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THE COVER



Walter Haskell Hinton

The Old Footbridge

I^N the cool shadows under an old bridge, the big fellows are almost sure to be found. Wary and angler-wise, it takes all your skill to tempt even a rise to your fly. A constant challenge, a never-to-beforgotten spot. Nearly every angler has an old bridge tucked in his memories.

If you are lucky enough to land a trout, the commotion of playing him so puts the others on their guard that it is useless to whip that spot again for some time.

There you are liable to have an unexpected audience. A farm boy and his dog, so enraptured with your performance that, who knows, you may have planted the seed of a future Waltonian. The footbridge stream is yours this morning. Another day, perhaps his.—W.H.H.

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Page

Sportsman's	Quiz		-	 -	 -		-	-	-	- 11
What Every										
			-	 	 COL.	TOW	NSENI	D W	HELE	N 12
That's Why	They're	e Big	_	 	 -	- LA	RRY	В. 8	SAMPL	E · 14

Mañana Is Today - - - - - - - ROB F. SANDERSON 16 Trout That Got Lost - - - - - ORMAL I. SPRUNGMAN 18

In the Land of the Lemon Fish - - - - ANTHONY V. RAGUSIN 20 Pictorial Section - - - - - - - K. McGrann 22

Know Your Fish! - - - - - walter J. WILWERDING 26 Swordfishing With Warren William - - - - MAY MANN 28

Summary U. S.-Canada Fishing Laws - - - K. McGrann 30 The Sportsman in Wartime (An Editorial) - - - -

Sportsmen—Your Movies Need Sound - ORMAL I. SPRUNGMAN 36 Boats and Motors - - - - - - WILLARD CRANDALL 38

Fish and Fishing - - - - - - - - CAL JOHNSON 44 Make the Striped Bass a Game Fish - - - ROBERT D. HALL 60

Arms and Ammunition - - - - MAJOR CHARLES ASKINS 62

Small Game and Light Deer Rifles - MAJOR CHARLES ASKINS 66 With the Skeet and Trap Shooters - - - JIMMY ROBINSON 70

Better Fishing Along West Coast Is Expected as Result of War - - - - - -ROY SHAVER 76

Sporting Dogs - - - - PETER BOGGS 77 Game Breeding -- - - - - - - HORACE MITCHELL 80

Liars' Club SUBSCRIBERS 82

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"The deer had collapsed and slumped down the slope 20 feet."

T was the day after yesterday. "Ahhh!" Manuel whispered in excited awe. "Big buck! Look!" I reined my bronc with a jerk and glanced upward. Outlined against the Sonoran, blue sky like a statue on a dome was a big buck on the crest of the low mountain.

For a moment, His Majesty paused, then slid off the skyline down the other slope.

"Whew!" John exclaimed admiringly. "That was sure a beaut-for a Mexican buck."

It was. Perhaps no whopper in the standards of my old Wisconsin hunting cronies, but for a Mexican whitetail he was a dandy.

Yes, even larger than the larger of the two bucks hanging from the bent limb of the oak tree between our camp and the creek. And decidedly bigger than the smaller buck hanging beside

You see, we had taken an eye-wiping the day before. An eye-wiping from a New Yorker and a slight woman, each of whom had brought in one of those bucks. While John and I, supposedly strong anti-venison stuff, had sent off a few volleys of purely honorary salutes, the scrub team had brought warm liver into camp.

That just wouldn't do at all, and today we wore the avenging grimness a

IS TODAY

First day, U. S. hunters get Bronx cheer plus hideful of cacti barbs in desert hills of Sonora, Mexico. Next day guide Manuel turns mañana into the day before tomorrow

By ROB F. SANDERSON

PHOTOS BY THE WRITER

man wears when he is shooting not only for sport, but for reputation as well.

"We got to get that buck."

"He was sneaking," I observed. "He was too far to be scared. and he won't leave the mountain unless we push him."

"Let's pull a double flank move," John,

who has the quick mind of a seasoned tactician, suggested. "He'll be looking for us from this way. You ride along the canyon to the left here, to the other side, and Manuel and I will keep on going around this slope. In 20 minutes we all start for the top from different angles."

I. wheeled my sorrel bronc and started for the east, spurring him suggestively as I had further to ride than those who went southwestward. At once I was off the faint trail and zigzagging along the steep slope of loose

rock, detouring the denser growths of sharp-needled cholla cacti and the savagely curved cat-claw.

The sharp spines had a familiar feel as my hide winced under their raking barbs and brought yesterday's banter into my mind. This is about what I did all day yesterday, I thought, while our more fortunate hunter pals had ridden through the open oak brush of a higher mountain. At night my legs had looked like twin saguaro cacti, they had so many spines in them. "But," Manuel had confided, "the

more bigger bucks, they are down lower, in the rough cactus country. We will get one, mañana."

"Wherever there is hope there is cacti," I kiddingly paraphrased to

In some places the cacti are so wretchedly torturing that I have found young colts and calves standing statue-like for hours in the sun, afraid to move a leg in any direction for fear of the barbed desert growth that was under and around them on all sides.

"Sometime," I had said to my camp



On mountain crests the hunters paused to rest their broncs and to search for deer. Cholla cactus in left foreground. Mountain in background looks bare—but just go over and see!

pals, "I expect to find a big buck in a cactus patch he jumped into by mistake, standing there like a tame shorthorn, afraid to move among the spines."

Our Bronx friend, who had been eavesdropping, ribbed us. "A buck'd have to be trapped by barbed wire and hog-tied for you boys to knock him over!"

YESTERDAY I had seen a big buck, and he hadn't been standing still in the cacti. He had been running down a canyon, and if I'd been more alert I might have brought him down with a from-the-saddle shot.

"Mañana," promised Manuel, who had caught the drift of the conversation, "You get big cactus buck."

"Mañana, tomorrow," John had uttered the words in a philosophic tone. "Mexico, land of tomorrow." Then in Spanish, "When is mañana, Manuel? It is always the next day? Mañana never comes-is that not true?"

"Es no verdad!" Manuel denied. "Mañana . . . is tomorrow. Mañana, get big cactus buck." And with this parting ray of optimism, he had vaulted onto his horse and had trotted swiftly toward the brush corral.

And here we had ridden almost the whole morning, through the best country, seeing only two does.

"Big buck tomorrow, not today," John had reproached Manuel. "Mañana, mañana. Always another day."

"Quien sabe!" Manuel had given a non-committal shrug.

And then we had seen the buck, and everything had been all right again. About a quarter mile from where I



"John and Manuel dress out the deer."

parted from the others, I came to a steep outcrop of red volcanic rock footed by a loose talus slope of steeply piled, irregular rocks. There was no apparent way to cross above or below the barrier. It threatened either to block my path entirely or else force such a wide detour that I could be nowhere near my assigned location when the proper time arrived.

In either case, the buck would slip down the slope I had been elected to guard. It just couldn't happen, not to us-after yesterday.

I rode apprehensively up to the loose rock slope. A chunk of talus gave way under the horse's hoof and rolled several hundred feet to drop with step-like echoes into the canyon

below. My sorrel balked and tried to veer sidewise.

I surveyed the loose rock slide with careful calculation. It would be utter disillusionment to the others to fail my duty. I thought of dismounting and running ahead on foot, but once off my horse I wouldn't be able to see above the brush and cacti tops.

DECIDED to cross right below the solid rock of the outcrop. The loose rock seemed more firm here, and not as wide. Bringing my quirt down hard and clamping my spurs into the flanks of the hard-mouthed little horse, I sent him stepping out onto the talus slide.

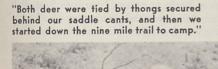
The rocks began to roll under his feet, and from then on he was clawing for footing as on a treadmill. He tried to turn back was wasn't able to manage his head. A dozen times I thought his scrambling hind legs would stay down.

But he brought me through, without harm to either of us, about 30 feet downslope from our starting point. Like swimming across swift-current water. His belly was heaving for air, so I let him blow a couple of minutes while I listened to the last of the spinning boulders tumble echoingly into the canyon below.

"Well," I mused to the bronc, as solo riders often do, "after that volley of rocks our big buck won't be on this side of the mountain."

As I rode ahead, fighting brush and a hard-mouthed horse, I could see the top of our low mountain narrowed to a single ridge before dropping to a saddle. As I surveyed the topography, two rifle shots shattered the sunny quiet from the other slope. A third followed when the first two died out.

Immediately alert, I was watching the ridge above. The corner of my eye caught (Continued on page 56)





and cacti, met John with his buck, then we were joined by Manuel and the horses."



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That's Why They're Big

(Continued from page 15)

into a heavy riffle, on the far side of which was a nice back eddy, with a large, deep pool below. After a few false casts I dropped the fly so it would float down the fast water just outside of the back eddy. It had floated only a few feet when it was sucked under and disappeared without any commotion.

I set the hook carefully and the fish, which I judged to be a large brown, headed down stream. While he never jumped or came to the surface so I could see him, I knew from his heavy run that I was fast to the largest trout I had ever hooked on such fine tackle.

The click on my reel was of average tension but this together with the friction of the line going through the guides and the drag of the ever increasing length of line in the water, made me uneasy. I knew the 3X gut or the little barbless hook could not stand the strain much longer. I tried to pay out line from the reel by hand to relieve the strain but, just as the back end of my Halford went through the guides, the little hook tore out.

After this experience I bent the spring to weaken the click tension on the reel. This proved beneficial when using light terminal tackle but upon my first trip to the Nipigon, where I was fishing heavy water with large flies and coarse leaders, the soft click proved disastrous.

I hooked my first rainbow in this famous river where the white water pours into Cameron pool. Dashing down the fast, heavy current at a terrific speed, he stripped line direct from the reel. At about 75 feet he made a beautiful jump. He was unable to throw the barbless hook and settled down for a few seconds rest before tearing on down stream.

This gave me a chance to glance down at my reel and I discovered that the soft click had allowed it to over run. My C tapered Halford was in a beautiful backlash which could only be equaled by a novice at bait casting.

My fingers worked feverishly and I just had the loose coils picked out when he started downstream again. This time, as before, his sudden burst of speed caused the line to snarl. At about 100 feet he made another spectacular jump just as the backlash tightened up. Something

had to go and upon reeling in I discovered that I was minus one of my latest streamer creations in addition to the largest rainbow I had ever hooked.

My memory retains a beautiful picture of this big fellow as I last saw him. The dying rays of the setting sun were slant-



Larry B. Sample with a pair of Nipigon rainbows. In spite of catching nice fish like these, Mr. Sample insists upon saying that "the big ones get away!"

ing across Cameron pool and shimmering on his gorgeous rainbow side, while he was momentarily poised there, twice his length out of water.

Anticipating next summer's vacation, I have chosen the heavy rapids of a large northern river, noted for its wild, acrobatic rainbows of more than ordinary proportions. I shall no doubt catch a few good trout and have some rare sport but I also hope I will tie into some big ones that are too fast to handle. They will probably teach me another lesson in angling and leave me with memories never to be forgotten.

Mañana Is Today

(Continued from page 17)

a flick of gray movement in the brush, and then I saw the buck. I had been looking too high; he had crossed over in a little arroyo that ran diagonally to my line of sight, and was fleeing along my side.

I clawed my carbine from its saddle boot and whipped it to my shoulder. There was no time to dismount. But he had dropped from sight into another arroyo leading down from the crest of the mountain.

Vaulting from my saddle into a cactus, I held my gun crosswise ahead of me in my gloved hands to buck the under-

growth and scrambled up and forward to gain a small rock abutment that blocked my sight.

Between the falling rocks on my side and the shots on John's, the buck knew he had been flanked by the enemy and headed down the ridge away from us toward the southeast. Whether he had seen or heard me now, I did not know.

A shot clattered from the other slope. He had crossed again! So I slowed when I rounded the rocky knoll and stopped part way to the top. I pulled my bandanna out to mop my face. I was puffing from my hurried climb.

Then I saw him again-running fast. He cleared the lower brush with spectacular bounds, antlers thrown back on his neck.

Up came my carbine. I was still breathless and fumed with myself as I tried to steady the barrel down in the few seconds allowed me for my two shots. About 170 yards away, it was too far to ascertain whether my .270 had scored thru the brush. The reticule would not stay put for time enough to see.

Again the buck was down out of sight, over another ridge that led down the bulging mountainside. I had to gain the next ridge before another shot-and the buck had probably run down John's slope after my shots.

Another scramble. More cactus spines. More loose stones. I panted heavily and I had lost one glove and my sombrero. I gained the rise of ground and my breathing stopped for a full three seconds.

There on the big ridge, 150 yards distant, walked the big buck! I could see every step, every detail shadowed against the brilliant desert sky.

I dropped to my knee and flicked off the safety. I was puffing and couldn't hold still. I was shooting into the light and my eyes flooded with water. "Why didn't I take a snap shot?" I thought.

The sight post wobbled and bobbed. The time seemed interminable. How long would the silhouette walk the ridge? I tried to hold my breath. I could hear the blood surging through my head with the force of an hydraulic pump. A bead on his heart. . . . He walks behind some brush. I'm wobbling again. . . . Why was I so utterly winded?

In desperation I jerked the trigger-a fatal mistake. The buck bounded at the report and I felt my stomach sink as I realized a clean miss.

I worked the bolt with lightning strokes. Another shot jarred my shoulder -a snap shot this time, just as the buck slipped over the ridge.

I stood with my carbine half lowered from my shoulder, empty hull still in the chamber. The buck was gone. I wouldn't get another shot, I knew.

I worked the bolt with the deliberateness of defeat, watched the slowly acting mechanism kick the brass hull sailing into the air, heard the brass clink on stones when it fell.

A shot from the other side! . . . two . . .

 Γ HERE was still more cacti between me and the ridge top, and still more hope. I hurried to the crest.

Across a canyon I saw John and Manuel, on a lower ridge over 200 yards away.

Hastily I scanned the downslope for sign of running or sneaking deer. I spied a still form. It was feet up on the ground, in a little clear patch among the sea of brush and cacti across the canyon.

It was a deer, resting against the upright trunk of a tall green saguaro that had stopped its downhill roll.

"Think I hit," John called across when he caught sight of me. The deer was about 75 yards below him, and as the mountain slope curved convexly, he could not see it. He later said he had shot only when the deer bounded high enough for its back to



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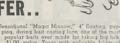
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show above the brush.

I called signals. Down . . . down . . lower, right . . . down . . . left; and finally when John found it, the dead deer was 15 feet upslope from him. The 120 gr. .270 Spitzer bullet had exploded in the deer's chest without coming out the other side, and it had dropped in its track. With no blood trail, it was a hard one to find without help.

'Hey!" he called in cheated surprise. "This isn't the buck we saw! His rack isn't much bigger than the smaller buck in camp!'

"Then watch out," I yelled. "He's still on the mountain. To the southeast along the ridge. He couldn't get off without our seeing him!"

I slipped three fresh cartridges into my magazine and started down the ridge with renewed zest.

'Cover this slope!" I yelled to John, not taking my eyes off my own side of the

Barely had I gone 50 feet when a cholla slapped my leg. One of the spiny balls had stuck into my shank and when I stooped to pick it off, there on the gravelly ground I saw . . . blood! Buck

I had hit the buck after all . . . on my last shot. And here I had guessed a clean miss, because I heard John shooting and thought it was at the same deer.

My heart jumped an inch or two and I swallowed it back. Here and there were big red splotches where the wounded buck had paused. Sometimes his tracks staggered and I knew he was hit pretty bad.

Then his tracks stopped altogether. I circled ahead, up and down, but saw no blood. I circled again, more cautiously, but no tracks. I was about to look for a back-track, when I saw him, dead on the ground.

He had collapsed and slumped down the mountain slope for 20 feet. His gray coat blended perfectly into the cover, and so intent had I been looking ahead for movement, I had overlooked the animal completely.

The 130 gr. .270 had entered his left hind quarter just as he turned to slip over the ridge-my snapshot. The bullet exploded in his stomach and when I took his antlers and began to drag, his stomach dropped out.

We met in the canyon after pulling our bucks downhill. Soon Manuel was along with the horses, from below. John and he dressed out the deer while I went back to the other side to bring my own horse around.

SLINGING the deer behind our saddle cants, we worked down the mountain and back along the nine-mile trail to camp. We reached it in the late afternoon. The bucks we hung by their horns from a stout limb in the oak thicket by the stony little creek that came out of the mountains behind our camp and shortly disappeared into the sandy desert below us.

A half hour later our Bronx pal came riding up, an empty space behind his saddle cant-no deer.

"Well, boys, where's the bucks?" he asked cockily.



"Talk about luck!!"



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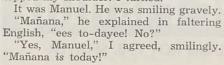
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tapped my shoulder. I turned.

"Well, I'll-how'd you get 'em?"

nonchalance.

Snow-White Crow



Carl E. Austin, Winnipeg, admires his snowwhite crow, shot near Lac du Bonnet, Man. ONE sportsman has found one crow that isn't as black as this predator is usually pictured. It's an albino, with white body and wings, and this freak of birddom has been mounted and now hangs on the wall of the summer cabin

naturalist, at Lac du Bonnet, Manitoba. Austin, an amateur ormithologist whose knowledge of birds is amazing, saw the crow on the road three miles from Lac du Bonnet. The albino was feeding with other crows along the highway. Austin and a companion drove on to the cabin. but by the time they returned with a gun, the white crow had disappeared. Ten days later, while driving along the same road, they saw the same white crow feeding with his black brethren in the fields.

of Carl E. Austin, Winnipeg sportsman-

The albino was mounted by Horace Hatton, Winnipeg taxidermist, and is now a part of the collection of mounted birds and other relics in the Austin cabin.

Unusual is the fact that while albino crows have pink eyes, the Austin specimen had blue black eyes, thus adding to its rarity. Albinos that remain with the flock are often attacked and driven away by fellow crows, according to B. W. Cartwright, chief naturalist of Ducks Unlimited. Albinos occur in human beings as well as birds and animals, and may be caused by failure to pass on from parent to offspring the chromosome carrying the color factor when the egg is fertilized.



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See page 81