



MOOSE HUNTING IN NEW BRUNSWICK.

By the late Edmund P. Rogers.

THE season was at its best when I reached Boisetown, on my way to a favorite range of the moose. At Campbelltown I had picked up my Indian, Peter, and at Boisetown I found the men, the teams, and my favorite bark canoe awaiting my arrival. I had conceived the idea that this canoe would be very useful upon certain long stretches of dead water, and so had resolved to risk the experiment of transporting it one-hundred and fifty miles into the woods. Some of the natives assured me that the canoe would be kindling-wood before it had traversed half the distance, but I was determined to risk it.

After carefully packing impedimenta and securing some necessary stores, we started upon the first stage of our trip into the wilderness. We made good progress until noon, when we halted for rest and food at a farm-house, the last upon our route. About dusk we made camp at the portal of the forest primeval, and all hands soon turned in, for all knew that the real labor of the trip was yet to come.

A lovely crisp morning found us early astir. The precious birch was secured to its sled, and anxiously watched by all hands as it bumped its way over bowlders, stumps and ruts. As on all first days, whether packing in the Rockies or sledding on the wood roads of Canada, numerous vexatious stops occurred, till ropes were stretched, horses settled

to their business and the "just exactly right thing" ascertained. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, we put in good work, and night found us in camp, four miles south of the Little Dungarvon. The canoe was still intact.

Better work was done next day. We reached the second crossing of Little Dungarvon, and made camp in a lovely spot; a gentle slope to the river, knee-deep in grass. The white canvas lean-to of the guides, surrounded with the packs, sleds, harness, etc., my tent about twenty yards off, and the four horses enjoying their succulent supper, all made a picture that would stir any sportsman's heart.

We started the next morning through a succession of heavy showers and gleaming sunshine, and mid-afternoon found us at the rough log fish-house on the Big Dungarvon.

All anxiety about our beloved canoe had vanished, for we had accomplished a piece of portaging that was probably the first of its kind. The only accident was at once unexpected and amusing. We had halted at the head of a sharp descent, where all hands took a rest and a smoke. We little dreamed that one of our nags would use the bow of our birch as a scratching post; but this, to our horror, he did. His vigorous swaying started the bark sheathing, but fortunately high up, and a little rosin and cloth soon repaired the damage.

After lunching, we bade adieu to our teamsters, launched and loaded the canoe and started up-stream, finally making camp at Beach-nut Cove. Here we were joined by the men who had been sent on a week before to clear our trails, select camping grounds, etc. These hardy woodsmen, backing packs of from eighty to one hundred pounds each, tramped over the mountains.

Sunday found us in permanent quarters, on the dead waters of the Renouse. As this was to be our main camp of supplies, two days were taken to fit it up, while B—— and I scouted about in quest of sign.

On one of these expeditions we saw a striking example of the beavers' ingenuity. Finding our route barred by one of their dams, we broke away about six feet of it. Two days after we found the breach repaired and it was almost impossible to detect where the repair work began and ended. In deference to this workman-like job, we pulled the canoe over, and left our ingenious and industrious friends in peace.

After completing our main camp and securing stores against that arrant thief and epicure, the bear, we started for Lewis lake. This is a magnificent sheet of water, about three miles long and two wide, and abounding in trout. Our useful craft, the catamaran, which had been hauled out the previous fall, was quickly launched, and after poling to the head of the lake we soon had our old quarters in comfortable order. Then we killed a dozen big trout, had supper and turned in.

While fishing, we had an amusing experience with that skillful thief, the mink. B—— had taken several fish, which he had tossed on the beach behind him. Presently he heard a purring noise and on looking around, he found a mink helping himself to choice tidbits. The thief paid, later on, somewhat bitterly for his rascality. B—— happened to leave his tackle lying near the water. On the hook was a piece of pork, which the mink endeavored to and in so doing hooked himself fast. He was haled at end of the line up to camp. He fought like a terrier at every effort to get hold of him, and it was only by slipping him into an empty bag that he could be secured, and even then the hook had to be filed off. The time made by that mink from camp to lake was a two-minute gait, and we were not again troubled by his visits.

Round Lewis lake, at a distance of from one to two miles, are large barrens dotted with lagoons. Sign was plentiful, the barked saplings and their twisted limbs showing that the moose were rubbing off the velvet and

sprucing up to make a gallant show before their lady-loves.

One morning Peter said to me, "You get moose to-day."

"Why?"

"Me dream of blood, sure sign," and so indeed it turned out.

Picture to yourself a perfect Autumn afternoon, the air just cool enough, a light breeze ruffling the lake, and the surrounding hills gorgeous in their varied and brilliant tints. We started about three o'clock for a large barren, about a mile away. Just as we struck the opening of the trail to the little lake, we saw on the opposite shore a bull moose. His antlers flashed in the sun with every motion, and his coat appeared almost as black as ink. Crouching at once in the friendly screen of the alders, we quickly made preparations to call.

The bull was taking things in the most leisurely style, cropping a bit of moss or sipping a mouthful of water, but at the first note of the challenge he became an active, fierce opponent. Raising his lordly head, he uttered an answering roar that carried "biz" in every note. He was eager and ready for fight, and he started at once to come round the edge of the lagoon, giving with each step, a short, sharp grunt, as much as to say, "I'll cook your mutton, presently."

The distance he had to come was about a quarter of a mile, and he stopped every now and then to give forth a bellow in answer to our renewed invitation to "come and have it out."

The sight of that great, raging brute was one never to be forgotten. In all my previous experiences in hunting I had seen nothing to equal it, for it must be remembered that the bull was in full view for nearly two hours. It is impossible to describe our feelings. The fear that some whiff of wind might carry the taint of our presence to his keen scent; the dread that some slight defect in the call would alarm his sensitive hearing; the necessity to remain as quiet as the grave in our hiding; his partial disappearances when the trail led around some large boulder or a few yards into the forest, kept our excitement at fever heat.

When he was within a hundred yards



Painted for Outrigger by Marc Lucas.

"THE KING OF CANADIAN WOODS." (p. 50.)

or so of us, he halted. He was evidently stripping for work. Tossing his head, striking his horns against the saplings, pawing up the mud and moss, and throwing it over his back, he presented a sight rarely granted to the hunter. His stop troubled us, as he might fool about till dark. A whispered consultation was held. The feasibility of trying to creep nearer to him was discussed. We dreaded to risk another call, as the slightest failure in its tone would be fatal. Finally, in desperation, we uttered one more call, and so perfect was it that the bull at once started forward. We could hear the rattling of his antlers against the trees, and the welcome bark given with each step. Nearer and nearer came the sounds, till at last they ceased, and a bellowing challenge followed, so close to us, that it made the few hairs on my head fairly stand on end.

"Reckon you had better give it to him?" whispered B—.

Simple advice enough, but fraught with indescribable import to the chap behind the gun. The moment so desired was at hand, and the next would see well-earned success, or ignominious defeat.

Rising, I beheld a sight which few city men have seen. Within ten yards, his magnificent antlers towering over his massive head, his eyes red and savage, and his mane erect and bristling, stood the King of Canadian Woods.

A rash movement, a tremor of the arm, might have spoiled it all, and the probability that a wound would send him charging down upon us (woe betide us in such event), did not tend to steady me. Aiming until I could see the very curl in the centre of his forehead, I pulled trigger.

Though blinded for a moment by smoke, I knew from the thrashing going on, and B—'s triumphant shout, "You've got him," that the game was mine. Aroused by the shot, Peter and Pringle came tearing along the trail, and presently pronounced the head to be far beyond the average.

The hands of three skilled woodsmen soon finished their task. In half an hour the head so longed for was on Peter's back, and succulent steaks and liver in the hands of the others. With

flaming torches of birch bark we marched back to camp, a triumphal procession indeed.

We went to the same barren next morning, and, somewhat to our surprise, saw a moose feeding. Its head was concealed by foliage, so that we could not decide its sex. We made a careful stalk down the bed of a small stream, and to our regret, found a cow moose browsing on the lily pads near the shore. We quietly watched her for five minutes or so, and then rose with a shout and waved our caps. She quickly disappeared in the forest.

The old adage, "It never rains but it pours," proved itself to be a true one. That evening a noble bull, evidently having found one of our trails to the barrens a convenient route, deliberately walked into camp. He came within twenty yards of the main fire, where all hands were talking and smoking, and coolly took in the situation. Unfortunately, before I could reach my rifle, he concluded to leave, which he did at a cracking gait.

Another rencontre occurred, but it was a very ludicrous one: Peter and I had tramped over to the main camp for some supplies. On our return, when we were within a few yards of the catamaran, with Peter leading with a substantial pack on his back, he suddenly stopped and shouted, "Bear, bear, shoot!"

"Where shall I shoot, Peter?" I asked, not seeing the animal.

"No matter, shoot, shoot anywhere."

I don't know whether the poor little bear or Peter was most frightened. They had met face to face, and both were too startled to know exactly what to do.

Black bear are numerous in this portion of New Brunswick, but I never the found much excitement in hunting them. We killed two nice ones with beautiful fur, and one morning we saw a she bear and her two cubs swimming near the opposite shore. After a man has once hunted grizzly he is apt to neglect black bear, except he is after skins. These I cared little about, and not once did we hunt in earnest for the fat black fellows. Had we done so, several skins might have been added to the handsome trophies that we brought out of the woods when our pleasant holiday was done.