IN CLOSED TERRITORY

BY

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WITH NEARLY 100 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR

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II

OLD JUNGLE WARRIORS AT BAY

MOVED out well beyond the game reserve to the west of the Guaso Nyiro, the three of us were out before dawn of the nineteenth after rhino or buffalo. Within twenty yards of my tent we found where a rhino had passed in the night, and lucky it was he had not winded us. Only two months before, and at the same place, Outram's camp was charged at night by a rhino that actually trampled over one side of the blankets in which his mate, Robinson, was sleeping. All about us in the earlier morning hours buffalo had trailed in to and out from water, but we did not see one; all had trekked back into the thickest jungle, and were comfortably sleeping off their night's jag of food and water.

All sorts of other game we saw by hundreds, but at nothing did we shoot until, about 8 A. M., the sun became unbearable and we decided to return to camp. Then I stalked and was lucky enough to kill a bull giraffe that measured fourteen feet, eight inches, from hoof to horn end, and fifteen feet, nine inches, from tip of nose to tip of tail,—a bull I later learned from R. J. Cunninghame to be a true "Kilimanjaro giraffe" (*Giraffa camelopardalis tippelskirchi*), a species of which no specimen then existed in the United States. Ordinarily I should never have thought of killing a giraffe, for they are wholly harmless, but our boys' feet were in such bad shape that marching unshod must remain impossible for some days,

tracks and softening dry grass and twigs until one's footsteps were noiseless.

From the moment we left camp our advance was slow and cautious — on foot, behind us, the gun bearers with our spare rifles, behind them the syces leading our mules — on winding game paths so low we had to crouch most of the time, where each turn of a bush might bring one face to face at arm's length with any old jungle warrior that would carry in his system as much of one's lead — unless it was particularly well placed — as a man could comfortably pack in a bandolier.

We moved down river towards the swamp and out toward the wide alkali plain that extends south from the swamp four miles to Lake Natron.

And it was a bit odd, our so going out in such infernal country, for only the day before each of us had vowed that any fool who liked, could go after rhino and buffalo in the thorn jungle of the river and the tall grass and vine tangle of the swamp, but he would have none of it; and now there were we three plunged into it, as if just a matter of course, prey each to the lure of the chase!

While the ground was covered with footprints made the day before, apparently everything had gone out to the open to feed or retired to the more secluded recesses of the swamp, for it was not until we reached the edge of the plain just at the upper end of the swamp that we found the first spoor made since the rain had stopped.

But it was spoor worth while, — a giant rhino whose footprints in the soft ground were a full twelve inches in diameter. Evidently he had been out for a night's ramble and feed in the plain, and had probably entered the swamp no more than half an hour ahead of us.

Leaving mules and syces outside, we at once started into the swamp on his spoor, easy to follow as a highway, Outram in the lead, I next, and then Judd.

Sometimes the rhino followed paths, sometimes crushed haphazard through the tangle, just as the fancy struck him. Luckily the wind was quartering, across the general line of his advance.

We were not hurrying any. In fact, our pace would have made a passing funeral look like a Derby finish. Feet fell silent as the very dew itself. The least unusual sound reaching him meant either our losing him or his charging us, about an even-money bet which.

It is droll, but in this sort of stalking big game I always find myself having to fight a persistent inclination to hold the breath to listen, — one seems to hear better when not breathing, — which, if not resisted, keeps me as hopelessly blown and unsteady for close shooting as if I had just finished a hundred-yard dash, until I have now long made it a practice, under such conditions, to keep saying or thinking to myself, "Breathe deep and slow!" Keep the lungs full and the hand is pretty sure to stay steady.

I don't know just what time we entered the swamp, but I should think it was within fifteen minutes of our entry that about fifteen yards ahead of us we heard the crunch of huge jaws and a mighty sigh of surfeit. The old giant had apparently found shade to his liking and was meditating a nap. Plainly he was unwarned of our presence. Sound told us he stood beneath a large, wide-spreading tree whose drooping branches met the thick mass of tall grass and bush that lay between us and completely hid him from our sight. After perhaps four or

five minutes' waiting, nerves tense and every sense alert, we thought we heard movement to his left and Judd turned to me, bronze cheeks white as paper, but square jaws set and eyes blazing battle, and whispered, "I believe there are two or three with him,— if so, it 's apt to be hell here."

And then a moment later another whisper came from Judd, "I think I can see his rump; shall I stir him up a bit?" and no more had I nodded assent before the roar of his heavy .450 cordite rifle was followed with shrill squeals of rage and pain, — twigs cracked, great limbs snapped as the monster whirled toward the sound coincident with his injury, plainly swinging for a charge.

Then I caught a glimpse of his neck, just back of the ears, and sent two .405 hard-nose Winchesters into it, and, an instant later, sighting the upper half of the head, gave him a third. At this third shot he swayed about in the bush for a few seconds and then crashed to the ground. While I was shooting, Outram fired once with his .303.

All was now still beneath the tree, and after a few seconds we started clambering in to him, but, just as the vast carcass came in view, he tried to rise, and Judd gave him another .450.

But his effort to rise proved, when we got to him, to be only the death throe. Judd's first shot had hit him in the left hip and probably angled through the kidneys; his last had landed far back in the neck and below the spine. Of my two first shots one was four inches behind the ears, over and probably reaching the spine, the second two inches back of and an inch below the first, while my third had landed full in the curve of the head between

eye and ears, about three inches below the left ear and a inch to the left of the centre of the "forehead." Outram's .303 was a few inches lower in the head, crumpled up in the bone.

It was my third shot that killed him, and at the same time exploded a fallacy I have read, to the best of my recollection, in every book I have ever perused on rhino shooting, viz., that it is folly to try to kill or even stop a rhino with a frontal head shot,—that no rifle ball will penetrate its massive frontal bone structure. For when we came to remove the scalp and chop away the horns, we found my .405 had driven through the frontal bone and smashed the inner skull structure to fragments.

And it was a prize I had! Not a "record," but close to it, a splendid old bull close to 3,000 pounds in weight, with an absolutely perfect front horn of graceful shape, 23½ inches long and 24½ inches in circumference at the base, while the back horn was 10 inches long and 24 inches at the base. His length from tip to tip was 12 feet, 7 inches, his height at withers, 5 feet, 9½ inches, while the circumference of his foot was 30 inches. He was killed at 7:15 A.M., little more than two hours after leaving camp. To cut away his mask and horns, remove the hoofs, and cut strips from his full inch-thick hide for *kibokos* (whips) and canes, took us about two and one-half hours.

The foregoing horn measurements were made the night the rhino was killed. Thoroughly dried, the front horn measured 22 inches on the outer curve and 22½ inches in base circumference, — the rear horn, 9½ inches in length and 23 inches in base. Rowland Ward records only one black rhino horn above 24½ inches in base (and

that one 24¾ inches) and only seven better than 22 inches, and no rear horn above 23½ inches in base and only two above 22½ inches, thus placing my N'gari Kiti giant high among the top-notchers.

As soon as the trophies were secured and started for camp we clambered out of the swamp, and then ambled away south to the much larger swamp lying between Shombol Mountain and Lake Natron, wherein the Guaso Nyiro River finishes its career. There, Outram told us, were buffalo in hundreds. A high ridge of dry ground near the centre would, if we could reach it, command a wide view down into the long grass where by day the buffalo were browsing or asleep. To negotiate the four miles of intervening alkali plain, floundering through deep pools made by the previous night's rain, and laboring through mud into which our mules sank half-way to their knees, took more than two hours.

To the east of us the majestically buttressed summit of Shombol, and to the west the lofty uplift of the southern extremity of the Mau Escarpment, stood as a giant gateway, a worthy southern entrance, about five miles wide, to the great Rift Valley, there immediately guarded, as by a colossal fosse, by Lake Natron. This winding along the foot of the Mau in its northern reaches, bends east to and past the southern flanks of Shombol, perpetually sentinelled by Sonya's beautiful volcanic cone rising, midway of the gateway but miles to the south of it, to a height, I should think, of at least 9,000 feet.

As we neared the swamp, scores of acres of slightly raised and dry ground were found to be covered thick with buffalo "sign," trampled and littered like a farm barnyard. But try as we would, never a black back could

IX

A HIDEOUS OLD HAUNTER

TO avoid the terrific heat, after the rains stopped in the lower valleys, which began blazing down upon the Engabai plains shortly after dawn, we broke camp at 3 A. M., February 3, reaching the summit of Isuria at 8 A. M., and finding our donkeys safely arrived there with the *posho* we had bought in Kavirondo. Then we marched on to permanent camp at one of Jordan's old bomas, where he had spent a year along with his Wanderobo and Lumbwa, his cows, sheep, and fowls, trading a bit, shooting a bit, idling and musing a lot, chief of the native chiefs, happy as a king until down upon him descended a collector and party of Askaris on a raiding search for ivory they fancied he had but never found, when in disgust he slipped away to another forest nook, and lodged himself anew.

Dawn found us out after eland or roan, but by noon we were back empty-handed — apparently the game had shifted, for there was little sign about to the west of us.

In camp we found Mataia, chief of the Manga Lumbwa, the stoutest vassal chief of Jordan's overlordship, with Arab Tumo, his foremost warrior, and two young *elmorani*, all come at Jordan's summons from their country, a full day's journey north.

Jordan, Mataia seemed to worship — no other could bear his gun or do him service,— while with his own kind I soon learned no ruler was ever more despotic or cruel.

Fancying himself well out of it, Marini handed Mafuta ten beauties, administered with absolute impartiality, five on either half of the buttocks, under which the culprit winced and writhed but uttered no plaint.

Marini stepped back and Mafuta bounded to his feet, drew himself up, and saluted me with one hand while rubbing with the other whichever place still hurt most, a smile on his face, and a cheerful "Thanks, *bwana* (master)" he really meant, an ugly rebel converted to a lot better opinion of his employer. Off he started, but only to be stopped.

"*Engoja* (wait), Mafuta! *Chine*, Marini! Mafuta, give Marini ten of the best!"

A shot would have startled the giant less, but down he lay and at him Mafuta flew, with a vigor that could have left no doubt in Marini's mind that Mafuta had become a wholehearted and sincere convert to the beautiful theory so few are willing to practise, that it is more blessed to give than to receive!

Now come within fifty or sixty miles of Kericho, the nearest Government police post and mail and telegraph station, Outram started on the eighth on another try to get my mail, with nine porters to fetch new supplies, and followed by little yellow Pugge. Later in the day we missed Rollo, the big setter, and concluded he had followed Outram's safari.

Outram off, Jordan hurried away the three Wanderobo to bring up their village and sent three Lumbwa, Arab Tumo, Arab Barta, and Arab Sendow, out on a scout to locate elephant. Then he, Mataia, Mosoni, and I started out on a search for rhino, which there are found with horns up to thirty-four inches in length and would therefore

make my N'gari Kiti twenty-three and one-half inches kill look like a *toto*.

For two hours we skirted the edge of forest, looking for the track of a big fellow returning from the night's feeding to his customary morning nap in the bush; but, finding no spoor except of some of moderate size, we spent another two hours within the forest, on the chance of sighting or hearing one worth while.

And it is downright breath-holding work, nothing less, I believe, for even the coldest blooded man, poking along forest paths strewn with fresh rhino and buffalo sign, always in dusk like late twilight, sometimes along low, winding tunnels through tangles of vines, sometimes along high-arched aisles, always surrounded on all sides by an eight-foot, broad-leaved bush suggesting the rhododendron and carrying great clusters of pale golden fruit that look like bunches of lemon-yellow grapes, whose dense green mass seldom opens you a view of more than five or ten yards' distance and makes most awkward going when one has to side-step a charge. There was a fascination in it I could not resist, and yet whenever I stepped out of the threat-holding shadows of the wood, back, half-blinded, into the light and warmth of the sun, I always found myself feeling much as I fancy a man must feel who might have the luck to find himself climbing out of his own grave. Perhaps older hands get used to it, but I know I never did. And even Arab Tumo, who for four hours stalked ahead of me silent as a graven image, himself the vanquisher, with no aid but that of his own good spear, of sixty rhino, I noted approached every path-turn crouched and muscle taut for an instant shift.

Now and again the paths were widened into broad bed chambers shaped by the big fellows, always in the

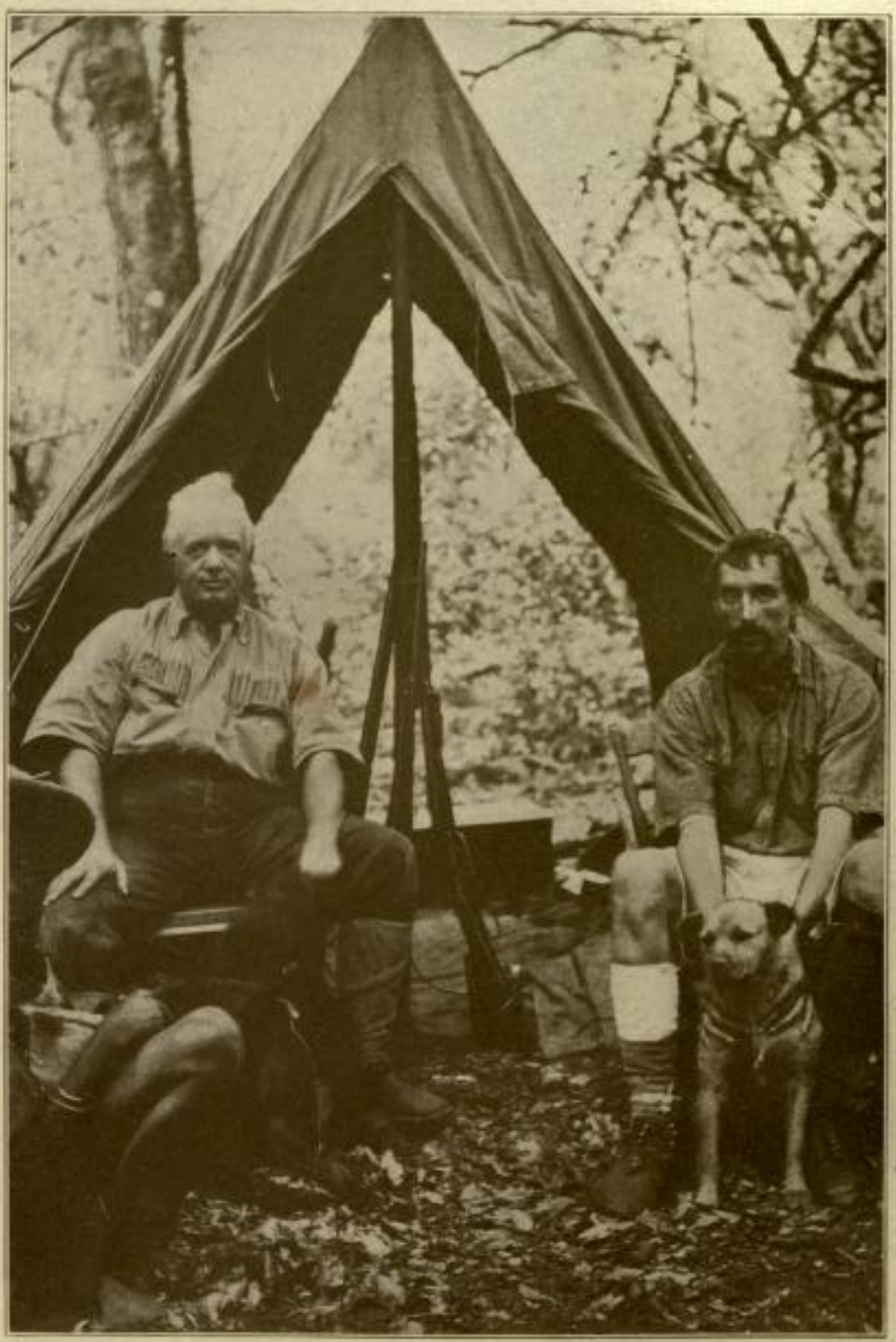
lowest, densest roofed bush where the floor was softly strewn with bits of broken twigs, again dropped steeply down to deep, clear, cold pools, richly tapestried round about with the pale green of their moss-covered rock walls, the baths rhino and buffalo love to cool themselves in after a strenuous night afoot.

The first hour our only real sensation was a crashing stampede of buffalo that caught our wind before we sighted them — and evidently did n't like it, for off to the left through the timber they raced.

The second hour we struck the fresh spoor of two very big male lion and followed it from one path to another until finally they left the paths and bore away into thickets where we lost all trace of them.

Then we quit for the day and jogged back to camp and a late luncheon, where we found the fourth Wanderobo had slipped away unseen, whether for his honey or his *toto* we could only guess.

With no word come of our elephant scouts, we spent the next forenoon on the fresh spoor of two rhino, one a splendid big bull by his footprints, the other a cow. And it was an everlasting lot of sweet things the pair must have had to tell each other. For five hours we kept after them, rarely along paths, breaking through patches of bush or corners of virgin wood only to wind away at random through long grass, for all the world like two lovers blind to all but each other and seeking seclusion from their kind. Three times we heard them near ahead of us in the rhododendrons, but before we could finish a safe stalk they had moved on — and on and on they so outfooted us until Arab Tumo decided they were moving range to the Cabanoa Hills, and that it was useless to follow them longer.



The Author and John Alfred Jordan in Rongana Camp after the Elephant Kill

XI

A MIGHTY SPEAR THRUST

WHILE awaiting Jordan's recovery from the illness brought on by our elephant hunt on the Sambi River, Nabrisi, brother of the Wanderobo chief, Labusoni, and Bélé, another of his men, came into my Rongana camp and brought me a lot of fine honey and Jordan a batch of lame excuses why the Wanderobo camp had not joined us as promised. Summed up, it was plain these shy forest folk were distrustful of the stranger.

Nabrisi was such a smiling, gentle, kindly faced soul that, despite his black skin, semi-nakedness, primitive arms, and reputation as a reckless elephant hunter, it was hard to think of him except as a most amiable and courteous old gentleman. Bélé, on the contrary, was an ideal type of the Wanderobo *elmoran*, middle-aged, severely dour of visage, gashed across the forehead with the scar of a sword cut deep enough to lay one's finger in — a wound no white man could have survived; and never once during the week they were with us did I see the flicker of a smile on his face, never once to my knowledge when he was near did I escape a continual, suspicious scrutiny of my every movement from great eyes wide, unblinking, and glaring as those of a buffalo at bay. Round the camp fire at the door of my tent they lolled all day, he and Nabrisi, and beside it they slept at night, on beds primitive as the nuptial couch of Adam and Eve. Each scraped a shallow saucer-shaped area in the soft loam, cleared it

by the Sotik boma chief that the same morning the other safari had sighted the main herd, and had then retired because, they claimed, they saw none but small tuskers.

That night we camped on a steep hillslope near Tumo's and within a few hundred yards of where the elephant had been feeding earlier in the day. There we were about midway between the Sotik and Kisii bomas and in the extreme northeast corner of the range of the big Kisii herd.

It was an elephant-grass country everywhere, but even worse to work in than the Sambi, for the hills were much more precipitous, there were absolutely no trees to climb for a look about, and every valley was a broad, boggy, reedy swamp trampled by elephant into pit holes until nearly impassable to us.

At dawn we were off. In the first swamp we struck we jumped two rhinos, but they scurried away through the reeds. Two hours later, from an obligingly placed anthill upon a tall summit, upon a lower shoulder of the same hill about a half-mile below us we caught a glimpse of fourteen elephant, while across a deep valley and swamp and on a hillside probably two miles away, appearing and disappearing brown patches and glints of ivory showed us a great herd of anywhere from one hundred to two hundred head.

Had the day been clear the sight would have been superb, well worth the entire trip from Nairobi, but the air was so hazy with smoke the elephant looked like dim spectral shapes rising from the slope of a mighty billow of a faintly moonlit sea.

Already the sun was getting very hot, for neither

clouds nor smoke seemed materially to lessen the intensity of the equatorial sun rays — and both herds were on the move for cool quarters for their midday nap, headed, one lot north and the other south toward a broad swamp that lay eight hundred feet below them in a valley trending west toward the Kuja.

They actually seemed a gift, did those elephant — or rather a chance at one or two fine bulls of the herd seemed a certainty; for while we could not follow directly on the spoor of the nearer herd without giving them our wind, a leisurely wide circle to the west and descent to the swamp, and a careful stalk up it through its tall rushes or along the slopes that dropped steeply to its margin, seemed sure to bring us to close range of the united herds, floundering about among the lily pads and reeds, showering themselves with their trunks or boring into the dark green masses of the high, dank marsh growths for shelter from the sun.

So off the anthill we stepped and down the precipitous hillslope started, heading northwest, the tall, wiry Lumbwa, Arab Tumo the rhino slayer, in the lead, I next, and the rest trailing along behind. Of course, the moment we descended from the anthill the ghastly gray leaves and stalks of the tall elephant grass closed about each tight as a winding sheet, and shut out view of everything except the patches of sky that now and then appeared through the rustling russet roof above our heads. Each step was like passing from one tight-shut chamber to another, tight-shut as a sodded grave, for the gray stalks were ever springing up behind one with a sinister, malicious suddenness and vigor and with rasping swishes that sounded in my ears like a hoarse, gloating, trucu-

lent whisper,— "You are ours, *ours*, OURS! *Forever* are you ours!"

Indeed, the fevered imagination of the worst dying sinner could never people the dusky shades of Hades with more terrible shapes than the horrors and perils one knows *must* always be crowding close about him while plunged into that worst of all terrestrial infernos, a region of elephant grass. They are there all about you, scores of the predatory, with any of whom a chance meeting means your death or theirs. At your very feet a poisonous cobra or mamba may be coiling to give you a *coup-de-morte;* within reach of your rifle muzzle a great python may be suppling his mighty folds for the toss of a crushing hitch about your neck; rhino, buffalo, lion, or elephant love and always haunt such convenient ambush, and may at any instant catch your wind and be literally upon you before you have time to throw your rifle to shoulder.

Indeed, no form of duel to the death, fought out in utter darkness, could hold more terrors to try the stoutest heart than a man adrift in a sea of elephant grass finds himself a prey to.

Nor were we that day to be without our bit of experience of the hostile activities of its dangerous denizens.

While modest and refusing to talk at all of his own exploits, the chief Mataia and other Lumbwa repeatedly assured me that no less than sixty rhino had fallen to Arab Tumo's spear thrusts, each killed by him alone in single combat. While the story appeared incredible, large color of truth was lent it by an incident of the morning.

While about half way down from the summit to the

swamp, with Arab Tumo marching ahead of me, and, although no more than six feet in advance, quite out of my sight, suddenly I heard just beyond him the swish and crashing of some mighty body, and jumped forward to Arab Tumo just in time to see a giant rhino, which had been crossing our line of march directly in his front, start to swing for a charge up our line, great head shaking with rage, little pig eyes glaring fury.

It was all over in a second, for when I reached Tumo they were in arm's length of each other, he crouched with spear shortened, and, in the very second of the rhino's swing to charge, with one bound and mighty thrust he drove his great three foot six inch spear blade to entry behind the left shoulder, ranging diagonally through the rhino's vitals towards his right hip, and burying it to the very haft!

Followed instantly a shrill scream of pain, a gush of foam-flecked blood that told of a deadly lung wound, and then the monster wheeled and lurched out of our sight down hill at right angles to our course, Tumo's spear still transfixing him.

So suddenly sprung and so fascinating was the scene, so like a single-handed duel of the old Roman arena between two raw savage monsters of the African jungle, biped against quadruped, that it never occurred to me to shoot, although I might have chanced a snapshot over Tumo's shoulder.

And there Arab Tumo stood quietly smiling, his pulse apparently unquickened by a single beat, signing for permission to follow and recover his spear!

About an hour later, just as we were about to enter the swamp, he rejoined us with the fragments of his spear,

the blade broken free of its long-pointed iron butt, which was bent nearly double by some wrench in the ground the rhino had contrived to give it to free his vitals of the gnawing blade! And, once free of the spear, on he had gone — Tumo had not seen him again.

Of the elephant we had heard nothing, and, of course, had seen nothing since leaving the mountain top. But if they had held their course, as we felt sure they had, we should there have been about a half-mile below them. So we began a cautious stalk up swamp, silent as we could make it, for they might be moving toward us.

Most of the way we had to wade along the edge of the swamp, sometimes jumping, sometimes slipping into pot holes up to the middle, for everywhere the Big Ones had been trampling. Nor did the water matter, for in elephant grass one never gets a breath of breeze and when we had reached the swamp we were as wet as if we had rolled in it. Both to north and south we found the swamp lined with heavy thorn bush that did not show above the heavy grass tops, but with stems thick as one's wrist, utterly impenetrable except along an elephant path or where occasionally they had trampled it into a tangled springy mattress over which we could occasionally pick our way, bobbing up and down as if on a spring board, five or six feet above the ground.

On we toiled and yet on, expecting every step to sight the gleam of ivory or a flapping ear, to hear a "tummy" rumble or a trumpet, on, for three weary hours, until we had thoroughly scouted the swamp to its head — only to find that by some ill chance both herds had swerved elsewhere, probably northeast; either that or they had doubled in behind us as we descended the mountain.

It was absolutely heartbreaking, but there was nothing to do but drag ourselves to the crest of the nearly perpendicular hill that rose seven or eight hundred feet to the northeast above the top of the swamp, in hope of cutting their spoor or sighting them from the summit.

It was like swarming up a giant Gothic roof, first battling for a bit of opening in the grass and bushes and then grasping grass and weeds and pulling ourselves up into it, — labor so exhausting and taxing on our lungs we were over two hours making the ascent. And, once come there, we soon found our work had been for naught; neither on the summit nor on the slopes could we find an anthill; nothing could we see but the sky and the hell of weeds that shut us in. Nor was there another ounce of energy left in us, for it was then at least an hour past midday and we had been marching and stalking since dawn, eight hours or more, through the most laborious going, I believe, the entire world affords.

Then to make our situation worse, our water bottles were empty; in our keenness to get to the elephant we had forgotten to fill them before leaving the swamp. So, after sending three Lumbwa off to try to find the elephant and two more to fetch up our camp to the margin of a swamp we knew must lie at the bottom of the valley to the east of us, we cut with our knives little chambers among the grass roots and into them crawled, and there lay sheltered from the direct rays of the sun for three hours, until our Lumbwa returned with word the elephant were gathered in a swamp three miles northeast of us, from which they might be moving back toward evening past or across a big open "burn" that lay a mile below us.

About 5 P. M. we got down to this "burn," and shortly

thereafter our safari reached us and we there pitched camp, among some anthills, from which we could get a bit of a view about. But nothing did we see, until, just at dusk, our watch reported two big bulls about a thousand yards away, heading straight for our camp. Too late to gain anything by trying to go out after them in the gathering darkness, our fires were extinguished, Outram stopped in camp, Jordan took stand two hundred yards to the east, and I the same distance west of camp on the chance the bulls might come smashing along within range.

And there on his post in the moonless, murky night and down among the soft, gray-black ash of the newly burned herbage, each crouched with ready gun till near midnight, when, having heard nothing, I stumbled into camp, called in Jordan, and we had the fires rekindled and rolled up in our blankets.

Such is the luck of the game. Although they should not have gotten our wind, perhaps they did. Anyway, off they had turned, a scant three hundred yards from camp, off into the southwest, had those two bulls, and after them had softly trailed the mighty herd, we soon the next morning learned, two hundred or more strong. And along the broad track they had trampled we followed until, near noon, come to a great "burn" across which we could see for five or six miles, I realized they were settled down to a longer trek than I had time left to follow them on, for the next day at the latest I must press forward on the march through Kericho Boma to Lumbwa Station on the Uganda Railway.

Thus and there, in the Kisii Highlands, virtually ended my safari and shooting "In Closed Territory."

A hard six days' march got us across the Sessi and

Isogu Rivers, two mountain torrents that within a fortnight the "big rains" would make impassable, by any means, for weeks, and into Lumbwa Station. It was a toilsome week over steep, rolling, lofty mountain contours, relieved only by a most delightful night at Kericho Boma, where, in my host at a most capital dinner, Deputy Commissioner L. A. F. Jones, I met a man who knew so many of my home club mates it almost seemed as if I were dining before an open window overlooking Madison Square of a softly sibilant May night when the birds are love-making in the scant shelter of the young leaves. In stalwart Angus Madden, commanding the Boma Askaris, I found a ripping Irishman with a heart his big body must have vast trouble holding and a brogue almost as rich as the wit it adorns; and in Bryan Brooke I came to know a giant, brawny young Scot, in whom generations of the gentlest breeding have contrived to engraft the *simpatia* and imagination of a poet upon a warring, adventurous spirit that no influences can serve to long hold away from the wilds.

Then came Lumbwa — the railway — after a total safari trek, what with marching and shooting, that covered something over twelve hundred miles; the entraining of my trophies and myself for Nairobi, and the leaving dear old Outram (quite the best camp mate of all the many I have known, and that 's saying a bit, for the trials and vicissitudes of camp life soon show dissonant any human chords not atuned true) to march the safari back to Juja.

XII

POTTING A PYTHON *

FOR the American press in general, Theodore Roosevelt's shooting trip in East Africa has served chiefly as a convenient subject of more or less broad jest. Few at home outside the circle of his own family and closer friends have taken it seriously, except the more zealous members of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, who, to the number of some thousands, have joined in petitioning him to look but not to touch — to abstain from slaughter of their cherished (and usually rightly enough cherished) wards. Not one in a million has the faintest conception of what his undertaking really means or of the actual perils inseparable from it.

Compared to a wounded Cape buffalo, lion, leopard, rhino, or elephant, a stricken moose or even a maddened grizzly is child's play. Of infinitely stronger vitality, harder to kill, and possessed of an infernal cunning and a speed of attack and persistence in pursuit, are these African Big Ones, that make them far and away the most dangerous game in the world, with the single exception of the Asiatic tiger.

From the hour Mr. Roosevelt starts on safari and goes under canvas on the Kapiti Plains until, in his descent of the Nile, he has passed the temptation of a final run up

* Written aboard *S. S. Melbourne* of the Cie Mesageries Maritimes, cleared from Mombasa, B. E. A., March 29, 1909, for Marseilles.

the Sobat River, he literally carries his life in his hands, a pawn easy of annexation to any of the many predatory types of beasts and reptiles that swarm in jungle and in plain.

Nor is it his wounded he alone has to be alert for. The struggle for existence in the often densely overcrowded animal kingdom of Central Africa has taught many types the strategical value of instant attack the moment an enemy is sighted — and all are their enemies they fancy they can make their prey.

Rarely does a lone buffalo bull lose a chance at a man, and he makes a straight, furious charge if he thinks he is sighted, or, if unseen, a wide detour to close ambush along one's path and a dash at short range it is extremely difficult to stop or escape.

Most often the rhino charges the moment he scents a man, usually, I believe, from primary motives of curiosity, in fact charges about any and every thing except elephant, from which he flies in mortal fear; but it is none the less necessary to do some straight shooting or to execute a series of amazingly quick sidesteps.

At any moment a man traversing long grass or bush may come upon a lioness and cubs, at no more than arm's length, and lucky indeed he if she is not instantly upon him.

Any night his tent may be invaded by a hungry man-eater who has stolen past drowsing Askari camp sentries, and his spine be crushed under its favorite neck grip before even the approach of peril is suspected — it has happened often enough in the past and often will so happen again.

Out of any bunch of longish grass the wide-hooded

head of a black (blue-black) cobra may rise threatening him — and that 's no good place to stay; or a sluggish puff adder may lazily await until he is in easy reach of its favorite backward stroke; or a python may toss a half-hitch of its giant coils his way that few get free of once it has enfolded them.

And then there are the fevers so many fall victim to, from plain malarial to "tick fever" (*spirillum*) and "black water," that one is often years getting wholly rid of—where they don't begin by ridding the earth of him,—and the awful spectre of the sleeping sickness that is now claiming white victims with growing frequency.

Overdrawn? Exaggerations, these? No; not by a hair's breadth; just types of common incident of the sort that, sooner or later, are reasonably certain to be handed, in a more or less mixed job lot, to invaders of the open veldt and bush of Central Africa.

It is a country and a life in which a man untrained in taking care of himself against any and all comers, uninured to confronting deadly peril with steady nerves, is sure to have more frights than fun.

Indeed, any man who is not a quick, cool-headed, and accurate rifle shot is a fool to go after African big game. To be sure not a few such dilettanti sportsmen have so gone, and have returned not only unscathed but with handsome bags of trophies; but alike for their own personal safety and for the major part of their fine collections of big game specimens they remain indebted to the straight shooting of one or another of the splendid little group of professional safari leaders, highly trained expert hunters, like Cunninghame, Will Judd, or Tarlton. The two former men for years made their rifles win them

handsome tribute in ivory and in skins, who, accustomed daily to stake their lives upon the accuracy of their aim, one might fancy possessed of iron nerves capable of meeting any situation without a materially quickened heart-heat. But the fact is they know the game so well they are ever keenly alive to its hazards. Within ten yards of a wounded rhino bull in thick bush, I have myself seen Will Judd's cheeks go livid white as the palor of death, but that it was a fighting palor his blazing, red-brown eyes and gripping jaws left no doubt of, — palor come of every nerve and muscle held under such high tension for instant action that the veins were made to pour their ruby blood back into deep arterial streams.

And Theodore Roosevelt himself knows so well what he is going out against — must so know it as an intimate of Sir Harry Johnston, F. C. Selous, and others justly famous for the last quarter-century for their work and sport in Central Africa — that the American public can be quite sure he goes from a sheer love and lust of battling that even the perpetual bitter contests against almost overwhelming odds that in history will serve to most strongly mark and distinguish his administration of the nation's affairs, has left unsatisfied.

Seven of the last ten months it has been my privilege to pass in Central Africa I have spent on safari in British and German East Africa and in Uganda, shooting. In that time I have covered most of the country Mr. Roosevelt will shoot over, excepting Mount Kenya and the sections of his homebound journey between the Victoria Nyanza port of Entebbe and the Nile port of Gondokoro,

a heavy fine or imprisonment, or both. Thus my bull will remain one of the very last ever to be killed in British East Africa. Well it is the eland should be saved, in a country in which both horses and mules are easy and frequent prey to several types of fatal horse sicknesses, for they are easily domesticated, and it is hoped their vast bulk of weight and muscle may yet prove of economic value for heavy draft purposes.

Moreover, as Mr. Roosevelt is more likely to shoot and kill than to heed their petitions that he should not shoot, it may interest the members of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to know that the Administration of British East Africa has been compelled to recognize in the new Game Law the loud cries of settlers for protection against the depredations of wild game. Indeed, the game in B. E. A. *must* be thinned, if not exterminated, before farmers may enjoy the avails of their land holdings. Thus the new law permits proprietors to allow any one holding a game license to shoot all the game he likes on their estates, and practically removes all restrictions against the killing of game on one's own land.

The sheer "vermin" so declared by the law, predatory beasts against which no life is safe, biped or quadruped — lion, leopard, hyena, crocodile, etc. (while the "protected" buffalo and rhino are just as dangerous to human life) — the most rabid member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals would not long live neighbor to before unlimbering his guns.

For example, a few days before I left Juja news came from the manager of one of Mr. McMillan's farms that his next neighbor, a young German named Loder, had been killed by leopard. Swift and Rutherfoord, farmers

The Kapiti Plains are almost entirely bare of cover, short grassed, bushless, but every *donga* (ravine) is densely filled with thorn, reed, and weeds, with here and there a water pool of the sort lion love to take to shortly after dawn in the dry, hot season just then at its height, and, to be seen, out of this cover they have to be routed.

Down all their favorite *dongas*, over the rocky, cave-slit crests of Theki and Wami, through the dense scrub along the lower slopes of the Machakos between Theki and Kitanga, for three days Clifford Hill led his native beaters, while Harold and I, on foot, marched from fifty to three hundred yards ahead of and slightly flanking the line of beaters, one to right and one to left as a rule, but never a lion did we raise. Once we struck fresh sign entering a bit of bush and thought we had him, the incident shown in the pictures where our group is rather closely bunched and advancing to where we thought he lay. But on out of the bush he had passed, over hard-baked ground where he left no further sign.

With more luck than I had ever dared hope for with all other big game, lion are evidently not meant for me — like Director of Surveys, Colonel G. E. Smith, who surveyed the first caravan road from Mombasa to Uganda, who was chief of the Anglo-German Boundary Survey, and has spent the larger part of the last fifteen years in the wildest of British East Africa's wild places, who on these same Kapiti Plains himself killed seventeen rhino in one day — had to do it to protect his safari from their continual charges — but who to this day *has never seen a lion.*

Tuesday, just before beating the summit of Theki, we had lunch with Mr. Allsop, manager of Sir Alfred Pease's

ing. There, moreover, he will be in reach of some of the rarer species; within two to three days' march roan may be had on the crest of Isuria Escarpment, and nearer still, if he has patience and luck, the Chipalungo Forest may yield him a bongo, while two days west of Sotik Boma, on the Rongana, rhino abound sporting horns up to thirty-four inches in length.

The Sotik safari finished, I shall expect to see Mr. Cunninghame march the safari north from Gilgil, probably to and past Rumuruti Boma on the Guaso Narok River, thence swinging west to Lake Baringo for greater Kudu and lesser Kudu, or perhaps instead descending the northern Guaso Nyiro River and following it east along the southern boundary of the great Jubaland Game Reserve, and returning to Nairobi via Nyeri and Ft. Hall.

The time allotted to shooting in British East Africa nearing its finish, I shall not be surprised to see Mr. Roosevelt's safari lead northwest from Londiani Station, through the capital shooting on the Uasin Guishu Plateau, to a look in on the Cave Dwellers of Mt. Elgon, whence its descent to Jinja, the Nyanza head of the Nile, will be easy by one of the excellent roads which Governor Bell's energetic administration has given to Uganda.

The giant white rhino I see in the home press Mr. Roosevelt is keen for, are now about as scarce as hens' teeth, but along the western sources of the Nile, on his way to Lake Albert Edward, through the farther limits of the Uganda Province of Toro, well over toward the Congo, he may have the luck to find one.

If for his journey across Uganda and on north down the Nile to Cairo he follows the usual route, and the only easy one, he will cross the north end of Victoria

days ago a large herd of elephant crossed the railway just east of Voi, trekking from the bamboo forests of Mount Kilima N'jaro to fresh pastures in the north.

On my first journey up from the coast, no more than two hundred yards from the station of Kiu, a great lioness crossed the track just in front of us, walking slowly away south and no more than thirty yards from the track as we passed. Stopped in the station, a Boer emigrant took a shot at her from a car roof, but apparently missed.

The extraordinary present abundance of game both north and south of this section of the Uganda Railway is due to the fact that all the vast territory extending from the Tsavo River to Escarpment, a distance of two hundred and thirty miles, and from the south line of the track to the German border, embracing about eleven thousand square miles, is a carefully preserved game reserve, preserved as jealously as the Yellowstone Park, while immediately southwest of it in German territory is another reserve of the same size. Unfenced, shut in by no impassable streams or mountains, the game is free to wander out of and into the reserve at will; but like the shrewd stags of a Scotch deer forest, so well does the game seem to know the very boundaries that mark for them sanctuary, that little do they leave it except in periods of local drought or as crowded out by overstocking, — so well do they know the immunity of sanctuary that, shooting from trains being forbidden, timid antelope, wary giraffe, and even lion and rhino often idle within a stone's throw of the track.

And since from the Tsavo to Kapiti Plains, one hundred and fifty miles, there is absolutely no white settlement north of the track, and from Kapiti west

settlers are few and scattering and practically all within a narrow belt of forty miles, naturally the heavy out movement of the game is northward, while yet other thousands are pouring down into this central open region of Ukamba and Kenya Provinces from north of the Guaso Nyiro River, out of the Jubaland and Sugota Game Reserves, that together total an area of thirty-eight thousand square miles.

The region lying between the Athi and the Tana Rivers is the centre of this sportsman's paradise, although equally good and varied shooting is to be had southwest of the railway in the Sotik country. Close upon a half-hundred different varieties of big game are here to be had, each in their favorite type of country: elephant during the dry (and hotter) season, in the dense bamboo thickets of high mountain slopes and during the rains in the bush veldt and elephant grass country; hippo in the streams, or from dusk to dawn feeding along the banks; rhinos, any old place, on plain or hills, in bush or open; most buck and antelope, preferably in the most open level plains; duyker and dik-dik in long grass, out of which they pop right under your feet, visible only for the instant of each leap, artful little dodgers most men would be more apt to get with buckshot than with bullet; reed buck, among the scrub of steep, rocky hillslopes; leopard everywhere, but seldom seen and rarely killed unless by trapping.

Elephant are to be found within at the most a week's march of almost any camp in the Protectorate, as also are most of those now rarer prizes, — sable antelope, roan antelope, oryx, eland, Kudu.

By many sportsmen the buffalo is considered a far

more dangerous antagonist than the lion. Loving the shade and concealment of papyrus swamps, dense forest and fifteen-foot elephant grass, buffalo are seldom seen until you are within a few yards, often a few feet of them. Mobs of buffalo seldom charge you deliberately but, when startled by scent of you or by a shot, they stampede; often the mob comes thundering straight upon you and you are lucky indeed if by rapid close shooting you can turn them.

The real danger with buffalo is with the wounded or in an encounter with a lone bull. The latter will often charge you from no more provocation than the fact of your presence. Recently an officer of the King's African Rifles was spooring an elephant near Mount Kenya when he sighted a lone buffalo to his right. Keen for his elephant, he made a wide detour to the left of the line of spoor, to avoid chance of having to defend himself against the buffalo. When well past the point where he had seen the buffalo he returned to the spoor, but before he had followed it thirty yards and before he could turn or spring aside, with a cleverly executed rear charge, the buffalo, which had been quietly stalking to intercept him, caught him on its horns and tossed him upon the flat top of a mimosa tree, where, luckily, he lodged comparatively unhurt. And there up the tree the doughtv old warrior held him till nightfall!

A wounded buffalo is infinitely more dangerous when he runs from you than when he charges, for in nine cases out of ten, after a dash that may be of a few hundred yards or a mile, he revengefully circles back to an interception of his own trail, stands hid in grass or thicket until

his pursuer comes plodding all unconscious along the trail, and then is out and upon him.

And yet fierce as is the temper of a lone bull, savage his cunning, irresistible his great charging bulk, I believe him far less dangerous than the lion,—he has less speed, lacks the lion's poisoned weapons, and is a much bigger target; and this opinion is substantiated by the indisputable fact that at least ten men are killed or mauled by lion to one by buffalo.

While easily stalked, the rhino is a most nasty customer, as most men will agree who have hunted him — especially Benjamin Eastwood, Chief Accountant of the Uganda Railway, who was mauled and tramped by one to the near loss of his life and the actual loss of one arm above the elbow.

If the rhino gets your scent, almost invariably he charges, — often, probably, from sheer curiosity, only that does n't make him any more easily disposed of. Moreover, he runs and turns at a speed incredible of his vast bulk. Either shoot straight or stand absolutely motionless, when, with his bad sight, there is a possibility he may mistake you for a tree and veer past you.

Indeed, this latter is the safest tactics in the crisis of any and all charges, stand fast and still, — even the unwounded lion sometimes swerves in his charge and retires before a man with nerve to so await his coming.

Where you sight your rhino first and can get the wind of him, it is perfectly easy to stalk within even five or ten yards and land a shot where alone you can be sure of a kill, — four inches back of the eye into the brain pan, into the spine between neck and shoulder or midway of the

body and in line with the centre of the foreleg into the heart. And none of these shots are possible except with a hard-nose bullet, — no soft nose will penetrate his thick hide to any vital part.

Doubtless the most exhausting and nerve-racking work the African sportsman encounters is in the pursuit of elephant. Not often are they to be found except by following their own narrow paths between walls of bamboo thicket, jungle tangle, or elephant grass so entirely impenetrable to the hunter that escape from the path is impossible. So meet an approaching frightened herd and chance of escape is practically zero. Rarely does one see elephant until within a few yards of them. Often one will find himself squarely in the middle of a feeding herd, will hear them breaking limbs or tearing up roots, within five or ten feet of him, on all sides, and yet without seeing one! Like any youngsters, the totos, the babies, are playing about the outer edge of the herd. At the first alarm, the mothers rush trumpeting about for their young, and it is in such a position the hunter's greatest danger of elephant lies. Imprisoned in bush through which they easily crash, man and beast are practically in collision before there is time for the man to stop him with a vital shot in the chest, — the only vital spot in a charging African elephant, — or even time for the elephant, from surprise or fear, to swerve. Otherwise safely armored by the massive bone structure of the head, the elephant's comparatively tiny brain is only to be reached by a side shot in the orifice of the ear, while the sure shot for the heart is midway of the body and in line with the inner side of the foreleg. Indeed, I have known several elephants to retire, leisurely if not comfortably, with two or three

balls in the temple which had failed to reach the brain, whether to ultimate recovery or death was never learned.

The vitality of the elephant is enormous, as in fact is that of all African game, down to the tiniest buck.

But occasionally a white man comes along with a vitality as astonishing as that of his quarry. Of this Craig Helkett, an officer of the First King's African Rifles, is a wonderful proof.

Out for a few weeks' sport with elephant before going on leave, he gave one a mortal chest shot at such close range that it was upon him before he could deliver a second shot, passed one of its great tusks first transversely through his stomach and then through his thigh, picked him up with its trunk and tossed him far to one side into the bush, and then lurched away to die. And, miracle of miracles, though it was nine days before his men got him to Entebbe and surgical aid, he is making a safe recovery.

Still for the experienced and prudent elephant hunter, the sport is comparatively safe. Mr. Bell, an Englishman who has been for the last five or six years shooting elephant for the ivory, as a business, and who has to his credit the probably unparalleled bag to one gun of over five hundred head, says he has never yet been charged. Only a fortnight ago he came into Entebbe from a four months' safari in the Congo country with the tusks of one hundred and eighty big fellows. Deducting the period of the journey in and out, this remarkable kill must have been made within no more than six weeks' actual shooting! And one day alone he bagged eighteen! No bad business with ivory at two dollars and a half a

pound and an average tusk weight of probably one hundred pounds per pair!

Asked by a friend of mine how he had contrived to so long come off unscathed, Bell replied, "I never shoot until I get my big tusker right; if I find myself amid a big herd, I manage to slip out and bide my time; patience will always get you a big tusker right, and then you have it your own way," and, indeed, "patience" is the watchword of every notably successful big game hunter: waiting to "get them right."

Hippo are rarely to be had in daylight hereabouts, although they are plenty in the larger streams and positively swarm in the lakes of less than 5,000 feet altitude. They are easiest to be had by cruising at dawn in boat or canoe a few yards out from landings for their favorite grazing grounds, where a fair breast or shoulder heart shot may be had as they enter the water, or by lying in wait on land on moonlight nights for them to come ashore. On the water at dawn or of a night they often rise near you, and in such position the only sure shot is through a yawning nostril into the brain. They are trophies well worth while, their great teeth, finer ivory than that of the elephant, making beautiful mirror or picture frames. On water they are beasts to have especial care of, for they sometimes charge you and sink your canoe with a crunch of the jaws or rise under the canoe and spill you into crocodile-infested waters.

At the African home of my host, William Northrup McMillan, at Juja Farm, twenty-two miles from Nairobi, and in the heart of the great Athi Plains, all the East African game abounds in thousands, except rhino and elephant, sable and roan antelope and oryx — and the

Some of the Author's Head and Skin Trophies from "Closed Territory"

More of the Trophies