

TENTING IN WINTER.

On a cold, frosty, January morning, not many years ago, while the stars were still bright, and the night wind blew keen and cutting, a party of six individuals might have been observed, travelling in a north-westerly direction along the road leading out of the city of Quebec known as the Lorette Road.

The party consisted of five young clerks and an old French-Canadian driver—of whom more anon—and was divided in two vehicles, a cariole and a sleigh containing the impedimenta. The latter was driven by one of the young men, while the former was engineered by the old driver and drawn by an antiquated animal, the praises of whose steady gait he was continually sounding—it could never be induced to trot without first undergoing any amount of abuse from its driver and a liberal castigation into the bargain.

Their destination—a lake not fifty miles from the ancient capital; their object—a “good time” generally, fishing and shooting in the bush, for a fortnight.

By sunrise the travellers had reached the higher part of their journey, and were crossing the ridge of hills, from which they would bid farewell to the city for some time. They paused on reaching the summit, and looking back towards the city the scenery was very picturesque. In the distance lay the city, the bright sun shining upon its metal roofs, now and then dimmed by the driving clouds of white smoke from countless chimneys. Beneath them, the country roads, winding in all directions, were dotted with *habitants* on their way to market, and the music of many sleigh bells came to them on the wind.

But no time could be spared for sight-

seeing, if our travellers were to pass the night under their tents; so with a last admiring glance towards the city, a general lighting of pipes, and a vigorous application of the eel-skin to the horses, the journey was resumed, and they almost immediately entered a long bush road, on which the houses were few and far between. The road too, was very narrow, and some caution was requisite in passing other horses, without one party coming to grief by being pushed off the road into deep snow. Several times the horses had to be unharnessed and led carefully past each other, the vehicles being dragged by hand after them.

At one time a small animal was seen trotting quietly along the road before the party, which caused some comment, as no house being near it was thought unlikely that it should be a dog. On nearing it, it proved to be a red fox. Of course, as is invariably the case on such occasions, the firearms were carefully packed away at the very bottom of the load, and so the party had the mortification of seeing Reynard, when he had gone as far as he wished, deliberately turn off the road and walk away into the bush, a shot from a revolver somewhat quickening his movements but doing him no harm. Without other troubles than those already mentioned, *i.e.*, passing other teams on the narrow roads, an annoyance incidental to all country travelling in this vicinity in the winter season (and also of having the misfortune to lose their way for a time, thereby incurring some six miles more travelling than they anticipated and losing much valuable time), our party arrived on the shores of Lake Ontario about two in the afternoon.

Being so late in the day, it had been de-