

# ON SAFARI

## BIG-GAME HUNTING IN BRITISH EAST AFRICA

WITH STUDIES IN BIRD-LIFE

BY  
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'BIRD-LIFE OF THE BORDERS ON MOORLAND AND SEA' (TWO EDITIONS)  
'WILD NORWAY' AND 'WILD SPAIN'

WITH 170 ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY THE AUTHOR AND E. CALDWELL.  
SKETCH-MAPS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

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CHAPTER VIII  
BEYOND BARINGO  
(II) TWO RHINOS

THAT same afternoon when I had secured my oryx bull, after the usual midday rest in camp we went out separately in search of *Gazella petersi*, being still under the false impression that that species was the gazelle of Baringo. While I was busy "glassing" a small herd, Elmi suddenly turned on me, and I knew by the fire in his eye what was coming. "I see rhino," he said. The huge beast was standing about 400 yards away in a grassy glade—a sort of broad grass street bordered on either side by a line of low thorn-bush. I was unprepared, having only five "solid" cartridges with me; but, as it was too late to send back to camp for more, I decided to take on the rhino at once. On reaching the grass street the rhino had disappeared. I therefore proceeded along the windward side of the open, keeping close under the lee of the low thorns, amidst which I expected to find him. It was, nevertheless, a bit of a shock when I found we had walked within twenty yards before seeing him. He was standing facing us, up a sort of side street, or narrow opening in the scrub. Being almost under the rhino's nose, I dropped in the grass, Elmi behind me. The latter, as we lay still, presently remarked (and the words were not reassuring), "Shoot, he's coming!" The expression for a moment conveyed the idea of a charge; but I could see for myself that there was no such danger, as the beast clearly had not seen us, although so near. What Elmi meant was that the rhino was moving our way.

Though not blind, yet rhino use their eyesight but little. All I could distinguish among grass and thorn was an amorphous mass, of a red-brown colour (from wallowing in red mud), with a spiky horn like a smoke-stack at the hither end. No possible shot was presented, and the beast was slowly approaching, feeding on mimosa boughs. We therefore crept away through the grass, and, gaining the cover of the thorns, soon reached the broadside position. Even then, though within less than twenty yards, and full broadside on, I was reluctant to fire, for in the bad light (the prelude to a coming thunderstorm) and the shade of the bush, I could not quite distinguish the vital spots. Presently the rhino raised his huge head to pull down a mimosa branch (akin to eating a mouthful of barbed wire), and the whole outline was fully exposed. I placed a .303 solid at the point selected—one foot behind the ear and slightly below—while Elmi, by my direction, put another, from the carbine .303, between eye and ear. The rhino merely moved two steps forward, turned deliberately round and stood still, with his other broadside exposed. We repeated our salute as before, Elmi this time taking the neck shot, while I tried a point below the ear and slightly forward thereof. The effect this time was unmistakable. The great beast dropped straight to earth, disappearing from view. For some seconds I thought the deed was done, and greatly rejoiced thereat. The joy was premature, for once more that vast red-brown bulk rose above the thorns, and slowly, deliberately walked away.

Only a single cartridge now remained. I followed the rhino, walking some thirty yards behind him, awaiting a chance. Presently he left the bush, and, with head carried low and a dead-sick gait, entered the open grass street. This time I decided to try the heart, presuming that a rhino carries such an appendage (which I now doubt), or, at any rate, the shoulder. The distance, ere I had perfected a thrice-refined aim, was near eighty yards, and I heard the bullet tell.

The effect was remarkable. This hitherto apathetic beast, which had so far treated cordite with sluggish indifference, suddenly awoke to life and amazing activity. With a succession of hissing snorts—resounding like jets of steam driving through a safety-valve—he reared on end, spun round again and again, and finally, still shrieking and rearing, bolted back to the covert he had just quitted. He left a track like a runaway wagon, which we followed; but it was now dusk and raining in torrents, with lightning and thunder crackling straight overhead. Nothing more could be done that night. It was a rough job to regain camp.

At break of day I took up the spoor with fifteen boys, following it for hours through thin scrub and thick. The latter seemed to me highly dangerous work, our radius of vision being limited to a few yards. On open ground the rain had obliterated all tracks, and I divided my force into three parties, two circling on the flanks, to cut the spoor ahead when we lost it ourselves; but noon arrived without our overhauling the stricken rhino. The midday heat was more than I could withstand, so I returned to camp, directing the trackers to hold the spoor till night. After sundown they too returned empty-handed. Not a sign of the beast had been seen, though we had followed on for eight or ten miles. Either I or the .303 had failed. After this double disappointment, first with elephant and now with rhino, I decided never again to take on these huge pachyderms with a small bore.

It was at this spot—that is, on the first plateau of Laikipia—that, a year before, a terrible accident had befallen an English sportsman, Mr. B. Eastwood of Nairobi, whom I afterwards had the pleasure of meeting, and who kindly allows me to reproduce his description of the event as follows—

“On Sunday, the 19th of October, I was under way before six, and made straight for the big hill (Njoro-Ilimalo), nine or ten miles away, where I had seen the koodoo tracks. I had gone some distance up the valley,

shooting a steinbuck on the way, when I saw two rhinos a mile away. The country was fairly open, and before I got up they had disappeared in some dry scrub. There was, just inside this scrub, what I took to be a low hillock, and which I purposed using for stalking. But to this my gun-bearer, Sulimani, objected most strongly. He said it was not a hillock, but rhinoceroses. We crouched behind a little bush and waited, but not for long. Hardly were we down before the group opened, and I saw there were seven rhinos in a cluster.<sup>1</sup> Two came rushing in my direction, and at forty yards I fired and dropped one, finding afterwards that the bullet had splintered its nose, and I now have the huge splinter of bone, 18 ins. long, with the horns mounted on it.

“Leaving Sulimani to skin the beast, I went, with one porter, after an oryx that I could see considerably more than a mile away, but could not get anywhere near it. I followed it nearly five miles, passing on the way another rhino, that I marked in case I lost the oryx.

“On the way back I passed an immense herd of eland, fully one hundred, and then returned to the rhino. It was 120 yards away, with its back towards me. I sat down in grass eighteen inches high and waited. After ten minutes the rhino turned round and walked slowly towards me, grazing. The man I had with me became frightened, and after creeping for some distance through the grass, jumped to his feet and ran. This aroused the beast, for it lifted its head and looked after the man, giving me the chance I wanted. I put a solid bullet in the centre of its chest, about twelve inches up; it took two or three short quick steps and went down heavily, head-first, its body slewing round as it fell. It made one futile effort to rise, but did not succeed in even lifting its head, and then lay motionless. I put in a second shot to make sure, but might as well have fired at a rock, as it did not move in any way. There seemed to

<sup>1</sup> As related in a subsequent chapter, the author on one occasion came across a “hillock” of six rhinos in a cluster.

be not the slightest breath of life left in it; so I walked up, wondering what its horns measured, and how I could get it skinned and reach camp before dark.

"All these conjectures were rudely knocked on the head. When less than twenty yards away the huge beast gave a roll and got on to its feet. My rifle was up at once, and I put a bullet into the shoulder; but before I could get in a second shot the brute was charging straight.

"I commenced to run at a right angle to its course, thinking the rhino would probably go on in a straight line, as they usually do; but the first step I took I tripped and fell, and before I could regain my feet it was on top of me.

"I was nearly on my feet when it struck me. It hit me first with its nose, dropped with both knees on me, then, drawing back for the blow, threw me clean over its back, the horn entering the back of my left thigh, and I saw the animal well underneath me as I was flying through the air. It threw me a second time, but I cannot recollect that throw clearly: and then came on a third time. I was lying on my right side when the great black snout was pushed against me. Then I found myself upon my feet—how, I do not know—and staggered off. As I went an inky darkness came upon me. After going perhaps forty or fifty yards, expecting every moment to be charged again, I felt that I might as well lie down and let the beast finish its work without further trouble; so I lay down."<sup>1</sup>

The spot where the catastrophe occurred was fifteen miles from his camp, and that camp a twelve-hours' march beyond Baringo. The nearest doctor was distant 136 miles—at Fort Ternan. There, on the desert veld, a shattered wreck, with right arm smashed, ribs stove in and broken, and many minor injuries, lay Eastwood all alone, and exposed hour after hour to the fierce equatorial sun and with ghoulish vultures flapping close overhead. Not till late in the afternoon did his men

<sup>1</sup> *Globe Trotter*, March 1907.

find him, and it was near midnight ere they could carry him into camp. By indomitable pluck he reached Baringo, carried in a litter, on the second morning; but it was not till the eighth day after the accident that the doctor arrived and the necessary operations could be performed. Poor Eastwood lost his right arm, but otherwise bears no trace of his terrible experience.

Another rhino incident. Mr. Long-Innes, whom I met close by Baringo, had just had this curious adventure. While passing Lake Hannington on his way up, he suddenly saw the beast lying asleep beneath a dwarf mimosa, and only a few yards from the track. The rhino sprang to its feet in a blind charge. The Kikuyu gun-bearer with the rifle having promptly taken to his heels, Innes had no resource but to bolt the other way, but pitched his white Panama hat behind him as a blind. The rhino momentarily halted at this bait, but, seeing the flying Kikuyu beyond, transferred attention to him, and speedily overtaking him, "chucked" the luckless "boy" over his back, then continuing his course. Curiously, the Kikuyu was not seriously damaged. The blunt horn of the rhino had caught him under the chin—a blow that would surely have broken a white man's neck, but in the savage it merely produced "contusions"!

ibises, greenshanks, and plovers—specially noticeable being the spur-winged species (*Hoplopterus speciosus*) in its handsome contrasted colours that recall our grey plover (*S. helvetica*) in its summer dress. At the point of a rush-clad spit stood a Goliath heron, stiffly erect and with the silvery neck-plumes finely offset by the dark maroon breast. On another occasion at this spot we recognised a pair of the great African jabiru or saddle-bill. Far out on the lake sat pelicans, flamingoes and grebes.

The hippos, however, though they floated, and splashed hard by, raising vast heads to yawn and



HIPPOS IN LAKE ELMENTEITA.

exposing great curving ivories, carefully kept beyond range. So intensely interesting was the sight that we lingered on till past dusk ere taking our campward way.

The moon being some days past the full, the darkness beneath the forest-trees that fringed the lake was intense—indeed I could barely keep in touch with my Swahili gunbearer, Mabruki, though only a yard ahead.

While feeling our way thus through forest, the stillness of night was suddenly shocked by a loud shrill snort on our immediate front and apparently not fifteen yards ahead. Then, contrary to all orders, Mabruki insanely fired my big '450 into that enveloping pall of darkness. No human eye—not even a savage eye—could conceivably have seen anything to aim at. Mabruki had lost his head.



After the shot, stillness reigned as before. There was no sign of a charge, no crash of a falling or a flying foe—only silence, presently broken by my brother asking from behind, "What's happened?" A few yards ahead, we found thick bush, impenetrable; so, leaving a handkerchief to mark the exact spot, we resumed our course, intending to return by daylight. Little recked we that long before that day should break we were destined to hear that terrible snort once more—but *cras fuge quærere*.

The hippos, we ascertained, had recently been disturbed at this point, which explained their shyness in approaching the waters of Karriendoos. We therefore changed our tactics and decided to attack them by night, when they come ashore to feed far and wide on the grassy veld. The moon being just past the full, favoured this enterprise, and we gave orders for a start at 2.30 a.m. next morning. It was, however, but a little after midnight that we were aroused by the night-watchmen, who excitedly stated that there was already a hippo within sight of the camp. This, on turning out in pyjamas, we at once verified for ourselves. There, not 300 yards away on the open prairie, the great pachyderm was plainly visible in the bright moon-rays. Pulling on coats and camp-shoes, we were ready for action and away within thirty seconds. The intruder deigned no sign of notice, and soon we had slipped in to what looked well within fifty yards, at which point I whispered "That's near enough; let's stop to fire," and had already dropped down in order to rest the .450 on my knee, when our huge opponent at last detected us. Again that terrible hissing snort, and in a moment he had turned upon us. I could not rise, so fired both my barrels, my brother (who remained on foot) only one, realising that we were caught and reserving his second for contingencies. On reaching back for my second gun, I found that the valiant Mabruki had gone—he was already fifty yards away campward. But no second gun was needed. So far as one could

judge in the fickle moonlight, the great beast still continued his forward onrush, but there was another movement—downward: and in five more yards he had gradually subsided, ploughing a trench with his snout ere he rolled over flat on his broadside not thrice his own length from where I sat. Then the sense of relief and of danger averted struck home together: for in that



“FACED ROUND IN THE MOONLIGHT.”

open ground, short of dropping the enemy dead, there could have been but small chance of escape.

To make sure, we put in two more bullets in the heart and presently the stertorous breathing had ceased. Then cautiously drawing in, we discovered that our prize was not the harmless hippo after all, but a gigantic bull-rhinoceros! This fact our men had learned earlier—that snort had enlightened them: it explained Mabruki's sudden flight, though Ali Yama, my brother's Somali hunter, had stood firm. This rhino carried magnificent horns, the front one over 28 ins. in length, second 13 ins., while further up was a third



**RHINO BULL—AS HE FELL.**



**THE THREE-HORNED RHINO'S HEAD.  
Lake Elmenteita in background.**

horn, more or less rudimentary. After a cursory examination, we returned to bed at 1.20.

At three o'clock we turned out again, but in five hours' walk failed to find a hippo ashore, though several were grunting and blowing close outside the rushes. I stalked one of these and at about fifty yards fired at his head—so much, that is to say, as was above water, say three inches. The light was most uncertain for fine shooting, for the moon being in zenith, perpendicular, the night-sights lent no assistance. Yet the ball seemed to strike fair and square, since no water flew up: but we saw that hippo no more. He disappeared without leaving a ripple or the slightest clue to guide us. What a disturbance that shot created! From the trees overhead clattered out guinea-fowl in scores, while all the peoples of the wilderness, geese and pelicans, flamingoes, ibis, cranes, and the rest protested in strident cries against that outrage on the decencies of night.

As the dawn broke we thought we heard a lion close by; it proved, however, to be an ostrich, the two notes being singularly alike. Then followed another startling cry, an explosive croak coming from the heavens, twice repeated. It was a Goliath heron, sailing overhead from the forests above. Presently, with set wings, the great bird swept downwards and settled on a rush-clad spit a mile away. Ducks in successive packs (chiefly mallard, pintail and shoveler) were streaming in towards the lake, where we also observed sacred ibis, stilts, greenshanks, ruffs and green sandpipers.

Returning to camp after the adventures of this night, we examined the rhino. All our three bullets, we found, had got well home; but the shot that had actually done the deed was little short of a miracle—Providential. Missing by a hair's-breadth the two great horns as the beast came on headlong, it had crashed into the massive neck between the ears, smashing the spinal column. Had the ball touched either horn, it must have been deflected.

It was my pony, "Goldfinch," we now learned, that

## CHAPTER XIV

### HUNTING ON LAKE SOLAI

#### CHANCE OR SKILL?

THE operation of extracting the tusks from the massive rocky cranium of an elephant can be effected in two ways. The more expeditious method is to hew them out with hatchets; but this necessarily involves some injury to the ivory, one-third of which is embedded in the bone. By allowing three or four days to elapse, decomposition will have loosened the hold and the teeth can then be drawn out.

Being in no special hurry, we elected to await the latter result, the more readily as we found ourselves in a lovely situation, commanding within reach of our camp both wood and water, mountain, marsh and plain. We decided to spend a week exploring our environment and its wild life.

This decision caused general joy among our men, who were gorging on elephant-meat. Strangely, they preferred the internals, and had driven a "drift" like a mine-shaft through the ribs, thereby entering bodily into the interior and excavating the coveted titbits. We had thought of experimenting on the trunk ourselves, till informed that only after forty-eight hours' cooking would the meat be soft enough to cut with a hatchet. We contented ourselves with the undercut of hartebeest and cutlets from some delicious little steinbucks and oribi that W—— had shot on the hill.

On one of these days I was specially pleased to secure a fine cock ostrich, breaking the thigh at 200 yards—thus killing the biggest bird on earth and the

biggest beast within a short league of each other! We also observed ostrich-poults, half-grown.

Another day, however, was memorable for shattering to atoms any complacent sentiment of self-assurance that success only follows on deserts, or that achievements are always proportioned to skill, perseverance, or other personal qualities. Those who exclude the element of chance from their creed may be interested in some notes from that day's experience. So far as the writer can remember, they stand unique in over forty years of shooting-life.

It was a dull misty dawn, with a wet haze hanging over the marshes, whence resounded the sonorous cries of the great Kavirondo cranes, while all around our camp the bush was alive with the matutinal chorus of doves and francolins and the cackle of guinea-fowl in the thorny-scrub above. Telling my brother I intended to shoot an eland, I set out with my gun-bearers in the half-light. We ascended the hill behind our camp, and were walking in single file towards the west when I espied close ahead a waterbuck bull (*defassa*) feeding in an open glade surrounded by bush. Strangely, with three pairs of keen eyes on the look-out, none had detected him in time; for before the rifle could be handed, the big buck, though unalarmed, had moved forward out of sight, still feeding. Eventually the shot was one of those, in bush, at "horns only," with a conjectural body beneath that may be standing in any conceivable relation thereto; the distance also was much greater, and the result a miss. The direction of the spoor coinciding with our intended route, we followed on; but presently coming on the crest of a sudden escarpment, sighted four hartebeest on the plain far below. After a detour, I got a steady lying shot, and the best of the four (300 yards away and 200 feet below) dropped and lay motionless. It cost us half-an-hour finding a way down those crags, and then . . . that bull was gone! Neither spoor nor blood served us on such ground—half rock, half bush; and we saw him no more. Holding our course, we shortly viewed what we

judged to be the missed waterbuck, a mile ahead and on the right shoulder of a gentle pass, or depression in the foreground, which at that point dipped sharply away to lower levels beyond.

On reaching our marks, where the view broadened out on either side, we could see nothing of our water-



WATERBUCK BULL.

buck, though feeling sure he was somewhere on our right and not far away. While spying, a hartebeest bull with fine head showed up on the left, and a shot at the neck dropped him—my hope in thus firing being to secure the supposed waterbuck with the second barrel. There ensued a crash among the bush on the right, and far away the expected animal appeared, halting to gaze, full broadside, as he gained the open. Salim tried to take the smaller rifle (.303) from me and handed me the .450. His reason I did not follow; for at the long

range (350 to 400 yards) my eyesight had failed to recognise that this was no waterbuck after all, but a grand old eland bull! The .303 bullet struck with the sounding "clap" that usually signifies a good hit; the eland plunged forward, staggering almost to earth, but recovering, carried on towards the plain below. The



ELAND BULL.

line he took, however, viewed in relation to the configuration of the mountain-barrier ahead, suggested the idea that we might, by very hard running, cut him out—that is, we could take the chord while he ran the arc of a circle.

There was not a moment to spare—not a second to recover our poor crippled hartebeest: a cruel exigency drove us to leave that splendid animal a prey for vultures and hyenas.



Half-an-hour of the hardest going and we had reached our point—alas! too late. The spoor, crossing a shallow pool, showed where the quarry had passed but a minute before, for on hurrying forward, we caught one glimpse of his bulky form disappearing round a bluff ahead.

Having heard the impact of the ball so distinctly, and having two excellent trackers (Salim and Kenana), I had every confidence in recovering this grand prize; a promise of good backsheesh further stimulated the men, and for three long hours we held the spoor forward, the trackers backing each other beautifully on either flank at each slight check. We were, however, rarely in difficulty, and indeed had made good at least six miles without a sign of the stricken beast ahead, nor had he once laid down.

Towards noon, while passing outside a great conch-shaped recess scooped out of the impending mountain-side above, a sudden snort brought us up, and from some high bush fifty yards ahead there protruded the ugly armed snout of a rhinoceros. The wind was right and he had evidently not seen us, for his head turned to and fro, gazing; so I gently brought my glass to bear. He carried a good head, the two horns being more even in length than in my previous specimen at Elmenteita. Motioning to Salim, he handed me the .450, and with it (thoughtfully) a couple of "solid" cartridges, one of which I directed to the junction of neck and shoulders, though, owing to intervening bush, I could hardly see so far back. The shot was followed by heavy and continuous crashing among the brushwood—presumably the death-flurry; but we were soon undeceived on that point, when two rhino dashed out straight ahead and at full gallop made direct for where we stood in the open. A couple of yards to the left was a thin burnt bush, a mere skeleton, behind which we jumped, and five seconds later the pair (which I now saw were a big cow with long thin horn, and a three-parts-grown calf) passed where we had a moment before been standing, but without seeing us, though so near.

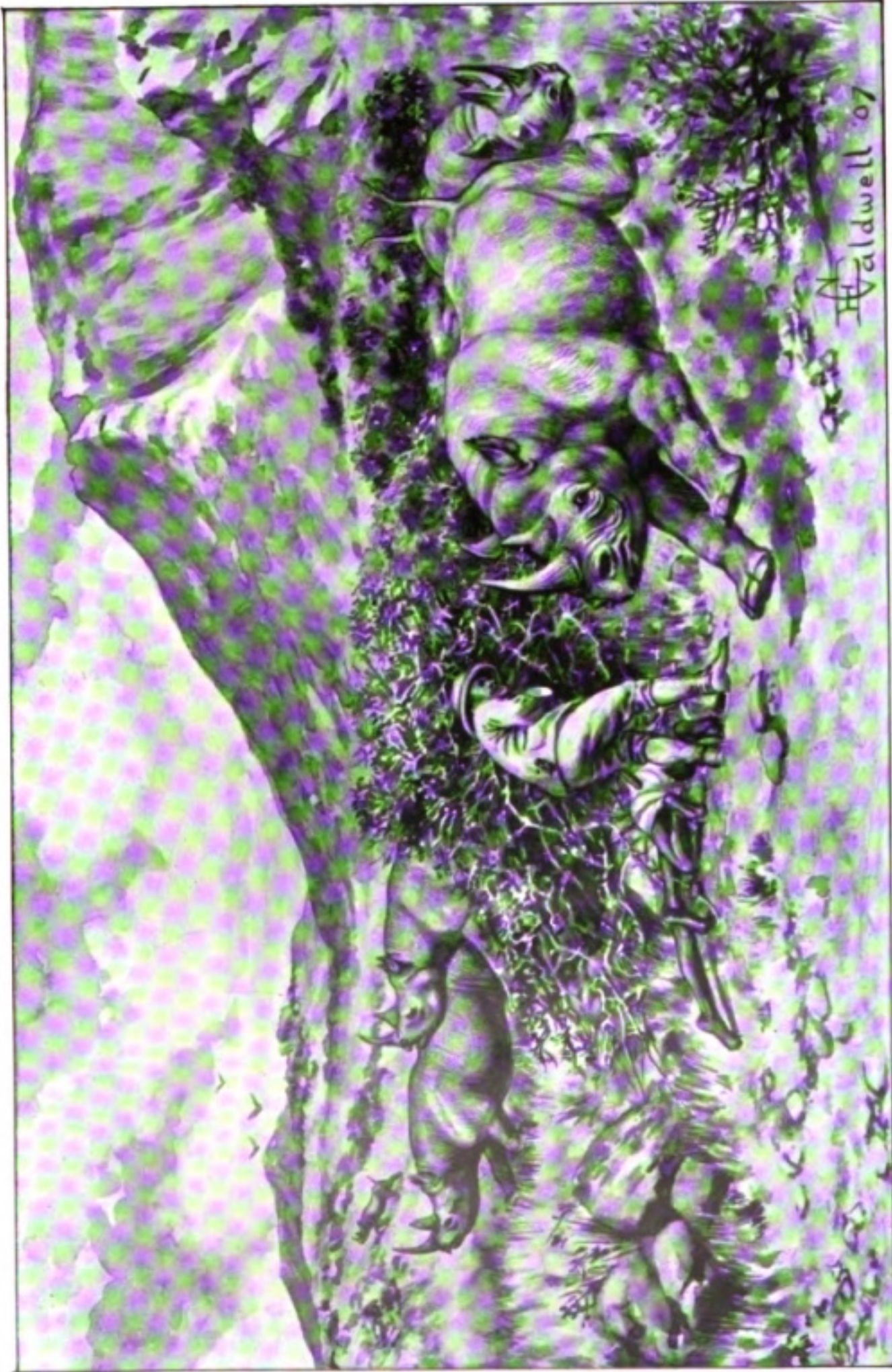
At the same moment I saw there was another pair, both big brutes, crashing through the thicker bush on our left, some thirty yards away, while beyond them was yet another rhino on the inner slope of the couch aforesaid. This last, however, displayed a totally different demeanour. He was either overwhelmed with rage or convulsed by some violent emotion; for he ran hither and thither, rearing up forward, snorting and grunting, and presently reached the sky-line, where he presented a picture of fury spoiling for a fight, wheeling round in every direction and with his stump of a tail stuck vertically upright.

Meanwhile, I had necessarily kept an eye on the first pair, lest after passing us so near they should have got our wind; but after a single halt about a hundred yards away, to my infinite relief, they held their course along the valley.

Salim at this point called my attention to yet another rhino—the sixth—standing quite motionless in full outline on the ridge ahead, but further away, say 200 yards.

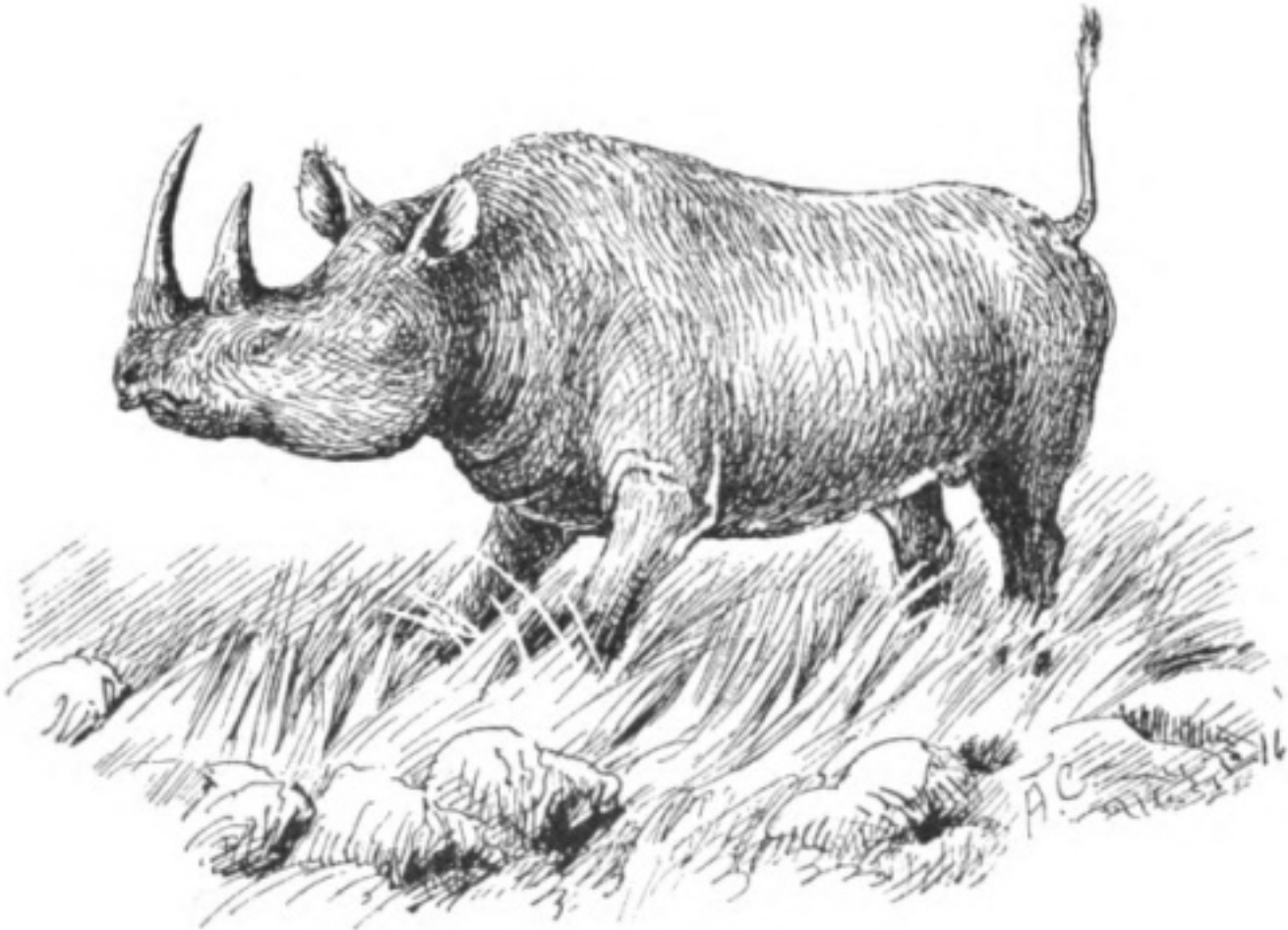
Concluding that the enraged rhino on the ridge to our left must be the wounded animal, we proceeded with due caution in his direction—so soon, that is, as the second pair, which had passed between us and him, had got sufficiently far to leeward to leave us a safe road. We had already arrived within sixty yards or so—rather too far to make sure, as the beast still kept constantly on the move, snorting, rearing and wheeling—when we lost sight, and hurrying to the crest the rhino was nowhere in view: nor was there blood on the spoor. That, however, with pachyderms, is not conclusive. An ordinary body-wound is rapidly closed by their solid hides, and no blood is given. Of course, should the lungs be injured, the animal bleeds from the mouth.

To make perfectly certain that a rhino had not fallen dead to the shot, we returned to the original spot, but found nothing there. We then put in another hour



A CHARGE OF THE HEAVIES.

on the eland's spoor, passing on our way the sixth rhino, still quiescent on his ridge and attended by numerous tick-birds. The eland now led us upwards and westwards, on to open veld where we could see for miles stretching away towards the Molo River, and as nothing was in sight, after four hours' spooring, we were reluctantly obliged to abandon that quest as quite beyond hope.



“SPOILING FOR A FIGHT” (RHINO).

It was now nearly two o'clock. In five shots that day I had wounded four of the finest game-beasts in Africa, and had not got one of them. I concluded it was *Kismet*, and sat down to lunch on biscuits and cold tea while reflecting on the extraordinary events that had just occurred. What was their inner history? What strange frenzy had possessed them, to set all those rhinos charging madly *down-wind*? Wild animals seeking safety in flight, invariably point their noses *into* the wind; that is their safeguard. Naturally one had

directly towards us, came our eight waterbuck! Sinking behind a friendly boulder, we watched them come with frequent halts, standing to gaze back over their shoulders. It was obvious that they had been startled by the retreating wild-dogs, and, luckily for us, in the presence of this new danger they had forgotten the old. For they were quite unsuspecting of our proximity, and all attention was concentrated on their rear, whence they clearly feared attack. A memorable picture they presented as they trotted past close below, the bull leading—a true monarch, majestic in massive form and stately carriage. It was, however, downright bad luck for him to find a foe at each end of the trail, and a bullet on the shoulder ended his career.

“Though I had never before seen hunting-dogs (*Lycaon pictus*) in life, yet I instinctively recognised what these brutes were, partly by their half-white brushes flashing over the scrub as they puzzled out the scent, apparently interested rather than alarmed at our intrusion.”

The photo overleaf shows the big dog above mentioned, a fine adult, clean in fur, and with none of the mange that often disfigures these animals.

Besides waterbuck and ostriches, there were also around Lake Solai a few Jackson's hartebeests, and the marsh swarmed with the East-African Bohor reedbuck (*Cervicapra wardi*). One day, riding together round the *vlei*, we were directed by the vultures to a good male specimen of this latter which had been killed the night before (as the pugs showed) by a leopard. On the hills above we shot steinbuck, oribi, klipspringer and wart-hog.

Every morning at dawn we had sent out scouts in different directions to report on what game they could discover—and especially to locate a good rhino bull; but no satisfactory information was forthcoming by such means. One day we had together explored a long rock-girt valley that penetrated the hills towards the north-

N

west, without seeing anything beyond the usual game—a few zebras, ostriches, gazelles, and some klipspringers on the crags—when about ten o'clock we sat down beneath a mimosa and sent our gun-bearers over the rocky range on the west to investigate what lay beyond. Presently to us smoking in the shade they reported three rhinos in the valley beyond, and having scaled this ridge we verified the fact for ourselves, the rhinos looking absolutely pure white (owing to the calcareous mud they had last wallowed in). They were a couple of miles away, down the wind, and moving further in that direction—involving a long detour. The wind, moreover, was shifty and treacherous, so that many changes in tactics became necessary before we gained a commanding position.

The scene of operations was a flat-floored valley two miles across, walled-in by low abrupt hills and overgrown with thin open forest, mostly thorns. Beneath a group of these—shady, flat-topped mimosas—two of the rhinos had, during our long manoeuvres with the wind, drawn up to spend their midday siesta. The third we could not see, but knew he was in the bush somewhere near by.

The feature of this stalk was the extraordinary callousness to threatening danger, and its manifold signs, displayed by those two great pachyderms. Owing to the constantly-varying wind, puffs of which came from opposite airts within a few seconds of each other, we had twice unwittingly given alarm to some groups of hartebeests and gazelles<sup>1</sup> that happened to fall under our lee. On one of these occasions several antelopes galloped past within a comparatively short distance of the sleepy monsters, but without arousing their suspicion. Then, during the final approach, when we were already close in, a band of shrieking plovers (*Stephanibyx melanopterus*)—the

<sup>1</sup> These gazelles were all *G. granti*, except a single example of *G. thomsoni*—the only one seen at Solai, which clearly lies north of their range, though they are abundant a dozen miles to the southward.



WILD DOG WITH TWO SPOTTED HYENAS.

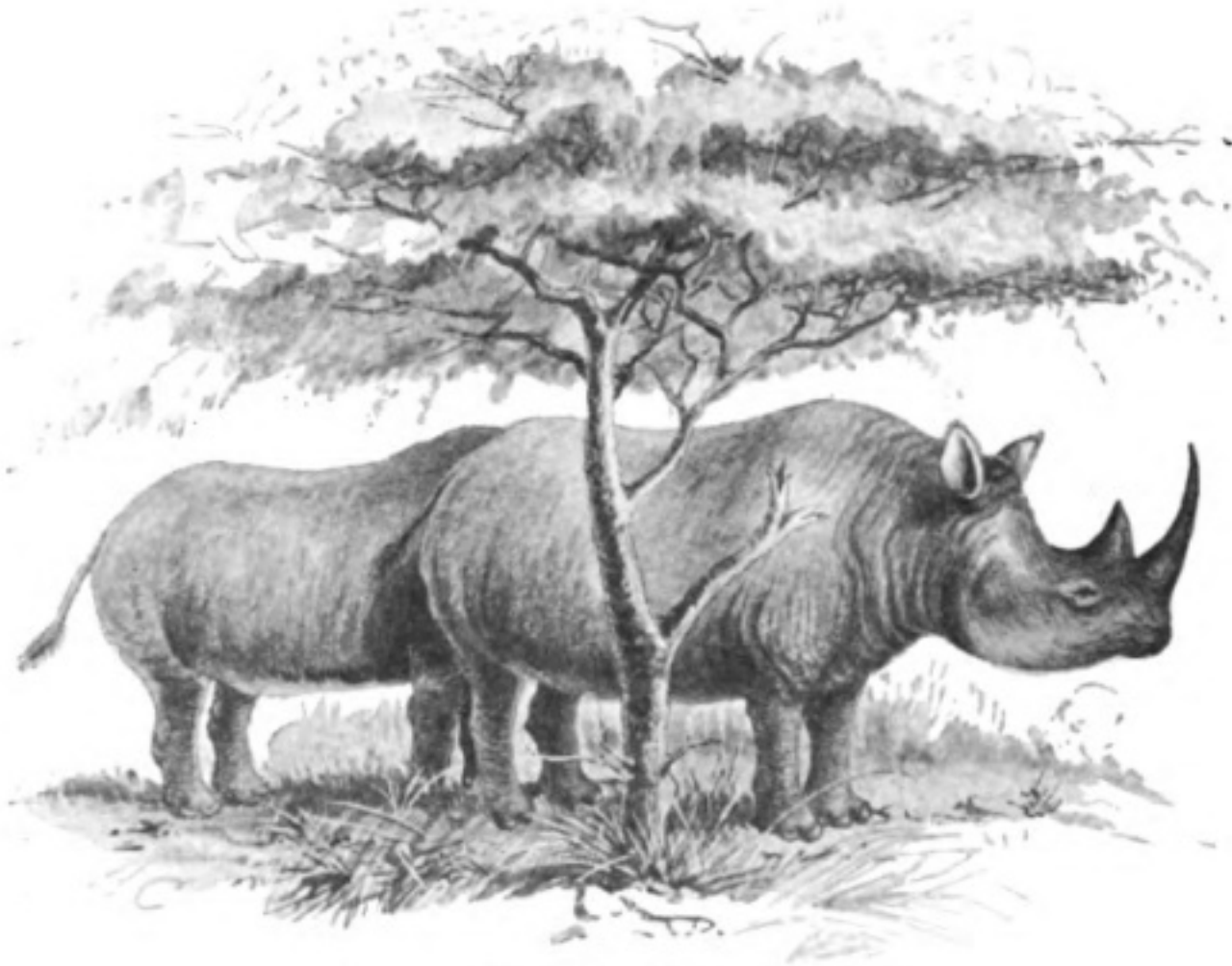


*Marq. de la Scala, Photo.*

RHINO.—FROM LIFE.

nosiest bird in Africa—sprang from an intervening marshy patch, rending the air with shrillest and most persistent vociferations. All Nature seemed to join in common warning, yet no heed did those rhinos take.

They stood side by side, the nearer beast (which was the larger of the two) covering the head, neck and part-



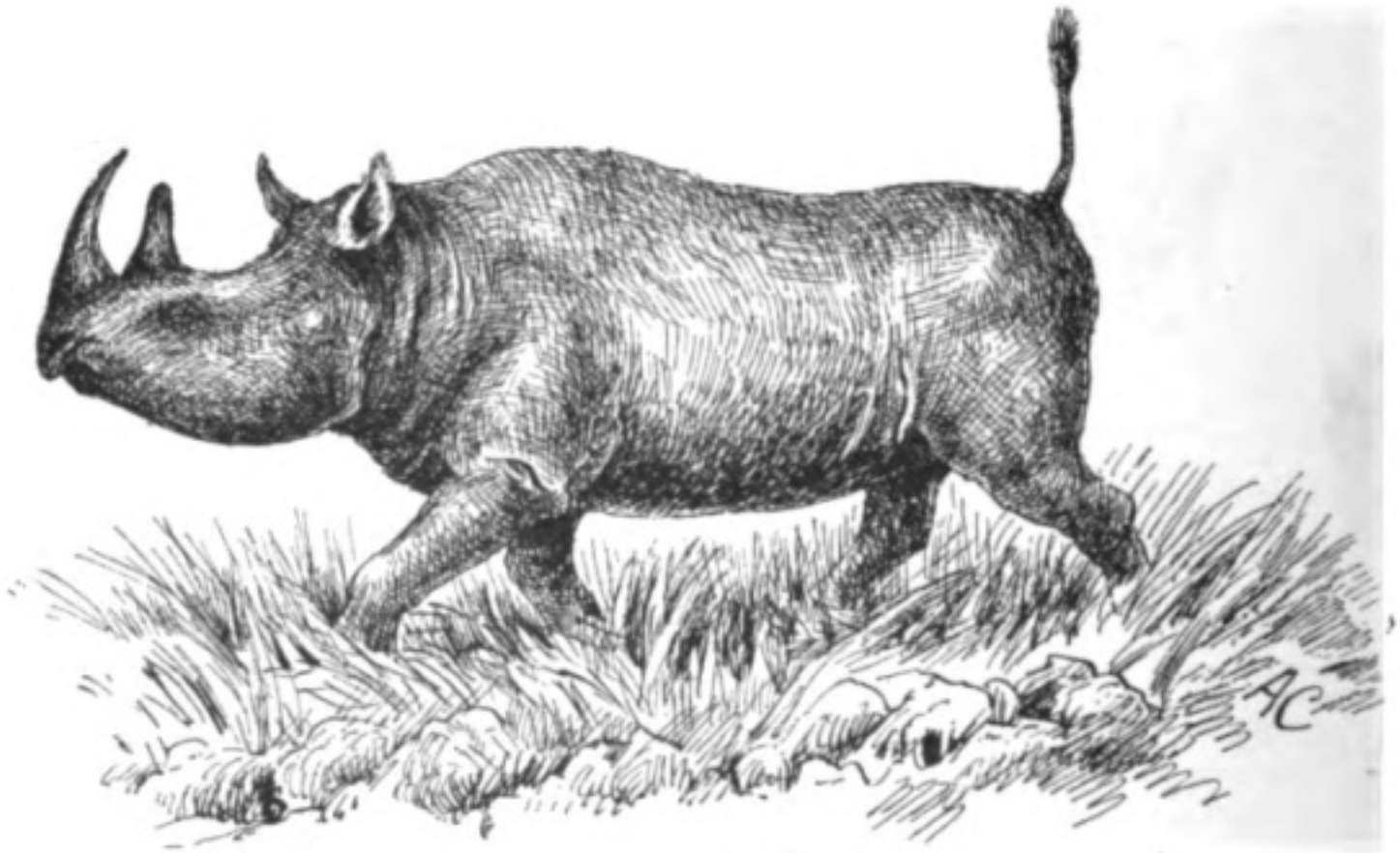
SLEEPING BEAUTIES.

shoulder of the one beyond, while the trunk of the sheltering mimosa concealed from view *both* the central pairs of legs—conveying an absurd appearance of but a single animal, and that about eight yards long! We had crawled in to a thin tree about fifty yards away, and W——, who fired first, placed his ball on the shoulder of the nearer beast, while I, instantly thereafter, directed mine as far forward as was visible of his companion. At the shots, both rhinos whipped round, with snorts and amazing agility, and for several seconds, being at such



very close quarters, matters became lively enough till another shot dropped the bull with a broken hind-leg.

The cow-rhino meanwhile made a determined dash as though to get round under our wind, circling back on the left at a ponderous gallop, and hidden by intervening bush and clumps of tall grass. She, however, gave the situation away by her snorting and the crashing of brush-wood. Running in that direction, I got a momentary glimpse of her between two tall grass-clumps, looking



"THOROUGHLY NASTY."

thoroughly nasty, with head carried high and tail standing erect. So threatening appeared this rush that (as she was already within short distance of the wind) it was necessary to take some risks, and at the next opening in the bush I gave her a quick shot which fortunately sent her headlong to earth. The .450-solid struck the top of the shoulder, smashing the spine, and she dropped in an upright position. The two rhinos lay dead within some eighty yards of each other.

The third rhino, which, though nearly full-grown, was probably the produce of this pair, showed up outside

the bush beyond ; but after beginning an offensive demonstration, we were glad to see retired whence he came. The two rhinos carried blunt massive horns, measuring around the base, No. 1, 18 ins. (front),  $17\frac{1}{2}$  ins. (hind), and, No. 2, 18 ins. each respectively, the lengths being 15 and  $14\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

We suffered much inconvenience and discomfort at this period from heavy thunderstorms, which deluged our camp every afternoon ; while owing to its marshy environment, it was infested by swarms of jumping frogs, which even invaded our tents. At night the display of electric flash-lights in the heavens was often superb.

Loading up our ivory, skins and other trophies, we struck camp and left Solai on March 1, holding for the Alabanyata, and securing a good female of *B. jacksoni*, with 16-in. head, on the march. On the river named we found General Baden-Powell encamped, and now learnt (to our regret) that it was to the defender of Mafeking that we had unwittingly showed a "clean pair of heels" on the night of the 23rd (p. 152-3). The General rode up as we were off-skinning a grand bull of Neumann's hartebeest, carrying 19-in. horns, that W—— had just shot from the track. The bullet had entered the eye at a very long range, and we were rather surprised when we noticed its species, further west than we had expected to find it.

Riding on together, we presently began to notice, far ahead, large troops of zebras, many hundreds in all, steadily moving up the valley towards us. None having been observed here on our way up ten days before, this was evidently a migratory movement in progress. There were also several kongoni in sight, and "B.-P." presently went after three big bulls on our left. An hour or so later, a retrograde movement among the troops of advancing zebras attracted my attention. Several herds were galloping wildly back in the direction whence they had come. Thinking that it might possibly be a lion that had thus thrown them back in confusion,

easy stalking country, as we were requiring meat for the camp. This was an ideal park-like country—a spacious vale whose gentle slopes, decorated with clumps of bush, forest-trees and open grass alternately, dipped away to a gorge far below—the whole being backed by loftier ranges beyond. While the “boys” cut up meat and I smoked in the shade (watching a pair of wood-hoopoes (*Irrisor*) and wondering at their climbing habit, which belied the name) my new Somali hunter, Yama, came up and said, “I see rhino.” The beast was on the opposite hillside, two miles away, standing on a rocky slope where



TWO WEAVER-FINCHES IN BLACK AND GOLD  
(*Hyphantornis textor*, *Pyromelana taha*).

grew scattered thorns. On one of these trees he was breakfasting. Abandoning our two kongoni (except heads and skins), we were soon ready; but meantime “Kifaru,” having finished his meal, slowly turned, and still more slowly strolled along the mountain-side. The thought occurred to me, watching, that perchance he had performed that selfsame walk on the morn of Waterloo.

The descent into the intervening gorge and the passage thereof were of the roughest—broken rocks all intercepted with dongas and terrible brushwood; and ere we emerged the rhino had disappeared. In vain we sought. To the right, in the direction he had gone, a great ravine rent the hill. This was choked with euphorbia, cactus and other humanly-impenetrable

shrubs. Had he entered that, he was lost; but second thoughts negated the probability, for such are not the spots beloved of rhino. Anxious moments succeeded when, on the stony ground, no spoor could be discovered, and I directed Yama to proceed direct to the thorn-tree of the original "view." On our way thither we struck



WOOD-HOOPOE (*Irrisor erythrorhynchus*).  
Brilliant in lustrous reflections of deep greens and purples.

the three-toed spoor, and, following this, soon ascertained that (as anticipated) the animal had shunned the ravine; turning to his left, he had crossed over the mountain-ridge, or "neck," high above.

Beyond this was a saucer-shaped depression full of low trees and bush, fairly thick—not a comfortable spot for tracking, as we could rarely see over twenty yards. Here, presently, we walked right into the rhino in his

boudoir; we stood actually at seven yards before detecting him within. His chamber was a natural arbour, four-square, formed by grouped trees whose foliage overarched it above, while green brushwood walled it in below.

Though so near, we could not distinguish the position of the beast—it was merely the indication of a dark mass that we saw; and for several trying minutes we stood, nervous lest some fickle puff of air might betray us. Then the waggle of a stumpy tail showed that we were right under his stern, the beast standing about two-thirds "off." Gently we retreated backwards, since such quarters were too close, leaving neither time nor room to act had we been detected; and, besides, we thus gained the advantage of rising ground. When some twenty yards away, and already nearly full broadside, my foot in backing touched a stone, and round came that huge head instantly, the broad, tufted ears deflecting to catch the slightest sound. It appeared as fair a chance as was likely to occur; so I placed a .450-solid six inches below the visible ear. The indication of a dark mass vanished; there was a heavy fall, followed by groans and thumps as of a Nasmyth hammer. These I saw, on running forward (lest the beast was merely stunned), arose from the great head convulsively pounding the earth. The second shot was then placed in the lungs, and within a few moments all was over. This was a huge old bull, exceeding  $12\frac{1}{2}$  ft. in total length—almost identical with that previously shot at Elmenteita, though measuring a foot less at shoulder. Even at the first, distant view, I had noticed that this was an unusually long low beast. The comparative dimensions of the two are given at p. 142. The anterior horn of this rhino was just under 18 ins.

The bedroom bore evidence of long occupation, protruding branches at the sides being all broken off short—whether by accident or design—the floor worn flat and smooth, all made snug and comfortable, as though the rhino had occupied this koppie for a century. Yet the

beast itself was literally infested with loathsome vermin. Ticks in solid layers (like mussels on sea-rocks) clustered inside the ears, armpits and in every fold of the hide; while creeping and crab-like creatures crawled and sidled away—repulsive to the last degree. A few yards outside this main lair, the rhino had prepared a second bed, where he could enjoy an open-air siesta. The home-



PORTERS BRINGING IN RHINO HEAD.

ward march, burdened with that heavy head, besides the two kongoni, occupied three hot hours.

All that evening in camp we had a regular serenade of lions, concentrating, it seemed, about the locality of the two abandoned hartebeests. We therefore decided to reach the spot by dawn, and set out at 4.30 a.m. On drawing near the scene, after two hours' stumbling in the dark, as day broke we observed vultures sitting on the trees above—a safe index that something was at the carcasses. Any doubts thereon were speedily dis-