

ROD AND GUN IN CANADA

VOL. IV.

MONTREAL, OCTOBER, 1902

No. 5

A Bear Hunt by Moonlight.

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Jack and I had determined on a trip back into the mountains. Our occupations were such that vacations had to be taken somewhat on the instalment plan, as it was rarely we could manage to get away for more than a week at a time, for a run back to the bush. Naturally, with such a limited time at our disposal, our choice of grounds was equally limited, but withal we had seldom any cause for complaint with our week off when we made the Laurentians our "stamping grounds." They were easy of reach—only a matter of a couple of hours' run by rail, and then back into the mountains another hour behind a good Canadian pony, when were reached the first of a chain of lakes, where most of our short stunts were put in. And scarcely a season passed but we managed to get back into our favorite haunts a few times. Game of all kinds was fairly plentiful, and the lakes, rivers and creeks are full of fish, and we therefore always had a good time on these short excursions up the line.

Settlement goes back through these parts in a jagged, uncertain sort of edge, parallel with the railways, and one climbing along over a mountain or through the bush, comes upon a clearing in all sorts of out of the way places. A man's nearest neighbor may be a quarter of a mile away, or he may be five,—it makes but little difference to these backwoodsmen, who speedily become discontented when settlement encroaches too close upon their "farms," and it is no

matter of serious thought to pull up stakes and go further back to where they can be left alone.

It was to one of these little clearings we had betaken ourselves in the fall of 1898, where we proposed putting in the better part of a week or two, with no other object perhaps than a few brace of partridge, some ducks and a little quiet fishing.

Jack, Harry G. and myself comprised our outfit. Jack and myself knew almost every stone throughout the mountains, but with Harry it was different; he was a veritable tenderfoot, as far as the mountains were concerned, but as good a hand in a boat to windward as ever reefed a sail in a "blow." His experience, up to the present, in the fishing and shooting line had consisted of an occasional snipe and a half day with a rod in the hopeless task of trying to hook a sucker, along the water front in the vicinity of the city. Hence, it was more with a desire to "see what you fellows find so much to talk about," as he expressed it, that he volunteered to come along, just to fill up.

Our bush friend, "Big Jim," picked us up at the lakes, where Ned and his pony had dropped us, and took us the balance of the way up to his clearing, over various lakes and portages.

Big Jim was a worthy representative of life in the wilderness, straight as a string, a shade over six feet one in his socks and broad of beam in proportion; the weigh beam went up with a thud