THE COLUMBIAN, BLOOMSBURG, PA.

SIGNS OF THANKSGIVING.

can bear Thanksgiven' comin' with the joillest kind o' sound; can hear the turkey holler for a mile or two around; he knows that he is in it, as he has been in the pust. For he knows that he is in it, as no and the pust, the pust, An' he thinks that every minute is jes' sure to be his inst;



ar Thanksgiven comin' with a rush An' the knives an forks a hummin' as we pass the plate for more: Oh, it's folly every minute, in the North an' in the South. For the turkey gobbler's in it, an' we're waterin'

-Atlanta Constitution.

existing in

howling of

still

bear.

A THANKSGIVING BEAR.



panther and catawere frequently encountered, and away from the growing towns the people still led the primitive life of the settler.

The Bairds were a happy and pros-perous family, that lived near the Little Red, a swift stream that flowed through a region but little opened as yet to civilization. The father was a type of the hardy men who opened up the Great West-a skillful hunter, a woodsman and a farmer by turn, cultivating the soil in the spring and summer, and hunting and trapping during the fall and winter. His two boys, Robert and Philip, had been brought up to be expert shots, so that the family table was always luxur-iously supplied with meat, generally game from the forest. Wild turkey, prairie chicken, pheasant, and venison were quite as common to this remote Western family as beef or pork are to the table of an Eastern farmer.

"Well, boys, what shall we have for our Thanksgiving dinner this year?' asked Mr. Baird, one day at supper, as the November days were drawing to a close.

The two half-grown boys to whom the question was addressed, opened their eyes expectantly. They knew it did not mean wild turkey or prairie chicken or pheasant, for these were a daily dish, almost. It could hardly mean venison, for the neighbors were generous, and several deer had been recently shot by hunting parties. "What is it, father?" finally asked

Robert, the elder son. "What do you say to bear?" asked

the father, smiling. "What!" shouted Phil; "Old Eph-

raim? And can we go along?" The elder Baird smiled. He had long thought of taking the boys on their first bear hunt, and "Old Eph-raim," a well-known black depreda-tor of the bear species, had just returned to his usual autumn haunts among the wooded hills some miles of the boat with the rifle while Phil handled the paddle. All at once the paddles in Phil's hands rested, as Rob bent forward with an eager movement. On the right, where the tall trees shut out the

stars, gleamed a pair of flery eyes, close together and near the ground. "It is not a deer," whispered Rob. "I hope it is Old Ephraim."

'Don't miss him!" responded Phil, in hushed tones Slowly and deliberately Rob raised

the rifle and glanced along the barrel. The crack of the weapon awoke the echoes along both shores. "You have missed him," shouted

Phil, in an agony of disappointment, as silence succeeded the shot.

But in an instant there was a splashing in the water, and Phil ex-citedly urged the canoe toward the spot. As they neared it, they were momentarily unable to detect anyspot. thing in the deep shadows. While they were discussing the matter, a huge form appeared in the circle of light that surrounded the boat, and both could see the head and shoulders of a large bear making directly for the boat.

"Back off!" shouted Rob.

For a moment Phil's arms were paralyzed. Before he could recover, the great paws, looking doubly formidable in the unsteady light of the torch, were upon the gunwale of the canoe and a moment after the boys were both struggling in the water.

All this happened in a second, as it seemed, and it was well that the boys were both good swimmers. At first, they struck away from the cance, but soon observing that it remained affoat near the rocky shore, with the torch burning, they halted in their flight. "Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Rob. "I guess Old Ephraim scared us off."

"But where is the bear?" asked Phil, breathlessly.

"Safe in the woods by this time, probably," replied Rob. "I guess I missed him."

The boys quickly swam to the canoe and clambered into it. Everything was safe; even the rifles lay securely Everything in the bottom, but were rendered use-less by the water in the canoe.

"Well," laughed Phil, "this canoe was never upset; we jumped out." "Oh, that was all right," responded

Rob; "but-" He had no time to complete his remark, for in an instant the great paws were on the gunwale of the canoe again. The boys did not get

into a panic this time, but Rob seized his rifle and brought the stock down



Old Ephraim Was Unceremoniously Tumbled

with all his might upon the huge head. Old Ephraim merely blinked, and lunged forward with an effort that threatened to upset the canoe. "Here, Rob, my knife," exclaimed Phil, who handed forward the hunting knife he had brought with him. Rob seized it, and turned to survey the enemy. Instead of striking at the throat, which was exposed, he drove the keen blade into one of the feet near the root of the claws, and drew it toward him. The bear growled savagely, but Rob boldly faced the beast, and severed the other foot also. The bear now dropped off, and the excited boys watched it slowly strug-ble to the shore. Then they held a consultation. Rob's rifle was injured, but Phil's was in good condition. The wet charge was drawn, and the rifle carefully reloaded, the powder in the horns being dry. The boys slowly rowed toward the shore, and, when they approached so near that the torch clearly revealed things, they saw the burk of Old Enhraim saw the huge bulk of Old Ephraim extended along the shore. 'We have got him!" yelled Rob. To make sure he sent a second bullet into his body, and, after a time, as he did not stir, they paddled ashore. Sure enough, the great beast was dead. The first shot had entered his breast near the heart, and his attempts to enter the canoe had been in the nature of the dying effort for re-venge that actuates savage beasts when fatally wounded. Excited and exultant at their tri-umph, the boys paddled down stream till near the great falls, and then struck across through the woods till they came to the house of a neighbor. Here they stayed all night, and in the morning, having obtained a mule and wagon, they returned and secured the body of Old Ephraim after much toil, and returned home in triumph. "My! What will your father say!" was all that good Mrs. Baird could utter, as Old Ephraim was uncere-moniously tumbled out of the wagon at the door. What the old hunter and farmer said was all in praise of his plucky boys. He was too old and wise a woodsman to condemn the courage and skill that had enabled them to provide alone the Thanksgiving din-ner his accident had prevented his seeking in their company.



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away, that formed the source of the Little Red. The boys were enthusiastic and excited over the proposed bear hunt. Alas, for human expectations! Three

days before the expected hunt, Mr. Baird, while in the wood felling trees, severely cut his foot, and the long tramp up the Little Red after "Old Bphraim" became an impossibility. The boys mourned as only boys can mourn over deprivation of such a glorious chance for sport.

But Rob and Phil were adventurous young hunters. They had rivalled their father more than once in shooting at the mark, and plenty of small game had fallen before their rifles.

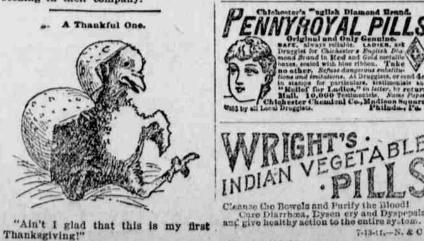


The Boys Were Both Struggling in the Water.

Why should they not have a hunt all by themselves? It was Phil who pro-posed this plan to his older brother. After discussing the matter for whole day, they decided to ask their father for permission to indulge in a "fire hunt" on the Little Red. The permission was given, as the father had confidence in his sturdy boys, and believed them to be equal to securing a deer, now that the bear hunt was impossible.

"But I hope we will meet Old Ephraim," whispered Phil to Rob. The latter only smiled in a significant way. The idea had also entered his mind.

It was a calm, moonlight night when the boys started to paddle up the Little Red. The torch had been placed in the stern of the canoe. Only two or three rapids were to be passed, and these the young hunters sur-mounted by hard poling, and then they dragged the cance around the big fall. Now they had reached a point same four or five miles from home, where the stream flowed smoothly for several hundred yards, and was shad-eved on each side by treas. Shere ewed on each side by trees. Slowly they proceeded, Rob sitting in the bow



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