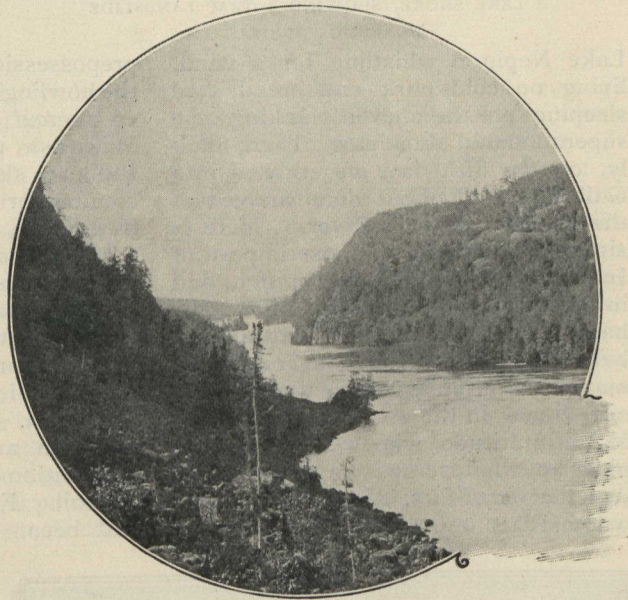


possible. The average distance read thus was perhaps half a mile, though frequently the disc-pole was serviceable over a mile away. The geologist's outfit consisted principally of a geological hammer and a blow-pipe case. The latter is a familiar device by which a charcoal flame is blown upon a mineralized surface to ascertain its composition. Two large Peterboro' canoes and a varying number of birch barks were our vehicles of transport; and four tents sheltered us. The commissariat department weighed about two tons, flour and pork being the chief constituents; and this, with our dunnage, axes, guns and ammunition, made life a burden on the portages.

One morning about five o'clock a small fleet of canoes, heavily laden, pushed off in the rain from the south shore of Lake Helen—an expansion of the Nepigon River just before it empties into Lake Superior. A paddle of three miles took us to the Narrows, and nine miles farther up the river we came to Camp Alexander, which lies at the foot of two miles of rapids, the first chute on a magnificent waterway, which is also the finest trout stream in the world. Here in a blinding rainstorm we pitched our tents; and besides the discomfort of being wet, we were ravaged that night by mosquitoes. All the next day, and the next, we waded over the portage through the mud, weighed down by loads ranging from 75 to 150 pounds, according as we were whites or Indians, tenderfeet or seasoned packmen. You who have never had a pack-strap across your forehead, who have never felt a bag of flour athwart your shoulders, or staggered a mile or so under a hundred-weight of pork, will know but faintly the joy of a two-mile portage,

or the perspiration which attendeth it.

With our canoes once more in the water an early start took us to Split Rock before noon, Islet Portage in the early afternoon, and for the night we camped on the south end of Pine Portage. At the foot of the rapids we landed several five and six-pound speckled trout, which made a pleasant variation in our menu. Next day we forwarded our supplies across Pine Portage, a distance of two miles. Passing round the end of the White Chute we reached Little Flat Rock in the early afternoon, and leaving the



NEPIGON RIVER BELOW SPLIT ROCK

Nepigon River we crossed Little Black Sturgeon Lake to the west and camped for the night on Flat Rock Portage—the home of the original black fly. Next morning we crossed the portage (one mile long) and had our first glimpse of Lake Nepigon. Here the Hudson's Bay Company schooner *Bella*, by arrangement, was waiting for us, and as soon as we got our supplies aboard we dismissed the Indians who had come with us from Nepigon Station.

For four days we drifted about on