



FOR THE LAND WE LIVE IN.

Fishing for Ouananiche.

"The Home of the Ouananiche" was briefly described in the June number of *THE LAND WE LIVE IN*, and the tale of its discovery by the Jesuit missionary DeQuen was briefly told in the same number, having been largely drawn from the discoverer's own letters. Much more concerning Father DeQuen, that can scarcely fail to be of interest to every visitor to the great lake with whose name its history must ever remain associated, is furnished by the present writer in his "Story of Three Skeletons" published in *The Week* of Toronto in its issue of July 31st. To pursue this subject further, here and now, would be foreign to the intention of the present paper, which is to fulfil the promise made in the June number of *THE LAND WE LIVE IN*, of a description of the manner of taking the Ouananiche, and of the remarkable sport which it affords the angler. How many of your readers have ever seen a ouananiche? To even eat one in good condition, it has hitherto been necessary to go to Lake St. John, or at all events to come to Quebec. I have it from my friend Kit Clarke, the entertaining author of that charming little volume "Where the trout hide," that prior to the present season, no ouananiche was ever eaten in New York city. I believe that by taking advantage of the closest railway connections between Gotham and the home of the ouananiche, a few anglers have been successful this year in getting specimens of this beautiful fish upon the dining-tables of friend in New York, in good condition, but its flesh is as delicate as it is toothsome, and that implies extraordinary care in its preservation, packing and shipment.

I have never yet met with a better description of the ouananiche than that I

have already taken the liberty of quoting in "Haunts of the Ouananiche" from Mr. J. G. Aylwin Creighton of Ottawa. In a paper in Scribner's Mr. Creighton says:

"In appearance a fresh-run salmon and a fresh run Ouananiche do not differ much more than salmon from different rivers. The back of a Ouananiche is greener blue and in a fish just out of water can be seen to be marked with olive spots, something like the vermiculations on a trout. The silvery sides are more iridescent, the X marks are more numerous and less sharply defined; the patches of bronze, purple and green on the gill-covers are larger and more brilliant, and with them are several large round black spots. As the water grows warm, the bright hues get dull and toward autumn the rusty red colour and hooked lower jaw of the

spawning salmon develop. As the Ouananiche, unlike the salmon, feeds continuously and in much heavier and swifter water than salmon lie in, it has a slimmer body and larger fins, so that a five pound Ouananiche can leap higher and oftener than a grilse and fight like a ten pound salmon. The Ouananiche is much longer than a trout of the same weight; a five pounder, for example, is 25 inches long, twelve in girth and looks like an eight pound salmon. Now and then solitary fish of great size are seen, but they are intensely wary and carefully guarded by the demon of ill luck."

Messrs. W. H. H. Murray and Kit Clarke have also painted interesting pen pictures of this no'ed fish, though I have very serious doubts about the correctness of its identification with the land-locked salmon of the Rangeley lakes, which is claimed for it both by "Forest and Stream" and by the author of "Where the trout hide." Mr. Walter Bracket of Boston, who is as clever an artist in the killing as he is in the painting of all species of North American salmonidae is my authority for the statement that the fresh water salmon of Lake St. John is distinguishable from the Rangeley species by having a greater width of tail and larger spots upon the side of the head. Mr. Clarke has not failed to point out that "in Lake St. John alone does he display his amazing and obstinate strength, his marvellous finesse, his tempestuous somersaults and his tremendous fighting qualities."

The favorite fishing ground for ouananiche has been hitherto the Grand Discharge of Lake St. John. Anglers who have sufficient time to spare for it, are now commencing to ascend the Peribonca and other tributary rivers of the great lake, where fish of an enormous size and in very great numbers are taken. Most anglers will be satisfied however with eight pound fish, and a ouananich of this weight was taken a few days ago at the Grand Dis-

charge by Mr. Lewis Webb of New York. The prize was taken on the "Professor" fly and killed after a struggle of fifty minutes. Five and six pound fish are being continually taken here, and Mr. Young of the Cornwall *Freeholder* took twenty-six in one day's fishing last week. The ouananiche is usually taken here in the scum-covered eddies, dotted with insect life, where the hungry game-fish lies in ambush below, waiting to spring upon his prey as soon as his favorite fly floats around. The rapids of the Discharge are magnificently wild, and it is a thrilling sensation to shoot them in the various channels that wash the Thousand Islands of the great lake's outlet, with nothing but the untutored skill of the dusky guides and a sheet of birch bark between you and eternity. If you are a novice at the sport your *royaleurs* will guide you in the selection of the proper fly, and in the most probable locality for a cast. A "Coachman," with his white wings clipped off, making a "brown hackle" with a green or bronze colored fuzzy body, a "Silver Doctor," "Jock Scot," "Professor," "Lord Baltimore" or "Parmachene Belle," each and all of these are amongst the most killing flies for ouananiche. Occasionally, the game of which you are in search, floats about so near to the surface of the water, that a number of dorsal fins may be seen moving around through the creamy scum that has come down laden with insect life from the overflowing churn of yonder rapids. Presently, the gay deceit with which you have been skimming the creamy surface of the pool disappears, with a swirl upon the water and a tug upon the line, and your rod will be alternately arched into a bow by the enemy whom you have started out to fight, and suddenly relaxed again by the same heroic antagonist as he leaps repeatedly into the air in his frantic efforts to be free, like a galled charger determined to throw his rider. In addition to his leaps, your fish, if he be a heavy one, may run out a good deal of line and if the humor strikes him will get away down and sulk like any salmon. It is not very long however until he wakes up again to business, for he knows nothing in these rapids of the life of indolence and luxurious ease that conduces to enervation and effeminacy. The very excitement and unrest of his surroundings render inactivity impossible to him, while the physical exertion necessarily employed in his constant struggles amid the mighty forces of those turbulent waters, insures for him the possession of that courage, agility and strength that make him the recognized champion of the finny warriors of Canadian waters. His leaps are prodigious. Habituated to overcome obstacles to his progress up stream by throwing himself over them through the air, his skyward somersaults and aerial contortions when hooked, leave the angler little leisure for contemplation while the struggle is in progress. It not unfrequently happens that the somersaults of a Ouananiche result in a leap into the angler's canoe.

Amongst those who have been most successful this season in fishing for Ouananiche in the Peribonca or the Grand Discharge, and for trout in some of the tributary waters of the great lake, may be mentioned, in addition to the anglers already referred to, Mr. J. H. Botterell of Quebec,