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THE RISE

OF

OUR EAST AFRICAN EMPIRE

EARLY EFFORTS IN NYASALAND AND UGANDA

BY

FREDERICK D. LUGARD



IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

NYASALAND AND EASTERN AFRICA

WITH CHAPTERS ON

COMMERCE, SLAVE-TRADE, AND SPORT



FRANK CASS & CO. LTD.

1968

*1721. N°93
Kx, 563*

rush across country, and then the densest jungle and most impenetrable scrub give way before him like dry flax before fire; but, however panic-struck, he will follow the first track he crosses. These tracks intersect each other in an elephant country in all directions, and it is difficult to decide with what object they first became well-used paths. A hippo path is different. This animal does not put one foot into the footprint of the last, like an elephant, but his near and off feet each make paths for themselves, so to speak, so that generally there is a narrow ridge of grass or soil in the centre. Rhinoceros again are different, and they use their paths to connect their dunging-places. On the bare plains, where the grass is no higher than the turf on a lawn, you may see the game tracks, worn still more bare by the hoofs of countless animals. In high grass, in forest, through tangled scrub and brushwood, of course the rule applies with still more force. Even the very field-mice and vermin keep to their runs, though the ground be flat and without a blade of grass.

If the caravan is proceeding along game tracks (as now on our journey up the Sabakhi) I select such as bear in the direction I wish to go by my pocket compass. Each path that branches away is "closed" by the men who follow me. This is done either by throwing upon it a few green twigs, leaves, or grass, or by drawing a line across it—if no leaves are handy—with a stick or spear. By this means, should you wish to follow up the track of the caravan, you can do so with ease among a network of paths; and thus, should a gap occur in the caravan, those behind have no difficulty in selecting the path we have followed.

After an hour and a half or two hours' march we halt. By this time the caravan has opened out; men who are sick, or who have stopped to adjust a load, &c., and the lazy or weak ones have lagged behind. Before long

they are all up, and the rearguard, whose orders are on no account whatever to allow a single man to remain behind them, arrive, and report all present. A few more minutes' rest, and we are off again; and probably if we have started early, and the men are in good marching condition, our next stretch brings us into camp. If the march is over ten or eleven miles, a second intermediate halt is necessary, and this delays arrival for over an hour, and tries the men greatly in the fierce mid-day sun. In such cases the custom is usually to *telekeza*—viz., to make a long halt of three or four hours, while the men make fires and cook some food; and then marching again at 2 or 3 P.M., to halt for camp towards sundown. I have done this day after day when marching hard; and a Swahili porter, when—by an early start and judicious halting, &c.—his endurance is best utilised, can carry a load of from 70 lb. and upwards for twenty miles, and even more!

Arrived in camp, the site for the tents is indicated by me with small flags; later, when I had companies of Sudanese and Zanzibari soldiers, the line for each and the limits of camp were similarly marked by flags. In an incredibly short time—half-an-hour or so—the tents are pitched, the bed and tent gear arranged, the loads counted and stacked, and the party whose duty it is to construct the *boma* or zeriba round camp is engaged in chopping boughs, and dragging them in to form the fence. Meanwhile the cook has made his little fire and boiled a kettle of water, and a refreshing cup of tea is ready, and cold meat and *chippatis* if you want them.

Each little coterie of men select the small site for their bivouac; one goes off to collect material to build the huts, another to draw water, another for firewood and stones on which to place the cook-pot. When the caravan has but just left the coast most of the men have little tents. These consist of a sheet of drill some 6 ft.

"They have no conception of the scope of the question. Here was I, wishing to take over a valuable tract of ground, and to gain legal possession of the site, on which I wish to build the fort, together with adjoining lands, including the regular camping-ground, and the reply is, that there is a honey-pot in the tree on the site! The fact is that waste land in Africa is literally 'no-man's-land,' and a neighbouring small village headman has no more claim over it than you or I" (diary).

I urged that a European and a doctor should be stationed here at the Kibwezi on account of its central position (half-way to Machako's, and at the junction of the Taru and Sabakhi routes), and the good water, abundant food, &c. Though this was never carried out by the Company, the suggestion was followed by the establishment of the East Africa Scottish Industrial Mission.

I carried out my plan exactly as I had arranged, marching very rapidly (in torrents of rain), and reaching Makongeni on May 5th. The forest was now dense with foliage, and where before the ground was burnt up, it was now carpeted with the most lovely flowers. The Sabakhi was a roaring river of immense volume. Buffalo and rhino had come down to the riverine forest in great numbers, and it was a matter of some danger passing through their haunts at the head of my little caravan, with only a small .440 Winchester for defence. The ground was literally trampled down by them, like a cattle-yard. However, though a rhino charged through the caravan on one occasion, and a buffalo made for a porter on another, we were singularly fortunate, and met with no *contretemps*.

I note in my diary a quaint custom or superstition with regard to the cobra, which I noticed on this march:—"A very big black snake crossed my path slowly, and getting a man's sword-bayonet I let him

have it on the tail-end. He reared, and expanded a big hood, like the picture-book cobra. I did not know there was so well-hooded a cobra in Africa. He spat furiously, on which my men with great energy spat back! Nor could I get them to speak until he (and they) had finished. He did not attack further, though he looked like it at first, and went his way in the thick grass." From the manner of this performance it was evident that the men seemed to think their safety lay in spitting back at the reptile.

During this march I was much distressed by a bad foot, a very large thorn having entered the sole and broken off there. My boots were completely worn out, in spite of all my cobbling, and I had to march more than once with bare feet. The thing became so painful that for a couple of marches (for the first and last time in Africa, except when brought wounded to Karonga's) I had to submit to be carried. This, however, is no great luxury in such a district as the Sabakhi valley, as my diary testifies:—"It is rough work brushing through the thorns, which tear one's arms, and sometimes one's face. This jungle here is full of wait-a-bit thorns, and my bare feet, &c., *can't* wait a bit when I am carried through by main force in a blanket slung on a pole. Not an easy conveyance, unless you know how to dodge it—legs hanging out on one side, and head on the other, is the only way; for you *must* wear a big hat in this fierce sun, and the hat won't go *under* the pole or accommodate itself to the shape of the blanket." I was, in fact, rather a cripple at this time, for the wound in my left arm had broken out and become excessively painful, and I took several considerable pieces of bone from it, and had to wear it in a sling to get relief, though I still used my rifle when I got a chance, and secured a very fine water-buck—perhaps the longest horns I have.

Why? Perhaps they are suspicious of what all this may mean, and, as in Nyasaland, think they are being fattened to be *eaten*. I think, however, it is merely the dumb brute's instinct to wander which makes them go. The long, hot, dusty march, &c., is a bore. They wander off as cattle do, regardless of stall and food, of danger from lions, of danger of a cruel master, instead of a kind one. The very immediate present is the only thought, and sooner than march to-morrow to the unknown, they slip off to-day, and follow the caged bird's instinct, and, like it, they perish in their ill-advised liberty; but, who blames the foolish bird?"

I have copied the passage *verbatim*, though it is somewhat lengthy, and perhaps those who read it will begin to understand that the African must be treated differently from the European with centuries of culture to his making, and that coercion is sometimes necessary for their own good. The children were taken to the Company's station at Machako's. The tiny one shared a donkey with a wizened old Sudanese soldier, who was too ill to walk. They were then handed over by me to the safe keeping of the Company's agent. What has become of them since I do not know.

Grant was now able to ride a donkey; but Wilson, who had been ill ever since we left the coast, and had only kept himself together by mere pluck, was getting worse daily. We crossed the Masai roads safely, though we only missed running into a very powerful war-party by a few hours apparently. We passed a very large Swahili trading caravan, and arrived at the Kibwezi on Sept. 5th, our food having held out with a small margin.

Here I found the caravan I had despatched in advance on July 1st, under Mr Auburn, an ex-cavalry soldier. He told us of strange adventures. He had been lost in the jungle for five days when out shooting, and his wretched men, as I long afterwards overheard from their conversa-

tion together, had been panic-struck, fearing lest they should be accused of having murdered him. He, moreover, casually mentioned that he "had been tossed several yards into the air by a rhino." He returned from here to the coast, taking the prisoners (slave-traders) with him. His caravan included most of the men of our former caravan, and they professed much delight on meeting Wilson and myself. Most of them were armed with muzzle-loaders, and a new instalment of sixty more, who now arrived, had no arms at all.

The Sudanese collapsed here, and a very great many were seriously ill. There were now some 5 Europeans and 450 natives, and yet no doctor. Grant and De Winton were as yet ignorant of the work; when Wilson was well enough to do anything, he was worth ten ordinary men, but as he now completely broke down, the whole work devolved on Dualla and myself, and it was almost more than we could accomplish. The sickness of the Sudanese compelled me to halt for five days before they could possibly march, and in this time I reorganised the whole caravan, divided them into companies and "camps," checked and entered all rifles, re-sorted and ascertained the nature of all loads, bought food, wrote voluminous mails and despatches for the coast, and with a thousand other details occupied my time completely. In addition, we had to tend the sick.

None of the little forts except Makongeni and the "fifth stockade" contained any garrison. Our old friends among the Wakamba chiefs came and brought us their little presents—a sheep, sugar-cane, grain, and what not—and received an equivalent (and no more) in cloth or beads—a more satisfactory system than the virtual blackmail demanded in Nyasaland. On the 11th Sept. we marched. Our cheery old Wanyamwezi porters, who had been with us before, carried Wilson with positive eagerness, though he weighed, I suppose, fourteen stone.

"After this he had two or three relapses ; but I saw his eyes going, and redoubled the rubbing. It was twelve o'clock when I got in, and by evening he was better, and able to talk and to taste the spirit at last. Still, his pulse was very, very weak, and he dreaded the night. I left him for a few minutes, and he had again a bad turn ; but when I returned, he cheered up again. It was extremely curious ; my presence just then seemed to be life to him, and he could not bear the idea of any one else having anything to do with him, except under my directions. . . . I sat up with him, though very tired, of course, not only with the physical work, but the strain of many hours when his life depended on me. So I sat up the long night through (and it *was* a long one), and drank strong coffee to keep off the sleepiness. I talked to him for some time, and the subject turned on his and my past. I did it purposely, to take him out of himself, and told him I had done something like this once before in my life.

"His life was *barely* flickering, for he was weaker than ever now, though the stroke was past ; and many times I could not detect a pulse at all—and such a fluttering and stopping one at best. We did not dare that he should sleep, except for a very short period at a time, lest he should just pass the border in his sleep, and I should find myself watching a dead man ! So all through the night I hardly took my eyes off his face ; and when he dozed, I felt his pulse, and watched his breathing till it flickered, and then I woke him. At intervals I fed him with Liebig. Towards daybreak he fell into what seemed to me a far easier and healthier sleep, and I watched and let him sleep. He awoke *very* much better, and I rigged up a really most admirable *dhoolie* of the bed as it stood, and, by a good device, fixed the pole so that when the bed was put down it stood on its own legs, and the pole, too, did not fall. The same con-

trivance prevented the possibility of the bed's toppling over. I fitted him up with bottles of Liebig and lime-juice, and he went off. Then I got the caravan off."

The march was a rough one, and I walked beside the bed on which Wilson was carried to steady it, stumbling through and over the thorn-bushes to hold it up. This was terribly fatiguing work. "Near camp, a very fine rhino came trotting past the *safari*. Wilson's porters were scared, and dropped him, giving him a bad shaking and hurting him much. I had just then gone ahead to select camp. The rhino came past me at twenty yards. I went towards him with the '577, and he swerved towards me, and looked like charging. I thought it was all right with the '577, and stood fast. Luckily, he did not charge, for, a few seconds later, I covered him carefully and fired, and found no cartridges in the rifle ! My gun-bearer had extracted them without orders (and against orders). It would have been bad for me if he had charged when I was under the impression an empty gun was loaded. I was very riled at losing him" (diary).

The extremely heavy work of forcing my way through bushes, &c., to hold on to Wilson's bed, had tired me out completely, and I add :—"I meant sitting up again with Wilson, and started to do so, but fell dead asleep after watching for some time ; and on his urgent request, and assurance that he was very much better, I allowed a Somal to take my place, with orders to wake me on the slightest possible occasion, and I slept like a dead man."

Next day we arrived at the fifth stockade. There was a garrison here, but the *akida* in command told me that the men had already declared their intention of leaving (without orders), being ill supplied with food and necessaries. I took away their arms, but subsequently gave them muzzle-loaders in exchange. I left them goods to buy food, and warned them not to desert, but

conjecture as to what it was, nor was it until we were quite close that I discovered it to be a rhino lying down asleep! I shot him stone dead, with a single bullet from the .577, before he had time to wake and make himself disagreeable; and my men were able to carry off their fill of meat without even going off the path to fetch it. Shukri, the Sudanese native officer, was a capital game-shot, and secured several animals for his men. I allowed no native, except him and Dualla, to fire at game.

My instructions had been to build a station at Ngongo Bagas; but this is mere waste land, uninhabited except by passing Masai, who graze their flocks and herds there during the season. There would be no object in building a station at such a place. The object of a station is to form a centre for the purchase of food for caravans proceeding to Uganda, &c. Kikuyu was reported a country where food was extraordinarily abundant and cheap. In Masailand, on the contrary, there would not be food, even for the garrison, except such as the Wa-Kikuyu might bring; for the Masai do not grow a single blade of corn, and exist entirely on their flocks and herds. I therefore decided to build at the southern extremity of Kikuyu, as close as possible to Masailand, so as to get in touch with that tribe, but within the borders of the rich and fertile, food-producing country.

Kikuyu is surrounded by magnificent primeval forest, and probably owes its rich soil to the existence of former forests, which have been replaced by cultivation, only the skirts being allowed to remain as a protection against the Masai. These forest paths are full of deep pits for buffalo, elephant, &c., which are concealed with such consummate skill that though I was aware there were many about, and was on the look-out, and considered myself by no means a novice at jungle-craft, it was not long before I precipitated myself into one! The common custom is to dig the pit close to where a trunk of a tree

—and I believe will even attack green and living wood.¹

I have been told by an eye-witness that the acacia forest lying between Teb and Tokar, in the Eastern Sudan, has been entirely killed by white ants, a fact which was corroborated by the Arabs of the desert. I cannot say that I recollect to have seen any such evidences towards Tamai, and in that portion of the district which I have traversed; but, if it be true, it is worthy the attention of Mr Floyer as a third cause of the destruction of the vegetation, and the desiccation of these countries, added to the axe of the Arab and the appetite of the camel.

Near the Lilwa we came upon elephant, for here acacia scrub, on which they feed, abounds. They do not eat the melalesha, and the succulent Nkongé aloe is only chewed and ejected. It is a compliment to the toughness of its fibre—which I have elsewhere spoken much of—that the elephant, whose favourite food is the tough rope-bark of the fig-tree species, refuses to attempt its digestion! Guinea-fowl are in enormous flocks throughout this country, of the spotted variety, the vulturine being confined, as far as I know, to the Sabakhi; quail of several varieties abound, and also partridges and chikor, blue pigeon, with occasional florican and bustard. De Winton, looking about for something to shoot, got charged suddenly one day by a rhino with a calf. He fired his gun in her face and bolted, and she went past without attempting to injure him.

From the Lilwa we struck into an abominable piece of country, of continual ranges of low hills running north and south, with no surface-soil, and formed of loose rocks, hidden by thin spear-grass and parched and withered plants. Acacia, euphorbia, and all the thorn-

¹ Buchanan relates that white ants killed the *living* eucalyptus trees in Nyasaland. Geog. Journal, vol. i. p. 252.

trees, which thrive where nothing else can grow, flourished here, and among them wandered the rhino, who, like them, seems to thrive without water and sustenance, and to delight in barren rocks and a fierce sun. He is a beast with no fine feelings, he has no eye for scenery, no manners if you meet him unexpectedly. His palate lacks discrimination, unless it be in the comparative merits of thorns as appetisers. He is a pachyderm inside and out with whom I have no sympathy, and, like some people one has met, enforces his repartee with the point of his horn, and relies for his emphasis on the ponderous bulk of his own mass of insusceptibilities. I must beg my reader's pardon, for I have no right to linger on either white ant or rhino, and the thousand other subjects of interest—animal and vegetable—on which I would like to pause.

Steaming on ahead in the desire to complete a given distance on a bearing I had taken on a small peak, I got detached from the caravan, and awoke to the fact that my gun-bearer, a Somal, and myself were undoubtedly lost. My diary written at the time describes the incident thus:—"To be lost in such a vast wilderness of barren hills, interminably spreading on every side, is most dispiriting—worse than in a forest or on a plain, for one feels such an *atom*. It would be impossible to see any camp, however close. The near hills were on fire, so we could not tell a grass-fire from a signal-fire. One could not hear a gun in such a country, and there was no water and no food, and already I was very empty and hungry."

My main anxiety was concerning the caravan, for I felt confident I could myself find my way to the Lilwa and Baringo, and the presence of two companions makes all the difference in such a case. We were lucky, however, in striking a right direction, and eventually in finding the caravan. The same evening I shot a buffalo

ing what he thought to be an elephant under a tree, he approached it, but on turning round to take his gun from his "boy," he was astonished to find himself deserted, with no rifle in his hand, and his gun-bearers in full flight. Looking again towards the animal under the tree, he found that it was coming for him "bald-headed, in a bee-line," as he phrased it! He fled, but the rhino (for such it was) regularly hunted him, and when already his horn was but a few inches from the seat of his pants and his fate seemed inevitable, a half-bred dog that he owned flew at the rhino's nose, and distracting his attention, saved my friend's life.

In East Africa the *kifaru* is by no means so dangerous as either the elephant or buffalo. Rhinos will frequently charge a caravan, when it passes to windward of them, but they rarely make a vicious assault, and are generally contented with scattering the porters in every direction, and keeping straight on their course, grunting and puffing like a runaway engine. When I was bringing down the Sudanese, a rhino charged the rear of the caravan, and bore down on a Sudanese woman. Never, I presume, having seen or heard of such a beast before, she was panic-stricken at the sight, and pitching her baby into a bush, fled with shrieks into the jungle. She was, however, unharmed, and came back and gathered up the baby later on.

The rhino, however, when wounded, is naturally more vicious. The first one I ever shot showed great sport. She charged us backwards and forwards like a bull in a ring, and regularly hunted down one man, whom she overtook. He threw himself down, and the rhino galloped right over him. I expected to find him like a poached egg on which a brick has fallen, but he got up (in the marvellous way that natives do escape under such circumstances) without a scratch! The gun-bearers out on that occasion were not my own men,



A RHINO ON THE RAMPAGE.

whom I never allowed to fire off a gun under any circumstances whatsoever. These, however, who belonged to the Machako's garrison, had no such order, and as the rhino charged backwards and forwards, natives were letting off their Sniders in every direction; so that, on the whole, it was a pretty warm quarter. She dropped to a final shot from myself; and I was sitting on her examining the position and direction of the bullet-wound, with my finger in the hole, under the impression she was dead, when she suddenly upset me by rising!

Captain Williams had an extremely narrow escape on his way to Uganda. He started with the idea that a rhinoceros was not a dangerous animal, and could not turn quickly enough to catch an active man,—in fact, that it merely charged like an engine on a rail, and you had only to stand out of the line of the metals and let it go past. So he went rhino-hunting, after arguing his theory late overnight. He wounded a rhino, and proceeded to run after it. Eventually he came up with it again, and fired. It immediately turned the tables, and began to run after him. Dodge as he might—and out of wind with his long run, he had not much dodginess left in him—the rhino dodged quicker, and its horn, I believe, actually touched his clothes. He threw himself down on the ground, for he saw escape was impossible, but the rhino refused to take advantage of a fallen foe.

The African rhino is smooth-skinned like a pig and not armour-plated, with his skin in great massive "shields" like the Indian species. The skin is very thick, and is valued for making whips, &c., and, especially in the Sudan, for shields. He has a double horn, the second one varying much in length. Sometimes it is nearly as long as the front horn, sometimes it is a mere knob. Willoughby speaks of shooting a rhino with a rudimentary third horn.

In habits the rhino is peculiar. Far from any water, among burning rocks and burnt-up grass, in the very most inhospitable and foodless localities, he loves to take up his quarters. His thick hide is impervious to the long spikes of the aloe, which will pierce a leather gaiter as though it were brown paper. The 3-inch acacia thorns tickle his palate, and serve as sauce to the tasteless fodder. He stands in the same relation to the graceful gazelle which crops the grass beside him as a bargee does to an athlete. His manners are uncouth, and he requires plenty of elbow-room. If he comes your way, it is best to avoid him; for he will not apologise for treading on your toes. He delights in the thorny places of nature, for his unfeeling hide has no sensitiveness, and a 4-oz. bullet is the only argument which will have any weight with him. Nature provides her types to point our moralisings, and it is well that there are pachyderms, I suppose, in and out of the jungles of Africa. I do not envy them, for nature's law is compensation, and the more sensitive we are to pain, the greater our capacity for pleasure.

Rhino are very numerous in East Africa. I have not seen them in Uganda, though Speke, Felkin, and others mention having found them there, and they are met with in Karagwé in the German sphere. Nor have I seen them in Ankoli, or the countries westward of the Victoria; but they are reported plentiful in the Sudan. The rhino stands about 4 ft. 9 in. at the shoulder, and is about 9 ft. 7 in. in length. His weight would be about 1200 lb. and upwards.

The only other pachyderm is the hippopotamus. He merits but few words, being an unobtrusive beast, of whom one rarely sees more than the head. As a rule, hippos are harmless animals, and when found in river-pools, where it is impossible for them to swim away,

it is mere butchery to shoot them; one might as well shoot the cattle in a fold. But old bulls will often become cantankerous and aggressive. On the Shiré, when I was there, they swarmed in very great numbers, and were continually charging boats, and on more than one occasion bit a mouthful out of the side, making a hole a man could creep through. As this would naturally sink the boat, and the river was full of crocodiles, it was a taste to be discouraged. The rule is, never to go between a hippo and the open water by day, if you wish to avoid being charged—*i.e.*, always pass to landward of them; but by night keep away from the banks, as the hippo are ashore to feed.

Hippo-hide is especially valued for whips, and for thongs for the long teams of oxen, at the Cape. The ivory is very hard, and is worth, I think, about 1s. 6d. a lb. The curved teeth are handsome, and are used for picture-frames, &c. I used to file my rifle-sights out of a bit of hippo-ivory, as it does not turn colour in the sun so quickly as elephant-ivory. Hippo will cover great distances in their nightly quest of food. At Karonga's there were no hippos within some fifteen miles, yet they nightly grazed even above Karonga's, and went perhaps six miles inland, so that I should suppose they must have swam thirty or forty miles, and walked while grazing ten or twelve more each night, and this in spite of the fact that there was apparently every bit as good a grazing-ground close by the bay they patronised by day. The hippo lives in harmony with the crocodile; both love the same sand-banks and shallows. When a hippo is wounded, however, and his blood taints the water, I have seen the whole river seething with crocodiles attracted by the gore. This probably accounts for hippos, when wounded, frequently leaving the water and going ashore. The hippo is sometimes found in isolated small