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# IN WILDEST AFRICA

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BY

C. G. SCHILLINGS

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TRANSLATED BY

FREDERIC WHY

WITH OVER 300 PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIES DIRECT FROM THE AUTHOR'S  
NEGATIVES, TAKEN BY DAY AND NIGHT; AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

VOL. II

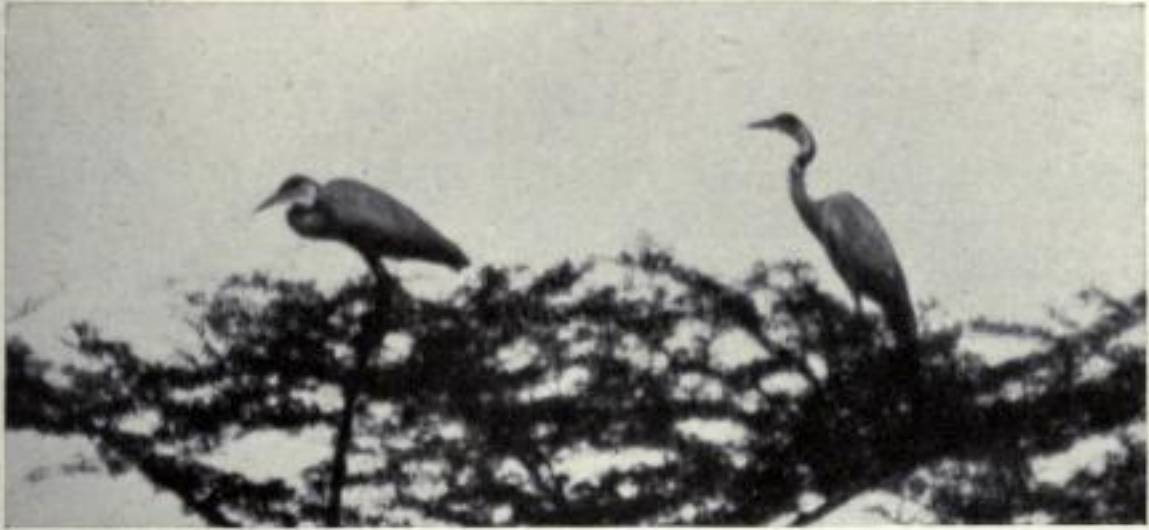
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BLACK-HEADED HERONS (*ARDEA MELANOCEPHALA*. VIG. Childr.).

X

## Rhinoceros-hunting

MANY sportsmen of to-day have no idea what numbers of rhinoceroses there used to be in Germany in those distant epochs when the cave-dweller waged war with his primitive weapons against all the mighty animals of old—a war that came in the course of the centuries to take the shape of our modern sport.

The visitor to the zoological gardens, who knows nothing of "big game," finds it hard perhaps to think of the great unwieldy "rhino" in this capacity. Yet I am continually being asked to tell about other experiences of my rhinoceros-hunting. I have given some already in *With Flashlight and Rifle*. Let me, then, devote this chapter to an account of some expeditions after the two-horned African rhinoceros—one of the most interesting, powerful, and dangerous beasts still living.





*C. G. Schillings, phot.*

RHINOCEROS HEADS.





*C. G. Schillings, phot.*

**RHINOCEROS HEADS.**



## In Wildest Africa •

Rhinoceroses used to be set to fight with elephants in the arena in Rome in the time of the Emperors. It is interesting to note that, according to what I have often heard from natives, the two species have a marked antipathy to each other. It is recorded that both Indian and African rhinoceroses used to be brought to Europe alive. In our own days they are the greatest rarities in the animal market, and must be almost worth their weight in gold. Specimens of the three Indian varieties are now scarcely to be found, while the huge white rhinoceros of South Africa is almost extinct. The two-horned rhinoceros of East Africa is the only variety still to be met with in large numbers, and this also is on its way swiftly to extermination.

The kind of hunt I am going to tell of belongs to quite a primeval type, such as but few modern sportsmen have taken part in. But it will be a hunt with modern arms. It must have been a still finer thing to go after the great beast, as of old, spear in hand. That is a feeling I have always had. There is too little romance, too much mechanism, about our equipment. In this respect there is a great change from the kind of hunting known to antiquity.

It was strength pitted against strength then. Strength and skill and swiftness were what won men the day. Later came a time when mankind learnt a lesson from the serpent and improved on it, discharging poisoned darts from tightened bow-strings. The slightest wound from them brought death. Then there was another step in advance, and the hunter brought down his game at



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even greater ranges with bullets of lead and steel. A glance through the telescopic sight affixed to the perfected rifle of to-day, a gentle pressure with the finger, and the rhinoceros, all unconscious of its enemy in the distance, meets its end.

But there is at least more danger and more romance for the modern hunter in this unequal strife when it takes place in a wilderness where bush and brushwood enforce a fight at close quarters. Then, if he doesn't kill his beast outright on the spot, or if he has to deal with several at a time, the bravest man's heart will have good reason to beat fast.

Now for our start.

We make our way up the side of a hill with the first rays of the tropical sun striking hot already on the earth. The country is wild, the ascent is difficult, and we have to dodge now this way, now that, to extricate ourselves from the rocky valley into which we have got. The vegetation all around us is rank and strange; strong grass up to our knees, and dense creepers and thorn-bushes retard our progress. Here are the mouldering trunks of giant trees uprooted by the wind, there living trees standing strong and unshaken. But as we advance we come gradually to a more arid stretch, and green vegetation gives place to a rocky region, broken into crevices and chasms. Here we find the rock-badger in hundreds. But the leaders have given their warning sort of whistle, and they are all off like lightning. It may be quite a long time before they reappear from the nooks and crannies to which they have fled. Lizards share these



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localities with them, and seem to exchange warnings of coming danger. A francolin flies up in front of us with a clatter of wings, reminding one very much of our own beautiful heath-cock. The "cliff-springer" that miniature African chamois, one of the loveliest of all the denizens of the wilderness, sometimes puts in an appearance too. It is a mystery how it manages to dart about from ridge to ridge as lightly as an india-rubber ball. If you examine through your field-glasses, you discover to your astonishment that they do not rest on their dainty hoofs like others of their kind, nor can they move about on them in the same fashion. They can only stand on the extreme points of them. It looks almost as though nature were trying to free a mammal from its bonds to mother earth, when you see the "cliff-springer" fly through the air from rock to rock. It would not astonish you to find that it had wings. Now here, now there, you hear its note of alarm, and then catch sight of it. It would be difficult to descry these animals at all, only that there are generally several of them together. . . . Deep-trodden paths of elephants and rhinoceroses cut through the wooded wilderness; paths used also by the heavy elands, which are fitted for existence alike in the deep valleys and high up on the highest mountain. I myself found their tracks at a height of over 6,000 feet, and so have all African mountain-climbers worthy of the name, from Hans Meyer, the first man to ascend Kilimanjaro, down to Uhlig, who, on the occasion of his latest expedition up to the Kibo, noted the presence of this giant among antelopes at a height of 15,000 feet.



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It is strange to contrast the general disappearance of big game in all other parts of the earth with their endless profusion in those regions which the European has not yet opened out. I feel that it sounds almost incredible when I talk of having sighted hundreds of rhinoceroses with my own eyes: incredible to the average man, I mean, not to the student of such matters. Not until the mighty animal has been exterminated will the facts of its existence—in what numbers it thrived, how it lived and how it came to die—become known to the public through its biographer. We have no time to trouble about the living nowadays.

For weeks I had not hunted a rhinoceros—I had had enough of them. I had need of none but very powerful specimens for my collection, and these were no more to be met with every day than a really fine roebuck in Germany. It is no mean achievement for the German sportsman to bag a really valuable roebuck. There are too many sportsmen competing for the prize—there must be more than half a million of us in all!

It is the same with really fine specimens of the two-horned bull-rhinoceros. It is curious, by the way, to note that, as with so many other kinds of wild animals, the cow-rhinoceros is furnished with longer and more striking-looking horns than the bull, though the latter's are thicker and stronger, and in this respect more imposing. The length of the horns of a full-grown cow-rhinoceros in East Africa is sometimes enormous—surpassed only by those of the white rhinoceroses of the South, now almost extinct. The British Museum contains specimens



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measuring as much as  $53\frac{1}{2}$  inches. I remember well the doubts I entertained about a 54-inch horn which I saw on sale in Zanzibar ten years ago, and was tempted to buy. Such a growth seemed to me then incredible, and several old residents who ought to have known something about it fortified me in my belief that the Indian dealer had "faked" it somehow, and increased its length artificially. It might still be lying in his dimly lit shop instead of forming part of my collection, only that on my first expedition into the interior I saw for myself other rhinoceroses with horns almost as long, and on returning to Zanzibar at once effected its purchase. A second horn of equal length, but already half decayed when it was found on the velt, came into my possession through the kindness of a friend. I myself killed one cow-rhinoceros with very remarkable horns, but not so long as these.

There is something peculiarly formidable and menacing about these weapons of the rhinoceros. Not that they really make him a more dangerous customer for the sportsman to tackle, but they certainly give that impression. The thought of being impaled, run through, by that ferocious dagger is by no means pleasant.

In something of the same way, a stag with splendid antlers, a great maned lion, or a tremendous bull-elephant sends up the sportsman's zest to fever-pitch.

It is astonishing how the colossal beast manages to plunge its way through the densest thicket despite the hindrance of its great horns. It does so by keeping its head well raised, so that the horn almost presses against



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the back of its massive neck, very much after the style of our European stag. But it is a riddle, in both cases, how they seem to be impeded so little.

I felt nearly sure that I could count on finding some gamesome old rhinoceroses up among the mountains, and my Wandorobo guides kept declaring that I should see some extraordinary horns. They were not wrong.

I strongly advise any one who contemplates betaking himself to the velt after big game to set about the enterprise in the true sporting spirit, making of it a really genuine contest between man and beast—a genuine duel—not an onslaught of the many upon the one. Many English writers support me in this, and they understand the claims of sport in this field as well as we Germans do at home. The English have instituted clearly defined rules which no sportsman may transgress. In truth, it is a lamentable thing to see the *Sonntagsjäger* importing himself with his unaccustomed rifle amid the wild life of Africa!

I shall always look back with satisfaction to the great Schöller expedition which I accompanied for some time in 1896. Not one of the natives, not one of the soldiers, ventured to shoot a single head of game throughout that expedition, even in those regions which until then had never been explored by Europeans. The most rigid control was exercised over them from start to finish. I have good grounds for saying that this spirit has prevailed far too little as a general thing in Africa.

I have invariably maintained discipline among my own followers, and they have always submitted to it. How



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difficult it is to deal with them, however, may be gathered from the following incident which I find recorded in my diary.

On the occasion of my last journey, a black soldier, an Askari, had been told off to attach himself for a time to my caravan. Presently I had to send him back to the military station at Kilimanjaro with a message. A number of my followers accompanied him, partly to fetch goods, etc., from my main camp, partly on various other missions that had to be attended to before we advanced farther into the velt. The Askari was provided, as usual, with a certain number of cartridges. When my men returned, a considerable time afterwards, I discovered quite accidentally that one of them bore marks on his body of having been brutally lashed with a whip. His back was covered with scars and open wounds. After the long-suffering manner of his kind, he had said nothing to me about it until his condition was revealed to me by chance—for, as he was only one of the hundred and fifty attached to my expedition, I might never have noticed it. It transpired that not long after he had set out the Askari, against orders, had shot big game and, among other animals, had bagged a giraffe, whose head—a valuable trophy—he had forced my bearers to carry for him to the fort. The particular bearer in question had quite rightly refused, whereupon the Askari had thrashed him most barbarously with a hippopotamus-hide whip—a *sjambok*. I need hardly say that he was suitably punished for this when I lodged a formal complaint against him. Had it not been for his ill-treatment of my bearer, however, I



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should never have heard of the Askari's shooting the giraffe, for he had succeeded in terrorising all the men into silence.

Now we move onwards, following the rhinoceros-tracks up the hill-slopes, where they are clearly marked, and in among the steep ridges, until they elude us for a while



AN ELAND BULL, THE LEADER OF A HERD WHICH AT THE MOMENT OF THIS PHOTOGRAPH WAS IN CONCEALMENT BEHIND THE THORN-BUSHES.

in the wilderness. Presently we perceive not merely a hollowed-out path wrought in the soft stone by the tramlings of centuries, but also fresh traces of rhinoceroses that must have been left this very day. We are in for a first-rate hunt.

We have reached the higher ranges of the hills and are





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looking down upon the extensive, scantily-wooded slopes. Are we going to bag our game to-day?

I could produce an African day-book made up of high hopes and disappointments. Not, indeed, that returning empty-handed meant ill-humour and disappointment, or that I expected invariable good luck. But a day out in the tropics counts for at least a week in Europe, and I like to make the most of it. Then, too, I had to reserve my hunting for those hours when I could give myself up to it body and soul. How often while I have been on the march at the head of heavily laden caravans have the most tempting opportunities presented themselves to me, only to be resisted—fine chances for the record-breaker and irresponsible shot, but merely tantalising to me!

On we go through the wilderness, still upwards. I am the first European in these regions, which have much of novelty for my eyes. The great lichen-hung trees, the dense jungle, the wide plains, all charm me. The heat becomes more and more oppressive, and I and my followers are beginning to feel its effects. We are wearying for a halt, but we must lose no time, for we have still a long way before us, whether we return to our main camp or press onwards to that wooded hollow yonder, four hours' march away, there to spend the night.

A vast panorama has been opening out in front of us. We have reached the summit of this first range of hills, and are looking down on another deep and extensive valley. My field-glasses enable me to descry in the far distance a herd of eland making their way down the hill, and two bush-buck grazing hard by a thicket. But these have



no interest for us to-day; we are in pursuit of bigger game. Suddenly, an hour later, my men become excited. "Pharu, bwana!" they whisper to me from behind, pointing down towards a group of acacia trees on a plateau a few hundred paces away. True enough, there are two rhinoceroses. I perceive first one, then the other lumbering along, looking, doubtless, for a suitable resting-place. My field-glasses tell me that they are a pair, male and female, both furnished with big horns. Now for my plan of campaign. I have to make a wide circuit which will take me twenty-five minutes, moving over difficult ground.

Arrived at the point in question, I rejoice to see that the animals have not got far away from where I first spied them. The wind is favourable to me here, and there is little danger at this hour of its suddenly veering round. I examine my rifle carefully. It seems all right. My men crouch down by my order, and I advance stealthily alone.

I am under a spell now. The rest of the world has vanished from my consciousness. I look neither to right nor left. I have no thought for anything but my quarry and my gun. What will the beasts do? Will this be my last appearance as a hunter of big game? Is the rhinoceros family at last to have its revenge?

I have another look at them through my field-glasses. The bull has really fine horns; the cow good enough, but nothing special. I decide therefore to secure him alone if possible, for his flesh will provide food in plenty for my men. On I move, as noiselessly as possible, the wind still in my favour. Up on these heights the rhinoceroses miss their watchful friends the ox-peckers,



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so faithful to them elsewhere, to put them on their guard.

Often have my followers warned me of the presence of a "Ndege baya"—a bird of evil omen. Many of the African tribes seem to share the old superstitions of the Romans in regard to birds. Certainly one cannot help being impressed by the way in which the ox-peckers suddenly whizz through the air whenever one gets within range of buffalo or hippopotami.

The unexpected happens. The two huge beasts—how, I cannot tell—have become aware of my approach. As though moved by a common impulse, they swing round and stand for a moment motionless, as though carved in stone, their heads turned towards me. . . . They are two hundred paces away. Now I must show myself. Two things can happen: either they will both come for me full pelt, or else they will seek safety in flight. An instant later they are thundering down on me in their unwieldy fashion, but at an incredible pace. These are moments when your life hangs by a thread. Nothing can save you but a well-aimed bullet. This time my bullet finds its billet. It penetrates the neck of the leading animal—the cow, as always is the case—which, tumbling head foremost, just like a hare, drops as though dead. A wonderful sight, lasting but a second. The bull pulls up short, hesitates a moment, then swerves round, and with a wild snort goes tearing down the hill and out of sight. I keep my rifle levelled still at the female rhinoceros, for I have known cases when an animal has got up again suddenly, though mortally wounded, and done damage.

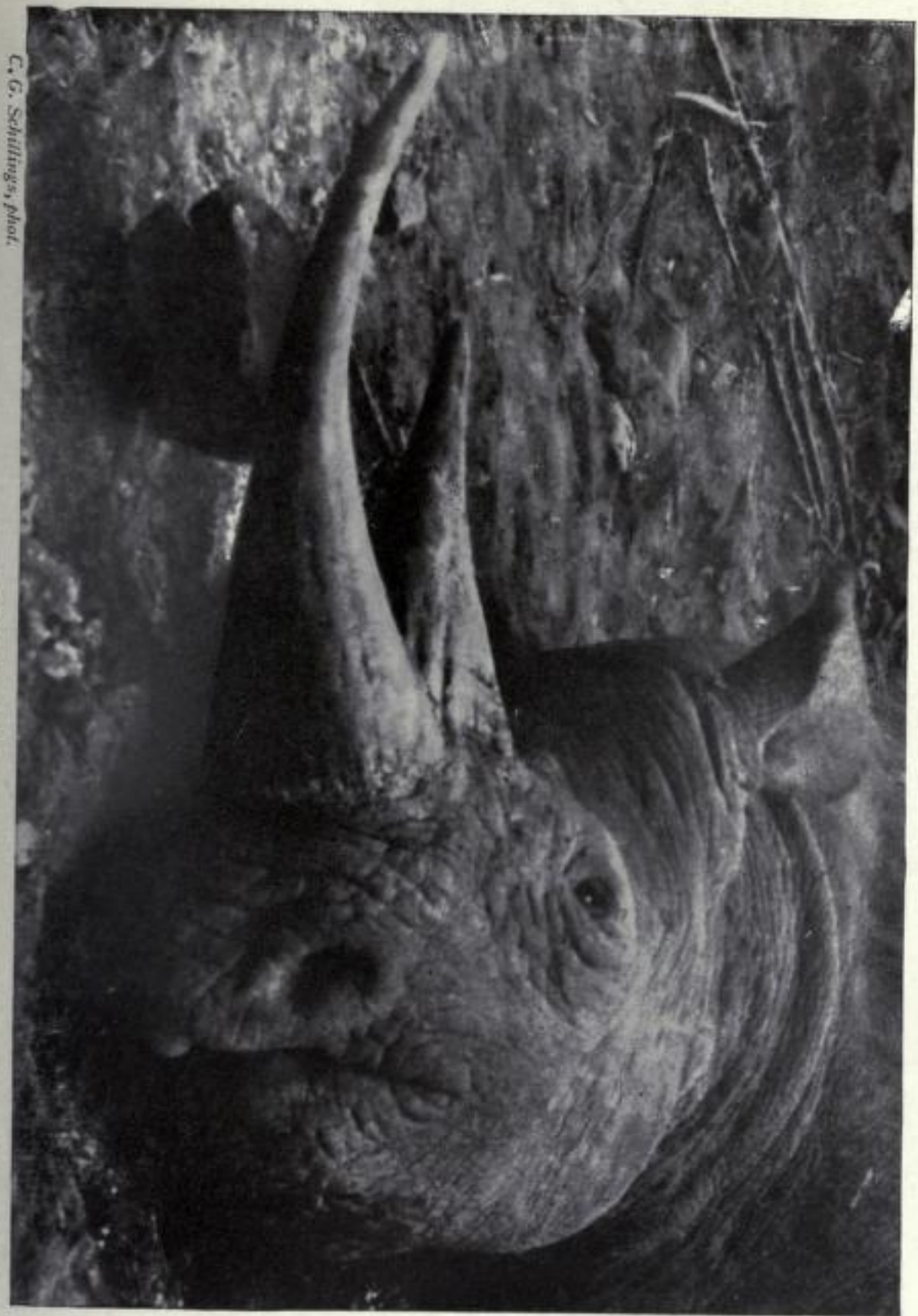




*C. G. Schillings, phot.*

RHINOCEROSES SHED THEIR HORNS FROM TIME TO TIME AND DEVELOP NEW ONES. THE COW-RHINOCEROS IN THIS PHOTOGRAPH HAD SHED BOTH OF HERS. THE RHINOCEROS WHICH I BROUGHT HOME AND PRESENTED TO THE BERLIN ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS HAS RENEWED HER FRONT HORN SEVERAL TIMES.





*C. G. Schittings, phot.*

A GOOD SPECIMEN.



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But on this occasion the precaution proves needless. The bullet has done its work, and I become the possessor of two very fair specimens of rhinoceros horns.

It was scarcely to be imagined that in the course of this same day I was to get within range of eight more rhinoceroses. It is hard to realise what numbers of them there are in these mountainous regions. It is a puzzle to me that this fact has not been proclaimed abroad in sporting books and become known to everybody. But then, what did we know, until a few years ago, of the existence of the okapi in Central Africa? How much do we know even now of its numbers? For that matter, who can tell us anything definite as to the quantities of walruses in the north, or the numbers of yaks in the Thibetan uplands, or of elks and of bears in the impenetrable Alaskan woods?

It seems to be the fate of the larger animals to be exterminated by traders who do not give away their knowledge of the resources of the hunting regions which they exploit. English and American authors, among them so high an authority as President Roosevelt, bear me out in this. I remember reading as a boy of a traveller, a fur-trader, who happened to hear of certain remote northern islands well stocked with the wild life he wanted. He kept the information to himself, and made a fortune out of the game he bagged; but when he quitted the islands their entire fauna had been wiped out. The same thing is now happening in Africa. Our only clue to the extent of the slaughtering of elephants now being carried on is furnished by the immense quantities of ivory that

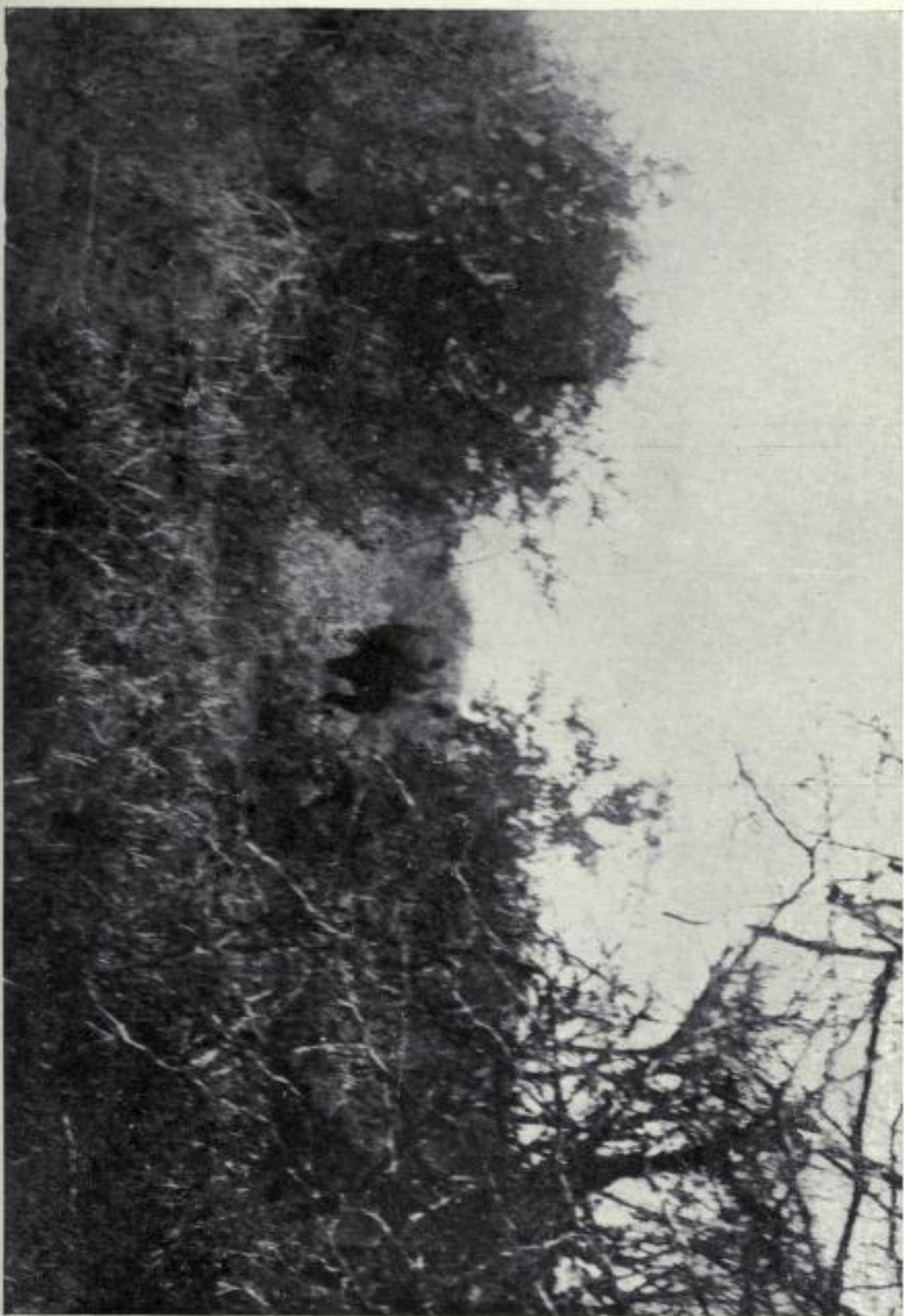


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come on the market. So it is, too, with the slaughtering of whales and seals for the purposes of commerce. It is with them as with so many men—we shall begin to hear of them when they are dead.

But to come back to our rhinoceroses. Not long before sunset I saw another animal grazing peacefully on a ridge just below me, apparently finding the short grass growing there entirely to his taste. The monstrous outlines of the great beast munching away in among the jagged rocks stood out most strikingly in the red glow of the setting sun. It would have been no good to me to shoot him, for all my thoughts were set on finding a satisfactory camping-place for the night. Soon afterwards I came suddenly upon two others right in my path—a cow with a young one very nearly full grown. In a moment my men, who were a little behind, had skedaddled behind a ridge of rocks. I myself just managed to spring aside in time to escape the cow, putting a great boulder between us. Round she came after me, and I realised as never before the degree to which a man is handicapped by his boots in attempting thus to dodge an animal. It was a narrow escape, but in this case also a well-aimed bullet did the trick. We left the body where it lay, intending to come back next morning for the horns. Some minutes later, after scurrying downhill for a few hundred paces as quickly as we could, so as to avoid being overtaken by the night, we met three other rhinoceroses which evidently had not heard my shot ring out. They were standing on a grassy knoll in the midst of the valley which we had now reached,





*C. G. Schilling's, phot.*

A SNAPSHOT AT TWENTY PAGES WITH A HAND-CAMERA, WHICH I HAD TO THROW AWAY THE NEXT SECOND, FOR THE "RHINO" MADE FOR ME AND ONLY TURNED ASIDE WHEN IT HAD GOT WITHIN THREE PAGES OF ME!



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and did not make off until they saw us. By the stream, near which we pitched our camp for the night, we came upon two more among some bushes, and yet another rushing through a thicket which we had to traverse on our way to the waterside. In the night several others passed down the deep-trodden path to the stream, fortunately heralding their approach by loud, angry-sounding snorts.

Many such nights have I spent out in the wild ; but I would not now go through with such experiences very willingly, for I have heard tell of too many mishaps to other travellers under such conditions. That seasoned Rhenish sportsman Niedieck, for instance, in his interesting book *Mit der Büchse in fünf Weltteilen*, gives a striking account of a misadventure he met with in the Sudan, near the banks of the Nile. In very similar circumstances his camp was attacked by elephants during the night ; he himself was badly injured, and one of his men nearly killed. This danger in regions where rhinoceroses or elephants are much hunted is by no means to be underestimated. Rather it should be taken to heart. According to the same writer, the elephants in Ceylon sometimes "go for" the travellers' rest-houses erected by the Government and destroy them. These things have brought it home to me that I was in much greater peril of my life during those night encampments of mine on the velt and in primeval forests than I realised at the time.

In those parts of East Africa there is a tendency to imagine that a zareba is not essential to safety, and that





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a camp-fire serves all right to frighten lions away. It is a remarkable comment on this that over a hundred Indians employed on the Uganda Railway should have been seized by lions. In other parts of Africa even the natives are reluctant to go through the night unprotected by a zareba, because they know that lions when short of other prey are apt to attack human beings, and neither the hunter nor his camp-fire have any terrors for them.

However that may be, the true sportsman and naturalist in the tropics will continue to find himself obliged to encamp as best he may *à la belle étoile*, trusting to his lucky star to protect him as he sinks wearily to sleep.

\* \* \* \* \*

The long caravan is again on the move, like a snake, over the velt. Word has come to me that at a distance of a few days' march there has been a fall of rain. As by a miracle grass has sprung up, and plant-life is reborn, trees and bushes have put out new leaves, and immense numbers of wild animals have congregated in the region. Thither we are making our way, over stretches still arid and barren. Watering-places are few and far between and hidden away. But we know how to find them, and hard by one of them I have to pitch my camp for a time.

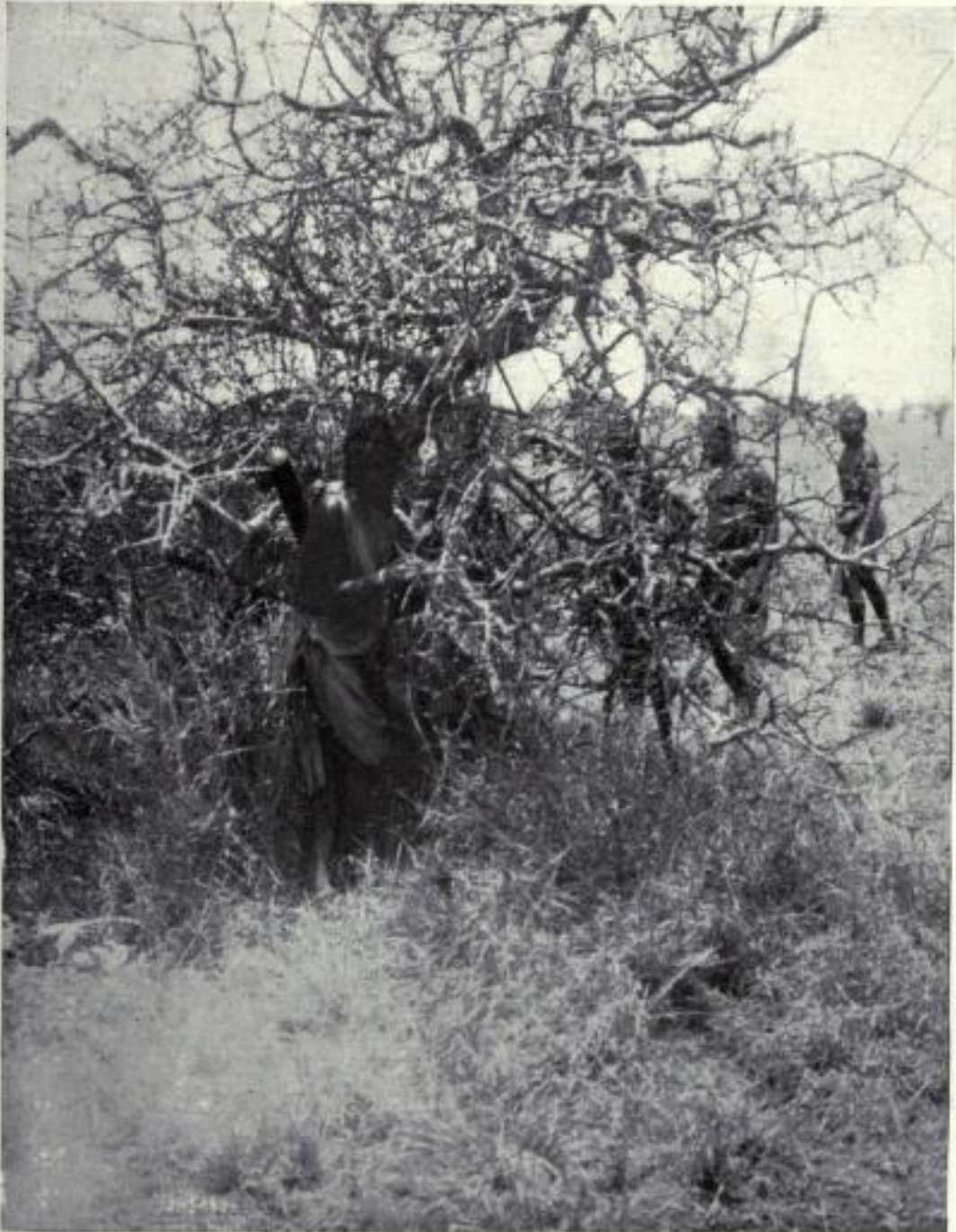
As we go we see endless herds of animals making for the same goal—zebras, gnus, oryx antelopes, hartebeests, Grant's gazelles, impallahs, giraffes, ostriches, as well as numbers of rhinoceroses, all drawn as though by magic to the region of the rain.

With my taxidermist Orgeich I march at the head of



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my caravan. My camera has to remain idle, for once



HOW ONE OF MY MEN SOUGHT SHELTER WHEN THE RHINOCEROS CAME FOR US.

again, as so often happens, we get no sun. It would be useless to attempt snapshots in such unfavourable light.



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Suddenly, at last, the entire aspect of the velt undergoes a change, and we have got into a stretch of country which has had a monopoly of the downfall. It is cut off quite perceptibly from the parched districts all around, and its fresh green aspect is refreshing and soothing to the eye. On and on we march for hour after hour, the wealth of animal life increasing as we go. Early this morning I had noted two rhinoceroses bowling along over the velt. They had had a bath and were gleaming and glistening in the sun.

Now we descry a huge something, motionless upon the velt, looking at first like the stump of a massive tree or like a squat ant-hill, but turning out on closer investigation to be a rhinoceros. It may seem strange that one can make any mistake even at one's first sight of the animal, but every one who has gone after rhinoceroses much must have had the same astonishing or alarming experience.

In this case we have to deal with an unusually large specimen—a bull. It seems to be asleep. My sporting instincts are aroused. My men halt and crouch down upon the ground. I hold a brief colloquy with Orgeich. He also gets to the rear. I advance towards the rhinoceros over the broken ground between us—the wind favouring me, and a few parched-looking bushes serving me as cover. I get nearer and nearer—now I am only a hundred and fifty paces off, now only a hundred. The great beast makes no stir—it seems in truth to be asleep. Now I have got within eighty paces, now sixty. Between me and my adversary there is nothing but three-foot-high parched



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shrubs, quite useless as a protection. Ah! now he makes a move. Up goes his mighty head, suddenly all attention. My rifle rings out. Spitting and snorting, down he comes upon me in the lumbering gallop I have learnt to know so well. I fire a second shot, a third, a fourth. It is wonderful how quickly one can send off bullet after



A RHINOCEROS IN THE DRY SEASON, ITS BODY EMACIATED BY THE SCANTINESS OF GRAZING-GROUNDS AND DRINKING-PLACES.

bullet in such moments. Now he is upon me, and I give him a fifth shot, *à bout portant*. In imagination I am done for, gashed by his great horn and flung into the air. I feel what a fool I was to expose myself in this way. A host of such impressions and reflections flash through my brain.

But, as it turns out, my last hour has not yet come.



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On receipt of my fifth bullet my assailant swerves round and lays himself open to my sixth just as he decides to take flight. Off he speeds now, never to be seen again, though we spend an hour trying to mark him down—a task which it is the easier for us to undertake in that he has fled in the direction in which we have to continue our march.

Orgeich, in his good-humoured way, remarks drily, "That was a near thing."

Such "near things" may fall to the lot of the African hunter, however perfectly he may be equipped.

On another occasion, two rhinoceroses that I had not seen until that moment made for me suddenly. In trying to escape I tripped over a moss-covered root of a tree, and fell so heavily on my right hip that at first I could not get up again. Both the animals rushed close by me, Orgeich and my men only succeeding in escaping also behind trees at the last moment.

\* \* \* \* \*

To descry one or two rhinoceroses grazing or resting in the midst of the bare velt and to stalk them all by yourself, or with a single follower to carry a rifle for you, is, I really think, as fascinating an experience as any hunter can desire. At the same time it is one of the most dangerous forms of modern sport. An English writer remarks with truth that even the bravest man cannot always control his senses on such occasions—that he is apt to get dazed and giddy. And the slightest unsteadiness in his hand may mean his destruction. He has to advance a long distance on all fours, or else wriggle along on his





PIECE OF VERY HARD STONE FROM THE SIRGOI MOUNTAIN IN BRITISH EAST AFRICA, PRESENTED TO ME BY ALFRED KAISER. RHINOCEROSES WHET THEIR HORNS AGAINST THIS KIND OF STONE, MAKING ITS SURFACE QUITE SMOOTH.

stomach like a serpent, making the utmost use of whatever cover offers, and keeping note all the time of the direction



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of the wind. He has to keep on his guard all the time against poisonous snakes. And he has to trust to his hunter's instinct as to how near he must get to his quarry before he fires. I consider that a distance of more than a hundred paces is very hazardous—above all, if you want to kill outright. I am thinking, of course, of the sportsman who is hunting quite alone.

To-day I am to have an unlooked-for experience. A number of eland have attracted my attention. I follow them through the long grass, just as I did that time in 1896 when the flock of pearl-hens buzzed over me and I started the two rhinoceroses which nearly "did for" me.<sup>1</sup> These antelopes claim my undivided attention. The country is undulating in its formation, and my men are all out of sight. I am quite alone, rifle in hand. The animals make off to the left and in amidst the high grass. I stand still and watch them. It would be too far to have a shot at the leader of the herd, so I merely follow in their tracks, crouching down. Now I have to get across a crevice. But as I am negotiating it and penetrating the higher grass on the opposite slope, suddenly, fifty paces in front of me, I perceive a huge dark object in among the reeds—a rhinoceros.

It has not become aware of me yet, nor of the peril awaiting it. It sits up, turned right in my direction. Now there is no going either forwards or backwards for me. The grass encumbers my legs—the old growth (spared by the great fires that sometimes ravage the whole velt between two rainy seasons) mingling with the new

<sup>1</sup> See *With Flashlight and Rifle*.





*C. G. Schilling, phot.*

RHINOCEROSSES OFTEN REMAIN IN THIS SITTING POSTURE FOR QUITE A LONG TIME.



## ● Rhinoceros-hunting

into an inextricable tangle. Such moments are full of excitement. It is quite on the cards that a second rhinoceros—perhaps a third—will now turn up. Who knows? Moreover, I have absolutely no inducement to bag the specimen now before my eyes—its horns are not of much account. I try cautiously to retreat, but my feet are entangled and I slip. Instantly I jump up again—the rhinoceros has heard the noise of my fall and is making a rush for me, spitting and snorting. It won't be easy to hit him effectively, but I fire. As my rifle rings out I hear suddenly the singing notes like a bird in the air above, clear and resonant, and I seem to note the impact of the bullet. Next instant I see the rhinoceros disappearing over the undulating plain.

I conclude that the bullet must have struck one of his horns and been turned aside, and that it startled the beast and caused him to abandon his attack.

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But there are yet other ways in which you may be surprised by a rhinoceros. I had pitched my camp by the Pangani, in a region which at the time of Count Telekis' expedition, some years before, was a swamp. Its swampy condition lasts only during the rainy season, but I found my camping-place to be very unsatisfactory and unhealthy. I set out therefore with a few of my men to find a better position somewhere on dryer land, if possible shaded by trees, and at a spot where the river was passable—a good deal to ask for in the African bush. For hours we pursued our search through “boga” and “pori,” but the marshy ground did not even enable us to get





## In Wildest Africa •

down to the river-side. Endless morasses of reeds enfolded us, in whose miry depths the foot sinks even in the dry weather, in which the sultry heat enervates us, shut in as we are by the rank growth that meets above our heads as we grope through it. At last we reach some solid earth, and it looks as though here, beneath some sycamores, we have found a better camping place. Deep-trodden paths lead down to the waterside. We follow them through the brushwood, I leading the way, and thus reach the stream. The rush and roar of the river resounds in our ears, and we catch the notes, too, of birds. Suddenly, right in front of me, the ground seems to quicken into life. My first notion is that it must be a gigantic crocodile; but no, it is a rhinoceros which has just been bathing, and which now, disturbed, is glancing in our direction and about to attack us or take to its heels—who can say? Escape seems impossible. Clasp my rifle I plunge back into the dense brushwood. But the tough viscous branches project me forward again. Now for it. The rhinoceros is “coming for” us. We tumble about in all directions. Some seconds later we exchange stupefied glances. The animal has fled past us, just grazing us and bespattering us with mud, and has disappeared from sight. How small we felt at that moment I cannot express! In such moments you experience the same kind of sensation as when your horse throws you or you are knocked over by a motor-car. (Perhaps this latter simile comes home to one best nowadays!) You realise, too, why the native hunters throw off all their clothing when they are after big game. On





*C. G. Schillings, phot.*

A ROCK-POOL ON KILIMANJARO.



## ● Rhinoceros-hunting

such occasions even the lightest covering hampers you, and perhaps endangers your life.

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Countless thousands of two-horned rhinoceroses are still to the good in East Africa. Yes, countless thousands! Captain Schlobach tells us that he would encounter as many as thirty in one day in Karragwe in 1903 and 1904. Countless also are the numbers of horns which are secured annually for sale on the coast. But how much longer will this state of things continue? And the specimens of the white rhinoceros of South Africa which adorn the museum in Cape Town and the private museum of Mr. W. Rothschild (and which we owe to Coryndon and Varndell) are not more valuable than the specimens also to be found in the museums of the "black" rhinoceroses still extant in East Africa.

This view of the matter will perhaps receive attention fifty or a hundred years hence.