

## Stubby's First Panther.

By CLARENCE HAWKES.

The fitful gleam of two score lanterns, following at regular intervals, a few rods apart, was trailing along a country road. The moon and stars were hidden by a soft spring haze that enveloped the travelers, wrapping all things in its gray mantle.

By the light of each lantern one could see revolving wheels, and the massive outlines of circus vans. Here and there a light stronger than the rest revealed the outline of the driver sitting wrapped in his great oilskin coat, guiding the team through the dense darkness.

Even had it not been for the lanterns one would have guessed that a large caravan was passing, from the snapping and creaking of the axles, and a score of other small sounds that always attend the moving of heavy freight.

Most of the drivers were alert, watching the bushes by the roadside that they might guide their teams as near between the two dark outlines as possible. Others in the middle of the procession dozed, feeling quite sure that the horses, so long accustomed to the life, would trail after the lantern in front of them, and keep the road. Two or three of the drivers neither watched the teams which they were supposed to drive, nor the road, but were wholly engrossed with black bottles on the seat beside them.

Such was the condition of Big Ireland, as he was called by the hands, the driver of the great van containing the panther and the jaguar.

Presently the teams in the distance began rumbling over a short iron bridge. One could have guessed this, for the sounds of the heavy wheels on the plank came nearer and nearer, giving the impression that the bridge was traveling towards one, for there was nothing in this dense darkness to gauge the movements of the team by.

When the van carrying the big cats struck the bridge, which was narrow, the team had hauled over to the left, and the shutters of the cage barely cleared the strong iron pillar that stood guard at the corner of the bridge.

Although his faculties were numbed by drink, Big Ireland felt that something was wrong, and instinctively pulled upon the right rein, or what would have been the right rein had they not been crossed. At the same time he spoke sharply to the horses. Then there was a grating, grinding sound, and the drunken driver reached for his whip. Twice it fell upon the frightened horses, and the grating and grinding gave place to cracking and breaking. Then there was a hideous din, in which the squealing and kicking of horses, the breaking of strong wood and ripping of bars, and the snarling of frightened, infuriated cats, could be distinctly heard.

When the drivers from the teams ahead and behind hurried to the scene, they found one horse down, his legs through the lattice-work in the side of the wagon had gone through an opening between the railing and floor of the bridge, and were wedged in clear to the hub, while the forward side of the van had been literally gutted.

Their first thought was of Chiefin, the great circus cat, but the flash of their lanterns into the cage showed that he was gone.

When the van driven by Big Ireland struck the bridge, Chiefin, the panther, was lying curled up in one corner of the cage asleep. His first instinct on being so rudely awakened was to slink away into the furthest corner from the commotion. But when he heard the tearing of the bars, that had so long stifled him, he raised his head and sniffed the air eagerly. He could not see that the side of the cage had been ripped open, but something told him that it was so. For a breath of freedom blew through the open bars, that only a wild creature, for years held captive, could have discerned. Then he stretched his great paw forward and felt the opening. Then cautiously he slipped through the opening to the railing of the bridge where one great spring carried him into the darkness, and night folded her arms about him as though to protect this wild creature from pursuit, while the fields and the meadows cried, "Come, you are ours! We will feed and water you."

At first the panther, so long cramped in his cage, stumbled blindly through the darkness. His limbs would not respond to the mind that subtlety that they should, and his eyes, so long used to artificial light, winked and blinked strangely. But by degrees the pupils dilated to their utmost and drank in whatever light the gloom contained, and with catlike stealth he crept along the pasture.

Now and then the great cat would stop to roll like a kitten upon the grass, or stretch its limbs. Once it gave two or three great bounds, just to feel those sturdy limbs spurn the green earth.

After about two hours of stumbling

through the darkness, a gray streak appeared in the east, and birds began to twitter in the tree tops. Then the panther entered a wood. As it had never seen anything like this before, but it was fresh and cool, and besides it was dark and there were plenty of places to hide, so the great cat was well pleased with his new discovery, and thereafter kept to the woods.

It was about a week after the accident on the bridge and the escape of Chiefin from the van, that Stubby Daggitt was going for the cows, just as he had done for the last six or seven years. There would seem to be little relation between Stubby and the cows, and the great circus cat. For that dread animal had escaped some twenty-five miles from the village where Stubby lived. Though the woods had been scoured for days, nothing could be found of him. So every one had concluded that the panther by some inborn instinct was working his way northward toward the wilderness that its kind had frequented ever since the days of the red man.

Stubby was not handsome. You will guess this when I tell you that his other nickname was "Freckles," but he had an honest countenance, and any boy in the village would tell you that he was clear grit from the top of his tow-head to the bottom of his bare brown feet.

The cows gave him considerable trouble this night, for he had to go to the farther end of the pasture into a maple grove for them. They acted rather strangely, too, he thought; for they started uneasily every time he struck at the weeds by the side of the path with his birch rod. Just at the edge of the woods was a spreading maple that overhung the path; here they jammed up in a bunch, refusing to go under the tree.

"Why, there! what are you doing?" cried Stubby, switching the hind cows with his birch.

These pressed forward and the cows ahead broke into a trot, going under the maple at a good pace.

Then a long, lithe figure dropped from the tree like a thunderbolt from a cloudless sky, and with a snarl that froze the blood in Stubby's veins, dug its claws in the sides of the foremost cow, while its teeth were buried in her neck. With a frenzied bellow of pain and fright, the old cow broke into a keen gallop, and almost before Stubby knew what had happened the herd was ten rods away, going for the barn like stampeded steers. Stubby's first thought was of the escaped panther.

Then Stubby thought of his own safety, and he started for the barn as though the panther had been upon his trail instead of the old cow's back. He was taking a short cut home, parallel to the path the cows were following, so he could still hear their wild bellows and the snarling of the panther. All of which lent energy to his sturdy legs; over knolls and stones he bounded, as though running the race for life.

Half way to the barn he mounted a stone wall, and gave one frightened glance backward, to see if the panther had left the cows for his own trail. Then he saw a very strange thing that both amazed and delighted him. The cows, in their headlong rush for the barn, had reached the same stone wall that he stood upon, and were about to pass through an opening from which all but the top bar had been left down, the remaining bar caught the great cat under the chin, and brushed him off the old cow's back as though he had been a fly, while the herd galloped on with new energy.

Stubby waited to see no more, but jumping from the way, made the sprint of his life to the house. A moment later he burst into the dining room where the family were at supper, and wild-eyed and speechless, sank exhausted on the floor. As soon as he could speak he gasped out his story to an amazed family circle.

Stubby's father at once went to the barn, where the lacerated sides of old Crakehorn told plainly that his story was only too true.

There was great excitement in the village that evening when Stubby's adventure was related at the country store, and a hunt was planned for the next day that should rid the neighborhood of this furious beast.

Old shot-guns that had not been fired for years were pressed into service, heavily loaded with buckshot or slugs.

To his father's astonishment, Stubby declared his intention to go with the hunting party.

"Gracious, boy!" exclaimed his father. "Didn't you get panther enough last night to last you twenty-four hours?" but secretly he was pleased with his son's pluck.

"Don't go, Herbert," pleaded his mother. "You'll be eaten alive."

"I guess there won't be nothin' happen to him if he sticks close to me," put in the boy's father. "I've got the old shotgun loaded with four slugs in each barrel and I guess there won't be

panther eat us up. Better let him go, mother." So Herbert's mother gave "Gue— I'll take along my pocket-knife," said Stubby. "I'll feel safer with it."

"Might as well try to shoot a rhinoceros with a popgun, as a panther with that thing," said his father. But the boy slipped the little 22-rifle under his coat and went with the hunting party.

They had planned to beat the woods where the panther had appeared the night before, just as they do in India for tigers. So the party was strung out in a long line, each man two or three rods from his neighbor, and in this way they swept the woods, from end to end. It was a new experience for most of them, and each man went with his gun cocked, and his heart in his mouth. The timid hunters insisted on making a great shouting, and the courageous said it was to frighten the panther away, for fear that they would see him.

As for Stubby, his nerves tingled so that he doubted if he could even hit the tree containing the panther, let alone hitting the beast if he should see him.

The forenoon was very hot and it was hard work beating through the underbrush so by noon they were a tired and disgusted lot. A council was then held, and it was decided to divide the party into two parts and one beat the neighboring woods, while the remainder worked the maple grove still more. A hasty lunch was eaten, and they set to work again.

By the middle of the afternoon the maple grove had been beaten from end to end, and the panther certainly was not there. So while others of the party went into a little swampy run nearby, Stubby sat under a big hemlock, resting.

They had barely gotten out of sight when the boy noticed a movement in the large hemlock near the one under which he sat. Then one of the green tufted boughs sprang down as though a heavy weight were upon it, opening a gap between it and the branch above, and what Stubby saw in the opening made his tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth, and his heart pound away at its ribs as though it would break through them. For there, upon a large limb of the hemlock, with his hind legs well under him and resting against the trunk of the tree was the great circus cat.

His tail was switching horribly, his fangs were bared as though for a snarl, and his eyes seemed to be measuring the distance between him and the boy.

The moment his eyes met those of the panther, Stubby's gaze was held as though by some will stronger than his own. He could not move, he could not cry out. All he could do was to sit there and wait until the panther should spring. Cold sweat stood upon his brow, and he felt sick and faint. He thought of his mother's prophecy, that he would be eaten alive. It looked as though it would be fulfilled. He felt that his only safety lay in looking directly at the panther. Perhaps someone would discover them before it was too late.

Seconds seemed like minutes, and the quarter of a minute that elapsed, an hour. Then Stubby thought of his little pocket rifle that lay upon the grass beside him, and felt for it with one hand, still keeping his eye on the panther.

But as his arm went down for the rifle, the panther bent lower on the limb. He was going to spring.

Then with a quick motion Stubby raised the rifle to the level of his eye. One moment the light glimmered along the panther's back, and the next it was dancing around in the tree. His arm eyes, and pressed the trigger. Then a fit of sheer desperation seized him, and with a great effort, he drew the sight down until it stopped, as he thought, between the great brute's eyes, and pressed the trigger. Then in a frenzy of fright he pitched the little rifle into the bush and sprang to his feet. His nimble legs had saved him the night before, and might now. He had barely sprung from a sitting position, when the body of the great cat shot like a black streak through the air and fell heavily at his feet.

Then Stubby's legs sank under his weight, and it grew very dark.

The next thing he remembered, his father was bending over him, fanning him with his palm-leaf hat, while someone else was sprinkling brook-water in his face from a wet handkerchief. He was not mortally wounded, as he at first thought, or even scratched, only his head was light and things looked strange.

After a few moments he was able to sit up and tell his story.

"You say you fired at him with the popgun, did you?" asked Stubby's father.

"Yes," replied the boy, "I aimed right between his eyes, just as I have read about in books."

"Made a mighty big sight of noise for a 22," remarked someone in the crowd.

"Wal, the panther's dead," said Stubby's father, "and I don't see but the boy's bullet did it."

"Look at this here wound," said another. "Bullet went in just behind the shoulder, square through the heart, and came out the other side. Don't

look like a 22 either. That warn't no popgun that did that."

"Where is old Ben Wilson, from over to Edgewood?" asked someone in the party. "He knows all about such things; he can tell what kind of a bullet made the hole." And a shout went around for Ben, but he was nowhere to be found.

Then one of the Basset boys said, "I vum!" and slapped his side.

"I have it," he said. "I just saw Ben myself, sorter skulking off through the woods towards home, and if I ain't mighty mistaken 'Old Kentuck' was still a smokin'." Anyhow I saw Ben lift the hammer and throw away the cap, and he wouldn't have done that if it had been a good one."

Here then was the secret of the mystery. Ben had happened along just in time to see Stubby's plight, and had rescued him by a lucky shot with his famous hunting rifle that he called "Old Kentuck."

To make sure that this was the case, a committee was at once sent to interview Ben. But to their great astonishment that quiet old man would say nothing about it, either one way or the other. "We want to give you a vote of thanks and the skin," said the chairman. "Now tell us; did you kill the panther?"

"Can't say as I did," replied Ben. "I hain't seen no dead panther. 'Twould be mighty hard to say. There ain't nothin' sure in this world, 'ceptin' death and taxes. But you folks just go back an' ask Stubby about it. He got the panther's eye and I didn't."

"Mebbe, he winked at him. You just ask Stubby."—Outing.

### SHAW ON SHAKESPEARE.

Calls Him "a Narrow-Minded Middle-Class Man."

Bernard Shaw, the well-known novelist and dramatist, delivered a lecture on "Shakespeare" the other evening at the Kensington Town Hall, London. According to a report in the London Chronicle his real points were just these. Shakespeare the writer was not God. Shakespeare the man was not an illiterate, good-for-nothing blackguard. Both were comprised in a thorough middle-class "gentleman of my own profession."

Shakespeare was, too, not an infallible philosopher; but as an artist he was supremely imaginative, the greatest master of language that ever was, and of verbal music, with an enormous power of characterization and "tremendous fun."

Here are some characteristic Shawisms:

"On the idolization of Shakespeare's works—

"People view them as they view the Bible—that is to say, in the 'proper spirit,' which means that the mind must be completely closed to everything they contain."

"Others abide our question, thou are free"—what can that mean but that Shakespeare is God?"

On Shakespeare not being a vagabond:

"That he was a respectable, middle-class man is proved by the fact of his father having been a bankrupt."

"He came to town obviously as an ordinary sort of middle-class literary young man, and wrote 'Love's Labour's Lost,' a regular Bedford Park sort of play."

"My own family have always called themselves 'the Shaws.' There is no doubt that Shakespeare's family called themselves 'the Shakespeares.'"

After his remarks upon Shakespeare's middle-class origin and instincts, Mr. Shaw set out to prove an old point of his that in his early "romantic" plays Shakespeare was just writing what the public wanted, and that in his heart he was a pessimist.

"Otherwise," Mr. Shaw added, "Shakespeare failed as a philosophic guide. He had no religion, no politics, no great concerns. He was a narrow-minded middle-class man."

As an artist, however, Mr. Shaw would have had hardly anything to go to say about Shakespeare—if only he hadn't written in blank verse. Here are some Shawisms upon this little matter:

"Blank verse is a thing you could teach a cat if it had an ear."

An enormous mass of the blank verse in the plays isn't poetry at all.

Shakespeare was a master of tremendous prose. Compare the "What a piece of work is a man" speech in "Hamlet" with such twaddle as "To be or not to be."

Why didn't he leave the mighty line to people like Marlowe, who could write nothing else?

Yet he made even this blank verse musical. There was a charm even in such a line as "Thou damn'd and luxurious mountain goat."

Finally Mr. Shaw put it to his audience that they were just fascinated by the magic of Shakespeare's speech into idolizing everything that he wrote, whether it were true or no. The eyes had it.

### Both Sides of a Question.

"There are many things you can't do with money," said the man who affects philosophy.

"Yes," answered Dustin Stax, "but there are a whole lot more things you can't do without it."—Washington Star.

## SOUTHERN FARM NOTES.

TOPICS OF INTEREST TO THE PLANTER, STOCKMAN AND TRUCK GROWER.

### Dairying in Distress.

There is a widespread opinion that the dairy industry cannot be made a success in the South, that the proper field for the industry is in the North and West, but little by little we are learning that while there may be "no new things under the sun" there are many old industries that find new homes, and here and there, like an oasis in the desert, some bold pioneer, backed by the courage of his convictions, has introduced some new field of enterprise in an old community.

This is particularly true of the dairy industry, and though there have been many who have failed, there are more who have succeeded, and many an acre that once knew only the tread of the cotton planter and his mule, now is covered with grasses, and here the gentle cows find subsistence, and on many another field, corn and forage crops have supplanted cotton, to the improvement of the soil, and to the enhancement of the contents of the farmer's pocketbook.

Among those who have achieved success in the South is one Mr. E. A. Barrows, of Monticello, this State; coming here seven years ago from Illinois, and knowing nothing about Southern agriculture, and but a little about agriculture anywhere, the experiences of those first few years would have discouraged a less determined man. As Mr. Barrows now laughingly says, he was the "laughing stock of the whole community;" he can afford to laugh now at the recollection, but it was no joke in those days, and only proves the saying, "that he who laughs last," etc., for those who came to scoff then come now to gather knowledge—it is again the old story of the hare and the tortoise. Those who had supposed there was nothing more to be learned have been distanced by the one who had the perseverance to burn the midnight oil in order to find out the cause of his failure and how out success where an ordinary man would have given up in despair.

Mr. Barrows early saw the necessity of keeping livestock in order to preserve the fertility of the soil, and realizing the possibilities that dairying afforded, he made a thorough study of the industry, all its branches. He had a herd of high-grade Jerseys and Guernseys, consisting of about forty milch cows and as many more young heifers. They furnish milk to supply the town of Monticello with a high grade product that cannot be excelled in quality. In addition, he is making a fancy grade butter, that was scored by one of the best judges of butter in America, and was marked ninety-eight points out of a possible 100. This butter goes to Thomasville, Jacksonville and other points to supply a critical class of customers, but the only kick is from those who can't get it; every few days he is obliged to turn down orders from some one who has heard of it.

But it is not alone in the products of the dairy that he has distanced others who are older in experience; for in his cane syrup he has produced an article that has been highly commended by experts, and in fact by all who have tasted it, and—but, as Mr. Kipling would say, "that is another story." Mr. Barrows raises all the roughage for his cows, buying only concentrated feeds like brewers' grains, brans and cottonseed meal. Two large silos hold enough silage to last through the winter months. In the summer the pasture is supplemented with green feeds and soiling crops. To visit his farm and look over his fields and his herds, to be regaled with a few of his jokes, to meet his accomplished wife and fine boys is worth a journey from a distance.

This is but a single instance of a successful Southern dairyman, there are many, but there is room for many more. The field is a broad one, and will grow even faster than the population will increase; there is nothing that will create a demand for any product like a product that is a little better than the average, and this is particularly true of the dairy industry.

There is no branch of agriculture that impoverishes the soil so little as dairying, provided the fertilizer is returned to the land and not allowed to go to waste around the barn. It furnishes a steady income the year around, and when our friends on Wall Street are forcing cotton down to five cents, the dairy farmer sleeps just as sound, eats just as hearty and dresses just as well as when it is ten cents or more.—The Stockman.

### Machinery on the Farm.

The following from the Southern Ruralist contains some very good advice:

"There is nothing on the farm to-day which pays a larger profit on the money invested than modern improved tools. The man who tries to farm with nothing but a single stock is handicapped from the start and will never get ahead until he reaches

the point where he can begin to acquire the necessary implements for his profession.

"A machine which will pay for itself several times over the first year, which will pay from 100 to 500 per cent. on the investment, is certainly worth purchasing.

"There isn't a successful business man in the city to-day who would hesitate one minute on such a proposition. In fact, the successful business man would not hesitate to make an investment in labor-saving machinery if he knew it would save him ten per cent. What we farmers need to realize is, that our farming is our business, and then run it on business principles. When a business man knows that a certain improvement will pay him twenty-five per cent. or fifty per cent. or 100 per cent. profit, he makes it even if he has to borrow money to do it, for such an investment will soon pay back the money many times over.

"Now, we do not advise you to go in debt indiscriminately for every new machine that comes along which some one wants to sell; but we do advise you unhesitatingly to by all means procure the tools necessary to do your work to best advantage. If you run a one-horse farm you need, besides your single stock, a one-horse team plow, a straight tooth harrow, a corn and cotton planter, a guano distributor, a one-horse cultivator, a weeder, and a one-horse mower and a hay rake.

"Now, with these tools you should be able to do such good work and so much of it that you will soon be in position to purchase another horse and run a two-horse farm. You will then be able to ride much of the time instead of walk. With the advent of the horses many more tools will be needed. A two-horse breaking plow will turn your land deeper, and with a cutaway or disc harrow, a smoothing harrow and a roller, you can put it in such fine condition that the yield per acre will be much larger. You will also need a two-horse cultivator in addition to your one-horse tools.

"When you reach this point you will soon be able to purchase another animal, and then comes the three-horse disc plow, which will tear up land that before you could not touch. You will now need a grain drill if you sow much wheat, and your crops will be so much heavier that you will abandon the cradle in despair at ever cutting it by hand, and purchase a reaper at once. Your large crop of corn calls for a shredder, and the shredder needs an engine, which will also run your feed cutter, pump your water and cut your wood. And all these pay a big profit when properly managed and cared for. You can now employ more help at a profit, have a foreman to superintend under your directions and have time for yourself and family to live like folks.

"If you are a gardener you need many more tools, including hand seed drills and single and double wheel hoes. But the gardener also needs the heavy tools to fit his land. In fact, they are a necessity, for vegetables need the very best preparation it is possible to give.

"And the further you climb up along this road to success the easier things go and greater the profit, for mother earth appreciates good treatment and will yield a bountiful return."

### Sowing Alfalfa.

Alfalfa may be sown either fall or spring. It is useless to sow alfalfa unless the land has been thoroughly prepared. It will take a year at least to get land ready for alfalfa. Simply scratching over the surface of the ground and sowing seed, even when inoculation is followed, is not likely to bring satisfactory results. If the land is at all heavy in nature it should be deeply broken to the depth of twelve inches and then subsoiled. Subsoiling is best done in the fall. In order that the land may contain an available supply of plant food, it is well to grow peas on the land and plow them under in the fall. A heavy application of phosphoric acid and muriate of potash should be made to the pea crop, and lime may be applied after the peas are plowed under, say at the rate of fifty bushels per acre. The lime should be applied two or three weeks before the alfalfa is sown so as to avoid an injury to the seed. Use the caustic lime, placing in heaps in the field and covering lightly with earth. When thoroughly slaked, scatter over the ground uniformly and work in with a harrow. Seed the alfalfa at the rate of twenty pounds per acre and not later than the first of September. The alfalfa should be inoculated before planting. The station is in position to furnish you with the inoculating material.

It is not well to plant alfalfa on too large a scale, for it is a difficult crop to establish, and it will be better to go slowly and thoroughly understand its peculiarities before attempting to cultivate it extensively.—Journal and Tribune.