

SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE

VOL. XXXVIII

NOVEMBER, 1905

NO. 5

A WOLF HUNT IN OKLAHOMA

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEXANDER LAMBERT, M.D., AND W. SLOAN SIMPSON

ON April eighth, nineteen hundred and five, we left the town of Frederick, Oklahoma, for a few days' coyote coursing in the Comanche Reserve. Lieut.-Gen. S. B. M. Young, U.S.A., retired, Lieutenant Fortescue, U.S.A., formerly of my regiment, Dr. Alexander Lambert, of New York, Colonel Cecil Lyon, of Texas, and Sloan Simpson, also of Texas, and formerly of my regiment, were with me. We were the guests of two old-style Texas cattlemen, Messrs. Burnett and Wagner, who had leased great stretches of pasture from the Comanches and Kiowas; and I cannot sufficiently express my appreciation of the kindness of these my two hosts. Burnett's brand, the "four sixes," has been owned by him for forty years. Both of them had come to this country thirty years before, in the days of the buffalo, when all game was very plentiful and the Indians were still on the war-path. Several other ranchmen were along, including John Abernethy, of Tesca, Oklahoma, a professional wolf hunter. There were also a number of cow hands of both Burnett and Wagner; among them were two former riders for the "four sixes," Fi Taylor and Uncle Ed Gillis, who seemed to make it their special mission to see that everything went right with me. Furthermore there was Captain McDonald of the Texas Rangers, a game and true man, whose name was one of terror to outlaws and violent criminals of all kinds; and finally there was Quanah Parker, the Comanche chief, in his youth a bitter foe of the whites, now painfully teaching his people to travel the white man's stony road.

We drove out some twenty miles to where camp was pitched in a bend of Deep Red Creek, which empties into the Red River of the South. Cottonwood, elm, and pecans formed a belt of timber along the creek; we had good water, the tents were pitched on short, thick grass, and everything was in perfect order. The fare was delicious. Altogether it was an ideal camp, and the days we passed there were also ideal. Cardinals and mocking-birds—the most individual and delightful of all birds in voice and manner—sang in the woods; and the beautiful, many-tinted fork-tailed fly-catchers were to be seen now and then, perched in trees or soaring in curious zigzags, chattering loudly.

In chasing the coyote only greyhounds are used, and half a dozen different sets of these had been brought to camp. Those of Wagner, the "Big D" dogs, as his cow-punchers called them, were handled by Bony Moore, who, with Tom Burnett, the son of our host Burke Burnett, took the lead in feats of daring horsemanship, even in that field of daring horsemen. Bevins had brought both greyhounds and rough-haired staghounds from his Texas ranch. So had Cecil Lyon, and though his dogs had chiefly been used in coursing the black-tailed Texas jack-rabbit, they took naturally to the coyote chases. Finally there were Abernethy's dogs, which together with their master, performed the feats I shall hereafter relate. Abernethy has a homestead of his own not far from Frederick, and later I was introduced to his father, an old Confederate soldier, and to his sweet and pretty wife, and their five little children. He had run away with his wife when they were nineteen and

** From the forthcoming book, "Outdoor Pastimes of an American Hunter," by Theodore Roosevelt.

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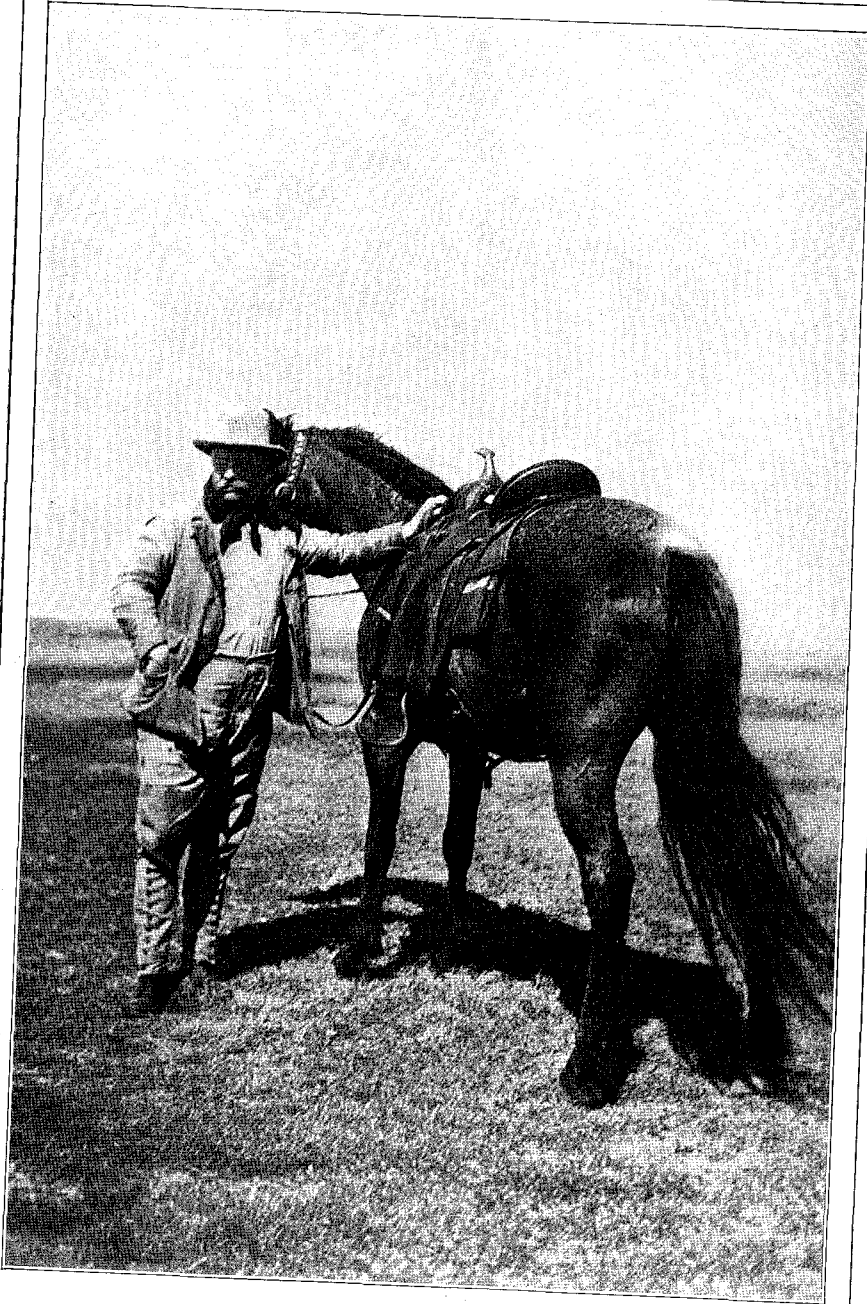
From a photograph, copyright 1905, by Alexander Lambert, M.D.

Starting toward the wolf grounds.

sixteen respectively; but the match had turned out a happy one. Both were particularly fond of music, including the piano, horn, and violin, and they played duets together. General Young, whom the Comanches called "War Bonnet," went in a buggy with Burke Burnett, and as Burnett invariably followed the hounds at full speed in his buggy, and usually succeeded in seeing most of the chase, I felt that the buggy men really encountered greater hazards than anyone else. It was a thoroughly congenial company all through. The weather was good; we were in the saddle from morning until night; and our camp was in all respects all that a camp should be; so how could we help enjoying ourselves?

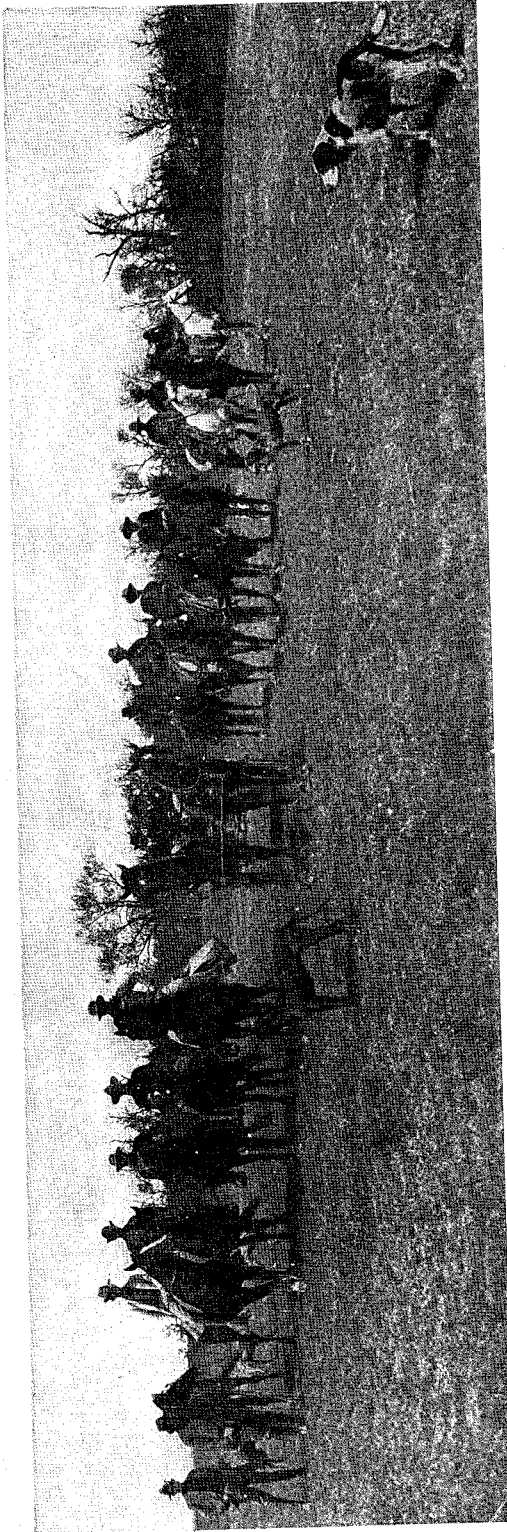
The coursing was done on the flats and great rolling prairies which stretched north from our camp toward the Wichita Mountains and south toward the Red River. There was a certain element of risk in the gallops, because the whole country was one huge prairie-dog town, the prairie-dogs being so numerous that the new towns and the abandoned towns were continuous with

one another in every direction. Practically every run we had was through these prairie-dog towns, varied occasionally by creeks and washouts. But as we always ran scattered out, the wonderfully quick cow ponies, brought up in this country and spending all their time among the prairie-dog towns, were able, even while running at headlong speed, to avoid the holes with a cleverness that was simply marvellous. During our hunt but one horse stepped in a hole; he turned a complete somerset, though neither he nor his rider was hurt. Stunted mesquite bushes grew here and there in the grass, and there was cactus. As always in prairie-dog towns, there were burrowing owls and rattlesnakes. We had to be on our guard that the dogs did not attack the latter. Once we thought a greyhound was certainly bitten. It was a very fast blue bitch, which seized the rattler and literally shook it to pieces. The rattler struck twice at the bitch, but so quick were the bitch's movements that she was not hit either time, and in a second the snake was not merely dead, but in pieces. We usually killed the rattlers



From a photograph by W. Sloan Simpson.

The Big D cow pony.



Start for the hunt.

From a photograph by W. Sloan Simpson.

with either our quirts or ropes. One which I thus killed was over five feet long.

By rights there ought to have been carts in which the greyhounds could be drawn until the coyotes were sighted, but there were none, and the greyhounds simply trotted along beside the horses. All of them were fine animals, and almost all of them of recorded pedigree. Coyotes have sharp teeth and bite hard, while greyhounds have thin skins, and many of them were cut in the worries. This was due to the fact that only two or three of them seized by the throat, the others taking hold behind, which of course exposed them to retaliation. Few of them would have been of much use in stopping a big wolf. Abernethy's hounds, however, though they could not kill a big wolf, would stop it, permitting their owner to seize it exactly as he seized coyotes, as hereafter described. He had killed but a few of the big gray wolves; one weighed ninety-seven pounds. He said that there were gradations from this down to the coyotes. A few days before our arrival, after a very long chase, he had captured a black wolf, weighing between fifty and sixty pounds.

These Southern coyotes or prairie wolves are only about one-third the size of the big gray timber wolves of the Northern Rockies. They are too small to meddle with full-grown horses and cattle, but pick up young calves and kill sheep as well as any small domesticated animal that they can get at. The big wolves flee from the neighborhood of anything like close settlements, but coyotes hang around the neighborhood of man much more persistently. They show a fox-like cunning in catching rabbits, prairie-dogs, gophers, and the like. After nightfall they are noisy, and their melancholy wailing and yelling are familiar sounds to all who pass over the plains. The young are brought forth in holes in cut banks or similar localities. Within my own experience I have

known of the finding of but two families. In one there was but a single family of five cubs and one old animal, undoubtedly the mother; in the other case there were ten or eleven cubs and two old females which had apparently shared the burrow or cave, though living in separate pockets. In neither case was any full-grown male coyote found in the neighborhood; as regards

Coyotes are sharp, wary, knowing creatures, and on most occasions take care to keep out of harm's way. But individuals among them have queer freaks. On one occasion while Sloan Simpson was on the roundup he waked at night to find something on the foot of his bed, its dark form indistinctly visible against the white tarpaulin. He aroused a friend to ask if it



From a photograph, copyright 1905, by Alexander Lambert, M.D.

After a run.

these particular litters, the father seemingly had nothing to do with taking care of or supporting the family. I am not able to say whether this was accidental or whether it is a rule that only the mother lives with and takes care of the litter; I have heard contrary statements about the matter from hunters who should know. Unfortunately I have learned from long experience that it is only exceptional hunters who can be trusted to give accurate descriptions of the habits of any beast, save such as are connected with its chase.

could be a dog. While they were cautiously endeavoring to find out what it was, it jumped up and ran off; they then saw that it was a coyote. In a short time it returned again, coming out of the darkness toward one of the cowboys who was awake, and the latter shot it, fearing it might have hydrophobia. But I doubt this, as in such case it would not have curled up and gone to sleep on Simpson's bedding. Coyotes are subject to hydrophobia, and when under the spell of the dreadful disease will fear-



From a photograph, copyright 1905, by Alexander Lambert, M.D.

The trail hounds.

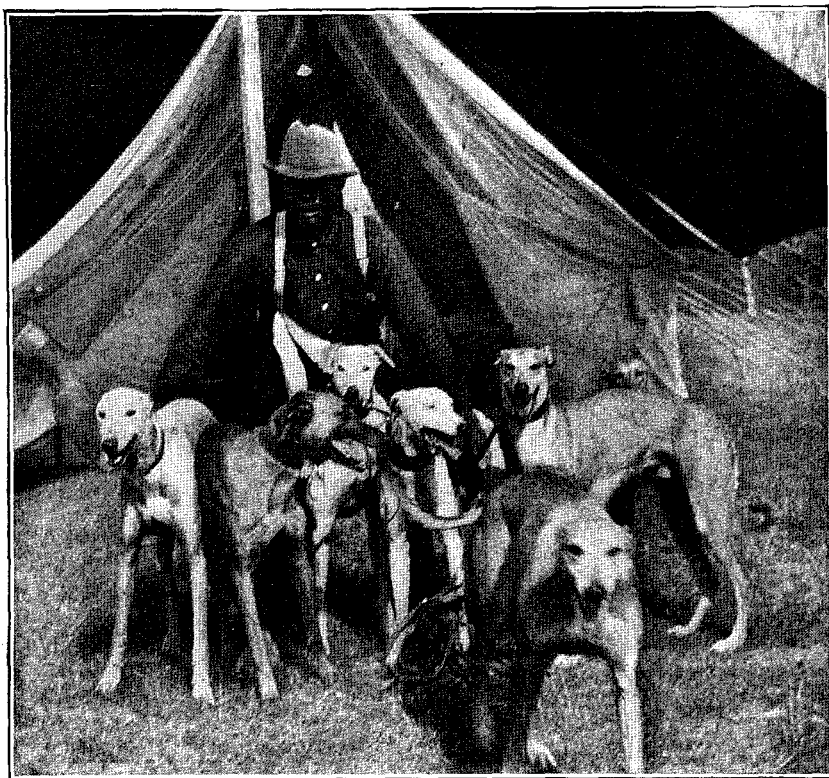
lessly attack men. In one case of which I know, a mad coyote coming into camp sprang on a sleeping man who was rolled in his bedding and bit and worried the bedding in the effort to get at him. Two other men hastened to his rescue, and the coyote first attacked them and then suddenly sprang aside and again worried the bedding, by which time one of them was able to get in a shot and killed it. All coyotes, like big wolves, die silently and fight to the last. I had never weighed any coyotes until on this trip. I weighed the twelve which I myself saw caught, and they ran as follows: male, thirty pounds; female, twenty-eight pounds; female, thirty-six pounds; male, thirty-two pounds; male, thirty-four pounds; female, thirty pounds; female, twenty-seven pounds; male, thirty-two pounds; male, twenty-nine pounds; young male, twenty-two pounds; male, twenty-nine pounds; female, twenty-seven pounds. Disregarding the young male, this makes an average of just over thirty

pounds.* Except the heaviest female, they were all gaunt and in splendid running trim; but then I do not remember ever seeing a really fat coyote.

The morning of the first day of our hunt dawned bright and beautiful, the air just cool enough to be pleasant. Immediately after breakfast we jogged off on horseback, Tom Burnett and Bony Moore in front, with six or eight greyhounds slouching alongside, while Burke Burnett and "War Bonnet" drove behind us in the buggy. I was mounted on one of Tom Burnett's favorites, a beautiful Kiowa pony. The chuck-wagon, together with the relay of greyhounds to be used in the afternoon, was to join us about midday at an appointed place where there was a pool of water.

We shuffled along, strung out in an irreg-

* I sent the skins and skulls to Dr. Hart Merriam, the head of the Biological Survey. He wrote me about them: "All but one are the plains coyote, *Canis nebrascensis*. They are not perfectly typical, but are near enough for all practical purposes. The exception is a yearling pup of a much larger species. Whether this is *frustor* I dare not say in the present state of knowledge of the group."



From a photograph, copyright 1905, by Alexander Lambert, M.D.

Lyon's greyhounds.

ular line, across a long flat, in places covered with bright-green wild onions; and then up a gentle slope where the stunted mesquite grew, while the prairie-dogs barked spasmodically as we passed their burrows. The low crest, if such it could be called, of the slope was reached only some twenty minutes after we left camp, and hardly had we started down the other side than two coyotes were spied three or four hundred yards in front. Immediately horses and dogs were after them at a headlong, break-neck run, the coyotes edging to the left where the creek bottom, with its deep banks and narrow fringes of timber, was about a mile distant. The little wolves knew their danger and ran their very fastest, while the long dogs stretched out after them, gaining steadily. It was evident the chase would be a short one, and there was no need to husband the horses, so every man let his pony go for all there was in him. At such a speed, and especially going downhill, there was not the slightest use in trying to steer clear of the

prairie-dog holes; it was best to let the veteran cow ponies see to that for themselves. They were as eager as their riders and on we dashed at full speed, curving to the left toward the foot of the slope; we jumped into and out of a couple of broad, shallow washouts, as we tore after the hounds, now nearing their quarry. The rearmost coyote was overtaken just at the edge of the creek; the foremost, which was a few yards in advance, made good its escape, as all the dogs promptly tackled the rearmost, tumbling it over into a rather deep pool. The scuffling and splashing told us what was going on, and we reined our horses short up at the brink of the cut bank. The water had hampered the dogs in killing their quarry, only three or four of them being in the pool with him; and of those he had seized one by the nose and was hanging on hard. In a moment one of the cowboys got hold of him, dropped a noose over his head, and dragged him out on the bank, just as the buggy came rattling up at full gallop. Burnett and the

general, taking advantage of the curve in our course, had driven across the chord of the arc, and keeping their horses at a run, had seen every detail of the chase and were in at the death.

In a few minutes the coyote was skinned, the dogs rested, and we were jogging on once more. Hour after hour passed by. We had a couple more runs, but in each case the coyote had altogether too long a start and got away; the dogs no longer being as fresh as they had been. As a rule, although there are exceptions, if the greyhounds cannot catch the coyote within two or three miles the chances favor the escape of the little wolf. We found that if the wolf had more than half a mile start he got away. As greyhounds hunt by sight, cut banks enable the coyote easily to throw off his pursuers unless they are fairly close up. The greyhounds see the wolf when he is far off, for they have good eyes; but in the chase, if the going is irregular, they tend to lose him, and they do not depend much on one another in recovering sight of him; on the contrary, the dog is apt to quit when he no longer has the quarry in view.

At noon we joined the chuck-wagon where it stood drawn up on a slope of the treeless, bushless prairie; and the active roundup cook soon had the meal ready. It was the four-sixes wagon, the brand burned into the wood of the chuck-box. Where does a man take more frank enjoyment in his dinner than at the tail end of a chuck-wagon?

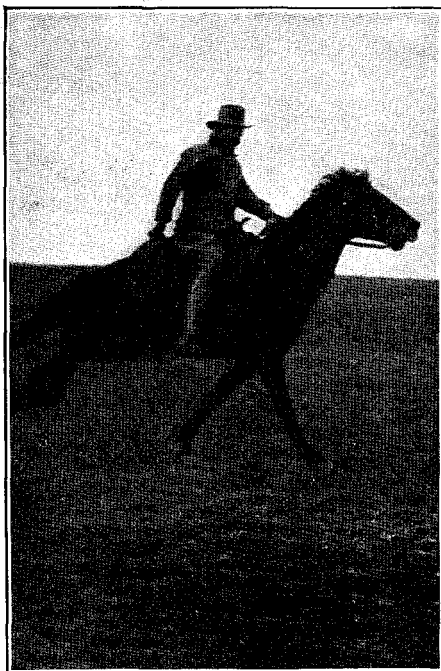
Soon after eating we started again, having changed horses and dogs. I was mounted on a Big D cow pony, while Lambert had a dun-colored horse, hard to hold,

but very tough and swift. An hour or so after leaving camp we had a four-mile run after a coyote, which finally got away, for it had so long a start that the dogs were done out by the time they came within fair distance. They stopped at a little prairie pool, some of them lying or standing in it, panting violently; and thus we found them as we came stringing up at a gallop. After they had been well rested we started toward

camp; but we were down in the creek bottom before we saw another coyote. This one again was a long distance ahead, and I did not suppose there was much chance of our catching him; but away all the dogs and all the riders went at the usual run, and catch him we did, because, as it turned out, the "morning" dogs, which were with the wagon, had spied him first and run him hard, until he was in sight of the "afternoon" dogs, which were with us. I got tangled in a washout, scrambled out, and was galloping along, watching the country in front, when Lambert passed me as hard as he could go; I

saw him disappear into another washout, and then come out on the other side, while the dogs were driving the coyote at an angle down toward the creek. Pulling short to the right, I got through the creek, hoping the coyote would cross, and the result was that I galloped up to the worry almost as soon as the foremost riders from the other side—a piece of good fortune for which I had only luck to thank. The hounds caught the coyote as he was about crossing the creek. From this point it was but a short distance into camp.

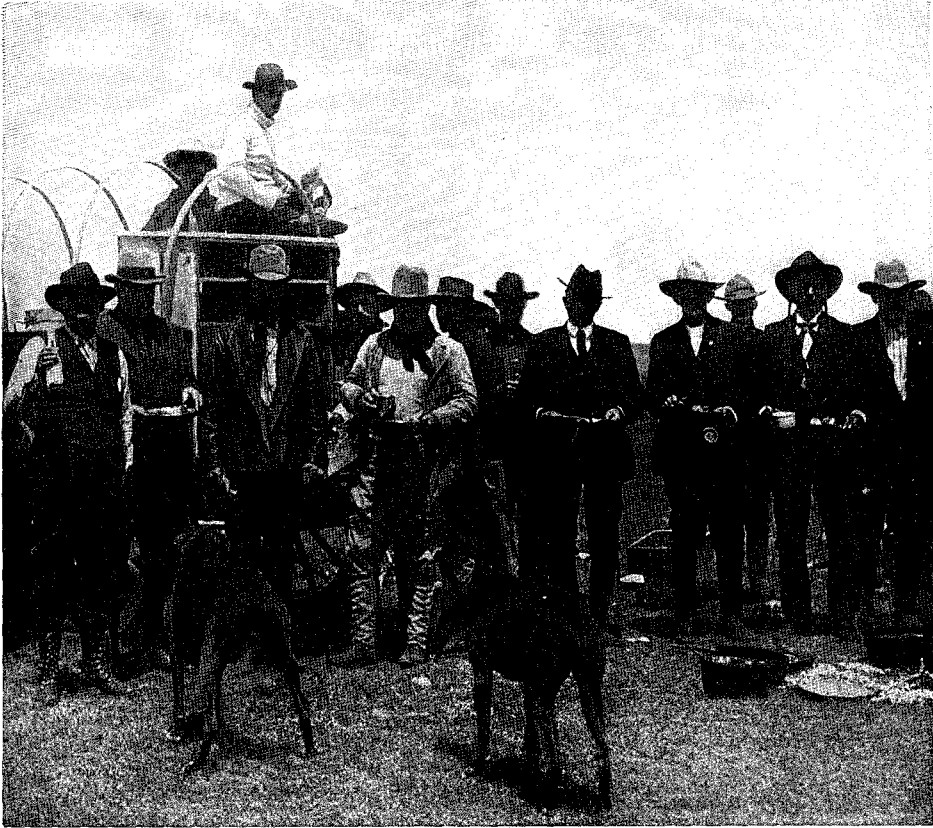
Again next morning we were off before the sun had risen high enough to take away



From a photograph by W. Sloan Simpson.

Tom Burnett's cutting horse.

(I was riding him at full gallop.)

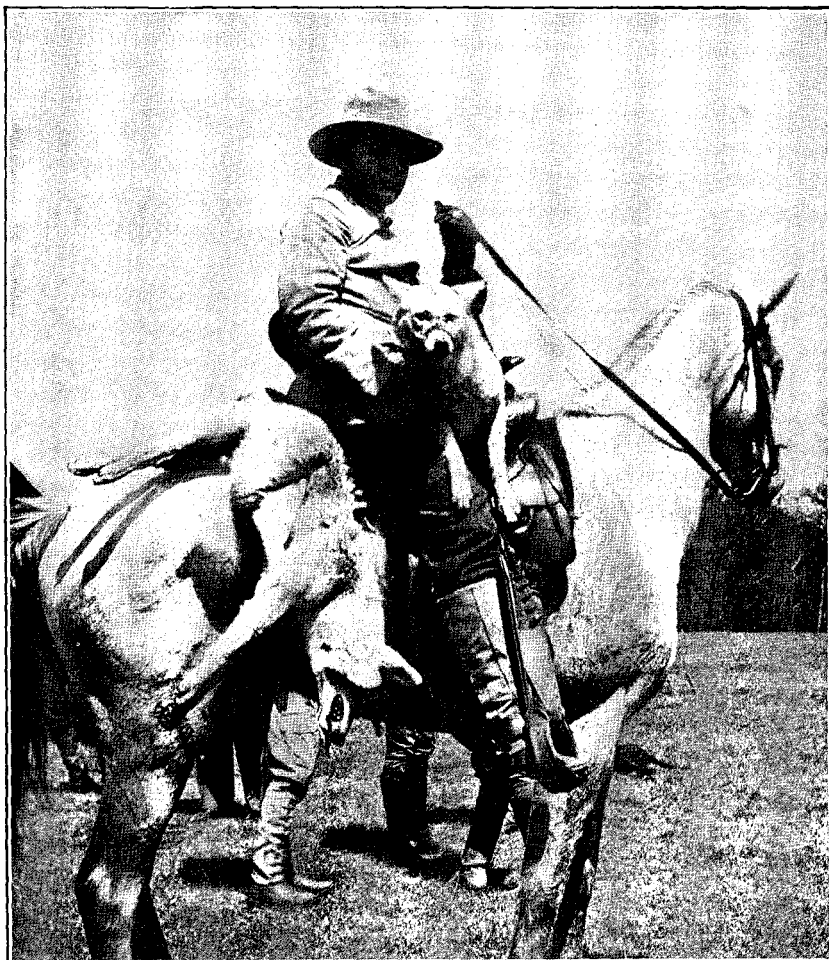


From a photograph by W. Sloan Simpson.

At the tail of the chuck-wagon.

the cool freshness from the air. This day we travelled several miles before we saw our first coyote. It was on a huge, gently sloping stretch of prairie, which ran down to the creek on our right. We were travelling across it strung out in line when the coyote sprang up a good distance ahead of the dogs. They ran straight away from us at first. Then I saw the coyote swinging to the right toward the creek and I half-wheeled, riding diagonally to the line of the chase. This gave me an excellent view of dogs and wolf, and also enabled me to keep nearly abreast of them. On this particular morning the dogs were Bevin's greyhounds and staghounds. From where the dogs started they ran about three miles, catching their quarry in the flat where the creek circled around in a bend, and when it was not fifty yards from the timber. By this time the puncher, Bony Moore, had passed me, most of the other riders having

been so far to the left when the run began that they were unable to catch up. The little wolf ran well and the greyhounds had about reached their limit when they caught up with it. But they lasted just long enough to do the work. A fawn-colored greyhound and a black staghound were the first dogs up. The staghound tried to seize the coyote, which dodged a little to one side; the fawn-colored greyhound struck and threw it; and in another moment the other dogs were up and the worry began. I was able to see the run so well, because Tom Burnett had mounted me on his fine roan cutting horse. We sat around in a semicircle on the grass until the dogs had been breathed, and then started off again. After some time we struck another coyote, but rather far off, and this time the dogs were not fresh. After running two or three miles he pulled away and we lost him, the dogs refreshing themselves by standing and lying in a shallow prairie pool.



From a photograph, copyright 1905, by Alexander Lambert, M.D.

Abernethy returns from the hunt.

In the afternoon we again rode off, and this time Abernethy, on his white horse, took the lead, his greyhounds trotting beside him. There was a good deal of rivalry among the various owners of the hounds as to which could do best, and a slight inclination among the cowboys to be jealous of Abernethy. No better riders could be imagined than these same cowboys, and their greyhounds were stanch and fast; but Abernethy, on his tough white horse, not only rode with great judgment, but showed a perfect knowledge of the coyote, and by his own exertions greatly assisted his hounds. He had found out in his long experience that while the greyhounds could outpace a coyote in a two or three mile run, they would

then fall behind; but that after going eight or ten miles, a coyote in turn became exhausted, and if he had been able to keep his hounds going until that time they could, with his assistance, then stop the quarry.

We had been shogging along for an hour or more when we put up a coyote and started after it. I was riding the Big D pony I had ridden the afternoon before. It was a good and stout horse, but one which my weight was certain to distress if I tried to go too fast for too long a time. Moreover, the coyote had a long start, and I made up my mind that he would either get away or give us a hard run. Accordingly, as the cowboys started off at their usual headlong pace, I rode behind at a gallop, husbanding my



From a photograph, copyright 1905, by Alexander Lambert, M.D.

Abernethy and the coyote.

horse. For a mile or so the going was very rough, up over and down stony hills and among washouts. Then we went over gently rolling country for another mile or two, and then came to a long broken incline which swept up to a divide some four miles ahead of us. Lambert had been riding alongside of Abernethy, at the front, but his horse began to play out, and needed to be nursed along, so that he dropped back level with me. By the time I had reached the foot of this incline the punchers, riding at full speed, had shot their bolts, and one by one I passed them, as well as most of the greyhounds. But Abernethy was far ahead, his white horse loping along without showing any signs of distress. Up the long slope I

did not dare press my animal, and Abernethy must have been a mile ahead of me when we struck the divide, while where the others were I had no idea, except that they were behind me. When I reached the divide I was afraid I might have missed Abernethy, but to my delight he was still in sight, far ahead. As we began to go downhill I let the horse fairly race; for by Abernethy's motions I could tell that he was close to the wolf and that it was no longer running in a straight line, so that there was a chance of my overtaking them. In a couple of miles I was close enough to see what was going on. But one greyhound was left with Abernethy. The coyote was obviously tired, and Abernethy, with

the aid of his perfectly trained horse, was helping the greyhound catch it. Twice he headed it, and this enabled me to gain rapidly. They had reached a small unwooded creek by the time I was within fifty yards; the little wolf tried to break back to the left; Abernethy headed it and rode almost over it; and it gave a wicked snap at his foot, cutting the boot. Then he wheeled and came toward it; again it galloped back and just as it crossed the creek the greyhound made a rush, pinned it by the hind leg and threw it. There was a scuffle, then a yell from the greyhound as the wolf bit it. At the bite the hound let go and jumped back a few feet, and at the same moment Abernethy, who had ridden his horse right on them as they struggled, leaped off and sprang on top of the wolf. He held the reins of the horse with one hand and thrust the other, with a rapidity and precision even greater than the rapidity of the wolf's snap, into the wolf's mouth, jamming his hand down crosswise between the jaws, seizing the lower jaw and bending it down so that the wolf could not bite him. He had a stout glove on his hand, but this would have been of no avail whatever had he not seized the animal just as he did; that is, behind the canines, while his hand pressed the lips against the teeth; with his knees he kept the wolf from using its fore paws to break the hold, until it gave up struggling. When he thus leaped on and captured this coyote it was entirely free, the dog having let go of it; and he was obliged to keep hold of the reins of his horse with one hand. I was not twenty yards distant at the time, and as I leaped off the horse he was sitting placidly on the live wolf, his hand between its jaws, the greyhound standing beside him, and his horse standing by as placid as he was. In a couple of minutes Fortescue and Lambert came up. It was as remarkable a feat of the kind as I have ever seen.

Through some oversight we had no straps with us, and Abernethy had lost the wire which he usually carried in order to tie up the wolves' muzzles—for he habitually captured his wolves in this fashion. However, Abernethy regarded the lack of straps as nothing more than a slight bother. Asking one of us to hold his horse, he threw the wolf across in front of the saddle, still keeping his grip on the lower jaw, then mounted and rode off with us on the back track.

The wolf was not tied in any way. It was unhurt, and the only hold he had was on its lower jaw; I was surprised that it did not strive to fight with its legs, but after becoming satisfied that it could not bite, it seemed to resign itself to its fate, was fairly quiet, and looked about with its ears pricked forward. The wolves which I subsequently saw him capture, and, having tied up their muzzles, hold before him on the saddle, acted in precisely the same manner.

The run had been about ten miles in an almost straight line. At the finish no other riders were in sight, but soon after we crossed the divide on our return, and began to come down the long slope toward the creek, we were joined by Tom Burnett and Bony Moore; while some three or four miles ahead on a rise of the prairie we could see the wagon in which Burke Burnett was driving General Young. Other punchers and straggling greyhounds joined us, and as the wolf, after travelling some five miles, began to recover his wind and show a tendency to fight for his freedom, Abernethy tied up his jaws with his handkerchief and handed him over to Bony Moore, who packed him on the saddle with entire indifference, the wolf himself showing a curious philosophy. Our horses had recovered their wind and we struck into a gallop down the slope; then as we neared the wagon we broke into a run, Bony Moore brandishing aloft with one hand the live wolf, its jaws tied up with a handkerchief, but otherwise unbound. We stopped for a few minutes with Burnett and the general to tell particulars of the hunt. Then we loped off again toward camp, which was some half dozen miles off. I shall always remember this run and the really remarkable feat Abernethy performed. Colonel Lyon had seen him catch a big wolf in the same way that he caught this coyote. It was his usual method of catching both coyotes and wolves. Almost equally noteworthy were the way in which he handled and helped his greyhounds, and the judgment, resolution, and fine horsemanship he displayed. His horse showed extraordinary endurance.

The third day we started out as usual, the chuck-wagon driving straight to a pool far out on the prairie, where we were to meet it for lunch. Chief Quannah's three wives had joined him, together with a small boy and a baby, and they drove in a wagon



From a photograph, copyright 1905, by Alexander Lambert, M.D.

Bony Moore and the coyote.

of their own. Meanwhile the riders and hounds went south nearly to Red River. In the morning we caught four coyotes and had a three miles run after one which started too far ahead of the dogs, and finally got clean away. All the four that we got were started fairly close up, and the run was a breakneck scurry, horses and hounds going as hard as they could put feet to the ground. Twice the cowboys distanced me; and twice the accidents of the chase, the sudden twists and turns of the coyote in his efforts to take advantage of the ground, favored me and enabled me to be close up at the end, when Abernethy jumped off his horse and ran in to where the dogs had the coyote. He was even quicker with his hands than the wolf's

snap, and in a moment he always had the coyote by the lower jaw.

Between the runs we shogged forward across the great reaches of rolling prairie in the bright sunlight. The air was wonderfully clear, and any object on the sky-line, no matter how small, stood out with startling distinctness. There were few flowers on these dry plains; in sharp contrast to the flower prairies of southern Texas, which we had left the week before, where many acres for a stretch would be covered by masses of red or white or blue or yellow blossoms—the most striking of all, perhaps, being the fields of the handsome buffalo clover. As we plodded over the prairie the sharp eyes of the punchers were scanning the ground

far and near, and sooner or later one of them would spy the motionless form of a coyote, or all would have their attention attracted as it ran like a fleeting gray or brown shadow among the grays and browns of the desolate landscape. Immediately dogs and horses would stretch at full speed after it, and everything would be forgotten but the wild exhilaration of the run.

It was nearly noon when we struck the chuck-wagon. Immediately the handy round-up cook began to prepare a delicious dinner, and we ate as men have a right to eat, who have ridden all the morning and are going to ride fresh horses all the afternoon. Soon afterward the horse-wranglers drove up the saddle band, while some of the cow-punchers made a rope corral from the side of the wagon. Into this the horses were driven, one or two breaking back and being brought into the bunch again only after a gallop more exciting than most coyote chases. Fresh ponies were roped out and the saddle band again turned loose. The dogs that had been used during the morning then started campward with the chuck-wagon. One of the punchers was riding a young and partially broken horse; he had no bridle, simply a rope around the horse's neck. This man started to accompany the wagon to the camp.

The rest of us went off at the usual cowpony trot or running walk. It was an hour or two before we saw anything; then a coyote appeared a long way ahead and the dogs raced after him. The first mile was up a gentle slope; then we turned, and after riding a couple of miles on the level the dogs had shot their bolt and the coyote drew away. When he got too far in front the dogs and

foremost riders stopped and waited for the rest of us to overtake them, and shortly afterward Burke Burnett and the general appeared in their buggy. One of the greyhounds was completely done out and we took some time attending to it. Suddenly one of the men, either Tom Burnett or Bony

Moore, called out that he saw the coyote coming back pursued by a horseman. Sure enough, the unfortunate little wolf had run in sight of the wagons and the puncher on the young unbridled horse immediately took after him, and, in spite of a fall, succeeded in heading him back and bringing him along in our direction, although some three-quarters of a mile away. Immediately everyone jumped into his saddle and away we all streamed down a long slope diagonally to the course the coyote was taking. He had a long start, but the dogs were rested, while he had been running steadily,



From a photograph by W. Sloan Simpson.

The worry of the coyote.

ily, and this fact proved fatal to him. Down the slope to the creek bottom at its end we rode at a run. Then there came a long slope upward, and the heavier among us fell gradually to the rear. When we topped the divide, however, we could see ahead of us the foremost men streaming after the hounds, and the latter running in a way which showed that they were well up on their game. Even a tired horse can go pretty well downhill, and by dint of hard running we who were behind got up in time to see the worry when the greyhounds caught the coyote, by some low ponds in a treeless creek-bed. We had gone about seven miles, the unlucky coyote at least ten. Our journey to camp was enlivened by catching another coyote after a short run. Next day was the last of our hunt. We



From a photograph by W. Sloan Simpson.

Greyhounds resting after a run.

started off in the morning as usual, but the buggy men on this occasion took with them some trail hounds, which were managed by a sergeant of the regular army, a game sportsman. They caught two coons in the timber of a creek two or three miles to the south of the camp. Meanwhile the rest of us, riding over the prairie, saw the greyhounds catch two coyotes, one after a rather long run and one after a short one. Then we turned our faces toward camp. I saw Abernethy, with three or four of his own hounds, riding off to one side, but unfortunately I did not pay any heed to him, as I supposed the hunting was at an end. But when we reached camp Abernethy was not there, nor did he turn up until we were finishing lunch. Then he suddenly appeared, his tired greyhounds trotting behind him, while he carried before him on the saddle a live coyote, with its muzzle tied up, and a dead coyote strapped behind his saddle. Soon after leaving us he had found a coyote, and after a good run the dogs had stopped

it and he had jumped off and captured it in his usual fashion. Then while riding along, holding the coyote before him on the saddle, he put up another one. His dogs were tired and he himself was of course greatly hampered in such a full-speed run by having the live wolf on the saddle in front of him. One by one the dogs gave out, but his encouragement and assistance kept two of them to their work, and after a run of some seven miles the coyote was overtaken. It was completely done out and would probably have died by itself, even if the hounds had not taken part in the killing. Hampered as he was, Abernethy could not take it alive in his usual fashion. So when it was dead he packed it behind his horse and rode back in triumph. The live wolf, as in every other case where one was brought into camp, made curiously little effort to fight with its paws, seeming to acquiesce in its captivity, and looking around, with its ears thrust forward, as if more influenced by curiosity than by any other feeling.



From a photograph, copyright 1905, by Alexander Lambert, M.D.

Quannah Parker's family.

After lunch we rode toward town, stopping at nightfall to take supper by the bank of a creek. We entered the town after dark, some twenty of us on horseback. Wagner was riding with us, and he had set his heart upon coming into and through the town in true cowboy style; and it was he who set the pace. We broke into a lope a mile outside the limits and by the time we struck the main street the horses were on a run and we tore down like a whirlwind until we reached the train. Thus ended as pleasant a hunting trip as any one could imagine. The party got seventeen coyotes all told, for there were some runs which I did not see at all, as now and then both men and dogs would get split into groups.

On this hunt we did not see any of the big wolves, the so-called buffalo or timber wolves, which I hunted in the old days on the northern cattle plains. Big wolves are found in both Texas and Oklahoma, but they are rare compared to the coyotes; and they are great wanderers. Alone or in parties of three or four or half a dozen they travel to and fro across the country, often leaving

a district at once if they are molested. Coyotes are more or less plentiful everywhere throughout the West in thinly settled districts, and they often hang about in the immediate neighborhood of towns. They do enough damage to make farmers and ranchers kill them whenever the chance offers. But this damage is not appreciable when compared with the ravages of their grim, big brother, the gray wolf, which, wherever it exists in numbers, is a veritable scourge to the stockmen.

Colonel Lyon's hounds were, as I have said, used chiefly after jack-rabbits. He had frequently killed coyotes with them, however, and on two or three occasions one of the big gray wolves. At the time when he did most of his wolf-hunting he had with the greyhounds a huge fighting dog, a Great Dane, weighing one hundred and forty-five pounds. In spite of its weight this dog could keep up well in a short chase, and its ferocious temper and enormous weight and strength made it invaluable at the bay. Whether the quarry were a gray wolf or coyote, mattered not in the least to it, and it

made its assaults with such headlong fury that it generally escaped damage. On the two or three occasions when the animal bayed was a big wolf the greyhounds did not dare tackle it, jumping about in an irregular circle and threatening the wolf until the fighting dog came up. The latter at once rushed in, seizing its antagonist by the throat or neck and throwing it. Doubtless it would have killed the wolf unassisted, but the greyhounds always joined in the killing; and once thrown, the wolf could never get on his legs. In these encounters the dog was never seriously hurt. Rather curiously, the only bad wound it ever received was from a coyote; the little wolf, not one-third of its weight, managing to inflict a terrific gash down its huge antagonist's chest, nearly tearing it open. But of course a coyote against such a foe could not last much longer than a rat pitted against a terrier.

Big wolves and coyotes are found side by side throughout the Western United States, both varying so in size that if a sufficient number of specimens, from different localities, are examined it will be found that there is a complete intergradation in both stature and weight. To the northward the coyotes disappear and the big wolves grow larger and larger until in the arctic regions they become veritable giants. At Point Barrow Mr. E. A. McIlhenny had six of the eight "huskies" of his dog team killed and eaten by a huge white dog wolf. At last he shot it, and found that it weighed one hundred and sixty-one pounds.

Good trail hounds can run down a wolf. A year ago Jake Borah's pack in northwestern Colorado ran a big wolf weighing one hundred and fifteen pounds to bay in but little over an hour. He then stood with his back to a rock, and though the dogs formed a semicircle around him, they dared not tackle him. Jake got up and shot him. Unless well trained and with the natural fighting edge neither trail hounds (fox-hounds) nor greyhounds can or will kill a big wolf, and under ordinary circumstances, no matter how numerous, they make but a poor showing against one. But big ninety-pound or one hundred-pound greyhounds, specially bred and trained for the purpose, stand on an entirely different footing. Three or four of these dogs, rushing in together and seizing the wolf by the throat, will kill him, or worry him until he is helpless. On several

occasions the Colorado Springs greyhounds have performed this feat. Johnny Goff owned a large, fierce dog, a cross between what he called a Siberian bloodhound (I suppose some animal like a Great Dane) and an ordinary hound, which, on one occasion when he had shot at and broken the hind leg of a big wolf, ran it down and killed it. On the other hand, wolves will often attack dogs. In March of the present year—nineteen hundred and five—Goff's dogs were scattered over a hillside hunting a bobcat, when he heard one of them yell, and looking up saw that two wolves were chasing it. The other dogs were so busy puzzling out the cat's trail that they never noticed what was happening. Goff called aloud, whereupon the wolves stopped. He shot one and the other escaped. He thinks that they would have overtaken and killed the hound in a minute or two if he had not interfered.

The big wolves shrink back before the growth of the thickly settled districts, and in the Eastern States they often tend to disappear even from districts that are uninhabited save by a few wilderness hunters. They have thus disappeared almost entirely from Maine, the Adirondacks, and the Alleghanies, although here and there they are said to be returning to their old haunts. Their disappearance is rather mysterious in some instances, for they are certainly not all killed off. The black bear is much easier killed, yet the black bear holds its own in many parts of the land from which the wolf has vanished. No animal is quite so difficult to kill as is the wolf, whether by poison or rifle or hound. Yet, after a comparatively few have been slain, the entire species will perhaps vanish from certain localities. In some localities even the cougar, the easiest of all game to kill with hounds, holds its own better. This, however, is not generally true.

But with all wild animals, it is a noticeable fact that a course of contact with man continuing over many generations of animal life causes a species so to adapt itself to its new surroundings that it can hold its own far better than formerly. When white men take up a new country, the game, and especially the big game, being entirely unused to contend with the new foe, succumb easily, and are almost completely killed out. If any individuals survive at all, however, the succeeding generations are far more difficult

to exterminate than were their ancestors, and they cling much more tenaciously to their old homes. The game to be found in old and long-settled countries is of course much more wary and able to take care of itself than the game of an untrodden wilderness; it is the wilderness life, far more than the actual killing of the wilderness game, which tests the ability of the wilderness hunter.

After a time, game may even, for the time being, increase in certain districts where settlements are thin. This was true of the wolves throughout the northern cattle country, in Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, and the western ends of the Dakotas. In the old days wolves were very plentiful throughout this region, closely following the huge herds of buffaloes. The white men who followed these herds as professional buffalo-hunters were often accompanied by other men, known as wolfers, who poisoned these wolves for the sake of their fur. With the disappearance of the buffalo the wolves diminished in numbers so that they also seemed to disappear. Then in the late eighties or early nineties the wolves began again to increase in numbers until they became once more as numerous as ever and infinitely more wary and difficult to kill; though as they were nocturnal in their habits they were not often seen. Along the Little Missouri and in many parts of Montana and Wyoming this increase was very noticeable during the last decade of the nineteenth century. They were at that time the only big animals of the region which had increased in numbers. Such an increase following a previous decrease in the same region was both curious and interesting. I never knew the wolves to be so numerous or so daring in their assaults upon stock in the Little Missouri country as in the years 1894 to 1896 inclusive. I am unable wholly to account for these changes. The first great diminution in the numbers of the wolves is only partially to be explained by the poisoning; yet they seemed to disappear almost everywhere and for a number of years continued scarce. Then they again became plentiful, reappearing in districts from whence they had entirely vanished, and appearing in new districts where they had been hitherto unknown. Then they once more began to diminish in number. In northwestern Colorado, in the White River country, cougars

fairly swarmed in the early nineties, while up to that time the big gray wolves were almost or entirely unknown. Then they began to come in, and increased steadily in numbers, while the cougars diminished, so that by the winter of 1902-3, they much outnumbered the big cats, and committed great ravages among the stock. The settlers were at their wits' ends how to deal with the pests. At last a trapper came in, a shiftless fellow, but extraordinarily proficient in his work. He had some kind of scent, the secret of which he would not reveal, which seemed to drive the wolves nearly crazy with desire. In one winter in the neighborhood of the Keystone Ranch he trapped forty-two big gray wolves; they still outnumber the cougars, which in that neighborhood have been nearly killed out, but they are no longer abundant.

At present wolves are decreasing in numbers all over Colorado, as they are in Montana, Wyoming, and the Dakotas. In some localities traps have been found most effective; in others, poison; and in yet others, hounds. I am inclined to think that where they have been pursued in one manner for a long time any new method will at first prove more efficacious. After a very few wolves have been poisoned or trapped, the survivors become so wary that only a master in the art can do anything with them, while there are always a few wolves which cannot be persuaded to touch a bait save under wholly exceptional circumstances. From association with the old she wolves the cubs learn as soon as they are able to walk to avoid man's traces in every way, and to look out for traps and poison. They are so shy and show such extraordinary cunning in hiding and slinking out of the way of the hunter that they are rarely killed with the rifle. Personally I never shot but one. A bold and good rider on a first-rate horse can, however, run down even a big gray wolf in fair chase, and either rope or shoot it. I have known a number of cow-punchers thus to rope wolves when they happened to run across them after they had gorged themselves on their quarry. A former Colorado ranchman, Mr. Henry N. Pancoast, who had done a good deal of wolf hunting, and had killed one which, judging by its skin, was a veritable monster, wrote me as follows about his experiences:

"I captured nearly all my wolves by run-

ning them down and then either roped or shot them. I had one mount that had great endurance, and when riding him never failed to give chase to a wolf if I had the time to spare; and never failed to get my quarry but two or three times. I roped four full-grown and two cubs and shot five full-grown and three cubs—the large wolf in question being killed that way. And he was by far the hardest proposition I ever tried, and I candidly think I ran him twenty miles before overhauling and shooting him (he showed too much fight to use a rope). As it was almost dark concluded to put him on horse and skin at ranch, but had my hands full to get him on the saddle, was so very heavy. My plan in running wolves down was to get about three hundred yards from them, and then to keep that distance until the wolf showed signs of fatigue, when a little spurt would generally succeed in landing him. In the case of the large one, however, I reckoned without my host, as the wolf had as much go left as the horse, so I tried slowing down to a walk and let the wolf go, he . . . came down to a little trot and soon placed a half mile between us, and finally went out of sight over a high hill. I took my time and on reaching top of hill saw wolf about four hundred yards off, and as I now had a down grade managed to get my tired horse on a lope and was soon up to the wolf, which seemed all stiffened up, and one shot from my Winchester finished him. We always had poison out, as wolves and coyotes killed a great many calves. Never poisoned but two wolves and those were caught with fresh antelope liver and entrails (coyotes were easily poisoned)."

In the early nineties the ravages of the wolves along the Little Missouri became so serious as thoroughly to arouse the stockmen. Not only colts and calves, and young trail stock, but in mid-winter full-grown horses and steers, were continually slain. The county authorities put a bounty of three dollars each on wolf scalps, to which the ranchmen of the neighborhood added a further bounty of five dollars. This made eight dollars for every wolf, and as the skin was also worth something, the business of killing wolves became profitable. Quite a number of men tried poisoning or trapping, but the most successful wolf hunter on the Little Missouri at that time was a man who did not rely on poison at all, but on dogs.

He was named Massingale, and he always had a pack of at least twenty hounds. The number varied, for a wolf at bay is a terrible fighter, with jaws like those of a steel trap, and teeth that cut like knives, so that the dogs were continually disabled and sometimes killed, and the hunter had always to be on the watch to add animals to his pack. It was not a good-looking pack, but it was thoroughly fit for its own work. Most of the dogs were greyhounds, whether rough or smooth haired, but many of them were big mongrels, part greyhound and part some other breed, such as bulldog, mastiff, Newfoundland, bloodhound, or collie. The only two requisites were that the dogs should run fast and fight gamely; and in consequence they formed as wicked, hard-biting a crew as ever ran down and throttled a wolf. They were usually taken out ten at a time, and by their aid Massingale killed over two hundred wolves, including cubs. Of course there was no pretence of giving the game fair play. The wolves were killed as vermin, not for sport. The greatest havoc was in the spring-time, when the she-wolves were followed to their dens. Some of the hounds were very fast, and they could usually overtake a young or weak wolf; but an old dog-wolf, with a good start, unless run into at once, would ordinarily get away if he was in running trim. Frequently, however, he was caught when he was not in running trim, for the hunter was apt to find him when he had killed a calf or taken part in dragging down a horse or steer, and was gorged with meat. Under these circumstances he could not run long before the pack. If possible, as with all such packs, the hunter himself got up in time to end the worry by a stab of his hunting-knife; but unless he was quick he had nothing to do, for the pack was thoroughly competent to do its own killing. Grim fighter though a great dog-wolf is, he stands no show before the onslaught of ten such hounds, agile and powerful, who rush on their antagonist in a body. Massingale's dogs possessed great power in their jaws, and unless he was up within two or three minutes after the wolf was overtaken, they tore him to death, though one or more of their number might be killed or crippled in the fight. The wolf might be throttled without having the hide on its neck torn; but when it was stretched out the dogs ripped open its belly. Dogs

do not get their teeth through the skin of an old cougar; but they will tear up either a bobcat or coyote.

In 1894 and 1896 I saw a number of wolves on the Little Missouri, although I was not looking for them. I frequently came upon the remains of sheep and young stock which they had killed; and once, upon the top of a small plateau, I found the body of a large steer, while the torn and trodden ground showed that he had fought hard for his life before succumbing. There had been two wolves engaged in the work, and the cunning beasts had evidently acted in concert. Apparently, while one attracted the steer's attention in front, the other, according to the invariable wolf habit, attacked him from behind, hamstringing him and tearing out his flanks. His body was still warm when I came up, but the marauders had slunk off, either seeing or smelling me. There was no mistaking the criminals, however, for, unlike bears, which usually attack an animal at the withers, or cougars, which attack the throat or head, wolves almost invariably attack their victim at the hind quarters and begin first on the hams or flanks, if the animal is of any size. Owing to their often acting in couples or in packs, the big wolves do more damage to horned stock than cougars, but they are not as dangerous to colts, and they are not nearly as expert as the big cats in catching deer and mountain sheep. When food is plentiful, good observers say that they will not try to molest foxes; but, if hungry, they certainly snap them up as quickly as they would fawns. Ordinarily they show complete tolerance of the coyotes; yet one bitter winter I knew of a coyote being killed and eaten by a wolf.

Not only do the habits of wild beasts change under changing conditions as time goes on, but there seems to be some change even in their appearance. Thus the early observers of the game of the Little Missouri, those who wrote in the first half of the nineteenth century, spoke much of the white wolves which were then so common in the region. These white wolves represented in all probability only a color variety of the ordinary gray wolf; and it is difficult to say exactly why they disappeared. Yet when about the year 1890 wolves again grew common these white wolves were very, very rare; indeed I never personally heard of but one being seen. This was on the Upper Cannonball in 1892. A nearly black wolf was killed not far from this spot in the year 1893. At the present day black wolves are more common than white wolves, which are rare indeed. But all these big wolves are now decreasing in numbers, and in most places are decreasing rapidly.

It will be noticed that on some points my observations about wolves are in seeming conflict with those of other observers as competent as I am; but I think the conflict is more seeming than real, and I have concluded to let my words stand. The great book of nature contains many pages which are hard to read, and at times conscientious students may well draw different interpretations of the obscure and least known texts. It may not be that either observer is at fault, but what is true of an animal in one locality may not be true of the same animal in another, and even in the same locality two individuals of the same species may differ widely in their traits and habits.





THE LIEUTENANT'S MESSENGER

By Eleanor Stuart

ILLUSTRATIONS BY F. C. YOHN

I

MISS ETHEL and Miss Coolidge, sir."

I looked up from my account-book with a sigh, thankful to be reading nothing of greater interest. "Let them come in," I said, snapping its covers together. I knew that peace was at an end. Ethel had been at odds with her governess for the last month and—as my whole heart and mind were concerned in the whereabouts and rescue of Wallace Weir—I was sometimes impatient of her vagaries and her governess' opinions. Wallace had named me her sole guardian.

She was a big, handsome child in that Christmas season of 1900; and, as she entered my littered London study, her likeness to Wallace smote me with keen remembrance. The feeble sun drew a gleam from her red-gold hair and the ruddy fairness of her skin seemed out of place in our city of murk and gloom. Miss Coolidge

was ever a distressing person. Argumentative and ecclesiastical, she had been a sort of parochial scene-shifter and glossary of priestly appointment in our country vicinage. I could well understand that there was friction.

"Come in, Ethel," I cried; "I was expecting a visit. What's wrong now? Are sums too long, or skirts too short?"

"Both—and thank you for inquiring—but it's not those," she answered. There was a quiet wilfulness about her as she took up a strong position in the Lamu chair Wallace had sent me, carefully guarding her new muff from harmful contact. "It's money. I need three pounds most awfully."

"Are you in debt—at fourteen?" I demanded gravely. "And when I know that you had seventeen pounds given you, first and last, on Christmas day?"

"It's not the money I so much object to, Sir Patrick," Miss Coolidge interposed primly; "it's the man, and the bird itself. They are neither of them fit to be a companion to a gentlewoman."