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1903. 1903.

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The Chestertown Transcript $100 per annum.

HUNTING THE ELK IN THE WEST.

The Animal Fast Disappearing—Thrilling Adventures With the Bulls.

"The happy hunting ground days of the West are now a thing of the past," said a well-known westerner, and something of sadness could be detected in this observation. "Where countless numbers of elk, deer, and antelope once were found, scarcely a type is now seen. Notwithstanding the stringest game laws enforced in various states where they exist, to prevent their extinction, they are fast disappearing altogether. This is specially true of the elk, which are rightfully considered among the noblest of game. The hunting of elk is not without its dangers, for like the moose, they are very formidable animals when brought to bay, and are not to be trifled with. I recall one of my own experiences, which will exemplify this statement. The uniqueness of the incident should entitle it to a niche of its own among hunting annals.

"The incident occurred near the headwaters of the Laparaal and Deer Creeks, where a companion named Frank Howe and I were on a hunting expedition. The purpose of the hunt was to lay in a winter supply of elk meat for my ranch, as had been my habit for many years.

"One day along about noon we were riding leisurely down a ravine, when a bunch of elk, numbering fully 100, was started. They had evidently espied us first, as they were making good time getting up the slope. We hazarded several shots, but without effect, as the timber made accurate shooting almost impossible. We were both familiar with the country and knew from the direction they took that they were making for the opposite range of mountains about eight miles distant.

"Their course lay across a valley or meadow, which afforded an opportunity for an exciting chase, as the nature of the ground, which was slightly rolling, could not have favored the horses more for running had we chosen it ourselves. We immediately turned our horses' heads in the same direction and started after our quarry. Considerable delay was experienced in climbing the side of the ravine, as we were often blocked by fallen timber, which they would clear at a leap while we would be compelled to turn aside and seek another course.

"We had lost ground in the slow and tortuous route to the top. It was at length reached, however, but another serious delay stared us in the face. A sharp incline, heavily timbered, led away from us, while on the line bordering the plain a windfall had occured. A windfall is usually the result of a fire which partially burns a large area of trees, causing them to die, and a strong wind will come and level the whole space, piling the ground high with timber. This frequently occurs, even without the aid of fire, and scarcely a tree will be left standing to bear evidence of a former forest, and they are often met with in the west.

CLEARED THE TIMBER.

"The elk were now taking this timber and making for the open expanse of prairie. It was truly a beautiful sight to see them go over that timber, even though it meant a wide circuit of perhaps a quarter of a mile for us before we could reach the open. We checked our horses and watched a sight that is seen but once in a lifetime. First one, then another, then many together would clear logs seven and eight feet high, and be in the air at the same time, and do it with as much ease as a race horse would take a hurdle. The obstruction was nothing to them, although absolutely impassible to a horse and rider.

"We made the quarter of a mile circuit as expeditiously as possible, and were soon in hot pursuit across the plain. The nature of the ground, which, as I said, was slightly rolling, favored our riding up to them almost unawares, and enabled us to lessen the mile they had gained during our delay. When flushed, an elk will run till it thinks itself out of danger, and will then stop and go quietly to feeding again. This is also true of a herd.

"The band was led by a magnificently antlered bull, as we had seen at first, and we were each covetous of the head. He was the target of many a bullet from our rifles, but as they were fired from the saddles of our running horses they were necessarily inaccurate. His speed was far superior to any in the herd, and this proved his salvation. We rode up on the others, killing and wounding several, but could not approach within accurate shooting distance of this prize of the band. He was unquestionably the best specimen of elk that I have ever seen.

"But try as we would we could not get beyond a certain distance. We succeeded in riding up repeatedly on the rest, but he would always leave them far in the rear. When compelled to stop and breathe our horses, as frequently happened, he would stand in kingly pride with that splendid head erect and wait for the others to catch up. Sometimes we would get a broadside glimpse of him, and it could be seen from bloody splotches that he had been hit.

"By this time we only had several hours' reprieve before darkness would come on, so we reluctantly gave up the chase and turned back to kill the wounded animals and dress our 'bag.' We knew that enough meat had been secured for a winter's supply in this one killing, and were both in high spirits, both from success and the exhilaration of the chase. Apparently, our adventures were through with for the day, but later events showed how the unexpected often happens.

OBEYED THE CHALLENGE.

"We had not gone far on the back trail when we came upon four wounded animals—three bulls and one 'spike'—bunched together. I dismounted at a safe distance, knowing the danger of getting too close under the circumstances, pulled my winchester from the saddle-sling and drew my bead on my elk with the intention of dropping him. I was just in the act of pulling the trigger when Howe, who came riding up, bawled to me in bantering tones, 'Go up and give him a fight! don't kill him like a rat in a trap!' Somewhat nettled by what I considered an imputation on my bravery, I immediately lowered my gun and recklessly advanced to within 30 feet of the marked bull. Suddenly his eyes glared, the bristles under his neck shot out, down went his head, and he came for me. I managed to keep my head, however, and barely had time to throw my gun to my shoulder and bring him down with a shot through the forehead. In another instant he would have been upon me, and had I missed fire, would undoubtedly have been gored or trampled to death.

"I was just about to pull down on the 'spike' bull that had been shot in the stomach that was standing all humped up over the effects of the wound. At this junction Howe came up on the dead run, swinging his lariat and crying to me to let him 'have him.' Howe was mounted on one of the best 'cutting ponies' on the Laramie plains, and as he reached the bull it turned suddenly, and the cowpony, true to its training, turned with it as if on a pivot and precipitated Howe onto the back of the wounded animal. By rare good fortune he landed astride, and in his wild clutch got a grip of the loose skin beneath the shoulders, and held on for dear life.

"Then followed some indescribable funny antics on the part of the elk in his vain endeavors to get Howe off. He would jump, sidestep and buck, but, unable to effect anything by this method, he proceeded to rake the rider across the back with his horns, who kept calling to me to help him out. But feeling rather bitter toward him for my close call, I improved my opportunity to laugh, and cheerily answered his cries of distress by calling to him in his own words, 'Give him a fight! Don't kill 'im like a rat in a trap!'

"Of course, Howe was in imminent danger every moment of being thrown and trampled, but I determined not to go to his rescue till the last moment. The only consolation he received from me was my laughter, as an antler would rake him, and he would hug tighter in an endeavor to flatten himself to the thickness of tissue paper. I also took it upon myself to shout many friendly admonitions to 'stay with him,' coupled with frequent repetitions of his banter to me.

"During these harrowing moments I don't imagine he entertained many kindly sentiments toward me. After a time, however, by virtue of much maneuvering, he succeeded in getting his knife from the scabbard and dispatched the wounded animal by sinking it into his heart.

"Howe was much elated over the feat of killing the elk under such circumstances, which soon drowned any ill feeling in the matter as he playfully remarked around the campfire that night that he had to call on me to pull him off the elk. An invoice of his casualties showed several horn prods and a fearful lack of raiment, but these were small matters compared with what might have been. The total number of elk bagged was 14, which was quite large for one killing."

TWO OF A KIND.

An English actor tells a story of an Irishman named Flanagan, who had been out of work for some time and at length applied to a circus proprietor for a position.

There were no regular places open, but the manager looked Flanagan over and said:

"Our largest lion died last week, but we kept his skin, and if you like to get into it and be shown as a lion you can have the job."

Flanagan agreed. At the first show the proprietor stepped into the cage and said: "Ladies and gentlemen, to prove the docility of this roaring lion I shall order him into the cage with a ferocious tigar."

Flanagan hung back, but the circus proprietor prodded him with a sword and threatened to run him through, and the "lion" was driven into the same cage with the tiger. There he backed into a corner and cried, "Spare me!"

Then the ferocious tiger jumped to his feet and answered: "Ye needn't be afraid o' me. I'm an Irishman meself!"—*Youth's Companion.*

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New Year's Greeting.

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Many Thanks

and the very best wishes for a Happy and Successful New Year.

As in the past, my stock of fine and staple goods will be uniformly large and varied, and at the most reasonable prices consistent with purity and full measure.

With best wishes to one and all,

I am, respectfully,

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