

## Charles Ray's Adventure With a Bear.

THE delightful days of Autumn were fading sadly away. Jack Frost had already begun to play his saucy pranks, and finally had come that last delightful reminder of Autumn, Indian Summer, whose warm, dreamy, smile-laden days, make it the most beautiful time of year, but under whose coverlet of cheer, lies treacherously hidden the dreary skies, the faded sunshine and cold wintry gales of November.

It was on such a day, an Indian Summer day that the following happened.

Seven miles from Chesterton, cosily nestled in the giant lap of its guardian, the mountain, lies the beautiful Vera Lake, whose glassy surface so seldom rippled by the winds, and whose pure transparent waters of the most beautifully blended hues reflected from the mountain, make it indisputably a fit rival for any lake-scene in Canada. To complete the attractiveness of this lake, it must not be forgotten, that its waters abound in fish of almost every variety, while the surrounding forests are the home of many beasts of chase.

This last feature attracts, each Fall, many tourists, men and boys who prefer the perhaps more profitable, and, certainly, more exciting sport of moose-hunting, to lounging lazily about the piazzas or drawing-rooms of some luxurious hotel.

Among these tourists, was the son of a wealthy banker of Chesterton, Charles Ray, who owned the quaint cabin situated in a quiet, sheltered nook, near where Mount Amherest in his majestic sweep, pours the largest of its mountain streams of pure sparkling water into the lake. In this cabin Charles Ray, accompanied by his college friend Emerson

Wentwood, and John Aiken the guide, lived during the moose-hunting season.

As we have already said it was a glorious morning, an Indian Summer morning, with its smoky amber light and delightful warmth. The cawing rooks, at their noisy matins had, hours ago awakened our hero and his companion. The three had already had their breakfast, and Ray had gone on his customary tramp, along the lake shore, leaving his companions lounging at ease on the lawn benches. By a singular chance, Ray, on that particular morning, had taken a longer walk than usual. As he was strolling along admiring the beauties of the lake, a few huge foot-prints attracted his attention. It was a bear's trail, but on closer examination Ray found it to be the trail of no ordinary bear, for every fourth print had been made by a paw that was badly injured. By this Ray knew exactly what bear it was. It was Crusher, the huge grizzly, at the mention of whose name, every rancher reached instinctively for his gun. This notorious bear had been almost a weekly visitor to every ranch in the district, for a period of twenty years. He had been up to all sorts of mischief, such as tearing down fences, stealing sheep, and in fact almost every disagreeable trick that a cunning animal had ever been heard to do, and as a consequence his capture bore a handsome reward. What was most remarkable about this grizzly, was his having escaped, all but two, of the thousands of attempts to kill him. Hundreds had lain in wait for him, with good trusty rifles, but only two could boast of having hit him one of which had carried away half of his left fore-paw. He possessed extraordinary cunning, for it was even said (whether there is any truth in it or not, remains to be proved)

but at any rate it was rumored that he used to turn in his trail and walk backwards. This, combined with numerous other devices, so confused hunters, that none had ever traced him to his lair.

After carefully observing this wonderful trail Ray hurried off towards the cabin to tell Aiken of his discovery.

"What do you think I have found?" he yelled as soon as he came in earshot of his companions.

"Well lets have it" cried the guide "What are you so mysterious about?" "A bear's trail." answered Ray triumphantly.

"Oh" exclaimed Ray's companions disappointedly "I thought by the way you were acting that you had found a—a gold mine or something" they chorused. "Well sir" said Ray slowly shaking his head, "You asked me why I was so mysterious, It is now my turn to ask you what you are so cool about? Why I thought that after finding Crusher's trail———":

"Crushers trail!" echoed Aiken turning swiftly. "Crusher's trail? Go 'way you're dreaming. Didn't you ever hear that Crusher never came any nearer a house than two miles? No sir, You never saw Crusher's trail down there."

Ray listened to all this with anything but patience. "Say you," he snapped "do you think I was walking in my sleep?"

"That I do" answered Aitken tauntingly, in his easy manner. "All right, run down and see for yourself" growled Ray thoroughly angered at the slight upon his detective powers.

"Didn't you tell me that his left fore-paw was half shot off?"



That question surprised Aiken not a little.

"Perhaps you are right," he admitted "but to make sure I'll run down myself and have a look at them. Get things ready for a hunt and meet me at the shore." But Ray had not needed that command for he had entered the cabin before Aiken had as much as uttered it, and was in his great haste throwing things right and left, which was so much in contrast with his usual behaviour that Emmerson wondered, if he were mad.

Meanwhile Aiken had arrived at the lake. He followed Ray's footprints until he came to the spot where the bear's trail had been discovered. He bent low and examined it closely "Sure enough" he muttered, "it's old Crusher. I wonder how far he went. This might only be a sham trail to shake off hunters, so I had better follow if up." Accordingly he followed the line of huge foot-prints, for about a hundred yards where he discovered that Crusher had had recourse to an artifice. The wily beast had turned, retraced his steps for a few yards, and had leaped sideways into the water, there to proceed without leaving any trace of his presence. But this time Aiken was not to be baffled; he had often heard of that *cunning*, and he knew that the bear, owing to a natural dislike for water, would not continue wading very long. He therefore followed the shore northwards keeping a sharp look-out for the place where Crusher had emerged from the lake. After a walk of about two hundred yards, Aiken found the object of his search. Here Crusher again had had recourse to trickery and, a second time, failed yet more miserably than at first. In an attempt to leap from the water, and to land upon a large flat rock, which lay near the foot of an old unused path, he had failed to

reach the object of his effort, and had to content himself with a good roll over and the exposure of his big foot-prints. Aiken could not but sit down, and laugh at the trick Crusher had played upon himself.

But there was more than laughing to do. Which way, Crusher had gone, had to be determined. That Crusher had gone up the path was plain to Aitken, but then, a few hundred yards up the mountain the path divided into two grass-grown trails, one leading towards the south, the other towards the north. Aitken could have guessed that Crusher had not gone south at that time of day that part of the district being populated. But Aiken preferring to be sure, set off at a run and in a few minutes came to the parting. He found his supposition to be true. Crusher had gone north. But now a new question arose! Why had he gone north? What could take him up there? The thought had not occurred to Aitken before. He sat down and tried to think. Just then a few drops of blood caught his eye. He got up, so as to command a wider range of view. More blood appeared. Here was the explanation for Crusher's being out so late. Doubtlessly, he had been up to some mischief and a wary rancher had succeeded in surprising him with a cool reception. He had now found out why Crusher had been out so late but why he had gone northward still remained a mystery. Suddenly it struck him. He had gone to his lair. Aiken then made haste to meet Ray and as he sped along he noticed many drops of blood which he must have overlooked while tracing the trail on the shore.

Meanwhile, Ray who had packed the guns and sufficient ammunition set out to meet Aiken as had

been agreed. They met just where Crusher had so lucklessly betrayed his presence.

"Well Aiken," asked Ray with a little fun, and much sarcasm in his tone "are you satisfied now?"

For answer, Aiken turned and pointing at the trail said. "He is gone up that way."

"North or south?"

"North."

"Well then, we'll take the boat will we not?"

"Boat nothing" exclaimed the guide. "Do you see those drops of blood." Ray foresaw Aiken's intention and without comment followed him up the trail. Both started off at an easy dog-trot, which, they kept up for many hundred yards. Aiken ran on ahead, ever watchful, always keeping a sharp lookout for blood-marks, which, he found at intervals of four or five feet. Ray trudged on behind thinking of what his friend at the cabin would say when he returned with the notorious Crusher. Emmerson had always laughed at him, even in college, when he boasted a little of his marksmanship. But how he would show Mr Emmerson that he really could shoot. All such pleasant thoughts were occupying his mind, but not once did it occur to him, that he was rushing toward danger. He had but a faint idea of bear fighting, and naturally imagined he was going out for sport, much like moose-hunting. Aiken, on the other hand, was of a quite different frame of mind. He had seen bear fights, had fought them single handed, and he well knew the danger of such an enterprise.

They ran on for about an hour when they came to what Aiken termed lair-ground on account of its many huge boulders and such things that afford excellent lairs. Aiken, who wished to give Ray a few hints about bear fighting, (more to try his



courage than anything else) halted, and sat down. Ray came up and did the same. "Well, Aiken, what is the trouble? Can't follow the trail any longer?" asked Ray uneasily.

"Lots of trail" answered Aiken, "but I don't like the idea of sending you up before Mr. Crusher, and you a regular tenderfoot."

"Now listen well to what I am going to tell you. I intend to let you do as much of this as possible without your getting hurt and all you have to do is to watch your nerve; don't let yourself get excited and everything will run smooth. So keep steady and watch your gun—watch—your—gun!" repeated Aiken laying great stress on the repeated words. "Remember that if you fail I'll be right there to help you, and remember also, this isn't the first time for me to handle a gun; so don't worry about that. "Of course if he starts the game with anything unusual why I'll bring him under the play of my automatic, but if not why you'll do the killing. Now are you quite sure that you will be able to do all that?"

"Yes yes. answered Ray hurriedly paling a little but heaving his chest doubtlessly with courageous resolution. Aiken continued "Now we're likely to find him before he finds us, that is if he isn't in his liar.

If I hear any sound of him I'll give you the signal and tell you what side of the path he's on. Then duck in behind a rock or anything that will give you cover, but on the side of the road opposite him. Then lie quiet and watch closely. Now as to Crusher, well its hard to tell what he'll do, but, if he scents us, his very first move will be to stand on his haunches showing the white spot on his big chest. There is your chance. His heart is opposite that white spot and be

sure you don't miss it, just take a good aim and let him have it. Of course, if the bullet strikes his heart Crusher rolls over dead, but if not, if the bullet hits his lungs or something like that understand that he's done for. But your fight will not be finished and you'll be likely to have a little trouble. If he rushes at you, before you have time to get a second shot at him, just run up a good stout tree, out of reach of Crusher's awful claws. I guess that's about all. Now are you quite sure you can do all you promised?" asked the guide somewhat affectionately.

"Oh you don't catch me loose my nerve." answered Ray for at least the twentieth time turning away to evade Aiken's sharp glance.

"All right" said the guide watching sharply every move of Ray's face. "We'll see if you keep your promise. "Remember about watching your gun and ———shhhh! Listen." Both strained their ears to listen. They heard sounds of heavy foot-falls, accompanied by the crackling of dry twigs. It was Crusher. He was on their right. Aiken gave the signal, but Ray had dived under cover, before Aiken had as much as lifted his hand. Aiken plunged in after Ray and whispered, "Keep cool. Keep that position and I'll run on to your right in order to get a flank shot at him if he puts up too much of a fight."

But the guide did not go to the right. He just stepped in behind a thicket near by from which he could watch Ray and if necessary put in a timely shot. He crouched low and watched Ray closely; but there was no need of doubt, for the boy was perfectly calm, a little pale perhaps, but not a muscle trembled.

At last, after what seemed an age to Ray, old Crusher emerged from the forest into the trail. What a shaggy monster! Aiken could see Ray pale a little,

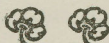


yet he was immovable as a veteran. The big bear stopped, sniffed the air a little and growled savagely. Apparently he had scented the hunters. What Aiken feared, was that Ray might shoot, and he well knew, that no shot save an extra good one could kill Crusher in that position. Again the boy showed discretion and calmly waited. Crusher was about to resume his journey, when something attracted his attention, and as if to make a survey of his surroundings he arose on his haunches, showed his two rows of ivory white teeth and growled angrily. Now was Ray's chance and he meant to take advantage of it. Swinging his trusty rifle into position he took deliberate aim. Bang! cracked the rifle, and the bullet lodged itself fatally deep into the powerful chest of old Crusher. He uttered a terrible roar, reeled, paused a little, and fell scratching frantically with his forepaws. He sighted Ray and with a terrible roar that Ray must surely never forget the huge beast frantic with surprise, pain, and rage, flung himself toward the rock, behind which Ray was hiding. It was indeed a perilous moment. Ray's first impulse was to climb a huge spruce tree near by, and he lost no time in acting. With a leap he gained the tree, and swung himself upon the lowest limb. It cracked dangerously, almost gave way under his weight, but with a desperate grasp he caught the limb above him. He was safe, but in his great haste and excitement he had dropped his gun. It was a rather perilous position to be in without a gun and the enraged brute putting forth every effort to climb the tree.

"Where is that Aiken anyway?" said Ray to himself, almost in despair. He is certainly letting me do it all my self," he continued aloud.

But Aiken was not far away. He had not left his position, and was preparing to send a decisive bullet into old Crusher. Suddenly Ray remembered his revolver, and in less time than it takes to tell, he had it drawn. Aiken, who saw this movement, withdrew, and before he could as much as lay his rifle aside, Ray's revolver spoke and a well aimed bullet entered Crusher's head at the base of the left ear. The bear rolled over, a quivering mass. He had met his end. Here, close to his dreaded lair, old Crusher, the terror of every rancher, who so long had eluded death, received from the hands of a mere boy, the fatal shot.

C. G. '24.



Love all, trust a few,  
Do wrong to none ; be able for thine enemy  
Rather in power than use, and keep thy friend  
Under thy own life's key ; be check'd for silence,  
But never tax'd for speech.

—Shakespeare.

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The rose and thorn, the treasure and dragon, joy  
and sorrow, all mingle into one.

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A compliment is usually accompanied with a  
bow, as if to beg pardon for paying it.

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We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow ;  
Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think us so.