

French companion picture, "Les Trois Filles," by Léon Gaudillot. As a whole, however, the publication is of interest, and were it better edited, would take a prominent place at once. The typographical errors are legion.

I have spoken, I hope, not disparagingly of George Meredith. Take at my hands this splendid description of rainy weather from him before I close:

"Rain was universal; a thick robe of it swept from hill to hill; thunder rumbled remote, and between the muffled roars the downpour pressed on the land with a great noise of eager gobbling, much like that of the swine's trough fresh filled, as though a vast assembly of the hungered had seated themselves clamorously, and fallen to on meats and drinks in a silence, save of the chaps. A rapid walker, poetically and humorously minded, gathers multitudes of images on his way. And rain, the heaviest you can meet, is a lively companion when the resolute pacer scorns discomfort of wet clothes and squealing boots. South-western rain-clouds, too, are never long sullen; they infold and will have the earth in a good strong glut of the kissing overflow; then, as a hawk with feathers on his beak of the bird in his claw, lifts his head, they rise and take veiled feature in long climbing watery lines. At any moment they may break the veil and show soft upper cloud, show sun on it, show sky, green near the verge they spring from, of the grass in early dew; or along a travelling sweep that rolls asunder overhead, Heaven's laughter of purest blue among Titanic white shoulders.

Let him be drenched, his heart will sing. And thou, trim cockney that jeerest, consider thyself, to whom it may occur to be out in such a scene, and with what steps of a nervous dancing-master it would be thine to play the hunted rat of the elements for the preservation of the one imagined dry spot about thee somewhere on thy luckless person! The taking of rain and sun alike befits men of our climate."

Where did Meredith pick up this style, you ask? I should imagine, mostly from Carlyle, Ruskin, and Victor Hugo. I cannot for one moment discover any resemblance to George Eliot in these remarkable novels of a man only now coming into general notice, although he is so frequently referred to as her successor. He has an impetuosity, a style, a dramatic vigour, which gives him, if not metaphysically a higher place, at least one that carries a swifter and keener delight with it. I am very fond of George Meredith, his analysis is so witty, so racy, so cultured. But if you want a story to be a story, go back, as I said just now, to William Black or Walter Besant.

A CANADIAN RAMBLE WITH ROD AND TENT.

"COME in!"

"Thanks! and I'll light one of your cigars, for I came up to talk over your proposal to do as Peter did, and 'go a-fishing,' and a smoke helps you along. What do you suggest?"

"Well, the fact is, the embarrassment of riches is a disturbing factor in making a choice. I know an old fellow called Johnny, up the Ottawa way—trapper, hunter, guide or teamster as occasion offers, an Irishman by the way, who looks like a Frenchman and might easily be mistaken for an Indian, says he can speak four languages, English, French, Indian and Irish—who is anxious to show me some of the sporting attractions of the Laurentian lakes and mountains. Of course we have a larger choice. There are the bass lakes of the Eastern Townships; the muskallonge fishing of the Thousand Islands and the Ottawa River; there are the trout lakes at the back of Quebec where the monsters come from; the Saguenay and Lake St. John where the festive Ouiniche sports in his native element, not to speak of the salmon rivers of New Brunswick and the lower peninsula."

"What about taking up our old quarters at the Sea View House? There are Silver Lake and Beaver Lake and Trout Lake, where you made such a record as a raftsman, not to speak of the brooks, the Tartagou River and the more distant White Lakes and their outlet, White River, all good for a day's outing and basket of trout. We can take Johnny and make a three or four days' trip down to that new lake he talked about, where the fish grew so big that one the last party caught was so immense they could not get it into the boat, but had to tow it ashore, and the whole party lived on him for a week!"

Of course that settled it. Tackle was at once overhauled and repaired, a small wall tent, blankets and other requisites necessary to the better catching, curing and digesting of trout were added to the combined outfit, and the day fixed for starting found us on the St. Lawrence aboard the steamer *Quebec*.

Three hundred and fifty years ago, Cartier, lost in wonder and admiration, first sailed over its broad expanse. His pious soul, in memory of the day, would fain dedicate it to some tutelary saint—Canadian nomenclature ever after taking largely the same pious bent—and hailed it St. Lawrence!

The poet, or novelist with a poet soul, will some day arise who will embalm his memory in some soul-stirring epic worthy of so great a theme. Every foot of land washed by its crystal flood is redolent with the breath of romance and heroic daring. From the very spot where we started on our journey the immortal Dollard embarked in canoes with his handful of predestined martyr companions. A few steps back into the town is the spot where

the intrepid Maisonneuve, "first soldier of the cross" and governor of the colony, stood alone and held at bay before the gate of the fort a swarm of redskins. A few miles down and almost within sight—we pass the spot on our way—the heroic Madeleine de Verchères held her father's fort for seven days and nights against the baffled Indians till help arrived, her only garrison being the women, boys and old men who could not take the field.

But why go on? A book might be filled with similar tales and the end not reached; besides here we are at Quebec.

Quebec! the Mecca of the modern tourist, satiated with the monotonous sights of the checkerboard cities of more go-ahead proclivities. Who shall do justice to the romantic associations that cluster around its storied past, or describe its beauties?

Not I, for I go a-fishing. The Intercolonial Railway, by which we continue our journey, follows pretty closely the shore lines for about two hundred miles, when it takes a sharp turn off through the Metapedia Valley. The beautiful panorama of ever-widening water and distant mountain is continuously unfolding before our eyes. Our journey ends at the sharp corner referred to and we are soon in our old quarters.

We found Johnny, the guide, and engaged his *charette* (a little two-wheeled cart) and pony to take the baggage and himself to go as boatman and general camp utility man, and well did he fill the position. In fact, he might be allowed to speak of himself, and with better show of reason, as a certain royal personage is said to have done: "*Le Camp! c'est moi!*" We secured provisions enough to last three days, borrowed from our friends what utensils we required in the way of pots and dishes, not forgetting that standby of the camp—the *frying pan*. These, with the tent and blankets, made quite a load for the *charette*, which we sent off as a sort of *avant-courier* to make an impression, and more especially to lead the way, we ourselves following with all the importance a dilapidated buckboard and battered habiliments would permit of, and begin our twenty-mile drive.

We follow the shore road for about eight miles, passing through a thriving French village, with, as usual, the most prominent objects its parish church and the neighbouring *presbytère*. Straggling out at either end of the central point at ever-widening intervals is the double line of familiar old-fashioned farm houses with their eaves overhanging in gracefully sweeping curves, white-washed, and, according to the taste of each individual owner, the roofs and window frames painted in vivid colours, or a mournful black; many of them, with the front door appearing several feet above the level of the road, but with no steps up to it, suggesting ideas of a state of siege with the ladders drawn in. A worn footpath around the gable end discloses the more homely entrance by the back door, which will probably continue to be used till the inhabitants reach a state wherein it will be possible to live up to the requirements of front-door steps, and, as the stage people say, a practical door.

A striking feature in connection with most of the better places is the substantial-looking barn, with its long-armed windmill built out at the best angle to catch the prevailing breezes, a chain gearing running through the wall and connecting with the threshing machine inside, all of them, however, at this season of growing grain standing silent and grim. Another noticeable feature attached to nearly all the houses is the old-fashioned, oval-topped clay oven standing in the open, wherein the housewife bakes the heavy, sodden black stuff called bread (!) by heating it with a strong fire, raking out the ashes and putting in the loaves to bake, just as her Normandy or Brittany French ancestors did hundreds of years ago. Along the fences, on lines strung for the purpose, or against the walls of the buildings, are the opened skins of black porpoises, with the fat attached, which later will be resolved into the fragrant and luscious porpoise oil with which much of the cooking is done.

Presently we leave the shore and turn off for our tedious climb straight over the hills into the back country, making for what Johnny calls the "*douzième range*," or "concession," pausing for a moment at the top of the first hill to take a parting look at the ever-fascinating seas spread like an expanse of glistening mirror at our feet and reflecting the glare of the bright summer sun. We journey for miles, scarcely meeting a human being, and for long stretches not seeing a living thing, and reach in time a stream where the road descends and rises again at the other side of the bridge in a way that would cause the heart of a city hack to ooze out his heels, but which our hardy nags seem to take as a matter of course. More hills, along whose crests we drive and enjoy a magnificent view of indented valley and rising mountain, all covered with a thick growth of primeval forest, passing several lakes of varied extent, which Johnny contemptuously describes as "*pas bon*," or as containing nothing but "*des petites poissons blancs*."

Finally we reach the "last house" and halt a moment to purchase a can of milk. Then we plunge into a two-mile drive over a bush road, the vilest specimen of "road" it was ever my lot to traverse. We reach at last our journey's end and drive our team into an open space by the side of a most tempting little sheet of water and throw ourselves on the ground to ease our bones after the six-hours' drive.

Johnny speedily has a fire going, tea made and we all three fall to on a refreshing lunch.

After a comforting smoke it was decided that we two should take our first cast in the "scow," which Johnny

had dragged out from the spot where he had cached it the year before, leaving him to set up the tent and have things in readiness for our return before dark. The ground, or rather water, was new, the boat leaking like a basket from its exposure to the weather, and as both wanted to fish, to the exclusion of paddling, the chances began to appear slim. However, fortune favours her friends, and the end of a day threatening rain being the best possible for trout, a few casts soon served to show that there were plenty of fish. We speedily landed several good ones of three-quarters to one and a half pounds. Presently, in making a long cast near a likely spot, where the lily pads showed above the surface, my flies were seized with such vigour and displacement of water as to draw forth an expression of delight.

"I've got him! — the patriarch of all the tribe of fishes!"

Reeling him in as fast as the exigencies of light tackle and an eight-ounce bamboo rod would permit, he was gradually drawn within sight of my end of the boat.

"By the shades of your valorous ancestors, come and have a look at him, Don Carlos, so that if he should break away I shall have a witness to the tale I have to tell!"

The landing net soon disposed of him and he was laid on the bottom of the boat, the admired of two pairs of delighted eyes, the pocket scale recording his weight at 2½ pounds. Darkness was now setting in and we made for the landing, where the cheerful blaze of the camp fire shot across the quiet waters. Johnny had done his work well. The little tent was pitched, the "baggage" stowed inside, a tempting bed of "*sapins*," or spruce tops, was spread, and the rugs and blankets laid on top of these.

A few words of description of Johnny, as we see him in the light of the camp fire deftly preparing supper—the *beau idéal* of the hardy, simple, honest French-Canadian peasant farmer or *cultivateur*, whose ancestors are typified in the *coureurs des bois* of the old *régime*, and from whom are descended the *voyageurs* and raftsmen of later times. He has travelled, has John; been to Quebec, the lumber shanties, and to that Eldorado of the French-Canadian labourer—Fall River. He lives in a little *cabane* on a rough hillside, its one solitary room containing himself, wife and the usual tribe of children, which will probably be increased by one each subsequent year we see him. We wonder where he would raise enough among the stumps of his little clearing to keep the life in his growing family. His house you would not stable your horse in. He does not see as much money in a year as you spend in cigars in a month. The *housse* for his scant wardrobe is probably made in continuous process from the sheep's back by his hard-worked, prematurely aged wife, and the *beufs* on his feet will by careful patching be made to last for years. He is a devoted son of the Church, to which he drives with his family some seven or eight miles when he desires its ministrations and wishes to enjoy a gossip with his widely-scattered neighbours at the same time. He is strong, healthy and happy; has probably no idea of the barrenness of his lot. He is fond of life, and would not willingly leave it, but would make the most strenuous efforts to prolong it.

He is able and willing to do more work round camp and in a boat, stand more exposure, carry a bigger "pack," eat more provisions, and is a better man for the rough work of a fishing trip than any I have ever met. *Salut!* Johnny, may we smoke many a pipe and share many a meal together yet!

Here is one now that his skilled hands have prepared—rough and ready, perhaps, but enticing, as hungry fishermen well know. Fresh trout—on the fin—fried to a turn with rich bacon. Potatoes boiled in their jackets and dried to a powdery whiteness. Fresh bread and butter. Tea—hot, strong, sweet, and served at the proper moment, winding up with canned peaches that never tasted so good before. Not very luxurious, perhaps, or fit "to set before the king" in his royal apartments, but served in such surroundings possibly even his royal nose might take on a less contemptuous curl. Have you ever eaten such a meal in camp, my friend? If so you'll agree with me; if you haven't, I can only say, *you have not yet lived*.

Our first day in camp ended; night closed in, and we retired to rest on our spring bed of fragrant spruce, to sleep the sleep of—if not of the just—of the tired and happy fisherman.

Rain fell during the night, but our tent was perfectly dry. Continuing in a drizzle all the next day, we did not propose to lose what promised good, if damp, sport, so donning our mackintoshes we sallied out. This time, with Johnny to paddle, and a comparatively drier, because more soaked, boat, as Paddy would say, luck favoured us.

A word of technical interest may here be looked for.

My experience of trout fishing in these lakes during the midsummer season—which is not by any means the best time for fly fishing—varies as to size of fish. I find the best time to fish from about four o'clock to dusk, though I have taken them at all hours of the day. The style of fly—of which a cast of three is used—seems to be of small moment, as when trout are rising at all they seem to take almost anything. The general rule is, for bright days, to use some such flies as "dark hackles," "turkey wings," or "black fairies." For dull days, any bright-coloured fly takes well, and when dusk comes on, a "coachman" or "white miller" as a "dropper" is very taking; in fact, the "coachman" is a good fly to make one of a cast at any time. A slight breeze to ruffle the water is a very desirable element.

Each lake—and there are hundreds scattered through