

flash of the waves as they broke astern and rushed around us in foam. We went feeling for the harbor mouth, striking into what looked like promising openings and sheering off again as they proved false friends. At last we slipped into the right pocket, as dark and still as a mill-pond; a harbor that winds upon itself until it is land-locked, and here we had to lie for twenty-four hours until the gale wore itself out.

It was a pleasant afternoon upon which we arrived at the Hudsons Bay Post, "Nepigon House," as it is called. Its situation upon the high shore of the Lake is one of great natural beauty. Opposite is the mountainous Jack-Fish Island and to the south there is a great extent of lake, with the striking profile of La Roche Frapper. The scenery of the northern end of the lake is said to be finer than the southern. Certainly the view of the inner and outer Barns, as they are called, is highly picturesque. These huge dome-like masses of rock rise sheer from the water to a height of six hundred and twenty, and five hundred and seventy-five feet. They look like great stacks of hay or enormous barns, as their common name suggests. When you round the point of the small island opposite Nepigon House you have turned your back upon the only civilized house on the lake and you feel anew the sense of the immense grandeur of the scene and the absolute loneliness of these miles of restless water, this wilderness of islands.

It may not be amiss to give the distances, as lately measured, between the chief points on the lake, as they may prove of some use to sportsmen:

	Miles.
From Nepigon to Gros Cap.....	21
From Nepigon House to Flat Rock.	42
" " " Popular Passage.	41
" " " Bay View.	57
" " " Nipogina.	55
" " " Red Rock.	71

It was off the Dry Beaver Islands that we took one of the big trout for which the lake is famous. Tradition says that here the Indians from all points on the lake used to meet and feast on the dried meat of the beaver. Here we were stormstaid for two days and on one afternoon trolling in the calm water to the north of one of the islands we met our record fish. As fore-runners he had half-a-dozen of various sizes and weights, ranging from five to seven pounds. But there was no mistaking either his size or his temper when he laid hold upon the hooks. The first sight of him looming through

the water was sufficiently interesting, but when he broke away and went boring into the bottom of the lake, disappearing into the shadow as if he would never come up again his behavior was intensely exciting. It took twenty minutes of careful work to land him in the canoe, and when he was tested ashore he pulled the scale down to thirty-two pounds and held it there. Trout of this size are by no means uncommon, and, as Lake Nepigon has not been largely fished, good sport may be found almost anywhere within its waters.

Unscientific Facts about the Animals that Live in the Bush—The Otter.

Continued.

Of all the furs that this northern country produces, to my taste the Otter is the most beautiful. Of course, there is a great difference in the quality, the blackest and glossiest being held in most esteem. As a rule, the largest skins are not the best, a big male otter often having a brownish tinge which impairs its quality.

The fur becomes "prime" about the end of October, and remains so until about the middle of May, though by that time, and fully a month before, it assumes a shabby tinge, caused by the whitening or bleaching of the extreme ends of the coarse hair, which have almost the appearance of having been singed.

The condition of the fur can usually at once be determined by the appearance of the skin, especially of the tail. If an otter has been killed a trifle early in the season, the skin of the tail is black, and though the fur on the rest of the body is in good, marketable condition, the fur on the tail is short and lacks its full gloss. If the otter has been killed in the summer and is absolutely useless, the skin of the tail is yellowish black, and the main skin a sickly, blotched yellow. But a winter-killed otter is unmistakable. The whole skin, tail and all, is white, tinged with red, which, to the experienced eye, is an infallible indication of its perfect condition.

The Indian name for the otter is "nik-cek." It, like the beaver, figures in the Indian's mythology, though, as a matter of fact, the Indians of the valley of the Upper Ottawa seem to be singularly deficient in the quality that clothes the common objects of their lives with legendary lore.

The Indians of the coasts of Hudson's Bay are much more imaginative in this respect, and I verily believe that most

of the legends that are current amongst these inlanders have been brought from their more imaginative brethren of the sea coast. The only legend that I know associated with the otter relates to the peculiar shape of its head, which, as most people probably know, is exceedingly flat. It is said that the animals were once gathered together with the object of choosing a chief or king. The aspirants for the honor were numerous and exceedingly eager in setting forth their claims, especially the otter, which would push itself forward to such an extent that the great spirit who was presiding over the meeting set his foot right down on him, literally and metaphorically, to such good purpose that the otter came forth from the press with a flattened head, a mark which he still retains. The flesh of the otter is not a highly esteemed delicacy, even amongst Indians, though they do occasionally make use of it when meat is scarce.

I remember once, many years ago, coming back at night, after a long walk to my little log hut, built upon an island on Winiwayah Lake, which served me as a temporary trading post, I found an Indian making use of my fireplace and cooking utensils. He was cooking something which, to my hungry senses, sent forth a most appetizing aroma. On investigation it proved to be an otter, which he invited me to share with him. Nothing loth, I accepted the invitation, and between us we managed to polish off nearly the whole of it. Next morning, being mindful of my previous evening meal, I thought to make my breakfast off the cold remains. Whether the heat or the hunger had obscured the real flavor of the beast on the previous evening I know not, but this I know: that of all the fishy abominations in the shape of flesh that I ever ate, that otter headed the list. It tasted like meat boiled in a pot exclusively used for fish and rarely washed. Perhaps I am not fair to the otter, but I have eschewed the flesh of otter ever since and would advise others to do the same.

The otter is a very playful animal and makes an excellent pet. The Indians tame them with great success. They even train them to catch fish for them, like the cormorants of the China Seas. The favorite dwelling places of the otter are old abandoned beaver houses. Here the Indians set their traps for them in the winter and at the holes in the ice through which they come on shore to eat their fish.

It is a strange thing that the otter