



BIG-GAME HUNTING FOR THE CINEMA.

By JOHN A. JORDAN, F.R.G.S., F.Z.S.

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY L. WOOD.

How the Author led a moving-picture expedition into the wilds of British East Africa to secure films of its strange animal life. Plenty of game was encountered and exciting incidents were numerous, but so far as marketable films were concerned the expedition was not the success contemplated.



OWADAYS science can bring the wonders of the world to one's very arm-chair, and the cinematograph thrills millions of people with the glories of remote countries, where adventurous men break into unknown lands and chase wild beasts in the depth of virgin forest or across vast plains and dismal swamps.

British East Africa, with its wealth of big game and scenes of great beauty, offers ex-

ceptional scope for the daring cinema man anxious to secure really sensational and startling pictures of wild animals in their native haunts. True, quite a number of such films are in existence, such as those secured by Mr. Cherry Kearton and Mr. Shelly's pictures of dogs hunting the lion. But there is still plenty of scope for new pictures, more particularly of wild animals on the move and in their fighting attitudes. But the work is dangerous and calls for good nerves on the part of the operator,

while his men must know something about the handling of big game. This will be obvious from the following account of the writer's attempt to secure marketable films.

A few years ago I agreed to partly finance and lead an expedition in search of moving pictures of animal life. The operator had a Pathé Frères' cinematograph camera, which, with the stand, weighed forty pounds, and was very awkward to fix quickly. He carried with him ten thousand feet of film.

Apart from the financial side I wanted to make the expedition a huge success, so spent some days in Nairobi getting together a caravan of porters and boys who had been with me on my shooting expeditions. I also induced three white men to join—men who I knew would face any danger. We managed to buy some fast Somali ponies, these being the best breed for running down lions.

Having collected a first-class caravan, we started for the Kisi country in search of elephants. No sooner had we reached our destination when the natives brought us word of the existence of a herd close by. It was too late to go after them that day, so we curbed our impatience till the morning.

After a hasty breakfast three of us set out, accompanied by some porters and native warriors. It was very tedious work forcing our way through the tall elephant grass to which clung a kind of vetch with firm tendrils, in which we occasionally caught our feet and tripped over. At noon we got our first sight of the elephants descending from the hills into a large swamp that lay at the bottom. No place could have been more suitable for our purpose and we felt sure of getting a good film. Manœuvring to within thirty yards of the animals, we had a fine view of them wallowing in the swamp.

The operator soon had his camera fixed and began winding off the film. A young bull, however, heard the uncommon click, click of the machine and, becoming alarmed, threw his trunk in the air and gave out a terrific roar. It was soon taken up by the other bulls and then the cows joined in with their trebles, the whole producing a regular pandemonium. Our operator looked round for a safe retreat. My companion, thinking the animals intended to clear off, raised his rifle and fired at a big bull, but failed to bring him down. But we had not bargained for what was to follow. The now thoroughly roused monsters began circling for our scent and we had to make a quick retreat to a rise about eighty yards away, so that we could see what was happening in case they got round to our rear.

We had no sooner taken up our position than they made a charge over the spot which we had just left. Disappointed at not finding us they split into small groups, the majority crossing the swamp. Two of the animals, however, stuck to the wounded elephant—a cow and a medium-sized bull. These evidently made up their minds to locate us, and again started circling for our wind. As there was only one

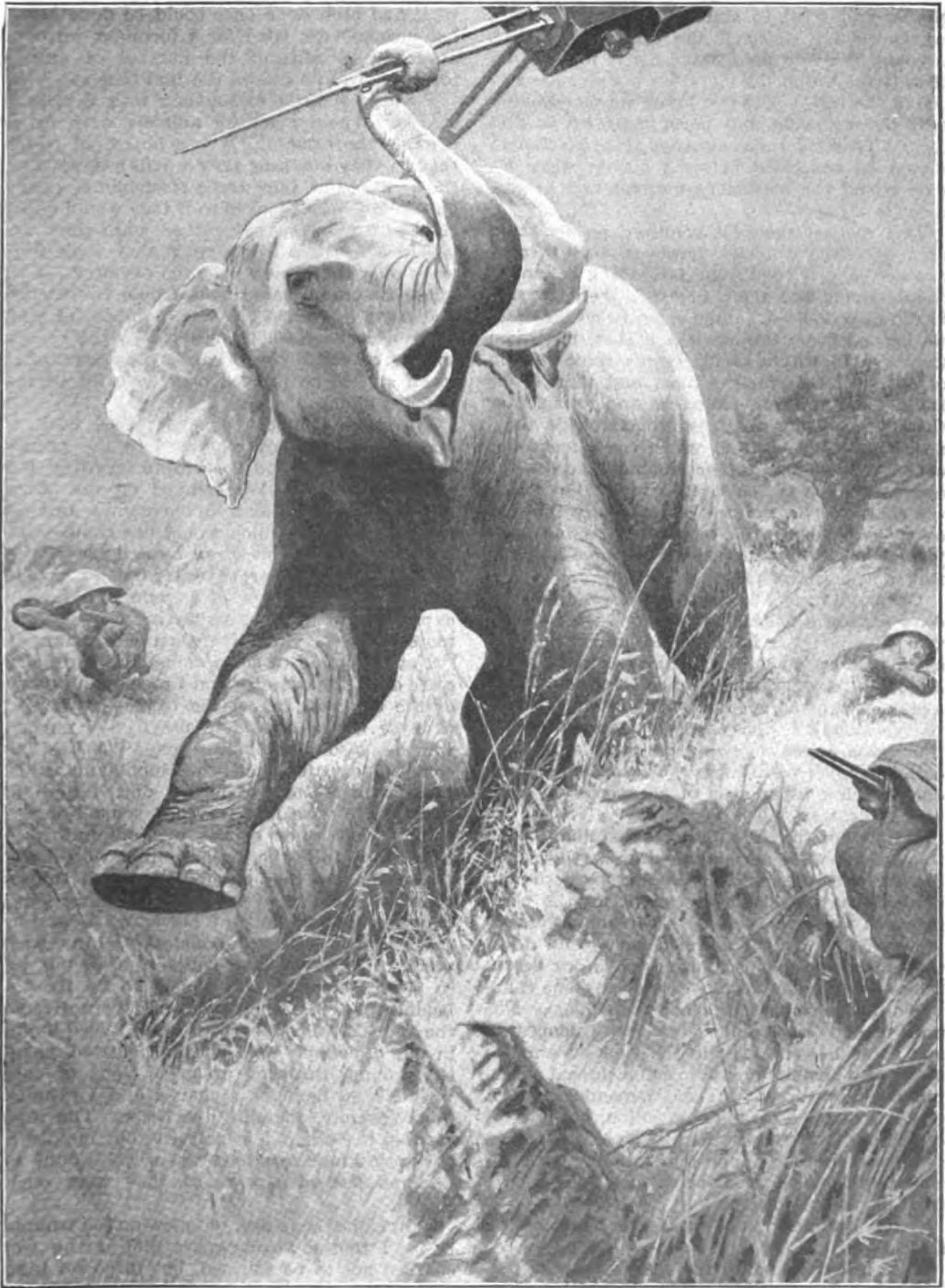
tree near us, we decided to shoot if they came close and meant to attack. They gradually reduced the circle till they had got our wind, when they stopped dead at about forty yards distant.

We knew that foretold a straight charge, so Robbey and I fired hastily. My partner brought his bull down with a quick shot from his .500 Express. I was using a 9mm. rifle, useless for killing an elephant with a frontal shot. So I aimed at the trunk, and it had the effect of turning the brute from his purpose of charging. Not so, however, the cow. Flapping her large ears she started squealing with rage, and then, with trunk outstretched and gleaming red beady eyes, came on like an express train. The operator collapsed, and it was lucky he did so, for before we could get a shot home the enraged animal had seized the camera with her trunk and swung it aloft. We were forced to give ground, and then Robbey and I found ourselves on each side of the elephant, our rifles singing out together. The great beast sank down backwards, dead, still holding the camera and stand. The operator investigated the camera and reported nothing broken, so we took up the hunt for the other wounded bull, leaving the photographer to continue his picture of the natives cutting up the dead beast.

The bull led us a merry dance, and it was six o'clock before we finished him off. We then returned to camp, where we expected to find the operator, but the others had seen nothing of him. Thinking he would turn up at any moment, we sat down to dinner. We finished the meal, but still there was no news of the missing one. Knowing he was quite new to the country we began to get uneasy, although we had left most of our boys with him. At last, getting tired of waiting, and having moonlight to guide us, we set out to find him. We got about half-way to the dead cow-elephant when we heard voices, and on reaching the spot we found our friend lying in the grass surrounded by the boys. He was in a state of collapse. They had waited for us to return, but finding it was getting late had started back for camp. But the day had been a strenuous one, and the operator was tired and kept catching his feet in the grass, each tumble making him weaker. Then the climax came when they disturbed a rhinoceros, which being in a bad temper promptly charged. Fortunately for our friend, and also for us, as he was the only man that understood the camera, he was accompanied by four brave warriors of the Lumbwa tribe, who met the beast with their long stabbing spears, killing it on the spot. They had then tried to lead the white man on, but the fright had deprived him of the power of his limbs.

Having no hammock, and there being no trees for us to cut sticks and make one, we each took one arm and bullied and joked him into walking, but it was midnight before we reached camp.

The next day we had a discussion about our photographer while he lay asleep in his tent, and after dealing with the previous day's experience, in which he had only used about



"The animal seized the camera with her trunk and swung it aloft."

fifty feet of film instead of a thousand, came to the conclusion that it would be best if we left the dangerous animals alone till he had acquired more experience, and for the next month confine our work to taking pictures of antelope and giraffe.

It was quite three days before our invalid was fit for work again, and then we started for the Loita Plains, practically virgin country as regards shooting, and where antelope, zebra, and gazelle were found in herds of thousands. On our way we came across a good-sized herd of

giraffe, and tried to stalk them, but the wily beasts quickly detected the camera. So that it could be ready for instant use it was carried already set up on the stand on the shoulders of one of the boys. For two hours we manoeuvred near those giraffes, but never managed to film them. Then someone suggested that the camera should be concealed in some bushes while we rode round the suspicious animals and headed them towards it.

This seemed the best solution, so we acted upon it. The animals, however, had become alarmed, and it took some fast riding before we could circumvent them and get them moving in the direction we wanted them to go. At last we headed them towards the bushes, but when they got to within eighty yards some motion of the operator startled them and they broke back. We, however, closed in, and riding after them with shouts managed to stampede them nearly over the place in which the camera was concealed. It was rather laughable to see the awkward lurch of the giraffes when they heard the click of the machine; some nearly tumbled over. We found the operator beaming with joy. He said he had taken over three hundred feet of a first-class picture.

On arriving at the Loita Plains it took two days finding a suitable spot on which to work the camera. We intended to follow out the same plan as with the giraffes—namely, get a large number of animals to race past the camera. I stayed with the operator, while the rest of the party, including the carriers, made a detour round the animals grazing on the plain. This entailed hours of arduous work, as we wanted one long line of animals of all species to come past the camera.

It was not till the afternoon that they began to come our way. I could see literally thousands coming over the rise. They had been so well herded that they headed straight for the place in which we lay concealed. Then some freak or knowledge of danger alarmed them, and down they raced like fiends hunting us to our death. There was no time to move, and only one thing to do, and that was to shoot the leaders. Not until I had killed four zebra, two wildebeeste, and three hartebeeste did the tide of animals swerve. I held my breath in astonishment at the number and speed. Then remembering the camera, I looked for my companion, but instead of finding him busily taking a picture of the sight of a lifetime, found him standing with his rifle raised ready to shoot at any animal that tried to trample over us.

"For goodness' sake take the picture!" I shouted.

This brought him to the business we had in hand, and, dropping his rifle, he started with his machine; but too late! He only managed to get the tail end of the charging squadrons, composed of gazelles.

When the men rode up and learned that we had only managed to secure a picture of the tail-end of the moving panorama of animals they were terribly disappointed. We tried, however, to cheer one another up by saying that

what had been done once could be done again; but although we tried for a fortnight we could never get a fifth of the number of animals together that we did on the first occasion.

We had a little excitement with a herd of impala. These beautiful animals were driven towards the camera. It was hoped, of course, that as they got near they would swerve off to the right. But they came straight on, despite our shouts, and it looked as if they would charge right into us. On they rushed, until they were within a few feet of us, when they took flying leaps over the camera and the operator. Some of those springs were not less than twenty feet, and eight feet high. It was a wonderful sight, but unfortunately not registered by the camera, as the operator could hardly be expected to stand still to be jumped over by a lot of fear-stricken animals.

We spent a month on the plains, and, our operator having now got used to the country and the animals, we decided to go after more dangerous game. We camped on the Amala River, and tried to find hippopotamus, but only saw one big bull which would not come within the focus of the camera, so crossed the river in search of the dangerous water-buffalo. These animals are the terror of anyone who has had experience of big-game shooting; no beast is more deadly or vindictive when once wounded.

Not expecting to come across this animal for some days, the operator and I rode on in advance of the caravan, taking the camera with us in case we had a chance to use it. A party of warriors also accompanied us. We had now come to beautiful country resembling an English park, with clusters of bushes dotted here and there. After we had travelled some hours we halted while some of the warriors followed a honey-bird into the bushes after wild honey. No sooner had they entered the scrub than we heard a crackling of sticks and rustling leaves, denoting the presence of big animals, and out poured about twenty buffaloes within twenty yards of us. We were halted near a big tree, so I whispered for the camera to be fixed up behind the tree. The movement was noticed by the animals, who stood with heads raised looking in our direction. One fine bull started pawing the ground, throwing up great clods of earth. This I knew heralded a charge, and I promptly fired, severely wounding the beast. The report startled the others into activity, but luckily not our way, and the photographer got about two hundred feet of film before they were out of sight.

Now came the danger of following the wounded bull. I told my companion that if the brute charged not to be alarmed, but to go on taking the picture, because if I failed to bring him down with the rifle the warriors would soon despatch him with their spears, which would make the film more exciting and all the more valuable. We then started to look for the spoor, but could find no trace of blood, although we knew the animal was badly wounded, for we had seen it stagger. I told the men to stretch themselves out in a long line and go in the



"They took flying leaps over the camera and the operator."

direction the animals had taken. The warriors started away, and my companion and I mounted our horses to follow, when my gun-bearer drew my attention to some huge animal partly concealed by bushes. We rode towards it, but the animal, who was evidently watching us, cleared

round the bush. I had four dogs with me, and, telling my companion to stay still, rode towards the spot, urging the dogs into the scrub. They had no sooner started when out charged my wounded buffalo; head down and tail erect, he came plunging towards me and the dogs.

I wheeled my horse out of the way, but the beast sighting the operator charged towards him. Never having done any riding till he came to Africa, he lost control of his horse, which, frightened by the charging buffalo, bolted. He was thrown, and seemed to turn a double somersault before hitting the ground. I thought he would certainly be killed by this wounded buffalo, and rode towards the spot. Seeing the danger, my gun-bearer pluckily fired at the beast, thus drawing the animal's attention to himself. Before he could fire a second time he was caught on the tremendous horns and hurtled into space. I now noticed the photographer crawling on hands and knees into the bush. I do not know what would have happened if the dogs had not joined in at this critical moment. My Airedale terrier tried to fasten on the buffalo's nose, but was swept by the savage horns into the air. The brute then charged the other dogs, which action promptly made them come towards me. Thinking I should prove the easier mark, the buffalo now charged down upon me. That was what I wanted. I rode off with the wounded beast following me. When we had travelled about a mile I headed away to my right across a stream and through a small patch of forest, where the beast lost my trail.

I then rode back to find out what had happened. I found the operator sore from having fallen on to his revolver, and he was undecided whether he had some ribs broken or not. The gun-bearer had lost a good deal of skin and was severely shaken, but no bones broken. Mac, the dog, had a jagged wound reaching right along his right side. I had my pocket medicine-case and we sewed up the gash, but he died before morning. The warriors now joined us, having come back at the sound of the gun-bearer's shots, and we decided to follow up the wounded buffalo.

We were not long in finding the spoor, and the trail led us into the forest on the banks of the river. We trailed him for two hours through thick underbush, and at last arrived at the river which he had crossed. Seeing it meant going back about ten miles to the fording-place, I gave up the search and returned to the place where we had elected to camp.

I found the rest of the party enjoying tea, of which I partook before telling them of my adventures. The poor camera man was unmercifully chaffed about his tumble.

We were very keen to try to take a picture of lions, but though we heard them all round us at night we could not get a sight of them during

the day. However, while out in search of rhinoceros, accompanied by a Dutchman and the operator, we came across them. We were following the spoor of a rhino, the Dutchman leading, when he gave out a shout and hurriedly retreated. We snatched our rifles from the boy, thinking it was a rhino, when the Dutchman informed us he had seen a large troop of lions asleep. We cautiously approached and saw a group of about ten looking our way. The camera man hastily got his machine fixed, but the lions had no wish to be photographed, and entered the thick bush lining the banks of the river.

Seeing it was only a narrow patch, I sent some boys to encircle it, with instructions to make a noise and drive the lions towards our position near some good trees. I stationed six warriors near us, armed with spears and shields, so as to protect the operator should any lions break through our lines. Silence reigned for some time, then we heard the beaters in the distance shouting and coming towards us, but no sound from the lions. I was just beginning to think they had escaped when I noticed one of my warriors making signs to me. Cautiously creeping towards him, I saw a magnificent black-maned lion standing about ten yards in front of us. I beckoned to the operator, and he started to come towards us when some of the other lions began roaring. The noise was enough to send a chill down the back of a veteran like myself, so I could not blame the camera man for losing control of himself and making for a good-sized tree to climb. The lion I was watching now turned to escape, but I managed to drop him with a bullet through the brain. This started a tremendous racket, and we could hear the beasts rushing backwards and forwards in the scrub, giving out terrific whoops of rage. Then they broke towards the beaters, who promptly climbed trees and let them through. Thus we lost what should have been a most thrilling film of lions.

We spent three months in the bush and used up all the film. We returned to Nairobi, where they were developed, and now came the bitterest disappointment of all. The pictures were all out of focus and commercially valueless. Our operator, in fact, had had virtually no experience in filming in the open. Naturally, we were all unaware of this, and after the money and time we had spent we were more than disappointed. But I have hopes of one day securing pictures of the exciting adventures a big-game hunter experiences while following his profession.



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The Editor invites Travellers, Explorers, Tourists, Missionaries, and others to send in any curious or remarkable photographs they may have. For these, and for True Stories of Adventure, liberal payment will be made according to the value of the material. Every narrative must be STRICTLY TRUE IN EVERY DETAIL, and a WRITTEN STATEMENT TO THIS EFFECT must be furnished. The author must also, if possible, furnish portraits of the leading character or characters (even if it be himself), together with any other available photographs and portraits of places, persons, and things which in any way heighten the realism and actuality of the narrative. All MSS. should be typewritten. Every care will be taken of contributions, but the Editor cannot be held responsible for accidental loss or damage. All communications should be plainly addressed to the Editor, WIDE WORLD MAGAZINE, 8, Southampton Street, London, W.C., England.

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IN THIS DAY AND AGE attention to your appearance is an absolute necessity if you expect to make the most out of life. Not only should you wish to appear as attractive as possible for your own self-satisfaction, which is alone well worth your efforts, but you will find the world in general judging you greatly, if not wholly, by your "looks," therefore it pays to "look your best" at all times. Permit no one to see you looking otherwise; it will injure your welfare! Upon the impression you constantly make rests the failure or success of your life. Which is to be your ultimate destiny? My new Nose-Shaper "TRADOS" (Model 24) corrects now ill-shaped noses without operation, quickly, safely and permanently. Is pleasant and does not interfere with one's occupation, being worn at night

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