

south-west, thickly strowed with boulders, and here and there a peak; marshes, bare ragged rocks, tucks of stunted wood, dotted with the ever-present lakes and ponds, spread on and on beyond the reach of sight. No mark of the handiwork of man far or near—a wilderness, a silent wilderness. A careful examination under some of the boulders revealed the striated rock and the south-eastern ice current of the glacial age.

The season had almost passed for the hum of insect life, happily, or the musquito-pest of the woods would no doubt have left his mark upon us. Of insects, an occasional grasshopper alone seemed to be alive, except when one stepped upon an ant hill, and disturbed the treasured hoards of industry. But few small birds are seen, and there is no blithe song of thrush or linnet to greet the ear. Only sometimes in treading one's way through a marshy vale the chee-chee and blue jay hop out from a dwarf fir-tree, as if surprised to see so strange a being there. The time for wild flowers had likewise nearly gone, and I was left to imagine where, in some of the shallower ponds, the white water lily had shot up its stems from the black boggy mould beneath, to rest its broad leaves upon the surface of the dark still water, whilst the pure blossom unfolding offered perfumed incense to the noon-day sun.

The curiously shaped leaves of the pitcher-plant, or Indian cup, were numerous, each containing a host of flies and other insects which, no doubt, seeking shelter there, found it more easy to get in than to get out.

Our camp evenings were often enlivened by tales which consisted of old Robert's former experiences.

"John," said he, "did you ever see a black bear?"

"No; but they are not fierce, are they?"

"Only she-bears with cubs are so. I remember some years ago, I'd gone in as far as the quarries with the women to pick some berries. I took me gun, a long swoiling gun, and up I goes towards the Butter-Pot, thinking to get a pa'tridge. I'd only a load o' small shot in; I was goin' along putty quiet and had jist stooped down for some hurtz, when I heerd a leetle rustle close alongside. I looks through the bush, and right t'other side, not five feet from me, I sees a bear eatin' hurtz like a Christian. He was sittin' up takin' the branches in his arm and eatin' the berries off. I niver stopped to think but clapped the gun to me shoulder, and let drive. He put his paw to his side and lept away a dozin feet, then faces round for the bush. Somehow I know'd he didn't see me, for a bear's eyes isn't quick; they depends more on scent. It was blowing hard and I was to leward of em; but I tell you, I felt quare when I seed em make for the bush. I'd jist time to throw in a handful of powder and a ball altogether, without any wad. 'Twas a flint gun. When I looks up agin, he hadu't come a stip but stood staggerin' and shakin' like mad. I put on the primin' but before I'd done he rolled over as dead as a mutton. He was a grate baste and I got £3 for his skin. If you'd seed the fat upon him—'twas like a swoil."