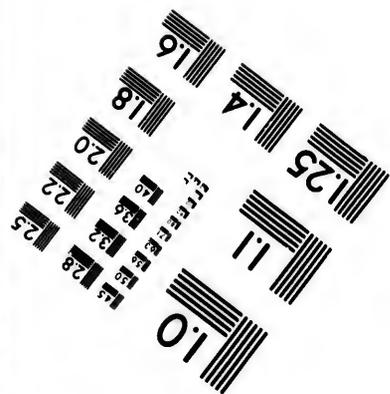
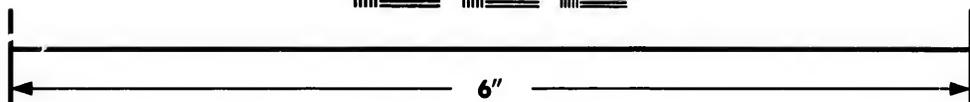
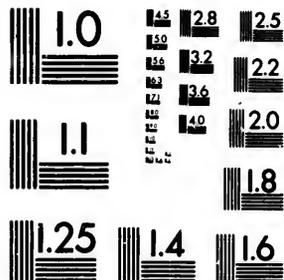


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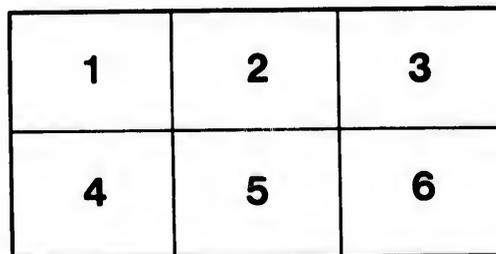
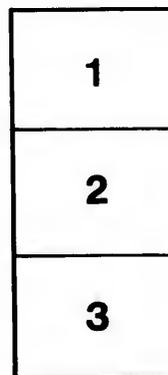
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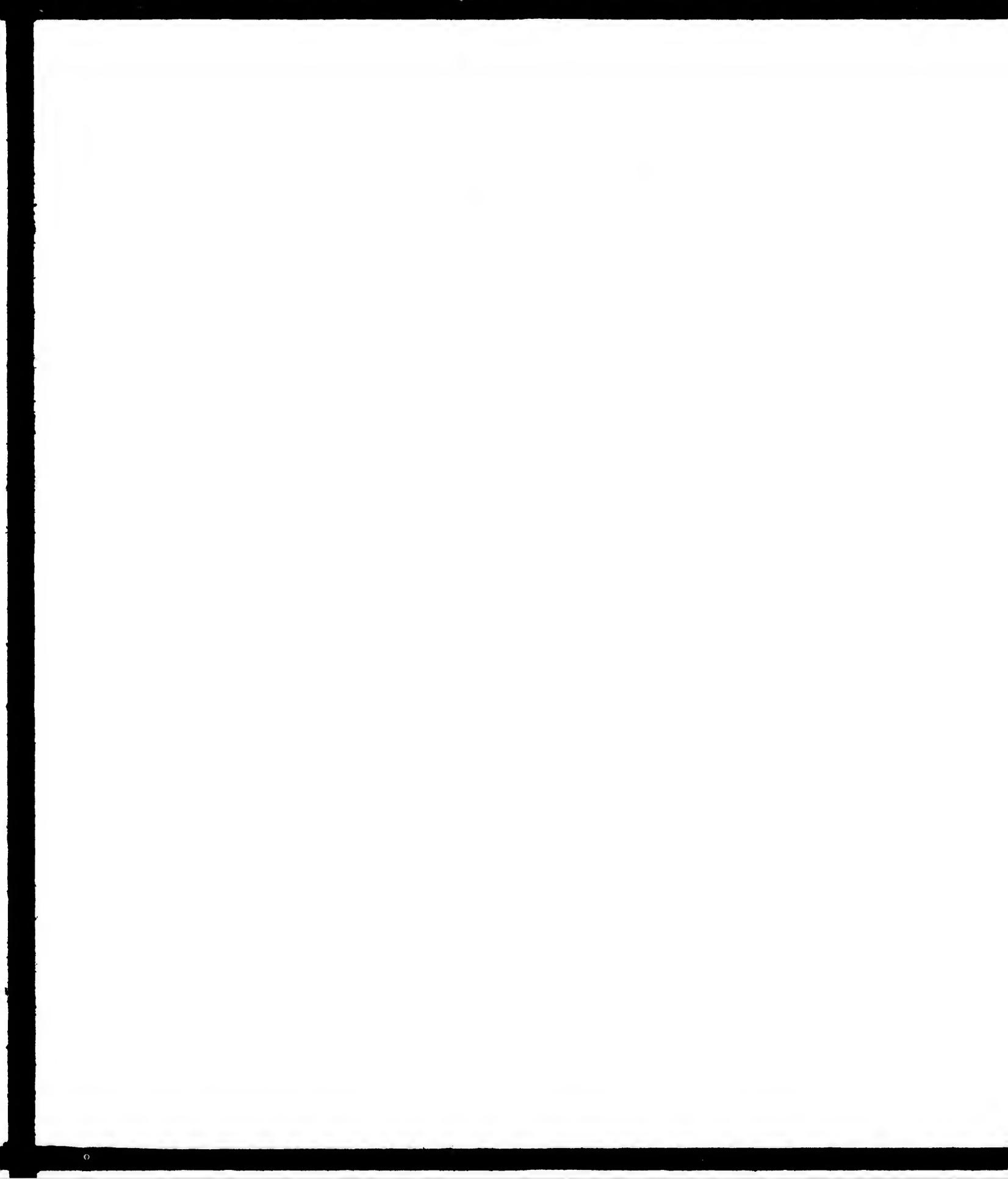
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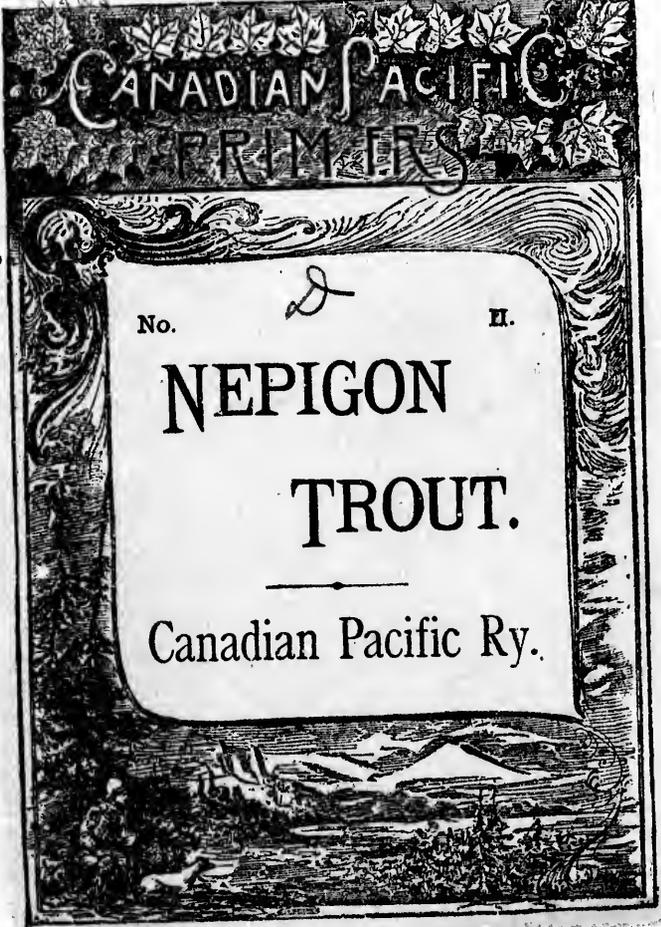
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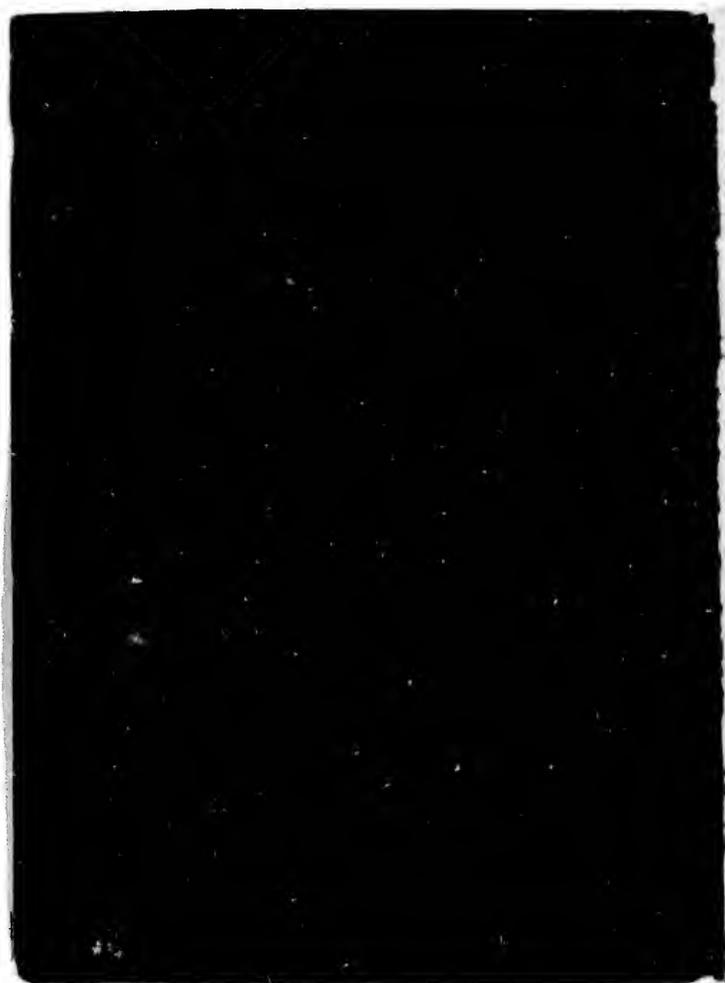
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CANADIAN PACIFIC PRIMERS—II

NEPIGON TROUT

AN

OTTAWA CANOEIST'S EXPERIENCE

ON THE NORTHERN SHORE OF

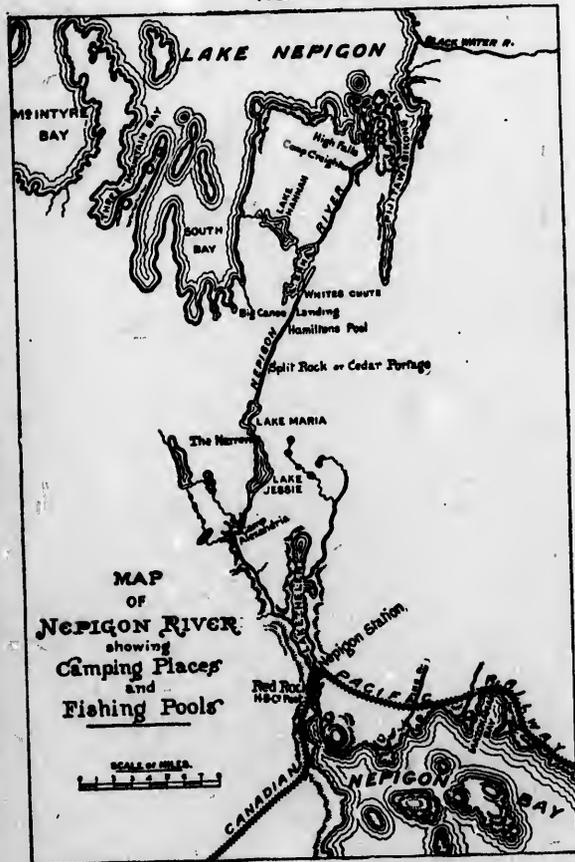
LAKE SUPERIOR

W. F. WHITCHER



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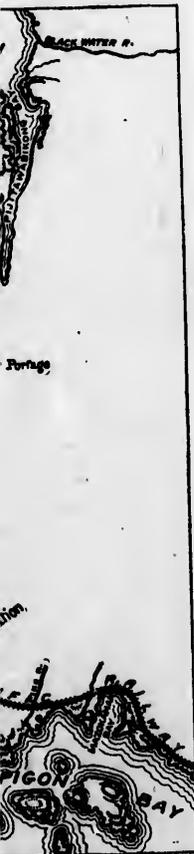
A WORD AT THE START.



A MORNING CATCH.

THE WRITER indites these pages as voluntary information and, possibly, amusement for fellow pleasure-seekers of the anglecraft; and in acknowledgement of cheerful assistance and uniform courtesy towards himself and companions, during many days and nights of very enjoyable travel between Ottawa and the Rocky Mountains, by the officials of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company.

On an exploratory fishing and shooting trip in unsettled and distant parts of Canada, such as some of mine have been, the stop-over tickets and coupons provided for sportmen's baggage have been peculiarly serviceable. I was bound nowhere in particular, but desired to stop wherever the fancy seized me or my companions; anywhere that the waters looked fishy, woods were leafy and cool, and the scenery of forests, fields, mountains or lakes promised to intensify our holiday delights. At any such inviting localities (rarely known in advance) we were liable to be tempted to alight and to pitch a tent, then launch a canoe, cast a fly, rig a troll or handle a gun; yet our sometimes trying



demands were all met by a ready and agreeable compliance on the part of the railway men. Brethren who know how much attention we sportsmen require, with our wants and whims and our multifarious equipage, are best qualified to estimate the worth of willing aid on the part of the transportation companies who carry us between our homes and the initial point of one of those rejuvenating excursions in which the craft justly takes so much delight.

Many years of most memorable enjoyment in angling over rivers and lakes in all parts of the Dominion of Canada, enable me to compare knowingly the eastern and western resorts of fly-fishermen, and to speak with favor of the newly accessible places on the northern affluents of Lakes Huron and Superior, to which this little pamphlet is devoted. For that reason the author believes that what is herein written, without fee or reward, will be read with interest and faith by anglers, to whom new opportunities and localities for fishing, canoeing and pleasant camp-life are always welcome.

Persons inclined to fish along the railroad route eastward of Nepigon should provide themselves with light canoes, either of cedar or of birch-bark; the former can be brought from Toronto, and the latter could be purchased in advance through some of the station agents west of North Bay or Sudbury Junction. Cruising along the shore of Lake Superior west of Heron Bay can be done in Mackinaw sailboats, procurable at Peninsula Harbor, Jackfish bay or Rossport. Guide and men must be taken on chance.

Tourists who intend visiting Nepigon river can procure nearly all ordinary supplies and camping requisites at the Hudson's Bay post; also Indians, canoes, tents, bedding, clothing and rough cooking materials. The Nepigon Indians usually employed are fair cooks, good canoeists, woodsmen and guides; and are smart, clean and civil.

It is customary to pre-engage men and canoes before starting, by advising N. Flanagan, Esq., the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company's agent at Red Rock, Nepigon, Ontario. This gentleman is thor-

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oughly informed and very obliging. He can engage men and canoes, and procure an outfit at any time; but the pick is by early prearrangement, and to be quite certain of having all your requirements, a list, accompanied by money, should be sent him a few days in advance, so that any deficiencies in his stock may be supplied from Winnipeg. Apart from railroad fares or hotel bills, the outlay incurred for one or two months depends upon the number and tastes of each party; and four or five persons can figure out to "find" and feed themselves almost as cheaply as one or two. Clothing, provisions and camp outfits need not cost, for each person, over \$1.25 per day. Tackle and fishing-gear can be had for \$20, that will last for several seasons. Guides and hired canoes cost from \$2 to \$4 per day for two men and one canoe. Their daily feed, say forty cents each.

A single angler can manage with one canoe and two Indians; and a party of three or four would merely double that estimate, unless every man weighs 250 pounds and carries a cannery of eatables and drinkables along with him. Every additional canoe means also a brace of Indians, two mouths, and as many appetites as there are stoppages in each day's journeying, or idle hours between daylight and darkness.

One word more. Don't leave wives, daughters, sisters and sweethearts behind on the plea of expense. It is poor economy. I believe that if some men would spend half of what they do in buying themselves off from the delightful encumbrance, these charming creatures could nowadays participate in the inspiring pleasures of our angling trips, without the slightest danger of family bankruptcy. Just think how much brighter the waters appear, how much lovelier the woods seem, and what a grace of gentleness pervades the wildness and romance of our surroundings when "the girls" are in canoe and camp with us! And a mere trifle of extra cost suffices thus to "paint the lily" of our joyous outdoor life.

A GUIDE TO THE RIVER AND LAKE.

Before beginning my story, some general account of the Nepigon river and lake may not come amiss; and I have the advantage of Dr. Robert Bell's report to the Canadian Geological Survey (Rept. Geo. Surv. of Can., 1867-9, pp. 313-364, with maps) to check and supplement my personal knowledge of this interesting locality.

Nepigon bay is the most northern point of the triangular outline of Lake Superior, and into it flows the river we are about



RED ROCK SETTLEMENT, NEPIGON BAY.

to ascend. It is the largest river received by the lake, and differs from all others in having clear water. This characteristic, and its size, together with the fact of its draining the largest area tributary to Lake Superior, entitle it to be considered as the continuation of the St. Lawrence beyond Lake Superior, with which it connects Lake Nepigon, thirty-one miles distant, due north. The following is Dr. Bell's description of the river,

which will explain the accompanying map, and the points of our various adventures:—

"Four lakes occur in its course. . . . The lowest of them, Lake Helen, is only one mile from Red Rock, a Hudson's Bay Company's post at the head of Nepigon harbor. At the outlet of this lake (where the railway now crosses) the river is very narrow, apparently only about one hundred yards wide, and sweeps around with a strong current (estimated by Admiral Bayfield at four and one-half knots an hour) for a distance of about half-a-mile, between banks of border-drift from thirty to forty feet high. Lake Helen, which runs due north, is about eight miles long and one mile wide. The upward course of the river leaves the west side of this lake nearly at right angles to the shore. For six miles from this point, in a northwesterly direction, it has a width of about five chains, with deep water and a moderately strong current, flowing in a bed of alluvial sandy clay, with Laurentian gneiss close to the east side, sometimes approaching quite to the brink of the river; while, on the west side the same rock comes to the water toward the end of this sketch.

"Here the river makes a slight bend to the right and is broken by a slight chute at Camp Alexandria. At one-quarter of a mile above this point the Long rapids begin, and continue for two miles; but in ascending the river they are avoided by turning into a brook on the west side, and following it for about three-quarters of a mile, and from it a portage of one mile and a half brings us up to the foot of Lake Jessie. This lake, which is three miles long, and is studded with islands, is separated from Lake Maria, immediately above it, and two and one-half miles in length, by The Narrows, six or eight chains wide, in which there is a strong current, with a fall of six inches or more.

"A very high, west-facing cliff of columnar trap approaches the river from the southwestward, at the head of Lake Maria, and runs from this point, in a tolerably straight course, all along the east side of the river to Lake Nepigon. Trap cliffs also occur on the west side of the river from Lake Maria to Cedar portage

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(Split Rock), the distance being two miles. This portage is 250 yards long. A mile and a quarter above it there is another portage, of fifty yards, over an island in the middle of the river. Three-quarters of a mile above Island portage the One-Mile portage (2,600 paces) begins.

At rather more than one mile from the head of this portage, the river breaks into a white foaming chute, across a narrow ridge of trap, which separates Lake Emma from the lower level. A narrow arm, in continuation of the course of the river, just below White chute, and parallel with the east shore of Lake Emma, but on a lower level, extends beyond the chute to a distance of about a mile, where a portage of 230 yards is made across the low trap ridge to the lake which has just been mentioned.

This lake is nearly four miles long. Between it and the point at which the river leaves Lake Nepigon, a distance of some six miles, four principal rapids occur, the lowest of which is seen where the river enters the northern extremity of Lake Emma.

The canoe-route turns aside from the waters of the Nepigon at the northwest angle of this lake, and for one-quarter of a mile follows a brook flowing from Lake Hannah, which has a slightly higher level than the last lake. Four miles more, in a northwesterly course, brings us to the head of Lake Hannah, from which Flat Rock portage, about one mile in length, carries us to the shore of Lake Nepigon."

Lake Nepigon is elliptical in form, but its outline is extremely irregular. The longest diameter is a little west of north and measures about seventy miles, while its breadth is about fifty. On the south side are many large bays, though the largest bay of all, Ombakika, is on the northern side; this bay is nearly twenty miles long, with an entrance only a mile wide. These many deep indentations, rendering no less than 580 miles of coast accessible by water, will prove of great service when the excellent land which exists on various parts of the shore becomes settled.

The shores are generally bolder, and the water is deeper

along the southern and western margins of the lake than opposite; in one place a sounding-line 540 feet long failed to reach the bottom. Streams in great numbers,—several large enough for long canoeing-trips, and offering a most attractive field for exploration,—pour into this spacious basin. The largest of them is the Kayoshk, or Gull river, which enters near the Southwestern "corner," and at the mouth of which is the Hudson's Bay post, Poplar Lodge.

The Nepigon river is now the only outlet of the lake, falling 313 feet in its swift course to Superior; but there is evidence that formerly water escaped through Black Sturgeon lake and river, a few miles to the westward.

Lake Nepigon differs from the other great lakes of Canada by being studded with islands, which add much to the beauty of its landscape. These vary in size from eight miles in their principal diameter, down to the merest islets, and probably the whole number in the lake exceeds a thousand. Excellent soil exists here and there, sometimes extensively, all around the lake, though the largest tract of good land appears to lie on the south-western side. For fifty miles north of the Nonwatan river the country is comparatively level and fertile to a great distance westward. A similarly level and fertile region extends north-westerly from Ombakika bay, and at many other points colonization is feasible. Farming has, in fact, been carried on there for a long time, at several localities, by the Indian traders.

The climate is as well suited to agriculture as that of the greater part of the Province of Quebec; timber of a serviceable sort is plentiful; brick-clays, lime and building-stone abound; salt-springs are known; and the day is probably near when these hills and waters will echo to the sounds of rural industry.

Finally, it must not be forgotten that all these rough rocks belong to the same series as the copper-bearing ledges surrounding Lake Superior; and that not only native copper, iron and lead, but gold and lesser minerals are recognized, and to some extent have already been mined.

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LAKE NIPISSING TO LAKE SUPERIOR.

Finding our places at Ottawa, the capital of the Dominion of Canada, one evening early in July, on board a luxurious sleeper of the night express from Montreal to Vancouver, we breakfasted at North Bay, on Lake Nipissing.

This extensive lake still abounds in bass, pickerel, maskinonge, whitefish and forked-tail trout. A cluster of wooded islands with rocky shores and gravelly bays lies outside of the village of North Bay, about four miles from the railroad station, where camping is good and fishermen are usually lucky. The north-western, southern and eastern corners of the lake receive streams of considerable volume, within the mouths of which sport with rod and trol is always certain.

French river, which forms the southwestern outlet draining that part of the lake into Georgian bay (the eastern expansion of Lake Huron), is studded with islands and cut into deep and tortuous channels, where the best of trolling and live-bait fishing is found. Maskinonge of rare size frequent these haunts. I saw one of seventy-two pounds weight caught in a net, and have myself taken them with trolling-gear all the way up to forty pounds.

There are three long, narrow, winding arms at the westerly end of the lake, into each of which small streams empty, and weedy and rushy bays intervene. Among the pretty islets and gravelly shoals of these indentations, very fine bass are caught with gaudy-flies, minnows, or metal baits. I took last summer, with an artificial fly, in a single forenoon, eight black bass weighing from two to five pounds. They rose briskly and played vigorously. I could have captured twenty, that same day, while paddling about in my small canoe. I have effected many exciting captures of heavy and determined fish hereabouts, but much prefer the stream-fishing for river trouts, with finer tackle, as practised farther westward. The extension of railway lines now open from Toronto to North Bay renders access to all of these enticing waters quite easy.

Between Nipissing and Sudbury Junction, where a branch of the railroad leads down towards Lake Huron, at Algoma Mills, crossing on the way numerous unfished localities, we passed the Sturgeon and Wahnapitae rivers without feeling keenly tempted to prove their untried waters.

Beyond Sudbury Junction the frequent glimpses of Spanish river, and its redstoned fork, the Vermillion, whose broken currents and cascades looking very trouty, alternate with tranquil stretches shaded by leafy trees and set off by piney woods,—a



A MEDIUM-SIZED STREAM.

back-ground of forest primeval,—made our fingers tingle for a passing cast. Again near Straight lake, and at Metagama, we could scarcely resist the temptation to jump off and pitch an exploratory camp. Trout are reported abundant and the scenery is romantically diversified. But there is a constant succession of similar places westward of Biscotasing. We saw plenty of chain-lakes and smallish streams all along the height of land separating the drainage of Lake Superior from that into Hudson's

bay, to whose salt waters we could easily have floated in our canoe with very few portages. Biscotasing seems to be a desirable place for outfitting an excursion. It is conveniently situated on Biscotasing lake in the midst of a network of bays, windings and tributary brooks, said to be full of fish.

The largest and most tempting rivers crossed beyond here are the Magpie and the White, both of which can be fished from the shore or by means of canoes. White river has more rapids and deep reaches, is narrower, and therefore offers livelier sport. It skirts the railway down towards Heron Bay station, where the line first reaches Lake Superior; and near its final crossing an inviting valley, occupied by a series of narrow ponds, connects it with White lake, — a large body of water. The two Pic rivers are crossed, and then comes the station Heron Bay, where Lake Superior is first touched by the railway.

Our objective point was a medium-sized stream near the easterly corner of Jackfish bay, named Bluestone or Steel river. To reach it we loaded our outfit at Jackfish station, and intending sojourners in any part of this region should do likewise. Accommodation may be scarce, but persons outfitted for camping and cruising about the bay, or in the minor lakes, can so readily get afloat, and so soon settle themselves in some desirable locality, that nothing beyond a momentary lack of civilization between the Pullman and the camp-fire will be felt. There is a greater likelihood of being able to hire sailboats, as well as greater ease in moving to some other locality by railroad, when located near any important station. A suitable tenting-ground will easily be found, whether one proposes fishing eastward or westward of the landing place, or to angle in the small lakes and streams inland from the bay.

We preferred the beach, both on account of the cooler air and freedom from flies, for the fine outlook and for the change of fishing; and therefore worked eastward alongshore about four miles to the mouth of Steel river, camping there in a sheltered nook with a rocky islet near by and exactly opposite the Slate

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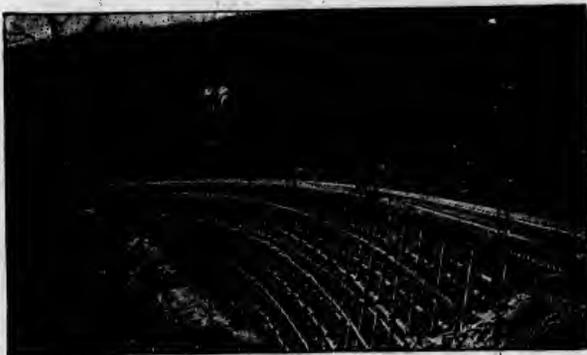
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islands, out in the lake. It was a cosy and airy spot, with the wildest of scenery in every direction. Trout were plentiful and within easy reach. Daily the trains rattled along the cliffs behind us and clattered through the deep rock-cuttings, then dashed across sandy levels and were suddenly muffled in a series of tunnels. After quitting the station the west-bound train winds its way in a looplike curve around Jackfish bay, and then doubling backwards upon itself, appears as if climbing wearily over the herculean shoulders of Victoria cape.



THE LINE AROUND JACKFISH BAY.

STEEL RIVER TO THE NEPIGON.

Steel river is a sort of diminutive Nepigon. Behind the frontage-line of mountains it expands into smallish lakes and quiet reaches connected with each other by noisy little falls and lively rapids. The choicest trout-fishing is along these connecting links. The river communicates with other lakes and ponds among the hills and valleys by breaks which were once filled with young and lesser trouts. In several spots the ravage of explosives is perceptible, where this wasteful invention of loafers and poachers has been cruelly used. The proximity of the main lake and the prolific areas of Jackfish and Nepigon bays, can alone account for the abundance and size of trout still found in these tributaries in spite of such piscatory vandalism, which is not likely to recur, now that the rough army of men engaged in building the railway has decamped and left the woods and streams to their natural process of recovery.

We caught with small artificial flies, in various parts of Steel river, and with large trout flies and guttapercha minnows outside the river's mouth, fine speckled trout varying in weight from half a pound to five pounds. Had we been killing for count, *which we were not*, the number of our catch might have been hundreds instead of dozens. Engaging a fisherman's boat to take our traps and canoe in tow, we left there after a few days, with much reluctance, and boated slowly along towards the head of Nepigon bay.

Naomekan, or Gravel river, distant some forty miles, was our next haven. We amused ourselves on the way each day by catching trout for provender, and by watching the hundreds that rose about sundown on the calm surface of every pebbly bay, or played near the entrance to tiny coves where brooks or larger streams emptied from the gullies, or poured down among the boulders. Gravel river was formerly famed for its spotted trout until dip-ucts and dynamite had their fling; yet there is still some nice fishing to be had in it, particularly near the mouth.

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Mazokamah brook tumbles its cold sparkling water into a lovely little bay sixteen miles beyond Gravel river. The trout inside the stream are small but gamey; outside they are larger, and at times, when the wind grows strong and the sea runs heavy in Nepigon bay, this sheltered bend is literally alive with them.

Here we took to the cars and alighted again at Nepigon station, on Nepigon river, where canoes were hired. Indians carried our belongings from the station to the place of embarkation, and we paddled ourselves through Lake Helen and up the river twelve miles, where, at the foot of the first rapids, we pitched our next tent, on the long trodden point of land called Camp Alexandria.

Here used to be a general stopping place; and notwithstanding the merciless thrashing with flies of all sorts and sizes that adjacent waters have winced under; and the hobbing with every creeping and jumping thing imaginable, to say nothing of incessant baiting with minnows and worms, varied by spoons and metal and rubber baits; this charming locality affords to-day as much pleasure as any rational angler can desire.

Last summer we caught at different times near our camp, from half a dozen to two dozen trout, many of them weighing over two pounds. They were taken on artificial flies. We also captured each day three or four true whitefish, by using very small flies. Their weight was from one to four pounds, and their gameness was akin to the cousinly trouts.

The rapids above and below Camp Alexandria are frequented by whitefish from Lake Helen and Nepigon bay in such numbers as often crowd out the trout. I have seen them rising all over the pools. We captured twenty or thirty of these silvery sided coregoni, on the excursion which I am describing, each of two or three pounds weight, by using tiny black gnat flies. In taking the fly they poise themselves almost upright against the stream and mouth it like a sucker. Their mouths are excessively tender, but they fight bravely and appear to relish the fun quite as much as their aristocratic cousins with the vermillion



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spots and plucky reputation. As a pan-fish they are very tasty and delicate. It is hard to say whether they, or the spotted trout of equal size and age, are the most delicious food, both being firm in flesh and richly flavored. One of the elbows of the river in this neighborhood is known as Whitefish bend, and is a popular point with all fishermen.

Several comfortable tenting-places are to be found near these rapids, on both sides of the river; and a careful angler can find trout all along the broken water between here and Cameron's falls. Under these falls there is a wide and deep basin in which the largest trout are found; but fly-fishing for them is uncertain when natural bait is running, and success is surest with artificial baits.

A word about bait and baiters. It is so fashionable to sneer at bait-fishing that I hardly know what to say of it. Every man to his taste. Angledom should be as free as the air it circulates. There is no lawful or unlawful reason why any whitey-brown Sambo in these backwoods shouldn't carry "wo'ms fo' bait," if he keeps his "monf" sbut and his hat on. Neither is there any anglers' code that forbids fishing with an entire rooster instead of a cock's hackle, or tralling a burnished soup-ladle with a string of cellar meat-hooks across a pool, in lieu of a fancy minnow, if it serves the purpose in view. There are anglers and anglers, many of them as good as the others, and some better than either. If the most artful deceptions of refined angling are surer, and therefore deadlier, than clumsy counterfeits and coarse deceits, the dons of our business must be reconciled in self-defence to count in with the general average of sporting humanity. Were a fish vote to be polled on the respective merits of succulent angleworms, tender shiners and juicy grasshoppers, although the barb was moulted before the meat was stomached, can anybody imagine their preferring a bunch of mixed feathers tinseled on cold steel, either as a mouthpiece or a morsel? The vote would probably mean:—A fig for science, we vote for victuals! Charles Hallock, a very busy and versatile practicalist among angling literati, who



WHITEFISH BEND.

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knows by experience what top-crust fishing means, and is withal a shrewd judge of anglers, says a fair word for every duly elected member of the modernized "Diet of Worms," in the following phrases:—

"Fly-fishing and bait-fishing are co-ordinate branches of the same study, and each must be thoroughly learned to qualify the aspirant to honors for the sublime degree of Master of the Art," That is well said. He admits that fly-fishing illustrates the "poetry" of the gentle calling. Let us offset that admission by recollecting how bait-fishers have been praised in verse far more than glorified fly-men. Cynics have impaled both of them on pens as sharp and points as barbed as their own hooks. The palm for antiquity belongs to the former. Jeremiah mourns the scarcity of fish as compared with the abundance of earthworms. Epitaphs on anglers immortalize worms, whilst imitation flies are treated as ephemeral emblems of man's fleeting existence. I quote one epitaph, a century old, to remind the haughty fly-fisher that the common destiny of all flesh should make him wriggle with fits of humility:—

John Day, an angler of renown,
Moulders beneath this stone,
With worm he caught the speckl'd trout,
But to his home he's gone.
Worms for his bait, he'd many a feast,
We'll never see him more:
His body's gone, and in its turn,
Must feed worms by the score.

A frequent visitor at our camp-fire was one whose theory and practice in bait-fishing were original, for he was accustomed to put an assortment of baits on the same cast, "to give the trout a choice." How good his stories were, you can feel sure of after a glance at his countenance, which shows the very soul of jollity.

Loath to depart, we tarried long and lazily at this favorite campment, angling at leisure and reading, bathing, eating and sleeping at our own sweet will. The marmurous music of the

rushing and dashing rapids abreast of us, echoed in fitful cadences against the opposite cliff, was a soothing accompaniment to daytime reveries in the soft hazy sunlight; and its drowsy rhythm lulled us gently to sleep when night's peaceful presence hushed all other sounds. Neither mosquitos, blackflies nor midges disturbed our serenity. We smoked and veiled and culaxifaged them by day, and snored them to scorn by night. Perfect idleness and the unspeakable luxury of restful quietude were varied now and again by polling or portaging our canoe upon the swift currents, and then, after catching a few fish, we would run down stream homewards through the exciting rapids.



THE STORY-TELLER.

There was a squatter family of juvenile chipmunks located beside our camp. These cheeky urchins rustled about our cookery at meal-hours and took charge of the larder during our absence. Their sociability was sometimes excessive, until one morning an inquisitive youngster tripped across the frying-pan and warmed his too familiar paws on a hot corner of the gridiron; then he limped off squealing among his companions, who returned next day but ever after kept a safe distance from the fire-place. Even when mischievous, they were always amusing and companionable.

Near the camp we had a stony enclosure at the river's edge for keeping trout alive, and frequently led our fighting captives half-a-mile from the hooking-place into this reservoir. Nimble minks and sportive otters, unseasonably clad in faded furs, used to take their toll out of it occasionally, under cover of darkness, and once emptied the pond of six four-pound fish in four-footed style fully equal to the nocturnal relief of a crowded hen-roost by biped Ethiops.

The next day we caught and killed four other large trout, and as they hung upon a stump close in front of our tent, in broad daylight, an unsatiated mink crept furtively over the ledge and smelt of them right before our eyes. After informing his keen sense of their complete freshness, he seemed to wink at himself and glided away with an air of "They'll do for supper to-night!" But they didn't. We euchred him by expressing them to Ottawa before sundown.

How to keep and dispose of the fish one catches is often puzzling. The simplest and most portable preservative I have found consists of a powder composed of two parts of common salt and one part of finely powdered boracic acid. This may be used as a pickle in tubs and kits, or for a moist wrapping in cotton cloth and brown paper, after cleaning the fish.

LAKES JESSIE AND MARIA.

A brisk walk of three miles over barren hills enables us to launch into Lake Jessie, an expansion of the Nepigon, which joins with Lake Maria (a second expansion) by a crooked rapid called The Narrows, where fishing is fair and the tenting-ground clear and comfortable. Both of these lakes are of beautifully clear water, and the wooded, mountainous scenery on their banks is enchanting.

It was on one of those stilly days when the air is so warm and balmy that canoers seem to bathe in its reflection on the glassy surface, that we paddled through the mirrored sky and pictured softness of the leafy shores. One needs to see these waters on

such a day to fully appreciate their extreme purity. We appeared to be moving through inverted hill-sides thinly covered with evergreens and maples, birches and poplars, berry bushes and wild flowers, so clearly were the bordering mountains and unburnt woods reflected in the lake. Here is an example: From an old rampike, projecting over the water, hung a trailing vine on which a solitary lady-bug was basking herself in the sunshine. The tree, the creeper and the insect were minutely shadowed underneath us; and as we passed, a trout swam along and darted at the shadow of the lady-bug. Do not smile, incredulous reader; I really did see the shadow, the tree, and a bright-hued insect clinging to the ivy; also I saw a fish swimming across the picture. Isn't that enough for an enthusiastic angler to have seen in order to justify a tale? If you think not, then you are not used to fish stories!

We dawdled along to a camping ground near the entrance into Lake Maria, and there landed. Here, too, one can make a fair cast. Luckily we camped early and securely, for a drenching rain-storm, with terrific thunder and lightning, succeeded the loveliness of the daytime. Seldom have I rested under such an elemental racket. Although the darkness was pitchy the whole lake fronting us was made visible and seemed afire with flashes of electricity; and as the slanting rain-drops were pelted into the water, and waves and spray were thrashed along by the driving wind, the sheeted lightning played upon them a continuous blaze of aerial artillery, seeming at times to envelop and confuse them like a fleeing and disordered army. The thunder-clouds appeared to roll down the mountain sides and tumble together into the lake at its foot with a bewildering crash, through which the forked lightning broke with terrifying sharpness, shaking every animate and inanimate thing around like a smothered explosion of nitro-glycerine.

We were dry and snug enough, for the tent-poles and guy-ropes held fast; and when, toward midnight, we crept again to the front and opened the tent-flap, the lake was calming down and

We saw the streaming moon flee through the sky,
Pursued by all the dark and hungry clouds.

The storm was spent. We lay down again, and slept like seals on an ebb-tide. At sunrise the fish were jumping about in gleeful style, and we hooked up an early morning acquaintance with several fresh and active fellows who must have been fast asleep throughout the tempest.

Split Rock is sometimes called Cedar Portage. It is the first "carry" on the long stretch upwards from the foot of Lake Jessie, and is a wild-looking place. The river is deep and turbulent at the mouth of the pass, but around the lower side of the island-rock there is capital fishing when the stream is low; and further down on either side the shallowing corners are fished successfully with the fly. There are gravel ridges with clayey channels between them, across which the trout pass and re-pass at feeding and play times. When hooked on such casts, where the current is swift and curling, they are difficult customers. Between this rapid and the inlet to Lake Maria downwards, a distance of about three miles, there are several pretty casts which can be conveniently fished from a campment on the shore of the lake, as canoeing up and down is easy and makes an agreeable variety in the daily pastime.

Next above Split Rock is Island Portage, where, also, a fine pool exists, but better camping-ground and fishing are at Pine portage, close beyond. A foot-road of one mile leads over the mountain from here to Big Canoe landing, where some very large sized trout may be caught near the top of the rapids on the easterly side.

The next point is Hamilton's pool.

THE WITCHERY AT HAMILTON'S POOL.

This famous locality is a tangle of whirlpools. The Nepigon river having just tumbled madly through a rock-bound pass, escapes among patches of boulders and ledges into a horseshoe bay with a deep bend to the right. There are upper and under currents, outside and inside circles, crossing and counter-cross-



HAMILTON'S POOL.

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ing currents, the form and number and directions of which baffle description, and which seem to vary every time they meet, mingle or diverge.

Where these separating and remixing currents impinge upon the stony shore, three ridges of bowlders and gravel are formed in the bottom, betwixt which the constant boring and attrition of the much troubled waters have scooped out irregular troughs and ragged pot-holes. These troughs are, at recurring intervals, filled with subsident water, where the trout huddle together; but every few minutes the strong eddies clean them out like sluiceways,—fish, pebbles and all. The whole space for several yards then becomes a mass of rushing, bubbling, swirling, hissing and foaming water, in which hundreds of trout of different sizes may be seen wriggling about, in vain endeavors to keep their snouts in the master current, and save themselves from being washed bodily clean out of the pool, or cast ashore among the rocks. Every now and again some supreme effort is capped by ten or a dozen dripping and frolicsome fish throwing themselves wildly into the air, tails over heads, and tumbling pell-mell back again into the suds.

Although this singular performance seems to onlookers a frenzied sort of aerial antics, the method of its madness is easily seen when each trout strikes a length or so beyond the strongest swirl of the surface turmoil and enters at the curly rim of some reactionary streak.

It is skillful work to draw a fly through this fluvial commotion. An artificial or a live bait may be cast into it with the aid of a sinkered leader and stiffish rod, but in an instant the lure is gyrating close to one's feet, and the long line is flourishing about the pool like an attenuated eel. But the sight of these frisky and fantastic trout was most exciting, and I felt bound to catch some of them by hook or by crook. I ventured the experiment of paddling into the centre of the pool in a birch canoe and casting across the outermost edges. My Indian, Kenise, was unable to stem the tumult, and we narrowly escaped swamping, yet tried it again. I hooked a handsome fish on a phantom

minnow just as the periodic upheaval of waves, currents, bubbles and soap-suds came on again; and as the little canoe swung away it seemed to collide with a shower of trout that drummed against her sides like spiteful hail, while she twirled about like a thing bewitched.

Kenise looked scared and scuttled ashore so clumsily that the captive broke loose. I wanted to return, but Kenise insisted that I had hooked *wahbunoo-nahmagoos*, the spirit trout, declaring that he had felt her underneath trying to upset the canoe. He repeated with an emphatic grunt the phrase *Kahween kayahbe*, which means that the speaker wants no more of that fooling. I rallied him with the suggestion *sigee*,—"your afraid," whereupon he shot at me an arrowy look of barbarian contempt and walked away, muttering in native gibberish some sarcasm equivalent to: "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

It was Sunday. Our party had arrived and camped late the night before tired and hungry. The empty frying-pan cried aloud for fish. They wouldn't bite anywhere else, perhaps because it was Sunday, but I salved tender consciences with old Chadband's unctuous excusal: "Do we need refreshments? We do!"

Nowise daunted by the previous misadventure, I paddled alone into the aqueous hubbub and with a glittering minnow-troll snatched from it a fine trout of six pounds weight; and after half filling the canoe with foamy spurts and bubbling ripples, I landed him at last, despite the witchery that had so impressed Kenise.

Inside of five minutes after weighing he was split along the back; cleaned and cut into juicy cutlets, seasoned with salt, pepper and a squeeze of lemon; coated with cornmeal, and gently set a-fizzling in hot lard over the glowing coals.

What savory morsels! My lips smack instinctively at the bare recollection.

After breakfast, when everybody was filled with good humor and fried trout, I asked Michel, who speaks English like one to the lingo born, what was the unseen devilry that Kenise

imagined in the pool. His answer at first was a mysterious head-shake. Gradually his Ojibway taciturnity was relaxed and he told us all about the enchanted pool, and the

Legend of Nahmagoos-chahsuhkeed-equa.

This is it: "Great many years, whitemen came Lake Nepigon from *Kitchi-Gami*, Big Sea-Water, and tell Injuns stop kill and eat themselves, and no catch fish or shoot things 'cept real hungry, because wicked. Teach us Good-Spirit day, *anuwdebw-inekezhegud*, big rest time. Injun play (pray) and sleep, *Gitchi-Manito* fetch plenty more game other days. Bad spirit catch somebody bimeby if don't mind ourselves, certain sure. One Sunday lot Injuns camp 'longside this pool. White Injun, young missionary, take pole and fishin' jes' where you was with *chemauning*, small little canoe. Hook great large fish. *Gakoiked*, fisherman, pull hard. Pretty soon *Matchi-Manito*, Injun devil, make terrible fuss in bottom river. Water run mighty quck, wet all over stones. Most same time *Windigokive*, kind o' witch, woman-trout, swim close up and take boy right under. Never see again. Can't never save any trout neither. Broke sumthin ebery time Sundays. Poor place for fishin anyhow!"

Nothing was said by us to weaken this useful faith in Sabbatarian thrift. But I felt curious to learn if he, himself, really believed the plausible legend. I asked him to explain why so much commotion existed in the pool at other times, and why so many fish were lost there on week days.

Michel was equal to the occasion. He said that he supposed that this "hurly-burly" was caused by the squirmings of the captive mortal. The air bubbles were his escaping breath, and whirlpools were made by his frantic struggles to escape from the fishy embrace of the enchantress; while the glad trout were dancing and leaping about in hilarious mockery of their would-be captor's grotesque contortions. Whenever any trout got hooked, the fisher's tackle became entangled in the turmoil



RUNNING THE RAPIDS.

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and the fish was freed. If not, the guardian witch frayed the casting-line with a comb, in the shape of a fish's backbone, which she always carries in her right hand; while a scalp-lock in her left grip is believed to have been sawed from the greasy poll of the raped half-breed by the same novel hair-dresser.

Of course, I forbore to spoil these harmless delusions by closer questioning of Michel, but I could not help asking myself, Where does the untutored savage get fast hold of such slippery tales? They are neither original or aboriginal, but taste of common origin and smell of civilized manufacture. The present incident is so much like the German poet Goethe's fantastic satire on the "human art and human gulle," that lure the finny brood "to die in scorching air," I am tempted to copy it for comparison. Mayhap that is whence it was imported into "the land of the Dacotahs," where Hiawatha's clever conceits have done poetic duty for Ojibway tradition. The witch and the siren are not unlike. Listen, then:

There was a gentle angler who angled in the sea,
 With heart as cool as any heart, untaught of love, could be.
 When suddenly the waters rushed — and swelled — and up there sprang
 A humid maid of beauty's mould — and thus to him she sung:
 "Why dost thou strive so artfully to lure my brood away,
 And leave them then to die beneath the sun's all-scorching ray?
 Could'st thou but tell how happy are the fish that swim below,
 Thou would'st with me, and taste of joy which earth can never know.
 Does not bright Sol, Diana too, more lovely far appear,
 When they have dipped in ocean's wave their golden silvery hair?
 And is there no attraction in this heav'nly expanse of blue,
 Nor is thy image mirrored in this everlasting dew?"
 The water rushed, the water swelled, and touched his naked feet,
 And fancy whispered to his heart it was a love-pledge sweet.
 She sang another siren-lay, more witching than before;
 Half-pulled — half-plunging — down he sank, and ne'er was heard of more.

AT THE HEAD OF THE RIVER.

The river, just above the cañon at Big Canoe, leads up to a narrow and wild passage called White's chute, nearly at a right angle to the stream, where a short carry connects it with Lake Emma. I consider this one altogether the prettiest of these small lakes. Near its upper end a track crosses into Lake Hannah, and continues over the westerly side into a long arm of Lake Nepigon, named the South bay. Adventurers can pass around this way to the outlet above the High falls, on their way up, and return by the river. From Lake Emma upwards by Camp Victoria, the river is full of small islands and rapids, where a great variety of successful casts may be tried. Alongside the great rapids emptying out of Lake Nepigon is Camp Creighton, a most interesting spot from which one gets a view of High falls, which are at the very point where the river emerges from the lake as will be seen by reference to the very carefully drawn map which accompany these pages.

The circular basin at the foot of these falls is usually filled with fish, some of the largest being lake-trout, weighing from ten to twenty pounds. They are taken with live bait or strong spinning tackle.

If any one wants a greater variety, let him cruise about the main Lake Nepigon, and around into the long narrow bay east of Green mountain. With Lake Nepigon I have had no personal experience. Hallock refers to it in these general terms:—

“From the falls the river widens gradually, enclosing within its area dozens of small islands variegated with evergreens, birch, poplar, larch, tamarack, etc., and then expands into a vast inland sea, whose shores gradually recede beyond the limit of vision. In the far distant horizon, sky and water meet, and the waves roll up on shore with a volume and dash as turbulent in storms as those of Erie or Superior. Its bays are numerous and vast. Some of them are very deep, and extend inland for twenty miles, teeming with trout, lake-trout, pike and pickerel. Into it flow large rivers, that have their sources in the heights

RIVER.

Canoe, leads up to a chute, nearly at a right angle, which connects it with Lake Umbagog. The prettiest of these chutes crosses into Lake Umbagog into a long arm of water where Adventurers can pass through high falls, on their way to Emma upwards by all islands and rapids, which may be tried. Along Lake Umbagog is Camp Umbagog which one gets a view of from a point where the river crosses to the very west of these pages.

The falls is usually filled with trout, weighing from three to five live bait or strong

to him cruise about the long narrow bay east of which we have had no personal experience in general terms:—

Usually, enclosing within a bay, and fringed with evergreens, the bay then expands into a wide bay, and then extends beyond the limit of the bay, and water meet, and dash as turbulent as the sea. Its bays are numerous and extend inland for miles. Out, pike and pickerel. sources in the heights



CAMP CRIGHTON.

of land which constitute the watershed that divides the waters of the St. Lawrence chain from those of Hudson's bay and the Arctic zone."

Every one takes the back track from this region with a lingering desire to stay longer. The run down is made without breaking bulk except for one night's temporary shelter. Few can withstand the temptation to make it two, or perhaps three.

But too swiftly, at last, our canoe races under the iron girders of the railway bridge, and a minute later we turn the corner of the last rapid and tangle land on the sandy beach in front of the Hudson's Bay post at Red Rock, where our portly friend, Mr. Flanagan, a warm-hearted Irishman and an old and trusted agent of the company, awaits our safe return.

A WORD AT THE CLOSE.

My enthusiastic friend and author-companion of former years, the Hon. R. B. Roosevelt, who writes as well as he fishes, tells glowing tales of "*Superior Fishing*" hereabouts in bygone days. Writing in 1865, he says:—

"After having fished from Labrador to the Mississippi, and killed trout in many states where trout are to be killed, I am satisfied that the fishing of Lake Superior surpasses that of any other region on our continent, and is, as a natural consequence, the best in the world. . . . The fish of Lake Superior excel those of the other inland waters, either in flavor or game qualities, and sometimes, as with trout, in both. . . . Of the rivers, the most famous is the Nepigon, where barrels of trout, averaging four pounds, have been taken in one day. . . . They were collected in pools and were so numerous as to ruin the sport."

Later on, Charles Hallock confirmed it all and showed that, in 1873, the fascination of sizes and numbers attracted many visitors. "At the first rapids, and within sight of the steamboat landing (at the Hudson's Bay post, Red Rock), he remarks, "one may tarry and fish to repletion of desire and basket, with-

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out going further. Passengers, while waiting for the departure
of the steamer, have caught within an hour or so from off the
dock, trout ranging from one and one-half to five pounds each.
Of one hundred and fifty fish which we have caught, the average,
by actual test, was a little above two and one-half pounds. The
score runs thus, on exceptional occasions: Five fish, eighteen
and three-quarters pounds; five fish, twenty pounds; five fish,
twenty-three pounds; six fish, twenty-two and one half pounds.
And this is about as they run in the river. There are some



THE RAILWAY BRIDGE ACROSS THE NEPIGON.

small fish, but they are very scarce. Up in the lake they have
been caught weighing as heavy as twelve pounds. In short,
one may hook and land on stout gear as many trout as he has
flies on his line. I have known four to be landed at once,
weighing, in the aggregate, nearly fourteen pounds.

Sketchy references to notable places on the railway line
north of Lake Superior, in Lady Macdonald's felicitous descrip-
tion in Murray's Magazine, for February, 1887, of a trip
"By Railroad and by Cowcatcher," give the Nepigon river a

pleasing picture; and the accomplished authoress adds: "The only fault of the trout-fishing in the Nepigon, I am told, is that the fish are too numerous,—as if any one could catch too many four-pound trout!"

But explosives and manifold devices of abusive practice have left their mark on these once faithful resorts. Nowadays one must push upwards towards the narrower and more inaccessible portions of the river, where trout, though fewer than formerly, are less scattered. Would that so clever a pen as her ladyship's could impress upon Sir Ka-ta-mo-ni-mon, as Great Head Chief over sleepy sachems in the national wigwam, the urgent importance of waking up somebody to protect these piscine "wards of the nation!" And when Lady Macdonald *does* graciously come to their rescue, the mellow voices of gratified and jovial anglers, both white and red, will chant her praises at future camp-fires on Nepigon's forest shores, "as long as grass grows and water runs."

HINTS FOR OUTFIT.

Practiced campaigners know all about the proper outfit for such a jaunt as I have been describing; others may be glad to be reminded of what are necessities; what may be considered luxuries; where best to get them; how to arrange for transportation, etc.

Bear in mind that it is better to groan under luxury than to growl with discomfort. Paste this inside your fishing-hat, and determine beforehand to feed well, fish moderately and sleep comfortably. Then can you enjoy yourself whatever happens, and whether or not the fish and the flies bite as you may reasonably expect.

The kit for such an expedition ought to include tents and a regular canteen for cookery, with eating and drinking utensils, an inside pail for water and an outside one for boiling, besides a wire gridiron and baking-pan, or a Dutch oven, axes, hatchets, knives, tin candlesticks and candles, an extra kettle, tea-pot, coffee-pot, a dish-washing pan, coarse towels and yellow soap.

A folding camp bedstead or a canvas stretcher, and folding chairs and tables are desirable, unless you prefer to make your bed on hemlock boughs. The bedding should be ample and warm, and well stowed in dunnage-sacks made of oiled duck and secured by hand-straps. Your clothing must be woollen and durable and carried in a soft leathern valise; overalls and waterproofs should be included; strongly laced ankle-shoes and water-tight boots thickly soled, slightly legged above the knee form the best footwear. A tariton veil for the face, and gauntlets to protect the wrists against insects are indispensable. A mixture of castor-oil and tar, or an unguent compounded of camphor-gum and vaseline, is needed to smear the face, neck and ears, since it not only protects those parts but acts as an antidote to the poisonous secretion in all fly-bites which irritates the skin and fevers the blood. In addition to toilet articles, take pins, needles, thread, buttons, tape, wax, hooks and eyes, and scissors.

In your medicine chest you will naturally pack such curatives as your own special ailments suggest, but be sure to include spirits of camphor, effervescing magnesla, aconite, arnica, ginger essence, court plaster,—

Well, if you really need a little whiskey for your stomach's sake and your often infirmities, take a few flat flasks of old rye. Treasure it. Don't "swill" the Indians and half-breeds for the cowardly reason that because some generous or bibulous fool has heretofore done so, you fear to be reckoned as mean. If at any time they are wet or tired and need stimulants give them plenty of extra strong tea, and if for true cause they are chilly, dose them with hot ginger tea well sweetened. A few drops of spirits of camphor on a lump of sugar, or in cold water, is the proper physic for relaxation.

If you are well furnished with liquors, and inclined to "treat" the crowd, you'll very soon discover more stomach-aches and indigestions and shivering fits among your party than you can carry medicine of that sort to cure. Men with

limbs as supple as withes will manifest a variety of stiff joints that apparently cannot be straightened out by any external application. Fellows with a patent sheet-iron apparatus, fitted for digesting a horse-shoe, will suddenly weaken on a can of tomafoes, or an underdone ham, and want some fire-water to finish cooking it internally. The cook will always want another "spoonful" in a half-pint cup to clarify the coffee or to flavor the stew.

If you are known to have a supply and fail or refuse to circulate it, look out for sulks or spills. Once begun and you must continue with ever increasing generosity, or soon find out your initial mistake, no matter how excusable you may have thought of it. The extra exertions and agreeable moods due to intoxicants dispensed to aborigines cannot counterbalance the sullen reaction that easily develops into passive or active incivility. Better limit your quantity strictly to personal and necessary use, and your temperance will be read and respected by all men.

Having got together all of these necessaries, lay in your provisions according to time and number, allowing about double your own need for feeding attendants. The chief essentials to reinforce the contents of cases in your canteen are,—tea, ground or condensed coffee, flour, fat pork, smoked and spiced bacon, corned beef, ham, lard, salt lutter, corn-meal, oatmeal, biscuits, pea-flour, corn-starch, rice, potatoes, onions, pickles, salt, pepper (white and red), baking-powder or soda, condensed milk, canned preserves and vegetables, canned meats, tongues, lemons, lime-juice, vinegar, maple sugar or syrup, and any thing else you may fancy. With these trifles you can get along pretty well, eked out as they should be by fish, at least twice a day. Pipes and tobacco you will not forget, of course, if you are a smoker.

For a trip to the north shore of Lake Superior, or the Nepigon, your fishing tackle should include single and double-handed trout rods, trolling rod and lines, reels, creels, flies, bait-hooks, artificial minnows, bait box for grasshoppers, spring balance, landing net and small gaff. The standard patterns for flies on the Nepigon are, 'professor,' 'grizzly king,' 'queen,' 'Mon-

treal,' 'shoemaker,' 'fairy,' 'Seth Green,' 'coachman,' 'silver doctor,' 'green drake,' 'gray drake,' yellow, and black, brown and grizzled 'hackles,' and small, black-bodied and light winged 'gnat flies' for whitefish.

THE END.



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