SHOOTING.

THE BIG GAME OF EAST AFRICA.—II.

(*Concluded from page 573.*)

AS WE APPROACHED THE TANA RIVER rhinoceros began to get very common. In fact, as there was no path, for some days we marched along rhino and hippo tracks, which we found a great convenience, the grass being about 3ft. long, and very thick and tiring to walk through. During the month or so that this trip lasted I saw thirty-three rhino, but none with any exceptional length of horn. After shooting the two allowed by my licence I did not see any which I thought worth an extra £5 note; two extra are allowed on payment of £5 each. On one occasion, just when the Tana suddenly became visible through the bush, we saw nine in sight at once, seven old ones and two calves. They were all on the other side of the river, where the country was fairly open. Rhino have a great name for being dangerous game, but we never came across any of very truculent disposition.

After shooting my two rhino I made several attempts to get sufficiently close to others to photograph them, but as I only had a small Kodak it was necessary to get within about 10 yards or less, and I never succeeded to my satisfaction. On one occasion, when creasing over the brow of a hill, I came suddenly on a rhino with her young one; she was about 60 yards off and walking towards us. I thought this an excellent chance of taking her photo, as the country was open and there were no trees to intercept the view; but, to my embarrassment, she suddenly snorted and charged straight at us. I only just had time to drop the camera and seize the rifle, which I had loaded and given to my gun boy before opening the camera, and I was just going to fire when she turned off and galloped past us, snorting violently. When she turned she was only some 10 yards away; I had not had time to fire before—fortunately, as it turned out, as I did not want to shoot her owing to the calf. She certainly looked as if she meant business, but I suppose her courage failed her at the last moment.

On another occasion, when our caravan was walking through a bit of thick bush, we disturbed a rhino with her young one. She cantered round the front of the column, and came to a stand on the opposite side, then turned round and charged straight through the line of porters, causing much excitement among them. I am sure she did not mean to go for the caravan, but was only trying to get up wind. It is one of the characteristics of the rhinoceros that, being nearly blind, but gifted with a keen scent, when disturbed or frightened they will move off up wind, as a rule, they will gallop through anything in their way. On one memorable occasion a rhino charged a train near Nairobi. The shock was sufficient, according to my informant, to stop the train; but speed is not characteristic of the Uganda Railway trains, and in any case I fancy the driver pulled up in view of the possibility of a rear carriage being derailed. The poor beast was rather damaged, and stood upon the rails behind the train looking very sick till a passenger fired at him, when he trotted off and was not seen again. In this case probably the train passed in front of the rhino, and, after their usual custom, her head went up wind, and as the train happened to be in the way he charged it. He struck one of the rear carriages I believe.

Although nearly blind and rather deaf, they have, apart from their powers of scent, what might be called a keen sense of danger. Often I have endeavoured to photograph a rhino, with wind and everything in my favour, when I have seen it get uneasy while I was still some 40 or 50 yards off. In such cases it would turn round and round, trying to smell or see where the danger was, and finally would gallop off up wind, never stopping till it had covered many miles.

They display good deal of affection, and a young one will stay with its mother till long past the age at which it can fend for itself. We saw a remarkable instance of this on one occasion. W. had shot one of a pair of rhinos, choosing the biggest, which we thought was the male. (We afterwards found it was a female, so it was probably the mother of the other.) The smaller had a horn only some 10in. long or less, so we were unwilling to shoot him, and endeavoured to drive him off, but had the greatest difficulty in doing so. A line of thick trees ran down to within some 30 yards of the pair, so we took refuge behind them, and then endeavoured, by throwing sticks and stones, &c., to get rid of him. He refused to budge, and only attempted to attract the attention of his mother by digging at her with his horn. We were quite close to camp, and presently some thirty or forty porters arrived, and added their efforts, many of them running out and throwing sticks or clods of earth at the unwelcome visitors. These the rhino charged and chased back to the trees, then returning to his watch over the body. It was nearly an hour, I should think, before he made up his mind to go, urged thereto by a more vigorous effort than usual of the porters, who were getting anxious about their meat, seeing that we refused to shoot him. He made off at last, but evidently hung about in the neighbourhood, as I came across him twice the next day.

Hippo were very numerous in the Tana River, but when shot it was almost impossible to get their bodies to the bank, owing to the depth of the river and the force of the current. They feed at night, and spend the day basking in the shoals, biting and playing with one another. I counted a herd of fifty-two on one occasion standing together. It is necessary to hit them in the head to kill them at once, between the eye and ear being the best place to aim. We saw many wild cats, but only one antelope no bigger than a hare, with horns that run to some 3in. in length. There are several species, and they are very difficult to distinguish, except for the expert. Those we met were, I think, principally Kirk's dik-dik (*Neotragus kirkii*), with a long prehensile nose. They live in the direst and most inhospitable parts, and have the habit, so common among animals, of always dropping their dung in the same place, till it forms a large pile.

Hartebeeste and zebra are found everywhere, sometimes in immense numbers. Up to the Rift Valley the species met with is Coke's hartebeeste (*Bubalis cokei*), a large and ungainly animal, with the fiddle head characteristic of all hartebeestes. Down near the coast, where it is hot, this animal is of a bright red colour; but further up country, as the climate gets colder, it grows a longer coat of a much duller and more rusty tinge. In most parts it is very wary, and certainly on this side it is most difficult of all East African antelopes to stalk, although the commonest. It has an awkward habit, too, of spoiling your stalk at other animals, turning up unexpectedly from behind you, and sending everything off with its warning sneeze. The horns are curious, but not much of a trophy, the length of the skull detracting from their size.

Zebras are quaint and amusing beasts to watch. Government, with some idea of domesticating them, is experimenting to that end, and only allows two to be shot on the ordinary licence, with the result that they are plentiful and fairly tame everywhere. A zebra farm has been established in the Rift Valley, and at a drive last September or the end of August some 300 were captured. One would naturally think that their brilliant marking would render them very conspicuous, but this is not the case. Their stripes blend into grey at a short distance, and unless the sun is glinting on their coats (when they shine like a heliograph), they are not so noticeable as the hartebeeste. Their curious whinnying sounds like a dog yapping, and until I knew what it was I very often thought there must be wild dogs about.

Wart-hogs are also common in most places, and we saw a good many. Their hairs are laid over their bodies, and covered with immense warts, which, with their big, curving tusks, give them a ferocious look, belied, however, by their disposition, as they are comparatively harmless except when cornered. At Nairobi they are starting pig-sticking after them, but without much success I believe, owing to their proneness to get to ground.

After this trip we took the train further up country towards the Victoria Nyanza. We stopped for some time in the vicinity of the line at Mohoroni and Kibigori stations. Our primary object was elephant, but the big herd that usually lived in the neighbourhood had gone, nobody knew where, and we put in our time after Jackson's hartebeeste, topi, roan antelope, and singing.

This was the only part of the country we had been in where there was any considerable population. Around Mohoroni there were the Walumbwa, and from there west to the lake the Kavirondo. The latter are one of the few peoples in the world among whom both sexes go about stark naked, and it is odd to see a lot of them standing about a railway station when the trains come in.

Jackson's hartebeeste, which here takes the place of Coke's, is an enormous beast, with massive horns, very wary and difficult to kill. Topi are just the reverse, being stupid and comparatively easy of approach. They are a dark chocolate in a compound of rich reddish brown, or even scarlettish, with black; but the horns are indifferent trophies. Roan antelope, bohor, reedbuck, and oribi are the only other important animals in this district. Roan antelopes are exceedingly local, and the vicinity of these two stations is one of their very few haunts, but even here there could only be three or four small herds. I did not get one large buck, but shot an old female with a fair pair of horns. W. got a good buck with 25in. horns. Oribi and bohor are very common, I believe, but at the time of our visit the grass was in this part of the country about 5ft. long everywhere; consequently such small beasts were quite invisible unless one happened by chance to walk on to them, when they would dash off at a surprising pace, with a succession of high bounds, doubtless to enable them to see where they were going.

After a fortnight here, as we could not get any news of the elephants, we took the train down country again, stopping *en route* at a small siding in the Rift Valley to get Neumann's hartebeeste and Chanler's mountain reedbuck. Neumann's hartebeeste, although apparently regarded as a distinct species for the last few years, would appear without doubt to be a hybrid between Coke's and Jackson's hartebeestes. It is as big as the latter, but the horns are very much like Coke's, and are of every conceivable shape between the typical Coke's on a large scale and the typical Jackson's. In the same herd there are frequently animals which might pass for either. They are just as wary as their relatives.

On one occasion when trying to stalk a herd of these animals I observed a large leopard passing near them. They soon winded or saw him, and moved slowly away. The leopard passed quite close to me, but saw me, and, owing to the exceedingly rough ground I was unable to fire a shot at him. After following him for about half an hour I had to give him up and return to the hartebeeste. After a great deal of trouble I managed to get a shot at the old bull, but unfortunately the bullet only broke a foreleg. I followed the blood trail some way, and at last saw him standing in the open not far from a patch of bush. Making a circuit behind some high ground, we reached the place, only to find that he had vanished. W. had met him while I was away, and we separated, making casts to pick up the blood trail. While thus occupied, I suddenly saw a leopard, my friend of the morning presumably, trotting towards us. A hurried scramble over some exceedingly sharp lava rocks brought me just in time to a point directly in his path. He must have been deaf not to hear the noise that my heavy boots made as I stumbled about, but he had advanced some 15 yards before I was ready for him. I then raised my rifle; the movement attracted his attention, and he saw me. He stopped and snarled, and then deliberately sat down; immediately after a bullet in the brain knocked him over. He was an old male some 8ft. 4in. long, and very heavy. It seemed doubtful whether he could have pulled down such a powerful animal as a Neumann's hartebeeste; but, as he was apparently following the blood trail, he perhaps expected to find the beast helpless and dying. His stomach was empty, and he was presumably hungry; but there were plenty of reedbuck about which ought to have given him an easily obtained meal.

These reedbuck, which belong to Chanler's mountain form, are among the smallest of their kind, with horns rarely exceeding some 6in. in length, with a pretty greyish coat, and the usual fluffy white tail of the species. Another common species hereabouts was the klipspringer, which, as far as I could see, was identical with his South African brother. The coat is peculiar, being of stiff, bristle-like hairs, each hair being hollow for part of its length.

A short stay at a station further down the line called Makindu, where we hoped to get lion and oryx but were unsuccessful, brought our trip to an end. We had shot between us, besides birds, some 200 odd head of big game (including about thirty different species) in about three months. If we had desired it we might have shot many more if we commenced early enough.

On arriving in the country a licence (costing £50 for a visitor not an official of the Protectorate) has to be taken out before one's guns can be handed over. For this one may shoot two elephants, two rhino, two hippo, two each of Class A and ten each of Class B antelopes, and a certain number of certain other beasts, such as zebra, cheetah, colobus monkey, &c. Class A includes some of the rarer and larger kind, such as sable, oryx, koodoo, Neumann's hartebeeste, and topi; Class B the commoner kinds, such as hartebeeste (except Neumann's), impala, Grant's, Peters's, Thomson's, and Waller's gazelles, wildebeeste, waterbuck, reedbuck, and roan antelope are not allowed to be shot under this licence at all. To get them it is necessary to obtain a special licence, under which one of each may be shot, costing, in the case of giraffe, eland, and buffalo, £5 each animal, and in the case of the roan antelope £3. If it is desired to kill more than the number allowed under the £50 licence (and this is sometimes necessary for food), an extra fee has to be paid, and ten more each of Class B antelopes (except wildebeeste and waterbuck) may be shot for 20 rupees each, and one each of Class A for £3 each; two more wildebeeste and waterbuck and one zebra at £2 each. (The local coinage is in rupees.)

No trophies can be taken out of the country till an administrative officer has certified that the game regulations have been observed. It is easy, however, for settlers who do not wish to take their trophies out of the country to evade these regulations, and it is to be feared that many do so. Occasionally, however, offenders are caught and punished.

As regards the expenses of a trip, no one should go intending to shoot as we did unless prepared to pay some £800 for a three months' trip for two guns, this to include everything, namely, money, rifles, and ammunition. A. H. B.

THE EFFECTS OF DRIVING GROUSE IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND.

SOME OLD RECORDS of grouse shooting which have lately turned up abundantly confirm the opinion already expressed that Yorkshire grouse preserving has not improved since the first wonderful effects of "driving" the birds were fully realised. Whether partial dog work and driving later in the season did good in Yorkshire, or whether the improvement only followed a period of driving, to the exclusion of dogs altogether, is a question. The evidence on that point is not so ample as could be wished, but there is a record of 1099 brace of grouse being taken off one moor in one day over dogs in Yorkshire, and on a moor which was regularly driven after the birds became too wild. Consequently it is safe to assume that the stock must have been extraordinary, and also that what was done upon one moor could, and probably was done upon others. The figures appear so remarkable to the present generation, so totally at variance with the modern teaching of scientific grouse preserving, that it will be well to give them in full. The shooting was on the Bowes subscription moors in 1872, and abundantly proves the superiority of the grouse stock then. The bags made on Bowes moor on Aug. 12, 1872, by thirty shooters were, 85½ brace, 65½, 56½, 54, 49, 45, 44½, 43, 50, 40½, 41½, 41½, 36, 35, 35½, 35½, 35, 33, 33, 32, 32, 29½, 29½, 27, 23, 21, 16, 16, 8, 8, and 5½; total, 1099 brace. Knowing how wild grouse were then for dog work in Yorkshire, this is very remarkable, and it was probably due to the fact that the birds never got any rest, but no sooner did they leave one shooter's dogs than they were found by others, and so scattered and made to lie.

It proves, moreover, that there could not have been "packing" to any great extent then as early as Aug. 12. About the Sheffield moors there certainly was long before Aug. 12. But Bowes moor lies on the borders of Durham and Westmoreland, and the grouse had become less educated than on the east further south and west, where at that time a man's bag was held upon Aug. 1 cause a cloud of grouse to rise a quarter of a mile away and go off like so many scared rooks. But, in spite of these swarms of grouse and the wonderful record on Bowes moor, the top scorer there was so handicapped by the wildness of the birds that his bag was far less than many made in the Highlands at the same time. There were bags there commonly of over 100 brace per gun over dogs, whereas this year no place has afforded half the number anywhere south of Caithness-shire, an exclusively dog-hunting county. The fact that there were fewer birds on the acre and yet more birds killed over dogs by a gun in Scotland only emphasises the wildness of the Yorkshire grouse at that period.

In 1872 there were many bags of a thousand brace made in the day in Yorkshire by driving, as at Broomhead, Wemmergill, Dallowgill, and Hope Forest, where 15,484 birds were killed in nineteen days' driving. This season no such bag has been made anywhere; only one of the sort was made last year, and none others since 1899, so far as can be remembered. In 1872 the *Field* reported 2012 brace killed in the day at Dallowgill, but this was evidently intended for "cards," because no such bag has ever been made anywhere, and also because the next day's bag on the same moor is recorded as 1260 birds.

It is often said that the Broomhead bags show a wonderful improvement in methods of preservation, but Broomhead is unique in being without disease for thirty years, though it is not very certain that it has improved in spite of this advantage. The season's bags would greatly exceed the educational value of those of the best day's bags, but, failing that evidence, most information can be obtained from the best two days' bags, for Mr Rimington Wilson always begins with two days, with one intervening. The best bags and two-day bags were as follows:

AT BROOMHEAD.

Date.	Guns.	Brace in day.	Best two days.
Sept. 6, 1872	13	1315	—
Sept. 3, 1890	8	639	—
Sept. 9, 1891	8	630	—
Aug. 30, 1893	9	1324	2125½
Sept. 1, 1893	9	801	—
Aug. 29, 1894	9	1001	1694
Aug. 31, 1894	9	687	—
Sept. 4, 1895	8	624	—
Aug. 26, 1896	9	1050	—
Aug. 25, 1897	9	1006	—
Aug. 24, 1898	9	1105½	—
Aug. 23, 1899	9	1013	—
Aug. 22, 1900	9	586	—
Sept. 4, 1901	9	712	—
Aug. 26, 1901	9	775	1447
Aug. 27, 1902	9	693	950
Aug. 23, 1902	9	257	—
Aug. 26, 1903	9	1035	1188
Aug. 28, 1903	9	454½	—
Aug. 24, 1904	9	1371½	1777
Aug. 26, 1904	9	405½	—
Aug. 30, 1905	9	872½	1476
Sept. 1, 1905	9	604	—

Possibly the averages per season of the three tenants at Wemmergill—the late Sir Fred. Milbank, Lord Westbury, and Mr Charles Hunter—will throw some light on this subject, and will, in any case, be most interesting; but it should be remembered that the tenancy of Sir F. Milbank included the two years of disease, namely, 1873 and 1874, the worst disease ever known in our time, and after which the moors recovered but slowly:

Sir Fred. Milbank's average	4133 birds.
Lord Westbury's 1887 to 1893 average	6000 "
Mr Charles Hunter's 1901 to 1905 average	5008 "

The last named was up to Sept. 2 this season, and possibly the 1903 brace killed then may be added to. This does not look like continued progress, and is upon a par with the rest of the evidence. Dealing with less well-known moors, we find that, in spite of the wonderful breeding season, the bags made in Yorkshire this year are not much better on the average than in the three preceding years, two at least of which were periods of disease. On the borders in Derbyshire the grouse are only moderate, and the stock has not fully recovered from three years of disease. Such the experience given by the Marquis of Granby, who has been good enough to give information. But do any of the records below compare better than those above with those of 1872? If not, what becomes of scientific care of heather, sheep removal, and draining? When, in 1888, Lord Walsingham made the record for Blubberhouses moor, that ground carried the 1400 sheep it always had carried, and he then made the remark that of grouse improvement, which he spoke of as from 400 to 800 per cent. better than before the system began.

The bags on less well-known moors are indicative of local fluctuations rather than of great improvement in an excellent breeding year after several seasons of disease. But the averages of recent years do not compare favourably with the 1871 and 1872 seasons when such comparisons are forthcoming.

Lord Walsingham, writing in 1888, said that he thought burning had a great deal to do with grouse increase in Yorkshire in the previous twenty-five years, because shooters were inclined to leave very old heather upon dog moors in order to induce the birds to lie. He said that we do not, but, although burning was a cause, that has been attributed to Yorkshire at that time, the best burned moors were seen in Caithness-shire, and the worst burned ones in Yorkshire. In 1871 the moor of Dunbeath, in Caithness, was burned in patches as regular as those of a market garden, and shooters on Bowes moor a few years after the great bag recorded above, there was very little indication of past burning, and very few grouse, for disease had swept all the Teesdale moors and left hardly one grouse in fifty of the former stock. This clearance affected the dog moors, and the exclusively driven moors equally. Indeed, it swept the whole country, beginning before the shooting season of 1873 on some moors and after it upon others. In Wales they were all dog moors at that time, and the bags were small compared to the driving bags now made in Wales, but are they ever exceeded in Yorkshire when shooting over dogs? It is probable that in those days the old cocks could be dealt with satisfactorily in Mid-north Wales without resorting to driving, and that was also true of the Highlands.

There were some bags made at Menzies Castle moors in that year, and not seen since, confirm this view, and also to show that, in spite of a majority of old birds, and therefore a bad breeding season on that particular moor, the grouse killed over dogs were more than can be got now. The bags made were, on Aug. 12, 205 brace; 13th, 117 brace; and 14th, 168 brace, the five shooters, and the record was added to the report in the *Field* to the effect that the birds were very wild and mostly old. Now, in an excellent breeding season, the shooters got, on the same moor, on the 12th 115 and on the 14th seventy-six brace, which we may be sure were mostly young birds.

Driving had not been started in Scotland, except in isolated instances, and there with little success, before 1872, so that if it can be shown that there were then as many grouse in the Highlands as there are now, it will be clear enough that driving has not increased the stocks there, and that practice did all the good and made all the difference in Yorkshire. First, there has been no such increase of seasons' bags as 400 to 800 per cent. since driving began in Scotland; secondly, there has only rarely on individual moors been increase at all; thirdly, bags made over dogs rarely reach in the day fifty brace to a gun now, whereas in 1872 there were many 100 brace bags made; there was also one 220 brace bag made, and so there had been twenty years before that.

A few of the best bags in Perthshire in this and the immediately preceding years were as follows: At Chamore, thirty-eight brace on June 12, and twenty-six brace on the 14th, and in 1902 there were twenty-six and a half brace bagged here by two guns; three shooters on Aug. 12 in 1903 had sixty-three and a half brace. On the Balmakelly moors on Aug. 14 there were forty-seven brace killed by three guns, and in 1903 only twenty-seven and a half brace were killed by the same number of shooters, and thirty brace last year. At Faskally there were seventy-five brace bagged by four guns on Aug. 14, and in 1903 there were twenty-six and a half brace obtained by three shooters; in 1872 at Faskally two guns obtained thirty-five, thirty-five, and fifty brace in three days. At Foss this year Capt. Hargreaves's party bagged fifty-two and a half brace on Aug. 14, and there were fifty and a half brace killed by two shooters in 1902, sixty-seven and a half brace to four guns in 1903, and seventy-nine and a half brace last year to the same number of shooters. At Chabnamore this season there were sixty brace killed, as against 100 brace last year, and 104½ brace the year before. At Dalwhinnie, on the borders of Perthshire, three guns had twenty-nine and a half brace on Aug. 12, and fifty-two brace on the 14th, whereas in 1902 the same party had forty-eight and a half brace in the day. This does not show that a grand breeding season does much for dog bags in Scotland now, for they are not invariably, if on the average, better than the seasons immediately before this one. Nor can they begin to compare with such bags as were made on similar moors in 1872. There was the Grandtully bag of 220 brace to