

loaded with green faggots for firing. The women have most of this work to do, as it seems, and they even steer the canal-boats tugged up or down stream by stout teams of horses. No matter how lean and stooped an old hag may have become, she seems always able to carry a big basket.

In every village there is a washing-place beside the river, where women, young and old, congregate with baskets of soiled clothes, which they beat and rub on slabs of slate, while their tongues are busy with the gossip of the day.

In general, the people seem dour, colorless and untidy, with very little comfort in their lives; but on fine Sundays and holidays they blossom out in brighter colors, and enjoy their one amusement, fishing. To be a fisherman on the Meuse, you require three or four poles, a large landing-net, a pail with boiled wheat for bait, and a big basket of lunch, with a bottle in it. In many cases they consider it well to take their wives or sweethearts along; and presently you find the whole grassy shore of the river lined with sportsmen. At first the three English-speaking geologists—the Englishman, the American and the Canadian—decided that the whole affair was a pretence, that there were no fish in the Meuse; but ultimately we really saw several fish, perhaps one to one hundred fishermen. The largest was six inches long and hardly needed the landing-net. However, the man of the Ardennes is right to go fishing on fine Sunday afternoons, for the fun of the thing lies really in seeing his neighbors, in watching the boats on the river, the splendid cliffs, with trees covering their tops or straggling down the ravines, the clouds and their shadows, all doubled by reflection in the placid water. If our seventy-year-old guide, Professor Gosselet, had not been so active, we also should have liked to "loaf and invite our souls" on the grassy banks of the Meuse.

While the narrow, winding valleys are full of life of a somewhat gray and stony kind, the gently-rolling highlands which make up much of the region, are strangely barren and lifeless. They are covered with what France calls a forest, but what a Canadian would call merely scrub. The Forest of Arden suffers a sad decline when one comes actually to travel through it. Much of the forest is cut over every twenty years, the young oaks furnishing bark for tanning and wood for fuel or for charcoal-burning.

Here and there, a few grey stone houses hide in nooks of the woods. In one we took our "fork" breakfast about noon one day. The low rooms were roofed with oak beams a foot thick, and tiny, small-paned