

Round the Campfire

Rhino Routed

THE Warden of the Murchison Falls National Park recently saw a black rhino chase a group of twelve waterbuck for a distance of about a hundred yards. The waterbuck, however, quickly tired of this, and, wheeling round, charged the rhino, who retreated speedily into a patch of dense thicket and was seen no more. On another occasion the Warden watched a rhino deliberately charge a herd of about 350 buffalo which were strung out in a line some 400 yards long; the rhino charged right along the line of unsuspecting buffalo, scattering them in all directions, and then continued on his way—presumably in search of further trouble!

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A Narrow Escape

*Recounted by Justinio Tokwaro, Road Supervisor,
Murchison Falls National Park.*

EARLY in July, 1959, I heard that my expectant wife was sick in Masindi hospital. I was very anxious to visit her, and I decided to do so on Sunday 5th July. When I had travelled for a few miles from Wairingo Control Post I suddenly found myself amidst a herd of elephants—there were elephants on my left, right, front and behind me; elephants were everywhere. I got off my bicycle and remained motionless for some time, and my presence did not appear to have caused any alarm amongst them in any way, although they looked attentive. After a short while the beasts began to move away and my fear was fading, then of a sudden a mother elephant charged from the side, and another one attacked from the front. I threw down my bicycle and took to my heels at a speed such as I have never attained before in my life.

The elephant did not want the bike, so I threw her my great coat; she did not want that so I threw a shoe but she did not seem to want that either, so I picked up a stick. The elephant got hold of the other end of the stick, and so we were on the run. I thought that I was flying, but this proved to be untrue as I got tired very quickly. I was losing ground rapidly while the elephant was gaining it at a double speed. I felt that her trunk was almost touching me, and then I fell down between her front legs. She bent down her mighty head and the tusks struck and got buried in the ground; I was pinned between them.

In despair, somehow I took off my coat and pushed it with my left hand right into the mouth of the determined beast which then kicked me with a foot and dashed off. I was left half conscious on the ground but I managed to crawl away for about 200 yards on my knees. When I had fully regained my wits I walked back to Wairingo Post where I got someone who carried me on a bicycle to Masindi Hospital for medical treatment.

Room at the Top?

IN the Queen Elizabeth Park the Warden recently witnessed an interesting struggle between two bull elephants. The fight took place around an anthill upon which grew a small tree. The two bulls, one of which was much bigger than the other, were rushing at each other and sparring over and around the anthill. Eventually the younger animal uprooted the small tree and proceeded to brandish it in his trunk in a threatening manner, though he did not, in fact, use it as a weapon.

The fight took the form of a series of head-on charges, with tusks clashing and trunks being intertwined. Although the bigger bull was the first to sustain injuries in the form of severe grazing on the forehead, the younger one was the first to lose heart, starting to reverse rapidly with the other elephant in pursuit. This quickly developed into a complete rout with the larger bull in headlong pursuit, until he gave up the chase and changing direction, charged the Warden's Landrover instead!

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