

low-held head they seem to wander aimlessly about. How their mouse-coloured bodies, their black noses and glinting antlers, offset the perfect blending of the green and white background! How odd their queer-shaped feet appear as they leisurely draw them along! How the trail winds and twists through the greenwoods, your eyes roam the shadows of the ever-greens for the coveted head, you grip your rifle in anticipation. How glad you are you have come! And so it was on that ever-to-be remembered afternoon. Abe paused. I had no question to ask but gently stepped forward. There was the cow, side on, looking me full in the face. I knew they could not possibly have got our scent and I contentedly froze in my tracks. Then, apparently satisfied, she turned her head, and, following the direction of her gaze, I saw two bulls emerge from the forest. Something told me they would walk towards her and I waited. The young one did, and passed the opening in the trail. The larger one paused behind two firs, some seven inches apart at his back, and some sixty odd yards away. I could just see his rump and his head. "Better take him," whispered Abe, "that's a pretty good head."

I wonder now I took so much time about it and I suppose that is why I remember it so well. How often when we shoot big game we do it almost too quickly, and afterwards try to remember each detail. This bull had more points than any I had seen, though not as large as two of the heads seen the previous week, and yet, I couldn't decide. I suppose it was that 39-point head.

Just then he turned and looked me full in the face. The light struck against the top of the left antler and gave it a wide-looking appearance. That settled it. But how to shoot? If he would only please move a step or so forward. But he did not and I carefully pressed. As the muffled report came back to me from the shadows of the wood, the stag moved slowly forward, the low-held head betokening a mortal wound. Quickly I threw in another shell and started forward. At the same moment he commenced to clear the deadfalls in single bounds, and I pressed again. The stag was in mid-air at the time, he stood on his head, and came down with a resounding crash, his brow-prongs buried between two deadfalls. On examination the head bore twenty-four points, two brow-prongs and one water-break.

So ended my 1908 caribou hunt with guide Arthur Pringle of Stanley, N.B., and my first trip to the famous Bald Mountain country, situated some sixty odd miles from Newcastle, on the Intercolonial Railway, and considered the best all-round caribou country in New Brunswick. As I have said, the sighting of game every hour we were on the trail was as an open toll gate to the passing hours, and I derived a satisfaction from the entire trip not met with in any of my many moose expeditions. For instance, there is a certain amount of "open" travelling which is distinctly part of the game, and which lends a zest to the sport as unique as it is delightful.

As to the habits of these restless children of the forest, much can be said. During the summer they generally frequent the dense thickets at the heads of streams, where they raise their young. As fall approaches they work down towards the barren and open hillsides of these same streams, and, when the first real cold weather sets in, frequent the open country for the caribou moss which they dig up from beneath the snow. There are, of course, sections where caribou are found every week of the open season, though not the same sections. In fact, there are many well-versed woodsmen who will openly admit the caribou is, to them, an as yet unsolved mystery. They are here to-day, gone to-morrow, not back for a week or so, and nowhere we know of in the meantime. I have heard many theories advanced as to the strange manner in which caribou will sometimes desert an entire section. One concerns blowdowns. Should perchance a wind-storm sweep down several thousand feet of timber in a caribou district you may bank on finding caribou there that fall. By what means they locate these windfalls is, of course, unknown. But locate them they do, and feed in large numbers on the moss deposited in the upper branches. But the caribou, according to his nature, is his own worst enemy. They are continually on the move, roving from place to place, and if you are travelling through a caribou country in the spring of the year you will find many carcasses of calves, who, left to shift for themselves in the deep snow,

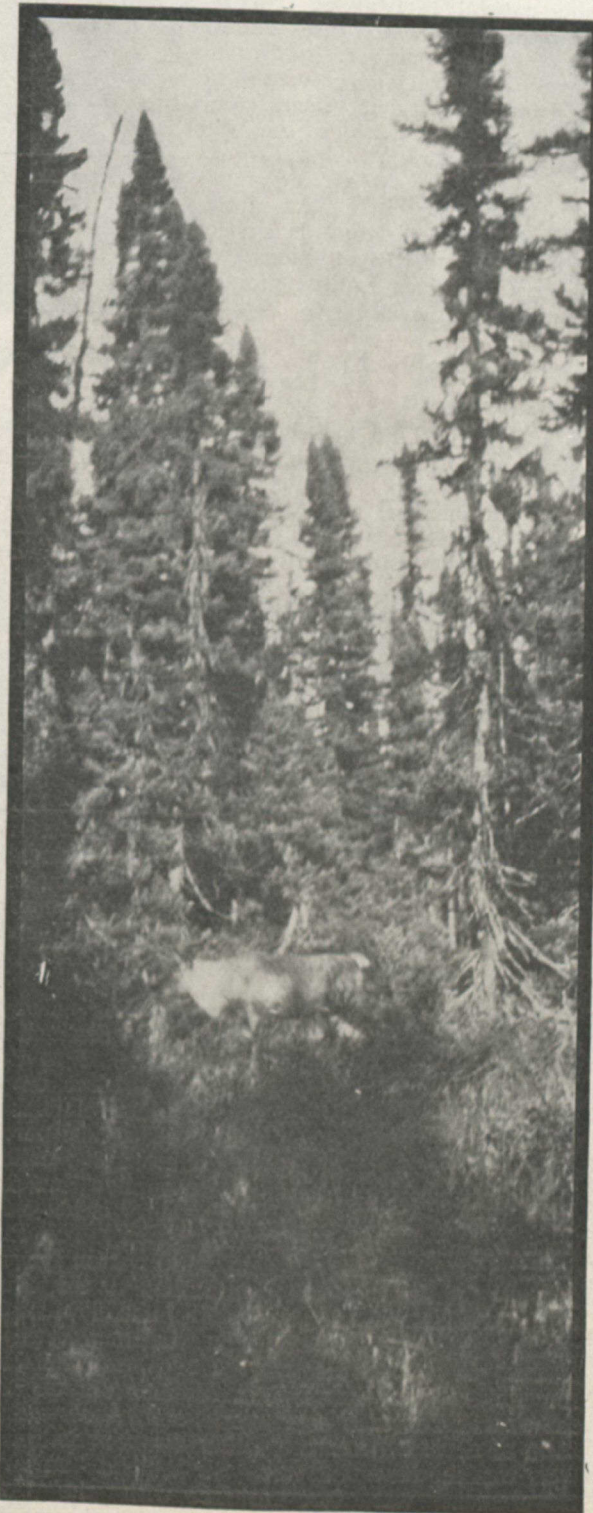
were unable to keep up with the wandering herd. This may also pertain to Newfoundland caribou.

November is the best time to hunt them, unless you visit Bald Mountain, which bears the unique distinction of having herds frequent its



This tea-party had really nothing to do with the hunting expedition, but the picture illustrates the same spirit in a somewhat different form.

open country during October. The old stags shed one antler about the second or third week in November, invariably the left, and should be hunted during the first two weeks of the month. As to the colour of antlers, I am of the opinion that much depends on the nature of the greenwoods on which the antlers are rubbed to clean them of the



A picture of a live Caribou in the woods is rather unique, but the writer of this article has succeeded in taking several. This is one of the best.

velvet, and also that the earlier the velvet is shed, the darker the antler will tan. The very old caribou also possesses two holes in the skull, just below the eyes. Should the fall be particularly dry, as in 1908, the caribou will carry their antlers for an additional week or so. Again in some countries, when a dry season prevails, the herds will not be seen in the open country in large numbers during the daytime, though their tracks may be there to follow.

In stalking caribou, the prime factor is the wind. Keep it in your face, and never move a muscle as long as you are kept under surveillance by a mouse-coloured head. Always watch your cows. In the old days, before the high power rifle was perfected, the Nimrods of the time would sling their smooth-bores over their shoulder, cut two firs and sharpen them at the butts (small trees), and, with a tree in either hand, work upon all fours, on a feeding herd, as they basked in the open. At other times a tanned caribou hide, tanned with the fur on, would replace the shrubs.

On windy days when a storm or blizzard prevails the herds will keep to the lee of the hills and the greenwoods, but on a fine winter's morning you will find them basking, sometimes a hundred in a flock, in the hummocks of the open country. If you are wise you will wait for those perfect days before picking your head. In shooting in the greenwoods you may drop your stag, and, at the report of your rifle, discover a head twice as good, clattering through the tree-trunks. In the open your work is cut out, for in such herds there is generally one pretty good head. When but half a mile away when first sighted with the wind blowing in your face, anywhere from two to six hours may elapse in covering that half-mile. Calling caribou is resorted to when visiting a stretch they are known to frequent, perchance some wandering bull is browsing in the thicket. It will also, under favourable conditions, bring a stag out from a herd. It is entirely different from moose calling, in so much as it is nothing but a coaxing call used on the spur of the moment and would, at the most, carry but a few hundred yards. It sounds like asthmatic cough and reminds you of a large edition of a dog, coughing up a bone.

And then there are, of course, many things which the guide books never mention. They pertain to "Christmas Post Card" skies, meals munched in silence, friendships made to stay, and dreamlands never fathomed. Who has not paused in a snow-thatched "dingle," and, unmindful of the cold, most contentedly mused as the "toohoo—hoo—hoo—ho—ho" of the great-horned owl broke the otherwise perfect stillness of the night. How the white-robed chariots of heaven roll across the azure sky as the light of the full moon trickles through the pine tops. With what a sigh we turn to the sleeping camp and gurgles in our delight as we contentedly turn in our blankets. Long toward morning you stir, perhaps to feed a hardwood stick to the creaking cooling stove, and pause to glance out the tiny window, set so deep in the great logs shadow. "Not daylight yet!" for all is moonlit in the snow-guarded lanes of the forest. Perchance you dream of a record head after wondering if you yourself will ever break the record and what your friends will say if you do. You think perhaps of the feeding herds at that minute roaming the greenwoods, if a lynx has visited "Tom's" trap, and you drop off to dream that the cook has grown gigantic antlers and that a ton wouldn't move your trigger.

Editor's Talk Criticised

A CRITICAL and cultured reader has sent a letter to the CANADIAN COURIER in which he strongly objects to the tone of "Editor's Talk" last week. Though he does not allege flippancy, he probably means it when he speaks of the reference to Bryant's "Thanatopsis." He agrees, however, that "there was something wrong with Bryant" when he wrote the poem; and adds that it was in *memoriam* of the death of the poet's sister. He alludes to the closing passage with great reverence—"So live that when thy summons comes." We entirely agree with him; but beg leave to denote an odd coincidence: the man who wrote "Editor's Talk" last week, years ago used to repeat over and over in the autumn woods of Canada the whole of that sombre threnody; and was so obsessed by it that he even wrote passages of it in autograph albums. Which proves that there may have been something wrong also with the writer of "Editor's Talk."