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# The DRAWBACKS of PLEASURE SEEKING



## OFF THE SCENT.

So many spring chickens, tender lambs and other live stock had been carried off by the wild beasts of the Kentucky mountains that the negro inhabitants rose as one man and passed a vote of vengeance. A fund of thirty dollars was raised to outfit the Big Game Hunting Club, with instructions to kill everything in the gulches of the neighboring mountains and Red Bud Jim, president of the Hunting Club, was ordered to spare neither the living nor the dead.

Owing to disappointment in getting his hunting clothes and delay in finishing up a brew of moonshine whiskey, Red Bud Jim gave notice of a week's postponement for the hunt. This was his ostensible reason. But facts pointed to a circus, it had come to Saratoparia Centre for a two night show, and the country expected to turn out in a body. That night an event occurred which paralyzed the Hunt Club. Some wild cats or bears from the mountains entered the menagerie just before daylight and bit the neck of the giraffe, stampeded the elephants, which destroyed most of the saloons in town, and nearly ruined the show.

This was too much for the citizens. Red Bud Jim was ordered to kill bear for a week. A big crowd assembled that afternoon to see the hunters off. Red Bud Jim carried an old army rifle with a bayonet. Budd Taylor had a double barrel shotgun (owner unknown). Deacon Todd said he would not "miss" the party, but he'd have his dogs ready, and if the "bar" came that way his Kentucky rifle, with its patched bullet, would kill the critter at the first shot.

Miss Lucy Ann, as usual, was in for sport. She carried the whiskey for the crowd. She wore pokee dot stockings and a smile a yard wide. Her mother, Bellinda Bluegrass, was in the height of Kentucky fashion in an old automobile coat and a pair of opera glasses. "Less to see it de best is dead when he's shot." All rode mules except Red Bud Jim, who was mounted on a swayback cavalry horse that had served in the Cuban war.

They made a picturesque appearance as they passed out of town and galloped away over the pike toward the mountains. It should be explained that they did not forget the dogs. No man, woman or child in Kentucky travels a mile without a dog. One was an English "pointer dog." It had been a gamster in its day, but was demoralized by the petting of Miss Lucy and her friends, who fed it on hand cooked meat and canned fruit and made it wear a big blue ribbon day and night, which is enough to ruin any dog. Then there were fierce bloodhounds, ready for prey.

The party had not proceeded more than half a mile before they discovered the freak of the show, a big Jack-rabbit, somewhat gifted with human speech, but enough to speak a few words in a squeaky, equally way, a sort of a cross between a cat and a parrot. The show people declared they could understand the freak. It certainly was the most remarkable rabbit ever seen in that part of the world or in any other. The dogs paid no attention to the creature, while the pointer had his nose in the direction of the old woman's game bag, which was filled fat with pork sandwiches.

To give all the particulars of that journey through the mountains would take up too much space. Everybody had been pitched off a horse or mule once or twice in trying to follow the supposed bear trail in the mountains, but all were "game," and on the club rode through the grand forest. Suddenly the pointer dog, with the big blue ribbon around its neck, started off with the bloodhounds trying to get free from their leashes, held by the old woman, Bellinda. It was a spirited ride, the mules leaping over logs and rocky creeks, with the awayback army nag cantering along like a rabbit, and the big dogs close on the scent, filling the woods with their cries.

The hunters were stumbling over some loose rock at the foot of a cliff, where bear tracks led into some holes near the ground, and projecting ledges. That little pointer dog with the big blue bow on its neck ran for the game, and sure enough out came a frisky young bear snorting and sniffing with the blue ribbon disappearing through the trees like a shot.

The second-hand bloodhounds sought shelter under the mules. Lucy leaped up against Red Bud Jim, who was at her side, and would have fainted dead away but for the unearthly yell of her mother with the bloodhounds. One of the big dogs, smelling the grease that had dripped on her hair and feet up in parabolic curves toward the centre of the earth, but, unfortunately for them, they landed on hard ground near some rocks. The horse and

the mules are probably running yet. The little blue ribbon dog, once a glorious English "pointer," poised his nose toward a lone tree and wouldn't budge an inch. But the bloodhounds set up a series of mournful howls, and to a spectator half a mile away it seemed as if all of Kentucky was on a fox hunt, with a few bears and wildcats thrown in.

Budd Taylor was the first on his feet and began calling the roll. "Here I is," shouted Bellinda Bluegrass, hoarsely. "Ise here, too," chirped Miss Lucy, with a strawberry smile on each lip. "Jest put my name down in big capital letters, for Ise har too," said Red Bud Jim, taking fresh squirts at his rifle, as he sharpened the bayonet on a boulder. "Xamine my 'natomy and see if any bones is broke," said Miss Lucy.

Red Bud Jim plucked his hair over, and said angrily as a ripe watermelon. Budd Taylor said he was all right, and Miss Lucy's mother, who was eating pork sandwiches and licking the pork fat off the opera glasses, said "Ise in de best ob health, dis mawwin, tank youse. Hope youse all well an' 'provin'." "But how is dis hunt goin' on without the hosses?" added the old woman. "Don't you lose no sleep on dat account," said Miss Lucy. "Dese brave men haint worryin' about hosses. Dey's all hasses demselves, and dey will prove it, or I ain't no yellin' gal."

"Dat's dead right, Miss Lucy," said Budd Taylor, "we're agoin' to turn dis hunt into a glorious fiasco ob success 'fore de day is o'er." At this very instant a whole meadowful of hysterics broke on the ear. Miss Lucy's mother had her eyes fixed on something near a tree and was laughing like a maniac. But she had reason for hilarity, for there at the foot of a tall sassafras, sitting on his haunch, sat the talking jack rabbit from the show, making a noise like a squeaking cider mill, and apparently trying to say something. Then the pointer dog started off again, with the Hunt Club on foot following him. After a lively dash across field they came to a halt near some black walnut trees, and there stood the pointer dog, immovable, with its nose fixed on prey.

"Hit's big game, shore," screamed Lucy Ann's mother. "Ssee dat big mount ob yours," screamed Miss Lucy. "You'll skeer de bar again." Parapetition stood on the forehead of Budd Taylor, who said "de news is too good to be true. Jese haint me dat flower pot ob tigger, an' I'll prepare for de work ob de hour."

Then all hands took a drink, and before they had finished about a gallon of the strongest Kentucky moonshine was inside them. Later Budd Taylor wanted to take the name "at risk," but there was none the liquor into them as they lay half intoxicated on the green sward.

But now the bloodhounds began to get busy, and the pointer advanced to the very foot of the tree, lifted his nose and whined straight for a limb about twenty feet from the ground. Miss Lucy said it must be big game. Her old mother said it was a ghost—she could tell by its shadow. But Red Bud Jim thought he saw a bear, while Budd Taylor thought it was only a catamount, yet more dangerous than a bear.

Red Bud Jim fired first, both barrels simultaneously. He fell in a heap, and when he came to his senses said the gun kicked worse than a mule. Budd Taylor picked up courage and moved forward, gun in hand, with bayonet pointed directly in the direction of the game. As he was about to shoot, Miss Lucy went into hysterics. The dogs howled and tried to break from their leashes, and then the talking rabbit from the show stuck his head out from behind a big dock leaf and squeaked out something like this:

"I say hied not on de top of a limb; He whined at me, and I whined at him; I sneaked up a rock and spilt his milk; And said 'Now, jar bird, wink agin'!"

This broke the spell and brought every member of the Saratoparia Hunt Club to his senses, and for the first time Miss Lucy revealed the whereabouts of the game. Sure enough it was a jaybird on a visit to Kentucky, from Jonesborough, Union county, Ill. Not feeling very well that morning, the jaybird had taken a before breakfast constitutional, and by chance was meditating on the mutability of affairs.

The applause and hoots that followed this statement shook the building to its centre, and the gallery doors were heard to crack several times distinctly. The meeting would have closed with unanimous approval but for an impudent question asked by Budd Taylor's rival for the hand of Miss Lucy.

"I wain' ter ax jess one question ob de honor'ble gentleman speakin' from de cneer." "What came ob all dat whiskey in dat mawwin' pot dat Lucy Ann's mudder carried?" Here the assembly broke into an uproar, stumps, umbrellas, hats and canes began to fly about the room, and the meeting finally closed in great disorder, with no one to ask what became of the rest of the bears.

The club was reorganized, however, a month later, and the man that stole the awayback horse and the mules was summarily dealt with. This restored order in the club, and now the squawk of chickens is heard in Kentucky roosts every night in the week.

Deacon Todd's farm, when the noise of the Hunt Club attracted its attention. Thus it was that the bird had witnessed the runaway when the war horse and mules threw their riders and galloped away into the forests. Then everybody collapsed, and some time next day they were over their spurs and assembled in the rooms of the club, where Budd Taylor was to make his report of the great bear hunt. In substance, he said:

"We found seventeen bears in a tree, keepin' watch ober a lot ob young cubs. The runaway when the war horse and mules threw their riders and galloped away into the forests. Then everybody collapsed, and some time next day they were over their spurs and assembled in the rooms of the club, where Budd Taylor was to make his report of the great bear hunt. In substance, he said:

"Howsomeber, we weren't skeered and jess turn the dogs loose on dem cubs. Dat made ebery bar jump to de rescue. Now, as de rocks protected ober de place where de cubs was playin' under de ledge, de bears hit de sharp pints ob dem rocks, and more'n haf ob dem bars was killed right dar on de spot. Meanwhile de dogs pulled de cubs out an' piled dem up like cordwood between de trees. We counted de carcasses ob de cubs 'tree times, an' found 'only one missin'." We counted de bars all dat night, and den contracted wid Deacon Todd to hab dem skinned, dressed and packed in barrels for winter eatin' by de club.

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## On the Decline of Letter Writing and the Art of Writing Love Letters

By Albert E. Hunt.

AS letter writing becomes a lost art! The query is suggested by a recent editorial in a local newspaper, lamenting the decline of epistolary correspondence. Doing so it also raised a peculiar phase of the question which is worth considering.

"Probably few men in this age write letters unless they have to," said, "but where are the women? They are, or should be, the letter writers." This provokes a Brooklyn woman to retort with an emphasis unusual for that pastoral city of refuge. She demanded to know why women should be the letter writers? Have they more time? Have they more opportunity? Have they type-writers? Have they nothing to do at home? Is it not as much effort for them to put their thoughts on paper as it is for the men? With much more to that effect.

Now, there is matter for melancholy in that reply. Instead of corroborating the editorialist and enlarging upon the talents of women as letter writers, which for the greater glory of her sex she should have done, the Brooklyn woman evades the issue. More than that, by the intemperance and what might be termed the jerkiness of her epistle she unmistakably upsets his argument. Which, perhaps, was her purpose after all.

But let us take up the two parts of the proposition in order. Undeniably it is true that few men write letters nowadays, except, perhaps, the very young men. But letters in this connection is meant not those formal and brief business documents which go by the name and which pass through the medium of a second party—namely, the unympathetic typewriter. The term applies to those intimate effusions which your true letter writer comes to with joyous anticipation. Of course, he must know the person he is addressing. He must be assured of understanding and appreciation. Chesterfield, himself one of the best of letter writers, said that a letter shows the person to whom it is written as well as the person by whom it is written.

Granting, then, that the writer knows how his letter will be received, he goes to his purpose with pleasure and enthusiasm. He rolls his sleeves above his elbows, he chooses a pen that will not splat, he sprawls over his desk and he writes with a fine freedom of soul, pouring himself into his paper, yet with enough self-consciousness to pause occasionally for a pet phrase or to polish off his periods. Which is, indeed, a proper tribute to the receiver.

Let us, for the sake of illustration, suppose he is writing a love letter to the lady of his heart. We assume, of course, that both are more or less intellectually endowed, for the commonplace letter does not enter into the present argument. That being the case, what a glorious messenger what an exquisite go-between and tale-bearer is the letter! Rousseau, prince of sentimentalists, said that to write a good love letter one ought to begin without knowing what he means to say and to end without knowing what he has said. But that will not do. Necessarily, thought comes as one writes, and there should be system and arrangement.

No one is more captiously critical of letters than the beloved, although often they themselves are not aware of the fact. The lover always has something to say to his lady, even though he has already said it to her every day for the last year. Therefore, it becomes a question of saying it well, and therein lies the advantage of the letter. It is only in books and on the stage that the lover is eloquent and impassioned to the point of romantic beauty. In life he cuts a rather foolish figure, if that be a horse.

There is always some untoward circumstance to detract from the charm. Sometimes it is a wagon wheel which chooses to pass at the wrong moment; sometimes it is a cold in the head, sometimes mosquitoes. There are a thousand and one drawbacks. Besides, the hardest words in the English language to say are, "I love you." And the deeper the love, perhaps, the harder the expression. Ask your average man in what terms he proposed to his wife and you will be surprised to find how few used that simple phrase, but this is not an infallible test, since most of them have forgotten.

In a letter the case is vastly different. With a nibble pen, reserve and reluctance depart. "Then 'I love you' becomes too bare and primitive. A whole lexicon of other words may be employed to express the softer graces. It is doubtful if many women are won in these times by letter writing.

But what of the women, as the editorialist says? In spite of the Brooklyn parson—matron or maid—undoubtedly they are the letter writers of to-day. But they write, for the most part, to one another. The woman who initiates a love letter in the full, rich sense of the term is rare. There are good reasons for this. Women are not permitted an equal degree of frankness with men. For them to pour themselves out with the same ardor and

copiousness would be unbecoming and incongruous. They are the beloved, not the lovers. Men love; women love to be loved. Every woman instinctively recognizes this distinction. That is why so few of them write letters that are satisfying to the unthinking lover. It is a complete reversal of the case. They can make love better by speech—or by silence—than by writing. Whereas men was eloquent with ink, women grow timid and restrained. And when they do write love letters these are generally stilted and wordy, even though the warmest feeling may glow between the lines.

True, there are exceptions to this, but those are only for a blessed few. What can be more delicious than a woman's love letter that rings true in every word and thought and suggestion? It is the flower of life, the consummation of all poetry, a glimpse of infinity. It is the lark singing at Heaven's gate. And, being so, who shall presume to frame rules and regulations for its making? Every man will write his letters in his own nature-given fashion, and so will every woman. No doubt they are satisfactory, in the main, to those who get them. Therefore the whole argument, though pleasing, is futile. Those who care to do so will write love letters whether they know the trick or not, and for the rest, as Christopher Sly said, "let the world slide!"

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CHARLES WRIGHT