

Hunting Ahead of Roosevelt In Africa

By John Jay White, Jr.

THE WRITER OF THIS HUNTING DIARY WAS ACCOMPANIED BY DR. W. S. RAINSFORD, FORMERLY RECTOR OF ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, NEW YORK, ON AN EXPEDITION THROUGH THOSE REGIONS OF AFRICA IN WHICH MR. ROOSEVELT WILL PROBABLY HUNT

THIS is the third of a series of articles which have appeared in HARPER'S WEEKLY. They are from the diary of Mr. John Jay White, Jr., of New York, and are descriptive of a successful hunting-trip which the author undertook recently, in company with Dr. W. S. Rainsford, formerly of New York, through those regions of East Africa which Mr. Roosevelt will probably traverse.



In camp on return to Ravine, June 26th.—Left Good Luck Camp at 8.15. Just before we left, three Wandorob came in, carrying on a piece of hide upon their shoulders a fourth who had fallen out of a tree the day before while gathering honey. We found out that he had fallen on his back, but, though we felt him carefully over, could not find any broken ribs or bones. He was unable to move, and seemed in a bad way. We gave them some smoking, telling them to rub his back often and gently, hoping the

meat that, and, on his saying he did, I dismissed him, giving him twenty days' *pusho* of meal, and ordering an askari to see him two miles out of camp. He is the first man we have had trouble with, and I was afraid if I didn't send him off at once he would make discontent among the others and we might lose a dozen men. Saddle gave us an excellent dinner, and Dr. Rainsford and I shared a bottle of champagne in honor of the Fourth.

July 5th.—Left Big Tree Camp at seven. Made camp at 11.20. Safari travelling well, though the loads are heavy. Sick men better. The "Sick Leg" asked for a load this morning, saying he was well. About noon five donkeys and our askari came in. Rice, salt, and sugar in plenty. We are travelling heavy. Dr. Rainsford and I each carrying a gun, and the gun-bearers leading our mules when we walk, as the asses have to carry their own loads.

July 6th.—Some men, taking supplies to Hocy's camp, spent last night with our men. They say they met Kombo, well on his way to Ravine. Hunted in afternoon; I saw nothing, but Dr. Rainsford got a huge shot at a kongoni. That is about the last fresh meat we will have till we leave Ravine. Last night coldest we have had so far. My watch broke down at 2.10 this morning, and I cannot get it to go again, though I have tried to assist the works with a pocket-knife. Very annoying. It will be a couple of months before I can get it repaired at Nairobi. I was talking to one of the porters last night and trying to tell him how cold it was sometimes in America. I told him that sometimes it was so cold that the water grew hard and stopped running, and that then I could walk on it without getting wet. He said, "If you can do that, you are a God," and would not believe it till both the guide and Dr. Rainsford told him they had also done so. This fellow has five wives, and five huts for them to live in, and would hardly believe me when I said I had only one wife. I further said I had only one hut and could only afford one wife and one hut. He has cows and sheep, so I said I only had five horses, and no cows or sheep. He seemed quite sorry for me.

July 7th.—Out at 7.10 and camped at twelve in the forest near a little stream. Weather very cold to-day and yesterday. I wore a heavy woollen sweater all day. The path through the forest is dryer than when we came through on our way in.

Big Tree Camp, Swahili in Africa, July 3, 1905. (From private correspondence.)—To-day is the Glorious Fourth, but beyond shooting at a mark a couple of times, I have done nothing to celebrate it. Last Fourth I spent seeing Indian pony-races on the Sioux reservation. How different it is out here! We are working slowly toward Ravine, on our way to Laikipia, when we are going to hunt buffalo and other fauna. I look forward with considerable dread to our meeting. A few days ago I was walking on a level and barren plain—I chose that location because I could see a long way and not be approached easily from behind. I saw something in the distance which on closer inspection developed into a rhino. This fearful and wonderful beast was jabbing its horns into the African soil in a way that made my blood run cold. It ought to be prohibited by law from making such a noise. While looking at it, and racking my brain to devise some excuse for not busting a hole in it with my elephant gun, I happened to look another way and saw three large black-maned lions striding along. They saw us and moved off in a dignified manner, but cautiously pursuing. Fortunately they kept ahead of us, and when we gave up the chase and went back the rhino also had moved, so I went down and shot a couple of zebra for the men's supper. We met a party a day or two ago out hunting, and Italy, their guide, told us that a short time before, while riding along alone, three lionesses gave chase to him. This is a thing they rarely do when unprovoked, but of course he had no means of ascertaining just why or if they were provoked. He said it was a beautiful (though he used a considerably stronger word than that) race for about 200 yards, his mule just keeping ahead, but after that they got tired and slackened speed. He didn't seem to hanker after another trial of speed, and also volunteered the information that "his mule didn't need to be pushed." We are hoping to come back here after we have finished our Somaliland trip (provided, of course, we are alive) and make another try for elephant and lion. It is so far off that I feel quite brave on the subject, but next time I shall have a fast pony. That is



Zebras are among the most common of game



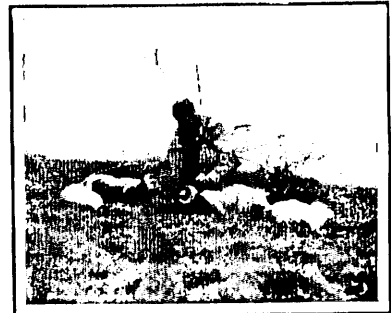
Masai guides in an attitude of diffidence

friction would reduce the bruises, gave him an old blanket, shot a kongoni for them, telling them to make some strong soup for him, and went on. I had to cut my big giraffe skin up, for the bad weather made the hair slip. I kept the head skin and a piece out of the back for a rug. Too bad, for it was nearly a record skin for size—21½ feet from the nose to the end of the tail, and the same across the shoulders from hoof to hoof. Made camp at ten, on edge of a swamp where two old elephant skulls lay—I named it "Elephant Skull Camp"—saw ostriches, claud, zebra, kongoni, wart-hogs, antelope, and gazelle from my tent.

July 3d.—Pulled out at 7.20 and headed for Big Tree Camp, where we were on May 17th on our way in. Camped eight miles from it at 1.20. Loads very heavy. Two men ill. Asked David if they had come in, and he said, "The Sick Leg has come in, but the Sick Chest is still behind." Saddle, the cook, down with a slight fever. We are out of flour, sugar, milk, etc. Kombo, my second gun-bearer, is kicking because he was given no rice. Told him it would arrive by donkeys, probably to-morrow. He was insolent, and said he must have rice at once. Asked him if he

the best way to hunt lion. You have a slave on the pony and when you see a lion he chases it. The lion does not enjoy this, and, after a bit, turns at bay. Then you go up and settle your differences in a gentlemanly manner. No more crawling in the bushes for me.

I think we have pretty definitely settled our future plans, which are as follows. We have roughly divided the hunting-trip into four parts. The first, the Sayo-goi Rock trip after lions, we have just finished. Our second trip is to the Laikipia Plateau, where we



A pair of Colobus monkeys

hope to get rhino and buffalo. That trip should last till some time in September. Then we go down to the coast and take ship to Aden and Berbera in Somaliland after lion, leopard, and greater and lesser koodoo (not hoodoo). Then back and up to this locality after elephant. It is, as you might say, the off season for them just now. We had intended going to Uganda for elephant, but it is not healthy there, and a man runs chances enough (no joking) of his health here without monkeying with the unhealthy districts. Lion, rhino, elephant, and buffalo are distinctly unhealthy. Some of the buck, too, have a nasty habit of charging you if you go too close after wounding them. Dooda, Dr. Rainsford's gun-bearer, was present at a little incident when a hunting-party was seriously inconvenienced. The gentleman sport who was paying



A wart-hog—small but dangerous



A rhinoceros, happily slain at close range

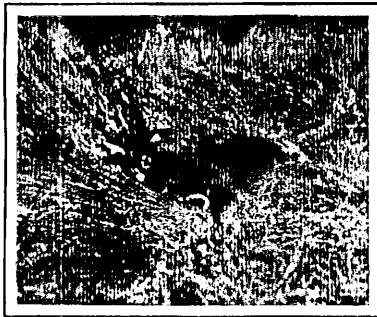
27 March 1909

the expenses of the trip usually got too close to a wounded waterbuck, when the animal made a quick plunge at him, and tipped him open so that he died soon after. Of course they did him proud in the funeral ceremonies, but that hardly compensated the unfortunate sport. In Uganda (not to put too fine a point upon it) the parasites, to speak politely, are very bad, and the sores their bites leave are quite dangerous. They also inoculate you with a very unpleasant kind of fever, so that of late few hunting parties have been there.

Crawling on our way to Laikipia, Sunday, July 12, 1908.—We left Ravine three days ago, and are slowly making our way toward the scene of our next hunting exploits. We are under the dominion, so to speak, of a Masai guide. We don't know the way, and I don't believe he does. He travels about three and one-half miles and then says it is many hours to the next water, so we have to stop. He is dressed in a short cloak of rock-rabbit skin and sandals, and carries a spear and a water bottle. The effect is striking, but rather spoiled by an old cotton underclothing he puts up if it rains. Found the fertile he had wrapped a parcel about as long and thick as your finger tied up in newspaper. I asked him what it was, supposing it to be some charm to keep the evil spirits off. He opened it and showed me a tin, a tin-spoonful of tea. That was his sole provision for the trip, as we give him meals. The Masai don't eat much meat, but live on milk, and have large herds of cattle, sheep, and goats. We are due at Laikipia Boma (settlement) in three days. I have just come in from hunting, and saw stenhuck, eland, Grant's and Thompson's gazelle, zebra, and kongoni, but did not get a shot. Rainsford saw two rhinos, but they were both small.

July 13th.—Darkness prevented my writing more last night, so I resume. I am sitting in my steamer-chair, writing on my knees, and it is difficult to keep on the lines. We made a hard march to-day. When we had gone about ten miles the guide said there was water and we would stop. So he hunted round, but came back saying that the leopards must have drunk it up, and we would have to cross a mountain and go a long way farther. At least, so I understood him. But the old bird was right, for we struggled along till three, when we came down to the plain and a beautiful river about two feet deep and fairly clear, which is quite wonderful for Africa. I promptly went in and had a bath, which was delightful. There are a great many Masai cattle on this plain, for we are passing through the Masai country. These bring a perfect plague of common house flies. They are like the kind we get in August, which cling and tickle. To-morrow we have another long march, passing the Aberdare Mountains, and next day should get to Laikipia Boma. I saw twenty-two ostriches to-day and a lot of baboons. Also zebra, kongoni, etc. The game is wild here, however, and we have not got any in some days. This part of the country is not very healthy, and Dr. Rainsford is busy treating fever cases this afternoon. We passed Soki Lake to-day. It is a little pond, but the peculiarity of it is that the equator passes through it. It was full of pelicans, flamingos, and other aquatic creatures, so that there seemed hardly room for the equator in it also, but I suppose it was there just the same. It also has hippopotami in it, but they, like the equator, were not visible.

Camped at the Junction of the Gussi Narok and Gussi Nera River, July 29th.—I am still sound in



A bushbuck, one of the small antelope

wind and limb, though badly shaken by my last three days' experiences, which I will relate. Two days ago I was dragged from my downy couch at 5.30, and forced to climb on my equally disgusted mule and rush out to kill things. I like to do my shooting about noon, holding that it is ineffectual to blow holes in game so early in the morning; but things do not always go to

please the tourist in Africa. Well, we wandered along, seeking what we might discover, as the Scriptures put it. We didn't see much, and when I did see anything I carefully refrained from calling attention to it, knowing by sad experience that I would be forced to pursue it through the mud, on my hands and knees, which is, I take it, the only correct way of approaching one's prey in these parts. At last in the distance appeared what I took to be a large rock, but, on study through the glasses, it materialized into a rhino. It was asleep on the hillside, as any sensible person ought to have been at that time of day. Further search revealed another along-side of it. While we were sniffing the air, and going through other formalities prior to creeping up to inspect them closer, two other spots caught our eyes. These were discovered to be a lion and a lioness lying dormant near the carcass of a zebra which they had killed and bitten a few chunks out of. As they were farther off than the rhinos, I suggested seeking their acquaintance. So we crawled laboriously toward them, my helmet falling off occasionally as I progressed. We got up within three hundred and fifty yards, when I perceived that our line of march was bringing us directly to windward of the torpid rhinos. Now a startled rhino almost invariably charges up wind, and I did not care, no matter how brave I consider myself, to find myself occupied in front with a couple of raging lions, and assailed in the rear by a brace of rhinos.

The guide wanted to go nearer, and we had a heated argument on the subject, which was nipped in the bud by a hyena, which happened along with an eye to zebra meat. The lioness got up, and, fearing she might leave us, I unhooked a few shots from my little rifle at her. She did not pay much attention to them, but went off majestically, followed by the lion and by another lion which I had not seen. They disappeared in some scrub, and I refused flatly to participate further in the chase. No more crawling in the brush after lion for me. So we went back to the rhinos, which were still very obligingly waiting, and laid out a plan of campaign. I left that matter to the guide, only stipulating that the field of action should comprise a tree with one strong branch. This being finally agreed to, we chose a position, on our hands and knees as usual, and proceeded toward the unsuspecting fauna.

First we went back to where the mules were and told the syces, the mules, and the slave who carried my camera, that there was going to be more or less trouble in the vicinity in a few moments, and they had better employ their spare time in hunting over somewhere. They did not wait to be urged, but went off like gazelles. Then I took off my field-glasses, and other articles which might impede me in climbing, and we crawled on. Arrived at the tree, I poked with my eye a likely limb, and then we peered through the branches. The rhinos were about eight yards off, and evidently had an idea that something was wrong, for they seemed nervous. I sympathized extremely with them. One had a pair of fairly massive, but not very long horns. The other was not so good. Nur Juma insisted on accompanying me, though I urged that he had better get a tree of his own, as I might need all of the one we were behind. All being ready, I poked the muzzle of my .450 elephant gun through the branches, shut both eyes, and let her go.

Opening my eyes and glancing instinctively up to see that the particular branch of the tree I had selected was still handy, I next looked, expecting to see fragments of rhino flesh spattered all over the scenery. To my disgust, I could discover no practical results from my shot, though I knew I shouldn't have missed her at that distance. Setting my teeth, I again closed my eyes and touched off the other barrel. Hearing a shrill whistle in their direction, I opened them again and, to my surprise, saw the one I had shot at give a hunch forward on its shoulder, roll on its back, and lie still. The other was now thoroughly roused and alarmed, and ran in circles around, trying to get our wind, when she would have come down on us like a steam-engine. My knowledge of their habits did not include such a condition of things, and, as I did not want to shoot her also, I inquired of the guide what he generally did under such circumstances. He suggested firing a shot at her from the little rifle, just so as to graze her, which was done, when she made off up wind at a smart trot, with her tail straight up in the air. We waited till she was well out of sight



Porters taking to trees at rumor of an approaching rhinoceros

and then went over to the dead one. I had shot her through the shoulders the first time, and the second shot was through the body, causing instant death. So we photographed in our hearts' content, with myself and the gun very large in the foreground, and sent to camp for men to carry in the head, feet, and large pieces of the hide. When the men arrived they said that Dr. Rainsford's syces had come in to camp on the Doctor's mule, and reported that Dr. Rainsford, who was chasing ten lions, had been set upon by a huge herd of buffalo. The syces said the gun-bearers had run away, and he had stood by the Doctor till he saw there was no hope, when he mounted the mule and left him to his fate. Knowing the habits of syces and how little they usually know of the value of the truth, I was not much alarmed, but was pleased to see Dr. Rainsford still alive when I got back to camp. His report was as follows: He had come on the tracks of four lions and was following them through some scrub



Interrogating a wandering wild man

when he roused up a herd of fifty or seventy-five buffalo.

These, not knowing what was the row, and being alarmed, rushed around snorting and making an awful noise. The syces had promptly got on the mule, and, seeing Dr. Rainsford and the gun-boys run forward in hopes of a shot, and the photograph slave climb a tree, had called out piteously, "Don't leave me," and started for camp at a gallop. Dr. Rainsford said he rode like a jockey and made wonderful time. I told the syces afterward that I should have done exactly the same thing. Dr. Rainsford got a shot, but the bull was moving and he only wounded it and did not get it, though he followed the tracks for several hours. Yesterday I met a lion and five lionesses while out for a walk, but could not get near enough for a shot. To-day I shot a pretty fair oryx and a Grant's gazelle and spent half an hour watching a big rhino gambolling on the hillside. He found a pool of rainwater and proceeded to take a mud bath. It was very amusing to see him lie on his side and roll over with his short fat legs kicking in the air. Then I spent quite a bit of time watching some giraffe, and went back to camp to find that Dr. Rainsford had come across a big puff-adder, which almost bit one of the gun-boys. So you see that life in Africa is not as dull as you might imagine it to be. It is getting dark and I must finish for to-day. Will add more before sending this, as it can't go out for quite awhile.

Friends

By John Kendrick Bangs

MAY I be friend to all the trees,
To birds and blossoms and the bees;
To things that creep, to things that hide
Through all the teeming countryside;
On ferns with all the stars at night,
With all the playful beams of light,
In love with leafy dales and hills,
And with the laughing mountain rills;

With summer skies and winter snows;
With every kind of breeze that blows;
The wide sea and the stretching plain;
The tempest and the falling rain,
If I were thus what need had I
To fear Death's solemn mystery
That takes me from the world's alarms
And lays me in earth's loving arms?