

clear away and lower the star-board cutter — Quartermaster down helm.' It was simply wonderful the power of coolness and discipline.

"In a few seconds the scene had completely changed, the soldiers had lined the front of the poop and were handling their rifles, the gunners held the trigger-lines ready waiting for the word to fire into the seething mass of convicts before the bulk-head. As the ship came slowly to the wind with the main-yards aback, the cutter was lowered in the water and a few strokes carried her to where the man was calmly swimming. He was dragged on board without much ceremony, the boat was hoisted in, and the fellow promptly ironed. The commotion among the convicts seemed quieted as if by magic, and as they slunk about their usual morning's work the main topsail was filled and the ship slowly gathered way on her course again. In five minutes the hands had been piped down and the ship resumed her usual appearance. I think, and the Captain told me years afterwards that it was his firm opinion, the whole thing was part of a prearranged plan to rush the poop and in the confusion capture the ship. If so, the moment was well chosen; for the Chief Mate had gone down into the afterhold along with the carpenter on some business, leaving the deck in temporary charge of the Third Mate, who was not equal to the occasion. However, it was a case of 'All's well that ends well.'

The fellow who jumped on board was none the worse of his bath, and so well convinced were the Doctor and Captain that the whole affair was a plant, that the fellow was promptly put in the stocks for punishment. The stocks is a wooden erection somewhat like a sentry-box, only a little smaller. It is about six or seven half feet in height with enough room inside for a man to stand upright. When the door is closed the inmates are about half a dozen angustures in the door before his eyes these are to see and breathe through. He cannot sit down by reason of the straightness of the confinement and the punishment is very severe, 6 hours a day being as much as a strong man may bear. Our friend was 6 hours a day for a week, and I expect he was rather sorry for himself before the punishment was over."

No further 'incidents' occurred and the *Racehorse* dropped anchor in the Swan River one day out. This was a record passage at the time and has probably never been bettered by sail.

Captain Mann's narrative ends—"In a few days our convicts had all been landed and taken to the prison, but before leaving the ship each man was stripped, weighed, and measured, a careful note made of his personal marks or tattooing, and each man was provided with a new suit of clothing. When leaving they actually cheered the Captain."

[Lynn-Allen]

RHINOCEROS BICORNIS.

BY B. G. LYNN-ALLEN.

No one could describe the Black Rhinoceros as a pretty or charming creature, but to the globe-trotting tourist he is always a draw, and to those who live in rhino country the beast itself is liable to induce some interest in his uninhibited behaviour and simple way of life.

To my mind, one of the most startling physical characteristics of the rhino is his length. Before our first meeting, I had been prepared for something very heavy and very massive; I had not expected a beast like a small Pullman. But perhaps nursery books depict their rhino as being too square. Again, among my first impressions was the feeling that I had been taken back thousands of years to some primæval age of unpeopled spaces, vast morasses, and giant reptiles. The lion and the buffalo, and even the elephant, seem not entirely out of place in a modern world; but the rhinoceros, masticating an extremely prickly euphorbia with undisguised relish, makes me think immediately of prehistoric times.

The Black Rhinoceros is confined to Africa, and his range down the eastern side of that continent is unbroken, from the Sudan to the Rhodesian border, except where he has been swept out of existence. Today there are not nearly so many of them as there were even fifty years

ago, but they are still far from rare in most of the sparsely populated districts. The rhino's sole requirements seem to be water within daily walking-distance (anything up to fifteen miles, though he prefers it much closer), a sufficiency of very unappetising-looking arborescent foods — ordinary dry twigs, or twigs embellished with needle-sharp spines or knife-like edges — and a certain amount of shade from a tropical sun. Little enough to ask for, in this sybaritic world, one would imagine. Provided these simple wants are forthcoming, and he is not unduly harried by man, the rhino will flourish. You will find him nearly everywhere from the dense bush of the coast to moorlands, 12,000 feet up and above the forest-line, on the great mountain masses of the Kenya highlands. Forest, swamp, plain, tree-bush, and the endless acacia-thorn of the low, hot semi-desert are all favoured: it is only waterless country, or very wet rain-forest such as occurs in West Africa, that does not suit him.

The Black Rhinoceros carries two horns. The posterior one is usually a short thick projection, sometimes almost an equilateral triangle. The anterior horn, on the very tip of his long concave face, is usually much the longer of the two, and its length varies enormously. No one has, I

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think, discovered what is responsible for this great variation in size. It is certainly not conditional on the development of the animal itself; for one can find very large rhino with less than twelve inches of horn, while others, equal in size, sport magnificent affairs up to three feet along the curve. Some of the longest horns on record have been borne by females—immensely tapering, almost graceful, adornments.

The horn is important in that it is the direct cause of a lot of trouble—to the rhino's adversaries, because it may impede his already poor vision, and is the weapon with which he does most of the damage; and to the rhino himself, because it makes him a valuable prize to the poacher. The formidable nature of the horn as a weapon of offence can be easily imagined when it is remembered that a full-grown rhino will weigh something between one and two tons, and that his speed when charging has been estimated at a dozen yards a second. The value of the horn to evilly disposed persons who covet it needs some explanation. Rhino horns are not bony growths—like a stag's antlers—but are composed of numberless hairy fibres packed tight together. With a knife and infinite patience they can be reduced to a pile of bristly dust. From time immemorial, horns have been in constant demand in the East, where, after being ground up, they are thought to be a powerful aphrodisiac. For years past the illegal acquisition of

rhino horns in East Africa has been a flourishing underground activity for unscrupulous people—'poor-whites,' Indians or Africans—who have had difficulty in finding local hunters to procure them. There are many Indian traders and small general stores in parts of the various reserves, and some of them have given trouble to the Government Departments. Living in the nearest town, and in unlimited bush in which they cache their hoard, they are easily caught. On one occasion an isolated Indian store was suspected and, after careful planning, his shop was raided at night. Complete surprise effected, but after a stern search of his modest premises, not a vestige of horn could be found. Then some had a bright idea. Behind the house there was a huge pile of manure. Right underneath the odoriferous covering lay two or thirty rhino horns.

Apart from the horns, the rhino's hide is valued for making into table-tops and whips. In the old days, Somalis used their small round shields of this material. When the rhinoceros became exterminated in British Somaliland, they had to fall back on the thick skin of the oryx's withers. (Until recently, and years after it had officially ceased to exist in British Somaliland, the people insisted that there was a solitary one still left, and a keen shot went out in search of it, but this last hunt never materialised.)

Rhino flesh, though usually tough and coarse, is much in demand by some of the more primitive tribes, chiefly, I think, because there is so much of it. On one occasion I enjoyed a week-end shoot with a friend in a very good game district in N.E. Uganda. We were in 'animal-fly' country where no beasts of burden could survive, so we had thirty or forty porters for our loads. These carriers could rarely have had a more gastronomically satisfying three days; for my friend and I each shot a rhino, as well as various 'small fry' such as hartebeest and waterbuck. When the time came to return, our porters were practically 'drunk' on meat (a feat which the African can achieve) and we were getting anxious whether they could manage the loads. Even then, these born optimists tried to interest us in an eland which we met *en route*, but we decided they already had more than enough—both in their stomachs and carried on their heads.

The rhinoceros has an acute sense of smell, well-developed hearing, but most indifferent sight. It is the last that seems largely responsible for getting it into trouble with humans. It is difficult to lay down the exact degree of this defective vision, but it is probably accurate to say that, up to fifty yards away, a man standing out in the open would be spotted by the rhino as something unusual which called for investigation, whereas, if he stood motionless and quite behind even a spindly tree, and with the wind in his

face, he would not be noticed. One man who soldiered with me in East Africa and who had shot a great deal of heavy game had the quaint ambition to creep up behind a rhino and chalk his initials on its bulky backside. But even if all the usual precautions were scrupulously observed, this prank could barely succeed. For rhino, like most other wild-life, have a well-developed sixth sense, which warns them when something is wrong, without any confirmation from nose, ears, or eyes. As far as I know, this enterprising idea was never tried out, which was probably just as well for the originator.

A great deal has been said and written about the irritability and truculence of the Black Rhinoceros, and it is perfectly true that some are distinctly peppery, while a very few (I mean, of course, unwounded ones) are really vicious. But the majority are only too anxious to avoid trouble, though they often give a contrary impression, largely owing to their poor sight and their stupidity. For example, a man approaches a rhino up-wind (either unwittingly or by intent) and eventually gets close enough for the animal to hear a suspicious sound; the rhino has seen or smelt nothing, but decides that the place is unhealthy and it clears off. In such a situation it is just as likely to go straight towards the intruder as away from him, and the latter, not unnaturally, believes that he is being charged. This often happens to people walking about in rhino country.

And if a rhino is approached very closely, it may see something with its blurred vision which strikes it as so unusual that it goes forward to investigate. Once again the man is apt to think that the beast's rather stealthy approach must be the prelude to a charge. Generally, a rhino will rush straight past an interloper and vanish, not to return; but sometimes it really does mean mischief, and many a man has been unpleasantly surprised to find how nimbly such a ponderous beast can turn in its tracks in order to attack in a new direction. One friend of mine was literally up-ended by a rhino which meant no harm at all, but might easily have killed him. Towards sundown he was working his way up a narrow game-track on a steep hill; on either side there was thorn so dense that it practically constituted a tunnel. At close quarters he met a rhino descending to water; it immediately panicked and accelerated to a gallop the way it was facing. My friend tried to cross the track to a small gap in the thorn, but underestimated the animal's speed and was sent flying by a crashing blow from one massive shoulder. Though bruised and shaken, nothing was broken, and when he had picked out a few dozen thorns he was little the worse. The rhino, though much the more terrified of the two, went on travelling.

But even when they mean no harm and are merely trying to escape, rhino can be a

nuisance. A safari is pursued way peacefully through the bush when the whole cavalcade is brought to a sudden standstill by a succession of loud bangs—not unlike an engine blowing up steam. Porters are scattered like chaff before the wind, and baggage-animals—to which the smell of rhino or elephant is most obnoxious—stampede and scatter their loads over the whole area. The knowledge that a rhino is out of six human beings like scalded dogs is not entirely reassuring, and one never knows, until the last moment, whether a rhino is that sixth one or not. More than several species of African rhinoceros—particularly the bearded impala—also blow through the noses when they are alarmed, and sometimes, in rhino country, an unseen impala snorting and blowing will momentarily make one believe there is a rhino at a short distance ahead.

A fairly typical encounter occurred when my trackers and I were stalking a herd of buffalo in thick tree-bush and had got fairly close to them. Suddenly we ran into a cow-rhino and a calf right in our line of advance. I did not want to shoot at a young calf the moment it might have been troubled, so when she came in our line of vision we all shinned up a tree. She went straight underneath, considerably stepping right on my 12-bore, which, unknown to me, one of the trackers had unceremoniously dumped on the ground. At her heels, the calf squealing with agitation, was

the smallest calf—about Airedale size—I have ever seen. Both were bashed for good, and it was almost amusing sight, but my calf was irretrievably spoilt.

The daily routine of a rhinoceros is not unlike that of a country buck. After spending the night in feasting and drinking, he retires to his bed about 10 A.M., where, if undisturbed, he stays until early evening. By that time, particularly in the hot areas, he is all ready for another drink, and, quitting his bed, he sets forth in lumbering, but determined, fashion for the nearest water-hole. Rhino-beds, which are sometimes occupied at night, as well as during the heat of the day, are somewhat peculiar. They consist of a long shallow depression which the rhino has rootled and scuffed out of the soil, and they are often scored with longitudinal furrows as if the owner had literally tobogganed into his bed. Most rhinos seem to have several beds, sometimes using one, sometimes another. They are usually beneath good shade, and, particularly in hot districts, sited where a cool breeze can reach them; near the top of a ridge is a favourite site. Unlike most animals, the rhino is not very cleanly in his bedroom and there is a Swahili tale which recounts how the elephant—as King of Beasts—became most incensed at finding unmistakable traces of rhino scattered about the bush. He thereupon caught the smaller beast and gave him a good beating with his trunk. Since

then, say the Swahilis, the rhino has hidden his droppings in his bed to avoid further beatings.

To the newcomer, rhino have a startling habit of appearing as sometimes one colour, sometimes another. Thus, one can see a brick-red rhino, a whitish rhino, or a black rhino. It all depends on the colour of the wet mud in which they have been wallowing. Their real shade is that of the trunk of an oak.

Apart from his three main senses, this queer monster often gets another warning of the presence of man. This is provided by the tick-birds (or red-billed oxpeckers, to give them their correct title) which habitually sit on their backs or flanks—as they also do on those of buffalo and native cattle. These birds are doubly useful; for they take the ticks, lice, and blood-sucking flies from the body of their host, and they also give the alarm, if a man approaches, by becoming increasingly restless and uttering a hissing chatter. But to thin-skinned animals these bloodthirsty little ruffians—in the most literal sense of the term—can be an absolute curse; for they fasten on any sore or cut and, by constant pecking, rapidly enlarge it to a horrible wound. On a rhino's tremendously thick hide they can, of course, make little impression. In appearance the oxpecker is like an ashy-brown starling with a wicked red eye and a beak significantly hued a bright vermilion. When we were in thick bush, my Embu trackers always used to say they could

tell by the number of tick-birds getting up into the air whether it was rhino or buffalo we were approaching. One or three meant a rhino, two, four or more than four meant buffalo; but I never had much faith in their system; for there were often two rhino together, or a whole herd of buffalo with dozens of tick-birds in attendance, but only a few showing themselves in the air. Generally a single rhino is attended by three or four birds, perhaps a family party. But what is so queer about these birds is that they usually take little or no notice of a man if they are on cattle, but rarely fail to become demonstrative if a human approaches when they are on big game.

In spite of the huge size and strength of the rhinoceros, primitive peoples have various means of destroying them with their equally primitive weapons. The Masai, for example, will take on a rhino with their spears, usually only when a particular animal has become a nuisance by chasing their cattle on the grazing-grounds. After the great circumcision ceremony which changed the status of every young Masai from a youth to a warrior, each one was required to prove his manhood by killing single-handed a lion or a rhino or a man (of any race but his own). Other tribes catch rhino in pits or kill them by deadfalls, and some hunt them with parties of spearmen, who endeavour to wound them in the legs so that they are first

crippled, then incapacitate and finally killed. The Tutsi have a queer trap for these huge beasts, not unlike a bicycle wheel, the rim represented by creeper or rope and the spokes by sharpened reed-stems. At the hub would be, is, or is just bigger than a rhino (a similar model is made on a bigger scale for elephants); the rope ring is then secured to a heavy log and placed in a narrow rhino-track just where the beast is likely to stop. When the trappers have guessed correctly (and there are many failures), the rhino puts its foot squarely on the ring; the animal's weight ensures the pointed reeds grip and the beast is unable to free itself from the ring or the attached log. The latter slows it up to an extent that the spear-following the spoor have an easier task killing it.

Some of the Bantu tribes, the Wakamba and the Abasi, kill rhino with poisoned arrows either set over game-paths or go off automatically when a stick is trodden on, or fire at its softer parts by a bow in close range. In either case the hunters follow up with a dog's patience until the slow poison has done its work. I once had an opportunity of seeing one of these little men using his distinctive two-foot bow on a rhino, but without fatal results. They were returning from a rhino-hunt with a couple of antelope trackers when we ran across a pair of rhino with

three-quarter-grown calf. Both parents went off at once, but the youngster was curious and would not move from our path. In vain we shouted, until in the end, in some impatience, I told one of the trackers to have a shot. The man let go his arrow at about thirty-five yards range, and either by accident or design put it through one ear, where it struck, with several inches standing out behind. This shifted the rhino and he went off with the arrow dangling like an ear-ring. No harm would have been done; for the haft must inevitably have broken off in the first thick bush, and the slow-acting poison would have no effect as the point of the arrow was not in the wound.

Before leaving rhino anecdotes of the lighter sort, I will mention one somewhat comic incident which befell my own wife. We were on our honeymoon, and were camped in a pleasant little grove of thorn trees flanking a small stream. On our second night there, we had just gone to bed when my African gun-bearer appeared at the door of the tent with the news that there was a rhino in the camp. Grumbling, I got up, pulled on my boots, caught up a heavy rifle, and went out to investigate. There was a brilliant moon, and there certainly was a rhino—in fact, as it turned out, there were two. The nearest one was standing just outside our little camp and was making the usual engine-like noises. We wanted, if possible, to avoid shooting, so while I covered him with the

rifle, the gun-bearer threw red-hot sticks from the fire in the rhino's direction. The sticks were sufficient, and both animals thundered round the outside of the camp and disappeared. Feeling that the matter had been well handled, I went back to the tent and told my wife that all was now in order. To my surprise a voice answered me from well above my head, and presently I grasped what had happened. My orderly, Gonyebe, an enormous man, hailing from the West Nile district of Uganda, had standing orders that whenever we ran into a dangerous game he had one duty, and one only—to get my wife up a tree. As soon as the disturbance started, my faithful follower had carried out his instructions to the letter. Striding to the tent in masterful fashion, he had found my wife watching events from the doorway—this was clearly all wrong and demanded action. She was seized and, with one gigantic heave, fairly shot up into the branches of a very prickly tree. As she remarked to me afterwards, triple ninon pyjamas are a bit flimsy for that robust growth, the African acacia-thorn.

Some years before, my own first introduction to this primeval creature had left a lively impression on my mind. (I had seen one earlier, but only several hundred yards off, and as quiescent as a small outhouse.) On this occasion, a brother officer and I had been out in the bush since 4.30 A.M. in search of buffalo; we had seen none, but

had met a lion, which escaped unshot at. About two hours after dark we were on our long trek back to camp with all our thoughts centred on a drink, food, and bed. The moon was full. With us were our two orderlies—both Nandis—and we were chattering away, and no doubt making a lot of noise. We were well out in the middle of a clearing, some three hundred yards wide, when a loud snort brought us to an immediate halt, and the Nandis thrust the heavy rifles into our hands, taking the lighter ones we had been carrying. There were three rhino—a bull, a cow, and a big calf. They were about sixty yards away and moving across our front in single file. For a very long minute they stopped: then they started off again, and we thought that all was well. But after only two paces the bull stopped again—he must have got our full wind. There was another terrific snort and he came straight at us like a train. (The cow and the calf had moved on and we never saw them again.) I knew then—and I still know it—that this was no peevish demonstration but that the bull really intended business. On our part it meant instinctive pointing; for bright as the moon was we could see no sights, and there was an old-fashioned volley from four rifles. Just as we started to scatter—our spare rounds were all with the wrong people—we realised that someone had held beautifully straight; for down came our opponent in a cloud of dust about twenty-

five yards away. He fell on his knees (as rhino often do) and squealed like a gigantic pig until he expired. By this time the Nandis were thoroughly worked up and were pumping in rounds from our magazine rifles at a yard's range. When we eventually stopped them, it was difficult to tell how good our volley fire had been, except that one shot straight through the rhino's chest had clearly been the bullet that had mattered. When we returned next morning to find the horn and some hide, we found that hyænas had eaten the ears and the tail, which were the only parts they could get up. The Game Department took a reasonable view of the incident (we had no licence) when we related the story of this unprovoked attack. Since then I have met many rhino, but have never again been charged at night.

Perhaps, so far, I have rather over-emphasised an impression that the rhinoceros is not much more than a vast mammalian buffoon whose mission in life is to obstruct and mildly annoy those who may meet him; comparable with the impatiently engendered by a continuous stream of traffic when one is waiting to cross the road. There is, however, a more serious side to them. When they come close to human enterprises rhino tend to dislocate labour, harass stock, and make mince-meat of fences. And it is inevitable that a creature like a small lorry with a singularly undeveloped intelligence and

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(sometimes) a cantankerous disposition, crashing about the countryside, will, on occasions, be much more than a mere nuisance. Tragedies have occurred—and will doubtless continue to occur—but, to be fair to these antediluvian beasts, they injure fewer people than any other species of dangerous game, and when they do, the animal has nearly always been previously wounded. One of the best known and most shocking Kenya tragedies in which a rhino was involved, concerned one that had been wounded by a small-bore bullet, had killed its assailant and gone off. A week or so later, the injured animal chanced on a married couple whose small car was bogged down in mud on a cross-country track. The occupants had no firearms. The husband, in order to cover his wife's escape, took off his coat and was last seen trying to play the rhino like a toreador. Almost inevitably, this gallant man was killed before his wife could return with help; the rhino was then dispatched, but too late. Another fatality concerned a very great friend of mine who was charged without warning by a rhino when he and his orderly were walking through close bush in Southern Turkana. This beast—which was found to be suffering from a rotting wound inflicted by an African's spear—singled out the orderly for its attack. My friend, who was a particularly fine shot, dropped it dead, but a fraction of a second too late to save his

companion; for the rhino was on his heels when the bullet struck it. The rhino died instantaneously, but in its fall the huge head crashed down on the African, crushing in his chest. He died in a matter of minutes.

Sometimes a bad-tempered rhino will take charge of a stretch of bush-road and chase every car that uses it. On a bumpy surface covered with pot-holes, ant-bear scrapes, and soft sand, this pursuit is not the idle threat it might appear to those who only know the smooth tarmac of civilised countries. A rhino, flat out, can do about 30 m.p.h. for a few hundred yards, and plenty of people have had the experience of wondering whether combustion or muscle would win. One well-known white hunter, who knew of a particularly vicious rhino, drove an old crock into the middle of its haunts, left the engine running, and climbed into a nearby tree with his camera. Sure enough the beast appeared, and with great gusto proceeded to knock the car about until it was a shapeless mass of metal. The photographer managed to get a fine series of pictures of a rhino in action. I forget how long he had to wait before he could climb down and go home.

The rhino has few enemies, apart from man. Lions will take on a calf, if they can separate it from its parents, but an adult rhino is altogether too strong, heavy, and thick-skinned for them to tackle. But there is one beast, or rather

reptile, that will attack a grown rhino, and that is the crocodile. I was once shown a photograph of a Homeric conflict in progress between a small (perhaps three-quarter grown) rhino and a crocodile. The latter, which must have been very large, succeeded in dragging in its victim and drowning it. The photograph was not a particularly good one; for it was taken at some little distance and by an old-fashioned type of camera, but the taker was a man of integrity, and it was a genuine record of what very few people can have witnessed. It took place on the Tana River.

The enormous strength and the stupidity of the rhino are well illustrated by a story told by Mr Maxwell, the well-known big-game photographer. He had shot an adult cow-rhino in fairly dense bush, and a few seconds later the bull, which, unknown to him, had been close by, arrived on the scene. On getting no response from its mate, it attacked her dead body with great savagery, buffeting it with tremendous blows, and finally turned the huge corpse right over with one prodigious heave of its horn. Even after this treatment the hide on the dead animal was not gashed, but only dented. For the outer hide of a rhino is at least an inch thick, and if you are tempted to shoot one you should use hard-nosed bullets—a soft-nosed ball tends to mushroom, and may inflict no real damage.

In conclusion, I will try to describe what I always consider

one of the best sporting evenings I have ever spent—although I came home with unsullied bars. I had news that a pair of rhinos had been seen about nine o'clock in the morning entering the tangle of scrub on a low hill nearby, with the obvious intention of being up during the day. The slope of the hill was gentle and was thickly covered with tall grass and low bush. As I wanted to get the lion, I went out about two hours before dawn and took up a strategic position some four hundred yards from the base of the hill. I did not go so as to have freedom of lateral movement; for since the lion's exact position was unknown I was uncertain where he would emerge.

At the foot of the hill, and directly to my front, was a large open patch of short grass with two long promontories of yellow reeds running out into the plain on each flank of the clearing. Browsing there, where the coarse grass turned to green bush, was a family party of three rhino—a very big bull, a cow, and her half-grown calf. For some time I lay there watching them. Suddenly the bull showed every symptom of alarm, and the female hustled her calf into the middle of the clearing. The male, head up and ridiculous pig's tail stiff in the air, started truculently at the hillside. The grass parted, and out walked the two lions. Then ensued the most absorbing spectacle.

The lioness, which was farthest from me, sat up on her haunches and waited; and there she stayed

throughout the proceedings. Next to her, and about thirty yards away, the lion began to prow to and fro on a short beat, parallel to the base of the hill. It was obvious that both had designs on the calf, if only they could cut it off from its watchful parents, and equally plain that these particular rhino knew all about lions and were determined to stay on the short grass, where they could see every move. About twenty yards from the lion the huge bull also paced backwards and forwards, opposite his adversary, never for one moment allowing himself to be anywhere but in a dead straight line between the lion and his family. It was a fascinating sight to see the two antagonists—both so formidable and yet so dissimilar: the great cat walking with all the light grace and latent agility of the felines, the huge pachyderm stepping carefully with a tremendous impression of controlled power. Well clear from the hill the vigilant female rhino continued to stand guard over her calf. At least twice, during the hour or so in which I watched this manœuvring for position, the lion sidled in until he was only a few yards from the bull and sat down. The rhino approached him in a slow, sinister advance, his great head down, ready for the charge. When the gap had closed to five yards, the lion got up and in leisurely fashion gave him best, slinking off with his tufted tail between his legs. Then the strange pair of sentries resumed their beats.

About half an hour before dark I made my one effort to get on terms with the lion. Engrossed as they were, I believed that I might be able to skirt the rhinos by using the reed-bed which was downwind of the adversaries, and thus take on the lion from the flank. But after going a hundred yards through the reeds I was convinced it was hopeless; for they were tinder-dry and my tracker and I were making nearly as much noise as an elephant. With our whereabouts so blatantly advertised, I felt that to make two more in that crowded arena was rather asking for trouble. So about twenty minutes before dark I reluctantly turned for home; for I had several miles to do before I reached a road, and, as will be realised, that particular district was rather like Whipsnade—without the ditches. My last look showed the two lions as impassive as ever, but the bull-rhino was rapidly losing his temper. Even then he was not so mad with rage as to indulge in useless charges, but he was ploughing up the turf with his frontlet and raising a great haze of dust with his pounding feet. I think it was the approach of nightfall, which would tip the scales heavily in the lions' favour, that was annoying him.

I never knew the outcome, but as the light faded out altogether I could visualise that lioness, at long last taking her cue, starting to close in—tawny belly low to earth, and paws velvet-soft on the sand and short grass.