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ROD AND GUN

AND MOTOR SPORTS IN CANADA



CHRISTMAS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Our First Goat.

BY AIRD FLAVELLE.

THE summer of nineteen hundred and seven probably witnessed the greatest activity in timber circles in the history of British Columbia. Timber cruisers, good, bad and indifferent were everywhere; though if you hunted from one end of the country to the other you couldn't find one. That's what we really were, though wild horses couldn't draw it from us. We were always hunting, fishing or prospecting or out for the good of our healths (that is when the other fellow was round.)

Like all the other innocents we first hit for Powell Lake which lies about eighty miles north of Vancouver along the coast and runs about twenty-five miles inland (though the map makes it forty) right into the heart of the Cascade Range. We had been told that goat and bear were very plentiful at the upper end so when we started round the east side of Big or Goat island, the four of us in old August's big twenty-five foot dugout, we kept a sharp look out. Mac was in the bow with Craig's 25-36 Marlin and about half a dozen shells. Craig was in the stern with the rest of the cartridges while Ed. and I were seated on the duffle in the middle.

Just as we rounded the south east corner of the island we spied a goat down close to the water's edge and only about 150 yards away. Mac of course began to spit lead but though there was hardly a ripple to disturb his aim he could not locate that goat. Naturally the goat started to seek cooler regions higher up but, much to our surprise, seemed not to hurry in the least. He calmly went up and up, often getting behind stumps and rocks, with Mac's bullets striking just above him every time, until the last shot in the gun found his right hind leg. It did not disable him much however so Mac passed the gun back to Craig.

By this time the goat had about doubled the space between us so we hastily paddled closer. Then Craig unlimbered but with no better success though we did think that he touched him once. The goat had now gained a small cave which placed him temporarily beyond our reach but Mac was determined to have him. Craig said he would go up the cliff with Mac if I lent him my 32 Colt, while Ed. and I stayed below with the rifle to watch the cave. Just as the other two had started the goat tried to get out but soon got tired of forming a target for Ed and went back again.

I now claimed the rifle and as the goat obligingly stood with his head out I fired a couple of shots which only caused him to wag his head as though saying "Oh dear ! what rotten shooting. Those fellows make me tired !" As all the shots had been going high I decided to investigate and promptly discovered that the Lyman peep was elevated to the top notch instead of being down at the bottom! I was pretty disgusted but by the time I had rectified the error the goat had backed out of sight.

But if we in the boat were having our troubles so were the fellows on shore. What looked like an easy ascent from the water was proving well nigh impossible on shore. Craig, never a good climber had cold feet and would go no farther while Mac, some distance higher, had only his Marble Sheath knife. Finally I said I would take the revolver to him. I got it there but I would not have repeated that climb then for a thousand dollars. What little nerve I possessed had slowly oozed away until now I dared not go on. Mac, then, had to go up alone while I got behind a projecting corner which shielded me from the miniature avalanches which he started every little while. Next I began to consider my own position. Get down the way I got up I knew I could not, for, as every one knows, it is easier to go up a cliff than go down and I could see no other way. I was standing on a narrow ledge about forty feet above the lake and by looking over the edge I could see the cliff going straight down to the water and through it until lost in obscurity. To

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jump off seemed the only way without risking a broken limb or worse.

In the meantime by making a short circuit, Mac had gained the ledge which led to the cave, without disturbing the goat. But now it seemed to feel something was wrong and decided to investigate. The others below dared not fire for fear of a glancing bullet striking Mac and so could render no assistance. Mac himself was in a rather unpleasant position. On a ledge so narrow that he had to crawl on hands and knees, a sheer wall above and a straight drop below, and unable to turn round and retreat, with a very slightly wounded goat in front decidely anxious to depart via this same path, was a combination I was perfectly willing to allow him to tackle alone. On came the goat in genuine goat style. Talk of the Charge of the Light Brigade ! It wasn't in it. Mac opened up at a range of fifteen feet but the first three shots, though all going home, produced no effects At the fourth when he was almost touching the gun the goat seemed to stumble, struggled to regain his balance but toppled over the precipice, came crashing down the declivity only to be brought up with a thud against a dead stump. Down come Mac and with one roll sent him flying until with a last bound, amid a perfect torrent of rocks, he leapt into the lake.

Mac could hardly wait to get down and was almost ready to adopt my suggestion and jump for it. However with him in the lead we finally managed to get down by grasping and clinging to bunches of devil's club and salmon berry, which are just a little more prickly than the worst raspberry, and by crawling over several patches of wet slimy rock where the winking of an eye would almost have sent us after the goat. When we did reach the bottom we found the other two busy skinning our prize and soon with hide and horns and a good supply of meat we paddled on.

What visions of juicy steaks we had as we hastened to find a suitable camping ground ! We were out of meat and had tasted none for two days, and working hard as we were our lucky find was doubly welcome. What a disappointment ! Did you ever try to eat goat, especially an old he one ? I have, and I honestly believe you could get more nourishment out of a bunch of elastic bands. I do know that we each took just one bite and none of us, after minutes of effort, were able to swallow that. Sole leather would be tender in comparison.

However Mac has a splendid pair of horns and a magnificent hide which August tanned for him to remind him of the adventure. Nor do I think that any of us will soon forget "Our First Goat."

The Big Game of Southern British Columbia.

BY AUGUST WOLF.

ISOLATED and remote from the whirl and noise of civilization is the Elk River valley in the southeastern part of the Kootenay district of British Columbia, which today is declared by seasoned sportsmen to be one of the most prolific and varied big game ranges on the American continent. Elk roam the valley in bands of hundreds and beaver have colonized by thousands. This is due in a large measure to the restrictions adopted by the Provincial Government and the excellent grazing range afforded. Elk and beaver have been protected since 1905 and the close season will continue until 1911.

R. L. Laird of Spokane, who has explored parts of the valley, declares that the measure of protection afforded the big game in the preserve has not been half-hearted; in fact, he adds, it is the belief of Government officials, guides and others familiar with the district, that the law has been strictly observed with the result that elk and beaver, bear, deer, goats, mountain sheep and other fur-bearing animals have increased and are today probably more abundant than at any other period within the last half century.