

ELEVEN

THE LATEST FROM PIPESTONE

This piece lampoons the poor hunting and shooting skills of an inexperienced client. He fails to attain Tex's approval because he shoots the goat repeatedly after it is clearly dead. The penalty for the hunter's failure to embody proper mountain masculinity is measured by the ruined hide, "mulligan meat" (shot up too much for anything but stew, mulligatawny) and only one intact horn. The hunter has thus lost both a good trophy and the use of the meat, which contravenes a crucial part of Tex's hunting ethos.

Tex apportions some of the blame to himself, however, for having given the hunter the impression that he thought his gun, a 30.30 (a medium-calibre rifle) was not much of a "man's gun." This tips us to the fact that manhood is indeed at stake in this exercise. Revealingly, manhood turns out not to be about firepower or raw machismo—it is about skill, just measure, and restraint.

—AG

THE LATEST FROM PIPESTONE

By N. Vernon-Wood

—*WB Ranch*
Pipestone Creek, Alberta

Mr. John Lincoln
Wall Street. N.Y.

DEAR FRIEND,

You mind that creek that runs into the Whiterabbit from the west side? It never had a name that we knew of, except a few sort of conterperanious ones a feller thinks up while gouging through the deadfall, or side slippin on the rock.

We camped at the mouth last fall, and I'm guidin a feller thats new to this mountain stuff.

The Pilgrim was packin a 30.30, and I guess I'd give him the impressions that as a mans gun it don't rate very high in my expert opinion.

Come to think of it, the Text, firstly, thirdly, an finally of my discourse was pretty much "Bust 'em where they're biggest, knock 'em down an keep 'em down."

NEXT MORNING we get organized to give the Canadensuses hell an long about noon, we've gotten over the worst of the going. Also, we haven't seen a thing, which aint surprisin, considerin the racket we made scramblin over shale. We reaches the grass lands at last, an while takin on a load

of what Old Greasy alleges is bannok an cold venison, we check over the surroundin real estate with our eight powers, carefull an systematic.

The Pilgrim run true to form an located fourteen or 19 rock sheep, three four dead stump grizzly, and three snow patch goat.

We've worked down the lunch pack to what the Pilgrim called the irreducible minimum when out of a dip at the mouth of that draw, up looms a goat.

I flop onto my lunch, & the Pilgrim eases down alongside, thinking I've been took with acute gastrominous rukus, which, considerin the specific gravity of the bannok, aint surprisin. However, he is relieved when I show him the wedgface, at the same time urging him to look as much like a columbine or skunk cabbage or something floral as possible. There aint a scrap of cover for 200 years, an why that goat aint seen us, is one of life's mysteries.

"What in hell do we do now?"

"Do nothin, just as hard as you know how, until that ol fool begins to graze, or move someplace where he aint got a goats eye view of all these Rockies," I tell him, "then belly crawl for the crick bed."

You know how damn deliberate a goat can be? Well this egg is a regular Senator, an his deliberations are right slow & ponderous. We have plenty of time to figure out what we hope to do, when, as an if we get a chance. Once we get into the creek bed we can sneak along the bank until we get to where a strip of timber comes down, & follow that up along a hogback, keepin below the crest an provided the Senator don't take it into his head to climb, we should get a shot. An remember, I wind up, a goat can shure take it, so bust him high wide an handsome.

Old whiskers, not bein in the plot remains in statue quo. Statue is right: he stands an thinks for another six hours, or anyway 20 minutes, when all of a sudden he remembers that theres a patch of perfectly splendid grass about 400 yards down—an in no time a tall he is out of sight behind the hogback, & me an the Pilgrim dash for the creek an cover.

Then come the climb. The hogback falls away in a cliff on the far side, and as I stick my face over I hear just a faint clatter of shale, & right under my nose is old Oreamnos poking along at the foot of the cliff.

I DUCK BACK an get the Pilgrim, talking with my hands like a deaf mute Sioux. We crawl to the edge again & find ourselves looking right into the Senator's face, he havin climbed some. He shure forgot his dignity that time,

an for a few seconds I am afraid that the Dude has got triggerfingeritis. The goat is going places with ease an celerity, when—Whammy, an down he comes, not even kickin.

Before I can open my face though, the Pilgrim lays down a barrage that 'ud stop a regiment. Five more times he killed that goat, an its not until his magazine is empty that I can convince him we have a corpus delicti.

Then I discover, that besides shootin up that goat very promiscious, he's bust him twice in the head. Even a 30.30 can do things to a trophy at about 25 yards. When the trimmin is done, we have a perforated hide, some mulligan meat, an one horn to tote to camp.

“Well you said to bust 'em didnt you” is all the satisfaction I get.

Anyway, when you want to refer to that creek that runs into the Whiterabbit from the west, remember its now Bustum Creek.

Yours truly,

TEX.

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