

A.P. Ball

# LAND WE LIVE IN.

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## THE LAND WE LIVE IN.

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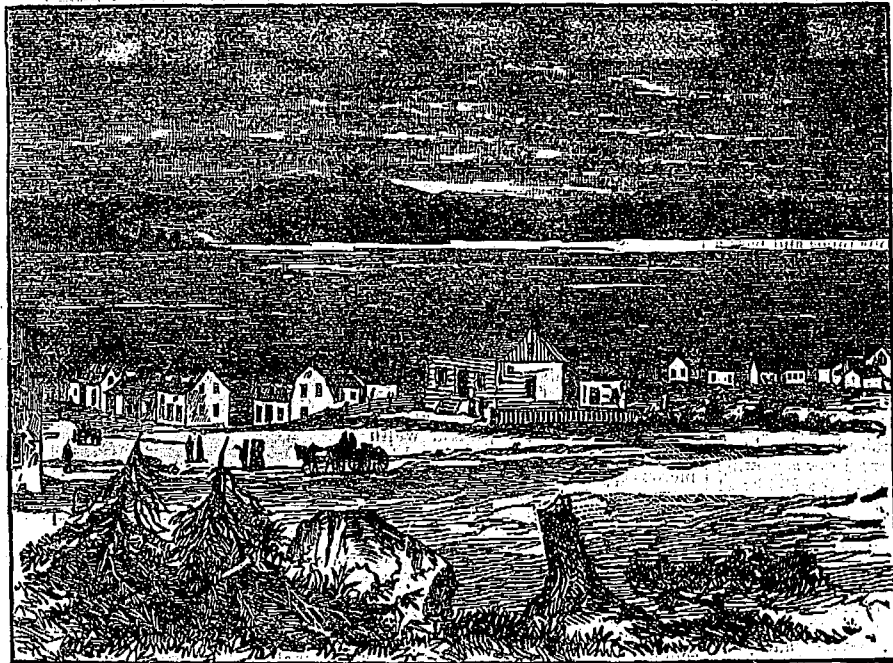
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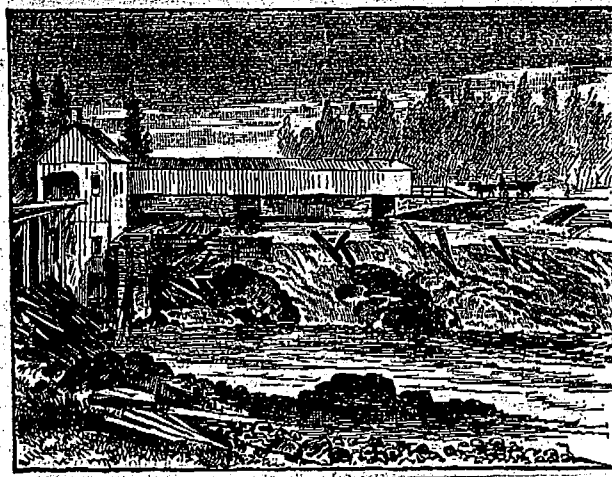
### LAKE AYLMER.

A description of the hunting and fishing grounds of the Eastern Townships would be incomplete without, at least, a passing notice of Lake Aylmer, and I very much wish some one more competent than I am would undertake the task—I am essentially a "fly-fisher," and all other methods are to me devoid of pleasure and sink into the mere drudgery of "pot-hunting." I will, however, except trolling with the spoon which, although, not to be compared for a moment with the artificial fly, is a more cleanly and consequently more gentlemanlike, *modus operandi*, than the empaling of worms and live minnows.

On a fine July morning of the year of grace 18—1, (Caestigan) Bachelor B., his brother Jack and Trask, took the "Quebec Central" for Weedon station, where we launched our skiff, and after pulling a short distance up stream got among some scraggy islands garnished with all sorts of forest jetsam; these passed, we landed on a muddy bank in Battoche's bay and "piped to dinner." Having refreshed the inner-man preparatory to a long pull to Black Creek at the farther extremity of the lake, we dug in a swampy field a half bushel of warty sticky potatoes, for which we paid old Battoche (cousin-german of the Nor-Western rebel) the price of two bushels of mealies. Those being stowed, we, with considerable difficulty, wrenched our boat from out of her muddy berth and continued our course through extensive fields of rushes and aquatic weeds of a green so dark and sombre that an occasional patch of mud-stained yellow water-lilies was an agreeable relief. The sun was hot and the lake calm, so we pulled leisurely over the *drowned lands* until we passed the narrows and entered the more open water which constitutes the lake. A long, narrow strip of water lay before us, which receded into a deep bay on our right while on our left could be seen the mouth or entrance of another deep bay, which we afterwards found was so extensive that it might easily have been mistaken for another and distinct lake. In front of us ran out a long tongue of land (*pointe aux crabes*) covered, then, with a fine growth of maples, the only redeeming *point*, in my opinion, to the whole landscape. The fact is that Lake Aylmer and surroundings do not possess one single attraction to the



WARD'S BAY, LAKE AYLMER.



BULLS HEAD FALLS, NEAR D'ISRAELI.

tourist and I am informed that it has so thoroughly been depopulated of its funny inhabitants by unscrupulous netting at unreasonable periods of the year, that very few sportsmen now frequent its otherwise unattractive shores, even duck shooting, which used, formerly, to be the October attraction there, is now, I am told, "a pleasure of other days." At the time of our visit, some few mascalonges and doves were to be caught and once in a while a twenty-five pounder was secured. The Bachelor and I as late as 7 years ago partook at our old friend Beudet's shanty, of a black bass, which would have kicked the beam at eight pounds and by the bye, was caught in a net. Those days are past and lake Aylmer, unless it is protected in the future by more conscientious penitents than are our present legislators, will sink into a mere *lenten* preserve of frogs.

CAESTIGAN.

Our esteemed correspondent has had his glimpses of Lake Aylmer from its worst imaginable approach, that is by the way of Bull Frog Bay. Now it is reached by the Quebec Central Railway from Garthby Station, which lies at the extremity of Ward Bay from where there is a beautiful view of the lake with the mountains lying between there and the Megantic region on the south. A road leads from Garthby to Nicolet, Brechees, Indian and Conlombs Lakes, to the north where there is good trout fishing. We agree with "Caestigan" that to the fly-fisherman Lake Aylmer has no attractions, but very good trolling for bass and mascalonge may be had in the proper season. There are fish enough there, if properly protected and the facilities for reaching it are such that it might be made a great resort for pic-nic parties, especially as the Q. C. R. Co. are extremely liberal in their

special train service charges. We are indebted to the Co., for the cuts of Ward's Bay and Bulls Head Falls which illustrate this article.

Eds.

Somewhat discouraged at the prospect both scenic and pictorial, we made a landing on "pointe aux crabes" where, after a short rest and a snack we proceeded on our way to Black-creek, at the head of the lake where we were pretty sure to meet a party of our Sherbrooke friends who had preceded us by two or three days, so we pulled away with a will, and the wind being fresh and astern we made good head-way and found our friends encamped on a sand-bank at the entrance of Black creek. On landing

we found two of the party solemnly engaged in a funeral rite which I witnessed with much interest and curiosity, for the first time, and not wishing to expose my ignorance by asking questions, I for a long time, wavered in doubt whether the defunct was to be interred or cremated, for the grave had no sooner been dug than a quantity of dry fuel was deposited around it. But my doubts were set at rest when I heard the master of ceremonies, Mr. James Morkill, call to his companion to "put in a good chunk of fat pork on top of the beams, that everything was ready for the baking, &c."

Declining Mr. M's invitation to remain and partake of the pork and beans which he said would be resurrected in seven hours time, we proceeded up the creek which gradually expanded into a capacious bay, beautifully wooded on its northern bank. We landed in a cove, the banks of which we found tenanted by a numerous band of navvies, who from all appearance had been there too long to make the place either healthy or savoury; therefore, although it was late in the afternoon and our long pull from Weedon was beginning to tell on our muscles, we paddled back past our friends beans and pork, past the then nascent village of D'Israeli, until we arrived in a nice bay two miles below the village where we pitched our camp on a hard wood ridge near a beautiful cool spring, a very comfortable, capacious habitation, half tent, half shanty was erected and fuel being plentiful we soon had a fire sufficient to roast an ox. We were comfortably domiciled before sunset, had partaken of a hearty supper, smoked the pipe of peace and, what next? After a long day's pull under a broiling sun without a drop of drinkable water, it might be naturally supposed that Morphews or "purchaus" Bacchus would have claimed our devotions. My dear reader, the members of our party were all true sportsmen, hardy, rough-and-ready and jolly, but they had not come all the way