

PRAIRIE  
AND  
FOREST











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Frontispiece.

SUMMER RETREAT.

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# PRAIRIE AND FOREST;

A GUIDE TO THE

FIELD SPORTS OF NORTH AMERICA.

BY

PARKER GILLMORE,  
"UBIQUE,"

AUTHOR OF "THE GREAT THIRST LAND," "A RIDE THROUGH HOSTILE AFRICA,"  
ENCOUNTERS WITH WILD BEASTS," ETC., ETC.

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# PRAIRIE AND FOREST.

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## CHAPTER I.

To lay down rules by the observance of which the majority of bad shots may become experts is sufficiently easy; but the trouble is, however great the determination to follow the given precepts, so soon as game is flushed the instructions are thrown to the winds, and bang, bang, go both barrels, with the same hurried unsuccessful results as previously. That more birds are missed by shooting too quickly, I assert as indisputable; and knowing this to be the case, why will it continue to be practised? For this reason, that many are so fearfully nervous that for the moment they have no control of their actions, or they are so timid that although firing off their gun they consider a duty, they believe the sooner it is got through with the better; neither of such pupils is ever likely to become a crack shot. I have a friend who is, without exception, the most unlucky shot—I was going to say the worst—that ever I met. We at one period very frequently shot together, and each evening, on our tramp home, he was

certain to tell me that he had discovered the reason for his apparent want of skill. How various the causes attributed, would be beyond possibility of enumeration; however, he always devised some means of counteracting them—viz. by stuffing cotton in his ears, not to hear the spring of the game! to wear a loose collar, so that he could the better and more rapidly bring the head to the stock; to discard a waistcoat, for the thickness of clothing militated against bringing up his gun. However, he was always wounding birds—at least he said so; for constantly, if near, he would call out, “Don’t you see the feathers fly?” which, perhaps owing to my less keen vision, I never did, save it were the feathers flying off with the bird. Another peculiarity this gentleman possessed was, that although he might have discharged the entire contents of his shot-pouch without bagging a single head, when separated from me, as soon as we both shot over the same point, one or other of the birds knocked down was due to his skill; doubtless companionship reassured him, or induced him to take more pains. I would advise such, therefore, always to shoot in company, only I would rather be excused becoming the company. Of course occasionally he would knock over a bird, but when this took place it either was lost or took no end of trouble to secure. I remember one instance, in a marsh where we were snipe-shooting, a number of mallards flushed within easy range; following the report of his gun, one of the greenheads left its companions, sailed round several times, each circle becoming lower and less contracted, till it dropped. Half an hour was fruitlessly wasted looking for it, my friend

would not give up the search, so I went forward alone; some time afterwards he joined me, but his perseverance had not been rewarded. All that day he lamented over this lost bird, for, like many of our fishing friends, he doubtlessly thought it (because it was not bagged) far larger and far finer than any obtained. The reason for the so frequent loss of the few birds he hit was this: the victims seldom received more than a stray grain outside the disc described by the shot, and therefore were not seriously wounded. That there are many like my friend I know, and I fear it will be a hopeless task to endeavour to make them good shots; at the same time I think there are many bad shots who might be much improved.

I believe that too much importance cannot be attached to the stocking of guns. Occasionally one will meet with men who appear to do equal execution with either a crooked, straight, long, or short stock; but such are rare, and when found you may feel certain that they have possessed unusual opportunities for practice. The length of man's arm, neck, and conformation of shoulder are so various, that seldom will a gun come up alike to different individuals; the straight, tall figure wants a crooked stock; the short, stout person, the reverse; and intermediate figures, the bend between both extremes. I once possessed an excellent gun, with which I invariably acquitted myself creditably. The stock had always been an eyesore, for it was composed of objectionable wood, and the previous owner had chipped and scratched it so badly that, after lengthened hesitation, I determined to have it re-stocked. However, when it reverted from the

gunmaker to my hands, I was surprised how indifferently I shot with it; but, on examination, I found that the new stock was much straighter than the old. Again: being in a neighbourhood where game was abundant, when I did not have one of my own guns with me, I borrowed from a friend, and my execution was so bad that before the day was over I gave up in disgust. This gun's stock was so straight that I doubt if any but its owner could use it. In having a gun made, there is nothing that should receive from the gunmaker more careful observance than the figure of the purchaser; for I feel confident that a very great deal of bad shooting is made through want of attention to this point. Again: a gun should never possess a superfluous ounce of metal that is not necessary to its safety. When we start in the morning, fresh and vigorous, after a good night's rest, the weight may appear a trifle; but in the evening, if the day's work has been severe—more especially on grouse moor or snipe bog—you will be surprised how a little extra weight tells, and will induce you to undershoot your game.

Still another equally important point is the strength that is required to pull the trigger. After long practice you may get accustomed to either very fine or very heavy, but whatever you are used to, that retain. With the tyro it is different. Through frequent experiment he should find out what weight of pressure he can give without disconcerting his aim at the precise moment that he has obtained the line of sight. By imparting this knowledge to his gunsmith he will commence shooting under great advantage. A deal, we all know, depends upon a good

start. It is as applicable to shooting as to life. If you begin under advantageous circumstances success becomes probable. Success begets confidence, and with confidence we are certain to shoot well. An habitually bad shot has no confidence. Constant failure makes him doubt his ability, his gun, in fact, every portion of his shooting paraphernalia. Nearly all persons who do not shoot regularly fire their right barrel first. When such is the case, your left barrel should shoot the strongest, as the second shot is generally at longer range. A good workman, however, will use either indifferently, a practice to be commended, so that one barrel may not become more worn than the other. A fault which a great number are addicted to, is using too much shot. An ounce of number five, or any of the smaller sizes, is amply sufficient for a twelve or even ten-bore gun. However, if you have reason to use a larger grain, a quarter of an ounce more may be added to the charge. The reason for this is that the small packs closer, and thus makes a more formidable resistance to the explosive power. For strong shooting, and, therefore, long shots, it is the driving force that is required, which you counteract by surplus lead, as friction is increased and so power wasted.

Old hands may smile after reading the above, and justly say, "The fellow has told us nothing new"; but remember we are not all old hands, and that there are many beginners, for whose benefit these hints are given.

The fly rod, like the gun, cannot be too light, as long as it possesses the requisite strength. For while fishing it is incessantly at work, the respite for loading not even

being granted; thus if a heavy gun after a hard day's work will make you undershoot your game, a heavy rod will have a greater tendency to make you a sluggard at evening in striking your fish, and the result will be about similar in both instances. For the trout fisherman—he, I mean, who fly-fishes burns and rivers—from twelve to thirteen feet is quite sufficient length for his rod to be (lake fishermen frequently use longer, but what they gain in reach they lose in quickness, a loss, in my estimation, of most serious importance), and such a rod should not exceed in weight eight or nine ounces. I can imagine I see many cast up their eyes and exclaim that such is impossible to procure, but let me say they are mistaken. I have owned several of that weight, and with them, days in succession, have taken baskets of fish, of not only all the ordinary sizes, but on one occasion killed a trout nine pounds in weight. As I cannot help regarding this as a performance to be proud of, I will relate how it took place. A couple of companions and myself were encamped on the margin of Mad River, in Oxford County, State of Maine. Our guns had failed to provide dinner, so taking a hazel wand I essayed to capture sufficient chub to make a *chowder*, a description of *olla podrida* stew. Having hooked a small fish, I was about lifting it into the canoe when a large trout rushed from underneath the birch-bark, seized the chub, and although I gave him both line and time to pouch what had not been intended for a bait, on taking a pull the chub came away, and I was free from the larger antagonist. Having caught sufficient small fry I went home, brooding over my misfortune, but keeping



the adventure closely locked in my bosom (selfishness again). About the hour that the sun began to dip behind the giant pines, I had made up my mind to the course I would pursue, which was to take my pet rod, mount a cast of two flies, and carefully whip the pool from end to end. As if it were but yesterday, I remember distinctly the flies. The trail one was ginger-coloured cock's hackle, with light corn-crake wing, tipped with silver; the dropper a large-sized moth.

"For work at that hour," I hear some internally mutter, "the moth did the business." No, it did not; cock's hackles of all shades may invariably be backed against the field, and the cock's hackle on this occasion kept up its reputation. Down on my knees in the bow of the canoe, the camp-keeper holding her back by a pole in the stern, slowly and cautiously I fished the throat, from thence down into the less angry but wider-spread current, when just as my flies passed over an eddy that divided the downward flow from the back-water, there was a splash rapidly responded to by a nervous quick movement of the wrist, which planted the hook firmly home. I doubt if I exaggerate, in fact I think I scarcely state enough, when I say that thirty minutes elapsed before my trophy could sufficiently endure the sight of a landing-net to have it placed under him. Thus was taken the largest river trout (*Salmo fontinalis*) I ever caught. But to my rod; it was made out of cedar from butt to tip, did not exceed nine ounces, and was the most lively, quick, light casting treasure I ever used. Cedar fly-rods I have heard objected to, because they are brittle; doubtless you may find them

so, and your casting-line also, if you change its use into that of a whip-lash. However much I admire a cedar rod, I do not think it suited for a tyro, but when the beginner has gained experience, and is able to offer an opinion and use a fly-rod as it should be, I doubt not he will perfectly agree with me. A cedar rod can seldom be purchased ready made, as tradesmen dislike the job; so if any reader should wish to possess one, he had better go to the very best workman he knows of, and give him an order. Even then I doubt if he will get it.

Next to the cedar rod, but one that will stand any amount of fair work, is the split bamboo; this, I think, can be procured even lighter than the former. There is a firm, the Messrs. Clark, of Maiden Lane, New York, who make this *spécialité*. I have had the fortune to use one, and of their good qualities I cannot say too much; but their price is necessarily high, from the care with which the cane has to be selected and put together.

When I was a boy, I believed Flint and Martin Kelly, both of Dublin, before all other rod-makers. I have used their manufacture over a great portion of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and did not, until I had a cedar rod, believe that anything was made that could compete with theirs. Old bluff-blown lumbering packet-ships sufficed our fathers to go to India; now we have the P. and O. Service, with canal and rail across the Isthmus, and it is far from probable that this means of transit will always suit our children. If Joe Manton was to rise among us, I doubt much if he could hold his own among modern gunmakers.

Some persons, particularly Irish fishermen, are attached to double-action rods; that is, rods which have so much elasticity in them that they display two movements, one up and the other down, when suddenly used. I do not like them for more than one reason; the movement of the wrist in striking the fish, while raising the butt, throws the tip down, thus giving quite a contrary motion to what is intended. Again, if you have to fish against the wind, they will not only be found most difficult to manage, but excessively fatiguing. There is a rod made in Castle Connell (principally for salmon), after the above pattern; it has many admirers, who doubtless through experience have become proficient in its use; still I can speak only from what I know, and my verdict is, leave them to their present advocates.

A combination-rod has always been my horror. I mean such as fishing-tackle-shop proprietors guarantee to be both a perfect fly and bait rod by only altering the tip. If persons will but use their brains they can in a moment see that such is impossible. The two cases are essentially different, requiring the spring and elasticity in totally different parts. The act of placing a dull, lumbering tip on the first three joints of a delicate, pliant trout-rod is really absurd. However, some may say, you will find a medium between the two more generally useful. My answer is, what is worth doing is worth doing well; and if your intent is fly-fishing, the most perfect rod for that purpose should be selected. If the river is so discoloured or swollen that bait has to be resorted to, or you must go supperless to bed, for goodness' sake go and cut a hazel

wand, unless you carry a bait rod. Hybrids, whether in rod or gun, are to be carefully avoided. I remember being once entrapped into using a hybrid gun, in the township of Markham, Upper Canada. It was in this way: Going through some brush I flushed a quantity of woodcock. I stated the circumstance when I returned to the farm-house where I was residing. As I had no gun with me the host offered me the use of his, which from his description was worthy of a royal duke; I therefore accepted the offer. On production it proved to be half shot-gun, half rifle—that is, the right-hand barrel was smooth, the left rifled. This was my first experience of such a weapon, and most probably will be my last. The game was found, the cover was close, and snap-shooting necessary. It was of no use. The gun would not come up, or the game come down. The fact was, that the shot-barrel was only half the weight of the rifled, consequently the whole fabric was without balance, and do what I would my aim was invariably disconcerted.

Of the joints used in fly-rods the plain sliding one is probably the most convenient. If properly fitted it should never jamb or work loose; but if I lived on a river I should never make use of any other than the simple splice, for the lashing affects less the action of the spring; and if a few additional moments are lost in putting it together, the return is ample recompense. But I fear the age is too fast for its adoption.

Having given my opinions of what a rod should be, I will now go to the reel. Of late years, at least since I was a boy, all kinds of mechanical inventions and appliances

have been used to produce a more perfect reel ; and there are now to be obtained stop-reels, multiplying-reels, and reels with as many internal cog and other wheels as would start a clockmaker. Of these complicated apparatuses beware, for they are fraught with disappointment and vexation of spirit ; the old simple click reel is the only one that deserves the honour of being attached to a fly-rod. Still, too much care and attention cannot be devoted to their construction. Every screw and joint should be as perfectly finished as those of a gun from a first-class manufacturer. The barrel of the reel should be wide in proportion to its length, for you thus gain power or give line with greater freedom ; nothing is more unsightly or more awkward than a long narrow-barrelled reel. Brass is the metal usually employed for their construction, but the newly-invented aluminium bronze is infinitely to be preferred, for it does not corrode or discolour with the action of the atmosphere, and it is less liable to suffer from a blow or fall ; mischances that the fly-fisher's paraphernalia, more particularly in a rocky mountainous country, are especially liable to, when following the course of a trout brook, for stones will be slippery and fishermen have been known to take too much grog. Who among our expert salmon-trout fishermen cannot remember having obtained a frightful cropper when precipitously following up or down stream a heavy fish he was fast to ? I do not require to tax my memory greatly to recal half-a-dozen such casualties. There are various methods of attaching the reel to the rod. Of none do I approve so highly as that by which the reel is held fast in a shallow indentation by a

movable band. In those cases where the butt is pierced, or the reel held on the rod by a brass band attached to it, which closes with a screw, the nuts are constantly getting lost or loose, through the thread being worn out; moreover, the hand not unfrequently gets chafed by coming in contact with the edges or termination of the screw.

On the subject of fly-lines there is great diversity of opinion. Of whatever materials they are composed they should taper. Hair and silk I was at one time much in favour of; but after a lengthened trial I found one great objection—the two materials had not the same amount of elasticity, so that a heavy strain would bear more severely on one material than on the other, ultimately causing brittleness. A plaited silk line, which has been submitted to a process of varnishing, rendering it impervious to water, will, I think, do the greatest amount of work, and throw the greatest length of line; but for delicate, light, fine fishing, nothing I know of can surpass the old-fashioned line, composed entirely of horse-hair; for they are possessed of more vitality, elasticity, and quickness. In the selection of one of these every foot should be carefully examined and tested, for a careless slop-shop maker will frequently work in short and worthless hair, possibly in the centre, which will destroy the whole fabric; for if the line be once broken it is useless, it matters not how much ingenuity and time you spent over the splice. For a day or two it may pass through the rings, but the friction will wear it rough, and it will catch sooner or later, not improbably when a large fish is on, for then the strain is greatest. Can anything more disgusting be imagined than

taking the last look at eight or ten yards of your line, perhaps more, rapidly disappearing in the eddying stream with your casting line and flies acting as advance guard? The thought of such a catastrophe is enough to make a man's blood run cold.

Casting lines should also taper, and, provided the gut is good, can scarcely have too fine a termination. Although a great many disciples of the rod always purchase these ready made, every fisherman should be able to knot one up himself. The process is simple. Select your hairs—coarse ones for the top, fine ones for the bottom—steep them for some minutes in water as warm as the hand can conveniently bear, then knot them together, increasing or diminishing gradually in size according to the end you have commenced at. Care must be taken that such a knot be used as there is no slip to. The safest I know of is formed thus: take the ends to be joined, and place them alongside one another, then take one end and make a single hitch by doubling it back and passing the end through the loop, which pull tight. Do the same with the reverse end, when by pulling on the line both will slip together, the strain having the tendency to lock the knot. After cutting off the surplus ends, take a few turns of very fine silk to whip them down, and the smallest quantity of varnish will add much to the appearance of the line. There is no amusement that I wot of in which it is so requisite for its lover to know how to make use of his hands and ingenuity. Bad luck, or whatever you choose to call it, may, before an hour's fishing be done, reduce you to the alternative of either ceasing work or manufacturing

out of broken fragments a new casting line. Very possibly this is caused by the fish being more than usually on the feed. How disagreeable to be compelled at such a time to halt!—better far to spend ten minutes with the dry end of gut in your mouth, the more rapidly to render the hairs fit for knotting, and to know how to put them together afterwards, than be obliged to cease.

The rings upon your rod should be large and not too numerous; five are sufficient for the lower joints, and about five more for the tip, supposing it to be a rod thirteen feet in length, and in three pieces. In America I lately saw rods ringed on both sides, so that if after unusual hard work and constant use a tendency to warp was evinced, you altered your reel to the reverse side and thus counteracted it. However, the better plan, I should say, would be to use the reverse sides day about. The only objection to this double arrangement of rings is additional weight, but that must be very trifling.

Having now described the rod, the reel, the line, and the cast, I approach a subject that I hesitate to touch, viz. fly-tying, for I do not think that anyone can become an expert but through constant practice, after having received numerous elementary lessons from an adept. I believe I can tie a fair fly; but how long do you suppose it was before I reached my present excellence? Years; and even now I discover wrinkles and new methods of which I was not previously aware; however, one rule may be laid down: never to take a turn of the silk round your hook without purpose, or without giving it sufficient strength to keep it in its place and perform the duty



intended. The most important part is the simplest and first, the securing of the gut to the shank of the hook. Unless this is attended to, all your labour is vain and worthless—so much time thrown away and wasted. Here comes all the strain, and a thoughtless turn or two will cause nought but disappointment. Some anglers, particularly Irish ones, place the wings on so that the feather points from the hook, then double them back and tie them down. In this method much practice is necessary to form a handsome head ; but its advocates claim for it strength. However, I have so frequently found the silk slip, and the feathers consequently point in the reverse direction, that I unhesitatingly condemn the practice. To make a handsome and serviceable fly, I have always followed the method of putting the wings on separately, care being taken not to injure the pile of the feathers ; and this should be done last, the most minute drop of varnish being used over the silk when the head is finished off. My first effort to tie a fly turned out a thing like a humming-bird, my second like a humble bee, and so on till I have succeeded in making a good imitation of a gnat. Patience and perseverance have done this, and none will ever excel in fly-tying without exercising these qualities, so essentially useful in every walk in life. As a rule, the bigger the river, a superabundance of water in a stream, and the more boisterous the weather, the larger can be the flies used ; but in summer, when the rivulets and burns have become clear and low, the smallest sizes must be resorted to, thrown with the lightest line, from the most unobservable and most sheltered position.

Three flies, their colouring and component parts, that I have found successful on almost all waters and at every portion of the open season, I will describe; in fact, I have so much faith in them that I invariably use all three in making my first essay on an unknown river, viz. the red hackle, hare's ear and yellow, and black hackle. In America, on the small trout-brooks, I found them equally attractive, evidence of a similarity of taste in fish on the Eastern and Western Continents. Fly No. 1, the red hackle, body composed of rufous wool, twisted in with tying silk, lower portions of body to be fine, gradually increasing in thickness till the shoulder is reached. Shoulder of bright-red cock's hackle, the colour that is obtained in a natural state from the domestic fowl, game fowls generally producing the finest; but if those from the East Indian jungle cock can be obtained, you will possess the very best. Wings put on separately, and obtained from the wings of the corn-crake, shot immediately previous to their autumnal migration. Fly No. 2, hare's ear and yellow; this has a tail composed of two strands from the larger feathers of the guinea-fowl, body composed of the fine mottled hair off the ears of a hare, mixed with fine mohair, of any of the intermediate shades from straw-colour to olive. The mohair should be cut short, so that it will the better mix with the hare's ear. This dubbing must also be tied in with the silk, and the fly should be large at the shoulder. No hackle in this specimen is required. The wings from the large wing feathers of the fieldfare, each placed on separately. Fly No. 3, black hackle; body of blue wool or mohair, finished at termina-

tion with a couple of turns of silver tinsel, black hackle from domestic fowl for shoulder, with the wing composed of the feather either from tail or wing of the water-hen. The angler had better be provided with various sizes of these, as rivers are not always in the same condition, and weather is variable. For me to say that other flies will not kill better on some rivers, or at least equally well, would be absurd, but those described I have found most generally useful. A handsome and frequently very killing fly at times, particularly in blustering weather, is made of the following material. Body of two of the longest and most rufous strands of a feather from a brown turkey; these strands to have the fingers pulled up them, so as to cause the fine edges to stand out before being wrapped on. Shoulder of brown cock's hackle, with brown grouse feather for wing. In autumn, particularly if the stream should be clearing after a flood, I have known this fly to be most effective. However, it is no bad plan, if you are a stranger in a neighbourhood, to get hold of an honest disciple of Izaak Walton, who will give you information, and if he be poor very probably sell you some of the contents of his book. Except for sea-trout fishing, the brilliant and many-coloured macaw-like compositions are generally useless in American inland streams, so let not love of gaudy colouring or the advice of inexperienced persons induce you to spend your time and money on such fabrications.

We will suppose the novice accoutred with all that money and judgment can obtain in the shape of tackle and rod—at the same time hoping that his garments are

composed of those sober quiet colours that are least observable; for whether in shooting, deer-stalking, or fishing, attention to this is all-important—to be on the river's margin, at a spot free from bush, rock, or other impediment. The rod is carefully put together (I hope it is a spliced one, for I shall have more hope for the beginner's ultimate success from this choice), the reel attached, the line drawn through the rings, and the cast and flies are carefully taken off his hat, round which they have been wrapped (to make them more subservient and less obstreperous on commencing work), and made fast to the line. Ere an attempt at the first cast is made, take one word of advice. Englishmen are so horsey in their proclivities that they invariably consider a rod, when first they handle it, an instrument to be treated and used in exactly the same manner as a carriage whip. From boyhood upwards they have been used to the latter, and the Englishman's hand has obtained wonderful cunning in cracking the same. Now the uses of whip and rod are essentially different; the one is performed by the quickest possible jerk, the other by making the widest possible sweep, as free from angles as the turns on a racecourse. Get this information, whatever your nationality, so grafted into your brain that you will not forget yourself, for on each occasion you do, you will pay a penalty by losing a fly, probably the trail one. I have known some persons so skilled in snapping off flies, even although possessed of considerable experience, that their custom must have been of no small advantage to the tradesman who supplied them with tackle.

Supposing the angler is facing a river which he is

desirous of throwing across. The rod being held in the right hand, gradually, but with increasing velocity, raise your rod from left to right; when the line is straight out from you, make a sweep, and bring the flies down upon the water with a half-circular motion of the hand. This last movement will raise the slack of the line and cause the trail fly to strike the water first, which should always happen. When this first lesson is thoroughly learned with the left hand, it should then be practised up and down stream: when, with perseverance and attention, such precision may be gained that the fisherman can place the flies at every effort within an inch or two of the desired spot.

After having said thus much, it will not be deemed out of place to mention those tradesmen who supplied me with the important portions of my outfit; for so much of your pleasure and comfort depends upon them, that a sportsman intending to prosecute a distant and lengthened tour through the American wilds would be guilty of committing a great and serious injustice to himself, if he did not obtain the very best that the English market could afford. I am not foolish enough to believe that no others than the individuals I mention, would have served me equally well; but, of course, those I know, and have not found wanting, are the persons I must introduce. For fire-arms, ammunition, &c., I would, as formerly, go to J. D. Dougall, of 59, St. James's Street, or his late assistant, A. G. Willison, now doing business at 9, Railway Approach, London Bridge; a further advantage in dealing with them also deserves notice, viz. that they are both so well acquainted

with North America and its inhabitants that information of a valuable description to the sportsman, on nearly all subjects connected with his intended tour, can be obtained from them.

Messrs. Strickland and Son, of 14, Clifford Street, New Bond Street, I can confidently recommend as perfect in the production of shooting clothes almost impervious to wear and tear, at the same time gentlemanly in appearance, and fitting with such exactness, that the figure will not suffer from restraint, but permit the arms and limbs ever to be free for prompt action. Although armed and clothed, I must not go further without alluding to your foot gear, for nothing will militate more against your pleasure and powers of endurance, than a blistered heel or pinched instep. To avoid these inconveniences go to Waukenphast's, 10, Pall Mall East, and if he does his duty by you, as he has by me, you will be more than satisfied, and as loss of time is not unfrequently to be regretted, in half an hour from the time you crossed his threshold, you will be in possession of all you require. As waterproof clothing and ground sheets are absolutely necessary for camping out, as I have done in a former work, I recommend Messrs. Woolgar and Co., of Ludgate Hill; their bark-tanned fishing stockings are perfection, while their deer-stalking and fishing coat cannot be too highly prized for rough and hard service. Another commodity they furnish, although receiving its name from me, I would strongly recommend no person going in for roughing to be without, viz. the Ubique bag, for it possesses all the convenience of the ordinary sailor's bag, can be turned into a pillow at night, or, if necessity

compels you, if in a canoe or open boat that leaks, you can place your feet in it, and thus be thoroughly protected from damp of every description. Of course there are numerous other things you may advantageously add to your kit, but do not forget that every superfluous pound of baggage is to be avoided, for long marches on tired horses have to be made, and rough and weary *portages* to be traversed, across which every ounce of unnecessary luggage will add to the fatigue of the bearers, and not unfrequently produce grumbling and lack of discipline, two objectionables to be given a wide berth to, for they destroy much of the pleasure attached to roughing beyond the boundaries of civilization.

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## CHAPTER II.

## THE BISON, GENERALLY CALLED BUFFALO.

THE habitat of this powerful and gigantic animal extended from the Gulf of Mexico on the south to the 62nd degree of north latitude, and from Kentucky and Indiana on the east to the higher ridges of the Rocky Mountains on the west; however, this range is now much contracted, and in a corresponding ratio their numbers diminished. Although buffalo at the present day can be found in the State of Kansas, yet the wholesale butchery they have there been lately subjected to has caused the few survivors to be extremely wild and difficult of approach; therefore I should advise the sportsman to direct his steps further toward the north-west, to the valley of the Yellowstone or upper forks of the Missouri, to the Saskatchewan or the large plains lying to its north. From the increase of settlement and of travel across the continent, this game, which formerly was migratory, has, comparatively speaking, ceased to be so; thus the sportsman will not now be compelled to follow them over an extensive range of country, but will probably be able to



enjoy the pleasure of their pursuit all the year in one locality. The legitimate methods for their pursuit are by running them on horseback, when they are shot with a very large-bored pistol as the sportsman ranges alongside, or to stalk them, a rifle of great power and calibre being then necessary. The shoulder-shot is the best, unless the animal happen to front you and expose his chest. Shooting at the head is a useless expenditure of ammunition, and unless to turn a charge should never be attempted.

When studying on the distant and far-west plains of America the habits of the buffalo (for though this name is erroneous, still it is the appellation by which I knew them, and daily heard them called), or pursuing them to supply our camp with food, I never, in the retrospect of a long and adventurous life, enjoyed such perfect health, for the air on these distant plains is the purest I have ever breathed. Frequently on a knoll I have stood, after some unusually hard run, inhaling and enjoying its freshness as the thirsty traveller does a cup of clear cool water drawn from a mountain stream. Each day you perform you allotted work, and no cares are sufficiently weighty to be dwelt upon, or procrastinated till they return with redoubled force. Your horses are your companions; hardy and enduring you have proved them to be; and between master and steed a bond of sympathy springs up, the animal being all reliance, the owner determined that the confidence shall not be misplaced. With the true-hearted sportsman, who loves hunting for the pleasure it affords, and the opportunities of studying nature as it emanates from the Creator's hands, carnage

when useless is detestable: unnecessarily taxing the endurance of his steed, or paining it with uncalled-for punishment, is a crime he would no more be guilty of than the honest man of despoiling his friend. Again, your gun or rifle, ever a willing servant when properly taken care of, requires no small amount of attention; to no other hands than your own trust it to be cleaned. However high your birth, delicate your nurturing, or boundless your means, to do without the assistance of hirelings, and rely entirely on yourself, is far from derogatory; on the contrary, it is deserving of commendation, and the benefit that will result in after-life from such lessons cannot be too highly estimated. I have known a few months of wild western life do more good in forming a character than years passed in cities or continental tour; for here the fop forgets his folly, and the timid and nervous becomes self-reliant.

Imagine spread before you an immense plain; in whatever direction you look, the same expanse of level country stretches before you. Such is the prairie. The dear old ocean, as viewed from the deck of a vessel, is the nearest simile I can think of. In both an almost level horizon in each direction is met by the sky. Nothing in either is to be seen to break the stillness, save it be the animal life that have these elements for their home. Although this may be applicable, as a general rule, to prairie scenery, there are portions less monotonous; in places, heavy belts of timber mark the margin of streams that ultimately help to feed some of the giant rivers of the American continent; while as you approach the great

vertebra of the country—the Rocky Mountains—hill after hill rises, overtopping each other; again frowned down upon by lofty mountains, beautiful in colouring, soft in their distant outlines, and grand in their irregular and picturesque shape. Moreover, between these hills, almost impassable at first glance, through cañons and gulches you can thread your way, perhaps for many, many miles, when, perchance, a beautiful meadow,\* thousands of acres in extent, opens before you, rich and bright in the abundance of its grasses, while the slopes that gird these retired retreats are covered with the densest and loveliest of indigenous trees. Such spots as these are a naturalist's elysium, for game of every variety select them for retreats. The buffalo cow comes to them frequently to calve; the worn-out fierce-looking bull, over whose head so many years have passed that he no longer has strength to keep pace with the migratory herd, and struggle in its dense phalanx for female favour or choice croppings of pasture, retires to them to spend in abundance the winter of life; while the graceful deer, the timid hare, and the sagacious beaver here pass their lives in peaceful, happy contentment, except some adventurous white man or snake-visioned redskin should pay it a visit, destroying, as man ever does, the serenity that reigned around previous to his advent.

But come, the morning has broken clear and invigorating, breakfast has already been discussed, and the horses have got a rough rub over. The neighbourhood is well

\* In America termed park.

suited for a gallop, for from the slight shower of the previous evening the soil is springy, and fewer of the indefatigable little burrowers—the prairie dogs—have undermined our vicinity. Meat is wanted, and as we start our minds are made up that, unless successful, the sun must dip the western horizon ere we return. Each attending to his own nag, and giving an extra pull upon the girths ere getting into the saddle, at a sober, steady pace we start. An old practised buffalo-runner (for so the western man terms his favourite and experienced horse) will quietly settle to his master's will, for from experience well he knows that probably a hard day's work is before him, and all his strength will be required; while the youngster or griffin at this work frets and prances, almost pulling his rider from the pigskin. Forbear, rider; curb your annoyance; give and take a pull upon your snaffle; soon the youngster will settle down, and this day's work will probably teach him a lesson that will act advantageously on his future conduct.

Discussing subjects suitable for such occasions, miles are passed; so far, with the exception of numerous bleached bones or an occasional deer or antelope track, no indication of game has been seen. From a knoll a survey is made; a fresh hole or two is taken up in the girths, and the scarcity of animal life commented upon. To the Indian, of course, the blame is laid; war-parties or moving villages of redskins are always saddled with being the cause of every disappointment and annoyance in wild life. But look there! What is that? A distant cloud of dust. Buffalo for a thousand, and advancing towards

where the hunters are stationed. How is the wind? is inquired. One wets his fingers with his saliva, and holds it up. In a few moments the position is declared untenable, and both, vaulting on their horses, hurry off to get more to leeward, availing themselves of a swell in the prairie to keep *perdu*. Having marked well the direction in which the herd is advancing, keeping as much out of sight as possible, scarcely speaking a word, and then not louder than a whisper, the distance between the hunters and game is rapidly diminished. From the nature of the ground, no longer can they remain hid; so, taking their horses well in hand, forward they dash, and, in a few strides, what a sight is before them! Cows, bulls, and calves, all intermingled, forming a straggling drove of thousands, heading in the same direction, and feeding as they progress, Occasionally this harmony of action is disturbed. Two ragged, clumsy-looking, veteran bulls approach each other: perhaps they have been former rivals for some dusky-hided beauty's favours. With a deep bellow one throws down the gauntlet, which the other is not loth to take up; and, with fire flashing from their partially hid eyes, each rushes at the other. But the herd have become alarmed—a foe equally dreaded by both bulls is at hand; their rencontre will brook delay to be settled at a future date; and, with a startled stare and toss of the head, both turn and rush off after the herd, which is already making a most hurried stampede. However, when the hunters are old hands, the bulls might have saved themselves the trouble; while young cow-beef is to be obtained, none but the veriest novice would think of wasting ammunition on their rough

and rugged old carcasses. No time is now to be lost. These animals, unwieldy as they appear, for a mile or so are wonderfully swift, and if they should gain rough ground will beat an indifferent horse. Sitting well down in their saddles, nags in hand, at a grass-country speed, both push for the sleekest and squarest-looking cows they can mark. The pace commences to tell; the distance that separates sportsman from quarry is rapidly diminishing, a few strides more and one ranges alongside: the heavy pistol, which has till now been secure in the holster, is taken in the right hand, its barrel depressed; low down, and eight or ten inches behind the shoulder, is the spot, if shooting forward. A puff of smoke is seen, followed by a report. The *coup de grâce* has been administered by a master-hand; for the huge animal loses the power of its fore feet, comes down on its shoulders and head, and nought of life is left but a few spasmodic struggles. But where are the hunters? Look well among the retreating herd, and you may occasionally catch a glimpse of their hunting-shirts. A few moments more, and another shot is fired—this time not so successfully. Again the report of fire-arms; still the quarry retains her legs, but blood is already pouring from her nose, an indication that surely tells of speedy demise; so stop, let the poor creature die in peace; aggravate not her last moments.

The scene which I have tried to describe took place about ten miles to the south side of the Yellow-stone River. An old and tried friend from Germany was my companion, and on this occasion we each killed two cows. Double this number, or even more, could have been shot



BUFFALO RUNNING.

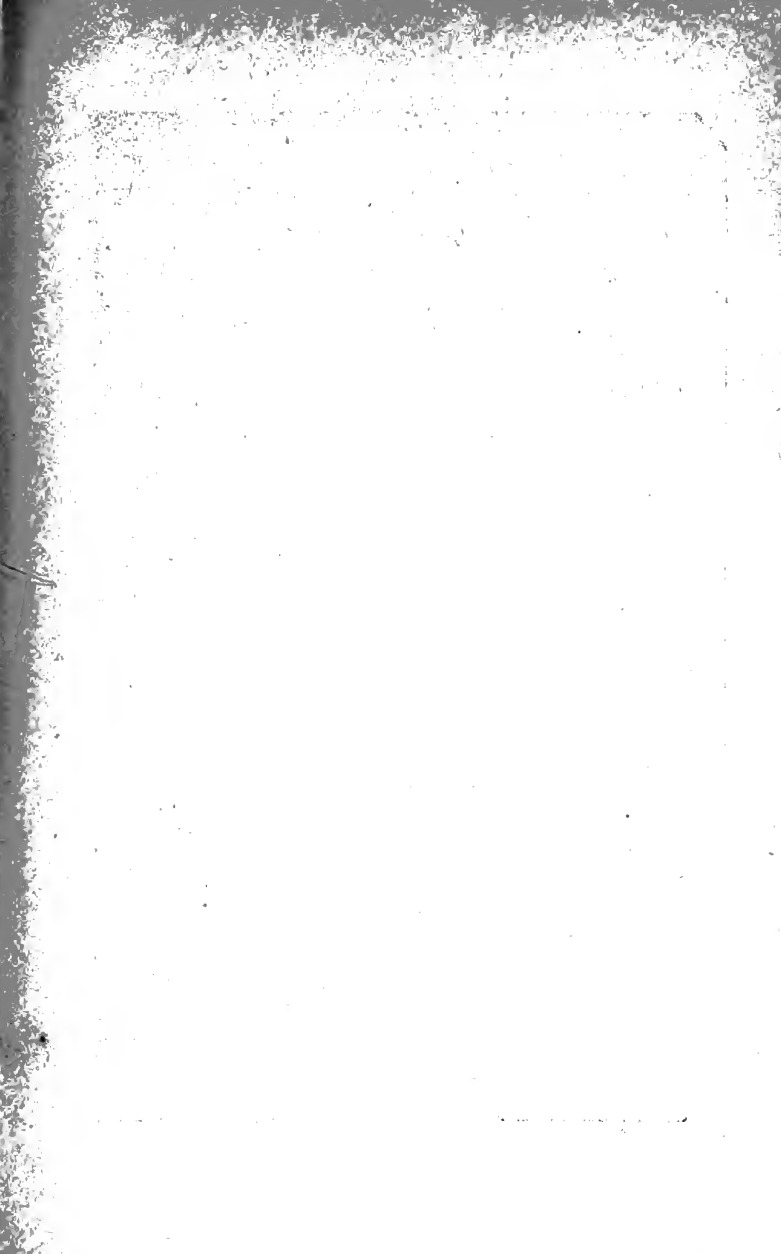




without trouble : but the requisite amount of beef had been obtained, and I was jealous of husbanding the strength of my horse, for then, as now, but little reliance could be placed on the professed peaceful intentions of the Indians. The range of the buffalo, I have said, was at one period much more extensive than at present. The same reasons that have decreased, and in some instances almost annihilated, other genera, can be safely urged as the cause of this—the cultivation of wild lands and the unprecedented increase of inhabitants on the American continent. On the eastern limit of the Grand Prairie, in Indiana, I have frequently found bones of the buffalo, telling too plainly that this had once been his home. At the present day, at least twelve hundred miles further westward must be traversed before the sportsman can hope for a chance to use his rifle on this game; and year after year further distances will require to be journeyed to accomplish this purpose. Their southern limits are Northern Texas and New Mexico, while the intermediate expanse up to sixty-five degrees of north latitude, according to the season, contains them in more or less abundance. Of late years their range north has been increased between three and four degrees, so that Indians who formerly had to come two hundred or more miles, if desirous of obtaining a supply of beef for winter use, have the animals now on their home hunting-grounds. I am disposed to believe that this is caused from their finding these northern regions less disturbed—for this is far north of where the constant tide of emigrants crosses the plains—and that the poor, persecuted creatures prefer suffering from the cold of

these inhospitable localities to facing the dangers that always are connected with a rencontre with the pale-face. Although the buffalo can endure a great amount of cold, and find food even after a thick covering of snow lays upon the earth, yet he is not provided like the musk sheep for an Arctic winter, and from his greater bulk requires so much sustenance, that a protracted sojourn in the northern barrens must ultimately have the result of reducing his strength, and therefore his fitness to cope with the severity of the climate. Again, he has other enemies as well as man. The wolves seldom leave him alone. Day and night they bestow upon him the most devoted attention. However, as long as he is in good health he has little to fear from the marauder; but the moment that accident, sickness, or loss of strength from starvation occurs; the buffalo's unhappy position is known, and half-a-dozen of these robbers will remain night and day, watching for an opportunity to complete the wreck; and should this not occur as soon as desirable, not unfrequently they will make a simultaneous assault, one pretending to fly at the victim's head, while another attacks in the rear, using every artifice to cut the buffalo's hamstring, in which they invariably succeed, unless the presence of man should disturb them.

On one occasion, while hunting, I obtained an excellent opportunity of witnessing one of these encounters. At the distance of half a mile I perceived an old bull going through a variety of eccentric movements, which were at the moment perfectly incomprehensible. To know what might be the cause, as well as perhaps to learn something new regarding this race, I left my horse and made a most





careful stalk without once exposing myself, retaining the advantage of wind till within a hundred yards of the old gentleman. The ground in the vicinity was much broken, and before attempting to take a survey of the situation, I ensconced myself behind a boulder. I had been eminently successful, the first glance told me. There was the bull pretending to feed, while four prairie wolves were lying around him on the sparsely covered soil, tongues out, and evidently short of breath from some excessive exertion. None of the *dramatis personæ* had seen me, and I chuckled in my shoes as I grasped more firmly my double barrel, knowing how soon I could turn the tide of battle. By the way, the prairie wolf has always been a favourite of mine, as well as his half-brother, the coyote. Their bark has often recalled pleasant memories, and their services have several times recovered a wounded deer. In a few minutes the apparent ringleader of the quartette got up and shook himself. This was the signal for the others to get upon their pins. Prairie wolf number one walked quietly towards the bull, occasionally stopping (after the manner of dogs to pluck grass); then, with a sudden spring, made a feint at the persecuted buffalo's head. The buffalo in his turn lowered his head, and advanced a few steps to meet him; but this was unnecessary. Now the rest of the fraternity rushed up. Another took the post of teaser, while our friend number one dropped in the rear; and when a second feint at the head was made by his comrade, number one, watching his chance, left a deep scar over the bull's hock. Again and again this game was played, the same wolf always retaining his rear position. Is not the instinct of

animals most similar to the reason of man? Here each wolf had his allotted work, doubtless that which was best suited for his capacity. The rear assault was the most dangerous; for a kick well directed would unquestionably have caused instant death to the adventurous assailant; but the most experienced and expert had selected the post of danger and honour. The flashing eyes and foaming mouth of the bull told plainly the result; so I stepped from my concealment. However, all were so occupied that until I awakened the echoes with a loud "war-whoop" I was unseen; but man's voice always has its effect in cases of this kind. The vermin, with startled scare, plainly asking what the deuce right I had to interfere, sulkily trotted off as I advanced; while the persecuted in return for my kindness, lowered his head, and pushed rapidly for me, compelling me to seek safety in flight. Such conduct in the buffalo was scarcely commendable, and very unusual. I accounted for it by the harassing his temper had suffered, as well as his feeling how inadequate his strength was for escape by flight. Poor old creature, his days were numbered; for as soon as my back was turned, and a safe distance intervened between us, the wolves returned, and as I rode homewards, occasionally turning and halting to watch the gradually more indistinct belligerents, the victim was still employed in battling for life. After all, was he not paying the debt of nature, and dying as his ancestors for generations had died before him? Man yields his spirit to the source from whence it emanates, on a luxurious couch or humble straw bed, after frequently suffering from protracted and painful illness. The veteran buffalo, effete

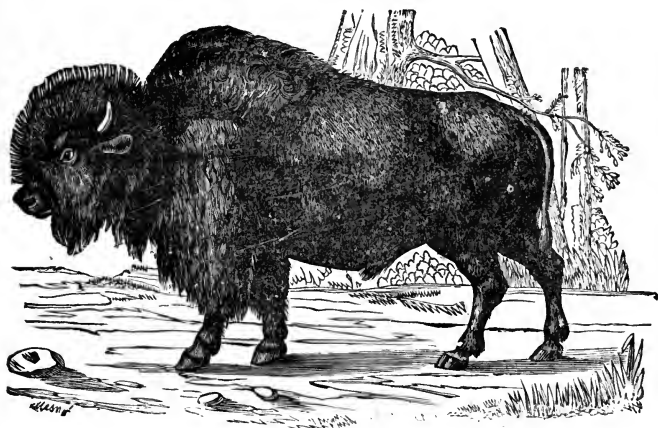
from age, after a long and happy life, when unable to keep with his companions, dies in a gallant and short struggle, overpowered by his too numerous enemies, a death worthy of a hero.

The cow calves in spring, although I have, on several occasions, met with a mother as late as the end of July with a youngster by her side, not over a couple of weeks old. The attachment shown by the parent for her offspring, and the solicitude she evinces for its safety, impart a touching lesson, which even the human family would do well to follow. I remember on one occasion I had been setting traps in a small stream with abundant signs that beaver were numerous in the vicinity. I had waded up this watercourse for upwards of a mile, all the time being hidden from the view of the animals on the prairie by the bluffness of the banks. Having performed my task, I left the stream and ascended to the level of the country. The first glance I took disclosed a beautiful and interesting picture, for a young cow, with her calf almost between her legs, stood determinedly facing several wolves. The baby was evidently sick, and the instinct of the party of prowlers told them so. My sympathies, of course, were not with the aggressors; and, the better to prove it, I picked out the apparent ringleaders, doubling one up with the first barrel, and accelerating the retreat of another with a second; for although he did not drop, an ominous "thud" gave me the information that he had received a hint that the neighbourhood was dangerous, and that he had better leave it while he had the power. In September the rutting season commences, and furious encounters between the

bulls take place ; their actions on these occasions remind the spectators very much of domestic cattle. The combatants at first stand apart, eyeing each other with flashing orbs, while they paw up the soil with their feet, throwing it frequently over their withers ; their short tails lash their sides, their horns are dug into the soil, and the vegetation scattered to the winds ; occasionally bellowing in a low guttural voice, apparently using every effort to work themselves into a fury. At length they rush at each other ; the shock sometimes brings one or both to their knees ; this is repeated again and again ; for over thirty minutes frequently, when well matched, the struggle will be protracted. At length the weaker commences to give way, first slowly, always keeping his head to the foe, till with sudden energy he wheels and leaves the victor triumphant. All this time the cow has stood by, an inert spectator, waiting for the hero of the hour to claim her love. These battles seldom or never terminate fatally. They occur at the period when the coat is in the greatest perfection, and the almost impenetrable mane which densely covers the brows and fore-quarters is unquestionably of the greatest service as a protection. It is my belief that when the sexes thus mate, the male remains faithful to his spouse, for up to within a month of the cow's confinement both keep together. Early in autumn the bulls are in good condition ; but after the rutting season they gradually lose flesh, and by midwinter become so poor, that they are scarcely fit for food. The cow, on the other hand, keeps fat, and even in spring fat may be found along the vertebræ and lower portion of the carcase an inch thick. With



the advent of the first mild weather, even before the snow has disappeared, they commence to shed their rough coat, first from between the fore-legs, then the prominent parts of the body, and later from the fore limbs and hump. This long hair—or, as it is frequently called, wool—comes off in patches, trees and rocks being used to rub against; the result is, that by March a more ragged, tattered, weather-beaten creature can scarcely be imagined. The horns of



BUFFALO IN SPRING COAT.

both bull and cow are about the same length; those of the former are thick, blunt, and clumsy, those of the latter sharp, slim, and trim-looking. Both sexes much resemble each other; at the same time the figure of the female is more delicately formed, and not within a couple of hands as high at the shoulder, nor is she clothed with such a quantity of the rough, coarse covering over the fore-quarters.

When a herd of buffalo are alarmed by the approach of the hunter, the cows, in a few seconds, head the retreating herd, closely followed by the yearlings and calves, while the lumbering old bulls, from incapacity, drop in the rear. When not disturbed, in lying down or rising, they exactly resemble others of the *Bos* family; but if they be come upon unawares by an object of fear, the velocity with which they gain their legs and break into a gallop is truly surprising. They are excellent swimmers, and have no hesitation to enter water; nevertheless, annually, great numbers are drowned; but this generally occurs in spring, when the broken ice is clearing out of the streams.

Throughout the western country there are numerous quicksands, and frequently unfortunates get embedded in them. It appears in such cases that, without exerting themselves, they submit to their fate. I have formed this conclusion from having, unseen, perceived a bull get into such a scrape. I watched him. Inch by inch he kept sinking; still I felt convinced that a protracted, energetic struggle would take him across to *terra firma*; yet no such effort did he make. Thoroughly believing that his earthly course was run, I advanced to have a closer survey of the finale. The unfortunate did not see me till within a few yards; but when he did, his habitual fear of man predominated over all other feelings; again and again he plunged forward. Dread of my proximity had given him strength and endurance; for, after a few minutes, his feet got on soundings, from which the margin was gained, and the brute was once more free. I think this apathy to death in certain forms is common to the majority of animals.

The dangers attending the chase of this noble game are very much overrated. True, a horse may put his foot in the burrow of a wolf, swift fox, or prairie dog, and send his rider skyrocketing. The result may be a broken neck, or, if such a fall took place when in the centre of a large herd, trampling to death might be possible; but I am convinced, from long personal experience, that, so long as the game can keep going, they will seldom or never turn on pursuing man. At the same time, if you fire at a buffalo as you ride past him, without much changing the direction they are pursuing, he or she may slightly deviate towards the pursuer. However, your bridle-hand should invariably sheer your steed from the quarry, not only to avoid this deviation, but to clear the animal if it drop to shot. The majority of horses accustomed to this work do so of their own accord. At the same time, I should particularly caution the tyro that on himself and his own nerve he should invariably rely, not on that of his dumb companion. To be a good horseman, of course, is particularly desirable; and the person who can ride bare-back will often come in for a run when a saddle may not be at hand. Many of us, of course, can ride in this primitive manner; but there are very few Americans or Europeans who can compare in this respect with the Indians—they appear so perfectly at home on their horses; anywhere and everywhere they place themselves, and but seldom get a fall.

However, the paces of horses are very different; some I used for running buffalo I preferred riding with blanket and a surcingle; on others I did not feel sufficiently at home without the saddle. For some months I had an

under-sized chestnut, very little over fourteen hands. My associates called her a mustang. In some points she much resembled one ; but there was a well-bred look about her small head, narrow muzzle, broad forehead, and lean neck, that told of aristocratic lineage. Moreover, she was very fast and high couraged, as well as easy in her paces. Her back, while in my possession, was seldom crossed by a saddle, although she was the favourite mount, and as such was more frequently used. I purchased her for a trifle from a fellow with "villain" plainly written on his countenance, and, as might have been expected, she was recognised and claimed. To part with her was a great trial ; but I had the satisfaction of learning that my surmises of her parentage were correct, her sire being thorough-bred, and her dam a mustang.

When buffalo are so severely wounded as to feel incapacitated from further flight they will then occasionally turn to bay. When this takes place, unless the animal be an old bull, you may safely conclude the wound mortal, and that but an hour or two will elapse before death comes to their relief ; but if you be desirous to terminate the final sufferings, when dismounted, be very cautious how you approach to deliver the *coup* ; for, with velocity almost marvellous, they will dash at their tormentor, gathering all their energy for the occasion. A bull I had disabled stood at bay, and, judging from appearances, was within a few moments of expiring ; blood flowed profusely from his nose, and already he had commenced to straddle his legs to support his towering carcass. Carelessly I approached. The manner of the rider was infectious on

the steed. When twenty yards distant from me, down went his head, and at me he sprang. The activity of the horse alone saved me; and the shave was so close as to be far from pleasant. It was a cleverly executed charge, and a fitting finale to life. The impetus of his motion he was unable to control. The strength of the body was unequal to his courage of heart; for, ere he could halt, over he rolled to rise no more. In hunting, as in civilised life, it is dangerous to trust in appearances—we know how often they are deceptive. But there are other dangers to be apprehended on the buffalo range; viz. the Indians, who are so cunning and treacherous that the hunter must ever be on his guard. The following reminiscence will illustrate how even over-caution might prove dangerous to friends.

For some days I had had a terribly hard time of it. The ground had drunk its full—and to spare—of snow-water, game was scarce and wild, and the scanty herbage that my horse and mule were able to obtain since we entered the plains was barely sufficient to keep them alive; still good seventy miles more had to be traversed before I could reach the friendly shelter of the belt of timber that surrounded the Forks. If it had been autumn, I dare not have chosen this route, for it is a debatable ground of the Camanche and Arrapaho, to whom a solitary white man would be so tempting a morsel that he could not fail to be caught, and we will not say what done to; the very conjecture is disagreeable. The severity of the late weather, therefore, was my safety; for red-skins, no less than white men, dislike unnecessary exposure. Still, I was convinced some stragglers must have lately visited the neighbour-

hood, for the occasional head of game I saw was so wary that I concluded hunters had lately disturbed them. One thing was very much in my favour—I was in the lightest of marching order: no pack of peltries or well-stocked kit had I; for a few pounds of bullets, a pound of powder, and my buffalo robe were all my beasts had for a load. How independent a fellow feels when all his worldly goods can be summed up in so few words, unless he be in Bond Street or Broadway. To keep as much in the nags as possible, in case speed might be required, ever on the look-out for anything suspicious, with cautious, slow steps, I pursued my route to the eastward. Nothing occurred to increase my watchfulness; in truth, I commenced to believe that I had unnecessarily alarmed myself, when, crossing a small watercourse, on the edge of which was a sandy margin, plainly I saw prints indicating that three horses had lately passed. The fore feet of one of them was shod—a good sign. Still, they might have lately been stolen from distant white settlements; so all my previous alarm and caution were again reverted to.

Half an hour afterwards, I heard the report of a rifle; but, as there was a roll in the prairie between me and the direction the sound came from, I could not see who had fired the shot. In ignorance of what was to be seen beyond, it would have been madness to have ridden to the top of the bluff; so, turning off to the right into irregular, broken ground, the effect of the previous year's heat, I hobbled my animals, and started cautiously to stalk my way to some elevated ground, from whence I might obtain a view of the surrounding country, taking at the same

time care to keep myself between the suspicious direction and my beasts. I had not traversed over 150 yards, and was halting, the better to notice the most available cover for future progress, when first the head and shoulders, then the entire figure of a man, loomed o'er the top of the swell. Camanche or Arrapaho I knew at once he was not—perhaps Ossage or Potowatamy; but what the deuce would bring them so many hundred miles from their own hunting-lands? However, as everything in the shape of red-skins is to be dealt cautiously with, I changed my caps and got into most convenient and unobtrusive shooting attitude, determined not to throw away a shot, or, much less, give my supposed foe a chance of returning the compliment. That he was alone, being dismounted, I knew could not be the case; and as he was coming in the very direction of my fresh trail, which, if he was permitted to cross, he could not fail to discover, and, with the discovery, bring his whole party in pursuit of me, there was but one alternative to adopt. Last year, in this very locality, the Indians had been unusually active; scarcely a gang of emigrants or traders who had taken the southern route but had lost members of their party; in several instances neither sex nor age had been spared by these blood-thirsty marauders; so what could I expect if alone I fell into the hands of a party of braves on the war-path? True, my scalp—for it has long been ignorant of a scalpy lock—would scarcely be worth lifting; but then I did not want to knock under yet; and, if so, I preferred making a fight for it, as, I think, under the excitement, the process of being wiped out is less painful.

By this time my stalwart apparition had approached within eighty yards: he was a noble-looking figure, without the slouch of the red man when hunting, with a step as free and independent as if he had been shooting over a private manor. A big bug he evidently was, conscious of his own divinity; still, no eagle's feather or characteristic mark of a chief distinguished him. Presently he halted, and threw his large gun across his arm; from this movement I perceived at once that he was a white man. Great was his surprise when he saw me leave my ambush; quick as thought his rifle was cocked and brought to the port, but I prevented him from further hostile demonstrations by a salute in mother tongue. Our meeting was strange; both took a pretty good stare, and then mutually mentioned each other's name, for we had met before, and where? In no less distant a portion of the earth than in the realms of the Tycoon. A restless spirit, a crack shot, and passionately fond of field sports, the world was his demesne; and where game was abundant, there he would be found, whatever were the dangers that surrounded it, laughing at hardship and privation—the bitters that make the sweets of life the more enjoyable by contrast. Securing my animals I accompanied him to the party to which he had attached himself. They had only lately left civilisation, and, through his interest, my equine companions got several feeds of corn, to which they had long been unaccustomed. The night passed discussing old friends, a flask of brandy, and a package of kill-a-kinnick tobacco; and when, on the morrow, I shook his sterling hand at parting, before recommencing my journey, he

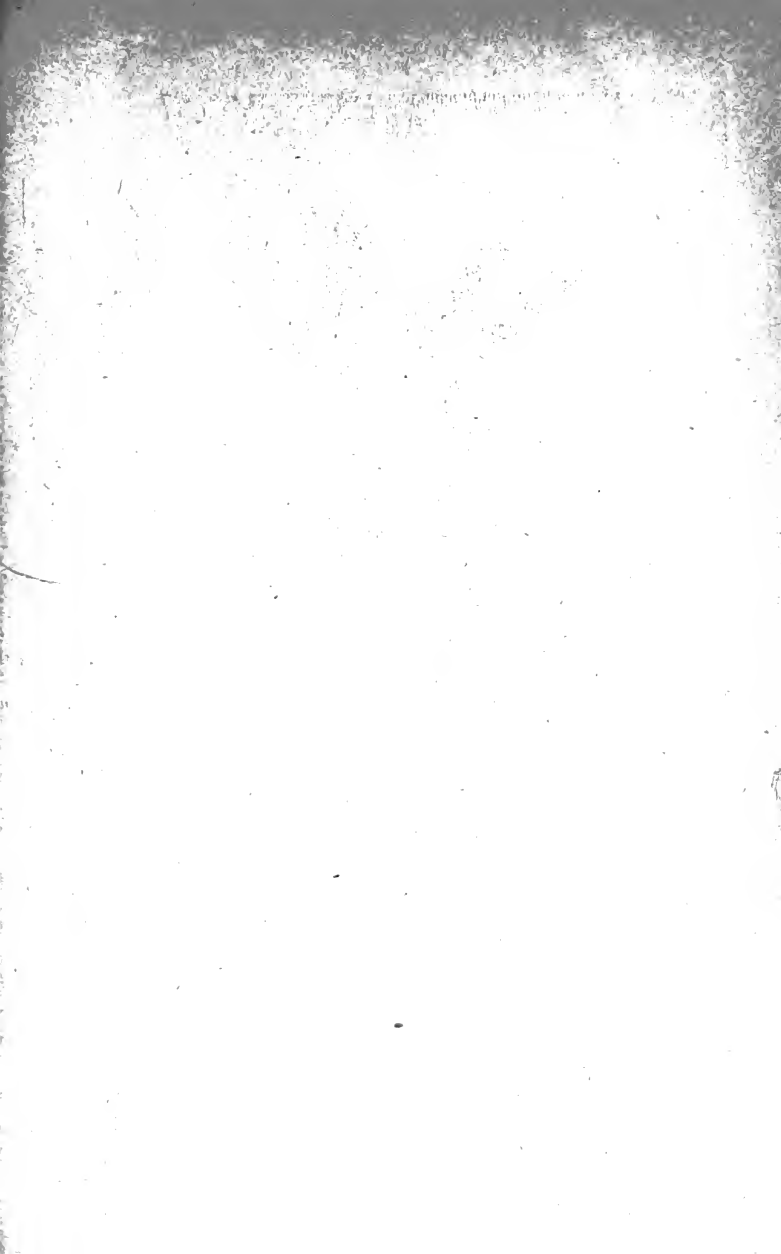


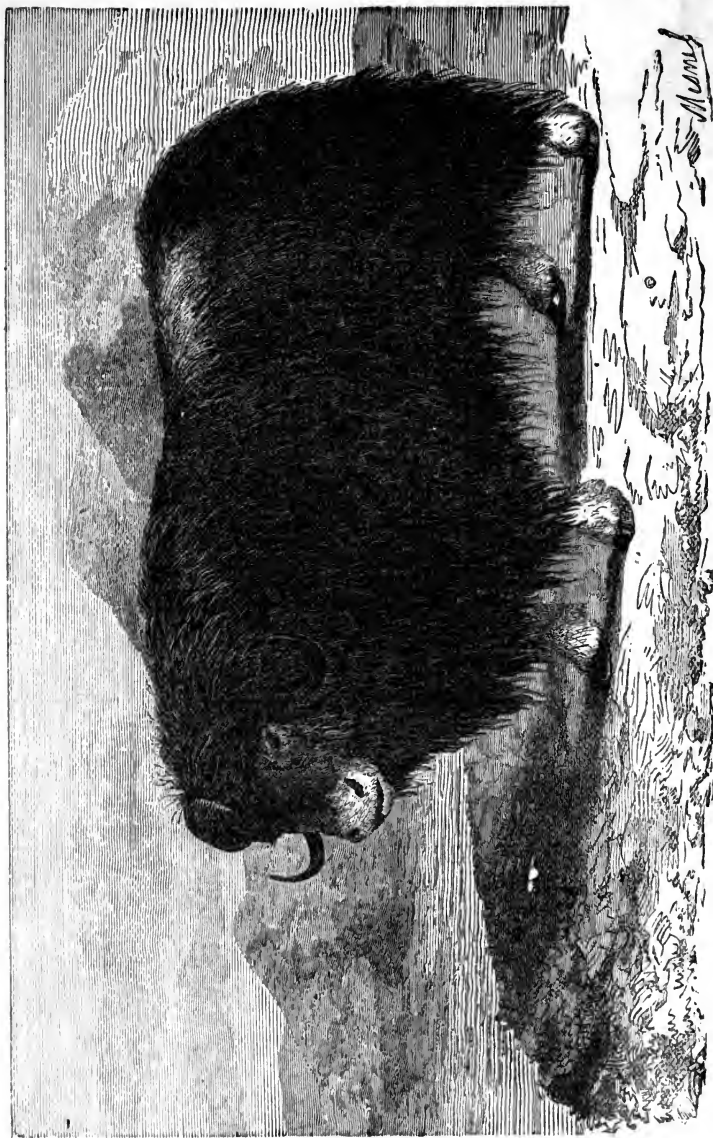
presented me with a few more feeds of grain, which without doubt, materially assisted my four-footed friends in rapidly traversing the balance of the debatable ground.

The visitor to the plains desirous of hunting buffalo, and doing so comfortably under the most advantageous circumstances, should always take his saddlery with him. A hunting saddle from Peat or Wilkinson and Kidd, made of the best pigskin, would be my choice, remembering always to be provided with spare girths. The high-peaked saddle generally used in the West has advantages for frontier use; but for a firm seat, hard and rough-riding, give me our English production. A double-reined snaffle I would take in preference to all bridles. At the same time, much depends on how a horse's mouth has been made. If the nag in his youth had his jaws dislocated with a barbarous Mexican bit, a snaffle will have no more power of control over his actions than officers over a panic-stricken regiment. I once possessed such a beast. The rider with a snaffle might as well have pulled at a stalwart oak as at this creature's mouth. He was a light-necked, star-gazing, hot-tempered beast. The scrapes he got me in were so numerous that to this day I wonder he did not break my neck. Of the arms most suitable for buffalo-shooting from horseback, I believe the large-bore breech-loading revolver the best. They are easily loaded while on the gallop; for the muzzle can be placed between your thigh and the flap of the saddle, and thus held. For my part I used a double-barrelled shot gun, with the barrels reduced to

twenty-two inches in length. The stock, however, was always inconvenient, particularly when loading while the horse was going at speed. Small-bored arms are to be avoided. The trappers and professional hunters use them; but the reason is, that they require much less ammunition than those of larger calibre; and at the same time, in killing fur-bearing animals, the pelt does not become so much torn. A small bullet, when properly placed, will do its work instantaneously; but deviation of a few inches is so frequent in this, which may be called snap-shooting, that the more severe shock and larger wound of the big projectile are eminently more effective.

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MUSK SHEEP.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE MUSK SHEEP.

ON the vast steppes of barren land that stretch from the 60th degree of north latitude to the Arctic circle, this little-known animal is to be found; however, I have never been able with certainty to learn that it has ever been seen to the eastward of Hudson's Bay. Its favourite haunts are about Great Bear and Great Slave Lake, and along the upper tributaries of the Mackenzie River.

From musk sheep being extremely shy, and the roughness of the nature of the country they inhabit, there is but one method for the sportsman to adopt in their pursuit, viz. stalking; and although a small-bore rifle might on such an occasion be employed, I should advise a calibre which shoots a bullet of not under twelve to the pound.

Any gentleman visiting these regions should endeavour to propitiate the Hudson Bay Fur Company, and if possible obtain letters of introduction to the factors of the various forts that extend along his route; for it will ensure him a hearty welcome, shelter him in time of necessity, a supply of provisions if stores should run low, and information

where the game will be found, with very possibly the assistance of a guide and hunter who is thoroughly conversant with all the surrounding country.

English and American sportsmen of the present day are possessed of such courage and perseverance that the rigour of the Arctic regions does not intimidate them; or I would not introduce my readers to this animal.

Why the musk sheep should be designated ox by some persons is to me a mystery. Plainly do its appearance, habits, &c., designate it as a member of the *Ovis* family, instead of the *Bos*. However, Blainville, a naturalist of good reputation, to avoid censure, boldly seizes both, and designates it *Ovibos*, thereby claiming a distinct standing and title to the honour of representing a new genus by adopting the *sobriquet* of two old ones. Audubon does likewise, and heads his chapters on these animals with the title of "Genus *Ovibos*." As an authority on American natural history, the latter is entitled to the highest consideration. At the same time I cannot help feeling that the name adopted is a shuffling pretext to prevent controversy, and the possibility of making a mistake that in future years would require to be corrected.

Among the numerous lakes of North America, that are situated on the extreme edge of the Rocky Mountains and the barren lands in sixty-four or sixty-five degrees north latitude, the musk sheep (for I must call it so) is occasionally found, but when the traveller progresses farther to the north-west it is no uncommon occurrence in a day's march to see several herds; in fact, they were so

numerous that the camp of a friend of mine was always well supplied with them for food. Their flesh is excellent and nutritious when fat, but quite the reverse when, by a long protracted winter, they become thin and attenuated. The flavour is much the same as that of venison, although much coarser in the grain, and is entirely free from any musky odour, except in very old males during the rutting season. The ground which they principally frequent is the same on which is found the small cariboo—two species of this genus being accredited to the North American continent—immense stretches of rolling, rocky steppes, most sparsely supplied with vegetation, except where an occasional brook winds its solitary course towards some giant river, rapidly hurrying on its northern course to the Arctic Ocean. Their principal food is the various mosses, the leaves of stunted brush, and the fine velvety grasses that sparsely crop up in wet localities.

For animals so unwieldy in shape and appearance *Musk Sheep* are wonderfully nimble, making always for the roughest grounds when pursued, leaping with agility from rock to rock, and scaling the faces of slopes so perpendicular, that the hunter, with hands and feet brought into play, finds it almost impossible to follow. Their hearing and sight are very acute; at the same time so suspicious and cautious are they that, although always assembled in little parties of from ten to twenty, sentinels are regularly told off for duty, which place themselves in the most commanding positions, ready to whistle the signal of alarm on the slightest suspicion of danger, accompanied by the usual sheep-like stamp of displeasure, which summons the

herd to assist in inspecting the supposed intruder before they shift their feeding-grounds for haunts that previous experience has taught them are more secure.

From the high latitudes in which they have their *habitat*, Captain Parry, the celebrated voyager, classes them among the dwellers north of the Arctic circle; and well might he or others do so, for so well are they protected by nature from the inclement weather of the inhospitable regions which they inhabit, that the most severe snow and frost little interfere with the routine of their life. Their wool is remarkably soft, long, and densely close; so that at a small distance, if they are walking over irregular-surfaced soil, their feet are scarcely seen, the body of surrounding fringe giving the observer the impression which would arise if you saw an animal surrounded with a petticoat. Their colour is much the same as that of the buffaloes of the plains, possibly a little darker, and at a distance they might easily be mistaken for them; but on closer inspection the delusion cannot continue, for their outline of form, sheep-like movement and figure, at once correct the error. In height they stand from eleven and a half to twelve and a half hands, the males being the largest and most cumbersome in appearance. Their legs are excessively short, and gifted with great muscular power, while the track of their hoof is about the size of a two-year-old steer's, but straighter and less pointed. The head is ornamented with handsome horns which almost unite at the base, and taper off with graceful handsome sweeps to sharp points, which are generally with the mature animal on a level with the eyes. The nose is covered with soft



downy hair, and the eye, which is large and full, gives the physiognomy an intelligent look, which would induce the belief that no great difficulty would occur to prevent their domestication. If such could be effected, great benefit might result from the introduction of their wool into our markets, as from its length, elasticity, and fineness, it could be manufactured into the most superior class of cloths.

Their rutting season occurs at the breaking up of the autumn, when the cold and fitful winds of October commence to warn us that warmth is gone, and snow and ice are coming. The male, who generally is very inoffensive, unless he chance to receive a wound incapacitating him from escape, becomes now most quarrelsome and vindictive, attacking with the greatest fury whatever provokes his displeasure; and woe be to the white man or Indian who then meets him, if away from a place of escape or unprovided with fire-arms. At this time furious engagements take place among the males, which sometimes continue till one or both of the contestants are so much exhausted that they fall an easy prey to the Indian's arrows or the tusks of the large northern grey wolf.

In May the female produces a single lamb, over whose welfare the mother shows great solicitude. The young, until three or four weeks old, are unable to follow the parent, but are hid away in the manner usual with deer; the old lady, however, on such occasions never wanders far from her offspring's hiding-place, and on the least suspicion of danger rushes to her offspring, prepared to do battle with all intruders, whatever may be their size or appearance.

The droppings of these animals, with the exception of their size, exactly resemble those of sheep.

I will relate two anecdotes illustrative of the chances of accident that will occasionally occur to the sportsman, even when in pursuit of animals which are generally deemed harmless ; and clearly proving how necessary presence of mind and decision of character are to the person who adopts wild life, or hopes to return safely from a trip to the comparatively unknown tracks of the great north-western portion of the American continent.

“The ice had just disappeared from the rivers ; the wild duck had already arrived in immense numbers, so that our table daily had been graced with the choicest varieties, when a thought struck me that an alteration of fish for fowl would be most acceptable to the palates of the encampment. About a couple of miles distant, where the river, contracted to one-fourth its usual breadth, rushed into a noble pool, I had on the previous year been most successful ; moreover, it was a pleasant place to fish—no overhanging bushes, but gently sloping, gravelly banks nearly the entire length of its margin. In an hour I had secured more trout than I felt disposed to carry ; so, work being over, I treated myself to a pipe. While enjoying my baccy, a wading bird of a description I never before saw lit close to me. It was so tame that I threw several stones at it, almost with success, for the distance was not over ten or fifteen yards, before it took to wing, and went farther down the stream. Anxious to procure a new specimen, I followed till almost a mile lay between me and my fish. To save distance in returning, I determined to

cut across the angle formed by the bend of the river, and had progressed about half way when I saw a female musk-sheep coming after me. When a lad in the Highlands I had got dreadfully punished by a tup, and the remembrances of the event had not yet been forgotten. A mountain ram is a small beast compared to my present pursuer, and *he* was able to do enough mischief. The ground was very roughly sprinkled with boulders, some of great size, and for the most inaccessible of those I made the best speed I could muster, and only succeeded in gaining a place of safety when the ewe's horns were within a foot or two of my hurdies. For over an hour she kept watch on me; and, worse than all, when I got back to my fish, some vermin or other had carried all the best ones off, and it was getting too late to catch a new mess. When at the fort the Indians soon explained the reasons of this unprovoked attack, and proved the correctness of their assertion by shooting the mother next morning and bringing the lamb home, which we were unable to keep alive for over three days, much to the regret of all."

The second adventure is a repetition of the inexcusable folly of not immediately loading your gun before approaching wounded game. "In stalking some barren cariboo, eight musk sheep crossed directly between me and the deer. I was well hid at the time, so that they came unsuspectingly within thirty yards. In a moment I gave them both barrels. To the first shot an old buck dropped, and rolled into a ravine; the second barrel crippled a three-quarter grown sheep so badly that I knew less than a mile would lay her up. In my hurry to secure

the old one, without loading I hurried to the ravine. There he was, as I thought, in the last struggle. Down I jumped into the hollow, which was about ten feet deep ; but no sooner did he see me than up he got, and, head down, charged. I turned tail, and fortunately scrambled out a wiser man ; for, deil tak' me, if ever I gang near ony o' them without baith powther and lead in my gun."

The average weight of the full-grown male is about four hundred and fifty pounds, while the female is generally from fifty to seventy-five pounds less. The Indians state that they live to an immense age, which belief is probably caused by their venerable and ragged appearance at the time they cast their coats.

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## CHAPTER IV.

## MOOSE DEER.

THIS giant of the deer tribe, although at one time abundant in all the north-eastern States, at the present time holds only a precarious and short-leased existence in the northern portion of the State of Maine. However, when the Canadian frontier is crossed they become more abundant, increasing in number till about the 57th degree of latitude is reached, above which they are seldom found. In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick the sportsman in pursuit of moose would still find a reward for his labour, but in that section of country lying to the south of James's Bay and stretching westward to Lake Winnipeg this giant deer can be obtained in greater abundance than in any other portion of the American continent.

For their capture two methods are usually adopted; firstly, by calling them up to where the sportsman is concealed, by imitating the voice of the female, or call of the male, through the assistance of a horn of birch bark; this device can only be employed in the still evenings of

autumn during the rutting season. So acute is the sense of hearing in this animal that the slightest false note on the call will send the quarry flying in the reverse direction; thus Indian companions are almost necessary to the white hunter, they, from greater experience, having become adepts in its use. The second is to pursue them on snowshoes after a heavy crust has been formed on the snow, through the heat of spring sun by day and the sharp frosts by night. As long shots at this quarry are seldom fired, the sportsman will find the ordinary smooth-bore gun quite as efficient as the rifle. A weapon of heavy calibre is here also of great importance.

I never think of the State of Maine without the most intense feelings of pleasure, for among its pine-clad hills and wood-embosomed lakes I enjoyed many, many weeks and months so free from care, so productive of pleasure, that the recollection can never pass away.

This region of country is characterised by numerous labyrinths of lakes that are scattered over it in every direction, divided from each other by mountainous ridges, clothed to their summits with giant pine-trees and the many varieties of hard woods peculiar to these latitudes, alike giving beauty to the landscape and affording food and shelter for every kind of northern game. On the extensive flat meadows that edge these lakes or form the margin of many of the numerous noble rivers, in the hollows, ravines, and hill-sides, was the moose-deer's home to be found, his choice of quarters being regulated by the changes of the seasons. Portions of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia are now favourite resorts of this giant deer;

but in northern New Hampshire, Vermont, and north-eastern New York State, where, a quarter of a century since, moose were plentiful, I doubt if at the present date a single specimen can be found. Such is the result of civilisation and the influx of the white man.

The size to which the moose-deer grows has been variously stated. Audubon says over twenty hands; Mr. Hays, an animal artist of great talent, and who has spent many years studying his profession in the native haunts of all the subjects he has used his brush upon, informs me that he has known animals to grow much larger. From this gentleman's experience as a hunter and naturalist, I have not the slightest doubt that he is correct. However, I believe about sixteen and a half hands to be the average height of a full-grown male, but that certain localities—possibly where greater abundance of the most suitable food is to be found—produce much larger animals. All the moose that I have heard of being killed in Labrador—where the winters are particularly severe and vegetation sparse—have been smaller than those shot in the State of Maine; nor can I see any reason to doubt such being the case. We know how other genera are affected by such local peculiarities, and why should this animal be an exception?

It is the habit of sportsmen and naturalists to praise the appearance of the moose. My own impression is that there is no animal more ungainly, awkward-looking, and apparently disproportioned. That he is admirably constructed for the part he has to play in life there is no question, but the very requisites with which he is endowed

give him such an unusual appearance that prejudice alone can call him handsome.

The Virginian deer, the Fallow deer, the Wapiti, and the Red deer are, to me, perfect in shape, graceful in their movements, and ornamental to the landscape; but the moose, on the other hand, with his short, thick neck, asinine head, protruding eyes, heavy broad ears, tremendous antlers, long, awkward, powerful legs and disproportionate withers, looking even higher than they are from the mane that surmounts them, can never be considered by an impartial judge but an awkward and clumsy-looking brute.

Of all the ruminants on the American continent, the moose is the tallest. I doubt not that a stall-fed ox can be made to weigh as heavy, but not to attain the stature, and on this account, as well as many others, it is really a duty that the legislatures of the various states of which he is an inhabitant owe to the country at large to pass and enforce such laws as will prevent his ultimate annihilation.

Probably it may never again be my good fortune to revisit these scenes of my youth; but can I ever forget the happy days and nights I have spent in the dense swamp, sparsely covered, barren, tangled woodland, or over the brilliant camp-fire, when, miles and miles away from civilisation, I have been on an expedition to hunt moose? No! Though I have shot in all parts of the world, gone through scenes exciting, both as soldier and hunter, Northern Maine, with all its glorious lakes, rivers, and mountains, will stand paramount: for there my experience



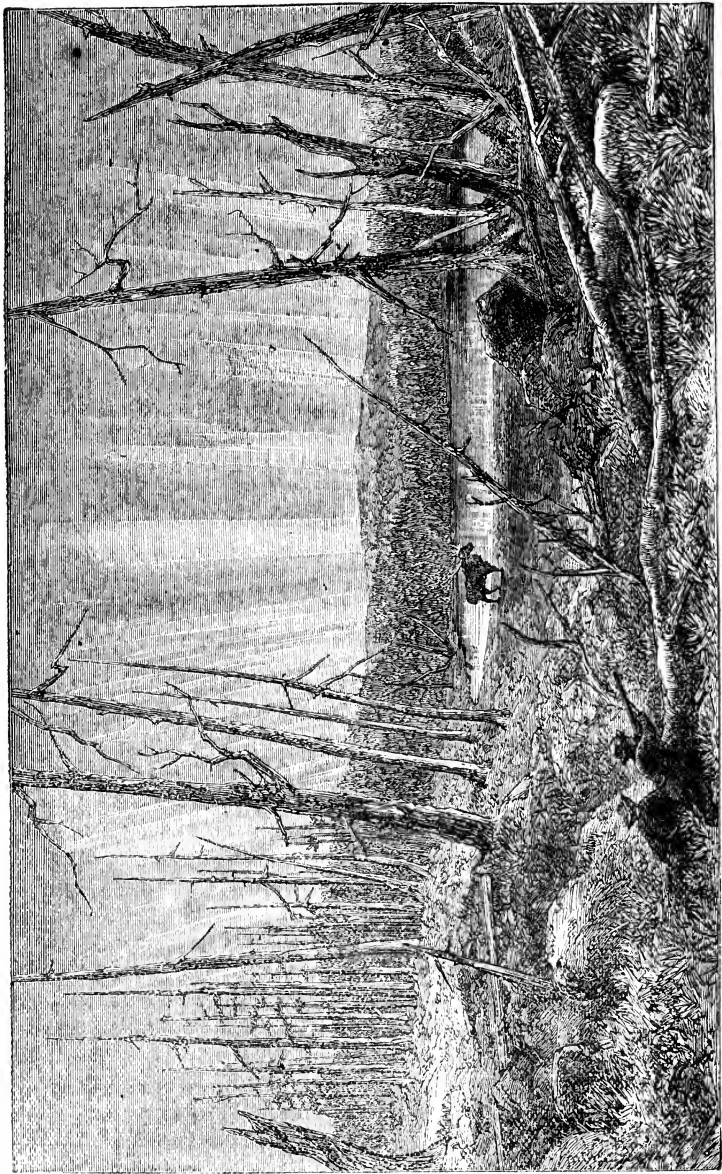
of moose-hunting was gained; there I made my maiden effort, which was a failure, to return years afterwards and awake the echoes with the war-whoop that proclaims success.

In December, moose deer cast their horns; by April, the successors commence to sprout; by the end of June full form is developed, but not till many weeks later are they denuded of velvet; when that takes place the antlers are perfectly white, but exposure to the atmosphere soon gives them a tawny shade, which deepens with the lapse of time. The cow, of course, never bears these ornaments, but the young bull-calf at one year throws out a brace of knobs an inch in length; in the second season these are about six inches long; the third year they increase to nine or ten inches, with a fork. In the fourth season palmation is exhibited with several points. From this age there is a gradual increase in the palmation and number of points till the animal attains its greatest vigour, from which period the horns decrease in width and weight, at the same time becoming more elongated. Twenty-three is the greatest number of points I have seen on one head, and the weight of the horns just exceeded seventy pounds. I doubt if larger has ever, of late years, been found.

The young moose deer, that is, those under five years, frequently do not show their new head-dress till March. Instances have been known—still, I have no doubt that such were great exceptions—of young males bearing the former year's horns as late as the calving season, which is in the end of April, and in Labrador and far northern localities, May.

In September the rutting season commences. Then is the period to see this great animal in all the magnificence of his strength. Reckless and furious he rushes about, bellowing forth defiance to his own sex, and what is accepted as notes of love by the other. Woe betide the traveller, the unarmed or inexperienced man who shall then meet him, if no place of safety is at hand, for nought but their total destruction would be the result. I knew an instance where a French Canadian nearly lost his life by one of these furious beasts. He had gone with his pony and sledge to bring a boat across a portage, and on his return, while threading the intricacies of the bush-path, a moose, excited with rage and lust, rushed past him. Indiscreetly he fired a charge of small shot after the retreating termagant, which brought him to the right-about, and caused him to charge. Into the boat jumped the Canadian, but the thin ribs and planks afforded no protection from such an assailant. The frail craft was soon knocked to pieces, and our friend took to a tree, when, from his perch, he witnessed his pony gored and trampled to death. Moral: Don't fire small shot at moose if you have any regard for your life.

During the rutting season many bull moose are annually killed, for the hunters, taking advantage of their then combative disposition, secrete themselves, and imitate, by means of a roll of birch-bark, the challenge note of an excited male. Some gallant lord of the wilderness hears the false, deceptive call, and believing that his demesne has been invaded by a rival, towering with rage, he rushes in the direction whence the sound proceeds, intent on



MOOSE CALLING.



repelling the intruder. Listening to the repeated calls, again and again the bull answers, till at length he is drawn within the range of the rifle of the secreted hunter. My maiden effort at moose-shooting was made in such a manner. As if it were but yesterday, the whole adventure is written plainly on my memory. I had only been in America a few months. The attractions of Saratoga I could not avoid, and when there became acquainted with a family of St. Francis Indians, earning a precarious subsistence by basket-making. Before this I had never met any of the aborigines of the American continent, and hour after hour I passed idling around their encampment, listening to stories of the chase, and more especially of moose-hunting. The dark-skinned race got my spare pocket-money, and I in return all their knowledge of woodcraft that could be theoretically imparted. The spirit of adventure had become excited within me, and ere I left Saratoga I had faithfully promised to visit St. Francis in autumn, to join one of my new acquaintances in a moose-hunt.

The beautiful tints of an American fall were in their greatest brilliancy when I reached the termination of a long and tedious journey to accept the proffered hospitalities. My reception was not so enthusiastic as I expected; in fact, my ardour was a little damped by the marked coolness of my host. Yet after coming such a distance, I was determined to carry out my project, and a well-stocked purse enabled me to do so. Starting at early morning, on a beautiful clear day, we descended a tributary stream of the Penobscot river, for eight or ten hours.

The easy motion of the birch bark, the grand scenery and the brilliant-coloured foliage recalled many a vision I had formed of what fairyland must resemble. About four o'clock we disembarked, our birch bark was shouldered, and a portage of a mile or two traversed, when the margin of a clear, calm lake was reached, surrounded by beautiful green hills. Again we launched our canoe on the bosom of the waters, arriving at a second halting place as the sun in glorious splendour dipped the western horizon. Hiding our frail birch-bark craft in some brush, with my attendant leading, we started up an acclivity; after an hour's rough and difficult walking, the Indian stopped and sounded a note on his calling-horn. To this there was no response, but my friend assured me, "Plenty moose by-by."

The night was as beautiful as the day preceding it. The hunter's moon was at its full, and near objects could be seen almost as distinctly as when the sun was high in the heavens. Several efforts with the call had been made; disappointment and failure began to appear certain, when a distant and unknown sound struck my ear. At the same moment the redskin seized my arm and whispered, "Old bull." We both placed ourselves in a hemlock tree, and numerous were the injunctions I received of the necessity of silence. Afraid to move, cramped in an awkward position, for near a mortal hour I endured the torments, certainly not of the blessed; still move I would not, ultimately could not, as the answering voice of the bull in response to the Indian's call told that the giant was rapidly approaching. At length—oh, how glad I was!—the noblest game I had ever set eyes upon broke into the

opening at a cautious trot, hesitated, stopped, and impatiently stamped his foot. The distance that the moose was from us could not have been more than thirty yards. Slowly and imperceptibly the Indian's gun was getting into shooting position. I attempted to do the same with mine, when—oh! what excuse can I offer?—bang went the right barrel, and, but for a vigorous effort, I should have fallen from my perch.

I had better draw a veil over the recriminations that ensued, for homicide was nearly the result, whether justifiable or not must be for others to decide; but St. Francis was not long honoured with my presence. Of moose-hunting I had seen enough for one season, and for many a year not even my bosom friends knew that I had ever made an attempt to slay the noblest of all the deer family.

In the close, warm weather of July and August this game is much pestered with flies. To avoid these plagues, the moose becomes almost aquatic in his habits; for hours he will completely submerge himself, with nought but his head above the surface. At this season their principal food is the long, succulent limbs and leaves of the water lily. In the tributary streams that help to feed Moosehead Lake it is no uncommon thing for the fisherman or tourist, on his aquatic excursions, to come across moose floating, or see them reach the shore in advance of him, alarmed either by the voices or wind of the strangers. Such was my fortune once when fishing in a tributary of Lake Parmacheny. Trout had all day been on the feed; my gun lay carelessly at my feet, half buried in blankets and other hunter's paraphernalia in the bottom of my canoe, which I

had permitted silently to drift with the current. Suddenly I heard a splash, as if all the fish in the river had collected to make a simultaneous rise; but, instead of fin, it was fur, and a splendid moose, bearing a noble head of antlers, plunged through the weeds, and soon disappeared in the recesses of the forest. If I had been prepared, or even had my gun been obtainable at a minute's notice, I could almost with certainty have administered the *coup de grâce*.

When the season advances, and the sparse advent snows occasionally give warning that winter is at hand, the moose deer leave the morass and river banks for higher ground. Here they collect in families previous to yarding, which takes place as soon as the lands of these northern wilds have received their annual deep and pure white covering. At this time the moose lives in comparative security, his length of limb and tremendous power enabling him to defy all pursuers. Enjoy well thy rest—enjoy it, I say, for it is but for a short season: for when the sun again warms the landscape, and a crust becomes formed through the thaw by day and frost of night, powerful and noble though you be, you will require more than that superhuman power to save you from the persevering Indian or venturesome white man. Poor creature! your chance when pursued, after a heavy crust is formed, is indeed small. I know no denizen of the forest that, at any period of life, has the odds so fearfully against him.

As may be imagined, then, the end of February and March are the periods when the greatest havoc among these animals takes place, and I regret to say that



frequently the fiendish love of carnage alone seems to occupy the mind of the pursuer. I have known instances—I grieve to say many—when moose have been killed simply for the sake of killing; for, with the exception of one or two titbits, the giant carcass has been left to satiate the appetite of the wild beasts of the forest. If one who has been guilty of such unjustifiable conduct should read this, let his conscience reproach him for the past, and the sting of remorse cause him to resolve never to be again an offender.

The exact position of the scene which I am about to describe lies within the limits of the State of Maine, about sixty miles north-east of Moosehead Lake.

The days that had heralded the advent of March had been extremely warm, the nights clear, with sharp frost; just such weather as would be pronounced first-class for the collecting of sap to make maple sugar. Two days' journey had been required to bring us to the desired locality, for we had both agreed that no search for moose should be made till a favourite neighbourhood was reached, alike beautiful in summer or winter. Moreover, here we should find a log hut, erected two seasons previously, and which we had every reason to believe would be in a thorough state of repair. In due course of time we arrived at our rendezvous; the snow was cleared out of the structure, and, considering all things, the two Penobscot Indians who accompanied us succeeded in making our temporary residence more than inviting. The first night passed in the usual manner; we each pledged the other's health more than once, and again and again requited our

pipes with baccy. Still we slept soundly, and day had well broken before either turned out. A hurried cup of coffee and a few morsels of cold meat and biscuit sufficed for breakfast, so that ere the sun had risen over the neighbouring hill we were *en route* for the scene of action. The country that we traversed was covered, but not densely crowded, with hard wood—so open, in fact, that a fair shot would severely have punished woodcock which had taken shelter in a similar locality. After tramping three miles, the Indians leading, and I causing much amusement by a succession of catastrophes from one snow-shoe overlapping the other, a halt was made, and the expression of the guide spoke plainly of the vicinity of game; without questioning, we turned off to the left, still following in single file. Stooping low, and slowly advancing for some moments, we came upon a yard—but, alas! deserted; but such had not been long the case. Our dark-skinned companions were jubilant; visions of moose-meat floated before them, and straight they directed their steps to the place of exit, for the occupants had winded us earlier than expected. To a novice but one track appeared, yet the Indians held up four fingers to indicate that number of inmates. Soon we found their information correct; for, after a pursuit of an hour and a half, we perceived our game—a bull, cow, and two calves—going over a neighbouring swell. The reason of the deceptive appearance of the trail is caused by the cow and calves stepping as nearly as possible in the footsteps of the bull, who on such occasions invariably leads.

Just as we supposed ourselves on the verge of success,

the moose passed through a second yard, easily known by the trampled state of the snow and barked sides of the trees. The occupants of this retreat had joined those we were following. This additional force to the pursued added fresh excitement to the chase, and the distress resulting from pace was for the time forgotten. In an hour more we were again in view, and soon afterwards among the game. My companions I will leave to themselves, and confine myself to my own performance. One of the males had a noble head of horns. These I determined to be possessed of; so, marking him for mine, resolved not to halt till successful. Again and again I thought that but a few minutes would elapse till I could shoot; but either from the snow being less deep, or the animal making extra efforts, at least an hour had elapsed before the quarry was sufficiently close to deliver with precision a fatal shot.

Soon I was joined by one of the Indians, then by the remainder of our party. Four moose had been killed; so my companion and self agreed that we had reaped enough reward for one day's work. Next day was equally successful, more game having been seen than on the first essay. I doubt not, if we had been so minded, for days we might have continued this slaughter; but as it was, we had as much meat as we could transport to the settlement.

A more rapid manner of taking moose when there is a crust, and one much practised, is to be accompanied by a small, active dog, which, if properly trained to his work, will never lay hold, but only snap at the quarry's heels.

The poor moose is thus soon brought to bay; for his active pursuer, whose weight is so light that he does not break through the crust, dances in security around the game, snapping at every exposed point, and so engaging the victim's attention that the hunter can approach the quarry sufficiently close to deliver with certainty an unailing shot.

The flesh of the moose, although sweet, is very coarse. Still, many people prefer it to any other. I cannot say that such is the case with me, good beef being to my idea infinitely superior. The tongue, last entrail, and especially the muffle or extremity of the upper lip, are great delicacies, more particularly when eaten cooked in the primitive style of the backwoods. It may be the wood fire, it may be the want of seasoning, or more probably still the fresh air and severe exercise of the hunt; but all that I have eaten when snugly housed about a camp-fire has been relished with a gusto unknown in city life. A *bonne bouche* which must not be forgotten, and which only the moose hunter can enjoy, or those who live near the haunts of this animal, is the marrow from the shank-bones of the legs, cooked immediately after the animal is killed. This, served on toast, with a sprinkling of cayenne pepper, would make the mouth of the most fastidious epicure water that had previous experience of its excellence.

The moose deer changes much in appearance with the rotations of the seasons. In summer the coat is short and fine; in winter coarse and long. Underneath the hair is found an abundant crop of soft wool, which doubtless

enables them to endure the great severity of the northern winters. The face-hair, different from that of the horse or cow, grows upwards from the mouffle, on the termination of which there is a triangular bare spot. The power of the awes and teeth of the moose is very great. The facility with which they strip the bark from those trees that constitute their favourite food is wonderful. Their pace is either a walk or trot, the usual bounding gait of other species being unknown to them. Even if a fallen tree interrupt their progress, instead of rising at it like a horse, they manage to clamber over in a most effective manner.

Two methods of capturing moose I have not alluded to,—for why? They appear so antagonistic to all those feelings that should actuate the gentleman; viz. by snaring and trapping. The minutiae of the modes of proceeding by which the unsuspecting game is induced to enter either of the above devices, I am certain would not be interesting to a sportsman.

For many years it was a disputed point whether the moose deer of America and the elk of Europe were the same species; but the most eminent of recent and present authorities agree that they are identical. Captain Hardy, of the Royal Artillery, who was stationed many years in Canada, and devoted much of his time to moose-hunting, as well as studying this animal's habits, and who is also conversant with the European elk, emphatically asserts that there are not the smallest grounds for any diversity of opinion on the subject. Audubon, an authority on American natural history second to none, refuses to give a decision,

and justly so, for he was not conversant with the European animal.

The following adventure occurred to me while sojourning in the habitat of the moose :—

For some days my fly-rod had been indefatigably and most successfully at work, furnishing not only my own table, but many of the neighbouring families with trout, so that a change of programme was far from unacceptable. One morning as I was deliberating in which direction I would go, my host asked me if I should have any objection to accompany him to lift some traps he had not visited since spring. The trip promised an acquaintance with a new beat, and an insight into what I was not as yet conversant with in this section of the American continent, viz. the method followed of trapping martens. As the sun was rising over the eastern hills—for these primitive people are early risers—we found ourselves about to leave the surveyed road. My friend bore on his back a sack in which to place his long-neglected traps, while I carried my trusty ten-bore double gun, loaded by request with ball in one barrel, and buck-shot in the other. Our route at first was through a dense cedar swamp, exceedingly irregular on the surface, while the undergrowth was so close that it was with difficulty parted; a thick coating of moss was under foot, so spongy and full of water that if we remained stationary for a few seconds we would be over the insteps in water. Nevertheless, the tracks of the American swamp-hare were innumerable; an animal, by-the-bye, which is very similar to the Scotch blue hare, some authorities going so far as to say they are the same

species, slightly changed by climate and different habits of life, resulting from the dissimilar localities in which they are found.

A blazed path was all we had for direction, but as both were in the full vigour of manhood, we steadily progressed. Several times we flushed the Canadian spruce grouse, but as my projectiles were not suited to this stamp of game, and my companion continually kept reminding me that larger might be expected, I forbore troubling them.

From the swamp we got on drier soil, very rocky, and densely wooded with pine, the trees increasing in stature as we ascended, till we were surrounded with such glorious pines as might one day form, without discredit, the main-mast of a line-of-battle ship.

Upwards, like the youth who shouted "Excelsior," we kept ascending, but we had not the maiden to warn us, whose warning I doubt not, unless she had been unusually pretty, would have been disregarded. Soon the walking became climbing, and after an hour's clambering the summit of the ridge was reached. Here the first trap was lifted, and at intervals of two hundred yards or so, according to the nature of the ground, the others were found distributed. As they had been down for nearly two months, whatever had been captured by them was now in a decomposed state. Soon the whole (over a dozen) had been gathered, when we descended to a stream literally alive with fish; trout of all sizes up to a pound appeared to be actually crowding each other, and so unacquainted were they with man's presence that they totally disregarded our intrusion.

Lunch-time had arrived, and on the margin of the brook we enjoyed our meal ; several of the trout, which my companion had captured with the most primitive line attached to a rod cut from the nearest tree, forming no inconsiderable portion of the meal.

After a smoke and half-hour's dawdle, we started on our return, following an entirely different route, equally disadvantageous for rapid progression. During our homeward tramp I learned that martens could only be taken on the highest ridges, and that the bait used was either a red squirrel, the beautiful little cedar bird, or the heart or liver of the swamp hare. I was not a little surprised at the number of times my companion halted to inquire if my gun was all right, more especially as so far we had seen no indications of large game, excepting some decayed stumps and logs, moved where Bruin had been grubbing, or scratched trees where his race from time immemorial had been in the habit of stretching themselves.

As the sun set, we once more regained the path, well fatigued with our rough and protracted tramp, myself not a little disgusted that I had seen nothing sufficiently worthy of being considered fit game for the heavy missiles which both my barrels contained. In fact, I could not help openly grumbling that I should have been inveigled into such a useless journey, which elicited the response from my associate that I might thank my stars we had got back safe. With this answer for the time I had to be satisfied, but that evening the mystery came out, and the selfish motives that had dictated my companionship being sought. I will endeavour to state the story as told by the trapper.



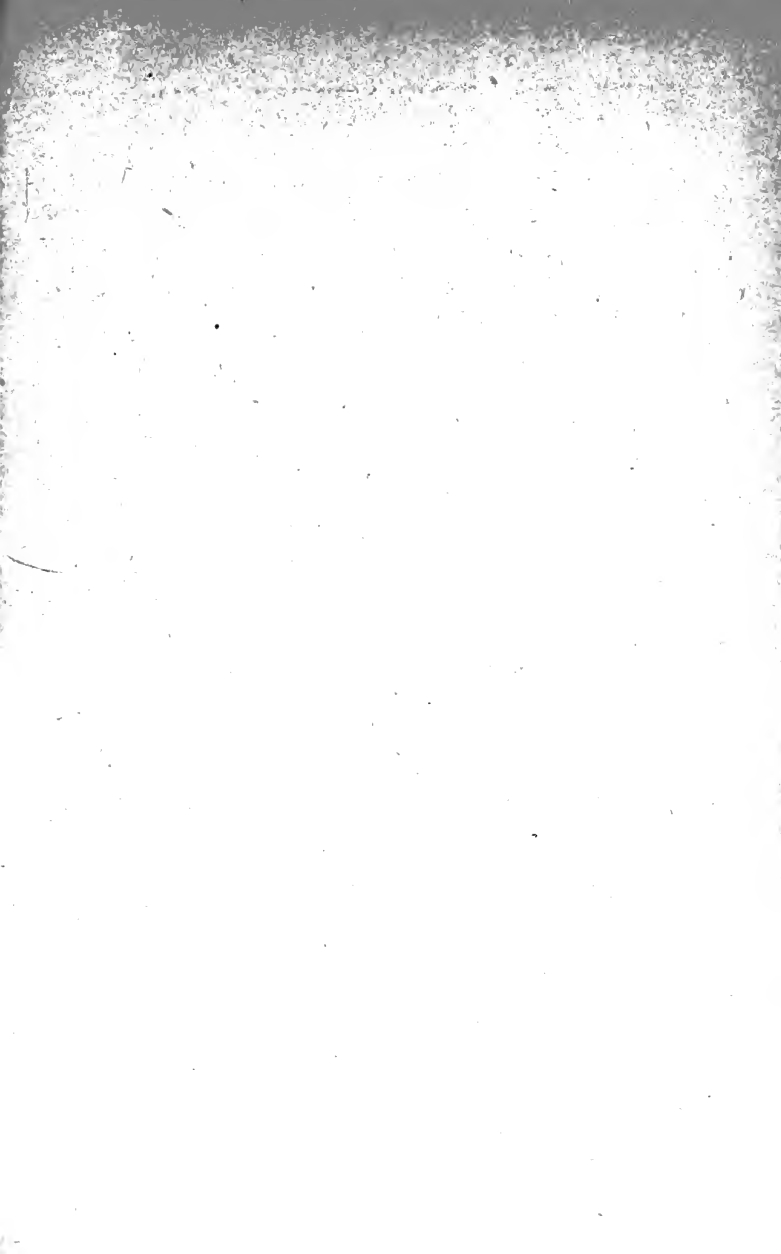
Last April, when the snow was on the ground, I laid out the traps we have to-day lifted. The travelling was very bad at the time, for it was near the break-up of winter. I got along the ridge all right; but as I thought it better to return as I had come, I determined to retrace my steps. I had scarcely faced homewards when I found, to my surprise, the print of an animal following my old track. I looked in every direction to see where the follower could be, but was unable to detect him. However, I knew well that the skulking villain was no other than a painter (*Anglicè*, puma); and as I had only my old single-barrel loaded with bird shot, I became justly scared. All of a tremble, I continued my course, and you may bet I made tracks. The very evidence of the brute following me showed he was after no good, and I was right; for as I drew near the outside edge of the swamp I saw him right ahead; but I went out of the way to avoid him, and after I left the wood I heard him howl, doubtless in anger because he had missed making supper off me.

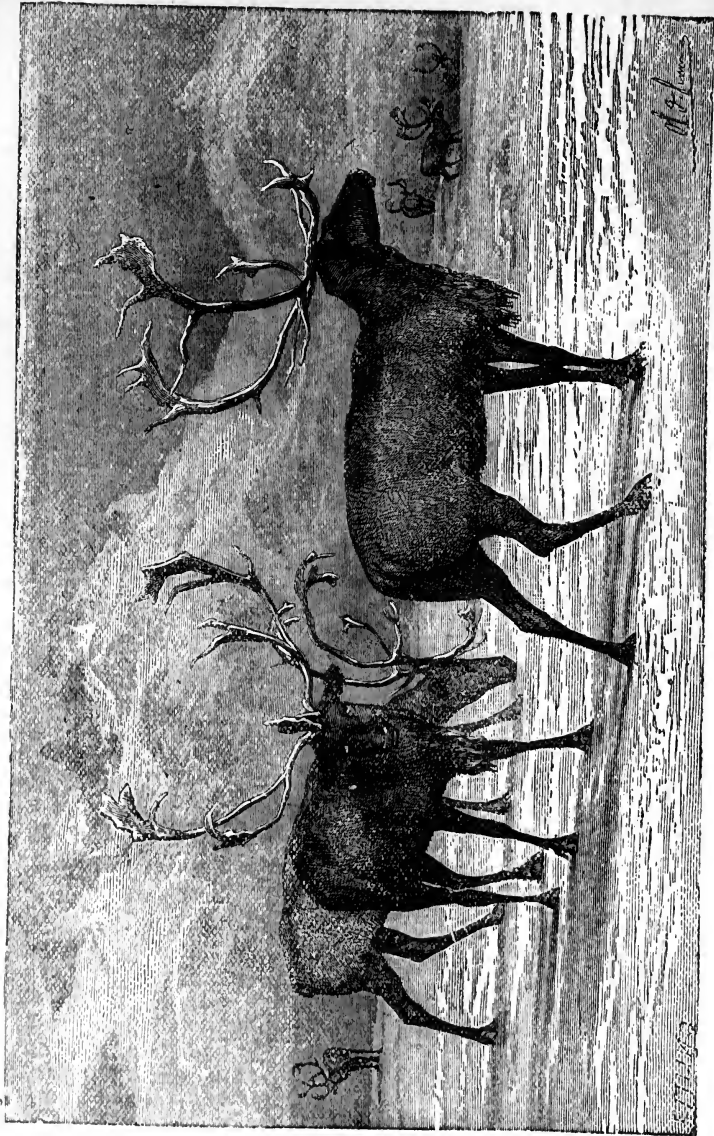
At the time I could not help thinking that my host had been needlessly alarmed, and told him so, when he informed me that nothing would have induced him to return alone—in fact, that he would sooner have lost his traps than do so; that a painter in those regions, more especially in winter, was much to be dreaded, and in corroboration informed me of a little tragedy that occurred some years past in the same neighbourhood. Two friends once trapped the township of Success. They had two beats, running in reverse directions, while the shanty in which they both lived together was situated at the dividing point

from which each radiated. The one who examined the traps to the north to-day, visited those to the south to-morrow, changing their routes with each other daily, and always meeting at night at their common residence. Almost half the season had thus passed away, when one of the companions who had returned to the sleeping place, became seriously alarmed at the continued absence of his friend. At length the little cur dog who constantly accompanied the missing man came home alone. There is an end to everything, and so there is to a long winter night; and with the earliest indications of day the anxious watcher sallied forth to find the missing trapper, whom he, after a long and weary search, discovered dreadfully mangled and partially eaten. The assassin had been a painter. The tracks on the tell-tale snow spoke correctly. About thirty feet above where the corpse lay, an immense limb ran out at right angles from the parent tree. From this the skulking coward had doubtless sprung upon the unsuspecting trapper.

Thus it will be seen that the home of the giant moose is not without other tenants, some of whom are likely to afford adventurous hunters more excitement than a hot corner at the side of an English cover.

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CARIBOO MIGRATING.

*W. H. L.*

*W. H. L.*

## CHAPTER V.

## CARIBOO.

ALTHOUGH occasionally the cariboo is killed within the limits of the United States, they have ever there been deemed scarce, doubtless from it being the extreme southern limit of their habitat, nor can they be found in such numbers as to justify the sportsman going in their pursuit till the northern shores of the great St. Lawrence are gained; from whence, as the traveller advances into higher latitudes, daily indications of their presence will become more abundant. How far to the north they may be found is doubtful, although it is beyond a question that their range extends to the Arctic circle. The almost unknown interior of the vast island of Newfoundland abounds with them, also the interior of Labrador; while in the uninhabited waste between Hudson's Bay and Alaska, late Russian America, their numbers are so great as to form the staple article of food of the inhabitants of these dismal lands.

Capable of resisting with comparative impunity the

greatest severity of cold, they suffer severely from heat, to avoid which they make two migrations annually, to the north in summer grazing back to the south in winter. During these journeys the greatest destruction of the species takes place, for they almost invariably follow the same line of march, with which the natives are acquainted, and where they await for the herd either entering mountain defiles or crossing rivers, when they are surrounded and indiscriminately slaughtered.

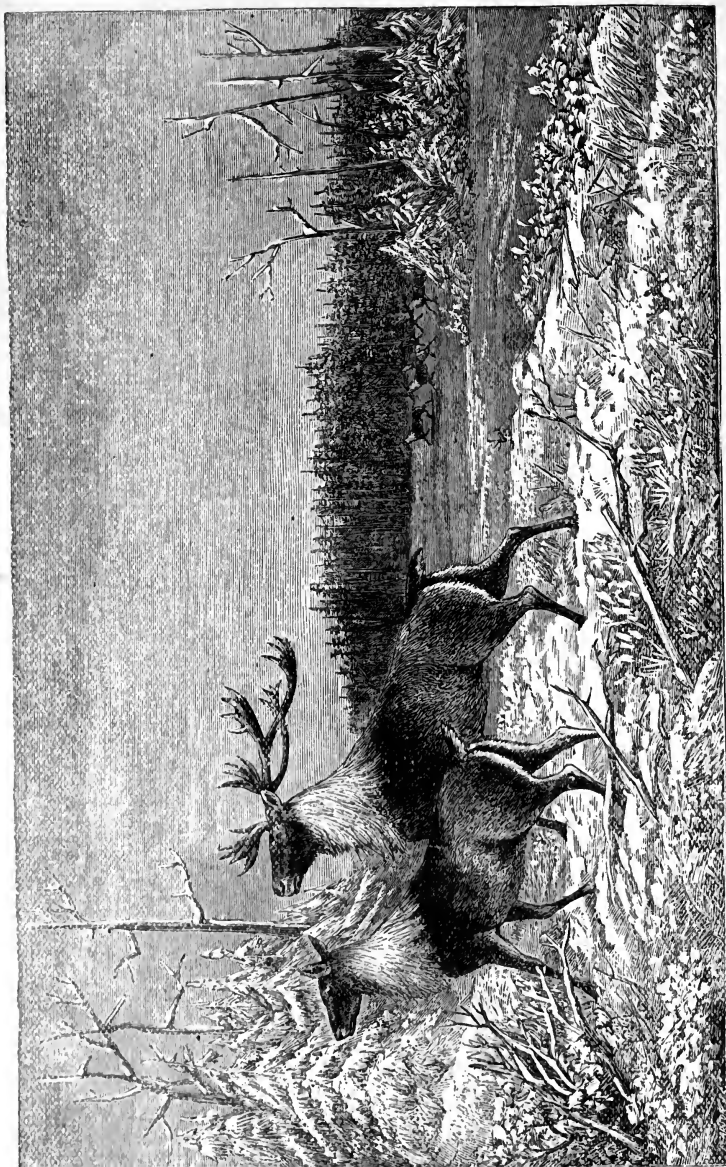
They are also hunted on snow-shoes, after the manner of moose.

As cariboo are possessed of great vitality, they require heavy hitting: so a rifle of large calibre ought to be employed by the sportsman.

Although there are upon the American continent two very distinctly marked varieties of the reindeer, I cannot adopt the idea of many travellers that, so conspicuous is their dissimilarity, that they are entitled to be considered distinct species.

We are all aware that difference of climate, local causes, and abundance or paucity of food work wonderful alteration on animal life—more especially in regulating their stature; for instance, the moose deer of Labrador seldom exceeds sixteen and a half hands, while that of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick has been known to attain twenty-one or even twenty-two hands (*vide* Audubon). Now the grounds that are taken for asserting that there are two species of cariboo are exactly the same, and would equally justify the decision that there are two species of elk. The woodland cariboo leads a life of comparative idleness among





CARIBOO IN WINTER COAT.

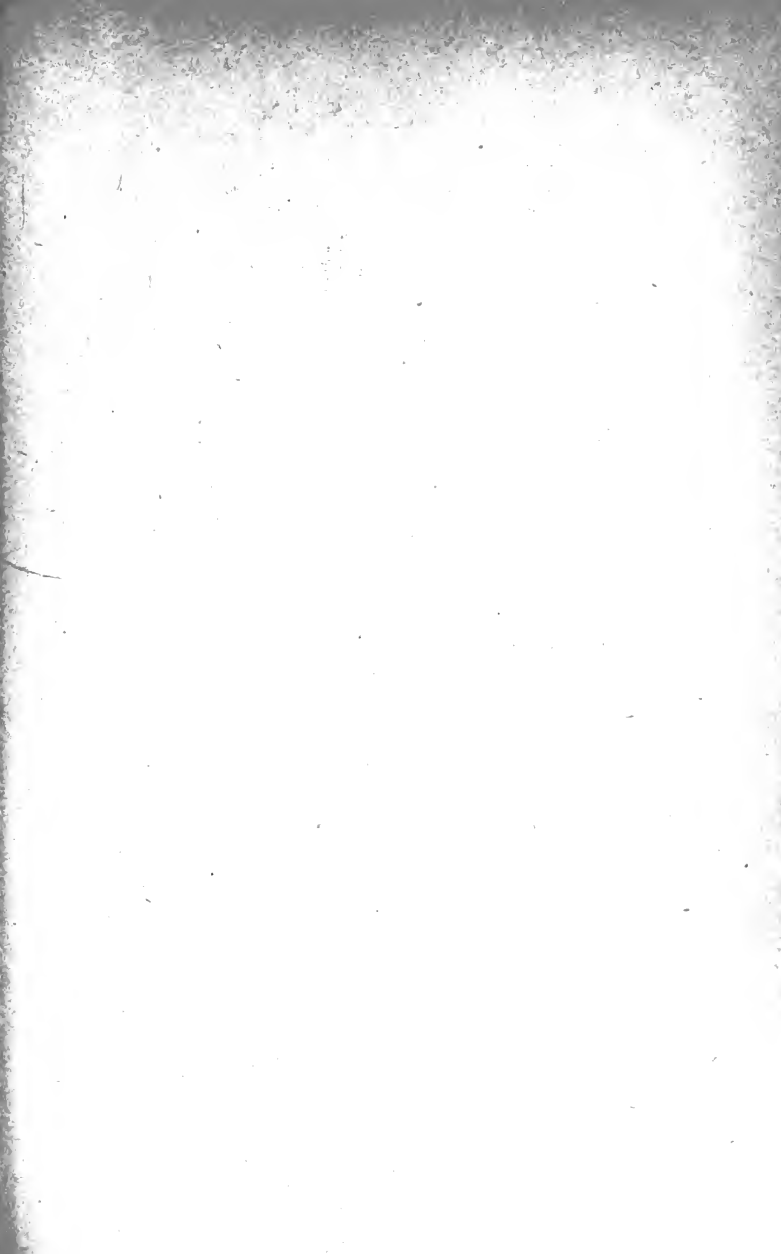


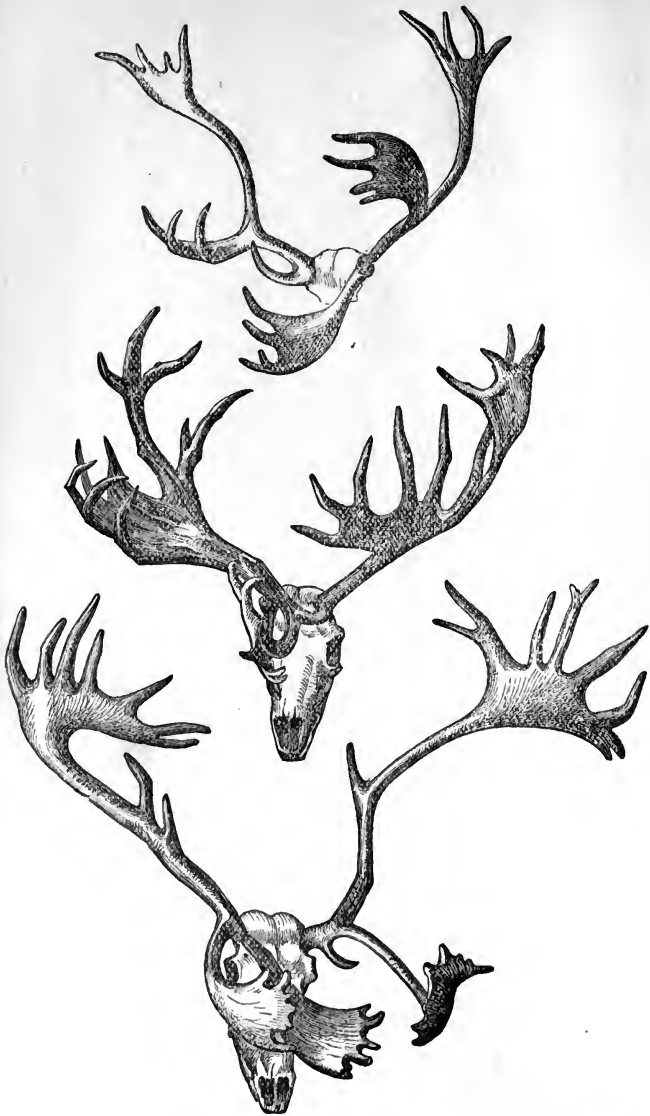
the dense swamps and pine-clad hills, where food is constantly to be found in abundance. The barren cariboo, on the other hand, inhabits the immense flats or mountain ridges close to the Arctic circle, where vegetable growth is sparse, and little shelter afforded from the biting cold winds and snows peculiar to so high a latitude. So great often are the straits the latter variety are subjected to from the inhospitable nature of their habitat, that in some districts they are compelled to become migratory to obtain the necessaries of life. Is it, then, to be wondered at, that there should be a marked difference in size between the inhabitant of the sheltered forest and the wanderer upon the barren upland waste?

Another strange circumstance has often struck me—viz., that although the reindeer has for ages been domesticated in Europe and Asia, employed both to draw and carry freights, as well as provide milk for the inhabitants of Lapland and the Siberian wastes, no attempt ever appears to have been made in the New World to utilize their capacities. This is the more surprising when we consider that only a few years back Russia possessed a large portion of the north-west angle of the Continent of America, a country literally swarming with wild cariboo, from the herds of which no difficulty would be found to make captives. Still, such has never been done with a view of utilizing their labour, although in her possessions across the Behring Sea reindeer are in constant use among the sparse population that inhabits the north Asiatic slopes that margin the Pacific. Between America and Asia, up in these high latitudes, for many years an extensive trade

has been carried on in furs, so that the inhabitants of the one continent must have intercourse with, and a knowledge of the ways of life of the other.

Although the reindeer easily becomes domesticated, and when in that state is no more difficult to herd than sheep, still, when in the wild state, particularly if near to the confines of civilization, they are of all game the most difficult to approach, even to obtain sight of. Their large heavy ears enable them to possess most wonderful powers of hearing; and their olfactory organs and sight are none the less acute, so that they are able to distinguish the approach of an intruder upon their demesne long before the sportsman is aware of their presence. Thus, when hunting cariboo, I have often come across the indentations caused by their tread in the soft, bent moss of the swamp, and so lately made that you might observe the pressed stems reverting to their original position, still no sight of the quarry could be obtained, although it was impossible they could be more than a second or two in your advance. However, the cariboo has a way of stealing off, gliding, as it were, out of sight, which in so large an animal appears impossible. To accomplish this they lower their backs, push their heads far forward, with the antlers laying close along the withers, while each foot is raised and, with very bended knee, placed far and silently in advance of the other. To observe this done, the action is so slow and measured, that you cannot help being astonished at the rapidity of progression that results. The moose, also, will practise this ruse to avoid observation; but it is far





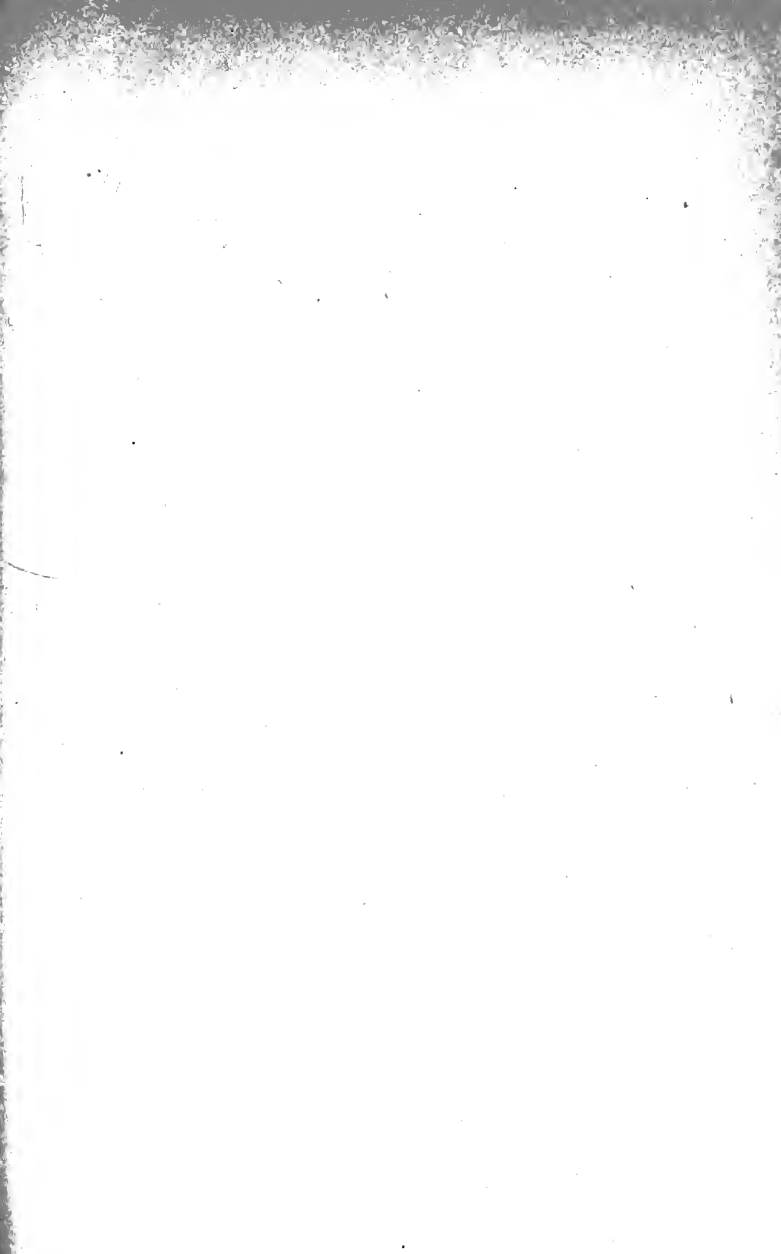
DIFFERENT TYPES OF CARIBOO HORNS.

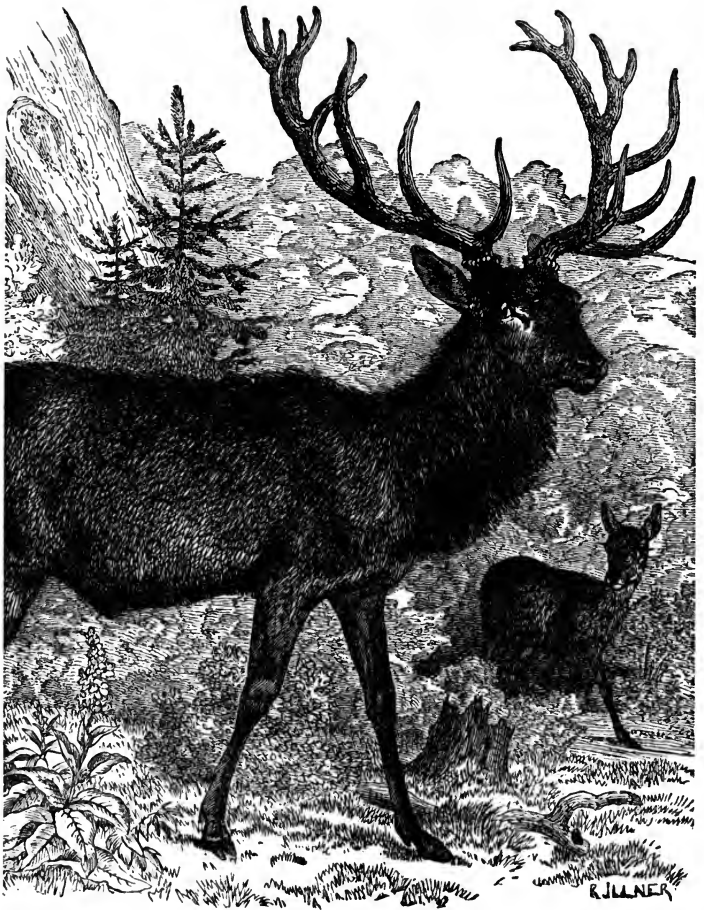
from as great an adept in it as the cariboo. In summer this animal becomes almost aquatic in its life; for, whether it result from the pestering annoyance of the legions of mosquitoes or black flies that constantly hover around them, or its love for the refreshing influence of the bath, it appears to spend day after day submerged, with little else than its nose, eyes, and horns above water. At this season it feeds but little during day; but when the sun has set, and the atmosphere becomes cooler, it sallies off to the woodland and swamps in search of its favourite lichens and ground shrubs. The shooting of one species of deer so much resembles another, and I have already described so many adventures in pursuit of moose and, hereafter, in the pursuit of the more common Virginian deer, that I will tax the reader's patience no further than to add, that to be successful in pursuit of cariboo, unless when they are swimming the great rivers in their annual migrations, the hunter must be cool and self-possessed, have an extensive knowledge of woodcraft, and powers of endurance to bear fatigue of no ordinary quality.

The peculiar and varied formations that the horns of the cariboo assume have been the subject of much controversy among the *cognoscenti*. Why palmation should occur in one antler over the brow and in another at the extremities, has been accounted for by individuals doubtless to their own satisfaction, but I fear not at all so to the general public. For myself, when I have formed a theory in reference to this animal's antlers, and possibly nursed it for some time, I had the misfortune or otherwise

to kill a cariboo that annihilated the pretty little structure I had built. Thus the horns here represented, although taken from life, must not be accepted as a stereotyped pattern of the whole family.

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WAPITTI DEER.



## CHAPTER VI.

## WAPITTI DEER.

WHAT I have said in reference to the habitat of the bison may be repeated as regards the wapitti, with this exception, that it does not roam so far north by some degrees of latitude. Thus the visitor to the district I have recommended for buffalo-hunting will have the advantage of enjoying both descriptions of sport.

I do not consider this noble game swift when you compare it with the other species of the deer family. From this I am led to believe the statement of a well-known sportsman, who holds a commission in the United States regular service, that he and his brother officers have frequently ridden them down. Such sport must be eminently exciting, if the ground be good that you gallop over to attain such results. In such a chase, a heavy pistol or short carbine would be the weapon I should prefer.

For stalking the wapitti, the rifle, and that of heavy calibre, ought to be employed, for so large and powerful an animal requires no ordinary shock to effectually paralyse

the system, so as to prevent the victim wandering off to die a lingering death, and ultimately become food for the carnivoræ. The habit that sportsmen of the United States have of using small-bore arms when in pursuit of large game is much to be deprecated, for the result is, that a great number of the stricken do not fall until they are entirely lost to the hunter.

In Scotland the red deer is vaunted and his praises sung, for he is truly a noble beast, alike trying the hunter's courage and endurance; but if Caledonia's rocky glens and heath-covered mountains boast of possessing such a hero, the far distant plains and central plateaus of America have a right to glory, for they feed and shelter a nobler quarry, if size and power constitute such. The New Land surpasses us in the magnitude of its rivers, mountains, waterfalls, and trees; in her animal creation, also, she is ahead. Facts are facts; and when such is the case, the Britishers should surrender with a good grace; for to contradict, even evince scepticism, would only prove our ignorance.

But a thought arises in my mind, will the western world long possess those representatives of animal life of which she has a just right to be proud? I say no, if the work of destruction continues as now, for every border ruffian, every squatter, is allowed to slaughter at his will, and at all seasons, creatures, the possession of which any land has a right to be proud of.

To the old mountaineers and Indian traders this animal was known by one appellation, and that an erroneous one; and so constant has become its use, that even among the

educated classes this misnomer will be heard; thus the wapitti is invariably denominated an elk, the proper name for a moose; so that the sportsman desirous of devoting his time to the pursuit of Wapitti deer, in seeking information where they are to be found, had better inquire for the animal under his false *sobriquet*. It is strange how many mistakes of this description have crept into the naming of American quadrupeds, fishes, and birds; thus the buffalo is a bison, the pheasant a grouse, the quail or partridge an ortix—dozens of these errors could be enumerated, but the previous examples will suffice.

The noble horns which the stag wapitti bears give him a most imposing appearance, for they are wide-branching, ponderous, and covered with numerous points, and not unfrequently, in the case of very old males, semi-palmated. In height the stag frequently stands fourteen hands and a half, and so powerful are their proportions, that the carcass is as broad and strongly put together as that of a draft-cob. Possibly it may be the knowledge of their strength, but, unlike the majority of their family, they prefer open prairie or sparsely treed river-edges to the densely-covered wet lands. From this circumstance it is easy to find abundant opportunities to course them with greyhounds; but, from the strength of the adversary, your dogs must be of great size and courage; even then, if the game be driven to bay, woe betide the aggressor who should come within reach of his powerful fore-feet, for he can deal a blow, or, rather, make a thrust with his sharp-pointed hoofs, that literally would go through the panel of an ordinary door. Well the wolf knows this; and it is of rare occurrence that the

blood-thirsty robber dares to approach a member of this species, unless he be disabled by wounds or effete from age. I do not think, from the information I have been able to obtain, from searching old authorities who have written on the fauna of North America, that the range of the wapitti ever extended eastward to the Atlantic seaboard, but that their habitat commenced with the prairie country, say Illinois or Indiana. However, these states have long ceased to know them, for, like the other large game, they have rapidly retired before the tide of immigration. The upper waters of the Missouri, the plains around the fork of the North and South Saskatchewan are where at the present day this mammoth stag will be found most abundant. The adventurer who would follow them to these fastnesses must be a brave, determined person, for it is the centre of the hunting grounds of some of the most warlike and treacherous of all the Indian tribes; and of late years so many acts of retaliation—yes, and treachery—have been practised by the white man upon the aborigines, that the aborigines are too apt to regard all pale-faces as their natural-born enemies. Thus, to shoot wapitti will probably entail shooting savages; for if you are not prepared to do so in self-defence it is highly improbable that you will return to the land of your nativity to relate your knowledge of their habits, or the success you have had in their pursuit.

The stag of Canada, for by this name the wapitti is scientifically known, is essentially gregarious, and sometimes herds amount to hundreds; but as a rule they will be found assembled in coteries of a dozen or more, the

females invariably performing the duties of sentinels, and although they are less difficult of approach than either the Virginian or black-tailed deer, still it is necessary for the stalker never to disregard wind and intervening obstacles if he desire to get sufficiently close to the game to deal it a certain shot.

In very stormy weather, particularly if it be accompanied with snow, however, I have known them possess the utmost indifference to man's presence, so that even after being wounded they would scarcely move above a few yards from the place where they had been stricken. In fact, under such circumstances, they appear to get confused and afraid to flee, lest the herd should become separated and broken up. On such occasions as these the Indians make great havoc among them; for it is a peculiarity of this race that they never cease from slaughter while a survivor remains within their reach. One would imagine that experience would teach them otherwise, for there is scarcely a year that these aborigines are not reduced to the most desperate straits from famine; but their improvidence is inherent, and to the end of time they will practise the adage, "Sufficient for the evil is the day thereof."

I cannot leave the Wapitti deer without recording one of the numerous adventures that occurred to me while a resident in the region that they inhabit. As a rule my *contretemps* in their pursuit were not very exciting, for they are a large animal, and as I have previously said, far from as wary as many smaller species of the genus; thus if the first barrel had not effectually done its work of destruction the second seldom failed, for it was a

rare occurrence for me to draw trigger till within fifty yards.

I had met in one of the sequestered valleys of the Rocky Mountains, from whence a tributary of the Yellowstone flowed, a couple of wanderers. Two more objectionable beings it would be difficult to find. The veriest off-scourings of a jail could not excel them in villany and repulsiveness of appearance. Still they were white men, and as such were welcomed as brothers, so we cast lot together, and commenced housekeeping in common. The first night after our meeting a slight amount of disagreeableness occurred, through the elder of my new associates being discovered ransacking my pack, as he said, for tobacco. Now tobacco was scarce in these regions, and although I would willingly have shared with a friend, still I objected to be deprived of what was as important to me as my molars, by an individual I knew nothing about, and still more already had acquired an intuitive dislike to. Happily next day we were joined by a new comer, or I believe a row would have taken place, for I could see that an *entente cordiale* existed between the duo, far from amicable to my interests. However, the stranger's advent acted as a sedative, and the most acute could not have imagined that ought but the most perfect comradeship existed amongst us. Some time after the sun went down, a game of euchre was proposed. Never having cared particularly about cards I said nothing, so the movement was carried without opposition. The stranger was assigned to me as a partner, and the stakes to be played for were tobacco, lead or powder; in fact anything we possessed.

My antagonists were both miners from the north of England, but a long time residents in the new land, my partner a regular down-east Yankee. For some time all went on straight and fair, but it was not destined that such should continue. We had been euchred three times in succession, when both my partner and self detected our opponents passing cards to each other beneath the blanket that covered our knees. Hard language immediately ensued, knives and pistols were drawn, but all thought better of it, and peace between the belligerents was proclaimed for the night.

On the morrow, however, we, partner and self, left the old camp, and started with the intention of founding a settlement of our own.

Half-an-hour before dark we reached one of the prettiest camping-grounds that the eye of wearied hunter ever rested on, and as the night was fine, we satisfied ourself with a fire, without taking the trouble to erect a wigwam of boughs. Thus far I had not studied my new friend; from his manner on the previous evening he undoubtedly was pluck to the backbone; not insufficiently educated, but crude—deucedly crude. I say this from a habit he had, namely, of expectorating on whatever offered a fair surface for a shot, the piece of birch-bark that had been pinned up at the corner to make a wash-dish, in fact, anything smooth he could not resist squirting at. The first time he indulged in this weakness was to deluge the upper of my cowskin boot. On my angrily remonstrating, he protested that he meant no insult, but simply wished to see what kind of map he made. “Well, what do you

make out of it?" said I, half indignant, still partially appeased.

"Why," returned he, "a map of Asia, and these splashes are the Malay Archipelago; don't you see, it is as plain as a pike-staff, there is Sumatra, Java, Borneo, and the Celebes; that is the Straits of Malacca and those Sunda. Well, I have often thought of going to them parts, for the oftener I spit the more frequently I make the self-same show, clearly telling that there is a opening in that county for a man of intellect and energy. You are not listening, but look here, Britisher, just look how quick the Hindostan peninsula dried up, showing nairey a doubt, that there ain't a show for a Yankee nohow in that benighted land."

From my own experience I knew there was a deal of truth in what the Massachusetts schoolmaster said, and I wished old England would only see the necessity of holding in her own hands these self-same Straits of Malacca and Sunda with the same jealous care as she does our Indian empire, as through them all our most valuable commerce must pass to the populous north-eastern shores of the Pacific.

Pleasant company, yet a great character was this Yankee; here he was evidently on a hunting-tour, yet he could not shoot, and when in search of game, in spite of remonstrance, would frequently produce his tuning-fork, and strike up some doleful psalm through his nose, instead of from his mouth, to let the hills of this heathen land resound, as he said, to the songs of the Lord.

Mr. Schoolmaster—for I found out he was a dominie;



any fool with a grain of sense, except myself, might have known with half an eye that he was something out of the ordinary line—never killed anything, so the duty of supporting two mouths instead of one, devolved upon me ; so from soon after sunrise to sundown I was invariably from camp, leaving my new associate to the bent of his fancies, provided he looked after the horses, and kept sufficient firewood for the coming night's consumption. The day had been dark and gloomy ; the season, Indian summer ; the hour, as far as I judged, three in the afternoon, when to my surprise, I heard the report of a gun in the direction of camp. As the schoolmaster, from want of success, had almost given up the use of his gun, the report struck me as ominous of evil, so I hurried rapidly forward to discover what could have induced him to shoot, nor was I long kept in suspense, for in an opening, a few yards in front, I saw a fine stag Wapitti engaged in a determined battle with my comrade. The deer was on three legs, one of the fore ones being smashed below the knee, while my companion with his gun clubbed carefully watched his assailant. Fortunately for the schoolmaster, the stag's agility was seriously impeded by the shattered limb, or the contest would have been ere this finished ; as it was, he had to display his activity, and rivalled in it any French dancing-master I had ever met. But for the rapid evolutions of assailed and assailant, I could have easily killed the deer, but twice as I was about to press the trigger, the wrong object was in the line of fire. The position of this eccentric man was not without danger, yet when I approached the combatants to give him assistance,

I was almost rendered incapable of the task by the risibility of the whole affair, for even in his most adroit movements, even when the foe's antlers were within a foot of his body, he kept chaunting through his nasal organ something or other about letting the hills resound, only stopping in his vocal exhibition when he struck the assailant a blow with the butt of his musket, when the exclamation, "One for his knob," would come from his lips with much emphasis.

At length my approach was perceived, when he retreated towards me, expressing his conviction that he had never doubted that the Lord would send him succour. After the gallant stag had subsided to a neat shoulder-shot, I was graciously awarded a solution of the situation in which I discovered him.

"I was singing 'the Old Hundred,' and I was in prime voice, and didn't the echoes take it up rejoicingly, for you see it is the first time that this benighted heathen land has heard the voice of a Christian, when that beast, the emissary of the evil one doubtless, without a bit of provocation came ramping at me. There was no mistake in his intentions, for his eyes were bleared, and I could see he was panting for my blood. So I thinks of my weapon, but in my hurry to let it off, I forgot to fetch it to my cheek, so you see it was a merciful interposition of Providence that caused the charge to go straight"; and, looking at the carcase he spoke a soliloquy about the children of darkness ever succumbing to the children of light.

If he had got the weapon to his cheek, our worthy friend would doubtless have missed the stag, which from

its appearance was rutting, and like all the deer family when in that state exceedingly dangerous.

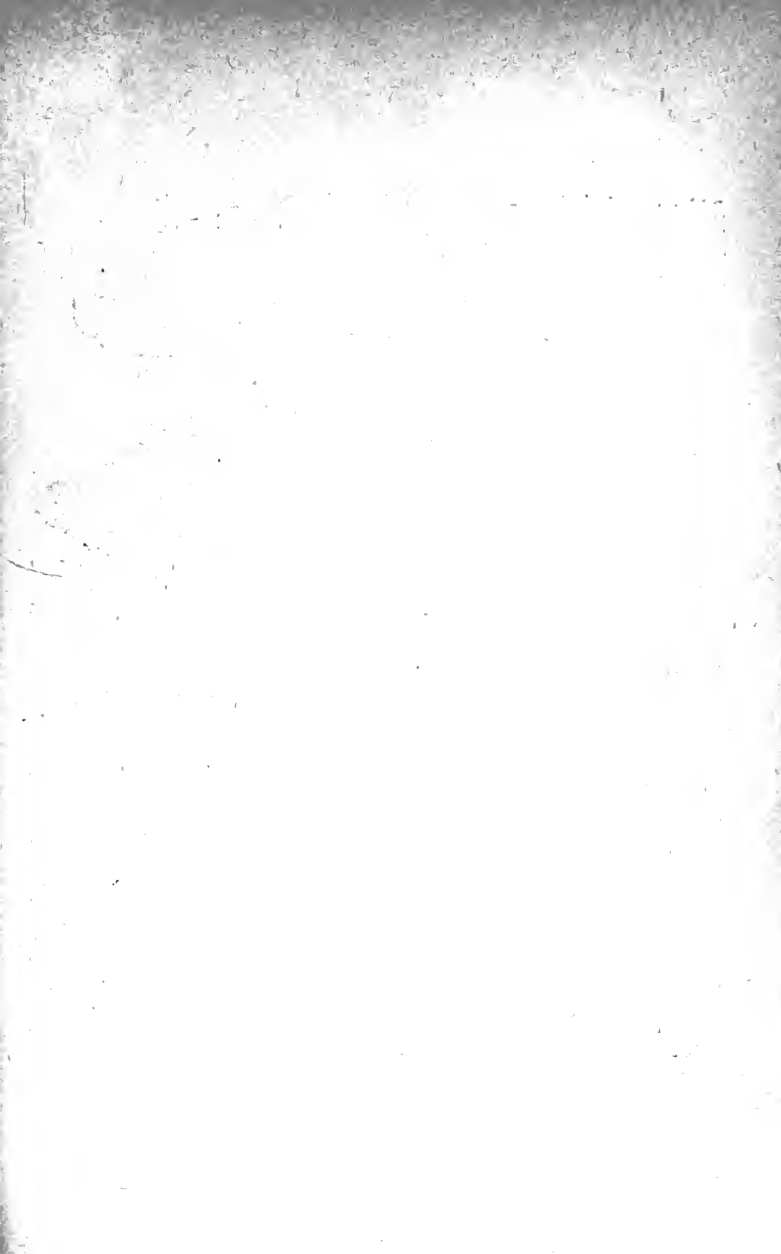
A month's residence with the New England schoolmaster gave a considerable insight into his character; he was always trying to be good, very good, unless when temptation came in his way, and one of these, which he could not resist, was to cheat at cards. At it I again and again detected him, lectured him in consequence, asserting I would not play further with him if it re-occurred, and in the very next deal he would be guilty of the same mal-practices; so at length we both agreed, our stakes being nil, to cheat our darndest; and from that time forth to see how right and left bowers, aces, and kings, used to be turned up in that peaceful, sequestered valley, was something awful, and that often to the tune of the Old Hundred.

During the rutting season terrific combats take place between the claimants for the favour of the fair ones; and these battles royal are fought with such *vim* and determination that they not unfrequently result in the death of one or both of the belligerents. Again, the antlers of the contestants occasionally get locked together, so that the owners find it impossible to disengage themselves, when death overtakes them in the appalling form of starvation. I was once shown two grand heads of Wapitti horns at Pembena which had been picked up on a tributary of the Upper Missouri, that had become so interlaced that no effort could disengage them in their entirety.

The fawns are produced late in spring, and at two years of age the young bucks exhibit knobs, which in six years

become full heads ; however, with further years the horns continue to spread and increase in weight, the very old males exhibiting at the top fork a very obvious palmation. Mr. Hays, a New York animal artist of great repute, showed me a pair of Wapitti antlers which he had picked up in a valley of the Rocky Mountains ; they were larger than any I had previously seen, although I have killed a very great number of specimens. If memory serves me correctly, they possessed fifteen points, and weighed fifty-two pounds. What a splendid stag their owner must have been ! And the trouble and expense of a voyage across the Atlantic, with the additional fatigue of the land journey to the hunting-grounds of the red-men, would not be thrown away if the sportsman was certain to be rewarded by the capture of such a quarry.

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VIRGINIAN DEER.

## CHAPTER VII.

## VIRGINIAN DEER.

THIS beautiful animal, in size, shape, and colouring so nearly resembles the Fallow deer of English demesnes, that the one might be taken for the other, if it were not for the characteristic formation of the horns in each, the former having the tines pointed forwards almost in a perpendicular line above the eye, while the antlers of the latter are palmated.

Its range is most extensive, being from Canada west to the Gulf of Mexico, and from the Atlantic sea-board to New Mexico, north of which a different variety takes its place, viz. the black-tailed deer. Although the Virginian deer of late years has greatly decreased in numbers, still they are to be found in tolerable abundance in portions of the country within easy access of several of the largest cities: for instance, in the John Brown's tract in Eastern New York State; in the country north and west of Ottawa in Upper Canada, and in the Allegany Mountains; but, as a rule, in such situations, they are very wild and difficult of access, as they are incessantly harassed by every

visitor or resident who owns or can borrow a gun. However, good sport with them can be obtained in many of the Southern and Western States, more especially in Texas, and in the country traversed by the upper waters of the Brazos, Red and Canadian rivers. If driven into the open country they are easily overtaken and pulled down by a strong greyhound. Shot or ball are indifferently used in their pursuit, choice in your projectiles being guided by whether the nature of the country is open or wooded.

The following experiences in its pursuit will give an idea of its habits, and the localities where the sportsman may find them. Near Vincennes, Indiana, I once knew a man who was pretty nearly master of the art of deer-stalking, and he could as well discriminate a good day for this purpose from an indifferent one as he could a thoroughbred from a mustang. "No use going out to-day, Cap.," he would say, in answer to an inquiry; "the woodpeckers have got their heads up, and the deer are lying: best stop at home"; and best it always was.

It was in the month of December or January, I cannot precisely state which, but on rising from my bed, to my surprise I found the ground covered with a few inches of snow, just sufficient, and none to spare, to track a deer with a degree of certainty. Now, I was hungry for venison, and such a chance was not to be let slip. From a very bad habit which is unaccountable among many when they go from home, I had a morning cocktail brewed, and with a glass in each hand sought the dormitory of my friend, and over this beverage we discussed the prospects and our plan of campaign.



The horses were ordered to be in readiness after breakfast; buck-shot and bullets were hunted out, shooting-boots greased, and 'baccy and pocket pistols loaded to the neck and stuffed in our saddle-bags. A hard day we knew to be before us, so ample justice was done to our meal; for, sportsmen, rely upon what I say, nothing so materially assists you to withstand fatigue and cold as an ample breakfast.

A ride of about five miles took us to our ground, but as our horses were fresh, and we impatient to be at work, the distance was soon traversed, and we dismounted in a grove of saplings, well suited to hitch our nags to and shelter them from the wintry blast.

While we are performing the necessary operation of loading, a description of our armament will not be inappropriate. Will (as so I'll call him) had an antiquated uncouth rifle, with the old-fashioned, double trigger, the second to set the hair-spring,—an invention I had seldom previously seen and never used, which, although possessed of no finish, could shoot "plumb centre"; while I myself had my trusty double-barrel ten-bore, which from long experience and association, I was aware had only to be held straight to do correct work.

A large swamp, about half a mile off, was a favourite resort for deer, and to it we directed our steps: but before we had gone half the distance, we came across numerous tracks, so fresh that we kept a sharp look-out in all directions, hoping every moment to be gratified with the sight of some antlered monarch. Failing in this, we changed our tactics, friend Will posting me on the margin of a

branch of the swamp, with my back against the butt of a *trée*, with instructions to remain still and keep a sharp look-out, while he would take a *détour*, and possibly drive some stragglers across the run which my position commanded. Slowly, after Will started, the time passed; the forest appeared perfectly deserted; not a squirrel or bird showed itself to break the monotony, except an angry, squabbling family of woodpeckers, who appeared to have some serious disagreement in reference to the possession of a hole in the trunk of a dead giant tree. Wet feet are never conducive to comfort, and much less so when you are prevented from taking exercise; besides, it was bitterly cold. First I stood on one leg, then on the other, after the manner of geese, which birds I began to consider I much resembled, till at last the inaction became so unendurable that I was very nearly taking up my gun and starting in pursuit of my supposed recreant friend.

As I was about to put my resolution in practice, I thought I heard a voice, and on looking in the direction from whence it proceeded, I was surprised to see a couple of hunters with a cur dog passing my retreat, about a hundred yards off. He who has shot much in the timber, well knows that if he remains quiet the possibility is great that those moving about may make the game start towards his retreat. And well it was I did so; for ere five minutes had passed a grand old turkey, head down, and going like a race-horse, ran past; but turkey was not deer, so I let him go, preferring to be without turkey to braving the wrath of Will for firing at illegitimate game. How often patience and forbearance receive their reward! and so it

was in this instance, for scarcely had the gobbler gone when a fine large buck hove in sight. From his manner he was evidently alarmed, for every now and then he stopped, snorted, and continued his route. Unfortunately, he was heading so as to pass further off than would afford a good shot, and the ground was too clear to permit me, with any prospect of success, to better my position; so I had almost made up my mind not to shoot. However, I changed my resolution, for so soon as he came abreast of me, he halted, and looked around. The temptation I could no longer withstand; so, pitching my gun with due elevation, I let drive the first barrel with no apparent result, for the deer only threw up his head and trotted off. The second charge I quickly determined to put in, and holding well in front and high, had the satisfaction of seeing his lordship make a tremendous bound and drop his tail, a certain indication that some of the shot had taken effect, but the distance was so great that successful results could scarcely be expected.

Nothing is so difficult as to obtain a gun that throws buck-shot well. I am inclined to believe that gun-makers have not paid the same amount of attention to discovering the proper internal construction of barrels, so as to obtain the greatest range and closeness in throwing this description of projectile. Generally, at the distance of one hundred yards, the side of a barn would be none too large a target to be certain of hitting; and again, occasionally a barrel will make an unusually good pattern at one discharge, while at the next it will be quite the reverse, so that hitting a deer at a hundred yards I consider more

the result of luck than good guiding, if charged with buck-shot.

After waiting for nearly a quarter of an hour I was joined by my friend, who at once inquired what I had shot at; but when I told him the distance, he only laughed one of those peculiar, little dry laughs which, as plainly as words, said, "You're a fool if you expect to eat any of that carcass." Nevertheless, we together inspected the track, and I had not even the gratification to find blood. Well, Will was for giving it up, but I wished to follow it out; so after using all his powers of persuasion and argument in favour of his views, he succumbed, and consented for once to be dictated to.

For over a mile we followed our game. The line was straight and the track distinct: moreover, the gait was steady, if one could judge from the regularity of the impressions; and there was nought to indicate that we might not with as great propriety follow any animal in these bottom lands at which a shot had never been fired. Will was going ahead, leading, and your humble servant bringing up the rear, when the former suddenly halted and turned round. From the expression of his face I knew something was up, but was scarcely prepared for the information he gave. "Look here," said he: "you have hit that deer, Cap., tolerably badly, and I suspect we shall get him yet; his fore-leg is disabled, and he can't travel far without our overhauling him." On inquiring how he gained his information, he pointed to the tracks; and sure enough the off fore-foot, instead of making a clean impression, cut the snow for nearly a foot whenever raised off the

ground. "You see," said he, chuckling, "he don't use both alike, for it's all he can do to get this one up." There was no gainsaying such conclusive evidence, and with renewed ardour we sharpened the pace of pursuit, alternately changing places, one being constantly on the look-out while the other tracked. Once or twice we got sight of the deer, but too far off, or for too limited a period, to shoot; but the view was always cheering. Forward we pressed, exultingly hoping that each minute would finish the hunt; but the deer thought otherwise, for he was of a most unaccommodating disposition. Soon it became apparent that the confounded brute was travelling the same circle, and that, unless we altered our plans, we might be kept going till dark; and as we were not disposed to work harder than necessary, it was agreed that I should drop behind and take up my stand in the most eligible place, while Will continued the pursuit with the hope of driving our wily foe past my ambush. Though the plan was well devised, it failed in execution; for after an hour's tedious delay my companion rejoined me, disgusted and dispirited, heaping anathemas upon the foe, pronouncing him to be one of the very foxiest brutes he had ever come across. After all our trouble, it would never do thus to be defeated; so I proposed doing the tracking while he took a stand, at the same time changing guns at his request.

Full of hope, and animated with the desire of distinguishing myself, I pushed forward with renewed energy. At first the trail was tolerably clear, but, after some time, it led and twisted in every direction through innumerable hog-paths. Never was I so sorely puzzled to keep correct,

but with perseverance and care I managed to carry the track almost across to clear ground, where I suddenly lost all signs, and was completely brought to a stand-still. I was aware that all dodges were practised, more particularly when deer feel the effects of increasing weakness and incapacity for further exertion; so, hoping that fortune would favour me, I determined, like a skilful foxhunter, to make a cast completely round the disturbed ground. After the loss of twenty minutes I fortunately again struck the trail, which, to my surprise, led in a reverse direction; clearly indicating that the deer had retraced his steps probably in the same track, and thus, by this cunning device, almost succeeded in eluding his pursuer. The trail of the animal now became more irregular, and the tell-tale track of the wounded limb greatly assisted me in distinguishing his footsteps from those of his fellows, which on every opportunity he selected; but all having failed to throw me off so far, the deer adopted a new ruse, which under other circumstances would have been eminently agreeable to the sportsman, but in this instance made me so savage that I would have indulged in the amiable weakness of breaking the gun-stock over the nearest tree, if it had not been that my friend might not see the joke of his rifle being thus treated.

So intent was I watching the tracks that I did not observe the exhausted deer had halted. Becoming alarmed by my near approach, and deeming it advisable to make a fresh effort to place distance between us, he again put forth renewed energy. The brush, unfortunately, was so remarkably dense, that although I got several glimpses of

his tawny hide, still never for sufficient length of time to get a fair chance to shoot, and I was unwillingly compelled to keep tracking. About fifty yards from where I stood, a small river, not over ninety feet across, named the Ambaras, wound its sluggish, peaceful way towards its parent stream, the Wabash, and direct for the nearest part of this river the deer had gone. Still I could not bring myself to believe that a buck at this season, with plenty of ice in the water, would hazard an aquatic performance; but my doubts were soon solved, for on reaching the margin, with surprise I saw the deer upon the ledge of ice attached to the bank struggling violently to keep his footing, the disabled leg, which appeared to hang powerless, evidently now causing serious inconvenience to his progress over the slippery surface. Such an opportunity to finish my work was not to be neglected, so cocking the rifle I pitched it forward and drew a bead, but still no report followed. All my power and exertion could not pull the trigger. Again and again I looked at the lock, and essayed another effort, but with the same result. At length, in despair, I desisted, and the deer, having altered his mind, came ashore and disappeared through the tangled brake. Of course, to examine the gun and inform myself what was wrong was my first thought. My surprise may be well imagined when, with all my endeavours, I could not get the hammer down; there it would stand, not a particle of compromise was in the confounded thing. All my skill in mechanism was called into play, all my past experience put to use, and not until my patience was nearly exhausted did I discover the use of the second

trigger. Discouraged I was, but whether most at my own stupidity or want of luck I know not. Still hoping for another chance, I followed on in no very amiable frame of mind.

Time fled and the long shadows of the trees told of the rapid approach of night, still not a sight did I further get of the buck; and to add to my troubles, the tracks a second time led through ground that hogs had lately fed over. Never was I so sorely puzzled. Back and forwards I searched, my eyes nearly strained to bursting, till at length I was compelled to give up the chase. On looking round to find out as nearly as possible my situation, the better and more directly to return to my horse, I espied a splendid wild turkey busy feeding not over thirty yards off, and still unaware of my presence. Sheltering myself behind a fallen log, I took sight along my barrel, determining inwardly to have some reward for my labour; but, although this time I worked the trigger correctly, nothing but the explosion of the cap took place; in fact, the rifle had missed fire. The turkey, frightened at the noise, lowered his head, ran about twenty yards, then stopped, and looked around, still ignorant of the cause of his alarm. Substituting a new cap and again taking sight, was but the work of a few moments, but still the gun refused to explode. I now sprung my ramrod and placed on the nipple another cap, but the result was as before, and the turkey having become conscious that he was in a dangerous neighbourhood, sought safety in flight. How often a day's shooting is one tissue of blunders from morning till night! and so it was in this case. First, the game



had passed too far from my stand; secondly, changing guns had lost me the deer; and thirdly, the carelessness of my friend in not sheltering his gun from the damp was the reason of my not having turkey for a future day's dinner.

Tired, hungry, and bad tempered, I struck off direct for my horse, expecting to have little more than a mile to walk; but with surprise, after having travelled that distance, I found I was turned round and lost. Already it was sunset, half an hour more would make it dark, and the bottom land which I was now wandering through, was as intricate, densely covered a swamp as ever was inhabited by wild cat. The season of the year, moreover, was not exactly the one to select for making your couch on the surface of mother earth, and visions of a good dinner, comfortable fire, and dry clothes floated before me. Hark! what is that—a dog barking? And so it was. Forward I pushed to the sound, and in doing so came across a road, which, on inspection, I recognised as one we had traversed in the morning. The rest of the programme for that day was plain sailing. I found my pony where he was left, my friend's horse being gone; so, concluding Will had made tracks for home, I mounted my fiery little nag, and with a sufficiently tight rein to guard against accidents, rattled home, almost at a racing pace. It was nearly two hours afterwards that Will turned up wet and exhausted—down upon his luck and deer in particular—vowing that he would be up with the sun in the morning, and not return till he could boast of not having been beaten by a broken-legged deer, when there was enough

snow to track. My defeat had similarly operated on myself, so that we mutually agreed to devote the morrow, blow or snow, to re-establish our tarnished honour. The morning was well suited for our task, still and clear, with just sufficient frost in the atmosphere to give zest to travelling. The track was easily found, my back track being taken as the guide.

In ten minutes we again had our game afoot, but without getting a shot, the animal having doubled round before lying down, and, consequently, rising behind us. The bed where he had passed the night was soiled with blood, and other indications were such as to justify us in hoping early success. Although perseverance is generally rewarded, it was not so on this occasion. Hour after hour slipped by, the game appeared to moderate its pace in accordance with ours, just keeping sufficiently ahead to be out of range. The badness of the walking (for a thaw had commenced), the continued disappointment, and the difficulty of following through the bush, commenced to operate upon our spirits, and, but that we struck a more open range of country where the travelling was better, doubtless we would have given up. However, being in the vicinity of our ponies, we determined to continue the pursuit on horseback, hoping to get a view, in crossing some opening, where we could give the buck a run of a few minutes, with the expectation that a sharper gait might break him down; but luck continued adverse. Time was rapidly gliding by, a few hours more would bring on night, and as far as we could see, the prospect of a termination was as distant as ever. Want of success or fatigue made us

careless, and as we slowly wended our unthankful way—first one in front, then the other, talking aloud, deploring our misfortune, and paying but little attention to the surroundings, unsportsmanlike on such an occasion—my pony (for I was in front) suddenly shied, turning almost completely round, and at the same time brought me excessively near getting a spill. And what do you imagine was the cause of this want of propriety in so experienced a steed? Simply this: the deer had lain down, and we had almost ridden over him. To wheel round and try to bring my gun to bear was the work of a few seconds, but all my exertions and rapidity of motion were thrown away. The pony would not stand still; he had evidently been frightened, or perhaps was still in ignorance of what caused the alarm. Moreover, my manœuvring so directly intervened between my friend and the game that, for fear of peppering me, he dared not fire. To turn round and look at one another, first sulkily, but afterwards to burst into a roar of laughter at the absurdity of the whole thing, was the result, each agreeing that the buck had well earned his safety, and that two such awkward devils had no right to a feast of venison resulting from that hunt, and, therefore, we had better acknowledge that we were beaten handsomely, and that by a buck on three legs.

On the following occasion the results were different. In the autumn of 186—, when travelling across the Grand Prairie, about 150 miles north of where the last episode occurred, I was caught in the first snowstorm of the season. The vicinity was but sparsely settled, and from

the thickness of the drift our charioteer lost his way, and after getting mired times without number, and enduring one of the most disagreeable nights out of doors it is possible to imagine, we reached the village of Kent. Under ordinary circumstances it would have presented no great inducements, but the large wood fire that blazed in the bar-room of the diminutive tavern, after our protracted night of hardship, possessed such attractions, that I determined to lay over for a couple of days. The neighbourhood was well stocked with game I learned the following evening, when I presented myself among the *habitués*, who commonly made this public-house their place of rendezvous after the toils of the day. No small portion of the conversation was in reference to a buck, who for years had constantly been seen, yet none of the heretofore successful hunters had been able to circumvent him. It was evident that this animal was of no ordinary size, as he was dubbed by all with the *sobriquet* of the big buck, and one regular old leather-stocking, whose opinion was always listened to with the reverence due to an authority, ventured to assert that he believed the bullet would never be moulded that would tumble him (the buck) in his tracks. This extraordinary deer had almost escaped my memory, and I was resting over my next morning's pipe, and beginning to fear that my visit was longer than necessary, for there was absolutely nothing to do but to eat and sleep, unless the prices of pork, corn, or wheat had possessed interest, when a man from the timber-land arrived with a load of wood, and held the following conversation with the mixer of mint juleps, cocktails, &c.

“ Abe, have you e'er a shooting-iron that you can loan this coon ? ”

Abe having replied in the negative, and inquired the reason, was told that the most alfiatest big buck had crossed the road about a mile off, and gone into the Squire's corn. Quietly going to my bed-room, I unpacked my heaviest gun, a ten-bore, in which I have particular faith, and having noted the route that the teamster had come by, I followed the back track of his sled, and true enough found the prints of a very heavy buck. The day was still young, myself in good walking trim, and with an internal determination not to be beaten, except night overtook me, and very probably with the hope to show the neighbours that a Britisher was good for some purposes, I followed the track with unusually willing steps and light heart. To get into the corn-fields the buck had jumped the snake fence and afterwards doubled back, and as the wind did not suit for me to enter at the same place, I made a considerable *détour*. In my right barrel I had sixteen buck shot, about the size that would run one hundred to the pound, and a bullet in the left. As the corn had not yet been gathered, and the undergrowth of cuckle burs and other weeds was tolerably dense, I had little doubt but that I should get sufficiently close to make use of the former. An old stager like my quarry, I knew from experience would be desperately sharp, so with the utmost caution I advanced up wind, eyes and ears strained to the utmost tension. I had only got about a fourth of the field traversed, when I heard some voices right to windward encouraging a dog to hold a pig. The noise of the men,

dog, and porker, I concluded would start the game off in the reverse direction, so hurriedly retracing my steps, I regained the fence, got over it, and took my stand at an angle that stretched close to a slough which was densely covered with a growth of various aquatic weeds and bushes. In about five minutes after gaining my position, I was greeted by a sight of the beauty, who hopped the fence where there was a broken rail, and gaining the opening, for a moment halted, then tossing up his head, offered me a fair cross shot nearly eighty yards distant. Pitching my gun well in front, I pulled the trigger, and well I knew not fruitlessly, for he gave a short protracted jump, dropped his white tail close into his hams, and with an increased pace disappeared in the swamp.

Unless the wound was mortal, or so severe as to seriously incommode him, I was certain he would not be satisfied to remain in such close propinquity to danger, so after reloading I made a *détour* to find where he had left this cover to seek one more retired. My conjecture was correct, for after travelling nearly half-a-mile, I found the familiar tell-tale track. The snow was in pretty good order, both for tracking and walking, and I did not let the grass grow under my feet. As yet I had seen no signs of blood, which the more thoroughly impressed me that my lead had made more than a skin wound. In about an hour's walking, I found myself on the edge of another slough, which I was hesitating whether to enter or go round, when I espied my friend, some way beyond range, going over a neighbouring swell of the prairie. Of course I cut off the angle and cast forward to where the view was obtained, and as I rose the

swell, in the distance I saw my friend at a stand-still, evidently anxiously scrutinising my direction. My cap was of a very light colour, so I concluded he did not see me, and my supposition was again correct, for after a few minutes he relaxed his pace, and turning at right angles, walked into a small expanse of dense rushes, interspersed with an occasional stunted willow. In deer-shooting, if you suppose an animal severely wounded, never hurry him; if he once lie down, and you give him time to stiffen, you will not have half the trouble in his ultimate capture that you would have by constantly keeping him on the move. So I practised in this instance; carefully for ten or fifteen minutes I watched that he did not leave the cover; then having concluded that he had laid down, I quietly lit my pipe and dawdled away an hour more. Deeming that I had granted sufficient law, I renewed operations and pushed forward; the track was very irregular in length of pace from where he had reduced his gait to a walk, and several times, from want of lifting his feet high enough, he had ploughed the surface of the snow with his toes. An old deer-stalker will know these symptoms, a young one may without harm remember them. Having cautiously followed the trail three parts of the way across the cover, and almost commenced to think I would have done better by waiting half-an-hour longer, the buck jumped up within twenty yards, heading straight from me, when I gave him the contents a second time of the right-hand barrel in the back of his head.

The distance was too great to remove him home that day, so cutting a branch off a willow, I affixed my hand-

kerchief to it, and left this banner waving to denote possession, also to furnish a hint to the prairie wolves that they had better steer clear. That night at the tavern bar in the most ostentatious manner, in presence of the assembled crowd, I ordered a team to be got ready in the morning to bring in the big buck; old leather-stocking, *sotto voce*, remarking that I had not been reared on the right soil to be able to come that game. However, next morning, when I arrived with my trophy, the crowd congratulated me, while leather-stocking remarked that he knew not what the world was coming to, by G—d, when a Britisher, with a bird gun, could kill the biggest buck in Illinois. In conclusion I would say that in skinning we found that at the first shot one grain had gone through the lungs, while two more had lodged further back. The gross weight of this deer was one hundred and eighty-four pounds.

Shooting deer driven to water by hounds is a very common method adopted in autumn for their destruction.

While visiting in Canada West, I chanced to make the acquaintance of a young Highlander ardently devoted to the chase, and who, when he found that I was also a would-be disciple of the chaste Diana, at once proposed, as the season was suitable and business affairs did not interfere, that we should start for the gigantic and then unbroken woods which covered the township of Oro, lying on the edge of that placid sheet of water, so well known for its lovely woodland scenery, Lake Simcoe. After a long tedious walk over the most villanous roads that ever unfortunate was condemned to traverse, we arrived late at night opposite Snake Island, then inhabited by a remnant of the once



numerous and powerful Chippewa Indians. The distance across to this island retreat was too far for our lungs to inform its denizens that two benighted travellers were desirous of joining them, and, as there was no boat, a camp fire and blanket were required to do duty for roof and feather bed. But, alas! our limbs and bones were demoralised from our former life, and absolutely refused to be satisfied, so that both tossed, fumed, and fretted till the sun thought proper to make his re-appearance. Nor was this all; a scoundrelly wolf, whose midnight propensities for serenading had taken hold of his thoughts, kept up a most objectionable chant, however pleasing it might have been to his lady-love, till we wished the brute in Jericho, or any other remote district; not only that, but I will not say that fear had not a little to do with my feelings, for I can distinctly remember, as I listened, my blood became exceedingly cold and stagnant, my hands clammy, and my throat parched. Moreover, all the stories I had ever read of the sanguinary propensities of these scourges of the distant settlements, from "Little Red Riding Hood" to "Robinson Crusoe," recurred vividly to my recollection.

However, quiet came with the sun, and, after a few ineffectual efforts, we succeeded in attracting the attention of a worthy redskin, who, for a trifling remuneration, landed us in the precincts of his island domicile. Our business was soon made known, and a hunting party was organised in an inexpressibly short time. The inner man was still to be satisfied, and, on making our wants known, we were borne off willing captives to the grandest and most capacious log-cabin, no less a worthy than a chief

assuming the responsibility of providing us with breakfast. I cannot help here mentioning a little episode which, although it had not the appetising effect of Worcester sauce, chutney, a squeeze of lemon, or other familiar auxiliaries, still had its influence on our then pleading stomachs. Sun-fish was destined for the standing dish, and as the good old squaw had a very small frying-pan and a large stock of the above finny treasures to operate upon, it behoved her to make several cookings; and, to prevent the results of her first efforts getting cold while the second lot were undergoing culinary operations, the aged matron, with a talent that denoted great skill in adapting herself immediately to circumstances, snatched a very battered and greasy straw-hat off the head of one of the filthiest youngsters, and made it do duty for dish-cover. Of course, any squeamishness would have been a base return for the anxiety displayed that we should not eat our morning repast cold. An hour afterwards we were all *en route*, three buoyant, graceful birch-barks transferring the party, which was now augmented to ten, and three half-fed hounds, to the opposite beach.

Well, all that forenoon to mid-day we tramped, tramped, tramped; the only alteration in the performance being an occasional halt, when an acute observation of some sign would cause comments from all parties, excepting we two pale-faces. First, it would be a broken twig; next, an indentation of the ground; and thirdly, what would not have appeared to the uninitiated a rarity in sheep pastures. Although this was all Greek to us, we determined to look knowing, say nothing, and possibly, like many another

under similar circumstances, get credit for being perfect Nimrods. A halt was at length called, and old Chief John, no small bug, spoke like an oracle. The deer had gone to the big swamp, and if we wanted buck we must go there. Off again we started, I having come to the determination that the whole thing was a humbug, and that I would slip off the first available opportunity. The desired chance soon offered, and after half an hour's walking I struck the margin of the lake where the canoes had been left. Another I found before me at this rendezvous, which helped much to console me for not being the only deserter.



PASSENGER PIGEONS.

We had not long been dawdling and attempting to kill time, when some pigeons came down to drink ; so drawing my buck-shot and replacing it with No. 6, I came to the conclusion, as I could not have venison, I would try and procure some of them. Nor was I unsuccessful, for soon half a dozen long tails (the wild pigeons of America have long tails) swelled the voluminous proportions of my pockets. There is an end to all things, and even pigeons got wary of our proximity, and a second period of inaction followed. However, the scenery was pretty, the foliage brilliant, the temperature pleasant, and a hunter might be far less comfortably situated.

Time was passing rapidly, the sun was fast dipping into the horizon, and consequently our indefatigable friends could not much longer be absent. Thus I thought when Master Redskin jumped suddenly out of a canoe in which he had been lolling, clapped his ear to the ground, exciting greatly my curiosity, and remained in that ludicrous and ungraceful position for some minutes. On asking him for an explanation, naught but a grunt could I get for an answer, and a non-describable wave of the hand, as if to invoke silence. After manœuvring thus, my nearly exhausted patience received the explanation that one of the hounds was running a deer, and that they were coming this way. Immediately afterwards I was bundled into a canoe, and although I had never previously handled a paddle, was forced to take one of those implements and attempt a trial ; but no use—the obstinate composition of birch bark would only spin round and make most indisputable signs of objection to its freight, which were

manifested by the gunwale several times taking in water, so that my now irate companion almost got out of his wits with rage. At length I attained a slight dexterity, and succeeded, assisted by the skilful steering of the Chippewa, in propelling our frail boat under a cedar that grew on the termination of a promontory. Whatever might have been my doubts before as to my friend's assertion that game was afoot, they were now dissipated; for, true enough, the deep voice of a hound could be distinctly heard resounding through the forest, and coming towards us; every bound he spoke, till the echoes and his voice were blended in one prolonged, deep, musical, note. My pulsation increased as the music approached, my whole nervous system was in a state of extreme tension; even clasping my gun, setting my teeth, only gave me temporary relief, and never from that day to this has my excitement been so intense. "Look! look!" said the Indian, and, following the direction of his hand, I saw a splendid doe breasting the water and heading for the middle of the lake. Like all green hands, my first prompting was to start in pursuit; but my more wily friend put a veto on that proposition, begging me to restrain my impatience till the quarry got well out from land. Long—very long—appeared the next few moments. But it was evident I was not boss\*—only a deck hand of very ordinary acquirements. Remonstrance was, therefore, out of the question; so, submission, with the best possible grace, was adopted. By this time the doe had got nearly

\* American for "master."

a quarter of a mile out—for few animals swim so fast as deer—when the signal was given to commence the chase. Never did oarsman more energetically pull—never did race-horse more gallantly struggle; every thew, every muscle was brought into play, and what I lacked in skill was made up in *vim*. It, however, took all the dusky gentleman's skill to keep the craft's head straight. For many minutes we did not appear to have gained an inch; the perspiration ran down my face, and even lodged in my eyes; but there was no time for rest, no desire for respite; each succeeding stroke equalled its predecessor in strength. At length, we commenced gaining—a further inducement to renewed exertion—and the paddle was dipped deeper and handled still more swiftly. Inch by inch we crept up, at first slowly, then more rapidly, till but twenty yards severed the victim and the destroyer. I was about to drop my paddle and seize my gun, when Master Redskin informed me, "Not time yet!" On we advanced; ten feet at most intervened. Mr. Chippewa gave the desired permission, and as I pitched my gun to the shoulder he veered the canoe a point or two to the right. A sharp report followed, and the water boiled with the ineffectual efforts of the stricken animal. Quickly the birch bark was shot up, and just as the deer was disappearing it was grabbed by the ear, and after several ineffectual efforts lifted on board. Know you, reader, that a dead deer will sink; and although I remembered it not at the time of drawing the trigger, my double-barrel was loaded with No. 6, which at that short range, and pointed at the back of the head, almost instantaneously destroyed vitality; and,

however easy it may be to lift a heavy body into a boat, it is a different thing to bring a dead deer into a birch canoe.

On our way to shore we picked up the hound, which was taken on board, and enjoyed himself by licking the blood that trickled from the shot-holes. Feeling fatigued from my severe exertions, I halted for a few moments, and commenced handling our trophy, when the confounded dog flew at me, inflicting a most disagreeable impression of his ivories on the palm of my hand—a habit I believe he had with all, excepting his owner; which peculiarity, doubtless, was much approved of by him, but was far from raising this canine in my estimation.

Close to Lake Champlain, in the State of New York, is situated an immense range of wild land, called the Ariondac; here Virginian deer are still numerous. The excellence of the fishing to be obtained there, also the beauty of scenery, make it one of the most delightful retreats for either sportsmen or lovers of nature.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE PRONG-HORNED ANTELOPE.

FROM the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, and from the Gulf of Mexico to about the fiftieth degree of north latitude, this beautiful animal at one time ranged. Now, however, from the same causes as have restricted the habitats of other large American game, the prong-horned antelope will only be found on the great prairies that lay on the eastern margin of the Rocky Mountains, and in the vast plain of Sonora and North-West Mexico. For from their wonderful fleetness, and extreme watchfulness, horses and hounds are useless in their pursuit. Frequently, however, they are brought within range of the sportsman by waving a coloured handkerchief or other unknown object. This must always be done down wind, care at the same time being taken to conceal every part of the person. I can imagine no weapon better suited for killing this game than the new Express rifle. In no description of field-sports that I know of will the skill of the stalker be better tried than in pursuit of this handsome indigenous game; and if your shot should be a running one, and you do your work



in a clean and workmanlike manner, you will deserve all praise, for you have caused to bite the dust the swiftest, in my belief, of all quadrupeds—in fact, their speed is such that the eye can scarcely follow the action of their limbs. Yet their gait is not low and close to the ground, but a succession of rather lofty bounds, and performed with such surprising ease, that it causes the beholder to wonder how the frame of any creature can sustain uninjured such a tremendous strain.

The prong-horned antelope is the only species of the genus, and is about the size of *Cervus Virginianus*, both graceful and elegant in form and action. Well may the Americans be proud of possessing the only representative of the race, for when the antelope is seen on the boundless prairies of the Far West, untrammelled by limit, free to go and return as they choose, the impressions caused will never be effaced, or a better representation of perfect independence and freedom beheld.

In referring to my diary, I find the following narrative of a day's shooting:—

“Cap., are you asleep?” such was the welcome sound that informed me that some one else was awake besides myself. Such a night I do not think I had ever previously passed, and trust shall never have to again. To ask a man nurtured in a Christian land whether he was asleep!—the thing is perfectly preposterous: a gale of wind blowing the entire night, with drops of rain as large and so numerous that a brick wall would scarcely have repelled them, let alone a flimsy break-wind composed of green boughs, yet these western companions of mine slept. Half-a-dozen

times I determined to rout them out, and as often gave up the idea: for one was quarrelsome whenever his rest was disturbed; the other had a disagreeable way of telling the most doleful stories, and keeping the listeners in a constant state of excitement, for in every shadow, every movement of the horses, every unusual sound, he professed to see an indication that a whole tribe of Indians, fully decked with war-paint, and thirsting for scalps, were about to make an onslaught on our defenceless bivouac. Further, I must inform my readers that Cap. is an abbreviation of captain, used over the western portion of the United States, for every man who has borne arms, whether in the militia or regulars; whether he has been a full private or only a camp-follower.

Yes, I was awake, as wide awake as a pool of water under each arm, each knee, and every protuberant portion of the figure, could make me. With an anathema against weather, country, and out-door life, I sprang up, and willingly busied myself in raking together the fragments of what had been a fire; long and tedious were the efforts to coax a blaze, but at length the reward of patience was vouchsafed, and in spite of the almost insurmountable obstacles a sufficient heat was obtained, by which to cook the *débris* of last night's supper, the sole remnants of provisions the larder could boast of.

At the time to which I allude we were on a branch or small fork that flowed from the south into the Pawnee River. I and my companions had come from the westward, and had experienced as hard a time as it is possible to conceive; we had been about two weeks together, and

although I am doubtful of the propriety of picking up strange acquaintances when beyond civilisation, those squeamish ideas never enter the heads of western *habitués* ; a white man is always a friend until he proves himself to be otherwise, and then it is your own look-out that he does not get the upper hand. Wild life makes you wonderfully wide awake, and although an apparent *bonhomie* may lay on the surface, a constant guarded caution should never be neglected. My new pals, however, were really good fellows, a little eccentric, for each was in the habit of picking his teeth with his bowie knife ; but they were honest, plucky, and enduring, ready to face whatever emergency occurred, and pretty certain to get out of it if a bold hand and quick eye could be of avail. Breakfast ! what a misnomer for a few mouthfuls of half-charred, half-cooked, pieces of tough venison ! what a contrast with one of our home hunting-feeds that bear the same *sobriquet* ; still I doubt much whether *patés de fois gras*, game pies, and spiced round of beef, were ever relished with more gusto than was that meal.

After the viands had disappeared, over the consoling, soothing pipe, our course for the day was discussed, and, as the rain had ceased and clouds lifted, giving every prospect of fine weather, it was decided that we should remain another night where we were, and in the meantime each start in different directions to seek for a supply of game, to prevent our going supperless to rest, and resuming our journey on the morrow with empty stomachs.

I had a horse ; from his wonderful formation and intense ugliness I dubbed him "Broomstick ;" he was truly a

doleful beast to look at; no amount of food seemed to do him any good; he always looked in the last stage of consumption, although his capacity of stowage of forage was immense; nor did he ever lose a chance to get a cow kick at the unwary, or make his teeth meet in the flesh of the too confiding. Broomstick, from having lately had an easier time than my other mount, was selected for the day's work, and with expressions of grief that would break the heart of the most obdurate, he submitted to be saddled, I returning every few minutes to take an extra pull upon the girths, for the villain would expand himself on such occasions like a powder pigeon, so that when you imagined you had got safely seated, and ready to start, by a succession of the most mulish and awkward buck-jumps, the saddle would get forward beyond where his withers ought to have been, and nought but wonderful skill in the laws of equitation or fortune would prevent the rider from kissing mother-earth. Now Broomstick could go if you knew how to take it out of him, and that was accomplished by commencing with a high hand from the start, and giving him "the brumagems" every pace or two, and twice as often if you felt his back getting up (which he used to roach after the manner of a half-starved sow), or at any attempt to put his head down.

After a few ineffectual efforts which my steed made showing an inclination to differ from me in opinion, we jogged on comfortably for several miles along the edge of prairie and timber, the usual markings of watercourses. The sun was near mid-day, and still no game was to be seen. In quiet, retired situations like this, such is an

unhealthy sign. For game is not in the habit of leaving a favourite feeding-ground without reason. Discouraged at want of success, I dismounted, fastening up Bucephalus, and took my pipe again into confidence. On an old rotten limb of a partially-decayed button wood a family of red-headed woodpeckers were busily at work, making the wood echo with the violence of their tapping. Watching the sprightly movements of these active little beauties, I became totally absorbed in their energetic pursuits, when a half snort and uneasy movement on the part of my horse caused me to look round; and well I did so, for about forty yards off, leisurely feeding, were about thirty full-grown wild turkeys. My smooth-bore had ball in each barrel, but as I had two or three loads of buck-shot in my pouch, I determined to substitute it. To the shelter of a log like a snake I glided to perform the change of missiles, and was about to draw the last fragment of myself out of sight, when the confounded warning of a rattlesnake sounded so close, that I involuntarily gave a jump to avoid the threatening danger, thus exposing myself to the turkeys, who took wing, without affording me a chance of a shot, so turkeyless I was compelled to remain; but you may bet that snake never scared anyone afterwards. He was one of the largest and most venomous of his family, being quite five feet long, as yellow as gold along the abdomen, and possessed of sixteen rattles. He belonged to the variety which generally goes by the name of timber-snake, much larger and totally different in colour from the prairie rattlesnake or massasauga, which is always black, and never exceeds eighteen or twenty inches in length.

Having found no game in the timber, I struck out for the open land, and riding several miles I saw two small droves of antelopes. This beautiful animal is very difficult to stalk; but as there appeared to be no other means of getting on intimate terms with them, I hobbled my horse, and taking advantage of all intervening obstacles, managed unseen to get within five hundred yards. Further approach now looked impossible, and I had almost relinquished the idea, when it struck me that by making a slight detour to leeward, I could find shelter from a dip that appeared to lead in the direction of the game. On hands and knees, slowly I crossed the open, my stomach almost on the ground. The antelopes still continued feeding; so far they had not been alarmed. Twenty yards more would again place me under cover. He who wishes successfully to stalk game must never deem precaution thrown away. On the care with which you pass over an open space depends often the success of your labour. With a feeling of gratification I regained shelter, and such shelter as I was able to take the twists and knots out of my legs and arms, with the consciousness that I could do so without imperilling success. A few moments' inspection of the game sufficed. With renewed care, slowly but steadily, I made for the shelter of an unusually high prairie-dog's earth. From the back of it I would be within eighty or a hundred yards of my prey. The antelopes, perfectly ignorant of my presence, were quietly feeding, while occasionally one or two of the youngsters, like kids, would shake their heads at each other, rear up or stamp with their feet, and make other grotesque

threatenings of attack. The prospect of venison was now in the ascendant. I commenced to believe my eggs near enough hatched to count them chickens, when a confounded prairie-dog, who doubtless had been watching all my strategy, uttered his shrill, quick whistle, and took a header into his burrow. This was enough; the antelopes simultaneously closed into a bunch, and with every sense strained looked eagerly around for the cause of alarm. A closer stalk was impossible, the movement of a mouse could not escape their notice; so springing on one knee, I pulled both triggers almost simultaneously, taking sight for the nearest of the ruck. As the smoke lifted, with satisfaction I beheld two victims, one apparently dead, the other making violent efforts to get upon his pins, while the remainder of the drove were scampering across the prairie at such a pace as these animals only are capable of going. As quickly as possible I reloaded my gun, and on advancing to bleed my victims, the wounded buck got his legs under him, and had I not given him the right barrel, a nice clean shot at fifty yards tumbling him all of a heap, I should have been left with only a single prize.

After bleeding my trophies, I went after Broomstick, who, like all perverse beasts, had grazed off at as rapid a pace as possible, in exactly the reverse direction to that wanted. Oh, Broomstick, you provoking brute! was ever an unfortunate sportsman so tortured by having to endure the vagaries of so ugly and obstinate a steed! Venting my indignation on his sparsely-covered ribs, and giving him every second stride a reminder that his owner was on his

back, I hurried back to my quarry, in the hope of making camp at an early hour, and having a good fire before my comrades returned. Nor was I too soon, for already a coyote had scented blood, and was about to whet his sharp tusks on the results of my labour. With considerable hoisting, and not until I had blindfolded my mount, I got both antelopes on my nag's back, where I lashed them fast with the lariat to the cantle of the saddle. Swinging myself into the pig-skin, congratulating myself on the success of my stalk, for camp I headed, and already had commenced in imagination to enjoy a hearty meal on some of the tit-bits. Humming possibly the old regimental march, and my thoughts wandering to far-off scenes, I was surprised, on issuing from a dip in the prairie, to see several antelopes feeding undisturbed about a hundred and fifty yards off. Throwing my head forward over the saddle-tree, in a moment I was on my feet, and hurriedly hobbling my beast, I made a cast to the right to obtain a better leeward position. Prairie-dog earths were numerous, and apparently untenanted, or else the whole population had turned in for their afternoon siesta. These irregularities of the surface afforded an abundance of shelter. A few minutes' crawling, and I was within easy range, when springing to my feet the game commenced their succession of buck-jumps, which they invariably practise before settling to their regular stride. Pitching my gun to the shoulder, I drew sight upon the leader; over he went; while my second shot, fired too hurriedly, sent its bullet harmlessly ricocheting, its course being marked by a puff of dust where the missile bounded each time it hit the soil. The fall of the leader turned the



remainder of the flock, and with the velocity of falcons they rushed past Broomstick ; up went his tail and down went his head ; half-a-dozen violent struggles, and the hobbling broke. For a moment he stood, then threw his mane recklessly about, turned round and gave his dead load a sniff, and breaking into a succession of buck-jumps, finishing with a shower of kicks, divested himself of his burden, and in spite of all I could shout, with the most perfect disregard for consequences, started for home at a pace so unusual and corky, that I vowed if ever I had leg over him again he should give me a specimen of the same gait for my gratification.

I do not think I ever felt more savage in my life. Two or three times I hesitated whether I would try the effect of a leaden messenger after him. If so long a journey to civilisation had not been before me, I believe I should, but finally concluded that cutting off your nose to spite your face was at the best an unsatisfactory performance. After spending half-an-hour in dragging the game together, and possibly as much longer in ruminating over the awkwardness of my position, and the mutability of human and horse affairs, debating the *pros* and *cons* whether to return to camp or remain where I was, to my intense satisfaction I saw one of my comrades coming towards me with the now-submissive Broomstick captive, and looking as if any pace faster than that of a funeral procession was entirely beyond his powers of exertion. My friend had spied the truant making straight for camp. After an exciting chase, he had succeeded in capturing him, when, by taking the direction from which he was seen to come, he happily

tumbled across me, much to my relief; for, after all, the little shelter afforded by timber, where you can always have a good fire, is infinitely preferable to a smouldering smudge of buffalo-chips, with the wind playing at hide-and-go-seek round your shirt-tails.

The following will give the reader some idea of the hardship and danger to be run by the sportsman who determines on visiting the home of the prong-horned antelope.

Circumstances had caused me to attach myself to a trader, who, with about twenty teamsters, was *en route* for Northern Mexico. My duties were to hunt and supply the party with game, a pleasant enough occupation, but not without danger, for the greater portion of the country we traversed belonged to the much-dreaded Comanche, the most reckless race of freebooters and horsemen probably on the face of the earth, who are at war with everyone, and prize nothing so much as a white man's scalp. Knowing such to be the case, it behoved me to keep my weather eye open when separated from my newly-formed acquaintances; but for all my watchfulness I several times had narrow escapes. Still, time fled pleasantly onwards, and as I write this I look back with delight to the happy, free, thoughtless hours passed either in the saddle or watching the movements of the wild animals that knew no bounds to their demesne. The Indians seldom troubled my thoughts, for I had a mare, that I daily rode, handsome as a picture, and as game, fleet, and enduring as any animal I had ever thrown a leg over; thorough-bred, I believe, and as sagacious as a dog; also a bat mule,

between both of which existed a most extraordinary affection. I had but to go ahead, and the latter was certain to follow; so if I did not fall into an ambushade, I knew full well I could distance most Camanchee braves till I regained camp, where, behind the waggons backed by the stalwart Missourian teamsters, who knew well the use of their rifles, I would be safe. Unfortunately the principal of the expedition was a most unpleasant and unpopular person, so that between his bullying and unpleasant manner, a mutiny arose among his retainers, and the consequence was that the majority started *en masse* on their own hook to seek another employer, or find their way back to their native State.

My education and antecedents had been such as to give me a horror of mutiny; moreover, up to this date, I had nothing to complain of, so I determined to stick to the waggons, and use every effort in my power to save the owner from the only alternative that appeared left, deserting his property in the wilderness. Ere long, however, I was compelled to change my resolution, for no one could submit to his irascible temper and constant insulting language; so, with no companions but my mare and mule, I left the camp one bright morning in the month of February, with the determination of returning eastward alone. The step was full of danger, but I preferred running the risk rather than remain to be further insulted, or seek redress by recourse to weapons, too often done in this lawless portion of the world.

As the teams were being hitched up I started in the reverse direction to their route, little aware of the trying

ordeal that was before me. My animals were in good condition and spirits. For a week I travelled north-east, in the hope of finding a suitable halting-place to remain in till spring fairly commenced. At length I came upon a spot which took my fancy—a small table-land, well sheltered from the northern wind, underneath which was a valley, that the snow had partially disappeared from, and where there was a fair quantity of bunch grass, the most desirable food for the quadrupeds. Under a projecting rock I made my camp, for the spot was so enclosed, that I hoped the lighting of a fire would not attract attention. Weeks rolled by, and the mare and mule lost little of their condition, although the weather was frequently pinching cold. The canons in the neighbourhood supplied me with abundance of game, and each day I expected that a break in the weather would justify a start for the eastern settlements. Of course one day was only in outline a repetition of the other, but how widely different in detail. In the morning the horses were taken to the bottom, breakfast was cooked, the enjoyable pipe lit, and the direction settled in which I would hunt, returning earlier or later, according to success. The afternoon would pass mending moccasins or clothes, cleaning arms or arranging camp, procuring firewood, till it was time to hunt up the nags, which being accomplished, and the evening meal dispatched, on a bed of leaves I would smoke myself to sleep, painting, till no longer conscious, pictures of distant home. A hunter's camp always becomes a rendezvous for some wolves, and two of these scoundrels were seldom beyond sight. Latterly they became so tame that they would come close enough to pick up a bone if

thrown to them, and one night, when the cold was more rigorous than usual, on awaking to add fresh fuel to the fire, I saw one of them sitting beside the warm embers, nodding his head like a sleepy listener to a prosy sermon. Every day I expected to be able to set out. The appearance of the sky denoted change as I turned in on the last evening of my stay in this remote corner of the earth, but whether it was anticipation of the good things to be obtained when civilisation had been reached, I know not, or an unaccountable consciousness that danger was not far distant, I could not sleep. First I tried one side and then the other, but without effect. As it was not cold the fire had gradually decayed till only a few embers remained, making the surrounding darkness more intense. While I was hesitating whether the rebuilding of the fire or a fresh pipe would induce sleep, uneasiness seemed to have taken possession of my animals. The mule was as watchful as a dog, and as I knew he would not leave his friend, I invariably left him untied. Several times he uttered that short quick snort so peculiar to the species, and always indicative of alarm; while the mare kept moving as far as her lariat rope would permit her. It might be anything, from a deer to an Indian; so, as my arms were at hand, I quietly laid hold of them, and crawled out of my lair, taking special caution that no momentary flicker from the fire should disclose my movements, and by a short *détour* got beside the nags, and soon had the soft, silky muzzle of Becky in the palm of my hand.

The greatest disaster a man can suffer in such a situation is the loss of either his ammunition or of his horses. If

there were any hostile red-skins in the neighbourhood, by the step I had taken a stampede of my animals was now impossible. A few of the longest hours I thus sat, my presence reassuring the beasts, and when day broke, so still had all become, that I doubt not I should have been asleep, only that the hour preceding day is well known to be invariably the time selected by Indians to carry out their machinations. In the morning, quietly moving about camp, as if pursuing unsuspectingly my usual avocations, I particularly examined the locality, when, among the remaining scattered patches of snow, the easily-distinguished moccasin track of an Indian was discovered, doubtless made by a brave, who in search for game had got benighted, and chance had caused to stumble across my hiding-place. My camp was therefore no longer safe; the coming night he, with his companions, would be back, when woe betide the solitary white man! My horses in the morning I accompanied to their feeding ground, not permitting them to get beyond control, and as soon as their appetites were sufficiently satisfied, I returned to my little home for the last time. The few trifles I possessed were soon packed, and nothing remained further to cause delay. Still I waited a quarter of an hour longer, for the purpose of building a pile of wood, in which I placed some smouldering embers, in the hope that it would not blaze up till several hours after dark—an indication that I doubted not the red-skins would construe into a certain evidence that I was still ignorant of being discovered. On arrival my mare had been a little tender in front from her hoofs having been worn very close; the period of rest had rectified this, and,

full of hope and anticipation, I pushed my way eastward, the only regret that passed like a cloud over my mind occurring, as I took the last, aye, and long look, at my wilderness home.

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## CHAPTER IX.

## BIG HORN AND ROCKY MOUNTAIN SHEEP.

THE big horn and Rocky Mountain sheep are to the continent of North America what the ibex and chamois are to Europe. However, there is no great similarity of appearance between these representatives of the eastern and western world, although the differences are no greater than can be found between races of sheep and goats. From what I have said, the reader will be prepared to learn that both these interesting animals are inhabitants of mountain districts, searching for their food and enjoying their gambols upon the verge of the precipitous sierras, where mortals' tread dare not touch, where the slightest false step, the slightest hesitation, would hurl them down to inevitable destruction.

The elevation of the situations they select for their resting places is doubtless governed by temperature; thus they ascend to greater altitudes in summer than in winter; at the same time, if compelled through alarm, they will



unhesitatingly retire into regions covered with perpetual snow, and nature seems to have so well provided for such occasions, that they appear to do so without suffering inconvenience. From my own experience I have formed the conclusion that both the above animals are partially nocturnal; by this I do not wish it to be understood that they wander about when it is impenetrably dark, but that when star or moonlight occurs they avail themselves of its use to descend from their mountain fastnesses into the valleys beneath in search of favourite food, a performance which they never attempt during daylight, except in such regions as their enemy, man, seldom or never intrudes.

Although this game is far from scarce, the traveller through their habitat would imagine that such was the case from the few opportunities offered of seeing them alive; but if attention be paid to all that surrounds his path,—and who, that is a hunter, does not do so when in regions where danger besets him?—he will discover such quantities of skulls, horns, and bones that tell as plainly as words can express, that he is traversing the feeding-grounds of numerous invisible herds. I have occasionally been vouchsafed a shot at the big-horn when least expected; but so seldom has this occurred, that such episodes have become engrafted in my memory. However, if willing to bear fatigue and exposure, the person desirous of adding them to the list of game that has fallen to his rifle, can easily do so by following the advice I am about to give. Being satisfied from tracks and other evidences that they frequent a neighbourhood, endeavour to discover by their trail from what portion of the mountain sides

they descend into the valley to make their nocturnal foray. This is not difficult to find out, for, this game always travels in single file, and generally through the same passes, their path thus is as easily distinguishable as that of sheep over heather-clad hills. Hours before break of day, for many may be the weary miles of climbing before you make a detour to leeward so as not to give the quarry your wind, push silently for the most elevated ridges. If you possess a keen eye for locality and tracking you will find little trouble in discovering where the game you seek most frequently resort. On this point being satisfied, ensconce yourself in some sheltered nook and wait for day,



BIG HORN.

for the sun will have commenced to tint with gold the eastern sides of the hills ere the prey you seek will reach, from the feeding grounds below, the elevation of your position.

It is strange these children of the mountain only dread danger from beneath: thus it is that to successfully hunt them you must ascend into the heights they would fly for if alarmed; to follow them from beneath would simply be needless waste of time, to stalk them from above almost certain to produce success. At length the desired-for time is come: silently and well-secreted, search with keen eye every ridge that will command a view of the valleys beneath.

Your careful survey of the country is at length rewarded, for far beneath you, so far off that their outline it is almost impossible to define, you perceive a family party, probably a buck, doe, and pair of kids, ascending leisurely to more elevated ground.

Slowly plucking the tender grass at each step, they graze upwards; but, ever on guard against danger, the male or female pause to watch, or not unfrequently post themselves on some rocky excrescence to note what may be occurring in the lower world. At length their slow approach has brought them within range of your rifle; but be not impatient, rest a little longer if you wish to make certain work, for the bullet must be well and strongly placed, or else your labour will be fruitless, for few animals possess greater vitality, and unless, in Yankee parlance, you tumble the quarry in his track, the wounded game will struggle upwards with speed lent by fear, or fall head-

long over the nearest ravine into some rugged cañon impossible to descend into, or where, even if successful in reaching its bottom, the carcass would be found pounded and torn into a shapeless mass of flesh, only fit food for the loathsome vultures who probably have already commenced to congregate, in expectation of a feed on their beloved carrion.

In the days of De Bonneville, and Lewis and Clark, big-horns and rocky mountain sheep were very abundant in the mountain ridges that encompass the upper waters of the turbulent Columbia river, but the tide of emigration which has flowed into Oregon and British north-western possessions has had the effect of lessening their numbers, and driving a large proportion of the survivors from what at one time must have been one of their chief habitats. However, both these species are not likely soon to become extinct, for the nature of the country they inhabit is a safeguard which the poor buffalo unfortunately does not possess; aye, and what will the undulating prairie be to the Indian and hunter when you deprive it of the lordly bull, who in times gone by caused each tree, rock and ravine to reverberate with his deep voice or heavy tread?

The time may come—I do not wish to see it—when these broad acres will possess mills and factories, daily disgorging their inky smoke into the pure azure heavens, or their thousands of unwashed mortality over what now is a flower-studded prairie.

Manchester doubtless is charming to the factory owner, for well is he aware that every throb of its machinery,

every grunt of its boilers, tells the constant tale : money, money, money. Possibly not being a recipient of the lucre these never-tiring engines coin, I prefer the landscape when free from such evidences of man's industry.

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## CHAPTER X.

## BEARS.

GRIZZLY (*Ursus ferox*).—The ambition of every American sportsman is to shoot a grizzly, and he who has performed the task is justly entitled to wear his spurs, for unquestionably he is one of the most dangerous antagonists that man can cope with. Their habitat at the present time extends from about the 25th degree of north latitude to Oregon, following along the sierras of the Rocky Mountains. At one time they were found eastward as far as Kansas and Missouri, but that is many years ago. Nearly all the accidents that have occurred while hunting the grizzly have originated through the assailants being armed with small-bore rifles—weapons almost as much out of place with such an antagonist as they would be in shooting elephants. The curl upon the chest, the base of the ear, and the shoulder rather far back and low down, are the most vital places to aim at. If the ground be suitable for riding, a steady horse will be found of great service to the hunter, and materially lessen the danger he would otherwise run.

There are very few—and thank goodness for it—who rise from their bed in the morning as unrefreshed as when they stretched their weary limbs upon it to crave for rest. It was exactly in this unenviable state I felt when I pulled myself together to turn out as the sun was breaking on a misty morning. Dozed I might have, rested I had not, but day had broken, and I felt thankful, for although weary, thirsting for rest, in whatever position I lay, on whatever side I reclined, sleep obstinately refused to come to my eyelids. True, twice I had to turn out of my warm and snug blankets to see what disturbed my mare and mule, but this was a nightly occurrence; nevertheless a load seemed settled upon my spirits—in fact I had a foreboding of misfortune. But daylight at length came. How blessed is its appearance to the storm-tossed mariner, the invalid on a sick couch, aye, and to the wanderer who is far beyond civilisation—a sojourner in a land where savage brutes and doubly savage man surround him, craving for the darkness of night to accomplish his destruction! At the period I speak of I was among the Black Hills, at that time, although not many years since, the favourite retreat of the grizzly bear, and the frequent lurking-place of the young brave, or war party of Indians, craving for an opportunity to shed an enemy's blood. To win honour they had left their tribe, and to return with a scalp was to reap the reward.

When day became sufficiently advanced, and the mists that wrapped the valley in their impenetrable shroud had rolled up the hill-sides, I sedulously searched around my solitary bivouac to find if there were grounds for my uneasiness. In gradually increasing circles I walked around

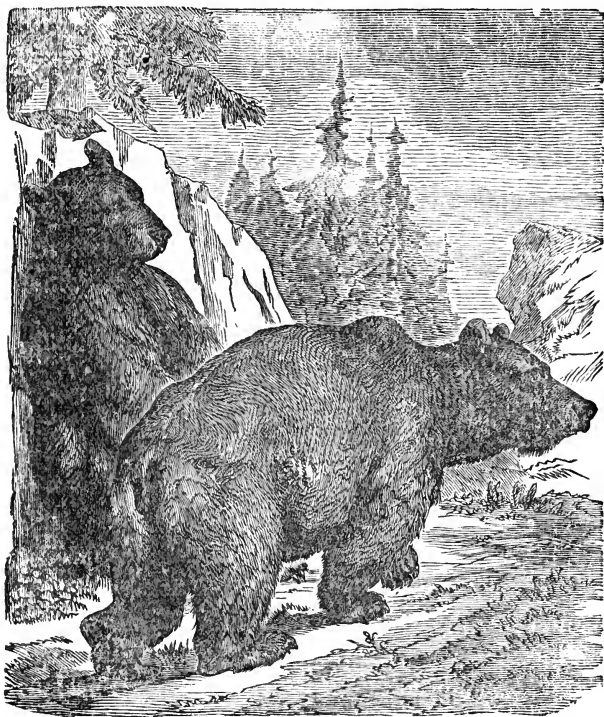
the camp, and until I had gained the distance of a hundred yards from it, no impression on the fast disappearing snow, no broken twig, or disturbed rotten limb indicated that I was not far from animal life. By degrees I increased the diameter of my circling search, and was all but returning, satisfied that my own excited imagination had been playing me tricks, when I came across the wide-spread deep impressions of an immense bear. Whatever others might think, in such utter desolation and loneliness, it was pleasing to learn that Bruin was my foe instead of a stealthy red-skin.

After turning my nags loose that they might graze upon the bunch grass which was abundant in the bottom lands beneath my encampment, I examined the stock of food in the larder, and found, as I almost could have foretold if I had thought upon the matter, that it was reduced to one rib of venison, and that but poorly provided with meat. Submitting it with hungry eyes to the smoke and ashes, I observed with anything but gratified look that the eatable portion rapidly diminished under the effects of the fire. When it was sufficiently cooked to become eatable there was not more left than would have satisfied the appetite of a hungry tabby. Nevertheless I ate and was thankful, consoling myself with the hope that ere the sun reached the meridian I should shoot something sufficiently substantial to afford a good meal. But no such fortune was in store for me. I tramped over fell and valley, through bush and over open valleys, and nought rewarded my search but innumerable tracks so old and stale, that it would have been madness to follow them up.

Weak from want of food, and anxious to know whether



I was doomed to die of starvation, I returned to camp dissatisfied, more than angry, with myself that my love for adventure and wandering had reduced me to such straits. Of course I could have killed either my mare or mule ; but



GRIZZLY BEARS.

no, I would not slaughter the good, faithful animals that had stood by me in all adversity, who had before this saved my life, and now at the present time returned to me

at my call with the confidence of children in their parent ; fie upon me ! why should I permit such a thought for an instant to hover through my brain ?

I had got sufficiently close to my sleeping-place to perceive the white smoke circling from the gradually expiring fire, when again I came across the grizzly's track, and so fresh that I felt sure its maker had been at the camp during my absence. In a moment I came to a resolution, the intruder must pay the penalty of his rashness or I perish in the attempt.

What would that matter, only one more unknown to be added to the thousands whose eyes have closed in unknown lands, although their mothers pray unceasingly for them, and day by day look for their return.

Reaching the camp I found my conjectures had been correct : the bear had been there during my absence, turned over the pack and tried the flavour of both flaps and stirrup leathers of my saddle. To obtain water to wash my gun out with, I melted a quantity of snow in my solitary cooking dish ; for the foe I was about to encounter I was well aware would fight me with tooth and claw till death separated us, and on a miss or hang fire depended my life.

I cannot say I liked my task. I was not strong or well enough to court such an encounter, and several times I thought, as I followed the tell-tale impressions in the snow, how much rather I would prefer it to be a deer. However, it appeared to me to be kismet, destiny, or aught else you choose to call it, that I should meet the grim giant of the forest in deadly strife.

About a mile and a half from home—so camp is ever

called, however humble its appurtenances—I came to a place where the grizzly had halted and scratched up the wild cranberries, which through all low-lying lands, in this portion of the country, are abundant; but it was evident that they were not sufficiently numerous or attractive to detain him long. Again striking the trail, I persistently followed it till I reached some thick timber, much covered with windfalls. Through such obstacles progress is naturally slow, and difficulties to your advance numerous. Moreover, in such a place one has to be doubly guarded, for on every side, in front, in rear, the upturned roots or labyrinth of semi-decayed limbs can be formed into an ambuscade. But Bruin was not a rifleman, and did not avail himself of these natural lurking-places, so I reached the further side of the belt of timber without seeing a foe, for which I was heartily thankful; but as I straddled the last log which intervened between me and the open land, not twenty yards to my front I perceived the object of my search reared up to full length against a dead tree, as if endeavouring to ascertain how high he could reach. I had not a clear shot, for, although my quarry was facing me, the trunk of the deceased monarch of the woodlands was between me and him. From my foe's manner I felt convinced that he was unaware of my presence; this I could have turned to advantage had a vital part been exposed. Long I stood in my awkward position, hoping that he would slue himself round; but such a movement seemed foreign to his intention. At length the grizzly lowered his hold of the tree till his fore-paws were beneath the level of his head, when, turning to the left, he rested the jaw upon

his foot, at the same moment obtaining the first view of me. Not a muscle of the bear's body moved, while the small pig-like eyes momentarily increased in the glow of their intensity. In that gaze there was no mistake; it clearly said, "I will brook no intruder in my demesne, and the life of him who is guilty of it shall pay the penalty."

It was a fool-hardy or precipitous course to pursue. I would not do it now, no, nor even then, if starvation had not stared me in the face. I raised my gun and took sight, hoping the ball would penetrate the neck near the junction of the head; but my eye and hand failed me; the bullet glanced off the weather-beaten tree-trunk, smashed a paw, ultimately glancing through the thick skin at the base of the quarry's ear. My foe fell, but in a moment after was on his legs, and, before I had time to think, came at me with headlong speed. His lower jaw interfered with the breast-shot, for his mouth was wide open: still I fired, for I felt that only an instant existed between my being in his grasp; but the result was only a momentary recoil. I raised my gun to save my head; but it was sent flying into the brush, and I was prostrated. My sheath-knife, however, was at hand. One, two, three stabs, a spasmodic gasp and shudder of frame, and the wounded monster, trying to encircle me with his paws, sank slowly by my side. His left fore-foot was smashed to pieces, and his lower jaw splintered, or I believe I never should have lived to narrate the death of the grizzly of the Black Hills.

#### CINNAMON BEAR.

This bear, which is cinnamon in colour, and doubtless the connecting link between the grizzly and Arctic species,

has considerable resemblance to both, but, smaller and slighter built than the former, still possesses all its vindictiveness of character and powers of vitality, combined with greater activity.

Although existing chiefly on vegetable diet, it will greedily avail itself of any opportunity that offers, to gorge on flesh; and to so great an extent has it been known to indulge in gluttony that, on discovery by the hunter, it has been found alike incapable of defence or escape.

On the first settlement of Oregon and British Columbia the farmers suffered such serious losses among their valuable newly-imported herds of horned cattle and sheep, that a war of extermination was declared against the red bears (as they are frequently there called), which did not terminate in those neighbourhoods till the race had there almost become extinct. In the vicinity of the Carriboo gold mines they now are occasionally to be found, and doubtless will frequent that locality for many years to come, as the surrounding country is very rugged, covered with dense timber, and totally unfit for cultivation.

Many and many are the stories I have heard related by trappers and miners in reference to their adventures with these savage animals; but as one bear story is so much like another I desist here, as my personal knowledge of the species is limited, only adding that I have heard it universally affirmed that the activity of the cinnamon bear makes it a more dangerous foe than even the much-dreaded grizzly.

## BLACK BEAR.

None of the *feræ nature* are better known in a state of captivity than the black bear. What village schoolboy, however remote the hamlet in which he resides, cannot remember poor Bruin being led round by some half-washed, uncombed foreigner, or his forming a portion of the attractions which drew the gaping crowd to enter the strong-smelling precincts of the annually visiting erratic menagerie? Alas! hard is the poor bear's life when he is thus a prisoner. In summer he is kept on half diet, and shut up in a miserable den; in winter he is stowed away in a cellar, and possibly, at least once a week, baited with curs, that the blackguard owner may raise enough funds to carry on his vagrant life. How different this from the life the bear enjoyed in his native woods, wandering about at pleasure, enjoying every luxury of nature that the seasons produce; and, if in a country subject to a severe winter, quietly sleeping through that portion of the year when the winds, loaded with frost and snow, whistle round his snug retreat! The black bear at one period was very widely distributed over the North American continent. Its range now, on account of the advance and increase of population, has been much restricted; still, wherever there are large tracks of uncultivated ground, representatives of this species will be found, whether in Canada or Labrador, Florida, Georgia, or the Far West until you reach the Rocky Mountains, beyond which I have never heard of the black bear being seen, the cinnamon bear and the grizzly bear there supplying his place. . So numerous still are the

black bears in some parts of Arkansas that a portion of each year is set aside by the squatters and farmers for their capture, and large packs of curs, specially trained to assist, are kept for this purpose ; and numerous instances are on record of thirty, or even forty, bears having in a couple of months fallen before one hunter's rifle. The flesh, which is with justice much prized, is either salted down or smoked for future use ; while the pelt furnishes a bed, or is sold to the traders, ultimately to be made into rugs for sleighs or the coarser kinds of furs for women and children.

The different sizes that black bears attain in various sections of the country are somewhat remarkable ; so much so that I have often been induced to believe them entitled to be considered different species, but otherwise they are so similar in habits of life, choice of food, and residence, that it would only be opening a path that might lead to innumerable intricacies without the probability of resulting in benefit. The black bear of Michigan, Wisconsin, and the regions bordering on these States, never exceeds two hundred and fifty pounds—these are generally denominated hog bear ; but when you descend the Mississippi and get into the cane-brakes of Arkansas, numbers are annually killed that reach four hundredweight. Coming eastward, you find a still larger animal ; and I have heard from undoubted sources that in the State of Maine, and along the edges of New Brunswick, bears have been known to attain six, or even seven hundred pounds' weight. Doubtless these differences are occasioned by varieties or abundance of food that the different regions produce, not

temperature or climate, as Wisconsin and Maine are almost in the same latitude.

Without further preamble, I will attempt a description. The black bear is short in carcass, with an unusually baggy, slack look; the legs are long and powerful in their sweep, and the animal can handle them with the skill and proficiency of a professed pugilist; the head is very nearly an equilateral triangle, with the nose for an apex; the ears are small and rounded, the same distance in situation behind the eye that the eye is from the nose; the measurement in circumference close in front of the shoulder is almost as great as behind, which gradually increases as it ranges backwards till the loftiest point of the spinal vertebræ is reached; while the hind limbs, from their immense muscular power, as well as abundance of flesh, appear like the extremities of a man encased in pegtop trousers. In walking, the toes of the fore feet are turned in, while the use of the nether limbs is so human as to appear like a burlesque on *genus homo*; but if a casual observer be thus struck, the anatomist recognises in this exaggerated formation the means supplied the animal by nature to ascend trees, escape enemies, or earn its support. The colour, when the pelt is prime, is glossy black; but in early spring a rufous tint is strongly developed; this is assisted by the undergrowth of wool becoming elongated, and showing through the coarser black hairs that at other seasons are the only visible covering, unless a close and minute inspection be made. From the eyes, in a straight line almost at right angles to the nose, the fur is brown, with a tip of the same colour frequently over the eyebrow.



At the same time, exceptions, more particularly among those of the North-western States, are to be found which are black to the nostrils.

As a general rule, when this bear is in a state of nature, he is extremely timorous of man, flying from him with a stealth and rapidity almost marvellous; but wound him, hurt him, even insult his dignity, and the huntsman must be prepared for a conflict that will only terminate in death; for, once enraged and drawn into hostilities, his combativeness increases, never lessening till life is extinct. However, instances have been known where Bruin was not had these excuses for becoming aggressor; but generally these bellicose individuals have been an old lady engaged in imparting to her progeny her extensive knowledge of the world, some gallant lover worshipping at the shrine of his devotion, or possibly a half-starved unfortunate desirous of gaining some retreat where appetite could be gratified.

The first bear I ever shot was doubtless suffering from the last. I will narrate the circumstance. In the State of Wisconsin, near Green River, there are situated some beautiful retired sheets of water. These spots had long enchanted me with their attractiveness, for game abounded in their vicinity; the scenery was beautiful, and, above all, you were entirely free from man's intrusion. Could it be wondered, then, that seldom a week passed that I did not find time to visit them? Summer had unconsciously glided into autumn, the dark, dense covering of the trees had changed to all the gaudy hues of the rainbow, and the enlarged ripples on the water, and occasional sighings of the wind, predicted that at no distant period another

shroud than the green grasses would cover the surface of the earth.

On the day in question, when I left my couch, immense numbers of wild fowl were migrating southward—evident signs that cold weather had made its appearance north. So, hoping possibly to kill a swan, or a scarce specimen of wild duck, I determined to visit my lakes once more ere they were frozen up. At noon, when I started to fulfil my purpose, large flakes of snow were noiselessly descending, but not in sufficient numbers to obliterate the trail. The water reached, the first glance exposed a sight only seen by those who reside beyond the verges of civilisation, where the wild denizens of the air, or inhabitants of the land reign supreme. The surface of the lakes was covered with ducks of every variety—moving room even looked scarce; still phalanx after phalanx came swooping down before the wind with the well-known velocity that a wild duck's wings command. Quack, quack, quack, went the ducks on the water; a prolonged note from those in the air answered. The three notes were an invitation, the one note a hearty response, as willingly accepting the invitation as the most hospitable host could desire.

A few shots filled my bag, and I seated myself on a rock, regardless alike of snow or wind, to admire and learn the instinct of the animal world. Hour after hour glided on, and night was near as I returned my pipe to my pocket, unfolded my covering from around my gun-locks, and rose to depart. The snow had in the meantime obliterated my path; still the familiar trees and the ever-true-speaking mosses told with certainty the direction. Indolently and

self-satisfied I broke into the bush on my homeward route; the weight of the game told heavily on my shoulders. When half of the journey (which I had long wished had been the whole) was reached, I heard a rustling in the brush, evidently caused by large game. Such a warning instantly aroused me, and, on the alert for further sport, I took all the surrounding visible objects in at a glance. In front was a bear. A monster to my vision he appeared, for I was uninitiated at that time—and I believe the eye has a trick in dealing in the marvellous with unaccustomed objects—and, to my horror, Bruin was coming directly towards me. My first feeling was to fly; next, to ascend a tree; thirdly, to disappear into my boots. The second glance gave me more assurance. Mr. Bear was evidently on urgent private affairs; his whole manner bespoke this; and he did not see me; so I determined to stand still, hoping he would remain ignorant of my presence, or, at least, give me a fair show, if compelled to fight. Onward advanced Bruin; closer and closer he came, and the nearer he approached the farther my heart came into my mouth. Still he was fifty yards off, and had plenty of time to change his course; but no such change took place; for if he had been a ball bowled at a wicket the precision of his course could not have been truer. Twenty yards could not have intervened between us when my presence became known, and the manner of welcome I received was far from encouraging, for he halted, sniffed in the air, and gave an angry growl. I wished myself at home in bed, or at the antipodes, or in any place but my present standpoint. For remember, reader, my gun was only loaded with duck shot;

and I was young, and, I fear, very soft. It was evident that my appearance was not intimidating, for my adversary



CLOSE QUARTERS.

neither swerved to right nor left, and his wicked eyes blazed forth flashes of malignant hate. Eight or ten

yards more the distance was diminished, when, whether from fear, certain that my last moments had arrived, or knowledge of the animal's habits, I gave a shout,—a feeble one, of no distinct note, I believe; but the result was fortunate, for the foe halted, and really seemed uncomfortable, occasionally glancing around, as if he believed retreat, if possible, would be advisable; but second thoughts are not always best. The irresolution was fatal, and the bear found it so ultimately, for he again advanced towards me. When scarcely eight yards divided us, a second shout brought him again to a halt, and, as he sat up, displaying his teeth—symptoms that too truly said, “I will teach you a lesson”—I let him have the contents of the right barrel, aimed for the nose, well knowing the shortness of range would throw the projectiles up. And so it did. At so short a distance the concussion was irresistible; both eyes were destroyed, the forehead up to the apex of the crown fearfully cut up, and the poor bear rolled over, clawing the injured parts in life's last agony. Without hesitation I delivered the *coup de grâce* by discharging the second barrel at the butt of Bruin's ear, thus surely putting a finishing touch to his earthly career. This bear weighed about two hundred and twenty pounds, and was, in the vicinity where killed, deemed a very large one.

When in the State of Maine I was called from my writing by the landlord of the small roadside hotel at which I was residing. He informed me that a bear had entered the clearing,\* evidently with the intention of attacking his

\* Where the forest has been cut away for cultivation.

drove of sheep. Seizing my unloaded gun, and hastily charging both barrels with bullets, I rushed down to join him, in the state of *déshabille* I had been sitting. From an eminence a few yards from the house we took a survey; no bear could be seen; but the timid sheep were huddled in a fence corner, evidently having suffered no ordinary fright.

With anxious gaze we scanned the enclosure; several times a blackened, charred stump, the memento of some giant monarch of the forest, was supposed to be the bear. Again and again our mistake was found out, and a new object was metamorphosed into Bruin. Ten minutes were thus spent, the flock of sheep became, if possible, more uneasy, when, with sudden energy, they made a simultaneous dash and crossed to the far side of the field; still no bear was visible, but that he was close at hand was evident. Loss of time or prolonged suspense began to make us careless; an advance into the field had even been proposed, and was about to be executed, when the sheep made another start, evidently intent on returning to the position we found them in; but as they passed a log out rushed Bruin, and cut off the retreat of the hindermost. The poor victim made two or three feeble efforts to regain his fellows, then turned and looked his enemy in the face, and from that moment succumbed to fate, at the same time retaining the use of his legs. Nor did Bruin rush up and seize him. He only headed him off when inclined to turn out of the proper direction, driving him all the time towards the right side of the field, which edged on a piece of swamp. Soon the fence was gained; here the sheep's fortitude

forsook him, and as both landlord and self had followed as close in rear as advisable, we were witnesses of a proceeding almost incredible. Bruin was evidently in a magnanimous frame of mind, or was overcome by his natural politeness, for without worrying or mauling, never for a moment using his teeth, he picked up the poor sheep between his paws, placed it on the top of the rails, then pushed it over, and with the agility of a greyhound cleared the fence himself. The shock had roused the victim and reanimated him, for both walked off into the bush, the one satisfied to be driven, the other apparently a not over-exacting shepherd. Following up the duo as rapidly and silently as circumstances would permit, we again came on both; but the bear had been annoyed, or the sheep could or would not do what was wanted, for Bruin had seized the unfortunate and dragged him on a log, and was using both teeth and claws with animosity and purpose. Making a stalk I got within twenty yards of both; the sheep's head had already been almost severed from the body, and the hot and liquid gore was evidently giving intense satisfaction to the slayer. With a long steady aim I covered the white horseshoe on the bear's breast; the gun was a large and heavy one, the necessary pressure of the trigger was given, and without a moan, almost without a kick, the would-be despoiler and his prey fell to the earth together. The shot was a good one; the results on dissection proved with what precision and force a solid bullet can be fired from a common shot-gun. This bear weighed four hundred pounds, and, from the decayed and worn teeth, must have been an old stager; in fact, I think age is

wanted to give black bears the courage to attack and kill cattle

The white shoe on the breast is commonly, in some sections of the country, the spot which the trapper waits to be exposed, to shoot at. A ball entering there, and going either upwards or horizontally, always proves fatal. However, behind the shoulder, very low down, is the favourite aim with me. In these cross shots, if obtainable, you always have more to shoot at, and the regions of the heart are reached nearer the surface. The butt of the ear, a little backwards, if close enough to make certain, is another deadly point; but the size of this delicate and mortal place is small, and should never be chosen beyond thirty yards. The head-shot can, with conical bullets, easily be performed; but a spherical bullet, especially from a small-bore rifle, from the wedge-shape of the cranium, is very apt to glance off without injuring more than the skin.

In hunting bears with dogs, the commonest cur that has pluck enough to snap at his heels is the best animal for the purpose. The bear gets worried, then cross, and ultimately ascends the first tree that his judgment tells him is suitable, resting most frequently on the soonest reached branch, unless the hunter be seen or heard; if so, then the highest foot of timber sufficiently strong to support him will be selected. On such occasions he has been known to ascend too high for the strength of the limb, when, the bough breaking, both have come tumbling to the earth. Although such a rapid and lofty descent would certainly destroy a man, Bruin will arise unin-



jured, shake himself, and trot off as if nothing had happened.

The vitality of the bear is immense. His powers of destruction when wounded are equally so. So, gentle reader, if it should be your fortune to go bear-hunting, pray be careful in your approach to them when wounded. A sportsman's maxim, that should never be forgotten, is "always load your gun before you move from where it was discharged, and never let the excitement of the moment permit you to hurry when performing this useful duty."

A great many bears have been killed with the knife only, but the person who performs so dangerous a feat must truly be fool-hardy and reckless of consequences, and in my belief such conduct is, except in cases of emergency, most unjustifiable. For one who returns safe in limb and skin from such a contest, the majority who attempt it get fearfully mauled, or very possibly disabled.

The black bear in a state of captivity is extremely restless, and, when old, bad-tempered and treacherous, more especially should he have been teased in his youth; but when he roves the forest, free, he is the laziest and most luxurious fellow, sleeping the greater portion of his time, feeding on nuts or luscious fruits, playing in the sun's heat with comrades, and seldom quarrelling with his brethren. When passages of arms take place, love is the cause, and the battle is waged more in words than blows.

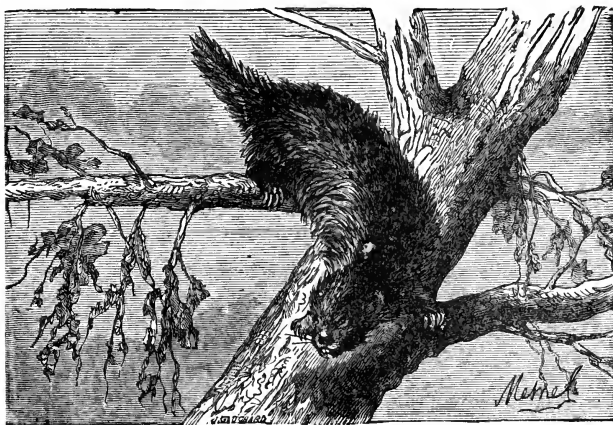
Two or three years ago, in the autumn, about midnight, I was passing through a chain of lakes in the State of

Maine ; the night was lit by an occasional star, struggling through the rapidly fleeting dark clouds for an opportunity to show the earth its brilliancy. I was alone, and, save the splash of my paddle and the occasional unearthly call of the loon, all was still as the grave. A narrow passage I traversed, to avoid the weeds, made me hug the land so close that occasionally the limb of a tree would brush against my birch-bark canoe. With a suddenness that made my heart's blood run cold, a yell from some unknown beast, loud, shrill, and unearthly, so close that I almost believed for a moment that the cause was within reach, echoed from tree to tree, and died away, reverberating in the distance. Again and again it was repeated. For awhile I remained motionless, till the cool breeze recalled me to myself, and I proceeded homewards. Next morning I returned to examine the place. A veteran hunter was my companion, and we found such convincing proof that bears had been there, that one of them I feel certain produced the weird-like sound that had caused me so much alarm, my companion assuring me that at the period the sexes come together, if rivals are in the way, the call or note of defiance is quite dissimilar from their general voice.

Early in spring the young are born. At first they are very small. In six weeks they are able to accompany their mother, who cares for them with the greatest solicitude and attention, hauling the logs on one side for the cubs to obtain the coveted grubs and larvæ underneath ; pulling down the uppermost branches that produce fruit ; and if by accident the young should be placed in a position of

danger, her life is always willingly sacrificed in their defence.

Walking across a portage in Maine, close to the borders of New Brunswick, in front of the party of which I was a member, my gun loaded, in the hope of killing a grouse or two, I perceived a small animal, about the size of a King Charles spaniel, running along the track a hundred or more yards in front of me. Without troubling myself to look closely, I concluded it was a porcupine, animals



CANADIAN PORCUPINE.

which were extremely common in the vicinity. Soon after, a dog belonging to one of my companions passed me; stooping to the trail he gave tongue, and went in pursuit at his best possible speed. In a few moments I knew he had brought something to bay, and, proceeding to his assistance, I found a young bear the size of a badger, treed

in a six-inch sapling. Where was the mother? Answer says, "Don't know;" for young Bruin, after a vixenish fight, was secured, and, although half-an-hour elapsed in the operation, the old lady still remained *non est*.

It is very common for bears to be killed after they have retired to their dormitory for the winter sleep. When living near Lake Couchachin, in Canada, I assisted on such an occasion. An Indian from Rama came to me in great haste, with the hope I would sell him some ammunition. From his earnestness and anxiety I knew that he had made a valuable discovery, which after a little higgling was disclosed. He had found a bear's retreat in a hollow log, nearly imbedded in snow, and the ammunition was for poor Bruin's destruction.

Stipulating that I should have a share of the sport, I supplied the ammunition, and we started. The distance was short. Mr. Chippewa Indian knocked on the log, and the writer stood at the entrance. Poor Bruin at length forsook his snug retreat, yawning and looking stupid as he emerged into daylight, when a bullet at less than five yards settled the matter. When a bear is thus housed in a log, a heavy vapour of steam, should the weather be calm, perceptibly hangs over it.

A friend, in the true sense of the word, and myself heard of a small lake on the edges of New Hampshire and Maine, that was reported to swarm with trout, and, as a tramp through the wild timber-lands was never objectionable, we determined to make an effort to find it out. An old lumberman, long superannuated, gave us our instructions thus: "First go through the wood two

miles north, then incline a little to the westward, and after about half-an-hour's walking through a swamp you will strike a small brook, which follow up and you will certain sure make the pond."\* To those who have not wandered through an American forest such instructions will be perceived to be far from definite; to the thorough woodsman, however, they would be sufficient. Before we left the township road where we were to branch off, there stood a shanty, at which we halted to put up the horse and buggy in which we had thus far travelled. From the head of the establishment we made inquiries, who, calling to his son who was within, gave the following directions — "Bub,† take the gents and show them the pond." Now "Bub" was a most communicative youngster, about fourteen years of age, and, scenting a dollar in the distance, hopefully undertook the job. A cowpath we, the trio followed for more than a mile, then we continued on what is familiarly designated a blaze road—*id est*, a path marked out by a tree at every hundred yards, more or less, having a piece scooped out of its bark. The walking was as bad as possible, for constantly we were delayed by giants of the forest who had been prostrated by the gales of preceding winters. At length, tired and frightfully worried by mosquitoes, we reached a brook eight or ten feet in breadth, but deep and sullen as a canal; down this we pursued an erratic course till between two lofty bluffs we came upon a beautiful sheet of water of an area of about forty acres.

\* Small lakes in Maine are always called ponds.

† A Yankee father's familiar way of addressing his son; daughters after the same manner are called "ciss."

To fish it from the bank was impossible, for the sumach and cedar grew to its margin, so that no other resource was left but to cut a number of cedar logs and form a raft. An hour or more was lost in this operation, and when we had launched out we found that nothing but the smallest fry could be taken, although these were in such quantities that frequently we would have three or four rises to a cast. For an hour or more we fished indefatigably, still nothing over a quarter of a pound rewarded our labours, and when we landed for our pic-nic lunch I determined to fish the stream with the hope of obtaining some heavier specimens. My friend, who felt indisposed, either from the effects of the sun, or some State-of-Maine whisky (warranted to kill as far as a six-shooter) which he had been imbibing, refused to accompany me; so, with the youth who had acted as Palinurus, I left him to ruminate over his transgressions or misfortune.

As I had supposed, large fish were to be found in the stream, and my basket began to groan under its weight, when I hooked my flies in the top of a larch that leaned over the water close in my rear. With all my efforts I could not get them free, so sending the lad aloft, I waited patiently for him to cast them off. The place where I stood was hummocky, such lumps as you come across in the bogs of Ireland when snipe-shooting, only a great deal larger. With care and precaution the hummocks could be traversed without wetting a foot, but hurry would certainly get you between them, when over the boot-tops would be the consequence. I had stood for several minutes for the youngster to get the line loose, when across the stream,

but a short distance off, I heard an animal grunt; the spot whence the sound issued was a large clump of whortleberries, where some fallen timber lay. Not being quite certain that my ears had not deceived me, I waited, when the noise was repeated. By this time my line was free, and my juvenile companion was descending, when I asked him to listen to the noise, for I felt convinced that it emanated from no other than a bear feeding, enjoying his favourite *bonne bouche*, the blue berries. Young America listened; Bruin gave another grunt of evident satisfaction, when the former—exclaiming “bear!”—slid down the tree with such agility as would have put in shade the majority of monkeys. As soon as he reached the ground, off he started down stream, but the funniest part of all was that my guide, in the precipitancy of his movements, must have tripped over the hummocks at least half-a-dozen times in a dozen strides. When we had got thirty or forty yards off,—for I followed, though scarcely as rapidly,—my *amour propre* asserted itself, and I halted; not so my companion; soon he disappeared through the labyrinth of shrubs, and I remained alone. To my relief I found no bear was in pursuit, so, placing my rod against a stalwart hemlock, I ascended its branches to take a survey of the situation; for a long time I could not discover Bruin, but at length detected a large mass of black fur, accompanied by two smaller ones, busily employed feeding. They had quitted the wet ground and were on the edge of an acclivity, where the mother was most industriously drawing the broken fragments of shattered logs on one side, while her hopeful progeny feasted upon the beetles

and ants thus exposed. The old lady had neither wined nor heard us, and she remained sedulously pursuing her avocation, perfectly ignorant that her industry and strength were forming a subject of admiration to a son of Adam. At length their search for insects took them out of sight, and I descended to join my companions.

The day by this time was far spent, and neither of us having arms suitable for an assault upon the happy family, we determined to seek the settlement and revisit the scene on the morrow. Next day, at an early hour, with quite a reinforcement, all armed with most formidable firearms, from the Spencer rifle to the old smooth-bore, and accompanied by a well-trying bear-dog, we sallied forth; for miles we tracked Madam Bruin, by the broken fragments of decayed timber and the numerous logs she had disturbed from their original resting-place. Finally, we thought she could not be far distant, and the dog was untied; off he went like a thunderbolt, and in a quarter of an hour we heard him baying vociferously. Guns were looked to, the men most energetic previously now dropped behind, doubtless to examine their trusty rifles and see that the powder was up in the nipples; but when we reached Watch, what was our disgust to find that he had treed a covey of Canadian grouse. Unwillingly we went to work and decimated this unhappy and unconscious brood, nor could all our efforts afterwards induce the unfailing bear-dog to take up the desired track.

The scene of the subsequent narrative was between Lake St. John and Mud Lake, near the most northern extremity



of Lake Simcoe, Canada West, in which my efforts for Bruin's destruction were more successful.

In following a flight of ruffled grouse, which had risen so far beyond range as to have prevented my getting a shot at them, I came across a perfect brake of wild grape vines loaded with fruit. I could not withstand the temptation of halting for a feed, for they had been touched with frost, which changes them from the most unpalatable to the most delightfully-flavoured fruit. The day had been warm for the end of autumn, and I suppose the fatigue of my tramp, together with the delightful shade afforded, induced me to lie down, and as might be expected under the circumstances, I fell asleep. How long I might have been in a state of oblivion I cannot say, but I was awakened by my companion, a mongrel English terrier, barking vociferously at some intruder. After a stretch, a yawn, and the usual awakening actions, I turned in the direction of Prince to see what on earth had raised his ire and disturbed my siesta, when, judge my astonishment, —I beheld a large bear erect, pulling down the vines not twenty yards off, ignorant of my presence, but occasionally casting a furtive glance back at his angry assailant, who took precious good care to keep beyond arm's length. Men become cool in such situations, either from association or the power of controlling their feelings. My gun lay at my side loaded with number six; if Bruin found me out and became aggressive, at close quarters, say eight or ten yards, I was prepared to risk the issue; if he would only move off a little way, still keeping to windward, I thought I might improve my opportunity by substituting a brace

of bullets. Under any circumstances my gun would be required, so watching the first opportunity when the bear's back was turned, I brought my double-barrel close by my side, and cocked each lock. Many may laugh when I say I did not feel nervous; but I did not, and remained watching with special pleasure the enjoyment that my foe appeared to take in scrunching up whole bunches of the luscious fruit. As he worked further from me my dog became less demonstrative, only occasionally giving way to a suppressed growl, which his feelings were unable to control.

Deeming myself comparatively safe from the distance that intervened between us, I uncocked my gun; then first one barrel was unloaded, and the heavier missile substituted, then the next underwent the same operation, Bruin being now out of sight, still within hearing; but the tables were turned; if formerly I was prepared to leave him alone, I now felt equal to acting on the aggressive. Giving Prince a little encouragement, he again rushed to the attack, and it is wonderful with how much more ardour, knowing that his master's eye was on him. Soon I knew the dog had nipped him, for I heard a rush, and dogs will retreat towards their masters, which brought Bruin in full view. As the distance was greater than I liked, I hesitated to fire; but the bear had seen me, and disliking my appearance turned to make off, but the brave little cur was at his heels, and as I cheered him to the attack, he never lost an opportunity of pinching Bruin's stern, who at length treed to avoid the persecuting little pest which hung in his rear, the most desirable course for me he could have adopted.

By the time I reached the spot the enemy had gained the first fork, not twenty feet overhead, and is it to be wondered at that at such a short range, with not a twig to intervene, and with a clear view of the quarry's shoulder, one barrel brought him to the ground with no more action in his carcase than the usual death-struggle? My trophy was not large but well fed, and his hams afforded me for many a subsequent morning a *bonne bouche* worthy of a hunter.

But poor little Prince got into trouble before he reached home. As I struck the margin of a river which lay in my route, I observed a large bald-headed eagle sailing about. Keeping under the shelter of some brush, I waited for a chance. My right-hand barrel I had reloaded with heavy shot, and, as the bird passed about seventy yards off, I gave him a portion of its contents, which was responded to by his immediately reaching the ground with a broken wing. Prince, plucky with the issue of his late engagement, made a dash at the bird, but caught a Tartar, for he was seized by both talons, and, but that I came to the rescue, would have been rendered useless for any other purpose than baiting a wolf trap. As it was, after I had killed the bird I had some difficulty in unloosening its claws, and I doubt if my faithful little mongrel had lived to the age of Methuselah, he ever would have been induced to tackle another eagle.

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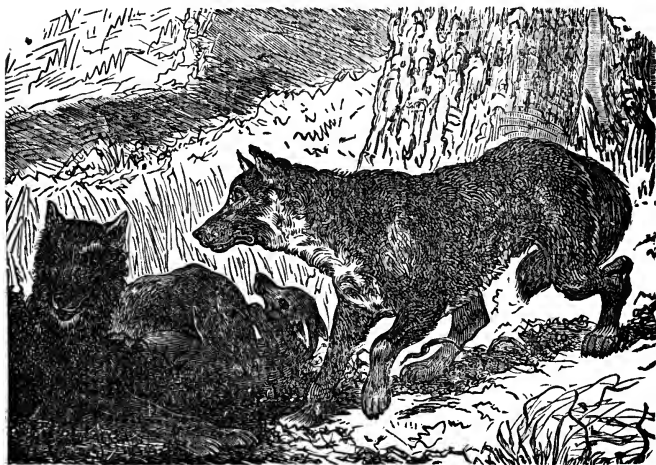
## CHAPTER XI.

## WOLVES.

THERE are certainly three distinct species of wolves on the American continent, many persons say more, but I am inclined to believe that from a desire to increase the fauna of a country, varieties are frequently transferred to the responsible places of species. My opportunities of studying the habits and appearance of the wolf have been very great; still, although my ideas are not in accordance with Audubon and Bacheman and other accepted naturalists, I have no hesitation in stating them.

First, on account of the greater size and nearer resemblance of the animal to the European race, we will take the common familiarly-called grey wolf. At one time it was scattered all over the North American continent to the Gulf of Mexico; but now, with few exceptions, is not to be found until the great prairies of the West or the slopes of the Rocky Mountains are reached, or the immense timber lands to the north of Canada entered. But still, although their habitat has become restricted, owing doubt-

less to difference of latitude—great varieties of colour are to be found among this species—but neither in habits, voice, nor shape are they in the least dissimilar; I am aware that at one time I possessed a different idea, but further experience and study of the subject caused me to change. Thus on the Rio Grande and in Southern New Mexico and Sonora, the wolf is most frequently black; as you advance northward red is the preponderating colour, gradually changing into grey as you get into higher latitudes, that changing to white as you approach the Arctic circle. The texture of the hair in the black wolf is coarse,



GREY WOLVES.

and his covering scant—that of the red animal similar but not so much so, while the grey is well provided with an abundant fur, but not equal in quality or texture to the

Arctic variety, Here as in many other races is to be observed the wonderful provision of nature to enable the animal kingdom to be suitably clothed for the climate they live in, whether they have to combat with almost tropical heat or hyperborean winters. Thus what is generally called the grey wolf is one and the same race with the black, brown and white, the change of colour being to adapt them to the prevailing temperature of the latitude they live in.



PRAIRIE WOLVES.

The two other species are the cayotte and prairie wolf, both much smaller than the afore-mentioned species, in fact bearing the same relative position to the new world as the jackal does to the old. They are essentially prairie

animals and invariably live in burrows, while the larger race, although found in the open country, is partial to forest, and generally sleeps in a nest or den upon the surface of the soil, or in a crevice of the rocks. The prairie wolves and cayottes are timid little fellows, living and hunting in communities, and if captured young are easily tamed, becoming much attached to their owner, and when in that state not unfrequently display sagacity worthy of the dog; while the larger wolf becomes sullen and treacherous with age, ever evincing an unconquerable dislike to his domesticated relation, the dog, and if at any time able to recover his liberty will at once return to the modes of life of his ancestry.

In courage the grey wolf of America materially differs from the old world race, it being of very rare occurrence for them to attack human beings—still that has happened, but never I believe in the powerful bands trooped together, that scour the Steppes of Western Siberia and Eastern European Russia. It may be that game being more abundant in North America the animals do not get reduced to the same straits from hunger, but this I doubt, for travellers of authority generally advance the opinion that finer hunting grounds than those that margin the Ural range are nowhere to be found. No; the ferocity of those of the old world is in my belief attributable to this: Europe and Asia have ever been the scenes of intestine wars, dead and wounded have been deserted and left to perish—naturally, the wild animals have preyed upon them, and thus become so familiar with our race as to know their helplessness and want of powers of resistance. Of

course the Indians have carried on wars among themselves, and the white man has constantly been in the habit of invading the territories of the aborigines, but the slaughter in these forays has been trifling, the victims on either side seldom left without interment, thus depriving the carnivoræ of an intimacy with the human family, which leads to contempt of our powers of resistance or possibly a relish for our flesh.

Few of us have not experienced the excitement of a gallop over a good grass country with the spotted beauties leading the way, getting over the ground at a racing pace, while your mount is nearly hauling you out of the saddle with enthusiasm and inclination to make himself on still more familiar terms with the pack. By Jove! how reckless such excitement makes you feel! Fear is banished for the time being—all sense of danger is dispelled to the winds, and sooner than be thrown out you would ride at a canal, or charge any height of timber. You may be old—yet for the time feel young: you may be *blasé*—yet you feel as buoyant as when you made your *début*. But it is far from the grass countries, across three thousand miles of water and fifteen hundred of land—far beyond the giant Mississippi, to the illimitable prairies of the Far West I wish you, in thought, to travel. Imagine a boundless expanse of undulating land, covered with grass; here and there a sparse scattering of brush, with perhaps one or two lines of timber that mark the margin of tributaries of some mighty river, and you have the landscape without entering into detail. What a place for a gallop! what a place for a buffalo run, or any other kind of run that will give your



mettlesome nag an opportunity of showing his pluck and endurance. But take care, don't ride with a slack rein, keep your eyes open; all may look plain sailing from the distance, but on closer inspection you may come upon a densely populated dog town, or collection of cayotte earths, each hole of which is big enough to use a Newfoundland in for a fox terrier.

Wolves of each species are found numerous all over this elysium; game is abundant, and the marauder is always on its track looking out for the feeble or unfortunate. Skulking scoundrels are these members of the canine fraternity, and cunning withal; keen and successful hunters if necessary, but addicted to idleness; for if they can obtain their dinner at others' expense, they are always ready to sacrifice their principle and sponge upon the first acquaintance. If you go out for pleasure, or with the desire of replenishing your larder, you are certain to be attended; you cannot get away from camp without their watchful eyes detecting you. As you rise one knoll you may observe the escort topping the last, and intently keeping all your movements under their observation. Full well do they know that if buffalo or deer fall before your rifle, on the refuse that you reject they will find a bounteous repast; or if your hands and eyes forget their cunning, and a wounded unfortunate goes off, then the chances are that the whole carcase will fall to their share, and a gorgeous feast on tidbits ensue, for master *Lupus* has wonderful scenting powers, and with the trail spiced with blood he grudges no amount of exertion.

Again, the wolf is generally in disgrace; for he steals

your game if deserted by you for a few hours to procure assistance to transport it to camp ; he eats your lariat ropes, untying your animals, nibbles the flaps of your saddles, and keeps up an unearthly serenade through those hours that the tired sportsman is most disposed to rest. Is it any wonder that he is unpopular, that he has few friends, and that he is considered a vermin of the first magnitude ? In all shooting excursions you will have idle days, a lay off for the more serious duties of the morrow, when guns are cleaned, bullets cast, powder-flasks replenished, and wet and dirty clothes dried or washed. The forenoon having sufficed to perform these labours, a run with a wolf will be found not a bad appetiser for your evening meal, or remover of your little stiffnesses and ailments, in the same way as a little exercise is necessary to the hunter the day after a long or hard run. To enjoy this pleasure to perfection you must be provided with dogs, and there are none so suitable as the strongest stamp of greyhounds ; more powerful ones that are addicted to grappling with the foe will get fearfully mauled, for the jaws of a wolf are almost as powerful as a hyena's, and consequently your limited establishment would be half the time on the sick list ; with the greyhound it is different. As soon as you get a view, at him they go, and although the game is swift, still his adversaries are not long in ranging alongside, when a snap in the hams or loins immediately brings him to bay. Determined and numerous are his efforts to catch the nimble antagonists, who take precious good care to keep beyond reach. After a few moments of such skirmishing, the closer approach of the sportsman admonishes the wolf

to be moving, and off he goes, best foot foremost ; but his persecutors are in attendance. A hundred or two yards may be traversed, and again he is brought up standing from a similar cause ; thus the game is played till the wolf is exhausted, and the sportsman gets sufficiently close to end the episode by a well-directed pistol-bullet through the grizzly marauder's cranium.

Spearing the wolf on horseback is also capital sport ; but it takes a great deal out of your nag, for the scoundrel while fresh will double almost as sharply as a hare, and from his wonderful lasting powers take you over an immense distance, he invariably choosing the roughest ground. In this mode also you must constantly be on the *qui vive*, for if opportunity offers he will make either your horse or yourself acquainted with his grinders, and a snap from him will be a memento. In the neighbourhood of Fort Riley an accident of this kind almost occurred to me. A large grey wolf jumped up before me, and as my horse was fresh and the afternoon cool, I made up my mind for a run. Drawing my revolver, and taking my nag in hand, we were soon skimming the prairie at a slashing pace. After a mile of this work I ranged alongside, but on several occasions when about to press the trigger, the wolf wheeled sharply to the right or left, once very nearly throwing my nag on his head. More determined to draw blood from the trick practised on me, I was soon again at his tail ; but the foe tried a new and quite unexpected ruse, viz. suddenly slackening his pace, and as I overshot him, made a most wicked snap at my off foot, which fortunately was protected by a heavy cow-hide boot ; but

the indentation showed that a lighter covering would have caused me to regret my prowess.

If ever you visit the Western Prairies you will not regret the trouble of taking with you some good strong greyhounds; the rough Scotch dog I should prefer, for you will not only find them great promoters of your sport, wolf-hunting, but useful auxiliaries in pulling down wounded deer, as well as most watchful and trustworthy camp guardians and companions.

#### FOXES.

The varieties and even species of foxes are so great on the North American continent that I doubt much if they have ever been properly classified by the naturalist. Go where you will, they are to be found. Of the commoner species, I may safely state that I have killed hundreds. So in the following I will allude only to the principal of them. For a long period I had resided in a part of Northern Canada, that probably supplies as many of those extremely rare animals—the Black or Silver Fox—as any portion of the American continent, and during the entire length of my residence was constantly associated with trappers, fur traders, *et hoc genus omne*, so a few remarks on this scarce and valuable animal may not be out of place.

The fabulous sum that a prime black fox-skin is worth causes this animal to be universally sought after; the tawny redskin or the swarthy half-bred hunter when he discovers the haunt of one of these beauties, never ceases day

or night to ponder over schemes for his capture; the martin and mink traps are for a time neglected, and every artifice, every trick and ingenuity that ever entered trapper's brain, is at once put into practice. Nor is this fox less wary than his *confrères*, but quite the reverse; and I believe in the current opinion that there is no animal more difficult to circumvent. Often of an evening I have listened to the broken English of the snake-eyed aborigines, or the curious *patois* of the Canadian habitant, recapitulating how they all but succeeded on such and such an occasion, or were rewarded with success upon another. By the bright glow of a wood fire, illuminating the unhewn log walls, rough chinking and shingle roof of a frontier cabin, the cold and bitter night being made doubly severe by the howling blasts that impetuously rush with angry noise through the disturbed trees, these narratives of perseverance and hardship form a pleasant way of passing the long wintry night. The cup goes round, the pipe is smoked, and the company, although illiterate and unpolished, possess one great quality—sincerity. If they quaff your health or shake your hand, it is not an empty form, but one which emanates from genuine friendship and unselfish feelings.

There are no distinctive differences between the black and red fox excepting colour, save it be that the fur of the former is much finer: but this can satisfactorily be accounted for by his residence being always in much colder latitudes; in fact, his chief resorts appear to be the intermediate space between the homes of the red and Arctic representatives. Nevertheless, I claim that he is of different

species from either of the afore-mentioned. My reason I will state.

The black fox has been known in North America since the first settlement of the country. We hear of one of the Indian chiefs presenting some of the earliest settlers with a skin of this species, as a mark of the high estimation placed on the white man's friendship. Not so with the red fox of at least the eastern portion of the North American continent. In searching over some old works among the admirable writings on natural history emanating from the pen of Postmaster-General Skinner, now dead many years, we learn that the red fox was introduced into the State of Maryland from England considerably over one hundred years ago. The importer was no other than the gallant and loyal old soldier, Colonel Guy Carlton, whose name so conspicuously appears associated in all the efforts made by the royal troops to suppress the revolution. This noble veteran was doubtless a hard-riding and enthusiastic fox-hunter. The little grey fox indigenous to the country did not suit his exalted ideas from having enjoyed the noble sport at home, and to remedy the evil he went to the trouble, and doubtless, in those days, great expense, to import the larger, gamer, and more lasting animal. The result was the success he so eminently deserved. The first arrivals were turned down in Maryland, not far from Baltimore. From there they have gradually extended north, south, and west, marking their advent by the gradual annihilation of the grey species. I have had the pleasure for some years of enjoying the friendship of Colonel Skinner, son of the old

postmaster-general ; from him I learn that he frequently heard his father speak on this subject, and that he has often visited the spot where the first English or red foxes were released. From my own personal experience I can state a circumstance corroborative of the fact, that with the *entrée* of the red fox into any section of country the grey species either migrates or perishes. Some years since I lived in a hilly portion of Southern Illinois. On my arrival the little grey foxes were so numerous that with a moderate pack of hounds two or three could be killed daily. I had not been there over a year when, to my surprise, I jumped up a noble specimen of the red, while deer-shooting. From that day the grey commenced to diminish, and I am informed by reliable authority that at the present time not a single representative of the smaller breed is to be found in that district. Audubon, an authority on whom generally the greatest reliance can be placed, regards the black and red fox as simple varieties of the same species. Doubtless he never heard of the red fox being a foreigner, or he would probably have agreed in the decision I have come to—knowing the truth of the red fox's introduction—that the black and red fox are entitled to be regarded as representatives of different species. Nor has the red fox belied his ancestry or deteriorated by his emigration. The keen and persevering foxhunters of Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Carolina, and Georgia, give him the credit of being the most lasting and difficult animal to run down that the forests produce. From the natural differences between England and America, fox-hunting is not only a very dissimilarly-

conducted sport, but in the latter associated with more labour and hardship. The woods are so immense that it generally results in cover-hunting from start to finish; consequently slower hounds require to be used, and every advantage of pug taken. At dawn the Field assemble, so as to catch their quarry with a full stomach, and it is no uncommon thing for the sun to have reached the western horizon and the hunters to be thirty miles from home ere the death wo—whoop be sounded.

But to the black fox. I had often longed to capture one of these beauties during my boyish residence on the American continent. The price that the pelt would bring was a supply of pocket-money that I could see no end to; but once, and only once, during that visit, had I the fortune to almost realise my wish. I had been hunting all day by the margin of a distant lake. Tired and unsuccessful, about the hour of sunset I approached a clearing of a few acres in the forest, where Indian corn had been grown and just gathered into shocks. My companion was a little half-bred terrier, who had endeared himself to me from his sagacity and obedience. As I neared the brush fence which surrounded the opening, with the habitual caution that residents in wild lands learn, I secreted myself behind a stump, and took a careful survey; for deer are fond of corn, so are bears, as well as all the small varieties of game. I had not remained thus hidden for many minutes when what I had taken for a charred stump suddenly became animated, and remarkable were the movements that heralded this transformation. One more glance told me that it was a fox of the long-coveted species; but what



the mischief was he about? mad surely, and for this reason, no creature in his senses could otherwise make such a fool of himself. First he took hold of his tail, and spun round like a kitten, next moment he was turning summersaults, or struggling on his back, kicking his legs in the air; then the tail-trick was reverted to again, and so on. For several minutes I stood transfixed; pug was too far off to shoot at, and any attempt at a stalk was too dangerous to put into practice. But my patience was not severely taxed. With a sudden spring the fox dashed forward; up flew a dozen Spruce grouse, and the black-coated gentleman, with a bird in his mouth, quietly trotted towards cover, giving me a cross shot at forty yards' range—a chance which I was not slow to avail myself of. With the report, pug turned head over heels, but quickly picked himself up, forgetting however his prey, and made for the timber. Hurriedly I gained the bird—small consolation for my disappointment; but my hopes were again revived, for my little cur dog took up the scent, and waking the echoes with his significant bark, went off as if he intended work. At the best pace I could command I followed, singing every few strides a word of encouragement to my trusty companion. Farther and farther into the woods I advanced, but soon it was so dark that at length, with barked shins and sundry tumbles, I was obliged to give up the pursuit. Several times in the chase I came to a standstill, and as often as I did so, Prince's voice appeared as if he had brought the foe to bay. Halting for the last time the same thing occurred, and as the dog did not appear to be much over a hundred yards distant, I determined to

make another effort, which resulted in no better success. This led me to believe that my dog came up with the fox, and brought him to bay, but as the latter was the larger, Prince was afraid to lay hold, and on my advancing too close to the belligerents pug would make off again, to stop when he thought himself out of harm's way.

Next morning I instituted a search, which was unsuccessful; but a week afterwards, when shooting wood grouse in the same vicinity, I accidentally came across the carcass of a dead black fox, partly immersed in a pool of stagnant water, which had utterly destroyed what must have been a most perfect and prime pelt.

Those fond of fox-hunting can have it to repletion in all parts of the country; for when the red is not to be found, the grey fox, kit or cross fox, and swift fox take their place.

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## CHAPTER XII.

## HARES.

ALTHOUGH it is common in America to hear different species of hares designated by the name of rabbit, this is one of those extraordinary mistakes in nomenclature, in reference to the fauna of the American continent, of which I have previously spoken ; for no true rabbit is to be found there, except in a state of domestication. In other words, they are not indigenous to the land. The little wood hare, so very abundant on the verge of cultivation that adjoins prairie land, might well have been confused with the other rodent, but when we find the Townsend hare and jackass hare, both remarkable for their size and strongly-marked characteristics of race, also called rabbits, such obviously erroneous misnomers appear intentional, and therefore culpable.

The little wood hare is to be found in large numbers in all those States whose rivers are tributaries of the Mississippi, their favourite haunts being neglected overgrown old clearings or uncultivated land that the heavy

timber has been cut off. With beagles they would afford admirable sport but for their habit of seeking shelter when pursued in decayed logs or hollow trees, their claws being so sharp that they can ascend the cavity in the interior of a perpendicular girdling from ten to twenty feet, and it is no unusual occurrence to find a dozen, or even more, of these pretty little creatures in the same retreat. This species is almost unknown in Canada.



SWAMP HARES.

The sportsman, wishing to make a bag of them, should use very small shot, say No. 7, for they require but slight injury to prevent their escape. The season of the year in which the greatest reward for his exertions will be obtained, is in early spring, particularly if the ground retains a

covering of snow, with a bright warm sun overhead. In the valley of the Wabash on such a day I have frequently killed over fifty in an afternoon. In the State of Missouri, near Brookfield, I have been equally successful. In fact, so great are their numbers in the prairie countries, margining timber land, that any ordinary shot can do the same in almost any portion of their habitat. The changeable or swamp hare is also abundant; but does not frequent the same localities as the last mentioned, being partial to thick, low-lying woodlands. Its southern range commences about the 10th degree of latitude, terminating about the 55th, cedar and hemlock swamps being its favourite retreats. In summer, this animal is a beautiful bright chestnut, while in winter it becomes almost entirely white, rendering it no easy object to see when the landscape possesses its snowy covering. With hounds it affords good sport, for it is fleet and enduring, and invariably prefers being run into, to taking shelter in tree-stump or rocky fissure. This species has frequently been confounded with the blue hare of Scotland, but both are so essentially dissimilar in their habits of life and in choice of haunts, that there can be no reason to doubt that they belong to separate species. However, there is another species of American hare found upon the barren lands about the 60th degree of north latitude, in Labrador and Newfoundland, which it would not surprise me to find to be identical with the white hare of Northern Europe.

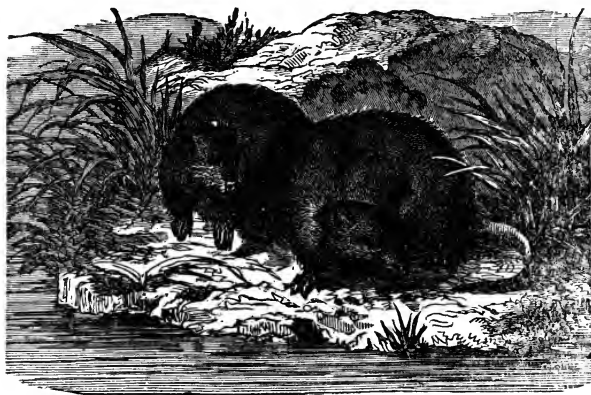
The jackass hare and Townsend's hare are very similar in appearance and habit, the former being larger than the latter. The habitat of the first being to the east of the

Rocky Mountains; of the second, to the westward, and upon the plains, verging on the Apache country, in Lower California. Where the country is sufficiently clear for coursing, doubtlessly good sport could be obtained with greyhounds, as they are remarkably swift and enduring. When among the caporal or wild sage, they have so little dread of man's presence that they will almost permit themselves to be kicked out of their form; from this circumstance, for shooting them, small shot, say No. 6, can be used to the greatest advantage.

The aquatic hare is alone found in America, the savannahs of Georgia and South Carolina being its favourite habitat; Kentucky, Southern Indiana, Illinois, also Tennessee, possess them. I am inclined to believe, however, that they are nowhere sufficiently numerous to make them a special object of pursuit.

My introduction to this animal I will relate. A little before sunset, on a fine calm evening in March, I took my stand upon a bridge crossing a slough in the southern portion of Illinois, with the hope of killing a few wild ducks. The atmosphere was so clear and still that the birds were very late in visiting their feeding-ground. While impatiently trying to kill time, I saw something swimming in the water, and supposing it to be a common American musk-rat, and being desirous of a new tobacco-pouch, I, well hid in the flags, stealthily stole along the margin of the water, to endeavour to obtain a closer shot, for the musk-rat requires a tremendous deal of killing. Having knocked over my game, in a few minutes my retriever laid it at my feet; but imagine my surprise when,

instead of a rat, I found it to be a hare. I could scarcely believe my senses, but seeing is believing. Of course I thought that the poor creature had been driven to water to avoid a foe, but before many days I shot several, and all in similar situations. The habits of this new variety I now made a study, and found that they were amphibious, sleeping in forms on the edge of the morass during the heat of the day, and feeding before sunrise and after sunset on the different descriptions of water plants. Whether this hare was able to dive or not I did not ascertain, but that he is a most expert swimmer there can be no doubt. His size is the same as that of our common wild rabbit, but from his build being thicker, he may possibly be heavier. His legs are



MUSQUASH OR AMERICAN MUSK-RATS.

short, feet large, ears small, and head very full and round; colour dark-greyish brown, with scarcely any white upon the scut, and the fur exceedingly soft and fine. I frequently

tested his qualities on the table, and can speak in the highest approval of the delicacy and delicious flavour of his flesh, which is much lighter in shade than that of any other of the same family with which I am acquainted. The skin, remarkable for its thinness, is easily removed from the carcase ; but great care must be taken to prevent it getting torn. On inquiring, I found that this hare was well known by the residents, and from them learned that it bred only once a year, generally producing two at a birth ; and that the young at a very early age follow their mother in her sundry aquatic excursions in search of those delicate water plants that form their staple food.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

## GROUSE.

THERE are supposed to be upwards of twenty species of grouse upon the continent of North America. However, they have never been strictly classified, so I will confine my remarks to those best known, commencing with the pinnated grouse, prairie chicken, or prairie hen, for by all these names this noble bird is recognised in different localities. During my sojourn across the Atlantic I recognised three distinctly marked varieties of this species—two only differing in colour of plumage and size; the third having a tail longer by some inches than its *confrères* and terminating in a point. This last has its habitat in higher latitude than the others, being found in the greatest abundance on the plains that surround the Saskatchewan river, while the former are common to all the prairie country of the States of Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Michigan, even as far south as Texas. The flight of all is swift, powerful, and prolonged, so that late in autumn, when the young birds have reached maturity, a

mile or even more distance will be traversed from the place where they are flushed till they think proper to alight. On the contrary, early in the shooting season, they will lay with such persistency that many efforts of both dog and sportsman will be required before they can be induced to take wing. Their pursuit is followed in the same manner as that of red grouse upon Scotch moors, for their time of watering, dusting, and feeding, are almost identical. At the commencement of the shooting season (which I believe is now on the 1st of September), No. 7 shot will be found heavy enough to do effective work, but later on, when cold nights, accompanied by rain and wind, have taken place, No. 5 should be used.

The first pheasant I killed in China I thought the noblest game-bird that ever I had pulled a trigger upon, and truly he was a beauty; the plumage was in the most perfect state—the neck of the greenest emerald, the ring of the purest white, the tail the longest, and the different shades and tints of wings and body the very brightest I had ever seen in one of the species; moreover, he weighed nearly one-half more than any of the same family I had killed at home, and to add additional appreciation, the shot that brought him to the ground was a difficult one, and at long range. For years the pheasant of the southern portion of China reigned paramount in my opinion; but a change has come over my ideas, and now, superlative before all others, I place two descriptions of American game-birds, and this species is one of them. What days of pleasure have I had in the pursuit of pinnated grouse! What splendid bags have I made, and on such ground as

gave my darling companion setters the very best opportunities of showing their sagacity and careful education to the greatest advantage. In alluding to the ruffled grouse, I have stated that I do not believe this bird (the pinnated grouse) so worthy of acclimatisation; and why? he disregards distance in his late autumnal flights; and therefore where shooting-ranges are limited by bounds, unless the proprietors on every side would mutually agree for their protection, I fear that the labours of the introducer in the cause of acclimatisation would be fraught with dissatisfaction. But for all that, the pinnated grouse is deserving of attention; for he is truly a most noble bird, and affords the best of sport, till the cold winds preceding winter cause them to pack, in the same manner as our red and black game; when their wariness becomes so great that naught but quick shooting and Ely's green cartridges are likely to help the labourer to produce a bag remunerative for his toil. That this bird could be acclimatized here there is no doubt, for he is capable of withstanding great changes of temperature; is not particular as to choice of ground as long as it is open, and a sufficiency of food can be obtained.

Although its range now is confined to the prairie country of the United States—not being found, with two exceptions, till the edge of the Grand Prairie is reached—still formerly it was equally abundant all over the open lands, on the edge of the Atlantic sea-board; still, however, Long Island and Martha's vineyard possess some remnants, who long since would have disappeared but for the protection and care of the landowners, who have endeavoured to prevent,

if possible, their extinction. I cannot well imagine any place so bleak in winter as the scrub uplands of the two afore-mentioned islands, unless perhaps Mull and Jura on our Scotch coast. The bird that could with impunity withstand the rigours of the cold in the former, could doubtless do the same in the latter. The pinnated grouse pairs in March, and generally produces from twelve to fourteen young at a brood; the chicks very early take to the wing, but their flight is weak and short until they are more than half-grown. During the infancy of the family the courage and artifice of the parent bird to intimidate or draw off intruders are worthy of notice. At first she will fly towards you as if intent on doing you battle, but when this course has failed, she will retire, droop her wings, struggle on the ground, only just keeping beyond your grasp, always moving in a direction contrary to where her brood are hid, until parent instinct tells her that the children are safe, when suddenly, on strong wings, she will start for a distant flight. The facility with which the young secrete themselves is most surprising. Frequently have I got unexpectedly into the centre of a family, when up they would rise like a flight of bees and as rapidly drop again; certainly you see the exact spot on which they have alighted—that tuft of grass you believe most surely contains one, but search as you will, turn over carefully every blade, look well about the roots—all is useless, for no fledgling will you discover.

At the commencement of the pairing season, particularly if the weather is calm and cloudy, the male birds call all day; their note resembling the lowing of a cow, which can

be heard distinctly for over a mile. As the spring advances they confine this habit to evening and morning, but by the time the brood is hatched, cease it altogether. The peculiarity of the call of the males of this species is such, that once heard, it is difficult to forget, particularly when softened by distance; it is produced by forcing the air out of two orange-coloured receptacles placed on either side of the throat, and which, when inflated, are as large in circumference as a man's finger, perfectly free from feathers upon their surface, but hid when in a state of quiescence by fan-shaped bunches of hackles that completely cover them.\*

The pinnated grouse is about the size of our pheasant; however, they differ considerably, those birds that inhabit southern Illinois being at least one-fourth larger than those obtained in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the north-west prairies. They are of a beautiful mottled-brown and fawn colour, frequently with white finger-marks on the upper portion of the wings and back: are feathered down the legs to the feet, have beautifully set-on small heads, with a slight crest, and bright yellow iris. When standing, their attitude is very erect, but graceful. On being flushed, they invariably cackle, and the flight, except of young birds, is very long. In the commencement of the season, and in fact as long as the weather is bright and mild, they lie remarkably well to dogs; but severe and cold weather causes them to pack and become wild. However, late in October, or even in November, if you should hit upon a

\* The most killing hackles for tying trout-flies.

warm, summer-like day, the birds will become so disinclined for exertion, between the hours of 10 A.M. and 3 P.M., that marvellous bags can be made.

As food, this bird can favourably compare with any of the grouse family, but is dissimilar in one respect from all the others,—that the sooner it is cooked after being killed, the more delicate and savoury it will be found. Even the skill of Delmonico, of New York, the justly-celebrated restaurant proprietor, with all his knowledge of *cuisine*, cannot impart the delicate flavour that the same bird would have from the hands of the most ignorant cook, provided it were served a few hours after being killed.

This grouse can easily be domesticated. Mr. Audubon, the naturalist, for some time kept quite a number in a walled garden, where they became as tame as domestic fowls; from this circumstance I do not believe there would be any difficulty in transporting them across the Atlantic. To gentlemen stocking preserves, or desirous of being able to show a great variety of game upon their estate, this magnificent member of the grouse genus ought to receive attention.

The best prairie-chicken shooting I have ever had was in the month of October; and although September had been both wet and boisterous, yet the birds had not packed, and lay well. Day after day I killed from twenty brace upwards, and this in the northern portion of Illinois, with a fourteen-bore, light-made, twenty-six-inch-barrelled gun. I have little hesitation in saying that, if I had had a ten-bore, which I now always use for general shooting in America, my score would have been at least double. As it was I

saved nearly every bird, for in the numerous shipments which I made to a wide circle of acquaintances I did not hear of one arriving at its destination unfit for the table. Now, in September, this would have been impossible, though hours had been spent over each packing-case, and the expected hamper contained at starting as much ice and a little more charcoal than game. Some knowing hands profess that by immediately drawing the fowl upon being knocked over, and stuffing a wisp of grass in the cavity, putrefaction will be delayed; but what an agreeable operation to have to perform! Fancy stopping in the middle of a covey, with dogs standing, to perform the functions of a kitchen-maid!—the humanity or refinement of the proceeding, the afterwards loading and handling your handsome breech-loader with your well-daubed hands! or, perhaps, in a fit of desperation, caused by the attack of some blood-thirsty mosquito, giving your nose or forehead the benefit resulting from your labour! But it is too horrible to think of. All these drawbacks can be warded off or prevented by not shooting till the weather is suitable; or, better still, not permitting shooting till such a date as we have reason to expect a sufficiently cool temperature; making it actionable for game-dealers to expose for sale the temporarily forbidden treasures before the termination of the close season. Gentlemen of America, if you wish to keep game abundant, and near home, and to increase and preserve the fine feelings that should imbue the breast of every true sportsman, devote a little attention to this important point.

Like the deer, bear, and sundry varieties of American

game, which once were to be found in abundance in almost every section of the country, so was the prairie chicken; but as civilization and population have increased, in such a ratio their numbers have diminished. In Kentucky, forty years ago, they abounded; it is more than doubtful that one can now be found in that State. The pinnated grouse has abandoned its old haunts, like the Indian, and removes every season farther to the westward, to avoid the society of the pale-faced interloper. Fortunately, all game does not thus dread the stranger's presence, for as civilization increases, so does the partridge, and the familiar call of Bob White will soon entirely supplant the deep, musical, but strange boeing of the prairie fowl east of the Mississipi.

To get sport now-a-days, the ultimate western edge of Indiana and the State of Illinois, for the eastern sportsman, are undoubtedly the nearest points; but even after having travelled thus far, if you desire results commensurate with your trouble, rest not near the track of the iron horse, but pursue, to the right or left, your course till you find people who still talk of the cars\* as seven-day wonders, and report as a marvel, that one still night, a month ago, Hans or Jaques heard them whistle. When such originals have been found, if heavy bags are desired, till then, and not till then, call a halt.

The prairie fowl are very erratic in their habits, and the situations in which they abound one season may be almost entirely deserted the next. It has often puzzled me to account for this strange uncertainty in their choice, and I

\* Railroads.



have thus far failed to satisfy my mind, unless the burning of the grass, or inundations, to which the western country is particularly subject, can be accepted as a reason. A few years ago a low prairie close to my dwelling was most amply stocked with prairie fowl, so much so that I used to limit my bag to one dozen, and seldom did it take more than an hour to obtain this number. Next year, on the same land, not one solitary bird was to be found. Now, this prairie had not been burnt, although others in the vicinity had undergone the operation. Early in the season, before the young have attained maturity, and ere the cold and boisterous winds of autumn have caused them to pack, the sportsman must indeed be a bad shot who cannot tumble them on nearly each discharge, for they are easy of approach, lying very close, and rising and flying slowly, without making much of that disconcerting disturbance so apparent in the flushing of partridge and of ruffed grouse. Again, the ground in which they are found is open, and clear from interruptions, affording an abundance of time for the most precise and formal to take aim; but after the autumnal equinoctial gales have whistled over the unprotected landscape, and the sharp night-frosts have changed the verdant leaves to a vermillion or golden hue, rapid and precise shooting is required, for not only will they rise at long range, but take hard and fair hitting to bring them down, and instead of finding the quarry on the sun-warmed, open, grassy slopes, the dense tall corn will be more frequently selected as their chosen retreat.

Of course, the farther you proceed West, the nearer you reach the ultimate extremities of civilization, the greater

will be your prospects of heavy bags, and more particularly so late in the season, as the population being sparse, and the intrusion of cattle, sheep, and dogs less frequent, the birds still continue comparatively tamer than in the more densely settled quarters. However, it is not convenient for all, nor even would many choose to sacrifice every comfort for the sake of slaughter, and turn a pleasure into a labour, and a pursuit of discomfort; for living in a squatter's hut is scarcely, as an old friend used to say, "what it's cracked up to be": besides, what can you do with the results, a very small portion of which will satisfy your own demands? For my part, give me from eight to ten brace daily, with means of using them, to the most tremendous bags, if they are to be thrown away. Not many years since, when travelling through a remote and unfrequented section of the State of Illinois, I came across a party of young men who were daily destroying from twenty to thirty couple per gun, and as the season was warm, and the connection with the railroad difficult and uncertain, when asked by the tavern-keeper what they intended doing with their game, they laughingly responded, "Throw it in the hog-pen," and for upwards of a week they continued this dastardly behaviour. Can it then be wondered that game rapidly diminishes, when persons are to be found capable of such disgraceful conduct? The only check that I can see, is the organisation of proper game-laws, and putting their enforcement in the hands of honest, reliable men, who will see them carried out to the very letter, the violation of which should be punishable by heavy fines, the greater part to go to the informer.

Pinnated grouse are very capricious in choice of sites on which to place their nests ; solitude and vicinity to favourite food or other causes, of which an outsider can know but little, must be accepted as the probable reasons. However, I have generally observed that a preference is shown for those places where the prairie is covered with bunch-grass, particularly if the subsurface is moist, and the neighbourhood not overstocked with cattle. This bird is easily caused to desert her nest, whether the intrusion be committed by man or beast ; on such occasions a new nursery is chosen and a second lot of eggs laid, but if misfortune should deprive her of her brood after the young have left the egg, all idea of raising a second family is laid aside, and the chickless mother joins company with the first similarly-situated unfortunate she may chance to meet. Odd hen-birds, when found by the sportsman, are frequently supposed to be barren, but in nine instances out of ten, I am satisfied that some luckless cur dog, mink, or weasel deserves the onus for the poor birds broodless lot.

About the end of March the large flocks begin to break up and divide into parties of twenty or thirty, each detachment selecting a knoll on which to exhibit their fascinations to the fair sex or select partners. On the first glint of dawn the males utter their war-cry, and either wait to receive their rivals, in love, or swiftly wing their way to accept the challenge of some distant gallant. The fiercest battles now ensue ;\* nor is it only between two, for some-

\* Until a late date I believed these battles were a description of tournament, in fact, all for show. However, this is not the case, and numbers of the combatants get severely injured.

times a dozen may be observed engaged in the *mêlée*, each fearlessly attacking his nearest neighbour, rising and striking with the wings and feet, much after the manner of domestic poultry, when feathers fly and severe and numerous injuries are received, till the weaker, finding their strength inadequate to the trial, reluctantly retire, and some old veteran alone remains, exhausted and war-stained, to make selection of his future mate. Often have the birds been found, after these contests, so exhausted that they were scarcely able to rise off the ground or avoid the traveller's feet. And well do the hawks know their enfeebled condition after such tournaments, and are not slow to avail themselves of the advantage, and pounce upon the unfortunate conquerors, who, but for their now exhausted condition, resulting from their prowess, could easily have avoided the relentless destroyer.

As soon as the victor has made his choice, he retires. The same scenes are again and again enacted till all are mated.

Like the turkey-cock and domestic pigeon, when making love they ruffle their feathers, drop their wings and tail, and strut about with more pomposity than ever did city beau.

The nest, which is generally placed upon the top of a hillock among the long grass, in shape is irregular, but on examination it will be found carefully constructed of leaves and interwoven grasses. The eggs are a trifle smaller than those of the domestic fowl, and are of a dull yellowish colour, much resembling those of the ruffed grouse. In eighteen or nineteen days they are hatched, and the chicks leave their nest immediately afterwards. From this period

the female is deserted by her mate, and until severe weather causes them to pack, the old males and females are not found again together.

By the first week in August the young are capable of short flights, although not exceeding our partridge in size, and if shot thus early, which is too frequently the case, it is difficult to imagine more delicious food; but they will not bear keeping, and sooner taint than any other game-bird I am acquainted with.

Although the pinnated grouse seldom leave the open country, yet if winter be excessively severe they will frequent the edges of the timber, roosting on the tallest trees, more particularly girdlings or those destitute of small limbs. Under such circumstances they are exceedingly wild, and the most successful deer or turkey hunter may practise all his cunning and most cautious methods of approach with signal failure in getting even within rifle-range; however, in a snow-storm, by putting white clothes on, or a night-gown over your attire, and tying a towel around your head, with facility the gunner can get within ten or fifteen yards of them.

When flushed, prairie chicken invariably utter several separate clucks, but after they have succeeded in placing a safe distance between themselves and the intruder they continue their course in silence; nor if when on the wing they should chance to fly over a sportsman do they repeat their note of alarm.

Their favourite food is buckwheat, corn, oats, wheat, and grass-seed, the buds of fruit trees and the seed of the sumach.

Their size is eighteen inches long by twenty-seven inches across the wings: bill short, stout and curved, with the upper mandible considerably overlapping the lower; legs feathered to the ankle; feet of ordinary size; toes covered above with numerous small scales; hind toes very short; claws moderately long, curved and concave beneath; feathers compact, those of the head and neck long and flexible, with a continuation tapering to a crest on back of head; on either side a tuft of fine long hackles, covering a bare portion, which is orange-coloured in the males, and dull brown in the females; the wings short and much rounded; pin feathers hard and short; tail short, and composed of eighteen broad feathers; bill dusky; iris yellow; toes dull yellow; claws bluish; the neck and upper portion of back dark brown, mixed with grey, getting lighter beneath; tail dirty brown, tipped with white, except the middle feathers, which are mottled with a deep brown; and a dark line from mandible to eye, thence back to neck, and a beautiful patch of soft slate-coloured feathers under each wing, invaluable to the fly tyer,—is a correct description of their appearance.

The following are the events of a day's shooting on the grand prairie, which occurred a few years since, and may be considered as a sample of the average sport to be enjoyed in the month of October.

On rising from the breakfast-table we found the team waiting. But few minutes were necessary to stow our traps, and get under way. Near the confines of the village (Kent, Indiana) we found birds, but our driver (who was a regular Tom Draw) would not allow us to alight, insisting that we

must go first to our intended sporting ground. About forty minutes took us there, our charioteer beguiling the time with innumerable anecdotes and songs, never being silent for a moment. One ditty he was particularly attached to, which I can scarcely forget, he having sung it at least a dozen times :—

“ My health and wealth declining,  
The doctor was called in ;  
He spoke to me so serious—  
He spoke to me so plain—  
‘ You ’ve racked your constitution  
By getting drunk again.’ ”

However, the warning that the medical attendant appears to have given him seemed to be thrown away, for he drank more spirits, with more gusto, and that without showing the effect, than any representative of the genus I ever previously met.

Arriving on the ground, we determined to hunt Beau and Belle, and keep Jock and Fan for the afternoon. Leaving our waggon by the side of an Osage orange hedge, separating the prairie from a large corn-field, and, having inserted cartridges in each barrel, we commenced work. The ground we intended first beating was rolling prairie, with a sufficiency of grass on it to make the walking good, and the cover tolerable. My companions and self stretched into line and started with the wind in our faces. Before progressing a hundred yards Belle set dead as a statue, and Beau immediately backed. Steadily we walked up to the dogs, expecting immediately to commence fire upon a pack of grouse ; but what was our disappointment to find that the dogs were standing to a covey of partridge scarcely

half grown ; so we let the young ones go without molestation, and continued our range. Our previous forbearance was soon rewarded, for a hundred yards farther our setters again drew on game, Beau now having the lead. Up we went, and although alongside the dogs, nothing showed. By coaxing they advanced farther, and lay down. There was no mistake now ; this indication I seldom knew to fail. Short was the period of suspense, for up the grouse commenced rising, not altogether, but by twos and threes. Each gun killed two birds at the first fire, and not being delayed in loading, our dogs were soon ordered to retrieve. Belle had not gone five paces to perform this duty when she again stood, and bang, bang, from all our guns followed ; in five minutes we had fifteen birds on the ground, and more flushing every moment. What luck we were in ! We had evidently got out of bed on the right side that morning, and were in for a big day's work. While retrieving the birds two more fell to our aim, making seventeen out of the covey, a pretty good account : and, better still, those that had not been shot at did not continue their flight more than two hundred yards, when they lit on the brow of a sunny bank. Having bagged our game, and handed them to Hank (for that was our charioteer's name), we hunted up the survivors, and soon were at work again ; the dogs struck them off at once, and, save that two escaped, who were out of bounds, and took a lengthened journey out prairie-wards, we bagged all.

Our charioteer now returned, and gave us the satisfactory information that there were plenty more, but at the same time adding, "Look you here, jist leave some to breed."



We found that our fat friend was correct, for before ten minutes we were again enfilading a second covey. I must tell you how splendidly Beau found this pack. When ranging two hundred yards off, at his usual swinging gallop, he stopped, and sticking his old, knowing head perpendicularly in the air, commenced walking straight forward, with a delicate, careful step, well suited for progression over eggs. As I had seen him do so previously, I knew what was coming, and called my friends' attention, so that they might gradually close up towards the keen-nosed setter. Belle soon saw what Beau was up to, and followed him with equally cautious, gingery steps. H., who was off on my right, flushed a bird, which he cleverly cut down with his first barrel, making a very pretty cross shot. But where were the dogs? Both down in the grass waiting for us to come, nor could they be persuaded to leave the game they were on to find the victim first killed. After looking for a few moments, we gave it up, I marking the place as near as I knew by dropping my white pocket-handkerchief, intending to return as soon as I had learned what the dogs had found. As we advanced, Beau and Belle rose, and continued drawing for near a hundred paces more, when they stood. Oh, that some artist had been there to sketch them on the spot! Nothing would I grudge for the picture. The attitude of setter or pointer, when standing, is to me the personification of grace and beauty: and these were two of the handsomest of the breed that ever gun was fired over. Well, the old story: the birds were put up, so packed that we all had difficulty in singling them; five more fell to our lot; the others, after going about sixty

rods, dropping, scattered among a thick growth of iron-weed. The dogs must, on this occasion, have winded their game at least several hundred yards off, so strong is the effluvia emitted by this game and noble bird.

The majority of the last brood we killed; so, ere noon had arrived, our bag consisted of seventy head of prairie chicken fairly bagged.

Hank selected a well-suited place for our meal, and with *otium sine dignitate* we passed the meridian hours of the day, happy and contented, at peace with all men, and conscious of the pleasure of successfully following an innocent pursuit.

We remained under the hedge till after two o'clock, eating, chatting, and smoking, our irrepressible driver relating, in the most facetious manner, several most amusing anecdotes of his previous career; but as the western sun commenced to elongate its shadows, and the afternoon breeze to cool the atmosphere, a start was agreed upon, and with one accord each rose and shouldered his gun, intent on doing good shooting and further swelling the capacity of our already distended game-bags. The fresh brace of dogs were uncoupled, and, amid the discordant notes and piteous whining of our discarded morning favourites, we started for the beat.

The ground we were about to hunt exactly resembled in appearance and vegetation what we had traversed in the morning, and our anticipations of sport, from former experience, were up to the boiling-point. However, we must have walked quite an hour before either obtained a shot, although the slut ran up two birds, for which she got

a severe rating. In prairie-chicken shooting I have frequently observed, and on this occasion it was a corroboration of the fact, that during the heat of mid-day, or immediately afterwards, pinnated grouse are seldom or never to be found near cultivation; why, I cannot say, but they always appear in an unaccountable manner to have transferred themselves to the uninterrupted prairie.

Our lengthened tramp had now brought us to ground more irregular, with vegetation more rank, and sparsely sprinkled with dwarf osier and willow, the surface being damp, and occasionally intersected with rivulets. Our spirits were all becoming depressed from our want of success, and even a new beat had been proposed, and was on the eve of being accepted, when both dogs stood, not ten yards apart, and each, apparently, on different birds. This pleasing incident revived our drooping spirits, and with steady, regular stride we approached them. When we got up, three birds flushed, which were immediately cut down; still another and another met the same fate; and in less than five minutes nine were on the ground. These were without difficulty retrieved, and the dogs ordered on to find more; scarce a hundred yards had they ranged when they a second time found game, the slut leading and the dog just at her shoulder, backing. It was perfectly evident that we had discovered the retreat of the prairie chickens; water or solitude had undoubtedly caused them to assemble here.

Soon we got to the dogs, and never in the course of my experience did I see a sharper half hour's work. Bird after bird rose, and was knocked over: scarcely had we time to

thrust into the breeches fresh cartridges before we were called upon to deliver our fire; not less than a hundred and fifty birds must have flushed in that space of time, out of which number nearly half fell to our guns. At one moment, over twenty were on the ground, waiting to be picked up; and, better than all, we did not lose a single cripple, although one old cock, which had only been pinioned, cost us some minutes' labour before being bagged.

#### RUFFED GROUSE.

Contrary to the last-described species, this worthy member of a noble family loves the woodland glades and rocky hill-sides. The verge of the prairie he may occasionally visit, but let him be disturbed, his fears excited, like arrow from bow he will wing his way direct to the friendly shelter of the forest.

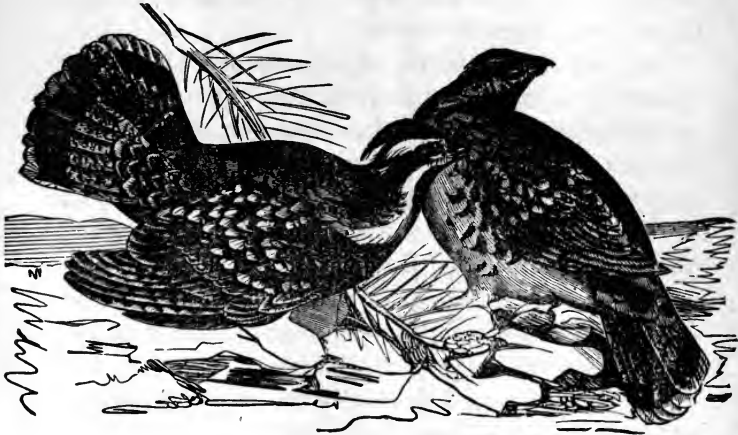
But all woods do not suit the fastidious taste of this beauty—for when there exists only the fat, damp, slimy bottom lands that margin so many of the south-western rivers, he is not to be found. No—rolling country and hilly spurs are his home, where, deep in the shelter of the laurel, cedar, hemlock, hazel, and birch, he can laugh at his pursuers, unless they are the very quickest and best of shots. But I allude to where he has known man and learned to dread his presence as ominous of evil, for when such is not the case, if flushed they are often satisfied to settle upon the first tree in the neighbourhood, regarding the intruder with looks of wonder, and remain gratifying their excited curiosity till the whole covey have been shot in detail. Throughout Canada West they are numerous.

At the northern end of Lake Simcoe I found them very abundant, also on the hill-sides that cradle in the lovely, peaceful Lake Umbagog in Oxford County, Maine ; but western Maryland and Virginia are also favourite haunts—in fact, it may be found everywhere where wood, water, and hill-side combine to form for it a suitable haunt, between 32 and 50 degrees of north latitude. No. 6 shot I prefer for shooting ruffed grouse, as from the nature of the ground on which they are found, more birds are killed at short range than at longer distances.

The characteristics of the ruffed grouse make them better adapted for a residence in England than the prairie hen ; and so strongly am I disposed in their favour, that I believe if once introduced they would, as soon as known, out-rival the pheasant in popularity, being much hardier, swifter on the wing, lying better to dogs, disinclined to run before flushing, requiring the quickest and straightest aim to bring them to bag ; moreover, independent of these sporting perfections, they are not much inferior to the Oriental favourite in beauty of plumage.

The ruffed grouse a little exceeds the red grouse of Scotland in size, being almost eighteen inches in length, is very handsome and upright in form, of a beautiful rich chestnut brown colour, variegated with grey and dark spots, and pencillings on the back, breast, and neck. The tail is grey, with a black bar across it near its termination, and is generally carried open like a fan. On the top of the head there is a slight crest, and down each side of the neck are curious fan-shaped tufts of glossy black velvet-looking feathers. In April these birds pair, but I should imagine,

from the seasons in the northern portion of the United States and Canada being more backward than ours, if they were introduced here they would do so a month earlier. They lay from ten to sixteen eggs, their nest, which is a very primitive one, being generally secreted in brush, or under the shelter of a fallen log. They are most affectionate parents, and use the same artifices as the wild duck to draw away the intruders from the vicinity of their youthful progeny.



RUFFED GROUSE.

This grouse has two distinct calls, one a soft, mellow, prolonged note, generally used in gathering after the covey has been broken up; the other an extraordinary drumming sound made by the cocks in the pairing season, and capable of being heard in still weather a great distance. The latter noise is caused by the rapid vibration of the wings when the male is perched on a fallen tree or stump.

Indiscriminately they live on a great variety of food—ants, grubs, alder-berries, wild cherries, and grain being their favourite diet. Early in autumn, when the weather is fine, particularly in the morning and evening, they will be found in the open cultivation, more especially if there be rough ground with brush in the vicinity; but as severe weather approaches, the woods will become their constant resort. In shooting the ruffed grouse, great difficulty is always experienced in marking them. Their flight, as I have previously said, is wonderfully rapid, and they have a method of doubling back in the reverse direction to which they started; however, as they do not generally go far (about three or four hundred yards), with patience, and a selection of the nearest irregular ground which has young timber upon it, or the densest brush that is in the neighbourhood, a second opportunity will probably occur of bringing more of the family to bag. In many portions of the United States and Canada they are known by the misnomers of partridge and pheasant. Frequently when trout-fishing in the wilds of the State of Maine I have come suddenly upon them, when they would rise into the nearest tree, and remain with unconcern watching me; from evident curiosity they would stretch their necks and get into all kinds of grotesque attitudes; and so little would they then regard the report of a gun that I have known pot-hunters kill quite a number of the same family by always shooting the lowest birds first. But when the ruffed grouse becomes familiar with man he is perfectly cognizant of the danger of being in his proximity. Although before dogs they lie close, their colour harmonises so well with that of the ground,

that it is next to impossible to see them before they are on the wing.

In the undergrowth which springs up in that portion of the country where the timber has been destroyed by fire, I ever found them very abundant, it being almost impossible to wander half a mile through such openings without flushing a covey. As these generally occur in the lumber regions, where the winters are particularly long and rigorous, far exceeding in severity those of Scotland, the hardiness of this bird cannot be doubted. In the Alleghanies and all the southern ranges of hills of the United States, it is also abundant, where, if the winters are less severe, the heat in summer is sometimes excessive, proving that the ruffed grouse is capable of enduring great varieties of climate.

The palate of the most fastidious epicure cannot fail to be gratified with the appearance of this game on the table, the flesh being extremely delicate, with a strong flavour of our red grouse. I have eaten it cooked in every conceivable manner, and whether it be simply roasted over a camp fire, or form a portion of an omnium gatherum stew, it will be found alike acceptable. Although scarcity of food may compel this grouse to change its beat, still it is not migratory, as stated by some naturalists. This supposition has arisen from their being found in great numbers during summer and autumn on the scrub barren land, which they leave as soon as the more severe weather commences, for the shelter of the dense timber. A family of these birds I was acquainted with for a year. On their range there was an abundance of food and water, and



during that period I could always find them, their home being a little hilly island in the prairie covered with timber and brush, and detached from any irregular land by several miles of grass.

Some authorities have placed woodcock-shooting first in the list, and called it the fox-hunting of those pleasures in which the dog and gun form the chief accessories. As far as present British field sports are concerned, I believe they are correct, but should the ruffed grouse be introduced, and Englishmen experience the suddenness of their rise, the velocity and irregularity of their flight, the uncertainty of their movements, and the beauty and size of this game when bagged, they would assuredly insert a saving clause. I doubt not many, I believe all, of the warm admirers of shooting will agree with me that there is a superior pleasure in making a mixed bag—now a mallard, next a woodcock, perchance thirdly a partridge, and so forth—loading your discharged barrel, scarcely knowing at what description of game it will be used. Thus a reason for their introduction to England.

If the inhabitants of the British Islands can boast of their pheasant and grouse, the Americans can in equal justice laud their ruffed grouse and Virginian ortix.

#### CANADIAN OR SPRUCE GROUSE.

Even to the red iris around the eye, so much does this bird resemble the red grouse of Scotland that it would be pardonable for any one who had not well known the latter to confuse it with the former. Although the Canadian grouse and ruffed grouse are occasionally found upon the

same range of country, the habitat of the former commences where that of the latter ceases, and extends up to almost the 60th degree of north latitude. Although occasionally flushed in packs, they are more frequently seen in pairs, and the denser the cover and more swampy the soil, the more abundant will they be found. So little do these birds dread a human being, that they will often remain perched upon a limb till a snare on the end of a rod can be passed over their heads. This trustfulness of man's good intentions towards them seriously militates against the amusement they would otherwise afford the sportsman. By the residents of the localities this bird inhabits, they are not considered good food, for the reason that their back and thighs strongly possess that peculiar game flavour for which epicures value the Scotch bird. No. 6 or 7 shot will be found the best suited for their destruction.

SAGE GROUSE, or SAGE HEN, is a gross, heavy, awkward, but handsomely plumaged bird; it is almost unedible from living upon the buds of the wild sage plant, and can only be found where this shrub grows, viz. on the vast plains on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains, for several degrees north and south of the 38th degree of latitude.

#### PTARMIGAN.

I remember asking a true representative of the Indian brave, a member of the Sioux tribe, what he thought the "happy hunting ground" was like that he hoped to go to when he left this world; his answer was, "One vast country without limits, divided into prairie, meadow, and timber land, where all the wild game teemed, and was so

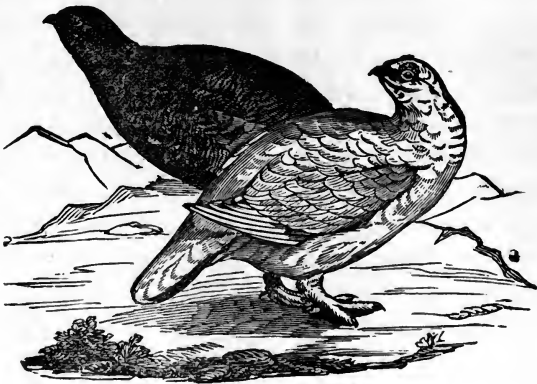
reckless of man's presence that the hunter had but to slay and eat." How much more admirable would this description be, if eating had been considered unnecessary, and that we could return the confidence of the inferior animal life with kindness—not death! The Indian, doubtless, had his imagination controlled by the memory of some of the choicest hunting grounds within the limits of his tribe's extensive range of country, for theirs *is* a game country *par excellence*. But if my informant had been from some of the tribes that lay far off to the north, where the snows lay deep half the year, and the spring flits into summer, and the summer into winter, as rapidly as the changing scenes of a drama, he would possibly have described the happy hunting ground similar to the great lone land, the home of the ptarmigan. What eye hath not seen, the mind seldom can conceive; and I have no doubt the Aborigines of these far-off, desolate regions, with their cutting north winds and interminable winter nights, if asked to picture what they deemed a perfect paradise, would describe their own land; thus contentment springs out of ignorance.

But to the country Mr. M'Donald describes as back of the north wind, lonely as it is (for it is but sparsely populated), if visited at the proper season, is not without its beauties; for arid mountain, verdant swamp, and rocky crag mingle together, intersected by innumerable dancing brooks or grand pellucid rivers, forming a landscape ever grand and impressive.

Here the ptarmigan is to be found in abundance, even without the aid of a dog; but should the sportsman be accompanied by so useful an auxiliary, I have no doubt

that he could make a bag which for numbers would rival any formed of the grouse of the more southern prairies, or of the nut-brown beauties that love our English stubbles.

One drawback exists to ptarmigan-shooting in America: the country the sportsman is compelled to seek them in is far beyond the borders of civilisation, and freedom from intrusion has rendered them recklessly tame. Time after time I have seen them sit upon some bare exposed piece of rock and refuse to be flushed, even after hurling stones at them from less than a dozen yards' distance.



PTARMIGAN.

Again, their flight (in contradistinction to those of Scotland) is so short, that if the unfortunate bird have the luck to be missed, it can again and again be put up, till even the very worst of shots must ultimately bring it to bag.

They are beautiful birds, either in their summer or winter plumage, and the confidence which they exhibit in man's

good intentions towards them cannot fail to endear them to him. Thus, I have never shot the ptarmigan but with regret, for here you have no crafty game, to accomplish whose destruction you must call into play all the cunning of your nature.

They unquestionably rank among the game of America, or I should have left them unnoticed. So if the sportsman, through my instructions, should visit their habitat, let him, pray, desist from useless slaughter.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

## ORTIX.

*(Ortix.)*

THE Virginian ortix is to be found from the Gulf of Mexico to Upper Canada, and from the Atlantic sea-board to the confines of the western settlements eastward of the Rocky Mountains, its vagrant habits occasionally causing it to stray so far north as to cause thousands to perish through the severity of the winter; for, although so reckless of consequences, they are far from hardy. They are sought for in the same manner as partridges are in England, viz. with setters and pointers; but from their being a smaller bird, and laying closer, it is desirable, when in their pursuit, to use smaller shot. If justifiable to envy your neighbours the possession of anything, I think the sportsman who has killed this game must often have wished in his heart that it was abundant in England.

If all who have travelled abroad or sojourned in foreign lands had done so with their eyes shut, or if, not keeping their orbits closed, they had refused to give their country-

men the benefit of their experience, a useless lot they would have been, and England, as far as progression is concerned, would have been far behind her present advanced position. He who first introduced the idea of crossing our native horse with the foreigner did an immense public service; he who introduced the old Spanish pointer deserves the gratitude of every sportsman, for doubtless our present beauties, with all their speed and sagacity, have much of the blear-eyed, bad-tempered, pottering old scoundrels' blood in their veins; and still further, to foreign climes we trace the pheasant, the turkey, and so many more valuable animals that to enumerate them would be tedious. However, I believe that there are quadrupeds, birds, and fishes, still strangers to England, that require only to be known to be appreciated; and by placing their merits before the public, some one may be found sufficiently patriotic to make the attempt to naturalise them.

Without more preamble, and to come at once to the point, let me say that in my humble opinion there is no bird more worthy of attention, and more deserving of the honour of introduction to any land, than the American ortix. Its numerous good qualities, together with its description, I will to the best of my knowledge give, hoping it may be the means of our yet seeing this little beauty ornamenting European fields, and adding brilliancy and variety to the game-bags of its numerous enthusiastic sportsmen. The American ortix varies in weight from eight to ten ounces, is erect in his walk, very handsome in plumage, strong upon the wing, feeds principally upon grain, grass seed, and ants, frequents indifferently brush,

timber, or open country, is capable of standing cold, is not quarrelsome with other game, and is very prolific, frequently hatching two broods in a season. Moreover, an advantage which cannot be too highly estimated, is that it never gets so wild as to rise so far from your dogs as to be out of gunshot, a nuisance that all are so well aware of in our home-bred bird towards the end of the season. In fact, who that shoots regularly cannot remember instances of our partridge disappearing over the far side of a field as soon as the sportsman had entered it? Now, in years of experience in America, I never saw an instance of this kind; up to the commencement of the close season they would remain almost as tame as they were at the termination of the previous one. A reason for this may be that they seldom pack: only once or twice have I seen more than the usual number of a covey together, and then remarked that the weather had been unusually severe and stormy.

A peculiarity, however, this bird possesses is that in wet and slushy weather it will frequently when disturbed take shelter on the limbs of trees, from which if flushed they afford the hardest possible shots. In the open it is by no means easy to hit, for its flight is very strong and swift, and frequently irregular, but it does not go far, so that a good marker seldom has much trouble to re-find it. Some persons are under the impression that this ortix is migratory; however, this is a mistake, for, although they may wander from their breeding-place, from constant attention I am convinced that the change of quarters is caused from scarcity of food. On the edges of the dry prairies in Southern Illinois, in early autumn, this bird abounds; in



winter they disappear into the neighbouring thickets and brush—for why? The prairies are constantly burned at the end of the season, and consequently starvation or change of residence are their alternatives. In one section of the country that I resided in, a great portion of the prairie land was too wet to burn, and many a heavy bag I obtained late in the season, even when the roots of the grass were submerged in ice. My dogs, which I invariably broke upon them, seldom made mistakes, and never do I remember a covey departing (except the pointer or setter had run into them coming down wind) without getting at least a barrel into them. With other varieties of game they appear to agree well, for I have on several occasions killed the ortix with one barrel, and the ruffed grouse with the other over the same point.

They are universally scattered over the United States, east of the Rocky Mountains, where cultivation exists, although possibly most abundant in Maryland and Virginia.

As a table delicacy I know no greater; for weeks I have constantly had them at both breakfast and dinner, still without becoming satiated, and there are very few varieties of game could stand a more severe test. Their note or call is remarkably melodious, and in the spring or pairing time, when they are numerous, you can hear their sweet voice all day long, and in every direction. I have always regretted that no one introduced this little stranger, in sufficient quantities to guarantee the experiment a fair trial.

**CALIFORNIAN ORTIX.**—This bird is a little smaller than the Virginian. It is strictly confined to the Pacific slopes,

and wherever cultivation exists the sportsman may be satisfied that his exertions in their pursuit will be rewarded. No. 8 will be found the most suitably sized shot for killing this game.

This bird is particularly one of those that the Americans have reason to be proud of, for not only is it possessed of brilliant plumage, but is gifted with a plume remarkable alike for its beauty and grace. This head-dress is a row of eight or ten feathers, commencing on the top of the head and gradually diminishing in size as they grow down the neck. In cases of excitement, or at the breeding season, the cocks raise this, the upper portion of the plumes pointing forward over the forehead after the manner of the crest of a cockatoo. On the hill-sides that enclose the Valley of Sacramento at one time they were very abundant, and, although their numbers have been greatly diminished of late years, still they are sufficiently numerous in that locality to afford abundant amusement to the sportsman.

Unlike the Virginian ortix, they do not lay well to dogs, not that they are wild, but from a preference they have for running instead of taking wing. This peculiarity will often be found a great source of annoyance when the cover is thick, and be most injurious to the well-broken, highly-bred dog. However, when flushed, their flight is swift, although not protracted, and no small amount of skill and practice is necessary for the shooter to become a certain shot at this description of game. Like the Virginian bird, they frequently breed twice in the year, and at each sitting, if no accident occur, or wet weather supervene,

which in their habitat is unusual, hatch from eight to ten young; thus it is easily understood how they are so abundant.

Although not migratory, they are very erratic in their habits; the same cause as in the Virginian ortix being doubtless the reason.

From a custom they possess of sunning and dusting themselves in very exposed and bare situations, immense numbers fall victims to the birds of prey; in fact, in California, I believe they form the principal food for the numerous species of Falconidæ that infest its mountain ranges; report also states that the snakes have a *penchant* for them, and prefer them to all other articles of food. This is scarcely to be wondered at when we consider how defenceless they are when seized, their excessive tameness, and last, not least, their delicacy of flesh, if the taste of birds of prey and snakes is to be judged of by that of the human family.

In Sonora and the south-western boundary of the Appache range of country they are captured, with nets and snares, in immense numbers by the Indians, it being no unusual thing for hundreds to be taken in a single day.

While residing in China, at Hong Kong, the idea struck several friends and myself, from the constant communication there was between the Celestial land and San Francisco by ship, that we might import these little beauties and acclimate them there. After some delay we received about twenty couple, eight of which we turned out in Ty-tan Valley, Hong Kong, and the remainder in Shang-moon Valley, in the opposite mainland.

Although next shooting season they were diligently searched for, I am unaware that any of them were afterwards found—climate, soil, or food, individually or collectively, being doubtlessly unsuited for them.

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## CHAPTER XV.

## WILD TURKEY.

Two species represent this family, viz. the common wild turkey, so well known in nearly all of the states composing the Union, and the ocellated, common to Honduras and portions of Central America.

Although this race are not migratory, still they are great wanderers; thus a locality where they have been abundant one month, may be entirely deserted by them the next. It is found in the province of Ontario in Canada, which I am led to believe is the most northern range of its habitat; here it was at one time tolerably abundant, but the cultivation of the wild lands, and constant persecution by the settlers, have very much reduced their numbers. Pennsylvania and Ohio at one time swarmed with them, but there, as in Canada, they have suffered much diminution; however, in the adjoining states of Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin, they can be found in sufficient numbers to remunerate the sportsman for the time and labour passed in their pursuit. All the southern states

possess them in greater or less abundance, but their range does not extend westward beyond the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains.



WILD TURKEY.

The early settlers, when this game was far less wary than now, were in the habit of shooting them with the rifle, the

head invariably being the object fired at, but quickness of aim being now a desideratum, the shot-gun has usurped the place of the other weapon. On damp hazy moonlight nights in autumn, if the roosting-place be discovered, several in succession may frequently be killed, before the others become sufficiently alarmed to seek safety in flight.

This noble bird, the parent stock from which our domestic race is sprung, should be seen in the free untrammelled state of nature, unsubdued by domestication, to have a just conception of his grandeur and consequence. No pasha with many tails, no Mongol mandarin with obsequious followers, struts about with greater consequence, while the ladies of his harem gaze with meek and submissive admiration on all their liege lord does. In his domestic arrangements he is truly an autocrat of the first water, caressing one, sharing his food with another, or punishing a third; however, he is not a brave gallant, for let a note suspicious of alarm be heard, down will go his head, and, forgetful of all his family ties, he will seek safety in the most precipitous flight, not with wings unless compelled, but on foot, and at a gait that would astonish an ostrich. When human inhabitants are scarce and brush abundant where wild turkeys inhabit, they are not remarkable for their cunning; but if an old bird should remain sole survivor of his race in the neighbourhood of land newly settled, I doubt much if a more crafty, suspicious animal can be found in the world, for his whole life seems to be spent in a state of uneasiness, seeing and dreading danger in every breath of wind or moving object. Not unfrequently this very watchfulness leads to his destruction, for to avoid an imaginary danger

he runs into a real one. Again, although this bird may be accredited with an unusual amount of cunning, some of his actions are so extremely stupid, that it causes astonishment in the mind of a reasoning being how qualities so dissimilar can be found to exist together.

As an instance, in some portions of the United States where settlements are becoming daily more numerous, wild turkeys still exist in considerable numbers, but the sportsman who would go in their pursuit with the hope of obtaining a shot, will find his efforts fruitless and his labour thrown away; but the settler, more probably one of his young children, will go into the uncleared land, search till he discovers evidence where turkeys frequent, and then commence his plans for their capture. His first proceeding is to make a circle, on the margin of which he scatters a few grains of Indian corn; this being accomplished, he sprinkles from the ring to its centre more grain. Here is erected a small edifice of poles, laying sufficiently close upon each other not to obstruct the light, at the same time to prevent the prey from escaping when inside. Underneath the foundation of this structure a passage is cut with a gradual incline of sufficient size for the game to force itself into the cage, the incline and interior of trap being abundantly supplied with grain. This generally wary bird, in his wanderings through the woods in search of food, discovers the corn laid along the outer circle: feeding along he follows it, till the line is reached which leads to the trap; this he also pursues, and ultimately squeezes himself inside the cage, whence, as long as anything remains to eat, he never thinks of retiring. At length all is consumed,



when the captive raises his head for an examination of his prison ; after a time he endeavours to force his way through between the poles, but this is impossible, for they are firmly pinned together ; restraint now makes the prisoner reckless, headlong he dashes against the bars, till exhausted, frightened, and with disordered plumage, he resigns himself to his fate, never for an instant thinking of lowering his head to seek for the spot that afforded him admission. As many as a dozen wild turkeys have been caught by this means at one time. Curiosity is another of their besetting failings, and a knowledge of this weakness in their character is often employed to bring the noble bird within gun-shot. While residing in Southern Illinois, I had a favourite kitten, which, unless I shut it up, would invariably follow me into the woods when shooting. On one occasion, with this strange shooting companion at my heels, I came across deer tracks so fresh and regular that I felt convinced their producers were not far off ; what to do with pussy first occurred to me, and, as I neither wished to lose my pet or have her company, a thought struck me, why not tie her up with a long piece of string I had in my game-bag ? Very few of us have not tied up a dog, and found he had slipped his collar on their return ; a little experience and care will obviate this as far as the canine race go, but to tie up a cat is quite another kettle of fish. At length, however, I succeeded by not only placing a collar round her neck, but also around her shoulders at the back of her fore-legs, which, connected by an inch of cord, retained each in its place without puss having the power to slip them. To this connecting link I attached six feet of string,

which I made fast to a long horizontal branch, about five feet from the ground. Thus the cat could lie down or stand up, but not go sufficiently far to lay hold of anything with her claws to assist her to tear from her moorings. Pussy soon found that escape was impossible, so satisfied herself by expressing her feelings of disappointment by giving vent to low, piteous cries.

Off I went after the deer. From the woodland they had crossed a small enclosure of tobacco, proceeded through a belt of brushwood, and entered my corn-field. Making a circle to get the wind, I carefully entered the maize, and after half-an-hour's diligent search, during the greater part of which I was crawling on my hands and knees, I viewed the dusky hide of a well-fed doe, which I brought down at the first shot.

Having secured my prey I returned for pussy, and, as chance would have it, I approached up wind the place where she was tied. If I had forgotten her exact position, I could easily have found it by her piteous mewings. When within fifty yards of where she was, on looking to my front, to my surprise, I saw nine full-grown wild turkeys around her, and so remarkable was their conduct that I halted to witness it.

The ringleader of this coterie was a very large old cock bird, his companions young males and hens. In a circle of a few yards in diameter they stood around my pet, their necks either stretched forward to their greatest length, or their heads hoisted knowingly on one side. The leader, who seemed the bravest of the party, slowly would advance till he was almost within pecking distance of the cat, then

puss would make a struggle, and the intruding bird would precipitately retreat several paces. Being ambitious to follow the example of their leader, a younger bird would now advance, to be frightened off in the same manner as his predecessor. The turkeys seemed to regard this as great fun, for as soon as one would retire, all would commence gobbling together, as if chaffing the coward, immediately after which all would bristle up their feathers and commence a mimic attack upon each other. Half-an-hour I spent watching the strange vagaries of these noble birds, till I considered I had learned all their performance by heart, or witnessed all the tricks that the mountebanks intended putting into practice ; so, waiting my chance when the turkeys were aligned, I killed two with my left barrel and one with my right. Pussy's release now called for my attention ; with the aid of my knife in a moment she was free, but true to her tiger instincts, the first use she made of her liberty was to fly upon one of the dead birds, and attempt to rend it in pieces with teeth and claw. In fact, five minutes of her vindictive wrath would have soon mutilated my game to such an extent as to render it unfit for human food. I afterwards made trial of this discovery, but never with the same success, although it invariably afforded me a shot.

If domestic turkeys are kept where wild ones abound, they constantly associate together, although apparently always engaged in quarrelling. This may be caused through jealousy, for report states that the tame hen birds much prefer the attentions of the wild cocks, and that if they are not carefully watched they will stray off with their

paramour, regardless of the ties that connect them to their legitimate protector.

A half-bred Frenchman residing on the banks of the Embarras told me that whenever he wanted a wild turkey, he tied a piece of scarlet cloth around the neck of his domestic male bird and turned him loose, when every unreclaimed turkey in the neighbourhood was certain to come and attack him, fearlessly affording the easiest shots.

I have occasionally shot them over setters, but in each instance the victims were not full grown. When hounds are running deer in a neighbourhood this description of game frequents, they appear to lose their habitual caution and expose themselves to the hunter in the most reckless manner.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

## WOODCOCK AND SNIPE.

THESE woodcocks are undoubtedly migratory, passing the winter in the genial South and the summer in the North; they are also nocturnal, doing all their travelling by night. From the peculiar formation of the eye, their sight is much better after the sun has declined. Strong light is their detestation, for, judging from their conduct when flushed in the noonday glare, their optics are then of little use, hence the idea that is so frequently current that this bird is stupid. Such is not the case, but quite the reverse, experience having taught me that they are as capable as any other of availing themselves of artifices and hiding-places that are likely to throw out the dog, or shelter them from molestation. This bird, although undoubtedly of the same family, must not be confounded with the European, which is coloured differently in plumage and much larger in size. The woodcock killed in England generally measure about  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length, and weigh from 14 to 17 ozs., although one is reported to have been killed at

Narborough, of the enormous weight of 27 ozs. I do not here give all the minutæ of the English bird, for it is not of it that I wish to speak, but only sufficiently to show that there is a marked difference between it and its namesake of the American continent, whose peculiarities I will, so far as memory serves me, attempt to describe, for the benefit of the young sportsman. Length, from point of bill to end of tail, 11 to 12 inches; across the wings,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  inches; weight from 6 to 7 ozs. The females generally exceed these measurements by about 1-10. In shape they much resemble the Wilson snipe (*Scolopax Wilsoni*), only they are more round and compact, the eye larger and more prominent, and wings shorter but fuller. In colour the bill is a yellowish brown; legs and feet of a pinkish flesh colour; claws dark olive or brown; iris, brown; forehead, dirty yellow, with two black bars across the back of the head, and two narrow ones in front on the neck, a finely-pencilled dark line running the whole length of the head, the eye dividing it into two parts, with another similar line underneath, and marking the termination of the lower mandible. Three broad bands of brownish-black pass lengthways and parallel from the shoulder to the tail, divided from one another by a narrow line of bluish grey. The stomach and breast are of a warm fawn colour, becoming deeper in shade as it approaches the tail and termination of the wings.

This description, I am aware, is far from perfect, or such as the naturalist would demand; still, I think it is sufficiently clear to enable the novice to distinguish what he has got when the first American woodcock falls to his

companionable gun. Although this bird resembles, in many respects, the snipe, in point of character it is essentially different. For instance, snipe will, in the middle of the day, without any perceptible reason, be seen taking long and erratic flights, ascending so high that the keenest sight fails to trace their course, and again wheeling about in the heavens, as if they were creatures of extraordinary momentary impulses ; one instant, with speed, dashing off to the right, and in the next moment returning with equal velocity. Not so with the woodcock ; they very seldom take flight during the glare of daylight unless disturbed, and then it is short, and only sufficient to avoid, if possible, the intruder a second time disturbing their privacy. When on the wing unalarmed, they rarely elevate themselves above the tops of the neighbouring trees, and are seldom seen before sunset or after sunrise, unless driven from their bowery, shady retreats. The descriptions of ground which they prefer are moist bottoms, close covered woods of second-growth timber, and evergreen shrubs, or dry ridges of maple, oak, and beech, where they turn over the decaying leaves in search of insects. Although, as I have stated, these birds have a strong dislike to taking flight in the glaring light of day, yet, in searching for them, you will always find more success attend your pursuit upon those declivities that receive the warm, genial rays of the sun. In spring, when the woodcock are on their migratory journey north from their winter residence, they travel singly, but are followed in rapid succession by others : consequently, where one day not a single specimen could be seen, the day after they will abound. This has

given rise to the erroneous impression that they go in flocks; but during many years' experience I never saw over two or three on the wing at the same time, and then it occurred through the birds having paired, or two or more being flushed from a favourite haunt. From what I can learn, I am led to believe that Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Maine are their principal breeding-places, although annually numbers take up their temporary quarters in the middle States of the Union. I have even heard of their nests being found in Georgia, North Carolina, and Alabama; but these are only stragglers, and unimportant, numerically, when you compare them with those that are to be found in their more northern retreats.

The nest of the woodcock is very primitive—composed of grasses and leaves, placed in some secluded spot near the root of a bush, or under the shelter of a fallen log. They commence to lay early in April in the State of New York, and sooner or later as they happen to be further south or north; four eggs are the usual number, although occasionally five may be found. These are about the size of the domestic pigeon's, smooth, of a yellow clay colour, and prettily marked with irregular patches of puce or brown. The young, as soon as hatched, run about like the plover, snipe, and the majority of waders, and at the age of four weeks are able to fly. The mother bird, during the infancy of her progeny, is a most attached and solicitous parent, frequently permitting herself to be captured rather than desert her offspring. What a beautiful example the human family may frequently learn from the insignificant inferior animals!



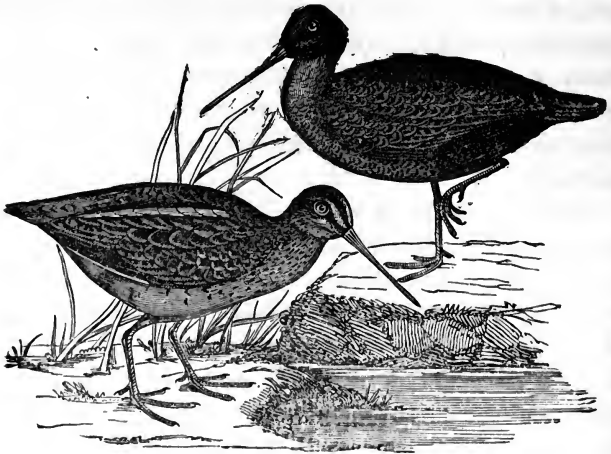
For shooting woodcock, a sport that nearly all are partial to, I prefer the setter to the pointer, for the reason that the former are better protected by their thick coats from the thorns of the briars; again, I have found them less liable to become footsore, with a stronger relish for hunting through damp, and sometimes wet ground; besides, they are more easily taught to retrieve, and are, in my belief, more intelligent. A gentleman who has frequently shot with me across the Atlantic, uses with great success a pair of cocking spaniels, which answer admirably and make an extremely lively and pretty team, but they are rather too quick for a veteran; ten years ago, I should have enjoyed nothing better than such companions. One thing I would recommend, that for woodcock shooting your dogs have plenty of white in their colour, for unless such is the case, you will frequently lose a point and shot by walking past them, an annoyance to yourself and a disappointment to your setter.

Before concluding, I would call the attention of all good and true lovers of the dog and gun to a practice that exists in Louisiana, and doubtless elsewhere, of killing woodcock with poles at night in the corn-fields, with the assistance of a brilliant torch. Like the noble salmon, the woodcock becomes fascinated or stupefied by the brilliancy of the glare, and falls a ready victim to the club of the midnight prowler. America is now coming to that age when it is absolutely necessary to insist on the laws being enforced for the protection of game and fish. If not, half a century hence, the haunts which now abound with game will be as thoroughly divested of it as the Hudson or Connecticut

river is of the princely salmon. Once extermination takes place, it will be too late to do aught but repine.

*Snipe* abounds throughout the prairies of Western America, far outdoing all other game in their abundance. The Wilson snipe, for such is its proper name, is truly a splendid bird, so nearly similar to our own home beauty, that the skilful naturalist is alone able to distinguish the one from the other; in size, habits, flight, and even call, they are essentially alike.

Spending the winter months in the Southern States, principally in those that border the Gulf of Mexico, as spring advances they follow up northward the line of de-



WILSON SNIPE.

marcation between frost and thaw, ultimately arriving in that boundless expanse which stretches northwards from the Great Lakes to the Arctic Ocean. Up in this remote

haunt is their principal breeding-ground, although occasionally a nest may be found much further to the south ; but in such instances I have been induced to believe that either the male or the female bird had met with an accident, and thus been prevented following the migration of his or her companions. What a beautiful lesson all may learn from this ! how it should speak home to the human heart, this attachment of the mate, who, sooner than desert a companion, forsakes for the time being his whole race, save one, and foregoes even following the journey almost necessary to life !

In Southern Illinois, where I had the greatest amount of experience in killing this game, the advance heralds of migration generally arrived about the 10th of March. Much, of course, depended upon whether the winter was late or otherwise ; but if a thaw had taken place, and a moist southerly wind had been blowing over-night, the ground that yesterday you had tramped over in pursuit of wild duck without seeing a single snipe, on the morrow would harbour thousands. Their journey being a continuation of short flights, they are seldom out of condition on arrival ; and as they do not take up a permanent residence, little compunction is felt in shooting them. Out of the large number that I have brought to bag, I do not remember a single instance of an egg, or other indication that pairing had taken place. The prairies of this state (Illinois) are generally burned late in the fall, or early in spring, to improve the succeeding year's grazing, leaving the surface of the soil entirely denuded of grass, except where moisture has prevented the burning taking effect.

Over this, especially in the vicinity of sloughs, dwarf prissimon bushes abound, and there the snipe much frequent. A dog is not necessary here, for the game is so abundant, unless, perhaps, a good retriever, who must be under such control as never to attempt to leave heel, except when ordered by his master to recover a cripple. A further attraction to this sport is, that few days pass on which numbers of teal, pin-tailed duck, or mallard do not assist to swell the size of your game-bag. From the advent of the first flight till the middle of May, additional arrivals take place, but after that date all disappear till the fall of the leaf, and gusty changeable weather foretells the near approach of winter. But the autumnal flight is never numerically equal to that of the spring; still, if twenty brace will satisfy the sportsman, he can have that reward for his labour, provided he be a fair shot.

Americans as a rule are excellent shots. By them the arrival of snipe is looked forward to with much pleasure; but to the pot-hunter, the fellow who will shoot pinnated grouse on the ground, the duck upon the water, or crawl all day through brush to have a standing chance at a wild turkey, this branch of shooting presents little attraction. How satisfactory it is that there is at least one game bird who can laugh with derision at such pursuers. At first, when snipe make their appearance, especially if the weather be wet and blustering, they are inclined to be wild; but much depends upon the amount of cover afforded by the locality, but when the genial sun of spring shines with invigorating warmth, they will frequently lie so close that many will flush almost at your feet. When wild, their

flights are long and rapid ; when not so, they droop their wings, and frequently alight before a hundred yards have been traversed. However, this does not apply to the whole day, for towards sunset, possibly from having by that time digested their last night's meal, for they feed principally by night, they invariably become wild, and more difficult of approach. To be successful in making a heavy bag of snipe, there is a rule which may be beneficial to the tyro to remember, viz. always to hunt down wind, or as much so as possible, provided always that dogs are not used. The stronger the breeze, the more necessity for doing so ; the reason being, that invariably snipe fly against the wind, and being flushed by your advancing on them from windward, the birds will wheel round to the right or left, and present an easy cross shot, in their determination to pursue the desired direction.

The migration of this snipe, as well as of the American woodcock, is peculiar ; each appears to act independently of the other. Dozens may be seen to pass or light near you in the space of a few minutes, yet each bird is alone. Many an evening, after sunset, have I watched their coming, yet never saw two or more together. These journeys take place before sunrise and after sunset. This scattered mode of travelling, and the hour at which it takes place, are doubtless the reasons that none but close observers of nature witness their arrival. By the end of May the migration of this snipe has ceased, and their summer quarters are reached, which are, as previously stated, principally north of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence ; although not a few spend the summer in Nova Scotia, New Bruns-

wick, and Maine. Early in June they commence laying their eggs, four in number, in a nest of the most primitive construction, it being simply an indentation in some trifling excrescence of the surface. The eggs, which are of a yellowish brown colour, blotched with dark markings, taper very much towards the small end; they are always placed in the nest with the larger end outwards. As soon as the young are hatched, they leave the nest, and in six weeks afterwards are almost full grown. At this age it is impossible to tell the Wilson snipe from our home variety; however, at any period the only difference that exists is that one species has two more feathers in the wing than the other.

Last year but one I shot snipe day after day, till a surfeit might have been expected, and only desisted when the advancement of the season proclaimed the approach of the period for breeding; and, though some might imagine such a lengthened campaign would have sufficed for coming years, before twelve months had slipped past I stretched my arms, looked at the sky, observed the wind, all three of which being favourable, anathematised, perhaps, the destiny or fate that compelled me to accept more sedentary town occupation.

With that intuitive feeling that tells the swallow when to migrate, the fish a change of weather, or the cattle the portended storm—we feel certain that all the southern prairies of Illinois are now alive (March) with snipe, that they are lying well to the gun, and that heavy bags are being made. We can even shut our eyes and imagine that we are just approaching some favourite spot either bordering on a

slough or stream, or rich-loamed dip between swelling slopes, and that the game is flushing right and left, as we cautiously pursue our course down wind, while our trusty and well-tried gun rapidly responds to our aim. Again and again we fill and empty our blood-stained pockets, till the body, from fatigue, calls "Hold, enough!" or we return, with waning day, to our little bald-faced pony, ever ready with a neigh to welcome his master's reappearance. Though to revisit these secluded haunts, to re-enact these scenes, may not be my lot, why should they not be the reader's? If you are a proficient in the art, you will make such a bag of snipe as an English sportsman scarcely ever dreamt of. Go, by all means—do not stop to hesitate—and I will guarantee you an amount of sport that will induce many a future return.

Those gentlemen who live in the cities that surround these sporting localities are well aware of the excellence of the shooting at this season upon the prairies, and make up large parties to have a week or so at the Wilson snipe. In the course of a day's shooting on the Grand Prairie, I have met visitors from Louisville, Cincinnati, and St. Louis, marching like companies in skirmishing order, and keeping up a regular fusilade. But so great is the extent of hunting-ground, and so numerous the game, that in each day, over the same beat, no visible diminution can be observed. We do not mean to say that no English sportsman ever made a trial of these western haunts, but we are thoroughly impressed that the excellence of these grounds is far from as widely known as it deserves, and that many persons possessed both with means and inclination are

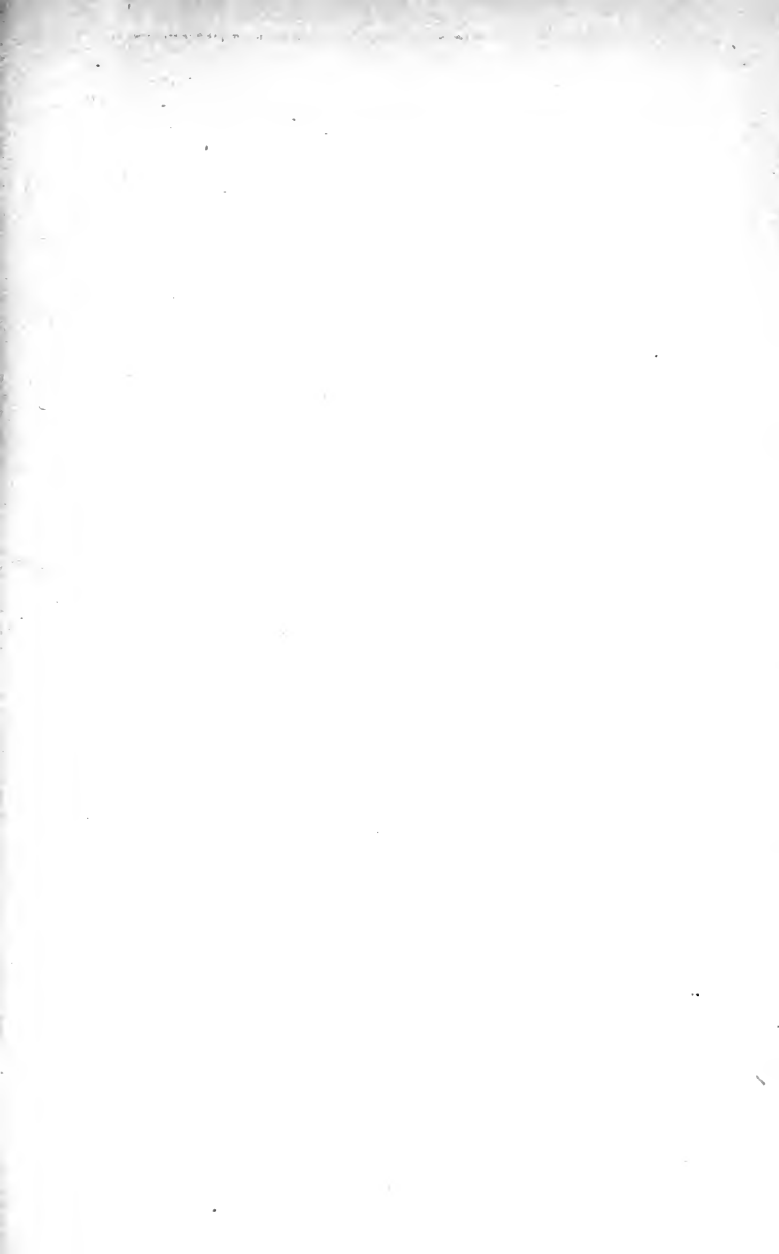
unaware that within thirty-six hours' journey of New York they can have such snipe-shooting as is to be enjoyed in no other portion of the globe.

As to all the haunts of snipe, the visitors must go well prepared with a good supply of waterproof boots, for the walking is always damp, sometimes wet; also a good stock of flannel clothing will be found indispensable, for at this season the weather is frequently so variable, that although noon may be oppressively warm, sunset and the hour of the tramp home—especially if your feet are wet, may be found sufficiently cold to chill the warmest blood.

In our opinion, there is no kind of field sport in which the breech-loader so plainly shows its superiority over the old muzzle-gun as in snipe shooting. The rapidity with which they can both be loaded and cleaned, dispensing with the ramrod, which is always difficult to handle in cold weather, being able to load without placing the butt on the ground or in the mud, and the non-necessity of using caps, are advantages in all sporting, but in none more decided than in snipe shooting.

As an estimate of what may be considered a good day's sport in the spring of the year on these grounds, we will recur to our own experience, and state that. An acquaintance, who was a good shot, killed, to my certain knowledge, nine dozen snipe in seven hours, and I myself have frequently killed from seven to eight dozen in the same time. The first day's shooting of my last season, over indifferent ground, and very difficult to walk upon from its inequality of surface, in five hours I to my own gun bagged four dozen, and but that the birds were







extremely wild, would possibly have knocked over fifty per cent. more.

Where we should advise the sportsman commencing snipe shooting in spring would be at Vincennes, on the Ohio and Mississippi railroad. From here you can have sport in every direction, and when you feel desirous of change of scene, the prairies, which begin here and continue north almost uninterruptedly to the great lakes, will be found abundantly stocked from the date of the arrival of the first flight of the migratory hordes. Of one thing we should like to caution the novice, viz. the using of too large shot. No. 9 will be found the best. A snipe requires but little hitting to bring him down, and then his body is so small, that at the distance of forty yards, although your aim may be correct, if you shoot large shot, it is far from improbable that the game may fly through it.

If your frame be cast in that iron mould which nature has bestowed on some, and you are consequently capable of bearing, without inconvenience, fatigue and exposure, and are, at the same time, desirous of making as heavy a bag as possible, while shooting over your snipe beat pay particular attention to the water-courses and sloughs; and when you become satisfied that you have found a spot where the ducks are in the habit of spending their evenings, which may be ascertained by the down-trodden weeds and muddy appearance of the water, mark the place, for when it becomes too late to continue peppering the snipe, you can return and lie in ambush for the web-footed gentry. Duck, from flying high when on the move, can be seen much later than small game, more particularly if, watching

for them, you can frequently get them against some clear spot in the sky. Frequently I have killed in thirty minutes half-a-dozen of that prince of birds and epicurean dainties, the mallard, in this manner, when it was so dark that, after they had dropped, but for the sagacity of my retriever, I was scarcely aware whether I had correctly aimed. If the evening should be dark and gloomy, with indications of change to cold weather, and a high wind blowing, it will be unnecessary to wait as late as sunset before visiting the feeding ground of the duck ; for, under such circumstances, they come in fearlessly early in the afternoon. However, you cannot practise this work successfully without some kind of screen, which will require to be larger and thicker if your clothes do not in colour closely approximate the hue of the ground.

Brother sportsmen, let me once more advise you to visit the western snipe grounds, and on your return I know I shall receive your thanks for being the means of introducing you to sport that cannot fail to rejoice the heart of every true lover of the dog and gun.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

## WADING BIRDS.

THERE is no portion of the world with which I am acquainted where this family is so largely represented as in America, both in numbers and varieties of species. Along the Atlantic seaboard of the United States, both in spring and autumn, they abound; the interior and coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, their principal breeding grounds, fairly swarm with them, while the prairies, at the breaking up of winter, especially on such portions as have been flooded or the grass lately burnt off, are populated with different species in such phalanxes as almost to cause the surface of the soil to appear moving as they rush about in search of the various insects that form their principal food.

On the coast they afford abundant amusement to those partial to this description of shooting, for they are easily induced to alight among decoys placed within range of screens or blinds, behind which the gunners are secreted, and so great is the slaughter sometimes made among the

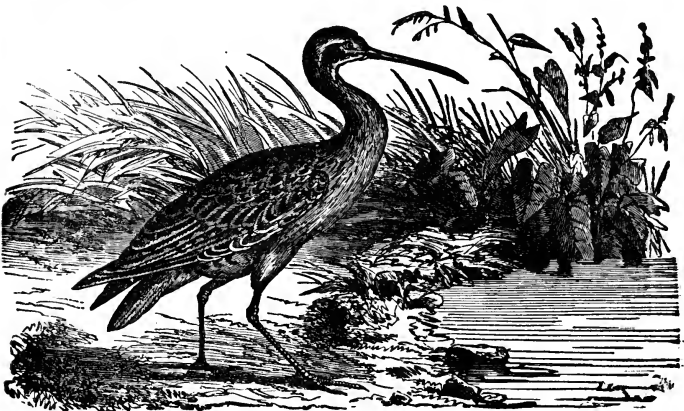
unsuspicious hordes, that but that they form a delicious article of food, and are eagerly sought for in the markets by all classes of people, it would be deemed a most culpable amusement.

For this family I confess to have a great love, for they are always graceful in form and beautiful in plumage, buoyant in flight, active, and untiring on the ground. Then their movements appear to be guided entirely by impulse, while many of the species evince a love for their companions so powerful that, sooner than forsake their dead and wounded comrades, they will remain hovering over the spot where they have fallen, till the irresistible shot has decimated in the most wholesale manner their well-organized ranks.

Cobb's Island, near the entrance to Chesapeake Bay, is one of their most favoured haunts; in fact, all the islands and beaches along the coast of New Jersey were little less frequented, but, from being easier of access to the dwellers in the neighbouring large cities, the birds of late years have betaken themselves to the less-frequented resting-place. However, they are soon threatened with expulsion from Cobb's Island, for an hotel, for the accommodation of sportsmen, has been built upon its sterile shores, and the Atlantic breakers that guard its surf-beaten coast listen, with murmuring dissatisfaction, to the constant repeated echoes of the report of fire arms, which are decimating the graceful beauties that in years gone by were permitted in peace to glide over the bosom of old Father Ocean.

Strictly migratory, what an enjoyable life they must lead

—here to-day, gone to-morrow; one week skimming the waters that skirt the sunny shores of Florida, the next seeking their food on the spongy verdant uplands of Labrador: in the former wakened from their reveries or slumbers by the approach of the stealthy alligator or clumsy turtle, in the latter by the deep growl of the Arctic bear, or the sudden dash into their ranks of the stealthy blue fox. Then the scenes they see, traversing the ocean—the overfreighted ship toiling in the surging storm, the taut-rigged coaster or pilot vessel laying to, to wait for the war of the elements to cease; the giant steamboat, regardless of wind or weather, cleaving with scorn the mountain billows that oppose her course, or, more to my taste still, the white wings of numerous crafts lazily flapping against their spars, while the anxious skipper earnestly looks for the semblance of a breeze, or superstitiously whistles with the hope of producing one.



AMERICAN CURLEW.

If the doctrine of the transmigration of souls were true, when our earthly course in the present form was run, who would not wish to be transformed into one of these migratory darlings, especially if those he or she loved passed through the same change.

But to leave dear dream-land and return to cruel reality. A large-bore gun, say a ten, with the lightest shot, is the best weapon to use for the destruction of this family, unless curlew be the principal object of your pursuit, when heavier shot—I should prefer No. 5—should be employed.

A retriever will be found absolutely necessary in this description of sport, for the greater portion of the game killed, from being shot on the margin of the sea, fall in the water. Your dog, however, should not be large, for these birds, although only crippled, are easily captured, and a small retriever is always preferable to a large one in a boat. As sharks are numerous all along the Atlantic seaboard of the United States, particularly from New Jersey southward, any stray bird that should drop a long way out, had better be lost, for your dog would run a great risk of being seized by these marine savages if he went out into the deep water. I can imagine novices and old men attached to this description of shooting, but for the keen sportsman, who values his bag in proportion to the amount of labour and skill which has been called in practice to obtain it, such wholesale slaughter of confiding flocks of birds must be far too tame work to meet his approval.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

## SWIMMING BIRDS.

SWANS, in my lengthened experience, I have never seen in lower latitude than the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, and it requires very severe weather indeed to force them further southward; however, they are occasionally found on the coast of Georgia. Last season I spent the winter upon a large arm of the sea in Maryland, and as the frosts were unusually protracted, swans were abundant. Their ordinary habitat may therefore be considered to stretch from Virginia to the Arctic regions; in the latter they spend their summer. As they are of little use for the table, but seldom commit damage to the crops, and are extremely ornamental, it is a great pity to destroy them, and, thanks to their extreme wariness, this is seldom accomplished. Moreover, they are so powerful on the wing, and their covering of down so dense, that they must be within easy range for the gunner to bring them to bag. As a rule, I confidently believe that half these birds that are

shot, escape to die a miserable death from hemorrhage or starvation.

Although I have obtained shots at swans, they were more frequently the result of chance than intention. However, last winter, I determined to obtain a specimen for myself, and two others for friends, on which the taxidermist should exercise his skill, so that I might retain a memento of my sojourn on the Maryland swamp-washed shores of the Chesapeake. The weather had been very variable, jumping, with those sudden changes peculiar to America, from intense cold to almost gulf-stream temperature: the result was that for one or two days all sheltered portions of the bay would be ice-bound, and the succeeding days the surface of the water covered with little bergs and sheet-ice like an arctic flow.

The 12th of February had been as balmy as an English spring day, and the rays of the sun were reflected in innumerable colours off the prismatic surface of the blocks and cakes of ice floating seaward with the retiring tide. The pongeys and canoes employed in oyster dredging floated listlessly on the bosom of the calm water, for not a breath of wind fanned their snow-white cotton sails; even so still was the atmosphere, that their crews' voices could be heard distinctly at distances really surprising; while the low land of Turtle-egg Island, Holland and Hooper's island, from the rarified state of the atmosphere, appeared to hang suspended in the air. I had passed the afternoon lounging on the beach in front of the principal store on Devil's Island, a spot which was the favourite resort of old and young, who had time to spare for gossip.

Rising from a leaning position against the stern of a boat, which I had assumed the better to enjoy the perfect peacefulness of the scene surrounding me, I was about to retire to my lodgings, when I casually remarked, addressing my language to no one in particular, that if this weather continued, as I believed it would, there was an end to duck shooting in this locality for the season. An old weather-beaten fellow, who, from his appearance, had seen over sixty winters with very few summers, put in an oar in the way of conversation, and vouchsafed me the information, that, "if he knew anything of the looks of the sky and water, with the next run of the tide we would have a gale, and cold enough to take a fellow's nose off." This prophecy I thought little of at the time, but an hour or two before midnight it was verified. Sudden squalls of wind and rain commenced soon after dark, and continued, with gradually increasing violence, till it blew a full gale of wind; then the thermometer fell considerably below freezing-point, and the breeze suddenly chopped round from south-west to north-west.

All was commotion now in the little settlement, for every available hand was summoned to beach the smaller crafts in the roadstead, or make the larger ones secure with additional moorings and anchors. Of course, I turned out with the others to assist in saving property, and a wilder scene could scarcely be imagined. On the shores broke the white rollers, hissing out with compressed breath their wrath at being deprived of their expected pleasure of destruction; the wild boatmen pulled, hauled, and swore at every obstacle that increased their labour; while the pitch-

pine torch blazed up or partially died out as the gale increased or diminished in violence. After a couple of hours' work the various crafts were deemed safe, and the crowd retired to their respective domiciles, leaving me to enjoy the grandeur of the scene alone.

The bustle, confusion, and noise that had previously surrounded me, had at the time absorbed all my attention; now, however, all was still, save the raging of the elements, and above its great voice I could hear one incessant sound, most dear to the sportsman's ear, the hum of innumerable wild-fowl calling to each other. I retired with a light step and happy anticipations, for I looked forward to the morrow as certain to afford me abundant employment for my gun.

Next morning I was not disappointed, for every bay and inlet was covered with game, even the open water in front of the village, within gun-shot of the shore, and intermingled among the fleet of oyster-boats, were numerous flocks of wild-fowl to be seen. Leaving the birds near home for the village juveniles to practise at, I started for a favourite stand, which, with the present wind, was certain to be abundantly frequented. So I found it, and soon had a bag sufficiently large to satisfy the most greedy sportsman. While shooting, the incessant calling of wild swans had attracted my attention, and thus directed by sound, about half-a-mile off, upon the edge of the flow-ice, I could distinguish several flocks of these noble birds, each of them composed of about twenty members. Anxious as I was to obtain a few specimens, I was not sufficiently sanguine to believe that I had the slightest prospect of

success, for, from the continued fusilade I had kept up, they must have become well aware of my hiding-place. Still I could not resist admiring the scene, one not often seen by British sportsmen: a vast expanse of frozen salt water, here and there opened by air-holes, and the distant tidal current covered with bergs of every shape, nearly all affording resting-places for the noble game. The Chesapeake never looked more attractive to me than that day; for, although the cold was intense, the atmosphere was clear, so that the sharp points and rugged outlines of each berg stood out clearly defined, while the distant swamp pines, with their dark-green foliage, formed a charming contrast to the other portions of the snow-and-iced-covered landscape. With my field-glass, by the way a most important part of all sportsmen's outfit, long and patiently I watched the habits of the pure white beauties; and with what pleasure they appeared to enjoy their ablutions in the frigid water, one moment splashing and throwing it far and wide, at another pursuing rivals of whom they were jealous, or cooing notes of love or admiration over mates in whose favour they wished to establish themselves. Again, they would rise and flap their broad pinions as if to test that their exertions had not deprived them of the powers of flight; or, struggling on to some floating berg, rest from exertions, with their graceful necks and heads buried in their abundant snowy down.

The place in which I was secreted was an isthmus densely covered with dwarf water-alder, and connecting a peninsula, almost an island, with a narrow, long promontory from the mainland. Under ordinary circumstances it

would have been as wet as a well-saturated sponge, but frost had placed its iron hand upon the moisture, and rendered the use of my waterproof-sheet almost superfluous, a circumstance that advantageously contrasted with what it might have been. About mid-day, certainly not later, it became apparent that some important change was about to take place among the swans, for their voices became louder and more frequent, and the before-scattered groups concentrated themselves into closely-packed coteries. This I noted, and thought it foretold change in the weather; my surmises soon proved correct, for the north wind which had subsided into a calm, was soon after replaced by a southerly breeze, whose influence I had scarcely felt when the swans in succession stretched their wings, and, with heavy measured stroke, raised themselves in the air, first circling round in gradually increasing circles; ultimately, with outstretched neck, shaping their course right over my ambushade. The moments of suspense, though few, were sufficient to make the heart beat faster; but my hopes were not disappointed or long delayed. At length I could see distinctly the eye of the leader, then of the followers; next moment I was on my knees, and with each barrel killed a bird.

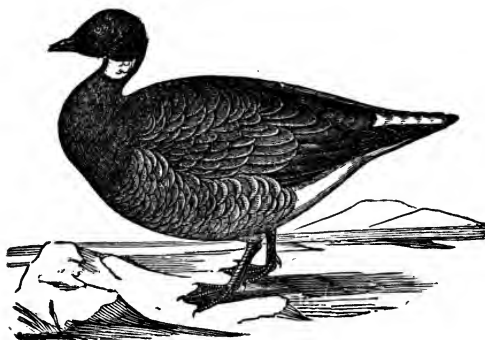
With intervals of ten or twelve minutes, a second and third flock came within range, and were treated similarly; but here I ceased, for I had enough, and to spare; had I desired, I could, without doubt, have killed three times the number.

Although it be two years since the events above narrated occurred, the impression on my memory is so distinct and

pleasurable, that I feel convinced it never will be forgotten. In fact, I regard it as one of those episodes that give an ample reward to the sportsman for weeks, yes months, of lack of success and wasted toil.

## CANADA GOOSE.

The Canada goose is a magnificent bird, and although smaller than that of Europe, occupies the same place to the New World that the common wild goose does to the Old. The plumage is of a dark slate colour along the neck, breast, and stomach, gradually becoming black toward the back and wing coverts; the head, also, is black, with a clear white ring around the throat, immediately behind the junction with the head. Its average weight is about twelve pounds.



CANADA GOOSE.

From 35 degrees of north latitude, the Canada goose is found in greater or less numbers, according to season and the closeness of settlements, to beyond the Arctic circle,

their favourite breeding-places being upon the marshes and lakes, from whence flow the rivers that enter the Polar Seas. Consequently they are not to be found upon the popular shooting-grounds or waters of the United States and Canada until severe weather has set in over the Hudson Bay territory, when they migrate in thousands south, either following the coast-line or the course of rivers flowing from north to south.

On the Chesapeake Bay and the various inlets along the coast of Virginia and North Carolina, I have seen them in great numbers ; still the wet prairies of the west exceed all other localities in the immensity of hordes that visit them.

During the middle of the day, unless the weather has suddenly changed from mild to severe cold, their pursuit will be found comparatively useless ; but in the afternoon and morning in early winter, or at the commencement of spring, if the sportsman secrete himself in some lonely out-of-the-way corn-field, he is almost certain to obtain numerous shots. Still it is very rare for a day to be passed on the prairies wild-fowl shooting without an opportunity occurring to fire into a flock of wild geese.

If maimed birds are kept, or the young reared in captivity, they answer magnificently as decoys, for not a flock of wild geese or wild duck will pass within seeing or hearing of them without leaving their course to join their ranks.

An old gander, as may be expected, is tough and hard, but the young bird, on the contrary, is a great delicacy, and well worth any amount of labour it may have cost to obtain.



In November, 'sixty-five, in an afternoon and morning shooting, a friend and self killed eighty-five wild geese, as well as a large number of duck. The scene of this performance was a corn-field, the weather bitterly cold, with snow flying, although the previous week had been warm enough for summer clothing.

As I am about to say so much on mallard shooting, and the advice I will give the sportsman in reference to their pursuit being equally applicable to the Canada goose, I trust the reader will pardon my not further extending my remarks.

BRENT GEESE are well known in the United Kingdom, yet they are comparatively scarce among us in numbers, when compared to the immense flocks that are to be found in autumn and spring scattered all over the western prairies, or in winter and early spring along the Atlantic seaboard of the United States. From their size the novice will frequently mistake them for wild geese, but a little experience will soon teach him that there is a marked difference in their flap of wing, and in the figures they form while in flight. Again, the large white marking on the lower portion of the breast and along the stomach, conspicuous for a great distance, soon tells the tale that they are not the more coveted larger species.

Another characteristic of this species is, that they are far less wary than geese, and appear to be gifted with such an amount of curiosity, that even when they are almost out of sight of the sportsman they may frequently be recalled within gunshot by waving a pocket-handkerchief, or

inducing your retriever to run about after sticks, provided always that the shooter is out of sight.

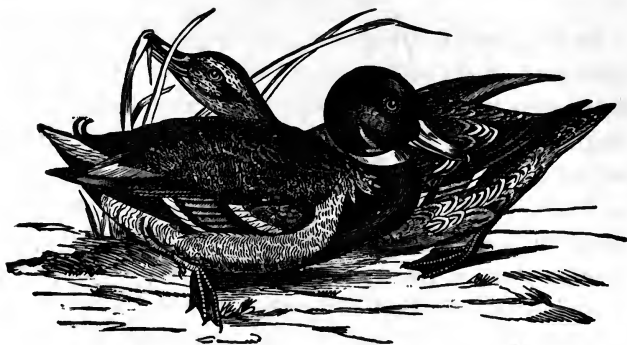
I remember such a circumstance occurring to me while on the lower portion of the Chesapeake Bay, State of Maryland. In the society of a veteran wild-fowl shooter, I started one bitterly cold morning to shoot wild-fowl at a place most appropriately designated the Mussel-hole. From sunrise till two hours afterwards we enjoyed most excellent sport, but soon a thaw commenced, accompanied by a soft, balmy, southerly wind, which appeared to have the immediate effect on all the wild-fowl, with the exception of an enormous flock of brent, of sending them off seaward. For over an hour we patiently waited for a change in the atmosphere, but no such occurred ; and we were commencing to chew the cud of disappointment, when evidences became conspicuous that the brent also intended making a flitting. After a deal of conversation in their ranks, much pluming of feathers, and a great amount of flapping of wings, the whole phalanx rose together, circled round twice, and departed seaward. My never loquacious companion silently watched them from behind our hiding-place, and muttered to himself an oath. At length he exclaimed, with some excitement, "I'll try the old dodge." So pulling out the dirtiest remnant of a scarlet pocket-handkerchief, commenced waving it over head. I must acknowledge that I was rather surprised, for I had never seen wild-fowl called up in such a remarkable manner. But the experienced veteran was right ; the now distant flock slowly but gradually turned, and, after several times shifting their course, ultimately headed directly for our hiding-place.

Closer and closer we cowered behind our screen; nearer and nearer the game came within reach of our destructive weapons. Our breath was held, and our impatience curbed, till the leaders of the host were but forty yards off, when both simultaneously rose and poured in four barrels. In a moment after, seven birds were struggling or laying dead upon the water, while the remainder, instead of instantly leaving, hovered over their stricken comrades till both of us had obtained a second double shot. I have long known plover to be guilty of such foolish want of regard to their safety, never previously brent.

#### THE MALLARD.

In my protracted rambles about the world, I know no portion where the mallard cannot be found. I have always been passionately fond of wild-fowl shooting, and the bags that I have made in the United States and Canada of this noble bird far exceeded those obtained elsewhere. As wild-fowl are nearly all migratory by inclination, or are compelled to be so from the changes of the seasons, it is of great importance that you should visit the various haunts at the proper periods of the year. However, the rule is, for successfully carrying on war against the web-footed families, go north in summer and south in winter. In June, July, and August, the wild rice-fields of the numerous labyrinths of lakes of Minnesota and the North-West territory, perfectly swarm with wild-fowl, while in December and January they will be found equally numerous on the large bayous and lagoons that surround the mouth of the Mississippi. Of course, in the intermediate portion of

country between Minnesota and the Gulf of Mexico, during the seasons of migration, splendid days' shooting can be obtained ; but the stay of the birds is so short that it might not compensate for a special visit. Where thousands are to be seen to-day, not a dozen will be met to-morrow ; but if you should happen in the spring and autumn to be in either of the States of Illinois, Iowa, or Indiana, when the frost and ice are breaking up in spring, or when winter makes its first appearance, you may with safety calculate on having some of the finest sport. A year or two since, when in Illinois in November, a sudden change took place in the weather, and although the morning was ushered in



THE MALLARD.

mild and warm, by noon it was snowing, with a gale of wind blowing from the north. From experience I knew that such a day was not to be wasted over the fire. I got on my shooting-ground with a very large supply of ammunition, and in two or three hours I had to cease, as my stock was exhausted. My stand was in a field of Indian

corn that had been gathered into shocks, from the back of one of which I took shelter from the blast as well as concealment. Never shall I forget the scene. The ducks came in thousands, all flying before the wind, and if a dozen guns had been there instead of one, abundant work would have been found for all. On another occasion, in the same locality, two friends of mine killed in two or three hours in the evening, and in an hour and a half the succeeding morning, eighty-four brace of mallard duck. In the spring of 1866, when in Iowa, the first day of thaw, I went for a stroll, scarcely expecting to find game: but when I got on the prairie land, I was perfectly astonished at the clouds of wild-fowl arriving from the south, some of the ponds being so densely covered with duck that the surface could scarcely be seen. These birds were all coming from the south, where they had passed the winter. If any of our readers intend to go in for work, and do not object to roughing it, I should most decidedly say that the wild-fowl shooting is good enough to justify a visit; but let him not be induced to keep in the vicinity of settlements; but let him and his attendants commence housekeeping on the margin of one of the northern Minnesota lakes if in summer (remember, one that produces an abundance of wild rice); but if the reverse season should be selected, the southern lagoons of the Mississippi will afford him abundant sport, and any of the hospitable planters will deem it a favour if he will do them the honour of making their home his.

When living on the upper portion of Lake Couchachin, Simcoe district, from the beauty of an afternoon and the

coolness of the weather, I was induced to shoulder my gun, and start cross country to Lake St. John, with the hope of killing some ducks to add to the fare of our already sumptuous table. I had never visited this place before, and as I left the clearing, the last words of H—— were, "Take care you do not get lost." With an amount of confidence "usually denoting ignorance," I responded that I was too old to be guilty of such a green proceeding. With little trouble I found my destination. Game was abundant and tame, they being overcome with that languor which makes them perfectly indifferent, and which is so frequently the precursor of bad and stormy weather. In a little time my bag was heavy, too much so to be agreeable, and, considering that I had committed havoc enough, I determined to retrace my steps. Another and yet another duck would come in my way, and presented such fascinating shots that I could not resist, so that by the time I had returned to the place where I first struck the water, I was completely loaded. Have any of my readers ever walked two or three miles, with from eight to a dozen mallard ducks in the skirt of his shooting-coat? If so, they undoubtedly have vivid recollections of their weight. If still a tyro, I advise you to make a trial, as a new sensation will be experienced, particularly if the ground is soft and muddy. I had scarcely re-entered the sombre forest, when my spaniel found some ruffed grouse, and treed them a short way off on the left. A brace of these delicate birds would be a most acceptable addition to a future dinner; so, without hesitation, I struck off to the right, to cultivate their more intimate acquaintance. Advancing upon them

unwarily, the covey flushed, but flew only a short distance. I thought my chances so remarkably good, that I would make another try, but again the watchfulness of my feathered friends foiled me. With a malediction on my lips, I turned to retrace my steps, but for my life I could not tell in which direction my route lay. 'To be lost, pooh! pooh! what nonsense! I was not still a schoolboy, and had been too long cut loose from my mother's apron-strings. The whole thing appeared too absurd and ridiculous. Off I went, as I thought, straight back to the place I had left; I must cross my own path in a few minutes—only a few steps farther! I am certainly close now! And thus arguing and consoling, I proceeded. By degrees it began to dawn upon me, though much against my inclination, that I was "certain sure out of my reckoning." The more convinced I became of the uncertainty of my position, the more I became excited; at first I walked faster, talked to myself, and tried, though I fear very indifferently, to treat the whole affair as an admirable joke. But soon my countenance became elongated, and a very gloomy expression usurped the place of my previous smile. For change, I shouted, with the hope some one might hear me—a very improbable thing—except, perchance, some solitary Indian should be out in attendance on his bear or other traps. At last I became fairly desperate, and broke into a headlong run; the pace was too fast to keep up; fairly blown, wearied, and exhausted, I sat down on the trunk of a fallen tree. The depression I felt will never be forgotten. The terrible loneliness, the perfect solitude and monotony, with the certainty of having to pass the night *al fresco*, made

my frame of mind anything but enviable. The mosquitoes, which previously I had scarcely noticed, now put in a claim for attention, my wretched plight seeming to give them confidence, for they attacked me front, rear, and flanks, in columns. It was useless to attempt to drive them off; their confidence would have been most commendable, if engaged in a better cause. Night was rapidly approaching, and the giant shadows had become indistinct in their outline, mingling together in one dark gloom. Distant rumbling of thunder portended a coming storm, reminding me that I had better make all snug, as a dirty night was at hand.

I soon found a prostrate monarch of the forest, under whose side I expected to find comparative shelter; in a short space I had gathered sufficient *débris* and flammable matter to make a fire, determining to sacrifice one of my ducks to the implacable tormentor, hunger. Out of the few matches I had, four missed, or would not light; but two more remained. With what care and anxiety did I try the others! Alas! the head of No. 5 flew off, and but one remained to save me from Erebus, and the incursions of some erratic midnight prowler. With the utmost care I undertook the trying ordeal of squeezing myself into a corner, sheltering my hands with my cap, and sacrificing a portion of the last letter from my lady-love for tinder; success rewarded me, and soon the surroundings were brought out in deep relief by the brilliant glow, reminding me of the deep contrast of light and shadow in one of the much-admired pictures by Rembrandt. The rain was not long delayed, and after a few premonitory drops, came



down as if the flood-gates of heaven had been opened, accompanied by the loudest thunder and most dazzling lightning. There is nothing that more powerfully impresses man with the omnipotent power of the Creator, or with his own utter insignificance, than being placed alone, unprotected from the warring elements, listening to the dismemberment of limbs from the parent tree-trunks by the fury of the blast, or the scathing power of the electric fluid. All my efforts to keep a good fire were futile—sleep was out of the question—while the incessant attacks of the mosquitoes made me restless and irritable. No sick man or storm-tossed mariner ever more ardently longed for break of day. The night appeared endless, and doubts of whether the sun had not been delayed in his course, or taken his departure to gladden with his rays the inhabitants of other planets, intruded themselves. At last, faint lines of light glimmered in the east, foretelling the departure of darkness, and with greater satisfaction than I ever previously experienced, I rose from my wet and uncomfortable resting-place. To seek my lost route was my first endeavour, and for more than an hour I wandered without success. At last, when almost yielding to despair, I struck the margin of the lake I had been shooting on the evening before; and what a beautiful, enthralling scene lay before me! The placid water only rippled where the wild duck sported, or the voracious fish pursued to the surface their destined prey; while the shadow of each tree that grew near the margin was so distinctly reflected, that the minutest limb or twig could be traced with perfect precision.

I stood entranced, and so great was my admiration, that nothing could have induced me to disturb the harmony of the picture by destroying the life, or disturbing the retreat, of the beautiful creatures which formed its prominent features. To the left were several deer and fawns, knee-deep, feeding upon the tender, succulent leaves of the water-lily, the youngsters occasionally chasing one another in sport, and unknowingly practising and developing those muscles which Nature intends to be their protection in the hour of danger; their beautiful, graceful mothers frequently raising their eyes from their morning repast with maternal solicitude for their progenies' safety. What sportsman could witness such a scene without feelings of the greatest pleasure? and, in my opinion, unless hunger could be pleaded, he would be unworthy of the name who could desecrate the hallowedness and peacefulness of the view by wantonly shedding blood. Long I gazed with feelings of rapture, congratulating myself on having at last discovered a hunter's elysium. Uncertainty in reference to my position had vanished, as without trouble, by following the margin of the water, I could find my back track. At last hunger told me it was time to think of home and breakfast. An hour after found me in my bedroom undergoing the luxury of a good wash, preparatory to an ample meal. My friend, who was rejoiced to see me, having dreaded the inconvenience of hunting me up, listened with great pleasure to my glowing, and, perhaps, unintentionally exaggerated description of all I had seen and endured. On one point, however, we were resolved— an immediate visit to the beautiful locality I had so lately

left. Before a month had elapsed many visits had been paid, and heavy game-bags, or still heavier fish-baskets, were the result. Game is still abundant near the region where my night adventure took place, but like every locality, the hunter will have to proceed a little farther beyond the bounds of civilisation; for as certain as the red man vanishes before the progress of the stream of emigration, or the morning mists before the gladdening rays of the rising sun, does game before the dreaded sound of the squatter's axe, or the sharp report of the deadly rifle.

In Central Illinois, a thousand miles or more from the scene of my last mishap, I have had wonderful mallard-shooting, so will attempt to describe one of my fortunate essays on a November evening. The wind was eminently suited for the purpose of exhibiting a large show of birds; it being dark, stormy, and threatening with a rapid decrease in the temperature, strongly indicative of frost or snow. In truth, if I had made a selection, I could scarcely have chosen better-adapted weather. After a tiresome and unprofitable day, we found ourselves back at the requisite station, wet, weary, and fatigued, and not by any means in the best of spirits; still, I did not wish to be the proposer of an adjournment of my promised exhibition, and my friend felt placed upon his mettle, lest he should appear to suffer more from his long tramp than myself, or indicate less capacity for enduring the fatigues of the hunting-field. How often, if we could read one another's internal feelings, should we find that external appearances are only assumed, and that the companion who ostensibly looks as

fresh and capable of travelling for hours, as he was at the time of starting, is suffering from extreme lassitude and disinclination to more exertion, only he is restrained from confessing his weakness by a certain *amour propre*, and repugnance to acknowledge himself beaten; at least, I speak from my own experience, and I believe that the majority of men are similarly constituted. If men would but give the same attention, the same pertinacious assiduity to business affairs that are bestowed by its devotees on field sports, it cannot be doubted that their fortune in amassing wealth would be equal to their success in filling game-bags.

As the sun dipped in the western horizon, or as near as possible to that time—murky, dark, threatening clouds preventing the sun from being seen—we entered the wet, marshy margin which bounded our future scene of operations. With much difficulty, and the energetic use of all the *vis* left in us, we progressed slowly and steadily, till we reached the edge of the water, where, ensconcing ourselves in the centre of some of the scattered water-loving brush which vegetated in the vicinity, we awaited the result.

Permit me, kind reader, to deviate from my narrative, and give a hint to all who love the gun, that they may find useful in their future essays against all descriptions of game. I have heard sportsmen, and those gentlemen of experience, condemn Colonel Hawker for impressing upon his pupils the necessity of particular attention to their costume; many thinking he devoted too much time and pains to what appeared to them a very unnecessary desideratum. If any one who peruses these lines should be of

that impression, allow me, with all kindly feeling, to take an opposite stand, and assert that there is nothing which will more certainly guarantee your success than paying due attention to wearing clothes that at all times harmonise with the colouring of the ground over which you are about to shoot. I have so many times had convincing proofs of the efficacy of attending to this important point, that I consider it scarcely possible to impress it too strongly upon the minds of all. An instance I will state, out of many others I could tell of, which I think will prove that the grounds I take are strong, and beyond opposition. While sojourning West I made the acquaintance of a good-hearted, kind gentleman and thorough sportsman, whom the uncertainty of worldly affairs had reduced much in pecuniary circumstances; in those days, although I had experience, still, as now, I had much to learn; my friend was, if anything, my superior as a shot, more particularly on wild fowl. On the breaking up of winter in the spring of '65—in fact, the morning after a decided thaw had set in—he arrived at my house at an early hour, and invited me to accompany him on the prairie to kill duck. For some time previously all the water that was stagnant, or had but slight current, had been frozen, and there being in consequence no feeding-ground for the broad-bills, they had taken their departure for more hospitable regions. My want of success a few days before caused me to doubt if better results could be obtained on this occasion, but being aware that H—— was better posted on these matters than any man in the vicinity, I shouldered my ten-bore, straddled my Indian pony, and started for what he considered the

most appropriate place for doing havoc, On reaching the confines of the prairie, we found that duck had come in, and in myriads. In no direction could we gaze without seeing flights in those strange mathematical figures which they always assume when on the wing. We at once held a council of war, and determined to leave our steeds (having first spread a horse-blanket on each to protect them from the bitter blast; for every true votary of Diana is humane, though the virgin goddess herself displayed but little of this virtue to the unfortunate Actæon), and after striking the wet land, to separate, one to take the right side and the other the left. My clothes, through chance, were admirably suited for our work, being composed of that common coloured velveteen which so much resembles withered grass, while H——'s were dark and conspicuous; without doubt, his inattention to colour being caused by the lightness of his pocket and inability to procure more suitable raiment. After four hours' shooting, on comparing results, my proceeds were more than double his, while two wild geese, the most wary of all game, were among my victims, he having failed to get a shot at this noble quarry. I was at a loss to account for this superior fortune, and might have remained long without satisfactory reasons, but my comrade's experience taught him that the difference of colour in our costume was the cause.

But to return to our work. As soon as we were at our stands, we divested ourselves of shot-pouches and powder-horns, hanging them on the bushes that we might the easier use them when required—for, once the game commences to arrive, every moment is of value. Before we

had been stationary many minutes a few stragglers made their appearance, the advance guard, doubtless, of the main body ; some old and experienced veterans, I should think, are generally chosen for this duty, as these forerunners are wary in the extreme, and seldom or ever come within gunshot. However, we were not detained idle, a bunch of mallard passed within range, and a salute welcomed their visit ; another and another party rapidly followed, in such quick succession that it was impossible to shoot at all. These birds, so far, had only flown past, and as night approached their numbers increased, and we being probably less conspicuous from decreasing light, the open water at our side was chosen for their resting-place. Down they would come on the water, almost imperilling our heads, with the rustling sound of the eagle in the act of swooping upon his prey, while some of their companions, less certain of the security of this halting-place, would sweep round and round our *locale* before they finally selected it. As soon as the birds struck the water they would commence bathing themselves, flapping their bodies with their wings, diving with short plunges, and cutting so many capers that one might imagine them stark, staring mad. The fact, however, is, that all this apparent eccentricity is caused by the necessity the ducks feel of cleaning themselves of the insects about their plumage, as well as the pleasure they experience in finding themselves again in a milder climate, with abundance of food around them, after enduring a hard journey from the stormy North, protracted possibly through a day and night. On arrival, therefore, they wash themselves and arrange their dress

before commencing their meal—an example other travellers would do well to imitate. But, as the night advanced, some strangers are mixed with the throng. The dusky duck, the bald pate, the pin-tail, the blue and green winged teal, shoot past like arrows from a bow, the latter making, with the rapid motion of their wings, a sound not unlike an ungreased wheel or hinge. When the travellers are satisfied with the neighbourhood, they dash down upon the water, ceasing it to fly in spray for yards around, while the first arrivals welcome the new-comers with innumerable quacks. The report of a gun then will scarcely alarm them, and, if they should rise, in a moment they will re-settle, doubtlessly feeling security in their numbers.

Tarry a little longer, friend, it may be too dark to shoot, but a better sight than all is yet before you ; be not impatient—don't you hear that strange voice ? The geese are coming—ay, and brant, too—can't you hear their noisy chattering ? Move not an inch ; these fellows have two eyes, equal in excellence to the whole hundred of Argus' placed together. Soon a dark line is seen against the sky advancing directly to us. Honk ! honk ! honk ! comes from its different sections, doubtlessly inquiries from the leader as to the propriety of calling a halt. Keep close—stir not, nor think of shooting, till they are over you. You cannot, perhaps, see them fall, but the splash they will make tells the tale. Another and another regiment of these worthies came in, till perfect Erebus enclosed us, and further shooting became impossible. Our dogs had been busy gathering the slain, and a noble bag we had. The thermometer continuing to fall, and the appearance of



a snow-storm becoming momentarily more marked, we mutually determined to desist, well satisfied with our night's recreation.

It took time and trouble satisfactorily and securely to sling our booty; and if any of our friends could have seen our noble selves and nags strung around with the fruit of our labour, they could not have suppressed a smile.

While resting for a day or two at MacComb's, Grand Prairie, Northern Illinois, when on a tour, cattle-purchasing, at the commencement of winter, one of the hands, on returning to dinner, informed me that both ducks and geese were arriving in immense numbers. Soon my No. 10 gun was brought out, and with seven pounds of shot and my large powder-flask full, I started in the direction indicated. The weather since morning had undergone a complete change; for instead of a damp, mild atmosphere, snow was falling in large but few flakes, with the thermometer below freezing-point.

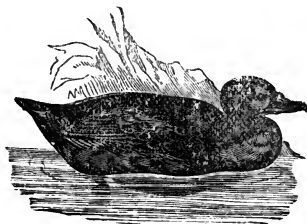
On reaching the sloughs I found birds abundant, but too wary for great success; so, after firing a few long shots with indifferent success, I determined to change my beat. I had remarked the day before a field of a few acres of indifferent Indian corn which had not yet been gathered, and which was excessively wet and soft from the dampness of the soil; thither I determined to turn my footsteps, and well it was I did so, for a finer afternoon's sport I have seldom enjoyed. Before I got within a quarter of a mile of my destination, I could see duck in numerous large flights hovering over the place in question, giving hopes of

sharp work. On gaining the edge of the field and taking a survey, I found the ground in many places perfectly covered with birds, and strings of fresh arrivals coming in momentarily—mallard, butter duck, teal and winter duck, all making the best use of their bills to further destroy an indifferent crop. After a survey of the situation I selected a stand, forming a screen of corn stems and iron weed, and scarcely was I ensconced, when the honk! honk! honk! of a distant flock of wild geese told me that the wary scoundrels were *en avant*. However, so many duck came within easy shooting distance, that I could not resist opening fire, and I commenced skirmishing forthwith. The birds appeared totally devoid of fear either of the report of my gun or my presence, and flew frequently within fifteen or twenty yards in the most leisurely and business-like manner. Again and again I loaded and shot till my barrels got agreeably warm. Old Nep, my retriever, soon had the ground around my feet thickly strewn with slain, and when an unfortunate duck less severely peppered than others, or only broken-winged, would attempt to hobble off, Master Nep would give him a pinch about the regions of the cranium that immediately reduced the most obstreperous to submission. Geese commenced to arrive after I had been at work about half an hour; first a solitary gander, whose coat I dusted and secured, next two or three, and ultimately half-dozens and dozens, while the duck whistled by with all the velocity of sky-rockets. By 4 P.M. my powder-flask commenced to show signs of giving out, and with sickly, hollow rattle proclaimed that the remaining charges were few. To prolong the sport I

reduced my charges ; but still the end was drawing near, and could only be delayed a few minutes, for with regret, though the snow was now falling fast and the weather anything but enjoyable, I was brought to a halt. On collecting the spoil I had nineteen geese and forty-one ducks, a load sufficient for a Canadian pony. However, I managed to stow them all in a fence corner, there to remain till sent for, and most unwillingly I turned towards home. My last view of the field was of broad bills in ever-increasing regiments rushing on to the devoted crop, and I have little doubt, if my ammunition had lasted, that I could have shown a score that had seldom previously been made.

## BLACK DUCK.

The black duck is of all wild-fowl, scarcely even excepting geese and swans, the wildest and most difficult to induce to come within gunshot. All who have shot upon the low sedgy shores of the Chesapeake will confirm this assertion, for well and frequently must he remember to have watched with anxious and impatient eye this dusky



BLACK DUCK.

beauty wheeling, and wheeling in gradually contracting flights, towards the well-guarded decoys, only to leave them in disgust before the impatient gunner was rewarded with a shot. Moreover, this species seems to be regarded by all others of its family as a most reliable advance-guard in whom to place confidence, for often have I seen both red-heads and canvas-backs retire precipitously from the blind to which they were coming direct, when a black duck has been observed giving a wide birth to the decoys.

Mr. Copper and Mr. Macready, both commanding vessels in the Maryland police force, than whom no better sportsmen and duck-shots are to be found, have often assured me that the black duck was the most difficult of all the waterfowl on the Chesapeake to kill; this I feel assured of from another circumstance than their wariness, for being very large, more so than mallard, and very powerfully built, they can carry away an enormous deal of shot.

I can well remember a circumstance illustrative of this. There was a marsh close to my head-quarters last year. To wile away the afternoon, I took my gun, and, with my landlord, started to explore some open water reported about a mile from home; for the late frosts had been severe, and all places that did not possess a rapid current were ice-locked.

The early portion of our tramp had been extremely unprofitable, but as we were crossing a narrow creek on the most unstable of bridges, temporarily constructed of fence rails purloined from the arable land of a neighbouring farmer, a brace of black duck flushed within twenty yards

of us. My companion, as he was holding on by the skin of his teeth to escape a ducking, could not shoot. I, who was situated in a less precarious position, could; so, making a violent effort to pull myself together, I put in both barrels; the first shot told its execution by cutting out a handful of feathers, the second by dropping the object at which I aimed it stone dead. However, the wounded bird went off with such velocity and power, that but little hope was entertained of recovering it; and as its retreating form gradually diminished in the distance, remarks to that effect passed between us, although both continued to gaze after it as long as its retreating form was in view. My friend's sight being better than mine, some seconds after I had turned my attention to other matters, informed me that my bird was down, and he thought he could find it. After a long and troublesome detour we reached the place, and the retriever recovered it in a few minutes. On examination, there was not a shot in the head, but the body was riddled to such an extent as to induce one to surmise how it was possible for the machinery of the body to work under such circumstances.

To every rule there are exceptions, so I will give one—a very rare one, I believe—in reference to black duck. It was the last day of the Indian summer, and consequently that preceding the commencement of winter. The atmosphere was so wonderfully still, that not a cat's-paw marked the surface of Lake Conchachin, in Upper Canada. In the morning I had crossed to the village of Orillia in a light skiff, with the intention of returning as soon as possible

with some provisions required by the labourers employed clearing land. Circumstances delayed me till almost mid-day before I took up my sculls to commence my return journey, and as I had some distance to go, and my craft was light, small, and crank, I took a good survey of the horizon to see that no squalls were brewing. No, not a cloud hung on the horizon, not a breath of wind disturbed the wonderful repose of the scene, and the two islands which formed either side of a strait through which I had to steer stood up exaggerated to double their size from the refraction of the atmosphere. A strong pull and a long pull disposed rapidly of space, and about half my journey was accomplished, when to my surprise I saw about a dozen black duck not twenty yards from my port oar. I did not have a gun with me, so lost a chance which I should have much liked to avail myself of. From curiosity to learn how near I could possibly get to these generally very timid birds I altered my course, and actually for ten minutes, if not more, pulled after them, and although I frequently came within a few yards, could not force them to take the wing. To explain this unusual circumstance, I have but one elucidation to offer, viz. that they had just arrived from a long migratory journey from the north, and the fatigue they had suffered temporarily incapacitated them from flight.

#### CANVAS-BACK DUCK.

The canvas-back duck, considered by many to be the greatest delicacy of all American game, is a magnificent bird about the size of the mallard, and not unlike in plumage the English widgeon. However, there is a marked

characteristic by which they never can be mistaken, namely a dip in the centre of the bill, while the upper portion of it runs very far over the forehead.

Rearing their young during summer upon the edge of the arctic circle, no sooner do indications of approaching winter occur, than on rapid and powerful wing they sweep down the line of coast, seldom ceasing their flight till the estuary of the Delaware or Chesapeake bay are reached; many continuing their course southward even to the marshes of Louisiana, and the swamps on the sea-boundary of Texas.

On the Pacific coast they also swarm within the same degrees of latitude as on the Atlantic. Thus it may be seen from their not being found in the interior of the continent that they are essentially a sea-duck. A curious circumstance connected with them is that until they have fed on the vallisneria, familiarly known as water-celery, the flesh of the canvas-back is insipid and fishy; and as this plant grows in the greatest abundance on the Chesapeake, especially on a portion called the Susquehanna Flats, the duck that are killed there are of far more value than when shot elsewhere.

As these birds are exceedingly strong, tremendous divers, and covered with a very close coating of feathers, they require a large-bore gun. My selection should be, after the experiences of last season, a single barrel No. 6 with No. 3 shot for flight-shooting; a No. 10 or 8 double-barrel, with 5 shot for point-shooting.

Immediately after their arrival from the north, they are very easily decoyed, becoming more wary, however, when

much shot at; but if severe weather, with ice and snow set in, they soon forget the caution gained by previous experience.

The number of these ducks that are annually killed is surprising, the greatest slaughter amongst them being made from sink boats, a species of box which is sunk in the water till within a few inches of its level; to prevent the splash coming on board it has immense wings on either side which lay on the surface of the water, and which are studded over with innumerable decoys. Of course it must be understood that this infernal machine is anchored, the gunner lying on his back and shooting upwards as the game hover over his head. Such experts have many of these Chesapeake wild fowl shooters become, that they seldom put their gun to the shoulder.

Over decoys which are placed off points in the line of their flight, large numbers can be killed. Many repudiate this shooting, even condemn it; in this I cannot agree, for quick shooting and great skill in management are required.

Again, they are killed flying over dips in the land, when moving from one feeding-ground to another; the large gun's utility then shows itself. (For detailed account, see *Afloat and Ashore*.)

The hospitality of Marylanders is proverbial; the shooting in their State is excellent, so a sojourn there is certain to be conducive of much pleasure to the sportsman.

#### PIN-TAILED DUCK.

Sprig-tailed, pheasant, long-tailed, and pin-tailed duck are the names by which these handsome birds are known



in different portions of the North American continent. Although not unfrequently found upon the coast, they are much more numerous on the swamp and sloughs of the interior. Strictly migratory in their habits, they are invariably the earliest visitors of the duck family that denote the termination of winter, and the last to tell that autumn is about to give place to the season of snow and ice. They breed away up in the far north among the innumerable lakes and rivulets of the Hudson Bay territory, and pass their winter in the swamps and lagoons scattered over the seaboard of Texas and other southern states.

They are very swift and powerful upon the wing, and require as much hitting, if not more, than any bird of their size, therefore No. 3 shot and a ten-bore gun should be used. They are also very wary, and unless in a snow-storm, when they appear to become bewildered, great patience and skill are necessary to make a successful stalk upon them. In seeking for them, the sportsman must be guided entirely by not only the season of the year, but by its severity, if on the western prairies, where I have seen them in immense numbers; the day or two preceding the freezing up of the sloughs they are certain to be found in abundance; again, in spring, immediately after thaw has commenced.

From their delicacy of flavour, they are much sought after; but their destruction is inconsiderable from the reason I have above stated; however, drainage and agriculture are certain ultimately to drive them from what are now their favourite haunts.

## THE WOOD-DUCK.

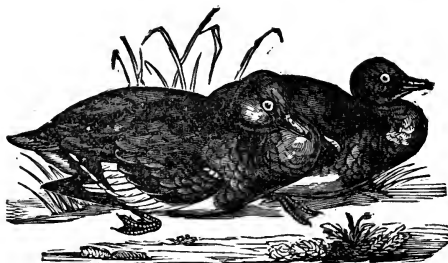
This bird, which rivals in beauty of plumage the far-famed mandarin duck of China, is seldom or never found upon the sea-board of the United States, even in such severe weather as freezes up the rivers, for on such occasions, being migratory, it betakes itself southward to more hospitable latitudes. However, during summer and open winters, it will be found, not in large flocks, but in little family parties of from four to eight, on all the streams that have wooded margins south of the 45th degree of latitude. Nowhere have I found them sufficiently abundant to make them for the day the sole object of pursuit, yet few excursions will be made in the vicinity of their retreats that several shots will not be obtained at them. Although not essentially a wild bird, still they have the instinct, unless stalked upon unperceived, to flush just beyond gun-range, and appear invariably to endeavour to keep either some giant tree or immense limb between the intruder and themselves. As their favourite perching places are upon limbs of trees, it is useless to search for them on the stream after being alarmed, for they invariably make into the timber, and alight near the summit of such trees as possess the densest foliage. Their nest is always built in a tree, generally such a one as is overgrown with ivy and leans over a pond or watercourse, the young being carried in the bill of the parent bird from its nursery to the water when it has arrived at sufficient maturity to endure such treatment. Their flight is very swift and powerful, so, although the bird is small, little larger than a

teal, it requires hard hitting to bring it down : thus No. 6 shot will be found most useful for their pursuit.

*Smaller Varieties.*

Independent of Chesapeake Bay being visited by such immense swarms of canvas-back ducks, there are thousands of red-heads and black-heads, all excellent birds for the table, and larger than English widgeon, besides quantities of bald pates, teal, and many smaller species of wild fowl denominated by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood respectively dipper ducks, southerlies, and whistlers—all of which are remarkable for their beautiful plumage, and their activity, whether swimming or on the wing.

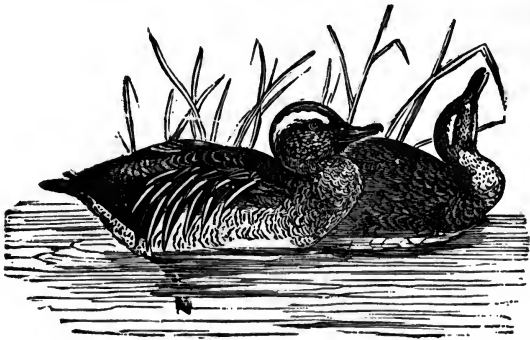
It is very seldom in winter, during any weather, that sport is not to a certain extent marred by these little beauties, more especially by the dippers, for they are such



BALD PATES.

little rogues, thieves, and impudent withal, that whenever they see decoy ducks set out they are bound to visit them. The reason they do so is this : they imagine that the imitation birds are a veritable flock of canvas-backs feeding,

and they themselves being indifferent divers, wait upon the surface for the larger species to bring up the much-prized water-celery, when, before the lately-submerged bird has got the water out of his eyes or recovered his breath, the little pilferer has purloined the fruits of his labour. This is no idle fancy; Audubon vouches for its truth, and I have many times heard it confirmed by persons who spend their lives upon the Chesapeake, supplying Baltimore with wild fowl. A cock dipper, for such is the name the male bird receives, in the parlance of that locality, is truly a beautiful bird, almost rivalling the wood duck in the brilliancy of his plumage. When he raises his handsome crest he is particularly attractive.



TEAL.

For the table, dippers are superior to teal, and that is paying them no mean compliment; for who that is an epicure can be ignorant of the delicacy of flavour of the latter?

The SOUTHERLY, as well as the dipper, are essentially sea ducks, neither being found inland. The former doubtless derives its name from the notes it utters when calling to each other or when alarmed. In stormy weather they are particularly garrulous, and the notes "Sou-southerly" may be heard in every direction, as distinctly uttered as if by a human being, and the intonation is particularly musical. They also possess great beauty of plumage, the preponderating colouring being rich brown interspersed with white. They are a little larger than our teal; however, they are tough and fishy, consequently little used for the table when other varieties can be obtained, so that, except in cases of necessity, the sportsman ought always to spare them.

The WHISTLER is about the size of the former, but fuller in form. It is a dark, sombre bird, with a beautiful white bar on each wing. They derive their name from a sharp whistling sound emanating from each wing when in flight. Unlike the former species, they frequent the rapids and air-holes of rivers in severe frost, consequently are not, strictly speaking, sea ducks. When in such haunts they are extremely wary and difficult of approach, and being very powerful of wing and extremely tenacious of life, will fly a long distance after they have been severely wounded. Although my experience would cause me to say otherwise, they are not much appreciated as an article of food.

For general duck-shooting, that is, for killing a great variety of this appreciated race, I know few places I can more strongly recommend than a beautifully-timbered placid stream called the Irequois, flowing through the northern

part of the State of Illinois. Autumn was the season when first I visited it, and so charmed was I with its suitableness for this description of sport that I tarried by its banks not only the two weeks originally intended, but many weeks more.

For a water-course situated in a settled State it was wonderfully free from intrusion; so much so, that my friend and self have frequently gone from morning till night without seeing the face of a stranger.

The appearance of this river is easily described, for there was no grand cascade or boiling rapid to make it remarkable; no, it was only a commonplace prairie stream about sixty yards wide, margined at the edge with lilies and sedge, which was again bounded on the dryer ground by dwarf hazel and alder bushes in sparsely-scattered clumps, the whole framed in with thin, widely-scattered, diminutive trees. Thus the reader will perceive that there was enough cover to get within range of your game, not sufficient to interfere with your aim, and the walking was excellent on both sides, free from quagmire or cedar swamp.

I can recall with pleasure the rich go'den mellow of the American autumn glinting over this retired scene, and almost every variety of duck passing with strong and rapid pinion, unconscious of danger, along the centre of the stream, and within such easy gun-shot that we invariably picked up each other's birds; for we took reverse sides of the river, such a proceeding saving our faithful, patient, ever-willing retrievers. Nor would our forenoon bag be better than the afternoon one, although towards night we returned over the same route we had pursued in the morn-

ing; for if we killed a couple of dozen going with the stream, the number bagged would be about the same returning in the reverse direction. And day after day no apparent diminution in our sport occurred, for the vast sloughs in the surrounding prairie immediately supplied the deficit occasioned by our labours. There were other pleasures attached to this delightful locality that never could fail to delight the naturalist or sportsman; for the fleet, timid, watchful-eared deer, the fussy, pompous wild turkey, and graceful, swift-winged ruffed grouse were also partial to this retreat, and few were the days that we did not see several of each, rushing off on rapid feet or wing to hide themselves from the dangerous intruders on their demesne. This spot cannot be much changed, for it is only seven years or so since I was there, and it is some distance from railroads; but even supposing the game be reduced one half, then there would be ample left to induce me to go many a long and weary mile to revisit it. My old shooting companion and very dear friend, Nathaniel West, a year or two since was still residing at Kent, Indiana, not many miles from the Irequois. If the reader be of the right sort, *id est*, willing to do a fair day's work for a fair day's sport, and acknowledge that there are as good countries in the world as our own, let him call upon him, and he will return satisfied that America can and does produce as good shots and sportsmen as England.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

## SALMONIDÆ.

(*Salmo salar.*)

ALTHOUGH at one time salmon were found abundant in all the tributaries of the St. Lawrence, even in Lake Ontario, now the fisherman on the Atlantic seaboard of America, if he desires commensurate reward for the trouble and expense he has been put to that he may enjoy his favourite pleasure, must visit some of the streams along the coast of Labrador, unless he feel disposed to rent a fishery, which will be found almost as expensive in Canada as in Norway, Scotland, or Ireland. However, if you are able and willing to pay for the enjoyment of your hobby, this advantage is gained, that when the season terminates you are nearer home and civilisation; advantages that cannot often be over-appreciated if accidents or sickness have overtaken yourself or companions.

On the Pacific coast salmon are [also most abundant in all the streams that flow into it above the 42nd degree of north latitude. In fact, a few years ago, the Columbia



and Fraser rivers abounded with this fish in such numbers as often to pollute the air with the decomposition of the countless thousands of dead that were washed up on their margins.

At the present date those of Fraser river are justly famous. There are five species, and they make their way up the river for 1,000 miles. The silver salmon begins to arrive in March or early in April, and lasts till the end of June. Their weight is from four to twenty-five pounds, but they have been caught weighing over seventy. The second kind are caught from June to August, and are considered the finest. Their average size is only five or six pounds. The third, coming in August, average seven pounds, and are an excellent fish. The noan or humpback salmon comes every second year, lasting from August till winter, weighing from six to fourteen pounds. The hook-bill arrives in September and remains till winter, weighing from twelve to fifteen and even forty-five pounds. Salmon is sold at Victoria at five cents a pound, and there appears to be no limit to the supply.

However, one thing I must not forget to mention is that, although the trout of British Columbia, Oregon, and California rise freely to the fly, the salmon of the Pacific do not, a circumstance to be regretted by all lovers of the lithesome rod.

Halifax—reader, have you ever been in Halifax? Many places are less to be admired and less agreeable to live in, although I have heard sailors quote the saying, in Old England, “Deliver us from Hell, Hull, and Halifax.” Why this condemnation I know not. For my part, I have

been in many towns less pleasant; the inhabitants are hospitable and genial, the society is good, and the ladies have no small pretensions to being considered beautiful. Having spent a couple of weeks lounging about Halifax with nothing to do, at length I decided to go in search of adventure, and, if possible, get a few days' salmon fishing.

Having come to this conclusion, on examining the local papers, I found that the good schooner *Alert*, registered A 1, would sail on the morrow for the Straits of Belle Isle, to collect salt fish from the coast, weather permitting; so without delay I hastened to the designated wharf to examine the craft, and strike a bargain with the skipper. The captain was below, in the cabin, one of the deck hands informed me, as I passed the gangway, indicating the position of the companion-ladder with a jerk of his finger over the left shoulder. On getting at the bottom of that most inconvenient piece of mechanism in every small craft, a little faster than expected, having slipped my foot on the second or third step, and slid the rest of the way to the bottom, only saving my neck by the hold I had of the bannisters, and making a tremendous racket by my rapid descent, I was saluted with, "Jock, you careless lubber, can't you mind your feet? This is the second time you have made that infernal clatter this day!" And what more would have come I know not, for I interrupted the speaker in his invective by knocking with considerable energy at the door which appeared to stand between us. On being desired to enter, I turned the handle, when Captain MacGregor was presented to my view, lathered all

over, and in the act of giving the finishing touch on the strap to his razor. He was a big man, powerful, raw-boned, but kindly-looking, and with great courtesy he apologised for his undress and the rough salute he had given me. The companion-ladder he condemned in no measured terms, but at the same time he could make no allowance for a young callant like Jock being not spry enough with his feet to keep a grip of aucht that he could get his heel or toe on. I saw that the skipper was a bit of a character, and, with all his external roughness, had a good, warm, kind heart underneath. I determined, therefore, to trust myself to his seamanship, if suitable terms could be made. At once the subject of my visit was broached and his charge for the trip ascertained. After thinking a minute or two, he asked my name and whether or no I was from the States. On being answered in the negative, and my cognomen given, he took a good look at me, and laying down his razor, the lather being still on his face, he delivered himself in these words:—“The passage I’ll just charge you five pund sterling for. I’m thinking you’ll na deem that ower muckle; but if I didna like your cut, twenty pund, let alone five, would na hae let you aboard. And I suppose it’s a’ right, and gin you’ll jist wait till I get scraped, I can gie you a glass of real Islay that nare was gauged by exciseman.” Soon the scraping operation was performed to his satisfaction, and a black bottle was produced, the contents of which fully reached the proper standard of excellence, if strength is considered to constitute it. In the meantime, the captain had got ready to go on shore, and Jock was summoned for final

instructions ; but the deck hands stated that he was not on board, but fishing off the end of the dock. A stentorian shout summoned the truant. With line in hand and a string of flounders he made his appearance. "How dar'st you gang ashore wi'out my permission? You're mair bother than the whole ship's company, you de'il's buckey, you. Yinst we get hame, your mither maun keep you to hersel'; for though she be my ain sister, I'll no be langer fashed wi' the likes o' you. Now listen to me: hae dinner sharp at twa; see that the cook dun'na boil the haggis ower muckle, and set twa plates. You'll tak your dinner wi' me, sir; I hae got a real Scotch haggis, and the likes you maybe nare tasted afore. I'll tak no refusal, mon, unless you're promised to a friend." With pleasure I accepted the invitation, and, much pleased with both captain and schooner, returned to the hotel to pack my traps and make final arrangements before sailing. Sharp at two I was again on board, and the agreeable odour which pervaded the craft, if it rose from the haggis, was a guarantee of future excellence. The captain welcomed me with great warmth, and expressed hopes that we should have a rapid and pleasant passage, but at the same time informed me that there was no more kittlish navigation in the world, excepting it be on his own native coast. Our meal passed pleasantly; and while performing the office of host, his brusqueness disappeared, and with it a good deal of the broad dialect. The haggis was excellent, the bacon and chickens were as good, and the West Indian preserves which formed the dessert were of the best quality. As I stretched my limbs under his table in the snug little cabin,

after the cloth had been removed, and a kettle of boiling water flanked with lemons had made its appearance, I felt satisfied that there were worse lots in the world than commanding a clipping schooner in the West Indian trade.

As the toddy circulated our companionship increased, and to a question I asked in reference to his success in the last voyage, he made the following statement.—“Well, sir, you see a man that commenced the world without a bawbee. My faither and mither were baith poor, and when I thought I had enough schooling, our family being big, I bound myself as an apprentice on board a bark called the *Kilmors*, that traded out of Clyde to the West Indies. She was one of the old-fashioned sort, and would make as much on a wind as a hay-stack. Still, she was a snug little boat, strong as oak and dry as could be. On the last run I made in her the captain took sick and died, most before we lost sight of Cantire. This made me second mate, and the former first mate took charge. Our voyage was prosperous, and we dropped anchor off Demerara in near the shortest time that then ever had been made. One thing only disturbed the harmony of the passage, viz. the acting first officer was so puffed up with his new post that he neither performed his duty nor would let others do theirs. The temporary captain was, after a deal of forbearance, compelled to place him under arrest, and prefer charges against him on dropping anchor. The result was, he was discharged, and as the bark was to go to sea immediately, and a first mate could not be procured, I was advanced to act in that capacity.

“When we got back to Clyde, the very day we sighted old Ailsa Craig, my time was out, and as we ran up the river with a fair wind astern, and all our stunsails set, I would have given most aucht if my mither and faither—who lived at Saltcoats, close by—could have seen their boy, in his new and advanced berth. The owners of the old *Kilmors* launched a new ship next year, and, much to my unexpected satisfaction, I got the berth of first officer in her. A year or two after, when at Jamaica, I was offered the command of a brig in the Honduras trade, and here I saved some money; in three years I purchased a share, and in two years more was half owner. The world prospered wi’ me, and every few years or so I see the auld folks and gie them a little comfort in their auld age. When young, many’s the trout I had tane, and when I would make my fleeing visits to the old hearthstone, I would generally get a day or two to try the salmon in Doon, for I was aye fond o’ fishing, so was my father, and his father afore him, an’ somehow I ne’er kent a fisher who was na an honest man” (as he warmed with the subject he resumed his native dialect), “and when I looked at you, and heard you say you were going for a bit o’ fishing, my heart warmed to you, ane tho’ I ha’ been so fashed with passengers, and had maist made up my mind nare to take anither, I jist thought I’d drap my rule on your account.”

The afternoon passed pleasantly; the captain had been everywhere, and discoursed with great good sense and knowledge upon different countries, and he was destitute of the disagreeable egotism that so frequently stamps our uneducated countrymen. Moreover, he was a loyal and

true subject of his queen and country, which made me the more appreciate him. Next morning we got to sea with a fair wind, and every prospect of a short run; the schooner was a remarkably fast sailer, built after the model of one of our modern yachts, low and close to the water; with plenty of beam, and long, tapering, rakish spars.

Her decks were without hamper, and showed from their whiteness that holystone was not spared; while the crew, which consisted of six men, the redoubtable Jock, and a sturdy nigger, were as efficient, clean, and smart as could well have been found. The captain took a great deal of pleasure in his craft, and handled her as none but a man of experience could; besides, he was half owner, and this made him have an interest in all the details that one employed by the month or cruise would be unlikely to possess. In talking to the skipper, reading, and looking over my tackle, the day passed rapidly, and as night closed in and the breeze lessened, I concluded that I had seldom passed a pleasanter day.

After supper, MacGregor produced his rods and fly-book for my inspection, and a long and careful examination we had of these common subjects of interest. His rods were remarkably heavy, longer than I should deem necessary, while his flies were coarsely tied, although the colouring was all that could be desired. If one had been dismembered, I have little doubt, from the dubbing and feathers of which it was composed, three, or at least two, of my treasures could have been fabricated. Of course, I soon produced my tools, to all of which he gave an

abundance of praise, but doubted if they could do more execution than his own. My reel, alone, he acknowledged to be better than his, and concluded, if ever he went to New York,\* he'd be guilty of purchasing its counterpart. Bedtime arrived, and having discussed a nightcap, I turned into my bunk, while the captain went on deck to keep the middle watch with the second mate, a practice he always followed when on the coast. The motion was just sufficient to lull me to sleep, and soon my eyes were closed to the outer world. Three hours at the utmost must I have been asleep, when the violence of the motion, the stamping on deck, thoroughly aroused me from my slumbers. From the even keel that we had been on a few hours before, we now careened so far over that I found it next to impossible to brace myself in my berth; the wind fairly screeched through the rigging, and the racket caused by chairs, and other movables adrift, banished slumber for the time being. At length I could remain no longer below, from a desire to see and ascertain the nature of affairs. After many ineffectual attempts, and not without assuming all kinds of strange attitudes, I got into my nether garments and boots, and succeeded in gaining the upper regions. The scene was truly terrific; the sea was wild with agitation; billow after billow rolled past, crested with foam, while the blast fairly howled its wrath. The captain stood aft, holding on to the weather mainstay, occasionally giving an order to the men at the wheel. From the spread of canvas we had formerly carried, we were now reduced to a close-reefed

\* Made by Andrew Clerk and Co., of Maiden Lane.



mainsail, fore-stail, and storm-jib. Sometimes the vessel would appear to jump, as she would leave the top of one roller to reach the next. Nobly the gallant craft bore the ordeal, and splendidly did she behave; still, the cool self-possession of the captain failed to prevent my thinking how much better I should be satisfied to be again standing on *terra firma*, and, although pride prevented my making the confession, I internally registered a vow, that if I ever again placed my foot on land, nothing should again tempt me to trust my safety on board a coaster.

But to my narrative. With each hour the gale increased, and to such violence that the gallant schooner was momentarily in peril. Next morning dawned bleak and wild, the waves tumbled over one another, the larger swallowing up the lesser for want of something else to satisfy their devouring inclination. This day and several others were only a repetition of the first night; no reckoning could be obtained; still we stood upon our course. With half an eye I could detect that our skipper was uneasy, and anxious again for a glimpse of the old familiar sun.

One of our sails had been blown to ribbons, and our bowsprit became partially sprung, still as long as we had plenty of sea-room all was comparatively safe; sailors' ingenuity had obviated temporarily the injury of the latter, and the sail-room had supplied fresh canvas. The fourth evening the gale exhausted itself about midnight, and I, who had not closed an eye during these days, experienced a few hours of the balmiest sleep that ever fell to the lot of storm-tossed mariner, notwithstanding that there was not a

dry stitch, even among the bedding, on board the *Alert*. How often do I think of the affectionate kind mother of my childhood, and her anxiety that her boy should not sleep in damp sheets! Could she see or know the trials and hardships which he, with others, have encountered in his journey through life, her maternal solicitude would receive a severe shock. Truly the journey of life is a rough path, made up of storms and sunshine, wintry snows and tropical showers; one time ascending hills, the next descending; fortune smiling to-day, frowning to-morrow; ignorant of what the future has in store for us. But, doubtless, all is for the best, and those troubles and temptations which in our spleen we grumble at, are but intended to fit us for our ultimate resting-place, where perpetual sunshine and unclouded happiness will reign for ever.

Next morning, when day awoke me, I was delighted to find that we were once more on a level keel, and when I gained the deck, so bright and joyous appeared the weather, that you could imagine that nature was laughing and enjoying our previous discomfort. Sambo, the cook, soon supplied me with a cup of coffee, which, with my morning pipe, I thoroughly enjoyed, while I watched the detached banks of fog roll lazily over the water, occasionally shutting out or opening vistas of the distance. The whole water was alive with fish, the surface in many places being broken, and resembling the rapids of a river, with their gambols; but soon a giant porpoise would roll in among them, when all the terrified fry would disappear for a few minutes, to re-present themselves when the intruder had departed. Gulls, in immense numbers, floated upon the

water, as if resting from the fatigue caused by the war of the elements, and adding beauty to the picture by their pure white, spotless plumage. I remember hearing an old salt in answer to the question of why sea-fowl, in bad weather, so much more fearlessly approach vessels than when it is calm, give the following solution:—"Well, you see, those good folks who die don't go to Davie Jones, but turn into Cape pigeons and kittiwakes, and them kind of birds, and when they think it's rough and kind of dangerous, they naturally like to hover about their friends to protect them." If angels visit earth in these modern and wicked times, there are many garbs they could assume less beautiful and less suitable than that of the snowy-white sea-gull.

At breakfast our captain expressed much satisfaction at the bad weather having passed, and particularly at its being so unusually calm, for he much feared, what with the usual incorrectness of dead reckoning and strong tides—which exist to a greater extent here than probably in any other portion of the globe—that he was some way off his course. On taking soundings, the depth indicated by the lead-line and the composition of the bottom so completely differed from what we expected, that there scarcely remained a doubt that we were astray; still we were drifting very rapidly to the north-west, the fog, if anything, growing denser. About eleven, our captain having given the look-out strict injunctions to keep his eyes open while he again went below to examine his chart, I followed suit. I could scarcely have been in the cabin over five minutes when the schooner received a severe shock, which caused me to rush

on deck. We had struck a rock forward, a little to starboard of the stem, but the tide had fortunately swung us round clear, and we were drifting on as if nothing had happened. On sounding, we found we were making water rapidly, faster than the pumps could throw it out. True, we had the boats, and our danger was trifling, but the security of the gallant craft was imminent. Not a word of anger did the captain permit to escape his lips, but accepted all as destiny. Scarcely twenty minutes had we been in this uncertain state when a gentle breeze sprang up and the fog rapidly lifted, giving us an observation, and disclosing a panorama never to be forgotten. Tier after tier of sterile hills overtopped each other to the north, grand in their bold and fantastic outline, while a white sandy beach met the blue water, occasionally interrupted by a reef of rocks jutting out into the azure element. Not over a mile separated us from the shore; and projecting headlands shut us in from west and easterly gales; while a reef of rocks, the extremity of which we had touched, formed a natural breakwater, a mile and a half to the eastward. If so disposed, with the wind from its present direction, we should have found it a difficult matter to beat out, and when the skipper informed me that he intended running in and stranding the vessel at the first high tide, I not only highly approved, but was much delighted with the prospect. The welcome word to let go the anchor soon rang forth, and the emblem of faith took hold on firm sand at four fathoms.

In discussing our early dinner the captain informed me that he intended going ashore to seek out a suitable place

to strand his craft, and that I might as well accompany him and explore to the westward, for a stream was marked on his chart which could not be over a few miles from our anchorage. Soon we trod *terra firma*, and, while MacGregor remained, I started, double-barrel in hand, on a reconnaissance, with light steps and lighter heart. The soil was thin and unproductive, bearing nothing but stunted brush, excepting in the ravines and hollows, sheltered from the prevailing winds; here a dwarf deformed pine or stunted larch would rear its diminutive head, or an antiquated birch, covered with its hoary bark, hang precarious from a jutting rock. Intense solitude reigned around, and naught broke the stillness of the landscape save the persevering wickered hum of the blood-thirsty mosquito. With buoyant hopes I walked on, and just as I began to think I had traversed quite two miles I suddenly came upon the margin of a bright pure river, about seventy yards wide, running in a continuous rapid stream towards the sea. Mungo Park's first view of the Niger, or Speke and Grant's first sight of the upper waters of the Nile, can scarce have afforded more satisfaction to those illustrious travellers than I experienced on this occasion. Several seals were fishing in the current, and their disregard of my presence convinced me that their acquaintance with the lords of creation had been very limited. Several families of wild duck were conspicuous, while salmon and sea-trout broke water wherever the stream was undisturbed by the unwelcome seals. Reader, have you ever been at the mouth of a river and witnessed how rapidly the arrival of a seal in its estuary is trans-

mitted to the inhabitants? The moment before his unwelcome presence is known, thousands of fish sport themselves, but on his advent being published not an indication can be noted that aught else tenants the water save this amphibious animal. After taking a due survey I started upwards, following the margin of the stream. In less than a mile I found its general characteristics changed, and from a steady rapid current it became a boiling, seething cataract. Again its character changed, and large sombre-looking pools interrupted its precipitous course. How I longed for a rod! It required much less experience than mine to be aware that this was a magnificent fishing-ground. Salmon rose on all sides, pitching themselves clear of the water and making it fly in spray like the splash of a heavy stone. I had beheld enough to satisfy the most fastidious, and with hurried steps I retraced my way, brimful with what I had seen and anxious to convey the important information to my kind and worthy acquaintance, the captain.

That evening we discussed our plans, MacGregor being in excellent spirits, having found that the ship's leak could easily be stopped, and that the injury was far from serious. As he was his own employer he thought he would indulge in a little recreation, and set his men to painting, sail-making, and all those minor *et ceteras* so constantly wanted on board ship, while we in company flogged the river or otherwise enjoyed ourselves. That night we sat up later than usual, and fishing excursions for years gone by were discussed, tales told of the first blood we had drawn, of the largest fish we had captured, and where they had succumbed

to our prowess. Old, musty, moth-eaten fly-hooks and feathers, that appeared as if they had not seen the light of day for years, were produced from his numerous lockers, and as they were examined, and various pages turned over, numerous were the anecdotes narrated in connection with each.

Jock roused us an hour before daylight next morning, and having discussed an excellent cup of coffee, we got into the stern sheets of one of the boats with two of the crew to pull us to our destination. As the captain commenced fishing, a fine sea-trout rose at the fly. Judging from the splash, that he was of more than usual size, and worth making a second effort for, again the cunningly-disguised hook was passed over his retreat, but with the same result; a third trial was essayed, and as the third time is said to be lucky, so it proved, for the fish was hooked. The struggles and devices this fish practised to escape were worthy of success; three times he ran out many a yard of line, and on each occasion jumped several times clear of the water; but all was futile, for after upwards of ten minutes' play he was obliged to surrender to skill and practice. My companion called upon me to use the gaff, and with the first effort I succeeded in landing him on *terra firma*. We had no scales to weigh him, and we were too tired, and had killed nobler specimens before we returned to think more of this little hero; but from experience I am confident he must have reached nearly five pounds. On examination of our ground we mutually agreed to separate, one taking the left and the other the right side of the river. Trees and brush did not grow sufficiently near its margin

to seriously incommode us, and the rocks, which became uninterrupted after leaving the coast, were flat and in regular strata, affording excellent footing, and in many places their table-like surface was only a few inches above the level of the stream. One of the sailors accompanied me to act as gaffer and afford assistance, while the other went with the captain. In our council of war, which we held before separating, it was determined that we should try and fish opposite one another as much as circumstances would allow, and under no occasion get out of hail. A few hundred yards higher than my exploring had led me the day before the water tumbled over some rocks, making a fall of six or seven feet, and then expanded into a broad sullen pool, with a disturbed but slow current down its centre covered with patches of foam. Soon my rod was together and an old favourite fly added to my stretcher, whose performance was frequently on previous occasions satisfactory. This fly has no name that I am aware of, in fact, I go so far as to imagine myself the inventor; but whether my title is good or not to this honour, I will give its description, *pro bono publico*. Wings from the wing feathers of the bustard (a bird now to be found in quantity only on the steppes of Southern Russia or Tartary: in plumage and colour it much resembles the wild turkey, whose feathers, I have no doubt, would answer equally well), with a few strands of the scarlet macaw or ibis mixed with it. Body of two colours, equally divided; upper portion of dark blue mohair, lower of gingery red, a red hackle round the lower portions of body and a black round the upper. A band of silver tinsel if for a bright day, and



gold if for a dark one, wrapped carefully and regularly between the hackles; the whole terminating with a scarlet tail either of ibis or worsted—the latter I prefer. To say that this fly has not been tried previously might be deemed presumptuous; but this I will say, that when I first made it I had no pattern, neither did I try to copy anything I had seen. I have used it in many waters, and invariably with success, although I am aware that frequently what is found most deadly on some streams is totally ineffective in a neighbouring one.

My fly being on and the cast well stretched, I commenced operations, and at the third throw rose a heavy fish without pricking him. However, I thought I would move down and return when I had got to the bottom of the pool, and offer his excellency another chance. At the fifth throw I rose and hooked a fine fish, who, as soon as he felt he was impaled, rushed down into the still water. Not less than seventy yards did he run out at this burst, and when I thought I had turned him the scoundrel sulked and remained sullen at the bottom. I thought he was hooked strong, for I struck him quick and forcibly, and therefore felt confident, barring accidents, that he was destined to be mine. Slowly, but surely, I worked down stream, taking in with guarded hand every inch of slack that I could with safety. When abreast of him not over thirty yards were off my reel, and the ground was more than usually accessible. With patience I waited some minutes, but I might just as well have been fast to a rock. Other salmon were leaping around me, and I could not afford the time to remain inactive. I was determined to

rouse my prize, and my anxiety increased when the sailor who accompanied me announced that the skipper had just landed a fish. In my excitement I had lost sight of my friend, but Crosby's news recalled him. The captain had drawn first blood. This fact brought my impatience to boiling-point, and I could stand it no longer. Crosby was instructed to throw a few stones above the fish, and thus endeavour to start him from his retreat. The first piece of rock had scarcely touched the water when the object was attained. Off he went with the velocity of electricity, and the handle of my reel spun round like the fly-wheel of an engine; although I kept a considerable check, still over ninety yards must have run off, when, much to my satisfaction, he broke water three times, the first time throwing himself good three feet clear of his element. This manœuvre, although frequently dangerous, pleased me in one way. I was certain that his route would now be changed, and probably I should succeed in getting in some of my line. True to my former experience the fish now headed up stream and permitted himself to be somewhat controlled. At moderate pace he retraced his steps and almost had got to where I struck him, when, putting a little more strain on than he admired, round he wheeled, and with his previous velocity pointed his head again for the sea. Still, the struggle had its effect; this dash was not equal to previous ones, and fifty yards of line brought him up. For ten minutes it was give and take, back and forward, up and down, till at last I brought him, all resplendent in his silvery armour, into shoal water. "Now, Crosby, now's your chance; careful, man; don't be in too big a hurry."

But my advice was disregarded ; the sailor made a plunge at the fish with the gaff as if it had been a harpoon, scratched the salmon's side, and all my work was again before me. The drawing of blood instilled new vitality into the fish's veins, and the previously vanquished foe was running out line as if he had been fresh struck. I could not be angry ; when a novice I had done likewise, and, no doubt, my attendant had just made his virgin effort. In fact, I could not help being amused at his astonished countenance, for, doubtless, he had already counted the fish as safe. This last struggle did not continue long ; again I got him in shoal water, when, having cautioned and instructed my excited attendant as far as words could avail, he made a second effort, and that correctly. Twelve pounds was the weight of this noble salmon, and often have I found that those of this size are more game and afford a harder fight than larger fish. The strain on your rod is not so severe or the contest so long as with a heavier antagonist, but the activity and energy displayed are greater.

Having overhauled my tackle and lit a weed as reward for my prowess, I again ascended to the top of the pool and commenced afresh ; visions of the first fish I rose, which I felt convinced was a formidable one, inducing me to this course. My leader had now got straightened, from the action of the water and the strain it had so lately successfully withstood. To get my line clear away to the requisite length I threw across the surging portion of the stream and dipped my tip, to prevent any unnecessary delay when I reached my friend's ambush ; a couple of casts brought me to the spot, and with careful steady hand and

measured throw I placed my fly, straight as a bee-line \* a few yards above where my prey was supposed to be lodged ; and with that regular motion that resembles the passage of a shrimp through the water, I brought the bright fascinating deception towards me, the current at the same time carrying it downwards. Description, particularly if you enter into detail, is always longer than action. My handsome imitation—of what ? for a similar living fly I never saw—was a foot or two above the desired eddy when a splash, a flourish of a broad dark tail, answered by my quick nervous hand giving an electric strike, fastened me to a splendid fish. As man and animals choose different methods of assault or defence, so this salmon selected a different course to free himself. The hook had scarcely been in him when four times he sprang with determined energy from his watery home, each spring causing me in courtesy to lower the point of my weapon, as an inferior would salute a senior officer ; but this steeple-chase escape had not the desired effect, and the salmon, comprehending this, altered his plan of combat and settled down deep in the pellucid river, although far from conquered. An occasion of this kind is a trying ordeal, and often as dangerous to the tackle as any stratagem that is put in practice ; in fact, I have thought that it is pursued for the purpose of rubbing their snout on the rocks or gravel, as frequently I have found after killing a fish who had thus performed that my fly was much frayed and worn.

\* A common Americanism originating from loaded bees always flying straight to their home.

After waiting for many minutes, trusting that my foe would change his mind and his quarters, I became impatient, and believing my tackle to be good, put on a little extra purchase; this *ruse* was successful, for with astounding velocity the fish started down stream at racing pace for parts unknown. The reel fairly yelled, and instead of the well-made sonorous click being heard, a discordant screech was its utterance. Close on a hundred yards of line rushed through the heated rings before he slackened up, and a good twenty yards more I had followed his course; at the end of this dash he broke water splendidly, causing the spray to fly for many feet around. Again and again his argentine flanks reflected brilliant radii in the sunlight, and at each glistening reflection of the solar rays I feared that we should part company without the most remote chance of further or more closely renewing our acquaintance. Fortune and good tackle, however, favoured me; and I had the satisfaction of turning his head for the source of the river, and probable birthplace of himself and relations. With the greatest satisfaction I took in yard after yard, my hopes rising as the body of my reel expanded; at length I saw the loop which attached the line to the leader, and the sight caused me more satisfaction than one can imagine who is engaged in the ordinary pursuits of life. O salmon fishing! what pleasure have I enjoyed following thy peaceful pursuit! What ecstasy, what delight! Would that I had the pen of the most fluent writer, or tongue of the most eloquent spokesman! I could do you far more justice; but still I doubt if it is in power of words to mete to you an iota of the

laudation and praise your fascinations so eminently deserve?

Why wander from facts? Simply because I cannot help it. But if I must be recalled from the enchantment of scenes which may never be re-acted, bear with me for a moment; it is but the allotted time for a breather between the heats—the welcome respite before the final burst that is to terminate the race. So it was in this instance; the strength, if not the courage of the regal foe, was weaker, and each succeeding effort became less powerful. Many a yard of line was again run out and safely restored to its resting-place. Up and down both immolator and victim traced and retraced their course: the one fearing to pursue, the other momentarily becoming more unfit. Time did its work, and, as in all things, brought the last scene to a close. A shoal bank of gravel lay at my feet, and, giving my fish the butt, I drew him in towards Crosby, who, ankle deep, stood beneath me in the cool, clear water, and struck the gaff into the spotless silver side, and landed him with the adroitness of one who had served a long apprenticeship to the trade. Don't imagine that there is no science in handling a gaff; for one expert many muffs will be found. How, then, you may ask, did this sailor learn so difficult a business in so short a space? Probably because he had a natural aptness; or, more likely, being a sailor, he could turn his hands much sooner than persons of any other trade to a business which required coolness and dexterity.

This fish weighed over eighteen pounds, and was fresh run from the sea, for he had not yet cleansed himself of

the sea-lice; his breadth and depth were enormous in proportion to his length—the best proofs of condition. In this capture, from the time the fish was struck till I had him floundering on the bank, full forty minutes elapsed, I having noted time previous to making the first cast at the head of the pool.

On examining my tackle, I found that it had suffered considerably, particularly the fly, which not only had one of the hackles broken, but also the tinsel; I therefore stuck it carefully in the crown of my hat, and replaced it with another, intending in the evening, when comfortably seated in our snug cabin, to bring my pliers, scissors, vice, &c., into play, and construct its counterpart, being well satisfied that the combination of colour which in previous exploits had done me good service, was again destined to reap fresh laurels and further establish its reputation. The upper portion of the stream, and the only part I had so far fished, was now well rested; and while refreshing myself preparatory to making a third essay, several noble fish broke water in the immediate vicinity where I had hooked both of my trophies. From what I had already seen, I was convinced that magnificent sport was before me, and that I had at last arrived in the land of plenty—of salmon. There was a satisfaction in knowing this—a feeling I will not attempt to describe, a gratification of a longing often felt, but never expected to be realised. Fancy, brother fishermen, having salmon as abundant as trout in a good trout-stream! In ten casts I had three rises, out of which I had hooked and killed two fish; and my friend across the water had also been busy.

Ye lords and commoners, who pay enormous rentals for salmon rivers, can you, with all the paraphernalia that a London fishing-tackle establishment can supply, with all the attendance and accessories that wealth can purchase, show a finer record? Truly I doubt if it is possible. Again I commenced at the head of the pool, and slowly progressed downwards; one fish I stirred, but on a second time casting over him, he refused to put in an appearance. Step after step I descended, and when not more than ten yards below where I had hooked my first fish, I struck another; but alas! the hook did not hold; a few spasmodic struggles, and he was free.

Salmon or trout fishing is not alone enjoyable for the pleasure of killing fish, but for the scenery and attachments which form the necessary adjuncts to the sport. The distance from the haunts of fellow-men, the solitude of perhaps the surrounding forest, the soft murmuring of the descending and rushing water, the opportunity afforded to study nature in its unalloyed purity—all tend to enhance, to the true lover of nature, this princely sport; the very combination of all these *et ceteras* making the perfection which all will acknowledge to belong to fly-fishing.

I must have been resting some time, when a more formidable attack of insects recalled me to reality; and as I raised myself gently, with destructive intent to slaughter without compunction those most persevering assailants, my eye caught sight of an animal evidently in full pursuit of some prey: it was not an otter, for its formation was different; nor a mink, for the size was much



greater ; again, its gait was different from both. Regularly it hunted to and fro, tail erect, nose down like a spaniel, and back arched like a weasel, occasionally emitting a peculiar sound, as if giving tongue, in the enjoyment of fresher indications and more satisfactory proofs of a rapidly successful termination to its exertions. Twice the unknown passed within thirty paces of my resting-place. Silently I watched the chase ; and so intent did I become, that both black flies and mosquitoes had a splendid harvest, for a far greater amount of suffering would have been necessary to cause me to make a movement that might prevent my seeing the issue. But the termination was near: the stranger made two or three short casts, like a pointer, to confirm the information that the reward was near, and then with a sudden rush forward seized a fowl—what kind I could not tell. I was on my feet in a moment, either with the intention of sharing the spoil or saving life, and rushed for the marauder ; but ere I reached him he dropped his prey, which I secured, and he departed hurriedly for parts unknown. The victim I picked up, and found lifeless, was a fine specimen of the merganser,\* about half grown, and, from the wing-feathers not becoming fully developed till a later period of life, unable to fly. The poor duck's skull was crushed into a jelly, so that its early deprivation of life must have caused only a momentary pain. The assassin was the scarce and indigenous fisher, only known in northern latitudes, and much valued for its fur. The little episode was in keeping with what all who

\* In America erroneously called shell-drake.

are observant of nature may daily witness—the stronger insect devouring the weaker, the more powerful animal the lesser; or man, the greatest tyrant of all, whatever falls within his reach, if worthy of the exertion, or suited to his fastidious palate.

On recommencing work in the afternoon, much to my satisfaction the fish were on the move, and during the few minutes that were necessary to arrange my tackle, over a dozen succeeded in ascending the shoot. It is seldom that the lover of nature can witness a more satisfactory and pleasing exhibition than that of salmon passing up a leap. Their efforts and perseverance are truly astonishing, and frequently dozens of essays will be made before one is successful. The manner of performing their ascent is a proof of the immense velocity, strength of body, and enormous power with which they are gifted; from six to eight feet can be accomplished by them, and I have heard many persons assert more. When once the fish gain the summit over the edge of the upper bend, a few spasmodic, rapid motions of the tail carry them forward, and they disappear from view so suddenly as to leave the beholder in doubt whether they have succeeded, or been carried down in the surging fall.

The flies continued exceedingly troublesome, particularly a small species of sand-fly. So minute are they, that when on your hand it is almost impossible to detect their exact situation; but however insignificant, their powers of torture are intense, for immediately after they have punctured the skin, a small water-blister rises, which smarts as acutely as a burn from the application of nitric acid.

All the concoctions that I have ever used to repel these pests have, so far, signally failed to give the desired relief; oil of pennyroyal, camphor, hartshorn, &c. &c., are useless, because their power evaporates the moment they are exposed to the atmosphere; coal-oil and oil of tar retain their virtue a little longer, but they require too frequent applications for one engaged in exciting sport, as well as being filthy and soiling to all you come in contact with, making your approach most objectionable to your companions from the offensiveness of the smell. If some of our numerous ingenious chemists would set their brains to work and discover a practical means for repelling these vampires, they would earn the goodwill of all the followers of the gentle craft.

The fifth or sixth throw rose and hooked a fine fish, which made me uncommonly busy; he was remarkably lively, and kept me on the move the first ten minutes. I scarcely ever remember to have seen a salmon break water so frequently; after the first burst, with about sixty yards out, he showed himself six or seven times, springing on each occasion several feet clear of the surface. However, these exertions told upon my foe, for when I turned him he submitted to be guided till all surplus line was in. Through a stumble which I made on passing over the rocks, I accidentally checked him more abruptly than Mr. Salmon thought was courteous, for off again he went with the velocity of a steam-engine; however, my tackle was strong and hook well planted, and soon, a second time, I had him under control, and by exercising a little politeness of the give-and-take order, I brought him into shallow water.

Jock, now my faithful attendant, was by, and with intense delight waded into the stream. "Careful, boy! be cautious!" But all was thrown away; he made a grab at the fish with the gaff, as the sailor had done before, but fortunately dragged it in water too shoal for swimming. Jock saw he had made a bungle, and was determined to retrieve, if possible, his lost reputation, so threw himself on the struggling salmon, and after a wrestling match of some minutes, with imminent danger to my tackle, proudly walked ashore, wet from head to foot, with the prize tightly cuddled up in his arms. Although at first tempted to anathematise the young scamp, I enjoyed a hearty laugh at the nonchalance with which the monkey treated his ducking.

Moving down the water, I recommenced operations, and rose two good fish; soon I got fast to a third, which gave me ten minutes' splendid sport, then he sulked, and after two or three futile attempts to escape, succumbed. I was surprised at obtaining so easy a victory, but this was explained by finding a piece cut out of his back, in front of the first dorsal fin, upwards of an inch in width, and two or three long. In trout fishing, I have once or twice taken fish similarly wounded; and, as there were no gill nets at either place, the only satisfactory reason I can attribute is that either a seal or an otter was the perpetrator.

As the evening advanced I changed flies, and selected what I have long known by the sobriquet of "the drummer"; it is composed thus: the mottled feathers of the peacock's wing, with a few strands of golden pheasant for wings; body, light brown fur of the bear next the hide, mixed with

orange-sable fur and gold-coloured mohair; gold tinsel, loosely but regularly wrapped with blood or claret-coloured hackle round the shoulder, and ordinary red hackle lower down. This fly has always been with me a great favourite, more particularly if the water is clearing out after rain, and with confidence I recommend it; at the same time I would have two or three sizes, the choice to be dictated by the size of water, colour, and hour. Some persons, in addition, have forked it with two or three hairs of the squirrel for tail; and a very worthy friend and admirable fly-fisher, whose success was a guarantee of his skill, used to affirm that when fish wouldn't rise at "the drummer," you might as well go to bed. As the results will show, my couch was not put into requisition, for ere many minutes I touched a splendid fish, but unfortunately didn't hold him. After a few minutes without success, I moved a very heavy fish without touching him. Again I gave him a chance, and he tumbled over the fly like a porpoise, without any apparent inclination to take. The third time that I offered, however, I was more successful, for in striking I hooked the fish foul. The result was curious and far from satisfactory, for this fellow put me through a course of spurts which opened my optics, and further convinced me of the uncertainty of the movements or plan of escape that is probable to be adopted by the impaled. What was my surprise—and I am confident many others would have been similarly affected—to see my victim remain on the surface, not jumping out of the stream, but beating the water with his tail, and violently struggling, making the liquid fly for feet around. For several moments this continued, when,

changing operations, down stream he went with surprising velocity. The reel screeched, and I followed with agile and careful steps, when,—confound it! the d——I take it!—readers, you must excuse, remember the aggravation—my rod broke at the ferrule of the second joint, and my line returned to my feet like a coil of rope scientifically thrown by an expert boatman. I was in despair. Such damage could not be repaired where I then was; my leader and new fly were gone, possibly for the estuary of the St. Lawrence, and, like a vessel stranded in a falling tide, I was perfectly helpless. To find the cause of this unexpected casualty was my first endeavour. The wood of the rod at the fracture looked fresh and sound, the brass appeared to be put on correctly, but there was something to be discovered yet of which I was still ignorant, and to the reel I went to solve the problem. In winding up or taking in line I had, through carelessness, permitted one round to lap across the other. In paying away the two had jammed, coming to a full stop. My rod had been broken, my fly stolen, and my casting line was probably performing duty for a pennant to a fish, totally disregarding distance or trespass. “There’s no use grieving over spilt milk,” some one says, and after I had got rid of the fizz, like a bottle of soda-water, I was calm enough, only regretting I had lost the salmon, for, with all fishermen, the fish that gets off is, of course, a very great deal larger than any you have captured.

To be a perfect fisherman, you require more excellences than are usually to be found in such a small space as is allotted to man’s carcass. You should be patient, forbearing,

vigorous, decided and prompt in emergency, with the constitution of a water-spaniel and the ingenuity of an Arkwright or a Fulton. Being deficient in many, more particularly in the latter requisites, I was compelled to shut up shop by putting up my rod in its canvas covering, regretting my bad luck, my stupidity, and last, though not least, the fish that had worsted me at my own game. Not being in the best of humour, of course Jock was out of the way, and not within hailing distance. What a capital chance to vent the balance of my spleen, not at all improved by the confounded flies, whose attacks since I had ceased to be employed, became more noticeable; in truth, if it were possible, I doubt not that I should have liked to saddle the boy with his absence being the cause of my mishap. After several times shouting his name, he at length appeared, hat in hand, bare-headed, with a smile of child-like satisfaction on his face that, even in my irate state, I had not the heart to destroy. To my inquiry where he had been, with a look of satisfaction he informed me he had found and harried a nest, producing his hat full of the stolen treasures. After giving him a lecture on the impropriety of such a course, and the probabilities of his being devoured by wolves and bears, or even cannibals, if he left my side, I could not help making an inspection of what his hat contained. Truly, he had a hat full, for upwards of a dozen pale, cinnamon-blotched eggs, a trifle larger than those of the domestic pigeon, lay at the bottom. The nest and parent bird, from description, left me in no doubt that Master Jock had deprived some luckless rock ptarmigan (*Lagopus albus*) of her embryo brood; and, after lecturing

him on the enormity of such a proceeding, and begging a share of the spoils, we started for the place of rendezvous.

The evening after my first day's sport was not an idle one, for though the body inclined to rest, full well I knew that on my exertions in fly-tying depended the sport of to-morrow. To make a good fly requires not only skill, but patience and knowledge, with a correct taste in the blending of colours, a strong hand to make secure work, and the employment of the best materials. How frequently indifferent hooks and gut are purchased because they are a trifle cheaper ! but if we could foresee the severe ordeal that may some day be in store for our tackle, and the splendid fish that may be lost through this parsimony, we should be better suited with half the quantity at double the cost. Your feathers should, if possible, be fresh, with the pile unbroken, your furs and mohair uncut by moths, and your silk the strongest, yet the finest, that can be procured. Of course, many of your principal feathers will require to be purchased ; but if the fisherman is also a shooter, there are few game birds that will not afford him choice materials ; so that during the autumn and winter, when his gun instead of rod is his companion, he can daily make additions to his treasures, which will serve him in pursuing the sister amusement.

Everything which makes deception more alluring should be resorted to by an angler ; for let his experience be ever so great, he will always find opportunities to regret his deficiencies. Where all depends so much upon chance, it is impossible to see the disadvantages under which you



may frequently labour, or the awkward positions in which you may occasionally be placed; where it is absolutely necessary for the fisherman to put on an unusual and severe strain to turn a hooked fish, so as to prevent his going over some surging fall, or down or up stream, inaccessible to the steps of the angler. Sometimes, of course, the loss of fish, or even fish and tackle, cannot be avoided; but good, careful work and the best materials will frequently obviate so annoying an ordeal. However, having struck your fish, the tackle and your own coolness are generally responsible for the issue, and woe betide you if careless knot or indifferent tying should have been made in constructing your leader or fly.

I would therefore advise all gentlemen to acquaint themselves thoroughly with the method of their construction, for though they may not have time and inclination to follow it as a pursuit, they may chance to be placed in positions where their pleasure and the success of their expedition may be entirely marred by want of this knowledge.

I would further advise that your leaders should be stained as nearly as possible to the colour of the water; but care should always be taken not to make them too dark, as you thus go to the opposite extreme that you adopt this plan to avoid. Brown and bluish-grey or light neutral tint are decidedly the best colours, the former to be used when the water is clearing out after heavy falls of rain. To procure the first-mentioned colour, a few ounces of alum dissolved with a pound of the bark of a walnut tree when the sap is up, I think, is the simplest recipe;

while the latter colour can be got by substituting logwood for walnut.

Of course, as the season advances and the quantity of water diminishes, and the noonday sun becomes more powerful, the size of your flies must be proportionately less. Even the hours of the day have to be consulted for choice of size; for instance, from break of day till sunrise, and from sunset till dark, very large flies frequently will kill fish, while the smaller would be totally neglected.

An Irish gentleman who had for many years been considered one of the most successful and expert performers on the river Corib, while on a fishing tour in America, had the kindness to show me the treasures contained in his valuable fly-book. Among a remarkably choice collection of all sizes, shades, and construction, I observed many so large that they excited my curiosity and inquiry. These were several inches long in the body, and were commonly used in Galway for early morning or late evening fishing.

Those projecting an excursion to the distant wilds of Labrador should pay particular attention to arriving there at the correct season. As to specifying a day or a week, that is perfectly impossible, for as long as the water is impregnated with snow, not a fish will be taken; and, of course, the lateness or earliness of spring, which frequently varies one or two weeks, must receive consideration and guide your steps. The first few days after the salmon commence to run, large flies are more successful, but as the season advances their size must be reduced.

The next morning, bright and early, found us again

upon the river. The number of seals which I had seen the previous evening induced me to take my rifle, with the intention of having a little practice during the noonday rest. The rocks in the estuary appeared a perfect nursery of these curious animals, and, from their numbers and well-known destructive habits, immense quantities of salmon must be annually destroyed to satisfy their fastidious and insatiable appetites. I have since found out that the habitants (persons of French extraction) frequently pay visits to this *locale* for the capture of these valuable amphibia, their oil and skins fetching long prices in our principal markets. Since yesterday the water had fallen some inches, but I had little fear that where fish were so numerous and little disturbed it would unfavourably affect their disposition to take. Having faith in the fly I designated "the drummer," I determined to experimentize with others, retaining my old friend as a last resource in case of failure. I therefore selected a former favourite, known by many as "the hornet," and whose texture and shape has produced good results in many localities. The fly is made as follows: wings from the fine fibres of the English cock pheasant's tail; body of yellow worsted or amber-coloured mohair, the mohair to be preferred; the body to be ribbed with black and made full, with a large red cock's hackle, black at the roots, wrapped several times under the butt of the wings. Having got my rod together, I commenced work, and the success that had attended my efforts of the day before and my choice of flies were quite equalled by this day's performance. The third cast I rose a superb fish, but, unfortunately, scratched

him, and had the same misfortune repeated before many minutes. However, by the time I had got thirty yards down the water, I struck another, whose unusual size and activity evoked unlimited admiration. His first rush was truly magnificent; and as soon as I succeeded in stopping his precipitous course, he returned almost to my hand with the same velocity, preventing my immediately recovering the slack of my line. From pleasure a moment before, I was now nearly in grief, and but for luck should certainly have lost my prize. However, being thus favoured, I got again upon equal terms. A quarter of an hour more, and the gaff pierced his silver coat of mail, and I had the satisfaction of capturing a handsome and well-made fourteen-pound fish.

That morning I killed eight fish, the majority weighing about nine pounds, and the number I rose and touched must have been quite equal. One salmon I rose six times in succession, but ultimately failed to secure: from the swirl he left in the water I should imagine he was about fifteen pounds. On my way down to the tideway I observed two new specimens of birds, whose plaintive notes were very sweet; their names I have never been able to ascertain, but doubtless they belong to the numerous bunting family. Crossbills, snow-birds, and cedar-birds were abundantly numerous: and although I did not succeed in obtaining any of their nests, I am convinced that they were engaged in rearing families, as I perceived several gathering grubs and insects, with which they flew to the neighbouring brush.

Having got to the boat, we started to the reef to try what

could be done with the seals. But they did not like our appearance, and commenced scuffling off the rocks and dropping into the water ere we got within range. However, one old scoundrel—grim and savage-looking through age—appeared less alarmed than his fellows, and remained stationary, watching our motions with dubious eyes. When within fifty yards the men ceased pulling, and permitted the boat to forge ahead with her own way. Pulling the tiller-lines so as to alter the course, I got a clean shot, and turned the ungainly, awkward brute over; but his struggles carried him down the incline till he fell in the water, when he sank immediately. After much difficulty we managed to get him out, and on examination found the ball had pierced the skull a little above the right eye. His weight must have been upwards of three hundred pounds, and the quantity of grease that came from the carcase as we divested him of his pelt was surprising. The hide of these animals makes most excellent shoes when properly tanned; and I have been told that nothing in the shape of leather is so capable of turning water. One shot was sufficient to expel the seals from their haunt, so were turned shoreward. However, just as we were about to land, a youngster popped up his head, which I let drive at, but without precision.

The flies to-day continued very annoying, and the irritation caused by their bites itched so severely that it affected the majority of our tempers; the only respite that could be obtained was when out on the water, where the draught of air had full scope. Oh, that some one, versed in the likings and dislikes of these insidious foes, would find a method

that would protect the angler from these pests when he is enjoying a trip that has no other drawbacks! To describe my sufferings would be impossible; suffice it to say that my actions were sufficient to cause a physician to imagine me fit for incarceration in a lunatic asylum. Even now, I can scarcely revert to the subject without feeling inclined to scratch myself.

*Revenons à nos moutons.* With salmon fishing the imaginary moment of victory is frequently the precursor of defeat; the noble adversary but relaxes his efforts that, in the resulting confidence which follows, he may the more successfully concentrate his powers for a final dash, and frequently succeeds in escaping. I can compare it to naught else than the skilful swordsman who, finding himself overmatched in his antagonist, gives ground and feigns fatigue to imbue his foe with confidence, hoping that a careless pass will still afford him an opportunity to deliver the deadly thrust. Men have always foibles, always paramount pleasures; their tastes are as diversified as the colouring in Joseph's coat, as the physiognomy which we bear. While one is devoted to the horse, another is to the hound; while one loves the gun, another loves the rod. To question their tastes and argue with them the reason would probably be unproductive; but of this I am convinced—no man ever felt the pleasure, the intense excitement, of having a salmon on a rod, or even the more diminutive trout, without being again desirous of renewing the sensation. The very uncertainty causes this fascination. A gentlemen for whom I have much esteem, and who has been busily employed all his life in mercantile pursuits,

principally abroad and in countries where fly-fishing was not practicable, a few years ago met me on a fishing excursion. His essays with the fly, from lack of experience, were not generally successful; but when I hooked a heavy fish and handed him the rod to play the deluded victim, his countenance, particularly if victorious, exhibited more satisfaction than I believe it would have done if he had made thousands of dollars. Fishing—legitimate fishing with rod and fly—requires but to be known and practised to have more votaries than any other sport extant.

The next afternoon I killed four more fish, all worthy of a place in the memory of the most successful angler, all deserving of notice for their plucky efforts to avoid their doom.

Just as I was thinking of closing up for the night, my companion shouted to me that there was a bear in the water. On looking up stream, sure enough Bruin was in sight, stemming the current, and boldly pushing for this side. With hasty impulse I laid my rod down to grasp my rifle, but, alas! my attendant, fatigued with carrying it, and seeing small prospect of its being required, had left it leaning against a rock some distance off. You may well imagine my disappointment, for when the bear left the water he was not over twenty-five yards above my position. This animal, judging from his size, must have been quite four hundred pounds—a size much greater than it generally attains in the north-west. Until he had firmly gained his footing he had not observed us, and the ludicrousness of his alarm and astonishment when he became

aware of our vicinity was laughable in the extreme. Off he went with a rush into the brush, making dry and withered limbs crash before him.

As the constant and severe attention of the flies put fishing out of the question, and I had become surfeited with tobacco from the number of cigars I had consumed, under the fallacy that the smoke would deprive me of their company, I was compelled, as a last resource, to start on a tour of inspection, at the same time hoping that my exertions would be rewarded with the discovery of some quadruped or bird with which I had been previously unacquainted. On entering the scrub bush the mosquitoes became more numerous, and I have little hesitation in saying that the blood-suckers of Arkansas and Mississippi, which bear the same name, are far from proficient when you compare them with those of Labrador. After half an hour's rough scrambling through the morass, I succeeded in gaining more open ground. Rising towards the upper ridges of high lands, the squawberry and blueberry grew in profusion, and the wild strawberry was scattered in patches wherever sufficient sustenance from the impoverished soil could be gained for its support. In straying about I found two nests of the night hawk; the maternal parent of both was of different plumage from those I have so frequently seen on a summer evening on the banks of the Ohio river; the eggs in each were four in number, of a dirty colour, smudged with brown, and almost lying on the bare rock. This bird is doubtless migratory, resorting here in the summer for the purpose of propagation, and spending its winters in the more genial climate of the Southern States where it



changes its plumage to one of less brilliancy, and receives the local appellation of "bull bat."

In the rocks and sand I found some fossils of shells, and on such elevated ground that it caused me at the time surprise and wonder whether shell-fish were once denizens of land instead of water, or whether these mountains had once been submerged. Hares appeared to be numerous, as their paths crossed and recrossed each other, forming a perfect labyrinth. Ptarmigan and the Canada partridge I also saw so frequently, that I have little doubt, in the month of September, fine sport might be obtained with dog and gun. Bear signs were also abundant, a solitary stump showing evidence of the power of their claws, and from the height some of these convincing proofs extended up its side, the Bruin family are evidently not stunted in growth in this locality.\* After walking for almost an hour, I succeeded in reaching the crest of one of the numerous swells, and, as I turned to survey the scenery, one of the most enchanting panoramas that ever I witnessed broke upon my vision. Bays and arms of the sea, innumerable small islands, numerous reefs of rocks and uncountable mountain peaks stretched as far as the eye could see; while almost beneath my feet lay our goodly little schooner, reduced by distance to a mere cockle-shell,—the busy crew passing to and fro upon the beach, looked scarcely larger than ants. Here, with the unobstructed breeze playing upon me, I got

\* In localities where bears are numerous, all appear to select the same tree to try their claws upon. Of course, the larger bears make the highest incisions. From these marks an expert hunter can form a good estimate of the size of the visitors.

a little peace from the troublesome insects, and I would have remained longer, but that the hour indicated the close proximity of the time to close my evening fishing.

The fly I had used in the morning had done me such good service that I determined to re-employ it, and the result was quite equal to anticipation. I soon got to work, and in a few minutes was fast to a fine fish, who, although he made a noble struggle, succumbed in less than twenty minutes. Moving my position from some slow water, I took a cast in the throat of a stream formed by the projection of some rocks, not that I expected to rise a fish, but to get the line out of my way as I scrambled over some rough ground; in fact the water, although rapid, looked too shallow for the retreat of anything over a pound weight. With surprise I rose a fine brook trout (*Salmo fontinalis*). Of course such a fish was not to be despised, so I gave him a second chance, and had the satisfaction of succeeding in striking him. With my strong tackle and rod I treated him cavalierly, and, in about ten minutes, had the pleasure of handling and canvassing his weight, which was a trifle over five pounds.

I never remember to have seen a fish of more brilliant colouring and beautiful proportions, and I have little doubt that on a seven-ounce trout-rod he would have given a good half-hour's pleasure. These streams—or those which lie in this portion of the American continent—swarm with trout, more particularly when you ascend some distance above the tideway; and from information I have received from fishermen who are acquainted with these waters

that lie nearer to civilisation, I have reason to believe that brook trout can there be caught upwards of ten pounds in weight

Moving down to the run, I recommenced, and rose a very large fish the second cast; but our acquaintance got no further, for all my blandishments were futile to induce him again to move. A little lower down I was more successful, for I struck a regular Trojan, whose memory still lives, and to whose performances I award the palm over all others. As soon as he felt himself pricked, contrary to the custom of his brethren in a similar predicament, he rushed up stream with the velocity of a bullet, through the throat of surging water and into the next pool; fortunately the ground was accessible, and I was enabled to follow, but for the life of me I could not, dared not, take a pull on him. From the fish's movements I should think he was swimming about two feet deep, and, from the power and speed that he showed, appeared totally to ignore any control. However, it's a straight road that has no turn, and if I was led a dance in the first instance, my turn was coming. After walking two hundred yards and giving out nearly one hundred yards of line, the drag told, and my friend thought it better to change his course; down stream he came with a rush, still without showing, but just as he got to the smooth, oily-like water that preceded the break of the rapid, he commenced springing with great rapidity. Five or six times this ruse was repeated, when off again my gallant foe went down stream with as much energy and spirit as he had at first displayed. Well, to make a long story short, to and fro we both went, up and down, first

one way and then another, till the fun became hard work, and the exertion caused globules of perspiration to stand on my face, and worse than all, the confounded flies attacked me with renewed vigour, availing themselves of my unprotected situation. Again and again I took in line,—as frequently to be run out; but the exertion had told on the foe, and at length I succeeded in getting him ultimately gaffed. Truly he was a beauty—twenty pounds if an ounce. From what I have above narrated, some idea may be formed of the sport in store for the visitor to the salmon rivers of the West.

The tackle in use in England will answer here, the size of flies being guided by the water and weather, still I would advise some of Canadian tying being added to the stock. The Nova Scotia rivers are now too much fished to waste time upon by the visitor from this side of the Atlantic, so I append a list of the best streams on the northern shore of the St. Lawrence: they are the Outardes, Godbout, Trinity, St. Margaret, Moisa, St. John, Mingan and Esquimaux, the further to the eastward the better. The stream where I had the success narrated entered the sea near the southern end of the Straits of Belle Isle.

SEA-TROUT.—That beautiful member of the Salmon family must strike, when mentioned, in the reader's heart a chord that will reverberate with pleasures possibly long past, but none the less delightful to recall.

In writing upon the present subject, I retreat in thought to the memories of youth, and many and many a scene recurs to my memory of which I was the hero, and the

captive valued over all I possessed. The first time I essayed for sea-trout was when low in my teens. Previous to this attempt many spotted beauties from the brooks and rivers of my Highland home had filled my creel; but I was not satiated with such game, for it was far too noble to have such effect; still I craved to kill a sea-trout, for I deemed it correctly the connecting link between river trout and lordly salmon.

Where mountain peak and inland loch, bubbling stream and placid lake combine to make a picture worthy of an artist's eye, or a landscape to be beloved by the Celt, I made my *début* in taking the life of the silver-sheened, gracefully-built beauty, whose home is indifferently the pellucid burn or the storm-tossed ocean. Of the spot where my maiden effort was made history has no story to tell of ruthless slaughter or blighted ambition; still it is a bonny place, and such as once gazed upon is likely not easily to be forgotten.

I allude to the head of Loch Long, in Argyleshire, where the river, or rather brook, Lyon, enters the mountain-fringed loch on which stands the village of Arrochar. The month of August had hardly passed away when the clear skies and mountain peaks became overcast with that dark, drifting, humid mass of clouds that betoken a heavy fall of rain. The weather-wise were not wrong in their conjectures, for true the gates of heaven were opened, and hill-sides and glens for two successive days were pelted with the pitiless rains till the burns became brim full, and the surplus water waxed wrath against the enclosing banks as if the yellow, turbid stream would burst its boundary

Impatient youth proverbially is, and I fretted at the imprisonment that the weather imposed upon me; but to some extent I was consoled by learning that when the spate cleared out, the sea-trout would be on the take, and that I should have a chance of trying my skill with a nobler foe than those that had previously fallen to my prowess.

At length the late rain-gorged hill-sides had returned to their normal condition, and the mud-stained stream had gradually reverted to its proper colour. The time had come for me to prove my skill. Nor long was I kept in doubt; the fourth, or fifth, or sixth throw hooked a fish, such a fish as never before had made me feel diffident, or previously made me doubt the seasoning and strength of my rod. No sooner had the barbed hook fastened in its insidious hold, and the impaled monarch learned that he was captive, than every effort of his lithe and agile frame was brought into play to recover freedom. In every struggle, in every effort to burst the bonds that made him captive, there was an utter recklessness of consequences, a disregard for life that was previously unknown, as from side to side of the pool he rushed, or headlong stemmed the sweeping current. Nor did the hero confine himself to his own element; again and again he burst from its surface to fall back fatigued but not conquered. The battle was a severe one, a struggle to the death; and when my landing-net placed the victim at my feet, I felt he had died the death of a hero. Such was my first sea-trout, no gamer truly than hundreds I have captured since; but what can be expected of a race of which every member is a hero?

But to bonnie Scotland and its purple braes, its snow-clad peaks and birchen slopes, its sweet-noted mavis and plaintive cushey-doo, I bid adieu, and flit across the broad ocean till the stormy estuary of the St. Lawrence is reached; for here, as well as in my native land, the sea-trout cleaves the briny tidal wave or ascends rushing, reckless rivers. . But, strange to say, in Eastern and Western streams these beauties are very dissimilar in their habits; in the former you capture them in the upper waters or fluvial portions; in the latter, if you desire success, it is in the sea you must seek them, near where an affluent empties its volume. I know of no greater pleasure in this world, so scantily supplied with them, than to be seated in a light buoyant boat, dancing to the music of the ever-murmuring ripples, deftly whipping the surrounding diminutive waves. It is to mature man what the rocking of the cradle is to the child; the latter, because it has no knowledge of the past or future, is lulled to sleep; the former feels soothed for the present, and in his enjoyment forgets past trials and hopes for fortune in time to come. There is an alloy in this entrancing pastime as well as in nearly all others—to practise it is death and pain to that which affords you the pleasure; but how few of the gratifications of life are without this! the success of one is the downfall of another. Even the mosquito in gratifying his appetite for blood is not satisfied to depart after he has glutted himself to excess, but must leave a virus behind him that poisons the orifice from whence he has drawn his sustenance.

At the mouth of all streams that salmon frequent in the Dominion of Canada, sea-trout will be found in abundance;

even the estuaries which the larger species has forsaken they do not in consequence desert.

There was a time when the coast of Maine was abundantly stocked with sea-trout; but that age has passed; for long have these waters been glutted with the *débris* of manufactures, or the still more injurious sawdust from the pine-logs which have been severed into planks for houses or ship-building purposes.

The sea-trout of Canada, we are informed by authorities, differs from that of British waters. Although I have captured numbers of both, I have never been able to detect where this distinction existed. To my eye they are identical in appearance; and the fly which lures the one captures the other. Even when hooked, their exertions to escape are essentially the same, characterised by efforts which only cease when nature is exhausted. At the same time, I would not be certain that both have the same number of spines in the caudal, ventral, or dorsal fins; and on a difference in such points the naturalist feels justified in forming his decision.

Day after day I have fished for these beauties; hundreds have I taken; and if the reader and I are like-minded, he will vow that there is no more noble quarry to capture, or one which, when taken, makes a more gallant struggle for freedom and life.

#### CHAR (BROOK-TROUT).

The States of New Jersey, Maryland, and Pennsylvania may be considered the southern limit on the American continent of the habitat of this brilliantly coloured,



beautiful fish. How far to the north they can be found is difficult to say, but of one thing we are certain, viz. that all the streams and lakes of Labrador or the Hudson Bay territory are abundantly supplied with them. It has been observed by me, and frequently have I heard it commented on by others, that the trout from the southern waters are dull, listless, and much less brilliant in their hues than those from the northern streams; at the same time the artificial fly, so greedily taken in high latitudes, ceases to be as attractive a lure as you progress south—the fish of some streams even refusing entirely to notice it.

Doctor Bethune was, I believe, the first authority who informed the public that the *salmo fontinalis* was a different species from the *salmo farrio*, and afterwards identified the former with the char of the lakes of the north of England, Scotland, Norway, and Sweden. My own impression is that he is correct. Professor Agassiz, one of the first authorities, adopts, I think, this view, for he uses the same Latin synonym, a proof at least to the sceptical on this point that he did not consider them *salmo farrio*. In the northern waters they take the fly greedily and when hooked are very game. The largest I have captured was nine pounds in weight; this was a *rara avis*. However, three and four pound fish are abundant in large rivers; in inferior streams, of course they run much smaller.

The brilliancy of their scales is really marvellous, far outrivalling the most exaggerated conceptions: for their backs are a beautiful clear tortoise-shell, gradually approaching a pale green to the lateral line, where a deep

orange colour commences, deepening in richness over the stomach, while longitudinally they are traversed by lines of spots of the brightest vermilion. The States of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont possess them in abundance; the tributaries flowing from the north into the great lakes and the rivers and streams of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota fairly swarm with them. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia fresh waters are also well supplied.

The size of fly usually employed in the capture of sea-trout are the best for taking this fish, unless the angler be following his pursuit on some diminutive brook, when smaller should be used. Besides the *salmo fontinalis*, in American waters are to be found a great number of other species of *Salmonidæ*—such as the great lake-trout, the Glover salmon, and the land-locked salmon, the latter seldom exceeding four pounds, receiving its name from the strong resemblance it bears to the *salmo sala*, to which it is not inferior in any quality, save size.

The exertion of crossing the Atlantic for fly-fishing will be amply repaid the sportsman by the quantity and weight of the fish he will capture—for there the fish are not troubled with the fastidiousness of appetite, which in Great Britain causes it always to be a source of doubt whether the water is in proper order, the wind in the east, or thunder over head; either of which, or all combined, too frequently cause the most industrious to return after a long and laborious day with an empty basket. The description of an excellent river, and how to get to it, I append.

Having arrived at Portland, State of Maine, and enjoyed a good meal and rest at one of the numerous hotels, the

terminus of the Grand Trunk Railroad will have to be reached, where you will procure your ticket for Bethel, Oxford County. The scenery through which you will now rush, dragged by the iron horse, is magnificent, alike suited to the taste of artist or sportsman ; but one thing is certain to cause a regret, viz. that the numerous beautiful rivers and brooks that so frequently will be seen or traversed, are now destitute of fish,—at least so I was informed, although I could not learn the reason why. Visions of mill-dams, without fish-ways, and tons of saw-dust floating in islands, hovered before me, and, probably whispered a true cause of the destruction of the thousands of fish which doubtlessly swarmed here before *genus homo*, which his devices and march of improvement, had defiled these formerly pure, pellucid brooks. Bethel, where you leave the train, will be found a model village, which, for cleanliness and neatness, it would be impossible to surpass. As you progress along the principal thoroughfare, the pretty dwellings overshadowed by handsome shade trees, remind you of some of Longfellow's beau ideal New England homes. The hotel, also, is very comfortable, and Mr. Lovejoy, the proprietor, can give good information and instruction as to your future proceedings. He also will supply you with a conveyance to take you to Upton, distance about twenty-seven miles, over a road far from good ; but if the weather be fine, you will be so delighted with the beautiful panoramas of wild and magnificent mountain views that time will slip by rapidly, and ruts and jolts will be totally forgotten. For the first five or six miles of your drive you pass along the margin of the grand

Andrascogan river, exhibiting a succession of pools and rapids, so eminently suited for salmon retreats, that you cannot fail to regret that these noble fish are debarred from visiting this choice water. A few miles farther your course winds by a beautiful mountain brook well stocked with trout, and in which a good basket can always be taken. We will now suppose you have reached the half-way house, a pretty little roadside tavern, where the horses are baited, and the traveller, if he chooses—we would strongly advise you not to fail to—may insist upon making the acquaintance of mine host, a worthy man with a wonderful fund of information on various interesting subjects. The allotted half-hour having expired, and the inner man been refreshed, forward is again the word, and more beautiful becomes the scenery. Wild, irregular hills, with bases densely covered with timber, but stony and irregular towards their summit, frown over your head; precipices, cliffs, and yawning chasms alternately vary the prospect, throwing, for grandeur, the choicest wilds of Scotland into the shade. Only an able poet, with a romantic turn of mind, is wanted to immortalise by soul-stirring lays these stupendous mountain fastnesses, accessible alone to the wild denizens of the forest, or to him who is gifted with the nerve, steady foot, and reliable eye of the chamois hunter of the Alps.

Having at length reached the upper portion of the village of Upton, an entire change comes over the landscape; far beneath your feet lies nestled, in all the splendour of luxuriant timber, with irregular and changing outline, the lovely sheet of water, Umbagog, thickly studded with in-

numerable islands of every form, size, and outline. On first beholding this scene, Loch Lomond was visibly recalled to mind, and the more frequently I beheld this picture, the stronger was the impression of the striking similarity. Again, this lake will have additional charms to the sportsman, for here trout abound in immense numbers. But, supposing you started from Bethel after breakfast, the sun must now be near dipping the horizon, when you have reached thus far, so that you had better hurry forward and gain the hospitable roof-tree of Mr. Simeon Frost, the hotel proprietor, ere night envelopes the earth with her sombre mantle of darkness.

Being met on the porch by the honest, straightforward Simeon, you may safely resign yourself to his care, which would be dangerous in this *locale* in many other hands, as some of the hosts are peculiar in their belief, and strongly adhere to a sinister interpretation of the words, "I was a stranger and ye took me in." But once marshalled under the banner of Mr. Frost, you will be safe from their philanthropic designs; and further, you will be well fed and housed. If you be an epicure, fail not to ask for a *bonne bouche*—which we relished among these pine-clad hills—viz. trout stewed in cream. The white-bait of the Londoner, the canvas-back duck of Delmonico's, and the green turtle-steak of the City Fathers, are all thrown into the shade by this delicious dish. You have but to scent it in future to make your mouth water, and visions of epicurean feasts float before your eyes. Now, if you will only place yourself in my hands—and well I know the smooth waters and and rocky shoals, the pleasures and disappointments that

beset the stranger in this beautiful but inhospitable region—I will keep your feet free from pitfalls, and your purse safe from too-frequent incursions. Having eaten your evening meal, and retired to your room, send for your host, and learn from him all particulars necessary to guide your future steps. Wherever you go you will catch fish; sometimes the fishing at Errol\* is so good as to well deserve a visit ere you go up to the dam where the Androscogan River leaves Lower Richardson Lake. Supposing the season to be the end of May—the time we should advise to be selected for your visit—delightful brook-fishing may be obtained beneath the dam in the Little Cambridge river, which flows within fifty yards of the hotel. Many and many a morning and evening I have taken here three or four dozen beauties, some of them over a pound, and all game to the last. I know no river better suited for the increase of trout, and doubtless at the present time it would swarm with thousands all along its course, but that a selfish being named Abott projected and erected a dam about twenty feet high, to collect water to drive a mill; and worse, had the inhumanity not even to leave a fish-way; consequently, Izaak Walton's disciples have to walk many a wearisome mile up this brook before fish can again be found abundant, and then they are so poor and badly fed that they are almost unfit for the table. Now, the difference between those beneath the dam and those above, is doubtless caused by the unfortunate denizens of the upper water being prevented from making their annual visits to Lake

\* A village a few miles distant from Upton.

Umbagog to recruit, or enjoy the cool retreats afforded in its deep waters, at that portion of the season when the summer sun pours down its refulgent, heated rays upon the unprotected water. Persons who resided in this locality years ago, informed me that before this impediment on the Cambridge was made, trout swarmed all the way up to the source in times the quantity they do now. But why grumble or find fault in this particular instance? Are such shameful structures not to be found in every section of this and my own land, a glaring example of want of forethought, or selfishness, or worse? But, thank goodness, such abuses in America are about to be stopped; State legislation has taken the matter in hand, and is determined to enforce such severe penalties, that I hope, ere long, to see the temporarily-deserted retreats of the spotted, brilliant-hued trout again teeming with their numbers, and the placid, sheltered pools, now still and tenantless, boiling with their breaks and rises, as they either roll over in sport, or rush headlong to the surface after the dainty and fragile ephemera.

A lady, who formed one of our party frequently of an evening, without moving from the bridge, took a dozen fish in an hour or so, plainly proving that even the uninitiated can here be successful, for Madame previously had never seen a trout captured in her life. The flies which we should recommend for this stream are about the same in size as those in use on Scotch and Irish rivers, and of the same colouring, black and red hackles being preferable. We also found a fly constructed as follows most killing: the wings from the tail of the ruffed grouse, with a few

strands of scarlet ibis, brown cock's hackle under wings, body of ground hog's fur, plucked off the stomach, with a couple of strands of guinea-fowl feather for tail. If the water should have been discoloured with rain, substitute a little of the golden-pheasant topknot for the termination, instead of the guinea-fowl. By coming here early in the season, as above advised, you will moreover escape the attacks of those confounded pests, the black flies, which generally make their appearance the second week of June, when woe betide you; for if you are compelled to submit to their persecutions, your tortures from the results might turn your hair gray in a night, or drive you crazy for the remainder of life. No one can sympathise with the unfortunate Egyptians so well as he who has visited the Maine fishing-regions in the fly season.

Before leaving Upton for the Wilds, as by this name your future resting-places may well be called, we would revert to the practice of throwing sawdust that comes from mills into the water. Now, although some may not be aware of it, there is nothing more destructive to trout and salmon than these minute particles of timber. The fish, as they rest head up stream, imbibe them into their mouths, whence they pass into the gills and stomach, ultimately causing disease and death. When this is known to be the case, would it not be well to insist that this *débris* should otherwise be disposed of, which may, without much labour or inconvenience, be accomplished by fire. Hendrick Hudson, the first explorer of the magnificent river which bears his name in America, speaks of that river as swarming with salmon; but where are they now? Gone, never to



return, unless re-populated by artificial means; in fact, expelled by dams and sawdust, and such like accompaniments of the human race. As with the Hudson, so it would be everywhere, if preventive measures were not adopted to stop these abuses, so glaring and unjustifiable, that every well-thinking man can scarce fail to anathematise the short-sighted policy that has formerly marked the advance of civilisation. But it is not only fish in America; game has also thus ruthlessly been dealt with, till forests and farms cease to re-echo the musical, plaintive notes of the partridge, or the sonorous, drumming call of the ruffed grouse. For our part, the most picturesque walk, the most delightful rural drive, if not graced with the presence or note of the feathered warblers, the cooing of the dove, or the flight of birds, loses half its fascinations, half its enchantments, and consequently half the pleasures it would otherwise afford.

Supposing that you have passed a few days at Upton, and enjoyed, with that relish which is so natural to a sportsman, the manifold pleasures of a country excursion, we should advise your now leaving civilisation and revelling in the solitude of the pathless wood, where man seldom intrudes and nature remains undefiled or deformed except by the assassin hand of the axeman. If you be a good pedestrian, we would recommend your feet as the most enjoyable and natural method of gaining the portage where the upper Androscogan has to be crossed; but as you may not be experienced in woodcraft and all the sciences that teach the solitary hunter to surely follow a blazed path, procure the services of Collins, an agreeable and obliging

man, to perform the duty of guide ; and if he still possesses his noble dog, the jaunt might possibly be diversified by the treeing of a bear, for Mr. Bruin here roams at large, undisputed master of a gigantic demesne. At the same time, care must be taken to ascertain that a boat is available to transport you across the river, for thus early in the season the water will be found too high and too cold for fording or swimming.

But if previous confinement and sedentary habits have relaxed the muscles and made the feet tender, get Mr. Frost to negotiate for the services of the steamboat,\* taking care that a direct understanding as to charge is made before embarking. In fact, go not to the dam ; do nothing till you are certain what will be the cost ; for once you are caught sleeping, if away from Mr. Frost's protecting influence, you may, on awakening, find your molars gone, or your strength, if it consists in the length of your purse. To be fore-warned is to be fore-armed ; and now, if you fall into the snare, blame not the writer.

The voyage by water, distance fourteen or fifteen miles, is charming. After leaving the place of embarkation you proceed about two miles down the Cambridge, which is here dead and sluggish,† till you reach the entrance to Lake Umbagog, when your vessel's prow is pointed for distant hills fringed with giant timber. On either side, islands after islands dot the bosom of the water, while

\* By what other name to designate this extraordinary piece of mechanism I know not, but be advised while on board always to keep the wood bunkers between you and the boiler.

† Once a favourite haunt of moose.

verdant mountains and primeval forests stretch far, far beyond the limits allotted to vision. The two or three hours which are taken to cross the lake will flit by rapidly; if you have appreciation of what is sublime, of what Nature in her grand conceptions formed, the impressions indented on the tablets of your memory will doubtless be permanent. It matters not how sceptical and unbelieving some may be, place them where the giant works of the Creator are visible, and how insignificant for ever after must they view the puny efforts and constructions of their fellow-beings, and cease to doubt that there is One above omnipotent and all-powerful!

Fail not, on reaching the centre of the lake, to face about and look for the White Mountains,\* and if the day is clear, ample will be your recompense, for, towering high above all other competitors, they smile gloriously over the landscape, softened into a dreamy reality by distance, and furrowed on their summits by lines of virgin snow, reflecting a thousand brilliant prismatic colourings. But the irrevocable pace of time glides on, and pleasure flits with rapid stride. Our nondescript boat now appears to head direct on shore, and so we advance till, when within a few yards of the rocks, the helm is put hard down, and we quickly turn to the left and enter the Androscogan, up whose waters a most charming vista is beheld, the drooping limbs of the trees on either side playfully kissing the rippling stream, and the irregularly formed rocks splitting the water, and diverting its course in tangent lines, making

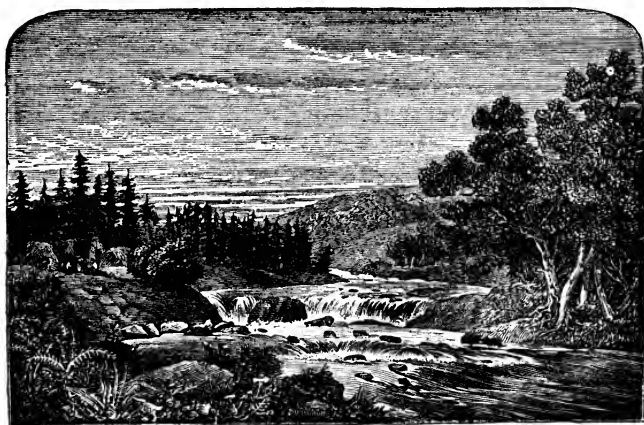
\* Mount Washington is six thousand feet high.

many a miniature whirlpool or gurgling eddy, the haunt and breeding-place of innumerable trout. If the river is sufficiently high you will be able to proceed, without leaving the steamboat, as far as the commencement of the portage; but, should it be otherwise, your baggage and self-will require to be transferred to boats, to be propelled up stream by pole and paddle in the skilful hands of some of the proficient backwoodsmen.

The trip up the river is worthy all the distance you have wandered. The view is ever changing and ever beautiful: now you float over some still, dark pool; next with laborious and slow progress, ascend some seething rapid; one time the centre of the stream only is navigable, the next moment the brush and branches on the margin grate against your craft's gunwale. A solemn stillness reigns around, only broken by the murmuring of the water, the occasional shrill cry of the fish-hawk, or the laborious, incessant hammering of the industrious woodpecker. Again, as you advance, many a wild duck or merganser, on rapid wing, will whistle past, or flutter over the rippling stream, followed by a numerous, inoffensive brood, perhaps but the other day divested of the egg-shell, yet, thus early, proficient in aquatic travel—all adding peace to the scene and suitable figures for foreground to the picture.

From this point, where you leave the boats, a portage of four miles occurs, which has to be traversed on foot; however, the walking is not bad, although too rough for driving. The path is well defined and erratic, one moment pointing direct for the impenetrable woods, the next follow-

ing the margin of the river. Some persons have christened this portion of the Androscogan "Mad River," a name far from inappropriate, as for more than a mile it is one succession of grand rapids and miniature cascades, boiling, surging, and rushing for the placid bosom of Lake Umbagog. Good fly-fishing can be obtained at low water all along this portion close to the margin, where the water forms many miniature eddies; but woe betide your tackle if you should chance to hook a heavy fish, whose



RIVER SCENE.

gallant spirit dictates a rush for the turbid centre waters! no rod or line on earth could possibly hold, and the shores are too rough for the angler to follow downwards.

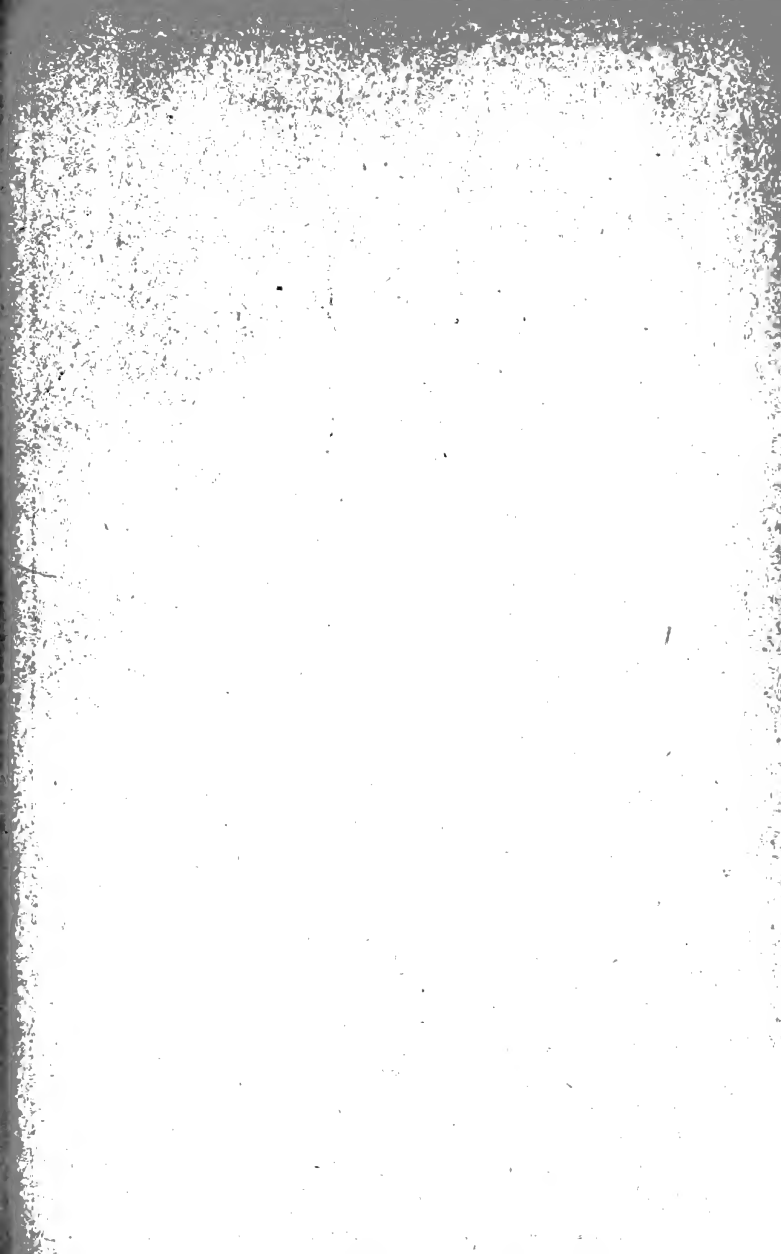
It will be well to have a gun with you in taking the tramp across this portage. The first time we traversed it

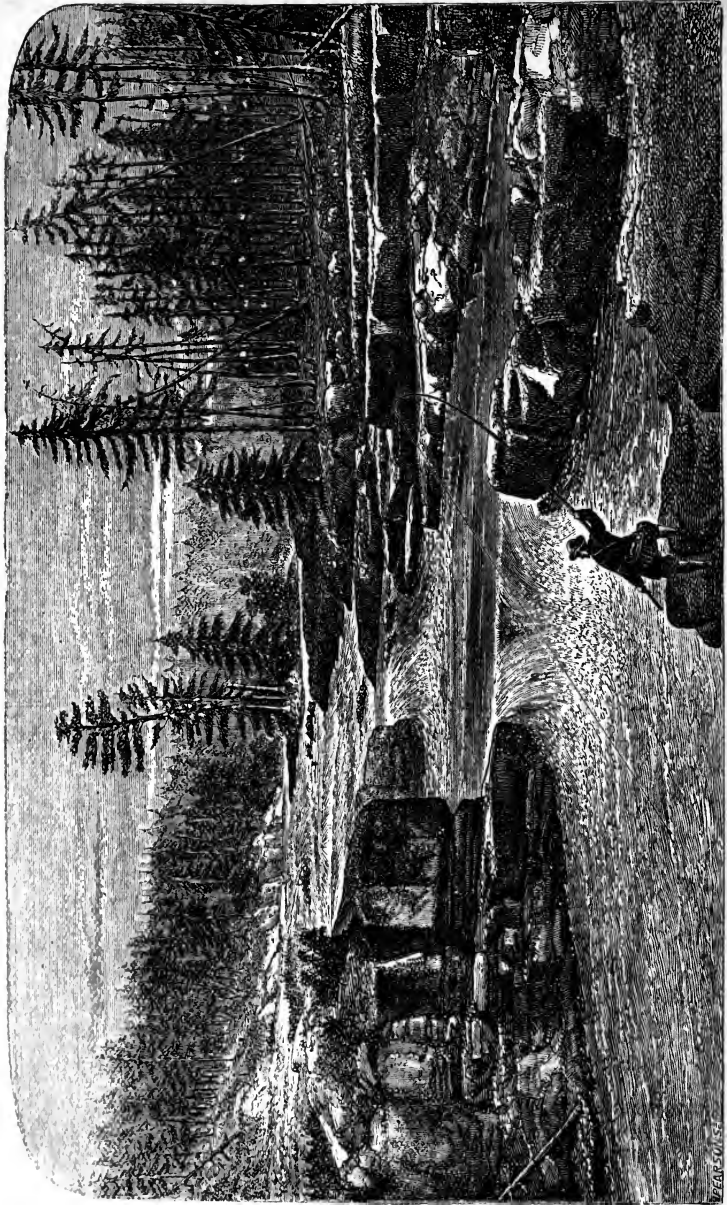
we saw a young bear, and the last time one of our party came in such close contact with an old lady bruin as to be frightened almost to death, if it is admissible to judge from his appearance rather than from his description.

Having progressed a little over half the distance, a pretty fishing-shanty, the property of a Bostonian, most opportunely offers itself as a resting-place, while the panorama from its porch fairly earns the eulogy of sublimity. Above, below, and in front seethes the precipitous river, white with foam, while in the distance the placid surface of a miniature lake, unpoetically dubbed "the Pond," recalls to memory the stories of our childhood, in which naiads and nymphs, with the enchanting Lurline for their sovereign, prominently figure.

The Pond, at some seasons, affords splendid sport, especially at the entrance and exit of the river, which flows through it, but it cannot be fished except from a boat, which can be brought down, if desired, from the dam above, — no easy task to be performed, but frequently accomplished by the expert lumbermen, who appear equally at home in handling the axe or shooting rapids in their flat-bottomed punts.

Having rested sufficiently to recruit, and probably imbibe a small glass of something stimulating, diluted with water that trickles from a neighbouring spring—which is always cold as ice, however warm the weather may be—as scarcely more than a couple of miles are before us, we may just as well hurry on. The walk now leaves the river and becomes much more hilly and enclosed; one time crossing a deep boggy ravine, the next, threading its erratic course along





CANADIAN TROUT STREAM.

W. G. & S. W. 1874



the summit of some stony hill-side. The timber here is very beautiful, much superior to what we have formerly met, and the graceful, silver birch prevails—a tree than which no prettier or more beautiful exists. Although the road, in some places, must be quite half a mile from the water, still the deep rumbling of the numerous rapids is distinctly audible—the neighbouring portion of the Androscogan River being wild and broken in the extreme.

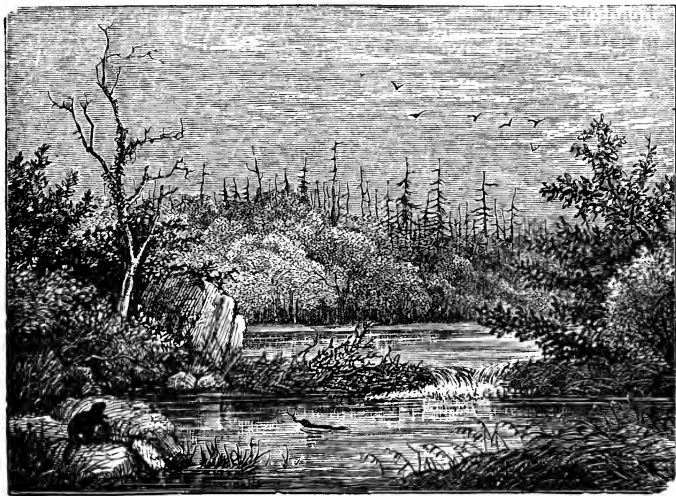
We have scarcely ever threaded this part of our journey without seeing ruffed grouse, and frequently Canada grouse, one of the most beautiful of the indigenous birds, and resembling more closely than any of the American family the red grouse of Scotland; the deep scarlet iris, the rich, dark chestnut colouring of both are similar; but they are totally opposed to one another in habits of life, the one preferring the open, heather-covered mountain slopes—wild as a hawk, unless when engaged in family cares—the other, thoughtless and careless of danger, and never seen away from the densest retreats of the woods. So tame are the Canada grouse that, during my residence in Maine, I knew one of the hotel proprietor's sons to catch an old cock-bird, by slipping a noose, attached to the end of a stick, over its head. But our promenade is near an end. The woods appear less dense as we advance, and soon the flag, that floats over the shanty which is to be our future dormitory, appears in view, with the placid waters of Richardson Lake close by, while numerous irregular hills, all clothed with pine timber to the summit, form the background.

Generally this beautiful lake is smooth as glass, without a ripple, excepting what may be caused by the break of

fish, or sudden appearance or descent of the great northern diver, whose wild weird notes have not unfrequently startled the uninitiated, brought a cold shiver to their system, or vividly recalled stories of ghosts, sprites, panthers, and wild cats. You are at last fairly in the wilds, miles from man's habitation—if you except a couple of fishing shanties only occupied a few weeks yearly. You may strain your eyes up and down, no snow-white smiling cottage will greet your vision. This country is the same still as in the days when the red man knew no superior, and owned every inch of soil from the Atlantic to the Pacific, save it be that the cruel axe of the lumberman has culled out the choicest giant monarchs of the forest. But having done a pretty good day's walking, we may as well lay up for an hour or so, before making our *début* on the Androscogan; moreover, the trout in the middle of the day do not rise so freely, and a couple of hours' work in the evening, if the weather is propitious, will afford as many fish and as much sport as the most exacting can possibly desire.

In the spring the best fishing is to be obtained underneath the dam—which is built across the river a few hundred yards below where it debouches from the lake, and formed for the purpose of gathering a good head of water to assist in shooting the lumbermen's logs. In autumn, however, it is the reverse, for above the dam the greatest numbers and the heaviest fish are found. Why trout should, at the various seasons, select different resorts, is still a matter of surmise; our opinion is, that in summer all that are able leave the river and betake themselves to

the locality of the springs in the bottom of the lake, or lie down in such deep water as has not been rendered tepid by the rays of the sun; but as the season advances, and becomes proportionably cool, the fish retake themselves to the streams, either for the purpose of spawning, or because the rapid water is a more suitable residence during the



THE WILDS.

severity of a northern winter. This migration, if such it may be called, has a great resemblance to the movements of salmon, except that the latter have the choice of the ocean instead of the land-locked lakes. From the above, our readers will see that midsummer is not the season to select for a visit to this picturesque neighbourhood, even

supposing that the flies and mosquitoes were less numerous; but even if the sport was then to be enjoyed to perfection, the assaults of the insatiable pests would render the most fascinating pleasure of fly-fishing a perfect labour.

Turning from the house, a foot-path, sufficiently clear to permit you to carry your rod ready for work, leads off to the right, and soon you reach the river, tumbling with a headlong, impetuous rush through several flood-gates and a shoot.\* The river above and below the fall is lovely, yet almost the opposite in effect. Looking towards the lake the water is placid and calm, with islands and bay, covered or sheltered with trees, reposing in quiet peace, while beneath the fall, from the effects of the descent, a broad course of white foam water rushing with headlong speed, first striking one margin, then ricocheting towards the other,—now divided by abrupt rocks of irregular outline, or swaying round in real whirlpools,—descends on its uncontrollable route. The best stand to fish from, for those who object to wet feet, is a rock about the size of a waggon, thirty or forty yards beneath the falls, on the right-hand side. From this place a person may work for hours with constant success. However, if the visitor be of an adventurous disposition and fears not to wade, the opposite shore is well worthy of attention; but as the bottom is extremely rough and irregular, and in some parts the current very strong, care must be taken not to make a false step or stumble, as fatal results might be the consequence. I should advise the constant use of the handle of

\* A smooth incline, down which the logs are floated.

your landing net to feel and guide your steps, on no account permitting the excitement of hooking a large fish to make you lose your head.

A couple of hundred yards beneath the dam is a splendid pool, difficult to fish and difficult of access, but a trial will be amply rewarded. Scarcely in the memory of a long fishing career have we ever enjoyed such a couple of hours' sport as fell to our luck the first time we wetted a line upon its well-stocked surface. On the first cast not one but half a dozen of the spotted beauties rushed to the surface, so that we were ultimately compelled to reduce the number of flies we were using to a solitary specimen. For two hours we confined ourselves to this pool, with the simple change of altering situation or cast, and even then only desisted, not from want of fish but for fear the constant strain would wear out the rod. On this occasion the results were nearly four dozen, and none under half a pound, many reaching as high as three and even three and a half. The guide, whom I have previously mentioned, was my companion, and most satisfactorily he did his work, although on many occasions he was compelled to wade up to his middle; in fact, I never met a more obliging person, or one more fearless in entering water, or better skilled in handling a landing net.

Another day's sport I will quote more minutely, as another part of the river was the scene of operations. Within an hour and a half I had killed eleven fish, averaging two and a quarter pounds, when suddenly they stopped rising, and all my skill was wasted, for I could not raise a fin. This striking peculiarity in both trout and

salmon fishing, which no fisherman can fail to have observed, I am unable to account for. That all the inhabitants of a portion of a stream should desist to feed instantaneously, when a few minutes previously they have been seizing with avidity your flies, is the subject on which I should like to hear the opinion of some competent authority. I remember asking an old hand, whose success in his neighbourhood was a household word, and his response was that a sudden change in the atmosphere caused it. This answer somewhat astonished me, nor could I reconcile myself to the idea that fish which, in the majority of instances, lie some distance beneath the surface of the water, should be cognizant of an alteration which is imperceptible to us.

From continued want of success, I changed my position, and removed to a hole some way farther down. After much difficulty from the quantity of brush that grew on the margin of the stream, and carrying a rod among such obstacles, I reached the water. The appearance of the pool much pleased me, but it was difficult to fish, from the timber growing so close to the water, and wading being almost out of the question from the rough and irregular bottom being thickly packed with large boulders. Obligated to make a virtue of necessity, with a short line, and a quick, contracted cast, I commenced operations. My companion informed me that he very much doubted if a line had been wet there that season; from the result, I think his statement must have been correct. Scarcely had my flies touched the water, when two beauties, radiant in their handsome golden hues, simultaneously dashed at the

deception ; one I hooked firm and strong, and soon brought to net : a dozen times did I go through the same performance, only varied by occasionally hooking a brace at the same cast. I feared, with such incessant work, my perfect little rod would get strained, but I was disinclined to give up. Having once filled my large basket, and being in a fair way to repeat the performance, I moved forty yards lower down towards the tail of the stream, where, from the placid appearance of the surface, I had little doubt I could wade. With the assistance of the pole of my landing net, I succeeded in staggering out to a shoal bank of gravel, about ten yards from the brink, and although quite up to the knee, established a firm footing ; and each cast rose or hooked a fish. The water appeared to be alive with trout ; first one would spring several feet clear of the water with a *vim* and energy positively speaking of determination ; another would only barely come to the surface, leaving no other indication of his presence than a miniature whirlpool ; while a third would roll over like a grampus, displaying a good view of his golden, strongly proportioned, handsome side, raising the demon of covetousness in my breast. I have frequently sought for a satisfactory reason for the different degrees of ardour which fish exhibit in taking the fly. I am inclined to believe that much is to be attributed to caprice, and not hunger, for it is very rare to see a heavy fish entirely disengage himself from the water when about to seize the cunningly-devised imitation.

Several fine fish had fallen to my prowess, and step by step, with cautious care, I advanced down the river, till I had almost got within casting distance of the bottom of

the pool, where the stream was contracted previous to forming another rapid.

In taking my last throw, I was so near the broken water that my trail-fly was without doubt in it, when, without seeing a fish, I felt a smart pluck at my line. On elevating the top of my rod, I found that a small chub had taken my hook. Reeling up to get rid of the incumbrance, and fetching him to the surface, what was my surprise to see an immense trout dash at the unfortunate captive, and in the twinkling of an eye, I had my reel going at telegraph speed. Here was an adventure truly, but one out of which I could scarcely expect success. Running out something like fifteen yards, the interloper became stationary, and well I knew he had returned to his sanctum, probably to pouch the bait at pleasure. With but a slight strain upon my rod, I waited on the will of his mightiness, hoping it would not be long ere his royal pleasure would dictate swallowing the booty. Ten minutes, at least, I remained in *statu quo*, when, supposing due courtesy had been extended, I took a slight pull just by way of reminder. Alas, the chub came way, and, being now dead, combined with the rapidity of the water, trailed upon the surface. I was not disappointed—the result was but probable. Commencing to reel up to divest my hook of the mangled carcass, I had not more than taken a few feet in when, *mirabile dictu*, the same episode was enacted, and the unfortunate disfigured remains of the shiner were borne off, apparently to the same location. Patiently now I determined to rest, hoping against chance that, in sportive mood, while playing with his intended *déjeûner*, his



highness would get the point of the insidious hook attached to his royal person. What time elapsed I know not, but my necessary inertness and the disagreeableness of my position induced me to endeavour to bring the drama to a finish. With a gentle strain, I evoked a succession of rapid, quick jerks, admonishing me that I had a gentleman of short temper to deal with. Gradually I continued shortening my line, which, although an unusual proceeding thus early, I succeeded in doing without the least hindrance. Still the dead strain that existed proclaimed that no ordinary contestant was at the other end. In all my previous experience I had never seen a fish come without an effort almost up to my hand, without once making a rush, or giving a chance to judge of his paces. By this time nearly all my line was in, and the trout could not have been over fourteen or fifteen feet from me, but down in deep water, moving slowly in rings of a foot or two in diameter. Whatever some persons might have done, I did not exactly like bivouacking in two feet of rapid stream, with a very precarious footing, and a cloud of mosquitoes singing either a requiem or a lullaby about my unprotected face. My patience exhausted, I inwardly made up my mind, let the results be what they would, that I would force the giant to declare himself. Gradually raising the point of my rod, inch by inch, with a steady motion, to my astonishment I brought him to the surface, giving me a good view of his massive form. The chub was across his mouth, as a spaniel would carry a stick, and devil a hook had touched him! Worse than all, it was apparent, from the constant strain, that my hold of the

impromptu bait was nearly at an end. Being humbugged and victimised is at all times disagreeable, and as the laugh was decidedly against me, with a sharp jerk, I disengaged my flies, and chastising the brute which had caused me so much trouble, and sincerely hoped his breakfast would disagree with him. With a flourish of the tail, my tormentor bid me good morning, and I returned to the shore in far from an enviable frame of mind. On my way to the shanty for my morning meal, I scarcely spoke a word, no doubt moralising on the uncertainty of all worldly affairs; but just as I was entering the domicile, with feelings of dire revenge, I told my attendant not to say a single word on the subject, for that I had a plan in my head by which I trusted to wipe off all old scores. With vindictive feeling I munched my food in silence, avenging myself on the finny tribe by the quantity of fish I put under my belt, and only did I begin to feel in a placid frame of mind after I had smoked an inch of my morning cigar. Tobacco—divine tobacco! how much does irascible man owe you! Companion in our solitude, amuser in our idleness, and soother in our troubles, what happy fancies and castles in the air can we build whilst watching thy smoke curling gracefully towards the azure heavens or dingy roof-tree! What henpecked husband has not enjoyed your soothing influence when he has escaped to the safety of his sanctum? The lords of creation owe much to the taste and good sense of Sir Walter Raleigh, the ladies little—undoubtedly the reason that he lives less vividly in our memories than his deserts.

About an hour before sunset I returned to the field of

action, armed, however, with a strong bait-rod and a bait-kettle filled with well-selected minnows and chubs. With a determination equal to the undertaking of the most arduous and hazardous enterprise, I mounted a minnow-tackle (don't turn away, gentle fisherman, to hide your blushes; any apologies which are due I freely tender; remember the aggravation I had suffered), and boldly stalked into the water, a short way above where my tormentor domiciled. In working my way down, I killed several of the smaller gentry, but with these I dealt most cavalierly, they being far beneath my present ambition. At length I reached the very stone on which I stood in the morninig, and, with nervous, anxious eye, I made my cast. Slowly the bait swung round, and described an arc of a circle to the charmed spot. A rush, a dash and a splash, and away flew my line, the reel discoursing sweetest melody (perhaps not sweetest, for the music of the deep-mouthed pack deserves the superlative degree), and I had my gallant tormentor fast. Every effort that ever was successfully perpetrated by fish was put in play. Down and up the stream he frantically rushed; first to one side, then the other, but all without avail. Ten minutes of these futile efforts told a tale, and the shortened and less vigorous exertions proclaimed an early approach to the finish. Carefully I backed out, step by step, feeling cautiously the inequalities of the ground, till I stood on *terra firma*. My attendant permitted excitement to cause him to act too precipitously, and the splash of the net instilled fresh vigour into my victim's now exhausted frame. Game to the last, another effort was made for life,

and with an impetuous rush he again started for his time-honoured, watery haunts. With a nervous grasp on my rod, I was prepared to give him line; but imagine my astonishment when the slack returned to my hand, minus hooks and leader! The swivel had parted, one I had actually purchased in the Strand, London, and, with a rueful countenance, I stood the picture of desperation. I doubt if the physiognomy of Marius over the ruins of Carthage could have looked more doleful. On my way home, talking the matter over with my *fidus Achates*, we agreed upon the verdict of "served me right," for attempting to immolate so noble a victim in such an ignoble manner; and doubly was I convinced of the time-honoured French adage, "L'homme propose et Dieu dispose."

But let not the enthusiast run away with the idea that in Maine there are no drawbacks to pleasure, that sport is found without an alloy, for the pests of every new land here swarm—black flies, mosquitoes, and sand-flies; but fortunately their reign of terror does not exist over six weeks. The first (the black fly), which is about the size of a small house-fly, and not dissimilar in appearance, is a perfect cannibal, refusing to be driven away, willingly immolating himself in his thirst for blood, and drawing blood whenever he can obtain a footing; up your trousers, down your shirt-sleeves or collar, everywhere he will get at his victim. Kill them by thousands, the phalanxes, apparently undiminished, will return to the attack; and even domestic animals do not escape. The unfortunate cow that had been driven up to supply us with milk I have seen changed from a strawberry to a black, by the

myriads of these vampires that clung to her; and, but that we lit a large smudge\* for her to stand over, I believe the poor old creature would have died under the incessant torture and irritation. But if the poor cow suffered, so did we, and it was only by constantly lubricating the exposed parts of our persons with oil of tar, or oil of pennyroyal, that we were enabled to stand the ordeal. Fortunately, the black fly is hungry during daylight only; like a respectable citizen, he early goes to rest, and equally early recommences business.

Next come the mosquitoes. I have found the same gentry troublesome in the Mediterranean, bad on the Malay Peninsula, worse in the paddy-fields of China, but all these lack the 'cuteness and insolence of their Yankee cousins. If your hand is bare for a moment, a dozen will be on it; when up to your knees in a pool, and fast in a big fish, both hands consequently employed, your face and the back of your neck will begin to itch—to burn—as if scalding water had been poured over them. Nor were the sand-flies deserving of better character, for though so small that you can scarcely perceive them, their powers of annoyance are tremendous.† Thank Providence that none of these wretches are made as big as the *feræ naturæ*, or else genus *homo* must soon become extinct.

I will here tell a little circumstance that befell me. I and two acquaintances were fishing under a fall. Fish were abundant, but space, on account of the trees, too

\* Decayed damp wood, which burns slowly and emits a great quantity of smoke.

† Called by the Indians "No-see-ums," from their minuteness.

limited for so many rods, so down the stream I started, and forgot, in my desire to beat the others in results, the odious preparation of oil of tar. After half an hour's scrambling through brush and climbing over rocks, I at length reached such a lovely pool. The first cast showed it to be alive with fish, and they in the proper way of thinking. Soon the gravel margin had over a dozen beauties glittering in all their glorious colouring, but the sun was near the horizon, and my attendant warned me that time was up. On joining my friends, long and vociferous were their peals of laughter whenever they looked at me. What the deuce was up? On arrival at the shanty all was explained. The black flies had attacked me when so immersed in my sport, that they had been unnoticed, or brushed off, making my countenance the most extraordinary-looking mess of blood and bruised flies imaginable; but if I did not then feel the pain, you may bet I did that night when warm in bed.

Knowing that such torments exist, why did the writer go there? is naturally asked, and as simply answered; for before he started he was assured that not even a mosquito was to be found in Maine. Afterwards it was discovered that the visit of his informant had been paid to this Ultima Thule late in autumn. A dozen times conclusions were come to of sloping (not for Texas) in the morning; but the attractions were so great that even the entire summer, even on to the end of October, was got through, the last two or three months so delightfully, that the self-sacrifice endured in June and July was more than compensated for; and never can be forgotten the beautiful weather, glorious

sport, and free independent life enjoyed. The State of Maine being of considerably larger proportions than England and Scotland together, it is desirable that the particular locality should be mentioned. Seventy miles from the thriving seaport of Portland, along the Grand Trunk line of railroad, will be found on the map the picturesque, clean, flourishing village of Bethel; twenty-seven miles north from it, Lake Umbagog. Here you have the last settlement, and by following up the Androscoggin river, which enters the top of the last-mentioned lake, you get into a perfect labyrinth of lakes and ponds, united together by brawling streams, only navigable by the lumberman's flat or Indian's birchback. On all sides precipitous mountains rise, covered with pine-trees where there is a possibility of their clinging, or immense boulders, to all appearance ready to roll from their resting-place into the waters beneath. And here in this vast solitude, free from cares, we made our home; fishing or hunting by day, and sleeping such sleep upon piles of hemlock as seldom is enjoyed on feather beds (that is, at the end of the fly season); for though the bears might growl around, the grey wolf give us a proof of his vocal powers, or the weird note of the loon come shrilly over the waters, still all formed but a lullaby to make us rest the better.

In fishing the rivers of all the wild lands of the extreme northern portion of the United States and the Dominion for trout or salmon, little or no sport will be experienced by the angler until the snow water has run off; in fact I do not believe the latter fish will enter a river that has not got rid of that addition. We got to our fishing ground

just at the desired time ; a guide we consulted said we were too soon. It being better to be early than late, we pushed at once for our first halting-place, and the result was that we hit things so nicely that we struck the opening day. For about two or three weeks the take was very great, and the variety of colouring among our prizes something wonderful. A collecting naturalist, a pupil of the celebrated professor of natural history at Yale College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, joined our party a few days after our arrival, and all these various coloured fish were designated by him as *Salmo fontinalis*. With so great an authority I did not presume to differ ; still, when he informed me that the *Salmo fontinalis* of American waters was identical with our home brook trout, I thought that the lively game little beauty of our mountain streams had wonderfully changed in colour and appearance from his trans-Atlantic brother, or *vice versâ*. As the weather began to get warmer, the more brilliant coloured specimens became scarcer, and ultimately ceased to be taken in the river. This circumstance induced me further to think that there was some difference either in habits or choice of haunts which their more plain-clothed relatives did not affect, and that at least there were different varieties, if not species, among the inhabitants of this stream ; and the more I think the subject over now, the more thoroughly do I feel convinced that the name of *Salmo fontinalis* has been frequently applied to what is, in reality, our red-bellied char. Memory is often not to be depended upon ; but with the assistance of a few notes (the lapse of time not being more than a few years), I will endeavour to tell



the differences that I most particularly observed. In outline of shape, what I suppose to be the red-bellied char much resembled a well-fed trout, except that the first dorsal fin is nearer the head, the caudal fin has a wider spread at its termination, and the junction of the caudal fin with the body is more tapered away. In colouring, the back was of a deep mackerel green, interwoven with irregular darker waving lines, while the belly was as brilliant as burnished copper. Above, where the green of the back and red of the stomach ran into each other, there were three lateral lines of large brilliant red spots, interspersed with minor straw-coloured ones, and in some specimens the anal and pectoral fins had the first two or three spines black. Altogether, in shape and colouring, a more game-looking, beautiful fish cannot be imagined; moreover, their table qualities surpassed in delicacy of flavour any fish I have ever eaten, for the bright red flesh had a delicate nutty flavour indescribable and, I fear, scarcely imaginable. Our guide, who was also cook and master of camp, used to fry in cream the smaller ones, and I doubt if ever prince or epicure had a dish placed before him more worthy of his palate.

But having given what I know to be, more particularly to the naturalist, a far from perfect description of this handsome fish's peculiarities, its habits, as differing from the trout I have known, may have interest. With the artificial fly they were not so readily taken as with minnow or worm. When hooked I never knew them to spring from the water, and the quiet reach of the pool was invariably a more certain find than the brawling neck.

After sunset I never could succeed in capturing them, and the best hours in the day were from sunrise till it commenced to get warm, and the two hours preceding sunset. After these fish had disappeared from the river, I discovered that they could be taken in the deep waters in the lakes, either with minnow or natural fly, the bait being sunk close to the bottom; and the place where I was generally most successful in this fishing was where, our guide affirmed, were situated the springs that partially fed these lakes; his reason for this statement being that this portion of the lake always remained open in winter, while the balance every year froze up.

Again, after these fish had deserted the river I had some admirable sport with them by going to the top of the lake and coming down on the annual lumber raft. I was put up to this by the guide; he for years had followed lumbering, and the rafts as they floated down, he assured me, were always followed by swarms of trout. His information was correct as to the numbers of fish, but instead of the trout of the river, I found my beautiful, brilliant-coloured friend. This habit is peculiar, to say the least of it, and untroutlike, and I could only account for it in two ways, viz. either the shade afforded by these immense logs formed the attraction, or the constant immersion of the timber in the water caused the insect denizens of the bark to be drowned out of their retreats, and, dropping off in the water, furnished these fish with a favourite food.

Summer drifted past, and with it disappeared the incessant persecuting flies. Autumn, with all that brilliant colouring so remarkable in America, made its appearance,

and the oppressive heat gave way to the most desirable temperature. An English autumn to me is always sad; an American autumn is quite the reverse, the hues and colours of the former are sombre, in those of the latter brilliancy unsurpassable predominates. An American autumn once seen makes as lasting an impression on the memory of mature age, as the gorgeous fairy scene of the pantomime when first beheld upon that of youth. For some time none of the bright-hued fish had been taken, and I much feared that my acquaintance with them for that year had terminated; but not so, a few sharp nights of frost took place, and going one morning to obtain sufficient fish for breakfast, in the run that formed the exit of the river from the lake, I with pleasure, in succession, captured several of the beauties. From that day forward, they became more numerous, and the last morning's fishing which I here enjoyed, with the snow flying so thick that I could scarcely see my flies, I killed not only the greatest number, but the heaviest of the brilliant representatives I had captured during the season. With regret, having no desire to pass almost an arctic winter, I turned my back upon the three lonely lovely lakes, with the following unpronounceable Indian names, Molleychunkeymunk, Mooseluckmaguntic, and Moligewalk, to seek the boundless prairies of the far West, and to substitute for constant companion, my double barrel, in place of my well-tried tapering fly-rod.

In my experience as a fisherman in Scotland and Ireland, I never knew of our river-trout being captured in the sea. In Long Island, what is there called the brook-trout

(*Salmo fontinalis*) is well known periodically, when practicable, to visit salt water; in fact, they are constantly taken with the fly in the tidal portion of those streams. The char of Norway and Sweden does the same, and I can only say that both these fish are wondrously alike. On the other hand, the brilliant-coloured inhabitants of the interior lakes of Maine, that I have mentioned, cannot do so; for, if they survived the descent of the Burling falls, their ascent would be impossible. Although the arctic char goes to the sea, the more-resplendent coloured relation remains, I think, constantly in his fresh-water retreats—*id est*, supposing this is a char. To me it would be particularly interesting to know if my surmises as to the proper species of this beautiful fish are correct: and doubtless there are numbers of English fishermen whose verdict, even from my imperfect description, would set at rest a point important both to naturalist and sportsman.\*

\* Since the above was written the surmises of the author are found to be correct.

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## CHAPTER XX.

THE STRIPED BASS is known the entire length of the seaboard of the United States, and is almost as popular as the salmon. The reasons for this are, he is game in the highest sense of the word, fighting with the most determined obstinacy as long as his strength will permit, frequents alike the ocean tideway or river, taking generally with avidity the greatest varieties of natural and artificial baits, and ultimately being fit food for the most fastidious epicure. By naturalists he is placed among the perch, and has been named *Perka Labrax*, an indignity which he is in no way deserving, for he is built on the beautiful lines of the salmon, possibly with a little more depth and beam, and his colouring has a near approach to that of the lordly *Salmo salar*, save that horizontally along his sides are placed several lines (generally seven) from the gills to the tail, and from which he doubtlessly derives his familiar name. Early in April, if the weather be favourable, these fish make their appearance in the rivers *en route* to their spawning-beds—(from this date they become the

object of attention to the pot-hunter, for I cannot call the man who tries to capture fish in that state by the name of fisherman,)—where they remain for some time, probably over a couple of months. This duty performed, they return again to the coast, affording sport for a short period, then disappear, to return in September and October in immense numbers, gladdening with their advent the heart of every sportsman.

Their size is so varied that they may be taken from the weight of a few ounces up to sixty and even more pounds, the heavier fish generally being captured late in the season; and woe betide the angler if unprepared he should strike his hook into one of the leviathans, for all his fishing paraphernalia will certainly receive so severe a shock as to render it for after-use completely worthless—that is, the portion that is left with him. After spawning, this fish does not lose its condition like the salmon, therefore his capture immediately subsequent is not nearly so reprehensible, the propagation of his species not injuring him to a noticeable extent; therefore if he be fished for in the rivers after that duty is performed, nothing is so attractive for his capture as a gaudy sea-trout fly; but the striped bass is not dainty, and many persons of experience persistently use with the greatest success a piece of white or scarlet rag tied over their hook instead of the more complicated and expensive imitation. Fishing in the sea, however, the shrimp is the most popular and gentlemanly bait, trolled along the surface after the manner of the fly, at which the fish break, similar to trout or salmon; still there are days when you cannot thus allure them; and

soft shell crab, spearing (a small transparent fish about the size of a minnow), or squid, have to be resorted to; even the spoon bait has been known to be successful when all other attractions have failed.

Although this fish annually chooses a change from salt to fresh water, still it is not necessary for his existence, numbers having been experimented on by detaining them for years in fresh, where instead of losing flesh, they were pronounced to have improved much both in size and condition. So exceedingly popular is the striped bass in America, that those watering-places in whose vicinity he is known to abound receive annually an immense influx of visitors, attracted chiefly by the prospect of enjoying this fishing. At Kittihunk even a club house has been built, and a very large association formed of the principal gentlemen in and about New York, who spend a great portion of their summer vacation at this retreat, and, as I have been informed by many of the members (some of them salmon fishermen of experience), the sport they there have is only second to what they could obtain on Labrador or Canadian salmon rivers.

I believe that this fish could be most easily introduced into English waters, and that he is well deserving of the effort, for he is very hardy, and I do not think so likely to be affected by the pollution that so many of our streams suffer from; they also appear to be immensely prolific, for although traffic, netting, drainage, &c. may have reduced their numbers, still they are to be found in so great abundance, even in such crowded water-thoroughfares as the Bay of New York, Hudson and East rivers, that any person duly

initiated in the necessary mysteries can, at the proper seasons, confidently expect a heavy basket as a reward for his trouble, and that within sight of the numerous spires, storehouses, and business haunts of their handsome western metropolis.

Great and unprecedented trouble has been lately taken successfully to introduce salmon and trout to the southern hemisphere. With how much less difficulty could this fish be transported here—no tropics to cross, only one-fourth or fifth the distance to traverse, and steam-ships to be found sailing almost every day of the week. Certainly this matter is worthy of consideration, for not only would thousands find amusement and health in their capture, but a wholesome and excellent article of food be provided for our immense population.

BLACK BASS are found in the vicinity of the Thousand Islands on the St. Lawrence, the Niagara River, Lake Erie, and in fact nearly all streams and lakes that are situated near the line which separates Canada from the United States, also the tributaries of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. I am informed that they are also most abundant in the Potomac, into which river they were introduced twenty years ago by a keen fisherman who possessed property on its margin. The artificial fly, spoon bait, or trolling with minnow, will all be found successful in their capture. From their great activity, strength, and vitality, very strong tackle must be used in fishing for them, such in fact as generally is employed for sea-trout. It is very much to be regretted that the efforts made of late years to introduce black bass into English waters by myself first, and Mr.



Parnaby, of Borrowdale, afterwards, have been a failure, for they are unquestionably as fine a fish for angling purposes as any we possess, and as an article of food are equal to our best.

On the Wabash I have had some magnificent black-bass fishing. About one mile and a half above the town of Vincennes, in Indiana, a small rivulet enters it, and when floods occur in the parent stream the back water in the tributary invariably swarms with black bass, pike, and cat-fish, as long as the water is on the increase, and so ravenous would these different species be, that as quick as you could supply your hook with bait, so rapidly would the fisherman catch them; but the instant the volume of water commenced to abate, all would cease to feed, and the disciple of Izaak Walton would go unrewarded. All the tributary streams of the Ohio and Upper Mississippi are well stocked with black bass, but there are few places where I have enjoyed better sport than at Mount Carmel, on the Wabash, where they abounded in such quantities as to astonish those who had never previously visited this pretty retired village. I believe I was the first to use the fly for the capture of black bass upon these waters, but so successful was I, that in a marvellously short space of time both inhabitants and visitors adopted my method; but there was no use in being jealous, for there was enough sport and to spare for all. Another admirable bait for this gamest of fresh-water fish is the crawfish immediately after it has cast its shell; and, as it is clean and easily handled, it is much sought after, but unfortunately is very difficult to procure, for at the period that it is in its most

prime condition, it is generally buried several inches beneath the mud. Americans have reason to be proud of the black bass, for its game qualities endear it to the fisherman, and its nutty sweet flavour to the *gourmand*.

The black bass is an extremely free feeder, and is caught in all the various ways used to capture trout. He rises freely at the fly; with minnow or worm, crawfish, spoon bait, or almost any artificial device, he can be taken. On being hooked, generally the first effort he makes for freedom is to spring from the water. Look out, Mr. Angler—dip your rod in courtesy to him, for if you neglect the requisite *salaam*, your acquaintance will probably terminate. When this device has failed, with a purpose and force alike surprising, he makes a rush for parts unknown, and not until every effort, every trick is put in practice that is known to the fish family, can you get the slightest chance to use your landing-net. I have frequently, after a long and fierce struggle, been about to place the net under him, but the movement was enough: though apparently exhausted, the fish took a new lease of life, and a further trial of patience was demanded before I could call the prize mine. In shape, the black bass much resembles a well-fed trout; but is deeper and thicker made, while the tail is remarkable for its breadth. Their weight varies from 1lb. to 5lb.; yet, on the Niagara river, near the village of Chippawa, I captured a splendid fellow quite 8lb.; but I was then assured that I had reason to congratulate myself, for fish of such a size were far from common. The colour, as in all varieties of fish, varies much. In clear running-water they are generally a very dark green upon

the back (much such a shade as the darker hues in mac-kerel), gradually getting lighter, almost to white, as you approach the abdomen; but in those southern waters, which are strongly impregnated with alluvial deposit, and consequently turbid, the back of these bass are less brilliant in shade, while the stomach is not so clear a white. An advantage that recommends them is, that they are in season when trout should not be killed. In spring they spawn, the exact time varying in different waters on account of season and position as to latitude.

If I may judge from the quantity of spawn the female contains, they must be immensely prolific; for although the individual ovum is small, the roe is very large in proportion to the bulk of the fish. From my own observation and inquiries, I believe that the spawn is from sixteen to twenty days in maturing after being deposited, which would give ample time for its transportation across the Atlantic. I am further of opinion that, indiscriminately, gravel or soil bottom is selected on which to deposit the eggs; for many of the rivers and ponds in which I have captured this bass flowed through, or were situated in deep bottom lands, where a stone, even as large as a pebble, would be difficult to find. One pond in Southern Illinois I particularly remember; it covered a space of about thirty acres, with an average depth of about three feet, except in the southern extremity, where about eight feet of water could be found. The bottom was entirely composed of mud; yet this pond swarmed with black bass. Lake Champlain, the St. Lawrence, and Lake Ontario (all who have visited these regions will remember) are remarkably clear, with

gravelly or rocky bottoms, and each is a favourite haunt of this fish.

A friend, once a resident of the Isle of Skye, and a well-known successful trout and salmon fisherman, had a beautiful little lake, about ten acres in extent, on his estate, not many miles from Toronto, which he had stocked with black bass. In a few years their numbers so much increased, that, in an hour or two, trolling of an evening, a dozen or more could easily be taken. This lake had neither outlet nor inlet, but was supplied with water from springs in the bottom.

I fear it will be almost deemed heresy to place this fish on a par with the trout; at least, some such idea I had when I first heard the two compared; but I am bold, and will go further. I consider he is the superior of the two, for he is equally good as an article of food, and much stronger and untiring in his efforts to escape when hooked.

A description of a draught of fishes from a favourite black bass pond in Southern Indiana may not be without interest to the reader, as it will give some idea of the varieties to be found in Western waters.

When returning from shooting pinnated grouse in the State of Illinois, I came upon a party of farmers who were netting a pond on the edge of the timber land. This sheet of water was about two-thirds of a mile long, with an average breadth of one hundred and fifty yards. The bottom was composed of mud, except the southern end, where it was gravel. Only when very high floods occurred in the Wabash river was there an outlet or inlet to this

piece of water ; still, I knew it was well stocked with fish, for on a previous evening, as I stood on its margin as the sun went down, waiting for wild duck, I had seen the surface in portions broken into spray with the fishes' numerous pastimes, or energetic pursuit of their prey. With curiosity I stopped to see the result of the first haul, and well was my patience rewarded, for what food for study was in the result ! First and foremost, from the size and peculiarity of formation, I will mention what the fisherman designated a " spoonbill catfish "—a name without doubt given by some one who knew as little about genus and species as a cow does about a watch-pocket. This curious fish was beautifully shaped, with all those perfections that characterise the salmon family ; but projecting from his head was a muscular continuation about sixteen inches long and six broad in the centre, not unlike the blade of a canoe-paddle. This spoon-bill was entirely separated from and projecting over and independent of the mouth, the lower jaw being in its ordinary place ; nor was the mouth large. As nature forms nothing without purpose, of what use was this projection ? My own idea is that it was a feeler, used in poking about through the weeds, decayed vegetation, and mud : and by its sensitiveness the fish was enabled to find his food. On handling this *rara piscis*, I found that the slightest pressure on this attachment appeared to produce intense pain. The skin was entirely free from scales from the tail to the termination of the projection, and was very smooth and soft, not at all dissimilar to that of an eel. For a trifle I secured the prize, as I was assured he was an excellent

table addition, and my informants were perfectly correct. I afterwards cut up the proboscis to satisfy my curiosity, and found it entirely composed of gristle, the surface underneath the skin being a labyrinth of veins. Afterwards I saw, at different times, many of this curious family, thus proving that they are in no way rare; still, I have never seen them mentioned by naturalists. Probably it is exclusively confined to inland American waters. Further, I would say the vitality was remarkable, for after transporting it home it lived for over an hour. The weight of the entire fish was probably about sixteen pounds. The next attraction noticed was what is familiarly known in that vicinity as "the pond fish." In colour it much resembles the beautiful black bass, in shape slender but graceful; the placement of the fins is the same as in the pike family, but the head is small and not unlike that of a trout. It is a greedy feeder, and from its being uneatable (the flesh being hard and rank) is considered a great bore by the fishermen. Their average weight is from two to four pounds. Still another variety with which I had been previously unacquainted was taken, viz. "the Great Western carp," there called "the buffalo fish." It is frequently captured of enormous size—several I have seen over twenty pounds. They are much and deservedly esteemed, and are taken in immense numbers in the spring of the year by spearing; for as soon as a flood takes place, when the water is rising, they rush out over all the inundated lands, wherever there is sufficient depth for them to swim. For more than an hour one day I watched a lad, spear in hand, who had taken his post over an

opening which passed under the Ohio and Mississippi railroad, made similar to a sluice for the purpose of preventing the water in time of floods becoming dammed. During my stay this youngster must have killed a couple of hundredweight. You must not imagine that these were all that were in the net. Sunfish, pike, pickerel, black bass, catfish, mullet, and turtle to a waggon-load rewarded the fishermen's efforts. In the end of the bag, I was about to place my hand upon what I considered a rare prize, when I was stopped by the rough intervention of one of the people, and the exclamation of "You don't want to die before your time? If he bite you, all the whisky in the country won't save you." (Whisky is considered an infallible cure for snake-bites.) This nondescript to be avoided was like Siebold's salamander, with four of the smallest and most awkward-looking legs; the brute was about fourteen inches long, and was there known by the name of water-dog. It frequently takes the fisherman's bait, who prefers to cut his line and lose the hook to becoming on any more intimate terms.

#### COMMON BASS

Never exceeds a pound in weight, but is more generally captured at about half that weight. In some streams, such as the Niagara, Iroquois, Kankakee, and White River, it positively swarms in such abundance as to become a trouble to the fisherman who desires catching heavier fish. In shape and build they much resemble a well-fed English perch, but instead of possessing the same colouring, they are of a dark copper shade along the back, which

gradually becomes lighter as you approach the stomach. However much they may be despised by the ambitious sportsman, still it is far from an unworthy fish, for it is a greedy feeder, exceedingly strong on the hook, and last, but not least, excellent when cooked.

In American waters there are several other species of this genus, no less curious in appearance than their names, goggle-eyes, new lights, &c. &c. &c., which, although not indifferent as food, still are unworthy of particular attention by the fisherman, as their size is too inconsiderable to make them worthy antagonists.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

## MUSCALONGE.

EVERY person has, more or less, a conception of what Fairyland must be like. My ideas run into caves and grottoes, with shady nooks and flower-clad rocks, ferns luxuriously covering jagged peaks, and creepers festooning imaginary roofs; one moment the eye resting upon the evanescent oleander; at another, gazing with admiration upon the pure and spotless water-lily; but to leave the realms of fancy and return to reality is but the work of an instant, the arousing of the sleeping man to the realities of life.

Fancy the season of the year autumn, the day cloudless, with the bluest and most transparent sky overhead that mortal ever gazed upon, the water underneath your keel the most pellucid, rapid, and laughing that eye ever rested on, hundreds of islands on every side of the most fantastic shapes, trees and shrubs crowding every available inch of soil, covered with the most gorgeous colourings that ever were represented by the arc of heaven, and a distance so

soft and undefinable, that the beholder wonders if he cannot see into another planet. Such, in truth, is the St. Lawrence amid the thousand islands on a fine day towards the end of September. Where under the sun can such a scene be looked upon? I search my memory in vain for its counterpart; and although the inland seas of Japan, the broad and placid waters of the Hudson at the Highlands, the palm-clad islands of the Indian Archipelago, the azure seas and skies of the Mediterranean rise before me, beautiful and perfect as they are, they cannot compare with the giant river of Canada and its surrounding landscape, because it is without a fault—perfection verified.

Strong and enduring are the thews of our boatmen, tough but pliant the ash oars, and although each stroke they are bent like hoops, still our progress over the rippling, glancing, eddying water is slow. But delay matters not here, in fact it is rather pleasing, for it affords the spectator time to gaze, aye, inhale the manifold beauties that surround him. Look to the left at that feathery birch: how playfully and daintily its long, graceful, floating limbs tap, tap, tap, upon the rapid's surface. Another rival in attractiveness grows close by; it is the wood grape with its long tendrils floating in every breath of air, but treacherously longing to lay hold of the tree that now she only fans with her passing touch. And the red maple and yellow maple and scarlet sumach crowd together, rivals for the palm of precedence in gaudiness of hues; while behind them, in calm dignity, towers the giant pine, looking down with unbending dignity upon its minor surrounding brethren; the motion of these Canadian waters

itself is joyous, and every dip and plunge and jump of the birch-bark canoe seems to be its ebullition of excessive animal spirits.

But, unconsciously, we have glided out of the swift current into eddying back currents, our spoon bait trails thirty odd yards behind; in fact, it has been for some time forgotten, for admiration and thought have been feeding upon the beauties of surrounding nature, when suddenly we are recalled to the fact that we are fishing, by several rapid jerks upon the line; the top of the rod bends towards the unseen adversary, and the reel-handle spins round with unusual velocity. Now comes the test to prove your knowledge of the gentle art. Take and give, never be hurried, or permit excitement to control you, for a worthy foe you have to struggle with, and coolness and nerve will alone insure you success. Almost a hundred yards of line have passed through the heated rings, the strain commences to tell upon the foe, and second by second the pace decreases, till ultimately the adversary changes the route he pursued, enabling the fisherman to recover many a yard of the tough line. The battle is not yet finished: a movement frightens the prey, and a second dash is made for freedom, but it is a feeble effort and unworthy to be compared to the first; still, it is the last struggle made for life, and the giant pike is drawn within reach of the gaff, and soon flounders in the bottom of the skiff. It is a splendid fish, dark bronze upon the back, white as mother-o'-pearl along the vent, well-made and handsome but for the alligator-shaped head. For a member of the family to which he belongs, he is wondrously

game; for a salmon of the same proportions he is a wondrous cur.

It is beyond a doubt that Muscalonge have been captured exceeding eighty pounds, but such leviathans are very scarce, their average weight being from fifteen to twenty-five.

For edible purposes they are much superior to the pike, for they are firm and not insipid in taste. In fact, I can recall, on more than one occasion, when they have been roasted in wood ashes by our camp-fire, that they have given so much satisfaction, possibly resulting from the proverbial hunter's appetite, that it would have puzzled the most celebrated cook to have produced anything that would have been more enjoyed.

#### PIKE.

This species is very abundant throughout all the waters of the Northern United States and Canadas that are suited for its residence. - However, the familiar name which heads this chapter is almost unknown in the Western land, its place being usurped by the sobriquet pickerel, the same misnomers occurring among fish which are so abundantly applied to the feathered and four-footed game.

The best pike-fishing I have ever enjoyed in my life was in the Holland River, about thirty miles north of Toronto, near its junction with Lake Simcoe. Here the fish are very large, and if caught in a taking humour, the most greedy for sport will have their appetite abundantly satisfied. The eye of the connoisseur in piscatorial matters

could not find a stream better suited in every particular for becoming the habitat of the pike than the river just mentioned, for it is densely margined with weeds on both sides, with a deep sluggish channel between them, and such are its characteristic features for many a mile. If the sportsman visited this haunt in spring or autumn, he should not fail to have his gun with him, for innumerable wild fowl frequent it in their migrations north and south; in fact, at sunset and break of day I have seen the entire surface of its placid waters covered with them. Deer, also, were formerly very abundant here, but I fear that such is not now the case. I can remember as if it were but yesterday, although twenty and more years have slipped past since then, I was upon the upper deck of a steamboat, talking to its skipper, while the obedient vessel carefully threaded the erratic course of the Holland River. My companion exclaimed, "Here comes a buck!" and darted for the wheel-house. In an instant he rejoined me, rifle in hand. For some minutes we lost sight of the beautiful deer in the tall reeds, but soon afterwards had the satisfaction of seeing him breasting the waves as he headed for the opposite bank. The game being behind us, pitching and tossing in the ground-swell caused by the passage of our craft, the captain delayed firing till the deer gained the margin. In the halt that he made to recover his strength, the better to be able to withdraw his feet from the sticky, muddy bottom, the rifle was slowly brought to bear upon the quarry's heart, and with the report the gallant animal gave a tremendous struggle, and pitched headlong, to rise no more.

Excuse my wandering from my subject, but as I see in memory the Holland River, the little episode narrated rises before me.

Another river, similar in its characteristics to the Holland River, and also a favourite haunt of pike, is the Kankakee, in the northern portion of the State of Indiana, and whether we fished with shiners (resembling minnows) or used the spoon bait, I and my companions were equally fortunate. For a week we tarried here; the season was early autumn, and seldom at night, when we returned to our encampment, but that each could count from two to three dozen large fish that had succumbed to his skill. During that visit I hooked a monster, and although I twice succeeded in bringing him alongside the boat, I had to suffer the annoyance of seeing him go off with several yards of my tackle. From the position I was in, I was obliged to treat the foe very cavalierly, for the bottom is full of decayed timber, and the limbs of a fallen tree half bridged the water down stream, to gain which my foe made the most determined efforts.

To state the size of this pike correctly would be a difficult matter; still, from my lengthened experience, I can form an approximate estimate, and do not believe I exaggerate when I say he must have exceeded forty pounds.

In Southern Illinois, on the tributaries and ponds margining the Wabash, I have killed some very large pike; but here they were not generally so well fed, or so strong as those of the North.

In Iowa I have also been very successful in capturing

this fish, but in that State they do not run so large in my experience as in the more Eastern waters.

In the Lake of the Woods (a few years ago if I had spoken of this distant sheet of water, I would have been laughed at, but, thanks to Colonel Wolseley opening a road to the Red River and the Settlement of Manitoba, it is now within easy access), I was informed by a half-breed residing at Fort Garry that its waters teemed with gigantic pike that had but to be tried for to obtain. From my knowledge of the marshy nature of the country that surrounds this silent sheet of water, I have little doubt that my informant spoke the truth.

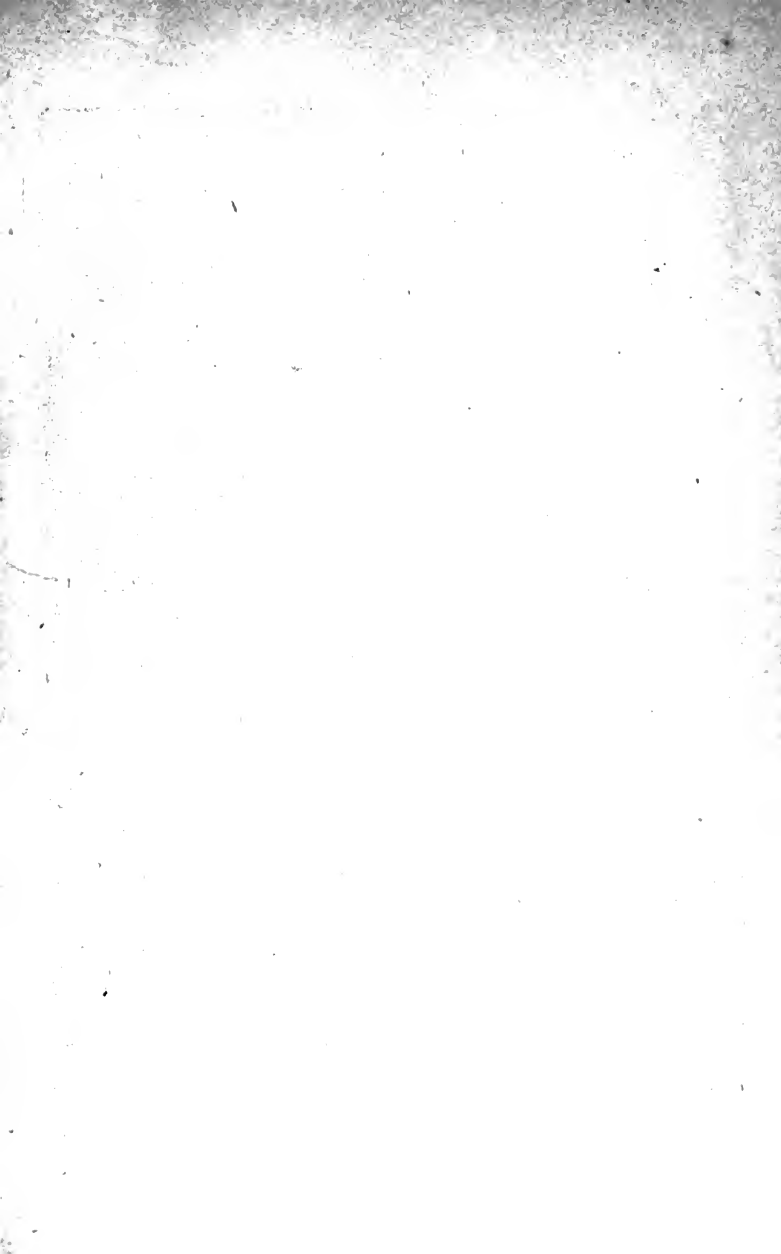
When no other fishing is to be obtained more worthy of the sportsman's skill, let him then by all means devote his leisure to the capture of the subject of this chapter: but I would sooner take one salmon, aye, one trout, than a dozen of these fresh-water sharks.

But let me shift the scene from the valley of the muddy Ohio river to the pellucid Severn, a feeder of Lake Huron. I was living on the confines of civilization literally, for for there was but one residence further north than the house of which I was an inmate, and it was inhabited by a canny Scot, who never knew what it was to take a day's relaxation, his entire energy, early and late, being devoted to the improvement of his homestead. Shortly after my arrival I paid him a visit, but I found that information on shooting matters would have to be obtained through my own exertions; for, more than a complaint against Bruin occasionally depriving him of a pig, he knew literally nothing of the sporting capabilities of his neighbourhood.

It is always pleasant on a new field of operations to obtain a slight inkling of what you may expect. It is far from agreeable to have to draw a charge of snipe-shot, and thus lose time, to substitute B B, or perhaps ball, small game being expected and large game found. In wandering about the neighbourhood of my temporary residence, about two miles from home, I came upon one of those beautiful little sheets of water so frequently found upon the northern portion of the American Continent. This soon became a favourite retreat, for wild duck were numerous on a portion where wild rice grew luxuriantly, and passenger pigeons and spruce grouse had adopted it as a watering-place, owing to its freedom from intruders. All devoted admirers of nature know what a pleasure it is to be alone where none of man's work mars the prospect, where every object the eye rests upon is as it came from the Creator's hands, unsullied and unchanged. As I sat on a rocky promontory to see the sun dip the horizon, perhaps visions of my distant land or far-off friends flitting before me, I was struck with the immense numbers of fish that kept breaking the unrippled surface—good evidence that the rod and line might find abundant work, and on the next visit I determined to put it to the test.

To those who are acquainted with the birch-bark canoe it is needless for me to say anything. All the praises I could sound could not further enhance it in their estimation; but to those who are not, to them let me say, that there is not in existence a more perfect piece of mechanism for the purpose it is intended. Only learn to handle







it properly, and you can go in it anywhere, over shoals, down rapids, through channels where an oar would be useless, and finally, if necessary, you can take it on your shoulders and tramp across portages where nothing but an ox-team could transport a boat. In construction they are models of skill, yet the Indian alone knows how to make them; for, although white men may occasionally attempt their manufacture, they never do so successfully. On the following day, with my birch-bark on my shoulders, looking like a gigantic animated letter T, I crossed the portage with a formidable array of lines and artificial baits, full of most mischievous intent towards the finny tribe. This day the surface was broken by that desirable ripple, whether it be for trolling or fly-fishing, and dark clouds occasionally darkened with their shadows the face of the water. With exhilarating freedom, deep I dipped my paddle, pushing for the rocky end, waiting till I had crossed the centre of the lake before I commenced to fish; for, as a rule, unless there should happen to be a reef, seldom any fish will be taken far from the margin. When alone in a canoe one line will be found as much as can be conveniently attended to, for the navigation of your craft requires both hands. Getting under good headway, I soon had twenty-five to thirty yards of line astern, with a few inches of red cloth for lure, which proved so attractive that I almost immediately had a break, and in a moment or two afterwards a fish hooked. For two or three hours such was the sport which continued with never over a few minutes' cessation.

As I pushed slowly along the shore I came to a river

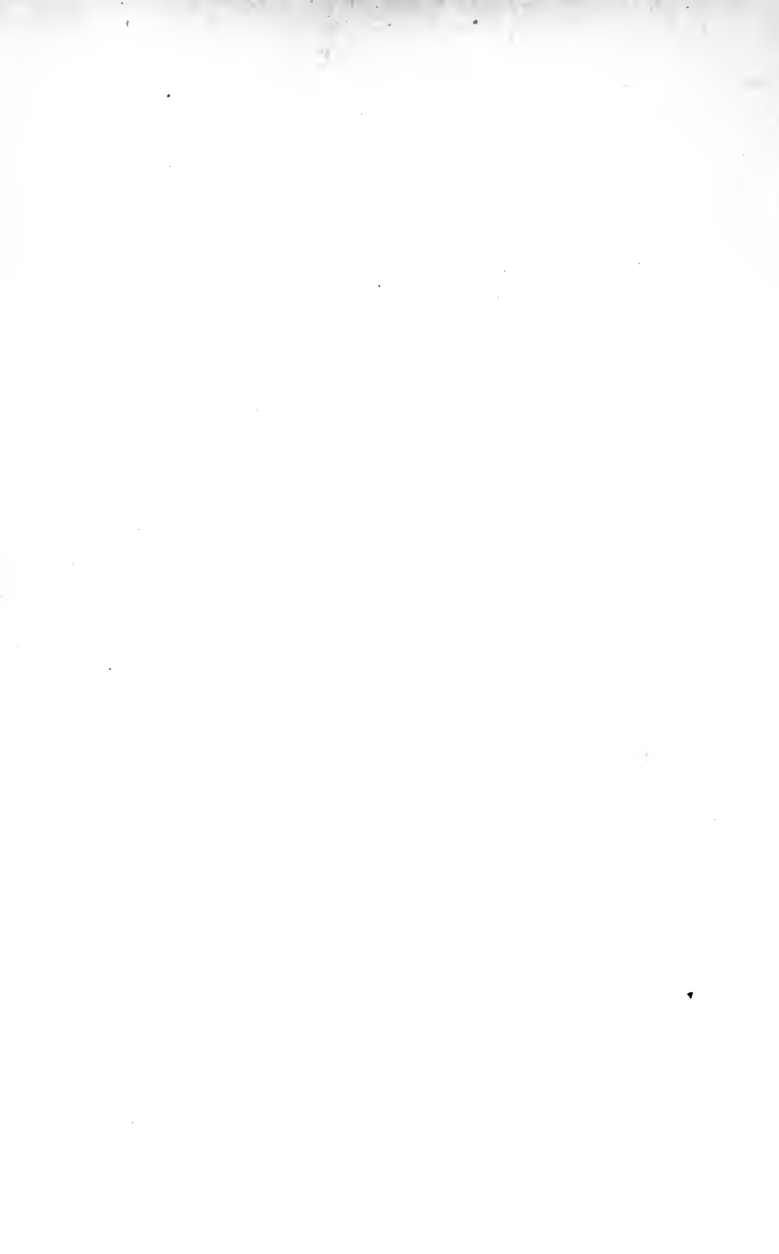
previously unknown to me, and which I have since learned is the only outlet from this lake. The edge of this stream was fringed with a dense network of weeds, and the channel had scarcely a perceptible current. On breaking full in view, several dozens of wild duck rose, conspicuous among whom were many of the beautiful wood-duck, a gem among his brilliant plumed race. The sedgy nature of the shore here predicted a more than ordinarily favoured retreat, so, replacing the red cloth by a large Buell's spoon, with some scarlet ibis feathers tied along the shanks of the hooks, I tried my fortune, and such was my success that before I ceased, the bottom of my canoe had a goodly show of noble bass and pike—so many, that I was satisfied to select three or four for present use and hide the others, with my birch-bark, till I could send across for them in the morning; but a couple of bears, judging from the different-sized tracks, got at my *caché* during the night, and had the bad taste to maul and pull about what they did not eat, so that I rejected it as unfit for food. Fish I have always found the most tempting bait with which to attract Bruin into a trap, so I built a bower-house and hung up the bait at the end of it, with my trap nicely covered with leaves; still all would not do, he and his companion were too wide awake, or had left the neighbourhood. This lake I often visited again, and with equal success; the influences of weather never appeared to affect the fishes' appetite, and they are always a welcome addition to a backwoodsman's fare. In company of a Chippewa Indian, I also tried fishing through the ice. The method adopted is simple; viz. cutting a hole two or three feet in diameter, over which is

built a small hut to keep out the light and sufficiently large for the fisherman to sit inside, the end of his fish-spear protruding through the top. With an artificial minnow on a few feet of line in the left hand, and weighted so as to make it readily sink, you attract the pike to the surface, when, with a dexterous blow, you drive your leister home. Very much like poaching; still, where fish are so abundant and wanted for food, this system becomes less culpable.

At the northern end of Lake Couchachin, the beautiful Severn, after, tumbling over a grand fall, starts on its erratic, precipitous course for Lake Huron. To visit this spot was not more than seven or eight miles of water, through a labyrinth of islands, and along the most picturesquely beautiful shore, wooded to the margin. Beside the fall was a saw-mill belonging to a descendant of the French aristocracy, who had emigrated before the days of "The Empire." Whether or not the proprietor happened to be at home, a cordial welcome could be relied upon, and the fishing underneath the fall was always excellent—sometimes so good that your bait would scarcely touch the water ere it was seized. However, there was one drawback, for the spot was infested with snakes, particularly a large, thick, dirty-brown water species, which looked exceedingly venomous. From the indifference with which the mill hands treated them, I imagine their look was worse than their bite. They had, however, a *penchant* for minnow, for I saw one captured on the hook. As the wild fowl migrate this is a splendid stand; for if the weather is in the least stormy, with an indication of cold, the ducks keep passing all day, and their flight invariably is so low

that they are well within range. By following the Severn down to its junction with Lake Huron, plenty of occupation can be found for both rod and gun ; and the appetite your open-air life will impart will make all you eat taste superior to anything obtained in civilized quarters.

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