

## IN SEARCH OF AN ISLAND

By "Straw Hat."

[Continued from June Number.]

WE STARTED from Bass Lake about 6 a.m. I had my canoe driven in a farmer's waggon over the fifteen miles, and I would here say that the proper canoe for these waters is a beamy, fourteen foot undecked, light canoe. My canoe was decked fore and aft and was not beamy enough and so drew too much water; a very good canoe for the open lake but not the thing for rapids. The shorter, beamier canoe answers for both. The entrance to Bass Lake is grand in the extreme; the outlet is through a willow brook with a clay bottom. There are two dam obstructions which are easily surmounted. At the second dam there is a fall of a hundred feet for the first jump, followed by a series of leaps over rocks, I had been told that a quarter of a mile portage was all that I need make. At the end of the quarter of a mile we came to a fork in the tote road, or trail (the road by the way is on the south of the dam). If I had taken that to the left I would have had a walk of four miles and my trip would have been much less eventful, but I took the road leading to the right, which led me to what I thought was the foot of the rapids. The water was still very swift, but McGregor had been so positive that I thought it was all right. We embarked and shot down like a bullet from a Mauser rifle. We had gone about two hundred yards and saw another fall. We had just time to jump on to some rocks, where we held on to the painter of the canoe, which swung swiftly, the stern filling with water; with the bow well out of the water, as she hung over the falls. The blankets were in the stern and my camera was floating inside the canoe. The grub, as I called it, or chuck as Atkins called it, was kept dry. This was quite as exciting an adventure as I had hoped to have, but not without its enjoyment. The Australian poet gives us a true touch of human nature when he says:

"No game is worth a rap  
For a rational man to play  
In which no disaster, no mishap,  
Could possibly find its way."

We waded to shore, pulling the canoe with us, and found that we had made a three-inch hole in it. I had

brought resin with me, and beeswax as I thought, but somehow the beeswax was forgotten. I found that a little fat pork put with the resin is a very fair substitute, making it tougher. A good canoe for the rapids should have foot boards screwed on. When a hole is made in a canoe it is generally in the bottom, somewhere near the middle. A thin piece of whittled cedar, large enough to little more than cover the hole, is placed between the bottom of the canoe and the foot board, which is screwed down again and the space is filled up

then began to lay up a supply of wood—enough to have heated a house for a month. Dry maple, pine and cedar, and green birch, keep a good supply of live coals. This put a very cheerful appearance upon matters in general, and I thought of the other poet who said:

"Oh, don't the days seem blank and long,  
When everything's right and nothing's wrong,  
And isn't your life extremely flat,  
When there's nothing whatever to grumble at."

This was after Atkins had stumbled on a very good tote road that would have brought us past these rapids without any difficulty. The proper course here is to start from the second dam, the guides carrying the canoes and outfit and the fishermen wading down stream and fishing as they go. This would make it perfectly satisfactory; there is not an hour lost and the trip is easy; so easy, that with a few trees cut out, that bother



In Desbarats Islands, North Shore of Lake Huron.

with the resin and fat pork, making a tight repair. Then the canoe is turned over and the resin is put on the outside. This was a Peterboro canoe. I have made most of my trips in bark canoes, and I am not quite sure that I do not like them better than the Peterboro. We put the canoe in the water again and although we did not upset in our gallop down the four miles of rapids, two more holes were made in it. We, ourselves, received a few bruises and practiced two or three hours of wading, but we kept our hair dry through it all. At four o'clock I asked Atkins how he felt. "About played out, sir," he said. "All right then," I said, "we will camp here and dry up everything." We

considerably now, ladies could make the trip.

I never put in a sounder night's sleep.

Next morning, we started at five o'clock, after about ten hours repose. We felt like two giants refreshed, ready for anything that came along. From where the Little Echo River joins the Big Echo River we had plenty of water. Our speed was very great as we came down and great care had to be taken not to strike the shoals in the river. This is excellent trout water. About seven o'clock that morning we ran into a huge hemlock tree, around a swift bend, whose branches filled the entire stream. We lost a hat here, took in some wa-