

This unique photograph shows a rhinoceros—"the picture of rage incarnate"—charging the Major's camera.

AFTER BIG GAME WITH A CAMERA

Told by Major A. Radclyffe Dugmore FRGS.

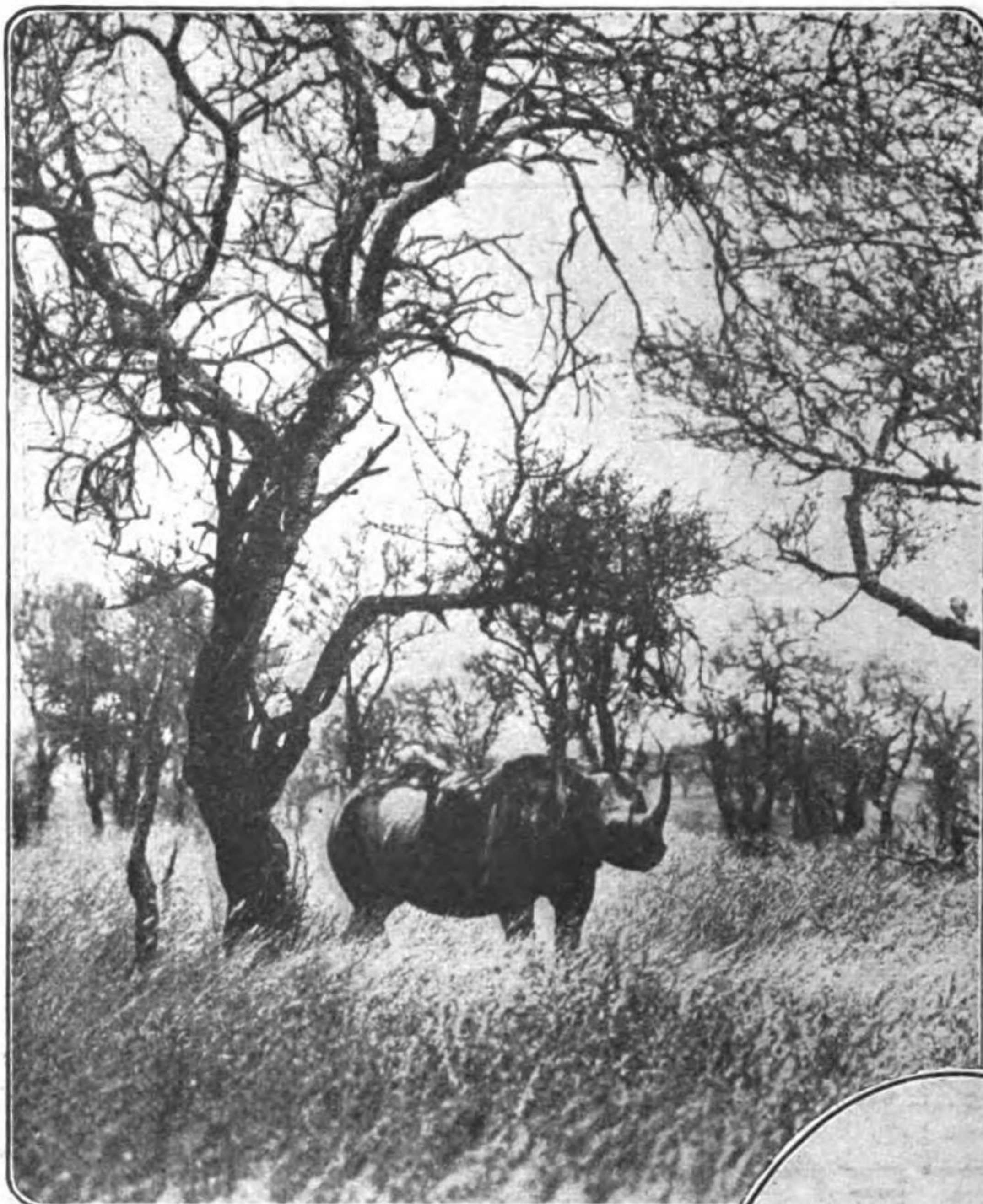
and Set Down by Reginald Pound

Major Dugmore is a hunter of a new type, using the camera instead of the rifle and photographing instead of destroying. That he has found his life's hobby exciting will be abundantly evident from the stories here related; that the results achieved are well worth the risks entailed is proved by the wonderful pictures that accompany the narrative.

DURING an almost life-long experience of big-game hunting, chiefly in Africa, the number of occasions on which I have resorted to the rifle in the pursuit of my quarry can almost be counted on the fingers of my two hands.

Foolish and fanatical as some people doubtless imagine me to be, I freely confess that I have never been able to reconcile myself to the shooting of more or less defence-

less creatures, whether antelope or giraffe, buffalo or lion. However aggressive an animal may be—and it is my experience that few show this characteristic unless they are molested—I have for a long time argued that big game hunting, at any rate as it is prosecuted in these days of high-powered motor-cars, telescopic sights, and rapid-firing weapons, is at its best a one-sided and unsatisfying form of sport, hardly worthy of the name.



Another "close-up" of a rhino.

The upshot of this long-cherished conviction of mine is that for many years I have made the camera my chief weapon, and often my only one, on my journeys in search of the bigger and more formidable mammals. Of trophies in the shape of heads, horns, skins, and so on, I have comparatively few, although had I wished I could have had enough to stock a museum.

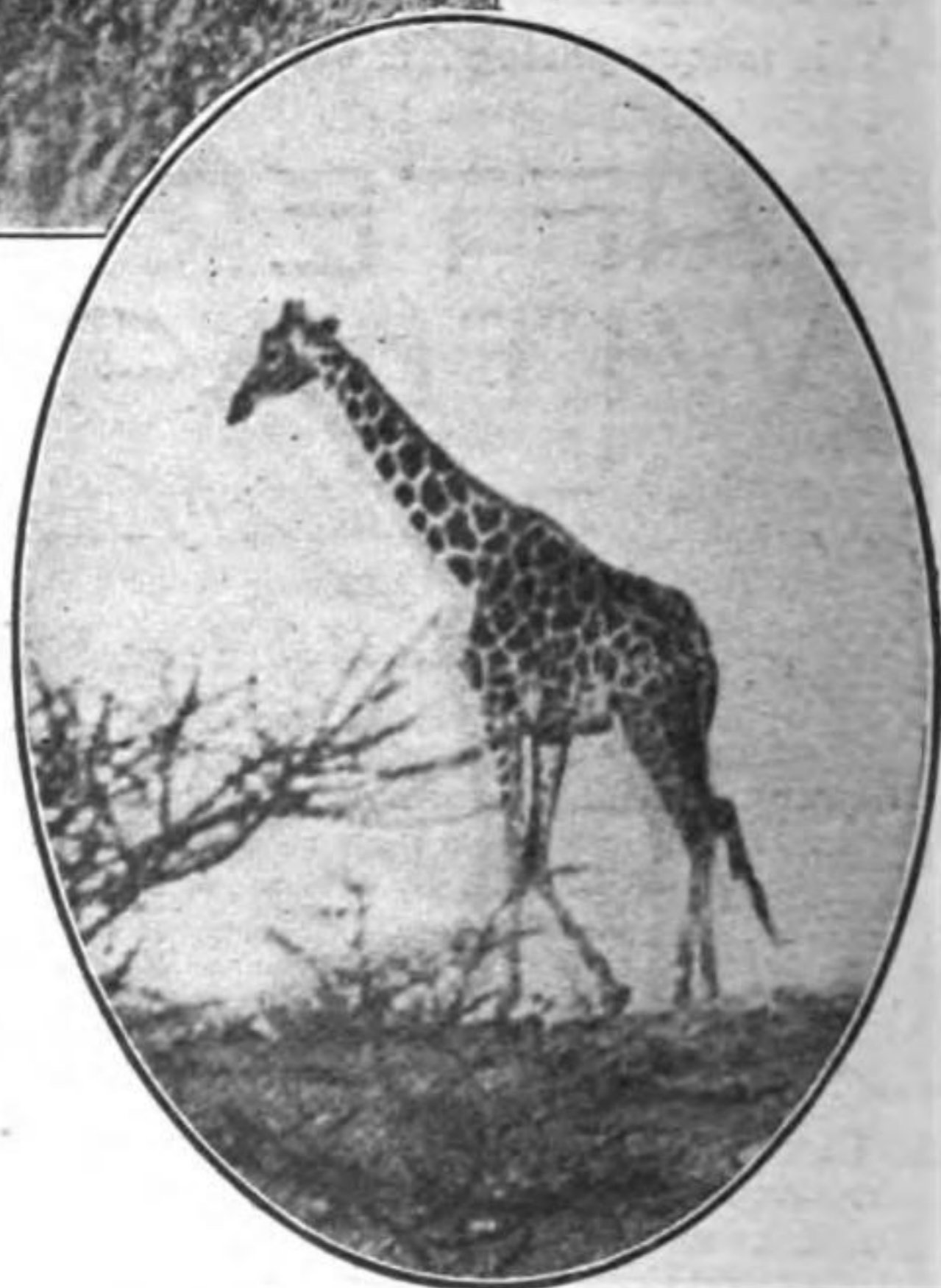
Instead, I am the proud possessor of what I believe to be an absolutely unique collection of photographs and films of animals and birds in their natural haunts—a regular photographic zoo, in fact, to which naturalists and others may possibly be glad to turn in the years to come when some of the species portrayed have been wiped out.

My trips in search of big game pictures have, as already stated, been spread over many years, and with several of them I have dealt in my books. In this article, however, I propose to describe some outstanding experiences, including those that befell me

in the series of trips from which I have recently returned.

Altogether I have travelled close on eight thousand miles in different parts of British East Africa, my headquarters being Nairobi, the administrative centre of the colony. In some instances I made part of the journey into the game country by motor-car; in others, in company with from forty to a hundred bearers, I covered the distance on foot, marching some hundreds of miles in the glaring sun, over the great sandy wastes, fertile plains, and wooded hill country that lie around Mount Kenia and—farther afield—the mighty, snow-capped Kilimanjaro.

One of the first big game photographs I



A giraffe against the skyline.

ever tried to obtain was of a rhinoceros. The first member of the species to come my way appeared within a short distance of our camp, walking in an ungainly fashion under some trees and paying not the slightest heed to us. I hastily made preparations for photographing it, but before I was ready the huge beast had lumbered into the bush and out of sight.

The next day, after marching twelve miles, I came on a brace of rhinoceroses asleep under a thorn bush. By dint of careful stalking I got within eighty yards, when the two animals, a cow and a well-grown calf, suddenly got up and, hearing the sound of my shutter, turned and made straight for me. Being desirous of getting a closer picture, I stopped to change my plate, by which time the distance between the beasts and myself had decreased to fifteen yards.



A flashlight picture of a lioness.



Hartebeest drinking at a water-hole.

Shouting to my companion, I withdrew the slide from the plateholder and, a second later, turned and fled, leaving my friend to warn the animals off by a shot not meant to kill.

Hardly had I recovered my breath than there rose from the landscape ahead of me no fewer than eight more rhinoceroses!

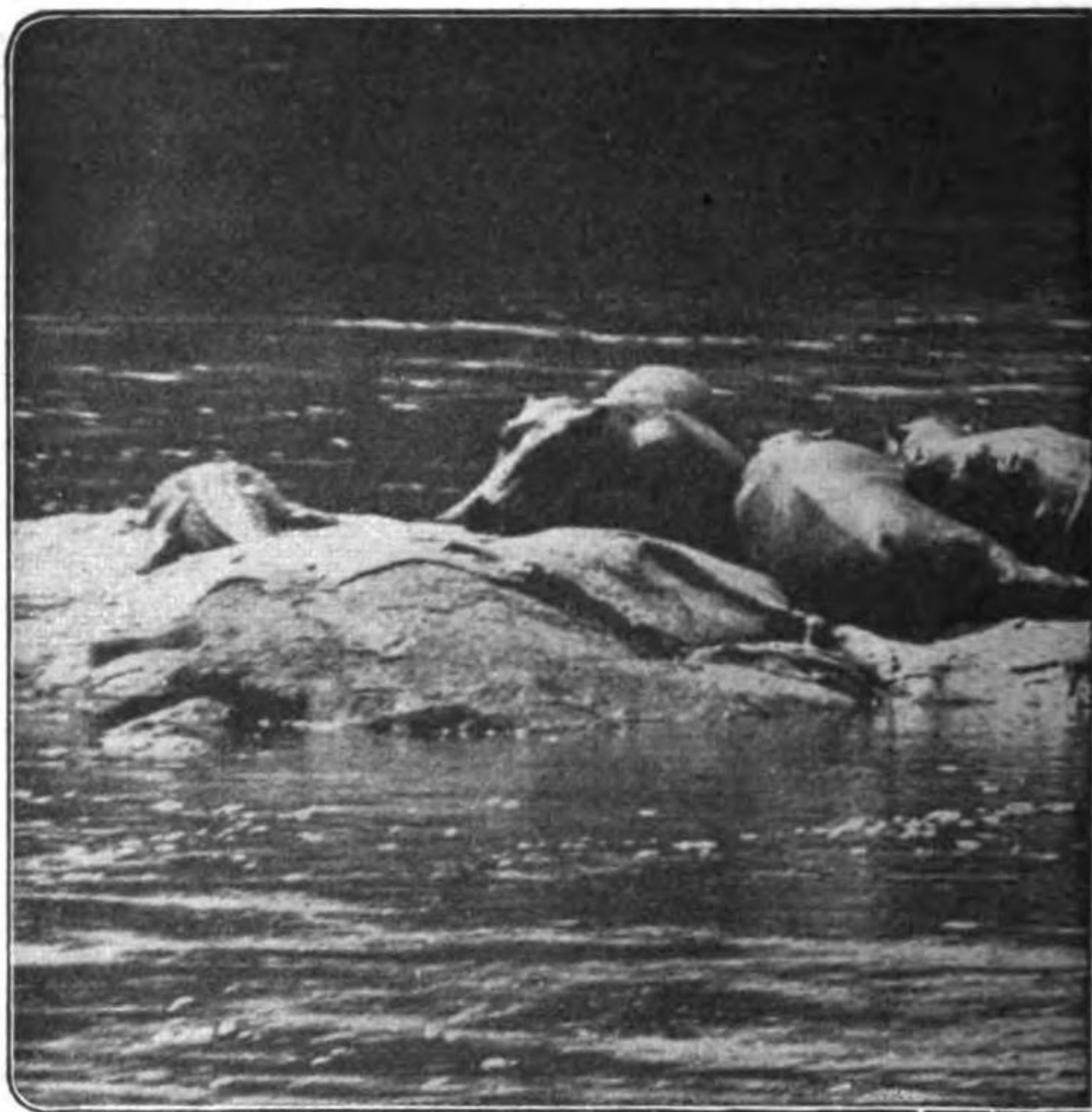
This was a bigger number than even I, a confirmed optimist, had bargained for, and the prospect of being surrounded by what looked like a small army of "rhinos" was so unalluring that I took advantage of a gap in the ranks and bolted precipitately for camp.

The following morning I went out again on a similar quest, my efforts being rewarded not only with some excellent pictures, but with a number of thrills that more than compensated for my ill-luck of the previous day. My companion noticed two rhinoceroses feeding half a mile from camp, one being the possessor of a very fine horn. Promptly I gathered together some photographic kit and, working in such a way as to get the wind in a favourable quarter, made my way towards my quarry.

I had gone perhaps a hundred yards when I had what must always count as one of the big surprises of my life. The country hereabouts consisted of tall grass, intermingled with many thorn bushes. Suddenly I was brought to a full-stop by a terrific snort—"Wough!" Anyone who has once heard that sound is not likely to forget it in a hurry; it can only be described as a sort of super-snort, followed by a series of equally alarming grunts. Swinging round I was amazed to see a rhino lumbering up behind me, though how on earth it had got there without being spotted I was at a complete loss to understand. However, there was not much time for speculation on this point; the great brute, its tail nearly erect and its ears standing well out from its head, was advancing upon me—the picture of rage incarnate.

Rushing to one side, with my companion and a Masai gun-bearer hard on my heels, I quickly focused the camera, and succeeded in getting some good pictures.

Rhinoceroses are surprisingly sharp at turning, and this one was no exception.



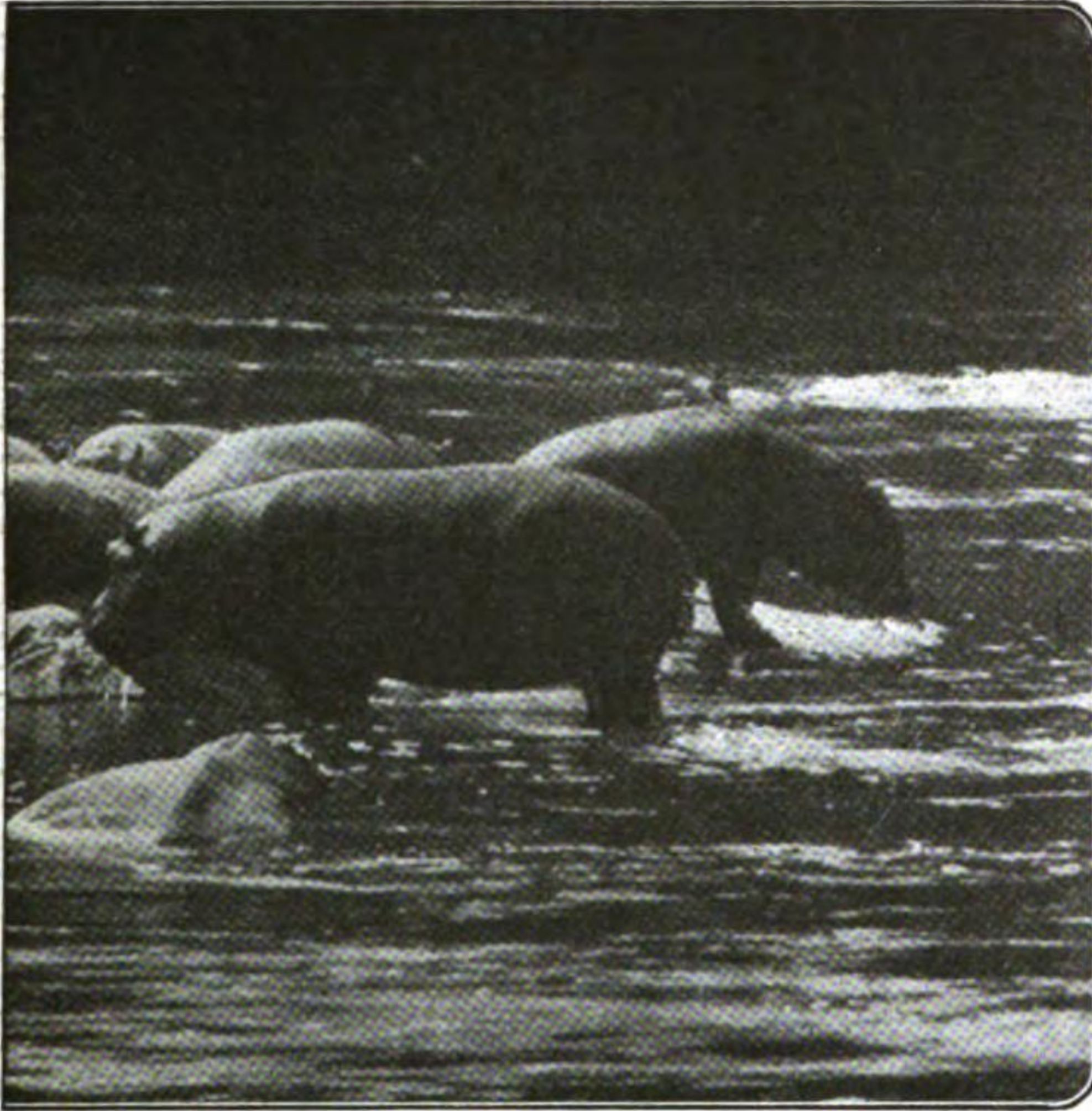
Hippos asleep in a river. Notice the

Rather, I should say, it was unusually practised in the art, for it swung round in our direction with a suddenness that was quite astonishing. Seeing that it meant business, and that its huge bulk made a path through the tangled grass more quickly than did our labouring feet, my companion pulled up, took aim, and fired, hitting the beast in the shoulder and turning it instantly.

As soon as the animal had lumbered off, we stopped for what we regarded as a well-earned rest, and to recover from the nervous strain through which we had passed. Rhinoceros stalking is no sport for people with weak hearts, its effect on the nerves of even the strongest hunters being by no means negligible.

I wish I could give you a more adequate idea of the actual state of one's feelings in these and similar circumstances, but the task is beyond me. I only know that for the great pitch of excitement to which one gets worked up when meeting big game at close quarters one often suffers a corresponding degree of "done-up-ness" and depression afterwards. Some hunters admit that the reaction is often so great that they come near to shedding tears, and I can well believe it.

Rhinoceroses are the subject of many conflicting stories among hunters. Some say that a "rhino" does not charge; others



crocodile to the left of the picture.

declare that it always does. My experience points to the fact that the disposition of an animal often varies in different districts. In some parts of East Africa rhinoceroses, I have found, are comparatively harmless, even when rudely disturbed. In the Olgere district, where I was working, their moods seem to leave no room for doubt, for they invariably assume the offensive on sight.

One of the narrowest shaves I ever had was at the hands—or horn, I suppose I should say—of a rhinoceros. We were making our way back to Kiu, preparatory to returning to Nairobi, and were passing at the time through some tall grass. Suddenly our Masai guide, a fine specimen of a proverbially fine race, checked us with a sharp exclamation and, peering into the grass twenty yards ahead, I discerned a fine “rhino” sleeping peacefully on the path. For a reason that none of us afterwards could explain, we had failed that morning to load any of our weapons. The sound of this grave omission being repaired caused the rhinoceros to wake, and before any of us quite appreciated the gravity of the situation the big beast was up and charging the lot of us!

To me it seemed impossible that so bulky a beast could move so quickly. Hastily focusing my camera, I worked the shutter; then stepped aside to let my companion deal with the animal with his rifle. A

charge of buckshot proved to be anything but a deterrent, the “rhino” snorting furiously as it came on. Snatching a 12-bore gun from the hands of one of the “boys,” C— fired again, supplementing his shot with one from a revolver. The infuriated animal made a dash at the nearest Masai, actually getting within touching distance of the man; after which it turned suddenly and made straight for me. Just as it got within half-a-dozen yards of me, the foremost Masai, with splendid coolness, leapt forward and plunged a spear into the rhino’s side. This turned him again, by which time C— had reloaded. He fired at its head once more, whereupon the rhinoceros swung round again and charged the now thoroughly frightened porters. Yet another shot dissuaded

it from this enterprise, and the animal then gave up the chase in disgust and, still snorting loudly, made off into the bush. The encounter, extremely warm and brisk while it lasted, was one which I am not likely to forget for a very long time.

Although the majority of people seem to be unaware of the fact, one of the most dangerous animals in the African jungle is the buffalo. While circumspection has to be used in all big-game hunting, it is doubtful, I think, whether any animal demands the exercise of more care than the buffalo. Most hunters will agree with me that to be caught unprepared by a herd of these animals would be to find oneself in a terrible position. Hidden behind that shaggy and cumbersome-looking head, with its broad, curved horns, is a capacity for ferocious tenacity shown by no other beast.

Up to a year or so ago my experience of this species of buffalo had not been altogether successful. I had seen them in considerable numbers, and had followed in ex-President Roosevelt’s steps in hunting them. My photographic “bag,” however, was a poor one, and I therefore resolved, on finding myself in Africa three years ago, to make a special effort to film them.

Arriving at a suitable location in the Tana River area, I went out one day with this object in view, news having reached me that

a large herd of buffalo had been seen in a papyrus swamp several acres in extent. Working up wind, I came to the fringe of the swamp, where I concealed myself in a roughly-made "hide-up" to await events.

I stuck in that "hide-up" for five solid hours, without hearing so much as an untoward sound. Then, just as I was on the point of giving up my vigil in disgust, I heard a loud bellowing noise, and the next moment several buffalo came into view, two hundred yards away. By this time the light was too uncertain to make film photography worth while, so I started to manipulate a hand camera, and managed to get some tolerably good pictures.

The big beasts, fifteen or twenty in all, stood conspicuously in the tall grass, apparently trying to get wind of my whereabouts. One magnificent bull presented a fine target for a rifle, but I suppressed a strong desire to use that weapon and, with the object of securing a really good buffalo picture, crept cautiously out of my hiding-place, hoping to approach close enough, without being seen, to make this possible. Hardly had I got into the open, however, than the buffalo were joined by several others, the whole bunch of them, numbering thirty or forty in all, moving forward at a steady trot, which presently developed, for some reason then unknown to me, into a sudden rush towards me.

The sight of those big black brutes careering in my direction was more thrilling and awe-inspiring than I should have believed had I not experienced it. I waited perhaps two minutes, rather foolishly wondering whether some chance might not bring the animals to a full-stop within reasonably close distance; then, without further hesitation, I turned and literally *ran* up the nearest tree!

I saw then that I had been in far greater danger than I had thought. The buffalo had in some way become separated from the main herd, which shortly afterwards emerged from the swamp, and their sudden hurry had apparently been occasioned by an overwhelming desire to join forces once more. I never want to find myself in such a predicament again, for had there been no tree handy I should certainly not be here to tell the tale.

The East African plains teem with smaller game, including vast herds of antelope. One animal, the hartebeest, I soon discovered to be an intolerable nuisance, constituting itself, as it does, a sentinel to warn other animals of the hunter's approach. On one occasion I was anxious to photograph a big herd of zebra, animals which, by reason of their inherent shyness, I had not previously succeeded in "bagging" pictorially to the best advantage. Judging by their movements, I concluded that the zebra were working their way to a certain water-hole,

near which there was a good chance of concealment. No sooner had I reached the water-hole, however, than a couple of hartebeest sighted me, and immediately galloped off to where the zebra were feeding, warning the herd with snorts that sent it scattering across the plains.

This happened not once, but many times, and as a result I realized why the hartebeest was so unpopular with the hunting fraternity, and why it so often fell a victim to the gun.

It goes almost without saying that the lion was the subject of elaborate photographic stalking arrangements on my part. The first lion I ever saw gave me such a thrill—not because it was too close, but because it marked the realization of an ambition cherished from childhood—that I omitted to remove the slide from the camera, thus losing an opportunity of recording photographically what to me was an historic occasion. Since then I have seen many lions and have had my fill of adventures in connection with them.

The incident I have just mentioned reminds me of a night when we baited the ground in front of the "hide-up" with zebra meat, afterwards remaining in concealment for three hours, waiting for a lion to appear. One did so with such suddenness, and with so little sound, that I marvelled at its cat-like qualities, which vastly increased my respect for the species.

I had planned to take a flashlight photograph. Accordingly, when I heard the subdued growling and crunching that betokened the lion's presence, I gently pressed the button that was to operate the flare. *The flash did not go off!*

This was a great disappointment, but I refused to let it worry me, although at the time I feared that I should never have quite such a good opportunity of getting a photograph of a lion at close range. Fortunately, my fears were ill-founded.

By way of introduction to the following account of a more thrilling adventure I would like the reader to indulge in a feat of imagination, and conceive me sitting in a camp chair under a group of trees, near which is my "hide-up." It is early morning. I have been cooped up in the "hide-up" all night, and have had very little sleep and no sport. I have just emerged to take a rest in the open, before going back to camp, a few hundred yards away, and turning in for an hour or two before breakfast. Stretching away beyond the trees is tall grass, waving in the gentle breeze of an African dawn, with thorn thickets clumped here and there in the middle distance. I feel indolent and pleasantly weary; my will is in abeyance for the time being, my mind a blank, stirred by fleeting thoughts of jobs to be done, of plans to be made, of letters to be written home, and sometimes of home itself.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, I become



A herd of zebra.

aware of something moving in the grass two hundred yards distant. A dog, no doubt. Our camp dogs are always early astir. I relapse into a reverie, bordering on sleep. Presently I pull myself together, and feebly resolve that I *must* turn in. Still I remain where I am. Something is still moving away down there in the grass. Looks like two dogs now. Out scouting for their breakfast, I suppose. Rather big dogs—seem to have

such massive heads. But this early morning light is deceptive. Very deceptive. They seem to be getting nearer—about eighty yards away now. Suppose they are dogs all right? Lively if they turned out to be lions! Lions. . . . Yes, it would be a joke if they were lions. . . . Dash it! I ought to make sure. One of them is coming forward alone—pretty big chap for a dog—Heavens, it's not a dog at all—*it's a lion!*

Two of 'em ; two great tawny brutes big enough to stagger anyone !

My first impulse was to seize my camera—mere force of habit, I suppose—but the moment I moved the foremost lion advanced with a few long, deliberate strides ; then stood stock-still again, its eyes fixed majestically on mine. Realizing in that instant that my rôle of photographer was misplaced at this juncture, I reached forward with as little movement as possible and grasped my rifle. In my excitement I overlooked the sights, presuming that these were set for a hundred yards, at which range I invariably fixed them. Taking a quick, careful aim I fired at the animal, only to find that the shot had gone high. My next shot fared no better. Then I noticed that the sights were set at three hundred yards, having been left in that position by my gun-bearer, who had used the weapon the previous day.

Almost in the same moment the thought flashed upon me that I had no ammunition except the six cartridges in the magazine and chamber of the rifle. Indeed, it was entirely a matter of luck that I had my rifle with me at all, for I was not far from camp and had remarked overnight that I had a good mind not to arm myself for once. Realizing, then, that the next shot or two meant everything to me, I once more took aim and fired. This time the big lion rolled over.

Meanwhile, the second lion stood motionless, and apparently uncertain what to do. I therefore fired again and succeeded in scaring the animal off. No sooner had I done so than the first lion suddenly leapt up and, roaring defiantly, slunk off into the bush. I followed, thinking that I might have a chance to put the poor beast out of its misery, but although its roaring could be heard for several minutes, I was unable to track it for more than a few yards, and accordingly I returned to camp.

I do not think anyone could do descriptive justice to that experience ; certainly I could not adequately describe the emotions it engendered. All that I can say is that in a fairly adventurous career this ranks as the most thrilling adventure that ever befell me.

Lion photography has a fascination entirely its own. Most of my best pictures were the result of hours of waiting and watching, during which time I had to restrain

myself almost from blinking, so essential to success is lack of movement and suspicious sound. And quite as often as I have obtained pictures I have spent whole nights without getting nearer lions than hearing them roar in the forest depths.

It was after a long spell of disappointment that I set out, one glorious May morning, for the Thika river, in which neighbourhood lions, I had heard, were fairly numerous. On our way we happened to spot some vultures in a tree—a sign of the presence, more often than not, of meat, most likely a lion's kill. Hastening ahead, I searched for the kill, but for an hour could find nothing of the kind. Finally one of the "boys" came up and, aided by a keen sense of smell, located blood in some grass not far away. The trail led us to a bank, at the foot of which was the dry bed of a stream. Here we found the remains of a partly-eaten hartebeest, which had undoubtedly been killed by a lion.

From the point of view of getting flash-light pictures, which were what I was after, no position could have been more suitable. The background provided by the bank was excellent, while some overhanging trees made a splendid place for the erection of a "hide-up." This was accordingly built, three cameras being placed in different positions, so that photographs could be got from three totally different angles.

At six o'clock that night C—and I had a hurried meal, after which we crawled into the "hide-up," carefully closing the opening through which we entered with the lopped branches of a tree. Half an hour later, dusk having fallen, a slight sound came to our ears from outside the "hide-up," and presently we were able to distinguish a shadowy form making its way cautiously through the grass. Very soon the shadow was followed by another, and yet another. That they were lions there was no doubt at all, and I was keyed to a pitch of intense excitement at the prospect of securing what proved to be



Giraffes feeding.

really excellent photographs.

By way of making sure that the kill had not been dragged away without our knowledge, I presently switched on my little electric pocket lamp. Three lions there were, sure enough, but only one was close enough to photograph satisfactorily. In the light of the lamp the animal's eyes gleamed like diamonds—a really striking revelation,

which for the moment gripped me intensely and left me unwilling to disturb the magnificent creature. However, it was evident that the lion was on the *qui vive*, so I pressed the button, and with a blinding flash the pictures were taken.

Our next task was to re-set the cameras and the flashlight. Both C—— and myself went out, crawling back to the shelter with feelings of relief when the job had been done. An hour later a fine lioness appeared on the bank, and slowly made her way towards the kill. When she was within a dozen yards of us I pressed the button again.

Going out to re-set the cameras was more unnerving this time than before. For one thing, the night now seemed pitch dark, while for another the roaring of several lions came from the bush; evidently our flashlight did no more than scare them momentarily. Hardly had we got settled in the "hide-up" again than growls came from quite near, while the sound of crunching reached our ears. There is something more than mere uncanniness in hearing these sounds on a dark night and not knowing exactly whence they come. Both of us, after a while, found the continuous growling quite unnerving.

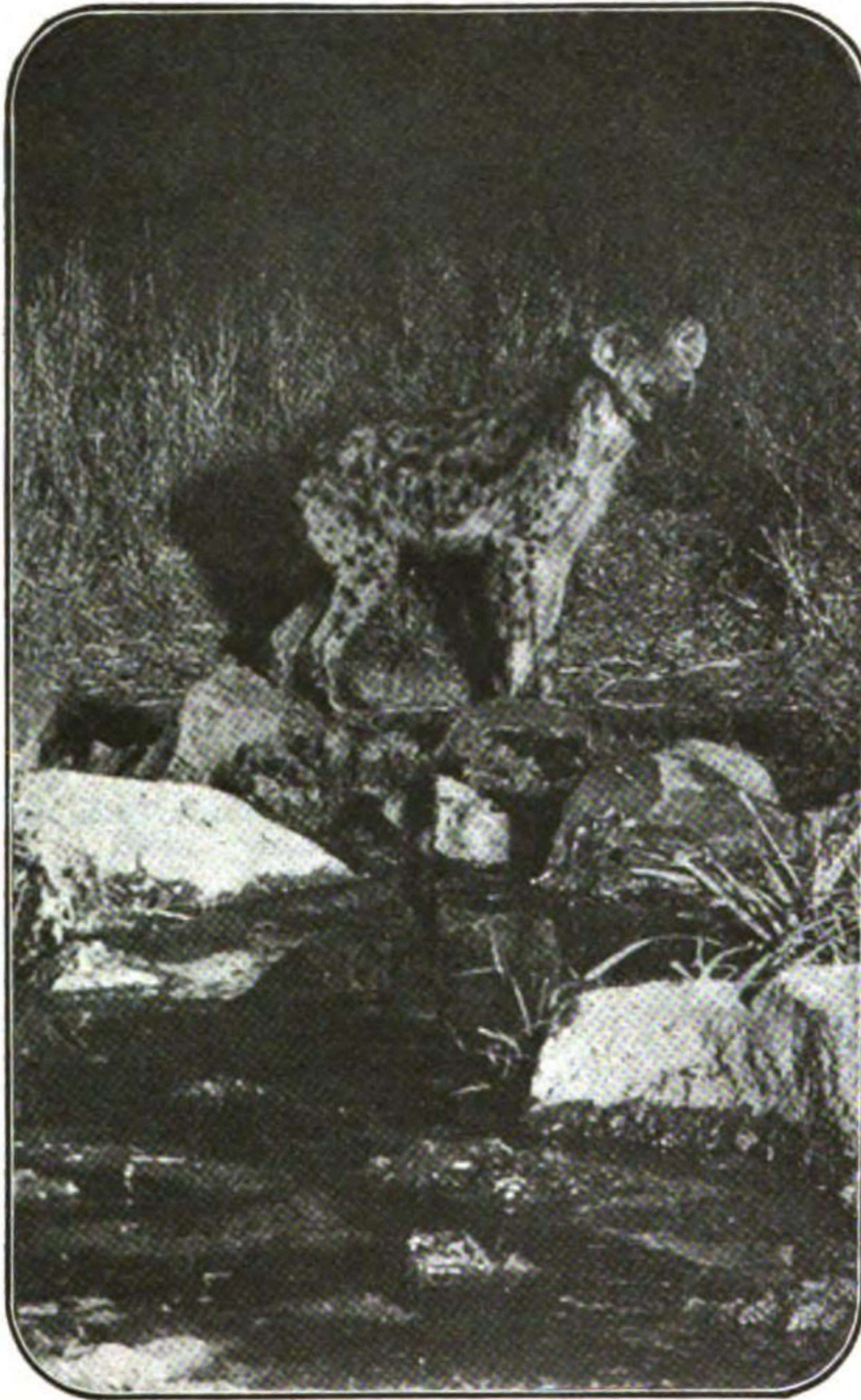
Three lions came into view this time, striding majestically to and fro before descending the bank to the kill. Then, to make us more alert and uncomfortable, a fourth lion, giving vent to bloodcurdling growls, approached the scene from directly behind us, and for a few palpitating moments we seriously thought we were about to be attacked. At one time this lion was only *three* yards from where we crouched, hardly daring to breathe, and I began to reflect

that perhaps after all wild animal photography was rather a foolish sort of game.

Once more I pressed the button, and again the flash went off, this time so loudly that both of us, our nerves on edge, jumped perceptibly. The lions, however, did not rush out of sight, but merely slunk away, obviously enraged at being cheated of their meal.

With fear and trembling we ventured out into the open again to re-set the cameras, the roaring of many lions seeming almost to shake the ground as we walked. Never do I remember a more awe-inspiring or eerie night than this; and there were no more thankful men in all Africa than us when at last dawn began to streak the sky and we made our way back to camp.

One day, shortly after this, I observed on entering a wood an animal which I at first thought was a young rhinoceros. Thinking that the parent could not be far away, I seized my rifle, by way of being prepared. A second and more prolonged look convinced me that I was in the presence of an animal of a species unknown to me, at any rate



A young hyena.

from personal experience. I therefore substituted my camera for the rifle and "snapped" it. As I did so, I realized that the creature was none other than the giant bush pig, one of the rarest of African beasts. This animal, the biggest member of the pig family, has been known to science for only about twenty years, during which time only a very small number of specimens have been seen by white men. I had never thought, even in my wildest imaginings, that I should encounter it, far less photograph it, and so far as I know I am the only person who has done so.