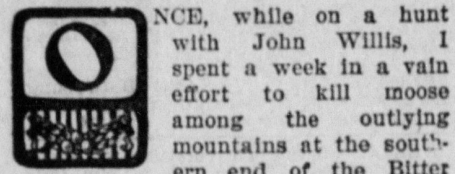


HUNTING THE WAPITI

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT



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Root range. Then, as we had no meat, we determined to try for elk.

We were camped with a wagon, as high among the foot-hills as wheels could go, but several hours' walk from the range of the game; for it was still early in the season, and they had not yet come down from the upper slopes. Accordingly we made a practice of leaving the wagon for two or three days at a time to hunt; returning to get a night's rest in the tent, preparatory to a fresh start. On these trips we carried neither blankets nor packs, as the walking was difficult and we had much ground to cover. Each merely put on his jacket with a loaf of frying-pan bread and a paper of salt stuffed into the pockets. We were cumbered with nothing save our rifles and cartridges.

On the morning in question we left camp at sunrise. For two or three hours we walked up-hill through a rather open growth of small pines and spruces, the traveling being easy. Then we came to the edge of a deep valley, a couple of miles across. Into this we scrambled, down a steep slide, where the forest had grown up among the immense boulder masses. Finally, in the afternoon, we left the valley and began to climb a steep gorge, down which a mountain torrent roared and foamed in a succession of cataracts.

Three hours' hard climbing brought us to another valley, but of an entirely different character. It was several miles long, but less than a mile broad. Save at the mouth, it was walled in completely by chains of high rock peaks, their summits snow-capped; the forest extended a short distance up their sides. Hardly had we entered this valley before we caught a glimpse of a yearling elk walking rapidly along a game path some distance ahead. We followed as quickly as we could without making a noise, but after the first glimpse never saw it again; for it is astonishing how fast

under them, straining every muscle in their huge bodies, and squealing savagely. They were evenly matched in weight, strength, and courage; and push as they might, neither got the upper hand, first one yielding a few inches, then the other, while they swayed to and fro in their struggles, smashing the bushes and ploughing up the soil.

Finally they separated and stood some little distance apart, under the great pines; their sides heaving, and columns of steam rising from their nostrils through the frosty air of the brightening morning. Again they rushed together with a crash, and each strove mightily to overthrow the other, or get past his guard; but the branching antlers caught every vicious lunge and thrust. This set-to was stopped rather curiously. One of the onlooking elk was a yearling; the other, though scarcely as heavy-bodied as either of the fighters, had a finer head. He was evidently much excited by the battle, and he now began to walk towards the two combatants, nodding his head and uttering a queer, whistling noise. They dared not leave their flanks uncovered to his assault; and as he approached they promptly separated, and walked off side by side a few yards apart. In a moment, however, one spun round and jumped at his old adversary, seeking to stab him in his unprotected flank; but the latter was just as quick, and as before caught the rush on his horns. They closed as furiously as ever; but the utmost either could do was to inflict one or two punches on the neck and shoulders of his foe, where the thick hide served as a shield. Again the peace-maker approached, nodding his head, whistling, and threatening; and again they separated.

This was repeated once or twice; and I began to be afraid lest the breeze which was very light and puffy should shift and give them my wind. So, resting my rifle on my knee I fired twice, putting one bullet behind the shoulder of the peace-maker, and the other behind the shoulder of one of the combatants. Both were deadly shots, but, as so often with wapiti, neither of the wounded animals at the moment showed any signs of being hit. The yearling ran off unscathed. The other three crowded together and trotted behind some spruce on the left, while we ran forward for another shot. In a moment one fell; whereupon the remaining two turned and came back across the glade, trotting to the right. As we opened fire they broke into a lumbering gallop, but were both downed before they got out of sight in the timber.

The wapiti is, next to the moose, the most quarrelsome and pugnacious of American deer. It cannot be said that it is ordinarily a dangerous beast to hunt; yet there are instances in which it wounded wapiti, incautiously approached to within striking distance, have severely misused their assailants, both with their antlers and their forefeet.

However, the fiercest wapiti bull, when in a wild state, sees the neighborhood of man with the same panic terror shown by the cows; and he makes no stand against a grizzly, though when his horns are grown he has little fear of either wolf or cougar if on his guard and attacked fairly. The chief battles of the bulls are of course waged with one another. Before the beginning of the rut they keep by themselves; singly, while the sprouting horns are still very young, at which time they lie in secluded spots and move about as little as possible; in large bands, later in the season. At the beginning of the fall these bands join with one another and with the bands of cows and calves, which have likewise been keeping to themselves during the late winter, the spring, and the summer. Vast herds are thus sometimes formed, containing, in the old days when wapiti were plenty, thousands of head. The bulls now begin to fight furiously with one another, and the great herd becomes split into smaller ones. Each of these has one master bull, who has won his position by savage battle, and keeps it by overcoming every rival, whether a solitary bull, or the lord of another herd, who challenges him. When not fighting or love-making he is kept on the run, chasing away the young bulls who venture to pay court to the cows. He has hardly time to eat or sleep, and soon becomes gaunt and worn to a degree.

The battles between the bulls rarely result fatally. After a longer or shorter period of charging, pushing, and struggling the heavier or more enduring of the two begins to shove his weaker antagonist back and round; and the latter then watches his chance and bolts, hotly, but as a rule harmlessly, pursued for a few hundred yards. The massive branching antlers serve as effective guards against the most wicked thrusts. While the antagonists are head on, the worst that can happen is a punch on the shoulder which will not break the thick hide, though it may bruise the flesh underneath.

Wapiti keep their antlers until the spring, whereas deer and moose lose theirs by mid-winter. The bull's behavior in relation to the cow is merely that of a vicious and brutal coward. He bullies her continually, and in times of danger his one thought is for sneaking off to secure his own safety. For all his noble looks he is a very unamiable beast, who behaves with brutal ferocity to the weak, and shows abject terror of the strong. According to his powers, he is guilty of rape, robbery, and even murder. I never felt the least compunction at shooting a bull, but I hate to shoot a cow, even when forced by necessity.

During the rut the bulls are very noisy; and their notes of amorous challenge are called "whistling" by the frontiersmen,—very inappropriately. They begin to whistle about ten days before they begin to run; and they have in addition an odd kind of bark, which is only heard occasionally.

Heard at a little distance, and in its proper place, the call of the wapiti is one of the grandest and most beautiful sounds in nature. Especially is this the case when several rivals are answering one another, on some frosty moonlight night in the mountains. Once, while in the mountains, I listened to a peculiarly grand chorus of this kind. We were traveling with



He plunged wildly forward.

pack ponies at the time, and our tent was pitched in a grove of yellow pine, by a brook in the bottom of a valley. On either hand rose the mountains, covered with spruce forest. It was in September, and the first snow had just fallen.

The day before we had walked long and hard; and during the night I slept the heavy sleep of the weary. Early in the morning, just as the east began to grow gray, I waked; and as I did so, the sounds that smote on my ear, caused me to sit up and throw off the warm blankets. Bull elk were challenging among the mountains on both sides of the valley, a little way from us, their notes echoing like the calling of silver bugles. Groping about in the dark, I drew on my trousers, an extra pair of thick socks, and my moccasins, donned a warm jacket, found my fur cap and gloves, and stole out of the tent with my rifle. Two herds were approaching one another from opposite sides of the valley, a short distance above our camp; and the master bulls were roaring defiance as they mustered their harem.

I walked stealthily up the valley, until I felt that I was nearly between the two herds; and then stood motionless under a tall pine. I made up my mind, from the sound of the challenging, now very near me, that one bull on my right was advancing towards a rival on my left, who was answering every call. Soon the former approached so near that I could hear him crack the branches, and beat the bushes with his horns; and I slipped quietly from tree to tree, so as to meet him when he came out into the more open woodland. Day broke, and crimson gleams played across the snow-clad mountains beyond.

At last, just as the sun flamed red above the hill-tops, I heard the roar of the wapiti's challenge not fifty yards away; and I cocked and half raised my rifle, and stood motionless. In a moment more, the belt of spruces in front of me swayed and opened, and the lordly bull stepped out. He bore his massive antlers aloft; the snow lay thick on his mane; he snuffed the air and stamped on the ground as he walked. As I drew a bead, the motion caught his eye; and instantly his bearing of haughty and warlike self-confidence changed to one of alarm. My bullet smote through his shoulder-blades, and he plunged wildly forward, and fell full length on the blood-stained snow.

Nothing can be finer than a wapiti bull's carriage when excited or alarmed; he then seems the embodiment of strength and stately grace. But at ordinary times his looks are less attractive, as he walks with his neck level with his body and his head outstretched, his horns lying almost on his shoulders. The favorite gait of the wapiti is the trot, which is very fast, and which they can keep up for countless miles; when suddenly and greatly alarmed, they break into an awkward gallop, which is faster, but which speedily tires them.

Next Week: "Elk Hunt at Two Ocean Pass."

The Scrap Book

A Quick Recovery.

"If a man wants to encourage calamities that sometimes result in miracles, all he has to do is to send a son to college and present him with an automobile," declared the father of a young man now in his second year at one of the big universities.

"That boy of mine was likely to bankrupt me with his calls for money to pay damages to and by his machine until I wrote him that in future he must cover all such expenses out of his allowance, which is about ten times what my father gave me when I went to college."

"For a time there wasn't a single demand from him, but last week he sent me a telegram like this: 'Wire me \$300 immediately. Have killed a man's horse.' Of course I said things unfit to repeat and finally telegraphed him: 'Demand exorbitant. Will be on tomorrow to compromise.'"

"Imagine my amazement, in view of the horse's late demise, at receiving within two hours this inexplicable reply: 'Don't trouble to come. Horse recovering.'"

A Baby's Feet.

A baby's feet, like seashell pink, Might tempt, should heaven see meet. An angel's lips to kiss, we think, A baby's feet.

Like rose-hued sea flowers toward the heat, They stretch and spread and wink Their ten soft buds that part and meet On baby's feet.

No flower bells that expand and shrink Gleam half so heavenly sweet As shine on life's untrodden brink A baby's feet.

—Swinburne.

In Black and White.

A southern banker gave his young son \$5, and instead of spending it the boy handed it back to his father to deposit for him in order that he might draw the interest. A few days later, however, the youngster saw something he wanted more than he did the interest, so asked his father to please return the money.

This the banker refused to do, explaining that the son had no note for the money and unless he could prove in black and white that the money had been handed him the \$5 was his.

The youthful financier looked both puzzled and unhappy. Then his countenance cleared. He called the colored butler.

"John, did you see me give father \$5 the other day?"

He was answered in the affirmative. Then he put the same question to his grandmother.

When she, too, said yes young Machiavelli turned to his father triumphantly:

"There, father, I have it in black and white!"

He got the money.

On the Way.

A jovial son of Erin who is a conductor on a trolley car was telling a friend the other morning about his experiences as a helper in a large manufacturing establishment. The friend wanted to know what Pat quit the job for. The latter explained with emphasis that he had invited the boss to visit a place where he might burn forever.

"Well, did he go?" inquired the trolleyman's friend, who was in rare good humor.

"Oh, I don't know," quoth Pat, with a broad smile, "but th' last time I sa' him he was smokin'."

One Thing He Forgot.

A native born American member of a party of four business men who often lunched together took great delight in joking the others on their foreign birth.

"It's all very well for you fellows to talk about what we need in this country," he said, "but when you come to think of it you're really only intruders. Not one of you was born here. You're welcome to this country, of course, but you really oughtn't to forget what you owe us natives who open our doors to you."

"Maybe," said an Irishman in the party thoughtfully. "Maybe. But there's one thing you seem to forget. I came into this country wid me face paid an' me clothes on me back. Can you say the same?"—Everybody's.

Somewhat Puzzling.

It is not at all surprising that the American vernacular should some times prove a little too much for the Englishman. A case in point was that of a visitor from London who came to New York last summer and was taken by his host to see one of the league baseball games at the Polo grounds. The game had progressed as far as the third inning without anything in particular happening, when suddenly one of the Giants pounded out a three bagger that set everybody howling with joy.

"That was a bird!" ejaculated the Englishman's host after the excitement had subsided.

A moment later a foul tip sent the ball flying back to the grand stand. "And what do you call that?" queried the Englishman.

"That's a foul," said his host.

"Ah," returned the Englishman, "a foul, eh? Well, it seems to me that the language of baseball is most extraordinary. A foul is a bird and a bird is a foul, and yet you use these terms to describe two plays that seem to me to be diametrically opposed to each other. Do you call that logical?"

The Englishman is still trying to think it out.—Harper's Weekly.

England's Generals.

There has not been an English general since Marlborough. Wellington was born at Dangan castle, Meath, of an old Irish family called Wesley and christened in Dublin. Wolfe was born at Ferneux abbey, Kildare, and christened at Westerham—nearly in the same case as the Brontes (Bronty). His grandfather defended Limerick against William III.

Sir John Moore and the Napiers were Scotchmen, and so was Abercrombie (Egypt); so were Napier of Magdala, Crawford and Clyde, Wolsley, Roberts and Kitchener are Irish; so was Gough. The generals and statesmen who saved India to Great Britain were Nelli, Nicholson, the two Lawrences (Irish), Edwards (Welsh) and Rose (Scotch).

I know of Wolfe because my great-grandfather served under him at Quebec. His Irish birth was corroborated to me by Captain Dunne, once well known in literary circles of a Queens county family. I don't know whether Scotchmen like to be called English, but certainly Irishmen do not.—London News.

A Queer Battle.

A traveler in South Africa tells of a singular combat that he witnessed. He was musing one morning with his eyes on the ground when he noticed a caterpillar crawling along at a rapid pace, followed by hundreds of small ants. Being quicker in their movements, the ants would catch up with the caterpillar, and one would mount his back and bite him. Pausing, the caterpillar would turn his head and bite the ant and kill his tormentor. After slaughtering a dozen or more of his persecutors the caterpillar showed signs of fatigue. The ants made a combined attack. Betaking himself to a stalk of grass, the caterpillar climbed up tall first, followed by the ants. As one approached he seized it in his jaws and threw it off the stalk. The ants, seeing the caterpillar had too strong a position for them to overcome, resorted to strategy. They began sawing through the grass stalk. In a few moments the stalk fell, and hundreds of ants pounced upon the caterpillar. It was killed at once.

Taking the Step.

It happened while a marriage was being celebrated. The bridegroom did not have the usual happy, bashful look. Instead he seemed to be profoundly unhappy and fidgeted about, standing first on one foot and then on the other.

So patent was his state of mental inquiet that the "best man" deemed it expedient to elucidate the mystery. "Hae ye lost the ring?" he solicitously inquired.

"No," answered the unhappy one with a woeful look; "the ring's safe enough, but, man, I've lost my enthusiasm!"—London Scrap.

Impressed.

"I appear to have made something of an impression on that man over there," remarked a young lady at a wedding party. "He has been looking at me ever since I arrived."

"If you mean that one with the black mustache, he's the detective engaged to look after the presents!" said a friend.

Very Little Change.

"It's three years since I was in this city," said a stranger in a restaurant as he was walking out after finishing his dinner; "city looks the same."

"I don't find much change!" responded the waiter as he took up the nickel that was left on the table.

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The crash of the meeting antlers resounding through the valley.

an elk travels, with its ground-covering walk.

By the time the sun set we were sure the elk were towards the head of the valley. We utilized the short twilight in arranging our sleeping place for the night, choosing a thick grove of spruce beside a small mountain tarn, at the foot of a great cliff. As the first faint streak of dawn appeared in the dark sky my companion touched me lightly on the arm. The fire was nearly out; we felt numbed by the chill air. At once we sprang up, stretched our arms, shook ourselves, examined our rifles, swallowed a mouthful or two of bread, and walked off through the gloomy forest.

At first we could scarcely see our way, but it grew rapidly lighter. Then, as we trod noiselessly over the dense moss, and on the pine needles under the scattered trees, we heard a sharp clang and clatter up the valley ahead of us. In a little glade, a hundred and twenty-five yards from us, two bull elk were engaged in deadly combat, while two others were looking on. It was a splendid sight. The great beasts faced each other with lowered horns, the manes that covered their thick necks, and the hair on their shoulders, bristling and erect. Then they charged furiously, the crash of the meeting antlers resounding through the valley. The shock threw them both on their haunches; with locked horns and glaring eyes they strove against each other, getting their hind legs well