



The Mowich the Maskalonge and the boy

up and down the wild-rice beds, in and out of the bays the dainty little boat slid noiselessly. Instantly responding and stopping like a lady, while the lad struggled with the great plunging thing on the end of his trolling line, a thing sometimes so big that it could pull Mowich, boy and all, stern first. Then came the swift overhauling, the mighty splashing, the rapid passing of the last few feet of line through the fingers, the outward reach and lift, and then the dull drumlike beating of the big fish's tail on the hot bottom boards of the



The Mowich on Ontario Waters

launch—or the great whacking "splash" as the huge slimy thing slipped over the combing and struck the water, free to roam its native element once more.

Or sugging on the gentle swells, the craft lay anchored off the point of one of the many islands in these northern lakes. Here, with steel rod and fine line, with crayfish or minnow, or frog bait, he lured for the active small mouth, or its more sluggish cousin, the big mouth bass. Many were the pretty fights the little propeller in the stern saw. Many the captive bass has hung beside the white walls of the little witch, wondering no doubt at their opaqueness.

Or, when the stars were out, and the Mowich opened her red and her white eye, and gazed into the summer darkness



Maskalonge and Ducks

through which she was speeding, he sat at the engine, and ran it by instinct and by touch, starting the wildfowl into clamorous flight, and making the blue herons go croaking and complaining off into the gloom.

Then, when the nor'easters blew, and the great waves were loosed, how each roaring rush of wind that struck the shack made him think of poor holding ground and the lantern twinkled down the path in many a midnight storm, for a fellow gets to feel a strong liking towards his boat when she is as true and obedient as the Mowich.

Musquash and His Neighbours

By G. W. Bartlett, Gladstone, Man

WHERE the sluggish little stream merged its waters in the marsh, the willows of a projecting headland cast a black blot on the glimmering moon-lit surface. The wavering edge of the shadows was cleft by a sudden wedge of waves as a dark form shot out into the open marsh, a hundred yards further, he made a parabola and curved gradually in to the reeds, through which he crept to the muddy flat, and dog-like proceeded to scratch his ear with his hind foot.

For two minutes or more he sat in the moonlight, intently alert, his nose working questioningly on the gale. He had need for watchfulness. Other night prowlers were abroad. A long, lean, fierce-eyed mink had of late appeared with perilous frequency among his favorite haunts where the lily roots grew thickest, on the south side. For this reason Musquash foraged tonight on the less attractive north shore. He chose for landing, a spot hemmed in by a dry, dense screen of rushes whose crackling would warm him of any hostile purpose of a certain shadowy gray lynx which had on other occasions beset his path.

As he sat alert to these enemies by land and water, some guardian angel of the wild must have warned him of the approach of another unseen foe. As he plunged, a shadow silent as moonlight, swept like a breeze across the rushes and struck the water. A splash—a flutter—and the great horned owl rose, with a drop of blood on one talon. Hovering over the water it marked with glaring eye the ripples which showed the path of the fugitive below the surface. These led to the densely willowed headland, whose tangled margin afforded shelter from the aerial pursuer. After two ineffectual swoops, the owl carried his depredations into other quarters, leaving the rat to nurse his mangled tail.

This he accomplished, quadruped fashion, by licking the wound till bleeding ceased. Never having heard of germs, infection, or antiseptics, Musquash was content to leave the rest to Dame Nature, to whose efficiency, his numerous long-healed scars bore ample testimony.

He had little appetite for another adventure on the marsh, even on the chance of a lily root; but he cared not to go to bed supperless. In these circumstances, he bethought himself of a grassy shallow a short way up-stream, where he might at least fill his stomach.

Here fortune smiled upon him. In his work among the grass roots he brought up two clam shells, which, from their weight could not be empty. Of course the bivalves refused to open up; but that was no great matter for one so richly endowed in the matter of jaws and teeth. Carrying his prizes to the shelter of an overhanging bank he laid one shell-fish where he could easily reach it, and proceeded to the solution of the other. This he soon effected with his chisel teeth; and the hungry rat regaled himself on the juicy mollusk within. The second clam soon followed the first; and Musquash crept off to his repose.

The Crow

Though normally and by tradition a vegetarian, Musquash was by no means narrow-minded in creed or practice. A change of menu in the form of shell-fish or crabs, was always acceptable, he had occasionally dined off the carcasses of dead fishes found in the water, and some of his kinsmen had even been accused, probably on flimsy evidence, of attacking young ducklings. Few rodents are tied down to any stereotyped bill of fare, least of all Musquash.

Full of recollections of his clam feast, the rat repaired, next afternoon, to the same reedy shallow. On this visit, his



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