

TREKS ACROSS THE VELD

By
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Frontispiece

Chief Olongo sat erect in a crude native chair. The ostrich feathers in his headdress were the longest obtainable. (See page 15)



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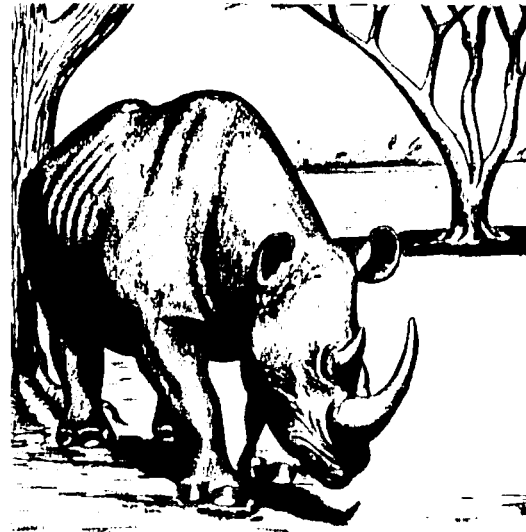
tail were cut free. With each touch of freedom the leopard, which had never once ceased to fight against his thongs, fought even harder, became more and more of a spitting, threatening fury. He must have visioned the moment when he would be entirely free to tear his tormentors into strips.

The last bond to be cut was the one about his neck. Now the spotted tornado was free in his prison. Voicing deep-throated snarls of vengeance and defiance, he leaped frantically from end to end and from side to side, unconvinced there was no escape from the indignities of his prison.

There still were the remains of the stretcher to be got out of the cage. These were pushed slowly to one side, where the door could be lifted upward just far enough for the flat boards to be pulled out.

Mr. Spots had become a permanent boarder.

A leopard ready to spring from a low-hanging limb of a tree. He does this not merely to satisfy his appetite but also for the sport of killing. (See page 25)



A rhinoceros getting ready to charge. Equipped with a comparatively small brain, this animal is unable to reason or think, and being a vegetarian, divides his time between browsing through the dense thorn bushes and sleeping. (See page 53)

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At the same time as many more monkeys as there were melons had done exactly the same thing, and the antics that resulted were limited only by the length of the various pieces of moored string! Since we were doing this as much for amusement as to capture monkeys some of the strings were rather long, so that a monkey could hop back and forth over the log practically without stopping, almost meeting himself in mid-air, while another monkey could pass under a friend and over an enemy, caught in other melons, and add most amazingly and thoroughly to the original, noisy chaos.

And, believe it or not, while my hunters rolled and laughed on the ground, hands clasped over their stomachs, and in spite of the scolding of elders, when every melon held its fisted monkey there were free monkeys who came down to the captured ones and tried to thrust their hands in beside those of the wilful prisoners. They did not seem to learn this by precept, that the trap that caught one meddler would still catch others.

Our next move was to gather up our captives. One native would place himself in front of a thoroughly frightened, completely exasperated victim, while a second would slip swiftly up behind and clutch him by the back of the neck so that his teeth became ineffective. Then the cord would be loosened and a prisoner taken.

And all the time, through thick and thin, every last monkey clung to his rice! The only reason we did not do this over and over again, and perhaps have died with laughter, was that we had to break the melons from the fists of the monkeys, rendering them useless. Invariably, with some surprise, the captive would realize that he had a handful of rice, and would begin eating. Captive or not, a wise, clever, cunning man of the forest must eat!

From the trees, as we departed, the elders shrieked "I-told-you-so's" at Corbell, Smith, the hunters, trekkers, and me; probably because their own young simply never bothered to listen and they had to shout it at someone.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RHINO HUNT

WE HAD already organized a sizable zoo at our camp, and what with water buck, a leopard, Chimpny and the monkeys, more men were needed. When we decided that it was time to go rhinoceros hunting, Corbell elected to remain at camp to take care of the animals while Smith and I went out with one of the trucks and twenty-odd native boys, including Ngomba, who was wise in the ways of many animals, and especially those of the rhino.

In the truck we carried everything we could need, for past experience had made it clear to all of us—we had all had some experience in hunting the comparatively rare rhino—that it might be hours, days, or even weeks before we viewed our quarry. Moreover our requirements were specific: we must find a baby rhino. To capture a full-grown animal was out of the question. It is almost impossible, even with many men, to check the onslaught of a charging rhino, for an adult specimen weighs in the neighbourhood of three and a half tons, is seven thousand pounds of veld battleship. No one with any experience will waste time trying to catch and hold a full-grown animal.

Therefore we must find not one rhino but three. The rhino male mates with the female on what appear to be chance meetings, remains with her until the young is sufficiently grown to be able to take care of himself; then they part as casually as they met. Seldom are there more than three rhinos together at a given time. And when a mother and a baby are found together, and no father is in sight, it is good evidence that the young one himself has grown beyond possibility of handling. It was up to us then to rob a couple of seven-thousand-pound parents of their only child, and the child might be expected to weigh in at around a ton himself!

The male rhinoceros, or the female when found alone, charges anything that attracts his attention with the drive of a four-footed tank. Should any living thing tamper with his young, his conduct is even less gracious. It was up to us to lay a foolproof plan, for no captive was worth the loss of a human life.

As we drove away from the camp our truck was piled high with supplies; for we had to carry all our food with us, not only food for the white men, Smith and me, but also *posho* or meal for the natives. We had tarpaulins for use when we made camps. We had ropes, nets, tackle. In effect we had created from the supplies of the main camp an expedition complete in every detail, a small reproduction of the equipment we were leaving and, in fact, an integral part of it. There was no telling when we would return, so we must be self-sustaining. We carried what we estimated to be enough gasoline to get us there, wherever "there" might turn out to be, and back.

There were no roads, just the veld. We left our own roads in the lengthening tracks of the wheels behind us. They might be erased next day by rain or the feet of animals, or they might be visible years later; there was no way of telling. Still, that track was the only visible tie with the camp we were leaving. We could orient ourselves by using our compass, but there was no real need for going to that trouble. All we ever did when we wanted to check on our relation to the camp was to ask a hunter. Instantly he would point in the direction of the camp. Almost infallibly we were startled into disagreeing with him and he invariably turned out to be right.

As for distance, it was recorded on the speedometer, when it worked. In this respect, too, the natives were our most reliable source of information. They never hesitated a moment before telling us how many hours it would take a fast Masai runner to get from a given position back to our camp. The native of Africa seems to have the instincts of the homing pigeon, and a bit more, for he knows how to get to almost any point from a given spot, not just back to

our camp or to his kraal. I never quelled the urge to argue with my own gun-bearer when we were out on short trips, and I invariably became confused in the matter of direction. We would walk, I was sure, directly away from camp. I would, when it was time to return, insist that all we had to do to get back to camp was to turn directly around, that the camp was in that direction. My gun-bearer, Ngomba, would say, without a smile:

"No, camp not that side. This way!"

I always argued. It was a sort of ritual. He was always right.

And now, in the truck, we were going further and further from our base camp. The natives, every last one of them, would be able to conduct us back, though Smith and I, for all our experience, would have found the return difficult, even by the time we had been gone for so much as a day.

Going into the trackless—as far as man is concerned—veld is like setting sail into unknown seas. The atmosphere itself is deceptive, and distances that seem great are short, landmarks that appear near are not reached in hours and sometimes days of travel. A near mountain may be blue with distance, a far one stand out with startling clarity. A truck is a small ship on a vast desert ocean. It is the moving home, camp, of the white man and his helpers.

"What direction, Ngomba?" I asked, not that he would know exactly, for rhinos, like gold, are where you find them, and even that might be open to question when your requirements were so definite.

"I do not know, Bwana," said Ngomba, "but I would say in this direction, since one direction leads to rhino, and others lead far, far away."

I looked at Smith. He shrugged. You just went hunting rhinos. You found them or you did not find them, and when you found them they might be—but I refused to anticipate. If we did not find what we sought on this trek across the veld we would try again.

The motor ground hoarsely as we headed across the rough country. The wheels struck against clumps of elephant grass and jumped, even with the load: supplies to which the blacks clung as monkeys cling to storm-lashed branches. The grass was tough, with matted roots like iron wire. Sand and gravel pushed reluctantly away from the wheels. The vast area had, in ages past, been the bed of a fresh water sea. Thinking of this I looked toward the horizon and saw many different sorts of animals drifting, and feeding, and thought how odd it was that they should be doing that where, ages ago, there had been great stretches of water over the earth on which we now travelled. It was interesting to play with this fancy and to imagine the water rising, as in a misty dream, flooding the broad plain, but this vision collapsed when I looked back to these same animals, all unaware they walked the old lake bed, feeding, drifting, living their lives.

There was so terribly much man did not know of the past of his own planet, and about its present. When that thought came to me it helped dispel the uncomfortable realization that this time we would be compelled to kill. To capture a young rhino it is necessary to shoot its parents, but the lives of two great animals were little to pay for the information that our captive, if we got a captive, would bring scientists in the outside world from the fastness which had been his home and the home of his forebears since time immemorial. In the rhino, I knew, were secrets of the history of the world, of its great vertebrate animals, including man, and past eras when the shapes of all of them were different; the rhino's exterior was not always the anachronism it appears to be today.

But the veld was not the place to dream of the past. The dangers of the day, dangers that had existed since the beginning of time, made dreaming a dangerous luxury. Every minute must be guarded for it was quite possible that we would encounter our prey when we least expected him and it was well to see him first; the truck itself was not proof against the charge of the great beast. A rhino

charge might damage the truck severely, could possibly turn it over. This thought was never far from our minds as we hunted gingerly, at little more than ten miles an hour, for a sight of our prey.

Far off to the right were the Mella mountains, "blue with distance." This was at ten o'clock in the morning. By late afternoon they appeared to be on the left, just as far away, and I'd have sworn we had travelled in the same direction all day. But there were the mountains to indicate otherwise. We had swung right in a wide circle, marking out the immensity of the veld that lay between our position at ten in the morning, and the mountains that still were no nearer.

We saw animals far off to the right and left of us, all sorts of animals except what we sought. It sometimes struck me that we generally saw every creature save the particular game we were equipped to hunt. It seemed almost as if our prospective victims had received some mysterious warning, and fleeing before us had left no trace.

And then, suddenly, away to the left toward the mountains Ngomba saw something. He saw it with his naked eyes, though I had some difficulty seeing it through the binoculars with which I was constantly searching the horizon for our quarry.

"Rhino," he said quietly.

"One? Three?"

"One," he said. "An old bull."

"There may be a female, lying down, and a calf beside her."

"One," said Ngomba, no change of expression on his face. "An old bull. No waste time, Bwana."

"There may be a female and a young one," I insisted. Smith grinned, taking no part in the discussion. He turned in the direction of the fantastic shape I had now seen through my binoculars, against the blue horizon. The shape moved without haste. The animal was grazing.

"One," said Ngomba, after a long pause. "Old bull."

I didn't answer. I had a feeling right then I had been too

insistent, that the creature we were approaching was indeed an old, surly bull.

But since we had started, we might as well look at him. I said as much, to nobody in particular, as if I myself had known it all the time, but I did not fool Ngomba for an instant. He knew I was trying to give in as gracefully as possible. If he laughed, though, it was laughter that was deeply silent within him.

We came up to the rhino, which caught our scent and started lumbering away in a wide circle. He might just as certainly have started a charge. That he didn't might have been just temporary, or a whim. I knew that the tick-birds which spent most of their time riding the rhino, had warned him, even before he had wheeled about to catch our scent. They had risen from their feasting ground upon his seamy back to chatter loudly.

I carried an English Rugby high-powered rifle across my knees, just in case. I might not know much about rhinos for all my experience with them, but I knew better than to approach one near enough to be smelled out without making sure that all defences were prepared.

"An old, surly bull," said Ngomba.

"Oh, not so surly," I said, grinning. "He ran away, didn't he?"

"But he may circle back," said Smith. "Since he's no good to us, let's not give him an excuse."

"Where now, Ngomba?" I asked my gun-bearer.

"Just keep going, Bwana," he said. "Rhino keep going too."

Which was about as accurate a direction as anyone could get.

On and on, leaving behind us a twisting trail like the track of a monster snake, we worked our way through areas of boulders, where I had to get out and scout the way, and signal back along the file of hunters to Smith telling him just how to drive slowly through a section where a single sharp rock might rip our tyres and cause long delays. We had spare tyres but in a country that seemed to

devour rubber one could never have too many, or be too careful of those one had.

We would slide down steep slopes into ancient water courses which we hadn't seen until we were already slipping down their sides; and the blacks would jump off and Smith would slam on the brakes and I would jump, too, shouting to the men, and they would grab hold wherever they could to make sure that the truck did not tip over. Bracing it the whole way, we would let it down into the water course, whose vast extent would only then become apparent. The far bank that seemed to be miles away would show us that this had once been the bed of a wide river, so wide that its immensity was lost now in the veld.

We would turn left for a few miles, then right, following a hunch as to where the rhino might most quickly be found. Later we went straight on through the dry bed of the river and fought our way up the other side. Sometimes we had to unload, push the truck to the crest, carry up the items one by one on the black heads and re-stow them in the truck. And then the very next day we came right back into this same water course, miles to the right. It was easier and far more accurate by this time to say right and left, rather than mention a compass direction, for I had lost track of directions. Even the sun, it appeared to me, shifted at will in the sky. But then after all my principal interest was in rhinos.

On the off-chance that we might be within rifle-shot of what we sought, I sometimes sent the hunters far to right and left, with instructions to shout to us if they found rhino footprints. We did everything we could think of to find a trace, a sign. And I never ceased scanning the horizon, searching for their antediluvian shapes against the blue that, at midday, blended so neatly with the golden-grey of the veld.

The scene was like a great mosaic, where every carefully worked part contributed to the effect of the whole. Patches of acacia and mimosa stood out against the water-boom trees that fronted the thickets of woods in which baboons

held family gatherings. Water holes to which the day-grazers came stood out as hubs for a network of trails. Ever and anon we noticed spots against the sky, countless cruising vultures, those ill-favoured birds that are the veld's infallible messengers of death, finding in each new corpse the promise of a feast. I often wondered how they knew, always in advance, that some creature was going to die. I decided then and there that I had neglected the vultures in the past because they made me shudder. I would pretty soon study them a bit closer, after I had captured a rhino and rested a bit at the camp.

Again we slid down the side of a stream bed, but this time there was a stream on its bottom. We halted beside the bank, got down to look at it. Rocks were visible beneath the shallow water. It looked as if the bottom were solid but if we were to cross we must be sure. Trucks had driven into "solid" stream beds before now, to sink out of sight in treacherous quicksand. The hunters strode through the stream, feeling the bed with their feet. The water came to their knees. We could cross without difficulty, everybody decided. So Smith drove the truck into the stream, and promptly stalled it. The natives laughed. I did not feel like laughing. While we were stuck in the stream, directly ahead of us out of sight beyond the rising bank of the stream bed a trio of rhinos, the very ones we were hunting, might graze to right or left and be lost to us. Ngomba was amused. So was everybody but me. A baby rhino had become very important to me.

We unloaded again, got the truck through. As nearly as I could tell, no matter how we went back to our camp, we would have to cross the same stream. I looked at Ngomba but before I could ask the question he said, half smiling:

"No Bwana, we no see this water again on way back home!"

So we were out, and beyond the stream there was more veld, leading away and away.

The sun was just above the horizon, and the first day was almost done. There would be no rhinos until to-

morrow. I took out the small rifle; rather Ngomba, who knew the needs of the day as if he picked the thoughts new-born from my mind, handed me the rifle for small game. I got out and walked beside the truck, while the hunters ranged far and wide.

And shortly a shout came from my right, and there was a sable antelope, racing across my field of vision and of fire. Somewhat regretfully, even though we must eat, I shot the graceful, beautiful animal. This was meat for our supper.

Soon we bivouacked near a small stream, pitched our tarpaulins, and were housed as snugly as if we had arrived back at our base camp, now an endless distance it seemed to me, somewhere behind us.

Our cookboy got busy with rocks, making a veld fireplace. One of the natives helped him to skin the antelope and cut it for roasting. He went to a nearby thicket of woods, brought back two forked sticks and a straight, hard one, which he trimmed to a point as he came. Thus they made a spit in the veld, and shortly the antelope meat was turning on it above a hot, almost invisible fire, and the aroma of its delicate flesh went its titillating way by our nostrils. Strange to say Smith and I were the only ones tempted by the smell. The Masai are vegetarians except when they drink blood from living cattle during ceremonies in their own kraals.

The Masai made paste of their *posho*, and soon we were eating our supper, commenting on the news of the day—Smith and I apart from the blacks, who wished just as much to be apart from us, to observe their own rituals of eating—and trying to guess what the morrow would bring us.

"We'll cut rhino spoor tomorrow," I said, not knowing of course, but wishfully thinking.

"We'll be out a week," said Smith, sitting back comfortably in his folding camp chair, which stood on a piece of canvas his gun-bearer had brought along for him, as Ngomba had brought a piece for me; we couldn't have been more comfortable, even at the base camp.

We talked of past hunts as night fell, and the murmuring voices of the blacks died away, and the veld came to life as animals prowled and the jackal howled and a hyena laughed afar off. The stream that was the source of our water brawled through the darkness. I fancied I could hear the sucking sound of some big animal drinking from the stream, and would have sworn it was a rhino because that's what I wanted; but if there had been a rhino out there Ngomba would have come running long since to tell me so. The natives always knew what came down to drink at the stream beside which we camped.

Finally Smith knocked out his pipe and went into his tent. I sat for a time longer, waiting for the stars and the moon to come out, to capture again the glory of an African night.

Then I went to my own tent to sleep, subconsciously winding the alarm clock within me that would awaken me in time for an early start the next morning.

The second day was like the first, that is as much as one African day could be like another, for the veld which might appear monotonous to the novice is never the same from hour to hour, even from minute to minute. And with the same reservations, the third day was like the first and the second.

We were four days from camp before Ngomba said to me quietly:

"Rhino, Bwana! Three. One of the hunters found the spoor."

Immediately I wanted to see it, so Ngomba led me to the tracks of the three great animals and I watched while he studied them for a minute or two.

"They travel this way yesterday," he said.

That did not mean that they were that far away from us, for they might have spent hours, even days, within the radius of a mile. I scanned the horizon intently with my binoculars to see if I could see them.

"No near," said Ngomba. "No far, either."

We put trekkers out to follow the spoor of the rhinos,

and we trailed the trotting men in the car. Excitement was mounting within me for now we would shortly find our game. These tracks would lead us to them certainly, surely. It was just a matter of time.

And yet we spent another night on the veld, in spite of my impatience, before Ngomba said to me:

"There, to right. They went far ahead, now come back."

I studied the spot he indicated. I made out the shape of the bull, in a patch of thorn bush. Rhinos like the thorn bushes. The two-inch thorns bother them not at all. Their hides are like armour plate.

Then I could make out a second rhino, lying down. That would be the female. And after careful scrutiny I made out the shape of the small one, if a half-ton baby can be called small. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon. We had time, if luck were with us, to make our capture. But we must get right to business.

We left the car at a safe distance so that it would not attract the attention of the rhinos, and Smith and I, after dividing the men between us, started moving in on the animals, each of us forming our little group of hunters into a quarter-circle, and then joining the groups to form a semi-circle, like the jaws of a trap or the mandibles of a monstrous beetle.

The rhinos were all three on their feet now, the male snorting at us. We moved closer to them. I held my rifle in readiness, so did Smith.

The male snorted.

The female coughed menacingly.

The baby snorted in his own key, expressing his contempt for anything his parents did not like.

Grey mountains charged with death were these parent animals. The male's principal horn was well over two feet long, almost three: a sword whose gruesome possibilities would make even the hardened hunter shudder. Here in the rhino was a creature left over from dim and distant ages past before man walked the earth; a relic from the

days when even this monster took care to save himself from larger and more formidable creatures.

These rhinos, because of the youngster, elected to run for it rather than to charge. They started their thumping, ponderous run, attempting to circle away from the two jaws of our little trap. The sound was such that we should have felt the earth shake under them, and I almost convinced myself that it did. Dust rose from their stumplike feet, and eddied up from their armoured backs and sides.

Several of my men darted swiftly away to the left, to head off the three animals. The baby rhino kept so close to his mother that his strangely shaped nose was against her flank: against her left flank when she angled away to the left, cutting across her stern to get himself against her right flank when she wheeled.

Our natives appeared in front of the male. This time he did not swerve. The scent of the enemy was in his nostrils and anything that was not rhino was an enemy to be trodden to a pulp. Here was danger. The rhino's brain is a tiny thing, very tiny. Once a charge is missed the beast often goes right on, forgetting why it charged, forgetting to wheel and come back; except when there is a young one with it, an accident that seems somehow to quicken the brute's brain.

The living tank charged one of my men. The show had begun in deadly earnest. It would end one way or the other, within a small area, right here. While the male charged at his attackers his mate still tried to get away through the open places in our human trap. I had my eyes on the man the male was charging. The great brute was gathering express-train speed.

My hunters knew what they were doing of course. The rhinoceros cannot swerve quickly, because inertia holds his charging bulk true in its chosen course, until he checks his speed. My hunter waited until the great horn was very close. Then with a twist of his hips he slid aside, smoothly as an eel or a star half-back. Had he jumped too soon he would have given the rhino time to wheel and catch him

on that hideous horn. He must wait until the last second, then jump fast and far, for behind the wickedly armed head, bulging far to right and left, were the armoured sides of the four-footed tank. If they struck a man they might maim him, certainly would hurl him off his feet.

The charge missed. Another native rose in the rhino's path. He could not be allowed to escape from the circle. For while the female and the baby were his concern, he would circle back. This time the rhino, his little eyes following the movement of the second man, was induced to swing more toward me. I was trying to watch both great beasts now, for at any moment they might be coming at me from opposite directions. The scene shifted so fast when one dealt with such creatures that I dared not relax vigilance for a second.

The female was still trying to break out by running for it, and the baby stuck right to her. Our first task was to separate the male from the mother and baby, then the calf from its mother.

Now the male was working in my direction, or rather being worked in my direction by our black boys.

My gun-bearer spoke softly behind me:

"His next turn will bring him this way, Bwana. Ngomba knows the wisdom of each of his black brothers. This one who now rises before the rhino will know just how to turn him this way."

Ngomba was right.

The brute was charging in my direction; but there was a black man in the way of a shot, a black man who must jump to safety. I waited, drawing a bead with my Rugby. Three shots would be necessary to kill this huge animal. I could not dodge him as the blacks could. White men seldom acquire that kind of agility.

The man jumped to safety. I shot. I saw the powerful big bullet smash into the great animal, somewhere about the head. It didn't matter much where I hit him, as long as he was struck. The heavy bullet would knock him down,

and while he fought to get back on his feet, I could pick my spots for the next two shots.

Dust shot up from the point of impact. The great brute seemed to fold his legs into his belly and to go down in full charge. His tremendous bulk hit the ground and skidded toward me, with dust rising grimly from his dirty grey carcass. I stood, making sure that I had not attracted the attention of the female, with my rifle ready, until I could be sure of the second shot.

I fired into the body.

The short tree-trunk legs of the rhino were pawing the air, as the animal tried to get up. When the second shot struck the legs stiffened as the beast floundered on his side.

I fired again and I could see the great body relax while the legs pawed the air limply, aimlessly. The rhino was already dead, out of the picture. A third, and the most dangerous third, of the job had been done.

The female did not understand. Her brain would never grasp the idea that her mate had been destroyed. She was still trying to outwit our blacks, still trying to escape by speed. But with the male out of the way we had more men to throw into the game we played against her. She had to be separated soon from that overgrown baby of hers.

My men began to throw stones at her, trying to make her lose her temper, always a fairly easy thing to do to a mother rhino or any rhino at any time. The rocks smashed against her side. She felt the first one and whirled on the man who had thrown it, automatically responding to the source of danger. Then she was charging. She now realized that there was real peril here, and that she could not adjust her pace to that of her young one. She must charge out, smash all opposition, then return for her baby. It wasn't a matter of decision, exactly, for she had no faculties for decision in her brain—at least none scientists can discover.

She bore down on Smith this time, or on his segment of the closing semi-circle.

And already, anticipating the kill, my men who carried the ropes rolled over their shoulders, for they had come into

the battle prepared, moved in toward the now frightened, utterly bewildered young rhino.

Smith fired at the mother.

The thud of the bullet came first to my ears, then the crash of the gigantic body's fall. Watching the calf darting this way and that at my men, reproducing in miniature the movements of his parents, even to the charges, I waited for the second shot from Smith's rifle. It came. Then the third, and no more. I knew that two-thirds of the battle was over, and almost all the danger.

The young one had a fighting horn, too, but it was insignificant compared to that of his parents. Yet he charged and heaved it with such plain intent that my men took care not to be touched by him. And a slap of his body against a naked black one could maim for life. Yes, even the baby had to be treated with respect.

But his moments of freedom were numbered as soon as his mother hit the dust and caused powdery eddies to rise slowly, like smoke from a funeral fire.

The natives were bedevilling the baby rhino now, and all of us were concentrating on him. The men with the ropes had them off their shoulders and were trying to get in behind the baby animal to loop one of his hind legs. But just as one man would get into place the rhino would turn and charge, and the ropemen would have to dart away and other men get in front of the animal to turn him. He was bewildered, but he snorted just like his parents and refused to be daunted. He was angry beyond anger. If he could just get that baby horn into somebody's midriff he would show them! But he was being slowed down, forced to make shorter, sharper turns. He was being teased, tormented, and the ropemen were getting closer with their loops. Then one man got his wide loop in front of the right hind foot. The rhino baby stepped into it, the rope was yanked and the loop closed on the leg above the pad. Four or five men were instantly on the rope pulling it taut and the baby rhino was suddenly, to his great surprise, stopped in mid-charge, with his head still lowered and his

horn all ready to gore anything it happened to hit. His hind leg stretched out straight behind him. He almost fell on his right side. Only his automatic sense of balance kept him on his feet. He stood there, as if to make an estimate of the situation, stretched well out, snorting. Then he gave to the pull of the rope, backing swiftly, turning, realizing that his leg was being held, seeing the men beyond the spot which held him. He turned and charged, the men scattered, those holding the rope jumped to the right, and his charge ended in lurching futility, hard against the rope. The second ropeman got his loop around the front right leg. Now the rhino was in a precarious situation. Two legs were held from opposite directions; yet still he balanced somehow. The men relaxed the ropes, letting him put his feet on the ground, so that the other two legs could be lifted, each in its turn.

And so, one after the other, they got the four legs of the baby monster. Then the men in the rear who held the left hind leg crossed under the rope held by the men who secured the right hind leg and the two changed positions. The men in front did the same thing. The forefeet were drawn together, and so were the hindfeet, so that the baby at last, with his pairs of feet drawn full limit in opposite directions, was hard pressed just to hold his balance. Now two men who had been waiting with poles moved in. Extra men grabbed the poles with them. The ends were pushed against the side of the rhino suddenly, and all together. He had no choice but to fall on his side, and more men closed in to wrap him in ropes.

As the end was a foregone conclusion Smith had left to get the truck, while the others secured the rhino, a tightly bound prisoner. The truck backed up close to him. The end gate was dropped. Two beams were lowered to form a gangway to the truck bed for the rhino. They were about fifteen feet long, seasoned hard wood, to hold the weight of the animal.

The little one, angry, snorting, but utterly helpless and immobile felt the end of those beams shoved against his

back. The block and tackle we had brought along for just this purpose was hooked to the back of the truck seat and to the ropes which had been drawn into a loop behind the rhino's back. Taking care that the beams were close enough together to keep the baby from folding up between them, and sufficiently separated to prevent his sliding slickly off to right or left, the word was given to haul away.

Our baby slid up the gangway to the bed of the truck.

Right then I noticed how well timed all this was. We had used up enough supplies to make room for the rhino and had enough left to get us back to camp if we left at once and spent as few nights as possible on the veld.

We lashed our prisoner firmly down.

Then I gave permission to the blacks and the work of skinning the two grown beasts got under efficient way. Rhino hide was valuable to the Masai, who used it on their shields, and for many other purposes.

So, triumphantly bearing the rhino skins and baby rhino we turned back to camp, hoping that by the time we arrived a stout stockade would be ready for our captive.

And we didn't see that river again though I'd have wagered that we went back directly the way we had come.

The second day after the capture we reached the camp. The stockade was ready, and food had been gathered for the newest member of our zoo. I was glad to be back. I wanted to spend a few days really becoming acquainted with my menagerie on the veld.