Black Bass and Muskallonge Fishing.

In the memory of the past there are always reminiscences, the recalling of which gives us the greatest pleasure. Such it particularly the case with me when I think of the scenes and events which I am about to endeavor to describe. I was living on the confines of civilization literally, for there was but one residence farther North than that in which I was as inmate, and it was inhabited by a canny Scot, who never knew what it was to take a day's relaxation, his entire energy, early and late, being devoted to the improvement of his homestead. Shortly after my arrival I paid a visit, but found that information on shooting matters would have to be obtained through my own exertions, for more than a complaint against brain occasionally depriving him of a pig, he knew literally nothing of the sporting capacities of his neighborhood. It is always pleasant on a new field of operations to obtain a slight inkling of what you may expect. It is far from agreeable to have to draw a charge of solid shot, and thus lose time to substitute B B, or perhaps ball, small game being expected and large game found.

The locality of which I am about to speak is at the extreme northern end of Lake Simcoe, where one uninterrupted forest extends northwards for several hundred miles to the banks of the Upper Ottawa, except when on occasions lake or river occurs to break the monotony of this ocean of timber. In wandering about the neighborhood of my temporary residence, about two miles from home, I came upon one of those beautiful little sheets of water so frequently found upon the northern portion of the American continent. This scene became a favorite retreat, for wild ducks were numerous on a portion where wild rice grew luxuriantly, and wood pigeons and spruce grouse kept aloof in as a watering place, from its freedom of intruders. All devoted admirers of nature know what a pleasure it is to find a place where man's work mars the prospect, where every object the eye rests upon is as it came from the Creator's hands, and remains unchanged. As I sat on a rocky promontory to see the sun dip the horizon, perhaps visions of my distant land or far off friends flitting before me, I was struck with the immense numbers of fish that kept leaping out of unruffled surface, good evidence that the rod and line would find abundant work, and on the next visit I determined to put it to the test.

To those who are acquainted with the birch bark canoe it is needless for me to say anything. All the praises I could lavish could not further enhance it in their estimation; but to those who are not, to them let me say that there is not in existence a more perfect piece of mechanism for the purpose for which it is intended. Only learn to handle it properly, and you can go in it anywhere, over shoals, down rapids, through channels so narrow that it would appear that finally, if necessary, you can take it on your shoulder and tramp across portages where nothing but an ox team would take a boat. In construction they are models of skill, yet the Indian alone knows how to handle them, for although a white man may occasionally attempt their management, they never do it successfully. On the following day, with my birch bark on my shoulders, looking like a gigantic beetle T, I crossed the portage with a formidable array of lines and artificial bait, full of most mischievous intent towards the finny tribe. This day the surface was broken by that desirable ripple, whether it be for trolling or fly fishing, and clouds occasionally darkened with their shadow the face of the water. With exhilarating freedom deep I dipped my paddle, pushing for the rocky end, waiting till I had crossed the centre of the lake before I commenced to fish, for as a rule, unless there happens to be a reef, seldom many fish will be taken far from the margin.

When alone in a canoe one line will be found as much as one can conveniently attended to, for the navigation of your craft requires both hands. Getting under good headway I soon had twenty-five to forty yards of line astern, with a few inches of red cloth for line, which proved so attractive that I almost immediately had a break, and the moment or two afterwards a fish hooked. Of all piracy, determined fish, to which I give the palm, they are so thoroughly reckless in their efforts to escape, first springing from the water; then possibly coming at you like a cricket ball, giving you often more than you can do to get line on the reel, their next step to the right or left, and only succeeding when an unsanctioned nature refuses to do more, when two or three hours was the sport which continued with never ever a few minutes' cessation.

As I pushed slowly along the shore I came to a river previously unknown to me, and which I have since learned is the only outlet from the lake. The edge of this stream was fringed with a dense growth of weeds, and the channel had scarcely a perceptible current. On breaking full in view several dozens of wild duck rose simultaneously, which were many of the beautiful wood duck, a gem among his brilliantly dressed race. Want a pity at home we could not acclimate this bird, but I fear his migratory habits would sadly interfere! The sedge usurper of the stream here predicted pike, so replacing the red cloth by a large Smith's spoon, with some scarlet ibis feathers tied along the shanks of the hooks, I operated for fortune.

Few have not heard of the muskallonge, the king in stature of the pike family. He is to be found in nearly all the rivers and lakes of Northern Canada. Among the shoals and rapids of "The Thousand Islands," on the St. Lawrence, he is said to attain an immense size, even eighty pounds, but the largest that I have seen did not weigh two-thirds of that weight. Such large fish as the above I had not on that occasion to deal with, but before I ceased the bottom of my canoe had a goodly show of *duss* and *pike*; so many that I was satisfied to select three or four for present use and hide the others, with my birch bark, till I could send across for them in the morning, but a couple of bears, judging from the different sized tracks, got at my *cache* during the night and had the taste to make very full about what they did not eat, so that I rejected it as unfit for food.

Fish I have always found the most tempting bait with which to attract Bruin into a trap, so I built a house and the favor of my bait at the end of it, with my trap nicely hid over with boughs, and waited not do, he and his companion were too wide awake or had left the neighborhood. This lake I often visited afterwards, but never enjoyed the influences of weather never appeared to offer opposition, and fresh fish I always a welcome addition to backwoodsman fare. In company of a Chippewa Indian I also tried fishing through the ice. The method adopted is simple, viz.: cutting a hole two or three feet in diameter, over of the fishes with no bait, so keep set the light, and sufficiently large for the fishermen to sit inside, the end of his fish spear protruding through the top, with an artificial minnow on a few feet of line in the left hand, and weighted sufficiently to make it readily sink, you strict the pike to the surface, when, with a dexterous blow, you drive your trainer home. Very quick, like poaching, still where fish are so abundant and unalarmed for food, this becomes less culpable.

At the northern end of Lake Couchiche, the beautiful Severn, after tumbling over a grand fall, starts on its erratic, precipitous course for Lake Huron. To such this spot was not more than seven or eight miles of water, through a labyrinth of islands, and along the most picturesquely beautiful shore, wooded to the margin. Beside the fall was a sawmill belonging to a descendant of the French aristocracy, who had emigrated before the days of "The Empire." Whether or not the proprietor happened to be at home, a cordial welcome could be relied upon, and the fishing underneath his fall was always excellent—sometimes so good, that your bait could scarcely touch the water ere it was seized. However, there was one drawback, for the spot was infested with snakes, particularly a large, thick, dirty, brown water species, which looked exceedingly venomous. From the indifference with which the mill hands treated them, I imagine their look was worse than their bite. They had, however, a penchant for mischief, for I saw one captured on the hook. As the wild fowl migrate this is a splendid strand; for if the weather is in the least stormy, with an indication of cold, the ducks keep passing all day, and their flight invariably is so low that they are well within range. By following the Severn down to its junction with Lake Huron, plenty of occupation can be found for both rod and gun; and the appetite your open air life will impart will make all you can take superior to anything obtained in civilized quarters.

ART ITEMS.

The Philadelphia School of Design for Women has occasionally the gratification of knowing that the benefits it renders are substantial. A beautiful young girl, child of a wealthy father, entered the school as an additional accomplishment, but all of the conventional ideas of woman's destiny, her father having told her that it would never be necessary for her to work. Subsequently, her father, involved in business embarrassments, lost his whole fortune. She then drew from the saving fund a small sum she had laid by from the proceeds of her school accomplishments. And that father then saw before him a daughter capable not only of taking care of herself, but of assisting him in his hour of distress. What a comment on the purse-proud sentiment, "You will never have to work." Another lady learned wood engraving at the same establishment, and when her husband was sick she, by her work, took care of him, kept her house, and carried on the business still.

BOSTON.—At the Boston Athenæum, the thirty-first annual exhibition of paintings, by American and foreign artists, is daily attracting large crowds. Church's "Niagara" is on exhibition in Boston.

The Boston *Transcript* gives the following account of the present whereabouts and labors of the Boston artists:

"Champney still remains at his home in North Conway, and will not return to the city until the middle of the month. Gerry is busy with his studies in the South Bulfinch, he has also finished several very beautiful paintings of fruit. Hill is at work upon a picture of Goodrich Falls. He has under his pictures of White Mountain scenery. His "Lyndon Valley" will be on exhibition at Child's, accompanied by a fine chromo by Prang. Hodgdon has returned from the Adirondacks with a number of fine sketches, and has begun a large picture from one of his studies. Griggs is also at home again, having spent most of the summer at Plymouth, Vermont, where he received a large number of orders for his sketches of the place. Two young artists, Shapleigh and Brown, have taken rooms in the Studio building, and show marked improvement as a result of their visit abroad. N. T. Johnson has upon his easel one of his beautiful miniatures on porcelain, for which he has quite a reputation. Fletcher has just finished a life-like portrait of a well-known gentleman of this city. Norton has at his studio in West street several fine marine pictures. T. D. Johnson sailed for Europe last week."

THE ACADEMIE DES BEAUX ARTS, PARIS.—By the death of Count Walewski a vacancy has occurred among the *membres libres* of the Académie des Beaux Arts at Paris. The members are elected by the votes of all the existing members of the institution, and are limited to the number of twenty. The intention of appointing them is to distinction upon persons who have contributed to the knowledge and cultivation of any of the fine arts by their writings and their labors. The class of men from which has been more than sufficiently represented among them, and the late Count Walewski had no other claim to the honor. There are three competitors for the place which his death has left vacant, but the field seems to be well known writers on art, M. Arsène Houssaye and M. Charles Blanc, brother of M. Louis Blanc. M. Houssaye founded *L'Artiste* after the revolution of July, 1830. Under Louis Philippe he was Inspecteur des Beaux Arts, an office which has since been abolished. He is the author of several works of the class which the French call *literature d'agrément*, that is to say, collections of gossip about the Court and society of France in the eighteenth century. In the course of these studies he shows a keen appreciation of the less important painters of the French school of the period. Nattier, Greuze, Carème, Boucher and their compeers. In fact, his preferences in art rarely rise above the atmosphere of the boudoir and the ante-chamber. His style has the merit of a certain sparkling affectation, which, though now somewhat out of date, is still regarded by most Frenchmen as a particularly valuable national product. The claims of M. Charles Blanc are of a more serious order. He filled the office of Directeur des Beaux Arts under the Republic of 1848, and has resigned after the events of the 2d of December, 1851. No living writer set the rivers and lakes of Northern Canada. Among the shoals and rapids of "The Thousand Islands," on the St. Lawrence, he is said to attain an immense size, even eighty pounds, but the largest that I have seen did not weigh two-thirds of that weight. Such large fish as the above I had not on that occasion to deal with, but before I ceased the bottom of my canoe had a goodly show of *duss* and *pike*; so many that I was satisfied to select three or four for present use and hide the others, with my birch bark, till I could send across for them in the morning, but a couple of bears, judging from the different sized tracks, got at my *cache* during the night and had the taste to make very full about what they did not eat, so that I rejected it as unfit for food.

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