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SPORT & ADVENTURE IN AFRICA

A RECORD OF TWELVE YEARS OF BIG GAME
HUNTING, CAMPAIGNING & TRAVEL
IN THE WILDS OF TROPICAL
AFRICA

BY

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WITH MANY ILLUSTRATIONS & A MAP



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WARUSA MORAN.

The Moran are the men of a fighting age. In this photo the warriors are represented in their war paint and dress, for a ceremonial occasion.

loaded with soft-nosed bullets, and I was therefore obliged to unload these and reload with the nickel-coated ones I always carried.

During this action, which I executed with tremulous fingers, the monster's curiosity did not abate, and I was eventually able to take aim and fire at him without his becoming alarmed. My bullet, however, did little harm, for the rhinoceros whipped round and crashed off into the jungle as fast as he could go. Being alone, and unable as I was to pick up any spoor at all, I was reluctantly obliged to give up my search.

Three days in this district yielded but little sport and no trace of elephants, which really was our primary object, and hearing rumours from local natives of elephant to the west of the Mpika road, we left the Mchinga hills and made for the flatter country to the west.

On October 5th we moved camp at 9 a.m. and marched to Kawanda, where we enlisted an old elephant tracker, whose name was Menduanzila. He was most optimistic about our chances of shooting some big bulls, and that night, contentedly gorged on roast klipspringer and suet pudding, we gazed into waning camp fires and dreamt of elephant and huge tuskers that seldom come one's way except in dreams. I loved the camp life, its peace, the pure air, and the eternal atmosphere of wild life.

Our next move was to make for the Lukulu and Lumbuttwa rivers, and on the way, when passing through a wild and almost uninhabited land, M. shot a fine old bull rhino, whilst R. and self bagged a couple of young rhinos.

On the 13th October, 1910, I heard a lion for the first time in my life. He kept up his musical roar all the night, and I lay awake listening to him and picturing the disturbance his presence must have caused to weaker beasts. Just before dawn an old hyena whined discordantly, as if he had been thwarted of a meal by the King of beasts. In addition to the large herds of game we found in the vicinity of this camp, there were countless francolin and other game birds. The former would bewilder the best of shots as they whirl amidst the jungle trees, and the green pigeon were as wily as the English "woodmen." We did not have it all our own way, however, for the tsetse flies were very annoying in the daytime, and ants waged war on us at night!

I quote verbatim from my diary :

"Just as M. had been on Thursday night, so was I last night, driven out of my tent by a host of ants. I could not get back to the tent, for immediately a leg or hand appeared inside, the insect army would swarm over one in a trice, worrying and biting all the time. I imagine they have waged war on us, systematically invading tent after tent. Unable to regain the shelter of my tent, I had to be content with a camp bed, but I found it very difficult to sleep, and lions again made melody most of the night."

It must be difficult for anyone, who has seldom left the roar of cities behind them, to imagine what it is to be lost. The feeling of despair and anxiety is hard to exaggerate. It was in the wild piece of country above referred to that I experienced these feelings.

The Return Journey

for Mpika, arriving there four days later. It is a pleasant little place, perched high up in the shelter of the Mchinga hills, which when we arrived were topped by fleeting rain clouds, rolling on in never-ending billowy waves.

We dined well with the hospitable magistrate, and on the morrow we marched to Kilonga mission, where Catholic Fathers pursued their work of love and salvation.

Many of the Catholic Fathers I have met during my wanderings have lived practically all their lives in their mission stations, devoting themselves to their God and their work, regardless of the dangers of sickness, and an iron routine which must become monotonous. Theirs is a battle nobly fought, and theirs a reward deservedly won.

The kind hospitality which they warmly extended to us we eagerly accepted, and, after dining on rich viands and subtle wine, the Father Superior found us eager listeners to his stories. Mpika, he said, a few years back had been besieged by lions, and even the armed sentries were taken on dark nights.

One of the Fathers had shot several lions to his own rifle, and another had been badly mauled by a leopard, which, however, he managed to shoot.

From Kilonga mission we followed the main path back to Broken Hill. A few days later I again went down with fever and was unable to shake the effects off until I got back to civilization again.

During this return journey I shot a rhino which one of our boys had spied feeding on an open *dambo*. Two shots from my .400/450 black-powder rifle sufficed to

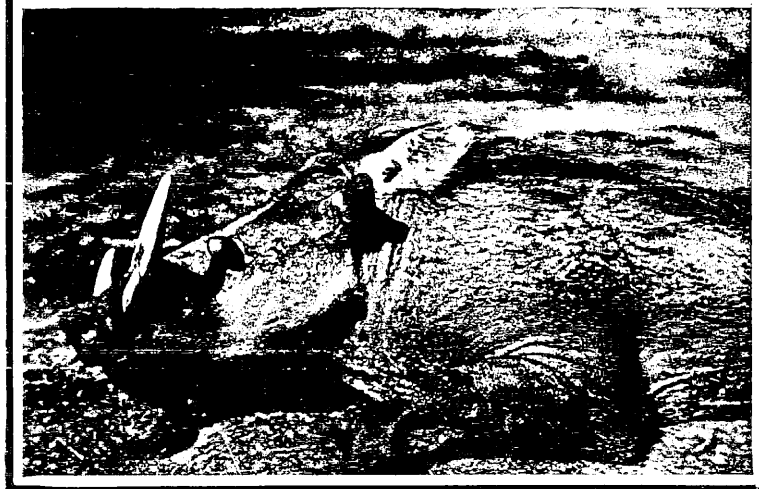
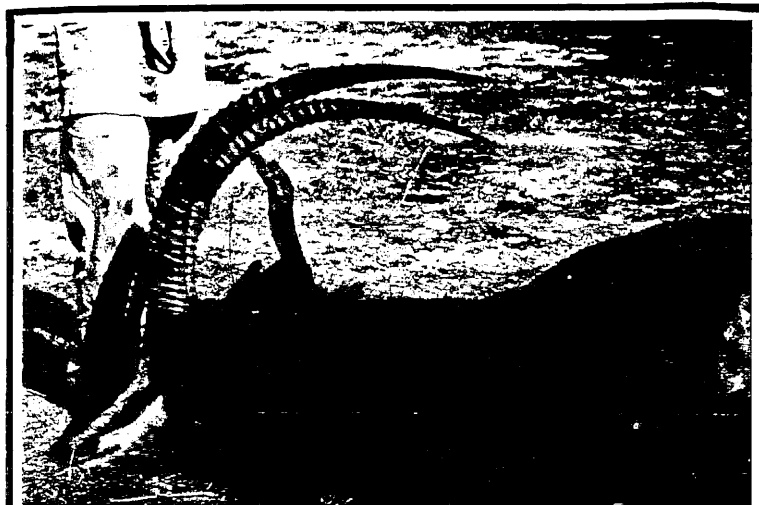


Photo by

Colonel B. I. Way, D.S.O.

A SABLE ANTELOPE.

Except the Kudu, the most beautiful of the antelopes. This specimen was shot in Rhodesia. The sable of Angolaland (called the Giant Sable) is slightly larger and possesses much finer and longer horns.

A WART HOG.

Note the large warts under the left ear. They are not as ferocious as they look.

kill the old beast, for I had crept up to within ten yards.

Once we were held up by swollen rivers, and it took us several hours to make a bridge of felled trees. From then onwards, until we returned to Broken Hill, only one incident of real importance, or interest to us, occurred.

Our special Christmas hamper, which we had ordered from the African Lakes' Corporation, did not reach us. Alas! our long-cherished hopes, and the final disappointment, when we made what cheer we could at Christmas eve on a dinner of fried barbel and stewed hare (a very thin hare, and probably carnivorous!) and suet pudding! The Christmas dinner consisted of fish, soup, francolin, with beans, potatoes, and macaroni, and two small tins of Christmas pudding.

On December 30th, 1910, amidst torrential rains, we hobbled into Broken Hill. It was the end of a long trip, the pleasures and glories of which I can never forget. Also, when I look back upon those strenuous, though perhaps at times, trying days, I always feel that they were all well worth the learning.

Our bag consisted of the following:—

(a) Big game: 2 lions, 3 elephant, 5 buffalo, 4 rhino, 4 sable, 1 impala, 7 waterbuck, 6 duiker, 15 hartebeest, 3 eland, 5 zebra, 3 oribi, 9 warthog, 13 reedbuck, 6 roan, 1 bush pig, 4 sassaby, 1 jackal, 9 black lechwe, 1 sitatunga, 19 puku, 4 klipspringer, 1 Sharpe's steinbok.

(b) Small game: 9 guinea-fowl, 18 francolin, 1 bustard, 9 green pigeon, 50 duck, 2 heron, 5 plover, 1 water-rail, 10 geese, 4 cotton teal, 1 hare.



several low whistles from my men, and immediately a terrific crashing quite close. By the time I had reached my men the beasts, whatever they might have been, were away in a scurry of dust. They proved to be two rhino, who must have heard my men talking in low tones whilst I was stalking the impala; and I had passed within a few yards of them, carrying only a bird rifle!

One evening Saidi, an Askari, and myself were searching for rhino when suddenly we espied a pair of ears in a patch of long grass. These, on close investigation, proved to belong to an old rhino. I could see nothing but his ears, so, creeping well down wind of the beast, with Saidi in close attendance, I directed the Askari to drive him towards us. When the Askari, however, had got to windward, the rhino charged out, snorting like an engine. We never saw that rhino again, although we looked everywhere, and we only saw our Askari when we reached camp at dusk. I walked over a puff adder one day, but Saidi, ever watchful, saw it, and seizing the little rifle he quickly despatched it, shouting out invectives all the while, and then, seizing the venomous reptile by the tail, he flung it far from him into the bush. Saidi's brother had been killed by a snake.

On the 24th August we reached Maji Moto (hot water). Here the lake almost meets the escarpment, and the route leads over a small shoulder which juts out. Several hot small streams gush forth from the bowels of the Rift wall, and they are so hot one can scarcely keep one's fingers in them. I tasted just a little, and found the water slightly sulphuretted. The



MASAI HUNTERS.

The man on the left is a typical Masai, and the other a Wamberebo Masai. The latter carries a bow and a quiver full of arrows. The "perfection cigar" is obviously not wasted.

signs of activity. Askaris were embarking or disembarking, as the case might be, and one or two Europeans were joining our ship, obviously pleased to see again signs of civilization.

Arua, I was informed, is a high, healthy place and the centre of a good shooting district, where one can obtain white rhinoceros and, a little further north, Lord Derby's eland. An interesting personality who also joined us at Mutea was Mr. Driberg, an official in the administrative service of Uganda. He said that whilst on a punitive expedition against the Lugwari he had been wounded by a poisoned arrow in the foot. However, he seemed none the worse for the experience, and in fact at that time was looking forward to returning to his old country, that of the Lango (a fine race of Nilotic people, inhabiting the country to the north of Lake Chioga. The Lango natives extend north up to the land of the Acholi).

On our journey up the Nile to Lake Albert Nyanza we saw numerous crocodiles, three of which we accounted for. On the morning of October 16th we reached the Belgian port of Mahagi, and at noon cast anchor off Butiaba, Uganda's northern port on the lake. Butiaba can boast of only a few thatched houses belonging to the Goanese clerks of the Uganda Customs and Transport. Further to the south are a few buildings belonging to the Marine officials. They also lie in the plain by the lake.

The Uganda Transport Service was out of gear, and after much "strafing" we managed to raise sufficient porters to take our loads to Bukumu, the rest-house on

the escarpment, which rises two miles from the lake. Passing through the open bushland of the level strip between escarpment and lake, we saw some defassa and kob, but there was no time to shoot, and, after dragging weary limbs up the steep face of the escarpment, the rest-house was a welcome sight. The day following, the necessary number of porters not being available to take us all in to Masindi, I left my friends and proceeded on my weary way. Eighteen miles was quite enough for a start, and at dusk, when I could struggle no further, I was nothing loth to accept the kind hospitality of a friendly Scot who was managing a coffee plantation close by.

The road we had traversed was well made and ran in easy gradients through dense forests, skirting numbers of native *shambas*, a few European coffee plantations, and much elephant grass. We were now in the country of the Banyoro, a Bantu tribe, half-brothers to the Baganda, but past feuds and wars have not been forgotten, and they prefer to live apart as entirely different tribes.

The language and customs of these two tribes are almost identical. The staple food is *matoke*, a green cooking banana, mashed up and cooked as a porridge.

Their organization is also similar, the chain of responsibility being correctly linked from king (*mukama*) through the *saza* (district) and *gombolola* (sub-district) chiefs to the humble *omwami wekyalo* (village chief). I was introduced to the *mukama* at Masindi. He is a very much respected man.

I have referred to the road by which we then

tremendous rattle of musketry is heard in the opposite direction. The defenders are taken by surprise and, losing the initiative, are compelled to shorten their line of defence. But it is now too late, and the attack, flushed with victory, sweep all before them and gain their objective.

Once more it is routine work, "the daily round, the common task." We already begin to conjure up thoughts of the next *safari*, the freedom of the bush, its health, its life, and natural glories.

CHAPTER XXII

Hunting rhinoceros—Mount Kilimanjaro—Rhino cow and young—
A primeval forest—Deserted German homesteads—Volcanic lakes
—Shooting duck—The troubles of a gardener—Sport with bush-
buck.

IN days of strenuous toil, when most Departments are short-handed, it is not easy to get away into the "blue," or even towards the blue, for a few days' respite from duties which become monotonous with their very regularity. However, you must blow the cobwebs away sometimes, and it was with this idea that I decided to take week-end leave and indulge in my favourite sport and pastime—hunting big game.

My *safari* of twelve porters left in the early hours of the morning of November 12th, and I caught them up late by means of a motor-bicycle, thus lessening the fatigue of an otherwise long and tiring journey, and adding to one's chances of shooting something in the evening.

I left the road at 1 p.m., after having completed some sixteen miles. An hour's trek through long grass and patches of thick green vegetation, varied by occasional clumps of acacia thorn, brought us to our camp, which, unfortunately, was a long way from a water hole, situated in some dense forest. This was, indeed,

the home of the wily, ferocious buffalo and his blundering, intrusive companion, the rhino.

Whilst scanning the landscape from the little conical kopje on which we had decided to camp, I breathed more freely when observing the numerous vleis of shortish grass which relieved an otherwise monotony of forest and bush. In addition, several small hills afforded excellent points of vantage from which one could observe or plan an attack on a quarry.

Our shooting grounds, according to the guide, lay away to the east, between a long, forest-clad ridge on the north and a high grass peak to the south.

When our weary sun-scorched bodies had recovered from the noonday heat, and when the tropical sun was waning in the west, we bent our steps towards the happy hunting grounds.

Kopje after kopje I wearily climbed, scanning with my glasses the surrounding country. Nothing was visible. It must have been quite an hour before we saw a living thing, and then a bushbuck dam got up about thirty yards in front of us and dashed away with a great scurry, only to crouch again a little further off, whereupon I took a snapshot with my .250/.297, wounding her. My dog was immediately released, and he caught her in fine style.

We were surprised to find on examining this beast that she had no hair on half the tail she possessed, and had two large raw patches on her hind quarters. I fancy a hyena had had a stroke of bad luck, or perhaps a leopard. This was welcome meat, and I was delighted to have bagged something with the little rifle which I had used, in order to avoid scaring the

bigger game, which was almost a certainty if I had fired the .318 W.R.

A little further on I saw fresh tracks of rhino, but as it was almost dusk I made my way back to camp as quickly as possible.

A hyena disturbed the stillness of the night soon after dark, but it was a welcome sound to me, these weird howls of the carrion beast of the bush. It was not so with my two dogs, who kept up a constant barking in defiance.

On the 13th the little camp was astir long before dawn, and, after a cup of tea, I headed for the happy hunting grounds, the *safari* having been ordered to keep well behind.

By 7 a.m. we had drawn a blank and were on the point of climbing an open slope when I saw a fine eland bull. I took a hurried shot, which was not fatal. My dog was at a loss to follow up, the scent being bad, and we had to plod on for a long time through long grass, up hill and down dale, but, unfortunately, were compelled later to give it up, heading as we were in a totally opposite direction to that I wished to pursue. Time was of the utmost importance on this short trip, and, as the blood spoor had considerably lessened, I said, "No." Sometimes one is forced to be unsportsmanlike.

Returning to the slopes from which I had wounded the eland, I joined the *safari*, which had come up, my boys having prepared breakfast. This was speedily devoured, and I now continued my search for game in the same direction.

A few hundred yards ahead lay a large, reedy strip

of water, where I hoped to find signs of rhino. We were not disappointed, for scarcely had we left the breakfast table than I saw a single rhinoceros slowly walking towards the water. The wind was regular and good and the terrain ideal for stalking, the grass being short, and small, bushy ant hills being dotted about at intervals. Taking advantage of these latter, I was able to creep up to within forty yards of the poor old rhino as he returned from his morning drink, walking slowly and sniffing about in the most unsuspecting manner. One shot from the .470 laid him low, and with another he ceased his struggles and gave up his life with a shrill scream. I was delighted with my success, but albeit was sad, as I think hunters are, at the sight of a fine animal giving up his life for human whims.

My caravan of porters had watched the performance from a small rise not a hundred yards off, and seemed delighted with the event.

We proceeded to cut off his horns at once, and also great strips along his flanks, which, when cut into long pieces and after preparation, make useful whips or pliant walking-sticks. His front horn measured twenty-one inches along the front curve, an average length.

I now decided to pitch camp within the borders of the forest, hoping in the evening to bag an eland, some of which the porters had seen on the heights of a large hill the previous evening.

A midday rest was very welcome, and we dozed under the shelter of giant trees, rich in verdure, and whose leaves reflected the rays of the sun in many little dazzling beams. The larger denizens of these

grand primeval forests slept noiselessly within, but the hosts of insects and birds vied with one another in a never-ending chorus, close around, which re-echoed from a bosom of infinite mystery.

Punctually at 4 p.m. I left camp, attended by gun-bearers and a guide, and made for the hill, where we hoped to find the sleek and massive eland peacefully feeding on its slopes. With much toil and many a gasp we reached the summit, and paused a moment to enjoy the scene.

Mount Kilimanjaro (the hill of snow) was like a magnet to our eyes as it rose, serene in peace and majesty, snow-capped, to the sky. Everything was dwarfed around, and even angry Meru, with pointed, jagged peaks and craters with imprisoned lava, was belittled by the former's grandeur. These fine mountains were separated by an enormous plain of scattered bush and open vleis, intersected by rivers, whose courses were well marked by tortuous lines of green trees. Meru was nearer, and so its under features were more distinct, one of which ended abruptly at the hill on which we stood.

The vegetation around us was very thick, wherefore I commenced to make a gradual descent, hoping to find some eland on the open lower slopes. Whilst thus descending one of the gun-bearers arrested my attention by an exclamation of surprise and caution, and, looking in the direction in which he pointed, I perceived the shape of two rhinos slowly feeding towards the swamp, their intention evidently being to water. Motioning the men to close up and keep silent, I hastily made for some level ground, whence a line

of action was obvious. The wind blew diagonally from the two rhinos as they approached an open piece of ground, situated between the thick bush in which they were at the moment meandering, and the swamp, their ultimate object.

I crept along the borders of the thick bush and the open, and soon reached the spot, already noted, close to where we had last seen the two beasts. Here one of the men climbed a small tree and soon located them some fifty yards ahead, still in the thick cover. However, they soon emerged, and I was surprised to see a huge rhino cow, accompanied by a full-grown calf, the latter bearing quite large horns, as far as I could judge. My gun-bearer whispered immediately he saw them, "*Yiko toto, matata sana,*" meaning we should have a tussle with the mother. This I realized, and quickly put her *hors de combat* with a shoulder shot, too far advanced, but a crippler. On receiving the bullet she slewed round and commenced a succession of snorts, but was unable to move far, and another shot finished her. Whilst this was happening the calf kept by its mother's side, and even when she lay stone dead on the short green grass it would not leave. I now gave instructions to release the dog, who immediately rushed forth and, having sniffed at the dead mother, to make certain she was dead, bayed at the smaller animal, which bravely charged him from time to time, snorting like an engine. I was very grieved for the poor little beast, although it was quite large enough to look after itself. However, something had to be done to get it away, as it was getting late, and I therefore instructed my men to shout, which we all

did right lustily, but it had no effect. The alternative was to fire at this faithful animal, which I had no desire to do. I now remembered that one of the men carried the .250/297, which fires a tiny little bullet useful for shooting birds and very small buck. Seizing this, I put a couple of shots about the animal's hind quarters, and it went off still snorting, eventually to disappear into the bush. The dead beast was a huge cow, with horns of moderate length but thick, the front one measuring seventeen inches along the curve.

On the way back to camp I was unsuccessful in trying to shoot several reedbuck which got up out of the reeds and long grass. Nearing the camp we had occasion to pass the body of the rhino shot in the morning, and on approaching the carcass, amidst a flutter and burr of wings, a number of vultures flew off, but leaving one of their number on the ground, so gorged that it could not lift a wing to help itself. My dog danced round it, waiting for me to encourage him, but the wretched bird was no mean assailant, with its imposing beak, which was opened and shut rapidly in a most menacing manner as it bent its neck downwards almost to the ground, bringing it up just as quickly. We called off the dog and left this useful carrion to his fate.

I did not sleep as a hunter should, firstly, because I was overtired, and, secondly, because of the throng of baboons, which, creeping close to our camp fires, showed their resentment at our presence by a continual growling and barking. In the interim of this medley of noises more peaceful and pleasant sounds were audible, the buzz of insects and the chant of

night birds. These huge forests give melody to the notes and songs of birds.

An early morning inspection of the carcasses was not as unpleasant as one might imagine, for scarcely a bone was left to tell the tale of the death of these two mighty beasts. A few vultures remained, resting in gorged contentment on neighbouring trees, whilst a few soared high above in eager hopes of spying something else.

We now moved north-east with the whole *safari*, cutting a way through the primeval forest, for by doing so I knew I should cut off a large corner. In its depth I shot one of the beautiful Guereza monkeys with a long flowing white tail. After two hours' tramp we were glad to emerge from the secret haunts of mighty beasts—small, peeping mammals, birds, and snakes. Soon afterwards I shot a reedbuck in a little vlei, where the grass was short and green, and my dog distinguished himself again by catching it in fifty yards. The bullet had struck it rather low down.

About 10 a.m. we suddenly came on a deserted house, relic of wars. We sheltered from the burning sun within its walls, and found a good supply of clear running water close by, which was a godsend. Another hour further on we reached a very pretty little homestead, which was also deserted. Vandal and plundering passers-by had furtively sought what was of use to them, for here timbers were missing from a well-built roof, and there valuable plants of machinery rendered useless, or perhaps part of a wall, the work of skilled masons, crumbled into ruins. One saw the work of years of toil in these carefully constructed houses, now

dilapidated and forlorn in appearance, and almost, it seemed, sad and lonely, bereft of happy occupants. This unhappy air might be even reflected in the brightly coloured creepers, overgrown and drooping in disarray, or struggling rose trees bearing but little bloom. Indeed, weeds were gradually strangling the life from every other form of vegetation. Nevertheless, that which lent an air of happiness to these otherwise pitiful scenes was the bird life, the feathered denizens, undisturbed by man, singing gleefully, sole possessors of these little domains.

We fed and rested for two hours or so, and then continued our journey towards Lake Momella, where I hoped to shoot a hippo. There was only a semblance of a path, and oft-times not even that, and so we were obliged to lengthen the journey to some considerable extent, as we turned and twisted to take advantage of short grass and easy slopes.

The ground was very broken and undulating, with alternate strips of long and short grass; the formation of the ground and strata was obviously due to volcanic disturbances, which must have taken place at quite a recent epoch. Looking at Mount Meru, one saw a distinct and sinister-looking crater, low down and, as it were, bored into the bowels of the earth, which must have ejected its lava many miles to the south-east and east, forming a very broken country of innumerable small kopjes, divided by steep little hollows, which in some cases assumed the proportions of valleys.

There were several small and large lakes about, the largest being Lake Momella.

To the thirsty and unenlightened traveller the sight

of these large stretches of water, viewed from some lofty rise, of necessity to be negotiated in the journey, is welcome and encouraging, and causes him to redouble his efforts to reach them. Alas! he is doomed to disappointment, for it is not a lake of fresh, clear, and deep water that greets him, but a green, odorous, and shallow expanse of salt water which has nothing else to recommend it but the beautiful birds that cry and swoop in rapid regular flight along its surface. Flamingo, pelican, geese, duck, and snippets are all to be found in large numbers.

After three hours' hard walking through such a country as I have described we reached one of these small lakes, and were grievously disappointed to find it such a colour and with such a beastly odour. Previously, all I knew was that they were salt, and so of volcanic origin. I shot a couple of small duck here, similarly coloured to the English mallard, but smaller and with a large bill out of proportion to its size. They were excellent eating.

Pausing for a moment to admire the scene, we continued what had become a very weary journey. The poor porters struggled far behind. Another hour, and we reached our destination, but my guide seemed at a loss to find fresh water, therefore we decided to camp close to the edge of the lake on a small rise which overlooked a little backwater, containing water only just drinkable to a very thirsty being. It did not possess the strong odour of the green water of the lake, but was the colour of tea and very brackish.

All were in before it was really dark, and we set to work to make large fires to keep off the mosquitoes.

I had shot a small buck during the day, and so, in spite of their fatigue, my men were content.

We were now within the precincts of an old German farm, called Ngare Nanuki. Very early next day I spied a hippo not far from the shores of the lake. He kept a good watch, and, just exposing his pig-like head above water, would occasionally dive, to reappear in a few minutes. The cover was good by the water's edge, and I was thus able to approach without being seen. I took a steady shot, and it seemed as if the bullet had gone home, for I saw no splash and felt certain I had heard the bullet tell. However, my guide was of another opinion. In any case, unless we could spot him in some part of the lake soon, it was quite likely I had killed him, so I now left the lake, as time was of importance, intending to ask some natives inhabiting kraals not far off to watch for a floating carcass.

It was a long ascent to reach the hills overlooking the River Ngare Nanuki, but the view from their summits was glorious and the air keen and invigorating. I flushed several bushbuck in the long patches of cover close to our track, but sadly missed hurried snapshots taken with the little rifle. A short pause, and then we descended to another small lake to the north-west, and on our way down I saw a young waterbuck bull feeding on the short green grass by the water's edge. Approaching noiselessly, my attention was diverted by a cluster of duck preening themselves close to the shore. This was too much of a temptation, for I was due back to-day, and the addition of a few fat duck for the larder was most desirable. Neglecting altogether the presence of the waterbuck, I crept up quite

close and gave the little flock two barrels of No. 5. Seven duck either lay dead on the surface or vainly struggled to get away. We eventually collected the lot.

I had breakfast by this lake, the water of which was clear and only slightly brackish, and at 9 a.m. we had started on our return journey of some twenty-five miles, which took us through some rather pretty open country when near the River Ngare Nanuki.

To the north (our right) it was fringed by Meru's wooded slopes, and further on we passed through forests which overlapped the broad track, until we reached the open districts thickly populated by the Wameru. Here it was a switchback road that passed over the mountain's southern shoulders, which ended precipitately only a few miles to our left, whence the dry plain stretched far south, thinly clad with bush except along well-marked watercourses, until all was lost in the haze of "Pale blue hills that hold the smoke of distant smouldering forest fires."

The bag for the week-end was, indeed, a mixed one, consisting of two rhinos, one reedbuck, one bushbuck, one guereza monkey, and seven duck.

The cobwebs had blown away.

The depredations of two bold and cunning bushbuck had caused such damage to my budding *shamba*, and such annoyance and chagrin to the two hard-working natives whom I employ, that I decided to use armed force to keep off the intruders.

Two Askaris were, therefore, ordered to sleep in the *shamba*, their vigil starting at dusk and ending just before dawn. They were armed with my .250/.297

Westley Richards. Such a light weapon, although quite effective in its killing powers, I hoped would not awake our lightly sleeping Political Officer, who, I feared, if roused, would give vent to an early morning hate.

In spite of my precautions, the plundering went on and the state of the poor struggling cabbages did not improve, and, indeed, the continual thinning of the strawberries indicated the presence of human agency. I was quite disheartened, and was diligently constructing a trap in which to catch the thieves, a practice which I usually avoid, when one early morning Saidi Matola, my *nyampara*, who was assisting me, rushed into my house and greeted me with: "*Jambo, Bwana, pongo yiko hapa, karibu mto*" ("Good morning, Master. The bushbuck is here, near the river").

It might be as well to describe the environments of my house. "Our Town" nestles under the slopes of a towering mountain, and consists of a small community of English, Greeks, Indians, and a few foreign natives, the houses of the English being scattered, in artistic array, to the north of the *boma*, which stands by itself, a kind of square white-stone fort, emblem of stern authority. On all sides, and close around, the thrifty and industrious local natives abound. Their *shambas* are fertile and well watered. Vegetation, therefore, is abundant, and that which is allowed to grow and increase forms a sanctuary to any wild beast bold enough to explore such civilized regions. One often finds in such places bushbuck, dik-dik, mongooses, jackals, and civet cats.

My house, an old German thatched-roofed building,

is situate some three hundred yards to the north of the *boma*. To the south is a large fruit garden, and to the north a fruit and vegetable garden. To the east, and between the house and that of the Senior Political Officer, runs a beautiful clear stream which rises in the lonely forest-clad heights of the aforementioned mountain. Short green grass borders it, and occasionally there is a strip of thick vegetation such as I have already described. Just outside the boundary fence of my vegetable garden, and close to the stream, is a patch of cover, as mentioned, which was often the haunt of our friends the bushbuck, and thither we rushed when Saidi called me.

It was about 6.30 a.m. and a fine exhilarating morning. Seizing my .250/297, and handing the Lancaster .12-bore to Saidi, we proceeded to where the two *shamba* boys eagerly awaited me. There was no time to dress, and pyjamas and a "British warm" are regal robes in a land of naked peoples.

The bushbuck were reported to have just entered the small strip of cover. Placing Saidi some five yards to my left, I crouched behind a tree in the garden fence. Noiselessly the *shamba* boys threaded a way through the long grass and scrub, and when they had reached a place about twenty yards from us there was a rush, and a big ram bushbuck made straight towards Saidi, who fired quickly and truly, avoiding its stam-pede. It came so quickly that I was unable to get a sight with my small-bore. There was a copious blood spoor, and off we rushed in hot pursuit.

We crossed the stream, and then I saw our Political Officer, clad in pyjamas and coat, shoeing on three dogs

which had sprung from nowhere. Answering his query and cheery halloo, in a few gasping words, I joined the throng of men and dogs, who seemed to be increasing every minute.

The spoor led us across the stream, up a small slope, and then down to the stream again, taking us through the least trodden *shamba* paths.

Some two hundred yards from the stream the track bent to the left, and just after we gained the stream I heard the cries of our pack. We soon came up to the quarry, which was bravely defying all the dogs, one of which held him firmly by a hind leg.

It is always advisable to approach a wounded bushbuck warily, as they are quick and clever with their short-pointed horns, and, moreover, are very brave little animals. Another shot finished the plucky little beast, and triumphantly, amidst the barking of excited dogs, which had now tasted blood, we trekked back to the house.

One of the *shamba* boys now informed me he had seen two bushbuck in the cover we had drawn. I was delighted at this news, and sent the beaters and dogs to drive it, just as we had done before. Sure enough, they flushed another, and it again dashed towards Saidi, who actually hit it with the .250/297 (we had exchanged weapons), but not with sufficient accuracy to strike a vital place. It swerved off to me, and I knocked it over with a shot in the spine—bad shot, but a stopper. One wants the eye of a hawk, and just as quick transmission of a flash of the eye to the brain, passed on to the motive powers, to stop these agile animals, as they rush and leap towards one.

We had had a good morning's sport, and I think had made a good job of it—no wounded beasts unaccounted for, no more nibbling at our precious cabbages.

The Political Officer's answer to my note and present of a fat bushbuck's leg was, "Splendid! I would just as soon shoot buck as anything on four legs." I wonder if he meant it? I knew he had shot other things besides.

CHAPTER XXIII

Hunting near Mondul—A fine rhinoceros bagged—Dog mauled by a hartebeest—Bull rhino shot—I leave Arusha—Dar-es-Salaam—Morogoro—Hunting on the Mgeta river—Much game—An accident—The call of the Bush.

IN the third week of June, 1921, I paid a flying visit to the precincts of a fine mountain called Mondul, where rhino abound in large numbers. On the summits are level stretches of short grass, and on the slopes are a succession of fissures, choked with trees, and thick green vegetation. Now, so molested had the rhino been in past days that only at night and early dawn did they venture to leave their fastnesses.

After traversing eight odd miles of inhabited country, the environs of Arusha, we emerged on to the open but hilly lands by Engare ol Motoni. A long and tiring trek brought us to the under features of Mondul, where an impromptu camp was pitched, what time night had already cast dark shades over all the land.

Refreshed by the night's rest, I made tracks for the dam at Aardi, where it was rumoured lions were wont to drink nightly.

We had left the open bush country near Mondul's under features and were now crossing the Masai plains, where countless herds of cattle roamed, and hundreds

of blue wildebeest, some eland, hartebeest, Grant's gazelle, and oryx. I took several pictures of the Masai cattle drinking, but beyond that I had no adventure at the dam. From here we changed direction and proceeded north, soon leaving the plainlands for the forests of the mountains. There were many indications of the presence of rhinoceros, and it behoved us to move cautiously, keeping "eyes skinned" for the slightest movement amongst the foliage. The forests were thick and primeval, almost impassable by reason of the tangle of their undergrowth, and in the occasional open spaces the grass was long, thick, and green. The altitude was just over five thousand feet, and mountain breezes and mists continually swept over these heights, keeping all the vegetation fresh and luxuriant. The air was cool and bracing, and gave one energy for fresh efforts even in the noon. Strange to say, water was scarce and very difficult to find, but, in our case, a Masai warrior had condescended to point out the one source known of in this unfrequented place. I pitched my tent close to the water, a shallow and primitive well, from which a furrow, well dammed up, ran for a short distance, to catch the overflow. The well was situated somewhat below the tent, so that I could see any animals coming to drink. A thickly wooded ravine ran up to within fifty yards of the water.

Steep, mantled walls ran up from the well, and giant trees, and lichen with clinging creepers, and ever-green bush formed the dense foliage round us. There seemed to be little life in the vicinity, and no sound impressed the ear except, perchance, the tired strains

of rubbing boughs, the occasional rustle of wind-stirred leaves, and maybe a note from a bird. The atmosphere was mysterious, almost uncanny, but restful, in this seclusion, the unsoiled bosom of the lonely mountain. What joy to dwell in such an elysium, the Utopia of my dreams!

O infinite, mysterious, and mighty blue above, you form the sapphire crown of my emerald world below! My dreams of Utopia being ended, I collected my hunters, two dogs which I had brought along to put up the rhino, and give me a chance of getting a shot in before they were right upon me, and commenced to descend the densest ravine near by. It was impossible to see more than a few yards ahead. Encouraging the dogs to scent out the rhino, I crept on stealthily behind. Half an hour of such hunting, and then a succession of snorts, angry rushes here and there, and the barking of dogs told its tale!

I waited tense and on the alert, but, although the rhino got up close to us, I never saw any sign of them in the flesh.

We then continued our course down the ravine, and finally emerged into more open land, soon after which the two rhino came suddenly charging up to us, snorting like engines. I could see one had a very long horn, and her companion was a much younger animal, but not exactly a *toto* (baby one).

I fired, whereat they turned and fled. There was a faint blood spoor, and I guessed I had hit her high up in the shoulder. It was fairly clear that I had shot at a cow rhino, for her horns were very long and slender, and, moreover, she was accompanied by a

youngish animal. Now, strange to relate, these rhino did not break back to cover, but led us for some miles across the open, first of all passing a Masai kraal, where the inhabitants helped me to follow up the trail. The tracking became very difficult, for all the grass in the neighbourhood had been trampled down by innumerable herds of Masai cattle. Once we lost the trail altogether until a little herdsman excitedly told us how the two rhino had scattered his cattle, and how he managed to climb a tree in the confusion that ensued! However, he put us in the right direction, until another Masai gave us the clue. By this time there was no hope of finding the spoor, and we simply were obliged to follow by the information we obtained, and intuition. Whilst descending the slope leading into one of the small wooded ravines, which ran out from Mondul, my attention was arrested by shouts from behind. Turning round, I saw one of my orderlies excitedly pointing to the ravine in front, and I made out that he saw our quarry lurking in the trees and bush in the ravine, and cautiously crept forward to investigate. She was standing on the edge of the bush, at the further side of the gully, and, creeping up, I fired at the shoulder. She turned and retreated into the shelter of the bush, and I put in a raking shot as she went off. Sandy, my dog, now rushed in, and I heard him baying the rhinoceros ere I had taken a few steps. She was dead, in a mass of blood and gore, my raking shot having penetrated to the lungs. Her youthful companion, in the meantime, had gone off. I was delighted with my success, for the front horn was exceptionally large, just touching the 30-inch line.

It was a long and tiring trek back to camp, which I had ordered to be moved to a site nearer to the Masai kraals. We got in after dark, and I simply tumbled into bed without any food, but so tired was I that I scarcely slept at all.

The following morning, after cutting off the rhino's horns, I returned to Rassa Rassa, and on my way, espying a small herd of Coke's hartebeest, I stalked them and wounded a small bull. He galloped off, and, mounting my mule, I gave chase, and the two dogs, outpacing me, caught him on a small ridge, in some thickish grass.

The trio were lost to sight for a short time, but suddenly I heard a wild yelp of pain, and one of my dogs came limping back towards me with a huge hole in his stifle. I ran up to the wounded hartebeest and found him just breathing his last, with my other dog worrying him. Poor old Simba (the name of the maimed dog) looked very pitiful, and after bandaging him up as best I could we carried him in to Rassa Rassa, where Mr. Joubert, a Dutch farmer, and I did our best for Simba, but the more we probed his guts the more they seemed to come out, until finally we ordered him to be taken in to Arusha to the Veterinary Officer. After being poorly for a few days, he finally completely recovered.

Joubert very kindly offered to show me another rhino's home, and early one morning off we went, this time with a veritable pack of dogs. After casting about for an hour or more, we found an old rhino feeding on the edge of a deep and thickly wooded ravine and some level, open grass country. He moved

Bull Rhino Shot

off into the bush on our approach, but the dogs, who then took up the spoor, rushed in, and the rhino immediately charged out straight at me, the dogs following and making a great noise. I turned him with a bullet through the neck when he was but fifteen paces away, and then put in a raking shot. The dogs followed, with Joubert and myself in their wake, and we soon came up with pursued and pursuers, the former on his knees, motionless, with a deluge of blood leaving his nostrils, and the dogs biting at him and barking viciously. He was dead: this grand old bull rhino, of enormous size.

The day after I returned to Arusha with my two rhino trophies—one a 30-incher, and the other 22 inches.

In August, 1921, the usual K.A.R. relief of our stations took place, and I returned to Dar-es-Salaam with my company, via the southern slopes of Kilimanjaro, Moshi (railhead), and Tanga. I passed again my favourite hunting grounds, Ngongongare, the Momella lake, and the broken-up lava stretches beyond where rhinoceros roam in large numbers. I never saw a single rhino, so pressed for time was I, but we experienced a most interesting journey. One day a cheetah leapt up from a bush close to our line of march. Sandy, my dog, flushed him scarce two yards from our path, but I missed, and we never saw the spotted dog-cat again. That same day another incident occurred which, although amusing at the time, might have been serious.

Quite unexpectedly, as we were walking along in



AN OLD BULL RHINO, SHOT NEAR ARUSHA, TANGANYIKA TERRITORY.

This picture gives a good idea of a Rhinoceros's prehensile snout, also the huge scars on the knee and flank, caused by fighting and thorns.