

My First Moose Hunt.

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The moose, the biggest of the deer tribe in North America, is practically the same animal as the European elk, still to be found in Scandinavia, northern Russia, and possibly in some of the northernmost parts of Germany also. Moreover, he is of the same genus as the old Irish elk, whose enormous horns excavated from bogs fairly take away the breath of the sportsman who views them upon the walls of some museum or country house adjacent to the scene of their discovery. Although, however, his antlers cannot compare with the gigantic trophies of the antediluvian Irish elk, the moose of Canada is himself a tremendous creature, an old bull moose frequently standing as much as nineteen hands at the shoulder. With his very high withers and his Roman nose he is an ungainly beast, especially as his enormously tall legs give one the idea of being too long for his body. For all that, he is agile in the extreme, and those tall legs of his seem equally adapted for stepping over the fallen logs lying everywhere in the Canadian forest, or for splashing through the muskgs or swampy prairies, where he dearly loves to roam in search of his favorite food, the willow, for the huge hoof widens out as it sinks into the bog, while the great strength of the moose enables him to lift it out again easily and without apparent effort, no matter how deeply the limb may sink. With his huge, wide-spreading palmated antlers towering above his towered head, and his wild eye fixed upon you when about to charge, a moose is a ferocious looking animal indeed. How great is his strength none know better than the writer of these lines, whose scarred wrist bears witness to the occasion when for five minutes, at least, he preserved his life by hanging on to the horns of one of these huge creatures, who, after charging, carried him about the while as easily as had it been but a fly upon his antlers. That

was a terrible experience indeed, but as it was not my first moose, we will not go on with it here.

There are two methods of hunting the moose in the Dominion of Canada. One, which is chiefly practised in the lower provinces (that is, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick), is by hiding at night in the rutting season and calling. The call, which is made to imitate the tremulous cry of the cow moose, can be heard at a great distance. It is made with the assistance of a sort of funnel of birch bark, and, if the cry be skillfully given, will on a still night bring the bull moose from a distance of a mile or two right up to the very muzzle of the rifle of the hunter who is waiting to slay him. Thus seeking for love he finds death. It seems scarcely an honorable way to kill this mighty monarch of the forest !

The other method, that of still hunting, is that more usually pursued by the Indians and other hunters of the lone Northwest; and it is only by careful tracking, by great endurance, and by the greatest precaution that success can be attained by him who would kill his first moose. I am not alluding to another method of still hunting which usually depends more upon chance than on skill; this is shooting the moose from the birch-bark canoe, as he comes down to drink at the borders of some far-away lake or stream. This is a method of hunting far more successfully practised in shooting caribou than moose, as one can usually be more certain of the exact haunts of the former at a certain period than of the latter, who is a great traveller. Many a moose certainly has been slain in this way, but he is more likely to be obtained quite unexpectedly by a chance shot from a canoe than when deliberately employed in looking for him in this manner. Great slaughter of moose also takes place at times by the red Indians in the depth of the winter. At such a