

any such luck, when we ran pell-mell into a covey of fully twenty birds, flushing all around us. By a good bit of slam-bang, we pulled down three and a cripple, which we marked down and killed a few moments later. The covey split, most of them going into the marsh.

After this we suffered a break for some time, and finally put out into the marsh for stragglers. Suddenly a bird flushed behind me, and to my left; I swung on him, but Ed corked me—and laughed. A moment later it was my turn, as I grassed a bird he had clean missed; and I was just shoving home another shell when, with a pounding of wings, a covey flushed and soared, minus four of their number, out of our range of vision.

Seeing we could not mark them down, and as it was growing late, we started for the house, where we found the owner at home and cooking supper—a great spread it was, too, we found that out.

After a little time spent in getting acquainted, our host, who was "batching" it, invited us to remain over night, assuring us that, if we did so, we could have a chance at the green-wings next morning, as there was a good flight into the rice-beds. As we both have a weakness for green-wings, we were easily persuaded, and were soon happily engaged in talking over the chances, through

pretty fair clouds of comfortable smoke. Just as we were thinking of turning in, our host produced a pack of cards, proposing a game of "cinch," and not to seem unaccommodating, we sat in—exceedingly so, as it was 12:30 when the game broke up, and we were shown to our couch.

The morning was dark and stormy, with a fitful wind coming in momentary gusts, and we looked for a lively time when they commenced "coming in," which they presently did.

It was barely daylight when we took our stations, where the sight was my ideal of a hunting morning. Out on the lake the white-crested waves tossed and muttered, while the tall rice-stalks bent and rustled in the wind, to the accompaniment of the incessant chatter of the rail hidden within.

The flight was all that we hoped for, but, as this is not a story of ducks, I will only say that we were charmingly entertained until we were ready for the road.

On the way home the conversation lagged a good deal, and Ed says that I slept like a log until we were crossing the bridge into town. Perhaps I did, for Ed was driving—or said he was.

When we parted at the door I asked him if he thought he would be much troubled with insomnia that night, and he answered that he thought not.

A BEAR-HUNT IN NEW BRUNSWICK.

BY FRANK H. RISTEEN.



OF the many rapid woodland rivers of New Brunswick, the wild and rugged Nepisiguit is about the toughest proposition for either birch canoe or "pirogue." After you leave the Grand Falls your journey up the stream for over thirty miles is one of continuous battle

with the rips and whirling pools. This could be endured if only good, sure bottom could be found, but for much of its course the river dashes over wide brown, glassy ledges, offering, even for

the steel-shod pole, a most uncertain hold.

But there are few really good things to be had in this life without striving and vexation of spirit. He, who with sturdy Canadian polesmen works his way to the upper waters of this lovely mountain stream will surely return with a wealth of picturesque experience that will last as long as memory remains. He will camp at the mouth of babbling brooks that tell in endless monotone the story of strange, remote regions at their fountain heads, where the foot of the white man, at least, has never trod, and where there are lofty cataracts whose hoarse soliloquy is seldom heard by human ear. He will float through silent deadwaters, in whose depths are

mirrored only the infinite blue and a ribbon of ragged shore, while on either side vast, prairie-like, treeless plains stretch away, the home of the caribou to-day, as it was in the time of Cartier.

He will traverse a region where Nature reigns supreme; where the unsophisticated trout, having never gone to kindergarten in a hatchery, are prepared to seize a flannel rag as readily as the most alluring fly; where daily, in his onward way, the sheldrakes churn the waters before him in their flight, and where his blissful sleep at night is broken only by the hooting of the owl, the chattering of the mink, or the sloppy blow of the big gray togue as he tumbles back in his native pool.

If the season be that of summer or early fall, scarce a day will pass in his dreamland pilgrimage that he will fail to meet the monarch moose, or the timorous deer, waist-deep among the water plants, and if he is "one of the chosen," to whom none of the choice things of this life are denied, he may even chance upon that coyest and wariest of all northern game animals, the black bear, browsing on the berry-laden slopes, or patiently fishing for trout or suckers at the outlet of some brook or lake. The Nepisiguit River in fact enjoys the rare distinction of being, perhaps, the only region in Eastern America where the black bear may be hunted with a sure prospect of success. From the door of your tent on the river's bank you can easily spot the slouching form with a field glass as he roams the hills in search of his favorite food. Then it is only a matter of careful stalk and nervy marksmanship.

Our modest tent was pitched on the edge of a world of gleaming, white birches that girthed the river like an army in battle array. Across the stream not a birch, nor indeed a tree of any kind, could be seen; only the fire-shaven hills which had sprouted forth in league upon league of blueberries and wiry, hardhack brush. The sun was near his western landing place, the river mist was curling from the cove, and the still September air gave promise of a nipping night. Henry, the chief guide, and Joe Paul, the Indian cook and general handy man, were carrying the bedding and cooking utensils up the rugged bank, while Fred sat on a rotten log cleaning his repeater,

and the writer, with a pair of search warrants labeled "Lemaire," diagnosed the rolling scrub. That Bruin failed to materialize that afternoon gave us small concern.

In the evening, as we dried our feet before the crackling blaze, and every pipe in camp was wafting the smoke offering of contented minds to the red gods of the wilderness, the conversation turned upon the immediate object of our hunt.

"I tink dar's two kind of bears in dese mountains," said Joe. "Sartin, dem long, slim chaps ain't like de reg'lar, common bear."

"Well," said Henry, "it's a free country. Any man can think what he likes, especially about bears. I think we have only one breed of bears, though they certainly differ a lot in their looks and habits. Some feed almost altogether on roots, grass and berries; others like a little caribou liver for a change. It's a mighty sight easier to tell what a bear does eat than what he doesn't."

"What's your idea," Fred asked the Indian, "of the mating season of the black bear?"

"I tink it's in de month of June or July, 'coz plenty time I see where scratch on trees with der claws."

"It's funny," mused Henry, "that an Indian never gets anything just right. Now, I've noticed that bears begin to strip the bark off the trees in their travels, just as soon as they come out of their dens, and they keep it up till they den again in the fall. They do it in play, I guess, or just to test their claws. There can't be any regular mating time because the cubs are born at all times through the winter. I have found new-born cubs in the den as late as the last of March and as early as the middle of January."

"How many cubs did you ever find with a she-bear?" I asked.

"As a rule the litter is composed of two or three cubs, though I caught a bear this last spring that had four cubs with her."

"Dey only breed once in two years," asserted Joe.

"Yes," said Henry, "and another thing that keeps them comparatively scarce is that they often destroy their young."

"Lose 'em, too," added Joe. "Some-time ole she-bear, jist like pa'tridge—

walk, walk, walk all roun' so fas'; bush all wet and cold, young ones git tired out and fall behind."

Just here an expansive grin stole over Joe's swarthy face as he remarked, "Sartin, I guess Henry didn't tole you 'bout dat time de bear stole his boots."

Henry smiled in mock discomfiture.

Joe's solemn remark: "Plenty Injin, I guess, not more smart as Henry," produced a general laugh at the veteran woodsman's expense.

Fred seemed to have an unsatiated appetite for facts in regard to the bear's mysterious habit of denning in the winter months, so Henry discoursed upon this topic at considerable length.

"The time of the year when the bear holes up, depends on the weather and the food supply. As soon as the snow gets deep the bear is helpless so far as finding food is concerned. He is also obliged to den, whether the snow is deep or not, as soon as nuts and other vegetable food gets scarce. He will sometimes den as early as the middle of October, but the latter part of November is the usual date. Old settlers stay out as long as they can find anything to eat. A captive bear seldom wants to den, so it is plain the wild one only does so from necessity. He will sometimes search for weeks to find a suitable place for his winter home. Then he will choose a hollow log or tree, a leaning stub or root, the weather side of a cedar swamp, or even the shelter of a bush. While there is little snow on the ground he may wander about a good deal in the daytime, returning to his den at night. Even in mid-winter he is apt to come out when the weather is soft and ramble around, and perhaps shift his quarters."

"Dat's because he was drowned out," said Joe. "Sartin, bear no likim dat wet bed."

"Maybe so. Anyhow, I have known him to gather up new moss and bark for the purpose of repairing his bed. As a rule, he appears to pick out a dry place for his den."

"Is it true," asked Fred, "that after a bear has picked out his den he will back-track to it in the snow for the purpose of fooling anyone who wants to find it?"

"I never noticed that," replied Henry, "but I have trailed them on the snow, late in the fall, and had them come back

on their tracks and jump out sideways, the same as a deer will do."

"Purty dam squirr'ly animals, too," said Joe.

"Yes, and I have noticed that a she-bear takes far more pains than the male in picking out a secluded spot for her den. That, of course, is for the protection of her young from the black cat and lynx, as well as other bears."

"When does the bear leave his den?"

"In early springs I have known them to come out as soon as the 10th of April, but the latter part of the month is the usual time. They travel very little at first, sometimes frequenting warm, open spots, where they can take a sun bath during the day, returning to their dens at night. When the bear comes out of his den in the spring he is fully as fat as when he went in, but he loses weight rapidly for the first two or three weeks. The first move he makes is for some spring hole or water course, where he can gorge himself with mud and grass. I think it is fully a fortnight before he will touch solid food. I have never known one to take a bait until he had been out of the den at least two weeks."

"What is the best kind of trap to set for a bear?"

"A steel trap, the bigger the better, if you want to hold your bear. It takes a lot of work to build a deadfall properly; you leave so much sign that any bear that is up to snuff will not go near it, and if you do get a real nice bear he is almost sure to work out. I have often caught bears in the steel trap that had the marks of the deadfall on them."

Joe pulled his pipe reflectively. "One time I make big deadfall right cross brook from where I camp. Well, dat night I heard big noise and knowed I ketchim bear. Sartin, nex' mornin' I find one big bear in dat trap. Sartin, dat bear stand still and holim dem big log on his back all night. By tunders, I clime one leetle, small tree fust t'ing; den shoot dat bear mighty quick."

"Not much use in climbing a tree," declared Henry. "A bear can pull down any tree too small for him to climb."

"Well," said Joe, "by tunders, I didn't dizackly like his looks 'tall and I 'tought more bes' git what you call a preserved seat!" (Laughter and applause.)

Fred wanted to know how long a bear would live in a steel trap?

"That depends on circumstances," replied the guide. "When a bear finds himself in the trap he makes tremendous efforts to get clear of it, banging the trap against trees, tearing things up for rods around, and trying to get fast to something so he can get a square pull. After he gets quieted down a bit, he hunts for water. If he can't reach a spring or brook he digs for it. If he finds water he is likely to live a week; if not he will hardly survive more than three days. He won't last long in hot weather."

"I could never see what was the use of the clog," said Fred. "It is said that you must not hold the bear hard and fast or he is apt to break away, yet I am told the clog is generally found solidly lodged under a root or blowdown with the bear at the end of the chain. Why not hold him fast in the first place by attaching the chain to a tree or log?"

"That," observed the veteran, "is easily explained. "As soon as the bear is caught he gives three or four desperate jumps that would almost certainly tear the trap off if it had no play. But he soon gets tired and discouraged, reconciled to his fate you might say, and when the clog fetches up he has neither the strength nor the pluck to break loose. Well, boys, I'm sleepy."

The fire had now become reduced to a feeble glow and Joe was snoring blissfully with his head beneath a blanket. The tenderfoot contingent were drifting into dreamland too. Henry got up, slipped on his moccasins, buried the sputtering bean-pot in a bed of coals and ashes and piled a fresh supply of wood upon the fire. All hands crept under the woolen spreads and, soothed by the river's brawling melody, were soon fast asleep.

Oh, for the pen of Parkman to set forth in characters of light the glory of the dawn of a crisp September day on one of these wonderful woodland rivers of the north! The wizard Kipling has pitched his tent on the Restigouche and he has never tried it or if he has he failed. First is oblivion, then a dim consciousness that someone (you are vaguely glad it is not yourself) has stirred, and is drowsily gathering fuel to revive the sunken fire. Then you hear the stirring crackle of the flames and feel their cheering warmth stealing through the moist, cold coverlets. The

gray light enters slowly, and the river chorus grows in strength. All else is noiseless yet, save as, it may be, from some lake or deadwater near at hand the tremulous note of the loon is borne on the pulseless pinions of the morning air. You rub your eyes, rouse stiffly up, tread gingerly with shoeless feet through the door of the tent and out upon the dewy, twig-strewn turf. What tonic ever devised by human chemistry so bracing as that first whiff of forest air flavored with the grateful scent of the fire that, like a sentient thing, seems now to rejoice with the quickening influence of a new-found life? What dainty product of Havana or Manila so refreshing as that first morning smoke from a plain clay pipe ignited with a hardwood coal? What music so sweet as that of the red-poll'd linnet as he greets your coming forth? And then, the row of tin plates spread out upon the fragrant earth, piled high with pork and beans such as Boston never knew, flanked with a pyramid of bacon fried to a turn, backed up by a camp-made biscuit, hot and steaming from the baker, with the inevitable adjunct of "bow and arrow" tea! Such joys as these can never be described; they can only be recalled to those who know.

Henry broached his plan of campaign at once. Fred's fondest earning was to shoot a moose, while I confessed an aching void for bear. The guide would take Fred in the old Micmac canoe, he said, and pole upstream to a "bogan" a mile or so away and "call" there for moose. If unsuccessful they would visit a lake he knew of, two miles to the south, and try their luck in the afternoon. Incidentally, he proposed to set a steel trap for Bruin near the stream. As for my part of the programme, he thought no better chance for "Spotting" a bear could be found than on the rolling hills that faced our camping ground. I was, therefore, to remain at home and watch the berry-fields with care. If a bear was sighted in the offing we could easily wade the river above the cove and work within killing range. If the wind should spring up and blow from the south, he advised us to "dowse" the fire. Henry closed his remarks with a piece of forest philosophy:

"Aim low. Don't shoot till good and ready. Be sure you're right and then be sure you're sure."

Joe and I took turns surveying the hills with the glass. The job proved sufficiently monotonous to test our united store of patience to the full. I began to regret as the hours moved slowly by that we had not adopted some more enterprising scheme. We varied the essential sameness somewhat by climbing a large fir-tree, that offered a more extensive view. The wind blew freely in the afternoon and a bank of leaden clouds pushed up from the south, presaging, the Indian thought, a juicy night.

Doubtless the chief charm of hunting, as of many other sports, and some more serious occupations, is the element of chance. You never can tell what is going to happen in the woods. Nothing ever happens just as you expect it will, nor twice in the same way. We grew weary at last with the strain of searching the lifeless, gray slopes across the stream, and Joe was fishing for trout in the cove, while I watched lazily the shining, snake-like windings of the leader as it looped above his head, when suddenly the Indian stopped right in the middle of a cast and pointed mutely down the stream. As my eyes sought the line of his outstretched arm they encountered an object that fairly froze the blood in my veins. Standing on a sand-bar, about two hundred yards away, his black mass outlined like a statue of ebony against the purling ripples of the stream, stood one of the largest bull moose I had ever seen! He was in the act of crossing the shoal and had evidently been arrested by sight or scent of the Indian, whom he was now regarding fixedly.

As I grasped my 30-40 Winchester two thoughts were vaguely uppermost. One was that I could not safely attempt to move within closer range; the other seemed to be an echo of Henry's parting words: "Be sure you're right and then be sure you're sure." Lying prone upon the open bank I aimed carefully for the shoulder of the moose and pulled. The animal appeared to flinch, then turned in his tracks and started slowly for the bank he had recently left. He splashed the water in his clumsy stripes and swayed his head confusedly. My second shot was not as steady as the first, but the third went home. To my surprise the moose on reaching the bank made no attempt to

climb, but turned and sullenly faced us. I fired again and could have sworn the hair flew from his breast. He merely shook his horns and grunted. By this time Joe, in a state of excitement closely akin to lunacy, was at my side, shouting:

"By tunders, Frank, you miss him dat moose every time. Run down de shore! Run down de shore!"

I think it has ever been a strong weakness of mine to be easily moved by others when I ought to take my own way about it. Instead of running down the open bank, I immediately found myself hustling at breakneck speed in tow of a crazy Indian down the jagged, slippery boulder-covered shore. How we ever got there without loss of life or limb is passing queer. The moose was in sight all the while and, beyond a slow, heaving motion of his shoulders, made no stir. At a range of not over 60 yards I fired again, but the animal simply lifted one of his feet in response and "pawed" the water. I noticed, though, that his shaggy mane was on end and his eyes twinkling savagely. I threw down the lever once more; then Joe seized my arm with a vice-like grip:

"By tunders, don't shoot him any more! He's mad! De moose is mad! Come away quick and let him die!"

If the moose was as mad as Joe he was certainly in a sad state of mind. I was familiar with the wide-spread Indian belief that a mortally wounded moose could not be induced by powder and lead to die till he was ready, but I was skeptical. I am skeptical still on this point, but here is a frozen fact: Disregarding Joe's eloquent advice I recharged the magazine and placed four more shots in the dauntless forest king before he toppled to the ground. The bull had a massive set of antlers, spreading 55 inches with 28 perfect points. Joe's face was grave as he helped me with the skinning.

"Sartin, Frank, you'd orter let him die. Mujago, Mujago! He'll come and paw your grave for dis!"

Great was the surprise of Fred and Henry when, an hour later, they arrived and found Joe frying moose steak, Indian fashion, on sticks before the fire, while our impressive trophy grimly faced them from a stump beside the tent. "It all belongs to hunting" was

the only comment Henry made. The old man had not come back empty-handed either, for he threw down a string of black ducks, five in number, as plump as one could wish to see.

"Live and learn," he said. "I never found out how to fool black duck in good shape until to-day. Git on the west side of your lake a little after sun-down, and You can paddle right out them, for they can't see you."

"I call dat a four-year-ole moose," said Joe. "Front teeth all loose, you see."

"More like eight," said Henry. "You never saw a moose in Your life with the front teeth solid."

"Sartin, I know one ting," Joe affirmed. "All same, every moose, bull, cow and small calf too, all got dat whis-ker on de neck."

"That's right," said Henry, "and in the case of the adult male it follows the growth of the horns, being thinnest in the spring, attaining full size in September, and fading away in winter."

"Is there any relation," asked Fred, "between the number of points on the horns and the age of the moose?"

"I tink," replied Joe, "all time more pints, more spread, till moose 'bout ten year ole; after dat not so many pints and not so sharp; bambye, very ole moose you see, horns all straight, jus' like goat's."

"Have you ever known of a fight between a bear and a bull moose?" asked Fred.

"Yes, I once followed on snowshoes, in the early part of December, the trail of a moose that was being chased by a bear. I found a few scraps of hair and hide on the snow, where the bear had almost bagged his game. Finally I came to a burned knoll where the moose had turned and shown fight and driven the bear up an old pine stub. There he was perched on the top limb, puffing and blowing from the mauling he had got, with his tongue hanging out about a yard. I fetched him down with a charge of buckshot through the lungs. If I could have overhauled that moose I'd have given him a feed of oats!"

"Sartin," Joe remarked; "plenty bear git plenty moose calf in the spring."

"Yes it is because of her ear of the bear that is the cow, when bringing forth her young, retires to an island in some

lake, or other hiding place. The bear is pretty sure to levy his toll all the same. It is seldom that both calves escape. But if the calves can keep out of his clutches till they are three or four weeks old, they are then too speedy for the bear, and far more wary than the full-grown moose."

Next morning Fred elected to again try the upstream route with Henry, while Joe and I remained in camp to dress the moose and cure the venison. This latter was accomplished by erecting a kind of scaffold of white-birch poles, loosely thatched with fir boughs, from which the meat was suspended, and under which a smudge of smoke was kept in constant operation. This drove the flies away and formed a hard, black coating over the meat, that preserved it sweet and firm. The weather was warm on the entire trip, but we were able to bring out all our surplus venison ten days later in excellent condition. The scalp was preserved by salting thoroughly and tying in a bag, which was kept as far as possible from the direct heat of the sun.

We had no premonition of the stirring scenes in store for us that morning. As Joe, puffing peacefully at his pipe, was leisurely skinning the head of the moose, my attention was directed to a startling drama that was being enacted across the stream: namely, Fred and Henry stalking an immense black bear that had suddenly appeared on the hillside. They had sighted the animal when poling up the stream a few rods above the landing. The bear was about a quarter of a mile away from the hunters, who were approaching him on all fours, with the utmost caution, creeping from bush to bush, taking advantage of all possible cover afforded by the inequalities in the ground. Through the glass the bear could be plainly seen scooping the blueberries with his paws and stowing them away in his capacious paunch. At times he sat bolt-upright on his rump and surveyed his surroundings with an air of supreme content. Fortunately for Fred, he never looked up the stream. As I watched the stirring spectacle with the glass I could almost seem to hear the whispered words exchanged by the excited hunters as they neared their prey. They were soon within shooting distance of the bear. As if the situation were not

sufficiently thrilling, at this moment another and somewhat smaller bear emerged like a black ghost from a wooded hollow some distance to their right and closer to the stream.

The attention of the stalkers was so taken up with the first bear that they did not seem to observe the other, who almost at once caught sight of them, and stood with fore-paw lifted, watching their mysterious movements with interest. This second bear was not over two hundred yards from the tent. The desire to shoot was hard to quell, but not wishing to spoil Fred's chance, I knelt quickly on the bank, covered this bear with my rifle and waited for Fred to open the ball. As the whip-like crack of his rifle broke the morning calm, bear Number One reared to his full height, tumbled over in the brush and then bolted up the hill. I fired at once at Number Two. His answer was a whistling snort and a flying start directly for the stream.

It was easy to straighten the facts out afterward, but just at this time the position of affairs was a trifle mixed. I remember that Fred was standing up, firing as fast as he could pull at Number One; that Joe was down somewhere in the alders by the stream, yelling and falling over himself with a double-barreled gun; that as bear Number Two drew near the bank I fired three or four shots at his bounding form; that presently he took alarm and, swerving suddenly in his tracks, broke for the ridge where I had last seen Fred and Henry, who were now concealed from view by a dip in the ground. I fired again at the furry ball as it caromed over the knolls, and then let the hammer down as the bear was dangerously near Fred and Henry. I have a faint recollection, too, of hearing the remorseless roar of Joe's shotgun booming over the hills, that insane redskin having somehow managed to cross the cove without my seeing him. Number Two was now plainly staggering in his flight. Just then Fred's wide felt hat reappeared on top of the ridge, within about twenty feet of Number Two, while the earth seemed to have swallowed Number One. I heard a shout from Henry, saw Fred turn suddenly and raise his rifle, and at the report of his weapon this bear also vanished.

The very next thing I recall, though

it must have cost some lively work to reach there, I, too, was standing on the edge of the gulch and Fred was frantically wringing my hands.

"Old man," he roared, "look! look! I've got 'em both! Oh, this is too good for poor people!"

At the bottom of the gulch, Henry, with a gory knife in his hand, was bending over the carcass of Number One, while not fifty feet away the maniac Joe was executing a Millicete jig around the prostrate form of Number Two. Life seemed worth living just then.

We ran down the side of the gulch and examined the proceeds. Henry looked up with a grin and remarked:

"I guess you had some help, Fred."

A look of amazement crept over Fred's beaming face as he stammered: "W-W-Why?" He knew nothing of my part in the fray.

"Well, you only fired once at this bear and he's shot all to pieces!"

It was now the imbecile's turn.

"By tunders," Joe declared, "I t'ought I didn't miss dat bear!"

Henry shot one withering look at Joe. Here I should own up that I experienced quite a shock myself. Highly as I had always rated Henry's ability as a woodsman, as well as his marvelous powers of observation, it had never occurred to me that he had been able to note every feature in this exciting double tragedy. Not only had Henry seen Number Two when this one first appeared though he refrained from telling Fred for fear of confusing him), but he had observed the effect of every shot fired both by Fred and myself. "There's four bullets in each bear," he said, and so it proved to be.

As our procession filed down the bank, staggering beneath the weight of bear-hides and meat, the old man said quietly: "I guess your shot hit just about here, Joe," and pointed to a hole in the ground.

Joe was very moody for a while, but he thawed out at last so far as to confide to me in liquid tones:

"Sartin, Frank, I knowed you shot dat bear, but, by tunders, dey was claimin' everyting in sight and I t'ought I'd better put a claim in too." And then he added earnestly: "Sartin, I didn't git rattled 't all. You know dat. By king, it was de bear got rattled and didn't gimme fair chance!"