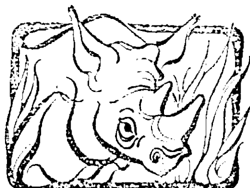
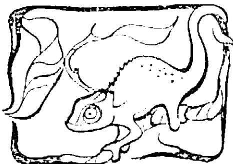
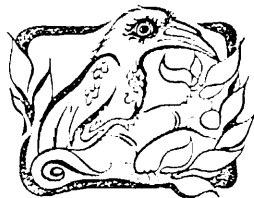
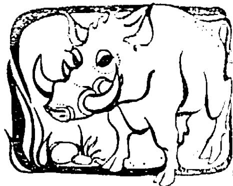






ZULU JOURNAL

FIELD NOTES OF A NATURALIST IN SOUTH AFRICA



BY RAYMOND B. COWLES

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the low afternoon sun. All day the distant hills may have been hot and hazy blue, but in the last glory of sunset, the blues became purple, violet, and rose.

The colors would hold for only a few minutes, touching the hills and the valley until all the world seemed to glow with warm color; then as the sun dropped lower still, the valley filled with smoky shadows, pools of twilight in the fading day. Last of all, the hilltops glowed like giant opals in a smoke-gray setting, then the color faded, and the sky, for a few brief moments, reflected the colors that were on the hills.

The chill of evening would fall, and in the twilight while the dew-wet grass was fragrant, I would walk along the hill until down below the faint glow of the campfire would show the homeward way, making one spot of welcome light in the blackness of gathering night.

3

RHINO CAMERA HUNTS IN THE 'TWENTIES

In the 'twenties, photography in the Hluhluwe reserve was always a delight and often exciting. I liked to visit there in the winter, in many respects the best season for photographing the wild animals. Usually the air was cold and invigorating, just right for enjoying to the utmost the hours of walking and, when tired, the pleasure of stretching out in the tall grass, protected from the breeze, but exposed to the warm sunshine.

In the morning the air would be fragrant with the scents of a new fresh day—the simple primordial perfume of growing things and the open country. Under the glowing early light, the wide fields of grass would give off faint aromas, such as the delicately acrid but spicy scent of bruised thatch grass, *isicunga*, or the faintly smoky, aromatic odor of *umbutambutane* grass.

Natal's winter coolness is probably surprising to Americans; it should attract tourists during our summer vacation—South African winter. And the winter colors, although generally pastel, should lure color photographers. Most of the grass in the open areas, the parklike savannah country, is reddish brown with fine purplish streaks on the blades and a reddish color on the stem. At a distance, in the flat light of noon, it may look brown or golden depending on subtle differences in the atmosphere, but with the changing angles of light and greater atmospheric filtration of sunrise and sunset, the colors are exceedingly variable.

It was under these colorful conditions that I enjoyed big-game photography some thirty years ago.

One of my longest and most interesting rhino camera hunts started on a morning when I studied the Hluhluwe valley on both sides from the crest of a ridge near one of the camp sites. I looked through my field glasses at some suspicious appearing gray termite hillocks which so often suggest rhinos. As usual I was accompanied by one boy carrying my gun, one boy carrying the camera, and the native game guard. Suddenly one of the boys loudly whispered, "*Nanse u'bejane n'kos*" (There is a black rhino, chief). I replied, "*Ehe,*" implying casually that I had already seen it. The boys talked softly, but agitatedly, and I wondered at these men becoming so unusually excited over the presence of a rhino half a mile away. I placed the glasses back into their case and we started off, trying to get close to the animal.

After searching awhile in the dense bush I suddenly saw it only twenty-five yards away, half hidden in the tall grass and short thorn bush—squat and brownish, on its nearer side a long, curved horn and a black, piggish eye that stared unblinkingly.

It was impossible to get into position for a better picture because the grass was long and obscured the view, but, though partly hidden, the rhino presented a fairly good picture, and I made an exposure. At the click of the camera, her ears pricked up more alertly, and the big form seemed to surge forward a few feet. The motion of the legs was hidden, and the heavy porcine body showed only this forward progress. It gave the impression of an enormous floating weight, with an irresistible strength and force inside it.

I took a second picture. Now the huge animal turned once or twice as though undecided, the head swung threateningly from side to side. Then, while turning, she revealed a calf, half out of sight behind her huge body, and they both trotted off into the brush. Although we had not been too close, we felt relieved when she had gone. Our morning encounter was informative, but unadventurous even though she was with her calf.

Meeting these unpredictable animals, which can be decidedly

dangerous at times, always evoked in me the psychological elements present when one unexpectedly runs into a strange dog in the path. If the dog stands his ground and raises his hackles, safety may be gained by either of two dignified procedures: by attempting a nonchalant and inconspicuous retreat that will not seem like flight and so not encourage attack, or by facing the dog and trusting that his morale will fade. To imagine my feeling of tension in meeting a rhino one merely needs to visualize the situation when the dog weighs several thousand pounds and when the surrounding grass and brush are tall and entangling enough to hold up a man even if he runs for his life.

These often experienced moments of tension made it evident to me that the evolution of man must have been achieved by many compromises, and that man's erect posture, no matter how valuable in some circumstances, was by no means the product of fast escape in tall vegetation. Even the quadrupedal rats and small antelopes could speed through these tangles with far greater celerity than longer-legged bipedal man. In fact, whether motivated by intellect or instinct, I found myself appraising any nearby tree for climbability as well as stoutness under the possible impact of a rhino. I wondered sometimes if man's kinship with the arboreal primates was as remote as he had thought it to be. Certainly many men have saved their lives by emulating their ancestors. The compromises retained by evolutionary processes do have their value, and primitive man, lacking firearms, still employs simian tactics with profit. As judged by man's aptitude for employing this escape device, it seems as though it must have been of selective advantage up to an evolutionary yesterday.

With increased experience one learns that, formidable as it is, the rhinoceros can be photographed with comparative safety, but at first a man strolling through big-game country with only a camera and no rifle at hand, feels extraordinarily naked and helpless. It is not surprising that one's resolve not to carry a gun will suffer a fate like that of the monthly resolution to quit smoking.

After the female rhino and her calf had removed themselves to a safe distance, we continued our walk down the ridge. Soon a breathless messenger announced that he had seen another rhinoc-

eros and calf. As fast as tall grass and thorny vines permitted, we dashed off the few hundred paces to a spot where a waiting Zulu pointed out the animal as it stood motionless in the tall grass across the valley about one hundred and fifty yards away. She was a cow with unusually long horns, and although in the 'twenties no white rhinos were supposed to occur in the Hluhluwe reserve, one boy insisted that she was an *'umkombe,* the extremely rare "white" species, while another was equally emphatic that it was the *'ubejane,* the "black" rhinoceros. The argument was never settled, for in the concealing brush and tall grass only the back was at this time clearly in view, and even later we never came close enough to tell for certain. With experience it is easy to distinguish the so-called white rhinoceros with its distinctive back outline and differently shaped head, but as none of the boys seemed to be able to tell the difference, and the animal was so wary as to prevent our getting a good look, we accepted the odds against her being the docile and safe-to-approach white species and treated her with circumspection.

She was in country difficult to photograph, but it was worth the attempt because of the calf which could be glimpsed from time to time.

Between us lay the narrow valley, which was filled with tall brush, five-feet-high grass, thorn scrub, and a few palms. It was bad country in which to avoid a charge, and under those conditions even a good marksman would have found it almost impossible to shoot and deflect the animal until too late. Also, if it turned out that we were dealing with the precious white rhino, no set of photographs could have justified endangering the animal by shooting at her in self-defense, should she have charged when frightened by the click of the camera.

There was practically no breeze. In the tall grass and brush I would be able to conceal myself perfectly because of a rhino's eyesight, which is poor in either species, and I therefore decided to approach as closely as possible and then climb a tree to get an unobstructed view for the camera. This seemed to be the only possible method by which a good picture could be obtained, and at the same time, if I could reach the tree before a charge, there

would be safety for both man and beast. From the ground it would have been necessary to approach within five yards of the animal and her calf, and I could not persuade any of the boys to do that.

I ordered the boy carrying the bulky camera case and extra gear to wait in a safe place. Then I began a careful creeping stalk down the hill, into the tangle of bush, and the walk across the small valley. As soon as I had passed the worst of the thickets screening the cow I focused all attention on her movements.

The tick birds, the worst avian pests of the rhinoceros photographer, were alarmed and "chirred" almost continuously. The cow was alert, but not knowing exactly where the danger lay, surged first in one direction and then another. She acted as though she had received some whiff of tainted air, but not enough to provide a decisive stimulus. The varying breeze made continued stalking impossible. At times it looked as though she would break away and move over the ridge behind her, then again it seemed as though she might rush down the hill to investigate.

It was while she was thus occupying the center of attention, when my every nerve was tense with expectation, that there was a sudden explosive snort and crash in the bush a few yards away and a black rhinoceros bull emerged, standing seemingly at a distance of only a few arm lengths and truculently staring back toward the spot from which had come some sound or smell.

He had evidently been lying down, asleep in the tall brush and grass, and I had walked almost on top of him. He was now standing only thirteen yards away, as we measured later. There was a deep, breathless silence, and we cautiously looked about, searching for the nearest tree. I hardly dared to move even my head for fear that any motion, no matter how slight, might attract the attention of the mammalian tank.

There was nothing to do but wait for some overt act, and the rhino evidently considered himself in the same predicament. He could not make out the source of danger, and fortunately no turn of the breeze relieved him of his indecision.

For many long minutes there was absolute silence, and I was concerned lest at any second the fickle breeze might change.

There was no telling what might happen, for in bush so thick the air does not move in straight lines but eddies and seeps here and there in vague and unpredictable vacillations. At such a short distance the scent might have carried to him at any moment. If he knew that the danger was almost beside him, it seemed probable that he might make a rush up that trail of scent.

After what seemed an eternity his head began to turn, first to one side, then to the other, his eyes short-sightedly staring with piggish intensity and examining every suspicious object within range. With ears pricked and all alert, he slowly turned, moved a few hesitating steps, stopped to look back, moved again and, suddenly, as though puzzled, trotted off, looking back first to one side and then to the other as he sidled along. Each time he turned, he looked ridiculously like a dog that had been bluffed into retreat and expected to be pursued. He appeared uncertain whether to reverse and speed up in ignominious retreat or to stand and face the danger. Finally he panicked and plowed away through the tangle of brush at full speed ahead, knocking down a small, thin tree that stood in the way. When he disappeared over the ridge with a crackling of brush, we breathed deeply.

Now we remembered the cow on the hillside fifty yards away. She was still standing motionless, staring toward the vanishing sound of the retreating bull as though in a daydream. That was her only reaction, and doubtless if we had not been present, she would have continued to stare until she would have passed into a doze, and then a sound sleep. As soon as we started moving, however, the tick birds commenced their chatter and she turned and faced directly toward us. There was no doubt that we were well beyond her range of vision, especially since we were up to our necks in tall grass and brush. There was now practically no breeze, but what little there was would probably move up or down the valley according to thermal differences rather than across it, and it was unlikely that our scent carried to her. Most animals when alarmed turn and look in all directions, and do not seem to have any "uncanny sense" of where danger lies. But the rhinoceros cannot bend its neck gracefully and look back over its shoulder—it is constructed too solidly for such an acrobatic feat.

When danger threatens, the animal turns stolidly and faces toward it—a most uncompromising attitude that, justifiably or not, enhances the rhino's reputation for truculence—and automatically aims its head in such fashion that when panicked the rhino gives the illusion of a charge.

About twenty-five yards from the cow was a slender mimosa tree that looked as though it would afford a sufficiently secure perch. I carried the camera six or eight feet from the ground, where a forked limb and some small branches gave just sufficient support to allow picture taking if the rhino moved into the open. With each snapped twig, the cow moved forward a few steps, then, hearing nothing more she moved back again. The tick birds continued their alarms, she became more and more nervous, finally moved off to the right, and disappeared into thick brush frustrating our picture-taking efforts. During all this time the calf had remained hidden behind her.

Before we continue our photographic hunt on rhinos, a few comments on the tick birds might be inserted. Although these starlings, known to the Zulus as *umhlalanyati* ("sit on the buffalo"), help their hosts by passing the alarm to them, their aid is supplemented by an apparently keen sense of smell and hearing in the rhino. On the other hand, it soon becomes obvious that a rhino is almost blind, at least for the interpretation of motionless objects at even less than fifty yards, and for this reason one is amazed to see how quickly it sometimes seems to sense the direction of danger even in still air.

Sometimes when a man has only a part of his face exposed from behind a tree, one rhino may turn and stare in his direction; another, however, may fail to see a motionless person only half the distance away and in plain sight. Coincidence might be the explanation, but the response seems to be too frequent to be accidental. The real facts may be simpler despite those adventure writers who endow wild animals with mystical senses.

Tick birds feed on all sides of an animal, and a flock of half a dozen or more settle on their host, scatter over its body, and begin a search for ticks—not a difficult undertaking in Africa. As

soon as they sense a threat, they immediately call their alarm notes and retreat to the side farthest from danger, where they cling almost out of sight. When alerted they usually manage to keep their host's body between themselves and the peril. The few lookouts that keep the enemy in sight show only a small part of their body, and the closer the danger, the less of their bodies shows. This habit of retreat to the side farthest from the threat could quite obviously provide their host with cutaneous information as to the direction of danger, and this might be reinforced audibly by the bird's habit of uttering almost continuous warning sounds. The possible effectiveness of this type of mutualism is enhanced in animals that are accustomed to face toward the source of danger, the rhinoceros and buffalo particularly, for under these conditions the host animal swings about in varying directions until it locates the source of a disturbance, and while doing so the birds usually scramble hurriedly from side to side, clinging with their powerful feet and needle-sharp claws. When they have finally retreated to the rump area and cluster there, calling harsh warnings, it would be a dull animal indeed that could not sense at least the general direction of the unseen menace.

These beautiful little starlings, somewhat reminiscent of the American waxwings in their neatness and sober hues, feed on the blood-engorged ticks that so beset almost all game and domesticated cattle. In the farming country the birds are becoming rare, presumably because of the arsenical dips in which all cattle must be submerged at regular intervals, and it is therefore chiefly in the game refuges that one will have opportunity to study their habits. If their services can be classed as mutualism of a sort, it must be doubly effective, for the birds provide dual benefits to their host—the removal of damaging and irritating ticks and an effective warning against danger.

As the day of our picture hunt was getting warmer, it seemed probable that by going down the bed of a small, almost dry stream, and keeping in the shade of the scrubby trees, chances for finding another rhino would be good. I was not too enthusiastic

about working in the dense scrub cover because of the possibility of an inadvertent approach to danger and because of the obstacles to taking good pictures caused by the screen of brush. But we would frequently find open spots in the brush, usually the dust or mud wallows of wildebeest, where "candid camera" tactics might produce results, and we hoped that with rhino so abundant, we might find a sleeping animal more or less in the open at the edge or center of one of these openings.

The valley through which we moved was a peaceful looking spot, beautiful with clumps and groves of African sandalwood and wild date palm.

The palms were *isundu* (*Phoenix reclinata*) from which the local natives make palm wine. They cut off the leafy tops, trim the tip of the trunk in such a way as to drain the sap into receptacles, and after two days the sap is fermented sufficiently to be called wine.

Signs of rhinoceros were abundant in all directions—tracks as big as dinner plates and chewed thorn-tree twigs, their favorite food.

After some time we reached the banks of the Hluhluwe River, and after the hot and exciting work of the morning, it was a relief to wash and drink. The Hluhluwe of the 'twenties was beautiful and clear, running over stony riffles, through long, reed-margined pools, over sandy stretches where the water sparkled in the sun, then through thick, black bush with hardly any perceptible flow and the pools looking deep and inky black. Although the river appeared so inviting, and one longed to plunge in for a pleasant swim, it would have been almost suicidal to do so. It would have been dangerous even to wash at the margin of the deeper pools. The Hluhluwe River was, and still is, a favorite haunt of crocodiles, many of them large, and all hungry. Each year the natives suffer accidents from crocodiles. However, with the passing years, erosion, rapid run-off and resultant reduction of underground water are gradually altering this river, and in time the crocodile pools and their occupants will become rarer and eventually may disappear.

After a rest and a light snack, we returned by a different route,

through more open country than that traversed in the morning. We walked up-hill for a quarter of a mile and soon found ourselves on the top of a ridge from which we could see for miles. Below us ran the silvery Hluhluwe, and from it in all directions wound the sinuous game trails. Most of them seemed to converge at definite points, showing that many animals preferred drinking at shallow and well-trampled fords, rather than at the deeper pools in more isolated spots.

And now our search was rewarded. From where we stood we saw a rhinoceros lying asleep. It was on the far side of the valley, and with the exception of a small open space immediately around it, the ground was thickly grown with thorn trees six or seven feet high, so that it was necessary to detour to one side, walk blindly through the high brush, attempt to recognize a larger tree used as a landmark, and then to reach it without disturbing the sleeping animal. After half an hour of anxious stalking, we finally reached the tree, only to learn that the rhinoceros had been awakened, the garrulous tick birds undoubtedly being responsible. But he had not left the spot and seemed drowsy.

There was no chance of getting pictures from the ground, and so I climbed an advantageously situated thorn tree. Even from the main fork, eight feet from the ground, the view was so poor that it was necessary to force a way through the interwoven thorny crown of the tree. Fortunately, my heavy pith sun helmet made a good, though noisy, battering ram, and by pushing through the branches and thorns, and carefully squirming through the small opening thus made, it was possible, without too much discomfort, to get on top of the tree crown.

Even the final position was far from comfortable, however, for it was necessary to stand half doubled over, and any attempt to stretch upright was punished from behind by a tough and awkwardly placed branch bristling with sharp thorns. My efforts to brace against the tree trunk resulted in sharp jabs from the inch long thorns growing there. After making several exposures from this position, I sank back against the main branches trying to ease my aching muscles and then climbed down the tree. The still somnolent rhino seemed to be listening—then eventually

turned his ridiculous little tail over to one side, and hastily barged away through the crackling thorn trees and out of earshot. At the moment it was impossible not to envy him his impervious hide.

This was the last rhino for the day, and we returned as the sun was sinking.

I recall another picture-hunting day when I started out with boys and a game guard along the same route, but kept to the ridges along the edge of the reserve in the hope that we would see a rhinoceros where the brush was thin, and so give us better chances for good photographs. After a mile we saw two rhinos standing near each other on a ridge across the valley. One was browsing in the open, the other was almost concealed in a thicket, perhaps lying down. Between us the valley was approximately a quarter of a mile wide, and in the center of it lay a narrow strip of bush, called by the local natives *ihlati kwa gube* or *kwa gube* (bush of danger, or evil bush).

The name was unquestionably appropriate. It was a very dense bush and the wild tangles of vines and thorns allowed travel only along the game trails that formed a network of paths, all showing abundant rhino signs. The natives claimed that the bush was inhabited by all kinds of animals, both natural and supernatural. Most men would refuse to enter it, and I was not surprised when the camera boy said that if I insisted on going closer to the rhinos, we should detour this bewitched bush. This would have necessitated going to the head waters at one end of the valley a mile higher up, then crossing to the other side—a two-mile walk to save going through that narrow strip of *kwa gube* bush land. I expected that my twelve-year-old native gun boy would side with the superstitious camera boy, but when I asked him he merely smiled and said, "*Ku lungile*" (It's all right). The native game guard looked scornfully at the big camera carrier and made some caustic comment about a "missing liver," the Zulu expression for faintheartedness.

We started toward the bush, and all went well until we reached the edge. Then the camera boy insisted that he was not going

through that bush, and that we could wait for him on the other side. The game guard made some belittling suggestions that eventually convinced the camera carrier that it was better to fall in with the majority, but he was obviously frightened. Perhaps it would be more true to say that he was either exceptionally imaginative or realistic.

While we were going through this strip of bush, the rifle was a consoling thing to have in hand. Game was so abundant that the bush even smelled strongly of animals, and the paths were as well trodden as a shady lane in a crowded pasture. Judging by the tracks, wildebeest were the most abundant animals, but there were many others also, all keeping company in *kwa gube* bush.

When we finally came to the edge of the bush and moved into the open, there were sighs of relief, and we wasted no time in putting additional yardage between us and the edge of that fascinating but dangerously thick patch of bush.

On reaching the top of the hill, we could see nothing at first. The quarry seemed to have disappeared, but after we had walked down the slope of the ridge for a hundred yards, a great, lumpy-looking "ant hill" showed through the bush, and with a little careful maneuvering, the form of a sleeping rhino could be made out. He had lain down in a small, open space. The nearby brush was not more than waist high, which made an ideal place for photography. The other rhino had apparently wandered out of sight.

When we saw the sleeping animal first, he was about a hundred yards distant, and for once the ever-wary tick birds were either asleep or off duty. We cautiously crept toward him, and at thirty yards I motioned the camera boy with the extra lenses and other material into a tree. I wanted him in a safe place, for, if the rhino charged, the boy might leave everything to be demolished. The gun boy took my rifle, and I ordered him to keep about four feet behind us and stay at that distance no matter what happened. Prepared for work, we advanced, trying to keep a small patch of brush between us and the rhino. This brush was twenty-five yards or less from him and made a convenient blind from which to take pictures.

We approached this patch very cautiously, walking directly in line with another and larger patch. When this nearer bush was reached, we slowly raised our heads to see what the rhinoceros was doing. We had been so careful, and had moved so quietly, that he was still unaware of us. We raised our heads inch by inch, almost holding our breath, afraid that at any instant we might hear the tick birds' warning calls or stumble on the second rhino, whose whereabouts we still did not know.

As our heads reached the top of the brush and we looked over it, there was an explosive snort and rush, seemingly from under our feet. For an instant we were paralyzed, then realized that we had almost stepped on four wart hogs, not a rhino as we had thought. During that first split second of the rush, we had expected to see the second rhino confront us at arm's length.

As soon as we recognized the cause of the commotion, our heart beats dropped to normal, and we laughed with relief and amusement at the wart hogs' panic-stricken rush. They made a headlong dash straight toward the sleeping rhino. As they reached him, startled tick birds flew screeching into the air, the rhino jumped to his feet with a grunt, and the hogs swerved off to one side.

The rhino stood motionless as the hogs faced about waiting, and the birds returned to their post. Again there was the same oppressive silence—no sound except the "chirring" of the tick birds and the faint, crackling song of a grasshopper. For a minute nothing moved. Then the wart hogs raised their tails in the air, the brush parallel to the ground like a flying pennant, and rushed madly away. As they went, the rhino turned and gazed after them, the tick birds scrambling over the ridge of his back to hide. Stooping low, we strode as quickly as possible to our chosen bush. Just as we reached our cover, the rhino turned and faced our way again. He appeared to suspect the general direction of some danger, but could not make us out.

I snapped several pictures, and each time the rhino would wheel, sometimes appearing to be on the brink of an attack, at other times simply curious. He would probably have quieted down, but the tick birds kept up their warning calls and scurried

from side to side as he turned. Finally, as they worked their way to concealment on his rump, he started toward us, and that was our signal to leave. He was coming slowly; we stooped and left the field as rapidly as possible. Unfortunately, one of us stepped on a twig which snapped sharply, and there was a thumping rush behind us as the rhino broke from a trot and pounded along in our direction.

The gun boy had undergone more than his young nerves could stand and had fled to a tree at the first move; he was still climbing even though he was already twenty feet from the ground. With the advantage of our early and speedy start, it seemed as though it would be easy to sprint to a substantial tree well ahead of the rhino and dodge behind it. The sounds from back of us came nearer. The game guard, who had speeded past me as we started running, dropped back a few paces behind me, and held his gun ready, without shooting. He remembered his instructions well, for I had told him not to shoot unless he must, and yet, of course, he was anxious to demonstrate his skill and bravery. After we had run fifteen or twenty yards, the sounds indicated that the animal had turned. When we looked back he had reversed direction. A last view of the rhino showed a broad, squat stern and a tiny tail disappearing into the bush below us.

I thought that the six exposures made on this animal would probably be good, but I wanted a few more at different angles and with a different background. If I obtained these, rhino photography could be concluded and work started on animals with more predictable dispositions.

So we continued our search. After a while we found the comparatively fresh tracks of a rhino and her calf and followed them along the ridge. As we neared a patch of dense bush we heard a snort. As before I sent the spare equipment to a place of safety. The camera boy soon stowed the equipment in the crotch of a tree and climbed up to the higher branches where he could look over the nearby trees and see beyond us over the bush. He had hardly settled himself when he started waving signals, and I sent the gun boy back to find out what he had seen. The youngster

returned at a run to say that just around the next patch of bush there were three adult rhinos, and that a female and her calf were headed toward them. This was wonderful news and walking quietly we followed on the trail of the female.

Just beyond the bush the tracks turned and skirted along the edge of a little island of high-piled boulders from the center of which grew a small tree. This was an ideal spot so we scrambled up and looked over the edge. About twenty-five yards away were four rhinos, one a little smaller than the others but almost adult. The calf we did not see, either then or later. They were all standing in scattered thorn brush, so it was necessary to climb into the small tree to get a better view. The animals were still partially hidden by the tops of the thorn trees, but any picture showing four rhinos together would be a trophy. Slowly, even majestically, the four huge animals moved toward us, keeping abreast, until at eighteen or twenty yards they emerged from the obstructing brush into the open. This was the great moment. I pushed the shutter lever down. There was only a feeble click of broken gears. I tried a second time, but the camera failed again. The nervous strain was great, and my disappointment even greater as the rhinos turned broadside, stood for a moment as though posing, then stampeded down the hill and out of sight.

A few days later as we left camp for the return to civilization, we looked back toward the bush; it was sunrise and the far hills were tipped with lemon-yellow light; in between, the bush still lay in dusky shadow. Close by, an aloe pushed its dull red spikes of flowers into the clear air. The dew was glistening on the grass and on a drop-beaded spiderweb stretched carelessly from aloe bloom to tufts of dark green leaves. The air was cool and clean, fragrant with the smell of morning in the wilds.

More than thirty years had passed by the time I returned, but never during all that time had I forgotten the hues of those mornings, the freshness of the air, the excitement of our stalking the prey. The episodes with wildebeest, bushbuck, zebra, and rhinoceros formed little links of a chain that, in the 'fifties, pulled me back with elemental force to Africa.