



A Trapped Bear.



THE BEGUILING OF THE BEARS

By Frederic Irland

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR



SOME people like the woods in summer, and some go there in the fall. This year I visited a far-away fastness before the spring awoke, and stayed till summer abounded in the land.

The most remote and inaccessible stream in the province of New Brunswick is the North Pole Branch. No road or trail approaches it. Mountain ramparts guard its birthplace. Falls and rapids, which even the salmon cannot climb, are a barrier to its ascent.

Henry sometimes goes there to hunt, and he has a shed camp at the foot of a mountain. Many years ago the trees on

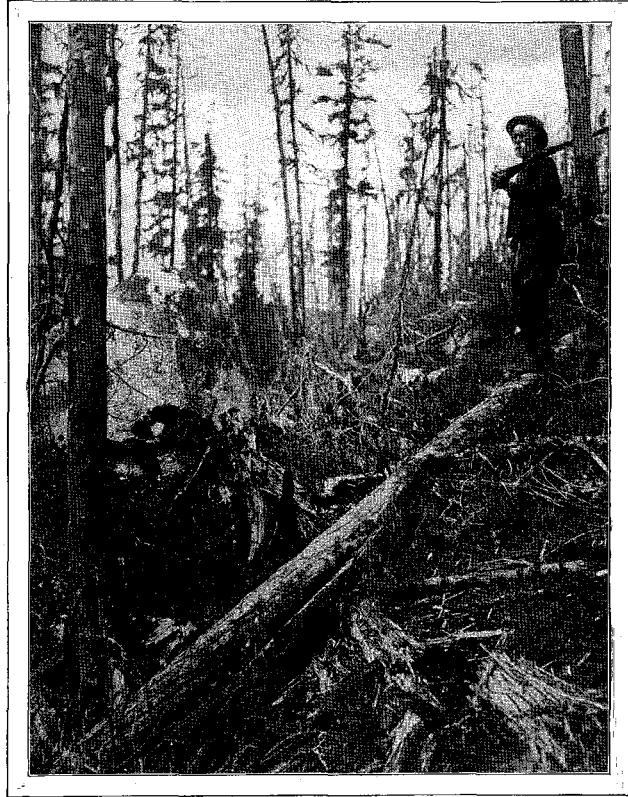
this mountain were burned, and you can see the scar of the old fire when you are miles away. Dunc Moon was sent to this camp last summer with flour on his back and the burnt mountain for his landmark. He reported, on his return to humanity, that his feet "never teched the ground fer three mile." This is why the fallen tree-trunks, which mark the pathway of an unrecorded cyclone, are known to the chosen few as "Dunc's Three Mile."

Much of the North Pole Branch is fine canoeing water; a smooth, silent, strong-flowing stream, with banks which the beavers climb even at noon-day, to feast on

balsam-boughs; and interminable alder-swales, where the bears roll in the wet places, while little birds sing above them. When the flies are bad, the moose stand in the water up to their ears, and in their search for river-grass keep their noses submerged long enough to down three men.

joyed it a great deal more than the bears did.

If we had been famous arctic explorers, we should have run fifty or sixty miles the first day. As we were going for pleasure, we found twenty miles of snowy road ample to engage our daily attention. When



Dunc's Three Mile—"Never teched the ground for three mile."—Page 313.

At great pains Henry packed a rip-saw to the banks of the Pole, and worked out enough thin boards to make a canoe. This craft had been built about a week when a bear came along and bit a hole in the bottom through which a cat might crawl. Another bear visited Henry's camp on Mitchell Lake, a few miles from the Pole, and made it look as though a primary election had been held there. These things occurred in the fall of 1900, and Henry concluded that the bears in the Pole precinct needed suppressing. So in the spring of 1901 he spread desolation among them. I was allowed to accompany him on this campaign, and en-

we had gone above all the lumbering operations, and reached the country where the trees are too small for commercial purposes, we could travel in the early morning on the crusted snow. After ten o'clock, when the warm April sun had set things dripping, we would break through a few times and find the snow more than leg-deep. Then we would spread our raw-hide wings and sail along finely for a while. After the snow got very soft, and a shovelful caught on each toe at every step, we did a little penance for our sins. But it was nothing. A week of rather bad going, and then we used the snowshoes only for the worst places.



Rescuing the Toboggan.

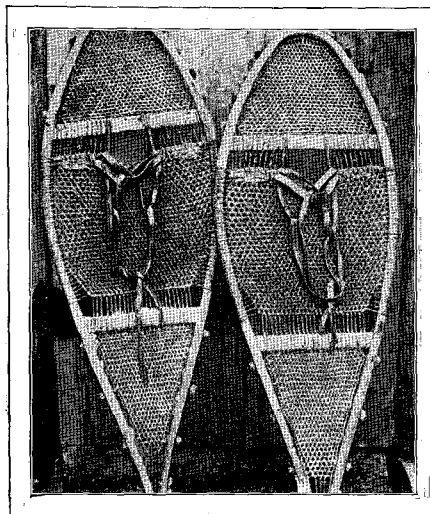
There are as many sorts and conditions of snow-shoes as there are of guides. Poor snow-shoes sag when subjected to severe trial. The raw-hide fillings slacken, and the journey of the wearer is a joyless progress. Well-made shoes are strung with caribou-skin, so stretched that as the filling becomes wet it draws more tight. Few Indians make good shoes. Henry fills his own, and at the close of a day's march, in the sloppiest snow, his shoes are as tight as drum-heads. There is also a nice knack in tying the strings that hold the shoes to the feet. I believe Henry is the inventor of the tie most commonly used in that region. It is an interesting study to those who have walking to do on deep snow, and is plainly shown in the photograph.

Henry had a lot of big steel bear-traps hidden in the woods, which he wished to put where they would do the most good, and it was desirable to transport them while the lakes were still frozen over. All woodland trails take to the water as much as possible, both in

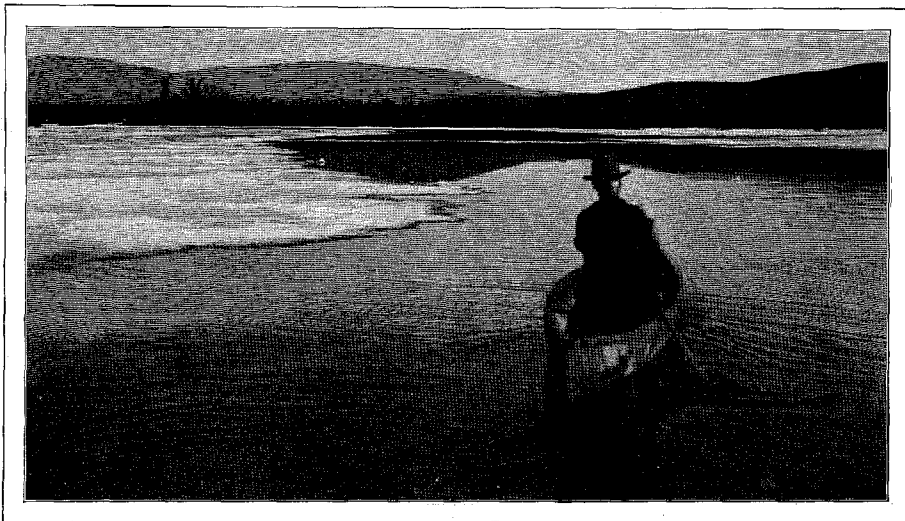
summer and winter, because the hauling of loads is easiest there, whether by canoe or toboggan. There is a short time in the fall and spring when travel is almost impossible, because the ice is unsafe and canoes cannot run. The dangerous period is very short in the fall, for the thin, new ice of a single night will often bear one with perfect safety; but in the spring ice six inches thick may be so rotten that it will give way without warning. There are several ways to tell whether ice is good. As long as the caribou and moose cross it freely, it may be relied on implicitly. When it begins to soften, the dangerous

spots get brown or black as the water soaks through, while the strong ice remains white or blue.

We had a merry adventure with the ice one day. It was getting near the limit of winter travel. The trail led across a narrow neck of Birch Lake, only a few minutes' walk. The toboggan track of two days ago went straight to the other shore. There were ominous brown spots all over the lake, but it would take hours



The Correct Thing in Snow-shoes.



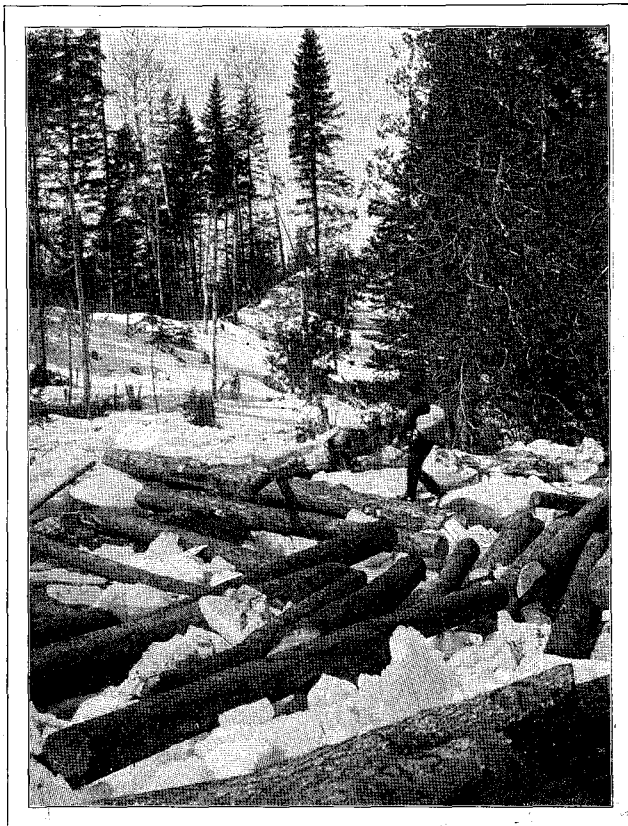
The Opening of the Lake.

to drag the sleds around the shore, among the fallen trees and thick bushes. Henry thought we could steer a devious course over the ice. We climbed down the steep bank by a fallen tree, and got the sleds on the ice. A few rods from shore, where it looked doubtful, Henry sounded with his axe, while I hesitated and was lost. I felt the ice going, and told Henry so. "Look out for the camera," he warned, as I plunged waist-deep. So as I fell I held the camera on high. Henry stretched forth the saving hand, and in an instant he also broke through, and found how cold the water was. We were not in a particle of danger, but the toboggans were. Henry broke a path back to shore and I followed him. After the first plunge the water did not seem so cold, and we managed to coax the sleds along till they were in reach of safety. Then Henry floundered ashore, felled some little trees onto the ice, and sneaking gingerly out, rescued our food and blankets from a watery grave.

In a few days the streams began to open, and another picture in the infinite panorama of the wilderness spread out before us. Wherever the water ran with a fair current the ice was gone in the centre of the stream, so that canoe navigation was practicable. We could go sometimes for miles through narrow aisles, with ice and snow between us and the shore on either side. Where the river widened into

a lake the winter coverlet was still spread, and there was often trouble in making a landing on the edge of the ice. One morning we hauled the canoe far from the water's edge and walked securely down the frozen dead-water. At evening, when we retraced our steps, our morning snow-shoe tracks led straight into black depths, and a long détour was necessary to bring us around the newly opened water.

One day when Henry had gone on a solitary cruise, to look out a new trail somewhere, Albert, the cook, went with me canoeing. We floated quietly along, and presently I heard the splashing of some large animal walking slowly through the slush close to the shore. Watching an opening in the evergreen growth, I saw the shape of a large bull moose, with his new antlers already grown a foot or more. I saw he would come out at the head of a little bogan not far away. We paddled as fast as possible to the nearest point, and jumping on the ice, I went ashore with the ever-present camera. In front of me was a little hillock covered with scattering spruces. From the top of this the ground fell to an open barren, but along the water's edge the growth was thick. The moose was not in sight, and I stood a couple of minutes, watching for him to cross the open ground in front, hoping to make a picture. The snow on the land side of the hillock was drifted



Logs Waiting for Spring Freshet.

very deep. The footing seemed fairly secure, and I walked along the edge of the drift, toward the bushes where I knew the moose must be. Without preliminaries the snow gave way, and I was floundering in the soft mass. Then it was that, looking over my right shoulder, I beheld at my side the great motionless moose, with ears thrown forward, nostrils distended and eyes solemnly bulging, a black statue of dignified curiosity. Even in my momentary panic, I could not help noticing how cunningly he kept a bush between himself and me. This habit of the moose is one thing which makes him so hard to photograph. But I was chiefly concerned then to get out of that soft snow. Had the moose known it, he had a fine chance to avenge some of his brothers whom I had slain in former years. Two jumps would have put him on me. But he only pulled his gray muzzle back into the bushes, faced about, and stole

away without making a sound. I took the camera to the canoe and shook the snow out of the bellows. Then Albert and I went back to look at the tracks, and we saw that the moose had not run, but carefully placed each foot where the walking was best, and so taken himself away without turmoil.

That evening when I told Henry about it, he said the moose was harmless, that his ears thrown forward were a sign of interrogation. "But," said he, "if you ever meet a moose in the snow and he lays his ears back and begins to lick his lips, then look out. And don't you go to clawing at a tree to climb it either. To scrape the bark of a tree in front of a moose is the deadliest insult you can offer him; for that is the way one bull dares another to fight. Never run away from a moose either. Stand your ground and call him all the names you can think of."

The opening of the shallow dead-wa-



Setting the Bear Trap.

ters disclosed a curious phenomenon of spring which I have seen described. The canoe passed over extensive patches of ice stuck fast to the bottom, showing where the water had frozen clear through. The rising flood of spring finally lifted these ice patches clear, bringing with them masses of lily roots and mud. After the ice melted, a great many of these lily roots, thick as a girl's wrist, were left floating on the surface.

Henry got his bear traps and provisions pretty well scattered out before the snow went away, and finally the time came when he concluded that the bears must be abroad. We visited the bones of two or three moose shot last fall, miles apart. At one place we found the tracks of a large bear. Henry thought it would be a good idea to set a trap here, as the bear might return.

The trapping of bears is an arduous art. Henry believes it to be justified from the sportsman's standpoint, because the bear is the deadly enemy of the moose. During the first few days of its life the baby moose is a clumsy, helpless creature, that wabbles feebly on its long legs, and can scarcely get out of the way of a man, to say nothing of a bear.

All the bears go moose-hunting at this season, and any bear killed in May is almost certain to have moose-hair in its stomach. Since Henry and a few other trappers have decimated the bears and lynxes, the moose have increased enormously. Henry and one other man trapped eighty-four bears in three consecutive springs, a few years ago. Now, the bears are comparatively scarce, and the moose are certainly ten times as plentiful as they were in the early nineties, when I first began going to New Brunswick.

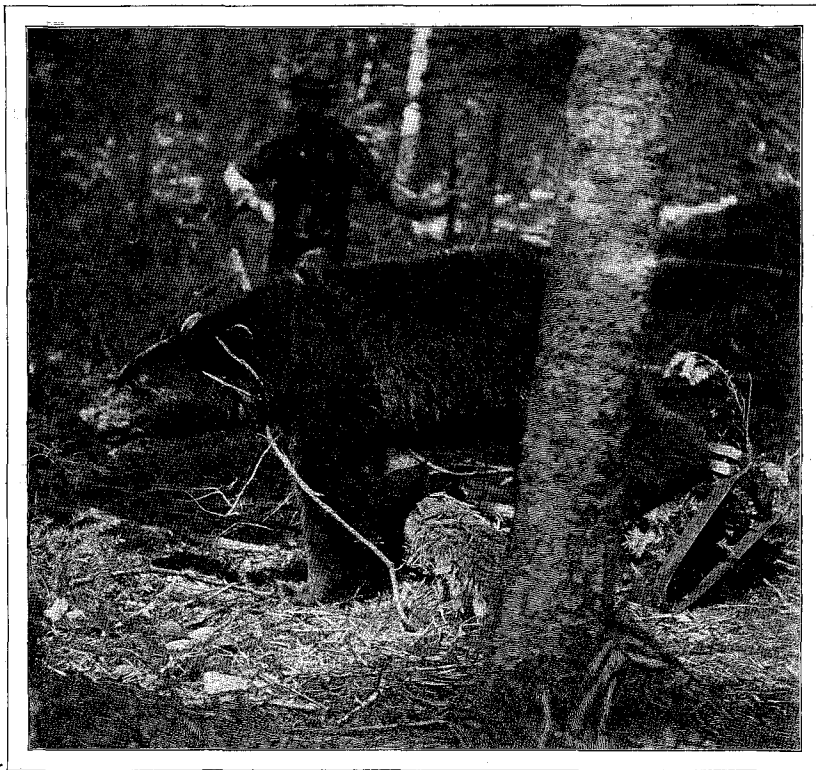
You cannot set a bear-trap anywhere and anyhow, and expect success. Bears like green woods when the sun is warm, and they must get to water about as



There stands a big ill-tempered bear.—Page 321.

often as a man must. Therefore a bunch of green timber close by the water, in the midst of burnt woods or barrens is an ideal bear-set. One trap in a place where bears are sure to come is better than ten set haphazard. A dozen traps, there-

ter, for a bear will not go through dry limbs if he can help it. The twigs break off and stick in his clothes. The trap is set in the opening on the fourth side. The steel springs are so strong that they cannot be pressed down by a man's weight.



Getting His Clog Snubbed by a Root.—Page 321.

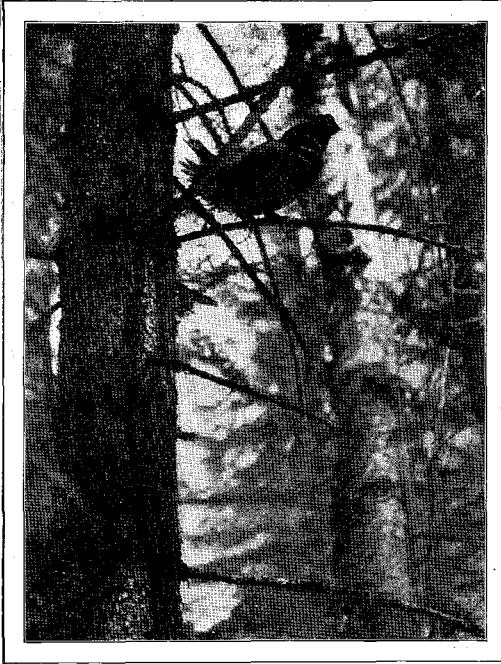
fore, may be strung out on a line twenty-five or thirty miles long. Henry scoured the country, and set traps in the neighborhood of all the bear-tracks he saw.

The trap itself is simply a large, double-spring affair, with jaws a foot wide. It weighs fifteen or twenty pounds. The New Brunswick forest is well marked with paths made by the wild animals. Traps are never set in the paths, for fear of catching something not wanted. There was once a game-warden who walked into a bear-trap; but that was a long time ago.

A place is selected where three or four small trees grow close together, and these are surrounded with brush on three sides. In this little enclosure the bait is placed. If the brush is old and prickly all the bet-

They are held down by levers, as shown in the photograph [page 318]. Then the trap is covered with moss, and slender sticks are stuck in the ground, crosswise, in such a way that the bear, in avoiding them, will put one foot on the pan of the trap and spring it. The placing of these sticks is the finest art in bear-catching. The people in the Harvey settlement have a peculiarity of speech by which they are known throughout the province. It was a man from Harvey who brought back a bear-trap to the blacksmith, saying: "This twop's no gude. It won't gwob a baw." But a skilful trapper can set a trap so as to "grab a bear" by any foot he pleases.

And what is the bait used? You would not guess in a long time. The very best



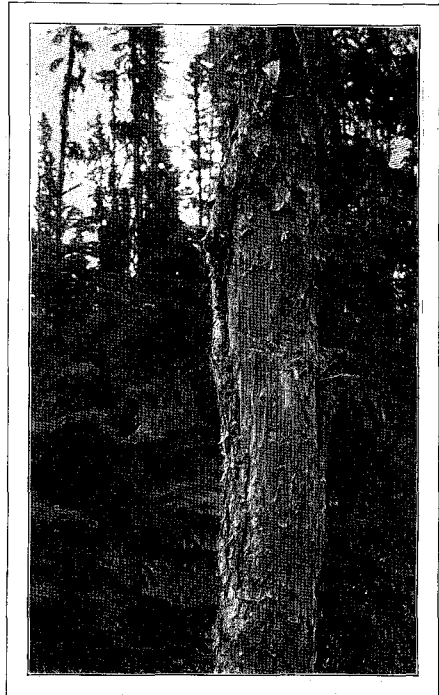
Spruce Partridge.

is a mixture of honey and cheese. Henry simply took a stick and split it, and into the opening plastered a tiny morsel of honey and a little slice of cheese. He placed the stick in the brush back of the trap, and left it; a patient, alert invention of the evil one of beardom. Almost anything will do for bear-bait. An old mocasin, a piece of birch-bark twisted up, a bit of raw-hide; any unusual thing will attract the attention of a bear, and he must stop to turn it over, as he comes loose-jointed along the path, swinging his head from side to side, and seeing everything with his shrewd little pig-eyes. He falls a victim not to his necessities, but to his curiosity, and his liking for dainties.

The trap is not chained to a tree. If it were solid, the bear would surely break it or pull his foot out of the trap. So it is fastened to a light clog, which allows considerable freedom, and at the same time catches in trees, roots, and bushes, to the great hindrance and vexation of the bear. Some of the large ones go a long way, though. Our biggest bear picked up the trap, chain, and clog, and carried them over a mountain, nearly three miles.

You would feel imposed on if you were

forced to travel as far daily as you will willingly walk to inspect traps. You reach the first one. There it is, mossy covering undisturbed, the bushes intact, and the dreadful thing beneath almost hypnotizing you to put your foot on it, to see if it is really there. Not a sign of a bear anywhere. Never mind. Three miles away, on the other side of yonder tangled mountain, is another trap. It takes two hours to get there. Clothes are torn by the prostrate trees, and muscles tried by constant climbing. The moss here, too, conceals only yawning ennui. Now we are at the river, and the next trap can be reached by canoe. But how high the water is! If we run down the next rapid we shall not get back to-day. So we canoe as far as the head of the rapid, and climb painfully up out of the deep gorge, to avoid the bushes. When the journey was made by canoe, it seemed no distance at all. Now the road has stretched out like a rubber string.

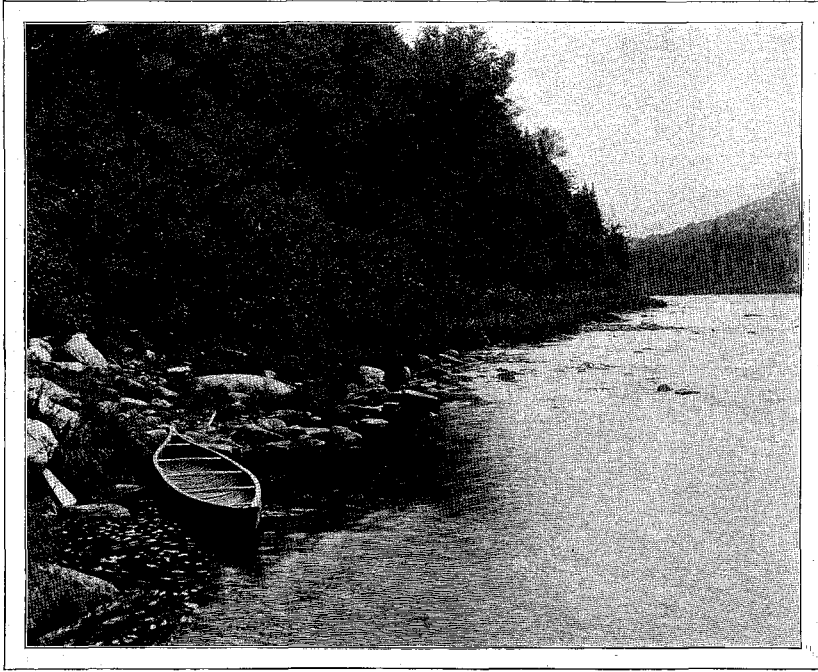


Bears' Striking Tree.

But see the moose ! There he is, swinging across the burnt upland at what seems to be a lazy walk. Yet a man would soon be winded who tried to equal his pace. This is the season of safety for all moose. We are not even carrying a gun. He is

black against the pale green of the spring foliage, as life-like as though in a cage at the zoo, stands a big ill-tempered bear.

"Well, old fellow, are you the boy that bit a hole in my canoe ?" inquires Henry, pointedly. The bear deigns no reply,



A June Twilight—9 P.M.

crossing ahead, and will probably get wind of us. Henry says perhaps not, as the sun is hot and the moisture rises. Sure enough, the big beast never turns his head, but trudges on, four feet at a stride, his black winter coat a little rusty, and his antlers nothing to speak of. In three months he will have a head-piece that will catch in all the trees, and then he will be very proud and important.

Now the moose has gone, and we have rested from our climb. It is all down hill to the dead birches which mark the location of the next trap. As we approach, unconsciously we increase our pace, and crane our necks to see. "Here's trouble," says Henry. The brush is scattered. The moss is torn. The trees show marks of frantic teeth. The ground is clawed, and trap and clog are gone. But not far. There is a broad plain trail. We break into a run as we follow, and there,

but when Henry gently touches the black nose with the end of his axe-handle, the bear snaps his teeth in fury. There is a very decent sunlight among the trees, and as I focus the camera, the bear concludes it is some new trap, and makes a rush for it, getting his clog snubbed by a root when five feet or so away. I make a picture, and Henry gives the bear a quick one-handed tap on the head with his axe. An instant ago the bear was biting great strips from that green tree. Now he lies as still as a log.

There were days at a time when there was nothing doing in bear-traps. The real rushing business did not begin until about the first of June, when the moose calves had got big enough to run fast. Then Henry discovered to his great joy that the bears had begun marking anew their striking trees. The trapper who takes possession of a stream by blazing



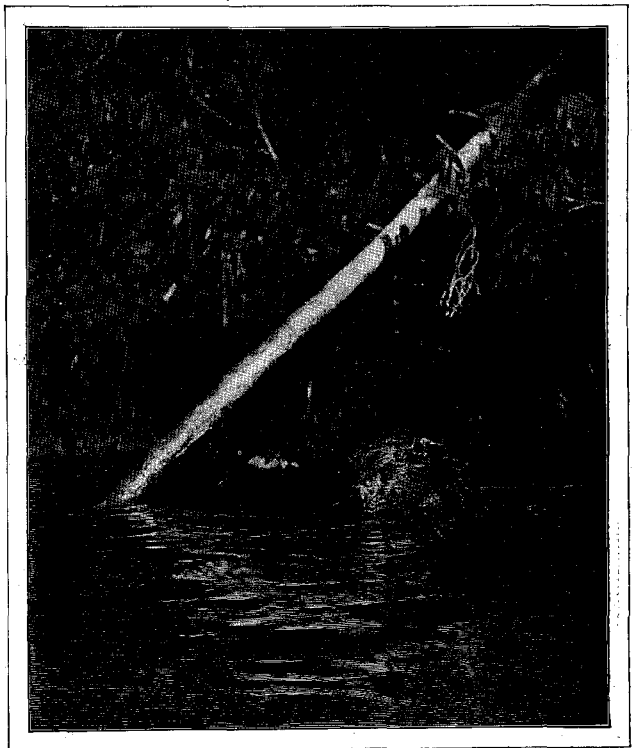
A Beaver House.

trees with his axe is only imitating a custom that was old before Elisha studied bear culture. The big bears stand up as high as they can by certain trees and mark them with their teeth. Each year they bite them anew, at the beginning of summer, and Henry showed me several freshly struck trees one day. "That bear is an old settler," said Henry, as we looked at the bites on the tree, higher than a tall man's head. So he rebaited the nearest traps, and burnt the feathers of a loon which had come too close to camp. "I think he will smell those burnt feathers a mile," said Henry. Also he toasted cheese and stuck bits of it in cleft sticks about the neighborhood, to get the bear interested.

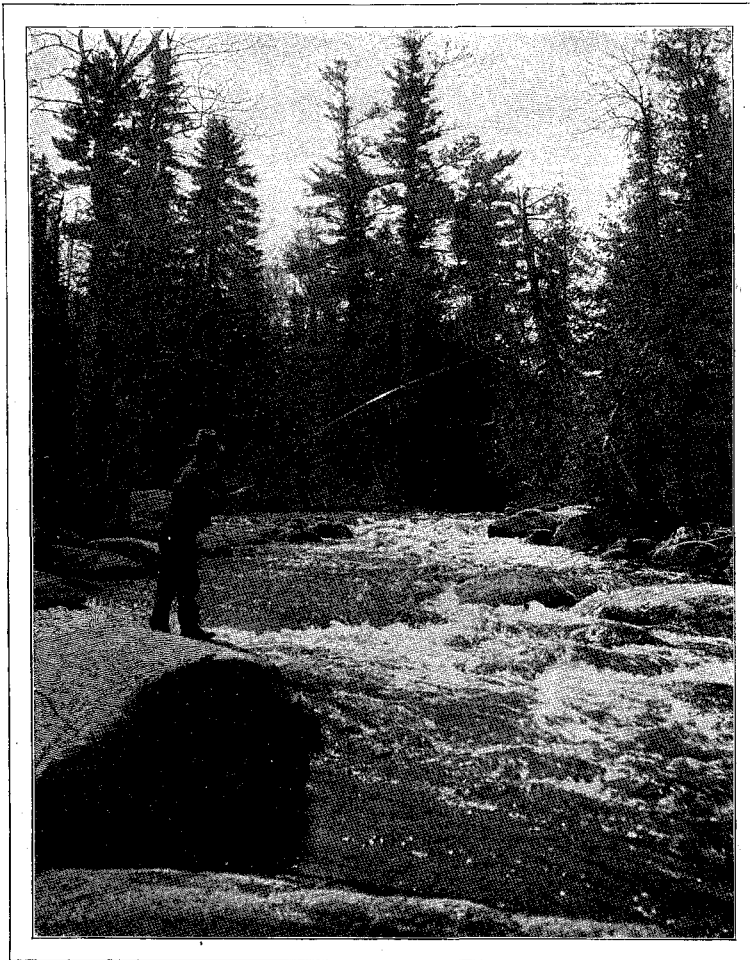
This diabolism worked its spell, for on approaching the trap, three days later, we heard roars and howls a quarter of a mile away. The bear had be-

come entangled in a snarl of blow-downs, and having fought the trap and bushes for hours, lay flat on his back as we approached, wailing his despair. Henry said he never heard a bear make so much noise.

There was a great difference in the way the bears acted. Some of them tried to get away, some became furious at our coming. But all of them took the final blow quietly, and died instantly. Henry seldom carries a gun while bear-



The Astonished Beaver.



Pocket Lake Pool.
(A Three Pound Brook Trout.)



get his one moose a year, he need carry no rifle.

The winter-birds were with us from the first. Flocks of friendly cross-bills, red and yellow, and the tiny speckled thistle-bird which we always saw in their company, were daily working about our various camps. They seemed to have a great liking for salt; and an old bag in which pork had been carried would furnish them pickings for days. These little birds are particularly fearless. Time and again while standing at the camp door they alighted on my fishing-rod, my shoulder, my hat. I would sit perfectly still, watching them feed within six feet of me, and they would peck away while watch-

ing me with their bright round eyes. The old red ones fought a good many sham-battles. Suddenly some nervous one would fly, for no reason at all, and with mimic thunder the whole flock would rise, only to return in a few moments, one by one. Henry caught several in his hands, right in open daylight, but I could not learn that trick. And when released they would not fly far, but soon return to their endless eating of nothing in particular.

I wish the partridge hunters of these United States could see how coolly the ruffed grouse took us. We saw them daily, seldom more than one or two at a time. But there was none of the alert



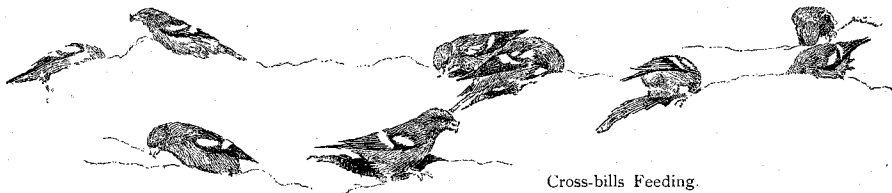
Moose Standing on Shore.

rigidity and noisy flight so familiar to us all. Cocks and hens alike would scarcely get out of our way. There are two kinds of partridge in New Brunswick, locally known as the birch and spruce. The birch partridge is the pheasant of Virginia, and the common friend of all bird-shooters of North America. Even this most suspicious fowl would not easily take alarm. I photographed one at six feet as it was walking on a log.

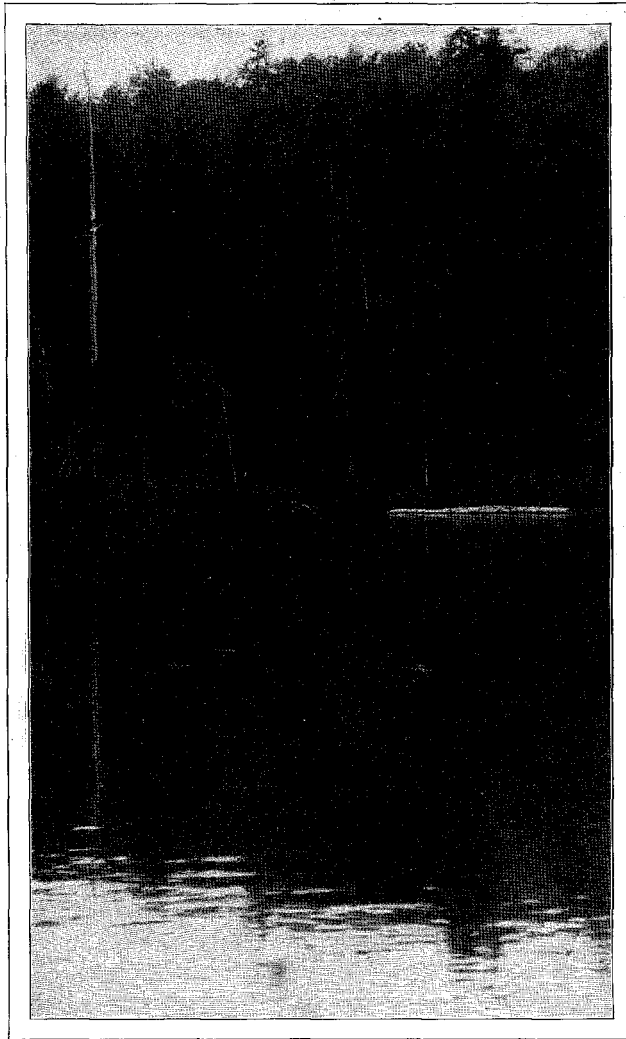
The woods in May are a continual Saengerfest. There are a great many people who never heard the morning song of a wren. I would willingly go a thousand miles to hear this little bird make his joyous prediction of fine weather. The lumbermen want rain to fall in the spring, so the streams will be full of water to float their logs to mill, and they have a saying

that "two wrens will hang a drive." But as I heard their happy songs, I did not care if they hung up all the logs in the province.

It was a splendid thing to see the wonderful increase in the beavers. In our pursuit of bears we were on many lakes and streamas. In scores of places the old dams and houses had been repaired, and at almost every turn the sticks, denuded of their bark, showed beaver-work. One day, running down the North Pole, we came upon a whole family at work. The Indians say "Beaver big fool; work all time, same as white man." One beaver we took wholly by surprise. He was dragging a stick down the bank, and it seemed to have caught on something. He was dragging it backward, beaver fashion, and had his head turned away



Cross-bills Feeding.



Moose in the Water—Evening.

from us as the canoe shot toward him. I had the camera in my hand as usual and instantly hoped for a picture. We almost ran the beaver down before he suddenly let go the stick and whirled around. For an instant he was the most astonished-looking animal you ever saw. I snapped the shutter, and the beaver dived almost under the bow of the canoe, not even having time to slap the water with his tail, as we heard others do. Sometimes a frightened beaver will whack the water so loudly that you would think a tree had fallen into it. Beavers have been entirely protected in New Brunswick for some years, and it is certain that we saw fresh

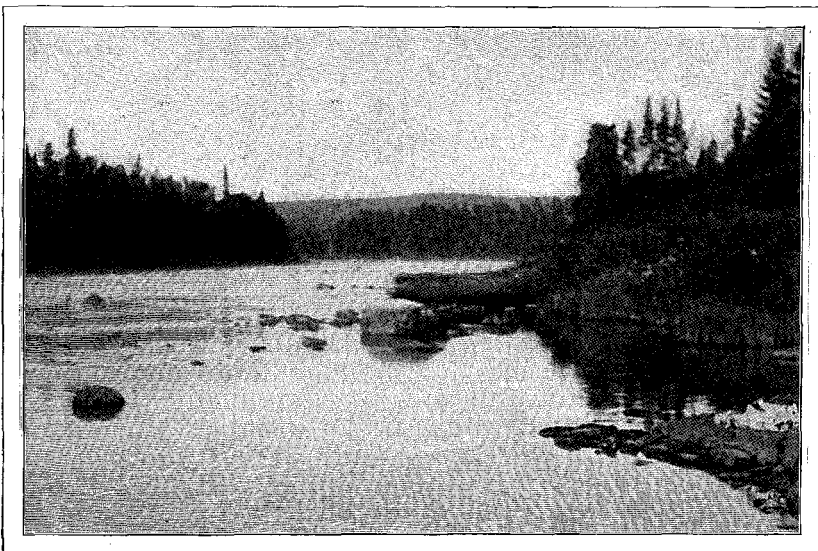
signs of scores of them in the different waters we crossed. We only heard of two being caught, and this was done by a man in a lumber crew away down river.

The fishing this spring after the trout began to gather in the pools as the water warmed, was the finest I have ever seen. I do not kill many fish, but I love to know they are about. At some of our camps the trout supply was ample without going beyond the water-hole. One morning, as we were coming out of the woods, Henry and I made a business of going to fish at Pocket Lake pool, where the stream pours out among big rocks. I got out of the canoe onto a bowlder, just big enough to

stand upon, using the canoe as a bridge, the other end being ashore. Henry went up the trail to see if he could find a toboggan that the driving crew's cook had borrowed and not returned. I hooked a fine two-pound trout, and trailed him about till he was tired out. Then I discovered that the canoe had drifted away from my rock, leaving me without place or means to land my fish. So I coaxed him close to my feet and firmly seized him by the mouth and one gill, getting my fingers nicely bitten. I pray I may have fingers torn by trout's teeth for a great many years yet. Lifting the trout from the water and keeping my balance on the little rock, I disengaged the hook, and let the fly trail on the water while I reached in my pocket for a large jack-knife to stop the struggles of the fish, which I had strung on my left thumb. And it is only the narrative of truth that as my fly dangled unwatched on the water, a wicked trout, much larger than the first, seeing my embarrassed condition, grabbed the fly and ran with it. I had a big flapping trout in one hand, a water-devil running out my line from the rod in my other hand, and no way to let go or get ashore. So Henry found me when he came back, trying my best to fight the two fish at once. We landed the second one, and the two of them weighed five pounds. That was the most concentrated fishing I had on the trip.

There is a general impression among those who take an interest in wild animals that their days on this continent are numbered. Some years ago the editor of a sportsman's magazine in New York wrote a very doleful article on "The Vanishing Moose." It is only the commonplace statement of an obvious fact to say that in New Brunswick the moose and deer are increasing in numbers. Henry reads a great deal, and often when we would come upon a bull or a cow and her calves in the woods he would laugh and say: "There are some more of those vanishing moose." The season when they go into the water to feed and to escape the insects had hardly come when we left the woods. Yet we saw more than thirty moose in three weeks while we kept count, and there were fresh tracks everywhere.

The last week or two, after the snow water had all gone, we began to see the moose feeding on lily roots. One day we were paddling home and on rounding a familiar bend I had a queer sensation that I had not before seen a rock which stood out of the water two hundred yards ahead. The canoe ran on for perhaps a minute, when suddenly there was a splash, and a long neck, head, and ears grew on the rock. What we had seen was the back of a moose, with her head submerged. She would not have seen us probably till we were close to her, but the wind blow-



Slightly out of focus and none the worse for that.

ing fair upon her from us caught her attention, and in a moment she began a springy trot for shore, leaving a wake of muddy water after she had disappeared in the woods. One evening at dusk we came upon a moose similarly feeding, and I touched her back with my paddle as we swept past her. She tore up the lily roots by the dozen with her feet, in her frantic rush for shore.

Bear-hunting was just becoming good when we left the woods and returned to the settlement, where we found the dwellers in the Miramichi beginning the attack

on the first run of sea-trout and salmon. Some day the salmon rivers of New Brunswick will be rehabilitated as the woods have been.

I went into the forest on the snow. I came out in the miracle of the northern summer, when the daylight was eighteen hours long. I travelled many miles up and down that indescribable wilderness, and saw many things which will ever linger in memory, a little indistinctly perhaps, like a photograph slightly out of focus and none the worse for that. After all, what can a man do in two months, in the woods?

THE CLOCK IN THE SKY

By George W. Cable

ILLUSTRATION BY HOWARD CHANDLER CHRISTY

"NOW, Maud," said uncle jovially as he, aunt, and I drove into the confines of their beautiful place one spring afternoon of 1860, "don't forget that to be too near a thing is as bad for a good view of it as to be too far away."

I was a slim, tallish girl of scant sixteen, who had never seen a slave-holder on his plantation, though I had known these two for years, and loved them dearly, as guests in our Northern home before it was broken up by the death of my mother. Father was an abolitionist, and yet he and they had never had a harsh word between them. If the general goodness of those who do some particular thing were any proof that that particular thing is good to do, they would have convinced me, without a word, that slave-holding was entirely right. But they were not trying to do any such thing. "Remember," continued my uncle, smiling round at me, "your dad's trusting you not to bring back our honest opinion—of anything—in place of your own."

"Maud," my aunt hurried to put in, for she knew the advice I had just heard was not the kind I most needed, "you're going to have for your own maid the blackest girl you ever saw."

"And the best," added my uncle; "she's as good as she is black."

"She's no common darky, that Sidney," said aunt. "She'll keep you busy answering questions, my dear, and I say now, you may tell her anything she wants to know; we give you perfect liberty; and you may be just as free with Hester; that's her mother; or with her father, Silas."

"We draw the line at Mingo," said uncle.

"And who is Mingo?" I inquired.

"Mingo? he's her brother; a very low and trailing branch of the family tree."

As we neared the house I was told more of the father and mother; their sweet content, their piety, their diligence. "If we lived in town, where there's better chance to pick up small earnings," remarked uncle, "those two and Sidney would have bought their freedom by now, and Mingo's too. Silas has got nearly enough to buy his own, as it is."

Silas, my aunt explained, was a carpenter. "He hands your uncle so much a week; all he can make beyond that he's allowed to keep." The carriage stopped at the door; half a dozen servants came, smiling, and I knew Sidney and Hester at a glance, they were so finely different from their fellows.

That night the daughter and I made