

## A BUFFALO BULL FIGHT.

[By S. S. PETERS, City Editor of the Beatrice Express, Beatrice, Neb.]

The favorite buffalo gun of the old hunting days was the Sharpe's rifle. It was a 58-calibre weapon, and being invariably of the carbine pattern was a handy gun for horseback shooting. These rifles were discarded by the regular army early in the 70's and the Spencer carbine substituted. It was of the magazine pattern with a magazine in the stock for seven shots. It was of a 50-calibre, and was ordinarily a reliable shooter, though the chambers would frequently become blocked, and by frequent shooting the ejector spring would refuse to throw out the empty shell, and then there was trouble. Again it frequently occurred that a defective cartridge would refuse to go entirely into the chamber, and in forcing the lever up the cartridge was liable to explode prematurely and do damage at the breech, or possibly become blocked so that the gun would be useless until repaired by the company armorer.

An accident of this latter description occurred one Fourth of July to a couple of us who went out on a two days' hunt, that came very near resulting disastrously to a comrade named VanDevere. We were equipped with a Spencer and a Remington revolver each, and Van had wisely taken along with him a long knife made from a sabre blade. Several miles from camp we ran across a big buffalo bull, who, instead of trying to escape from us, showed fight before we had manifested any hostile intentions whatever.

We were each riding new company horses that had never before seen a buffalo, and they were badly frightened by the old bull. The old fellow had been lying down in a wallow and on seeing us rose to his feet and began pawing the ground, throwing clouds of dust and dirt up over his back and shook his shaggy head viciously. We both concluded to open out on him with our Spencers from the horses, but the horses were so unruly that we could do very little accurate shooting from their backs. The old bull was struck by an accidental shot and then he made for us. The horses became uncontrollable and it required all our attention to handle them. We were a little too fast for the bull and he stopped to consider matters and began pawing again. It was finally decided that one of us should dismount and take a ground shot at him with a Spencer. Van dismounted and I held the horses. The first shot struck the old fellow somewhere about the hump and then he got furiously mad again and came after Van with a vengeance. Van let him have it again, or rather tried to, but the cartridge blocked in the

chamber, and seeing that the gun was useless, he mounted his horse and we lit out again. The old bull seeing that he could not overtake us on a straight run stood at bay. He was evidently hurt but not seriously so. In the interval the magazine of my carbine had sprung open and the cartridges fell out, so we were without carbine ammunition. Our only recourse therefore were our Remingtons, 44-calibre pistols, and so we concluded to finish him with them. We had only a small supply of pistol cartridges, and some of these, being of the old paper pattern, had broken and we had, in fact, just six rounds each. The horses would not go near enough to the wounded bull to permit a close shot off their backs, and one of us had to stay with the horses while the other made the attack afoot. Van held the horses on this clip and I sneaked up toward the old fellow with a view to getting a broadside shot at him, but he determined to keep his head toward me and I did manage to hit him once in the nose and a fourth shot crippled one of his legs.

He came on a charge after us and it was with the utmost difficulty that I could get into the saddle at all, so close was the old buffalo after me. Van fired two or three shots at him to give me time and gave him a bad wound in the flank. This brought the old fellow down on his knees, and Van dismounted and went after him with the revolver at close range. He soon emptied his revolver. But the old fellow was down but not dead, nor mortally wounded by any means. He struggled up on three legs, but he was powerless to make any headway, and all he could do was to stumble and bellow. We had but two shots left; the two in my revolver, and upon these we calculated to give him the "coup de grace." Van took the pistol and got within a dozen feet of the bull and blazed away. The ball struck his shoulder and buried itself in the sand and dirt and matted hair and didn't hurt him a little bit, only raised a little dust.

Finally a bright idea struck Van Devere. He called to me to dismount and lead the horses up as close to the bull as they would come, and while the bull's attention was diverted to me and the horses, Van would sneak around on the other side and knife him.

I doubted the success of the experiment, but Van insisted and so it was undertaken. The bull was lying down but with his head erect and furious. His eyes were glaring and savage and he shook his head in defiance at me and the horses. He couldn't rise wholly to his feet, though he tried it repeatedly. A moment later I saw Van on the other side of the wounded

bull and in an instant he jumped onto his back, and holding on by the long woolly hair of his hump, he made a vicious plunge with the long sabre knife just under the old bull's fore shoulder. He struck true and the old bull gave a piteous bellow and tried to rise but could not. Van pulled out the long knife and a dark stream of blood followed it as if bursting from a fountain. Van made another lunge with both hands holding the knife and seesawed it into the gallant old fellow's heart. The great body quivered a moment and then rolled over on its side. His two good legs stiffened out. The other two had been broken by our shots, and in a moment more the old buffalo was dead. Van was literally besmeared with blood, but was unhurt.

We skinned and quartered the old fellow, and it was a most tedious task. We took out his heart and in it we found a bullet of at least a 54-calibre, and was completely encysted or overgrown with gristly substance, indicating that it had been shot into him at least a year before. His old pelt had a dozen bullet hole marks in it, and near his heart was a healed bullet wound that showed where the ball had entered that we cut out of his heart.

We took one quarter and the heart into camp and cached the rest of the meat, and went out with a detail the next day and secured it.

## "THE OLD TOWN ON THE RIVER."

A second edition of Miss Bullock's nice little book has become necessary. This is a phenomenon worth considering; we like the look of it ourselves. We think Nebraska City is fortunate in having numbered among its temporary inhabitants one who could look at it with just this young lady's eyes. She does not see its smoking stacks, its full dinner pails, its railroads, nor does she reckon its past, present or future with the calendar and the arithmetic. It lies before her and she looks over it, and beyond it—off to the land of day dreams. She stands off among the sunrises and sunsets, and sees the house-roofs below her only as she sees the hills that the pioneers marched over, and looks on the people in the streets with the same speculative vision as on the endless river trooping by under the hill. It is an essay, not a book of reference, and it has a very distinct charm, for it is not feebly done. One who is not able to surrender to the author's guidance, in reading it, and to enter fully for the time being into her spirit, is rather to be sympathized with.

This edition has been brought out by the Morton Printing Company, and it is decidedly better done than the first or Lincoln edition. The book is now on sale at Young's and Hyer's.