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THE TRADE IN WILD ANIMALS.

BY HAROLD J. SHEPSTONE.

Hamburg is by far the principal depot for the shipment of wild beasts Nearly the whole of the trade here is in the hands of one man, Mr. Carl Hagenbeck. Some idea of the immense amount of business done by this well-known dealer is evidenced when it is stated that in the course of a single twelvemonth he dispatched from Hamburg some 76 lions, tigers and panthers, 42 different sorts of bears, 52 elephants, 64 camels and dromedaries and some 730 monkeys, besides a large number of other animals and birds. The greater portion of this vast collection is sent to America to the various towns and is purchased by the directors of zoological gardens and by circuses.

During the week the writer was in Hamburg Mr. Hagenbeck shipped $2,500 worth of animals to Cincinnati and $3,500 worth to Philadelphia. He was also busy preparing a large consignment for the New York Zoological Society. When Prof. Hornaday, the Director of Bronx Park, visited Europe in the autumn of 1902 he spent $17,000 among the European dealers in the purchase of animals. He bought 6 lions, 2 tigers, a leopard, jaguar, cheetah, 2 black leopards, mountain goats and sheep, a chimpanzee, an ibex, a wild hog, a number of snakes and a lot of large and small birds. When I mentioned this to Mr. Hagenbeck he admitted the fact that there is a growing interest in zoos and that in a few years' time the United States will boast of some magnificent gardens. He also told me that his thirty-six years' experience as an animal dealer had taught him that the great nations that possess a natural inborn love for animals and desire to know all about them are the Americans, the English and the Germans.

The great worry of the big dealers is to keep their stock up-to-date. At the time of my visit to Hamburg Mr. Hagenbeck told me he was daily expecting some of his travelers from Siberia with a herd of 30 roe-deer, 15 ibex, wild sheep and several smaller animals and birds. One man was also bringing home 3 giraffes from Soudan, as well as some Kudu and other antelopes. In a week's time he was expecting a shipment from German East Africa, which included 20 zebras, 2 African rhinoceroses, some white-bearded gnus, water buck and other antelopes and a number of smaller animals and birds. From West Africa he was expecting several chimpanzees and also some young gorillas, while a boat due the following day from Australia was bringing in a consignment of 60 kangaroos, several big red "boomas" and a number of rare birds. There were also other travelers on their way to Hamburg from different parts of the world with more or less valuable collections of wild animals. As to his present stock one has only to add that it is more valuable than the animals found in any one zoological garden the world over, to give some idea of its immensity and variety.

Altogether, Mr. Hagenbeck employs a staff of sixty European hunters. Many years ago he recognized the need of establishing depots in various parts of the world, from which he could replenish his stock as occasion required. He has five depots in Asia, three in Africa, several in Europe and one in America. These men employ the natives to catch the animals for them. Much could be written about the manner in which the animals are captured. In Nubia, where most of the lions are now obtained, the natives, by carefully watching, know exactly when a lioness is about to have cubs. They then go to the den and kill the mother and carefully remove the young cubs to the camp, where they are brought up on tame goats' milk. When about two months old they are conveyed to the coast on the backs of camels and shipped to Hamburg. Lions are also obtained from Abyssinia and Senegal. The finest lion was that obtained from the Atlas Mountains of North Africa. This species now no longer exists, and there are only a few in captivity. Adults Nubian lions fetch $1,000 apiece; Senegal lions range in price from $500 to $750. Tigers vary in price from $375 to $1,500 apiece and more, according to variety and rarity of the animal. Siberian tigers, for instance, sell at the latter figure. They are large, beautifully striped creatures. In the winter they grow a long woolly winter coat. A very singular variety of the tiger comes from Russian Turkestan. Its characteristic is that its hindquarters have brown stripes instead of black on a yellow ground. Mr. Hagenbeck imported one three years ago and sold it to the Berlin zoo. In Bengal Mr. Hagenbeck's agent employs a number of natives who catch adult tigers in pitfalls, while if they come across a mother with young she is at once shot and the cubs taken away and brought up on goats' milk.

It is the rarer animals, such as the hippopotamus, the rhinoceros, and the giraffe, that are difficult to secure. In the first place, it is practically impossible to secure an adult beast, and the young ones, when finally secured, are by no means easy to rear. The feeding of them is no light task. A baby hippo will drink thirty pints of milk a day, and a rhinoceros almost as much. To arrange for such a supply in a desert, hundreds and probably a thousand miles or more away from any civilized center, means that a large number of goats have to be kept with the expedition party. African elephants are also very scarce: indeed, only five have been imported into Europe since 1880. Mr. Hagenbeck puts this down to the recent wars in the Egyptian Soudan. A hippopotamus is worth from $2,500, to $3,000, a rhinoceros slightly more, while giraffes sell at from $2,500, according to size, age and condition of the animal.

Up to 1880 giraffes were very cheap, and were imported from the Egyptian Soudan in large quantities. Between the years 1880 and 1900, however, only three were brought to Europe, two from South Africa and one from Senegal. They are caught by African hunters, who search for them on their quick Abyssinian horses. When they come to a herd of giraffes they drive them forward as fast as they can at such a pace that it is impossible for the young ones to keep up with the mothers. They are then easily caught and supplied with little halter and finally brought into camp, where they are fed on goats' milk, also on corn and various kinds of plants. Zebras, unlike giraffes, are fairly plentiful. Mr. Hagenbeck showed me a letter from one of his travelers informing him that a recent drive which he had organized in German East Africa fully 400 zebras were surrounded, besides a number of antelopes, some of the latter being entirely a new variety. As the corral was not large enough the larger portion of these animals were allowed to escape. Finally, however, 85 zebras and 15 antelopes were captured.

Curiously enough, Mr. Hagenbeck does not insure his animals after dispatch from Hamburg. He prefers to take the risk. The insurance rates are much too heavy, for if proper care is exercised the mortality is very slight. In the case of large consignments Hagenbeck sends one of his own men to attend and feed the animals on the voyage. In a recent shipment to the Mikado of Japan, which included lions, Polar bears, panthers, kangaroos, antelopes, monkeys, as well as a collection of larger birds, such as eagles, vultures, etc., the whole collection arrived safely after a journey of nine weeks with the exception of one monkey. In another recent shipment of $17,500 worth of animals to the Sultan of Morocco, the mortality was very small, one tiger dying of sunstroke while crossing the desert, while one crane succumbed to seasickness on the voyage. The shipments to America have been particularly successful, the losses sustained through death or accident being very trivial.

In conclusion, attention may be called to Mr. Hagenbeck's recent experiment in the acclimation of all kinds of tropical animals and birds. He is firmly convinced that almost any tropical animal can be acclimated to stand a northern climate. During the winter of 1901-02 he kept out in the open at his park at Stellingen, a suburb of Hamburg, a pair of South African zebras, an African eland antelope, several Indian antelopes, large and small Brahma cattle, Indian deer, a pair of South African ostriches, a cassowary from New Guinea, several Indian and West African cranes, as well as other tropical waterfowl and birds. All these animals were placed in unheated stables and were allowed to go out in the open whenever they pleased. What Mr. Hagenbeck did was this: He left the dung in the stables from the middle of November until spring. When it got too high a part of it was taken away and new straw placed on top. This dung gives off a natural heat and makes a warm bed for the animals to lie down upon. During the winter referred to the thermometer in Hamburg registered a temperature as low as 10 deg. F., yet the animals kept exceedingly well. Indeed, Mr. Hagenbeck lost a number of other tropical animals at his other depot which were kept in heated stables. The Duke of Bedford is evidently a believer in this simple method of acclimating animals, for he is keeping three very fine giraffes, which he purchased last summer from the great dealer, during the past winter in unheated stables. Their bed consisted of 9 inches of peat upon which the dung was allowed to remain. Up to the time of writing the animals are quite healthy and doing well.

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