

# AN AMERICAN ALADDIN

THE PALATIAL ESTATE CREATED BY A ST.  
LOUIS NABOB IN THE AFRICAN WILDS.

(Copyright, 1908, by Frank G. Carpenter.)

**N**AIROBI, Feb. 20.—British East Africa has an American Aladdin. He comes from St. Louis, and, like his prototype of Baghdad, in the days of Haroun Al Raschid, he has created a great estate in a night. He has rubbed the golden lamp of his fortune, and the genie who serve it have chopped down the jungle and fenced in the wilds. A year ago all was a wilderness. Now 20,000 acres are under his tutelage or agricultural control, and many miles of wire fences have gone up about it. He has erected stables for hundreds of horses and ponies, has a dairy supplied by over 100 cows, and a magnificent bungalow home with electric lights, ice-making machines and the other comforts which the nabobs of St. Louis most love. All this is in one of the wildest parts of the black continent, where antelope are as thick as sheep in Ohio, where there are more zebras than there are cows in Kentucky, where the gnus are more numerous than horses in Virginia, and where the lion still roars at night after the leopard has been in wait for his prey. The estate itself is centred with wild animals; and it is one of the great private game preserves of the world.

## A PIKE COUNTY MILLIONAIRE.

The man I refer to is Mr. William S. MacMillan of Missouri. I have called him a Pike county millionaire, although I am not sure that he comes from Pike. Like all Missourians he is nearly a native of St. Louis. He is about 33 years old; is dark complexioned, tall, straight and fine looking, and he weighs, I judge, about 170 pounds. He is a man of culture as well as a man of muscle and enterprise, and he is also evidently a man of great wealth. He has already spent a fortune on his African estate, and I am told that he is now putting out from \$50,000 to \$100,000 a year in improvements. He is supported by the citizens here to be worth some tens of millions of dollars and to have an income running into the hundreds of thousands a year.

As to these things, however, I know only from hearsay. Mr. MacMillan is a modest man, and when I took tea with him at his city home here in Nairobi the other day I did not feel at liberty to ask him personal questions. Indeed, a large part of the information which I give in this letter concerning his farm and his operations comes from other sources, although considerable cropped out in our chat about farming, land-holding and big game hunting on this great African plateau.

## THE JUJA RANCH.

The name of Mr. MacMillan's big ranch is the Juja farm. I see a posting notice concerning it in the Nairobi Globe Trotter of this week, stating that its boundaries are undisturbed, that shooting is absolutely prohibited, and that trespassers will be prosecuted. The farm lies right in the heart of the big game country. It is on the Athi plains more than a mile above the sea, in a region which is high and healthy. The Juja ranch is bounded by three rivers and is now surrounded by a wire fence. Inside the fence are thousands of antelopes, great droves of zebras, and a large number of gnus, or wilde beasts, which are a combination between a horse and a cow and are of

the antelope species. There are also rhinos and hippos unnumbered. The hippopotamuses inhabit the swamps along the rivers, and these streams are also inhabited by crocodiles. The other day Mrs. MacMillan's favorite terrier attempted to swim a creek not far from the house and was gobbled up by a crocodile. A day or two before that a rhinoceros attacked one of the negroes who was hoeing the lettuce in the garden and damaged area considerably, and every now and then a hippopotamus from the swamps of the Athi river breaks in and has a meal of the peanuts or sweet potatoes. The amount that these animals eat is not so great, but they tramp over the garden, crushing the vegetables into mush with their giant feet and they are apt to wallow in the flowers.

## A PALACE IN A WILDERNESS.

I don't suppose I ought to call Mr. MacMillan's country home a palace. It would not be one in London, Paris, Washington or Berlin, but it is certainly palatial in this land, where, until within a dozen years ago, there were nothing but mud huts thicked about the swamps, and where the natives are still conspicuous by their nudity. The home is a low bungalow, painted in a cool green and white, with wide halls, spacious verandas and long, cosy chairs all whispering comfort to the saddle-tired hunter who may have just come in, chased by a lion, or from a long hunt on the plains. The house itself was imported from England in sections, the material being brought 30 miles by oxen over flooded rivers through almost impassable swamps and through a country filled with wild beasts. This is so also of the furniture, the wall papers and the beautiful engravings and books, and also of the modern farm implements of various kinds which are now used on the estate.

The same is true of the machinery of the pumping station and electric light plant, which are down near the river and carry light and water to all the buildings on the homestead. The structures include an engine house and rooms for dynamo, storage cells and an ice chamber.

## DAIRY OF A HUNDRED COWS.

In talking with me Mr. MacMillan said he had now 100 milch cows in his dairy. Each gives only a gallon of milk a day, but the milk is almost pure cream, and far richer than that of our American cows. Mr. MacMillan told me that he is now making a great deal of butter and that the most of it finds a ready market in Nairobi. He speaks confidently of the future of British East Africa as a dairying country, saying that the grass is rich in its butter-producing qualities, and prophesying that this colony will some day export butter to India, South Africa and London.

Mr. MacMillan's dairy on the Juja ranch is a wonder to the people here. It is equipped as well as any of the cowhouses belonging to our millionaires of the United States. Its fittings are of white enamel; it has a boiler for sterilizing the utensils, a steam separator with white enamel fittings and everything is managed in the most sanitary way. On one side of the dairy is a bacon room containing fitches and hams, and down on the marshy bank of the river nearby are pigsties, in which are swine of all sizes, fattened on the refuse milk.

## STABLES AND THEIR ABYSSINIAN

The Juja stables have quarters for

He Has 20,000 Acres Swarming With Zebras, Antelopes and Gnus—His Troubles With Lions and Hippopotami—How He Farms With Seven Hundred Black Natives—He Has Electric Lights, Telephones and Ice-making Plants—The Horse Stables are Screened From Mosquitoes—Barbary Mules and Abyssinian Ponies—Domesticating The Zebra—Lord Delamere's Big African Estate, Etc.



ZEBRAS ARE SOMETIMES RIDDEN BY NATIVES.

Photographed for the "News" by Frank G. Carpenter.

100 horses and ponies, with box stalls and all other conveniences. The floors are paved and drained, and the loose boxes are netted against mosquitoes, which during the rainy season are death to horses in this part of the world. Outside the stables are chicken runs and not far from them are a large number of farm wagons lately imported from Wisconsin for use on the estate. Among the animals used for draft are Bombay mules and East Indian oxen, both of which seem to thrive here. Mr. MacMillan has recently brought in about 100 ponies and mules from Abyssinia. He has also gathered 400 cattle, having just begun to stock the ranch. His cattle have humps on their backs; they are descendants of the sacred bulls of India, but he is now importing Hereford and Guernsey bulls to improve the breed.

## THE QUESTION OF LABOR.

In my talk with Mr. MacMillan I

tary of agriculture says that he has great hopes from the zebra colts born in captivity and things they may eventually be handled like donkeys and horses. As to the wild zebras, he says it is impossible to take them from the plains and use them for farm animals, and he advises the settlers that oxen and mules are better and cheaper. A wild zebra never becomes docile and the natives cannot possibly handle it. The colts, if treated kindly, learn to change their nature, and I have seen zebras driven about hitched to carriages and spring wagons, and in some places even ridden by natives.

## HOW TO BREAK THE ZEBRA.

I have before me the report made by the farmer in charge of the government ranch giving his conclusions as to zebra training. After saying that the animals need a wide range he tells how he broke five zebra stallions, after they had been haltered and stabled for more than a year. He says that one of these was savage to ferocity and unsafe to approach in the stall or outside. The others he hitched up to an old military wagon, using a set of mule harness reversed, with the breeching acting as the breast-collar, and with rope tugs. It took him one whole month before he could run a pair of these zebras together, and six weeks before a good team could be depended upon. After that they went fairly well. He worked them for several weeks hauling brush and wood, and at the end they became tamed. They would eat only grass, and turned up their noses at bran and corn. They were good pullers and strong. Shortly after turning them out on pasture they picked up and grew fat once more.

One of the chief troubles of keeping the zebras in captivity, is that they become infected with worms and parasites of various kinds. Old settlers, who understand the country, say that the zebra has these same parasites when he runs wild on the plains, but that he knows certain plants and grasses which are antiseptic for them and soaks them out and eats them. This keeps him in health, notwithstanding the parasites. When in captivity such wide ranging is not possible, he cannot find his medicine and as a result grows sick and dies.

## BIG FARMS IN AFRICA.

The farm of Mr. MacMillan, which I have described, is one of the big estates which are springing up here on the high African plateau. There are a number of the kind, and the papers are filled with warnings to hunters that they must not shoot upon these large properties. The division of the land into big holdings, through favoritism or in other ways, is creating a great deal of comment, and it is denounced by the smaller settlers. Among the big estates are those of Lord Hindlip, who has over 100,000 acres, of the East African syndicate, which has 500 square miles, or 320,000 acres, and of Lord Delamere, who has 100,000 acres and more. Lord Delamere's estate is 7,000 feet above sea level, and the equator runs through it. He has already 1,000 acres under cultivation and has stocked his pastures with 8,000 native sheep and 600 imported Merinos. He has also imported rams and 200 Ryeland-crossed native jacks. He is experimenting in cattle rearing, and has a herd of 17,000 native head, including 800 oxen. He has 14 Shorthorns and a number of Herefords. He has also a model dairy. Other farmers are bringing in European stock for breeding purposes. There is a settler not far from Nairobi who has recently imported 30 Merino rams and 100 Merino ewes. This man is also engaged in dairying, and has several fine Guernsey bulls.

## NO PLACE FOR POOR AMERICANS.

There is one thing I should like to say about British East Africa: It is no place for poor Americans, and the poor Englishman who can do well here is a wonder. The land seems to be good, and it can be bought comparatively cheap, but everything is far from the markets, and all imports are high. Labor is exceedingly low. A native can often be employed for 5 or 10 cents a day. But it is difficult to control them, and the conditions are impossible for the ordinary American farmer who has but little money and relies largely on his muscle and brains. The British East African government advises no one to come to the country unless he has at least \$1,000, and it says he should have \$5,000 to do well. The cost of land ranges from 40 cents to \$1.30 an acre, according to whether it is near or far from the railroad. This is for farm lands. Pastures can be bought for as low as 20 cents an acre and homesteads of 150 acres can be purchased by instalments, spread over 15 years. The right of preemption lapses at the end of three years, if 45 acres out of the 150 have not been cultivated. As a general thing the government will not grant more than 5,000 acres to any one man, although 15,000 acres may be acquired by special arrangement. It would take about 3,000 sheep in stock 1,000 acres of good grazing land, and the government estimates that the capital needed to start

with the prospects. This country is a world of undeveloped possibilities, and if it were thrown open, as was our great west, each man being given 100 acres outright and aided as Canada is now aiding its settlers, the land would soon be taken up and a considerable white population would result. As it is now most of the best tracts along the railroads are in the hands of English nabobs, and the hundreds of comparatively poor men who came here from South Africa at the close of the Boer war have left. Many of those who remained are living in little galvanized iron shacks, and are not doing overly well.

Nevertheless there is no reason why this should not some day be a white man's country, settled by white men. Everywhere above 5,000 feet the climate is healthy, and at 5,000 feet ice is usually seen in the early morning. A great part of the highlands has a good rainfall, and almost any kind of crop common to the temperate zone will grow. Farther down near the coast, patches of cotton have been planted, and are yielding 300 or 400 pounds of lint to the acre. I have already spoken of the coffee plantations about Nairobi. I am told there are also good

coffee lands on the slopes of Mount Kenia. Some tobacco farms have been set out along the Hamisi river, and vegetables are now being raised here for Mombasa and the other ports far down the coast. The people hope to raise European vegetables for South Africa, and it is their idea that they will eventually export meat to the country. The greatest obstacles now to the raising of the insect pests and animal diseases, but they will probably be conquered, and these vast plains, which are now supporting thousands upon thousands of antelopes, zebras, gnus and other wild animals, will eventually be teeming with cattle and sheep.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

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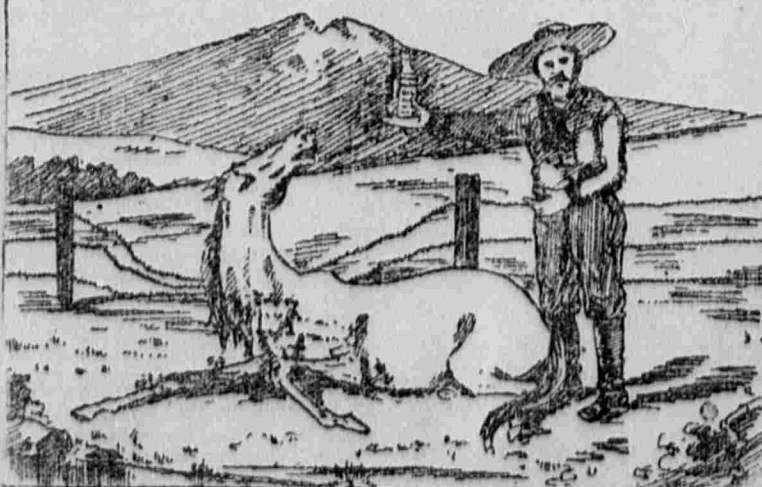
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## AUTOISTS DRIVING FROM NEW YORK TO PARIS.

Seventeen motor car drivers, mechanicians, photographers and correspondents, have started on their journey by automobile from New York to Paris.

Three of them—Maurice Drieghe, Eugene Le Louvier and Max Hohmann—are making the trip independently of the others, and will take a more difficult route.

They will embark at Seattle and go from there to Skagway, Alaska, by boat as there is no continuous road up through the western part of Canada, and travel there by automobile would be impossible. In crossing Behring strait, they will sail their 30 miles by canoe. With those two exceptions the entire trip will be made in the car. They will carry 75 gallons of gasoline

and make a thousand miles on it. The remainder of the motorists go by way of San Francisco. The three daring motorists once in Siberia will find gasoline awaiting them and will proceed via the Anadri river, thence to Njino-Kolusuk. They expect to cover 22,000 miles on the trip and be in Paris in time to welcome the drivers going by way of Frisco.

asked him as to the African natives as an available labor supply. He says they do well, and that the wages paid average about \$1.32 a month per man. He has about 10 white foremen, and something like 700 Hindoes, Somalis, Masai and other native Africans. The Masai are a stockraising people and they are valuable upon the ranches, as they know how to care for cattle. They will do nothing in the way of cultivation or other hard labor. The Wadikuyu, on the other hand, are fond of farming, and can use the hoe fairly well. Such men as are working away from their own country have to be fed; but this costs only about 75 cents a month over their pay. Those who are employed from the tribes nearby are allowed to go home every night feed themselves.

Most of the farmers here use African or Indian servants. The Somalis are good boys and the Swahilis are in great demand. The wages of a fairly good house boy are about 10 cents a day and his food. The better class cooks, however, sometimes get as much as \$13 a month and such wages are rising.

## DOMESTICATING THE ZEBRA.

There are great droves of zebras running about over the wilder parts of Mr. MacMillan's big farm. He permits no one to shoot any of them, and as a result these animals are very tame considering their character and locality. After the farm is in good running order, an attempt will be made to domesticate the zebra, and experiments in cross-breeding will be carried on. Indeed, this has already been attempted here and there throughout the country and especially at the government agricultural farm at Naivasha, where between here and Uganda, I have gone through Naivasha and the wild zebra about there look fine and healthy. It is different from the tame ones on the government farm. The experiment was begun in 1904, when 100 heads were brought in from the wilds. They fell off one by one, being attacked by parasites and disease, and the experiment is now considered a failure. The secret

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