

furiously and chasing me for a considerable distance. This incident occurred in 1880. In 1883, when hunting on horseback just outside the "fly" country on the upper Sabi river, I one day came across an old bull black rhinoceros which, though it ran off in the first instance as soon as it saw or scented me, turned and chased me smartly, with the usual accompaniment of snorts and puffs, as soon as my horse drew level with it. It chased me certainly for over a hundred yards, and pressed my horse pretty hard. As it swerved off and stopped snorting, I brought my horse round, and dismounting, gave it a shot in the ribs; but on galloping up near it again, it gave me another smart chase. Two more bullets, however, finished this plucky old animal.

Besides these two, I can only call to mind eight other black rhinoceroses which I chased on horseback, and none of these showed any fight at all, but kept continually sheering off as the horse drew level with them, making it almost impossible to get anything but a stern shot. In November 1874 I chased a black rhinoceros bull out into an open expanse of ground near Thamma-Setjie, on the old waggon road to the Zambesi, and in trying to get a broadside shot, rode it round and round in a large circle, until it presently stood still with its mouth open, evidently completely done. Even when I dismounted and shot it at close range—I only had an old smooth-bore gun—it never attempted to charge.

Several times, when hunting elephants in the early 'seventies of the last century, black rhinoceroses rushed snorting either close in front of or close behind myself and my small party of Kafirs. They had undoubtedly been alarmed by hearing or smelling us, and were, I think, trying to get out of danger; but I believe that, should a rhinoceros get the wind of the foremost man amongst a long string of porters, and on starting

off to run away from the disagreeable smell, suddenly find itself confronted by another portion of the caravan, it will not turn back, but rush snorting through the line, sometimes perhaps injuring a man in its passage. It is, I think, owing to the fact that travellers, traders, and hunters in East Africa have always employed very large numbers of porters, who marched in single file in a line often extending to several hundred yards in length, that incidents of this kind have been so frequent in that country. But when a black rhinoceros just rushes through a long line of porters without singling out and following any particular man, I think such a proceeding is more the result of panic than anything else. My view is that the wind blowing obliquely across the line being taken by a caravan may reach a rhinoceros lying or standing some distance away. This animal at once takes alarm and runs off, at first perhaps at right angles to the direction from which the wind is blowing; but on again turning up wind, as rhinoceroses almost invariably do, it comes right on to another portion of the straggling line of porters. Confronted by this line of men, whom it had at first tried to avoid, it will probably not turn back, but rather charge through them and continue its flight. The sight of the black rhinoceros is certainly very bad, and in cases where these animals have charged against waggons in South Africa, and trains on the Uganda Railway, it is difficult to say whether they were animated by pure bad temper or ran against these obstacles because they suddenly saw them moving right across their path, when they were endeavouring to escape from some other danger.

Upon three occasions during 1873 black rhinoceroses came close up to my camp at night, snorting loudly, and upon one occasion, as I shall

relate in a subsequent chapter, a white one did the same thing. On all these occasions, I think the curiosity of these rhinoceroses must have been aroused by the sight of the camp fires, or else the smell of blood and meat must have excited them. I fired into one of the black rhinoceroses as he was coming very close, and drove off the other two by shouting at them.

That a certain proportion of the vanished race of South African rhinoceroses of the prehensile-lipped species were of a morose and savage temper, and therefore dangerous animals to encounter, I will not for one moment attempt to deny, for there is a great deal of evidence that this was the case. But what I do think is that many writers have taken the character of the exceptionally vicious animals they met with as typical of that of the whole species. But, unless at least a very considerable proportion of black rhinoceroses were neither savage nor dangerous, I fail to understand why it was that none of those that I myself encountered behaved in a manner befitting their reputation; how it has come about that the whole race has been practically exterminated in South Africa at so infinitesimal a cost to human life; why Gordon Cumming, who shot so many of these "hideous monsters," only appears to have met with two adventures—both of a very mild character—with these animals; and why Baldwin never seemed to have the least idea that they were either dangerous to attack or subject to sudden paroxysms of unprovoked fury.

Hitherto I have only spoken of the black rhinoceros in South Africa; but the testimony of the most experienced hunters, in other parts of the continent, seems to show that the character of this animal has always been essentially the same throughout its entire range. Everywhere it seems

to have been and to be a stupid, blundering, bad-sighted, but keen-scented beast; in the great majority of cases doing its best to avoid human beings, but always liable to become savage when wounded, like elephants, lions, and buffaloes, and sometimes being really bad-tempered and savage by nature, and ready to charge unprovoked at the sight or scent of any one approaching it. My own experience proves at least that it is quite possible to come across a great number of black rhinoceroses without ever encountering a really vicious one.

In those countries which now form part of North-Western Rhodesia, through which I travelled many years ago, black rhinoceroses were by no means plentiful. In fact, though I from time to time came across their tracks, I never actually saw a rhinoceros in the flesh to the north of the Zambesi. Throughout British Central Africa, too, I believe I am correct in stating that these animals have never been found in any great number. It was somewhere in this territory that my friend Captain C. H. Stigand was severely injured by a black rhinoceros. I have heard the story of this misadventure from his own lips, and I think there can be no doubt that the animal which suddenly charged and tossed him without provocation was one of those vicious, dangerous brutes whose exceptionally savage tempers have given a bad name to the whole species.

In a footnote to the article on the black rhinoceros contributed to the *Great and Small Game of Africa* by Mr. F. Vaughan Kirby, that writer says, in speaking of the character of this animal: "I know an instance of a native being charged and killed, and another whom I met personally who was chased and regularly hunted by a wounded one, which caught and fearfully mutilated him."

Judging by his own personal experience, Mr.

Kirby came to the conclusion that, "although naturally timid, and certainly not dangerously aggressive, the black rhinoceros is of most uncertain temper, and when wounded and encountered at close quarters, can and will charge most fiercely, and occasionally is as vindictive as any buffalo." The adjective "vindictive" here used by Mr. Kirby does not appear to me to be quite the right or fair one. If an elephant, buffalo, lion, or rhinoceros should be attacked and grievously injured by a human being, and is brave and stubborn enough to resent such treatment and make a fight for its life, it seems like adding insult to injury to speak of it as vindictive.

In many parts of both British and German East Africa black rhinoceroses were quite recently, and in some cases probably still are, extraordinarily numerous. Here, as in other parts of Africa, a certain number of accidents have occurred in hunting these animals, and there have been a good many instances of their charging through a line of native porters. However, although it is unquestionable that in East Africa, as elsewhere, black rhinoceroses have sometimes shown themselves to be really vicious, and therefore very dangerous animals, there seems to be a consensus of opinion amongst those men who have had the greatest experience with them, that these were the exceptions to the general rule.

Few men, if any, could have had a wider experience with the black rhinoceros in East Africa than my friend the late A. H. Neumann, whose recent death I shall never cease to deplore, and I therefore make no apology for quoting a few sentences from the very interesting and informing article contributed by him to the *Great and Small Game of Africa* on the subject of this animal. Neumann says :

As has often been pointed out, the rhino is the most intensely stupid of animals, and marvellously blind. So much so, that it may often be approached even on a bare plain with little trouble *up wind*. It is their very stupidity and blindness which makes these beasts a source of danger to passing caravans; for should the wind be blowing *from* them, and unless they be accompanied by tick-birds, as they often are, which alarm them and cause them to make off, they frequently remain unconscious of the approach of a caravan until it is close to them, when, being suddenly confronted with a long line of porters, they will sometimes charge straight through it, apparently under the impression that there is no other way of escape open. On the other hand, they are keen-scented; and if the wind be blowing in their direction they start away at a quick trot as soon as the taint reaches them, and while yet a long way off.

As regards the much-disputed question, to what degree the rhinoceros is a dangerous beast, the result of my experience and observations is very decidedly to convince me that, under ordinary circumstances and with proper caution, there is not very much risk in shooting him, and that the danger is not to be compared in any way with that attending the pursuit of the elephant. At the same time, there is always a possibility that one may charge, and there is therefore a certain amount of excitement in the sport; and instances are not rare of men having been badly injured by these beasts. . . .

The Ndorobos kill these animals with their elephant harpoons, or trap them in the same manner as elephants. Those I have been among have far less fear of rhinoceroses than of elephants, and as a consequence it is a rare thing to see a rhino in country much frequented by such of these people as have much skill and courage in elephant-hunting. The same applies to Swahilis, many of whom think nothing of shooting a "faro," though they would not dream of attacking elephants.

The only other man whose experience with rhinoceroses in East Africa has been equal to that of Arthur Neumann is Mr. F. J. Jackson, C.B., who for some years past has been a most able administrator of the territories in which he first made a name as a hunter and a naturalist. Mr. Jackson's testimony concerning the character of the black rhinoceros as he has known that animal appears to me to coincide very closely with that arrived at by Neumann, his great friend and only rival as a hunter in East Africa. Like Neumann, Jackson fully realises that black rhinoceroses are sometimes vicious and dangerous, but his experience has been that, as a rule, these animals avoid and run away from human beings if they can, and that even when they rush snorting through a long line of native porters, they are usually trying to escape from rather than viciously attacking these men. In the course of the very interesting article on the black rhinoceros contributed by Mr. F. J. Jackson to vol. i. on *Big Game Shooting* of the Badminton Library, he states: "When alarmed, the rhinoceros becomes easily flurried, appears to do things on impulse which other animals endowed with more sagacity would not do, and is by no means the vicious and vindictive brute which some writers have found him to be in South Africa and the Soudan. In the majority of cases, where a rhinoceros is said, by men who perhaps have not been very well acquainted with his peculiarities, to have charged in a most determined and vicious manner, I believe this so-called charge to have been nothing more than the first headlong and impetuous rush of the beast in a semidazed state, endeavouring to avoid an encounter rather than court one."

In the course of the Report made to the Earl of Elgin on the game of the East Africa Protectorate by the Chief Commissioner, Captain (now Sir

James) Hayes-Sadler, dated "Commissioner's Office, Nairobi, September 28, 1906," the following passage occurs: "This interesting Pachyderm (the black rhinoceros), though sometimes a dangerous, is always a stupid animal, and, from his bulk and the nature of the country he inhabits, with but few exceptions falls an easy prey. My experience of him, too, is that in fairly open country he is easily driven away, and that therefore the necessity of shooting to protect life is not nearly so frequent as has sometimes been alleged."

The opinion expressed in the above paragraph concerning the black rhinoceros and the danger of its pursuit has, I think, been proved to be fairly accurate by the experience of the many sportsmen (most of them utterly inexperienced in hunting large and dangerous animals) who have visited British East Africa in recent years; for since Mr. B. Eastwood was very badly injured, and indeed had a most miraculous escape, near Lake Baringo, in October 1902, from a rhinoceros which he thought he had killed, but which got on to its feet again and charged him after he had walked close up to where it was lying, I have not heard of any other accident having occurred in the hunting of these animals, although during the three years ending on March 31, 1906, no less than 308 black rhinoceroses were killed under sportsmen's and settlers' licences in British East Africa, besides twenty-three others which were shot on the border of the same territory by the members of the Anglo-German Boundary Commission.

The big-game hunter of to-day is armed with weapons which are vastly superior to those which the old pioneer hunters of South Africa had to rely upon in bygone times, and the dangers of big-game hunting are, in consequence, now very much less than they were then; but still, judging



from my own experience (and in 1872, 1873, and 1874 the clumsy old four-bore guns I used were very inferior even to the two-grooved rifles possessed by Harris, Oswell, or Gordon Cumming) and all I heard from many old Boer and native hunters, I feel convinced that the character of the black rhinoceros was originally painted by picturesque writers in colours which, although they may have been appropriate to a certain small proportion of these animals, were quite undeserved by the great majority of the species. I will conclude these notes on the black rhinoceros with a letter which I have lately received from President Roosevelt, covering a most remarkable and excessively interesting description of a struggle between a crocodile and a rhinoceros in the Tana river, in British East Africa. Before making any comments on this extraordinary incident, I will first give both President Roosevelt's letter to myself and his correspondent's communication, as I have full permission to do.

THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON,  
*September 27, 1907.*

MY DEAR MR. SELOUS—I don't know whether the enclosed letter and photographs will be of any value to you in your book or not. Both relate to an occurrence so remarkable that I thought I would send them to you. Fleischmann is a man of good standing, entirely truthful, and he had no conception of the importance of what he was telling me. I told him that the "authorities in Africa" who informed him that the crocodile might have gotten a purchase by wrapping its tail around something sunken were doubtless in error, and advised him to leave it out of the letter which he wrote me, which I told him I was going to send to you. But he put it in, and I am sending it along. It is the only part of his letter which is mere hearsay or guesswork. I had no conception that

crocodiles would tackle a rhinoceros. But you may remember in Samuel Baker's *Wild Beasts and Their Ways* that he speaks of seeing crocodiles in Africa with the girth of a hippopotamus. In any event I send you the letter.

The other day, in reading *Big Game*, in the Badminton Library, I noticed that Oswell, the South African hunter, speaks of trying to cut off a cheetah, and that the latter distanced his horse with the utmost ease. This tends to confirm me in the opinion that the cheetah for a half mile or so can readily distance a horse, and that when pursued by you the two animals you overtook at first simply tried to keep ahead of you, not trying to exert themselves, and that after a half mile was passed their wind was gone and then they gave out.

When do you think you will publish your book?

Sincerely yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

Mr. FREDERICK C. SELOUS,  
Heatherside, Worplesdon,  
Surrey, England.

CINCINNATI, *September 23, 1907.*

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT—I take pleasure in sending you under separate cover to-day, as per your request, the enlarged photographs of the encounter between a rhinoceros and crocodiles in the Tana river, British East Africa; also another photograph showing a large herd of hippopotami in the Tana river, which I believe may prove of interest to you.

I shall also undertake to give you a brief description of the attack of the crocodile upon the rhino, which resulted in the latter's death. While encamped on the Thika river, about one hundred yards above its junction with the Tana, the attention of the members of our hunting party was called to the loud cries of the porters. A moment later "Ali," the Somali headman, came running

in to tell us that a mamba (crocodile) had seized a faro (rhinoceros), as the latter stepped into the river to drink. "Ali" was concealed in the bushes on the side of the river opposite the scene at the time the rhino came down to drink. When our party arrived, about fifty of our porters were on a sandbank leading out into the Tana river. The rhino was held by its left hind-leg, which had been seized by the crocodile just as the big beast was leaving the river after drinking. At least half a dozen of the porters, who had been lying in the bushes near the scene, in reply to my questions, agreed as to the manner the rhino was attacked.

When we neared the point of attack, the rhino appeared panic-stricken, making very little noise—simply straining and heaving in its efforts to release its leg from the jaws of the crocodile. While making but little headway, the rhino did for a time succeed in holding its own, keeping in shallow water, as the photos 1 and 2 show. A moment or two later, however, blood appeared on the surface of the water, leading us to believe that the crocodile had been reinforced by other mambas which had been attracted to the scene by the blood and lashing of the water. The struggle continued on down the stream, the combatants having moved quite a distance from the original point of attack. The rhino still managed to keep on its feet, facing either down stream or toward the opposite bank, and for a distance of at least one hundred yards down stream had made no perceptible loss of ground. Shortly afterward, however, apparently maddened by the pain it was undoubtedly suffering (for now much more blood and pieces of flesh appeared on the surface of the water), the rhino evidently lost its head and attempted to cross through the deep water to the opposite shore, as shown in photo 3. This move was the beginning of the rhino's end, for as soon as it turned and met with deeper water, it lost the advantage of a firm foothold in the shallow water, and the animal was quickly drawn beneath the surface.

The rhino was a full-grown female with a horn which we estimated to be about twenty inches in length. It was the opinion of authorities in Africa to whom I told the story of the struggle, that a very large crocodile had taken hold of the rhino's leg and wrapped its tail around some sunken obstacle, thus giving it a purchase, as it were, which enabled it to successfully hold on until reinforced by other crocodiles.

These enlarged photographs were made from  $3\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$  negatives, the "snaps" being taken by my valet, who was acting in charge of the commissary department of the caravan.

I trust that these photos will reach you in good condition.

With my sincere regards, I have the honour to be,

Yours respectfully,

MAX C. FLEISCHMANN.

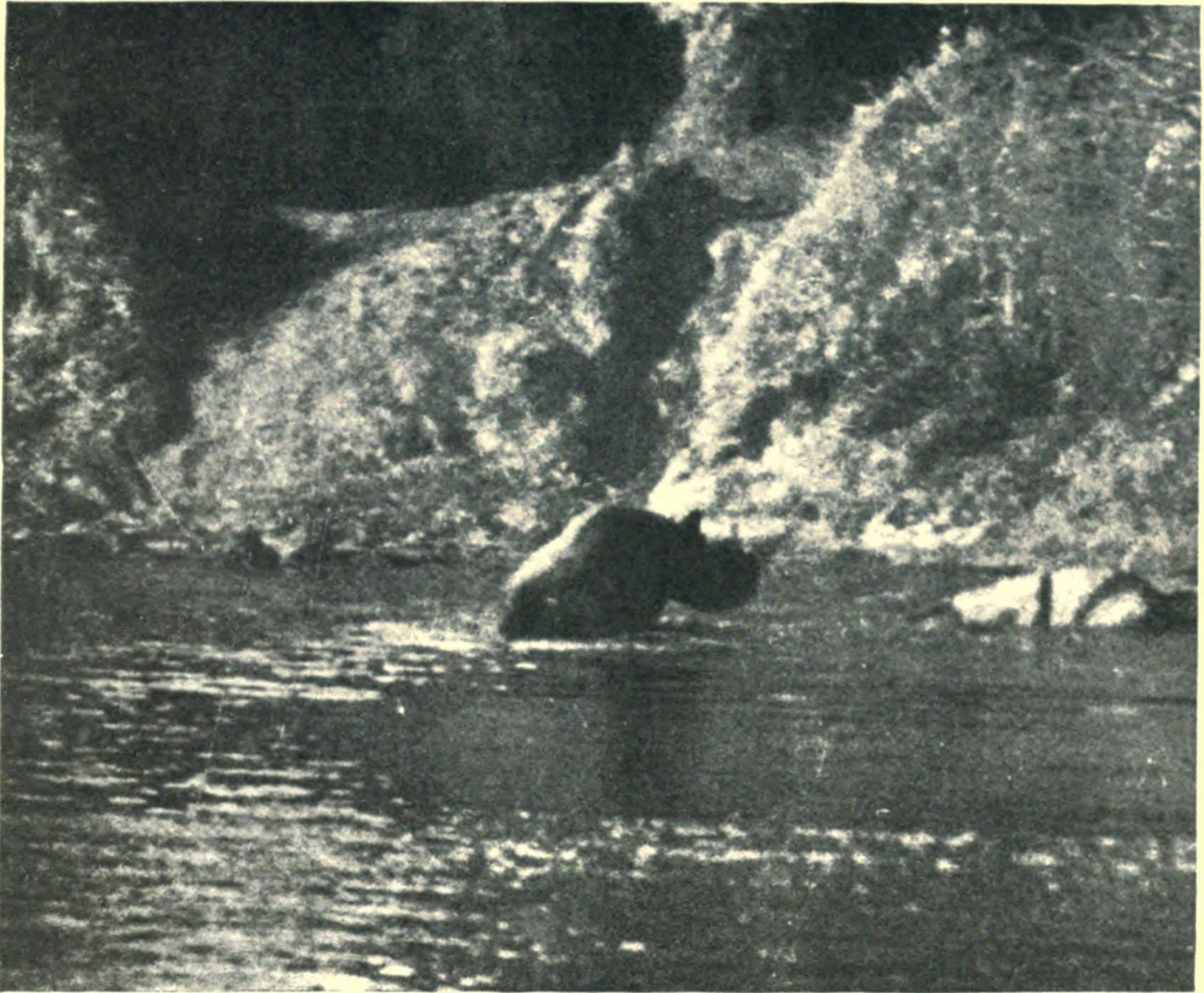
TO HONORABLE THEODORE ROOSEVELT,  
Washington, D.C.

Remarkable and unusual as was the occurrence witnessed by Mr. Fleischmann, there can be no doubt as to the truth of his most interesting story. The three photographs—all of which are reproduced in this book—showing the rhinoceros straining against something which was gradually pulling its hind-quarters deeper and deeper into the water, must convince the most sceptical. I fully agree with President Roosevelt that the theory, that the crocodile held the rhinoceros by getting a purchase with its tail round some sunken log, is not tenable, especially as Mr. Fleischmann states that "the struggle continued on down the stream, the combatants having moved quite a distance from the original point of attack."

Personally, I find no difficulty in believing that if

a very large crocodile were to seize a rhinoceros by the one hind-leg, and was sufficiently powerful to hold that limb off the ground, the largest of these animals would become almost helpless; for if either hind-leg of a rhinoceros be broken by a bullet, the animal is rendered immediately almost incapable of movement, and very soon assumes a sitting position. I imagine that a rhinoceros would easily be able to pull the largest of crocodiles out of water, if it was harnessed to one of these reptiles, and so could get a fair pull at it from the chest and shoulders; but I think that the paralysing effect of the crocodile's hold on one of its hind-legs would be sufficient to account for the helplessness of the animal whose struggles and ultimate death Mr. Fleischmann witnessed in the Tana river.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF A STRUGGLE BETWEEN A RHINOCEROS AND A CROCODILE.



No. 1.

Shows the Rhinoceros holding its own, but unable to reach the bank.

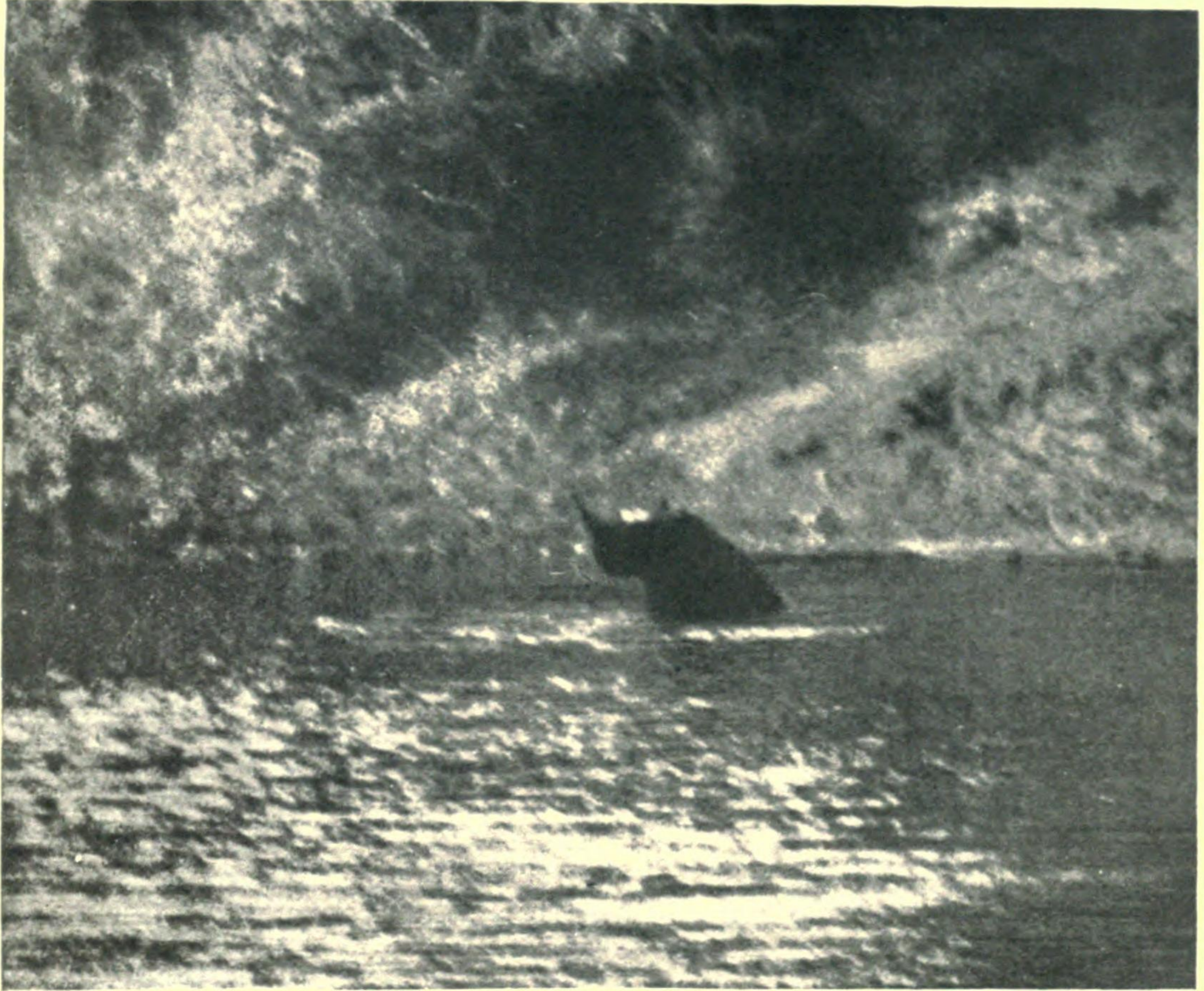
*To face page 202.*



No. 2.

Shows the Rhinoceros still struggling, but in deeper water.

*To face page 202.*



No. 3.

Shows the Rhinoceros after it had turned round, and just before it got into deep water and was pulled under.

*To face page 202.*