


BIG GAME PHOTOGRAPHS

FROM

The  Times

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
MR. MARCUSWELL MAXWELL
TAKEN IN
KENYA AND TANGANYIKA

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FOREWORD

The photographs in this volume, which were taken in East Africa by Mr. Marcuswell Maxwell, are examples of the satisfying trophies that the big game photographer can win. The distance at which a good photograph can be taken is almost always less—unless the subject be an elephant too large for the plate—than that at which a safe shot can be taken with a rifle. The photographer could generally kill his quarry many times over before he succeeds in getting him in the right position for a portrait. The rifle has to be kept handy, and the hunting is usually done in pairs—one man ready to click the camera and the other to press the trigger should the sitter turn ugly.

It should be noted that Mr. Maxwell had had no earlier experience of big game stalking. Either, then, he was born for the business or our guesses at wild animal psychology must begin afresh. To obtain such delightful pictures as his the hunter should clearly have much knowledge of his quarry's habits, and certainly to this must be added skill in tracking and patience in approach. The photographer must be prepared to wait for hours, sometimes indeed for days, close to his subject before the lucky moment comes. He must have the animal's head and forepart facing the camera, which may mean he will have to keep crawling over acres of ground—with the possibility of being discovered and hunted—because his subject persists, in crass obtuseness, in turning the wrong way. Some details in these pictures might, their interest apart, hold no significance for the uninitiated, but they establish Mr. Maxwell's hunting sagacity. The rhino's tick birds—which may be seen on the animal's back in one of these photographs—may be given as an instance. The rhino has bad eyesight, and, if unaccompanied by tick birds, can be approached to within thirty yards and even less, providing the stalker keeps right with the wind. Within fifty yards he must go circumspectly, avoiding sudden movement, and in a straight line. The hazards against the photographer are more than doubled if the rhino has his warning tick birds.

But the most curious speculations will be raised by the lion pictures. Unlike the rhino, the lion has acute sight and is exceedingly difficult to stalk. He is no more a lover of mankind than the rhino. Yet these pictures show that a group of lions will allow a motor-car to approach to within thirty yards and pay no attention to it. Lions will watch lazily while men produce cameras and the safe-guarding rifles, they will listen to the click of the instruments, and some are so bored that they will go to sleep. And the car may go off, return in a cloud of dust with a zebra in tow, and the lions will accept the gift as though it were in the course of nature in Africa for men in cars to serve dinner to lions. Mr. Maxwell drove to within fifteen yards of the group under the tree, and then had to back the car in order to include all the lions in the picture. The young lion on his own kill was taken at a distance of five yards. Such pictorial triumphs as these will have importance as historical records, for Africa is in process of rapid change and its wildest aspects are threatened. While they yet remain it is a matter for thankfulness that hunters may learn from Mr. Maxwell's successes to place as much pride in good pictures as in heads and skins.



THE FRIEND OF THE RHINOCEROS. TICK-BIRDS AT THEIR POST



A SUSPICIOUS MOTHER



READY FOR ACTION



BROWSING