

EXTRACTS FROM THE LETTERS
DIARY AND NOTE BOOKS
OF
AMASA STONE MATHER

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M. S. M.

which we did, enjoying muchly their phonograph and a hot bath.

PUNDA MALIA, SEPTEMBER 4. A most interesting day. We moved the camp early, down into a wooded hollow about five miles from Smith's Shamba, and pressed on ourselves to get some buffalo, as it is reported a good country for them. About 7:30 a.m. we sighted a herd of hartebeests, presently four giraffes within two hundred yards, and then six eland (all cows, or I should have tried a shot, despite the buffalo). Next, two female bushbuck, then two wild boar. At nine, we spotted a one-horned water-buck, and then, down to leeward, two rhino. We crept around them in a wide circle and came up within thirty yards of them on our windward side, but they had small horns, so we let them go; great lumbering, truculent-looking brutes they were, too, in their full war panoply. We scoured the country, but saw nothing more except cow eland until four-thirty, when I decided to get some meat for camp. I stalked to within one hundred and fifty yards of a distant herd of hartebeests, but the same long grass which had helped the stalking, hindered the shooting, and I missed three times. At last I just touched my bull on the run, bowling him over. Later I wounded another, who, alas, got away, and then I came upon another herd. I made a miss, and then knocked another one over with my last cartridge (I didn't know it at the time, thinking my gun boy had more, but they were with the other reserve-gun-boy, whom I had sent back to camp). Imagine my disgust when on going forward he got up with a broken shoulder and eventually got clean away. T. got nothing, as it soon grew dark. A snug camp. The search party sent out brought in my mule tonight. Oh joy, oh rapture!

LATER. The water here looked good, so we foolishly didn't boil it, with the result we were both sick tonight with a touch of dysentery.

I'THANGA RIVER (EIGHT YARDS), SEPTEMBER 10. Off at six, and kept traveling until two-thirty, when I came upon running water. T. turned back to camp at nine, and I took a tremendous swing around and out into the hot, thorny, open plain, which stretches away northwestward from these hills. No fresh buffalo tracks. Hit a water-buck, but he got away. Off again at three-thirty. At four, I potted a good water-buck through the lungs, but he gave us a chase for half a mile through thick bush, long grass, rocks, and deep running water, where we several times lost his spoor. Eventually I came up to him, far-gone, in a shoulder-high pool under a beautiful fall, where he had turned at bay - a beautiful picture, as he is a magnificent animal about the size and build of a Scotch stag, and I longed for a kodak. A very nice head of twenty-four inches. I had a most refreshing dip in the pool, after he had succumbed. On the way home, came upon a rhino, rather suddenly, some thirty-five feet away, in long grass. He charged, but as he didn't wind us for a second or two, I had time to slip in my steel cartridges and bowled him over like a rabbit as he came for me. Poor horn of nineteen inches - but what could I do? "The night was dark, and I was far from home." It was six, forty-five, and pitch dark, before I reached camp.

I'THANGA RIVER (EIGHT YARDS), SEPTEMBER 11. Although an early start, we saw no buffalo or other mentionable game - being allowed but one eland, I am waiting for a good one. About nine we came upon a beautiful little rocky glen, where we had a smoke, and T. dug up a lot of ferns and palms for Newland, his pal. Later, we saw two rather small-horned rhinos. I wished to avoid them, as I had already had to shoot one, and wished to wait and make the only other I am allowed a good one; but T. went up close and had to shoot at one which charged. It got away but the other made things nasty for quite a while, charging up and down in furious,

chance of a bird before dinner (no other game hereabouts, the country being too thickly populated with Meru, whose shambas are almost continuous). T. got a pigeon with his 22, and I a spur-fowl, with my paradox. Pleasant evening by the camp fire—I have taught T. Wasting in Despair, and Come Lift the Rosy Goblet High, and we elucidate a rich strain of harmony from these and kindred songs. Early to bed.

HEAD WATERS OF LEKIUNDRA RIVER (Two Yards), September 25. Off at six. Track winding through thick low mapani forest, where branches and creepers interlacing thickly overhead made a perpetual green twilight. Went ahead with my gun, but saw nothing. Later, on the dry open veldt, we bagged some baby-blue doves (nice eating), T. doing most of the work. We are still among the shambas, and shan't be in the game country proper until tomorrow's camp. As we have so many new porters whom we don't wish to discourage by overwork, and are anxious for the aforementioned ten to catch us up, we camped early today (shortly after noon) as soon as we struck the head waters of the Lekiundra River. Enjoyed our usual bath. We haven't been observing Sundays of late, but "Cleanliness is next to Godliness." After tea went out and bagged three brace of guinea fowl in spite of my villainous shells, which are crimped and old. T. did the like. Early to bed. Windy camp.

LEKIUNDRA RIVER (Two Yards), SEPTEMBER 26. Bagged a couple of brace of guinea fowl each this morning, and sent half a dozen back to Horne by a runner. The local sultan, Ndaminuki, brought us in some eggs and milk, which we enjoyed hugely for breakfast. He still wears the battered white helmet which Neumann gave him, and has proudly borne behind him by a retainer an old Snyder rifle, which Neumann also gave him, but without any ammunition. We didn't get away this morning until six, forty-five. The track wound down over rolling, scrubby,

burnt-out plains, covered with sharp, loose stones, very bad for the horses' feet, and painful for the porters. As we are much lower (four thousand feet, I should say), than on the eighteenth instant, Kenia, though farther away, looks much higher. About ten-thirty, T. and I, jogging along behind the *safari*, espied a huge rhino ambling across the plain to windward. There was a very strong wind blowing and making a great noise among the dry thorn scrub, so that we rode up to within one hundred yards in perfect safety, he neither hearing nor smelling us and facing the other way. He seemed to have a very good head, and as T. didn't care about it, I decided to have a go myself. As I only had my paradox (soft-nosed bullets), I borrowed T.'s 350 Rigby-Mauser, a cordite, and walking up to within fifty yards, planted a steel behind his left shoulder. He gave a frightful snort and a stagger, but did not fall; in fact, being still unable to locate us, he started off at speed. I gave him another in the flank, and one in the buttock, as he turned away from us, T. blazing away with my paradox, peppered him with soft-noses in the hind quarters. Presently he stopped and faced around, looking rather nasty, and evidently feeling pretty sick, so I decided to wait for boys with the heavy guns. Armed with my 450, I cautiously approached the truculent bicornate, and, just as he started a final furious charge, tucked a steel into his right shoulder. He fell to his knees, and I was able to put another exactly beside it, which made him collapse utterly. Upon measuring, his horns proved to be twenty-three and three-quarters inches. These horns, though good, are not remarkable, but T. said it was the biggest bodied animal he had ever seen out of a total of say five hundred. In order not to make it too far for the boys to go back for the meat, head, feet, and skin, we camped two miles further on, in a villainous place, beside this muddy little stream. Miserable picking for the ponies. A strong gusty wind filled our ears, eyes, and noses with sand and ashes (the

ponies and much needed food, and to carry back the mighty head, skin, feet, and meat. We pushed on ourselves with renewed vigor to look for more, but a tempting sand bank, free of crocs, soon lured us to a delicious bath. Seeing no more tracks for three miles further up the river, I bagged a small wart hog who presented himself, with a raking shot through the fore-shoulder. We got back to the buffalo at 4 p.m., had a hearty *breakfast*, and rode back to camp which we reached at six-fifteen, moonlight. Enjoyed a hot soap-bath, and doctored my feet and some of the porters. Early to bed.

BASE CAMP, OCTOBER 3. Lions roaring last night. Away at five-ten on a cup of tea—but taking along a loaded tiffin basket today, to which we did ample justice at eleven-thirty and three-thirty. Got on buff tracks at about eight. At eight-thirty came up with the herd in thick scrub. I covered a bull which I could only see indistinctly, while T. looked with his glasses to see if it was good enough to shoot. We each saw only one bull, but they unfortunately proved to be different ones, as there were two in the herd. T. said it was a very good one, and though mine looked small, I took his word and biffed mine in the chest. T. then fired also, but in the press and the dust raised by the stampeding herd, he missed his bull and killed a cow. By comparing notes we then found that I had shot the smaller bull, and so left him to his own devices, and followed the herd in the hopes of another shot at the big one. Blistering hot! Almost bumped into a herd of about fifteen giraffes upwind. The thorn scrub and euphorbias were so thick that neither party saw the other till we were within ten or twelve yards of them. There were a couple of good bulls, but I had made up my mind that I wouldn't shoot any giraffes—they look such nice people. It is true that they furnish the porters with lots of meat and good rawhide for sandals, but they are very easy to get in this thick scrubby

to Mrs. Buff, in the same manner. My line of approach brought me up first. When about twenty yards off, I thought I saw something on the body, and knelt silently down. The next moment the grizzly head of a big old lion rose from behind the buff and looked me in the eye. As he gathered himself for a spring I drove a soft-nose 450 through the center of his skull, between the eyes, and he fell over stone dead with his feet up. However, I gave him another for luck, remembering our experience with T.'s buff. He proved to be larger than the first, nine feet, three and one-half inches, before skinning. He was a villainous old wastrel, his teeth being well worn down, showing that he had taken his toll of life. As the Masai had told us that they had lost a man and a couple of children through lions during the past months, I think he was probably the offender. We skinned him at once, took it back to camp, pegged it out, and treated it with alum and arsenical soap, so as to give it no possible excuse to go wrong. On the way back a huge rhino, with a poor horn (perhaps fifteen inches), whom I took to be the bereaved father of our impetuous young friend of the day before, made himself rather unpopular with our porters. He had evidently heard us, but kept charging about, unable to place us, the wind being puffy and all rhinos having poor eyesight. Luckily we were able to get away without having to shoot. After breakfast, eleven, forty-five, and a delicious swim, I donned a silk shirt and lounged gracefully in the shade, making a new stem for my pipe. We have had the porters make us a grass *banda*, or porch, in front of our tent, which is much cooler than being under canvas. Read *Hypatia* until 3 p.m. when we had tea and some delicious cold buffalo tongue, and sallied forth to look for lions, the boys having heard some roar in the direction of the Lekiundra River. Decided to leave the buffalo alone for a day. Back at six, forty-five, with no luck, though we stoned or crept

As I went after him, abandoning the more sporty for the rarer quarry, a big sod of a rhino who had got my wind, charged without warning from a patch of dense reeds and screw palms. I only had Jeramba with me, and he bolted like a shot. I dropped behind a bush and shoved a steel into my nine m.m., but he passed within five paces of me without seeing me, and eventually made off. I spent another hour in fruitless search for the gerenuk, and then came back to recross the river as it was getting dusk. Another rhino, with quite a good horn, came poking about and rather accelerated our selection of a crossing, with the result that I soon found myself up to my neck in a hole. It was not shared by a croc, luckily, and no harm done, except some "paradox" shells spoiled. I found that the pony had gotten away from the syce, (either asleep or careless) so tramped back to camp (7:45 p.m.) where he had fortunately preceded me. I had the syce given ten lashes (as he had no excuse, and there were plenty of lions about who might have nabbed the pony) both for this and several other little things I had been saving up against him. He agreed that it was quite just and took his punishment like a man. Afterwards, I gave him some quinine, as he seemed to have a bad cold. A certain amount of personal chastisement is absolutely necessary to keep so large a body of more or less wild men in hand. I believe in being very severe upon even slight provocation at the start, for the sake of making an impression and inculcating a wholesome respect. At the same time I always notice, commend, or if necessary, reward, any marked good work on the part of my boys, or particular application or evidence of interest. I never allow myself to punish anyone at the moment, or when my blood is hot, but wait until evening, when I hear both sides and try to give a calm, judicial opinion. It is necessary for all sportsmen in a vast country like this, where the ruling element is comparatively infinitesimal, to preserve the dignity and prestige of the white

drunks came into the club about ten, and there was quite an orgy.

MOMBASA, NOVEMBER 27. Two boats arrived from Europe this morning, one French and one German, and the little town, with its three tiny hotels and two clubs, is full up, many people sleeping in railway carriages. There are about a dozen prospective shooting parties in town, one that of the Duke of Alva, a brother to Penur-anda, to whom I sold my pony. Scott and I have been congratulating ourselves on having had our shoot at a time when there were but few other parties out. Of course it was the rainy season, and we were perhaps not quite so comfortable, therefore, as these chaps will be, but after all, one expects to rough it when out for sport, and the rainy season is undoubtedly the best time for elephants. Paid for my passage, this morning, which I had reserved some time ago, as the boat is said to be very crowded. Lots of women and children going home on leave from the French colony at Madagascar. Packed my luggage and gave my guns a farewell cleaning, greasing them up well for the voyage. Called on a doctor, who gave me some medicine for my fever, which has not quite gone yet, and for a bad cold in the chest, which I have picked up somehow. Stuart and I beat Walker and Eastly at tennis, but Stuart got his revenge at piquet. I dined with him, and spent the night at his house.

NOVEMBER 28. Put my luggage on board, paid my adieus, and loafed about the club reading Neumann's book during the morning. Our boat came in last night, and I went on board after tiffin. The boat is small, dirty, and crowded, mostly whiskered Frenchmen and children. I know several people, however, and expect a pleasant voyage — Lieutenant Neilson (Fourth Hussars), Captain DeCrespigny, Mr. Skein, Mr. Walters, Mr. Parkenson, Mr. Stevenson, also a German gentleman and his wife who have been out on *safari*. A rhino broke his leg

just after starting, about two months ago, is now on crutches, and is being taken home by his loving spouse, a very beautiful and accomplished Frau. The accident occurred in this way: he was stalking buffalo, when the rhino charged unexpectedly in thick cover. He lost his head, and in attempting to run or dodge, he tripped and fell. The rhino charged over him, breaking his leg and wounding him in the side, and passing on drove his boys into trees. Luckily, however, it did not come back to finish the job. We weighed anchor and steamed out of the beautiful little harbor of Mombasa with the picturesque ruins of its old Portuguese fort at two, and by sunset the beautiful green shore of Africa had faded away, and we were steaming northward and homeward over a calm blue sea.

NOTES: the Headman receives 4 kibabas of rice (2 2/3 lbs.) per day

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------|---|-------|---|---|---|--------------|---|---|
| Gunboys | " | 3 | " | " | " | (2 lbs.) | " | " |
| Tentboys | " | 3 | " | " | " | (2 lbs.) | " | " |
| Cook | " | 3 | " | " | " | (2 lbs.) | " | " |
| Askaris | " | 2 | " | " | " | (1 1/3 lbs.) | " | " |
| Porters | " | 1 1/2 | " | " | " | (1 lb.) | " | " |
| Syce | " | 1 1/2 | " | " | " | (1 lb.) | " | " |

Where no rice is obtainable, the men should be given whatever native *pocha* can be procured, i.e., mealy meals, beans, mahinda flour, etc., at the same rate per day.

Where food is scarce, men will agree for a slight backsheesh, (salt and tobacco are recommended as backsheesh) to take half meat and half *pocha*, which is a very economical method for the sportsman, if he is in a country where game is plentiful.

Besides a recruiting fee, of Rs. 1 for every man engaged, which is charged by the party who engages them (i.e., Smith-McKenzie and Co.), the government charges a registration fee of Rs. 1 for every man taken out on *safari*, and the sportsman is responsible for them.

TARIFF: Rice (it varies, but say roughly) Rs. 5 1/2 per load of 60 lbs.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|-------|---|---|---|---|
| Mealy meal | " | " | " | " | " | 4 1/2 | " | " | " | " |
| Beans | " | " | " | " | " | 3 | " | " | " | " |
| Mahinda flour | " | " | " | " | " | 2 1/2 | " | " | " | " |

MY LIST OF GAME - WHEN AND WHERE SHOT

| DATE | SPECIE | WHERE SHOT |
|---------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Aug. 31 | 1 Thompson gazelle | Athi Plains |
| Sept. 2 | 1 Hartebeest (coke) | Outside Nairobi |
| " 4 | 1 Hartebeest (coke) | Punda Malia |
| " 5 | 1 Bushbuck | " " |
| " 6 | 1 Waterbuck | " " |
| " 8 | 1 Bushbuck | Ithanga River |
| " 9 | 1 Reedbuck (bohor) | " " |
| " 9 | 1 Cobus cob | " " |
| " 10 | 1 Waterbuck | " " |
| " 10 | 1 Rhino | " " |
| " 14 | 1 Hartebeest (jackson) | Near Nyeri |
| " 15 | 1 Blue ape | The Spurs of Kenia |
| " 17 | 1 Zebra (burchall) | Tagesa River |
| " 19 | 1 Grant's gazelle | The Spurs of Kenia |
| " 26 | 1 Rhino | Lekuundra River |
| " 26 | 1 Steinbuck | " " |
| " 26 | 1 Zebra (burchall) | " " |
| " 27 | 1 Grant's gazelle | " " |
| " 27 | 1 Oryx | " " |

| | | | |
|------|----|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| " | 28 | 1 Grant's gazelle | Lekiundra River |
| " | 28 | 1 Impala | " " " |
| " | 29 | 1 Crocodile | Guasa Nyro River |
| " | 29 | 1 Grant's gazelle * | " " " |
| " | 30 | 1 Lion | " " " |
| " | 30 | 1 Oryx * | " " " |
| " | 30 | 1 Grant's gazelle | " " " |
| " | 30 | 1 Waterbuck * (defassa) | " " " |
| Oct. | 1 | 2 Crocodiles | " " " |
| " | 2 | 1 Wart hog | " " " |
| " | 3 | 1 Rhino ** | " " " |
| " | 3 | 1 Grant's gazelle * | " " " |
| " | 4 | 1 Lion | " " " |
| " | 5 | 1 Lioness | " " " |
| " | 5 | 1 Hyena | " " " |
| " | 5 | 1 Waterbuck (defassa) | " " " |
| " | 7 | 1 Lioness | " " " |
| " | 7 | 1 Hyena | " " " |
| " | 8 | 1 Buffalo | " " " |
| " | 8 | 1 Impala ** | " " " |
| " | 9 | 1 Impala | " " " |
| " | 9 | 1 Aardwolf | " " " |
| " | 10 | 1 Oryx | " " " |
| " | 11 | 1 Gerenuk * | " " " |
| " | 12 | 2 Wart hogs | " " " |
| " | 12 | 2 Impala | " " " |
| " | 12 | 1 Gerenuk | " " " |
| " | 13 | 1 Impala | " " " |
| " | 15 | 1 Baboon | Lekiundra River |
| " | 17 | 1 Oribi | " " |
| " | 18 | 1 Eland | Sultan Metbeely's Country |
| " | 29 | 1 Elephant | M'Gunga Lake |
| Nov. | 3 | 1 Thompson gazelle | The Spurs of Kenia |
| " | 4 | 1 Cerval cat | " " |
| " | 4 | 1 Zebra (burchall) | " " |
| " | 5 | 1 Waterbuck | Nyeri |
| " | 12 | 1 Grant's gazelle | Athi Plains |
| " | 12 | 1 Wildebeest | " " |
| " | 13 | 2 Hartebeests (coke) | " " |
| " | 14 | 2 Hippo | Athi River |
| " | 15 | 1 Duiker | M'toto Andei |
| " | 16 | 1 Lesser kudu | " " |
| " | 16 | 1 Bushbuck | " " |
| " | 17 | 1 Lesser kudu | " " |
| " | 17 | 1 Zebra (chapman) | " " |
| " | 22 | 1 Sable antelope | Shimba Hills |
| | | Thirty-three different species. | |

* Female ** Immature