

FOREST AND STREAM & ROD AND GUN

THE AMERICAN SPORTSMAN'S JOURNAL.

Terms, Four Dollars a Year,
Ten Cents a Copy.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, JULY 19, 1877.

Volume 8.—No. 24.
No. 111 Fulton St., N. Y.

For Forest and Stream and Rod and Gun.

Hunting the Bighorn.

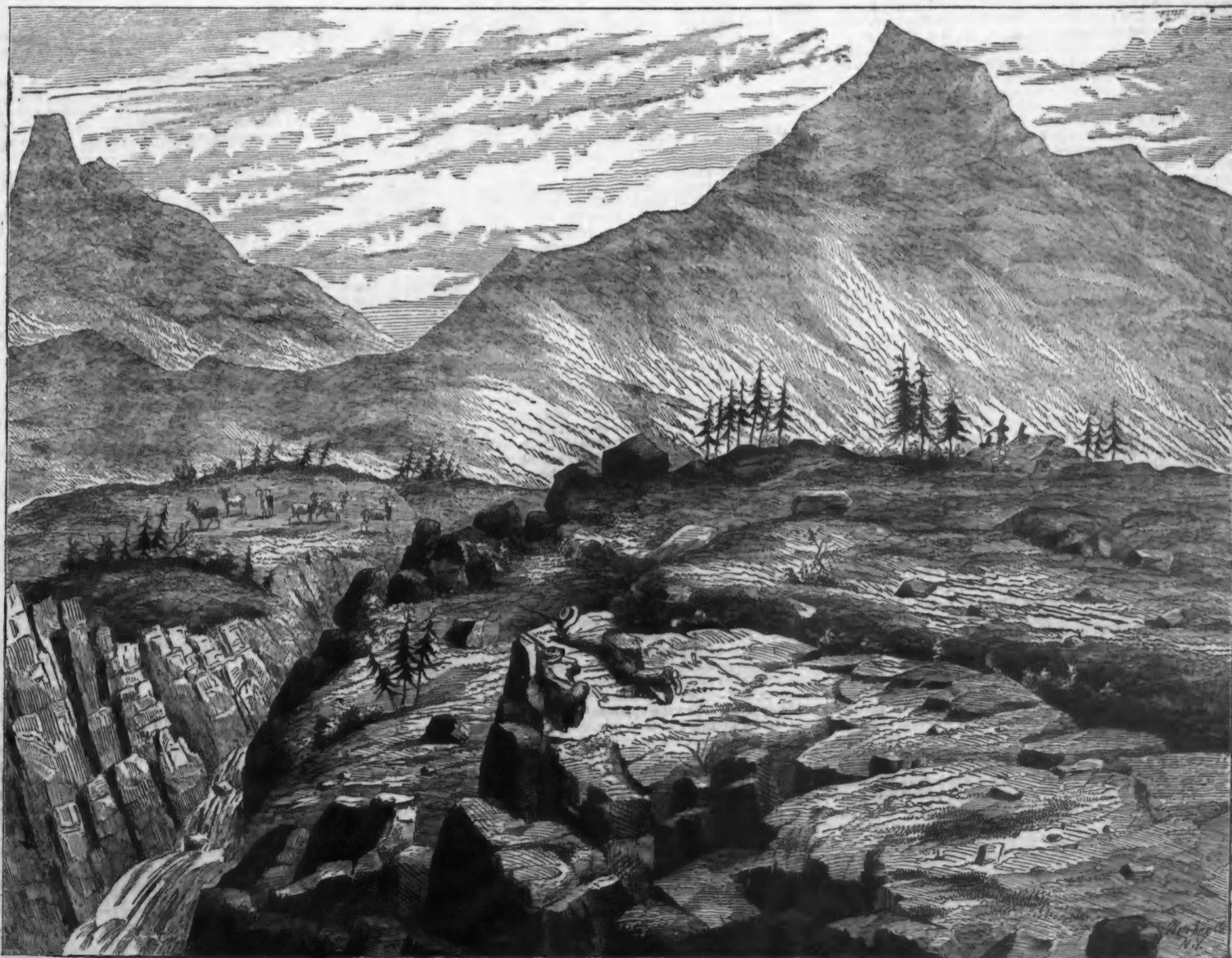
BY JOHN MORTIMER MURPHY.

THE only species of the ovidæ found wild in the United States is the so-called bighorn or mountain sheep (*Ovis montana*), and that is confined geographically to the region lying between the Rocky Mountains and the Cascade Range, which runs north and south through the States and territories bordering the Pacific Ocean, at an average distance from the sea of, perhaps, one hundred and twenty miles. This vast area is traversed in every direction by mountain chains varying from four to ten thousand feet in altitude; and it is amid their many-shaped peaks that the American chamois loves to dwell, for not only is it there comparatively safe from all foes, except the red and white hunter, but it also finds there the daintiest of feasts in the alpine and subalpine vegetation. Owing to the incessant warfare waged upon it in the Rocky Mountains, it is getting quite scarce in that range, except in isolated localities; but in the Cascades it is nearly as



THE BIGHORN.

abundant as ever, as its pale-faced enemies are comparatively few, and the red men can procure food in an easier manner than by pursuing it amid the snow-enshrouded haunts which it selects as a home. The amateur hunter who would bag a large number must therefore leave the regions in Wyoming and Colorado, in which it is usually sought, and go further West to the man-silent mountains that traverse Idaho, Oregon and Washington Territory, and there he will find no cause to complain of ill-luck. No animal in the world is perhaps more difficult of approach than the bighorn, as it is exceedingly keen of scent, unusually vigilant, and so cautious that it carefully reconnoitres a country from an elevated standpoint ere it presumes to advance toward it. The Nimrod who would therefore place the heads of many among his trophies of the chase must be not only of a vigorous form, to bear the climbing and rarified atmosphere, but he must possess above all the qualities of patience, perseverance and hardihood. The best time for hunting it is the early morning or late in the evening, as it is then out browsing, but in the middle of the day it is generally concealed among the crags, or deep in



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WISCONSIN FISHING.

as he goes for the bird! On a walk, too, you see. He would like to go on a bound if he dared, but knows better. Never let a dog run in retrieving unless it is necessary to catch a wounded bird.

"Why not?" Why not! Look! There is the answer already: he is pointing again as stiff as a rock before he is half way to the dead bird.

Two more birds rise as we come up, a four gun battery immediately opens in their rear, and when the smoke clears away, the air shows nothing but feathers: the second one fell after I missed him with my second barrel; an elegant eye-wipe, that! He was crossing, and in my haste I forgot to shoot ahead of him. I fear you have been imposing on the credulity of your rustic friend in telling me you never shot woodcock before. After loading, Don brings the bird you first shot. See how carefully he holds it, and lays it in my hand. What a noble bird, too, for this time of year. See his rich, dark rosewood back, large, lustrous, expressive eye, set far back in his head. He looks like a gentleman of the olden time in his rich buff vest, aristocratic legs and feet, his odd looking bill, and beautifully mottled wings. And so he is. He's one of nature's noblemen, and the prince of American game birds. Don soon brings the other two, and on we go. In a few moments Frank is "drawing." There he stops; Don, too, and sure as you live on a different bird. He sees Frank, too, but you can see that he is on an independent point. Let us attend to his first, for Frank wouldn't break his point for an earthquake. Away goes Don's bird. Both guns crack together, and down he comes.

"There! Who hit him?"

"What is the difference? Call him yours. A couple of hunters would squabble half an hour over that bird and want to toss up a cent for it, and all that kind of stuff. But we are after sport and not meat, and it makes no difference who hit or who bags him. But see! he fell right in front of Frank, is only winged, and is walking off too! See old Frank; he looks wistfully at the wounded bird and then at the place where his own bird is, and hardly knows what to do. To ho! Keep your point, old boy, we'll attend to the well one first. Away he spins upward through the trees, with a twisting, corkscrew flight, while both guns crack harmlessly behind him; mark him, though. We'll find him again. It is always best to mark game, no matter how plenty it may be. He may possibly have been hit and we find him dead, although it rarely happens that woodcock carry away shot in a vital place as quail sometimes do. I will send Frank for that wounded one, so watch him now; he is a better retriever than Don, and knows more than any dozen ordinary dogs. There he goes on his trail. You see he don't stop now to point at all, but walks right in for him! He knows the difference perfectly between the scent of a wounded and of a well bird.

"Is it possible?" Yes. All good dogs soon learn that; but see how he carries him by one wing. He takes them sometimes by both wings, but never by the body unless they flutter hard. He takes a short cut to reach us, and when half way slackens and stops. I really believe he is on another bird.

"What! with one in his mouth?" Yes. It is a rare thing, but good dogs will sometimes do it when occasion happens. I have before now seen him point with a dead bird in his mouth, but never with a live one, though I presume it is quite as easy to do. You take first shot again, and if we kill him I will make Frank stand there with the wounded bird while Don brings the other. That is a test of a dog's training, but he will stand it.

As the sun advances the birds get farther back from the wet ground, and we soon find ourselves in a heavy thicket that covers a long slope leading from the swamp. Here the birds are plenty. The dogs are drawing or pointing nearly half the time. Now look out for your laurels. You have done very well out in the open timber, but you have a different task on hand. This is no child's play. There is no time to take aim, and unless you fire the instant your gun comes to your shoulder you might about as well not shoot, for you will have little time to shift it to the proper place.

"Pshaw! why half the time I can't see anything but a yard or two of brown streak through the green leaves, how do you expect a man to hit that?" No matter, catch its direction and blaze away; for oftentimes it is your only chance. With practice you will soon do capital shooting in this way, though not so good as where you have opportunity to get sight. You will, too, always be apt to fire directly at crossing shots instead of ahead of them as you should do, if at any distance; but even though we miss more, this is better sport than open shooting—at least it is for me. There is a satisfaction in stopping a whizzing streak with a shot quick as lightning's flash, that I do not feel where it is more easily done. The greater skill required the greater the sport. But let us now bid the Major good-bye for to-day. It is nine o'clock, and we have had good sport and made a fair sized bag, and there is no use in being swinish about shooting, any more than in anything else. To-morrow we will call again, perhaps in the evening. Evening is nearly as good as the morning for birds, though not for the dog's nose.

Fall woodcock shooting is far ahead of summer shooting, as the birds are larger, stronger and quicker, and the weather is cooler; then, too, other kinds of game are "ripe," and for variety we may occasionally pacify a ruffed grouse, or a few quail or snipe. But since the law allows it, and as it is a good time to escape from business, and there is nothing else to shoot, commend me to summer woodcock shooting. It is not generally known by Eastern sportsmen that splendid summer shooting is to be had in many parts of the West, although the birds are apt to scatter in the fall. On the Illinois river, and on the Mississippi bottoms in Minnesota and Wisconsin, I have seen as fine shooting as the heart of a reasonable man could desire. I presume good shooting may be found in certain places on almost any Western river bottom or swamp, although the choice grounds will vary according to the rise or fall of the streams, which are generally different in their action in this respect from Eastern rivers. You will also as a general thing have all the shooting to yourself, as very few Western hunters trouble them at all. I know many towns having plenty of sportsmen who hunt ducks, "chickens," etc., with great ardor, but never trouble anything smaller, except, perhaps, pigeons. For many years I was the only one in the city of Wabasha, Minn., who ever hunted woodcock, quail or snipe, although there were plenty of ardent sportsmen and many good shots there. At Henry, on the Illinois river, some years ago there were over twenty capital shots, and magnificent woodcock shooting within half an hour's reach; but only one person in the town ever touched them, and the rest used to look at us with contemptuous wonder as they saw us going out to waste ammunition upon such trifles. The West has many good sportsmen who are splendid shots and capital companions; but the majority of them like to see at least one pound of meat drop at every shot, consequently the Eastern man will generally have the small game all to himself.

J. S. VAN DYKE

HAVING in contemplation a business trip along the lakes, and thinking that perchance a little good fishing might be intermixed without detriment, I addressed a note of inquiry to the highest authority on such subjects, which speedily brought forth the following reply:

NEW YORK, May 25, 1877.

OFFICE OF FOREST AND STREAM AND ROD AND GUN:
My Dear Mr. L.—I shall set the example by going to Bayfield, Wisconsin, and the Apostle Islands. For information see our article this week. You might take Mackinaw Straits in. We don't go West enough. Yours very truly,
CHAS. HALLOCK.

I did not get started till the second week in June, and then stoppages at different points occupied the best part of two weeks before I touched Wisconsin soil at Milwaukee. At Sandusky I lingered long enough to run over to Put-in-Bay and "put in" a day with the black bass. It was, however, rather late in the season, and though two weeks before boats had been averaging 100 fish a day, my luck was indifferent. I was, however, much pleased with the spot, and during early May and September the sport is unequalled. Jay Cooke formerly had a beautiful retreat on one of the islands, and the boatmen have fabulous stories to tell of the quantities of fish he used to catch with "bow-line and dipse."

Returning to Sandusky and mentioning to a friend there that I proposed to try the fishing at Mackinaw, he remarked that it was unnecessary to go so far to catch trout, and that within five miles of that place he could insure me as good fishing or better than I could get at Mackinaw. Incredulous, I accepted his offer, and within an hour, armed with a letter, I was off behind a fast team for the grounds. The stream is only a short one, finding its source in several ice-cold crystal springs, and flowing over moss-covered limestone rocks to Lake Erie; is private property, and a permit is required to fish it. I reached the spot, hastily put on my fishing suit, adjusted my rod and flies, and made the first cast about six o'clock in the evening. There was a stiff breeze blowing, amounting almost to a gale, accompanied with a fine drizzling rain, and I was quite dubious of success. The man in charge informed me that I could not catch anything with that rig; that I would have to use bait, and that the pole would go to pieces with the first fish I took, as some of them were as heavy as five pounds. Strange as it may appear, it seems no one had ever tried the fly there.

In five minutes I had my first fish hooked—a noble fellow of about two pounds weight—and from that time till nine o'clock I was kept busy with them. Never was more sport condensed into a shorter space of time, and my host's respect for a fly and 7-oz. rod increased amazingly. I did not get any of the five-pounders, but I am told they do spear them of that size.

At Milwaukee I was so fortunate as to make the acquaintance of Henry Pratt, the general ticket agent of the Wisconsin Central R. R., and upon informing him that I was going to try the fishing, he very kindly provided me with a special excursion ticket, with stop-over privileges, and strongly recommended me to tarry at Butternut Creek station and experiment on the maskelonge in the lake at that point. The road runs from Milwaukee, 351 miles, northwest to Ashland on Lake Superior, and has been a number of years under construction, work being carried on at both ends. It was not till June 11 of the present year, however, that it was completed and the first train passed through to the lake amid great rejoicing along the line. It runs through the finest pine forests and mineral region of the State, crossing two of the longest iron bridges in the world; and the scenery at times is grand, especially along the Bad River.

Leaving Milwaukee at 1 p. m., I stopped the first night at Menasha, a pretty village at the head of Lake Winnebago, celebrated for its black bass fishing, and tried them after supper with live minnows; but it was too late in the season and the catch was trifling. On again the next morning, the settlements growing smaller and further apart; we reached Butternut at 6:30 p. m. Here I found boats, men and tents awaiting me, all provided beforehand through the kindness and forethought of Mr. Pratt. The lake is about two and a half miles from the station, and is a beautiful sheet of water five miles long, by an average of half a mile wide. The shores are high and densely wooded, while along the banks rushes and lily pads extend a short distance into the lake, affording splendid shelter for the fish. There are no settlements on the lake, and it has never been fished by white men until this spring.

We made our camp, and the next morning, by sunrise, were on the water. Spoons are used, and the fish are taken by trolling in the same way as at the Thousand Islands. Ordinary spoons will not answer, but I was fortunate enough to get a couple of "home-made" ones at Milwaukee that would hold a whale; and, armed with these and a stout braided line, I felt there was nothing to fear.

My first fish weighed 27½ pounds, and the smallest nearly 19, and one taken while I was in the camp, 37½ pounds; but unfortunately I did not catch him. This fish measured 4 ft. 1½ in. in length, 9 in. in depth, and 5 in. across the back. A boat will average on good days about 125 lbs., and there are legends of fish 6 ft. long having been hooked and lost, which may be true, though I saw none such. In my opinion they are not real maskelonge; certainly not the same as those caught at the Thousand Islands in the St. Lawrence, but are more like immense pike.

If further information about this place is desired, I have no doubt it will be cheerfully furnished by Mr. Pratt at Milwaukee, or by Hart & Barnidge, the hotel proprietors at Butternut Creek. The country is new and rough, and the accommodations not suited to ladies, unless they are of the hardy kind accustomed to camping out.

After three days spent here in the most enjoyable manner, I left reluctantly and arrived at Ashland at 11:20 p. m., to again find the hand of Mr. Pratt reaching on before me by means of the wires. The agent awaited us at the depot and informed us that quarters were ready at the private house of Eugene F. Prince, a most ardent sportsman, and the "Prince" of fishermen in this region. More of his hospitality on my return.

Taking the boat next morning we are at Bayfield in a couple of hours, calling on the way at La Pointe, on Madeline Island, one of the Apostle group, formerly a station of the Hudson Bay Fur Company. It is noted for its church, near 200 years old, and its white fisheries. Bayfield is a pleasant little village situated on the south shore of Chequamegon Bay, which puts in here from Lake Superior. It has a very fair hotel, the Island House, kept by Mr. Knight, who is something of a sportsman himself and understands the wants of visiting members of the craft. There is also another large hotel not yet quite ready to receive guests. I had a letter to

Mr. James Chapman, the acknowledged head of the sporting fraternity of Bayfield, who received me very cordially; but my bright anticipations were somewhat dimmed by the information that it had been raining almost every day for three weeks, that the streams were very high and muddy, and so much washings had gone into the lake that "rock fishing" was undoubtedly spoiled for the time being. This term does not indicate fishing for rockfish as one might suppose, but for speckled brook trout among the rocks which line the shore of the bay for miles. Numerous streams filled with trout run into the bay between Ashland and Bayfield and beyond, and the trout pass along the rocky shores from one to another, while many of them remain to take up a permanent abode. I was told that do not take the fly till August, and my experience corroborates it.

Not entirely discouraged, however, I took an early start the next morning with a boat pulled by a half-breed, Henry La Pointe, and a most excellent guide I found him. We first tried the Sioux River, but it was very high and discolored, and the only bites secured were from the black flies. We wasted the best part of the day here, and it was not till 4 p. m. that we got to work along the rocks. From that time till dusk I took 17 fine trout, the largest weighing 2½ lbs., and lost two. I followed directions implicitly, and this is the "rig" I used: A fancy fly, made for the Rangeley lakes, with six B B shot on the leader, for sinker, and a trout fin for bait. How is that, Mr. Editor, for a fly fisher? In this way trout are frequently taken weighing 3 and 4 lbs., and even larger, and in great quantities when the waters are in proper condition. I enjoyed the scenery, which is magnificent, the running in and out among the rocky coves, and the novel style of fishing, exceedingly.

The next day we bid adieu to Bayfield, intending to fish the rocks all the way to Ashland, a distance of eighteen miles; but a fierce northeast wind arising, we were glad to make our port, by aid of the sail, with all dispatch through a heavy sea. My friend Prince had arranged for a day up "Fish Creek" on my return, and I found him in readiness. We made rather a late start, and had a pull of at least an hour and a half to our fishing grounds, across the head of the bay. The creek is navigable eight miles for skiffs, but our time being limited and the water not in first rate condition, we did not go very far up. The fishing is done from the bow of the skiff, as it floats down the stream. I first tried a great variety of flies, but could get only one rise, and that a small fish, so I adopted the custom of the country and used minnows. We soon had them coming to the landing net in fine style, and by dark had made a good string, averaging ¾ lb., the largest 1½ lb. The beautiful creek, densely shaded, an excellent lunch and the fine sport all combined to make the day one long to be remembered, but there were trials in store for us. A terrific thunder storm came up just before sunset, wetting us to the skin. Next it came on to blow a gale, and when we reached the lake the seas were running so that no skiff could live, let alone make headway. There was nothing left for us but to pull up our boat, hide our bulky and heavy traps, and foot it home around the shores of the bay. Here was an experience for a city youth. It rained in torrents, it thundered, it lightened, it blew. We had no light except the flashes, and quickly lost the trail, bringing up after blundering around the swamp in the midst of an Indian encampment. This we got out of as quickly as possible as the dogs were savage and made for us. We had now no resource but to follow the shore, which we did for two miles, often wading armpit deep, reaching home about 11 o'clock rather the worse for wear; but we brought our fish through.

A good hot supper awaited us, and with dry clothes and a roaring fire our equanimity was soon restored. Next morning I started for home, regretting much that my time was so limited; and in closing this hasty article I desire to bear witness to the beauty of the country, the hospitality of the people and the abundance of game, as, apart from the fish, excellent duck and goose shooting is to be had in the season. I feel particularly indebted to Mr. Samuel S. Field, editor of the Ashland Press, for courtesies extended, as well as to many others. To any sportsman coming this way I would say see Mr. Prince, at Ashland. He does not "keep a hotel," but knows how to take care of a tourist in a manner not to be surpassed. He is besides well-acquainted with all the fishing grounds, both at Ashland and Bayfield. Provide yourself with your own tackle, bring plenty of warm clothing, as the nights and many of the days are very cool, a good landing net and a small bottle of "fly mixture." The flies are not bad, but the mosquitoes are lively. If a water route is preferred you can go by steamer from Chicago, through the Straits of Mackinaw, but one needs plenty of time if he selects that course. From either Ashland or Bayfield the far-famed Nipigon River of the north shore can be readily reached. It is my intention to revisit these places next summer prepared to make a stay. In the meantime, as the country is a new one to most of Eastern people, I will be pleased to furnish any information to those contemplating a visit it is in my power to give. Board can be obtained at \$1.50 to \$2 per day, or \$10 per week, and boats and guides at \$2.50 per day. The sportsmen of the country, Mr. Editor, are very anxious that you should make your contemplated expedition, and I can assure you of a hearty welcome.

Philadelphia, July 10, 1877.

WM. H. LIPPINCOTT.

A GOOD WOLF STORY.

CLARINDA, IOWA, June 1, 1877.

EDITOR FOREST AND STREAM:

A friend of mine, by the name of Irwin, living fifteen miles from town on a prairie farm, near some timber, one day last week took his gun with him to the field where he was plowing, while the horses rest, the ground being very wet and heavy. He called up the creek search of wolves, which are very plentiful in that section of the country. On reaching the creek he started up something in the tall rushes. Not being able to see what it was, he ran up a little hill just in time to see where it stopped. He fired into the rushes a heavy charge of buck shot, at the distance of about one hundred yards. Imagine his surprise and delight when a splendid buck bounded in the air and fell dead. Horses and plow being now entirely forgotten, Irwin set to work to dress his game. Before he had finished, a large hungry wolf rushed on the scene, but he had a hasty retreat and succeeded in crossing the stream just as Irwin discharged at him his second barrel loaded with buckshot. He wounded him, and saw him tumble down the opposite bank. He then gave chase, and while trying to cross over on main willow brush, the wolf turned and attacked him with open mouth so suddenly that he lost his footing and tumbled into the water, fortunately not very deep. After a short scuffle both swam for the shore, Irwin taking the lead. On gaining the bank, he turned and dealt his wolfship a finishing blow, breaking the stock of his gun, but fully satisfied with his escape and success. We don't know how long it took Irwin to gain his breath and steady his nerves before scalping his wolf. Yet further profit still awaited him. On opening the animal, he found nine fully developed young wolves. He scalped all and brought them to town and received one dollar bounty on each. The venison he divided among his friends. Pretty good work for one day!