

HUNTING *and* CAMPING IN THE ALBERTA WILDERNESS

By WM. C. BARTLETT

IN SIX PARTS—PART IV

By nine o'clock the next day we had started, with Bill, the Professor and the Trapper, walking, while I rode a little bay mare, furnished me by the latter.

Of all the horses I have ever had the pleasure of riding, this was the most marvelously trained, and showed the most intelligence. In picking her way over the almost impassable trail, she would carry me in safety where a goat could hardly find foothold; through dense timber growth where an elk would find difficult going, and over tangled tree laps where a man could scarcely make his way.

In crossing such places she would often catch a hoof in the fork of a prostrate limb, and would then patiently stand on three legs until she had carefully worked herself free again, or someone came to her assistance, and in crossing the treacherous muskeg she would often come to a stubborn stand until I gave her free head, when she would sometimes retrace her steps and, picking up the trail where she knew it, make a detour and cross without a founder. She was the Trapper's constant hunting companion, and had been brought with him from faraway Oklahoma.

The government surveyors operating in this district, a year or so before, had left evidence of their work, in long straight avenues about eight feet wide, cut through the dense brush and timber. These avenues ran straight north and south, in parallel lines, exactly one mile apart, and every two miles running east and west.

It was up one of these section lines; thickly set with the sharp stake-like stubs of the willow and poplar, lopped off about two feet from the ground, by the surveyors, that we took up our line of march, in single file, like a band of marauding Indians.

We continued on in this way for about a mile without seeing any sign of game, except now and then we

would cross a well-beaten moose run-way, or a flock of foolhen (willow grouse) would scuttle across our path, to stand stupidly staring until we had passed.

Coming out at last on a high, timbered bluff overlooking a dense tangle of willow which marked the course of a small stream, we turned to the left and pushed through the timber, until we reached a point where the bank sloped more gradually; we then descended into the narrow valley below.

Hardly had we crossed the little mountain stream at the bottom when the Trapper suddenly stopped and held up his hand—a silent command for caution. Pointing to the soft mud at the margin of the stream, he called our attention to several deep tracks, such as a Jersey cow would make, with her narrow, sharp-pointed cloven hoof.

They were just beginning to fill with water, percolated from the wet soil, a sure sign that the maker of the tracks had just passed and (as the Trapper declared) by the spread of the toes and depth of the track, at a fast trot.

We had jumped our first moose only about a minute or two before, and, judging by myself, our nerves were strung to the highest tension as we cautiously moved ahead, rifles at a ready, and eyes and ears on the alert to catch the first sight or sound of our quarry some place out along the well-beaten moose trail ahead.

We continued on, following the trail, which lay plain in the soft soil of the runway, until it suddenly left the beaten path and turned off up the slope, leading to higher ground. We were then halted by the Trapper and instructed to separate and strike into the brush in the direction the moose had gone, keeping a distance of about 150 yards apart, and traveling in a parallel course.

The Professor took the west side of a low, jutting ridge, the Trapper the top, Bill next and myself the ex-



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I Made a Dive for the Nearest Forest.

treme right, where the moose runway made fairly good going for my horse.

There was no pretense now to follow the individual track of the moose we had first started, for the territory was traversed in every direction by well-worn paths, and fresh moose signs were so abundant that it would have been ten chances to one that before we sighted the one first started others would be encountered.

From now on it was every man for himself. I kept on until the runway I was following led me to where the little valley broadened out into an extensive beaver meadow, now abandoned by the wonderful little four-footed engineers and grown up with a rank growth of swamp grass and willow, from which came the source of annoyance which finally compelled me to give up the hunt and beat a retreat.

The sun had come out very warm, and as my horse waded through the tall grass clouds of gnats, millions of them, warmed and brought to life by the heat, swarmed up by the wayside and formed a perfect fog around my head.

They were the most persistent, blood-thirsty little devils in insect form that the world can produce. If I took a breath of air I had to expectorate gnats until time for the next one, and of the numbers that went on down I do not like to think. If I opened my eyes to see where I was going a thousand were waiting to dash into them, and when once securely lodged under the lids they could give as perfect an imitation of a hot cinder as a freight engine. My ears fared the same. It was useless to try to fight the pests off; it made them worse; they seemed to like it.

Getting desperate, I tore off my muffer and, cutting small holes for my eyes and nose, I partially rid myself of the little fiends by tying it over my face.

My horse, in the meantime, was nearly frantic from their ferocious attacks. They would crowd into her ears by the hundred and bite until the members were running blood.

To relieve her I crossed the beaver meadow and a small stream which traversed it, and then skirting a wide muskeg for about a quarter of a mile, I dismounted on a sandy knoll where the gnats seemed loath to follow. I then produced a couple of pokes of smoking tobacco which I happened to have, and, emptying the contents into my pockets, I slipped the little muslin bags down over the horse's ears and tied them fast to the browband of the bridle.

I had just gotten her ears nicely gnat-proof and was filling my pipe for a friendly smoke with myself, when I was startled by a terrific cracking and crashing of the brush about fifty yards to the left.

Looking in the direction of the commotion, I observed a large bull moose emerge from the thick cover and come at a rapid trot toward where I was standing with the horse.

One look at the great beast as he bore down on me and my scalp began to twitch, and stories I had read of the ferocity of the attack of a rouge bull moose during the rutting season flashed through my mind.

I snatched at the saddle holster for my rifle, then remembered that I had leaned it against the trunk of a jackpine twenty yards away.

The moose was now so close that the malicious flash of his wicked little eyes and the veins in his great palmated antlers were plain to my eyes as he moved toward me like an avalanche of flesh and bone, trilled, comet-like, by a swarm of moose flies vainly trying to keep pace with his swift onslaught.

All this I saw and noted, so rapidly does the eye and mind act in an emergency. Then with a yell and flourish of my arms to start my plunging mare to safety, I turned and made a wild dive for the nearest tree.

I had covered about half the distance between myself and the jackpine, against which I had left my rifle, when my toe caught on a projecting limb of an old half-burned log, and I fell sprawling in the sand alongside.

With but an instant to spare, I twisted myself around and, like a scared rabbit, instinctively flattened my body against the ground, with the log between me and the charging moose.

With a coughing bellow the old rogue swept past, so close that the sand kicked up by his wicked, razor-sharp hoofs flew over my face, and the rank smell of him struck me in the face so strong that I nearly sneezed.

Keeping straight on, as if he had entirely forgotten his murderous intentions on me, by the time I had scrambled to my feet and gained possession of my rifle he had disappeared in the pine thicket bordering the muskeg.

I now turned my attention to my horse, which, when last seen, was flying for her life through the pine timber. Taking up her trail, I had followed only a short distance when I heard a low whinny and following the sound I soon came up to the intelligent creature, standing in the center of a small cleared space, lush with pea vine and vetch, from which she was placidly munching her long-delayed lunch while waiting for me to appear.

I mounted and rode back to the edge of the muskeg, following the trail of my frisky bull, with the possibility in my mind of getting another view of him and squaring our account a little more in my favor, but when I arrived at a point where I could see for a distance up the swamp, there was nothing in sight but his great tracks in the soft ground at the margin of the quaking bog.

The gnats received me joyously as I again came out onto the low ground. It seemed that all the gnats in the world were assembled there in mass convention to await my return and another square meal before cold weather set in and froze them for the winter.

Looking out across the muskeg I made out Bill's lank form, hitching along through the bordering brush and waving his arms about his head like a stage maniac. He, too, seemed to be troubled with gnats and was on the back trail in search of high ground and peace.

I had had enough moose hunting under the existing annoying circumstances, so with a determined resolve not to try it again until the weather was so cold that every gnat in Canada would be frozen stiff, I started on the back track for our after-hunt rendezvous, the bank of the creek where we had started the first moose.

Thinking to make a short cut, I selected a favorable looking place and started to cross to the opposite side of the muskeg. I had proceeded only a short distance when the spongy surface began to shake and heave under the weight of my horse. Recognizing the danger, the wise little mare immediately took things under her own management, turning about and stepping only where the swamp grass grew in thick tufts she cautiously made her way back to firm ground again.

These muskegs are one of the peculiar and remarkable features of this ever-interesting country. They were at one time in the past beautiful little lakes, formed by the damming of streams by the beaver, or by the natural topography of the land, and were sometimes of considerable depth.

Then the water-moss, the most active agent in the formation of a muskeg, takes root and soon forms a compact mass of interwoven stems, which, beginning at the margin of the lake, gradually extend their growth until at last a floating, unbroken carpet of living green is formed, which covers the whole surface of the water. This floating moss carpet becomes more and more dense from yearly accumulation until in time soil finds lodgment on the surface and the swamp grass springs up to complete the work already begun by binding the formation together with its long fibrous roots.

Over the surface of this tough, spongy mass a man or the lighter animals may pass in safety, but it is treacherous and avoided by the heavy denizens of the brush or

prairie, with the exception of the bear, whose track we frequently saw traversing the quaking areas where his bearship had been seeking and digging for the bulbs of water lilies, evidently to him a dainty article of diet.

Just after crossing the little stream before mentioned, I came upon the Trapper. He was sitting on the sloping side of an old beaver dam, looking tired and hungry. I dismounted and turned the horse loose to graze, first untying from the saddle the little bag of bread and jerked moose meat that was to serve for our lunch. Joining him, we devoured our share of the grub, then lounged in the warm sun, to fight gnats and wait for Bill and the Professor to appear.

The Trapper was of the opinion that the bull moose which had tried to run over me was an old rogue of unsavory reputation that had been roaming the Moose Mountains for the last ten years. He was never seen in company and was famous for his size and the wide spread of his antlers. He was feared and avoided by the Indians on the one hand, and diligently hunted by the occasional white hunters who heard of him on the other. He had been shot a dozen times, but never brought to the ground, a fact which only seemed to increase his cunning and malicious temper.

The Trapper had started him back in the spruce timber, beyond the point to which I had penetrated. He had made a wide detour around the lower end of the muskeg, when, on account of the unfavorable direction of the wind, combined with the heat and gnats, he decided to give up the hunt and start for the rendezvous. He was on the way and was crossing a low spruce-covered ridge when he heard the moose get up and go crashing through the brush, but did not see him.

We had finished our second pipe when Bill put in an appearance, his temper on edge from the gnats, and ready to return to camp.

After waiting some time longer, and the Professor not showing up, we decided to move on campward and leave him to pick up our trail, which was plain in the soft soil, and follow into camp at his leisure or overtake us. Shortly after starting we left the goat territory and were able to breathe air that did not have to be strained through a muffer, and by 5 o'clock were in camp with the coffee pot a-boil and the aroma of fried bacon filling our nostrils and bringing a smile of anticipation to the bewhiskered faces of two of the threddest, hungriest moose hunters who ever came out of the north woods.

Supper ready, Bill and I set to and satisfied our hunger, leaving a generous share near the fire to keep warm for the persevering Professor, who had not shown up.

We were joined by the Trapper in the inevitable "tell-you-how-it-happened" smoke, and still the mighty nimrod was absent from our circle.

Night was beginning to settle over the surrounding hills when at last we began to feel real concern for the doughty hunter. The possibility of his having to spend a night in the brush, lost, and perhaps wandering farther and farther away through the endless reaches of the wilderness, without matches perhaps, and beset by the ferocious timber wolves, which abounded in the hills to the north, was not pleasant to contemplate.

Tired as we were, when the black night settled down and the Professor had not come, we pulled on our fur-lined coats—for the nights are cold in the North at that season—lit the lanterns and, led by the Trapper, were just starting on a search for the absent one when away off to the north, faint and indistinct, we heard the report of a rifle.

Bill threw his rifle to his shoulder and fired once, a pause, then twice in quick succession, the signal for a lost man. Listening with strained ears we heard, faint, very faint, sounding, it seemed, miles away where the black bulge of the mountains loomed up to meet the sky, the answering shots—one, then two immediately after—and we knew that the wanderer heard and was even then plunging through the brush on the way to camp.

Getting my shot gun, I continued to fire at regular intervals to guide him in. At last he came staggering into the firelight, covered with mud from the muskogs he had crossed, his clothes torn by the brush, and, above all, hungry as a famished wolf. The latter condition was easily, but not quickly satisfied. There is an end to all

things, however. After the Professor had about cleaned out our week's supplies, he turned to us with a look of reproach and asked: "Why'n't you fellas wait? I been sit'n out there on that creek nearly all afternoon waitin'. Thought yeh was still out there." Poor Professor; he had failed to pick up our trail.

Then back of this kitchen you see the dining tent. The center pole passes through the center of the table, making more room, and, no matter where you go, the memory of those meals served in such a tent will stay with you just as the taste of your grand mother's pumpkin pie has since boyhood.

Campers are always interesting people and whatever the work or worry of getting started for camp, you will be doubly repaid when you see the pleasure you have given your children, and as to the health side of the question, one can scarcely calculate the benefit the fresh air and sunshine will give.

Bathing claims as many "joy victims" among the older ones as the young, and the boys always glory in the water sports, while that good, wholesome tired feeling that comes from stumbling and picking one's way along a stony lake shore should be considered no drawback, but a good, healthy insomnia cure. But when one comes to roughing it, leave all your grumblers at home.

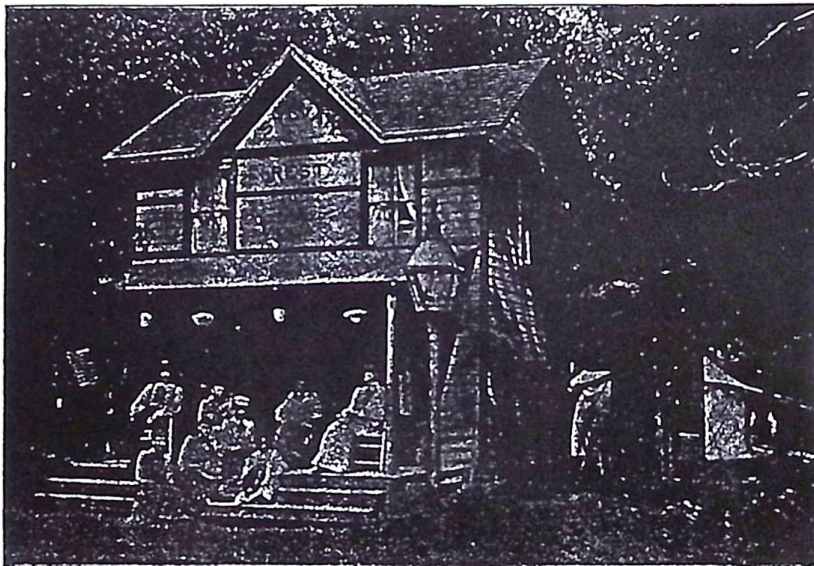
Away from every one you know, eating anything eatable, wearing any old thing and looking any old way—just any way to be free—digging fishworms, catching grasshoppers, catching frogs, fighting mosquitoes, with a shadow for a dressing room, plenty of game and sunshine and no accounting of time—this is freedom, and the novelty of it will grow new nerves in a coward and make the pessimist a "glad boy."

Away with the fashionable resorts, with their vanities, and let us get next to nature's ways for two, three or six weeks and enjoy the freedom God intended we should.

CAMPING FOR CAUSE AND EFFECT

Taking More From the Camp Than We Put In

By MRS. A. H. NORTHUP, MARKLE, IND.



A Typical Summer Retreat.

IT has not been so very many years since camping was considered an absurdity, but today there is a strong sympathy for those who are not fortunate enough to have a few days' or weeks' vacation at the water's edge.

Among these vacationists are two distinct classes, i. e., those seeking for simply a "change" and those looking for a "rest."

The first class often seek a cottage among cottages, where all their friends and relatives may come and enjoy the novelty of their surroundings with them, regardless of rest and quiet.

The second class are of the "go-way-back-and-sit-down" variety, selecting a quiet, sylvan retreat where rest is in the very air they breathe and the joy of being with nature alone undisturbed is paramount.

Never is money better invested than in cottage building and "keeping up" a rest home. The joy we get from each day as it comes we are sure of, and the sooner we realize that life is what we make it, and that real happiness comes from within, the sooner will our nervous troubles be to us only a memory.

For the benefit of those who are not financially able to build an expensive cottage I will give the plan of this neat cottage, shown above, which gives one every necessary comfort.

The interior is left in the rough, and under the stairway is the dish cupboard and dumb-waiter, the latter being a large cup-

board 4x3x6 feet, sunken in a deep hole in the ground that is lined with tight boards. The water is brought up and let down by a windlass.

The small kitchen back of the cottage is just the frame with iron roofing painted, and the siding of building paper painted same color as cottage. Both sides of this kitchen are made like doors which swing from hinges at the upper side, giving an awning over the opening when raised and resting on a single standard. This is inexpensive and the delight of the cook.

TIMBER WOLF

Portland, Oregon—Reaching San Diego after a stormy sea voyage of two weeks on board a big log raft, a large gray timber wolf was shot while roaming the yards of the Russ Lumber Company, at that place, searching for food.

The log raft and wolf came to San Diego from the Columbia River logging camps, near Portland. The logs are bound together with great chains into a cigar-shaped raft containing millions of feet of lumber. Powerful tugs take them in tow for the ocean voyage south.

The rafts are moored near the shore while awaiting dispatch, and it was there, it is supposed, that the wolf took passage. These log rafts are the biggest floated anywhere in the world, and a wolf easily could hide himself on board before being pulled to sea.

INDIAN FIGHTER FLOATS DOWN RIVER FOR WEALTH

Nemaha, Nebraska—Thomas Bogle, a veteran Indian fighter and trapper, is coming here to claim a fortune of \$30,000, to which he is said to be sole heir.

Bogle is travelling down the Missouri River in a small houseboat. He has been trapping in the Northwest since the Indian warfare ceased, years ago.



You Will Be Doubly Repaid when You See the Pleasure You Have Given Your Children.