

THE OLD MEDUCTIC FORT.

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Twelve miles below the town of Woodstock, N. B., there enters the river St. John, from the westward, a good sized tributary, known as Eel river. It is a very variable stream, flowing in the upper reaches with feeble current, over sandy shallows, with here and there deep pools, and at certain seasons almost lake like expansions over the adjoining swamps. The sluggish current and muddy bottom render the upper part of the river a congenial resort for pickerel,* and large numbers of these fish are taken there from time to time by sportsmen. In the last twelve miles of its course Eel river is transformed into a turbulent stream, broken with rapids and falls, to such an extent that only at the freshest season is it possible to descend in canoes. About six miles above the mouth of the river there is a well-known water fall, about fifteen feet in height, at the foot of which Salmon were formerly taken in large quantities. More than two centuries ago the Indians of the Meductic village used to resort thither at the proper season for the purpose of fishing.† The place is only about six miles, in a direct course from the Meductic fort.

Geographically, Eel river is of some local importance, as it forms the boundary between the adjoining counties of York and Carleton. Historically, it is more notable than any other tributary of the upper St.

* Pickerel were unknown in Eel river until recently. About twenty years ago a Mr. Deakin of Benton, placed about a half dozen of these fish in the stream, and in a very short time they multiplied so amazingly as to take almost entire possession, exterminating trout and other fish. From Eel river they have found their way into the river St. John, where they are frequently caught.

† This is in all probability the spot to which John Gyles (who, as a boy, was a captive at the Meductic village A. D. 1689-1695), refers in his narrative:—"Once, as we were fishing for Salmon at a fall of about fifteen feet of water, I came near being drowned in a deep hole at the foot of the fall. The Indians went into the water to wash themselves and asked me to go with them. I told them I could not swim, but they insisted, and so I went in. They ordered me to dive across the deepest place, and if I fell short of the other side they said they would help me. But instead of diving across the narrowest part I was crawling on the bottom into the deepest place. They, not seeing me rise, and knowing where about I was by the bubbling of the water, a young girl dived down and brought me up by the hair, otherwise I had perished in the water." Gyles adds, that "Though the Indians, both male and female, go into the water together, they have each of them such a covering on that not the least indecency can be observed, and neither chastity nor modesty is violated."