



GAME BAG AND GUN

My First Rhinoceros.

It was three years ago that I made my first trip to British East Africa, and although I fancied that I had killed my share of big game, having been in Rhodesia and Central Africa for several years, I had not yet had the luck to kill a rhino. One I had seen in Rhodesia, and only one. It was in very thick bush, and I had been unable to get a shot, and although practically following up for two days, he got the best of me, and I had to give it up.

In Central Africa rhino are scarce, or at least not nearly so plentiful as further north, and on going to British East Africa, it was one of my special wishes to bag one of these ferocious animals. Savage they are, and there is no doubt about it. They do not stand on ceremony and wait to be hunted, but will hunt you and your caravan, however large it may be, especially if you are in their way. Their sense of smell is extremely keen, but, thank goodness, their eyesight is very bad.

We had been out several weeks—that is, W., who was my guide, and myself—and enjoyed very fair sport, but up to this time had not seen a rhino, which was, to say the least, very annoying, as we had come across plenty of fresh spoor. I also had boys out, whose duty it was to report immediately on finding what we wanted. It only shows the extraordinary luck of sport. Because you particularly want rhino, you cannot find one, but if you were not keen on seeing one, in all likelihood you would run across several.

As I mentioned, I had with me W., one of the best guides and hunters I have ever known, cool, keen, good-tempered, and a happy knack of hitting it off with the natives, a dead shot, and the bravest man in his particular line that I ever ran across. Several times we have been in queer places together, and I always found him all there. Naturally I had the greatest confidence in him, and I may say that anybody wishing to shoot in that country could not do better than to get hold of him, and I will gladly give any sportsman his name if desired.

At last the boys brought in word that they had seen two large rhino which had disappeared in a large patch of thick brush, and they had not gone out. So we determined to try and find them. I must say that to hunt rhino in thick bush was rather a foolish thing to undertake, but we determined to try it. Starting out immediately, I armed with a double .450-400, shooting 60 grains of cordite, and W. with a Mannlicher—and I may add that with this little weapon he does all his hunting, elephant and everything—away we hurried.

On reaching the patch of bush, which was about a mile long and half a mile across, we found it very thick and utterly impassable, except by the game paths, of which there were a good many. The wind was favorable, so we decided to go quietly through the bush, each taking a game path and keeping in touch with one another as far as possible. We took no

boys with us, but left them on the outside of the bush to watch. I was worse than nervous, and if it had not been for appearing ridiculous in W.'s eyes, I should not have dreamt of going further, but because he went, I went.

Every sound to me appeared to be a charging rhino, and every bird getting up made me start and grip my rifle. On we went, the further side of the bush getting nearer and nearer, and I must truthfully say, I thanked my stars that up to that time nothing had turned up, and in another few minutes we were out in the open again where we sat down for a short time. I pretended to be so sorry and annoyed at not having found the rhino, telling W. what I should have done if one had charged. Run away? Why rather not; just step aside and shoot him in the neck as he charged past? A few minutes of silence were broken by W. saying, "Well, I tell you what we will do, we will go through it again, downwind." I had to agree, but suggested that perhaps it would be as well to go together, to which W. laughingly agreed, adding, "Why, surely you are not getting nervous?"

We started to return; after going about half way through the bush, there was a most awful commotion, and the two rhino charged straight at us, snorting like steam engines. I must explain that I had asked W. not to shoot unless necessary, as I was anxious to have the entire kudos of killing my rhino by myself. One charged straight at me, down the narrow path, and I literally did as I had said, stepped on one side and shot her in the neck as she thundered by, in the most approved manner, and she fell within a few feet.

I think most people, when danger is really staring them in the face, have the power to pull themselves together and act instantly, and God help the man who cannot; he certainly should not hunt dangerous game. Several times I have been forced to do this, or chance a dreadful end. The second rhino charged past and stopped about thirty yards off, trying to find out our whereabouts. The wind was again in our favor. The bush was so dense that from where I was I could not chance a shot, and so I left the cover of the friendly bush behind which I had jumped immediately after firing at No. 1 and tried to get a clear shot. Bang! An angry stamp was all I saw, although I could plainly hear the thud of my heavy bullet; but before I could get in my second shot, on he came right at me. I tried to jump out of the way, caught my foot in a creeper and over I went. Luckily for me, W. shot him twice, and was enabled to turn him, so that he missed me by about three yards, and there he stood again, squinting his horrible little pig eyes and trying to find me.

In falling down, I had dropped my rifle and did not dare to move, for fear of attracting his notice. I could plainly hear his hard breathing and could see that he was badly hit, as he swayed about, and could scarcely keep on

his legs. W. called out in his cheery voice, "All right, get your rifle and finish him off, I will cover you while you do it." I think I lay still another minute before attempting to reach my rifle, and then I groped very carefully with my right hand and reached it. Moving only enough to enable me to get the rifle to my shoulder, I fired both barrels as quickly as I could, and down he dropped, but still he was not finished, and I had to give him his *coup de grace* with another shot.

All these shots were practically dead shots, but this is where the danger comes in. I have seen all kinds of game go on for some distance with a shot right through the heart before falling down, and with the larger animals I think it is more often seen than with smaller ones.

He was a real good specimen, his first horn measuring twenty-six inches, and the cow was very little smaller, so that I had succeeded in getting two very fine average specimens at one go. Even now when looking at rhino in a zoological garden, the few awful moments I went through—which seemed to me then to be hours—come back most vividly, and I look up when I am sitting in my den at those two mounted heads and think!

There are several ways of utilizing a rhino as regards trophies. Personally I have the heads mounted. They are certainly rather cumbersome, but very unique. The skin I have had made into the top of a table. They polish most beautifully and make a most useful article of furniture, and the feet and legs into feet and legs of the table. It really makes an exceptionally fine trophy and is the admiration and envy of all who see it. A FULL HAND.

Hunting in the Capitans.

A TULSA (I. T.) paper says Ira Isenberger and Clarence Render, of Tulsa, and D. A. Taylor, of Beaver Dam, Ky., returned this week from a three weeks' big game hunt in the Capitan Mountains of New Mexico. The party brought back as souvenirs of their trip numerous hides and other trophies. The party killed seven blacktail deer, four brown and one bald-face bear, and five black eagles, besides much small game. The hides of the deer and the bear pelts are in fine condition and will be sent to Denver to be mounted or made into rugs. Speaking of the hunt, Mr. Isenberger stated that the party camped in McEllis cañon, about sixty miles west of Roswell, and aside from two light snowfalls had most ideal weather for comfort, and at all times the finest hunting conditions. With the party was Ray Jacobs, whose bear hounds have a national reputation and whose services as guide and hunter were almost indispensable in the rough country visited. The most magnificent specimen brought back by the party was a mule deer killed on the headwaters of the McEllis cañon that weighed 280 pounds.