



XI. CAMELOPARDALIS GIRAFFA: - THE GIRAFFE.

PLATE XI.

CAMELOPARDALIS GIRAFFA.—THE CAMELOPARD OR GIRAFFE.

Kameel of the Cape Colonists. *Naip* of the Hottentots. *Intootla* of the Bechuana and Matabili.

GENERIC CHARACTER.—In stature the tallest of Mammiferous animals. Adult male, twelve feet high at the shoulder, and eighteen at the crown of the head. Twenty feet in extreme length. Legs slender, and very long. Feet terminating in a divided hoof, shaped like a parallelogram, with rounded heel and pointed toe. No succentorial hoofs. Body short. Withers very elevated, a scanty upright rufous mane extending along the whole neck. Back very oblique. Tail thirty-four inches long, terminating in a tuft of bristly black hair about the same length, which reaches to the hocks. Head light and tapering, thirty-four inches long; provided with osseous peduncles (common to both sexes), eight inches long, covered with a hairy skin, and terminating in a pencilled tuft of black hair. A tuberculum on the chaffron. No muzzle. Upper lip entire; hairy and pointed. Eyes large and melting, with long lashes. No lachrymary sinus. Ears pure white, and ample. Callosities on the breast and knees. Tongue very long, pointed, and flexible. General colour, deep sienna, with large angular ferruginous spots, variously disposed over the whole; each spot darker in the centre. Belly and cheeks white, with dark blotches.

Female, sixteen or seventeen feet in height at the crown, of a dirty white colour, with pale ferruginous spots as in the male. An udder with four teats. Gregarious in small troops. Inhabits the great wooded plains of the interior.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GIRAFFE.

Magnificent creature! to reach thee I strain
Through forest and glen, over mountain and plain,
Yet now thou art fallen, thy fate I deplore,
And lament that the reign of thy greatness is o'er.

Thine heart's blood is streaming, thy vigour gone by,
Thy fleet foot is palsied, and glazed is thine eye:—
Now the last hard convulsion of death has come o'er thee
Magnificent creature! *who* would not deplore thee?

DURING three centuries and a half, the accounts given of this extraordinary animal were deemed entirely fabulous. Its apparent disproportions and colossal height had classed it with the Unicorns, and Sphynxes, the Satyrs, and the Cynocephali, of the ancients; and had induced a belief that so singular a form belonged rather to the group of chimeras with which the regions of imagination are tenanted, than existed amongst the actual works of the creation.

Loftiest of all the *Mammiferes*, and isolated among the ruminating creation, whether in family, in genus, or in species, the animal now before us is one so extraordinary in form, and so stupendous in stature, that even the stuffed spoils, the almost shapeless representative of the living creature, produce upon the eye of the beholder a mixed effect of astonishment and awe. Involuntarily is his imagination led back to the early epochs of the world, when colossal beings peopled the earth, and were the undisputed possessors of every region. He fancies himself at once in the presence of one of the survivors of the great diluvian catastrophe, when the Mastodon, the Megatherium, and perhaps its own congeners, were swept away, leaving the *Camelopardalis* to attest, amongst a few others, what were the forms of a primitive animated nature!*

The first of this noble species ever seen in Europe is said by Pliny to have been exhibited at Rome, during the dictatorship of Julius Cæsar. Several of the emperors subsequently displayed others in the games of the circus, or in their triumphal processions; and Gordian III. is said to have possessed no fewer than ten living examples at the same time. It was displayed by Aurelian amongst other remarkable animals, in his triumph over Queen Zenobia, on the conquest of Palmyra; and it is represented both in its grazing and browsing attitudes on the Prænestine mosaic pavement. In that part of the mosaic which designates the cataracts of the Nile, a larger animal is likewise represented with shorter horns. Since the Southern regions of Africa were a *terra incognita* to the Romans, these specimens must have been obtained viâ Egypt, from the Northern, or North-Eastern line of that vast continent. Nevertheless the animal was at no time a native of Egypt, and in the ancient sculptures is introduced only in subjects which relate to Ethiopia, whence it was brought with apes, rare woods, and other native productions, as part of the tribute annually paid to the Pharaohs.†

Amongst the earlier writers, Pliny, Ælian, and Strabo, have all noticed the *Camelopardalis*, but the first satisfactory description is to be found in the *Æthiopica* of Heliodorus, Bishop of Tricca. "The ambassadors," he says, "of the Axœomitæ (Abyssinia,) brought presents to Hydaspes, and among other things there was an animal of a strange and wonderful species, about the size of a camel, which had its skin marked with florid spots; the hinder parts from the loins being low, like those of a lion, but the shoulders, fore-feet, and breast, elevated above proportion to the other parts; the neck was small and lengthened out from its large body, like that of a swan; the head in form resembled a camel's, but was in size about twice that of a Libyan Ostrich, and it rolled its eyes, which had a film over them, very frightfully. It differed in gait from every other land or water animal, and waddled in a remarkable fashion; each leg did not move alternately, but those on the right side moved together, independently of the other, and those on the left in the same manner, so that each side was alternately elevated. This animal was so tractable as to be led by a small string fastened to the head, and the keeper could conduct it whithersoever he pleased, as if with the strongest chain. When it appeared, it struck the whole multitude with terror, and it took its name from the principal parts of its body, being called by the people, extempore, *Camelopardalis*."

The terms of exaggeration in which the old travellers have mentioned the *Camelopard*, were naturally derived from the distorted reports of Africans. It was "a beast not often seene, yet very tame, and of a strange composition, mixed of a libard (leopard), harte, buffe, and camel; and by reason of his long legges before, and shorter behind, not able to graze without difficulty."‡ Again, he was "so huge, that a man on horseback may passe uprighte under him, feeding on leaves from the tops of trees, and formed like a camel."§ In a very curious old Spanish book, however, which describes the second embassy from

* Hamilton Smith p. 160.

† Wilkinson's Egypt.

‡ Purchas, book vi. chap. 1.

§ Ibid. book vii. chap. 6.

Henry III. of Castile to Tamerlane the Great, in 1403, there is the following minute, and in many respects, accurate account of the animal:—"The ambassadors sent by the king of Castile, Henri III., to the Great Tamerlane, arrived at a town called Hoy, now Khoy, on the confines of Armenia, where the Persian empire commences. At that town they fell in with an ambassador whom the Sultan of Babylon had sent to Tamerlane. He had with him as many as twenty horsemen, and fifteen camels laden with presents, which the Sultan sent to Tamerlane. Besides these there were six Ostriches, and an animal called *jornufa*, which animal was formed in the following manner:—In body it was of the size of a horse, with the neck very long, and the fore-legs much taller than the hind ones: the hoof was cloven like that of the ox. From the hoof of the fore-leg to the top of the shoulder, it was sixteen hands (palms); and from the shoulder to the head sixteen hands more; and when it raised its neck, it lifted its head so high as to be a wonder to all. The neck was like that of the stag; and so great was the disproportion of the length of the hinder legs to that of the fore-legs, that one who was not acquainted with it would think it was sitting, although it was actually standing. It had the haunches slanting like the buffalo, and a white belly. The skin was of a golden hue, and marked with large round white spots. In the lower part of the face it resembled the deer, on the forehead it had a high and pointed prominence; very large and round eyes, and the ears like those of a horse; near the ears, two small round horns, the greater part covered with hair, resembling the horns of a deer on their first appearance. Such was the length of the neck, and the animal raised its head so high when he chose, that he could eat with facility from the top of a lofty wall; and from the top of a high tree it could reach to eat the leaves of which it devoured great quantities. So that altogether it was a marvellous sight to one who had never seen such an animal before."*

Prior to the arrival, in 1827, of two living specimens, sent by command of the Pacha of Egypt to the Courts of England and France, none had been seen in Europe since the end of the fifteenth century, when the Soldan of Egypt sent one to Lorenzo di Medici. This individual was represented in the frescoes of Poggio Acajano, near Florence, with the inhabitants of which city it was very familiar—being accustomed to walk at perfect liberty about the streets, stretching its long neck to the balconies, to implore apples and other fruits, whereupon it delighted to feed.† To modern Naturalists the species has been known only since its discovery in Southern Africa—no very precise account being obtained of its figure and habits, until within these last fifty years; and for these the world were principally indebted to the amusing and enthusiastic Le Vaillant, whose assertions, like those of many other travellers, were nevertheless originally received as pure fabrications. So early as the year 1774, a rude design, made from a specimen killed in an expedition two hundred leagues to the North of the Cape of Good Hope, was transmitted by Governor Tulbagh to the Academy of Sciences,—and this drawing, together with the ill-stuffed skin of a young one, presented at the same time, first proved that the species was not confined to Ethiopia as originally surmised; though it served also, by its incorrectness, to confirm the common error, into which even Buffon had been betrayed, of describing the fore-legs to be twice as long as the hind, "so that the rump seems brought down to the ground, and the beast, when it sits on its crupper, appears to be entirely on end.‡" "I saw," says Belon, "at the castle of Cairo, an animal commonly called *Zurnapa*. It was anciently stiled by the Latins, *Camelopardalis*, a name compounded of *leopard* and *camel*; for it is sprinkled and variegated with the spots of a leopard, and has a long neck like the camel. It is a most beautiful creature, as gentle in its disposition as a sheep, and more amiable than any other wild beast. The legs are long and slender, and those behind are so low, that the animal seems to stand on end." Such blunders as these have been long exploded; but even the improved delineations of the present day, having been all derived from half-grown and stunted prisoners,§ limited to an enclosure which they could traverse from end to end in a few dozens of their ogre-like strides, are very far from being faithful portraits of the princely Zerapha, as he appeared to me in his native deserts.

Where is the man who could behold the soil he treads upon, impressed with the recent footprints of this colossal quadruped, and not experience emotions of the deepest interest? Who is he amongst the votaries of the chaste Goddess, that shall hear tell of riding familiarly by the side of a troop, ranging unfettered in their own wild abodes, and not feel the spirit stirred within him? The recollection of a spectacle so marvellous, and so animating, awakens in my own breast a tingling renewal of past impressions, more lively than any written description can render intelligible. The chord once touched—I have already in fancy's wanderings left the haunts of men, and dived anew into pathless wastes, traversed only by the brute creation—into wide savannahs where the grim Lion prowls, and where the gaunt Hyænas and the wild dogs fearlessly pursue their prey. Though the glories of the African wilderness may have closed for ever on my view, so long as memory lasts they can never fade from my recollection. Intensely delightful is it to look back upon the sunny scenes that are past, and especially dear to my remembrance are the thrilling passages of which I am now to treat;—but abler pens than mine, dipped even in the brightest ink, would fail to represent the reality, and leave much to be supplied by the imagination.

* *Historia del Grand Tamerlan*, &c. Madrid, 1782.

† Geoffroy St. Hilaire.

‡ Buffon.

§ The arrival in London, in 1836, of four Giraffes from Kordofan, formed quite an epoch in the annals of Natural History; and the highest praise must be awarded to M. Thibaut, through whose exertions these rare and delicate exotics, after being captured in a region of the globe so distant, were transported in health and safety over deserts of arid sand, and across the salt seas, to Northern shores. Accompanied by several Nubian attendants, they were led through the streets of the metropolis, before day-light, towards their final destination in Regent's Park, the few persons who were abroad at that early hour, staring with amazement at a spectacle so novel—four such grotesque figures with their keepers in Abyssinian costume, together with a mingled retinue of servants, forming a most singular cavalcade.

Well do I recall the avidity with which, in the days of my boyhood, I devoured Le Vaillant's picturesque and eloquent account of his first success in the chase of the Giraffe, at a period when men had long doubted of its existence; and many a time has my own bosom since leapt to the very emotions he describes. The appearance of a troop of those antediluvian figures, gliding majestically amid the wild magnificence of an African landscape, never failed to transport me beyond myself. Methinks I see them now—in yonder "field, spacious and delightful by the shade of many stately and aged trees"—the white chintz-pattern garments of the lady-like cows contrasting vividly with the chocolate coloured robe of that mighty bull. Aye, there they stand, grouped tranquilly in graceful and dignified attitudes, elevating their stately crests to the clouds, some *craning* over the tops of the smaller trees, whilst others—burying their light heads among the reticulated boughs, and darting out their long black tongues like the chameleon, are busily drawing in the tender sprigs.

It was on the morning after our departure from the residence of his Amazooloo Majesty, that I first actually saw the Giraffe. Although I had been for weeks on the tip-toe of expectation, we had hitherto succeeded in finding the gigantic footsteps only of the tallest of all the quadrupeds upon the earth; but at dawn of that day, a large party of hungry savages, with four of the Hottentots on horseback, having accompanied us across the Mariqua in search of Elands, which were reported to be numerous in the neighbourhood, we formed a long line, and having drawn a great extent of country blank, divided into two parties, Richardson keeping to the right, and myself to the left. Beginning at length to despair of success, I had shot a Hartebeest for the savages, when an object which had repeatedly attracted my eye—but which I had as often persuaded myself was nothing more than the branchless stump of some withered tree, suddenly shifted its position, and the next moment I distinctly perceived that singular form, of which the apparition had oftentimes visited my slumbers—but upon whose reality I now gazed for the first time. Gliding rapidly among the trees, above the topmost branches of many of which its graceful head nodded like some lofty pine, all doubt was in another moment at an end—it was the stately, the long-sought Giraffe. Putting spurs to my horse, and directing the Hottentots to follow, I presently found myself half choked with excitement, rattling at the heels of an animal which to me had been a stranger even in its captive state, and which thus to meet, free on its native plains, has fallen to the lot of but few of the votaries of the chase. Sailing before me with incredible velocity, his long swan-like neck keeping time to the eccentric motion of his stilt-like legs—his ample black tail curled above his back, and whisking in ludicrous concert with the rocking of his disproportioned frame, he glided gallantly along "like some tall ship upon the ocean's bosom," and seemed to leave whole leagues behind him at each stride. The ground was of the most treacherous description—a rotten black soil overgrown with long coarse grass, which concealed from view innumerable gaping fissures that momentarily threatened to bring down my horse. For the first five minutes I rather lost than gained ground; and despairing, over such a country, of ever diminishing the distance, or improving my acquaintance with this ogre in seven-league boots, I dismounted, and the mottled carcass presenting a fair and inviting mark, I had the satisfaction of hearing two balls tell roundly upon his plank-like stern. But as well might I have fired at a wall; he neither swerved from his course, nor slackened his pace, and pushed on so far ahead during the time I was reloading, that after remounting, I had some difficulty in even keeping sight of him amongst the trees. Closing again, however, I repeated the dose on the other quarter, and spurred my horse along, ever and anon sinking to his fetlock—the Giraffe now flagging at each stride—until, as I was coming up hand over hand, and success seemed certain, the cup was suddenly dashed from my lips, and down I came headlong—my horse having fallen into a pit, and lodged me close to an Ostrich's nest, near which two of the old birds were sitting.

Happily there were no bones broken, but the violence of the shock had caused the lashings of my previously broken rifle to give way, and had doubled the stock in half—the barrels only now hanging to the wood by the trigger-guard. Nothing dismayed however by this heavy calamity, I remounted my jaded beast, and one more effort brought me ahead of my wearied victim, which stood still and allowed me to approach. In vain did I now attempt to bind my fractured rifle with a pocket handkerchief, in order to admit of my administering the *coup de grace*—the guard was so contracted, that, as in the tantalizing phantasies of a night-mare, the hammer could not by any means be brought down upon the nipple. In vain I looked around for a stone, and sought in every pocket for my knife, with which either to strike the copper cap, and bring about ignition, or hamstring the colossal but harmless animal, by whose towering side I appeared the veriest pigmy in the creation—alas, I had lent it to the Hottentots to cut off the head of the Hartebeest, and after a hopeless search in the remotest corners, each hand was withdrawn empty. Vainly did I then wait for the tardy and rebellious villains to come to my assistance, making the welkin ring, and my throat tingle, with reiterated shouts—not a soul appeared—and, in few minutes, the Giraffe having recovered his wind, and being only slightly wounded in the hind quarters, shuffled his long legs—twisted his bushy tail over his back—walked a few steps—then broke into a gallop, and diving into the mazes of the forest presently disappeared from my sight. Disappointed and annoyed at my discomfiture, I returned towards the waggons, now eight miles distant, and on my way overtook the Hottentots, who, pipe in mouth, were leisurely strolling home with an air of total indifference as to my proceedings, having come to the conclusion that "*Sir could not fung de Kameel,**" for which reason they did not think it worth while to follow as I had directed.

Two days after this catastrophe having advanced to the Tolaan river, we again took the field, accompanied by the whole

* Ang. Catch the Camelopard.

of the male inhabitants of three large kraals, in addition to those that had accompanied us from the last encampment. The country had now become undulating, extensive mimosa groves occupying all the valleys, as well as the banks of the Tolaan, winding amongst them on its way to join the Mariqua. Before we had proceeded many hundred yards, our progress was opposed by a Rhinoceros, who looked defiance, but quickly took the hints we gave him to get out of the way. Two fat Elands had been pointed out at the edge of the copse the moment before, one of which Richardson disposed of with little difficulty, the other leading me through all the intricacies of the labyrinth to a wide plain on the opposite side—on entering which I found the fugitive was prostrate at my feet in the middle of a troop of Giraffes, who stooped their long necks, astounded at the intrusion—then consulted a moment how they should best escape the impending danger—and in another, were sailing away at their utmost speed. To have followed upon my then jaded horse would have been absurd, and I was afterwards unable to recover any trace of them.

Several hours' diligent search the following day, brought us within telescopic range of twelve, whose carpet robes flickered amid glare and vapour, by which their lower parts were quite obscured. Pursuing them a considerable distance, over an extensive plain, where mokaala trees grew among thistles and mat-rushes, we repeatedly wounded the largest male, a gigantic dark coloured fellow, probably eighteen feet in height; but he merely acknowledged the receipt of each bullet as it whacked against his stern-posts and bulwarks, by wincing a little as if stung by a gnat—and then, tying an extra knot in his tail, increased his pace. Our famished horses falling repeatedly into the numerous Buffalo holes with which the ground was covered, we at length relinquished the chase, convinced of the impossibility of humbling the lofty head of the Giraffe, until our steeds should have improved in condition upon the fine pasturage which now abounded. A range of blue mountains which we visited some weeks afterwards with better success, bounded the wide prospect to the North Eastward, and the face of the country being covered with large herds of Elands, we vented our spleen upon them,—the great host of savages by whom we were attended, quickly clearing away the carcasses of those we slew, and even quarrelling for the entrails.

Many days elapsed before we again beheld the tall Giraffe, nor were our eyes gladdened with his sight until after we had crossed the Cashan mountains to the country of the Baquaina, for the express purpose of seeking for him. After the many *contres-temps*, how shall I describe the sensations I experienced, as on a cool November morning, after rapidly following some fresh traces in profound silence for several miles, I at length counted from the back of *Breslar*, my most trusty steed, no fewer than thirty-two of various sizes, industriously stretching their peacock necks to crop the tiny leaves that fluttered above their heads, in a flowering mimosa grove which beautified the scenery. My heart leapt within me, and the blood coursed like quicksilver through my veins, for, with a firm wooded plain before me, I knew that they were mine; but although they stood within a hundred yards of me, having previously determined to try the *boarding* system, I reserved my fire. Notwithstanding that I had taken the field expressly to look for Giraffes, and in consequence of several of the remarkable *spoors* of those animals having been seen the evening before, had taken four mounted Hottentots in my suite, all excepting Piet had as usual slipped off unperceived in pursuit of a troop of Koodoos. Our stealthy approach was soon opposed by an ill-tempered Rhinoceros, which with her ugly old-fashioned calf stood directly in the path; and the twinkling of her bright little eyes, accompanied by a restless rolling of the body, giving earnest of her mischievous intentions, I directed Piet to salute her with a broadside, at the same moment putting spurs to my horse. At the report of the gun, and the sudden clattering of hoofs, away bounded the herd in grotesque confusion—clearing the ground by a succession of frog-like hops, and soon leaving me far in their rear. Twice were their towering forms concealed from view by a park of trees, which we entered almost at the same instant; and twice on emerging from the labyrinth, did I perceive them tilting over an eminence far in advance, their sloping backs reddening in the sunshine, as with giant port they topped the ridges in right gallant style. A white turban, that I wore round my hunting cap, being dragged off by a projecting bough, was instantly charged and trampled under foot by three Rhinoceroses; and long afterwards, looking over my shoulder, I could see the ungainly brutes in the rear fagging themselves to overtake me. In the course of five minutes, the fugitives arrived at a small river, the treacherous sands of which receiving their spider legs, their flight was greatly retarded; and by the time they had floundered to the opposite side, and scrambled to the top of the bank, I could perceive that their race was run. Patting the steaming neck of my good steed, I urged him again to his utmost, and instantly found myself by the side of the herd. The lordly chief, being readily distinguishable from the rest by his dark chesnut robe and superior stature, I applied the muzzle of my rifle behind his dappled shoulder with the right hand, and drew both triggers; but he still continued to shuffle along, and being afraid of losing him, should I dismount among the extensive mimosa groves, with which the landscape was now obscured, I sat in my saddle, loading and firing behind the elbow, and then placing myself across his path, to obstruct his progress. Mute, dignified, and majestic, stood the unfortunate victim, occasionally stooping his elastic neck towards his persecutor, the tears trickling from the lashes of his dark humid eye, as broadside after broadside was poured into his brawny front.

His drooping head sinks gradually low,
And through his side, the last drops ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder shower;—

Presently a convulsive shivering seized his limbs—his coat stood on end—his lofty frame began to totter—and at the seventeenth discharge from the deadly grooved bore, like a falling minaret, bowing his graceful head from the skies, his proud

form was prostrate in the dust. Never shall I forget the intoxicating excitement of that moment! At last, then, the summit of my hunting ambition was actually attained, and the towering Giraffe laid low. Tossing my turbanless cap into the air—alone, in the wild wood, I hurraed with bursting exultation, and unsaddling my steed, sank exhausted with delight beside the noble prize that I had won.

When I leisurely contemplated the massive frame before me, seeming as though it had been cast in a mould of brass, and wrapt in a hide an inch and a half in thickness, it was no longer matter of astonishment that a bullet, discharged from a distance of eighty or ninety yards, should have been attended with little effect upon such amazing strength. Did stature alone constitute precedency, observes M. Le Vaillant, the Giraffe would undoubtedly claim the highest rank among quadrupeds. From the crown of the elegantly-moulded head to the sole of the hoof of this magnificent animal, the extreme height was eighteen feet; the whole being equally divided into neck, body, and leg. Two hours were passed in completing a drawing; and Piet still not making his appearance, I cut off the ample tail, which exceeded five feet in length, and was measurelessly the most estimable trophy I had ever gained; but on proceeding to saddle my horse, which I had left quietly grazing by the side of a running brook, my chagrin may be conceived, when I discovered that he had taken advantage of my occupation to free himself from his halter, and abscond. Being ten miles from the waggons, and in a perfectly strange country, I felt convinced that the only chance of saving my pet from the clutches of the lion, was to follow his trail, whilst doing which with infinite difficulty, the ground scarcely deigning to receive a foot-print, I had the satisfaction of meeting Piet and Mohanycom, who had fortunately seen and recaptured the truant. Returning to the Giraffe, we all feasted heartily upon the flesh, which, although at this season highly scented with the rank Mokaala blossoms, was far from despicable; and losing our way, in consequence of the twin-like resemblance of two scarped hills, we did not finally regain the waggons until after the setting sun-beams had ceased to play upon the trembling leaves of the light acacias, and the golden splendour which was sleeping upon the plain, had gradually passed away.

The spell was now broken, and the secret of Camelopard hunting discovered. The next day Richardson and myself killed three; one, a female, slipping upon muddy ground, and falling with great violence, before she had been wounded, was despatched by a shot in the head as she lay floundering like a tommy-long-legs. From this time we could reckon confidently upon two out of each troop that we were fortunate enough to find, by always approaching as near as possible, in order to ensure a good start, galloping into the middle of them, *boarding* the largest, and riding with him until he subsided. A few only, struck in a vital part, fell at once in a mighty crash, and arose up no more. The rapidity with which these awkwardly formed animals can move, is beyond all things surprising, our best horses being unable to close with them under two miles.* Their gallop is a succession of jumping strides, the fore and hind legs on the same side moving together, instead of diagonally, as in most other quadrupeds, the former being kept close to each other, and the latter wide apart like a pair of oars, so that in riding by the animal's side, the hind hoof extends behind and beyond the horse, momentarily threatening to overthrow him. The motion arises less from the roof-like slope of the back, than from the total absence of *channel*, the stern appearing exactly as if it had been *plastered*. Perhaps the complicated sawing progress of this strange animal might be aptly compared to that of a horse whose fore feet were shackled; but altogether, it reminded me rather of the pitching of a ship, or the rolling of a rocking-horse, than of anything living; and the remarkable gait is rendered still more automaton-like, by the switching, at regular intervals, of the long black tail, which is invariably curled above the back, and by the corresponding action of the neck, swinging as it does like a pendulum, and literally giving the creature the appearance of a piece of machinery in motion.

The ordinary pace, although more stately and dignified, is also rapid, by reason of the great length of the legs; and owing to the condensation of the carcase, the hinder feet instead of covering the fore, as in most other quadrupeds, are still invariably placed in advance of them, considerably on the outside. The cloven hoof measures from ten to twelve inches in length, and being parallelogrammatic, with a rounded heel and pointed toe, resembles a pair of slippers placed side by side. Be the Giraffe running or walking, the lofty neck is invariably protruded, and carried in the prolongation of the slope of the back, without forming any angle with the withers, in the manner usually represented; and possessing only seven joints, it appears, although beautifully flexible, to move on a pivot, instead of being curved, like that of the swan or peacock. Numerous folds of loose skin betwixt the fore legs enable it to straddle wide, but the operation of bringing the head to the ground

* "The first run of the Giraffe," writes M. Thibaut, "is exceedingly rapid, and the swiftest horse, if unaccustomed to the desert, could not come up with it unless with extreme difficulty. It was on the 15th August," he continues, "that I saw the first two of these animals, about four days' journey to the south-west of Kordofan. A rapid chase on horses, accustomed to the fatigues of the desert, put us in possession, at the end of three hours, of the larger of the two. Unable to take her alive, the Arabs killed her with blows of the sabre, and cutting her to pieces, carried the meat to head-quarters, which we had established in a wooded situation,—an arrangement not less necessary to our own comfort, than to secure pasturage for our camels of both sexes, which we had brought with us in aid of the objects of our chase. We deferred until the morrow the pursuit of the young Giraffe, which my companions assured me they would have no difficulty in discovering. The Arabs are very fond of the flesh of this animal. I partook of the repast. The live embers were quickly covered with slices of the meat, which I found to be excellent eating.

"On the following day the Arabs started off at dawn in search of the young one, of which we had lost sight not far from our camp. The sandy nature of the soil of the desert is well adapted to afford indications to a hunter, and in a very short time we were on the track of the animal which was the object of our pursuit. We followed the traces with rapidity and in silence, cautious to avoid alarming the creature while it was yet at a distance from us. Unwearied myself, and anxious to act in the same manner as the Arabs, I followed them impatiently, and at nine o'clock in the morning, had the happiness to find myself in possession of the Giraffe. A premium was given to the hunter whose horse had first come up with the animal, and the reward is the more merited, as the laborious chase is pursued in the midst of brambles and thorny trees."—*M. Thibaut's Letter to the Zool. Society.*

is still one of extreme awkwardness, and from the browsing habits of the animal can be rarely necessary—the leaves, tender shoots, and blossoms of that singular species of mimosa, yecept by the Colonists *kameel doorn* (Giraffe thorn), and found chiefly on dry plains or sandy deserts, forming its ordinary food. The size of this tree, together with its thick and spreading top, shaped like an umbrella, distinguish it at once from all others of the country—the Namaquas terming it the '*kanaap*, whilst by all the Bechuana nations it is recognized as the *mokaala*. Both in flower and foliage it closely resembles the common Cape acacia, but the pod is an oval husk, filled with a solid mealy substance, and the stem is covered with stout thorns. The wood, excessively hard and heavy, and of a dark red colour, with a black heart, is much used by the Africans in the manufacture of spoons and other domestic utensils, many of which are ingeniously fashioned after the model of the Giraffe.

So far as came under my observation, both sexes are mute, and utter no cry whatever. The male, whose maximum stature appears to be about eighteen feet, increases in depth of colour with his years—the patriarchs becoming well nigh black; but the cows, whilst they seldom attain the height of seventeen feet, are uniformly of a fainter hue, bordering upon straw colour. Both sexes have crisp flaky coats, similarly marked with a rhomboidal or pentagonal carpet pattern, somewhat symmetrically disposed—and they possess in common, obtuse horns, or rather peduncles, about six or eight inches in length, covered with hair like the footstalk of a stag's antlers, but terminating in a black pencilled tuft. On the chaffron also is a remarkable prominence, which increases with age, and in the young females is scarcely perceptible. The senses of sight, hearing, and smell, are acute and delicate; the full humid eyes, fringed with dark silken lashes, eclipsing those of the oft-sung Gazelle of the East. Beaming with the mildest and most intelligent expression, they are so arranged that the animal can see both before and behind without turning its graceful head. Nor is the construction of the tongue less remarkable—its mobility being such as to enable it to perform in miniature the office of the elephant's proboscis, by coiling round the twigs of lofty trees, and assisting, like the nose of the Tapir, in drawing the tender sprouts betwixt the flexible lips.

Amongst the Griquas, or Bastaards, as the Mulatto Hottentots residing beyond the border are termed by the Colonists, large parties are annually formed for the purpose of hunting the Eland and Kameel, the flesh of both being held in equal estimation, and the thick robe of the latter considered the *ne plus ultra* for sandal soles. Many of the wretched wigwams of these people are *thatched* with an entire hide. During our sojourn at Chooi, we had an interview with a party returning from the Molopo, freighted with the spoils of not fewer than thirty-three, in obtaining which they had expended the whole of their ammunition, and worn their wretched horses to skin and bone. A trader whom I met in the Cape Colony, assured me before I visited the interior, that he had himself counted so many as eight hundred Kameels in a single day, and during his extensive travels had ridden down hundreds. But on our return, after a little cross-examination, the number destroyed gradually dwindled down to *one*; which solitary individual appeared upon further investigation to have been entrapped in a pitfall! They are sometimes taken in this manner by the savages, who can never speak of the lofty *Intootla* without rising on tip-toe, and stretching their black necks to the utmost. A full-grown female, heavy in foal, was one night slaughtered by a lion whilst in the act of drinking at no great distance from our waggons; and in the morning, an inspection of the scene of the noisy conflict, proved that the giant strength of the victim had been paralyzed in a moment by the gripe of its tawny foe. Indeed, notwithstanding the amazing power of the animal, I should be disposed to doubt its ability to maintain a race under the merciless jockeyship of the "great destroyer," who, clinging with teeth and talons, is said, or rather fabled, to be carried fifteen or twenty miles before the quarry sinks under him, and not unusually to be hurled off at last without effecting his purpose.

Heedless at the ambushed brink
 The tall Giraffe stoops down to drink:
 Upon him straight the savage springs
 With cruel joy!—The desert rings
 With clanging sound of desperate strife—
 For the prey is strong and strives for life;
 Now plunging tries with frantic bound
 To shake the tyrant to the ground;
 Then bursts like whirlwind through the waste,
 In hope to 'scape by headlong haste:
 While the destroyer on his prize
 Rides proudly, tearing as he flies.
 For life the victim's utmost speed
 Is mustered in this hour of need;
 For life, for life, his giant might
 He strains, and pours his soul in flight,
 And, mad with terror, thirst, and pain,
 Spurs with wild hoof the thundering plain.

An inhabitant of Nubia and Abyssinia, as well as of the adjacent regions east of the Great Desert, the princely Zerapha* occurs southward over central Africa, toward the settlement at the Cape, but is now to be found lower than the 24th parallel of latitude. Of sequestered habits, it seeks the most secluded deserts, and even at its head quarters is by no means a common animal. Whilst we seldom saw one without having followed the trail, we never found more than five and thirty in the same day; and the range of its habitat, although so extensive, is exclusively confined to solitary regions, in which the *kameel doorn* is abundant. It was delightful to witness the courage evinced by our horses, in the pursuit of game, and even when brought into actual contact with this almost unearthly quadruped, they evinced no symptom of fear—a circumstance which, I confess,

* The Giraffe is conjectured to be the *Zamor* of Moses. The modern nomenclature is a corruption of the Arabic *Zuraphata*, implying elegance or beauty.

we felt sometimes disposed to ascribe rather to their meagre diet, than to the virtue of their training. Not indeed that there existed any real cause for alarm; for naturally gentle, timid, and peaceable, the beautiful Colossus has no means of protecting itself but with its heels; and although jammed into a corner, rarely even resorted to kicking as a mode of defence. Meek and resigned, it trusted to its speed alone, and having learned to its cost that "the race is not always to the swift," wept such bitter tears, when vanquished, that but for its fleetness and rarity, the expression of its dove-like eyes might almost have disarmed me.



Head of Giraffe from North Africa, exhibiting in the Geological Gardens, Regent's Park