



"I SUDDENLY CAME IN SIGHT OF A MOOSE."

RIDING A MOOSE.

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OUR camp was in the heart of that wilderness which occupies the tongue of land between the Bay of Fundy and Minas Basin—a wilderness wherein the moose yet abound, and bears are growing yearly more and more numerous. It was a crisp October night, and the fire burned vigorously in front of our open "lean-to." The tall black birches and maples surrounding the camp were lit up sharply, while the space between them lay in deepest shadow, with here and there a low-swinging branch whose dewy leaves gleamed against the darkness. A smell of broiling steaks was in the air.

We were lounging in various attitudes, according to each man's idea of comfort, upon the heaps of blankets that littered the floor of the camp; and were awaiting in eager expectancy to partake of the first moose-meat of the season.

"How well I remember," I remarked, "the proud moment when I served up to the rest of the boys the steaks that I had sliced from my first moose! They were just such steaks as those which Barney there is cooking with such care. That first moose, how I loved him! And to think that just because I loved him so, I shot him!"

"I remember *my* first moose," said Sam, "with half a feeling of shame."

"How's that?" inquired the Doctor, who was cutting bread in slices an inch thick. "Was it close season?"

"Oh, not quite so bad as that, my dear boy," answered Sam; "but, you see, instead of shooting him, I rode the poor creature to death!"

Here Sam paused, doubtfully, and looked at the steak.

"Let's hear about it, now," I exclaimed. "That steak won't be cooked for seven or eight minutes, and if something isn't done to distract my attention, I shall eat it raw. Never was so hungry in my life."

"All right," said Sam, "it won't take long to tell it. It happened this way. I had gone to Joyce's lumber camp, on the Miramichi, early one winter, just to see what life in the camp was like, and to get a little shooting. I may say, in parenthesis, that I got enough shooting, and too much of life in the camps. Don't get impatient now, there is no hurry! One morning as I was wandering about a mile from the camp, in a direction opposite that in which the choppers were at work, I came upon the fresh tracks of a large moose. My heart beat quicker—a moose was just then my sole ambition. The snow was deep and soft, and I could see that the animal was making slow and laborious progress. I was, of course, on snowshoes. Looking to my rifle to see that there was a cartridge in place, I set off in hot pursuit.

"After tramping about a mile and a half I suddenly came in sight of the moose, a big bull. He was standing on the very brink of a deep ravine, at the bottom of which, as I knew, flowed a shallow river known by the name of Falls Brook. The animal was sniffing the air and looking about apprehensively. I raised my rifle eagerly, took a quick aim, and pulled the trigger. There was no result. The weapon was only at half-cock. Angrily, but noiselessly, I rectified my stupid mistake; but that very instant the creature must either have seen me or winded me, for he disappeared with a plunge down the ravine. I rushed forward, and in my hurry failed to check myself on the edge of the decline. I went rolling and sliding headlong to the bottom, and brought up in the icy current,