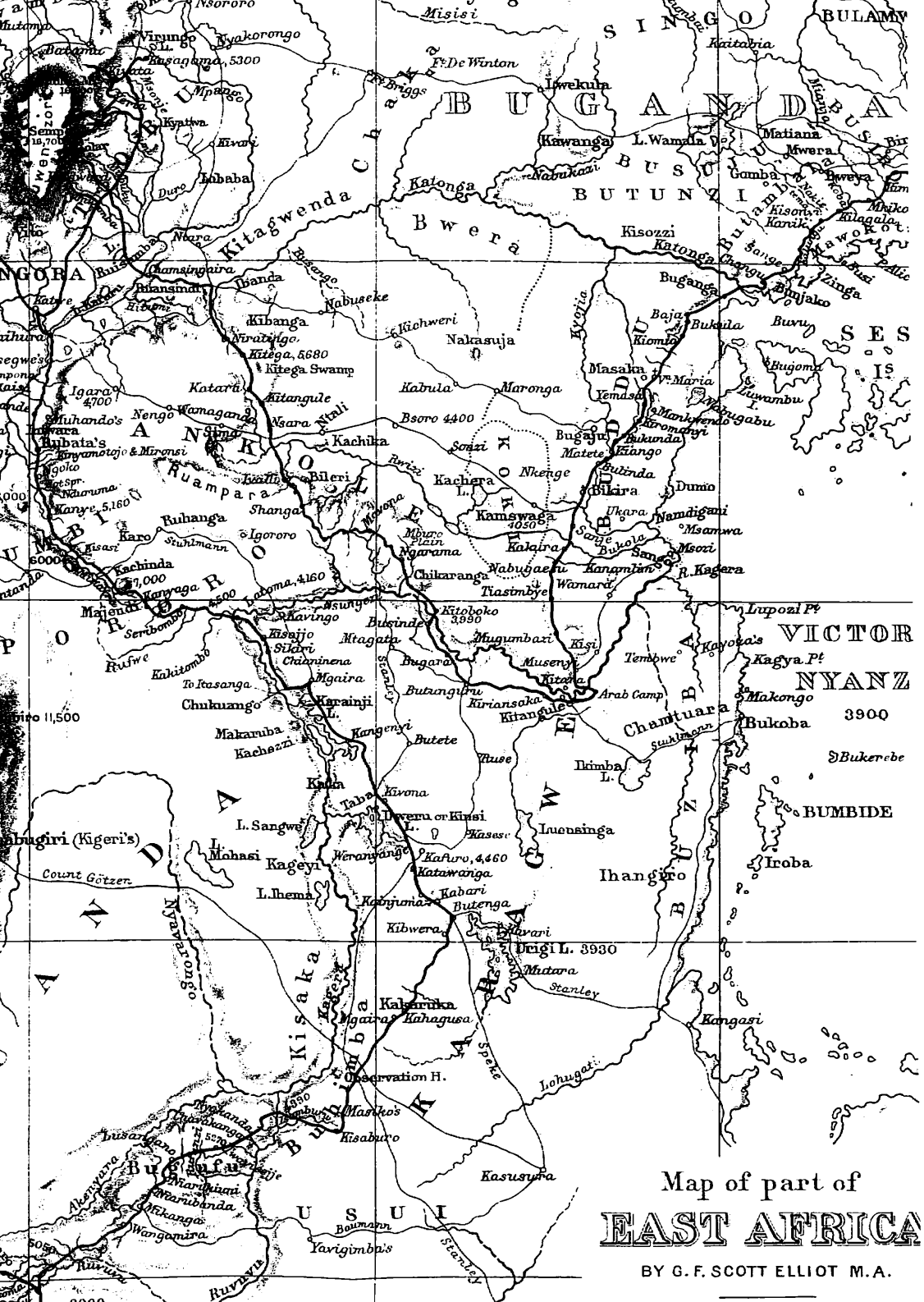
This day's experience showed me conclusively that as a rule these animals do not charge out of sheer wickedness. In this country, however, the natives appear sometimes to collect in large bands and spear them, and this may account for their timidity. I am sure that they cannot see clearly for more than 50 yards or so.

I also saw them on four or five other days in Karagwe and Buhimba. The reason of their abundance is probably connected with a kind of thorn bush, of which there is a great variety all over the district.

I supposed them all to be the common "black" two-horned rhinoceros, although they were nearly white in colour. The long horns of the white species are often found for sale at Zanzibar: I should have supposed that these specimens had probably been brought by the Arabs from the Zambesi river or Portuguese Africa. I hear, however, that this form (*Rhinoceros Homewoodi*!) has been reported from the German Territory to the south-east of the Victoria Nyanza—practically, it appears, the same country as Karagwe—and it is possible that I was mistaken.

Other game is very rare. I once saw a troop of zebras, and on two or three occasions we came across hartebeest. Guinea-fowl were curiously common near the plantations at Kibwera and Kakaruka. I saw one flock, which must have contained at least a hundred, and Bobby for once made himself useful by rushing in and barking. They took refuge in the trees, and were so occupied in gloating over his futile wrath, that I had no difficulty in getting as many as I wished.

The little lake which Speke called Windermere is one of the pleasantest spots that I have seen anywhere. It lies amongst some very steep hills, and its surface is dotted with two or three beautiful little islands. Kajeti's capital lies on the banks of a wooded ravine to the south-east corner, and there are several small valleys and



Map of part of  
**EAST AFRICA**

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Scale 1 : 2,000,000.

STATUTE MILES