

CORRESPONDENCE.

CANADIAN HUNTING.

To the Editor of the VOLUNTEER REVIEW.

DEAR SIR:—The following notes from a diary kept by my friend Lieut.-Colonel Miller, commanding the battalion of Volunteer Militia, having been handed to me for publication in the VOLUNTEER REVIEW, I forward herewith, thinking that they may prove of interest to many of your numerous subscribers.

Col. Miller is one of the keenest hunters in the Eastern Township and has been renowned for many years past as a most successful deer killer.

Yours very faithfully,
R.L.

MY FIRST CARIBOO HUNT.

Having heard that Cariboo were to be found somewhere north of the St. Francis and that one had actually been killed not many miles from Drummondville, I was not long in making my preparations for visiting that locality, for although I have had some rare sport deer hunting yet I had never even seen a Cariboo. I did not make known my business to any one except a few particular friends, being determined that if I should prove unsuccessful there would be but few to laugh at my disappointment, but my precaution nearly brought me into trouble, for on my arrival at St. Germans, a village about five miles from Drummondville, I fell in with an inquisitive countryman who on receiving evasive answers to his numerous questions, had his suspicions aroused, and drove on before me to Drummondville to warn the authorities of my approach, declaring his belief that I was a Fenian spy! I, however, evaded any unpleasant consequences by driving direct to the residence of Mr. Robt. Brack, in whom I found a most hospitable host and an enthusiastic sportsman. This gentleman agreed to accompany me to the woods and next morning we started early for our hunt. The day appeared rather too warm for snow shoeing and the snow being light would pack under the shoe, making it heavy travelling, whilst the bushes being loaded with snow when the sun became strong enough to melt it, would saturate our clothes and moccasins. Nothing daunted, however, by the unfavourable appearance of the weather, we got our breech loaders, snow shoes, hatchets, packs and two days provisions stowed away in the sleigh and set out on our trip.

Crossing the ice to the north side of the St. Francis river a drive of some miles brought us to a lumber camp, we made enquiry if any cariboo had been heard of in the vicinity, and received the welcome information that one had been seen browsing the night before on the branches of a newly felled tree some distance from the camp and we determined as it was getting too late to commence operations to give the woods between the camp and the river a good search

next day, my companion Mr. Brack was unfortunately unable to remain as he had intended, his presence being required in Drummondville next morning, and it was decided that after supper at the camp he should take the horse and sleigh and drive home that night which he did accordingly, but before starting gave me some good hints about the habits of the animal I was about to pursue. I also found a most agreeable companion in the person of the foreman who had had a good deal of practice in moose hunting, having himself killed upwards of eighty and is yet only in the prime of life. I must here enter my protest against the manner in which the best of game have been wantonly slaughtered when out of the season, and therefore unfit for use. To hunt deer or moose in the month of February is both cruel and unsportsmanlike, indeed the law makes it a criminal case, at this season of the year the females are heavy with young, and being unable to proceed on the hard crust, which breaks through with them at every step, the animals fall an easy prey to the hunter. My anxiety to get a fair shot at a cariboo was sufficient to keep me from sleeping late and I turned out at day break; the morning was all I could have wished, a hard frost having taken place during the night with every appearance of its continuing, so after a hearty breakfast I strapped on my snow shoes, shouldered my pack and loaded my trusty rifle and bidding good bye to my hospitable friends and proceeded on my tramp. I made at once for that part of the forest where the cariboo had been observed browsing on the branches of the felled timber and soon fell in with the tracks which following up, brought me to another clearing where more trees had been cut down, on the tops of which it was evident he had been at work, I found also that he had lain down several times which was all in favour of my coming up with him. I now began to travel more cautiously fearful of losing the chance of a shot; the wind was favourable, blowing towards me, preventing him from scenting the hunter, as their sense of smell is very acute.

I had now travelled perhaps two miles and it was clear the cariboo was still keeping along the lumber works occasionally stopping to tear the moss off the trees as he passed. The track being still frozen I did not expect to come up with him for the next two hours, when I heard suddenly the shout of the lumbermen to their teams, and in a few moments more I saw my first cariboo (and a splendid fellow he was) trotting leisurely along before me from right to left at a distance of about 200 yards.

The cariboo moved along with an ease and grace I had never seen equalled by any other denizen of the forest or indeed by any other animal, either wild or domestic. The moose although of larger bulk, cannot compare with the cariboo or reindeer of Eastern Canada in point of build or ease of move-

ment; he was evidently startled by the shouts of the lumbermen, and had not seen my approach, I therefore stood perfectly still and admired his graceful bearing as he trotted through two and a half feet of snow, at the rate of 2,40, a speed quite too fast for me to try my rifle with so much standing timber between us, so after he had passed out of sight, which he did not take long to do, I followed up his track very cautiously not wishing to put him again on his mettle being quite satisfied with the exhibition of speed I had witnessed. I had not proceeded far when I found by knowledge of woodcraft what it would be impossible for a novice to ascertain, that he had slackened his pace and begun to walk eating the moss as he passed on, I, therefore, moved along very slowly, keeping a sharp look out for a shot in a short time I came within sight of him walking leisurely along and browsing as he went, unconsciously that the eye of the hunter was on him, and that he held in his hand the death dealing Snider rifle. The intervening timber, however, again saved him, and I watched him till he passed out of sight behind a high knoll covered with spruce timber towards which I made with cautious strides in the hope of getting a fair shot at him from behind it, so creeping up till I could just see over the top, I took a careful survey of the ground around, but though I could see the track leading off I could see no cariboo; still gazing in the same direction I fancied I saw something move that looked very much like the top of his horns behind a small knoll. I kept my eye on the object when it again moved fully convincing me that he was lying down, the knoll and snow hiding him completely except the tip of his antlers which had first caught my eye. My mind was now made up, and I determined to await his pleasure to arise and give me a dead shot, so quietly slipping off my pack and snow shoes and placing the latter under me for a seat, I took a nip from my hunting flask and began to speculate on the distance I would have to draw trigger which I estimated at about two hundred yards and elevated my sights accordingly. He was in no hurry it appeared to get up, and I was just beginning to feel chilly when at the end of nearly an hour he quietly arose and stretching himself up gave me what I so much coveted, a fair shot at the most vital part of his body; my rifle soon broke the silence of the deep woods, while through the smoke I could see the noble animal bound fully six feet high alighting on his back as he fell, his lungs gave one quiver and all was still, I made my way to him through the snow not waiting to take up pack or snow shoes, and found he was stone dead, my bullet having passed direct through his heart and embedded itself in a tree on the other side of him. I viewed my prize with satisfaction but would have given much to have got him out of the woods as he was, but this was impossible, being alone