

A TIMAGAMI FISH STORY



SHE said she didn't believe it. "It's of a piece with all those other Canadian fish stories," said the Cleveland professor's wife. "I want you all to understand that I'm

A Piscatorial Doubter," she added, with a decisive snap. A deep hush fell on all. The pub-a-pub, put-a-put, of Oderick Perron's (pronounced per-ong) speed launch as it rounded the corner of Bear Island past the Fire-Ranger's Hall, died away, and nothing broke the silence

except the yelp of a cur back among the Indian wigwams, and the faint sound of a crooning song as some Indian mother nearby sang her papoose to sleep, rocked in its wildwood cradle.

We were sitting on the verandah of Walsh's wigwam. The setting sun was just sinking behind the pine covered hills of the mainland. Its golden radiance bathed hillside, island and lake in a glorious halo. The evening breeze just kissed the placid surface of old Timagami, and sent a swarm of ripples dimpling over its azure breast. Some one hummed out in the silence,

Wondrous Timagami, Wasacsinagami,
Deep rushing rivers, and skies that are blue.

Out on thy deeps again, sing me to sleep again,

Sing me to sleep in my birch-bark canoe;
Back to the wilds again, show me the way,
Make me a child again, just for a day.

Sitting far back in a corner of the verandah was a quiet looking man clothed in corduroy breeches and a grey sweater. Fumbling in the inside breast pocket of his four-button sack, which hung on a chair beside him, he produced a well-thumbed photograph, showing an elderly man seated on a rock, poising in the air a magnificent fish suspended from a gaff which he held in his right hand.

"Say, Madam," said he, "I keep this photograph for just such 'doubters' as you.

"This grey trout (*christivomer namay-cush*) was caught one day last week by a professor from the Southern States, who is staying at Wabikon Camp for the summer. They catch many such trout between Wabikon and High Rock, and if you go over there one of Miss Orr's fish dinners will convince you of the superior quality of the fish."

THE lady took the photo in her hand, and studying it for a moment, shot back, "What did it weigh?" "Oh, about 10 pounds," quietly responded he of the corduroy.

"Well, that's a different story from the 20-pound fish we have been hearing about to-night," she said.

Just then a demure little Miss who had just come up from Cochrane Camp and had so far taken no part in the conversation, stepped over to the still unconvinced Cleveland and said, "How would you like to go fishing with the 'kids' at Cochrane Camp?" And suiting, the action to the word, she whipped out a cute photograph, showing two lads standing beside a canoe and holding on a stout stick a magnificent pike (*Esox lucises*).

"That's not a 10-pounder," said the little Miss. "That pike tipped the beam at a little better than 16 pounds, and was caught by that tow-headed 12-year-old you see standing this side of the canoe."

Everybody was interested at once. Everybody wanted to know where the catch was made, and when they knew it was in the South Arm, all wanted to try their luck in these waters immediately. So it was that arrangements were made at once with Oderick Perron for a special trip down the lake next morning.

By M. PARKINSON

Everybody arranged to go. The Cleveland Doubter said she would give the water a fair trial. So she engaged Jim Petrant (pronounced pet-tra), the expert guide, to direct her piscatorial efforts in the morning.

There was a great buzz of expectancy around the blazing spruce logs in the great hearth fire of the Wigwam that evening. Everyone was recounting fish stories. Many were looking over and assorting tackle for the morning. At last the dying embers were left alone. All were off to bed, sleeping, and, perchance, dreaming of tugging trout and leaping black bass.

The morning opened cool and clear. Everyone was in high spirits. Even the Doubter from Cleveland seemed to be reconciled to the signs of good luck, which filled all with a sense of elation. Promptly at nine, with the roar of an opened muffler, and the flourish of a grand curve, Oderick drew the St.

and lost itself in the limpid waters, after they had each ceased to be interested in counting the drops as they fell from Jim's paddle and ran scurrying like globules of silver over the polished surface, something happened. Something struck that guilty, glittering spoon twirling away there at the end of 300 feet of wire. Away down there 200 feet below the surface something had struck the lure.

Was it a rock! A moment set all doubts at rest. Away went the copper wire, humming over the reel. A fish had run away with the bait.

Now came the exciting moment's. After a rush which threatened to take up all the spare wire, would come a period of sulking in which, under Jim's direction, many yards of wire would be restored to the reel. Then, the quarry would commence boring for the bottom. Down, down, he would go. One hundred, two hundred, three hundred feet he would plunge, making the copper tether sing over the rapidly revolving reel.

"My, you've got some big one," suggested Jim.

"You know there are really fish in Timagami," confessed the Doubter.

Time flew by. The rushes became shorter and farther apart. The fish was becoming tired. Until, just one hour after the strike, Jim yelled, "See, he break water." And, sure enough, there, a hundred feet behind the canoe lay a great grey trout motionless on his back, his white belly glistening in the sun. Little by little the wire was reeled in. At last, he lay along side. With one quick motion, Jim's hand was inserted in his gills, with one swift curve of his right arm the fish was landed in the bottom of the canoe.

JIM quickly paddled to a nearby gravelly beach. The fish was weighed. It tipped the scale to 20 pounds. By this time many of the party had arrived, and all insisted, "I told you, there are big fish in Timagami."

The "Piscatorial Doubter" said nothing. Someone suggested a photograph, and there in the noon day sun stood Jim, with a look of grim satisfaction on his face, the woman who doubted wearing a smile that would not come off, and the 20-pound trout that fell a prey to

the patience of Jim and the wiles of her who did not believe.



Anybody knows that the Indian guide can tell you more about how to caulk a fishing canoe than he can about where to find fish.

Lawrence up to the dock and men, women, fishing tackle and lunch baskets were in a trice disposed. Each in the proper places and everything ready for the grand emprise. The guides soon had the string of skiffs and canoes fastened behind the launch, Oderick gave one turn of the fly-wheel, the six cylinders began to sputter and soon took on a rhythmic song, the clutch was thrown on and the St. Lawrence, with its freight of happy humans, slid away from the dock and breasted out into the open waters.

The bow was turned to the south. The half-way islands, lying three miles below, like guardians of this great south straightaway, were passed in a few minutes. Now opened before us the great South Arm. Cochrane Camp was soon passed and among the maze of islands beyond, Oderick slowed down, and turning to the group of women, where the Cleveland Doubter sat, said, "Now, everybody out and we'll soon show you 'Piscatorial Doubters' what fishing in Timagami means."

It would be about ten o'clock when all were at work. The Cleveland, with Jim Petrant, in a canvas-covered Chestnut, chose a still strip of water between two long islands, where the high cliffs on either side betokened deep water. Here, the imperturbable Jim trolled up and down with the same unvarying speed, and with the same unvarying lack of result.

Along about eleven, after Jim had stood all kinds of remarks from his "Lady Scornful," after she and he also had gone almost asleep watching the strand of burnished copper wire as it ran over the gunwale



Anybody can tell just by looking at a good map where to get bass and 'lunge, without bothering about the piscatorial doubter.