

Field Sports at Home and Abroad

1000 MILES BY PACK AND CANOE

Wolf Creek, Alberta, was the name of the town where we met our pack-train. It was a day in early May and the thin patches of snow scattered through the scrubby timber marked the last efforts of winter to hold its own against the warm rays of the spring sunshine. From Edmonton we had come 118 miles by the newly-laid steel of the Grand Trunk Pacific, and by daylight of this morning we were rounding up our little bunch of pack-ponies that were to provide the means of transportation for the first stretch of journey on the more than 1000-mile expanse that lay between us and the far-off Pacific. From the time we left the railroad on a rough siding in the scarcely cleared swamp till we met the end of the steel 20 miles eastward from the Pacific, our ways of travel were to be the simple methods of the early Indians and trappers that traversed this same country centuries ago.

By noon of the day of our arrival our ponies are packed and with our provisions for six weeks we wind out of the roughly-built little town. Each day at dawn we are up and pushing our horses along the wagon road across the rolling prairies and foothills. For more than a hundred miles they stretch between us and the majestic Rockies that form the first great barrier to the unknown land that lies between us and the western ocean. Each day as we advance the signs of man's activity grow more meagre until at last, when we reach the crossing of the Athabasca, in the very portals of the mountain wall, the wagon road is the only sign of man.

Sweeping through the Jasper Pass that opens from the plains even as the entrance of a gigantic harbor, the line or the rail follows up the Athabasca River.

Through the pass for five days we wend our way. We cross a summit to the Pacific watershed, a summit so low that save for the running of the water westward there is naught to hint that we have passed over the great watershed and are within the borders of the Province of British Columbia. Now we are fairly beyond the reach of man and barring the occasional prospector and engineer, we see no human signs. Past Yellowhead Lake, a gem in the very heart of the mountains, and on to where the Fraser River, a mere infant rivulet, comes in from the south, we plod westward. And now stream after stream comes in from north and from south, and with each day's travel the river gives promise of the width and turbulence that characterize its later journeyings through the wilderness. A little more than half way through the pass is Moose Lake, to whose very shores sweep the edges of the mountains that rise above us. Moose River we cross and wend our way on and on till at the junction of Grand Forks with the Fraser we emerge from the pass as from a doorway, and here to the north towers Robson, the loftiest peak in British Columbia. Nearly 14,000 feet above sea level, its head, crested with clouds that drift about its rugged rocks, it towers above the trail in majestic beauty. Another day of the pack-train and we emerge into the great broad valley where the Fraser broadens out to wind its way for 200 miles almost without a ripple. Here at the old trappers' rendezvous, the Tete Jaune Cache, we camp for the night. The first lap of our journey is completed and here we bid farewell to the fuzzy little pack-ponies that have been our companions these last weeks, for here ends the trail of the packer and begins the way of the canoe.

And such a canoe! She is 42 feet long and cut with axes from the heart of a single great cottonwood tree. George Williams and two Indians of the country are to be our companions to pilot us down the 400-odd miles of river that lie between us and Fort George, the old Hudson's Bay post that marks the next link in our journey. George Williams is a type of this vast new country. A gentleman born, he has listened to the call of the wild and in a few years has earned the name of the best canoe man in British Columbia, a man for whom rapids and canoes have no terrors, and who, with pipe in mouth, steers his canoe as casually through the roar of rapids where a single false move means disaster, as he would drive a horse down a city's street.

The next days are on the river. Up at daylight and on the face of the waters almost before the sun peers over the mountain's ridge, we drift along on the deep-flowing bosom of this silent river, now paddling and now floating with the stream and drinking in the wonder of this wilderness wrapped in the silence of the centuries. The banks on both sides are dense with the growth of cedar, spruce and fir, while the nether forest is so thickly grown with alder, great ferns and underbrush that a man on foot, unless he have an axe, can hardly force his way through.

For 200 miles or more the river winds through this great valley of silence, broken only by the sighing of the wind through the tree tops and the occasional call of some wild animal or the plaintive wail of the loon as he sails above the denseness of the green that blankets the valley and is broken only by the silver thread of the sinuous stream. Two or three times in the course of the day tributary rivers bear in from the east of from the west, coming as we can see from clefts in the mountain walls, the Rockies to the east and the Selkirk to the west. We pass the Beaver River where two prospector friends have these

two years past been holding a group of gold claims on the side of the mountain.

And now each mile brings us into a denser and denser wilderness. Not a day passes but we see game, either on the bank or swimming the river. Now it is a black bear, paddling about on a sand bar, or nosing along the river's rim in search of berries. Again a ripple in the water ahead tells where some furry denizen of the forest is swimming from bank to bank, to improve his hunting mayhap. Now it is a beaver, now an otter, and once a bigger ripple almost convinced us that a cub bear was about to grace our supper table, but the rifle brought to the canoe's side only a wolverine minus a lower jaw where the bullet had nipped his progress in mid-river. But it was the nights that remain ever in one's dreams! Those long twilights, with the west a crimson flood of deepening tints, while the east grey ever deeper and deeper in its shades of blue and greys till at last the first stars twinkled out of their sable settings. And then truly was the hour of silence—a stillness intensified only by the ripple of the water and the splash of the paddle. This, too, was the hour for the game. Beneath the river bank we scanned the busy beaver sitting on his house of mud and twigs resting after an arduous day, or perchance he was still putting in a few belated touches to a half-finished job. And then the moose! Scarcely a day did we pass that some soft-eyed delegate from the deeper woods did not stand to watch us pass. Theirs was the sense too little touched by the coming of man to feel the danger of his presence. Knee deep in the water they would stand so that we might splash them with the water from our paddles, and then with sudden shouts amuse ourselves at the panic in which they hurried within the shelter of the cedars, the cracking and snapping of the brush telling of their haste for five minutes after they were lost to view.

Day after day we drift and paddle down this artery of the north. On the third coming of the dusk we sweep down Goat Rapids. For miles the silence is broken by the frothing of the water against the giant rocks. We sweep around the bend and for five minutes we are in a slather of foam and spray, while our boat dances like a corkie shell. The paddles of our canoe men fairly bend as they drive the boat through the dangerous place with such good effect that almost before we know it we are in still water again and the roar of the rapids a diminishing murmur in our rear. Other days, each a memory to dwell upon, pass, and at last we come to the Grand Canon of the Fraser. Here the river drops its torrent between granite walls and bends back and forth with a tumult and fury that would seem to defy the puny hand of man. But again our canoe men know their business. A few bad places and a few clouds of spray and we are through the worst part and once again are drifting down the placid bosom of the river, whose gentle flow belies the fury of the dangers past.

Each day is but a repetition of the peace and majesty of nature undisturbed, but at last it is over, for on the noon of a cloudless June day a bend in the river discloses standing on the river's bank the old Hudson's Bay post of Fort George, near which is sprinkled the first settlement of the new town of the same name. From here southward runs a trail to the Cariboo country, and the old mining towns of Barkerville and Quesnel, whence runs a good wagon road to the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, more than 200 miles away.

And here we leave the river and our canoe to again try the fortunes of the trail. A day of rest, and then with 25 horses we file out of the little settlement and string out on the trail for the last lap of our journey westward to the Pacific.

We are well clear of the mountains now, and day after day for nearly three weeks we are plodding over a great table land, thickly grown with birch, cottonwood and jack pine, with occasional clearings and all studded with innumerable lakes that glisten like sheets of silver in the summer sunshine. Up the valley of the Nechaco we wind our way, and at Fort Fraser cross it to follow the border of Fraser Lake and then on up the Endaka River and again up one of the tributaries, Roe Creek. Until at last, we reach the height of land that separates us from the Pacific Ocean. Once over the summit and we are at the head of the South Bulkley River, and before us dimly loom the first black ridges of the Coast Range of mountains. And now the trail breaks away into a wagon road—we are approaching the settlements once more—a thin fringe thrown out ahead of the railroad. At Aldermere and Telqua, rival towns, a quarter of a mile apart, we camp for three days and bask in the companionship, such as only a frontier town affords. But our time is all too short, and once again we are on the trail, that three days later brings us into Hazelton, a town of some hundreds on the Skeena River, where the Bulkley pours its waters into the greater stream. Now, indeed, are we in the realm of man. Prospectors, miners and the offal of a new country litter the streets.

A wait of four or five days and we are off again by boat down the turbulent Skeena, for 188 miles, to the new town that in a bare twelve months has sprung from a swamp—Prince Rupert.

And here ends our journey of almost 1,200 miles. In two years the rear platform of a palace

car will be the substitute for the saddle and Indian canoe. The wilderness will be gone and civilization will have come into its own.—Stanley Washburn in Outdoor Life.

PHOTOGRAPHY FOR THE SPORTSMAN

No one should go into the woods without some kind of a photographic outfit. Unless you are desirous of making special studies of live game at close range, it is not necessary that this outfit should be either expensive or extensive, but the sportsman who does not include a camera of some sort in his pack, when starting on a hunting or fishing trip, is making a serious mistake, and one which he will be very apt to regret many times before he again returns to civilization.

It is, to a great extent, the sportsman who must furnish us with photographs portraying the different phases of the lives of our much too rapidly disappearing big game. This is so because, of all men, they know best the habits and haunts of the animals, as well as the surest and best means of approaching them, and also because they can best afford the time necessary to the accomplishment of such work and are possessed of the strength and endurance that are almost the most essential requirements. And it is not at all necessary for the sportsman to give up his gun in order to use a camera. Why not combine the use of the two? This can be very easily done without the two sports conflicting in the least, and he who does thus combine them will find that the pleasures of his outing are doubled. He can bring home with him not only trophies in the way of antlers and skins, but also pictures of the game he was seeking, taken in their native haunts. He can have photographs of his dogs at their work; of his different camps; his pack outfit; various incidents of trail and camp life, the thousand and one things that are constantly happening to make pictures of which one can take advantage if he but has his camera with him.

There are some hints which I am going to give that may not come amiss to him who is not an expert in the use of a camera.

The Outfit

As to the outfit necessary, it depends largely upon whether the making of photographs is to be the main or only the secondary object of the trip. As the majority of men have not the time nor the inclination to make extensive trips solely for the object of obtaining photos of the animals which they are seeking, I will take for granted that it is the latter, and not enter into a discussion of the paraphernalia necessary to the nature photographer.

For all around practical work a camera of the reflecting type is by far the more useful as offering better advantages for quick work, inasmuch as it is always ready for instantaneous use. But one need not go to the expense of such a camera for much can be done with even a folding pocket camera. It is well to have the camera fitted with one of the faster lenses, for the lens that is sold with it, while sufficient for ordinary purposes, is not rapid enough for very quick work.

While films have not the keeping quality, either before or after development, that plates have, still, on a trip of this sort, I should advise their use, especially if much packing is to be done. They have four very material advantages over the glass plates, advantages that count for much upon a hunting or fishing trip: they are much lighter; take up less room; are unbreakable; and can be inserted in the camera and removed therefrom without the aid of a dark room.

If you use a pocket camera you must, of course, depend upon the scale for your focusing. You should, therefore, before making any exposures with a new camera, test this scale in order to be certain that it registers correctly. This can be readily ascertained by focussing upon a piece of white paper, with heavy black letters printed upon it, at the different distances as marked upon the scale, or, if necessary, it will sometimes be found to be economy to use a roll of film and make exposures at the different distances to see if the results are all sharp, clear negatives. Also, if you are intending to rely to any extent upon the view finder, you must be sure that it shows the view exactly as it will appear in the negative. This can be determined by making an exposure and, after developing, comparing it with the view as it appears in the finder from exactly the same point from which the negative was taken. By these simple preliminary precautions much future annoyance may be avoided.

The chance shots that are constantly offered to a photographer in the woods are frequently the ones of most interest, and you should therefore always, when possible, have your camera within easy reach and in readiness for immediate use.

Once, while pushing my canoe up the Miami river in Florida, on rounding a sharp turn I suddenly came upon a deer drinking at the edge of the water. He was not over twenty-five yards from me, and as he heard the rippling of the water against the canoe, he raised his head and stood absolutely motionless for as much as two or three minutes while I allowed the canoe to drift. His surprise and curiosity were evidently greater than his fear, and he made a beautiful picture as he stood in green foliage, his whole body reflected in the clear water. The canoe drifted to within thirty feet of him before he suddenly turned and

bounded off into the woods and out of sight. At another time, as I was passing through a piece of "hammock" at Cape Sable (the southernmost point of the mainland of Florida), a lynx jumped from the low herbage at my very feet and, springing upon a fallen tree not over ten feet distant from me, stood there growling, his back partly towards me and his head turned over one shoulder. As he stood thus he made a splendid picture of natural wild life, one which I could not help but admire. I would have given much to have been able to obtain a negative of him, but, unfortunately for me, I did not have a camera with me on either of these occasions, and so I lost two good opportunities.

Again, even with an experienced hunter, excitement may cause him to miss a picture, and this should be carefully guarded against. I have known of a man, and he was no novice at the game either, who let an excellent opportunity to obtain a picture of an elk escape him simply because, as he himself said, in the excitement of seeing the animal so close to him he entirely forgot that he had a camera in his hands.

One of the greatest faults of the beginner is to imagine the lens of his camera should be able to do more than it can, in other words he wonders why an instantaneous exposure in the shadow of the woods or upon a cloudy, dark day does not result in a fully exposed negative. It is very difficult to give any real advice upon this subject; one must learn for himself the limits and possibilities of his lens. It is well, however, unless you are using one of the very rapid (and very expensive) lenses, never to attempt an instantaneous exposure of less than a quarter of a second except in the sunlight. In the shadows of the woods it is almost always necessary to give a time exposure, and this can always be accomplished, without the aid of a tripod, by resting the camera upon some stump, rock, or other slight elevation. An exposure of one or two seconds, on a bright day, of from four to six on a dull day, will generally be found sufficient. Of course, it should always be remembered that the length of time necessary to the exposure increases in accordance with the diminishing of the size of the stop, and I should advise, except where absolutely necessary, that the lens be used at its full aperture, at least until you are no longer a beginner. The average photograph made by an amateur is underexposed.

In taking your pictures always try to have them interesting from a vital standpoint. If you take a photograph of your camp have life in it, and have the figures doing something, not merely standing around looking pleasant. If you photograph your companion do not pose him beside a string of fish or a bag of ducks or grouse, that sort of picture has become an eyesore. Rather have him casting in some quiet pool, following up the dogs in the open with gun at ready, or engaged in some one of the many homely but necessary camp duties. If your dogs form the main object in your picture do not pose them especially for that picture, but catch them at such moments as when they are making a point, quartering the ground for a scent, or retrieving a bird. Give action every time in your pictures and you will find that they will have more than double the interest that they otherwise would.

Another thing, while your figure or figures, whether of human beings or tame or wild animals, should be so handled as to form the principal point of attraction in the picture, everything else subordinating to it or them, still they should not be made so large as to occupy the majority of the plate or hold one's attention to the entire exclusion of all the surroundings. There is a happy medium that one can strike wherein the figure or figures are of a size that show they were the main reason for the making of the photograph and still do not give the impression that the picture was taken of the malone. It is also important, when a human being is the main object, if you would have the picture hold real interest, that your subject should have the appearance, at least, of being unconscious of the fact that he is being photographed, and not show in every line that he was posed for that purpose and nothing else. A pleasant word will often accomplish the desired purpose.—L. W. Brownell in Recreation.

BARE TRACKS

Having killed our allotted number of deer—or rather, bought a couple—Kingsley and I decided to break camp in the morning.

We would walk out to the settlement and send a team back for our belongings.

When we arose in the morning we found it had snowed some during the night and as the wind had been blowing the ground was well whitened in some places, while in other places it was quite bare.

Kingsley had gone down to the spring for water and I noticed him coming back hurriedly.

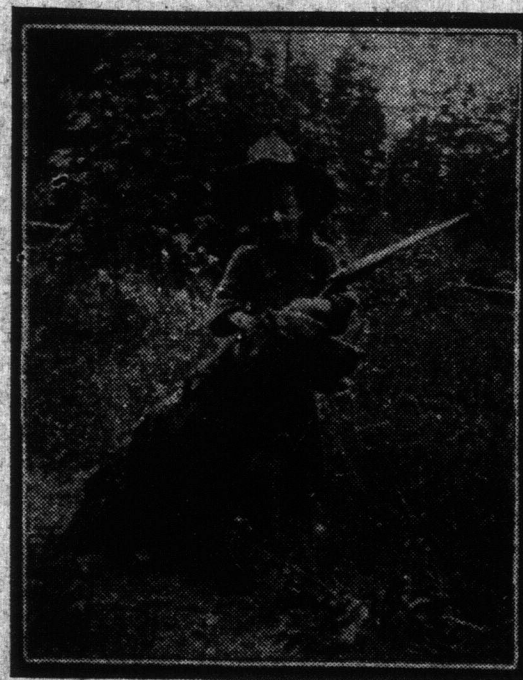
"A bear! A bear!" he cried as he rushed toward me.

"Where?" I asked.

"Down by the spring," he gasped. "Tracks fresh tracks, a whopper."

"Keep cool, keep cool, Kingsley," said I. "Let's get out our guns and follow it up."

"All right, Bill," he answered. "he's our meat sure but it's going to be dangerous work. He's a monster. Why, jumping Jehosaphat, Bill, he makes tracks a foot long."



"The larger he is the more meat we'll have Kingsley."

In a few minutes we were down at the spring examining the tracks. Neither of us had ever seen bear tracks before. I remarked on the immense size and length of the toe-nails, at which Kingsley stood aghast.

Finally we started on the track, our Winchester being well loaded. Kingsley took the lead. I preferred that he should although he showed some hesitancy in accepting the honor Kingsley drew my attention to the cunning of the beast in keeping on the bare places to avoid making tracks. We had however no trouble in following it. We had an altercation as to who should take the lead. Kingsley insisted that as I was the best shot I should be in advance—this was the first time I had ever heard him admit I could shoot. I stoutly maintained that as his rifle was heavier it was better adapted for bear than mine and that I was an indifferent shot at best. We had followed the track a mile or two when an unusual sound smote on our ears.

"Hush!" said I. "What's that, Kingsley?" Kingsley grabbed me in his excitement. I was glad he did—not that I was afraid.

"The bear!" he whispered, but it was only a limb which had broken from a pine tree with the weight of the snow, and had fallen near us. We spent some time in screwing up our courage to the point of advance, each insisting that the other was entitled to the honorable position of leader.

Finally I was reluctantly pressed into the advance although I always dislike people who push themselves to the front. In the present instance however I preferred to go ahead myself and be chewed up by the bear rather than see the mangled remains of friend Kingsley after the bear was done with him. I took the precaution not to get far enough ahead to lose him however. In fact we kept so close together it was hard to say which was really ahead.

We heard a lot of uncanny sounds from time to time as we passed along. Often we hesitated, not knowing whether to go ahead and take chances on our lives or break back for camp. I entreated Kingsley not to be afraid. He said he wasn't afraid to meet a bear but had a sort of creepy feeling about having one come up behind him. I told him I would protect him from the front and he had better walk backwards to protect himself from the rear.

We heard something again.

"We must be right close on him now," said Kingsley. "One of us had better climb a tree and see if we can spy him out. Kingsley said he was always considered the fastest climber in his part of the country and before I had time to reason with him as to my climbing ability he was up in the branches of a hemlock tree. He left his hat and gun at the foot. As I looked up at him in the branches I could see terror depicted in his expression. Putting his hand to his mouth to convey the sound he whispered, 'I see the branches of the underbrush shaking.' A tree was my first thought. As a general rule I am not much on the climb but when there are bears around I seem to become endowed with a desire and an ability to climb above normal.

When we reached the very pinnacle of our respective trees—which were only about two rods apart—I asked Kingsley if he could see anything now.

"Yes," he answered, "Look near that big pine," and just beyond where he pointed, about one hundred yards from us, out into a little opening walked an old bare footed squaw with a big bundle of something on her back.

I looked over and saw Kingsley laughing. I was down first and at the foot of Kingsley's tree.

"Why, Kingsley, I knew all the time we were following an old squaw's track."

"So did I," said Kingsley, "only I thought I would have a joke on you."

"Say Bill, you won't say anything about this will you?"

"Not on your life, Kingsley," was my reply.—Rod and Gun.

To Aeroplane for Sharks

Robert J. Allyn, of Hartford, Conn., who is demonstrating a new hydro-aeroplane at Palm Beach, Fla., purposes to fly out to sea and try to catch a shark near the Gulf stream. This sounds improbable, but if the fish is hooked it is planned to run the machine close to the water up over the bathing beach, dragging the shark up high and dry before the line is let go.