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Photo by A. Radclyffe Dugmore

RHINOCEROSES ON THE PLAINS OF KIU

Game is so thick in this good grazing region that we were glad to use an old *boma* of the chief game warden, barricaded with a heavy stockade of thorn branches. A circle of fires around a camp will protect against lions, leopards and other animals, but a rhinoceros may charge through fire. These huge creatures in family groups of two or three, never in herds, look like scattered rocks in the distance



Photo by James L. Clark

Before crossing, stones are thrown into the water to drive away crocodiles, and an occasional rifle shot on either side helps to protect the cavalcade. The more dangerous rivers are waist deep and many an unwary boy going down for water gets caught by a crocodile

Pioneer Photography in Africa

A STORY OF THE WORK OF A. RADCLYFFE DUGMORE IN SECURING FOR AMERICA THE EARLIEST FINE SERIES OF AFRICAN WILD GAME PICTURES

By JAMES L. CLARK

WE sat outside our tent smoking, and sipping the last of our coffee. The air was soft and balmy. There was not the hum of a single insect nor the sting of a biting ant. Soft light was flooding the plains of Kiu, which lay before us like a rolling sea with the full moon just lifting from the horizon. "And this is Africa — how different from what we expected!" As Dugmore spoke these words I roused from my silent wonderment at it all.

This was our first camp in the land of sun-scorched plains. We had expected that by nightfall the insect pests would be unbearable and that to walk about

outside our tents would mean to render ourselves liable to the bites of poisonous insects and lurking snakes or to the germs of the malaria-laden mists.

But we found these all absent and so, as the big moon ascended high and grew brighter and brighter we watched and marveled until, drowsy with the weariness from our previous days of preparation and the afternoon's journey in the little toylike train, we reluctantly turned to our cots to wait for the morrow.

By the first sign of light in the eastern sky breakfast was finished, the tents down and all the loads packed. A circle of little fires showed where the

porters' tents had been, and about these huddled the half-naked boys in the cool of the early dawn, waiting for daylight to appear that we might march on in safety. As dawn broke, the unbounded plains of the night before seemed like another land; and our guide pointed to a little blue hill topping the horizon to the south and said, "Sisi kwenda huku" (We are going there.)

When our day's march ended we had covered about twenty miles and were then camped at the only water hole in the bottom of a dry river bed. Our

tents were pitched some hundred yards back, that we might not disturb the animals which were in the habit of drinking at the hole in the night.

Dugmore, after months of preparation in New York and London, had assembled a wonderful outfit of cameras and all the necessary paraphernalia for developing and for making prints in the field, whether by running brook or muddy water hole, and his success was due as greatly to developing immediately and knowing whether or not he had his picture before he turned his attention to

other things, as it was to his ability and technical knowledge as a photographer. The advantage of developing at once while there is time and opportunity to take the picture again if necessary, rather than bringing the undeveloped plates home and then developing, is manifold. It insures against loss through plates and chemicals going bad under unfavorable conditions; against loss of plates through the camera having sprung a leak unnoticed; against wasted effort through over or under exposure and many other conditions, any one of which might make the result a failure.

We had brought with us only such guns and ammunition as seemed necessary to insure our safety, as it was not for animal trophies we had come but for photographs.



Messrs. A. Radclyffe Dugmore and James L. Clark on the way to Africa



Photo by James L. Clark

First steps in constructing a *boma*. Heavy logs and sticks, lashed together with thorn tree bark, make a substantial cage, over which thorn branches are densely packed to form a barrier and to conceal the operator. The dry river bed was a runway for lions, which came to a water hole just below the *boma*.

Field photography is most fascinating when resources are taxed and one's versatility is called upon to secure results. The success with which Dugmore overcame obstacles is shown in his marvelous photographs. At that time (1909) no such series of African wild-game pictures had reached America. Eliminating Schilling, the German sportsman and author, who took some interesting, but photographically poor, game pictures in German East Africa, Dugmore was perhaps the pioneer in the African field of animal photography.

From our camp we worked the water hole at night and the



Photo by James L. Clark

This lion came stalking the dead zebra in the night, but the flash light missed fire and it was necessary to shoot him when he was about twelve yards distant.

outlying country in the daytime. Each evening Dugmore set his flash-light cameras at this water hole; these were controlled on an electric circuit which tripped the cameras and fired the flash simultaneously — and it was here that we had some of our most disheartening trials. Before leaving at dusk we would make repeated tests of the working order of cameras, batteries and flashes, but

we were at a loss to understand this mystery, but finally concluded that the night birds in flying down and skimming the surface of the water as they drank, hit the string and fired the flash, but since they were going at considerable speed failed to leave a record on the plate.

This, with the fact that one night two lions had rolled in the sand directly on



Photo by A. Radclyffe Dugmore

Lion with broken back impotently snarling.— When waiting in a blind for antelope Mr. Dugmore suddenly found himself stalked by two lions eighty yards away, and was obliged to use a rifle instead of a camera, breaking the back of one and knocking the other over

afterward they would fail to act just at the very moment when tripped by some night prowler.

For about ten days we were baffled by most peculiar results. On several mornings we found the flash fired and upon developing the plates discovered a perfect picture of the water hole itself, but not the slightest sign of the creature that had tripped the camera. For days

the thread and that another time three rhinoceroses had come down to drink and, although stepping on the thread, had failed to trip the switch, led Dugmore to abandon the automatic principle and adopt the method of sitting up and watching from a near-by tree or constructed blind — the method by which he finally secured his flash-light pictures of lions and antelope.

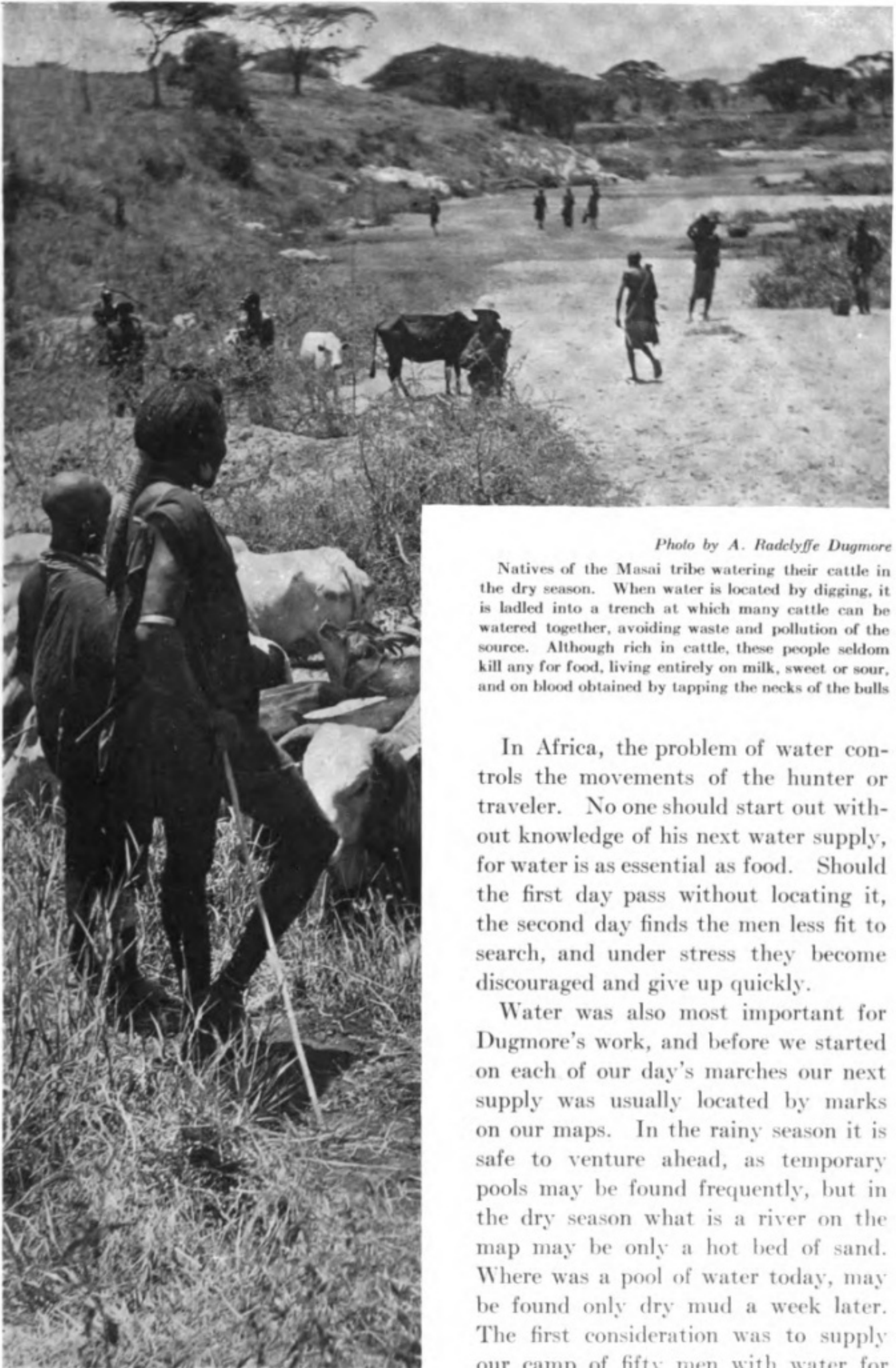


Photo by A. Radclyffe Dugmore

Natives of the Masai tribe watering their cattle in the dry season. When water is located by digging, it is ladled into a trench at which many cattle can be watered together, avoiding waste and pollution of the source. Although rich in cattle, these people seldom kill any for food, living entirely on milk, sweet or sour, and on blood obtained by tapping the necks of the bulls

In Africa, the problem of water controls the movements of the hunter or traveler. No one should start out without knowledge of his next water supply, for water is as essential as food. Should the first day pass without locating it, the second day finds the men less fit to search, and under stress they become discouraged and give up quickly.

Water was also most important for Dugmore's work, and before we started on each of our day's marches our next supply was usually located by marks on our maps. In the rainy season it is safe to venture ahead, as temporary pools may be found frequently, but in the dry season what is a river on the map may be only a hot bed of sand. Where was a pool of water today, may be found only dry mud a week later. The first consideration was to supply our camp of fifty men with water for

drinking and cooking; the second to supply water for developing and printing. For drinking purposes all water had to be boiled; for developing, it only had to be reasonably clean. We considered ourselves fortunate if we could camp by a running stream, but this was only occasionally possible as our camps were controlled by the presence of game as well as of water. Many times we saw abundance of game which Dugmore wished to photograph, but as we could not locate water in the vicinity we had to move on.

On several occasions we were obliged to dig for water because we wanted to be at a certain point of vantage from which we could get to the herds of game. This method was not always successful, and where water could be had under these conditions it was always scanty and had to be used most sparingly. Each night it was covered with branches of thorn trees to protect it from the animals which would otherwise have come and exhausted the supply, for as a rule it seeped in very slowly and could be taken out only in small quantities at a time. Under such conditions developing was out of the question and our plates were allowed to accumulate until camp could be moved to some stream, where for a day or two we would make a business of developing.

Our first serious difficulty was the frilling of the plates by the warm water. Dugmore overcame this by filling buckets with water the last thing in the evening and allowing them to stand all night. Then in the morning at about four o'clock, the coolest time in the twenty-four hours, we would develop the plates. By daylight these plates would be drying and by eight o'clock they would be so dry that the heat that came with the forenoon sun would not affect them.

This arrangement also left us free at

the proper time for taking pictures, which is between nine and eleven o'clock in the morning and between two and five in the afternoon, when the light is good and the animals are moving about feeding. In the middle of the day, from eleven to two o'clock, the heat rays dance so that a picture at a hundred yards is almost impossible, and this period of direct rays of the sun is so hot that the animals take to shelter, resting under trees and in strong shadow where photographing is quite impossible.

Dugmore was tireless, and would obtain results where results were apparently unobtainable. I have seen him after being out all night in a *boma*, return for breakfast and immediately thereafter start out for pictures, perhaps to wait with patience all day long for antelopes to feed slowly in his direction, or to stalk with his heavy camera across the hot barren plains.

It was while he was working in a little leaf concealment at noon one day not far from camp, waiting for antelope to appear, that he chanced to look behind and saw two lions stalking him. His first thought was a picture and he reached for his camera, but the deliberate stealthy progress of the two beasts made him change the camera for his gun. He broke the back of one and knocked the other over, but this second one finally got away. The first, powerless to move, was then photographed at close range.

Photographing lions proves most successful if one can find a fresh kill and construct a *boma* near it during the day, being careful not to touch the kill or to go near it. The lion — or leopard perhaps — is almost certain to return the following night. It was this method which secured for Dugmore his lion pictures taken at about thirty feet from the animal.



Photo by A. Radclyffe Dugmore

ZEBRAS GRAZING ON THE ATHI PLAINS, NEAR NAIROBI

Except the hartebeest this is the most common animal in Africa, generally found in herds of one hundred or more. It also herds with giraffes, hartebeest, wart hogs, buffalo and other game, no other animal being so variously gregarious. The stallions of this species are fierce fighters, so that it is almost impossible to get an unscarred skin of a male zebra. Zebras are the favorite food of the lion and also of the native porters, being one of the few African animals whose meat contains fat. They are as harmless as ponies and an easy prey

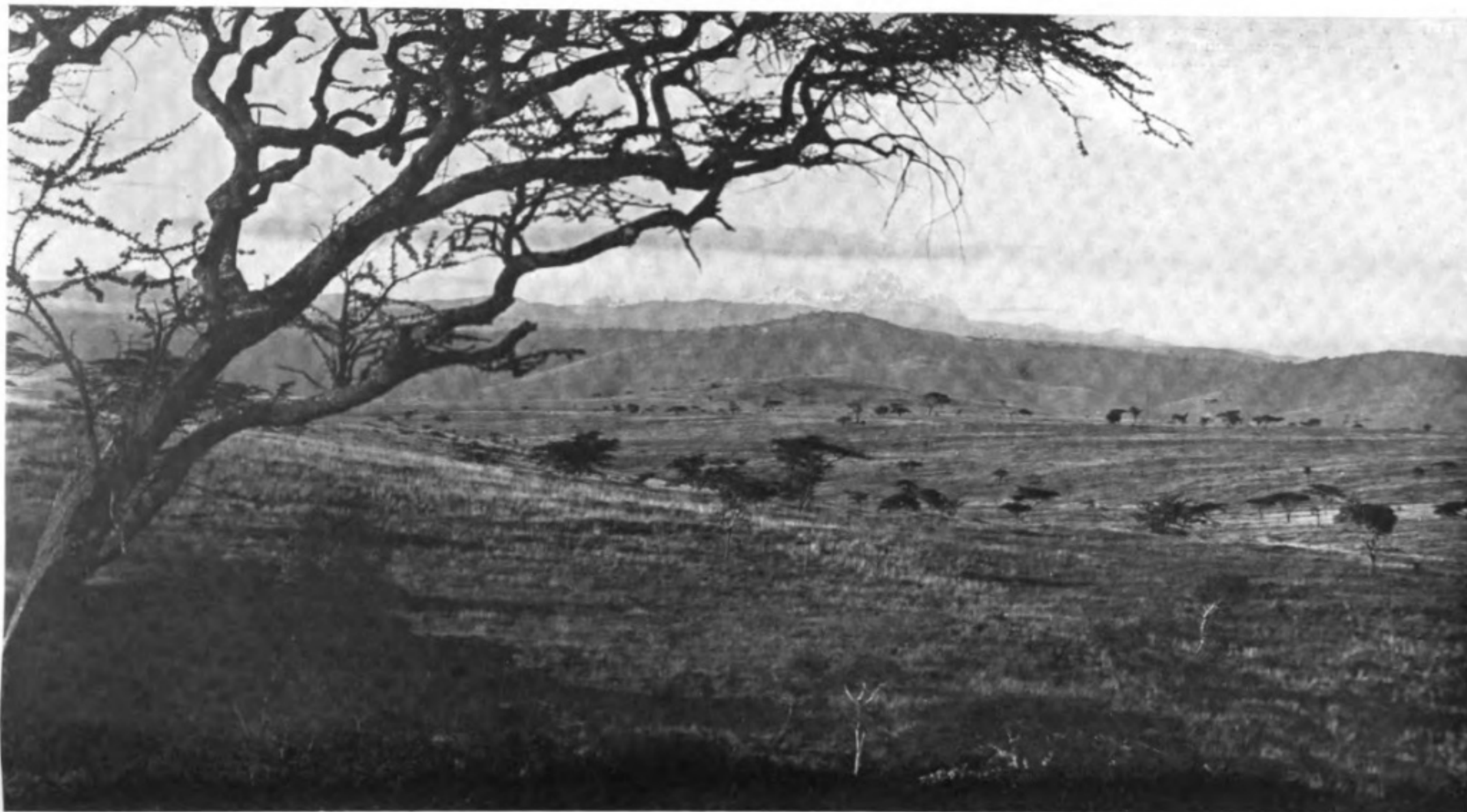


Photo by A. Radclyffe Dugmore

DISTANT VIEW OF MOUNT KENIA AT SUNRISE

Photograph taken on the return trip from the Northern Guaso Nyiro where the fauna of Somaliland penetrates British East Africa in a long spur. Hunters visit this district to secure types of animals which can be found nowhere else in British East Africa. After chopping a way through dense forest for two days, short of food and water, we emerged on the slopes of Mount Kenia, which gave us a straight course for our post station



Photo by A. Radclyffe Dugmore

INFURIATED RHINOCEROS IN FULL CHARGE

These animals are extremely agile for their bulk — which is chiefly muscle — and can overtake a man on foot. A shot from Mr. Clark's gun turned this infuriated beast at fifteen yards. The black rhinoceros is a browser, grasping twigs and tufts of coarse grass with its prehensile upper lip. The Nile is the natural barrier between this species and the grazing white rhinoceros of the Congo. In Africa, the crocodile-infested streams keep animals distinct for thousands of years, one on either side of the same river

The next best method is to shoot a zebra, which is the lion's favorite food, and drag it some distance over the ground; then to build a *boma* or get up into a near-by tree in a constructed crow's nest. The latter is safer but not so satisfactory, for the darker the night

prepared kill stalks it and does not make the slightest sound; therefore to have knowledge of his presence is a protection as well as an advantage photographically.

Other methods used for photographing game were improvised on the spot as the conditions demanded. For hours at a



Photo by A. Radclyffe Dugmore

The hartebeest is the most common animal in British East Africa, found in herds of one to three hundred, and used extensively for food. An interesting peculiarity of this beast is that it assumes the duty of sentinel, not only for its own kind but also for all the other animals, often risking its life to warn game that is being stalked — and standing for hours perhaps on the open plain watching a photographer's blind. It is a true antelope, very swift, and has a large range

the more likely the lions are to come and nothing can be seen looking down toward the black ground from the tree; whereas looking upward from a *boma* on sloping ground the lion will be seen against the sky line, visible on even the darkest night. A lion coming to a

time we might lie in the grass or in holes we had dug in the ground or sit up in trees or in little shelters constructed of boughs, while ant hills were very useful as screens.

At one time I shot and skinned a hartebeest, the most common of African

animals, and then making a form by winding together dry grass, I stretched the skin over it. After the skin was dried for a few days, it became stiff and hard, the grass was removed, and we had a light, strong and hollow decoy hartebeest. Dugmore used this as opportunity came, getting inside with his camera and stalking game. For some reason however, the method did not prove a success; just why we could never find out.

One of the things that especially vexed Dugmore was the indifference of all the game to the natives, who could walk about the plains disturbing the animals but slightly while a white man could hardly get within gunshot. Unfortunately we had to protect our heads from the sun by big pith helmets and our bodies by a good covering of clothes, and so could not imitate natives and approach the animals in this way.

Altogether the most successful method of getting pictures proved to be patient waiting. Animals if not disturbed, stick to one locality where they make a sort of circuit. From their drinking place they go to the feeding ground, then from there to the place for the noonday rest; leaving there as the heat subsides they go to some other feeding place, then to water at dusk or later, and so on day after day. If on entering a new country one works carefully he will soon learn the times and places of feeding or resting and, by studying the wind and concealing himself carefully, will get photographs as the game comes directly toward him. Pictures thus taken are of value, as they show the animal as he really is. Driving is unsatisfactory as it gets a picture of the game in frightened and unnatural positions — and causes it to shun the locality afterward. By never frightening game one is always certain to have another chance at it.

One of our most interesting experiences was on Kamiti Plains, where we tried for a picture of a herd of the Cape buffalo. A week before us Colonel Roosevelt had secured from this herd, after considerable difficulty and great danger, a group of specimens for the National Museum. These buffalo had the reputation of being the most savage herd in the country, and, when we found them, were still living up to their reputation. Their home was in an immense papyrus swamp, the bed of which was oozy mud under about a foot of water, and a member of our party rode out along the edge of this to look for them. The buffalo were resting just inside the papyrus, and as he passed they charged out into the reeds which skirted the edge.

A hundred yards of level ground lay between us and the reeds; this had been planned so that the animals could be photographed clear of reeds when they charged into this area. Behind us were open plains without shelter, and it was evident that retreat was our safe course. Dugmore however, was determined to get a picture. With heads out straight, the herd came plowing through the reeds directly at us, but as they broke into the clearing they suddenly wheeled before they could be photographed. We could see the tops of their backs as they galloped back, until they plunged into the papyrus and disappeared. Dugmore regretted having no picture, but I was glad that our expedition had not come to a sudden end.

During our stay at the first water hole we were on the plains every day and it was here Dugmore secured his rhinoceros pictures. His anxiety for close pictures led us into some trying predicaments, and it was his good judgment as often as my big gun that got us out again.

One of our first experiences with the rhinoceroses was when we had stalked

two on the open rolling plains and they, having scented us, began to charge around looking for the trouble. Their snorts evidently aroused another who was sleeping in the grass, for in a few moments three of them were charging back and forth instead of two. The appearance of the third rather disturbed me, as I was carrying a gun with only two shots and Dugmore had nothing but the camera.

The rhinoceroses suddenly halted three abreast at only forty yards and stood there waiting for something to happen. Although this was the picture we had been running through this danger for, Dugmore showed his judgment in not snapping the camera, fearing that even this slight sound would bring the three enraged beasts down on us. As we stood motionless, Dugmore with the camera and I with the gun leveled on the head of the biggest one, our hearts going like trip hammers wondering what was to be our fate, one of the beasts wheeled and ran and the others followed immediately. The tension was momentarily relieved, but when I saw Dugmore chasing after one that had separated from the others, my anxiety returned and I followed with my big gun to protect him. The rhinoceros made better time than we could and the gap between us continued to lengthen as he made off over the plains. We gave him up and took a short cut back toward our boys, who had been in the background while we were photographing the animals.

As we topped a little knoll, we saw about one hundred yards ahead of us in the yellow grass, the black outline of a rhinoceros' back. We approached to about eighty yards off where we had a good view of him, and from this point

Dugmore took a telephoto picture. Although in plain sight we moved slowly and cautiously toward him and at about sixty yards Dugmore took another picture. Being sure of two pictures, he then changed his lens to one with a shorter focus while the rhinoceros showed no sign of knowledge of our presence. We walked to a spot about forty yards from him, where Dugmore focused the camera, while the rhinoceros deliberately lay down. This was a sure sign that we had not been detected and we both gave a sigh of relief.

Dugmore however whispered "Splendid! Now we can walk up very close without his seeing us." This was no place for an argument, so as he started forward I followed, my finger on the trigger of the gun. As each cautious step brought us closer and closer — and my breath grew shorter and shorter — I wondered if Dugmore were ever going to stop! At a little over twenty yards from the big rocklike mass he hesitated and began to focus his camera, while the rhinoceros' ears twitched nervously. My gun, which seemed to weigh many tens of pounds, came slowly to my shoulder. The next moment there was a snort, a cloud of dust, and a big rhinoceros was coming straight at us. I set my teeth, held the gun and listened for the click of the camera.

Dugmore let him get well on his feet and under way, when a "click" and a "bang" in quick succession decided the battle in our favor. At fifteen yards distance the rhinoceros bit the dust, scrambled to his feet, wheeled and made off.—It was through many such instances of daring disregard for danger that Dugmore achieved his splendid success in African game photography.