

# THE HAUNTS OF AFRICAN GAME

THE HUNTER WHO PENETRATES INTO HUNTING GROUNDS SELDOM VISITED BY CIVILIZED MAN MUST BE PREPARED TO SUFFER THE DISADVANTAGES OF SUCH ISOLATION

By MAJOR C. H. STIGAND

AS a hunting ground Africa excels all other continents, for it contains a greater wealth and variety of game than is found elsewhere and is prolific of that which gives the highest form of sport—dangerous game. The reason for this, is that, naturally well stocked with animal life, it is the least civilized and least populated continent in the world and so, in the wilder and more central parts at any rate, the game still has wide areas over which it may roam and graze as yet little disturbed by the exterminating influences of civilization.

The hunter who penetrates to hunting grounds seldom visited by civilized man must be prepared to suffer the disadvantages of such isolation; such are: lack of roads, primitive means of transport, heat, fever, dirty water, poorness of food, the necessity to force a way through swamps and thick brush and the unwelcome attentions of myriads of insects—both noxious and merely aggravating. The true nature-lover will think such discomforts but a small price to pay for the privilege of wandering in the heart of primeval nature.



The end of a successful Rhino stalk

THE dangerous game of Africa consists of:—*The Elephant* which is still numerous in the central, thicker and less healthy parts of the continent. The Indian elephant is smaller and less fierce than the African, it is strictly preserved and but seldom shot. The African elephant affords

the finest and the hardest sport in the world and—taken all round—it is perhaps the most dangerous of all hunting. To take my own experience, in shooting between fifty and one hundred elephants, I have been once badly gored; once knocked over, several times charged—dropping the animal by a lucky shot at a few yards distant, and have been many times narrowly missed by them. *The Lion* is perhaps not quite so for-

teenth case.

*The Rhinoceros*.—There are two kinds of rhinoceros in Africa, the black and the white, of which the former is still common and the latter is plentiful in a circumscribed area.

*The Buffalo*.—There are three kinds of buffalo of which two sort, the Cape and the Congo buffaloes, are common. The former is found over the greater part of south, central and of East Africa, and possesses the finest head, the latter is met with in the Congo and on the west coast. The third variety—the Abyssinian buffalo—is local to parts of Abyssinia and adjacent territories.

Some twenty years ago rinderpest had considerably reduced its numbers but the buffalo has now increased and is nearly as numerous as it was before this scourge thinned its ranks. It is a formidable beast when wounded, as it generally retires to thick country where it can hear, or smell, the hunter following it up and charge him unexpectedly from close quarters. It is very quick to scent man, has very good hearing and sees as well as, or better than,

the majority of bush animals.

Other dangerous game are *the Leopard*—which is found in most bush and forest countries but lies so close during the daytime that it is seldom seen—and the less formidable *Hippopotamus*—only a danger to one travelling, or hunting, by canoe—the *Cheetah* and the *Hunting Dog*.

I am not quite satisfied that the



Hunting Dog is really a dangerous animal to man. They will pull down any kind of game and appear quite fearless; often when I have met them, or shot one of a pack, they have approached fairly close and kept me under observation for some time. They have given me the impression that they were quite ready to come for me, and numbers of old hunters have told me of similar experiences; "for two pins," they say, "the dogs would have come for me," or, "if I had not shot the leader the whole pack would have been on me." The fact remains, however, that in twenty years experience of Africa and African hunters I have never heard an authenticated instance of a man having been killed, or wounded, by these animals.

Of other game, there is only one deer in Africa, the Barbary deer, which is probably not African but has come from Europe. The game animals in which Africa excels are the hollow-horned ruminants; of these there are a great wealth and variety. These are grass and leaf eating animals of which the males at least, and generally both sexes, bear unbranched horns which are not shed annually, as with the deer, but continue to grow during the whole life of the beast. These horns are of the most varied shapes but all have hollow cores which fit onto corresponding growths of bone springing from the top of the head.

In this group are found,—cattle, such as the Buffaloes and the Wilde beasts, or gnus; large antelopes, such as the Elands, Sable, Roan and the different kinds of oryx; spiral horned antelopes of which the Kudu is the finest trophy and others are the Bongo, Situtunga, lesser Kudu, Nyala and bushbuck; the large group of the Hartebeests, with horns turned at right angles and the bastard Hartebeests, including the Sassaby and Thiang, with curving horns but the same ungainly bodies as the true Hartebeests.

Then there is a big division with horns more or less, lyre-shaped but with the tips pointing forwards, all of which, nearly, are water-loving animals. Such are: the long-haired waterbucks; the Lechwes, of which Mrs. Gray's Lechwe is the most handsome; the Kobs, the Puku and the Reedbucks, of which there are several varieties.

Another very large division includes the Gazelles, thin-legged, wiry animals adapted to live in dry countries—of these the Grant's gazelle bears the finest horns and the most curious is the long-necked Waller's gazelle.

There are the sheep, including the Ibex and the Barbary sheep, and numberless other hollow horned ruminants from the Addax, Impala and Blesbok

down to the small fry such as Oribis, Steinboks, Duikers and Dik Diks. Of other sorts of game there are Giraffes and Zebras of several kinds; the Okapi; Pigs, from the giant hog to the ugly warthog; Hyaena of three species, and the Crocodile and the Ostrich.

Apart from the game there are numerous other animals, many of them peculiar to Africa, of interest to the naturalist-hunter. Such are: the Gorilla of the Kamerons\*; the Chimpanzee of the equatorial forests; the Colobus, Hussar



The Sable Antelope

and a quantity of other monkeys; Baboons; the Galago Lemur; several cats; Gennets; the African porcupine; the Ratel, or Honey Badger; Jackals; the Scaly Manis (the armadillo of the old world); and the curious ant bear (the ant-eater of Africa) whose tracks and burrowings are ubiquitous, although itself never met with.

THE types of country found in Africa may be divided up, for the purposes of big game hunting, into the following:

1. The Plains.

\*Gorillas do not occur in the Congo water shed, but only north of it in the Ogowe River district.—[Edmund Heller.]

2. The Desert.
3. The Bush.
4. The Forest.
5. Swamps.
6. Mountains.

Each of these divisions requires different methods of hunting, and is, generally speaking, the habitat of different game, although that typical of the various regions often overlaps. As examples of such overlapping one might instance the hartebeest, a typical game of the plains but which is also found in bushes but not in thick bush; the lion, which inhabits both bush and plain; the bushbuck, which is typical of the bush but may be found on the edge of forest. So the grouping of game, as inhabitants of the above types of country, can only be considered as generally correct, just as the division of the continent into types is a purely arbitrary arrangement, for all sorts of country, intermediate between the extremes, is encountered.

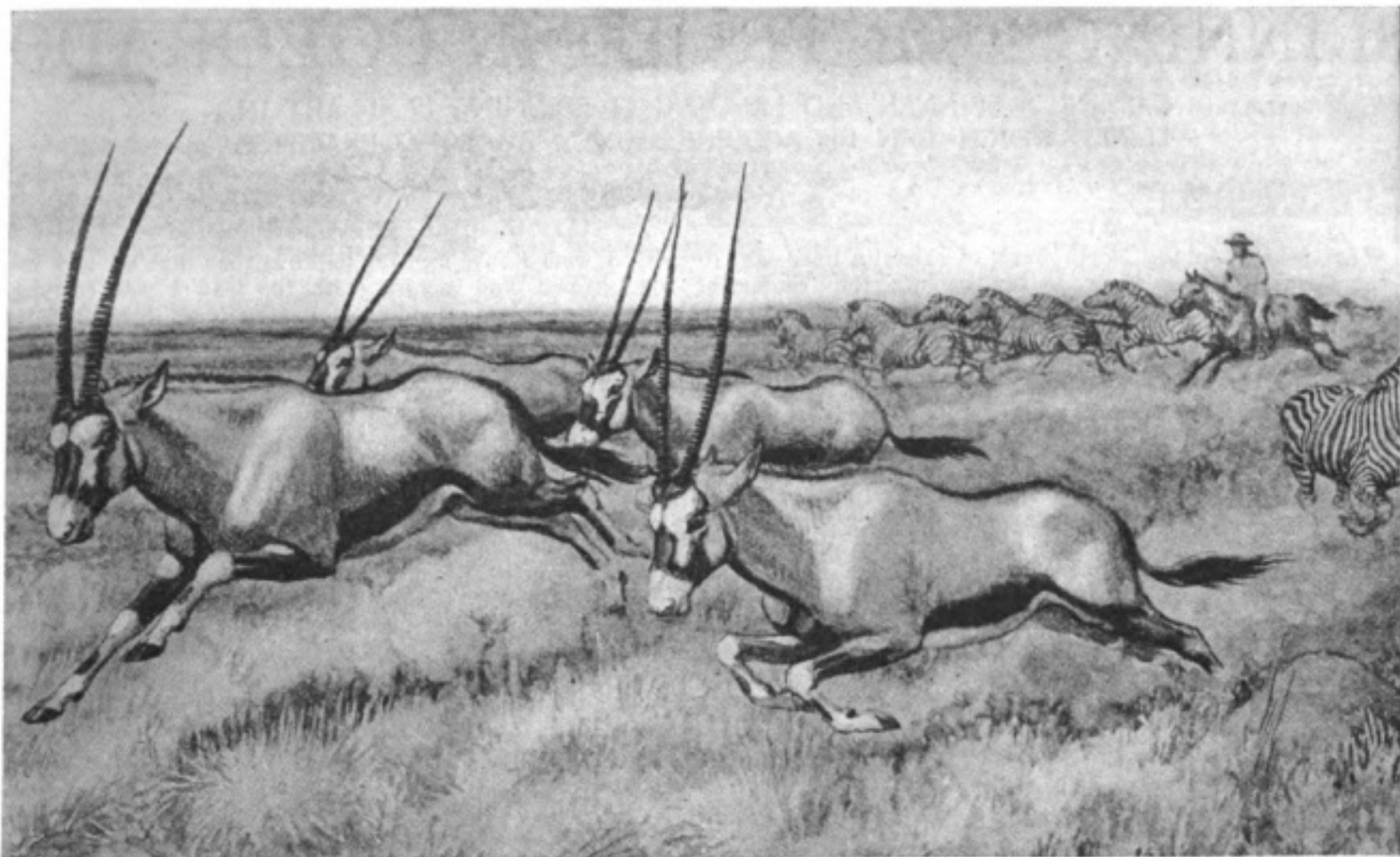
THE PLAINS.

THE rolling, treeless prairies of short grass are the habitat of hartebeests, zebras, wildebeests, oribis, steinbok, warthog and cheetah. Lion hunt the plains by night but generally return to bush, or scrub, to lie up during the day, or else take cover in a reed bed, or a treed riverbed. Many other kinds of game are found incidentally on the plains but most of them are mere visitors from bush, or desert, rather than real denizens of the prairies. The true plain dweller relies little on scent for locating an enemy; it depends chiefly on seeing its adversary as a moving object at a distance and avoiding it by its fleetness. It is interesting to follow along the edge of bush abutting on prairie and watch the different behavior of the animals one disturbs.

First, perhaps, one encounters a herd of zebra, or hartebeest, grazing near the edge of the bush. On sighting their enemy, man, they turn and fly into the open plain—to them, danger lies behind every bush, and safety means an open field of view on all sides. Next one sees a bushbuck, which has ventured out to graze a few yards from cover; it cocks up its head and then plunges into the bush and continues pushing its way through the vegetation until it has reached the center of a thick and tangled clump of undergrowth.

The plain-dwellers are mostly gregarious, some of the herd scan the horizon whilst the rest graze. The wildebeest often go so far as to post sentries at a few hundred yards from the main body—a solitary gnu standing conspicu-





Courtesy of Macmillan Co.

The late F. C. Selons scattering a herd of Zebras while in pursuit of Gernsbucks

ously on the sky line, and appearing to be the only one on the plains, generally indicates that there is a herd close by, concealed by some inconspicuous fold in the ground.

These folds and dips on the plains are misleading. At first sight the plains look so flat and open that one imagines that one sees everything there is to see for several miles in every direction. If one watches more closely one finds game appearing and disappearing; a whole herd of zebra is swallowed up and, more astonishing still, the enormous bulk of a rhinoceros appears where before there was nothing but open grass, stretching away into the distance until the heat haze blurred the vision.

The typical plain-dweller is a stupid animal; it gazes at the passerby and canters off a few hundred yards when he approaches too closely. It can still be beguiled into standing until the sportsman is in range by the old expedient of walking as if to pass it, sidestepping nearer and nearer the while. However, the game differ in tameness from time to time in a way I am quite unable to explain. Sometimes all the game on a plain will be as wild as hawks; at other times this same game will let one pass within a hundred yards and will even walk after one and show the greatest curiosity.

It is in their dealings with lion that the plain-dwellers seem most stupid. They get caught time after time at the same waterhole, by a waiting lion, without learning to take the obvious precaution of approaching upwind. At night they fall an easy prey. I have

often marvelled at the insouciance shown by game in the presence of a lion. The general conception of them as hunted and frightened creatures, for ever on the *qui vive* and flying before the king of beasts, is not according to fact. I have seen lions walking through herds of game, passing within a few yards of some, and not an animal troubling to the extent of turning its head to see which way they were going.

On one occasion I espied three belated lions returning home, followed closely by a small group of hartebeest. The lion reminded me of revellers returning home in dishevelled evening dress in the full light of day, and trying to escape public notice. They were very full of meat and slunk along in the most sheepish way, appearing most embarrassed by the curious interest shown in them by the hartebeest. Why these hartebeest should be so interested I do not know, unless they were attending the funeral of a brother, for, as a rule, they pay not the slightest attention to a lion; if a lion springs at one at night they gallop off a few yards and then start grazing again—either the lion has caught one, in which case the rest are safe, or it has not, in which case it will probably go off to stalk another herd.

In South Africa is much of the typical prairie country—open plains of short grass with a sufficient water supply from streams, or waterholes—but alas the game is now scarce. The most wonderful game plains in Africa are those of the highlands of East Africa, of which the Athi and Kapiti plains are the best known, reached by way of Mombasa and the Uganda railway.

These countless herds of game could be seen in every direction, the most wonderful and incredible sight that I ever saw. In whichever way one looked there were herds upon herds peacefully grazing—Grant's zebra, Coke's Hartebeest, Wildebeest (gnu\*), Grant's and Thomson's Gazelle, Warthog and, occasionally, Eland, Rhino, and other rarer visitors. Here also conditions are changing, for much of the land has now been settled over, but there are still other plains in both British and late German East Africa plentifully stocked, whilst the animal lover may see, but not shoot, the game in the reserve between the railway line and the German border.

Other plains are the Sabi and Pungive flats, reached by way of Beira, and the Bangweolo flats, to the south of the lake of that name, where great herds of Sassaby and Roan are found. In the plains of rather longer grass near the sudd area of the Nile, reached by river steamer from Khartoum, Thiang, Jackson's hartebeest and Baker's Roan occur.

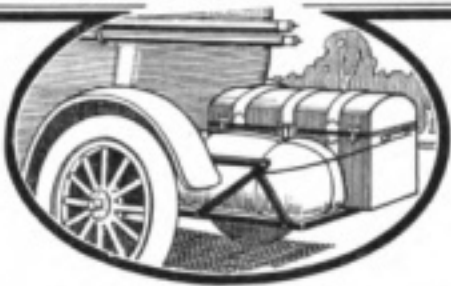
The plains have a charm of their own to the nature observer, but they are disappointing to the hunter. There is little scope for the exercise of his bush craft; tracking is useless where the game is visible miles off, and stalking is futile when there are thousands of pairs of eyes watching from every side. Success on the plains is chiefly dependent on the tameness of the game itself and the marksmanship of the shooter, who has

\*The name "gnu" applies only to the white-tailed wildebeest which is confined to South Africa.—[Edmund Heller.]

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 316)



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## THE HAUNTS OF AFRICAN GAME

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 293)

often to fire at longer ranges than would be considered sporting elsewhere. By infinite patience, waiting at water-holes, or lying motionless in the shadow of isolated little bushes, a closer acquaintance may be had with the game.

### THE DESERT.

A DESERT may be thinly bushed, or may contain dense patches of thorn, but all deserts agree in one point—the scarcity of water and the consequent lack of luxuriant vegetation. Desert-dwelling game is adapted to live in such surroundings; it is able to do with but little water and sustain life on the dry grasses and thorn trees which such regions produce.

Although game is scarce, it is easy to find, what little there is, as it must return frequently to one of a very limited series of waterholes, and it is simple to follow tracks in the dry, sandy soil. Typical desert game are the oryx and the gazelle, also giraffe, lion, dik dik, and, to a lesser extent, lesser kudu and rhinoceros.

The hunter in such localities should visit unfrequented waterholes, camping at some distance from them so as not to disturb the game. At dawn the water should be visited; game may be found still close by, or their night's tracks may be followed up. If nothing is found, likely grazing grounds in the vicinity should be visited and searched for tracks fresh enough to be worth following up.

In the evening game may be met with coming in to water. If lions visit the hole by night their tracks may be followed, or the hunter may sit up for them—the former being an uncertain method, as desert lions often travel enormous distances between drinking and lying up.

There are some deserts, such as parts of the Nubian and Sahara deserts, which consist of loose sand and do not contain vegetation sufficient to support any animal. The highland desert of Somaliland, called the Haud, and especially its western part called the Galbed, is a good hunting ground. Here are found the oryx beisa, various gazelle, including Soemering's, plateau and Waller's gazelle; the bibtag and several kinds of dik dik. Lions are fairly numerous, whilst kudu, lesser kudu and leopard occur in the hills.

In Darfur, Kordofan and the deserts of the northern part of the Sudan are found the Beatrix oryx, the addax, the ariel gazelle, and, further south, giraffe are plentiful, as well as the ruffrons and rather local Rothschild's gazelle. In the desert regions round Lake Rudolf the oryx beisa, topi, Grevy's zebra, Neumann's hartebeest, rhinoceros and a variety of Grant's gazelle are met with. In East Africa is the Taru desert, the habitat of the fringe-eared oryx, lesser kudu and Peter's gazelle, and in the

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Kalahari of South Africa occurs the biggest of all oryx, the jemsbok.

THE BUSH.

FOR the purposes of this article one can consider as bush any sort of country — whether typical bush, clothed with long grass, or thinly-wooded—sufficiently thick to afford to game complete cover from view. Such country generally holds less game than a similar area of prairie and calls forth all the hunter's skill in bushcraft to locate his quarry. He must follow by tracking, walk soundlessly, keep the wind right and be ever ready to discover the presence of his game, through the thick vegetation, by the twitching of an ear, whisking of a tail, or other sign, before he is himself seen, heard, or scented. He must also be quick with his rifle as often the only chance he gets is a momentary one as an animal dashes off out of sight.

The denizens of the bush are much more wary than those of the plain. They are sharper of hearing—indeed most of them are provided with very big ears for this very purpose—and more observant of scent than the latter. They are also quick at seeing through the interstices of the thick cover they inhabit.

Typical bush-dwellers are:—the elephant, which loves bush interspersed with trees; rhino, which prefers dense thorn; buffalo, which like bush with open glades, cane brakes and a plentiful water supply; sable and kudu, which like wooded hills; eland; lion; leopard; impala; bushbuck; waterbuck; duiker; dik dik and bushpig.

The lion of the bush is a more wary customer than that of the plains, or desert, and is exceedingly hard to circumvent. It feeds on buffalo and eland, which it prefers when it can catch them, but its staple food is the bushpig—a fact which is not well known.

The greater part of Central Africa consists of such bush country. Nyasaland, reached via Chinde, Northern Rhodesia, reached via the Victoria Falls, and Portuguese East Africa all afford good hunting grounds where most of the above game may be found. In Uganda elephants are plentiful, as also Jackson's hartebeest, buffalo, Uganda kob and waterbuck. There are stretches of bush in East Africa where lesser kudu are found, and west of Lake Bangweolo and in Eastern Angola the finest sable are shot.

In the Southern Sudan are wide tracts of bush country where elephant, rhinoceros, giraffe, buffalo, thiang, eland and other game are common. In the open glades of bush country reedbucks are met with—the common reed buck in the south and the Abyssinian and bohor reed buck in the north.

The greatest difficulty in the bush is to keep the wind right, especially when following such game as elephant and buffalo, which twist and turn and partly retrace their tracks. Often, when one finds the spoor leading downward it is better to leave the track altogether and

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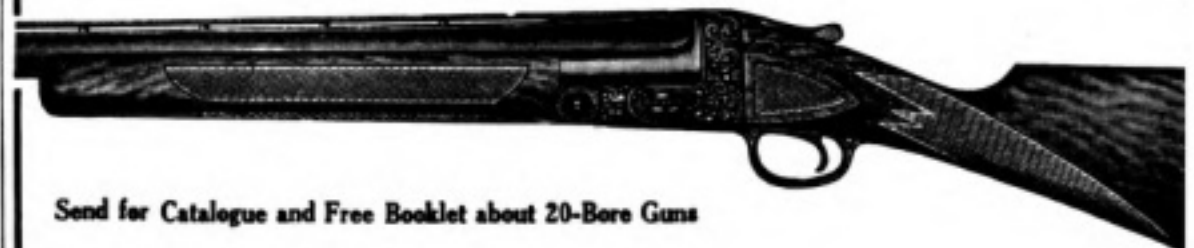
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cast round to try to pick it up again under more favorable conditions. Even when everything is favorable, wind right, spoor fresh and country open enough to allow quiet going and a fair view, one is liable to be let down by numberless circumstances out of one's control. I remember on one occasion, after following a herd of buffalo for some hours, I had just located them by hearing one bellow, and was preparing to stalk, when a honey guide appeared.

The honey guide is a small bird which wants to lead you to a bee's nest; it buttonholes you in the way and goes on saying "tit-tit-tit" till you consent to follow it. No sooner did this honey guide start talking to me than the herd of buffalo—recognizing that it must be in conversation with a human being—stampeded away and so ended that day's sport.

On another occasion I was following fresh elephant spoor when I ran into a herd of buffalo. I made a big detour to get round to the other side of the herd and give them my wind. Instead of stampeding off the way I had come they made a semi-circle round me until they reached the elephant spoor, followed that, and then waited for me. Every time I came up they galloped off down the track for a few hundred yards and then stopped. Just because I did not want a buffalo I could not shake them off anyhow, so finally I gave up and returned to camp.

**THE FOREST.**

**T**HE dense forests of Africa lie on the equator in the form of a triangle, with its apex on the east and its base on the west coast. These forests include isolated patches round such mountains as Kenya and Kilimanjaro, the forest clothing the escarpments in East Africa, of Budonga in Uganda and then broaden out into the great forests of the Ituri, the Congo and Southern Nigeria.

The equatorial forests are so thick that no ray of sunshine reaches their floor; they consist of immense trees tied up with lianas and creepers, sheltering a thick undergrowth through which one must force a passage to proceed at all. Sometimes it is necessary to crawl on all fours. Such is the home of the okapi, the bongo, the giant, or forest hog, and a few kinds of dik dik. Elephants are also found, bearing long, thin tusks of what is technically known as "hard" ivory—less valuable than the "soft", and thick Uganda type. Other denizens of the forest are the gorilla, chimpanzee, scaly manis, colobus and many varieties of monkey and long-beaked, fruit-eating birds.

Hunting in the forest is as much more difficult than hunting in the bush, as the bush is more difficult than the plains. The game consists of the few varieties mentioned above; they are fairly scarce, very wary and require time and patience to outwit. The floor of the forest is carpeted with broken branches, and it is almost impossible to proceed without cracking of twigs and rustling of under-

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growth; sounds which betray the hunter from afar.

The chief advice I would offer in this kind of sport is firstly, to follow the track, treading in the footprints of the game followed, as a heavy animal, such as the bongo, will have already cracked the twigs under foot and, secondly, to proceed infinitely slowly. If one does not come up with the quarry nothing is lost—it will remain in the neighborhood to be hunted the next day. If, from overhaste, one makes a noise and scares the game it will clear out of the vicinity, and it will be of little use to remain in the district.

**SWAMPS AND RIVERS.**

**A** FEW animals make their habitat in the dense papyrus swamps, such are:—the red and the black lechwe—both of which are found in Lake Bangweolo; the situtunga—which occurs in the same lake, round the shores of Lake Victoria and in the Bahr et Ghazal, where it is rare; Mrs. Gray's lechwe—which lives in the sudd region of the Nile and the white-eared kob of the same region, but lives rather in the vicinity of swamp than actually in it.

The lechwes live largely in the water and take refuge in the water but graze on adjacent grass lands. They all have a peculiar habit of putting their noses to the ground, as they run off, like a hound following scent.

The first time I saw Mrs. Gray's lechwe was in 1910 when proceeding up the Nile. It was then called Mrs. Gray's waterbuck, but directly I saw the way it put its head down I recognized its similarity to a lechwe. A few weeks later I received a letter from Colonel Roosevelt, who had just concluded his African trip, saying, amongst other things, that his expedition had discovered that Mrs. Gray's was not a waterbuck but a highly colored lechwe.

The old males of this buck and the white-eared kob are, like most game, darker than the females, and young; in fact, they appear quite black, whilst the latter are chestnut. The males of the two species may be distinguished at a considerable distance for Mrs. Gray's is marked with white on the withers whilst the kob has white ears.

The little chevrotain, found in the Congo, is another aquatic animal, whilst on every swamp, lake and river of any size, which has not been much disturbed, the hippo and crocodile are common.

**MOUNTAINS.**

**T**HE strictly mountain game of Africa are:—the ibex, found in the hills back of Suakim and in the Italian colony of Erythrea; and the barbary sheep inhabiting the mountains of the Northwest. There is also the little Klippspringer which occurs on rocky hills, and even isolated bosses, or kopjes, throughout the greater part of the continent. Chandler's Reedbuck has similar habits, but



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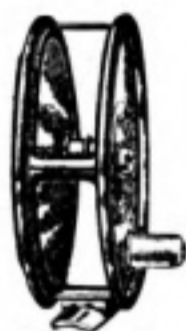


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is more local in distribution, being confined to the neighborhood of British East Africa.

Of other game the kudu, sable and mountain nyala are all fond of hills, whilst the elephant, chiefly a bush-dweller, is also a great mountaineer—its tracks and paths are found on nearly every important mountain, except where it has been exterminated by man.

In conclusion, it will, of course, be understood that the lives of all animals, their habits and changes of habitat, are actuated and directed by the same elements that affect the lives of men. Various scourges, continued dry spells, fires or the destruction of vegetation prompt certain animals to long migrations and naturally they are accompanied by the carnivora which prey upon them. The practical sportsman, however, can read all these various languages of nature clearly.



## DR. HENSHALL AND FISH CULTURE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 298)

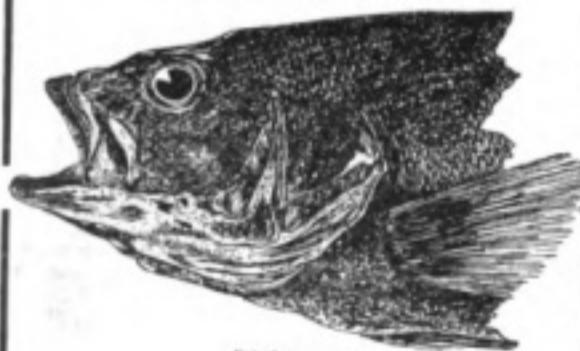
influence with the President than himself it would be useless to try. The party suggested the names of several prominent men, but the Senator said they would not do. Finally the party mentioned Commodore Bob Evans, who was a fellow officer in the Navy, and he and Captain Brice were good friends. 'Well,' Senator Brice said, 'I know of no one who has more influence with the President than Bob Evans; they are very chummy, and go fishing and shooting together.' So it came about that the party saw Commodore Evans, who saw the President, who then appointed Captain John Brice to gratify the Commodore, and as he thought, to square himself with Senator Brice by appointing his cousin U. S. Fish Commissioner."

**W**HEN the appointment of Captain Brice was confirmed I wrote him a letter of congratulation, and let it go at that, inasmuch as we were good friends. Soon after this I received a letter from Mr. Logan Carlisle, chief clerk of the Treasury Department and son of Mr. John G. Carlisle, Secretary of the Treasury, and one of my supporters; after sympathizing with me on my disappointment he said that if I cared to make a summer trip to Alaska his father would appoint me Inspector of Salmon Fisheries in Alaska, which position was under the control of the Treasury Department, and which was vacant.

I decided to apply for the position as there was nothing now to detain me in

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