

## CHAPTER IV

FROM DONYA SABUK TO THE YATA PLAINS. INTERESTING EXPERIENCES WITH LIONS. PHOTOGRAPHING RHINOCEROS AND OTHER ANIMALS BY DAYLIGHT AND FLASHLIGHT

ON THE 5th of March we left Donya Sabuk without having had another chance of photographing the buffalo. Heading in a southeasterly direction, and traveling by a very circuitous Wakamba track, we went toward the Yata Plains. The country, until we reached the Athi River, was more or less hilly and very dry. It was the usual park-like country so common in British East Africa — low grass, scarcely any undergrowth, and evenly distributed thorn trees. The delicious fragrance of the cream-colored flowers of these trees filled the air, and reminded one strongly of a northern apple orchard in full bloom. We saw no game of any kind except a small herd of impala and a few hartebeest, and we encountered scarcely any natives other than those in two small villages through which we passed. These villages, with their small and very unpretentious grass huts, belonged to the Wakamba tribe, a quiet people who live mostly by their flocks of goats and cattle. They received us in a very friendly way, giving sour milk to our porters, and expressing their pleasure at having a visit from white men. The women were engaged in winnowing a fine millet-like seed which, with maize and milk, is one of their chief articles of food. Most of the men were busy making large baskets, about six feet in diameter, in which they stow their grain. One old man was engrossed in the making of

a bow, and it was interesting to see with what dexterity he used an adze-shaped tool. The men frequently carry bows and arrows, but whether they are skilful in the use of them we were unable to discover. The Wakamba men have the curious habit of filing their front teeth to fine points. In some cases they even pull out some, and in their place insert very finely pointed teeth made usually of hippopotamus ivory. They are not, generally speaking, a fine-looking race, being frequently rather small, and as a rule their color is coal black, instead of the splendid deep copper color so often seen among their northern cousins, the Wa-Kikuyu.

We camped for the night on the banks of the Athi River, and next morning continued on our way toward the Yata Plains, following the course of the river for several miles before turning eastward. We entered the Yata Plains almost immediately after leaving the Athi. This immense tract between the Athi and the Tiva rivers, is treeless except in occasional gullies. The ground is somewhat stony in places, but the greater part, like that of most of the open country we had crossed, is composed of very porous black earth with scanty vegetation. Water is scarce throughout the region except during the rainy season. At other times most of the water holes and tiny streams dry up. On the whole we were disappointed in the amount of game. A few zebra, hartebeest, impala, ostrich and a small herd of eland were all we saw during the first day. Around the water holes, near which we camped, there were fairly good signs of animals, and as our guide declared there was no water within six hours' march, we felt that our chances for obtaining flashlight photographs were excellent. Accordingly we set the cameras near the water only to experience the same disappointment

as on previous occasions, when the nocturnal birds had invariably sprung the shutters by flying against the threads. This finally necessitated our having to give up all idea of doing any more automatic flashlights near water, and resorting to the more trying, but, as it proved, infinitely more interesting method of watching the cameras all night, and firing from a distance when the animals were in the desired position and place. The great drawback to this sort of work, if one is limited in time, is that it means being awake all night, and consequently being unable to do much during the daytime. It is absolutely necessary to indulge in the very fullest allowance of sleep, for in tropical Africa, as in all hot countries, one's strength must be maintained if illness is to be avoided. A man in full vigor is of course much more nearly immune from fever than one who is in a run-down condition, and once fever has got its hold on a white man his powers of work are very greatly curtailed. Then, again, living on the generally high altitude of British East Africa has a tendency to affect the nerves, and in doing big game hunting, whether with camera or rifle, it is highly desirable that one's nerves be in very good condition. The best way to secure this is to have abundant sleep and exercise, and, it might be added, to be moderate in the use of alcoholic liquors.

It may be readily understood what a wonderful fascination flashlight work has for those who are interested in wild animals. Probably no branch of photography offers greater possibilities for pleasure and excitement. Whether the device one uses is automatic, so that the animals take their own photographs, or whether one sits up watching by the side of water hole or runway, and releases flash and camera at the proper moment, no one can have any idea of the



FLASHLIGHT PICTURE OF COKE'S HARTEBEEST

allurements of this form of sport unless he has undergone the experience. Apart from the animals themselves, there is something so delightful in being out in the mysterious night, when the great world is erroneously believed to be in a state of slumber, whereas it is only when the searching light of day vanishes that so much of the animal world awakes to life and activity. Then again, all creatures are game for the photographic bag, and that in itself as a sport offers an advantage over any kind of shooting. In British East Africa flashlight photography may be found at its very best, the possibilities are almost unlimited, the conditions most wonderfully favorable, and the variety of animal life as varied as the most ambitious could wish. One cannot tell what will come within range of the camera — the lowly jackal that approaches so quietly that his presence is seldom betrayed, the mighty rhinoceros, whose petulant snorting leads the watcher to wonder what might happen if he should become too inquisitive; the beautiful zebra, whose strongly marked coat makes him a much-desired object for the camera; or, best of all, it may be the stealthy, silent-footed lion, who comes without warning, and curdles our blood with his roaring when he retreats after being suddenly disturbed. The one thing absolutely necessary for successful flashlight photography is the selection of a suitable place. There must be some strong attraction for the animals, otherwise they will not come near the cameras, for even with the most scrupulous care there is usually something that will betray the presence of man to the keenly alert creatures. They are extremely suspicious of any place that has been recently frequented by man, so that a water hole, which offers perhaps the greatest of inducements to the wild beasts, is one of the best possible fields of operation, though

for the carnivora a dead animal is most likely to attract, especially if it be one of their own killing.

When working in a country where lions and other dangerous creatures are a constant menace to the sportsman every precaution must be taken to protect oneself against possible trouble; therefore when engaged in watching flashlight cameras a well-built boma of thorn bushes is desirable. We built ours of stout poles placed in the form of a tepee, and covered with thorn bush except at the opening. This was left open to admit of free passage, for there is always the chance that one may have to rush out in a hurry, in case the flashlight sets fire to the dry grass. This small opening means that one is liable to an attack from lions, but by keeping a sharp lookout, and having firearms ready for immediate use, we felt fairly safe. A very important consideration in flashlight photography is that of quietness, not comparative, but absolute noiselessness. To ensure this one must be comfortable, so that there will be no incentive to move at a critical moment. It frequently happens that an animal may be within a few yards, watching suspiciously, when you are not aware of its existence. The slightest sound will betray your presence, and off he will go. We found that by using a thick layer of grass, covered with a heavy blanket, we could move slightly without making the least noise.

On the evening of our first attempt we made everything absolutely ready before darkness set in. Any appliances that might be required were placed where they could be easily reached, and soon after the sun had set we settled ourselves for our first night's watching. What a splendid night it was! Scarcely a breeze stirred the air. The moon, then at its full, lighted the country as only a tropical moon



FLASHLIGHT OF A HERD OF COKE'S HARTEBEEST COMING TO DRINK

can. The stillness was almost overpowering, such a stillness as I had experienced only in the winter nights among the northern forests when the deep snow deadens all sounds. There was not even the buzzing of nocturnal insects to distract one. Occasionally in the distance the queer dog-like barking of the zebra, the maniacal howl of the hyena, or the thrilling roar of a lion, would disturb the peaceful quiet. Our slightest move sounded alarmingly loud; even our breathing made us wonder the sharp-eared animals could not hear us. For a couple of hours we watched without result, but about nine o'clock we heard sounds of approaching footsteps. What they were we could not tell for some time. In vain we strained our eyes, until at last some indistinct forms began to take shape. It was a small herd of Coke's hartebeest; not rare animals, it is true, but nevertheless we were greatly excited as we watched them coming nearer and nearer. They did not come directly to the water, thirsty though they probably were, but approached with the utmost caution, stopping every few steps to scrutinize the pool and its surroundings. Who could tell what enemy might be crouching in the deep gray shadows of the rocks and bushes! Any one of those small mounds or clumps of grass might in reality be a lion or a leopard ready to spring on one. A wild animal that would live long must go slow when he knows not what is ahead, and so these hartebeest came on at a pace which was to us most tantalizingly slow. Occasionally one would leave the herd and come close to the pool, then as a frog or bird would make a noise in or near the water away he would go, taking the other animals with him. Again and again this happened, and we were kept in breathless suspense, fearing each time that they would not return. For over an hour I held the electric button in



my hand ready at any instant to release the flash. When at last, to my great delight, the animals, satisfied apparently with their investigations, came straight to the pool, and standing directly in front of the two cameras began drinking, scarcely realizing what I was doing I pressed the button. Instantly the scene was lighted by the powerful blue-white flash, and before the animals had time to move two photographs had been made. Away went the bewildered herd, blinded no doubt by the brilliancy of the light, and badly frightened by the report, which, owing to the quietness of the night, sounded unusually loud. It is not necessary to add that we were thoroughly delighted, as there was every reason to believe the pictures would prove satisfactory.

Other animals might come to drink, for the night was still young, so, armed with lamp and rifle, we visited the cameras, changed the plates, reset the flash lamp, and returned to the boma to wait for what might come. Scarcely an hour had passed before we heard the distant sounds of footsteps and crunching of grass. There was little doubt that it was zebra, for they are noisy feeders. We hoped our surmise would prove correct, for I was very anxious to obtain photographs of these animals by flashlight. They did not keep us long in suspense, and soon we heard them coming down the hill behind. On they came without hesitating until they were within about forty yards. Zebra they surely were, and what a sight they presented! About one hundred and thirty of the beautiful striped creatures, their strangely marked coats glistening in the clear moonlight. One moment the light would strike them, so that the pattern was wonderfully conspicuous; then, turning slightly, they would become merged in the gray of the landscape, and fade into oblivion.

Sometimes their dark noses would be the only evidence of their existence. It was unquestionably the most superb animal picture I have ever had the good fortune to see. One could not imagine anything more beautiful, yet it seemed unreal, and was far more like a dream than a reality. If one could but photograph such a scene in all its delicacy of tone and color, what a triumph it would be! But such pictures are only seen in nature, for neither camera nor even brush can reproduce the wonders of moonlight and its mysterious nameless colors. We had thought the hartebeest suspicious, but the zebra proved even more so, and for five hours or more they kept us in a state of nervous excitement. Sometimes the whole herd came within thirty or forty yards of the water hole, and stood still for a few moments, then one, more courageous than the others, came forward a few steps, but fear taking possession of his timid heart he stopped. After a few minutes another, with a sudden and belated idea that he was no coward, slowly advanced, but his courage, too, dwindled when he felt himself alone, and after looking ahead at the dark shades about the water hole he turned with nervous haste and scampered back to his companions; then they all disappeared for a time. It reminded one of a lot of boys each daring the other to do some act of supposed bravery; one taunting another, would urge him to do things that he himself was afraid to do. We were unable to discern the cause of the zebra's remarkable caution. Perhaps it was that the cameras were not sufficiently well hidden, or that they had gotten our scent. It seemed scarcely possible that under ordinary conditions they would spend five hours in coming to water, but whatever might have been the cause, their suspicions were so thoroughly aroused that they finally

gave up all idea of visiting the water hole, and vanished in the dim light of the early dawn.

The following night saw us again at our post. We concealed the cameras more carefully with reeds so that no animal could detect them. The electric device was thoroughly tested, and everything appeared to be in perfect working order, so we settled ourselves down to what we hoped would prove a good night's sport. Toward midnight a small herd of zebra came, but after walking about and examining the ground near the water hole, they departed without satisfying their thirst. Later on some hartebeest arrived on the scene. Unlike those of the previous night they scarcely hesitated. One came ahead, and after a brief examination of the place began drinking. The others immediately followed his example. They were in a splendid position for a picture, and I pressed the button with the fullest expectation of securing a fine photograph. To my utter disgust the flash refused to light, and as the noise of the shutter had frightened away the animals, we went out to see what could be the cause of the disappointment. There had been no change since the outfit had been tested, so we were at a loss to understand the failure. Apparently something was wrong, as the flash would not work when both the cameras were in circuit, so that as we were unable to remedy the trouble, we finally decided to use only one camera. We returned to the shelter in a somewhat discouraged frame of mind to await the next comers, whatever they might be.

Unfortunately the sky had clouded over, so that we no longer had the brilliant moon to light the scene of operations. About an hour before daylight, when the country was shrouded in darkness,



FLASHLIGHT PHOTOGRAPH OF COKE'S HARTEBEEST AT A WATER HOLE ON THE YATA PLAINS

I heard the sound of water being lapped. What animal it might be I could not tell, but it was evidently neither antelope nor zebra, as they drink as a horse does, almost without a noise. Hyena it might be, or still more likely a lion, for several times during the night we had heard one roaring not very far away. The only way to find out was to make a photograph, so I pressed the button. The flash went off immediately, and so did the animal. My feelings can be better imagined than described when on going to reset the camera I discovered the fact that the slide had not been drawn from the plate holder. Inexcusable carelessness it was without doubt, but it must be allowed that working at cameras on a dark night with lions roaring around is apt to make one somewhat hasty in attending to the many and somewhat intricate details of a flashlight device. It is really quite remarkable how many opportunities there are for failure in animal photography. One may take every possible precaution beforehand, and see that each part of the apparatus is in perfect order, and then, at the critical moment, fail through forgetting some minute but important detail. The flashlight device seemed actually to be governed by the spirit of trouble. Often we would test it repeatedly in every possible way with perfectly satisfactory results, and then, after waiting for hours, or even nights, for some animal to come within range, the wretched apparatus fails at the last moment. The electric device is unquestionably the best of all methods *when* it works, as it responds immediately and is noiseless, which is a most important consideration, but it is unfortunately over-easily deranged in the knocking about which things are almost bound to have on "safari." It is to be hoped that some one will eventually design an apparatus for flashlight work that will

be both simple and effective, yet light enough to work on the field. Mechanical devices are nearly always too noisy to be used with perfect satisfaction, and they are not instantaneous, so that when several cameras are used together it is almost impossible to secure absolute synchronism.

One night we were much interested in watching the peculiar behavior of an old doe hartebeest. She came with her yearling fawn, and after carefully investigating the vicinity of the pool began drinking. The yearling very soon satisfied his thirst, and retired from the scene, but the old one continued drinking intermittently for two hours. During this time three other hartebeest appeared, but every time they came near the water the fractious old doe drove them away. A more ill-natured old creature I have never seen. What her reason was for objecting to the other animals having a drink no one could say, but she was absolutely determined in her selfishness, and must have taken far more water than she could possibly need, for every time she chased any animal away she would immediately have a drink. A small herd of zebra came, and these, too, she drove away. Finally she was badly frightened by the sudden arrival of a jackal, and we saw no more of her.

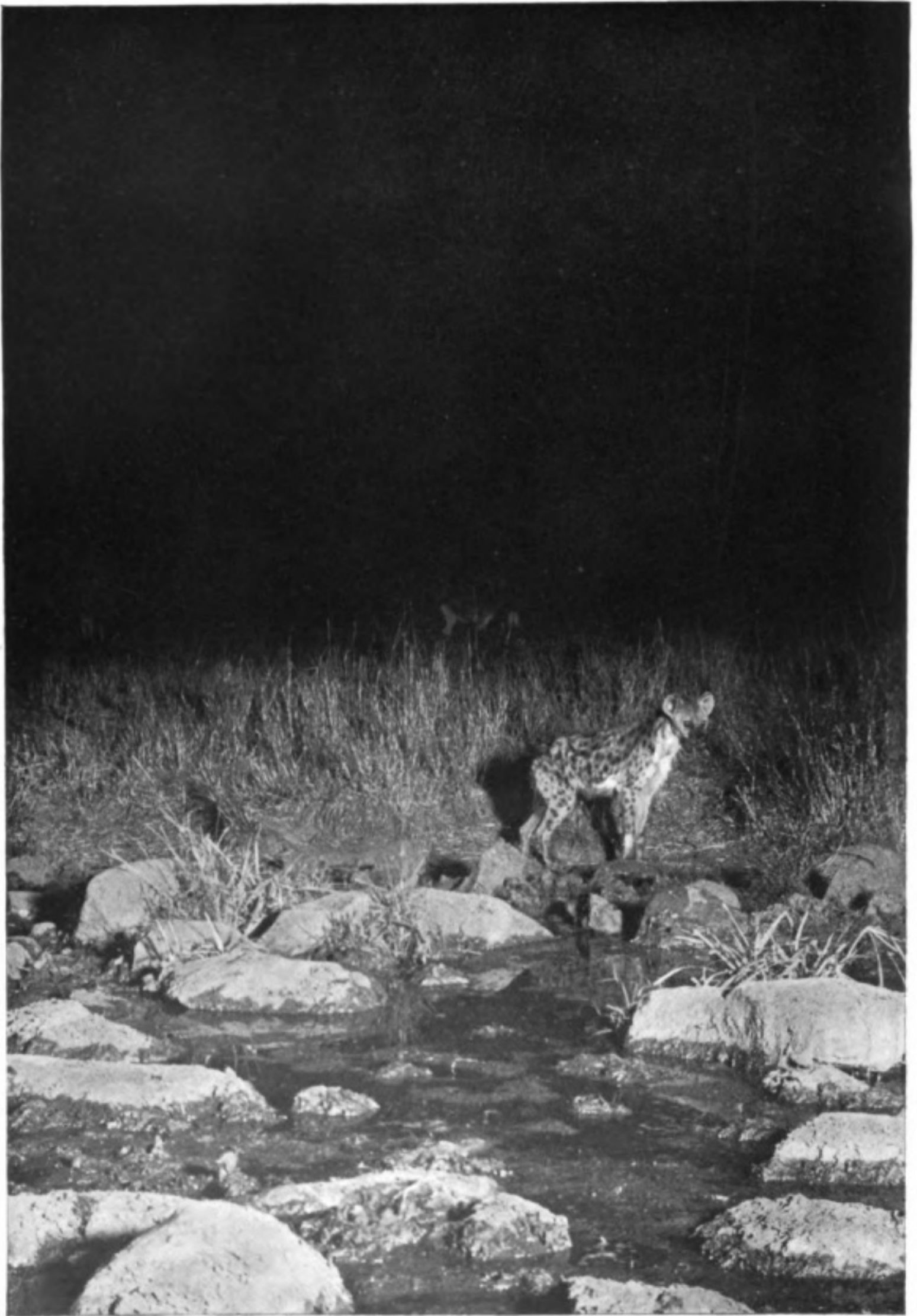
Later in the night I secured a photograph of four hartebeest which came with very slight hesitation. For several nights we watched the water hole without very satisfactory results, as the animals were extremely shy. One night, however, while watching the careful approach of a small herd of hartebeest, we were surprised to see them suddenly bolt with wonderful speed just as they reached the water. The cause of their fright soon appeared in the shape of a spotted hyena, which had come as silently as a ghost. The harte-

beest did not wait to investigate, but ran as soon as they realized that an animal was near. As a matter of fact they had no reason to be afraid of the despised hyena, which probably never attacks any wild creature, unless it be wounded, but prowls about, ghoulish, and plays the part of scavenger and thief. Nothing is too disgusting for it, meat in the last stages of decay, and even offal, being eaten with apparent relish. Human flesh finds favor with them, and though they will sometimes attack children, they prefer to wait for those that are dead or dying. Burial by the natives of most of the East African tribes is very rare, old people who have lost their teeth, mothers of very large families, and distinguished chiefs, being about the only ones entitled to burial. Many of the tribes believe that to have any one die in a hut brings bad luck, so as the end approaches the wretched creature is carried out and placed under a tree (if one is convenient), away from the village, to be devoured by the hyenas. On this account the natives will not kill these "living tombs of their people." It is strange that the hyenas should be such miserable cowards. Evidently they do not appear to realize their power, though it is true that most of their strength is in their jaws, which are so powerful that they are said to be able to crunch any bone around which their teeth can close, and yet, unlike their close relations, the big "cats," they will almost starve rather than attack a living creature. The hyena that frightened away the hartebeest was himself so alarmed that he slunk away, but after a few minutes reappeared, and as he stood suspiciously examining the pool I fired the flash and secured two photographs. In one of the pictures the indistinct forms of the hartebeest are visible in the background.

We were somewhat surprised that no lions visited the water hole, for the fact that there were many in the neighborhood was only too clear. Nearly every night we heard them roaring, and the men while gathering firewood had seen several. As lions invariably drink soon after feeding, we could not understand how it was that we had seen none. Evidently there must be other water about, notwithstanding our guide's assurance to the contrary. One morning, while taking our much-needed sleep, after having been up all night, we were aroused by the magic word "Simba" (Swahili for lion). The men had been out for wood, and had seen two lions in a little gully not far away. Without waiting to ask many questions we hastily dressed and started in the direction of the gully, armed with rifles and cameras, and followed by almost all our men, as I had promised backsheesh for information leading to either the photographing or shooting of lions. Both my companions and myself were extremely anxious to secure a lion's skin, and we were greatly excited at the prospect before us. On reaching the place where the lions had been seen we found a small and nearly dry stream, in which was a dense growth of papyrus, evidently a first-rate cover for the animals. Accordingly we determined to try a beat. My companion took one side and I with my camera bearer the other. The men followed close behind, making all the noise they could and throwing stones into the thicket.

It was not long before something began to move in the papyrus within a few yards of me. That it was a lion there seemed no doubt, and at that distance there was no time to lose, for should the beast decide to spring there would be an extremely good chance for trouble. The men, in a high state of excitement, begged me to shoot. Photo-





THIS SPOTTED HYENA IN COMING TO THE WATER TO DRINK FRIGHTENED AWAY SOME HARTEBEEST WHICH CAN BE DIMLY SEEN IN THE BACKGROUND. (FLASHLIGHT, YATA PLAINS)

graphing was out of the question, so, trusting to luck, I fired into the moving grass, and though there was no sound of any struggle the motion ceased. I was just wondering what had happened when, not more than four yards away, there was a crashing sound, and again I fired, though nothing was visible. Scarcely had the sound of the shot died away when to our surprise out rushed a lion cub directly toward my companion. Then there was great excitement, as all hands gave chase. It was not long before the youngster was caught, and a savage little brute it proved to be. We were very anxious to keep it alive, and while several of the men were helping to tie it securely, I had the very questionable pleasure of seeing an immense lion and lioness approaching. If ever there was an opportunity for trouble we surely had it, for the growls of the cub as it fought its captors could be clearly heard for several hundred yards. Nearly all the men, following the primal instinct, bolted with more haste than dignity, while we stood still watching the mighty beasts as they watched us. Neither of us had ever seen a wild lion before, and our feelings may well be imagined. Of course we thought there was no possible way of avoiding an attack, and we drew lots for who was to take the lion. It was a queer experience, standing there holding an infuriated lion cub, and drawing lots for choice of shots, while the huge black-maned lion and his mate were not more than two hundred yards away. I won the draw, and was wondering whether I had better shoot at once, or wait for a closer shot, when, to our utter disgust, the two animals turned tail and ignominiously disappeared over the hill.

As there was every reason to suppose they would return, we concluded it would be best for us to take advantage of a comfortable-

looking tree, from which both photographing and shooting would be more satisfactory. Using the camera from the ground was impossible, owing to the high grass which concealed so much of a low-standing animal such as a lion. The struggling cub was carried to the tree we selected, in the hope that its growling would bring the parents within range of the cameras. My camera bearer had climbed the tree, and I was about to pass him the outfit, when to my surprise three lions came in sight, the black-maned lion and two lionesses. They were about two hundred and fifty yards away. I was in the act of changing the ordinary lens for the telephoto in order to get a good long-distance picture when they retreated. The noise made by the men as they struggled for the few available trees presumably frightened the lions, and so once more we were disappointed. To add to our dismay the unfortunate cub died. It actually killed itself by struggling. The tree we were in was about seventy-five yards from where the cub had been found, and as it seemed to me that it would be better to be nearer, I decided to take my place alone in a small thorn tree, directly over where I had fired the shots, so with my rifle and camera I started off. I had not gone half-way before my companion called out, "Here comes the lion!" That is the way things go in animal photography. One waits for hours and nothing happens, then the moment one moves the long-awaited-for animal arrives. I cannot say that there was any undue lingering on my part, and it seemed as though that tree were only too far away; however, I finally reached it, and had just wriggled my way through the thorns to one of the lower branches, when I had the pleasure of seeing the two lionesses standing close together, not seventy-five yards away. One shot with a solid bullet would have gone through

both of their shoulders, and I was sorely tempted to fire, but the thought that the big lion was behind prevented my acting on the impulse.

Judging by the conditions, there seemed to be every probability that I should have an opportunity of securing a photograph of him, and even have a chance of a shot as well, and perhaps my companion might get a lioness or two. For about three minutes I watched the splendid creatures, expecting every instant to see the lion emerge from behind a large bush near which the tawny pair were standing, and when they turned their heads and looked back I felt sure the time was close at hand. It was very exciting, but I wished that bush was out of the way, and I also wished myself a little farther from the ground, and among fewer thorns. Five feet from the ground is too close for complete comfort. I held the cameras pointed at the lioness, ready to press the button the moment the lion came in sight, when before I realized what had happened, they jumped into some high grass and bolted as hard as they could. It appeared that one of the men had been off after honey, not knowing anything about our lion hunt. As it happened, he came directly between the lion and the two lionesses, and all three went off. During the rest of the afternoon there was no further excitement.

We found that my shots had killed two cubs, which was most unfortunate, as it greatly reduced the chances of seeing the old ones. Had they been alive the parents would certainly have come to feed them, and we should have been practically sure of an opportunity to secure some photographs. As there seemed nothing better to do, we finally decided to spend part of the night in the tree on the chance of getting a shot or two, and so we sent the men away, and had some

supper brought to us about sunset. We were thoroughly tired and extremely hungry, having had nothing to eat since six o'clock breakfast, so we quickly settled ourselves as comfortably as possible on the hard, thorny branches to eat our meal. Scarcely had we commenced when in the dim twilight we saw the lion and lioness coming in our direction. Unfortunately they must have seen us move, for they stopped when about one hundred and fifty yards away, and remained there until darkness set in. Then we heard them coming through the dry grass, a few steps at the time, and oh, so slowly! It really seemed as though they would never reach the papyrus. We could see nothing, for there was no moon, and a darker night I have never known. Thinking that I might possibly be able to distinguish the big animals if I were nearer the ground, I cautiously descended to the lowest branch, which was not more than eight feet from the ground. The lions were not far away, and we heard their low purring as they crept through the papyrus. While I was peering into the darkness, trying in vain to see something, I was badly startled by a loaf of bread which I had left on a branch when the meal had been so suddenly interrupted. It fell with a thud directly beneath me, just as one of the lions was passing not more than twelve or fourteen feet away. The sudden noise gave me such a start that I nearly fell off the branch, and incidently it frightened away the lions. We heard them going through the papyrus, stopping once to drink, but unfortunately they did not come near us again, and we had the mortification of realizing that though we had seen lions we had lost every opportunity for both shooting and photographing, and had nothing at all to show for the extremely tiring day. We had been very much surprised at their behavior. Many



THESE THREE TELEPHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN IN QUICK SUCCESSION SHOW THE RHINOCEROS: (1) WALKING DOWN WIND TO GET OUR SCENT; (2) STOPPING TO LISTEN; (3) FACING US AS HE HEARS THE SOUND OF THE SHUTTER

times have I seen moose and deer, or even rabbits, display much greater solicitude for their young than was shown by those lions. I could scarcely believe that they would calmly allow their young to be captured without making any attempt to rescue it, even after listening to its cries for help.

As we were too tired to prolong our vigil we only waited for the moon to rise before returning to camp, and even with its soft light we did not feel particularly comfortable, knowing that at least three lions were about, and that two of them were in anything but an amiable frame of mind. In our excited and tired condition, bushes, stones and ant-hills took on strange shapes, and many a time did we hold our rifles ready to protect ourselves against enemies which proved to be harmless shadows. Never did the camp look more cheerful, or bed more alluring, and not all the lions in Africa could have disturbed our night's sleep. Next day we built a boma overlooking the water hole in which the lions had been heard to drink, but though we spent the night in careful watching we neither saw nor heard any lions. Our only visitor was a spotted hyena, and even he did not wait long enough to be photographed.

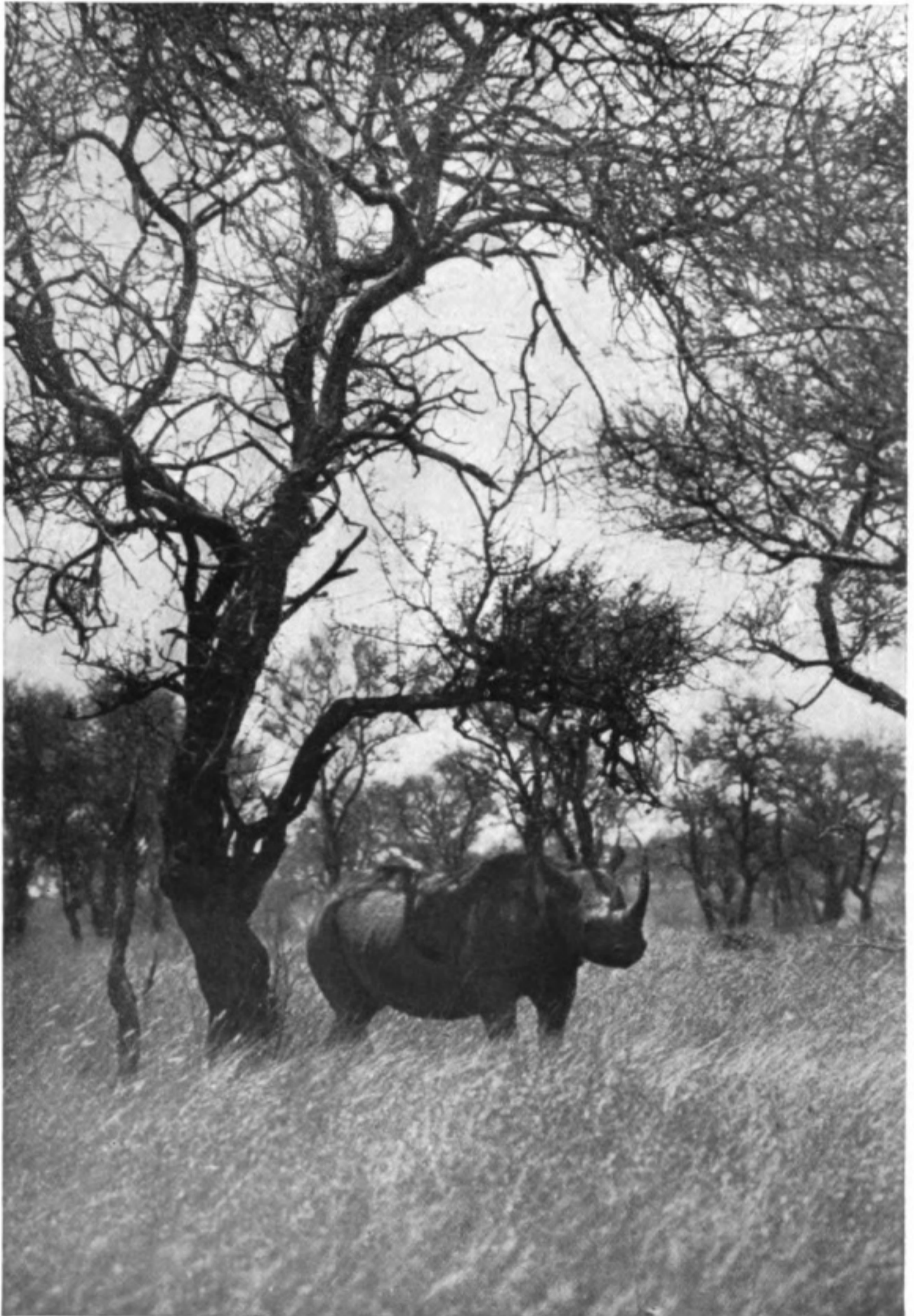
As we had devoted most of our time to flashlight work since our arrival at the Yata Plains, we had not had much opportunity for seeing the country around us. So we took a day off to see what might be found, I going in one direction and my companion in another. For several hours I saw nothing but an occasional herd of impala or hartebeest, and some fairly fresh tracks of buffalo. I found that the country northwest of the Yata Plains was slightly rolling, with many dry water-courses. There were the usual scattered thorn trees to break the monotony; along the beds of the streams

these trees were in bloom, and the fragrance was very refreshing. Swarms of bees were busy gathering honey. Here and there the Wakamba beehives, consisting simply of hollow logs, partly closed at both ends, were hung in the trees. Presumably these people must make expeditions into the country periodically to collect the honey, but we saw no natives of any kind during our stay.

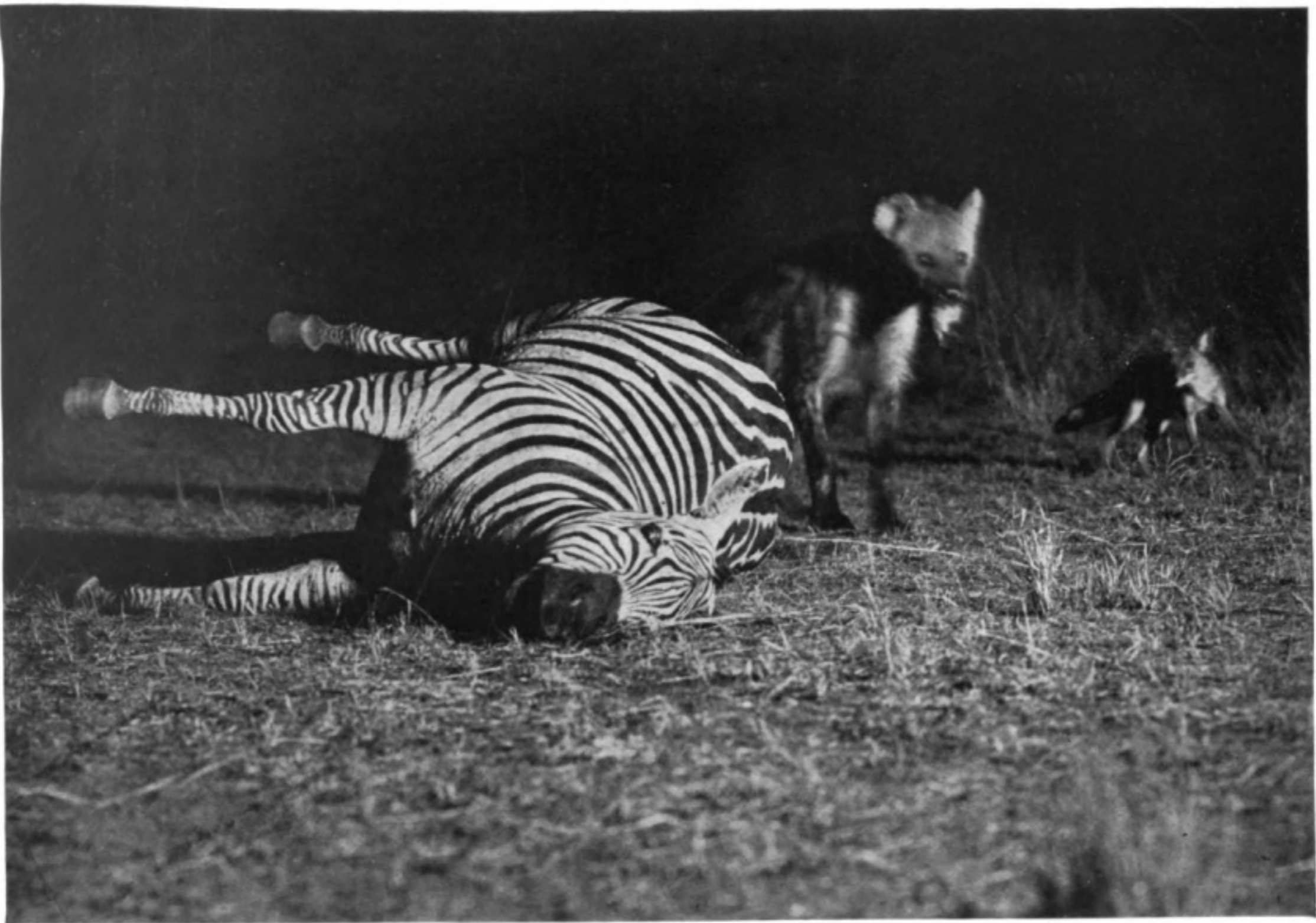
In Nairobi we had been told we should find the Yata Plains fairly alive with rhinoceros. Evidently we were there at the wrong season, for up to this time we had seen only one. I had almost given up looking for the queer beasts, so was much surprised when we nearly ran on top of a big fellow who was standing in a drowsy sort of way in the shade of a tree. Fortunately we were working up wind, so were not discovered. The chance for a photograph was apparently very good, so exchanging the rifle for the camera, and instructing the man to stay close by, for, in the event of a charge, I might have to shoot quickly, we moved toward the big beast, which had in the meantime become suspicious. It was somewhat of a surprise to find that, instead of one rhinoceros, there were no fewer than five.\* The prospect was anything but alluring, especially as we only had a .275 rifle — a weapon powerful enough for most work, but rather small for stopping a charging rhinoceros. While I was debating in my mind as to the best method of procedure, our big friend became very uneasy and proceeded to inform the other four, which had been asleep, that there was something wrong. They all stood up, then walked about, trying to discover what and where the danger might be. Once they all came together, and it was decidedly comical to see the five ungainly animals actually rubbing noses. Apparently

\*This experience clashes with that of a well-known hunter and writer, who declares that more than four rhinos are never seen together.





THE SAME RHINO AS SHOWN ON THE PREVIOUS PLATE, PHOTOGRAPHED WITH A SINGLE LENS AND GREATLY ENLARGED



OUR ONLY VISITORS ONE NIGHT WERE TWO SCAVENGERS — A SPOTTED HYENA AND A JACKAL, WHICH CAME TO FEED ON THE DEAD ZEBRA

they were discussing the situation, and it ended in the biggest one being sent to reconnoitre. He was one of the finest specimens I have ever seen, even though the horns were not large. His hide was in splendid condition, and wonderfully clean and smooth, entirely free from scars and blemishes. By good luck, instead of coming directly toward us, he went to one side, and as he came slowly along I very carefully approached to within less than forty yards. Then I made an exposure, getting a good broadside view. At the sound of the shutter he stopped, then walking a few steps ahead, stopped again, and I made another exposure. This time he located the sound of the shutter, and turned straight toward me, and I confess that I felt uncomfortable as I changed plates, keeping one eye all the time on the suspicious creature. If he should charge, the others would probably come, too, and the situation would result in a tree-climbing contest for us; so, after making another exposure, I crawled to a convenient tree as rapidly as possible. Once there I felt more comfortable, and changed the telephoto lens for a more rapid one, in order to be ready for a charge. We stood eyeing each other for some minutes, but as I found the tension anything but pleasant, I tried to stalk him. He allowed me to come within about twenty-five yards, and then, being unable to stand it any longer, he bolted toward the other four, and away they all went, leaving me somewhat delighted, but very much surprised at their behavior.

It is just as well for one's comfort that the poor old beasts are so nearly blind, for if they were able to see as well as they hear and smell, they would be extremely dangerous. As it is, anything farther than about one hundred and fifty yards is practically beyond their range of vision. Their sense of smell is very keen, however,

and their hearing fairly so. As already stated, the big creatures have few, if any, enemies except man, and so have small need of keenness. When anything disturbs or annoys them, they charge in a lumbering sort of way that is very deceptive. It seems incredible that such clumsy-looking creatures can attain the speed they do; not only do they go fast, but their agility in turning is really remarkable. When charging they usually lack the fiendish persistence of such animals as the buffalo, and if they fail to strike the object of their ponderous attention the first time, they are more than likely to pass on. Frequently their so-called charges are not charges at all. They see, hear, or smell something, and, to satisfy their curiosity, come to see what it is. In such cases they usually trot, whereas when they mean mischief, as they frequently do, they more often gallop with tail erect. This at least has been my experience, though it has been said that they *never* gallop unless wounded. The question of how to avoid a charge is open to dispute, and I almost hesitate to advise dodging, after a certain writer has declared it to be a practical impossibility. Yet I have seen it done with perfect success. Of course it requires coolness and favorable conditions to begin with, and no move must be made until the animal is within about two or at most three yards, then a sudden jump to one side should prove absolutely safe. If you move too soon the rhinoceros will turn. It is of the utmost importance that the ground be examined before any move is made, as in many places it is honey-combed with holes, and to fall into one would prove decidedly disastrous. When there is more than one of the big brutes it is unwise to trust to dodging. Shooting is far more safe. Curiously enough the rhinoceros, notwithstanding its size, is comparatively easily killed; but I do not

believe that it is often necessary to shoot to kill, as they will in most cases turn if struck on the shoulder or the nose. A solid bullet of about .450 calibre will kill instantly if properly placed, while a soft point of the same size will usually cause the animal to turn. We even tried buckshot with a twelve-bore shotgun with success, but it can scarcely be relied upon, as we found to our cost when we tried to turn the last one mentioned in the Olgerei trip.



ROUGH MAP SHOWING THE ROUTE OF THE EXPEDITION

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