

Field Sports at Home and Abroad

THE COUGAR.

Popularity, next to actual death, to which it is an introduction, is the worst thing that can happen to a wild animal. Once let it become popular among sportsmen, and its doom is sealed. It may linger in decreasing numbers for many years, according to its original abundance, the effectiveness of game laws, and the degree of protection afforded it by its habits and habitat, but sooner or later it reaches that point where the natural increase of its diminished stock no longer balances the normal hazard of its existence. The fate of the species is then swift and inevitable. If the animal itself belong to the predaceous group, its fate is none the less certain; and in recognition of this danger some of the more advanced game authorities are advocating laws for the adequate protection of such carnivorous beasts as have lately become popular to an extent that endangers their existence. Thus there is already limited protection of the bear in some sections, and so undoubtedly in time to come there will be protection of those other wild animals, now described as "pests," which are growing so rapidly in the favor of sportsmen. But this will come only when these beasts of prey have been thinned out to the point where their depredations on game do not balance their own value as sporting quarry.

Foremost in this class stands the cougar, the largest and most powerful of North American cats, and perhaps the most cowardly member of the genus *Felis*. Various known as panther, painter, sneak-cat, mountain lion and puma, it has ever occupied a fantastic place in the imaginative literature of its native country, where until recent years practically nothing authentic was known concerning its real character and habits. Consequently fancy wove preposterous tales around the power and apparent truculence of the beast, and indigenous hunters, who rarely encountered the cougar and knew little enough about it, were not slow to feed the popular imagination with highly-colored yarns of its ferocity and prowess. Even today, in spite of considerable dogmatic assertion and counter-assertion, little more is known of the animal than its general behaviour under the stress of pursuit, but our information under this head is now sufficiently comprehensive and authentic to dispel all doubt as to the cougar where human beings are concerned. Instances are on record of the cougar having made unprovoked onslaughts on man, but there are exceptional cases of individual temper, such as are observable even among the meekest animals, and are not now in any sense characteristic of the species.

To assert, however, as some do, that the early tales of the cougar attacking man were invariably fables seems to me to be ill-advised, unless, indeed, we are prepared to prove that the character of the cougar has undergone no change in consequence of the advance of civilization. It is a well-established fact that the grizzly has lost much of its former ferocity and courage where man is concerned, and possibly in the subtle school of the wild the cougar has learned wisdom with the grizzly. At least, lacking direct evidence to the contrary, it is justifiable to presume that the unsophisticated panther of earlier days may have been a greater menace to man than it is at present.

The following extract from a reputable American sporting publication exemplifies a type of incident which, while open to the gravest suspicion, is yet so close to the bounds of possibility that none can say definitely whether it is fact or fiction:

"While Mrs. William C., of Canada township, was out riding on January 24, a large panther sprang at her horse. The cries of the frightened animal, together with those of the panther and the rider's for help, brought another panther from its lair, and a breakneck race ensued for three miles. Fortunately the horse was fleet of foot, and only one panther kept in the race till the end. Mrs. C., arriving at home, jumped from her horse to the ground, and at the same instant the panther landed in the saddle. Her husband killed the panther."

Except for certain details, which may have originated in the imagination of him who chronicled the event, there is nothing in this report that conceivably might not have happened. Two of the details, however, are improbable, and a third is impossible. Ordinarily, when attacking, a cougar is a silent animal, and in many sections, and during the greater part of the year, it makes very little noise at any time; nevertheless, there is nothing seriously amiss with the statement that the cougar screamed. Neither is it altogether impossible that a second cougar joined in the pursuit. These animals are solitary by nature, and even during the amorous season, which is not sharply defined, the male is seldom in the society of the female. But here, again, individuals vary greatly from the common habit. On the third point there can be no question. The cougar, although its long, graceful bounds carry it with wonderful swiftness for short distances, has the wind of an alderman, and could no more keep up with a fleet horse than a portly city magnate could pace a racing motor. It is an exceptional cougar that can outrun the dogs for more than four hundred yards, if started close up, and I think that most hunters will agree that 200 yards is the average limit of the cougar's highest burst of speed. After that its running powers fail with

astonishing rapidity, and it speedily turns at bay, or, what is more frequently the case, "holes" or "trees."

A full-grown cougar at bay is an inspiring spectacle. With its small ears laid close to its head, its yellow eyes glaring, and its teeth bared in demoniacal grins, while its long, cylindrical tail vibrates with fury, and its whole lithe body bespeaks the ultimate pressure of passion, it is an object to thrill the stoutest and most blasé sportsman. Yet the danger to the hunter, unless he is unnecessarily venturesome, is practically nil. The brunt of the fighting falls on the dogs. Their business it is to engage the cougar and either force it up a tree, out of which it may be shot with safety, or to so occupy its attention that the hunter may approach and despatch it with a bullet. In either case the hunter stands no appreciable chance of coming to harm. Only in the final worry, when the mix-up is too fast and furious to admit of shooting, and the hunter who would spare his dogs must watch his opportunity and dash in to administer a heart blow with the knife, does the hazard to him become in any degree vital; but here there is an unmistakable element of danger. Even when the cougar is apparently held fast by half a dozen fighting dogs it frequently breaks away, and in its mad rush it is as likely to hit the hunter as anything. A friend of mine was thus knocked down by a big male cougar and formed the protesting foundation of a wild heap, composed, in effect, of equal parts of cougar and dogs, from which he was rescued in a sadly striated condition. This was not an instance of being deliberately charged, but was solely one of those accidents the possibility of which lends such zest to cougar hunting.

Hunting the cougar is, in fact, one of the most exciting sports afforded by the wilderness. It is as if all the hunting possibilities of the animal were concentrated into one vital essence. Other animals dissipate the spirit of their pursuit in various methods, but the cougar can be hunted successfully in only one way—with dogs. Very rarely one is shot by chance when the hunter is seeking other game, and occasionally the lure of a carcass claims a victim, but of the hundreds that are accounted for annually fully 90 per cent are secured by chasing. This method is especially deadly, practically every cougar that is "trapped" being killed, while of the total number started and run, only about half escape, generally by "holing." *Felis concolor* in a hole is an ugly proposition, and frequently is best left alone; but where the conditions are all favorable dogs will often turn out the more timid cougars, though almost always at the expense of some dog's hide or life. In the opinion of a few hunters it would be safe for a man to crawl into a cave to shoot a cougar, but, so far as I am aware, this is purely suppositional, and is likely to remain in that category for an indefinite time. The only man I ever knew to attempt the trick backed out hurriedly before his heels disappeared, and did not make a second trial. But this may have been final rather than conclusive.

In the late eighties, while staying at a rela-

tive's ranch in the cow country, I had excellent opportunities to study the habits and characteristics of the cougar, or sneak-cat as it was called in that section, and among my notes of that period there is much information bearing on the subject of this little-known animal. At that time, however, our knowledge of its ways was not only very meagre but highly colored with imaginative details, and in looking through my copious memoranda I find that, with the exception of what came to me in the way of personal experience, my data require extensive revision and emendation. For instance, we now know (or think that we know, which for the purpose of the hour amounts to the same thing) that the cougar never disputes a carcass with the grizzly, but in the eighties fights between *Felis concolor* and *Ursus horribilis* were the favorite theme of native hunters. There is, of course, no absolute proof that such contests have or have not been waged, and possibly we are a little rash in forming a negative conclusion without seeing more steps thereto; for the cougar, while it is now undeniably a cowardly beast in the presence of man, has far less fear of animals, and it is conceivable that particular cougars may occasionally submit differences with the grizzly to the arbitrament of tooth and claw. Mr. Roosevelt is very emphatic in denying this possibility, and supports his argument with the fact that he once saw where a grizzly had taken possession of a cougar's "kill" without molestation by the rightful owner; but this really proves nothing more than that that particular cougar was either "fed-up" or of a pusillanimous temper. Mr. Roosevelt is an excellent observer, but, although he expressly warns against the practice, he is here subconsciously inclined to allow the single instance to define the whole, and in this case, in view of the surprising latitude of the cougar temperament, anything like generalizing from one datum is ill-considered. Until we have something more definite to go upon in this matter it would, in my opinion, be wiser not to dogmatize.

To readers who still have in mind old tales of 11-ft. cougars the following list of weights and measurements, taken from my notebooks, will be disappointing, but to such I would explain that no cougar measured in the carcass and not by the skin (which can be stretched a couple of feet), has ever been found to greatly exceed 8 ft. As a matter of fact, the animals specified here were all full-grown adults. The value of the measurements given, however, lies not so much in their length (although the largest must be nearly the record) as in the idea they convey of the remarkable variation in size of these big cats. It will be noticed that the females outnumber the males by more than two to one, and these proportions are fairly representative of the actual numerical disparity of the sexes:

Male	Weight
7 ft. 2 in.	142 lb.
7 ft. 9 in.	170 lb.
8 ft. 2 in.	226 lb.
Female	Weight
4 ft. 9 in.	43 lb.

THE LATE DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS

(Continued From Page Eight.)

rugged and primitive of manner, he is loud mouthed and vulgar and deliberately discourteous. Margaret Severance, the reigning beauty of Washington, whom he decides in his stormy, violent, irresistible way to marry—not because he loves her, but because he conceives the idea that she loves him—is in point of manners pretty nearly his match. She has a way of looking at people "with a lady's insolent tranquillity," and on one occasion, when she receives a letter that angers her, and her maid happens at the same moment to be buttoning her shoes, she relieves her feelings by springing up and bringing the sharp French heel of one shoe down with full force on the back of her maid's hand, leaving it skinned and bleeding. She is distinctly an unpleasant personality, yet even so, to marry her to such a cyclonic boor as Joshua Craig doesn't seem rather like making the punishment exceed the crime.

Passing over "White Magic," which is simply an innocuous little love story told with rather more explosive violence than the theme warrants, we come to the two books that exhibit Mr. Phillips's ripest powers, "The Hungry Heart," and "The Husband's Story." "The Hungry Heart" is a sincere and detailed study of a marriage that threatens to be a failure because the man adheres to old-fashioned standards regarding woman, while the wife, with her modern education and progressive views, finds it impossible to accept the role of domesticity and inaction to which he would assign her. As a piece of careful construction this volume deserves high praise. The entire action takes place within the house and grounds of the husband's ancestral home; the cast of characters is limited to just four people—two men and two women; we hardly get even a passing glimpse of any outsiders. And yet within this little world of four people we get a sense of universality of theme and interest, an impression not of learning the secrets of a few isolated lives, but of learning much that is big and vital about man and woman. There is nothing essentially new in the specific story; it is simply one of the

many variants of the familiar triangle—the husband and wife who drift apart, the other man who takes advantage of a woman's loneliness to persuade her that she is in love when really she is only bored, and finally the inevitable discovery by the husband of his wife's infidelity. What gives the book its value is not the episode of the wife's frailty, but the wise, far-sighted understanding of the way in which two people, physically, mentally and morally well equipped to make each other happy, gradually drift apart through stubborn adherence to foolish prejudices, mistaken reticence, petty misunderstandings, and a hundred and one trivialities, no one of which by itself is worth a second thought, while the cumulative effect of them all becomes fatal. Mr. Phillips's solution of the story, in which he makes the wife experience a revulsion of feeling that drives her from her lover back to her husband, while the husband, after hearing her confession, not only forgives her but practically admits that he is glad everything has happened as it has, because the effect upon him is to have reawakened his love—this solution comes as a disappointment. One feels it to be in the nature of an anti-climax to an exceptionally fine piece of work. That a man of this husband's conventional, conservative type could bring himself to pardon and receive back the woman who admits her guilt with a frankness of speech that makes one wince, rings false. Forgiveness under such circumstances is a delusion and a blunder. The ghost of the past simply refuses to be laid.

Lastly we have "The Husband's Story," which is the type of book that we have long had a right to expect from Mr. Phillips, and which it is to be hoped is but the first of a long series of equal strength and bigness. Like all of this author's best work in the past, it is a study of a marriage that failed. And the reason that it is a better and bigger book than any of his others is not because of his theme, but because of his workmanship—the thing is better done, in its underlying structure, in its working out of details, in all that goes to make up good technique. The whole intimate drama of a rushing, climbing couple,

5 ft. 3 in.	61 lb.
5 ft. 11 in.	70 lb.
6 ft. 3 in.	103 lb.
6 ft. 5 in.	116 lb.
6 ft. 7 in.	99 lb.
6 ft. 10 in.	135 lb.

The old belief in the separate identity of panther and cougar dies hard, being kept alive by the many curious contradictions in the character of the species, and the variations of shade to which these almost uni-colored cats are susceptible as between individuals. The color phases range from slaty-grey to bright rufous, females inclining more to the so-called "blue" shades, males to the "red," but neither to a degree to form a rule.

Indeed, the cougar is in all things apparently loth to submit its individuality to the tyranny of rules. Even in the production of its young it preserves no semblance of exactitude. The bulk of the kittens—two to four in a litter, of which quite half die young—are brought forth within the space of two months, but kittens may be found at any time between the beginning of January and the middle of June. When taken very young they make amusing pets, but must be carefully watched, for as they grow older they sometimes develop treachery with amazing abruptness. An old hunter friend of mine, who had a half-grown cougar running about his cabin, was suddenly attacked as he sat smoking by the fire, and had his right hand so badly bitten as to render it permanently useless.—Lincoln Wilbar in *Baily's*.

SHOOTING FLYING FISH IN PACIFIC

Imagine trying to hit an animated clay pigeon with a shotgun during an earthquake, when the bird goes out of the trap at an unknown angle and plumps out of sight after a 30-yard flight. Imagine that, and you have some idea of flying-fish shooting.

A new sport has just been born, and Waikiki Bay, Hawaii, is its birthplace. For the first time in the history of field sports have flying fish been shot on the wing. It was a brand-new experience. Taking pot shots at fish on the wing is sport of the first water—affording plenty of exercise in the good sea air, giving the opportunity for quick shooting and providing for the use of all the alertness contained within a man. The idea came to Jack Young, who has been plying the waters of the bay, day and night, for many years, and who has grown accustomed to seeing the buzzing fish leap out of the water as his launch plowed past. The young boatman made a few preliminary experiments, as time permitted, and satisfied himself that he had discovered a new form of sport. So yesterday morning, just as the sun was peeping over Diamond Head, his launch chugged out of the channel with its pioneer expedition. There was a nice little chop to the sea—just sufficient to keep the bows on a bob to windward, a roll the other way, and a shake with an upturn. The motion failed to shake the nerves of the gunners, however, and a sharp lookout was kept



Sportsman's Calendar

FEBRUARY

Sports for the Month—For the angler, grilse and spring salmon. For the shooter, ducks and geese.

In Season—Ducks, geese, brant, snipe; grilse, salmon, steelheads in tidal water. February 28 the last day of the season for ducks and snipe.

for the first school. This came, with a great scurry of blue wings, just as the boat swept around the last channel buoy and headed towards the sun—the fish taking to the streak that the sunshine made in the water. It would have been a sad day for that flying fish family if the launch just then hadn't lifted its nose over a roller, and the shot scattered Waikiki-wards.

From that time on the shots came fast and furious, and the dip-net came into requisition. For three hours the sport was kept up. With shark fishing there is likely to be more disappointments than successes. With flying-fish shooting there is almost a certainty of sport. Besides this, the beautiful little fliers, ranging from 10 to 15 inches in length, are very tasty eating. The native Hawaiians catch them for this purpose by the thousands. Their method of doing this is interesting. As many canoes as possible are pressed into service, forming a large half-circle about the fish, which are then driven before the advancing boats, by beating upon the water, into nets spread to intercept them. The flying fish always remain near the surface and may be driven in this manner for a long distance. When the fish are stopped by the net, the ends are quickly brought around together and the catch is scooped up by the canoe-load.—Roderick O. Matheson, in *Sports Afield*.

THE KAISER'S BAG FOR 1910

The following figures have been published in the German sporting papers as the result of the Kaiser's shooting for the season, 1910—Sept. 6, Prokelwitz, five roebuck; Sept. 12-14, Pait, two bull elks and one calf, one roebuck; Sept. 16-19, Belye, Karapancsa, Hungary, nine stags, one roebuck; Sept. 24-Oct. 6, Rominten, 11 stags; Nov. 5, Oranienburg, 27 fallow bucks, Nov. 12-17, Donaueschingen, 97 foxes; Nov. 25, Neudeck, 629 pheasants, three hares, one various; Nov. 28, Raiden, 738 pheasants, one hare, three wild turkeys, one various; Dec. 9, 10, Springe, five fallow bucks, 66 wild boars; Dec. 27, Hinter den Commons (Potsdam), 43 pheasants, one hare; Dec. 29, Entenfang (Potsdam), 173 pheasants, 21 rabbits—in all, 1,842 Head. His Majesty's total bag during his career as a sportsman is given as follows: 1,880 stags, 90 hinds, 1,768 fallow bucks, 98 does, 3,392 wild boars, 931 roebuck, 17,903 hares, 2,447 rabbits, 121 chamois, 439 foxes, three bears, 12 elk, six bison, three reindeer, six badgers, one martin, 108 capercillie, 24 blackcock, three wild turkeys, 33,637 pheasants, 856 partridges, 95 grouse, four woodcock, two snipe, 87 ducks, two guinea fowls, 826 cormorants, herons, etc., one whale, one pike, and 516 various. Our German contemporaries credit the Kaiser with a gross total of 65,332; according to our calculation this exceeds the tale by 10.

THE SOLACE

Proud Motorist—"Yes, it took me about six weeks' hard work to learn to drive my machine."

Pedestrian—"And what ave you got for your pains?"

Proud Motorist—"Liniment."—Tit-Bits.

THE DECLINED DRAMA

Blobbs—"Scribbler has had no less than nine plays rejected."

Slobbs—"What is he doing now?"

Blobbs—"Writing essays on the decline of the drama."—Philadelphia Record.

THE MILKMAN'S FIB

Boy—"What is a white lie, Pop?"

Father—"Most of the milk we buy, my son."—Lippincott's.