

Memories of Sixty Years

By The Right Honourable
the Earl of Warwick and Brooke



With Eight Plates

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CHAPTER XI

MY JOURNEY TO EAST AFRICA

IN the year 1904 my old friend Moreton Frewen came to see me one day, and told me that he had recently been brought into business relations with a Mr. Lingham, a big Canadian lumber man, who had lately acquired certain large timber concessions in East Africa. Mr. Frewen said he was about to visit East Africa with Mr. Lingham to inspect his concessions, and he suggested that we should make a party, in order that I might see the new country of which every sportsman spoke so eagerly, enjoy some sport in the game shooter's paradise, and see at the same time if I could find some fresh timber ranges and get a concession for myself. The prospect was a very inviting one, and I did not need much persuasion. I asked my brother Alwyne, best of company and best of sportsmen, to come along with me, and persuaded a friend who was then in the Essex Yeomanry to undertake the management of the camp and the sporting arrangements. This friend was Colonel J. H. Patterson, D.S.O., author of "The Man-Eaters of Tsavo," and "In the Grip of the Nyika," books that do not stand in any need of my praises, though they are heartily welcome to them. The Colonel knows British East Africa well and has mastered all the details of conducting a sporting expedition and going on "safari" in a land where all that has been forgotten must be dispensed with. At that time he was one of the

and boxes of sugar were about to be brought up from the hold by means of a derrick and unloaded into a steel lighter. Of this I knew nothing. I was standing close to the edge of the deck, looking out eagerly to where I could see my little Gulf Arabians coming up alongside. Suddenly I heard a loud shout of alarm; a voice cried "Look out!" and something struck me hard from behind, but at a curious angle, so that instead of sweeping me right off my feet into the steel lighter or the water, it merely knocked me down and gave me a movement in the direction of the ship's edge. I tried to dig my feet into the deck, but I couldn't stay myself, and my toes were actually over the deck side, when a friendly hand caught my coat-tails. It was the mate's. "Thank God!" he said; "I was only just in time. I thought nothing would have saved you from going down there."

The unexpected load of sugar had taken an erratic course, and had actually hit my shoulder on the way to the steel lighter. However, as it might have knocked me overboard or broken my head in and was content merely to scare and bruise me, I felt I couldn't grumble. But I've never stood nearer to death than I did just then.

We disembarked at Mombasa, where, by the way, the climate is a little trying to the new-comer, collected our camp followers—over a hundred of them—and set off to Nairobi, where we made a discovery at once startling and disconcerting. By an unfortunate oversight that need not be dwelt upon, the whole of our arms and sporting equipment had been left on the ship, and was being taken on to Natal. We telegraphed at once for the things

to be sent back, but more than a month's delay was inevitable. We were able fortunately to pick up a little material at Nairobi to enable us to carry on, but nothing that quite corresponded to our needs. There was nothing for it but to console ourselves with the thought that sport was, nominally at least, a secondary part of our expedition. The prime motive was the discovery of good timber in large quantities, and our first step, on the way to Lingham's concession, was to seek out my friend Lord Delamere and get the benefit of his advice. We found him working hard in his vegetable garden in the roughest clothes he possessed, and he gave us a warm welcome. A pioneer in a land of pioneers, he owned 100,000 acres or more, and was raising stock, conducting agricultural experiments, and varying the course of life from time to time by going on "safari" with his wife, who was as good a shot and as fearless a hunter as he. She was Miss Cole, daughter of Lord Enniskillen, and her early death must have been sincerely lamented by all who knew her. Lord Delamere was a member of the Governor's (Sir Hayes Sadler) Advisory Committee, and there was hardly an aspect of life in British East Africa that he had not studied. We discussed the timber question, about which I had obtained the expert views of lumber men in Mombasa and Nairobi, and I found the general opinion was that the forests I was out to seek would be found, if at all, at an altitude of 4,000 to 5,000 feet above the sea level. There was no question of the timber being there; our discovery of it was the only uncertainty. It seemed best, in the first instance, to inspect Mr. Lingham's concession, so we set out to do that. After leaving Lord Dela-

mere's our little party divided. Frewen and Lingham went ahead to locate the camp; my brother, Colonel Patterson and I followed in more leisurely fashion. On the following morning a messenger came back from Frewen to say that he had seen what he thought was a white rhinoceros. He had fired, but did not know if he had hit it, and was coming back on the following day that we might have a full party to make a thorough search. On his arrival we all set out for the place where the rhino had been seen, Frewen and Patterson going round one side of the ground and Alwyne and I taking the other. We hunted fruitlessly for a considerable time, and just as I was thinking that nothing would be found we saw the back of the rhino just visible over some broken ground. Alwyne and I fired together, and the rhino dropped stone dead. It certainly might have passed in some lights for a white specimen, but on reaching the body we saw that the animal had been wallowing in some light clay. We shot a few hartebeests that day and then resumed our journey. Our carriers quickly skinned the rhino, and were not very long in eating it. The skin was sent to Nairobi and thence to the game ranger's office. All hides must pass through there, and in this way the authorities are able to see that men do not exceed the limits of their shooting permit. The limited permit serves a treble purpose. It produces revenue, helps to keep game-killing within proper bounds, and avails to preserve young and immature animals, for naturally, if a man may only shoot two examples of a species, he is going to hunt for the best and not be content with the first that comes. Without strict laws and ample reserva-

of streams, where men or animals had passed, disturbing the ground, there were hosts of butterflies, some of them very large ones, and all as radiant as finished jewels. They came to feed on the churned-up mud teeming with life invisible. After examining all or most of the concession we started off for a station on the railway, twenty or thirty miles from Ravine Fort. Alwyne and I took the lead on our little horses, and we were on the look out, for we were in a country where four native traders had met with a tragic end just recently. One would not say they deserved their fate, but they certainly invited it, for while two went ahead with loaded rifles two marched behind with the ammunition! When we arrived at Londiana Station on the Uganda Railway, we were well pleased to have been prepared, for we found the railway station occupied by some twelve hundred troops of Sikh and East African regiments on the way to the Nandi country where trouble had come to a head and war had been declared. It seemed that we had run considerable risks by travelling where we had been without an escort, but good fortune had favoured us.

At Londiana, Frewen and Lingham left us, and my brother, Colonel Patterson and I decided to leave our boys for a while and make a trip into Uganda. So we travelled by rail to Victoria Nyanza and across the lake to Entebbe in the Uganda country. The sights of that wonderful country have met with the full measure of description, and it is hardly necessary for me to write about them. The hospital at Entebbe was full of sleeping-sickness cases, and on our return across the lake to visit the famous Ripon Falls, where the Nile flows from the northern part of the lake, we passed a country where in a

few years some eighty thousand natives had succumbed to the disease. I could not help feeling that in fighting that disease in the service of those who cannot fight it for themselves, the white man has done something to justify his intrusion upon a world that would have preferred to work out its own destinies.

At Entebbe Alwyne and I went out with the Governor's secretary to shoot hippopotami on the lake. Most of the islands we passed were as empty as the desert. The sleeping sickness had swept them clean, and those who had not been seized had fled the plague, perhaps carrying it with them to areas hitherto uninfected. We landed on one island to look for crocodiles' eggs, and I remember the Governor's secretary, who was looking after us, brushing from my neck a fly, presumably a tsetse, which, he said, carried the infection; a tiny assailant enough, but far more dangerous than any animal the traveller meets in the wildest part of the globe. In the launch that towed our rowing boat over the lake I noticed a smart, well-built native lad, perhaps seventeen years of age, sitting cross-legged in naval uniform, under the Union Jack, in the stern. He took no notice of what was passing, and seemed to be more asleep than awake. I asked the engineer about him. "He's Tom!" replied the engineer, "and he works on the boat, but he has caught the sleeping sickness." And he told me that, in his view, it was certain death but a painless one.

Later we went up a lagoon, and suddenly saw the enormous head of a hippopotamus rise from the water within range. Before we could fire it had disappeared, only to reappear a few minutes

later and be shot dead. It sank at once, but the body gets distended after death, and after some hours rises to the surface, so we were not surprised to find it floating on the lagoon within a day. We secured the skin and the head, and this last was in due course mounted for us in London.

Returning to the line of the railway we prospected in the direction of Mount Kenia, 18,000 feet high, with the view of finding out what forests existed at the range of five or six thousand feet that is most suitable for timber. To get there we had to cross the Aberdare range. As we were leaving for this country, which is but sparsely watered, we had a wire from Mr. and Mrs. Cyril Ward to say they had left the Waterfords after some very successful lion-hunting round Nairobi, and would like to join us for the journey over the Aberdare range, to the northern province, and a place called Rumuruti, in the direction of Lake Rudolf. We were very gratified to have their company, and gave them time to come up. By now, of course, we were in possession of our full equipment, and enjoyed excellent sport in the Aberdare country. We had a great camp then, 200 carriers, to say nothing of donkeys, so that it was necessary to keep near the river. Several rhinos were bagged, but lions were shy. They could be heard at night, but were invisible by day. Unforgettable amid all the excitement of sport was Mount Kenia; the sight of its vast peaks, which at sunrise cast a curious shadow across the sky, is something I have never seen surpassed for sheer grandeur, and a picture that will remain with me as long as life itself.

As far north as the junction of two rivers, the

Guaso Nyiro and Guaso Narok, I saw but one lion. The occasion was an evening when our men were pitching camp, and I took a ride and went out for a stroll in the half light. On a sudden I felt that something was staring at me, and became conscious of the head of a lion looking over a rock, just visible across broken ground some hundred yards away. I don't think I checked my pace or gave any sign of recognition, at least I tried not to do so. My object was to walk on as though I had seen nothing, make a detour, and work round for a better shot. Unfortunately, if you are not afraid of a lion the lion is speedily afraid of you, and this one bolted before I could gain a favourable position. I've known tigers bolt in the same way, and many another animal do likewise. On the other hand, if a lion or tiger has killed and is found by its kill, the probabilities are that it will stay there and even put up a fight. The lion will attack men, but the chances are that he is already a man-eater, and the odds are long that the attack will be a surprise one. Camp fires and watchful sentries will keep even a hungry man-eater at bay, but the prowling beast is quick to know when vigilance has been relaxed, and will act on the spur of the moment. My own experience has taught me that there is only one animal that does not fear man, and that is the rhinoceros. He has taken some toll of African sportsmen, and would have taken a much heavier one but for the fact that his eyes are not as reliable as his nose. He can often scent the man he cannot see, and his charge in the direction of an enemy is almost as blind as the rush of a horse that has run away in a fright. In fact, if we could analyse the emotions of the charging rhinoceros, we should

find in all probability that there is fear as well as anger in them. It was a great disappointment to me to be in the lion country and get no lions, but I think the fault was our own. We had kept to the river bank because, as I have already explained, our company was far too large to take with impunity into the waterless country, and the lions were not by the river. Perhaps they had already found that terrain unhealthy.

Below Mount Kenia, at Fort Hall, on the edge of one of the great Reserves, I stayed with Dr. and Mrs. Hind. The doctor, who held an official position, had come to it from the Belgian Congo, where I believe at one time he was under Colonel Lothaire, whose name will not be unfamiliar to students of Congo history. It is straying from my subject to recall any of his anecdotes, but I remember being particularly impressed by the simple statement that when the colonel and his brother officials met for meals, they always kept their revolvers on the table in front of them! Dr. Hind and his wife were most hospitable and interesting people. A few days after we left them they went out on a sporting expedition, taking only a small company of servants and carriers, carrying their water supplies as well as food, and moving right away from the river. In three days they saw no fewer than thirty lions. Quite clearly, after all our thousands of miles of travel, we had been within a few days' march of the finest sport of its kind in the world—so near and yet so far. I suppose it was decreed that I was not to add a lion to my trophies.

Mrs. Hind was a very versatile lady—by the way, the woman who is not versatile should not

see that it doesn't exhibit our sporting qualities in a very favourable light, but the truth must be told, and I have often thought that the sportsmen whose yarns never hint at a miss or a mistake have deliberately forgotten a large part of their experiences. Those of us who have shot big game and small in three continents know that there are days when it is hard to make mistakes, and days when it is hard to make anything else. A fair picture of sporting days must not ignore the disappointments.

I have never forgotten my pursuit of the buffalo, nor have I forgotten the rather startling experiences that followed. It was a very hot day, and during the afternoon I climbed the highest knoll in the neighbourhood and took out my field-glasses to help me to recognise certain landmarks that would guide us back to the Tana River. Under the first tree I examined carefully I could distinguish a rhinoceros taking shelter from the heat. I turned to another tree and saw a second rhino, to a third and saw another, all be it remembered along the path by which we should have to return. Remember, too, I was overlooking a large expanse of comparatively unsheltered prairie with these big trees growing haphazard here and there. I began to count steadily, and, incredible though it may seem, I counted no fewer than eight-and-twenty rhinos sheltering under as many trees. This will give a good idea of the quality of that district as a game country. An hour or so later as we were making our way home we saw the very fine head of a waterbuck showing through a bush some distance away. Being anxious to bag it, I left Patterson and went forward slowly and carefully until the original three or four hundred yards that separated me from the buck had been dimin-

ished by at least two-thirds. Then, on a sudden, there stalked from the bushes, not sixty yards away, three enormous uncouth shapes of strangest red ochre colour. They were three rhinos that had sought relief from the heat by wallowing in the red clay of some pool instead of standing under trees. There was very little cover, but I was moving up wind so that they could not scent anything, and they had not seen me. It was an exciting moment. I might have been able to kill one, and so turn the others, but my killing limit was two, and that was already reached. To have brought down another would have meant a heavy fine. On the other hand, if I was seen by those dull eyes, or scented by those keen noses, it might be a tough fight. I squatted motionless, and quiet as a mouse. A slight sound by my side and whisper in my ear told me that Patterson had seen my danger, and wriggled his way across to share it, and we both waited breathlessly upon events. The rhinos began to sniff the air and show signs of uneasiness, then they seemed to be satisfied that all was well, and one led the others grunting back into the bush.

We met Alwyne and Frewen on the river bank; and the journey home had no other incident than was provided by Frewen's horse. It tumbled into a big hole in the river, and chose a course for itself. Frewen chose another, and his hat a third, and the collecting time was an anxious one, for the Tana River hides crocodiles as well as water-holes. But fortune favoured us.

Coming back from the Mount Kenia country we lost several horses through a sickness that is due to the presence of certain poisonous water grasses near the river. It is pleasant to think that hard work

with the spoil, a dance was held in honour of the stag's downfall, and much whisky flowed.

The pendant to this head on the other side of the wall is a twelve-pointer from Glenfeshie, and both heads were stuffed by Quartermain of Stratford-on-Avon, who, in my opinion and that of many experts, is the finest stuffer of animals in the country. The heads of African deer and antelopes are not of special note. The only remarkable ones are those of two impallah, the most attractive of East African antelopes, so quick in pace, so graceful in action.

I have two sets of rhinoceros horns, one of the foremost horns of the pair slightly chipped at the top. It was at the junction of the Nyiro and Narok rivers that this horn came my way. Four of us were out that day, and we had gone over a wide extent of country, each taking a gun-bearer and one or two natives, and forging ahead a few miles apart. I came first upon a large herd of oryx, a beautiful antelope, always very wild and hard to reach. They made off, and I followed, not without hope of a shot. As I moved along I came suddenly upon a very fine bull oryx quite apart from the others. He was lying under a tree about 120 yards away, and I think he must have sighted me just as I sighted him. He rose and bolted, so that no broadside shot was possible. But I fired once or twice and finally hit him in front, as I discovered afterwards, a short distance above the fetlock joint. Nevertheless he went off at great speed and was joined by a comrade from the fast disappearing herd. I at once jumped on my pony and galloped hard after him up a hill. He went so quickly that I found it necessary to spur the pony to keep him

in view, but as soon as the hill-top was reached and the descent began, he could no longer keep up the pace and preferred to turn and face me. I jumped off the pony, fastened the bridle to a bush, and walked up to give the *coup de grâce*, never realising how savage a cornered antelope can be. The plucky beast charged right at me, and I dropped him dead in his tracks with one fortunate shot. His head with its magnificent horns is by the side of the rhino's.

No other chance of sport appeared to be coming my way that day, and it was not until the evening, when I was making my way to camp to rejoin my friends, that I saw a rhino feeding on the open plain. There were no bushes in sight, nothing but a great ant-hill that covered me to within forty or fifty yards of the quarry. I made up my mind to reach that ant-hill if possible, and get in a certain shot. It was a long stalk, over bad ground, but I reached my objective undiscovered because I was moving up wind, and the great beast, whose scent is as keen as his sight is uncertain, suspected no evil. Arrived at the ant-hill I sat down, got my legs forward, and took what should have been a very effective elbow shot. My rifle was one of Holland and Holland's new .500 Express kind, with a very heavy cordite charge, and a solid bullet. I was not accustomed to it, and the pull was very light. So when, after taking careful aim behind the shoulder I pressed the trigger carefully, both barrels went off at once, and the force of the recoil rolled me backwards down the ant-hill which was five or six feet high. I think that I could hardly have reached the ground and started to pull myself up before that rhino had gone racing and snorting past me

some twenty-five yards on my right, with his tail high up in the air. Without being a moment more than I could help, I rammed in two more cartridges and fired again. He went on as though untouched, and, suddenly collapsing, tumbled over stone dead, six hundred yards away. On examination I found that his horn, otherwise a long one, had the point broken off, and he carried two bullets, one in the neck that had killed him, and the other in the hind quarters. To my great surprise I realised that the two first shots that were accidentally simultaneous had missed him altogether; they would have been close together else, in the neighbourhood of the shoulder. My men took the skin and horn, and doubtless the jackals and hyenas cleared up what was left.

The other rhinoceros horn on the other side of the oryx head in the hall came to me later, with no incident worth mentioning. It is a longer and a thinner one, and is from a cow rhino. As I have pointed out in the chapter on my East African journey, I could have shot others, but there is a Government limit to the number that may be killed, and the restriction serves a double purpose. It checks (as I said) the indiscretion of the indiscreet, and goes far to insure the killing of the most mature and consequently most destructive animals.

My collection holds another rhinoceros horn; it stands on a cabinet in the hall, and came from India. I secured it when I went out after the Proclamation Durbar on a sporting expedition to the vast domains of the Maharajah of Cooch Behar. I remember that four or five of us were given places overlooking a considerable morass which was beaten out by elephants. I had been warned that the

track my rifle was to command was greatly favoured by the rhinos, and so it proved, for several came my way, and I had the good fortune to account for four. I kept only one trophy, and though compared with the East African species it is of no great significance, it has a special value for me as a record of a singularly interesting visit. The Indian rhinoceros is smaller than the East African, and it has a thick black hide.

The two sambur, with their six-point horns, fell to me in the country of the Maharajah of Ulwar. It was when out stalking there that I heard the extraordinary wailing cry of one of the Maharajah's servants, a lad who was carrying to his master the sacred water of the Ganges, a sound that I have never been able to forget. The bala sing, a ten-pointer, not unlike our Highland red deer, became mine in the woods of the Terai, in the country of the Maharajah of Cooch Behar. It is a very shy animal, demanding all the craft of the stalker, but the head is good, and the flavour of the venison excellent.

The Thompson's gazelle, whose head is mounted close by, is an albino from East Africa. I was riding back to camp one night after a hard day's sport, when the strange white beast came in sight, looking for all the world like a ghost in the gathering darkness. To make sure that it was really an earthly visitant, and not supernatural in any way, I jumped off my pony and shot it. It was too dark by then to take the skin, so we cut down bushes and covered the body as best we could, to keep it from the roving beasts of the night that scent the dead from incredible distances. I had not much hope of the morrow, but my luck was in on that occasion,

and the next morning found the pile of bushes undisturbed.

On the left of the albino is the head of an eland bull, not in any way remarkable as these splendid heads go, but of interest to me by reason of the difficulty I had in securing it. The bull was surrounded by cows, and my object was to get in a shot that should bring him down without previously disturbing his companions. A long time elapsed before I could get what I desired, and several times I feared the chance would not come. But it came at last, and so the eland bull's head is among the trophies. The body was very large, and had the head been in like proportion, which it is not, it would have been a remarkable one. Next to it, and also from East Africa, is a good specimen of the rather common Jackson antelope, and in the corner the head and neck of a fine giraffe can be seen in a prominent position.

I remember how Colonel Patterson and I were out one day together when we came upon four or five giraffes browsing on the tops of thorn bushes. They did not wait for our close investigation, but went off, and we followed them for miles and miles under a hot sun and over rough ground. They would allow us to get nearly within shot and then would be off again. It was not until the end of the day, when we were feeling the full effects of our pursuit, that we came up to them where they were feeding deep down in a donga and, shooting at the same time and picking out a mark for each barrel, Patterson and I dropped four out of the five. Looking back, it seems a little cold-blooded, but we had had a long chase; we had not at the time shot any giraffe on this journey (doubtless