

Mirth's careless, joyous, wild refrain ;
The joke, the song, the hunting story,
Return in all their vivid glory—
Green spots of bliss, alas ! how few,
My beautiful old bark canoe !

I look on thee and think upon
The happy days forever gone,
I miss, how sadly, from my side
My spirit's twin, my nanhood's pride,
Thou ready hand, the loving heart,
The soul of my own soul a part,
The gentle voice, the smile which gave
Me courage to be true and brave—
All these were mine when thou wert new,
My beautiful old bark canoe !

WILLIAM PITTMANN LETT.

Ottawa, Nov. 19th, 1882.

AN EXPLANATION BY MR. WHITCHER.

Ridout Bank, Ottawa.

DEAR MR. COPPER,

Attention is drawn to certain passages in an article in *The Canadian Sportsman and Naturalist*, viz:—

"When Mr. Wilmot exhibited his fishes at Ottawa, the Editor of this Journal competed with a collection of stuffed food-fishes from the Province of Quebec; many of the latter species were different from those exhibited by the former gentleman. The Quebec fish collection was offered to the Fisheries Department, at a reasonable price; the offer being made through Mr. Whitcher, who knew the lot was a bargain, and by his request, they were packed and left in Ottawa, to await a reply from the Chief of the Department. Some days afterwards an answer was received that the Department had no money to purchase stuffed fishes, and the collection was brought back to Montreal, where it was immediately purchased by Dr. Sterry Hunt and presented to McGill College Museum. Mr. Wilmot endeavored to induce Mr. Whitcher to purchase the collection, and probably they now regret not having secured it."

The latter reference to myself is entirely incorrect. Your own recollection of that occasion should have suggested the improbability of this assertion. Please recall the facts: You were a professional exhibitor of stuffed fishes of your own handiwork at the Dominion Exhibition. Mr. Wilmot was President of the Association and exhibited stuffed fishes belonging to the Government, entered in his own name. I objected, through Dr. Sterry Hunt, to these being put in competition for personal prizes or medals, much to Mr. Wilmot's displeasure; and having failed to protect your industry in this way, I promised to do what ever could be done towards securing your valuable exhibit for this Department, and asked you to delay shipment. There are, as correctly stated in this article, no funds provided for such purpose; but as Mr. Wilmot's specimens had been procured out of fish-breeding funds, and were thus placed on exhibition for prizes or medals to himself, my idea was

to acquire your's in the same way through him, and a correspondence was had accordingly. He did not consider your's worth acquiring and so reported. It was therefore inconvenient for the minister to authorize the purchase, and my proposal dropped. I understood that the injustice towards you as a professional was somewhat softened by awarding you a second prize; but the chief prizes and gold or silver medals went the way they were probably intended from their origin.

By referring to a recent number of the *Toronto Globe* you will find it stated, in course of an interview with Mr. Wilmot, that he says "no Taxidermist can be found in Canada whose work would appear in a favorable light," "or whose specimens (presumably of fish) are artistic enough" to be attractive. This accords with his opinion of your's. Unqualified depreciation will doubtless be a surprise if not an amusement to many other Taxidermal artists besides yourself, who are obliged to labor in the business without such public encouragement or private patronage, as in other countries serve to enhance the art and improve the productions of Taxidermy.

I quite agree with the *Sportsman and Naturalist* that facilities should be afforded to form a museum of aquatic animals; and I have striven during several years past to impress its importance on official minds. Time passes rapidly and with it many of the opportunities to make a choice and finished collection are also passing away. The great representative specimens (particularly of our ichthyic fauna) are fast disappearing. We find the want of such a storehouse, as should long since have been formed, in connection with the fisheries service whenever the country requires to participate in public displays. Notably at the present juncture.

The article in question adds, referring to the International Fisheries Exhibition:—"We know that Mr. Wilmot, of Newcastle, Ont., has done his share to make a successful show, but some one in the Department is to blame for procrastination and want of energy." If the reflection is meant for my benefit—as most of the editorial reflects on me personally—your information on this point also is incorrect, as I have had nothing whatever to do with the matter, beyond making a timely statement of what was required to be done in order to do justice to Canada on so important and trying an occasion, offering also some practical suggestions as far back as last winter. Mr.