OUTDOOR PASTIMES of an AMERICAN HUNTER

By Theodore Roosevelt

IV—IN THE LOUISIANA CANEBRAKES

IN October, 1907, I spent a fortnight in the cane-brakes of Northern Louisiana, my hosts being Messrs. John M. Parker and John A. McIlhenny. Surgeon-General Rixey, of the United States Navy, and Dr. Alexander Lambert were with me. I was especially anxious to kill a bear in these cane-brakes after the fashion of the old Southern planters, who for a century past have followed the bear with horse, hound and horn in Louisiana, Mississippi and Arkansas.

Our first camp was on Texas Bayou. This is in the heart of the great alluvial bottom-land created during the countless ages through which the mighty Mississippi has poured out of the heart of the continent. It is in the black belt of the South, in which the negroes outnumbered the whites four or five to one, the disproportion in the region in which I was actually hunting being far greater.

There is no richer soil in all the earth; and when, as will soon be the case, the chances of disaster from flood are over, I believe the whole land will be cultivated and densely peopled. At present the possibility of such flood is a terrible deterrent to settlement, for when the Father of Waters breaks his boundaries he turns the country for a breadth of 80 miles into one broad river, the plantations throughout all this vast extent being from five to 25 feet under water. Cotton is the staple industry, corn also being grown, while there are a few rice fields and occasional small patches of sugar cane. The plantations are for the most part of large size and tilled by negro tenants for the white owners.

Conditions are still in some respects like those of the pioneer days. The magnificent forest growth which covers the land is of little value because of the difficulty in getting the trees to market and the land is actually worth more after the timber has been removed than before. In consequence, the larger trees are often killed by girdling, where the work of felling them would entail disproportionate cost of labor.

The Spectral Fields.

At dusk, with the sunset glimmering in the west, or in the brilliant moonlight when the moon is full, the cotton fields have a strange, spectral look, with the dead trees raising aloft their naked branches. The cotton fields themselves, when the bolls burst open, seem almost as if whitened by snow; and the red and white flowers, interspersed among the burst-open pods, make the whole field beautiful. The rambling one-story houses, surrounded by outbuildings, have a picturesqueness all their own; their very looks betoken the lavish, whole-hearted, generous hospitality of the planters who dwell therein.

Beyond the end of cultivation towers the great forest. Wherever the water stands in pools and by the edges of the lakes and bayous the giant cypress looms aloft, rivalled in size by some of the red gums and white oaks. In stature, in towering majesty, they are unsurpassed by any trees of our Eastern forests; lordlier kings of the green-leaved world are not to be found until we reach the sequolas and redwoods of the Sierras. Among them grow many other trees—huckleberry, thorn, honey locust, tupelo, pecan and ash. In the cypress sloughs the singular knees of the trees stand two or three feet above the black ooze. Palmettos grow thickly in places.

The cane-brakes stretch along the slight rises of ground, often extending for miles, forming one of the most striking and interesting features of the country. They choke out other growth, the feathery, graceful canes standing tall, slender, serried, each but a few inches from his brother, and springing to a height of 15 or 20 feet. They look like bamboos. They are well-nigh impenetrable for a man on horseback. Even on foot they make difficult walking unless free use is made of the heavy bushknife. It is impossible to see through them for more than 15 or 20 paces, and often for not half that distance. Bears make their lairs in them, and they are the refuge for hunted things. Outside of them, in the swamp, bushes of many kind grow and creepers climb the trunks and hang in trailing festoons from the branches. Here likewise the bushknife is in constant play, as the skilled horsemen thread their way, often at a gallop, in and out among the great tree trunks and through the dense, tangled, thorny undergrowth.

In the lakes and larger bayous we saw alligators and garfish, and monstrous snapping turtles, fearsome brutes of the slime, as heavy as a man, and with huge horny beaks that with a single snap could take off a man's hand or foot. One of the planters with us had lost part of his hand by the bite of an alligator, and had seen a companion seized by the foot by a huge garfish, from which he was rescued with the utmost difficulty by his fellow swimmers. There were black bass in the water, too, and they gave us many a good meal. Thick-bodied water moccasins, foul and dangerous, kept near the water, and farther back in the swamp we found and killed rattlesnakes and copperheads.

Abundant Smaller Game.

Coon and 'possum were very plentiful, and in the streams there were minks and a few otters. Black squirrels barked in the tops of the tall trees or descended to the ground to gather nuts or gnaw the shed deer antlers—the latter a habit they shared with the wood rats. To me the most interesting of the smaller mammals, however, were the swamp rabbits, which are thoroughly amphibious in their habits, not only swimming but diving, and taking to the water almost as freely as if they were muskrats. They lived in the depths of the woods and beside the lonely bayous.

Birds were plentiful. Mocking birds abounded in the clearings, where, among many sparrows of more common kind, I saw the painted finch, the gaudily colored brother of our little indigo bunting, though at this season his plumage was faded and dim. In the thick woods where we hunted there were many cardinal birds and Carolina wrens, both in full song. Thrashers were ever more common, but so cautious that it was rather difficult to see them, in spite of their incessant clucking and calling and their occasional burst of song. There were crowds of warblers and vireos of many different kinds, evidently migrants from the North, and generally silent.

The most characteristic birds, however, were the woodpeckers, of which there were seven or eight species, the commonest around our camp being the handsome red-bellied, the brother of the red-head which we saw in the clearings. The most notable birds and those which most interested me were the great ivory-billed woodpeckers. Of these I saw three, all of them in groves of giant cypress; their brilliant white bills contrasted finely with the black of their general plumage. They were noisy but wary, and they seemed to me to set off the wildness of the swamp as much as any of the beasts of the chase.

Among the birds of prey the commonest were the barred owls, which I have never elsewhere seen so plentiful. Their hooting and yelling were heard all around us throughout the night, and once one of them hooted at intervals for several minutes at midday. One of these owls had caught and was devouring a snake in the late afternoon, while it was still daylight. In the dark nights and still mornings and evenings their cries seemed strange and unearthly, the long hoots varied by screeches, and by all kinds of uncanny noises.

Camping by the Bayou.

At our first camp our tents were pitched by the bayou. For four days the weather was hot, with steaming rains; after that it grew cool and clear. Huge biting flies, bigger than bees, attacked our horses; but the insect plagues, so veritable a scourge in this country during the months of warm weather, had well-nigh vanished in the first few weeks of the Fall.

The morning after we reached camp we were joined by Ben Lilley, the hunter, a spare, full-bearded man, with mild, gentle, blue eyes and a frame of steel and whipcord. I never met any other man so indifferent to fatigue and hardship. He equalled Cooper's Deerslayer in woodcraft, in hardihood, in simplicity—and also in loquacity. The morning he joined us in camp, he had come on foot through the thick woods, followed by his two dogs, and had neither eaten nor drunk for 24 hours; for he did not like to drink the swamp water.

It had rained hard throughout the night and he had no shelter, no rubber coat, nothing but the clothes he was wearing, and the ground was too wet for him to lie down on; so he perched in a crooked tree in the beating rain, much as if he had been a wild turkey. But he was not in the least tired when he struck camp; and, though he slept an hour after breakfast, it was chiefly because he had nothing else to do, inasmuch as it was Sunday, on which day he never hunted or labored.

A Veteran Nimrod.

He could run through the woods like a buck, was far more enduring, and quite as indifferent to weather, though he was over 50 years old. He had trapped and hunted throughout almost all the half century of his life, and on trail of game he was as sure as his own hounds. His observations on wild creatures were singularly close and accurate. He was particularly fond of the chase of the bear, which he followed by himself with one or two dogs; often he would be on the trail of his quarry for days at a time, lying down to sleep wherever night overtook him, and he had killed over 120 bears.

Late in the evening of the same day we were joined by two gentlemen to whom we owed the success of our hunt: Messrs. Clive and Harley Metcalf, planters from Mississippi, men in the prime of life, thorough woodsmen and hunters, skilled marksmen, and utterly fearless horsemen. For a quarter of a century they had hunted bear and deer with horse and hound, and were masters of the art. They brought with them their pack of bear hounds, only one, however, being a thoroughly staunch and seasoned veteran.

The pack was under the immediate control of a negro hunter, Holt Collier, in his own way as remarkable a character as Ben Lilley. He was a man of 60 and could neither read nor write, but he had all the dignity of an African chief, and for half a century he had been a bear hunter, having killed or assisted in killing over 3000 bears. He had been born a slave on the Hinds plantation, his father, an old man when he was born, having been the body servant and cook of "old General Hinds," as he called him, when the latter fought under Jackson at New Orleans.

When 10 years old Holt had been taken on the horse behind his young master, the Hinds of that day, on a bear hunt, when he killed his first bear. In the Civil War he had not only followed his master to battle as his body servant, but had acted under him as sharpshooter against the Union soldiers. After the war he continued to stay with his master until the latter died, and had then been adopted by the Metcalfs; and he felt that he had brought them up, and treated them with that mixture of affection and grumbling respect which an old nurse shows toward the lad who ceased being a child. The two Metcalfs and Holt understood one another thoroughly, and understood their hounds and the game their hounds followed almost as thoroughly.

Habits of the Southern Bear.

They had killed many deer and wildcat, and now and then a panther, but their favorite game was the black bear, which, until within a very few years, was extraordinarily plentiful in the swamps and canebrakes on both sides of the lower Mississippi, and which is still found here and there, although in greatly diminished numbers. In Louisiana and Mississippi the bears go into their dens toward the end of January, usually in hollow trees, often very high up in living trees, but often also in great logs that lie rotting on the ground. They come forth toward the end of April, the cubs having been born in the interval.

At this time the bears are nearly as fat, so my informants said, as when they enter their dens in January; but they lose their fat very rapidly. On first coming out in the Spring they usually eat ash buds and the tender young cane called mutton cane, and at that season they generally refuse to eat the acorns even when they are plentiful. According to my informants it is at this season that they are most apt to take to killing stock, almost always the hogs which run wild or semi-wild in the woods. They are very individual in their habits, however; many of them never touch stock, while others, usually old he-bears, may kill numbers of hogs. In one case an old he-bear began this hog-killing just as soon as he left his den. In the Summer months they find but little to eat, and it is at this season that they are most industrious in hunting for grubs, insects, frogs and small mammals. In some neighborhoods they do not eat fish, while in other places, perhaps not far away, they not only greedily eat dead fish, but will themselves kill fish if they can find them in shallow pools left by the receding waters. As soon as the mast is on the ground they begin to feed upon it, and when the acorns and pecans are plentiful they eat nothing else; though at first berries of all kinds and grapes are eaten also. When in November they have begun only to eat the acorns they put on fat as no other wild animal does, and by the end of December a full-grown bear may weigh at least twice as much as it does in August, the difference being as great as between a very fat and a lean hog. Old he-bears which in August weigh three hundred pounds and upward will, toward the end of December, weigh six hundred pounds, and even more in exceptional cases.

LISTENING FOR THE PACK.

Bears vary greatly in their habits in different localities, in addition to the individual variation among those of the same neighborhood. Around Avery Island, John McIlhenny's plantation, the bears only appear from June to November. There they never kill hogs, but feed at first on corn and then on sugar cane, doing immense damage in the fields, quite as much as hogs would do. But when we were on the Tensas we visited a family of settlers who lived right in the midst of the forest 10 miles from any neighbors; and although bears were plentiful around them they never molested their cornfields—in which the coons, however, did great damage.

A Dangerous Fighter.

A big bear is cunning, and is a dangerous fighter to the dogs. It is only in exceptional cases, however, that these black bears, even when wounded and at bay, are dangerous to men, in spite of their formidable strength. Each of the hunters with whom I was camped had been charged by one or two among the scores of hundreds of bears he had slain, but no one of them had ever been injured, although they knew other men who had been injured. Their immunity was due to their own skill and coolness; for when the dogs were around the bear the hunter invariably ran close in so as to kill the bear at once and save the pack. Each of the Metcalfs had on one occasion killed a large bear with a knife, when the hounds had seized it and the men dared not fire for fear of shooting one of them.

For several days we hunted perseveringly around this camp on the Tensas Bayou, but without success. Deer abounded, but we could find no bears; and of the deer we killed only what we actually needed for use in camp. I killed one myself by a good shot, in which, however, I fear that the element of luck played a considerable part. We had started as usual by sunrise, to be gone all day; for we never counted upon returning to camp before sunset.

For an hour or two we threaded our way, first along indistinct trails, and then on an old disused road, the hardy woods-horses keeping on a running walk without much regard to difficulties of the ground. The disused road lay right across a great canebrake, and while some of the party went around the cane with the dogs, the rest of us strung out along the road so as to get a shot at any bear that might come across it. I was following Harley Metcalf, with John McIlhenny and Dr. Rixey behind on the way to their posts, when we heard in the far-off distance two of the younger hounds, evidently on the trail of a deer.

Almost immediately afterward a crash in the bushes at our right hand and behind us made me turn around, and I saw a deer running across the few feet of open space; and as I leaped from my horse it disappeared in the cane. I am a rather deliberate shot, and under any circumstances a rifle is not the best weapon for snap-shooting, while there is no kind of shooting more difficult than on running game in a canebrake. Luck favored me in this instance, however, for there was a spot a little ahead of where the deer entered in which the cane was thinner, and I kept my rifle on its indistinct, shadowy outline until it reached this spot; it then ran quartering away from me, which made my shot much easier, although I could only catch its general outline through the cane.

But the 45-70 which I was using is a powerful gun and smoots right through cane or bushes; and as soon as I pulled trigger the deer, with a bleat, turned a tremendous somersault and was dead when we reached it. I was not a little pleased that my bullet should have sped so true when I was making my first shot in company with my hard-riding, straight-shooting planter friends.

But no bears were to be found. We waited long hours on likely stands. We rode around the canebrakes through the swampy jungle or threaded our way across them on trails cut by the heavy wood-knives of my companions; but we found nothing. Until the trails were cut the canebrakes were impenetrable to a horse and were difficult enough to a man on foot. On going through them it seemed as if we must be in the tropics; the silence, the stillness, the heat and the obscurity, all combining to give a certain deeriness to the task, as we chopped our winding way slowly through the dense mass of close-growing, feather-fronded stalks.

Each of the hunters prided himself on his skill with the horn, which was an essential adjunct of the hunt, used both to summon and control the hounds and for signalling among the hunters themselves. The tones of many of the horns were full and musical, and it was pleasant to hear them as they wailed to one another, backward and forward, across the great stretches of lonely swamp and forest.

Three Days in the Open.

A few days convinced us that it was a waste of time to stay longer where we were. Accordingly, early one morning we hunters started for a new camp 15 or 20 miles to the southward, on Bear Lake. We took the hounds with us and each man carried what he chose or could in his saddle-pockets, while his slicker was on his horse's back behind him. Otherwise we took absolutely nothing in the way of supplies and the negroes with the tents and camp equipage were three days before they overtook us.

On our way down we were joined by Major Amacker and Dr. Miller, with a small pack of cat hounds. These were good deer dogs and they ran down and killed on the ground a good-sized bobcat—a wildcat as it is called in the South. It was a male and weighed 23½ pounds. It had just killed and eaten a large rabbit. The stomachs of the deer we killed, by the way, contained acorns and leaves.

Our new camp was beautifuly situated on the bold, steep bank of Bear Lake—a tranquil stretch of water, part of an old river bed, a couple of hundred yards broad, with a winding length of several miles. Giant cypress grew at the edge of the water, the singular cypress knees rising in every direction round about, while at the bottoms of the trunks themselves were often cavernous hollows opening beneath the surface of the water, some of them serving as dens for alligators. There was a waning moon, so that the nights were as beautiful as the days.

From our new camp we hunted as steadily as from the old. We saw bear sign, but not much of it and only one or two fresh tracks. One day the hounds jumped a bear, probably a yearling from the way it ran, for at this season a yearling or a two-year-old will run almost like a deer, keeping to the thick cane as long as it can and then bolting across through the bushes of the ordinary swamp land until it can reach another canebrake.

After a three hours' run this particular animal managed to get clear away without one of the hunters ever seeing it, and it ran until all the dogs were tired out. A day or two afterward one of the other members of the party shot a small yearling—that is, a bear which would have been two years old in the following February. It was very lean, weighing but 55 pounds. The finely-chewed acorns in its stomach showed that it was already beginning to find mast.

On the Track of Bruin.

We had seen the tracks of an old she in the neighborhood, and the next morning we started to hunt her out. I went with Clive Metcalf. We had been joined overnight by Mr. Incabod Osborn and his son Tom, two Louisiana planters, with six or eight hounds—or rather bear dogs, for in these packs most of the animals are of mixed blood, and, as with all packs that are used in the genuine hunting of the wilderness, pedigree counts for nothing as compared with steadiness, courage and intelligence. There were only two of the new dogs that were really staunch bear dogs.

On reaching the cypress slough near which the tracks of the old she had been seen the day before, Clive Metcalf and I separated from the others and rode off at a lively pace between two of the canebrakes. After an hour or two's wait we heard, very far off, the notes of one of the loudest-mouthed hounds, and instantly rode toward it, until we could make out the babel of the pack. Some hard galloping brought us opposite the point toward which they were heading—for experienced hunters can often tell the probable line of bear's flight, and the spots at which it will break cover.

But on this occasion the bear shied off from leaving the thick cane and doubled back; and soon the hounds were once more out of hearing, while we galloped desperately around the edge of the cane. The tough woods-horses kept their feet like cats as they leaped logs, plunged through bushes, and dodged in and out among the tree trunks; and we had all we could do to prevent the vines from lifting us out of the saddle, while the thorns tore our hands and faces. Hither and thither we went, now at a trot, now at a run, now stopping to listen for the pack. Occasionally we could hear the hounds, and then off we would go racing through the forest toward the point toward which we thought they were heading. Finally, after a couple of hours of this, we came up on one side of a canebrake on the other side of which we could hear, not only the pack, but the yelling and cheering of Hartley Metcalf and Tom Osborn and one or two of the negro hunters, all of whom were trying to keep the dogs up to their work in the thick cane.

Again we rode ahead, and now in a few minutes were rewarded by hearing the leading dogs come to bay in the thickest of the cover. Having galloped as near to the spot as we could we threw ourselves off the horses and plunged into the cane, trying to cause as little disturbance as possible, but of course utterly unable to avoid making some noise. Before we were within gunshot, however, we could tell by the sounds that the bear had once again started, making what is called a "walking bay." Clive Metcalf, a finished hear-hunter, was speedily able to determine what the bear's probable course would be, and we stole through the cane until we came to a spot near which he thought the quarry would pass. Then we croched down, I with my rifle at the ready.

Nor did we have long to wait. Peering through the thick-growing stalks I suddenly made out the dim outline of the bear coming straight toward us; and noiselessly I cocked and half-raised my rifle, waiting for a clearer chance. In a few seconds it came; the bear turned almost broadside to me, and walked forward very stiff-legged, almost as if on tiptoe, now and then looking back at the nearest dogs. These were two in number—Rowdy, a very deep-voiced hound, in the lead, and Queen, a shrill-tongued brindled bitch, a little behind. Once or twice the bear paused as she looked back at them, evidently hoping that they would come so near that by a sudden race she could catch one of them. But they were too wary.

Shooting the Bear.

All of this took but a few moments, and as I saw the bear quite distinctly some 20 yards off, I fired for behind the shoulder. Although I could see her outline, yet the cane was so thick that my sight was on it and not on the bear itself. But I knew my bullet would go true; and sure enough, at the crack of the rifle the bear stumbled and fell forward, the bullet having passed through both lungs and out at the opposite side.

Immediately the dogs came running forward at full speed, and we raced forward likewise lest the pack should receive damage. The bear had but a minute or two to live, yet even in that time more than one valuable hound might lose its life; when within half a dozen steps of the black, angered beast, I fired again, breaking the spine at the root of the neck; and down went the bear stark dead, slain in the canebrake in true hunter fashion. One by one the hounds struggled up and fell on their dead quarry, the noise of the worry filling the air. Then we dragged the bear out to the edge of the cane and my companion wound his horn to summon the other hunters.

This was a big she-bear, very lean, and weighing 202 pounds. In her stomach were palmetto berries, bettles and a little mutton cane, but chiefly acorns chewed up in fine brown mass.

After the death of my bear I had only a couple of days left. We spent them a long distance from camp, having to cross two bayous berore we got to the hunting grounds. I missed a shot at a deer, seeing little more than the flicker of its white tail through the dense bushes; and the pack caught and killed a very lean 2-year-old bear weighing 80 pounds. Near a beautiful pond called Panther Lake we found a deer-lick, the ground not merely bare but furrowed into hollows by the tongues of the countless generations of deer that had frequented the place. We also passed a huge mound, the only hillock in the entire district; it was the work of man, for it had been built in the unknown past by those unknown people whom we call moundbuilders. On the trip, all told, we killed and brought into camp three bears, six deer, a wildcat, a turkey, a possum, and a dozen squirrels; and we ate everything except the wildcat.

Around the Campfire.

In the evenings we sat around the blazing campfires, and, as always on such occasions, each hunter told tales of his adventures and of the strange feats and habits of the beasts of the wilderness. There had been beaver all through this delta in the old days, and a very few are still left in out-of-the-way places. One Sunday morning we saw two wolves, I think young of the year, appear for a moment on the opposite side of the bayou, but they vanished before we could shoot.

All of our party had had a good deal of experience with wolves. The Metcalfs had had many sheep killed by them, the method of killing being invariably by a single bite which tore open the throat while the wolf ran beside his victim. The wolves also killed young hogs, but were very cautious about meddling with an old sow; while one of the big half-wild boars that ranged free through the woods had no fear of any number of wolves. Their endurance and the extremely difficult nature of the country made it difficult to hunt them, and the hunters all bore them a grudge, because if a hound got lost in a region where wolves were at all plentiful they were almost sure to find and kill him before he got home. They were fond of preying on dogs, and at times would boldly kill the hounds right ahead of the hunters.

In one instance, while the dogs were following a bear and were but a couple of hundred yards in front of the horseman, a small party of wolves got in on them and killed two. One of the Osburns, having a valuable hound which was addicted to wandering in the woods, saved him from the wolves by putting a bell on him. The wolves evidently suspected a trap and would never go near the dog.

On one occasion another of his hounds got loose with a chain on, and they found him a day or two afterward unharmed, his chain having become entangled in the branches of a bush. One or two wolves had evidently walked around and around the imprisoned dog, but the chain had awakened their suspicions and they had not pounced on him. They had killed a yearling heifer a short time before, on Osborn's plantation, biting her in the hams. It has been my experience that fox hounds as a rule are afraid of attacking a wolf; but all of my friends assured me that their dogs, if a sufficient number of them were together, would tackle a wolf without hesitation; the packs, however, were always composed, to the extent of at least half, of dogs which, though part hound, were part shepherd or bull or some other breed.

Near our first camp was the carcass of a deer, a yearling buck, which had been killed by a cougar. When first found, the wounds on the carcass showed that the deer had been killed by a bite in the neck at the back of the head; but there were scratches on the rump as if the panther had landed on its back. One of the negro hunters, Brutus Jackson, evidently a trustworthy man, told me that he had twice seen cougars, each time under unexpected conditions. Once he saw a bobcat race up a tree, and, riding toward it, saw a panther reared up against the trunk. The panther looked around at him quite calmly and then retired in leisurely fashion.

Jackson went off to get some hounds and when he returned, two hours afterward, the bobcat was still up the tree, evidently so badly scared that he did not wish to come down. The hounds were unable to follow the cougar. On another occasion he heard a tremendous scuffle and immediately afterward saw a big doe racing along with a small cougar literally riding it. The cougar was biting the neck, but low down near the shoulders. He was hanging on with his front paws, but was tearing away with his hind claws so that the deer's hair appeared to fill the air. As soon as Jackson appeared the panther left the deer. He shot it, and the doe galloped off, apparently without serious injury.

How Cougars Kill Game.

I wish those who see cougars kill game, or who come on game that they have killed, would study and record the exact method employed in killing. Mr. Hornady sent me a protograph of a cougar killing a goat, which he had seized high up on the back of the neck in his jaws, not using his claws at all. I once found where one had killed a big buck by seizing him by the throat, the claws also having evidently been used to hold the buck in the struggle. Another time I found a colt which had been killed by a bite in the neck, and yet another time a young doe which had been killed by a bite in the head.

In most cases were I came across the carcasses of deer which had been killed by cougars they had been partially eaten, and it was not possible to find out exactly how they had been slain. In one instance at least the neck had been broken, evidently in the struggle; but I could not tell whether this had been done designedly, by the use of the forepaws. Twice hunters I have known saw cougars seize mountain sheep in each case by the throat. The information furnished me inclines me to believe that most game is killed by cougars in this fashion. Most of the carcasses of elk which had been killed by cougars that I have examined showed fang marks around the throat and neck; but one certainly did not, though it is possible in this case that the elk died in some other way, and that the cougar had merely been feeding on its dead body. But I have read of cases in which elk and large deer were slain where the carcasses were said to have shown wounds only on the flanks, and where the writers believed, with how much justification I cannot say, that the wounds had been inflicted by the claws. I should be surprised to find that such was the ordinary method with cougars of killing game of any kind; but it is perhaps unsafe to deny the possibility of such an occurrence without more information than is at present available; especially in view of the experience of Brutus Jackson.

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WHERE IS THE PERFECT WOMAN?

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quettish coming forward in a dimpled curve. The large, square jaw is quite too overpowering.

And the forehead should be broad, but not too high. Over-development of her intellect means a starving of her more essential instinctive powers. The intellectual woman is rarely beautiful, and almost never attractive. It is right that she should conquer man, but she should conquer him by yielding, and intellect finds it hard to yield.

The ear of woman should be small and dainty, a cunningly carved shell of ivory, set well back and not outstanding. And her face should be a perfect oval—not so large as to dwarf the features, nor so small as to make them huge. Yet I have found some round, plump faces very piquant and alluring. As for her complexion, we ought not to admire the dolly cream-and-pink that comes from ointments and massage, but rather the fine red and brown of the open. And yet—well, man is weak, and the dolly sometimes attracts me. Though, if I were a woman, I should not like to attract men in that way.

Importance of Shoes.

Her hands may be plump and short, and, if they are well exercised in the open air, hard work will not deform them. Few women, especially few in this land, know how to use their hands, know how eloquent they can be, how charming. They use them to hide in a muff, as a hook for a handbag, as a hold for an umbrella or a fan. But the delicate language of the hands has been lost to us. Perhaps, when we have learned to dance, it will come back. Let me say one word on the evil of ill-fitting gloves that cramp and deform the fingers, and impede the circulation of the blood. If women knew that from tight gloves come red noses, they would be more careful with their hand-gear.

And ill-fitting boots are a greater evil. Watch the procession of feet down Broadway! See how stupidly the boot is tilted forward by its high heel, how the toes are cramped together, how ungracefully and uncomfortably the whole foot wabbles on its pedestal! Surely we can leave it to the Far East to admire the toddling toes of dolly women. And tight shoes, even more than tight gloves, impede the blood's circulation and redden the nose. But they have more deadly results. When, as they always are, they are fitted with high, slender heels, they weaken the ankle and the instep, destroy the strength of the arch, and cause weakness of the limbs and backbone, and all manner of nervous diseases. No woman in dolly boots can be graceful.

About the shape of a woman's body a man can say little except in verse, in paint and marble, in jest and in love.

Beauty Is a Light.

But a word in prose a poet may hazard perhaps on the horror of corsets and all other strait-jackets that deform the shape of woman. How I hate that fashionable line that makes women walk as if perpetually bowing, or like peacocks with flaunting tails! This is not how a fine, free woman should stand; this is not the shape of a goddess or the mother of men. And skirts that hobble the movements of the legs are all but atrocious. The cruel tightening of the corset that gave a spindle tininess to the figure and spoiled the graceful waist-line of Nature is a little out of fashion, thank Heaven!

I have spoken in detail of the beauties of woman, but I hope you realize that a woman cannot be beautiful in detail. You may fix on one certain feature as the reason of her loveliness but you will be wrong in your judgment. Beauty is a spiritual light that shines through the lamp of the body, or it is a more obvious sex magnetism which the body radiates.

And now let me give you briefly my recipe for the making of a perfect woman. A serene, ordered life in a fine surrounding, with a strong purpose in that life (and that purpose should be to bear a man children and give him a home); rhythmic exercise in the open from childhood up; sun and air baths, regular habits, simple diet, light, easy and charming clothes and plenty of good fellowship and good laughter.

And woman will grow toward perfection by dint of not thinking of her growth. She will be so busy in making the life around her fine that she will have little time to waste on self-contemplation.

For though "pretty" women often know the secret of their good looks, a beautiful woman loses something of her charm when she discovers why she is beautiful.

W. R. T.

Great Grandmother of Dolls.

"Now, here is about the nicest thing I ever knew a little girl to do with her dolls: She is a particular friend of mine, this little girl, and she has a good many dolls. Out of the number she selected the four which she liked best. One was Betty Lou, a darling doll dressed like a darling little girl of today. The second one was dressed as Betty Lou's mother, in a fashion of about 30 years ago. The third one was dressed like Betty Lou's grandmother—not an old lady, you understand, but Betty Lou's grandmother when that grandmother was a young girl—a costume such as lovely ladies were wearing about the time of the Civil War. The fourth doll was dressed as Betty Lou's great-grandmother would have dressed, way back in 1830."—Woman's Home Companion.