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frequent certain parts of the county—
 of number eight, Oceana County con-
 tained both a nesting place and a
 "root" during the years 1875-76. We
 seldom shot pigeon, as the grouse fur-
 nished better sport; but the former were
 killed by thousands. At that time I
 shot a muzzle-loading, double, fourteen-
 gauge gun, a beautiful weapon, which
 had been built to order by a celebrated
 flash maker. It was as good a gun as
 you ever leveled, I believe, and a couple
 of seasons later was regretfully laid aside
 for a more modern style. My rifle was
 a had the left barrel with nine small
 buckshot over three drachms of powder,
 keeping this load for any big game that
 might show, meantime shooting grouse
 with the right barrel, loading with num-
 ber seven shot, and occasionally pressing
 the barrel down the left barrel to guard
 against a possible loosening of the wads.
 One day I strolled along the shore of
 Lake Michigan, at a point where for
 about forty yards in breadth the loose
 sand was almost level, while between this
 and the dense woods rose a rather high
 barrier of sand dunes. Through this row
 of dunes, at intervals, narrow, ravine-like
 openings, presumably caused by rushing
 water, allowed passage to and from the
 woods, and deer frequently made use of
 them.
 It was hard work walking in the sand
 of the beach, and I turned into one of

these openings, intending to beat up a
 few grouse in the cover inside. The par-
 ticular ravine selected curved in its course
 somewhat like a letter S, and as I rounded
 the second curve my eyes fell upon some-
 thing that made my heart leap into my
 throat. A few yards ahead (not more
 than five at most), sitting half upright,
 his back supported by the sun-baked wall
 of earth, and he himself forming a per-
 fect picture of lazy contentment, was a
 good-sized black bear. He had evidently
 heard uncertain indications of my ap-
 proach, and was gazing intently at the
 opening toward the woods. His pose
 and whole appearance was so comical
 that had I been less startled I should
 probably have laughed outright. Then
 he slowly turned his head around in my
 direction, his pointed snout sniffing,
 sniffing, sniffing until his eyes fastened
 upon my guest and also started into the
 night as orbits of the levelled gun.
 He gave a soft "phit" of startled
 recognition, pricked up his ears and
 turned his head aside in a quaintly
 puzzled fashion, while his forehead
 seemed to wrinkle with thought, ex-
 actly as one may notice the head turn
 and wrinkles come on the forehead of a
 big Newfoundland pup if some noise is
 made which he cannot understand.
 There was no show of fierceness about
 him—in fact, he seemed to be the very
 soul of good-humor; possibly his thoughts

and his comfortable sunbath had been
 thoroughly enjoyable. However, that
 was none of my business, and I didn't
 even wait to apologize for my intrusion.
 One instant after his head turned the gun
 covered the space between his eyes, there
 was a roar and a cloud of smoke, and if
 the gun had kicked me clean out of the
 ravine I could not have left it quicker.
 Reaching the entrance I faced around
 like a flash, trembling all over with ex-
 citement. No sign of pursuit, and keep-
 ing a watchful eye in the direction of my
 black friend, I hastily began reloading.
 To my surprise, I found that the right
 barrel was empty. In my astonishment,
 or fright, at our unexpected encounter, I
 had forgotten all about the buckshot in
 the left barrel, had hurriedly cocked the
 most convenient hammer and had dosed
 brain with an ounce of number seven
 shot. Needless to say, both barrels were
 charged with buckshot when I again ven-
 tured to enter the ravine. There was
 not a sound to betray his presence, noth-
 ing but a powdery snuff in the air to hint
 of the great event, until I neared the spot
 where I had made my involuntary stand.
 There I saw great splashes of red upon
 the parched sand, a row of long gashes in
 the dusty surface, and above these gashes
 a black arm and paw thrust stiffly out,
 the wide-spread toes and claws still
 quivering with that straining tremor that
 thrills the muscles of a brute but once.

The number seven shot had worked
 terrible damage. A hole almost as large
 as one's fist showed in the head, both eyes
 had been forced out from their sockets—in
 fine, the upper portion of the skull and
 most of the brain appeared to have been
 entirely blown away. The head pre-
 sented confirming evidence of what three
 drachms of good powder and an ounce of
 small shot will do at close range. I cut
 off the two fore-paws and put them in my
 shooting coat as trophies, and later in the
 day returned with a native for the skin
 (in poor fat, of course), and the meat and
 the much-prized fat. It was only a small
 bear compared with many I have seen,
 but the glory was great. Yet sometimes
 I have commended with myself and pro-
 pounded these questions:
 "Supposing that bear had been look-
 ing in your direction when you first saw
 him; supposing he had not given you
 that moment to recover your nerve, and
 supposing his face and movements had
 not so reminded you of a big black pup,
 would you, or would you not, have
 dashed out of there, and run clean up to
 your neck in Lake Michigan before you
 noticed whether you were drifting?"
 And conscience whispers—"I don't
 know."

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