

and elaborate treatises in theology are excellent in their place; but that place is not the footpath or street corner in which a reader of Ingersoll pauses to ask a question or press a difficulty. Readiness and dexterity in conversation is a most valuable qualification here in all departments of church work.

Last, *good health and spirits*. What with cold winters and long prairie rides, it is too drastic a country for delicate constitutions. As for melancholic pessimistic dispositions, they are not likely to do otherwise than hinder the work disastrously.

HOLIDAYS AMONG THE ISLANDS OF THE ST. LAWRENCE.

BY FIDELIS.

If ever there was a river capable of supplying almost boundless scope for pleasure grounds and holiday-making to a hard worked and busy people, it is our noble St. Lawrence, more frequented every year by both Americans and Canadians, lying as it does, so conveniently adjacent to Northern New York and Eastern Ontario. Not the inhabitants of these particular localities alone, however, enjoy its privileges. People come from east, west, north and south—from hot Pennsylvania, and nearly as hot Montreal, from Boston and Chicago, to enjoy the pure delicious air, and the manifold pleasures of boating in all manner of ways among the beautiful islands. In summer, in August especially, the river is alive with pleasure boats of all sorts and sizes, from the handsomely equipped and costly steam yacht of a coal king—a Cleopatra's barge in its way—to the primitive birch-bark canoe. Of late, indeed, the ancient canoe has come to the front with an evident determination to "survive" as "the fittest." For the great centre of attraction was very recently the camp of the American Canoe Association, which, for the last two or three seasons, has held its annual "meet" at Grindstone Island—one of the largest American islands—stretching from the head of Wells Island up to Clayton and Gananoque, on the opposite shores of the river, here, about eight miles wide. The sight of the canoe camp is a yellow round-shouldered hill, about five miles below the Canadian village of Gananoque, and about three above the "Thousand Island Park," on Well's Island, from which it is separated by a wide bay, giving ample scope for aquatic evolutions. The hill is a bare one, showing tawny amid the green wooded islands for miles away; but there is a light fringe of trees at the water's edge, which shelters some at least of the tents of the canoeers. These are divided into little clusters, belonging to the different local clubs. Among the American clubs represented are the Brooklyn, New York and Knickerbocker, Amsterdam, Newburg, Sing-Sing, Canton, Lowell, Boston, Hartford, Oswego, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Florida, Ogdensburg; among the Canadian ones, the principal are Royal Military College, Kingston, Brockville, Peterboro', Lindsay, Toronto, Deseronto. The Mother Country across the sea is represented by two canoeists, Messrs. Powell and Stewart. Other prominent men are W. P. Stephen, editor of *Forest and Stream*, Paul Butler and R. B. Burchard, of New York, who alone has performed the feat of sailing down the rapids of the St. Lawrence in a canoe. The British and American flags float side by side over the pretty little encampments and the canoes, as they lie, drawn up on the shore when not in use. They are extremely dainty and graceful little crafts, the greater number being of the decked "Rob Roy" model, beautifully finished in varnished wood. Others, as the Canadian "Rice Lake," are of the original open build, and a few of the paddlers use the original bark canoe, which certainly is the most picturesque. Most of the modern ones, however, carry two sails, a tolerably large one at the bow, and a small one astern; some bearing instead, little lateen sails. They look as pretty as white swans when gliding over the blue waters of the bay, under the light rippling breeze of a fine August afternoon; and hardly less graceful when the sails are down, and they are silently and swiftly propelled by the noiseless paddle. One of the Peterboro' canoes is styled the "baby" of the camp, being only ten feet in length, two in width, and about ten pounds in weight. The English canoes are rather broader and heavier than the American; and the Englishman sits, or lies, much lower in his "Rob Roy," only a little of his head showing above its deck, while the American

sits on the railing of the central hole. All manage their crafts with much dexterity, including the lady members of the association, of whom there are about twenty in camp. They have a pretty little encampment of their own, in a shady grove at the southern extremity, called appropriately, Squaw Point. There is a common dining hall; a temporary light wooden structure, open all around; and almost every little camp has its central marquee for a sitting room. Some of the canoeists have simply a little canvas "canoe tent," or light cover, under which they can sleep in their canoe. The camp life is delightfully free and easy, and the boatmen, in their picturesque flannel boating suits and hats, look as if they enjoyed it thoroughly. Of course no one is allowed to land without the badge of the association, except at stated times, and the beach is kept strictly patrolled all day—a necessary precaution where money and valuables must often be kept in the open tents. Vice Commodore R. W. Wilkins, of Brooklyn, was Acting Commodore, Commodore Rathbun being a Canadian. Secretary Neide had with him a canoe, the *Aurora*, in which he has cruised on nearly all the waters of the United States.

Of course, the "canoeists" are out from early morn till dewy eve, cruising generally across Eel Bay to Wells Island, but sometimes going up and down the river as far as Clayton and Gananoque. Certain days are devoted to racing. Here is the programme for one recent day: "Paddling race, one mile, canoe and load to weigh 200 pounds; paddling, one mile, weight 160 pounds; paddling and sailing, alternated each half mile, for three miles; paddling, one mile, weight 120 pounds; paddling in tandem, one mile, with decked canoes; sailing races, three miles; hurry-scurry race, 100 yards run, twenty yards swim, 200 yards paddle; tournaments and gymnastics." A final international race for the championship and guardianship of the cup, winds up the proceedings.

A description of the canoe camp would not, however, be complete without an account of the closing grand illumination, which conjures up, with the aid of a bonfire, and a few lamps and lanterns, a scene of enchantment that might lead the onlooker to dream for an hour or two that he was in Venice. A night without moonlight is of course purposely selected, and as the dusk deepens into darkness, lights sparkle out as if by magic along the shadowy shore, and dart to and fro like large fireflies across the dark water. Ere long, the several encampments along the beach are all outlined in lights, some being decorated with fiery arches, pyramids and monograms, forming nearly a continuous line of light for perhaps half a mile. The ladies' encampments sparkle like a tiara of diamonds out of the deep shadow of its protecting grove; and all the quivering lights, yellow, red and green, are doubled in the undulating reflection of the dark water. A huge bonfire blazes on the summit of the rounded hill, and throws a broad band of ruddy light far into the river. Canoes carrying lights at stem and stern, and some of them hung with Chinese lanterns—so as to give them a fantastic resemblance to a harp, a swan, or elephant,—glide silently about in capricious gyrations, or form a long *queue*, which seems like a fiery serpent as it sinuously turns and twists its long coil over the dark bay. Several steam-yachts, all sparkling with lights, and some excursion steamers, add their quota to the *mise en scene*; and when the coloured Greek fire begins to burn, and rockets and Roman candles fill the air with their coloured stars, the entertainment seems complete. It is all the more like an enchanted scene, because so silent, except when the steamers suddenly set up an orchestral chorus of whistles in all keys, with an irresistibly droll result; or when a boating song comes ringing out from a number of manly voices with great spirit and charming effect. But the pretty illusion is short-lived, and in a very short time both lights and tents are fled, and miniature Venice reverts like Cinderella to its original condition of a bare and solitary hill overlooking an almost deserted bay.

(To be concluded next week.)

LETTER FROM DR. MACKAY, FORMOSA.

The following interesting letter has been received from Dr. Mackay, missionary in Formosa: Out in the Pacific, north-east from Kelung, there are three islands, called by foreigners Pinnacle, Craig and Agincourt, and by the Chinese respectively, Flower

Pot, Bird and Large Island. The latter names are exceedingly appropriate, as they indicate the characters of the islands. I have visited them three times, and as I am just back from the last trip, a few notes may be of some interest to your thousands of readers.

Pinnacle is nothing more or less than two irregular rocks close together, standing about fifty feet above the water. Approached from the south, it certainly bears resemblance to a Chinese flower pot. It is naked, bare and barren. Sea birds only take time to rest the "soles of their feet" upon it.

Craig, on the other hand, was surely heaved up expressly for the flying dwellers of the sea. One side rises rugged and perpendicular fully two hundred feet, then slopes right down to the water's edge. By standing there you take in the entire sloping surface with one view. That surface occupies about two acres. It is smooth, without trees or shrubs, and completely covered with a soft grass, where the birds lay their eggs without making any kind of nests whatever. Only a few rocks here and there raise their heads above the grass. Of course, the edges of the sides of the island have rocks all along. What kind of rock? Volcanic and scoraceous, black and irregular. And the grasses, what kind are they? I picked up fifteen different kinds, all belonging to the sandy beach type. Flowers, there are none.

Insects include the much dreaded centipede, several species of the beetle family, the fly and mosquito. But the distinguished feature of the island is that it is a "home." Yes, the grand sight worthy of admiration is to gaze at the sky,

LITERALLY DARKENED WITH SEA GULLS,

etc., etc., returning home from the fishing excursions far out on the deep, deep sea, and hovering a few moments, then settling down, apparently each in his accustomed house. Rocks, ledges, points, peaks, and that whole sloping surface one mass of living creatures! When on a steamer, how often have I stood for hours watching the stormy petrels, sea gulls, etc., on the crests of the angry waves, but to see their home, and, indeed, remain a whole night in their midst, is so intensely interesting that it can't be put on paper, because we rise from them and seek their Creator, the divine, great and merciful God.

Every year, a dozen or so of the inhabitants of Agincourt go to gather eggs and catch birds. As these eggs lie thick all over, bushel baskets are soon filled, and as the birds get fairly settled down, torches are carried, and two bushel bags soon filled, when they are taken near a large fire, one by one taken out and dashed against a large stone until

HEAPS SEVERAL FEET HIGH

are collected among the deafening cries of the poor birds. In the morning they are cut open, salted and dried. It can be easily seen how their numbers must decrease enormously every year. Immense turtles are also hooked up night after night by these destroyers of birds. Agincourt is much larger than the other two, and has a surface of perhaps ten acres. There are about one hundred inhabitants (Chinese), originally from Kelung, Formosa. These live on one side of the island in small stone huts, with doors from three to four feet high. There grow trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowers. There also skip from hillock to hillock flocks of goats. The main production is Indian corn, which is eaten in all kinds of forms. Millet, pumpkins, cucumbers and beans are grown. All these articles of food, with their salted birds and shell-fish they got by diving, answer so well that they care little for rice, etc. The people I found very bright and kind, and they remember my former visit.

On the top of the island, just above the huts, I came across

A ROUND FORT,

such as I saw in Sutherlandshire, Scotland. It looked ancient in every particular. The oldest man on the island (about seventy five) could give no account of it. When the Dutch built a fort on Palm Island, did they also erect one on that island and mount it with guns? Or did mutiny take place on board a passing vessel, and the mutineers get left behind on that isle of the sea? Or were brave mariners gallantly ploughing the deep until during a storm or dark night their noble ship was dashed to pieces and they left on that lonely isle as so many Robinson Crusoes? None can tell, conjecture is in vain, and there are no figures to decipher; but sure enough, anxious hands in the bygone past put stone upon stone, and there