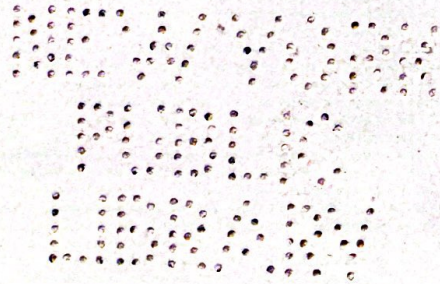


IN KOREAN WILDS AND VILLAGES

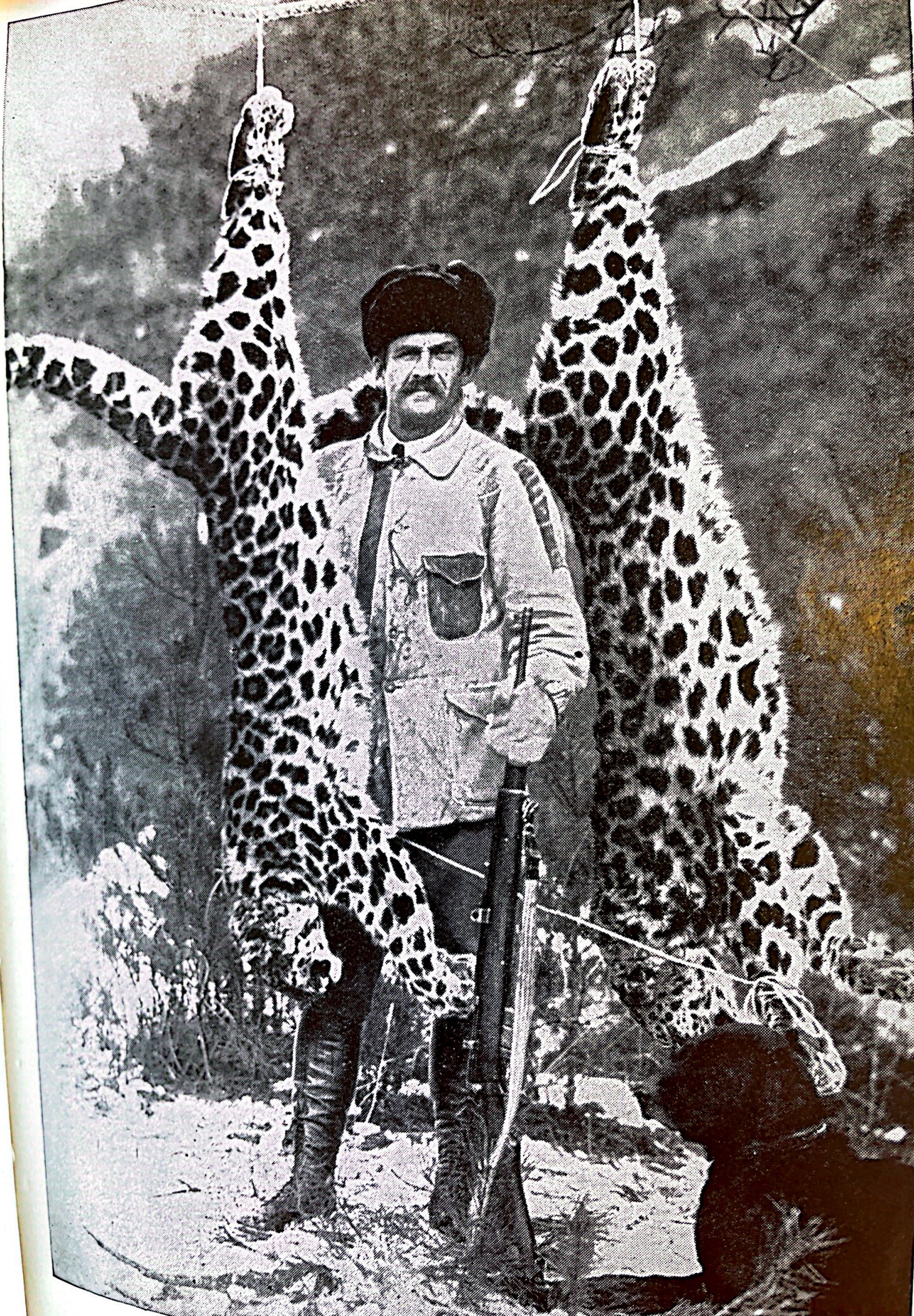
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GEORGE JANKOWSKI WITH HIS MAGNIFICENT BOOTY—EIGHT WILD BOARS.

JANKOVSKI

NO EUROPEAN name is so well known to the inhabitants of Northern Korea as Jankovski. The bearer of this name is a Russian who has settled down in the village of Shuotsu. Like most Russians whom one meets outside their native land he has had a life full of changes.

His father, who has now been dead a long time, had in his young days emigrated from Poland and become a settler on the Siberian coast, by the Sea of Japan. Apart from his great activities as a settler, he contributed greatly to the exploration of the animal world of Eastern Siberia. In the museums at Leningrad, Warsaw and many other places may be still seen specimens of many strange species of animals, among them some previously unknown to science, which Jankovski collected in Eastern Siberia.

His son, George Jankovski, now fifty-eight years old, was before the Russian Revolution owner of the large estates which his father had settled at Sidemi, between Vladivostok and the Korean frontier. In those days he devoted himself to the breeding of horses. He had more than six hundred, among them many fine racers.

But what made his property most famous was perhaps his breeding of deer. He had a deer farm with no fewer than three thousand head. These deer (*Pseudaxis*

dybowskii) he bred only for the sake of their horns. The newly grown horn with only soft skin on them produce a very expensive medicine which is in great demand. Among the Chinese especially it is most highly prized as a means of rejuvenation. One single horn of a large size brings more than £50 and new horns are grown every year.

When the waves of the Russian Revolution reached those tracts and there was danger there of civil war, Jankovski played a conspicuous rôle. He organized a White force which for long stood out against the Reds, but at last he had to bow before superior strength and then he fled with his family in a motor boat to Korea, where he landed at Seishin. He also arranged for some of his men to drive a herd of horses into Korea over the frontier. But everything else he had to sacrifice. Had he fallen into the hands of the Reds, his doom had been sealed, because he had given them so much trouble during the conquest of the Maritime Province.

Jankovski now settled for a while at Seishin and looked about for something to do. To begin with he sold the horses. Then he went in for herring fishing along the coast near Seishin. During the winters he shot leopards, wild boar, roe deer and pheasants. Thanks to his great energy and resourcefulness he soon achieved success again.

In the Shuotsu River valley, thirty-two miles from Seishin, Jankovski discovered a beautiful and fascinating bit of country where he bought some land and built himself a house. He christened his home Novina. Here he provided himself with horses and cows and took up gardening and bee-keeping. With the help of the natives he also managed to catch in the woods of Northern Korea some deer of the same kind as those

he formerly had bred and with them he laid the foundations of a new deer-farm.

One day he came upon the idea of taking in summer guests. He built some summer cottages and let them to some of his acquaintances who arranged to have their meals with him. This venture proved successful. He kept erecting new summer houses, one after another, and when I arrived at Shuotsu in the spring of 1935 his activities were still on the increase. He had also purchased a strip of the sea-shore with a fine sand beach only a half-hour's motor drive from the village, where his guests could bathe. During the summer his little holiday resort is now visited by a large number of people, especially Russian émigrés from Harbin and from Shanghai but also other Europeans from Japan, China and Manchuria. His deer-farm grows steadily. He has nearly fifty head already.

During the winter Jankovski devotes himself to hunting in the company of his three sons, all of whom are good hands at it. His eldest son, Valerij, is held now to be the best hunter in Korea. I was out with him several times and marvelled at his efficiency and his unique faculty for stalking his quarry. His younger brother, Arsenij, is also a first-rate hunter. Jankovski senior has two brothers, one of whom also lives in Shuotsu. He is an entomological collector, and he specializes in the sale of Korean butterflies abroad. The other brother is a detective in French service at Shanghai and spends his holidays at Novina. So that quite a little Russian village has sprung up there.

"Have you shot any tigers?" I asked Jankovski one day when he was paying me a visit.

"Yes," he answered. "Several. The first I shot when I was seventeen. My brother Alexander and I were

riding through the taiga one winter's day. We were going along the side of a steep incline when suddenly our horses became uneasy. An instant later a powerful tiger came for us in a series of mighty leaps. We jumped off before he was too near and the tiger sprang upon one of the horses. Tiger and horse went tumbling down the slope. My brother and I both fired at the tiger, who was finally despatched by a bullet of mine.

"The Eastern Siberian tiger is unique in its beauty, with its long-haired winter coat," went on Jankovski. "Thirty years ago fifty or sixty tigers used to be shot every winter in the Vladivostok region, but now they have been almost exterminated. In the Siberian forests there was plenty of game at that time. Apart from tigers, I used to go after wolves, bears, leopards, gorals and roe deer to say nothing of wild fowl, geese, ducks and pheasants and much else. But, in Korea, I have not had a chance of shooting a single tiger during all the thirteen years I have been here. I have sighted several, however, and I once captured two little tiger cubs. The tiger is almost exterminated here also."

"Were there many bandits in those regions?" I asked.

"Yes," Jankovski replied. "They gave us a lot of trouble. They plundered and murdered whenever they could. We had to go out after them several times, bands of us."

"Have you ever brought down wild fowl of that species?"

"Yes, several. Otherwise I would not be sitting here. Many's the time their bullets have whistled past me. But here in Korea we are not bothered by them. They are a trouble only up in the Paiktusan woods and of course, in Manchukuo, where it seems impossible to get rid of them."

AFTER WILD BOAR ON THE KOREAN MOUNTAINS

IN THE middle of December I found myself in a very wild tract of Northern Korea. It was a mountainous region, traversed by deep valleys with countless ravines in every direction. The mountains were extremely high and steep. Snow lay everywhere. It was not far from the Manchurian frontier and one could see into that country from the highest mountain-peaks. The southern slopes of the mountain range were in places bare from snow. The whole region was covered with leafy woodland, oaks being specially noticeable, but here and there were pines and firs also. In the river valleys many different species of leafy trees occurred.

In this region tigers, leopards, lynxes, bears and wild boars were to be met with, as well as roe deer and smaller animals. It was the wild boar I was after above all. I particularly wanted to get for the Natural History Museum in Stockholm a specimen of the very big type of wild boar which is to be found thereabouts.

The numbers of wild boars in different parts of Korea vary greatly from year to year. Up in the mountainous parts they depend very much on the supply of acorns which here seem to be their favourite food. In the summer, when they live chiefly on roots and green stuffs and such potatoes and corn as they can get at in the Koreans' farms, they are spread out more evenly, but in the winter they are drawn chiefly to the

localities where acorns are plentiful. Here they may frequently be seen in herds of fifteen or twenty burrowing about for the acorns in the snow.

During my visit to this locality I stayed in a bare little Korean hut in a deep valley. I had for company there Jankovski's two sons, Valerij and Arsenij, who also were out after wild boar. Sjöqvist had other tasks to get through with for the time being. In addition to the Korean family, five in number, there lived in the hut a bull, a cow, a calf, a dog, a cat and five hens. The Korean family and all these animals lived in the kitchen where the cattle had a section to themselves, partitioned off. In most of the native huts hereabouts it was the custom to have the cattle living thus in the kitchen. This is a practice dating back to the period when tigers were so numerous that it was dangerous to leave the cattle outside.

From their separate compartments the bull and the cow were able to stretch their heads well into the other part of the kitchen. Once when one of the young Jankovskis was standing near the low partition, with his back to it, and was munching at a turnip, the bull suddenly stretched out his mighty head, swung out his long rough tongue and, to the astonishment of the Russian, appropriated his turnip.

We ran no risk of over sleeping of a morning as the cock in the kitchen began to crow long before daylight. As we lived in the room next the kitchen, there was a distance of only a few yards between us and this trustworthy alarm-clock which had the further merit that it did not click.

When I awoke on the morning of December the 12th the thermometer registered -7°F . An icy north wind was blowing with tremendous force. There was not a cloud in the sky. It was not tempting weather for a

trip up to the summit of the mountain—the wind would be worse still up there. But as soon as we had had our fill of roe deer flesh and rice and warmed ourselves with a couple of cups of hot tea we decided to carry out our plan for the day. However I did not expect much from it.

We made our way up a side valley first. There was a chance of coming across here a herd of wild boar which had gone through it the day before. Arsenij went one way by himself, while Valerij and I together went another. We had a Korean with us who carried a knapsack with a little food in it in case we should not return that night.

After about a mile and a half of walking Valerij and I came upon the tracks the wild boars had left the day before. The snow was almost a foot deep, and the tracks, which told of a herd of about twenty, were almost obliterated by the wind. Valerij had seen the herd on the previous day and had reckoned it to be of about twenty. Two he had shot.

To begin with, the tracks led up a steep incline. Then they wandered up and down the wooded mountain. Soon we were several miles from where Valerij had encountered the herd. After we had gone on our way for a couple of hours, the tracks ceased to tell of the whole herd—it had evidently dispersed. The wild boars had evidently lost their sense of fright. The single set of tracks divided up into several. Here and there some of them had kicked away the snow and burrowed about among the dry oak leaves in search of acorns, but only a few of them had snatched a mouthful. It was clear that they intended going farther.

There were lots of old tracks everywhere and as the new tracks had been so much affected by the wind it was sometimes impossible to follow them. Twice we

lost them entirely but after scouring all the immediate neighbourhood found them again. We came at last to an oak-grove in which the herd had clearly made a regular halt for a large expanse of the ground had been rooted up.

Not long afterwards we reached a spot where the animals had spent the night. Wild boars don't lie down to rest just anywhere. They take trouble over the arrangement of their beds. First they kick away the snow, then they make an oblong kind of hole in the ground adapted to their measurements. As they are equipped with a singularly strong hide and are in addition fat, they don't suffer from cold. In fact they are able to bear a very low temperature indeed. It sometimes seems indeed, as though they feel too warm even in the depths of winter, for while stalking them I have often come upon tracks leading down to a stream where a boar has taken a bath in icy cold water—he had had to break the ice to get in!

Once I could see by a boar's tracks that he had been lying in a shallow stream and wallowed about in the mud and then shaken himself several times so that the snow all around was bespattered with mud. It is quite clear that we need not worry about the wild boars suffering from climatic conditions in these northern wilds!

Valerij and I continued to follow the tracks as best we could and presently they looked fresher. The herd had split up repeatedly in oak-groves and hunted in them for food. They sometimes wandered about over quite a wide area and as they scattered so much on these occasions it was hard to follow them. Whenever this happened we had just to wander about ourselves, pursuing our search.

In one stream they had broken a hole in the ice to

drink but it was clear that they had resisted any temptation to bathe in it. Perhaps they reflected that forty degrees of frost and a hard north wind did not combine to make suitable bathing weather. Generally speaking, however, wild boars are so given to winter bathing at least in these regions that one valley here has become known to hunters as the Wild Boar's Bath, because the animals resort to it so much for the purpose.

The tracks led us next into an extremely dense thicket in which I sometimes could see only a few yards in front of me. At 2.30 p.m. we felt that the herd must be quite near us, and we told the Korean to stand still to avoid all unnecessary noise. It was impossible to avoid making the branches rustle when one tried to move, but the fierce north wind, which was dead against us, neutralized this a little by shaking the branches all around.

We stood still time after time, watching and listening, and suddenly we thought we saw something dark moving at a distance of about fifty or sixty yards. It seemed likely to be a wild boar. As we could not get nearer to it I decided to shoot, being convinced now that it must be a boar.

As my shot rang out the whole thicket seemed to burst into life. A tremendous cracking of branches was to be heard in all directions. My bullet, though it went first through a small tree trunk, reached its mark. The wounded boar now came rushing towards us and fell to a second shot. My companion brought down another one which was tearing past us but we did not catch sight of the rest of the herd as it made off through the undergrowth and brushwood. This was so dense we could see nothing through it.

We were, however, quite satisfied to have shot two

big specimens. When we had examined the two animals, both of which had almost black skins, we removed the entrails. Wild boar hunters in Korea attach great importance to the gall bladder, which is dried afterwards and made into medicine. With its contents it is pulverized and the powder is mixed with *saké* or some other spirit and the mixture is drunk by Korean women immediately after giving birth to a child. It is believed to hasten the woman's convalescence and to prevent complications. A boar's gall bladder will as a rule be worth five or six shillings in Korea.

Our Korean attendant, whom we had left behind us, now joined us again and lit a fire while we busied ourselves with the carcasses. Both beasts were big but not of the very biggest kind and I decided not to use either of them for my museum purposes.

We now made tea and indulged in a meal. It was fine to be able to take a rest by the fire for we had not paused for more than a few minutes since our start and it was now three.

Valerij now decided to follow the herd's tracks a bit further so that we might know where to begin our next hunt. The Korean and I tied ropes round the two carcasses and dragged them down into the nearest available glen, where we covered them over with snow and placed branches over them. Next day we would send ox-sledges to fetch them.

When we had finished our job the dusk was already falling but we were able, fortunately, to reach a path which took us down into a valley before it grew dark. I then made for home with all possible speed while the stars shone out in the heavens, the cold wind becoming even more biting. It was delightful to be under a roof again and a palace could not have been a more welcome

refuge than the simple clay hut, though there was only a door made of paper to shut out our room from the cold outside. The Koreans busied themselves at once with the kitchen fire and as its flues went under all the floors (as usual in such abodes) we were soon comfortably warm. The cold continued all that night. Indeed it was so severe that week that in our valley alone four Koreans died of it during the next few days.

Two days later I set forth again after wild boar, again accompanied by Valerij and the same Korean carrier. We had decided to make for a valley a long distance off so we made a start even before our cock could wake us—about an hour before daybreak. The weather was just as it had been before. The sky was cloudless. It was 27 degrees of frost.

First we walked through a valley about three and a half miles in length, then we clambered up to the summit of the mountain range and swept the ravines and side valleys with our field-glasses to see if we could descry any wild boars. They were more likely to be found on the southern slopes where the snow was less deep and sometimes the ground was bare. But we could see no sign of any. We crossed one deep valley after another and found countless tracks of them but old tracks only. In the oak groves they had rooted up the snow over wide stretches. It was clear that a big herd had been feeding there for a long time.

At one o'clock we sighted a huge boar at a distance of about a mile. He was moving along over a bit of ground which we ourselves had traversed just before. Several deep valleys lay between him and us. He seemed to be nearly coal—and almost as big as a bear. I enjoyed watching him through my glasses. He was moving away with his back to us, and as the wind blew straight in his direction from us it would not do for

us to follow him. Now he stood still a while, burrowing in the snow. Now he began to run. We were in December, the boars' pairing time, and single males at this period roam about among the different herds. They are very capricious at this time of the year and when a male animal is quite quietly occupied burrowing for acorns he is apt to break off without warning and to dart off in one direction or another. Perhaps his thoughts have turned suddenly towards some young sow whom he has met in the locality and who has set his pulse beating.

When rival males meet now there are tremendous battles and as their tusks are fearsome weapons the outcome is apt to be sanguinary to a degree. Valerij had witnessed several such fights and he declared they were fights to a finish. He had also often shot boars with great scars on them. These big males have no fears. A wounded boar is ready to attack man and every year a number of Korean hunters are killed by them. With their big tusks they tear open the bellies of their foes. It is said that even tigers give a wide berth to the biggest wild boars.

Feeling that it would be a mistake to follow our quarry, we wandered down fresh valleys instead and then climbed up new inclines. An hour later we descried through our glasses a new specimen. He also was burrowing about for acorns. He was on a steep slope about 1,000 yards from us and in the direction we were following. The wind was favourable, as it came straight from him to us. The precipices between him and us were extremely deep and difficult, so we decided to wait a while before we tried to get at him. We had not taken a rest since we started and it was now two o'clock. So we made tea and had a meal. Reinvigorated, we now descended into the first

valley. The descent was so steep that it would have been impossible for us but for the bushes here and there to which we clung. But we managed it all right and then began the climbing of the ridge beyond.

When we reached the top we were able to see that the boar was still on the same spot. There was now no time to lose, so down we went into the second valley, which was much easier to get across. We were now only about 600 yards from the boar. He was moving about in a very dense thicket now and sometimes was quite hidden by the brushwood. He was about ninety yards from a peak which we decided to climb from the side opposite to him and we hoped to see him near at hand thus, if he remained where he was.

We set about this manœuvre at once. But before we had been ten minutes on the move we began to hear a breaking and rustling of branches just below us. The ground was rather uneven and at first we could not see anything, so we went down a bit. There was our friend on the move also and making off downwards. Valerij shot first and hit but the boar continued on his way. Then we both fired together and this time the boar fell. We discovered afterwards that all three shots went home.

He was a male of medium size, weighing we reckoned between 80 and 100 kilos. He was not therefore of the dimensions I wanted for my museum specimen. As soon as we had dealt with his carcass in the usual way we dragged it down to the bottom of the valley, thence to be taken home on an ox-sledge next day.

It was now four o'clock. We had only an hour left before dusk. There could be no question of returning the way we had come as we could not cope with such difficult ground in the growing darkness. Valerij, by good fortune, knew a path which we could take if we

first got over a height half an hour's walk from where we were. He declared that even in the darkness we could keep to this path which he knew well. So we decided on this. We did not know of any Korean hut in the immediate vicinity and the idea of spending the night without sleeping bags out in the open with 27 degrees of frost did not tempt us. The thought of the delightful hot soup awaiting us at home also had its weight.

When at last we reached the path in question, we walked our very quickest and within three hours we were able to step into our snug dwelling and squat down on the warm floor of our room.

Next day Valerij and I went out separately and now he had the good luck to bring down the very arch type of boar I so much wanted. It was a really prime specimen and its weight after removing the entrails was found to be 145 kilos. It had splendid tusks also. I bought it from him and it is now in the Natural History Museum at Stockholm.

The day after this I had the great enjoyment of seeing a herd of seventeen wild boars of all sizes engaged in burrowing for acorns. When we first espied them through our glasses at a distance of about a mile and a half, Valerij exclaimed: "I hope there will be a Christmas pig among them!"

I had been telling him that I was hoping we should bag a small animal suitable for our Christmas dinner.

As things turned out the small Christmas boar was the only one we got out of that herd which we pursued until dusk. It was then too late to make for home but we came upon a native hut at the bottom of a narrow valley and we were very glad to spend the night in it.

It was delightful to have a rest. We cooked our food and ate our fill, drinking cup after cup of tea, while our

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Korean host, a friendly old fellow, entertained us with his talk. Into the open space between our room and the kitchen the six other occupants, mostly children, of the hut had squeezed themselves, and were staring at us with immense interest. Several of the children had never seen a white man before.

The owner of the hut told us that when he was young he had visited Jankovski's property in Siberia, and that he knew old Jankovski well—Valerij's grandfather, who was living there at that time. Old Jankovski still lives in the memory of all elderly Koreans, as in former days they used often to wander over the frontier to get work with the Russians. Old Jankovski is still spoken of by Koreans as "Four Eyes," a nickname given him because he so excelled in the shooting of Chinese bandits that they believed he must have two eyes in the back of his head also.

Valerij told us now how his grandfather once on returning to his estate from a visit to Vladivostok, found that all the servants of the house with their wives and children had been murdered by bandits. From that time onwards his hatred of Chinese bandits had never cooled and he remained one of their most dangerous foes.

We sat talking long into the night in the light of the smallest lamp I have ever seen. It consisted of what had once been an inkpot about two inches high, filled with paraffin and provided with a wick. I asked our host how much paraffin it took to keep alight all the winter and he answered that a bottle-full was usually enough.

At last we lay down to sleep on the comfortably warmed clay floor. Next morning we bade the old Korean good-bye and returned in a whirling snow-storm to our hut, which we reached in the evening.

Here we met a Captain Barton, formerly of the British army, now a business man in Shanghai, who was staying as Jankovskis' guest to hunt wild boar.

We had a very pleasant evening in his company.

Captain Barton, who had paid long visits to India and the Malay Peninsula, told us about a lot of interesting fakir tricks and other wonderful things he had seen. He said that he had seen with his own eyes the fakir trick of walking bare-footed on glowing coals and on mats of spikes without damage to the soles of their feet. He told us also that he had seen a couple of Indians at religious festival draw a heavy cart which was fastened with hooks of iron to their backs without their bleeding. Our conversation was twice interrupted by the bull bellowing in the kitchen. It sounded almost as though he wanted to make a protest when the stories were too tall.

Next day we returned to Shuotsu for Christmas now was at hand.