

# STALKING BIG GAME WITH A CAMERA IN EQUATORIAL AFRICA

WITH A MONOGRAPH ON THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT

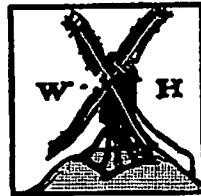
BY

MARIUS MAXWELL

CONTAINING 113 PLATES AFTER PHOTOGRAPHS  
BY THE AUTHOR

PREFACE BY

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## SPORT WITH BUFFALO & RHINOCEROS

of remarkably fine and shapely horns, and the animal faced the camera behind which I stood nervously fumbling with the focussing knob before pressing the release. Here the animal is portrayed as it appeared at that moment, a picture of massive proportions and pugnacious strength, with the sheen of its black coat well set off by the colours of its environment (see illustration No. 11).

With head raised, nose pointed forward and horns laid back in a defiant and challenging attitude, the buffalo gazed steadfastly at me, obviously mystified by the close proximity of such a strange apparition. The partly chewed heather in its mouth and the sprig on its frontlet are appropriate signs of an interrupted feed.

The action of the shutter made the wondering beast snort and move a few steps forward as if it could hardly trust its eyes. For a second time it halted, but now much nearer, and posed in a slightly altered attitude (see illustration No. 12). The focussing became intensely exciting work, and they were speculative moments when I tore at a tab from the filmpack and pressed the release for this second exposure.

This time the rap of the shutter at such close quarters proved too much for the buffalo: with a parting snort, it wheeled round and cantered out of sight, leaving me confident and satisfied that I had made a couple of successful exposures.

Both Barnes and myself felt not unnaturally relieved from the tension caused by this unique experience. Similar experiences have made me arrive at the conclusion that the African buffalo is seldom truculent in such circumstances. The formidable appearance of the beast at close quarters, with its impressive frontlet and sweeping horns, inspires an appreciation of the colossal strength which this animal undoubtedly possesses, and makes it appear the finest of all representatives of the bovine family.

### RHINO ADVENTURES

Tramping across the valley of the Southern Guaso Nyiro from Mt. Shombole towards the base of Mt. Sambu, we espied a pair of rhinoceroses in the distance.

They were feeding some way from the swamp, on the edge of a bare plain which extends south to the lake shore and west to the foot of Mt. Sambu. The coarse grass, interspersed with reeds and plants, among which the two animals were leisurely feeding some little distance apart, was mostly about four feet in height, and grew in clumps. The two huge bodies, stained with the earth in which they must have been wallowing quite recently, had assumed a light grey hue, and lurched every now and then slowly forward through the parting vegetation.

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On our approach one of these old-world beasts, the individual nearest to us lifted its snout, and gradually raised its head above the grass, remaining motionless except for the twitching of its ears. It had evidently heard our approach, and standing stock still we awaited the moment when it would lower its head and continue feeding; with great care we then proceeded towards the vast bulk until the desired distance was reached for a satisfactory exposure. Wishing to make the best of the conditions, I was on this occasion using a portrait lens and tripod, and kept edging cautiously towards my prospective "sitter." Although we were on the right side of the wind the beast kept looking up uneasily at short intervals, and evidently felt that everything was not quite as it should be. Finally, raising its head and swaying it in our direction, it could no longer fail to discern the intruders, in spite of its exceedingly bad sight. Gazing at us for a while with its small eyes twinkling, and its ears nervously twitching, a dull curiosity at last overcame the animal's uneasiness, and it decided to investigate the object of its inquisitiveness. It lumbered deliberately forward in our direction, stopping and raising its head every two or three steps, puzzled, and apparently straining its defective eyes to get us well in view. Its image grew on the focussing screen, and accurate adjustment of the camera became a difficult and trying matter. Prepared to sacrifice the apparatus, should the "sitter" become flurried at the last moment, I kept focussing until the body of the animal occupied a satisfactory proportion of the ground glass, and pressed the release at a moment when the beast was advancing towards us (see illustration No. 13). The click of the shutter, curious to say, did not deter the old fellow from stepping forward on to the small piece of open ground at the end of which we were stationed with the camera poised on its light field tripod. The gun was held in readiness in case anything should go amiss.

A sudden yell from Barnes, however, accompanied with a few blasphemous terms of endearment, brought the beast out of the depths of its thoughts, and, throwing up its head, it stood amazed for a moment, wheeled round in what seemed at first rather a hesitating fashion, and trotted finally out on to the bare plain. It then halted for quite a minute, gazing in the direction of Barnes, which gave me ample time to train the lens to where the wondering animal stood; and so I got my second exposure. After trotting a few paces in a circle it again turned in his direction and stood as if not satisfied with its interrupted investigation. From the subsequent photograph (see Plate No. 14) it may be gathered that the good-natured but inquisitive beast was on the verge of approaching for a



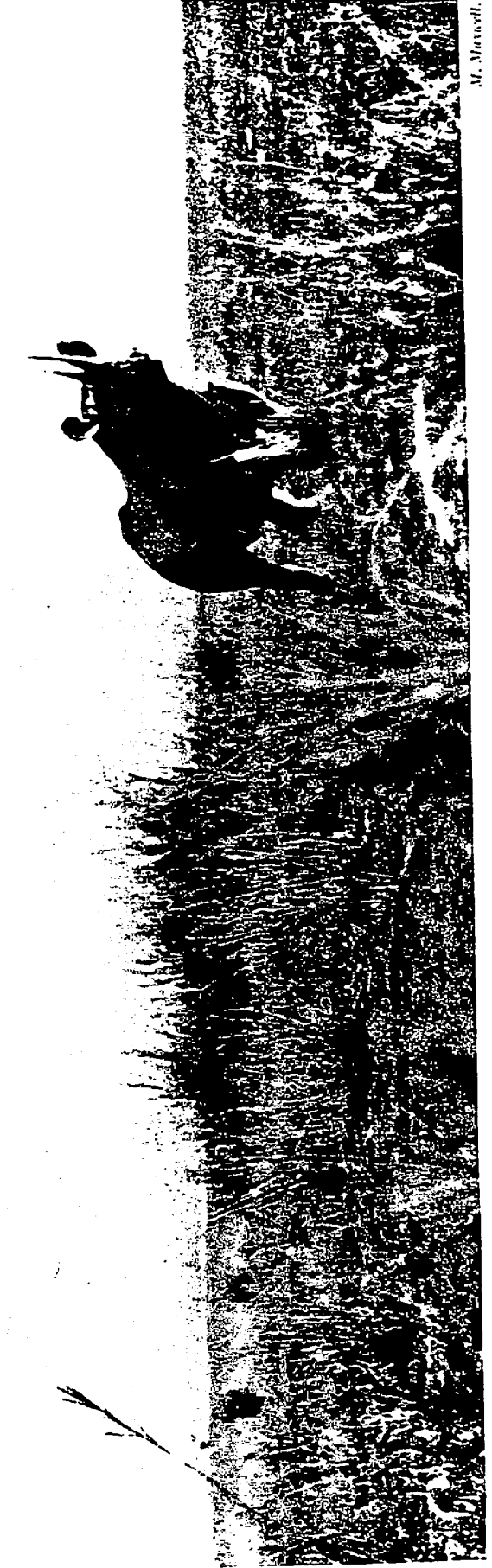
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FACE TO FACE WITH RHINOCEROS BICORNIS.

M. Marshall.



GAZING INTENTLY TOWARDS THE INTRUDERS.



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THE OLD-WORLD BEAST IS ABOUT TO INVESTIGATE.

M. Maxwell.

## SPORT WITH BUFFALO & RHINOCEROS

second time, but finally, thinking better of it, it swung round and moved off briskly, closely followed by its mate. The latter at the outset had been a certain distance away, too far to permit me to include both of them in the picture.

It was a comical sight to see the pair of them trotting off briskly, one behind the other, with their elevated heads, horns stuck in the air and tails stiff and erect, looking from a distance like a pair of large warthogs.

It is a well-known fact that these creatures are the most uncertain in their behaviour of all the larger game animals of the African continent. They are easily flurried, and their sudden confusion, probably resulting from the smallness of their intellects, causes them, when confronted with anything strange, to gather that they are in desperate straits and are called upon to make some demonstration in self-defence. It is perhaps largely due to this fact that they often become a nuisance to the traveller, and particularly so in bush country. The rhino is a formidable-looking beast, with a curious prehistoric air, and when it bears down on the intruder, to the accompaniment of snorts, the demonstration is at times decidedly disconcerting. It is as well that in such cases they are easily turned by a shot in the head or forepart of the body, as they are tough and will stand much punishment with the rifle before they succumb; one can never be quite sure of dropping the charging beast with anything but a well-placed shot.

Their awkward habit of standing motionless and alert, concealed in the scrub, listening intently to the approach of strange sounds, before they suddenly barge out from a most unexpected corner at a moment when the porters have almost stumbled on to them, is frequently conducive to mishaps by way of scattered loads and broken chopboxes. The boys naturally drop their burdens in their anxiety to keep clear of the clumsy and dull-witted animal, which is, in reality, only too anxious to make his frantic escape. Imagining himself surrounded by the line of porters he may at times repeat his rush through the caravan with fatal result to his ignorant self. An old bull, when suddenly confronted with a human being at close quarters, particularly in bush country, may occasionally stand restive for a short while, snorting defiance before taking himself off at a trot. On detecting a strange object he is likely to trot up to it. A shout is usually sufficient to bring the beast to its senses, but on occasions, feeling himself confronted by a dangerous intruder, he instantly decides to rush forward, and changes his trot into a slashing gallop. A side-step in the nick of time is possible, but requires agility, and remains at all times a risky performance. When unwounded he will seldom return for a second attack, and this supports the belief that the demonstration on the part of the stupid

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animal has been prompted by its sudden confusion and ignorance as to how to deal with an embarrassing situation at a moment's notice.

The photograph (No. 13) in no way claims perfection from a photographic point of view, and lacks the artistic setting, but it may bring back to those who have at some time or other made the close acquaintance of the black rhino of East Africa a vivid recollection of the grotesque appearance of these antique creatures.

It may, perhaps, be of interest to the reader to hear of the following little experience with the East African rhinoceros, for incidents of this nature are bound to occur once and again to camera men who wish to gain at first hand an insight into the disposition and habits of those game animals which are generally classed as dangerous. Here, for instance, is an account of a typical incident with a rhino startled from his midday siesta.

We were travelling light from our base camp, and the few porters had just commenced to pitch our 40 lb. tent on a ledge of the Lisudwa hills, some eight miles from Lake Natron, when one of the boys informed us of the presence of a large bull rhinoceros. The peaceful animal had evidently picked out a suitable thorn tree on the broken hillside, some distance from the ledge, and had probably occupied the chosen spot between the hours of nine and ten, previous to our arrival. The hum of human voices had apparently been detected, and had caused the old beast to awaken from a heavy slumber. At all events, when I approached him from down hill over the broken ground, I obtained a glimpse of the massive head facing in the direction of the camp, and so giving me a side view, with the restive, twitching ears cocked and the two horns stuck in the air. From the outline of its back it appeared that he was seated on his hind quarters, his fore-legs straight, in a manner often seen in the domestic pig as it squats on its haunches. I happened to be for the moment standing about a dozen yards below in a rock-strewn watercourse, where my movements were circumscribed on either side by patches of thorn-scrub, and I was about to prepare for an exposure when the beast suddenly stood up, wheeled round unexpectedly and, with alacrity, hurled down the hillside, choosing the watercourse as a line of escape. This gave me barely time to dispute my ground and turn the animal with a shot. With astonishing quickness he swerved at the impact of the bullet, and it was extraordinary to see with what agility and speed he went clattering down, over the broken ground, and galloped for more than a mile on the open plain below. We had an excellent view of the fleeing animal, and this incident gave us a singular opportunity of observing the gait of a rhinoceros at full gallop.

## Chapter VIII

# Further Experiences with *Rhinoceros Bicornis*

IT is common knowledge among hunters and interested observers of animal life that it is practically impossible to foretell how the rhinoceros of East Africa will act if approached within close range.

Under such conditions he will prove to be undoubtedly the most erratic of all the larger game animals, whether he is met with on the turf-covered plains of the uplands, in bush or scrub country, or in the arid regions of the Northern Frontier District of the Colony.

In the previous chapter on "Camera Sport with Buffalo and Rhinoceros," some experiences with this old-world creature have already been described, from which it can be gathered that the East African rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros bicornis*) affords the camera sportsman a good deal of interest; at times, also, a considerable amount of excitement. It is a matter for regret to realize that this animal will in all likelihood be the first of the great African mammals to become extinct.

His erratic actions at the sight of mankind and his habitually fidgety demeanour in such circumstances are presumably due to excessively bad sight, which is, moreover, hampered, when the head is held in certain attitudes, by the presence of the pair of median horns. In addition, the animal is known to be awkwardly stupid. His sense of hearing, on the other hand, is acute, and this fact is particularly noticeable and more pronounced when an alert individual is met with in bush country.

It is, I believe, because of these defects that the animal is apt to behave in such an uncertain and nervous manner in the presence of strange objects. He detects, for instance, an unusual sound and instinctively suspects danger. At the same time, his inadequate sight is unable to make out the cause of the disturbance, and this annoys him considerably; he becomes suddenly startled by the close proximity of the strange or dreaded object the moment it appears within his range of view, is thereby apt to become flurried and, in consequence, takes the initiative by attacking the intruder, or he blunders out of the way in the most unreasonable direction he could have chosen.

Normally he is a timid enough creature and prefers solitude. Human sounds will scare him away and the scent of man is generally equally effective, as the



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average rhino is quite aware that the human being is to be avoided ; he seems to know him by his scent and noises, though rarely actually from sight.

The rhino is easily provoked at times when disturbed during a siesta, or when he is thirsty, and is unexpectedly startled by the appearance of moving objects close at hand while intently engaged in quenching his thirst or indulging in a bath.

In the arid regions of the Northern Frontier District I noticed that these quaint pachyderms were in the habit of travelling long distances from their water supply to their feeding ground, which may sometimes be a matter of ten to fifteen miles away. They often come to drink in broad daylight, and the notion that they quench their thirst only in the evenings or at night is incorrect, unless they are apt to be disturbed in their chosen localities. The adjoining photographs, for instance (illustrations Nos. 1 and 2), were taken shortly after noon, and my porters frequently came with reports of rhino coming to drink at the river-side (Northern Guaso Nyiro) during hours between sunrise and sunset.

A little adventure, which incidentally gave me the opportunity of obtaining the next series of photographs depicting an attacking rhinoceros, will perhaps be of some interest to the reader (illustrations Nos. 3, 4, 5 and 6).

While we were travelling in the Northern Frontier District our Boran guide informed us of a certain locality where rhino frequently came to drink at some salt water springs in the heat of the day.

The place in question possessed one of those typical sandy river beds bordered here and there with so-called Dome palms. Hot springs welled up from below the outcrops of foliated rock, furnishing crystal-clear, but distinctly saline water, which formed a chain of small pools in the rocky parts of the otherwise dry watercourse.

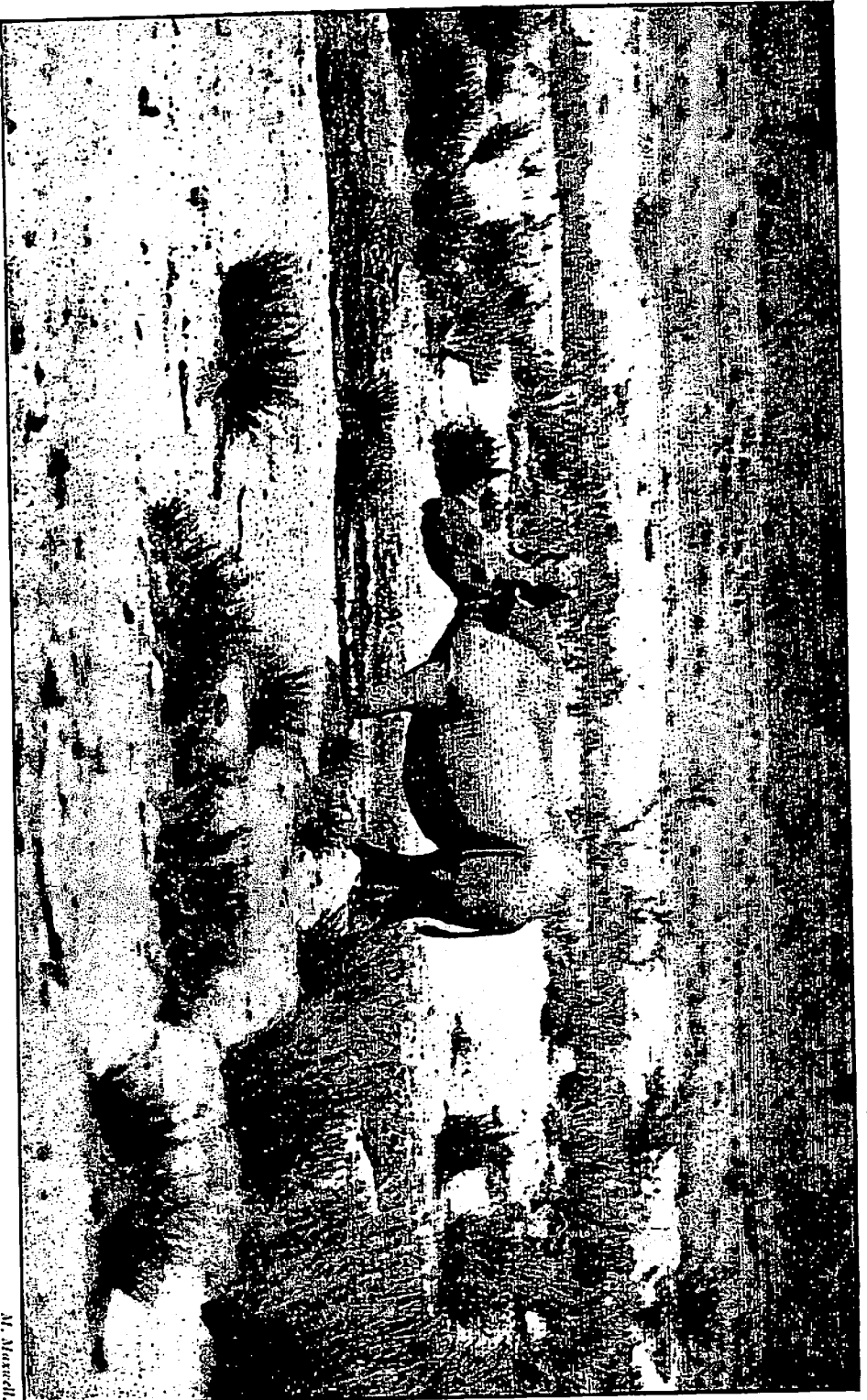
Arrived at the spot after a hot and thirsty march through a parched scrub country, we took up a position some distance from the springs, and, after a few hours of impatience, spied a rhino making its way towards the water. It trotted for a while along the edge of the distant strip of thorn scrub, and finally made its way directly across the open to the springs, changing its gait to a walk as it neared its destination. It appeared most unwary and showed not the slightest hesitation in its actions. It had evidently travelled some distance and seemed very thirsty, for the moment it reached the first pool it walked right into the shallow water and promptly lowered its head, drinking steadily for not less than a couple of minutes at a time. This gave me an opportunity to take the accompanying pair of photo-



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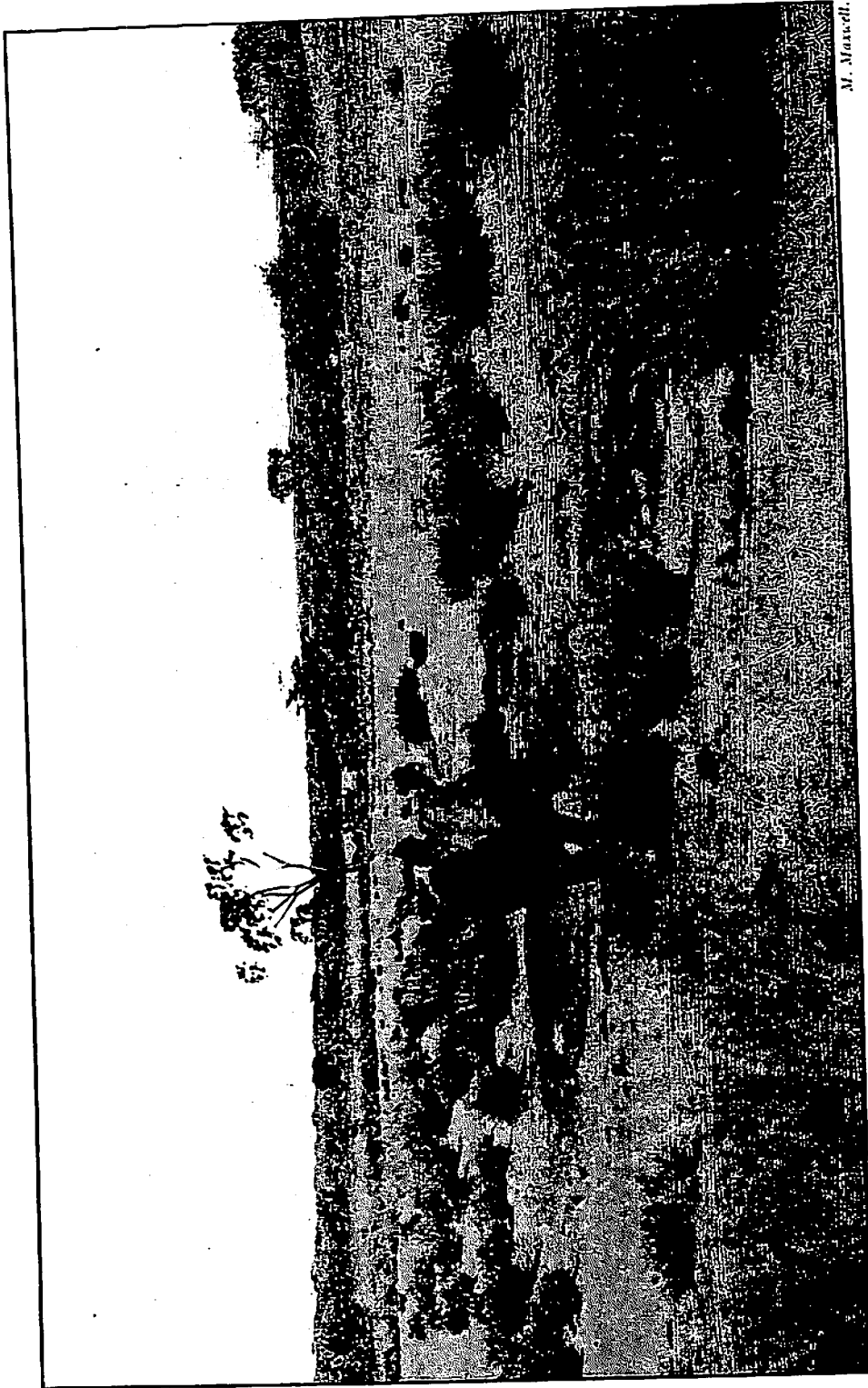
RHINOCEROS DRINKING FROM A POOL IN THE ARID REGIONS OF THE NORTHERN FRONTIER DISTRICT (KENYA COLONY).



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M. Marchi.

IT PAUSES AFTER EACH LONG DRAUGHT.



M. Maardt.

BEARING DOWN ON THE UNWELCOME INTRUDERS.

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IN FULL GALLOP WITH HEAD LOWERED FOR ATTACK.



M. Maxwell.

THE BULLET MAKES THE ANIMAL SWERVE TOWARDS MY COMPANION, WHO FIRES HIS SECOND BARREL.

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M. Maxwell.

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THE SECOND BALL MAKES IT SPIN ROUND AND COLLAPSE ON ITS FORELEGS.

## EXPERIENCES *with* RHINOCEROS BICORNIS

graphs of the drinking animal. The beast was fortunately not accompanied by tick-birds, otherwise the approach would have been a tedious business and the pictures, in all probability, even more imperfect than they here appear.\*

Having made what exposures I desired I withdrew a certain distance without the creature having the slightest suspicion of my presence, so intent was it on quenching its thirst.

Exchanging the long focus lens for a five-inch (13.5 cm.) Zeiss-Tessar, which I intended to employ for close and rapid work without the need of camera adjustments, I returned to my "sitter," accompanied by Barnes, who carried his rifle in case of a mishap.

Creeping up carefully and making use of every available cover in the shape of a tuft of grass and a small boulder here and there, we reached the bare space round the pool and found our rhino lying comfortably in the shallow water. We had barely straightened our backs and moved unobtrusively out into the open, to within thirty yards or so from the beast, when, with ears twitching, it raised its head, stood up, and turned sharply in our direction where we stood exposed and in full view. As it seemed, in less than a second the animal galloped towards us and the shutter was released, thus giving the first of the series of four photographs. The rhinoceros is here seen bearing straight down on the intruders with its ears pricked—but the head is not as yet lowered for the thrust (Plate No. 3).

The removal of a tab of my film pack and the resetting of the shutter were matters of a second or two, and jumping aside with what agility I could muster and pointing the camera, more or less at random, in the direction of the galloping beast, I pressed the release. I heard my friend discharge his first barrel. This second exposure has fortunately succeeded and shows the irritated animal in its stride, in the attitude in which it was rushing blindly at the intended victim (Plate No. 4).

Resetting the shutter and wrenching another tab off the pack I pressed the release for a third time, and was apparently in time to snap the rhinoceros a short moment after it had received the bullet (Plate No. 5). From Barnes' account after the incident it would seem that at his shot the beast, after passing between us, had swerved in his direction and slackened its gallop to a canter. The animal is

\* The blemishes on the Plates Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of this chapter are due to the following reason. Excessive heat prevalent in the locality where these photographs were taken had affected the sensitive emulsion of the films in the pack, and the violent rubbing of one film over the softened emulsion of the next in the pack as they were being changed for the various exposures caused horizontal scratches on their surface. Neglect to develop the films in cooled water resulted in the emulsion breaking up into a multitude of small cracks. Rather than try to have these blemishes removed by retouching, I have chosen to have the reproductions made in accordance with the original negatives.



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depicted in the illustration with its horns lowered, and must have been close upon my companion at the moment I made this exposure and he felt compelled to fire his second barrel. The effect of this second shot was curious, as the rhinoceros spun round and sank on its forelegs in the attitude which is caught in the fourth illustration (No. 6).

As a rule, if a shout has proved ineffective in stopping a rhinoceros, it may be easily turned by a head shot. Once it is in rapid movement shouting will naturally be of no avail. Even then, so long as the animal has not yet lowered its head, it will often wheel round and take itself off at the last moment. But once the creature has dipped its head, in full stride, it apparently sees and hears nothing more and rushes blindly at its enemy. This particular individual showed itself an uncommonly determined beast, but at the same time there was doubtless ample provocation on our part, considering the circumstances of our intrusion.

I have little doubt that this same animal would have moved away from our proximity had it previously wined us and had time enough to retire without undue haste. This sudden appearance of two strange, moving objects at such close quarters might have flurried any other placid beast as well as the blundering rhinoceros. But even under such trying conditions most individuals will show their timidity by instinctive flight. Others, of a bolder or more inquisitive disposition, may perhaps stand for a time and gaze steadfastly at the object that excites their curiosity. In the incident just recounted the black rhinoceros attacked by sight and not by scent, and I have had occasion to observe this in the course of other experiences with this species.

Generally, the rhinoceros, like all animals, prefers to move off on winding a human being, and particularly so when it scents a white man, unless, of course, it is persistently thwarted from satisfying its natural wants. In the case of its access to a water pool being prevented by the constant presence of cattle and herdsmen in drought-stricken areas, an occasional individual may become decidedly savage.

I gathered from transport riders in the Northern Frontier District that cases had occurred when their oxen were driven away from water holes, and in two instances a Dutch transport rider, in the service of the King's African Rifles, had one of his team of oxen gored by a truculent rhinoceros when his animals were led to drink at some water hole near Lasamis, a locality situated on the track from Archer's Post to Marsabit. Reports of similar incidents from Boran and Somali cattle owners in the region of the Lorian were current regarding the savage



M. Marzetti

RUSHING FORWARD WITH LOWERED HEAD.

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behaviour of elephants during severe droughts, and when the water of the Guaso Nyiro has failed them.

A cow rhino in company of a calf is at all times likely to be vicious, frequently to such an extent that even the hapless male parent is not permitted to come too close to her offspring without incurring the displeasure of the female.

Stalking and photographing the rhinoceros as it is often met with on the turf-covered and shadeless plains of the uplands of Kenya Colony can hardly be called a difficult matter, as the animal under these conditions is so very easy to approach. It is, however, a different matter in bush or scrub country, when the creature is apt to show an alert and suspicious disposition.

Having struck the fresh spoor of a rhino, or perhaps that of a family of rhino, the camera sportsman follows it with infinite caution until, when his luck is in, he hears the distant sound of a tick-bird, which gives him timely notice of the presence of his intended subject. This would allow of the necessary preparations being made at ease, while his companion gets his gun ready in case of emergency.

Often, though, the sudden twitter of a few alarmed rhinoceros birds is heard close at hand and their snorting host may then be expected to emerge suddenly from the brushwood or scrub, with raised head, ears pricked, and horns stuck perkily in the air, to investigate what all the commotion is about.

A more embarrassing encounter, in the absence of birds, is perhaps heralded by an unexpected crashing in the bush followed instantly by the appearance at close quarters of a snorting rhino blundering past one in full gallop.

The following illustration (No. 7) depicts an interesting moment where an individual is shown with lowered horn as it was snapped in the act of rushing forward at my companion.

It had apparently been standing motionless and alert for a while among the brushwood, listening intently, until it became discomfited and flurried by our close proximity, and decided to attack the intruders. The surroundings give one some idea of the arid locality in which these animals may occur, bare and desolate, with here and there a "kopje." The brushwood and parched thorn-scrub is typical of the "Nyika" of the northern regions of Kenya Colony.

Considering that the foregoing series of photographs (Nos. 3, 4, 5 and 6) are the impressions of the incident faithfully recorded by the camera, one can hardly abstain from remarking the surprising difference between reality and imagination.

Most of us are familiar with the wonderful drawings and engravings that are found in the old books on sport and hunting: in these pictures the artists' imagi-

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latter is, from all accounts, a larger and less active beast than the "black" species of East Africa. There is, however, judging by the animal's general build, no reason to suspect the least difference in their respective gaits, but I should imagine that the white rhino, by reason of its slow and sluggish disposition and seemingly excessive bulk, would be contented with a canter as its fastest gait, and show a great disinclination to gallop.

Considering the proportions of even the black rhinoceros it is astounding how active the beast may show itself in case of need: driven to its utmost speed it can possibly travel at a rate exceeding twenty miles an hour.\* It takes but a little time for a rhino to get into full stride, and even in its gallop it is surprising to notice how quickly and suddenly the animal can swerve aside at the sound of a shot.

Normally it holds its head in the position depicted in illustration No. 2. Curiosity will cause it to elevate its head in the manner which is so well shown in the illustration No. 14 of the previous chapter on "Camera Sport with Buffalo and Rhinoceros." In this photograph an individual is seen facing the object of its suspicions, with its head in the attitude it assumes while conducting investigations at close quarters, the horns sticking up in the air. I therefore conclude that in this position the beast can make the best use of its deficient sight. The commencement of the gallop towards the unwelcome intruder is apparently carried out with the head slightly raised above the normal position, and the ears pricked up and alert, as shown in illustration No. 3; the moment the beast is at close quarters, within, say, a few paces from its antagonist, the head is evidently lowered and it rushes blindly forward with unrelaxed speed, with the anterior horn poised for the impact. This change in the attitude of the head is a useful indication for the sportsman and should be responded to with a timely side jump. Needless to say, it is always an unpleasant performance and is better suited to the trained agility of a *torero*.

From the foregoing photographs it is curious to note how slender the animal's legs appear when seen laterally and compared with the bulk of its body. The length of the thigh to the hock has probably much to do with its capacity for rapid motion, without giving the appearance of unwieldiness in the animal's movements.

The African rhinoceros has in its untrammelled state three distinct gaits. The first is the walk, which, as in nearly all quadrupeds, has the following successive

\*In this connection it is interesting to note that Sir Samuel Baker mentioned, in his "Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia," that a fleet Arab horse is needed to catch up with a galloping rhinoceros in open country. The accounts of his chase on horseback after rhinoceroses are most instructive for forming an idea of the animal's fastest speed.

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nation has added considerably to the effect of the composition, but necessarily at the expense of reality. This is, however, in many ways explicable as even the eye of the sportsman is apt, at such moments of intense excitement, to picture in his mind an exaggerated image of the rapidly advancing animal. Briefly, the excitement and discomfort in the circumstances are factors to be taken into consideration, as they are capable of affecting the spectator's judgment of the animal's proportions, and produce an idea of a most savage and gigantic creature bounding forward to effect his destruction.

The camera, however, looks upon it from a different and cooler point of view and gives a record devoid of sentiment and colouring.

Photographs depicting such exciting incidents can, therefore, hardly ever convey the same impression as the pictures of an artist representing the same subject. By a proper choice of lenses a slight distortion in the perspective of the subject can be almost entirely avoided.

The foregoing photographs of the charging rhinoceros give one an insight into the nature of the animal's movements while galloping towards an antagonist. Remembering the ponderous weight of the beast and the remarkable speed (roughly about a dozen yards a second) with which it bears down on the intruder, it may be imagined with what force the anterior horn can be driven home.

In Muybridge's admirable work on "Animals in Motion" will be found the following paragraph, page 258 (fourth edition, 1918):—

"It is very desirable that some African traveller should succeed in obtaining photographs of the rhinoceros under full speed, as, like the hippopotamus, it will perhaps in a few more years be exterminated. A single lateral exposure will, under favourable conditions, be quite sufficient to determine the character of the movement."

The illustrations which are here given of the rhinoceros in full stride show, by comparison with Muybridge's series of photos of the galloping horse, the nature of the actions of the old-world beast.

No. 12 of his Series 50 gives an identical phase in the stride.

I have on several occasions had the opportunity of observing the rhino's fastest movements and found its footfalls similar to those of the horse in the gait which Muybridge terms the Transverse Gallop.

The observations of the writer are concerned with the black or prehensile lipped rhinoceros of East Africa (*Rhinoceros bicornis*) and have not extended to the so-called square-lipped, or white rhinoceros, of the Lado (*Rhinoceros simus*). The

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foot-impacts: the stride is begun with, let us say, the near (left) hind leg, the next foot to touch the ground is the near fore, then follow successively the off (right) hind and the off fore.

The second gait is the trot, in which each pair of diagonal feet, let us say, the near fore and off hind, or off fore and near hind, are alternately lifted more or less simultaneously.

The third gait is the gallop, which is the movement that most concerns us here.

Muybridge distinguishes two distinctly different-types of gallop in quadrupeds, namely, the one which he terms the Rotatory, and the other the so-called Transverse Gallop: the latter is the most common among four-footed animals, and evidently also includes that of the rhinoceros. Commencing with, for instance, the near hind, the foot-falls or foot-impacts succeed one another as follows:—

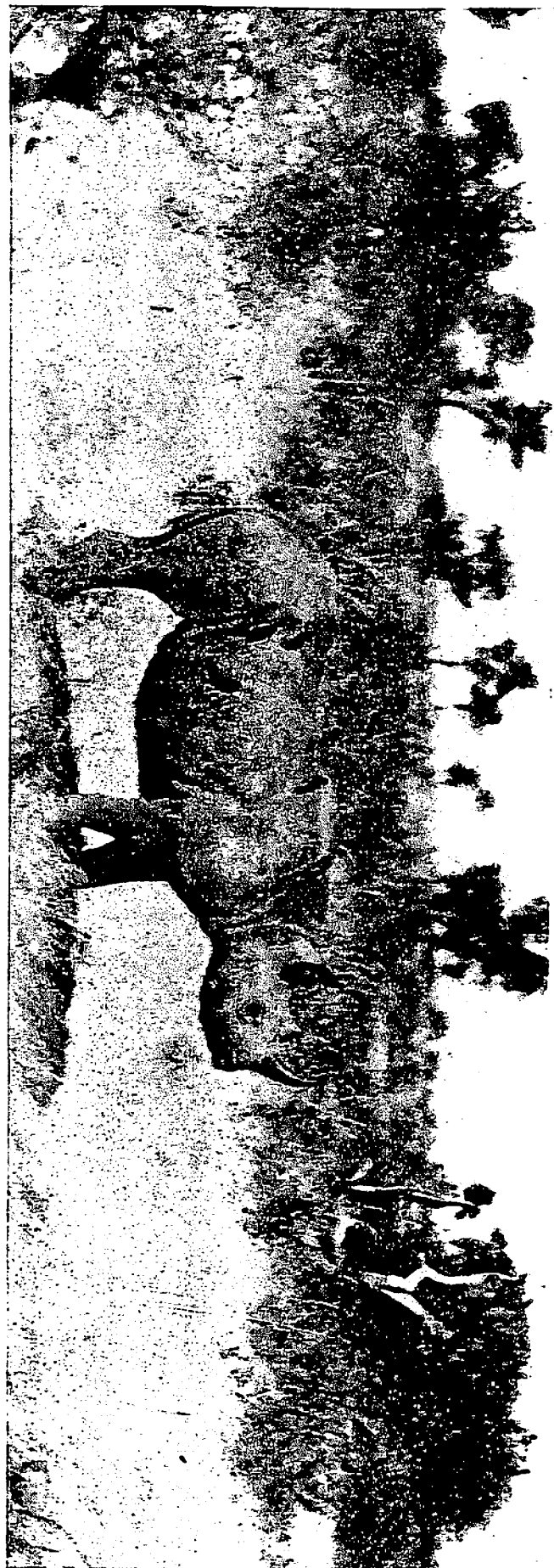
Near hind, off hind, near fore, off fore; or, off hind, near hind, off fore, near fore, depending on whether the animal is leading with the near or off fore.

Muybridge's Rotatory gallop has the foot-impacts succeeding one another in rotary fashion in the following sequence: near hind, off hind, off fore, near fore, or, in the same sequence, commencing with the off hind in rotary fashion. Unlike the elephant, the rhinoceros can travel quite well on three legs in the event of one being severely injured.

The front horn of the rhinoceros, which consists of a mass of closely packed fibres growing from the skin and resting with its slightly hollow base on a shallow prominence of the massive skull, is a formidable arm of offence. The head of the beast, supported by the powerful muscular neck on the vast bulk of the animal's body, can, when needed, be lowered for an attack to such an extent that the snout remains poised a few inches above the ground. Such a low poise of the head is on occasions observed when the animal is charging, in the comical way these bad-sighted and crusty customers sometimes do, at a small object on the ground that for some reason or other has disturbed their mind.

On account of its proportionally shorter neck the black rhino does not normally hold its nose as low to the ground as its bulkier and more sluggish cousin, the white rhinoceros. The latter, it is said, is able to lower the head to such an extent that the front horn remains almost parallel with the ground, offering, incidentally, a better target for an effective shot in the head in case of a charge.

The forward rush of the black rhino, when at close quarters with a human adversary, is evidently carried out with the head poised in the attitude depicted in Plate 4 of this chapter. From Plates 4 and 5 it will be observed that, at close



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AN ASSEMBLY OF RHINOCEROS BIRDS FLITTING ABOUT THE BULKY FLANK OF THEIR HOST.

M. Maccelli.

## EXPERIENCES *with* RHINOCEROS BICORNIS

range, the charging animal has its ears somewhat drawn back, in the same way as a vicious horse in a savage mood.

The astonishing speed of the animal, with its considerable weight, adds much to the momentum with which the horn can be driven into the body of its antagonist, and the following little anecdote will give some idea of the power with which this formidable means of aggression can be wielded in the event of the rhinoceros being so minded.

In the country between the Amala and Mogor Rivers we were one day following the track of what appeared to be a large rhinoceros. The Ndorobo tracker after some spooring led us finally into a strip of dense bush, which extended over a few hundred acres along a tortuous course of a partly dried rivulet-bed; this, now a mere chain of pools, served as a drinking place for the numerous herds of antelope inhabiting the adjacent plains. Cautious stalking brought us close to our quarry, which, from its general attitude and its nervously twitching ears, appeared to be very much on the alert. Obtaining a momentary glimpse of the substantial base of the front horn, I was satisfied that this was the owner of the big footprints we had followed, and secured it with a shot behind the shoulder. This I much regretted afterwards, seeing that it was an aged cow rhino. The mistake in sex was comprehensible in the circumstances, for the female African rhinoceros has almost invariably a notably thinner horn than the male, though occasionally it may be longer, while the base is generally proportionately smaller in circumference; such, however, was not the case in this particular instance. Moreover, she was unfortunately accompanied by a calf, which was presumably standing close by, effectively concealed among the creeper-like stems of the bush. Immediately after the shot was fired the young one showed itself beside the body of its parent. Moving a few steps towards my quarry, I was suddenly startled by a terrific crashing through the bush, and the male rhinoceros appeared on the scene at a fast gallop, giving me barely time to retreat a few paces and watch further developments: he must have been browsing some distance apart from his mate and remained for a while motionless and alert on hearing the report of the rifle. Standing still for a moment beside the carcase of his mate he lowered his head and prodded at her with a resounding thud. This was repeated several times with increasing vigour until frenzy seemed to overcome the desperate beast and retreating a pace or two he charged the carcase wildly again and again in rapid succession and finally rolled the heavy body over, stepping over it through the surprising momentum of his rush. In the meanwhile the orphaned calf, alarmed

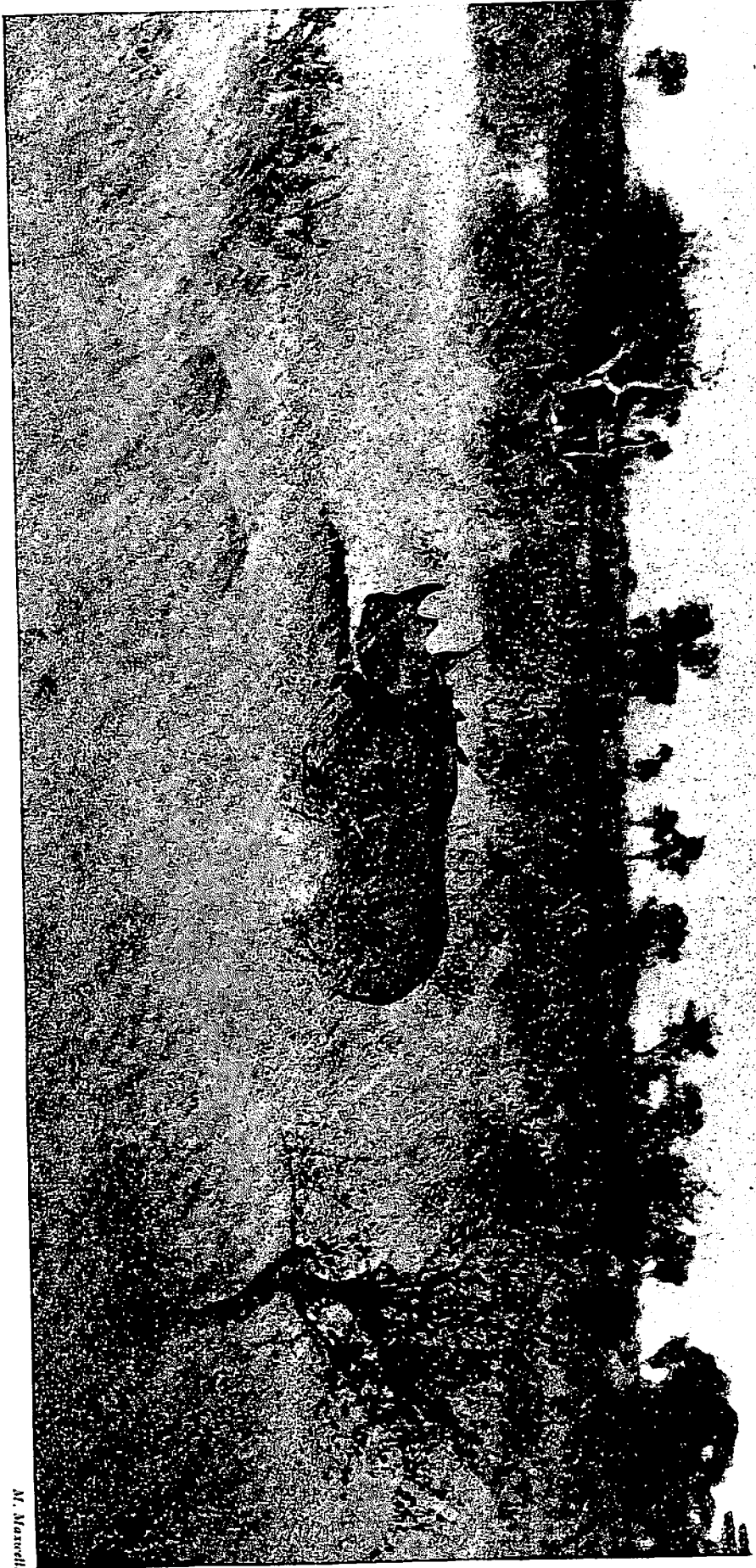


## STALKING BIG GAME WITH A CAMERA

by the fury of its male parent, had made itself scarce. This incident indicates the strength which a rhinoceros can display when thoroughly roused and goaded to frenzy. The weight of the carcass must have been well over a ton, and it is perhaps worth recording that the tough hide of the dead female was dented in places but not pierced, in spite of the terrific blows to which it had been subjected.

An indication of the difficulty which these animals have in gaining a clear sight of objects may be found in the action of the head, which they repeatedly raise and dip in a comical and puzzled fashion, when they are approached in the bush, as they stand peering in the direction from which the intruder is coming towards them. Their uneasy cogitation often expresses itself in the way they sway their head and the forepart of the body from side to side, while standing on one forefoot and then on the other alternately. At such a moment a sudden decision may be expected; the tail goes up, the animal either rushes forward at the intruder or—turns and trots off.

The rhinoceros usually seeks a place for his siesta between the hours of nine and ten in the morning, and resumes activities about three in the afternoon. In places where they are rarely startled or molested they will lie down on their side and sink into a deep slumber without further preliminaries; where they have been recently disturbed they are apt to remain restless and apprehensive for several days, and at such times they are found to become fastidious in the choice of a resting place. I have had occasion to watch these creatures for hours from a ledge on the Lisudwa hills, from which a splendid bird's-eye view was obtained of the bush country immediately below. One individual, for instance, stood about in a restive condition for over an hour before it finally squatted on its hindquarters. In this attitude it sat for quite a considerable time, in an uncertain and disturbed frame of mind, judging by the manner in which it incessantly kept moving its head, now in this direction now in another, listening intently all the while with its mobile ears twitching and alert. It had previously been startled by our appearance in the neighbourhood on two consecutive days. The moment the animal's perturbed senses detected the shouts of our boys, whom we had sent down for water, it made no further bones about it, but promptly stood up and trotted briskly off. It was evident from the suddenness of its actions that the keenly alert animal had heard the sound of human voices at a distance of roughly three hundred yards, showing how acute their hearing can be once their suspicions have been aroused.



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THE SAME INDIVIDUAL A MOMENT BEFORE IT MOUNTED AN ANT-HILL.

M. Marcell.

## EXPERIENCES *with* RHINOCEROS BICORNIS

On the other hand, by moving slowly and cautiously in open country where the rhino is usually much less suspicious and wary, it may often be approached to within easy photographing distance without even causing alarm to the tick-birds that may happen to be on the animal's body at the time. In fact I have, by careful movements, taking a few steps at favourable intervals and standing stock-still alternately, secured the following snapshots of rhino, when the hearing of the particular individual had already conveyed to it a suspicion of my approach, and it had become fidgety before the unwary birds were in any way disturbed.

One of the photographs depicts an assembly of five of these rhinoceros birds pecking away energetically at the thick hide of their massive host, flitting about the animal's flank and back and industriously searching for vermin on all parts of its huge body.

The next illustration (No. 10) shows the same individual directly facing the camera after it had pivoted on the mound on which it stood, now this way and now that way, in an endeavour to locate the exact origin of the intermittent noises caused by the rap of the camera shutter at each exposure. The moment it detected my presence it wheeled round unceremoniously with its stiffened tail in the air and its head elevated in a comical and perky fashion, and thus it trotted off briskly from the unpleasant neighbourhood.



FACING THE CAMERA PREVIOUS TO A HURRIED DEPARTURE.

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M. Maresca.