

LAKE VICTORIA  
TO KHARTOUM  
WITH RIFLE & CAMERA  
BY CAPTAIN F. A. DICKINSON  
D.C.L.I., F.R.G.S., WITH AN INTRODUCTION  
By THE RT. HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL  
AND NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS FROM  
PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR

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## Mr. Churchill's Journey

went in different directions, and arranged to turn to the right when the time came to make for home, to avoid tumbling into one another.

The doctor and I had walked for less than half an hour when we came across a single tusker trekking across our front on his way (presumably) to water. His tusks were not large enough to warrant the shooting of him, at least so I thought. We therefore let him off, and contented ourselves with a waterbuck for the men.

Colonel Wilson came in with the news that he had encountered a bull elephant, which had promptly charged and been knocked down, and, on regaining his feet again, had been floored a second time. But, although badly wounded, he had managed to make good his escape, and on the morrow the gallant colonel intended to follow up his tracks and secure him. The third party then arrived and related how they had seen a dozen elephant in the distance, and, on approaching to spy upon them, had stumbled upon a rhinoceros in the thick grass, and, as it was getting late and neither species had perceived them, but appeared to be feeding quietly and contentedly, they had decided to return to camp and leave them till next day.

This was great news. Excitement reigned supreme in camp that night. Each party had seen elephant, so that the countryside seemed to be stuffed with them, whilst Mr. Churchill had



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come across a rhinoceros which it was strongly believed would turn out to be the rare Burchell's or white variety. Plans were made for next day ; it was determined to prolong our stay further than was originally intended ; everybody was talking animatedly at the same time ; in fact, it was very difficult to get to bed, there seemed to be such a lot to say !

Next morning the same parties sallied forth in the same direction as yesterday, so that each could have a try for what he had seen the day before. *We* had not marched far before we tumbled without any warning into a big herd of elephant, some sixty or seventy, chiefly cows and calves, however, and, try how we would in the thick grass, we could not distinguish any bulls. It was quite on the cards that they were feeding away from the herd, and the climbing of some huge trees did not throw any further light on the important question whether there were any shootable bulls or not. However, we hung on, on the outskirts of the herd, till a crashing on three sides of us gave us warning that we were being surrounded, when we thought it time to "shin out." After another hour's work we had seen nothing bigger than a small bull, and so decided to leave them and try our luck further afield. We walked and walked and did no good, so got back to camp in good time to go out again after lunch.

BURCHELL'S, OR WHITE  
RHINOCEROS

I HAVE related the story of my first meeting with this redoubtable animal—antediluvian I almost called him—when on my trip down the Nile with Churchill. All the way back I tried and tried, and hunted in all the places where white rhino were likely to be encountered, and saw tracks innumerable, but never the brute himself.

On this journey I was put on to a new place where one of this species had been seen before and left alone, and had since been seen again. This sounded good enough, so I started out one fine day.

We trekked along, following a well-worn hippo-path from the water's edge, through thick bush, gradually thinning out till we reached the higher ground about a couple of miles from the Nile. As this was ideal rhino country, I had extended my orderlies well on each flank to keep a sharp look out. We disturbed numerous herds of water-buck and Uganda cob, but shortly before sundown had to turn our face towards the camp without



## White Rhinoceros

having come across the object of our expedition. I had taken out half a dozen porters with axes, for use in the event of our falling in with a rhino ; they all followed us, marching some half a mile in the rear. Just as I had fired at a cob for the larder, one of them rushed up and begged me to return, as he had just seen a hippo fast asleep under a tree. I thought this very odd, as no self-respecting hippo would think of leaving his watery fastness for at least an hour or more, but on close inquiry I gathered that the supposed hippo had a very long horn on his nose.

A rhino, of course, and probably the identical animal we were in search of! It's perfectly marvellous how little the indispensable but ignorant porter knows about any animal he may see. It was ten minutes ago, he said, but it had only just occurred to him to run and tell us!

Back I went, "hard all." The porter who had brought the news, and who returned with me to locate the tree, grew greener and greener about the gills, till at length he indicated the place where the animal lay. He then sank speechless behind an ant-heap in evident terror.

It was rapidly getting dark, but we hadn't moved many steps before my orderly pointed out what looked like a bush ; but it moved. This was, as I had expected, a veritable white rhino, with two beautiful horns, advancing on the position I at once took up behind a stout tree. I

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allowed him to come quite close on account of the rapidly failing light, and when his head went down to graze, pulled the trigger so as to hit him in the neck.

He fell to the shot twelve yards away, got up, spun round like a tee-to-tum, squealing blue murder the while, and disappeared in a cloud of dust. I must have hit him too low on the hardest and thickest part of his forehead as he faced us, and so he got off with little worse than a bad headache.

Curses? The air went blue for miles! I was, of course, a double-distilled donkey for having chanced a shot so late in the evening; but then the rhino mightn't have been there next day, you see; and he *was* so close. I honestly believe most people would have acted in the same manner, and have tried their luck, instead of leaving an animal they particularly wanted till a problematical to-morrow. There's many a slip, however; and it shows how easy it is to miss one's mark in the dusk, leave alone moonlight!

. . . . .  
At last! at last!! I am able to say that I have had the good fortune to bag a white rhino.

After many days' sweating and slaving; after marching hours at a time in the vain endeavour; after having been brought first-rate *khabar*; after having had the two chances mentioned before.



## White Rhinoceros

At last!!! When I had long given up the idea as hopeless; imagining that I was not fated to get one of these monsters; that they had conspired amongst themselves to keep out of my way, even in their own favourite localities; that if I wounded one, he would go on and on, and thus wear out the prescribed duration of my stay. Every device had failed, even heavy bribery of the natives, to find one for me: till, as I shall now relate, in a most unexpected place, where the country round had been harried and thoroughly disturbed in my pursuit of elephant, one appeared as if by magic under my very nose.

I happened one fine day after tea to be pensively strolling along with my rifle—one never leaves it at home under any circumstances—up a small, rocky, dry khor, fringed on either side by dense thorn thickets on the tops of the steep banks. The chatter of the birds in the trees overhead and the varied hues of their plumage had kept me interested during my walk, and I was just poking about in search of the lair of a curious species of field-mouse, when crunch! crunch! round a corner in the nullah came a rhino. From the ridiculous to the sublime!

He had, I imagine, been sauntering along on his way to water with a deliberation equal to my own. Be this as it may, we found ourselves face to face some twenty paces apart. I was quite as

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startled as he was. We stood for fully half a minute stupidly staring at one another before he realized that I was a specimen of his sworn enemy, man; and I, that he was one of the rare white rhinos.

The great brute, after pondering the matter carefully in his dense, pig-like fashion, evidently came to the conclusion that he had little desire for further acquaintance, so turned his unwieldy carcase in the narrow way. I had by this time gathered my scattered senses sufficiently to turn off the safety-catch of the rifle, and let drive at his neck which he offered to my shot as he turned to disappear. The bullet took immediate effect; he measured his length on the floor, and lay like a huge dark boulder on the shimmering sand. This was great good fortune, for, as I have said, all thoughts of white rhino had vanished ages before, and the luck in even setting eyes on one was little short of stupendous.

However, there he lay in all his glory. White be hanged!—grey-black in colour, instead of the plain black of his East African brother; square-lipped like a cow—the square lip is his special sign-manual; and the owner of two nice horns, the anterior one being  $36\frac{1}{2}$  inches. A trophy to be proud of.

The hacking off of the horns took some little while, so that by the time they were ready twilight was beginning to fall. Meanwhile I had



## White Rhinoceros

gone on in front, and was some way on my return journey to the river—having left the carcase to be cut up on the morrow—when I heard a crash in the bush bordering my path, immediately followed by another, and then a third!

The banks of the Nile, be it noted, are here very much overgrown with dense undergrowth. This gets thicker and gradually merges into forest as one approaches the river. I had, therefore, no notion as to what was advancing towards me. The result was an attack of funks, which became gradually worse and worse, as I expected to have an elephant, or at least another rhino, to contend with, now almost by the light of the moon.

And still the sound got closer, and I became more alarmed. Nearer and yet nearer drew the dreadful noise—sounds always appear to be louder and more frightening in the still night—and I gripped my rifle, prepared to do or die, when a good British “Damn!” broke the awful silence, and out stepped my companion of the launch—the trusty engineer!

Talk about relief to one's feelings! By Gad! Try being out in the jungle in the twilight that is momentarily growing into darkness—not an English twilight, which lasts for more than half an hour at the least, but a gloom which will be pitch black inside of ten minutes—and see what it feels like, and what sort of a game it is, being sup-

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posedly on the verge of coming face to face with a huge antediluvian animal at that hour in his own fastnesses!

Immediately on my arrival, the news spread through the camp that there was a rhino to be eaten. My tent was besieged with eager porters, not necessarily hungry, but all anxious to get their bit, which being interpreted meant that once they could get at the carcase they would stuff themselves so full that all hope of a move on the morrow would be out of the question. During my bath I was considerably bothered by them, whilst to shave was impossible till I told them where the carcase was.

I'll defy anyone to wield the old-fashioned razor—none of your new-fangled garden rakes for me—with safety whilst a mob of savages are making facetious remarks about the operation. The savage can never make out why the white man wastes such a quantity of soap only to scrape it off again.

Well, I told these gentry that the carcase was a long way out, and that they had better wait till the morrow; but, notwithstanding this, and their customary fear of being eaten up by some nocturnal beast of prey, the camp was practically deserted that night; and on my return to the spot next morning, the sight of these savages baffles description. Suffragettes weren't in it with them!



## White Rhinoceros

Meat in general appeals to their stomachs, and in spite of their all-night sitting I saw a solid mass of half-naked men flourishing long, sharp knives, yelling, shouting, and screaming at the top of their voices, tearing, hacking, and hewing at the bloody and dishevelled carcase. Great coarse pieces of gory flesh were being thrown about—the highly-prized stomach had long since vanished—knives dripping with blood were gleaming and slashing round the mangled remains in the most dangerous way in every available spot; whilst some of the company, who had not been lucky enough to retain a front seat at this delectable form of amusement, were pushing and trying to climb over or force a way under their more fortunate comrades in front. Others contented themselves with thrusting their long sharp weapons over the shoulders or between the legs of their companions who were nearest, themselves drenched in blood and “in’ards” from head to foot. Some were actually struggling manfully inside the carcase itself.

If one’s sisters or one’s cousins or one’s aunts were to witness a scene like this, I would back them to fly shrieking to the privacy of their tents, there to tie themselves up and pray for mercy at the hands of these presupposed cannibals, whose appetite for blood would, presumedly, be well whetted by the time their orgy had terminated.

# Game Regulations : Uganda

mencement of this Ordinance shall remain in force for the period for which they were granted, as if this Ordinance had not been enacted.

H. HESKETH BELL,

*H. Majesty's Commissioner.*

ENTEBBE, 16th October, 1906.

## FIRST SCHEDULE

*Animals not to be hunted, killed, or captured, by any person, except under Special License.*

1. Giraffe.
2. Zebra.
3. Wild Ass.
4. Gnu (*Connochaetes*), any species.
5. Eland (*Taurotragus*).
6. Elephant (female or young).
7. Secretary Bird.
8. Vulture (any species).
9. Owls (any species).
10. Whale-headed Stork (*Balæniceps rex*).
11. Saddle-billed Stork (*Epphippiorhynous Senegalensis*).
12. Crowned Crane (*Balearica*).
13. Okapi (*Johnstoni*).
14. Buffalo (female).
15. Ostrich (female or young).
16. Speke's Tragelaphus (female).

## SECOND SCHEDULE

*Animals, the females of which are not to be hunted, killed, or captured, when accompanying their young, and young of which are not to be captured except under Special License.*

1. Rhinoceros.
2. Chevrotain (*Dorcatherium*).
3. All Antelopes or Gazelles not mentioned in the first schedule.