

quarters. Fur, blood and thistles flew thickly. The fur and blood were Foxy's and the cat's, but the thistles were impartially distributed, they stuck closer than a brother to the three of them. Never once did Danny take one of his eyes off Foxy or the other off the cat. If Foxy let go his hold, as he had to do once or twice, the pup took all sorts of care to let his end go too. It was a job, he rightly considered, his youth excused him from tackling single-handed. Directly Foxy gripped again, the pup followed suit. It was all done in a minute or two, and the cat was a corpse. Brutal work, do you say, fair cat fancier? Pardon me, not half so brutal, for example, as that same black Tom's detestable habit of eating our pet chickens alive. He might think himself extremely lucky to escape juster and more prolonged retribution himself.

The caution Danny showed on that occasion followed him through life, though his courage was undeniable. He rarely got into the way of a boar's tusks as rasher dogs do, whose pluck is not similarly seasoned with this commendable virtue.

One can get a good deal of variety in pig-hunting. I remember calling on a gentleman who owned a sheep-run in Otago. I had never met him before in my life, but I wanted to do some business with him. But it did not appeal to him, he refused to entertain it, and, as a pleasant way of changing the subject, he invited me to join him in a pig-hunt, mounting me for the occasion on a stout little black cob, and arming me with an old bayonet fixed on a short handle. He had some good hunting dogs, but there was not one among them that would hold a pig. The dogs soon picked up the scent on the sweeping tussock, and went off at speed. The country was terribly broken but we followed at a gallop, pulling up only when absolutely necessary. We had not gone far when we sight-

ed a black boar making off along a spur, with the dogs gradually gaining on him. Those who have not seen a wild boar when he is in a hurry, would be amazed at the speed he can command. This fellow was nothing approaching the size of a good old North Island bush boar, but for speed he could beat anything I ever saw in hog's hide. My host asked if I could ride before he mounted me on the black. I replied that I could, and was glad I had not lied, for directly we sighted the boar, the beggar took the bit between his teeth, flew along spurs like the ridge-pole of a house, at the tail of the dogs, down an awful declivity like a steep pitched roof, with the evident determination to get the stranger on his back in at the death. The gallop was exhilarating to a degree. It was a treat to ride such a determined little demon. A true horseman delights in being in perfect accord with his mount.

The boar had bailed up at the bottom, under the overhanging bank of a dry water-course. A retreat he had often used successfully before. But he would never use it again. Jumping off the pony, I plunged the bayonet into him, and he turned up his toes.

The station-holder came up and grasped me by the hand. "My word, you can ride," he exclaimed. "Thought you were one of those black-coated town swells I abominate. When you pestered me about that life insurance business, I guessed I'd pop you on that demon of a pony, and have some sport to pay you out. But you've bested us all, and killed that brute, we've chased many a time, but could never catch! You're a white man. What are your terms? I'll insure for a thousand!"

But I didn't see anything in that ride to make a song about.

I freely forgave the old gentleman his designs on me. I considered the ride, and the business that concluded it, cheap at the price.