

HUNTING THE ANTELOPE BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT



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DURING the morning I came in sight of several small bands or pairs of antelope. Most of them saw me as soon as or before I saw them, and after watching me with intense curiosity as long as I was in sight and at a distance, made off at once as soon as I went into a hollow or appeared to be approaching too near. Twice, in scanning the country narrowly with the glasses, from behind a sheltering divide, bands of prong-horn were seen that had not discovered me.

In each case the horse was at once left to graze, while I started off after the game, nearly a mile distant. For the first half mile I could walk upright or go along half stooping; then, as the distance grew closer, I had to crawl on all fours and keep behind any little broken bank, or take advantage of a small, dry watercourse; and toward the end work my way flat on my face, wriggling like a serpent, using every stunted sagebrush or patch of cactus as a cover, bareheaded under the blazing sun. In each case, after nearly an hour's irksome, thirsty work, the stalk failed. One band simply ran off without a second's warning, alarmed at some awkward movement on my part, and without giving a chance for a shot.

In the other instance, while still at very long and uncertain range, I heard the sharp barking alarm-note of one of the prong-horn; the whole band instantly raising their heads and gazing intently at their would-be destroyer. They were a very long way off; but, seeing it was hopeless to try to get nearer I rested my rifle over a little mound of earth and fired. The dust came up in a puff to one side of the nearest antelope; the whole band took a few jumps and turned again; the second shot struck at their feet, and they went off like so many race-horses, being missed again as they ran. I sat up by a sage-brush thinking they would of course not come back, when to my surprise I saw them wheel round with the precision of a cavalry squadron, all in line and fronting me, the white and brown markings on their heads and throats showing like the facings on soldiers' uniforms; and then back they came charging up till again within long range, when they wheeled their line as if on a pivot and once more made off, this time for good, not heeding an ineffectual fusillade from the Winchester.

Antelope often go through a series of regular evolutions, like so many trained horsemen, wheeling, turning, halting, and running as if under command; and their coming back to again

run the (as it proved very harmless) gauntlet of my fire was due either to curiosity or to one of those panicky freaks which occasionally seize those ordinarily wary animals, and cause them to run into danger easily avoided by creatures commonly much more readily approached than they are. I had fired half a dozen shots without effect; but while no one ever gets over his feeling of self indignation at missing an easy shot at close quarters, any one who hunts antelope and is not of a disposition so timid as never to take chances, soon learns that he has to expect to expend a good deal of powder and lead before bagging his game.

By mid-day we reached a dry creek and followed up its course for a mile or so, till a small spot of green in the side of a bank showed the presence of water, a little pool of which lay underneath. The ground was so rotten that it was with difficulty I could get Manitou down where he could drink; but at last both of us satisfied our thirst, and he was turned loose to graze, with his saddle off, so as to cool his back,

and I, after eating a biscuit, lay on my face on the ground—there was no shade of any sort near—and dozed until a couple of hours' rest and feed had put the horse in good trim for the afternoon ride. When it came to crossing over the dry creek on whose bank we had rested, we almost went down in a quicksand, and it was only by frantic struggles and floundering that we managed to get over.

On account of these quicksands and mud-holes, crossing the creeks on the prairie is often very disagreeable work. Even when apparently perfectly dry the bottom may have merely a thin crust of hard mud and underneath a fathomless bed of slime. If the grass appears wet and with here and there a few tussocks of taller blades in it, it is well to avoid it. Often a man may have to go along a creek nearly a mile before he can find a safe crossing, or else run the risk of seeing his horse mired hard and fast. When a horse is once in a mud-hole it will perhaps so exhaust itself by its first desperate and fruitless struggle that it is almost impossible to get it out. Its bridle and saddle have to be taken off; if another horse is along the lariat is drawn from the pommel of the latter's saddle to the neck of the one that is in, and it is hauled out by main force. Otherwise a man may have to work half a day, fixing the horse's legs in the right position and then taking it by the forelock and endeavoring to get it to make a plunge; each plunge bringing it perhaps a few inches nearer the firm ground. Quicksands are even more dangerous than these mud-holes, as, if at all deep, a creature that cannot get out immediately is sure to be speedily engulfed. Many parts of the Little Missouri are impassable on account of these quicksands. Always in crossing unknown ground that looks dangerous it is best to feel your way very cautiously along and, if possible, to find out some cattle trail or even game trail which can be followed.

For some time after leaving the creek nothing was seen; until, on coming over the crest of the next great divide, I came in sight of a band of six or eight prong-horn about a quarter of a mile off to my right hand. There was a slight breeze from the southeast, which blew diagonally across my path towards the antelope. The latter, after staring at me a minute, as I rode slowly on, suddenly started at full speed to run directly up wind, and therefore in a direction that would cut the line of my course less than half a mile ahead of where I was. Knowing that when antelope begin running in a straight line they are very hard to turn, and seeing that they would have to run a longer distance than my horse would to intercept them, I clapped spurs into Manitou, and the game old fellow, a very fleet runner, stretched himself down to the ground and seemed to go almost as fast as the quarry. As I had expected, the latter, when they saw me running, merely straightened themselves out and went on, possibly even faster than before, without changing the line of their flight, keeping right up wind. Both horse and antelope fairly flew over the ground, their courses being at an angle that would certainly bring them together. Two of the antelope led, by some fifty yards or so, the others, who were all bunched together. Nearer and nearer we came, Manitou, in spite of carrying myself and the pack behind the saddle, gamely holding his own, while the antelope, with outstretched necks, went at an even, regular gait that offered a strong contrast to the springing bounds with which a deer runs. At last the two leading animals crossed the line of my sight ahead of me; when I pulled short up, leaped from Manitou's back, and blazed into the band as they went by not forty yards off, aiming well ahead of a fine buck who was on the side nearest me.

An antelope's gait is so even that it offers a good running mark; and as the smoke blew off I saw the buck roll over like a rabbit, with both shoulders broken. I then emptied the Winchester at the rest of the band, breaking one hind leg of a young buck. Hastily cutting the throat of, and opening, the dead buck, I again mounted and started off after the wounded one. But, though only on three legs, it went astonishingly fast, having had a good start; and after following it over a mile I gave up the pursuit, though I had gained a good deal; for the heat was very great, and I did not deem it well to tire the horse at the beginning of the trip. Returning to the carcass, I cut off the hams and strung them beside the saddle; an antelope is so spare that there is very little more meat on the body.

This trick of running in a straight line is another of the antelope's peculiar characteristics which frequently lead it into danger. Although with so much sharper eyes than a deer, antelope are in many ways far stupider animals, more like sheep, and especially resemble the latter in their habit of following a leader, and in their foolish obstinacy in keeping to a course they have once adopted. If a horseman starts to head off a deer the latter will always turn long be-

fore he has come within range, but quite often an antelope will merely increase his speed and try to pass ahead of his foe. Almost always, however, one if alone will keep out of gunshot, owing to the speed at which he goes, but if there are several in a band which is well strung out, the leader only cares for his own safety and passes well ahead himself. The others follow like sheep, without turning in the least from the line the first followed, and thus may pass within close range. If the leader bounds into the air, those following will often go through exactly the same motions; and if he turns, the others are very apt to each in succession run up and turn in the same place, unless the whole band are manoeuvring together, like a squadron of cavalry under orders, as has already been spoken of.

After securing the buck's hams and head (the latter for the sake of the horns, which were unusually long and fine), I pushed rapidly on without stopping to hunt, to reach some large creek which should contain both wood and water, for even in summer a fire adds greatly to the comfort and cosiness of a night camp. When the sun had nearly set we went over a divide and came in sight of a creek fulfilling the



Nearer and nearer we came.

required conditions. It wound its way through a valley of rich bottom land, cotton-wood trees of no great height or size growing in thick groves along its banks, while its bed contained many deep pools of water, some of it fresh and good. I rode into a great bend, with a grove of trees on its right, and containing excellent feed. Manitou was loosed, with the lariat round his neck, to feed where he wished until I went to bed, when he was to be taken to a place where the grass was thick and succulent, and tethered out for the night. There was any amount of wood with which a fire was started for cheerfulness, and some of the coals were soon raked off apart to cook over. The horse blanket was spread on the ground with the oil-skin over it as a bed, underneath a spreading cotton-wood tree, while the regular blanket served as covering. The metal cup was soon filled with water and simmering over the coals to make tea, while an antelope steak was roasting on a forked stick.

Breaking camp is a simple operation for one man; and but a few minutes after breakfast Manitou and I were off. I headed the horse towards the more rolling country where the prairies begin to break off into the edges of the Bad Lands. Several bands of antelope were seen, and I tried one unsuccessful stalk, not being able to come within rifle range; but towards evening, when only about a mile from a wooded creek on whose banks I intended to sleep, I came across a solitary buck, just as I was topping the ridge of the last divide.

As I was keeping a sharp lookout at the time, I reined in the horse the instant the head of the antelope came in sight, and jumping off crept up till I could see his whole body, when I dropped on my knee and took steady aim. He was a long way off (three hundred yards by actual paces), and not having made out exactly what we were he stood still, looking intently in our direction and broadside to us. I held well over his shoulder, and at the report he dropped like a shot, the ball having broken his neck. It was a very good shot; the best I ever made at antelope, of which game, as already said, I have killed but very few individuals. Taking the hams and saddle I rode on down to the creek and again went into camp among timber.

Thus on this trip I was never successful in outwitting antelope on the several occasions when I pitted my craft and skill against their wariness and keen senses, always either failing to get within range or else missing them; but nevertheless I got two by taking advantage of the stupidity and curiosity which they occasionally show.

NEXT WEEK:—"Hunting The Black-Tailed Deer."

When the neighbors call at his house a boy notices that they all laugh heartily when his father tells how he used to steal watermelons when he was a boy, but the boy remembers that when he tried it his father whipped him for stealing.—Atchison Globe.

A Real John Doe.
"There goes a man who would be justified in changing his name," said the city salesman. "His name is really Doe, and John in the bargain—John Doe. Moreover, he has a sister Jane. I wonder what kind of joke their parents were trying to perpetrate on those helpless mortals. Doe as a surname was bad enough without adding to the offense by tacking on John and Jane. When I first met John Doe I didn't take his name seriously. I thought the man who introduced us was enjoying a little pleasantry at my expense or maybe at the expense of John Doe. I smiled. John Doe did not smile.

"You don't believe it," he said, "but unfortunately it is true. I am the famous Doe."
"Later I met his sister Jane and the rest of that particular Doe family. They assured me that there are a number of Does in town. I presume there are, but I trust that in most cases the old folks had sense enough not to christen their offspring John and Jane."—New York Press.

The Moor and His Horse.
The horsemanship of the Moors is primitive and entirely successful. A Moor never walks when he can ride and never by any chance gets off to ease his beast. How a Moorish pony would have chuckled at the weary walks enforced on tired men by well meaning cavalry colonels in South Africa! He would have said to himself: "I don't think much of animals that can't carry fifteen stone fifteen hours a day. I must be a really superior kind of beast." The Moorish (and Goumier) horse always spends his nights in the open. He is never groomed or clipped. His youth is passed wandering untended over the vast fields. When in work he gets all the barley he wants at night and a drink before his feed in the evening. From 7 a. m. to 7 p. m. he expects to work and to work hard without bite or sup. His saddle is a wooden tree superimposed on at least half a dozen folded blankets, the thickness of which often reaches six inches, and he never gets a sore back.—London Spectator.

He Got the Ticket.
"Seamen's return" tickets are issued by most British railways at seaport towns to sailors at reduced rates. A rather well groomed young man demanded one to Birmingham; the booking clerk at Hull demurred.
"Seamen's returns" are only issued to sailors," he snapped.
"Well, I'm a sailor," was the reply.
"I have only your word for that," said the clerk. "How am I to know it is correct?"
"How are you to know?" came the answer. "Why, you leather necked, swivel eyed son of a sea cook, if you feel my starboard boom running foul of your headlights you'll know I've been doing more than sit on a stool bleating all my life, and you'll haul in your jaw tackle a bit."
"Give him the ticket," said the passenger superintendent, who had overheard the dialogue; "he's a sailor, right enough."—London Scraps.

Seeing and Thinking.
Most people see an object when they think of it. They can see before their eyes a geometrical drawing or the figures on a chessboard when they think of them. In order to think at all most men make use of images, though they may be of different kinds. Thus one man when he thinks of "Italy" sees just the printed word; another sees the country's outline on a map; another may see the country spread out before him, with its villages and towns. Psychologists are beginning to classify the different aids or images of which men make use. Some, for example, hear the words of their thought within themselves; others read them, as if the words were written generally in black on a white ground.—London Post.

To Pluck Them.
Lord Justice Mathew once tried a case in which a money lender sued a youth who had fallen into his hands. The plaintiff demurred at counsel's referring to him constantly as a "money lender" and protested that he was something in addition to that.
"What is the addition?" inquired the judge.
"Well, I'm—well, a dealer in—er—birds."
"Certainly—pigeons?" quietly asked the judge.—London Telegraph.

Something Similar.
"Have you a copy of the 'Stolen Rope'?" inquired a visitor to a music seller.
"I am afraid I don't know of such a song."
"Why, it goes like this." And the customer hummed the tune.
"Why, you mean 'The Lost Chord'?" said the assistant.
"Ah, that's it!"

Highly Flattered.
"Your glasses," she said, "have made a great difference in your appearance."
"Do you think so?" he asked.
"Yes. You look so intelligent with them on."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Rebuked.
"Guilty or not guilty?" asked a Dutch justice of a prisoner.
"Not guilty."
"Den vat you vant here? Go about your business!"

Occupying.
Dressing dolls has become the serious business of a great many people, but especially of American men.—Puck.

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Complied With the Law.
A certain well known Mobile lawyer, who was lame and had something of a reputation as a fighter, was at one time attorney in a suit that caused much ill feeling. He won the suit for his client, and the loser vowed vengeance. "In pursuance of that same," in the language of Truthful James, he one day went into the lawyer's office and subjected him to a tirade of abuse that would have caused a salt water captain to die from pure envy, such was his talent in vituperation.
The lawyer answered him nothing, to the surprise of two or three men who were present, but, getting out of his chair, began to hobble backward. His enemy, thinking he was retreating, followed him up, with more abuse and threatening gestures. The lawyer's foot finally struck against the wall, when he suddenly straightened up and, saying "Gentlemen, I call on you to witness that on account of this wall I have retreated as far as possible" (the general law of homicide), drew out a Derringer and shot his opponent.
At the trial he was acquitted, his witnesses being the men present at the time of the killing, who testified to the lawyer's having retreated as far as possible.

Too Great a Strain.
Every once in awhile the actor while taking the part of a duke in a play would spend large sums of his stage money. On one of these occasions it seemed too much for a certain person in the audience, for a voice rang shrill and clear through the house, "Hey, Bill, how about that five you owe me?"—Exchange.

Just Goes Out.
"Mother, when the fire goes out, where does it go?" asked a child of her parent.
"I don't know, dear," replied the mother. "You might just as well ask me where your father goes when he goes out!"

Useless Luxury.
A sick peasant motions feebly to his wife to approach his bedside and whispers painfully, "I think, my dear, I could fancy a little broth."
"My dear, what do you want of broth? Hasn't the doctor just given you up?"

Substantial.
Tom—I ate of the cakes she made just to make myself solid. Dick—Did you succeed? Tom—I couldn't feel any more solid if I had eaten concrete or building stone.—Utica Herald.

Lapland Reindeers.
In April the Lapp lets his reindeer loose to wander as they please, and when the mosquitoes begin to abound, about midsummer, he collects his herd simply by catching one deer, fitting it with a bell and trusting to instinct, which leads the animals to gather into herds for protection against the mosquitoes, to do the rest. In a cool summer, when mosquitoes are few, this instinct does not come into play, and it is almost impossible to bring the reindeer together.

Very Impressive.
Nouveau Riche is at times an amusing person. Said one of these exotics the other day—he was a commuter—just as the train was moving from the station:
"Er—John."
"Yesir!" answered the valet.
"—I think, after all, I would like the asparagus served as an entree tonight."
And the train moved off amid smothered laughter.—New York Times.

Tact.
Harry—What in thunder did you ask that fellow what time it was for when you carry a watch that is always right on the notch? Dick—I merely wanted to give him an excuse to exhibit his watch.—Boston Transcript.

A Hair Dressing

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