

A Close Call.

A Story of the Canadian Northwest. By Jaw Ridge.



DURING the winter of 19—, at which time I was a member of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, some one had given information at headquarters that the game law protecting beaver was being violated, and I was sent out to the suspected district to investigate.

Now, it was well known to the police in the Canadian North-West that ranchers in outlying districts violated the game laws frequently in the close season by shooting wild fowl, antelopes and deer for the pot, but for several considerations among which were the facts that these people lived so far from their source of supply, also that what was killed in this way would make no material difference to the numbers of animals, and again, it was really no violation of the spirit of the law, which was framed more to prevent the ruthless slaughter by sportsmen hunting for pleasure. No action was taken by the police on such knowledge unless someone made a specific charge, in which case their hands were forced, as it were. With respect to beaver, however, it was a different proposition; in the one case the game was killed for food, but in this case it was killed for the profit to be made by the sale of the fur.

At the time I write of the beaver had become so scarce as to be in danger of extermination. Therefore, a law was passed prohibiting their capture for a number of years, during which time they were entirely protected in order that they might escape the fate of the buffalo; incidentally I may mention that the American Antelope (or Antilocapra) is fast following the buffalo into the past.

Having made these explanations I may now proceed with the relation of the adventure which befel me while carrying out my instructions.

I left town, which was on the Canadian Pacific railway, on horseback, and reached a ranch 50 miles north the first evening, where I put up for the night, and proceeding about 25 miles further north next day, arrived at another ranch house on one of the great rivers of the Canadian North-West, along which river lay the suspected district; and as my horse was somewhat tired, I rested him there till noon next day before beginning operations, while in the meantime I tried to elicit some information by means of a little judicious pumping, but, as I expected, without success.

However, I decided to try down the river first, so after dinner I started out on the trail, but immediately on getting out of sight, I cut over to the river and proceeded down stream on the ice, watching both banks for signs of beaver. I may state here that the beaver on the great rivers are what are called "bank" beaver, the width of the river making it impossible for them to build dams. They burrow holes in the bank, which have their only exit under water, and, like the dam beavers, they store their winter feed by sticking it in the bottom of the river close to the entrance of their houses so that to catch them the trapper has to cut a hole through the ice in front of their house, which can be located by means of the "slide" which they have made while pulling their winter feed down the bank. He then sticks a fresh, green cottonwood sapling in the bottom of the river and places his trap so that when the beaver comes to gnaw off the bait,

he steps on the pan of the trap and gets caught.

I had gone probably about 12 miles when I found a man's tracks leading across the river, and on following them to the bank I saw two beaver houses near each other, and directly in front of each was a recently cut hole in the ice. I therefore dismounted, and lying flat on the ice at the edge of the hole and shading the light around my face with my hands, as I expected, I could distinctly see the trap on the bottom alongside the green bait stick. I then repeated the performance at the other hole, with a like result. Obviously the next thing to do was to locate the owner of the traps.

I therefore led my horse back up the river until I came to a place in the bank sloping enough for him to climb up and there I tied him to a bunch of the willows which here grew along both banks in a pretty dense scrub. I then returned to the beaver houses and presently located the tracks leading away from them through the scrub down the river, and after following them about a quarter of a mile, I came to where they turned and crossed the ice toward a shack, which I could plainly see on the other side. I then returned to my horse, and recrossing the river, headed straight back until I struck the wagon trail which I had quit just after dinner, intending to arrive at the trapper's shack just about dark on the off-chance of catching him red-handed in the act of skinning, and also to give the impression that I had come straight from town and suspected nothing.

Well, I arrived, according to plans, just after dark, and riding up to the stable, dismounted and walked quietly over to the shack, and opened the door without the ceremony of knocking, but was badly disappointed to find the occupant—a man slightly under the medium height—sitting quietly reading by lamp-light. He looked up on my abrupt entrance, and with a pleasant smile greeted me with, "Hullo, boy, you're kind o' late on the trail, ain't you?"

Take your horse down to the water hole and give him a drink, and by that time I'll have the lantern lit, and we'll fix him up for the night."

Having watered and fed the horse we returned to the shack, where he prepared an appetizing little supper, all the while enquiring for and discussing the scraps of town news which I was able to give him. During supper and afterwards, while washing up, I was surprised to find him a man of wide reading who could talk agreeably and instructively on most any subject under the sun; in fact, he interested me so much that I began to be sorry that I had seen those traps, and made up my mind to do nothing till morning anyway, rather than spoil a pleasant evening. Presently the talk drifted round to firearms, as was natural in a hunters' camp, and we fell to discussing the qualities of the various makes of rifles, etc., when, talking of revolvers, he said:

"Now, that thing that you fellows carry is a pretty effective weapon, but it's obsolete compared with this—Hands up! Quick! and don't make a move or there'll be ten bullets in your upper works in less than a second."

While speaking he had produced from somewhere about his person one of those newly patented automatic pistols which works at the will of the operator either as a repeater or, when the trigger is held back, empties itself of the whole charge of ten bullets in about one second; and I found myself with my hands pointing heavenwards and gazing into its wicked little muzzle. Now, maybe some who have never had a like experience will think that I was in a hurry to throw up my hands while wearing a revolver myself, but let me tell such people that the order came so sharply that ninety-nine out of a hundred would have acted exactly as I did; that is to say, involuntarily.

My friend with the pistol continued: "Now, just stay like that for a few minutes while I open my head to you a little. I've travelled this world now

LAKE VIEW BEACH

ON LITTLE MANITOU LAKE

The wary Indian Medicine Man first discovered the wonderful curative powers of the waters of Little Manitou Lake. Since then it has attracted thousands to its shores.

NOW THE CARLSBAD OF AMERICA

This natural beauty spot and health resort will eventually be the most fashionable watering-place in the Dominion. Already it is known as the Carlsbad of America. You have heard of wonderful Carlsbad, of course. It is situated on the Tepe, near its junction with the Eger River, in Bohemia, and has long enjoyed the reputation of being the foremost among the aristocratic watering-places in Europe. Although the permanent population is only about fifteen thousand, there is a transient population of nearly fifty thousand, who take up their residence during the months of June, July and August, thus making a summer population of sixty-five thousand. And yet Carlsbad is somewhat out-of-the-way and not situated near a great trans-continental railway, as is Little Lake Manitou. A comparative analysis of the water of these two wonderful bodies of water shows that Little Manitou Lake is actually superior in curative powers.

Lake View Beach overlooks Little Manitou Lake from the most advantageous point on its beautiful shores, the land sloping gradually down to the very water's edge. It is undoubtedly admitted by those who have investigated Lake View Beach that it is the natural and ideal location for a great and fashionable watering-place.

While it is near enough to the thriving and prosperous town of Watrous, Saskatchewan, for visitors travelling on the gorgeously equipped trains on the main line of the Grand Trunk Pacific, it is just far enough away to be free from the noise, smoke, hustle and bustle of a great railroad centre.

We all know what Brighton Beach stands for in England, what Atlantic City and fashionable Newport, R.I., stand for in the United States, and Carlsbad in Europe. The most discriminating classes have invested there and paid big prices for their holdings. Little Manitou Lake is the only one place known in America enjoying the same and better natural advantages as Carlsbad. These advantages are just becoming known and appreciated. A better investment now would be very hard to find than in Lake View Beach, the most beautiful spot on its shores. Read on.

As a Health Resort it has No Equal

As a result of scientific investigation, proving the water of Little Manitou Lake to have the same medicinal properties as that of Carlsbad, coupled with the visits of widely-known journalists, and the consequent publicity given to the wonderful advantages of the place, Lake View Beach district is certain to be inundated with wealthy visitors next summer, who will come from all over the continent, but particularly from Winnipeg and the West.

Cut Out and Mail this Coupon To-day

THE WALCH LAND CO.
Northern Crown Bank Building, Winnipeg, Man.

GENTLEMEN:—

Send the undersigned, postage prepaid, full information and facts regarding Lake View Beach, and all information which may be of interest.

Name.....

Street.....

City.....

People from all over Canada being attracted

People from all over Canada are being attracted to Little Lake Manitou, and many of them are purchasing property on which to build a summer home. Dr. Pugsley, brother of the Minister of Public Works, recently visited Little Manitou and was so convinced of its curative waters that he purchased a lot and he intends to build at once. Hon. Mr. Pugsley also visited the Lake and spoke as follows regarding its waters: "I am not an authority on medical waters, but I can say that the bathing is particularly pleasant in Lake Manitou. There is something in the water that imparts a feeling of relief which gives to Lake Manitou great assets. "In other countries the supplies come from small springs, but here in Manitou Lake the supply is large. I have been to England and to Banff and was so much pleased that on my way back I stopped over a few days at Watrous. I am somewhat troubled with rheumatism and am quite certain that I have received beneficial effects from bathing in Manitou Lake."

As a Pleasure Resort it will Know No Rival

The water of Little Manitou Lake is so buoyant that the human body will float in it and consequently there is great fun in bathing and not the slightest danger of drowning. The land has many fine stretches of natural lawn suitable for tennis, golf and other outdoor sports; while further back the country abounds in game to the heart's content of the enthusiastic hunter. The surrounding agricultural district is rich and fertile and capable of supplying the products of the farm and dairy for the tables of hotels and summer homes to suit the most epicurean tastes.

A Splendid Opportunity for Investment---The Best

The most reliable statistics available show that Western town property increased in value a hundred million dollars last year. This increase was chiefly in the new districts, where some towns actually sprang into existence over night, and formed into a substantial and thriving little community in one season. Although Little Manitou Lake has been known for some time it was not until just recently that the exhaustive researches of eminent scientists in regard to its curative powers were completed, and its position as a real superior of Carlsbad settled beyond a possibility of dispute. Numerous Canadians of prominence have visited the spot to ascertain for themselves the truth of the tales in regard to the wonderful medicinal powers of the lake and the beauty of the surrounding scenery. One of them has already secured property on the shore for a summer home. The Provincial Government of Saskatchewan has reserved a mile of frontage on the water for sanatorium purposes. The party of American agricultural editors who toured the West this summer also visited Little Manitou Lake, and the result is that enormous publicity is being given to the wonderful advantages of the place. There is a great future before Little Manitou Lake. If you want to share in that future, invest in the best division on the shores—Lake View Beach—and invest now, before the rush begins and values go up beyond your reach.

The Walch Land Co.
Northern Crown Bank Building, Winnipeg, Man.