

his head, if he have doffed his head-gear for greater secrecy; him the fates favour not, and the benado, getting more frightened, rushes on towards *B*. Here his fear gets the better of his sagacity, or *B* has left nothing to betray his presence—the deer dashes out past him; as soon as he has crossed one of the lines diverging from *B*—marked out for human safety—*B* may do his best or worst for deer-destruction. If he is not too nervous when he levels his weapon, he remembers that said deer is moving rapidly—perhaps eighty or a hundred yards off—he aims a little in front of his fore-shoulder; and if his bullet go true, and the shoulder is struck, over rolls his victim, and he is happy; if he has fired a little too late, or too far back, and the poor beast receive the missile in his paunch, he will bear his hurt for miles, and must be followed up; and woe to the rest of the day's sport, for all the party join in pursuit of a 'benado panzado' (pronounced benao panzao); otherwise, as is not uncommon, his bullet goes whirring on, with a sound very startling to the unaccustomed, who fancy that it must have passed within a few yards of their own precious carcasses, when in fact it may have been continually lengthening its distance from them—or buries itself with an unsatisfactory *thud* in a bank of sand.

'The distance between the posts of ambush varies from one to three hundred yards, according to the size of the beat and conveniences for concealment, so that if the beast is lucky enough to choose the

exact central spot between the two guns, he may get off with the chance only of being reached by a long shot. The keeper always examines the track of a deer after the spot where he has been fired at, and pronounces whether he has been hit or not; a drop on the sand, which an unpractised eye would overlook, causes him to pronounce that he is hit; and if he decides that 'da sangre,' the rule is, he must be followed—an occupation probably for the remainder of the day. They can tell, also, by his track whereabouts he has received his wound, by a limp, or a trailing of a leg, or a weakness on one side. If it is fixed that he is hard hit, time is given him before we follow, in order that, on finding himself uncomfortable, he may take to the nearest resting-place, and stop there to bewail his melancholy fate ('echaremos un cigarro'). When it is fancied that he will not be urged onwards by the sounds of pursuit, but has laid down and is getting stiffish, and unwilling to start on again—in short, when the cigar is ended, we take to the track. When he enters a thicket, we surround the covert with guns before it is entered by the beaters, so that he may be secured if he have not passed through; and so on until we either overtake him, or evening overtakes us. When once it has been said of the benado that he 'da sangre,' he becomes of less interest to all the party save one—to him who fired the shot which told; for, whoever may at last bring him down, he is reckoned among the trophies of the first blood-drawer. I remember, on one occasion, when

my neighbour had fired at a deer, it came afterwards beautifully within shot for me. I coolly sent one bullet at him, which disabled a fore-leg, but as he went stumbling up the slope of sand, I thought it as well, lest he should give us more trouble, to bestow my second upon him, and this struck him in the shoulder, and brought him at once to the ground. I was rather proud of my feat; especially as it was performed in sight of one or two more, who saw how each bullet told. When the beat was over, and some of us were examining his two wounds, to my astonishment the keeper and my friend, who had fired first, came up along the track, and declared he had been hit before I fired. I, and the rest who had seen me fire, were quite sure that my two bullets were there in those two holes; however, as Manuel affirmed that he was bleeding before ever I fired, we were sore puzzled. At last, in turning him over, we found that the first shot *had* passed over his head, and cut a round hole in the erected ear, from which a drop or two of blood had flowed. This explained the mystery, and showed the sharp-sightedness and accuracy of these keen observers.

‘Thus we slew the deer. When we came to a more swampy covert, we expected to turn out a ‘cochino.’ Some of the party who had fleet horses, and manageable, used to gallop after them with spears, if the ground was open, and try to transfix them. This is a very exciting, but dangerous amusement; as, first, it requires the full gallop—for a pig

can go as fast as a horse for some distance; and as the ground is very uneven, and, especially in many parts, full of rabbit burrows, the roll of the horse and rider is by no means unfrequent. Again, the boar, when brought to bay, has a very ugly way of using his tusks, and if the horse is unused to the sport, and so gets frightened at the hideous beast, or not perfectly tractable, so as to turn shortly and quickly at a motion of the hand, he runs a good chance of being ripped up, or getting an unpleasant gash in the shoulder; nor is the rider's leg at all proof against the onslaught of the exasperated brute. Sometimes they would turn sulky, and take refuge in an impenetrable thicket of low bushes, where all the interstices seemed filled up with reeds, and would set us and the dogs at defiance for hours: no one dared venture into the lair if he had been able to reach it, for he could not have used his gun, and the boar would have dashed at him, cutting his way with his tusks, and, before the intruder could turn, would have upset and given him the last Adonizing touch in the thigh. Our last resource was to set fire to his domain; and we sometimes burnt down an acre or more of the wilderness without succeeding in dislodging the crafty old pig.

When we had been a few days at the Palacio, we were joined by a Belgian Count, who brought letters of introduction to one of the party. We were going to occupy the following day with the 'caza menor,' and give our horses a rest, of which they stood much

in need, since they were hard worked all through the day: when not oppressed by our weight, they were in the hands of the gallifats, and much more seriously employed in forcing through the thickest parts of the coverts which were at all practicable.

‘Our new comrade appeared next morning gorgeously arrayed in a new shooting-frock (jacket it could not be called) of some fancy plaid, which he assured us had been specially recommended to him by Milady Shrewsbury during a recent visit to England. This was trimmed with a long fringe all round, apparently constructed expressly to catch at all protruding twigs, and, after encumbering the wearer for a short time in the woods, to aid in rending the light and delicate frock from his shoulders. We were disposed to smile when we thought what a thing of shreds and tatters our gay butterfly would become after a few hours’ struggling through brushwood; if the wicked notion of leaving him to his own imaginations, and pitying him afterwards, *did* occur, it was rejected by our sense of the duties of hospitality, and, after explaining to him the probable fate of his admired costume, if he persisted in exposing it to hardships for which the artist never designed it, we rigged him out in an old real English velveteen shooting-jacket—how his dress-boots fared we had not heart to inquire—they certainly had not a sole to answer. He acquitted himself, however, better than might have been expected from his outward man, though

he exhibited a few peculiarities. One day, when he was stationed beside a piece of water through which the deer would be driven—and where he might have a leisurely and uninterrupted shot—a herd of several benados, accompanied by numerous ciervas, dashed past him into the water. Now it is a high misdemeanour to slay a cierva, or doe, but our friend, instead of singling out a pair of antlers, and aiming at him who bore them, in his raptures and amazement blazed, no doubt quite promiscuously, into the middle of the herd—and, to his own astonishment no doubt, as such a thing had not happened before, down fell a beast. He instantly mounted his horse, rode into the water—jumped off, heedless of his boots, which on this occasion were of the tragic order of untanned leather—such as heroes appear in on the stage—and danced frantically around his fallen victim. Nor was his excitement cooled either by the water, which he splashed around, or by the announcement that he had slain a ‘cierva:’ in fact, during the whole of his stay with us we never could impress him sufficiently with the heinousness of his offence. That he had slain anything so large, appeared to him perfectly satisfactory. In spite of this we liked him much, and we were sorry when he took his leave. Manuel Toro summed up his character admirably, as far as we were concerned with it, by saying that he was ‘muy buen’ hombre, pero no cazador’ (‘a very good fellow, but no sportsman’).

‘I might go on with many reminiscences, of various scenes, but I think I have sketched you enough to show the style of our three weeks’ campaign, and will leave you to pronounce whether you would not have liked to have been one of the party.

‘Believe me, yours very sincerely,

‘G. H. A.’



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