

that he had known twenty-eight bears to be sighted in one afternoon in that same locality, which is one of the best on the river.

In the mercy of Divine Providence, no one was killed by our general and somewhat careless rifle fire, and toward dusk the most interesting part of our bear-hunting occurred. The steamer blew a long blast, and all at once there arose hurried shoutings. Far below us a black object could be seen swimming for the mainland. At once everybody on board opened fire. Some thought it was a moose, but the more knowing declared it to be a bear. As the boat dropped down rapidly in the current the range shortened to 500 yards, 400, 300, and as yet no one had been able, from the trembling and bobbing steamer deck, to hit the distant and difficult mark of the bear's head. It is very difficult to shoot from the deck of a steamboat as it jars and sways under you, as this one did.

It was at this time that my friend H—— strolled out on deck bearing under his arm his big .405, whose cannon-like qualities I had had occasion to notice earlier. He had finished his hot bath in a real tub, the first in several days, and was just at dessert and coffee in a six-course dinner when the confusion on deck interrupted him. He and L. H. Stanton, of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, were standing side by side against the rail, when I moved up at my friends' elbow and volunteered to feed cartridges into his machine. Stanton holds a championship medal or two for regimental rifle shooting, and he was not doing bad work with the .303 which he had, although this time he could not quite land in the bull's-eye.

"I think it's a moose," said H——, calmly, waiting until the boat was within about 250 yards. Someone else called out that it was a bear. When the big gun went into action its three shots were easily marked. The first was high, at least a foot over the back of the swimming animal. The next seemed to be too high, but it turned the creature, which now swam higher out of the water. We found later that this shot had deeply creased the back, although not far enough below the water line to blow up the boilers. The third bullet of the big .405 struck the head fairly, and the festivities were over, amid a general rejoicing that at last we had fresh meat. I had my rifle

on board, but it was not in action, and I told my friend that I was ashamed of him for shooting a swimming bear. The real reason that I did not take a hand, however, was that my rifle was in its case.

In a very methodical way the captain of the boat proceeded to land our bear. We were drifting down on the floating black object, and one of the deckhands had in readiness the gaff hook, made and provided for bears—a steel hook at the end of it—when all at once shouts and shots again broke out on the deck above us. Yet another bear, and a very large one, was swimming off on the other side of the island. Stanton and H—— again went into action, and from the pilot house above, Showan plied his .30-30 carbine. The distance was fully 700 or 800 yards. Both the big gun and the .303 came apparently within an inch or two of scoring, but the bear, very tired and apparently somewhat agitated, finally made his way across the beach and into the woods. I suppose his tongue was hanging out, but it was too far away to see. After this we swung alongside, calmly gaffed our floating dead bear, passed a big rope around his neck, and hauled him on board. Weight, 330 pounds on the boat's scale; condition, fat as butter. The deck hands licked their chops in anticipation of the bear meat they were going to have, and of which they are very fond. We had some of it on the table, but I didn't care very much for it.

From Peace River Landing north the river banks become regularly lower. Several smaller streams flow in, coming down from the valleys where game, especially moose, abounds. Occasionally a grizzly bear is found far east, but not often. The Indians are afraid of them and rarely care to hunt them, and I think perhaps they are more ugly there, where they are more hunted. As you go farther north along the Peace River, the black bears are less abundant. In all we saw twenty-nine black bears on our trip. The sight of bears got to be so common that we did not keep accurate tally.

All things considered, Fort Vermilion was perhaps the most interesting point on our journey. This old fur post is merely a collection of a few houses on top of a bare bluff. Back of the famous Fort Vermilion wheat mill lies the equally famous wheat