

"MR. FARU" OF KENYA

An Appreciation of the Rhino

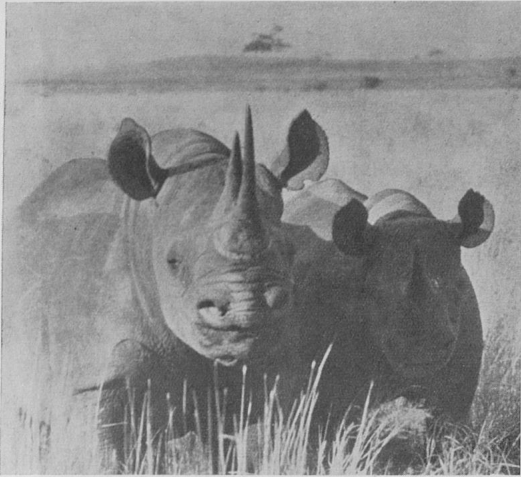
pointed out that this involved (1) increased suffering to the many more animals that escaped wounded; (2) danger to natives or sportsmen from wounded animals of dangerous class; and (3), the least important, increased danger to the hunter. All these three results occurred in the Fort Hall tragedy. I can only repeat, heavy game, heavy rifles, should be the rule. I see a recent writer fails to recognise this, and says: "One perfectly placed small-bore bullet is superior to a badly placed shot with a heavy rifle." This may be in a sense true, but in general is nonsense. The opportunity for a brain shot with the small bore is not always available, but the heavy rifle is likely to stop or at least turn a charge when the small bore would be futile,

while any well-placed shot behind the shoulder with such as the heavy 10-bore black powder rifle I used in my early days in Africa would leave little inclination to charge, whatever the animal. I never had occasion to use this rifle to stop a buffalo charge, but have no doubt whatever that a chest shot would have floored him instantly, when a small bore would have been futile. The modern big cordite rifles, such as .475, might be equally effective, though of this I am not sure.

To return to friend rhino, on a trip north of the

Tana river, eight years ago, I saw a few, and not having the slightest intention of shooting one, I made several attempts to get to close quarters with an ordinary Kodak, but on two occasions was repeatedly driven off by a cross-tempered old bull, who apparently hated being "snapped." Similar attempts on buffalo were also failures, but for the opposite reason, that the moment they made me out, they bolted as though they would not stop running till nightfall. I have a sort of affection for the plucky but stupid old rhino, though one was responsible for the only mauling I have had in Africa, two broken ribs and a knock-out.

This was sheer bad luck, as I was charged simultaneously by three rhino which had been lying in a hollow some 30yds. from the point I had reached when crawling to a waterbuck on an open plain with a most unsuitable rifle for such heavy game. They came very fast, all three abreast, so I had to wait till they were within a few feet of me, so that if I did succeed in "downing" the bull (the centre animal) neither cow could hit me on that rush. I ran it a trifle too close, but the bull was dead when he hit me, and his fall scared the cows. I never felt any animosity to them on account of this incident, though a few days later I left my bed (in pyjamas) on hearing the porters shouting that a rhino was in the camp, and killed him with the 10-bore, as he had the best horns I had come across. A certain German in German East before the war spent some years trying how many rhino he could kill, as if they were vermin; and I was not sorry to hear that at last he met his death on the horn of a rhino. I have met a great many of them in my wanderings, and shall never meet one again, but I take off my hat to Faru, the pluckiest and, perhaps fortunately, most stupid animal in Africa. MANNLICHER.



Captain H. A. White

"MR. FARU" AT CLOSE QUARTERS

RHINO, native name "Faru," were very numerous when I first visited what is now Kenya 35 years ago. In the more northern districts they were very aggressive, decidedly more so than I had found them in Somaliland during two long expeditions some years earlier, sometimes rushing safaris, and when the porters had made for the nearest trees, damaging the loads. Also, when out hunting, both I and my companion were on various occasions hunted by rhino whose moderate horns caused one to spare them; while at least on one occasion, during the construction of the railway, trains were charged by rhino. The rhino is, I think, far the most plucky and fearless animal in Africa, and but for his poor sight and lack of intelligence would be far more dangerous than he is. Thanks to these drawbacks, fatalities and injuries have been comparatively few.

The late Captain Stigand, a most fearless and competent hunter, was nearly killed by a rhino, his fine constitution enabling him to recover. In February, 1925, a lady big-game hunter was killed near Fort Hall by one which she had unwisely bombarded with a .303; while two days later Captain A., a noted polo player, passing along the Fort Hall road, was attacked and killed by this same rhino.

Curiously enough, only some three months before, I had written a letter to the *Field* condemning the foolish advice of certain writers that anything from elephant downwards could be killed with a small bore, and that heavy rifles were unnecessary. I



A RHINO PHOTOGRAPHED AT A SALT LICK BY LIEUTENANT-COLONEL F. E. STOCKLEY Above is a cow with remarkably big horns and her calf, while below is a rhino on the salt lick

[In this connection the following extract from Captain A. T. Ritchie's *Game Departments Report for Kenya, 1932-3-4*, is of interest. "We must admit, however, that we have not succeeded in perhaps the most important aspect of our work—the suppression of rhino poaching and dealings in illicit rhino horn. We are, indeed, not within measurable distance of such success, and it is difficult to foresee when we shall be. I have no wish to libel an in many respects admirable people, but I believe I am within the mark in saying that a great many of the Somalis in Kenya either are, or potentially are, rhino horn traders. With the same disclaimer I could make an almost similar statement with regard to the *duka* keepers throughout the reserves. The number of people involved do not constitute the crux, or even the major part, of the problem; the trouble is the rapidity with which the stuff changes hands. It has often occurred to me that our perpetual efforts to catch participants in the traffic is very like a game of 'hunt the slipper.' It is to be feared that the Italian authorities will not at present be more than usually co-operative as regards smuggling rhino horn over their borders."—Ed.]