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**AFRICAN
CAMERA HUNTS**



KLIPSPRINGER IN THE LOLDAIGA HILLS

They live in rocky, precipitous country, and go on the tips of their hooves, which are slightly hollowed and soft inside, so giving a grip on rocky surface.

AFRICAN CAMERA HUNTS

Written and Illustrated

by

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Preface

This book is an attempt to show what grand sport can be got by stalking animals with a camera, how intensely interesting such sport is even from a hide, and what a lot it teaches one about animals.

Many of the photographs, and much of the material, have appeared in *Country Life*, *The Field*, *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* (now *Sport and Country*), *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, and *Game and Gun*, while "Humiliation Week" appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*. I wish to make my grateful acknowledgements to the Editors of all these papers.

C. H. STOCKLEY,
Lieut.-Colonel.

STONEHOUSE,
NYERI STATION,
KENYA.
February 12, 1947.

The Sport of Camera Hunting

It is fashionable among most big-game hunters to assert that there is no sport in big-game photography, an assertion obviously based on the idea that such photography consists entirely in sitting in a hide or setting a flashlight and camera for night autophotography (when the photographer does not even see his quarry), both of which admittedly are non-sporting methods. Equally, shooting from a hide or at night by flashlight is devoid of real sport, photography under these conditions becoming a scientific hobby and shooting mere destruction.

Again, the shooting man will say that there is little danger in photography—a very poor criterion of a sport which does not consist in mere killing, but mainly in the approach to and defeat of one's quarry by one's own wits and energy. If the danger proposition be examined critically, it will be found to have no basis; indeed, photography is actually more dangerous than shooting, since, with modern weapons, any danger that occurs is almost certain to be due to mismanagement on the part of the sportsman, who, through excitement, carelessness, or taking too hasty a shot, wounds his prey. With the camera, except in thick stuff, one has to approach to within half the range at which a safe shot is taken; and since, when using a reflex camera, one cannot focus and keep an eye on the animal at the same time, one gives the initiative to the animal if it should turn nasty, thereby losing that first all-important second in which it gets into its stride.

It will be admitted, therefore, that camera hunting provides sport as good as or better than that obtained when using a rifle, since it is more difficult and the danger is at least equal. This statement, of course, infers that the photographer does his own hunting, is not covered by a "white hunter," and does his stuff in country open to shooting and not in a national park.

The difficulties of stalking with the camera are by no means ended when one is sufficiently near to make an exposure. There may be grass or bushes in the way—there nearly always are; a rest is necessary to defeat that dreaded enemy, camera-movement; the light may be wrong, and one may have to wait for a long time for a satisfactory pose, for it is no good taking an animal that is almost turned away with its head down—a very common position, and admirable for a forward raking shot with the rifle.

Then the background has to be considered, and a bad background can render an otherwise good photograph a mere picture puzzle. That of a gerenuk (Plate 63) is a good example of this. This gazelle, also known as Waller's or the giraffe gazelle owing to its weirdly long neck and legs, is very wary and difficult to photograph. Having at last got a good buck where, as I thought, I wanted him, I was greatly disappointed to find that, while the detail of the animal was satisfactory, it was most difficult to disentangle it from the twisted branches behind, the horns in particular being especially difficult to define. With Himalayan animals, where I rashly began my big-game photography, the difficulty is accentuated by the fact that in that part of the world nearly all big game sticks to the shady side of a hill, and feeds only in early morning and late evening, when the light is hardly sufficient even to focus with any degree of sharpness. The same dictum applies to some animals in Kenya, and is largely responsible for my not having got one single bushbuck photograph in ten years, for they are only out in the open at the edge of the bush during the early morning hours and towards dusk.

The statement that one has to get to within half the distance necessary for a good average rifle shot to make sure of killing is rather under the mark. One can take 150 yards as the range within which most sportsmen can make sure of killing and not just wounding their beast ; but 75 yards is only practicable for photographing large animals with a large telephoto lens, while small animals, such as reedbuck and klipspringer, must be approached to within 50 yards or less. I judge my distances largely by their relation to the length of a cricket pitch, which is 22 yards, but many men are most vague about this matter and will talk of an animal being within 30 yards when it was almost double that distance away. Of course, regular army officers have a considerable advantage in this matter, since they are accustomed to shooting on measured ranges every year with rifle and revolver.

It is common for people to say to me, when looking at some of my results, " Of course, you have a telephoto lens? " and on my assenting they seem to think that such possession accounts for everything, evidently under the impression that it is comparable to the telescopic contraption set up on the beach by a longshoreman for the tripper's benefit. But in point of fact, a 12-inch telephoto lens used at 50 yards on an animal 5 feet high only gives an image $\frac{2}{3}$ inch high on a $\frac{1}{4}$ -plate negative—and a 5-foot animal is a big one. Such a small image is rarely so critically sharp as to give good enlargements, with the result that when one is striving for a good picture of the animal, in a setting which will tell us something about its habits, a lot of detail is missed.

Want of depth of focus is often a difficulty with very small animals, which have to be taken at close range. At 6 feet a 12-inch lens only gives about 6 inches depth of focus, and in taking small and restless subjects, such as sunbirds at flowers, it is most difficult to keep them in focus.

It may be said that it is almost impossible to get good pictures of plains-dwelling animals, where there is very sparse

cover, without a big telephoto lens ; moreover, such lens cannot be used without a rest of some sort to eliminate camera movement which blurs all detail and renders a negative useless. Often a tree trunk (usually in Africa very thorny and inhabited by ferociously biting ants) or a rock is available against which to steady the camera, and I have devised a pointed iron staff with a reversed crook on which to rest the lens. The staff can be stuck into the ground when nothing better is at hand ; but even this measure does not defeat a strong wind.

My big lens is a 25-30-inch Dallmeyer, and the smaller one a 12-inch by the same maker, while I have a 4.5-inch Serrac for ordinary work. They fit into the same mounts, but the big lens has to be focused by racking both the lens and the camera, while the 12-inch has a fixed separation of the double lens and is focused by racking out the camera only—a $\frac{1}{4}$ -plate Soho reflex.

The big lens weighs $4\frac{1}{2}$ lb., and the total length of lens and camera when racked out is just on 2 feet, which makes it decidedly awkward to carry about in bush or on bad ground, while the weight bearing on the suspension strap round one's neck gives one quite an ache after a while. I carry my rifle slung on my right shoulder.

Miniature cameras are not suited to big-game photography, for telephoto lenses are too long for the camera and using them by hand gives camera movement. It is quite impossible to trail a tripod about, and the animal which it is intended to photograph is most unlikely to tolerate its being set up, and in all probability will depart long before the operation is over. A very keen and experienced photographer came out with a battery of Leicas shortly before the war, in order to prove their efficiency for big-game photography : in three months, employing " white hunters " continuously, he obtained precisely two worth-while photographs.

As a rule, only my camera boy is with me on the final stalk, and I often leave him behind when actually making the

exposure, though rarely with dangerous game, for he can keep an eye open for possible hostile movement while I am focusing or my attention is otherwise engaged. His getaway is considerably faster than mine.

Arrived at one's exposure point, preliminary focusing should be done behind cover, and may even have to be done before beginning the stalk. Quick focusing may make all the difference between a fine picture and none at all, for one may have difficulty in getting clear of grass or twigs, and no animal will tolerate being treated as if it were sitting for a studio portrait. It is maddening to find that a single blade of grass, only detected on development, has made a blur right across the negative, but such an occurrence is only too often the source of grievous disappointment.

Other mishaps which make one feel that every man's hand is against one and life is black and joyless are clear spots caused by the intrusion of hypo solution before its time (sometimes left behind from the last fixing and due to insufficient washing); other minute clear spots caused by dust, which may come from anywhere, even flicking out of the shutter when the exposure is made; and bits of vegetable matter in the washing or developing water, which seem to remain, filter one ever so thoroughly

The following are a few hints worth bearing in mind. Always develop as soon as possible; exposed films deteriorate rapidly in heat, whereas printing can be done at any time. Do not carry a dark-room tent; they always leak light in the end, are insufferably hot, and collect all available dust. Instead, it is far better to use a changing bag for loading films into carriers and the exposed films into the developing tank. It needs a little practice, as all operations are carried out by touch, but whereas it once took me 20 minutes to load a dozen cut films into carriers, it now takes me five.

A great source of trouble is heat. Cut films, which are the best for use on big game, will reticulate at over 70 degrees

Fahrenheit, and often one has to get up before dawn to do one's developing in a favourable temperature, though it is possible to use hardening solutions. "Reticulation" means that the film cracks slightly all over and the negative looks like a badly preserved oil painting.

Photography from a car or in a national park is as devoid of sport as shooting would be under similar conditions, and 90 per cent. of the wonderful lion pictures one sees are either taken in the Serengeti Lion Reserve, most probably from a car, or in the Hollywood animal park. Animals in a national park are often so tame that they even refuse to leave the road for a car: on the Serengeti, for example, a stick with a lump of meat on the end may be pushed out of the car and lions will come and take it. Lions which are really wild are most tricky beasts to photograph, and I have been seen off several times. I will have more to say about them later in this book.

To get full value from animal photography, one should try to get pictures of every living thing, biped, quadruped, bird, or reptile, which comes within range of the camera, or can be approached to within photographing distance; even butterflies make lovely pictures.

It will be found that some of the smallest and most insignificant animals provide the best sport, and from the point of view of a really good stalk, patience, and technical result, I am prouder of my klipspringer photograph (Frontispiece) than of any other.

It will be found with absolute certainty that one learns more about animals in a year's photography than in ten years shooting. When one gets within range of a shootable beast and a trophy is the object, the rifle is fired as soon as a steady shot at a vital point can be obtained. If the animal lifts its head to stare in the sportsman's direction, he will often assume that it is about to run away, so fires hurriedly. The camera does not frighten the subject away, and many a beast, photographed with lifted head, staring at the camera, later drops it to continue



PLATE 1. THE CHEVROLET 15 CWT. BEING LOADED

Tent, bedding roll and camp furniture at back, then four store boxes, with water tanks and petrol tins near tailboard. Tent poles and deck chair lashed at sides.



PLATE 2. THE CAR FULLY LOADED

Two boys sitting on load, and Kabogo waiting to join me in front.



PLATE 3. RETICULATED GIRAFFE BY THE WAYSIDE

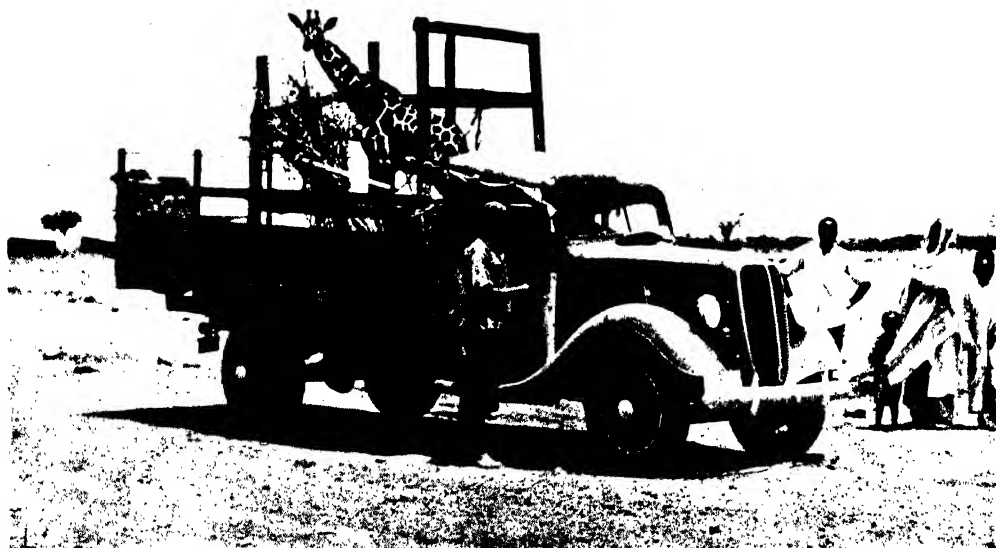


PLATE 4. CAPTURED YOUNG GIRAFFE
It showed no fear when travelling in the lorry, and ate peacefully.



PLATE 5. A DEFASSA WATERBUCK ON A HILLTOP
It took two years to get this fine beast's photograph, seeing him usually twice a week.



PLATE 6. WILDEBEEST AND ZEBRA NEAR NAIROBI



PLATE 7. GREY'S ZEBRA IN THE NORTHERN FRONTIER DISTRICT, KENYA
Taken at sunrise. The largest and handsomest of zebras with rounded ears and more and thinner stripes.

feeding. All animals lift their heads at times to keep watch around them. With dangerous game an advance which appears threatening is due often to no more than curiosity and a desire to look closer at a half-seen object. There is, however, a very definite limit to which such an advance can be tolerated, and a withdrawal or the rifle must obviate unnecessary risk. It should be remembered that a dangerous animal, when suddenly confronted by man, is always likely to attack, not because it is vicious, but from an idea that by so doing it is more likely to escape.

I would advise beginners to start their photography from a hide, as the technical difficulties are then much reduced and the stalk eliminated, while chances are more numerous. I reckon that stalking with a camera gives about a tenth of the chances which one gets with a rifle, and a few failures, due to accident or want of technical ability, are often sufficient to reduce the enthusiasm of a novice almost to vanishing-point. Before beginning photography one should be able to carry out all the motions of loading fresh carriers, focusing, adjusting stops, and so on, without having to look at the camera at all.

If not already trained in the pursuit of dangerous game, the photographer should most certainly be covered by an experienced hunter. I never have myself, but then I have some forty years of big-game shooting behind me and may yet be caught napping: one never stops learning about animals. Taking unnecessary risks for amusement or to impress others is not worth while; mere swank in fact. Only too often tourists, and those strange to the ways of wild animals, take an idea into their heads that because the beast does not run away it is tame and harmless, and this dangerous fallacy has been frequently disproved by new graves in our East African cemeteries during recent years. Such mistaken belief is particularly noticeable in connection with elephant, regarded by some tourists as merely the beasts one rides on at the zoo. "Safety first" is the maxim with the big four—lion,

elephant, rhino, and buffalo—and should always be borne in mind.

Often people say to me that I must be very brave to go up so close to dangerous game, but rather is it that, as the result of experience, I know just how far I can go and under what conditions. If a pilot takes his machine up in bad weather just after his first solo flight, he is not brave: he is a fool, and an experienced man who has flown many thousands of miles on many types of machines is not brave because he goes up, but is merely justifying the results of his experience.

But there is one remark that I do resent, and that is, "What a wonderful camera you must have." It gives no credit for years of hard work and of patience, both of which go to getting a good picture of a rare animal, and on these occasions I usually remind the speaker that the winner of the world-wide Kodak competition some twelve years ago used a Brownie.

There is, of course, too much "I" in this book, but it cannot be helped, for I hunt either alone or with my camera boy, and to him I must pay tribute. I have had two: the first unfortunately turned dishonest, but my present boy, Kabogo, has now been with me seven years and has been invaluable. He has many times warned me of possible trouble when I have been engrossed with one beast and another has turned up from a flank: he has been the first to see many of my best subjects, and the only consistent grouse I have about him is his complete faith in my ability to shoot us out of a mess, which confidence is liable to make him hang on too long or come up when I do not want him.

The journeys to the hunting grounds are very much part of the show, and rarely anything but most enjoyable. There is hardly a camp of which I have not pleasant memories recorded in diaries and by photographs, and many a wayside bivouac has shown me new and most profitable country for further exploration.

My car is a Chevrolet "light pickup." It carries three-quarters of a ton, which means myself, three boys, tents, camp kit, and food for at least a fortnight, and, very important, two ten-gallon tanks of water. I am quite convinced that this type of car is ideal for safari work. I have fitted the lorry-body with a skeleton roof over which a tarpaulin can be roped at night, or when it rains, so that the boys can sleep in it undisturbed by snuffling lions, snakes, or scorpions. Moreover, it has the added advantage that a mosquito net is easily hung inside.

Naturally, Kabogo and I have had to do many running repairs, as bush roads are not always perfect: but he has learnt to deal with punctures, airlocks in the petrol feed, the easier "shorts" in the electric system, greasing, and so on, and carries out the testing of the tyres for pressure with a regularity that is absolutely essential. The great heat of the sun at the lower altitudes of the Northern Frontier District may send tyre pressure up from 28 lb. to over 40 between 7 and 9 a.m.; and if it is not eased off to normal, a burst is inevitable, and tyres and tubes do not grow on the wayside acacias of that wild country.

Driving in Kenya entails incessant watching of the surface ahead, and is decidedly wearying, while, being an "outsize" and fitting with difficulty into the cab, I get decidedly stiff and cramped before the end of 100 miles. By now I have developed the art of watching the country for animals to a degree of easy combination with that of watching the road for potholes and runnels, until my reactions have become automatic and I have never been badly caught out by not paying attention to unseen obstacles ahead.

I do not recommend a box-body. When this is filled with kit there is little room for the boys to perch on top, and once, when I hit a runnel in my first Kenya car—a 72-Chrysler box-body—the boys hit the wooden roof with such force that both were slightly concussed.

Of course, not all my safaris have been by car, and I have been able to get in several with porters up Mount Kenya and the Aberdares, and so recalled the great pleasure of foot safaris in the Himalayas, but these experiences I am keeping for another book.

Before closing this chapter I must say a word about big-game shooting men. They got a bad name at first because the original exploiters of the sport shot merely for the pleasure of killing, and assessed their sport only in terms of numbers slain. This phase lasted only a short while, then the trophy hunter arose and made the world his playground. He shot, and still shoots, only old males carrying trophies worthy of retention, and in actual fact does good to the breeding of the hunted species by eliminating old males unfit to breed. It is this type of sportsman, and he only, who is responsible for the survival of many species of wild animals, and I am grateful to him, and proud to have learnt my own game through long apprenticeship to his. That I think my own photographic game the better sport makes not the slightest difference to the respect I have for those who do their own finding and hunting, and often endure considerable hardship and danger in the process.

CHAPTER TWO

Elephant

A man I met casually in a Nairobi hotel told me over the lunch table that he thought it a shame that anyone should shoot an elephant to make profit out of the ivory, seeing how scarce they are in these days. For a resident of Kenya he was very ill-informed, and seemed very surprised when I told him that our Game Department kills off several hundred elephants every year under control operations. In point of fact, I was under the mark, for I later found the figure to average nearly a thousand, and that there is no sensible reduction of their numbers, while the damage they do is immense.

Covering great distances—for 40 miles a day is nothing to a herd—and retiring into dense forest when shot up, elephants are a very real problem in Kenya, though not nearly as much so as in Uganda, where the average number shot annually is nearer 2,000. Most of those shot under control operations have been raiding native cultivation, and the Game Department officials doing the job may be permanent and salaried, in which case the ivory goes to the Government: or they may be temporary, in which case they take one tusk and the other goes to the Government. This latter arrangement is, of course, open to abuse, as the temporary employee is too often tempted to go after bulls carrying big tusks and leave the raiding herds alone; and in any case, the present licence of £50 for the first elephant and £100 for the second which is extracted from the sportsman seems very excessive for an animal whose

destruction has to be organised and entails the employment of a large staff.

That elephants have increased of late years in Kenya is largely due to the cessation of hunting by Africans, who, for the most part, used pitfalls and weighted spear-traps: but it is extraordinary how the numbers of such large beasts with so slow a rate of increase should more than keep up with the measures taken for their reduction. There are, of course, very large areas of dense forest which harbour elephants at all times, and these are almost sanctuaries, for I have yet to meet the hunter who likes shooting in such cover, where every advantage is with the elephant, often assisted by the presence of numerous rhino. I have had one experience of an elephant stampede in bamboo, which grows in dense brakes on the Kenya mountains and not in separate clumps as in Burma and southern India, and that experience was so daunting that if I now hear elephant in bamboo I clear out and go round.

Elephant are found in Kenya from the top of the tree-line at about 11,500 feet, right down to the seashore. They occasionally go up to the open moors on Mount Kenya, at about 14,000 feet, when crossing from one side of the mountain to the other, and I have seen them within half a mile of the seashore. They do not seem to be entirely dependent on water, for down the Tana in the dry season they come to the thick forest belt on the banks for ten days or a fortnight, then go back to the bush for about the same period, and there obtain the necessary moisture by chewing fleshy-leaved plants such as sansevieria. I base these impressions on three trips during which tracking up old bulls occupied most of the time, and so I know little about the herds: it is possible that cows keep their young calves close to the water, and it is only the older bulls who go off into the dry country. These thick-leaved plants are not used exclusively in the dry country, for it is quite usual for an elephant to chew them just after watering and on his way to his feeding ground,

leaving one or two bundles of twisted, saliva-sodden fibre thrown aside as he walks.

The main diet of all elephants is green branches, but they vary it at different times of the year, and for medicinal purposes. A couple of miles from my house is a big salt lick, which is much frequented in rainy weather by elephants of all ages and sexes, including one herd which must be about eighty strong. When they use this lick the earth is dug out with their tusks, and then (or perhaps alternately with the potassium-impregnated earth) big tufts of long coarse grass are swallowed, which, as far as I know, do not form part of their diet at any other time. The result is a complete spring-cleaning of their insides, which renders following them up a matter for gas-masks.

In the dry season I have seen elephants at high altitudes eating the berries of the *mukaita* tree (*Rapanea rhododendroides*), which is much used by the Kikuyu tribe living round Mount Kenya for curing stomach troubles, and it would seem probable that elephants eat them for the same purpose. My botanical knowledge is too limited for me to have recorded the various trees on which they feed: in the *nyika* bush of northern and eastern Kenya they eat much acacia thorn, but this plant does not occur at higher altitudes. Like Indian elephants they probably restrict their diet to only a few forest trees, and any old tree quite certainly will not do as food.

The gestation period of an Indian elephant is taken to be nineteen months for a female and twenty-one months for a male calf, which is about the period of an African elephant: but in the case of the latter I have not heard of any difference being accepted between the period for calves of different sexes, and there are no records of breeding in captivity, such as are now quite plentiful with the Indian elephants employed in timber extraction in Burma and Siam.

The slow breeding of elephants makes all the more remarkable the little effect that control operations have in reducing their numbers. Of course there are large forest areas

from which they emerge very seldom, and any estimate of their numbers is bound to be very much a guess, but it is usually assumed that certain known herds are responsible for raiding particular areas, and when these are reduced by several hundreds, and yet as many elephants turn up again in the same areas next year, it is most baffling to conjecture how their numbers are recruited. In my own area, at the foot of Mount Kenya, elephants have undoubtedly increased in the last ten years, though there has been little or no relaxation of control measures.

The finest tusks in Kenya come from the lower half of the Tana, and in 1945 and 1946 several very fine bulls of over 100 lb. a side were shot on both banks. The Mount Kenya bulls seldom carry tusks of over 80 lb. and the Aberdares produce rather smaller ones as a rule.

Up to twenty-five years ago, when the country between Mount Kenya and the Aberdares became settled, the elephant herds crossed regularly between the two forests and by established routes, doing 50 miles or more a day with perhaps a halt of a few hours to raid some unfortunate's shamba. They still do so, but very rarely, as they are usually shot up on account of the damage they do, and I have not heard of them in the open country for five years.

In January 1935 I was living in a house on the Aberdares side of the open country when my camera boy rushed in and poured forth a stream of words in great excitement. Having recently arrived in Kenya, and my Swahili being still very sketchy, I thought he wanted me to come and look at a dozen of beer which he had either found in the garden or which had arrived without my knowledge. To calm him I went outside, and he pointed to a sisal-covered hill about a quarter of a mile away, where twelve large elephants were crossing in stately fashion on their way to Mount Kenya. I had mistaken *tembo* (elephant) for *tembu* (beer)!

According to Blunt (*Book of the Elephant*) an elephant walks at about 8 miles an hour; though, judging by a recent

experience when trying to head an elephant either to shoot it or to take its picture, I should say that 7 is nearer. What is quite certain is that their pace is most deceptive: the unhurried stroll, which has a slight suggestion of a nautical roll, is impossible for the ordinary man to keep up with, when he is encumbered with a heavy rifle, field glasses, cartridges, camera and so on. As such following is usually done in a very hot sun, one has to be pretty fit to undertake it. The professional elephant hunter of fifty years ago would follow up and bivouac on the tracks of a herd, but that was mostly done in thick forest country, with several Africans carrying water and food. As I generally hunt alone, or with a single boy, I have made a limit of four hours' walking away from water in country where it is unobtainable, and if I do not come up with my bull in that time I go home.

I may say that I have the greatest admiration for the professional who does control work. His job calls for great endurance and courage, a quick appreciation of any change in direction or intention by a herd, with the ever-present danger of a charge from very close quarters by a previously unnoticed beast—most often a cow with a young calf. Fatalities amongst professional hunters in Kenya have been only too common, and here let me answer those who exclaim at the apparently excessive sums which are paid to a "white hunter" by his clients: the hunter has to stand the brunt of every nasty situation, often created by the bad shooting of his client, and if his client is killed, that is the end of the hunter's precarious livelihood. There are no pensions attached to white hunting: work may only be found for a couple of months in the year, or not at all, and every penny of the money is more than earned.

But let us return to our elephants.

An elephant travelling fast or charging goes at about 25 miles an hour, and throws out its forefeet (on flat ground) with a curious action, which is equivalent to "dishing" in a trotting horse.

Their sight is poor, though I think the common estimate of 25 yards for seeing with definition is too low by about 10 yards, and they can certainly make out moving objects in the open at 60 yards. They have an excellent sense of smell, though I normally should not put it as effective beyond 200 yards, owing to interference by trees, and their hearing is good in forest—much better than I thought up to a few months before writing this book, my change of opinion being caused by a big bull hearing the shutter of my camera at 30 yards, and, though on the move and broadside on at the time, immediately swinging round and coming straight towards me with spread ears.

Very often the first indication of a herd being near is “tummy-rumbling,” which I take to be the elephant’s expression of satisfaction at having eaten a good meal, just as the Oriental expresses his satisfaction with loud belches. In both cases the noise is quite controllable, and if one is scouting round a big herd and any member of it becomes alarmed or curious, all such noises cease immediately; which of course raises the old question of intercommunication by wild animals in thick cover. If the herd is still feeding there will be loud crashes of breaking branches, which will also cease just as suddenly if one of them becomes alarmed.

On going into a herd to find a bull, either to shoot or to photograph, it is essential to move slowly, with great caution, keep a look out all round and to stop frequently and listen. I once spent over an hour in a herd of about fifty, getting nothing but a photograph of a cow’s head in the dense forest, then decided to clear out as the situation was not good enough. I had retired about 20 yards when there was a terrific scream within a few yards of me which made my hair stand on end, and I slid behind a tree trunk; then evacuated the position as quickly and quietly as possible. An old bull had moved up behind me and was advertising his sense of humour at my expense. This incident cured me of trying to photograph elephant inside

thick and continuous forest; for though forest with occasional open glades is about the best ground for getting good pictures, when the forest is continuous there is hardly a hope of finding a subject sufficiently clear of branches to avoid those dreadful blurs caused by things too near the camera to be in focus. Again, the exposure inside forest, even on a bright sunny day, is of necessity too slow to avoid camera movement when the camera is held in the hand without a rest. Incidentally, even when the subject is lit by bright sunlight, if there be forest all round, the exposure will have to be at least doubled owing to the green reflections from the leaves.

Solitary bulls are much the most profitable subjects for the camera, and, though sometimes truculent, are easy to keep away from with a little experience when they turn nasty. A big bull is often accompanied by a small one, or there are frequently three of them, and in the event of the big fellow being shot, his companion, or companions, may take the offensive. I have had no trouble on two such occasions, but two of my white hunter friends tell me that south of the lower Tana the danger is invariably emphasised by the natives, and that they have had trouble under these circumstances.

Such parties of three bulls are particularly common in the Northern Frontier District, and in one year alone I saw five.

The biggest herd of elephant I know is over eighty strong, and lives on my (western) side of Mount Kenya, usually coming down to within a couple of miles of my house in very rainy weather. This vast herd probably breaks up into smaller herds at times, just as the great Lorian Swamp herd of 600 is composed of several herds which come together when feed is limited. I have not seen this herd, but hope to get an opportunity of studying both its composition and its feeding habits. I have been as far as the Swamp, and, judging by the country, would say that the elephants must do a lot of grazing, contrary to their usual practice. In the Northern Frontier District

elephants at times eat a lot of dom palm fruit, which is the vegetable, or palm ivory, of commerce. A line of trees is a certain indication of a watercourse all over this arid country, but does not necessarily mean that the water will be on the surface and get-at-able.

There is great variation in the ways of even the same elephants when in contact with man. Raiders will often show complete indifference to the entire man-power of a village shouting and banging kerosene tins, though too close an approach will often lead to a charge, sometimes with results fatal to the man.

During drought, both elephant and rhino will wait their turn 150 yards away while sheep and cattle are being watered, then come down to the waterhole. Only a few weeks before writing this chapter I was taken by Somalis to a temporary rainwater *balli*, where a big bull came down every evening. I was rather sceptical at first, but he arrived shortly after sunset, and had his drink regardless of Somalis scattered round in the bush whose wind must have reached him; still, judging by his frequent turns and stares with spread ears while drinking, I much doubt if he would have tolerated one within his forty-yard range of vision. At night, at least on the Tana, elephant have often come right up to my tent, and caused considerable alarm and despondency. I object to having to get out of bed at the dark hour of morning when human vitality is at its lowest, cower behind an inadequate tree, and shout at vague black hulks moving dimly against the light patches between trees. Often they seem to take little or no notice for several minutes, and one prepares for the worst—which would be a very bad worst; but so far I have been lucky, and they have eventually faded into the general blackness with nothing but the soft scraping of a branch against hide, or the breaking of at most a couple of dead sticks, to show that they were going. Their noiselessness is amazing: I have had over twenty of them come up within as many yards of the camp at night without waking a

soul, only the great patterned footmarks showing next morning that they had been and gone.

Tracking up elephants—or, rather, tracking up a solitary bull—is not as simple as it sounds. A herd, of course, is easy, but the wanted bull may leave the herd at some point without one noticing it, especially on very hard gravelly ground. That is one very good reason why I try to limit myself to solitary bulls. Another excellent reason is that it is less dangerous.

The track of a big bull should be more than 20 inches in diameter, which gives a height of over 11 feet, while twice round the forefoot is an elephant's height at the shoulder. The span of my hand is just 10 inches, so I have a measure always ready; but it is better when picking out a track to follow to carry a bit of stick 20 inches long which can be used quicker and more accurately where an African is concerned. The average African loves to linger over a "nearly-big-enough" track and enthuse on how fresh it is and how soon one will come up with the owner, rather than go on looking for the real thing. An elephant under 11 feet may carry good ivory, but one of that height or over is certain to do so.

One soon gets to recognise the track of a particular elephant, for the network of cracks is never the same, and there are usually one or two outstanding marks which meander across several inches of the pad. I have one pad firmly fixed in my memory, and that is of the last elephant I photographed, here reproduced, the owner of which I hope to meet again. Coming back from the coast in July 1945, I decided that I wanted some more photographs of a good elephant bull, and accordingly pitched camp on the bank of the Tana, about 100 miles from its mouth, and near the end of the month.

While the tent was going up I strolled along the bank of the river, mainly to see if the water had fallen sufficiently after the rains to make some sandbanks attractive to sandgrouse for their early morning drink, but had not gone 50 yards when some large dark marks in the mud a little ahead

of me drew my attention. They were the tracks of a big bull elephant which had watered there early that morning, and on the two previous mornings.

We were there at dawn the next morning, and he had been there half an hour before, so we followed up, full of hope, through the belt of forest which lines the banks of the Tana and is, there, under a mile deep, then out into the *nyika* thorn bush, and on to hard sandy soil. It was simple at first, but more than one lot of elephants had watered at the river that night and were making their way back to some favourite feeding ground, often crossing our bull's tracks. The usual saliva-sodden wisps of *hig* fibre were passed after a mile, and then some more, until our elephant's tracks began to meander and slow down as we approached a wide and shallow dip where the acacia thorn grew bigger and greener, so that I began to hope that an hour's walking would bring us up to him. Two hours and we were on the far edge of this great dip, approaching a wide gully that led up on to the next rise of the plateau; the tracks were zigzagging all over the place, and at last chewed bits of acacia showed that our bull was beginning to feed. I was sure that he was in that gully and stalked it carefully. Kabogo, my camera boy, pulled my sleeve and pointed. A long neck surmounted by a silly, supercilious face had risen above a flat-topped acacia to our left front, and ten yards to the left of it rose another.

I used to admire the giraffe, especially the large and handsomely marked *G. reticulata* of the Northern Frontier District, but soon got over that. They turn up just whenever they are not wanted and spoil the best of stalks. These two were no exception to the general rule. They stared, walked a few paces, and then, instead of going off reasonably and straight away from us, they cantered right across our front, their heads and necks swaying above the bush, and crossed the head of the gully in which I was sure our elephant was feeding. I was right, and as big bulls would never grow to big bulls if they

took no notice of such obvious warnings, my fears that he had moved on were only too well founded. A hundred yards on he had fed all round a big acacia, chewed bits from its flat top being strewn about, but had suddenly quitted it and moved away at a steady 7 miles an hour. We followed for an hour, but he showed no signs of stopping to feed, so we turned for a nice hot walk back to the camp.

Next morning was almost the same, except that he swung a bit northward, and rather closer to the river; but four hours' walking merely produced a sweat-soaked shirt and no elephant, so once again it was a case of "Home, John."

That afternoon was very sultry, clouds banked up from the south-east, and a grand thunderstorm swept across about 2 a.m. Would he drink again at the same place and hour? I did not think there had been enough rain to form a pool from which he could get enough water without getting too much mud, and sure enough there were the great holes of his feet in the mud of the river-bank at dawn.

Not only was the rain a great help, for we could track really fast, but the bull had evidently enjoyed it and was not hurrying. First he went south just outside the forest and palm belt and parallel with the river, then turned east into the sunrise, chewing a few bits of *hig* on the way; then he turned north again, still keeping parallel to the river and not more than a couple of miles from it. It was pretty stuffy by now, with the sun getting hotter and sucking the rain from the moist soil, but we got along famously, and about two and a half hours after starting, came on great masses of droppings scattered at the foot of a rise—a sure sign that he was going to begin feeding.

The tracks led up the rise—an easy grade—but I moved up very cautiously. Near the top I paused and swore heartily. There were the bull's tracks leading away to my right front, but 150 yards to my left front were four giraffe, one of which had spotted my head. I stood still and they all stared, then were

joined by six more. I walked steadily half right and a little below the edge of the rise to try to drive them northwards away from the bull's tracks. Seven more joined them, making seventeen of these handsome nuisances in all, and still I walked on. They began to move off in the requisite direction and I stood still again: no good hurrying them; and finally they walked off, and their pinheads gradually grew smaller over the bush and then disappeared altogether. Thank heaven!

I went back to the bull's tracks and beckoned up the boys (camera and local guide), and we carried on. The elephant had gone up a 3-inch deep runnel of packed sand, fed all round a big acacia bush, then apparently ceased to exist, for no track led away from it. Casting back, however, we found that he had gone back on his own tracks in the runnel and then into the bush a furlong to the left of the rise from below which we had seen the giraffe. Within a quarter of a mile we found him, feeding peacefully, and he was a really big bull.

I got the camera out of the case and studied him. The stuff he was in was a bit too thick for a good picture, but I focused on him and moved up within range to take what I could get. He swung a little right, I saw two grand tusks, and took my first photograph (Plate 8) from nearly behind him as he moved along a passage through the bush, while a perky glossy starling sat on a dead branch within a foot of him as he passed.

Then I ran round to his right, keeping the wind in my favour, and waited as he passed me. It was rather close, and he heard the shutter of the camera, swung right round, and came towards me with his ears out (Plate 9). I ran back round the next clump to the north, got a beauty of him as he advanced with his ears spread, then doubled back 100 yards to the boys, where I got a new carrier and ran back again. That bull was still hunting round the bush from behind which he had heard the shutter: he had located it down to the last foot. It was a lesson to me, for I had not known that an elephant's hearing

or sense of direction could be nearly as good, and I have noted it carefully for future reference.

Not finding me, and the wind being steady in my favour, he eventually turned and went off westward, so that I got another good picture of him as he passed through a patch of *hig* (Plate 10); this one showed his ivory better than any of the others.

I hope we meet again, but I shall be more careful with him next time.

Rhinoceros

When I first came to Kenya my friend, the late Martin Stephens, then shooting editor of *The Field*, asked me to get him photographs of rhinoceros and buffalo, as for every one he got of either he got half a dozen of elephant and more than a score of lion: nearly all the latter from the Kruger and Serengeti National Parks! Probably more big-game photographs passed through his hands than through those of any other man in England. He was himself a big-game hunter with considerable variety of experience, and he always said that, unless covered by a reliable shot, he would prefer to photograph any other animal but rhino.

My own experience makes me a little doubtful of this last statement, for I have found that really wild lion (not the national park hand-fed ones!) are very chancy in their behaviour if followed up or in any way badgered. Nevertheless, of one thing I am quite sure, and that is that it is harder to determine what a rhino is going to do under any given circumstances than any other large mammal, and that they are more prone to attack than any other species of dangerous game; by which, of course, I infer unwounded beasts. A cow rhino with a youngster will almost always attack when suddenly confronted in thick bush, and often in the open; but they are slow and can be dodged, whereas a lion gets into its stride from the very start, and is half-way there before one has raised the rifle

if one has allowed it the initiative, as is almost inevitable when trying to photograph it.

The black rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros simus*) is still very common in many parts of Kenya—so common that it has become a pest in many districts, including my own, Nyeri. On four occasions in the last ten years the Game Department has had to send white hunters to reduce their numbers in this area, and in that period more than 100 have been shot "By Order." About 140 were shot south-east of Machakos at the end of 1944 and beginning of 1945 in order to make the country there available for native settlement. One would have thought that it would have been easier and cheaper to put a free rhino on each big-game licence, and so induce more people to take one out, instead of still charging the absurd fee of £10 for shooting one.

Another anomaly we have is a relic of the long-vanished days of ostrich farming, since £1 is still the fee for shooting one of these birds, of which large numbers do great damage in young wheat.

But to return to our rhino: let us have a look at their life-history.

A full-grown rhinoceros stands 63–64 inches at the shoulder and is about twice that in length, while a bull weighs about one and a quarter tons. The measurements are my own, but the weight is Colonel Meinetzhagen's, and I do not know how it was obtained or whether the eleven specimens weighed were plains or forest rhinoceros. The forest rhino of Mount Kenya is distinctly bigger on the average than those of the adjacent plains, carries a longer horn, and the female is often bigger than the male. The rhino of the Northern Frontier District are small, with poor horns, until north of the lower Tana, and in Somalia, they are about half the weight of a big forest rhino, and 12-inch horn becomes a good average. These small beasts have a reputation for more than usual bad temper, and this characteristic is probably hereditary, for

Somalis, coveting their hide for shields, were wont to hunt them in parties, throwing a shower of spears at them, then running away, and repeating these attacks until the exhausted rhino died of multiple wounds. Of course many got away and passed on their very natural resentment of man to their offspring.

A 25-inch horn is big for a plains rhino, and of over fifty beasts that I saw round the headwaters of the Tana in the course of ten trips south of Embu, not one had a horn as long as this. But 30 inches is not uncommon for a forest rhino, and the Game Department has several of over 35 inches from the Mount Kenya forests. One most remarkable horn, taken from a beast shot near Nanyuki and about 30 miles from my house, was $42\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, and projected directly forward over the bull's nose, thereby seriously interfering with his feeding so that he was very thin when shot. Another pair shot in 1944 about 3 miles from my house measured $42\frac{1}{4}$ inches front and 22 inches rear, while a recent letter from Captain Moore, V.C., Game Warden of Tanganyika, tells me of a $47\frac{1}{2}$ -inch horn handed in to the Government, this last being the second best on record.

The plains rhino generally has a horn which tapers evenly from the base upwards, but forest specimens taken from both sexes are often long and thin, with sturdy bases. In fact, a bull of the forest tribe will often look more like a cow when the head only is seen, but is a much bulkier beast even when not so high at the shoulder or so long. One meets with occasional freaks, and there is, at present, a very big bull living near my house which has the front horn curved over and back like a scimitar, passing right over the rear horn and almost touching the forehead.

Rear horns vary very much in shape and length, and some of them (particularly in the small eastern beasts) are longer than the front one; but most are short, stumpy affairs, and in forest rhino the rear horn is often broken off short, how, it is

hard to suggest, for one would think that the front horn would be the first to suffer damage.

Quite a large proportion of rhino have a wound low down behind the shoulder (Plate 14), which is continually enlarged by tick-birds pulling at the edges until the poor brute takes to such thick forest that it is scored all over with white lines from broken branches. Whether the tick-birds start these wounds originally I do not know, but I have been told recently that the cow is responsible for horning the bull during courtship, and again that the wounds are caused by bulls fighting. I have not taken sufficient note to make sure that these wounds occur only in bulls.

Sulky, stupid, bad-tempered, and uncertain, rhinoceros start their life, after a 15-month period of gestation, already endowed with a pronounced offensive spirit. The calf, born with a thing like a large limpet shell on its nose as the beginnings of a horn, will worry and attack all smaller animals that come within range, its mother often supporting its efforts, obviously under the impression that her dear little offspring is being put upon. As the calf has much better eyesight than the mother, and is inquisitive in the extreme, meeting a cow with a yearling calf may lead to unfortunate situations from the photographer's point of view.

After the first eighteen months the calf, which stays about three and a half years with its mother, may still retain its offensive spirit, but mother may have come to the conclusion that co-operation in her infant's excesses is no longer called for.

One misty morning I was out with the camera when we suddenly spotted a rhino and a 6-months-old calf coming straight towards us along the hillside and about 100 yards away. Sending the two boys into the scrub uphill, I hastily retired to one of the clumps of bush which dotted the slope, and wormed into the side of it ready for action.

Unfortunately, I did not then know that a calf's vision is

effective up to double the usual 40 yards of an adult rhino, and the little beast had seen me. He galloped straight forward towards me, with mother puffing along steadily behind, and pulled up about 15 yards away to stare. Mother arrived convinced that somebody was threatening her hideous offspring and ready to abolish the offender, so the situation looked awkward, and I forced my way backward right through the bush, losing a good shirt and much valuable skin in the process, then took a photograph round the farther edge. The pair then moved on, and I stepped out to take another picture, but found that my struggles through the bush had resulted in an alteration of focus and by the time I had made the necessary correction, mother and child were showing only their butt ends. Following up only induced an offensive demonstration and I had to give it up without having got a picture—the first effort having been ruined by change of focus and general shakiness, which we will kindly attribute to excitement and not to funk!

Earlier that same morning I had seen a pair of bushbuck feeding peacefully round a clump on top of the hill on which I was working, and thought that I was going to get the photograph which I had been trying to bring off for years and still have not obtained. Getting to the next clump of bush to the bushbuck, I focused the camera and waited for them to come round into view. They were just visible through the twigs at the edge, and about to arrive exactly where I wanted them, when the camera boy pulled my sleeve, jerked his thumb upwards towards the interior of our clump, and whispered, "There's a rhino in there." A large dark form rose slowly to its feet within 5 yards of us, sighed heavily, and began waking up from the deep slumber induced by a muggy, misty morning. We retreated hastily to the next cover as the brute lumbered out and stood half awake looking at us blearily. I took one photograph (which was badly under-exposed) and retired out of sight, while the great lump lurched away in the opposite direction. I have known people quite short tempered when

they wake up with such a bad head as that rhino obviously had, and was taking no further risks.

When the calf has been about three and a half years with the mother, the latter comes in season again, and either she or a bull chases the calf away; though sometimes a bull joins up for some time before the cow comes in season, so that three is a common number to find together. I have once seen the pre-mating chase, with the cow lumbering along, a caricature of coyness, and the bull cantering behind, puffing regularly like a steam engine on the randan. The chase lasted about twenty minutes, in and out of clumps of forest, and was laughably reminiscent of some scenes featuring the old and stout on a French *plage*.

It is very difficult to spot rhino in cover, and the local Kikuyu are so much better at it than I am that I rely on them very largely. It is curious that I can usually pick up other animals before they can, but rhino I find the almost invariable exception.

Naturally the plains rhino is much easier to photograph than the forest beast, as, where not too much molested, they may be found away from thick cover up to ten o'clock in the morning, especially after rain. In the forest they will wallow nearly every day, and after rains in the plains. In some places I have found them go over a mile from cover to have a dustbath, evidently being particular about its quality, since there were several other apparently suitable places much closer in. The mud bath is amusing to watch, as the great beast is very thorough, rolling on back and both sides—so that it is a mystery how a long front horn is tucked away—or sitting up on its hunkers in the mud, then relaxing to lie down for a good soak.

I have seen rhino 11,000 feet up on the Aberdares, and their tracks at the same height on Mount Kenya; though I have not seen them or their tracks above the giant heath, which they use much as cover, nor do they go up on the moors

to over 14,000 feet as do elephant and buffalo, largely because rhino stick very much to their own bits of territory and do not change feeding grounds with the frequency which takes both the other big beasts right over the crest of the moors when shifting. One rhino in the Embu district I was able to keep an eye on for several years, as, like most of them, he stuck to one beat, while his general build and relative shape of horns were distinctive. It is worth while giving an account of him.

I first saw Stuffy (Plate 12), as I later named him, when he was with his mother shortly before he was due to leave her. He then had a front horn about 8 inches long and, at the end of a run of good years, was well rounded and furnished, and about three and a half years old.

Mother and son were feeding in a wide grassy valley about eight o'clock of a dull morning, so I dropped the boys amongst some rocks near the top of our slope, and made my way down it to the cover of a group of saplings near the bottom, where it looked as if some good pictures were a certainty. But, as usual, the three boys, though they had all seen many rhino, could not restrain their curiosity, and showed themselves, so that, just as I focused and Stuffy turned round to give me my first exposure, he saw them from 100 yards away, and in a couple of seconds was charging up the slope to scatter them. They knew all about such games, of course, and fled long before he got near them; then he came down the slope again past me, got my wind, stopped, wheeled and snorted until I shouted at him, and then went back to mother, who had taken no interest whatever in his antics. They both moved off slowly away over the far rise and gave no opportunity of another picture in a mile of following up through open tree and grass forest, particularly as Stuffy discouraged the taking of chances by often turning round suddenly to stare, though mother remained quite uninterested.

Having taken careful note of his appearance, I easily recognised him when I saw him again two years later, within a

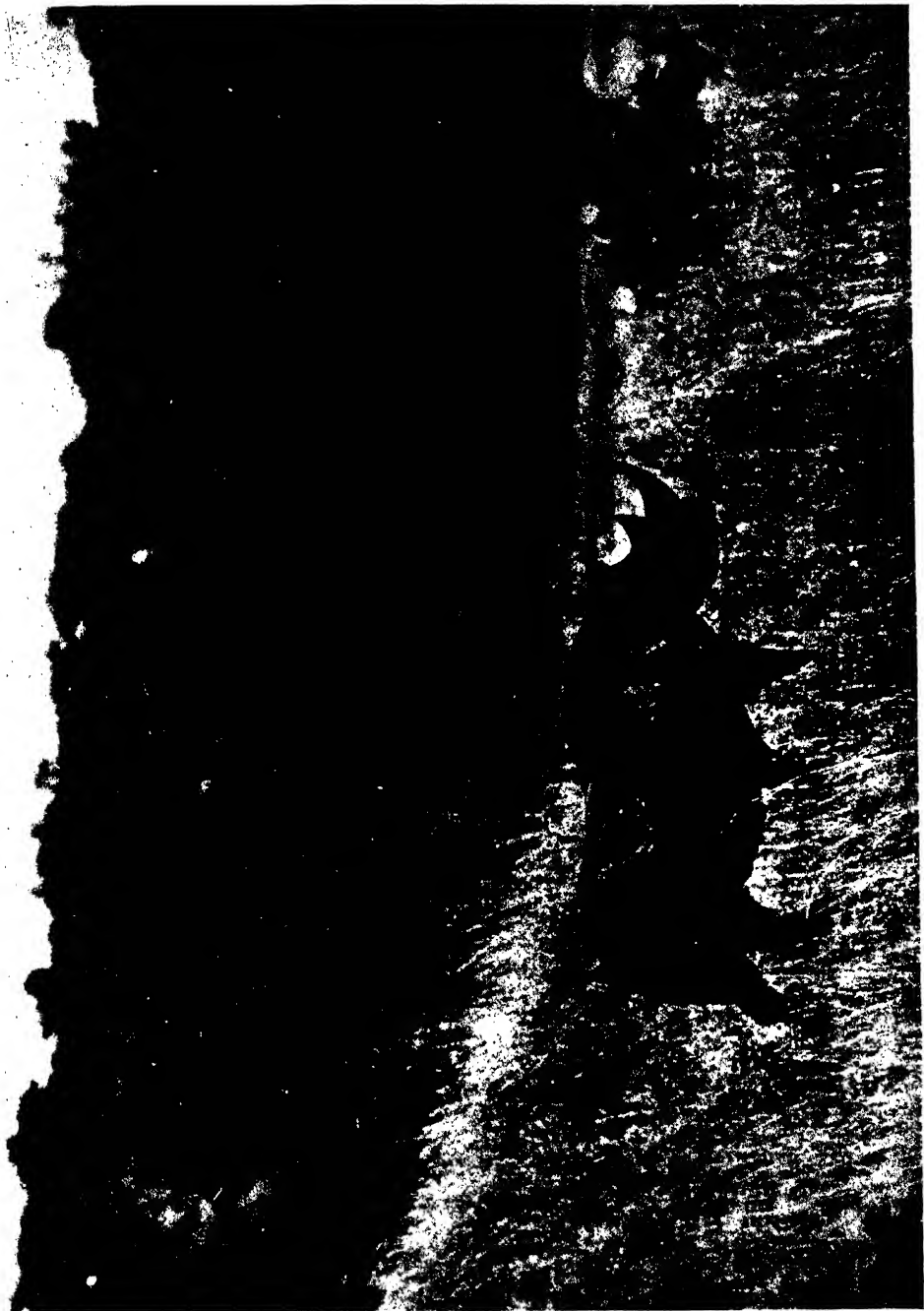


PLATE 12. "STUFFY"
A few seconds later he sent me up a tree.



PLATE 13. "STUFFY" AS A FIVE-YEAR OLD
He began ranging up and down trying for my wind.



PLATE 14. RHINOCEROS IN A SALT LICK
Note the wound behind the shoulder.



PLATE 15. RHINOCEROS GRAZING
After drought and every rib showing.



PLATE 16. THE PLEASANTEST VIEW OF A RHINOCEROS



PLATE 17. MOTHER AND CALF



PLATE 18. MOTHER AND CALF

The cow has an abnormally long horn. These are forest rhinoceros.

furlong of the same place. I was on the east side of the valley this time, and he came down the western slope past the place where he had routed the boys, and almost straight up towards me. I had picked a nice tree (I am the best judge of a climbable tree in Africa!) and stood behind it as he came up the next little ridge about 30 yards away. By bad luck it was again a very dull and cloudy day, so I had to risk under-exposure as he was moving, and so called upon him to halt. His tail whirled up, and he at once began ranging up and down trying for my wind, while I got one picture (Plate 13); then, evidently spotting movement as I changed the slide round, charged across the shallow dip between us and put me up my tree. Always on these occasions there are leaves and twigs obstructing the chance of a picture, and he soon went off, trotting with his tail whirling aloft, without another exposure being possible. Still I had quite a good silhouette of him ramping up and down in a real bad temper.

He went to a half-mile patch of bush, which he had evidently taken over as the centre of his territory, for there had been no rhino in it on my previous visits, and there I found him next year. He was lying down, and his front horn, now about 17 inches long instead of the 14 of the previous meeting, was just showing in front of a bush on the edge of a narrow clear lane. Focusing the camera, I roused him with offensive remarks about his personal appearance, temper and ancestry, but without profit; for he ramped up and down inside the thick stuff and would not show clear for a picture. He was too cross, and there were no suitable trees, so I had to give it up and left him.

My last meeting with Stuffy is told in Chapter Six, when he showed the same impetuosity and desire to abolish me. He was the only rhino I have known which did not haver about charging, but got off the mark as soon as he had located his man. Before our last meeting he had made it impossible for a couple of Meru to carry out their intention of cultivating a

small plot at the south end of his beat; clearing them off repeatedly during the day, and moving round their hut at night making threatening noises, so that they had to give up the idea. I fear his impetuosity has since led to his death at the hands of another sportsman.

A trick that Stuffy tried to play on me was to lie down and wait for me to come closer, so that a charge would get home effectively, and I saw it done by another rhino.

A cow with a six-month calf came across a wide valley towards me, from about half a mile away, so I circled them to get downwind before they should enter the big bay for which they were heading. This was about 300 yards wide and almost bare of cover, so that when they kept over to the windward side I was stumped, even the most careful and devious stalking failing to bring me within camera range. The cow was very suspicious, often mounting on an anthill and having a good look round as she pivoted slowly on top of it, trying the wind and staring in my direction. What had upset her I do not know, for I never got within 100 yards and, as I was very little exposed to view, ought to have been outside her range of vision. Finally, they both retired about a quarter of a mile and faced round, watching the bushes at the foot of the slope containing the main valley, while I had gone round once more and was working down under cover of these same bushes, which were considerably scattered. Eventually I got to one of the lowest clumps with the camera ready, but they were in 2-foot high grass, and I waited for a better chance. The calf was standing a few feet from the cow when she walked to it, pushed it right up against her hindquarter, and lay down facing me, only her horns and the top of her head showing above the grass.

The calf had also lain down, and they remained quite still waiting for me to come into the open. I photographed her head and horns showing just above the grass, then went home. Her tactics were admirable, for there were only a few bushes for cover, and no trees, so that if I had come out into the open,

a charge would have been a certainty and very difficult to avoid. Ten pounds is the fee for shooting a rhino, and I have never yet found it worth the money.

Rhinoceros are mainly browsing beasts, but they also graze at times, and, after rain following two years of drought, I photographed a rhino whose every rib was showing, and which was alternately eating grass and small bushes.

Queerly stupid animals at times, they seem to be given to daydreams which render them impervious to ordinary sounds. I have mentioned in Chapter Five an instance of this characteristic which manifested itself just after a lion had been shot. On another occasion, quite near the same place, we had just returned to the car and were standing in the open road chatting when an old rhino passed slowly across our front within 40 yards without taking the slightest notice of us.

This was a beast with a peculiarly long and dipped back, the like of which I never saw before or since, although the general shape of individuals varies considerably. Stuffy himself was of very compact build, and I have seen long, lean rhino, high up on the Aberdares, which were greyhounds compared with some of the massive pachyderms which live near my house.

The behaviour of rhino towards a car is, like everything else about them, eccentric. At times they will stare stupidly from 30 yards away, or make off at the sound long before they can have distinguished its nature. In the early morning, before sunrise, they are often decidedly truculent: I have several times been held up by one which refused to quit, but stood facing me too near the track for a dash past, while twice a bull has moved off and drawn me into passing, and then come galloping back with offensive intention, though too late to do damage. There have been several instances of their attacking cars, even chasing them for over a mile, and quite lately one villain has smashed up a car on the Nairobi-Mombasa road, and followed it up by damaging a lorry enough to halt it for repairs.

Comparing elephant with rhino as pests, the elephant has it every time, since they are much more numerous and go for crops which rhino do not touch; but there is one characteristic in which they differ considerably. On coming across a fence, a rhino will just push his horn under the lowest wire, give a heave, and carry straight on, often with part of the fence. Elephant will walk a long way beside a fence without doing any damage, often turning back.

Against these rhino "pros" we have many "cons." They will stick to a patch of cover even amongst farms, often making a thorough nuisance of themselves on a road, chasing boys and cattle. It would be thought that they are easy to deal with under such circumstances, but far from it. The stuff they live in is so thick that one cannot see them at 5 yards, while it provides perfect cover from view, but none from a charge. On more than one occasion I have detected the feet of a rhino at under 10 yards and had to clear out, there being no chance of dropping him until too close to prevent my probable decease as well—a contingency for which I have no use whatever.

Two more things remain to be said about rhino. The first is his frequent change of colour due to wallowing in various coloured earths. I have seen them in Somaliland, brilliantly white after taking a dustbath in white gypsum dust; almost jet black after being thoroughly washed in heavy rain; bright yellow in some of the clay pools in the Aberdares, and almost any colour between that and brown at other times.

The other thing is their habit of sweeping their horns or a forefoot through their droppings to spread them about. This practice is not confined to fresh droppings only, for I have seen an old bull come mooning along through the bush until he got to a place where several sets of droppings lay in hollows scraped out with his predecessors' feet at the base of trees beside the game path. He stopped at each and swept them about with his 30-inch front horn.

There are two African stories about this habit. One is that

the rhino and the elephant had a competition as to which could make the biggest pile. The rhino found that he was likely to lose, so spread his about to make them look larger; but was caught cheating by the elephant, since when there has always been bad blood between them.

The other, which was told me by a Rhodesian, is that when the Almighty issued hides to all animals for their suitings, he also gave them a large needle with which to sew them together. The rhino was pondering over cutting-out problems with his needle in his mouth, when the hyæna passed and made some ribald remark. In the ensuing explosion of violent temper the rhino swallowed the needle and has been looking for it ever since. This also explains why his hide fits so badly, for he had to carry on with an acacia thorn.

I do not like rhino. They have spoiled too many photographic opportunities, ruined too many nights' sleep by their habit of snorting offensively at one's tent, thus making it necessary to get out of bed to deal with a possible attack, while they have frightened me considerably at times, and kept me on the strain whenever hunting with the camera in their territory. The elephant is not so dangerous, though one has to be careful with him too, but he is a gentleman, whereas the rhino is a cad!

CHAPTER FOUR

Euphorbia Camp: I

Mainly Buffalo

When starting hunting operations in a new country one is lucky if one can find a friend or two to give one tips on good localities, and, very naturally, they are not going to give away their best grounds. Still, there are always some well-known places, which, though apt to be a good deal shot over, act as bases for further operations, and I have always been most grateful to a friend who put me on to the headwaters of the Tana and Euphorbia Camp.

I called it this because the tent is pitched under a big euphorbia tree on a small knoll (Plate 19), and not its least charm is its view down the valley of the little river with its border of thick bush and trees, backed by rolling hills. The country to the south merges into the open grassy plains, with the mass of El Donyo Sabuk 30 miles or more distant on their farther edge, and down from Mount Kenya and the Aberdares flow several little rivers to cut deep furrows across the plains and eventually join to form the main stream of the Tana, Kenya's biggest river. The course of these little rivers can be followed quite easily from any eminence by the long, tortuous strips of dark-green acacia trees, until they all merge in low bush-covered ridges to the south-east, through which the Tana forces its way to the coast.

Fifty miles to the south-west are the famous Athi Plains

and the great Southern Game Reserve, and the country over which I have hunted on half a score of trips looks so much the same that one would think that the animals would be the same. Yet though there appears to be no natural or other obstacle, giraffe, Grant's and Thomson's gazelles, wildebeest, and zebra, though they are all very plentiful on the Athi Plains, are none of them to be found here. Lion, rhino, buffalo, kongoni, eland, and impala, all plentiful on the Athi Plains, are also common round Euphorbia Camp. I have asked many hunters to suggest an explanation for this curious difference, but without success.

It is good country for hunting, undulating ground of open grass, patched with thick bush or dotted with trees in savannah fashion, and has the great advantage of being little over 50 miles from my house, only the last five or six being off the main road. By this I mean a Kenya main road, which may or may not be passable after heavy rain, not a tarmac'd or even macadamised highway. Of course one has to watch the weather to avoid getting cut off for some days by the state of the last half-dozen miles, but that is all in the game, and I never bind myself down to definite dates if I can help it, especially as the beginnings of each rainy season are the best for hunting.

The first time I went there was just after the long rains in June, and I have never been so badly attacked by ticks. The advantage of hunting in the early rains is that most game, particularly buffalo, like to sun themselves outside the dripping patches of bush after a heavy shower, and tracking, too, is very much easier. Unfortunately, this fine bit of ground has been dreadfully shot up during the war, particularly by sadists, shooting from lorries, who have in some cases not even bothered to recover wounded game, or in the case of buffalo, have not had the guts to follow up and finish their beast. May they burn over slow fires.

Still, I have had many pleasant days there and, given a rest from such murderers, Euphorbia Camp may give me many

more. There was plenty of fair shooting there before the war, and it never did any harm to my photography.

Buffalo were always my principal objective, for photographs of these had been specially asked for by a friend. He had also asked me for rhino photographs, so these made a good second, both they and buffalo being plentiful within a couple of miles. The great advantage of Euphorbia Camp was that car tracks could be used up to 5 or 6 miles away, so one did not have to camp too close to one's ground, but could go out, leave the car, and hunt in a wide circle round it. Moreover, one could kill meat for camp near home, and avoid that particular form of disturbance.

The African buffalo has acquired an undeserved reputation for ferocity, and after ten years' intensive experience of their ways, I have come to the conclusion that, with two exceptions, they are almost harmless when unwounded. These exceptions are the old solitary bull, in particular one which lives near mankind and has not only got over his awe of man, but has acquired more cunning through knowledge of man's ways; the other is a cow with a young calf. The first may attack on sight, and the other, very naturally, will protect her youngster to the last, and is a firm believer in the "offensive-defensive." A wounded bull is a most dangerous adversary: he will lay for his molester with great cunning, like all wild cattle, circling on his tracks, and charging home from a flank; and, if his charge gets home, will turn and hunt his victim, or stamp and rend him to death with feet and horns.

Photographing buffalo has its own peculiar difficulties, for not only are the beasts black and without definite shape from the camera point of view, but they also need at least double the exposure given to other game, while their love of thick cover generally means early-morning photography in a bad light if they are to be caught before retiring for the day.

My first effort at Euphorbia Camp was not only almost a failure, but might well have been my last; but it taught me

PLATE 19. THE TENT UNDER THE
EUPHORBIA TREE



PLATE 20. KARA, A MERU
He was with me on every trip to this camp.



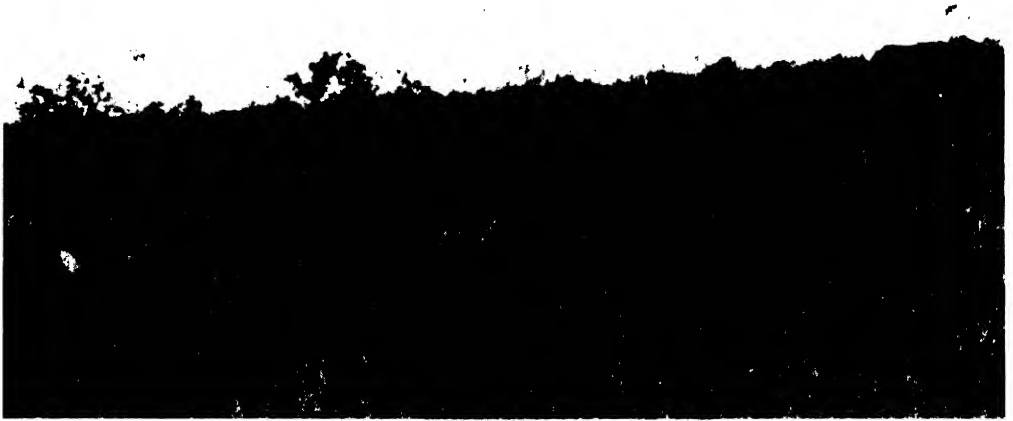


PLATE 21. BUFFALO IN LOW BUSH



PLATE 22. THE REARGUARD OF A BUFFALO HERD

Two old bulls, here numbers two and four, are usually to be found in the rearguard.

some useful lessons, well rubbed in by the buff, and one was not to get between the herd and the cover for which it was making.

One direction having been tried unsuccessfully, it was too late in the morning when we located my first herd of buffalo, for they were already inside a patch of thick bush about half a mile long and half that wide, with a waist like an hour-glass, which sloped down a long hillside towards a wide grassy valley with some pools of water in it. They were in the upper half of the hour-glass when we found them, and various members of the herd poked out great black faces at us when we arrived, while the peevish mooing of cows calling to wandering calves came from within. After thorough reconnaissance we went home, returning about four o'clock, when we found that they had shifted into the lower section and, passing through the waist of the patch, I saw several dark lumps lying in the shade of the upper edge of the farther bush. I was about to stalk them from inside when I saw the butt end of a big bull which was lying only 20 yards away, so sat down very quietly, focused the camera on him, and placed it on the foot-high remains of an anthill beside me.

My idea was that he would rise, stand awhile to look about him, and I would get the finest buffalo picture of all time under the interlacing boughs of the thornbush before he made off. I felt confident of being able to deal with him with the rifle if he looked like cutting up rough, for buffalo are slow to make up their minds.

After about forty minutes the more distant members of the herd, which was about 200 strong, began to get up and drift slowly downhill out of the cover to the shallow pools in the valley below, where they drank, and as slowly passed on up the far slope. My bull was last to go, and when he did, he rose and walked straight off without even looking back; so that, a picture of his blunt end being useless, I felt rather foolish.

This was the only occasion when I have seen buffalo drink

in the daytime, except (as told later on) once at sunrise on the Lorogi plateau.

Next morning we found the herd grazing in the valley beyond on open grass, and about 150 yards from a large patch of thick bush at the lower end of it, with wind and sun just right. Magnificent!

We reached the nearest point of the mile-wide patch of thick stuff, and there I dropped Mwai, a Kikuyu boy of mine, and a fat Meru who was doing local guide, going on with the camera boy only just inside the bush until we reached a point where I was sure I would get wonderful pictures of the herd returning to cover, and from which I could withdraw when they got too close. It was this last bit where I was wrong.

Unluckily there was another herd of about 30 buff farther inside the bush, and of course the wind was wrong for them and they stampeded. There was a roar of hooves, a cloud of dust above the thorns, and the big herd outside swung round, stared, and then went hellbent for cover right where we were standing. They came in lots of 20 to 30, some so close that I could almost have touched them as we cowered behind a low bush, and as they got about 30 yards beyond us and got our wind, a troop would halt and turn to stare, until another lot came charging into them and almost climbed over them. Clouds of dust, thunder of hooves, and low bellowings all contributed to my terror, for I knew little of buffalo then and expected an enraged squadron of bulls to wipe us out at any moment; indeed, when the last great black rump had bobbed away into the bush, it took me a quarter of an hour and a long drink from the water-bottle to steady up again, though looking back on the incident I do not believe that we were in any real danger.

Then we started back towards the two boys I had left behind, and within 100 yards we were charged and routed by two cows, each with a small calf. Having rallied and reassembled, we pushed on and reached a little open space where I

stood on a small anthill and whistled up Mwai and Fatty. They started towards us, I got down off my anthill, and resting my rifle against it began to peel an orange. The two boys were within 25 yards of us, passing a thick clump of bush which we had skirted closely ten minutes before, and out came a cow buffalo at them! Fatty just vanished, I never knew how, and little Mwai ducked under her horns and dived neatly beneath the lower branches of a big bush. The cow then trotted back and through her clump, coming out on the far side with a small calf before disappearing again. It was all over so quickly that I had hardly time to pick up my rifle, much less fire a shot.

Having recovered from this shock, we went straight for the open country, and were hunted out into it by a cow rhino with a calf. Mother love is a very beautiful thing, but can be overdone! I called it a day and went home to soothe my shattered nerves.

Two mornings later I found another herd at sunrise, filing slowly back to cover across a wide valley after the night's feed, grazing as they went, and got some fair pictures by cutting across and lying up near the edge of the bush, though not on a dead line this time. The photographs would have been better, but that the only native we saw during that trip turned up on the other side of the valley and shouted at the herd, thereby turning them into low bush earlier than they first intended (Plate 21).

This incident took place near the head of Lion Well Valley, which I so christened because, a little below the shallow pools where the first herd of buffalo drank, there is a deep natural hole in the rock at the upper end of a half-mile patch of bush and big trees, and here used to live a family of lions—there being always water in the hole—until some scoundrel shot them. A mile below this place the valley joins one of the little rivers which go to make the Tana. The valley runs mainly east, but where it comes down from the big conical hill called

Molinduku, its direction is southerly, and it was here, on its western lip, that I got my first good buffalo pictures.

It was November, the weather was showery, and I found the herd lying out on lush grass at about eleven o'clock, in bright and steamy sunshine, close to the lip of the bush-clad western slope—"bush," as usual, meaning greenery and trees from 10 to 20 feet high. The wind was from the south-east, which is the prevailing direction throughout the Mount Kenya area, and I was already on the right side of it. There were trees dotted about amongst and around the herd, and I selected one within a few yards of the edge of the bush which would bring the sun right, then started on my stalk.

A small clump of bushes gave me cover up to within 100 yards, and after that it was a long crawl in 18-inch grass up to the foot of my tree, which, as usual, I had chosen because it had a stout branch near the ground to enable me to climb in a hurry if forced to do so. I may say that I heartily dislike this crawling in long grass, as I am frightened of putting my hand on a puff adder, which reptiles are often too sluggish to move away until actually touched, but then strike like lightning.

All went well, and I arrived at the foot of my tree, then rose slowly behind the 15-inch thick trunk, but was immediately seen by the nearer buffalo, which were only 25 yards away, though they could only make out bits of something strange. The whole herd got up, and I took a couple of photographs, then the herd bull came shouldering through towards me on the left (Plate 30), and I went up the tree and made two more exposures while they stared in every direction, hardly any of them looking straight at me—a peculiarity of buffalo when alarmed which I have noticed in all herds. Suddenly they stampeded, poured down the slope into the valley in front, and on for a mile or more before settling down to a steady walk.

Just before coming down from my tree I noticed three collared fruit bats hanging together from a branch beside me,

while a green fruit pigeon was sitting on two eggs within a foot of my hand.

On walking over the ground where the herd had been lying, I found the remains of a very big puff adder, probably not less than 5 feet long, stamped into fragments so thoroughly that only one six-inch segment remained identifiable.

On my next visit to Euphorbia Camp I was looking for this same herd and walked out on to a big rock just inside the top of the wooded slope above the valley, to overlook the ground below. I had been there a couple of minutes searching the opposite slopes through my glasses when I heard a movement just below me, looked down, and saw the herd packed immediately below my feet, so close that I could have stepped off my rock on to their backs. In withdrawing I made a slight noise, and they looked up and saw me, then thundered down into the valley and beyond, taking the same line as before. It shows, the wind being right, how little animals look upwards, for I was in full sight on the rock, and if I had made no noise could have withdrawn without disturbing them. It also emphasises the advisability of searching the nearest ground first, especially when in cover. Buffalo eyesight is excellent, as are their other senses, and they are very good at picking a position for their midday rest which will give them the advantage of wind and visual command of upwind approaches.

Herd composition is interesting, most herds of over fifty having a definite advance guard, rearguard, and main body. The point of the advance guard is usually one or two adult, but youngish bulls, with the herd bull at the tail of the main body, and a couple of oldish bulls in the rearguard (Plate 22). Often there is an old cow with a calf in the rearguard, and she is particularly likely to give trouble. When drinking, on the two occasions I have seen them do so by daylight, the old herd bull saw everyone out of the water, and he is often very picky about members of the herd straying away from it; twice I have seen the old fellow go off and round up a party

which had gone too far away in his judgement. Often an old cow will be in the lead when changing feeding grounds.

The usual practice in dry weather is for the herd to drink about an hour before sunrise, and then graze its way back for 5 or 6 miles, sometimes even more, before lying down in thick cover. They will begin grazing again about an hour before sunset and drink again in hot weather, their night and day lying-down places being widely separated. In rainy weather they will lie down in the open during the day, being driven out of cover by biting flies, but lie up in cover at night; they feed a good deal by moonlight. These are of course generalities based on observation over a dozen years, in each of which I have had much to do with buffalo; and animals do not conform to fixed rules applicable to every portion of their habitat.

Solitary bulls are usually dangerous, being old beasts soured by having been driven out of the herd either by a younger conqueror, or having met the same fate owing to an injury that has made them unfit to fight for their place in the community. But many bulls are temporarily solitary by choice, coming back to the herd and cutting out a cow in season when the urge takes them. This is also the precise behaviour of the four species of wild oxen in India and Burma—gaur (usually miscalled bison), tsine, buffalo, and yak, all of which I know well.

Rinderpest, communicated by native cattle, is the bane of the African buffalo, and they have suffered greatly in the past, having twice been put on the protected list because they were so reduced in numbers. But they have marvellous powers of recovery for so large an animal, and soon came off it. At present (1945) there are plenty of them—too many in parts of Kenya.

The first stages of rinderpest at times have a curious effect on buffalo, rendering them most truculent both to man and to their own kind. This very same herd of which I have written contracted the disease during my third visit, and sitting high

up on the western slopes of their valley, I watched a young bull suddenly run amok, chasing his fellows all over the grazing slopes, finally to retire into the clump from which he had come. Two days later I found him dead inside it. Another day, shortly after leaving camp in the car, I saw a bull galloping towards us from the left, then pull up suddenly as I halted and got out the rifle. He then made short rushes, each time covered by a tree trunk, and I could not get a shot at him. Then, as I manœuvred to get him clear, he suddenly whipped round and galloped wildly away, kicking up his heels.

Twice near Euphorbia Camp I have seen a herd feeding amongst the fresh corpses of its own members which had died from rinderpest: a curious thing, as one would have supposed that instinct would have warned them off.

Of late years buffalo seem to have acquired greater natural resistance to rinderpest, for the casualties in three recent outbreaks near my house have been progressively less. It may be that they are getting a less virulent infection owing to the enforced inoculation of domestic cattle.

Tick-birds (the red-billed oxpecker) are always in attendance on buffalo, and give warning of the approach of enemies by flying up and screeching thinly. They do the same for most large animals, particularly rhino, and are also very often the means of warning one that dangerous game is close by.

Buffalo have a great reputation for ferocity, probably well earned in the days of soft lead bullets and black powder, when it was rare for one to fall to a single shot, and a wounded bull had often to be followed up with inadequate weapons. In those days the cloud of smoke from a discharge often hid a charging bull until right on top of the hunter. Even now we have occasional casualties from buffalo, nearly always due to the hunter taking an entirely unwarranted first shot from too far, or at a moving beast in bush.

I write feelingly about people who do this, or shoot from a lorry into the middle of a herd, then fail to collect their

wounded animals, more often than not through want of guts. On two occasions the finishing of a buffalo wounded by someone else has given me a most unpleasant hour and a half in thick thornbush, and made me think of several ways of using boiling oil on the man who did the wounding. Nearly all rogues begin being rogues through being wounded by someone chancing his arm at long range or in thick stuff, and some of these have been responsible for the deaths of unfortunate Africans who have had to suffer the results long after the *soi-disant* "sportsman" has gone back home.

Euphorbia Camp: II

Lion, Rhino, and Buffalo

The car ran perfectly, the road was better than I had ever known it, the double snow-streaked peak of Mount Kenya glittered in the sunlight 40 miles behind us, and everything seemed set for a good trip. We turned off the road and along a track to the edge of the native habitations, and a waterbuck, with one malformed horn curved back like an ibex, pushed its head over a bush a score of yards away and stared at us, but was gone before the camera could be focused.

We trundled over the last little ridge and down to the euphorbia tree; the two boys unloaded and began to make camp, while I strolled up the hillock behind to see if the local helpers were coming to the sound of the horn: a leopard rose from the shade of a tree at the top, made a peevish snarling noise at me, and galloped off to the thick bush beside the little river which runs a furlong below. The omens seemed very good.

Our first outing that evening was again propitious, for within half a mile I saw a bull buffalo standing a couple of hundred yards away up the slope to our left, so stopped and got out. He cantered off and, from the direction of his flight, and a glimpse I had of his horns and scarred back, I knew him for an old acquaintance.

“Surely that is the Bad One?” I asked the two locals in the back of the light truck.

"It is, Bwana," answered Kara, who was doing his ninth spell with me as local guide. "He is worse than ever. He raids our fields every night and chases us back to the huts when we try to drive him away."

The other man chimed in with, "No one can kill him. Several bwanas and the Government Game Controller have tried."

This bull had killed a man just before my last trip to Euphorbia Camp, so, not having a licence to kill buffalo on Crown land, I decided to send in a note to the District Commissioner to suggest my slaying the villain. Although I dislike firing a shot near my photography grounds, he obviously needed special treatment.

We went on, saw the usual impala, kongoni, and water-buck in the usual places, then crossed a wide valley 3 miles from camp, where a long black line on its western crest proclaimed a herd of buffalo moving out for the evening feed. They were the wrong side for sun and wind, so I drove on to the usual place for the first evening's reconnaissance.

This look-out post was at the corner of a big patch of thick bush on the northern lip of Lion Well Valley. I parked the car in the usual place, got out, and walked to the usual anthill, mounted it in the usual way; there was a big rhino 30 yards away on the other side!

Fortunately his head was well down in a bush and the wind was right, but I withdrew as before royalty, with great care and the rifle ready. A detour downwind and I could study his probable line, which also seemed to be downwind towards the sun, and therefore most favourable. He would have to pass a 30-yard patch of bush, and before he got to it I was half-way to a small tree that looked to be on his way. It was then that I discovered that both the local savages were with me, and sent them back by whispered abuse and awful grimaces. Kabogo, the camera boy, and I reached the tree, which afforded decidedly limited accommodation; but I had to get above the grass, so

climbed on to a branch about 7 feet up and Kabogo handed up the camera and cleared well away.

That rhino behaved marvellously; for, having come round the patch of bush, he worked steadily towards me, eating shrubs and grass alternately. Unfortunately, he came too straight, for the end of the branch on which I sat was heavily tufted with leaves, and while a deviation of even 5 degrees on either side would have brought him into full view with the sun on him, there was no hope of a picture as it was. On he came to within 15 yards, then looked up and saw my dangling feet, showed his objection to their size with a loud snort, circled to get my wind, then cantered back to cover, tail in air, and puffing like a steam engine. I have plenty of rhino pictures, even though another first-class one never comes amiss, so I was too entertained to suffer regrets, and drove back to camp thinking the first day almost too good to live up to.

Monday's sunrise saw us at this same place, and a glance up the valley showed a wide black mass of buffalo only a mile away, feeding steadily towards the cover by which we stood. Rapid assessment of pace and cover showed that by making use of a very shallow gully, we might possibly reach a solitary fig tree which grew at the bottom of the valley. We just did it, the last 20 yards being a painfully spiky crawl, and climbed into the tree with the herd still a quarter of a mile distant.

There were about 300 of them, the greater number a little up our slope, with the rising sun well on them. It looked a gift for the finest set of buffalo pictures ever taken, but it did not quite work out like that.

As they topped a rise 100 yards away, I took a long shot to show the width of the mass, and that was spoiled by camera movement. I took another as they came nearer, and the same thing happened, though of course I did not know it at the time. Then they decided that it was time to be back in cover, formed column of route, and went down into the bottom of the valley—on the side where our tree was a mass of leaves and I

could see nothing. The leading platoon was passing right under our tree, and was almost invisible, when I spotted two fine bulls moving along our side of the procession and half-way down it, so chanced an exposure through a small hole in the greenery (Plate 29); it eventually turned out a good picture. Those under the tree heard the shutter go a few feet above them and bolted back, the whole herd splitting into half a dozen big clumps, one lot massing 50 yards away in a solid phalanx, heads outwards, and bulls on the edge ready to give battle (Plate 25).

I had the big telephoto lens, which is particularly susceptible to movement, fixed to the camera, and made my exposure through a gap in the leaves which I thought must blur the negative, while my position was one of hanging along a branch with one arm crooked over it, yet I got the finest buffalo picture I have ever taken or even seen. The herd then thundered off, black waves of tossing horns and great lolloping sterns, to other cover, and I was left thinking that my first two efforts were probably good and my last two duds. That is big-game photography all over.

We went on over the hill and found a herd of eland with two bulls fighting, stalked them, and put up a rhino which, in turn, put away the eland. Kabogo went back to fetch the other two men, tried a short cut through a patch of bush on the way back, and "jumped" a small herd of buffalo whose departure alarmed the whole countryside, so we went back to the car. On the way we found a deserted penduline tit's nest, whose little pendent purse with overhanging porch looks as if it is made of white flannel. I have not yet discovered what the material is, it is so closely woven.

As we left the camp that evening a red-tailed buzzard rose in front of the car with a still living snake twisting in its talons. Although I had seen these birds almost daily for six years, I never knew that snakes formed part of their diet.

That western bit of country seemed almost empty of game

though we did come across one herd of eland, and just as we got back to the camp an old rhino with a curiously long back mooned across the track not 50 yards away, enjoying a daydream.

Soon after our return an official letter arrived, agreeing with pleasure to my proposal to abolish the old rogue buffalo, so I decided to take him on the first afternoon that a clear sky should give me a sufficiently steady breeze. The morning wind was too tricky. Southward seemed best for game, so next morning we took the car down to Lion Well, before leaving it to cross the big ridge beyond. Close to it were the tracks of a lioness and three cubs in the thin mud bordering a shallow pool in the flat rock.

The country we had disturbed the previous day was empty but for a couple of oribi, but in the valley beyond were many hartebeest and water-buck, while some indistinct black lumps at the edge of a stretch of thornbush indicated that a herd of buff were already inside. We sat down to watch for anything of photographic interest—the antelope being too numerous and too scattered to risk a stalk which might set the whole lot on the move—and an hour's patience resulted in a pair of rhino appearing low down on the opposite side of the valley and well away from the crowd.

We were soon opposite them at about 300 yards' range, the only difficulty being to avoid some water-buck, and were then on a grassy flat dotted with thornbush and bisected by a deep little gully. This little gully made a sharp curve opposite the rhino, the far bank steeply eroded by flood water and a couple of big trees growing in the bay. One of these looked the best bet, for again I had to get the camera well above the long grass.

We reached the bay, and I began to climb my tree as a vulture flew off its nest in the top of the other. I was using Kabogo's hands as a support against the trunk, and was in the act of reaching up to the first main branch, when both rhino, who had temporarily disappeared from view when we

went down into the valley, arrived on the farther edge a dozen yards away. There was no danger, for the bank at their feet was vertical and 8 or 9 feet high, and rhino are no leapers, and the situation was merely ridiculous. I was in full view while those two old pachyderms guzzled and blew for five minutes over their tufts of grass; then they moved a couple of yards to the right behind a bush which just covered their faces. I scrambled on to my branch, Kabogo passed up the camera, and still they did not hear the inevitable scraping noises, or my muttered curses as I skinned my knees against the rough bark. I sat there, shaking with laughter, waiting for those two great lumps to come clear of their bush, when I would take the finest rhino picture ever.

Suddenly there came a puff of wind at my back, up went their heads as they whirled round and departed side by side, blowing like twin locomotives, expressing their evident opinion that the mere existence of humans was an outrage. Again no picture, but much amusement.

Half-way home an attempt at a solitary kongoni failed, and when Kabogo brought me the camera case he remarked that there was probably a ground hornbill's nest in a dead tree near-by, as two birds had left while I was stalking the hartebeest, and he could still hear strange noises from inside a hole 15 feet up. We walked up to the tree and were staring at the hole when the devil came out of it!

A ground hornbill is the size of a turkey, and is black with large crimson wattles on either side of an immense curved red bill. When such a bird emerges suddenly from a hole just above one's head the impression that one has at last seen the devil is quite overpowering.

A sapling was cut down for a ladder, and two dirty white eggs were found resting on rotted wood about 18 inches down the hollow.

After lunch the Assistant Game Controller, a local tribesman armed with a magazine rifle, arrived in camp with a letter

from the District Commissioner, who had sent him to help me deal with the rogue buffalo. I have a rooted objection to tackling dangerous game in unknown company—even that of personal friends, if their capacity with a rifle is uncertain—but I appreciated the trouble taken, and decided to give him a trial in the form of taking him out with me to get an impala for meat.

He did not shine. He started with a friend clothed in a shirt which had been white when bought a month before, and was still sufficiently conspicuous to scare game. I told him to take off the shirt or go back to camp, and he chose the latter alternative. Then, on my shooting an impala with a fairly long shot, the Assistant Game Controller failed to mark the spot in the grass on which the animal had fallen, and was still hunting for it in the wrong direction when I had found it by the blood trail. Going back to the camp he frequently impressed on me the terrible nature of this particular buffalo, and on arrival came for medicine to cure a bad cough. Anyone with a bad cough who goes in pursuit of a rogue buffalo that may be found in thick bush, and is just as likely to fight as to run, is asking for a permanent cure, finishing underground. I wrote a letter of thanks to the District Commissioner and returned my potential partner.

I proposed tackling the old bull the next afternoon, if the wind suited, so spent the morning bird-nesting and catching butterflies. During breakfast, a couple of African hawk eagles, black on the back, and white splotched with black in front, were hunting over the knoll behind camp. We went to the top and the hen bird killed a guinea-fowl 20 yards away, thus providing me with an excellent dinner.

At four o'clock we started out to tackle the rogue, a blue sky flecked with white clouds and a steady breeze from the west making all favourable.

From the top of the small escarpment south of camp we walked along a plateau through yard-high grass dotted thickly

with trees until we came to a gap in a line of bush. Here I dropped the boys until I had looked over the ground in front, for it was a likely place, and I did not want to jump the bull, or other game which might warn him by flight.

A little beyond the gap an indistinct black lump came in sight showing over the grass 100 yards away. I thought it was the back of a warthog, but closed in cautiously to make sure. Half-way it moved, and the crown and ears of a buffalo were defined. It was the enemy, lying down, and taken by surprise. I crept up, broke his spine between the shoulders, and finished him off with another bullet.

What an old warrior! His left horn stuck out straight from the skull and was worn down to a thick wedge, while the right only retained the remains of a curve near the end. He was scarred all over, some of the wounds quite recent, and the front lower teeth were worn level with the gum. He had evidently kept up his turbulent, truculent way of life long after all chance of victory in battle with another bull had vanished with advancing years, and had taken it out of the unfortunate villagers, recuperating on their crops until the next bout came along.

He was well out of the way and, lazing in a deck-chair after dinner that night, I watched a string of passing men silhouetted against the firelight, each with dripping, gory bundles of meat pendent from stout poles, and thought it a fitting end to his tyranny.

Thursday, March 13th, 1941, was Lion Day. I would like it commemorated in letters a foot high; for although Kenya is famed for its lions and there are innumerable photographs published of the Serengeti lions, which are fed by tourists and run to the sound of a car (and are in Tanganyika), lions are not plentiful in the open shooting districts of our colony and are usually most retiring.

Kenya lions normally withdraw at once on sighting a human being at under a furlong's distance, which makes the



PLATE 23. THE OLD BULL CAME LAST, WITH THREE OTHERS



PLATE 24. ALL HEADS WENT UP AS A RHINOCEROS WALKED ALONG THE HILLSIDE



PLATE 25. A BUFFALO PHALANA WITH THE BULLS ON THE OUTSIDE READY FOR TROUBLE



PLATE 26. A HERD OF ELAND
The bull is right centre, and has a big decolap.



PLATE 27. THE GRAND OLD MAN ON THE ANTHILL.



PLATE 28. A KONGONI SENTRY ON AN ANTHILL.
*Most antelope herds post sentries, an anthill being a favourite stand,
and getting a photograph of the sentry is none too easy.*

behaviour of these particular lions the more remarkable. It is possible that they had come up from the Southern Game Reserve some 60 miles to the south, but any animal, however tolerant in the Reserve, immediately it crosses the railway line which is the northern boundary, becomes as wary as any permanent dweller outside that sanctuary.

The day began with a fine old lion which Kabogo spotted lying on an anthill 80 yards east of the track. I stopped the car and considered him, while the lion imitated those of Trafalgar Square in his magnificent indifference to my existence. It was cloudy and only 7 a.m., so a long exposure would be necessary, but 30 yards closer to the beast was a nice little bald-headed anthill, with no impeding grass, on which the camera might be rested.

I slung the camera round my neck and the rifle on my shoulder, then walked towards that anthill, thinking it improbable that I would get a photograph, as the lion would be sure to retire into the patch of bush behind him before I could make an exposure. But that was not why I am without that picture.

When I was half-way towards him he turned his head and looked at me with apparent indifference. When almost there I noticed that his head had sunk and put up my glasses. He was crouched, all tensed up, his tail switching slightly to and fro, and there was a look of grim and glad anticipation in his expression. I withdrew with what dignity I could retain, fortunately saving self-respect by discovering at the last moment that the top of a bush intervened and would have spoilt the picture in any case. By the time I was back at the car he had resumed his Trafalgar Square pose.

Such behaviour is not at all "according to the book." He should either have tolerated me or cleared out: this demonstration of eager hostility was all wrong. I manœuvred a bit to see if there was any other line for a photograph, but without real enthusiasm; then he got bored with me and walked off

into the bush without even deigning to look over his shoulder.

We drove on and found a big herd of buffalo on the highest part of the ridge, watched for an hour as they went slowly into cover, vainly hoping for the sun: a picture of a black beast without any salient features is impossible unless the light is good, so we gave it up, and drove across Lion Well Valley and over the far ridge.

The sun came out as we reached the top, and we looked down into a wide shallow corrie and on to the most remarkable wild-animal drama that I have ever seen.

Near its lower end and about 400 yards away was a cow rhino with a 25-inch front horn and a three months-old calf. On the slope above them, and 100 yards up our side of the corrie, were five lions sitting in the grass: two old males with fine manes, another with a sort of Newgate fringe, and two lionesses, all staring down at the rhino. As we watched, the biggest lioness slipped into the little central gully and began to stalk the calf, which was feeding 20 yards from mother.

She reached a fringe of higher coarse grass and rose slightly to peer through it within a dozen yards of her quarry. There must have been a tell-tale eddy of wind, for there was a snort and a rush as mother joined her offspring, and both stood facing the lioness, who then showed herself and strolled about unconcernedly. Master rhino was a sturdy little fellow, and showed no signs of panic as the lioness had probably hoped, but stood facing her, nose up and ready for anything.

Then the biggest lion walked slowly down past the mother within a dozen feet of her nose, trying to draw a charge which would take her far enough from the youngster for his mate to get in some deadly work. I noticed that the other three lions were sitting up on their haunches watching intently, with heads pushed well forward. None of the actors took the slightest interest in us.

The lion walked past twice, and the rhino resumed their feeding, very close together, and much on the alert, moving

gradually up our side of the corrie. In the next half-hour the pair of lions made three more unsuccessful attempts to separate mother and child, while the other three lions still looked on without attempting to help.

By that time the rhino were a third of the way up the slope, about 300 yards from the flat-topped crest on which we had halted, and the lions gave it up as hopeless, the big lion walking slowly up the slope past the others to lie down on an anthill right on the skyline within 10 yards of the track (Plate 27). There was a wind-stripped tree just the right amount to his right to make the picture balance, and I could not resist it.

I moved the car slowly forward to within 70 yards of him, while the remaining four lions moved up and were 20 yards nearer, looking over the grass below the big fellow's anthill.

I got the camera ready, focused as near as I could, and got out, leaving the engine running, rested the telephoto lens on the reversed crook of my spiked stick and made one exposure. The nearest lioness was already beginning to move towards me when I nipped back again. It was a long shot, but the resultant picture, although suffering from slight camera movement due to the breeze, will always serve to revive memories of this wonderful morning.

I backed the car a little and swung her round ready to flee, and the four lions relaxed their tense attitudes: the grand old man on the anthill had retained his pose throughout, never even looking our way. Then the four filed slowly past him and into a 15-yard strip of 4-foot yellow grass on the highest point of our ridge, disappearing beyond it, and, I supposed, going to a patch of thick bush which lay a furlong down the far slope.

At last, the old fellow himself rose, looked at us once, then disappeared after his fellows. I had a mind to see down into the valley beyond, so, after giving him a couple of minutes' law, proceeded along the track. Just this side of his anthill was a dozen yards of steepish upgrade on the right of the longer grass. We negotiated this slope, the cab of the

three-quarter-ton "pickup," which is our "car," came clear of the strip, and, glancing to our left, there was the old fellow sitting on his hunkers 60 yards away.

I stopped the car, keeping the engine running and expecting him to clear off in pursuit of his friends. He rose, half turned to go, then whipped round again, and began to advance with switching tail and sunk head just as, from the corner of my eye through the rear window, I caught sight of the two local idiots standing up in the truck body behind, thus giving him a fine view of them over the grass which made the body of the vehicle invisible. His pace increased to a run as I put in the gear and swung the car round right-handed, there were two resounding thumps as the culprits subsided on to the floorboards, and I revved up the engine as Kabogo, looking through his window, exclaimed "He's coming! He's coming!"

Fortunately the car has a wonderful acceleration; we regained the track on two wheels, and in three bounds, and without crashing into an antbear hole, the downward slope helping, we were away at the highest speed I could get out of second gear—for the fraction of a second necessary to change into top was not available. The makers say in their booklet that one should never, never use the highest speed possible of the lower gears: I would have much enjoyed having a managing director of the company beside me.

I slowed 100 yards on and looked back. The lion was standing on the track at the end of the high grass, tail lashing and looking just as bad tempered as was to be expected after having failed to dine off rhino calf, and being followed up, in his opinion, to the point of impertinence. Kabogo asserted that he had missed us by a few feet. After a minute or so he moved off after the others, and was lost to sight, but not to memory.

Thinking this enough for the morning, and having addressed a spirited homily to the rear passengers on the subject of standing up in the back (behaviour that had been

the subject of previous addresses), we went home. Kabogo suggested trying for a picture of the two rhino, which were still half-way down our slope, but they were unlikely to be sweet-tempered after their badgering by the lions, there were no trees or other cover, and I suspected him of wanting to see a bit more fun. As I would have to do the photography, I declined to make an African holiday.

Several questions arise from this hour of packed excitement. For example, why did not the other three lions take part in the baiting of mother rhino, and why was it left to the lioness to tackle the calf? After all, she and the calf were much the same size, with a probable advantage in weight to the latter. Again, would she have been able to cripple him before mother arrived to intervene? All carnivora are well aware that an injury that prevents them from killing food is as good as fatal.

As regards the final act, I never expected a charge, for, as before emphasised, Kenya lions are not given that way, and a lion rarely attacks a car. If I had gone forward I might have got into high speed quicker, but I am sure that the lion's being unsighted when we plunged downhill behind the longer grass saved us from a very nasty incident. I still have dreadful imaginings of having to stop, struggle out, and shoot the lion at a yard's range, while he mauled the two in the body behind. It makes a first-class nightmare. It takes nine seconds to get out of the cab with the rifle.

I was wrong in thinking that we had finished with lions for the day. In the afternoon we tried for pictures down the lightly wooded eastern slopes above the river, found some hartebeest, which, as usual, defeated us, then three more which behaved strangely.

They were a trio consisting of pa, ma, and baby, and they mounted an anthill and stared to our right while I made an exposure from behind a tree. They still seemed taken up with something in that direction, so I gained the cover of a closer tree and made two more. There came urgent whispers from

behind the tree where I had left the boys, "Simba, Bwana, simba!" and, looking over my right shoulder, I saw a lioness staring at me from an anthill 50 yards away.

Hastily I unslung the camera and took up a defensive position behind the trunk. But she meant no harm; only rising and descending slowly to ground level, then walking off. Once she looked back at me, with an expression which obviously meant, "You clumsy oaf, you've lost me my dinner," then vanished into the grass. I have to thank her for a very fair kongoni picture.

Half a mile on we sat down on the lip of a slope running down to a wide grassy valley which ended at the dense trees bordering the little river. From thick bush at the top, 150 buffalo moved out on to the opposite slope for their evening meal. At our feet, in an open strip like a forest ride, an old rhino bull meandered from shrub to shrub, so all was complete. We watched until the sun touched the horizon, then went home to camp.

"Lion Day" was by no means my first encounter with these fine animals; that meeting took place on my second visit, in rainy weather, on the ridge to the west where I got my first good buffalo pictures.

We had sat down at sunrise on an anthill at the eastern lip of the valley, near the place where we had left the car, and were looking across to Buffalo Ridge, when I spotted some indistinct forms on a large anthill about 1,000 yards away. The glasses showed them to be three lions, an old male with a fine mane, an oldish lioness, and a younger one. We started at once to cross the valley, up the 200 feet of wooded slope on the far side, then out on the open bush and grass at the top, to find the anthill no longer tenanted; but the grass, dripping with last night's rain, showed three clear dark trails leading southward along the ridgetop, so tracking was easy. Here let me say that I never saw any but adult lions when hunting from Euphorbia Camp; why no cubs I do not know.

The trails verged to the left into rather thicker bush, and I was making for a big anthill 40 yards ahead, to use it for spying, when the big lioness suddenly snaked up out of the grass on our side of it, and gazed over the top with her back to us, searching for game. I sat down in a hurry, but quietly, with the rifle ready and the glasses on her, and after about 15 seconds the sixth sense warned her and she turned her head right round to stare. It was fascinating to see her face wrinkle and contract as she saw us, then she slipped over the left shoulder of the anthill and was gone.

I ran forward, mounted her anthill and clamoured for the camera, for all three lions were cantering away 50 yards ahead. They came to a wide and shallow vlei of rainwater, and went straight through, great splashes of rainwater glittering in the early morning sun on either side of them—a grand sight. But when they stopped on the far side to stare back they were too far from the camera, which had arrived too late. Then they walked soberly over the far rise and vanished. It is not possible to carry a camera, with telephoto lens in position, through thick bush, after dangerous game of whose whereabouts one is not quite certain.

That evening we again occupied the morning's anthill on the east side of the valley, and very soon picked up all three lions with the glasses, again lying on an anthill down in the south end of the valley, where it turned abruptly east. They were watching two small herds of kongoni, and probably planning a stalk in the dusk.

It was easy to cross the valley and work along the foot of the opposite slope, the lions' anthill being much nearer to that flank, and I got within distant camera range without difficulty. But there was a strong wind blowing, waist-high grass, and no rock high enough on which to rest the camera, while in trying for a better position, the younger lioness spotted me and stood up facing me. The other two got up; the old lion slipped down into the grass and went up the slope parallel with me, the older

lioness keeping twenty yards nearer to me and obviously covering his withdrawal: I could only see their heads and necks. The young lioness was looking very uppish by now, switching her tail and half crouching as she watched me, but I put the camera against the trunk of a sapling and made one exposure, then picked up the rifle again. However, she decided against an attack, and the other two being near the top of the hillside, she went after them with great easy bounds, taking the same line as the other lioness. It was as clear a case of the female protecting the valuable breeding male as could be seen.

It was the old lion of this party that I eventually shot as the climax of a very busy morning.

The porridge had just arrived in the half light of dawn and as I was sitting down to it in front of my tent, something moving along the hillside beyond the camp caught my eye—a fine bushbuck—and meat was needed in the camp. I picked up the rifle, watched until he went behind a clump of bushes, then ran downhill and sat on a low mound waiting for him to emerge, the light being right behind me. He came out, stopped to stare at me, and within five seconds was rolling down the slope quite dead. He was brought in while I finished breakfast, then measured and, after being galled, put aside to be skinned on my return, as he was wanted as a specimen.

We got away in the car at sunrise, and had driven a couple of miles westward through tree and grass savannah country, when I saw a ring of kongoni all staring at a big 12-foot grass-covered anthill about 200 yards ahead. On stopping the car a fine lion got to his feet at the top, came down to the flat, and strolled leisurely away. I had been asked for a museum specimen, and here was a good one.

He was 300 yards away by the time I was out of the car with the rifle, and moving along the far slope of a slight rise trending to our left, but the beginnings of a dip ran from just where the car stood and parallel with his course. Nipping into

this, I ran along it at a steady double, thinking that the lion's pace was about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour, and that I would soon get ahead of him, move up to the top of the rise, and find him walking towards me along the farther slope. I was badly mistaken. When I had gone about 500 yards and went up my side of the rise, he was still walking away steadily and 150 yards distant. No good amongst trees and with his stern towards me, so I doubled back to my dip, made generous allowance for his pace, and this time came up to find him about 100 yards away and crossing my front. My bullet took him right through both shoulders, and he collapsed to a lying position, apparently dead. But I never trust a sudden collapse of that sort, and walked up to him from half-rear, with the result that when I was 25 yards away he suddenly turned his head over his left shoulder and roared at me, and got the remaining three bullets from the magazine where they would do most good.

Having looked him over and seen what a fine beast he was with his full mane, I started to walk back to the car and got to about 500 yards away and within sight of it, when I saw the boys running for trees, and a sort of thin wailing, like sea-gulls scavenging in harbour, came to my ears as they waved and pointed. Putting up the glasses, I saw a rhino walking slowly towards the car, mooning about and picking a mouthful here and there, so broke into a steady double once again to get there before he might take it into his head to savage it.

When I had reached the car and jumped inside it, he was not more than 40 yards away at the most, although the boys had been shouting nearly all the time and I had fired four shots at the lion. Yet he remained completely unconscious of there being anything unusual about, and only woke up from his daydream when I started up the engine and moved the car away from him. It took him about 15 seconds to take things in, then he snorted and, whirling round, finally bolted, disappearing in the distance to the accompaniment of cheers from the boys.

I then drove the car up to the lion and we hoisted him in with great difficulty and took him back to camp to be skinned, shooting a brace of guineafowl on the way, and reaching the tents by nine o'clock. A very crowded three hours to be followed by much hard work skinning and cleaning. This adventure had taught me that a lion walks at about 6 miles an hour, and later I confirmed this.

Many people think that skinning is an easy job. It is very far from it, as I know from having often had to skin animals for museums when there was no sufficiently expert help available.

Lack of skilled assistance means doing at least the head, with its delicate work on the ears and mouth, by oneself, and, in the case of carnivora, the paws also: these last are most complicated. I once shot a tiger at noon in Siam, began skinning him at one o'clock, and finished at ten o'clock that night, completely done up and with the most ferocious cramps in every inch of my hands and forearms.

The lions near Euphorbia Camp now have a bad reputation for being offensive, mainly due to their being harassed so much during the war by excursionists from Nairobi, whose only idea was to get an animal's skin or horns by any means—usually shooting at long range from a lorry and often wounding sufficiently to enrage a lion without any prospect of bagging the beast. A bad, cowardly, and unsporting practice.

Much has been written about lions, but the reason for man-eaters being common in certain districts and practically unknown in others has never been satisfactorily explained. They are rare in Kenya, despite the notoriety given by that famous and most interesting book, *The Man-eaters of Tsavo*, and were unknown in the country round Embu, though occasional casualties occurred through natives trying to drive them off kills or protect their own herds.

There are districts in Tanganyika and Uganda where man-eating is a regular occurrence and has been for many

years, and it would seem that it must be in some degree hereditary—the lionesses passing on the taste and training to their cubs.

As I write, man-eating has become common at the eastern, or coast, end of Kenya's Northern Frontier District: possibly it is due to much of the game there having been killed off by troops during the war so that lions have not enough natural food. They have been coming into camps and killing in a curious and unpleasant way—by biting off the top of a man's head as he sleeps. Quite a number of lions have been killed round permanent waterholes, seven by one man alone, but the nuisance continues.

It is to be hoped that it is only a temporary phase, as touring for officials or camping for sport is likely to have too many anxious moments if it continues.

Euphorbia Camp: III

Humiliation Week

Many years' close acquaintance with wild animals is apt, from the big-game hunter's point of view, to engender a feeling of condescension towards even the larger game usually classed as dangerous, and in course of time I acquired this rather snobbish attitude of superiority over the poor brute beast. But I have had some severe shocks administered in the pursuit of camera stalking.

There can be no doubt that the possession of a rifle, a licence to shoot, and the desire to acquire a trophy create a readiness to quench at the outset any offensive projected by the lower mammalian genera, and this state of affairs inclines the hunter to a self-complacency amounting to condescension towards them. In photography all this is changed; for the last thing one wants to do is to disturb country by firing a shot. And the necessity for a closer approach than is required for the purpose of shooting the beast, together with the encumbrance of a heavy camera, as well as the rifle, field-glasses, and other paraphernalia, hamper movement, and considerably reduce the speed of one's getaway to the nearest tree or cover. Personally, I have now brought to a fine art the selection of a climbable tree, and the estimation of the distance from it to which I think it is safe to venture.

Yet even two rather hectic incidents with rhino and buffalo

had failed to subdue my innate complacency or induce me to regard wild animals of the "dangerous" class with the real respect to which they are entitled. But on one trip I had more "incidents" packed into a single week than in all my years of big-game shooting and photography, and I came home feeling mentally bruised and subdued to such an extent that it has induced me to call that strenuous seven days "Humiliation Week."

We arrived at Euphorbia Camp about noon: "we" being myself, Kabogo the camera boy, the cook, and his assistant.

As usual, Kago, the headman, was soon helping to pitch the tent and giving us the local news of game. Kago used to come out with me; but we were once between a big herd of buffalo and the cover which they were determined to reach. Kago drew the only remaining and thorniest accommodation in a tree while the herd thundered downhill beneath it, and the incident so discouraged him that he now only responds with a nervous giggle to my suggestions of further enterprises.

However, he was full of information, backed up by Kara (Plate 20), another of his tribe, who had drawn the best place in the aforementioned tree. He evidently considered his luck likely to hold, since he immediately volunteered for service in the front line; though I have always found him sufficiently cautious when danger threatened to remain with the supporting troops, and to retire into distant reserve when it became active. Not that I blame him—far from it. I would rather have no unarmed followers to look after in moments of stress.

Rain had fallen in plenty a little to the south of camp, and as the grass was good, many antelope had come in, and with them, at least two pairs of lions. Buffalo, as usual, were there in any number, and staying out late to feed on the new grass, while rhino were likely to be as great a nuisance as ever. All very promising.

It was Sunday, and after an early tea we set off in the car to reconnoitre a new camp site farther down the valley.

We climbed a quarter of a mile of slope on to a plateau covered with open forest and grass, where antelope, eland, waterbuck, impala, and kongoni abounded, all within a mile of starting. This plateau is about 3 miles across, and the buffalo find their best grass in the valleys flanking it, then spend the hotter hours of the day in the dense thorn scrub which patches the higher slopes.

Within ten minutes we saw four natives busy at a small fire some 50 yards from the track, while a couple of large haunches of meat hung from a dead tree beside them. They said they had been looking for strayed cattle, and, at about two o'clock, had seen a pair of lions kill a kongoni (Coke's hartebeest). They had climbed trees and shouted until the slayers had departed, and had then annexed the carcass.

Another mile took us down a long slope into a grassy valley, and to a ford over the river, where I expected to find fresh buffalo tracks; but the banks only showed recent traces of rhino and waterbuck. While we were poking about under the trees that lined the bank, an old male baboon began barking angrily some 50 yards lower down, and we went to investigate. He was so preoccupied, craning down from a stout branch and abusing something in the bushes, that I got to within a dozen yards of him. I advanced a little, the baboon crashed away in the trees, and a very big python slid into the river almost at my feet. I say "very big" advisedly, for I have seen a good many of its kind, and it was nearer 20 feet long than 18. I was able to get a good look at it a day or two later.

We walked on towards our projected camp site, which I wanted to make about half a mile below the ford, so as not to alarm animals crossing. Kabogo called my attention to a butterfly in the grass, asking if I wanted it. We bent down to examine it, when he suddenly leapt back, exclaiming, "Snake!" There was a dark-brown puff-adder lying within a foot of the butterfly, and we had not noticed it against the wet brown soil. Having disposed of it with the handle of the butterfly net, we

selected our camp site, and returned home, seeing nothing else of interest but a duiker. This beast belongs to a genus of antelope whose species seem most difficult to determine. This one was rufous brown behind and grey in front—quite different from any other I have seen.

Monday saw us well on our way southward by sunrise, and the first find was a fairly recent lion kill—again a kongoni—with half a dozen vultures sitting above it, while a large hyæna was going off with a horrible, rotting fragment in its mouth. Antelope watched us as we passed, then cantered off, and every now and then a black-bellied bustard rose and flew away with a harsh scream.

At the lip of Lion Well Valley we left the car and continued on foot. Lion Well Valley is broad and grassy, with open slopes and patches of bush stretching down to shallow pools that hold water after rain. About 2 miles above where it joins the river is Lion Well, a deep rock pool below a sudden fault. There are big trees and dense undergrowth on either side, continuing for half a mile down a deep central hollow until the sides are clothed with dense cover. And for some time after rain the bottom holds grass much beloved by buffalo. When the grass gets too long and rank for them, they prefer the grazing on the ridge-tops.

Buffalo photographs were what I had come for principally, and it was here that I hoped to get them.

First we looked out for Victoria and Victor, a rhino and her two-year-old calf which had been living there for eighteen months or more. There they were, nosing among the bushes about a furlong above the well, and in a most awkward position as far as our advance was concerned. Victoria I knew to be of a truculent disposition, and the wind, normally from the south-east, was at this time most changeable owing to daily storms between us and Mount Kenya and to the recent heavy rain.

We worked our way higher up the slope, making a traverse through some scattered, unhappy-looking thorn trees

that took us well above the rounded ridge at the foot of which the two "V's" were feeding. We were just congratulating ourselves on our good fortune when there came a roar of hooves from the dip beyond, and a cloud of tick-birds flew up. Buffalo stampeding!

Kara shot up a tree, while Kabogo and I selected others of the very indifferent "one man, one tree" size, which were the only available refuges. But the buff were off downhill, and a jostling mass of great black bodies poured over the bottom of the rise and down into the thick jungle of the central hollow. Victoria and her son swung round and stared in our direction—without result, however, since we were beyond their 80-yard limit of good vision. Then they too strolled leisurely into the thick bush.

But all was not yet lost, and, having recovered Kara, we circled back and down into the valley, certain that the buffalo, having only got our wind, would soon emerge to finish their feed on the luscious green grass. Sure enough they were soon streaming out of the far side of the cover, Vicky and her son with them, and then along the higher slope of the valley. We kept parallel with them, under cover of the upper edge of the bush that filled the central dip. They did not hurry, and soon began to feed again, gradually working their way down towards the bottom. Here the bush gave way to the best grass, and their obvious intention was to spend the hottest hours of the day in the thick stuff that lined our side of the central hollow.

Creeping across the thinner bits and making detours away from the edge when opposite gaps, by the time we had gone a mile the whole herd of over 200 was down in the bottom feeding greedily, and we were well above them, with little chance of the wind going wrong.

Still, they were not within range of the camera, and I pushed along, trying to get ahead and under cover, to await them. We came over a small spur, and not 30 yards away,



PLATE 29. TWO FINE BULLS ON OUR SIDE OF THE PROCESSION
They are the two on the right of the photograph.



PLATE 30. THE HERD BULL CAME SHOULDERING THROUGH TOWARDS ME. ON THE LEFT
70]



PLATE 31. KONGONI (COKE'S HARTEBEEST) IN OPEN BUSH

inside a small patch of thorn, more black bodies showed against the light beyond: another small herd had already finished their feed and gone into cover on our side. Kabogo poked me in the back and pointed. A cow had swung round and pushed her head out of cover, then took half a dozen short paces forward, ready to charge, probably having a small calf near-by; then more black faces emerged from the bushes. A solitary bull, and a cow with a young calf, are the only buffalo that will charge without provocation; and on a previous occasion I had been attacked twice in one morning by cows, each of them having a day-old calf. We cleared off—and I think only just in time—then stood in the shelter of some outlying bushes for a quarter of an hour to allow things to simmer down.

Fortunately the big herd had turned up the valley again, and soon we were well down our side and into the bush, and I was resting the camera against the trunk of a tree at the head of a small gap which commanded the feeding herd—its nearest members not 50 yards away.

The buffalo were grazing steadily, but the biggest bull, a tremendous, heavy beast with worn-down horns carrying immense bosses, was not satisfied. Some of his charges had remained in the bush farther back of the valley, and he suddenly set off across our front and disappeared. I guessed what he was after, and made a note to keep my eyes open for his return. Kara was higher up the slope, and Kabogo was with me.

I took several pictures and then waited. Suddenly all heads went up as a solitary rhino walked along the opposite hillside, and I made another exposure (Plate 24). Then buffalo poured out of the bush to my right, crossing my front so close that I could not focus them until the old bull came last, with three others, when I just managed to bag them (Plate 23). Yet I had not heard a sound of their approach, though there were more than thirty of them with the old bull. They passed, and we slipped back up the hill, where I put on the smaller lens, hoping to get a picture of the whole herd from ahead of

them; then I went towards where the cow had seen us off, leaving Kara behind. We were up against the edge of the bush when there was a roar of stampeding buffalo, great black noses pushed out at the top, some within 10 yards of us, and we fled to the cover of one of the few isolated clumps on the upper slope and waited. Thank heaven buff take some time to make up their minds, and they decided to stay where they were and not stampede back to the cover a mile behind us, where they were often to be found at midday.

A few snorts and bellows by cows summoning strayed calves and all was quiet. We went back to Kara, and, picking up the rest of the gear, made our way back to the car. We had been four hours with the herd and had taken nine pictures. Still I had been seen off twice and once been taken completely by surprise, with the result that my confidence was a bit shaken; nor was it completely restored by devoting the evening to small stuff, such as kongoni and a secretary bird.

We were due to move into the new camp on Tuesday, after a look round in the early morning for the nearest pair of lions, on the chance of finding a kill in the open which could be used for subsequent photography. We found them all right, but not quite as we had expected.

We set out on foot very early along the eastern edge of the plateau above camp, finding occasional traces, then turned due east towards the river, so that we should be able to walk along the hillside above it on the return journey. The line led down a spur, which I knew held a bull buffalo, a bad-tempered old solitary who had already killed a man, and I heard baboons and monkeys making a tremendous hullabaloo in the belt of trees by the river. Half-way down I was glad to see the bull's fresh tracks leading towards a patch of thick jungle which was his usual home, and I went on with my mind easier. There were two focal points of simian attention about 50 yards apart, where big and little baboons were bouncing about in the trees above thick undergrowth. I suspected that this cover held the

pair of leopards that I had heard in the night uttering their rasping grunts like the thrust and return of a cross-cut saw. Peering into the mass of green-stuff, I worked forward slowly, hoping to find a kill where it could be used to get a photograph of leopard—so far an unsatisfied ambition.

Suddenly there was a tremendous roar, a swirl in the greenery, and a glimpse of something tawny. The boys faded out, and I realised that I had found my lions. Feeling as if I had been sandbagged in the solar plexus, I retired backwards uphill, for there was a muddle of tracks and scores in the ground just outside the cover, denoting the wide trail of a kill dragged inside—probably an eland. All the advantages of position were with the killers. Seen off again!

Back to camp and breakfast, and by midday we were settled at the new site, building a *machan* in a tree by the ford in the evening, from which we hoped to get pictures of animals crossing. A pleasant camp, though without a sign of game on our side, which deficiency I put down to the grass being full of the noctuid moth caterpillars, known as "Army Worms." It must be disconcerting, even for a buffalo, to include a bitter-tasting grub with every mouthful of grass.

The night was noisy, beginning with a couple of leopards grunting harshly at our firelight from across the river, continuing with the yells of hyænas, and finishing in the early hours of the morning with the deep, coughing roars of at least four hunting lions.

We crossed the ford and worked the far side of the river for a couple of hours, seeing nothing but antelope and a few helmeted guineafowl which had all paired; then waded back again with a Kaffir rail swimming about in the stream within a few yards of us.

The evening, too, was uneventful, a few Kenya oribi being the only noteworthy animals seen, except for an unusually large herd of eland. So Wednesday was a quiet day. But Thursday was to make up for it.

We were at Lion Well Valley before sunrise, and walked down towards the thick bush in the valley bottom to make sure of the whereabouts of Victoria and Victor, who were certain to be somewhere in the vicinity. I was working quietly along the edge of the mass of green which filled the central hollow, and had just located the "V's" fresh tracks entering it, when, as I was passing round an anthill, a fine lion rose from behind a little mound just eighteen paces in front of me. The rising sun was behind me, and he looked all gold without a black hair in his mane; he stared tensely for a second, then turned and vanished into the bush behind. What a relief! He had probably heard us, and taken it for breakfast approaching on the hoof. I noticed a disappointed look as he departed.

We walked on a couple of miles, but saw no buffalo, and, wanting to keep the ground beyond for another day, when the wind might not be so tricky, we started back the way we had come.

Near Lion Well were the rhino mother and son right across our path, but this time with the sun in the best quarter for a picture and the wind now apparently quite steady in the opposite quarter. They were nosing about happily some 80 yards up the slope from the thick bush, and there were two anthills nicely situated for taking a picture. I reached the first, and was waiting for a good pose when up went young Victor's head and he trotted straight downhill into the cover. An eddy of wind had played me false. Curiously enough his mother did not seem perturbed, but remained trying the air for a whiff of danger; then she too walked downhill and disappeared round a promontory of green-stuff. Thinking she might be just round the corner and still available for publicity purposes, I went forward to the second anthill, and was horrified to meet her coming back—evidently to investigate further the cause of her young hopeful's alarm. Fortunately I caught a glimpse of her just in time and crouched in the edge of the cover as she halted about 30 yards away. I wondered if my friend the lion of

earlier in the morning, who had gone in within a few yards of my position, was still there and would resent my intrusion.

Victoria mooned about, then mounted an anthill, and I would have given almost anything for her picture as she pivoted slowly round with her nose in the air; but there was a small tree in direct line which prevented an exposure from where I was hiding, and I dared not move. I feared I might have to shoot, which would have cost me £10—to my mind no rhino is worth that money; but eventually she descended from her eminence and meandered back round the corner to her offspring, luckily just before the wind switched round again.

Rhino have excellent hearing and sense of smell, though their eyesight is indifferent, and when keyed up their senses seem to increase greatly in power of perception. It is then that they become quite different animals from the half-comatose pachyderms of peace and green bushes, and are often endowed with an obstinate determination to abolish anything they do not like, or, above all, anything that seems to threaten their ugly offspring.

This incident was enough for that part of the world, so we went back to the car, and started for home. But as we reached the brow of the hill above the river I spotted some black dots away up on the far side, which turned out to be a herd of buffalo apparently feeding steadily towards the ford below us.

We free-wheeled down the hill to avoid noise, and I got into my *machan*, hoping to get a wonderful picture of the herd crossing the ford. It was delightfully peaceful and cool in my tree, and I was perfectly safe some 10 feet above ground-level, and could regard with equanimity the closest approach of any number of buffalo. Bright-blue swallows and white-capped black martins circled over the shining water and dipped into the ripples; doves cooed softly in the big fig tree at my back; and a green fruit pigeon settled on a branch just above my head and began to preen itself; a sandpiper trotted along the

bank, and golden orioles piped their mellow calls in the dense foliage.

Suddenly there was an outbreak of harsh barks: a party of baboons making their way along the bank had seen me. Peace was gone; they would remain there telling the world of my presence, and the buffalo would take note and avoid the ford like the plague. We went to camp.

Just as I left I had a look at the pool where I had seen the python. There it was, half its shining length resting on a snag above water, looking beautiful with its patterned black, chestnut, and yellow skin lit up by the sun. But it was wary, and an attempt to photograph it only resulted in its gliding back into the water. Still it looked so fine that I decided to try again that evening.

Four o'clock found me seated on the base of a tree which jutted out into the water above the python's pool, camera in hand, and hoping for it to come out again on to the log where it had rested in the morning. It had slid into the water on my arrival, but I thought it would soon be out again.

About half an hour later I suddenly became aware that all was not right. I had been watching two cock Paradise flycatchers in the hanging creepers across the way—the first I had seen in Kenya in the full breeding panoply of long white tail, for they usually only reach the black-and-chestnut stage in our colony, and my attention had wandered more than was wise.

At first my uneasiness did not seem justified by a careful look round the scrub behind me; then I noticed a long strip of little bubbles on the water, and these bubbles, curiously enough, seemed to be spreading upstream towards me from a point under the bank, about 20 feet farther down.

The river was still a little coloured from a recent flood, but I watched the bubbles as they arrived beneath me, and then saw the form of the python increasing in clearness as it quietly rose. The brute was stalking me under water!

I was about 3 feet above the business end, and python

have a trick of driving at their prey with their heads and so knocking it over. Such an effort would have resulted in my leaving my perch in a backward dive into the water, where I felt I would be hardly a match for a snake weighing some 500 pounds. I did not want to disturb the country by firing a shot, so I picked up my rifle and camera, and departed to the ford. I sat on a log and peacefully awaited the return of the boys whom I had sent to scout for buffalo.

Three shocks in one day were more than enough.

Daybreak on Friday found us on the plateau and making towards Lion Well. The eastern sky was a marvel of loveliness in delicate pinks and greys, and all the world seemed beautiful until we met a solitary bull rhino beside a marshy hollow, where a black stork was pushing his sealing-wax bill into the long grass in search of frogs. The old beast was standing like a Crystal Palace effigy, black against the sky, within 10 yards of the track. There was no going round him, and he seemed unwilling to budge. I stopped the car, swung it half round, and kept the engine running as he regarded us balefully from 50 yards away. He began to move off, thought better of it, and returned, coming closer and forcing me to go back on our tracks. Again he walked off, and I tried to progress, but he came trotting back and again forced a hasty retreat. A third time he went slowly away, and this time I gave him a bit more law, until he was well on the west side of the track, then sprinted past him, though he repented and cantered along parallel with us for a quarter of a mile. Cantankerous old brute, holding up modern progress.

As we neared our parking place above Lion Well Valley, there were two helmeted guineafowl fighting—jumping a yard or more in the air as they struck at each other—while six more looked on, waiting the turn for their bouts, I suppose. Somehow one does not associate guineafowl with violence, and the combatants looked slightly ridiculous as they leapt and struck, all fluffed out like big grey footballs. I watched them for a

minute or two; then, the rhino having already made us late, we walked down into the valley.

There were Victoria and Victor on their usual bit of ground, and we crossed the valley a quarter of a mile above them to examine some shallow pools. Many buffalo had watered there in the early hours, and the trail was easy to follow up the opposite slope and along the top of a big open rise.

What little breeze there was seemed steady in our faces and conditions were all in our favour, as we were on the highest ground and scent rises; yet we had not gone half a mile when a cloud of the red-beaked, grey-bodied tick-birds rose from a big fold in the ground to our left front, and the thunder of hooves proclaimed an even bigger stampede than before. All the buffalo in the vicinity seemed to have gathered together and breasted the opposite slope in a long line, until some 400 of them were halted along the ridge-top staring back at us. Then they began to trickle over the crest, filing away into patches of bush, or down in the valley beyond, until only some 50 were left, and half of these turned down the ridge across our front.

From across the valley came an old cow rhino with a small calf. She mounted the ridge and met the buffalo, then began herding them back again, cantering clumsily about and driving them the way they had come, the toto following closely at her heels. It was a quaint sight, for I had always thought that buffalo gave way to no animal but elephant.

We followed in the hope that they would stop in the next valley, but there was green grass everywhere and they continued to travel, feeding as they went; and, with the wind so shiftily, allowed no possibility of getting up for a photograph.

We went back, finding thirty-seven waterbuck cows drinking at the pools the buffalo had used, and then to camp, collecting an impala on the way for meat.

In the evening I tried some new ground to the northwest, where a shallow valley between lightly wooded slopes

was bound to hold game, but normally was too popular with antelope to permit of the undisturbing progress so necessary for photography. Sure enough it was full of eland and kongoni, and there was nothing for it but to walk across and try the forward slopes beyond the farther ridge, leaving the whole country behind us alive with moving beasts as we crossed.

At the far side of the valley a babbler's nest, containing four highly polished bright-blue eggs, demanded our attention, and then we crossed the foot of a low spur and entered patchy bush.

I was keeping a bright look-out to the front, when Kabogo pulled me back and pointed into a patch of acacia thorn on the right. A big bull rhino lay there, asleep on his tummy, an unusually big horn for that part of the world sticking up behind a fallen log.

I took the camera and manoeuvred, but could not get him clear of obstacles. Then he woke up, heaved himself on to wrinkled stumpy legs, and stood there, butt on to us, swinging his ugly head from side to side. He had probably been awake some little time and heard something suspicious, and he looked to me very like an old enemy with whom I had had a difference near the same spot a couple of years before. Caution was advisable.

He strolled round to the far side of his clump of bush, and we worked to the left to get ahead of him. He partially appeared, saw or heard something he did not like, and returned to his original position; then stood listening. I worked round, back again, and then to the other side, leaving the boys in safety, for he seemed most untrustworthy; but I could see nothing but his legs. He altered his stance, and I crept back to try once more down the little alley that had given us our first view of him; there he stood with his head down behind a small bush, the rest of him in full view, but quite useless for a picture.

Then he turned and lay down. And that was enough for me.

When a rhino is already suspicious and lies down, head on to the suspected danger area, he means mischief, and is only waiting for the enemy to make a mistake and come close enough for a charge to be fairly certain of getting home.

We left him and went back to camp.

Saturday was to be the last full day, and first we tried for yesterday's buffalo; but they had moved on a long way. There was good grass everywhere, and from the high ground we could see some of them grazing a couple of miles away in a position that was already difficult to approach, and now was rendered completely impossible by the presence of numbers of kongoni and waterbuck. Any advance would have meant disturbing the whole countryside to no purpose.

Last night's rhino seemed the best bet, so we turned back northward in the hope of finding him in more favourable ground and a better temper. As we left the car I noticed a rain-storm sweeping across the hills, and had my doubts whether the wind, now steady from the north, would continue long in that quarter.

We reached the shallow valley where we had seen so many eland the previous evening, and a preliminary look round showed us our rhino half a mile away, walking steadily along the foot of our slope towards us. He would probably pass about 50 yards to windward of us, with the light behind us and scattered trees available for cover. Everything in the garden seemed lovely.

Leaving the boys behind cover, I went forward to a suitable tree and waited. By a suitable tree I mean one sufficiently strong to support my sixteen stone odd, and having a branch sufficiently low to enable me to ascend it rapidly in times of stress. I also picked out another such tree some 30 yards to my right, the rhino's line of approach being from my left.

He came steadily on, passed behind a large anthill in front of me and did not emerge. Loud sucking and squelching noises indicated that he was enjoying a mud bath. He emerged

dripping, and I made my exposure just as the sun went behind a cloud.

Being doubtful whether I had got a good picture, I went on parallel to him under cover of bushes, and reached my second tree. He arrived opposite me, and began to feed on a bush, but was covered by some scrub. Fifty yards to my right was another practicable tree, but the ground between was barren of cover. Still, he seemed so engrossed in his bush, and the wind was so steady, that I chanced it, and half-way across found an absolutely clear view. I trained the camera on his butt-end, waiting for him to turn round.

Suddenly the wind changed and blew on the back of my neck. He whipped round, stared for not more than half a second, and then, getting off the mark like an Olympic sprinter, came bald-headed for me from 40 yards away.

I fired over his head and he "planted," pulling up dead half-way, and while he was making up his mind I legged it back to my tree (Plate 12). I was encumbered with rifle, camera with large telephoto lens, cartridge belt, field glasses, extra dark-slides, and other sundries; but I am certain I did the distance in under three seconds, and was up in the lower branches while he was still 15 yards away, coming on again. He halted and I tried for another picture, but the end of a low branch was in line and I had to wait.

Then the boys broke cover 80 yards away and made for better trees. Thinking, I suppose, that my reserves were coming up, he dithered a bit, then galloped off the way he had come without giving me another chance.

I came down feeling decidedly chastened. I have never seen a rhino get off the mark so quickly, or make up its mind to charge without hivering about it for half a minute or more. This was the sixth time that week that I had had a nervous shock from a brute beast normally assessed as being considerably lower than myself in the scheme of life, and this final humiliation hurt my pride. The bull's departure, with tail

whirling in the air, had conveyed his complete contempt for any lone man. Moreover, it was the second time he had put me up a tree. I had taken his photograph two years before while he ramped round looking for me, and I had to ascend rapidly when he got my wind.

On the way back to camp I shot an impala for meat, and tried to assure myself that man was really the fine fellow I had always assumed he was, though not altogether successfully; for what answer has a "brute beast" to a rifle fired 150 yards away?

Next day we returned to our home on the other side of the mountain, acquiring a puncture on the way. The jack broke while we were taking off the wheel, and only the fortunate arrival of a passing car retrieved the situation. That jack was an expensive one, had been in use a very short time, and yet had failed me in emergency. Again my appreciation of man, the lord of creation, suffered considerably.

Later, I developed the photographs I had taken on the trip. There was an excellent one of the offensively minded rhino bull; four first-class ones of buffalo; and four other reasonably good; two good ones of kongoni, one of waterbuck, and one of a secretary bird.

Once again I felt on top of the world.

CHAPTER SEVEN

My Waterhole

MY first long safari in Kenya was down to Lamu, the next port north of Mombasa, and a little over 500 miles from my house, and on the way a halt at the oasis of Shafr Dikr produced a few useful photographs.

Shafr Dikr was then a delightful place where a stream of clear water, several feet wide and 4 inches deep, flowed from under the edge of the long stony slope that comes down from the bottom of the escarpment to meet a flat plain on the south side of the Guaso Nyiro river. Now Shafr Dikr is almost without life, except for a few Grant's gazelle and an occasional gerenuk, first, owing to a succession of camps set up by the military pioneers, locust destroyers, and so on, whose inhabitants have almost wiped out the game, both large and small; and second, because of prolonged drought.

It was a delightful drive. Thirty miles north to Nanyuki, where our branch of the railway ends, and which looks like a cowboy town of the western States; then 20 miles east along the northern foot of Mount Kenya, through undulating forest and grass with many farms, turning left and north 4 miles beyond the garage and shop that marks Timau; then over the crest of the Loldaiga watershed, and down by a long winding road, with the view of the Northern Frontier District widening at every bend until one halts at the last corner, above where the road flattens out, to gaze at new country.

The tin roofs of Isiolo, the administrative centre, can be

seen 20 miles away, and there is a drop of nearly 3,000 feet from the crest over which we have come to this most uncomfortable home of wind and dust 52 miles from Nanyuki. Giraffe, Grant's gazelle, and ostrich are sure to be on view before getting to Isiolo, where one reports to the District Commissioner and gets one's permit to enter the district.

Beyond Isiolo is flat country covered with *nyika* bush, mostly acacia, but also with many other lesser thorny trees; and in the 20 miles before one reaches the Guaso Nyiro, game of the above three species, with the large and handsome round-eared, multiple-striped Grevy's zebra added to the number. A mile short of the bridge over the Guaso Nyiro at Archer's Post, one turns right through low lava hills, whose loose, sharp stones provide most painful walking, and, with the river on one's left, lined throughout with dom palms, passes through another 20 miles of bush and stone country, with occasional small grassy plains, before reaching the dark mass of flat-topped thorns at Shafr Dikr.

A mile before turning off for Shafr Dikr the river is 500 yards from the road, but at the oasis itself, it is nearly 4 miles distant, and varies between these distances in its windings through the deep trough it has cut for itself, its 100-foot banks stepped into shelves by many fierce floods or overhung with rocky cliffs.

All along the river one could then, and I hope will again, have a very good chance of seeing elephant, buffalo, or rhino, while an hour before every dawn the deep grunting of lions is heard.

It was while driving the last stretch to Shafr Dikr that I spotted a slight track leading away southwards into the thick bush of the low hills and ridge that rise above the plain on this side, and determined to investigate some other day.

My next trip to Shafr Dikr was mainly with the idea of getting a photograph of a giraffe drinking with legs all splayed out to get its mouth down to water level. This ambition is still

unfulfilled, and on this particular occasion was merely a source of vexation. For, having built a hide of branches at the south end of the oasis, where the stream, deserting the reeds and the big acacias, spreads itself out in several tiny rivulets, only to be speedily sucked into the thirsty soil, nothing but oryx arrived during the first two days, and a photograph of two bulls passing across my front, with the inevitable tick-birds on their backs, was my only success.

One morning I went down to the Guaso Nyiro river at sunrise, walking downstream along the top of the bank, with tree-covered cliffs below me. A rhino and half a dozen ellipsiprymnus waterbuck on the far side (Plate 42), and a troop of baboons on my own, were all that I saw in the first hour, until I approached a small patch of marsh where water seeped out from under the rock strata. When about 50 yards from it I saw something white appearing and disappearing in the rushes, and made out a small python about six feet long lying beside a shallow pool and opening and shutting its mouth in a series of yawns just in front of a small bundle whose nature I could not be sure of. On getting a bit closer I saw that it was a dead sandgrouse, and that the python seemed to be stretching its gape before swallowing the bird, which had evidently been caught as it came to drink at sunrise. A careful stalk with the camera failed, as the rushes still hid the snake when I got within range, and, as I was working for a better opening, the python saw me, slid into the pool, and thence under water to some hole in the rushes. I have since found that python make a regular practice of catching birds at water, though one would have thought that the very keen vision of their prey would have made lying beside a pool unprofitable, and an approach after the birds were settled to drink would almost certainly be spotted by some of the immense flocks that arrive to drink.

It was getting hot, so I went back to camp, had some tea, and then got into the hide once more, giraffe being late drinkers. By noon two hours of equatorial sun had reduced me

to the human equivalent of a bit of chewed string, and I would not have stayed on but for one most interesting sight. About 200 yards to the east of me, beyond the limit of the short green grass, were two herds of zebra, one of Grevy's and one of Burchell's, each about a dozen strong. With the Grevy herd was a mare with a foal, and that foal was definitely a natural cross between a Grevy and a Burchell's. The forequarter was Grevy striped, while the hindquarters were just as definitely Burchell's. But the most curious feature was the ears, which were the pointed ones of the Burchell's species and not the round bat ears of the Grevy. I watched them for a long time, hoping that they would come on to the short grass to feed and so give me a picture; but they remained in the shade of a few flat-topped acacias, and had evidently finished grazing for the morning.

I was so intent on them that it was only the feel of something strange that made me look up and behind me. There was a large bull giraffe peering over into the hide. He jerked up his head, wheeled and swayed away, his feet making noises like a football bouncing on hard ground; then stopped 100 yards away, looked back and sneered at me, and finally departed, taking every other animal away with him.

This was the last straw, and I got out of the hide, went back to the tent for lunch, and mourned resentfully. Not even good shade and water, with the presence of many toothsome francolin, could influence my eventual decision to depart, and we went off at two o'clock to try for better fortune elsewhere.

At the vague trail that I had seen the year before, I turned the car left-handed and, noting many other game tracks converging on it, came to a wide-spreading acacia that overhung the path. Out of this dropped a leopard, not 10 yards from the bonnet, and sped up the left-hand slope too fast for me to get a shot, though I was out of the car in ten seconds or less. It was undoubtedly a "Pigmy" or "Somali" leopard, and a museum

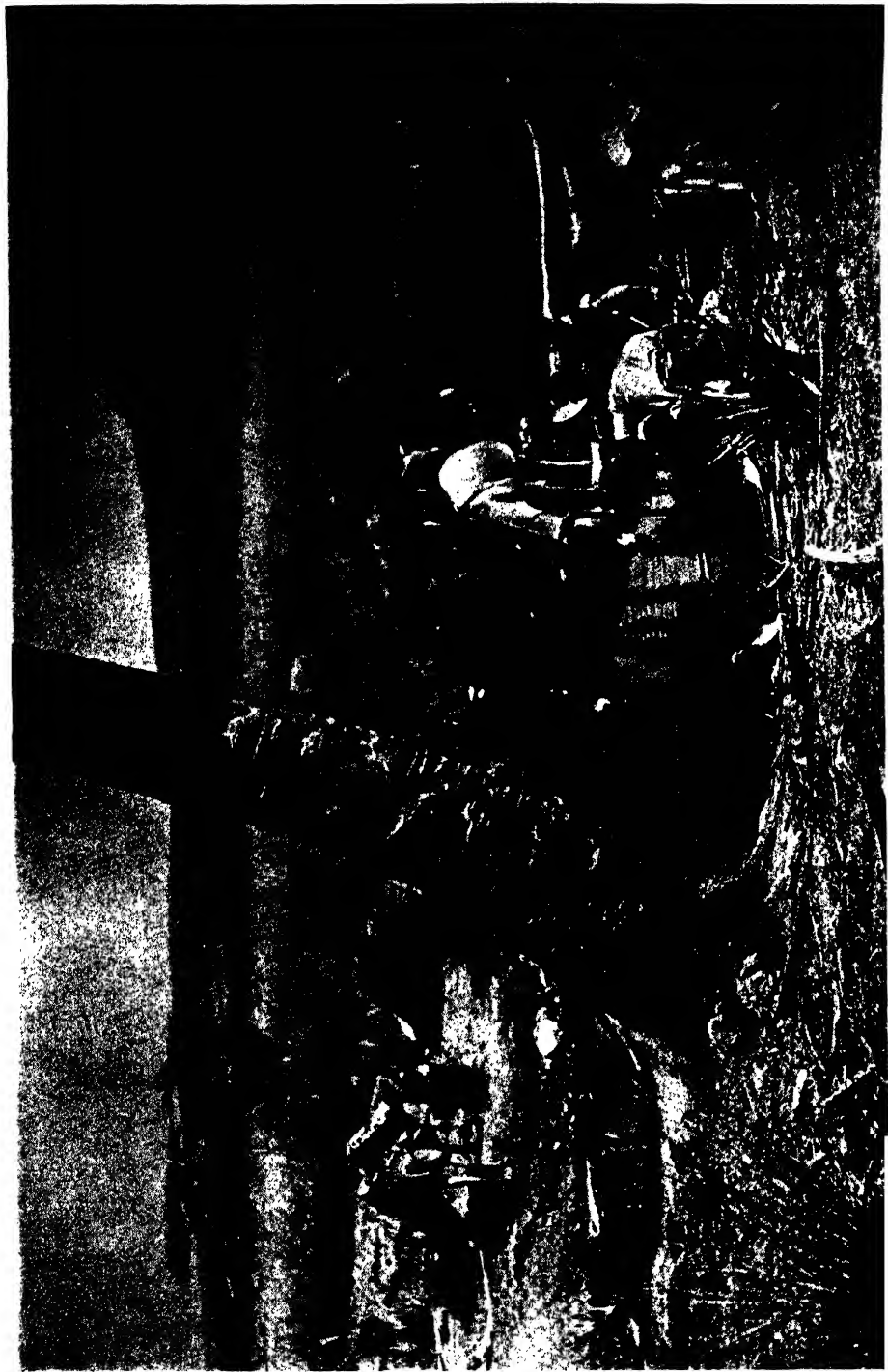


PLATE 32. MY WATERHOLE

Boran tribesmen have brought their donkeys to carry back water to their camp. They are nomads.



PLATE 33. IMPALA BUCKS AT THE WATERHOLE

The shape of the horns of the young buck on the left is quite different from that of the two adults nearer the camera. The backward bend is acquired later in life.

specimen was badly needed: I had shot my only one thirty years before in the Golis Range of British Somaliland.

A furlong higher up was the waterhole, a 100-yard strip of marshy grass in the bed of an otherwise dry ravine, with shallow pools here and there, and a basin of clear water under some dom palms at the head. Tracks of game were plentiful, and it was evidently well worth while trying some photography from a hide, so I pushed on three quarters of a mile and camped on a long, stony slope in the shade of some fine acacias, with elephant and rhino tracks and droppings all around.

From camp the view was typical of the Northern Frontier Province: my long acacia-covered slope leading gently down to an arid plain patched with thornbush and coarse grass, while a line of dom palms some 3 miles to the north marked the course of the Guaso Nyiro, with lofty rocky hills beyond it and the summits of the Matthew's Range showing blue between them. Each day we fetched our water from the basin under the leaning palms and carefully inspected it for intrusive leeches. Since fuel was plentiful, and mosquitoes absent, the camp was a good one; especially as a light breeze tempered the midday heat and the nights were cool. Often have I blessed that inquisitive giraffe, for he it was who drove me into finding "My Waterhole."

All around the water were strewn white pieces of gypsum rock, and we soon had a hide made between two stunted thornbushes on the slope above the most frequented pools. The principal drinking hours for game are between 9 a.m. and noon, when the sun is very hot, so I left the back of the hide open, thinking that it would be pleasanter to get a little breeze and that nothing would come from that direction. It did not turn out to be such a very good idea.

Punctually at 9.30 the first animals began to arrive, and every one of them pulled up and stared at my hide. It was built of the same stones as were scattered all round it, was not on the skyline, and, to my eyes, seemed the perfection of what

a hide should be. But those oryx, usually the easiest subjects for the waterhole photographer in that part of the world, did not like it; a couple of fine impala bucks would have nothing to do with it; and a Grevy stallion and a Burchell's very lame in the off hind, which came to join the circle of watchers, were just as aloof.

At last a solitary oryx arrived from farther left and walked straight up to within 30 yards. I made one exposure, more because there was nothing else within range than because I wanted the picture, for I already had several of oryx. He drank and went off, but failed to instil confidence into the others, so that, when, half an hour later, a small herd of Grant's gazelle arrived, they at once began snorting and wheezing at the hide, then started working round behind to get a closer look into it, and, having got one, at about 15 yards' range, fled in disorder.

The oryx, disappointed of their drink, departed sorrowfully; a large warthog went off at a trot, with tail in air; and the two zebra stallions and the impala bucks took up positions in the scrub 200 yards away from which they could watch the hide, and the lame Burchell's eventually lay down under a tree opposite me. I stayed until noon, by which time I was roasted on the sunny side and baked on the other; but it was no good and I had to leave.

As I walked slowly away the animals left, though in no great hurry; all but the lame zebra, which stood up for a moment, then lay down again to watch the hide with a "You-can't-fool me" expression on his pied face. I passed by again late in the afternoon, and he was still on watch in the same place.

Next morning, having built up the back of the hide, and made my two Kikuyu boys chase away the zebra, which had watched the whole operation, I settled into it at 8 a.m. But it was no good. The animals arrived and stared, but would not come to drink, while as the sun rose higher, the heat inside the

enclosed stone wall became more and more intolerable. The sweat poured down, soaked my clothes, and almost blinded me, with the result that I could hardly look into the reflex finder of the camera without splashing the ground glass. I gave up at noon, having got no pictures.

Since I was due to go home next day, I thought I would try down by the river after tea, and, leaving camp at four o'clock, and quitting the car at the edge of the wide belt of thorns that margined it, we walked through the belt in search of tracks.

Elephant, lion, and rhino, and a herd of about thirty buffalo, had all been there the previous night; so we went carefully until we reached the dom palms which border every river in Kenya. The river flowed yellow and swollen between its lofty banks, and on our side was a wide shelf, eroded by floods and clothed with grass and bush, where, shade and grazing both being plentiful, game would surely start their evening meal.

In half an hour's slow and careful walking we had seen nothing more exciting than a couple of waterbuck. Then I trod on a half-buried dead branch, which broke with a noise like a pistol shot as I tripped, and the camera boy pulled my sleeve as I recovered and pointed over my shoulder. Thirty yards ahead a grand bull buffalo rose from his couch in the grass and faced us with widespread horns touching the bushes on either side of the narrow lane in which he stood. A grand sight, and he would have made a fine picture; but the sun was behind cloud, it was after five o'clock, and we were under trees, so that was little hope. Still, I was about to focus on him on the chance of a gleam of sunshine arriving opportunely, and so giving me a chance before he fled.

Suddenly I realised that he was decidedly fractious; in fact, he had no intention of quitting, and was about to take the offensive. A little cloud of sand rose as he struck the ground with his forefoot and snorted, then took a pace forward.

Another snort and forward step, and I had to shoot. The bullet took him in that fatal groove where neck joins shoulder and throat, he staggered, lurched round to gallop 20 yards, then, feeling himself failing, whirled again to charge; but only got half-way, pitching on his nose in a cloud of sand between two clumps of high grass, stone dead.

A grand trophy, his horns were $49\frac{1}{4}$ inches across the span, exceptionally long (44 inches), but with a not very broad boss (Plate 41). He was blind in the left eye from some ancient injury, dust and sand having formed a hard shell over the wound, like a dark piece of ostrich shell; and this excrescence explained, in addition to his truculence, his boss not being more massive, and the length of his unchipped horns. For his injury must have caused his ejection from the herd years before, so that he had lived a morose and solitary life without the fighting that breaks the horntips, but increases the size of the boss through repeated blows.

Next day I had to return home, but vowed to come back again for that leopard.

Two months later I camped there again, and this time it was very different, for the animals had become used to the hide, and a series of successes with the camera delighted me.

Grant's gazelle, impala, beisa oryx, and both species of zebra came to drink, and were duly photographed. The most interesting thing was the way in which they passed within a few feet of me without winding me, although what breeze there was ought to have given me away. True it was intensely hot and dry, and such conditions are bad for scent; but there were times when I could have pushed out a stick and touched the passing antelope.

Only once did I have a mishap, and that was with oryx. A herd had come to drink, and three of them were standing on the edge of a pool less than 20 yards away, while I waited for them to put down their heads so that I could get their harlequin-marked faces mirrored in the water. Suddenly there

were loud snorts behind me, and the rattle of cavalry galloping over loose stones: some more oryx had come so close that they had seen me through the slight opening left for ventilation, in spite of a stone wing built across it.

Still I could not find that leopard, and, judging by the carefree ways of the antelope, he seemed to have moved off for the time being.

Three months later, at the beginning of December, I paid a third visit to Shafr Dikr, the start of which was most inauspicious. As we drove the last 20 miles thunderstorms came sweeping up one after the other, turning the surface of the country into a vast butterslide, so that the car swooped and skidded from side to side, twice right round, while the rain was so heavy that the windscreen wiper was quite useless. Once we slid into a soft runnel, watched by a supercilious giraffe (Plate 39), until we got out to heave the car back with jack and rope, my first effort on emerging being to take the great bull's photograph. Cutting branches and placing them under the wheels to make them grip was a most painful process, for there are few trees without thorns in that country; indeed, the only difference between them is that some have thorns longer and sharper than others. But we got there somehow and pitched camp to the "ping-g-g" of multitudes of mosquitoes which the rain had brought into voracious activity.

Next day was sticky and hot; there were pools of water all over the country, and I expected little success at the water-hole. There was nothing doing. I sweated in my hide while mosquitoes and flies plagued me, and even if any animals had come along I would almost certainly have frightened them away by my efforts to swat my tormentors. For an hour and a half I endured it, and was about to quit for camp when a series of rasping grunts, like a crosscut saw going through a log, made me sit up, all attention.

The sounds came from behind a low rounded ridge on my left front, and were answered from a short distance to their

right. Two leopards—and long odds on one of them being my friend of six months ago! I slipped out of the hide, over the little ridge behind, then down a gully to where it opened on to the rise from which the calls had come. Again a leopard spoke, and was answered from about 200 yards in front, so I moved quietly to an acacia with a thick forked trunk and watched through it. The quarry was moving nearer.

A grey shadow appeared suddenly, standing on a projecting root, and the glasses showed the beautiful, lithe beast whose spots are almost invisible at over 50 yards. The leopard cantered across to a big tree, sprang lightly upwards, and stood on a branch some dozen feet from the ground, then lowered its head and “sawed” “Ugh-urngh-r-h, ugh-urngh-r-h,” afterwards lying down along the branch as an answer came from just over the rise. I waited in the hope of bringing off the double event.

Suddenly the leopard turned its head and stared in my direction. I had it covered, and as its ears pricked and it tensed to rise, I fired. The leopard turned over and slumped to the ground with a thud. I ran up. It was my Pigmy species all right (Plate 38).

“Third time lucky!”

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Several more visits to the waterhole never failed to give interesting results. Once a lioness killed a baboon not 100 yards away while we were pitching camp. Another day, when going to occupy the hide, I walked right on top of three bull elephants, unfortunately giving them my wind, and thus spoiling the chance of a picture. This was the only time I saw elephant, rhino, or buffalo come to the water to drink, for almost invariably they came at night.

These many visits usually involved the same herds of game and often the same individuals, and so gave me a lot of

facts about them, and particularly about their drinking habits, which provide one of the most fascinating subjects in the study of wild animals, and one in which I have taken great interest. The drinking habits of animals have received far too little attention from naturalists, just as those of humans have received too much from our legislators.

Of recent years the occurrence of wild animals in waterless regions has been accepted as showing that they can do without water for prolonged periods, and not necessarily that surface water exists there and is known only to them.

Some thirty years ago I wrote to *The Field* making this suggestion, but was scoffed at as showing youthful ignorance; but I am now quite sure that I was then very moderate in such ideas, and that, to many large mammals, water is a luxury and by no means a necessity. I wrote that letter from British Somaliland, and three years in that territory convinced me that few of the animals there are in any way dependent on water, and that the majority never drink as we understand it. Rather do they obtain the necessary moisture from thick-leaved plants, such as sansevieria, and particularly in Somaliland and Northern Kenya from *Sansevieria ehrenbergi* called *hig* by Somalis. Even such big beasts as rhinoceros and greater kudu live for months without water, since for months on end there is no surface water in British Somaliland.

Later on, in India, the Sind ibex drove this belief home to me, for they live in barren hills where rain does not fall sometimes for two years, and I have often watched them chewing—nearly always at the end of a meal—small fleshy aloes that grow flat with the ground on stony ridge-tops. I am a bad botanist, so my classifications may be faulty: "aloe" may be "cactus" or "euphorbia." The ibex strike off the spiked tips of the leaves with a forefoot before beginning to eat them.

Another hill-dweller, the klipspringer, sometimes called the African chamois, undoubtedly does without water in the

Loldaiga Hills of Kenya, where I photographed them after much difficulty among rocky cliffs and thornbush. -

Blackbuck and chinkara, too, in some areas, such as the Punjab-Bikanir border, were never seen by me to drink, even when living close to the irrigation channels which have turned their desert into a fertile country. The same dictum applies to the Thomson's gazelle of Kenya, which I have never seen drink, nor can I find any one of the many settlers who live with these graceful little animals all around them who has definitely done so. Admittedly I have seen chinkara come to a pool and splash themselves with a forefoot, but never bend a neck to drink, although I often came on blackbuck and chinkara eating the water melons and cucumbers grown amidst the high millet crops, slashing them open with a sharp forefoot, and twice found a fox sharing the dainty.

But it is since settling in Kenya and watching at waterholes in the Northern Frontier District that much interesting matter has come to my notice. At both Shafr Dikr and "My Waterhole," oryx have been the most numerous animals at water, with Grevy's and Burchell's zebra the next; though impala were almost as numerous at the second place and never seen at the first. Grant's gazelle were equally plentiful at either. Other daylight visitors were warthog, ostrich, and, at Shafr Dikr only, a few waterbuck.

No animal that came to drink ever seemed to be in a hurry to do so; even oryx, the only animals to approach at a gallop, halt 200 yards away, and have a good look round before coming forward to the water; then post sentries while drinking. Oryx have a definite system of reliefs for their sentries, and the first on duty wait for their drink until they are relieved by those who have finished. I have a very good photograph illustrating the relief of the sentries (Plate 36). If suspicious, oryx will go back to their grazing as if the lost drink were of no importance; yet though they were quite independent of water in Somaliland, they drink regularly in Kenya.



PLATE 36. ORYX CHANGING SENTRIES

The second from the left is coming forward to drink, his relief moving out in the centre, having satisfied his thirst.



PLATE 37. ABYSSINIAN BABOONS AT THE WATERHOLE
They drink hurriedly, being afraid of getting caught without refuge.



PLATE 38. A SOMALI LEOPARD (*Felis pardus somalicus*)

PLATE 39. WATCHED BY A
SUPERCILIOUS GIRAFFE



PLATE 40. THE CAMP SANITARY SQUAD
Composed of vultures, marabou storks and dwarf ravens, they removed every trace of shot animals round camp, but were never seen at water.



PLATE 41. FORDING THE GUASO NYIRO WITH THE BUFFALO HEAD



PLATE 42. ELLIPSIPRYMNUS WATERBUCK IN THE GUASO NYIRO VALLEY
*The Defassa waterbuck has a white patch on the buttocks, but the
Ellipsiprymnus has an oval white line instead.*

Impala also come to drink, stay longer than any of the others, and graze a little on the green grass around the water, while the bucks strut about with everted eyeglands, grunting challenges to each other, and often indulging in vigorous shoving matches. These vigorous but innocuous battles often end in a new buck taking over a herd, and it is very conspicuous with impala that the herd male is not one of those carrying the finest horns of between 28 and 30 inches, but one of between 25 and 26 inches. On several occasions I saw the finer male, from the hunter's point of view, deposed and driven away.

Grant's gazelle will sometimes come to the water and not drink, grazing a little or standing in a shallow and splashing themselves, or even just gazing around as if it were a mere social occasion which they were attending.

Gellada baboons are peripatetic, and cover a lot of country, using different waterholes on different days. They drink hastily and are very restless, so that I found it very difficult to photograph them. They live a precarious life, with lions, leopard, and cheetahs always on the look-out for a chance at them, and I fancy a serval or caracal would not be above snatching a baby if it got a chance. They always arrived at a canter, drank with the red rear bull's-eye well elevated (Plate 37), and were off again, crossing and re-crossing in front of the camera so as to mask each other, and passing the lens within a few feet.

Giraffe I saw drink only at long range. They are the wariest and most difficult animals to approach by ordinary stalking methods.

Rhino I find move much across country in the Northern Frontier District, and do not seem to take up a piece of territory in the way they do in close country, especially near my house. They were very plentiful on both sides of the Guaso Nyiro, and I never spent a day there without seeing one or two.

Most animals drink in the late morning, and the timing was most interesting and very punctual.

At 6.25 the sandgrouse arrived and continued for about fifty minutes. Then an interval of about half an hour before the spotted pigeons came at about 7.45, followed closely by scores of the handsome little Namaqua doves, with their soft grey and chestnut plumage and long tails. After them came the small birds—finches, weavers, starlings, and such-like, with an occasional dingy little hammerhead stork. Crowned plover were always there, and blacksmith plover sometimes, but all the other birds were gone when the first of the big game, the impala, arrived at half-past nine, sometimes preceded by a warthog or one or two silver-backed jackals.

Some twenty minutes later the oryx would descend through the low bush, and then, about 10.30, the Grant's gazelle and the zebra showed up. Most of the animals stood about for an hour or so after their drink, then went off, not always in the direction from which they had come, while Grevy's zebra mostly came between noon and 2 o'clock.

Of course these waterholes—especially my last discovery—were little disturbed then, and these times would not necessarily apply to country where there are many humans or the approaches to the drinking places might afford cover to lions or other beasts of prey. Under such conditions most antelope drink at night, though I have seen the big red lelwel hartebeest come down at midday on a secluded little stream 30 miles north of Nyeri, and they were the only other beasts besides oryx which I have seen approach at a gallop, stop 200 yards away to have a look round, and post sentries while drinking. This behaviour is not invariable, for I have seen other herds of these lelwel hartebeest in country nearer Nyeri, where they were more disturbed, drink at sunrise and approach from half a mile away at a walk with several stops to look about them. Eland in the same two areas behaved in just the same way and drank a little after the hartebeest.

Birds have naturally come in for notice as well as mammals, and it struck me that I never saw any of the camp

sanitary squad of marabou storks, vultures, and dwarf ravens at water (Plate 40), though they were ever at hand to remove the smallest traces of buck brought in for meat, and I was at the water every hour, from dawn to dusk, on different days. Ostriches were rare visitors, about midday, and so wary that I only once got a photograph, of a hen bird.

Almost the greatest interest is in those animals which are never seen at the water, and which get their moisture through vegetation. Gerenuk and dikdik I am sure never drink, but lesser kudu probably do, though I have found them in areas in Somaliland where they could not have got to surface water. Greater kudu are the same, watering irregularly, and eating thick-leaved plants, though I do not think they touch *hig*, of which lesser kudu at times eat great quantities. I have watched greater kudu nip off the ends of the candelabra euphorbia, but probably as a condiment, for the juice will burn human skin.

It seems probable that all gazelle are independent of water, using it occasionally as a luxury, but even this is not a regular habit of some species. A long acquaintance with Thomson's gazelle in Kenya, and Speke's and Pelzeln's gazelles in Somaliland, makes me almost sure that they have no interest at all in water. My experience of anatomy is not sufficient for me to be able to give any opinion as to whether gazelles have any special internal development that enables them to do without water; but it is curious that whereas I have seen Tibetan gazelle on five trips, I have never yet seen one of them drinking, and when camped for a week on a barren plain at about 15,000 feet above sea-level, and occupying the only spring for many miles around, I never failed to see three small herds of Tibetan gazelle in the same small areas every day, and it was hardly possible for them to drink during the day without my noticing their absence. Of course they may have drunk at night, though the higher trickles from the melting snow were all frozen, and they would have found moving at night very dangerous owing to wolves and snow leopards.

It is an interesting comparison that, when I was serving in mounted infantry in Somaliland, the Somalis only watered their sheep once a week in the wet season, and their camels once a fortnight. At such times I have seen our own riding camels refuse water when brought in to drink every fourth day, the green grazing and browsing being ample for their liquid wants, while our ponies, if given a total of eight hours' grazing each day, did not seem distressed by being ridden for two days without water.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Tana River

On all three trips down the Tana to the coast I have gone through Shafr Dikr, and once, on the last one, returned through that pleasant oasis.

As one leaves it south-eastward, the track at once enters a dark-red plain of sharp lava blocks on which some twenty or thirty Grant's gazelle are always to be seen. What they find to eat there is a problem, for, beyond one or two very dry and dusty-looking bushes, there is no vegetation; but they are comparatively safe from a man on foot, since there is no cover for a stalk, and those sharp lava blocks provide the most unpleasant walking I know, with a very good chance of a sprained ankle. At 7 miles one turns off right-handed and crosses 10 miles of broken country towards some low hills, before joining the main road from Isiolo to Somalia.

This used to be a reasonably good bush road, but experts attacked it with a "We-can't-have-this-sort-of-shenzi-thing-in-war-time" snort, threw large quantities of partially broken rocks on it, and called it a good military road. It is now a continuous length of corrugations and potholes which cannot be beaten even among the unusually awful roads of Kenya. The car proceeds in one unceasing fit of bone-shaking shivers, with occasional leaps and crashes that threaten to disintegrate it at any moment.

On my last trip I had about 50 miles of this road to traverse before I turned south at Garbat Ullah, and in the first

10 I had lost my radiator cap, half the exhaust pipe had come unshipped, and the friction of the wires leading forward through the dashboard caused the insulation to wear through and the whole lot fused. Such fun! Running repairs took longer than running time, and, being of excessive length, I find contortionate poses under the dashboard, mostly wrong way up, are most exhausting to body and temper.

At Garbat Ullah one gets some water, sees a few native habitations, and finds 100 miles of good bush road leading to the Tana. It is waterless, the sand is deepish at places, but both going and coming I did it in a little over four hours, with three-quarters of a ton in my Chevrolet light "pickup." The great thing to watch is one's tyre pressures, which, owing to the great rise in temperature from sunrise to noon, may go up as much as 50 per cent. in the first two hours, with a burst as the result. Other catches are little runnels across the road which are difficult to see until one is right on them, and which may cause a wild leap and a broken spring. It is absolutely essential to carry water on such journeys, as an accident may maroon one for days on end.

The country is all undulating bush, with gerenuk, dikdik, and vulturine guineafowl the only relief, except for a few rather annoying birds, such as the Go-away Bird, also called the Grey Lourie, which flies up into a tree and screeches "Go-way-y-y" nasally and offensively. The little red-billed hornbill is another common feature, its speciality being to try to balance on a twig insufficiently large by several sizes to hold it. The vulturine guineafowl would be beautiful if it were not for its naked, blue-black neck, for it has a cape of lovely powder-blue tapering feathers. Its principal virtue is culinary, for not only is it plentiful and stupid, but it is excellent eating.

As one crests the last big rise towards the Tana, the long dark-green line of bordering forest is seen from several miles away, while giraffe are certain to appear close to the track. The last few miles to camp are parallel with the river and the

road is not so good, for there are stretches of deep sand that demand an early change into low gear and steady driving if they are to be successfully negotiated; while elephants, especially big bulls, are sure to have walked along the road during the last heavy rain and made large holes which it is better not to bump into.

By the time I reach my favourite camp I am always very glad to see the shining river, with its swirls and gurgles as it crosses a barrier of rock outcrop showing here and there above the surface. There is plenty of shade, plenty of water, tracks of game all around, with a few large droppings left by last night's elephants, so all is as it should be on a big-game safari. The only fly in the ointment is that this camp is the only one where I have found scorpions—a real nuisance—and whenever one picks up anything there may be one underneath. The boys have to watch their step when putting dead logs on the fire. There is plenty of fuel lying around on the hard, flat, sandy soil, mostly broken down by elephants, and from the tent door one gazes lazily across the broad river to the green forest on the far side, whence on many mornings comes the blaring of elephants.

Below the 15-foot bank and a furlong upriver is a wide beach to which the Somalis bring their flocks and herds to drink (Plate 43), and to fill their *hans*, which are conical water-vessels carried in nets of sansevieria fibre on either side of donkeys and camels, but now almost universally replaced by the petrol tin. The water at the edge being shallow and free from crocodiles, from eleven o'clock to three this beach is crowded with camels, donkeys, goats, and sheep—all the last with black faces. The Somali, who is a bit of a wit, says that a forbear of theirs stole a sheep from Mohammed, who decreed that in future all their sheep should have black faces to bear witness to the outrage. The mingled smells of the animals on a hot day, which is nearly every day, are too awful; and when the inevitable wind—ordinary, monsoon, or *kharif*—is blow-

ing, clouds of dust and dry dung sweep across upriver; for fortunately the wind is almost always from the south or south-east.

Having started before sunrise in order to break the back of the journey in the cool of the morning, we get in about noon, and before camp is finished there are Somalis gathered round chatting, and telling yarns of the immense elephants and ferocious lions that are to be found in the neighbourhood. They are more anxious for one to shoot the lions, which take to living on Somali sheep and by so doing insult these conceited and windy-headed folk. The shock-headed men are quite ready to show elephants, and swear to the presence of bulls with enormous tusks, which may or may not be true; for though very brave with most wild animals, they do not go too near to elephants in the thick forest by the river.

Safaris have to be paid for, and the way to pay for them is with ivory, whereby one relieves pressure on local village crops, helps to keep the number of elephants within reasonable bounds, and at the same time enjoys magnificent sport.

But a licence to kill an elephant costs £50, and the price of ivory has to stand at over ten shillings a pound if the deficit is to be cleared and something left towards the cost of the expedition. I run my trips cheaper than most people, with only a single car and three boys, doing nearly all my own finding and hunting, but even then petrol, wear and tear to the car, and other expenses mount considerably. Moreover, in my case, the elephant hunting may take a good many valuable days that normally would be spent in getting photographs or specimens. The first object of all my safaris is photography, then collecting for museums, and finally shooting. Here let me say that, having shot for many years in Africa and India, I owe a great deal to that sport. Until the "anti-blood sport" people can finance complete preservation, they should accept the work of hunters as a help and not abuse them; in the meantime it is remarkable how few of those who cry out

PLATE 46. SOMALIS OF THE TANA
VALLEY



PLATE 47. A GOOD ELEPHANT BULL OF THE NYIKA BUSH



PLATE 48. A FIFTEEN-FOOT PYTHON WAITING FOR A BUCK TO PASS UNDER IT

against blood sports are vegetarians or make any effort to tone down the horrors of the slaughterhouse. Big-game hunting carried out in the proper spirit, and according to real sporting ethics, is a fine thing, but camera hunting is better sport, because it is more difficult.

But let us return to camp.

Having conversed with the cheerful villains who promise unlimited ivory and lions, and selected the least improbable story, you then make arrangements to go out at daybreak, and the afternoon and evening are devoted to settling in, cleaning rifles, a short stroll to examine tracks, resulting in a demand for more firewood to be brought for warning off wild animals that night, and other camp chores. Dusk, dinner, and bed are the end of the first day.

The best thing is of course to get one's elephant as soon as possible, so as to have it behind one; and down the Tana the difficulty is not in finding elephants, but in finding one with good ivory, which means in the neighbourhood of 80 pounds each side, with 100 pounds as the great prize. Of course, judging ivory is not always too easy, and the bull is not always so considerate as to stand in the open and let one have a good look at his tusks for purposes of assessment. A 100-pounder will have about 6 feet of tusk outside the gum, and will girth over 20 inches; but girth is difficult to judge in forest shade and against a tangled background. I once stood within 20 yards of a giant bull in the gloom of a big forest trying hard to make up my mind as to whether he was worth shooting: eventually deciding that, although very long, his tusks were too thin, while one had a foot or more broken off the end, and, since it was early in the safari and I had assessed him at 80 pounds, I left him to search for something bigger. Another party came along a week later and shot him, the tusks weighing out at 104 and 91 pounds respectively. That safari ended in a rapid return in "Munich Week" with four hurriedly shot tusks averaging 73 pounds. Ivory had fallen from 7s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. and, with

war threatening every minute, it was no use hanging on for a possible rise, so that was that.

I thought of those dreadful days as I idled my first afternoon in that pleasant camp on my last safari, and thanked heaven that, while the difficulties of peace were still ahead of us, the waste and slaughter of war was over.

Writing my diary in a deck-chair, I was soon an object of curiosity to several lovely glossy starlings. At Shafr Dikr the superb glossy starling—sometimes called the Imperial because a strip of white divides the blue of his breast from the red of his underparts—was the common species, and there the very tame brown-and-white sparrow-weavers were always with them at the little patches of maize meal which I put out as bait for my sitters. The untidy nests of the sparrow-weavers were in every acacia tree, dry grass sticking out all over the place and the entrance hole hard to distinguish from the rest; while often there would be another even more dishevelled apartment built on, which is said to be the abode of the cock.

Here on the Tana there were no sparrow-weavers, and the superb had given way to the blue-eared glossy starlings as the commonest species. Why "blue-eared" I do not know, for they are dark glossy blue on the back and right up to the head, with duller colours in the underparts, and a double row of four dark spots on the shoulders, which the superb also have, only more of them. Like most glossy starlings, both species have a bright-yellow eye, and as they strut about they occasionally halt, in their hunt for stray fragments, to look at one in a haughtily accusing way as if complaining of the dearth of crumbs.

The long-tailed glossy starlings were first met with on the Tana, but they are much shyer birds; a little larger, a little less glossy, and with longer tails than the blue-eared, they flit from tree to tree in parties of seven or eight, rarely coming down for scraps. Hopping along under the edge of the thornbushes comes another shy bird, the red-billed hoopoe, about 15 inches

long, including its long tail, which has black feathers tipped with white on the sides: the rest of him is mainly black, and the brilliant red, curved bill makes a nice contrast.

Suddenly all the birds fly up with protesting screeches, as a wicked little head peers over the base of the nearest anthill; it is a desert mongoose on the look-out for a meal. Finding itself spotted, the lithe brown beast sits up and inspects the camp, and is joined by another which has been working round the flank of the starling party. These little animals make good pets, being excellent ratters, but spell death on chickens. They often go about in parties of thirty or forty, spending their sleeping time inside the many holes of a big anthill, and when one meets one of these parties hunting on a 20-yard front, they all sit up like a group of tentpegs. The Somalis say that it is wise to give them a free passage, or they may attack with serious results.

The next visitors are a few monkeys; slender, long-tailed guenons which peer round the tree trunks and over the forks of the big branches until satisfied that there is no real danger. But they are never sufficiently satisfied to allow their photographs to be taken, for the black eye of the camera puts them to chattering flight the moment they spot it directed their way.

A subdued bark from a little farther up the river-bank draws my attention to a troop of baboons which have come down to drink: gaunt beasts, as tall as the ordinary upland baboon, but probably weighing several pounds less, they are not nearly as formidable as their highland cousins, and are the principal food of the local leopards.

A stroll into the forest after tea shows plenty of fresh elephant tracks, with one probably worth-while bull amongst them; but the only beasts seen are a pair of gerenuk, all legs and necks, and a glimpse of a dark-grey lesser kudu bull as it slips away round a clump of bushes. There are lesser kudu tracks innumerable, many of them quite fresh, but in several days' quiet hunting one rarely sees one more than every second day. A 30-inch pair of their graceful spiral horns is quite a prize.

Before sunrise we meet a couple of Somalis about a mile down the motor track, close to their *karia* (the movable village of mat huts on curved sticks enclosed in a high thorn *zariba* that moves from pasture to pasture with their flocks and herds); we pick them up and run on a couple of miles, then park the car in a thick clump 100 yards off the track. They have promised to show me a big lone bull close to a rainwater pan, but after half an hour's walking we strike the tracks of a herd of about thirty, follow them for another twenty minutes, and come to a shallow strip of muddy water almost entirely enclosed and overgrown by big acacias. This does not suit me at all, for there are several mothers with calves amongst the herd, but I consent to work down the lee side to get a look at them on the chance that we might find the bull apart from the rest, and after ten minutes or so locate them, by the usual tummy rumbles, on the windward side. A back cast round the top of the water brings us down the far side with the wind a bit doubtful, and since, by peering below the branches, I can see the legs of a couple of cows with calves a short distance away, I call it a day and go home. As we get back to the car our two guides say they will have another look round for the bull, as it is only about half-past eight, and at midday they arrive in camp in a great hurry saying that they have found him resting under some big trees.

This is an easy one, for I drive the car through open bush for twenty minutes, get out and walk half a mile, then find the watcher left by our friends, fast asleep. However, there are tracks of a possible bull within 50 yards, and, following them up for a quarter of a mile, we discover him moving about restlessly in some very thick stuff, but where there are no green branches. Dropping the others, I get within 20 yards and find him to have 50 to 60 pounds of ivory, so call up Kabogo the camera boy and, after instructing him in the rudiments of judging tusks, we go back to the car and so to lunch.

At tea-time our enthusiasts arrive with news of yet

another bull, this time an immense fellow, and no more than a mile down the river-bank.

We arrive at the spot, and there are certainly some very promising tracks just outside a long stretch of young dom palms which grow in a dense mass 15 feet high. The Somalis say that they came on him just outside and he retired inside; the tracks confirm their statement, while on following them inside the edge of cover a harsh rustling betrays his presence close by. This does not mean that I am necessarily going to get a chance at him, for while there are plenty of two-foot lanes through the stuff, they twist and turn so much that 10 yards is the limit of vision, and 10 yards from the business end of a solitary bull is too close for me, as there are no trees whose trunks would give shelter and there would be no possibility of sidestepping a charge. So, having a desire for continued existence, I scout round and about the dense mass of cover for nearly an hour, hearing the harsh rattling inside and within 20 yards several times, twice getting a glimpse of a small patch of hide and the gleam of ivory. The bull is obviously an old stager and probably dangerous, so I sit down on a fallen log close to the last rustle and listen for further moves on his part. This bores the impetuous Somalis, and one of them slips away without my noticing and pushes in along one of the narrow lanes farther than is wise. He finds the bull all right.

There is a toot, a rush, and the Somali comes out like a bullet, and does the quarter in about forty seconds, right out of the riverside belt of trees to the bush behind. The bull had only followed him to the edge of the thick stuff and had then turned back, but I get a brief look at a pair of tusks which I put at 80 pounds a side.

As the next camp will be in country where I feel sure of seeing another bull as big, and probably something bigger, and the nasty temper of this fellow also has a distinct influence, I call the hunt off and we start for home. Outside the tree belt we find our Somali sitting on the top of an anthill, and he

returns a firm negative to the suggestion that he should go back and have another look at the bull.

The day had been very typical of Somali methods. A very conceited race, they always assume that one is wanting in grey matter, so try it on. After all, one may be an excitable fool, who will shoot an elephant quite near their *karia* and pay them large baksheesh for small ivory, and, on that failing, a decent bull is found, though not a first-rater. My caution in not putting myself in such a position that I might be forced to shoot a bull with inferior ivory did not appeal to them at all; they probably thought it was just funk, and that they, the great and brave hunters, would show me how it ought to be done. Yet with the usual Somali sense of humour they treated the whole affair as a great joke, and, after a séance with my camera boy, came to the conclusion that perhaps I had seen an elephant before and knew what I wanted. So they then became serious and said that they would look for a really good bull next day, that there had been a very big one about in the bush north of their *karia*, and that they would hunt for him. They were told to watch him all day and then take me to the place early next morning by the shortest route, having first sent two more men to scout round at daybreak.

In the meantime I would go upriver, with Kabogo only, at dawn.

The two of us started as soon as it was light enough to see, walked a couple of miles north along the edge of the bush, then entered the forest to try a bit of ground where I had had a contretemps with a very big bull seven years before.

Almost immediately we came on a lovely lesser kudu buck, and for once I was able to watch one before he had seen me. But time pressed and we had to go on, making a slight cast round to force him off our line of advance when he bolted.

Within a mile we came on very fresh tracks of a really big bull, evidently going to water rather late in the morning. He had dawdled along, pulling a branch here and there to chew,

and, which was not so good, stood about a while to listen. Old bulls would never become old bulls if they were not pretty wary, and that curious sixth sense that tells them of approaching danger is almost the most valuable part of their natural equipment, so hopes which were high began to suffer a slight slump. After an hour and a half on his tracks we came to a place where he had started across a slightly open bit of ground, then turned sharp left, and stood a long while behind some thick greenery. There were warm droppings here, but the forward tracks no longer dawdled, even though they did not hurry. Another half-hour and we came out on a tiny beach by the river's edge, and there were the great holes made by his feet as he drank, with the water still slowly filling them. The tracks then turned upriver and downwind, into dom palm so thick that we could hardly push through it, and at the far side we found ample evidence that he had waited to find out if he was being followed, had got our wind, and pushed steadily along at the 8 miles an hour stroll that takes an old bull right out of range for all practical purposes.

We back-tracked ourselves to the open bush, for the forest belt was several miles wide within a big loop of the Tana, then walked home along the edge, seeing a few gerenuk on the way, a flock of guineafowl, and, half a mile from home, a colony of small voles which were throwing up little spurts of sand over a couple of square yards of soil.

Tea and a rock-cake were most welcome, and I then settled down to the usual diary writing and sorting a few butterflies I had caught. Kabogo felt restless and said he would go off to see what last evening's bull had done, and would look out for camera subjects. I knew just what that bull had done—he had gone right off as soon as it was dark.

An hour later Kabogo returned to say that he had found a python up a tree and easy to photograph, so off we went again.

Quite close to where we had hunted last night's elephant (which had cleared off just as I thought) Kabogo enjoined care,

and we stole along to see a python about 15 feet long draped over and in a big bush, its head about 18 inches from the ground, waiting for a dikdik or duiker to pass below (Plate 48). I got the camera ready with the 4·5 ordinary lens in place of the telephoto, took two photographs from a dozen feet away, then, as he did not move, changed the slide and moved in closer. After I had focused carefully, a bit of stick tossed at him made the snake raise its head in a graceful curve, and I got one of the best pictures I have ever taken—even the tight grip of the tip of the tail on an overhead branch and the black tongue darting out showed clearly.

Being most useful in keeping down rats, monkeys, and suchlike noxious animals he was left to prosper, and we went back to camp.

In the evening our Somalis arrived. They had found fresh tracks of the big bull, but had not seen him, so what about it?

Remarking that we would not find the bull by staying in camp (which for some reason was taken to be the best joke of the year), we arranged to meet a couple of miles out before sunrise, and were there betimes, four Somalis joining us.

We walked and walked, mounted anthills, found plenty of yesterday's tracks, and at one point had our hopes raised by an indifferent bull with short, thick, 50-pound ivory, at which the Somalis barely glanced—a great change from the first day. It was quite good hunting, but we got nothing definite by the time the sun was high and hot, so went home. From what I could judge the bull had gone right off to new ground.

The Somalis were at first rather sad but a brew of tea with sugar in it and a few shillings cheered them, and when I bought a fine fat-tailed ram from them for ten shillings—a good deal over the market price—they beamed. The tail kept my three boys (camera, cook and camp) in cooking fat for a month.

After a conference I decided to go on next day, telling

them that I would be coming back that way to have another try if I had not already got my elephant.

Thirty elephants came to within 20 yards of the tents that night without waking us, and others trumpeted across the river as we struck camp next morning.

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We went on 80 miles, passing through Garissa, the local administrative centre, 14 miles out, to find all three officials on tour.

We had a rough run, over a road much seamed with small runnels that threatened to break springs, so that an average of 15 miles an hour was all we could manage. And the whole way along, the Tana's bordering strip of forest stood up darkly green on the right, every now and then gerenuk crossed the road, and once a lion stared at us round the base of a tree. It was very hot, so the turn off down to the river and the wattle-and-daub hut, which had been built for passing officials since I was there seven years before, was most welcome. The ground around was neatly cleared and swept, but the sandbank that daily used to hold a basking crocodile was still under water from recent rains higher up. It was at this camp that I had spent several disturbed nights, shouting at elephants which threatened to walk over the tent, and a reminder lay within 5 yards of the hut in the shape of a heap of fresh droppings.

After lunch the usual questioning of the locals was gone through, with the usual indefinite result; but only men from the river-bank shambas and no Somalis were there. They are always hungry for meat in that part of the world, and the old fellow who looked after the hut and its exiguous garden immediately asked me to shoot something for them, so I said we would go out after tea to try for a buck.

We did so, going in the car in order to be able to carry back the buck complete, and a mile down the road turned off

into the bush along an old overgrown track which I knew before. A mile along this, and we left the car, then within ten minutes saw half a dozen gerenuk, stalked them and half-way through the stalk jumped a small herd of oryx, which ran 100 yards, then stood to look back. There was a nice bull standing quite clear, and I dropped him with a bullet through both shoulders. A little cutting of the bush and I was able to bring the car right up to him while he was being gralloched. He was hoisted in and all was very well, for an oryx carries a lot of meat, and, since only one shot had been fired, the country was little disturbed. Just as we had seen the gerenuk I had noticed some fresh elephant tracks heading back from the river, so went to have a good look at them while the oryx was being loaded. The tracks were those of a big bull which had been down to drink at the Tana early that morning and—for I have something of a photographic memory in such matters—these tracks seemed uncommonly like those of a grand old fellow with whom I had just failed to connect on my last visit. On following the tracks for a quarter of a mile each way the direction of his coming and going was made clear, for a second set of tracks joined in close by, and I took a line on where they would be likely to get to the river.

Four hours' steady walking next morning gave me three different places where he watered, each about half a mile apart, including those of that very day. The bank of the Tana is too steep in many places for drinking, and the bull had rung the changes on different little shelving beaches and a small backwater which had once been the bed of the Tana. Other still older tracks were there in plenty, but heavy rain had blurred them and they were no use; still, both his tracks and his habits seemed to say that he was my former quarry.

As all the tracks must cross the motor road within the same half-mile, it was obvious that, as it led away from the river at an angle of over 45 degrees, and would be at least 2 miles from his drinking places when he crossed it, we should

save much time by taking up the fresh tracks there, and might even intercept him as he crossed.

Next morning we were there just after sunrise, but too late, and a short follow-up showed that he was going too fast for us, and was not feeding; so we went back, for to-morrow was another day.

At camp we found two Somalis who said that a big bull came down to drink every evening at a small rainwater pan used by their cattle and sheep, and close to their *karia* and only a mile from the road. But whether or not he was my bull they could not agree, for one of them said that he had seen a very big bull cross the road at daybreak just where the tracks we had been following took off.

At four o'clock we drove eastward down the road for 4 miles, going very slow over the half-mile that held the tracks of my bull, and, having "de-bussed," walked fast for twenty minutes northward through 15-foot bush, the only thing of interest on the way being a sandgrouse's nest containing three eggs. We arrived at the pan, which had low and skimpy trees growing in it, examined some good-looking tracks made the evening before, then walked half a mile to another smaller pan where the elephant had watered that morning. He was not my bull, but, from his tracks, he was a good one, and might even be the coveted 100-pounder. We went back to the first pan and began to follow up the most recent tracks to see where they led, when two breathless Somali boys arrived to say that the bull was just coming down to drink; so we returned at the steady double to the north end of the water, the bull arriving simultaneously at the south end.

He strode 20 yards into the marsh, with the low sun lighting him well. There was about 6 feet of ivory outside the gum and the tusks were blunt-ended, which is generally the mark of an old beast, but I was very doubtful of their girth. In any case, I hate giving up a beast I am already after unless for very good reasons, and I decided to keep him in reserve. The water

would not dry up for at least a week, and he would continue to come there to drink, so I took a couple of photographs of him. Several more Somalis had arrived and were standing around peeping out from behind bushes, occasionally changing ground impatiently to get a better view, and he must have winded some of them; while, as they were most conspicuously dressed in white tobés (the toga-like garment worn by Somali men), he most probably saw some of them as well, if only badly defined as white blurs. But he took little notice beyond turning about uneasily and lifting his trunk to catch the taint, while his great ears waved forward and back like four-foot bat wings. Then he began to drink, sucking up water in his trunk and pouring it into his uplifted mouth, as Kabogo said, just like filling a bucket. He did not stay long, perhaps ten minutes, then turned and went off to his grazing grounds and we to camp.

Something went wrong next morning (I have forgotten what) so that we were a little late in starting, and the sun was just topping the trees on my left front as I let out the clutch and ran the car into the side of the track at the beginning of our bull's half-mile.

As I did so he crossed the road 100 yards ahead.

I was out and after him in a few seconds, running to cut him off in order to get a good look at his ivory; for his tusks turned in so much at the tips that they looked rather short from the side. His lurching stroll was ever so much faster than I thought, and it took over 200 yards at the steady double to get far enough ahead to have a frontal view as he crossed a gap in the bush; then, satisfied with his appearance, I had to head him again to get my shot.

That took a bit longer, and he heard me just as I got in front, then halted 25 yards away half facing me. But his head was covered by the upper branches of an acacia, so I had to take the heart shot underneath them.

He swerved away right-handed and I ran after him, re-

loading as he plunged into a dense thicket of thorns quite impossible for me to enter, bellowed and broke down some branches, then went on. Running round, with shirt and skin suffering from more thorny encounters, I was just too late to get him broadside on, so had to follow after his great lurching bulk, sure that my first bullet was well placed, yet beginning to have doubts as to when he would stop. An elephant will always go about 200 yards after a heart shot, and may go several miles if it is only through the edge of the heart. There was no doubt that his tusks were big and the very sight of them made me fearful of losing him.

We plunged on, with me having to run round thick stuff every so often, and then at last he stood, turned broadside on, and I brained him. He collapsed so suddenly, falling towards me on to his side, that I am still not sure whether the original heart shot killed him or the bullet that I found afterwards lodged in the front edge of his brain, and which might only have stunned him.

The tape came out and was put over his right tusk—the slightly shorter left one being below—and there was $6\frac{1}{2}$ feet of ivory outside, which meant over 8 feet in all; while since the girth was 21 inches, there was no doubt about there being 100 pounds a side. The safari was paid for.

The chase had been parallel with the road and, pacing the distance back to the car, I calculated that he had gone 1,000 to 1,100 yards after the first shot.

Leaving Kichui, the camp boy, with the elephant, I took Kabogo back to camp, and removed the remaining tatters of my shirt, washed away the blood from my chest to reveal something like a map of a well-trenched area in France, and came back with Gasuku the cook so that he might be photographed sitting on the elephant. He and Kabogo have been with me seven years, starting as chicken toto and junior shamba boy respectively, and working their way up from the ranks.

The elephant was 11 feet 1 inch at the shoulder, his ear was 4 feet 2 inches from top to bottom, and his tail 5 feet long; this last measurement surprised me. From tip of trunk to the small bump between the eyes was 8 feet 9½ inches, and from the bump to the root of his tail just 14 feet. The tusks 115 and 110 pounds.

Cutting out the tusks took over three hours. It was a messy business, entailing cutting away the trunk and flesh of the face to clear the long bone sockets before hacking away the latter with an axe. The office at Garissa had sent a newly enlisted game scout to help me the previous evening, and he had distinguished himself by running in front of me after the wounded bull, drawing an energetic flow of my best efforts in curses as his reward. He now proved very useful, as he was a sturdy fellow and had done the job before. When we got back to camp I returned him on the first opportunity, as I could provide neither food nor transport: he had come by one of the stray Indian trading lorries which work all over that country between little dukas run up wherever there is permanent water.

A couple of mornings later the District Commissioner, returning to Garissa from tour, drove in in a lorry; and he took my tusks with him to Garissa and sent them to Nairobi for me. I had never met him before, and these District Commissioners are busy men, so I was more than grateful. I have invariably found the District Commissioners in these remote posts most helpful, and they do a great deal towards preserving the wild life of the country.

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The next item on my programme was Hunter's hartebeest or hirola (Plate 45), a rare antelope that is found only in the strip of country between the Tana and Juba Rivers.

On my first trip this way I had got a rather poor photo-

graph of four of them, including the finest male I have ever seen, but time was too short to allow of more being done.

I thought I was alone in knowing this particular patch of ground, but on making a special effort in 1938, was disappointed to find that a professional hunter from Nairobi had taken a Royal party there the week before I arrived. The hirola had been a good deal harried and, while I shot a good specimen for my collection, photographs were quite impossible: another demonstration of the difference between the difficulties of the camera and the rifle.

This third time I tried to find the Somalis who had been with me in 1938, but they had gone elsewhere, and a volunteer, who said he knew all about hirola and how to get to the place where I went that year, proved a complete fraud. There had been very heavy rains, and we could not find the proper turn-off from the motor track, failed to get through, and, having spent the night in the bush, returned to base with nothing accomplished. We then went on to the coast at Lamu, intending to try elsewhere on our return, but lost eleven days due to a complete fade-out of the car battery, and got to our ground just in time to find thousands of Somalis moving into it with their stock. The hirola, very naturally, had gone elsewhere.

Hirola are interesting beasts, decidedly like the hartebeest tribe, with their high withers and sloping back, but when they look over a bush at one, the backward bend of their horns just above the base is not seen, and they look very like impala. They are just about the same size as kongoni (Coke's hartebeest), but have not the horns placed on nearly such a bony base, such as reaches its most exaggerated form in the big red lelwel hartebeest.

Hirola are probably quite independent of water, so that when hunting them we had to send 20 miles for ours, and were still about 3 miles from the edge of the hirola ground, a succession of small grassy plains patched with bush. With them

were some oryx, and an occasional lesser kudu, while old male topi were dotted about in the ratio of about one to the square mile, though I never saw a female. It was notable that each of these beasts was a different colour: the hirola, khaki; the oryx, grey-dun; the lesser kudu, dark grey, with sparse vertical white stripes; and the topi, dark brown, with a rich bloom like a plum.

An interesting little beast that was also quite common in pairs about the plains was Haggard's oribi—a rather longer-legged and less compact animal than the familiar Kenya oribi—with the annulations of the horns carried two-thirds of the way up.

There were a good few rhino, of the small and peevish kind, about in the bush, and I saw three which had the rear horn longer than the front.

It is interesting country, and I hope to get back there for some really good photographs of that unique animal, the hirola.

Down to the Coast

Another 60 miles eastward is the waterhole of Ijara; also a small police post and native shop. The Tana has bent away well to the south-east, and the road to Ijara lies through waterless country covered with dense bush. Just beyond the waterhole one enters the coastal forest belt, quite different country abounding in big trees and stretches of fairly open savannah, with sandhills becoming bigger and more common as one nears the sea. It is easy to reconstruct the process of the sand mounting ever higher before the winds from the south-east, until the ground was gradually clothed, first with grass and bush, then bigger trees, while all the time more sand was gradually added to the land. The coastal showers come as far as Ijara and no farther, so that west of it the country is dry for months together, while east of it there may be rain at any season, though the rainfall is not as heavy as on the coast itself, and encourages sufficient greenery to cause the belt to abound with wild animals during the dry season.

Camp at Ijara has always something interesting around it, usually birds, and the last time I was there a red-necked falcon was being mobbed by crowned plovers; on walking towards them to look at a bird crouching flat in the short dry grass, at which the hawk had stooped and missed, I found it to be a Seebohm's courser, which I had never seen before, while the falcon itself is rare so far north.

At night one hears both species of zebra, the high barking

of Burchell's and the strangled neighing of Grevy's, which last noise sounds so much as if the animals were in distress that my boys asserted that when first they heard it they thought that the zebra had been seized by a lion.

The road through the forest to the coast may be quite good or very much the other way, depending on how many elephants have walked along it during the last rains. There are certain to be various obstacles in the shape of trees pulled down across it, and if one's own is the first car down of the season, as was mine on my last trip, much time is spent with axe and shovel clearing debris and filling in holes; while occasionally a short track must be cut through the forest to avoid a small bog.

Both going and coming last time, we came suddenly on a bull elephant, each time a big one, and the second time much too close for comfort, for as we rounded a bush he was standing staring at the car from 30 yards away, looking mountainous and threatening with 6 feet of ivory gleaming on either side. Pulling up at once, I got out of the car to stand behind the open door with the heavy rifle ready for trouble, and feeling as if I had taken a damaging blow in the solar plexus. But he was only curious and not offensively minded, and swung round and departed in a fashion so stately that, pursuing with the camera, I nearly got his photograph before he vanished into the bush. With an enormous animal like that, this quick melting away into the greenery always leaves one a bit amazed—just a swish of twigs and it is gone, without a sound to show that it is still moving on in dense forest carpeted with dead branches.

When the forest dries up a little this stretch is full of giraffe, zebra, oribi, and topi (Plate 55), the last in herds up to 100 strong. Half-way to the coast is a stream called Duldul (which means "marsh" in Hindustani), where either one used to have to go through a bog or drive across a fearsome bridge consisting of two parallel iron girders laid flat with nothing between them, so that one drove on the webs. Trading lorries were often stuck there, and the first time I went to Lamu a new one

was firmly bogged with its crown wheel stripped: not pleasant when spares and repairs are both difficult, as invariably they are.

On this last trip we stopped for lunch just beyond Duldul and close to a tall shrub in flower, on which I took some very interesting butterflies—*Acreea damii*—a species that I have never seen before or since. Then, after getting across a bad patch of elephant holes by much pick-and-shovel work, we had a nice run over firm sandy soil but for one or two stops to clear broken-down trees. The first village beyond Duldul is 18 miles from the coast, and there are only a couple more between it and Mekowe, where one reaches the sea at a channel between the mainland and Lamu Island. This channel is lined with mangroves whose skeleton roots are 4 or 5 feet above water at low tide.

It is here that one leaves the car and hires a dhow to sail to Lamu, a trip of two hours; northward first and then eastward round a palm-clothed cape until Lamu appears in sight on the south shore of the big inlet that has made it a port. For here there is an opening through the outer line of islands, giving a deep-water channel to shelter, whereas most of the islands are joined by coral reefs with breaks too shallow for anything but dhows, and too narrow even for them in rough weather. But steamers of 2,000 tons can enter Lamu.

It is a pleasant sight as one sails up to Lamu, after a hair-raising tack over to the Manda Island side of the inlet if the monsoon is blowing. One must then lift the great yard of the lateen sail round the top of the mast, and often the bellying head of the sail gets caught up to the accompaniment of shouts and curses by the crew. This manœuvre safely accomplished, the dhow heads straight for a mile-long row of tall white houses, with green trees between them and the two small wooden piers that jut out from the sea wall. On both sides are big golden sandhills and waving palms, both date and coco-nut, while away to the left is a glimpse of the Indian Ocean beyond one or two European houses and a mosque which mark the village of Shaila at the harbour mouth.

At the back of the town the old Portuguese castle looms darkly above the white houses, and below it is the market-place from which the ravine-like streets branch off, most of them too narrow for a car. A few ancient cannon scattered round Lamu bear witness to its former popularity as a rendezvous for pirates and as the hub of the east coast slave trade. This latter claim to fame is much disputed by Mombasa, and the curious can still go out to the Shaila sandhills and uncover one or two gleaming human skulls, highly polished by wind and shifting sand, that supply the only remaining evidence of a great raid by Mombasa traders, who wiped out their rivals and their human stock.

Lamu's principal trade is now very peaceful, for cutting and loading mangrove poles (called *boritis*) is the main occupation of the local populace. These poles are impervious to white ants, and are at all times in demand for building native huts; while during the war many shiploads of them went to Burma to make temporary barracks for our troops. There are always stacks of them on the foreshore and, being heavier than water, it does not matter that they are half covered at high tide. They come in dhows, and are then loaded into small steamers (Plate 50).

There are nearly always one or two dhows in process of construction on or by the beach, and Lamu dhows have a great reputation among the nautical folk of East Africa and the Persian Gulf. Yet even they cannot enter Lamu during the monsoon, and it is a great sight when the first dhow makes its entry in September, flying all its flags, its crew blowing conches and beating oil tins, while a similar cacophony rages on shore.

On my first visit to Lamu I was chiefly interested in the sea-birds and the fishing. It was late September and the migrants had begun to arrive, so that most of the common European waders were to be seen, and out by Shaila, busy parties of knot, ruff, grey plover, turnstone, and such familiar

birds were trotting along at the edge of the waves picking up sea provender. On the flats at low tide curlew and whimbrel were common, though always solitary.

To see some fishing at first hand I hired a small shark dhow, and we went round to the north coast of Manda Island, where I camped for a few days. Manda is the big island just across the Lamu inlet to the north, and the passage is through the mangrove-lined channel between it and the mainland (Plate 49). We started just after sunrise, and just managed, with a good deal of shoving and hauling, to get the boat over the bar at the north end; then sailed round the point to the east to open a wide bit of sea between Manda and Patta, the next and still bigger island. Seaward, between Manda and Patta, were a couple of islets and a long line of roaring white water, specked with the black of jagged crags, where the rollers beat against the coral reef.

We camped above a sandy beach, which was marred by the sight and smell of various portions of defunct fish, and shot the nets just inside the reef for hammerhead sharks and whip rays (Plate 51).

The nets, a seine of big meshes about 6 feet deep buoyed with coco-nuts, were set overnight, and I hoped to get good pictures of the catch being hauled on board. But though we caught fish—hammerheads up to 7 feet long and whip rays up to 40 pounds—they came in over the bow wrapped in the net and were instantly speared, while I hung on to a stay trying vainly to get my photographs. It was too rough; the bulge of the boat or the bodies of the crew hid what I wanted to record, and if I had let go of the stay I would have been overboard in a second (Plate 52).

Still, I had great fun and some quite good angling from the beach with a light rod suitable for catching fish up to about 4 pounds, while Manda Island provided much of interest.

It is flat, sandy, and mainly bush covered, and though quite waterless, yet had dikdik, bushbuck, and suni on it; and

these animals can have been able to drink only when there was heavy rain—if at all. There were also plenty of bush partridge and red-necked francolin.

The first shore objective was a very large python, said to live in an old masonry well and to be as big as the trunk of a date palm. We found the well, circular, about 6 feet deep, and lined with masonry, and there were fresh traces of the python, which left a wide trail that eventually was lost in very thick bush. We went on, making an easterly left-handed circuit, and were turning north across an acre of waist-high grass when I was brought up with a jerk by something between a grunt and a cough quite close to me. The noise sounded rather like that of a wild pig, but on its being repeated, I saw a very large python looking at me, its flat head level with the top of the grass and about 10 feet away. It was most uncomfortable, for I had the rifle instead of the shotgun, and a python has a trick of driving at one with its head, following up with coil after coil of an immensely powerful and heavy body which is then thrown over the victim. However, after we had stared at each other for about fifteen seconds, the great brute turned and, leaving a broad swath, glided fast to the edge of the bush and there entered some creeper-covered ruins—probably the vestiges of piracy or the slave trade. I had followed up with the camera, but could not get a chance of making an exposure.

Captain C. R. Pitman, in his book *A Game Warden Takes Stock*, states that python cannot make a noise because they have no larynx, but this one very definitely did so, and I have since heard another make the same sort of harsh grunt. There are several species of fish that make a noise when removed from the water, and the horrible slimy kugger of Northern Indian rivers, which I have often caught when fishing for its betters, quacks loudly when flopping about the floorboards of the boat with poisonous spines erect, and can raise a loud quack after being there a couple of minutes. They, also, have no larynx.

We had another try to find the python next day, but it was still well inside the piled stones of the ruins and we failed completely. I reckoned it to be about 20 feet long.

On the way back to Lamu, before we entered the mangrove channel, the crew caught a skipjack about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet long, and I got a garfish whose bright-green bones deter so many people from eating them, although they are both delicious and wholesome.

At Lamu I saw the biggest turtle ever. Two fishermen asked me to come and see it with a view to purchase, but when I saw that it nearly filled a dinghy, and weighed about 500 pounds, I had to tell them that it was rather more than a meal for one.

Dugong, the mermaids of ancient mariners, are sometimes caught off Lamu, feeding on the seaweed, with head and flippers out of the water. For some obscure reason one should not talk about them to a Mohammedan—why, I do not know.

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On my last trip in 1945 we arrived in June, the idea being to go up the coast to one of the islands to photograph sea-birds and their nests; though, owing to faulty information, I was six weeks too early, the terns, of which there are several species, not breeding until mid-August.

Thanks to the kind help given by officials, I was sent over to the village of M'kikoni, 30 miles north of Lamu, on the Government launch, as she had to go there with the pay of the local headmen, and to collect tax money.

The monsoon was blowing great guns and we had it fairly rough going to Faza, the principal village of Patta Island, where we called, then lay-to outside for the night. The launch had a curious trick of sticking her nose into the water, then coming up with a twist, which was a bit disconcerting, but I do not get seasick in small boats or airsick in open aircraft, though a large liner or closed aircraft is liable to defeat me in rough

weather. The launch gave a lively show when we got away at 5 a.m., but it was only about half an hour across the open bit, and we were soon under the lee of the next island, then entered a narrow mangrove-bordered channel with the long, high island of Kiwaiyu at its far end. At eight o'clock we ran up to the coco-nut grove on a sandy promontory, which is all one sees of M'kikoni, for the dozen or so houses are hidden by the trees which the monsoon was doing its best to blow inside out (Plate 56). A solitary dhow lay at anchor, waiting to load *boritis*.

We staggered up the steep, wrack-heaped beach, and made camp on the downwind side of the palms in the shade of a large acacia, with 1,000 yards of sparkling blue water between us and Kiwaiyu, where a pair of handsome fish eagles yelped musically from a high tree on its crest.

At the village was the mudir of the district, who had come from Kiunga, 40 miles up the coast, to collect salaries and deliver taxes, and he was the first to disillusion me about the possibilities of sea-bird photography. The birds would not be nesting for nearly two months, and there was none at present on Kiwaiyu. He said that Kiunga was the place, for there were islands there which were crowded with nesting terns in late August. I may say that an article in our Natural History Society's Journal, received when I got back, confirmed everything he said, and was amplified later by a letter from a very keen and efficient officer of the Game Department.

The mudir departed with his carriers as soon as he had done his business, and after some breakfast, I mustered the local intelligence, the M'kikoni and Kiwaiyu headmen, together with one or two others who gathered round for a chat.

The Kiwaiyu headman said there were no birds nesting on the island, and no game there, as a party of lions had swum across from the mainland and killed off the bushbuck. This story I found hard to believe; but later a friend in the Game Department confirmed it; which all goes to show that we should



PLATE 49. A FISHING DHOW IN A MANGROVE-LINED CHANNEL.



PLATE 50. THE SEA FRONT AT LAMU
Mangrove poles stacked against the sea wall.

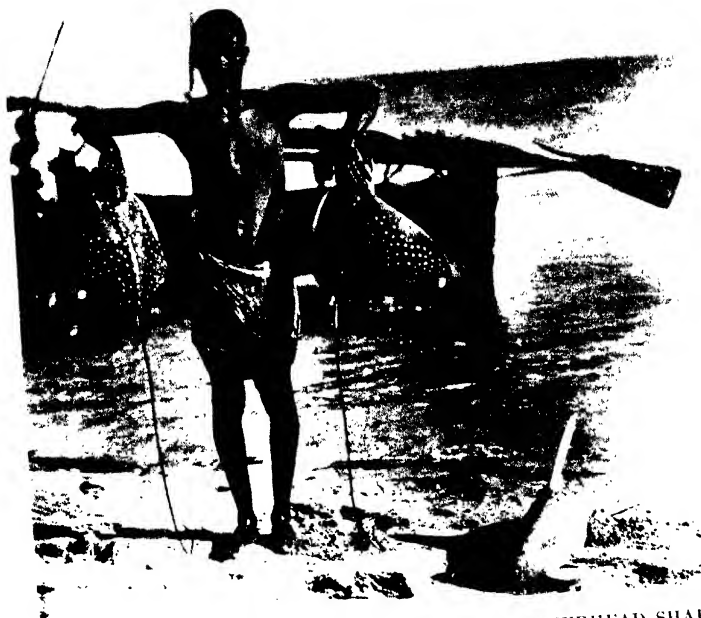


PLATE 51. FISHERMAN WITH WHIP RAYS AND HAMMERHEAD SHARK

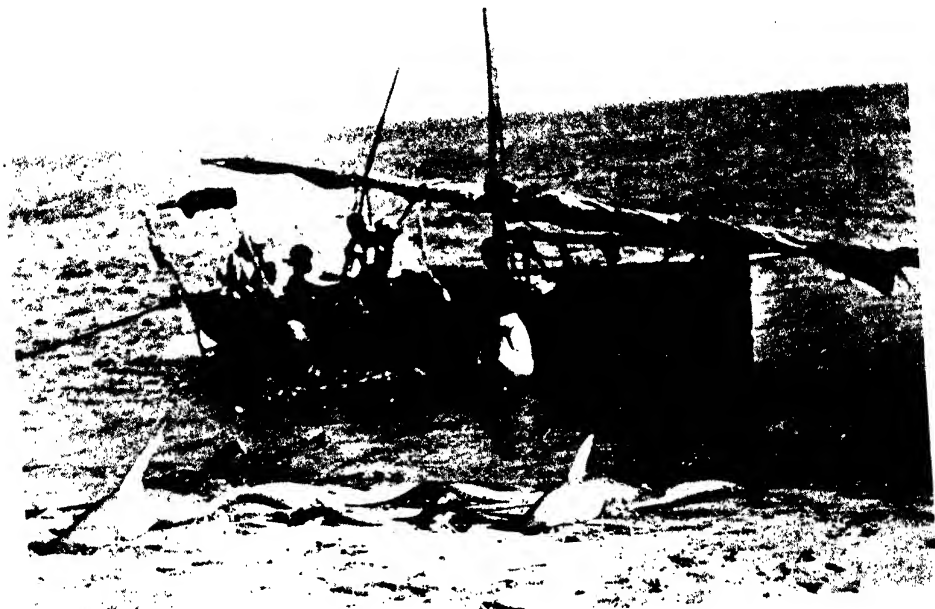


PLATE 52. OUR DHOW WITH THE MORNING'S CATCH



PLATE 53. A VERY SQUARE-BUILT CRAB READY TO FIGHT



PLATE 54. PIED CROWS



PLATE 55. TOPI IN THE COASTAL FOREST BELT
They have a curious bloom like a plum's on their chocolate-coloured coat.



PLATE 56. THE MONSOON BLOWING THE PALMS INSIDE OUT AT MKIKONI

keep very open minds about such things. It was quite an achievement, as when I tried fishing from the shore at half flood the current was so strong that the bait was immediately swung round on to the beach, and I had such difficulty in keeping my feet in knee-deep water that I soon had to give it up. Nobody, during our chat, or later, mentioned that these lions were still about, an omission that might have had serious consequences.

The M'kikoni headman was more forthcoming, saying that there were any number of bushbuck and lesser kudu about, also buffalo and elephant. Just then a camp helper came along with a tinful of water for us—it looked like weak cocoa and smelled and tasted horrid. The water supply is never good at these coast villages, for the wells are dug too close to the sea and never cleaned, but this was so specially filthy that I asked the reason, and was told that three elephants had spent the night in the village pond, and this was the result. Nevertheless I refused to shoot an elephant, unauthorised control not being my pigeon, but agreed to slaying a buck for meat if possible. Meat hunger is permanent among these very poor people. A sturdy fellow in a blue jersey volunteered as guide and that was satisfactory. Supplies? There were none, except a few drinking nuts, but they would catch me some fish.

Having sent Kabogo out with the local man to have a look at the surrounding country, I had a try at the fishing without success; then, after an early bath finished off with a pint of fresh water obtained by much use of alum on the local supply, Kabogo came in to report.

He said the bush was very thick, so that they had come on three elephants very close without being able to see them. They had seen one fine lesser kudu buck, many dikdik, and innumerable francolin.

Next morning we plugged along the half-moon of yellow beach into the eye of the rising sun, turned left over the dunes after a mile, passed through a small village, and came out on

to a grassy plain half a mile wide with a marsh running through it.

Having made many enquiries about birds for photographing and all to no profit, it was surprising to see quite a lot on the marsh. Woolly-necked storks and sacred ibis were doing their usual slow march, peering mournfully down into the grass in search of frogs and grasshoppers; greenshanks and plover flew up and circled piping about us. And in a small patch of water at the top was a flock of about thirty white-faced tree duck, of which I had yet no picture.

Using a clump of bush which grew near the water as cover, I got to within 20 yards of them, suddenly showed myself, and brought off a reasonably good picture of them rising, with some sacred ibis beyond them. Then I told Kabogo to come back that afternoon and hollow out a hide in the clump for use next morning.

We walked on, passed through a short belt of bush and found fresh elephant droppings; then came on another smaller marsh, where two snow-white yellow-billed egrets defeated my efforts at a picture. Turning west and south, we did an hour through bush so thick as to be almost impossible for hunting, but had one piece of luck. In a little open glade two dikdik bucks were fighting, and were so intent on their quarrel that I got to within less than the length of a cricket pitch and took several pictures, whose interest lay in the fact that they revealed that the tuft of dark hair on this tiny antelope's forehead is erectile, standing up like a shaving brush when they are excited. These were the first photographs worth having that I had ever got of these midgets which stand 12 inches at the shoulder and weigh less than a hare; and, although I have known them well for many years, I had never discovered that particular feature.

The species here, and for far into the interior, is Kirk's dikdik, which is very like Phillips' dikdik of Somaliland, though larger. Salt's is the intermediate species geographically,

and is the smallest of all, while Gunther's, which is grey and has the nose produced into a small trunk almost like a tapir's, is the largest of the family, and is very local over most of the Horn of Africa.

Having seen the rather tame finish of the battle, which had been interrupted several times for a rest between rounds, and which left neither combatant even bruised, we went on, and ten minutes later saw a clump of thick stuff 30 yards ahead looking curiously solid. Going down on my tummy, I made out the feet of three elephants; probably two cows and a half-grown calf, and almost certainly the same as those my two helpers had met the previous evening.

Skirting them carefully, with a passing curse for fouling our water, we turned eastward to reach again our first little marsh, then walked up to the village through a troop of most impertinent baboons, some forty or fifty strong. I remarked that the leopards did not seem to be doing their job properly, and got the doleful answer that the baboons would let no crops grow, and the lions had plenty of buck to eat and would not bother about them.

Just short of the village I got a nice picture of a pair of olive bee-eaters perched side by side on a bare twig, then went on to the sea edge of the sandhills, where I photographed a curious flower, the flower spike rather like that of a snap-dragon. It was yellow and a foot high, and was growing in the loose sand within 10 yards of high-water mark. The name is *Cistanche philipene*.

We sat down for a while opposite a glorious view. We were in the centre of a shallow curve of golden beach, its tips, a mile away on either side, clothed with a mass of coco-nut palms, whose leaves were forced upright by the monsoon gale. Across a mile of white-capped blue sea rose the long, green island of Kiwaiyu, edged with dark rock faces streamered with creepers. Beyond the island's northern point a little cape thrust out seaward towards it, and was joined lightly to the cliffs by a

furlong of black jagged reef over which the monsoon rollers burst with a continuous roar, then flooded shoreward in acres of seething foam, with just one narrow channel of heaving but unbroken water to show the way out to the open sea in days of calm weather.

We trudged homeward in a blazing sun over soft sand, picking up a few of the delicately coloured shells scattered between the tidemarks, and a drinking nut was most welcome on getting there.

Next morning I was in the hide just after sunrise, and sent the two boys to the far end of the marsh with orders to walk very slowly up on either side, so that the birds would be driven towards me and, I hoped, would settle on the bit of water in front of the hide.

A cattle egret was the first to come flapping slowly and settle in the water; then it was joined by a fine yellow-billed egret, snow-white but for its yellow bill and black legs, and almost the largest of its tribe. As it stood beside the little cattle egret I pressed the release and at that very moment another yellow-bill came floating down in a graceful curve with spread wings to join the first two birds, so that I was quite certain that I had had a wonderful bit of luck and got him in flight; but when I developed there was no trace of him on the negative, only the first two, so I must have been just a little previous. Still, I had changed the slide round quickly and got a good one of all three. This time they heard the shutter, turned to spot me through the opening, and were off.

The woolly-necked storks, which are very aptly named, would not play, and kept out of range, while the sacred ibis flew right over the hide to have a look at it, then settled 50 yards behind me, which was deliberately aggravating.

There was no profit in staying after eight o'clock, so we did another round through the bush on a slightly different line, getting a glimpse of lesser kudu and bushbuck.

Every day it was the same. We went out at dawn, walked

slowly and carefully through the bush, jumping lesser kudu and bushbuck every so often; but there was never a chance of a photograph. The trouble was that the bush had too many other inhabitants: little monkeys suddenly appeared, peering in half-standing pose from the tops of low bushes, then diving into the greenery; troops of baboons barked at us from the tops of sandhills; every 100 yards we put up a few bush partridge which whirred off with a clatter, and when it was not these, it was the handsome, red-necked francolin, which rose with harsh cackles to warn every animal within a quarter of a mile. There were some interesting butterflies, but the photography was mostly done around camp. The pied crows (Plate 54), which are ever on the look-out for scraps from the kitchen, gave some fun, and were much more difficult to get than I thought they would be. They disliked the camera intensely, the first glimpse of its black eye sending them off with harsh caws for a couple of hours. Eventually they fell for some dikdik entrails put out as bait.

Once a grand martial eagle arrived most unexpectedly to perch on the high-water heap of sea-wrack, and I just failed to get his picture after a careful stalk through the coco-nut palms. They are magnificent birds, dark-brown head, back, and mantle, with the light underparts thickly spotted with dark brown, and the inveterate enemies of my inveterate enemies—monkeys. They are fairly common near my house at 6,000 feet, but this was the first I had seen at sea-level.

The seashore provided plenty of amusement, even though fishing was not a success. The sand was covered with little crabs, about one to the square foot in places, each carrying an enormous red, blue, or white claw, quite as big as its body, and held across its face (if a crab has a face) with the eyes peeping over on stalks. Behind this shield the other small claw would be busy bringing up food to the mouth with a motion as regular as that of a coffee mill, while the little beast stood in water a quarter of an inch deep. When frightened they ran quickly to

holes in the sand, going inside, but usually leaving the great claw lying across the top as a warning. This bit of bluff did not seem to work with their own kind; for sometimes a fugitive would come to an occupied hole and pinch the tenant until it retired farther down, when the newcomer settled in on top of it, again with the big claw outside.

In a shallow pool I found a large, reddish-brown crab (Plate 53), of build so sturdy that it reminded me of the chess-board "rook" which stood up to me with both claws ready for a scrap, like a two-handed boxer; and once, while I was fishing knee-deep, a very big crab, quite 10 inches across the carapace, swam past me like something out of a bad dream. I say like a bad dream, for it was bright green, and bright-green weed trailed from every joint of its swimming paddles.

Sometimes the headman would bring in a crayfish, and usually a few fish every day, so that we fed well on these and the partridges and dikdik which spoilt so many stalks: a fitting revenge. The water trouble was always with us, but drinking nuts were a good substitute, though, for internal reasons, they could not be enjoyed without limit.

In the hotter hours of the day the sounds around were pleasant to listen to, even the harsh cawing of the crows fitting in with the distant roar of the surf. The musical chuckle of the laughing dove was heard at any hour of the day, while the green-spotted wood dove mourned that "My mother is dead! My father is dead! All my relations are dead! And my heart goes dum, dum, dum, dum."

There were few sea-birds, an occasional party of sooty Hemprich's gulls and terns passing along the channel, while once a flamingo flapped awkwardly past. All day came the pleasant yelping of the fishing eagles on Kiwaiyu, and with the glasses it was easy to see their white heads and capes contrasting with the rich chestnut and black of the rest of their plumage. They have marvellous eyesight, and can fly straight to a fish that they have spotted on the surface more than 500 yards away.

Our last morning in the bush was the climax of our stay. We started out along a narrow little path through very thick bush, and about half a mile from the village came on the very fresh tracks of a herd of buffalo. Two minutes later on we began to cross a strip of knee-high grass when a movement on the left caught my eye. There were four lions staring at us over the grass, the nearest a fine male, only about 30 yards away. The other three—a big lioness and two almost full-grown cubs—turned away and trotted off almost immediately; but the old boy went on staring for about fifteen seconds, then frowned at me, turned about and went off leisurely. He scorned to go into the nearest cover and carried on right to the end of the grass before disappearing, quite sure, I suppose, that I would not be so rude as to shoot him up from behind.

I put up the glasses as he went, and the ripple of his great back muscles was a fine sight. The other three were noticeably light in colour, but the old fellow was darker than usual, having patches on shoulder and sides which looked as if someone had thrown a lot of sticky black sand at him. He was so completely maneless that I could not see a single hair which gave even the indication of the beginning of one.

The party had evidently been following up the buffalo herd on the chance of picking up a lagging calf, and it was probably just as well that we had not come right on top of them in the thickest part of the bush. Almost always it is being taken by surprise at close quarters which makes animals attack when unwounded.

That evening Lamu's only "motor launch" arrived, bringing a friend in the Game Department who was on control work and expected to have to spend a couple of months shooting elephants around the villages farther north. The launch was an old ship's lifeboat with a small screw (too small for her) fitted through the sternpost, while her owner was a tall, square-bearded Arab whose enterprise was bringing him in quite a lot of money.

We left at 9 a.m., giving a lift to a couple of policemen and a man with a damaged leg who wanted to get to hospital at Lamu. A stiff wind and heavy clouds presaged a rough passage.

We got it rough all right, and before we got to the open stretch between Patta and Manda there was some doubt as to whether we should not bivouac on shore for the night. However, the captain and owner decided that we should probably get there safely "inshallah"; so having thrown the ultimate responsibility on the Almighty, we staggered across with a head sea hitting the bow a terrific bang every so often. Still, a ship's lifeboat is pretty sturdy as a rule, and though it was thoroughly uncomfortable (it rained nearly all the way), we did the trip in eight hours. At the end of it I was more than ever convinced that the proportion of sea to land on this earth is far too great.

I have written much about the local people without describing them. All along this stretch of coast the inhabitants call themselves Arabs, but are mostly very black and decidedly negroid in appearance. They are, except for the Lamu traders and dhow owners, of very mixed origin—often ascribable to the slave trade—while the villages up the Tana show the same traces of foreign ancestry.

Piracy and slavery flourished for many years on this coast after slaving became illegal, and the great Captain Morgan is said to have had a secret lair among the islands, which are certainly well suited to such enterprises. He is said to have held a British naval commission at times, and to have eventually fallen a victim to his inability to distinguish when he was covered by a legal cloak or was just a bloody pirate.

The slaves were mostly captured up Abyssinia way, marched across the desert to the Tana—a big percentage was lost through thirst—then brought down on rafts or boats and collected in Lamu or on neighbouring islands. The market was mainly in India and the Persian Gulf, and the present State Forces of Hyderabad include a guard originally recruited in this way.

The Somalis are quite apart in origin, habits, and language, being a nomad people who wander looking for grazing for their flocks and herds; while the *karias*, or smallest tribal communities, are housed in huts of curved sticks, over which are spread woven grass mats, both being carried on the *karia* camels.

Having spent three years in British Somaliland, much of it with only Somalis as companions, I got to like these cheerful but at times very irritating people. They tell lies just for fun, often to see how much one will swallow; but they are brave with wild animals, though no good as regular soldiers, since, though very hardy, they are difficult to discipline. They cover great distances on foot without food or water.

The southern Somalis of the north side of the Tana are not so hardy, but hunting with them is great fun. They supply much of the beef which goes down to Mombasa, the cattle marching 250 miles through tsetse-fly country, after being inoculated with "Stibophen." I saw this being done at Ijara, and we hope that the temporary immunity which brings them fit and fat to the far end may, with improved serum, eventually confer on them a permanent immunity that will solve our greatest African problem, and open great areas of Africa to humans and their cattle.

The Tana, from its sources to the sea, is a most interesting river, though I know only the north side well; but it has made an impression on me which makes me hope for more journeys along it with the camera; in particular to study the bird life of some of the little lakes near its mouth.

CHAPTER TEN

Marsabit

After the run down the escarpment, if one passes Isiolo and goes straight on northward instead of turning eastward for Somalia and the coast, the Guaso Nyiro river is reached at 21 miles, there being a good bridge and the scattered remains of Archer's Post. The river is here about 30 yards wide when full, swirling over a rocky bed through dom palms, eventually to lose itself in the Lorian Swamp some 100 miles lower down. Its water seems to be invariably a turgid yellow; it holds a few mud-fish and crocodiles, while hippo live in the bigger pools.

From Isiolo to Marsabit is 150 miles, with the Laisamis wells a little more than half-way between the two, and up to this point the road is all through bush and ravine country, with some deep sandy-bottomed gullies to negotiate. Giraffe, oryx, Grant's gazelle, gerenuk, and Grevy's zebra are sure to be seen, with a possibility of lion and rhino. Gerenuk are most difficult animals to photograph, because, furnished as they are with unusually long legs and necks, they move behind a bush on seeing or hearing one, then a head like a bead peers over the top. Enough seen, the gerenuk puts down its head and runs along out of sight with legs asprawl and body lowered, and the next thing one sees is the head popping up 100 yards farther on like a bead on a stick. Even if they are caught napping and one gets a chance of making an exposure, the background of twisted branches is liable to turn the result into a sort of puzzle picture.

Gerenuk have many points of zoological interest, as well as a third name—Waller's gazelle. They are reddish brown on the back and sides; then comes a distinct horizontal line below which the colour is much lighter. But they definitely lack the khaki and white "counter-shading" or very light belly below khaki with a black line dividing the coloration horizontally to break the pattern, which is the normal uniform of the gazelle tribe. The majority of gazelles live in open country and are grazers, whereas the gerenuk is a browser and lives in bush at all times, feeding mainly on the smaller acacia bushes whose new green leaves they reach by standing on their hind legs with the forefeet resting on the top of the bush, before reaching over to crop the new growth. Also they have the skull produced backwards with the cranium of such solid bone that their scientific name is *Lithocranius walleri*, or "Waller's stone-skull." It is worth noting that all these aberrant features are reproduced in the rather smaller dibatag or Clarke's gazelle (*Ammodorcas clarkei*) of the Somaliland interior, though the latter's colour is french grey and their horns curve forward like a reed buck's. The dibatag is also a browser and lives in bush.

Scientists, when unable to account for aberrant features by a theory that will cover the known facts, are apt to term such animals "accidents," which simply means that the man of science does not know; though why he should be reluctant to confess it seems to show overweening conceit in his own accomplishments. I refuse to believe that accidents have not been eliminated in the course of millions of years of steady development, and feel sure that environment, and diet in particular, have much more to do with such "accidents" than pure chance.

Laisamis wells are a group of holes in the rock which contain water at the far end, and it has mostly to be lifted out by scoops and poured into troughs from which the local Rendille flocks and herds quench their thirst. The bushes have

mainly been cut or eaten down, and there are masses of white stone all around, so that the glare at midday is terrific. The first time I went there I saw a row of fifteen rhinoceros skulls arranged on a big rock at the north end of the wells, and found that they had belonged to unfortunate pachyderms which had got stuck in the narrow entrances to the wells and died there.

There had been a bad drought, and the elephant and rhino used to wait their turn at the water, keeping their distance at about 150 yards, then moved down to drink in orderly fashion as soon as the humans and their flocks were done. The elephants had a big advantage over the rhino, in that their trunks would reach the water in most of the wells, and consequently there were no tragedies among them. Fifteen miles from Laisamis, at Merille, elephants had dug holes in the dry river-bed up to 5 feet deep to get at the water which accumulates in potholes at the outside of bends during flooding by storms, the sand and debris then covering them up.

Just beyond Laisamis one enters the Hor Desert, and has a 30-mile drive in blazing heat across sand and low scrub. Ostrich and oryx are common here, and also the yellow-throated francolin, which are such delicious eating. As one crosses the Hor the wide mass of Marsabit Mountain stands up like a huge inverted pudding-bowl, and the car begins to climb its rocky slopes straight from the flat of the desert, gradually rising by long switchbacks through fairly open grass and bush until Marsabit Forest is entered 7 or 8 miles from this little and remote station.

The chief interest from the zoologist's point of view is that Marsabit, being an isolated mountain mass, has to some extent an "island" fauna, but the traveller's interest is mainly in the great craters dotted all around it. Marsabit station lies at about 5,000 feet above sea-level, but the mountain rises another 1,000 feet above it, is capped with dense forest down to the 5,000-foot level and then comes bush and grass.

Water is the chief difficulty for the three officials who are

stationed there, as the spring which supplies them has a slow flow, and there are police lines and a small bazar to be allowed for. There are other springs up in the forest, but none of them with a strong enough flow to reach the station, and they only serve the elephant and buffalo.

I had been promised lots of elephants at Marsabit, but saw none on the way there, or on my first day. When dining with the District Commissioner on the second day an excited boy came in to say that there was an elephant in the garden eating my host's bananas. We went out, and 50 yards from the house found a big cow elephant calmly chewing the precious bananas, nor did she in the least mind having a torch turned on her at about 25 yards. An Indian elephant would have shown resentment by a charge, and I remonstrated with the District Commissioner, who was not being so foolishly brave as I thought, for he said that there was a deep pit between us and the raider. Eventually we had to leave her in possession.

Only a few months before I wrote this, a small herd of eight elephants began raiding the cornbins in the police lines, and a control officer of the Game Department was sent to deal with them. He shot two the first day, a little outside the lines, then two right on the road leading into the lines, hoping to be able to spare the remaining four. But they came in again, right past the corpses of their comrades, and all had to be shot.

The principal object of my trips to Marsabit was to take photographs of greater kudu, shooting of which is forbidden on Marsabit Mountain and for about 20 miles round it. I made the same two camps on each occasion.

The first was about 7 miles north, in a little gully right up against the lip of a magnificent crater about 1 mile wide and 400 feet deep (Plate 57). This crater is so regular in shape that it looks as if a gigantic flat-bottomed bowl had been pushed into the earth, for the bottom is quite level. The palms at the bottom look like small shrubs, and baboons sitting on the trees half-way down the inside are hard to make out as such. The only game we

found inside were klipspringer, and I got one or two photographs of these delightful little antelope; but there was always such a gale blowing that camera movement was inevitable—even when the camera would be rested on a rock and pressed down firmly with the hand—so the pictures were not up to standard.

To the west of the crater was a wide valley filled with dense bush, and it was here that the kudu lived—or else on the slopes of the hills just beyond. Several days' hunting failed to show a good bull on either trip, and I never even made an exposure on a kudu. Rhino, of course, interfered in the bush, and there were Grevy's zebra feeding on the slopes of the next crater to the west, their tails tucked well in as they presented their sterns to the howling wind.

North of camp was an open plain of tussocky grass and rock, very rough walking, where, having sat down unobserved on a grassy commanding hillock, I saw the remarkable sight of three Rendille youths running down a female Grant's gazelle on foot. I would not have believed this possible, but their steady, sure-footed lope carried them with long strides over the rough surface, forced the gazelle into going faster than it wanted to, and it was the four-footed animal which did the stumbling and not the bipeds. The latter kept the gazelle turning and running inside a wide circle, themselves well spread out, and had got it so tired that they were closing in upon it. It would have been dead very shortly if I had not fired a shot over the heads of the hunters, making them go off like rockets for their camp.

Walking round the lip of the crater, I twice came close on puff adders lying beside the slight game trail (Plate 64), the cold wind making my eyes water before I spotted the brutes. I photographed the first one, and in focusing suddenly found myself again much too close to the business end, for the adder did not move at all and the markings of the head so camouflaged it that it practically disappeared in the reflex finder. I got a good picture, full of detail, and the camouflage of the snake's head

is illustrated by the photograph, the head being quite difficult to see, though obvious when pointed out. It would seem that this ability to conceal itself is a great help to the puff adder in getting food, for it can wait until some small animal comes along the game trail beside which it lies, and though the rat or mouse would halt on catching sight of the body, the head, much nearer to the prey, would do its job. Although very sluggish when lying in wait like this, puff adders are very swift in striking. Their poison fangs are very large, the tips projecting well below the upper lips, and they run to over 6 feet in length. My machine-gunners killed one in Somaliland which was 6 feet 3 inches in length and had a whole adult hare inside it; while two of 5 feet 11 inches and 6 feet 1 inch respectively have been killed in recent years on an estate in the Loldaiga Hills. They are mostly patterned black and yellow, but there is also a terra-cotta variety that is fairly common by Mount Kenya, and usually seen by the mountain streams.

Having failed to get greater kudu pictures at this first camp on either trip, we then shifted to Gof Bengole, a most remarkable crater about 30 miles from Marsabit. One reaches it by going back along the main road for 23 miles, then turning off east for about 7 miles over very rough and overgrown track to a grassy ledge under a big hill on the left, where a slight rise on the right of the track gives no clue to what lies just beyond it. Walk 30 yards to the top of this little rise, and you are right on the lip of the crater, which is well over a mile across and some 500 feet deep. The sides are covered with dense bush, mostly thorns, and all round the bottom is a 15-foot belt of fine wait-a-bit thorn, almost impenetrable by man. In the centre is a small marsh peopled with duck and other waterbirds, and it is long odds that there will be elephants bathing in the patch of open water at the centre.

After marvelling at this great crater, one drives on through high forest to camp, a mile and a half farther, in a patch of big trees at the hither edge of a little valley that holds a tiny trickle

of water, which fills weedy pools and small marshes at every check.

The camp is "boma'd" by cutting down a few trees to keep rhino from blundering into it at night, for there are plenty of them about, also buffalo.

One evening eleven elephants came down to drink at the stream, unfortunately too late for a photograph, and one was a most unusual-looking cow. She was very tall—very nearly as tall as the herd bull—and was the thinnest of her tribe that I have ever seen, looking like a collection of bones barely covered by the hide. Her tusks were half as long again as were those of the average cow, were very thin, and curved up and over like those of a mammoth, the points directed back towards the top of the head. She looked fearfully emaciated, yet had a very healthy calf about three years old running with her. Even allowing that she had some wasting ailment, the peculiar growth of the tusks must have begun several years before the calf was born. It was nearly dark by the time I went back to camp and the elephants were still drinking leisurely, while up to midnight we heard trumpet blares showing that they were still close by.

The first time I went to Gof Bengole I saw the finest elephant I have ever seen or am likely to see. He was with another bull at about nine o'clock in the morning, feeding slowly along the south side of the crater just above the belt of wait-a-bit thorn. The smaller bull was a good one, carrying at least 80 pounds of ivory a side, but he looked quite small beside the other, whose every step forward was preceded by a heave of his head to lift his tusks clear of the undergrowth. When they came to a small gully, the big fellow shuffled slowly down into it, then heaved up his tusks to lay them on the top of the far bank, shuffled slowly half-way up, then another heave, and his tusks were resting on their tips farther on, while he himself reached the top of the bank only with a distinct effort. I put his ivory at 200 pounds a side, and wondered at so great an animal being handicapped by these overgrown masses. I tried to get



PLATE 57. ONE OF THE BIG MARSABIT CRATERS

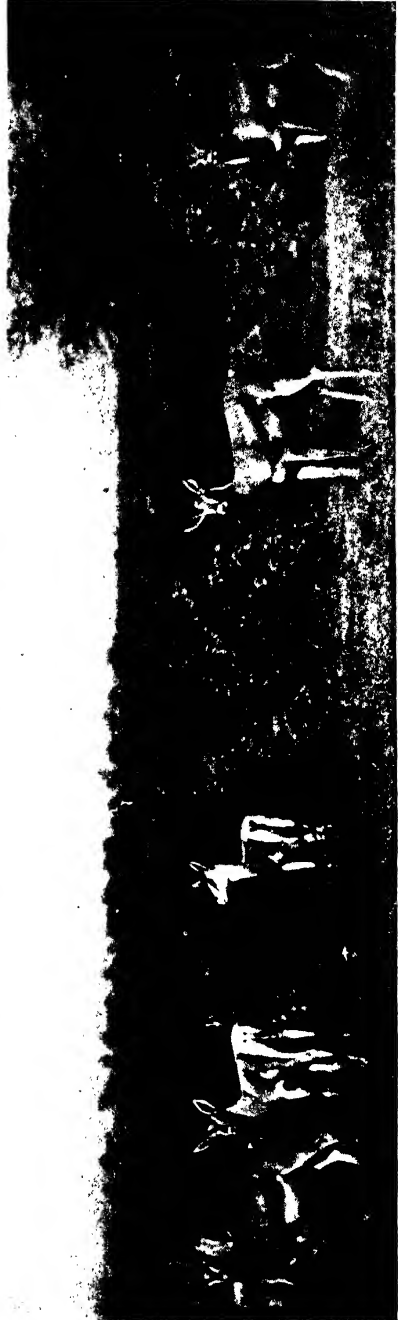


PLATE 58. GRANT'S GAZELLE, MASAI COUNTRY
The buck on the left has horns like those of the Sommering's Gazelle of Somaliland.



PLATE 59. A FINE GRANT'S GAZELLE. MASAI COUNTRY
Horns with wide spread.

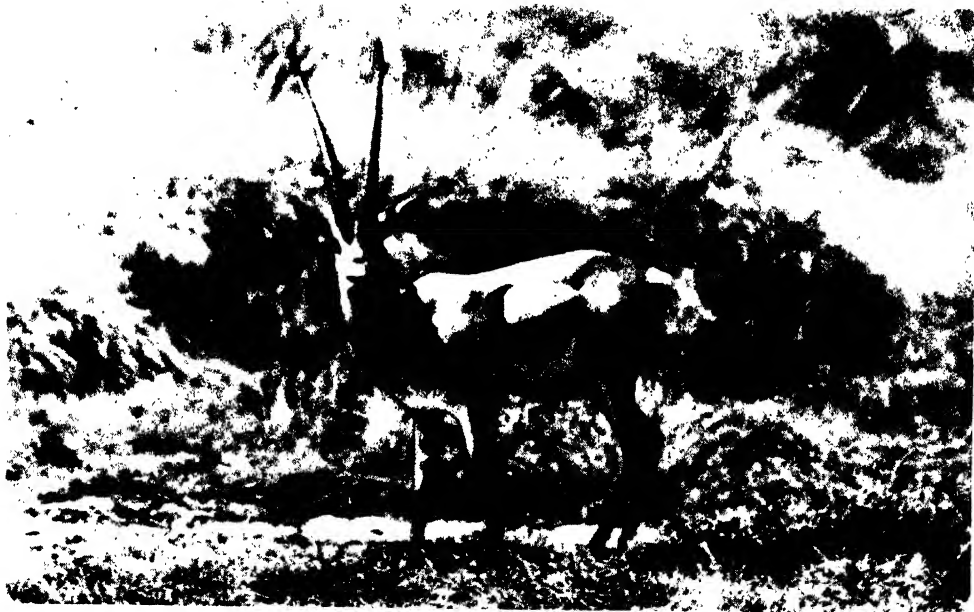


PLATE 60. GRANT'S GAZELLE, NORTHERN FRONTIER DISTRICT OF KENYA
Horns almost parallel and the same as those of "Peters' Gazelle" of the coastal country.

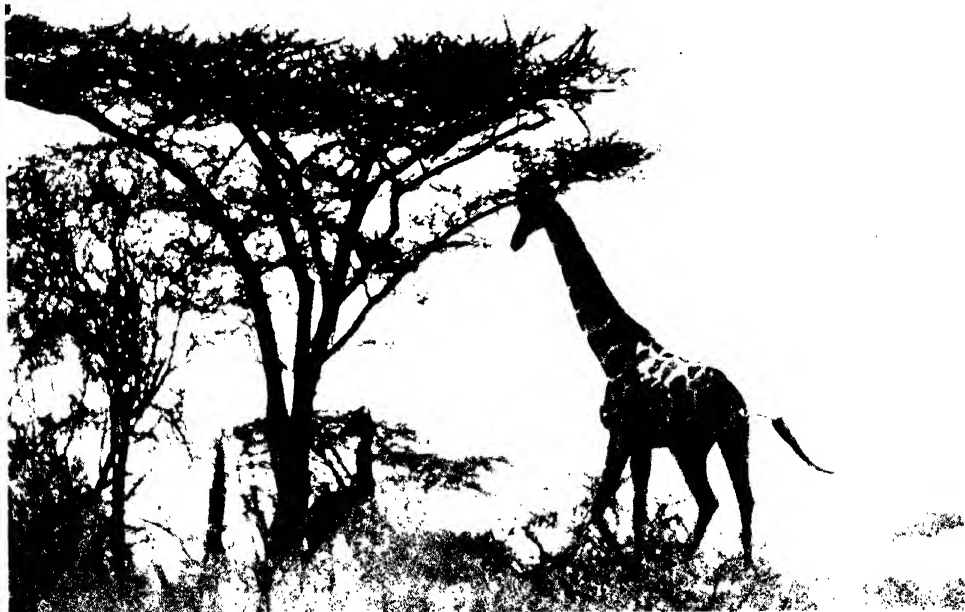


PLATE 61. A RETICULATED GIRAFFE GOES OFF



PLATE 62. AN OLD COCK OSTRICH
Most wary and an extremely difficult subject for the camera.



PLATE 63. A MALE GERENUK OR
GIRAFFE GAZELLE

Long-legged and long-necked, they can reach over the top of umbrella acacias by standing on their hind legs, and so get at fresh growth unreachable by other gazelles.

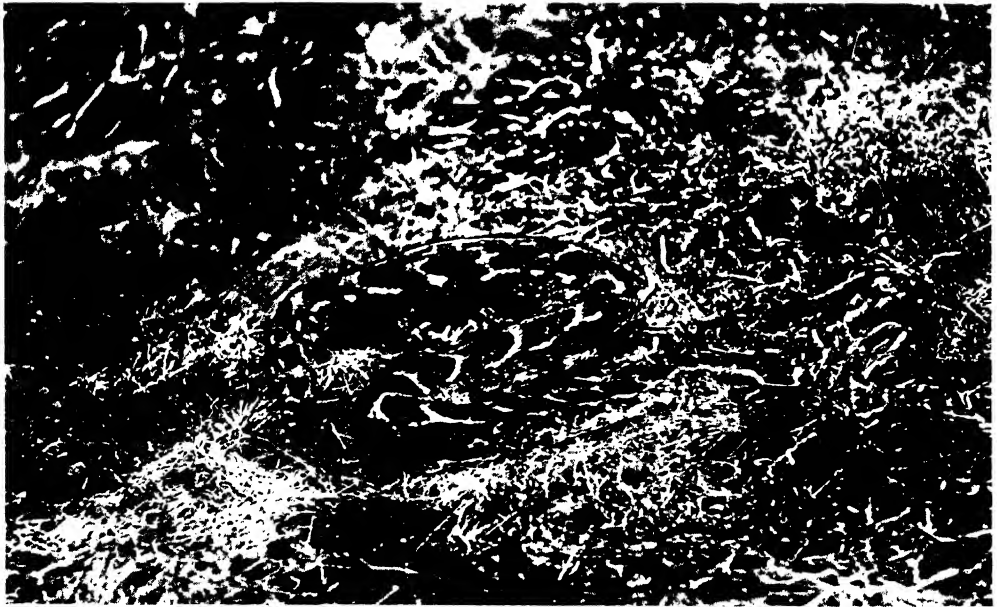


PLATE 64. A PUFF ADDER LYING BY A GAME PATH IN THE EARLY MORNING
The head, which is nearest the camera, is so well camouflaged as to be almost invisible, so that a field rat or other small mammal is within reach when it stops on spotting the snake's body.

down to the elephant for a photograph, but the thorns defeated me, and 200 yards' distance from them was the nearest I could reach, and there I sat on a big rock and watched with the glasses until they disappeared into the high thorn. An hour's wait showed nothing more of them—only an occasional swirl in the tops of the thick stuff—and I gave it up, hoping to find them again next morning in a better place for a stalk, but never saw them again.

I have been down to the bottom of the crater, but only to the edge of the wait-a-bit, which I found quite impenetrable without cutting. It was very hard work, and the climb back by a different route in the windless heat was most exhausting, while the presence of rhino and buffalo did not add to the enjoyment. Once nine elephants appeared suddenly below us, their backs swimming along in a sea of twigs, with only an occasional gleam of white from their ivory, and within 50 yards they had again disappeared entirely. Two-thirds of the way up was a small spring, the ground all round poached into thick mud by the feet of wild animals, mostly buffalo and rhino, for bushbuck and duiker were the only antelope.

I took some interesting butterflies here, including the two forms of *Charaxes zoolina*, both of which I took on the same bush. These two forms, one light creamy green and the other reddish brown, were supposed to be seasonal, but as I again took them together at the west end of the Loldaigas this cannot be so.

A day was spent in trying the valley both above and below camp, but troops of baboons were so numerous that their barking must have warned everything to clear out long before we got near, and rhino were all we saw. We tried the more open grassy slopes above the crater for greater kudu, and the same thing happened there, though, judging by tracks, the kudu seem to feed there mostly at night. There cannot have been many of them, for having often hunted them in Somaliland and in consequence knowing a good deal about their ways, I could find very few traces of them in places where they would almost certainly have been had there been more than a widely scattered few.

One unusual photograph I got was of the big Stanley bustard. All bustards are very shy and hard to get near, but I saw this one feeding slowly through scattered bush down below an easy slope, and, after a careful stalk, covered the gap through which I thought he would pass. I guessed right, for he walked disdainfully across it within five minutes and was duly bagged.

On the return journey of the first trip I took water in the car and camped at the near edge of the Hor for a night, just below the hill. In the night a rhino passed and, on going to look at its tracks before breakfast, I found a hedgehog that had been squashed flat under the rhino's foot. Next trip we camped for the night 20 miles south of Laisamis, and the same thing happened again. I suppose the unfortunate hedgehog hears the rhino coming, curls up for safety, then knows nothing when the great beast puts its foot on it, while the rhino is probably equally unaware that it has trodden on anything unusual.

We saw one fine sight as we crossed the desert, a very large herd of young ostriches, about sixty as near as I could count. They were led by an old cock, and an old hen brought up the tail of the "crocodile"; but it was obvious that these two could not be parents of the whole lot, so I had a look round with the glasses and saw half a dozen old birds scattered around the flock at about 300 yards' range, evidently as flank guards. I have found an ostrich nest with over forty eggs in it, but nearly half were so scattered round the margin that the bird could not possibly have covered them. The hen sits by day and the cock by night, thus getting the greatest protection from their colour, the hen being grey and the cock black. Lions have a decided liking for ostrich, and were very troublesome when ostrich farming was a Kenya industry, breaking in to kill several birds at a time. These large collections of eggs must be the work of several birds, and the seventeen off which I put a hen in the middle Guaso Nyiro valley is far more likely to represent the normal clutch for a single pair of birds.

At the camp south of Laisamis I was trying a new bit of ground as a speculation, thinking it looked promising from the road, though I could hardly have said why, since there were no tracks showing on the road itself. How one gets these hunches is not to be explained. There was a dry watercourse there, so I tried above camp, and soon found that I had struck something good. After passing fresh rhino tracks and jumping a herd of oryx, we came on yesterday's tracks of three bull elephants, which we took up to see where they had fed. This was in a grove of big acacias and, after trying north from there and finding no tracks, I made a wide cast through a lot of rock and bush where hyrax were bolting all over the place, sometimes taking refuge in the most meagre cover that afforded no more than partial concealment. It was the first time that I have seen them away from a fair-sized hill or rock outcrop.

The cast was veering due east, when I suddenly saw a puff of dust go up 300 yards ahead and made straight for it, to come on three bulls standing about kicking up dust with their forefeet, then taking it up in their trunks to blow over their backs. They were awkwardly placed for both wind and sun, so we made another slight cast to right this, and they very kindly moved our way while we were doing it. The wind being direct from the rising sun was unlucky, as I wanted colour pictures of them, and for these one must have direct light on the subject, and I should have been winded for a certainty if I had manoeuvred for it. However, I got as favourable an angle as I could, and exposed a couple, then took out the gelatine filter from between the lenses and reloaded with ordinary monochrome. These filters have to be inserted for Dufaycolor, a different one for each packet of films; but as these cut films (not roll films) give a much truer picture for colour, and are not at all glaring like most colour films, they are well worth it at most times. This time I had no sooner got the camera ready than the three bulls moved to just the place where I could have got an excellent picture. However, I got two good negatives,

and was thankful for those, as they made a fine picture with the big acacias arching over them. All three elephants had very fair ivory for that part of the world, where big tusks are not found as a rule, but in the best photograph the centre bull has one tusk mostly hidden by a bush, and the number of people who remark on seeing the photograph that "That old warrior has broken a tusk fighting" is quite extraordinary.

It was most noteworthy that there was no water near where I found these animals, though the leaves were still fairly green from the short rains. Yet that could not matter to oryx and Grant's gazelle, which would not travel far for water, and which are grazers whose food was already almost dried up. It certainly could not help rock hyrax and hedgehogs, which must be independent of water. This seems most remarkable with hedgehogs, which, being insectivorous, can get little moisture from their diet.

I shot a Grant's gazelle next day for meat and also for the specimen. It was a good buck with $24\frac{1}{2}$ -inch horns, and should have belonged to the race *G. g. brighti*, in which the horns are fairly well separated, widening out to lyre shape according to the books. But these horns were quite parallel, as were those of several which came to the waterholes on the other side of the Guaso Nyiro. This horn shape is supposed to be characteristic of the coast race, *G. g. petersi*, which shows how little shape of horns can be relied on for determining specific and racial differences.

I am sure that Soemmering's gazelle of Somaliland and the Red Sea coast is merely a race of *G. granti*. The horns are shorter and turn in more at the tips, and this feature is accentuated as one nears the coast of the Red Sea, where I have shot them very short and thick with the points actually crossing in one or two. The horns of the aoul, or *Gazella soemmeringi*, are reproduced in the immature *Granti* buck (Plate 58), even right down in the Masai country, so that on walking into a man's camp down there and seeing two heads of immature

bucks lying on the ground, I very nearly asked him where he had shot the aoul. They were both about 18 inches long and replicas of most big aoul heads. The body characteristics are almost identical in both species, and such differences (cited in books as racial) as to the amount by which the buff body-colour invades the white patch of the stern are purely individual.

The last two days of the trip we camped on the south side of the Guaso Nyiro, opposite Archer's Post, and I walked a good way up to look for some lion that had passed along the bank, but without success. I had also hoped to get hippo photographs at a pool higher up, but two Dutchmen had just been poaching there for the hides and teeth, so I was again defeated.

It was just above Archer's Post that an Indian, fishing for catfish with offal as bait, caught the record Kenya trout of 16 pounds, although he did not even know what he had caught. Here, too, is the lowest altitude at which a rainbow trout has been taken in Kenya. At almost the lowest farm on the Guaso Nyiro, though still at about 5,000 feet, the farmer's cook one day brought in a lovely 6-pound trout, wanting to know what kind of fish it was. He had been washing the cooking pots as usual when the trout came swimming up for scraps, so he hit it on the head with his bush knife.

Near Archer's Post I had a nasty trick played on me. Seeing a big flock of vulturine guineafowl 100 yards away in the bush, I decided to get out of the car and fill the larder. Just as I pulled up a large party of Boran came along the road, men, women, children, and cattle, who stopped to watch me shoot. After the usual stern chase I returned with a couple of birds, and they all moved off while we tied the guineafowl to the roof. Fifty yards on a loud hissing indicated a flat tyre, and I found that a carefully sharpened bit of wood about 4 inches long had pierced the cover and tube badly: it had evidently been placed there, one point against the tyre and the other on the ground, so that it would go in as soon as I drove on. The boy I had left with the car remembered shooing off an urchin who had been

bending down under the car on the side farthest from him, but had been too busy watching me take hard exercise to see what the little brute had been after, and had thought no more of it. I wish I had caught that youngster.

Tyres are always an anxiety in the Northern Frontier District, for they suffer greatly from the heat, and of course one is entirely dependent on the spares one carries. The Indian traders who run lorries there know all about tyre pressures, and let out air twice in a morning, but the African driver is often too proud or too lazy to bother himself, even when told to do it, and I was once badly held up by a driver of this sort, in a hired lorry, who just did not listen and who, when we had three bad bursts, told me they always had tyres blown up to 100 pounds in his garage, and that I did not know what I was talking about. He was sorry for that.

On that trip, too, I saw two lorries disabled by the sump hitting rocks in the sandy bed of a gully, the wheels sinking in and reducing clearance. I have twice had a yard of my exhaust pipe cut off by a sharp stone flying up and almost completely severing it. I often think that the invention of the internal-combustion engine was one of the greatest misfortunes that has befallen mankind.

Guineafowl are one's staple diet in the Northern Frontier District, the vulturine in particular, and one finds them in large flocks far from water, often sheltering from the heat of the midday sun under roadside bushes, when one cartridge may produce half a dozen for the pot.

Francolin and black-bellied florican are also a great standby, and in June it is a fine sight to watch the florican cocks fly up to about 60 feet, then spiral down with outspread wings in the nuptial flight. Sandgrouse are only spasmodic occurrences, and in war years hardly worthy of a cartridge. One gets a very nice sense of values in such matters and soon gives up the quite futile idea of shooting birds for sport on a long safari. Even in these days of motor transport one marches on one's belly.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Lorogi Plateau

Mount Kenya is about 15 miles north-east of my house, with Nanyuki and railhead just over its left shoulder 25 miles away: but by turning off left-handed a mile after reaching the main highway, and taking a cross-country road for 10 miles, I reach the Nyeri-Rumuruti road, which runs along the east flank of the Aberdares and across the Laikipia Plateau.

This road is over pleasant hilly country, and just before the Ngobit trout stream is reached there is a wide bushy hollow in which I have on three occasions seen a cock ostrich giving his courting display. There is another place, 100 miles to the east, where I have twice seen this sight, and it seems as if the birds go to the same place for their performance, for I have seen the display nowhere else, except twice on the plains between, and again in one limited area. But this last patch has many ostriches, and I am often there, so it would be expected that these displays would occur, whereas at the other two places I have only seen ostriches when giving their performance.

It is a very fine sight, for the cock, which normally shows but a mere fringe of white amongst the black of the body, erects his gorgeous snowy plumes in two fountains on either side and backs them with equally lovely tail feathers—so that one no longer wonders at the beautiful plumes on sale in big shops and whose natural existence one was beginning to doubt.

The cock then crouches with bent legs and sways around the hen with his body rocking from side to side and the lovely plumes waving in slow curves. Each time I have tried to photograph this I have failed owing to the presence of another cock, and twice, by the presence of two, which seemed to be keeping watch while awaiting their turn to show off.

At 70 miles Rumuruti with its three white officials, six shops, and a petrol pump, is reached—both before getting there and after leaving it there are plenty of little notice-boards bearing the names of settlers farming in the district—until about 30 miles out the Northern Game Reserve is entered. This has of late years been a game reserve in name only, for it was the chief source of the biltong that went to feed the African employees of various factories which sprang up in war-time, and also the numerous camps of evacuees and prisoners of war which were scattered all over Kenya. So one saw temporary camps at many places along the road, with frames erected on which were drying thick strips of buffalo or antelope meat.

The result is that when one gets to the first little marsh called Sugota Mugie, 40 miles from Rumuruti, there is not a living game animal to be seen, though the couple of acres of coarse grass and open shallow water is delightfully peopled with many birds.

The first time I went to this bit of country was in the first week of October, and I have since visited it during the latter half of December and the end of January, and each time the bird life has been very different in several ways.

In October few migrants had arrived from the north, and the birds of the marsh were mostly permanent residents. The level of the water was higher by about 6 inches than in December, and this made the deeper part of the water useless as feeding-grounds, and all the birds were crowded over amongst the pools and grasses of the north side, so that the end of a shallow arm of open water was densely populated when first I arrived. I noted sacred ibis, egyptian geese, dabchick, hottentot teal,

stilt, and blacksmith plover, all within 20 square yards; while on the south edge there were only four great spurwing geese, a grey heron, and four wood ibis, all of which are long-legged birds able to feed in 9 inches of water; while the teal and yellow-billed ducks that came on my later visit were only able to up-end and reach the bottom when the depth was down by 3 inches.

Ten miles on is another little marsh—Sugota Marmar—and the great pits made by elephants' feet are everywhere along its margin. A little farther and the country opens out to rolling plains, with Grant's and Thomson's gazelle grazing here and there and Burchell's zebra also fairly common. I had expected to see Grevy's zebra up here, and had been told that they were common enough to be a nuisance, but I neither saw nor heard one, though their strangled neighing is very different from the high barking of the Burchell's.

Thirteen miles from Sugota there suddenly appears a great depression on the right, with a varying amount of water in it. This is Lake Kisima, and throughout the day there are long strings of Samburu cattle watering there, pushing far out into the shallow water that may be either barely five acres or twenty in extent. At night, elephant, rhino, and buffalo come down to water, and there is a big rock on which the adventurous may sit and see dim black masses moving around, to the usual accompaniment of trumpeting, snorts, and bellows. I have not tried this, for I would much rather be in bed; moreover the size of the rock does not seem to me to guarantee the safety of a watcher to any marked degree.

A dozen miles beyond Lake Kisima is Maralal, the small administrative centre for the Samburu tribe, where elephants occasionally walk through the little bunch of native shops.

The wife of the Stock Inspector there was once giving the morning orders to her cook and, as he was constantly looking past her shoulder, reproved him for his inattention. "But, *mem-sahib*," he protested, "there is an elephant just behind

you." And there was: an angry cow whose calf had fallen into the waterhole a furlong away, and had already got a Samburu spear through her trunk. She had to be shot.

My objective was the Seya Valley, so I turned right just north of Kisima and, after a dozen miles over a vilely bumpy and often indistinct track, left it to take the car across-country for a mile to where a gleam of water showed 200 feet below.

The first time, I reached the place at about one o'clock, and had lunch by the water, intending to camp just there on a nice little flat shaded by a big tree with a kite's nest 50 feet up, over the edge of which a fluffy youngster peered every now and then. But a short walk was enough to show that to stay there was quite out of the question, for there were the fresh tracks and droppings of elephant within 50 yards, while rhino seemed to make the stream bank a regular walking-out ground; so we shifted back 200 yards up the slope and camped on open ground as free of the tracks of large animals as we could find. There was a high stockade round a couple of huts on the far side of the valley, and it turned out that these buildings belonged to an ex-soldier, a Somali sergeant-major of the 6th King's African Rifles, who had been three years with me in that battalion. But since Somalis are far from nervous of wild animals, the height and strength of the defences seemed to indicate a possibility of unwanted visitors, so we gathered plenty of fuel for a camp fire. It was needed.

Two rhino passed, and, dinner eaten, bedtime came peacefully, save for the distant grunts of a party of lions; then, a little after midnight, these noises were a great deal closer, passed by the stockade on the opposite side of the valley, and came straight for camp, where they became snuffling angry murmurings. I went out with the rifle, and could see four dim shapes moving round in the bright moonlight too close for comfort, so lit a lamp and placed it on a table in front of the tentpole, and these tactics made the party of lions, on whose beat we had camped, move off, grumbling their opinion of

finding their country simply littered with humans. The camp fire, made with brittle acacia wood, was almost out.

Leaving the lighted lamp, I went back to bed, and was dropping off to sleep again when two loud snorts close by brought me out a second time, and two rhino loomed up within 40 yards, staring at the light, then shifted closer as I arrived. Rhino will at times charge a light, so I hastily doused the lamp, then shouted loudly, and they turned slowly and walked uphill past the tents.

Up at five, Kabogo and I left at dawn, walking down the valley over the low spurs 100 feet above the river to look for the pool I had been told about, where the Seya stream is held up by a natural rock barrier before cascading down 1,000 feet to the plains below. We had gone about a mile over two spurs, and the sun was just rising when Kabogo pointed to a long slope of bush well down the far side of the valley and said, "Is that a rock or an elephant?" The glasses soon showed it to be a fine bull elephant feeding quietly in 6-foot bush (Plate 70). It was a worth-while subject for the camera; but the wind was all wrong, and we had to walk down our side, until we got well below and east of him, before fording the river to climb round above him.

We soon sighted the pool we were looking for and made straight for it to ford the bottom end when, just as we got to some low reeds, there was an upheaval amongst them, almost at our feet, and we both leapt back exclaiming "Crocodile!" Five yards out the waters parted, and up came the great head of a bull hippo with water streaming from his open mouth and a pair of canines showing, which made us retire still farther; then he gave a deep sigh and submerged, a wedge-shaped ripple showing his progress under water and upstream.

This was a great surprise, as I had heard nothing of there being hippo here, and I shall have a good deal more to say about them.

We forded the stream, plugged up the long slope to the

east of the elephant, got a little above him, left the camera case, then worked down to within 60 yards and got the camera ready. Another 25 yards and I was within range, but had to make my exposures whenever the bull lifted his tusks clear of the bush, as he was half-buried in it. The first two films had been in the camera overlong, so I took a couple more from a slide handed to me by Kabogo, having one very uneasy moment when the wind suddenly changed to south-east (as it does most days in eastern Kenya) and whirled fitfully round my head for a minute or so before settling down. The bull stopped feeding, took a step or two towards us, and began trying for our wind with uplifted trunk. But it had only been a momentary taint, and he moved to another clump of bush to begin feeding on its lower side.

We went back to the camera case and began to pack up, but as I was returning the exposed slides to their compartment I noticed the number on the second one. "Kabogo, from which side did you give me this double slide?" His face fell and he murmured, "Sorry, Bwana." He had taken an empty slide from the wrong compartment; the first two were quite untrustworthy, and the job had to be done all over again.

There is always a great sense of relief after getting done with the photographing of any dangerous animal; my boots had hardened from wading the stream and were hurting my feet, so I was decidedly disgruntled. Still, having now got so far with a fine 80-pound bull, I must see it through and back we went. It was half an hour before I could make an exposure, the light was getting worse owing to cloud, and the bull's position was not nearly so good; but I did get one good photograph showing his ivory as he lifted his head, and that was the only one of the lot; for the first two were perished through hot weather, and the pair to this last effort failed to show his tusks.

While we were busy several cheerful bellows from the stream below denoted hippo showing their *joie de vivre*, and it was evident that there were several there to be taken on with the camera.

Our only other elephant was spotted by Kabogo as we came back two evenings later from working the southern slopes of the valley below the escarpment, and next morning, before sunrise, we started high up the slopes on our side, where he had been feeding at dusk the night before. He was down in the valley by the stream amongst a lot of acacias, in an impossible place for photography, but very kindly moved across the water after we had watched for a few minutes. As we hurried down to get a picture he was moving from tree to tree, feeling high up with his trunk at the fresher branches; then just as I got within range and focused on him, he hooked his trunk over a fork, raised his head, and leant forward until throat and chest rested against the main stem of the 40-foot acacia, then pushed with his hind legs. The tree crashed to the ground, and he stood over it meditatively for several minutes before beginning to feed.

I have often seen elephants push over trees in India and Burma, and they had invariably done it with their foreheads as the propelling agents, so I thought that, as I had pushed the button at exactly the right moment, I had got a unique photograph. It was the only one of eight taken that morning that was ruined by a leaky slide and fogged. The animal photographer's life is a very hard one.

Just before the elephant began feeding on the topmost twigs of his tree, Kabogo nudged me and pointed to where a herd of buffalo was coming steadily down the slope behind him, so that I got a photograph of them and the elephant on the same negatives: that was some compensation for the first disappointment. Moving closer in, I ended the morning with a couple of exposures of the elephant at close range, then left him peacefully raking bundles of most unpleasant-looking thorns into a capacious mouth, to be chewed slowly and with evident appreciation.

I had shifted the camp the second afternoon, for the rhino had returned and been slightly threatening, while the lions had

again expressed their vocal displeasure at finding us still there; and, though an old rhino was walking up the hill as we came over the first ridge in the early morning, his were the only tracks in that gully, and I picked a nice site on a small flat beside the central bush-filled ravine, at a place where no game tracks came directly through it. The rhino came along every evening while we were there, snorted and stared at the tents from the far side of the gully, then passed down to the water quite peaceably. Fifteen months later we camped at the same spot, and this ritual was repeated each night. But by then he had got a ladylove with him.

This second camp was a mile nearer our ground and we set off on the third morning to see if the hippo would be kind enough to show out of the water, but, instead, found a family party of pa, ma, and a half-grown child in a string of pools 200 yards above the one where we had disturbed the bull on the first day. They were very wary, and the banks being overgrown with grass and bushes, getting good pictures was most difficult. The first stalk I made I rose up within a dozen yards and thought I had got a good picture of the two adults, but a long blade of grass was right across each great head, ruining that of the cow, and relegating that of the bull into the "passable" category only. But I did get some very interesting data about their power of staying under water, which was much less than I had thought. It was easy to follow the string of fine bubbles that rose as they walked along the bottom, and then time the appearance of the double black ring of the nostrils, which were almost always protruded just under an overhanging branch or bit of drifting weed. Several times I missed the appearance of the nostrils owing to the skill with which they were hidden, and only took times of which I was quite certain. The maximum was $4\frac{1}{2}$ minutes, but the average was about $2\frac{1}{2}$. Trying the same timing on Lake Victoria, I had thought the underwater period to be much longer, but must have failed much more often to see the nostrils appear at the surface.

Once while waiting for the bull to come up, I suddenly saw the cow looking coyly at me from under some overhanging grass by the far bank and got quite a pleasing picture (Plate 69).

There was a solitary old bull a mile higher upstream, whom we bumped into while hunting butterflies one day, getting rather a shock, as we at first thought him to be a rhino; but he went off quite peaceably. He was on the bank in thick grass, and we never saw the others out of the water.

The real interest came when we returned fifteen months later. I had purposely come when the stream would be dry, and arrived on Boxing Day to find only a series of stagnant pools, none of them deep enough to cover a hippo; but a little investigation showed plenty of hippo tracks in the riverbed, mingled with those of rhino and elephant, and just as many higher up the hillsides.

We had occupied the same camp site and, as there had been thundershowers quite recently, the gully beside it was full of new green bush. At midnight on the first night I was woken by a violent jerking of the tent, then heard slobbery chewing outside, which I did not recognise as elephant, rhino, or buffalo, so went out with the torch. The beam fell on the broad wet back of a hippo feeding within 10 yards. I shouted, and he ambled off downhill, where I could hear him reach a pool in the river. Next evening he turned up again, and on the third he came up to camp five times from different directions, making a curious noise like "bub, bub, bub..." repeated several times, and which I had not heard before.

The third morning we went to photograph a small herd of buffalo which had been feeding in the valley below the escarpment the evening before, and, on reaching the pool at the lip, turned left-handed (and north-east) up an old elephant track to reach the top of a big spur that would take us to the ground. Turning off at the col on the top, Kabogo heard something coming along the track towards us and called me back. We were about 200 feet above the lip of the escarpment, and 600

feet above the valley below, while the hillside was very rocky and covered with 10-foot thorn, so were surprised to see a three-quarter-grown hippo padding along the track towards us. The camera was produced, and I went round to cover a small open bit which I thought it was sure to cross, but was heard, and the hippo turned off the track into the thick bush just above it, then continued on its way, padding along fast with chin almost touching the ground.

I made another try to head him off, but got caught up in the thorns and lost him.

That hippo was obviously migrating up from the low ground, and from plenty of water to almost none at all except for drinking, so there could be no surer proof that they depend not on water but on green food.

Our fourth and last night there was dreadful.

It had rained as we arrived and everything in the camp had got wet and never dried, as there were heavy showers every hour or so: it was also very cold—38 degrees in the tent verandah.

At dinner-time on the last evening, the soup was just arriving when our hippo came strolling up to camp in the last of the light. I shooed him away. The two rhino arrived at nine o'clock, just as I was getting into bed, and I shoo'd them away. At midnight the hippo came back, and I did some more shooing. At 4 a.m. a leopard chased some impala into camp and then started a series of raucous grunts just across the gully, and at five a party of zebra came clattering downhill, followed by a full chorus from a hunting party of lions. Going out in the wet and cold with a double rifle had made me stiff and weary, so with early tea I said we were leaving, especially as there were 5 miles of black cotton soil behind us which would be quite impassable if there were more rain.

I was just about to wash at 7 a.m. and was clad only in the top half of my pyjamas when Kabogo rushed up and pointed to our hippo nuisance standing right out on the bare bank immediately below us. In spite of Kabogo's urgent demands, I had



PLATE 65. THE BUFFALO ARRIVING TO DRINK AT SUNRISE



PLATE 66. THE HERD WELL PACKED ALONG THE EDGE OF THE POOL.



PLATE 67. THE HERD BULL AND HIS PROBABLE SUCCESSOR COME INTO THE WATER
AS DRINKING ENDS



PLATE 68. THE GREAT HERD BULL SEES THE REST OF THE HERD LEAVE THE WATER

to get some clothes on, but was after him in five minutes, tracked him up for a mile, and then lost him in a thick patch of grass and thorn.

The buffalo in the valley were on view every day, with the exception of the first, and gave me a grand series of pictures.

The first time we met was while photographing the hippo, and Kabogo began making hissing noises at me from 30 yards behind. He pointed to the herd (sixty-four strong) coming down slowly to a drift 100 yards above us, and I went off to try to photograph them, thinking that they would stop to drink. But they passed straight through, and we found ourselves facing them at about 60 yards in light thorn: most awkward stuff, as it has innumerable trailing branches that obstruct photography and any fast movement by a clothed human, whilst it provides no cover against offensively minded large animals.

The herd saw us at once, and a big bull and an old cow moved out in front as we halted. I then tried to cross above them to their right, but had to turn back, as they too had started that way. I turned again, just as they also started back. It was like two men meeting on the pavement and having a sort of war dance before passing. This happened again, and I was getting rather nervous, for, though they meant no harm, we were between them and the thick cover in which they were going to spend the hot hours of the day, and might stampede over us to get there. So I turned my back on them and, followed by Kabogo, walked straight uphill for 150 yards, then down on a slant, and passed the other side of them. They turned and stared, while the old bull and the cow came right through the herd to take up covering positions as we passed, but made no offensive movement, and drifted away on their lawful occasions.

Next day they came down to the same drift while I was photographing the second elephant, and I naturally thought that they would come that way again, so devoted our last morning to them.

We spotted them at sunrise feeding at the top of the

bushy slopes of the southern crest, so went down to the drift feeling sure that good pictures were almost in the bag. Some time was spent in clearing branches and scratching out a makeshift hide on the bank downwind of the drift, and we had just finished when I saw that they were coming down the ridge towards the next drift below, at the last pool by the edge of the escarpment.

A steady double through the bush above brought me to an outcrop of big rocks above the pool, then a crawl down the east side took me to the final little hillock of boulders and thorn, and, much scratched, I got my first picture just as they were coming into the pool, a fine bull leading. Then they all came hurrying down (Plate 65), crowding into the water until they were packed from end to end of the far bank and within my camera's angle of vision. The rising sun behind me lit up their backs and horns, while a pair of egyptian geese watched the drinking herd from our bank.

It was a chance that I would hardly have dared dream of, for only once before have I seen buffalo drink in daylight, and that was at half-past five in the evening: they nearly always drink in the dark, then graze back to their feeding-grounds, and I had never seen a photograph of a herd drinking.

I got my second photograph just as the line was filled to capacity (Plate 66), then another as they began to lift their heads, and a fourth as the great herd bull moved out into the middle, followed by his probable successor as chieftain (Plate 67). I made this exposure a second too soon, for as I pressed the release, the younger bull moved forward and laid his chin affectionately on the old fellow's rump. Whatever might be their rivalry a year later, they were certainly on good terms then.

Then a party moved across and began to come out on our side, so we had to shift farther back. I got them as they came out and three bulls led a slow procession up the slope; but the last to leave the water was that grand old herd bull, with massive bosses to his horns, who stayed to see them all out

(Plate 68). The rearguard of a dozen passed me into the thick stuff, the old fellow in the centre, and two young bulls behind him, leaving me with delightful memories of one of my best mornings with wild beasts.

I was sure that I had got good results, was tired of being woken every night by rhino, and had kept a few films for birds, so went straight back to camp, packed up, and at one o'clock I was lunching in an acacia grove at Sugota Mugie, while the tents were being pitched in their shade. In the evening we made a hide at the end of the arm of water on our side of the marsh, and the boys finished it in the morning as I drank my early tea.

Sugota Mugie provided a great contrast. For one thing there was no wind, and I had endured just on a week of howling gale and dust. Then I had had eight hours' sleep, unbroken by snorting rhino or roaring lions, only waking once to hear, drowsily, the clamour of geese welcoming newcomers in the moonlight.

The cool air demanded a thick woolly as I sat in a camp chair, tea, biscuits, and fruit on the table, the glasses constantly raised to look at the birds on the marsh; for the ground sloped gently away to the dark-green grass on our side, with the glittering shallow water beyond.

The boys were still hauling green branches to the hide, so the birds were all on the far bank, preening and resting, four great spur-winged geese conspicuous among them, these latter almost certainly the newcomers of the night. When I had passed on the way up there were mostly egyptian geese and sacred ibis, with a few cape widgeon, bar-tailed godwit, and glossy ibis among them; while two sombre hammerhead storks had paced the bank. There had been blacksmith plover, stilts, both green and common sandpiper patrolling the edge of the water, while a grey heron hunched gawkily at the edge of the reeds, and a party of eight marabou stood solemnly in ungainly meditation.

Now some of these birds were missing, the glossy ibis in

particular; but I did not regret the marabou, of which I already had pictures, while a notable addition was a party of four wood ibis. These, to my mind, though scientifically called *Ibis ibis*, are storks, and, to the untutored mind, bear some resemblance to our black-and-white bringers of babies, though rather more ungainly, with large yellow bills, and the lower half of the back apparently sprinkled with a weak solution of permanganate.

Breakfast was taken to the sound of cooing doves, the lovely sight of a long-winged pallid harrier tilting and wheeling just in front of the camp—a symphony in grey against the blue of the sky—and the vociferous demands of two species of gorgeous blue glossy starlings, which demanded to be fed and were. Just before I left for the hide I saw a small brown and ash-coloured bird, with a long thinnish bill and a short square tail, creeping about the underside of the acacia branches above me. The book was searched, and it was identified as the slender-billed honeyguide—quite new to me.

On getting to the hide, large flocks of Delamere's whydahs rose from the reeds, some of the cocks furnished with ridiculously long and floppy black tails; but most, being young birds, had only the gaudy orange patches relieving the black. The hens are inconspicuous in dark and sober brown. The very long tails of the cocks make it impossible for them to fly directly into a high wind, and it is most remarkable to see them take off, and, using the wind by flying into it at an angle, fetch up at their tree by a steady backward and controlled drift.

Settled on a camp stool in the hide, the telephoto lens focused on the edge of the water, I had a good look at my prospective subjects still gathered on the far bank. The wood ibis were resting in the middle—one of them in that curious pose with the legs folded under the body, which makes long-legged birds look unnaturally ugly—and on either side of them were duck, both species of geese, and sacred ibis; while small waders, unidentifiable at long range, ran about the shore picking up food.

The first arrival was a common sandpiper, which pitched on the mud in front of me, but films were too precious to use on small and uninteresting birds. Then a wood ibis flew across, lighted on the reeds half-way down the channel, and was followed by a sacred ibis. "Too far," I thought, when the bigger birds came to the edge of the water; "anyway, it's sure to come closer, as they were right here yesterday." Half an hour later it flew away, taking the other three with it, and I saw them no more. Gather ye rosebuds while ye may!

Then that grey heron pitched too far on my right, eight sacred ibis arrived on the short green grass not 10 yards behind the hide, and were joined by a solitary egyptian goose. These all set to preening themselves, and went on doing so for the next hour, to my annoyance, while I almost acquired a permanent squint trying to watch them through holes in the greenery which would only fit one eye. Over an hour gone and no pictures.

Then came a stilt, to begin feeding just where I wanted him, but with such sudden twists and turns as he spotted minute water animals that it took me half an hour to get my exposure. It caught him beautifully, sideways on, with one long crimson leg lifting as he peered into the shallows.

A minute later a blacksmith plover ran to the edge to watch the other black-and-white bird and I got them both. Then three more blacksmiths arrived, making the curious clinking cries, like a busy smithy, which give them their name, and I bagged all four in a row.

A pair of egyptian geese, which had been swimming doubtfully about the entrance to the channel, suddenly made up their minds, swam straight towards me, and landed; so that I got a good picture of one on land and one on shore before they hurried to the lone one behind me and all three began to feed greedily on the waterplants, pulling off the tops at a great pace.

Still no sacred ibis, and I screwed my neck round to watch

the party behind me. Some were still preening, but a couple had begun to feed in their dejected, short-sighted way, making towards the ground under command of the camera. They came with maddening slowness and, to ease my neck and eyesight, I turned round to look at the channel. There was a fine sacred ibis, arrived from nowhere, standing just where I wanted him. He stretched to his full height, giving a lovely pose, I pressed the button, and got my first picture of a much-wanted species.

I had used as many films as I could spare and it was near noon, but I stayed a little longer. There came a cheery, triple-noted whistle that I had not heard for many months, as a greenshank pitched 5 yards left of the hide, then the gentle "puff" of another bird landing, and I craned round to see a bar-tailed godwit just beyond the greenshank; both old friends of many Indian jheels, and the latter rare in Kenya.

I left the hide to the tune of angry clamour from rising geese, harsh croaks from the departing heron, and the everlasting "clink, clink" of the blacksmith plover, while a neat little wheatear escorted me to my tent as the first heavy drops of a passing thunder-storm began to fall.

The rain cooled the air enough to develop my negatives after tea. No duds.

I went home next day, but with the intention of coming back when the migrants from the north were most likely to be there, so that December 20th found me again in camp under the acacias for afternoon tea, and with ample time to spare.

The water birds had not greatly altered at first sight, though hottentot teal, red-billed teal, and yellow-billed duck had taken the place of the cape widgeon; but the bush around simply swarmed with guineafowl and two species of francolin, while a little searching in a grove 500 yards east of us showed a red-tailed buzzard's nest containing two well-grown youngsters, and a hammerhead stork's nest in the process of construction and now nearly finished.

I decided on four hides: reconstruction of the old one

which was now too far from the water; a second on the far edge of the open water; a third at a small pond a mile farther down, and a fourth for the buzzards. We finished one that evening.

The early morning of every day was wonderful. Pack after pack of guineafowl came down from the bush to feed on the flats round the marsh, until there must have been about seven hundred of them running about from scratching to scratching, raising clouds of dust, and bobbing up and down like feathered footballs as they fought spasmodically and hastily on meeting, then ran off to continue feeding. Their metallic cackling was like the rattling of tin cans, and they never ceased running through the haze of their dust lit by the rising sun. With their noise came the sonorous "mah-hoong" of the spur-winged geese, the petulant "car ankh" of the gypsies, and the yatter of ducks, while two pairs of crowned cranes added their loud long-drawn-out "ow-wow." By the camp came the coucal's liquid bubbling, like water flowing out of a bottle, up the scale and down, and the screaming of both parents and young buzzards never ceased. It was really cold in the early morning, below forty inside the tent, while it was never too hot to develop negatives.

The open water on the south side being now shallow enough to allow all but the very smallest waders to reach the bottom, I got a few photographs from the old hide, a little treble-banded sand plover giving the best chances; but the solitary stilt walked right up to stare at me and gave me another good one. Then two crowned cranes came parading out of the grass behind and, by gently breaking off twigs to make a new hole, were duly put on record.

The best bit of luck was with a wood ibis which came for half a morning and was the only one to turn up. It fed across the open water of the channel, and the result shows its curious bill with just a slight downward bend at the end. Almost at the same time the heron gave me a long shot at the far edge of

the reeds, and gave a better result than I could really have hoped for.

There was one disaster. I had some very fast plates with which I tried a few flight pictures. Two of these plates had been broken in the packet and, in loading inside the changing-bag by touch, I did not detect that the fine glass powder had got into the next pair, the result being that a first-class shot of plover flying was covered with tiny holes, though fortunately not on the actual birds, and spotting has mended much of the damage.

In the evening a slow walk through the bush trying to head off guineafowl resulted in a couple of passable negatives of them rising; but they persisted in getting right up into the eye of the setting sun, which was hopeless for photography.

The hide farther down the valley produced a couple of pictures of hottentot teal; though this hide had to be given up, for it was not in view from camp and the cattle would eat it. They came down in hundreds to water at noon, and stayed for about three hours, and the hides seemed to have an irresistible attraction for them. If they had contented themselves with browsing gently on the outer twigs it would not have greatly mattered, but they usually seized a branch and walked away with it for a few feet until the whole hide was strewn about the shore. The hide by the buzzards' nest was also useless, first, because Kabogo, trying to get it higher, put it on top of some rocks which made setting up a tripod impossible; and secondly, because, after reconstruction, when we tried to cut away a little of the branches of the flat-topped acacia, the biggest buzzard youngster took to laboured flight, and was not to be found again, though it was back on a neighbouring tree next day. The last morning, before going on to the Seya Valley, I found a hammerhead stork busy depositing small sticks on the enormous mass of its nest about 50 yards from the buzzards', so marked that down for our return to Sugota Mugie.

On Christmas Eve I went over to have a sundowner with some friends who were passing through and had camped near-

by, getting back about eight o'clock. On going into the tent I noticed a nasty smell, but took it to be the result of annoying one or two "corpse" ants—big fellows which have the power to eject an evil-smelling fluid. I had dinner and went to bed at nine, after first looking round in a fruitless attempt to locate the source of the nastiness, then got into bed, kicking off my slippers just beside it. The smell seemed worse, so I got out again with the torch, shuffling my feet into my slippers, and examined the lunch basket to see if anything unpleasant had been left in it. No result, and I got back into bed.

Then it struck me that the smell was much worse at the end of the tent nearest to my head, so I leant over and switched on the torch just below the edge of the bed, to reveal a large puff adder, about $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet long, under the bed and within a foot of my hand. When the light came on him he turned and slithered away under the back wall of the tent, leaving me decidedly snake-shocked. Still I went to sleep peacefully; but next morning, on seeing a broad sinuous track, with the dust pushed up an inch at the outside of each bend, leading straight to my tent from the water, I felt quite ill, which is curious.

We went to the Seya Valley camp on Boxing Day, and the events of those four days have already been told, except one. On the first morning I went 60 yards downhill before breakfast, and was turning into the bush of the gully by a game track when something made me look round. There was a bull elephant walking straight towards me, not 40 yards away. Up the hill with a rush to get the rifle out of the tent, by which time he was walking straight over the place where I would have been hidden from him in the 7-foot bush until he was right on top of me, and there would probably have been an obituary notice in the paper, in which I would have had an unfortunate and intimate prominence. He turned uphill at the other side of the gully and came to the level of the camp, to stare at it across the dip, then turned again and continued his march to the lowlands, the slope of the hillside giving him a

nautical roll as he traversed it, to disappear slowly over the next ridge.

I got a bit tired of that camp and was glad to get back to Sugota Mugie.

On return I shifted the hide on the south side of the water about 15 yards eastward and got immediate results.

It blew hard from nine o'clock onwards, so duck feeding on the water were difficult to get, the wavelets nearly hiding them at times, but red-billed teal were added to the bag, and the shore at that end, being sheltered from the wind, gave fine results. Five sacred ibis arrived together and were put on record; then came a flight of ruffs, sandpipers, and green-shanks, which were also added; while six egyptian geese gave a very typical picture of their two sentries posted on mounds while the others fed. The last morning gave the best picture. A spoonbill had arrived the day before and had been carefully watched, then seen at sunrise feeding by the lower pond. Getting into the hide, I sent Kabogo to move the bird up to me, but it flew too far on and pitched at a pool just above the marsh. Another walk round by Kabogo and it flew towards me, to pitch right in front of the camera. I got two good pictures, and it then rose again to fly right away.

The second young buzzard was almost ready to fly when we got back, and on going to the hammerhead's nest we found that it had occupied the top of it and was being fed there by its parents, the rightful owners having been turned out. The older youngster was in a tree near the nest and the noise was incessant, the young birds squealing and the parents answering with harsh screams. A hide was made and, after two hours' waiting, the mother arrived just before sundown, alighted on top of the hammerhead's nest with a rat, and I got a picture of them both, the young bird being on a branch a yard above the nest and turning its back on its mother. When she flew off the young bird came down to eat the rat, taking a little under two minutes to tear it in pieces and finish it.

Within 50 yards of my tent I found a place where yellow-throated francolin came down a little rocky spur on their way to their evening feed, and since a hide gave me some good pictures, I determined to try for some of the crowned guinea-fowl to add to my game birds. Two hides failed, and on the very last evening I made another west of the camp where a flock came down every day. The birds arrived, saw the hide, and fed carefully round the southern edge of the 40-yard flat; but their curiosity had to be satisfied and, after working closer and closer, one bird actually perched on a rock about 10 feet away, and peered in at me, giving me a first-class picture.

We left that camp leisurely after lunch, all negatives having been developed and dried, to try for a picture of the local species of giraffe on the way, so took enough water for the night. Within 10 miles we saw four, about 1,000 yards away, so camped in a gully a little farther on and I went after them with Kabogo, while the other two boys were starting to unload. They were very wary and I only got a long shot, but it showed their colouring of indefinite blotches on a light ground; very different to the neat network of broad white tapes laid over dark liver colour that distinguishes the larger and handsomer reticulated ones from this species (*Giraffa camelopardus*).

We followed the four over the next big rise, and they joined up with seven more, of which two, I was very surprised to see, were a big cow and a half-grown calf of *reticulatus*; these latter were most conspicuous in their much darker colouring, and must have come up from the plains lower down on the east.

I took another long shot, which was a failure, and turned for camp; but noticed four Thomson's gazelle feeding on a slope 300 yards away. With them was a cock ostrich, and as a big grey rock some 10 yards from them seemed to move slightly, I turned the glasses on it and they showed a drowsy bull rhino.

A queer little party, and the last game seen on that trip.

The Loldaigas

The Loldaigas Hills form a long, low barrier across the northern edge of the plateau between Mount Kenya and the Aberdares, overlapping both massifs at each end, and pushing out long spurs into the plains of the Northern Frontier District. The northern Guaso Nyiro river cuts through their western end, then curls round eastward, to disappear eventually in the Lorian Swamp.

The range is about 80 miles long, not counting offshoots and outcrops, the southern flanks and crest of it being settled by stock-farmers all the way along, and it is a haunt of cattle-killing lions most difficult to bring to book because they rarely return to a kill. There are also plenty of buffalo and rhino, but, since there is no high forest—only coarse bush and cedars on the higher crests—there are no elephant, for which relief the farmers give much thanks.

The western end is the best for game, and it was there I made my first safari in these hills, mainly after buffalo, but came back with no pictures of them, though with several of other animals.

I did not know the way; my informants had been vague and unintentionally misleading as to the points of the compass, so, after asking for directions at two farms, we eventually arrived at some temporary waterholes in the bed of a gully by three little rocky hills. We were very tired after eight hours of difficult driving and a good deal of walking.

Having pitched camp and had some food, I was glad to get to bed, while the three boys dossed down in the body of the Chev. "pickup." At ten o'clock we were awakened by terrific roaring from a lion. He was with a couple of mates, and had got up on to a flat rock 80 yards away, with the vertical face of the hill behind him to act as a sounding board, and let drive in fury at finding us camped on his beat. It was hopeless to try to sleep, for the roaring made the whole tent quiver, and seemed about to shake me out of bed, but it lasted only half an hour and they went off. He was back again at midnight to give us another song recital, and again at half-past three, so when we rose at dawn we were short of sleep and decidedly jaded.

However, strong tea and a large breakfast soon put matters right, and we went off to have a look at the country, exploring first the 2 miles between us and the Guaso Nyiro river.

The little hill by which we had camped was the middle one of three, and also the smallest; we had passed along the western foot of the biggest a couple of miles back, and the third was not quite so far to the north, so we went up behind ours to survey the country in between.

Almost immediately we were met by a honeyguide, which fluttered along ahead in the usual way, and induced me to follow it just to test its reputation. Sure enough it led us round and half-way up our hill to two large cracks in the vertical rock face, at which bees were coming and going in great numbers. There was obviously plenty of honey inside, but it was equally obvious that it was not the slightest use trying to get it out of solid rock, so we left the insignificant little brown bird still fluttering in its efforts to draw us back.

Then we found numbers of tortoises. They are normally uncommon in Kenya, but here were about a hundred gathered in half a square mile; why, I do not know. There is an African belief that the tortoise smells just like a lion, and so keeps off its enemies, and prevents elephants and rhino from treading on it. In Siam the Karens say that a tortoise smells just like a tiger,

and one day, shortly after unloading in uninhabited country, and hearing a terrific hullabaloo from my elephants, I ran down into the river-bed beside camp to find all five in a half-circle round a 15-inch tortoise, trumpeting and screaming as if it were a herd of tigers.

Before we reached the next hill we had seen a small herd of eland, some impala, and numerous dikdik in the light bush, and as we neared it there came an outbreak of angry barks from a troop of baboons, which would give away our presence to every beast within a mile; so we climbed the hill, causing a still more furious uproar from the baboons, and sat down on the top to have a look round.

Half a mile due east of us we got a glimpse of the river, swerving west and north round the base of our hill, then vanishing into dense rolling bush a mile to the north-west. The country was all bush, with a few thin patches, and in half a dozen places the heads of giraffe stuck out of the thorn: a most unwelcome sight, for with their great advantage in height in such country they are almost impossible to approach or by-pass, while they warn everything else when they lurch away with rocking-horse gait. Buffalo were what we were mainly after, but so far we had seen no sign of them.

On the way down the hill towards the nearest point of the river, a pair of dikdik drew my attention. They were varying shades of grey all over, larger by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the shoulder than the others we had seen that morning, and I am sure they were Gunther's dikdik, found very locally in Somaliland and farther north, in Kenya. They have the nose produced in a short trunk like a tapir's.

Then we came right on fresh tracks of our three lions of the previous night and, as they had gone down river, which suited us, took them up on the chance of finding a fresh kill. Another half-mile brought us in sight of the water flowing between high, red banks, and we rounded a clump of bush to find a family party of three rhino the other side. The wind was

right and they had not detected us, so the camera was prepared under cover farther back. But when we went forward again they were moving on. We followed; they went into some bush, came out on the river-bank, and went down into the water. Giving them a clear minute, and keeping the far bank well in sight in case they crossed, we then went forward, but found no rhino. They had certainly not come out on our side, for the bank was too steep, and we could see along a straight stretch of river. The bush was thinner on the far side, and sloped up so as to give us a good view over it all, and they certainly were not moving there, so we walked down fast for half a mile looking for tracks: still nothing. They had probably swum and walked far faster than I thought possible, got round the next corner in the minute's law we gave them, then emerged into one of the deep little side gullies and stayed there; but I still cannot understand how we failed to find them.

We had left our lion tracks, but now began to find places where buffalo had watered, so followed the freshest lot of tracks to a square mile of impenetrable thorn-clothed ridges. After working round gently and up a few of the slightly thinner patches, we drew loud snorts and rushes from inside, which brought us up all standing, then to a cautious withdrawal. Climbing a few rocks showed us nothing of interest, and that lot of buffalo were scratched from the photographic programme.

It was really hot by now, so we made our way back to camp in a westerly-southerly circle, seeing nothing but a few warthog.

In the evening we worked along the broad ridge west of camp, so as to have the advantage of the sinking sun behind us on the way back, and came on a single giraffe feeding behind a clump of mixed thorn, grass, and fairly big trees, and thus in a good place for a picture.

The first stage of the stalk was easy, and I was moving round the west edge of the clump, and nearly within range,

when I saw half a dozen guineafowl feeding not 10 yards away on the other side of a little spit of tussocky grass. Normally these were distinctly more difficult subjects than is a giraffe, and it was the first time I had caught them off guard. I altered focus and waited for one to show clear of a tussock. There was a scurry from some grass right at my feet as a hare rushed out, jumped the little tussocky spit, and landed right on top of a guineafowl. The bird flew up screeching, the hare fled on and, as far as I could see, right through the giraffe's legs, and the giraffe itself lurched off into really thick cover. Much entertainment but no photographs.

The slow return journey to camp was unprofitable, except for an impala shot for meat very near home.

That night the old lion gave us a repeat performance, and again we lost our sleep; so, as his tracks were very close to the tents in the morning, I gave him best and shifted camp to beside a pool of rain-water which we had found the day before at the foot of the northern hill. It is wonderful how a car will get about without any roads if one cuts a little bush here and there and has made a previous reconnaissance.

The shift took up the morning, and in the evening we had a misfortune, running right into three buffalo, a big bull and two cows, and sending them off without getting the chance of a photograph. Those were the only buffalo we saw, the rest stayed in their thorny fastnesses during daylight, and camp was shifted three days later to the foot of the southernmost hill without a single photograph in the bag.

Here luck changed unexpectedly.

There was a heavy thunderstorm just as we were going to start up the hill after tea, and it lasted long enough to keep us in: a blessing in disguise, for it kept us from disturbing the ground, and in the evening we could see four pairs of klip-springer perched on big rocks in various places along the mile of broken crest.

Off before sunrise, we reached the top by the time it was

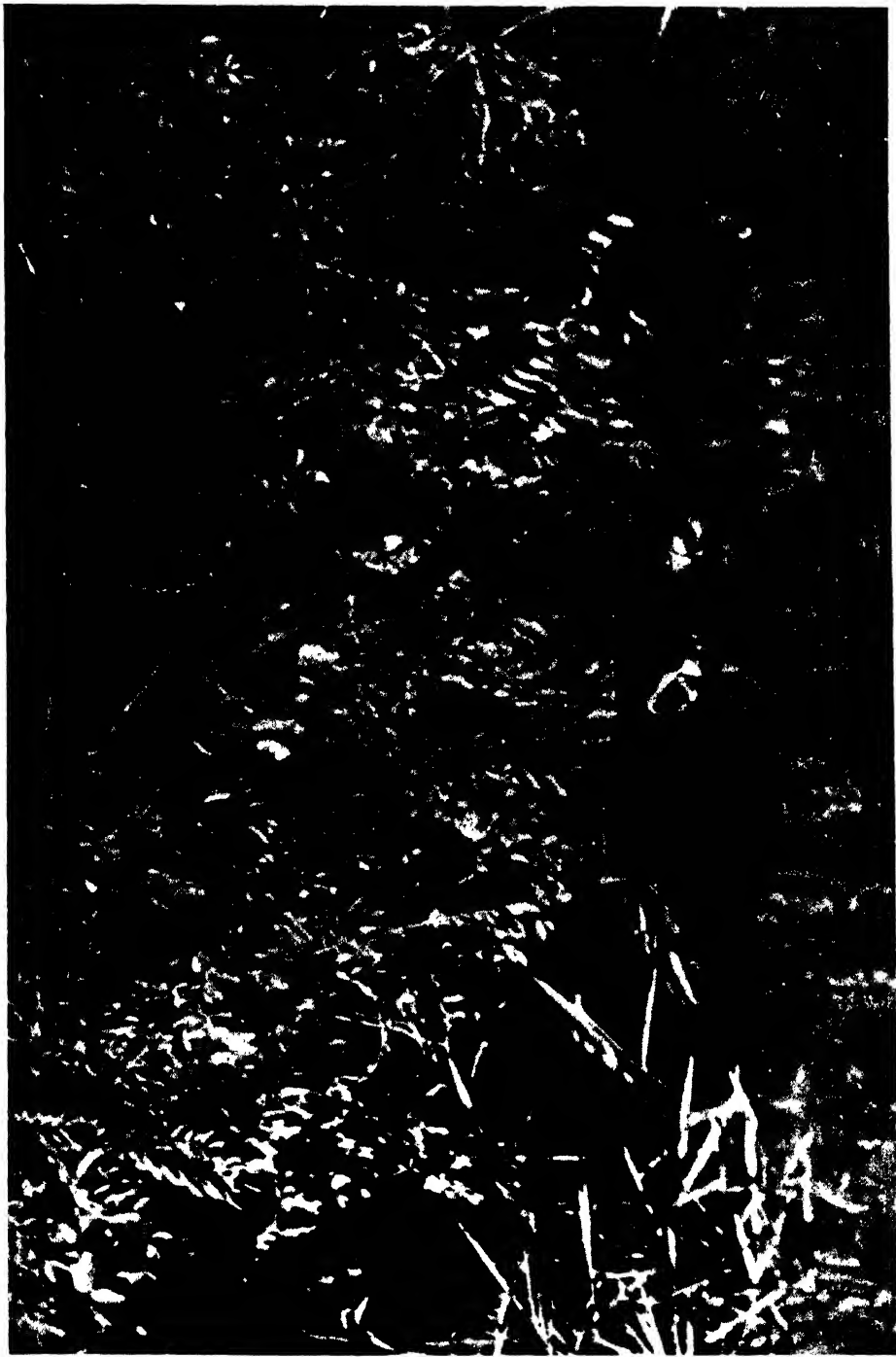


PLATE 69. A HIPPO RISES TO BREATHE UNDER THE OVERHANGING GREENERY



PLATE 70. A BULL ELEPHANT FEEDING IN THE SEVA VALLEY



PLATE 71. A MALE THOMSON'S GAZELLE
The mainstay of the camp kitchen in many parts of Kenya.

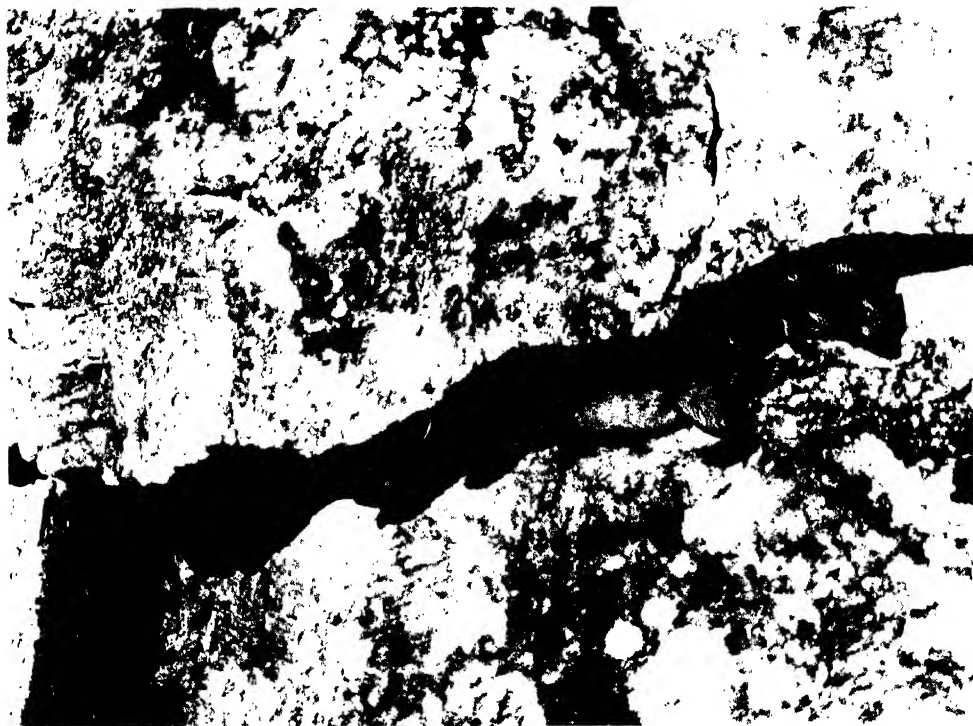


PLATE 72. ROCK HYRAX SUNNING THEMSELVES IN THE EARLY MORNING



PLATE 73. A CHANLER'S REEDBUCK

fully light and took up a good look-out in some rocks at the top. A party of rock hyrax appeared a few yards away, and the old buck perched himself on top of a pointed rock to warm himself in the first rays of the sun. He would not allow the rest of the family up in the warmth, probably telling them that he was keeping watch for them and that there was danger about.

Then a pair of klipspringer hopped up on to a flat-topped rock 100 yards away at the head of the gully we overlooked, and a short stalk brought me to a nice position, with one standing and the other lying down. The shutter clicked as soon as the sun got on them and I thought I had a good picture of unusual subjects. What I did not know was that the buck (which alone has horns) had flicked an ear just as I made the exposure, and created an ugly blur on that side of his head, so ruining the picture.

On to the northern end of the crest, and short look round with the glasses showed five Chanler's reedbuck in a flat-bottomed ravine right below us. The rocks were big, and the thorns fierce, but, much scratched and torn, I got down within range to rest the camera on a big rock, then waited for the only buck to show clear. A short whistle brought him walking out into the middle of the gully, where they had all been licking the soil for potash, and I got him as he stared up at me (Plate 73). They fled like the wind, bounding in a most graceful way over rocks and bushes, their french-grey, slender forms looking lovely in the rainwashed sunlight amongst the greens, greys, and reds of bush and rock.

I climbed the hill back to the two boys and, after some fruit and a bun, we started off to try the east face of the hill, feeling rather pleased with two good photographs apparently in hand.

We came to a vertical rock face, where a big earth-filled crack provided the only means of crossing, and half-way I met a porcupine. No porcupine has any right to be out at 11 a.m.: they are nocturnal beasts. But this one cared nothing

for rules and regulations, nor for me, and advanced, rattling his quills and grunting, so that I had to clamber to a most precarious foothold and hang on while the impertinent brute passed beneath me and the giggling boys. I felt that my stock had gone down right below par after this incident.

Ten minutes farther on I slithered down the top of a great sloping rock to look over the edge, and saw a beautiful sight. Sixty yards below two tall rock pillars thrust up out of the thorns, and on the left-hand one was perched a female klip-springer, while on a little ledge below the top of the other her mate lay in the shade.

Focusing the camera at full extension, I pushed the lens forward just clear of the rock and took a couple of photographs, then changed the slide and waited. An hour later I was still waiting for that horrid little buck to come up on top of his pillar; the female was still standing statue-like on hers, and I was baked by the sun and sodden with sweat.

I gave him ten minutes more, then whistled gently, fearing that he would jump down into the sea of thornbush. But he was a gentleman. He raised his head and listened; then a second low whistle brought him up on to the top of his pillar, to stand hunched on hollow toe-tips like a ballet dancer, and I got two of them both. One of these pictures (the frontispiece of this book) I put as the best I have ever got in composition, rarity, and interest, and it rounded off a very interesting trip most perfectly.

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The next trip to the Loldaigas was to look for greater kudu, of which there are a few on the north side of the hills in one small area only. They are preserved throughout these hills, but that has not prevented their being shot off everywhere else but on one settler's land. His is a very big stock farm carrying many sheep and cattle, where game is not only preserved but

properly kept, so that it does not get out of hand. There are always rhino and buffalo, and lions are very unwelcome and persistent raiders, doing great damage to stock, and are most difficult to kill. One lion which never came back to a carcass lasted over two years and killed several hundred pounds' worth of cattle. The owner of the farm and his wife are both very interested in wild nature, particularly in birds, and the local fauna owes them a lot; while their hospitality goes very far, since not only does it extend to putting up others who are interested, but in actual personal help involving considerable exertion at times.

The settler has only had to shoot one rhino on his farm. This beast came to look on at a children's gymkhana, and was only satisfied with a close view from some very adjacent bushes. So the youngsters were sent up trees, the rifle hurriedly sent for, and *faru* was duly liquidated.

On my first visit, in September, I made two camps but could not find the kudu bull which was known to be about. It was rather like oorial country in the north of India; long ridges patched with bush, grass and boulders springing from a main spine rising about 1,000 feet above the rolling thorn-bush country, and hunting in it was most enjoyable, and brought back memories of many happy days after wild sheep with rifle or camera.

Klipspringer were there in plenty, also Chanler's reed-buck, and I came on beisa oryx, impala, and waterbuck all scattered about the hills, but no kudu. On the third day five greater kudu cows were spotted in a deep ravine, just outside cover, but no amount of watching or careful shifting of position showed me that bull. Still, as I waited at the first place from which I saw them, several little hyrax came out of openings in the rock face just in front of me, and settled down to sun themselves (Plate 72), giving very pleasing pictures, while a rufous rock lizard posed so nicely within 10 feet that he had to be included.

Returning to camp that last morning, we met for the first time with the curious flowers from which the Loldaigas take their name. I am no botanist, as will be seen when I describe them as tall daisies which have had mesalliances with cacti.

I have been back again after that kudu bull, but saw nothing of him. His intelligence system was evidently better than mine, for two days after my departure he was parading blatantly over the very ground which I had searched thoroughly without even seeing a track.

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My third visit to these most interesting hills was to try for some lions which were killing stock. One glimpse of a lioness at about 400 yards was all I got in the first ten days in spite of the opportune arrival of two Dutchmen employed by the Game Department to destroy vermin, and who enlisted the help of a pack of twenty-three various dogs belonging to a compatriot who lived in a small shack a few miles away. We hunted two days with these, but found no lions, though we killed some warthog. The pack were most efficient in dealing with these pests, and on the first day killed three in twenty minutes after lunch, breaking them up and eating them to the last bit of hide in almost magical fashion. It interested me to note that only one dog was slightly cut, in the foreleg, whereas my own alsatians suffer severely when tackling warthog, and there are two reasons for that. Warthog killed by my dogs are invariably tackled in forest, and the undergrowth hampers the dogs' movements, whereas this bobbery pack killed these pig in the open. Then the small dogs piled on to the pig so quickly, seizing ears and hampering any movement to use the tushes, that the pig is down and out in a minute or less. It is certainly better to use many small dogs than a few large ones.

The loss of stock here was almost certainly due to want of proper enclosures at night. If an owner puts his cattle into a

plain wire enclosure (without even barbs) any passing lion is hardly likely to reject such an opportunity of annexing the free beef so beautifully displayed for his benefit. Here, as soon as the wire fences had dense thorn bomas piled up against them, the losses ceased.

The great interest at the first camp was provided by the birds. In my part of the world nearly all birds nest in April and May, or in November and December, and it was a surprise to find the nesting season in full swing in July. Our rains are very local in Kenya, and it was merely that the birds were taking advantage of later rains which would provide more insect food for the chicks: the birds of prey had taken the same course in nesting a fortnight to three weeks earlier than did the smaller birds, so that their youngsters would have chicks to eat in due course.

The little valley in which I camped had pools of water all along it, with the immense nest of a hammerhead stork over nearly every one. These huge collections of sticks and grass were not at the time occupied by their rightful owners, but every one had a barn owl in it: the owls did not appear to be nesting, but merely using the result of these dingy little storks' labours as a temporary home.

Another nest of interest was that of a spotted eagle owl, with a nearly full-grown youngster in it. A pair of red-tailed buzzards were nesting farther up the valley, and as I was passing one afternoon they suddenly launched an attack on the parent owls, driving them right away from the nest; and neither parent owls nor the chick were to be seen next day. The owls seemed to have made use of an old hawk's or eagle's nest, so that the attack may have been delivered by the original builders who had decided to turn out claim jumpers.

A hundred yards above the owl's nest was a big pool with a rock face overhanging it, under whose scarped upper half was a mass of nests of the sociable swallow—some 250, as near as I could count. On the sides of the boulders, in the pools, wher-

ever there was an overhang, red-rumped swallows had built their massive mud bowls with long tube-entrances.

The second camp was in a valley on the other side of the Guaso Nyiro (the same river 100 miles above the bridge at Archer's Post), and I went there to try for one particular lion who was to give me a fine lesson in tactics. The first morning I spotted him on the southern lip of the fan-shaped valley which sloped down from the edge of the plain to the river, so that he was walking round the top a little above me. I plugged up the nearest spur to try for a shot, but unfortunately almost walked on a cheetah on the flat above, and he bolted right across the open, thus giving me away, for the lion roared and began to walk northward along the upper edge of the valley. There were a dozen spurs trending down to the centre gully, so, since he did not seem to be hurrying, but merely strolling along, I thought I would go down, miss two spurs, then arrive at the top in front of him. Down I went, at the steady double as soon as I was out of sight, then up spur number four, and cautiously on to the flat at the top. I could see nothing at first, then there came a grunting roar, and there was the lion still strolling along and still 300 yards ahead. He was turning the bend of the valley's lip by now and making north-westward.

Again I ran down, then up the westernmost spur, reached the top, and there was that old devil just entering a patch of thick bush in which I lost him. That casual stroll of his must have been at about 6 miles an hour, not less.

I shot a waterbuck as bait, stayed two more days until the vultures and hyænas had almost finished it, then moved on to another farm, recrossing the Guaso Nyiro, and then moving westward along a very overgrown old road just under the escarpment, to camp at a rock hole containing water that was hard to render usable even with alum and much boiling.

Buffalo were the objective, and I shot a couple: the first, a big cow, was the leader of a herd of about eighty, and after she fell I sat on the escarpment and watched the herd steadily wind-

ing in a long black line right across a broad valley for at least 7 miles: they were still going steadily when they disappeared over the next big rise. It seemed as if the shooting of the herd leader was the right medicine.

The second was a solitary bull, and I would have got more if it had not been for the giraffe, which were far too numerous, and swayed off conspicuously until everything else went off with them.

We had one shock from a solitary bull buffalo, coming back to camp at midday along the lower slope of the southern hill where I had photographed klipspringer, and near which we had brought the final camp. As Kabogo and I passed on either side of a small but dense clump of bushes the bull jumped to his feet, went between us like a shell from a gun and down the stony slope at a pace I would never have thought such a heavy beast could attain. He had been sleeping in the shade of a sort of arbour, and we were lucky not to have been right in his path: being brushed aside by a buffalo is not funny.

That same morning we heard a loud clatter 50 yards to our left as a hen ostrich sped out of some bush, and found that she had been sitting on seventeen eggs. Judging by the noise, those eggs must have had some hard knocks, but none was even cracked.

During these trips to the western ends of the hills, we lived mainly on Grant's gazelle, until we found that most of them were "measly." Does were also infected, yet I have never found a measly *Granti* among the many I have shot for food lower down in the Northern Frontier District. Fortunately, tommy were plentiful, and a very pleasant substitute, providing meat much better than that usually sold in our butchers' shops (Plate 71), while game birds were many and the little 410 proved a godsend.

As a rule it is quite easy to live well in camp, have well-cooked food, and comfortable camp furniture; and people who say, "Oh, we are on safari and must rough it," are being lazy

and stupid; for one's comfort and health are dependent on one's tummy, and if the latter goes wrong the whole trip is spoilt.

I carry a sheet-iron camp oven that economises fuel and adds to the ease of cooking in a high wind or rain; but any good camp cook can dish up a good meal using three stones for a fireplace—if he finds it is appreciated and gets a few hints.

Rain, wind, or snow, heat or cold; there is hardly one of my camps which has not pleasant memories. There is always the sense of freedom and the blessing of the open air, with no hurrying crowds. I have marched over 10,000 miles in the glorious Himalayas and I do not know how many more after game, and I shall always miss them; but driving a car along bush roads, where birds and animals, large and small, are always present, is a good substitute for the climb up spur or pass through the warm-scented pines to meet the cold breezes at the top.

Such memories are grand and always with us, but seeing new things and new countries is better.

