

INTO THE LIONS' HAUNTS BY RAIL

Big Game-Hunting in Africa May Become as Common as Duck-Hunting Soon—Five Weeks from New York Will Take the Hunter into a Land Crowded With Rhinoceros, Elephants, Lions, Leopards, Panthers and Zebras



CAPTURING A BABY RHINOCEROS

THE stories of big game that have come out of East Africa lately, and the ease of entering the sporting paradise, owing to the practical completion of the Mombasa-Victoria Nyanza line, better known as the Uganda Railroad, have so inflamed the minds of sportsmen throughout the world that parties are being made up to go lion shooting very much as parties are made up to go duck or grouse hunting.

Uganda Land already has experienced a real "rush" of tourists and hunters, who have dropped in casually to pot a lion or an elephant. So alarming has been the influx of people who were attracted by the stories of herds of game and entered the country without any preparation and lacking the most ordinary of the necessities for African travel, that Sir Harry Johnston, the British Special Commissioner, who first told of the vast animal wealth of Uganda, where he found the strange okapi among other creatures, has asked the British government, officially to restrain all travelers unless they can show that they possess the experience, and that they are fitted with all the provisions, arms, medicines and guides that are needed in that wild country.

Like Garden of Eden.

It actually is possible for a man to leave Portland and within six weeks find himself in a country that, so far as animal life is concerned, is today as the Garden of Eden must have appeared. With the memory of skyscrapers scarcely out of his mind, with the din of trolley cars still ringing in his ears, he can see immense troops of elephants feeding, droves of zebras, gazelles and antelopes galloping everywhere, and enough lions to satisfy the most inveterate lion hunter that ever lived.

This facility of access already has tempted many men who had only the vaguest idea of what was needed in Uganda. The result is that the officials of the Protectorate have had to head a number of relief expeditions to rescue hunters and amateur explorers who tried to pierce Central Africa with a pocket camera and a sandwich for outfit. Sir Harry Johnston said in his message to the government that there hardly was a day when some distressed individual did not demand either money or provisions.

But well-organized expeditions are on the way now, and more are being formed, particularly in London and in Vienna, the two great European sporting centers. Several members of the Hapsburg family, always noted for its love of adventure in strange countries, are preparing to go into Uganda and Uganda Land, with Hungarian sportsmen who have been there already, and whose tales and trophies have set all Austria to envying them.

Short Time for Journey.

There is no exaggeration about the short time required now to reach the very heart of the finest big game region in the world. Sir Harry Johnston himself said recently:

"As a proof of the recent improvement in communications with Uganda I may say that four weeks before crossing the English Channel, I was wandering through a very wild and out-of-the-way portion of Uganda, near Mount Elgon, and in the midst of the most extraordinary quantity of big game I have ever seen in tropical Africa. This stretch of country, which lies between Eldama Ravine station and the slopes of Mount Elgon, is entirely uninhabited by natives, owing to the intertribal wars, which caused their depopulation many years ago."

Mount Elgon is only two days' march from the Uganda Railroad, and the railroad is running regularly on a scheduled time table, with only occasional interruptions, when a lion or a rampaging rhinoceros happens to take it into its head to hold the trains up for a time. One can get out at the stations of Nakuru, Morondot, Nalvasba, Nyrobi, Lukenia, Athi, Kiu or any one of a dozen others and stroll into a menagerie. Sir Harry Johnston's experience in the two days' march from Mount Elgon to the railroad station was this:

Time as Park Deer.

"The big game wandering over these elevated plains have been so long unmolested by man that they are quite as tame as deer in an English park. My expedition passed through herds of elephants and was constantly putting up rhinoceros singly or in pairs. We could actually be said to be escorted for stretches of several miles by zebras and antelopes that would approach within 10 yards. Lions were constantly met with, but they were so hard at work on hartbeest and zebra that they did not interfere with the caravan."

Up to this time lions have killed 22 of the men engaged in building the road—30 coolies and two officials. Every railroad camp along the line is protected with thorn fences and patrolled by armed guards, to prevent more occurrences of the kind. Only six months ago a lion boarded a moving car and dragged a man out of his berth at night.

So it is not to be wondered at that many, with the love of hunting in their souls, find it hard to withstand the temptation of rushing to the place where one may be able to shoot panthers and leopards and lions almost from the car windows—where the colored conductor may

reasonably be expected to shout: "Next station Makindu. All out for rhinoceros shooting. Elephant herds next station."

Even a "Baedeker" guide book has been published to teach sportsmen tourists how to go, and what to carry with them. It is a little handbook written by Captain Swayne, of the British Army. He has traveled much in Comal Land and East and Central Africa generally, and he tells just what weapons to take, how much ammunition, what clothing to carry, and how to reach the best spots for the various kinds of game.

What the Hunter Needs.

A vital feature of this unique "Baedeker" is in its hints on how much to pay for a caravan. For, despite the railroad, the time has not yet come in Uganda or Somali Land when a tourist can stroll calmly forth with nothing except a toothbrush and an umbrella and spend a few weeks in solitude. He needs shikaris (the native hunters), trailers and drivers, camels and horses, armed escorts and a retinue of servants. So, although even an ordinarily prosperous person could find the time to take a little run abroad and bag a lion or two now, the money required is a little greater than most wage-earners will find it convenient to spend off-hand.

As a specimen of what is needed, there is the experience of Count Joseph Potocki, whose adventures have incited many of the sportsmen of Austria to visit his hunting grounds. He started for East Africa with two Polish friends, Count Thomas Zamolski and Johann Grudinski. Guided by Captain Swayne's book, the party had made arrangements with a famous Somali head man Alkhar of Berbera, and he met them at Aden. Alkhar, who has guided many of the best-known of the modern explorers, possesses entire command of English, and is a man of unquestioned courage and uncommon executive ability. Arrived at Berbera, the three hunters there found a small army that had been gathered to help them kill a few beasts.

An Army of Helpers.

There were 50 camels, in four separate troops, one troop being loaded with the water supply, another with provisions, the third with tents and other camp equipment, and the fourth with the personal belongings of the hunters. Then there was a troop of horses, and, finally, a big herd of sheep, which were to serve as food for the men on the road.

Of men there were almost 75. There was a camel driver for every pair of camels. There were 25 beaters, a boy for each horse, a horde of servants, six shikaris, a cook, a shepherd, Alkhar and his assistant, Ahmed Dzama, the second head-man.

This caravan was not unusually large. It is the ordinary cavalcade which hunters must expect to pay for when they try to enter the big game country. Its composition is prescribed partly by British law and partly by native law. It is impossible to get Somali hunters to go out to the jungle unless the caravans are made up just as they think they should be.

Each of the men in the cavalcade must be armed with a shield and two spears. In addition, the caravan must be guarded by a certain number of men with Snider rifles, and if the explorer cannot find men who have firearms, he must provide the weapons himself, for the British Consul will issue no permit to enter the interior unless the armed guard is in evidence. Under the regulations, the escort must be kept loaded always, and the escort must be ready for fighting day and night.

Big Bag of Big Game.

However, if the expenses of Count Potocki's trip came high, the result was eminently satisfactory. The bag made by the three hunters in less than 10 weeks was five lions, three elephants, eight rhinoceros, five leopards and 200 head of antelope and similar game.

The first lion to be killed nearly cost the Count's life. He was a huge fellow and appeared with his mate outside of the camp before dawn. As is done always, the men had surrounded the camping place with a rude fence of thorny alo branches, loosely interwoven, in order to form at least a slight guard against attack from the greater carnivora. At 4 o'clock in the morning Potocki and his two friends awoke to find the camp in a panic. High over all the noises made by man, camels, horses and sheep, sounded the roar of a lion. He was just outside of the camp and had sprung on an ass. Alkhar rushed into Potocki's camp and cried: "Up, up, master! Two lions are killing the ass!"

Led by the native, Potocki felt his way through the night until they reached the fence. The dying ass was kicking the thorny twigs convulsively. Two lions sat over him. One was biting deep into the neck, the other was tearing the flank. But it was so dark that the hunters could not see anything in the outer gloom. For one fleeting instant Potocki saw the head

of one lion, as he rose to look at the men, but he covered again at once and resumed his meal.

The noise in the camp continued, and suddenly the watchers failed any longer to hear the muttering of the two beasts. Evidently they had crept away quietly; so the tents were sought again. But in a quarter of an hour a shikari brought the news that one of the lions had returned. Potocki loaded his heaviest rifle carefully and crept to the fence. He was separated from his quarry only by a few thin twigs, and could see the black silhouette of the creature plainly. The lion was staring at him, and he fired point blank. The beast turned and galloped off. After a while the watchers heard him stop and groan and moan and whine.

"The lion is dead!" sounded through the camp, and the Somali hunters clapped Potocki on the shoulders according to their custom when a man makes a good kill.

There was no more sleep that night. With the first dawn the party started out after the quarry. The lion was not found dead, however, as had been expected, but had managed to get away. Still, the blood along his path made a trail that could not be missed, and here and there, could be seen pools that showed where the wounded animal had rested. His track made it evident that either the left shoulder blade or the leg was badly injured, for the left forepaw dragged. Alongside of the wounded beast's trail was a smaller one, apparently that of the lioness.

At last the shikaris found a spot where the blood was entirely fresh. The trail of the lioness separated there from that of her companion, and Potocki, with his express rifle over his shoulder, stooped to examine it. At that moment the wounded lion leaped out of the bushes and charged him. The Count sprang to one side and pulled the gun up, but he could not have escaped had not Alkhar thrown himself directly in the beast's path. Covering himself with his shield, he dashed at the lion. The tough piece of rhinoceros hide caught up the blows from the mighty sprawling claws, and as the lion rose in a leap the brave Somali thrust his broad spear crosswise into the wide-open jaws.

The lion fell on the hunter, and it seemed as if all was over. Potocki took a desperate chance and fired at the rolling mass. Instantly the brute left the prostrate Somali and sprang at Zamolski, who stepped back a pace and fired straight at the advancing terror. The immense bullet struck the lion true in the

chest and bored through it. He hurtled over in the middle of a leap, struck head first against an antilope and rolled himself into a ball, where he lay dead, not more than 10 paces from the hunters.

Alkhar arose and stepped forward. To the amazement of all, he had not sustained the slightest injury, although the lion actually had been lying on him for several seconds. It appeared that one paw of the animal had been smashed by the shot of the night before, so that it was powerless. With the other paw the lion had seized the waistband of the Somali and had torn it into tiny ribbons. The tough rhinoceros hide of the shield was furrowed deeply from the claws and teeth, but it had not given way. The steel blade of the spear was dented and bent where the great cat had bitten at it.

The other lions that were killed by the expedition were taken in the ways practiced by the Somalis. One way is to build a seriba, a small inclosure of thorny aloes, and wait inside of it at night until a goat or a man tied just outside attracts the lion. The other way, which the three hunters enjoyed much better, is to track the lion in the day time. When he is sighted, the mounted men surround him and drive him toward the hunters.

The fourth lion to be killed was hunted in the latter way. He had been heard around the camp during the night, and early in the morning all the hunters started out after him. After three hours of

trailing he was located in a jungle only about 50 feet from where Potocki was standing.

He was a big, tawny fellow, and his movements were so swift that the Count got no chance to fire, although he had been holding his rifle in preparation. He disappeared in a thick patch of jungle, and the mounted men raced after him with loud yells. But the growth was so heavy that they could not surround him effectively, and he managed to work his way from one clump to another until his trail seemed to be lost entirely.

The trackers bent low, examined the ground carefully inch by inch, picking up faint vestiges that the beast had left in his leaps over the hard ground. Every few minutes they would lose the trail. Then they scattered and worked around in a circle until one picked it up again. He notified his comrades by snapping his thumbs, when they would all rush together again and follow the trail. This lasted for four hours in the hottest part of the day. At last the slow progress of the search brought the party in a region where the jungle became somewhat less luxuriant, and suddenly the hunters came upon an open place covered with sun-burned grass.

Here the trackers found marks that showed that the lion had crossed the spot not long before. His trail showed that he was making tremendous leaps to escape his pursuers, and all hands darted

forward at a gallop. Alkhar, riding up and down the line, hurried them on remorselessly. Another hour of this form of novel chase failed to bring them within view of the beast. The Somalis who were on foot raced after the mounted men like deer. But Count Potocki and his comrades found that the white man in Africa cannot vie in endurance with the Somalis; they had to drop behind.

Finally they heard shouts far in advance. Hurrying along the path, they saw a long row of mounted men sitting motionless on their horses, while between them, posted at regular distances, stood men on foot. Evidently the lion had been found.

Count Potocki says: "When at last I arrived there, entirely exhausted and breathless, Alkhar seized me feverishly by the hand and pointed at a yellow object lying about 120 feet away between two of the riders."

"When I saw that pale yellow thing gleaming in the long grass my heart began to hammer, and despite my long experience I found myself in the unwell-known grasp of buck fever, and without being able to help it I fired shot after shot instead of aiming and shooting deliberately."

"With a hoarse growl the lion ran off. The riders spurred after him and surrounded him. Again he sought cover, but this time he lay so close that it was impossible to catch a glimpse of the brute."

"We circled around his hiding-place and at last took position in line. I in the middle, Grudinski at my right, Alkhar at the left and our men with the shikaris behind us. They were all exceedingly restless and excited. One of the men tried to fire into the bushes to draw the animal. But he shot short and the bullet buried itself in the ground. Zamolski seized one of the rifles from Ferek and shot directly into the middle of the cover."

"At the same instant the lion broke out with hellish roars and charged us. I fired point blank, but managed to get in only one shot with my double-barreled rifle. Before I could aim a second time the creature was on us. Shrieking, the men scattered, and the lion rushed between Zamolski and me. He passed the former so closely that he almost brushed him. As he went he aimed a terrible blow at him with his forepaw, but luckily missed his object."

Death of the Lion.

"We hastened after him, and after a short time I could see how the beast, wounded by my bullet, was dragging itself slowly through the grass. I fired again, and Zamolski fired almost immediately afterward, but the great vitality of the magnificent animal enabled it to rise once more, and with a beautiful and wonderful leap it gained thick cover. Now we fired into its refuge several times. Each shot was answered by terrible roars of pain and rage, and suddenly the beast, mortally wounded though it was, broke cover to charge. A perfect salvo of infantry fire halted it, and it fell dead."

"The lion was an imposing specimen, a male, although unhappily he lacked a mane. My first bullet had struck him in the left shoulder blade. Zamolski had hit near the heart."

The return to camp with lions was the signal for a strange ovation by the savage natives. The inhabitants of the surrounding country advanced to meet the Frinil (as the white hunters were named). Alkhar, arrayed in his full panoply of war, galloped and cantered around and around the cavalcade, singing songs of battle. All the trackers and drivers, mounted and on

foot, swung their weapons in the air and chanted improvised praises of the sportsmen.

In the evening there was a great feast. Camel's milk, both fermented and fresh, formed the staple drink for the populace, but the hunters, as an especial and great mark of favor and honor, were treated to the rarest luxury of Somali Land—fresh water. It had been carried an immense distance and was a precious offering, indeed.

A troop of riders, mounted on little native horses that are direct descendants of the Arabian horse of the Nejd, covered with trappings and armed as for battle, rode up and thanked the white men for destroying the enemies of their cattle. The eldest of them, with his hair curiously matted with white lime, made a long speech, in rhythmic periods, in which he wished the strangers luck in their future expeditions and praised their courage and their accuracy of fire. Every few moments he would pause. Then the riders would dash suddenly at the sportsmen, to rein in their horses sharply just before reaching them. Swinging their spears, with terrific battle cries, they looked like devils.

A night in the Zeriba is described thus by the Count: "As soon as the sun sinks and the millions of flies disappear, the hyenas arrive and begin to fight for a share of the bait. One will rush at it, tear a piece of flesh off and plunge back into the jungle. A second seizes a bone with blood-curdling snarls. Their hideous voices, sounding like a combination of suffering and sardonic laughter, sound everywhere in the darkness."

"Suddenly there comes a short, barking roar, broken off abruptly like a cough. It is a leopard. One leap takes him to the dead animal. The hyenas retreat and sit around him in a circle, with their mean eyes shining green through the darkness. It is a great chance to shoot, but we are waiting for better game. And it is on the way."

"Soon the leopard betrays concern. He stops eating and glares into the darkness. Then he tears off another piece of flesh, gorges it quickly and leaps away into the jungle much more silently than he arrived. From a distance a long-drawn sigh comes to our ears. It increases to a roar, and suddenly the whole universe seems to be filled and to tremble with the thunderous challenge of the king of the jungle. The lion has appeared."

A fierce fight during the hunt was one with a big two-horned rhinoceros. It had run before the beaters and was lying in wait on a little declivity. Suddenly it charged, with nose down. Despite its upparent clumsiness, its speed was amazing, and for a moment it looked as if it would kill one of the hunters in its rush. But a lucky bullet struck it fair in the eye and shook it enough to make it swerve a little. Its headlong rush carried it into the midst of the party, where it fell with a crash. The projectile had smashed its brain, yet so great had its impetus been that it covered almost 50 yards before succumbing.

On the following day Potocki started early on the trail of another rhinoceros. The beast had moved along over rocky ground, and its track led through thickets. About noon the sportsman heard loud snores, which Osman, the shikari, said came from the rhinoceros that was sleeping in a little grove of mimosa.

Finally something moved in the gloom, and Osman begged the hunter to shoot. The latter yielded, although he was still unable to see anything. The shot was followed by a crash, and the rhinoceros dashed into the jungle. Another bullet was sent after it without effect.

Hardly had the noise made by the huge animal died away when piteous cries were heard from under the mimosa, and a tiny baby rhinoceros came trotting toward the party. It rubbed against their legs and would not go away. When the hunters, having failed to find the trail of the mother, started on the march back to camp, the little thing trotted clumsily behind. The natives adopted it and made a great pet of it, and finally managed to bring it with them to the coast.

IT WASN'T EXACTLY WHAT SHE MEANT.



"Do you consider fish healthy, doctor?"
"I have never heard one complain."