

now very happy. But I must relate a few particulars.

A few weeks after that evening, I was taken suddenly very ill, and soon lost consciousness in delirium. Of many days I remember nothing; but towards the close of a fine February afternoon, I opened my eyes to a knowledge of my situation, and began to realize that I had been very ill. I felt very weak, and one hand which lay upon the coverlet, was white and thin. Julia was sitting beside me, and bent over me with a look of the most tender affection, while a deep blush suffused her lovely countenance.

"Dear Charlie, you will soon be well again," she murmured.

"Perhaps so," I said feebly; "but what have I to live for!"

"Hush, do not speak so, or, indeed, not at all," she added, playfully, "for it is against the rules, you know, and I am a model nurse."

"Just one word," I pleaded, for something in her manner thrilled my very soul, and gave me courage to proceed; "I love you! May I hope?"

"Yes," she whispered, blushing—oh, charming blush! "Yes, for I love you."

"As a wife should, Julia?"

"Yes—but, indeed, you must not talk any more, or I shall be very angry," but a large tear which fell on my cheek belied a disposition to anger. But I grasped the little hands which were so tenderly arranging my pillows, and feeling my right, drew down the lovely face to me, and kissed it, and then meekly swallowed the draught she offered me, and closing my eyes, soon fell asleep.

We are to be married next month, and though Julia has not yet told me which of her three particular masculine friends stands highest in her estimation, I do not care, for I know that I stand above any of them.

If one of them marries soon, or anything else particularly interesting befalls them, I shall add it to what I have already written to this diary. Till then, Messieurs Adolph, Walter, and Frank, adieu.

Hamilton, C. W., 1866.

CANADA FOX-HUNTING.

FROM time immemorial Merry England has been renowned for her field sports; prominent amongst which may be reckoned her exciting pastime of Fox-hunting, the pride, the glory *par excellence* of the roystering English squire. Many may not be aware that we also, in our far-off Canada, have a method of Fox-hunting peculiarly our own—in harmony with the nature of the country—adapted to the rigors of our arctic winter season—the successful prosecution of which calls forth more endurance, a keener sight, a more thorough knowledge of the habits of the animal, a deeper self-control and greater sagacity than does the English sport; for as the proverb truly says, "*Pour attraper la bête, faut être plus fin qu'elle.*"

A short sketch* of a Canadian Fox-hunt may not, therefore, prove uninteresting. At the onset, let the reader bear in mind that Sir Reynard *Canadensis* is rather a rakish, dissipated gentleman, constantly turning night into day, in the habit of perambulating through the forests; the fields, and homesteads, at most improper hours, to ascertain whether, perchance, some old dame Partlett, some hoary gobbler, some thoughtless mother goose, allured to wander over the farm yard by the jocund rays of a returning March sun, may not have been forgotten outside of the barn, when the negligent stable boy closed up for the night; or else whether some gay Lothario of a hare in yonder thicket, may not by the silent and discreet rays of the moon, be whispering soft nonsense in the ear of some guileless, milk-white doe, escaped from a parent's vigilant eye. For on such has the midnight marauder set his heart: after such does he noiselessly prowl, favoured by darkness—the dissipated rascal—*querens quem devoret*, determined to make up, on the morrow, by a long meridian *siesta* on

the highest pinnacle of a snow-drift, for the loss of his night's rest. Should fortune refuse the sly prowler the coveted hen, turkey, goose or hare, warmly clad in his fur coat and leggings, with tail horizontal, he sallies forth over the snow-wreathed fields, on the skirts of the woods, in search of ground mice, his ordinary provender. But, you will say, how can he discover them under the snow? By that wonderful instinct with which nature has endowed the brute creation, to provide for their sustenance, each animal according to its nature, to its wants. By his marvellously acute ear, the fox detects the ground mouse, under the snow though he should utter a noise scarcely audible to a human ear. Mr. Fox sets instantly to work, digs down to the earth, and in a trice gobbles up *mus*, his wife, and young family. Should nothing occur to disturb his arrangements, he devotes each day in winter, from ten or half-past ten in the forenoon until four in the afternoon, to repose—selecting the loftiest snow-bank he can find, or else a large rock, or perchance any other eminence from which,

"Monarch of all he surveys,"

he can command a good view of the neighbourhood and readily scent approaching danger. Nor does he drop off immediately in a sound sleep, like a turtle-fed alderman, but rather like a suspicious, bloodthirsty land pirate, as he is, he first snatches hastily "forty winks," then starts up nervously, for several times, scanning all round with his cruel, cunning eye—snuffing the air. Should he be satisfied that no cause of alarm exists, he scrapes himself a bed, if in the snow, and warmly wrapped in his soft fur cloak, he coils himself up, cat-fashion, in the sun, with his bushy tail brought over his head, but careful to keep his nose to the direction from which the wind blows, so as to catch the first notice of and scent the lurking enemy. On a stormy, blustery day, the fox will, however, usually seek the shelter of some bushes or trees, and on such occasions is usually found under the *lee* of some little wooded point, where, steeped in sweet, balmy sleep, he can dream of clucking hens, fat turkeys and tender leverets,—sheltered from the storm, and still having an uninterrupted view before him. The hunter, when bent on a fox hunt, is careful to wear garments whose colour blend with the prevailing hue of frosted nature; a white cotton-*capot*, and *capuchon* to match, is slipped over his great coat; pants also white—everything to harmonize with the snow; a pair of snow-shoes and a short gun complete his equipment. Once arrived at the spot where he expects to meet reynard, he looks carefully about for signs of tracks, and having discovered fresh ones, he follows them keeping a very sharp look out. Should he perceive a fox, and that the animal be not asleep, it is then that he has need of all his wits and of all the knowledge of the animal's habits, he may possess. As previously stated the fox depends principally on his scent to discover danger, but his eye is also good, and to succeed in approaching within gun shot of him in the open country, the hunter must watch every motion most carefully, moving only when the animal's gaze is averted, and stopping instantly, the moment he looks towards him, no matter what position the hunter's may be at that time. No matter how uncomfortable he may feel; move he dare not, foot or limb; the eye of the fox is on him and the least movement would betray him, and alarm his watchful quarry. It will be easily conceived, that to successfully carry out this programme, requires nerves of steel and a patience *à toute épreuve*. It has been one of our friend's good luck once to approach thus a fox, within 20 feet, without his detecting us; needless to say, it was done against the wind. Some few hunters can so exactly imitate the cry of the ground mouse, as to bring the fox to them, especially if he is very hungry, but it is not always that this plan succeeds. The animal's ear is keen; the slightest defect in the imitation betrays the trap, and away canthers alarmed reynard at railroad speed. Some hunters prefer to watch the fox, and wait until he falls asleep, which they know he will surely do, if not disturbed, and then they can approach him easily enough against the wind. It is not unusual for them to get within fifteen

feet of the animal, before the noise of their footsteps causes him to awake,—as may readily be supposed in such cases, his awakening and death are generally simultaneous.

It is a fact worthy of note that the fox, if undisturbed, will every day return to the same place to sleep, and about the same hour. These animals are not as abundant now as they were a few years back.

The extent of country travelled over by a fox by moonlight, each night, at times is very great. Not many years ago, a Quebec hunter, who is in the habit of enjoying his morning walk at the break of day, informed the writer that on many occasions, he has seen the sly wanderer, on being disturbed from the neighbourhood of the Tanneries in St. Vallier street, hieing away at a gallop towards the Lorette and Charlesbourg mountains, a distance of nine miles each way.

Quebec, February, 1866. J. M. LEMOINE.

WINTER.

GRIM winter is upon us. Jack Frost is biting us keenly, and with his magic brush is decorating our windows with beautiful pictures.

"Nature in all her works subdued
Is but a frozen solitude."

But winter is not by any means a dull season; on the contrary it affords to many, much pleasure and amusement. The graceful and accomplished skater glides swiftly over the ice on the renowned Victoria and Guilbault Rinks, as well as the lesser ones along our river; while in the background may be seen the lover of horses and horse-racing, showing his animal off to the best advantage. The snowshoer plods his way over and around Mount Royal during the long and bright moonlight nights. Drives to Lachine and over to St. Lambert are all the rage. It is the time for the social entertainment, the warm and inviting fire on the little parlour hearth, the favourite author, and—excuse me advocate of total abstinence—the glass of hot punch. Oh! who would not enjoy the bracing Canadian winter! It is true, we have sometimes to suffer from the effects of frozen fingers, toes, cheeks, ears and noses, and are often compelled to say in the words of Shakespeare, "Tis bitter cold." But what of all this? We receive instead thereof, good health, one of Heaven's greatest blessings. Let us not grumble then, nor be dissatisfied, but always recollect that everything comes in its own appointed time.

And we ought also to learn a lesson from winter. It should put us in mind of the winter of old age, when our heads—if we are spared—will be whitened with the snows of years, and we shall be looking back with pleasure, upon the summer of our lives, even as we are now regarding the many happy days we have spent during the seasons of summer and autumn, which have just passed.

Many who began the spring time of life with as much, nay more strength and vigour than we, are now lying peacefully neath the clouds in the silent cemetery, and the wintry winds through the neighbouring trees, are whistling a requiem over their graves.

The cold, white marble alone keeps their vigils through the long silent nights. The winter's piercing blast, and the summer's scorching sun are to them alike. They have passed down to the silent city of the dead, and in the bustle, and hurry, and tumult of this world they are set down unremembered, save when we visit their graves and read the inscription on the tombstone that marks their last resting place.

Montreal, January, 1866.

ARTIST.

A POSER FOR SIMPKINS.—Employer (sternly): "Lato again, sir, as usual. What's the matter with your eye?" Simpkins (who has a black eye): "Why you see, sir—unfortunate accident, sir. As I was sitting up studying the 'Commercial Oracle,' the candle went out and I struck my head against the bedpost." Employer (grumpily): "Humph! Never heard four fingers and a thumb called a bedpost before."

* I am indebted for a deal of the information contained in this communication to the President of the Montreal Gymnasium, an old hand at fox-hunting.