

# HUNTING BIG GAME IN EAST AFRICA

## The Ugly Rhinoceros and Smaller Game

By Capt. Fritz Duquesne



**I**f the Genius of Hell used up all his mental energy making a devil for the animal kingdom he could not have created a more uncertain, malicious and ugly brute than the rhinoceros. This animal has killed more hunters than all other big game combined. It seems to be the hired assassin of the jungle. Its success as a homicide is not due to the fact that it seeks its victim, but because its victim falls over it. If the rhino knows that there is an enemy about, it will try to get away without being seen. If, on the other hand, it thinks that by keeping still it will be passed unnoticed, it stays as silent and motionless as Gibraltar, its little hog eyes watching the direction of the noise and its nose sniffing the air. Should an enemy show up suddenly in the jungle the rhino charges like a flash, nose down and horns leveled like swords for the thrust, its huge bulk crushing through the brush like an express train. It is always a fight to the death, for a rhinoceros once in a fight wins or dies, and it mostly wins, if it is not confronted with an express rifle in the hands of a cool, good shot. It was the express in the hands of a cool shot that saved me in the encounter related here.

We had been out nearly a year and were returning to civilization, such as it is on the East African coast, with a good stock of ivory. My partner, Jappie de Villiers, a well-known Boer hunter, had fever and was expected to die at any moment. He had been carried 300 miles from the interior in a hammock. If de Villiers had not been ill I would not be alive to-day.

We were pitching camp at the Kagera river, on one of those luxuriant barren patches that are scattered like freckles over the face of the tropical forests.

I hung our rifles on the limbs of the trees, which supported my sick comrade's hammock. The porters were collecting drywood for the night fire as I watched a monster crocodile in the water making a futile effort to swallow a friend nearly as big as itself. A party of natives from a nearby village was skinning a beast we had shot for food. In another group my "boys" were opening the bundles of camping necessities. A loud grunt, followed by a Somali's cry, came from the jungle side of the camp, and the next instant the screeching Somali, followed by a huge rhinoceros, burst through the undergrowth. The Somali ran for a tree. He tripped over an ammunition box, the rhino passed him in its blind fury, and charged down on the clump of porters, scattering them like chaff before the wind. One was crushed down. Another who had stumbled rose to run, the maddened beast charged and thrust its horn through his back, battered him against a tree, and then hurled him in the air.

### Close Call for a Brave Hunter.

I was reaching for my rifle when the rhino caught sight of me. It was too late. I turned and ran toward the river. A dive would save me. I thought of the crocodiles. I felt the puff of the rhino's foul breath. My heart sank. I had one chance to jump aside and let the rhino pass. I jumped, and the roaring animal wiped its gore-stained cheek on me as it did. I doubled on my tracks, the demoniac brute frothing in fury after me. As I passed under the hammock where my comrade lay between life and death, there was a vivid flash, a deafening roar filled the world, and I fell. The rhinoceros rolled over, scattering a stream of hot blood on me from a wound in its neck. I looked up, dazed and breathless. I didn't know whether I was dead or alive. I felt the huge, throbbing carcass beside me. The yellow fever-stained, hollow-eyed face of de Villiers looked over the hammock and asked, "Are you hurt?"

"I think not," I answered. "What happened?"

I got no answer. De Villiers sank back with a groan. I sprang to the side of the hammock. I thought he was dead. His breast was covered

with blood. I opened his shirt and saw his right collar bone broken and protruding through the flesh. I forced some brandy down his throat and he revived. "What happened?" I asked again.

"You had one chance for life, and that was the death of the rhino. I had one chance in a thousand of saving you and killing the rhino. I took it and gave the rhino both barrels of the express. Your face is singed a little from the flash. The recoil of the blunderbuss has hurt my shoulder."

He put his left hand over and felt the shattered collar bone. "I suppose it's all up with me," he said. "This, on top of the fever, is too much." He smiled and fell back unconscious.

The natives who had fled returned, and we examined the five porters who got the rhino's charge. Two were dead, three badly injured.

Through the night I sat beside my unconscious comrade in the flicker of the camp fires, listening to the dull, monotonous droning of the insects in the trees, and seeing faces in the embers, one face especially, a kind, thin face crowned with white hair weeping as I told her of Jappie, her hunter son's death. The chill before dawn struck the earth. I turned to put some wood on the fire. Glaring in the grass a few yards away I saw two green phosphorescent eyes. I seized my Luger pistol and rose. Like a flash a lion sprang away before I could shoot. A little later the forest burst into thunderous roars. It seemed to be full of lions, which were attracted by the smell of the rhino's blood.

De Villiers did not die. He came through it all. He now organizes hunting expeditions into East Africa

ing my express the rest took fright and scampered off.

### Narrow Escape from Crocodiles.

The summer before last I was hunting on the Kagera. We had eaten antelope for some time and the camp was anxious for a change, so I shot a hippo for food. It was an easy thing to do. I waited till it showed its head, and bang! A spurt of blood and it was all over. As the water was deep, but not running, I knew that in the morning I ought to find my victim floating. At daybreak I was down at the river with a party of natives. As I expected, the hippo's body was floating, but, unluckily for us, on the opposite side of the river, which was teeming with crocodiles. I tried to persuade some of the natives to go in with a rope and attach it so that we could draw the hippo over. No amount of persuasion would induce them to even put their feet in the river. At last, exasperated, I seized the end of the rope and jumped into the river, boots and all, and struck out for the hippo. I had gone about a hundred strokes when a cry from the bank caused me to look around. A cold shiver of horror ran through me, for 20 yards behind, gliding silently could distinguish the brown form of a crocodile.

"Shoot!" I cried. "Shoot!" as I put every bit of energy into my stroke. The crocodile must have been near me, for the bullets that were being fired from the bank commenced to zip, zip, around my head. I was afraid to look back, expecting every moment to be seized and dragged to the bottom.

At last I reached the dead hippo and managed to drag myself out of

the water up on the slippery carcass. The exertion made my head swim. In a few minutes I was myself again. I apologized in silence to the black gentlemen on the river bank for doubting their courage. I had none left. I took my knife and cut a foothold on the carcass, and then rocked it so that it would drift to the shore. The natives told me that a well-directed bullet had hit the crocodile in the head.

**The Enormous Cost of Hunting.**  
The cost of hunting big game in Africa is enormous. One must spend a fortune before firing the first shot. The various European colonies "protect" their game by charging 50 pounds sterling (\$250) a year for a license which allows the hunter to kill two each of the pachydermata, and from two to ten of the various species of antelope. This does not protect the game, but it fills the local treasuries. Added to this is the price for porters, shikaris, headmen, etc., who have to accompany the hunter. The average expedition is made up of from 30 to 35 natives for each white man. The cost of equipping and maintaining an expedition is from \$400 to \$600 a month for each white hunter according to the district hunted in. One well-known concern with headquarters at Nairobi, that makes a business of hunting and expedition managing, equips and maintains an expedition on the field for \$600 a month, supplying everything excepting arms and liquor.

**No Tigers in Africa.**  
Of course when Mr. Roosevelt hunts, his expedition will hunt for everything his license will allow him to shoot. It will be amateur sport, not conducted from a financial point of view; there his equipment will probably be more costly than a professional one, but no better than the average sportsman uses in Africa. For instance, he will carry a taxidermist's outfit and cure and preserve his game immediately after it is shot.

As soon as a lion or leopard is killed the skin must be removed, cleaned, and treated with a taxidermic preparation of alum. Then to protect it from beetles, it must be soaked in turpentine and put in charge of a native runner, who takes it to the nearest post for preservation. Often when a skin arrives at its destination the numerous insects that infest the country have eaten it full of holes and it is absolutely worthless.

Speaking of carnivora and the other fauna of Africa, let me say for the benefit of the American writers, lecturers and artists who wish to pretend to a knowledge of African animal life that there are no yaks, alligators, kangaroos, turkeys, bears or tigers in Africa outside of a circus or a zoological garden. There are two species of rhinoceros, the bicornis or prehensile-lipped, and the sinu or square-mouthed rhino. The latter, although almost as black as its relative, is called the white rhinoceros on account of a blue slaty tinge in its skin. To be exact, there is no such thing as a white rhinoceros. Both have two horns. The Asiatic rhinoceros has but one. Crocodiles and alligators differ greatly in appearance, and the latter do not live in Africa. The Asiatic elephant is also different in appearance from its African relative.

Now about tigers, which have been treated so freely as African game in recent American articles. It all depends on one's nationality whether or not there are tigers in Africa. The leopard is called a tiger (tiger) by



THE YELLOW FEVER-STAINED FACE OF DE VILLIERS LOOKED OVER THE HAMMOCK.

and in all probability he will be one of the Roosevelt party.

### Treed by a Rhino Birthday Party.

The next day we continued our march. We had not gone far when a native brought in news of a fresh rhino spoor. I at once set out in search of the game. We were not ten minutes on the hunt when I smelled the peculiar odor of the rhino, which sometimes is very strong. I was down the wind—that is, the wind was blowing toward me from the rhino—so I was sure of getting a pretty good shot. A few minutes later I saw a long horn sticking through the high grass. It was motionless. The animal was waiting for us to pass. I took a chance and fired, hoping to hit a vital spot. My calculation was bad and the rhino scampered off at a gallop. I stood there cursing my luck when a grunt behind me nearly scared me out of my wits. I took no chances, but turned and ran. I hadn't gone 20 yards when I bumped on something in the grass and down I went. I grabbed my rifle and made for the nearest tree a few yards away. When I could get my breath I surveyed the scene from my point of vantage. I could see at least ten rhinos. The thing I fell over was a newborn baby rhino and it must have been its mother I shot at.

It is the habit of the pachydermata of Africa to collect around a female that is about to give birth to young. This is to protect the new-born weakling against the attacks of its enemies, and that is the sort of christening I ran into. I hated to interrupt the birthday party, but I couldn't let sentiment interfere with business, so I opened fire on the nearest rhino. He got it right through the heart and fell. I fired at a second and that also went down. While I was reloading

the water up on the slippery carcass. The exertion made my head swim. In a few minutes I was myself again. I apologized in silence to the black gentlemen on the river bank for doubting their courage. I had none left. I took my knife and cut a foothold on the carcass, and then rocked it so that it would drift to the shore. The natives told me that a well-directed bullet had hit the crocodile in the head.

### A Blood Curdling Gorilla Hunt.

I was commissioned by a German naturalist society to capture one of each species of African quadrupeds. A German professor accompanied me on my expedition, which set forth in a direct line west from Dar es Salaam. We succeeded in getting some of each species, with the exception of the gorilla. For weeks we wandered about the country. It was in the rainy season, and the veld, which under ordinary circumstances afforded excellent traveling, became a swamp. With our long line of native porters we literally waded our way over the country for weeks, the black, oozy slush soaking into our bones and the clay under foot gripping like glue.

Such was the predicament we were in; the spirit of revolt and desertion had seized the caravan. I called the men together and told them we were going into the Congo forests where there was no doubt about capturing a gorilla. A smile of satisfaction swept over the natives' faces, and at sunrise we started for a three months' tramp to the west of the Tanganyika.

Arriving at a Belgian army post, a pigmy prisoner told us where we could find a gorilla, and an hour's travel from the post brought us to the place where the animal made its home. It was an ideal retreat, rank with rotting vegetation, the accumulations of centuries, reaching up to our knees. Snakes glided, hissing, out of the way, and lizards, green, blue and every color of the spectrum, bolted in fear to the tree tops and blinked at us with their little, glistening eyes from safe perches among the limbs. Monkeys looked in wonder and then scampered in thousands through the forest, screeching like wild fiends and swinging from tree to tree for such distances that they seemed to fly.

### How a Jungle Looks.

Beautifully designed ferns grow under foot and creep caressingly up the great tree trunks. Flowers of fantastic beauty, weird shape, and almost maniacal expression grew up and hung down from the smooth, black, smoke-like vines, exhaling from their hearts a hundred intoxicating odors which mixed with the sickening effluvia of decay.

Insects resembling flowers and leaves crawled over everything, twigs apparently walking up the trees and leaves apparently splitting and flying in all directions. Beetles with big, hypnotic eyes and bronze backs buzzed noisily around our heads, and beautiful birds vying with one another in brilliance of plumage sailed through the air, filling the dismal forest with their passion-laden songs. The constantly dripping sap spattered from leaf to leaf, soaking into the noxious earth. It was a scene, dread and fascinating, clamoring of life inviting one to death.

For four days we camped in this hotbed of disease. Beaters went out in all directions searching for the gorilla. At last some deep, wide scratches were found on a cluster of vines. On close examination the unmistakable hair of the gorilla was found on a broken twig. After some hours we found the tree where the gorilla lived. We could tell by the gross appearance of the bark, made so by the repeated rubbing of the gorilla's body. We could tell by the fresh marks, with sap still wet, that the animal had recently ascended the tree. The scratches were short and deep, showing that it had lifted itself up and not slid down, which would have made a long, shallow scratch.

We spread a strong net around the tree in a circle sloping upward on the outer side. Around the top of the net there were drawn ropes from four directions held by half a dozen natives hidden in the bush. These were to bring the top of the net together and thus bag our game.

After waiting some hours the leaves above rustled and then opened, as a six-foot male gorilla descended unsuspectingly and entered the trap. I signaled, the four ropes were pulled at once, and we had our animal—for a moment. He roared in fury, twisting, jumping, and biting the ropes into pieces. The natives were pulled about like dolls as he tried to reach first one and then another. The professor jumped about in excitement, trying to focus a camera on the infuriated animal.

At last the mighty arms of the gorilla broke a hole through the net and he tore the rest from him as though it were a rotten rag. Most of the natives fled in dismay. The professor dropped his camera and tried to escape; in a moment the gorilla grasped him in its terrible hands.

I seized my rifle and fired in the air to frighten the animal. In my position I could not shoot at him without hitting my friend. For a moment the gorilla stood still, holding the now unconscious man as though he were a baby, the brute's lips drawn back from his glistening teeth. I thrust another cartridge in my rifle. As I did so there was a buzz in the air, and an arrow, shot by a native, pierced the gorilla's side. A roar burst from his red throat and he dropped his victim. Like a flash, before I could shoot, a native sprang from the leaves and, half-thrusting, half-thrusting, drove an assagai into the gorilla's heart. With a groan the brute fell dead.

Examining the professor, I found that his right arm was broken and that some of his ribs were crushed into his lungs. We gave up the effort to get a live gorilla and, placing the injured man in a hammock, carried him back toward the East coast. He died on the road. Out on the veld beside a native village a lonely little slab marked "Carl Bloch" sticks up above the grass. It is the professor's grave. Hunting is not all exciting adventure and laughing victory. It has its tears, like other things.

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### NERVE.



"Excuse me, can I speak to your typewriter a moment?"  
"You cannot; she's engaged."  
"That's all right; I'm the fellow she's engaged to."

### Flies.

God bless the man who first invented screens, and God pity the man who is too indolent or indifferent to place them between his family and the spreaders of deadly disease. There is absolutely no excuse for the man or woman whose place of habitation swarms with flies and whines with the voices of mosquitoes. They can be kept out, and 25 cents spent in keeping them out is equivalent to keeping out a doctor who would cost \$25, or possibly to keeping out a much less welcome visitor.

### A Resourceful Mind.

What would happen if a comet should manage to hit this whirling sphere of ours? asked the imaginative man.

"I don't know," answered Mr. Fanson, "but I'd be in favor of offering it an engagement on our home team."

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### Evidence.

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Farmer Corncrib—Yes, even the trees are behind bars.

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