

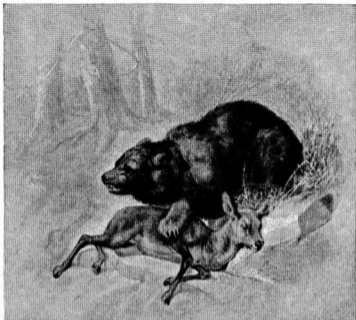
HUNTING THE GRIZZLY BEAR.

BY G. G. SHIELDS.

THE bear, like man, inhabits almost every latitude and every land, and has even been translated to the starry heavens, where the constellations of the Great Dipper and the Little Dipper are known to us as well as to the ancients as *Ursi Major* and *Minor*. But North America furnishes the largest and most aggressive species in the grizzly (*Ursus horribilis*), the black (*Ursus americanus*), and the polar (*Ursus maritimus*) bears, and here the hunter finds his most daring sport. Of all the known plantigrades (flat-footed beasts) the grizzly is the most savage and the most dreaded, and he is the largest of all, saving the presence of his cousin the polar bear, for which, nevertheless, he is more than a match in strength and courage. Some specimens measure seven feet from tip of nose to root of tail. The distinctive marks of the species are its great size; the shortness of the tail as compared with the ears; the huge flat paws, the sole of the hind-foot sometimes measuring seven and a half by five inches in a large male; the length of the hind-legs as compared with the forelegs, which gives the beast his awkward, shambling gait; the long claws of the forefoot, sometimes seven inches in length, while those of the hind-foot measure only three or four; the erect, bristling mane of stiff hair, often six inches long; the coarse hair of the body, sometimes three inches long, dark at the base, but with light tips. He has a dark stripe along the back, and one along each side, the hair on his body being, as a rule, a brownish-yellow, the region around the ears dusky, the legs nearly black, and the muzzle pale. Color, however, is not a distinctive mark, for female grizzlies have been killed in company with two cubs, of which one was brown, the other gray, or one dark, the other light; and the supposed species of "cinnamon" and "brown" bears are merely color variations of *Ursus horribilis* himself.

This ubiquitous gentleman has a wide range for his habitat. He has been found on the Missouri River from Fort Pierce northward, and thence west to his favorite haunts in the Rockies. Individuals have been found on the Pacific slope clear down to the coast. He is found as far south as Mexico, as far north as the Great Slave Lake in British America. He not only ranges everywhere, but eats everything. His majesty is a good liver. He is not properly a beast of prey, for he has neither the cat-like instincts nor the noiseless tread of the *felidae*, nor is he fleet and long-winded like the wolf, although good at a short run, as an unlucky hunter may find. But he hangs about the flanks of a herd of buffalo, with probably an eye to a wounded or disabled animal, and he frequently raids a ranch and carries off a sheep, hog, or calf penned beyond hope of escape. Elk is his favorite meat, and the knowing hunter who has the good luck to kill an elk makes sure that its carcass will draw Mr. Grizzly if he is within a range of five miles. He will eat not only flesh, fish, and fowl, but roots, herbs, fruit, vegetables, honey, and insects as well. Plums, buffalo-berries, and chokecherries make a large part of his diet in their seasons.

The grizzly bear possesses greater vitality and tenacity of life than any other animal on the continent, and the hunter who would hunt him must be well armed and keep a steady nerve. Each shot must be coolly put where it will do the most good. Several are usually necessary to stop one of these savage beasts. A single bullet lodged in the brain is fatal. If shot through the heart he may run a quarter of a mile or kill a man before he succumbs. In the days of the old muzzle-loading rifle it was hazardous indeed to hunt the grizzly, and many a man has paid the penalty of his folly with his life. With our improved breech-loading and repeating rifles there is less risk.



THE GRIZZLY AND HIS PREY.

The grizzly is said to bury carcasses of large animals for future use as food, but this I doubt. He hibernates during winter, but does not take to his long sleep until the winter has thoroughly set in and the snow is quite deep. He may frequently be tracked and found in snow a foot deep, where he is roaming in search of food. He becomes very fat before going into winter-quarters, and this vast accumulation of oil furnishes nutriment and heat sufficient to sustain life during his long confinement.

The newspapers often kill grizzlies weighing 1500, 1800, or even 2000 pounds, and in any party of frontiersmen "talking grizzly" you will find plenty of men who can give day, time, and place where he killed or helped to kill at least 1800 pounds of Bruin.

"Did you weigh it?"

"No, we didn't weigh 'im; but every

man as seed 'im said he would weigh that, and they was all good judges too."

And this is the way most of the stories of big bear, big elk, big deer, etc., begin and end. Bears are usually, though not always, killed at considerable distances from towns, or even ranches, where it is not easy to find a pair of scales.

The largest I have ever seen would not weigh more than 700 or 800 pounds, and I do not believe one has ever lived that would weigh 1000 pounds. The flesh of the adult grizzly is tough, stringy, and decidedly unpalatable, but that of a young fat one is tender and juicy, and is always a welcome dish on the hunter's table.

The female usually gives birth to two cubs, and sometimes three, at a time. At birth they weigh only about $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds each. The grizzly breeds readily in confinement, and several litters have been produced in the Zoological Gardens

at Cincinnati. The female is unusually vicious while rearing her young, and the hunter must be doubly cautious about attacking at that time. An Indian rarely attacks a grizzly single-handed at any time, and it is only when several of their native hunters are together that they will attempt to kill one. They value the claws very highly, however, and take great pride in wearing strings of them around their necks.

The grizzly usually frequents the timbered or brush-covered portions of mountainous regions, or the timbered valleys of streams that head in the mountains. He occasionally follows down the course of these streams, and even travels many miles from one stream to another, or from one range of mountains to another, across open prairie. I once found one on a broad open plateau in the Big Horn Mountains, about half a mile from the nearest cover of any kind. He was turning over rocks in search of worms. At the report of my rifle he started for the nearest cañon, but never reached it. An explosive bullet through his lungs rendered him unequal to the journey.

Few persons believe that a grizzly will attack a man before he is himself attacked. I was one of these doubting Thomases until two years ago, when I was thoroughly convinced by ocular demonstration that some grizzlies, at least, will attempt to make a meal off a man even though he may not have harmed them previously. We were hunting in the Shoshone Mountains in northern Wyoming. I had killed a large elk in the morning, and on going back to the carcass in the afternoon to skin it we saw that Bruin had been there ahead of us, but had fled on our approach. Without the least apprehension of his return, we leaned our rifles against a tree about fifty feet away, and commenced work. There were three of us, but only two rifles, Mr. Huffman, the photographer, having left his in camp. He had finished taking views of the carcass, and we were all busily engaged skinning, when, hearing a crashing in the brush and a series of savage roars and growls, we looked up the hill, and were horrified to see three grizzly bears, an old female and two cubs about two-thirds grown, charging upon us with all the savage fury of a pack of starving wolves upon a sheepfold.

They were between us and our rifles

when we first saw them, and we sprang to our horses, which were picketed a few yards below, supposing, of course, that when the bears reached the elk carcass they would proceed to eat it, and pay no further attention to us. Strange to say, it was the carcass to which they paid no attention. They still came after us; we had no time for flight, and could not even release and mount our terror-stricken horses. Our only chance was to fight for our lives, and with one accord we all three grasped our hunting-knives and dashed at them. We threw our hats and yelled like Comanches, and the savage brutes, seeing themselves thus boldly confronted by equal numbers, stopped, raised on their haunches, growled, snapped their jaws for a few moments, and then walked sullenly back up the hill into the brush. This gave us an opportunity to get hold of our rifles, and then it was our turn to charge. To make a long story short, we killed the old female and one cub; the other escaped into the jungle before we could get a shot at him. The resolute front we put on alone saved our lives.

The grizzly is partially nocturnal in his habits, and apparently divides his labor of obtaining food and his travelling about equally between day and night. It is not definitely known to what age he lives in his wild state, but he is supposed to attain to twenty-five or thirty years.

Notwithstanding the great courage and ferocity of this formidable beast, he will utter the most pitiable groans and howls when seriously or mortally wounded.

Another instance of a grizzly making an unprovoked attack upon a man was vouched for by a man whom I know to be strictly truthful. Two brothers were prospecting in a range of mountains near the head waters of the Stinking Water river. The younger of the two, though an able-bodied man, and capable of doing a good day's work with a pick or shovel, was weak-minded, and the elder brother never allowed him to go any distance away from camp or their work alone. He, however, sent him one evening to the spring, a few rods off, to bring a kettleful of water. The spring was in a deep gorge, and the trail to it wound through some fissures in the rock. As the young man passed under a shelving rock, an immense old female grizzly, that had taken up temporary quarters there, reached out and struck a powerful blow at his head, but fortunate-



Drawn by J. Carter Booth.

"VIGOROUSLY BELABORING THE BEAR OVER THE HEAD WITH THE CAMP KETTLE."

ly could not reach far enough to do him any serious harm. The blow knocked his hat off, and her claws caught his scalp, and laid it open clear across the top of his head in several ugly gashes. The force of the blow sent him spinning around, and not knowing enough to be frightened, he attacked her savagely with the only weapon he had at hand—the camp kettle. The elder brother heard the racket, and hastily catching up his rifle, found his brother vigorously belaboring the bear over the head with the camp kettle, and the bear striking at him savage blows, any one of which, if she could have reached him, would have torn his head from his shoulders. Three bullets from the rifle, fired in rapid succession, loosened her hold upon the rocks, and she tumbled lifelessly into the trail. The poor idiotic boy could not even then realize the danger through which he had passed, and could only appease his anger by continuing to maul the bear over the head

with the camp kettle for several minutes after she was dead.

The skin of the grizzly is one of the most valuable trophies a sportsman can obtain on any field, and its rarity, and the danger and excitement attending the taking of it, the courage it bespeaks, render it a prize of which the winner may justly feel proud for a lifetime.

The best localities in which to hunt the grizzly bear—that is, those most accessible and in which he is the most numerous—are the Big Horn, Shoshone, Wind River, Bear Tooth, Belt, and Crazy mountains, in Wyoming and Montana, all of which may be easily reached by way of the Northern Pacific road.

The best time of year to hunt for this as well as all the other species of large game in the Rocky Mountains is in the months of September, October, and November, though in the latter month the sportsman should not venture high up into the mountains where heavy snow-

falls occur. There is a great deal of this class of hunting done in the summer months, but it is contrary to the laws of nature, and should not be indulged in by any true sportsman. The skins are nearly worthless then, while in the autumn they are prime; the heat is oppressive, and the flies and mosquitoes are great pests. The best arm for this class of game is a repeating rifle of large calibre, 45 or 50, carrying a large charge of powder and a solid bullet. The Winchester Express, $\frac{45}{45}$, with its new solid ball, is perhaps the best in the market, all things considered. There are several methods of hunting him, the most common being to kill an elk, and then watch the carcass. Shots may frequently be obtained in this way early in the morning or late in the evening, and on bright moonlight nights it is best to watch all night, for the immense size of the grizzly renders him an easy target at short range even by moonlight. Another method is to still-hunt him, the same as is done with deer. This is perhaps the most sportsmanlike of all, and if a coulee or creek bottom be selected where there are plenty of berries, or an open, hilly, rocky country where the bears are in the habit of hunting for worms, or any good feeding ground where bear signs are plentiful, and due care and caution be exercised, there is as good a chance of success as by any other method. Many hunters set guns with a cord running from the trigger to a bait of

fresh meat, and the muzzle of the gun pointing at the meat; others set large steel-traps or dead-falls. But such contrivances are never used by true sportsmen.

Game of any kind should always be pursued in a fair, manly manner, and given due chance to preserve its life if it is skilful enough to do so. If captured, let it be by the superior skill, sagacity, or endurance of the sportsman, not by traps which close on it as it innocently and unsuspectingly seeks its food.

Grizzly bear hunting is unquestionably the grandest sport that our continent can afford. The grizzly is the only really dangerous game we have, and the decidedly hazardous character of the sport is what gives it its greatest zest, and renders it the most fascinating of pursuits. Many sportsmen proclaim the superiority of their favorite pastime over all other kinds, be it quail, grouse, or duck shooting, fox-chasing, deer-stalking, or what not; and each has its charm, more or less intense, according to its nature; but no man ever felt his heart swell with pride, his nerves tingle with animation, his whole system glow with wild, uncontrollable enthusiasm, at the bagging of any bird or small animal, as does the man who stands over the prostrate form of a monster grizzly that he has slain. Let the devotee of these other classes of sport try bear hunting, and when he has bagged his first grizzly, then let him talk!

