

## Among the Northern Lakes

By E. T. D. Chambers.

No map has ever been made showing the number and location of the myriads of lakes, large and small, that dot the vast expanse of unexplored territory in the far north of the Province of Quebec. There is no exaggeration whatever in the statement that in every important section of this great northern country there are thousands of well-stocked trout lakes whose waters have never been whipped by the angler's flies, and upon which the eye of the white man has never rested. Through one such expanse of primeval sporting territory it was my good luck to paddle and portage and fish a few years ago, accompanied by Lt.-Col. Andrew C. Haggard, D.S.O., the author of a charming paper that ran through two recent numbers of *Rod and Gun*.

The pilot of the party was John Minnigouche, a full-blooded Montagnais Indian, who was to escort us through a part of the country which he hunts in winter for the Hudson Bay Company, and which was at that time known to very few of the other guides. Each of us had a sixteen f.e.t birch bark canoe, and into them we packed our camp outfit and fishing tackle, our week's supply of provisions and small supply of personal comforts, as well as our guides and ourselves. A steamer conveyed us across Lake St. John to the mouth of the Little Peribonca which joins the larger stream of the same name a couple of miles from its mouth. Joseph Simeon, another full-blooded Montagnais, who was the chef de cuisine and practical head of the party of guides which accompanied us in 1892 up the Grand Peribonca river to Lac Tschotagama, had charge of the colonel's canoe, his mate in the bow being Joseph Nepton. Mine, with its contents, was confided to John Minnigouche and William Connolly. How William's ancestors came by their patronymic, neither he nor I can explain. The color of his skin, which is several degrees lighter than that of the other three Indians, may prove an index. Neither he nor they could understand or speak a word of English. All but Minnigouche could converse in French, and when alone with this latter in camp, I had an opportunity of bringing into requisition my limited knowledge of Montagnais, and in canoe of listening to the soft and musical accents of this Indian dialect, in the conversation between Connolly and Minnigouche. The hunting grounds of the last mentioned extend over more than 400 square miles.

Though but one of the Grand Peribonca's many tributaries, the Little Peribonca

is often more than 600 feet in width, and seldom less than 200, in the course of the 35 miles of the stream ascended by us on this occasion. There is so much rapid water in a large part of its course that a good part of three days was occupied in the ascent. We fished at the foot of most of its upper chutes, but took no trout larger than a pound, though several of over half that weight. It cannot truthfully be said that they rose freely, for we were there in the latter part of July, when the heat was at its greatest, and the large fish, naturally, in the seclusion of the deepest and coolest holes. But the fish that we took were stubborn fighters when hooked, and many of them made quite a spirited resistance. Their coloring, though beauti-

the water was discolored with dirty clay, and at the foot of the Chute Blanche and other inviting looking pools, the fish were unable to discern our flies. Here we expected to take ouananiche as well as trout, but were disappointed by both, and higher up the stream, the ouananiche do not ascend.

Chub, locally called ouitouche, (pronounced wee-toosh), are plentiful in nearly all the waters through which we passed on this trip, and were a positive source of annoyance. Far from being what Izaak Walton calls their English congener—"the fearfullest of fishes,"—these Little Peribonca chub were absolutely devoid of fear, and constantly rising to our trout flies. Pike are abundant in the lower stretches of



Opemikan, Lake Temiskaming

ful as that of fontinalis always is, was not nearly so brilliant as that of the rare specimens of the same fish that we took a few days later out of the crystal waters of Lac des Aigles. In favorable seasons the fishing in the Little Peribonca must be exceedingly good. The small trout in this river seemed perfectly unsophisticated, and rose greedily to every kind of feathered lure. A piece of colored flannel or rag would doubtless have served the purpose equally well, so far as they were concerned. The larger ones that rose to our flies, preferred the Grizzly King to any other, though the Parmachenee Belle was also a good killer. We were robbed of all our anticipated sport in the best pools on the lower part of the river, for there had been a freshet on the previous day and a landslide several miles up the stream, so that

the Little Peribonca, but we had not time so far to waste time upon those predatory monsters, and so passed them by.

The guides had a great deal of difficult poling up the rapids in the upper part of the river, and from the small lake which was reached at the 35th mile, we crossed a height of land to Lake Epiphany. It was a hard day's work, and involved four portages or carries. Two of these were very difficult, and two or three miles long, respectively, over high and thickly wooded hills, upon which we found a provoking amount of fallen timber. The narrow portage paths were almost obliterated by masses of tangled bushes and fallen trees, around which were dangerous pitfalls, difficult indeed to avoid on account of the rankness of the foliage. It was really wonderful how the guides picked their way