

From a painting by the Author

Elephants by moonlight: Kenya

THE WONDERLAND OF BIG GAME

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF TWO TRIPS THROUGH
TANGANYIKA AND KENYA

BY

MAJOR A. RADCLYFFE DUGMORE, F.R.G.S.

AUTHOR OF "CAMERA ADVENTURES IN THE AFRICAN WILDS"

"THE ROMANCE OF THE BEAVER," "THE ROMANCE OF THE CARIBOU"

"THE VAST SUDAN," ETC.

WITH 8 MONOCHROME REPRODUCTIONS OF PAINTINGS BY
THE AUTHOR, 52 PHOTOGRAPHS, AND A MAP



LONDON : ARROWSMITH

1st ed. 1925

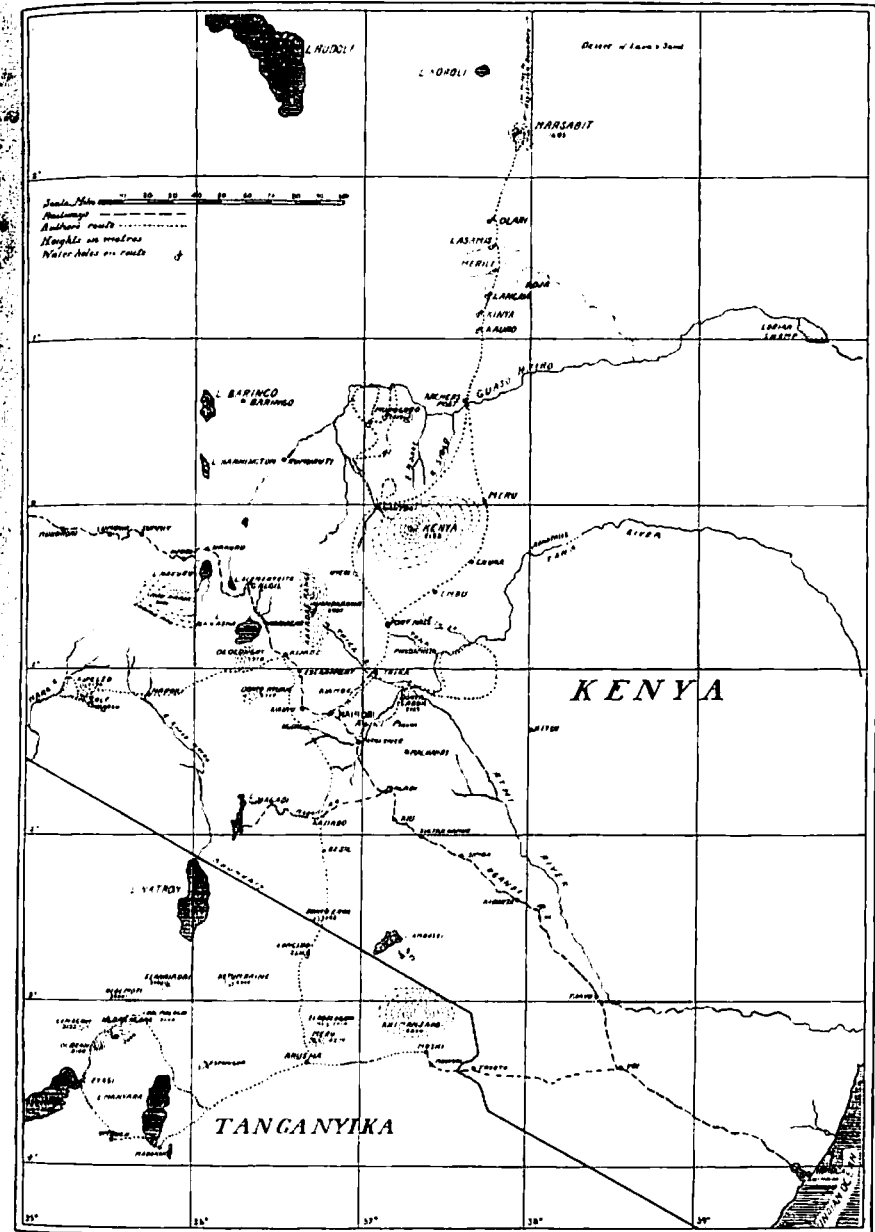
this is 2nd ed. 1929

reprinted 1933

THE WONDERLAND OF BIG GAME

followed closely by the camera bearers. It was a race against time. What had looked like a short walk of perhaps five hundred yards proved to be nearer a thousand, and what had looked like easy going proved to be appallingly rough. A stream had to be crossed and the dense fringe of bushes tangled up with wire-like vines had to be cut, and yet no noise must be made.

At last the clump of trees was scarcely a hundred yards away. Behind it, completely hidden from view, was the water-hole; but where were the buffalo? We stood still and listened, but there was no sound to break the quiet of the mountain glade. Then, leaving the natives and my friend with the cameras, I made my way through the tall, matted grass. Yard by yard the distance was covered, until at length I reached the edge of the trees where the grass was short. For a few minutes I stopped to listen, and to wipe the grass seeds from my moist face. There was no sound save the singing of birds in the trees. Through the dense vegetation were innumerable well-trodden paths, and along one of these I moved slowly forward, as I wanted to see if the buffalo were near the water-hole on the other side. Scarcely had I gone a dozen yards when the stillness of the morning was broken by an appalling crash among the bushes, as though a thousand buffalo were coming. There was not a moment to waste. I must get back to the men and to my friend, who had a rifle. Regardless of the noise that was unavoidable, I rushed through the grass and reached the men just as the buffalo came



THE WONDERLAND OF BIG GAME

always in places where the camera could not be used owing to the lack of light, the denseness of the underbrush, or the fact that the animals saw us before we saw them.

Few animals are more difficult of approach than buffalo; their constant vigilance, their exceptional keenness of scent, sight and hearing, combined with their extraordinary invisibility when in forest country, are so much in their favour that to photograph them by stalking requires a marked degree of skill, courage and good luck. There is something unpleasant about the work, for undoubtedly no animal is more to be feared, and though it is unusual for them to attack when in herds, there have been exceptions to this rule, and no one wants to risk these exceptions.

It is difficult to believe that such large animals would be hard to see, and they offer a strong argument against the theory of the protective colouring and markings of the larger beasts. We are told by those who believe in this theory that the leopard is spotted so that it may not be seen in the flickering light and shade of the forest; but the buffalo, like the elephant, has no pattern, yet the plain tones of varying shades of grey, running almost to black in the case of the buffalo, render the animals quite as invisible as the spotted coat of the leopard. If an elephant stands absolutely still, as it will do when suspicious of danger, it is almost impossible to see, notwithstanding its enormous bulk. The light and shade on the skin appear to merge into

A PAIR OF RHINOCEROS

the surroundings in a way that is difficult to believe. Even the tusks look like dead branches, provided they are not moved. The same is true of the buffalo, whose dark bodies seem merely shadows in the gloom of the forest; without moving a muscle, they will remain like statues and watch for the suspected intruder, who may easily approach to within a few yards before realising the proximity of the great beast. If there happen to be a cow with a young calf or a solitary bull there is every possibility of an attack; but if there is a large herd the chances are they will make off as fast as possible; as quietly as ghosts if they believe themselves unobserved, otherwise with a total disregard for noise, crashing through the brush like a tornado.

The buffalo hunt on Donya Sabuk proved a complete failure as to the photographic results; but an opportunity to make a film of a rhino just missed realisation owing to the unfortunate fact that one of the party carried a rifle. He had never seen a rhino before, and consequently did not understand the ways of these strange beasts. It occurred soon after the experience with the buffalo at the beginning of the day's work. Several of the party were gathered together near the water-hole, holding a post-mortem discussion as to the cause of the failure, when two rhino were seen coming down the hill-side in a state of nervous excitement. Evidently they had scented man, but had been unable to establish the enemy's whereabouts, so according to their usual habit they were rushing about wildly,

THE WONDERLAND OF BIG GAME

snorting loudly and generally making themselves ridiculously conspicuous. Nothing in the animal world can look more foolish than these queer prehistoric monsters. To the uninitiated they inspire fear, but to those who are familiar with their peculiarities they are usually a source of amusement. Now it happened that the member of the party who had the rifle and did not understand rhino had lagged behind, and was now approaching the water-hole. Suddenly he caught sight of the snorting rhino a hundred yards or more away, and of course imagined himself to be in great danger, since he failed to realise that the wretched beasts could not see him, their range of vision being probably not over fifty or sixty yards. I was assembling the camera as quickly as possible in the hope of being able to make a film of the animals. Not for a moment did it occur to me that anyone would dream of doing any shooting, for Sir Northrup was most anxious to preserve the few rhino that still remained on Donya Sabuk. To my surprise, however, two shots in rapid succession rent the air, and to my intense disgust one of the poor old rhino came tumbling down the rough hill-side stone dead. There was nothing to be said. The wretched man imagined that he had saved himself from a horrible death, instead of which there had been not the slightest necessity for ever firing a shot.

Towards afternoon we returned, tired and empty-handed, and the following day went back to Nairobi to complete

ENTERING TANGANYIKA

arrangements for the journey to Tanganyika, with the great crater of Ngora Ngora as the objective.

It was only by the courtesy of Sir Horace Byatt, Governor of the mandated territory, that permission had been given for the trip, as the country was not yet opened to sportsmen. From Nairobi the train took us to Voi, a wretched, feverish, super-heated place seventeen hundred feet above sea-level, and about a hundred miles from Mombasa. There we embarked on the train for Moshi, which was about ninety miles to the west, and a short distance beyond the Kenya border.

The Voi-Moshi Railway was built for military purposes, and was not intended for ordinary passenger traffic; however, it served the purpose of our party, who were more interested in reaching their destination than in the comforts which could so easily be dispensed with. The country west from Voi proved to be rather uninteresting, dry, generally flat or rolling, and with very little game; beyond a few Grant's gazelle, hartebeest and ostrich not much was seen. On nearing Moshi the appearance of the country changed completely; the dry plains gave place to wooded hills and water-courses, which came from the slopes of Kilimanjaro. Moshi was reached after eleven hours of rather shaky travelling, and we made ourselves as comfortable as conditions would allow in the only hotel in the place. Its name, Hotel Afrika, made the days of German occupation seem very recent.

THE WONDERLAND OF BIG GAME

cattle ; what will happen then remains to be seen. Conditions for farming are apparently ideal, except for the remoteness of the place. The volcanic soil is of remarkable fertility, if one can judge from the unusual growth of clover, which is so luxuriant that to walk through it is difficult. Where it came from seems rather a mystery, for it is doubtful whether it is indigenous ; apart from the frequent rains, heavy dews and mist give it the necessary moisture.

On the evening of the second day after our arrival a poor old rhino, who had made his home in the crater for many years, was foolish enough to come near the camp. He did not regard man as his enemy, for he had never been molested. Unfortunately, two of the party thought this an excellent opportunity for some easy shooting, and killed the wretched beast within sight of the tents. Not only was it an unnecessary thing to do, for there was no sport in killing an animal under such conditions, but it prevented what would most likely have proved a splendid chance for obtaining some interesting film. It showed conclusively that shooting and photography of wild animals cannot be combined with satisfactory results.

During the two weeks' stay in the crater a certain amount of film was exposed, but, as already stated, the conditions were not satisfactory, and only pictures of animals in the distance were obtained. Driving the vast herds of animals was tried, but, as usual, without success. One member of the party was

THE EUPHORBIA FOREST

confident that it could be done, but he had no experience of African game, and was surprised to discover that the animals always "broke back" as soon as they found themselves being pressed in any particular direction. On horseback it is possible to make these drives, but on foot, without hundreds of men, it is hopeless. While in the crater the rest of the party indulged in shooting and exploring the craters to the north, and in trying to get some clue to the supposed fossil remains of prehistoric animals which Dr. Reck, the German scientist, had endeavoured to find in 1914.

At the end of two weeks the food supply was getting very low, and the cold, damp nights were having a serious effect on the Arusha porters, a number of whom were laid up with fever and bad colds. It was decided, therefore, to move southward, but before doing so a couple of days were spent on the west side of the crater, the camp being made in a remarkable forest of Euphorbia (*Candelabra*). Usually these quaint trees are found singly or in small groups among other trees, but here there was a regular forest ; the height of the trees was about thirty to sixty feet, and most of them were of slender growth with several vertical branches, each surmounted by a thick cluster of the curious cactus-like branches. Scarcely any of them had the characteristic form which is usually associated with this tree.

It was a strange place for a camp, beautiful, perhaps, but not altogether satisfactory, as the leaves of these trees contain a



"Kilimanjaro was wonderfully impressive, especially at sunrise"

A RHINOCEROS

for shooting buffalo occurred they would receive nothing, but if the attempt proved successful they would be paid double what they had asked. This, after all, was the final proof of their ability, and they were not willing to take the chance, so negotiations fell through, somewhat to the relief, perhaps, of those who had suggested the buffalo shoot.

Of the return journey to Arusha there is little of special interest to relate. Water was more abundant than it had been on the trip out, nearly two months earlier. Seroot flies were much more troublesome than before; so bad indeed were they that the wretched mules were driven nearly mad, and the men were only able to protect themselves by the constant use of fly switches. Game was rather more numerous, but there was no time to delay, as the party was already overdue at Nairobi. One afternoon a half-grown rhino afforded some amusement. He got wind of the safari, and charged about in a great state of excitement as though intending to do terrible things, but eventually he changed his mind and galloped off. A large herd of giraffe was seen feeding out in the open, some distance from the trees. It is somewhat unusual to see them eating low-growing plants, so of course I wanted to photograph them; but they were very shy, and would not allow the camera within several hundred yards. One night camp was made at a place where on the previous day a native who was in charge of some cattle had been killed by a lion and his body carried away.

THE WONDERLAND OF BIG GAME

On arrival at Arusha plans for getting back to Nairobi had to be discussed. Owing to heavy rains it was found that the road to Moshi, the railway terminus, was impassable for cars, so it was decided to motor direct to Nairobi, a distance of nearly four hundred miles. But before starting fresh porters had to be procured, and I had to undergo special medical treatment before being allowed to leave, as I was in a serious condition from the long bout of fever. On the evening of April 16th the whole party left Arusha. The road, which had been built for military purposes, was for the greater part of the way in good condition, though many of the bridges were down. This necessitated careful handling of the cars in getting across the dry river beds and up and down the steep banks. In one place a bridge was found still standing and spanning a fairly wide river, the banks of which were very steep. On examining the structure before letting the cars cross it was found that most of the supports were hanging in mid-air, their base having been eaten by ants. A man's weight on the bridge made it sag several inches. When three of us stood on it the sag was still more noticeable, so the question was, Could the cars cross? After some discussion it was decided to make the attempt, but everything was first carried over by hand. Then the first car started on its perilous journey, while we watched. The bridge sagged lower and lower, and it creaked in an ominous way, but the car arrived safely on the other side and was soon joined

ARUSHA TO LONGIDO

by the second one. It was hard to understand why these bridges had been built of imported timber, which is splendid food for the white ants, when there was plenty of suitable timber growing in the vicinity.

The worst part of the journey was across the desert before reaching Longido, where water had to be carried for the porters. The ground was flat and covered everywhere with enormous ant-hills; trees were scarce, and scarcely any game was seen. The view of Kilimanjaro from this desert was wonderfully impressive, especially at sunrise, when the great mountain, with its snow-capped summit, stood like a lofty island above the sea of mist and low-lying clouds, which completely hid the lower country. On the fourth day the road crossed the boundary of Tanganyika and Kenya, and entered some beautiful park-like country, well wooded and with abundance of game. Giraffe were particularly numerous, and it was most amusing to see them race the cars; invariably they would, after running for some distance, make a frantic dash across the road, sometimes passing only a few yards in front of the fast-moving car.

Besil was reached on the evening of the fifth day, and the camp should have been called "Guinea Fowl Camp," for the place was alive with these birds; large flocks of them could be seen in all the open places along the river bank, so there was no difficulty in securing plenty of food. Leaving the safari

THE WONDERLAND OF BIG GAME

but I feared that the sound would disturb any game that might be lingering in the neighbourhood, so, instead of shooting, I suddenly shouted out an assorted variety of English and Swahili at the top of my voice. The effect was most amusing. The wretched fellow nearly turned inside out at the unexpected sound of a white man's voice, as he believed himself to be absolutely alone. To say that he vanished scarcely describes the fact. Without even taking a look in my direction, and scarcely waiting to grab hold of his rifle, he was off like a shot, leaving a trail of white dust to mark his departure. I was sorely tempted to put a shot behind him, in the *earth* of course, just to see if he could be made to go still faster. It appeared that Harris had seen the fellow crawling up to the rock, and had felt the same temptation that I had to frighten the life out of him by firing a shot close to where he lay. This occurrence proved a serious interruption, for the single zebra was only the advance guard of a large herd of both zebra and oryx which had been waiting in the scrub beyond Harris's "blind" for the signal that all was safe before coming to drink. I have since regretted that I did not take that black rascal and hand him over to the authorities. There is little doubt, however, that he received a severe shock, and that he will be somewhat careful when next he thinks of shooting at Lasarmis.

At sunset Tarlton arrived with the car, so we packed our outfit and sat down in the cool of the evening to a much relished

A RHINOCEROS COMES TO DRINK

meal. Twilight merged gradually into the soft, mysterious light of the half-grown tropical moon by the time we had finished our meal. Suddenly the stillness was broken by the curious, petulant snort of a rhino. Leaving the car, we made our way carefully down to the river-bed, and there, standing on the light-coloured gravel, was the dark, bulky figure of a large rhino; we approached to within about fifty yards before the light, shifty breeze carried our scent to him, and he did not like it. Without waiting for further evidence of the presence of his supposed enemy, the queer old beast made off as fast as his short legs could carry him. It was a pity he had not come while there was yet daylight, as he would have made a splendid picture standing there in the dry river-bed. He had probably learned by sad experience that this was a dangerous locality, and therefore waited until the kindly gloom of night afforded some protection from his persistent enemy, man. So long as rhino horns are allowed to be sold or exported the wretched beasts have little chance of surviving, for they are so stupid that anyone can stalk and shoot them, except in the thick forest country, where man usually considers discretion to be the better part of valour, and leaves them alone. The horns command a high price, and are chiefly sent to China, where they are used, so I am told, for medicinal purposes.

One feature of the country at Lasarmis struck me as peculiar. On the hill to the north of the river-bed there were

THE WONDERLAND OF BIG GAME

was only about six inches long. The strange, prickly creature was remarkably tame, but unfortunately it disappeared before we had a chance of photographing it. The smaller game was very scarce in this neighbourhood. There were a few Grant's gazelle, an occasional gerenuk, some bush-buck in the forest, and at Crater Lake I saw three water-buck. Guinea-fowl were abundant, and we were glad to get some for food, as we had not risked firing shots in the forest for fear of alarming the elephant, and had lived entirely on what meat we could buy from the Boran. These people possess very large numbers of cattle, which are regarded as an exhibition of wealth. They do not appear to use them for food (except, of course, for milk), and it was most difficult to induce them to sell us any for meat. Their whole lives seem to be devoted to the care of the great herds, which are used chiefly for the purchase of wives.

On the last day of March we said good-bye to the Marsabit country, and it was with sad hearts that we left this wonder mountain, the most delightful place I have seen in my wanderings through Africa. True, notwithstanding the unlimited possibilities, it had not been particularly kind to us, but we had enjoyed its beauty and its climate, and even if at times it had provided a somewhat superabundant amount of excitement, we forgave that. The danger and racking of nerves would soon be forgotten, while the experiences were well worth all they had cost. I trust that some day my good fortune will take me again to this forest home of the African elephant.

CHAPTER VI

THE RETURN FROM MARSABIT—MOTOR TROUBLES

ON the way south we could see a great change in the country between Marsabit and Lasarmis. What had been yellow and grey desert was now delicately tinged with green; grass and flowers were coming up, and the thorn trees were dressed in their feathery foliage. Where there had been no animals there were now herds of Grévy zebra, oryx and Grant's gazelle. Birds too were more in evidence, and the trees were covered with the curious nests of the different weaver-birds. The farther south we went the less evidence there was of rain, so apparently we had no need to worry about being able to cross the rivers.

On the second day's journey we left the men to make their way to camp, while we went ahead in the car to Lasarmis and spent as much time as we could in the "blinds." The day proved disappointing, for though we saw a fair number of animals, the only photographs I made were of a jackal and some birds. We found the remains of the poor old rhino near the water-hole where we had seen him on our last evening there. An Indian clerk from Marsabit Post, while on his way out on leave, had killed the wretched creature as it came to

drink. In some way it made me feel utterly disgusted, as I can never see why anyone should wish to kill these rapidly disappearing relics of the past. In very exceptional cases it may be necessary in self-defence, but under ordinary conditions it is little less than slaughter. There is no skill required; any fool can stalk the stupid old creatures to within shooting range, and with the modern high-power rifle they are easily killed.

We remained at Lasarmis till late in the afternoon, and saw the flocks of sand-grouse coming to drink. In watching them, coming as they do with extraordinary speed, in small, compact flocks, one is struck by their strange method of drinking. Scarcely have they alighted on the edge of the pool than with a whirl of wings and that curious call note they are off; just one sip of water is all they seem to take. Whether the same flock returns again I am not sure, for they are so quick in their flight that, though I watched carefully, I could never be certain if in their wheeling about they did not become confused with other flocks. Several times it certainly seemed as if the same lot returned more than once. Thousands and thousands of these birds came while we were watching, and they were still coming when, as darkness was coming on, we left.

We went back over the road to where the men had camped near a small pool of very muddy rain-water, and the following morning returned to Lasarmis at daybreak, leaving the porters to follow. Again it was a day of disappointment, as the place

was occupied by an officer and company of the K.A.R., returning from the northern frontier with all their transport, to say nothing of innumerable wives and babies. The officer, quite a young man, had been stationed for a couple of years on the borderland, and he asked us whether we could possibly spare him a bottle of whisky, as he had not tasted any for a very long time. He had chosen a bad place to renew his acquaintance with the liquor, because, as he told us afterwards, the strong salty water of Lasarmis made the whisky almost undrinkable. We had discovered that on our last visit. People who do not know Africa think that what comes from water-holes and springs is water such as we have at home—clear, clean and limpid; but as a rule it has none of these much-desired virtues. Sometimes it is thick and green, more like pea-soup than water, and strongly flavoured with a barn-yard taste and smell; sometimes it is so bitter from the salt or soda that it is almost undrinkable. It spoils the best of whisky and makes the best of tea taste like the worst; even soup is difficult to swallow. River water is usually by far the best, but even that may be so muddy that it looks like soup. However, one gets used to almost anything in time.

Finding that we could do nothing at the water-holes, as the K.A.R. outfit did not leave till sunset, Harris took the opportunity to make some interesting film of the various types of weaver-birds' nests. These birds are remarkably gregarious, and build their nests in regular colonies, hundreds being hung

CHAPTER VII

IN THE COUNTRY SOUTH OF THE NORTHERN GUASO NYIRO—
WONDERFUL LUCK IN PHOTOGRAPHING RETICULATED GIRAFFE
AND ZEBRA—ENCOUNTER WITH A RHINO FAMILY

ON the third day after my arrival at Nanyuki I started northward on what was to be the best trip I have ever made. The outfit was composed of ox-wagon, a horse and a mule and a few porters. I had discharged and sent back to Nairobi several porters who were unfit (or said they were), also such luxuries as gun-bearers and the head-man, and some of the men who wanted to leave. One askari was left in charge of my superfluous outfit to await my return.

The first day's trek was through a flat and very uninteresting region, almost gameless; but the next day, going north-east after crossing the Nanyuki River, we struck more promising conditions; the country was broken and rolling, with scattered trees and high yellow grass, but it was absolutely dry, and De Bruin began to get worried about water for his oxen. He and I rode on ahead and visited several places where water had been plentiful only a few weeks ago. Now, sun-baked, cracked mud was all we found. We saw a pair of rhino, and I succeeded in getting a short piece of film of the old cow, but she did not

A DISAPPEARING RHINOCEROS

behave as I wished. We saw her lying asleep under a large thorn tree, and stalked her until we were within about sixty yards, when a current of air carried our scent to her, whereupon she promptly got up, turned round and round, snorting and putting her tail up to show that she was alarmed; but of course she did all this on the farther side of a small thorn bush, so that I could not get a clear view of her. I moved slightly to one side with the cinema camera, expecting that she would make a dash in my direction, and that I should be able to make a really good film of her, and then dodge behind a big tree when she came too close for comfort. My plan was right enough, but she upset it by deciding not to interview me at closer quarters; instead she turned, and going in a comical zig-zag fashion, soon disappeared in the bush.

We saw a certain amount of game, chiefly zebra, oryx and stein-buck, but it was very wild. As a matter of fact, we were more interested in water than in game. Up till four o'clock we had not found any, and the position began to look serious. Our animals, having travelled all day in the heat, were seriously in need of a drink. De Bruin instructed the men to make for a certain valley a few miles away, while we scouted ahead as fast as we could, only to find that the water-hole he had counted on contained scarcely sufficient water for the animals to have a half ration each. That was better than nothing, but still not enough; so again we rode ahead, he taking one course and I another. The country was a series of rolling,

THE WONDERLAND OF BIG GAME

my bad luck to the fact that there were too many small water-holes in the river-bed, and of course the game preferred to go where there was no taint of the human scent. De Bruin made another trip to the Guaso Nyiro to see what chance there might be for hippo; he returned on the second day with the news that he had seen several of the big creatures in a shallow part of the river, and thought it would be worth while going there, as it was now only a day's journey away.

He was anxious that before going there I should spend one day after rhino, so accompanied by the camera bearers, we rode out to the rolling, grass-covered plains a few miles south-west of our camp. We had not gone far before we saw in the distance a group of three rhino standing on the top of a low hill. To reach them we had to make a wide detour so that we might approach up wind. The camera bearers and horse and mule were left in a valley, and De Bruin and I stalked the rhino. There was no cover, not a bush or tree, and the grass was so short that it offered no protection. Fortunately, these animals have very poor eyesight, and unless one is very conspicuous there is little chance of being seen at a distance of more than sixty or seventy yards.

Going slowly and silently, we walked uphill towards the three animals. They made a perfect group as they stood there against the sky, their dark grey bodies in strong relief to the rich golden yellow of the grass, and as good luck would have it the family was complete: a fine-looking bull and cow and

A RHINOCEROS FAMILY

a youngster about half-grown. With the utmost caution we got nearer and nearer, the camera ready for immediate action and De Bruin ready with his small-bore rifle. I carried no weapon more deadly than the camera, because I did not want to have any temptation to shoot, even in self-defence. There had been a lot of controversy regarding hunting dangerous game with cameras, owing to the number of cases of shooting, with self-defence as the excuse for killing without a licence, and some of those interested in the question urged that camera hunters must have a licence. They even claimed that we made animals charge us so that we might have the excuse for shooting, as well as for the purpose of making exciting pictures. These people who objected to photographic hunting did not realize the value of the pictures, not only as records of animal life, but for advertising the country. I could not afford the luxury of a licence, and as I particularly wanted to *avoid* shooting, I was in a rather awkward position. If animals charged I must take my chance, as I was determined not to kill. Once before when two rhino had charged, *really* charged, not merely lumbering in our direction, my companion (for I was unarmed) had killed one when it was but a few yards away. I have had that brought up against me so often that, in spite of De Bruin's urging that I should be able to protect myself in case of necessity, I had left my rifle behind. With the three great beasts in front of me I wondered whether I had been wise. I do not mind one rhino, as it is possible to dodge if he charges,

THE WONDERLAND OF BIG GAME

but with three the gentle art of dodging becomes somewhat complicated. A cow with her calf is a very much more serious proposition than two or more full-grown ones, and a whole family has a way of making one feel somewhat uneasy.

When we got to within perhaps a hundred yards or so of the group my companion suggested that we were close enough. I exposed a short piece of film so as to be sure of something, and then very cautiously moved forward again. The wind was rather shifty, and eddies carried a suggestion of our scent towards the animals. The old bull stood as still as a statue, but the cow became mildly agitated and turned from side to side with her calf close by her side. The young have better eyesight than the older ones, and the comical little fellow could see that there was something strange, for he stared at us, evidently wondering what we were. During this first alarm we remained motionless. Then, as it subsided, I exposed another strip of film, which showed the animals somewhat larger in the picture, but still not nearly as large as I wanted. Once more the wind blew steadily towards us, and we moved forward a little farther. The youngster, thinking that his fears were groundless, lay down for a few moments, while the parents kept a careful watch. The bull had made no move for a long time, and was content to watch down wind, while his mate, more cautious, with the maternal instinct for the safety of her young, was constantly restless.

It was interesting to watch this group of great prehistoric-

STALKING THREE RHINOCEROS

looking creatures, and note the peculiarities of the sexes and ages. Unfortunately, I found that while I was approaching from the safest direction, up wind, the grouping was no longer sufficiently concentrated for me, at this closer range, to include the three animals: the bull was too far from the others. To bring them within the field of the film it would be necessary to move some yards to one side. This sounds easy, of course, but it involved greater risk, owing to the direction of the wind; yet this risk had to be taken if I hoped to make a satisfactory picture, and with such a wonderful opportunity I felt that I must succeed in doing this, regardless of risk. Moving across the animals' line of vision, moreover, meant being extra cautious, as we were only about seventy yards away. So we went down on all fours, and dragging the cumbersome camera along, we moved twenty yards or more to one side and slightly farther forward. Then the camera had to be raised into position without making a sound. It was delicate work, but after a while I was ready once more, and again we went towards the great beasts, inch by inch, and I made some more pictures, this time with the three models posed in a nice compact group which delighted me. I am sure De Bruin thought me mad, even though he said nothing and stood by me without the least hesitation. Having exposed all the film I needed of the animals standing still, I stopped and waited for something to happen to give variety to the picture. The old bull thought, apparently, that he had a very fine profile; so he had, but having seen this

THE WONDERLAND OF BIG GAME

profile for nearly an hour I became somewhat tired of it, and I was about to suggest to my companion that we should make the animals move, when a current of air carried our scent the wrong way, and the old cow and her calf became greatly alarmed. In a comical way they swung round and round, with tails held straight up as danger signals. This gave me an opportunity for using more film, but it looked as though we were in for trouble.

Fortunately, the breeze changed again and peace was restored to the group, and still the father's profile remained unaltered as he stood there like a statue. The baby suddenly remembered that he had had nothing to eat for a long time, so he rushed to his mother and took what he wanted; by bad luck he chose the side away from us, so that I could not make a satisfactory picture of the feeding operation. When complete peace had been restored we were once more faced with the problem of producing action, and I suggested to De Bruin that he should fire a shot into the ground near the animals. This was bound to produce action, but the question was, which way would the action lead? If away from us, well and good; but if in our direction, what would we do? This point was brought home to me with great clearness when he said that the ammunition for his Mauser rifle was very uncertain; some of it was defective and it could not be relied on to carry any distance, and anyhow, with such a small-bore rifle, the chances of stopping a charging rhino were not noticeably great. With

A NARROW ESCAPE

splendid pluck he added that if I was willing to take the chance he had not the least objection. Personally, I do not mind saying that I was not at all willing, and had every possible objection to being charged by these monsters, two of which weighed about two tons apiece. I have always been given to understand that when a rhino charges the proper thing to do is to stand quite still (*if you can*) and wait until the animal is within three or four feet of you, and then jump lightly and without undue loss of time to one side, when he will pass you. It sounds quite easy, but I was not absolutely certain that it would work. We cannot always believe what we are told, and I hated to try any experiments; and, anyhow, the directions were for a single animal. No instructions had been given for dodging three! However, I wanted photographs of action, and so, without displaying the fear that possessed me, I asked De Bruin to go ahead and shoot. He did so, and the shot rang out with appalling suddenness. What a shock it gave to the three great beasts! They did not know what to do for a moment, but jumped about in a truly comical way, unable to make up their minds which direction to go, and then, of course, they chose the wrong one and headed straight for us. I was busy turning the handle and exposing film, even though my knees did shake in a painful way. It would not be long before I should have a chance of proving whether or not dodging would be effective. What was to happen to the camera I scarcely dared think. I was far too busy wondering what would happen to me.

THE WONDERLAND OF BIG GAME

But all my fears and worries were wasted, for the three frantic creatures suddenly turned for some unknown reason, and I got a splendid view of them disappearing with marvellous speed over the brow of the hill. Never have I enjoyed anything so much as photographing their tail view. To me it was a really beautiful picture. As I wiped the streaming perspiration from my brow, I could not help feeling that my good luck had not forsaken me, and I congratulated my staunch companion and asked him to forgive me for putting him deliberately into such an awkward position. He only laughed at this, and said he had enjoyed it thoroughly, and only hoped that the film would come out well. So did I.

We returned to camp tired, but more than satisfied with the day's work, and made our preparations for the trip to the Guaso Nyiro. The following morning we left camp at dawn with a light outfit and food sufficient for four or five days. The oxen were left behind, as we had a rough way before us. The horse and the mule had all they could do to scramble down among the boulders on the way down the steep hill-side which led to the plains two thousand feet below. Sure-footed little steinbuck gazed at us in surprise, then darted away among the rocks. Baboons made hideous noises from among the steep cliffs, and guinea-fowl, basking in the early sun, flew away at our approach.

Beyond this there was little life in the great gorges through which we wound our way, till at last we reached the more level

MY EVIL-MINDED MULE

ground and made a short halt near a pool which promised well for photographic purposes. The rolling plains before us were, for the most part, covered with low-growing thorn trees, which I had reason to hate most thoroughly before the day passed. Up to now I have scarcely mentioned my mule, not because he was unworthy of mention, but because of other and more interesting topics. But on this particular day he was possessed of a fiendish desire to injure me that was even more than usually well developed. A more thoroughly objectionable brute never existed, and mules can be the most evil-minded creatures in the world. Their dispositions seem warped, and their greatest joy is to cause trouble. My mule appeared to have but one desire, and that was to tear me to pieces with thorns. He would be going along quite peacefully and apparently not thinking of anything, when suddenly, near a particularly thorny thorn-bush, he would, without a moment's warning, turn and *back* me into the thorns, so that I was powerless to act. The curved, claw-like thorns would catch my clothes and my hands and arms and, if I was not very careful, my face as well. Then, having got me well caught, the beast would bound forward, tearing my skin in a most painful way and ripping my clothes to pieces. In vain did I struggle with the brute. Nothing had any effect on him. In vain did I try to steer him so as to give a wide berth to the bushes, and in the end my only safeguard was to jump off at the critical moment, and be careful to avoid the kicks which were aimed at me in a most vicious and indiscriminate

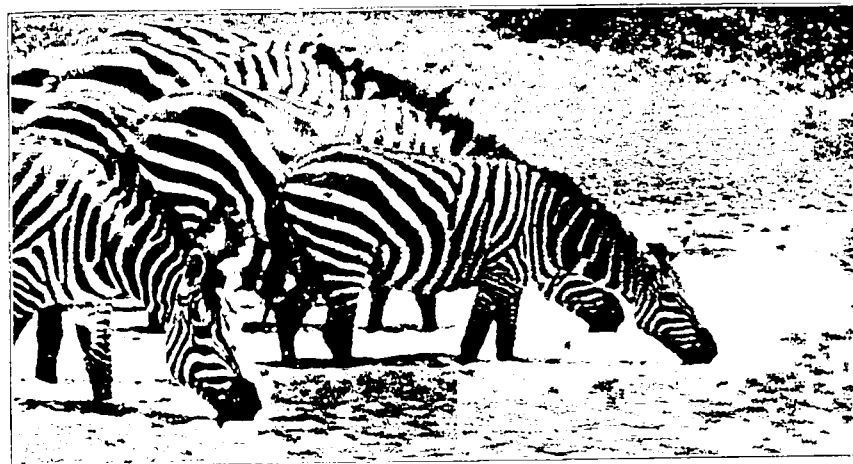
THE WONDERLAND OF BIG GAME

manner. Never in my life have I ever hated any creature as I did that vile-tempered mule. Not a redeeming feature did he possess, save that he carried me many dreary, hot miles, when otherwise I should have been compelled to walk.

In the course of our journey northward we saw a fair amount of game; gerenuk were common, and in one place, where there was a large expanse of grass-land, we saw a mixed herd numbering some hundred animals of several species—giraffe, Grévy and common zebra, oryx, hartebeest and Grant's gazelle—all together. It was an interesting sight, but not one of which one could make pictures owing to the heat haze, which made everything tremble and indistinct.

We completed the twenty-mile trek before three o'clock, and I had a chance to look over the situation and see what hope there was of making pictures of hippo. Owing to very recent rains farther up country the river was much swollen, and the shallow stretch in which De Bruin had seen hippo walking was now many feet deep, so that the animals would not expose more than the top of their heads above water. I spent most of the next day watching by the bank of the river on the chance that I should see something, but without success. One hippo appeared, but only his eyes and nose were visible. In the afternoon I walked farther up the river, and found on some thick scrub-covered islands a number of Wandorobo¹

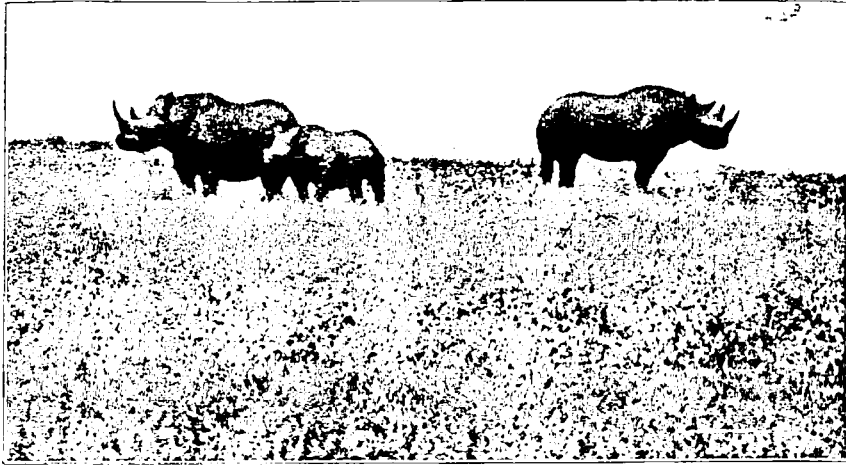
¹ A primitive people, who have seldom any fixed abode, but wander about the country living chiefly on game and fish.



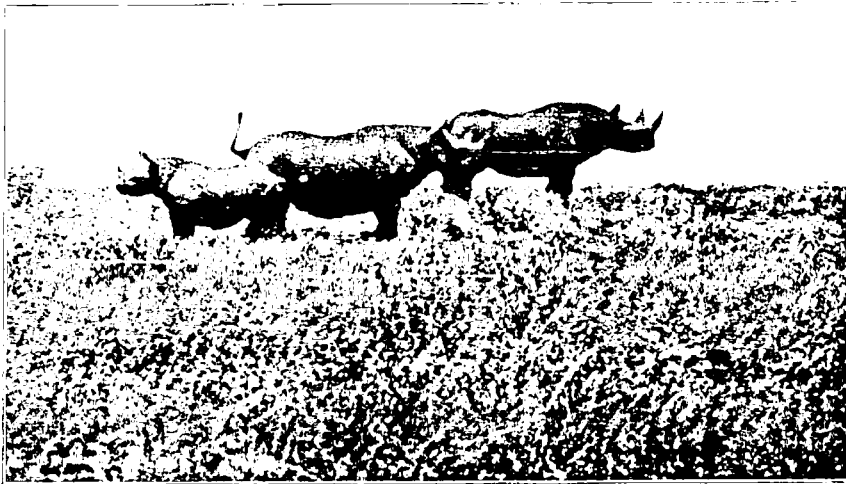
" They rushed in and began to drink "



" Their skin glistened in the noonday sun like the coats of well-groomed horses "



" They made a perfect group "



" They swung round and round with tails held straight up as danger signals "

A MIDNIGHT VISITOR

huts, and near them sufficient evidence to show that a large number of hippo had been killed. This accounted for the scarcity of the animals where formerly they were said to have been abundant. As the river was still rising, and the appearance of the sky in the neighbourhood of Kenya suggested that more rain was coming, I saw no object in remaining : with the coming of the rainy season, which was already overdue, the chances for my work would become less and less each day. Up to the present there had been rain locally in the Kenya neighbourhood, but nothing steady. From the many signs it was evident that rhino were fairly common, but we only saw one during the day, and he got our wind and moved off. Besides this, a few water-buck and monkeys were the only animals we saw in the vicinity of the camp.

During the night I was awakened from a sound sleep by the snorting of some animal very close to my tent. Leaving my bed, I peered out and saw De Bruin watching something. The moon was nearly full, so that it was almost like daylight. " Hippo," said my companion, as I saw a big, light-grey mass scarcely thirty yards away. " Rhino," I replied, as I picked up some stones. A rhino is as inquisitive as he is stupid, and it would be exactly like one of these beasts to rush through the camp and make a mess of everything ; so, in my pyjamas, I ran towards the great beast, shouting loudly and throwing stones at him. What he thought I was there is no telling, but he went off at full speed, crashing through the bushes in an

THE WONDERLAND OF BIG GAME

amusing way. For a long time we could hear the frightened creature putting as much distance as he could in the shortest space of time between himself and the strange and noisy apparition in pink and white. I feel almost certain that if you can only frighten rhino before they frighten you they will almost invariably turn tail without waiting to argue about it.

On the way south, towards our camp in the mountains, I made several attempts to secure films of herds of zebra with the snow-capped peaks of Kenya in the distance. To the eye it was a beautiful picture, but the delicate colours defeated the camera, and the mountain was scarcely visible on the film.

The heat of that march was so intense that I was glad to reach the shady water-hole at the base of the rocky mountain, and decided to stay for the night on the chance of being able to get pictures of the baboons that were accustomed to drink there.

I have never had any luck with baboons, in spite of their being so common. On account of their hated and cunning enemy the leopard, they are extremely wary, and are never, I believe, without a regular system of outposts and sentries. To outwit their remarkable system requires the greatest care, combined with good luck. Baboons are absolutely dependent on water at regular intervals, so that wherever they are found there is certain to be water not very far away. It may be in some well-concealed hole among rocks, but it is somewhere within their reach. It is very doubtful whether they can go more than forty-eight hours without drinking.



"The snow-capped peaks of Kenya in the distance"

THE WONDERLAND OF BIG GAME

instructions to come to this last camp and there await a guide whom we would send back when we had established ourselves near the Tana. As soon as the men had been sent off we started, expecting to do the trip to the river in two days of easy marching. But the plans and hopes were not to be realised, for harder marching I have seldom seen. The grass, in most parts, was several feet high, and so dense that I had to tear a way through for the heavily-laden porters.

Shortly after noon we arrived at the water-hole of which we had been told, and found it to be bone dry. The day was one of the hottest I can remember, and we were all thoroughly tired and much disgusted at our bad luck. We had done seven hours of hard marching, and whatever happened we must continue until water was found. On the chance that there might be a pool somewhere along the bed of the small stream we decided to keep near it, following its course until we reached the Tana, which I judged to be about twelve miles away. Twelve miles is not far when you start out fresh, but for a very tired lot of men, who had already done eighteen or twenty miles, the prospect was not a pleasant one. However, there was nothing else for us to do, and the men were most good-natured about it; after a short rest they put their sixty-pound loads on their heads and off we went. In order to find the easiest way for the men I went some distance ahead, with two men acting as a sort of connecting-file to whom I could signal any change in the route. We had gone about six miles, when suddenly I heard the petulant

TOO CLOSE TO THREE RHINOCEROS

snort of a rhino directly ahead; unfortunately, the wind was behind us, and it had carried our scent forward to the animal. I was going up a low hill at the time, through deep grass, so that my range of vision was not more than thirty or forty yards. For a moment I stopped to listen and, if possible, see where the rhino might be. Suddenly, without further warning, three great beasts appeared over the brow of the hill, coming rapidly towards me, according to their usual habit of working up-wind when alarmed. Should they continue in their present course we would soon meet face to face, a most unpleasant prospect. I looked in vain for a bush behind which I could hide, but there was nothing but grass; for a moment I thought of hiding by lying down, but that was out of the question, as I should be trampled on. A shot might turn them, but then I did not want to shoot; and still they came on, two cows and a bull, one of the cows with the longest horns I had ever seen.

If only the wind had been the other way there would have been a wonderful chance to use the camera, but under the existing conditions there was no time to think of photographing; my mind was otherwise occupied, as the terrifying trio were in a thoroughly bad humour. Their sleep had been disturbed by the awful scent of man, and they were out to see what they could do about it. The time came when it seemed that shooting would be not only necessary but fully justified, and I was about to throw the rifle to my shoulder, as the nearest of the three was scarcely a dozen yards away, when, for no apparent reason,

THE WONDERLAND OF BIG GAME

she turned slightly to one side and, at unpleasantly close range, rushed past me. The other two, of course, followed, and I was left alone, delighted to see the last of them, and very glad that I had not fired a shot. By good luck the course taken by the rhino was some distance from the safari, otherwise there might have been trouble.

A line of loaded porters appears to have a curious effect on rhino. It seems to touch their sense of humour, as the men rush about in every direction, dropping their loads with a total disregard for the contents. When there happens to be a tree in the vicinity there is the keenest competition among the men for the higher branches, and if the charging rhino is close enough, the men would put a monkey to shame by the speed with which they climb.

Such scenes are interesting and most amusing to watch, provided one does not have a personal interest in the contents of the loads. I find that photographic equipment, however carefully packed, is not improved by being thrown down by porters or thrown up by rhino.

In the course of this day's march we saw astonishingly little game: only a couple of giraffe and a very few hartebeest, zebra and impala, and most of these within a mile or two of the Tana. We did not see the river itself until nearly five o'clock, when we had done about eleven hours of steady marching. I was sorry for the men, who, though thoroughly tired, acted very well. I explained to them that such a long

HIPPOPOTAMUS SCARCE

march was not intentional on my part, but was due to the incorrect information given to us by the Wakamba.

The Tana, I was sorry to find, was very full, most of the bars and rocks on which hippo might take their sun-baths were under water, so that the prospects were bad so far as hippo were concerned. When I had visited this river many years ago I found them very numerous at a place a short distance below where the Thika joined the Tana. On the following morning, therefore, I determined to go there and see what the conditions might be now. How far it was there was no way of telling, as we did not know at what point we had come to the Tana. For four hours we kept on our way up-stream, following so far as possible the paths made by animals along the banks of the river, through tangles of bushes, open glades and under the welcome shade of large trees; we saw nothing of the hippo, except many old tracks and occasionally a fresh one.

Even at the pool in which I had once counted over forty of the queer old creatures there was not one to be seen. On the bank their bones were scattered about, which explained in a sad way the absence of the animals themselves. One of my porters told me he had seen a white man shoot over a dozen at this place during one day. He had, so the porter said, made no attempt to get any of the bodies ashore. It was just a case of slaughter for slaughter's sake. As hippo are slow breeders, such destruction means that the wretched creatures are wiped out of a district completely. Needless to say, I was very nearly

THE WONDERLAND OF BIG GAME

at night. I might mention here that the common idea that lion are found only in the plains and lower hills is not correct, they also live in the dense forests, such as those of Kenya, above ten or eleven thousand feet elevation. Whether this is a newly-acquired habit, due to the incessant persecution by white men, I do not know. Nor have I been able to discover whether the forest lion find their food in the thick cover, or go out farther afield in the open country for their prey. This I should imagine to be the case, because there is little game living actually in the forest except elephant, buffalo and rhino. If lion have taken to forest country as a means of protection, it is fairly safe to say that it will be many years before they are exterminated, but if they remain in the more open places, and do not change their habits, I feel sure that it will be but a comparatively few years before they will be wiped out. It is not easy to make a law offering protection to an animal which kills human beings, even without provocation. Public opinion is entirely against it, and sees no reason why lion should be preserved for the sportsman at the cost of human life, to say nothing of the cost of cattle.

Whether elephants are decreasing or not it is difficult to form any opinion. Large tuskers certainly appear to be getting more scarce each year. But I doubt whether the others are less abundant than they used to be. That fewer are seen means nothing; but the statement which recently appeared in one of the newspapers, that there are half a million elephants in Kenya and Tanganyika, makes one wonder how the census was taken.

THE VANISHING RHINOCEROS

They are wise creatures, and if molested too much seek their homes in the more remote parts of the country. Personally, I believe they will be the last of the larger animals to vanish. Their ready adaptability to different conditions is a great thing in their favour. Extremes of heat and cold do not seem to interfere in any way with their well-being; we find them at very high altitudes where frost is the rule at night, and at the same time they flourish equally well in the hot plains.

The most noticeable decrease among the animals is that of the poor old rhino, notwithstanding what anyone may say to the contrary, and some observers may challenge the statement. During my first visit to Kenya I saw as many as thirteen in sight at one time, and groups of four or five were not uncommon. During my last trip, when I covered a very large area of country and visited many places where the rhino used to abound, I saw thirteen altogether. The ease with which the stupid creatures may be shot must account for this, coupled, of course, with the idea, prevalent with many people, that it is a noteworthy feat to kill the wretched brutes. Unless *very stringent* laws are made for their protection, it is safe to predict their early extermination, except possibly in the forest country, where they still live more or less unmolested. In any event, the sale and export of rhino horns should be strictly prohibited. As long as these command high prices the animals will be shot.

The hippopotamus is another animal that is becoming rapidly scarcer, and will soon be unknown in Kenya. Their last home