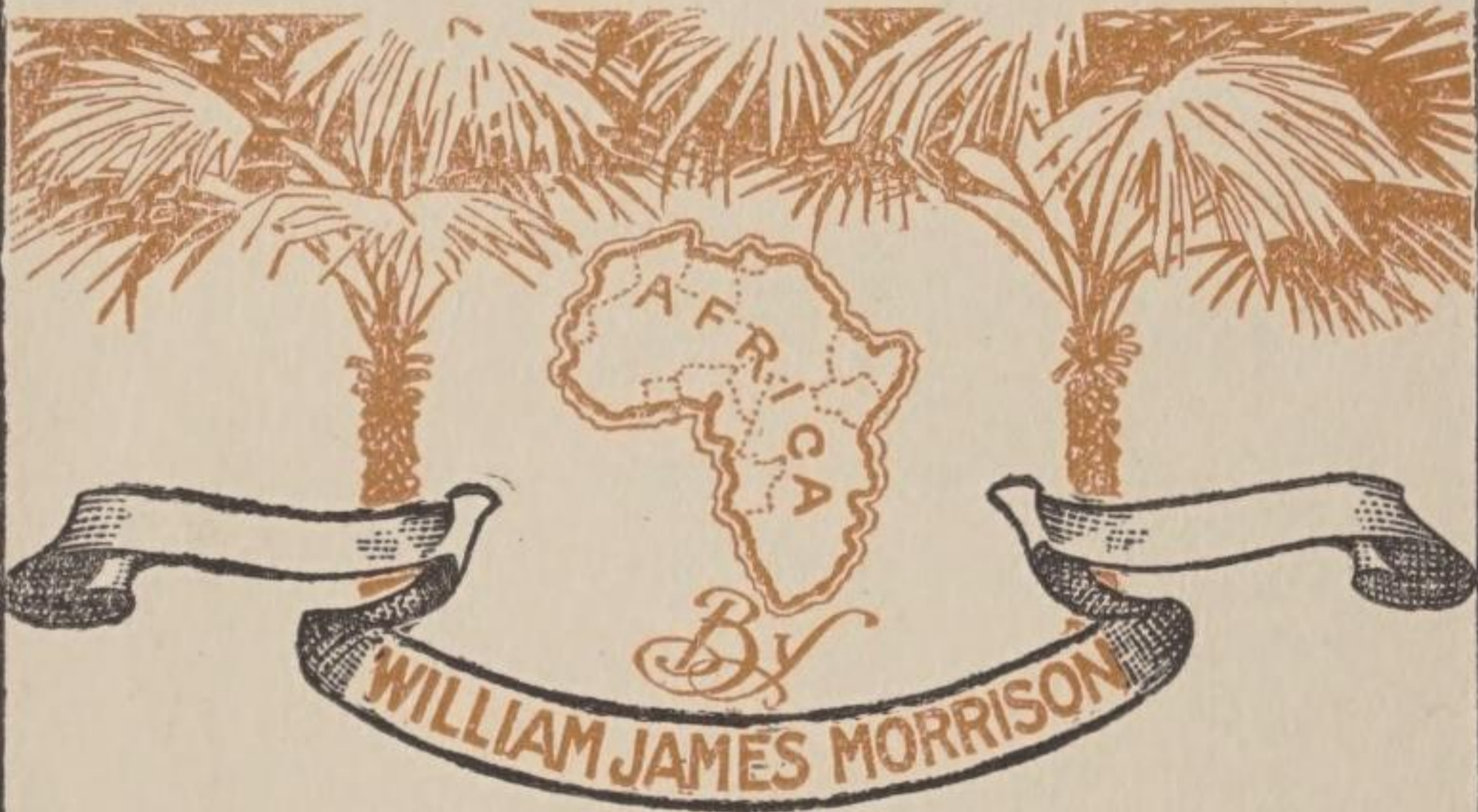


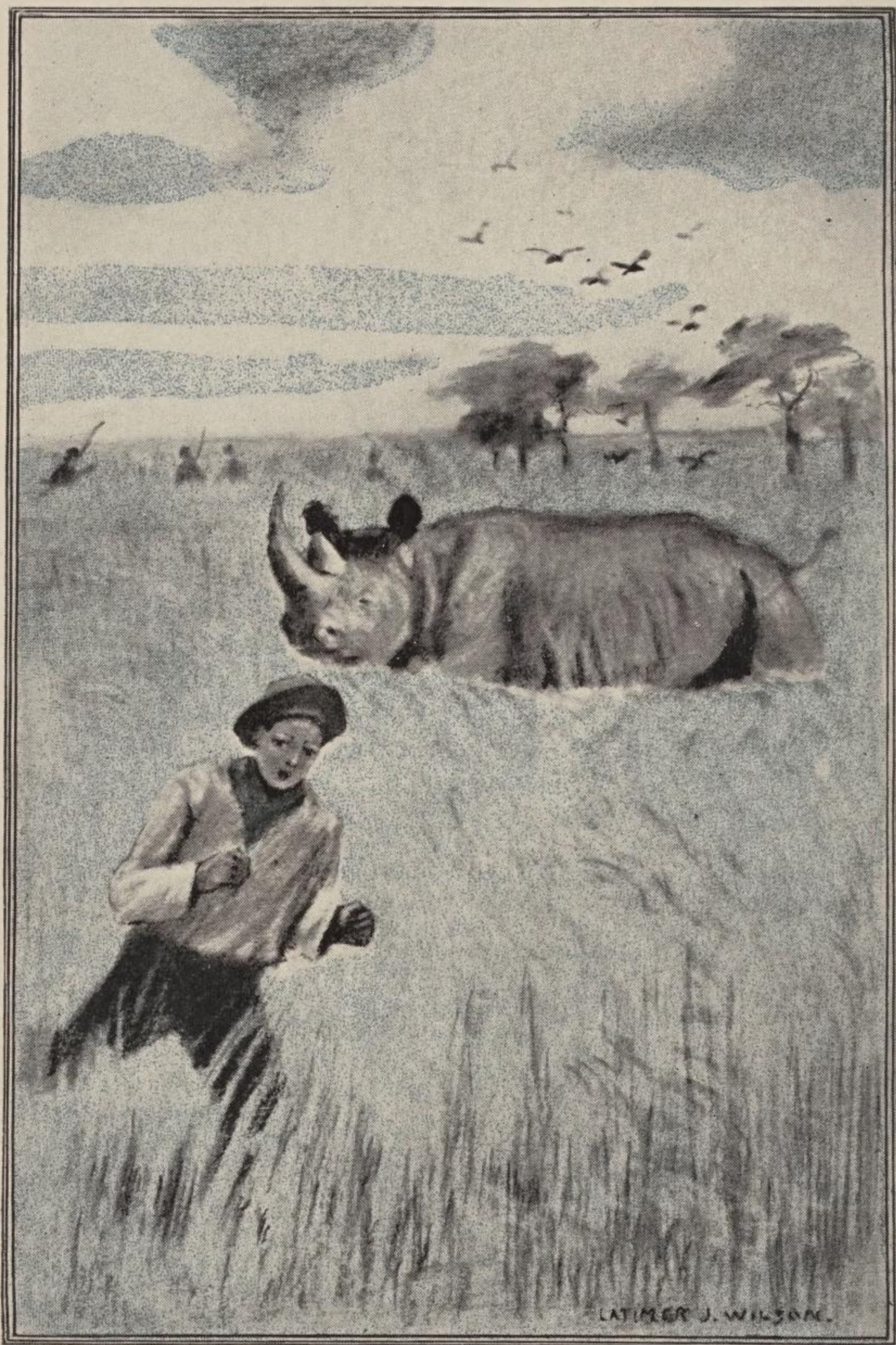
MORRISON'S SYSTEM OF NATURAL HISTORY STORIES

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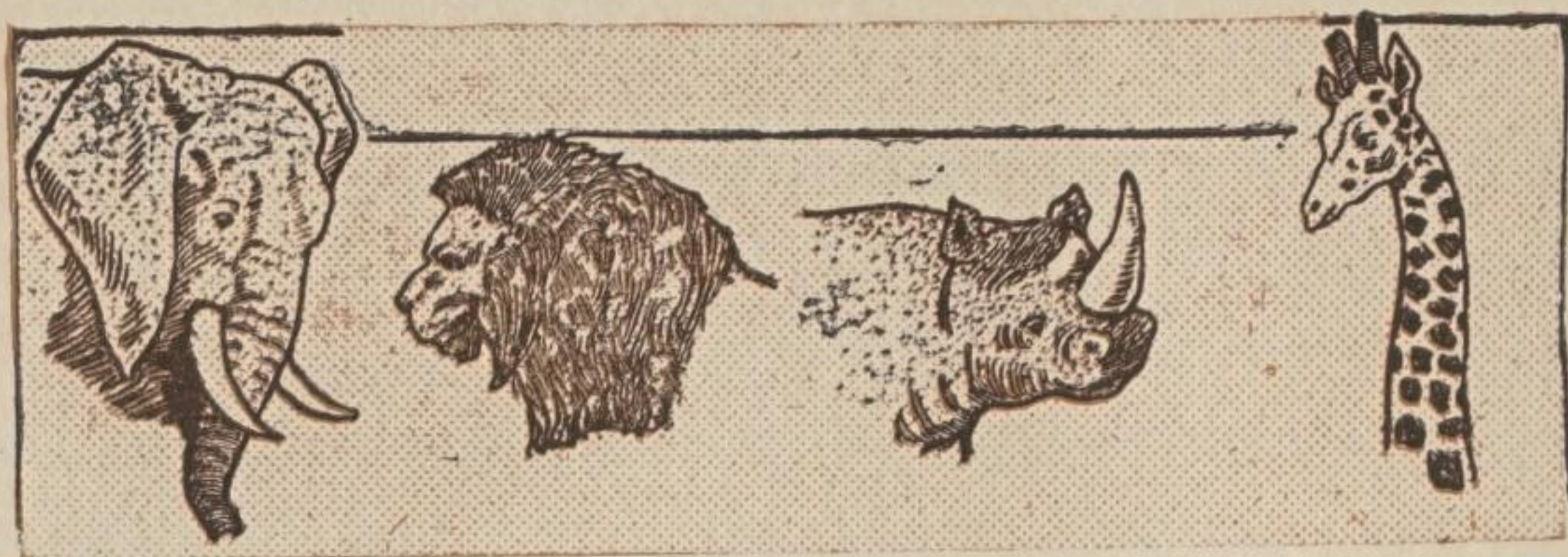
HUNTING BIG GAME
IN AFRICA



NASHVILLE, TENN.; DALLAS, TEX.; RICHMOND, VA.
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HE SAW ME AND STOPPED



Ninth Evening.

WELL, children, as soon as I got back to our hut I told General Kermit all about the trade I had made with the witch doctor. He was more than pleased with my bargain, for we were in a country where there were many wild animals and much big game.

That night we heard the drums beat. However, they were not the war drums, as we had feared, but were drums calling a meeting of the king's officers. Later in the night the drums beat again and we knew that the meeting with the king was over. For some reason Juma had been allowed to attend the meeting.

When he returned, he told us that the king had appeared before his wise men and said: "The time has not come for us to go to war. I have learned from looking into my magic horn that we need have no fear of the white men having an evil eye. Go home now and

dered his witch doctor to lead the hunting party to a place where we could find big game. As we marched away from the village Juma pointed out to me hollow logs that were hanging from the limbs of big trees.

“Those,” he said, “are beehives, and most of them are full of honey.”

I knew that the negroes were very fond of sweet things; for if we spilled a little sugar on the ground, they would eat the dirt from the spot as long as it tasted sweet.

As we traveled far into the forest Juma told me that this or that tree was thought to be the home of a tribe of little men. The people thought that sometimes at night these little men would come down from their tree houses and, going to the door of a hut, would listen until they heard some one on the inside call the name of somebody who lived in the hut. Then they would call out the same name and shoot an arrow into the heart of whoever came to the door. After doing this awful deed, they ran back to their tree homes and hid so that no one could find them.

Juma and I had traveled through the woods faster than the others and were some distance ahead of our friends when he stopped and

said, "That twinkling and sparkling we see so far ahead of us is a lake or large pool of water. We must keep a sharp lookout for a rhino," as he called the rhinoceros.

I knew that rhinoceroses like to live in such a country, for they can get all the grass, bushes, and roots that they are fond of eating, while the lake furnishes them with water to drink and a place to wallow. During the hot part of the day they sleep under the trees and matted vines in the dark and gloomy jungle. I had learned that there are four kinds of rhinoceroses in Africa. Of these, the most vicious and dangerous are the little black rhinoceros and the big slate colored rhinoceros. The white rhinoceros is a much larger animal than the others, but he is not so fierce or dangerous.

So when we discovered the footprints of a little black rhinoceros, we knew that we were in great danger, for although these animals are big and clumsy-looking, they can move about the jungle almost as silently as a cat; and when they are lying on the ground, it is very difficult to see them. I knew that if I did stumble over one I should have to kill him at the first shot, for I had heard General Ker-

mit say that hunters had rather fight any number of lions than a wounded rhinoceros. Not caring to take any such chances, we waited for our friends to overtake us.

General Kermit, the black king, and the witch doctor soon came in sight, and following them was the long line of negro men and hunters armed with their spears, bows, and arrows. Our men were loaded with the things for our journey. The head of the line had just reached us when we heard a snort and a kind of whistle. There was a sound of crushing bushes, a man was thrown high into the air, and the next moment a long-horned rhinoceros that had run through the line of men disappeared in the jungle.

The body of the man this rhinoceros had thrown into the air had not had time to fall to the ground before some of the negroes dropped their loads and were running away or trying to climb trees. Juma and I went to see if we could do anything for the wounded negro, but I found him so badly hurt that he died in a little while.

General Kermit, Fisi, and some of the negro hunters were chasing the rhinoceros. Juma and I followed as soon as possible, but

as we could see nothing of them we thought it best to march to the lake and prepare our camp. We had taken but a few steps on our way back when we heard a sound like a horse coughing and at the same time saw a white rhinoceros making his way through the jungle. I motioned to Juma, and we stepped be-



Get a shot at a white rhinoceros.

hind a tree so as not to be seen by the huge animal. I was anxious to get a shot at him, for he was the largest one I had ever seen. He looked as if he was seven feet tall, and he must have weighed more than five horses if each horse weighed one thousand pounds. One of his horns was over three feet long,

and he was plowing up the ground with it as fast as if it had been a steel plow pushed by a steam engine.

These animals can smell and hear better than they can see. This one had his head toward us; but as it cannot see in front of it, and as the wind was blowing from his direction, I felt sure he would not find our hiding place until he came near enough for me to get a shot at him. I made up my mind to let him come very close to us, for a rhinoceros has such a hard, thick hide that it is not an easy matter to shoot even a hardened bullet through it and kill the animal at one shot.

Sometimes I would lose sight of the huge beast, for he would go into the wait-a-bit thorn bushes to nibble off their tender leaves. To me it seemed a long time before he would come in sight again and go to plowing up the roots that he liked to eat. But each time he came in sight he was closer to me than before. I could see that he kept his ears moving all the time. One moment the hollow part of one ear was to the front while the hollow part of the other ear was turned so as to catch any sound coming from the back of him. The next mo-

ment he changed their positions so he could hear any noise on either side as he moved them back and forth. As I was watching this strange and continued movement of his ears he made his way into a clump of thorn bushes. This time he was out of my sight for such a long time that I was afraid he would go off and I would not get a shot at him. Or he might come out near our tree in such a way that he would see me and charge upon us with his dreadful horn.

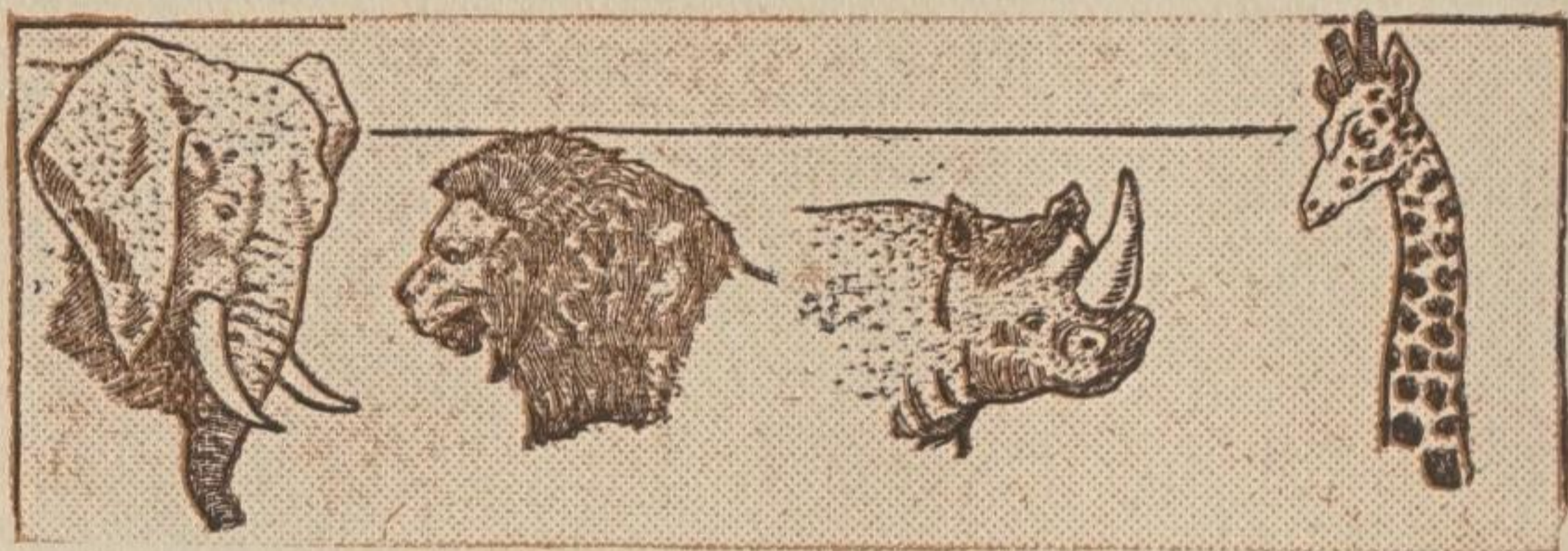
As I wondered what the beast would do, I noticed a little movement in the bushes, then not twenty feet from us I saw the head of the rhinoceros. As quick as thought I fired. The animal gave a squeal like a storm whistle on a steamboat and ran toward us. I fired again. The animal gave another and louder whistle, at once falling to his knees and then rolling over on his side as though he were dead. It was all done so quickly that I was surprised at what had happened. But as these animals, when wounded, sometimes play that they are dead, Juma fired another shot into him to make sure that he was not "'possum-ing.'" I then sent Juma to tell the king and his hunters about killing the beast. Sooner

than I had expected the king with his men came to see the huge white rhinoceros.

The vain old witch doctor claimed all the credit for my success in killing the animal. He said that he must have the big horn to make the king a drinking cup; for a cup made from the horn of a white rhinoceros would bring the king good luck, and no one could poison him as long as he used it to drink from.

The rhinoceros's horns do not grow out of the bony part of the skull, like a cow's or a ram's horns. They grow out of his skin, as his hair does. Yet his hide is so thick that the horns are as firm as a post, and it requires hard work to cut them off his head. As soon as the negroes had cut off the horns the king ordered some of his men who knew how to skin the animal to get to work. I saw that his hide was as thick and hard as an inch board. Juma told me that even the lions would not try to kill a rhinoceros, because they had learned that even with their powerful claws they could not hurt him through such a thick, tough hide.

If you would like to hear more about the rhinoceros, I will tell about another hunt some other time.



Tenth Evening.

CHILDREN, you must know that it was hard work to skin the rhinoceros; but as these negroes like his meat better than that of the cow, the king ordered the animal to be cut into pieces and smoked, for smoked meat does not spoil even in hot countries. As it would require a good many hours to do this, I told my men to get a supply of meat, then we would march to the lake and get our camp ready for the night. Up to this time I had heard nothing of General Kermit or his party, and, being a little afraid as to their safety, I asked the king to send some of his men to look for them.

On the march to the lake I heard a noise that reminded me of an elephant snoring.

“That is a rhinoceros we hear,” said Juma. “From the way he is snoring, he is so fast asleep that we can slip up on the old fellow and kill him before he ever wakes.”

I told Juma that he might take my gun and our men to hunt for the animal. I followed them for some distance, each step bringing us nearer and nearer to the sound. The hunters, who were now crawling through the bushes, must have been close to the sleeping rhinoceros, for several birds flew up into the air, screaming and making as much noise as they could. Up jumped the rhinoceros with a snort. He ran by the negroes and came directly toward me. Before I could jump behind a tree he saw me and began dancing about and turning around and around, grunting like a hog all the time. I could see the birds had taken their places on his back; but when the negroes came in sight, they flew up, screaming as before. When the animal started on the run, with the negroes after him, the birds alighted on his back, nor did they leave him except to fly up when he ran under bushes that would have brushed them off.

These birds are the rhinoceros's best friends. They can see better than the huge animal and are always on the lookout. If they see any of his enemies, or if they think he is in danger, they will begin chattering, and from this the beast understands that he must either run or

fight. These birds guard the rhinoceros day and night. They live on the bugs and worms that make their homes in the wrinkles and under the folds of the animal's thick skin. Some hunters say that the rhinoceros is such a sound sleeper that the birds sometimes have to peck him in the ears to awaken him. If it had not been for these birds Juma could have gone right up to the sleeping animal and killed him. As it was, the rhinoceros jumped up and ran through the forest with the negroes after him.

I was left alone in the wilderness of trees and bushes. I knew that I could not overtake them nor keep up with them if I did, for they were trained to make long runs through the forest when chasing down animals. I thought that the best thing for me to do was to find my way back to the path that led to the lake. As I hurried on I saw monkeys playing in the trees, and now and then a big bird would startle me with his loud cry as it flew away through the forest. Though I had walked a long distance, I could not see anything of the lake, and I felt that I was lost—lost in an African forest and night upon me. I did not know in what direction to go. I had crossed many of