

## BIG GAME HUNTING IN THE WILD WEST.

### THE AMERICAN ELK OR WAPITI.

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BEFORE commencing this branch of my subject I wish to say that the treatment accorded to it by Judge J. D. Caton, in his intensely interesting work on "The Antelope and Deer of America," is entirely exhaustive. It would, therefore, be arrogance on my part to attempt to add anything to the zoology of the elk. Judge Caton devoted years of diligent and effective study to the subject.

In this paper, then, I propose to merely notice some facts in regard to the peculiarities of these stalwart game quadrupeds as found in their habitat. This I am abundantly entitled to do, since I have hunted them every season for the past twelve years. During this period I have but seldom failed to find large numbers, and have killed all that could be disposed of in a legitimate manner. The many opportunities thus enjoyed have given me the chance to closely observe the habits of the animal in a normal, untamed condition. In all cases my experience has been corroborative of the accurate fidelity of Judge Caton's work. It will be noted that in speaking of the moose and elk I have adopted the nomenclature of the border hunters—of "bull" and "cow," instead of "buck" and "doe." The former I think more appropriate; as the terms are used in common parlance, and are more readily understood.

Naturalists appear not to have any definite conclusion as to the origin and derivation of the name "wapiti." Some have, however, considered it an Iroquois appellation. I have no doubt that the name has an aboriginal source. Probably it was derived from the Chippeway Indian word *wapeton*, which signifies "to see" or "seeing;" as, for example, "I see deer" is in Chippeway, "*Nieu wapeton wa-was kasp*," or "I see white man," "*Nieu wapeton chemokomon*." The elk is endowed

with remarkably keen vision, so that this native designation is very appropriate. Whether the word has the same significance in the Iroquois tongue, I cannot say, having no knowledge of that dialect.

It is now some forty-three years since I was stationed at Fort Gratiot, near the outlet of Lake Huron. That section of country was in those days in a perfectly natural state; perhaps it continues so still, for it is for the most part a cold, barren wilderness, covered with heavy pine, fir and tamarack trees. The soil was miserable and ill adapted to the requirements of the husbandman. At that period there was an abundant supply of large game, including elk, bear, deer and an occasional moose, within the then unpopulated peninsula of Michigan, between Lakes Huron and Michigan. Although from boyhood I had been an enthusiastic disciple of Nimrod, my experience up to that date had not, from lack of opportunity, extended beyond the ordinary sport of deer-stalking. I therefore determined to avail myself of this rare occasion for making an excursion into the elk region, in order to test my fortune and skill in the higher sphere of American field sport.

From the accounts I heard of this lonely and desolate section I deemed it imprudent to invade it without a guide who was familiar with the territory. Accordingly, being advised that there were good hunters among the Indians living near Sarnia, in Canada. I crossed the St. Clair River and engaged a Chippeway chief named "Pe-to-wan-quad." He had passed the greater part of his advanced life in hunting moose, elk and bear in the very section of country I proposed to visit, and was perfectly acquainted with the habits and peculiarities of these animals. He eagerly accepted my proposition and seemed highly delighted at the prospect of again indulging his dominant passion for hunting large game. His opinion, confidently expressed, was that we should in all probability see many elk, and possibly a moose or two. The latter had, however, he said, been hunted so much during the

previous years that he was doubtful about finding them.

One beautiful autumnal morning, when all preparations for comfortable bivouacking had been completed, our little party embarked in a small bateau and sailed about fifty miles up the lake toward Saginaw Bay. The party consisted of Lieutenant Stephenson, two soldiers, Pe-to-wan-quad and the writer. We landed at a point indicated by the Indian as being the most available for access and the best

ranges. Accordingly he was off at daylight and did not return until after dark. The only response we could obtain to our immediate anxious inquiries as to what game he had seen, etc., was: "Heap hungry me, and he seemed averse to talking at all until we had plied him with a bountiful supper. When this was over and he had deliberately filled and lighted his pipe, he condescended to offer this preliminary observation: "Find-um plenty elk sign me to-day." He then informed us that he

had gone about eight miles back from the lake to Black River, where he found a great number of elk signs, saw several of the animals and killed one. He added that we might all go out on Monday morning and "maybe so shoot-um heap."

I asked him if we could not hunt them on the following day.

"No," he said, "to-moller Sundy; no good for hunt Sundy; maybe so, Great Spirit no like-um hunt Sundy!"

I must admit I felt some misgivings at having made such a proposition to my conscientious guide, who had administered a very proper reproof to me.

We therefore remained in camp until Monday morning.

During this time he especially cautioned us against firing any guns, as he said it would cause all the elk that heard the reports to run far away from our vicinity. That may have been the effect of shots in that section where the animals had been considerably hunted, but I have not found it the case during my subsequent extended experience with those animals in the Rocky Mountains.

Early on Monday morning, Pe-to-wan-quad and I, after donning our hunting gear, traveled directly back from the lake



"I RAISED MY RIFLE AND FIRED."

hunting grounds. This was on a Friday afternoon. While we were arranging our camp for the night, our hunter went into the woods. Shortly afterward we heard a rifle shot, which proved to have been fired by the Indian, who soon appeared with a fat buck upon his shoulders.

As we were then eight or ten miles from where the guide expected to find the elk, he proposed making a preliminary reconnaissance the next day to ascertain whether the game still remained in their customary

for about five miles over a miserable, flat, tamarack forest region. Here we stopped for a short time and made an auxiliary camp, leaving one of the soldiers in charge of it. We then traversed for several miles country of the same character, so monotonous, without a hill, stream, road, trail or any other landmark, that it would have been impossible for me to have retraced our steps. The Indian, however, went ahead with apparently the greatest nonchalance. But I noticed as we went along he would occasionally brush away the dry leaves with his foot, or break down a small bush; but these marks were made at intervals so wide that they would have afforded no guidance to a white man. In returning, however, I observed some of these marks, which indicated that they may have served the Indian in keeping the right course.

Shortly after we left the new camp I observed some elk tracks that appeared to me fresh, but the Indian said they were made the night before. Soon I saw others that looked very new, and called the guide's attention to them, but he pronounced them three or four hours old, and objected to following them. From this time, however, he moved more cautiously, scrutinizing every track or other sign of game we passed. Finally we reached Black River, when he pointed to the tracks of three elk that he said had crossed the stream but a few minutes before, and had entered a dense copse of tall brush just ahead of us. As we approached the copse upon their trail, we suddenly heard in front of us two dogs giving tongue most vociferously, and driving the elk out upon the opposite side of the thicket. We could not see them, but they made off rapidly up the river, with the dogs in full cry at their heels.

We followed as fast as we (or rather I) could run, but they gained upon us rapidly, until they were almost out of hearing. We had no difficulty, however, in following the tracks, as the elk with their wide-spreading antlers broke off and scattered along the ground many branches of trees. At the rapid pace we were running my wind soon failed me, and I was obliged to stop. I told the Indian to go on and try to keep within hearing of the dogs. This he did until he called me. When I came up with him he told me the dogs had one of the elk at bay in the river, about 200 yards above us. I immediately cautiously crawled up to where the dogs were giving tongue,

and peeping over the bank discovered an enormous bull elk. He was standing up to his knees in water, only about twenty steps from me, with his head raised as high as he could hold it. Two large dogs were savagely jumping and tearing at his ears and nose with all their might.

I gave him a shot, but a little too far back from the shoulder. This seemed to exasperate him against the dogs (he had not seen me then); and he commenced pawing furiously at them with his fore feet, but did not strike them. A moment afterward he turned and ran out of the river, but the dogs, keeping close to his head, drove him into the water again a short distance farther down the stream. Then I gave him another shot, but he did not fall until I fired a third time, hitting him in the head and killing him instantly. He was so huge a beast that it took all our united strength to pull him up to the shore, where we commenced skinning him. Before we had finished two woodsmen came up. They had been making shingles somewhere in the vicinity, and on hearing the rifle shots came to ascertain the cause. It appeared that the brave dogs that had enacted so important a part in the affair belonged to them, and must have followed us to the spot whence the elk were started. As the men were delighted to see the fat meat, we gave them all that they desired for themselves and their dogs, hanging up the remainder in a tree, for it was as much as the Indian could do to pack the heavy antlers to the camp.

While we were cutting up the meat one of these men, who was an old woodsman, related a remarkable incident that happened to him some years before in this same locality. While he and his son were hunting one day they came across elk tracks leading into a thicket of trees and bush. The father was wearing a brown overcoat, in color not unlike the hair of an elk. He directed his son to enter the copse at one point, going in himself on the opposite side, in order to obtain more chances for shots. For awhile they found nothing, but at length the son discovered what he took to be an elk standing in the bush some distance away. He fired, and to his horror heard his father scream at the highest pitch of his voice:

"You have killed me—you have killed me!"

The poor boy ran to him and found that he had sent the two bullets with

which his rifle was charged through his father's chest. In a frenzied condition he ran to the nearest lumber camp for assistance. The wounded man was carried to a cabin, and after being nursed for two weeks entirely recovered. It appeared that the two bullets had passed around his ribs without penetrating the chest.

In returning to camp we followed a different route, but the Indian kept a very direct course. After we had traveled several miles through the dense forest he stopped, saying he believed we were near the new camp, and advising me to fire the rifle. This I did, and, to my amazement, an immediate response came from the soldier we left in charge, only about 200 yards distant. How in such a country the Indian could have determined our exact position with such perfect certainty was utterly beyond my comprehension, and to this day I have never been able to understand it. Pe-to-wan-quad's son, who went out alone for a hunt that morning, was lost, and did not find his way back until the following evening.

After packing in all our venison, we returned to the lake and embarked for home, well satisfied with the result of our expedition.

In regard to the elk Judge Caton very properly says: "The elk can be easily

domesticated," but adds "that he never heard of one being trained to the harness, as formerly was often the case in Scandinavia." The experiment of training them was often attempted in the vicinity of Fort Gratiot, about the time I was there, and with some success. In several in-



HEAD OF AMERICAN ELK.

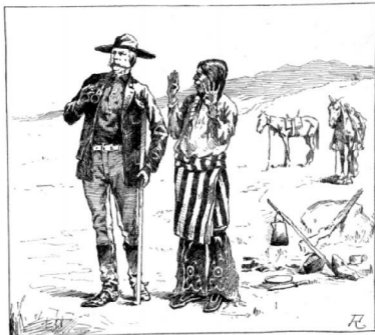
stances they were broken to the halter, so that they could be led without difficulty. One man even succeeded in training a full-grown bull to harness, and drove him to a sleigh for a time. But one day he stopped in front of a tavern in Port Huron, and, leaving his wapiti without tying, entered the house, presumably to get a drink. Just then a dog happened to come along, and, seeing the strange turnout,

went for it. This terrified the elk so much that he jumped a fence, with the sleigh at his heels, and started off at full speed for the woods. When the runaway was caught there were a few remnants of the harness hanging to him, but nothing was ever found of the vehicle. I do not remember that elk transportation was resorted to again during that winter in that particular neighborhood.

About this period my Chippeway friend, Pe-to-wan-quad, brought me a young calf elk, which we kept until he was about half grown. For some time he would take no other food but milk, and even that he would not touch unless it was administered to him from a bottle. When, however, the nose of the bottle was put into his mouth he would swallow the contents almost as quickly as it could have been discharged from a gun. He was very docile and came into the house whenever he desired. His favorite habit was to lie upon a rug before our sitting-room fire; and sometimes when he observed that the dinner was being put

upon the table he would quietly help himself, if not prevented. He was fond of playing with the children, and seemed quite harmless, until one day he took it into his head to strike at one with his sharp fore feet, but fortunately did not hit the child. Thereupon I gave him to a neighbor, who had an enclosure with a high fence round it, about 600 yards from the fort, and there he was confined and remained for several months. One day someone by accident left the gate open, and the elk made his escape, and came running at full speed, and, charging through the gate into the parade ground, made directly for my quarters, into the sitting room, and deliberately laid himself down upon his favorite rug, as he had often done months before. I had him taken back to the enclosure, but he repeated the same thing whenever he could get out afterward.

Until within a few decades the ranges of the elk were more extensive in American territory than those of any other ruminant quadruped, except the common Virginia



"SEE 'EM EIGHT BULL ELK ME."

deer. It is also probable that a few individuals of the species still remain in Michigan and Minnesota, and possibly in other sequestered Eastern localities.

On one occasion I heard of many having been seen in the neighborhood of Mankato. As the Sioux Indians were not friendly at that time, and as it was considered unsafe to travel alone through that unsettled section, I was prevailed upon to take an escort from the only available military force within reach. This consisted of two mounted Iowa militiamen, who, in the absence of volunteers, had been called out to protect the frontier settlers from Indian attacks. They were armed with Prussian rifles of a very ancient pattern that were but little, if at all, more effective than bows and arrows, as events proved. They possessed no conception of military discipline, and entertained but little regard for rank and titles. Notwithstanding my frequent protests they invariably gave me the abbreviated appellation of "Cap," but they never touched their caps to me. Being, as I supposed, the senior of the party, I set out from Mankato in a wagon, ahead of the rest, with a driver who said he had been out in the *Sy-ox* campaign under "Ole Pop" Sibley, and therefore seemed to regard himself as a little above me in rank and consequence.

The cavalry component of the party, apparently, had taken several drinks of whiskey just before starting, and marched in the rear, not exactly in column of squadrons, but as near it as the strength of the outfit permitted, in columns of one, or, in ordinary civilian parlance, in "Injun file."

In this order we proceeded very smoothly, until one day, as we were passing near an extensive dip in the ground, where the grass was more luxuriant than on the surrounding land, my driver suddenly stopped and informed me that he had seen something sink slowly down into the grass about a hundred and fifty yards from us, near the bottom of the dip. I had not the remotest conception that it was anything more than a badger or some other insignificant small animal, and directed one of the escort to ride down and see what was there. He went, and after dismounting and walking forward a few steps discharged his rifle. But as we saw nothing more, I told the other man to go and ascertain what it was.

They advanced together, with rifles cocked and held in both hands, ready in-

stant use. As they arrived within eight or ten yards from the spot where the first shot was made they halted, and, after aiming for a long time, fired two simultaneous shots. To my utter astonishment out from the grass bounded one of the largest bull elks I ever saw, and ran off untouched at full speed over the prairie, until he was out of sight. It was long before I ceased to regret that I had not, instead of remaining in the wagon during this miserable fiasco, taken my gun and made the investigation myself. I am confident that, without closing my eyes, I could not have failed to kill him, as the men were not over eight or ten yards off when they fired. It seemed to me that they must have been suddenly attacked with the most virulent type of buck fever.

During the seven seasons that I hunted within the Casper and adjacent mountain ranges I invariably found the greatest abundance of elk.

Even as late as in 1885 I often saw herds of from twenty to one hundred, and in 1882 and 1883 it was not uncommon to meet with herds of from 150 to 250. Once, in 1882, I was within 150 yards of a herd in which I verily believe there were at least 1,000 bulls, cows and calves, and that during the rutting season. As soon as the immense herd discovered me they started rapidly off over a mountain so precipitous that a horse without a rider could not have followed them. As they climbed the abrupt rocky side of the cliff they appeared like an enormous herd of cattle.

I often amused myself in crawling up to a large rock and hiding behind it so that I could watch the lively gambols of the young elk and the sedate and dignified demeanor of the bulls and cows as they walked around among their frolicsome children. I remember one day observing the movements of a large herd of elk for at least half an hour. It was during the rutting season, yet there was no fighting among the bulls, and everything appeared harmonious and serene. Among them I discovered a gigantic old patriarch that carried the largest pair of antlers I ever beheld. I could, however, only see the tips over the rock behind which I was hiding, so I waited some time for him to turn round so as to present a favorable side view. Instead of this, much to my annoyance, the old fellow deliberately laid down and thus screened himself entirely from my view. I was fearful that if I moved at all the herd would take alarm,

and I might thus lose the opportunity of securing the splendid antlers I was so anxious to obtain. I therefore kept quiet, waiting patiently for him to finish his siesta and show himself again. This he at last did, by slowly rising to an upright position and giving me a fair view of his enormous side, at which I instantly fired. The huge monster staggered and fell to the ground, shot through the heart. His head and antlers now hang among my trophies at Orange.

I made it a rule while we were hunting in districts where the elk were abundant that none should be killed except the oldest bucks and those with the largest antlers, and only as many of those as we could dispose of by sending their carcasses to the nearest military posts for consumption. In this manner the results of our hunting did not materially diminish the reproductive capacity of the species.

Although the elk are so decidedly gregarious in their habits that they are not often found alone, occasionally an old fat bull is left behind after a herd has been shot at or alarmed, and run so fast as to tire him out; or sometimes a cow may have wandered away to protect her young calf. Yet the adult bulls are often met with in the rutting season in small bands of from four to eight or ten, when no cows are in their vicinity, and these associations seem to be of the most harmonious character.

In support of this view I have a distinct recollection of one day's hunting that I made with an injured knee. When I left home I was obliged to use crutches, from having sprained my knee badly some weeks before; but I found on arriving at the hunting grounds that I could mount and ride a horse without trouble. After we had been in the woods a few days, and I had not been able on account of my lameness to accomplish much in the hunting line, I determined I would go out early the following day and see what I could do. Knee or no knee, I was resolved to make the effort. Accordingly, with our guide, Bat, I went into the most favorable elk ranges. There we hunted faithfully for several hours without seeing a single large-antlered elk. We found a few cows and young animals, but these were not what we wanted, and we went on until it was time to eat our lunch. We made a little fire and cooked our meat, after which Bat smoked his pipe and pronounced the luck "blamed bad." Presently

he asked for my field glass, and, placing it to his eyes, he took a long, scrutinizing look at something far off in the distance.

When I asked him what he was looking at, he replied, holding up eight fingers, "See-um eight bull elk mc." I took the glass, and sure enough I could discern eight dark objects about two miles off, but could not distinguish whether they were bulls or cows. But upon Bat's confident assurance that they were bulls of the largest size I felt quite elated, and we were soon mounted and started for them. The wind was, however, unfavorable, and we were obliged to make quite a detour to get upon the lee side of them. We accomplished it, however, and could plainly see the eight bulls quietly grazing in a valley about a mile from us, but the cover for our further mounted approach only extended part of the way toward them. The remainder of the distance was over a smooth prairie with short grass, affording but little cover.

After riding as close as we could without startling the elk we dismounted, tied our horses and commenced creeping and crawl-



"WITH A FAT BUCK ON HIS SHOULDERS."

ing toward our objective point, which was the crest of a little rise of ground overlooking the part of the valley where the animals were grazing. It was very slow and somewhat painful work for me to drag my sprained knee and rifle over this ground. My ardent anticipation, however, of soon realizing exquisite sport had the effect of chloroform in deadening the pain of my nervous system and enabled me to keep close to Bat. Both our bodies hugged the ground until we arrived within a few yards of the crest of the ravine.

Bat then halted, while I crawled carefully forward, so near the summit that I could, by raising my eyes slightly, see the eight magnificent bulls, every head crowned with the largest sized antlers. All were quietly cropping the grass only about 100 yards distant and seemed totally unconscious of our proximity. After admiring their imposing appearance for an instant, and with some scruples at disturbing their repose, I raised my rifle and fired two shots at different animals, both of which were struck but did not immediately fall. Bat then handed me his rifle, which I discharged at another while he was reloading mine, and in this manner I fired, as near as I remember, eight or ten shots, when four of the original band were lying dead, while the others, I am happy to say, escaped unharmed.

After disemboweling and raising the carcasses so that the air could have free circulation underneath, we started on our return to camp. We had not gone far before a herd of about twenty elk passed us in full flight upon the summit of a ridge about 300 yards off. Among them was a very large bull, at which I took a running shot, killing him instantly.

Again we started toward camp, but before reaching it discovered another small band. Among them was a bull carrying one of the largest pair of antlers I have ever seen. I did not wish to kill anymore that day, but these extraordinary antlers presented a temptation I was unable to resist. So, after stalking for some time through the thick brush, I succeeded in killing him, and after securing the meat we reached camp without any further interruption.

This was the most successful day's elk shooting I have ever had, and I should not have killed so many had I not been aware that all the meat would be used. Indeed, that very morning Mr. Woolcott, a large stock owner, having in his employ

many men, had sent a large wagon to us for meat. This we gladly furnished, and the remainder was used in our camp.

There are two methods of hunting the wapiti. Of these, stalking is the oftener adopted and the more successful. Hunters should move either against or across the wind, for wapiti, although they do not possess such acute senses of smell and hearing as the moose, have sufficient to warn them of danger if the conditions specified are not adhered to. The favorite resorts of this animal are in the wooded, grassy valleys near the bases of rocky mountains, over which, when pursued, they run with extreme ease and rapidity.

When unmolested during warm weather they are fond of ruminating under the shade of trees or in dense thickets, and their delight is to wallow like hogs in small pools of water. The state of turbidity these pools show, with the adjacent spoor of the animal, afford good indication of the time of their last visit. If they have only left shortly before the hunter's approach the water will be quite thick with mud, and will be dripping into some of the holes made by their feet in the soft borders of the pool.

Upon one occasion, while hunting in the vicinity of such puddles, I saw at a distance upon the prairie a herd of wapiti, and among them was one as black as ebony. This gave me huge delight, as I was firmly convinced I had discovered an abnormal nondescript specimen of the *genus cervus*, and I resolved "if it took me all day" to secure his anomalous scalp. Accordingly I made a long detour, skirting the woods to get on the lee side of him, and secure good cover from which I could crawl through mud and brush within rifle range. It was terribly hard traveling, but I persevered until I imagined I was about near enough to give him a fatal shot. On rising a little to take a sly peep I discovered to my supreme disgust that, instead of being a black nondescript of the cervidae family, he was nothing more nor less than a nasty old bull elk, covered with a thick coating of black mud from the tip of his snout to the end of his tail.

The most favorable season of the year for stalking wapiti is from about September 15 till about the middle of October. The former date marks the beginning of the rutting season, when the bulls are in the fattest condition, and their flesh most juicy and tender; at the latter period they



have become lean and tough and their flesh is not well flavored.

Soon after the commencement of the rut the bulls begin their calls. These are shrill, sonorous whistles, which can be heard for a mile or more, and resound day and night during the season. The bulls, however, when hunted much, are cautious about sounding their calls. When these calls are loud and frequent, as is generally the case, the hunter can push rapidly toward the sound until he arrives in sight of the bull. Then he must hide himself and stay quiet until the animal presents his side for a favorable shot.

During severe winters, when deep snow has covered the grass on the mountains and forced them to seek subsistence in the valleys, skin hunters have slaughtered thousands of the noble wapiti for the skins alone. But so diversified have their ranges been, and in many places so inaccessible to hunters on snow shoes, that there are quite large numbers left in secluded localities. Another cause that has helped to preserve them is that they have so little local attachment. When, therefore, they are molested in their feeding grounds, they will desert that locality and move far away into another where they are more sequestered and secure. These migrations are so simultaneous that it seems as if they must have some method of communication with their remote brethren which is beyond the comprehension of man. Several times after they have been hunted in a particular section, a general exodus of the species has been observed toward another range of mountains. These journeys are invariably made in the night, whenever the destination could only be reached by crossing open prairies.

The other method of hunting wapiti is on horseback. This is seldom adopted, as very fast and enduring horses are required. Even then success is quite precarious, especially when the game is single or in very small bands. Personally, I believe they are capable of outrunning any other game quadruped we have in America, except, perhaps, the prong-horned antelope, for a short dash. In illustration of this, I have a distinct recollection of standing upon the side of a mountain near Pike's Peak one day in April, 1858, when I had started and shot at some black-tailed deer. I watched them for several minutes as

they ran down the mountain at full speed. While running they started up three or four wapiti that ran along with them for a short distance, after which the wapiti passed the black tails and continued to widen the interval until they were out of sight. I had never before witnessed such an exhibition of speed. It seemed to be a perfectly fair and conclusive test of the comparative fleetness and bottom of the two species of deer, especially as I had frightened them all by my shots; they undoubtedly put forth their utmost exertions to escape from a mutual adversary.

The wapiti, may, however, when in large herds in the open grounds, be successfully coursed by sportsmen who have surplus horseflesh to expend. Under such circumstances the wapiti, when closely pursued, will crowd together with their wide-spreading antlers, which obstruct and retard their movements so much that they become entangled and confused, and are easily overtaken. Little Bat assured me that one season, while he was out to get a winter's supply of meat for his people, he encountered a large herd of wapiti upon an open prairie near the North Platte River. He hunted them with a good horse and continued the chase until he had killed seventy fat bulls, sufficient to afford his people subsistence for the entire winter.

This method cannot be successfully pursued in a densely timbered or mountainous region, as the following occurrence shows: I passed the month of April, 1858, in camp near the Manitou Springs in Colorado (then called "Soda Spring"), where there was not a white man living within 150 miles of the place. I was awakened one morning about daylight by my orderly telling me that there was a herd of elk across the "Fontaine qui bouille," upon a bluff only about 200 yards from our camp. I went out and there saw several hundred of the magnificent animals standing upon the very verge of the precipice with all their heads toward us in as accurate a line as a regiment of cavalry could have formed. It was a grand and gorgeous spectacle and afforded vast enjoyment. Several soldiers mounted their horses and pursued them, killing six before they reached the foothills to the south of Pike's Peak. At that point the horses were no longer able to keep anywhere near them, and we last saw them scaling with the greatest facility the abrupt mountains far away to the west.