

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1898.

A PROSPECTOR'S STORY

HOW HE FOUND THE GREAT STUPID ANIMAL

That Fished With Remarkable Ease and While Enjoying His Repast was Shot and Killed by the Author's Rifle Shot—A Powerful Beast of Prey.

In the spring of 1897, when I left New York with the Russian engineer, Mr. Boris Michaeloff, who had engaged me and four other young 'Techs' for the survey of the Trans-Siberian Railway, I had no idea that I was going to the country of the most powerful of all beasts of prey, but when I come home I will bring with me a most convincing skin, for which I have already refused four hundred dollars. Brought up a reader of the Youth's Companions, as I was, I think it was a sort of duty to send in an account of how I obtained the valuable pelt.

Throughout October and November, 1897, I was 'levelling' in the Yablonoi Mountains, beyond Cuita, one of the roughest regions through which the line passes, and survey work progressed slowly through the thick, tangled brush on the slopes. Before we could use instruments it was often necessary to send axemen, convicts, in advance, and frequently we could not get on the line for a day or two, or three together. At such idle times I commonly went prospecting, for there is a good deal of mineral wealth in the district which will be far more valuable after the completion of the railway.

On one of these jaunts in November, I climbed the long, low, rocky ridge opposite Mount Kathuan, and descended into the valley beyond it, a distance of seven or eight versts from camp. A verst is about two-thirds of a mile. Then I was in a fine wild country, wholly uninhabited and devoid of heavy forests, though there were scattered birch and larch copses. Pheasants abounded; with a double-barrelled gun I could have shot thirty brace, but I had taken only my American carbine that day, thinking that I may fall in with bears, and never imagining anything worse to be in the neighborhood.

In the valley of a clear, mountain river, a tributary of the Shilka, the steady roar of falling waters led me half a mile or more to where a cataract of twenty-five or thirty feet pours over a break of the strata into an opalescent pool which shoals out on pebble bars less than a hundred yards below. On the south side, where I approached, the pool is walled in by abrupt, smooth ledges of granite ten or twelve feet in height, and such a tangle of evergreen shrubbery grows on its brink that I could not get near enough to look down into the pool until I had crawled under the boughs. There I lay, out-stretched on the margin of the hoary, lichen-clad rock, looking down on the foam-flecked pool and up to the milk-white fall.

Directly below the rock where I lay, the water of the pool seemed no more than three or four feet in depth. It lay over yellow gravel, and presently I noticed large fish lying almost motionless, as if brooding on their spawning-beds—fish of five or six pounds each. At first I thought them carp, but soon I concluded that they were a large variety of river trout. Earlier in the season I might have supposed them salmon, since the Shilka is a tributary of the Amur, which flows into the Northern Pacific Ocean.

About twenty of these fine fish were lying so that with hook and line I might easily have dropped before their noses, and I was thinking to shoot one of the largest with my carbine, when a throaty scream from a fellow-sportsman—a fish-hawk, perched on a large, leafless tree across the pool—caused me to look in that direction. A minute later the hawk took wing, and with two or three claps of his powerful pinions came sailing across the pool and circled overhead, one round, red eye turned downward.

I thought him about to plunge down for a fish, but soon perceived that his attention was fixed on some object in the thicket either on me or on some object near me, something on the brink of the very crag where I lay. 'He has seen me,' I thought, 'and resents my intrusion on his fish preserve;' and I was on the point of rising up to punish his incivility with a shot when I heard a slight, stealthy crackle in a thick brush a few yards away.

I cast my eyes warily around. The boughs of the low evergreens were moving slightly, as a very great snake or a creeping man might move them. Still lying low,

I brought my carbine into position and cocked it. Although I could see nothing alarming save the curiously moving boughs my impression that some large creature was coming slowly forward, and its stealthy movements were unlike those of a bear.

Whatever it was, it seemed to be on my track,—hunting me,—and I was much startled, although I lay quiet and held myself ready to fire the instant I caught sight of its head. But I quickly perceived that the rippling movement of the boughs was not directly approaching me, but passing toward a part of the brink of the ledge that was twenty or thirty feet away, and a moment later I caught a puzzling gleam of yellow, black and white among the less thickly growing bushes near the brow of the ledge.

The blending of bright color with the deep green of the boughs was strangely confusing—there seemed to be so much of it! I could not make out the shape of the animal, for its head was held low to the ground and it was stealing forward; what I saw was a long streak of mottled color, more like a big snake than a quadruped.

But the animal emerged on the bare brink of the rocks, and then, indeed, I saw plainly enough that the creature was an enormous Mongolian tiger, which, with its tail slowly swaying back in the bush, looked, actually, to be twenty feet long!

My alarm was simply sickening. Certain authentic accounts of the size and ferocity of the Mongolian tiger came into my mind with awful suddenness. I knew that these monsters had been occasionally seen in Siberia, but had never dreamed that any were left there. But there was one before me,—one large enough to eat a man at a meal,—one so close to me that I dare not stir, or even move the muzzle of my gun!

My former fear recurred,—that the tiger had scented me and was crawling forward on my track, but as it emerged into full view I perceived that its eyes were not on me. Halt crouching, it crept, catlike, to the extreme verge of the ledge and peered intently downward at the pool. Before I could even conjecture what attracted its attention, it drew itself still farther forward curving its neck over the brink and drawing its feet beneath its body. For a moment or two its black-tipped tail whipped the boughs, then suddenly it leaped down with a splash.

With intense relief at heart, I peeped over and saw the tiger in the water, grabbing with lightning-like motions of its head and paws. Then, with a gleaming, struggling fish in its mouth, it bounded

through the shallow water on the gravel around the foot of the pool. Never shall I see a more beautiful spectacle than that of this magnificent beast of prey as it went at long leaps through the water in the afternoon sunshine, while over it the hawk circled and swooped with whistling screams, as it with some intent to snatch the fish.

Crossing the shallows, the tiger bounded up the rocky bank, its claws scratching audibly on the rounded boulders, and ran for forty or fifty yards to the leafless oak on which the hawk had been perched. There it stopped and crouched to eat the fish.

From where I lay, the tiger was in full view, and distant about four hundred feet. My courage had revived considerably, now that the pool and the steep rock lay between us, and I considered whether it would do to risk a shot. My carbine was a good one, and at that range one long forty-five caliber slug might be expected to kill or disable almost any creature smaller than a rhinoceros. Yet such terror had been struck into me by the brute's sudden appearance that I felt much inclined to steal away. But I dared not. Ten to one it would detect some sign of my moving and follow my tracks. To shoot it seemed the only way of saving my life.

While I was thus meditating, the tiger suddenly rose to its feet and stalked down to the pool again. It desired more fish. For a time it scanned the water, then entering the shallows, it began to cross over, walking somewhat gingerly, as if disliking to wet itself again, or also unwilling to disturb the pool.

It occurred to me instantly that its purpose was to cross to the ledges and repeat its former tactics of springing down on the fish. Fresh alarm took possession of me. If I lay there, the tiger might come upon me.

Clearly, I had better take the initiative and shoot the beast, if possible, while still down on the gravel. The distance was not more than fifty yards, perhaps less.

I rested my carbine along the smooth surface of the ledge and fired, just as the animal was at the deepest place on the shoals. Its head was turned up-stream as I fired, and the bullet as appeared afterward, passed through its right nostril, smashed its lower jaw, slipped underneath the skin of the neck and penetrated its chest.

With a howl which blent strangely with the steady roar of the cataract, the great yellow and black brute reared, all glistening with water, and fell over backward, splashing and leaping wildly. Then getting into deeper water below the bar, it rolled over with the current, wallowing, now up, now down, till, coming to a half-submerged rock, it struggled to climb on it and clung there, with awful gurgling outcries.

I fired again, sending a second bullet clear through its body, when it leaped clear of the rock and went rolling over in the stream for twenty or thirty yards, stranding finally against a rick of driftwood near the right bank of the river.

Elated at the success of my marksman-

ship, I made my way down the bank and found the tiger dead. By dint of hard tugging, I drew the body ashore.

There I left it while the afternoon sun was waning, and made for camp with a speed that came partly of my impression that tigers generally travel in pairs. If there was another about the place I was willing to leave it alone, in case it should not hunt me.

But next morning two Cossack rodmens went back with me to the scene of my 'kill,' and with their assistance I drew the dead tiger completely out of the water and removed the skin.

As subsequently cured, it measures an inch over eight feet in length, not including the tail and has an average breath of about five feet and a half.

But the splendid, rich tints of the thick fur and hair will have to be seen to be appreciated properly. Owing to climatic influence, the pelage, or furry hair, is much thicker and heavier than that of the Bengal tiger.

GIRLS WHO LOVE OLD MEN.

Mr. Gladstone and Others Had Scores of Unknown Sweethearts.

To those who know how charming a stout-hearted veteran can be when he likes, it does not seem surprising that the prettiest of girls should occasionally fall in love with old men. In some people's eyes there is nothing so beautiful as a face which, though wrinkled, shines with the radiance of everlasting youth, and the deeper the lines upon it the more attractive it becomes.

Mr. Gladstone, though he probably never knew it, caused many a young heart to beat faster for love of him. On one of the last occasions that he spoke in public, the daughter of a wealthy manufacturer would have forced her way to his side and declared her affection for him had not her friends violently restrained her. 'It is his voice I love,' she cried, passionately. I hear it night and day, and there is nothing like it in the whole world.'

Another girl, though she only had one fleeting glance at the Grand Old Man, worshipped him with a devotion approaching mania, and was only with great difficulty prevented from committing suicide when he died.

A white-haired man of science, known and respected everywhere, has been the recipient of some very embarrassing attentions from pretty young women. He has a cabinet drawer which is choked with girl-fish letters, all breathing the true spirit of love, and he respects the confidence of his fair correspondents so much that he will not allow a single one to be seen. However, he does not attempt to deny the touching story which is related of a certain beautiful young girl who had secretly ad-

mired him for years. She came to him one day while he was with her father, and without hesitation put her arms round his neck and kissed him. She had been married that very day, she said, and would never be able to see him again.

'My husband is a dear, good boy,' she went on, 'but he knows I don't love him as much as I do you. We are going to pray nightly that, when he grows old, he may be blessed with hair, eyes, and features resembling yours.'

When a great strike threw the inhabitants of a northern manufacturing town into a state of sordid poverty, a benevolent old gentleman came from London to do what he could to comfort the suffering workers. He preached no cant, only the doctrine of cheerfulness amid difficulties, and crowds of admiring people flocked round him in the market-place every night. To the women his clarion voice and bright, wrinkled face appealed irresistibly, and two handsome factory lasses were so much impressed that they fell in love with him almost at the same moment. But as time went on, and the strike still remained unsettled, the old preacher showed visible signs of weakness, and one morning the people were shocked to hear that he had been found dead in bed. He was buried in the local cemetery, and among the flowers strown on his grave a beautiful cross was found, bearing the inscription: "From his sorrowing sweethearts, Jennie and Jane." Jennie and Jane were the love-sick factory girls, and it is said that they actually lived on scanty food for weeks in order to pay for the costly flowers which formed the cross.

Borrowing a Horse.

In his interesting book, 'The Lawyers of Maine,' Willis relates an anecdote of Judge George Thatcher, who was noted for his humor. Solicitor Davis and Judge Thatcher, when boys were neighbours in Barnstable and Yarmouth Massachusetts.

The day after the Battle of Bunker Hill, the militia of these two towns set off for Boston. The boys accompanied the soldiers, Davis acting as fifer. A few miles out from Barnstable, an order came directing the military to return home. In their retreat, Thatcher and Davis, tired of their march, mounted an old horse they met on the road without saddle or bridle. After riding some miles they dismounted, and abandoned their steed in the highway. Many years after Davis, as solicitor-general, was prosecuting a horse-thief before Judge Thatcher in the county of Kennebec, Maine. In the course of the trial the judge leaned over the bench and said in an undertone, to the solicitor:

'Davy, this reminds me of the horse you and I stole in Barnstable.'

A good dinner often transforms a bitter memory into a pleasant forgetory.

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Abbey's Effervescent Salt has received the highest endorsements from the Medical Journals and from the Physicians of Canada since its introduction here. It has sustained its European reputation.

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LABORATORY OF INLAND REVENUE,

Office of Official Analyst,

Montreal, July 28, 1898.

I, JOHN BAKER EDWARDS, do hereby certify that I have duly analyzed and tested several samples of "Abbey's Effervescent Salt," some being furnished by the manufacturers in Montreal and others purchased from retail druggists in this city. I find these to be of very uniform character and composition, and sold in packages well adapted to the preservation of the Salt. This compound contains saline bases which form "Fruit Salts" when water is added—and is then a very delightful aperient beverage, highly palatable and effective.

Abbey's Effervescent Salt contains no ingredient of an injurious or unwholesome character, and may be taken freely as a beverage.

(Signed,) JOHN BAKER EDWARDS,

Ph.D., D.C.L., F.C.S.,

Emeritus Professor Chemistry, University Bishop's College, and Dominion Official Analyst, Montreal.