

## MIGHTY HUNTERS.

**J**OHNS PALLISER, by birth an Irishman, by education an Oxford man—six feet four in height, with inexhaustible spirits and humor, a taste for the polka, a talent for singing and making himself agreeable in all company, a fearless horseman, a tolerable cook, and a dead shot, having exhausted the excitement of European game, panting for fresh fields and pastures new—determined to take himself to the prairies, and to have a shot at the buffalo and the grizzly bear. In his voyage out to America he had for one fellow-traveler General Tom Thumb, whose great amusement was climbing to the shoulders of the tall Irishman, and then making a perilous descent at one leap to the bottom of his shooting-jacket, until by repeated droppings the bottom of the garment gave way. At New Orleans, he commenced operations in the marshes by waging war on snipe to the extent of twenty-one brace, and the following day took the solo parts, first of Goliath, and then of Saul, in the oratorio of David, performed by amateurs to purchase a new organ for an Episcopalian church.

In Arkansas Mr. Palliser shot deer by night, with a fire-pan, and carried off seven deer-skins for buck-skin clothes, as trophies. Here, too, he met his first experience of the hospitality of American sportsmen, and tried his first experiment in camping out. He remarks "It is only when left to our own resources that we sportsmen feel how very helpless we are rendered by our civilization. Very delightful is the refinement of sport in England, rising not too early, shaving with hot water, and tea cream-softened waiting for you in the breakfast-room, guns clean as if not used the day before, the gamekeeper following with the load of shot, and an excellent dinner awaiting, without any stint in consequence of the birds being wild, or your shooting nervous. Such were my thoughts as, for the first time, I sat solitary by my fire; but they presented themselves much more forcibly on subsequent occasions when, tired, cold, and hungry, I encamped after a day's unsuccessful hunting on one of the wild plains of the Rocky Mountains." His first night's lonely camp was marked by the stealthy approach of something in the dark; which something turned out to be a panther. He became tired of tame life in Arkansas, and joined a fur party traveling across the prairies from Independence to the Yellow Stone River. On this journey, daily before sunset, they unsaddled and unpacked the horses; fanned with the pack a circular inclosure about ten feet in diameter, and holded out the horses with straps and chains to prevent their straying; flocks out and gathered wood, kindled fires, fetched water in kettles, put meat on to cook, roasted coffee-berries, pounded them in deer-skins on the stump of a tree with the back of a hatchet, put them in the coffee-pot and boiled them; then, the meat being cooked, set to work to eat, made beds of saddle-cloths and buffalo robes, then smoked their pipes, and so to sleep, as only travelers in the prairie can sleep.

One day they arrived at a lake, and camped when their meat was exhausted and they had nothing but beans to eat; so our sportsman was set to work to kill ducks for dinner, and Mr. Palliser naively observes: "I had to work hard for my ducks that evening. They all fell into the water and I had to swim for them, but they formed a great addition to the boiled beans we had been reduced to."

After a long journey, sometimes "struggling through immense wastes where, feeling my own insignificance, I seemed carried back to some long past age, and as though encroaching on the territories of the mammoth and the mastodon," Mr. Palliser reached Fort Vermilion and found it surrounded by a camp of six hundred Sioux Indians just returned from a successful foray; so he witnessed a scalp dance, and then bought the scalp and the "poor devil's head-dress made of the scalp of a black bear, for fifteen rounds of ammunition." He also got up a subscription and purchased a poor woman prisoner, whom the Indians were about to put to death with great solemnity, and set her free at night. She finally escaped: running all night, guiding her course by the stars and concealed all day; so that in two days and nights she reached her husband and children, "half starved but very happy."

In spite of savage Indians, who sometimes shot at him by mistake, and nights in the prairie—where he woke in the morning and found himself lying in a pool of water—on he went, now starving, now feasting on the spoils of his gun, until, as the winter set in, he reached Fort Union. There the inhabitants of the fort were one after another laid up with the mumps; until, the supply of fresh meat depended entirely on the traveler. One day he set out covered with a white blanket, and "stalked" a herd of buffalo in the snow so successfully, that he crept about undetected for an hour and laid five of the fattest low; "then the herd bolted in a body, tossing their shaggy heads and plowing up the snow." He cut out the tongues of those he had killed; and, leaving a blanket on one animal, a cap on another, a pocket-handkerchief floating from the head of a third, to scare the wolves, "set off full speed for the fort; for it was puddling day, and worth while to make haste." He entered just as the clock struck twelve and feasted on buffalo and venison of his own providing, "dressed in delicious bear's grease and buffalo marrow, by a capital cook."

Listen to that, ye Norfolk pheasant-slaughters, and hide your humbled heads! Practice makes perfect. After a time Mr. Palliser flayed, cut up, and disposed of his game as neatly as any Indian hunter, and congratulates himself on driving a good trade as a dead shot, by earning white wolf-skins worth two-and-a-half dollars each. But he was not destined to slay buffaloes scotchless. After firing four times at an old buffalo, our hunter walked up and lodged a final shot, when the old brute charged, pursued, and overtook him. "I swerved suddenly on one side to escape the shock, but to my horror, I failed in

dodging him; he bolted round quicker than I did, affording me barely time to protect my stomach with the stock of my rifle, and to turn sideways in hopes of getting between his horns, when he came plump upon me with a shock like an earthquake; one horn shivered my rifle-stock, the other tore my clothes. I flew in mid air, scattering the prairie hens that hung from my belt in all directions, and fell unhurt in the snow, while my dying victim subsided not quite over me in a snowdrift."

Some time after this adventure, Mr. Palliser purchased from an Indian woman a magnificent dog, whose portrait forms the frontispiece of his volume—"Ismah." When purchased, it took time and trouble to reconcile the animal to its white owner; but eventually Ismah became a faithful efficient servant, drawing a small sledge called a "travail," during the day, and sleeping on his master's bosom saving him from being frozen to death at night. With Ismah as sole companion, he set out on a solitary winter's journey along the shores of the Upper Missouri.

Ismah dragged all the spare clothing, dry food, and the flesh of the deer last shot, as they traveled along the ice. "When I stood and looked about to choose a convenient spot to camp, Ismah used to gaze into my face, and whine, as much as to say, 'I am tired too.' When I tramped down the snow, cut and strewed the willows, and proceeded to collect wood, he used to watch me eagerly, and prick up his ears when he saw me take the flint and steel from my pouch, and the dry inner bark of the cotton-wood tree from my chest, in order to kindle a spark. The fire secure, I turned my attention to him, unpacked his travail, and placed it aloft against the side of a tree to protect the leather straps from the voracity of wolves. This done, I spread my bed and filled my kettle, took a handful of coffee berries from my bag, washed them in the cover of the kettle, then, pounding them, put them in the smaller kettle, and the meat in the larger to boil. These operations Ismah used to regard with intense interest. When supper was over—and his share was often very scanty—he sat up close beside me as I smoked my pipe and sipped my coffee. When at last I got into bed, he used to lie down with his back close against my shoulders, and so we slept until morning. As soon as it was daylight we rose; Ismah submitted patiently to be harnessed, and we resumed our march.

"Ismah's relationship to the *Lupus* [he was of the wolf-dog breed] family was often inconvenient to me, as he used to run off and play with the young *Luperkins*. One day, after a long march, while looking out for a camping place, a she wolf crossed the ice, and in spite of coaxing and threats, Ismah set off to join her. I shouted to the wolf, the wolf ran off, and away ran Ismah after her, with his travail behind him loaded with every thing I possessed in the world. I followed, shouting, until he disappeared, and then followed the tracks upon the snow, until darkness obliged me to abandon the pursuit, and I found myself alone on a vast waste of snow,

stretching around me on every side, a hundred miles from any human habitation, without warm covering for the night, with very little powder in my horn, and only two bullets in my pouch! I turned back and fortunately made the way to the river again, by the light of the moon collected fallen wood, lighted a fire, and sat down to consider what to do next if Ismah did not return. The cold north wind froze the perspiration—which, in the hot pursuit, had run down my face—and formed icicles on my beard and whiskers, that jingled like bells as I shook my head, and dismissed one project after another. I took out my pipe to console myself with a smoke; alas, on feeling for tobacco, that was gone too. I looked at the North star, and calculated, by the position of the Plow, that it must have been about ten o'clock—the time in England when we discuss a bottle of the best with our knees under the mahogany, awaiting the summons to the drawing-room. I endeavored to trace familiar faces in the glowing embers, till I almost heard the rustling of fresh white *crêpe* dresses round me; when hark! I did hear a rustle—it approaches nearer and nearer, and I recognize the scraping of Ismah's travail on the snow; another moment and the panting rascal was at my side! Nothing of the load missing or injured. I laughed aloud from sheer joy at the cringing movements by which he showed how well he knew that he had behaved very ill, but I was too well pleased to beat him. I had nothing more to do but unpack, make my bed, cook our supper, and go to sleep."

On the same journey the hunter again fell short of meat; for one day he sought game in vain, without coming on a single track. On the second day he saw *Wapiti* deer, but was unable to get near them. That night, tired and hungry, he dreamed continually of delicious feasts and hospitable friends, and waked all the more hungry and disappointed. On the third day, having had no solace but a pipe, he hunted hard without success, and suffered less from hunger than on the second day. He was upheld by the confidence that sooner or later he would fall in with game. At length he came upon the fresh tracks of deer, zig-zagging, as they do before lying down. He says: "I remained perfectly still, looking intently, with eyes sharpened by hunger, at the copse; something stirred in the willows—it was a deer going out to feed; most fortunately he came on toward me, slowly feeding, until he approached to within about one hundred yards and stopped. I drew up my rifle; but he came still nearer, feeding slowly forward, until scarcely sixty yards off, when I took a steady deliberate shot as he turned his flank toward me. I heard the bullet crack against his shoulder; he rushed a short distance back, and rolled over in the snow. Wood was close at hand. I made a fire, cut, broiled, and eat sparingly of a little venison; fed my dog. Then made a rope of the deer-skin, and dragged the carcass to my camp of the previous night, cooked and eat an enormous supper, smoked my pipe, and slept comfortably."

At length Mr. Palliser reached a hunter's paradise on the Yellow Stone River; built himself a boat of bulls'-hide, with willow frames to carry his baggage, spoils, and attendants; manufactured a shirt and breeches of deer-skin, and encamped and enjoyed himself. "If I wished to shoot from horseback, a ride of a few miles afforded sport after buffalo; if to stalk Wapiti deer, or black-tailed, there were plenty to be had, with enough toil and labor to afford sport; *grosses cornes* (wild sheep) were to be seen balancing themselves on the tops of cliffs as I sat in my own camp; lots of pheasants were handy on the prairie, antelopes were constantly bounding past, and many a prowling wolf received a bullet while feeding on offal, cunningly disposed to tempt him. The dinners of this Yellow Stone camp would make a European epicure's mouth water—buffalo tongues and humps, elk meat and venison, antelopes' livers, wild mutton, and cat fish, which is a sort of miniature fresh-water dolphin, white, firm, and rich, marrow-bones of buffalo bulls, with a fair supply of coffee and sugar;" bread is not mentioned.

But our hunter could find no grizzly bear. Their fresh tracks were found, but the monsters were gone. This grizzly bear, when full grown, measures eight feet six inches from muzzle to stern, and about that size round the body, with feet eighteen inches in length, armed with claws five inches long—a lion can not be more formidable.

One day, having shot a fine buck, he heard Dauphin, a French Canadian, one of a party he had joined, cry loudly, "*Monsieur, venez ici!*" (Come here, sir), and, looking up, saw him disappearing at his best pace over the brow of a hill; Palliser, following with his loaded rifle, beheld a bear standing on his hind legs staring about while Dauphin, concealed behind a rock, was industriously snapping a pistol that would not go off. First master and then man took a shot with the same rifle; and then Mr. Palliser, in spite of the remonstrances of Dauphin, followed the enemy into a clump of trees, and finished him. "He was young, only in his third year; but he measured five feet four inches from the rump to the muzzle, and had he been full grown, it would certainly have fared badly with us."

The next grizzly bear adventure was with a five year old female with two cubs, who chased Boncharville as he was washing his carbine at a river. "I at first ran to assist my companion; but, seeing the bear at fault, I rushed back to secure my horse, fearing that, on smelling the bear, he would gallop off and be lost on the prairie forever. Seeing me run the bear charged after me; I reeled the halter round my arm and prepared to face her—had my horse flinched I had been lost—she rose on her hind legs, then turned aside, and followed her cubs. I fired through the bushes, but only hit her far back in the flank, on which she stopped, wheeled round and round, tore at her side with her teeth and claws, and allowed me, fortunately, sufficient time to load again; my

ball was hardly down when Boncharville cried out, "*Gardez vous, gardez vous, Monsieur, elle fonce encore!*" (Take care, take care, sir, she is after us again!) and on she rushed. I had barely time to put on my copper cap as she rose on her hind legs; I fired, and sent my bullet through her heart. She doubled up, and rolled to the bottom of the slope; but we did not venture to approach until we had ascertained she was dead by pelting her with sticks and stumps. After this, Dauphin, with a stick and a coil of rope, set out to catch the young sucking bears; but they fought so hard that he was obliged to kill one, and the other bit and scratched so that the old hunter was glad to let him go."

Mr. Palliser was not content until he had shot three more of these grizzly monsters, of the largest of which he says, with his usual candor, "He rose up displaying such gigantic proportions as almost made my heart fail me. I croaked again like a bull calf; he came cowering up slowly. I felt I was in for it, and that escape was impossible, so cocking both barrels of my firelock I remained kneeling until he approached very near, when I suddenly stood up; upon which the bear with an indolent roaring grunt raised himself once more upon his hind legs. Just as he was balancing before springing on me, I fired, aiming close under his chin; the ball passing through his throat, broke the vertebrae of the neck, and down he tumbled floundering like a great fish out of water, until at length he reluctantly expired. I drew a long breath, and felt right glad at the successful issue of the combat."

And here we may as well end the hunting adventures, of which we have given only a few. Many amusing and pleasing traits of the character of the author are unconsciously scattered through the narrative. The self-possessed manner in which, at New Orleans, having forgotten the name and street of his hotel, and, having wandered into a house by mistake, he receives a candle through a narrowly-opened door from a white jeweled hand, and retires, to be awakened the next morning by an offer of ivory-backed hair-brushes from a lady who turns out to be the wife of a friend—such is the hospitality of New Orleans—is delightful. So is the ball at St. Louis, where he rushed into a kitchen and made pretty Madams Zoller leave the cooking, and come up and dance the Sturm March Gallop with a pair of shoes that kept continually coming off.

If he has the toothache and can not eat venison, he goes down and kills a buffalo bull, and feasts off his marrow bones. Then he will catch alligators at Cairo; and finally embarks for England with a menagerie of one black bear, two bisons, two bison calves, a deer, and antelope, after being indebted to the bear for defending his chum, the antelope, against the attacks of a great ruffian in the streets of New Orleans.

And so we take leave of John Palliser—good sportsman; who does not gloat over his wins with half savage exultation.