

SPORT IN CENTRAL AFRICA

BY PRINCE WILLIAM OF SWEDEN

[Prince William, the younger son of the King of Sweden, has just returned from a hunting trip through Central Africa. The animals that he killed are to be given to the Riksmuseum, Stockholm.]

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EVER since the winter of 1913-14, when I was staying in the plains around Nairobi, shooting big game, I had had an intense desire to see something more of that wonderful man-devouring Africa. That great Continent had for years defied explorers and scientists, taken the life of many a daring pioneer, and, even in our days, it still conceals many of its secrets behind the dark fastnesses of its impenetrable jungle, its death-dealing fever belts.

I had planned an expedition to Central Africa for the year 1916-17. But the war came between. It was only this year that my plan could be carried out. I meant to penetrate to the heart of the great Continent, the country around Lake Kivu, with its fantastic volcanoes and little-known fauna. The only scientific exploration made of those districts was that of the Duke of Mecklenburg, and much still remained to be done especially as regards zoölogy. After accomplishing this I intended to push farther north, to the west of the lakes, and gradually make my way to the Nile, returning to civilization by the Sudan and Egypt.

As my own collection of hunting trophies was already considerable, I meant this time to collect specimens for the Swedish National Museum. What more natural than that my friend, Count Nils Gyldenstolpe, first assistant of the museum's department for vertebrates, should join me, as to

me the sciences are *terra incognita*. He was to be the scientific member of the expedition, and he took with him an English taxidermist, Mr. Ruddle. To secure perhaps more 'visible' records of our doings we arranged to take with us Mr. O. Olsson, of a Swedish filming firm, who was to take films of the expedition.

It thus came to pass that the four of us found ourselves by the beginning of this year in Nairobi, busily engaged in making the necessary preparations for our long *safari* [journey].

On January 8 the expedition started for Entebbe, our first stage. Thence our baggage was sent on by motor to Masaka, where we were to start our exploration. We were joined there by Mr. Carr, as the white hunter, the man Newland-Tarlton had furnished, had withdrawn. From Masaka, on the west side of Victoria Nyanza, we marched off to the southwest, through the fertile regions of western Uganda, which before the rinderpest was a land of abundant big game. But now hardly any game at all is met with there. A fortnight later the expedition reached Kabale, the idyllic little frontier station high up in the mountains, in Uganda's southwestern corner.

Up and down, rising and falling, twisting and turning went our path. Woodclad or grass-grown slopes, which seemed like great mounds, but were in reality high hills, met us on all sides.

Here and there glittered a bright lake, dotted with muffin-like islets and bordered by serpentine inlets and creeks or spreading away into the distance in endless marshes, but everywhere alive with wildfowl and otters gamboling in the sunshine.

We crossed the Bunyonyi in canoes, passed Bufundi and Chuya, and reached Behungi at the extremity of the mountain range which forms the boundary of the great African Rift Valley. Our aneroid marked 8000 feet. It was cold and windy. But below us lay our goal: the grand crater-dotted Mfumbiro Plain, in which tower three giants — Muhavura, Mgahinga, and Sabinio. There they stand in a row, like three giant sugar loaves, with heavy clouds hanging about their tops. They are extinct, dead, but continue to mount guard on the heart of Africa.

Behind them looms Mikenos pointed summit, and next to it, like a dark gray monk with a white skull cap on his head, Mount Karissimbi. To the right shines Mutanda's mirror-like lake, and on the left the more agitated waters of Chahafis and Mulero, lit up by the setting sun. The whole forms a picture of wonderful beauty, overpowering in its titanic proportions, and certainly unrivaled in the world for its grandeur. We were bound for those mountains, the shores of those lakes. A few days later we were sitting shivering in a damp blast in our first mountain camp, on the slope between Muhavura and Mgahinga.

On that and other slopes below Sabinio we now for some time set energetically to work collecting specimens. Everything that came within the reach of our rifles or fell into our traps was carefully stored. It was the principal aim of our expedition to bring back to Europe as complete a collection as possible of the fauna of the country. The animal life here seemed, however, less

varied than might have been expected. The species were relatively few and not very numerous represented. Elephants, buffalos, bushbucks, leopards, apes, were, generally speaking, the larger four-footed animals met with, while the birds consisted chiefly of ravens, eagles, snipe, and numerous kinds of honey birds.

Hunting on these heights is difficult and fatiguing, owing to the nature of the ground. The mountain sides are steep, often precipitous, almost perpendicular toward the summit, and are separated by deep ravines. The thick vegetation grows into a perfect tangle. Bamboos, climbing plants and creepers, and broad-leaved cacti are interwoven into a hopeless entanglement, through which one can only advance by cutting one's way step by step. To approach wild game in such circumstances is well-nigh impossible, and in nine cases out of ten you catch but a glimpse of a twitching tail or the pricking up of an ear before the quarry is gone. To follow a trail is also very difficult, as the fresher the trail is the more cautious one must be, and it generally happens that the huntsman, crawling like a worm through the tangled undergrowth, is unable at the critical moment to raise his gun to fire before it is too late. If you add to this that the clayey soil, softened by frequent showers and undried in the shade, which the sun cannot penetrate, is very slippery, you can understand that hunting in these regions is not an unmixed pleasure.

Nevertheless, we made good bags, and the first three mountain gorillas of our collection, now growing rapidly, were bagged on the slopes of Sabinio.

Carr and I attempted once to climb to the top of Muhavura from the west. The ascent is usually made from the south and east, but we preferred to make it from a point where it had not been attempted before, and started one

morning directly from our camp on the slope. A minimum of baggage was confided to a few bearers, who, being promised a rich reward, consented to go with us and spend the night at the top. The climb seemed easy enough at first, but became steeper and steeper at every step, so that one had finally to swing one's self up from tree to tree to maintain a foothold. Gradually, however, the vegetation became rarer and the liana entanglements of the lower slope were succeeded by curious short-stemmed, broad-leaved *senecios* [giant groundsel] and giant lobelias; open spaces covered with moss and heather appeared here and there. Late in the afternoon we reached Mgahinga's sunken and overgrown crater, by which we camped. That was a cold night. The wind blew damp blasts and swept a misty veil all around. How the half-naked bearers did not perish with cold is a wonder.

The mountain top rose perpendicularly above us. Shivering with cold, we made an attempt to climb it next morning, but had to come to a dead stop a few hundred yards from the top. To accomplish the rest of the climb would require a proper outfit of pickaxes, ladders, and ropes. To go round it proved equally impracticable. We had to give it up and slide down again to more accessible regions, which we did in a couple of hours.

The tribes of the neighborhood say that heaven lies at Muhavura's top, which is the abode of the blessed, while the condemned are cast into Namlagira's burning crater. After the fearful cold we had suffered up there, Carr and I agreed that we would prefer the latter place, where one at least could get warm.

It would take too long to refer in detail to the wanderings of the expedition among the different volcanoes. We ended by crossing the Kongolese frontier at Bogandana, where two worthy Bel-

gian officers, whom the Government had kindly sent to join us, took charge of the recruiting of carriers and procuring of provisions for us, and helped us in every way by word and deed as long as we were on Belgian territory.

In a broad semicircle we went round north of Sabinio and Mikeno, leaving Namlagira in full activity and the half-extinct Ninagongo on our right, passed immense barren lava plains, till at length we reached the northern extremity of Lake Kivu — Africa's heart.

Lake Kivu lies opal-tinted, glittering, smiling invitingly. High soft mountain ranges surround it on all sides, varying in color from dark green to violet blue. A more beautiful setting for a precious stone no jeweler could imagine. The lava streams run to the water's edge in even undulating surfaces. On the shore trees mirror their tops in the crystalline waters. No reed-growth or papyrus, no marshy outlines, nothing but the clear wide expanse of glittering surface, where delicately shaped canoes with long bowsprits glide gently among the rose-colored Kwijwiji islands in the background. In these crystal waters one can bathe to one's heart's content. They are free of crocodiles or other water vermin.

My tent is pitched at a few yards from the shore, where the waters come rippling and splashing against the pebbles. The breezes blow in softly from afar. Numberless butterflies flutter in the sunshine. The scent of flowers is wafted from the glades. Not a human being anywhere. A few tumbled-down huts, with burnt roofs and gaping sides, bear witness to what the place once was — an idyllic little Belgian outpost on the Ruanda frontier. But war broke out in Europe and short-sighted leaders allowed its horrors to spread even to Africa. White killed black and black killed white, and desolation spread everywhere. Ngoma was plundered,

burnt, abandoned, and has never revived. The ruined defenses on the heights, numerous graves in the plain, remind one of bloody encounters and bitter strife, of race hatred and national enmities.

Ngoma was the most southerly point of our expedition. Thence we turned back to the volcano districts once more and devoted our energies to the exploration of the Miken-Karissimbi group. The Belgian Government had generously given us a license to shoot fourteen gorillas. To our great satisfaction we were able to bag this lot. They were animals of both sexes and all ages. Our museum's gorilla exhibits will be the finest in the world.

How should one shoot gorillas? One must, to begin with, have strong legs and a stout heart. Few animals give the huntsman sterner work. You must tramp about on the steep hillsides, clatter down steep ravines, and climb up on the opposite side, till you come upon a fresh trail. Then you must creep and crawl, balance yourself from tree to tree, endeavor to imitate the movements of the quarry you are pursuing. With good luck, after a day-long pursuit, you may find yourself in the midst of a chattering group, of which you may bring down one or two ere the rest, with deafening screams and the rush of an avalanche, dart away through the woods, uprooting young trees and tearing away branches in their precipitous flight. They generally fly before man, and only turn when wounded. Then they rise on two legs and rush madly at their foe; otherwise they rarely quit their four-footed attitude.

I must say, however, that the only gorilla I shot personally behaved somewhat differently. He rushed at me, with lightning rapidity, before I had fired. But I believe this was to defend his retreating comrades. He was a sturdy old male, bent on repulsing the

intruder, and doubtless ignorant of the danger he was incurring. I felt bound to enlighten him, and above all, put a stop to his experimenting on me. Besides, there was not much time to deliberate. The beast had burst through the bush within a few feet from me. A .350 magnum bullet, right through his lungs, put an end to the old fellow's life. He was a white-haired giant and weighed nearly four hundred pounds.

After about two months spent in collecting specimens in the volcanic district, the expedition proceeded slowly northwards to the plains round the Rutchuru and Ruindi rivers, south of Lake Edward. Here we found again sunshine and warmth, which unstiffened our limbs, cramped by the raw and damp air of the mountains.

It has been said that this part of the country is the richest in game in Africa. I doubt it. Besides the fact that the abundance of game along the high road Rutshuri-Kabaret — especially in the latter district — has been greatly diminished during the war, when the black troops lived principally on the game of this great centre, one might think that the more distant tracks, such as the western frontier districts, which were not overrun by bloodthirsty sharp-shooting *askaris*, would still present the same game standard as before 1914. This is not so. There is still a good deal of game, no doubt, but I do not think that the amount of game per square mile is anything like what it used to be in British East Africa. At least that was my impression.

The place is nevertheless an El Dorado for the huntsman, although the relative number of species represented is limited. These are principally lions, leopards, buffalos, waterbuck, topi, Uganda Cobb, reedbuck, bushbuck, waterhog; in the rivers hippopotamus; in the woods apes and baboons; more rarely elephants. The herds of topi

are fantastically numerous. One can meet with herds numbering from several hundred to over a thousand. Lions are also abundant. We had great sport with them. More than twenty fell to our guns within a few weeks. Among them many a fine male.

I remember especially one night when we saw no fewer than fifteen lions gathered round the animal we had set out as a lure. There was only one male, with a black mane almost trailing to the ground. Round him was his harem of lionesses and cubs. One heard a murmur of deep suppressed growls and crunching teeth as they tore the flesh from the bones of the lure between their jaws. When the great lion finally moved a little away from the gluttonous assembly he received my shot in his side. In sudden fright the whole lot rushed toward the stone shelter behind which I stood, one lioness dashing at the barrel of my gun sticking out through the loophole and almost tearing my rifle from my hands. But the pride was evidently starving; they returned again and again to their prey, regardless of our repeated firing. In the morning eight lions lay dead on the ground before our shooting-shelter.

If I had anything to say in the matter I should recommend the Kongo authorities to prohibit the shooting of big game in this district for some time. The natural limits of the preserve are the Rutchuru river to the east, the mountain range to the south and west, and Lake Edward to the north. The land and its fauna are so typically African that it would be a pity if they were destroyed. It is the only part of Africa where game is still plentiful. The Kongo has, indeed, its game laws, but how are these adhered to? Unless each district is specially protected against all comers, against every sportsman, whatever his mission or aims, these prohibitions are ineffectual. A

white overseer established in each district should see to the proper protection of bipeds as well as four-footed animals. There is, perhaps, no immediate danger of their being exterminated, but as facilities of communication increase, the greater will be the danger of indiscriminate shooting. If some measure is not taken in the near future I fear that this paradise of wild animal life will end like many another and become empty and lifeless. This would be a crime, a desecration of one of the beauties of nature.

It now became a difficult matter to carry the expedition over Lake Edward, encumbered as it was with the large amount of heavy specimens it had collected. It was a tedious operation, requiring several journeys backwards and forwards. The canoes used are not particularly seaworthy vessels, and the canoe-men dread the sudden thunderstorms that often burst over the lake. Much of our baggage got wet, some of our specimens were lamentably injured. But at last, in the beginning of May, we were all safely assembled at Beni, four days' march north of the lake and to the west of Ruwenzori's snow-clad heights. There we met with new difficulties, as we found it impossible to obtain a sufficient number of bearers. Thanks to the energetic efforts of the two Belgian officers, however, the difficulty was at last overcome, and the long march northward, toward Irumu and Ituri was begun.

It proved a most fatiguing and monotonous tramp, through endless virgin forest, part of the great equatorial forest range. Day after day we tramped through high grass under the shadow of giant trees, crossing rapids here and there. The rainy season had now set in. At times an arm of the Semliki would skirt our path, while the giant range of the Ruwenzori was never out of sight. There were lots of birds and apes, but

little of any other game. Now and then we saw a herd of elephants, but far out of range. This is due to the ivory hunters, who have rendered them shy. We tramped to exhaustion after okapis, but saw nothing but their traces. But we shot one of the large and rare forest pigs.

Until quite recent years the natives of these tracts were reputed for their savage character and cannibal propensities. Fearful orgies were frequent among them, and it was unsafe to venture into their country without a strong escort. Now they are tamed, and it does not enter into the head of a Wambuba to seek to injure a white man. They live their indolent life in the woods wherever clearings create open spaces for their villages. In limited areas round their huts the soil is cultivated with very primitive tools or even by hand. But the soil is fertile, and sufficient is harvested for their small requirements without much labor.

We also came in contact with the Wambutti forest tribes. They are dwarfs of a very low culture level. Their huts consist of a loosely knit skeleton of bamboos covered with branches and dry leaves. Utensils of any kind are unknown. A knife and very primitive earthenware are all they can boast of. The men are, however, wonderful hunters. Thanks to their small spare body and great agility they move rapidly through the bush. Spears are rarely seen among them. They are entirely dependent on their bows and poisoned arrows, but their ability with them is extraordinary. They live entirely on the produce of their chase. When game becomes rare they are exposed to starvation.

The expedition spent about a month in these forests west of the Semliki. When the fertile plains and low mounds about Irumu appeared, we rejoiced at having again a clear view and the sky

above us instead of the low canopy and damp shade of the forest.

It had originally been our intention to continue northward through Uele to shoot white rhinoceros and giant eland and then from Aba make for the Nile. But a sudden case of illness among us obliged us to linger in Irumu and delayed us so long that the heavy rainy season had meantime set in, in the Northern Provinces. The roads then became impassable, the grass so high that sport was out of the question and we decided therefore to give up this part of our plan and make our way eastward to Lake Albert.

During the two months of our enforced stay at Irumu we made frequent excursions in the neighborhood, adding greatly to our collections. The forests to the west proved especially rich in booty and the fit members of the expedition found plenty to do.

At last, in the beginning of September, we were able to move on, this time decidedly homeward bound. In spite of the friendliness and hospitality which had been shown us in such large measure at the Belgian station, not one of us but was glad to resume our wanderings. At Kassenyi, on the shores of Lake Albert, we parted with our Belgian friends and stepped on to British territory as we boarded the little paddle-wheeled steamer, Samuel Baker.

The rest of the expedition's journey lay within comparatively well-known regions. I may say in brief that we safely reached Nimule, where, thanks to the kind intervention of the Sudan Government, the Governor of Mongalla met us with five hundred carriers and accompanied us to Rejaf.

As there seems to be some doubt as to the distance in days' march from Nimule to Rejaf, and as the guide-books are either silent on the subject or contain erroneous computations, I may state that the distance was covered in

seven days' march at the rate of respectively 11, 15, 16, 12, 8, 16, and 14 miles per day. Many comfortable resting-places are met with which render the carrying of tents unnecessary. The roads are good, easy-going, and suitable for motor-cycles. To obtain carriers one should write in good time to the District Commissioner at Mongalla or the Mamur at Nimule, as the country is but thinly populated and the requisition of carriers must often be made from great distances. At the time of our passage, in the middle of August, the sleeping-sickness fly was not em-

barrassing. I myself did not see a single case. But the heat was very great and our start had always to be made at 3 or 4 A.M.

On a comfortable Nile boat, which after our long roughing seemed like a first-class hotel on the Riviera, we arrived at Khartum, and there reached civilization. The result of our expedition must be considered very satisfactory. Our collections, which are still on their way home, comprise about a thousand mammals, two thousand birds, five to six thousand insects, and divers other specimens.

GARDILHOU'S MELONS

BY ANDRÉ LAMANDÉ

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ONE night in September two melons were stolen from the garden of Gardilhou, whom they used to call Gardilhou le Cardinalice on account of his big red nose. There were prints of wooden shoes in the earth leading from his garden about two hundred metres to the garden of Sémary. Gardilhou needed nothing else to induce him to accuse his neighbor of theft. The two men squabbled over the affair and filled the village with so much gossip and ill feeling and contradictory stories that the whole case had to be properly tried and judged at the court at Gourdon.

And so one Sunday morning, freshly shaved, blinking his eyes in his round face, and lifting his gleaming red nose on high, Gardilhou went to hunt up his lawyer, explained the case, charged his

adversary with frightful crimes, and altogether showed himself more eager for vengeance than for justice. The lawyer listened in silence and did not interrupt him except by little grunts from time to time in which you could discern a profound pessimism. As a matter of fact, that was the way he usually received his clients. He always showed himself inclined to be doubtful so that when the case was tried his cleverness and his eloquence should burst on them like a clap of thunder and he could extract a good fat payment.

'Hum! *Mon ami*, your case does not seem very good to me. Of course, there is a presumption against Sémary, but there is no positive proof. Do you understand?'