

THE RIVER ST. JOHN

A SUBJECT so comprehensive as that of the River St. John can only be lightly touched within the limits of this article. Though dwarfed by comparison with the mighty St. Lawrence, it drains with its branches a territory larger than any other river on the Atlantic Coast from Labrador to Florida.

Rising in the spruce-clad hills of northern Maine and receiving in succession the waters of the St. Francis, Madawaska, Green, Grand, and other important streams, it forms for many miles the boundary between that state and New Brunswick.

At Grand Falls the river plunges over a precipice and through a rugged gorge that seems to have been placed there by some convulsion of nature. The cataract and rapids are only surpassed in Canada by those of Niagara, and are visited as the years pass on by an ever-increasing army of pleasure-seekers.

The falls and rapids at their mildest are the personification of untamed fury; but in the spring, when the water is at freshet height and thousands of great spruce logs go tearing over the brink, then shooting up from the basin below like the bolts of some great catapult, and finally disappearing in the whirling cauldrons of the gorge, or grinding on the adamantean rocks that oppose their passage, you have a picture of nature in a mood of passion that fairly appals the beholder.

Not many miles below the falls the Aroostook and the Tobique add their volume to the river, which thence becomes, except in summer level of water, navigable for steamers to its mouth, two hundred miles away. Indeed, before the coming of the iron horse, the wheelbarrow boat used to thread its devious way in freshet time clear to Grand Falls. In recent years, however, no passenger boats have run farther up the river than Woodstock, which is sixty-six miles from Fredericton and one hundred and fifty miles from the sea.