

**BIG
GAME
FIELDS**
of
AMERICA
NORTH AND SOUTH



DANIEL J. SINGER



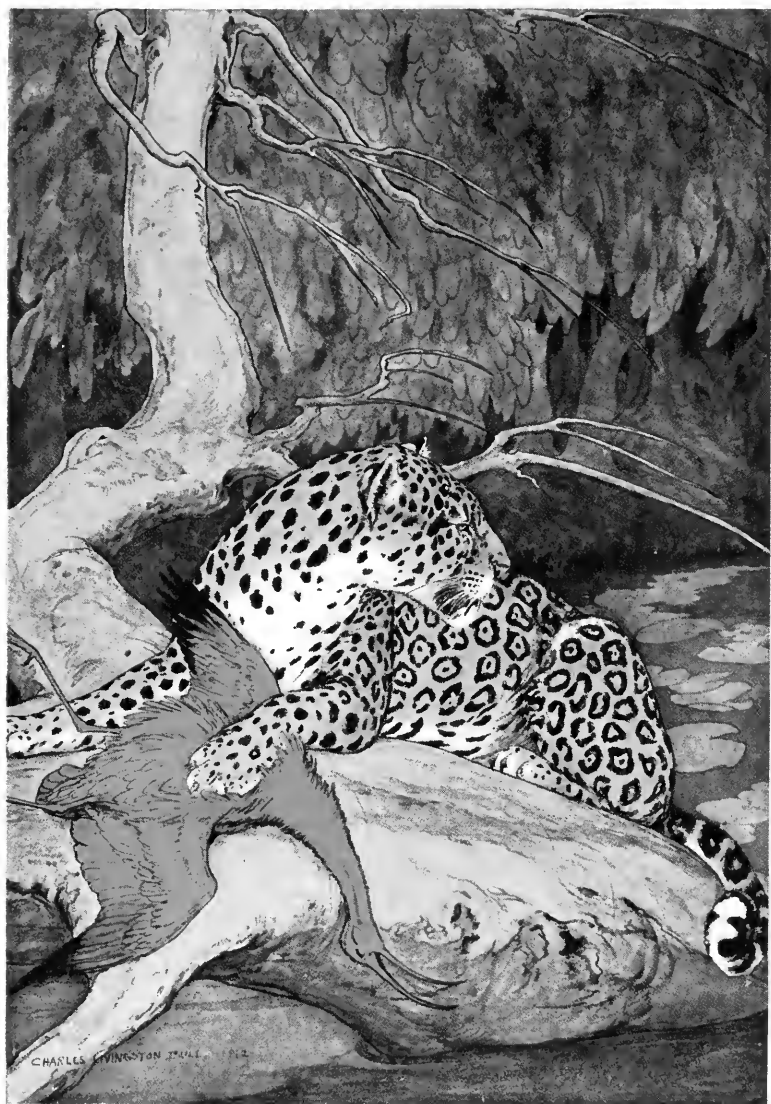
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**BIG GAME FIELDS
OF AMERICA:
NORTH AND SOUTH**

DANIEL J. SINGER



For there, where nothing had shown a moment before, appeared a vision of spotted black and gold.

**BIG GAME FIELDS
OF AMERICA
NORTH AND SOUTH**

BY
DANIEL J. SINGER

ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY
THE AUTHOR AND THREE DRAWINGS
BY CHARLES LIVINGSTON BULL

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AMERICAN TO NINE
SILVER SOLITA
YRABLI

Dedicated
TO
MY MOTHER

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1905 17

PREFACE

WHAT I have actually seen of wild life during a good many big game hunting trips in North and South America, from Alaska to the equator, is the theme of this book. Most of the accounts were penciled in the shooting tent or even on moonlit nights while awaiting some night prowler.

In two chapters I have attempted to give with some exactitude the natural history of the black bear and the jaguar, the two animals which in captivity and the open I have most carefully studied, but in general my object is to present as clearly as possible the human side of the sport—the greatest sport in the world.

If it proves that I am successful in taking my reader with me, through mountains and jungle, and if I make of the reader a convert to the life of the open, I shall be glad, for I know of nothing that gives so much and asks so little as nature.

DANIEL J. SINGER.

New York,
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**BIG GAME FIELDS OF
AMERICA: NORTH AND
SOUTH**

BIG GAME FIELDS

I

HUNTING THE JAGUAR IN SOUTH AMERICA

PART I—CAMPS IN THE BRITISH GUIANA BUSH

THE mystic call of the jungle had long been upon me and finally, not being able to longer withstand her beckoning to the fairyland of wild things, I took passage unaccompanied to Demerara, where, at the end of sixteen days, I arrived.

Demerara or Georgetown is the capital of British Guiana, and is a truly tropical city situated on the Demerara River. Out of 60,000 inhabitants there are not more than five hundred pure whites or Europeans, but there are a goodly number who consider themselves whites, who have what is known there as a touch of the "tar-brush," which means there is a slight trace of some dark-skinned race in them.

I purposed to roam through the great immeasurable jungles far up in the interior. The

chief objects in view were to complete a study of the jaguar in his true haunts, to learn something of the ways of the jungle and the principal game therein; also to bring back one jaguar skin of my own killing. These primeval forests are not traversed by any roads or trails. It is true there are many game trails, but they lead nowhere in particular, and can only be followed by continually wielding the cutlass. The only mode then that remains is to proceed by water, and a network of waterways with wide tributaries and multitudinous streams offers the traveler a wide selection, if he has but a mind to penetrate these sequestered wilds.

The first difficulties that arise are the rapids and waterfalls. To overcome this, peculiarly adapted river craft are necessary, one form of which is known as a curial, and, equally as important, not less than six bushmen or native Indians to paddle, haul or carry, as the case may be, through or around these various waterways.

Having become acquainted with the requirements, I at once set about to get such a crew and necessary outfit. There was one other point I had in mind, and that was to procure, if possible, a few good hounds that had had some experience in hunting the jaguar. I knew beforehand that

it was of no use to bring dogs into that country to hunt which were not acclimated and accustomed to the peculiarities of the Guiana bush. Men who have bred dogs there told me that dogs coming to Guiana from a cold climate usually die off in a few months. This is due to several causes; first, they cannot endure the climate, and fever seems to lay hold of them, while the ticks and bugs literally worry them to death. Then there are the usual dangers of the bush (the word "bush" is employed there when referring to the jungle), which the native dog or Creole breed, as he is called, has learned to some extent to avoid, such as giving wide berth to many of the venomous snakes, keeping away from the rush of the pugnacious bush-dog (there are two species in Guiana, the peccary and the Kairuni), frequently traveling in droves of fifty and upward; the crushing stamp of the tapir's forefoot when brought to bay, and similar jungle dangers.

To secure such a pack of dogs I was very kindly assisted by Mr. Frank Fowler, Commissioner of Lands and Mines, who gave me a letter of introduction to a Mr. D. J. A. Spence, the owner of a large rubber plantation, five miles out of Georgetown.

Mr. Spence, who has ten tigers to his credit

(tiger being the local term for jaguar), and has assisted in the killing of as many more, had just such a pack of dogs as I wanted to take on my trip. I was received cordially, and, in fact, I may take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the manner in which I was received and assisted by every one in the colony who knew the object of my visit. Mr. Spence agreed not only to let me use his hounds, but proposed that I outfit right from his place, while he would assist in getting my bushmen and Indians. Another problem was also overcome when he suggested that I use his curial.

I provided myself with a cotton knitted hammock made by the Indians, and fitted with a mosquito netting. This is about the best and only practical way of sleeping in the jungle. Above my hammock I always have stretched a heavy canvas 12 x 12 feet to keep off the rains and damp. One other absolutely necessary article is a tin canister, which is made like a small trunk. In this all extra clothing and belongings are kept, not only to prevent them from getting damp, but to keep the bugs and ants, which are everywhere, from making a meal of them; for it seems that every substance in the jungle has its special bug or termite, which contrives to

destroy it. My camera films were put up in tins and sealed; then again put in a tin box, all of which were wrapped up and kept in my canister. This is the only way to get results with any degree of certainty in a tropical country of this kind.

I spent two or three days with Mr. Spence while I was preparing for my trip up in the "bush." It was a most delightful and interesting visit. I listened with much interest to Mr. Spence's many encounters with the jaguar. He had spent the greater part of his life in the colony, was now in his sixty-second year and had taken advantage of the opportunity to hunt and observe the great cat. The "Old Shikari," as Mr. Spence was called locally (meaning "Deer-foot"), had several fine lusty-looking children, but I was much surprised when I noticed that some of their fingers and toes were missing. Upon inquiry I found that they had been bitten off by the dreaded "caribi" or "perai." This fish, usually not more than fifteen inches in length and similar in conformation to our black bass, has most powerful jaws, armed with large, razor-cutting teeth. In appearance these are not unlike the front teeth of a human being, excepting that the edges are extremely keen. When the

perai scent a wounded animal, or even man, they will crowd around in shoals and devour the object alive.

Finally, having engaged four blacks or bushmen, and laid in the amount of stores calculated to be necessary for myself and crew of six (my two native Indians or trackers we were to pick up a few miles up-river), I was ready and anxious to get away into the heart of nature.

.

Through the thin, opaque light of a faint gray dawn, I moved on down to the water's edge, where the curial and men were in waiting. "Old Shikari's" tall, spare figure loomed up indistinctly on the bank. He was giving some final instructions to the men; then their paddles sank deep into the dark, ominous-looking water and we swung out into the river. The figure on the bank grew dim, then faded and became a part of the billowy white mist that floated as gracefully as a white swan above the water. Soundlessly we slipped along, crossed to the other side of the river and headed up along the west bank so as to avoid the current. The outlying houses and huts dropped away, the river narrowed, and the great barricading jungle walls rose sheer from the water's edge. No sound was falling, for it



The outlying huts and houses on the Demerara dropped away.



Indians of the Guiana Bush.

was at that hushed hour when all nocturnal life had repaired to its lair and the wild kindreds of the day had not yet issued forth.

In the gloom of the deep-shadowed shore our long, narrow craft slid along with such incredible silence that it might well indeed have been taken for one of the shifting shadows. Glancing upward, a large bat flitted by—a passing phantom form—a bird shifted uneasily, and then with a long, plaintive note broke the intense silence. A lean dawn breeze drifted down the river, bringing with it the fragrance of the forests.

Over the tips of the jungle—far away to the east—the faintest tinge of mauve pink flooded the sky; another day was asserting itself. The sun slowly climbed into a clear sky, dispelling the mists and turning the dew-bespeckled jungle roof into a glowing, glistening blaze of glory.

I looked out on what was to me a new world, full of strange sights, sounds and creatures. Rampart-like the forests rose on either side of the river to a height of over a hundred feet. They were so dense that it was not possible to see beyond the surface of their impenetrable walls. Even so, they never grew tiresome. Fresh panoramas appeared at every turn, for the forest

walls were a garden of wonderland. Scarlet creepers festooned from branch to branch, and glowing crimson curved into arbors and bowers; grottoes from whose roofs swung what seemed like little fairy lanterns in shades of pale lavender, delicate blue and deep purple; velvety dark caverns overhanging the water, studded with white pendants that looked like crystal globes, pergolas draped in burnished copper.

Continuing on through this palm-strewn paradise, one sees the parrots in their natural wild home, flocks of blue and red macaws, the scarlet ibis, besides many other birds of gay plumage, and yet but a fraction has been said of the delights of these fairyland scenes.

Ranjettan, my head black, who spoke a little English, I relied on mostly to conduct the trip. The rest of the men I could understand but little, and therefore my conversation was rather limited, I being the only white. It was now ten o'clock and we had covered nearly a dozen miles. The heat from the stifling sun's rays made the air like a Turkish bath, and it was a great relief when Ranjettan steered for the shore and the inviting looking shade.

The manner of living in the tropics is quite different from that of a more northern clime, and



Through this palm-strewn paradise.

the traveler will do well to conform to their customs. For instance, in the early morning I took coffee and crackers; between ten and eleven a hearty breakfast; in the afternoon we made tea, and at night we had dinner. This is the English custom of Guiana, and when one has more or less strenuous matters to attend to the hours are excellent, for between eleven and four in the afternoon it is much too hot to be about, and it is only during the morning hours and the late afternoon that we went on our way, excepting on rare occasions. It is quite the same, too, with the wild folk, though most of our four-footed animals here are nocturnal, those of the day only moving about in the early morning and late afternoon; so that a stranger, upon entering the great forest, may be surprised at the absence of life; but if at nightfall or early morning, he should take up a position and remain quite still, then he may be surprised again at the abundance of wild life. So, having had a substantial breakfast, we swung our hammocks in the shade, where we dozed and idled away the long, hot hours of the day.

As the sun dipped low in the west we were up and about again. After tea and a little "cassava" bread we resumed our way. It may be

of interest to know just what cassava bread is: Scattered sparsely through these great forests are five tribes of aboriginal Indians. These children of nature, in appearance, bear a striking resemblance to the Japanese. Their small villages are now and again come upon and there are seldom more than five or six "benabs" (thatched sheds under which are swung the hammocks) in one village, and usually less than a score of Indians to a hamlet. They are just as primitive in their ways as they were when first discovered, living entirely by the natural products of the forest. With their bows and arrows and poisonous darts from the blow-pipe—while occasionally you will find one with what is called a "buckgun" (a long, single-barrel muzzle-loading affair)—they secure all the fresh meat they require. But it is the cassava plant that yields their staff of life, and to them we owe its discovery. Only the root of the plant is used and until properly prepared is quite poisonous. It is first grated, then put in a "Matapee," which in appearance resembles a long wicker basket; this is suspended from a branch and a heavy weight put at the bottom. In this way the poisons ooze out and leave a foodstuff ready for cooking, that

answers the purpose of bread, and is exceedingly nutritious.

By nightfall we came to just such a little Indian hamlet as I have described, and it was here I was to get my two Indians. They were of the Macoushi tribe, quite pleasant fellows, always ready to laugh, especially when ill-luck befell them. One peculiarity of these fellows is that they will never give their Indian name, but will have you call them "John" or "Charlie," so Ranjettan informed me that one was John Charley and the other was just plain John. From acting as guide and carrier before for Europeans, John Charley could say a few words in English, and could also understand a few, but very few. In answering it seemed that he tried to say what pleased, whether it was really so or not; as when I would ask him if there were any jaguars in certain sections he would always reply, "Plenty tigers, plenty tigers." That night we swung our hammocks in one of their "benabs." In the morning, instead of continuing on our way, we decided to remain over a day, and try for a little fresh meat, having been encouraged by John Charley, who told us of seeing large and fresh tapir tracks about two miles up the river the evening before. To follow hounds through

the jungle on foot seemed to me at first ridiculous. It not only proved possible, however, but quite successful as well.

After once cutting through the barricading walls, where the jungle is composed largely of great forest giants with huge buttressed roots, one is rather surprised at the absence of underbrush. The great tree trunks often shoot up to a height of seventy feet before sending out a branch, and the smaller trees, stalks, etc., seldom spread or show any foliage until they have reached the jungle roof, where the sunlight gives them the life they all seem to struggle for so eagerly. Through these column aisles of the jungle one can get along tolerably well, but it may be supposed that its character frequently changes, and in sections it is well-nigh impossible to get through the tangle of woods, where the dense growth and windfalls of countless storms conspire to keep the traveler from his goal.

.

As the first spectral gray of dawn began to sift its pale light through the forest, we were sliding up river in the curial with the hounds. The Indians paddling swiftly, we soon arrived at the spot where we were to moor our craft and follow into the vast forests. All my men were

A native thatched hut.



365117

barefooted, but they could see; by that I mean they had the trained eye of the lynx, and at a glance could distinguish the dull mottled body of the deadly labaria snake from the branches and roots that it so closely resembled. But the sense of the two Indians was still more keen than that of the bushmen. They seemed to possess the very craft of the dwellers of the wild—and why not? They were of them. John Charley could observe the footsteps of the game when the alien eye could not discern the slightest vestige.

It was with no little difficulty I followed these fellows through the woods, as they quietly and apparently with the greatest ease threaded their way, and must confess I was quite ashamed of the noise I made lumbering along. There would be plenty of opportunity for practice, however, and surely I must improve a little. About two miles were covered and to me they seemed much more—for I was already beginning to tire, and there was no life in the hot, murky air. Between the dew and perspiration I was quite wet through, and after picking up a couple of thorns, having my hat brushed off a few more times, I was commencing to feel like a novice. At just about this juncture John Charley pointed down to the

ground, chuckled to himself and seemed greatly pleased. I looked carefully along the floor of the jungle, but could not see the slightest sign or reason for his mirth. Presently we came to a creek, and here on the muddy banks I could plainly see the large three-toed hoof-prints of a tapir. Passing on a little further, the hounds soon gave tongue and were away on his hot trail.

The excitement seemed to give me a new lease of life, but just how I managed to develop the speed and endurance to keep up fairly well with John Charley, I never quite knew. I had employed a good many different methods of hunting during the past few years, but to follow hounds through the jungle on foot was not only a new experience to me, but strenuous enough for the most blasé sportsman. The run, though not a very long one, was plenty stiff enough while it lasted. Running down to a muddy bit of ground, I caught sight of a big animal which looked as large as a cow. The dogs had him at bay, and in his wild fury he was dashing first at one dog and then at another, trying to crush out their lives with the lightning-like stamp of his fore-feet.

To be quick with the rifle meant a new specimen for me, rest, and a refreshing draught of

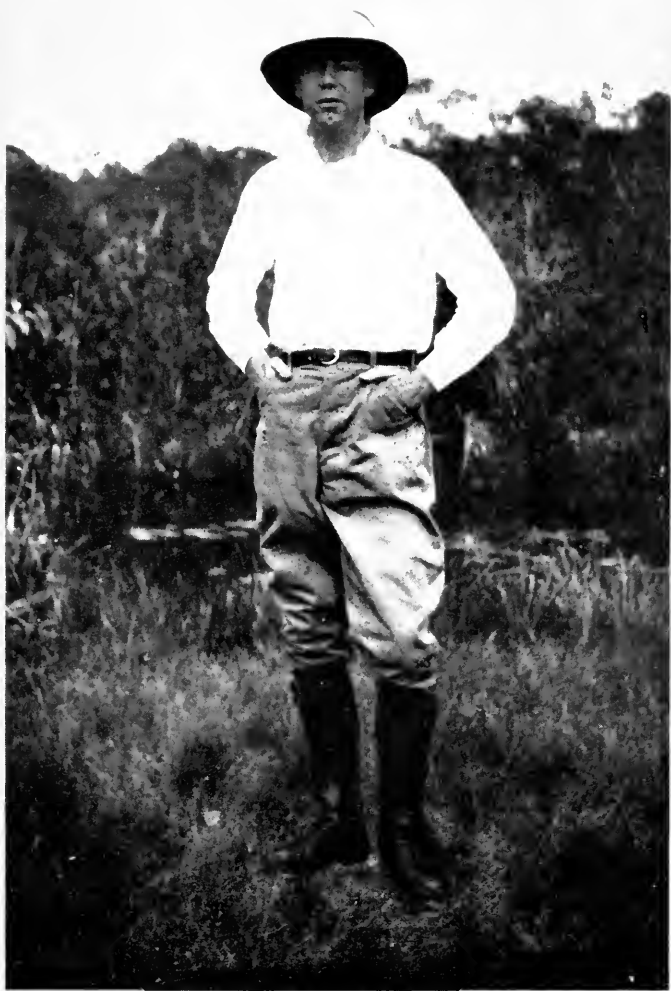
water; to bungle meant more of the terrific pace—and perhaps to lose him altogether. “Dash,” the most daring and vicious fighter of the pack, hurled himself in and gripped the tapir by the flank. At the same moment the animal had whirled, one hoof raised, and before it began to descend—or an eye-wink later—the big beast fell forward and lay quite still. There had been no bungle.

A pleasant smoke, a long, deep drink of water, a quiet rest in the shade are pleasures that money cannot bring, but have to be fairly earned to be appreciated. The tapir was a large bull, and I estimated his weight in this way: The men, six of them, after cleaning, removing the head and lower part of the legs, divided up the meat in six parts, to the extent of what they considered a fair load to each man. Figuring 50 pounds to a man, and allowing for parts removed, I would say 400 pounds very conservative. Taking large palm leaves and securing with the smaller bush-ropes or creepers, which make an excellent substitute for rope and cord—the men made very neat parcels of their loads, and passing across their foreheads one of these supports, packed out the meat much after the manner of the Canadian woodsman.

Coming down the river the men made it lively and interesting and treated me to rather a novel entertainment. As they propelled the boat rapidly along they chanted droll tunes. There were part-songs, and solos with choruses that told of tales of the chase, mournful tragedies, and adventures. As they sang they would now and again throw up the water with their paddles, so that it played in the sunshine, and fell in a jeweled shower, while all through it an accompaniment was kept up by the tapping of their paddles on the side of the boat. They also interspersed the songs with long, peculiar blasts on the hunting horns, and this, I learned later in the day, was a signal to all those within hearing that a big killing had taken place, and by nightfall we had many visitors from the neighboring Indians and bushmen, all of whom were given a liberal portion of meat.

That night I slept soundly until the small hours of morning, when I grew restless and finally awoke to the fact that a hundred places over my anatomy gave me a peculiar itching, burning sensation.

"Can't stand it any longer," I finally said aloud. "Ranjettan, get up and make a fire; there is something eating me alive," I



Most practical dress for the tropics.

called over to his hammock. Ranjettan hastily came to my rescue, and with the aid of my pocket electric lamp looked me over.

"Bête-rouge," he exclaimed with a smile. These are the little red devil-bugs that bury under the skin and make life unbearable. Waking up John Charley, they brought over some crabwood oil, which I spread over the affected parts, and, feeling as slippery as an eel, but much more at ease than before, I returned to my hammock to woo a little further sleep.

We were astir early next morning, and after loading the curial continued our way. As we ascended the river the jungle roof grew higher and higher, and its foliage displayed a charming variety of every shade, from the lightest to the darkest green. Occasionally a giant mora tree, overtowering the roof of the jungle, stood out in grand magnificence.

To appreciate the forest and enjoy the beauty and loveliness of all wild life, it is necessary, besides being a faunal naturalist and lover of nature, to be something of a botanist; for animal life is much in the minority, while plant life looms up everywhere and outnumbers the other a million to one. Naturalists have not been credited with the sense of beauty and harmony found

among poets, but to my mind none but a student of nature can fully appreciate a landscape. The painter sees the patches of color in the flowers, trees and river; but the naturalist recognizes the objects which make up the scene and can see a truer and infinitely more interesting picture. In the soft soil at the edge of the stream he recognizes the roundish footprints of the jaguar, and pictures the great cat stepping lightly as the fall of snow before him. To one side, and within the shadows of a great buttressed tree, the jaguar flattens, and becomes to all appearances a part of the uneven ground, for he has suddenly discovered a likely meal near by—a peccary, just twenty feet away, is enjoying her evening fare as she quietly munches the oily kernel of the fallen nuts from the saouari tree. Then something from somewhere pounces upon the unsuspecting pig, and in spite of her struggles, of which the ground about gives evidence, she is killed, and what the big cat leaves undevoured is soon obliterated by the many ants and termites. Here, on the sand, are the delicate hoof-marks of the peccary, and an occasional bone is found, while the little bristles are littered all about. It is with the aid of such signs as these that the naturalist reads the ways of the wild folks.



Native-bred jaguar hounds.



We grouped ourselves about Ranjettan.

For four days we continued on through this delightful waterway, so rich with medley of sight and sound. At times we stopped to shoot a few muscovy ducks, which were frequently met with, and now and then I would go a short distance into the jungle to bag a few "Maam," properly called "Tinamou," which are birds about the size of a chicken and make a very savory dish.

Having ascended the river some seventy miles, we now packed our outfit and portaged through a cut in the jungle everything across to the Essequibo River, some fifteen miles to the west. John Charley advised us that we could procure boats from the Indians there, so it was not necessary to transport the curial. The scenery in the Essequibo is still more awe-inspiring by force of its wild magnificence, due largely to the overpowering effect of the huge forest monarchs—the greenheart, purpleheart and mora, which, once viewed in all their stately grandeur, make a lasting impression upon the traveler. Their trunks frequently exceed six feet in diameter, while the silk-cotton tree is often more than a dozen feet through at the base. Most of us now are familiar with the invaluable qualities of the greenheart wood, so dear to the angler; its tough-

ness and unlimited power of resisting the action of the water also make it highly desirable for construction work, for docks and harbor works, while its use has been specified for the dock-gates of the Panama Canal.

Here, too, the wallaba tree is plentiful, and sections of our upper Broadway are already paved with blocks of its hardwood.

On the flora growth a volume might be written, so I shall not wander farther into these paths.

After procuring another curial and also a woodskin (the latter being made of a single oblong strip of bark, and used to paddle along in quietly in search of game) we proceeded to the north end of what my men called "Gluck Island," which is twelve miles in length and from two to three in width. Here we camped for several days, as I had been informed that the jaguar frequently repaired to this island to rear their young, and which could nearly always be relied upon to harbor some of the big cats.

Fresh meat had again become rather a scarce item on our evening menu, more because of neglect than for lack of opportunity. So rather than frighten off the game and possibly a jaguar—which quite generally follow the drift of the game—by promiscuous shooting, I proposed to

maintain the peaceful serenity of the still forest depths as long as I consistently could. Nor did I propose to go meatless; for it was not for nothing that I had provided myself with a few good hooks and lines, and had nodded my consent when John Charley held up his bow and arrow the first day I had laid eyes on him.

After a hard tropical downpour which had lasted all morning, I went out to try for a few "lukananni." This fish is rather similar to the perch, and when fresh caught makes a most excellent dish. Rigged with a rod of which a king might be proud—the price of which was the mere cutting of it—(Ranjettan having taken it off with one slice of his cutlass)—for bait I used a grub nearly three inches long, of brilliant coloring. Down would go the tip with a vengeance, and these finny fellows would give me a little pleasant excitement until I finally dropped them into the bottom of the boat. With more luck than artifice, I soon had a half-dozen of these handsome fellows, all of which would weigh between two and three pounds.

As we paddled back to camp I saw high up in the top of some mighty mora trees, a great band of the red, howling monkeys, generally called the red baboon, but incorrectly so. They were

sporting and frisking about from limb to limb and branch to branch, with such strange, rapid movements and unerring judgment that we all sat motionless watching the performance. Suddenly the leader—an old bearded chap—must have given the danger signal in monkey language, for all at once they became quiet and seemed to have suddenly disappeared. But upon looking carefully I could make out one after another indistinctly, as they sat motionless, close to the tree trunk, or all but lost themselves to view in a clump of leaves. After they had satisfied their curiosity—and I suppose deciding that their great height rendered them quite safe—they moved about again, seemingly unconcerned, except for one or two that would stop and peer away out over a branch, as much as to say: “Well, why don’t you go on about your business?” which we finally did.

II

HUNTING THE JAGUAR

PART II—UP THE ESSEQUIBO RIVER

ONE afternoon, coming out of the thicket into a small opening, I stopped short as I caught sight of a labaria snake, about five feet long, lying at full length only a couple of steps in front of me. He was apparently sleeping away the long, stifling hours of the day, while the sun full upon him seemed to be to his liking. Great chance of a picture, thought I, and straightway the camera recorded the scene. But as I stood adjusting another film I felt myself being quickly drawn backward by one of the men, and then saw the reptile had suddenly become very much awake, and with quick-darting head raised and arched, he looked hideous and menacing. There could be no doubt he meant to resent our presence; though he did not shorten the distance between us, he showed no signs of retreating; in fact, his attitude made me believe he was more inclined to come on. But at this very moment John Charley's

silent arrow pinned him neatly to the ground, while he writhed and struck again and again in his wild hate and fury at the unheard-of enemy that not only was eating out his life but riveting him to the spot as well. Ranjettan, never missing an opportunity to bring his cutlass into play, with a quick, clean stroke decapitated the long, sinuous mottled creature.

Upon returning from some bird-watching studies I could see something had taken place during my absence. John Charley was wearing his broad smile that always indicated he had something to show me, or something had transpired. It seems that he had contrived to temporarily incapacitate an electric eel by wounding it with an arrow, and had it penned up with stones and sticks at the shore's edge, so that the water could flow in and out, at the same time keeping this most peculiar species of all the finny tribe a prisoner. The eel was about four and a half feet in length, and the slight wound he had received did not seem to affect his health or activities. I had heard of the electric eel before—in fact, I had seen one mounted in the Georgetown Museum and recognized this fellow at once. I had also heard that they could send a shock through the water so severe as to render a man



A deadly labaria snake, six feet in length.



Our curial on the Essequibo.

helpless, who might be swimming near by. But I found this fellow could not or would not send any shock through the water. My illustrious John did not know I was familiar with the characteristics of his captive, and suggested that I touch the eel, which I promptly did, and received a pretty sharp shock, but not enough to warrant the startled jump I gave, as I wanted to see the effect it would have on the joker. This probably was the greatest amusement he had had in many a day, for he chuckled and laughed and went on like a boy. Then we each took turns in taking a shock. You could touch him anywhere and if he felt like it he would give you a shock identically the same as that received from an electric battery. The electric eel I saw in Georgetown was six or seven feet long, and no doubt could give a stronger shock.

With the two Indians I took many silent walks through the jungle, while they would point out various game signs that were to me very interesting, incidentally hoping we might, by sheer luck, come upon a jaguar. I saw where the big cat had clawed deep into the bark of some of the trees—a characteristic of the cat family. I noticed in the clay what looked like a fresh track, but John Charley laughed and pronounced it

weeks old. We found the remains, too, of an old kill—a “sloth”—just a few of the bones and a little hide and hair, with a few odd footprints, told the story better than it could be told with a pen.

Few, I think, are familiar with the two or three-toed sloth, so just a word or two may not be amiss. He is the quiet, unassuming little chap who never does any harm or mischief and spends his whole life upside down, so to speak; for, suspended from under side of branches, he passes his life in the trees, only asking a few leaves in exchange for his peaceful existence. On the ground he is quite ill at ease, and it appears a great effort for him to move about; but as the trees are close enough together he is scarcely ever put to this discomfort. In size he is about that of a baboon—though there are no baboons in Guiana—and inhabits the remote and gloomy forest, where snakes, scorpions, and stinging ants take up their abode, obstructing the way of civilized man, which accounts to some extent for the fact that few of us are acquainted with him.

After we had employed for several days all the best methods at our command for seeking out the elusive jaguar, we decided that there were none just then in the immediate vicinity. We

therefore again struck camp, proceeding further up the reaches of the mighty Essequibo, the river that glides through wonderland. Silver and golden sand bars swept into view; on one side of the river naked cyclopean rocks caused the water to hiss and roar as it fought for a passage; while looking away to the southwest great forest-clad hills rose tier upon tier, and in the glow of the stooping sun's soft medley of shade of color, produced the soothing effect of an opiate bath. We encamped that night on a sand bar, and scarcely had we made our camp when we saw clouds of insects coming across the river, and soon we were in the midst of a swarm of flying ants. In vain we muffled our heads and lit innumerable smudges; they settled on everything, crawled up our arms and dropped down our backs. Finally the cook announced he could not prepare the dinner, as they swarmed into the pots whenever he lifted the lids. They had an unpleasant way, too, of shedding their wings as they alighted, and remaining as simple and playful as caterpillars. We began to think we would go dinnerless, when just as darkness settled down they all seemed to disappear as they had come, leaving behind myriads of wings and creepy bod-

ies, which continued to wriggle about us throughout the night.

At dawn great banks of sullen clouds drifted over our heads and piled up threateningly. We thought we were in for a heavy downpour but decided to continue up—up, always up and southward; for the general trend of these rivers is to the north. We were now within less than four degrees of the equator, and the day continuing overcast, we did not stop until we finally turned up a tributary stream and were compelled to portage around a series of falls and rapids. At the next piece of white water the crew hauled the boat up with long ropes which they had brought with them for such an emergency. The stream then became quiet and deep; the jungle roof leaned out over the water until in places the arch was complete and formed a beautiful bowery waterway. At length the stream opened out again, and selecting a spot where the growth was less dense we made a small clearing and pitched quite a comfortable camp.

A heavy rain came on in the night and continued intermittently throughout the day. In the afternoon Ranjettan paddled me up the stream in the wood-skin. We had not gone far when I caught sight of a handsome red deer (*Coassus*



John Charley and red deer fawn.

rufus) standing at the water's edge with all his senses tense, looking straight at us, and investigating with eye, ear and nostril our strange appearance. I hesitated to shoot—he looked such a picture—but then there was the old meat question to take care of. The rifle spoke out, but it was apparently too late, for the shot and his bound seemed simultaneous, and with one graceful spring he completely disappeared. On returning to camp I found John Charley had been out to reconnoiter on his own hook, and with his unerring arrow had brought down a fine deer, and also brought in alive a little fawn; but just how he caught this little fellow I never quite understood. His explanation was, "I just run quick and pick him up—so." Needless to say, for dinner we had deer meat, although it was a little too fresh to be real good.

As I lay in my hammock that evening formulating plans for the next day, I could not help taking note of the many strange sounds and voices that rose up out of the forests, as the shades of night came drifting down. First there came the hum and droning of myriads of insects; then as these died away the air quivered and thrilled with the drowsy murmurings of birds as they flew home from their feeding grounds to

perch on the highest trees, while the wail of the goatsucker sounded like the departing voice of a lost soul. The millions of frogs and toads, one after another, helped to swell the chorus of the night. The dragon-flies came with their ghost-lights, that glowed and glimmered and danced and danced. Then the weird night song of the howling monkeys swelled through the forests until they rose, fell again, then rose, smothering all other sounds. The apparently sleeping world is, in reality awake, alive with sound; for it is now patrolled by other creatures. Those of the day have retired, their allotted tasks performed; now come the things that hate the glarish sun, to frolic, seek food, prowl, seize and be seized in turn, until the breaking of the distant dawn.

With the hounds the next morning we struck out into the jungle. My men had reported plenty of jaguar spoor and other unfailing signs that one or more of the big crafty cats were in the vicinity. I felt, too, that it was about time that something should happen. Quickly and quietly we threaded our way through the intricate forests. Game signs were plentiful and varied from puma and jaguar to labba. But suddenly the unexpected occurred, as it almost invariably does. I heard a rustling in the thick underbrush ahead,

a grunt, a squeal and a dash; a chorus of grunts and squeals—and across in front of us dashed the biggest herd of peccary it had ever been my lot to come upon. With flaming eyes and bristling hair the dogs made a mad rush forward. We tried to bar their way and called them off. But one might as well have attempted to stem the torrent of Niagara as to try to get them off the trail of these porkers. The dogs would not heed and I was fearful lest the whole pack might be wiped out by such a large herd of these pugnacious wild hogs. To make matters worse I had brought the rifle into play, and one old boar lay quite dead, while a second, just nicked, had with all his viciousness, wheeled to make his fight to the death; and about a half dozen more stopped to back him up. The dogs surrounding these cut them off from the rest of the herd, which went crashing on through the woods. The clamor and din that rose sounded as if a myriad of crazy echoes had been set loose. That there would be vacancies in the ranks of the dogs was now apparent; old Dash had fought his last battle. The long tusks of an old boar had been sunk deep into his neck. The old rifle spoke out—once, twice—and two porkers crumpled. Another I caught a glimpse of as he rushed off with an arrow

sticking straight up in his neck, while John Charley's last arrow went well-nigh through the only remaining one. The valiant Dash, who had been foremost in the fray, was carried back to camp, where we nursed him as best we could. The rest of the pack were the worst for wear, but still on their feet. There was more meat in camp than we had hoped for, but the porkers did not go to waste.

The next two days' searching of the forest for fresh jaguar signs revealed very little. On the third morning after the encounter with the peccaries I remained in camp, while John Charley, who had been off since daylight, returned about ten o'clock and reported that a jaguar had just killed a wild hog, only eating a small portion of it. As the "kill" had been carefully covered, we felt sure this signified the intention of the slayer's return. All the rest of the men had gone up the stream in the large boat, on a sort of holiday and fishing trip. They had also taken along the dogs, leaving me quite alone and undisturbed in camp, where I was penning this very narrative. The news of the jaguar banished all further thought of writing that day, and with John Charley in the little wood-skin craft, slid rapidly down stream for a couple of miles. Thinking



Three peccaries of the Guiana Bush.

possibly the big cat, through his varying and uncertain habits, might at this very moment be making a second meal from the "kill," we made a wide circuit, so as to come noiselessly up-wind, and thus to keep our scent from reaching him. After an hour of picking our way through the thick tangle of growth, exercising the utmost care to avoid the slightest noise, we neared the spot and looked tentatively through the mass of foliage. There was neither sound nor movement—it was the silence of sleep, one would say death, for it was high noon and the sun shimmering undimmed drove all the wild dwellers to seek the quiet shade, where the sun could not stab.

Almost inch by inch we worked our way on, but it was soon apparent that nothing had returned to the "kill." There was a low branching tree within a few yards of the "kill," while all around the jungle grew thick, excepting for a long opening caused by the fall of a giant Mora that lay uprooted, where it had cleaved a rift through the jungle for a hundred and fifty feet, and lay there stark and naked. In the low tree near the "kill" we built a platform of interlaced branches called in Guiana "Wabanni," in India, a "Machan." These are not built for the purpose of safety, for the jaguar climbs with wonderful

agility—but to lessen the chances of detection by scent.

Here we took up our silent vigil. An hour dropped by and we had seen and heard nothing but the continual singing of the hordes of mosquitoes that were biting with such a vengeance, that I could scarcely maintain a reasonable degree of composure. Finally, rather than to be literally eaten alive by these pests, I decided to send John Charley back for the dogs. It was more than likely that the jaguar was "lying up" close by, and I believed with the pack we could bring him to bay and have the thing over in short order. The faint sound of John Charley's fleeting footfalls soon died away. Then again settled the solemn hush of the great forest around. The air steamed and quivered while the atmosphere reeked with dank odors, from the damp, loamy soil of the place, and the humidity increased by a degree or two. The shrilling of the insects continued, and since there was no other sound to be heard—it was hard to tell what made me feel that I was not alone—unless it was that I was served with that sixth sense that comes to us at times. For there, where nothing had shown a moment before, appeared a vision of spotted black and gold gazing inquiringly down

the deserted vista from the very end of the nude Mora log.

He came on slowly for a step or two, then stopped short in the middle of a pace, seemingly to listen, as if something had arrested his attention. Not a breath stirred, the silence was complete; even the merciless mosquitoes seemed to pause in their murmurings. While his majesty was thus occupied he deliberately stared up into my tree with two unspeakably sinister, evil eyes—no, not eyes—two bits of cold steel that penetrated through to one's very backbone. Slowly he sank down to a crouch; suddenly his ears were gone, flattened; then, wrinkling his fastidious nostrils, that grinning mask displayed a splendid set of glistening, cruel fangs that spelled hate and death. Whether it was just I that caused him to display such a hateful loathing, or the idea that I had come to rob him of his rightful prey, was a question to dwell on later. He seemed about to dispel the idea that his race retired before man; and yet I felt certain, in spite of all his apparent willingness to do battle, he would not come on another inch. And just herein lies the rub.

I had been persuaded, against my better judgment, that a shotgun loaded with buckshot was

the proper arm to use in the thick jungle, as almost invariably the shooting was close up; and, too, in the case of following up a wounded jaguar, it gave opportunity for quicker action. And so, much to my dismay, I had brought the shotgun. How, for just that fraction of a second, my thoughts turned longingly to the old rifle; for the distance, though not great, was still too far to shoot with any degree of certainty of killing with such an arm. "Better take a chance, while I have it, even if it is a slim one," I thought. At any moment the crafty fellow might, with a single bound, disappear—and perhaps I should never again catch a glimpse of his beautifully spotted hide. I intended, after shooting the first barrel, to instantly shoot the second, even if I had to make a wing shot while he was in the air, so to speak; but there was no chance. At the instant of the first shot he had vanished with a wild leap that was so lightning-like that the eye could scarce follow.

Reloading and slipping to the ground, I paused at the butt of the tree to catch the slightest sound or movement. There was neither. Then out along the Mora log, with the gun at the ready, I stepped cautiously along. A big lizard went scuttling over some dead leaves. Up

went the gun, and I almost let off the right barrel. Near the end of the great log a few dots of scarlet caught my eye. He was hit—there was no doubt of that. Ever so carefully, step by step, and scanning carefully every possible foot of the way, I took up his trail. Twice I lost it, and twice I turned back and puzzled it out again. Now and then I could see his footprints plainly in the soft soil, and occasionally a spot of blood. Then the ground became harder, and the blood spots fewer and further apart, until I finally lost all trace; made a circle back to pick up the trail again, missed it, tried again and again, and then tried to find my way back to the tree where I had been watching. In an hour more there was no use trying to fool myself, though I hated to accept it as a fact. I was lost; and what was more, at almost this moment there came a veritable tropical downpour. Before the torrents of rain pelted down and drenched me through I was in a dripping perspiration, but now the sudden wetting had thrown me into a violent chill, shaking so from head to foot I was compelled to put my gun down for fear of dropping it.

So far I had escaped fever, but this occurrence was almost sure to bring on fever that would go raging and surging until it ran its course—one

way or the other. To put it mildly, my prospects were not good. At length the rain passed over, but every few minutes I would be seized with another chill. When I realized that I was in a maze out of which no human being could possibly find his way, excepting it were a native Indian, a horror of loneliness gripped me as I felt myself being completely swallowed up in the immensity of the jungle.

Could John Charley trail me after that sea of rain had swept away every sign? I didn't know. But I did know that every bit of wild craft he possessed would be taxed to its utmost to do so. I climbed high up in a tree to see if some solution of my predicament would present itself.

The sun was slowly sinking below the great, undulating roof of the jungle; the prospect of spending the night in such an ill-chosen place was gradually commencing to assert itself. As I stared out over these fastnesses my heart was smitten with a sudden sense of infinite and eternal desolation. Then I felt another chill coming on, so I quickly slid to the ground. Pale shapes took form before my vision—made and unmade themselves—the whole jungle swayed, moved a pace forward, then back; I was in the grip of the jungle fever! After a short interval I recovered

my strength sufficiently to move on again. Walking over to the gnarly roots of a giant tree, I sat down to "take stock" of my chances. "A man should never give up until he is quite dead," I would say slowly, which seemed to have a slightly stimulating effect. Taking a deep breath, I sent a long, loud call chasing through the jungle, and when it ceased it struck me that it had something of the tone in it that reminded me of a lone wolf bewailing the loss of his mate. I then listened intently, straining my ears to catch the slightest sound. Suddenly a heavy, hissing breath close behind me made me whip around with a sensation of the hair rising on my scalp. Not more than a few paces away was coiled a huge boa constrictor in the low branch of a tree, with his head protruding too unpleasantly near, and eyeing me with a pair of cold, unwinking, malignant eyes. A forked, colorless, flickering tongue added to his heinous appearance. Fickle fate seemed pitilessly and endlessly whimsical. What would happen next?

The deadly contents of the shotgun flew out and quite demolished his whole head. And then slowly his great coils unwound, and gracefully even in death, they slid to the ground until the tail finally came down with a flip. I couldn't help

but smile when the thought struck me, that I would have fresh meat, at any rate. Then once more came the mysterious whispering, terrifying silence. But now a sharp sound came up from the depths of the gloom, for the light was pallid now, and still another sharp sound. Then I hallooed long and loud—and waited; like an echo it rolled back through the jungle. There was no mistaking it now—it was John Charley coming with the dogs. . . .

* * * * *

By dint of unparalleled paddling, even all through the long starry nights, my men landed me in Georgetown before my fever had progressed too far. With the attendance and never-to-be-forgotten kindness of Mr. and Mrs. G. L. Lockwood (who were on a visit from New York), I was soon on my feet again and planning another hunt for the elusive jaguar.

One hundred miles to the east, and extending up from the coast, are the vast savannah lands, that roll away for miles upon miles. Their proportions are so great that no one even tries to indicate their enormity. Clothed with a luxuriant growth of grass, that waves and bends majestically as the winds ever and anon go singing and dancing across their vast reaches, they make ex-

cellent pasturage for the few cattle that have been turned out for the experiment of stock-raising. There was one, big Jack Haley, who had started a cattle ranch out in this very savannah country, and word had come to me that a jaguar was playing havoc with his stock. With a letter of introduction to big Jack, and rifle in hand, I rolled out of Georgetown on the only railroad in the colony, headed due east for Berbice, at the mouth of the Berbice River, and the terminus of the road. Just where I was going and how I was going to find this Haley fellow, my ideas were very vague. But, at any rate, I was perfectly content with the mere thought that I was on my way.

The iron horse commenced to eat up the miles, and then gradually the jungle gave place to these endless lowlands of grass, and occasionally there were what looked like islands of trees in the midst of a quivering sea. A feeling of great joy came over me as I looked far away into space. From being in the jungle so long, I had felt penned up, and now that feeling had vanished. Then another little thrill came over me as the landscape brought back pleasant memories of the old days on the cattle range.

At the end of the route inquiries for Jack

Haley failed to disclose much information, but finally a man volunteered to drive me to the house where Haley stopped when he was in town. At the end of a four-mile drive we pulled up at quite a sizable house, with a high veranda.

Mounting the steps, I was met by a tall, dark, handsome girl ("Bet a nickel that's Haley's sister," I said to myself). "I have a letter of introduction to Mr. Jack Haley," I said, and then added, "Is he home?" There was a slight pause, during which I managed to slide off my hat.

"Yes—that is, my brother is back from the ranch—and though he isn't in just now I expect him any moment," she said in a pleasant voice. "He's goin' right back to the ranch to-morrow," she continued; "he just came up to town to get some hounds."

"Hounds!" I exclaimed, evincing perfect surprise. "Why, what is he going to do with them?" I asked.

"Well, there is a big tiger (jaguar) killin' his stock out at the ranch, and he is going to use the hounds to hunt him."

Someone closed the gate with a bang and swung down the path with long strides. Then Jack Haley came up the steps, three at a time; and well he might, for he stood six foot six in his



Jack Haley and our hounds in the savannah country.

socks. He was lithe, well-built, dark-skinned, dark-eyed, and had a tangle of dark hair. In a word, I liked Jack Haley the moment I clapped my eyes on him; and when he laughed there was a mischievous twinkle in his eye, and his teeth gleamed with their very whiteness.

Day broke over the River Berbice. The sun rose pale yellow, and the dirty, oily waters reflected the brazen glimmer of the sky. Over the unresponsive desolation came the chug-chug-chug of a gasoline launch. Haley, the writer and the hounds were sliding upstream—that is, when the engine didn't refuse to work.

The scene was unvaried and monotonous; along the banks grew a fringe of brush, beyond this sloped away the vast savannah lands that were, during the rainy season, for the most part submerged. In the late afternoon we slid into a small quay and tied up. A little ranch house overlooked the river and stood on four large posts, which raised it some fifteen feet from the ground. It consisted only of one room, with an enclosed, latticed veranda in the front, where we swung our hammocks. Below were two or three native, palm-leaf-thatched huts. In these lived the men who looked after the cattle; also a coolie boy

(Booklaul by name), who did the cooking and acted as general house servant.

Soon the not unpleasant odor of cooking was wafted up our way, and shortly Booklaul appeared with two steaming pots—one of boiled ant-bear, the other of boiled monkey. Aside from the name, which is a little startling at first, I found them very good. Adding to this cassava bread and baked plantain, we had a very enjoyable and typically tropical dinner. The meal over, we extinguished the lamp, to discourage the mosquitoes, and sat talking in the dark.

“He is the very devil himself, this tiger with the cattle appetite,” remarked Haley, as he leaned back in his chair, rolling a cigarette, then the match, flaring up, bathed his dark face in a pinkish glow. “He has killed over twenty head in the last few months,” he continued; “he knows just as well as we do that he is on dangerous ground, and he seems to possess the craft and cunning of the old boy himself while he is carrying on his diabolical work. Why, he’ll make two or three ‘kills’ in a week, and then, perhaps, he won’t show up for a month; or he may kill to-night, and then he may shift ten miles to-morrow. Out of a score of these fellows I’ve killed, this

one seems to be the most mysterious and elusive of them all."

Taking a long pull on his cigarette, he went on again: "My foreman tells me this tiger mauled a cow this morning, just cut her all to ribbons, but he must have missed his spring by a little and landed too far back. The cow managed to get clear of him, and the man put her in the corral, but they say she may not pull through. This is the first miscalculation I have even known him to make. He has always planned his attacks so well that his execution has been quick and clean. He works his game something like this," Haley went on. "About six or seven miles from here there is a long strip of jungle running through the savannah and from this strip extend several long arms of thick woods, which are, perhaps, from one to two miles apart. It is down these strips this marauder, lurking under their cover, waits for the cattle to feed near enough to single out his victim. It will take two or three days to hunt these strips of jungle properly, and if old Spots is still up to his tricks we are almost sure to pick him up."

Haley rose and went to his hammock for the night. For a few moments I sat in a sort of dreamy thought. The place was so decidedly

alien, while the night and surroundings seemed so weird that, for the moment, I did not feel like retiring. Borrowing some of Jack's tobacco that lay on the table, I rolled a cigarette and leaned out of the window.

The night was beautiful, serene and clear. A languid moon hung listlessly over the savannah, a few nights from the full. The voices that I had grown accustomed to hear rise up out of the jungle night after night were here, for the most part, absent; but they were replaced by other sounds. From far down the stream came the dismal booming of the alligators, while the frogs, with their bass voices, rose in deep chorus; then a long-eared owl with fitful song awoke the superstitions of the night that froze all the small fry such as the dormouse and field mice to stone, for they well knew their worst enemy was at hand. Then there came another sound that made me stop short in the middle of a puff. I had heard it once before; intently I listened. Presently, through the desolation of the moonlit night, came the distant, vibrating roar of a jaguar. "The very skin I am after," I told myself, "and I'll have his hide before that moon is full!"

It seemed I had only been in my hammock a very short time when I heard Haley saying,

"Come on, it's three o'clock; we've got to walk over a mile to catch the horses, and we want to be hunting before sun-up."

We rode straight away to the south, where the faint outline of a strip of jungle showed against the sky. "How does it feel to be in the saddle again?" asked big Jack.

"Feel? Why, it's got struggling along through the jungle on foot beaten forty ways," said I.

"By thunder," broke in Jack. "I wonder what's struck those dogs! Look at 'em go! And none of 'em saying a word, none of 'em singing, and running a blue streak!"

Jack pulled up and stood upright on his horse's back in order to get a better view. "There they go!" continued Jack, pointing over the savannah, "headed for that neck of wood. Come on, you Yankee cowpuncher; let's see you ride," Jack sung out as we broke into a run.

"You don't call this riding, do you—a little run over a level piece of ground?" I whipped out. "Why, out West, we just call this 'pleasure ridin'.'" Jack grinned, and his white teeth glinted in the early light. The hounds, after running in grim silence, now gave tongue in loud chorus, while we were running on the inside of a

wide circle of their trail, fast picking them up with every bound.

It was a tight finish right up to the woods, with the quarry just ahead. What was the quarry? Jack didn't say, and I didn't know. "Come on," said Jack as we pulled our horses up, and slid off to enter the bush. "It's shooting time," he added. The hounds were only a few yards in the woods and barking treed. We stepped along gingerly into the woods, and soon, upon looking up, we saw, flattened on the branch of a flamboyant tree, an ocelot, staring down with a slow, evil, insolent stare. Then his eyes blazed with hate and fury; for his inches his disposition is a very wicked one, and even a young calf does not come amiss to his killing propensities. After despatching this handsomely marked little chap, who is second in beauty of all the cats in the New World, we continued our hunting.

We carefully beat through three long strips of jungle. But no fresh sign rewarded us; and so it was on the second day. After hunting carefully we returned to the ranch without finding a trace of the crafty fellow. The third day was going very much the same, and it was waxing along in the afternoon when we rode across the savannah to hunt the last strip of likely looking



Jack pulled up and stood upright on his horse's back in order to get a better view.

bush. The cattle, grazing peacefully, only stopped now and again to gaze at us inquiringly. As we rode by I could not help admiring their splendid condition, for I was not aware that cattle thrived so well in the tropics.

Another mile, and we were at the edge of the strip of jungle. Jack's brow grew dark—his lips tight set, his dark eyes were fixed upon something half-hidden in the bush. A fresh "kill," he said at last; "done to-day, not ten hours old. We ought to get this fellow now, if we ever do."

The hounds came up, and as they sniffed the evil scent their hair bristled along their backs. Then Star, the biggest and boldest of the lot, led out, with the others following through the jungle, and then their quavering chorus rose until the whole woods echoed with the din of the wild chase. The jungle was thick and the going difficult. Jack went on ahead with the cutlass, for the tangle of vines and creepers made it impossible to force a way without continually wielding the cutlass.

The hounds had evidently stopped short, for we could hear the whole pack, not fifty yards ahead, while the wailing and clamor that smote our ears assured us that just beyond, in that intricate and tangled mass of almost inconceivable

thick cover, that savage, crafty and powerful lord, the jaguar, was facing the pack. At this ill-timed moment Jack leaped back, nearly knocking me to the ground; his face went white. "Shoot," he said, for he was carrying nothing but the cutlass. I saw nothing to shoot at, but a second glance revealed a coil of a dozen feet of the most dreaded of all snakes—the "bushmaster." The treacherous-looking reptile appeared so enraged at our intrusion that an attack seemed almost certain. But in his moment of hesitancy it was averted by giving him an undisputed right of way and changing our course, for I did not want to shoot at that moment, fearing that the report might spoil my opportunity just ahead—for which I had come so far and which seemed almost within my grasp.

The moments were precious now; the baleful chorus of the hounds warned us the quarry was within a stone's throw; yet we could see nothing. Then my eye lit upon something that held me for a long moment arrested, motionless. Close along a bough, its ears flat against its neck, its tail twitching, its lips drawn back from its yellow fangs in a vicious snarl, lay the handsomest jaguar I ever saw. From between their wide lids his eyes blazed into mine, as I raised my gun



At the edge of the savannah.

to my shoulder, took careful aim and fired. The claws relaxed their hold; slowly the great body rolled over and fell into the midst of the frenzied pack. But, before I could take a forward step, the huge cat had leaped to its feet—I had aimed too high: the bullet penetrating the upper part of the shoulder. Into the wild *mêlée* I dared not fire, though my soul sickened at each lightning stroke of those terrible paws.

At last my moment came—for an instant the dogs drew back. Before they could again rush in, my second bullet crashed through his brain.

The cattle-killer had paid his debt—many lives had he asked—now he had paid with his own.

He was a male in splendid condition, and the tape showed him to be six feet ten inches in length. The day was fast declining, so we hastily started back through the waving, bending sea of grass for the ranch.

The sun was just going to rest after a terrific day's work, trying to burn up the world. The western sky was aflame with gold and crimson, while the fire-bolts leaped to the world below. Then the sun went lurid down. Slowly came the evening's changes, softly falls the mellow twilight, until the waning light has fled—then everywhere stalks the mystic night.

Big Jack Haley's hulk, with his slouch hat at a careless angle, loomed up before me as we filed back in silence. Then as we went over a slight rise, he and his horse became a clear-cut silhouette against the star-dust seeded sky. Away in the east a thin silvery light flooded the sky—a full moon was rising. Then across the vast and overpowering loneliness of the stupendous savannah waste the vagrant winds whispered soft and low. They were sweetly solemn—wildly sad.

The cattle-killer had paid his debt—many lives had he asked now he had paid with his own.



III

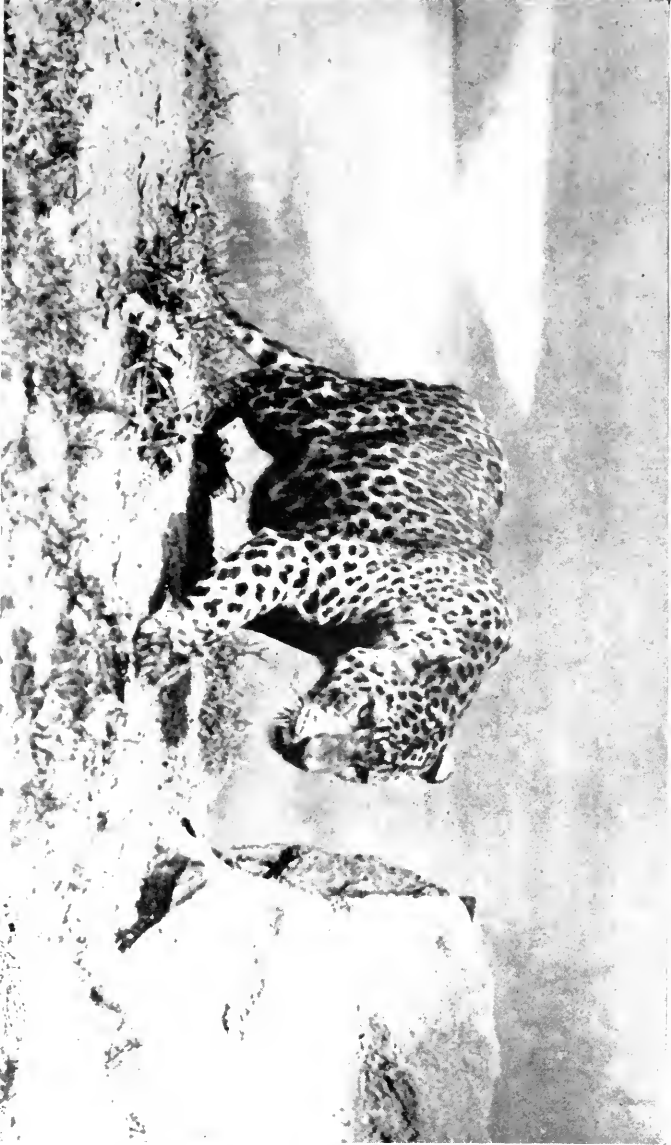
NATURAL HISTORY OF THE JAGUAR

THE hunting and study of big game in America are becoming more popular each year. It is almost invariably the case that when a man decides to make a trip for the purpose of securing one of our many big-game animals he is desirous of learning something of the natural history of the animal he selects. If he does not, he ought to. Such questions invariably present themselves as "Where does this animal range?" "What length do they attain?" "Of what does their food consist?" and innumerable other questions, as he finds a growing interest.

Much has been written of the lion and tiger, but I find very little, indeed, on the world's third largest feline—the jaguar. Nowhere have I seen an account that cited at all completely the natural history of this superb animal, which belongs to the fauna of the United States. Occasionally one may see an article giving a very good description of his appearance, with possibly some other

good points, and again we may read of the animal's disposition and savageness. But I think a concise account covering the habits, range and characteristics may prove of interest.

The jaguar (*Felis onca*) is the largest of all the spotted cats, being next in size to the tiger, but second to none in fierceness. South of the Rio Grande it is usually called "El Tigre" (pronounced teagre), which is Spanish for tiger. Though more essentially inter-tropical than most of the large felines, its range at one time extended as far north and east as Arkansas, and James Capen Adams, better known, perhaps, as "Grizzly Adams," states that in the year 1854, in the mountains of Southern Colorado, he met a pair of jaguars, followed by two cubs. He shot and wounded the female, which finally escaped after severely mauling his favorite dog, Rambler. There is no doubt, however, that the jaguar ranged as far north as latitude 37, but, like many other of our large-game animals, has gradually receded before the trend of civilization. Of late years a few have been taken in Arizona, and in 1910 I learned of one being shot in Central Western Texas. At the present writing there are still a few jaguars within the borders of the United States, but to meet with one is becoming a rare



The jaguar (*Felis onca*) is the largest of all the spotted cats.

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occurrence. From the Rio Grande south they become more plentiful, ranging through Mexico, Central America, and as far south as Patagonia in South America.

The true home of the jaguar, however, seems to be in the thickly wooded jungle country of South America and usually not far from water. Here he reigns supreme, the lord of the jungle. Don Felix de Azara states that when the Spanish first settled in the district between Montevideo and Santa Fé, as many as two thousand men were killed yearly. This seems almost incredible, but I have no doubt at that early date many succumbed to the attacks of El Tigre. Charles Darwin found this species in great numbers living in the basin of the La Plata River in the reed belts along the shores of the lakes and rivers. Unlike the puma, jaguars seem to require a constant supply of water. In contradiction of this, and showing a well-known fact that animals will frequently alter their generally conceded habits, according to their changed surroundings, the jaguar is found on the great pampas to the north of Patagonia, a place totally unfitted to its usual habits, where it has been attracted by the abundance of mammalian prey, to inhabit those cold, treeless and desolate tracts.

So much for the animal's distribution. We may now note his appearance and conformation compared with that of the leopard. Few animals can surpass the jaguar in point of beauty, and none in agility or stealth. His every motion is easy and flexible in the highest degree, he bounds among the rocks and trees with an agility truly surprising; now stealing along the ground with the silence of a snake, now crouching with forepaws extended and his head laid between them, while his checkered tail twitches impatiently and his eyes glare upon his expected victim.

At first glance one might mistake the jaguar for a heavily built leopard. In form the jaguar is thick-set; it does not stand as high at the shoulder as the puma, but is a far more powerful animal. His skull resembles that of the lion and tiger, but is much broader in proportion to his length, and may be identified by the presence of a tubercle on the inner edge of the orbit.

The ground color of the jaguar varies greatly, ranging from grayish white to black, while the rosette markings in the two extremes are but faintly visible. The typical color, however, is golden yellow, or a rich tan upon the head, neck, body, outside of legs and tail near the root. The upper part of the head and sides of the face are



At first glance one might mistake the jaguar for a heavily built leopard.

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thickly marked with small, black spots, and the rest of the body is covered with rosettes formed of rings of black spots, with an occasional black spot in the center, and arranged lengthwise along the body in five to seven rows on each side. The black markings are heaviest along the back. All the under parts and inside of the legs are pure white, marked with occasional spots of black. From the root of the tail, extending halfway, are large spots, some enclosing light centers, and from about midway to the tip it is ringed with black. The ears are black, with a buff spot at the tip. The nose is usually a pinkish brown. I have seen some quite pink, while others were decidedly more brown. Some specimens I have seen from Mexico have the small spots which ordinarily constitute the rings, at a considerable distance from one another, so that complete rings or rosettes only occasionally appear. The fleshy part of the lips is black, which, when parted, make the cruel, white fangs stand out in contrast.

The total average length of a fine specimen is from $6\frac{1}{2}$ to $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet, the males averaging a foot longer than the females. The tail is much shorter compared to that of the leopard, and in a large male seldom occupies more than 2 feet 2 inches of its length. The girth of the chest is about 3

feet, and the weight, depending on the condition of the animal, might be from 160 to 200 pounds, and in some cases this may be exceeded, but I am speaking of an average, full-grown animal.

Felis onca has been divided into a number of local forms, regarded by some as distinct species, but I am of the opinion that they should be ranked merely as sub-species. H. H. Smith and others look upon the black jaguar of the Brazilian highlands as a distinct species and one whose range is different from that of the spotted animal. W. N. Lockington is one of several authorities who consider that there may be several true species besides geographical varieties. After a careful research I am convinced that the black jaguar is but a melanoid of the true jaguar, just as the black bears and leopards enjoy a decided color variation, notwithstanding that in certain sections those of a decidedly different color will predominate. I find that, with few exceptions, the world's supply of black leopards comes from the vicinity of Singapore, yet they are merely a color variation of the true leopard (*Felis pardus*). A spotted female jaguar has been known to produce at one time black and at another spotted kittens. This would indicate that these variations are merely a caprice of nature. In many

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cases the environment seems to influence the color of the pelage, and those found in the more open country show a ground color of a decidedly lighter shade, while those found in the thick, gloomy forests are much darker.

In Africa the leopards found in the hills are invariably larger than those found in the lowlands, and are still considered by some to be a different species. The larger ones are referred to as the panther, but they are in reality all leopards. As with the jaguar, in some sections both the size and color and even the habits differ to such an extent that many mistake them for a separate species. The ocelot, that sleek, crafty little fellow, occupying very much the same range as the jaguar, is the only *felis* that might at a hasty glance be mistaken for a small jaguar; but even to the inexperienced the difference is so marked that they are not likely to be confounded. The black markings of the ocelot are elongated and running horizontally along the body, sometimes extending several inches unbroken, while the ground color is usually a grayish white, and they seldom exceed three feet in length.

In some sections the jaguar is to a great extent arboreal in habit, passing hither and thither along the matted roof of the jungle, where the trees

are linked and joined together by means of the bush-rope, a vine peculiar to South America and growing sometimes to the thickness of a man's body. Frequently the jaguar is forced to take to arboreal life during the rainy season, or floods, and, as may be expected, climbs well among the trees and branches. Here, instead of his retreat being a rocky cavern which he uses as a lair, in one place, he "lays up" upon a huge branch where the thick, gnarled foliage shuts out the sizzling sun, and here he can doze quietly through the long, sweltering hours of the day. The pupil of the jaguar is circular and is not adapted to excess light. Like all the *felidæ*, the jaguar is nocturnal and prowls stealthily at about sunset and throughout the night in search of prey. Occasionally, however, they are abroad by day, but this is not their custom.

The jaguar, leaving his lair shortly after sunset for his night-long prowl, frequently begins to roar like a lion, and again, like his majesty, continues at intervals until he actually begins to hunt. Jaguars are usually noisy animals, especially during the pairing season and upon stormy nights, when their deep, grating roar vibrates through the forest, in tones conveying the impression of great power. There is a widespread



The black markings of the ocelot are elongated.

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difference of opinion, however, as to the tone of his voice and to the extent he employs it, some insisting that the great cat is decidedly silent. He may be quiet or noisy, depending on locality, season, weather and other conditions which may or may not prompt him to give voice to his savageness. The English naturalist, Charles Waterton, who spent ten years in the wilds of Guiana, wrote, "During the night the jaguars roared and grumbled in the forests as though the world was going wrong with them." That the jaguar can roar, and often does so with violence, there can be no doubt, for I have heard his coughing roar both in the open and in captivity, and under all modulations his voice is a coarse undertone, and once heard cannot be easily forgotten.

Jaguars are indiscriminate feeders and their appetite is a ravenous one; so long as an animal has blood in its body, whether it be red or white, it does not come amiss to their taste. From bugs and lizards to all quadrupeds that inhabit their range they prey upon them promiscuously, including domestic animals, such as horses, cattle, and especially calves and dogs. In some sections of South America they seem to subsist largely on that large rodent, the capybara, now the only remaining representative of that otherwise ex-

tinct family. In the tropics they also capture for food the tapir, peccary, agouti, labbas, marsh deer, fowl, and consume large numbers of freshwater turtles and their eggs. The jaguar swims well and does not hesitate to follow turtles or alligators into the water to effect their capture. Perhaps one of his most eccentric propensities is the pursuit of the cayman or alligator. He seems to have a great fondness for its fishy flavor. Often the great cat, by a dexterous stroke of his paw, will flip a fish from the water up on the bank, and this practice seems to be engaged in both for sport and for gain; for all animals, no matter how serious a life they lead, must play a little some time, and I think the cat family particularly are more given over to this.

We see another trait where the jaguar resembles his cousin, the leopard, in their mutual fondness for monkeys, and heavy is the toll exacted from their ranks. Another apparently savory morsel of food to his "spotship" is the dog. The cautious approach of the jaguar is so wary that an unfortunate canine is often pinned by the neck and carried off before it is aware of the presence of its enemy. While hunting one year in Mexico my guide told me of a nearby town where the dogs had been almost extirpated by the

depredations of a black lion (he meant a black jaguar, as there are no black pumas). The stealth and cunning this animal displayed so completely outwitted his pursuers that they were never able to circumvent him, but several had seen the black mystery as he would momentarily appear or melt into the surrounding cover.

I do not think the jaguar kills as many deer as the puma, but they are much more destructive to stock. In Sonora several stockmen told me they suffered great losses from the raids of *El Tigre*, and that they usually selected the calves, while the puma or cougar showed a preference for colts. I cannot take space to mention all the animals the jaguar frequently preys upon. I must not omit to say, however, that, although he subsists chiefly upon game, he hunts men also, as might be expected from his size and traits. As there are man-eaters among leopards and tigers, so there are man-eating jaguars, and once having tasted human flesh and finding it easier to kill a man than almost any other animal that will afford him a meal, under favorable conditions, he acts accordingly. Cases of this kind are, however, rare, and are more confined to the remote and sparsely inhabited latitudes where the poorly armed native is no match for a beast of this kind,

but where they have come to learn that the contest between the properly armed man is an unequal one there is not so much to be feared.

It is impossible to say beforehand what any dangerous animal will do when come upon, and anything but the impossible may be expected. There is a great deal of individuality among wild animals, and no two of the same species ever are exactly alike in their conduct. Each individual has its own way of doing things, its own moods and own peculiar temperament. Probably the traits that are more marked in the jaguar than all the other members of the treacherous cat tribe are their deceit, craftiness and treachery. Slyness, stealth and cunning are written in their quick, keen glances, from their lurid, deadly looking eyes, and, above all, their movements of deadly quiet.

There are innumerable accounts by reliable men of instances where jaguars have attacked and killed human beings of their own accord. There are too many records showing that they have turned and charged when come upon, or when being pursued by hunters. It is my opinion, however, that, in the majority of cases, if they are given an option on the safe side of retreat they are more inclined to make off. If the

jaguar does intend to attack, he usually does so at once, and without the usual warning of the lion and tiger, which is indicated by throwing the tail up, baring the teeth and uttering violent growls. The great spotted cat runs with belly almost to the ground with lightning-like rapidity until it is within a few feet of its adversary, then springs to the shoulders, which is almost sure to fell any man to the ground, while it sinks its fangs in his neck or thereabouts and lacerates his body with its great claws.

The jaguar takes its prey in a variety of ways, depending on the animal it selects and its surroundings. In many cases the game upon the capture of which his subsistence depends is more fleet of foot than himself, and, therefore, he must resort to strategy to effect its seizure. So, either by stalking or ambushing his prey, his victim is invariably taken by surprise. The jaguar frequently strikes down and kills game with a blow of its massive forearm, but in the case of a large quadruped it usually springs for the shoulder and seizes by the throat, while one paw is placed on the muzzle and the other on the neck, and with a single tremendous wrench he breaks the neck. As might be supposed, circumstances often require them to vary their tactics. I have known

a jaguar to kill one of his own kind almost instantly by a bite through the back of the neck which pierced the vertebræ. The power in their jaws is indeed terrific. When they have killed their prey they never attend to the hindquarters first, according to the custom of the tiger, but tear open the under parts and eat first the heart, lungs and liver, then the meat along the breast. After satisfying their hunger, they sit down and make their toilet, for after such butchery the blood stains must be carefully removed with their great, rough tongues, for they are clean, fine-looking beasts; we must at least give them credit for this, even if they do kill one of us occasionally. The great cat then retires to some nearby hiding place, and if undisturbed will return to its prey a little after sundown on the following day.

Conditions being favorable, the female, after attaining the age of three years, brings forth from two to four cubs yearly (two being the usual number), which are about 100 days in gestation, and when they are about two to three weeks old are able to follow the mother. Jaguars are monogamous, both the male and female assisting in bringing up the young. At the end of a year they usually shift for themselves, and it

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is about five years before they attain their full growth. The splendid male jaguar named "Señor Lopez" was presented to the New York Zoölogical Park in 1901; he was full grown when he arrived, so at the present writing he must be at least the age of seventeen. I would judge from this, and from what I have gathered from other sources, that, barring accident, their expectation of life is about twenty years.

Both the jaguar and puma frequently occupy the same range, and there seems to be a decided enmity between them; though the puma is considered less formidable and less daring, it is, nevertheless, the persistent persecutor of the jaguar.

Like all animals with retractable claws, they delight in sharpening them, as it is called, but it is not for this purpose that it rears up and claws the bark on either side of a tree trunk. The object of this practice is to tear off the ragged ends and to cleanse them, and not for the purpose of sharpening them, as is generally supposed. Some assert that each animal has an especial tree to which he repairs for the purpose, and a common method of ascertaining if a jaguar is in the neighborhood is to examine the trunks of the trees.

The wounds from the claws of a jaguar are exceedingly dangerous, as they frequently feed upon carcasses that are in a decomposed condition, and as a consequence their claws are tainted and may cause gangrene by inoculation. Wounds of this kind should be thoroughly syringed with cold water mixed with a 1/35 part of carbolic acid, three or four times a day, and wrapped with a cloth soaked with the solution.

The methods of hunting the jaguar vary in accordance with the locality. Where the country is more open the most successful way is to pursue them with a pack of dogs which have been trained for the purpose. The big cat will often stop to fight the dogs off on the ground, and later will take to a tree, only to jump out again as the hunters come up, but as their lungs are not adapted to making long runs they will finally tree long enough to offer a shot if the hunter is persistent and the pack a good one. Sometimes, if only wounded, they drop down on the dogs and die fighting, while occasionally a hunter may come to grief.

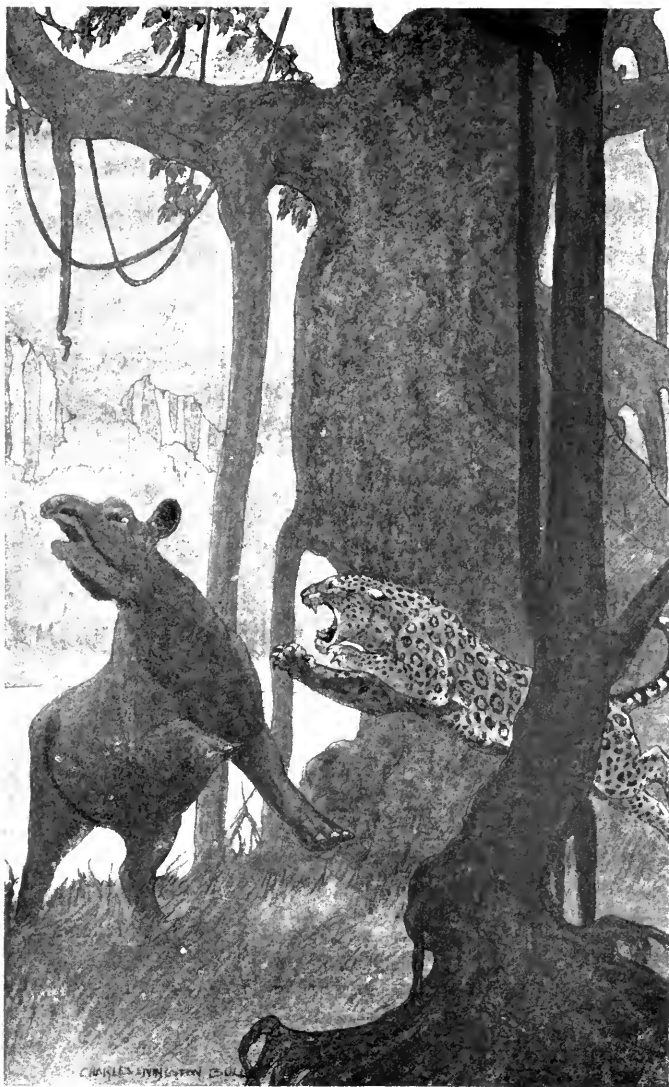
In other sections, where the jungle is thick and impenetrable, they are shot from canoes while the hunter is being paddled noiselessly along some winding stream that threads their haunts.

Again, they are killed by watching a carcass at night, or, better still, one of their own "kills," to which they are almost certain to return providing the watcher's presence is not detected. Occasionally they are killed by so-called jacking them. An acetylene jacklight is adjusted to the head, and when it is turned on an animal at night will reflect its eyes at a considerable distance.

Equipped in this way, and by walking quietly up an arroyo, the hunter may come within a few yards of a pair of yellow-green, glowing orbs that belong to none other than the great cat, and if he can bring him to earth with a well-directed shot in the uncertain light he has well earned his trophy.

In conclusion, would say that to hunt the lion or the tiger is the king of sports, but next to that (possibly because I am more interested in the carnivorous animals) there is no more thrilling or interesting sport than the pursuit of the American tiger. Sportsmen and lovers of animal life are already giving more attention to this superb animal, finding that transportation of the present day makes it possible to invade his haunts and return within the space of a few weeks. There is still much to learn about this splendid beast, and those who will go and live with him in

his native haunts, as the writer has done, may bring back something that others have failed to note. In my opinion the comprehension through observation of big game is more of an achievement than the killing of it.



From the gloom of the big mora trees shot a long, low, shadowy form.

IV

THE PROWLER OF THE NIGHT

AUTHOR'S NOTE.—The aim of this story is to bring the sportsman and naturalist in more direct contact with the surroundings of the jaguar, in his true haunts, to lead him into the jungle with all its fascinating variety of scene and picturesqueness.

Through hill and forests where he may make the acquaintance and feel a part of, rather than an intruder upon the creatures that dwell therein.

At sunset and at dawn, by the light of the moon, silently treading the undisturbed forests, he reads the secrets of the wilderness.

THE sky gleamed with a cold yet lustrous blue, while across it slowly flitted a few fleecy clouds of palest amber, deepening, as they sailed along, to a tawny orange. The surrounding hills, bathed as they were in the soft pink hue of a sinking tropical sun, were suggestive of things that might lurk in their deepening shadows.

A cold air came surging upward through a precipitous gully, creaking the bamboos and undergrowth, stirring the dry brown leaves that clothed the darkening hill slopes around. A sense of melancholy pervaded the surroundings that was intensified by the absolute silence. Not

even the cry of the toucan broke the almost death-like stillness—no vagrant breeze stirred a ripple on the glassy waters of the river that wound its way from the hills down into the stretch of low jungle lands, and disappeared in rich dark verdure. From the dark, noiseless waters stretched the forests, vast, gloomy and impenetrable. The limpid waters winding ceaselessly through the gnarled and rank vegetation of the jungle finally emerged into a boundless lagoon, its oily waters spreading out into a million different bayous, streams and ponds. Pond after pond, island after island, for miles stretched the bewildering waterway, and as night unfolded her curtains of somber hue, it became replete with the uncanny mystery that seems to lurk in the recesses of a great swamp. The rank swale grass, shoulder high, was fringed here and there with great gaunt trees that were silhouetted against a wonderful star-bespeckled tropical sky, whilst a creeping life moved unseen among the trees and roots.

Such is the scene, impressing the mind with a sense of awful magnitude and wonderment, a fitting background for forest dramas, for herein lay the haunts of the lord of the South Ameri-

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can jungle, the greatest of all the spotted cats, the jaguar.

By the light of a half moon—where its pale wan rays flooded a precipitous slope—there showed a cavernous gulch, falling suddenly to a great depth. At the foot of the dark scarps of horizontal rocks that rimmed the tableland wound a freshet over a boulder-strewn bed. The ravine for the most part was filled with a choked tangle of jungle bamboo thickets that were rent by huge and fantastic rock gorges, forming ghostly, damp and inky-black caverns, of innumerable sizes and shapes; a fitting place for the uncanny creatures that dwell therein.

Over a long slant of moss-grown, slimy rock wriggled a snake. It was the bushmaster, the largest and most poisonous of them all. His diamond-patterned body, nine feet in length, stopped and poised for a moment at the edge, while some eighteen inches of his pink and brown form hung over the brink. Finally he made the descent of some five feet of sheer drop, where he coiled at the edge of a pool in the rank grass to doze and await the coming of some small animal to drink.

The big black wax palms, the quiet, unruffled pool, the white moonlight, the inky shadows; and

save for the chirping of crickets or the croaking of a wakeful frog, all was as still and apparently as deserted as the grave. The great vampire, that spirit of the waste, cast spectral shadows here and there as he wove delicate mazes against the moon's white face. A slender shaft of moonlight fell dreamily over a huge mass of rocks, and at the foot of the ridge where the vegetation grew rankest a sleek, tawny jaguar stretched himself in the mouth of his lair. He rumbled a hoarse growl out over the night scene that struck all other creatures dumb with fear. Hunger pricked at his gaunt sides and urged him out into the jungle below; for not in five long days had he tasted food, the result of an ill-advised attack upon a great bull out on the edge of the Pampas, ten miles to the west. But the long gash in his flank had now nearly healed, and despite his stiffness he slipped noiselessly, cautiously down toward the pitchy canopy of the jungle.

The pools looked up into the night sky like dark, tranquil eyes, wide open and motionless, reflecting the crisp stars and the young moon. At the margin of one of these little, lonely pools the jaguar crouched and slaked his thirst; then, still gazing intently into the inky water which

reflected his massive, catlike head, he licked his black muzzle and long white whiskers, much after the manner of a big cat, which he really was. Stopping occasionally to peer through the soft light with his keen, luminous eyes, sitting back on his haunches he licked his paws and rubbed them across his spotted face just as a house cat would do.

Suddenly a ripened mango slipped from its stalk and fell to the ground with a little thud, breaking the heavy silence of the place. This brought the big cat to his feet in a half-crouched position, his senses all alert. Stealing silently forward, he satisfied himself at length that it was not a movement of some possible prey incautiously disclosing its presence. The jaguar passed slowly down the winding reaches of the jungle river-bed, while frogs leaped hurriedly for the pools at his approach; now and then a landerab would go scuttling off sideways to its hole and perhaps his heavy paw would descend on it.

The moon had passed across the sky until the slope of the bank lay in sable shadow, but the luminous line of grass fringing its crest was clearly defined. Very slowly a large, dark object that seemed to drift phantom-like up to the

crest of the rise, arose against the moon-lit skyline, stood motionless for a long time, then descended in the darkness. Under the matted roof of the jungle and through its column aisles of cathedral silence prowled the great beast far into the night.

It may have been toward the small hours of morning that the spotted prowler of the night approached a small opening amid the darkly enfolding jungle. A little patch of yellow, moonlit grass surrounded a shrunken pool, while all around the giant mora trees reared their great dark trunks aloft, and stretched out their many arms, that were interwoven with clinging vines and creepers, casting a black and impenetrable shadow thereabout. Under the trees the air was damp and chill. Some small animal, suddenly startled, passed into the moonlit grass, and vanished. It was a silent, lone and dismal spot. The jaguar crept into the shadows beyond the pool, where he paused. His long, tawny form might easily have been taken for one of the lurking shadows.

For a long time there was no sound; then came a faint rustling; another pause; not until many slow minutes dropped by did the crackle of undergrowth and brushing of grass grow sharper



It was a silent, lone and dismal spot.

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and clearer. Then it stopped. Long after this the grass rustled gently again; something was apparently moving about, undecided whether to advance. It came on again slowly—and after another lapse of time a hesitating footfall sounded. Now, against the luminous background, something showed black as it moved warily up to the water's edge. Then came slowly into view the long, lean muzzle of a tapir. There was a soft squelching in the dark, and a sucking noise, as the tapir lowered its nose to the cool liquid at its feet. The moon shone clear out in the open, the gentle night swung on her soft course, the stars twinkled down brightly on the silent scene. All was wrapped in a calm, kindly peace—a perfection of lulling repose that seemed to woo every sense into a feeling of quiet security. But it was the smooth treachery, the deadly dissimulation of the jungle by night.

Suddenly, noiseless as a shadow, another figure joined the first, and two tapirs were now clearly outlined in silhouette. Their muzzles began to go out and down—to be quickly raised again with a jerk. Their ears hinged forward, then back, then forward again. They were gazing intently, fixedly into the velvety shadows of the big trees. The lower jaw of the jaguar hung

slightly open, his black lips quivered and drooled with the expectancy of a meal; his spotted tail waved from side to side at the extreme tip, ever so gently, as he crouched, belly to the ground, all his muscles tense.

At last a paw of the stalker went out, with infinite caution, and remained there. Very slowly, indeed, another followed and passed it. And then, inch by inch, paw by paw, each advanced in turn with almost inconceivable stealth, a gray shadow, a mere suggestion of shape, began to creep along. So slowly did it travel, this phantom form, only a few inches in height—that it was only after long intervals of time that it seemed to have moved perceptibly nearer.

Then, into the moonlight, from the gloom of the big mora trees, shot a long, low, shadowy form. Fifteen feet from the tapir there was the slightest noticeable pause; the lithe and muscular form gathered itself together like a most powerfully compressed steel spring. The jaguar sailed through the air. There was a dull thud and a clattering of hoofs as one of the tapirs went galloping in terror off through the jungle, while something of great strength clutched at the nape of the neck of the other. Five cruelly lacerating claws fixed themselves into her long,

sensitive nose, and her neck was seized in a terrible grip. There was a sudden, quick movement, a dull crack, and the tapir sank down, her cervical vertebra dislocated. Long after this was heard a queer, low sound as of bubbling, a frothy breathing, and a ripping, tearing noise. Then it ceased, and a deep, throaty purr vibrated.

The jaguar was now wandering around and smelling his "kill." In the course of time a dragging sound ensued. He was endeavoring to convey his prey to a distance, after the instincts of his race.

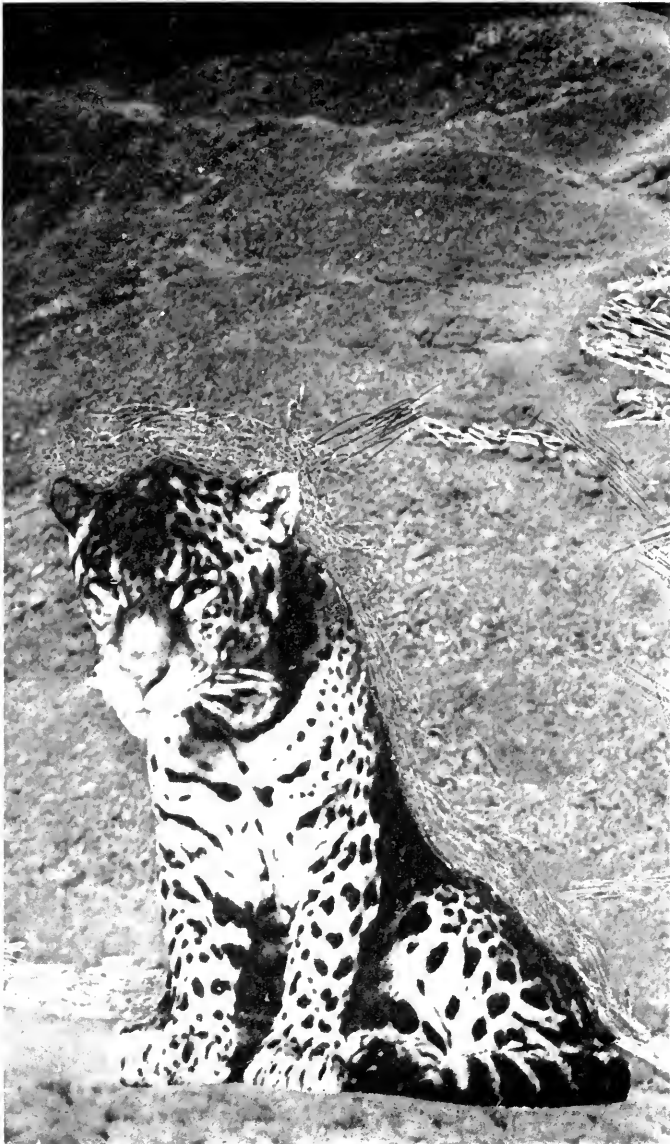
The jaguar fell to and fed voraciously. Tearing open the viscera, he demolished first the tender organs therein, and ate all the meat from the breastbone. The moon had set. Above the dark outline of the distant hills a faint and evanescent sheen lingered in the western sky, and marked where her declining disk had lately been slowly cut through by the black heads of jungle trees; and a complete hush had descended in that short period of darkness which precedes the dawn.

The jaguar began to drag the remains of his "kill" yet farther into the jungle, with a view to concealing it until his return the following evening. Carefully he covered up the gory carcass with leaves and grass, scratching them together

like a great cat. Water was his next consideration, then sauntering leisurely to a copaiba tree he reached up and dug his long, cruel claws into the bark, scoring it deeply. Contentedly he moved on, slowly, through the jungle. He had fed and drunk his fill. As he passed under the fallen stems of some long reed grass, they tickled his back and up went his round tail, after the pleasurable fashion of all cats. On he passed into the darkest reaches of the jungle, a handsome, sleek young murderer, seeking a quiet, dark retreat for the day, and wearing the appearance of gracious innocence very much at variance with his horrible work of the night. But all Nature is cruel and jaguars, too, must live; he had only fulfilled his mission after all.

The approaching dawn found the jaguar "lying up" in a thick, dark, leafy bower, where he dozed lazily, contentedly.

Now the faintest greenish suffusion is gradually mounting into the sky, rendering the morning star ever higher and paler. The slumbering forests stir gently. Then somewhere from afar the call of a campanero rises clear, to be quickly answered by another, and another, and as the shadows of night go trailing away their long, crapy garments, there is the faintest suggestion



A handsome, sleek young murderer.

PROWLER OF THE NIGHT 137

of soft light falling through the spectral limbs of the great trees. All the wild folk of the diurnal hours gradually come forth and pursue their many ways. In the growing light the superb scene is slowly unfolded as the sun creeps up with his mighty glowing orb, turning the horizon to a furnace of crimson fire. Now the tree tops catch a golden glint as the level beams run like long, bright fingers through the newly awakened jungle. A flight of chattering paroquettes go whirling and twisting through the trees. Day has come. Slowly the intolerable hot-weather day wears away in silence, but for the creaking of the parched bamboos in the occasional breaths of burning air, and the stirring of the sharp, dry leaves, an occasional "caw" from the indefatigable crows, or the squeaking hiss of the quarrelsome vultures as they greet the heavy flappings of some newcomer settling among them. The jungle grass, sand, trees, bamboos, rocks—all are quivering yellow-white in the furiously bright glare of the tropical sun, and stand out blindingly against the peculiar dull blue-black of the relentless sky. Such birds as could be seen hiding in the shade held their beaks agape, and all nature seems to be panting and gasping in the terrific heat of high noon.

The big cat had heretofore returned to partake of his meals in undisturbed peace. But on this occasion it was different. Not for nothing had the scene of carnage been witnessed by a native Indian who happened by that day. So it was that that evening, in the fading glow of twilight, that the birds shifted uneasily among the trees and a troop of loose-limbed black spider monkeys swung hurriedly along overhead. Something seemed to be moving stealthily in the jungle opposite the pool. There was a faint rustle where the long grass ran into the shadows of the close-set trees—and a sound of a dry leaf crushing slowly, as if under the pressure of a soft but heavy footfall. Night was falling. Already a star or two began to show in the darkening sky; and the mournful call of some nocturnal bird re-echoed hollowly through the forests. After a while a stick snapped indistinctly across the narrow glade, and there was a slight rustling in the trees opposite. In the dim light a shapeless form, as of some large beast, traveled slowly across the open glade, and faded into the shadows beyond. For some minutes there was dead silence. Then a cautious tread again became faintly audible in the loose carpeting of withered leaves; some grass stems bent very slowly aside, and with infinite



A native Indian happened by that day.

PROWLER OF THE NIGHT 141

craft the tawny form of a large jaguar stole softly, slyly out of the gloom. He was creeping watchfully forward, paw by paw, head down. Then he stopped short in the middle of a pace, and listened.

Across the glade something creaked gently in a tree, with faint sound of wood on wood. The jaguar swiftly raised his yellow orbs and stared, watchful, alert, and sat there and contemplatively waited, a shadowy, round, bewhiskered countenance. Darkness was rapidly closing in, yet he made no sign of moving. A pair of baleful, shining eyes were fixed inquiringly on a tree across the glade. For a long time the grizzly watcher under the trees had sat motionless, but now at last a shadowy bulk was creeping forward. The faintest breath of air drifted his way, carrying with it the strong scent of the tapir, which made him the more eager to begin his meal, and he came on more confidently. The dewy bushes parted; he paced heavily forward, to pass all unconsciously right under an unnatural-looking clump of leaves in the limbs of a low tree.

From this hiding place the long, lean muzzle of a native gun slowly protruded, and followed him as he moved onward to the "kill" and stopped

to smell it. Long dwelt the careful aim. Suddenly a flash of sparks flew out, then a thunderous discharge shook the air. A nerve-shattering roar—a spring into the shadows beyond—and a brooding silence settled everywhere.

V

FIRST TRIP TO MEXICO

PART I—OVER THE GREAT DIVIDE

THE good ship *Creole*, sailing from New York, November 12, bound for New Orleans, found me on my way to the Sierra Madre Mountains, in North Mexico, for big game. It is a five days' sail, and we had smooth and delightful weather all the way; moonlit nights, with a total eclipse of the moon occurring the third night out. It made the ocean take on a most interesting and weird aspect. It became quite dark with a rather purple effect, while the phosphorus from the rolling wave-tops shone like blue lights. In the Gulf of Mexico we noted the presence of various fish and birds that had been absent during the rest of the trip. Numerous sharks swam along in plain view, and we passed many schools of flying fish, while schools of porpoises put in their appearance quite regularly.

Arriving at New Orleans on the morning of

the fifth day, I drove across town and caught the Sunset Express to El Paso, which is a two days' run. Upon arrival in El Paso I set about at once to see if I could have my guns bonded across the line. It was just at this time that the uprising and the revolution were spreading throughout Mexico, and I was told by many it would be impossible to get my guns over. However, I took a rather optimistic view of it and expected the situation to improve, but on the contrary it grew worse from day to day. I waited in El Paso four days trying to get my guns over and expecting the trouble to abate, but each day the papers told more thrilling stories of the spreading revolution, bloody conflicts, the killing of Americans, and, finally, the day before I left for Casas Grandes, on the Mexican Northwestern Railroad, they fired on the train, killed two passengers and several troops, cut the wires and burned some of the bridges. After reading this the morning I was ready to start I telephoned over to find out if the train would start out that morning. They said they were going to run it, but didn't know how far it would get. Determined not to be turned back to New York, without at least a try to have my hunt, I crossed the Rio Grande River to Colonia Juarez, boarded



With the pack train over the Great Divide.

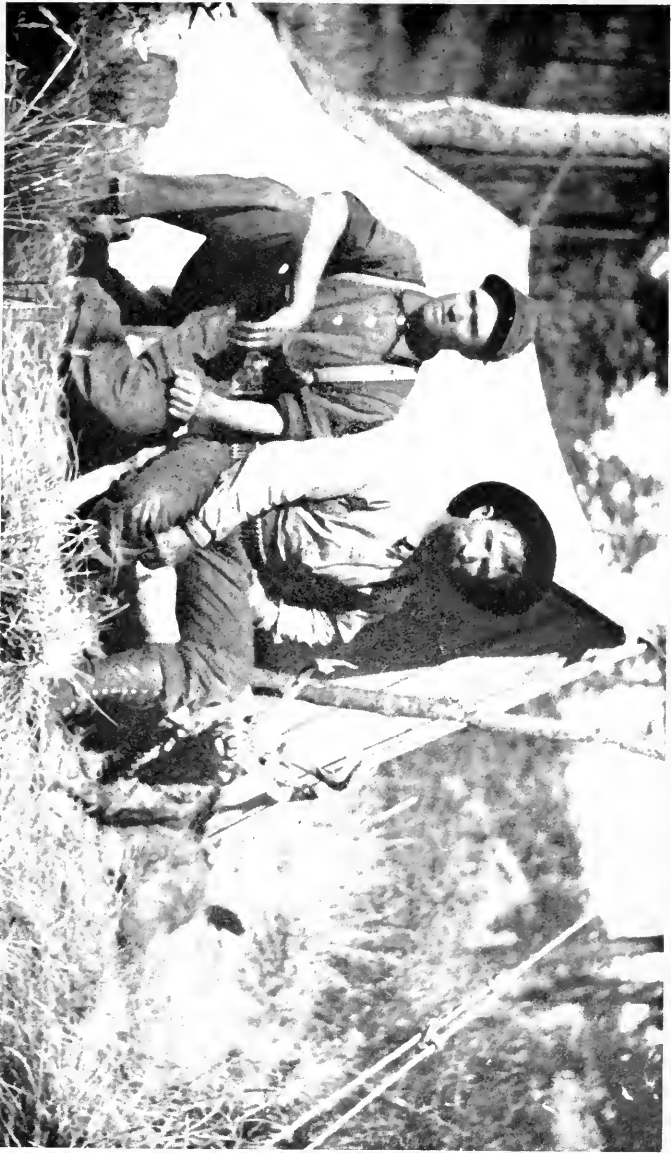
the train and started. It consisted of two cars—there were ten troops in the first car,—also the baggage and mail. In the second car were four troops, myself and six hard-looking Mexicans. It is a five-hour run to Casas Grandes, and I am glad to say nothing happened on the way down. It was reported, however, that the revolutionists were marching on Casas Grandes, troops had been rushed over and they expected the fight to come off that afternoon, but this interesting *dénouement* did not materialize that afternoon, and the next day I was off for the mountains.

It is a fifty-mile drive and all uphill from Casas Grandes to Colonia Pacheco,—here I was to rent guns, and start with my outfit, consisting of five horses, three mules, guide, cook, and, last but not least, a pack of hounds. We packed five of the animals and each rode one. The first day we rode fifteen miles and made camp in Hawk Cañon. We took along a smart little shepherd dog named Spot, who was of great assistance in keeping up the pack animals. When they would fall behind a little or attempt to stray off he would promptly drive them up where they belonged by snapping at their heels.

The second day we were up before the sun, breakfast over and animals packed, and were off

for another fifteen-mile ride,—should say climb, —as we were still going uphill. We made the top of Blue Mountain about noon, which was the highest point we reached, 9,000 feet above sea level, and the top of the divide, where the rivers flow to the Atlantic or Gulf on one side and toward the Pacific on the other. We then commenced to descend until we reached about 6,000 feet, where we made our second camp in Trout Cañon. Camps are always made in this country when possible in cañons, as they are the only places where water is procurable and one is also protected from the winds. The days were quite warm and comfortable, but as the sun sank in the west it grew steadily colder until it dropped below freezing, and ice formed every night. This made the camp-fires at night, where many thrilling stories were exchanged of adventures with the silver-tip and lion, as well as recent Indian killings by the Apaches and Yaquis, the more welcome.

We expected to spend several days in Trout Cañon and hunt the country thereabout before dropping below to a section practically unexplored. I was after the big stuff, silver-tip and lion, properly called cougar, but the first day, as all hunters know, was devoted to the getting of



The first day was devoted to getting meat for camp.

meat for camp and dogs. Two turkeys and two deer settled that question, at least for a while. The following morning there was a general feeling of something doing in camp, and we were all astir long before the sun had signaled the commencement of another day. It was not long before we rode out of camp on our best mounts, accompanied by the hound pack, which were prancing here and there with overflowing spirits of joy and enthusiasm. We rode south to the fork of the cañon to a country they call the Ruffs, and it well deserves the name, for it is indeed the roughest, wildest, most weird-looking country I ever saw, and I have seen some rough country, in Colorado, too. Great ledges of jagged rocks, immense timbers, huge boulders, and what seemed to be wondrous cracks in the earth—in fact, every formation imaginable seemed to be tumbled here together to form what one might term in its fullest sense the Ruffs. What a spot for anything that enjoyed living in an inaccessible place! How could we get through such a country? How I did I am still trying to understand. We rode away, of course, tied our horses, climbed, crawled, slid down and lowered ourselves in places with ropes one by one, and then the hounds, one at a time. At the foot of the

cañon we started to climb Back Bone Ridge, and when nearing the top several of the hounds rolled out that music of fine deep baying on the morning air that thrills the heart of every hunter who has heard his hounds strike a fresh trail. They were off, sure enough, and it certainly looked like our busy day.

Over the ridge they took, then along the side. We looked along in the soft places and finally saw the track, and what a print he left! It was not necessary to look twice to see that this Mr. Grizzly had waxed large and fat. The hounds were getting quite a lead on us, but you can bet a hatful of tobacco we were doing our best to keep up! They dropped down the side of the cañon beyond and into some of the rough places; and so it went until late in the afternoon. Twice they held him up while we could hear the furious fighting, barks, yelps, and growls, with the tumbling of rocks down steep slopes, but just as we were coming up he would push on again. The old silver-tip, no doubt, had fought many hard battles and was a game scrapper; anyone who has ever made the acquaintance of a grizzly will tell you the same—they are the hardest lot that roams the wilds. The dogs fought on bravely—until late in the afternoon, when we

saw that time would prevent us from continuing, so we decided to sound the horn for the dogs to return. Presently they came limping back, one and two at a time, footsore and weary, some with ugly cuts and spots of absent hide which told they had been in the thickest of the row. Old Don, the largest and heaviest of the pack, also the boss (especially at mealtimes), failed to appear. As we sat around the camp-fire that night talking it all over, we pictured brave old Don lying out there dead, where he had fought to the end. The next morning I was awakened by a loud "Hurray!" and, piling out of my bankets, discovered Don wagging what was left of his tail, for there was a piece minus, and his shoulder had been roughly handled. We nursed him along and in less than a week he again accompanied us on our daily trips.

For a week we hunted the country in the vicinity of Trout Cañon. We found no lion sign and only ran on to one more bear, which the dogs tried hard to hold up. As it was getting late, night soon overtaking us, we had to hike back to the camp in the dark once more, leaving old Bruin at large. That night we held a consultation around the camp-fire and decided to send the head guide back to Colonio Pacheco with one

packhorse to bring out additional supplies. Upon his return, he being absent about three and one-half days, we packed our outfit, filed out of the cañon down the steep mountain side, traveling to the southwest, out of the state of Chihuahua into the state of Sonora. Our object was to look over the country thoroughly and make permanent camp wherever the country seemed most promising. We camped one night on the Rio Bonito and found innumerable game signs, so that it looked like good country, but we pushed on further, and camped that night at Three Rivers. Here the rivers Chiuchupa, Bonito and Rhine come together and form what is called from there on the Bavespa.

I was in favor of shifting back and hunting the Rio Bonito, but Hi said it would be worth a day's trip to go down to Bavespa River, the country being very odd and interesting, with occasional flats of great cane-brakes. If game did not appear plentiful here we would at least see the country and could then pull back to the Bonito. Around the camp-fires that night I learned something of the Indians of this section; there were the Yaqui Indians that lived mostly on the western slopes of these mountains who have been continually on the warpath and have

At an early hour we were off with the hounds.



never come in under the government control, for the simple reason that those tribes live in these almost inaccessible parts of the mountains, where no one but themselves are familiar with the trails through the great cane-brakes, so that it has been impossible to round them up. For the last year they have been comparatively quiet, but there are two tribes of Apaches, one especially that have been raiding ranches, isolated settlers and stray travelers, killing men and women and taking their supplies; usually after a raid of this kind, some of the old frontiersmen and cow-punchers get together and trail these red devils into the mountains, and, if successful, they usually manage to reduce their numbers considerably. So many encounters of this kind have they had that there only remained nine in this tribe, five bucks and four squaws; by the way, the squaws can shoot just about as well as the bucks, and always take a hand during hostilities.

One of the nine is a young buck, generally known throughout here as "The Kid." He has done a lot of killing and has been wounded twice, but still roams the mountains and is the terror of the country. I was very much interested in the "Kid," and asked many questions concerning him, listening with interest to many of his daring

and bloodthirsty deeds, as I heard something of him when I was in Texas three years ago. He is of medium height; slim, black hair to the shoulders, clad only in buckskin; sometimes he wears moccasins, but often goes barefooted, and usually has three feathers tied in his hair. As to the other tribe of Apaches not much was known, they had not been seen in some years. From twenty to fifty might be their number; their old campfires and various signs had been reported from time to time. They confined themselves mostly to horse-rustling, and, although always at odds with the white man, they were not known to commit the depredations carried on by the "Kid" and his tribe. I made the remark that it might be more exciting to change our tactics and go on an Indian hunt than it would be for game, whereupon Hi exclaimed that I would be more likely to live to tell about the latter than the former.

We were now descending to the river, Hi ahead picking the way. No day was too long, no work was too hard, no ridge too steep for him; always good-natured, even when the whole pack-train seemed to want to go in various directions.

During the whole trip he never was once out of reach of his 30-30. He said he had lived most of his life in hard countries, and, as he put it,

“the habit” just naturally formed itself. In Iii’s wake I followed closely, and on this trip I was using a 30-40; next came the pack-train strung along with our other man Walter, and the hound pack bringing up the rear. By noon we had reached and were traveling along the river. The sun warmed us through and through and felt good. As we rode along shirt-sleeved in the not too hot rays, after proceeding some four or five miles and crossing the river frequently, we came to a small flat, and to our surprise saw several horses hobbled and bearing various brands. Further on we came to a dozen or two more.

“What do you make of it, Iii?” said I.

He thought possibly some company had sent men to look over the timber, saying that the stock looked too good to belong to Indians and there were too many of them. On we went, no sign of a human being whatever; together we pulled up before making another river crossing; we had stopped a moment to inspect the depth, when, upon looking up, I saw across the river, about seventy yards away, a head and shoulders appear out of the tall grass. It was a slim figure dressed in buckskin; black hair to the shoulders with two or three feathers tied in. We both saw him at the same moment; there was no mistake, and it came

to me at once it was the "Kid." At the same time I reached for my 30-40. "Keep your hand off the gun; we are covered now!" exclaimed Hi quickly. The head disappeared as suddenly as it had appeared, and the waving grass told which way it went for a few yards; then there was not a sound or a sign of a living thing.

Finally I inquired why he thought we were covered. Hi said he knew the Redskins' way of fighting and that they were lying right along that little ridge looking at us over their sights. He wanted to know if I would like to suggest anything.

"If we go back they will get us," I argued, "and if we keep right on, they might at least like our nerve. Something seems to tell me they won't pot us."

But Hi retorted emphatically that, from what *he* knew about Indians, something seemed to tell *him* that they *would*. We crossed the river, climbed the bank and rode on. One hundred yards passed and nothing happened. "I just know we're going into some snare," growled Hi as we rode forward. I didn't answer. I could have spoken, but I did not want to; it seemed foolish to talk at such a time. I was thinking of what a good time I had had, and if the In-



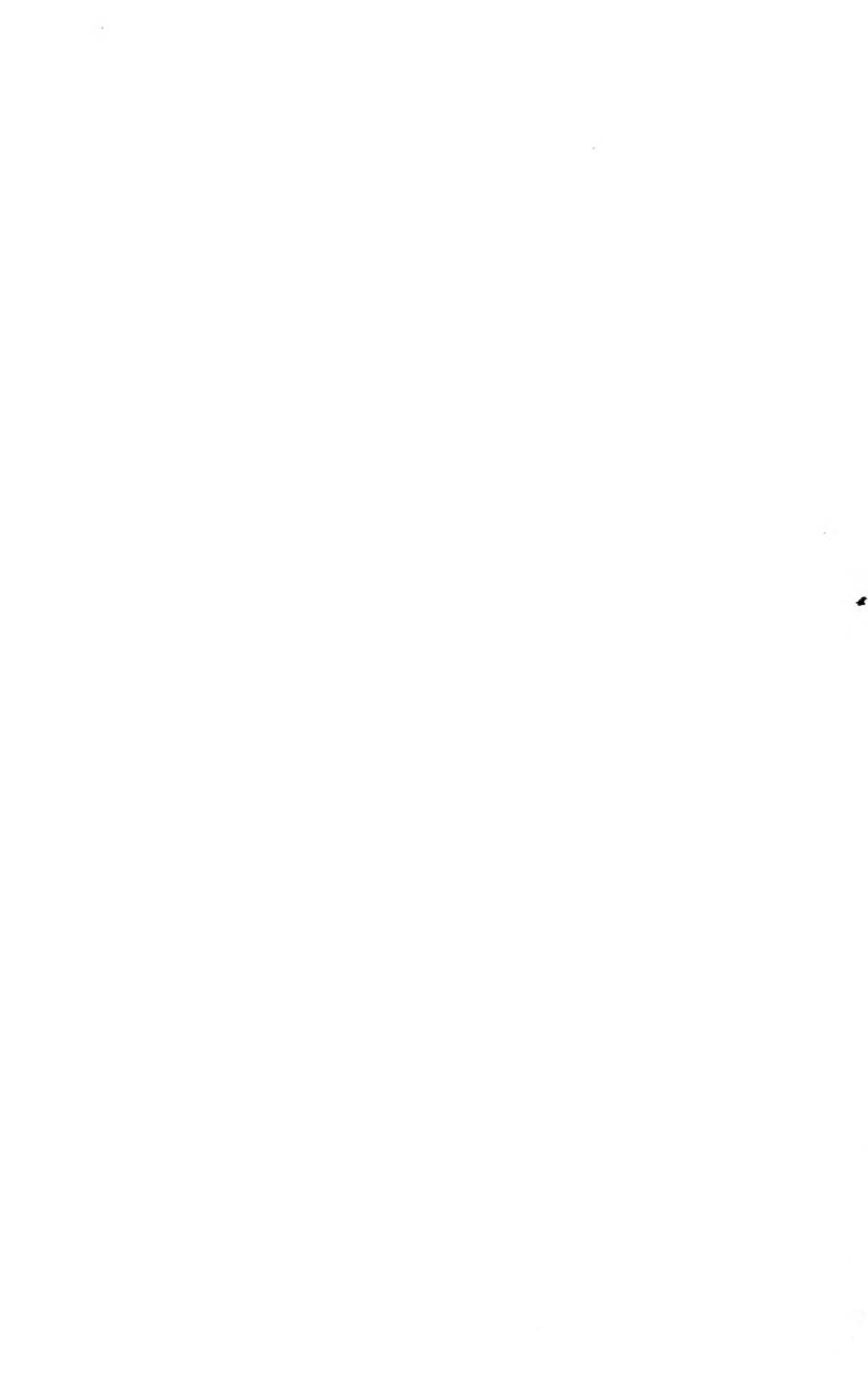
Some of the younger members of the tribe.



A few squaws were tanning deer hides.



I succeeded in getting a picture of the old chief.



dians would be able to shoot as straight with my gun as I did. In another hundred yards we rounded a bend, when the silence was suddenly broken by a very substantial war whoop, and we immediately came upon a number of tepees. There was no one in sight, except a few squaws who were tanning deer hides, but, as one of the squaws gave her war whoop, the old chief and three bucks suddenly appeared. Hi had camped at one time with friendly Apaches up in Arizona and knew a little of their lingo. He called something in Apache to the big chief and we all exchanged salutes.

"Ask the chief if I can take some pictures," said I in an undertone to Hi as we dismounted.

"He says 'No,' a whole lot," translated the guide after an inquiry in Apache.

I drew out a can of tobacco and passed it to His Highness. He accepted it all right, but when I pointed to my kodak he still shook his head. By this time I had my kodak focused up ready to snap something, as I was very anxious to have some pictures in memory of our days of adventure. I managed to snap one of the squaws tanning a deer hide and also slipped one on the old chief, but could not get him out in the sun where I wanted him. The three bucks were very

surly and kept where I could not get them at all, but presently some younger members of the tribe ventured out and I snapped them. "He says that they have hunted all around this country and that we better pull back to the Bonito," advised Hi, turning to me after a short pow-wow with the chief.

We made our adieus a short time after and got away amicably enough. You couldn't call our meeting very cordial, but it was far better than we anticipated.

It turned out later that the Apaches had not been doing much more than rustling a few horses occasionally. As we rode back, however, we saw one buck sitting on a rock with his gun between his knees, just where Hi said he guessed they were strung out looking at us over their sights in anticipation of a hostile meeting, and the buck watched us out of sight and, for all we know, trailed us.

VI

FIRST TRIP TO MEXICO

PART II—HUNTING ON THE RIO BONITO

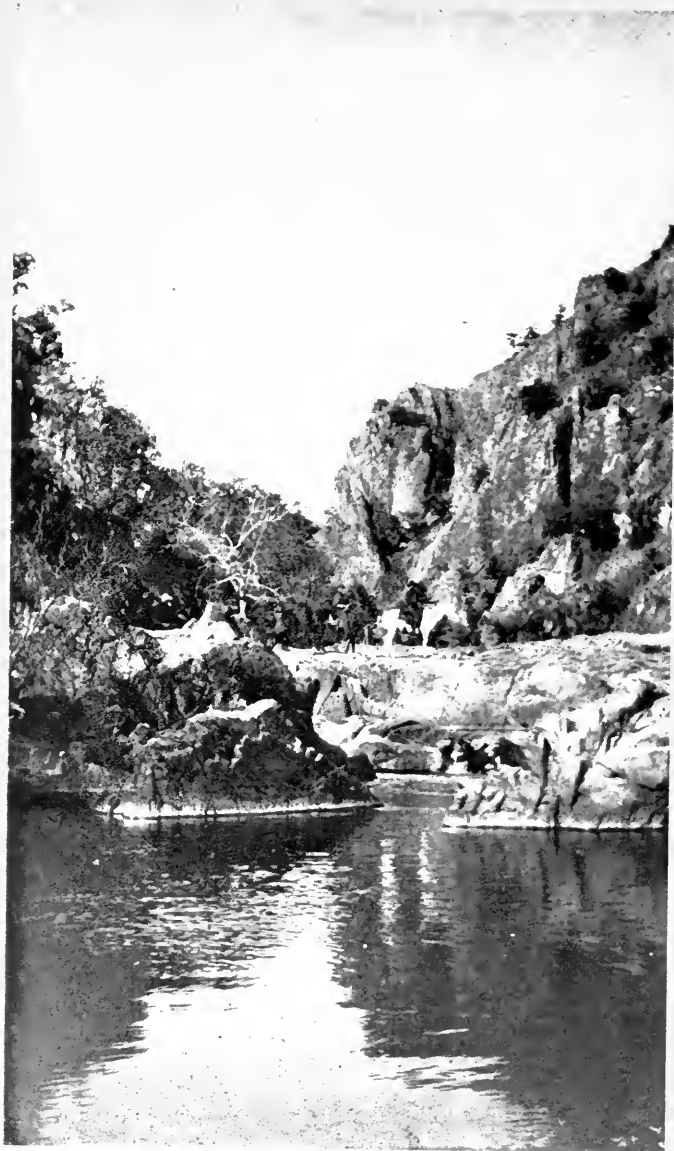
THREE days later we rode down on the Rio Bonito and pitched a permanent camp. I remained in camp to do a little reading and writing, and incidentally to rest up a little after several days of continuous riding. Hi went out to get some meat for camp, and whenever I sent him out on such an errand he never failed to bring in a deer. Unexpectedly and without going out of camp I succeeded in increasing the meat supply myself; I was sitting just outside of my tent, reading, and after finishing a story laid down my book. Just then I happened to glance out on a little flat directly in front, about seventy yards away. Here a flock of turkey were walking about as unconcerned as you please.

“This is really too easy!” I thought, my rifle being right at my hand, and opened fire, shooting two before they flew. They lit just around

the point, a little nearer, if anything, than they were at first, apparently not having located the point of danger.

"Nothing to it!" I exclaimed under my breath, knocking down two more before they bid me farewell. These turkeys were a highly unsophisticated lot. I picked up three; one unfortunately got away in the brush, crippled. Hi rode into camp in the afternoon, bringing in a deer, and reported plenty of lion sign, but he believed that the bear had holed up for the winter.

We were all astir at the crack of dawn and rode out of camp the following day before the sun had put in an appearance. After going not more than a mile or two from camp the dogs picked up a trail and tried to puzzle it out, but it evidently was not very fresh, so Hi called them off. We rode up the north branch of the Bonito, and I think it was the wildest cañon I had yet visited. We were riding on one side of the river, while some of the dogs had crossed to the other. "Those dogs are shore acting mighty queer over there," said Hi, reining up and peering across the creek. Just then Jewel, who had the keenest nose of the pack, started the music with her business-like bark and lost no time in getting over the ridge, closely followed by old Don and Red.



Scene on the Rio Bonito.

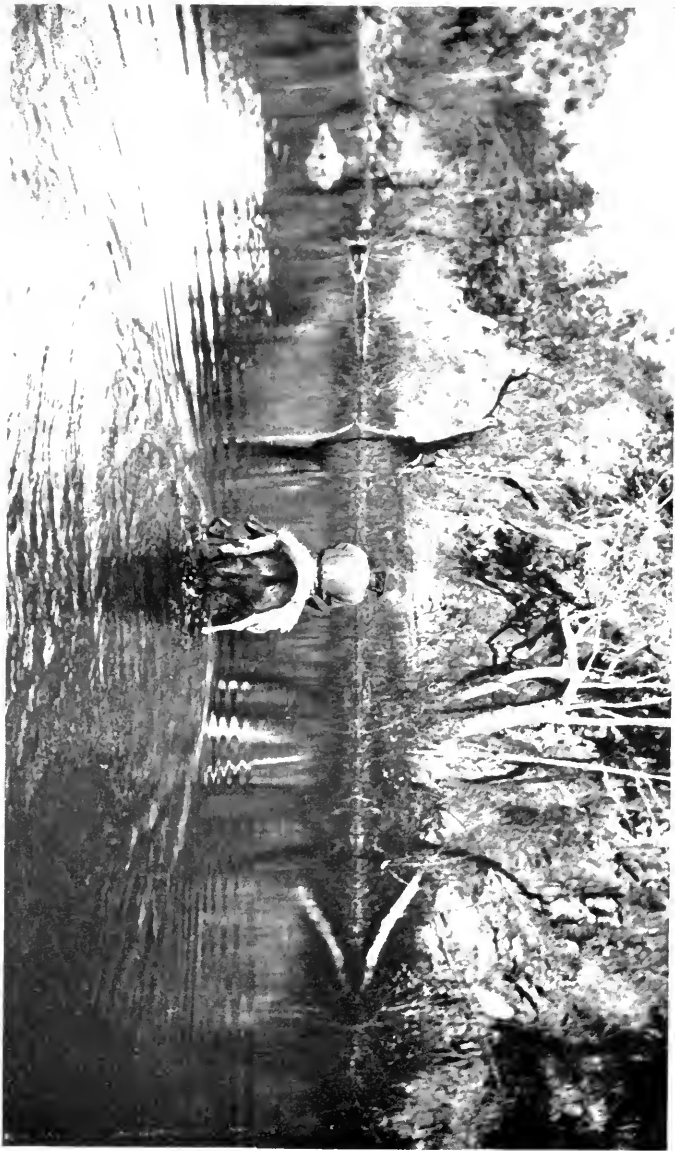


It was interesting to see the dogs swim the river and watch each one as they struck the trail satisfy themselves that it was all right, relieve themselves of their first long howl and tear off on the chase. Nig, the smallest member of the pack, with his little short barks and his tail going as fast as he could make it wag from side to side, seemed to be having the time of his life as he disappeared over the ridge. By this time Hi had crossed, and he knelt down over the tracks. "It's a lion and an old big fellow, too," he announced, after examining the ground. Up the hill we climbed, then, mounting our horses again, we had a good run for several hundred yards; here the lion had turned off at right angles and had run down a little dry cañon; we followed down at one side until, coming out on a rock ledge, we left our horses and followed on foot. The dogs were in plain hearing and near by.

"Come on! You'll get him now; they are holding him up just below here," yelled Hi. I was not long in reaching the pack, which had the lion treed in a low oak. He was intently watching the dogs, baring his teeth and lashing his tail. The cañon at this point was very narrow and I was on the other side, some thirty yards from the lion, when he discovered me. As I took aim he

uttered a low, menacing growl. The bullet sped true and he fell lifeless to the ground. We had to drive the dogs off to keep them from tearing the hide, as I wanted the skin in good shape. Before skinning, we took several pictures and measured him. He was just seven feet six inches. This is about as large a male as is usually found, although they are sometimes taken larger. Out of fourteen killed on Mr. Roosevelt's hunt the largest measured eight feet; the rest ranging from four and a half to seven. This was the best day we had had and there was much rejoicing around the camp-fire that night.

While Hi was busy next day doing a little work on the lion hide, I took my shotgun and climbed up to a high mesa to bag a few of a certain kind of quail native in this section. Probably few sportsmen are acquainted with this odd species of a most beautiful game bird. It is locally called "fool quail," but the proper name is *Messena partridge*, known in territories it frequents within our borders as the black, black-bellied or fool quail. The *Messena partridge* is the most fantastically colored of all the family to which it belongs, with a head-stripe mark like those of the clown in a pantomime. It is, however, a very handsome bird and would attract at-



Packing in a white-tail deer.



tention wherever seen. It ranges in more or less abundance from Western Texas in the vicinity of San Antonio through New Mexico, and into Arizona as far as Fort Whipple, which is about its western limit. In North Mexico, especially in and about the country I hunted, the Messena partridge is no doubt more plentiful than in any other section. It is usually found on the high mesas ranging in elevation from 4,000 to 9,000 feet. It was not long before I ran into a covey. They lie very close and usually flush one at a time, fly swiftly but straight away, presenting a not very difficult shot. I bagged six of these plump little fellows without a miss, and could have brought down more but this is all we wanted for supper. Game was plentiful on the Bonito, and I was having royal sport. I had already stayed longer than I had anticipated. We figured out we had enough supplies to last us several days, so we counted on reaching Pacheco Christmas night, which was but six days off. I got a shot at a deer at 160 paces, and dropped him with a bullet through the base of the neck, and at another time I shot a deer at 120 paces, through the shoulder, penetrating to the other side, and hit him twice more as he ran from me, one quartering through the hip and another

through the middle. This buck then ran over a hundred yards, shot up the way he was, before he finally dropped.

The deer here are all white-tail, and are considerably smaller than those I have killed in the States. There are, however, a few black-tailed deer, some fifty miles from where I was hunting. We caught all the trout we could eat, their average being about a pound. These fish, although splendid eating, and called trout, were quite different from the trout I had caught in the United States and Canada. One day when we were off on a ride we found some otter tracks along the river, so acting on Hi's suggestion, I took a shotgun down that night to watch by moonlight. We had not been waiting more than an hour when I could plainly see something swimming the river. Loaded with double B shot, I fired twice, and a good-sized otter floated to the top of the water, quite dead. I had often tried to get one of these little animals, as their hide is well worth having in a collection.

We had been very fortunate in riding over the rough country we hunted not to lame any of the horses nor had we lost any of the dogs; but a slight misfortune befell us which turned out to be of some advantage to myself. In the outfit



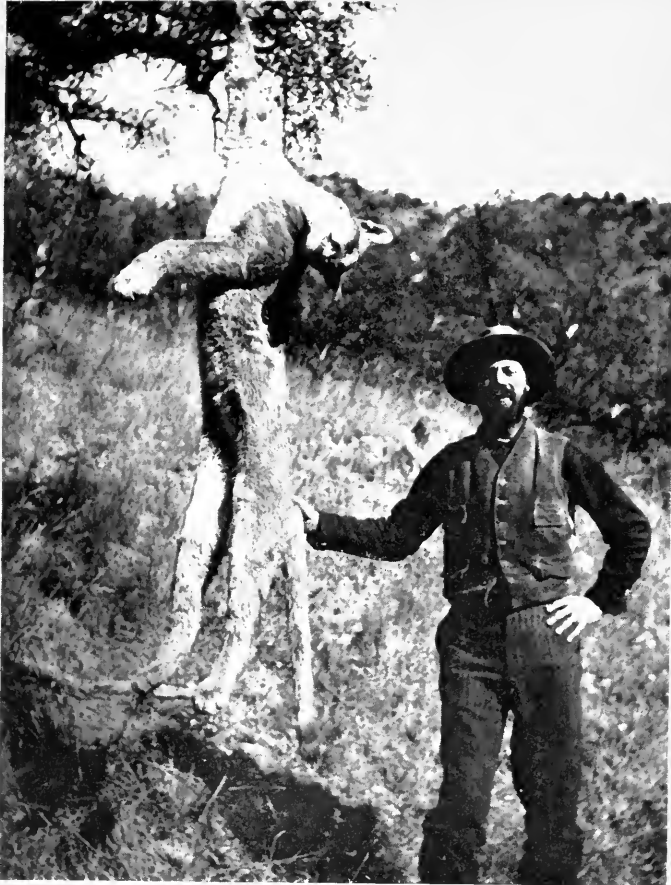
A little rest and lunch at midday.



was a buckskin horse called Buck. One morning when Walter rounded up the horses, Buck seemed to be a pretty sick animal. Hi discovered he had been bitten by some poisonous fly, which he called a bott-fly, and thought there was not much hope for him. That night Buck kept wandering right into camp and would walk up to the fire and almost into it if we did not drive him off. Finally he wandered aimlessly down the cañon, and the next afternoon, after following his tracks for several miles, we found where Buck had lain down and died in an open spot near the river. It was nearly full moon that night and I thought I would like to try my luck watching the carcass for a few hours in the hope of bagging some night prowler, preferably a lion. After eating a few biscuits and dried deer meat which we had with us, I hid myself in some brush about twenty yards from the dead horse. Hi took my horse about half a mile up the cañon and waited. He was to return upon hearing a shot, which would mean that I had either obtained my shot or was a signal that I was tired of my lonesome watch.

The last faint blush of sunset had melted into dusk and the hush of night was not long in creeping over the weird scene, and wrapping every-

thing in darkness. Nothing but the doleful hoot of an owl broke the stillness of the night. At last the moon rose over the peak tops and flooded the cañon with its light of simmering moonbeams. A long-drawn-out wail floated down the cañon and died away. Some lone gray wolf howling his serenade to the moon. I was straining my eyes in all directions, and listening for the slightest sound, lest the cunning cougar, with velvet tread, would steal up, take in the situation and slink away unnoticed. Presently I heard a slight noise to my right, and upon looking saw a little skunk run by, almost within arm's reach. He stopped at the carcass and commenced his evening meal. A few minutes lapsed and I saw the skunk hurrying away, as if disturbed by some unseen object. Almost directly in front, and some forty yards away, was a boulder about ten feet in diameter. The queer action of the skunk made me all the more alert, and looking carefully I made out a form, crouching low, just over the boulder in front. With all my caution this animal had stolen up while I was unaware. I glanced for a moment to be sure, when the form disappeared behind the boulder as mysteriously and as silently as it had appeared. I felt that I had been outwitted, when out from behind the



About as large a male as is usually found.

boulder, with slow, deliberate strides, walked a lion, every step bringing her within easy range. On she came, thirty yards, twenty-five yards, and she stopped, seeming to scent the air. My eye ran along the little ivory front sight and I pressed the trigger. With one great bound the beast cleared the earth some eight or ten feet, and rent the air with a most piercing scream. As she came to the ground she seemed to gather herself for another spring, as I was about to fire the second time; but just at that moment her feet seemed to fall from under her and she toppled over on her side and lay motionless, save for an occasional switch of her tail. This lion proved to be a female, not as large as the first lion. She measured a little over six feet. I had been looking forward to a smoke, so filled my pipe, and had not taken many puffs when I heard Hi coming with the horses.

“Who made that scream, you or the lion?” he called as his figure loomed up through the darkness. Hi was always there with his joke.

After a few days more hunting we broke camp and said good-bye to the Rio Bonito. Christmas eve we camped on North Creek. It was a beautiful starlit night, but the coldest we had had, ice forming an inch thick. Christmas night we rode

into Colonia Pacheco. Two days later I reached the railroad at Casas Grandes, to find that the revolutionists had blown up the bridges and cut the wires to the north, putting the railroad and all communications out of commission. I remained three days in Casas Grandes endeavoring to hire some one to drive me to Columbus, N. M., a distance of 150 miles, where I would be able to take the train to El Paso and make my return trip to New York. There were about 300 troops stationed at Casas Grandes and during my stay the revolutionists marched on the town, but were driven back by the troops, with heavy losses on both sides. The day before I left, a small town called Hannas, twelve miles away, was taken by the revolutionists. I made the acquaintance of four other Americans who were anxious to get out to the States. We succeeded in getting a man with a four-horse team to drive us out. It took us three days and a half to reach Columbus, and it seemed good to get back in my own country once more. The return trip to New York was filled with pleasant recollections of the hunt.

VII

THE AMERICAN BLACK BEAR

PART I—STUDYING THE BLACK BEAR IN THE ROCKIES

NEITHER a rattlesnake nor a black bear will do you the least bit of harm if you mind your own business, and at least give them elbow room. Neither one has any desire to make your acquaintance. In fact, it has been my impression that a black bear makes a business of keeping out of sight, and would say that he attends to his business very well indeed. If by any chance, though, you have approached so near that you should make either of them feel you are too uncomfortably near, they will both strike with a vengeance, in their own way, peculiar to each.

It is the common idea that a black bear will hug people to death. This is of course a mistake. A bear almost invariably makes its attack by striking a stunning blow with the forepaw and tearing with his very formidable claws. A large

black bear can strike a terrific blow and is capable of knocking down and mortally wounding a full grown caribou. When their enemy or prey is felled to the ground they usually bite them about the head and neck until death ensues. They are remarkable for the strength of their jaws, and have been known to bite through the skull of a man. Many animals that can generally be counted on not to attack may do so when come upon suddenly, crowded, wounded or annoyed. The black bear is no exception. The more I see and study animals the more I am impressed with the fact that there is no fixed rule what the same species of animal will do under similar circumstances, as they seem to vary as much in mind and temperament as the individual. Although one might predict with a very good average of correctness, there would always be the exception.

I have taken a great deal of pleasure in studying bears,—especially the black, possibly because I have had a better chance to observe him. I have met him in his natural haunts at various times of the year, in the Rockies, Canada and Mexico, and find him much the same good-natured fellow; yes, even playful, unless something should befall him to ruffle his otherwise peaceful nature; then he may become “as cross as a bear.”



Trophies of the chase.

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There are only two species of bear that inhabit the United States, the grizzly and the black bear. This does not, of course, include the several species found in Alaska. The black bears are divided into sub-species, and although the difference is not very conspicuous to the common eye, naturalists have agreed quite generally on the following list as covering those within our borders. The name in parenthesis is that of the man who has been credited with having classified them:

The American Black Bear, *Ursus Americanus* (Pallas).

Florida Black Bear, *Ursus Floridanus* (Merriam).

Louisiana Black Bear, *Ursus Luterlus* (Griffith).

Northwestern Black Bear, *Ursus Artifrontalis* (Elliott).

Clallam County, Washington.

The fact that the second species is called a black bear leads many people to believe that it necessarily follows that a bear to belong to the latter species has to be black, but I can almost see you smile when I tell you that you may kill a black bear that is *white*. By this I mean to illustrate that bears belonging to the black bear species enjoy a cheerful amount of color varia-

tion, and in speaking of a black bear that is white I refer to the Albinos seen in the vicinity of Flat Head Lake, Montana, by one of our most excellent authorities on bears, Mr. William H. Wright. I do not mean to say that there are no brown or cinnamon-colored bears in the United States, for I have killed both. But these bears all belong to the black bear species and are simply a color variation, just as one might find a white setter dog and a red in the same family, while the difference between a brown-colored black bear and a brown-colored grizzly is one of genus.

The grizzly, too, varies in color, but not nearly so much as do the black bears. In some sections one color will be more plentiful than in another. For instance, in talking to many of the oldest woodsmen in Maine and up through New Brunswick they could not recall a brown bear ever having been killed, but had seen a great number of black ones. Out of seven killed by myself through this section all were coal black, and I saw many more fresh skins that helped to bear out the supposition that they are invariably black through this particular country.

On the other hand, while hunting through the Rockies, I have seen and killed many brown

ones, and have found black and brown bears in the same section, even in each other's company, and will cite a personal experience I think will be worth while relating:

We had pulled camp three times and had shifted high up in the main range, where we finally pitched camp on the north fork of the Elk River. The river at this point is nothing more nor less than a good-sized brook, but it supplied us with excellent water. We were not far from the Wyoming line in North Colorado, and the altitude was, I should judge, between 7,000 and 8,000 feet. It was the old story of being very low on provisions (more generally called out there "chuck"), so we had cut down to two meals a day (flapjacks and venison). On this particular morning we arose in the dark, as usual, broke through the ice to get our customary bucket of water, and started to get what little breakfast we could scrape together.

My man (whose name was George) looked at me rather solemnly and said: "Well, this is the last time I can make coffee, and the chuck is about out, so I reckon we'd better pull up and quit." I said I would like to hold on for a day or two as, judging from the many indications up along the ridges, bears in this section were un-

usually plentiful, and it seemed almost a certainty that something interesting was going to happen soon. We decided that George should drop down in the lower country and try for another buck, as we were in need of more meat for camp—while I was to hunt up along the ridges and try to make the acquaintance of another bear or two. It was just getting daylight when I saddled up my favorite horse, Coley (an adept at climbing these ridges), and started up a trail which led along this truly wild rivulet. Following this trail some three miles, I turned at right angles and rode up an enormous gulch some two or three miles. Here Coley and I started to climb up the steep ridge and into the big timbers. A light fall of snow that morning had just covered the ground and rather added to the difficulty of climbing the steep ridge, so some distance from the top I dismounted, tied Coley to a tree, took my rifle and proceeded on foot. On the opposite side of the ridge it sloped away to the north and the timbers are mostly evergreens, balsam, pine and spruce. As I climbed to the top and carefully peered over the giddy edge down into the grim wild slope of wilderness, huge rocks, great pines, masses of tangled growth, made the scene wild and haunting.

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There was no sound,—at least none met my ears, nothing moved, there seemed no life down there, but death might lurk in every shadow. The snow had laid a finger on all Nature's lips, and a breath floated up through the gorge, that whispered one word,—“Silence!” or was it “Death!” I am not sure which. At length I could feel my curiosity beckoning me below in the forest gloom, but why? Could I not see quite well anything that might saunter by? Or would not every passing sound float up my way? Perhaps so and perhaps not. At any rate I must explore so weird a place, and stealthily, too, if only to harmonize with it all. I looked carefully along the top of the ridge for a place to descend, and soon found a little game trail that ran quite abruptly down. The steepness and covering of snow made a footing entirely too uncertain, and seated as I was at the top, it occurred to me that I might slide down toboggan-fashion, minus the toboggan. I soon found myself sliding along rapidly, and to my delight, very silently, too. My new method of stalking worked splendidly for some 60 or 70 feet, when I finally slowed up and came to a full stop at the foot of a great pine tree that had conveniently fallen, so that after carefully rising so as to swing my foot over the

other side, I sat astride, for another sharp look and to listen.

I had no sooner gained my comfortable seat than directly in front of me, not more than twenty-five yards distant, my attention was attracted by a "*Whoof!*" Now, if I had known exactly where this bear was and had practiced stalking it all my life I could not have done it better, though it was, of course, mostly a matter of luck. I could just see his black head and neck, a bush concealing the rest of him completely. Upon hearing his *Whoof!* I had swung my little carbine to my shoulder (for I was only carrying a .32 special), and dropped a ball through the lower part of his neck. The bear went down, falling behind some brush and rocks, which prevented me momentarily from seeing him while I worked the lever in case another shot was needed. To my surprise the bear had gained his feet and was coming up a little trail that led directly toward me. Now, I did not think for a moment that this bear was charging me; I believed he was simply running blind and had taken this trail as the easiest apparent way of making off. Contrary to all my learning and experience here was a black bear coming on, and, what was more, getting uncomfortably close, too. I got



My favorite hunting horse, Coley.



Packing in a deer.

down in my sights again and no snap shots for me this time; I really meant to do some aiming. The bear was below me and some twelve or fifteen yards off. I pulled down for the top of his head and hurled a bullet exactly between his ears that rung down the curtain on this bear story in a hurry.

This all happened in a space of time that it takes to press the trigger of your rifle, work your lever (if you have one), sight and shoot again—a matter of two or three seconds. Up to the present time everything that had happened had been the unexpected, but a most remarkable Act II was announced by a second "*Whoof! Whoof!*" It might be well to mention right here that the day before I had lost my hunting-knife and had come out this morning with just six cartridges, for the reason, firstly, that we were low in ammunition, and secondly, my experience was that I seldom used more than two cartridges in a day, more often none at all. I still had four shots left, which should be plenty for almost any occasion, but at the rate bears were turning up I was conscious of the fact that I had none to waste. All this time, you will remember, I was perched on the great fallen pine. I had, however, drawn one leg up, resting the other on the ground, and

shooting from a sitting position, mostly from lack of time to rise. Now I was on my feet and had swung my gun at right angles, where, at about the same distance away as the black bear, I could see the fore part of a brown bear. I remember as I glanced along the sights, I thought to myself, "Ah, I am going to get a grizzly,—or at least one of us is going to get the other." It seemed so intrusive and out of place to rend the silence of such a well-chosen retreat with the thundering of a gun; but this is exactly what I did, the bear presenting a very similar shot to the black one. I shot too low in the neck, the shoulders again being concealed. At the crack of the rifle this bear crumpled as did the other, only to rise again just as quickly, and this time he reared up and made a vicious stroke with one paw at a nearby bush, breaking off the branches, which were about the size of a broom handle, like so many little toothpicks. At this moment he made the woods fairly ring with his bawling. I have never heard a bear, before or since, make so much noise. Bears always look larger when they stand up, and a little nearer than they really are. So as he presented a fine heart shot I thought I would lose no time. My second shot passed through the top of the heart, cutting some of the

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large blood vessels, and death came almost immediately.

I still had two cartridges left, and stood for a few moments carefully scanning my surroundings, half expecting Number Three to appear. But evidently this was all. Now, whether I had grizzlies on my mind, or whether it was the subdued light caused by the thickness of the woods, that I made such a mistake to take this brown bear for a grizzly, I cannot say. I should have known first, by the conformation of the head, and second, by the fact that black bears and grizzlies do not associate together. However, they frequently occupy the same range, but a black bear generally gives a grizzly a wide berth.

The black bear was in fine fur, and as coal black as my horse Coley. The brown was in equally fine fur and of a good seal-brown color. The bears were both males and their skins compared almost exactly in size. It is my opinion they were brothers, and had denned together the previous fall. Although apparently together, I think it doubtful that they would den together this fall, as this would be, I believe, unusual. As near as I could judge, they would both be three years old the following spring.

I made it my business to find out exactly what

this brown bear had been doing while I was doing battle with his brother, for I knew perfectly well he was not standing there all that time watching me, even if it was only a matter of two or three seconds. A bear can get a long ways in that time. I back-tracked him in the snow to where he had, without a doubt, come out of a deep cleft in the rocks. The opening was large enough to enter in a stooping position, and I could see where he had gone in and come out. Of course I could see where he had come out, for I have enough caution not to walk into caverns when the tracks are all going in and none coming out; that means, as a rule, your friend is at home, and although I have no great dread of bears, I would not, of course, care to be as familiar as this. The cave immediately narrowed down and turned off at a sharp angle, so I could not comfortably go farther. It was my conclusion that he was either getting ready to den up or was doing a little exploring on his own account; or again, at the very end of the cave he might have stored up some dainty morsel of food, hiding it away from his little brother. But whatever his object, he was evidently there when I first shot, and had run out a short way when we probably discovered each other at the same moment.

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Not having a knife, I of course could not skin the bears, nor could I pack them over to Coley, or *vice versa*, as Coley has never tried tobogganing to my knowledge. There was nothing to do but to hurry back to camp and get George up with his knife to do considerable skinning and pack some bear meat to camp. As I rode into camp I found George had also just returned, and from his broad smile and the blood on his hands I knew he had a deer hanging up somewhere. George greeted me with: "See anything this morning?"

"I sure did," said I.

"Did you see any bear, I mean?"

"Yes, that's what I mean, too," I retorted.

"Did you kill one?" said he, finally.

"I killed two."

This was too much for George. "If you had told me you had killed one, I would have believed you, but two is one too many," he insisted.

"Get your whetstone and knife, saddle up your horse again, and I will show you two of the best-looking bear you have seen in many a day. By the way, we will have to let that deer of yours go until to-morrow, before packing him in."

It had stopped snowing, the sun was out bright and had melted most of the snow before we

reached the spot. It was long after dark before we returned to camp with the two skins and a good-sized piece of bear meat. We sat around and waited for the moon to come up and give us a little light to get supper, for having no lamp, we could not enjoy the luxury of an artificial light.

The next morning we packed in George's deer. By noon we broke camp and were soon on the trail, headed for the lower country.

VIII

THE AMERICAN BLACK BEAR

PART II—CHARACTERISTICS, HABITS AND DISTRIBUTION

I HAVE spent a good many weeks, even months, at a time, in the various ranges of the black bear, and might really say with truth that we have practically lived together side by side. Sometimes just a little ridge might have separated us, where I could see, possibly the next morning after, that he had been having a fine feast in a blueberry patch.

One night we were a little more sociable. I had just removed the pelt from a coyote, and had intended carrying the carcass away from the camp the next day, but left it that night a few feet from my tent. During the night my friend (who, by the way, always reminds me of a good-natured boy with a fur overcoat on), came down and saved me the trouble by carrying it away for me. I did not hear him arrive, for I believe I

was asleep, but the telltale tracks were enough to convince me in the morning. And so by having lived with him in his own home, watched, photographed, and studied his ways, over a period of a good many years, I can set down for those who may be interested, some of his characteristics, habits and distribution.

The range of the black bear extends from Mexico to Alaska, and they have been met with in nearly every state and territory within the United States; also Labrador, Province of Quebec, Alberta and Assiniboia, British Columbia, and the Mackenzie River Basin. All black bears hibernate during the winter months. There are, however, woodsmen in the South who disagree with me on this point, saying they have seen their tracks during every month of the winter, and the mild climate does not force them to lie up in a cave or den as it would in the more severe weather of Northern latitudes. I have myself seen bear tracks during the winter months, and even in the deep snow of the Northern states. But this is the exception, and I have no doubt that these bears are simply shifting to another sleeping place, having been driven out for one reason or another. Their dens may not have been well chosen, and they possibly became leaky, or ex-



A New Brunswick black bear.

posed to the winds, or some hunter might pass that way with a keen-nosed, inquisitive canine that would cause him to roll out in a hurry. It is safe to say all black bears den up both North and South, some time between November 1st and January 1st, depending on the altitude, weather and latitude. They emerge in the spring, usually from the first part of April to the middle of May, according to conditions, the males often appearing some two weeks before the females. It is at this time in the spring, just after they have left their winter quarters, that a bear's pelt is in its prime. During hibernation, as no food is laid up, they, of course, do not eat, nor do they drink, unless they make use of the snow that has fallen about them. Contrary to the general supposition, they are not in a deep coma or hazy condition, for they are easily aroused. It is true that they sleep, but are quick to detect danger and fully equal to the occasion of making off and looking up other quarters if disturbed.

The cunning little cubs (for what deserves the name more than a little woolly, black cub?) are brought forth during hibernation, usually between February 1st and March 1st, and it is several weeks before they are able to leave the den with their mother. From one to four cubs may

be born—I would say two or three is the average; four is rare, but three is often met with, and a she bear followed by one cub does not always indicate that the young hopeful had no brothers or sisters, as they may not have survived all the dangers of cubdom. At birth they are ridiculously small, compared with the size of the mother, and weigh but a few ounces. I have never weighed one, but understand that Dr. Hornaday, director of the New York Zoölogical Park, has, and that their weight runs from eight to eighteen ounces, depending on the number in the litter. Their eyes are closed—they have no teeth, nor have they their little furry jacket as yet. The reason advanced for bears being so unusually small at birth, is that the old bear having remained all winter without food, and not being able to forage for some weeks after the young are born, it would naturally be a great drain to nurse cubs that weighed several pounds. So Nature has thus provided in this way.

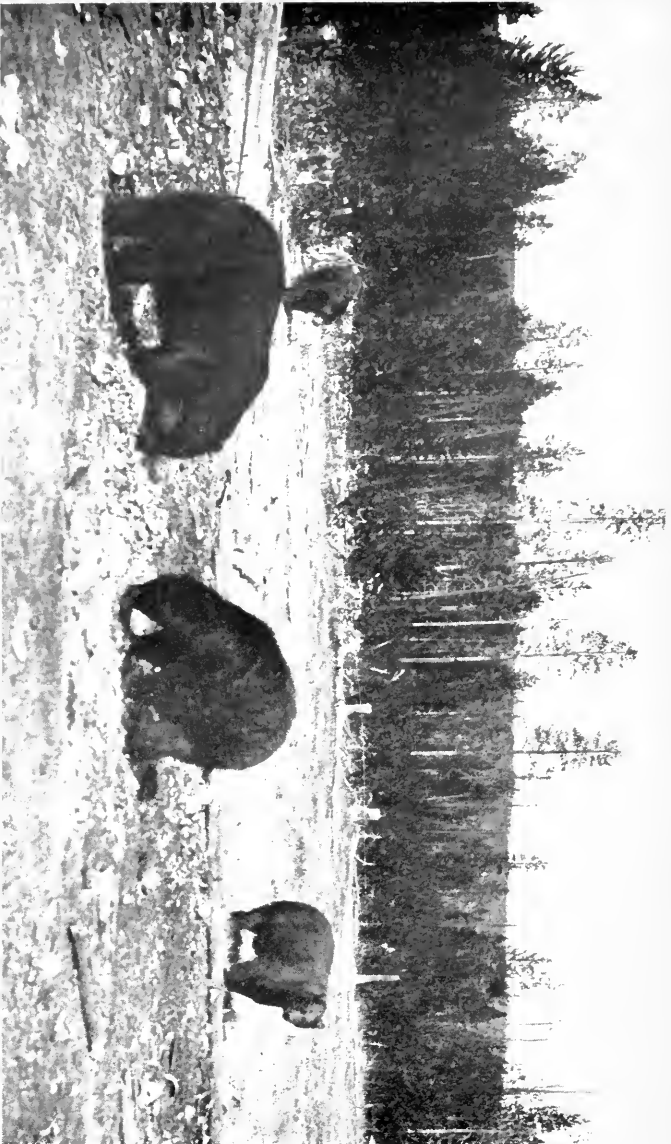
Unlike the grizzly, the black bears mate every year, or nearly so. Grizzlies may be put down for about every other year. When the cubs are from six to eight weeks old, they are able to accompany their mother and do so all during that summer. It is usually about berry time before

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the little fellows develop a grown-up appetite and commence to rustle for themselves. Not very long after this the old bear drives them off to shift for themselves. In some cases they have been found denning the following fall with their mother, but this is unusual.

Now a little bear knows exactly what he wants, and what is good to eat just as well as you do. He knows every root, every bulb, every berry that will make him fat and happy. How does he know this? I cannot say; you will have to ask him. When I say this I have in mind the following case that was brought to my notice: A young cub, only a few weeks old, was caught one spring and fed on milk. He was kept in camp until the following fall when they moved camp down on some bottom lands. Here, while running about, he would suddenly stop, dig up some roots and devour them with a relish. He seemed to be as fully prepared to forage for himself as if he had been taking lessons from his mother all summer. Another much mistaken idea about the black bear is that he emerges from his winter quarters very thin and emaciated (this so far, is true); that he is desperately hungry after his long fast; or is terribly ferocious, and inclined to attack anything on sight, man included. This

is not so, although I have often heard it so stated. Not even a black bear with his enviable digestive apparatus can or does indulge in a hearty meal after so long a fast. The organs of a bear are no different from those of a man in this respect, and after their long disuse are only capable of assimilating the daintiest morsels of food—such as grass shoots, tender roots and the like. In fact, at first they show little or no desire to eat, but after a few days they commence to partake again of pretty much everything. I say this because a bear is omnivorous, which means that he eats quite generally everything—both vegetable and meat. They are not as carnivorous as generally supposed, usually being contented with such small animals as ground squirrels and field mice, but still, when the opportunity offers, they have a great propensity for stealing down ever so carefully to a near-by farm and carrying off a fat little shoat. They, too, have a great weakness for sheep, and it is hardly necessary for me to mention honey and sweets, for here we see them again like good-natured, mischievous boys. The various insects form a long list of goodies for them, and they spend much of their time overturning stones, prying open old stumps and logs, poking their nose and sniffing at every tiny hole



Courtesy of Detroit Pub. Co.

Four of them at home.

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or crevice for such dainty morsels as grubs, caterpillars, crickets, and ants. The black bear seems to partake of such a variety of food that it is hard to say just which he enjoys the most. Ants are one of his favorite dishes, and I have no doubt that they consume as many of these as some of the ant-eaters of South America. One of their favorite methods of catching a certain species of ants, which are very vicious little fighters, is to thrust a paw in the midst of one of their hills, and as they swarm over the bear's paw with the purpose of attacking their enemy, they are quickly lapped up.

But what greater picture of contentment can one imagine than a bear in a good-sized blueberry patch? Sitting half up on his haunches and pulling the branches toward him with his paws—fairly shoveling in the berries that help fatten him up for the long winter—they are indeed great berry eaters and will often travel miles to locate a patch, and then will patronize it long and often.

Last fall in Sierra Madre Mountains in Northern Mexico I was camped for some weeks on a wild cañon through which ran a small river. Along the banks grew numerous juniper trees and for several miles I could see where the branches had been literally all pulled down by

bears in pursuit of the sweet juniper berries. I do not think I have ever seen so much bear sign; it looked as if all the bear in the country had been in on the great feast. It was the latter part of December and they had just recently gone into winter quarters, or we certainly would have been able to make a record on bears if we had cared to. There is another red berry that grows in that section the bear are very fond of, I think the name is *manacea*. It is a low-growing tree and the bears are often given to sunning themselves in these trees.

Up through New Brunswick the beech nuts are very plentiful and I found bears in that section feeding extensively upon them, and so it goes in different localities; both their diet and habits are inclined to differ as circumstances require.

The black bear prefers his meat well tainted, and, in fact, I do not believe it can be too strong for him. Unlike the grizzly he does not cover over or bury a carcass, but this again is only characteristic of him, for he does not feed, or in fact do anything, as systematically or as seriously as the grizzly—much preferring a little mischief to work, and here again we see him the happy-go-lucky fellow. I cannot take space to mention all the fancies of his appetite, but this gives a very

good general idea of his diet. I must not omit to say, however, he is something of a fisherman, both for gain and for sport, and with a quick stroke of his paw, sends many an unsuspecting fish hurtling through the air to land well up on the bank, where he can once more please his palate.

I have often heard of seven hundred pound black bears; there are none. Between four and five hundred pounds are as heavy as they will ever tip the scales. Bears are very rarely weighed by hunters, and the estimates given of their weight are very often much in excess, but, of course, not always purposely so. Broadly speaking, I would say that the average weight of the average black bear, taking them as you happen to find them, would be approximately one hundred and fifty pounds. I am not speaking of full-grown bears, as one is likely to kill several partly-grown bears to one full grown. A full-grown bear in the spring may weigh but a little over two hundred, and the same bear in the fall might easily be close to a four hundred pounder. At what age a bear reaches its full growth no one can say exactly; I am inclined to think some mature a little earlier than others, just as in the case of a human being. I think a bear of six years, under ordinary cir-

cumstances, should be fully grown; that the black bear lives at least to the age of twenty I am sure, for I know of more than one case where they have been kept in captivity for this length of time. But I would not care to take a life insurance risk on one that had reached the age of twenty-five, as I think this is about their limit.

How many of us have gone into the woods in our early hunting days (I am going to include myself in this) and looked around wondering which would be the safest tree to shin up in case an old black bear should have designs on us. Now that little sapling over there looks good. They say a slim tree with no low branches is the best to nest in on an occasion like this. But for those who do not already know, we will settle that question right here. It does not matter in the least what tree you select, whether it is one some two or three feet in diameter, or just that little sapling; it is safe to say if you can get up, so can the bear. But this is the point; he won't come. No black bear, when given such a fine opportunity to get away, will stick around. Their claws, which are very unlike those of the grizzly, are especially adapted for climbing, while the front paws of a grizzly are especially adapted for digging, being long, and from four to six inches



A little chap in trouble.

in length, and nearly straight. Grizzlies do not and cannot climb trees. On the other hand, the black bear's claws are shorter, more curved, and thicker at the base, which enables them to go up a huge tree very much as a cat or a squirrel would, and also a slim one just large enough to sustain their weight.

In conclusion would say that I do not pretend to know all about black bears—no one man can; but I have found them sufficiently interesting to have taken a great deal of pleasure in devoting a long study to them, and have here set down only what I know to be facts.

IX

WITH A MORMON GUIDE THROUGH THE SIERRA MADRES

LOOKING far away to the west across the great expanse of sun-scorched veldt, the huge, jagged peaks of the Sierra Madres loomed up ever so clearly against the skyline. The sun was just going to rest, and the scene, with its ever-changing colors, was glorious beyond description. Long threadlike clouds lingered close above the peak tops, now pink, now scarlet, then deepening as the light waned and slowly died away, leaving the lofty summits in a cold, blue haze that made them stand out bold, grim and forbidding. All the world shuddered, for night had come. The night prowlers yawned, stretched themselves and went their many ways; and so the darkening hours slipped by until a gray light in the east indicated the beginning of another day.

At full sunrise, upon gazing across the same veldt, a little cloud of dust rose, caused by nothing more nor less than a pack-train. The horses



Climbing back into the mountains.

and mules, ten of them in all, threaded their way along, single file, while at the head rode Hi and myself. Hi, which is short for Hiram, was to be with me again this year in the capacity of head guide. Manuel, our mozo, followed on behind, keeping the animals up in their places. Spot, a shepherd dog, and five hounds completed the outfit.

For five days we rode to the west, crossing the open and slowly ascending the foothills, then climbing up the mountains until we reached and crossed the Great Divide where it reaches the height of 9,000 feet above the sea. On the third night we camped in Cave Cañon, taking its name from the many strange cave formations. The caves started by the hand of nature, and were then taken up and completed by the prehistoric cave- or cliff-dwellers. This ancient race were dwarfs, proven by the many skeletons which have been exhumed, and by the diminutive size of the rooms and their doorways. Of all the many caves and cliff dwellings in which the cañon abounds there is none more interesting than the great "Olla" cave with the huge "olla" or vase, twelve feet high, built to hold their grain, which stands at its entrance. Extending far back into the dark recesses of the cave are many

small rooms, whose outside walls are decorated with hieroglyphics, some cut, others painted or stained on their surfaces. The winding river is hemmed in by great walls of rock running to a dizzy height. The scene here at nightfall was mysterious, weird, tenanted only by the winds that sighed and moaned down through its bottoms and up through the crags.

After crossing the Divide we descended to some five or six thousand feet above sea level and made our first permanent camp in a great, wild, unnamed gorge. The huge, silent hills, sheer walls of rocks and giant, solid pines, made one ever mindful of these fastnesses, and that we had at last entered the confines of the grizzlies' own domains. There is a vastness in his size and strength that makes him a fit inhabitant for these regions.

Upon the ensuing morning Hi and myself were away in an early start, leaving Manuel and the hounds in camp. We proposed to start out on foot this morning, quietly survey the surrounding country, look for bear signs, and, as is the custom the first day, bring in a little meat for camp if possible. It was my intention to try to locate where some bears were in the habit of feeding, or some point they would pass on their way



A bit of rough country.
(Manuel, our mozo, on top of rock.)

and then to watch at a distance with glasses and try to stalk them. If this failed, we would try the hounds, although in my former hunts I have never been able to hold up a grizzly with hounds long enough to get a shot, but this way does however, sometimes prove successful.

There was a chill in the morning air as we climbed the first ridge. I was full of energy and curiosity, and one needs a goodly supply, especially of the latter, in tramping this rugged country. We were now silently following along a little game trail bordering a box cañon when Hi suddenly stopped and pointed down at some fresh tracks:

“Wolves!” he exclaimed. I nodded my head, quite agreeing with him, and we quietly pursued our way. This was the last word spoken, and we had tramped several miles, winding our way in and out through the mountains before we felt disposed to be so incautious as to engage in further conversation. We came out on a high point and surveyed the surroundings with the glasses.

“Something moving up on that side hill,” said Hi.

“Anything that looks like a bear?” I queried.

“No, too small,—looks like a wolf,—yes, by George, and there are two of them!”

I now took the glasses and soon located them. They were traveling along with that easy stride peculiar to the wolf. Occasionally they stopped and pointed their muzzles skyward, testing the air currents, no doubt, for some passing odor. Without any apparent effort, they seemed to cover ground remarkably fast and soon passed on out of view. They looked serious and on business bent. We continued on some few miles, the day commenced to wane, and we must turn toward camp to arrive before dark. We felt disappointed to return empty-handed, and what little bear sign we saw was old. Luck took a little turn, however, when we were a couple of miles from camp. I caught sight of a fair buck feeding out on a ridge some distance above me. After making a careful circle and climbing a little above him, I stopped behind some thick cover, when he walked out to the very edge of the cliff in plain view. A pretty picture, and well worth the stalk. The shot was an easy one, but at least well earned. I pulled down for his shoulder and pressed the trigger, when, lo, with one jump he completely disappeared! It was about fifty steps to the edge of the cliff and I lost no time in covering the distance. Upon looking over I could see the buck still rolling down into the cañon and when he

finally stopped I realized that the climb down and back again was going to be no easy task. Taking a little shorter route, but decidedly a steeper one than I had ascended by, it was not long before I reached my first little prize of the mountains.

A short distance from where the deer lay I noticed the ground bore evidence of a violent struggle. That one of the nightly tragedies of the wilderness had been enacted here was quite evident, and upon close examination I found the carcass of a large buck which had been just recently slain. That the victim had struggled desperately the torn-up ground and strewn hair plainly showed. The slayer had covered its victim carefully with dead grass and brush. This signified to us that it was the work of none other than the death-dealing cougar, who at that moment no doubt was lying up near by in some well-chosen retreat, waiting only to steal forth again under the cover of night to further satisfy his inexorable greed upon his recent victim.

"We'll be down here at the crack of dawn tomorrow with the hound pack," said Hi, "and that fellow's scalp will be hanging up in camp tomorrow night."

We cleaned and swung my buck to a tree, intending to pack him in after the run on the

morrow. It was dark when we reached camp and we were quite tired and hungry, so we did not linger long around the camp fire that evening. Before retiring we succeeded in making our mozo understand he must make the fire very early in the morning, in fact, somewhere around the middle of the night. After rolling five or six cigarettes he finally exclaimed "*Bueno!*" (good), and after a few more cigarettes he remarked "*Muy Bueno!*" (very good). Whenever he ventured the latter we knew there was going to be no doubt about the matter in point.

At that stark hour when night pales to day we filed on down the trail like grim specters of the night. We rode our best mounts with the pack following at heel. As we drew up to the scene of the previous evening Hi started Jack off on a trail, and as he topped the ridge his long, deep-chested baying echoed and re-echoed through the cañon. The rest of the pack backing him up were now in on the chase and the hunt was on! We dug in our spurs and took the ridge on the run, zig-zagged down the opposite side, then up a long swale that led up and out of the cañon. It was a long, rough, up-grade run, and we knew now that the pack had jumped the cougar in the swale and were hot on his trail. We swung out



Those pleasant days in camp.

on a game trail, made one more ascent, then dropped from the shoulder of the hill and fairly flew across a smooth, grassy mesa, still running hard, as we knew such a hot chase could not last long, our horses straining every effort. Then, simultaneously, we lay back with all there was in us on our reins, throwing our horses back on their haunches, for we had unwittingly ridden to the very edge of a sickening drop. Some two hundred feet of sheer rock ledge fell away almost at our very feet. We slid from our mounts, and pulled off our spurs to climb down by some means or another, for there was unmistakably something doing down in the ravine.

“All we have to do is to get down there and that lion is ours,” said Hi; “the hounds have got him on a perch near by,” he added. It is needless to say we reached the bottom but not without scraping off a little hide and adding a few more rips to our jeans. The creek bottom was rocky and hard to travel, even on foot, but with gun and camera we hurried along with all possible speed, until we rounded a point which brought us abruptly upon the dogs looking up and barking at bay. There, at the end of a twenty-foot cleft of rock ledge, crouched the cougar, with bared teeth and savage mien, lashing his tail, snarling

and glaring wickedly at the dogs. My position was such that it made it difficult to shoot low enough to make a vital shot for fear of deflecting the bullet against the rock. I drew up my rifle, however, and sighted quickly as best I could, not wishing to give him an opportunity for another run. The shot taking effect too high, the cougar either leaped or was knocked by force of the bullet to the opposite side. Upon running up to a point where I could see, I found he had taken up his position on the slope to fight for his life, though wounded and at bay. Having long made myself familiar with the characteristics of the cougar, I knew that he would be unlikely at a time like this to make an attack, though they will threaten and do all in their power to intimidate. As I approached with the kodak he posed beautifully, baring his cruel fangs and growling in a coarse undertone. His eyes, like two disks of pure gold, glared in the manner symbolic all the world over of uncompromising animalism. He seemed to object as seriously to having his picture taken as some Apache Indians I snapped about a year ago. Hi handed over my .30-40, and with a better-directed shot I ended the career of at least one deer-slayer.

He was evidently in the prime of life, sleek,



As I approached with the kodak he posed beautifully, baring his cruel fangs and growling in a coarse undertone.



The cougar was a male in prime condition, and measured seven feet five inches.

vigorous and in splendid condition. I found him to contain much more fat than any I had previously killed. Before removing the pelt we made two or three pictures, and put the tape on him. He took seven feet five inches of it, and although I have taken them measuring a few inches longer, I believe this fellow, on account of his unusually short tail, had easily the largest body. As for weight, I had no means of weighing him, and guesses at weight are seldom worth recording.

Then we rode over to the cañon, where we had taken up the trail, and packed in my buck of the day before.

Around the campfire that night we spent a jolly evening discussing the adventures of the day. Hi proposed that we visit the carcass again the next morning with the pack to see if any other night wanderer had been attracted by the odor of venison. At an early hour, on different mounts, found us zigzagging down into the cañon until we reached the dismal spot. Rather to our surprise, the hounds took up a trail again and were immediately off, leading us exactly over the ground we had gone the day before, but on reaching the mesa we heard them barking treed. Upon riding up we found an old bob-cat perched up in the limb of an oak. After snapping one or

two pictures of him I tried to rope him, and after one or two unsuccessful throws only succeeded in driving him farther up the tree. "Better shoot the critter," shouted Hi, "or he may jump out and give us another run." So with a hard-nosed bullet, in order not to tear his hide, I dropped the "little critter," as Hi called him, to the ground.

In the afternoon we lounged around camp, preparing the hides and making plans for the next day. We had finished an early supper and were sitting about the camp fire smoking. The flame of the setting sun smoldered and went out, the shadows were rapidly deepening through the gorge, when soon a great dark water-laden cloud swung low down in the heavens and drifted through the gorge, coming in contact with a chill stream of air which condensed it. Then there came a great deluge of rain, accompanied by a blinding display of electricity. The lightning hissed and crashed among the tops of the giant pines, shivering and splintering their boughs. The thunderbolts boomed and roared through the gorge and rumbled up and down as if grumbling some grievance against the world. Terrific blasts of wind swept down with the rain. It was a terrible storm of the mountains. For four days



A treed bobcat, intently watching the hounds below.

and nights it rained, soaking everything. My blankets were wet; so were the provisions; we could scarcely kindle a fire. One night we went supperless, simply discouraged and disheartened trying to fight the wet. On two nights we made a little smudge in the large tent to fry some meat and heat some coffee. When it did not rain in rhythmic pitter-patter, fierce showers swept through, which were worse. The streams that were dry before the storm were now running with torrents of water.

On the fifth day the storm broke, the sun came out warm and bright, licking up the wet. The wild folk crept from their shelters and were on the move again; even the birds sang joyfully. All nature smiled. I rode three miles to the south, where I took up my position on a knoll to watch with the glasses a vast expanse of high hillslope opposite. It was sparsely timbered and offered an excellent opportunity to sight any animal that might feed thereon or saunter past. For three days I watched patiently, alone, surrounded by Nature at her best.

So picturesque and enwrapping was the scene stretched about me that the hours slipped by surprisingly fast. A little brook went meandering through the gully below, ever singing a lullaby

on its way. A jay piped up and flew to a nearby tree, pouring forth his sweetest notes as if his little chest could not contain all his happiness. One day a great flock of parrots flew over, winging their way South, the sun glistening on their brilliant plumage of scarlet, green, and gold. A flock of Messena partridge came trooping by within stone's throw, picking up seeds and feeding greedily, while all the time, on the very top of a stark, bare-limbed pine, blinked a great horned owl. These bright pleasant hours were not of his kind; it was not until the gathering night that he unfolded his shadowy wings and drifted abroad in search of meat. For he, too, belonged to the killers, and many of the nightly tragedies might be laid at his door. Perhaps with a slashing winnow he would drop like a bolt from the sky upon some squirrel to seize him in his crushing talons and make off. And so the play of nature was so absorbing that the hours slipped by until the afternoon of the third day.

X

COUGAR HUNTING IN SONORA

BETWEEN four and five o'clock in the afternoon I sighted with the glasses a large brown bear about halfway up the slope. He was under a juniper tree, apparently feeding on the falling berries. At times he rose up on his haunches, pulling the berries down so as to obtain his favorite fruit. Marking the spot carefully and the direction of the wind, I pulled off my coat and sweater, as the climb was a long, hard one. Then with all the care I possessed I commenced my stalk, making a long circle so as to steal up wind. I moved on as rapidly as necessary caution permitted. In something like a half hour I found myself approaching the tree exactly from the same direction the bear had come, as I could plainly see his tracks and was practically following in his footprints. Now, expecting the bear to come into view any moment, I doubled my caution and hardly dared to take a long breath, even taking the care to cock my rifle some hundred

yards back so that the click would not disturb him. Peering through one little opening after another, the moments dragged until I just had one more small bush to reach before I intended to straighten up from a stooping position which I had assumed, when, with a rattle and a snap-bang, I straightened up in a hurry with gun to shoulder. A big stone came rolling down the slope and bounced not twenty yards in front of me. There was no bear. With his keener senses he had detected me a few seconds too soon and was making off at a merry clip up the hill, his great weight loosening a large rock, which had tumbled down and greeted me with a thud. He had a good start and kept well out of view, as I could not catch a glimpse of him as he went. Pulling out the old pipe, I sat down to have a smoke, for I had not realized until this moment how tired I was.

When I climbed back to where I had been watching, Hi was there with the horses. He greeted me with "Well, I didn't hear you shoot." Then I explained to him how it all happened.

"I can't see why you want to fool away your time watching for that old bear when we can take the hounds up and settle the question in short order," he remarked. I tried to explain it was not

Brown bear, photographed while fighting off the hounds.



so much what I got as how I got it, and to stalk your game when possible was to me the best way of them all. However, I decided to be ready with the hounds the next afternoon should the bear put in another appearance.

The following morning we devoted to Red, one of our best hounds. He had been lame for the past two or three days, and we discovered that a fractured bone in one leg was the cause. After cutting splints and bandaging it well we kept him in camp, and in about ten days he was well.

Early in the afternoon we rode south with the remainder of the pack, and took up our position on the knoll to watch the hillslope again. It was probably but little past 3 p. m. when I located a bear near the top of the ridge, which appeared to be the same bear of the day before.

Up the hill we went, leading our horses, as the grade was steep, taking a roundabout way and holding the dogs in check, so that we might approach as near as possible before jumping our quarry, and thereby make the chase a short, lively one. It was evident now that the pack had caught the bear scent that had been wafted our way and were growing more eager and impatient each moment for the signal that would permit

them to give vent to the trait that is naturally born and bred in every hound.

“Riders up!” ordered Hi, and we swung on our horses. “Now all off together—we can take it on the run here,” said he. “Go get him, boys.”

His horse reared and with a long jump plunged into a run. Then I remembered he had sharpened up his spur points the day before. Notwithstanding our even start the pack soon had a good lead over us. The bear was up and going, the pack close up, that we knew by Spot’s short barks, as he seldom gave tongue unless indulging in his specialty, which was snapping at the heels of any fleeing animal. This, as we know, most bears cannot stand, and is usually the means of holding them up long enough to get in the shot. The bear had gained the top of the ridge, and, although hampered as he was, continued at surprising speed along the top. Here the going was comparatively good. Mounting the top Hi said: “Let’s have a real run now!” so we went hard at it. We were coming up a little now the pack swung into view, and soon we caught sight of the bear, some seventy yards ahead.

“He’s going to take down that little draw and go off the other side of the hill,” shouted Hi.

"Bet you a dollar Mex. you can't pull up your horse and stop him before he goes," he added.

"You're on!" I said. Laying back on the reins and jerking out my gun. I dropped a shot his way from the saddle, but he went on and down the other side. "I win," declared Hi; "you hit him all right, but it will take another one of those to get him down."

We tore on again to the spot where he had turned down and found a little crimson trail.

"It's all off," called Hi. "See him down there? He's stopped now to fight the pack. Get your kodak, make a little circle, and come up behind that big rock in front of him, and you will get a fine picture."

Climbing down on foot, then up again, keeping the boulder in front of me so that I could not be detected, I quietly crawled over the top and practically came face to face with a large brown bear. It required but a second or two to snap him, as we both stood rather surprised some eight feet apart. Laying aside my "picture-machine" (as Hi sometimes termed it), I grabbed up the rifle and took a hasty shot as the bear grunted and growled and champed his jaws. His great vitality was of no avail against such an impact, his strength soon began to ebb as he sank

down limp and lifeless. After the usual taking of a few more pictures and removing the pelt we returned to camp, to spend another jovial evening around the campfire. I might add at this point, strange as it may seem, Hi at one time traveled with a minstrel show, and to sit around a roaring good fire and hear Hi tear off, as it were, a few of his coon songs after a supper of venison and frijoles is, to me at least, a very pleasant evening.

During the next week we hunted every day. I was particularly interested in grizzlies, but up to the present time we had seen only one track and that proved to be an old one. Sometimes we went out on foot without the hounds, sometimes we each rode an unshod mule, as they climb well, are sure-footed, and travel more quietly than a horse. The last few days we tried the pack again, but no success crowned our efforts.

"It's getting too slow for us around here," said Hi one day. "Let's pull camp and hit the trail for Black Cañon; we can make it in three days."

Early the next morning we packed the outfit and were soon on the trail. By noon we had come out on and were crossing a particularly pretty mesa. Hundreds of broad-headed, short-



The end of the chase.



"Riders up!" ordered Hi.

stemmed, wide-branched oaks, which had probably witnessed more than one century, flung their gnarled arms over a carpet of most luxuriant grass, while we continued on to yet wilder scenes of sylvan solitude. Later, upon gaining the top of a summit in the range, we reined up to view the landscape. On all sides rolled away the mighty Sierras, and, looking to the limit of the human eye, the rugged peaks faded away until they melted into the horizon. Far beneath us, winding its way through the great range, sped the murmuring waters of the Rio Bonito (pretty river). The beams of the sinking sun shot its rays of broken and discolored light upon its limpid waters, turning them to a mass of quivering and shifting colors that alternated from bronze to copper and from copper to silver azure. The surrounding hills glowed with a warm, deep violet tint. Away in the distance a huge mass of rock stood out to view, wrapped in a veil of tender pink. The whole scene might well have been the fantastic dream of some imaginative painter whose ambition had soared beyond the limits of human skill. In my opinion there is no range in the world that presents the variety of ruggedness as do the Sierra Madres. After witnessing the splendid spectacle we resumed our way, slow-

ly descending until we finally reached and made camp on the banks of the Bonito.

In the morning we found to our disappointment that the late storm had caused the river to rise to such an extent that we were unable to cross with the outfit. We discovered, however, that the water was rapidly falling, and decided to camp there a few days until we were able to make the ford. On the fourth day, after finding a more favorable place to cross, and the water having receded several inches, we successfully made the opposite bank. Two days more on the trail and we pitched permanent camp in Black Cañon. It may be described as being hemmed in by huge ridges thickly timbered running abruptly down until they met a little stream that went racing through its depths. There were the dark, deep, silent pools that lurked in the shade, mysterious and cold. There were many places in the cañon that the sun's rays never visited, causing the light to be ever dim, hence its name Black Cañon. We were in need of meat again, so resolved to attend to the inner man first. Hi and myself went out for deer, and from their numerous tracks did not expect to be gone long, nor were we. Riding up a little gully as we were, Hi stopped and held up two fingers, meaning two deer. Dis-

mounting I slipped along quietly some seventy yards, when I jumped two spike-horns, only stopping to look back, as they frequently do, out of curiosity. Crack! went the rifle, and down came one spike-horn. The other was, to use the local expression, rolling his freight up a side hill. Again the rifle and he rolled it down grade. Now, whether this was purely a matter of luck or good shooting was of no great moment to me then. For we needed two deer, and we had them and could turn our attention to larger if not more worthy game.

Mounted one day on jennets, we determined to inspect and hunt a likely-looking stretch of country to the south. The weather had turned very cold during the past week, and at this altitude, freezing hard every night as it did, made fresh tracks difficult to discern. The day had been an uneventful one, and we were wending our way toward camp, evening being close at hand. Nearing the top of a small saddle, we suddenly stopped without word or sign, for our eyes had simultaneously met the object of our search. I drew my rifle from the scabbard, pressed back the hammer, but for a moment held my fire. The unexpected scene that lay before me surpassed anything I had ever witnessed in all my experi-

ence with wild life. There sloped before us a pretty grassy glade where three deer, two does and a fawn, were leisurely feeding along. The grass, growing to the height of some 12 or 15 inches and having been touched by the recent frosts, had taken on a red brown color. Not twenty feet behind the nearest doe, and scarcely discernible, so perfectly did its color harmonize with the frost-nipped grass, was the long, lithe, tawny form of a cougar in the very act of stalking its prey with all the stealth and cunning known to its genus. So light, silent and cautious was his every move that he might be said to drift light as a wisp of smoke toward his prey before making the death-dealing spring. Now crouching with fierce aspect, fore paws extended, head laid between them, while his lithe tail oscillated at its extreme tip with a gentle waving motion, his pale gooseberry eyes glared malevolently upon his unsuspecting victim. The cougar sprang,—but it was not the well-directed, accurate spring that cleaves the air like the strike of a monster snake, hurling him to the shoulders of his prey. It was a leap of pain, for the .30-40 had struck home, piercing the very heart itself, and he fell to the ground a shapeless heap. So fate had



The cougar of Black Canon was dead.

spared the life of one and taken that of another. The cougar of Black Cañon was dead.

This lion, though a few inches shorter than the one I had killed in the early part of the hunt, was an older animal, and bore several scars on his flanks, which, no doubt, were inflicted during some of his attacks upon animals that did not succumb any too readily.

His teeth were much worn down, and two of the large carnivores were badly broken. The head impressed me as being unusually large, and Hi, referring to it afterwards, spoke of it as the "bull-headed lion," which expression conveyed a very good idea of its conformation.

The next few days nothing of interest fell to our lot, but one morning we rose to find the world dressed in white. A film of new-fallen snow covered the ground and bowed down the trees with its weight, while all about stretched the silence and mystery of the snow-filled forests. This gave us encouragement for tracking, as the wild folk would write plainly their ways on the snow, but it was a bad omen for bear, as they invariably take to their winter dens when snow falls here in December, and it is April before they emerge.

The next two or three days we were busily en-

gaged trying to take advantage of the snow while it lasted, but it was as if we were deserted; left alone, there seemed no life of any kind—at least we met none. A gloom settled down over the cañon. We looked at each other and read what passed through our minds. Somewhere away over yonder there is a little village, and around the fireplace of one little wooden house are bright, eager faces, perhaps calling to mind some absent one.

One night I awoke and sat up in my blankets. I was conscious of being awakened by some strange noise. Pulling on my boots, I stepped out of my tent into the night. It was cold and clear, a pale moon peeped wanderingly over the ridge, and the stars glittered and glistened down through the tall avenues of pines. A solemn silence prevailed that was but accentuated by the booming of the stream far below. Five slow, languorous minutes dropped by, when, clear and distinct, but commencing low, came the howl of one great lone wolf, slowly rising with his deep-throated voice until the very hills seemed to shiver and the cañon echoed all through with the roar when it slowly dropped into a long, drawn-out wail and died away. The death-like stillness that followed the howl settled everywhere. The thin,



They knew no fear, those dogs.

shimmering gossamer of moonbeams danced and danced, and beckoned and beckoned. Then from the opposite direction, bursting as it were the heavy silence of the place, came the answer of the pack. Scarcely audible at first, then swelling as another and still another voice joined, until four deep-chested monster wolves howled in unison until they reached their topmost note, then dropping by steps until it became an unearthly moan that slowly drifted on and died somewhere up through the cañon. "Wonderful!" I mused, "and worth coming a long way, to be on hand at such a play of wild life. I will investigate in the morning and try to find out what the packs are up to," I thought as I slipped back into my blankets.

"Hear anything last night?" I called over to Hi's tent in the morning.

"We've got company now," said Hi, "but that's a sorry old song they sing."

"Let's climb the ridge and see if we can tell which way they went, or what they are doing," I suggested.

"They might be ten miles from here by this time, and then again they mightn't," said Hi. "There is one thing sure," he continued, "and that is if they travel that ridge they would follow

the trail on top, and in that case we could come pretty near telling how many there are, and which way they are headed.”

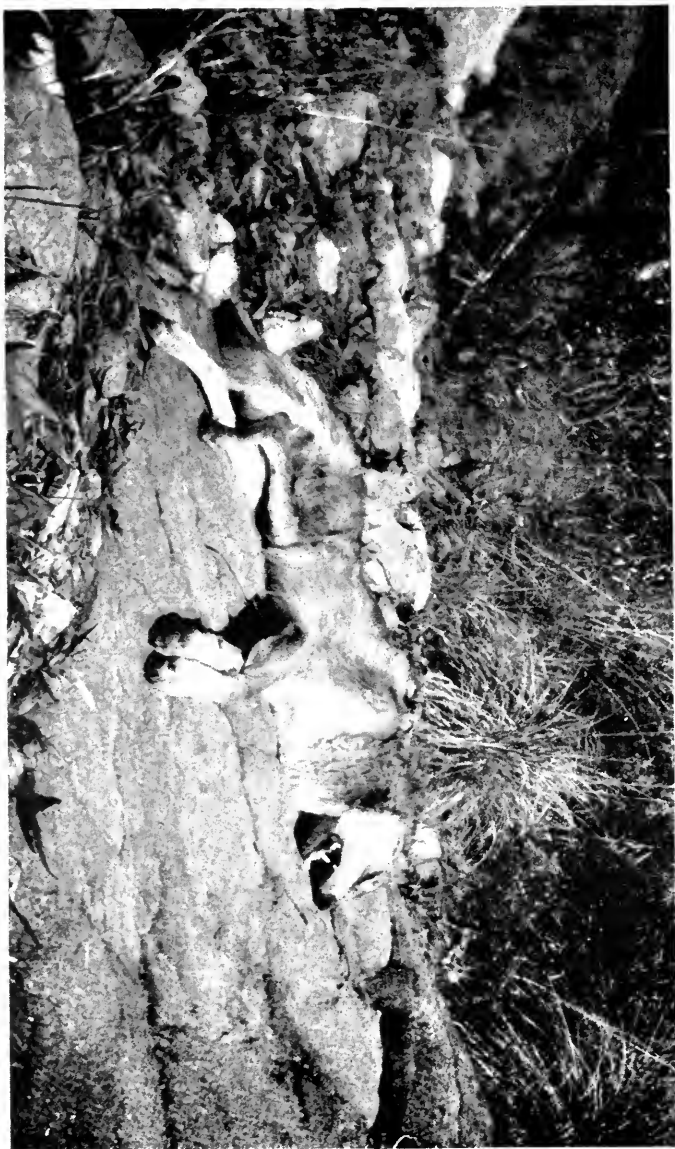
It was a heart-breaking climb, but after breakfast we started up the ridge on foot. We had no intention of taking the hounds, but when we were well on our way discovered they had followed us, so rather than to return we let them continue.

“Big doings!” said Hi as he reached the trail. “See here, they are all going up, four of them, and right here they are all coming back again, right fresh too; been done since sun-up—by George, there’s five going back, and look here, there’s one old fellow packing one leg. See,” he continued, “he’s traveling on three legs. I wonder what battle he’s been in that put one leg out of commission?”

The tracks were fresh and plain even to an inexperienced eye. There were five wolves, headed south, just recently passed and one going on three legs. This much, which is more than I had expected to learn, we had discovered in a comparatively short space of time. Where they would go or how far off they were at that moment no one could tell.

“Hello!” exclaimed Hi, “those darn dogs have

Old Three Legs breathed his last.



lit out, just sneaked off, darn 'em, and I never missed them until now!

"Never have turned them loose on a wolf," he added, "and when it comes to five I'm not quite sure which outfit would chase the other."

For the moment there was nothing to do, so we sat down to enjoy a pipe of tobacco, when Hi suddenly caught my arm, crying, "Give me your glasses, quick!" As long as I have known Hi this is the first time I have ever seen him show even a trace of excitement. As I reached for the glasses he said, almost in a whisper, "Listen!"

From 'way down the other side of the ridge a faint sound every now and then came up our way.

"Why, they're in full cry after them there wolves," said he disconsolately. "It's about even money either way I lose my string of dogs."

The sounds floated up louder and clearer; they were coming our way, headed for a cut in the ridge below.

"Might as well sit here as anywheres; there is no telling which way they'll turn," advised Hi as he peered through the glasses. At intervals now we could hear the deep baying of some of the hounds. The pack, however, were not giving tongue as freely as on former runs. Why, we

did not know. Though nearing what seemed little by little, they had not yet come into view, but we could occasionally recognize the voice of some of the hounds, as we had grown to know each one by their bark, and as we noted this one and that it was perhaps with just a little touch of sadness, for very probably they were running their last great race, for they knew no fear, those dogs.

"Here come the wolves across the opening, 'way below; there's only four," Hi exclaimed.

"See anything of the hounds?" I asked.

"No, not in sight yet. By George, there's Old Three Legs,—he's running a couple of hundred yards behind the wolf pack. Here come the dogs now, they will close in on him pretty soon; he needs his other leg bad now! Let's get down the ridge in a hurry." We now both started down the steep side as fast as it was possible for us to go. We had nearly reached the bottom when a great clamor arose, and we knew then that the fight was raging. As we came in view of a highly animated scene there was a confusion of dogs, wolves, barks, growls and snarls.

"Old Jack is down!" shouted Hi; "I hope he isn't dead,—best trailer I ever owned." The four wolves had disappeared, but Old Three Legs



Homeward bound.

had turned at bay and was fighting desperately his last battle, for the odds were too great against him. I have no doubt had it not been for our timely arrival the hound pack would have been no more. For it would have been five against five, and the great fangs of the wolf would have been more than a match for the hounds, fearless though they were. I could not shoot immediately, as there was danger of hitting the dogs, but as soon as the opportunity afforded I hurled a bullet just back of the wolf's shoulder, and Old Three Legs breathed his last.

We packed our outfit and for six days traveled in a northeasterly direction. We had spent fifty-five evenings around the campfire and fifty-five days in the open. It was the last day on the trail. The wind was singing a romping song to itself among the tree-tops; and so were we, for no matter how strong the call of the wild, the call of our own is stronger,—and we were homeward bound!

XI

NORTHERN GAME TRAILS

PART I—HUNTING THE MOOSE, SHEEP, GOAT AND BLACK BEAR

AFTER remaining a few months in New York, the spirit of adventure once more bubbled within, combined with a feeling of restlessness and dreamy thoughts. I was living in some distant land where tranquil nature reigns. I looked out on the town with different eyes. The granite walls and gray mazes of the city faded, and in their stead rose a vast mountain wilderness, against a sky of enchanting tender tints. It was the old summons to the unknown—the beck of the wild.

So it was on the sixteenth day of August I stood looking still dreamingly into the blue distance, while Vancouver faded across the pale un-wrinkled waters which lay like a dream at the foot of the hills. All its activities stilled at the summons of peace, while the shores receded into the night.



From time to time the prowler would stop.

On board was Judge Ford of New York. He, too, had felt the lure and spell of the open places where he could be a brother of the trees and a kin to the untrodden. On the little steamer *Princess Sophia* we proceeded to Wrangell, Alaska, which occupied about three and a half days.

The course lay entirely through the dangerous but beautifully picturesque inner passage. Fiord after fiord came into view in the ceaselessly changing panorama, ever increasing in splendor. Gigantic mountains rising up sheer out of the sea loomed against the sky in weird, fantastic forms, and from their snowy brows looked down, mute and solemn as if listening to the sobbing of the sea, heaving its long billows against their base of high-flung, naked, gap-tooth rocks. Regiments of spruces lined their sides that stood out like spear points against the sky. Further on one glimpses, through the inimitable vistas the spurning torrent, bearing down from austere and defiant heights; flashes here the million-voiced cascade, and trickles there a little soft-trebled spring. Cloud fragments drift silently over the nearer rose-tinted mountains; cascades, snow peaks, glaciers and overhanging cliffs made the way one of ever changing beauty. Colors untold mingling and melting and blending and

waving over all with a terrible beauty that knows no human name.

We called at several points on the way up the coast. At Prince Rupert there was great excitement. It was rumored that another big gold strike had been made in the Shushana district, which lies between the White and Chittina rivers and northeast of Bonanza. It was hinted to be something even richer than Klondike. Many of the old-timers were going up "to look it over," as they said. Dozens of big husky fellows with bronze complexions and packs on their backs filed on board, and as they bid their friends farewell the oft-repeated slogan was "Shushana or bust." I have an idea that more than one will never return, for the northern trails and trials are both long and wearisome, while the relentless arctic winter deals harshly with the poorly sheltered.

At Ketchikan I went ashore to see the salmon ascending one of the greatest salmon rivers on the coast. They were swarming up the river in almost unbelievable hordes. I took a number of pictures of them leaping the falls in the hope of obtaining at least one good one. It was at Ketchikan we received the shocking news that the steamer *City of California*, belonging to the Pacific Coast Steamship Company, struck on an un-

charted rock on the morning of August 17th. The steamer was off Admiralty Island when the accident occurred. The ship commenced to settle immediately and disappeared from view in three minutes after striking the rock. Of 170 passengers on board it was reported that not more than thirty were saved.

Continuing north through the chain of precipitous islets and broken promontories which fringed the dangerous coast, there was always something new to hold our attention. In the broad indolent green swells we sometimes saw great whales swimming leisurely through the bland, untroubled sea, patrolling the upper green, searching the transparent deeps below for schools of herring, or basking and rolling lazily on the slope of the swells. The myriads of wild fowl were interesting to watch, sometimes streaming through the upper air, again resting peacefully on the water's surface, bobbing up and down like hundreds of little corks. Pearly gulls, evanescent spirits of the winds, circled up from the banks with incessant clamor harsh and shrill, overriding even the trampling sea.

At length, upon rounding a long rocky point that jutted out into the channel like an extended finger, Wrangell Bay came into view, and lay all

a-shimmer in the soft rays of the westerning sun. There it was, all silver and blue, and boundless; with the tiny white sails of fishing boats dancing over it, winking and flashing like bits of blown feathers. Then the sun reddened and crawled to a smoldering setting, while its gold and purple banners hung softly over the bay, whose rippled surface flushed crimson, and the naked sand bars flung back a ruddy glow. The shores were washed in a flood of purple glory that climbed the rugged heights and lay in splendor on the lofty snow-topped peaks.

The town of Wrangell, situated on Wrangell Island, boasts of eight hundred inhabitants, including the Indian population. The visitor's eye is at once caught by the weird carvings of the many Totem poles, which both in color and design display striking grotesque ornaments. It is a fishing town and the salmon cannery there is a very profitable one.

Two days later, on board the little gas boat *Winiford* we left Wrangell for the long struggle up the swift-flowing Stikine River. Our destination was Telegraph Creek, which is situated 160 miles up the Stikine River, and is the ultimate outfitting point. Some idea of the swiftness of the current may be had from the fact that it took



Glacier on Stikine River.

us five days to ascend the river and only one to return.

Proceeding up the river one sees a cyclorama of such ruggedly wild and beautiful mountain scenery that it would hold in awe and silent admiration the most ardent lover of nature. At first one feels lost in the immensity of its great silence. Uprising in lavish and gigantic display, each crest and crag hung by bridal veils of the softest milk-white, show clear against the unclouded blue. On the flats grow the gigantic cotton-wood trees, much more massive than I had seen in other countries, while on the slopes almost invariably stand the big spruces so typical of the north. Nearing timber line the trees give place to a luxuriant growth of grass that supplies the sheep and goats of that country with an abundance of food. Finally, the tops are capped with the eternal snows.

The second day we passed through Kloochman Cañon. Here the water hurls itself through this narrow precipitous pass with terrific force, and the little boat sputtered and struggled while the exhaust every now and again would go under water, and it sounded like a thing alive, smothered, beaten, but still fighting for life. Then the exhaust coming up, it seemed to renew its

efforts and inch by inch we crawled up through the boiling, hissing waters.

Passing out of the cañon the character of the country changes, being decidedly more open, the cañon marking the divide from the Coast Range of mountains to the beginning of the Cassiars,—rolling mountains flanked with glaciers terminating in ragged gray peaks, while the more level spaces were overgrown with poplar and higher up lay the thick, deep, moss-covered slopes.

On the fifth day we reached the dangerous Glenora Rapids, only ten miles from Telegraph Creek, and it took us several hours to essay this most difficult stretch of the river. Here it was that so many lives were lost during the Klondike rush and many a cherished hope sank in its seething waters.

As we rounded a point in the afternoon the little buildings of Telegraph Creek came into view. Our landing was attended by all of the white inhabitants—that numbered nearly a half dozen in all—most of the numerous Tal-tan Indians and scores of big powerful looking dogs, huskies, Mackenzie River dogs, Malamutes and various other breeds—all with a greater or less strain of the wolf in them. These strange dogs that fiction has glorified so highly held a peculiar

attraction for me,—the uncanny creatures that shelter in our houses and share our bread, yet live in another world, a dumb, silent, lonely world shut out from ours by impassable barriers; drawing sleds in the winter and picking up a vagabond living in the idle summer, by hunting rabbits and raiding cabins from the back doors. They watched us disembark with hungry, savage eyes. Venture among them at night with the slightest fear and they will snarl and snap at your feet; but walk on your way without concern, or carry a stout stick with a dominant air and they slink off giving you a wide berth, watching you the while from the corners of their luminous eyes.

I had already arranged through J. Frank Callbreath for my complete outfit, which consisted of five strong pack horses, one saddle horse and two Indians of the Tal-tan tribe. McClosky (generally known as Mac) acted as guide, and I have never met a man, Indian or white, who could equal Mac as a hunter. He is chief of his tribe and in the winter carries the mail by dog team two hundred miles out to Atlin. His stories of the winter trails, told in his own quaint way around the campfires at night, were very absorbing and filled me with the thrill of the North, and the great white silences. His brother Pat did the

cooking and he, too, was well up in his art. Provisions were supplied by Hyland & Belfry; complete outfitting can also be arranged through them. I spent two or three days in Telegraph Creek preparing for my trip into the mountains, as I did not want to reach the hunting grounds until the game law was off, which is September 1st.

It chanced one night before starting on my hunt, I sat in my room writing. The lamp had burned low and the air had grown chill. I looked at my watch; the hour was later than I had thought. It was close to midnight. For hours the little hamlet had been slumbering, no sounds were falling, the hush of the night was complete.

It is often at a time like this I love to muse and ponder, out in the star-shine, alone with my pipe. On this occasion I pulled on a warm, fur-lined hunting coat, slipped down to the door and out into the starlit night. The frosty clear air was like rare old wine. Silently the darksome river flowed on its way below. The opposite bank rose steep and bold until its rocky, cragged top showed clear against the sky. A thin, silvery light grew behind the shattered spurs until a young crescent moon sailed up revealing her mellow light, silvering the river.

Over by the wood pile lay several huskies in restless slumber; every now and again they would raise their heads and peer at me through the pallid light, uttering a low growl, while their eyes shone like fox-fire. The night winds whispered soft and low, sighed, then dwindled until they were no more. Again the great silence reigned over all. Then from far up the river the loon's low note came like a soul's lost cry through the stillness of the night.

How long I sat there drinking in the wild scene in wonderment and solitude I do not know, for presently a strange thing occurred. Out of the blue throbbing night there ebbed a faint sound that came ululating over the distant hills like a voice of the wind,—then lost itself as softly as it had commenced. Three or four huskies trotted swiftly by as soundless as a darting shadow. Down by the lonely shore I saw several of them flitting about like witches in the moonlight, now sitting on their tails in a solemn circle, now listening intently in the vast silence, as if they scented or perhaps just felt the presence of some unknown force that was hidden from human sense. Something seemed to be wrong in the wild to-night. A long interval of profound silence passed. Then sud-

denly nearer and louder this time, an unearthly howl came rolling down the mountains. It was the long wail of a great lone wolf. Then the huskies, which are but wolves of yesterday, raised their muzzles to the sky and howled as if demented.

From the sable banks just across the river came a long woo-ooo-wow-wow, and then a great black wolf leaped to the very top of a spur and stood motionless in clear-cut silhouette against the crisp stars and young moon. Sitting back on his haunches and pointing his jaws to the moon he rolled out on the night air what seemed a long appealing wail. The huskies appeared to be held by some impelling force from which they could not tear themselves. It was the strong and free, calling to his degenerate captive kinsmen to be wild. One leap, and the shadows, black as the great wolf himself, took him into their arms—and I saw him no more.

The huskies whined, trotted hither and yon—then melted into the night. Only the murmurings of the river broke the stillness.

At last everything being in readiness, we ferried our packs and swam our horses across the Stikine; then packing the outfit, toiled slowly up the mountainside and back into the mountains.



Packing the outfit after crossing the Sikkim.

For three days we followed the old Klondike trail, where so many succumbed to the hardships during the gold rush, and, so story says, many are the bones that lay bleaching on the mountainside.

The fourth day we turned off and struck through a heavily timbered country. Mac went ahead and stolidly cut trail, hour after hour, so as to make it possible for the train to go through. We were going into a country, Mac said, that had never been hunted either by Indian or white man, excepting on one occasion, when he was there seven years ago, and as he put it, "Game he neber see man before, he no fraid, we go close." Then he had a pleasing way of displaying two splendid rows of perfect teeth. "Plenty game, plenty game," he would say smilingly. "Pretty soon you feel happy." This was a good deal for Mac to say, for he seldom talked excepting at night around the campfire.

It was late that night when we made camp, high up at the edge of timber line.

At the first vague signs of dawn Pat had always come to my tent and called me for breakfast, but this morning it was different. It was time to be up, the little drab light creeping in my tent said so. But what was it that made it seem so strange,—and the stillness so intense?

With a little shiver running down my back I rolled out to see. Snow flakes were whirling in the air and the whole world lay under a blanket of unbroken white, while it was fiendishly cold. Mac was just coming over to borrow the binoculars and he explained in his quaint way: "Big storm up here above timber, move camp no good; mebbe to-morrow we cross high mountains and camp good sheep country. You give me your glasses, mebbe I see beeg fat grizzly bear."

From the crest of the hill Mac scanned the country, and in a temporary lull in the storm, while the sun tried hard to show its wan face over the billowing mountains, something showed big and dark far below in the stragglng timber. One look was enough for Mac. He was back in less than three minutes. "Put yo shoe on quick. Take yo gun and plenty cartridges; maybe I see beeg grizzly bear; maybe he black; we find out pretty quick." We each had a hasty cup of coffee and then started off, stepping gingerly along over the soft white carpet of snow. The wind was so that it required our making almost a complete circle, but the stalk was very much facilitated from the fact that we were above the point and the going, with the exception of climbing a few small ridges, all down hill.

Whether on the trail hunting, or even stalking, excepting when very near the game, Mac traveled with remarkable swiftness, and it taxed me to the utmost to stay with him. He, too, had the eye of an eagle, no less, and it was on account of these traits I gave him the title of "Old High Speed" and "Old Eagle Eye," at which, when I explained their relation, Mac smiled his famous broad smile. It was little things like this, denoting appreciation, that kept him always keyed up, keen, yet serious, but under all a good-natured harmony.

We had traveled nearly a mile and were just topping a little crest when the very unexpected happened. Mac suddenly dropped to one knee. "Look," he whispered, "shoot him; shoot him good," he added. About two hundred and fifty yards in front, in the low-growing firs, a magnificent bull moose, with handsome wide antlers was swinging up the mountain with long, graceful stride. The old mauser split the quiet air, and rather to my surprise (for it all happened so quickly) a giant moose collapsed and rolled down the mountain for a hundred yards, and then lodged at the edge of the timber. "You knock him cold," said Old Eagle Eye, and added, "You feel warm now, eh?" Then came his cheering smile again.

Strange how the killing of a fine trophy banishes hunger, cold and weariness. "Bear, he no hear yo shoot, he way down below, we go right on an' get him," continued Mac. Hurrying on down the mountain we passed by the fallen moose. I paused only long enough to take one good look at him. A fine head and fresh meat, almost a little too easy though, I was saying to myself, as I hurried on after Mac; for I had already learned that if I did not keep up, it would seem almost impossible to close the gap between us.

This is my lucky day, I told myself; I never felt so fine, spite of the icy wind, and drifting bits of snow. My gun felt light and I seemed to be moving along as easily as the indomitable Mac himself. I even had a premonition that I was going to kill one of the finest old grizzlies in the country, within the next hour.

As we were coming out of a little patch of alders Mac spoke in his sign language, advising me to remain still until he had carefully scanned the country below. In fact it was always his custom before coming out into an opening or passing over any commanding point, to carefully survey every scrap of country. Mac gave me the sign to come on, and I might add at this point that his system of signs was much more adequate than



The two Indians, McClosky on right.

words. After learning them we never spoke while hunting or stalking.

At a trot we crossed a wide bare space on the mountainside, then dropped down into the green timber (spruce). Here the stalk commenced in dead earnest. It was a delight to see the catlike manner with which the Indian slipped through the woods, with the very craftiness of the prowling kindreds themselves. A half hour went by. Then I got the sign to freeze (which really would not have been very hard to do in that low temperature; in fact I thought my ears had already obeyed the orders). We had come to a point where a little scope of country could be viewed. Then I glimpsed Mac showing his teeth,—in other words he was smiling, and by that I knew the game was in sight and it looked good to him.

To come to where he was, slow, low, and noiseless, was indicated by a beckon and the turning of his palm to me. He seemed to take it for granted I was always watching him, for he never even looked my way. There he was, nosing about on a sparsely timbered knoll about two hundred yards away, not a grizzly but a fine old robust black bear. There was not enough cover to continue on in the same direction, so we dropped back in the thick woods again and made another

short stalk. I was just wondering if we had not made a slight miscalculation, when I saw Mac slowly sink to the ground until I thought he would go right on through it. Almost unconsciously I was doing the very same thing. Then came the best sign of all,—to proceed a little in advance of him and shoot.

As I crawled through the snow, I put my right glove in Mac's hand, and he might have been stone dead for all the movement he showed.

Kneeling up, I saw the great black glossy coat of the bear that showed in marked contrast against the snow. He was looking straight at me, his little furry ears cocked forward, not thirty yards away. There was no time for careful aiming, for here the cover was thick, and any instant he might lose himself to view. "Shoot him again," said Mac after the first shot, which I thought hit him fair. But the bear was off in the thicket before I could sight again. Here was a chance to get warm, for we took up the trail on the run, and by the dots of scarlet on the snow we did not expect to go far. The bear ran diagonally down the mountainside. Just as he was crossing a little brook I got a fair sight of him and brought him down at 150 yards, with a shot in the shoulder.

He proved to be a male, and his teeth being well worn down showed that he was an old settler. He was in good fur and his weight I would guess to be over 250. After getting him up on the bank I took the customary pictures, but the light, what there was of it, was exceedingly poor. While we were busy skinning the bear—or rather while Mac was—for to tell the truth I was enjoying a pipe, and just holding on to one leg occasionally at Mac's suggestion—we spied a little black object coming down the mountain, which grew and grew until it finally turned out to be Pat the cook. I suppose partly out of curiosity and partly to see if he could be of some assistance, he had hunted us up.

Pat made a fire, which was a very happy thought. After warming up a bit, and the skinning over, we started Pat back to camp with the pelt. Then came that heart-breaking climb back to the moose. It hardly seemed possible we could have come all that distance in so short a time, for the going back seemed to be everlasting. The sun had struggled out and was clearing up the snow on the lower slopes. This made the climbing the more wet and slippery, but at length we reached the spot where the moose had lodged. He showed twenty-three points and a fifty-inch spread. This

with a black bear, all before breakfast, seemed to me something like exceeding the speed limit. "I take yo knife again—he cut putty good," said Mac, and he soon had the head and a good-sized piece of meat ready to pack in. On reaching camp we all had a hearty breakfast—or perhaps I might say lunch—for it was then noon. After getting dried out, and talking it all over, Mac took a horse and packed in the head.

The day dawned clear and cold. Sunrise found us again with the pack train headed for the sheep country. Slowly we climbed the bare face of the mountain, high up above timber line. Ptarmigan cackled and flew hither and yon. Patches of white of their winter dress were already showing. Whistling marmots sounded their plaintive notes in every direction. A fox barked and went his way on some secret errand bent—beware you giddy ptarmigan! A hare rose up and limped over a crest. All the furred and feathered dwellers of the wild were busy—very busy indeed—putting on fat and thick coats for the coming winter.

At length we reached the top of the divide. Turning due east, the train straightened out and we settled down for a long day's march across the high, wind-swept, desolate moraine. A polar



Mac and the first moose of the trip.

wind swooped down with its icy breath and sang a long wild song all its own—down through the hungry teeth of the mountains, that chilled both man and beast to the bone. To the west great saw-toothed peaks thrust aloft their white jagged tops where the sun danced in radiant colors on their snows. To the south loomed an enormous glacier with its hundreds of feet of everlasting snow and ice that showed in delicate shades of greens and blues.

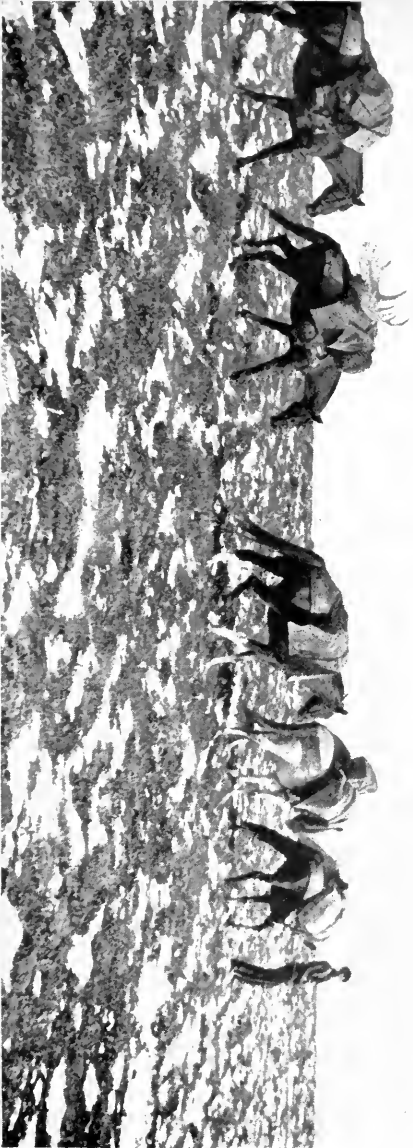
Toward afternoon the character of the ground changed to a soft gravelly substance that made the going very hard and wearisome. I led my saddle horse for several miles, as he frequently sank almost to his knees, while the pack horses would lie down every now and again. So it was with great difficulty we kept them up and going. The nature of the ground was finally accounted for, when we came to an extinct volcano that stood out in dark contrast against the snow where the wind had bared its sides, and showed a formation with strange colors of deep brown and maroon. Immense rock-like boulders were strewn about as if by giants' play.

Here again we had difficulty in getting the train across, the result of the earth's upheaval and strange tumble of rocks.

Late afternoon saw us still coming east, grim, tired and cold. There was no sound, save the mock of the wind. Nothing moved, nothing stirred—there was no life up there. How bleak it was—and night was coming on. Since early morning the only indication of life I saw was the skull of an old ram. When I asked Mac to account for its presence he replied, "Plenty beeg timber wolf he kill him," so that death, if not life, visited there.

At last, in the fading light we saw a vast valley stretched below. First came the high, steep slopes of green grass amid white patches of snow—then the white patches disappeared and here and there a few stunted clusters of fire came into view. Far below the deep olive green giant spruces, standing in motionless array, beckoned us to a comfortable camp. But best of all a silver stream finding its source amid the lofty snow-clad ramps, gamboled with merry chatter adown their sides, so that man and beast could soon slake their thirst that had been gnawing all through the long day's march. How good the crackle of the campfire sounded and how the tongues of flame leaped and danced, as we crowded up near to drive out the cold of the savage wind.

Morning arose. It was one of those drab days



Crossing the mountains above timber line.

when the whole landscape looked forlorn and empty. The sky was sullen gray—no sun—but a wannish glare, I had fancied it would be clear. While making our way down into the valley the evening before, Mac had seen five large rams feeding high up in a little grassy pocket. But a careful examination of the surrounding heights in the morning failed to disclose any rams.

After a little deliberation Mac decided we had better climb the towering heights (that looked almost sheer from their base, where we were camped), and hunt the opposite side of the range. When I looked up at those rugged heights I did not see how it was possible for a man, either white or red, to scale their tops and live to come down and tell of it. But Mac knew, he always knew—and faith goes a long way.

Taking the binoculars Mac proceeded to climb. He was to go on ahead, and with his more experienced eyes and by the aid of the glasses, he would be able to look over a vast amount of territory. Pat and myself following up at a much slower pace were to wait on reaching the top, until we saw Mac appear on the crest of some peak. Here he would give us a signal which way to proceed, and still another sign if he had sighted game.

Like a little cloud shadow Mac wormed up the mountain with astonishing swiftness; then he dwindled to a mere speck, and finally disappeared altogether from our view. At last we reached the top and high up upon a crest I sat, musing over these vast untrodden solitudes, where nature lays a finger to the lips of all care—mused and drank repose from the cool air. How strange and still and tense it was, there in the quiet upper world.

The silence was soon broken by Pat saying “Yo see little peak obber der?” I admitted I could see at least that much. “Yo see something on top?” “Yes,” I replied, “something that looks like a little rock about a foot high.” “That little rock be Mac. Bymeby he talk to us.” Pat raised both arms high in the air—then the little “rock” seemed to take life, and there was a slight movement. “Mac he raise right hand, once, twice, three time,” said Pat, “he tell us he see three big rams. Pretty quick he talk to us some more.” Then there was another slight movement on the little peak which I could not quite make out. Then Pat added, “He say we go quick, run, he meet us down by big snow.”

In something like a half hour, by fast walking and running (for it was all slightly down hill

now) we came to the edge of a blue glacier, and to my surprise Mac was already there, waiting,—he must have run down the entire length of the mountain. Crossing the glacier we left Pat behind, and we were off in quest of *Ovis Stoneii*. Then commenced a severe stalk lasting over an hour across some nasty shale rocks and loose gravel, which was impossible to traverse excepting at a snail's pace. One misstep would have meant terrible disaster far below in the yawning depths.

We were now making our final stalk that should bring us within fair range. I could not resist the temptation to raise my head and take one peep at them. They were lying down on the bare mountainside about three hundred yards off. While I looked there was a slight rumbling noise, then as if by a silent command, they rose as one and stood motionless. It was a rock that had loosened at the top and rolled down. When it had passed they settled down again in their same respective positions. The rocks were sharp and the crawling was most difficult; but if we could make another fifty yards I felt that I could score.

Now Mac stopped, they were up again walking slowly,—this time in the direction of a little patch of sheep grass. Reaching the grass they care-

fully scanned their surroundings, while we transformed ourselves into the very immobility of the stones around. Satisfying themselves there was nothing moving on all that great mountainside, they went to nibbling the sweet grass tops. Mac took one long look with the glasses, then held up three fingers and pointed to the middle finger. By that I took it that the middle ram carried the set of horns he wanted me to have.

Between nibbles the sheep would raise their heads, scan the country as if they expected to see an adversary. They seemed conscious of something unusual and commenced to walk slowly up the mountain. Carefully I raised my gun and Mac nodded his approval. They appeared a little over two hundred yards distant. Luckily they stopped and took that one last look that so often proves their undoing. I was taking up the creep on the trigger; the sight looked good. The mauser spoke out and a fine big ram rolled down the mountain, lodging in a tumble of rocks.

The tape showed a 16-inch base and 41-inch curl—a most satisfactory head. All measurements of horns as is generally known, will show a shrinkage of one-half to three-quarters of an inch after having been killed a few weeks. The official base measurement in Telegraph Creek



Stone's sheep.

some weeks later showed only $15\frac{1}{4}$, but it is rather rare to find a base over 14 of the *Ovis Stencki*.

While we were removing the scalp four ewes circled around us, showing the utmost curiosity. At times they would stop some 200 yards off and gaze at us as though saying, "You look mighty strange, but this is about as near as we care to come." Then getting our scent they scampered up to the very top. How strange that even though an animal may never have seen a human being, the dread of the man-scent seems born in them. Off to the north we saw several goats feeding on a lofty patch of green grass. They looked like little snowballs that had come to life.

It was dark when we reached camp, but Pat, who had returned before us, had a roaring good fire going. I know of nothing so welcome, after a hard day's hunt, as the old campfire, when one is tired, cold and wet; deep down in your heart there is a calm, clean satisfaction that makes one feel quite in harmony with all guileless nature.

The dawn wind played around my tent in fitful, panicky little gusts, and I could see outside that it must have been snowing all night, for it had piled deep. In fact it looked as if we were literally sewed up. It was Sunday, anyway, and

therefore a very good day to remain about camp. Attending to scalps, cleaning guns, drying out I don't know how many pairs of socks, taking the .22 for an hour in the afternoon and bringing a half-dozen fat ptarmigan back for supper filled in the day very nicely. The snow changed to sleet, then to a drenching drizzle that lasted throughout the night and had quite cleared off the snow down in the timber by morning.

Two days later, with the train, brought us to what we chose to call Goat Camp. This singular animal which makes its home in the giant, rocky peaks, is the most daring of all mountain climbers, fearless, sure-footed, and delighting in scaling great heights, taking perilous leaps across the chasms. His coat is white, soft and fluffy, while its color has the effect of magnifying his size, which is usually 35 to 40 inches at the shoulder. When full grown, he will weigh from 200 to 250 pounds. He has practically no enemies save man and eagles. When danger threatens he climbs up or down the steepest precipices he can find and there is no wild creature without wings that can follow him.

Everything spelled goat on this violet-tinted morning, as we trod along a faint game trail. Pinnacle after pinnacle, through the thin mist,



White mountain-goat.



Preparing to move camp.

thrust up its shattered lance, while yonder rose the sun with boundless majesty that melted the azure with a kindling of fluid gold and set the peaks on fire.

A fine old Billy had finished an early breakfast and lay drowsing on the lip of an outcropping rock. Perhaps from his great height he was enjoying the shifting colors on the crags below that were bathed in a flow of tender rose pinks, and thin, indescribable reds, and pulsating golds; or perhaps he was studying two mere specks in the distance, one Indian and one white man. Anyway, I like to think of him, alone up there, with only the eagles and hawks and ptarmigan for company, and how he calmly surveyed the world below, with that feeling of security and lordship.

The climb was too long, too hard, and too circuitous to lead the reader over all the toilsome stalk. More than once going over a dangerous rock slide I would have been almost willing to have called it off and let that Billy continue to be lord over his domain. One misstep and we would not have a whole bone left. And then there were the rock slides that kept us ever glancing upward, for if one should be caught by a slide there would be no hope. At length we had gained a point from where I was to shoot, and

cautiously peering around a sharp ledge—the outcropping rock was empty and bare—the goat had fled—I almost smiled, I didn't want to kill him anyway, I told myself. But Mac had a different version of it. He assigned me to this post, to remain indefinitely and wide awake. Then he lost himself among the crags and fissures, and the last I saw of him, his trail was pointing up to heaven and the going of him was amazing.

There was an unearthly, painful silence up there; the minutes dragged slowly by; I was wishing for something to happen—and it did, very suddenly, too. A great rock tore and bounced its way down the cliff. Then Mac stood up on a pinnacle above, gave a shout and pointed below. In magnificent bounds and leaps a great white goat was coming down the rocky peak and just as he topped a rock in front I fired. He collapsed and continued down the mountain, but rolling and bouncing now and not of his own volition. The goat hunt was over, and as Mac stood looking down a broad smile swept across his face.

XII

NORTHERN GAME TRAILS

PART II—HUNTING CARIBOU AND GRIZZLY

OUTSIDE it was raining, and the swish of the wind on the leaves conspired and whispered with the rain. Pat called me for breakfast and announced that we would move camp over to Bear Mountain as soon as it cleared a little.

It is a matter of five days to Bear Mountain; there were no trails and for two days Mac had a hard time of it, continually cutting through the down timber that, lying lengthwise and crosswise, barred our passage on every hand. The third day we crossed a series of bogs and had a most difficult time with the train, for the horses were continually sinking to their depths in the mud, and we were compelled to remove the packs to get them on their feet again.

Further on at the edge of a wide bog we came on a half-grown bull moose, and as he showed no signs of fear or making off I took the camera

and walked to within thirty yards of him and took his picture. Suddenly I heard Pat and Mac shout "He come for you!" Sure enough he was running straight for me and I made post haste for the nearest tree. He stopped quite close and stood staring at me. This is the most unusual performance of a moose that I have ever heard of. I only record this to show that anything but the impossible may be expected of a wild animal, and perhaps the next one, even with the most careful stalking, would be impossible to get within range of. As we rode on he still stood staring after us.

The fourth day we crossed the head of the Iskoot, that flows into the Stikine many miles further south. This crossing the Iskoot may sound very simple, but the river at this point is too deep to ford and its icy waters rush on with an alarming swiftness, so that it took us several hours to build a raft, ferry the packs, swim the horses and repack the outfit.

At last we reached the Ashcroft trail and as we were to return over this trail we made a cache of 100 pounds of provisions, all the horns, and in fact everything we could possibly do without, so as to reduce the weight of the packs and make better time.



A half-grown bull moose.

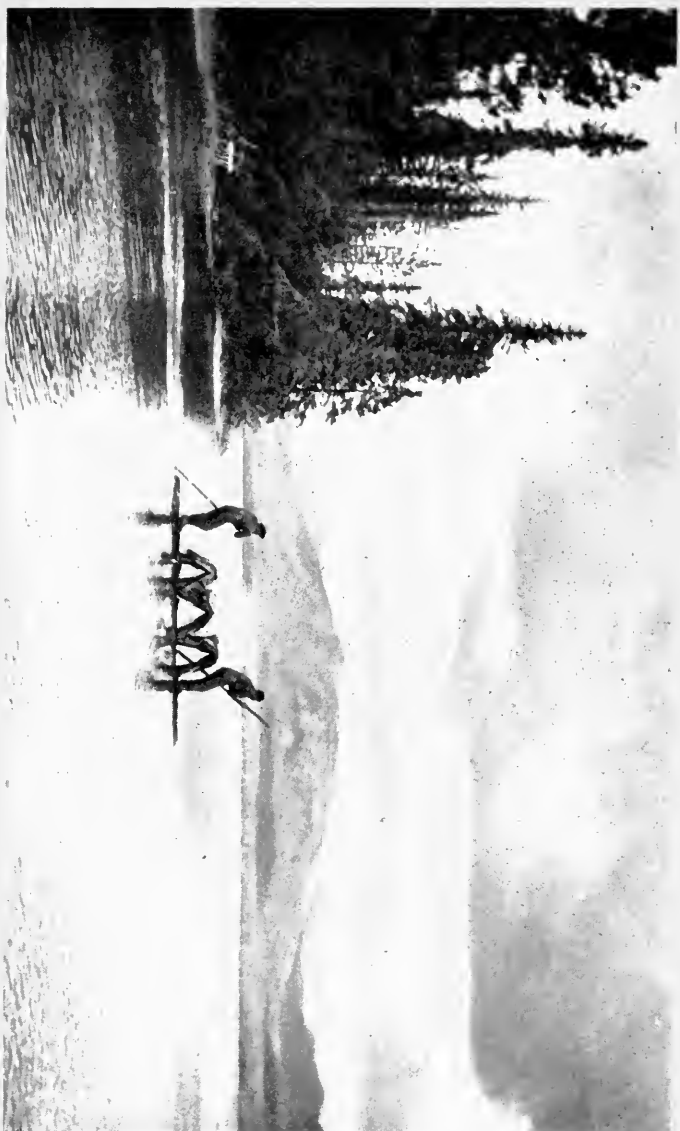
There was no difficulty in picking up, with the .22, what grouse we required for the pot along the trail. I found three varieties—the Franklin grouse, the Richardsons and Ruffed. Of the ptarmigan I got two varieties—the Willow and the Rock; but of course they were almost invariably found above timber on the bare, snowy slopes.

For several days Mac and I hunted Bear Mountain and the surrounding country for America's most prized, as well as most dangerous of all big game animals—the grizzly. In the lower country his signs were frequently seen, where he had reaped a harvest when the berries were at their best,—but we were just a few days too late. So now it was to the higher bare slopes we turned our attention, where he so assiduously pursues and digs out the whistling marmot of this country (locally called ground hog). We often saw his big unwieldy track, in snow, in sand, in the mud, and also his recently dug holes, large enough to admit his great hulk, where he had been searching out some luckless ground hog. But never once did we glimpse the royal quarry himself. The autumnal days were slipping by all too fast and the mornings grew ever more drear and chill. The Indians were getting tired

of grouse and ptarmigan and said unhesitatingly they wanted "big meat."

Up on the mountains the storm had been raging all day and the hammering gale drove the sleet in our faces that cut like bits of steel. On two Indian ponies Mac and I were slowly toiling up the crest of a high peak. The Indian rode ahead bare-back, grave and stolid, for he was too proud to use a saddle like the pale-face. Slowly mounting the steep slopes Mac would sometimes stop, shade his eyes and peer below through the sea of driving white flakes. What a wonderful picture he made as his dim outline loomed dark against the veiled background. He wore no hat, but in its stead an olive green bandana tied about his thick black hair, knotted at the top so that the ends stood up and looked in the vague light like the old-time two-feather headdress of his forefathers. Every move and pose was typical of his race.

Near the top under the lee of some great bare rocks we dismounted, made a little fire, for wood was scarce up there, and partook of a rather late and frugal lunch. The frantic gale fairly screeched over our heads and went wailing and moaning on its way. Then finally it seemed to have done its worst and blown itself out. There



Crossing the head of the Iskoot.

came a lull, the sky brightened, the wind lessened, then it ceased snowing. The sun came out bright and clear, driving the mist out of the valleys and revealing a wonderful landscape below.

Leaving our horses we decided to hunt in the vicinity on foot, but after a long and careful search that revealed nothing new, we turned upward to the point we had left.

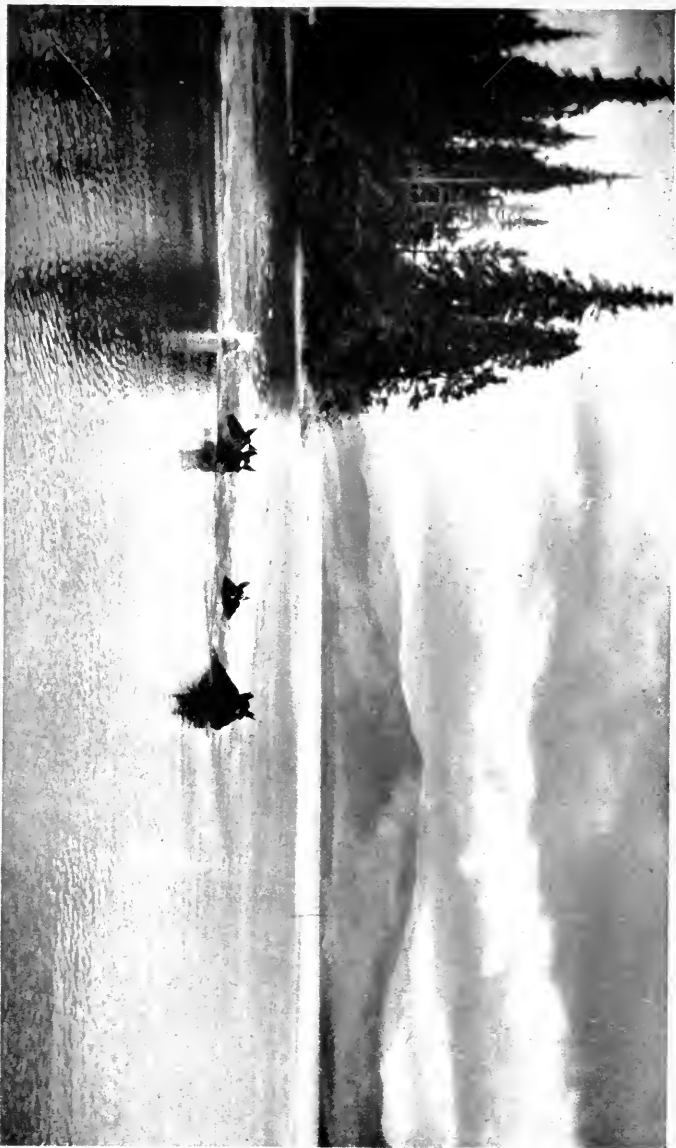
Far below in an unbroken stretch of spruce forest a little lonely lake looked up, smooth as a mirror, and spread pink, amber and gold toward the dappled pink and orange sky, where the sun had just sunk behind the peaks. Thick and straight the somber spruces pressed up the sheer slopes about it, their tops like embattled spear-points against the colored sky. From the farther shore a long gray point jutted out into the lake and on the very tip, in the strange shifting light, a magnificent form with lofty head that showed black against the orange glow, stood a giant bull moose, motionless, as if modeled in bronze. His wide, palmated antlers thrown back over his shoulders, his muzzle thrust out as if to issue a challenge to a rival bull.

Something moved up on the bare face of the mountain; then grew into two dots that showed black against the snow—something that looked at

first like two flies crawling down the mountain side. Now they seemed to double their pace as they neared the first straggling patch of cover. Then if an eagle had soared overhead he would have seen one Indian with an olive-green head-dress and one very cold white man stealing softly up-wind like the fox after the ptarmigan.

Mac was quietly and soundlessly slipping through the low firs and I followed in his very footsteps. A long wide circle and we were working our way up through the big spruces that line the shore of the lake. There was no sound except now and then the inexplicable rustle of a dead leaf, or an elfish gurgle of water from somewhere in the shadows along the shore.

There were still a hundred yards to traverse before the long gray point could be scanned, and now Mac, with the very craft of a padded-foot, tufted-eared, slash-clawed lynx, wormed his way toward the scene of expectancy. What had happened? There stood the Indian as still as a tree, one hand held high, and for seconds he might have been a graven image for all he moved. Then he made a strange sign that I could not quite understand, but which seemed to indicate there was more than one moose ahead. Then the sharp crack of a twig had an almost electrifying effect



Swimming the horses across the river.

in that uncanny stillness. After a short interval came the savage gruntings, as of some large animal; more breaking of brush, a strange trampling sound, a snort, and then the sound of a fearful impact with a dull thud.

With pounding pulses we at last peered over the thin gray point and the splendor of that scene bit deep into my memory. Two giant bulls had met in mortal combat and with lowered heads, brow to brow, were heaving all their great bulk, one to force back the other, and victory seemed to hang exactly in the balance. Now, as I looked, a little stream of scarlet was spurting from the neck of the somewhat smaller bull; slowly he seemed to be weakening. Then I was suddenly startled at the rather unusual sound of Mac's voice, saying: "Why you no shoot?" It suddenly dawned on me that I had simply forgotten to do so. Then Mac added, "You kill him beeg one—before he make other too sick."

At the report of the rifle a cow that had been idly looking on from the opposite shore, trotted off into the woods. The two bulls disengaged themselves and the larger stood as if glued to the spot. The other walked unsteadily to the water's edge, paused to look back, then sank into the cold waters, swam to the other side, shook his coat

free of the icy water and vanished in the direction of the cow. The big bull required another shot and then all his battles were at an end. His antlers were massive and heavy, all the points long—nineteen in number, with a 60-inch spread.

It was late that night when we got back to tents, tired, cold and wolfishly hungry, but light-hearted withal. The next few days failed to disclose any very fresh grizzly signs. We found his great human-like prints high up in the mountains, and where he had “laid up” under a shelving rock; but we could not seem to have the luck to happen upon a track fresh enough to warrant our following up the ponderous maker. The days were growing short and there was that in the air which seemed to warn all things to prepare to depart before the iron hand of winter closed down over the land.

Something must be done if I was to keep the pledge I had made to myself,—not to return without a grizzly. I had heard of a distant range where the lordly Osborn’s caribou roamed and the grizzly prowled undaunted over his realm with a grim joy of lordship, and its wandering, watchful inhabitants,—his slaves—almost all.

“Let’s try for caribou,” I suggested one evening. Mac looked serious for a few moments, then



The big fellow's battles were at an end.

finally said: "Caribou Mountains long way off—hundred mile norf; mebbe plenty big snow come; mebbe we make it; you tell me all right we go."

Those were long days on the trail, and we drove the train hard for several days, as we filed along silently through the great untrodden solitudes. Hour after hour sped by and excepting for the creaking of the gear and an occasional "Come, Jack!" "Get in there, Blackie," as Mac urged on the horses, we moved northward in stern silence, rapidly dropping the miles behind, now skirting the edge of a huge mountain that reared itself like a great gray monster against the sky—now passing through leagues upon leagues of burnt timber, where the trees, stricken to the heart, stood bare and cleft. Again down the rocky mountainside where the boulders were heaped and piled together in a rough turbulence, crossing the little rivulet that gurgled and chanted its way through the pine forests, dark and hoar, while the big trees whispered low and mild and waved their long arms to and fro. Out of the forests through a long stretch of low-growing willows, where the snow-shoe rabbits frisked and played in the wan gleam of the wintery sun. Further to one side over some craggy cliffs, a great eagle wheeled his

spiral way. Into the deep forests again, and through the trackless reaches of sombrous spruces that stood by the trail like phantoms grim and tall.

So it was on the seventh day I had my first glimpse of Caribou Mountain, rising bare and cold amid the purple distance, in a track of the setting sun. With weary limbs we moved on and upward, into the flush of the sunset, until at last we made camp in a small patch of balsams, just near the timber limit.

Caribou Mountain is really a vast flat range, some twenty-five miles in extent, by perhaps twenty miles across. Its surroundings are high, snow-covered peaks; with the exception of a little scrubby willow it is for the most part devoid of vegetation. Owing to the continual storms of this section and dampness of the ground, its tops or barrens are covered with a thick deep moss, upon which the Osborn caribou are wont to feed. At this time of year the stags are splendid, impressive looking beasts, with massive antlers and their long white manes tossing in the wind, while there is a glint of fire in their eyes. The long-legged, inquisitive fawns make a pretty picture as they go trotting after the sleek cows, whose



On the trail.

heads carry small pointed horns, more deadly by far than the stags' cumbersome antlers.

Over the bleak partly snow-covered tract I stood, watching the slowly dying day, and all the world seemed to stand by, silent, hushed, awed, as if waiting for the end. An old cock ptarmigan buzzed by, straightened and stopped his wings, then slid on a long slant and dropped out of sight in the willows. A hare, with his autumnal coat nearly matching the snow, got up literally out of the ground, limped into space and passed. Then, as if the picture were not sufficiently arresting, on the very top of a snow-covered crest stood a magnificent old bull caribou in silhouette, all burnished in silver, against a silently raging furnace. Came then dusk to the pomp of the dying day, and the sable skirts of night descended softly as a drifting feather.

Outside the quivering ring of campfire light the darkness was profound, which wavered, advanced and receded. The blackness was so hopelessly impenetrable I wondered if a storm was rolling up. Soon I saw little pale stars timidly glimmering through the vast black vault above. Then a meek, wan moon came stealing shyly up over the bleak, ghost-like spurs and shed a milky, uncanny light through a large, round misty halo.

“Mebbe he snow to-night,” said Mac dryly, as he took another helping of rice: then added, “I no like weather, he look bad; if snow not too beeg to-morrow we hunt beeg bull you see at sunset. He no trabbel to-night. Unless——” Mac stopped short in the middle of his sentence. There was a long pause—the fire flickered and seemed to shrink into the very earth; the air was tense and still. Something moved between us and the moon—something shot past like a drifting cloud shadow, or a puff of smoke. Or did I just imagine it? Mac was as still as a stone. His eyes kindled; surely he had seen it too. Two more, and then five vague forms swept by in the strange unreal light, with that unmistakable gliding, slouching trot of the wolf. I had counted eight, almost as many wolves as I had seen altogether in twenty years of roaming in remote wilderness lands.

How many more there were I never knew. Soon what apparently was the leader showed again against the half light of the moon on the top of an up-thrust fang of rock in dim outline. Then with his sensitive muzzle raised toward the sky, sounded the hunt cry to his fellow kinsmen. They seemed to answer from the top of every jutting rock. The long chorus deepened



At the ford.

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and swelled into a roar that filled all the night, then waked the sleeping echoes and set them jumping like startled goats from crag to crag. Every chord in their wild hearts seemed to thrill in answer to the leader's summons.

The howling ceased abruptly and several forms shot by like a ray of moonlight, as the pack of pale-eyed ravaging intruders swept on its way. Then the brooding silence again shut down over all that great land.

"By damn," said Mac at last, "he make bad sign; leader he talk to wolf pack and say 'we all hunt big meat,' and the wolf pack they talk to leader and tell him 'all right, we go.'" Mac seemed to think that this would spoil our chances for that big bull we intended to hunt in the morning and I quite agreed with him. He also indicated in his quaint way that the wolves had gotten ahead of us and were very probably on the caribou's trail at that moment. Once more, but faint and far now, came the quavering pack cry across the gray white reaches of that desolate, lonesome land. Often through the night I thought I could hear their unearthly wail in the distance; but it may have been only the straying of the wind.

In the morning it was snowing hard, while the

hammering gale drove in the cold and played weird music as it swooped on down the lonely mountainside. On two horses Mac and I decided to face the storm and hunt, spite of it all. There was really very little use in venturing out while the storm continued, for it was impossible to see much over a hundred yards through the whirling flakes, while the footprints of the wild dwellers were quickly sealed with the white covering. Mac, however, never wanted to remain about camp when it was possible to be out and doing.

Stolidly we skirted the mountain above timber line, and save for the scuttling away of a few ptarmigan now and again, and the whining of the gale, there was neither sign nor sound of a living thing. Death seemed the only inhabitant of those limitless, desolate expanses. No less awful than the weird moaning of the wind was the unspeakable stillness that shut down when it ceased. It was near noon when we stopped in the shelter of a cluster of stunted firs, where we managed to kindle a little fire and eat an all too scanty lunch-con. The wind veered round to the west and the sky grew a little brighter, but still fine crystalline flakes volleyed through the air.

Continuing on around the upper edge of the mountain we came on to a number of unmistak-



My tent in the high, cold caribou country.

ably fresh caribou tracks. They could not have been much more than a few minutes old, as otherwise the snow would have soon smoothed them out. Taking up the trail we had not gone more than a few hundred yards when Mac signaled we were very near them and that he had better proceed on foot. After a short stalk there suddenly loomed above the willows what looked to me like a splendid pair of antlers. Then I made out several smaller sets of horns which now plainly indicated that a large band of caribou were lying down and just the tops of their heads were visible. They must have suspected the presence of some threatening danger. They could not have scented us as the wind was strong from them to us.

Suddenly they jumped to their feet, and as they did so I trained the rifle on the larger bull. And then a strange thing happened. I felt a pressure on my arm which threw out my aim. The band were off now in long, graceful bounds. Again I drew up the rifle on the big fellow and again the pressure with a remark from Mac, saying, "You no kill him, we get heaper bigger head." Mac, to make sure I would not shoot, had simply pressed my arm down. This made me feel rather provoked at first as the head looked to be a good one, but very probably on account of

the peculiar light, the antlers appeared larger than they really were. In a few more bounds they vanished amid the gray mass of flakes. It had been a long, hard day and as it drew to a close the result was somewhat disquieting as we had failed to find any worthy quarry.

We now directed our course toward camp, while our hearts grew a bit lighter as the storm abated and the clouds scattered, showing once more the clear blue sky. By the time we reached camp it had grown intensely cold, there was scarce a cloud to be seen and we were treated to another of those glorious mountain sunsets. While it was still light, Mac took his usual evening scan about with the glasses, and across the valley located another band of caribou.

"I see beeg bull for sure," said Mac, still peering through the glasses. "He have plenty cows with him, he no trabbel to-night, we hunt him early to-morrow; mebbe we get good luck now; mebbe we get grizzly pretty soon; then we go home queek."

That night it grew bitterly cold and we hugged close to the old campfire as we ate a very modest meal, for we were already going light on the fast diminishing store of provisions, and it was very uncertain when we would reach our reserve stores

Two caribou in their native haunts.



which we had cached many miles to the south. The little crystal stars winked and sparkled out of the cold inky sky and looked down over the cruel, trackless land where the cold ate its way to the heart of the densest thickets—famine and death stalked hand in hand. Sometimes the implacable starlight would pale and the sinister spectral flames of the northern lights would go dancing and wavering across the arch of sky, in colors of thin elusive red, electric blue and violet.

Early morning found us zigzagging down the mountainside, for the caribou were still loitering on the higher slopes of the opposite hills. Riding across the long stretch of willows that filled the valley below, then fording a swift glacier stream, we came to the foot of the mountain we were to climb. Here we left the horses and proceeded to make a careful stalk, which proved to be rather a lengthy matter, as there was no cover and a hard crust having formed over the snow during the night made the going both wearisome and noisy. An hour of difficult climbing brought us within two hundred yards of the animals. There were several cows and a large bull together, while off to one side were two lesser bulls. The two smaller ones had sighted and were eyeing us with distrust and curiosity. Not getting our wind,

and curiosity exceeding caution, they came on slowly, studying us carefully the while. Mac and I remained absolutely motionless until they drew up within about fifty yards, when I focused the camera upon them and recorded the scene. Now they were thoroughly alarmed and made off at a lively gait. The big-eyed, long-eared cows stood staring as if they were aware of some pending danger. The old bull grew restless and as he caught sight of the other bulls coming in his direction, must have suddenly suspected them of interfering with his family affairs, and immediately started off on what appeared to be a head-long rush for them.

Over the face of the mountain swept the caribou—and on, strong, handsome looking beasts, to fight out the battle of life and demands of the hungry winter. But the big fellow's struggles were over, for he lay quite still in the snow.

I found him a very good specimen of Osborn's caribou, the length of horn being fifty-one inches and well furnished with points.

On the way back to camp we came upon a porcupine, slowly and serenely climbing a small balsam. He allowed us to approach within a few feet and seemed to survey us with an unconcerned air that said, "Go ahead and touch me

A typical Osborn's caribou.



and see how sorry you will be." We had no intention, however, of doing him any harm, but he looked very indignant when I snapped his picture.

Further on, as we were passing a small pond of perhaps one hundred yards in diameter, I caught a transient glimpse of a beaver through the thin blue ice, as he darted into the tunnel which led to his house. This low-domed house (which looked very much like the house our musk-squash builds) was built of mud, turf and sticks cleverly interwoven, and rising about three or four feet above the surface of the ice. At one end of the pond they had their customary dam as well as a great store of food, to guard against the winter's famine. At a point in the dam they had deposited this food supply, which consisted chiefly of willow branches cut into convenient lengths. At feeding time one slips out of the house and swims down through the pale amber water to the brush pile, selects a suitable stick and returns to dine on its tender bark. And so all through the long, savage winter, the little chaps live, play and feed,—all below the frozen upper world.

The beavers are not without their enemies, however, and perhaps the most feared is that

long, squat, shambling animal, with a triangular head and two cruel, leering eyes—the wolverine or glutton. With just about six rakes of his rascally claws he could demolish the entire house, but presto! the little chaps whisking out into the friendly water are not to be caught by such a trick.

Then there were also those gray drifting shadows that lurked near the pond when the little chaps were busy in the spring repairing the dam—those round-eyed, moon-faced lynxes, gaunt with famine after the scourge of winter, which come stealing on soft-padded feet and bellies to the snow, just within springing distance. The wary sentinel beaver bringing down his wide flat tail on the water with a loud “smack”—a signal to every beaver to vanish beneath the shining surface.

In the morning we rode to the north, and a more wildly desolate, oppressively isolated, cold, deathless tract cannot be imagined. The wind had swept the northern slopes bare of snow and piled it deep in their age-eaten seams. Far below from almost a sheer drop, looked up a valley, studded with balsam and other stunted growths, while a little stream glistening in the sun, wriggled on its way. Across the yawning



A porcupine climbing a balsam tree.

dip and borne over the endless sea of white-topped peaks, came the arctic winds that bit and stabbed like the driven nail.

We rode on; Mac had not spoken all the morning; in fact we held little talk these last few days. His expression was grave, serious; had we dog-team and snow-shoes we could have laughed at it all. The time had long since come to depart, but that outer garment of a grizzly I had not. Soon the bear would begin their long winter sleep and then all hope would vanish.

Mac was holding out one hand, thumb down, the signal to dismount, which we both did. What a print it was, made that night,—“My grizzly bear!” I said aloud, “by all that’s fair and right; I have already earned him.” Mac said just one word as we took up the trail: “Mebbe.”

For a quarter of a mile it led over the ridge, then took a long curve and doubled back. After a few more twists it led directly down the steep drop to the valley. Mac looked down and shook his head. “We stay here two hours and watch with glasses,” he suggested, for he thought the bear was down in the covert and might emerge at any time, and by watching from this point of vantage we could make a good stalk if he appeared.

In a little pocket we took up our watch and were thankful for the partial shelter which it afforded from the savagery of the wind. We took turns scanning every bit of the surrounding country. Slow minutes dropped by—an hour passed—then two. I was growing too painfully cold to remain inactive much longer, and on finishing a frugal lunch told Mac so.

For a few minutes Mac sat in silence, formulating, no doubt, some new plan. The air rang hollow as it does on these intensely cold, clear days; nothing moved—there was no sign of a living thing. It seemed that few creatures of the northern wilderness had the fortitude to face the polar wind that blew keen as an icicle, but remained in their lairs under rock and in the densest fir thickets, waiting for the rigor of the cold and wind to abate.

Then it was—while Mac was still devising some new plan, I focused my glasses across the gully and made out on the opposite mountainside a herd of caribou. Among them stood a bull, and unless the light, or my glasses, were deceiving me, he surpassed by far any that had yet met our view. "I see a very fine old caribou," I said to Mac. He then took the glasses and carefully looked him over. "He plenty beeg horns,



Mac and the big carbon bull.

best one we ebber see. I no think we make it; too long climb, too rough, long time dark we get back to camp." Then he added, "You tell me all right, we try it." Anything to break that monotonous cold watching and get a little warmth in my skin.

Accordingly we started; the stalk resolved itself into a long, dangerous and rapid descent to the valley; then a most arduous climb up the equally steep opposite mountain. With the skill and ease of a goat Mac was scaling the steep heights while I never could seem to quite close the little gap between us. Nearly spent, I was just cresting the last twenty feet that would bring me on top when I noticed Mac's signal to hurry. For an hour I had longed for that moment when I would reach the top, and thought how sweet that rest would be; but now it was plain there was to be no resting.

At last reaching more level ground, we ran in a stooping position behind a fringe of rocks, making a long semi-circle, then stopped. Presently over the ridge, and only a few yards away came a damp, twitching nose, and the wide searching eyes of a cow. I showed a little more cap over the friendly rock, and with a stamp and a snort the big bull that had been feeding a hundred

yards to the right was off with that beautiful, effortless, free action which is the heritage of his kind.

At the first report he continued on, as if untouched, but on firing the second time he was plainly in trouble, and a moment later toppled over and lay motionless in a small swale. He was a magnificent specimen with forty points, while the horns were heavy and handsomely formed.

It was by this time getting far along in the afternoon. The evening sun descending burned its way along the heavens. Great clouds were rolling up to the north as we slowly packed our splendid trophy campward. As the gloom deepened at the approach of twilight the darkness fell thicker and thicker; then as the wind sang softly to the night we could feel snow flakes whirling against our faces.

The next three days we were storm-bound. Those were long dreary days up there, where the hammering gale knew no bounds. The snows deepened, firewood grew scarce, and when at dusk the whine of the wind died with the day, it was replaced by the wail of the ravening wolf pack that haunted the mountain again.

Mac and I were of the opinion that the great



Mac sighting the grizzly on the opposite mountain.

track we had seen in the snow belonged to an old silver-tip who was spending his last few days before denning up, digging ground hogs on the bare sides of the range to the north of us. Further we argued that, weather permitting, we stood a reasonable chance of "meeting him," as Mac put it. We would have at least one more try, we agreed, if the storm would cease, and on the third day it did.

Early on the morning that followed Mac and I rode to the north. Even the horses shrank from the incalculably cold wind that swept over the endless sheeted procession of snow. The end had come. This was the last day of the hunt. Now or never, I told myself, as I jammed down my hat and threw a glance at the old rifle. The morning was still young when we rode to the edge of the vast basin. Dismounting we looked down into the lower world, dark, forsaken and empty. Nothing seemed astir, but a great ghost-gray bird that floated over the thickets far below. It was a giant snowy owl, an estray from the polar north, driven down, no doubt, by storm and famine, from his bleak arctic wastes. Straight across on the white, scarred face of the mountain the rays of the morning sun were crawling. Swiftly the horizon leaped into blaze, which

spread down the mountainside, bathing the whole range in a rose-tinted glow.

Something moved up on the bald face of the mountain—I say moved—for the gait of a grizzly is all his very own. There was no need of changing our position, for with the glasses we could see he was shambling down the mountain, and the wind was strong from his direction. From time to time the prowler would stop, raise his head and with instructed nostrils question the air currents, listen intently with cocked ears and shamble on again. Down into the valley he passed, through the low growing firs and willows, then crossing the stream he came on up the bold slopes where the winds had bared their sides of snow.

About five hundred yards below and to one side he stopped. “He dig him ground hog,” said Mac. Then, without removing the glasses, he asked, as if prompted by the size of that old grizzly, “How many cartridges yo bring to-day?” “Thirteen,” I said. He turned and looked hard at me. I was wondering if he bore the superstition of the white man. “Mebbe you need a couple more,” he replied, as he produced two from his pocket.

Mac shut up the glasses, drew his belt up a



The big grizzly, measuring seven feet from tip to tip.

hole, slid his hand over the sheath of his long knife, and said two words: "We go."

As swiftly as the uncertain footing permitted, we dropped down the mountain side on a long slant. Then up along a fringe of rocks that offered excellent cover for the final stalk. At seventy yards we stopped. The grizzly was busily engaged digging his breakfast and had made a hole large and deep enough to hide his head and shoulders. While thus engaged it was impossible to get a sight at a vulnerable point. But knowing his custom of suddenly stopping short in his work and carefully scanning his surroundings, I waited for that moment to arrive.

Sullen and ponderous he was mumbling over his expected meal in that uncouth solitude.

Then that moment arrived—the mauser flashed, and with a "woof" of rage he charged straight for us and closed in about half the distance, with a miraculous speed of action, as of a mighty spring unloosed.

The second shot in the chest staggered him, but did not stop him. With a roar of rage and pain he came on, bringing his jaws together the while with a hollow chop.

I could see the hair over his shoulder standing erect. His little eyes shone fiendishly red—like

rubies with fire behind them. Then Mac spoke, "Take yo time—shoot his head—you neber hab a better chance." There was no doubting his words. The third shot got him squarely between the ears, and a 600-pound grizzly, measuring seven feet from tip to tip, lay still in death—not twenty paces away.

Four days later we picked up our reserve stores, and each day found us early and late hitting the trail south to Telegraph Creek. One morning we arose, it was to be the last day on the trail. Big snow flakes were whirling in the air, busily weaving a thick blanket over all those vast reaches. The little folk of the snow had donned their white dress and went about noiseless and inconspicuous. Winter and silence shut down over all that great land.

Before making the long descent to Telegraph Creek we paused at a point that held a commanding view. Looking back over the limitless vistas I said aloud that in some way made even the stolid Indians appear as grave as if a prayer were being said: "Farewell to thee, oh wondrous mountains, with endless peak and crest; to sleep now, wrapped in your snows, all through the bitter, inimicable cold of the terrible winter."

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