

SPORTING RIFLES AND RIFLE SHOOTING

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Knowles, the Lieutenant-Governor of the province. It was he who gave me the wonderfully good photograph of Colonel Roosevelt which is now published for the first time as frontispiece to this volume.

For hippo, one rarely has any but the head shot presented and that a very small mark, but a solid bullet well placed will penetrate sufficiently, as the skull is rather spongy in substance and the bone not so resistant as that of animals not living in the water.

For rhino, we generally have the side shot at fairly close quarters and may either shoot for the neck or try the shoulder shot remembering the animal stands very low and that the heart and lungs are comparatively lower than with most animals.

In case of a charge the head is so fully protected by the horns that we are practically confined to a shot placed between the base of the neck and the shoulder and raking backwards and down, if he is close up. One should always employ solid bullets and the heaviest rifle for this work. A rhino will generally make a straight charge which can be side-stepped except in heavy brush, when he is likely to make a sudden rush

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and is at times difficult to avoid, but he may almost always be turned by the neck shoulder front shot. His eyesight is not good, and as his horns are in the way, he depends almost entirely on scent to locate the danger; as a rule, he is accompanied by white egrets and the small rhino bird which feed on the ticks and insects which cover him. These birds will generally warn him of the shooter's approach and so one must stalk rather the sentinels than the rhino. When he first scents danger he will snort, throwing his nose into the air and stamping about as if trying to work his anger to a boiling point. Then generally he will lift his tail in the air, urinate, and when he has located the danger and finished his war-dance, charge straight for the objective.

I once had a small cow rhino charge five times through my Safari line and back. The porters dropped their loads and climbed the nearest trees, preferring the thorns they encountered to the chance of the rhino's horn; finally, after she had ripped a load of tents to pieces and a case of whisky had gone where it would not do any good, I took a hand and stopped the fun with a 465 bullet in her neck. I didn't want to shoot, but it was a case of my outfit or the rhino. That this

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tendency to charge is congenital is well shown by the following: On my return to Nairobi from my first trip, I saw Tarlton, who I had previously met on the Tana River several months back, bringing in a baby rhino. He had shot the mother and had the little fellow in a sort of sling made from two tent flies, with holes cut for his legs and a long pole on top. When he refused to walk, he was carried by porters in this improvised sling, and when he struggled too much he was put on the ground and the pole held above so that he could be steered properly. Tarlton told me the baby had grown enormously and was three feet to the shoulder and weighed about 600 pounds, and asked me to come out to his ranch, some six miles from Nairobi, and see him.

Accordingly, Percival and I rode out to see the infant prodigy, which had become quite tame and followed his keeper, a Kikuyu boy, about like a dog. When we arrived, Tarlton was away looking to some sisal fields which he had just planted, and the baby rhino was out at exercise. Giving our ponies to a boy, we sent for the rhino and in the meantime looked over Tarlton's menagerie, for he is a collector for many Zoölogical Gardens, and his ostrich corral, where he had

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some fine young birds in high wire inclosures with posts about six feet high.

Presently the rhino hove in sight, his boy feeding him with some grass and leaves and guiding him with a light switch. We looked him over and he evidently did not recognize our scent, for he charged viciously, first at one and then at the other. Now a rhino, even if he is a baby and has only three or four-inch horns, is not to be trifled with, so Percival and I took to the fence posts of the ostrich corral and shouted for Tarlton, who came up.

He swears he found us perched on the posts, first being picked in the rear by the beaks of inquiring ostriches, and then charged in front by the harmless baby, and told the story to good effect at Nairobi. The rhino was finally beaten off with sticks and we had a very pleasant lunch, but it goes to show that a rhino will charge from birth to the end of his life.

One more anecdote of our friend the rhino. A. B. Percival and Wooseman, both game rangers, were marching north in the Meru country in Africa and had pitched their camp at dark near a water hole. The Bwana's tent was put up in a clear space which later turned out to be an old

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rhino path to the water. In the middle of the night Percival fortunately left the tent and Wooseman describes what happened as follows:

There was a great crash and the tent was ripped down. My first impression was that a cyclone had struck it. When I crawled out of the débris I saw an old rhino disappearing in the moonlight with part of the fly gracefully draped over his horns and streaming out behind. I immediately thought of Percival and examined the wreckage and found the cot and canvas of the tent smeared with heavy clots of red. Poor old "P," he had been done for, and these were part of the remains. Suddenly Percival appeared looking for me. He was all right, and the blotches of sticky red were the remains of a box of strawberry jam from our supplies placed under Percival's cot for safekeeping from the cook and tent boys.

Wooseman was killed in France bravely leading his men in 1915.

With the elephant, the head shot is one sure and certain way of avoiding trouble, and a careful study of the animal's skull will show us that the brain measures some six by eleven inches. It is a good plan to imagine a line drawn diagonally from each eye to the orifice of the opposite ear.

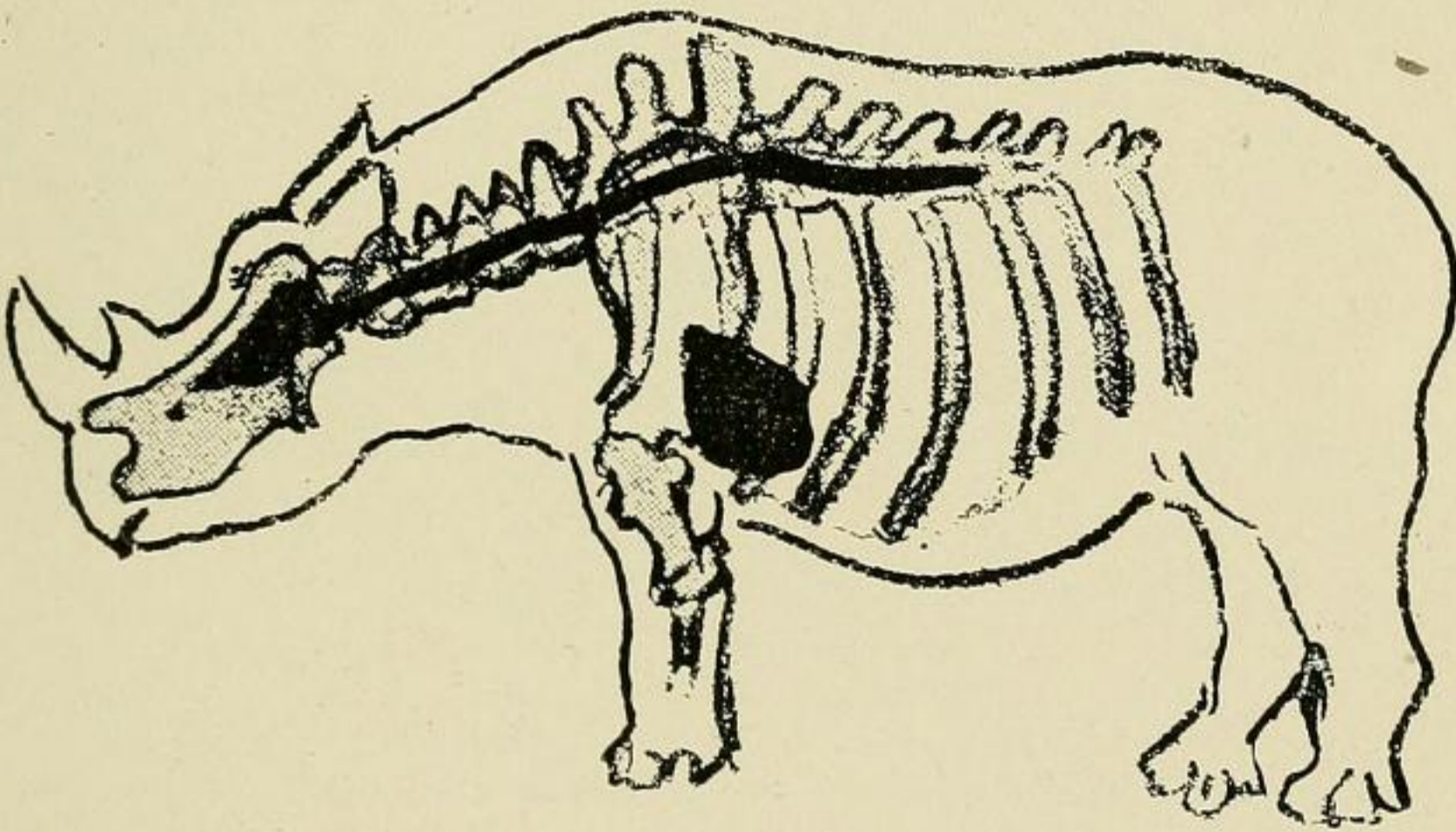
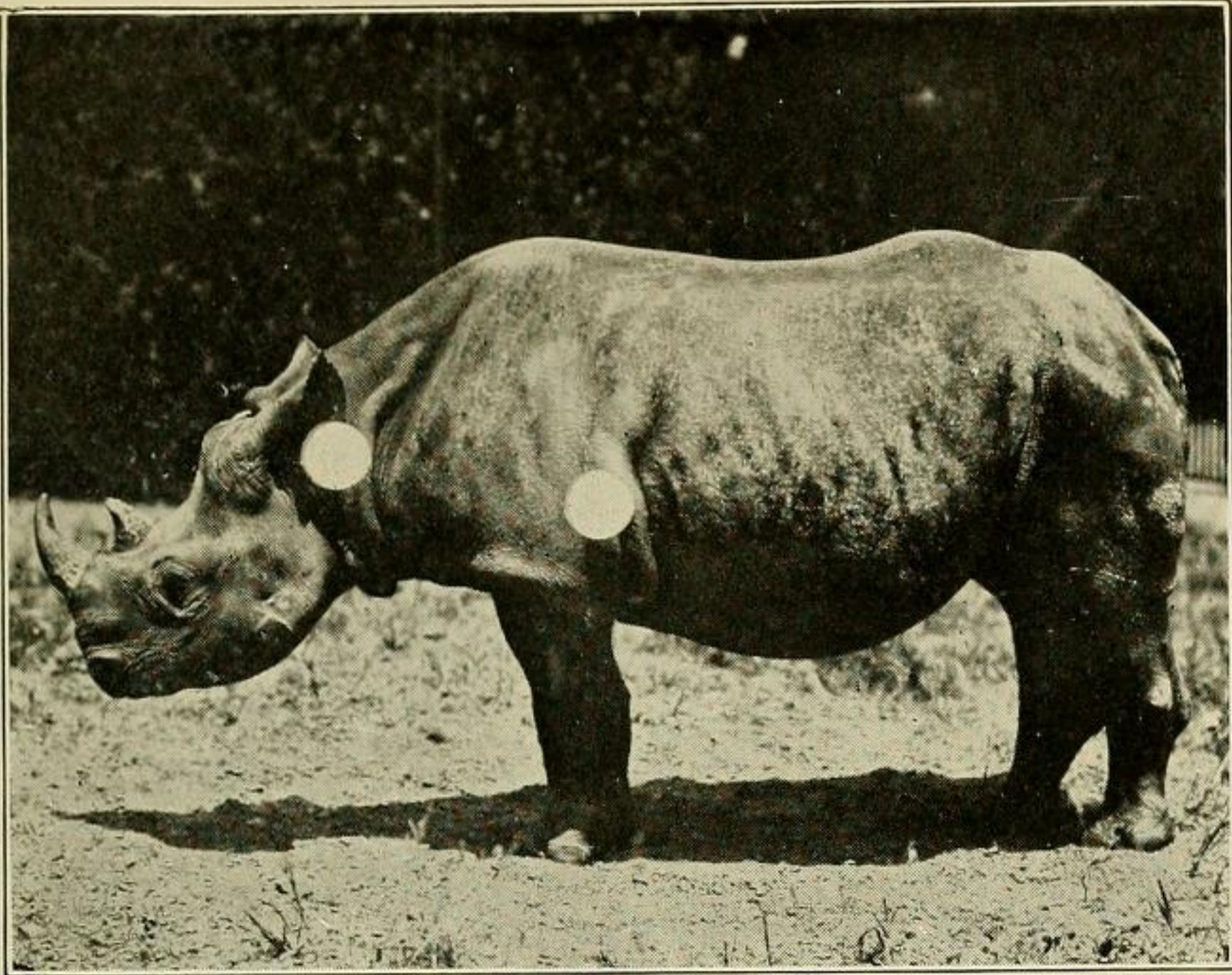


FIGURE 71. SIDE SHOT ON RHINOCEROS. THE NECK IF CLOSE ENOUGH; OTHERWISE THE FORE SHOULDER, BUT IF THE LATTER IS TAKEN, ANOTHER SHOT WILL BE NECESSARY TO FINISH

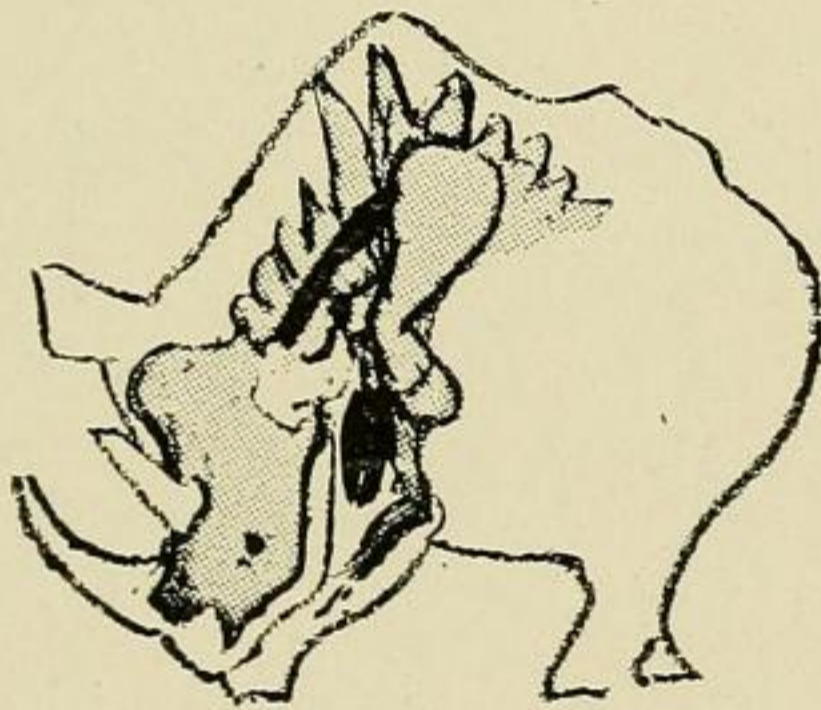
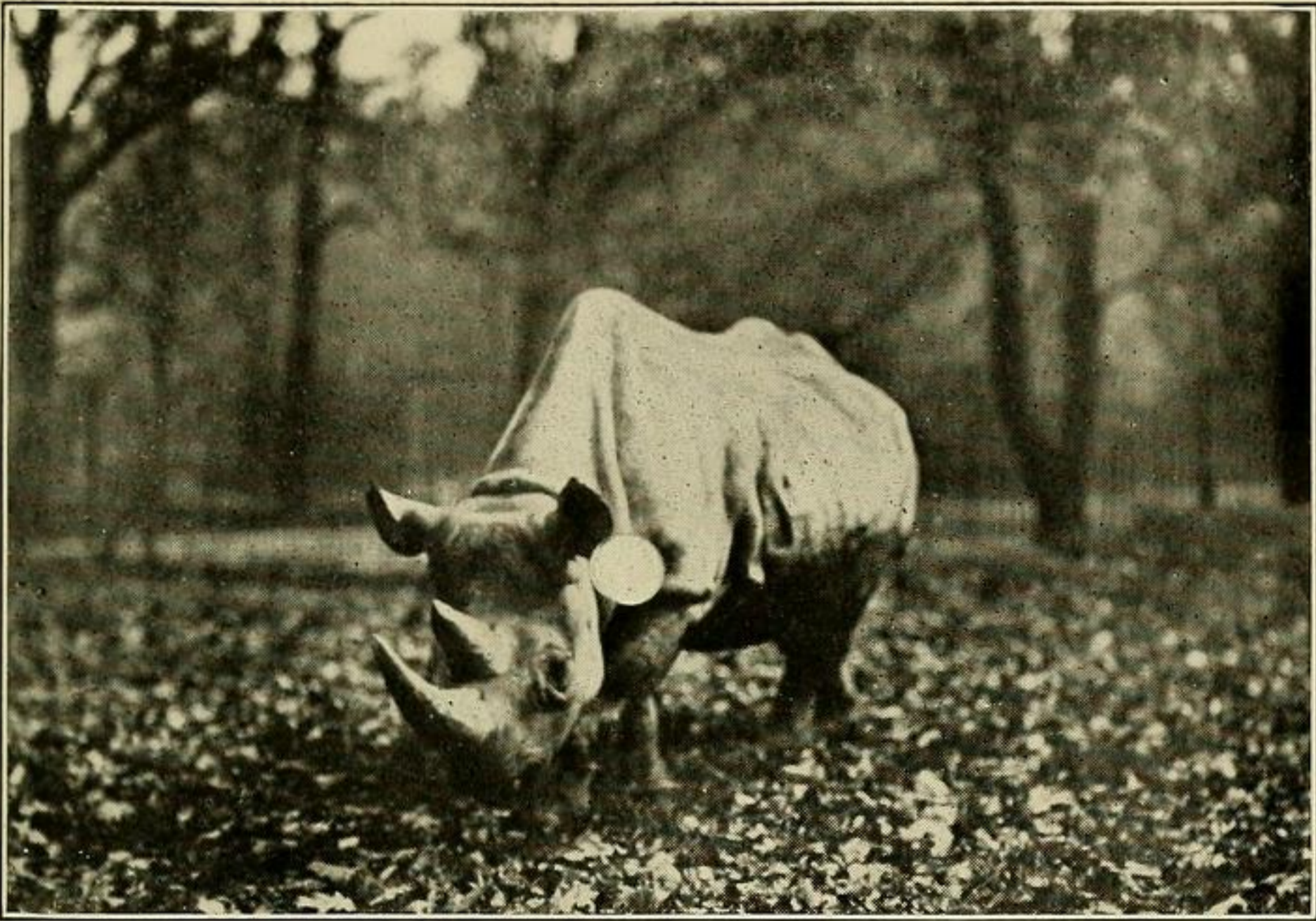


FIGURE 72. HEAD-ON SHOT ON RHINOCEROS. ONLY THE SHOT AT BASE OF NECK AND SHOULDER SHOULD BE ATTEMPTED, AS THE BRAIN IS SMALL AND IS PROTECTED BY THE HORNS. THIS SHOT ALSO APPLIES TO CAPE BUFFALO