

## CARIBOU HUNTING IN QUEBEC.

By the late Edmund P. Rogers.



WHEN the time for my annual outing came round I determined to make an expedition up the Bonaventure River, on the north shore of the Bay of Chaleur. With my Indians, Peter and Jim Gray and Mik Thoma, a full camp outfit, and a Gaspe canoe, I reached the little village at the

mouth of the river and secured quarters at Mons. Peletier's *hostellerie*, on the beach.

At roll call, next morning, Mik reported very drunk, he having somewhere in the night got hold of a bottle of "fire-water." This I had expected, as Mik always began work about two-thirds full. When he was in the woods, no better or more sober man could be found. I never had to conceal what little whiskey I carried, when once fairly started; on the contrary, I always gave him his "tot" with the rest.

After portaging the canoe and stores over to the river, we camped at night about twelve miles up. We put in the next day hunting over the blue-berry flats after bear, but those pests of the woods, the black flies (and strange as it seems, they are worse as you strike north), were so numerous, and my neck and face were so inflamed from their bites, that we concluded that no bear would repay us for the suffering. Even the Indians, accustomed as they were to the attacks of the insects, gave in, and we started on the back track. Evening found us again at Mons. Peletier's.

Fortunately a telegraph line passed through the village, and I wired to Campbellton for a tug, and to Mons. Horace, at St. Alexandre, to have teams ready Monday morning to portage canoe, stores, etc., over to St. Francis Lake. The little French operator was greatly excited over so many

messages and their answers. She told me she had not taken in so much money in months.

At 8 o'clock, A. M., Sunday, we heard the tug's whistle, and, loading up our traps in a two-wheeled cart, we drove out to her. To our Yankee notions of navigation this appeared to be a strange procedure; but so shallow is the water, and so gradual the fall of the beach, that the cart is by far the handiest means of transportation. We reached our destination, St. Francis Lake, without further adventures.

We portaged to the foot of the lake, and, after engaging Michel and Ernest Blier and their dug-out, started down the St. Francis River, which forms the boundary line between Maine and Canada, and thence through Beau Lakes, the little St. John's and Four-mile Lake. All were lovely, with their studdings of islands and brightly-tinted shores. Duck were plentiful, and I shot enough to feed all hands.

Upon stopping to pick up my guide, Sandy Stripes, I found he was off "cruising" (*i.e.*, hunting up good timber tracts), so I left word for him to join me as soon as he came in. We poled up the St. John's, through several swift rapids, and about midday we struck the mouth of the Allegash, where we stopped to "boil the kettle." While resting, to our surprise we saw, coming round a neighboring bend, two of the canvas canoes frequently used by the Maine hunters. The party included two young men from Cincinnati, Ohio, who had come from Moosehead Lake, and were bound down the St. Johns.

After portaging round the Heavy Falls, some ten miles up, we bade adieu to Michel and his brother, as all was now plain sailing to Harvey's, where we intended camping. On the way I killed a nice lot of duck and a fine mess of trout. I also tried a shot at a deer crossing the river about four hundred yards off.

We concluded to put in some time here on Long Lake, caribou signs being encouraging. Deer and grouse were also plentiful. The Indians and settlers

frequently kill the grouse with sticks or stones. The spruce partridge abounds here. Though not quite as large as the grouse, it is handsomer, the plumage being more decidedly marked, and the male bird having bright red wattles. The Indians call them "fool birds," so easily are they caught.

On one occasion, while paddling up the Bensacook Brook, we saw a male and two females on a small strip of beach. The male was parading up and down, with tail spread and wings sweeping the sand.

"You ketch 'em alive, Mr. Rogers," said Peter.

Following his instructions, I placed the end of my trout-rod in the bowman's hand. He made a running noose in the line, which I passed over the bird's head. A yank brought him safely aboard. These grouse are not so palatable as the ruffed variety, the meat being brown and somewhat bitter from the spruce berry.

We made an expedition to McAuliffe Lake, which is surrounded with numerous barrens. Here we found the caribou roads at least six inches deep, and evidently used daily to and from water. While skirting the shore I saw a fine bull leisurely trotting along, some three hundred yards distant, and evidently oblivious of our presence. Peter decided to paddle closer in under the lee of a small island, which would put us within about one hundred and fifty yards of where the bull should pass. This was successfully accomplished, and we watched his progress as he moved down the trail, disappearing for a moment or so in the clumps of balsam that dotted the barren.

"Peter, I fear we will lose him. Had I better not chance it?"

"No; he come near when he cross creek."

And so it proved. He easily cleared the creek by a jump of about twelve feet.

"Now, give him shoot," said Peter.

Standing up in the canoe I cut loose. At the report the bull stopped short, with head erect and pointed ears. He was evidently endeavoring to wind the source of the noise. I fired a second shot, and when the smoke blew to leeward I could see nothing.

"You got 'im," yelled the men, as they sent the canoe flying for the shore. The ball, a 50-express, had broken his neck at a clean one hundred and fifty yards. This was a satisfactory result of a standing-up shot in a frail canoe. He had a fine head, with brow points almost crossing each other. His coat was a beautiful mouse color, verging into pure white at his neck, and he had a fine bell—*i.e.*, long, hanging white hair under the throat. His head I see at this writing, and his fur coat has protected me in many a succeeding raid.

The next day a fine bull actually charged through the camp, but was off before I could reach my rifle. A few evenings after another came to Sandy's call, and we could hear his short, sharp bark, a quarter of a mile off, but drawing each minute nearer. Crouching near the canoe, with rifle at ready, we watched the beach. One of the Indians whispered, "There he come," but though we could hear him, we could not place him under the shadow of the bank. At last I made him out, or rather a moving dark mass now close to us. Aiming as near as I could judge for his shoulder, I fired, and heard the thud of the ball as it struck. We ran to the spot, and soon saw, by the trail of blood, that he was hard hit. We followed the trail on the sand till the tracks turned into the woods, then we decided to defer further search till morning. We took up the trail at sunrise, and soon discovered where the bull had lain upon a bed of blood-soaked leaves. We now felt assured that he was not far off, and so it proved a little later. A shout from Sandy drew us to the spot where lay our quarry, stiff in death. He had only a fair head.

To me this style of night hunting has no attraction. Its sole pleasure is the paddling for miles through these lovely lakes, the intense stillness, broken only by the weird call of Peter or Sandy, and the excitement (that is natural) of the answering bellow. I have known as many as five bulls to be called down in a week, and all circled round us without offering a shot that could be relied on. Far more satisfactory and exciting is the stalking on a crisp October day, with the track of your game showing plainly on the few inches of snow.

We decided to start for the settlement, and were soon once more near Beau Lake. As we entered its south end I heard a hail, "Are you Mr. Rogers?" Upon my answering, the man added, "Sorry not to see you as you went down; could have shown you lots of caribou." I consulted with Peter, and he advised me to put in a day, as our new friend, old McDonald, was a first-rate scout. He led us about nine miles back from the lake, to some excellent ground.

We began to hunt at daybreak, and about noon we were on the summit of Beau Mountain, having seen several bunches of cows on the route. We had something to eat, and then Peter tried a call. Like an echo came a response from some bull, and we crouched and waited. In a few minutes I saw a pair of horns towering over the bushes. Stepping to the left I discovered him, head on, his white, massive neck showing plainly through the brush. I took a careful aim and fired, but with no

apparent result. Peter called again, and the bull uttered savage grunts, moved some ten yards, and again came to a stand. I now had him in plain view, broadside on, and tumbled him in his tracks. He was a noble brute, weighing some five hundred pounds, and having enormous branching antlers. The brow-points almost reached his nose before turning up, and both they and the main branches ended in broad and perfect palmations. Shocking to relate, we three old duffers, two of us well past sixty years, joined hands and performed a vigorous war dance around our prize.

"Mr. Rogers," said Mac, "I will bet all this fall crop you have the finest head in the United States."

It was indeed a noble head, and now hangs on the walls of Crumwold Hall, among the many trophies of elk, bear, mountain sheep, moose and deer, that have fallen to the rifles of my son, Archy Rogers, and myself.



THE WHITE OWL'S CRY.

THE moon shines white in the Winter sky,  
 There's a gleam of ghostly frost on the trees,  
 There's a glimmer of wings goes whirling by,  
 A glimmer of wings and a sudden cry  
 Comes over the hills with the biting breeze;  
 Over the white hills deep and low,  
 The voice of the great white owl cries: "Woe!"

The frost-lit stars pale toward the day,  
 There's a gleam of rose in the darkling west,  
 A glimmer of gray in the milky way.  
 And a wild, weird cry, that seems to say  
 But a single word of a fierce unrest,  
 Where the lonely wood is white with snow,  
 And the voice of the great white owl cries: "Woe!"

WINTHROP PACKARD.



Painted for Oetzi by Hermann Simon.

See article "Caribou Hunting in Quebec." (p. 277.)

A ROYAL QUARRY.