

# A SOLDIER'S SHIKAR TRIPS

BY

BRIGADIER-GENERAL

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*Late South Wales Borderers  
(24th Regiment)*

WITH PHOTOGRAPHS OF SOMALILAND

BY

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## IV

### SOMALILAND

1894

IN my humble opinion the anticipation of and preparation for a big-game shooting trip are almost as enjoyable as the expedition itself.

At least that was my feeling when, in the early spring of 1894, being then quartered in Cairo with my regiment, I commenced to make arrangements for a shooting expedition into Somaliland.

Our party was to consist of three: my old friend, Major B. C., S. of the 7th Dragoon Guards, and myself. S. and myself were stationed together in Cairo, but B. C. was in England.

We had already purchased some of our camels. For this we employed a native, by name Hadji Duella Idris, a noted headman. He went over from Aden to Berbera to make our purchases, but could not take service with us as he was already engaged for another expedition (Mr Donaldson Smith).

Owing to the fact that we had on our route to cross the *haud* (or waterless plain) of Somaliland,

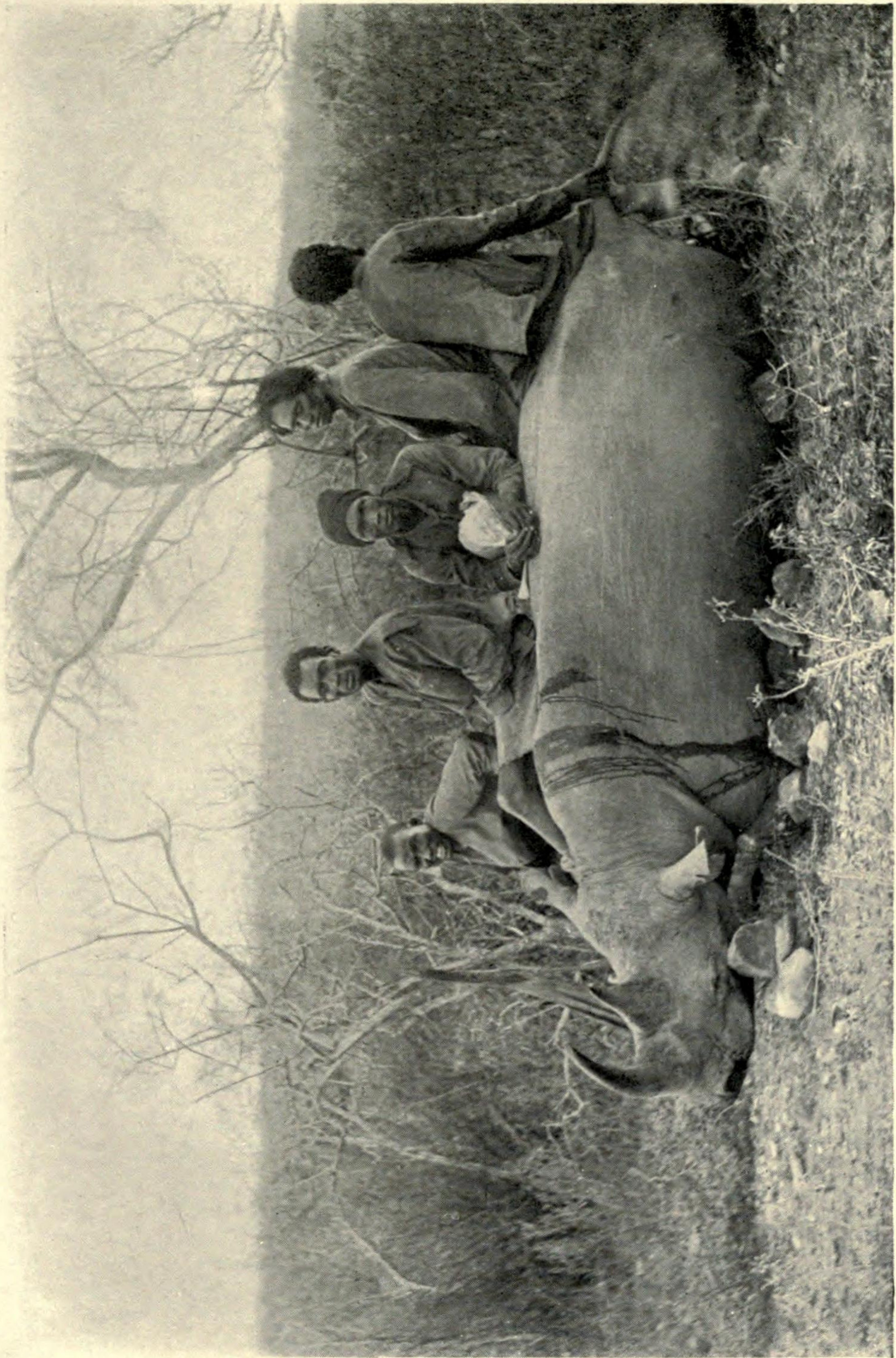
but on all sides hundreds of aloes in flower—some bright red, others yellow. I picked some flowers and pressed for E. We have now passed out of the long jungle-covered plain, which we entered on the 5th of August, and are ascending a ridge of hills. The view backward over miles and miles of country is very grand. Here the bush seems devoid of game. The ground in places was covered with the bones of hundreds of cattle that had died last year from some sickness.<sup>1</sup>

C. joined us again. He sat up in his camp last night, and a lion came within 400 yards of him, but did not approach nearer. We trekked again at 2 P.M., and halted at 5 P.M. at Mindergdee Munjardee. This seemed a much more likely place for game. At about 8.45 A.M. we crossed the River Jerard.

*August 11th.*—Moved camp at 5 A.M. and stopped at Worralli at 7 A.M. Very short trek, but we halted on account of a well—simply a hole in the rock with water like ink. At 6.30 A.M. we ascended a ridge of hills and arrived on the other side (which was Worralli) at 7 A.M. We heard that from this point the direction of Milmil is between S.E. and E.S.E., and about 72 miles distant. *Temperature*  
4.15 A.M. 54°

Moved on at 12 noon. I shot some partridges (three kinds), but there did not appear to be much

<sup>1</sup> Probably the rinderpest.



C.'S RHINO

game at this spot. Passed the spoor of rhino about five days old, also the spoor of lion (yesterday). The country began to improve in appearance. Up to this point it had been black and bare-looking. High hills on either side, covered with leafless bushes. Now patches of lovely green appeared, which our ponies—poor beasts—seemed to appreciate. The valley widened and assumed a park-like appearance, with fine trees. This valley led down to the River Fafan.

At 4.45 P.M. we halted at Tumpso, and soon heard that there were rhino about—two were seen that day—also that a lion killed a child a few days ago at the village close by.

*Temperature*

8.30 P.M. 63°

5.45 A.M. 61°

1.30 P.M. 79°

*August 12th.*—We three drew straws for choice of direction. I got third place, unfortunately for myself. Started from camp about 6.30 A.M. My direction led away from the River Fafan. I found the spoor of rhino in a nullah, and followed them for some time, but after walking for three or four hours the shikári (Nur Farrar), my headman, said it was useless, as the nullah was too dry, so I returned to camp.

C. went down to the river to the left—S. to the right. The latter returned at 1 P.M., having been unsuccessful. At 2.15 P.M. C. returned with the good luck of having shot his first rhino, which he said was a fine specimen. After something to eat, he started with a camel, intending to spend

the night out by the beast, and to return in the morning with the skin. S. and myself went out to two villages near where zeríbas for lion had been made for us, my village being the one where the unfortunate child was killed by a lion a few nights ago.

*August 13th.*—Nothing came of sitting up last night.

On arriving at the zeríba I found a large bonfire burning 300 yards off, and was informed that it had been made by a party of Abyssinians just arrived to hunt rhino. The fire was most provoking, as it spoilt the little chance I had of seeing a lion. After returning to camp at daylight—and a wash and cup of chocolate—I went out again and soon came on the fresh tracks of lion. These we followed for some distance, after which we lost all trace in the long grass.

Next we came on fresh spoor of rhino, but the same result—we followed for three hours and finally gave it up.

Moved camp at 8.10 P.M., and outspanned at 5.30 P.M.—“Gollarbiah.” Just before arriving I again found fresh spoor of a rhino, but the noise of the caravan must have frightened the beast.

*August 14th.*—Moved camp at 5 A.M. and outspanned for morning halt at Berdiesa, having passed over the dried-up bed of the River Galdire.

We went through one valley which had acres of splendid green grass, with a background of lovely blue hills. But for the trees it might have been English meadowland. This we soon passed, however, and entered a hilly, sterile country, nothing but rocks and scattered bushes.

Moved again at 2 P.M., rode after a couple of aoul, but without success. Our route now wound round the head of a valley. We could see an immense plain at our feet stretching for miles, covered with dense bush. This we thought was the commencement of the Bourka country.

Halted for the night at 5.20 P.M. at Tentomee, by which time we had descended to the plain. I left the caravan at 4 P.M. and went after some gerenook. Killed two. I ought to have killed a third, but was unsteady from running. I used the .303 service rifle with the split bullet and found it most successful.

On returning to camp I heard that C. had shot a splendid bustard—28 lb.

Have been again unlucky with my horse (the one I bought from C.). I shall have to leave off riding him for two days to avoid a sore back. The other horse's back is also in a bad way. C. has taken it in hand and is going to treat it.

*August 15th.*—We started at 5.20 A.M. and marched for only one hour—about 6.30 A.M.—when we came to a good well cut out of the solid

rock—at least, the upper part was. It must have been made years and years ago.

We stayed here the best part of the day, waiting for S., whom we supposed at last to be lost. Lighted fires and fired shots, but without result.

We moved on at 4.30 P.M. and halted in an hour's time on a plain. We heard of rhino in all directions. It looked a likely game country.

S. turned up in camp about 7 P.M., having shot a fine bull lesser koodoo, with a good head. He had been for six hours on a rhino track without coming across him. Halting-place to-night is Anna Kooloo.

*August 16th.*—Again I was unlucky last night in drawing for places. I drew "third." As I did not think my "beat" worth trying, I remained in camp all day.

C. returned about 2 P.M., having been again successful in shooting a rhino. S. appeared about 5 P.M., not having fired a shot, nor had any chance.

*Temperature*  
1.30 P.M. 88°  
7.45 P.M. 72°  
(in the tent)

*August 17th.*—At 6 A.M. we started, my shikáris and myself, and at 6.40 came on fresh spoor of rhino. We passed quite close to a herd of thirty oryx, but I did not fire for fear of disturbing the rhino. It was then, for the first time, I noticed the rhino birds, annoying little beasts, which flew ahead, uttering notes of alarm.

3.40 P.M. 84°



After tracking about ten minutes my gun-bearer, Moosa, stopped, crouched down, caught me by the wrist and pointed to a rhino feeding in an open grass patch about 100 yards off.

We went round and got behind him, then through some bushes succeeded in approaching within 50 yards.

Nur Farrar, the head shikári, handed me C.'s 8-bore, borrowed for the day. I fired at the shoulder, but hit low down. He turned and came in our direction, passing about 20 yards off, and as he went by I let him have the left barrel. The shot got home and, following, we found him lying down. It took another shot from the 8-bore and one from my .577 Express to finish him.

He proved to be an old bull. They told me his age was about seventy years! His horn was not very long—1 ft. 2 inches—but thick at the base—1 ft. 9 inches in circumference.

C. and S. were unsuccessful with rhino, but the former returned to camp about 4.30 P.M. with a cow oryx.

*Temperature*

8.20 P.M. 69°

I went out in the afternoon round the camp and shot two guinea-fowl and one francolin.

4.30 A.M. 62°  
(in tent)

*August 18th.*—We moved camp at 5.5 A.M. and halted at 10 A.M. at Diggerieleh. I went on the left of the road and saw nothing to speak of. C. went on the right and had an exciting adventure with a rhino. He had wounded it and was follow-

ing the beast up when it suddenly charged him from behind a bush.

He and his shikári succeeded in dodging, and the rhino retreated. They followed, and then discovered that S., who had stayed behind at the last camp, was following the tracks of the same wounded beast.

S. having overtaken it was also charged, but succeeded in finishing him with the 8-bore.

Our usual time for continuing the journey—viz. 2 P.M.—arrived, when Hadji Jama reported ten camels missing. A camel man who had been sent out to search for them came in with the report that they had been stolen by Midgans. I sent off Hadji Jama with six armed men in pursuit, with orders to bring in any prisoner they captured with his hands tied behind him. So off they started, but returned to camp about 5.30 P.M., having found the camels 10 miles away, going like “smoke” of their own accord. Something must have frightened them. So here we were stuck for the night. Dense bush all round, leafless trees, burnt-up grass and nothing to shoot.

*August 19th.*—Started from camp at 5 A.M. A most disappointing day. C. and self and the shikáris moved off in the direction pointed out by the guide, but after walking till 12 noon we halted—no sign of a caravan. About 2 P.M. the caravan guide appeared and took us off to where the morning

halt had taken place—about 4 miles to the S.W. Here we found a camel by a well named Doureedoufan.

We arrived at our camping ground, Habledleh, at 5.40 P.M.

Just as we were settling down a panther suddenly sprang into the zeríba amongst cooking pots and carried off two small kids. They were tied together by a string. In an instant they were gone—only a plaintive squeal. They were jolly little animals and were rather pets.

S. joined us this evening, having shot two more rhino to-day, making altogether for his score three. Of the two he shot to-day one was a cow, the other a nearly full grown bull.

The country in this place seemed quite burnt up—no grass to speak of. Looked very bad for our shooting prospects.

*August 20th.*—We decided to send a small caravan—about seven camels—into Berbera with our trophies. It was to return with rice, etc., so we had been busy in the morning writing letters for England.

C. had arranged to move on with his own camp and will rejoin us in two or three days.

Having finished my work I went out about 2 P.M., and after a very steep climb arrived on a flat plateau, which was the top of the ridge of hills overlooking our camp. Some distance ahead my

as far as one could see, stretched a long plain, covered with bush and called Erard country—said to be without game. We soon struck the nullah and found a zeríba newly made by P. over a water hole.<sup>1</sup> With the exception of an elephant track of yesterday, we met with hardly any trace of game, so we determined to leave the Turfo nullah and march in a direction between E.S.E. and S.E. for Jerello, which we hoped to reach in two days.

I have just been told that P. has gone to Waldiah, which is rather annoying, as it was the point we intended to make for.

We camped for the night at 4.20 P.M. at a place called Jellahwaddie.

*August 27th.*—Started kafila at 4.50 A.M. and halted in thick bush for midday rest at 9.50 A.M. The bush appeared to be utterly devoid of game, except dik-dik and lesser bustard. I shot one of the former for food, as I have been subsisting too much on tinned provisions. I cannot shoot a lesser bustard—have tried, but they always get the better of me.

We started again at 2.20 P.M. and in half-an-hour came to the edge of Effardee nullah. Very good view of the nullah from this spot. Far away in the distance northwards I thought I could make

<sup>1</sup> This was Donaldson Smith's zeríba, as I afterwards discovered. It is so marked on my map.

out with my glasses the smoke of our big caravan. We commenced the descent, which, owing to its steepness, was one of the most troublesome I have seen attempted by camels. Indeed, they utterly refused to face it at first. In about three-quarters of an hour we were at the bottom and reached the bed of the stream soon after. I was at once attracted by loud cries, and on going to the spot found a boy, about twelve years old, streaming with blood from a bad cut in his head. He said it had been done by some strange camel men—for no reason, according to his account. I had the wound washed and put some Holloway's Ointment on it.

We crossed to the other side, and in some bushes close to the nullah shot a cow koodoo. There were about five of them; no bull, worse luck! I record the killing of the cow without shame, as it was a necessity. My men had had no meat for a week, and as this was the first chance of fresh meat I took it. As I was going up to the beast I had shot two other cows stood and looked at me, about 60 yards off. I could easily have knocked them both over. The camel men now came and reported that they had found at a water-hole, or rather a large pool, the marks of two lions and about four rhino, so we determined to stop here and make a small shooting zeríba close to the pool. To-night I intended tying up a donkey outside our "Laager."

Temperature  
1 P.M. 89°

*August 28th.*—Nothing came of our “tie-up” last night. About 5 A.M. I heard, about a mile off, a shot fired. Next minute there was a perfect fusillade. We counted twelve shots. I heard afterwards that Capt. P. was in camp close by. He had a “kill” last night, fired two shots about 2 A.M. which wounded the lion. The shots we heard were the finishing of the beast after they had followed it up.

I started with my camp (as it was no use staying where I was) at 11.30 A.M. and camped on the plateau above Effardee at 5.30 P.M. Thick bush, but looked more promising for sport than where we had come from. An unlucky afternoon for me. First, I missed an easy shot at a gerenook—couldn't see it well for the thick bush. Shortly after I got an easy chance at an oryx, with a very good pair of horns. I hit the animal, but too far back. We tracked it by the blood for two or three miles and at last had to give up. The name of this camp is Hanzerah. Two notes brought in from C. and S. So far they have been unsuccessful.

*August 29th.*—Moved camp at 5.20 A.M. and arrived at the plain in Derello Valley about 8.30 A.M. The plain was covered with green trees, some large. It looked a very likely locality for game. We soon discovered lion tracks on the pathway, the spoor of four (one very large) of the night previous. Near the river we sighted a small

bull koodoo; unfortunately we missed it in the thick bush. I went down to the river and again found the four tracks of lion. There was running water in places and lots of it. We were quite delighted to see it again. The valley was full of herds of camel, which were being watered at the river. We formed a zeríba for our camp close to the stream. Also a small "game zeríba" at the watering-place. Unfortunately, there was no moon.

*Temperature*  
2.15 P.M. 95°  
(tent shade)

I heard last night from C. that he is going one and a half days' march N.N.W. of Effardee to a place called Koraiyo. This valley was reported to be full of lion, elephant and hartebeest.

*August 30th.*—No result to my sitting up last night.

Got back to camp about 5 A.M., and after a short sleep Nur Farrar came to tell me they had found the fresh track of rhino, so I started off. As soon as we came on the spoor I found there were two—one not fully grown, but I did not imagine it as small as it afterwards proved to be.

Whilst tracking the beast I passed a zebra, about 60 yards off—did not fire on account of disturbing the rhino—very lucky I did not as it turned out.

After following the spoor about half-an-hour we sighted the rhinos and succeeded in getting up to them. About 40 yards off, Nur Farrar

handed me my .577. Last night I was reading *Big Game* of the Badminton Library. An old veteran shikári, Mr Cotton Oswell, advocates shooting rhino always in a sitting or kneeling position, as the bullet is more on a level and more likely to pass through both lungs. Acting on this advice, I aimed for the middle of the shoulder and fired. Result was, I knocked the beast clean over—legs in the air. I thought at first it was quite dead, but it recovered, and staggered towards us. Three more shots were required to finish it. During this time the second rhino—which I much regretted to see, when too late, was but quite a youngster—was running round the parent, a cow. Its half-grown horn, on its funny little face, gave it a most quaint appearance. Naturally, I was sorry then for having shot the mother. However, it was quite old enough to take care of itself. We drove it away with stones. The horns of the cow measured 1 foot 2 inches—not very long, but in good condition.

I intend going out again this evening to sit up for the lion.

*Temperature*  
5.30 A.M. 72°  
2 P.M. 95°  
(tent shade)

The heat in this nullah is greater than we have yet experienced—at least, I seem to feel it more.

6 A.M. 71°  
2 P.M. 95°  
(tent shade)

*August 31st.*—Was unsuccessful again last night. Returned to camp about 5 A.M., and after a sleep and some breakfast went out shooting. A few miles from camp I suddenly came on another



shikar party, one, a sahib, proved to be Captain P. We had a long talk. He told me that the lion which I heard him shoot the other morning had given him rather an exciting time. After being wounded, it three times charged the zeríba. He said also that he had followed elephant right into the Galla country—had wounded two, but they had both got away. His present intention was to go to a place near Milmil—a good place for koodoo. P. regretted having come into my valley, but promised to move on the next day. Unfortunately, he had broken one of the hammers of his .577, and had only a 10-bore by a city maker (an indifferent weapon) left to shoot with.

In the afternoon I went out again, and shot some guinea-fowl. The place simply swarmed with them. I saw nothing else, however, except two cow koodoo in the distance.

*September 1st.*—Again last night after sitting up no lion came near my zeríba. My fourth night—am getting rather sick of this work.

About 2 A.M. a sharp shower added to my discomfort; however, I managed to keep the rifles dry. After a sleep, went out again, but was unsuccessful.

This place has proved another failure bar the rhino which I shot.

*September 2nd.*—My fifth night in the game zeríba—again without success.

*Temperature*

5 A.M. 79°

2 P.M. 92°  
(tent shade)

5.15 P.M. 87°

On daylight breaking I discovered that white ants had eaten holes in my waterproof. After a wash, and a cup of chocolate, I started off up the valley, and at the end of two hours' walk came to the place where P. had made his zeriba, and finding that he had moved, also that there was no game left in the valley, I determined to rejoin the head kafilá.

Sent back for our camp to join us. We sat for hours under a tree trying to get some shade. It was roasting hot. About 12 noon the camels arrived. At 2 P.M. we started off in a N.N.W. direction, and after about two hours' ascent again got on the high plateau covered with stones, rocks, leafless bushes and scanty patches of dry grass. Where the game had gone was a mystery. We stopped for the night at 5 P.M. at Bolad. While waiting for the caravan this morning I went about trying to get some birds for my collection.

*September 3rd.*—Moved camp at 5 A.M. The camels halted for midday rest about 10 A.M. About 8 A.M., while stalking a gerenook, we suddenly came on an old rhino. As he rushed past me I fired a snapshot at his shoulder, and knew I had hit. We followed for over a mile, and then came on him rolling. Off he went again, but deep blood tracks now showed, and soon we overtook him, standing quite still. I fired at the centre of the shoulder, and this time on the "near

side.” The shot bowled him over. We found he was a very old bull. They said his age might be a hundred! His horn measurements—length, 1 ft.  $4\frac{3}{4}$  in.; round base, 1 ft.  $10\frac{1}{2}$  in.

The news of the “kill” seemed soon to get abroad, for natives from neighbouring villages began to arrive. Before we left, which was not for some hours, as we had to wait for a camel from the kaïla, there were at least thirty persons taking meat from the carcass.

Somewhat exhausted, I had fallen asleep, when I awoke suddenly, just in time to see an old woman about to dash down a large rock on to the rhino’s head to break the horns and jaw, in order to extract the fatty substance inside the horn and to get at the tongue.

With a shout I was up and at her.

She fled, and I somewhat forcibly cautioned the shikáris to keep a more careful look-out that the trophies were not damaged.

Just before reaching headquarter camp, at Effardee, I received letters from S. and C. The former had been after a large lion which killed a gum-picker. The animal stampeded his camels after catching one and letting it go again. Two camels were missing. It then killed a donkey. S. had a game zeríba made. Again it came. S. fired and hit it on the neck, but unfortunately it was not a vital wound and the lion got away.

C. had found a good district for elephant—

Koraiyo.<sup>1</sup> He thinks I had better join him, which I am going to do. We shall start with a headquarter camp at 2 P.M. to-morrow. C. has killed two bull elephants, one gerenook and two zebras. S. has shot one zebra, one gerenook, one spotted hyæna and one wild cat. He is now going to join C. at Koraiyo. We moved out with my kafila at 2 P.M., and the camels arrived at 6.30 P.M. at the headquarter camp. Found on my arrival everything going on smoothly. Still no news of my big rifle!

*September 4th.*—Moved the camp with headquarters at 1.15 P.M. *en route* for Koraiyo. In about one and a half hours we got up on the plateau overlooking Effardee Valley, and the track led through dense bush. No game except dik-dik and lesser bustard—shot one of the former for dinner. Stopped for the night at 5.15 P.M. at Egorie.

*Temperature*  
(tent shade)  
12 noon 88°

*September 5th.*—Moved camp at 5.10 A.M., travelling N.W.

I went on some way in front of the caravan. First stalked two zebras. Shot at one and missed clean. Next I came on an oryx, which I stalked, but did not succeed in getting near enough for a

<sup>1</sup>To the best of my belief, we were the first white people to enter Koraiyo Valley. Indeed, when I took my sketch map to the map-room of the Royal Geographical Society they immediately pointed it out as some fresh ground.

shot. Soon after we heard branches being broken in a nullah and discovered a rhino. The bush was very thick. I got within fifteen to twenty yards, and could see the beast looking at me over the bushes, but could not get a shot behind the shoulder. He then took fright and bolted, but did not go far. We came on him again, some distance away, looking straight at us—the whole body exposed. I aimed at the point of the off shoulder and fired. The rhino spun right round. He rushed off, crossed the nullah, and went along the opposite bank. We followed, and when about level with him I fired again. The shot brought him down. I then went up and finished him with a third shot.

He was a bull. Horn measurements—1 ft. 4 in. in length; 1 ft. 4½ in. round the base.

Whilst standing by watching the animal's horns and skin being cut off, "Eggie," C.'s boy, appeared—told me he had orders to move straight for Effardee to join the headquarters and that C. was following. He was at present after a wounded rhino. That being so, I stopped his camels and made him come with me. We moved about two miles further on and then halted—about 9 A.M. I sent a message to C., who turned up about 12 noon, having been unsuccessful in finding his wounded rhino, but his shikáris shortly appeared with a lesser koodoo head. C. and myself had a long powpow and arranged

plans. He had left Koraiyo Valley for S. and myself. I was to join S. the next day at Eldare. C. was to head towards Milmil with the main caravan and there meet the camels we had sent to Berbera for stores. I was taking four days' stores for my men and ten days' for S., which we shall have to share.

Mahomed, my boy, was taken very ill to-day. He was too ill to be moved and I had to leave him with C. to look after. "Eggie," C.'s boy, has come on with me. We shall rendezvous, if all is well, at Milmil about 26th September.

I left C. and moved off with my kafila at 5 P.M., and at 6.30 P.M. we stopped for the night at a place Muligero, which is where S. got his shot at the lion. I have "tied up." There is a good zeriba with a small game zeriba off it just behind the table I am writing on.

*September 6th.*—Left Muligero at 5 A.M. to join S.'s camp. Eldare is in the country which used to be inhabited by a tribe called "Haweha." At one time they owned immense flocks of cattle, but a few years previous to this date a disease had swept these off in hundreds, leaving the tribe destitute.

The three guides in our camp were amongst the few representatives left.

I arrived at Eldare about 12 noon, having shot a zebra on the way. Very pleased to meet S.

## TOTAL BAG

	B.C.	S.	M.	Total
Elephant . . .	2	1	—	3
Lion . . .	1	—	1	2
Panther . . .	1	—	—	1
Rhino . . .	3	3	4	10
Zebra . . .	6	3	6	15
Great koodoo . . .	—	—	—	—
Lesser koodoo . . .	—	1	1	2
Oryx . . .	11	9	11	31
Hartebeest . . .	6	4	6	16
Gerenuk . . .	4	4	6	14
Aoul . . .	6	9	13	28
Ostrich . . .	—	—	—	—
Wart-hog . . .	1	—	1	2
Gazelle (Dhero) . . .	1	1	1	3
Hyæna . . .	2	2	1	5
Golawaraba . . .	1	—	—	1
Chumbala . . .	—	1	—	1
	Grand Total			<u>134</u>