

# WITH RIFLE IN FIVE CONTINENTS

BY

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AND 174 ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT

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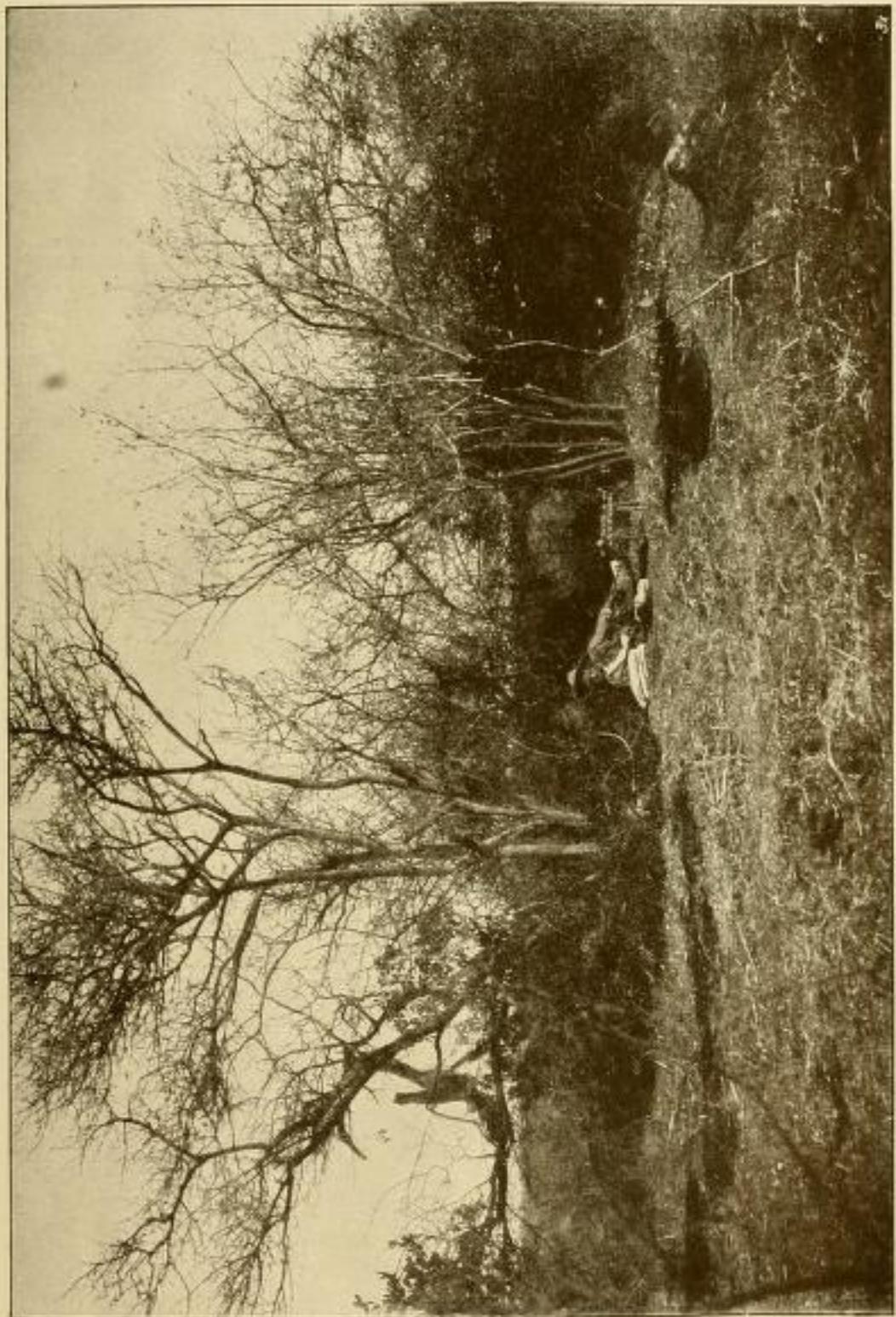
## CHAPTER XIII

### RHINOCEROS AND LION HUNTING

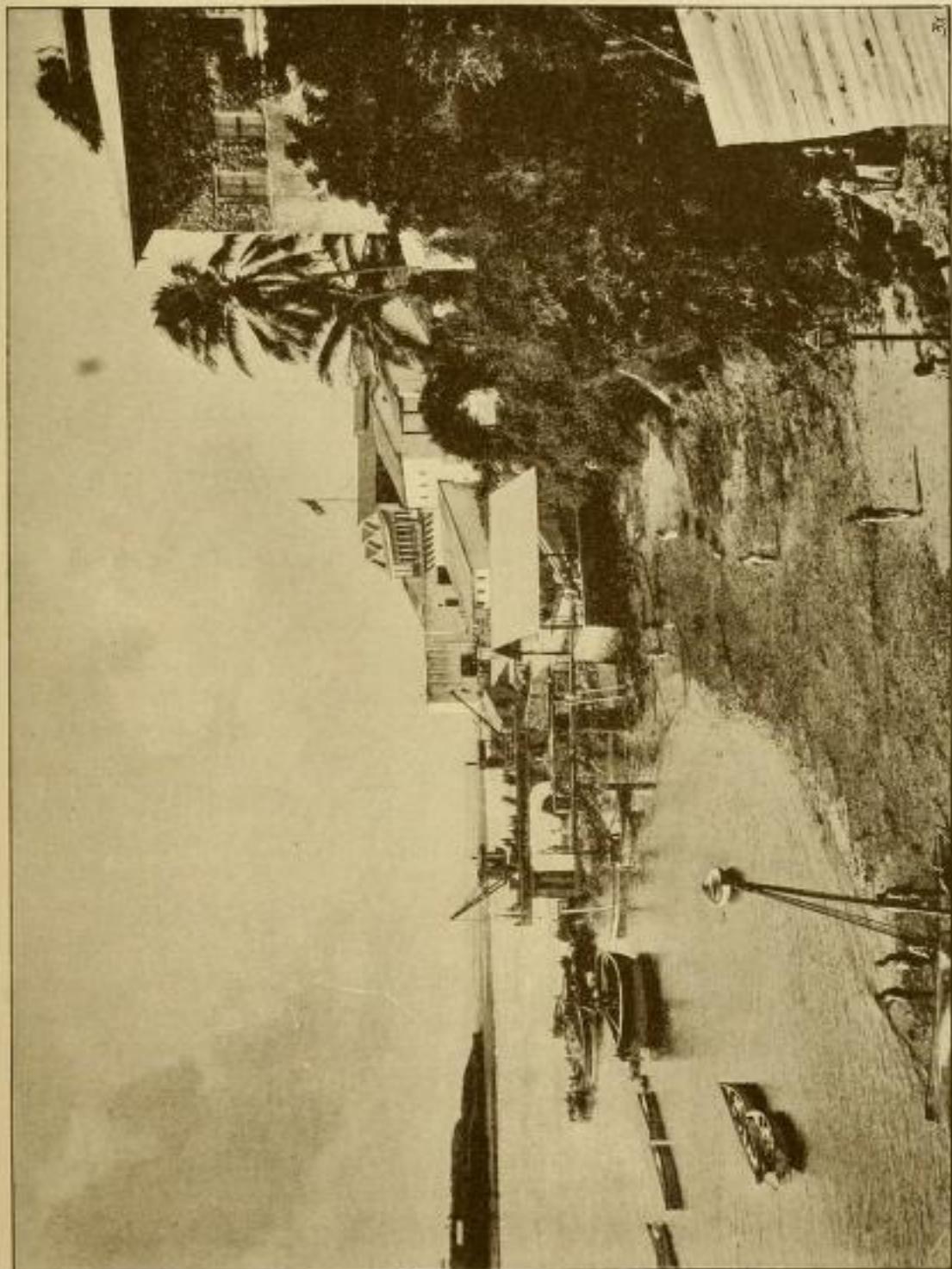
ON the 25th of September 1902, just four weeks and two days after leaving Ostend, I shot my first head of game in British East Africa, the everlasting waterbuck. The voyage from Europe had been long and tedious, but Mombassa, the port for British East Africa and Uganda, which lies inland, turned out better than I had expected. It is prettily situated and has a good hotel ; the native Swahelis, so far as I can judge from a few days' acquaintance, are pleasanter fellows than the Kafirs of the south and the Sudanis of the north. As in Portuguese East Africa, there are no transport-animals, such as camels and donkeys, available ; so there is absolutely nothing for it but the heads of the blacks. Sixty-one of these fellows I engaged in Mombassa, and with them started on my expedition by railway, first to Makindu, two hundred and twenty miles from Mombassa, on the Victoria Nyanza line. The railway has been open since January of this year, and it is another of those monuments of energy and enterprise which we see constantly in British colonies and protectorates.

At Makindu I was on the outskirts of a hunting-district now famous throughout the world, a country in which there are still plenty of lions, in which the rhinoceros can be seen from the railway line, and other wild animals, such as zebras, and various species of antelopes and the wily ostriches, still roam in herds. From Makindu to Nairobi, the most important town in the British East Africa protectorate, hunting is allowed only

MY ELEPHANT ADVENTURE.



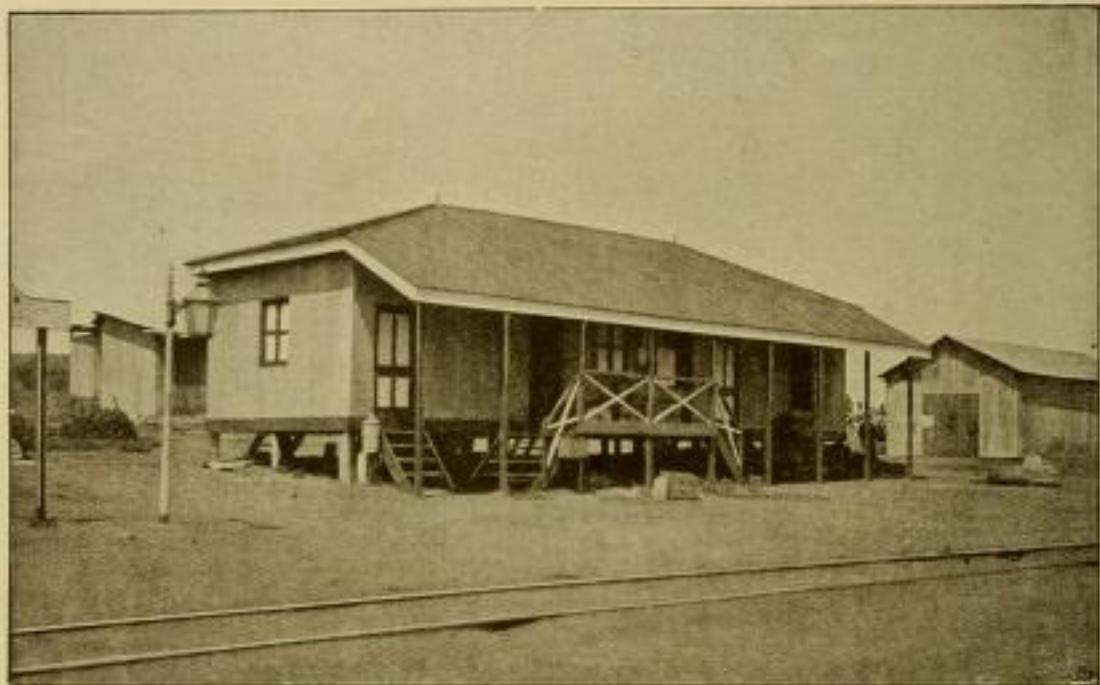
on the north side of the railway line ; the south side, as far as the frontier of German East Africa, being, like the right bank



MOMBASSA HARBOUR.

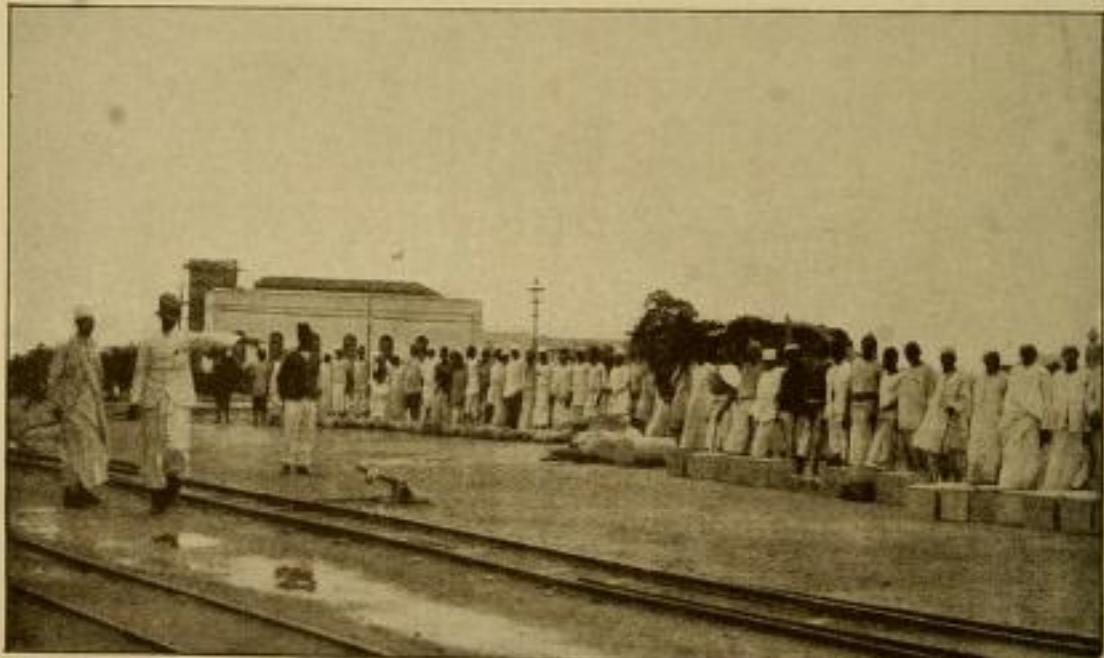
of the White Nile from Khartum to Fashoda, a so-called "game reserve"—in other words, a district in which no sort of game may be killed at any time of year.

From Makindu I marched for the most part along the railway line to Simba, pitching camp at various places but not



STATION ON THE UGANDA RAILWAY.

stopping long in any one, because it was my intention first to



MUSTER OF MY CARRIERS AT MOMBASSA.

get to know the country and its game, and later on to hunt as I worked down the line. At Simba I shot a few hartebeests as

meat for my bearers, and then again used the railway to Kiu, thirty-four miles on. Here I found two blacks, who offered to act as guides, and on the morning of the 29th of September I left the railway line and marched inland. Shortly after starting I shot two Grant's gazelles and a hartebeest. Towards ten o'clock I saw suddenly, eighty paces in front of me, two rhinoceroses, a male and a female, easily recognisable by their



A BRACE OF GRANT'S GAZELLES.

horns. All rifles were quickly loaded with the most powerful cartridges, and at full speed I was after the pachyderms. It is well known that rhinoceroses have bad sight, but they make up for this by excellent hearing and scent. They often locate men by the mere sense of smell. I made a slight circuit, so as to have the wind right and to avoid being attacked at our first meeting. The great beasts did not run far and let me get to within a hundred and fifty paces; then they started off again, the male sniffing the ground suspiciously, and, with his tail in

the air, looking as though he were standing on his head. In another five minutes I had to come within a hundred paces, and let fly at the shoulder of the male, using my English double-barrelled rifle calibre 375, with cordite powder and a solid



FEMALE RHINOCEROS HEAD FROM EAST AFRICA.

covered bullet. The animal came down on his hind-quarters and looked like toppling over, but pulled himself up again and went off, followed by the female and another bullet. I now took my model 88-rifle, and at the first shot from this the bull came down. The female ran another hundred and fifty

had no effect, and the blacks declared that I should have to kill her to save ourselves from attack. I waited another half-hour, because I did not want the animal as a trophy, and also on account of the hunting regulations which permitted me to slay only two rhinoceroses in the year ; but, when I saw the faithful better-half coming slowly towards her dead spouse, I resolved to send her, if I could, into the mountains.

Meantime, my bearers had come up and were standing all



A RHINOCEROS COW.

round, and, if the animal had charged, she would, at the very least, have caused frightful confusion. The rhinoceros was facing me ninety-eight paces away, when I took my 10-bore Paradox and fired a shot at her feet. After the shot she turned round and fled down the hill, soon disappearing from view. I then set to work to cut up the dead bull. In the evening I got back late to camp, having had a gratifying day's shooting—four head of game, three of which were species new to my collection.

I may at this point say a few words with regard to the

temperature. At Mombassa it was hot during the day, but the nights, owing to the cool sea-breeze, were endurable. Makindu, which is 4000 feet above sea-level, is considerably colder ; from this place the railway line rises rapidly to Nairobi, 6000 feet. I am much higher in the mountains, and the temperature corresponds with the higher altitude. The thermometer sinks at night to 6° R., while in the day it reaches 28° R. in the shade.

Consequently the cold is felt all the more, but I consider the climate to be very healthy and free from fever.

Yesterday, the 2nd of October, close to our camp, a rhinoceros, which apparently had our wind, came running down the hill in our direction. Then he lost the scent, and, as his horns did not seem very good, I let him go. Soon after this, having the wind in my favour, I found myself face to face with another rhinoceros. I stalked her to within a hundred paces and then gave her two bullets. She turned round and ran off, going against the wind, as is



CARRYING THE RHINOCEROS HEAD.

the habit of these animals. We soon found her lying down under shelter of a tree, but it was only after I had put six more bullets into her grey hide that she was finished. On close examination I found all the eight bullets ; two were shoulder-shots but had not broken the leg. I conclude from this that the solid steel balls go right through the shoulder without breaking it, and that the only shots to bring these animals down are those which pierce the heart, the brain, or the spine. On cutting up the rhinoceros I made the interesting discovery

that she was about to become a mother. Unfortunately the offspring was dead, hit by one of my bullets.

I had scarcely begun to cut off the trophies, when the natives swarmed up from every side to get the meat. Many of them had been following me for several days and were so

close as to be a veritable nuisance. Besides this they were exceedingly impudent, and refused to bring me six fowls and a few dozen eggs, of which they had quantities, in exchange for many hundreds of pounds of rhinoceros-meat. I threatened that I would burn the flesh, but this had no effect. They sat down on the ground in a semicircle and waited patiently till I should go away, knowing well that there was not enough fuel for miles round to enable me to carry out my threat.

Later on in the day I came unexpectedly on three sable antelopes,

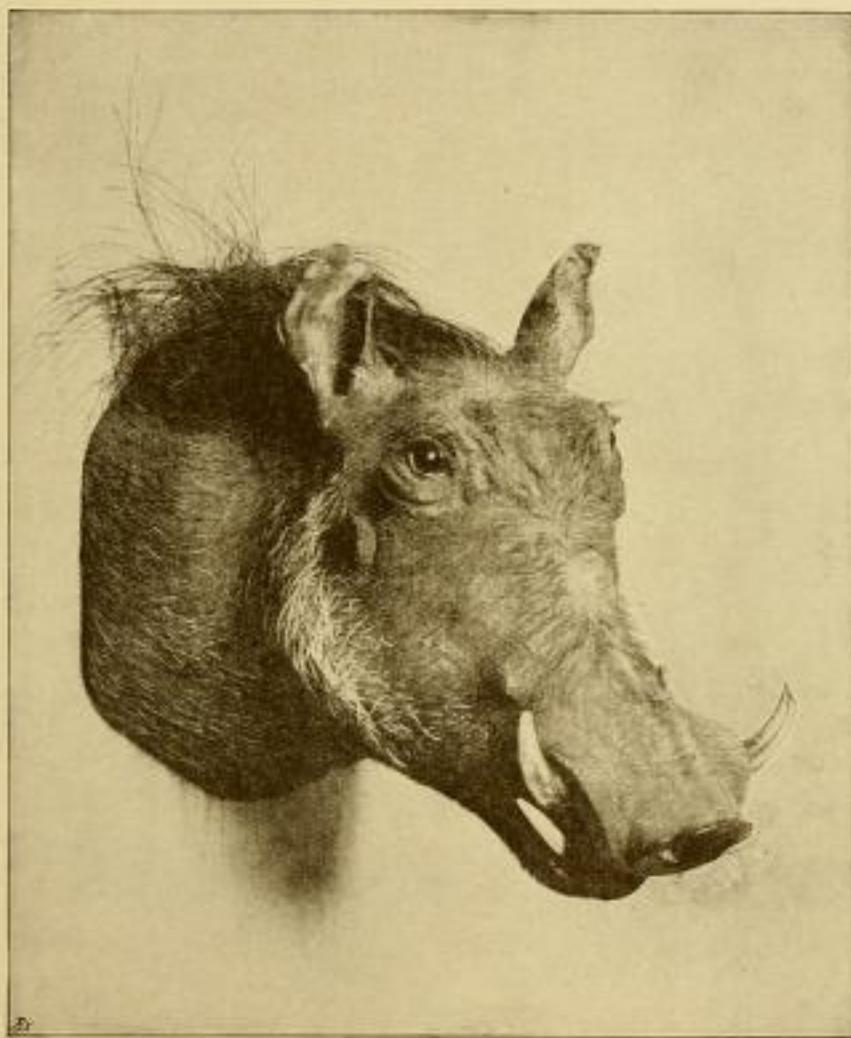
which by ill-luck I missed; but I brought down two more wart-hogs and a Thomson's gazelle.

Last night I was rudely awaked from sleep by deafening shouts and cries. Leaping from under my mosquito-net, I saw Brown close by, loaded pistol in hand, while the carriers were rushing from all sides to my tent. I went out, but could



HEAD OF THOMSON'S GAZELLE.

find nothing unusual, and it came out presently that one of the boys had given the alarm "a lion in camp." In reality it was only a hyæna, which had come to steal a bit of rhinoceros. Though it was but 2 A.M. the camp got no more rest that night, for the blacks, who are known to be exceedingly childish, laughed for hours over the incident in spite of my orders to



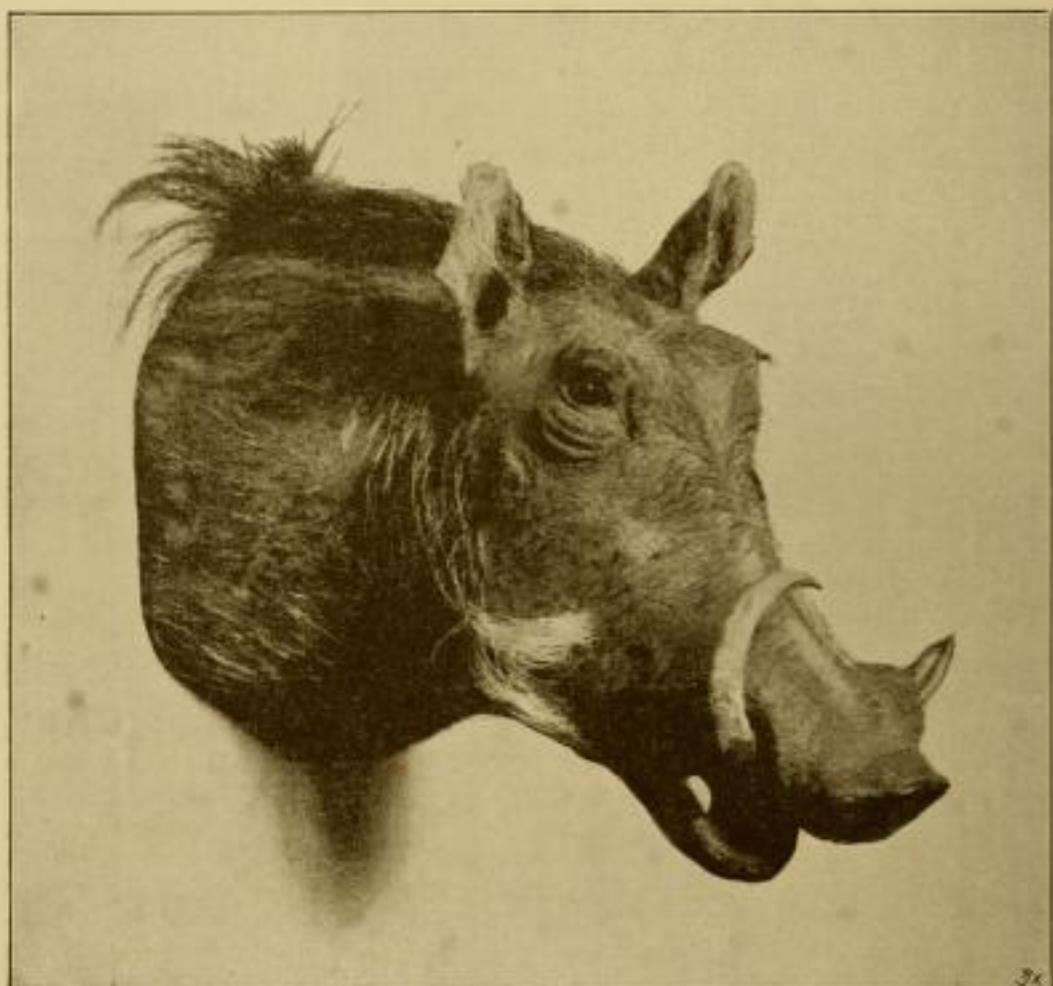
A MALE WART-HOG HEAD.

them to keep quiet. For a few minutes they giggled, and then one of them burst into a guffaw and set the rest off again. Then Brown and I must needs laugh too, and this amused these children still more, so the only thing to do was to get up.

There is no doubt whatever that the lions do visit the huts of the natives by night, and I have already found two human skulls. The blacks defend themselves by surrounding their

hut with a screen of thorns so high and strong that it is a real defence.

On the 4th of October I left my camp in the mountains and marched back to Machakos Road Station. On the way I brought down two Grant's gazelles and had a shot at a panther, which I found sunning himself on a bare hill-side ; I gave chase, but was unsuccessful.



A FEMALE WART-HOG HEAD.

I took the railway again from Machakos Road to Stony Athi ; there was no object in marching thirty miles over the waterless plain. It is truly astonishing how familiar the game has become with the railway ; gazelles and antelopes let the train go by at a distance of 60-80 paces ; an ostrich, the shyest game I know, could have been shot with a revolver from my carriage-window.

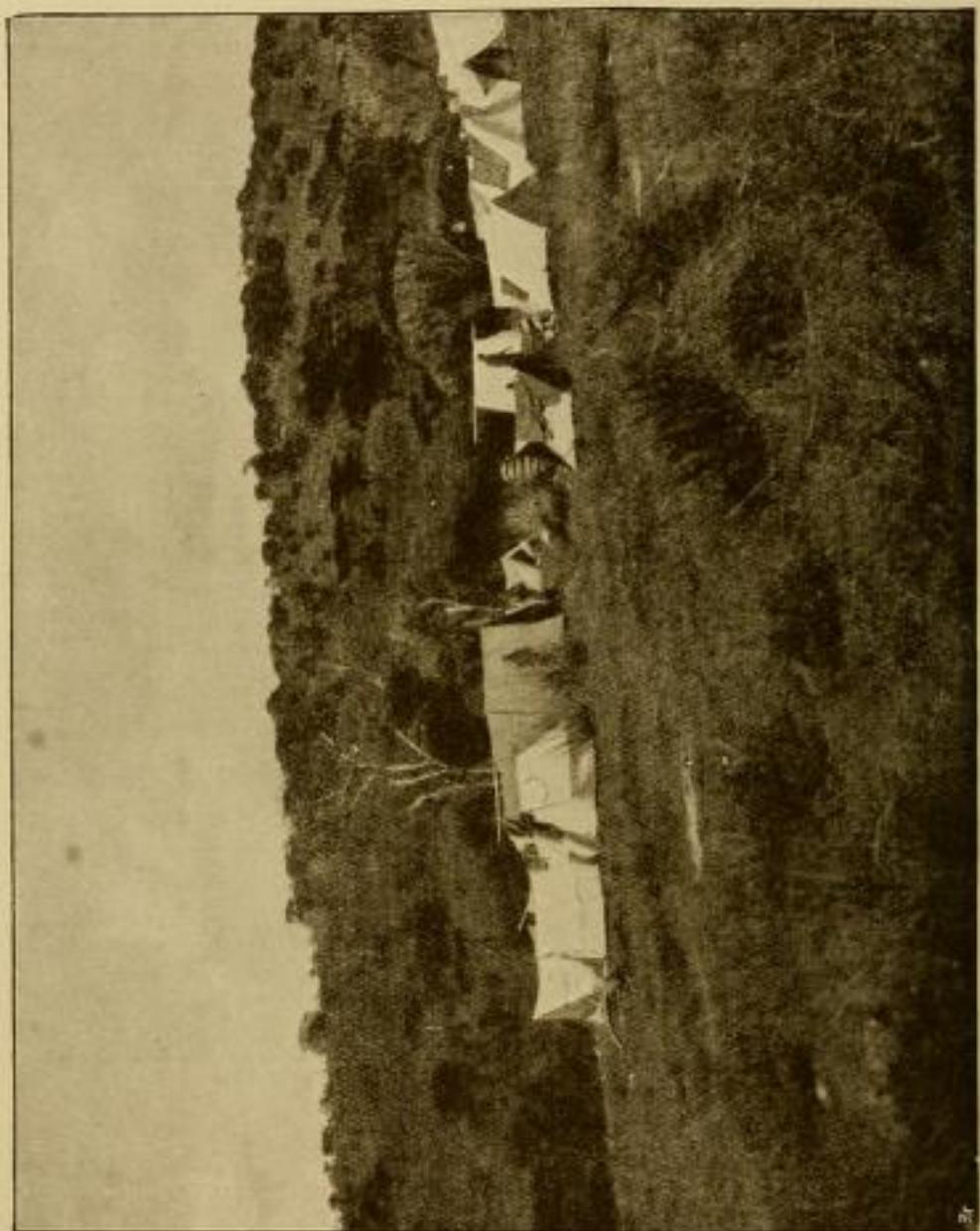
Here I am at Stony Athi, the country famed for lions, in which it is said that in the last eight months forty to fifty lions have fallen victims to the rifles of various sportsmen and professional hunters. The country itself is extraordinarily favourable. Right and left of the railway-line is an unending hilly stretch of country, on which graze hundreds of zebras,



A BABY WART-HOG.

wildebeests, and hartebeests, and in the middle, covering about sixty acres, is an oasis, consisting of thick sedge and reeds six feet high, the haunt of the lions. Numerous fresh tracks show that they really do hide here. They go out hunting in the evening and return to their cool retreat at daybreak. This is the time to lie in wait for them. One of my predecessors has put up a stone shelter affording very good covert and excellently placed ; in it I spent two hours this morning. I saw no lions,

only yesterday's fresh spoor. To save myself several hours' march each morning I have pitched my tent in the neighbourhood of the lions' lair, leaving my black boys behind at Stony Athi Station, where they will not frighten my game. The



MY CAMP AT MACHAKOS

next day I took up a position on the west side instead of on the east of the high grass, and, as ill-luck would have it, just after sunrise two lions appeared on the plain and struck off quickly for their sleeping-place, unfortunately for me on the east side. The next morning not one was to be seen, but to-day they came again about 6 A.M., likewise on the side opposite

to mine. The people in the tent called me, and said that the lions had gone down the rocky bed of the Stony Athi River and not into the grass. I followed them for two hours without success and then returned to the tent, from which



SUALA PALA HEAD.

I could see over a considerable extent of country, including the oasis.

Towards noon, while I was sitting at lunch, the two animals appeared—a splendid lion with a magnificent mane, and a lioness; they were coming up the river and moving with

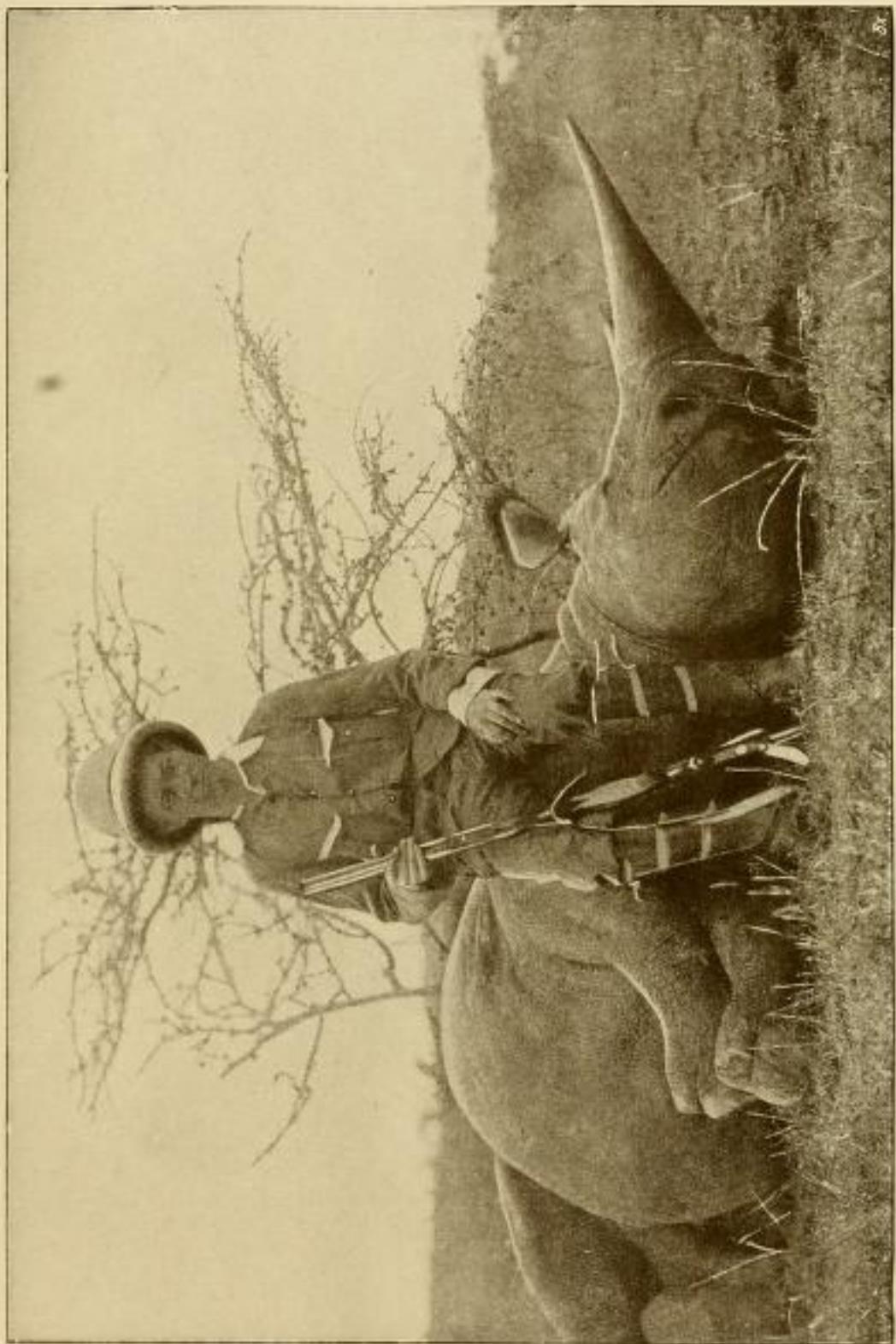
deliberate gait towards their dwelling-place. In the afternoon some Indian workmen on the line offered to drive the lions, and I took position with the wind in my favour, but the drive did not go well. The Indians simply went yelling up and down the grass, and the lions no doubt continued to sleep peacefully.



HEAD OF COKE'S HARTEBEEST.

Meantime an interruption appeared in the shape of rain. In the so-called rainy season of July and August scarcely any rain at all had fallen in the mountains, and it seems as if the heavens wanted to make up for the omission. This is very unpleasant for me, seeing that I am provided with no protection against the damp for myself and the animals I have shot.

A BULL RHINOCEROS.



Likewise it is highly uncomfortable to go out at 4 A.M. and sit waiting for lions for hours together in pouring rain.

On the 12th of October I determined to move on to Athi River, the terminus of my expedition, and hunt the lions in Stony Athi, if I got the chance, on my return journey. The Athi River, with its growth of trees on either bank, is a



HEAD OF GRANT'S ZEBRA (MARE).

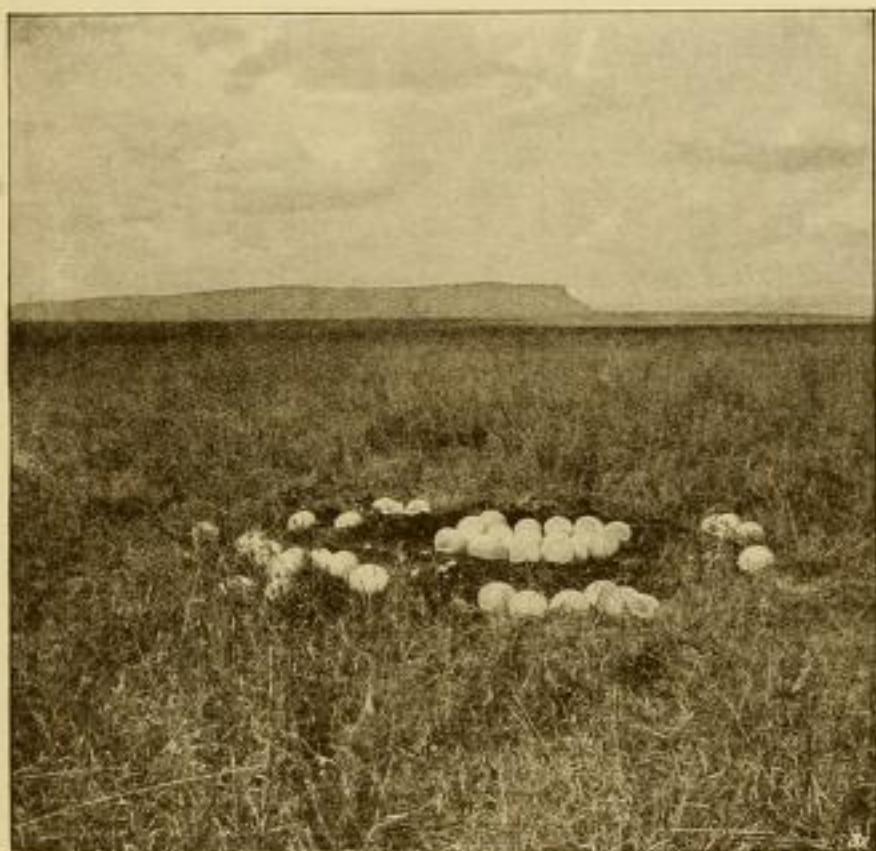
welcome change to eyes weary of the unending plain. On the first day's march down the stream I saw thousands of zebras and antelopes of all kinds, and shot a male Suala pala. On the second day I discovered with the glasses three lions, which appeared to be making away as fast as they could from me and my company. I called a halt and, accompanied by Brown and one black boy, began to follow the lions; on this interminable plateau I had no other chance of getting a shot

at them. We soon passed the place where they had just devoured their prey—a hartebeest—and the vultures were now quarrelling over the remains. Knowing that the lions would not be disposed to go far or fast on full stomachs, I hoped that I might be able to get near enough for a shot, and went on at full speed. At first we gained but little ground. They were about eleven hundred yards from us, but kept stopping more and more frequently, and I could see with the glasses that the trio consisted of a lioness and two lions. After we had chased them thus for half an hour the country became somewhat hilly, and I resolved to stay where I was to give the lions time to reach the hill, and then, so soon as they had disappeared over the crest, to make a dash for the top so as to lessen the distance between us. I reached the brow of the hill with my heart beating violently, and there were my lions four hundred paces ahead! At the first shot of my 375-calibre rifle they all stood still a moment, and then fled, two to left and one to right. This single lion seemed to me to be the biggest, so I gave him the second barrel. He acknowledged the hit by springing violently forward, lashing his tail and, after a few rushes, settling down. Sitting on the shoulders of the black boy, I could clearly see his yellow head above the dry grass, and determined to give him an hour to reach his end. When time was up, I climbed on my boy's shoulders again, but could see no more of the lion.

We now very cautiously approached the place where I had last seen the lion, and were within ten paces before I could make him out in the grass, which matched his coat exactly. I thought it too risky to stay ten paces from a wounded lion, so we went back a short distance, and told the boy to throw half-a-dozen stones at him; but nothing stirred. The king of beasts had joined his forefathers: he was a noble specimen. Seeing that I fired at a considerable distance and when I was out of breath, my shot was a lucky one; it hit him full in the body, and the bullet, travelling from back to front, had torn his liver and one of his lungs to pieces; the little double-

barrelled rifle had done its work well at 410 paces. With the death of the lion the object of my expedition is attained, for I have now killed all the known wild animals.

The 15th of October. I have seldom had such a fright as I had to-day. I was marching at the head of my company over the plain which stretched away before us, with no gun in my hand, because nothing was stirring for miles round, when



AN OSTRICH'S NEST WITH FORTY-FIVE EGGS.

suddenly a living thing leapt up at my feet, as though shot out of the ground. One's thoughts, not unnaturally, in this country are largely occupied with lions, and I supposed that it must be one. However it was a hen ostrich, sitting on forty-five eggs, and could in no way be distinguished in colour from the dry grass on which she sat; but Madam Ostrich also seemed to have had a bad fright, for she made off with astonishing rapidity. A meeting like this is not always free from danger; it sometimes happens that maternal love

will make the bird defend her eggs and even attack a man, striking out in front with her long legs.

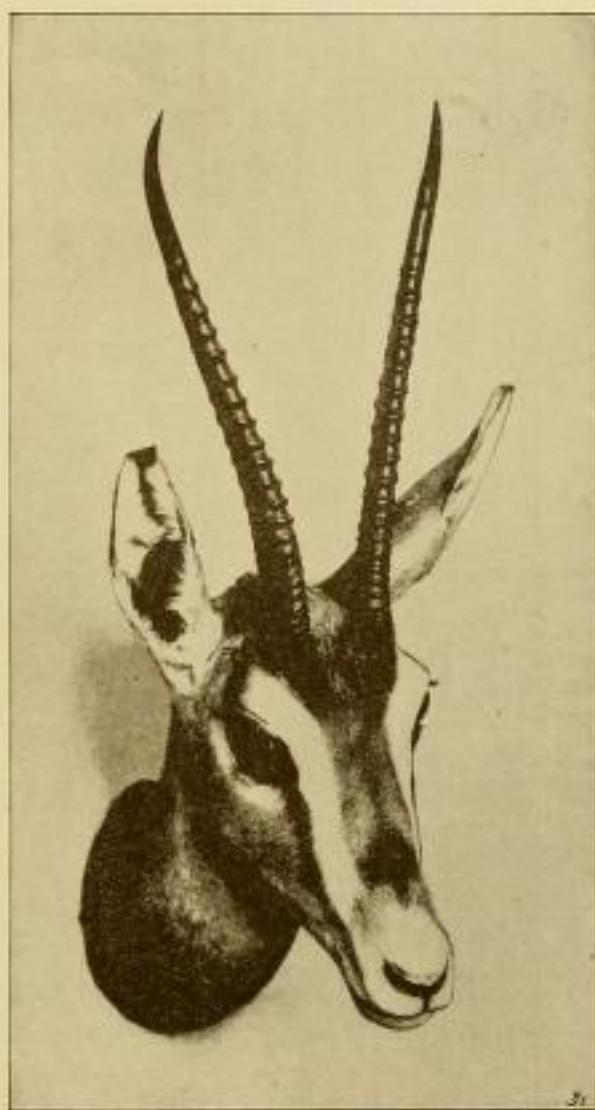
Yesterday afternoon I saw at a distance of some seven



HEAD OF MALE GRANT'S GAZELLE.

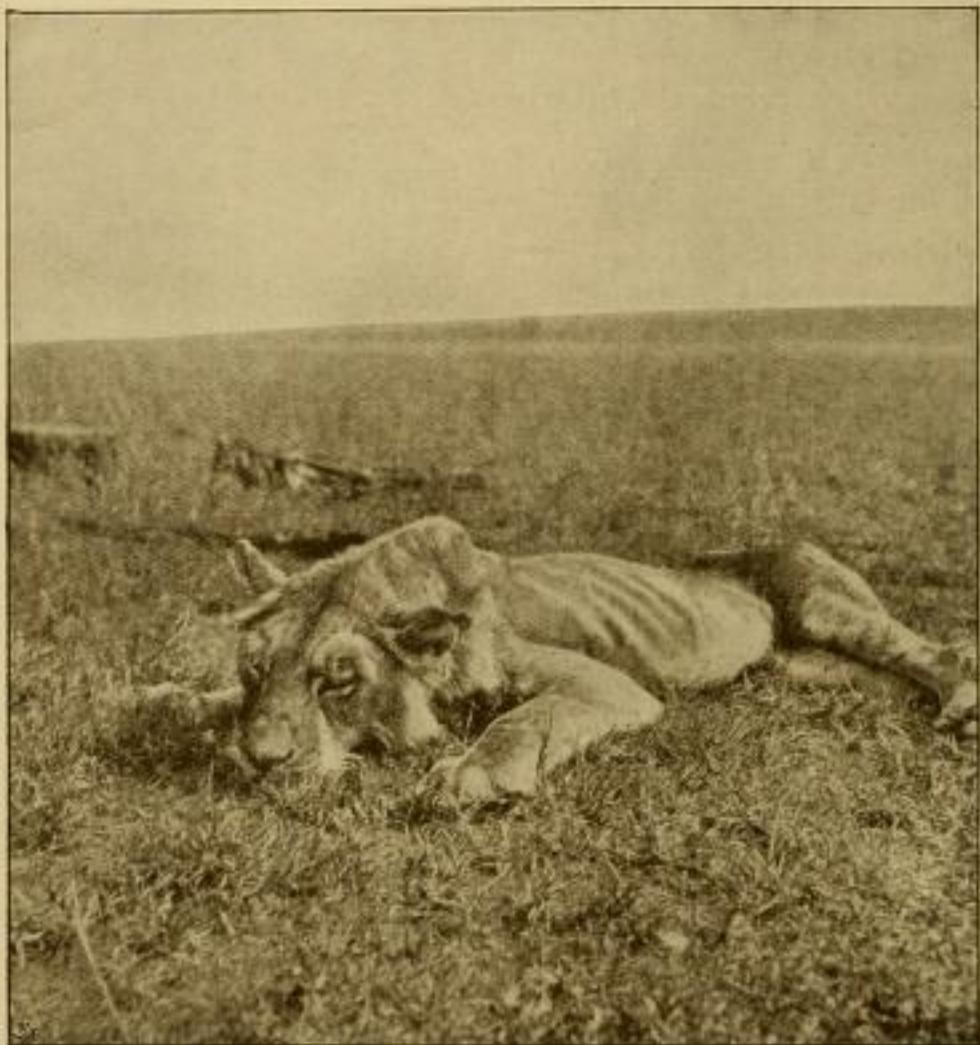
hundred paces two more lions rushing madly away; but spite of great efforts did not succeed in getting near enough for a shot. To-day I have had many strokes of luck, which have resulted in a splendid bag. First of all I shot a Grant's gazelle near the camp, and soon afterwards two hartebeests

came dashing over the plain towards me and my companions. Two hundred paces from us they stopped and began to fight ; then they started off on their wild career again without taking the slightest notice of us. At thirty paces I shot one of them, which fell dead, when the second rushed at his adversary and dug away at his flanks with his sharp horns, until a bullet brought him down too. While we were engaged in cutting up these animals, my black servant Msee came out of the tent towards us ; he had left the salt out of the breakfast basket and was bringing it to us. I told him to go back to the camp and bring the porters to carry the venison to the tent. He had not gone more than a few hundred paces when he began to gesticulate violently, and shouting "Simba" (lion), came back to us. I ran quickly to meet him, but could see only the tail of the lion, which was making off down a hill. We could not get a sight of him, and without doubt he had hidden in the thick grass at the foot of the hill. We threw stones and fired blank cartridges to try to make him leave his cover, but to no purpose. After half an hour I gave him up and turned my attention to some antelopes which were grazing peacefully near by. Scarcely had we been gone for ten minutes when we saw the lion



HEAD OF FEMALE GRANT'S GAZELLE.

slowly and deliberately going up the hill, from which he had descended, and making towards the dead hartebeests. It was at once evident that the crowds of vultures circling overhead had told him that there was dead game not far off, and, having been frightened away by the black at the first



MY SECOND LION.

attempt, he was trying to find it for the second time. I let him get to the crest of the hill, and followed when he had disappeared from sight. When I came to within three hundred paces of the two dead animals, I actually saw the lion tearing off great mouthfuls of meat with relish. Experience shows that a hungry lion does not leave the prey he has slain or found; and it is only necessary, as in the present case, to approach and shoot him. When the lion, which I perceived to be a

Europe. It was raining almost without cessation, and I was not at all prepared to face rain. So within three weeks I was back again at Mombasa with a bag of thirty-two head, a number due in no small measure to steam-power and smokeless powder. Thanks to these we need but days now, not weeks as formerly, to reach the places and objects we seek.