



OLD GABRIEL.  
(From a painting by Gilbert Berling.)

## = OLD GABRIEL. =



AKE St. Charles, twelve miles north of Quebec, for half a century and more rejoiced in possessing—a local celebrity—quite an object of interest to the numerous tourists visiting the spot.

His name was Rheume; to the sporting world he was known as Gabriel. Gabriel resided in a diminutive tenement sheltered by trees on the edge of a clearing not very far from the lake.

An old flint duck gun, two paddles crossed, rude fishing rods and fishing tackle ornamented the open space over the chimney place next to his pipe and tobacco pouch.

Fish, eggs, with game constituted the *menu* and *pièce de résistance* of the hardy old trapper of hares, partridges and trout. He was particularly proud of a batch of slim black Spanish hens, all great layers he said, which he kept in his warm cellar, to which access was had by raising a board in the floor. During the open fish season, a heap of crisp green leaves, sprinkled with ice, kept fresh the lake trout he had for sale, deposited in this cellar, next to the worms he used for bait. Sunrise generally found the watchful trapper visiting his snares in the adjoining forest, or whipping for trout the cool springs flowing into Echo Bay, or hauling up his night lines. Time had frosted his locks when I knew him first, and the long and laborious use of the paddle in his canoe in summer had disfigured the sinews of his right hand without impairing their power. From April to September was Gabriel's harvest time, with the city tourists to whom he acted as guide over the lake's crystal floods.

Gabriel was not only trusted and expert in the piscatorial art; nature had endowed him with a capital memory, ready wit, respectful and obliging manners, and so rare a talent as *raconteur* of forest scenes, blood-curdling encounters with bears, marvellous catches of fish, when he was young, as he never failed to add, that his name was a by-word in the settlement.

I recall the following on one of my visits to his den:—

One bright September afternoon I was seated with a friend in Gabriel's canoe. We were waiting for the cool of the evening to fish the Narrows on the Upper Lake for trout. My friend asked Gabriel whether bears were common round the lake.

"Not very at present," he replied, "but when I was young they were as thick as blackberries."

"Did you ever encounter one of these grim mutton eaters?" I queried.

"More than once," he replied; "one occasion I can vividly recall. It took place more than twenty years ago. Do you happen to know Judge J——, of Quebec?"

"Intimately," was the reply.

"Well, one Saturday afternoon, after term, the Judge, who was fond of sport, drove out here with a friend, a Mr. Smith. I was of course on hand to escort round in my canoe these *gros messieurs de la ville*. We paddled and paddled and not a bite; just as we were rounding *la pointe aux Courtes Bottes* the Judge eagerly seized me by the arm,

saying 'Gabriel, look! look! what is that dark object floating or swimming in the centre of the lake? Is it a Newfoundland dog?'

"No," says I, "it's a bear and a big one to boot."

"Of course," put in Mr. Smith. "I shall have that bear stuffed and take him over to England with me to show my friends what a Canadian bear is like."

"I smiled," added Gabriel; "the idea of us bagging a full grown bear without firearms or hunting knives, armed with paddles only, seemed to me preposterous. However, the sporting Judge gave the order, 'Pull away boys and we will be up with him in less than no time.' A light canoe, impelled by three paddles, makes good time you know. We paddled with a will and in twenty minutes we were alongside the black monster, who snorted and growled at us. The Judge, seated in the bow, was quite close to the surly brute.

"'Strike him fair on the snout with your paddle,' said I. He did so and blood gushed out in a stream. 'Again! again!' I cried. *Monsieur Fours* seeing himself cornered, dived under the canoe, and rose unexpectedly within reach of Mr. Smith. 'Catch him by the tail,' I roared, but reflecting how little there was to lay hold of, I added 'No! no! by the long bushy hair on his rump.' Bruin did not relish these jokes, and, laying his powerful paw on our frail canoe, it got half full of water red with blood. It was awful to see. 'Hold! hold!' yelled the Judge, 'the canoe is sinking and I cannot swim a stroke.' My hair stood on end, but I could not help laughing.

'Shove off! Shove off! Quick!' roared the Judge. We did so, and I then remarked, 'The skin of that bear won't leave for Eng'land this season.'"

J. M. L.

## Not Equally Endowed.

"Yes," said the spectacled literary man, "my brother Hiram is the genius of the family. Perhaps you have heard of my brother Hiram?"

"Not that I remember," replied the caller. "Is he a man of some distinction?"

"Is he? My brother Hiram, sir," rejoined the scholarly author of "Twenty Systems of Religion Critically Analysed and Compared," cheerfully emptying another coal-scuttle full of unsold copies of the book into the stove that warmed his meagre apartments, "is the inventor of a toothpick that will not climb up out of the pocket and get lost, and he is rolling in wealth, sir—simply rolling in wealth!"—*Chicago Tribune*.



STATUE OF SIR CASIMIR GZOWSKI, K.C.M.G., IN QUEEN VICTORIA PARK, NIAGARA FALLS.  
(Zybach, photo.)