



Painted for *OUTING* by Hermann Simon.

(See "Hunting the Mule-Deer." pp. 229-237.)

"FOR A WEARY HOUR I LABORED."

"I want to ask you something, Jenny, dear," said Crichton, in a tone which was reluctant in spite of its tenderness. "I want to ask you, my sweet one, if that brute kissed you just before he died. I know he did not in the beginning of the scene, but at the very last I suffered the tortures of Purgatory, for I thought that his lips closed on yours."

"No, no, no! Oh, how could you think that if they had I would ever have come to you?" I cried out in vehement negation at the mere suggestion.

"Thank God, my sweet one, my saint. Tell me," holding me close to him, "how did you save yourself?"

"With this; with your cross. See! I laid it on my lips, so. I pressed hard on it, like this," and I pressed my lips again to the ruby, just as I had done in the agony of that awful night. A startled cry from Crichton, whose face had paled as he looked at me, brought me to my feet, and the cross fell to the floor. Crichton made no move to raise it. His voice was hoarse with some horror which I could not comprehend. I would have stooped to pick up the beautiful thing lying at my feet, but he stopped me, saying, almost harshly:

"Don't touch it; for God's sake, don't touch it. Where is the paper that came with it?"

I found the bit of parchment. He read it as one may read in a dream:

"Florence, A. D. 1512.' The Medici were masters of Florence at that time," he said, thoughtfully; and then, as though it was a scorpion, he picked up the cross. He held it so that the full force of his thumb fell upon the great red stone. "Look," he said, and in less time than it took me to draw a breath, there darted from the reverse side of the cross a fang of steel. It seemed to me, in the rapidity of its movement, sharper, finer than any needle and more venomous than the tooth of a viper. With the quickness of a spark struck on flint, it scintillated before our eyes for a moment and was gone. Crichton and I looked from the cross to one another. "God bless the good Bishop Alipius. He guarded you well, my darling. We will build an oratory to his blessed memory, in which his cross shall be enshrined," he murmured, with his lips on my hair.

"With 'Poison' written under it in big letters," I said, between a smile and a tear. "And now translate for me, my dear, the inscription on the cross. You said you would when, when——"

"When what, Miss Goldgirdle?"

"When I loved you well enough to do as it bade me, you said." But he evaded my request. All he said was "Kiss me." I did.

"There, dear. You have made a free translation of it yourself: 'Kiss me!'"

HUNTING THE MULE-DEER.

By Rollin Smith.



"IT is snowing on the range, Mr. S.," said one of the men at the mine one day in November of the past year. Since leaving the Okanagon country, Washington, the writer had been tossed about by contrary winds, until finally landed high (5,000 feet) in the upper Missouri River valley, in a mining-camp fifty miles from Helena, Montana.

As yet we had not had snow enough for deer-hunting. I had been out several times, and made good bags of blue grouse with my rifle, but what the men in camp wanted was venison, and I was as anxious to kill it as they were to eat it.

Sure enough, it was now snowing on

the range, about eight miles away, and as it looked like snow in the valley also before night, I borrowed a pony from a neighboring rancher, and made preparations for an early start on the following morning. My cabin was a few minutes' walk from the "bunk-house" and kitchen, so I borrowed the cook's alarm-clock, agreeing to waken him at five o'clock.

On looking out the next morning I was delighted to see the ground covered by an inch of snow. After duly arousing the cook and making necessary preparations, I was in the saddle before six o'clock; the east had not yet begun to brighten, as I urged my reluctant "kayouse" into a trot.

Such a morning's ride can be enjoyed

only by an enthusiastic sportsman; to anyone else it would seem a hardship; I really enjoyed it. Strange pictures the freshly fallen snow made on the mountains, foot-hills and valleys as the day dawned. As I ascended, the valley broadened until miles of it lay below me, streaked here and there by the glittering serpentine course of the river. Beyond the valley rose several minor ranges of mountains, and in the distance the peaks of the Yellowstone Park completed the picture.

Upon reaching the edge of the timber on the mountains, I picketed my pony where he might root around in the snow and graze,—these Montana ponies are used to that,—and then started up.

Four inches of snow had covered every tree and bush; in a few minutes I, too, was covered, and later in the day when it grew warmer, my clothing was wet from shoulders to feet.

For more than an hour I did not see a sign of game, but finally came upon the tracks of three deer. I followed them, and in a short time found three beds, and long jumps leading from each towards the top of the mountain. Again I followed, this time keeping well to one side of the tracks; but the deer turned in my direction after going some distance, and evidently saw me, for on the top of the mountain I found where they had stood and then gone over on the other side with longer jumps than at the first start. I now gave them up, and moved along the mountain-side near the top in search of tamer deer.

After a half-hour's tramp I discovered the tracks of a medium-sized buck, and by their holding a straight course, rightly judged that he was looking for a place in which to lie down.

The trail led through a growth of young firs and over ground which made walking easy. By taking the up-hill side I could keep the trail in sight, while not being nearer than thirty or forty yards. For half an hour I tracked in this way; then the trail led into a slight depression.

I had no idea the deer would lie down in a place not commanding a good view of the surroundings; but, nevertheless, I moved cautiously, and when near the bank I saw him go bounding up the other side. Through the branches he appeared twice as large as he was.

He quickly disappeared, and I stood

for a few seconds thinking he might reappear, then slowly stooped down to be able to see under the lower branches of the trees. About one hundred yards away I could dimly make him out, with head and back hidden by the branches.

I quickly decided to risk a shot rather than take the chances of waiting for a clearer view; so sinking into the sitting position I aimed for the middle of the faint outlines and fired. With the smoke the deer vanished, and without a sound.

I felt sure he had not seen me, so reasoned that he must be hit or he would not have gone without first knowing where the noise came from.

After waiting a few minutes to give him a chance to lie down should he be badly hit, I went up to the spot where he had stood. The snow showed a few small bunches of hair, but not a drop of blood; however, the jumps were not as long as they ought to have been, and after a few yards they became quite short. Twenty-five yards from where he had stood were two imprints in the snow, with a little blood in one of them, where he had lain down; twenty yards down the hill, against a clump of bushes, lay my buck, a two-point mule-deer.

Quickly descending and pulling him around with the head down-hill, I plunged my hunting-knife into his breast, bleeding him perfectly. In a short time my game was dressed, and, after tying a small rope around the horns, I was ready for the downward trip; but I first wanted to find out the distance over which the shot had been fired. It had seemed to be about one hundred yards, but on carefully stepping it off I was surprised to find it only seventy-five yards.

The bullet, a .40-65-260, fired from a Winchester carbine, had struck in the middle of his left side and ranged forward, hitting the heart, and then out through the opposite shoulder, low down. The two holes in the skin were of the same size.

It was not yet noon when I began the descent of the mountain, dragging the deer. For a weary hour I labored until I reached a small stream to which it might be possible to bring the horse.

Leaving the deer I went down the gulch for two miles, picking out the most open course, to where the horse had been picketed. After saddling him up I left my coat, rifle and belt; for my

clothing was wet through, and as the back trip would be up-grade I wanted nothing more to pack than was absolutely necessary.

I got the horse to where the deer had been left, but doubted my ability ever to get him out with a load, even should I succeed in getting the deer upon the saddle. As I dragged the deer to the side of the horse I imagined the picture presented there: the hunter standing in the snow among the pines, the mount-ains rising on either side; the pony tied to a tree and pulling back at the sight of the deer; and the deer lying between the hunter and the pony. The picture might truly be called "The Dilemma," for such it really was.

The work began, and the pony stood like an old-timer; by means of the rope and a great deal of hard lifting the pack was finally secure, but I was more ready for a rest than for a six mile tramp to camp, two miles of the distance being

through a rough, timbered country without a trail.

The trip down to the edge of the timber was a rough one, but it was made without accident. The rest of the route was through open country and down-grade; the snow had disappeared in the valley, making walking easier.

Camp was reached at 5:30 o'clock. I had been on the move for nearly twelve hours, and had walked eighteen miles.

I can truly say that this was a hard day's work: and in the evening as I was relating the experience of the day one of the men asked: "Mr. S., do you hunt for pleasure?"

I meekly replied: "I do not know." The pleasure, however, derived from a day's hunting must outweigh the hardships often endured, or we would give up hunting. After a few days the fatigue and annoyances are forgotten, and only pleasant memories of a day well spent remain.



'MID ETERNAL SNOW.

ALONE, amid the wild secluded heights
Where Winter holds his solitary sway,
We wrestle with the fury of the storm,
The savage sleet and passion-laden gale:
A sleeping avalanche beneath our feet
And ice-capped giants menacing the way.
Behold, athwart the ebon brow of night
The "fire-zoned orb" with beauteous light
illumes
A distant mountain's iridescent rim;

And morning flits with swift, impetuous step,
Adown the snow-clad slopes, benignant, free.
Below us lie the valleys, urns of gloom,
Concealing nature's precious treasure trove.

From thence an hundred peaks
Proclaim the royal conquest of the dawn;
All rosy-robed and golden-crowned they stand,
Their rich prismatic splendors softly limned
Upon the dappled curtain of the sky.

CORA C. BASS.