EVERY one, it is said, must have a hobby, and he is a lucky individual who has but one. It is my fortune to have several. Besides a fondness for baseball and lawn-tennis,—as becomes a youth of the present day,—I am a devotee of amateur photography, and have a strong passion for the delights of woodland sport with dog and gun.

I spent the summer of 1886 at Mountain Lake Park, Maryland, in the Alleghany Mountains, and found pleasure and amusement in strolling about the surrounding country with my camera in search of picturesque views of mountain scenery. During my sojourn there in the fall, I learned of the fine deer-hunting to be had at a place called Davis; and immediately the spell of the woods came over me with such overwhelming force that I hastily packed up my traps, including my camera, and set out for the interior.

A day’s journey over a newly constructed railroad brought me to Davis, a town of half a dozen houses, a tavern, a tannery, and a saw mill. It is located in the midst of the forest on the margin of the famed Blackwater region, known in story and in song as the “Land of Canaan,” where trout, wild turkeys, deer, and bears abound.

In my journey thither I fell into conversation with a fellow-passenger; and as he was but a few years older than myself and our tastes were congenial, the acquaintance soon ripened into intimacy. He proved to be a young man named John Phillips, Jr., from Pittsburgh; which fact, as Pittsburgh is but ninety miles from my home in Wheeling, made him seem a near neighbor. When I told him the object of my trip, he readily consented to postpone his business engagements and join me in a hunt.

At Davis we soon ascertained from our landlord that a noted professional hunter and guide, named Bob Eastham, had a camp up the river, but was then at his house in town. This was just to our hand and we lost no time in finding him. After some conversation concerning the prospects of getting a deer, we arranged with him for a deer drive.

The next morning, after a good night’s rest, we set out on foot for the camp, Eastham having the lead. Through the dense forest we went, carrying our guns and traps, and fighting our way manfully along, foot by foot,—for fight it was from start to finish. At every step the wilderness grew wilder; up and down we tramped, through swamps, stumbling over logs, crawling through the underbrush, and falling over the gnarled and twisted roots of the laurel that projected themselves offensively in our pathway, until it seemed as though we never should get through. At last, after what appeared to be an interminable journey, and was really a very fatiguing one, we reached the banks of the Blackwater.

Here we gladly disburdened ourselves of the loads which had grown heavier at every step of the way, and embarking in a canoe, we were soon gliding swiftly over the dark waters, with a speed and comfort that was in