

Two African Trips

WITH

NOTES AND SUGGESTIONS ON
BIG GAME PRESERVATION IN AFRICA

BY

EDWARD NORTH BUXTON

AUTHOR OF 'SHORT STALKS,' ETC.

With Illustrations and Map

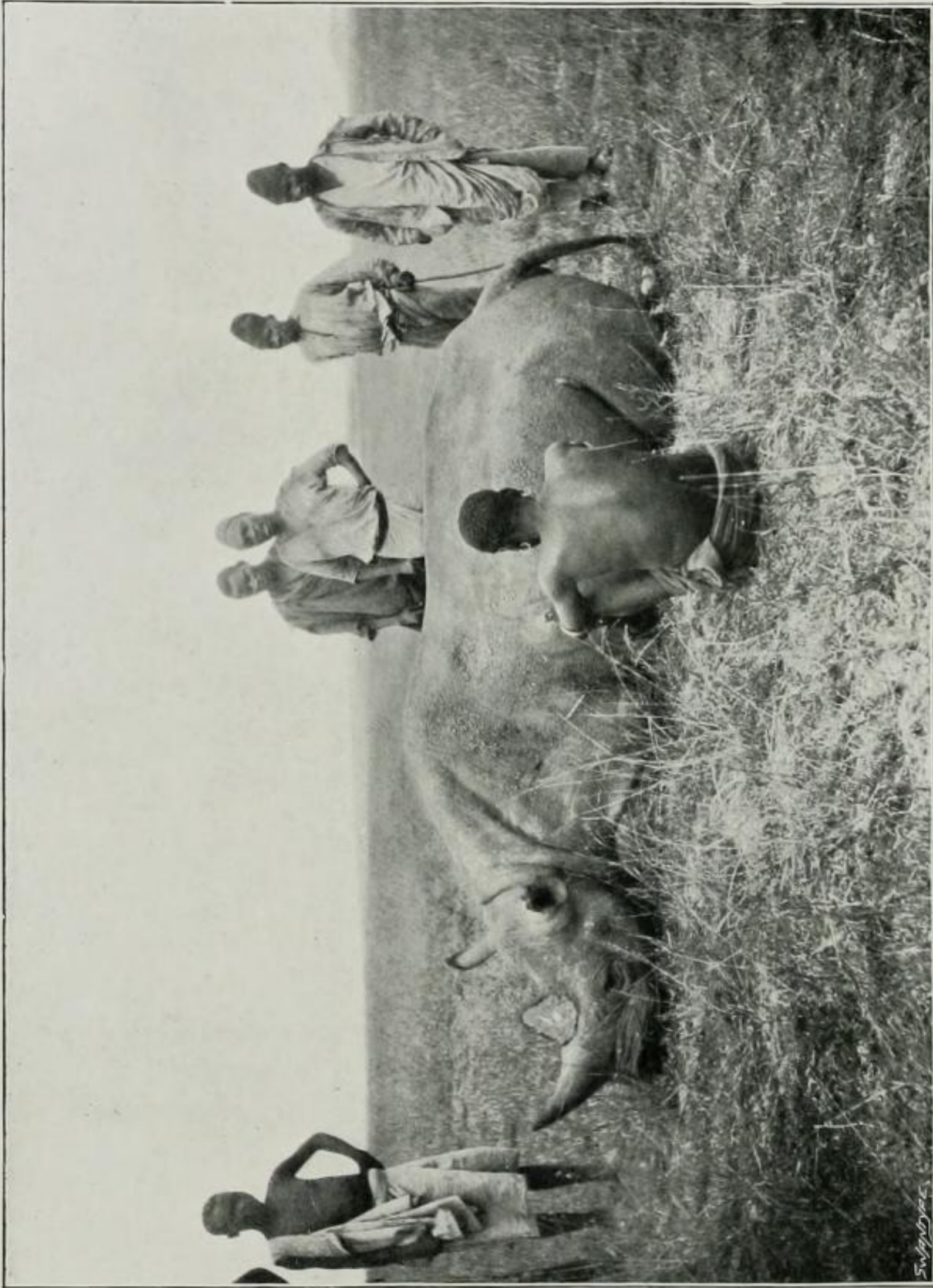
LONDON: EDWARD STANFORD

12, 13, & 14, LONG ACRE, W.C.

1902

on again, and a second bullet at shorter range told on one of them. With the sickness of death upon him, he turned and fled, hotly pursued by his antagonist, who seemed surprised at his easy victory. Both were unconscious of the cause, and the pursuit was continued in my direction, till at easy range the wounded animal fell dead to a third shot, and the victor, still hesitating, paid the penalty of his own life also. A message back to camp soon brought out a score of Swahili followers, and an hour later every pot was simmering. The prospect of fresh meat, to them an unwonted luxury, is one of the attractions which make service in an Englishman's caravan so popular.

Rhinoceros, of the two-horned kind, are at present common, but it is to be feared will not long remain so. They take their daily siesta in thick bush, lying in the shade and shaking their small pig-like ears; but they feed in the open, and are of course then very conspicuous. Owing to this, and their blindness and stupidity, they are easily approached. Indeed, even when the intruder is seen by them, they are rather reluctant to get out of the way, and will sometimes charge. My first rhino, though mortally wounded, led me a stern-chase of four hours before he was secured. Once we came up with him hiding behind a bush, and when he dashed out unexpectedly with loud grunts I sprang behind a tree, and thus lost the opportunity of putting an end to the hunt. For this weakness I was severely taken to task by Ali. Taking up the track again, it led us across a river and into aloe-scrub. This affords exceedingly dense covert, and the chase became highly exciting, as it was certain that



KILLED IN THE OPEN.

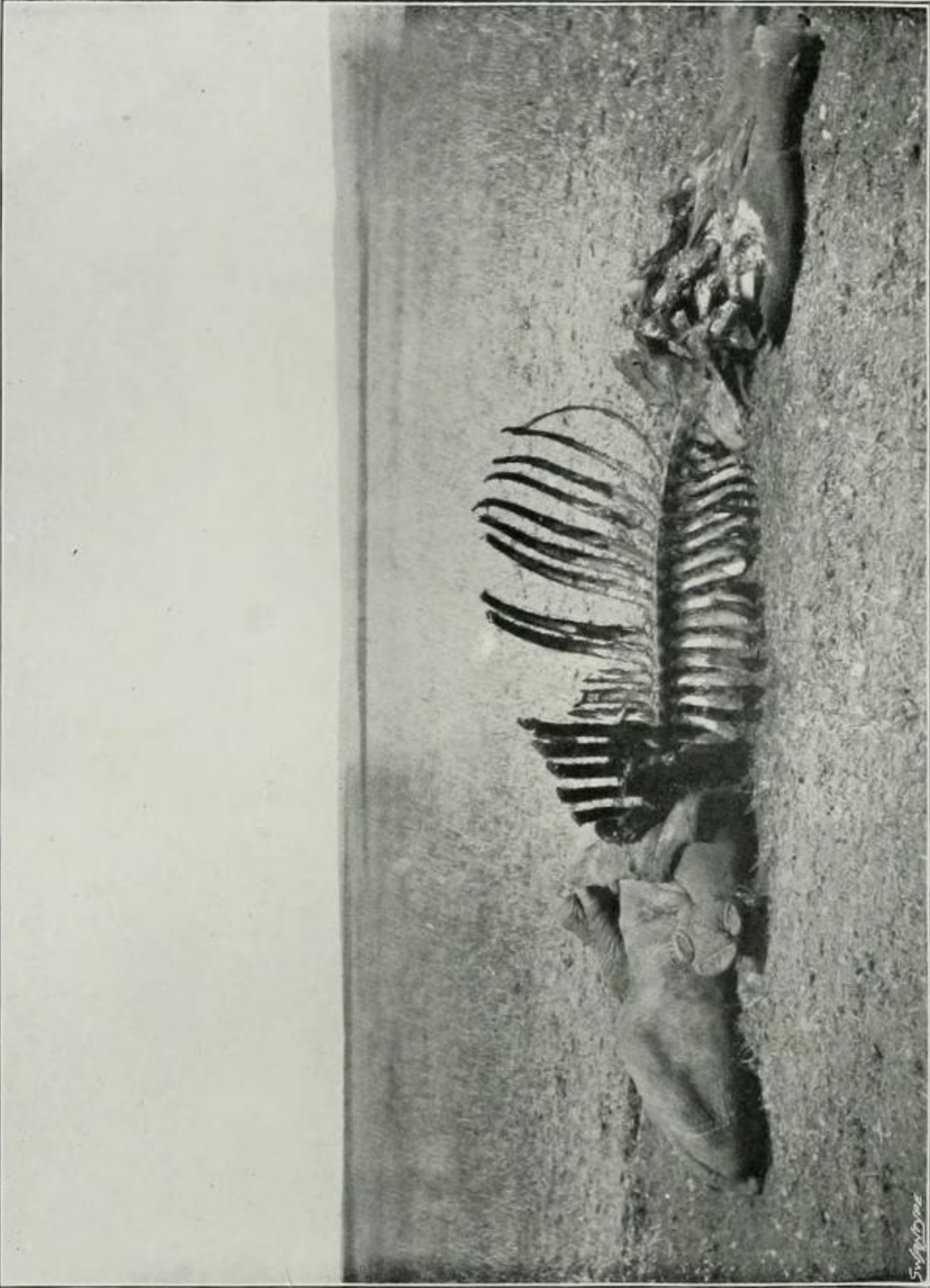
Swampy

if we could hold the track we should come to very close quarters. The hunt was so long, however, that we were at the point of abandoning it for the night, and Ali had actually drawn a line on the ground to mark the point we had reached, when the wounded animal jumped up within a few yards. This time I was too quick for him, and soon put an end to the business. In this aloe-scrub I found for the first and only time the fresh track of elephants. It is also the favourite ground for Kirk's gazelle, the smallest of all the antelopes. Another rhinoceros which I shot subsequently on the Athi plains lay sound asleep in the open, and I walked, without any attempt at concealment, to within twenty-five yards. When I fired, he sprang up and came straight for me, so that his massive head and horns covered his vital parts, and I could not fire an effective second shot. Standing up, I waited ready to jump aside, but, whatever his original intentions may have been, he swerved slightly, and passed three or four yards to my left, when I put my second bullet into him almost at the muzzle of the rifle. Either shot would have been sufficient, and after galloping two hundred yards he slackened speed, lay down, and died without further movement. I believe that more accidents have happened in East Africa from rhinoceros than from lions. This is perhaps because the former are too blind and stupid to detect the presence of a man until he is very close, when they charge suddenly. In the open it should not be difficult to avoid the charge; in bush it is otherwise.

The quantity of meat on a rhinoceros does not daunt a Swahili. He approaches the task with a cheerful confidence in his own capacity, and even while cutting up the

carcase he crams quivering lumps of raw meat into his capacious mouth, as appetisers for the feast to come. The meat once transported to camp, he sits down in a business-like way to work through it. The hunks of meat are skewered on a stick, which is planted among the embers till the outside is black. While this meal is being consumed another is preparing, and this goes on, with brief siestas interposed, throughout the day, and even the night. Their phenomenal capacity for stowing food is balanced by the power, not less extraordinary, of prolonged fasting. It is a common thing, when "posho" for six days has been distributed, to find that most of the men have finished their rations in half the time. But they cheerfully encounter the lean period and carry their loads without inconvenience. Yet, if you come to think of it, it is not more wonderful than that we should be able to last from breakfast to lunch. Our food supply is constant, theirs intermittent, but often abundant. Thus they are built to suit these conditions—with a "large coal capacity." Being so short of rice, and the camp full of meat, I cut down the rations of the former by one-half. But this was not acceptable. The porters drew up in a long line in front of my tent. This is a signal that they have a grievance. They complained that they were too weak from want of food to carry loads, and that they *did not like meat*. This I could understand, for they had had such a surfeit in the previous twenty-four hours as would suffice me for a fortnight.

We were now met by two serious difficulties. Owing to the non-arrival of our supplies, a retreat to our base on the railway became inevitable. Moreover, an outbreak of



THE NEXT MORNING.

5/10/1906

smallpox occurred among our porters. The Swahilis are not protected as they should be, and easily might be, by compulsory vaccination at the coast. This is a serious blot on our rule, and the result of it, combined with the railway, is the free and unrestricted importation of smallpox among the tribes. To us the danger of its spreading through the whole caravan was a serious one. In such a case we should have been unable either to move or succour the sick. It was a serious dilemma how to reconcile our obligations to the stricken men with the safety of the remainder. Fortunately, the two men first attacked were not too ill to march. We sent them under escort to Taveta, where they were isolated and provided for, and where one died, while the other recovered. Subsequent cases were dealt with as they arose, with the best means at hand. As an instance of the trials of a caravan-leader I may mention that our headman concealed one of these cases from me, and made the man carry a small tent. I was of course compelled to burn it, an incident the more annoying as the package contained the feathers of one of the ostriches which I had shot. These had also to be sacrificed.

Thus our retreat from the Kilimanjaro district was a somewhat hasty one. When within a day and a half of Voi we encountered the laggard commissariat column. Instead of marching to our relief, they had devoted their whole energies to devouring as much as possible of the rice which they carried. When almost within touch of the railway, the chain of my bicycle, which had been audibly complaining for some time, gave way with a bang—a victim to the inequalities of the road. But, as it

turned out, it would have been scarcely possible to use it in subsequent excursions from the iron way.

Arrived at Voi, the homing instinct of my men asserted itself. Many who were perfectly well the day before developed mysterious complaints. I lacked the skill to discriminate, and packed off a round dozen of sleek malingerers to Mombasa. The faithful fifty who remained were transported, with ourselves, in two days—the train did not then run at night—to the 308th mile, at the crossing of the Athi River. At Taveta we had encountered scarcity. In the territories of the Wateita and Wakamba, which the line traverses, evidences of positive starvation abounded. The natives seen from the railway were little better than walking skeletons, and at many of the stations were groups of foundlings, the orphans of parents who had perished. The Protectorate and railway officers had done their utmost with small means to save those within reach; but no one will ever know whether starvation, or the fell disease which dogged its footsteps, claimed most victims.

For the first two hundred miles the railway runs through thorn-jungle, which, being almost leafless, is singularly monotonous. This gradually opens out to park-like country, until, beyond the 250th mile, the Athi plains are reached—a grassy plateau at an elevation of five thousand feet, treeless except for the thin patches which mark the upper courses of the Athi River and its affluent, the Stony Athi. The sweetness of the grass attracts great herds of animals; indeed, it is doubtful if, for variety and number of visible game, it can be matched elsewhere at the present day on that continent, or

indeed in the world. From the windows of the train I noticed rhinoceros, hartebeest, gazelles of the two species named respectively after the explorers Thomson and Grant, zebras, ostrich, impala, steinbuck, and wildebeest in numbers which I have dreamed of, but never hoped to see.

We left the train at Lukenia by the crossing of the Athi. This high-sounding name suggests a place of consequence. As a matter of fact there was nothing but the station, which consisted, like many others, of a little green canvas, a thorn boma, and a water-tank. Hard by Captain and Mrs. Hinde were encamped, and we thought ourselves fortunate to meet so good a sportsman and naturalist. His camp was something of a menagerie, and contained, besides the trophies of several lions, a young zebra, a Grant's gazelle, a Thomson's gazelle, two falcons, a parrot, and several derelict babies. Hinde was appointed Commissioner to the Masai tribe, small camps of whom were squatted outside his boma. He had succeeded in establishing very friendly relations with this people, a short time ago the most formidable tribe in East Africa. They were the owners of vast flocks and herds, which they were in the habit of replenishing by raiding their neighbours. The rinderpest has destroyed so many cattle that there is not the same temptation as formerly, and the Masai are now poor and humble; but "when the Devil was sick, the Devil a monk would be," and I think the propensity is only dormant. When on the war-path they trust in hand-to-hand fighting, charging *en masse* with heavy thrusting spears. Other tribes, like the Wakamba and Wandorobbo, adopt more stealthy methods and the poisoned arrow, a

SECOND SCHEDULE

Animals, the females of which are not to be hunted, killed, or captured when accompanied by their young, and the young of which are not to be captured, except under Special Licence.

1. Rhinoceros.
2. Hippopotamus.
3. Zebra (other than the Mountain Zebra).
4. Chevrotain (*Dorcatherium*).
5. All Antelopes or Gazelles not mentioned in the First Schedule.

THIRD SCHEDULE

Animals, limited numbers of which may be killed or captured under a Sportsman's or Public Officer's Licence.

Kind.	Number allowed.
1. Elephant (male)	2
2. Rhinoceros	2
3. Hippopotamus	2
4. Zebras (other than the Mountain Zebra)	2
5. Antelopes and Gazelles—	
Class A—	
<i>Oryx</i> (Gemsbuck Colotis or Beisa)	2
<i>Hippotragus</i> (Sable or Roan)	2
<i>Strepsiceros</i> (Kudu)	2
6. Colobi and other fur-Monkeys	2
7. Aard-Varks (<i>Orycteropus</i>)	2
8. Serval	2
9. Cheetah (<i>Cynælurus</i>)	2
10. Aard-wolf (<i>Proteles</i>)	2
11. Smaller Monkeys of each species	2
12. Ostrich (male only)	2
13. Marabous	2
14. Egret	2
15. Antelopes and Gazelles—	
Class B—	
Any species other than those in Class A	10
16. Chevrotains (<i>Dorcatherium</i>)	10
17. Wild Pig, of each species	10
18. Smaller Cats	10
19. Jackal	10

APPENDIX II

RETURN OF GAME KILLED IN THE SOUDAN

For the year 30th September 1900 to 30th September 1901

	Game killed under Licences and returns sent in.	Game killed under Licences to my knowledge by men who have not sent in returns through absence on leave, death, etc.	Game known to have been destroyed by natives (actually detected; more important species only).	Totals.
Elephant	20	10	...	30
Buffalo	34	...	1	35
Hartebeest (<i>Bubalis</i>)	34	...	...	34
Tiang (<i>Damaliscus</i>)	83	...	...	83
Waterbuck (<i>Cobus defassa</i>)	78	...	...	78
Mrs. Gray's Waterbuck (<i>C. maria</i>)	16	...	...	16
White-eared Cob (<i>C. leucotis</i>)	107	...	...	107
Uganda Cob (<i>C. thomasi</i>)	6	...	...	6
Roan Antelope (<i>Hippotragus</i>)	39	...	2	41
<i>Oryx leucoryx</i>	2	...	...	2
<i>Oryx beisa</i> . . . . .	...	...	...	...
Addax . . . . .	...	...	...	...
Kudu (<i>Strepsiceros</i>) . . . . .	...	1	...	1
Reedbuck (<i>Cervicapra</i>)	22	...	...	22
Bushbuck (<i>Tragelaphus</i>)	31	...	...	31
Speke's Antelope (<i>Limnotragus</i>) . . . . .	...	...	...	...
Addra Gazelle (<i>Gazella ruficollis</i>) . . . . .	...	...	...	...
Ariel (<i>G. sømmerringi</i>)	61	5	...	66
Other Gazelles	123	...	...	123
Duiker (<i>Cephalophus</i>)	7	1	...	8
Dig-Dig (<i>Madoqua</i>) . . . . .	...	...	...	...
Klipspringer (<i>Oreotragus</i>) . . . . .	...	...	...	...
Oribi	42	1	...	43
Ibex (<i>Capra</i>) . . . . .	...	2	...	2
Wild Sheep (<i>Ovis</i>) . . . . .	...	...	...	...
Hippopotamus	18	1	...	19
Wart Hog (<i>Phacochoerus</i>)	14	1	...	15
Wild Boar (<i>Sus</i>)	2	...	...	2
Lion	21	2	...	23
Leopard	5	...	...	5
Cheetah	1	1	...	2
Ostrich	4	...	34	38
Rhinoceros	4	...	...	4
Giraffe	4	...	11	15
Tora Hartebeest	7	1	...	8
Totals	785	26	48	859