



IN QUEST OF CARIBOU.

BY S. R. CLARKE.



THE caribou (*cervus tarandus*) is conspicuous among the deer species, from the fact that it is still found in large numbers in North America. On the east and west shores of Hudson Bay there are herds of many thousands. In Newfoundland these noble deer are numerous, and they are also scattered over the northern portions of the continent, in the spruce forests or barrens, where the lichens or reindeer moss grow in profusion.

The caribou is confined to the more southern timber belts, but the reindeer wander in large droves over the dreary tundra of the frigid zone. These are, no doubt, merely varieties of the same species, though the forest-bred deer exceeds in size his congener of the Arctic wastes. All deer swim well, but there is none equal to the caribou in natty power, skill or speed. The hair is

extremely buoyant, and the hoof is large, giving great purchase on the water. In snow or soft mud, the spoor of the caribou is very different from that of other deer, owing to the formation of the hoof. The rim is sharp and protuberant, and the pastern joint flexible. When the weight falls the hoofs spread laterally, and the dew claws, coming down vertically, strike the surface of the ground. The circumference of the impression made by the fully expanded foot is greater than that of the moose, whose feet are so firm that they do not give sideways. The shank bones of the caribou are much smaller than those of the moose, and small in proportion to the size of the hoof. Instead of a well defined footprint, the caribou leaves a kind of broken impression, the sides of which are oat clean cut, but undermined, causing the snow or mud to fall back into the cavity, thus distinguishing the slot from that of any other ungulate.

Early in a December, a jolly party of four ardent sportsmen started from

Port Arthur eastward in quest of caribou. In the afternoon we reached one of the numerous streams of the north shore of Lake Superior. Leaving two men to prepare the camp, the rest of the party proceeded about eight miles up the river on the ice. We secured some ruffed grouse, but saw nothing except the tracks of three caribou that had crossed on the ice in a westerly direction. This reconnaissance induced our chief Indian hunter, Pernassie, to conclude that the deer were on another stream, some six or eight miles west of the one on which we were traveling. It was arranged that the bulk of the party should move camp the next day to the western stream, where the game were supposed to be, and Pernassie and I were detailed to reascend the stream, take the trail of the caribou whose tracks we had observed, follow them so as to determine their *locale*, and generally to explore the hunting grounds. After this we were to return down the stream to which the rest of the hunters had arranged to move the camp. This was cutting out a lot of work for the chief, and before the gray lines of the morning light had fretted the eastern sky we were leaving the river valley and toiling up a long sloping wood-crowned hill, on the lead of the caribou.

After several hours of lively progression we disturbed the band without sighting them; but the fresh trail of the flying deer quickened our pulses and we dashed along in pursuit, Pernassie in front, eager, and scanning every detail of the woods. For a time I had great difficulty in keeping up with the fleet-footed red-skin, but we did not even get within sound of the loud clacking hoofs of the game. After spreading with their weight, the wide-cleft hoofs snap together again as the foot is lifted, producing a noise something like that of a pair of bones which form the ludicrous accompaniment of a variety show. There was no lack of vigorous exercise and we had no reason to complain. We held the trail till about one o'clock and finding that the caribou were heading away to the northeast, while our camp was to the southwest, a halt was called.

We ate our lunch, took a drink of water from a small stream and turned homeward. Pernassie said the camp lay fourteen miles away. For some distance our course was along a beaver

meadow where there was an old caribou trail, plainly shown by the grass being beaten down. At length we reached the upper waters of the stream near the mouth of which it had been arranged to pitch the tent. Close by was a mud-hole in which the deer wallowed in fly-time. The woods along the bank of the stream had recently been overrun with fire, trees were prostrate and pointing in all directions, forming an almost impassable brule. Since the ice had taken the water had fallen about a foot, and mild weather had come leaving open water in some places. In other spots the pedestrian was liable to break through the hollow ice. It was a case of Scylla and Charybdis between following the bed of the creek and taking to the banks. To add to our misfortunes, distance often gave enchantment to the view and the difficulties in our immediate path seemed greater than those in some other spot, causing us to change frequently from the fluvian to the riparian highway and *vice versa*; but the walking everywhere was execrable and calculated to exhaust the patience even of a caribou hunter. We were so warm from the unusual exertion that a dip in the river was rather a luxury than otherwise. The water was only about three feet deep, but in some places we would fall suddenly and heavily through an airhole or imperfect ice and hit the stony bed of the stream. On one occasion my foot sustained a severe sprain in this way. But we persevered and about an hour and a half after nightfall reached the camp where our party, sitting around a cheerful fire, were regaling themselves with supper of ruffed grouse.

Pernassie and I had made a trail thirty miles long. The Indian chief fell frequently on the route, owing to the rough walking. On several occasions it was difficult to suppress a laugh as he tumbled into the water and floated contentedly down the current. He had a knack in falling so as to sustain no injury. At the first symptom of danger of losing the perpendicular Pernassie ceased to struggle and slipped down as quietly and good naturedly as if the upset were the most important part of the programme.

On a review of the whole situation it seemed we had opened a veritable Pandora's box in shifting from our first camp,

for in addition to the other misfortunes there was no green timber in the vicinity and consequently no caribou near us. As soon as we had time to cool down, inflammation commenced in my injured foot, and for the benefit of any who may be similarly placed perhaps I may mention the simple, effective and somewhat heroic remedy applied. The river was margined with ice in front of the camp leaving an open space of running water in the center. Sitting on the ice I immersed the swelled pedal extremity in the cold and limpid stream, keeping it there for some time and repeating the operation again in about a quarter of an hour. The result was that I had no difficulty in traveling the next day and only a slight tenderness in the joint remained to remind me of the *contretemps*.

We reluctantly decided to retrace our steps to the river we had left, and after proceeding up it about six miles, established our permanent quarters there. From this point, for several days, hunters radiated in all directions, but although there was a fair quantity of game, none was secured. One day I proceeded to a lake on which tracks of caribou were numerous, and, building a blind on the shore, held a lone vigil during the whole afternoon. In the month of March, when the sun is beginning to emit his warmer rays, the deer affect the ice of lakes a good deal, and are often killed in this manner; in fact, we learned by experience that it is extremely difficult to still-hunt caribou successfully anywhere near the settlements. With the wind favorable they can detect the hunter two miles away. They are not only shy but fleet, and a run of fifty miles is no trick for this wary deer. The woodland caribou stands next to the American elk in weight. Notwithstanding this, in snow or soft mud a caribou will sink very little, owing to his elastic hoofs and pastern, combined with his nimble steps and slithering gait. On the same trail I have seen the footprints of a yearling moose buried a foot deep in the mud, while that of a caribou rested lightly on the surface.

No game showed on the lake while I remained in the blind. There was no alternative but to return. It was three miles to the camp, and not a shaft of sunlight lingered to break the gloom of

the forest. Owing to the darkness I had some difficulty in keeping on my lake-ward trail. The lichens, with which the branches of the trees were festooned, helped to shut out what light had not yet forsaken the woods, but no sound varied the impressive silence of the forest. I hurried along through the gloom until at last the camp fire glimmered in the distance. After several vain attempts to get within range of caribou, one of our party got a severe attack of nostalgia, and we reluctantly returned to Port Arthur empty-handed, so far as the large game were concerned. But we had seen enough to incite a desire for further efforts.

The timber of the north shore is principally birch and spruce. The reindeer moss is pendant on every limb; a fallen tree carries it equally with a standing living one, and being more accessible, is preferred by the deer. I returned later in the season and resumed the hunt. The two Indians who acted as guides on the former occasion were trapping for fisher, beaver, marten, etc., on the same grounds. I engaged another Indian to act as cook and haul the toboggan with provisions, blankets, etc., to and from the trappers' camp.

During our first hunt the thermometer had been flirting with the zero mark, now it had fallen thirty degrees below. The snow was about three feet deep, or seemed to be, owing to the thick layer of yielding moss that carpeted the ground. But my savage allies had broken a good snow-shoe trail and we reached their camp after a tramp of about ten miles, without any difficulty. Passing along a line of dead-falls set out by the Indians, we found a very fine fisher in one of the traps. The body was frozen solid as a lump of ice, the jaws had been forced open by the weight on the back, and the teeth showed in ghastly array. The trail at one point led across a small pond, where a beaver trap had been set under the ice. It was frozen in Pemassie chopped away the ice, and, baring his arms to the shoulders, dipped down in the gelid mixture of ice and water to re-adjust the traps. One can scarcely realize how such an act produces the shivers without witnessing it in the cold gray light of the early morning, when all animated nature is beset with

the frost king, and the grim tyrant is actually felt clutching at the heart-strings, unlooked for and inexorable. Unfortunately I took in a plentiful supply of provisions, and as hunger is the best stimulus for an Indian hunter, it naturally followed that our incursions into the haunts of the caribou were, for a time, brief and sporadic. We slept under the brumal sky, and, without disturbing our repose, might at any time behold the stars coldly glittering. A heap of brush protected us somewhat from the northern blasts, a large log fire was kindled at our feet and kept up a comfortable heat for about two hours, when some one had to rise and replenish it, otherwise the temperature became too cold for sleep. In retiring the usual procedure was reversed; we put on our great coats and all the covering at hand.

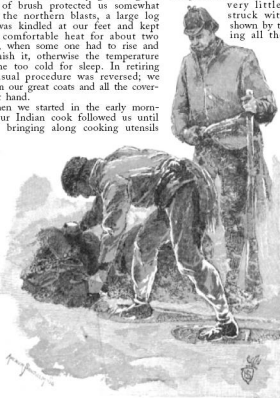
When we started in the early morning our Indian cook followed us until noon, bringing along cooking utensils

fire made, a hasty meal despatched and the cook returned homeward leaving us to prosecute the hunt. The Indians took turn about in "breaking trail" in the soft, deep snow. The shoe would sink about a foot and on top of it several pounds of snow fell, so that the unfortunate leader of the expedition had not only the additional weight of the shoe, but also of the superincumbent snow. The work of those following is comparatively light, as the snow gives very little. I was much struck with the aptitude shown by the Indian in using all the means at his

command. From the application of the moss of the trees to wad his gun to the dexterity shown in preparing a frozen hare for the pot, the son of the forest seemed in every instance to be quick and skillful as well as capable of fully employing all the facilities available.

On one occasion a twenty-pound beaver had been taken from the trap. The pelt was carefully removed before the fire, the carcass cut up and thrown into a large iron pot along with several pounds of pork, flour, etc., and the entire contents consumed for sup-

per and breakfast by the three Indians, I only relieving them of the tail of the amphibious rodent, which is justly esteemed one of the greatest delicacies. But I became gradually convinced that these extraordinary gastronomic exercises were a poor augury for the success



PREPARING FOR THE TRAIL.

and food for a meal. My servitors lopped branches of the fir trees with their axes, and throwing them in a heap on the snow, thus formed a platform on which we mounted, to prevent being partially buried. Then the snow-shoes were removed,

of the hunt, and besides the caribou were wild on the Indian trapping grounds. They had been fired at once or twice by the trappers before I arrived. I proposed to Pernassie that he and I, taking provisions, blankets, etc., should proceed a day's journey or so further inland, where the deer had not been disturbed. On the third day of this new departure, after a long and careful stalk we sighted and started a band of eight caribou. Pernassie turned loose his single-barreled smooth-bore and I attempted to bring my Winchester to bear for a hasty shot, but the deer had disappeared. In the line of their flight was a long hill about two hundred and fifty yards away, which they must ascend. While the Indian rushed frantically after the flying deer I hastily adjusted the sights on the Winchester so as to command the acclivity, as it was certain the game must show as soon as the ascent began. Sure enough I caught sight of

the entire band, well bunched together, fleeing up the slope, while the snow flew in cloud-wreaths around. Calling on the repeater I emptied the magazine without stopping, and had the satisfaction of seeing two of the animals stumble and fall before they reached the summit of the ridge. There was blood on the trail of those that escaped, but after following some distance we concluded it came from a flesh wound. As it was we had two fine deer. Refreshing ourselves with a drink of the warm blood of the caribou, which tastes very like new milk, we proceeded to skin and cut up the game. We made a temporary camp near by for the night, and the next morning loading the toboggan with meat we started from the forest solitudes? and after many a weary haul up the hills, and lively work going down to prevent the toboggan running on the snow-shoes or colliding with the trees, we at length reached Port Arthur.

A DAY'S FISHING IN JAMAICA.

BY ANNETTA JOSEFA HALLIDAY.



RAITRESS to my sex you may call me, but, nevertheless, I am an ardent enthusiast in that sport which may tempt a disciple of Walton to make unto himself graven images of what is in the water under the earth.

When I was a very little girl, I overheard a visitor assert that "No woman lived who could fish understandingly." I pondered a long time on that remark, and, as a result of my cogitation, procured a copy of Walton's "Complete Angler." Over its quaint pages I pored with a growing fascination, which, though born in spite, has never lost its charm for me.

If departed spirits could revisit this world, I'd like to invoke that shade whose contempt first inspired my piscatorial love, and question it now as to a woman's understanding of the art.

Jamaica, as a word, has always suggested to the mind a vision of an island ruined by the Emancipation, a region

of senescent estates, of unthinking, unambitious negro squatters, who support themselves and their families on yams and bananas, and whose sole household utensil is a calabash; a land of buried memories over which the lizards creep and the toads leap away, as you pass through the still, strange weeds and fantastic shrubs.

"Go to Jamaica even for a visit?" exclaimed an American friend to me when I told her of my purpose to visit the Exhibition of 1891. "Vegetation would devour me. I should expect to turn into a tropical growth myself, with vegetable decay in the near future."

This idea of Jamaica as a land of abandoned plantations and closed-up warehouses might have been in part true once; but the realities of native Jamaican life are now far different. The sugar estates in the lowlands and cocoa and coffee estates in the highlands yield fine incomes to their possessors, and the extensive grass lands pasture many cattle and horses. The banana trade, too, is rapidly increasing under the inexhaustible demand. The working classes of the United States