

Giraffe Hunting with the Hamran Sword-Hunters

By Captain Fritz Duquesne

Capt. Fritz Duquesne was born of Boer parents in South Africa, educated in Europe (where he won considerable distinction as a swordsman), and has been a professional hunter of big game most of his life. At the age of 17 he was a veteran of the Kaffir wars. He served in the Boer war and also in the Congo. In the recent events of South Africa's kaleidoscopic history Capt. Duquesne took a conspicuous part. He acted in many capacities during the hostilities between the Boers and the British, being in turn spy, military detective, engineer, censor, dispatch-carrier and propagandist. He was wounded twice in the fighting around Colenso. When the British succeeded in cutting cable communication between the Boer republic and the rest of the world, Duquesne carried the news of the Boer victories over the Mozambique border, and from there he wrote his dispatches to the Petit Bleu, the official European organ of the Boer government. He was once captured by the Portuguese and thrown into prison at Lorenzo Marques. Later he was taken as a prisoner to Europe at the request of the British government. When the ship that conveyed him and his guard touched at Naples he was suffering from a fever and in consequence was placed in an Italian hospital. On his recovery he was allowed to go free. He went to Brussels and was sent back to the front by Dr. Leyds, with plans for the seizure of Cape Town by the Boer commanders then mobilized in Cape Colony. Everything was ready for the taking of the city when, a traitor having revealed the plot, Duquesne and a number of others were captured in Cape Town inside the British defenses. This was the climax of what has come to be known as the "Cape Town Plot." Some of the prisoners were sentenced to death, who later had their sentence changed to life imprisonment. Capt. Duquesne was among the latter. Ten months later he escaped from the Bermuda prisons, got aboard the American yacht Margaret of New York while she was coaling at the dock and was conveyed to Baltimore. Back to Europe he went again, as war correspondent and military writer on the Petit Bleu; thence to Africa, where he took a commission on the Congo. In East Africa he hunted big game for sport and profit, and finally he came to New York to do newspaper and magazine work.



THE only hunting that appeals to a man with the real sporting instinct is that when the hunted animal has a chance to get away or will return the attack, that is, when it has a chance. Unfortunately, noted men, like Col. Roosevelt, do not get a chance at the game under good hunting conditions, that is, when the game is wild and shy and has its defensive instincts sharpened by frequent contact with native and European hunters.

In these days the Colonial African governments have game reserves where the animals are quite tame on account of never knowing what it is to be hunted. These reserves are thrown open to important and titled travelers who walk up to an animal that generally stands and looks in half-fearful wonder at the strange white human being, who could hit it with a walking stick if he liked. After the game is run into a corner the important personage is handed a double barreled express or a 35 caliber auto-loader, which he henceforth empties into the surprised animal, which, not being used to such harsh treatment, generally drops dead. This kind of animal murder is disguised under the word "sport."

Hunting is killing and it will never be anything else, but the way certain prominent personages who have recently visited the Dark Continent have excused their methods by surrounding their deeds with the glamour of danger that is purely fictitious only enlarges the feet of the lack of the real danger in their undertakings. Their invented adventures were built up on the real experience of men who hunt for a living and are not allowed to shoot "protected" game.

If the Englishmen who are entertaining Col. Roosevelt succeed in leading him to adopt the methods of English and Moors and employ beaters to drive animals which are tame through dissociation with the dangers that they would have to daily face off a reserve, then I am sure the ex-president is in for a disappointment and he will return to America without having experienced the thrills he expected on the African veld. I recently saw some very extraordinary killings on one of these reserves that were tame, and lacking the slightest risk, which became terrible adventures by the time they reached the London press, which is always partial to any one with a title, of either British or other nationality. Most of these gentlemen and even ladies are famous in the social line in London or one of the other capitals and therefore must be famous hunters as soon as they get a rifle into their hands. A good deal of the stuffed game and trophies they take back to their homes from the tropical jungles, is bought, like the fish of the famous and well worn joke, from a man who makes his living by selling them to disappointed sportsmen who are ashamed to return to their friends empty handed.

Hunt Giraffe with the Sword.

I have taken part in a number of animal butcheries myself, most of which were associated with giraffe hunting, perhaps the tamest sport that can be had on the veld with the exception of shooting lizards.

Notwithstanding that the giraffe is the most harmless and inoffensive of all the African game a great amount of sport can be had hunting it, with the sword instead of the rifle. This sport, in spite of the harmless nature of the giraffe, is not always without its element of danger.

Shooting the giraffe gives merely the suspense that one gets by the possibility of the animal getting the hunter's wind and making away before the fatal bullet can be driven home.

The defenses of the giraffe are its wonderful sight, due to the way the stands out of the head, giving it a field of vision, its long watch a neck and its fleetness of pursued.

It is a lucky chance that associated me with the famous swordsmen. I was camped one night with a live game caravan when in the distance on the South African veld, but had never been kicked by one or even come near being kicked, I suppose on account of the height of the Boer horses, which are much larger than the ponies used by the Hamran sword hunters.

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men, I believe, possess more physical courage than any other people in the world. With them, to hunt means to risk life and show prowess with the sword at close quarters. Although they carry firearms, they despise one who uses them when he could just as well use the long sword that each carries in his girth. These Arabs have been known for their bravery since the time of Hannibal, and they hunt today in exactly the same manner as they did 2,000 years ago. And to believe some of them they still have the same swords, fantastic things with highly ornamented belts and handles which they greatly prize.

Hamran Afraid of Nothing.

The brave Hamran swordsmen hunt in a way that the nerve shocking thrills are not lost as they are when one uses a telescope or a long range rifle. Single handed and with nothing but the trusty sword as a weapon of defense and offense a Hamran will attack a lion, a rhinoceros and even an elephant.

When the Hamran Arabs hunt the giraffe it has a chance, even of killing them, for a giraffe when pursued can

walked half an hour when a sharp challenge in Arabic brought me to a halt. I threw up my hands and said I was a friend. A few minutes later the sentinel took me to the camp fires and told the Arabs sitting around them that I was alone, which was to them much more important than being a friend. A headman asked me to sit amongst them and tell them my errand. After a great deal of questioning, they seemed satisfied, for they continued their conversation that my approach had evidently broken off. I shall never forget that night as long as I live.

Wondrous Tales of the Desert.

I sat under the black star spangled banner before the flicking camp fires and listened to the stories of the experiences both real and imaginary of the Arab hunters—for one must talk on the deserts, and romancing takes the place of real happenings when they have exhausted. The only pastimes of those whose home is in the mournful kingdom of sands is war, hunting, and talk. The past to the Arabs is but a picture of what the future should be, and every man has

which is the favorite food of the giraffe.

It was not long before the sharp eye of an Arab caught sight of a giraffe's head moving above the foliage. After a short ride to a position from which we could get down the wind the plan of attack was laid out.

Following Herd of Giraffe.

After receiving many warnings from the chief as to the correct way to use the sword, the best time to swing it and the proper way to ride, I set out with an Arab hunter. The country was very rough and I marveled at the way the Arab's horse carried me over it.

We got as near the giraffes as possible without startling them. There were at least a dozen in the herd, all nibbling contentedly at the mimosa trees. At last we were espied and of one accord the animals made off across the country at a terrific rate, the Arabs and myself after them at full gallop. It is necessary to press giraffes to the extremity at the beginning of the chase or they will outstrip one, even on a very flex horse, for the giraffe selects ground favor-

on for a few yards and missing me, returned. Although I was groggy and almost stunned from the blow, I picked up my sword and again mounted my charger, which seemed to be more eager for the chase than its rider.

Maimed by Bull Giraffe.

I was no sooner in the saddle than a noise behind attracted my attention and a moment later a huge bull giraffe, approaching at a terrific rate, burst into view. I went after him like a shot. As I did so I saw he was followed by an Arab who was taking a short cut to head him off. Some dense bushes ahead of the giraffe made him stop and turn. He faced me and the Arab rushed behind him to strike the blow. Like a flash one of the rear hoofs shot out and the Arab went flying through the air, a stream of blood pouring out of his face. I rode at the giraffe, which turned, and in a second, without realizing what had happened, both my horse and myself were rolling on the earth. When I got up I could see by the mark on my pony that the giraffe had planted a kick on the rear shoulder. That ended my giraffe

Although I did not succeed in hamstringing a giraffe, I certainly succeeded in getting into danger that was quite different from that one experiences when hunting the giraffe with a rifle.

The Arabs that day killed seven giraffes.

When the hunt was over the skins were removed from the animals and then the meat taken to be dried in the same manner that the Boers make their famous "biltong," which is hung in the shade, preferably in the wind, where it will dry before it has time to putrify.

The skin of the giraffe is greatly prized by certain Arab tribes, amongst which it is used for shields, and excellent shields they are, for I have known them to deflect a Martini-Henry bullet, and it is a strong man indeed who can pierce one with a sword. Another quality in favor of giraffe shields is their extreme lightness.

The night following the hunt, when all the Arabs were assembled, it was found that there was a man missing. The headman sent out searchers, who went off, uttering long, shrill cries which grew fainter and fainter as they penetrated further into the blackness of the night.

At the first signs of day the camp was alive and half the men mounted and galloped off to the hunting ground of the day before. Being curious to know the fate of the missing man, I accompanied them.

Fought Leopard with Knife.

Not long after we reached the hunting ground a cry from one of the party took us to a deep donga where a strange sight met our eyes. The missing man was lying there across the dead body of his pony, and a few yards away was the carcass of a female leopard. Although the Arab was not dead, he was in a very bad way, for by the appearance of his leg I could tell it was broken, and, added to this, one of his arms was badly chewed.

The wounded man was slung across a pony and taken to the camp. When he was revived he told his mishap. He was riding after the giraffes with the rest of us when all of a sudden his horse went head-first into the donga and broke its front legs. The rider was rendered unconscious from the impact with the hard earth. A little later, when he recovered, he found his own leg was broken and seeing the condition of his steed he cut its throat to put it out of misery. He saw the hunters returning to the camp, but could not attract them, for the thunder of the horses' hoofs drowned his cries. As night came on he grew weak and fell asleep.

How long he slept he could not say, when something soft touched his face and then a heavy weight bore down on him. He opened his eyes and was horrified to see a huge leopard with one paw on his chest, whilst it was smelling around his mouth, evidently undecided what to do. With great presence of mind he kept still and the leopard went to the pony and started eating its rump.

After indulging its appetite it roared for its mate and was answered. The Arab, feeling that his only chance of escape was to kill the leopard while it was alone, gently drew his hunting knife and watched his opportunity to take the leopard off its guard to give it a heart thrust. For some time the animal kept eating the horse and roaring alternately, and then it turned its attention to the man. It stood over him and glared into his eyes, blazing with a green yellow glare of phosphorus.

A roar came from the distance and the leopard threw its head up and answered. Like a flash he thrust his blade into the throat of the leopard, which cut off its roar with a howl of pain and seized his arm, which was already driving a second blow at the animal's heart. For a second the leopard held on and clawed the man's bare breasts. Then feeling its weakness, it staggered and, crawling away a few yards, roared for its mate till it died. The Arab, overcome by his weakness, fell into unconsciousness and knew nothing more till he was revived in the camp.

It is such adventures as these that attract the man who has some of the primitive instincts, who loves danger and will gamble his life against a lion's, just for the joy of feeling the thrills of physical supremacy.

*South African name for a rift, which are very common in alluvial country.

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THE ARAB WENT FLYING THROUGH THE AIR, A STREAM OF BLOOD POURING OUT OF HIS FACE.

kill a man or a pony with a kick should he be unfortunate enough to get directly in its rear.

There is a legend among some of the natives that the giraffe when pursued hurls stones with its back feet at the pursuers and sometimes kills them. The story had a good foundation, for, although the giraffe does not really hurl stones, it runs in such a way that the back hoofs strike the ground at a peculiar angle. It hits the ground to keep up its momentum and in doing so any loose stones are sent in a shower rearwards. I have seen pieces of stone at least two pounds in weight flying through the air behind a running giraffe that would kill a pursuer were he hit with one.

The first giraffe hunt in which I took part with the Hamran Arabs showed me what a giraffe could do with its hind feet. I had often run them down on the South African veld, but had never been kicked by one or even come near being kicked, I suppose on account of the height of the Boer horses, which are much larger than the ponies used by the Hamran sword hunters.

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a murdered ancestor to avenge on the desert.

It was strange, indeed, to sit with these men, fascinating to listen to their soft voices, enchanting to hear the wondrous tales of their deserts, weird mixtures of the mysticism of the past and the phantasm of the present.

The fire lights rose and fell, the mosquitoes buzzed incessantly and the Arabs now and again turned their eyes towards the darkness as though expecting some phantom to come out of the temple of the night. In a kraal near the well the camels and horses moved uneasily, a step sounded and every man rose and placed his hand on his sword. The next moment the chief strode into the camp. "To-morrow," he said, "we will hunt the giraffe. I have been told by the local men that there are some to the south of here and you must sharpen your swords."

"Do I hunt with you?" I asked, making my interrogation almost a demand. "Please yourself, but not with a rifle." "Well," I answered, "give me a sword and I shall hunt like a Hamran." Although it is a hard thing to get a Hamran's sword, I was lent one, which the owner tried on his arm before me, to show that it was sharp by shaving off the hair.

The next morning we set out. After an hour's ride we came to some broken country on which there was a great amount of red mimosa bush,

able to itself, which is generally very rough and not suitable for a horse to travel on at a great rate of speed. On account of my inexperience as a sword hunter everything possible seemed to happen to me. We dashed after the lumbering giraffes, through bushes, under trees, over stones and rifts. Sometimes gaining, sometimes losing, each man swinging his sword to strike the blow which is delivered on the rear leg of the animal so as to sever a sinew and hamstring it. On, we galloped, the gravel kicked up by the fleeing giraffes raining around us like bullets, and the earth thundering under our horses' hoofs.

We were approaching a wood and I was gaining on the animal I had picked as my prey. Ahead of me, I saw an Arab's sword glance through the air and the giraffe he was following fell in a heap under the blow. The fallen animal tried to rise, and as it did so it received another stroke, this time on the other leg, and went down for good, completely disabled.

Whilst watching the Arab do his work I lost ground and my quarry got to the wood. I forgot all instructions and followed it, greatly to my sorrow, for I had not been among the trees long before a limb that was dragged ahead by the fleeing giraffe came flying back and struck me in the chest such a blow that I was completely unhorsed and almost rendered unconscious.

My pony, trained to its work, ran

hunt for the day, for the animal got away before I could mount again. I turned my attention to the Arab, who was holding himself up against a tree in a dazed way, while his face bled in a sickening manner. The sharp cloven hoof of the giraffe had split his face to the bone, as well as broken his jaw.

Roosevelt Hunting in a Zoo.

Fresh from the field in which former President Roosevelt is hunting, Major Louis L. Seaman, a surgeon, arrived in New York recently. He went to Africa to study the dread sleeping sickness. In addition, Major Seaman has brought about 150 specimens of game, shot where Mr. Roosevelt and his party are now shooting.

The trip was Major Seaman's second. While it was a professional one, Major Seaman said he, with Dr. Guiteras, who accompanied him, could not resist taking something like six weeks off after reaching Nairobi, because the game was so plentiful.

"It is the greatest shooting in the world," said the major. "It's just a zoological garden without a fence around it. It is the place where old Noah landed the ark and shooed the animals off and their descendants are still there."

"Killing lions is tame sport. The king of beasts is a whelp. Wound a lion and go after him and he will give you some trouble. But he is a coward

THE DEBATING CLUB.

The fair co-ed for speaking had decided bent. And she could always beat the lad at argument.

She argued at a wondrous rate, We must admit. He couldn't match her in debate A little bit.

She can outargue him to-day, The neighbors vow; And often does, it seems, for they Are married now.

Ella Isn't Normal.

"I see where Ella Wheeler Wilcox is discussing 'The Normal Woman.'" "What does she know about the 'normal woman'?"