

BEAR AND FOR BEAR.

Ed. W. Saunders, in "Outlines" For September.

On the whole there has been a vast amount of fanciful rubbish written about bears and their ways, especially about the black bear. Many good people labor under the impression that our best known bear, the black fellow, is a wicked, dangerous brute, given to prowling at night, and the heady forest squire, seeking whom he may devour; a savage hable to attack in offensive human beings and lug or claw the life out of them in short order. It is an entirely erroneous impression, for *Ursus Americanus* is a comparatively harmless and docile chap enough, and will let us severely alone providing you accord the same treatment to him. The black bear will only face a man under extraordinary conditions.

A sick black bear will fight gallantly for her cubs, and will hardly hesitate to charge a man, or a number of men, if she has reason to believe that her youngsters are in danger. Then she will in all likelihood fight a single customer. And, if badly wounded, she will generally make a show of fight, and now and again there may be a snarl of red danger to its persecutors. In rare instances, perhaps, though I never heard of an authenticated case, an old bear or a bear that happens to be in a bad temper at the time, might possibly attack, if approached too closely even when neither mated nor wounded. But this would be an extraordinary case, and I have heard of one which was suddenly come upon and the route it desired to take had been cut off by its fanciful assailant. As a rule the black bear avoids intimate association with man as carefully as the man could avoid the dog.

Through of nose, quick of ear, and astonishingly handy at getting swiftly over rough ground or fallen timber, he is an exceedingly difficult animal to approach close enough for a sure shot. In my way, crafty quipster, he will hunt successfully through a track. His seemingly elusive body is in reality remarkably supple and powerful; his short, heavy limbs are towers of strength, and he can use them as skillfully as a trained boxer uses his arms. He is wrestler, boxer and climber combined, but he does not care for fighting unless driven to it as a last resort. Start a row close to him suddenly, especially if a few dog voices help the din, and he will generally climb a tree with amazing celerity. Give him time to run away and he'll put on his safest stronghold as fast as his flat feet can bear him, and you may catch a passing glimpse of a black bear's hairy, shaggy, wrinkled snout as a window or scuffling over rocks in most earnest endeavor to get safely away. If he happen to be lean, a condition most improbable, save in early spring, when his usual store of fat has been consumed during his long, restless hibernation, it will be a vain or a very long chase ere he can be driven to his den or to a tree, or to bay. Usually, however, he is laden with fat, and his dogs can keep up with him readily enough.

Howd him through his well loved fastnesses, run him through one or more water-courses and windfalls, and over rough rocks, with the unending roar of the pack sounding in his ears, and every now and again a venturesome bound nipping him sharply on one of his fat hauns; persecute him in this manner for a time until he is weary with urging his heavy body over elastic hauns, and let him wind up with mighty exertion, and then he'll fight. The lurking devil that is in every strong, wild brute asserts itself at last, and with blazing eyeballs and foaming jaws he faces about to settle the question.

When a conceited bear of rock so close as against a conceited bear of rock so close as to be attacked from behind, he rises on his strong hauns and grinds his teeth

outright of the yelling dogs; we see into them if they approach him too rashly. His great true eyes are tipped forward, he sniffs wondrous quick, and he can look like a very Corbett.

An over-eager dog may plunge at him to test the thickness of his fur, but the ready paw lances him, and he is lightning, ready to draw his teeth, and he will maintain him for life or kill him out right—in any case he'll never "pile onto" any more bears. The strong claws and toes move independently after the manner of a finger, and he will bite of one edge of a bone as a dog, that dog is in for an experience which he will never forget, no matter if he lives five minutes or five years longer. He may snarl and snarl and struggle, but the arms fold around him in a close, smothering embrace that would start the rivets in the Statue of Liberty and bring a blush to the face of Bartholomew's bluntness if there's any female life in her.

The bear may not use his teeth; more likely he will attack his track straight up and merely growl, with a snarl, bug-some bug, which breaks the dog's ribs or back or maiming, or at least disarranges his works so seriously that he does not care for the glorious chase any more. Then the man appear on the scene, he is inspiring, and yelling wildly, and he shows the bear and attend to the patching of such dogs as have any pattern life to wear.

Mind you, reader, all this only applies to the black bear, and in no wise implicates his terrible, non-climbing relative plangrizzly, the grizzly. Don't you ever go, and "sick" a parcel of dogs on a grizzly, and expect to get a healthy pleasure and personal enjoyment in the glorious pursuit. If you *must* run a grizzly with hounds, pay the men for the hounds first, and then cheer on your gallant pack to the top of the mountain. You may get enough for at least two days up the tree with you, for a grizzly is "onstrin" in his moods, and might possibly couple your name with the movement, to afford him excitement.

Famous Eo Ephraim, the terrible king of the canon, is so fit quarry save for men of iron nerve and practiced skill to pursue. A wounded or enraged grizzly is perhaps the most dangerous animal for man to tackle of all the great brutes. No cat that ever jumped, not even exceptional Royal Leo or His Stripes of Bengal, possess his ferocious temper and desire to fight at close quarters. The African buffalo may roundle, but it certainly does not claim the marvelous vitality which characterizes all bears, the grizzly in particular. You may riddle Ephraim with bullets, but unless you knock him off his feet and get in a volley of his own, his limbs will carry his tremendous bulk in your direction. Sometimes, of course, a single ball will lay him dead, but more frequently he may be wounded, and his claws and teeth will carry his tremendous bulk in your direction. Sometimes, of course, a single ball will lay him dead, but more frequently he may be wounded, and his claws and teeth will carry his tremendous bulk in your direction. Sometimes, of course, a single ball will lay him dead, but more frequently he may be wounded, and his claws and teeth will carry his tremendous bulk in your direction.

The fierce, indelictiveness of the grizzly, his giant strength, indomitable pluck and amazing tenacity of life are what make him such a terrible foe, and the Indian knew right well what best tested his hunter's craft and endurance was to brave when he chose the necklet of grizzly claws as a token to prove a man.

And now for a few bear facts. I never shot a grizzly, though I have been in

their haunts often enough, and upon several occasions really sought Ephraim with intent to do him bodily harm. Some day I hope to score a kill on my own rifle, but for the present the grizzly can wait.

Black bears I do not consider to be really dangerous game, having followed them often, killed a couple to my own gun, and been with parties who killed more. More often still I have caught distant glimpses of the black bear, and sought for the closer intimacy in vain. Once, at least, I met one when I didn't want to, and our interview was very brief.

A party of us were after deer in the Muskoka country, one morning, a beautiful Indian summer's morning. I took a paddle in hand and trailed along the lake shore looking for a canoe which had been told was beached somewhere near. Foolishly I left gun and rifle behind. Not a cloud marred the blue dome above, but there was a very black cloud shaped like unto a bear immediately before my limited horizon. Half a mile from camp a huge bowler, blacked out in the view of the shore, loomed behind this bowler the canoe was supposed to be hidden. I reached it, walked around it on a narrow strip of wet sand, and almost ran foul of a splendid black bear.

The last forward step has never been completed. I dug my hand into the sand and bear shot back upon his hams and we stared at each other, each quivering in every muscle—two motionless figures of awe-inspiring size and colossal physical amazement. He was close I might have touched him with the paddle, but I didn't. I looked at him and he looked at me. I saw his nostrils twitching and spreading as he got my smell; I saw his little eyes starting from the black mass and gaining a brighter lustre as he saw his life lift and wrinkle until there came a flash of gleaming white; I saw his little round ears slowly sinking backward like the ears of an angry cat; I saw two clots of wet sand drop from his eyes, and his hands and feet gripping the sand more firmly and the white foam on his breast slowly and steadily creeping upward, and I knew that he wouldn't attack me.

I came in first, and he didn't attack me. I made rather a wide turn round the big bowler, in fact actually stepped into the lake a few times in my carelessness, but my feet were quite dry when I reached camp. Later I went back to get my paddle and only found about twenty wet prints in about a quarter of a mile of wet sand—but he didn't even offer to attack me!

Last autumn a friend, chance met during a tour in the Pacific, asked me to wait for a few days with him near the summit of the magnificent Selkirk Range of British Columbia. I had previously halted there and studied the Great Glacier and its greater rivers, the Assinikan and the mountains and gorges which make that locality world-famous, but my friend wanted to devote a few days to the glaciers and scenery, and so I gladly agreed to halt with him.

One night—such a moonlit night as one had seldom enjoys—we left the chaflet lake and waded perhaps for a mile along the smooth path leading to the forefront of the Great Glacier. There was not a sound of life ever been our fortune to witness. We smoked steadily, hardly uttering a dozen words in an hour. Beyond us lay the Great Glacier, a river solidified, a mighty torrent chilled in its grand descent from the peaks above and huge forest and moraine of rounded bowlders but a few yards from us, its gleaming length flashing in the moonlight—a quivering highway of light, and above it a stairway leading to unknown space of

deepest blue. Behind us rose the dimly forested shadowy ascent of Assinikan Mountain; far away to the right the sharp summit peaks glistened like silver spears. From the opposite side of the narrow V-shaped valley towered mighty Sir Donald, so close that his dazzling height beyond the seaward limit of the valley the sharply pointed crests of the Hemes Range gleamed like icebergs against a sea of blue, while on all the lower steps and valley slopes were piled the black masses of forest that only grow upon Pacific slopes.

Not a sound broke the solemn stillness save the whispering and growling of the new-born Hillelwaet River as it flowed and struggled among the crowding ledges below, with true infantile audacity noisily asserting itself, where men had looked in silent admiration or spoke in whispers. The majesty of the surroundings, the power of the great peaks stretching far above, like mighty interlocking points nutly questioning the sky, filled our souls with a sense of the infinite. The water pipes did not murmur. We were drinking in the serenity Nature preaches.

"Wood!"

A sudden, frightful, grunting roar swept the solemn stillness, and shot us bolt upright with the convulsive nervousment born of genuine fright.

"Wood! Wood!"

It came from the black heights above, from far away, and not till it seemed horribly close. My comrade was to sportsman, and knew naught of the wild inhabitants of those mountains. In a long gasping whisper he asked:

"What's at the dev's that?"

"Koo-oo. It's a bear."

"What!?"

This time his voice sounded quick and sharp as a pistol shot, and had it been a starter's pistol he could hardly have gone away more quickly. "You're an fool, old man, keep still!"

"You're a fool," but the rest of it was lost, and I could hear his feet patter like a snare-drum along the leewardward path. I had, of course, lost the sound started, but had no intention of running, though the situation grew men and more homesome with strange rapidity. Suddenly from above came a volley of fierce cries, snorts of rage, grunting, wild snarls, all mingled in one grand explosion of wrath. Pebbles rattled, bushes rustled and snapped, and I ceased to hear the strong scraping of claws on rocks, and the rattle of heavy limbs struck rapidly. Then came a sounding crash, and rolled down to a lower level.

"Wood!"

The roar sounded his triumph in a soul-scaring, log-like snort. The snort appeared to be no closer than when I first heard it. But what was that second snort—certainly much nearer! The bear that got the worst of it was gone. For one instant I heard his rustling in the brush and grunting and complaining at his hard luck, then he quickly flashed through my mind—

"What if he be a grizzly?"

"What if he be a grizzly?"



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