IN AFRICA

Hunting Adventures in the Big Game Country

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rent and weakening. There are all kinds of ticks, from little red ones no bigger than a grain of pepper to big fat ones the size of a finger-nail, that are exactly the color of the ground. They seem to have immortal life, for they can exist for a long time without food. Doctor Ward told us of some that he had put in a box, where they lived four years without food or water. He also told us of one that was sent to the British museum, put on a card with a pin through it, and lived over two years in this condition. It is assumed, however, that it sustained fatal injuries, because after a two years' fight against its wound it finally succumbed.

We were told to avoid old camping grounds while on *safari,* because these spots were usually much infested with ticks waiting for new camping parties. Wild game is always covered with ticks and carries them all over the land. As you walk through the grass in the game country the ticks cling to your clothes and immediately seek for an opening where they may establish closer relations with you. Some animals, like the rhino and the eland, have tick birds that sit upon their backs and eat the ticks. The egrets police the eland and capture all predatory ticks, while the rhino usually has half a dozen little tick birds sitting upon him.

However, we were starting out in a day or so, and in a few days expected to learn a lot more about ticks than we then knew.

It is supposed to require a certain amount of nerve to go lion shooting. It is also supposed to

Your shoes or boots are by your bed, all oiled and cleaned, and your puttees are neatly rolled, ready to be wound around you from the tops of the shoes to the knee. Your clean flannels (one always wears heavy flannel underclothes and heavy woolen socks in this climate) are laid out and your clothes for the day's march are ready for you. You get into your clothes and boots, go out of your tent, and find there a basin of hot water and your toilet equipment. The basin is supported on a three-pronged stick thrust into the ground and makes a thoroughly satisfactory washstand. The fire in front of the cook's tent is burning merrily and he and his assistants are busily at work on the morning breakfast. Twenty other camp-fires are burning around the twenty small white tents that the porters and others occupy, and scores of half-clad natives are cooking their breakfasts. The ration that we were required to give them was a pound and a half of ground corn a day for each man, but in good hunting country we got them a good deal of meat to eat. They are very fond of hartebeest, zebra, rhino, and especially hippo. In fact, they are eager to eat any kind of meat, so that anything we killed was certain to be of practical use as food for the porters. This fact greatly relieves the conscience of the man who shoots an animal for its fine horns. Six porters sleep in each of the little shelter tents which we were required to supply them, and this number sleeping so closely packed served to keep them warm through the cold African highland nights.

A luncheon, with fruit, meat, curry and a pastry is ready by the time we are, and then we smoke or sleep through the broiling midday hours. Mr. Stephenson—or "Fred," as he is with us—and I go out on a scouting expedition and look for good specimens to add to our collection of horns or to get food for the porters. Sometimes the whole party went out, either photographing charging rhinos or shooting, but this part of the daily program was usually too varied to generalize as part of the daily doings. Several porters went with each of us to bring in the game, which there is rarely any uncertainty of securing.

In the evening we return and find our baths of hot water ready. We take off our heavy hunting boots and slip into the soft mosquito boots. After which dinner is ready, and our menu is strangely varied. Sometimes we have kongoni steaks, at other times we have the heart of waterbuck or the liver of bushbuck or impalla. Twice we had rhino tongue and once rhino tail soup. We eat, and at six o'clock the darkness of night suddenly spreads over the land. We talk over our several adventures of the afternoon, some of which may be quite thrilling, and then, with camp chairs drawn around the great camp-fire, and with the sentinel askari pacing back and forth, we spend a drowsy hour in talking. Gradually the sounds of night come on. Off there a hyena is howling or a zebra is barking, and we know that through all those shadowy masses of trees the beasts of prey are creeping forth for their

CHAPTER VI

A LION DRIVE. WITH A RHINO IN RANGE SOME ONE SHOUTS "SIMBA" AND I GET MY FIRST GLIMPSE OF A WILD LION. THREE SHOTS AND OUT

LIKE every one who goes to Africa with a gun and a return ticket, I had two absorbing ambitions. One was to kill a lion and the other to live to tell about it. In my estimation all the other animals compared to a lion as latitude eighty-seven and a half compares to the north pole. I wanted to climb out of the Tartarin of Tarascon class of near lion hunters into the ranks of those who are entitled to remark, "Once, when I was in Africa shooting lions," etc. A dead lion is bogey in the big game sport—the score that every hunter dreams of achieving—and I was extremely eager to make the dream a reality.

When speaking with English sportsmen in London my first question was, "Did you get any lions?" If they had, they at once rose in my estimation; if not, no matter how many elephants or rhinos or buffaloes they may have shot, they still remained in the amateur class.

On the steamer going down to Mombasa the hunting talk was four-fifths lion and one-fifth about other game. The cripple who had been badly

mauled by a lion was a person of much distinction, even more so than the ivory hunter who had killed three hundred elephants.

On the railway to Nairobi every eye was on the lookout for lions and every one gazed with intense interest at the station of Tsavo and remembered the famous pair of man-eaters that had terrorized that place some years before.

In Nairobi the men who had killed lions, and those who had been mauled by them (and there are

The Jolly Little Cemetery

many of the latter), were objects of vast concern, and the little cemetery with its many headstones marked "Killed by lion" added still greater fire to my interest.

Consequently, when we marched out of Nairobi on the evening of September twenty-third, with tents and guns and a hundred and twenty men, the dominating thought was of lions. If ever any one had greater hope and less expectation of killing a lion I was the one.

We had planned a short trip of from three to five

weeks northeast of Nairobi in what is called the Tana River country. While there are some lions in that section, as there are in most parts of British East Africa, it is not considered a good lion country. Buffaloes, rhinos, hippos, giraffes, and many varieties of smaller game are abundant, largely because the Tana River is in a bad fever belt and hunting parties generally prefer to go elsewhere. This preliminary trip was intended to perfect our shoot-

Peering for Lions

ing, so that later, when in real lion country, we might be better equipped to take on the king of beasts with some promise of hitting him.

The tree-tops and corrugated iron roofs of Nairobi had hardly dropped behind a long, sun-soaked hump of the Athi Plains when I began to peel my eyes inquiringly for lions. All the lion stories that I had heard for the preceding few months paraded back and forth in my memory, and if ever a horizon was thoroughly scanned for lion, that horizon just out of Nairobi was the one.

Hartebeests in droves loped awkwardly away from the trail and then turned and looked with wondering interest at us. Zebras, too fat to run, trotted off, and also turned to observe the invaders. Gazelles did the same, and away off in the distance a few wildebeests went galloping slowly to a safe distance. They were probably safe at any distance had they only known it, for up to the hour when I cantered forth from Nairobi in quest of lions and rhinos I had not shot at anything for three years, nor hit anything for ten.

Night came on—the black, sudden night of Africa—and we went into camp four miles from Nairobi without ever having heard the welcome roar of a lion. It was a distinct disappointment. I remembered the story about the lions that stampeded the zebras through the peaceful gardens of Nairobi only a few nights before—also the report that some man-eaters had been recently partaking of nourishment along the very road upon which we were now camping. I also remembered hearing that lions had been seen prowling around the edge of the town and that the Athi Plains are a time-honored habitat of the lion family. On the other hand, I thought of Mr. Roosevelt, who had recently been reducing the supply. I also remembered how many hunters had spent years in Africa without ever seeing a lion, and how Doctor Rainsford had made two different hunting trips to Africa, always looking for lions, but without success.

During our first three days of marching, we

looked industriously for lions. On broad, grassy plain, in low scrub, on the slopes of low hills—everywhere we looked for them. If a flock of vultures circled above a distant spot we went over at once in the hope of surprising a lion at his kill. Every reed bed was promptly investigated, every dry nullah was explored. McMillan's farm, which is a farm only in name, was scoured without ever a sign or a hint that a lion lurked thereabouts. Mr. McMillan has four lions in a cage, but they snarled so savagely that we hastened away to look for lions elsewhere. The second day we crossed the Nairobi River, the third day we crossed the Induruga River, and the fourth day we camped down on the Athi River. Here we struck a clue. Two English settlers came over and told us that lions had been heard the night before near their ranch house, on the slopes of Donyo Sabuk, a high solitary round top mountain rising from the Athi Plains, and we determined to organize our first lion hunt. It was here that Mr. Lucas was killed by a lion a short time before.

A lion hunt, or a lion drive, is quite a ceremony. You take thirty or forty natives, go to the place where the lion was heard, and then beat every bit of cover in the hope of scaring out the beasts. Lions are fond of lying up during the day in dry reed beds, and when you go out looking for them you are most likely to find them in such places.

We started, three of us, with forty porters, at about daybreak. At seven o'clock we had climbed

up the side of the mountain to the spot where the lions were supposed to be lurking—a long, reed-filled cleft in the side of the slope. The porters were sent up to one end of the reed bed, twenty on each side, while we went below to where the lion would probably be driven out by their shouting and noise. The porters bombarded the reeds with stones while we waited with rifles ready for the angry creature to dash out in our vicinity. It was an interesting wait, with plenty of food for thought. I wondered why the Englishmen had not come out to get the lions themselves, and then remembered that one of them had been mauled by a lion and had henceforth remained neutral in all lion fights. I wondered many other things which I have now forgotten. I was quite busy wondering for some time as I waited. In the meantime the lions failed to appear.

Bushbuck, waterbuck, and lots of other herbivora appeared, but no carnivora. We raked the reed bed fore and aft, and combed the long grass in every direction. A young rhino was startled in his morning nap, ran around excitedly for a while, and then trotted off. Birds of many varieties fluttered up and wondered what the racket was about. At ten o'clock we decided that the lions had failed to do their part of the program, and that no further developments were to be expected. So we marched back homeward, got mixed up with another rhino, and finally gained camp, seven miles away, just as our hunger had reached an advanced stage.

The next day we marched to the Thika Thika

River, then to Punda Milia, and then to Fort Hall. Some one claimed to have heard a lion out from Fort Hall early in the morning, but I more than half suspect it was one of our porters who reverberates when he sleeps. From Fort Hall we crossed the Tana and made three marches down the river. Rhinos were everywhere jumping out from behind bushes when least expected and in many ways behaving in a most diverting way. For a time we forgot lions while dodging rhinos. There were dozens of them in the thick, low scrub, with now and then a bunch of eland, or a herd of waterbuck, or a few hundred of the ubiquitous kongoni.

We camped in a beautiful spot down on the Tana. The country looked like a park, with graceful trees scattered about on the rolling lawn-like hills. On all sides was game in great profusion. Hippos played about in the river, baboons scampered about on the edge of the water, monkeys chattered in the trees, and it seemed as though nearly all of the eight hundred varieties of East African birds gave us a morning serenade. A five-minutes' walk from camp would show you a rhino, while from the top of any knoll one could look across a vast sweep of hills upon which almost countless numbers of zebras, kongoni, and other animals might be seen.

But never a lion. It certainly looked discouraging.

As a form of pleasant excitement, we began to photograph rhinos. Mr. Akeley took out his mov-

ing-picture machine, advanced it cautiously to within a few yards of the unsuspecting rhino, and then we tried to provoke a charge. We took a dozen or more rhinos in this way, often approaching to within a few yards, and if there is any more exciting diversion I don't know what it is. I've looped the loop and there is no comparison. It is more like being ambushed by Filipino insurgents —that is, it's the same kind of excitement, with more danger.

One day it was necessary to shoot a big bull rhino. He staggered and fell, but at once got up and trotted over a hill. Having wounded him, it was then necessary for me to follow him, which I did for three blazing hours. From nine o'clock till twelve I followed, with the sun beating down on the dry, grass-covered hills as though it meant to burn up everything beneath it. If any one had asked me, "Is it hot enough for you?" I should have answered "Yes" without a moment's hesitation. The horizon shimmered in waves of heat. From the top of one hill I could see my rhino half a mile away on the slope of another. When I reached the slope he was a mile farther on. I began to think he was a mirage. For a wounded animal, with two five-hundred-grain shells in his shoulder, he was the most astonishing example of vitality I have ever seen. He would have been safe against a Gatling gun. There were more low trees a mile farther on, and I plodded doggedly on in the hope of getting a little relief from the sun. As I drew near I

noticed a rhino standing under the trees, but he was not the wounded one. I decided that the shade was insufficient for both of us and moved swiftly on. Across the valley on the slope of another blistered hill stood the one I was looking for. He didn't seem to be in the chastened mood of one who is about to die. He seemed vexed about something, probably the two cordite shells he was carrying. I at last came up within a hundred yards of him. He had got my wind and was facing me with tail nervously erect. The tail of a rhino is an infallible barometer of his state of mind. With his short sight, I knew that he could not see me at that distance, but I knew that he had detected the direction in which the danger lay. By slowly moving ahead, the distance was cut to about seventy yards, which was not too far away in an open country with a wounded rhino in the foreground. I resolved to shoot before he charged or before he ran away, and so I prepared to end the long chase with an unerring shot.

Suddenly a sound struck my ear that acted upon me like an electric shock:

"Simba!"

It was the one word that I had been hoping to hear ever since leaving Nairobi, for the word means "lion." My Somali gunbearer was eagerly pointing toward a lone tree that stood a hundred yards off to the left. A huge, hulking animal was slowly moving away from it. It was my first glimpse of a wild lion. He was half concealed in the tall, dry grass and in a few seconds

had entirely disappeared from view. We rushed after him. The rhino was completely forgotten and was left to charge or run away as he saw fit. When we reached the spot where the lion was last seen there was no trace of him. He apparently was not "as brave as a lion." We followed the course that he presumably took and presently reached the crest of a ridge. Then the second gunbearer, a

Game Was Plenty for a Minute or Two

keen-eyed Kikuyu, discovered the lion three hundred yards off to the right. After reaching the top of the hill the animal had swung directly off at right angles with the idea of reaching cover in a dry creek bed some distance away. I started to shoot at three hundred yards, but before I could take a careful aim the lion had disappeared in the grass. For an hour we thrashed the high reeds in the dry creek bed with never a sign of the king of

beasts. He had apparently abdicated. He had vanished so completely that I thought he had escaped toward some low hills a mile farther on. The disappointment of seeing a lion and not getting it, or at least shooting at it, was keen to a degree that actually hurt.

There was nothing left but to resume our chase after the wounded rhino. It was like going back to work after a pleasant two weeks' vacation. We presently found him on a far distant hill, and after an hour's tramp in the sun we came up to him in the middle of the rolling prairie. There was not a tree for a mile, nor a single avenue of escape in case he charged. Horticulture had never interested me especially, but just at this moment I think a tree, even a thorn tree, would have been a pleasant subject for intimate study. However, to make a long story longer, I shot him at a hundred yards and felt certain that both shells struck. Yet he wheeled around and, stumbling occasionally, was off like a railway train. Again we followed, two miles of desperate tramping in that merciless sun, up hills and down hills, until finally we entirely lost all trace of him. It was now two o'clock. I had eaten nothing since five o'clock in the morning, my water bottle was so nearly empty that I dared take only a swallow at a time, my knees were sore from climbing hills and wading through the tall, dry prairie grass, and I decided to give up this endless pursuit of a rhino who wouldn't die after being hit with four cordite shells.

At four-thirty the homeward march was begun. At five-thirty two rhinos blocked the path and one of them had to be shot. At six we were still several miles from camp, with the country wrapped in darkness. The water was gone and only one shell remained for the big gun. Somewhere ahead were miles of thorn scrub in which there might be rhinos or buffaloes. Two days before I had killed two large buffaloes in the district through which we must pass, and there was every likelihood of others still being there. At seven we were hopelessly lost in a wide stretch of hippo grass, and I had to fire a shot in the hope of getting an answering shot from camp. In a couple of moments we heard the distant shot, and then pressed on toward camp. The lion had been carried on ahead while we stopped with the rhino, and so the news reached the camp before us. A long line of porters came out to greet us and a great reception committee was waiting at the camp. It was the first lion of the expedition, and as such was the signal for great celebration. That night there were native dances and songs around the big central camp-fire and a wonderful display of pagan hilarity.

It had been a hard day. Fourteen hours without food, several hours without water, and miles of hard tramping through thorn scrub in the darkness and of long, broiling stretches in the blazing sunlight. It seemed a good price to pay even for a lion, but that night, as I finally stretched out on my cot, I was conscious from time to time of a glow

of pleasure that swept over me. It seemed that of all human gratifications there was none equal to that experienced by the man who has killed his first lion.

My second lion experience came three days later. With a couple of tents and about forty porters our party of four had marched across to a point a couple of miles from where I had killed the lion. We hoped to put in a day or two looking for lions, some of which had been reported in that district. The porters went on ahead with the camp equipment, while we came along more slowly. Mr. Akeley had taken some close-range photographs of rhinos, and we were just on the point of starting direct for the new camp when we ran across two enormous rhinos standing in the open plain. One was extremely large, with an excellent pair of horns, and it was arranged that I should try to secure this one as a trophy, while Mr. Akeley secured a photograph of the event. At thirty-five yards I shot the larger one of the two, and it dropped in its tracks. The other started to charge, but was finally driven away by shouting and by shots fired in the air. The photograph was excellent and quite dramatic.

For an hour the gunbearers worked on the dead rhino and finally secured the head and feet and certain desirable parts of the skin. At noon we resumed our march for camp, two or three miles away. We had hardly gone half the distance when one of the tent boys was seen far ahead, riding the

one mule that we had dared to bring down the Tana River. It was evident that something important had occurred and we hurried on to meet him.

"Simba!" he shouted, as soon as he could be heard. In a moment we had the details. One of the saises had seen two lions, a large male and female, quite near the camp. Porters were instructed to watch the beasts until we should arrive, and now were supposed to be in touch with them. We omitted luncheon and struck off at once in the direction indicated by the tent boy. We soon came up to the porters and an instant later saw the lions. It was a beautiful sight. The two animals were majestically walking up the rocky slope of a low, fire-scorched hill a few hundred yards away. The male was a splendid beast, with all the splendid dignity of one who fears nothing in the whole wide world. From time to time the two lions stopped and looked back at us, but with no sign of fear. Several times they lay down, but soon would resume their stately course up among the rocks.

I shall never forget the picture that lay before me. It was as though some famous lion painting of Gérôme or Landseer had come to life, sometimes the animals being outlined clearly against the blue sky and at other times standing, with splendid heads erect, upon the rocks of the low ridge that rose ahead of us.

We stalked them easily. Several porters were left where the lions could constantly see them, while we three, Akeley, Stephenson and I, with our

CHAPTER VII

ON THE TANA RIVER, THE HOME OF THE RHINO. THE TIMID ARE FRIGHTENED, THE DANGEROUS KILLED, AND OTHERS PHOTOGRAPHED. MOVING PICTURES OF A RHINO CHARGE

Down on the Tana River the rhinos are more common than in any other known section of Africa. In two weeks we saw over one hundred—perhaps two hundred—of them—so many, in fact, that one of the chief diversions of the day was to count rhinos. One day we counted twenty-six, another day nineteen, and by the time we left the district rhinos had become such fixtures in the landscape as to cause only casual comment. Perhaps there were some repeaters, ones that were counted twice, but even allowing for that there were still some left. We saw big ones and little ones, old ones and young ones, and middle-aged ones; ones with long ears, short horns, double horns, and single horns; black ones and red ones—in fact, all the kinds of rhinos that are resident in British East Africa. One had an ear gone and another had a crook in his tail. If we had stayed another week we might have got out a Tana River Rhino Directory, with addresses and tree numbers. We studied them fore and aft, from in front of trees and from behind them, from close

range and long range, over our shoulders, and through our cameras, every way whereby a conscientious lover of life and nature can study a prominent member of the Mammalia. We called the place Rhino Park because the country looks like a beautiful park studded with splendid trees and dotted with rhinos.

When I went to Africa I was equipped with the following fund of knowledge concerning the rhi-

A Morning Walk on the Tana River

noceros: First, that he is familiarly called "rhino" by the daring hunters who have written about him; second, that he is a member of the Perissodactyl family, whose sole representatives are the horse, the rhino, and the tapir; third, that he savagely charges human beings who write books about their thrilling adventures in Africa, and, finally, that he looks like a hang-over from the pterodactyl age. The books and magazine stories that have come out since Mr. Roosevelt made African hunting the

vogue invariably describe the rhino as being one of the most dangerous of African animals. A charging rhino, a wounded lion, a cape buffalo, and a frenzied elephant are the four terrors of the African hunters. All other forms of danger are slight compared with these, and I was full to the guards with a vast and fearful respect for the rhino. I fancied myself spinning around like a pinwheel with the horn of a rhino as a pivot, and the thought had little to commend itself to a lover of longevity —such as myself, for instance.

After going to Africa and meeting some of the best members of the rhino set I was able to form some conclusions of my own, chief of which is the belief that he is dangerous only if he hits you. As long as you can keep out of his reach you are in no great danger except from the thorns.

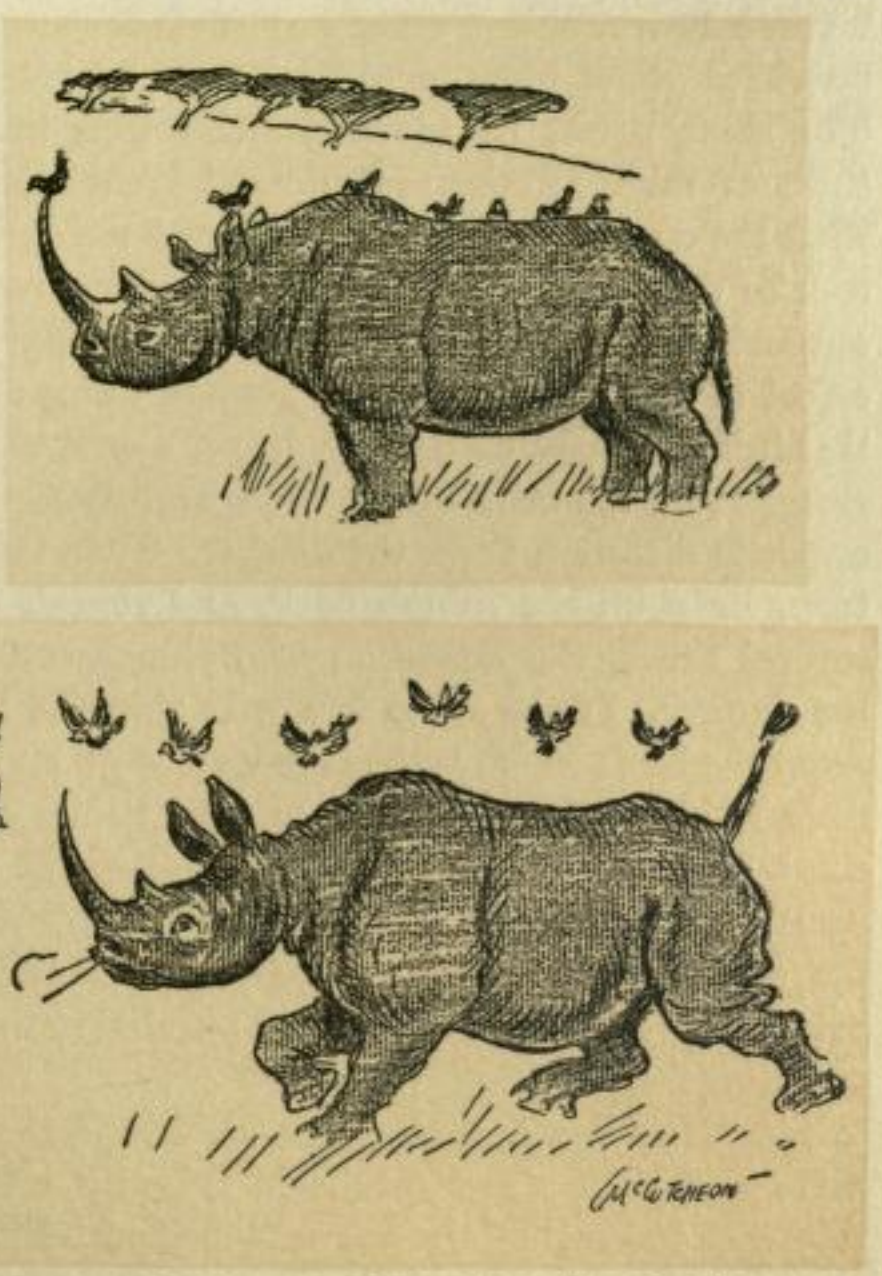
The prevailing estimate of the rhino is that he is an inoffensive creature who likes to bask under the shade of a tree and watch the years go parading by. His thick skin and fierce armament of horns seem to make of him a relic of some long-forgotten age —the last survivor of the time when mammoths and dinosauruses roamed the manless waste and time was counted in geological terms instead of days and minutes. His eyes are dimmed and he sees nothing beyond a few yards away, but his hearing and sense of smell are keen, and he sniffs danger from afar in case danger happens to be to windward of him. His sensitive nose is always alert for foreign and, therefore, suspicious odors, and when he smells the

blood of an Englishman, or even an American, his tail goes up in anger, he sniffs and snorts and races around in a circle while he locates the direction where the danger lies—and then, look out. A blind, furious rush which only a well-sped bullet can prevent causing the untimely end of whatever happens to be in the way. That is the popular estimate of the rhino.

Popular Conception of Rhino

Here are some of the conclusions I have formed: If the hunter carefully approaches the rhino from the leeward he may often come within a few yards of the animal and might easily shoot him in a leisurely way. The rhino can see only at close range and can smell only when the wind blows the scent to him. Consequently he would be defenseless and at the mercy of the hunter if it were not for one thing. Nature, in her wisdom, has sent the little

rhino bird to act as a sentinel for the great pachyderm. These little birds live on the back of the

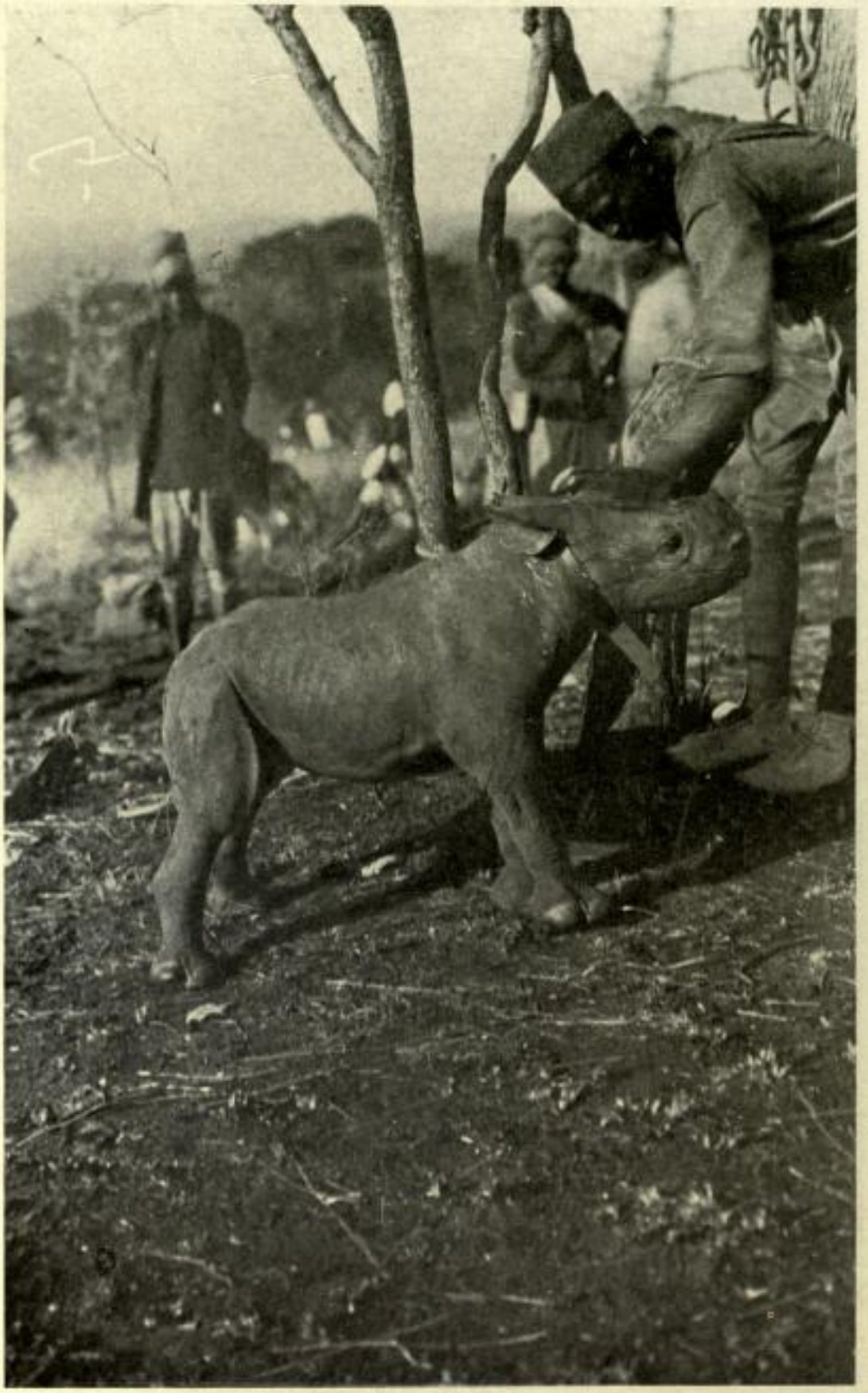


Before and After the Rhino Birds Give the Alarm

rhino and, as recompense for their vigilance, are permitted to partake of such ticks and insects as inhabit the hide of their host. Whenever danger, or,

in other words, whenever a hunter tries to approach their own particular rhino from any direction, windward, leeward, or any other way, the ever alert and watchful rhino birds sound a tocsin of warning. The rhino pricks up his ears and begins to show signs of taking notice. He doesn't know where or what the danger may be, but he knows the C. Q. D. code of danger signals as delivered to him from the outposts on his back and hastens to get busy in an effort to locate the foe. As a general thing the little birds, on sight of danger, begin a wild chatter, rising from the back of the rhino and flying in an opposite direction from the danger. Then they return, light on the rhino's back, and repeat, often several times, the operation of flying away from the danger. If the rhino is a wise rhino he learns from the birds which is the safe way to go and soon trots swiftly off. In a measure the habits of the rhino bird are as interesting as those of the rhino itself, and as an example of the weak protecting the strong, the Damon and Pythias relationship between bird and beast is without parallel in the animal kingdom.

The rhino is a peaceful animal. He browses on herbs and shrubs and dwells in friendly relationship with the rest of the animal kingdom. Perhaps once or twice a day he ambles down to some favorite drinking place for a drink, but the rest of the time he grazes along a hillside or stands or lies sleepily under a tree. At such times as the latter he may be approached quite near without much danger. Each



The Baby Rhino

day he also goes to a favorite wallowing place, where he rolls in the red dirt and emerges from this dirt bath a dull red rhino. In the rhino country dozens of these red dirt rolling places may be found, each one trampled smooth for an area of fifteen or twenty feet in evidence of the great number of times it has been used by one or more rhinos. This dirt bath is a defensive measure against the hordes of ticks that infest the rhino. It is a subject for wonder that the six or eight tick birds do not keep the rhino free of ticks, and it has even been argued by some naturalists that the rhino bird does not eat ticks, but merely uses the rhino as a convenient resting-place. Also perhaps they enjoy the ride. We had planned to get a rhino bird and perform an autopsy on him in order to analyze his contents, but did not do so.

After the rhino has taken his dirt wallow, and looks fine in his new red coat, he then slowly and painstakingly proceeds to kill time during the rest of the day. If danger threatens he becomes exceedingly nervous and excited. His anxiety is quite acute. In vain he tries to locate the danger, rushing one way for a few yards, then the other way, and finally all ways at once. His tail is up and he is snorting like a steam engine. When he rushes toward you in this attitude it looks very much as though he were charging you with the purpose of trampling you to flinders. As a matter of fact, or, rather, opinion, he is merely trying to locate where you are in order that he may run the other way. He

looks terrifying, but in reality is probably badly terrified himself. He would give a good deal to know which way to run, and finally becomes so excited and nervous that he starts frantically in some direction, hoping for the best. If this rush happens to be in your direction you call it a charge from an infuriated rhino; if not, you say that he looked nasty and was about to charge, but finally ran away in another direction. In most rhino charges it is

Trying to Provoke a Charge

my opinion that the rhino is too rattled to know what he is doing, and, instead of charging maliciously, he is merely trying to get away as fast as possible. And in such cases the hunter blazes away at him, wounds him, and the rhino blindly charges the flash.

It was our wish to get moving pictures of a rhino charge. Mr. Akeley had a machine and our plan of action was simple. We would first locate the rhino, usually somnolent under a thorn tree or browsing soberly out in the open. We would then

get to the leeward of him and slowly advance the machine; Mr. Akeley in the middle and Stephenson and I on each side with our double-barreled cordite rifles. In case the charge became too serious to escape we hoped to be able to turn him or kill the rhino with our four bullets. If we were unsuccessful in doing so—well, we had to manage the situation by jumping.

Our first experience was most thrilling, chiefly because we expected a charge. We thought all rhinos charged, as per the magazine articles, and so prepared for busy doings. A rhino cow and half-grown calf were discovered on a distant hillside. We stopped in a ravine to adjust the picture machine and then crept cautiously up the hill until we were within about seventy yards of the unsuspecting pair. Then the rhino birds began to flutter and chatter and the two beasts began to sniff nervously. Finally they turned toward us, with tails erect and noses sniffing savagely. Now for the charge, we thought, for it was considered an absolute certainty that a rhino cow accompanied by its calf would always attack. We moved forward a few yards, clapped our hands to show where we were, and their attitude at once became more threatening. They rushed backward and forward a couple of times and faced us again.

By this time we knew that they saw us and our fingers were within the trigger guards. It was agreed that, if they charged, they should be allowed to come within forty feet before we fired, thus

giving the picture machine time to get a good record. The situation was intense beyond description, and seconds seemed hours. When they started trotting toward us we thought the fatal moment had come, but instead of continuing the "charge," they swung around and trotted swiftly off in an opposite direction. As far as we could see them they trotted swiftly and with the lightness of deer, sometimes zigzagging their course, but always away from us. The charge had failed in spite of all our efforts to provoke it. The whistling and hand-clapping which we had hoped would give them our location without doubt had merely served to tell them the way not to go.

The moving picture record of a "charging rhino" would have been a brilliant success but for one thing—the rhino refused to charge.

During the following ten days we made many similar attempts to get a charge and always with nearly the same results. Once or twice we got within thirty yards before they finally turned tail after a number of feints that looked much like the beginning of a nasty charge. It was always intensely thrilling work because there was the likelihood that we might get a charge in spite of the fact that a dozen or so previous experiences had failed to precipitate one.

In several cases the first rush of the rhino was toward us, but instead of continuing, he would soon swing about and make off, four times as badly scared as we were. It seemed as though these pre-

liminary rushes toward us were efforts to verify the location of danger in order to determine the right direction for escape. In all, we made between fifteen and twenty different attempts on different rhinos to get a charge, but with always practically the same result, yet with always the same thrill of excitement and uncertainty.

Comprehensive statistics on a rhino's charges are hard to obtain. The district commissioner at Embo told me that he had been ordered to reduce the number of rhinos in his district in the interest of public

The End of the Charge

safety and that he had killed thirty-five in all. Out of this number five charged him. That would indicate that one rhino in seven will charge. Captain Dickinson, in his book, *Big Game Shooting on the Equator,* tells of a rhino that charged him so viciously that he threw down his bedding roll and the rhino tossed it and trampled it with great emphasis, after which it triumphantly trotted away, elated probably in the thought that it had wiped out its enemy. A number of fatalities are on record to prove that the rhino is a dangerous beast at times, and so I must conclude that the rhino experi-

ences we had were exceedingly lucky ones, and perhaps exceptional ones in that respect.

In only one instance was it necessary for us to kill a rhino and even then it was done more in the interest of photography than of urgent necessity. On our game licenses we were each allowed to kill two rhinos, and as I wanted one of the Tana River variety it was arranged that I should try to get the first big one with good horns. After a hunt of several hours we found two of them together out on the slope of a long hill. Our glasses showed that one of them was quite large and equipped with a splendid front horn nearly two feet long and a rear horn about a foot long. At the lower slope of the hill were two or three trees that screened our approach so that we were easily enabled to get within about one hundred and fifty yards of them without danger of discovery. From the trees onward the country was an open prairie for two or three miles.

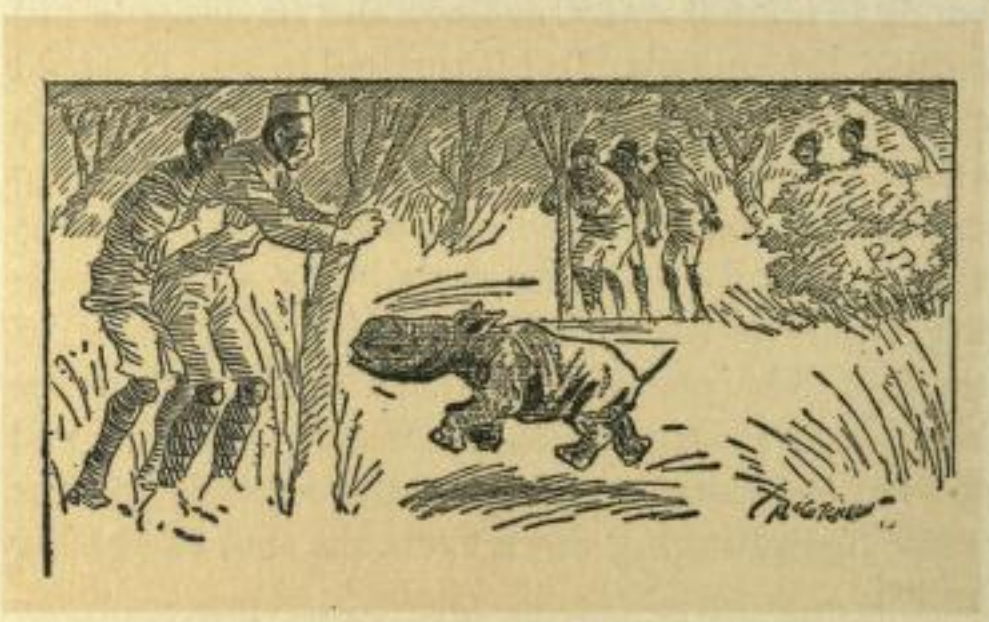
Armed with a double-barreled cordite rifle and the comforting reflection that the chances were seven to one that the rhinos would not charge, I slowly advanced alone toward the two rhinos. Behind me about fifty yards was the long range camera and a second gun manned by Mr. Stephenson. When fifty yards from the rhinos I stopped, but as no offensive tactics were apparent in the camp of the enemy, I slowly walked forward to thirty-five yards. Then they saw me. They faced me with what seemed like an attitude of decided unfriendli-

ness. Their tails were up and they were snorting like steam engines. When the big one started toward me I fired and it fell like a log. The other one, instead of thundering away, according to expectations, became more belligerent. It ran a few steps, then swung around, and I felt certain that it was going to avenge the death of its comrade. The camera brigade rushed forward, clapping their hands to scare it away, as there was no desire to kill both of the animals. But it refused to go. It would sometimes run a few steps, then it would turn and come toward us. It was evidently in a fighting mood, with no intention of deserting the field of action. Finally by firing shots in the air and yelling noisily it turned and dashed over the side of the hill. The photograph, taken at the instant the big rhino was struck, was remarkably dramatic and showed one rhino in an aggressive attitude and the other just plunging down from the shot of the big bullet.

The front horn of the dead rhino was twenty and three-quarters inches long and in many places the animal's hide was over an inch thick. Strips of this were cut off to make whips, and a large section was removed to be made into a table top. These table tops, polished and rendered translucent by the curing processes, are beautiful as well as extremely interesting. The rhino's tongue is even more delicious to eat than ox tongue and rhino tail soup is a great luxury on any white man's table; while the native porters consider rhino meat the finest of any meat to

be had in Africa. The conscience of one who slays a rhino is somewhat appeased by the fact that a hundred native porters will have a good square meal of wholesome meat to help build up their systems.

Our expedition sustained only one real rhino charge. One day Mr. Stephenson stumbled on a big cow rhino that was lying in the grass. The

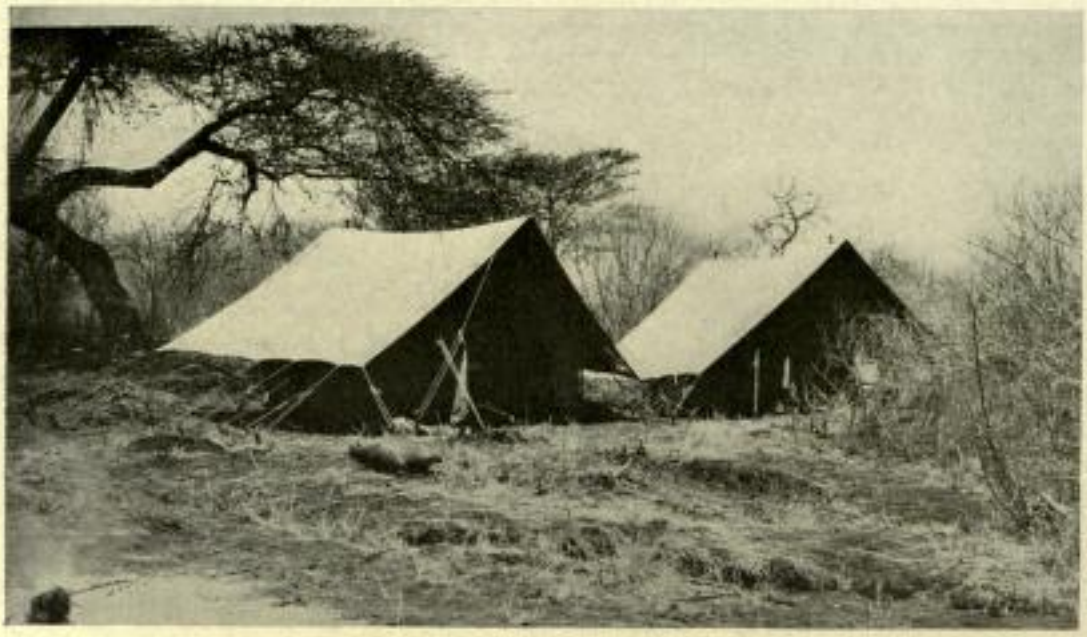


A Real Rhino Charge

meeting was as unexpected to him as to her, and before he could count five she was rushing headlong toward him. He clapped his hands, whistled, and shouted to turn her course, but she came on, snorting loudly and with head ready to impale everything in its way. Stephenson did not want to kill her, neither did he desire to be killed, so when all other means had failed he fired a soft nose bullet into her shoulder in the hope that it would turn her

away without seriously hurting her. The bullet seemed to have no effect and she did not change her course in the slightest degree. By this time she was within a short distance of Stephenson, who was obliged to run a few feet and take refuge behind a tree.

The gunbearers and porters, who had fled in all directions, thought that Stephenson was caught, but the rhino, passing him with only a small margin of five feet, continued thunderously on her way. In a few yards she slowed down, and when last seen was walking. She had evidently been hit very hard by the soft nose bullet and was already showing signs of sickness. Suddenly a terrific squealing made the party aware that the cow rhino had been accompanied by a little rhino calf. The calf, only a couple of weeks old, charged savagely at every one in sight and every one in sight took refuge behind trees and bushes. Instead of trying to escape, the animal turned and continued to attack in all directions whenever a man showed himself. When a man leaped behind a tree the calf would charge the tree with such force that it would be hurled back several feet, only to spring up and charge again. His squealing could be heard for a mile. After a long time the porters succeeded in capturing it and they conveyed it back to camp strung on a pole. If that little rhino was any criterion of rhino pugnacity, then surely the rhino is born with the instinctive impulse to charge and to fight as savagely as any animal alive.



In the Thorn Brush on the Tana

The Dummy Rhino

We fed our little pet rhino on milk and then swung it in a comfortable hammock made of zebra skin. In this more or less undignified fashion it was carried by eight strong porters to Fort Hall, two marches away, where it lived only a week or ten days and then, to our sorrow and regret, succumbed from lack of proper nourishment.

Sometimes, when the *safari* is marching through

Retiring in Favor of Rhino

bush country, the rhino becomes an element of considerable anxiety. An armed party must precede the caravan and clear the route of rhinos, otherwise the porters are likely to be scattered by threatened charges. It is no uncommon sight to see a crowd of heavily laden porters drop their loads and shin up the nearest tree in record time. Consequently, strong protective measures are always demanded when a long train of unarmed natives is moving

through bush or scrub country where there are many rhinos.

The lower Tana River country is admirably adapted to the life habits of the rhinos. Formerly the district was well settled by natives, but now, owing to the fever conditions prevailing there, the natives have all moved away to more wholesome places and only the forlorn remains of deserted villages mark where former prosperity reigned.

Favorite Way of Being Photographed

The country has been abandoned to game, with the result that it has been enormously increasing during the last few years. In addition to the great numbers of rhinos there are big herds of buffalo, enormous numbers of hippo in the river, and many small droves of eland. Waterbuck, bushbuck, steinbuck, impalla, hartebeest and zebra dwell in comparative immunity from danger and may be seen in hundreds, grazing on the hills or in the woods that fringe the river. It is a sportsman's

paradise, if he manages to escape the fever, and we enjoyed it tremendously, even though we shot only a hundredth part of what we might easily have shot. The charm of hunting in such a region lies in what one sees rather than in what one kills.

CHAPTER XVI

IN THE TALL GRASS OF THE MOUNT ELGON COUNTRY. A NARROW ESCAPE FROM A LONG-HORNED RHINO. A THANKSGIVING DINNER AND A VISIT TO A NATIVE VILLAGE

MOUNT ELGON is one of the four great mountains of Africa. You can find it on the map of the dark continent, standing all alone, just a little bit north of Victoria Nyanza, and surrounded by names that one has never heard of before.

The mountain is distinctly out of the picture-post-card belt—in fact, the only belt that one will find around Elgon is the timber belt that encircles the mountain, and perhaps also a few that the local residents wear on Sundays and national holidays.

The function of the latter class of belt is to keep up a gay appearance. It is worn for looks, not warmth.

The traveler who goes to Mount Elgon will not be distracted by sounds of civilization, except such as he takes with him. He will travel for days without seeing a sign of human life beyond his own following. The country west of the Nzoia River is uninhabited and is abandoned to the elephant and the giraffe and other animals that care not for the

Nevertheless we started and brilliantly blundered into some most diverting adventures.

The first day's march after crossing the Nzoia River was through scrub country and what we considered high grass. The next day we struck *real* high grass! It was so deep that we had to burrow through it. Only the helmets of those on horseback marked where the caravan was passing. The long line of porters carrying their burdens were buried from view. It was a terrible place to meet a rhino and perhaps for that very reason we promptly proceeded to meet one.

We were riding ahead, followed by the cook and the tent boys, and behind them was the long string of a hundred or more porters, askaris, *totos,* and so forth. The end of the line was some hundred yards behind the head. Suddenly there was a wild cry of *"faru!"* (rhino).

It was disconcerting, but after one or two hurried and flurried moments we got our heavy batteries in readiness and prepared to sell his life as cheaply as possible. But no rhino came. The grass was too deep to have seen him if he had come, but we thought it was well to have a reception committee ready just the same.

Then the rear ranks began to telescope into the front ranks. They came forward two or three jumps at a time. They were visibly perturbed, but presently they recovered enough to give expert testimony.

A huge rhino had been in the grass by the trail

as we came along and had waited until the whole line had passed. Then he jumped into the trail and charged furiously after the porters. The latter, severally, collectively, and frantically, leaped for their lives, dropping packs and uttering hurried appeals to Allah.

He Estimated the Length at Four Feet

After scattering a few dozen of the rank and file from his line of march the rhino veered off and plunged out of sight in the tall grass. One of the porters whose veracity is unquestioned by those who don't know him estimated the forward horn to be four feet long. He said the rhino charged earnestly and with hostile intent.

A rhino charging a *safari* is always a pleasing

diversion—pleasing after it's all over and diverting while it lasts. The cry of *"faru"* is a good deal like "car coming" at an automobile race. Instantly everybody is all attention, with the attention equally divided between the rhino and the nearest tree. If there is no tree the interest in the rhino becomes more acute.

The thought of being impaled *en brochette* on the horn of a rhino is one of the least attractive forms of mental exertion that I know of. It is a close second to the thought of being stepped on by a herd of elephants marching single file.

Well, we survived the charge of the heavy brigade, and then moved onward, ever and anon casting an alert glance at the deep clumps of thicket along the way. Fortunately no more rhinos appeared and the next thing we struck was Thanksgiving Day.

The proper way to celebrate that deservedly popular holiday is not by sitting in tall grass with a can of beans and a bottle of pickles in the foreground. This is said with all respect to the manufacturers of beans and pickles who may advertise in the papers.

For a time, however, beans and pickles seemed to be the nearest outlook for us, but after a while the cook, whose nerves had been shaken by the impetuous advance of the rhino, arose to the demands of the occasion and set up a table upon which soon appeared some hot tea, some bread and honey, some beans and deviled ham, and a few knickknacks in

the line of jam and cheese. That was luncheon, and we resolved to do better for dinner.

We told the cook all about Thanksgiving Day and what its chief purpose was. We also told him of the beautiful significance of the occasion, what happy thoughts it inspired, and how much sentiment was attached to it. Then we told him to get busy. We were in a Thanksgiving mood, being grateful that we were not riding around on the bowsprit of the rhino, and also because our relatives and friends at home were well at last reports, two months old.

True, our guide, who had never been over the trail before and who was trying to guess the way by instinct, had got us hopelessly becalmed in a sea of high grass so that we didn't know where we were. But we knew what we were. We were hungry!

In the meantime we planned and carried into brilliant execution a grouse hunt. There were lots of grouse in the country through which we had come and all day long coveys of them had been whirring away from our advancing outposts. It seemed a simple thing to go out and get a few for our Thanksgiving dinner, so we gave orders to make camp and consecrated the afternoon to a grouse quest.

I'll never forget what a formidable looking party it was. When we had spread out to comb the grass by the river side we looked like a skirmish line of an army. There were four of us, supported