

Sport and Adventure in Gallaland.

BY A. ARKELL-HARDWICK, F.R.G.S.

I.

The narrative of a most eventful journey from Kikuyu, in British East Africa, to Gallaland, viâ Mount Kenia. Much of the country traversed is very little known, and Mr. Hardwick's party suffered much from the difficulties of the route, want of food when game was scarce, and the attacks of hostile natives.



HIS account of an expedition into the little-known country which lies between Lake Rudolph and the East African sea-coast will, I hope, give the readers of THE WIDE WORLD MAGAZINE some idea of the perils and inconveniences which are at present inseparable from African travel away from the beaten track. Wild beasts and wilder natives conspire to give the adventurous traveller a bad time, and these, together with difficult country, such as thorn forests and waterless desert tracts, test one's patience and powers of endurance to the uttermost.

A description of the journey from Mombasa to Nairobi, the capital of British East Africa, would be out of place here, as it has been previously described elsewhere. Suffice it to say that our party of three white men, with forty native carriers and six pack donkeys — who between them bore everything we possessed in the way of tents, provisions, ammunition, and trade goods — left Nairobi in the early part of 1900 bound for the little-known Waso Nyiro River, viâ Mount Kenia and the River Tana.

The native carriers were recruited from several different tribes and included Swabilis, or coast natives, Wa'kamba from the province of Ukambani, A'kikuyu, or natives of Kikuyuland, and Wa'nyamwezi from Unyamwezi, to the south and east of Lake Victoria Nyanza. Each man carries a load of approximately sixty pounds weight, and will march on an average from ten to fifteen miles a day for weeks at a time. On the first few days after starting there is generally a little trouble, as the men are fresh from the delights and debaucheries of the native bazaar, and, having consequently grown very "soft" in condition, they

do not take kindly to work again. The attempts at desertions are difficult to cope with, and in spite of the most watchful precautions are frequently successful.

After leaving Nairobi we made direct for Doenyo Sabuk, a bold, rounded hill whose summit towers some eight hundred feet above the level of the surrounding plain and six thousand feet above the sea level. My first argument with a rhinoceros occurred while crossing these plains. I was utterly unprepared for the encounter, and only escaped injury by the most extraordinary good luck. The caravan passed the animal lying asleep on the open plain about three hundred yards to the

left, and unfortunately down wind. About two-thirds of the caravan had passed unnoticed when the great beast scented us and woke up. From my place near the head of the caravan I heard a sudden shout of alarm, and, turning round, a most disconcerting sight met my gaze. The rhino had charged the rear of the caravan, and the men, first dropping their loads, were scattered all over the plain, flying with terror-stricken feet they knew not whither. The huge beast, remarkably like an overgrown pig in appearance, was stamping about among the deserted loads in a state of great indignation, his comical little tail sticking straight up in the air, while he proceeded to blow and snort with great energy and ill-will. Far away over the plain a few black dots indicated where the men, having reached what they considered a safe distance, had seated themselves. There they waited with stolid indifference until it should please the "bwana" (master) to slay their assailant, so that their interrupted journey could be resumed.

My servant had fled with the others and taken with him my



THE AUTHOR, MR. A. ARKELL-HARDWICK, IN HIS AFRICAN COSTUME.

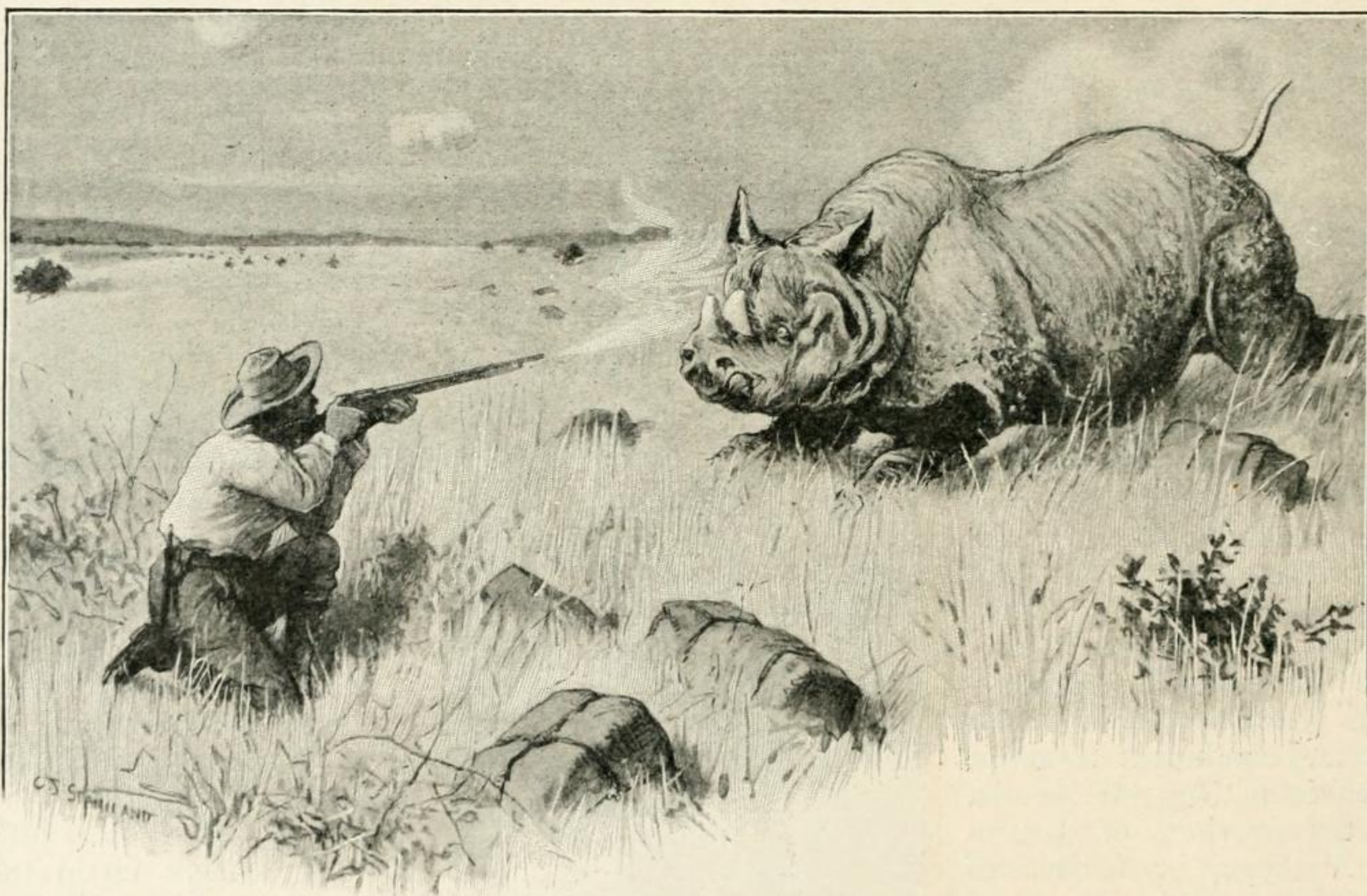
From a Photo. by Frost, Muswell Hill.

cartridge-bag containing my spare ammunition. I was carrying a .303 sporting rifle, and as it happened there were six cartridges in the magazine, but, unfortunately, they were soft-nosed bullets and only intended for soft-skinned game. However, as there was nothing else for it, I determined to do the best I could with the inadequate means at my disposal.

Cautiously approaching to within fifty yards of the angry beast I gave him a bullet behind the shoulder, but did not succeed in disabling him. Round he came like an angry cat and charged me, head down and ears and tail erect. There was absolutely no cover, so I ran about twenty yards and then turned sharply to the right, hoping he would pass me; but the beast had fairly got my wind and meant business. The only safe course now was to try and stop him with the rifle—so, kneeling down, I worked

are that my wanderings would have ended there and then. One gets used to such risks, however, on the veldt, and they are eventually regarded as part of the necessary routine of the march, inconvenient perhaps, but unavoidable.

Four days' marching across the Athi plains brought us to the Athi River, a broad and noble stream which winds round the north end of Doenyo Sabuk and thence flows south-east until it joins the Tsavo, the combined rivers forming the Sabaki, which flows into the sea at Melindi. These plains are infested with a particularly malevolent tick, a flat, red insect which bites most ferociously. They crawl in the grass in countless millions, and during the march we had frequently to halt and get our servants to brush the vermin from our persons and clothing. On our arrival in camp the first thing to be done always was to strip and hunt over our clothes



"KNEELING DOWN, I WORKED MY MAGAZINE AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE."

my magazine as rapidly as possible, taking care, however, to aim carefully. In less than ten seconds I put four bullets into the brute, hitting him every time, as I could see the dust spurt from his hide in little puffs wherever he was struck. Fortunately the fourth shot turned him, and as he swerved I gave him my sixth and last cartridge in the flank, which hastened his departure, and he finally disappeared over a rise in the ground a mile away, still going strong. Had my magazine jammed during that fateful charge the chances

and bodies for ticks; where they had taken hold of the flesh it was a painful operation to pull them off, as they almost invariably brought away a piece of the flesh with them.

We camped on the south bank of the Athi River for two or three days trying to find a ford. Eventually this was discovered and we crossed with some difficulty, the river being in flood. The river-bed was composed of granite slabs, worn smooth as glass by the action of the swift and powerful current. Deep holes between these blocks made the crossing somewhat

dangerous, while even on the stones themselves there was scarcely any foothold. However, a rope, which we slung across from bank to bank, helped matters somewhat, and we landed at last on the opposite bank thoroughly exhausted.

Rivers are one of the greatest obstacles to the traveller in Africa when he is journeying off the beaten path. Some can be forded with difficulty by means of a rope, others have to be crossed by means of a hastily constructed raft, while others again can only be successfully negotiated by means of a rough bridge,

built on the spot with whatever materials are to hand. I am speaking, of course, of the uninhabited districts, where there are no natives with canoes to assist one.

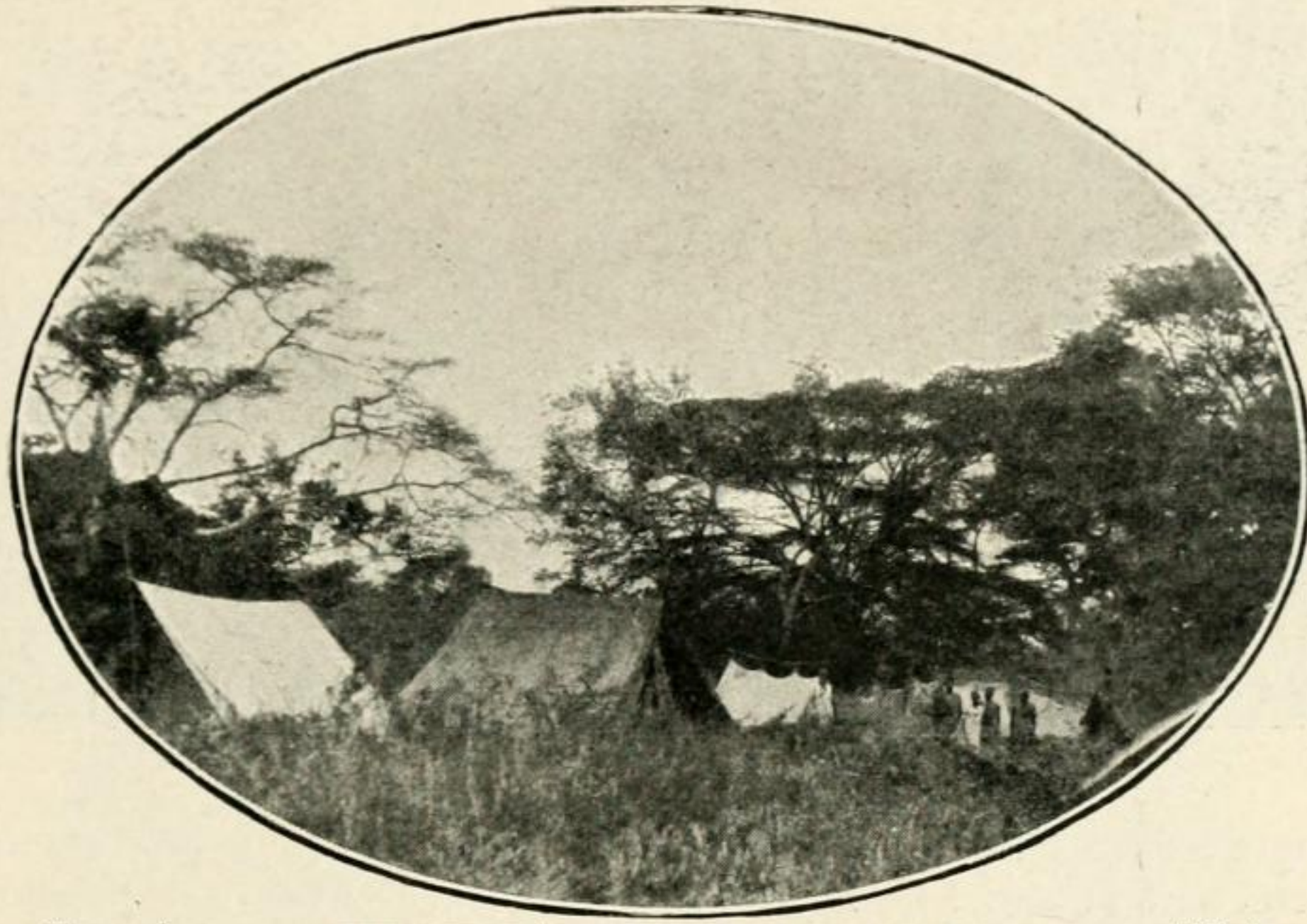
Four days' difficult journey awaited us on the other side of the Athi. One march brought us to the Thika-Thika River, which we crossed by means of a raft hauled backwards and forwards with a stout line. Two separate parties of the men upset it in crossing, and were dragged across, drenched and miserable, amid the jeers of their companions.

Leaving the Thika-Thika behind us, we floundered for three days among steep hills, with deep and precipitous ravines crossing and re-crossing in every direction. Trees, a tangle of rank undergrowth, and various rhinoceroses constituted the predominant features of the landscape. It is most exciting while threading one's way through the jungle to almost walk upon a sleeping rhinoceros. There is a quick, indignant snort, then a rush from

the rudely awakened beast. Everybody dodges behind the nearest cover with great celerity, while the rhinoceros charges through the party with great speed and disappears in the rear. A gabble of voices from the excited men as they resume their hastily discarded loads, and the caravan once more falls into line and pursues the uneven tenor of its way.

Finally we reached the Tana River, rendered famous by Mr. Rider Haggard as the scene of the great fight between Allan Quatermain's party and the Masai warriors.

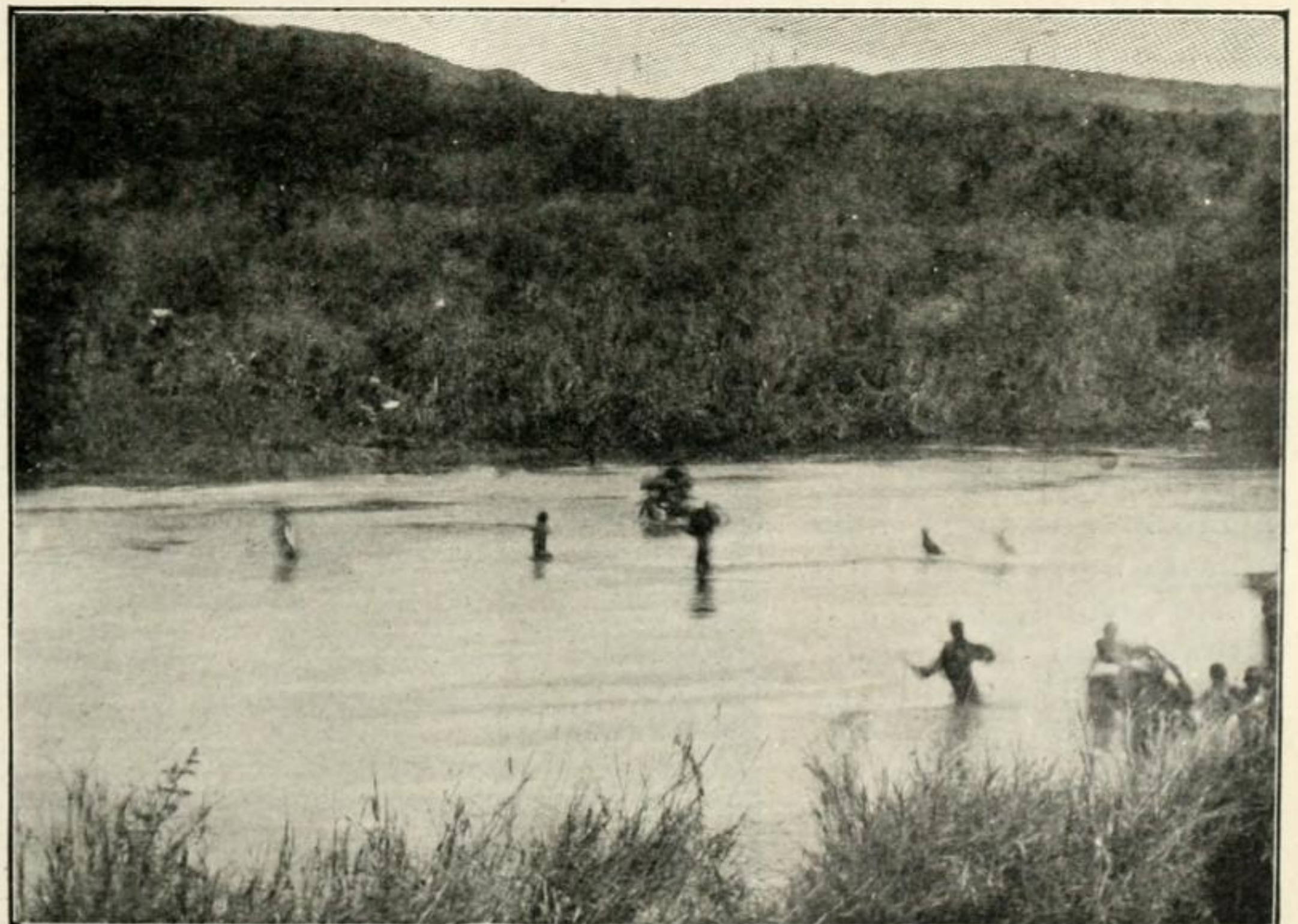
We crossed the Tana with the timely aid of an A'kikuyu chief, who answered to the euphonious name of Kinuthia. Together with some of his aristocracy, he condescended to lay aside his scanty dignity, and still scantier garments, and help us across, in consideration of sundry pieces of cloth. We were now in the Maranga country, and here we camped for a few days in order to lay in a store of provisions for our journey round the eastern slopes of Mount



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THE AUTHOR'S CAMP ON THE ATHI RIVER.

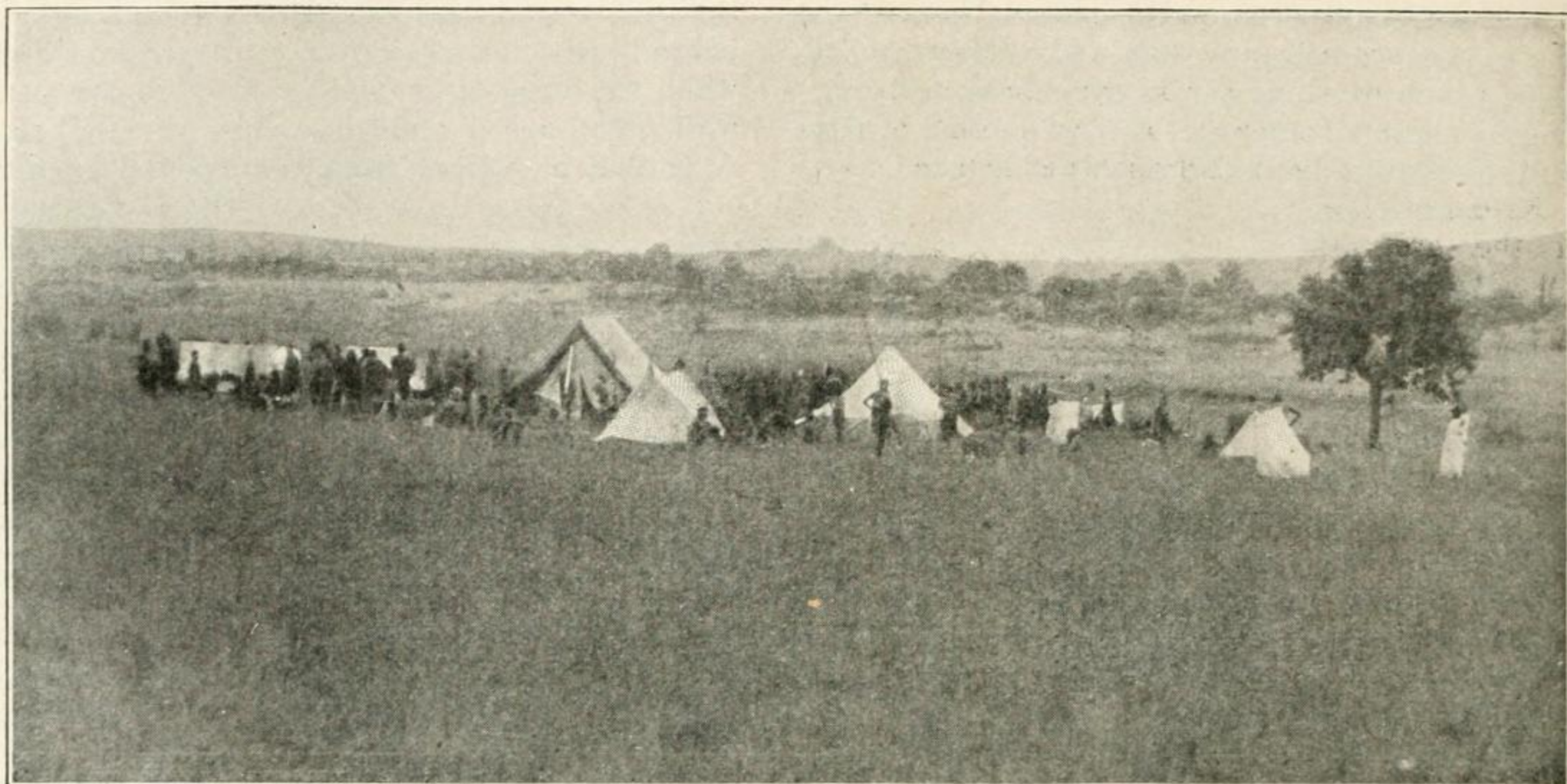
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CROSSING AN AFRICAN RIVER.

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THE CAMP AT MARANGA, WHERE THE EXPEDITION CAME VERY NEAR BEING MASSACRED.

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Kenia, whose magnificent snow-clad peak towered nearly nineteen thousand feet skyward some sixty miles to the north-west.

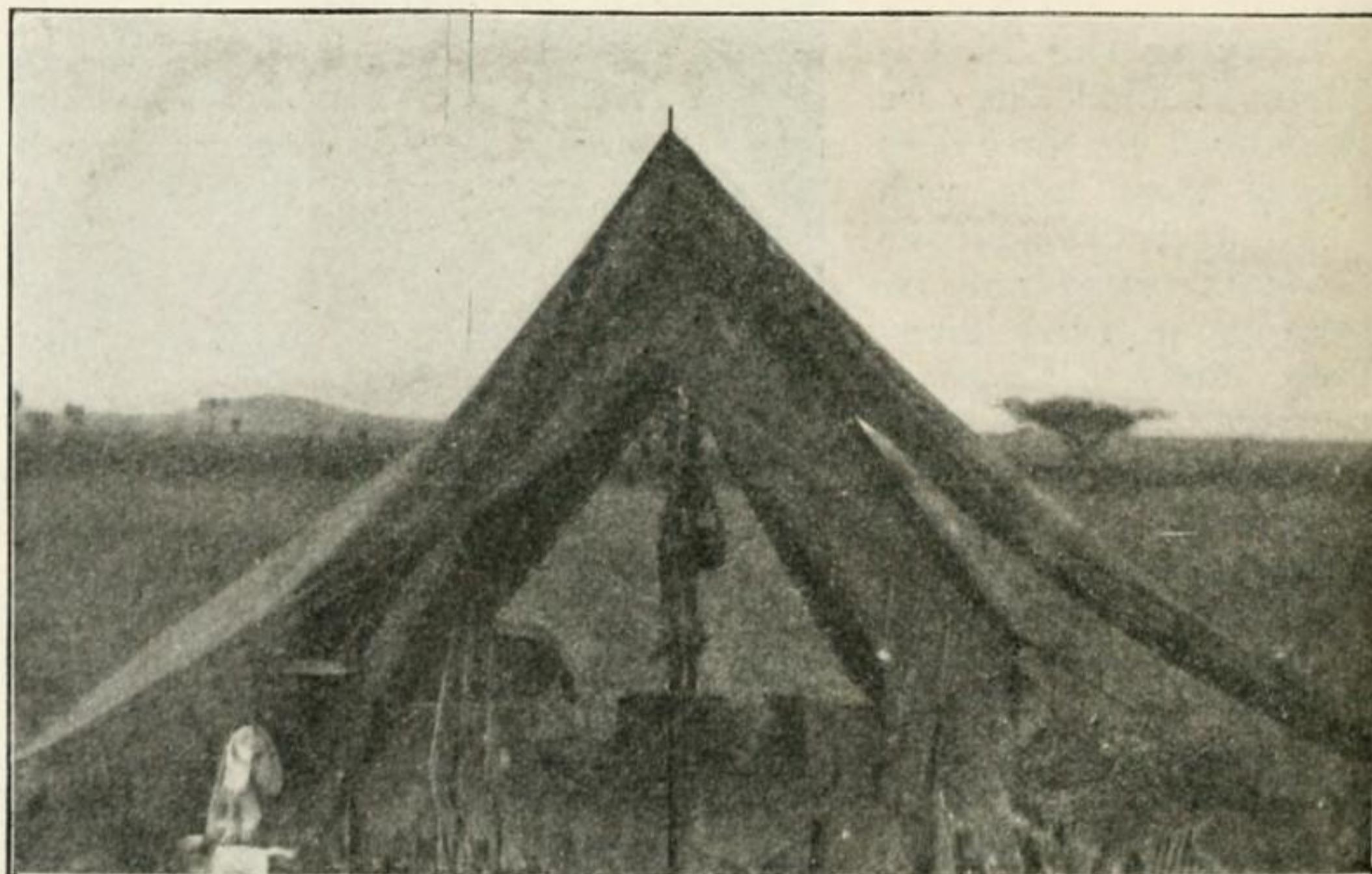
At Maranga we were warned by Manga, the chief, that the tribes to the east of Kenia were exceedingly hostile to strangers, and had already attacked two white traders, badly mauling their caravan and also wounding one of the white men. To have gone round by West Kenia would have entailed a toilsome journey of at least twenty extra days, so we decided to risk the hostile natives, and amid much croaking and shaking of heads by the people of Maranga we started.

The gloomy predictions of our late hosts we found to be fully justified. The natives were sullen and inclined to be actively hostile, and it behoved us to keep a sharp look-out. At the second halting-place an awkward fracas occurred which might have had very serious consequences to the caravan.

As we were pitching the tents and preparing generally for a halt a large number of warriors, fully armed with spears and shields, clubs, bows and arrows, and swords, appeared in the surrounding bush. They proceeded to demonstrate in force by yelling and hooting and otherwise making themselves unpleasant, without, however, committing any

overt act of hostility, so no notice was taken of them. After our meal my two companions and myself retired to our tents to rest. Suddenly we heard the rush of naked feet, and then a mighty yell arose.

Rushing out of our tents we were just in time to prevent our own men from firing into the excited mob of savages, who were dancing round the camp yelling and brandishing their spears. One of their chiefs was endeavouring to keep them in check, on seeing which we ordered our men to put down their rifles while we sent over to the excited savages for explanations. After a lot of shouting and gesticulation we elicited the information that the savages had just come from a big "beer drink" in a neighbouring village,



From a]

THIS LITTLE TENT WAS THE AUTHOR'S HOME FOR SEVERAL MONTHS.

[Photo.

and that one of their number, bolder or more intoxicated than his fellows, had rushed through our camp shouting his war-cry and waving aloft his club. Our men thought that an attack was imminent, and were preparing to use their rifles with deadly effect when our timely appearance prevented a serious outbreak. Had a shot been fired nothing could have kept the drink-maddened A'kikuyu back. The camp being absolutely open and defenceless there could have been only one result, and another massacre would have been added to the already long list of tragedies which have occurred in Africa's dark places.

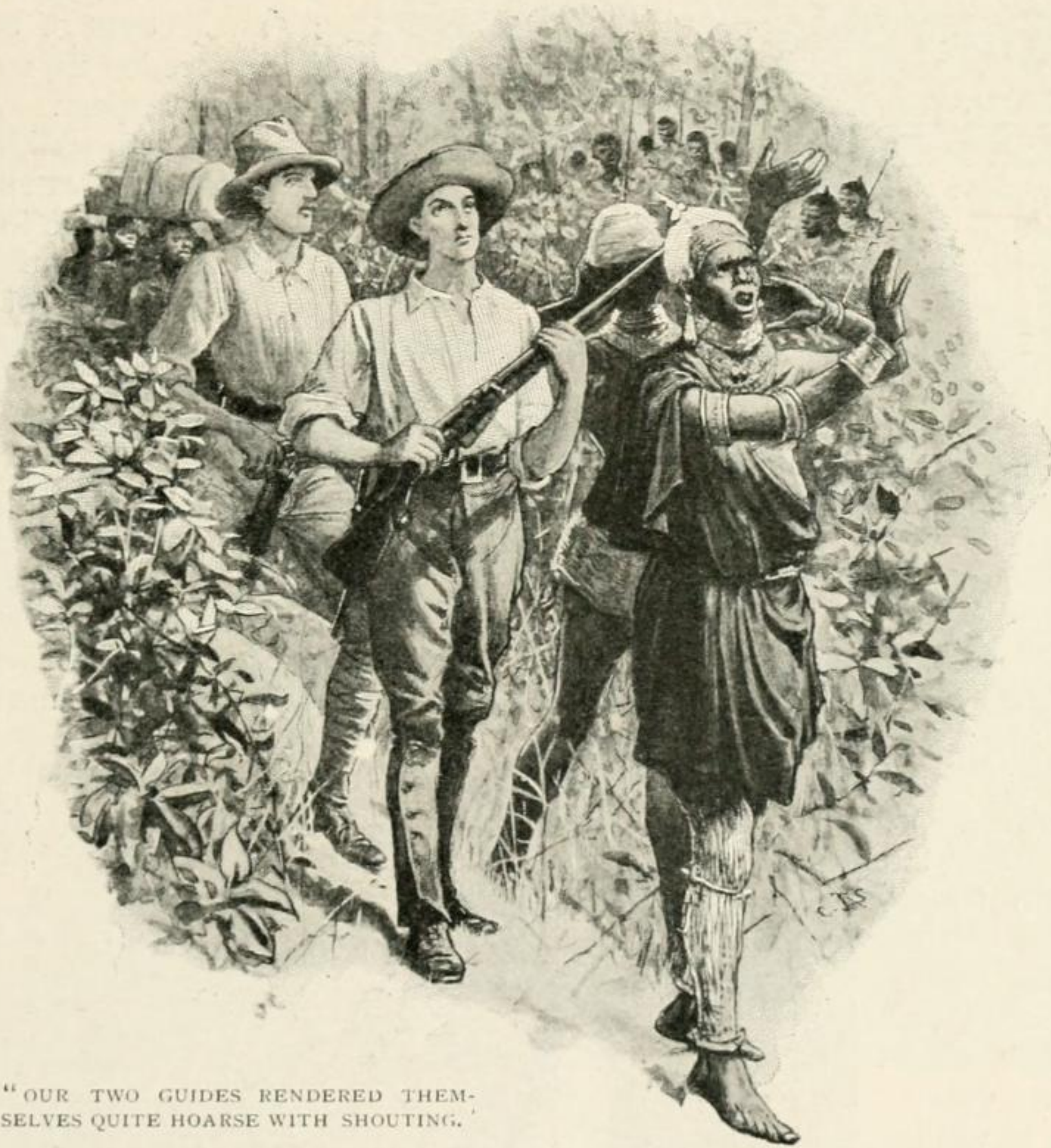
Mutual explanations apparently set the matter right, but we could see that the natives were very sullen. They hung about as if contemplating an attack in earnest, but we put a strong guard on the camp and each took a watch ourselves, and thus the remainder of the day and the succeeding night passed quietly.

Next morning we arose early and moved onwards before our friends the enemy had awakened to the realities of the situation. We had some rather rough travelling for a day or two. The country was exceedingly hilly and the vegetation very dense. A thick mist hung about the hillsides in the early morning, and during the day a fine rain soaked us to the skin. The steep paths, being mostly red clay, were very slippery, and the men slid and sprawled about under their loads in a manner which severely tried their strength and endurance. The rank vegetation dripped with moisture, and in forcing our way through it we were subjected to a continuous icy shower-bath.

On the fourth day we reached the country of the Wa'M'bu, a sub-tribe of the A'kikuyu.

These were the people who had attacked the two white men some weeks before, so that it was necessary for us to be very wary. Our first camp was pitched at midday and just within their borders. During the afternoon a few natives showed themselves in the distance, evidently reconnoitring, but they did not approach near to our camp. As the country round appeared to be densely inhabited this was a bad sign, and we therefore redoubled our precautions against surprise. The next day the natives, having apparently made up their minds to try our strength and temper, made a demonstration in

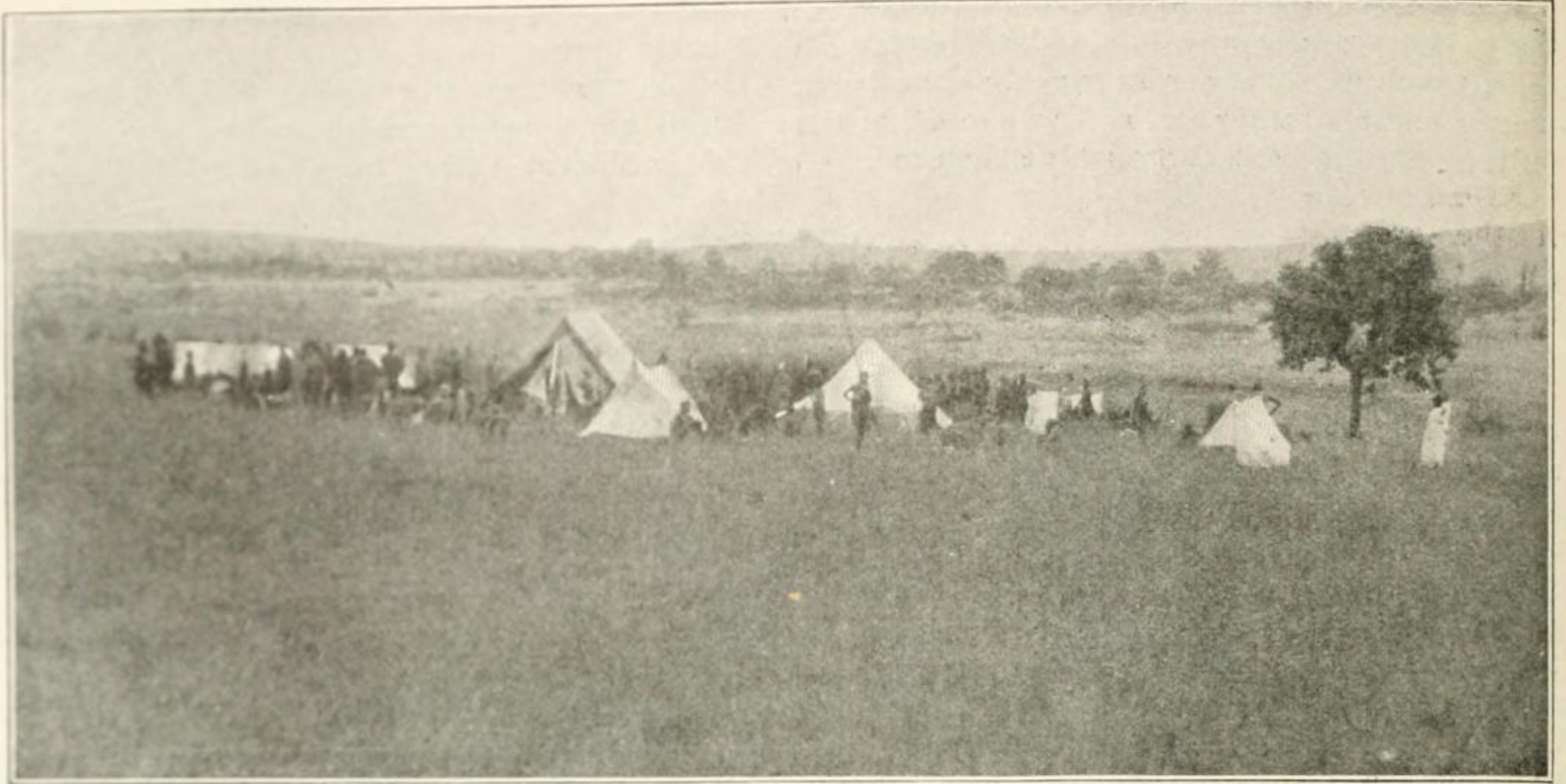
force, and for an hour or two our camp was the centre of a vast circle of yelling black natives, who, however, forbore to directly attack us. Our own men were very nervous and wished us to retire, and we could see that they needed very little encouragement to make a bolt for the border, in which case we should have fared very badly. We decided, therefore, to adopt a bold, if somewhat hazardous, course, and instructed



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those of our men who spoke the A'kikuyu language to call out to the Wa'M'bu and request that one of their chiefs would call on us, that we might try to arrange matters. This the chiefs were very reluctant to do, but finally, after an hour's long-distance conversation, they consented.

Presently two men were seen approaching our camp. Though both were old men, they were of fine physique and haughty presence, tall, and exceedingly well formed. Once they were safely in camp we "bluffed" for all we were worth. We intimated that we were most annoyed by the unseemly noise which their people had made round our camp, and in the event of the offence being repeated we threat-



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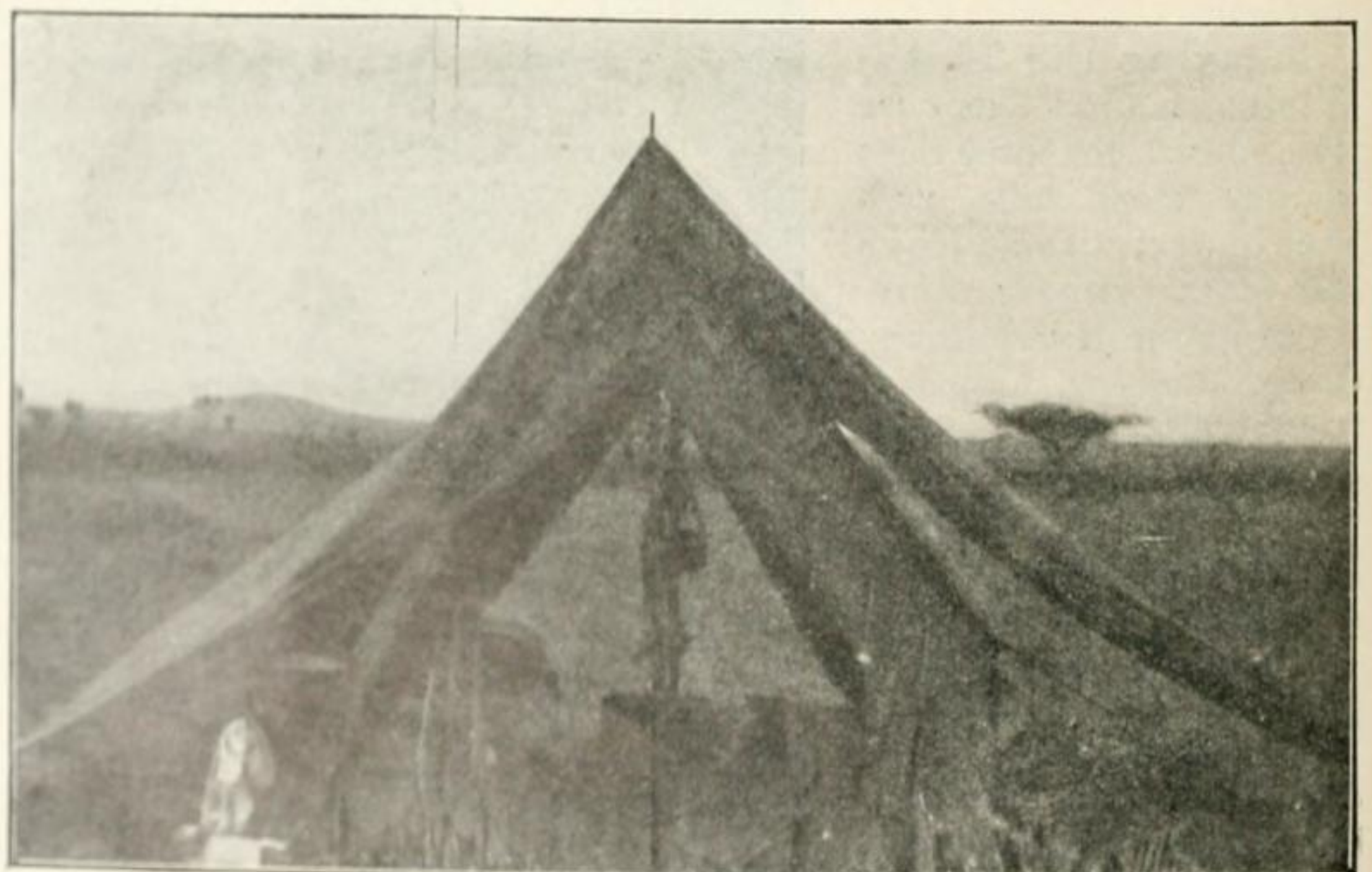
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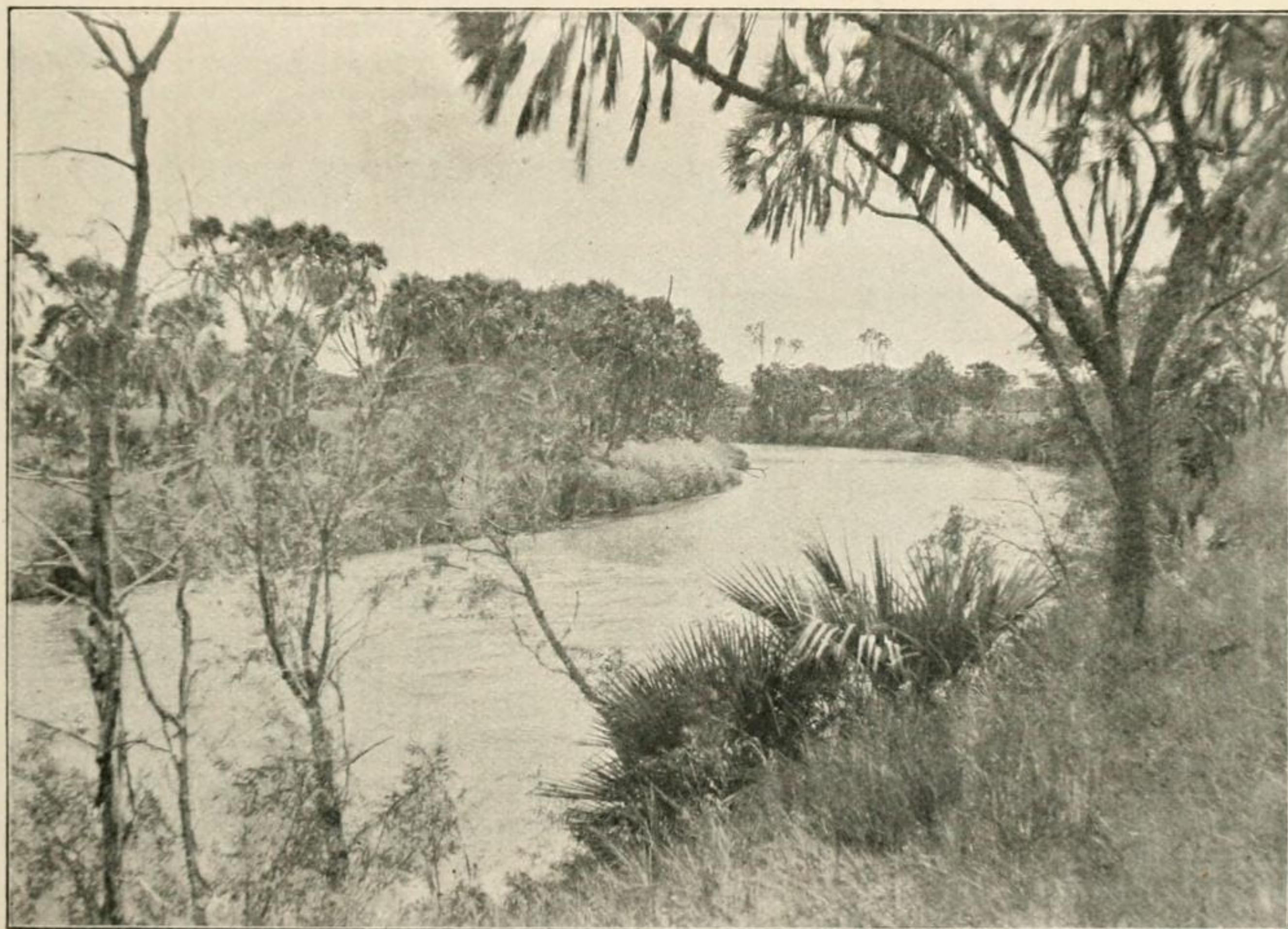
THIS LITTLE TENT WAS THE AUTHOR'S HOME FOR SEVERAL MONTHS.

[Photo.

amounted to about sixty men, in addition to which we commanded about fifty of the M'thara warriors armed with spears, shields, and bows and arrows. As we advanced just before daylight into the dense banana plantations of the Wa'Embe we were cleverly ambushed. The first alarm was a single long-drawn cry of "Lu-lu-lu-lu-u-u!" followed by a rifle shot from our advance guard. Our men instantly poured a fierce fire into the bush on either side of the path, and for a few moments pandemonium reigned supreme. The dense blackness that precedes the early dawn prevented us seeing the enemy, while the almost impenetrable bush on each side of the path appeared weird and

blade had been driven right through his body, from side to side. The grief of his lieutenants and followers knew no bounds, and the dawn resounded with their cries of grief and supplications to Allah. The stricken man died shortly afterwards and was buried there and then by the side of the path, with all the ceremonies and prayers prescribed by the Koran. A guard stood by with rifles at the ready in order to repel any attempts on the part of the Wa'Embe to interrupt the funeral.

At sunrise we held a consultation to decide what further steps we should take. We found, however, that the Somalis were thoroughly discouraged by the death of their leader, and they



From a]

A VIEW ON THE WASO NYIRO.

[Photo.

ghastly as revealed by the intermittent flashes of the men's Sniders. Yells, howls, the reports of the rifles, and the sound of groans blended together in the darkness to form a picture of raging horror not easily forgotten. This state of things lasted for some minutes, then suddenly—silence! dead silence! The enemy had withdrawn as quickly as they had appeared, probably daunted by the fierceness of our fire. Had they pushed their advantage we should have been in a very tight place indeed.

As soon as the firing ceased we investigated our casualties. To our great sorrow we found that Jamah Mahomet, the Somali leader, was dying. A great spear with a three-foot-long

refused to proceed farther, saying that their camp was undefended, and they feared it would be attacked in their absence. As we were not strong enough to attack the Wa'Embe without their aid we were reluctantly compelled to acquiesce in a retreat, which was accordingly carried out without further accident. On our return to our respective camps we found that they had been surrounded all night by large numbers of armed men, who had concealed themselves in the bush and who, without doubt, were waiting for news of our defeat and massacre in Embe to rush the camps and loot them, first spearing the few defenders.

After this mishap we stayed quietly in camp,

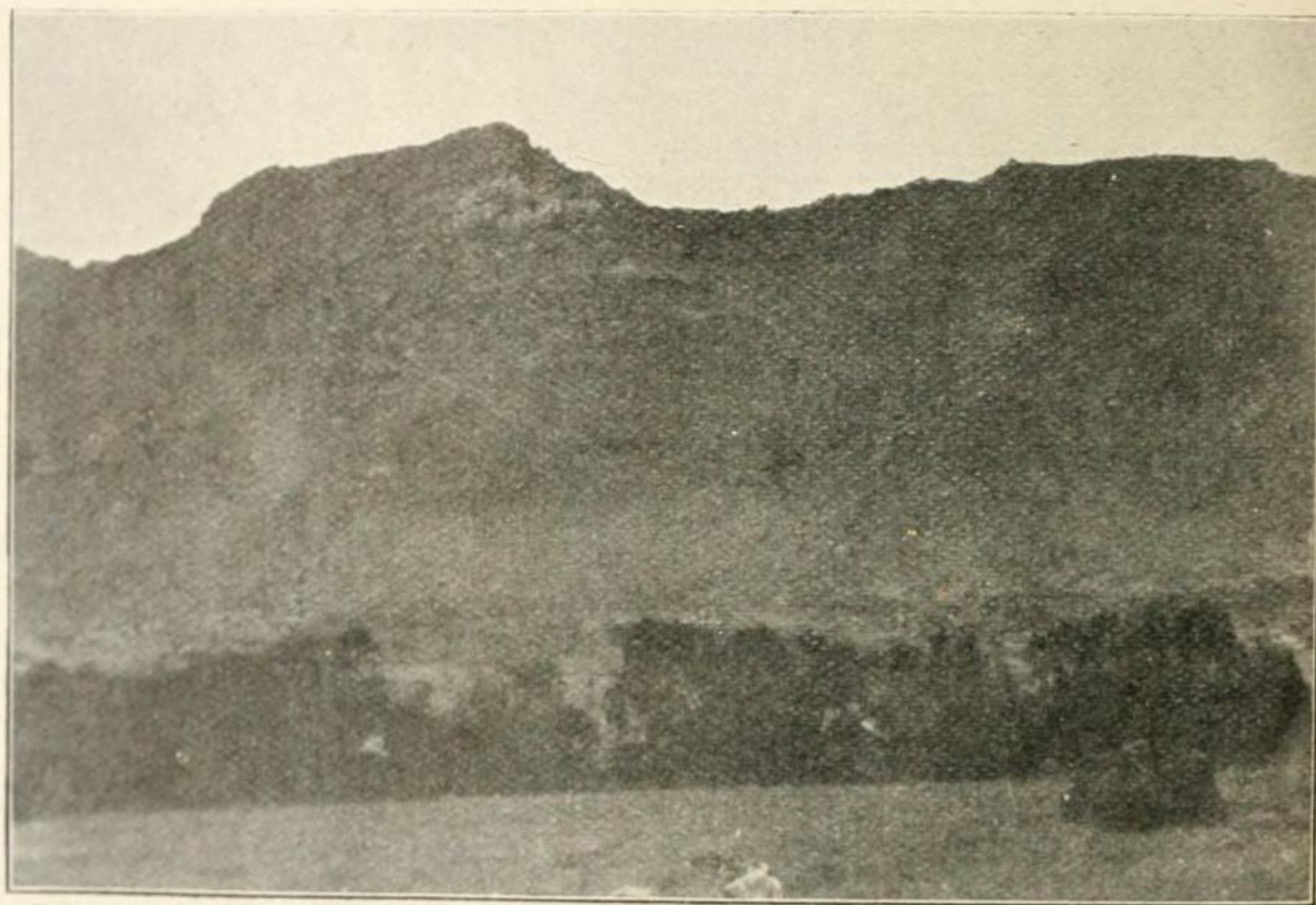
buying food and preparing for our march northwards to the Waso Nyiro. At this time I went through the quaint but somewhat disgusting ceremony of "blood brotherhood" with one of the chiefs of M'thara. It is not necessary to go fully into the details. Suffice it to say that the prospective "blood brothers" sit on the ground facing each other, while their friends squat in a wide circle round them. The oath of "Muma," or "blood-brotherhood," is then administered with appropriate ceremony, and afterwards incisions are made with a knife in the chest of each candidate, deep enough to cause the blood to flow. Pieces of toasted liver from a sheep killed for the purpose are then produced. These pieces are dipped in their own blood by the candidates, after which they exchange pieces and devour them. The spectators then cheer and shout "Oroi Muma" several times and the ceremony is completed.

When sufficient food had been obtained we started on our march to the Waso Nyiro. The food which we were able to purchase consisted mainly of muhindi (maize) and mwele (millet) flour, with a few yams and sweet potatoes. We required a considerable quantity, for the reason that after leaving M'thara we plunged into uninhabited desert country where vegetable food was unobtainable. We had intended to be away a fortnight or perhaps three weeks, but, owing to various causes, we did not return for two months and a half! Our supply of food was exhausted in little over a fortnight, and for two months we lived upon a purely meat diet, depending on our rifles for our daily sustenance. When, as sometimes happened, game was scarce we were reduced to the most dire straits, the men on one occasion going without food for five days. Two days after leaving M'thara we fell in with a herd of buffalo, and after a couple of hours' hard and careful stalking and ten minutes' excitement we secured three noble beasts, which were quickly cut up and their flesh converted into biltong.

I should mention also that we were without salt. On leaving Nairobi we had purposely brought only a couple of months' supply, as we

depended upon procuring it at Mount N'gomba, an extinct crater, marked on the map as a salt one. When we reached N'gomba we found that the alleged salt consisted of sulphate of magnesia and carbonate of lime! Altogether we were over four months without a grain of salt, but we none of us felt any ill-effects from our forced abstinence from this indispensable adjunct of the civilized table. Doubtless the flesh of the animals we killed contained enough of the mineral to prevent actual ill-health.

On the fourth day after leaving M'thara we reached the Waso Nyiro River. This river rises in the north-west of Mount Kenia, and not in the Aberdare range (as represented in the maps), and after flowing due north for some thirty odd miles makes a great curve to the eastward and winds on through the desert, finally losing itself in a swamp known as Lorian. Whether there is any



From a]

VOLCANIC CLIFFS NEAR THE WASO NYIRO.

[Photo.

outlet from Lorian is not known, though it is probable that there is not; but so much is certain—the Waso Nyiro never reaches the sea.

Our camp was pitched upon a patch of green grass, which surrounded a small spring of warm water. This water was so strongly impregnated with mineral salts as to be undrinkable. It, however, formed a beautiful natural bath, of which we availed ourselves daily while we remained in this place. We named it the "Green Camp," as it was in such pleasing contrast to the surrounding desert.

Near by flowed the Waso Nyiro, its banks covered with doum palms and green grass. Game was exceedingly plentiful, and we laid in a good stock of meat for the long journey eastward.

(To be concluded.)