

The LYNX AND HIS HABITS

by Frank Mossman

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IN the early '80s I settled in Mason county, Washington. My home was near the foothills of the famed Olympic mountain range, where the largest elk on the American continent roam today. When I first settled on Totten's Inlet, as this arm of the great Puget Sound sea is called, there were deer, bear, mink, otter, cats of three kinds, cougar and ducks and birds by the thousands. From my home west to the Pacific ocean, an hundred miles away, there was a dense wilderness of great green trees. The game of the claw variety had roamed for ages through this wilderness and the bear and cat trails were as well defined as the streets in our cities (as were also those of the elk and deer).

My first experience with our whiskered cat came shortly after I began hunting in the blue hills of Mason county. Through the kindness of a friend in Tacoma I secured a white dog, half bull and half hound. One day he ran and treed a large old tom I fired and broke a leg. The cat came down a little lame, but full of fight, and Don was a pretty sore dog before I killed the cat for him. This dog was about a year old at the time and for twelve long years after he was a cat and cougar treer. He would rather run a cat than eat; and when your humble servant had an hour to spare it was spent on the trail of the cat. When I look back over the long vista of years I spent hunting, I can truly say that I love cat hunting better than any other sport, and I may add that it is the hardest work of any game hunting on the coast. You see, the lynx is a great traveler and he does most of his traveling after nightfall.

We will suppose you are ready for a little cat hunt. You take your dogs and start out in the morning. They hit off on a cat trail and go yelping through the forest. "Fresh track," you say. "They will put him up soon." Presently there is a confused murmur of hound yelps; then none at all. "Treed," you think. But no! Here comes old Don, racing on the back trail. "Back-tracking," you think. Don's clarion bay calls the other dogs and they go baying the other way. They go a mile or so, when they lose the track altogether. The last scent was on an old cedar log. Back and forth for half an hour go the dogs, but they cannot hit the trail. You look around, and find the cat's trail where he had back-tracked, and away they go.

Wanda strikes another cat and trees it after a short run. Turk does the same—but Don, Sport, Little Boy and Naida hang onto their first love. You stop on the break of a hill. You hear old Don talking loud, long and clear, about cats in general and this one in particular. You reach the tree and at the same time get your first sight of your game—a big, brown, bulldog-headed animal with long Dundreary whiskers. You let the dogs shake him when killed, and then you pet them. You gaze on a far-off hill and find you are about six miles from home, in a country which is no skating rink even if the timber was off. About midnight a hunter and five or six tired hounds lift the latchstring at "Home, Sweet Home," vowing never to run another cat (at least that night!).

I well remember one morning an old Indian hunter who came to my home. This Indian knew all about wildcats—that is, some cats. I had one kitten at this time that was very tame. I also had a nearly full grown female, mother of the kitten. The Indian was playing with the kitten, which was on the ground near the wire netting that kept the old lady captive. The old Indian had on a pair of tight short pants that some lady had given him as her son had outgrown them. In stooping down he got against the wire netting. The old cat had been growling her disapproval of the Indian handling her kitten for some time, so when Klan-Soup-Billie backed his rear-guard into the netting she reached for Willie with both hands, and she got him, too, and Klan said something that sounded like "Gul-dub-to-de-cat!" and jumped about 15 feet the first leap. Now, the cat cage was of wire netting, just braced with small wooden sticks, so when Willie jumped, the cat hung on, and the cage, cat and Willie stuck together. Willie started down the beach toward the Indian reserve yelling bloody cats. This woke the hounds up, and when they saw Willie stealing their cat they put after him, and it was the finest mix-up I ever saw in my life. Willie, as became a great chief, scorned to sit down for weeks after this, but stood in a dignified way before his wickup. A slight hiss would cause him to jump clear over his tepee for weeks after.

But Bill is just like a great many



Lynx in the Snow

men whom I know. They will be out hunting when their dog will strike a cat trail, and tree the cat in no time. Then Mr. Man proceeds to tell what he doesn't know about cats—how easy they tree—dogs tree them in no time, etc. That may be true—if the cat has just dined; then he trees easily. But along in the summer months an old tom is worse than a bear to run. Then they not only run, but they keep a running. When there is a light snowfall cats are tracked and killed pretty easily. Then they travel around in the snow at all hours rabbit hunting. They don't seem to care much for rabbits, except in the winter season.

Out of the stomach of hundreds of cats which I examined in spring and summer months I never found the remains of a dozen rabbits, but found the remains of grouse and different birds. About 75 per cent. of the cats' food was mountain beaver, or "sewelle." This little animal is about the size of our common rabbit, with no tail to speak of, dark gray in color, with large teeth and long claws. They live in holes in the ground like the prairie dog. Their food is shrubbery in hot weather. They will cut bushes and cover their holes up. They feed in early morn, eve and night. This peculiar little animal is found nowhere in the world save on a strip along the Pacific coast from southern British Columbia to northern California.

In traveling around these cats travel on logs altogether, save when taking a little side hunt. Then they travel under or alongside of logs if they can. Through our forests in western Washington you will see great tree trunks blown down by passing storms. Where one lies so it points from tidewater to the distant blue-green hills, examine it closely, and you will see thousands of tiny holes, and worn smooth save for these tiny holes. This tree trunk has lain for scores of years, and it is our cat's highway from the hills to the settlements below. In the latter part of February or first of March a tom will start out of the hills, get on a runway, and go clear down into the settlements, five or six miles away, and back up into the hills again, all in a night—providing he does not make a kill on the way. If so, he will pick out a thicket and crawl in and lie all day, providing he eats his kill.

There are cats of both sexes traveling up and down these runways. It is at this time that cat hunting is one continual round of hound yelps and the dropping of cats, to the hunter who knows the game. Nine weeks from the time Thomas has met Susan on the trail she brings forth her young. Eighteen out of twenty times, two is the number, occasionally three, and sometimes four, this last number being very rare, I having noted it but once.

When the old female is training her kittens the cat hunter can capture all of the young ones he cares to without the least danger or trouble. You need a slow hound with a clarion voice—slow so you can note his actions around different trees. The old cat, as

a rule, when she hears the dog, gets her kittens up a tree. Then she waits till the hound is close, and then gives him a chase for a little while—then trees herself. Sometimes she will fight a little, then tree near her kittens. A green cat hunter when following his dog on a cold cat trail will suddenly hear the hounds open out in long and clear bays that denote the cat is started. He follows madly after the hounds, who finally tree her, and he kills a big female cat on whose breast hangs the milk for her young.

He has not the remotest idea where those young are, this green cat man; but not so with the man who hunts and studies the game at one and the same time. He notes that his hounds are sometimes trailing 50 to 70 feet apart and all have a good trail, and when they begin to warm up he strains every muscle in his body to keep near. When the final jump-up comes and the woods ring with the music of the hounds on a hot trail, the hunter notes the particular bunch of trees from where the jump took place. He pays no attention to the running hounds, but goes to this grove. Often he will find his best hound is there, baying up a small, thick tree; but more often he hears them barking "treed" some distance away. He knows that cat is safe—that the dogs will keep her there. They know their master is attending to business all right. Have they not hunted long enough to know him and trust him to come when game is treed? The hunter looks the trees over very carefully—young cats have a way of getting out on limbs and hiding, as still as death when found. The hunter takes a forked stick with a noosed line attached, slips it over the kitten's body, gives a smart pull, and the kitten is soon in the canvas bag made for this purpose. After all are secured or (if out of reach) are shot, the hunter then proceeds to do last what Mr. Green Man would have done first—he goes and shoots the old cat.

Sometimes dogs will tree a single cat, then strike another cat trail and away they go. Mr. Green Man follows his hounds blindly—but not so with a cat-hunter. He keeps his weather eye peeled. He notes the various changes in the actions of his hounds, their bays, etc.—"I don't know where he has gone"—"bay"—"I think he has treed"—"bay"—"I am a son-of-a-gun if I know where he is"—bay. The cat man notes the trees all along behind the hounds, for if the cat is running along a runway there are always cats turning up unexpectedly. Then, the dogs may be running two cats; one hops up a tree, the other keeps on with the pack at his heels. These things a cat-hunter knows, and he delights to have something turn up he was not expecting on a cat hunt. To have his hounds run into a family of skunks is another diversion that sometimes occurs.

With good voiced and intelligent hounds there is nothing that beats cat-hunting in Washington. There are three kinds of cats here. The first, which is not very common, is the Canada lynx, the fellow with long whiskers and tassels on his ears; the next is smaller in size and very plentiful, being called the bob-cat or bay lynx; the next is a long-tailed fellow, with a tail as long as his body, very spotted. The finest specimen of this animal I have ever seen is owned by Mr. Allie Bell, formerly auditor of Mason county, Washington, to whom I presented the specimen several years ago. I afterward killed several of these animals. I considered them freaks of nature as those treed by hounds were the first known of here.

I may add in conclusion that I take no credit for all the cats I killed in the past 20 years. I heartily give all the honor to my noble hounds, who treed the cats and made it possible for me to kill them. These noble dogs are now dead and gone—I hope to a hunter's paradise.

Surely So.

"It is a wonder that down south, cotton instead of being a blessing, is not a curse."

"Why so?"

"From the way they keep on damming the cotton mills."

CORNER FOR THE JUNIORS



Each Fairy wears, I do declare,
A little Lady's slipper,
And when she drinks, the butter cup
Is useful as a dipper.

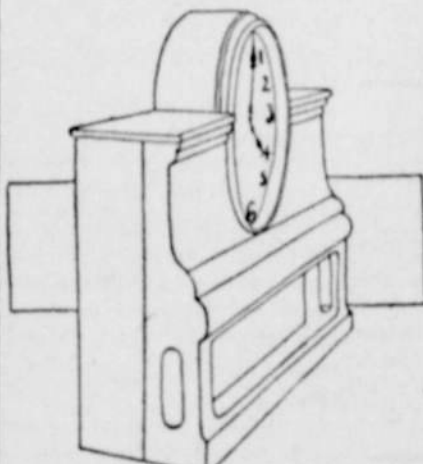
A mushroom is her parasol
As well as a supper table
At tea, I suppose the Hare-Bell rings
As loud as it is able!

Her candles are the fire-bugs
To light her to her pillow.
And in a weed, there's milk to feed
Her little Pussy-willow!

SAVINGS BANK QUITE NOVEL

One of Recent Novelties Is Clock and Depository Combined—Must Deposit Coin in Timepiece.

One of the recent novelties patented is a combined clock and savings bank designed by a Chicago man. Why a savings bank and a clock should be combined will not at once be apparent. The idea would seem ridiculous, as these two articles have no apparent relationship. The purpose of the inventor has merely been to increase the usefulness of the savings bank and assure that it will be constantly employed. He accomplishes this by requiring the deposit of a coin in the bank before the clock can be wound. Unless the coin is deposited the clock becomes useless. The amount of the coin deposited is controlled by the size of the slot in the savings bank. The number of deposits can also be increased by requiring a daily winding of the clock. In this way a certain sum must be



Novel Savings Bank.

added to the bank each day previous to each winding of the clock. After the clock has been wound and the key removed, the mechanism assumes its normal position so that the clock cannot be wound again without the deposit of a coin.

Wanted to Enjoy His Pie.

Little Elmer had just been given a piece of pie. "Are you going to give me another piece, mamma?" he asked.

"Why do you ask, Elmer?" she queried.

"Cause if you ain't, I'll eat this piece real slow," was the reply.

What is the Answer?

What kind of medicine does a father take for a wayward daughter?

He takes an elixir (he takes and he likes her).

When may a man be said to break fast before he gets up?

When he takes a roll in bed.

What is the difference between a tunnel and a speaking tube?

One is hollowed in, the other is hollowed out.

When is a sick man a contradiction?

When he is an impatient patient.

What is taken from you before you get it?

Your portrait.

When is a horse a victim of the Inquisition?

When it is fastened to the rack.

One on Uncle Tom.

Uncle Tom—Have you named your dog yet, Harry?

Harry—Sure thing. I named him after you.

Uncle Tom—That's not very complimentary, is it?

Harry—Oh, well, he hasn't got sense enough to know the difference.

Benny on the Carp.
The German carp is a creature shaped so as to resemble a fish. It can swim in any kind of water, and has one eye on each side of its head. Its food consists of small black bass and three cornered pieces of boiled potato. You catch a carp by throwing a stone in the water to attract its attention and then letting down a hook baited with a nice piece of garbage. There are people in St. Joe who will pay ten or fifteen cents for a big, fat carp, but as for me I would rather have a Welsh rabbit or a pound of angel cake.—"Benny," in the Chicago Tribune.

Mothers will find Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup the best remedy to use for their children during the teething period.

Scotch Alarm Clock.

A tourist in rural Scotland took refuge for the night in the cottage of an old lady. He asked her to wake him up early in the morning, warning her that he was quite deaf. Upon awakening much later than the appointed hour he found that the old lady, with strict regard for the proprieties, had slipped under the door a slip of paper upon which was written: "Sir, it's half past eight."

Tightness across the chest means a cold on the lungs. That's the danger signal. Cure that cold with Hamlin's Wizard Oil before it runs into Consumption or Pneumonia.

Bishop Was Ready for Them.

A story is told of a certain Norman bishop, who preached so eloquently against the wearing of long hair before Henry I. and his courtiers, that they gave in on the spot and agreed to have their locks shorn. No sooner had they made their decision than the wise prelate, who had provided for just such a contingency, pulled out a pair of shears from his sleeve and soon removed the curls of the whole court.

Science in Fishing.

In taking big catches of haddock if the insides are looked into there will be seen great quantities of herring eggs. The fisherman before casting his lines for haddock greases his sound and tries for herring spawn, for where he finds herring eggs there great numbers of haddock are sure to be.

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