

# "Hagenbeck's" Closes Its Doors

By T. R. YBARRA.

**H**AGENBECK'S," the world's most famous emporium of wild animals, has closed its doors. The great Hagenbeck Park at Stellingen, near Hamburg, where exotic beasts from the remotest parts of the earth were assembled, has been added to the victims of the war. After seeing scores of its most valuable animals perish of hunger because Germany's drastic wartime food regulations precluded their getting enough to eat, after losing scores of others because lack of coal caused them to freeze to death, the Hagenbeck firm has given up, for the time being at least, the struggle to keep in business. And in view of the fact that Germany's loss of colonies and merchant marine makes it difficult for the firm to meet competition from other countries, there is a possibility that Stellingen may remain closed permanently and the name of Hagenbeck, for years renowned throughout the universe, become only a memory.

For some time items of news in German and other European papers have been hinting that Hagenbeck's was in dire straits. One does not associate lions and tigers, polar bears and sea lions, hippopotami, giraffes and monkeys with wartime casualty lists, but the fact remains that, while soldiers were dying by thousands on the battlefields of the war, hundreds of Hagenbeck's animals, some of them unique among beasts in captivity and worth thousands of dollars apiece, were perishing in the Stellingen park because of the straits to which the war had brought them. Since the armistice, too, the mortality at Stellingen has continued until the losses of the Hagenbeck firm have aggregated a sum beyond which it cannot go. Keepers in whom years of constant association with wild animals had bred genuine affection for their charges have been forced to stand helpless at Stellingen month after month while its unhappy denizens pined away and perished, until at last there were scarcely any left in the great park.

Shortly before the decision to close the Stellingen park the following list of animals and birds which had died, directly or indirectly, from hunger and cold as a result of wartime conditions was given out by the Hagenbeck firm:

74 lions	17 kangaroos
19 tigers	2 rhinoceri
40 bears	65 antelopes
19 polar bears	20 porcupines
8 leopards	1,000 turtles
19 hyenas	68 ostriches
200 monkeys	58 cranes
14 elephants	300 sea birds
120 deer	50 snakes
28 camels	
24 crocodiles	2,155
10 zebras	

In addition, the entire Hagenbeck stock of seals succumbed, likewise one of the great prizes of the Stellingen collection, a remarkable trained walrus, the last one of its kind in captivity.

Naturally, those at the head of the Hagenbeck enterprise did all in their power to check the mortality among the animals at the park. The food stringency in Germany caused the German Government to forbid giving bread and grain to animals, and for long periods no meat or salt-water fish were obtainable for them, so the Hagenbecks were compelled to seek far and wide for substitutes. Fresh water fish instead of salt water fish were fed to the sea mammals and sea birds, but they showed violent dislike for it. Then fresh water fish were salted and fed to them without success. The first sea elephants ever exhibited in Europe were among the first to die, then a number of California sea lions perished, also

some South African sea bears and many valuable penguins.

One of the greatest tragedies at Stellingen during the war was the death, within a very short period of time, of no less than 160 valuable baboons. They perished because it was impossible to feed them the corn bread to which they had been accustomed. Next to die were dozens of ostriches and other extremely valuable birds. All the time desperate efforts were being made to find some method of keeping the denizens of Stellingen alive during the crisis. In some cases these efforts proved successful. For instance, numerous deer, antelope and other animals survived the period of greatest food shortage, though deprived of the kind of food which had been supplied to them in normal times.

Most of the beasts of prey at the Hagenbeck park perished. There was a great shortage of horse meat, their principal item of diet, and none of the substitutes introduced proved successful. For a long time during the war it was impossible to obtain horse meat in sufficient quantities for the Hagenbeck animals, though constant efforts were made to get it from the military authorities, who had commandeered practically all the horses in Germany. At last, large consignments of horse meat from the front were obtained and fed to lions, tigers and other beasts of prey; but the mortality among them, instead of decreasing, became even higher than it had been before.

Investigation showed that much of the horse meat fed to them was tainted, the horses having died of disease. Thus perished nearly all the lions and tigers in Hagenbeck's possession, including some of the finest specimens ever captured alive, and one whole group of twenty-two animals of different species which Hagenbeck had trained for purposes of exhibition.

In the midst of all this mortality the bears at Stellingen seemed to bear a charmed life. They ate practically everything set before them, and continued to thrive. Other animals which managed to survive the worst days of the war were a few Liberian baby hippopotami, one giraffe and one rhinoceros.

Lack of coal at Stellingen, with no substitute for heating the quarters of the animals, caused some of the most valuable inhabitants of the park to die of cold. Since the end of the war



Decorations of the Park—the Mastodonsaurus.

the difficulties of the Hagenbeck firm regarding food and fuel for its animals have been further complicated by active competition organized outside Germany. Last year plans were made in England for the formation of a big company to conduct the business of capturing and selling wild animals, and it was confidently predicted that the supremacy so long enjoyed by the German firm in this field would be ended for all time by the new organization. Among those interested in the venture was one of the leading wild animal hunters of the world—one who had been with Theodore Roosevelt after big game in East Africa.

Another factor in Hagenbeck's troubles has been the loss by Germany of her colonies in Africa. In German East Africa was a large farm where animals were collected and held pending shipment to Europe. This farm, according to report from Germany, is now lost to the Hagenbecks.

Before the war the Hagenbeck firm brought animals from Africa and elsewhere to Stellingen, largely in German ships, but now, that the German merchant marine has been swept from the seas, the expense of such transportation would be enormously increased. Undoubtedly this was one of the principal causes contributing toward the decision to close the Stellingen park. When the present exchange rate of the German mark is taken into consideration, it will be easily seen what payment of freight charges to foreign ship owners would have meant to the Hagenbecks.

Three generations of the Hagenbeck family have been engaged in the wild animal trade. The first to

enter it was Gottfried Hagenbeck, father of the founder of the great animal park at Stellingen. Gottfried Hagenbeck was a fish dealer in Hamburg, who had contracted with certain fishermen for obtaining at a certain fixed sum anything which they might catch in their nets on their trips to the waters north of Hamburg. One day in 1848 these fishermen brought to Hagenbeck six seals along with the rest of the catch. The fish dealer placed the seals on exhibition, fixing the entrance price per person at 1 mark. The profits, though small, were enough to give him the idea that further enterprises of the same sort might prove profitable.

At the time of the seal exhibit Karl Hagenbeck, destined later to be the wild animal king of the world, was only 4 years old. Shortly afterward he began to take an active interest in his father's new business. The elder Hagenbeck acquired in 1852 a polar bear, a hyena and some strange birds from far-away lands, and placed the whole lot on exhibition, raising his entrance rate to 4 marks per head. Little Karl assisted his father in caring for the menageries, and showed unmistakable signs of possessing extraordinary aptitude for the wild animal business.

When he was 11 years old he went with his father to Bremen to help him take back to Hamburg a bear, two American opossums and a few monkeys. The bear escaped from the wagon in which it was being transported, and for two years wandered about the lonely waste known as the Lüneburger Heide, near Hamburg, terrifying the peasants, until at last it was killed. Nobody but

Gottfried Hagenbeck, his little son and the driver of the wagon knew how that bear ever came to be at large in Germany, and they kept it a dark secret, fearing complications with the police.

The elder Hagenbeck's animal business grew steadily, but the expenses involved were so high and the beasts caused him so much trouble that he thought seriously of giving it up and devoting himself entirely to his humdrum fish business. Finally, he compromised by putting his son Karl in charge of the animal business, although Karl was only 15 years old. So in 1859 Karl left school and entered upon the career in which he was to out-distance all rivals.

The Hagenbecks, father and son, soon came into competition with William Jarrach, at that time the world's foremost dealer in wild animals, and the boy, despite his extreme youth, had the satisfaction of outgeneraling Jarrach in various deals. Young Hagenbeck's first really big venture was when he went to Suez and took over an entire caravan of captured beasts, brought out of the jungles of the interior of Africa by a famous hunter called Cassanova. The lot included lions, leopards, panthers, hyenas, jackals, wolves, monkeys and rhinoceri. Karl succeeded in getting most of these to Europe, in spite of all sorts of difficulties, and Hagenbeck senior derived good profit from the sale of the animals to zoological gardens and other customers. In 1882, Karl Hagenbeck, at the age of 18, was placed in full control of the Hagenbeck wild beast business by his father.

His operations grew constantly more important and daring. He soon entered into business relations with Phineas T. Barnum, the great American circus man, for whom Hagenbeck's hunters secured many valuable animals in the wilds of Africa and Asia. In 1893 Hagenbeck organized a big animal exhibit at the World's Fair in Chicago and crossed the ocean in person to supervise it. He had caused a number of wild beasts, including lions and tigers, to be especially trained for exhibition at Chicago by his brother-in-law, who had been remarkably successful as a trainer and animal tamer. But his brother-in-law fell ill at Chicago just before the date set for the opening of the exhibition and, as no substitute trainer could be secured at such short notice, Hagenbeck decided to enter the animals' cage himself and put them through their tricks, relying on the fact that he had helped his brother-in-law to train them. Having explained to the audience that he had not been near the animals for months, he entered the cage and put its inmates through their whole program without a hitch amid the enthusiastic acclamations of the American audience.

The great scope of Hagenbeck operations soon made it imperative



(International Press Photo. Co.)

Karl Hagenbeck



Gottfried Hagenbeck.

(Continued on Page 14)

# "Hagenbeck's" Closes Its Doors

(Continued from Page 8)

for him to seek new quarters in Hamburg. He bought a vast tract of land at Stellingen, outside the city, and threw open to visitors the great park, unique of its kind, which closed its doors a few days ago. He also felt the need of help, so he took into partnership his two sons as soon as they were old enough, thus initiating into this strange business a third generation of the family.

Hagenbeck made several trips to America. On one occasion he told Director Hornaday of the Zoological Garden at Bronx Park, New York City, that he felt sure that two lions and a tiger which he had supplied to the park after having kept them some time at Stellingen would recognize him. Dr. Hornaday doubted this, so Hagenbeck went with him to the cages, where the beasts went to him as soon as he spoke to them as he had been accustomed to do at Stellingen and allowed him to scratch their heads.

The Stellingen park was one of the great show places of Hamburg. Numerous distinguished visitors were shown through it by the proprietor, including Kaiser Wilhelm and his son, the German Crown Prince. It grew little by little to such dimensions that at the height of its glory its harbored nearly 2,000 animals and birds, of a total approximate value of \$300,000. Among these were lions, tigers, bears of all sorts, hyenas, wolves and dogs of fifteen species, chimpanzees, orang-utans and monkeys of nineteen other species, elephants, hippopotami, rhinoceri, tapirs, giraffes, camels, dromedaries, llamas, goats of strange breeds, bisons and buffaloes, wild swine and similar beasts of eighteen species, antelopes, a wart-hog, zebras, sea lions, seals, armadillos, kangaroos, crocodiles, alligators, many varieties of snakes, ostriches, cassowaries, flamingos, parrots and eagles. The yearly cost of feeding this extraordinary aggregation was about \$40,000.