



Selections from Eminent Writers.

The Canoe Birch.

(From "A Taste of Maine Birch," by Burroughs.)

"The Maine (canoe) birch is turned to so many accounts that it may well be called the palm of this region. Uncle Nathan, our guide, said it was made especially for the camper-out; yes, and for the woodman and frontiersman generally. It is a magazine, a furnishing store set up in the wilderness, whose goods are free to every comer. The whole equipment of the camp lies folded in it, and comes forth at the beck of the woodman's axe; tent, waterproof roof, boat, camp utensils, buckets, cups, plates, spoons, napkins, tablecloths, paper for letters or your journal, torches, candles, kindling-wood, and fuel. The canoe-birch yields you its vestments with the utmost liberality. Ask for its coat, and it gives you its waistcoat also. Its bark seems wrapped about it layer upon layer, and comes off with great ease. We saw many rude structures and cabins shingled and sided with it, and haystacks capped with it. Near a maple-sugar camp there was a large pile of birch-bark sap buckets,—each bucket made of a piece of bark about a yard square, folded up as the tinman folds up a sheet of tin to make a square vessel, the corners bent around against the sides and held by a wooden pin. When, one day, we were overtaken by a shower in travelling through the woods, our guide quickly stripped large sheets of the bark from a near tree, and we had each a perfect umbrella as by magic. When the rain was over, and we moved on, I wrapped mine about me like a large leather apron, and it shielded my clothes from the wet bushes. When we came to a spring, Uncle Nathan would have a birch-bark cup ready before any of us could get a tin one out of his knapsack, and I think water never tasted so sweet as from one of these bark cups. It is exactly the thing. It just fits the mouth, and it seems to give new virtue to the water. It makes me thirsty now when I think of it. In our camp at Moxie we made a large birch-bark box to keep the butter in; and the butter in this box, covered with some leafy boughs, I think improved in flavor day by day. Maine butter needs something to mollify and sweeten it a little, and I think birch-bark will do it. In camp Uncle Nathan often drank his tea and coffee from a bark cup; the china closet in the birch tree was always handy, and our vulgar tinware was generally a good deal mixed, and the kitchen-aid not at all particular about dish-washing. We all tried the oatmeal with the maple syrup in one of these dishes, and the stewed mountain cranberries, using a birch-bark spoon, and never found service better. Uncle Nathan declared he could boil potatoes in a bark kettle, and I did not doubt him. Instead of sending our soiled napkins and table-spreads to the wash, we rolled them up into candles and torches, and drew daily upon our stores in the forest for new ones.

But the great triumph of the birch is of course the bark canoe. When Uncle Nathan took us out under his little woodshed, and showed us, or rather modestly permitted us to see, his nearly finished canoe, it was like a first glimpse of some new and unknown genius of the woods or streams. It sat there on the chips

and shavings and fragments of bark like some shy, delicate creature just emerged from its hiding-place, or like some wild flower just opened. It was the first boat of the kind I had ever seen, and it filled my eye completely. What woodcraft it indicated, and what a wild, free life, sylvan life it promised! It had such a fresh, aboriginal look as I had never before seen in any kind of handiwork. Its clear yellow-red color would have become the cheek of an Indian maiden. Then, its supple curves and swells, its sinewy stays and thwarts, its bow-like contour, its tomahawk stem and stern rising quickly and sharply from its frame, were all vividly suggestive of the race from

It is handmade and homemade, or, rather, wood-made, in a sense that no other craft is, except a dug-out, and it suggests a taste and a refinement that few products of civilization realize. The design of a savage, it yet looks like the thought of a poet, and its grace and fitness haunt the imagination. I suppose its production was the inevitable result of the Indian's wants and surroundings, but that does not detract from its beauty. It is, indeed, one of the fairest flowers the thorn of necessity ever bore. Our canoe, as I have intimated, was not yet finished when we first saw it, nor yet when we took it up, with its architect, upon our metaphorical backs, and bore it

and the man seemed born of the same spirit. He had been a hunter and trapper for over forty years; he had grown gray in the woods, had ripened and matured there, and everything about him was as if the spirit of the woods had had the ordering of it; his whole make-up was in a minor and subdued key, like the moss and lichens, or like the protective coloring of the game—everything but his quick sense and penetrative glance. He was as gentle and modest as a girl; his sensibilities were like plants that grow in the shade. The woods and the solitudes had touched him with their own softening and refining influence; had indeed shed upon his soil of life a rich, deep leaf-mould that was delightful, and that nursed, half-concealed, the tenderest and wildest growths. There was grit enough back of and beneath it all, but he presented none of the rough and repellent traits of character of the conventional backwoodsman. In the spring he was a driver of logs on the Kennebec, usually having charge of a large gang of men; in the winter he was a solitary trapper and hunter in the forests.

The Windrow.

The noted scientist, M. Edmond Perrier, of the Academie des Sciences, considers that Mars is the only planet besides Earth which is inhabited by a race similar to human beings of this planet.

Dr. Alfred Wallace, who was collaborator with Charles Darwin in some of his work, has, at the age of 88, published a book, "The World of Life," which is attracting much attention in scientific and religious circles.

A memorial tablet to Goldwin Smith will be erected in the beautiful hall that bears his name on the Cornell campus by direction of the board of trustees of Cornell University. The tablet will commemorate the distinguished savant's gift of \$689,000 to Cornell, and will be placed in the entrance hall, not far from the busts of Dr. Smith and his wife. On it will be inscribed these words, from Dr. Smith's will: "All the rest and residue of my estate I give, devise and bequeath to Cornell University, in the State of New York, United States of America. . . . In confirming this bequest, my desire is to show my attachment to the University in the foundation of which I had the honor of taking part to pay respect to the memory of Ezra Cornell, and to show my attachment as an Englishman to the union of the two branches of our race on this continent with each other, and with the common mother."

Glad Heart.

By Mrs. Charles Page.

To hear her laugh, you'd think the earth Held nowhere sadness, only mirth.

It had been such a weary day;
The sullen skies were wan and gray;
The rain sobbed wistfully, and wept;
The cold wind—life was sorrow-swept
Until she came. Oh, all the birds
Sang in her voice; and strove for words
The tiny, seeping, silver streams!
The subtle music of my dreams
Came true, and life was good and fair;
The rain waxed beautiful, the air
Was filled with flow'r-scent—so my view
Veered to the magnet sound, and grew
Calm and serene and sane anew.



Canoe Birch.

which it came. An old Indian had taught Uncle Nathan the art, and the soul of the ideal red man looked out of the boat before us. Uncle Nathan had spent two days ranging the mountains, looking for a suitable tree, and had worked nearly a week on the craft. It was twelve feet long, and would seat and carry five men nicely. Three trees contribute to the making of a canoe, besides the birch, namely, the white cedar for ribs and lining, the spruce for roots and fibres to sew its joints and bind its frame, and the pine for pitch or rosin to stop its seams and cracks.

to the woods. It lacked part of the cedar lining, and the rosin upon its joints, and these were added after we reached our destination.

Though we were not indebted to the birch-tree for our guide, Uncle Nathan, as he was known in all the country, yet he matched well with these woody products and conveniences. The birch tree had given him a large part of his tuition, and kneeling in his canoe and making it shoot noiselessly over the water with that subtle and indescribably expressive and athletic play of the muscles of the back and shoulders, the boat