

## 48 Great and Small Game of Africa

Masai) kill rhinos, as well as elephants and other animals, with their very powerful bows and arrows; while even the puny weapons of the Wakamba, made deadly by the strong poisons with which these people are so well acquainted, are capable of occasionally laying one low.

Swahilis are very fond of rhinoceros meat, and the liver is considered by them a great delicacy. The tongue is, in my opinion, the best part, and is very good when thoroughly boiled; or the tail, well stewed, is not bad; either takes many hours to cook.

A. H. NEUMANN.

### IN SOMALILAND

SOMALI NAME, *Wiyil*; ABYSSINIAN NAME, *Aurarisse*

The rhinoceros of Somaliland appears to be the same animal as that found in East and Central Africa. It is found varying very much in size, also in shape and length of horn. I myself have shot rhinoceros with three very marked varieties of horns; one had three distinct horns, the second had a front horn of 29 inches, the other being 12 inches only, whilst the third specimen had a front horn of 17 inches and the other horn 18 inches. The latter animal seems to correspond with the old descriptions of *R. keitloa*. My companion, T. W. B. Greenfield, who had shot many rhinoceroses in the Kilimanjaro country, could see no difference. Half-way across the Haud (the great waterless plateau) I first found their tracks. They are fairly numerous on the southern side of the Haud, and particularly so between Milmil and Imè, and again south of the Webbi Sheybelli.

Rhinoceroses seem to have a great predilection for the tree cactus (giant euphorbia), uprooting it and chewing the branches. The acrid juice of a cactus should tickle even a rhino's palate. The rhinoceros, when unaccompanied by birds, is very easy to approach so long as the wind is right, as it relies almost entirely on its marvellous sense of smell for any warning

of the presence of danger. I should say, from my own observation, that a Somali rhinoceros generally drinks once in twenty-four hours, but often wanders great distances away from water even when quite undisturbed. On one occasion, taking up the night tracks of three rhinoceroses from a water-pool, we followed them for fully five hours without coming up with them. They appeared quite unsuspecting, and had stopped to uproot and feed on several cactus trees. The hide is much prized by the Somalis for fighting shields, as it becomes white and transparent when kept a little time. A dandy warrior generally covers his shield with a piece of calico to keep it clean. From fifteen to twenty-five fighting shields, three-quarters of an inch thick, can be cut from one beast. Some of the Ogaden tribes eat the flesh. It is a very coarse-grained meat, but otherwise good enough, particularly if well pounded between two stones. I had several fruitless hunts after rhinoceros whilst doing forced marches across the Haud. But at Lubba Sunli in Aulihan we found two pools of water, which, from the perfect maze of tracks in the sand, appeared to be the drinking-places of many rhino. It was hopeless ground for tracking, being almost solid rock. I therefore decided to spend the night by one of the pools. This was in a narrow rocky nullah. There was a well-worn path down the steep bank, also up and down the nullah. As there was no bush or cover near enough, I had to make the best I could out of some rocks close to the pool. Two hyænas came and drank early without detecting me, and I was aware of some animal feeding in the bush about 40 yards off. For several hours the stillness was only broken by the splashing of some fish in the pool. At last I was roused from a doze by some heavy animals coming down the track opposite; half-way down they stopped under cover of some bush; then one rhinoceros came sliding noisily down to the edge of the pool. She stared so hard in my direction that I thought she had made me out. I fired at her shoulder with a 10-bore Paradox. She fell to the shot, but, getting on her legs again,

rushed up the nullah. Nothing more came to the water, and as soon as it was light I followed the blood spoor and came up with her a mile up the gorge, when another shot finished her. After photographing her as she lay, I cut seventeen fighting shields from her skin for my men.

At Hagog, south of the Webbi, I remember starting out one evening to try to shoot something for the pot. I had just shot a dik-dik, when, 100 yards farther on, I came on three rhinoceros standing in some open bush. I fired at the biggest with the .577 as they rushed off, and, after following for about half a mile I saw two of them standing on the top of a stony hill trying to wind me. I managed to get up to within 30 yards of the biggest, when I suppose she got a puff of wind, as she then came snorting down the hill like a steam engine. A dozen yards or more away, I got in a good side shot, and 200 yards farther on she subsided. Her appearance was so lifelike that, when the men came up, they would not believe she was dead until they had thrown stones at her. This proved to be a very large cow with three distinct horns, 15 inches, 14 inches, and 3 inches in length respectively.

Farther south, whilst encamped on a bare, stony ridge overlooking a sea of mimosa, where we were hunting for giraffe, I frequently in the early morning saw rhinoceros returning from the water-pools in the hills to lie up for the day in the dense bush below our camp. They were very numerous here.

From this same camp I was riding through the bush one day, and came on two rhinoceros asleep under a mimosa bush; there were no birds with them. I sent the pony back out of harm's way and stood watching them within 20 yards. I suppose they must have got a puff of the wind, as they suddenly jumped up, and I shot the biggest, but let the other go unmolested. This rhinoceros fell where it stood, with a single shot from a .577 behind the shoulder.

Two marches east of Milmil I shot a cow with a fine horn,  $29\frac{1}{2}$  inches

in length. I was out in search of lions and came on the fresh tracks of two rhinoceros. I really did not wish to kill any more. However, I thought we were as likely to find lions' tracks by following the rhino as going in any other direction. After following them for about three hours we came on them most unexpectedly in a small patch of grass. One was only a few yards off, but I could only see its horn. I fired a snap-shot where I thought its neck ought to be, and finished it with another shot. I had to shoot No. 2 to save one of my men, whose white loin-cloth had caught its eye.

On my way back to camp I was lucky enough to pick up a leopard, which was squatting in the grass like a rabbit, apparently hoping to escape observation.

I was once encamped at some water-holes called Gô's : everything in a very strong zereba, as there were a good many lions about. About midnight I was awakened by the snorting of a rhino, and the consequent stampede of our seventy camels. How my tent escaped the rush I cannot think. Every camel broke out of the zereba. It was luckily a moonlight night, and they were driven in again, but only to have a second visit from a rhinoceros an hour later. It was the greatest wonder he did not go for the tent ; possibly he was coming down wind, and at night these beasts may not be so aggressive.

An incident which occurred to my companion, G., will give some idea of the distance a rhinoceros will travel. G. had been away from camp for a week after elephants ; meanwhile I had marched on to the next water with the caravan. While sleeping in the bush with his three shikaris and ponies, he was roused by a rhinoceros, apparently intent on attacking the tethered ponies. He could not see to shoot, but some burning brands appear to have scared the brute away. G. took up his tracks at daylight, and, curiously enough, they brought him past my camp, which was a good six hours' march. After a rest he tracked the beast on into some stony hills

without coming up with it, certainly not less than 25 miles in all, probably many more.

A. H. STRAKER.

THE WHITE OR SQUARE-MOUTHED RHINOCEROS (*Rhinoceros simus*),  
SOMETIMES CALLED BURCHELL'S RHINOCEROS

*Wit rhenoster* OF THE CAPE DUTCH ; *Chukuru* OF BECHUANAS ;  
*Umhobo* OF MATABELE

The great white or square-mouthed rhinoceros is a form which appears to have been evolved in the southern portion of Africa, for, although many other parts of that vast continent would seem to be eminently suited to its habits, it has not yet been met with anywhere to the north of the Zambesi, in Central and Eastern South Africa, or north of the 17th parallel of south latitude in the more westerly portions of the country. To the south of that line, however, this huge mammal was plentiful a century ago all over South Africa north of the Orange River, except in waterless or mountainous districts. In 1812 Dr. Burchell first met with this species in the Batlapeen country, not far from the present native town and mission-station of Kuruman. Probably the range of the white rhinoceros once extended even farther south than this point, but I should doubt its ever having been an inhabitant of the country lying immediately to the north or south of the Orange River, below its junction with the Vaal, as those districts are very arid and do not produce much grass. At any rate all the rhinoceroses met with south of the Orange River by the earlier travellers in South Africa—including Dr. Burchell—seem to have been of the prehensile-lipped or so-called black species. I do not know whether the emigrant Boers, when in 1836 they first entered the country now known as the Orange Free State, met with the white rhinoceros, but I am inclined to believe that they did, as I have had places pointed out to me just north of the Vaal River, on the