



HUNTING THE PECCARY

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

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In the United States the peccary is only found in the southernmost corner of Texas. In April, 1892, I made a flying visit to the ranch country of this region, starting from the town of Uvalde with a Texan friend, Mr. John Moore. My trip being very hurried, I had but a couple of days to devote to hunting.

Our first halting-place was at a ranch on the Frio; a low, wooden building, of many rooms, with open galleries between them, and veranda-

round about. The country was in some respects like, in others strangely unlike, the northern plains with which I was so well acquainted. It was for the most part covered with a scattered growth of tough, stunted mesquite trees, not dense enough to be called a forest, and yet sufficiently close to cut off the view. It was very dry, even as compared with the northern plains. The bed of the Frio was filled with coarse gravel, and for the most part dry as a bone on the surface, the water seeping through underneath, and only appearing in occasional deep holes. These deep holes or ponds never fail, even after a year's drouth; they were filled with fish. One lay quite near the ranch house, under a bold rocky bluff; at its edge grew giant cypress trees.

There had been many peccaries, or, as the Mexicans and cowpunchers of the border usually call them, javalinas, round this ranch a few years before the date of my visit. Until 1886, or thereabouts, these little wild hogs were not much molested, and abounded in the dense chaparral around the lower Rio Grande. In that year, however, it was suddenly discovered that their hides had a market value, being worth four bits—that is, half a dollar—apiece; and many Mexicans and not a few shiftless Texans went into the business of hunting them as a means

of livelihood. They were more easily killed than deer, and, as a result, they were speedily exterminated in many localities where they had formerly been numerous, and even where they were left were to be found only in greatly diminished numbers. On this particular Frio ranch the last little band had been killed nearly a year before. There were three of them, a boar and two sows, and a couple of the cowboys stumbled on them early one morning while out with a dog. After half a mile's chase the three peccaries ran into a hollow pecan tree, and one of the cowboys, dismounting, improvised a lance by tying his knife to the end of a pole, and killed them all.

Many anecdotes were related to me of what they had done in the old days when they were plentiful on the ranch.

I spent two days hunting round this ranch, but saw no peccary sign what-



Saw no peccary sign, although deer were plentiful.

ever, although deer were quite plentiful.

Having satisfied myself that there were no javalinas left on the Frio ranch, and being nearly at the end of my holiday, I was about to abandon the effort to get any, when a passing cowboy happened to mention the fact that some were still to be found on the Nueces River thirty miles or thereabouts to the southward. Thither I determined to go, and next morning Moore and I started in a buggy drawn by a redoubtable horse, named Jim Swinger, which we were allowed to use because he bucked so under the

idea that nobody on the ranch could ride a We drove six or seven hours over dry, waterless plains. The valley of the Nueces itself grew thick. There were many of pecan trees, and evergreen oaks stood in many places,

long, wind-shaken tufts of gray moss hanging from their limbs. Many of the trees in the wet spots were of giant size, and the whole landscape was semi-tropical in character.

High on a bluff shoulder overlooking the course of the river was perched the ranch house, toward which we were heading our steps; and here we were received with the hearty hospitality characteristic of the ranch country everywhere. The son of the ranchman, a tall, well-built young fellow, told me at once that there were peccaries in the neighborhood, and that he had himself shot one but two or three days before, and volunteered to lend us horses and pilot us to the game on the morrow, with the help of his two dogs. The last were big black curs with, as we were assured, "considerable hound" in them. One was at the time staying at the ranch house, the other was four or five miles off with a Mexican goat-herder, and it was arranged that early in the morning we should ride down to the latter place, taking the first dog with us and procuring his companion when we reached the goat-herder's house.

We started after breakfast, riding powerful cow-ponies, well trained to gallop at full speed through the dense chaparral. The big black hound slouched at our heels. We rode down the banks of the Nueces, crossing and recrossing the stream. Here and there were long, deep pools in the bed of the river, where rushes and lilies grew and huge mated garfish swam slowly just beneath the surface of the water. Once my two companions stopped to pull a mired cow out of a slough, hauling with ropes from their saddle horns. In places there were half-dry pools, out of the regular current of the river, the water green and fetid. The trees were very tall and large. The streamers of pale gray moss hung thickly from the branches of the live-oaks, and when many trees thus draped stood close together they bore a strangely mournful and desolate look.

We finally found the queer little hut of the Mexican goat-herder in the midst of a grove of giant pecans. On the walls were nailed the skins of different beasts, raccoons, wildcats, and the tree-civet, with its ringed tail. The Mexican's brown wife and children were in the hut, but the man himself and the goats were off in the forest, and it took us three or four hours' search before we found him. Then it was nearly noon, and we lunched in his hut, a square building of split logs, with bare earth floor, and roof of clap-boards and bark. Our lunch consisted of goat's meat and pan de mals. The Mexican, a broad-chested man with a stolid Indian face, was evidently quite a sportsman, and had two or three half-starved hounds, besides the funny hairless little house dogs, of which Mexicans seem so fond.

Having borrowed the javalina hound of which we were in search, we rode off in quest of our game, the two dogs trotting gayly ahead. The one which had been living at the ranch had evidently fared well, and was very fat; the other was little else but skin and bone, but as alert and knowing as any New York street-boy, with the same air of disreputable capacity. It was this hound which always did most in finding the javalinas and bringing them to bay, his companion's chief use being to make a noise and lend the moral support of his presence.

We rode away from the river on the dry uplands, where the timber, though thick, was small, consisting almost exclusively of the thorny mesquites. Mixed among them were prickly pears, standing as high as our heads on horseback, and Spanish bayonets, looking in the distance like small palms; and there were many other kinds of cactus, all with poisonous thorns. Two or three times the dogs got on an old trail and rushed off giving tongue, whereat we galloped madly after them, ducking and dodging through and among the clusters of spine-bearing trees and cactus, not without getting a considerable number of thorns in our hands and legs. It was very dry and hot. Where the javalinas live in droves in the river bottoms they often drink at the pools; but when some distance from water they seem to live quite comfortably on the prickly pear, slaking their thirst by eating its hard, juicy fibre.

At last, after several false alarms, and gallops which led to nothing, when it lacked but an hour of sundown we struck a band of five of the little wild hogs. They were running off through the mesquites with a peculiar hopping or bounding motion, and we all, dogs and men, tore after them instantly.

Peccaries are very fast for a few hundred yards, but speedily tire, lose their wind, and come to bay. Almost immediately one of these, a sow, as it turned out, wheeled and charged at Moore as he passed. Moore never seeing her, but keeping on after another. The sow then stopped and stood still, chattering her teeth savagely, and I jumped off my horse and dropped her dead with a shot in the spine, over the shoulders. Moore meanwhile had dashed off after his pig in one direc-

tion, and killed the little beast with a shot from the saddle when it had come to bay, turning and going straight at him. Two of the peccaries got off; the remaining one, a rather large boar, was followed by the two dogs, and as soon as I had killed the sow I leaped again on my horse and made after them, guided by the yelping and baying. In less than a quarter of a mile they were on his haunches, and he wheeled and stood under a bush, charging at them when they came near him, and once catching one, inflicting an ugly cut. All the while his teeth kept going like castanets, with a rapid clamping sound. I ran close up and killed him by a shot through the backbone where it joined the neck. His trunks were fine.

The few minutes' chase on horseback was great fun, and there was a certain excitement in seeing the fierce little creatures come to bay; but the true way to kill these peccaries would be with the spear. They could often be speared on horseback, and where this was impossible, by using dogs to bring them to bay they could readily be killed on foot; though, as they are



Dropped her dead with a shot in the spine.

very active, absolutely fearless, and inflict a most formidable bite, it would usually be safest to have two men go at one together. Peccaries are not difficult beasts to kill, because their short wind and their pugnacity make them come to bay before hounds so quickly. Two or three good dogs can bring to a halt a herd of considerable size. They then all stand in a bunch, or else with their sterns against a bank, chattering their teeth at their antagonists. When angry and at bay, they get their legs close together, their shoulders high, and their bristles all ruffled and look the very incarnation of anger, and they fight with reckless indifference to the very last. Hunters usually treat them with a certain amount of caution; but, as a matter of fact, I know of but one case where a man was hurt by them. He had shot at and wounded one, was charged both by it and by its two companions, and started to climb a tree; but as he drew himself from the ground, one sprang at him and bit him through the calf, inflicting a very severe wound. I have known of several cases of horses being cut, however, and dogs are very commonly killed. Indeed, a dog new to the business is almost certain to get very badly scared, and no dog that hunts steadily can escape without some injury. If it runs in right at the heads of the animals, the probabilities are that it will get killed; and, as a rule, even two good-sized hounds cannot kill a peccary, though it is no larger than either of them. However, a wary, resolute, hard-biting dog of good size speedily gets accustomed to the chase, and can kill a peccary single-handed, seizing it from behind and worrying it to death, or watching its chance and grabbing it by the back of the neck where it joins the head.

Peccaries have delicately moulded short legs, and their feet are small, the tracks looking peculiarly dainty in consequence. Hence, they do not swim well, though they take to the water if necessary. They feed on roots, prickly pears, nuts, insects, lizards, etc. They usually keep entirely separate from the droves of half-wild swine that are so often found in the same neighborhoods; but in one case, on this very ranch where I was staying, a peccary deliberately joined a party of nine pigs and associated with them. When the owner of the pigs came up to them one day the peccary manifested great suspicion at his presence, and finally sidled close up and threatened to attack him, so that he had to shoot it.

The ranchman's son told me that he had never but once had a peccary assail him unprovoked, and even in this case it was his dog that was the object of attack, the peccary rushing out as it followed him home one evening through the chaparral. Even around this ranch the peccaries had very greatly decreased in numbers, and the survivors were learning some caution. In the old days it had been no uncommon thing for a big band to attack entirely of their own accord, and keep a hunter up a tree for hours at a time.



TRYING TO HOODWINK NEGROES

Democrats Pursuing Their Usual Double Faced Policy.

Upholding Disfranchisement in the South While Forming Colored Clubs in West.

[From the Baltimore Sun, Dem.] General Winfield S. Hancock, who was the Democratic nominee for president in 1880, declared the tariff was principally a "local question"—that is to say, a Pennsylvania Democrat might be a protectionist for protection's sake, while a Democrat in Georgia or in Iowa might hold fast to the doctrine of a tariff for revenue only. The Massachusetts Democrat might be a free trader without reservation of any kind, while the West Virginia Democrat might be a free trader only with respect to commodities which were not produced by his own state. General Hancock's pronouncement was considered an ingenious evasion of the tariff issue, but it did not produce harmony in the Democratic party, and the general was defeated.

Twenty-eight years have passed since General Hancock defined the tariff as a local question upon which the Democrats of each state were free to act with regard chiefly to local interests. The principle which he formulated seems to have been adopted by Democrats in the west in respect to the relation of the Democratic party to the negro. Last week the West Virginia Democratic convention embodied in its platform planks demanding certain qualifications for voters, designed to disfranchise many negroes. Their platform also contains a declaration in favor of separate coaches for white and negro passengers on railroads. The West Virginia Democrats not only refuse to hold on to the olive branch to the negro and invite him into their fold, but they are determined to limit his political activity by a disfranchising law and to bring him under the operation of the "Jim Crow" law when he travels on the railroads of that state.

What Are the Promises?
Out in Nebraska and in Kansas the Democratic campaign managers are organizing negro voters into Bryan clubs. In Ohio no effort will be spared to secure the support of the negro voters for the Democratic national ticket. What pledges have been given and what inducements have been offered does not appear. But it is a fair inference that the managers have promised to do "something for the negro," perhaps to recognize him in the distribution of offices, if Mr. Bryan should be elected, and also to take such action as the negroes may demand in respect to the reinstatement of the negro battalion dismissed from the army by President Roosevelt for the attack on Brownsville. Last week when the West Virginia Democrats were declaring for a disfranchisement law and for a "Jim Crow" law the Democratic convention in the Twelfth congressional district of Ohio adopted a platform favoring "the enactment of laws which shall accord to all men accused of wrongdoing, whether soldiers or civilians, a fair and impartial trial and an opportunity to be heard before conviction or punishment." This apparently refers to the Brownsville incident. It may also have a broader meaning and a more extended application and may be susceptible of an interpretation which will make southern Democrats open their eyes with amazement and possibly with apprehension.

Race Question "Local Issue?"
There seems to be no ground for reasonable doubt that the Democratic campaign managers in the west, in the effort to secure negro support for their national ticket, are acting upon the principle that the race question is only a "local issue." It is evident that the south does not approve this plan of campaign, out is powerless to check it. The Democracy of the south is in full accord with the position taken by the West Virginia Democrats last week. And yet it is assumed by those who are trying to get negroes to support Mr. Bryan that the south will act in hearty co-operation with the Ohio, Nebraska, Kansas and Illinois Democrats who are welcoming the negro into free fellowship in the Democratic party and probably promising to annul the decision of President Roosevelt in the Brownsville matter. The theory of western Democrats that the race problem is merely a local issue is calculated to give the south much concern. Many Democrats in that section may question whether it is worth while to elect a Democratic president who may open wide the door of political opportunity to the negro.

Chafin Needs an Ark.
"Never since the flood has water reached such a high tide as at present," says the dry candidate for president. Looks as if he might be swept away in the freshet.

Rattling the Skeleton.
Eugene W. Chafin, the Prohibition candidate, was born in Waukesha, Wisconsin's foremost watering place.—New York Mail.

None of the Bryan phonograph records has the speeches advocating free silver and immediate government ownership of the railways, nor have they the "great commoner's" attacks on Roger Sullivan, Colonel Watterston and Guffey. These omissions tell an important story.

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