DOOM OF THE GREAT GAME.

It Has Vanished from the Earth Before the Rifle.

NORTH AMERICA DESTITUTE

And South African Plains Stripped of Their Old-time Inhabitants.

The Places that Knew Them Once Shall Know Them Never Again—A Vast Preserve for Great Game in South Africa Suggested as a Means of Preventing the Extinction of the Last Remaining Animals—Stories of Game Not Yet Exterminated in America from This Continent.

From the Fortnightly Review.

The introduction of firearms—and especially of breech-loading firearms—and the rapid opening up of one great hunting ground after another, have wrought within these last sixty years such incredible havoc that great game are now rapidly approaching a period of extinction. Men begin to wonder what their descendants of the next century will have left them in the way of sport, and in which direction the adventure-seeking Briton shall direct his energies.

It is quite certain that even the remoter corners of the world cannot much longer support the incessant waste of animal life, and it may be not unprofitable here to consider briefly the sad tale of a vanishing fauna, and the ways and means by which—if it is not already too late—something may be done to preserve the rarer and nobler creatures still left to the wilderness.

North America has been almost destroyed as a game country; the bison has gone—the wapiti, the moose, the caribou, and the bear are going fast. Of South Africa, a country more prodigally endowed by nature than any other part of the world, the same miserable tale has to be told. Only in portions of the virgin veldt of Mashonaland, the regions of the Pungwe River, and the least easily accessible deserts of North Bechuanaland and the Kalahari, are there to be found fair representatives of that astounding fauna, which not long since gave unspeakable charm to plain and mountain, karroo and kloff, from the southern shores of the Cape Colony right away to the far Zambesi. And even in those distant and difficult wilds their numbers are daily and hourly diminishing, so that apparently in a few more years the great game of all Southern Africa will be but a memory.

In India the same war of extermination has been and is incessantly waged, and with the same results. The Indian lion, the great mailed rhinoceros, the gaur, buffalo, sambur, bear, even the tiger itself, and many other species of great game are vanishing rapidly. In other countries the same process is going busily forward.

It is now—unless some effectual method of preservation can be quickly introduced—absolutely certain that the complete extermination of the great game of Africa, America, and Asia is merely a question of years. And in southern Africa, especially, this period of extinction is very close at hand. The quagga (*Equus Quagga*) has vanished: the white rhinoceros has been all but shot to extinction; the giraffe, the elephant, the black rhinoceros, the hippopotamus, Burchell's zebra, and most of the great antelopes are fast disappearing.

When the early Dutch settlers landed at the Cape in 1652, and under their first Governor, stout Jan Van Riebeek, took possession of the soil, they found the country one vast and teeming natural preserve of great game. Down to the very shores of the Atlantic and Indian oceans there wandered a countless multitude of the noblest and rarest species with which a prodigal nature ever blessed the earth. The elephant, rhinoceros, and buffalo roamed everywhere; the hippopotamus bathed his unwieldy form in every stream and river; the lion, leopard, and cheetah pursued their prey unchecked; the eland, koodoo, gnu, hartebeest, and a number of other fine antelopes grazed in astonishing plenty. The mountain zebras paced the sierras of the Cape peninsula and every other range of the colony in strong troops; the quagga (now, alas! extinct) thronged the karroo plains. In every corner of that vast land, upon flat and upland, in deep and lonely kloof, and over boundless plain, there wandered, free and undisturbed as they had wandered through countless ages of the past, an unexampled array of wild animals.

The early Dutch settlers scarcely knew what to do with this profusion of game. The elands and koodoos broke into their gardens and vineyards, the elephants and rhinoceroses made hay with their crops; the lions besieged them in their fort, and dogged Gov. Van Riebeek in his garden. There is a pathetic yet ludicrous entry in the old records of the Cape commanders, bearing date the 23d January, 1653. "This night," says the chronicle, "it appeared as if the lions would take the fort by storm."

In 1796, when the British first took possession of the Cape the game was as plentiful as ever at no great distance from Cape Town. Mr. Harris found elephants in the present Transvaal country (where not a single elephant now remains) in immense numbers. Rhinoceroses were as common as pigs in a farmyard, and were a perfect nuisance to the gunner. Here is a single instance: "On our way from the wagons to a hill not half a mile distant we counted," says Harris in his book of travels, "no less than twenty-two of the white species of rhinoceros, and were compelled in self-defence to slaughter four." Burchell's zebras and quaggas, brindled and white-tailed gnu, were found "in immense herds;" elands and hartebeest in "vast herds;" springbok in "countless herds;" blesbok "in immense herds." Other examples were almost equally abundant.

Harris's books quickly attracted the notice of many English sportsmen. Oswell, Vardon, Murray, and Gordon Cumming, four of the greatest hunters of the middle of the century, all fascinated by his glowing descriptions, found their way to these happy hunting grounds in the early forties, and the extermination of great game began in earnest. Traders were meanwhile pushing up country, and the sale of fireams to natives—which has since proved one of the most fruitful sources of destruction—set in. From the time of Harris's memorable expedition the downfall of the game of the far interior has proceeded with dreadful rapidity. In one season Oswell and Vardon slew between them eighty-nine rhinoceroses—to take one item of animal life alone! C. J. Anderson, in the fifties, shot some sixty of these immense and slow-breeding creatures in a few months in southwest Africa. Gordon Cumming probably could boast the greatest bag of any of these Nimrods. He shot through South Africa from 1843 to 1850, and his butcher's bill must have been immense.

But, it is to be remembered, besides the great hunters, whose books have recorded for us this plethora of sport, there were always silently at work in the wilds those unknown gunners who are content to slay without troubling the world with statistics—Englishmen, Boers, Griqua half-breeds, Hottentots, Bechuanas, and other native hunters; all these were, and still are, busy. And to the weapons of these obscurer sportsmen the great bulk of the game of South Africa has, of course, fallen. To-day and to-morrow their work of destruction still goes forward. Nothing it seems can check it. How are you to patrol or preserve those silent, illimitable deserts, hundreds of miles even from a native town, where the game still lingers, and the black hunter—often armed nowadays with a good Martini-Henry breech-loader—is at work? At the same time you can hardly blame the black hunter for slaying the game of his country. It is a natural result of contact with the white man and of the introduction of firearms.

Gordon Cumming began his hunting in 1843 in the northern part of Cape Colony. At that time the game still swarmed over the parched karroo plains. Quagga, wildebeest, hartebeest, and springbok fell in numbers to his rifle. In the deserts south of the Orange River—now sheep and goat walks in the Hope Town division of the colony—he enjoyed magnificent sport with the gemsbok (*Oryx Capensis*) which then abounded there. In those days the "trek-bokken," or migration of springboks, was common in the north of Cape Colony. Gordon Cumming witnessed one of these migrations. "I beheld the plains," he tells us, "and even the hillsides which stretched away on every side of me, thickly covered, not with herds, but with one vast mass of springboks; as far as the eye could strain the landscape was alive with them, until they softened down into a dim red mass of living creatures." This "trek-bokken" Cumming estimated at some hundreds of thousands. On speaking to an old boer about it, he remarked that "it was very fair 'trek-bokken,' but," he added, "you this morning beheld only one flat covered with springboks. I give you my word that I have ridden a long day's journey over a succession of flats covered with them as far as I could see, and as thick as sheep in a fold." I have myself heard much the same account from old farmers, English and Dutch, of the Cape.

In these astonishing migrations the springboks, travelling from the immense and arid deserts in the northwest of the colony, devoured every blade and leaf of vegetation before them. The frontier Boers often lost their entire crops, and even their flocks and herds were sometimes swept away before the myriads of antelopes and lost. It is on record that a lion has been seen encompassed by a mass of trekking springboks quite unable to escape, a pretty situation, truly, for the king of beasts!

In the dry uninhabited regions of Bushmanland the springbok will doubtless survive to adorn the veldt for a good many years to come.

Gordon Cumming gradually pushed his way north of the Orange River, enjoying the most extraordinary sport and shooting incredible quantities of game. He shot all his elephants in the Bakwena and Bamangwato country, never needing to go farther north than Letloche, not very far from Shoshong, Khama's old town. There are old men yet alive among the Bakwena and Bamangwato (among the latter is the Chief Khama himself) who hunted with Cumming in these days, and remember his exploits perfectly well. Khama himself has proved an apt pupil, and no better or braver native sportsman has ever gone into the hunting veldt.

The last of the great hunters is Mr. F. C. Selous, and, of all the pursuers of big game, Selous has been upon the whole the most sparing and the least wasteful. In his early years, it is true, he pursued elephants for their ivory as a means of livelihood and a matter of business; and by dint of immense courage, energy, and endurance, slew undoubtedly great numbers of the tusk-bearing pachyderms. But, apart from this, Selous has always been one of the most merciful of hunters, killing only for the sake of procuring specimens or to supply food for his followers.

Following Gordon Cumming, and bitten by the wonderful records of his sport, came Baldwin, another mighty hunter, who shot from Zululand to the Zambesi from the years 1852 to 1860. Mr. Baldwin is still alive and hearty, able to enjoy sport in Cheshire and elsewhere.

In the middle fifties Baldwin shot chiefly in Zululand and Amatongaland, where, among all kinds of heavy game, he had immense sport. These countries, together with the adjacent Swaziland, are now quite denuded of great game. At a later period he shot in the far interior, visiting Lake Ngami and the Victoria Falls. A fine horseman and shot, possessing wonderful nerve, William Charles Baldwin established a reputation in South Africa second to none of the great Nimrods who preceded him. Many and many a big bull elephant, many a fine tusk of ivory fell to his rifle. His game toll, too, must have been a very heavy one.

But Selous found things already greatly changed. By the year 1871, when he first landed, much of middle Bechuanaland and the Transvaal had ceased to be shooting ground. To get among the elephants the lad—as he then was—had to penetrate to Matabeleland, gain permission of Lo Bengula, and then pass into Mashonaland.

In Mashonaland, along the Zambesi, in the Mababe veldt (Ngamiland), and in the Chobe River country, Selous for many years had his fill of sport and excitement. But the elephants vanished rapidly, and became more and more hard to procure, and for some years before the opening up of Mashonaland (in which he has played so great a part), the last and best of the African hunters—as one may well call him—shot specimens for museums and turned his attention to exploration. Whatever damage he may have done in early years among the elephants, the magnificent specimens of great game sent home by Selous to the natural history and other museums, amply acquit him of the charge of mere wasteful slaughter.

From this charge it is impossible to absolve many of the great hunters. Gordon Cumming and many others were undoubtedly wasteful in their methods; they shot far too often for the mere pleasure of slaying, and wasted enormous numbers of rare, singular, and beautiful game. One can, perhaps, hardly blame them; the profusion of animal life was so great, the temptation so overpowering. No one who has not been in the presence of great game, mounted and armed, can understand how difficult it is to stay one's hand at such a time.

Some years since, in wandering through Cape Colony, I took a good deal of trouble to ascertain the distribution and numbers of the fauna still remaining. I found, of course, that terrible devastation had taken place. Most of the nobler beasts had vanished. The crowds of game that roamed the veldt in Gordon Cumming's time were gone, or nearly gone. The quagga had become quite extinct; the eland and the blesbok had disappeared; the lion and the last rhinoceros had given up the ghost in the fifties; the gemsbok and hartebeest only found shelter in scant numbers in the desert fringing the Orange River. Almost the last hippopotamus of the Cape rivers was killed in 1874. A few of these behemoths are, however, still to be found in the lower waters of the Orange. The elephant and the buffalo, thanks to timely measures of the Cape Government in years gone by, had strangely enough been preserved from extinction. It is refreshing to be able to record that troops of these animals still range freely in the Knysna Forest, the Addo Bush, and one or two other densely jungled localities on the southern borders of Cape Colony. But although these animals still roam the old colony within sight of the Indian Ocean, it is a melancholy fact that you may now travel for a thousand miles and more up country without finding a single specimen. The koodoo, one of the most magnificent of all the antelopes, thanks to the efforts of a few English farmers in the Eastern Province, still exists. The leopard defies extermination so far, and haunts the Cape mountains in nearly every district. The mountain zebra (*Equus zebra*) lingers on a few ranges of the colony, along the Drakensberg, and as far east as the Lebombo Mountains in Swaziland. I have watched with the keenest delight a troop preserved on the farms of friends of mine in the Eastern Province, no great way from Port Elizabeth, where they were, of course, never shot at. The curious bontebok (*Alcelaphus pygargus*), numbered of old in the Orange Free State and Cape Colony by hundreds of thousands, is at the present moment represented by one single troop, long preserved on the estate of a Dutch gentleman, Mr. Van der Byl, near Cape Agulhas. These are the last of their race. The white-tailed gnu is almost as near extinction, although thirty years ago inordinately plentiful. The fecund springbok is still fairly abundant on the karroos, and especially upon the northwest plains, near the Orange River. Some of the smaller antelopes, such as the rhebok, bushbok, steinbok, duyker, klipspringer, oribi, and blaauwbok still remain here and there in fair numbers. The animals here enumerated form the poor remnant of the once innumerable Cape fauna; and, but for the timely measures of protection passed by the Cape Government, and the private exertions of some of the colonists, most of these animals would by this time assuredly have disappeared from the country south of the Orange River. In Natal very much the same state of things prevails, and beyond Natal, in Zululand, Amatongaland, and Swaziland, the big game have practically vanished.

In 1890-91 I travelled through the whole of Bechuanaland, part of the Transvaal, much of the Kalahari, and Ngamiland. Here I found the conditions of the great game even more deplorable in many ways than in Cape Colony.

Guns are now plentiful in every part of the interior, and native gunners—next to the Boer skin hunters, the most reckless of all destroyers of animal life—are incessantly at work. Nearly the whole of British Bechuanaland and the Protectorate, as far as Khama's country, have now been denuded of heavy game. Here and there in the former territory a few troops of hartebeests still eke out a shuddering existence. But all the remainder of that wonderful collection of animal life depicted by Cornwallis Harris has vanished. The plains were tenantless, save for the small buck (steinbok and duyker). On the Maritsani River, where Harris had found himself involved in bewildering crowds of every kind of rare game, only a troop or two of hartebeest were left. On the Molopo—Gordon Cumming's "darling little Molopo"—where that great hunter, clad in his Highland kilt, and with bare arms and legs and vast red beard, had pursued the lion, buffalo, and other game, there remained but a reed buck or two. English sportsmen at Mafeking and Vryburg were now hunting with foxhounds the jackal and the duyker, where their predecessors had not long before pursued all kinds of noble beasts of chase, from the giraffe downward.

To the westward, on entering the South Kalahari, I found gemsbok, hartebeest, koodoo, wildebeest, and a lion or two still maintaining a sanctuary. Even here, however, the assaults of native hunters cannot be long resisted.

In short, it may be said that, notwithstanding proclamations and attempted game laws, in these remoter portions of the South African interior the great game is disappearing day by day and hour by hour, and apparently will soon be little more than a mere reminiscence.

Quite recently a project has been set on foot among some prominent sportsmen and naturalists, which, if successfully carried out, may help in some degree to preserve many of the rarer species of the African mammalia—especially the larger antelopes—in some districts of the interior. The idea, which is at present inchoate, is to secure if possible a grant of a tract of land—some 100,000 acres—in Mashonaland or the adjacent territories, fence it in, and form a park in which small herds of game may be enclosed. It would not be difficult to procure the young of many kinds of African game and rear them in such a park, and drafts could be sold off from time to time to supply the collections of European and other countries. Whether the help of the Chartered Company or of the British Government in South Africa can be enlisted for such an object, which is a matter of vital importance; whether the scheme, if brought to a head, can be made self-supporting, which is also an important consideration; these are questions hardly within the scope of this article.

But that any undertaking, having for its object the rescue and preservation of the disappearing fauna of South Africa, will have in this country the sympathy of all true lovers of nature and animal life, is, I think, a fact beyond the scope of argument. H. A. BRYDEN.

THIS BUCK WAS FOND OF MUSIC.

He Made Jeff Wilmarth Play the Bugle, but Carried His Fun Too Far.

"I don't believe that anybody ever had such a time gathering in a deer as Jeff Wilmarth did once up in old Canoadea," said Col. Noah Parker of Gardeau, Pa. "In the old general training days Jeff used to play the bugle, and he could make it hum and not half try. A general training in Allegany county didn't amount to anything if Jeff wasn't there to wake the martial spirit of the people with strains from his bugle, and at the big dance that always wound up the festivities Jeff and his bugle had to be present as well or the music wouldn't be complete.

"One time Jeff had done his duty with his bugle all day and all night at a general training and the closing-up dance, and started for home early in the morning, footing it through the woods. There were plenty of deer in old Canoadea then, but Jeff wasn't any hunter. As he trudged along he thought he would make things seem less lonesome, and so he struck up a tune on his bugle. He said the tune he played was the 'Last Rose of Summer,' but anyhow, just as he was along toward the end of it a snorting, big buck came bounding out of the bushes right toward him. Jeff saw the buck coming, but supposed it would turn tail and tear away in some other direction as soon as it saw him. The buck didn't do anything of the kind. It slowed up a little as Jeff finished his tune, but when the music ceased it made for Jeff more positive than ever. All that Jeff could do was to haul up and whack the buck over the head with his bugle. The buck dropped as if shot, but was up again about as quick as it had gone down.

"Straight for Jeff the buck sprang again. Jeff was quick with ideas. He struck up on his bugle 'Among the Rigs o' Barley,' soft and slow. As he played he walked backward. The buck followed him like a prancing colt, keeping time with the music. By and by Jeff had to stop to get some more wind, but the instant the music ceased the buck laid back its ears, raised the bristles on its neck, and made a savage break for Jeff. Jeff clapped the bugle to his lips without wasting any time, and started in on 'The Fisher's Hornpipe.' That's a mighty lively tune, and the buck put off his warlike front and looked pleased again, while he skipped and jigged, Jeff said, to beat a tipsy raftman.

"But no man ever lived who could tongue 'The Fisher's Hornpipe' for any length of time on an old-fashioned bugle, and Jeff was obliged to let up after awhile. He had to get a few gulps of fresh wind or perish in the attempt. But the buck was there for fun. The situation was entirely too solemn for him without music, and he bristled up and went threateningly for Jeff again as soon as Jeff stopped to grab some breath. Then Jeff blew away again, and this time selected that good old Methodist stand-by, 'Plunged in a Gulf of Dark Despair.' This tune, Jeff thought, would express his feelings just about then, and, being slow and without any jerk to it, would kind o' let him ease up on his lungs a little. As soon as the horn let loose again the deer got over his mad once more. He made a few efforts to prance to the tune, but couldn't get step to it. He stopped, took a new start, but with no better success. Then his hair began to rise again. Jeff saw that the buck wasn't pleased with that tune, and he played it a little faster and put some flourishes on it.

"That was what the buck wanted, and pretty soon he was stepping it off like a dancing master. All this time Jeff had been walking backward pretty fast, and had travelled something like two miles. Half a mile further on was his house. He thought that if he could hold out that long he would show that unreasonable buck a trick or two himself. It wasn't any easier to play 'Plunged in a Gulf of Dark Despair' in jig time than it would have been to swing his wind on 'The Devil's Dream' or 'Money Musk.' So Jeff made up his mind that he could gradually slow down on the tune and get back to its proper motion without the buck, who was now all taken up with himself and his steps noticing the change. Jeff did so, but the buck had too good an ear for music and too lively a heel for dancing to be fooled in that way. When Jeff got back to the proper level with 'Plunged in a Gulf,' the buck came to a sudden standstill. He looked at Jeff as if he couldn't believe his ears. Then his dander rose worse than ever, and he went for Jeff with a hump and a snort.

"This charge of the buck scared 'Plunged in a Gulf' all out of Jeff, and before he knew it he was filling those woods with 'The Devil Among the Tailors,' as loud and as lively as that old bugle ever made it bellow at a general training dance. It hit the buck just right, and he more than waltzed around and enjoyed it. At last the funny procession came right out onto Jeff's clearing. Jeff danced the fascinated buck plumb into his barn, and just had strength enough left to shut the door. Then he wilted like a frosted tomato plant. He declared to his dying day that he didn't get all his wind back for two days. When he did get it back he went and put a rifle ball through the buck, and was revenged."

HE WAS AFTER WILD FOWL.

But Pocky Griswold Says that He Killed a Bear, Though a Hog Turned Up Missing.

"Time me and Doc Phillips of Penn Yan and Oc Morse and Harry Morse was down in Hyde county, North Carolina, hunting ducks and geese and swan," said Pocky Griswold, Hammondsport's ex-lumber king, naturalist, and all-around sportsman, "I might just as well have bagged three bears one day if Oc Morse hadn't broke in on me and got scared and begged me to quit. I knocked one over in spite of Oc, but I ought to have had the whole three.

"We were scattered around in the reeds, hiding, waiting for ducks or geese or swan to come in, and, of course, weren't loaded for bear. I knew there was plenty of bear in that country, but hadn't thought anything about 'em. While I was crouching down in my reed blind, expecting every minute to get my work in on some ducks or geese or swan, I saw the reeds swaying and swishing and heard them cracking off to my right a hundred yards or so.

"'I'll bet a mess of Mud Pond eels,' says I to myself, 'that Oc Morse has got tired of waiting in his blind, and has come sloshing around up here, where he thinks he can do better, and he'll scare every duck or goose or swan away before it gets within nine miles of us!'

"I felt considerable put out, and crept along through the thick growth toward the spot where the reeds were in commotion, to get within speaking distance of Oc, so as to tell him to lay low and keep still, if he wanted us to get even a sight of duck or geese or swan. I hadn't gone far, though, before I found that I had been accusing Oc wrongfully. I got a glimpse through the reeds, and first saw one big bear, then another, and then another, making their way along, snorting and growling and grunting. Two of 'em were black bears, and the other was cinnamon color. If it had been Oc himself I couldn't have been any madder, for I knew that them bears would be just as likely to scare duck or geese or swan away as Oc would.

"'Thunder take it!' says I. 'I s'pose I might as well kill 'em and be done with it! There ain't any duck or geese or swan in sight, and the sound of the gun 'll be out of here and the smell of the smoke be gone before any of them fowl comes along more than likely. It won't be a bad idee, anyhow, to bag them three bears, long's there ain't anything else in sight.'

"So I took out my duck or geese or swan shot cartridges and shoved in buckshot. I was just on the point of knocking over the biggest bear, a snorting big black fellow that stood dern near five feet high, when somebody grabbed hold of my shoulder. I looked around, and there was Oc Morse looking scared.

"'What—be—they—Pocky?' says he.

"'Bear!' I says. 'Three rip-tearing big bears! Set down there and see me bag 'em!' I says.

"'Thun-der-a-tion!' says he, getting more scared every second. 'Don't—bother—'em! Let's—run!' says he.

"'Run!' says I 'All the running I'll do is to run a few ounces of lead into each o' them bear!' says I.

"Just then the big black fellow at the head of the three saw us, and he lifted up the bristles on his back, gave a snort that made Oc Morse jump four feet in the air, and rushed toward us like a runaway engine. Oc grabbed hold of me and hollered for help. The bear was about thirty yards away, and in spite of Oc's holding me and dancing around like a wild Injin, I blazed away. The bear jumped in the air clear to the top of the tallest reeds—and they stood three feet higher than my head—turned a double summerset in the air, and fell on his head in the soft marsh. His head sank in clear to his shoulders, and there he stood, like a clown doing a trick in a circus. He gave a few kicks, and the sight was so blame comical that I just fell back in the reeds and yooped and yelled. Oc's eyes hung way out on his cheeks, and all he could do was to stand there and gasp. When I could control myself I got up. The bear was still standing on his head, and he was as dead as a telegraph pole, his hind feet sticking up straight and stiff in the air. The other two bears had come up and stood looking at their companion. It seemed to me just about as scared as Oc was. I pulled up to settle 'em, but Oc grabbed me, and begged me so to take him away from there that I felt sorry for him and led him back to the blind, a mile away.

"'Say, Pocky,' said he, when I got him back there, 'don't—say—nothing—to—the—other—boys,—will—you? They—might—guy—me!'

"I promised I wouldn't say anything about the bears, and when I got back to my blind the two live bears was gone, but the dead one stood there on his head just as he died. I shoved him over and buried him in the marsh, and Doc Phillips nor Harry Morse don't know to this day that I seen three bears that day, much less killed one."

Capt. Oscar Morse commands the steamer Holmes of the Lake Keuka Navigation Company's fleet of steamers plying between Hammondsport and Penn Yan. He is a veteran steamboat Captain and a great sportsman.

"Yes," said he the other day, "I'm going down to North Carolina again this winter after ducks and geese and swan. I haven't been down there since I was down with Doc Phillips of Penn Yan, and Harry Morse, and Pocky Griswold. I had a great time with Pocky one day during that trip. We were blind hunting for fowl on the big marsh along Pamlico Sound, and my blind was something like a mile from Pocky's. The air was clear, and a person could see a good ways. Suddenly I saw Pocky rise in his blind and wave his hat in a violently beckoning way at me. I could see that he was excited over something or other, and I knew that unless he was quieted we'd never get a shot at a duck or anything else, so I made my way as fast as I could through the thick reeds toward where he was standing. I had to take a roundabout way on account of the creeks and bayous that lay between me and Pocky, and I'll bet I travelled three miles before I got to him. At last, winded and tired, I got within fair speaking distance of him and he put his hands up and hollered:

"'Oc, bears!'

"There are bears a-plenty down in that country, but I didn't think it likely that they had come out of their rich feeding places in the gum woods to slosh around in the marsh, and as soon as I got close enough to Pocky to talk without yelling I told him so. There's a very choice breed of razor-back hogs down there, and I thought may be Pocky might have run across some of them.

"'Can't be bears,' I said. 'Hogs, I guess.'

"That made him mad.

"'Hogs be d—d!' he hollered. 'I guess I've lived in Steuben county long enough to know a hog when I see one! They're bears, I tell you! Two big black grizzlies and a slammin' big cinnamon! They're right over yonder in the reeds, raisin' Cain! I seen 'em!'

"'Well, Pocky,' I said, 'they may be bears, but if they're grizzly bears and cinnamon bears they're worth taking in with us, no mistake!'

"'Two of 'em is grizzlies and one is a cinnamon, I tell you!' said Pocky. 'Nobody can fool me on bears!'

"We were making our headquarters with a man named Hodges. He'd had a good deal to say about a boar he had, that was worth all the hogs in that country, and he set great store by it. We had never seen the boar, but we had great respect for it. When I got to where Pocky stood, blazing with excitement over the bear he had discovered, he and I went carefully along, so as to not frighten the game away. The reeds were shaking as if a gale was passing through them. Before we had gone far, out came three tremendous big razor backs.

"'There,' said I. 'I told you they were hogs. Let's get out of here.'

"'Not by a blame sight,' said Pocky. 'Wild boar, by Jupiter! Better than grizzly bear, a blame sight.'

"The big hog came along toward us, and Pocky held his fire until he saw the whites of the boar's eyes. Then he filled its head with buckshot, and it fell dead as a stone. The two other hogs came up and rooted at the carcass. Pocky was for dropping them in their tracks, too, but I said that if there was going to be any wild boar hunting around there the rest of the party must have some of the fun, and got Pocky to let the other two live so that we could go out next day and have some sport with them.

"'Don't say a word to the boys, Oc,' said Pocky, 'and after supper to-night I'll tell 'em a story about wild boar hunting that'll make their hair curl!'

"So I didn't say a word. After supper that night we spread around the fireplace at Hodge's, and I saw that Pocky was getting ready to spring his wild boar story on the boys. Just then Hodge came in. We knew something had gone wrong, right away.

"'What's the matter, Hodge?' said I.

"'Well, sir,' said he, 'some orn'ry cuss has gone and killed that crack boar of mine, and if I can find out who he is I want to tell you that this neck o' Hyde county 'll be a leetle too tarnal hot to hold him!'

"Pocky didn't tell his wild boar story. Not that night. I don't know whether he ever told it at all or not. But this is it."

BURIED THE FOUR BEARS.

They Were Circus Animals, and Unused to the Ways of the World.

GETTYSBURG, Pa., Oct. 20.—One day several months ago Jake Banks entertained the loafers at the grocery store at Cross Corners with a remarkable tale of four bears that he had seen in the South Mountains. He said they played ball and performed various gymnastic feats on a wild grapevine. Before he had concluded Banks was called away. Last Sunday, however, he returned, and on Monday evening he related the following:

"Wall," he said, "you know there was an old she bear and three half-grown cubs in the travelling animal circus that I saw on Crow Nest Hills, but it wasn't for several weeks that they exhibited in my region again, and then it was their farewell appearance.

"I had moved my camp several miles eastward on the second hill, and was doing a little nosing around for some city chaps. I had a mighty close call with a lot of wildcats, run foul of several other dangerous animals, and once got lost in a big cave—but I'm off the track that leads to the bear family. Wall, one morning I got out just at daybreak and struck across to a place I had heard of, about two miles away. After looking it over I worked around in a circular direction toward my camp. Late in the afternoon, and when I was still an hour's tramp from my tent, I struck a place where there were some of the biggest trees I've ever seen in my life. They were a kind of fir and went up forty or fifty feet before there were any limbs. I stood and looked around in amazement. It was one of the prettiest places I had ever stumbled upon in the mountains. The grass was short and very thick, and the few boulders that lay scattered around were covered with moss.

"It struck me that this would be a good place for my camp. I had some crackers and cheese in my pocket and I sat down on the nearest rock and began to eat them. I was very tired and might have been half dozing, when all of a sudden I was startled by a sharp crack. It raised me to my feet mighty quick, I tell you. I looked carefully around, but did not see a thing suspicious. Five minutes passed, and I had settled back on the rock and was half asleep again when there was a second crack, and as I raised my head I saw something dark and large drop to the ground from a small hickory tree that grew about 150 feet away.

"Of course, it could be only a bear or a wildcat, and as I wasn't allfired anxious to make the intimate acquaintance of either, except over the muzzle of a gun, I slid gently from the rock to the ground and waited. In a minute or so I heard a sort of noise back of where I had seen the dark animal drop, and there, from the limb of a large hickory, I saw swinging three half-grown bears. I knew instantly it was my gymnastic family, and putting aside the rifle I fixed myself and prepared to watch them.

"They went through pretty much the antics I told you about the last time; swinging like you've seen fellows at the circus. Presently they came down the tree and came slowly across the grass toward me. The little wind that was blowing was from them to me or they would certainly have scented me. When they came to two big rocks, about 100 feet from where I lay, they climbed up and sat down. All this time I was wondering where the old she bear could be. She had always watched her children mightily close; now they were alone and seemed to be having a fine time.

"Presently they got off the rocks and one went out a little distance and dropped on all-fours. Then the other two ran toward him on their hind feet, and putting their hands on his back vaulted over him. Then they went down likewise and the first cub jumped over them. They were playing leapfrog, as well as any boys I ever saw, and they were enjoying it.

"In the various changes of position in the game one of the bears landed near a tree that had evidently been blown over several years before. It had been one of the biggest of the big fellows that grew around the place, and it was still well preserved. The smaller boughs had rotted away, but the trunk and large limbs were black and hard. Instead of fixing himself for his brothers' jumps, he remained on his hind feet, looking hard at the fallen fir. The other cubs kept on jumping, and when they reached him they also began to watch the tree. I took a hand in the looking now myself, but although I have mighty fair eyes I couldn't see a thing out of the ordinary.

"At last the cubs seemed satisfied, and with a grunt the largest made at the tree, followed by his brothers. They began to work around the trunk about fifty feet from the butt, and in a moment I saw something like a cloud rise from the ground and circle around their heads. Now I understood the situation. They had found a bees' nest and were for stealing the honey. They would put their paws into the cavity in the tree, bring out great fists of honey and greedily lick it off with their tongues. If there is one thing, you know, that bears like, it is honey, and they will submit to any quantity of pain to get it.

"Meanwhile, the bees were not idle, you just bet. There must have been a million of them, and they went at the bears like mad. The hum of their wings sounded like a storm, and I concluded that instead of one nest the cubs had struck a dozen. The bears' thick hair and hide protected them, but occasionally a bee got in a good thrust, and the cub would jump around and slash at himself with his paws. The honey was going fast, and I was thinking of pulling quietly away toward my camp, when one of the cubs suddenly climbed about forty feet into the air, and with a roar, began to batter himself on the ear. Evidently a bee had got into his head and stung him, and the pain was awful. Instead of becoming quiet he got worse, and turning on his little enemies, he began to beat them down with his paws.

"Meantime his brothers were getting in their work with the honey and didn't seem to notice the one in pain. When they did, however, they ceased their robbery and looked at him with broad grins on their faces. Suddenly each gave a howl and then began the same performance that the first bear had gone through. I laughed until I was tired at those three cubs knocking the bees right and left. In ten minutes they had so used up the bees that comparatively few of them were left. The exercise seemed to relieve some of the pain, and the cubs went to work on the honey once more.

"The hole was evidently pretty large, and one of the cubs got up on the tree and stuck his paw into it and handed some honey out to his brothers. I was about to sneak for camp again when I saw this fellow jump off the tree and make rapidly toward the big butt. I stopped a moment to watch him. If I hadn't you would never have heard this story, and the fate of the bear family would have been lost in obscurity. The other two bears polled right after their brother, and just as they reached the end of the tree the one ahead grunted two or three times, and each cub went down on all fours and the leader peered around the trunk. In a moment he grunted again, and the two in the rear made a double-quick march for the other end of the tree. Here they broke from the limbs, three good-sized cubs, and returned to their brother. He took one of the sticks, and then the trio instantly doubled the end of the trunk and the clubs went up and came down upon the ground with a thump. Before I had time to wonder what they were at I heard a buzzing sound that meant but one thing, rattlesnakes.

"One rattle after another went off and it was plain that the cubs had struck a big nest of them. The fight was now on in great shape. The bears were slashing away at the ground like crazy and jumping back and forward to avoid the snakes. I couldn't see well from my position and I crept slowly around toward the rocks where the bears had first seated themselves. I got there all properly and then things were very plain.

"The ground was covered with the rattlers, and the cubs had a pretty big job on their hands. Every time a club came down it hit a snake, but the buzzing still went on, and from out the hollow butt of the tree came rattler after rattler, who would go right to work on the invaders. As long as the bears could keep the snakes far enough away to avoid the full force of their fangs there was little danger of the poison getting beyond their thick hair. The only hope the rattlers had to win the fight was to strike some of the more exposed places, like the head. The cubs were in the fight for good, and they went at it in a way that pleased me mightily. I sort of looked upon these cubs as my particular friends, and had I suspected how the business would end I would have taken a hand myself.

"For ten minutes the bears' clubs went up and down as reguiar as the ticker of that clock there. If the snakes had got in any poison it hadn't showed itself. I noticed that no more of the varmints came out of the tree and presently one of the cubs threw down his club and walked back a short distance along the tree and sat down with his back against it. His two brothers, after stirring through the heap of dead snakes, followed him and leaned against the tree, the three in a row. They grunted and motioned and pointed toward the rattlers.

"While I was looking on at this conversation I saw an immense rattler come rapidly from the tree, raise its head and look around until it got range of the cubs. Then it turned and glided into the nest. In a moment three rattlers wiggled out and disappeared behind the tree. I presumed they were leaving for a less dangerous place, and I was about to cut past the cubs and return to my camp, when I saw first one, then another, and then the third snake come cautiously up the side of the fallen pine and coil themselves, one behind each bear. Their heads swung from side to side. 'Burr!' went the rattles. The fangs shot out and each cub was struck just back of the ear.

"The way those youngsters got awake and right-abouted was mighty funny. As their muzzles faced the snakes the varmints struck again, and the poison went straight into the nose of each bear; and before they could recover themselves they got another dose, and then the snakes dropped from the tree and struck as rapidly as they could swing their heads. With a howl of anger or pain the cubs stooped, and, seizing the snakes in their paws, they whirled them through the air and smashed the life out of them against the tree.

"But the poison was getting in its work. The cubs seemed perfectly crazy. They ran up and down, beating themselves with their paws; lay down and rolled over and over; howled and growled. While they were rolling on the ground they all three managed to bump into one another. That settled it. They were clear daft with pain or something, and in an instant a glorious free fight was on the carpet. They went at one another with awful roars, and the blood began to run and the fur and skin came off in great pieces. I have seen some pretty rough-and-tumble scrimmages, but this was the king of the heap. It was a slaughter and it almost made me sick. I turned away my head. When I looked again one cub was flat on the ground and the other two were staggering around in a circle, waving their paws in agony. Then, like a flash, the end came. Down they went like logs, and the rattlers' poison worked its end.

"Just then I heard a slight noise, and I almost jumped out of my jacket as I saw the old she bear come racing across toward her dead children. When she got to them she went down on all fours and sniffed each cub all over. Then, with a peculiar roar, she sat down beside the tree and rested her head in her paws.

"I was in a fix. There was the old she bear with her three dead cubs. If she should see me she would make things so hot that I would be killed. She would be sure to think I had killed her cubs. So I concluded to keep very quiet.

"I waited for an hour; still, the bear had not moved. Half an hour longer, and the old girl was in exactly the same position. The sun had gone down and it was rapidly growing dark. I thought it was time to get away. I moved quietly out from the rocks and started toward the nearest tree. There was no difficulty. I got back to camp, cooked supper and turned in.

"In the morning I went straight to the big trees to get some of the rattles. When I got there I could hardly believe my eyes. Just in exactly the same position was the she bear, and at her feet still lay the bodies of her cubs. I walked straight out into the opening with my gun ready. The bear didn't move. I went closer and closer, and then I saw it all. The old bear was dead. I looked her carefully over. Her body bore no mark. There was only one way to explain it. She had died of a broken heart.

"I buried their carcasses beside the fallen pine, and the next day I brought a headboard and planted it over the graves. On it I had cut:

"'Here lies the gymnastical bear family, a mother and three cubs. Peace to their ashes.'"

GEORGE GARRISON COUNTED 'EM,

And Says There Were Twenty-three Bears in the Drove—A Mystery.

BARLEY RUN, Pa., Oct. 20.—"Twelve hunters fired at the bear, and it is hard to tell who hit it, but it was hit. There was only one bullet in it. But the bear was dead."

Such was the news that Burt Shilling brought in from South Creek, Lycoming county.

"That doesn't seem much of a bag for twelve hunters to make out of drove of twenty-three bears," continued Mr. Shilling, "but that is all they killed. All of the bears. There was a dog killed, I believe. Ed Axtell's dog Juno was killed. He got mixed up with three of the bears, and Sid Mull tried to kill all three of the bears at one shot. He missed them and killed the dog. The way it all came about was this. Squire Neyhart came over to Ed Axtell's one morning.

"'Ed,' says he, 'somebody has stole ten of my sheep.'

"'Somebody hain't done nothin' o' the sort,' says Ed.

"'Why hain't they?' says the Squire.

"'Cause it's bears that's stole your sheep,' says Ed. 'That's the reason somebody hain't done it.'

"'That don't help me out,' says the Squire.

"'No,' says Ed; 'but it helps me out consid'able. I ben s'pectin' there was bears prowlin' around here, an' now I know it. I ben waitin' to be sure of it 'fore I went out arter 'em, an' now I'm goin'.'

"So Ed sent word around among the boys, and Charley Williamson, Sid Mull, George Wilson, Bill Trumper, Harv Williamson, Reub Neyhart, and Charley Root joined him to go on the hunt. Even Ed, old bear hunter that he is, had no idea that he was going to run into bear quite as strong as they did, or maybe he'd a laid things out different.

"The nine hunters started up the wild valley of South Creek. They had gone about two miles when they met George Garrison coming down the creek as if he was running on a bet and had to beat the cars to win. He was bareheaded, and looked scared. When he saw the small army of bear hunters advancing he stopped in his tracks, swung his arms, and hollered:

"'Glory!'

"George Garrison's word goes further among the South Creek people than any other man's in the whole district, so when he gave his reasons for being so much excited, the hunters quit wondering and saw a heap of fun ahead of them.

"'You've got along here just in time,' says George Garrison. 'The woods up the creek are so full of bear that the bears are moving north to get more room! I was coming down the creek when I saw a bear coming. I got behind a tree. I peeked out and saw that following the bear close was another one, and behind that one another one, and behind that one—well, the fact of the matter is that I saw a whole string of bears coming up the creek. I stood there and counted twenty-three big ones pass a given point. There was more coming, but my nerves couldn't stand it to count any further, and so I cut and run. How many more than twenty-three there was I can't say. But they're marching along. They ain't more than a mile up the creek. Come on and gobble 'em!'

"This was great news. The party of hunters spread out on each side of the creek. Harv Williamson and Reub Neyhart went clambering up a steep knoll on the lower side. When they reached the top they scared three bears out of the brush.

"'Thunder!' says Reub. 'These makes twenty-six!'

"Then he and Harv both fired. The bears kept on going. A bunch of fur and a dab or two of blood on the ground seemed to indicate that at least one of the bears had got a piece of lead in it somewhere. Not far beyond where Harv and Reub started the bears is the mouth of a deep ravine, and in the rocks of the ravine is a big cave. The bears were trailed to the cave. The reports of the guns had brought the rest of the party to the top of the knoll, and they spread out and stationed themselves at various points along the ravine. The only dog with the hunters was Ed Axtell's Juno, said to be the very best bear dog in all that country.

"'The bears is in that cave,' said Ed, 'an' nothin' will fetch 'em out but Juno.'

"So Ed put Sid Mull at a point opposite the mouth of the cave, because Sid had the name of being a shot that nothing could get away from. Then he sent Juno into the cave to rout the bears out. The dog hadn't been in the cave more than ten seconds before bears began to tumble out of the hole like bees out of a hive. They made a great snorting and growling and snapping of jaws. Mull jumped behind a rock. Peeking out, he hollered:

"'Great ginger! Look at 'em! One—two—three—four—five—six! Ginger, see 'em go!'

"Then Sid happened to think that he had a gun, and he jumped out from behind the rock and began firing. The bears had all come out. The dog Juno came out right on their heels. He came out just as Sid was firing, and got three bullets in him before he had time to die. The bear hunt was suspended for a minute while Ed Axtell licked Sid Mull. Then Sid dropped out of the ranks and went home. The party moved on, trying to console Ed for the loss of his dog while they moved. They hadn't gone far when they heard the crack of rifles up toward the head of the ravine. The hunters made a rush in that direction, and met Ed Rupp and Dan Knaus, two bear hunters from Collumsville, where bears had been carrying off sheep in droves, they said.

"'How many did you kill?' asked Ed Rupp, referring to the fusillade they had heard. They were surprised to hear that nothing had been killed but one dog.

"'From the flock that went by us just now,' said Rupp, 'we thought maybe you must have bagged a lot. There were five of 'em—big ones!'

"'I only seen three,' said Dan Knaus. 'I killed one o' them, I know!'

"The hunters then fell to consulting as to what was the best course to pursue, when loud cries were heard down in the valley to the right of the ravine. The men made all haste in that direction. They found Chris Walsh and Joe Shuler, two more venturesome bear hunters. They were in the fork of a big chestnut tree, yelling like Indians. When they saw the big hunting party advancing they yelled:

"'Git your guns ready! The woods is swarmin' with bear! There's one right at the foot o' this tree now! He's got us treed! Bing him!'

"Sure enough, there was a big bear at the foot of the tree. But he was dead. He was evidently one of the bears that had run the gauntlet at the ravine. Chris and Joe came down out of the tree.

"'Ding 'em!' said Joe. 'They came down offen the hill yonder like a hurrycane and surrounded us. We shinned up the tree quicker 'n scat. I counted eleven big ones besides the one that stayed here at the foot o' the tree an' kicked the bucket. The bull eleven is out in the brush yonder somewheres, an' I don't know how many more of 'em.'

"The big hunting party scoured the woods in all directions, they said, but couldn't find hide nor hair of any of the drove.

"'Where all o' them twenty-five bear could a got too,' says Ed Axtell, 'is a caution to miracles!'

"No one knows who fired the shot that killed the one bear, but of the twelve men who fired a gun during the excitement each one declares that there is no doubt in the world but that it was his bullet that made the fatal hole in it. But that doesn't seem so much of a mystery to folks in general as does the utter disappearance of the twenty-five other big bears, and the way George Garrison is being cross-questioned about his count of the procession of bears up South Creek is worrying him amazingly."

A STEER KILL AT FORT SILL.

Spirited Scenes at the Issue of Beef by the Government to Indians.

FORT SILL, O. T., Oct. 13.—Picture in your mind a broad prairie with sand hills and dwarfed shrubbery. Behind you cluster half a dozen dull-red frame buildings. To your left is a big corral built of skinned poles. Before you slopes the brown plain until it dips into a naked hollow, rising beyond in a long, smooth range. A bearded cow-puncher clings to the tops of the corral poles near an opening barred by a gate. Inside the corral a herd of cattle plunge and snort under the rawhide lashes of two cowboys mounted on Mexican ponies. Outside the corral gate, on the left, range Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache Indians mounted on ponies, gorgeous in hunting trappings and festivity paint, stolid of countenance, clutching their rifles across their saddles. Opposite them, on the other side of the corral gate, are grouped other Indians, young braves and boys, also on ponies, watching their fathers across the gate path. Behind the corral are numberless wagons, quaint in their trappings, filled with squaws and children.

The cow-puncher raises his hand. The corral gate opens. A steer dashes forth. The gate closes. The cow-puncher consults a slip of paper and yells "Odlepah!" A big chief rides forth from the Indians on the left. A group of young braves on the other side of the gate move forward. The steer stops suddenly and lowers his head, sniffing the ground. Odlepah motions to one of his young braves, and an arrow darts deep into the steer's side.

There is a snort, a bellow, a shrill squeal, and the steer darts madly beyond the line of Indians, plunging headlong down the slope toward the gully below. As he rushes on Odlepah throws off his gorgeous blanket and his gaudy trappings. His pony spurns the ground bounding after the steer. In his wake press his young braves. They shout with delight. The steer hears them and pushes ahead, straining to reach the gully in safety.

Suddenly, from the group of horseman, darts a young brave, mounted on a roan pony. He leans far forward, his head reaching almost to his pony's throat. He urges his pony ahead, circling far to the left. Then he turns quickly to the right and bears down on the steer, striving to cut him off from the gully and turn him through an easy trail onto the range beyond. Slowly he gains. As he draws nearer, the steer veers to the right and stops. The pony of the Indian sinks on his haunches. The steer hesitates, then runs pell-mell across the trail and up the range beyond.

A great shout goes up from the Indians in pursuit. They break out into a skirmish line covering a hundred yards of the range. Odlepah rides near the right end. The braves in the middle of the line close up until they are within eighty paces of the steer. The bucks on the end of the line gallop on until they are on a line with the steer. Then they gradually close in. The steer sees he is surrounded. He makes an attempt to break through the circle. Ponies block his way on every side. He halts, swinging his head to and fro, his tongue hanging out and touching the grass.

Then Odlepah leaves the circle, riding within it close to the steer. He settles firmly on his pony and raises his rifle. His men fall back. Odlepah nods his head. Again an arrow pierces the steer. Again it bellows and starts for freedom. There is a crack of the rifle; the steer staggers, runs a few paces, kicks, totters, and falls. As it falls the boys close in, and leaving their ponies begin to open his hide. Odlepah rides slowly away.

The beef issue, or, as it is known to the Indians, "steer kill," has begun.

Comparatively few people, aside from soldiers or stray cow-punchers who have married Indian squaws, have seen a beef issue conducted in true Indian style. In the heart of the reservation set apart for the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache Indians in the Oklahoma country may be seen the largest beef issues now held in the country. Two miles west of Fort Sill is a group of frame buildings known to the Indians as Red Store, and to the soldiers as Cash Creek Agency. Lieut. Nichols of the army is the Indian agent.

Issues of rations are made to the Indians by Lieut. Nichols in a quantity per capita of about 80 per cent. of the food allowance of a Government soldier. The mode of issuing beef or meat to the Indians long troubled the Government. Gen. Miles solved the difficulty. A census, as nearly accurate as possible, was prepared of all the Indians on the reservation—bucks, braves, squaws, and children. It was ascertained how many wives and children belonged to each buck. This was done only after months of labor.

It was then decided to issue one beef to every thirty Indians every thirty days. The weight of the beef is averaged at 850 pounds. Two rations a day for thirty Indians for fourteen days amount to 840 pounds, or a pound apiece at each meal. This is fully six ounces better than what the Indian calls hunger point, which means food enough to taste, but not to make a meal of.

Beef is issued every other Saturday at Red Stone. The issue begins at 9 o'clock in the morning. For several days before the issue Indian chiefs, with one or two and sometimes as many as five of their squaws and numerous young braves and children, appear at the agency, bringing tents with them. They pitch their tepees on the prairie near the corral. The morning of an issue there are more than 500 white tepees dotting the plain or ranged in long rows in villages, which in turn form a mammoth Indian city of white.

Chief among these Indians are Looking Glass and Stumbling Bear, the big chiefs of the Comanche and Kiowa Nations. Then there is Quana, formerly big chief of the Comanches, with his body guard of six braves and his record of a score of personal encounters with other warriors for the possession of squaws. Tabitosa, Pahsita, and Tabahortty are there, too.

At sunrise on the morning of the issue the squaws are astir. They hitch up the queer vehicles they call wagons, whet the knives, and prepare the festivity costumes of their husbands. The buck sleeps late. His breakfast awaits him. After eating he rides to the agency and accounts for his thirty mouths necessary to entitle him to a beef. Frequently two or three braves combine to draw a beef, the total of their squaws and children numbering thirty. Attempts are made to swindle one young brave trying to repeat much as a fraudulent voter does at an election. They seldom succeed.

After the buck leaves the agency he returns to his tepee and makes ready for the issue. This takes him almost two hours. He sets out for the corral a few minutes before the issue begins. His braves and sons follow in the rear. After all have gone the squaws bundle their pappooses into the wagons and follow slowly, keeping their husbands in sight.

After the first beef is freed the issue goes on rapidly. As fast as the cow puncher with the list prepared by the agent calls off the names of the various chiefs the steers are driven out to be killed. The chiefs and their young sons, like Odlepah and his youths, start the steer on a life and death race before killing it. Should an Indian kill a steer without a chase he is sneered at by his fellow braves. Such a brave is no true sportsman, they say. It is customary to delay the killing of the first steer out from the corral until the last steer is turned loose. Then every Indian strives to kill his beef before any of the other steers fall. Care is also taken by the braves to drop their beef in a convenient spot, where the squaws can reach it easily with the wagons.

The squaws wait in the wagons in the rear of the corral until the last beef is freed. Then they drive forward watching the chase and waiting for the end. The prairie is teeming with life. The steers gallop madly to and fro, and the Indians in gaudy garments follow, yelling and shooting. Then the noise dies away; there is a stray shot or two, then a moment's silence. It is followed by bedlam. The squaws lean far out of the wagons, lashing the ponies into a gallop and yell with their children like mad. Numberless dogs trail about the wagons, and they join in the noise, barking and howling. The squaws drive straight to the steers killed by their husbands. They leap from the wagons with bared knives as they near the carcasses. On their knees they work at the hide of the steer. The children and dogs lend their aid, the latter seizing the hide in their mouths, pulling and growling.

In a twinkling the hide is off. The braves stand idly by watching the workers. Not a pound of the beef is thrown away. Even the entrails are packed into the wagons. The women and dogs pause at times in their work to lick their chops or eat a choice bit of raw meat, such as the liver. The butchering is done in a surprisingly short time, seldom lasting over fifteen minutes. The bucks remount their ponies, the squaws climb into their wagons, and all start for the tepees. The hide trails on the ground behind the wagon, with the dogs snapping stealthily at it. Soon the prairie is deserted save for a litter of heads mounted with broad horns over dull, glassy eyes.

"GIMME COON."

You Will Always Say That After Eating Coon Cooked in This Way.

MILFORD, Pa., Oct. 20.—Although they carry around on their fat little bodies choice and toothsome morsels of food, the coon and the woodchuck are treated with contempt by those who affect to know what are the good things to eat and what are not. These nice folk even look askance at those who eat coon and woodchuck, and wonder at the fortitude of their stomachs, and, as if their gorge were rising, exclaim:

"Coon and woodchuck! Faugh!"

Yet if they but knew the coon and woodchuck aright, their cry, with smacking of the lips, would be rather:

"Coon and woodchuck! Yum-m-m, yum-m-m, yum-m-m!"

That the coon and the woodchuck, especially the woodchuck, have much within themselves that has worked to discredit their edible qualities no one who has anatomical knowledge of them will attempt to deny, but this has not worked half so much toward bringing them into popular contempt as has the ignorance of cooks in preparing and serving them. There are few people who know how to cook a coon or a woodchuck. If neither of them is cooked properly, about all you will get out of it will be a lot of grease and a bad smell. And that is more than likely what will result from the efforts of the average cook in preparing a coon or a woodchuck for the table. But this should be no disparagement of either. The choicest chicken that ever had its neck wrung may come from the manipulation of a careless or inexpert cook so redolent or so impregnated with the bitterness of a gall ruptured in cleaning that the stomach of a Digger Indian would do itself credit by revolting from the dish. Brook trout, a fish sweet and savory enough to almost be eaten raw and relished, after passing through the hands of an alleged cook, may defy any one to tell whether it was fried catfish or overdone calf's liver. A hell-diver duck, that animate reservoir of rank fish oil, and concentrated seat of toughness, may be served by another cook in such delicious shape and flavor that old Epicurus himself would have declared that it was a dish fit for the gods. Your bad cook can resolve the choicest of things into a culinary ruin. Your good cook can make of an apparently hopeless morsel a thing of beauty and a joy long after you have eaten it. But even the best of cooks fail when they come to cook a coon or a woodchuck. And that is why the choice bits that these generally despised little animals carry on their bones are under the ban.

The coon is plentiful in Pike county. So is the woodchuck. Both will be going to sleep for the winter months by and by—the coon in his cosey nest in the tree hollow or rocky crevice, and the groundhog in his nicely upholstered burrow, deep in the ground. And, by the way, the weather-wise old Pike county woodsmen, who gather their wisdom from observation, alleged or imagined, of the doings and ways of birds and animals, declare that they have noticed that the woodchuck has been busy this fall digging his burrow much deeper than he ordinarily does. This, they say, is an unfailing sign of a cold and hard winter. The woodchuck is burrowing deep because the unusual cold would reach and disturb him if he left his nest at the ordinary depth.

But both of these lively little animals are very wide awake as yet, and getting in prime condition for comatose wintering. Let any one who has had lifelong doubt about the possibility of a coon or a woodchuck being made a viand to be even tolerated on the table at a tannery boarding house, go out and himself fill the first requirement of the recipe for cooking a coon or a woodchuck that Mrs. G. W. Hart of Shohola Falls has "thunk up," and then let Mrs. Hart do the rest. If so be, then, if the coon or woodchuck is not a revelation to him and a thing to dote on, his palate has no finer sense nor his stomach the fitness for aught save the baser things of kettle, pot, and pan.

This particular requirement of Mrs. Hart's formula is paramount. It is antedated, of course, by the famous and ancient recipe for cooking a hare, with its wise and firm counsel that you first catch your hare. With just as much wisdom and firmness Mrs. Hart insists that you shall first catch your coon, or your woodchuck, before you may bring her recipe to bear upon its cooking. This requirement makes the cooking all the more enjoyable applying it, especially to the coon. The catching of your woodchuck will not add much zest to the culinary sequence. It may be just as well to let some one else catch your woodchuck. There isn't much sport or suggestion of sport in sitting on the edge of a meadow watching a woodchuck's hole, waiting for the woodchuck to come out and let you put a ball through his head, for the chances are that he won't do it. After sitting there five or six hours without the woodchuck showing himself you are apt to get mad and go away saying things, a state of mind that would not be quieted much if you knew that the woodchuck had been all these hours with the tip of his nose at the entrance of his burrow, and his sharp eye fixed on you, waiting for you to get up and go away. That is just what the woodchuck would have been doing, sure as you live, and you will not have gone two rods from your long waiting place before the woodchuck has popped out of his hole and is sitting on his haunches there, chuckling gleefully to himself as he gazes on your departing footsteps. So it will be just as well to let some one else catch your groundhog.

But the coon is different. The woodchuck is a clumsy, cowardly, petty larceny thief that settles in a clover field and does not go five rods away from home. The coon is a roving, reckless, rollicking freebooter, whose range covers miles of woods and thicket and swamp and field. There is excitement and toil and trial, skill against skill, cunning against cunning, endurance against endurance when you go out to catch your coon, with the night over and around all, the dark woods darker, and the entangling thickets, the devious swamps, the murmuring brooks, each and every one up in arms to protect and aid the game you and your dogs are pressing to its end in spite of darkness and thickets and brooks and devious swamps. And you will press him there, too, if you are in earnest about catching your coon, and if your dogs are good. The man who has ever participated in a night's catching of a coon, and who can then say that the game that comes from a chase like that was not made for great possibilities if treated right by the cook, is fit for treason, and doesn't know what's good.

Then, having caught your coon and had it skinned, if you submit it to the treatment called for by Mrs. Hart's recipe, which is one peculiar to that part of Pike county, it will dawn on you, when you partake of it, what coon was made for. One mistake the ordinary cook has always made when he starts in to cook a coon is that the more the fat he can leave on it the better.

"Cut off all the fat you possibly can," says Mrs. Hart. "Then cut the coon (or the woodchuck) into its parts. Put them in cold water made quite strong with salt. This is to draw out the blood, which is hot and overabundant in all hibernating animals. When the blood has been removed from the flesh, pour off that water and cover the parts with clean water, in which place a handful of saleratus. Leave your coon (or woodchuck) in this water not less than one hour or more than two. Then take it out and boil until it is nicely done. The boiling of the meat done, have ready a pan with plenty of butter well flavored with onion in it. Fry the coon (or woodchuck) in that until it is nicely browned. It is then ready to serve, and it is as good cold as it is hot."

That is the way to cook a coon or a woodchuck. When either of these misjudged providers of something good to eat (especially the coon) is prepared and served in this way the man who goes to the table to scoff will remain to eat; and he'll ask for more, maybe, two or three times. And ever after, if he has such good chance as to pass where they cook coon thus, and he hears at table the announcement: "Here is chicken, roast lamb, some venison, and coon. What may I help you to?" he will say: "Gimme coon!"

Jones and His Snake in Jail.

From the Courier-Journal.

A clammy cow snake occupies a conspicuous place at the county jail, substantiating a strange snake story connected with one of the moonshiners now confined there for beating Uncle Sam out of his tax.

About two weeks ago John Jones of Magoffin county was brought to the city and lodged in jail on the charge of moonshining. He had a leather satchel, which he was compelled to leave in the office of the jail. After being imprisoned for several hours Jones called one of the turnkeys to the bars and asked him to please feed "that snake what was in his satchel." This surprising statement proved to be true, as the satchel really contained a live snake, which Jones called "Old Bob" in a very affectionate tone. The snake was fed and placed in a box where it could be seen by the visitors. Jones handled it without fear, and said it had been his pet for a long time. He was recently fined $100 and given a sentence of sixty days for selling moonshine whiskey. He asks every day about how "Old Bob" is getting along, and will take him back home when he gets out.