CAMERON COUNTY PRESS, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1908



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the wide plains where



times face thirst, as well as fire and frost. The only time I ever really suffered from thirst was while hunting prong-buck.

It was late in the summer. I was with the ranch wagon on the way to join a round-up, and as we were out of meat I started for a day's hunt.

After two or three hours' ride, up inding coulies, and through the winding CHARLES THE PARTY OF THE PARTY on went with me, driven by an allround plainsman, a man of iron nerves and varied past, the sheriff of our county. He was an old friend of mine; at one time I had served as deputy-sheriff for the northern end of the county. In the wagon we carried our food and camp kit, and our three rolls of bedding, each wrapped in a thick, nearly waterproof canvas sheet we had a tent, but we never needed it. The load being light, the wagon was drawn by but a span of horses, a pair of wild runaways, tough, and good travellers. My foreman and I rode beside the wagon on our wiry, un-kempt, unshod cattle-ponies. They car ried us all day at a rack, pace, single foot or slow lope, varied by rapid gal-loping when we made long circles aft er game; the trot, the favorite gai with eastern park-riders, is disliked by all peoples who have to do much of their life-work in the saddle. The first day's ride was not attrac

tive. The heat was intense and the dust stifling, as we had to drive some, loose horses for the first few miles. and afterwards to ride up and down the sandy river bed, where the cattle had gathered, to look over some young steers we had put on the range the preceding spring. When we did camp it was by a pool of stagnant-water, in a creek bottom, and the mosquitoes were a torment. Nevertheless, as evening fell, it was pleasant to climb a little knoll nearby and gaze at the rows of strangely colored buttes, grass-clad, or of bare earth and scoria, their soft reds and purples showing as through a haze, and their irregular out lines gradually losing their sharpness in the fading twilight.

out for antelope. Of these we at first saw few, but they grew more plentiful as we journeyed onward, approaching olg, scantily wooded creek, where I had found the prong-horn abundant in previous seasons. They were very wary and watchful whether going sin-gly or in small parties, and the lay of the land made it exceedingly difficult to get within range. The last time I had hunted in this neighborhood was in the fall, at the height of the rutting generally more severe and lasting in season. Prong-bucks, even more than the spring, after the melting of the other game, seem fairly maddened by snow; and fierce local freshets follow erotic excitement. At the time of my the occasional cloudbursts. The large former hunt they were in ceaseless motion; each master buck being incessantly occupied in herding his harem, and fighting would-be rivals, while single bucks chased single does as gray- the current runs like a turbid mill-race hounds chase hares, or else, if no does over the bed of shifting quicksand. were in sight, from sheer excitement Once five of us took/a thousand head ran to and fro as if crazy, racing at of trail steers across the Little Mission λ full speed in one direction, then halt- souri when the river was up, and it ing, wheeling, and tearing back again was no light task. The muddy current

had to do was to feed and keep a look- entering it.

by shooting at such long ranges, pre-ferring to spend half a day or more in patient waiting and careful stalking but if he is traveling, and is therefore cramped for time, he must take his chances, even at the cost of burning the prong-buck dwells the hunter must some a good deal of powder. I was finally helped to success by

characteristic freak of the game I was following. No other animals are as keen-sighted, or are normally as wary as prong-horns; but no others are so whimsical and odd in their behavior at times, or so subject to fits of the most stupid curiosity and panic. Late in the afternoon, on topping a rise I saw two good bucks racing off about

three hundred yards to one side; ! scorched desolation of patches of Bad Lands, I reached the rolling prairie. The heat and drought had long burned the short grass dull brown; the bot-toms of what had been pools were covered with hard, dry, cracked earth. The day was cloudless, and the heat oppressive. There were many antelope, but I got only one shot, breaking a buck's leg; and though I followed it for a couple of hours I could not overtake it. By this time it was late in the afternoon, and I was far away from the river; so I pushed for a creek. found pools of which I had always found pools of water, especially to-wards the head, as is usual with plains watercourses. To my chagrin, how-ever, they all proved to be dry; and though I rode up the creek bed to ward the head, carefully searching for any sign of water, night closed on me before I found any. For two or three hours I stumbled on, leading my horse in my fruitless search; then a tumble over a cut bank in the dark warned me that I might as well stay where I was for the rest of the warm night. Accordingly I unsaddled the horse. and tied him to a sage brush; after awhile he began to feed on the dewy grass. At first I was too thirsty to sleep. Finally I fell into a sumber, and when I awoke at dawn I felt no thirst. For an hour or two more I continued my search for water in the creek bed; then abandoned it and rode straight for the river. By the time we reached it my thirst had come back with redoubled force, my mouth was parched, and the horse was in quite as bad a plight; we rushed down to the brink, and it seemed as if we could neither of us ever drink our fill My foreman and I usually rode far of the tepid, rather muddy water. Of off to one side of the wagon, looking course this experience was merely unpleasant: thirst is not a source of real danger in the plains country proper, whereas in the hideous deserts that extend from southern Idaho through Utah and Nevada to Arizona, it ever menaces with death the hunter and explorer

In the plains the weather is apt to be in extremes; the heat is tropical, the cold arctic, and the droughts are relieved by furious floods. These are rivers then become wholly impassa-ble, and even the smaller are formidable obstacles. It is not easy to get cattle across a swollen stream, where just as hard as they could go. was boiling past the banks covered At this time, however, the rut was with driftwood and foul yellow froth, still some weeks off, and all the bucks and the frightened cattle shrank from At last, by hard riding, out for enemics. Try my best, I could with much lead shouting and swing-not get within less than four or five ing of ropes, we got the leaders in, and

cutting horse, Muley, which has the provoking habit of making great

bounds where the water is just not deep enough for swimming; once he

allocat unseated me. Some of the cat-tle were caught by the currents and rolled over and over; most of these we

were able, with the help of our ropes, to put on their feet again; only one

was drowned, or rather choked in a quicksand. Many swam down stream,

and in consequence struck a difficult landing, where the river ran under a

cut bank; these we had to haul out

Although I have often had a horse

down in quicksand or in crossing :

swollen river, and have had to work hard to save him, I have never myself

lost one under such circumstances. Yet once I saw the horse of one of my

men drown under him directly in front

of the ranch house, while he was try

ing to cross the river. This was in

early spring, soon after the ice had

When making long wagon trips over

the great plains, antelope often offer

the only source of meat supply, save for occasional water fowl, sage fowl.

and prairie fowl-the sharp-tailed

orairie fowl, be it understood. This s the characteristic grouse of the cat-

tle country; the true prairie fowl is

bird of the farming land farther east.

"Towards the end of the summer of '92 I found it necessary to travel from

my ranch to the Black Hills, some two

Seed miles south. The ranch wag

with our ropes.

broken.

prairi

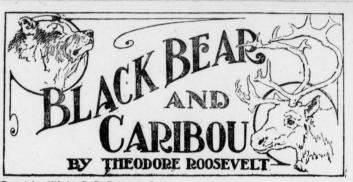
sprang to the ground, and fired three shots at them in vain, as they ran like quarter-horses until they disappeared over a slight swell. In a minute, how ever, back they came, suddenly ap-pearing over the crest of the same swell, immediately in front of me, and, as I afterwards found by pacing, some three hundred and thirty yards yards away. They stood side by side facing me, and remained motionless, unheed-ing the crack of the Winchester; I aimed at the right-hand one, but a front shot of the kind, at such a distance, is rather difficult, and it was not until I fired for the fourth time that he sank back out of sight. I could not tell whether I had killed him, and took two shots at his mate, as the latter went off, but without effect. Running forward, I found the first one dead, the bullet having gone through him lengthwise; the other did not seem satisfied even yet, and kept hanging round in the distance for some minutes, looking at us.

I had thus bagged one prong-buck, as the net outcome of the expenditure of fourteen cartridges. This was certainly not good shooting; but neither was it as bad as it would seem to the man inexperienced in antelope hunting.



They stood side by side facing me, and remained motionless.

When fresh meat is urgently needed, and when time is too short, the hunter who is after antelope in an open flattish country must risk many long shots. In no other kind of hunting is there so much long-distance shooting. Throwing the buck into the wagon we continued our journey across the prairie, no longer following any road, and before sunset jolted down towards the big creek for which we had been heading. There were many waterholes therein, and timber of considerable size; box alder and ash grew here and there in clumps and fringes, be-side the serpentine curves of the nearly dry torrent bed, the growth being thickest under the shelter of the occasional low bluffs. We drove down to a heavily grassed bottom, near a deep, narrow pool, with, at one end, that rarest of luxuries in the plains country, a bubbling spring of pure, cold water. With plently of wood, delicious water, ample feed for the horses, and fresh meat we had every comfort and luxury incident to camp life in good weather. The bedding was tossed out on a smooth spot beside the wagon; the horses were watered and tethered to picket pins where the feed was best; water was fetched from the spring; a deep hole was dug for the fire, and the grass roundabout care-fully burned off; and in a few moments the bread was baking in the Dutch oven, the potatoes were boiling, antelope steaks were sizzling in the frying-pan, and the kettle was ready for the tea. After supper, eaten with the relish known well to every hardworking and successful hunter, we sat



[Copyright, 1893, by G. P. Putnam's Sons, Published under arrangement with G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London.]

NCE in September I was camped on the shores of \bigcirc Kootenai Lake, having with me as companions. John Willis and an im-passive,-looking Indian named Ammal. Coming

across through the dense coniferous forests of northern Idaho we had struck the Kootenai River. Then we went down with the current as it wound in half circles through a long alluvial valley of mixed marsh and woodland, hemmed in by lofty moun-those know who have gone through tains. The lake itself, when we reach-nuch hardship and some little hunger, ed it, stretched straight away like a and have worked violently for several days without flesh food.

stream, that we might go to its sources amidst the mountains, where the snow us to land with our batteau, save at fields fed its springs. It was two full the places where the rapid mountain days' journey thither, but we took torrents entered the lake. much longer to make it, as we kept halting to hunt the adjoining moun fruitless hunting in the mountains; a tains. On such occasions Ammal was left as camp guard, while the white hunter and I would start by daybreak norance we had and return at dark utterly worn out ing straight back to the high ranges, by the excessive fatigue. We knew from which the game had not yet de-nothing of caribou, nor where to hunt scended. After three or four days of Until within a couple of days of were ready for another trial; and turning our faces back towards the one morning we made the start.

have to return without getting any, for traveled as light as possible, leaving our shoes had been cut to ribbons by almost all we had with the tent and the sharp rocks, we were almost out boat. of flour, and therefore had but little to eat. However, our perseverance

camp, we hunted across a set of spurs Ammal, the Indian, pigeon toed along and hollows, but saw nothing living. behind, carrying his pack, not as we The next day we started early, deter-mined to take a long walk and follow the main stream up to its head, or at least above timber line. The hunter through thickets and leaping from precipitous mountain sides, was incon-through thickets and leaping from ceivably rough and difficult. crossing the rock-slides, that I could hardly keep up to him, struggle as I would, and we each of us got several ugly tumbles, saving our rifles at the expense of scraped hands and bruised bodies. We went up one side of the stream, intending to come down the other; for the forest belt was narrow enough to hunt thoroughly. For two or three hours we toiled through dense growth.

Then we came to a spur of open hemlock forest; and no sooner had we entered it than the hunter stopped and pointed exultingly to a well-markedgame trail, in which it was easy at a glance to discern the great round footprints of our quarry. We hunted carefully over the spur and found several trails, generally leading down along the ridge; we also found a number of beds, some old and some recent, usually placed where the animal could keep a lookout for any foe coming up from the valley. They were merely slight hollows or identations in the pineneedles; and, like the game trails, were placed in localities similar to those that would be chosen by black-tail deer. The caribou droppings were

came so high that the large timber ceased, and there were only occasional groves of spindling evergreens. Be-yond the edge of the big timber was a large boggy tract, studded with little pools; and here again we found plenty of caribou tracks. A caribou has an enormous foot, bigger than a cow's and admirably adapted for traveling over snow or bogs; hence they can pass through places where the long slender hoofs of moose or deer, or the round hoofs of elk, would let their owners sink at once; and they are very difficult to kill by following on snowshoes-a method much in vogue among the brutal game butchers for slaughter-

ed it, stretched straight away like a great fiord, a hundred miles long and about three in breadth. The frowning The morning after killing Bruin, we and rugged Selkirks came down sheer again took up our march, heading up to the water's edge. So straight were the rock walls that it was difficult for

We had come down from a week's week of excessive toil, in a country where we saw no game-for in our igwasted time, not go for them; and we had been told that rest, and of feasting on trout—a wel-thus early in the season they were come relief to the ronotony of frying above tree limit on the mountain sides. pan bread and concern only of frying Until within a combine source of the ronotony were ready for another trial; and early turning our faces back towards the ing to pack everything for a forting to a lake we did not come across any carl-lake we did not come across any carl-bou, and saw but a few old signs; and use on our backs, through an excess-bou, and saw but a few full lest we should ively rough country we of course to be fearful lest we should ively rough country we of course

We walked in single file, as is necto eat. However, our personal was destined to be rewarded. The first day after reaching our final rifle on shoulder and pack on back. Ammal, the Indian, pigeon toed along essary in thick woods. The white hunter led, and I followed, each with did ours, but by help of a forehead band, which he sometimes shifted across his breast. The traveling

were traveling, as usual, in Indian file, beside the stream, through an open wood of great hemlock trees. There was no breeze, and we made no sound as we marched, for our feet sunk noiselessly into the deep moss

Suddenly the hunter, who was lead ing, dropped down in his tracks, point-ing upward; and some fifty feet beyond I saw the head and shoulders of a bear as he rose to make a sweep at some berries. He was in a hollow where a tall, rank, prickly plant, with broad leaves, grew luxuriantly; and he was gathering its red berries, rising on his hind legs and sweeping them down into his mouth with his paw and was much too intent on his work to notice us, for his head was pointed the other way. The moment he rose again I fired, meaning to shoot through the shoulders, but instead, in the hurry, taking him in the neck. Down he went, but whether hurt or not we could not see, for the second he was on all fours he was no longer visible. Rather to my surprise he uttered no sound-for bear when hit or when charging often make a great noise-so I raced toward the edge of the hollow, also very plentiful; and there were the hunter close behind me, while Am-signs of where they had browsed on mal danced about in the rear, very much excited as Indians always an in the presence of big game. The instant we reached the hollow and looked down into it from the low bank on which we stood we saw by the swaying of the tall plants that the be was coming our way. The hunter was standing some ten feet distant, a hemlock trunk being between us; and the next moment the bear sprang clean up the bank the other side of the hemlock, and almost within arm's length of my companion. I do not think he had intended to charge; he was probably confused by the bullet through his neck, and had by chance blundered out of the hollow in our direction; but when he saw the hunter so close he turned for him, his hair bristling and his teeth showing. The man had no cartridge in his weapon, and with his pack on could not have used it anyhow; and for a moment it looked as if he stood a fair chance of being hurt. As the beast sprang out of the hollow he poised for a second on the edge of the bank to recover his balance, giving me a beautiful shot, as he stood side ways to me; the bullet struck between the eye and car, and he fell as if hit with a pole axe. Our prize was a large black bear, with two curious brown streaks down his back, one on each side the spine We skinned him and camped by the carcass, as it was growing late. The take the chill off the evening air v built a huge fire, the logs roaring and crackling. To one side of it we made our beds-of balsam and hemlock boughs; we did not build a brush leanto, because the night seemed likely to or cropped off some little mushrooms, be clear. Then we supped on sugar-But the beasts themselves had evident less tea, frying-pen breid, and quanti-ly left the ridge, and we went on. After a little while the valley be-and how very good if tasted only

ing the more helpless animals. Spreading out his great hoofs, and bending his legs till he walks almost on the joints, a caribou will travel swiftly over a crust through which a moose breaks at every stride, or through deep snow in which a deer cannot flounder fifty yards. Usually he trots; but when pressed he will spring awkward-ly along, leaving tracks in the snow If almost exactly like magnified imprints of those of a great rabbit, the long marks of the two hind legs forming an angle with each other, while the forefeet make a large point almost between.

The caribou had wandered all over the bogs and through the shallow pools, but evidently only at night or in the dusk, when feeding or in coming to drink; and we again went on. Soon the timber disappeared almost entirely, and thick brushwood took its place; we were in a high, bare alpine valley, the snow lying in drifts along the sides. In places there had been enormous rock-slides, entirely filling up the bottom, so that for a quarter of



The hunter crouched down, while I ran noiselessly forward.

mile at a stretch the stream ran underground. In the rock masses of this alpine valley we, as usual, saw many conies and hoary woodchucks.

The caribou trails had ceased, and it was evident that the beasts were not ahead of us in the barren, treeless recesses between the mountains of rock and snow; and we turned back down the valley, crossing over to the opposite or south side of the stream. We had already eaten our scanty lunch, for it was afternoon. For sev-eral miles of hard walking, through thicket, marsh, and rock-slide, we saw, no traces of the game. Then we reached the forest, which soon widened out, and crept up the mountain sides; and we came to where another stream entered the one we were follow-

ing. A high steep shoulder betwee¹ the two vallyes was covered with an open growth of great hemlock timber, and in this we again found the trails and beds plentiful. There was no breeze, and after beating through the forest nearly to its upper edge, we began to go down the ridge, or point of the shoulder. The comparative freedom from brashwood made it easy to walk without noise, and we descended the steep incline with the utmost care. scanning every object, and using every caution not to slip on the hemlock caution not to sinp on the hemicek needles, nor to strike a stone or break a stick with our fect. The sign was very fresh, and when still half a mile or so from the bottom we at last came on three bull caribon.

Instantly the hunter crouched down, while I ran noiselessly forward be hind the shelter of a big hemlock trunk until within fifty yards of the grazing and unconscious quarry. The were feeding with their heads up-hill but so greedily that they had not see us; and they were rather difficult t see themselves, for their bodies ha monized well in color with the brow tree-tranks and lichen-covered bot ders.

not get within less than four or five ing of ropes, we got the leaders in, and hundred yards, and though ${\bf I}_i$ took a the whole herd followed. After them or even we went in our turn, the horses swim number of shots at these, or even we went in our turn, the horses swim-longer distances, I missed. If a man ming at one moment, and the next is out merely for a day's hunt, and has staggering and floundering through the quicksand. I was riding my pet

and the We got the whol herd followed

all the time he wishes, he will not scare the game and waste cartridges and then turned in under the blankets and listened to the wailing of the coyotes until we fell sound asleep.

We determined to stay in this camp all day, so as to try and kill another prong-buck, as we would soon be past the good hunting grounds. I did not have to go far for my game next morning, for soon after breakfast, while sitting on my canvas bag cleaning my rifle, the sheriff suddenly called to me that a bunch of antelope were coming towards us. Sure enough there they were, four in number, rather over half a mile off, on the first bench of the prairie, two or three hundred yards back of the creek, leisurely feeding in our direction. In a minute or two they were out of sight, and I instantly ran along the creek towards them for a quarter of a mile, and then crawled up a short shallow coulie, close to the head of which they seemed likely to pass. When nearly at the end I cautiously raised my hatless head, peered through some straggling weeds, and at once saw the horns of the buck. He was a big fellow, about a hundred and twenty yards off; the others, a doe and two kids, were in front. As I lifted myself on my elbows he halted and turned his raised head towards me; the sunlight shone bright on his supple, vigorous body with its markings sharply contrasted brown white. pulled trigger, and away he went; but I could see that his race was nearly run, and he fell after going a few hundred yards.





Giving me a beautiful shot, as he stood sideways to me.

berries, and also apparently of where they had here and there plucked a mouthful of a peculiar kind of moss, or cropped off some little mushrooms.

The largest, a big bull with a go but by no means extraordinary hes was nearest. As he stood fronting i with his head down I fired into j neck, breaking the bone, and he tu ed a tremendous back somersa The other two halted a second in st ned terror; then one, a yearling, ri ed past us up the valley down w' we had come, while the other, a bull with small antlers, crossed in front of me, at a canter, his i thrust out, and his head—so coa looking compared to the delicate lines of an elk's-turned towards His movements seemed clumsy awkward, utterly unlike those deer; but he han led his great ! cleverly enough, and broke in headlong, rattling gallop as he down the hillside, crashing th the saplings and leaping over fallen logs. There was a spur a beyond, and up this he went swinging trot, halting when he rethe top, and turning to look once more. He was only a h yards away; and though I had tended to shoot him (for his he not good), the temptation wa and I was glad when, in anoth ond, the stupid beast turned ag the valley at a went of run.

