

**BIG-GAME SHOOTING IN PATAGONIA AND NEWFOUNDLAND.<sup>1</sup>**

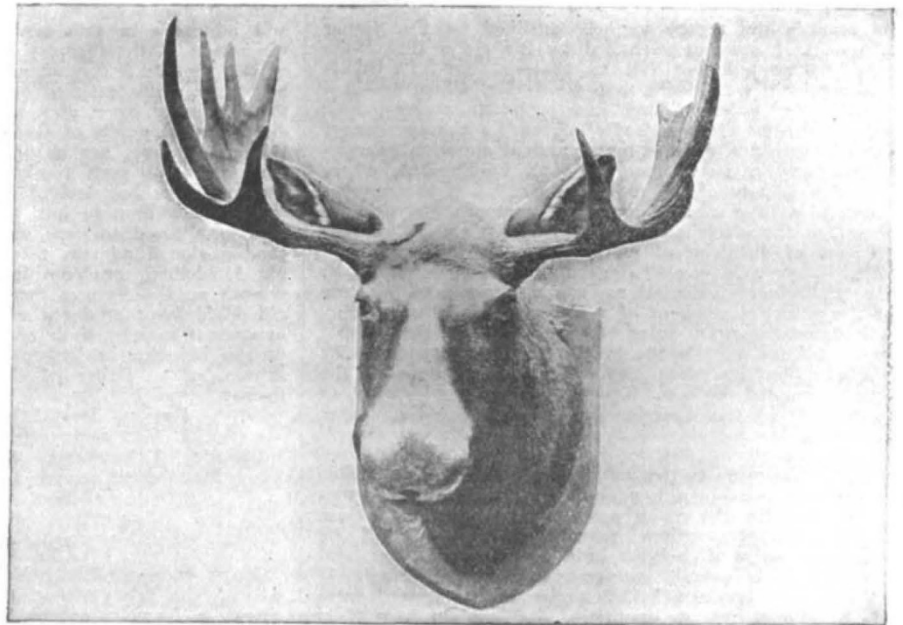
"IN Patagonia no one uses the word 'mile,' the distances are so great that all reckoning is counted in leagues," writes Mr. Prichard in his remarkably interesting studies of these desolate, extra-tropical pampas of South America. He contrasts this measurement with what prevails in vast Canada, where the land is so good and so usable that the distances are computed by the acre. "In sterile Patagonia, no farmer can make a living on less than fifteen square miles." In this region he pursued the wild guanaco, belonging, as he does still, to the old school, which thinks it better sport to kill than to photograph. He also shot the guemal, or Patagonian deer—*Cariacus* or *Mazama bisulca*. (The reviewer wishes that some zoologist of commanding physique and authority would settle, as with a hammer or an axe, what is to be the universally accepted generic name or names of this group of American deer.) We are probably still without adequate and correct information regarding the species and varieties of South American deer, and even the size to which some of them attain and the fullest developed type of antler. Mr. Prichard estimates that the Chilean (Patagonian) guemal stands from 36 to 38 inches at the shoulder and weighs about 160 lbs. He states that the specimens of horns in the British Museum are poor. The antlers given in the painted illustrations seem slightly more developed than those in the photographs of the specimens obtained by Mr. Prichard himself, though these are of distinct interest, and perhaps, as he says, much better than anything in the national collection.

The guemal, according to Mr. Prichard, does not range eastwards far from the foothills of the Andes; it is practically absent from the flat, grassy plains of Patagonia.

Besides this deer and the guanaco, Mr. Prichard shot rheas, swans, geese, ibis, condor, Magellan wolves, and saw several fine

specimens of puma. He records how this "poor-spirited cat" is frequently tamed and kept as a pet until almost full-grown. One settler near Lake Argentine lived alone in a single-roomed hut throughout the winter with two three-quarter-grown pumas.

As to the Amerindian natives of this region, the Tehuelche, he describes them as a fine race, with large,



The Heads of Canadian and Norwegian Elk contrasted (the lower head is Scandinavian). From "Hunting Camps in Wood and Wilderness."

<sup>1</sup> "Hunting Camps in Wood and Wilderness." By H. Hesketh Prichard. With a Foreword by F. C. Selous. Pp. xiv+274. (London: W. Heinemann, 1910.) Price 20s. net.

well-hewn features, their skin of a reddish-brown. But although they average six feet in stature, they have notably deteriorated in physique, from their habit of riding on all occasions and everywhere. A man will not walk a hundred yards, but catches his

horse and rides the distance. So far as the upper part of the body is concerned, the breadth of shoulder and great back and arm muscles demand admiration, but the lower limbs are not proportionately strong.

From the Andes and treeless plains of Patagonia Mr. Prichard whisks the reader to the wildest parts of Labrador and of Newfoundland. After that we have a digression dealing with moose (elk) hunting in Norway, distinctly interesting by the juxtaposition of the scenery, flora and fauna of that country with the north-eastern parts of British North America. Mr. Prichard attempts to show by his illustrations and explanations—or leads us to infer—that a specific difference exists between the elk of northern Europe and the elk of North America, which is cited as *Alces americanus*. But we fancy that zoologists do not claim a full specific difference between these creatures, widely as their habitats are separated at the present day. If the reviewer's memory is correct, Mr. Lydekker himself only claims for the very marked variety of elk in north-eastern Asia the position of a subspecies, *Alces machlis bedfordiae*; and there is distinctly less difference in antlers and other features between the elk of North America and that of Scandinavia, except that no doubt during the last hundred years or so the antlers of the last-named have degenerated, owing to the persecution of the species at the hands of the hunters. Nevertheless, the present difference in size between the Canadian and Norwegian elks is well illustrated by the photographs here reproduced.

Very interesting, and in some respects novel, information is given about the Canadian elk. Mr. Prichard, quoting other authors, touches on the discovery of the gigantic subspecies of elk in that country of marvels, Alaska, the home of the biggest existing bear, the biggest wild dog or wolf (*Canis pambasileus*), and of the biggest elk (*A. m. gigas*), a monster with palmated antlers measuring 76 inches in contradistinction to the 40 inches of an exceptionally good head in Norway, and the average 50 inches of Canada.

Some splendid heads of caribou (Canadian reindeer) were secured by Mr. Prichard and his companion, Mr. Gathorne Hardy. Admirable photographic illustrations are supplied to illustrate the scenery of Newfoundland, a country still all too little known to adventurous travellers seeking for varied phases of landscape beauty. We are made to realise the desolateness of Labrador and yet the charms of its solitude.

"A little lake . . . lay some two miles to the north-west of our camp. Surrounded by trees and seemingly of great depth, it presented the appearance of an unfathomable pit sunk into the roots of the hills. The diver and her brood called ceaselessly upon its waters, bringing back to memory the beautiful and poetic words of Saltatha, the Yellowknife Indian: 'You say the Kingdom of Heaven is good, my father, but tell me, is it better than the land of the musk-ox in summer, when the lakes are sometimes misty and sometimes blue, and the loons cry often? That is good, my father, and if Heaven is better, I shall be willing to dwell there until I am very, very old.' Besides the loon two ospreys haunted the lake, sometimes fishing in the shallow stream which fed it, sometimes winging their way over it and out into the blue distance towards the sea."

Elsewhere in the book there are pen portraits, unconsciously given, of the different guides, hunters, and trackers associated with Mr. Prichard or his companions, some of Newfoundland, some of Labrador, and one or two of Maine (United States) origin. In every case, these simple, virile, honest natures are

brought home to us with their quaint diction, shrewd faces, and slovenly clothing, and we realise what good stuff there must be in the manhood of North America. The Mikmak Indians of Newfoundland (recent comers and settlers from the adjoining coasts of Cape Breton and Nova Scotia) are also illustrated verbally and by photography. Mr. Prichard justly points out that it is sentimental nonsense allowing Indians greater privileges in the way of game destruction than are accorded to white men. All alike are citizens of British North America, enjoying the same privileges and subject to the same laws, and it would be no satisfaction to the zoologists of the next generation to be told that the big game was destroyed in Newfoundland by Indians and not by white men.

Altogether this is one of the most attractive and informative works on the big game of the New World which the present reviewer has had the pleasure of reading. The coloured illustrations by Mr. E. G. Caldwell are of remarkable excellence, worthy of Mr. J. G. Millais. Besides being beautiful pictures, they are absolutely truthful, not only in the delineation of beasts, but in the botany of the background. Two of Lady Helen Graham's drawings also deserve special mention; one, of a scene in the Patagonian Andes with guemal deer in the foreground, and another, a study of a bull elk being surprised at night by the light of a lantern.

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#### THE FANCY FEATHER TRADE.<sup>1</sup>

IN NATURE for December 15, 1910, we reviewed "Aigrettes and Bird-skins," a book written in defence of the bird-plume dealers, in which the name of Mr. C. F. Downham was cited frequently as a witness for the "defendants." This gentleman now appears before us as further counsel on the same side in an address under the second title of "Some Facts and Fallacies in Connection with the Trade in Fancy Feathers," delivered before the London Chamber of Commerce in November last. Part of it has been published as an article in the *National Review*; "The Feather Trade: The Case for the Defence," is an amplified edition. In the number of NATURE just referred to—which may be read in connection with the present observations—we strongly expressed our disagreement with the arguments then put forward. Our view we find independently supported by the *Madras Mail* of September last, which says that "Aigrettes and Bird-skins" will evoke little sympathy in India. Indeed, it would more probably be read with feelings of derision and ridicule on account of its erroneous and fallacious arguments were its subject not so pathetic."

These words seem to us to sum up very tersely the further defence made by Mr. Downham, who, as managing director of one of the plume-importing firms, can hardly be considered an entirely disinterested advocate. In years past the defence set up by the trade was that the "aigrettes" were artificial, and all the plumassiers' saleswomen were directed to inform tender-hearted buyers that this was really so. Ornithologists were able, however, to nail this deception to the counter so effectually that it had to be abandoned. In its stead arises now the equally spurious statements that they are taken out of the nests, where they form a bed for the eggs; and that in vast heronries in S. America, in Venezuela in particular—whence the largest export comes—

<sup>1</sup> "Some Facts and Fallacies in Connection with the Trade in Fancy Feathers." A Paper read at the London Chamber of Commerce in November, 1910, by C. F. Downham. Pp. 126. (London Chamber of Commerce, Oxford Court, Cannon Street.) Price 6d. net.

"The Pros and Cons of the Plumage Bill." A Letter. By James Buckland, of the Royal Colonial Institute.