

PREFACE

It is with something like a confession that I offer this second of my nature books to the public—a confession, and a hope; the confession of one who for years hunted and killed before he learned that the wild offered a more thrilling sport than slaughter—and the hope that what I have written may make others feel and understand that the greatest thrill of the hunt is not in killing, but in letting live. It is true that the greatest thrill live. It is true that hilling, but in letting live. It is true that he the great open spaces one must kill to live! one must have meat, and meat is life. But killing for food is not the lust edited at sampler: it is not the lust which atwest recalls to me that day in the British ways recalls to me that day in the British Columbia mountains when, in less than two Columbia mountains when, in less than two hours, I killed four grizalics on a mountain side—a destruction of possibly a hundred and twenty years of life in a hundred and twenty minutes. And that is only one instance of many in which I now regard myself as having been almost a criminal—billing for the excitement of killing on hiling for the excilement of killing can hilling for the excilement of killing can be little less than murder. In their small way my animal books are the reparation I am note striving to make, and it has been my cornest desire to make them not only of romantic interest, but reliable in their fact. As in human life, there are their fact. As in human the, there are tragedy, and humor, and pathos in the life of the wild; there are facts of tremendous interest, real happenings and real lives to be written about, and very small necessity for one to draw on imagination. In "Kasan" I tried to give the reader a pic-Treat of my years of experience among the wild sledge dogs of the North. In "The Gristly" I have scrupulously adhered to facts as I have found them in the lives of the wild creatures of which I have written. Little Muskwa was with me all that summer and assumn in the Canadian Parkers. Rockies. Pipoonaskoos is buried in the Firepan Range country, with a slab over his head, just like a white man. The two grizsly cubs we dug out on the Athabasca are dead. And Thor still lives, for his range is in a country where no hunters go-and when at last the opportunity came we did not kill him. This year iin July of 1916) I am poing back into the country of Ther and Muckwa. I think I would know Thor if I saw him again, for he was a monater full-grown. But in two years Mucken has grown from cubhood into full bearhood. And yet I believe that Muskwa would know me should we chance to meet egain. I like to think that he has not formatten the sunce you the property of the state of the s forgotten the sugar, and the scores of times he oveldled up close to me at night, and the hunts we had together after roots and berries, and the sham fights with which we amused ourselves so often in camp. But, after all, perhaps he would not forgive me for that last day when we ran away from him so hard-leaving him alone to hi JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD.

CHAPTER ONE



TH the stience and im-

If Ther could have seen distinctly for a mile, or two miles, his eyes would have disfrom down the valley. He stood at the edge of a little plain, with the valley noon an eighth of a mile above him. The plain was very much like a cup, perhaps an age in extent, in the green slope of fountain. It was covered with rich, soft grass and June flowers, mountain vio-els and patches of forget-me-nots, and wild saters and hyacinths, and in the center was a fifty-foot spatter of soft mud which Thor visited frequently when his feet became rock-sore.

spread out the wonderful panorama of the Canadian Rockies, softened in the solden sunshine of a June afternoon.

From up and down the valley, from the

breaks between the peaks and from the litthe guilles cleft in shale and rock that crept up to the snow-lines came a soft and dronmurmur. It was the music of running vater. That music was always in the air. for the rivers, the creeks and the tiny trains gushing down from the snow that ay eternally up near the clouds were never

There were sweet perfumes as well as tweet in the air. June and July—the last of spring and the first of summer in the northern mountains—were commingling. hern mountains — were commingling earth was bursting with green; the sarly flowers were turning the sunny slopes colored splashes of red and white and Purple, and everything that had life was singing—the fat whistlers on their rocks. opous little gophers on their mounts. the big bumblebees that buzzed from haver to flower, the hawks in the valley and the safes over the peaks. Even Thor was taring in his way, for as he had paddled through the soft mud a few minutes before he had rumbled curiously deep down in his treat chest. It was not a growl or a roar of a smarl; it was the roles he read when of a snarl; it was the noise he mad he was contented. It was his song

and now, for some mysterious reason.
there had suddenly dome a change in this
waderful day for him. Motionless he still
mifed the wind. It puzzled him. It disquieted him without alarming him. To the as and strange smell that was in the air is was so keenly sensitive as a child's manue to the first sharp touch of a drop is brandy. And then, at last, a low and the strange of the stran lice and then, at last, a low and lies growi came like a distant roll of sider from out of his chest. He was sriord of these domains and slowly his ain told him that there should be no smell him. he could not comprehend and of he was not the master.

Ther reared up slowly, until the whole lost of him rested on his haunches, he sat like a trained dog, with his great

His forearms were almost as large as a man's body; the three largest of his five

In the mud his feet had left tracks that If the mud his feet had left tracks that ITH the slience and immobility of a great reddish - tinted rock. There stood for many minutes looking out over his domain. He could not see far, for, like all grizzlies, his eyes were small and far apart, and his vision was had. At a distance of a third or a half.

the had never smelled before. It was something that did not belong there, and it stirred him strangely. Vainly his slowworking brute mind strangeled to comprehend R. It was not caribou, for he had been something than any caribou; it was not goat; it was not sheep; and it was not the smell of the fat and lazy whistlers sunning themselves on the rocks, for he had eaten humbered of whistlers. It was a scort that did not cerrage him, and neither did it frighten him. He was curious, and yet he did not go down to seek it out. Caution held him back.

If Thor could have seen distinctly for a lie was dynast of the rich valleys and the green slopes, and liege lord of all living things about him. He had won and kept these things openly, without strategy or treachery. He was hated and he was feared, but he was without hatred or fear of his own—and he was honest. Therefore he waited openly for the strange thing He was hated and he that was coming to him from down the valley.

As he sat on his haunches, questioning As he sat on his haunches, questioning the air with his keen brown nose, something within him was reaching back into dim and bygone generations. Never before had he caught the taint that was in his nostrils, yet now that it came to him it did not seem altogether new. He could not place it. He could not picture it. Yet he knew that it was a menace and a threat.

For ten minutes he sat like a carven thing on his haunches. Then the wind splitted and the secht grew less and less.

shifted, and the scent grew less and less

until it was gone altogether.
Thor's flat cars lifted a little. He turned his huge head slowly so that his eyes took his huge head slowly so that his eyes took in the green slope and the tiny plain. He easily forgot the smell new that the air was clear and sweet again. He dropped on his four feet and resumed his gopher hunting.

There was something of humor in his There was something of humor in his hunt. Thor weighed a thousand pounds; a mountain gopher is six inches long and weighs six ounces. Yet Thor would dig energetically for an hour, and rejoice at the end by swallowing the fat little gopher like a pill; it was his bonne bouche, the lusclous tidbit in the quest of which he spent a third of his spring and summer digging. He found a hole located to his satisfaction and began throwing out the earth like a huge dog after a rat. He was on the a huge dog after a rat. He was on the crest of the slope. Once or twice during crest of the slope. Once or twice during the next half hour he lifted his head, but he was no longer disturbed by the strange smell that had come to him with the wind.

CHAPTER TWO



MILE down the valley Jim Langdon stopped his horse where the spruce and balsam tim-ber thinned out at the mouth of a courter pleasure swung

fully about the horn of his saddle,

of these domains and slowly his old him that there should be no smell he could not comprehend and of he was not the master.

Treated up slowly, until the whole set of him rested on his haunches, sat like a trained dog, with his great, heavy with mud, drooping in frent chast. For ten years he had lived in mountains and never had he smelled will be stored to the other's vociferations, which threatened Dishpan with every known form of torture and punishment, from instant chast. For ten years he had lived in mountains and never had he smelled in the more merciful end dismbowelment to the more merciful end of lessing her brain through the medium distance of the medium distance of

turn somersaults while diamond-hitched under her pack, big, good-natured Bruce Otto would do nothing more than make the welkin ring with his terrible, blood-cardling protest.

One after another the six horses of their outfit appeared out of the timber, and last of all rode the mounta'n man. He was gathered like a partly released spring in his saddle, an attitude born of years in the mountains, and because of a certain difficulty he had in distributing gracefully his six-foot-two-nch length of flesh and bone istride a mountain cavuse.

far apart, and his vision was had. At a distance of killing. Out of a herd he would take one of a third or a half mile he could make out a goat or a mountain sheep, but beyond that his world was a vast sun-filled or night-darkened mystery through which he ranged mostly by the guidance of sound and smell. It was the sense of smell that held him still and mationless now. Up out of the said, and the strange smell.

In his muscles strength, in his aloneness and the country ahead of him now with the joyous intentees of the hunter and they quested the country ahead of him now with the joyous intentees of the hunter and they were in the skies. With the mountains, they were in the skies. With the mountains, they was thirty-five. A part of his

Langdon was thirty-five. A part of his life he spent in the wild places, the other part he spent in writing about the things he found there. His companion was five years his junior in age, but had the better years his junior in age, but had the better of him by six inches in length of anatomy, if those additional inches could be called an advantage. Bruce thought they were not "The devil of it is I ain't done growin' et!" he often explained, He rode up now and unlimbered himself

"Did you ever see anything to beat that?"

"Fine country," agreed Bruce, "Mighty ood place to camp, too, Jim. There ought be caribou in this range, an' hear. We seed some fresh meat. Gimme a match, wil

light both their pipes with one match when possible. They performed this coremony now while viewing the situation. As he puffed the first luxurious cloud of smoke rom his buildog, Langdon nodded toward

the timber from which they had just come.
"Fine place for our topec," he said. "Dry wood, running water, and the first good balsam we've struck in a week for our beds. We can hobble the horses in that little open plain we crossed a quarter of a mile back. I saw plenty of buffalo grass and a lot of wild timothy."

He looked at his watch.
"It's only 1 o'clock. We might go on.
out—what do you say? Shall we stick for a day or two and see what this country

"Looks good to me," said Bruce. He sat down as he spoke, with his to a rock, and over his knee he leveled a long brass telescope. From his saddle Langdon unsigns a binocular glass imported from Paris. The telescope was a relic of the Civil War. Together, their shoulders touching as they steaded themselves against the rock, they studied the rolling slopes and the green slides of the mountains ahead

They were in the big game country, and what Langdon called the Unknown. So far as he and Bruce Otto could discover, no were in the big game country, and other white man had ever preceded them. It was a country shut in by tremendous ranges, through which it had taken them twenty days of sweating toil to make a

hundred miles.

That afternoon they had crossed the summit of the Great Divide that split the skice north and south, and through their skies north and south, and through their glasses they were looking now upon the first green slopes and wonderful peaks of the Firepan Mountains. To the northward —and they had been traveling north—was the Skeena River; on the west and south were the Habine range and waterways; eastward, over the Divide, was the Drift-wood, and still farther eastward the Omin-

"We'd climb over the mountain and come enth day of May, and this was the thritteth of June.

As Langdon looked through his glasses to believed that at last likey had reached the bourne of their desires. For nearly two months they had worked to get beyond to trail to fine out the first of the series of the bourne of their desires. For nearly two months they had worked to get beyond the trails of men, and they had succeeded. There were no hundren here. There were no prospectors. The value without a high the sength tout the first of its mystery and its wonder his beart was filled with the deer and satisfying Joy which only men like Langdon can fully understand. To his friend and comrade, Bruce Otto, with whom he had gone five times in the North country, all mountains and all valleys were very much alike; he was born among them, he had one five times in the North country, all mountains and all valleys were very much alike; he was born among them, he had one five times in the North country, all mountains and all valleys were very much alike; he was born among them, he had one five times in the North country, all mountains and all valleys were very much alike; he was born among them, he had one five times in the North country, all mountains and all valleys were very much alike; he was born among them, he had one five times in the North country, all mountains and all valleys were very much alike; he was born among them, he had one five times in the North country, all mountains and all valleys were very much alike; he was born among them, he had one five times in the North country, all mountains and all valleys were very much alike; he was born among them, he would probably die among them.

It was Bruce who gave him a sudden sharp under very discovered to the heads of three caribou creaming adjust the self-country to the gone of the read of the course of a summer he absorbed in his lines and without taking his eyes from the course of a summer he absorbed in his lines and without taking his eyes from the course of a sum

And I see a Samy and act and black shale of that first mountain to the right" replied Langdon. "And, by George, there's a Sky Pilot looking down on her from a crag a thousand feet above the shale! He's got a heard a foot long. Bruce, I'll bet we've struck a regular Garden of Eden."

"Looks it." vouchsafed Bruce, colling up his long legs to get a beter rest for his telescope. "If this ain't a sheep an' bear country I've made the worst guess I ever made in my life."

"I see a grizzly as big as a house!" be disturbed except by the pack horses. Thrilling news like this he always intro-duced as unconcernedly as though speaking of a bunch of violets.

"Where?" be demanded.
He leaned over to get the range of the

He leaned over to get the range of the other's telescope, every nerve in his body suddenly squiver "See that slope on the second shoulder, just beyond the ravine over there?" said Bruce, with one eye closed and the other still glued to the telescope. "He's halfway up, digging out a gopher."

Langdon focused his glass on the slope, the second start and excited ways came. and a moment later an excited gasp came

from him.
"See 'im?" asked Bruce.
"The glass has pulled him within four
feet of my none," replied Langdon. "Bruce,
that's the biggest grizzly in the Rocky

"If he ain't, he's his twin brother," chuckled the packer, without moving a

"He beats your eight-footer by a dozen inches, Jimmy An —he paused at this psychological moment to pull a plug of black MacDonald from his pocket and bite off a mouthful without taking the telescope from his eye-"an' the wind is in our favor an' he's as busy as a flea!" he

Otto unwound himself and rose to his feet, and Langdon jumped up briskly. In such situations as this there was a mutual understanding between them which made understanding between them which made words unnecessary. They led the eight horses back into the edge of the timber and tied them there, took their rifles from the leather holsiers, and each was careful to put a sixth cartridge in the chamber of his weapon. Then for a matter of two minutes they both studied the slope and its approaches with their naked eyes.

"We can also up the ravine," suggested

'We can slip up the ravine," suggested

"I reckon it's a three-hundred-yard shot from there," he said. "It's the best we can do. He'd get our wind if we went below

'im. If it was a couple o' nours earlier...' | gully. His huge head hung close to the "We'd climb over the mountain and come down on him from above!" exclaimed Lang-microscopic in its keenness; his olfactory

The big grizzly was perhaps six hundred yards up the slope, and pretty close to three hundred yards from the nearest point reached by the gully.

most worthless at a thousand yards.

dope, swinging his head slowly from right

slope, swinging his head slowly from right to left and sniffing.

The scent grew stronger. Another two yards down the slope he found it very strong under a rock. It was a big rock and weighed probably two hundred pounds. Thor dragged it skide with his one right hand as if it were no more than a pebble.

Instantly there was a wild and protesting

chatter, and a tiny striped rock-rabbit, very much like a chipmunk, darted away just as Thor's left hand came down with a

smash that would have broken the neck o

but the sayor of what the rock-rabbit had

stored under the stone that had attracted Thor. And this booty still remained—a half-pint of groundnuts piled carefully in

a little hollow lined with moss. They wer

and very starchy and sweet, and fattening

his quest.

He did not hear Langdon as the hunter

on him. He is like the rogue elephant

Thor continued his food-seekink, edging

ound suddenly brought him alert. Lang

edge of the slope.

He heard Bruce yell, but he could not make out the warning. Hands and feet he dug fiercely into shale and rock as he

fought to make those last three or four

yards as quickly as possible. He was almost to the top when he paused for a moment and turned his eyes upward.

His heart went into his throat, and he started. For ten second he could not move. Directly over him was a monster head and a huge hulk of shoulder. Thor was looking down on him, his jaws agape, his

ing down on him. his laws agape, his anger-long fange snarling, his eyes burning with a greenish-red firs.

In that moment Thor saw his first of man. His great lungs were filled with the hot snell of him, and sundenly he turned away from that small he if from a plague with his ride half under him rangdon had been approximate to be a constructed to be a constructed to the constructed to the

Bruce spoke in a whisper now,
"You go up an' do the stalkin', Jimmy,"
he said. "That bear's goin' to do one of two
things if you miss or only would 'im—one
o' three, mebbe; he's going to investigate m, or he's going up over the break, or he' comin' down in the valley—this way. We can't keep 'im from goin' over the break an' if he tackies you—just summerset it down the gully. You can beat 'im out. He's most apt to come this way if you don't get 'im. so I'll wait here. Good luck to you,

With this he went out and crouched behind a rock where he could keep an eye on the grizzly, and Langdon began to climb juietly up the boulder-strewn gully.

CHAPTER THREE



F ALL the living crea-tures in this skeeping valley. There was the husiest. He was a bear with individuality, you might say. Like some people, he went to bed very early; he began to get sleepy in October and turned in for his lone may be a not be long map in November. He slept until April, and usually was a week of

ten days beaud other bears in washes. He was a sound sleeper, and when awake he was very wide awake. During April and May he permitted himself to doze considerably in the warmth of sunny rocks, but from the beginning of June until the middle of September he closed his eyes in real sleep just about four hours out of every trealways.

came nearer and nearer up the broken guily. He did not smell him, for the wind was faisily wrong. He had forgotten the noxious man-smell that had disturbed and irritated him an hour before. He was quite happy; he was good-humored; he was fat and sleek. An irritable, cross-grained and He was very busy as Langdon began his cautious climb up the gully. He had suc-ceeded in getting his gopher, a fat, alderceeded in getting als sopher, a rat, alter-manic old patriarch who had disappeared in one crunch and a gulp, and he was now ab-sorbed in finishing off bis day's feast with an occasional fat, white grub and a few sour ants captured from under stones which he turned over with his paw. still closer to the gully. He was within a hundred and fifty yards of it when a

don in his effort to creep up the steep side of the gully for a shot had accidentally In his search for these delicacies Tho used his right paw in turning over th loosened a rock. It went crashing down the rocks. Ninety-nine out of every hundred ravine, starting other stones that foll hears—probably a hundred and ninety-nine out of every two hundred—are left-handed; Thor was right-handed. This gave him an in a noisy ciatter. At the foot of the coulee, six hundred yards down, Bruce swore softly under his breath. He saw Thor sit up. At advantage in fighting, in fishing and in that distance he was going to shoot if the bear made for the break.

For thirty seconds Thor sat on his haunches. Then he started for the ravine. stalking meat, for a grissly's right arm is longer than his left—so much longer that if he lost his sixth sense of orientation he would be constantly traveling in a circle ambling slowly and deliberately. Langdon, panting and inwardly cursing at his ill luck, struggled to make the last ten feet to the

clambered up the remaining few feet. The shale and stones slipped and slid under him. It was a matter of sixty seconds before he pulled himself over the top."

Ther was a hundred yards away, speeding in a rolling, ball-like metion toward the break. From the foot of the coulee came the sharp cruck of Otto's rife. Langdon squatted quickly, raising his left knee for rest, and at a hundred and fifty yards

Sometimes it happens that an hour—a minute—chances the destiny of man; and the ten seconds which followed swiftly after that first shot from the foot of the coulee changed Thor. He had got his fill of the man-smell. He had seen man. And now he felt him.

It was as if one of the lightning flasher he had often seen splitting the dark sich had descended upon him and had entered his fresh like a red-hot kulfe, and with that first burning agony of pain came the strange, echoing roar of the rifles. He had strange, echoing roar of the files. He had turned up the slope when the bullet struck him in the fore-shoulder, mushrooming its deadly soft point against his tough hide, and tearing a hole through his fiesh—out without touching the bone. He was two hundred yards from the ravine when it hit; he was nearer three hundred when the stinging fire seared him again, this time in his flash. time in his flank.

Neither shot had staggered his huge bulk, twenty such shots would not have silled him. But the second stopped him, and he turned with a roar of rage that was like the bellowing of a mad bull—a snarling, thunderous cry of wrath that could have been heard a quarter of a mile down the valley.

Brue heard it as he fired his sixth unavailing shot at seven hundred yards. Landdon was reloading. For fifteen seconds Thor offered himself openly, roaring his defiance, challenging the enemy he could ne longer see; and then at Langdon's seventh shot, a whiplash of fire raked his back, and in strange dread of this lightning which he could not fight. Ther continued up over the break. He heard other rife shots which were like a new kind of thunder. But he was not hit again. Painfully he began the descent into the next valley. He reached the bottoms and buried him-

self in the thick timber, and then crossing this timber, he came to a creek. Perhaps a hundred times he had traveled up and down this creek. It was the main trail that led from one half of his range

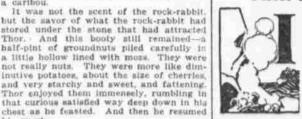
o the other. Instinctively he always took this trail then he was ready to den up for the winter. when he was ready to den up for the winter. There was one chief reason for this; he was born in the almost impenetrable fastnesses at the head of the creek, and his cubbood had been spent amid its brambles of wild currants and soap berries and its rich red ground carpets of kinnikinic. It was home. In it he was alone, It was the one part of his domain that he held inviolate from all other bears. He tolerated other bears—blacks and crizilies—on the

The sun was setting before he reached the wallow. His taws hung open a little the wallow. His jaws hung open a little. His sreat head drooped lower. He had lost a great deal of blood. He was tired and his shoulder hurt him so badly that he wanted to tear with his teeth at the strange fire

As he was about to turn over a fresh tone Thor paused in his operations. For full minute he stood nearly motionless. Then his head swung slowly, his nose close to the ground. Very faintly he had caught an exceedingly pleasing odor. It was so faint that he was afraid of losing it if he that was consuming it. moved. So he stood until he was sure of himself, then he swung his huge shoulders around and descended two yards down the The clay wallow was twenty or thirty

feet in diameter and hollowed into a little pool in the center. It was a soft, cool, golden-colored clay, and Thor waded into it to his armpits. Then he rolled over it to his armpits. Then he reciled over gently on his wounded side. The clay touched his hurt like a cooling saive. It sealed the cut and Thor gave a great heaving gasp of relief. For a long time he lay in that soft bed of clay. The sun went down, darkness came and the wonderful stars filled the sky. And still Thor lay there, nursing that first hurt of man.

CHAPTER FOUR



N THE edge of the balsam and spruce Lang-don and Otto sat smoktheir pipes after supper with the glowing em-bers of a fire at their feet. The night air in these higher altitudes of the mountains had grown chilly and Bruce rose long enough to throw a fresh armful of

Then he stretched out his long form again, with his head and shoulders beistered comfortably against the butt of a tree, and for the fiftieth time he chuckled. "Chuckle an' be blasted," growled Langdon. "I tell you I hit him twice, Bruce-twice mayor and he will be the street and the street twice anyway; and I was at a devilish disadvantage !"
"Specially when 'e was lookin' down are

and sieck. An irritable, cross-grained and quarrelsome bear is always thin. The true hunter knows him as soon as he sets eyes specially when 'e was lookin' down an grinning' in your face," retorted Bruce, who had enjoyed hugely his comrade's ill leading and a that distance you should a'mosa, ha' killed 'im with a rock!"

"My gun was under me," explained Langdon for the twentieth time. "Wich ain't just the proper place for gun to be when yo'r hunting a grinnly?

reminded Bruce. Langdon sat up, knocked the ash out of the bowl of his pipe and reloaded it with fresh tobacco.
"Bruce, that's the biggest grissly in the

Rocky Mountains!"
"He'd 'a' made a fine rug in your dea.
Jimmy—if yo'r gun hadn't 'appened to 'ave been under you."

been under you."

"And I'm going to have him in my den before I finish," declared Langdon. "I've make up my mind. We'll make a permareot camp here. I'm going to get that grissly if it takes all summer. I'd rather have him than any other ten bears in the Pirepan Range. He was a nine-footer if an inch. His head was as big as a bushel backet, and the hair on his shoulders was four inches long. I don't know that I'm serry I didn't kill him. He's hit, and he'll sureir fight shy. There'll be a lot of fun in gentring him."

CONTINUED IN MONDAY'S Evening San Bedger

