

# FOREST AND STREAM.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF THE ROD AND GUN.

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## THE BANNOCKS AND THE GAME.

For the first time in the history of the Bannock Indian hunting troubles in Wyoming, the matter has been taken into court and a legal decision respecting it has been made. The point at issue was as to the right of the Bannock Indians to kill game on the unoccupied lands of the State in contravention of the game laws as to seasons. The Indians claimed that they had such a right, and last summer some of them set about exercising it in the vicinity of Jackson's Hole. Thereupon the settlers of the Hole, constituting themselves judge, jury and executioner, apprehended certain of the Indian hunters and killed them. Having executed the penalty of death upon them, they then instituted the customary procedure to determine the guilt or innocence of the individuals they had shot down.

To make a test case, one of the Bannocks, named Race Horse, was arrested by the State authorities on the charge of having violated the Wyoming game laws, and he was tried in the United States Court at Cheyenne, where Judge Riner has just given an opinion, which finds that the right of hunting was conceded by the treaty made between the Bannocks and the Government, and that treaties having been declared by Congress to be the supreme law of the land, this one could not be abrogated by the State of Wyoming, nor has the State any power to enforce laws which conflict with or restrict in any way the full rights guaranteed the Indians by treaty. To alter the existing privileges of the Indians with respect to hunting on unoccupied lands in the State of Wyoming is solely within the province of the United States Government, and until action shall be taken at Washington to purchase from the Bannocks their present rights, Wyoming is powerless to restrict them. However unfortunate may be the conditions which have arisen, the opinion of Judge Riner commends itself as a sound exposition of the law. There the matter rests. Attorney Gen. Fowler and Judge Van Deventer, counsel for the State, have given notice of an appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States. There is little reason to believe that the decision just given will be reversed.

## THE VERMONT LEAGUE.

An argument that is very generally advanced in favor of protecting fish and game is that we should preserve them for the benefit of those who are to come after us, as well as for our own future use. The argument is certainly a sound one, and in many States is really about the only plausible one. In Vermont, however, a solid business-like view is taken. The State has a magnificent lake and some lovely fishing rivers, and mountains and valleys well wooded and eminently fitted for the purposes of rearing and fostering of furred and feathered game in large quantities. The scenery is grand, and the climate during the summer and early months of the fall, added to her natural beauties, make Vermont a favorite resort for a vast number of visitors during that season. This friendly invasion is a good thing for the State. Every individual visitor means money expended in her borders and the sum total left in Vermont each year by her temporary visitors cannot be computed with any degree of accuracy in cold dollars. The Vermonters are by no means slow people; they have recognized in their lake and rivers, in their forest-clad mountains and valleys, a fruitful source of revenue if properly looked after and cared for, correctly surmising that if the hunting and fishing shall be improved, the number of annual visitors will proportionately be increased.

At present the Vermont Game and Fish League is engaged in looking closely after the game now in the State, and is doing its best to prevent violations of the existing game laws. The State hatchery, under the able care of Superintendent Titcomb, is also doing great work in stocking the waters of Lake Champlain with game fish. Efforts are also being made, as will be apparent by a perusal of a report of the proceedings of the recent annual meeting of the League, given elsewhere, to introduce new game birds into the State, with a view to making a day's

hunt in the forests of Vermont the more attractive by reason of the variety of game that shall be obtained. The League is therefore doing good work in behalf of fish and game protection, perhaps from neither a semi-selfish nor a purely philanthropic motive. There is a solid business motive at the bottom, but we cannot see that its work is any the less commendable; it is working for the best interests of the Commonwealth.

The supply of deer in the State is yearly increasing very satisfactorily. The penalty for killing a deer is severe and the laws in this respect are well observed. From most reliable sources we have heard of deer being seen in certain favored sections with a frequency that augurs well for the first open season, that of 1900. With five more peaceable breeding seasons before them, the number of deer now in existence should be very largely increased. What the people of Vermont must now look to is the preservation of those deer from total extinction as soon as "the law is off." It should not be a case of a colored man's dog after a hog-killing—full as he can stick for two weeks and half starved the remaining fifty. A short open season, say from Oct. 15 to Nov. 15; non-shipment of deer out of the State; a limit placed on the number of deer to be killed by each hunter—all such restrictions will be of incalculable benefit when it comes to protecting the deer from extermination in 1900 and the succeeding years. The Vermont Fish and Game League may be trusted to see to it that these points will not be overlooked when it comes to framing a law in regard to the legal killing of deer.

## THE FOURCHETTE BUFFALO.

For a long time it has been an open secret among cowmen in Montana and travelers through the State who are interested in such subjects that there were still left on the Big Dry Fork of the Missouri River, and perhaps on the heads of Big Porcupine and Little Porcupine, a very few buffalo. The country is one of extreme difficulty, being exceedingly rough with bad lands and almost waterless. The few buffalo left there were the remnants of that last remnant of the great northern herd which furnished to Crees, Blackfeet, Assinaboines and Gros Ventres 50,000 hides in the year 1888, the last considerable shipment of buffalo hides which went down the Missouri River. Later it was into this same desolate and forbidding country that Hornaday went to secure specimens of the buffalo for the National Museum; and later still Dr. Daniel Gérard Elliott, now Curator of the Field Columbian Museum in Chicago, but then connected with the American Museum of Natural History, New York, made an expedition thither in behalf of the last named institution. Buffalo were there, but so few in number and so exceedingly wary that it was almost hopeless to attempt to find them. At the same time we have known that from time to time within the last few years an occasional buffalo has been killed in that country.

At first these animals were seen only by twos and threes, later we heard of a bunch of half a dozen, and later still of eight, one a calf. For the last two or three years it has been stated that the cattle owners, whose herds range in this country, have been protecting these buffalo. This they did in two ways, namely, by denying to inquirers that there were any buffalo in the country, and by threatening with death any one who should disturb the animals. It is known that within the last two or three years the cowboys have branded a number of calves, and it is said that last summer the iron was put on at least four.

It had been hoped by many residents of Montana that this system of protection might ultimately result in a herd of semi-domesticated buffalo ranging on tributaries of the Missouri from the south. Unhappily this hope seems now in vain. It is now reported that this little band of buffalo, sometimes known as the Fourchette band, have been killed off by the vagrant Cree half-breeds, who, finding Canada too hot to hold them at the collapse of the Riel rebellion, crossed the boundary line at that time and have since made Montana their home. These people are inveterate hunters, and since their invasion of the State they have probably killed more game than all its other inhabitants put together. As they are known, and as their acts are known to the authorities, it is difficult to see why the law is not set in motion and why some of them are not punished for the illegal killing of game of which they are so frequently guilty. It is sometimes said that because they are citizens of Canada the State of Montana has no right to punish them for offenses

against the game law, but we fancy that no such explanation would be given if these people had been guilty of murder or of cattle killing, or of any one of a hundred other offenses which more nearly touched the people of the State, and we are inclined to think that the inertness of the authorities must be due to a carelessness about the enforcement of game laws, rather than to any doubt of their ability to punish these people.

The laws of Montana prohibit absolutely the killing of buffalo and fix a penalty for the same. These laws are sometimes enforced against white men and more frequently against Indians. It is not so very long ago that three Assinaboines on the Missouri River were imprisoned for killing game illegally, nor since half a dozen Indians in Flat Head county, captured with elk skins and heads in their possession, were promptly locked up. If this is good medicine for our Indians, it should be good medicine for Canadian Indians guilty of like offenses if they can be captured on our soil and the offense proved against them.

## SNAP SHOTS.

An obliging correspondent who writes anonymously sends as marginal commentary on an Adirondack deer hunting note, recently printed in the FOREST AND STREAM, this comment: "The rankest, meanest pot-hunter in the State; preaches God's law Sunday and breaks State laws. Hunts out of season. Is a meat-hunter, and a disgrace to the cloth and to the name of sportsman." Such an indictment as that deserves authentication by the name of the person preferring it. The uselessness and ineffectiveness of anonymous letters is understood by most intelligent persons. If this anonymous accuser can make good his charge, we trust that he will make an opportunity to communicate with the game protector. A straightforward statement of facts, given to the proper authorities, will accomplish something. No-name letters are not worth the paper they are written on.

This is not to question the perfect good faith and right motive of the sender of an unsigned letter or of one signed "Justice" or "Veritas" or other substitute for a real name. In many cases "Justice" or "Veritas" may have actual knowledge of game law violations, and information and evidence which would prove amply sufficient to convict offenders, and which it is his duty as a good sportsman to lay before the authorities. Resort is had to anonymous writing only because the writer fears to give his name; he is apprehensive of the vengeance of the guilty; he thinks that his barn would be burned, or his cows would be killed, or his dog poisoned. What course he shall pursue under such circumstances is for each one to determine for himself. It is reasonable to conclude, however, that in every case where an informant will substantiate the information he has to give by coming out in his own proper person, the editor or the game protector or the army officer will respect his communication as confidential.

Mr. N. P. Leach, chairman of the committee on introducing new kinds of game into Vermont, has recently received a lot of Mongolian pheasants. He reports that the birds arrived in good shape, are bright and lively. They will be kept in a suitable inclosure and their eggs distributed among the members of the Fish and Game League, with instructions how to set the eggs and care for the young birds, etc. Mr. Leach expects very soon a lot of ptarmigan. These birds in the spring will be released on Mount Mansfield and other bald-top mountains in the State.

There are compensations. The world is full of them. Only one must have the correct philosophy, and look for them in the right spirit. Sometimes they are to be angled for with a fishing rod, sometimes hunted for with a shotgun. The weapon matters little, provided the spirit is right. Here is a man who looks on the bright side. "The Blanktown Times," he writes, "will suspend publication until next year. I will now devote the most of my time to hunting, and will keep you posted about the sport in this section." There are many editors who would suspend if they could put in most of their time in hunting in Virginia.

The twenty-second reception of the Cuvier Club, of Cincinnati, on the evening of Nov. 20, was an occasion of pleasant reunion and review of the year's pleasures with rod and gun.



## The Sportsman Tourist.

### HOW FUR IS CAUGHT.

#### The Pine Woods in Winter.

In the month of February last winter I was delegated by *FOREST AND STREAM* to secure a little information in regard to the modern methods of trapping fur, more especially that of the smaller fur-bearing animals. The public in general knows little of where the furs come from, how they are caught, or what are the conditions of their pursuit. To supply such information *in extenso* would of course be impossible, and undesirable if possible; but it was thought that a trip into a region where some of the commoner furs are regularly taken in some quantity would prove of interest and would supply the material for the story. Knowing that upper Wisconsin and the Michigan North Peninsula furnish each year a great many furs of the otter, beaver, lynx, marten, fisher, fox, mink, muskrat, etc., I decided upon visiting that region, the month of February being chosen because that is the time when the most of the above furs are prime, although of course every one knows that trapping begins as early as the fall and continues well on toward spring. It would perhaps have been easier to make the trip in the fall, before the woods were filled with snow and before the severity of a Wisconsin winter had reached its height, but to make it at that time would have given no idea of some of the harder conditions of a trapper's practical life, so of course the winter trip was decided upon, both as being more typical and more interesting of itself. After correspondence with different dealers and trappers all over the pine country of the two States above mentioned, I decided to go to Mercer, Wisconsin, near the northern State line, and near the head of the muscallonge waters, that point being on part of the Turtle chain of waters, which make up to the divide separating the muscallonge waters from the Lake Superior waters, and forming in part the division line between Wisconsin and Michigan. At Mercer I learned of G. W. Buck & Son, who were shipping a good quantity of fur, and I made in advance an arrangement with them to take me out with them over their trapping lines, so that I could see practically just how they lived and how they worked. Perhaps the simple story of our trip will serve well enough to show, in a modest way, a little about the methods of the fur-catchers of to-day, and will give something of a notion of the difficulties of the much misunderstood calling of the trapper.

I was accompanied for a part of the trip by Mr. Charles Norris, of Chicago, whose duties as a traveling passenger agent of a railroad take him much through the country indicated. We left Chicago early in February, and taking the evening train of the Northwestern Railway found ourselves at about 5 o'clock of the next morning some hundreds of miles further north, and in the heart of the pine forests of that great region between the lakes and the wild prairies of Dakota, a region which in spite of lumberman and angler, of iron miner and tourist, still remains a desperate and impracticable wilderness, which for generations yet will defy the patient and smoothing hands of the man who reaps the cultivated products of the soil. When we alighted at Mercer it was dark, except for the white reflection from the snow. The pine woods came down close to the railroad tracks, and the village, of a few log houses, also huddled close to the iron rails, as though afraid to venture far from that strong arm of adventurous civilization. The snow lay very soft and white and deep over the face of the world. The pine trees talked unceasingly, as they always do. Evidently we were in a winter country. The thermometer was some degrees below zero. It was impossible to help noticing the great difference of the air we now breathed from that we had left at Chicago. The atmosphere was keen, but sweet and exhilarating as some rare tonic. Once more I thought of the wisdom of letting a vacation fall in winter and in a winter country, instead of spending it in summer in some crowded so-called summer country, where relaxation and not building up must be the natural result, albeit desirable by contrast to the fatigue and fag of business life. Our whole trip was proof enough of this theory. I lost entirely the throat troubles and colds which annoy the average Chicago man in winter, and Norris, who had been weak and sick, came out feeling well and vigorous. There is potent medicine and stimulant in the frozen, balsamic, germless air of the winter pine woods.

Stimulus enough there surely was to make us eat a hearty breakfast, after we had found the long, low log house of our trapper hosts, one of the half-dozen of residences of summer guides and trappers which made up the town. It took us but short time to get acquainted with Mrs. Buck, who was frying sausage, and Mr. Buck, who was stringing a snowshoe, and Fayette Buck, a stalwart boy just about to reach 21 years of age, who was also snuffing the sausage afar off, and with Frank Brandis, who was soon crawling down out of the loft which made the upstairs sleeping apartments in the log house. Brandis, as we learned, was one of the three equal partners in the trapping lines. Mr. Buck, being somewhat disabled by long sickness, did not run the long lines, but tended a short line of sets for lynx and fox, which took him comparatively few miles from home. Fayette, practically the head of the family in hustling and hard work, joined Brandis in running a line which extended its two arms far over into the State of Michigan. I was pleased to hear that we should have to travel in all about 100 miles and return to cover the full lines of traps then attended by these three. All of this, of course, had to be done on foot and on snowshoes, and all supplies would have to be taken in in packs on our backs, except what supplies had been taken into the line camps before the closing of navigation at the advent of the snow season. Thus we were to see winter trapping in one of its very hardest forms, devoid of the ameliorating conditions of boat or horse transportation.

#### Snowshoes and Winter Wear.

In regard to the means of locomotion, I found that the Norwegian *skt*, which I had hoped to find practicable, was useless in that country as a practical shoe, except on the beaten sled track of the lumbering road, or upon the level surface of the ice-covered lakes and streams. On the lakes I could go quite away from my companions, who were

using the web shoes; but in the timber and brush, where the hills were short and choppy and where there was much down timber, the web shoes proved themselves altogether superior, and indeed the only practical shoe. My *skis* were objects of much comment in that country, and I found that the residents knew little or nothing of that sort of shoe, the environment having produced the proper development in the web shoe universally used by the trappers, lumbermen, and indeed everybody who travels in that country in the winter time. I had until that time never worn a web shoe, and of course had read all kinds of things about the awful difficulties of learning to use them, and of the terrible pains accompanying their use by the beginner. I found all this much like other bugbears, with very little to it. We did fifteen miles the first half



WISCONSIN WINTER COSTUME.

O. W. Gayner.

day I ever wore the webs, and I was surprised to find how easy it was to learn the step—far easier than to learn the use of the *skt*.

As to clothing, we found that the country had evolved its own proper and distinctive garb. The pine country is a country of wool. The heavy Mackinaw jacket, flannel shirt and heavy lumbering stockings make the best possible wear for that climate. The feet especially demand the best of care, and we found the practice of wearing several pairs of great stockings a very commendable one. The pine woods man thrusts his trousers in his long stockings, and pulls on over these only a low rubber shoe—not an arctic, but a pure rubber shoe, made without any heel step on the floor inside, and usually provided with rough corrugated soles. This shoe is sometimes fastened by a strap over the instep, but is more usually worn without any fastening, the full woven stockings filling it up so completely that little snow can work in at the edge of the shoe. On the rough wool of the stockings the snow has little effect, and unless the snow be damp they keep the feet dry and warm. The trappers of that region use the garb as above described. A few use the moccasin on the web shoe when the snow is dry and frozen, but I could not learn that they did this for any reason so much as that the rubber shoe is harsh on the lacings of the snowshoes. The Indians use the moccasin, and from what I saw of it in that country I should say the moccasin without other covering was a very sloppy, troublesome and dangerous footwear in thawing weather, though very fine when the weather was dry.

#### Transportation.

No doubt many readers have noticed the different methods of transportation employed in different sections of the country, each according to the necessities of the land. On the plains the wagon may be used. In the mountains the pack horse becomes a necessity, and the diamond hitch is invented. In the pine woods not even the horse can go, and the man must be his own pack horse. I had renewed occasion to wonder at the loads that a woodsman can pack. It is no unusual thing for a timber cruiser to start with a pack of 80 lbs. when out "looking land." The guide and trapper who traverses the pine country must learn the same facility in carrying heavy packs. Fayette Buck, though still but a boy, was a man in stature and strength. I think his pack when we left for the line of traps weighed over 60 lbs. Brandis packed as much when occasion came. The man who cannot carry these weights on the snowshoes, no matter what the condition of the snow, cannot successfully run a winter line of traps in that country. Let my lady, who nestles her cheek against the soft fur of her boa in the cold winter days, reflect that upon some other winter day, perhaps colder, some sturdy trapper, with a load upon his back amounting to almost as much as her saddle horse would like to carry, set out into the deep pine woods to live alone for a while, in search of the little fur bearer which at that time was wild in the snowy wilderness, and wearing his own best and warmest clothing. And let my lady's husband, who has read that trappers are a lazy set of fellows, read *FOREST AND STREAM*, and so learn that they are anything in the world but lazy. Methinks they might often teach my fine gentleman a lesson or so in manhood. The world is big, and men have different tastes. Some love the woods, where the air is clean. Some prefer the city life, where one perpetually parallels the gutter, if he does not walk therein. To cling to the

sweet pine woods, some men follow trapping in the winter time, because there is little else to do then. In the summer they guide and row for other men who can't do that sort of thing for themselves.

There does not seem to be money enough left in the trapping business in these regions now to make it an exclusive calling. The Bucks in the summer time have a summer fishing resort and a line of boats from the railroad up the river to Turtle Lake and all the adjoining waters—a very good place to go, too, for muscallonge and all sorts of fish. As soon as the last of the summer fishers and the fall deer hunters have gone they begin putting out their lines of traps. This is before the snow has fallen to any great extent and before the waters are frozen. It is possible at that time to use boats for taking in the bedding and supplies for one or two of the main camps, and of course the trapper clings to his boat as long as he can. In spite of the most favorable conditions, however, the great bulk of the traps must be carried in on man back. A load of sixty to eighty traps, together with the omnipresent axe and the necessary food, constitutes a considerable proposition, but the trapper must be able to take it all cheerfully.

#### Sorts of Traps.

I should at this time say that the deadfall and the artful wooden traps of all sorts, which we see described in the trapping guides, are practically things of the past as to actual use to day, at least in all the country anywhere near the railways. In Wisconsin and Michigan one does not now hear of a deadfall, except the large deadfalls set for bears. There is progress in trapping as in everything else, and nowadays the steel trap is relied upon altogether. I went prepared to make some pretty pictures of ingenious deadfalls and snares, but none of my trappers had any such things, and in the 200 miles or so I traveled on the trapping lines I never saw any sort of trap except the steel trap.

#### The Laying of the Line.

Let us say then, roughly, that the trapper is going to rely entirely on the steel trap. He decides where he is going to lay his lines, of course not intruding on any other trapper's country, in which case there would be complications. He will cling to the creeks for his mink and otter, having before this time paid good attention to the muskrats on the streams and lakes of his territory. He will follow up the streams, setting a trap here and there, perhaps one in each half mile, perhaps one in two or three miles. Then he will swing out over some divide or along the ridges, scouting for sign of marten or fisher, which he knows will be apt to cross there. On these high ridges he will drop a few traps here and there, depending on the sign he sees. He may see a bit of country where some foxes are working. Then he follows some game trails into a heavy thicket or bit of windfall, and discovers that to be a good place for a lynx. He wanders on, his pack growing lighter as he leaves his traps—which latter he does not scatter promiscuously, but with the most conservative care and deliberate judgment. When night finds him he may be twenty miles from his home camp or his central line camp. He figures that it will take him about that long to run the traps, after they are out, each time that he comes over the line; so he builds him a rough shelter at that point, in order to have a place to sleep when he comes in there tired and cold at the close of some win-



SNOWSHOE COSTUME.

THE FOREST AND STREAM MAN.

ter day—when my lady is out sleigh riding in the city in her furs. If he is in a hurry, and not sure that he is going to leave his line of traps down long, he does not take much pains with his shelter. It is often only a lean-to of boughs built against a log, or an open-faced camp made of pole and pine-needle thatching.

#### A Tale of Two Fires.

In some cases the trapper makes a permanent hut of logs and boughs well out on his line. He cannot pack in a stove very well, and he has no rocks to make a chimney, yet he must be warm when he comes to this camp, say forty miles from the home cabin, perhaps with some furs in his pack besides his tea and beans and blanket; he cannot carry many blankets, though the thermometer be far below zero in this bitter winter land where the fur grows good. So he makes a sort of wooden *teepee* out of logs, with a hole in the middle of the roof and a door





MOOSE HEAD OWNED BY MR. H. C. PIERCE, ST. LOUIS, MO.

Killed November, 1890, about ninety miles northeast of Winnipeg, Manitoba. Age about 25 years. Weight about 1,400 lbs.

## HEAD MEASUREMENTS (ACTUAL).

Length of head between ears to point of nose.....	1.33 inches.	Circumference of horn at butt.....	14 1/4 inches.
Length of ear.....	.11 "	Longest point on lower palm.....	.18 "
From tip to tip of ears, straight line.....	.30 "	Longest point on upper palm.....	.13 1/4 "
From eye to point of nose.....	.33 "	Widest part of lower palm.....	.18 "
Circumference of nose fin. from point.....	.36 "	Widest part of upper palm.....	.18 "
Circumference of ear.....	.12 1/4 "	Length of upper palm.....	.35 "
From tip to tip of horns, straight line.....	.56 "	Points on left horn.....	.17 "
Length of horn from butt to tip.....	.43 "	Points on right horn.....	.17 "

back under the logs, where he can doze for a few hours each night between mendings of the fire after he has dried his stockings and skinned out his fur and had his tea and beans. He dozes here under the slant roof of logs, his head upon the precious furs for which he seeks, his feet to the fire. Outside the wind shrieks, and the temperature goes down and down. The awful winter of the pine woods sets in in full sway. He dozes, he sleeps unharmed, himself a creature of the wild woods, and fit to survive. Meantime, in the city, my lady is returning from the ball. Her maid removes the fur-lined mantle. She sits for a moment near the grate, her feet to the fire, resting them comfortably upon the soft depths of the fur rug which lies before the fireplace. She does not dream of the trapper out in his lodge of logs, his head upon furs such as she holds under foot. Fire and frost are not the same elements for her and the trapper. And once, she thinks, perhaps she remembers, her husband, when they were together up in the woods at the hotel somewhere, had said to her that a trapper was a lazy fellow. My lady eats a wafer and a cup of tea—a very thin shell of a small cup. My trapper, if he sleep very cold at that hour, makes him a pint or two of tea in a can that was once a lard pail. It came up from the city, where the furs go—these furs, which he must not allow too near the fire. Good night, my lady, and may you sleep well. Of course if one be only a lazy fellow, it does not matter if he lose a few hours' sleep.

## The Running of the Line.

It will be seen, then, that one of the great labors in trapping is establishing the line of traps in the first place, looking out the territory, setting out the traps, putting up the main camps and supplying them, and building the temporary camps and shelters. All this had been done on our line of traps, of course, some months before I arrived on the scene; but it remained to see how the traps had been put out and how they were attended in the actual winter work. Since the establishment of the lines the traps had been visited each week, or say not less often than each eight or ten days. I was glad to hear that the take of fur had been good in nearly all sorts of furs common to that region. Marten had been most plentiful, but our trappers had caught a number of foxes, a lot of fishers, several lynx and a few otter. Mink had been abundant, but did not bring much. They had trapped a family of beaver—an animal now becoming very scarce in that region, and protected by law in Wisconsin—and were expecting before long to get results from some poison they had out for a pack of wolves which had several times swept down across their territory. On the whole, it had been a good season, as trappers viewed it. If all went well, the three of them would clean up \$500 or more that winter. At the time of our arrival they had just made a run of the lines and had shipped all the furs. It was now time to go over the lines again, and if we thought we could stand the trip, we were welcome to go along and see how they did it. It would be necessary to walk twenty miles or so each day, to sleep out pretty rough at times, and to eat trappers' diet of plain food. All this was just what we were looking for. I felt glad when at noon of one bright winter day we left the railway and with pack on back set out into the woods. At that time I had just returned from a trip to Texas, and as I pulled on my lumberman's socks for the voyage over 8 ft. of snow I thought of the barefoot children we had a month before seen play-

ing out in the open air along the Gulf coast. I wondered at and admired the more this great country of America, of which we were now to see another phase.

E. HOUGH.

309 SECURITY BUILDING, Chicago.

## About Some "Forest and Stream" Writers.

BISCAYNE BAY, Fla., Nov. 10.—*Editor Forest and Stream:* Although FOREST AND STREAM is always a joy and is always well worth reading from cover to cover, it contains every now and then an article, sketch or story of such extra merit as to be worthy of especial commendation. For instance, what reader did not experience an added thrill of pleasure upon opening his paper of three numbers back to discover that Uncle Lisha, Antwine, Sam Lovel, Joseph and Peltier had come again to camp with us for awhile? In this connection I am certain that every one of the widespread FOREST AND STREAM brotherhood will welcome a few words concerning the genius who created those characters and has again evoked them for our entertainment.

Last summer, when taking a bicycle trip through Vermont, I made an especial pilgrimage to North Ferrisburgh in the hope of meeting Mr. Robinson. Nor was I disappointed; for I not only met him, but I received such a kindly greeting and was so charmingly entertained that I came away feeling that the day was to be marked with a red letter, and that I had gained a friend. Mr. Robinson is a man of striking presence—tall, straight and broad-shouldered, with snow-white hair, and a face beaming with good-will to his fellows. He is a gentleman, and his speech is pleasantly punctuated with the "thou" and "thee" that betray his Quaker origin. Although he is always cheerful and gives no sign of what he suffers, he is a victim of one of the greatest misfortunes that can come to man; for he is totally blind, and can no longer gaze abroad over the widespread valley of Otter, that he loves so well and of which he writes so well. He writes, as he always did, with pencil on paper, but now he must lay the sheet on a corrugated board and slowly feel his way from line to line. Does it not make his work doubly precious to know of the well nigh insurmountable difficulties that attend it? To me it does. And now, when I find a chapter shorter than I would wish it to be, I no longer complain of its brevity, but am thankful for the dauntless perseverance that has given it to us at all.

Besides thanking this blind wizard of the Green Mountain State for his wonderfully lifelike word pictures of that corner of our country, and for the best examples of Canadian-Yankee patois extant, I want to thank you, and through you Dr. Robert J. Morris, for his story of a salmon in one of your September numbers. Never have your pages held a sketch more happily conceived or more deftly woven than that. Can't you persuade Dr. Morris to write another, and when he does, won't you announce it beforehand that we may enjoy it in anticipation?

Then there is Mr. Hough's masterly but terrible picture entitled "My Lady's Plumes." I would that it might be reprinted in every paper in the land until it reached the eye of every man whose brutish greed leads him to the slaughter of God's innocent creatures for money, and of every woman whose contemptible vanity leads her to deck herself with the blood-stained fruits of his crime.

I am sorry that Mater should have so woefully misconceived Mr. Hough, and so misinterpreted his words as to

imagine that he was attacking her sex, for I am certain that no more chivalrous knight than E. Hough ever wielded pen in defense of right or defiance of wrong. As I read his article it contains no word of indiscriminate attack against womankind, but is leveled solely at those whom every right-minded woman should be quick to condemn for their thoughtlessness, cruelty and silly vanity. And, Mater, look about you the next time you go to church or to the theater. For every feminine hat unadorned by feather or plume do you not see two decked with wing, breast or other evidences of slaughter? Even if the proportion claimed does not hold in your locality you will see enough to convince you that the annual sacrifice of bird life for millinery purposes is incredibly enormous, and it is well to remember that while it is man who does the killing it is invariably woman who pays his shameful wages.

O. K. CHOBEE.

## UNCLE LISHA'S OUTING.

## IV.—The Ducks of Little Otter.

WHEN Sam and Antoine paddled out from the landing a thick film of fog lay upon marsh and channel, undulating in the almost imperceptible breath of the morning breeze, but disclosing the dun and green rushes and glassy water the canoe's length away, beyond which color and substance dissolved and vanished in the pearl gray mist. Now a vague form loomed up in the marsh's edge till it shrunk to the solid reality of a muskrat house, then again became unreal in the veil of vapor. To the voyagers' eyes there was nothing substantial but themselves and their canoe and the little circle of glassy water sliding smoothly into the fog before, rippling a widening wake into the fog behind.

Now and then the raucous quack of dusky ducks was heard calling to their befogged mates, and the rustle and splash of some unseen life occasionally stirred in the marsh; but far or near there was no sound telling of human presence save the tinkling drip of the paddles or the scratching of a weed along the canoe's side, or a few whispered words of consultation.

So for half an hour they drove the arrow of their wake through the fog till at a turn of the channel Sam saw the ripple of another wake ruffling the water before him, and following it toward its point discovered five dark objects appearing as if hung in the mist. In two cautious noiseless motions he laid down the paddle and took up his gun, then aimed and fired just as the ducks, now suspicious and restless, were pivoting on the point of taking flight. As the smoke slowly lifted it disclosed two ducks killed outright and one fluttering toward the marsh with a broken wing, while two drove away into the fog, uttering wild quacks of terror. Antoine stopped the cripple with a timely shot, and then sent the canoe forward with a few dexterous strokes of his paddle till Sam could recover the dead birds.

The report of the guns was followed so quickly by the roar of myriad wings, as a mighty host of waterfowl uprose from the marshes, that it seemed a part of the echo which rebounded from along the wooded shores and far away among the distant hills, and then for a few moments the air was filled with the whistle of wings as the disturbed flocks circled above the almost invisible intruders or set forth in flight toward the lake.

"Wal, there!" said Sam, after listening till the confusion of sounds subsided to a faint whisper of retreating flight and the splashing flutter of laggards suddenly alarmed at finding themselves alone, "I guess we started out the last duck in the hull crik, an' might as well go back to camp. The' can't be no more, the' hain't no room for 'em."

"Oh, Ah'll tol' you, Sam, dey was roos' top one 'nadder, an' dey a'n't honly top one flew off yet," Antoine answered in a low voice. "Naow we go in de ma'ah for load off sour gaun."

With a few strokes they sent the canoe her length among the wild rice stalks to insure greater steadiness while they stood up to reload their guns. The sun was rising, and the first level beams paved a gilded path and pillared and spanned it with resplendent columns and arches of mist as it lifted and wreathed in the light wafts of the uncertain air, and now through and beneath the rising vapor a stretch of the channel shone in a curving line of silver, still barred with fading ripples of the canoe's wake. Sam's eyes were following it as he capped his gun, when suddenly he crouched upon his knees, whispering hurriedly:

"Scrooch daown, Antwine, th's su'thin' comin'; I'm goin' to try 'em if they don't light."

Antoine bent his head low as a flock of teal came stringing down the channel in arrowy flight, and Sam, aiming a little ahead of the leading bird, pulled trigger. The hindmost teal in the line slanted downward, and, striking the water with a resounding splash, lay motionless when the impetus of its fall was spent.

"Wal, if that don't beat all natur'," Sam said with a gasp of surprise. "That 'ere duck was ten foot ahind o' the one I shot at. What sort o' ducks du ye call 'em, Antwine?"

"He come 'fore you call it dis tam, but w'en he a'n't, you call heem steal dawkin' Angleesh, Ah b'lieved so. He was plumpy leetle feller," Antoine remarked as he picked up the bird, when Sam had reloaded and the canoe was again in mid-channel.

"An' a lively breed they be, to shoot a-flyin'," Sam commented, as he examined this victim of chance. "Tain't no use a-shootin' at 'em. You got to shoot 'way off int' the air ahead on 'em, an' let 'em run ag'in your shot. Naow be we goin' to poke among er lay low for 'em?"

"Wal, seh, it bes' was dis tam o' day, we go 'long kan o' slowry. 'Long mos' to evelin' was be de bes' tam for hide in de ma'ah, w'en de dawkin' come for hees suppy. Naow you be ready for shoot an' Ah'll paddle de canoe, me."

They had not gone far up the channel when the canoe in its stealthy progress came close upon a dusky duck sitting among the wild rice, where she might have remained unseen and unsuspected but for her alarm. As she sprang with a startling splash and flutter clear of the rank marsh growth, Sam thought to profit by his experience with the teal and fired too far ahead his mark, making a clean miss.

Sam stared at the escaping duck and Antoine offered the consoling comment: "Dat feller a'n't run ag'in you shot, prob'ly."

ROWLAND E. ROBINSON.