



Mtoto.

ANIMALS MY ADVENTURE

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founded the Ethiopian ruling house three thousand years ago. If today motor tractors work the fields of the highland steppes around Addis Ababa, if derricks bring oil from the subsoil of Abyssinia, if industrial plant is being erected, these are signs of a new age in which Ethiopia has a lively interest. As for us Westerners, whose civilization threatens almost to be the death of us, our respect for all the technical progress in the immemorial Abyssinian empire will be accompanied by the sincere hope that those values may be preserved there without which the soul of any modern man must wither—to wit, Nature unspoiled, and in Abyssinia that means the bird paradise by the lakes, the mountain solitudes with their ravines sheltering the monkeys, and all the precious wild life of steppe and bush, in which I found such a wealth of experience.

NETTING THE RHINOCEROS

AT LAST had come the most important event of my African trapping expedition. After months of thought, detailed planning and practical experiment, we had found our first young rhinoceros—and caught it!

In the bush country three days' march north of Umbulu in East Africa, we had reached the right place, swarming with rhinoceroses. Here, in a vast region overgrown with thorny thickets, with pools and watercourses bordered with narrow strips of primeval forest, cow rhinoceroses take refuge at calving time. Then and a little later, when their young are still small and helpless, the grown animals avoid the open steppe and seek safety in seclusion. They keep close to the water, because while they are feeding their young they need plenty to drink.

Our camp stood at the edge of a plateau, with a view over a wide plain of bush land. It was dusty and windy, and all our things were soon covered with bright red laterite dust. But the position was well chosen for our purpose of finding a cow rhinoceros with young that could be trapped, because from here we had a splendid view of the whole region with its many hills and valleys and beyond them a wide plain with thorny undergrowth and thickets. Close below us, in a steep ravine, there wound in the rainy season a stream which as its bed dried left small pools at various points. Near these drinking places were now many wild animals, and from a sheltered observation post we could watch them browsing or going to the water.

On the very first evening, when we had just encamped with our whole caravan of ninety bearers, we saw a great many animals. As we stalked them there jumped from the rocks a klipspringer, that delightful antelope which stands on the tips of its hoofs like a ballet dancer and is able to find a sure footing on the tiniest unevennesses of the rocks. The moment the little animal caught sight of us it gave a loud cry and fled headlong down an almost perpendicular precipice into the valley. There for a long time it stood motionless on a rock.

Beyond the valley, not far off, some waterbucks, splendid antelopes with fine long horns, moved to and fro in entire confidence as they browsed. When they turned away from us we could see quite plainly the white oval ring on their posterior, a strange 'escutcheon' which has given this antelope its scientific name, *Kobus ellipsiprymnus*.

I was still looking at the waterbucks as they moved slowly away from

us, when there came out of a group of acacias, towering over the bush, a gigantic giraffe. It seemed to me the biggest I had ever seen, certainly over sixteen feet high. Alone and with majestic calm it moved slowly over to an isolated group of trees.

Suddenly there was an uproar in the valley: a troop of fifty baboons rushed up, a little crowd of half-grown monkeys in front, then some gigantic males, then females with their young on their backs and other young ones dancing cheekily round them. Some of the adult males, respectfully avoided by the others, were closely surrounded by several females. One of them was evidently supreme over the whole band, for wherever it went all the rest sheered off.

When the monkeys jumped into the bushes and trees, the boughs bent under their weight and quickly sprang back as they left them. It was a wild little troop, all noise and movement. Disturbed by it all, some 'Negro's Head' parrots flew away with shrill cries. Others, red-breasted, flew up in agitation and dropped into the boughs of the Flat-topped Acacias.

Yes, I had come into a real animal paradise. I could not enter the species and names in my diary quickly enough. And on that same first evening, to my excitement, I saw not one but five rhinoceroses one after another! They moved about at various spots, all of them alone, browsing on the bushes and moving on slowly into the wind. One of them, and then another, came close to the great giraffe, but the animals took no notice of each other. The rhinoceroses shone in the evening sun, red all over from the mud in which they had been wallowing. But in the vast landscape these giants did not look as immense as they do from close up. Their great bodies, twelve or thirteen feet long and weighing a ton, were lost in the still vaster space that surrounded them. In the months that followed I had many meetings, and sometimes decidedly disturbing experiences, with rhinoceroses. At times there was even real danger to life. But I cannot say that I had any dislike or fear of them. I was nervous enough on occasion with buffaloes and elephants, with their incalculable temper, but for the strange beast with two huge horns on its nose, so fearless an animal and apparently awkward as it tramples the steppes, I had almost a friendly feeling.

This giant pachyderm was indeed so simple and understandable in its behaviour. When startled from a good way off it fled at once, but if it was approached too closely it would always attack. Even then, so long as it had not actually started to run at me, I was almost always able to keep it away by shouting and waving my arms. I never lost my pleasure in meeting the rhinoceros in the wilds of Africa, and although I was often

quite close to it, the two of us eyeing each other from only a few feet away, neither I nor my companions were ever injured by this beast.

Promising as the experiences of that first evening in the rhinoceros country had been, they had not yet fulfilled my chief aspiration. I was in search of a cow rhinoceros with young that were not big enough to be dangerous to us but also not too small to live in good health in their changed conditions.

With our glasses we had examined every spot in the bush, every rhinoceros that appeared we had carefully observed with our 36-magnification telescope, but we found no sign of young. Anyhow, we were content for the moment and full of hope, for where there were so many rhinoceroses there could hardly fail to be some young ones.

The sun's rays grew more slanting and the shadows lengthened; soon the whole country was in darkness. Now it became decidedly cooler, and we sought shelter in our tents from the cold night wind. At the Equator the day lasts exactly twelve hours. The sun sank below the horizon at 6 p.m.—as always. It went down amid a magnificent play of colours. Until the last moment the sky was filled with sunlight, and the clearness of the air at that time enabled us to see great distances in the beautiful country. Gradually the daytime colours changed, gaining radiance once more; distant mountains seemed wonderfully clear; hills on which we had camped a day or two earlier glowed a deep violet and seemed quite close. The tall yellow grass of the steppes shone, and the rocks round the camp were bathed in a tender rose-colour. Soon the twilight cast a bluish veil over everything. Already the view was obscured; then, quite suddenly, there was darkness. The moon rode in the velvet sky, like a saucer but slanting and not upright as in our latitudes; countless stars shone out. Everything was colourless. Only the leaves of a doum-palm, which but a few moments before had been touched with gold by the rays of the setting sun, shimmered in the silvery light of the moon.

Next morning I rose early. At 5 a.m., as every day, my boy, Radiabu, came into the tent, lit my candle, and set down by me a big cup of hot tea. Radiabu was the ideal of a personal attendant, always concerned for my well-being. He was a Vanyamvezi from the coast, dressed as a Moham-medan with a fez, and socially he regarded himself as high above the almost naked 'bush niggers'. He read every wish of mine in my eyes. Scarcely had I soaped myself for shaving in the morning when he handed me my razor with a fresh blade, and then the towel to dry myself, and so it went on all through the day: whatever he could see from my eyes that I wanted, and whatever I had shown him in the way of domestic detail, he carried out

unfailingly, and always in the same order. Whenever my tent was set up in a new place, everything was in it at exactly the same spot: on the right of the entrance the bed, on the left table and chair, at the back the trunk. No matter where we camped, I could find my way about at once in my tent, even in the dark! The bed with its mosquito net was always made in the same way—blankets and pillows exactly right, the tent slippers at the same spot, the gun hanging from the same tent-post, the telescope and the photographic apparatus, the pocket lamp, even the matches, were always at the same spot. Throughout this exacting expedition I was looked after and cared for by Radiabu as hardly in any other expedition.

The tea was wonderful, and I drank great draughts of it. One needs a great deal to drink in the tropics, and in the morning and evening one must take in a supply to last out during the hours of great heat. It is inadvisable to drink at midday—it tells on the heart, and should be avoided. I carefully followed this advice of old Africans; I also followed their example by taking chinin or plasmochin every morning as a prophylactic against the dreaded malaria, and succeeded in keeping free from it.

It was broad daylight at half-past five, and at six, when the sun rose, I was already at my post of the night before, and once more there spread before me the strange and manifold picture of the undisturbed wild life of the bush-covered steppes of East Africa. On my way back I caught sight of a herd of elands, the largest antelope of the Dark Continent. The bulls grow to fifteen hundredweight and more. Through our glasses we could closely observe them, the little calves with the cows. Soon afterwards a herd of twelve impallahs or Black-Heeled Antelopes fled from close by me. They jumped into the air, galloped a short distance away, and then in their high spirits jumped a yard into the air again. A lovely, astonishing, magical picture!

Hardly had I sat down on my observation crag when I saw a bull rhinoceros, at no great distance, resting under a Flat-topped Acacia. It was an opportunity for filming not to be missed. As soon as there was light enough I approached it cautiously, put up my film camera, had the animal sharply in focus, and waited for the colossus to move. But it made not the least sign of intending to move. I stood thirty yards from it, ready to film it, for some time. Still it would not get up. In the end I had to do something to rouse it. I threw a couple of stones close by it. At the first one, after some time, it moved its ears. At the second it reacted more quickly, lifting its head with its two long horns and turning it in the direction of the sound. When I threw a third stone it jumped up with astonishing alacrity. For a few moments it looked from side to side; then, when the purring of my apparatus became distinctly audible, it looked straight at me. Exciting seconds! I had to remain absolutely still, but I

turned my eyes to my heavy gun close by in the bush, and looked to see where I could best catch it up. Then suddenly the rhinoceros turned away and fled. Delighted, I went on working the camera, and I was able to take home an impeccably lit film strip recording a lively moment in the life of the Black Rhinoceros.

When it became hotter the country seemed to be dead, for every animal took refuge from the heat in impenetrable bush. So I returned to the camp. There were the three bright green tents standing invitingly under the broad boughs of tall trees, with washing on a line, hung up to dry by Radiabu. We were three Whites on this expedition to the rhinoceroses. One of us was Olesen, the head keeper from the Berlin Zoological Gardens; he was my permanent companion on the expedition. With us was Siedentopf, the famous hunter, known to most East Africans of the past. He had led us to the rhinoceros bush, and was in charge of our ninety porters and responsible for looking after them and he had a good deal of trouble to keep them in order and fed. This last especially demanded a regular organization. At fixed intervals a whole column of porters had to set out to fetch flour, the 'posho' that was the basis of their food. Each man received a good pound a day of it; that made a hundred pounds a day, or loads for two porters. Twenty men fetched the food every ten days. An African caravan of porters is like an aeroplane: each has a definite radius of action, determined by the food or fuel supply. Often game was killed for the porters—and to distribute it among the ninety men demanded from us Whites the wisdom of Solomon. Certain parts of the game were specially in demand, for instance the breast or the giblets, and sometimes there was fierce quarrelling, with spears brandished, until at last everybody was comfortably feasting.

The remains of these meals attracted various animals, and as I approached the camp I saw nearly a hundred vultures perched on a tree, waiting for something to eat. Most of them were long-necked Griffon Vultures. In front of me there flitted out of the thick clumps of grass a mongoose, a little animal of the size of the European polecat, but much more agile. Guinea-fowls with their high combs went to and fro in front of us, cackling cacophonously; francolins, resembling our partridges, waited hopefully in the distance.

Suddenly I saw in the sand the fresh spoor of a lion. In the night, or perhaps actually that morning, the great cat had been around, and it could not be far off. An undesirable neighbour! But in the daytime the lion is seldom aggressive. This, in any case, was not the time for following its track: our one concern was to find a cow rhinoceros, a mother with a nettable cub. The ground was full of the tracks of rhinoceroses; there were many also of zebras, of gnus and other antelopes, and even of the little

dik-dik antelopes, no bigger than hares. Only the tracks of a rhino mother and cub were nowhere to be seen.

Again on our second and third days I found no sign of our quarry. I began to have all sorts of doubts and fears of failure. And on this one search hung the whole success or failure of the expedition. A young live rhinoceros was to be the precious trophy to bring home, a rhinoceros of my own netting—and it was worth £750 to £1,000. Actually no one besides myself believed that the expedition could succeed. My keepers in Berlin had said, 'Well, let's hope you have luck with the rhino, Herr Doktor. It won't just come and ask you to take it home!' And the old Africans asked me before we started, 'Have you read Schilling's account of his rhino capture? A devil of a business! You must know that the thing can't be done.' In Africa old farmers had said, 'Never, in all our years here, have we caught a rhino, and are you, a newcomer, going to get one in six months?' Well, these Job's comforters left me undismayed. If only a young rhino would show himself, we should see.

I had been sending scouts out every day. One morning I was waiting for their return. The sun was high already, and it was time for the men to come with the usual reports of failure. I was alone in the camp. Sientopf and Olesen had lost patience, and had gone themselves after rhinoceroses early in the morning. Sientopf had spoken out of his many years' experience: 'Very likely the scouts are simply not looking—the fellows are probably lying under a bush somewhere and having a snooze, and by and by they will tell us they've seen nothing.' So he had gone off to look for himself.

I had sent out the six best scouts among my Umbulus, practised spear-men used to getting close up to the quarry and expert in recognizing spoor. I had just settled down under the shade in front of my tent when two of them came up noiselessly and were suddenly standing in front of me as if they had risen out of the earth. From the working of their faces I could see that they had something special to tell me. They pointed in a certain direction with their hands and spears and said, '*Faru mtoto kule*'—in other words, 'Rhino kid not far off!'

They spoke the word '*kule*' emphatically but quite softly. I caught their meaning at once. *Kule* is not quite a simple matter to interpret: spoken once in a low voice it means 'near'; shouted again and again in a higher key it means 'far'. So this time, spoken once and softly—it was near!

I jumped up, brought glasses and heavy gun from the tent, handed them to one of the Umbulus, and told another to carry my camera, which I never omitted to take with me. Then we set off. I called hurriedly to Radiabu to look after the tent and everything while all the Whites were

away—which visibly filled him with pride. On our way I looked back once and saw him sitting in my chair, exactly copying the style of the white Bwana! And all the caravan men, the porters and guides, and the curious onlookers from native tribes in the neighbourhood, who turn up in the remotest bush as soon as one camps, remained respectfully at a distance from the tent.

Our march to the 'Rhinoceros with cub' did not take long. At the end of half an hour I was standing at the edge of a steep cliff that fell sixty feet to a thickly over-grown river-bed. An Umbulu, with lively gestures indicating his delight, pointed down with his spear. I could see nothing there. Cautiously I pushed forward and found a good observation spot on a rock at the extreme edge of the cliff. Somewhere in the bushes below there must be a rhinoceros with young, and soon it was evident where they were: a small swarm of beef-eaters or ox-birds were flying to and fro at a particular spot. These birds, of the size of blackbirds, are the almost constant companions of rhinoceroses. They climb up and down the animal's rear and sides like woodpeckers, in search of vermin, mainly ticks, which they carefully collect. I found, however, a strange thing about them: they often keep big wounds open on the side of the rhinoceros, and they go again and again to the wound to take the flowing blood and also the new flesh that is forming. Thus, if in a fight between a couple of rhinoceroses, or in any other way, the thick hide is pierced, these birds hinder the final healing, and, useful as they are in removing vermin, they are a trial through their other habit.

The presence of the ox-birds was infallible evidence that there was a rhinoceros down below. But I strained my eyes in vain to see any trace of it. At last, at the spot where the birds dropped most frequently, I saw through my glasses a tiny movement, a brief twitching. It was the muscles of the grey ear of a rhinoceros, twitching violently to get rid of troublesome insects. The animal lay hidden and motionless under bushes. And then, after a long time, I was able to detect the cub as it moved past a little gap in the bushes, and to my inexpressible joy I saw that it was big enough, or rather small enough, to be captured.

Quickly I sent a messenger to Sientopf and Olesen. I wrote on a slip of paper torn from my diary, 'Come at once. Practicable rhino found. Bring nets.' The Black stuck the paper into a cleft stick, took a firm hold of it, and trotted away.

I did not move now from my observation post. For four hours I squatted alone on the edge of the cliff, waiting for my helpers to come. The old rhinoceros lay below me in the ravine, concealed, and slept.

They were hours of nerve-racking suspense. 'Patience,' I said to myself again and again, 'Patience!' Haste and impatience might spoil everything.

How long, after all, had I been waiting for this moment! From Berlin I had gone by express train, two days' journey, to Genoa, and then three weeks by sea to Africa. Then five days' red tape ashore and six days' journey by lorry across the steppes. I spent three days collecting porters for a caravan, and we went on foot for six days on safari. Thus it had taken me six weeks to get to this hot rock and sit looking down at the twitching ear-muscles of a cow rhinoceros, whose calf was browsing on the bushes below. Now a few hours more were a small matter.

At last Siedentopf and Olesen arrived, and we could distribute our roles. Each of us knew exactly what he had to do. But our patience was to be tried still longer, for the old rhinoceros slept on interminably. In the ravine below there was still nothing stirring but the twitching ear-muscles.

Several times I was tempted to throw a stone or shout to make the old rhinoceros move, but if I did it might take flight so quickly that it and the calf would be lost to sight at once; or it might make a furious attack in any direction. In either case, no one could tell what might happen. We preferred to wait, for even the midday nap of a rhinoceros must end some time! Already the sun was beginning to sink in the west. Then at last for some reason the rhinoceros got up to go away, perhaps for a drink. The boughs parted, two long horns came into sight, and then the head with the pointed muzzle, and soon we saw the whole colossus, weighing over a ton. The great animal pushed surprisingly slowly through the bushes. We found later that one of its forepaws was badly festered, probably through an infection of the soft pad of the sole, a slight injury to which may bring painful and often fatal sepsis.

The cow rhinoceros stood by a bush, nibbling at the thin twigs. Siedentopf waited, gun in hand, for the critical moment.

The cow was thirty yards away, and quite close to it, and so belonging to it, was the calf. The wind, which until now had favoured us, suddenly began to turn, and I was filled with apprehension lest the rhinoceros should scent us and take to flight. Just then it stood motionless by a low bush, with its head clear. Siedentopf shot exactly at the back of the ear, and the enormous animal fell instantly.

Tensely we watched the calf. For a time it stood motionless, nose in the air, but then it moved about the bushes, undisturbed in any way by the shot. It had not noticed that anything had happened.

Now was our opportunity! I reflected for a moment. Down below was the wild animal I was determined to have, but I knew that it could be decidedly dangerous. A little way behind me sat my porters with enormous nets, each sixty feet long and six feet high, woven of such stout material that a rhinoceros could not tear it.

With gestures, as silently as possible, I directed my men to the clump of

bushes into which the young rhinoceros had now disappeared, and I had this clump surrounded by the nets in a semicircle stretching a hundred yards. The nets were laid on bushes or loosely attached to poles, in such a way as to fall on the animal as it ran into them. Often enough I had practised this with the men!

The setting up of the nets now went on with surprising speed and noiselessness. In any case, the calf seemed to know nothing of our presence yet, for it did not stir. The clump of bushes in front of us seemed deserted, and yet the rhinoceros must be there.

Now that the nets were in position and all was ready for the capture, I had to break into the thicket, as we had arranged, as noisily as possible from the other side, so as to chase the rhinoceros cub into the nets. It was a ticklish moment, for if the young animal was stronger than I had judged it to be, and if it made for me, the consequences could not fail to be nasty. But there was no time to stop to think, and at the moment I was filled with the passion of the trapper.

With a Masai on my right and another on my left I jumped into the jungle of plants. I very quickly found where the young rhinoceros was hidden! Scarcely had a few boughs snapped when it appeared. I heard it pushing and breaking through in front of me, and then something reddish-grey came rushing at me pell-mell. Before I could really recognize it as an attacking rhinoceros, it ran at one of the Masai, who was thrown into the thorns at my side. It was incredible what speed and strength so small an animal already had. To my horror the rhinoceros galloped away and was on the point of breaking out beyond the nets. I ran at top speed towards it. It was a real race—at all costs I must cut it off! And I did it! It turned away like lightning and galloped back towards the wall of nets. I stood still, panting and wildly excited. What would the little animal do now? It did not seem to notice the nets, and then ran its head into the meshes and was caught.

I was delighted with our success. But only for a moment. The net slid away from the round little animal, and it was almost free; it had already jerked itself away from underneath. But Olesen, alert and as strong as a bear, was ready for it. He jumped on the youngster and threw his muscular arms round the animal's neck. It gave a loud squeak and carried the man away with it. Quickly I ran to his aid and held fast to one of the animal's hind legs. Then everyone rushed up. A heap of men, Blacks and Whites, rolled with the young rhinoceros amid a cloud of dust. At last we had it securely. A broad leather neckband of the right size which I had had made in Berlin was buckled round it, and it fitted perfectly, not too closely and never chokingly. Then we fastened two ropes to the neckband, and two more to the hind legs. These four ropes were then fastened to trees

at different points—not to the trunks but to branches or the tops, so that at every violent lunge the furious animal was drawn back as if by springs.

There we had our recalcitrant protégé, unable to get away and unable to attack in any direction. At first we all lay on the ground round it, bathed in sweat and thoroughly exhausted. Our little rhino was also sweating, and, strangely, a red liquid came out of its pores—the result of wallowing in red soil. It soon grew quiet, but remained full of courageous fury. When I went to it to coax it, it tried at once to run at me, viciously lowering its head with its short horns. It was a young bull, about six months old, two feet eight inches high at the shoulder. The fore horn was nearly five inches long, and the other was one inch. But these weapons were big enough to inflict bad bruises. Already this small rhinoceros had its troubles in life: there were countless ticks on every soft spot in its hide. Most of them were still thin, but some had gorged themselves on its blood. Later we took a good deal of trouble to pick these tormentors off.

Now we had our rhinoceros, but what next? It was much too strong for us to be able to drive it from the nets. So there was nothing for it but to transfer our whole camp to its neighbourhood. While Siedentopf attended to this task with his men, I had a strong corral built for it not far from where it was. This was not so easy, for tall stems were not to be found anywhere in the neighbourhood; we had to cut down no less than a hundred and twenty short stems from the thorny bushes of the steppe. These were rammed into the ground as close as possible to one another and woven together with tough creepers. Sixty men were put to this task, and completed it in five hours. But then came the real job. How were we to tow our rhinoceros into its corral? The distance was less than fifty yards, but I have always been amazed that we successfully covered it. It took every one of the sixty men. Fifteen of them held each of the four ropes, and the ropes needed holding! The rhinoceros tugged so hard that some of the men simply let go, and it very nearly got free. I therefore had it tied as a precaution to each bush we approached, but then came an entirely bare patch, and I had to shout to the men again and again not to let go on any account. When at last we had it in its enclosure, it kicked out two or three times while we were freeing it from the ropes. But at last we had it in safe custody.

The great thing now was to tame our rhinoceros. At first all our cautious efforts to approach it failed. Each one of us who climbed into the corral holding a toothsome green bough had to jump out again at once to escape from the animal's instant attack. The rhinoceros simply refused to eat anything. And yet we must at all costs get it to eat, and to eat without

suffering in health from its change of food. Olesen was not perturbed; after all, had he not successfully reared hundreds of young wild animals in the Berlin Zoo? He followed a recipe that had succeeded with lions and tigers: he warmed a strong 'baby's food', a mixture of oaten flour and Mecklenburg condensed milk, which we had brought with us from Berlin. We also had a giant milk-bottle and teat, big enough for a rhinoceros suckling. It had been no easy matter to get the teat made in Berlin in the shape and size of the teat of a cow rhinoceros. The milk-bottle was less trouble. A magnum of champagne was just right. This, too, we had brought with us to the Equator—full, of course. Now we let it pop. We drank the contents—the natives called it 'the White man's bang-water'—in celebration of our success, and at the same time christened our baby rhinoceros. His name was to be 'Mtoto', Kiswahili for 'child'.

As soon as the contents of the bottle—lukewarm, as they could not fail to be in the solitude of the tropical bush-steppe—were drunk to the accompaniment of a few suitable toasts, Olesen set to work on the first bottle of milk. But when he approached Mtoto in the corral with a few soft words and cautiously put the bottle to its muzzle, the animal gave a little jerk with its head, and the bottle went in circles high up in the air. But Olesen did not give up. At least fifty times the bottle flew away, but still Olesen tried again and again. He had poured the milk broth over the outside, to tempt the rhinoceros, and ultimately its hunger came to his aid. At the end of twenty-four hours Mtoto gave the bottle a first lick, and at last he fed properly from it.

That completed our victory. From then on the rhinoceros grew more and more used to its keeper. A few days later Olesen had only to hold the bottle for Mtoto to drink. The baby rhinoceros still gave a little toss of its head at him every time, but it became less and less serious. Finally even this ceased and a perfect friendship was cemented: Mtoto had adopted his stout and stocky keeper *in loco parentis*. He would squeak appealingly when Olesen went away, and was only happy and contented when Olesen was somewhere near. After a week we ventured to let our *faru* out of the corral. Olesen went ahead leisurely to some bushes with tender shoots. Mtoto followed close after him, and began at once to browse. As a precaution we had tied a long rope to Mtoto's collar, to catch hold of if he tried to escape. But he had no thought of escaping. He browsed peacefully in the neighbourhood of the camp, always remaining close to Olesen. Olesen often stroked the little fellow and searched for the troublesome ticks, and it was strange to see the trust the little animal had in his keeper.

Mtoto quickly got used to me as well. Only he could not endure the

Blacks, and especially when they came towards him swinging their arms or shouting, he rushed snorting at them; whenever he got the chance he would knock one of them down—to the general delight of the onlookers. But the time came when none of the Blacks was allowed any longer to approach the corral. One of us three Whites was always near to keep an eye on it, for though some of our men had plenty of sense there were others who were ready for any trick and would deliberately tease and excite Mtoto. One of them would snort like a charging rhinoceros and would grin with pleasure when our youngster fell into a rage; or another would creep up to the corral to induce the rhinoceros to charge against it. Gradually Siedentopf grew just as furious as the rhinoceros with these miscreants, and he would rush after them with a stick. After he had caught one, these games gradually ceased. Now and then we Whites still received a friendly dig from our *faru*, leaving a substantial bruise. But it was entirely well-meant—the primeval courtesy of the rhinoceroses.

A few days later we had another stroke of luck: we caught a second rhinoceros! It was one of the most exciting experiences I ever had in Africa, but it had a sad ending.

There had been a shower of rain in the night, and in the softened earth all the tracks of animals stood out with rare clearness. Next morning I found near the camp the track of a cow rhinoceros with young. The track was so fresh that we decided to follow it. That decision was to keep us going all day long. Hour after hour we clung to it; three times we seemed to have entirely lost it. Some of our Blacks were very experienced trackers, but when we came to stony ground even these men could do no more. Then I went in wide circles until I came again to soft soil, where the imprint of the large three-hoofed soles of the rhinoceros and small soles alongside them showed plainly in the sand. In this way we went for many hours following the tracks, across dry steppes, past bush and sand and stones. On our way I almost trod on a small Leopard Tortoise, and we took it with us. 'That means luck,' shouted Siedentopf. Later we saw a strong male zebra, wandering alone; then three ostriches eyed us. A herd of cow antelopes fled from close in front of us, and eight impallahs rushed away with gigantic leaps. We took no notice of any of these animals but stuck to our task of following the track. The two animals had rested by a couple of pools left by the last shower. The thick clayey mud showed plainly the contours of the head, folds of skin on the flanks, and the soles of the feet of the wallowing pachyderms. The two rhinoceroses had also taken a dust-bath in the open steppe, but then they had gone on into dense thorny bush in which, like an array of narrow swords, there stood up the dangerous pointed leaves of the *Sanseveria*. This was clearly a favourite



7 On the track of the rhinoceros. We followed a cow rhinoceros with a calf for ten miles. Early in the morning they had gone to drink and moved away. We followed their track in the intense heat of the day across the steppe, over grass and sand and loose stones.

8 On our return through the East African bush we had to build a corral for our rhinoceros at every stopping-place. We placed our tents round it in order to protect our precious foster-child from lions and other beasts of prey.





9 A great day in the trapping expedition: two young rhinoceroses in the corral! Chief Warden Olesen feeding them from a bottle, to which they took readily.

10 Our rhinoceros followed its keeper as it had followed its mother—as long as it felt like it!



resting-place of rhinoceroses, for a regular path led in, trodden by these colossi.

Here there was no escape on either side; we could only see a few steps ahead, and on both sides we were faced by the formidable knife-edges of the *Sanseveria*. We should certainly be in mortal danger if we met a rhinoceros on this narrow path, especially a mother with her calf to protect. But we had no choice but to take the risk.

With my gun in my hand I crept in.

There was nothing—this clump of bushes was also empty!

Rather desperate, and tired after ten miles' walking under the blazing sun, we went on with our search. Soon we had another dense island of bush in front of us, and it cost me an effort to crawl in once more. Our Blacks had already long lost interest, and after every short rest they held a *shauri*, a remonstrance: 'Rhinoceros and child far, far ahead! Camp with food far, far behind us!' Even Siedentopf began to say 'Give it up!' But I insisted, 'Let us try this slope, and make it the last effort!' Bending between the thorns and the sharp leaves, I crawled into the thicket, Siedentopf following me; every sense was strained to the utmost. In front of me was the track, now very fresh. At that moment there sounded suddenly, quite close, the penetrating warning cry of an ox-bird. I did not move. At any moment an alarmed rhinoceros might rush on us in fury. If then our shot did not go home in the first fraction of a second, this would be our last hunt! And there it was, close in front of me among the bushes, a reddish glow—the hide, stained by the red clay, of a rhinoceros.

Was it really the cow with its young which we had been following for so long, or was it perhaps another rhinoceros that had happened to choose this resting-place? The huge body turned its back to me; I stood motionless and searched the bushes for any sign of the calf.

Suddenly the rhinoceros turned round, quick as lightning: perhaps the wind had changed direction, or a twig had snapped—and now I saw a calf under it pushed aside, and the huge beast rushed at me. Nothing seemed to hinder it. It came through the thicket like a tornado, crashing blindly through thick dry stumps of trees. I had no means of escape. Right and left were the daggers of the *Sanseveria*. The Blacks who had followed me threw everything down, even the delicate cinema apparatus and camera, and disappeared in a moment among the trees.

Of all this I saw nothing: I could give no attention to it. I stood still and took most careful aim. Three yards away from me, the rhinoceros fell to the ground, dead.

'*Donnerwetter!* Close shave!' was all Siedentopf said.

A spray of blood reached us and stained my camera. My Blacks were still up the trees; they had had such a fright that they only came down

slowly when I flicked the ear of the rhinoceros. Before they could get excited at the kill, I looked threateningly at them and ordered absolute silence lest we should alarm the calf. That was a fearful trial for all of them, for they were bursting with excitement.

After hours of silent waiting, we found that the calf had left the clump of bushes, and had disappeared.

Its track led out into the steppe.

It was now evening, and quickly growing dark. All we could do was to set up a few primitive tents with our ground sheets. That night was an ordeal: for fifteen hours a cold tropical downpour drenched the camp. Shivering with cold, we felt once more the frightful contrasts of Africa—unbearable heat and dryness that parched mouth and throat, and then downpours and searching cold. We froze that night, near the Equator, in our tropical clothing, more than one ever does in winter in the North. Our Negroes also crouched shivering until dawn, their faces grey with cold. In the morning we discovered to our dismay that the rain had washed away all the tracks of animals, and when daylight came there was no trace to be found of our young rhinoceros.

We counted, however, on its returning to the spot where it had lost its mother, and we continued to search systematically in that quarter. But in vain! We grew more and more tired and hungry, and our spirits sank. The Wambulus, who had groaned at their labours the day before, could only with difficulty be induced to search ravines farther away. To encourage my men I shot a cow antelope, which was cut up and eaten at once. Little fires blazed up, the roast meat smelt appetizing, and at once good spirits were restored. The search for the rhinoceros began again with renewed energy. But to no purpose. Late in the evening we went back to our main camp, entirely exhausted, with nothing achieved.

I could scarcely sleep at night. I was constantly tortured with the question how I could capture this little rhinoceros in spite of everything. The roar of lions on the hunt came into the tent. It might well be that the defenceless animal had already become their prey! Once more I set out at dawn with our best track-finders, but the rhinoceros seemed to have been swallowed up by the earth. In the evening my natives had a great *shauri* as they squatted by the fire, after which a delegate came to me to declare loudly and vociferously that there was nothing to be gained by any further search, that they were all tired to death, and that none of them would start again. But I had made up my mind that I would find the little rhinoceros. On the following day I made all sorts of promises to the best of the track-finders and persuaded some of them to go with me into the steppe, and so we set out once more.

We had been gone about an hour when suddenly one of my boys came running through the bush:

'Bwana, rhinoceros child is there! There by the river are quite fresh traces: it had a drink in the night.'

I went quickly back to the camp. In a moment all was excitement and feverish activity: all the past labours were forgotten, and everyone did his utmost to help. The porters brought ropes and cord, the gun-bearers brought the guns, the camera boys took the apparatus, and in very little time we set off with sixty men. In a little valley I found one of my track-finders waiting for me.

'Big one not there, only child,' he whispered, and while the rest remained behind he led me to a little rise. And there I saw what we had spent three days looking for in heat and cold, wearing ourselves out—the little rhinoceros!

Now we all went to work with energy. Noiselessly one side of the bushes was surrounded with nets. While we were doing this the young rhino came at a leisurely pace towards us along a track.

'Don't stir!' The order was whispered from man to man, and everyone stood stock still. The young animal came closer, suspecting nothing; then it probably noticed our motionless figures. For quite a while it stood still and looked at us. Then it turned round, trotted off, and once more was lost amid the bushes. I ran to the other side with my two gun-bearers, and stood right on the only rhinoceros track, which led there through the *Sanseveria*. The little grey animal appeared in a moment, and as soon as it saw us it rushed at us, full of rage. The Blacks leaped aside; I waited for it, stepped aside at the last moment, and then threw myself on the youngster. With all my strength I clutched it round its neck and held on. Furiously the rhinoceros aimed at me with its head and horns; I had to duck right down to the ground; meanwhile it dragged me against the walls of thorn and particularly against those appalling *Sanseveria* stiletts. But I hardly noticed the tears and the bleeding wounds. Half lying on the earth, I was dragged to and fro on the track, but my arms wormed themselves more and more tightly round the fat, smooth neck. Then the little animal, unable to free itself from my grip, began to give out penetrating squeaks. These were cries to its mother for help, and if there were any rhinoceroses within hearing they would understand them. If a grown rhinoceros appeared on the scene and attacked me—what then? But I could no longer let go, my arms were locked round the animal, and we were nothing but a knot in a cloud of dust. I had completely lost my balance and had slipped half under the rhinoceros, so that I received some hefty kicks in the stomach. Probably I could not have held on much longer. My Wambulus, with ropes in their hands, were standing about idly and looking on to see the

outcome of my struggle with the animal. Not until I roared at them did they make up their minds to give a hand and catch hold of the rhino's hind legs.

Now at last we had it in our power; we tied it with ropes to the surrounding bushes. It stood still and calmed down. But we human beings were also so exhausted that we had to stretch ourselves out on the ground to regain our breath.

Then there began again the same game as before with Mtoto: as soon as a Black came near the rhinoceros it ran at him. This reaction of the animal enabled us to get it along to our permanent camp without any trouble to ourselves. I told a man to approach the animal and then start running towards our camp. The little pachyderm promptly ran at him, followed by my companions and myself holding the long ropes. This brought us to the camp in an hour and a half, streaming with perspiration, but proud and happy.

There stood Olesen, mother of rhinos, waiting for the new arrival and warming rhinoceros broth over a fire. Mtoto cautiously raised his long upper lip and sniffed at his new fellow when it was shut into the corral with him; but Mtoto showed no sign of distaste. It was a young female, a bride, I hoped, for Mtoto. What a glorious prospect, to have these two rare and splendid animals peacefully united in our camp! It seemed to me that fate could have nothing better to offer me in Africa; any later successes must pale beside the exaltation of having two young living rhinoceroses, captured by myself.

This was certainly one of the finest moments of my life. That same evening the young female drank from the bottle, standing next to Mtoto. It was quite obviously the same animal whose mother we had shot down as it attacked us, the young animal we had then lost.

But our good fortune did not last. It had wandered ten miles in the bush and spent three days and two nights alone there, and this was its undoing. Only a few days later the little animal, which had already won all our affection, succumbed to a heart attack. Probably it had been too long in the wilderness, alone and untended. It is difficult to describe our grief at its loss.

It was a good thing that Mtoto was still there for us to look at. Full of good health and the joy of life, he made a great hullabaloo in his corral, a powerful, cheerful, trustful young rhinoceros. After about three weeks we let him roam about where he liked in the neighbourhood of the camp, though with a rope twenty yards long fastened to his collar and trailing after him. In this way he was able to find his natural fodder for himself on the trees and bushes, and so we learned which species he liked as a 'sweet' after the bottle.

Our rhinoceros calf thrived on this diet and grew stronger and stronger; his excursions from the camp grew more and more extended; often he was away all day, always watched by Olesen. When the sun was at the zenith, the two lay down together in the shade of a tree for their afternoon nap. They made a peaceful picture, the stocky little Olesen sitting asleep against the tree, his hands crossed over his stomach, and close up against him the rhinoceros, evidently feeling safe in the protection of his foster-mother.

Now at last we could think about leaving the remote bush. Our return march was a severe test of patience, for our progress was determined entirely by our rhinoceros. When he cared to run, we could all make good progress; when he grew tired and lay down, we had to wait till he felt inclined to go farther. On the first morning we went along tracks made by rhinoceroses, and did very well. But after an hour and a half our protégé tired of running and began to feed from every bush, and then, as the sun rose higher and higher, he lay down in the shade and slept. That ended our march for that day. Next day we started off happily in the morning, but our rhinoceros was not very keen; after only twenty minutes he lay down and went to sleep, and we could get no farther. This time we were in the midst of the arid steppe, and the next water source was an hour and a half away. A water-carrier sent for water had thus a three-hour journey, and if we add an hour for gossip at the waterhole, it took half a day to get a bucket of water. On the following day we again made no progress! Mtoto was lord of the expedition, and everything depended on him. Sientopf became thoroughly furious, but Olesen and I remained calm. When Mtoto still kept up his cheerful whims, I had a stretcher made for our precious captive, with poles so long that six men could hold them at each end. And when at last it was all ready, we found that our work had been for nothing; for Mtoto now had a pleasant surprise for us—he ran of his own free will. The reason was that Olesen went behind him and kept on prodding him with a stick, just as the cow rhinoceroses do with their calves, using their horns. In this way we covered a few miles every day. The distance could have been covered by a runner in a day and a half; it took us a week. But need we worry? In Africa nothing is so cheap as time.

One morning we were just breaking up our camp in particularly beautiful, luxuriant green country, when suddenly a huge rhinoceros approached us. Now had come the moment we had always feared. If the big rhinoceros made an unexpected attack, my Blacks would all run away, and then our youngster might go off with the intruder and there would be nobody there to stop him. But by this time I had learnt something

LASSOING GIRAFFES

about the way to treat rhinoceroses. Carrying a loaded rifle, only for any extreme emergency, I walked towards the intruder and played once more the trick that had worked before: I roared at the rhinoceros at the top of my voice. It started, stood still—and then turned round and went off at full speed. My Blacks laughed with relief, and I, too, was relieved.

At last we reached the caravan track, with a 6,000-foot mountain to cross. Everything went smoothly during the ascent, and at the top we had the cheerful feeling that the worst was over. It was one more mistake, for on the peak our little rhinoceros refused to go down. He simply lay down and would not move. Laboriously we towed him until sunset, when we reached a little wooded valley, where we were very glad to pitch our tents. Unfortunately the waterhole had been fouled by cattle. Our tea tasted horrible, and Olesen said:

'If anyone asks us whether we have ever tasted cow dung, we can now truthfully say "Yes".'

The farther we went in the following days from the home of the rhinoceros, the harder it became to get suitable fodder, for the bushes Mtoto liked grew rarer and rarer. In the end all the porters of the caravan had to be sent out to collect as many of them as they could find.

So at last, after all sorts of trials of patience, we reached the level country in which it was possible to go by lorry. A messenger was sent ahead to fetch our Chevrolet. Mtoto then set us our last problem. When we tried to lift him into the lorry he struggled so wildly that we had to give up the attempt. So we garlanded the lorry with green boughs and made it into a sort of clump of bushes. We backed it against a mound, over which we gently induced Mtoto to enter it. The camouflage was a triumphant success—our rhino noticed nothing. We shut him in, and Olesen and I heaved deep sighs of relief.

From now on all went splendidly. During the journey Olesen sat next to Mtoto, talked to him, and calmed him when the lorry lurched over irregularities. The lorry with its Whitsun decorations and the pair inside it must have been a strange spectacle. But all of us were in high spirits, Olesen and I and the Negroes and the leading actor in the play, the rhinoceros. We all came in good shape to the Masai steppe between Kilimanjaro and Mount Meru, where we set up a new permanent camp for the second important objective of this expedition, the capture of giraffes.

MY FIRST meeting with giraffes in the freedom of the wide African steppes took place in the bush at Hanga, not far from Kilossa, which is on the railway line from Dar es Salaam to Tabora, by Lake Tanganyika. I set out in a car before dawn to observe wild animals. It was still twilight when I made out the first animals on my way—three wart-hogs, going leisurely through the bush. The wart-hog is a grotesque animal. Huge tusks—the world record for length is twenty-one inches—curve out of the sides of the jaw, and thick warty knobs stand out under the eyes; long hair hangs from the back. I saw the shining white of these wild boars' great tusks; the long manes on their backs waved as all three fled with great leaps. Soon after that a little family of green baboons ran across in front of me. The strongest male turned round in curiosity to look at me before they all disappeared in the bush.

I next noticed two guinea-fowls. They did not fly, but ran away from me at an astonishing pace, cackling in alarm. These birds can run at more than thirty miles an hour, as I was able later to confirm from my car.

A little later I saw a long-horned waterbuck in the tall grass. Noiselessly I stalked it; then a Yellow Reedbuck rustled close to me in the thicket, giving me a start. Before I had recovered from it a whole herd of impallahs, black-heeled antelopes, were making the maddest capers! Some twenty of them raced past together, making astounding leaps into the air, several yards high. As I watched them in astonishment there came from a bush not far away two wart-hogs. They scratched quite unconcernedly in the ground for roots, only ten feet away from me, then knelt on their front legs and slid about, an altogether unusual spectacle! These animals look dangerous with their great tusks, but they are quite harmless: I was able to stand watching them without any firearms. With many species of African big game there is no need at all to be armed. But with others, particularly elephants, rhinoceroses, buffaloes, and lions, situations may easily arise that call for a gun in the hands of a good shot as an absolute necessity. "There is not the least danger in going "across Africa with a walking-stick"—the only people who can say that from their own experience are people who have kept out of the way of all the larger wild animals.

On that early morning, however, with the sun rising so magnificently over the bush and steppe, I had no thought of danger from wild animals, but enjoyed the beauty of the world and in particular the wonderful

copper spirals, made fast, weighing in all over forty pounds and irremovable. Their sound white teeth shone in their dark faces when they laughed, and they were almost always laughing, especially when we shook the sugar into their hands.

As time went on, all sorts of beasts of prey came round our camp in the evening after sunset; more and more hyenas howled in our neighbourhood, and great leopards came up even in the daytime looking for scraps and garbage. A hyena, which we soon recognized, came boldly every day, in broad daylight, to our canteen to eat anything it could find. We were astonished at the way it could bite through the biggest marrow-bones, which no lion can do. The animal became so cheeky that it bit through the fresh patch of skin with which we had mended a tent-rope. Sometimes the rather weaker striped hyenas and jackals made their appearance in daylight, tempted by the remains of our meals. But only in the dark did the countryside really come to life; always at the same hour, first far away on the steppes and then coming gradually nearer, sounded short howls—the eerie cry of the hyenas. When several of them came together there began vicious quarrelling over the food, with ugly cries resembling the strident shouts of laughter of a maniac. Into this uncanny chorus came the whining and cackling of jackals trying to get a share of the meal. We could see nothing of all this ghostly nocturnal life of the beasts of prey; only the discordant cries told of their presence in the steppes, and often enough close round our tents. At first we found all these noises rather horrifying; later we grew used to them, and every night it was an experience for me to listen to these strange sounds, the laughing and howling and whining, growling and roaring and snapping. I sat then on my camp-stool by the table and wrote by lantern-light, the camp fire flickering in front of me, and behind me coming out of the dark infinity the sounds of an invisible and mysterious wild life.

The more our corrals filled with zebras and giraffes, the more carefully we had to watch over them and, when necessary, protect them from beasts of prey. We now planted thick thorn hedges round the various enclosures, and also rearranged our tents, distributing them in an outer ring as outposts, so that we had the animals' corrals in the middle and could watch them from the tents. We felt that we had then done all that was humanly possible to protect our hardly-won zoo in the wilderness.

The days passed by, each with something new, something never seen before, good or bad. Our best riding-horse had an accident on one of its mad gallops; it knocked a foreleg against a bit of rock and broke the shin-bone so badly that the hoof and ankle were only hanging by a bit of skin. Unfortunately I had to shoot it. Soon after that a fearful African disease

robbed us of the other riding-horse. Precious time was lost until, through a lucky chance, we acquired a new horse from a farm and could at last renew our horseback chasing after animals.

Needless to say, our lorry gave out several times. Driving across open country naturally put too much strain on it, and sometimes we had to wait for days until spare parts arrived from far away. But on the whole we had every reason to be content. When another day had passed with its excitements and exertions, I would lie tired but contented on my deck-chair under the canopy of my tent, enjoying in peace the charm of the dying day. Gradually the heat gave place to the pleasant freshness of a soft cool breeze. One's eyes were tired with seeing so much during the day, but the ears were alert to catch the strange sounds all round and the rustling of the bushes. About this time, with the sun sinking, many diurnal animals get ready for the night and make for their sleeping-places. Then the bush comes to life again. Towards the evening the birds especially are vocal, and I heard their song from near and far. Francolins called, guinea-fowl cackled, buffalo weavers repeated their short, monotonous song, so well suited to the unchanging landscape. Most attractive of all was the charming song of the little iridescent green Glossy Starling, which often perched on the top of a tree, where it warbled its little song with wide-opened beak, its small body literally shaking under the force of its notes. Tirelessly it sang its simple strophe, till the fading light silenced it. They were always to be seen near the tent. One day a great flock of these wonderfully beautiful three-coloured Glossy Starlings joined the singer, with their steel-green shining backs and their red breasts marked by a bright slanting stripe. They were attracted by flying ants that had surprised us in enormous swarms after the first rains. The insects circled in a wild wedding dance over our fires and over my lamp in the tent. When they had lost their wings they crawled in thousands on the ground, where they were picked up by the starlings. The birds pursued them even under the canopies of the tents; in the end they became so tame that to my delight they would perch on my table, and even close to me on the arm of my chair. On other evenings the whole air would seem to be filled with the cooing of the East African Laughing Doves. Deep, full notes continued unceasingly in the fading daylight. I listened so often to the cooing of these doves that I can never forget it; it is associated for me with everything connected with Africa. Their soft but penetrating voices have remained for me the accompaniment of the unforgettable picture of the steppes in the fading daylight, the little tents, the fires encircled by the natives in our camp, and around us the immeasurable wilderness.

Then came the evening when, lying half asleep in my camp bed and

waiting for the relief of the cool night breeze, I first heard the deep growl—an unforgettable sound for any who have once heard it—of a lion close outside our camp. I held my breath to listen to it, first catching from afar this strangely exciting and disturbing sound, and then hearing it come closer and closer. At night lions have the better even of a well-armed man, for they remain invisible to us, but their cats' eyes penetrate the darkness, and the great beasts of prey notice and watch everything that is going on in a camp. One feels defenceless, and the sense of impotence strains the nerves and drives away sleep. I could see through the opening in my tent how all the sleepers by the fire woke up, and I could sense my Natives' apprehension in the presence of 'Simba', the lord of the steppes, as he crept nearer and nearer. They stirred up the fire and came so close to it that the soles of their feet were almost scorched. The lions were on the hunt! None of the men would now have ventured out. Only here, by the blazing fire, was there safety when the lions came outside in the night. Often at night we heard the roar of the lion. We Whites soon grew used to the sound, but the Blacks were filled always with the same fear. To counter their anxiety they would begin to sing. Shivering in their blankets, lit up by the glow of the fires, they sang and rocked themselves slightly in time with the unending rhythm. Their eyes were fixed and absent; they were listening tensely to the sounds in the outer night, through which Death was stalking. The few short beats of the chant, continually repeated, induced somnolence. Amid them the eerie thunder of the lion's roar came across the plain, sometimes from so close that I felt physically affected by this formidable, unnerving sound.

One night all was quiet among the tents; the Negroes had had their evening meal and had gone early to rest; the fires were burning in the centre of the camp, at first blazing, then dying down a little. From time to time one of the sleepers would get up and revive the flames. I was busy in the tent with photographs and with my diary, thinking over the events of the day. Soon there came from steppe and bush the howling of a hyena and the whining of jackals. Zebras neighed, and at times we could hear the hoofs of fleeing herds thundering over the ground. Once more, as so often in these night hours, I felt the enchantment of Africa, looked out at the unfamiliar southern constellations, and breathed the aromatic air from the sun-scorched plains. The flickering light of the fire lit up some of the strange bent trees of the steppe. From behind the curtain of night only unfamiliar and uncanny sounds came now. Gradually they died away. There was deathly silence.

As often on moonless nights, I had placed in the steppe two cameras for flashlight photographs, which I had to fetch before dawn. I used to go out into the dark, quite alone, carrying a loaded gun, to bring in the

cameras. That night, however, the stillness had become so absolute, with not the slightest sound to be heard, that I felt uneasy. I sensed danger somewhere! And I did what I had never done before—I woke up Olesen and asked him to go with me over the few hundred yards to my cameras. There they stood, with open shutters; not the least light must reach them from the lanterns, and I must close them and take the cameras away in complete darkness. While I was doing this Olesen, the old keeper of beasts of prey, said to me in great excitement:

'Her Doktor, there's something growling here, close to us on the camp side!'

He did not venture to say that he was thinking of lions. I replied casually:

'No doubt it's our Negro friends snoring!'

We did not know that a few yards from us several lions were lurking, growling at our approach; at any moment they might have sprung on us. Not till the next morning did we discover from their tracks what mortal danger we had been in!

I went back to the camp unalarmed, threw myself on my camp bed, and went to sleep.

Very soon I heard, at first in my sleep, the cry of an antelope. At the same time came terrified whispers from our boys:

'Simba! Bwana, Simba killing gnu!'

I was awake at once, and as I got up I took my rifle, which lay always by the bed. Already we could hear the fearful death-rattle of one of our gnus in the night.

The whole camp was in an uproar. The two tame leopards spat; our young ostrich broke away and disappeared in the dark. When we ran to the antelope corral a great lion, only a few yards from me, sprang away from a gnu that it had killed, and fled with an enormous leap over the tall surrounding thorn bushes. The flickering light of our storm lanterns lit up the chaos. Then George de Baer, our young Boer, saw two more lions: they had killed another gnu! Quickly he shot three times; the air pressure put out our lanterns, and suddenly we were in darkness. When the lanterns were relit, the lions had disappeared. In the utmost haste we jumped into the car and drove out after them. We caught sight of one of them, but as soon as it came into the light of our headlamps it plunged into a thicket.

Ten minutes later we were back in the camp. We did not yet know the results of the beasts' attack. What had actually happened? When we took our lanterns and lit up the antelopes' corral we could hardly believe our eyes: by one of the gnus stood two lions! In spite of the noise, the shots, the shouts of the excited Natives, and the blazing camp fires, they had returned to their prey. As I stood there, quite close to them, they made an

astonishing leap over the thorn bushes and disappeared into the darkness. The beasts were so determined and aggressive—perhaps hunger had made them so reckless—that I had every reason to fear the worst. I now put a blanket round me, as protection against the searching cold, and sat down in the corral with my back against the protecting wall of thorns to wait for the lions' return. After a few minutes there was a rustling in the dark in front of me, an almost inaudible grinding: a lion was at work! When I turned on my torch a splendid dark lion was standing by a gnu, only a few yards away, brightly lit up—and motionless! The wonderful sight completely fascinated me. I simply stared at the great animal, with the green glow in its eyes.

Then the lion leaped straight up over the thorn boughs into the dark.

I put out the torch and sat on in tense expectation. For some time nothing stirred. I began to think that the lions had definitely gone, but then I heard again in front of me, not far off, the loud crack of breaking bones. My light went up—two lions were gorging on their prey! The astonishing thing to me was that they were so fearless as to come again and again in spite of the shots. They might have destroyed the results of the weeks of work of the expedition in a single night if they had broken into the giraffes' or the zebras' corral. Our loss would not have been the killing of one of the giraffes or zebras: in the universal panic that would certainly have broken out, the animals would have smashed the protective enclosures and fled. That would have been the end of the expedition. I roused myself from these thoughts and aimed carefully at one of the lions. The shot must kill; if it only wounded, the lion would attack me. My shot rang out, and after a short terrifying roar the lion jumped sideways and lay dead. I shot also at the second animal, and saw it rush into the distance.

No one slept any longer that night. No noise came from the steppes until a little before dawn, when a low growl was to be heard—sometimes far off, often alarmingly near. I sat in the tent with the gun on my knees—in case the sanguinary drama was still unfinished. But when light began to come from the east the menacing sounds moved away towards the mountains, and at sunrise they were heard no more.

At last we could begin a search, and close to the camp we found a strong dark lion, weighing nearly two hundredweight, dead in the bush. Later we found the second lion not far from it. The third lion returned on the following night, wandered about the camp, blundered against one of my tent ropes, and disappeared when shouts came from the Natives by the watch fires. It growled round the camp for most of the night, but then went away.

We had suffered less than might have been feared from the lions' attack. We still had our rhinoceros, six giraffes, nine zebras, four ostriches, a

number of antelopes and monkeys, and many birds. We had also two small lions, and when we reached the coast the British authorities placed at our disposal three hippopotomuses. These had been taken from Natives who had caught them without authorization.

We had to prepare for the transport of our whole Noah's Ark. There was a week of hammering and nailing up crates in the camp. Every sort of animal needed one of a different size; the monkeys had roomy ones to move in on the journey; the birds had to have plenty of air; we needed strong crates for the big antelopes, and the erections for the giraffes were real masterpieces, with movable roofs, to make the animals bend down their long necks in railway tunnels or under bridges. Who thinks of all the daily detail work entailed by such an expedition, or of the trouble and labour of accustoming these wild animals to their new conditions and then bringing them in good health to their destination? All sorts of fodder must be collected in sufficient quantity, space chartered on a cargo steamer, and the necessary export permits secured.

But just in these weeks when I had so much to do and to think about, I was often troubled with violent pain in the limbs, and sometimes overcome with a debility for which I could find no explanation and which I tried hard to fight down. I was suffering from Malta fever. The infection had probably come from the milk-tasting for our young animals. The fever came and went at regular intervals. Between attacks I felt perfectly well; then the fever returned and I was seriously ill again. One doctor treated me for malaria, and when his medicines did no good he gave me up as a mystery. Yet the rise and fall of temperature is typical of Malta fever.

When free of fever I went ahead with my affairs, and one day I was actually sitting in the train, or rather lying on the seat in utter weakness, bound for the coast, and the waggons with our animals rattling behind us.

The captain of the *Sumatra*, which was to take me and my animals from Mombasa, at once made no bones about letting me know that he had no room for men in my condition: corpses gave too much trouble on board. It took all my remaining energy to make clear to him that I should not be giving him that sort of trouble, and so the freighter sailed with us all. I stood on deck watching the land slowly grow distant and the palms gradually sink below the horizon.