

ARTHUR HEMING, ILLUSTRATOR

By ARTHUR STRINGER

HERE in New York I happen to know two wild-life artists. One has just moved up to the Bronx. He moved there, he explained, so that he would be close to the Zoological Gardens. In other words, that clever and facile and feverishly working young artist gathers his "wild life" through the cage-bars and buffalo-fences of a city zoo. He chics his background, whether in spirit he happens to be with Roosevelt in Africa, or with some less illustrious cheetah-shooter in Central America. And on the whole, as a hard-working picture-maker, he does very well. The last time I was in his studio he had seventeen white mice, running as tame as kittens about the floor. He enjoyed their society much more than I did. But that, I fancy, was about as near as he ever got to "wild life."

The other portrayer of animal and outdoor life whom I know is a Canadian called Arthur Heming. Ten long years ago he drew the pictures for the first Canadian story I sold to the *Post*. Some time later, when I wanted him to illustrate another Northwest story of mine for another publication, I suggested his name to the anæmic and overworked editor. "Heming," repeated the busy man of the blue pencil, "Heming, who is he?" Then a light dawned on him and he exclaimed: "Oh, that's the man who travels five hundred miles to get a fact!"

The phrase has stuck in my memory, not only because it was a characterisation of the man and his scrupulous method of workmanship, but also because it seemed about as big a compliment as could possibly be tossed out to an artist in this era of off-hand and short-cut illustrators. It explains why such a magazine as *Scribner's* could send this young man a thousand miles into Canada to bring back a descriptive article on lumbering and river-rafting. For Heming, they say, is always right. He is the natural-born enemy of the "Canada Faker." And, as with a certain cerebral breakfast-food, "there's a reason!"

The reason is that Arthur Heming knows his country. He knew it long before *Harper's* took him up and sent him along with Casper Whitney through the Barren Grounds of his native Dominion. For over fifteen years, in fact, he has been supporting himself by that knowledge, as expressed through his brush and pencil. He was the first illustrator to make a living at his profession in Canada. He was among the first to realise, in his depiction of that frontier phase of life which is creeping closer and closed up towards the Pole, that fidelity to detail must not be swamped by pictorial enthusiasms. The pictorial enthusiasms he always had. The detail he made it a point to acquire. He "tripped" with the trapper. He lived with the Indian, side

by side with him, in his teepee. He bunked with the lumberjack. He investigated "white-waters" with the river-driver. He went over his ground. In his day he has travelled over four thousand six hundred miles by canoe (figure out the paddle-strokes if you care to); he has trudged over two thousand miles on snow-shoes. He has done his round five hundred miles by raft. For thirteen hundred miles he has followed dog-trains through the



Mr. Arthur Heming

Who is returning to Canada to act as Art Editor of the Canadian Courier.

Northern Wilderness. Into this wilderness, at different times and on different occasions, he has made no less than fourteen trips. Metropolitan recognition—and in London and Paris and New York and Berlin he has found it—did not convert him into one of those artists of the second dimension who divorce Art from actuality and "professionalise" their work. He did not become one of those studio-

rats who turn around, as it were, and eat their own tails. He kept going back to nature for both his facts and his inspirations.

This meant enthusiasm; and Heming is essentially a man of enthusiasm. It takes a lot of devotion to truth to travel eight hundred miles to draw a lynx or a black bear. It means danger and hardship and going without more things than the morning papers. But it has its rewards, its rewards quite outside of truth, and the mere completion of a canvas. There's a thrill to it—if you doubt me, ask Heming himself—there's the blood-tingling satisfaction of a long chase well ended, of a long quest rewarded, of a fine danger faced and vanquished.

It's somewhat curious to think that this man who can happily bunk with cussing cow-punchers, who can listen to timber-wolves through nothing thicker than a teepee-wall, tramped with bull-whackers and packers, sung with river-drivers, swirling down raft-ridden "cellars," loped along lonely patrols with mounted police, followed moose and caribou for a hundred miles to get nothing more than a pencil-sketch, broken his bannock among lousy half-breeds and sweated over weary portages with an empty grub-bag and a tightened belt—I say it's somewhat curious to think of this man of muscle and sinew being ensconced in a London studio, such as Brangwyn's, working in the midst of the great English artists. But there he has been, and there he has broadened his powers and added to his equipment. To point out that he is the only Canadian member of the Society of Illustrators, that small but select organisation which includes such names as Abbey and Pyle and Gibson and Pennell and Brangwyn, need not, in itself, mean a great deal. But when it is remembered that Heming will be and must be some day looked on as the faithful and authoritative exponent of that wild life which is slowly but surely passing away, that he is the true interpreter of a vast region of Canada which he has made peculiarly his own, then we can realise both his vogue and his value. To enumerate the magazines to which he has contributed would be to give a directory of the Periodical Publishers' Association. His book, "Spirit Lake," has been published serially in England and France and the United States. You see his stuff in everything from *The Idler* to the *Scientific American*, for to both the scientist and the idler there is appeal in his drawings. To call him the Remington of Canada would be as unjust and as inappropriate as to call Gertrude Atherton the Agnes Laut of the States. It would be like comparing the lily to the rose, which is always confounding and never conclusive. But some day when the North as we now know it has passed, when the wheat fields of Canada stretch far up into the Sub-Arctics and the caribou is a zoo curiosity and the moose a memory, we will go back to Heming for our record of things as they were, and we will realise that our debt to him is greater than we dreamed.



THE OLD IMPERIALISM AND THE NEW—NO APOLOGIES TO THE 'SEPARATIST' BOGEY.

Drawn by C. W. Jefferys