

Getting a Line on a Sturgeon

IT was about a week before the exams.—just about that time, so well known to every student, when the brain becomes a place saturated with declensions, formulae, theses, and atomic weights, refuses to assimilate any more knowledge, and craves for a recreation. So it happened that one by one we gradually gathered in "Ike's" room, "far from the madding crowd" of text-books. The talk turned to how each was to spend the summer months. "Well," said "Slim" Jamieson, "I don't know where I am going to be this summer, but I do know one thing I am not going to do,—and that is set night-lines for sturgeon!" "How do you mean, 'set a night-line for sturgeon?'" someone asked. "If none of you fellows have ever tried it you won't be able to appreciate this tale. But last summer, I was out with a survey party on the banks of a well-known northern river, widely advertised for the magnificent sturgeon to be caught in its waters. One evening our chief suggested that we set a night-line and see if we could catch any of the monsters. As this seemed to offer an opportunity for diversion, to say nothing of some fresh fish and possibly some caviar, we all seized on the idea with avidity and set about getting the hooks and line ready.

"As I reflect upon that evening from the quiet of my room, free from the feverish excitement of the occasion, I am firm in my conviction that there was not one man in the whole crowd of us that had ever even seen a night-line either in the process of preparation or in operation. But I can assure you that, that evening, judging from the helpful (?) suggestions that were flying around there did not seem to be anybody that had not been laying night-lines from the time he was able to walk.

"The advice was strong in quantity and weak in quality—nevertheless we finally had a line, as long as the river was wide, with heavy hooks every two feet, baited with pork. To this line we now tied stones four feet apart, so that the baited hooks would lie close to the bottom of the river, where the sturgeon are wont to cavort"—"cavort" is good," remarked Ike—"are wont to cavort," continued "Slim". So far, so good. The "nut" of the party voiced our unspoken admiration of the work of our hands—