

THE CANADIAN SPORTSMAN AND NATURALIST.

No. 5.

MONTREAL, MAY 14th, 1881.

VOL. I.

THE GRAND ROMAINE.

This beautiful river enters the sea about nine miles east of Mingan. It is considered one of the best for angling. The salmon are generally of large size, said to be of extraordinary strength, and give excellent sport; indeed, one cannot easily doubt this statement when he visits the place and views the magnificent falls, just above the angling pools, and opposite the camping-ground. He may naturally ask does salmon leap this mighty torrent of water? No, dear Sir, although the salmon of this river are remarkable for their size and beautiful form, they cannot reach the spawning-grounds by attempting to leap such a perpendicular fall of water. Nature has provided another entrance for the fish, a short distance east of the falls. It is therefore evident that the habits of salmon are similar to the sea trout, which are known to remain for many days feeding in the estuary, gradually becoming accustomed to the river water before they finally depart for the purpose of propagation. In like manner, salmon leaving the salt water make for the pools at the base of the Romaine falls, where they remain a short time making vain efforts to go farther, but finding a barrier they again turn seaward discovering the east entrance where they enter and reach, (after many difficulties) their spawning-grounds. While we were at Mingan in 1868, the mistake of salmon missing their native river, was illustrated by the fact that the Romaine form of fish was caught in nets placed near the Mingan. It must be remembered that although there is no structural difference in *Salmo salar*, there is an evident change in the exterior form of the fish which is remarkable and moreover applicable to the river to which the salmon belongs, and the man who net-fished the Mingan at that time, could, with confidence say, "Mr. Couper,

this salmon which I have just taken from my net has made a mistake, it has passed its own river." Capt. LeMarquand, please explain. "You see, sir, that the shape of the fish is totally different from Mingan salmon; its form is deeper; it is more bulky, and the head is not shaped like any salmon entering the Mingan. This we have ascertained through long experience; we can pick out every fish that makes this mistake." In *Lovell's Gazetteer*, the Romaine is described as a large river of Quebec; falls into the north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It extends north and south many hundred miles, and has some fine falls. One hundred miles from its mouth, there is a natural bridge, and three hundred miles farther magnificent falls, said to be equal to those of Niagara." We have had the pleasure of entering the Romaine in a canoe, as far as the pool at the base of the fall on the north-west branch, about ten miles inland, where this portion of the river becomes narrow, descending from primitive rocky gulches, showing evidence of the difficulty salmon has to contend with in reaching the spring tributaries which make the river proper. If the water happens to be low, the fish must remain in the pools until rain occurs further north to add to the bulk of the stream. Should this not take place, many fish which have reached thus far must of necessity return to salt water before winter sets in. In our opinion the Fishery Department should take away this obstacle to salmon passage on the Romaine. It would cost little to make proper and permanent fish-leaps through these almost perpendicular falls, besides it would make the river more valuable, and increase the number of salmon. Several North-Shore St. Lawrence rivers are similarly situated. For instance, the Mingan; it also could be improved by making a more easy passage for salmon over its rocky fall of water.