

The branch hung right over the lake, and the poor trout struggled to the best of its ability to regain its native element. But what will not a boy dare, even to secure a trifle. Frank threw off his jacket and boots, so that he might be prepared to keep company with the fish, should he descend with it into the lake, and with the agility of a wild cat mounted the tree and happily secured the prize.

This restored them to good humour, and while Charley again set to work with fresh eagerness,—Frank and Randolph taking the trout, which was not very large, used it as a bait, and fixing it upon one of the large pike hooks, committed the strong line to the dark deep water, and returned to see how Charley was getting on. He threw and threw and waited with the most praise-worthy patience for a long time, but to no purpose. Not a fish would bite, and the boys concluded that “Shone Campbel” had been gammoning them, and again began to be rather out of spirits. They returned to their pike line with but slender hopes of success; but, the moment Randolph touched it he called out in a kind of shouting whisper, “a fish, by George, a tremendous fellow!” All three seized hold of the line at once, each one remonstrating and pulling with might and main, “don’t Frank,” “take care, Charley,” “take care man, you’ll break the line; I would not lose him for fifty pounds”—“I see him, I see him,” roared Charley, “gad, he’s six feet long! pull, Frank! haul away, Ran!” “No fear, here he is, huzza!” And sure enough, there he was struggling and gasping upon the beach, terrible to look at, grinding his teeth in agony.

The pike has, with great propriety, been called the fresh water shark; what a fierce, gloomy, vindictive look he has. This one was at least twenty pounds in weight. The hook was fixed firmly in the jaw, and held him in despite of the most desperate struggles. Possessed of great strength, activity and tenacity of life, he was a most formidable looking enemy, and the boys did not know very well how to despatch him. Even Nelson looked on with suspicion, and when requested to take him by the throat, positively declined the complement. He kept, however, capering round him, till his tail coming in reach of the monster’s mouth, he fiercely dashed at it, and held it like grim death. Nelson flew as if a thousand fiends were in pursuit of him, howling for mercy, and dragging fish and line after him at the rate of twelve miles an hour.

THE WILLOW BY THE RIVER.

There grew a willow on a river’s brim
Which stretched its slender arms to reach the tide;
And, waving gently, let its branches swim
Upon the wave, and in its eddies glide,
And in the wind it whispered to the stream
A wooing song of love’s delightful dream.