

HUN



Photographs by Peter Barrett

TEER

■ One evening, sitting in front of my campfire and smoking my pipe, I thought back over the many years I'd spent in Africa as a hunter. When I first came to Kenya, the game covered the plains as far as a man could see. I hunted lions where towns now stand, and shot elephants from the engine of the first railroad to cross the country. In the span of one man's lifetime, I have seen jungle turn into farmland and cannibal tribes become factory workers. I have had a little to do with this change myself, for the government employed me to clear dangerous beasts out of areas that were being opened to cultivation.

I hold a world record for rhino, possibly another record for lion (although we kept no exact record of the numbers shot in those early days) and I have shot more than 1,400 elephants. I certainly do not tell of these records with pride. The work had to be done and I happened to be the man who did it. But strange as it may seem to the armchair conservationist, I have a deep affection for the animals I had to kill. I spent long years studying their habits, not only in order to kill them, but because I was honestly interested in them.

Yet it is true I have always been a sportsman. Firearms have been my ruling passion in life and I would rather hear the crack of a rifle or the bang of a shotgun than listen to the finest orchestra. At the same time, I cannot say that I did not enjoy the hunting. The animals I faced were a formidable challenge. Looking back, I truly believe that in most cases the big game had as much chance to kill me as I had to kill them.

I am one of the last of the old-time hunters. The events I saw can never be relived. Both the game and the native tribes, as I knew them, are gone. No one will ever see again the great elephant herds led by old bulls carrying 150 pounds of ivory in each tusk. No one will ever again hear the yodeling war cries of the Masai as their spearmen swept the bush after cattle-killing lions. Few indeed will be able to say that they have broken into country never before seen by a white man. No, the old Africa has passed and I saw it go.

This, then, is a record of the last great days of big-game hunting. Nowhere in the world was there

Lee Rutten



BY J. A. HUNTER

One of Africa's most famous professional white hunters recalls the gripping adventures of his half-century career—a lifetime lived in the shadows of danger and death

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"The cunning leopard is Africa's most dangerous game."

game to equal the African game. Nowhere were there animals so big, so powerful or so numerous. Now that it is almost over, there may be some who wish to hear about the greatest hunting era in the world's history.

I was born near Shearington in the south of Scotland, 15 years before the close of the last century. My father had one of the finest farms in that part of the country, having 500 acres of good farming land and three square miles of grazing. There was a tradition in the family that our name "Hunter" was derived from the profession of a remote ancestor, and certainly the love of hunting ran in our veins. My father was always out in the marshes that surround the Solway Firth with a fowling piece over his arm and my older brother was regarded as one of the best field naturalists in Scotland.

But what was merely recreation to the rest of my family was the very breath of life to me. When I grew older I spent all my days in the great Lochar Moss, a vast bog full of game. By long experience I learned the pathways through the swamp and often while wandering there I would flush the red grouse from her clutch of eggs and the mallard from her dozen.

When I was 8, I borrowed father's gun while he was out one day and went shooting with it. This gun was an old Purdey and to my mind the Purdey shotgun is the finest firearm ever made by man. That first day I took the gun out, I nearly shot off my foot with it. I was stalking partridge and in my excitement I happened to squeeze the trigger. When father heard what had happened, he was very put out but he did not forbid me the gun. Soon I learned to handle the lovely instrument correctly and spent every night in my room cleaning and oiling it.

With the Purdey, I shot gray lag, pinkfoot and barnacle geese along the flats. I learned to stalk a flock of fowl while they were noisily guzzling the small mussels which were abundant in the wet sand and then stand stock still when the sound stopped and I knew the fowl were raising their heads to look about. At night I would lie in bed and

listen to the cackling of wild geese overhead as they battled against the gale, and the sound was sweeter to me than the music of bagpipes.

Nor did I neglect my fishing. Many a day I spent whipping the waters of the Lochar stream with a split cane rod, and like as not I would be back that night with a torch and spear, for the salmon were dazed by the light and, if you were quick, you could harpoon one with a fast thrust.

As I grew older, some of the country folk introduced me to an ancient and honorable sport which has no better name given to it than poaching, yet it is a fine business requiring the greatest of skill. There were some noble poachers in the south of Scotland but I think I can say there was none my equal, for I spent every hour that was not given over to my Purdey and fishing rod learning how to set a snare or run a net. Many's the dark night I crawled through cover, my fine silk net twisted around my neck like a scarf, listening for the sound of the keepers' footfalls on the frosty ground. The keepers carried guns and were not slow to use them, putting the life of a pheasant or a rabbit higher than that of a man. But this only made the sport more exciting and I often think the practice I got as a lad dodging keepers stood me in good stead years later when I came to stalk big game.

So I grew up, caring little for farming and less for the solid people in Shearington who, for the most part, were poor shots and could no more set a rabbit snare than they could flick a salmon fly into a pool 30 feet away. My parents had always taken for granted that I would follow in my father's footsteps and become a farmer. Now I had little love for farming, or indeed for anything save hunting. Yet I considered farming better than being cooped up in an office, so I said nothing. But when I was 18, I got in a serious scrape with one of the local lasses.

One evening while I was sitting moody and sullen alone in my room, my father came up to see me. "John, I've been talking to other members of the family about you," he said, sitting down on my bed and staring at his hands. "We've decided it would be nice if you took a trip somewhere . . . say to Africa. Some relations of ours have a cousin who is living there. He has a farm in Kenya near a town called Nairobi. If you were willing to go, I would buy you a half interest in the place."

I knew the relations father meant and a tight-fisted lot they were. If their cousin were like them it was a hard time I'd have in Africa. But I cared nothing about that. There were lions in Africa and elephants and rhinoceros. That was the land for me. I was ready to leave that night and so I told my father.

As my father left the room, he hesitated a moment at the door. "Son, you may take the Purdey," he said. Then I knew that he had forgiven me all my sins.

A few weeks later I embarked for Mombasa on the east coast of Africa. I had the Purdey and a .275 Mauser rifle, a great, heavy thing that an uncle of mine had brought back from the Boer War.

After a three months' voyage I reached Mombasa. To a raw Scotch lad like myself, it was like being picked up and set down in the middle of the Arabian Nights. For the first time in my life I saw palm trees growing, walked through native bazaars with leopard hides hanging up for sale and watched half-naked savages coming in from

the jungles of the interior. In the bay, Arab dhows were setting sail across the Indian Ocean to Bombay. Although it was the middle of winter, the tropical heat was heavy in the town and I sweated freely in my Scotch tweeds.

I was not able to stay long in Mombasa for I had to take the train north to Nairobi. I boarded the train in the evening and for the first part of the trip we traveled through tropical jungles. When I awoke in the morning, the train had reached the uplands. On every side were great open plains, dotted with herds of wild game. A hunter's dream come true. I went nearly mad with excitement watching the strange beasts raise their heads calmly to watch the train as it went by. There were a dozen different types of gazelles and antelopes grazing along the tracks. In a few years I was to know all these different kinds of game animals as well as I knew the various types of duck and geese on Lochar Moss.

I arrived at Nairobi about noon. In those days, Nairobi was largely a city of shacks although a few of the buildings had begun to take shape. I stood on the station platform, listening to the other passengers call to the native porters in Swahili.

Then along the platform came striding a huge giant of a man, his hair sprouting in every direction, and a dirty beard hanging down from his chin. He carried two great revolvers strapped to his side in the manner of an American cowboy and a knife stuck through his belt. I stared at this monster in horror and hoped there were not many like him in the country.

The man walked up to me and bellowed, "Are you John Hunter?"

"I am," said I, regretfully.

"I'm your cousin," he said with an oath. I was to learn he seldom spoke without cursing. "Get in the rig."

We drove to his ranch some 20 miles away. My cousin talked and swore the whole way, drinking from a bottle of rum he had on the seat beside him. The man's talk brought the sweat out over me. He had been the skipper of a windjammer that operated along the African coast and judging from what he said, the ship was little better than a pirate. He told me fearful stories of keel-hauling and flogging. I was soon to see that he was as brutal as his words.

The next morning I went out with my cousin to look at the plantation. The place was in a miserable state of neglect. I knew enough of farming to realize that everything was being done wrong. My cousin was not a farmer and why he had taken it up was beyond me unless he was afraid to show his face along the seacoast. I tried to explain to him how fertilizer must be put in the soil and irrigation ditches dug but he would pay no attention to a young chap like me. The man's constant brutality was sickening. He kicked and struck his native boys seemingly for the pleasure of it, and when the time came to bring in the cows, he beat the poor creatures with a rawhide whip until they screamed like humans in their agony.

I stayed on the plantation for three months. I learned nothing of Africa during this time except how to speak Swahili. Although there are scores of native tribes in British East Africa, Swahili is the universal language, and nearly everywhere you go, there are at least some natives

who can understand it. I could tell my cousin nothing about how to run a farm and the place was deteriorating daily. Every night I could hear him cursing his miserable little wife, and the curses were usually followed by blows. Yet I was only a boy and could do nothing. I held on, but at last flesh and blood could endure it no longer. I packed my few belongings and, getting a ride from a friendly farmer, returned to Nairobi. There, however, I had a bit of luck. I managed to get a job as a guard on the railroad.

A week later I was put on the same Mombasa-Nairobi railroad on which I'd traveled three months before. They gave me a fine khaki uniform with a belt across the chest, but I cared nothing for such nonsense and never had the uniform on unless there was an official on the train.

I found that as a railroad guard, I had a fine opportunity for shooting. Often we would see a lion on his kill beside the tracks, and in the early morning and evening we were as likely as not to pass a leopard. I carried my old Mauser in the chopbox where we kept our food and whenever we passed a likely-looking specimen, I would lean out the train window and bag him. Then I'd pull the Westinghouse release to stop the train, jump out with a native boy, and skin the beast. People were in no great hurry in those days and the engineer was a good sport. He could watch the tracks ahead and he would signal me with the whistle when there was game about. Three toots meant a leopard and two toots were a lion. If there was simply a passenger to be picked up, he gave one toot.

One day the engineer gave off a volley of toots. I looked out the window and saw my first herd of elephants grazing in the brush near the tracks. I had never seen an elephant before but I grabbed my rifle and jumped off the train. The engineer hurried over to stop me.

"I only meant you to look at them, not try to shoot one," he said to me. "Suppose they come for us?"

"Never fear, we'll knock them over like rabbits," I promised him.

Together we stole up on the herd. I had enough sense to stalk them from downwind and they had no idea what we were about. As we came up with them, the herd began to move with their grazing and drifted between us and the train. They did not keep in a body, but were scattered throughout the high brush. Suddenly they seemed to be on all sides of us, although none were actually downwind or they would have panicked from our scent. The engineer was a nervous man and he begged me not to shoot. "We'll be caught in the middle of a stampede. Let's get out of here," he pleaded.

I was not leaving there without a shot. I knew nothing about elephant shooting and did not realize that there are only a few places on an elephant where a .275 will penetrate. Still, I came up with my Mauser and aiming for the shoulder of a bull carrying a nice pair of tusks, I squeezed the trigger.

The next instant hell broke loose. Elephants were running in all directions, trumpeting and screaming. The ground shook under our feet and some of them passed so close it seemed as though I could have touched them with a fishing rod. When the dust had settled, I found the engineer down on his knees praying. My bull had not dropped and I asked the man to help me spoor him. "If God in His infinite grace ever lets me get back to my

engine, I'll never leave the train again," was all the man said. But my shot had told better than I thought. On our way back from Mombasa the next day I saw the dead bull lying not far from the tracks. I stopped the train and collected the tusks. I got five rupees a pound for the ivory, 37 English pounds for the two tusks, which was more than I made in two months as a guard.

For the first time I realized that it was possible for a man to make his living as a hunter—and a very good living, too. Such a thought had never occurred to me before. In Scotland, shooting was merely a recreation and that mostly for the very rich who could afford to raise pheasants and rent grouse moors. Being able to make my living with my gun seemed too good to be true, yet plenty of men in Nairobi were doing that very thing. One good point about being a railroad guard is that you get to meet people, and I made the acquaintance of some of the great white hunters of the period—to my mind, the most colorful group of men that ever lived.

There was Allan Black who decorated his hat with the tail tips of 14 man-eating lions that he had killed. There was Bill Judd, one of the most famous ivory hunters in Africa, who was later killed by an infuriated bull. There was Fritz Schindelar, who always dressed in spotless white riding breeches and was said to be of royal blood. Fritz had been an officer in the Royal Hungarian Hussars and hunted lions from horseback, galloping alongside the big cats and shooting them with a carbine. He was finally killed by a lion that dragged him from the saddle. I met old "Karamoja Bell" who hunted elephant with a light .256 caliber rifle and knew the vital spots on the big bulls so perfectly that he needed no heavier weapon. I knew Leslie Simpson, an American hunter, reputed to be the greatest lion killer of his day, for in one year he had dispatched 365 lions. These men were my heroes and I longed to be like them.

I began my career as a professional hunter by shooting lions for their hides. Lion hides sold for a pound each in Mombasa and leopard skins for nearly as much. At that time, there were plenty of lions around the Tsavo area, some 200 miles southeast of Nairobi. Lions were regarded as vermin, for they killed cattle and some were not adverse to picking up stray natives. In fact, a few years before, during the building of the railroad, lions killed so many of the Indian coolies working on the tracks that construction of the line had to be stopped until the man-eaters were hunted down and shot.

Lion hunting was a dangerous business. Several of the tombstones in the Nairobi graveyard bear the simple inscription "killed by a lion." There were about 40 professional lion hunters in the Nairobi area and at least half of them had been badly mauled at some time or other. Knowing next to nothing about these great cats, I set out with my old Mauser and a single native boy to make my mark as a famous lion hunter.

To hunt lions, you must understand how they think and behave. A man can understand dogs with fair ease, for dogs think much as humans do. But a lion is a cat and cats are curious beasts. They are temperamental creatures and highly subject to moods. Weather has a profound effect on them. Rainy weather makes them nervous, energetic, and keen. Very dry weather tends to make them lazy and

indifferent. Lions hunt mainly at night. Darkness seems to act on them as a stimulant. The darker the night, the more likely lions are to be about. I never heard of a lion making a kill during the full moon. There are many cases of men meeting lions in the bush and scaring the animals off by shouting at them, yet I have also seen a lion charge a lorry and nearly knock it over in his attempts to get at the men inside.

Although it would not be true to say that they hunt in packs, yet there is a certain organization about their work. The actual killing is frequently done by the lionesses or by young, active males. The old patriarch often holds back, directing the business and only throwing in his own weight and strength when necessary. A pride of lions on the hunt communicate with each other by deep grunts that have a strangely ventriloquial quality. It is almost impossible to tell where the noise comes from. Lions very seldom roar; I have heard the true roar only a few times in my life. They must have an amazing ability to see during the darkest night for I believe they hunt by sight rather than smell. They count on stampeding the game by their hunting grunts and sending it toward a spot where the other lions are waiting. Of course, if they manage to get close enough to their quarry, they will stalk and leap upon it much as any cat does.

There was little trouble about finding lions near Tsavo. The local natives were only too glad to help me out. During the rainy season lions were apt to leave their usual range and wander great distances. At such times, they usually went alone rather than in prides. Often a lion would find himself in a district where there was no game. Then he would be forced to turn to the natives' cattle.

When a native sent word that a lion had killed some of his cattle, my boy and I would find where the lion had made the kill and then start spooring the cat. On the sandy soil of the bush country, spooring is fairly easy. The lion would generally be lying up for the day in a patch of thick bush not too far away. We could tell by his angry growls when we were getting close to him. Then my boy would throw stones into the bush while the growls rose in pitch and fury. Finally the lion would charge us, moving so fast that a man often had time for only one shot.

There are few sights in nature more terrible than that of a charging lion. He comes at a speed close to 40 miles per hour, hitting top pace the instant he takes off. If a stalking lion can get to within 50 yards of an antelope, the antelope is doomed, for in spite of its great speed, the lion will overtake the animal within a dozen bounds. A man standing only 30 yards or so from a charging lion cannot afford to miss. A full-grown lion weighs some 450 pounds, and if he reaches you with the full force of his charge, he will knock you down as easily as a man overturns a mushroom with his foot.

I would stand with my rifle held ready while my boy was throwing stones to provoke the charge. When the charge came, I'd throw my rifle to my shoulder and fire instantly at the tawny shape that seemed to move with the speed of a shell. I have often thought that my early training with a shotgun, firing at waterfowl as they flashed across the Lochar Moss, was of great benefit to me in this type of hunting. If the shot is true, the lion often turns a somer-

sault and comes smacking down maybe a dozen feet in front of you. If a man misses, he is indeed fortunate if he has time for a second shot before the lion is on him, with fangs busy and hind claws ripping him open.

My boy and I would take the train to one of the small stations along the line and start out into the bush with no equipment but my rifle, cartridges, a skinning knife and a water flask. We would strike out through the bush until we came on a donga. Dongas are shallow ravines, usually filled with high grass and weeds which provide excellent cover. Lions often lie up in dongas during the heat of the day. I would take my stand on one side of a donga and my boy would walk along the other, throwing stones into the cover. If we heard any growls, he would continue his stone throwing until he flushed a lion. After shooting a lion, we would draw him and hang him by the hind legs to a tree limb before going on after another. I never killed more than four lions on one trip, for the green skins weighed 40 pounds each and two of them were a good main for a man to pack out of the bush.

The main trouble with this type of hunting was that I never knew how many lions would bolt out of the cover when the boy started throwing stones. Once I was walking along the edge of a donga when I heard a sleeping lion snoring away in the high grass. I tossed in a stone to flush him. Instead of one lion, two came charging out straight at me. There was no time to think. I fired at one and saw him drop. The other gave a great leap and passed right over my head, knocking off my hat as he went.

These lions were not making a proper charge. The stone had frightened them and they were merely trying to escape. I just happened to be in their way.

About this time the course of my life took a new turn. Her name was Hilda Banbury. When we were married I determined to turn over a new leaf and give up the risks and uncertainties of professional hunting. I had inherited some money, and I invested my capital in mules, horses and wagons and started hauling freight for the settlers. But, alas, I was not meant to be a businessman. I was soon bankrupt.

When I told Hilda the bad news, she took it very calmly, even though there was a child on the way. "Now, John," she said, "you can be a white hunter, which you always wanted to be in the first place."

I went to see my friend, Leslie Simpson, the American white hunter. When Leslie heard I wanted to guide parties and needed a job at once, he rubbed his chin.

"Two American sportsmen have just arrived in town who want to take a safari across the Serengeti Plain," he told me. "There's a great extinct volcano in the heart of that country called Ngorongoro. According to the accounts, there is more game in that crater than any man has ever seen before. As far as I know, no regular safari has ever crossed the Serengeti although a few ivory hunters have been there and a strange man by the name of Captain Hurst is said to have a home in the crater. I told these Americans I didn't know of any man who would care to take them through, but if you want the job, it's yours."

The following day I met my two American clients at their hotel. They were big, hearty chaps—successful businessmen from the western part of the United States. "Cap-



"The elephant is the most intelligent of all the game."

tain, we want you to take us into fresh territory that hasn't been all shot out," one of them explained while his friend nodded approval. "What we want is trophies and we don't mind roughing it some to go where the high-class stuff is."

Aside from Leslie Simpson, these men were almost the first Americans I had met and the nasal twang in their voices was new to me, although my own Scotch burr must have seemed equally strange to them. Their slang was infectious. After an hour's conversation I heard myself saying, "You bet, that's a whale of an idea."

My clients were very keen to make the Ngorongoro trip. I explained to them frankly I knew nothing about the place but that according to rumor the crater was the finest game country in Africa. I was concerned about crossing the great Serengeti Plain during the dry season. The plain is a vast, semi-desert country extending for hundreds of miles across southern Kenya and I had no notion where the water holes were or what game we would find as food for our native porters. I cautioned my clients that the trek would be hard and possibly dangerous but my warnings only served to make them more eager.

I was pleased with their enthusiasm but I knew well the difficulties of taking a safari across such country. I went to Leslie Simpson for advice and he came up with an excellent suggestion.

"I know an old-time Dutch hunter named Fourrie," he told me. "The chap's somewhat under a cloud because of ivory poaching and cattle running, but he's one of the few men who's been through that country. Fourrie is in Nairobi now and I believe he'd guide you to Ngorongoro."

Fourrie turned out to be a lean, shrew-eyed man old enough to be my grandfather. Early in life, a rhino had taken him unexpectedly from behind and so lacerated his thigh muscles that he walked with a limp. Like many of the old ivory hunters, he had made and lost several fortunes—always sinking the money he made from a successful trip into a still bigger safari. As long as his luck held, the returns from these expeditions continued to grow. But a few unsuccessful trips had wiped out all his profits. Fourrie had then taken to cattle running—driving herds past the government guards into districts where they could be sold for a high price. In spite of the old fellow's shabby morals, he was one of the finest bushcraftsmen I have ever

seen. Down on his luck, he was glad to guide us to the crater for a few pounds.

We outfitted in Arusha, 200 miles south of Nairobi en route to the Serengeti Plain. Our first consideration was porters. The only men available were the Wa-Arusha tribesmen, a miserable lot, lazy and cantankerous. They are an agricultural people, the women doing all the work while the men amuse themselves drinking and painting their bodies in weird designs with burnt bone and red clay. Fortunately, Leslie Simpson had loaned me one of his men to act as our head boy. This fellow's name was Andolo and he was the best field taxidermist in Africa, having been trained in the business some years before by an expedition sent out by the American Museum of Natural History in New York. I knew Andolo would be a great help in preserving our trophies and also act as a top sergeant to keep the unruly porters in order.

The modern white hunter can hardly realize the trouble and difficulties inherent in the old-fashioned foot safari. Today, safaris are made by heavy-duty lorries. Riding comfortably in one of these powerful machines, you can carry plenty of equipment and need not worry about lack of food or the cruel heat of the sun. You can cover 100 miles a day in comparative comfort while 20 miles a day was a long, hard grind on foot. Best of all, a lorry is not temperamental. Unlike a porter, a lorry will not suddenly desert you because it becomes homesick for its wife or because the going is too hard. Unless you have had to endure the emotional outbreaks of several dozen porters, you can hardly appreciate the sterling qualities of a lorry.

Our safari consisted of 150 porters. Everything we needed for the three months' trip would have to be carried on their heads. Nearly a third of them would be carrying food for the others. Even so, we would have to stop continually to shoot game to eke out our supplies. Although shooting game in Africa sounds simple, the animals must be stalked and this takes time and slows up the march. Also, you may find yourself in country where there is little or no game. Only a small amount of water could be carried and so we depended on finding water holes.

All the equipment had to be broken down into 60-pound loads, the recognized weight for a porter to carry on his head. For food, I leaned heavily on tinned goods, which are very convenient although heavy. In addition to our tents, camp beds, mosquito nettings, cooking utensils, guns and ammunition, we took along several hundred pounds of salt for preserving the trophies.

I wish people who write of Africa as though the whole land were a tropical glade full of shady trees and purling streams could have been with us on that bare, waterless waste. The country was nothing but unbroken, flat plains constantly fanned by strong currents of hot wind. There was no shade. Our sweat soaked through our clothes and then dried almost instantly in the intense heat, leaving deposits of salt over khaki jumpers. On rare occasions when we came on pools of stagnant water the foul stuff seemed to taste of various horrible smells. Our porters constantly demanded meat, but game was very scarce. There had been an outbreak of rinderpest in the district and the few surviving animals were nothing but skin and bones. The white skeletons of the others were strewn over the plains. In the evening, we pitched camp wherever we happened to stop and fell asleep listening to the hot wind howling over that miserable tract of desolation.

My two clients endured this long trek remarkably well. In fact, they actually seemed to enjoy the hardships. They trudged on day after day, cracking jokes with each other or me, and when we happened to find some Grant gazelles with good horns, they were delighted. These Grants were our first trophies and I was glad my clients were so pleased with them.

We had traveled over 100 miles and Ngorongoro was still not in sight. I began to be concerned. The porters were continually grumbling over the lack of meat and water and threatening to turn back. The country seemed to be growing worse.

The next afternoon while we were plodding across the seemingly endless waste, Fourrie stopped and pointed ahead. I could hardly believe my eyes. Across the dirty brown of the desert was a splash of the purest emerald, as though a giant with a green paintbrush had dabbed the spot.

"N'garuka Springs," said Fourrie. "Fresh water and fig trees. We'll camp under the shade."

Hundreds of green pigeons were feeding on the figs and our sportsmen put in an hour of shooting while the boys pitched camp. These pigeons are very fast and a test for the best wing shot. Later, I found a herd of hippo in the stream although the water was so shallow it scarcely covered their broad backs. How the animals got there I have no idea. I shot one as meat for the porters.

We camped for 10 days by the stream, resting and repairing minor damage caused by the trek. Then at daybreak one morning we regretfully left the wonderful spot and pushed on for Ngorongoro crater.

After some hard trekking, we saw ahead of us the tall, tree-covered slopes of the great extinct volcano. Ngorongoro rises 9,000 feet from the plains and the top was draped in mists. By evening we reached the foot of the great south wall of the volcano and camped there beside a little stream. We were in a tropical fairyland, surrounded by huge trees that formed a roof of branches



"The buffalo will charge with little provocation."

above our heads. Brilliantly colored birds flitted between the great trunks. I remember especially the lovely plover eaters with their dark blue bodies and crimson wings. Bands of monkeys swung through the branches overhead, chattering at us. There were plenty of elephant and rhino spoors about and also many lion signs.

As we sat around our campfire that evening, we could hear lions giving their hunting grunts around us in the dark. At dawn the next morning, we started the ascent of the crater. We followed the game trails, for animals are excellent surveyors and their paths are cleverly engineered to give the easiest climb. Nevertheless, our porters puffed and panted as they struggled up the steep slope through bamboo growths and mimosa bush. It was late afternoon before we reached the lip of the old volcano.

Every man in our party stopped dead as he arrived at the top and looked down on the vast crater, stretching away 15 miles to the far edge of the encircling lip. All the tales I had heard of Ngorongoro were as nothing compared to the great herds spread out over those green fields as though shaken out of a giant pepper pot. The crater seethed with game. The grass was cropped as fine as a lawn by the thousands of beasts. In the distance the herds seemed to melt together into a trembling mass of white and fawn. There were zebra, eland, giraffe, topi, waterbuck, reedbuck, bushbuck, steinbok, Thomson gazelles, Grant gazelles, impala, wildebeest, duiker, oribi, and ostrich. This was how all the African veldt must have looked before the coming of the white man. Here in this isolated crater was the last great stronghold of game.

My two clients behaved like children suddenly turned loose in a candy store. They shot until their rifles were too hot to hold. The daylight hours were all too short to enable them to satisfy their passion for more hides and horns. "Trigger itch" had them in its grip. Later I was to discover that this is a common trait among Americans when first confronted by the abundance of African game after the shooting restrictions in their own country.

After their first enthusiasm had died down, my clients became determined to bag a world's record trophy. I must confess that I became sick of the sight of Rowland Ward's *Records of Big Game* on the breakfast table every morning. At that hour, a bowl of porridge looked far sweeter to me. Impala were particularly fine in the crater and we spent days studying the different beasts through a pair of binoculars, searching for a record head. At last we located our trophy, a fine animal with horns that looked to be well over 50 inches long. Beside him was standing another first-rate buck but slightly smaller. One of my clients took careful aim and fired, but, alas, it was the smaller antelope that fell. Here was a tragedy. We measured the long, curving horns in every way possible but 28 inches was the best we could make out of them—an excellent trophy but still short of the record. To me, it was sportsman's luck and nothing could be done about it. But my clients were more determined. When we got back to camp, they held a long conference and then approached me with a proposition.

"Hey, captain, you can steam a gun stock to alter bend and cast, can't you?"

I admitted it.

"OK, then. How about steaming these horns to stretch

the ferrules and get a record?" My clients were serious.

I don't know if this would have given us a new world's record or glue, but I declined to make the experiment.

Often in the early mornings when we were out after game, we would see a lion in the shade of an acacia tree. These crater lions were magnificent animals and it is my belief that no lions in Africa can equal them for size and manes. In a perfect climate with plenty of food around them, it is no wonder that they grow to be giants. Our sportsmen were eager to bag some of these fine specimens and I was no less keen. But I soon found out that hunting lions on the open floor of the crater was a very different matter from shooting them in dongas.

Today, with motorcars, the sportsman can drive up to a pride of lions, for the big cats have no fear of cars. Bagging lions in the flat, short-grassed crater on foot was another matter. Lions have excellent vision, and the moment they spotted us they did not take their eyes off our stalking figures for a moment. If we lay down on our bellies and tried to crawl closer, the lion would sit up on his hunkers like a dog to get a better view. If we tried circling, we might gain a few yards but the lion still had the situation well in hand and just as we got within range, he would rise and trot off. Once he was on the move, we would never come up with him, for a lion's skill in concealment is extraordinary. I have seen a big lion crouch low and take cover behind some grass that I thought would scarcely hide a hare.

We next tried baiting the lions. Either Fourrie or I would shoot an antelope and drag the animal near a patch of cover where I thought lions might be lying up for the day. We would slit open the game's belly to let out the stomach gases and increase the scent, taking care to place the carcass upwind of the cover. After putting out a number of these baits in the evening, we would return to them in the morning to see if lions had been feeding.

Unfortunately for our plans, there were so many scavengers in the district that the lions seldom had a chance to get at the baits. At night, hyenas and jackals would strip the carcasses nearly clean before the lions could reach the spot. During the day, the bait would be so covered by vultures that nothing could be seen but a wriggling mass of black feathers and scrawny necks. Sometimes a hyena would take a flying leap on top of this tangle and break a hole through by the mere weight of his body. We often saw leopards feeding beside the vultures. I have noticed that when leopards have finished, they will often grab one of the vultures and carry it off with them—I suppose as dessert.

A few scavengers at the bait is a good thing for they seem to give a lion confidence. The yapping calls of the jackals and the long *you-e-you* howl of the hyena attracts the big cats. But when there are so many that the meat vanishes before the lions can arrive, then baiting is useless. We tried covering the baits with thorn bushes but no matter how many of the spiky branches we piled on the kill, the scavengers always seemed able to pull them off.

Both stalking and baiting having failed, Fourrie and I set out to study the habits of these crater lions carefully and find out the best way to give our sportsmen a shot at them. After several days of watching the beasts, Fourrie

said to me, "The lions seem to spend the nights hunting and feeding. Then at dawn they start back for the shelter of the reed beds. Why not put our clients in ambush among the reeds and waylay them on their return?"

We tried this plan and it worked well. Within a few days we had four magnificent lions; three fine black-maned specimens and one with a great platinum and orange mane that I considered the best trophy I had ever seen up to that time.

Fourrie also helped me out when our clients wanted to shoot elephant and rhino in the wooded slopes of the crater's walls. I hadn't expected to find such big game at Ngorongoro and had brought only a small supply of nickel-jacketed bullets. Our ordinary soft points did not have sufficient penetration power to pierce the thick skulls of elephant or rhino. Fourrie solved this problem by withdrawing the soft points and reversing them in the cartridges. With this back-to-front method, the bullets' nickeled bases were foremost and gave us the necessary penetration power.

So far we had seen nothing of Captain Hurst, the lone Englishman, who had a small ranch in the crater. But while we were in Ngorongoro, a runner arrived from the District Commissioner in Arusha. The man had trotted the entire distance in spite of the heat and lack of water, carrying his message in the end of a cleft stick. The message said that Captain Hurst was dead. His native boys, not knowing we were in the district, had sent word to Arusha to find out what to do. The Commissioner asked me to investigate the circumstances of his death and bring back the man's belongings with me to Arusha.

We went to Captain Hurst's ranch and found his boys sitting around aimlessly waiting for instructions. The head boy told me that their master had been killed 10 days before by an elephant.

Captain Hurst had lived in a little thatched cottage overlooking the crater. He could sit on his front porch in the evenings and watch the grandest collection of game that mortal man has ever seen grazing around him. The climate of Ngorongoro is about perfect. Although the mountain is only a few hundred miles from the equator, the high altitude keeps the crater cool and pleasant. In that wonderful spot it is always spring. The cold of winter or the heat of summer never reaches it. With game in plenty around him, a spring of cool water by the door, and forests full of fruit, a man could live there as happily as though in the Garden of Eden. Looking around me, I felt that I would be content to spend the rest of my life in Ngorongoro.

The captain had few possessions. The only difficult problem was a fine pack of Australian kangaroo hounds that Captain Hurst had for lion hunting. These great dogs resembled large, rough-coated greyhounds. They were in poor shape, for the native boys had paid little attention to them since their master's death. I gave orders to have the pack fed, and the poor brutes seemed to understand my kind intentions for they followed me everywhere.

Our clients did not wish to return to Arusha with Captain Hurst's effects. They wanted to continue east across the Serengeti to Tabora where they could get a train to the coast. Their desires were naturally our first consider-

ation. Fourrie and I agreed that we would go on with them to Tabora, and when our clients had left, Fourrie would remain there to arrange for the preparation and shipping of the trophies. I would return with the porters to Ngorongoro, pick up Captain Hurst's belongings and return to Arusha.

Back in Ngorongoro crater, I stayed at Captain Hurst's cottage for a few days preparing for the long trip to Arusha. The kangaroo hounds were now in excellent shape and I could not resist spending a few days hunting with them. In lion hunting, the hounds made all the difference. As soon as the pack sighted a lion, on the plains, they would take off after him and bring him to bay, forming a circle around him. The lion was kept so busy slapping at the dogs that the hunter could walk up within a few yards of him and place his shots. The dogs were smart enough never to close with a lion and kept well away from his great paws. If the lion charged, hounds would open to let him through and then chase him again, snapping at his flanks until they turned him.

I collected five good lions, knowing that their hides would bring a good price in Nairobi. It never occurred to me that the day would come when lions would be carefully protected as a valuable game animal. In those days, we regarded them simply as a dangerous nuisance.

After this trip, I was definitely launched as a white hunter. And I had already begun to learn by painful experience the truth of an old white hunters' saying, "It's not the wild beasts that are the problem—it's the clients."

I spent much of my next 20 years as a white hunter, generally outfitting in Nairobi and going everywhere from the Belgian Congo to Southern Abyssinia. During those years I guided the Prince and Princess Schwarzenberg, the Baron and Baroness Rothschild, many of the lesser Continental nobility, a number of rajahs and maharajahs, and a scattering of American millionaires. I also guided many sportsmen in very moderate circumstances who had spent years saving up enough money so they could have a go at African big game.

Like most white hunters, I was usually employed by one of the big organizations in Nairobi that make a business of outfitting safaris for clients. Although I have worked for several of these organizations, I spent most of my time with Safariland, Inc., a company that has been in operation since the turn of the century and has arranged safaris for Radclyffe Dugmore, the Martin Johnsons, the Aga Khan, and in recent years, MGM's *King Solomon's Mines*. Safariland keeps a number of white hunters on its payroll and during the boom years of the 1920's, as soon as one of us returned from a safari, he was immediately sent out on another.

I never knew beforehand if my next client would be a nervous individual who merely wanted to camp a few miles outside of Nairobi so he could later boast of having been "on safari through the wilds of Africa" or a keen sportsman who was willing to risk his life to obtain a fine trophy. Whatever my clients wanted, I did my best to provide, whether it was a record head or an easy tour of the game country.

It has been said that a white hunter must combine "the expert lore of an Indian scout, the cool nerve of a pro-

fessional soldier, and the ability to mingle easily with the rich and aristocratic." One of the most successful white hunters with Safariland put the matter to me somewhat differently. "Hunter," he said, "you must always remember that only 10 percent of your work is hunting. Ninety percent is keeping your clients amused." Now I was never much of a clubman and so Safariland tried to send me out with sportsmen who were mainly interested in obtaining trophies. But during the rush seasons no such distinction could be made. Then I had to learn to study my clients and try to gratify their whims. This I did—up to certain limits.

Among my first aristocratic clients were a French count and his countess who wanted a few African trophies for their chateau in Normandy. It was fashionable for the European nobility to be able to say that they had been big-game hunting in Africa and we white hunters profited by the fad. With the help of Safariland, I arranged a luxury safari for the couple. I saw to it that we had big, comfortable tents divided up into several small dressing and bathrooms. The couple had eight trained native boys as their personal servants and I took along enough supplies to stock a small hotel. Before we left, the count made it clear that the only commodity he was interested in was a plentiful supply of whiskey. I took along more whiskey bottles than I did cartridges and it was well I did so. We could have done without the cartridges, but without the whiskey I fear I'd have had a dead count on my hands and no mistake.

A few days out, I spotted a fine black-maned lion and took my clients over to him. When the countess saw the lion, she screamed and wanted to go back to Nairobi. The count lifted his gun with shaking hands and then asked anxiously, "Suppose I shoot and don't kill, what does he do, eh?"

"He may charge, but I'll stop him with my rifle," I told the gentleman.

The count shook his head. "I think I need a drink," he said and off we went back to camp. That was all the lion hunting the count did. But that evening the couple called me in to have drinks with them.

"I have thought of a clever idea," said the count. "You are a hunter, no? So you go and hunt. I will stay here and you get me nice trophies to show my friends."

I agreed that this was an excellent suggestion, saving us all time and worry. I got them several good trophies and the countess posed on each one for photographs wearing her shooting togs and holding her rifle. She always asked me anxiously, "Hunter, how do I look?" I knew little about such matters but I always told her she looked very well indeed and my answer seemed to please her. The countess wanted her husband to pose on a few of the trophies, but he was seldom in a condition to sit up long enough for the camera to click. So she and I spent most of the time together, wandering about the veldt and having tea by the banks of a stream or under one of the big acacia trees.

One evening after I had turned in, the flap of my tent opened and the countess came in wearing a lace Parisian nightgown that covered her put poorly and carrying a beer glass full of whiskey. She sat down on the edge of my cot, offered me a drink, and then took one herself. "Hunter, my friend, I am lonely," she told me sadly. "Countess, where's

your husband?" I asked her. She looked at me a long time. "Hunter, you Englishmen ask the strangest questions," she said and flounced out of my tent. For the next few days she was a bit cool toward me but when the safari was over, both she and the count kissed me as they said good-by. A very affectionate couple. I enjoyed meeting them.

It is a curious fact that some people lose their heads when they go into the bush and forget ordinary conventions. They seem to feel that they have escaped from civilization and all its responsibilities. Women succumb to this strange state of mind more often than men. I have seen carefully reared ladies whose conduct in the bush shocked even the broad-minded natives. There is much of the savage in all of us, but a man will work out his primitive instincts by shooting while a certain type of woman often turns to sex. Usually the white hunter is the object of her devotion. In the bush a white hunter cuts a fine figure. He is efficient, brave, and picturesque. These ladies never stop to think how this dashing individual would appear on the dance floors of London or in a Continental drawing room. One of the greatest scandals of Kenya came about as the result of a lady's unwise attachment to a white hunter.

This tragedy occurred near the turn of the century. The white hunter involved was internationally known, having established a reputation by killing several man-eating lions. One of the parties he guided consisted of a wealthy man and his attractive young wife. When the safari returned to Nairobi, the husband was not with them. The hunter announced that his client had shot himself with a revolver while delirious. However, the hunter could not stop his native boys from talking and the story got around that the man had met with foul play. The government sent a police officer to investigate. The officer backtracked the safari and found where the client had been buried. He dug up the body and discovered that the man had been shot in the back of the head by a heavy-caliber rifle. Meanwhile, the hunter and the dead man's wife had left the country. As far as I know, they were never heard of again. I believe that the American writer Ernest Hemingway based his famous story "The Short and Happy Life of Francis Macomber" on this incident.



"The lion charges all out—and it is either kill or be killed."



"We found the Ngorongoro crater seething with game."

After this case, the conduct of white hunters with their clients was carefully checked. Any suspicion of a scandal was enough to deprive a hunter of his license and ruin him for life. Although such careful supervision is no doubt a good thing, it occasionally puts a hunter in awkward positions.

I was once guiding a German baron who had a very handsome wife and was insanely jealous of her. He hired an ex-major in the German Army to stay with the lady at all times. This male chaperon earned his pay, for he never let the baroness out of his sight. The major was a trustworthy man but a bit heavy-footed and he made so much noise clumping along that he scared all the game away. This annoyed the baroness, who was a very keen sportswoman, but if she ordered the major away, he refused to go, looking suspiciously at the lady and me all the while. As the baron did not go out in the bush much, we usually had the major along and so we got little hunting done. One afternoon I mentioned to the baroness that there was a donga near the camp that usually held several lions. At supper that evening, she told her husband about the spot, adding, "Hunter says that the cover is so thick that taking three people would be dangerous."

She gave me a kick under the table as she spoke so I nodded my head and said, "Yes, I have my doubts if three can make it." I was always a poor liar so the major glared at us and said he was coming too, cover or no.

Next morning we started off to the donga. We put up no lion, but there was a fine warthog and the baroness wanted his tusks. The major stood on one side of the ravine and the baroness on the other, while I went in to drive the beast out.

I had taken only a few steps when I heard the baroness shout, "Hunter, come quick!" Thinking a lion had her, I ran to the spot throwing off the safety catch on my rifle. I burst through some little bushes and there was the baroness standing stark naked except for her knickers. For an instant, I thought she was mad. Then I saw her desperately pulling safari ants off her body. These ants are terrible things, half an inch long, with jaws like pincers.

I have been attacked by them myself in the bush and, like the baroness, I tore off my clothes to get at the creatures, for no one can stand the torture of their bites.

I spent several minutes pulling ants off the baroness. Then I had to scrape her body with the back of my knife blade to get out the insects' heads for the ants will let themselves be pulled apart rather than relax the grip. The lady had just gotten her clothes on again when the major came bursting through the bush on us.

"What's going on here?" he screamed.

"John and I were doing a little hunting together," said the baroness casually. The major glared at us but there was nothing he could say. Later, I sat down on the ground and shook as though I'd had a close call with a rhino, for if the man had come upon us a few minutes before, he would have reported the matter to the baron and I would have lost my hunter's license for sure and certain. Under the circumstances no one would have believed either the lady or myself. Such are the perils of the veldt with clients.

I do not wish to give the impression that a white hunter's duties are merely to keep out of scrapes with beautiful women. Much of his work is the prosaic task of organizing the equipment necessary for a two or three months' trip "into the blue." In the case of a large safari, this is a tremendous undertaking. Some clients travel with a small city of tents equipped with generators to supply electricity. Each tent has its own bathtub, toilet facilities and an icebox. To keep the cars and trucks in running condition, the equivalent of a small machine shop is taken along. Six- and seven-course meals that would not disgrace the best hotels in Paris or London are served regularly with a choice of several dishes and the best of wines. With such elaborate safaris, usually two or even three white hunters go along: one to handle the supplies and trucks, one to keep the clients entertained and one to find game.

As was only natural, the clients who wanted the luxury of these big safaris were seldom greatly interested in hunting. I remember guiding a rajah who refused to step out of his touring car to shoot a rhino which, I believe, carried a world-record horn. The rajah was afraid of getting the cuffs of his trousers wet in the tall grass. He insisted on trying to approach the animal in his car and the rhino took fright and galloped away.

Yet a short time after I was with this rajah, I had the privilege of guiding Commander Glen-Kidston, a British sportsman, who wanted to go to the Northern Frontier after oryx, a large straight-horned antelope. We took with us nothing but the bare essentials. In the desert country along the Abyssinian border the heat was so terrible that the rhinos scooped hollows in the sand during the day to bear the strain. The country was being continually raided by Abyssinian slave traders and bandits. We could hear their war parties go past our camp at night, but although they must have known we were there, they never bothered us. The local natives lived in such terror of strangers that the poor creatures urinated with fear when I spoke to them. Very few safaris ever penetrated that country and it was easy to see why. Water was more precious than gold. The natives dug in the ground for it and considered themselves well paid for an hour's hard work by a few mouthfuls of dirty seepage. At one camp, robbers stole our water bags. We had to punch holes in our cans of beans and

drink the stale fluid out of them until we reached the next water hole. In return for all our trouble, Commander Glen-Kidston managed to bag what was at that time the world-record oryx and a greater kudu that was a Kenya record.

Until that time I had been receiving 50 pounds a month as a white hunter. After I returned from that safari, my salary was gradually increased to 200 pounds. At that time, this was considered top salary for a white hunter.

I have always liked to guide sportsmen who were interested in getting fine trophies. I was guiding Mrs. Dorothy McMartin when she bagged a record Hunter's hartebeest. I helped Major Bruce to get a Thomson gazelle with 16¾-inch horns. I, myself, have shot a roan antelope with horns just one-half inch short of the record and have the head of a record suni gazelle that I collected in the Nyeri Forest. Yet I must say that in recent years the passion for "trophy hunting" has reached a point that I consider ridiculous. For a man to spend weeks or months hoping to get an animal with perhaps another quarter of an inch of horn or a half an inch more of span simply to see his name in Rowland Ward's *Records of Big Game* seems to me a bit foolish.

Records are often freak animals and the trophy instead of being a particularly fine specimen is actually deformed. Record rhino horns are often long, thin things like overgrown knitting needles, not at all an impressive trophy from my point of view. I prefer a really fine natural horn—thick, powerful, and of reasonable length. Such a trophy gives a far better idea of the animal and the strength of his weapon. By the same token, a buffalo with no boss—the boss being the thick, central base to which the horns proper are attached—will often have an extra length of horn. Yet such an animal bears no more relation to a true buffalo bull than a circus giant does to a strong, well-developed average man. These malformations may be of interest to a zoologist but I cannot see that they have a proper place among the trophies of a sportsman.

I soon learned to study my clients carefully before we started out into the bush. During my first few months as a white hunter, I would merely guide my client up to a good trophy and then expect him to do the rest. I found this was not a good practice. Some men would panic, others would show unwise boldness, many would fire wildly at the animal regardless of where they hit him. Then I would have a wounded rhino or elephant on my hands. So I tried to find out what sort of man I had as my client and laid my plans accordingly.

Sometimes having a client who is afraid of big game works out very well for the white hunter. I once guided a Swiss millionaire who was greatly impressed by the fine, 150-pound elephant tusk that hung in the Nairobi railway station. "I want you to find me an elephant like that," he informed me on our first meeting. I told the man that he was some 30 years too late, for big ivory like that is not common. However, it so chanced that after a few days in the bush we came on a bull carrying magnificent tusks, at least equal to those in Nairobi. After a careful hunt, we came up with him. My client fired. His bullet chipped the bull's right tusk and the elephant turned and ran. My client, thinking the elephant was charging him, bolted in

the opposite direction. When I finally caught up with the man he was too paralyzed by funk to go after the bull. Yet he kept muttering, "Those tusks! I must have those tusks!" Finally I went after the bull myself and dropped him. My client was so delighted that he presented me with a fine car. I am enough of a Scotsman to find safaris like that very pleasant.

Other clients were brave to the point of rashness. While I was lion hunting with two Canadians, we went out one morning to visit our baits. We stopped at one bait and saw it was undisturbed. While we were looking at it, the wind shifted and carried our scent into a patch of tall grass a few yards away. Suddenly three heavy-maned lions stood up in the grass. They had been feeding on their own kill a short distance from our bait.

We were between the lions and a heavily bushed river bank. The lions rushed past us, intent on reaching the cover. Before I could move, the two Canadians had tumbled out of the car and were racing after the lions. The men and lions sprinted across the open ground that led to the river, the lions lashing themselves with their tails as they ran as though to whip up fresh energy. Then one lion veered to the left, racing across the plains in gigantic bounds. Instantly both sportsmen pulled up in their stride and threw up their magazine rifles. They fired at the two remaining lions, which tumbled head over heels like shot hares. These two young men played at hunting very much as they might have played at football.

Perhaps a hunter's most disagreeable task is to guide a man who behaves like a stoat in a hen house, killing for the very love of causing destruction. I have done my share of shooting but always with a purpose. Yet some men delight in killing simply for the pleasure of seeing death. Often a client would say to me, "Hunter, I am allowed 500 animals on my license and as yet I have only shot 200. Are you sure I can get the rest in the next few days?" However, with most of them the mania soon passes. I have guided several Americans who came over hoping for a big bag, only to throw their rifles away after a few days and devote the rest of the trip to photography.

I was with another man who took great pride in his shooting. He had the best of firearms and talked knowingly about muzzle velocity, calibers and ammunition. One day we happened on a herd of warthogs and the pigs broke across the plain at full gallop, their tails carried straight up in the air as is the custom of the beasts. My client threw up his magazine rifle and opened fire on the pigs. I watched with great interest while his bullets went high, wide and every other way except among the porkers.

After the barrage had finished and I was thinking what a good thing it was that in the wilds of the African bush you seldom heard of accidents from traveling bullets, my client turned to me and said solemnly, "Hunter, I hope you didn't disapprove of this slaughter but I like blotting out these swine because they spread disease." I assured him I had no objections. Privately, I only wished I would never be any closer to death than those warthogs were.

One spring about the middle of the 1920's, I was called into the office of Captain A. T. A. Ritchie, the head of the Kenya Game Department. Captain Ritchie laid before me one of the most remarkable offers that has

ever been made to a professional hunter in Africa.

To understand the reasons behind his offer, you must first know the unusual conditions prevailing in part of the colony at that time.

In the center of Kenya lies a great tableland—the home of a war-like tribe of herdsmen named the Masai. The Masai are a nation of spearmen. They scorn the bow and arrow as the tools of cowards who are afraid to close with their enemies. The young warriors of the tribe, called the moran, subsist mainly on a diet of fresh blood and milk. This they consider the only proper food for fighting men. The neighboring tribes lived in terror of the Masai for none of them could stand against a Masai war party. For sport, the moran amuse themselves by killing lions with their spears—a feat I would have considered well-nigh impossible. In the old days, the Masai had lived almost completely on other tribes, much as any predatory animal lives on its weaker neighbors.

Now it is a strange fact that although the true hunting animals that insist on killing their own prey, such as hawks and wild dogs, have no natural enemies they seldom increase in numbers. They live at such a high pitch that they use themselves up very quickly. Also, in spite of their strength and ferocity, they are strangely delicate while their prey is apt to be much more hardy. This is also true of humans. When the British government stopped the raiding, the tribes near the Masai increased so in population that they became a major problem. But the Masai, with their whole way of life changed, were threatened with extinction. They were forced to raise more cattle as a means of livelihood. Partly as a result of the overcrowding caused by the increased herds, a terrible epidemic of rinderpest swept the district. The cattle died by the thousands until only a minor number of breeding stock remained.

Lions readily became scavengers, and with the plains littered by the carcasses of cattle, these big cats increased greatly in numbers. Weakening cubs that would soon have died under normal conditions grew to maturity and thus in a surprisingly short space of time the Masai country was overrun with lions. When the epidemic had run its course and there were no more dead cows lying about, the lions turned on the live cattle. The Masai sallied out with spear and shield to defend the precious remnants of their breeding stock but for every lion killed, one or two of the young moran were mauled.

So many of the warriors were injured fatally in these lion hunts that the elders of the tribe feared the Masai were losing all their best men. In the old days, the Masai would have corrected this state of affairs by raiding other tribes for more women and cattle. But under present conditions they had no solution except to appeal to the government for help.

"This is a task for an experienced hunter," Captain Ritchie told me. "After considerable discussion, the game department decided that you are the man best qualified for the task. We want the trouble-giving lions killed in the next three months to bring the lion population within control. You will be allowed to keep the hides as your pay."

The skins of first-class, black-maned lions were then bringing 20 pounds each and even lioness hides were

worth three pounds. Although the risks were great, this would mean a large sum of money for Hilda and me. We had four children by this time and it is surprising how much children cost to raise, even in Kenya.

That evening I talked the matter over with Hilda. To kill 10 or even 20 lions in brush country could be done by an experienced hunter without too great risk. But to kill 100 in the short space of time mentioned would almost certainly mean a serious mauling sooner or later. Hilda, who is a very shrewd person, came up with an excellent idea.

"Do you remember Captain Hurst's pack of hounds that you used to hunt lions in Ngorongoro? They were a great help to you. Why don't you use dogs in this work?"

Here was an inspiration, but Captain Hurst's kangaroo hounds had long ago been sold and I had no idea where to get a similar pack. After trying vainly to purchase some suitable hounds, I finally went in despair to the dog pound at Nairobi. There was a motley collection of 22 dogs, all awaiting their doom as worthless strays. They were all sizes, shapes and breeds. At least with me they would have a chance for their lives, so I purchased the whole collection at 10 shillings apiece and took them home. They barked by day and howled by night. They fought with each other and with our houseboys. When things grew dull, they went out and attacked the sedate dogs of my neighbors. But in a week, I had the collection—I can hardly call it a pack—under some sort of discipline and was ready to set out for the Masai Reserve.

The government had provided me with six oxen, for dragging bait to different spots in the reserve. With these valuable but slow-moving creatures, a few native porters and my dogs, I set out for Masai land.

We followed the main highway to Konza about 80 miles southeast of Nairobi and then turned almost due west. After a day's trek, we began to leave behind the forested country and come into the open plains. The thatched huts of the Kikuyu, an agricultural people who were long the favorite prey of the Masai, grew fewer. The cultivated shambas disappeared and ahead of us lay the open grassland, dotted with game. Here was perfect grazing country and here, for untold ages, the Masai had lived, pasturing their cattle beside the herds of zebra, and wildebeest. The air was clear and cool, a pleasant thing to breathe, and not a house or a road to mar the sweep of the great rolling country. We went on and on, farther and farther into the wilds of the reserve. I would have little cared if I never returned to Nairobi, for here was Africa as God made it before the white man arrived and began to deface the country with villages and farms. At night we camped wherever we happened to stop and when the sun rose over the hills, we went on again following no guide but our own wills.

One evening after we had penetrated deep into the reserve, I heard lions grunting around the camp. From the deep-drawn quality of the sounds, I knew them to be males. At dawn the next morning, I saw my first Masai, two young moran who were out lion hunting and had seen my camp. Completely self-possessed, they came strolling up to my tent and stood leaning on their long spears as they studied me. They were different from any natives

I had yet met—tall, slender men with very delicate features more finely cut than those of a white man. There is even a theory that the Masai are the descendants of the ancient Egyptians who traveled south on some great migration in the distant past. These young warriors had their faces painted red with ochre and outlined with white chalk made from powdered bones. Each man wore only one piece of clothing, a blanket thrown carelessly around his body and fastened at the shoulder.

I told the moran that I had come to kill the lions. The warriors seemed rather amused at this idea and said I would have trouble killing lions with nothing but a gun. A spear was the proper weapon to use on a lion. The Masai have a great contempt for firearms, dating back to the old days when a Masai war party had little trouble defeating Arab slave traders armed only with muzzle-loading muskets.

Apparently to call my bluff, one of the young men told me that he knew of two lions not far from camp. His friend chimed in, saying these animals were particularly fine specimens and he would be delighted to see me have a go at them. Now I had not intended making my first hunt before such a critical audience. The dogs were completely untrained and I had no idea in what kind of country these lions might be. But as the two young men were regarding me with amused contempt, I felt duty bound to do my best. I told them to lead on, calling to one of my porters to unleash the dogs.

The Masai led me to a drift, the dry bottom of a ravine that in the rainy season turns to a roaring torrent. The floor of the drift was covered with sand and the Masai easily picked up the lions' spoor and began tracking. The dogs trotted along, examining the strange scent doubtfully. We rounded a bend in the winding course of the drift and saw before us two lions lying stretched out on the sand like big cats. They both rose and stood glowering at us. When the dogs saw what they had been trailing, they took one horrified look and most of the pack fled, yelping in panic. None of them had ever seen a lion before or even imagined that such a creature existed. But four dogs of Airedale strain bravely stood their ground.

Neither the Masai nor I could spare any thought for the dogs. The two moran stood with their spears upraised waiting for the charge. A noble sight. I took quick aim for the chest of the largest cat and fired. He reared at the impact of the bullet, grunted and fell heavily on his side. His companion promptly bolted into some heavy bush on the left bank of the drift. Instantly my four Airedales charged in and began to worry the dead lion. I let them pull at the mane to their hearts' content, and when the rest of the pack gingerly returned, I encouraged them to do the same. There were two other dogs of remote collie ancestry that also seemed to show pluck and I hoped with these six animals to build up a true pack of lion dogs.

When the dogs had wearied of worrying the dead lion, I went on with them toward the bush where the second cat had taken refuge. As we approached, I heard the lion give a low, harsh growl of warning. The Airedales and collies promptly charged the bush, barking in fury, while the rest circled the cover, giving tongue but not caring to approach. One of the Masai tossed a stone into

the cover. The lion charged out a few feet, making a feint at one of the furious Airedales, and then dodged back before I could get in a shot.

The dogs were now growing bolder. I could tell where the lion was from the movements of the upper twigs in the cover. The braver dogs were crawling through the bush to drive him out, keeping up a furious yelling. I knew it would not be long now before the lion charged and steadied myself to meet the attack.

Suddenly the bushes swayed violently and the lion burst out and came for me at uncanny speed. He was bunched up almost in a ball, his ears flattened back and his back arched. He seemed to fly through the air across the sandy bottom. One of my gallant Airedales met the charge full on and tried to seize the monster by the throat. The lion knocked him over as a child might knock over a toy. Without even pausing in his charge he rushed toward me, ignoring the rest of the pack that were snapping at his flanks.

When he was within 10 yards, I fired. The bullet hit him fairly between the eyes. He dropped without a quiver. In the cool morning air, a tiny curl of smoke rose from the bullet hole.

News seems to travel through Africa with the speed of radio. When we returned to camp, there was a crowd of young warriors waiting to greet me. I can only suppose they heard the noise of the shots and hurried to the spot. There was wild jubilation and my first two friends informed me that the crowd had come to take me to a spot where lions were thicker than grass. They expected me to start off at once but I told them I could not break camp until the next day.

At daybreak the next morning we started off, the Masai trotting ahead with their spears and balancing their huge buffalo-hide shields on their shoulders. These shields are bulky affairs weighing 50-odd pounds, and yet the moran carry them like feathers. They are painted with elaborate designs in black, red and white, the patterns



"The open plains were dotted with herds of every kind."

erving somewhat the same purpose as the heraldic devices of our forefathers.

By noon we had reached the foothills of the Embarasha Mountains. The mountains threw out great spurs into the valley, each spur covered with fine, short grass dotted with tiny wild flowers. The slopes of the spurs were not precipitous but they made a steep climb. The moran bounded up them like springbok but with our heavy-footed oxen we had to zigzag back and forth up the grades. When we reached the top of a spur we would follow along it for a mile or two until it dropped away into the next valley. That meant another climb—this time down. Then we followed the valley to the next rise.

Late in the afternoon while we were toiling through some open brush, the moran began to give their curious yodeling calls, which were answered from just ahead. We came through the bush onto the banks of a muddy stream where a group of old men and women were watering a herd of the long-horned native cattle.

The old people clustered eagerly around us while the young Masai, with many whoops and much spear waving, told how I had killed two fine lions within a few minutes of each other. It seemed I had come to the right spot, for only a few days before lions had killed six head of their precious cattle as well as two herdsmen who had tried to defend the animals.

After we had rested and the women had brought us milk in orange-colored, goosenecked gourds, I went out to see the bodies of the cattle that had been killed. The Masai had removed most of the meat. This was unfortunate, for a lion's own kill makes a perfect bait as he will almost invariably return to the carcass to feed. I explained this to the Masai and one of the old men told me that there was a dead heifer still in the bush some 50 yards away that they had not disturbed. I inspected the dead animal and found that, although the stomach had been partly eaten by the lions, there was still plenty of flesh left. The bodies of the two herdsmen killed by the lions had also been left out in the bush but these had already been devoured by lions and hyenas. The Masai make no attempt to bury their dead, leaving the job to the scavengers that roam the plains.

I should add that these lions were not man-eaters in the true sense of the word. They had killed the herdsmen because the men had attempted to drive them away.

I trailed the lions and found they had entered a thick patch of sansevieria. They were evidently waiting in the undergrowth for night to fall so they could return to their kills. The Masai told me that when they drove their cattle into the kraal in the evening, they shouted to urge the herd along. The lions recognized these shouts and came out soon after, knowing the coast would be clear.

I asked the men if they could drive their cattle to the kraal earlier this evening while I waited in ambush beside the dead heifer. The old men were greatly amused at this idea and remarked it should work—the same system had always worked when they were fighting the Nandi. The Nandi were another warlike people who occasionally attacked the Masai.

I took up my stand in some thick bush near the dead cow and waited for evening. Just as the sun was setting, I heard the high-pitched, unmusical cries of the herdsmen

as they drove the cattle in from pasture. While I was still listening to the fading sounds, I suddenly saw three maned lions sitting dog fashion on their haunches with their ears cocked as they also listened to the faint yells. When the cries died away, the lions rose and trotted toward me in single file. I felt every nerve in my body grow tense as I waited for them to come within gunshot. They stopped at the spot where they had killed a bull and sniffed around, but the animal had been removed.

They were still just out of range. While I was waiting, a vulture came sweeping down and lit on the ground a few feet away from me. It had evidently seen my form in the bush and thought I was something to eat. I kept absolutely still for I knew if I frightened the vulture, the lions would take alarm.

The lions also saw the vulture and thinking he had found food came trotting toward me. Their heads were up and they sniffed the air like pointers trying to identify what the bird had seen. I held my fire until they were within 30 yards. Then the vulture which had been studying me with his little black eyes suddenly took alarm and with a whisk of his great wings leaped into the air. Instantly the lions stopped, looking after the alarmed vulture, and then turned to examine me more carefully.

I was still in a prone position and I had to raise myself slightly to fire. It seemed to take years while I gradually lifted my body enough to bring the rifle into position. Still keeping my eyes on the lions, I turned over the safety catch with my thumb and aimed at the leader. At the shot he dropped as though poleaxed. The others leaped back but did not run. Wild animals that have never heard firearms before apparently think the noise is thunder, for often they are not particularly alarmed by it. I fired at the next lion and hit him in the shoulder. He spun around in a circle, roaring with rage, and the third lion instantly sprang on him and they began to fight. This uninjured beast seemed to be in a maniacal rage, tail lashing, hair bristling, and mouth gaping open as he tried to crush the skull of his comrade.

I fired again and hit this animal in the shoulder. He reared like a bucking horse, and while he was still on his hind legs I fire again into his neck. He dropped without a quiver. The second lion was now also dead, whether from the effects of my bullet or the mauling he had taken from his friend I cannot say.

In the distance I could hear the whoops and yells of the Masai who had heard my shots. They came pouring through the bush and would have been overjoyed to find one of their enemies dead. But when they found all three animals lying stretched out in front of me, the whole community went mad with delight.

In the next few days I was besieged by Masai runners who had come for miles to beg me to kill their lions. Each runner vied with the others in making wild claims for his particular district. One man assured me that near his village the lions were more numerous than leaves on the trees. Another said that in his valley a man could hardly walk 50 yards without seeing several of the beasts. It seemed that no matter where I went I was sure to find plenty of lions. I started out with my oxen and dogs for the next village, where lions had [Continued on page 122]

Hunter

[Continued from page 38]

killed several cows in the last week and badly mauled an old man. A group of spear-carrying moran went with me, as they still did not like to see a man risking his life hunting lions with no protection but a gun.

When we reached the village where the latest stock killings had taken place, the natives showed me what was left of the kills. There was not enough flesh on the bones to tempt the lions back, so I set out with moran and the dogs to spoor them. The moran were excellent at spooring. Often they would lift the branches of some low bush with their spears to show me marks that I would have missed. I noticed they did not go from pug mark to pug mark but seemed to follow the trail 10 or 15 feet ahead of them. They knew the habits of lions so perfectly they could roughly tell where the animals were likely to go.

After several hours of spooring, we tracked the lions into a small belt of bush, the kind of dense cover that is the hunter's nightmare. There was no way of getting in to the lions, and yet I knew that unless they were destroyed they would be back in a few days killing more cattle and maybe the herdsmen as well. Here was the place where the dogs must prove their worth. I sent the pack into the cover.

The Masai and I waited outside. The moran leaned on their shields, the tips of their long spears resting on the ground in front of them. I stood with my rifle ready, waiting for the charge I knew must come. Suddenly all hell broke loose. I could hear the excited screaming of the dogs and the savage growling of the lions. The dogs were slowly retreating from the angry beasts, trying to lure them into the open. The Masai took a firm grip on the handles of the shields and raised their spears. I stood ready for the first lion to break cover.

Without an instant's warning, one of the lions charged out of the bush and went for the dogs. They opened out to let him through but he managed to knock over one of the pack with a swing of his paw. The motion was so swift I could hardly follow it. I simply saw the dog go down. At once the rest of the pack charged in, snapping at the lion's rear to distract

him from their friend. The lion whirled on them, cuffing left and right, as fast as an expert boxer could use his fists. I fired. The lion gave one great bound into the air. The second he hit the ground, he was covered by the dogs. Before I could call them off, a second lion bolted out some distance from us.

Instantly the Masai were after him with upraised spears, giving their wild, yodeling whoops. The lion went bounding across the plain in great leaps that must have easily been 20 feet long, with the dogs and Masai on his tail. For a while the lion kept ahead, but eventually the dogs caught up to him. I was panting in the rear and by the time I came up, the dogs had formed a circle around the lion to hold him. The Masai had also formed a circle and were beginning to close in with their spears.

I shouted to the fools to stop. They hesitated and I raised my rifle, trying to get in a shot without killing one of the hysterical dogs. The lion saw me. Suddenly he charged. He leaped right over the dogs to get at me. I waited until he was clear of the pack and then fired. My first shot sent him down in a whirl of sand and dust. In an instant he was on his feet again but now he was motionless and a perfect target. My second shot hit him in the chest and he died instantly.

In the next few weeks I killed over 50 lions with the dogs. After seeing a number of their friends killed, the pack became more cautious and kept well away from the lions' paws. I never saw a lion attempt to bite one of the dogs. They always used their claws, striking at their tormentors with those lightning-quick blows. Apparently they didn't consider dogs worthy of a bite. When the dogs fastened on a lion to pull him off one of their friends, they grabbed him by the mane rather than the hide. I suppose the mane offered a better grip.

In the bush, the advantage was all with the lions. I began to lose so many dogs that I did not dare to use the pack except to pick up a special animal that was a confirmed cattle killer. Most of the time I left the pack in camp and continued to hunt as best I could.

At this time I had the good luck to meet a Masai who was to hunt with me for years to come. His name was Kirakangano and he became my right hand—a third barrel to my rifle, so

to speak. A magnificent tracker and absolutely fearless, I relied on him as I did on myself. Such men are all too rare. Several times I have had the terrible experience of firing both barrels of my rifle at a charging beast to no avail and then turning to snatch my second rifle from the hands of my gunbearer only to find the man has run. But Kirakangano never let me down.

With Kirakangano as leader, I formed small groups of spearmen to make organized drives down gullies that lay between the mountain ridges. These gullies were full of thick brush and here the lions would lie up during the day. I stayed at one end of the gully and the moran drove the lions down to me, shouting and waving their spears and shields as they forced their way through the brush. By lying on the top of the ridge so the lions passed below me, I kept out of their sight and also above the level of scent. From one such ambush, I shot seven lions in quick succession. As one lion after another dropped to my shots, the others would whirl around snarling to see where the firing was coming from. But it never seemed to occur to them to look upward.

My time on the Masai Reserve was beginning to run out. I had up to now shot 70 lions and still the tribe had cause for complaint. Captain Ritchie wished me to eliminate the damage doers, so I decided to try shooting from a thorn boma at night. This is hardly a sporting way of hunting, but I had come to the reserve not for sport but on business and so I went ahead with my plans for a night shoot.

I hitched a yoke of oxen to a zebra that I had shot and had them drag the bait several miles across the plains, finally leaving the carcass on the upwind side of a likely cover. If there were any lions in the thicket, the wind would carry the scent of the zebra to them. At the same time, other lions wandering across the plains at night would come upon the dragged trail and follow it like hounds until they reached the bait. Thus I was fairly sure of getting some visitors.

My porters cut brush wood and thorn branches making a horseshoe-shaped boma near the bait where I intended to spend the night with Kirakangano. We made sure the zebra was well staked down so the lions could not carry it away. I took

particular care to have my boys cover the top of the boma with double layers of thorn bush so no light could come through. I have often seen lions run from a bait when I made a slight motion in the boma, and for a long time I could not understand how they knew I was inside. Later, I discovered that the cats could see moving shadows cast by starlight filtering through the top of the hide.

When all was ready, Kirakangano and I took up our positions in the boma. I gave him a flashlight and showed him how to throw the beam of light on the bait when the time came to shoot so I could see to aim. Kirakangano was fascinated by the torch and kept switching it on and off until I told him to stop. I had two rifles loaded beside me and cartridges in my pockets and belt and on the ground near me. No matter where I reached, I could not fail to grab a handful.

As it grew dusk, several hyenas slunk up to the bait, followed by two jackals. The jackals sat anxiously feasting their eyes on the zebra while the hyenas slunk back and forth to make sure all was clear. Finally one dashed in and grabbed the exposed entrails, dashing off with them and giving vent to wailing guffaws. The others now came closer. They began to pull at the bait. Then I saw them rush off while the jackals approached confidently. That meant lions were coming in. I had my rifle in position and waited.

In a few minutes I heard the low, hollow, deep and unmistakable breathing of lions behind the boma. They circled us and suddenly sprang on the zebra. I whispered to Kirakangano to switch on the light. To my astonishment, I heard him whisper "Taballo!" Masai for "Wait!" I glanced over at him and saw the man was paralyzed with fear. The unaccustomed experience of shooting lions at night from a boma had completely unnerved him, yet in daylight this man would walk up to an infuriated lion with nothing but his spear.

I grabbed the torch from his hand and flashed it through a small opening overlooking the bait. What a sight! There were at least 20 lions and lionesses a few yards in front of us, some standing by the carcass, others lying down and licking the bait. Two fine, black-maned lions stood staring at the light, the essence of defiance, their manes and chests covered with blood and filth from the

stomach contents of the zebra—for they had already begun to feed.

By this time Kirakangano was literally shivering with terror, but I knew he would gain confidence as soon as the shooting began. Wedging the torch between two thorn branches so it shone on the scene I slipped my rifle barrel through a hole in the brush and fired at what seemed to be the larger of the two males. A chorus of grunts and savage growls went up from the pride. I fired again and yet again. The animals had retreated beyond the range of the torch so I stopped to reload. Kirakangano was beginning to recover from his funk and I gave him a piece of tobacco to chew on. Masai love the weed. The sting of the tobacco seemed to restore him somewhat and the sight of the three dead lions was more than any Masai could regard indifferently. The pride had begun to return.

Kirakangano grabbed the torch and began to shine it from one lion to another, moving so rapidly in his excitement I had scarcely time to aim. A lion dropped at every report of my gun. It was a stern measure but it had to be. The lions paid no attention to the shots. They would turn to sniff a dead friend fallen beside them and then go on with their feeding.

Ten lions now lay dead around the zebra. Then for some reason a fine black-maned lion came sneaking around our boma from the side. He stood there, giving vent to some bloodcurdling sounds. The ground seemed to quiver with the reverberation of his roars. This outburst of sound alarmed the rest of the pride and they slowly withdrew with the old male following them.

I had no intention of allowing these fine hides to be torn to pieces by scavenger hyenas. When I was sure the lions had departed, I told Kirakangano to hold the light on the scene while I went out and pulled the dead animals closer to the boma. The Masai had now lost all his fear and was very keen. I left the boma and started toward the dead lions. I had almost reached them when the light suddenly went out.

Calling to Kirakangano to turn the torch on, I took another few steps forward. Suddenly I stumbled over the supple, hot body of a lion and fell on top of him. I heard a muffled breathing beneath me and a low grunt. The lion was still alive. I flung myself clear and raced for the boma. I expected every second to feel the

lion on my back but I reached the doorway and bolted inside. There was Kirakangano sitting with the pieces of the torch laid around him. He had become curious as to how the strange thing worked and had taken it apart while I was out in the darkness stumbling over wounded lions.

I spoke to him pretty roundly and he apologized. I reassembled the torch and put another bullet in the lion to make sure he was properly dead. Then we settled down to wait. During the night two more prides came to the bait. When dawn broke, I saw a sight I doubt if anyone has ever seen before or will ever see again. Eighteen lions lay dead before me.

The years immediately following my introduction to the Masai were big years for me. Nairobi was the heart of the big-game country and nearly every sportsman who came to Africa to shoot big game outfitted in Nairobi. I was seldom idle. I regarded the Masai Reserve as my own private shooting territory. The Masai were my friends and I was sure of a warm welcome in any of their kraals. I could guarantee any client I took there some of the best shooting in Africa and I profited by it. Today, the reserve with its great herds of game and magnificent lions is a prime tourist attraction. It has been cut up by roads and the best camping spots are all well marked. But in those days, few white hunters were acquainted with the district.

However, when I grew too tired of guiding, I would go off on my own—generally ivory hunting. In those days, there was little or no restriction on the numbers of elephants shot in the outlying districts and I made good use of this fact. Hunting elephants was a paying business. At that time ivory was selling for 24 shillings a pound—say an average of 150 pounds for a pair of good tusks. An experienced hunter could drop an elephant with nearly every shot, and a .450 No. 2 cartridge cost only one and sixpence. I was enough of a Scotsman to like a bargain like that.

One way and another, I was doing well as a white hunter. Counting the sale of ivory and the occasional gifts made me by some wealthy client, such as an expensive rifle or some *de luxe* camping equipment, I was making as much as the governor of the colony.

At the same time, I was always glad to accept a request to do control work for the Game Department. It occasionally happened that an elephant

herd would start raiding native shambas. Once the beasts got in the habit, they would come back again and again until they had wiped out the entire cultivated area. When natives reported a herd of persistently raiding elephants the department would assign a professional hunter to wipe out the nuisance. My usual arrangement with the department was that I could keep the ivory in return for my work.

I remember one such hunt especially. I had been asked to deal with some marauding elephants in the vicinity of Mt. Jomvu, in the extreme southeastern corner of Kenya. I had my old tracker and gunbearer, Saseeta with me. When it comes to dealing with elephants, I consider that Saseeta stands alone among all Kenya bearers. He is not only an excellent tracker but also steady to a incredibly high degree. He is also remarkably quick at changing rifles and loading. When one is shooting elephants with a double-barreled gun which permits only two shots, this is an important consideration. I doubt if even a trained English loader at a pheasant drive could give Saseeta any points on rapid loading. My old Masai friend, Kirakangano, had never been able to master this knack. Also at this time he was back in the reserve, checking on his cattle and keeping his wife pregnant.

Saseeta and I traveled by train to Kwale and then went on by foot to Jomvu. At Jomvu, I was near my well-beloved Marenge Forest. There is no place in Kenya that I prefer to this great wilderness with its huge trees. Unlike the semi-barren bush country, the Marenge is full of life. Monkeys and squirrels leap through the branches over your head. Hornbills with double-decker beaks, leap up before you with their heavy, swishing flight. The little plantain eaters in rich mauve and deep crimson jig-hop from one branch to another until they reach the shelter of the foliage.

There were also more sinister animals. I was about to step over a fallen log, covered with moss and draped with delicate little forest ferns, when Saseeta gave my jumper a quick tug and pointed. A smoky-green snake lay coiled on an overhanging branch. Its head was raised and it was studying me coldly, waiting until I took another step. It was a cobra. I killed the creature with my rifle.

When we arrived at the native vil-

lage where the raiding herd had been doing damage, the inhabitants swarmed out to greet me as their savior. They showed me the ruins of their little cultivated patches, tiny fields hacked out of the forest by the most primitive of tools.

Saseeta and I started out at dawn the next morning on the trail of the herd. On the way we passed what had once been a flourishing coconut plantation. Its owners had fled, unable to cope with the elephants. Only three towering palms survived. The rest lay twisted and trampled. Their wide, fanlike leaves were yellow. We waded through the remains of a sweet potato patch, smothered now in a tangle of vines.

We came on some elephant droppings with two red squirrels picking bits of undigested corn kernels from the mass. Saseeta touched the droppings. They were still warm. The herd must be just ahead. Then we heard them. They were making all sorts of noises, gurgling and sighing with an occasional shrill scream from the cows. As we got closer, I could see bush tops swaying as the herd moved about. Saseeta was beside me, constantly testing the wind with his fungus powder puff.

A group of brown, earth-colored masses loomed up among the trees. We crept to within 30 yards of them. It was a small segment of the main herd, composed of cows and two young bulls. I could see no vulnerable spots. Then one of the cows raised her head. I instantly dropped her. The rest of the herd milled about for a minute in panic. I was able to get two more before they broke.

All around us there was crashing in the undergrowth as the terrified herd dashed off. Saseeta and I started off on the spoor of the two young bulls.

The local natives had gone along with us as scouts. Now they were more of a nuisance than a help. They had spread out through the forest and I could see how the two bulls had shied away whenever they encountered the taint of human scent. An elephant has such an acute sense of smell that he does not have to cross a man's trail to wind it. He can pick up the odor many feet away. Before we had gone more than a few yards, there was a sudden crashing in the bush and both bulls rushed toward us. They were not charging. They had simply lost track of our position and were trying to escape.

They went by us in single file, one

following the other. As they passed, I fired right and left barrels at them, aiming for the shoulder of each. Neither dropped. They crashed on through the heavy foliage, making it bend and break. We followed. The bush was so thick I had trouble seeing, but at last I made out a great brownish object that looked much like a vast anthill. I tried to circle the bush to get a fair shot, but the cover was so dense no man could get through it.

I went back to Saseeta. The elephant had not moved. I could not tell which was rump and which was head, but the part farthest off seemed to slant sharply, so I decided the closer part was the shoulder. I had to stand on tiptoe to fire. After the shot, there was absolutely no reaction. Not a sound escaped the elephant, although I knew I must have hit him.

When hunting big game with a double-barrel rifle, I always like to reload a barrel after firing so I am sure of having two shots in case of a charge. This, of course, if I have time. I opened the breech of my rifle to put in another shell. To do this, I had to glance down. Suddenly I heard Saseeta cry out. When I looked up, the elephant was on me.

I had heard nothing. The bull had charged through the thick cover apparently without making a sound. There was no time to aim. I flung the breech shut and fired blindly at the great beast towering over me. I hit him between the eyes. He came down on his knees, his tusks plowing up the ground. He was just eight feet away. I stood there very much shaken, and then looked about for my gun-bearer. He was unconcernedly picking up my discarded cartridge case to use as a snuff container. In Saseeta's simple code, I was invulnerable. Nothing could hurt the white man with his potent medicine. I wish I had similar confidence in myself.

On investigation, we found the other elephant lying dead near the spot where the first bull had been standing.

Saseeta told me that as soon as I opened the breech of my gun the elephant had charged. The tiny mechanical sound had brought him on, although he had ignored the report of my gun and even the impact of my bullet hitting him. We examined his footprints in the bush. He must have literally skimmed over the ground. He had been on me in two strides.

While I was looking at some curious ticks on the dead animal, all of different colors, I heard a noise coming toward us through the bush that sounded like an oncoming wave. For an instant I could not imagine what it was. Then I realized that the elephant herd had turned and was coming back toward us.

There was no use running. We had no time. Also, I hate to turn my back on an elephant. They have a wonderful knack of stealing up on you unaware with a sure, collecting trunk. I was using a Gibbs .505 and had every confidence in the 525-grain solid bullets. They are indeed a great stopper. So we waited.

I saw a group of five elephants break through the cover and halt momentarily by the dead body of the first bull. They rent the air with a series of piercing screams when they saw the corpse. Then the rest of the herd came crashing through the bush toward us. Shooting was fast and furious. I fired a left and right at two cows in the lead. I could see their heads literally rock from the impact of the heavy bullets. Elephants were piled up in front and on both sides of us. Saseeta and I were sprayed by gushes of trunk-blown blood from the beasts that had fallen near us but I could not get sufficient time to finish them off. My rifle barrels became so hot that my left hand was severely blistered but I hardly felt the pain at the time.

When the herd finally drew off, 12 elephants were left dead on the ground around us.

Another time the Kenya Game Department was confronted by a different control problem. In the vicinity of Thomson's Falls, a community some 100 miles north of Nairobi, a herd of buffalo had been doing great damage. The animals were destroying shambas and had killed several natives. Captain Ritchie had come to the conclusion that this herd must be dealt with. I cooperated by killing over 200.

Because of their strength and ferocity, buffalo have always been a favorite quarry of mine. I have hunted them not only in Kenya, but also in Uganda and the Congo. Although I am far from underestimating the powers of this great animal, I think the dangers of buffalo hunting may have been somewhat overestimated.

I believe that deaths caused by this animal can generally be laid to two causes—either a man has become so

intent on following the spoor of a wounded buffalo that he has forgotten to watch ahead or he has insisted on using a light-caliber gun that does not possess enough shocking power to stop a charge.

In all of my memories one hunt stands out above all others. It will doubtless rank as one of the greatest big-game hunts that was ever undertaken. The work involved was carried out at the urgent request of the Wakamba tribe in the Machakos District. Its principal object was to make extra land available for settlement.

Under British protection the population of the Wakamba tribe had increased at least sixfold, and even in the settled areas, rhinos had simultaneously increased to an alarming extent, so much so that the rhinos disputed the natives' existing huts and crops. Natives were afraid to wander out after nightfall. The rhinos had become a genuine menace.

Had Wakamba bowmen been let loose with arrows, the place would have been living hell—complete with numbers of wounded rhinos at large.

But there was the added problem of tsetse fly control. Tsetse flies live in bush and when the bush is destroyed, the flies are deprived of a breeding place. But to destroy the bush, you must first destroy the rhino. Labor gangs cannot work in bush where there are rhino. The Makueni area of the Machakos district is the greatest rhino country in Africa so this would be the biggest rhino hunt in history.

During this safari we had many close calls. Remembering some of them still makes my hair stand on end. But one incident in particular stands out in my memory. One day two natives burst panting into my camp with the news that they had located three rhino a few miles off. They had wisely left another man in a tree near the spot so he could keep track of the animals. I left at once with one of my scouts. We found the lookout still in his tree, and he informed us that the rhinos had moved on into the brush but we could find their spoor by a large cactus he had marked down. The native was right and we picked up the spoor with no trouble.

The thorns were bad. That bug-bear of the bush, the wait-a-bit, was ever present, its thorns in pairs like miniature pike bait hooks. There was also plenty of low acacia with thorns

facing back to back. Then we came to some very dense stuff through which ran a narrow rhino trail like a tunnel. We started through this opening bent nearly double.

We crawled along in single file. Then ahead of me I saw two earthy-colored shapes. The shadows cast by the leafy foliage made their outlines a mere jumble of light and shade. Try as I would I could not tell head from stern.

My scout pointed toward our left. He had seen the third rhino. From my position I could not see this animal so I concentrated on the two before us. Just ahead was an open space where we could stand. My scout and I reached it and straightened up with relief. Without taking my eyes off the two rhino, I motioned to the scout to keep an eye on the third animal. At my slight motion, the pair in front of me became suspicious and swung around to face us. They had been mating for I could see the dried mud marks of the bull on the back of the cow.

I fired at the cow. She slumped heavily to her knees. The bull tore around in a circle giving me a chance to reload. Then he charged. A bullet from my right barrel hit him above the brisket. He never flinched and came on with head down. Suddenly I heard crashing in the bush on our left. The third rhino was also charging us from that direction.

I did not dare to take my eyes off the oncoming bull. I fired again. The shot hit him fairly below the ear and he went down. At the same moment I heard the third rhino right at my side. He tore past me and I saw my scout hanging on his horns. I reloaded again quickly. From the angle where I was standing it was almost impossible to deliver a killing shot without hitting the boy. I waited a fraction of a second and then fired for the rhino's shoulder. The animal dropped and the boy shot off his head like a rider whose horse has refused at a jump. The boy lay motionless and I could only think, "My God, I've shot them both." I was positive that my bullet had passed through the scout's body before hitting the rhino. I did not even have the courage to go over and examine the boy.

Then I saw the boy move. I can think of no sight that has ever given me greater joy. I ran over to him, my first move being to examine his body for a bullet hole. There was none. I must have missed him by a fraction

of an inch. The horns had not gone through his body. As the rhino lowered his head for the toss, the boy had been able to grab the foremost horn and hold himself clear of it while the animal carried him past me. I consider this one of the narrowest escapes I have seen in my years of hunting.

We hunted for three months. By November, my work was finally finished. The rhinos had been dealt with in the districts that the government wished to have cleared of brush. I had killed 163. Such numbers may indeed appear incredible, but my records are on file with the game department in Nairobi.

My boys and I started back toward Machakos. We could walk freely through the brush now for there was little chance of meeting a rhino. Walking in a single file, we topped a little rise. I stopped in astonishment and I could hear the amazed boys gasping with surprise as they joined me.

Three months before we had crossed the same country that lay before us. Then it had been a maze of thorn bush and acacia, cut by a tangle of narrow rhino trails. Now it lay bare as a polished table. The labor gangs had been moving steadily behind us, cutting down the bush and clearing the land. What a short time before had been as wild a bit of Africa as God ever made was now farming country. Not a tree or bush remained. Now that the scrub was gone, I could see the white network of rhino trails criss-crossing over the whole land. Already the grass was beginning to obliterate them. The freakish beast that had traveled those trails for centuries were now dead and gone. Here and there on the plain I could see piles of their whitened bones. In other spots were great black rings, showing where the labor gangs had piled the brush into heaps and burnt it.

This was not my only rhino hunt. As more and more demands were made by the natives for fresh land, I was sent back time and time again. Altogether, I have shot over 1,000 rhino. Is it worth killing off these strange and marvelous animals just to clear a few more acres for a people that are ever on the increase? I do not know. But I know this. The time will come when there is no more land to be cleared. What will be done then? In the meantime the inevitable clash between men and beasts will continue.

—J. A. Hunter