

stalwart halfbreed of known skill as a hunter; and Moise dug out a friend of his, Emile Bartel. They produced a long, lean, lank dugout, which looked as though it would fall over if you blew on it; into this we bundled our supplies, blankets, a little tent, and ourselves. We had chartered Moise a few days in advance to do some exploring for bears, but, Indian fashion, he had simply gone on a hunt of his own up the Smoky River, with two other Indians. They shot four bears, but only killed one, because they only had steel-point bullets. The gun sold universally in trade up there is a .30-30 carbine.

Before us lay the task of locating our own bear country. We dropped back down the Peace River for three days, until we got near Three Rivers, but apparently the noisy steamboat had driven most of the bears back from the river. It is most likely that had we had a couple of weeks' clear hunting there, we could have killed more bears than we wanted or our dugout would have carried. Even so, we had one of the most delightful experiences I ever had out of doors, in any quarter of the world.

We wished to get down as far as the Cadotte River, but feared we could not get back in time. So, when we found good bear country about thirty or forty miles down the river, we stopped to hunt. Bear "sign" we saw all along the shore, as well as a great deal of sign of moose, wolf, beaver, etc. Not a trace of human habitation was anywhere near us, and it was fine to be out in the actual wilderness with wild creatures all about. We scarcely could believe that we had got into so grand a country in so short a time.

Luck broke rather against me on this hunt, for although I was out with Moise, a bear hunter of renown, I did not score on a bear. He and I saw four, and had one long-range shot, 500 or 600 yards, at one running up the bluffs. We smoked him up, but did not land him. A day or so later, after a long and hard climb for a bear which we sighted, I got my best chance on this trip to kill a bear. It was heart-breaking work going up the bluffs, about 1,000 feet, but we went clear to the top after our bear, which we had sighted from below, only to find that he had disappeared. Moise went above me a little

way, to peer over and see whether he could locate his bearship. Nothing happens just as it should. At that instant the bear came back down the little gully and showed his big bulk for the flash of an eye, not more than thirty feet away from me in the heavy cover. Searching for an opening, I got none, and a moment later he was off on his own affairs, much to the joint regret of Moise and me. Again we had a breakneck run down the bluffs, trying to reach a bear we saw swimming across the river, a habit they often have here; but again we were too late.

My friend had no better luck, although I suspect he did not hunt very hard. One evening as Moise was pulling the dugout up to bring in H——, who was busy watching a beaver colony, there occurred perhaps the most exciting incident of our trip. A bear appeared in the dusk at the top of the bank, and Moise, dropping his pole, took a couple of chance medley shots at him from the rocking dugout. As the issue proved, he got him, too, fore and aft. The next morning we trailed this bear and hung up his hide. It was an enormous brute, probably weighing over 400 pounds, and delightfully fat, our men thought.

We had our dugout loaded down pretty near to the gunwale, and, as is so often the case where game is abundant, we did not really much care whether we got more bear or not. At the last camp we made, going up the river, twenty-five miles below Peace River Landing, we found that the bears were again coming back to the river valley. We hunted along one bayou where the tracks were as thick as those of cattle in a barnyard. There was one very large grizzly in here, which, added to the tracks of another seen by H——, at the beaver colony, showed us that sometimes there are grizzlies along the Peace River, and big ones at that. The foot of one of these bears was as long as a rifle stock, and it was a very heavy animal. There must have been eight or ten bears feeding and wallowing along this bayou, and they made sign enough for twice that many. We were sorry enough to leave this point, but this was the last day we could stay out, so, reluctantly, we began our journey of twenty-five miles upstream, making that