

# HUNTING THE WHITE-TAILED DEER

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT



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ONE afternoon, while most of us were away from the ranch-house, one of the cowboys, riding in from his day's outing over the range, brought word that he had seen two white-tail deer, a buck and a doe feeding with some cattle on the side of a hill across the river, and not much more than half a mile from the house. There was about an hour of daylight left, and one of the foremen, a tall fine-looking fellow named Ferris, the best rider on the ranch, but not an usually good shot, started out at once after the deer. Ferris found the deer easily enough, but they started before he could get a standing shot at them, and when he fired as they ran, he only broke one of the buck's hind legs, just above the ankle. He followed it in the snow for several miles, across the river, and down near the house to the end of the bottom, and then back toward the house. The buck was a cunning old beast, keeping in the densest cover, and often doubling back on his trail and sneaking off to one side as his pursuer passed by. Finally it grew too dark to see the tracks any longer, and Ferris came home.

Next morning early we went out to where he had left the trail, feeling very sure from his description of the place (which was less than a mile from the house) that we would get the buck; for when he had abandoned the pursuit the deer was in a copse of bushes and young trees some hundreds of yards across, and in this it had doubtless spent the night.

When we got to the thicket we first made a circuit round it to see if the wounded animal had broken cover, but though there were fresh deer tracks leading both in and out of it, none of them were made by a cripple; so we knew he was still within. After working some little time we hit on the right trail, finding where the buck had turned into the thickest growth. While Ferris followed carefully in on the tracks, I stationed myself farther on toward the outside, knowing that the buck would in all likelihood start up wind. In a minute or two Ferris came on the bed where he had passed the night, and which he had evidently just left; a shout informed me that the game was on foot, and immediately afterward the crackling and snapping of the branches were heard as the deer rushed through them. I ran as rapidly and quietly as possible toward the place where the sounds seemed to indicate that he would break cover, stopping under a small tree. A minute afterward he appeared, some thirty yards off on the edge of the thicket, and halted for a second to look round before going into the open. Only his head and antlers were visible above the bushes which hid from view the rest of his body. He turned his

head sharply toward me as I raised the rifle, and the bullet went fairly into his throat, just under the jaw, breaking his neck, and bringing him down in his tracks with hardly a kick. He was a fine buck of eight points, unusually fat, considering that the rutting season was just over. We dressed it at once, and, as the house was so near, determined we would drag it there over the snow ourselves, without going back for a horse. Each took an antler, and the body slipped along very easily, but so intense was the cold that we had to keep shifting sides all the time, the hand which grasped the horn becoming numb almost immediately.

When not much molested white-tail feed in the evening or late afternoon; but if often shot at and chased they only come out at night. They are very partial to the water, and in the warm summer nights will come down into the prairie ponds and stand knee-deep in them, eating the succulent marsh plants. Most of the plains rivers flow through sandy or muddy beds with no vegetable growth, and to these, of course, the deer merely come down to drink or refresh themselves by bathing, as they contain nothing to eat. At times the white-tail will lie so close that it may almost be trodden on. One June morning I was riding down along the river, and came to a long bottom, crowded with rose-bushes, all in bloom. It was crossed in every direction by cattle paths, and a drove of long-horned Texans were scattered over it. A cow-pony gets accustomed to travelling at speed along the cattle trails, and the one I bestrode threaded its way among the twisted narrow paths with perfect ease, loping rapidly onward through a sea of low rose-bushes, covered with the sweet, pink flowers. They gave a bright color to the whole plain, while the air was filled with the rich, full songs of the yellow-breasted meadow larks, as they perched on the topmost sprays of the little trees. Suddenly a white-tail doe sprang up almost from under the horse's feet, and scudded off with her white flag flaunting. There was no reason for harming her, and she made a pretty picture as she bounded lightly off among the rose-red flowers, passing without heed through the ranks of the long-horned and savage-looking steers.

Doubtless she had a little spotted fawn not far away. These wee fellows soon after birth grow very cunning and able to take care of themselves, keeping in the densest part of the brush, through which they run and dodge like a rabbit. If taken young they grow very tame and are most dainty pets. One which we had round the house answered well to its name. It was at first fed with milk, which it lapped eagerly from a saucer, sharing the meal with the two cats, who rather resented its presence and cuffed it heartily when they thought it was greedy and was taking more than its share. As it grew older it would eat bread or potatoes from our hands, and was perfectly fearless. At night it was let go or put in the cow-shed, whichever was handiest, but it was generally round in time for breakfast next morning. A blue ribbon with a bell attached was hung round its neck, so as to prevent its being shot; but in the end it shared the fate of all pets, for one night it went off and never came back again.

Only once have I ever killed a white-tail buck while hunting on horseback; and at that time I had been expecting to fall in with black-tail.

This was while we had been making a wagon trip to the westward following the old Keogh trail, which was made by the heavy army wagons that journeyed to Fort Keogh in the old days when the soldiers were, except a few daring trappers, the only white men to be seen on the last great hunting-ground of the Indians. It was abandoned as a military route several years ago, and is now only rarely travelled over, either by the canvas-topped ranch-wagon of some wandering cattle-men—like ourselves—or else by a small party of emigrants, in two or three prairie schooners, which contain all their household goods. Nevertheless, it is still as plain and distinct as ever. The two deep parallel ruts, cut into the sod by the wheels of the heavy wagon, stretch for scores of miles in a straight line across the level prairie, and take great turns and doublings to avoid the impassable portions of the Bad Lands. The track is always perfectly plain, for in the dry climate of the western plains the action of the weather tends to preserve rather than to obliterate it; where it cuts downhill, the snow water has cut and widened the ruts into deep gullies, so that a wagon has at those places to travel alongside the road. From any little rising in the prairie the road can be seen a long way off, as a dark line, which, when near, resolves itself into two sharply defined parallel cuts.

On the trip in question we had at first very bad weather. Leaving the ranch in the morning, two of us, who were mounted, pushed on ahead to hunt, the wagon following slowly, with a couple of spare saddle ponies leading behind it. Early in the afternoon, while riding over the crest of a great divide, which separates the drainage basins of two important creeks, we saw that a tremendous storm was brewing with that marvellous rapidity which is so marked a characteristic of weather changes on the plains.

We spurred hard to get out of the open, riding with loose reins for the creek. The center of the storm swept by behind us, fairly across our track, and we only got a wipe from the tail of it. Yet this itself we could not have faced in the open. The first gust caught us a few hundred yards from the creek, almost taking us from the saddle, and driving the rain and hail in stinging level sheets against us. We galloped to the edge of a deep wash-out, scrambled into it at the risk of our necks, and huddled up with our horses under-

neath the windward bank. Here we remained pretty well sheltered until the storm was over. Although it was August, the air became very cold. The wagon was fairly caught, and would have been blown over if the top had been on; the driver and horses escaped without injury, pressing under the lee ward side, the storm coming so low that they did not need a roof to protect them from the hail. Where the center of the whirlwind struck it did great damage.

The wagon came on to the creek along whose banks we had taken shelter, and we then went into camp. It rained all night, and there was a thick mist, with continual sharp showers all the next day and night. The wheeling was, in consequence, very heavy, and after striking the Keogh trail, we were able to go along it but a few miles before the fagged-out look of the team and the approach of evening warned us that we should have to go into camp while still a dozen miles from any pool or spring. Accordingly we made what would have been a dry camp had it not been for the incessant down-pour of rain, which we gathered in the canvas wagon-sheet

The bright-colored patch disappeared, and in our oilskin overcoats in sufficient quantity to make coffee, having with infinite difficulty started a smouldering fire just to leeward of the wagon. The horses, feeding on the soaked grass, did not need water. An antelope, with the bold and heedless curiosity sometimes shown by its tribe, came up within two hundred yards of us as we were building the fire, but though one of us took a shot at him, it missed. Our shaps and oilskins had kept us perfectly dry, and as soon as our frugal supper was over, we coiled up among the boxes and bundles inside the wagon and slept soundly till daybreak.

When the sun rose next day, the third we were out, the sky was clear, and we two horsemen at once prepared to make a hunt. Some three miles off to the south of where we were camped, the plateau on which we were sloped off into a great expanse of broken ground, with chains upon chains of steep hills, separated by deep valleys, winding and branching in every direction, their bottoms filled with trees and brushwood. Toward this place we rode, intending to go into it some little distance, and then to hunt along through it near the edge.

As soon as we got down near the brushy ravine we rode along without talking, guiding the horses as far as possible on earthy places, where they would neither stumble nor strike their feet against stones, and not letting our rifle barrels or spurs clink against anything. Keeping outside of the brush, a little up the side of the hill, one of us would ride along each side of the ravine, examining intently with our eyes every clump of trees or brushwood. For some time we saw nothing, but, finally, as we were riding both together round the jutting spur of a steep hill, my companion suddenly brought his horse to a halt, and pointing across the shelving bend to a patch of trees well up on the opposite side of a broad ravine, asked me if I did not see a deer in it. I was off the horse in a second, throwing the reins over his head. We were in the shadow of the cliff-shoulder, and with the wind in our favor; so we were unlikely to be observed by the game. I looked long and eagerly toward the spot indicated, which was about a hundred and twenty-five yards from us, but at first could see nothing. By this time, however, the experienced plainsman who was with me was satisfied that he was right in his supposition, and he told me to try again and look for a patch of red. I saw the patch at once, just glimmering through the bushes, but should certainly never have dreamed it was a deer if left to myself. Watching it attentively I soon saw it move enough to satisfy me where the head lay; kneeling on one knee and (as it was a little beyond point-blank range) holding at the top of the portion visible, I pulled trigger, and the bright-colored patch disappeared from among the bushes. The aim was a good one, for, on riding up to the brink of the ravine, we saw a fine white-tail buck lying below us, shot through just behind the shoulder; he was still in the red coat, with his antlers in the velvet.

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## APPEAL TO CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Made by Judge Taft in Behalf of the Filipinos.

"A Great Missionary Work That is Certain to Promote Christian Civilization."

The extension of a vitalizing Christianity among the Filipinos as advocated by Judge Taft both before his speech of acceptance of the nomination to the presidency and in that document itself has been widely commented upon in the pulpits of the United States. The voice of the clergy has given earnest commendation to the attitude of Judge Taft, who when governor general of the islands exerted the utmost influence for amelioration of the condition of the inhabitants of the archipelago, and that, too, at the cost of great self sacrifice on his own part in refusing the seat on the supreme bench, to which he was both called and commanded by President Roosevelt.

Never since he first assumed the burden of the governorship of the Philippines has the welfare of the Filipinos ceased to be close to the heart of Judge Taft. In his speech of acceptance again he reminded the American that it is the duty of this country as a strong, Christian and enlightened nation to give spiritual as well as material aid to the distant brown brethren.

### Taft's Appeal to Church.

Rev. Albert Hurlstone, pastor of Roberts Park church, Indianapolis Ind., in a recent sermon thus spoke of Judge Taft's appeal to the Christian people of America:

"Mr. Taft used words of wisdom in referring to this question in his notification speech. His appeal is not only to his party, but it is to the Christian church of America. It seems to me that every man whose heart beats loyally to Jesus Christ must rejoice in the statement so truthfully made. Mr. Taft said: 'We have established a government with effective and honest executive departments in the Philippines and a clean and fearless administration of justice; we have created and are maintaining a comprehensive school system which is educating the youth of the islands in English and in industrial branches; we have constructed great government public works, roads and harbors; we have induced the private construction of 800 miles of railroad; we have policed the islands so that their condition as to law and order is better now than it has ever been in their history.'

"Mr. Taft is better fitted to speak on this question than any other man in the government today by virtue of his close connection with the problem, his experience and personal observation of the work being done; hence what he says will be heeded by the Christian church with intense interest.

### Influence of Christian Civilization.

"More than ten years before Dewey sailed into Manila, Bishop Thoburn, our missionary bishop for fifty years in India, predicted that ere long the missionary would find an open door in the Philippines, but God alone knew how the door was to be opened.

"Now we hear Mr. Taft saying: 'We are engaged in the Philippines in a great missionary work that does our nation honor and is certain to promote in a most effective way the influence of Christian civilization. It is cowardly to lay down the burden until our purpose is achieved.' True, nor do we believe that the American people will allow this to be done. The sacrifice has been made, the song of the redeemed people will ere long fill heaven and earth with gladness. The selfish are ever lonely and joyless, but they who bring the sacrifice to the altar will find the joy of the Lord arise within them."

### "According to His Folly."

"Shall the people rule? is declared by the Democratic platform and candidate to be 'the overshadowing issue now under discussion.' It is no issue. Surely the people shall rule; surely the people have ruled; surely the people do rule." Thus Candidate Sherman replies to Candidate Bryan, and if the latter was looking for a straight answer he certainly got it. But those familiar with the mental processes of Mr. Bryan know that he would welcome no reply, but that his absurd question was asked to instill doubt in the minds of his more thoughtless followers.

### Democratic Discouragement.

At the risk of calling down upon ourselves further execrations from a few of the faithful and fanatical we make bold to remark that the indifference of the South Carolina Democrats to the cause of Mr. Bryan seems to justify our prediction some months ago that the campaign would end with the Denver convention. We wish that we could be disillusioned; we wish that the Democrats of South Carolina and of the country would sharply rebuke us for saying that there was an absence of enthusiasm for Mr. Bryan.—Charleston News and Courier (Dem.).

### Making or Keeping Promises.

The difference between Mr. Taft's promise of tariff revision and Mr. Bryan's pledges in the same direction is that Mr. Taft if elected will be in position to redeem his pledge, while Mr. Bryan if elected would be powerless to accomplish anything with a Republican senate arrayed against his free trade plans.—Omaha Bee.

## Merchant Tailoring

Fall Stock has arrived in all popular shades. Brown and Elephant Gray are the leaders of this season. Call and look them over

Theo. Haberstock

## MRS. M. F. Conway

Has removed from Broad Street and is now located on Fourth Street, opposite the Odd Fellows Block, where she will continue to serve her customers with

Home-made Bread Cookies and any thing in the Baking line made to order.

Mrs. M. F. Conway,

SECOND TO NONE  
ADAM, MELDRUM & ANDERSON CO.  
396-408 Main St.  
BUFFALO, N. Y.

## New Fall Dress Goods

We import more, sell more and carry more Dress Goods in stock than all the department stores in Buffalo combined. You get a greater selection here from a full range of weaves and colors. Our large purchases and the fact that we deal with producers only enables us to save all middlemen!

## Send for Samples

of the new Fall goods. Please state the kind and color you desire and about the price you can pay. On account of our immense stock it is impossible to send samples of all.

COME IN PERSON IF POSSIBLE  
Railroad fares rebated in connection with the Chamber of Commerce.

ADAM, MELDRUM & ANDERSON CO.  
American Block, Buffalo, N. Y.

# Ludlams Summer Clearance Sale

We do not intend to carry over any of our Summer Goods and in order to make all goods go we have put the knife deep into all prices.

- Any Untrimmed Hat 98c
- \$6.00, \$7.00 and \$8.00 Hats \$3.50
- \$4.00 and 5.00 Hats \$2.50
- \$2 and \$3 Hats \$1.50
- All Flowers, One-half Off

We still have a few nice pieces of Embroidery Flouncing that we have reduced one-third in price.

New Assortment of Valanese Laces and Insertion.

Finest line of Hosiery in the county. Also the new Princess Corset.