The Log of the North Shore Club

Alexander

Ex-libris
Charles Atwood
Kofoid
BMC

THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA

PRESENTED BY
PROF. CHARLES A. KOFOID AND
MRS. PRUDENCE W. KOFOID

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/logofnorthshorec00alexrich

"*Wagush* Takes us out to the Trout Reefs."

The Log
of the
North Shore Club

Paddle and Portage on the Hundred
Trout Rivers of Lake Superior

By

Kirkland B. Alexander

With 40 Illustrations

G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press
1911

S-8449 2 ...

COPYRIGHT, 1911
BY
KIRKLAND B. ALEXANDER

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

F552
A37

To

THE MEMORY OF HIM WHO

THROUGH ALL THE TRAILS OF LIFE WAS MY GUIDE

MY BROTHER

THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS DEDICATED

CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION ix

CHASING A CAMP SITE AND THE LURE OF A PERAMBULATING WATERFALL 1

DISCOVERIES, DAY-DREAMS, AND MENDACITY AT DUNCAN'S COVE 27

AT THE KNEE OF MICHAEL 50

EXPLORING THE HEADWATERS OF THE STEEL RIVER AND BILLY FRASER'S ANECDOTES . 67

"NO LANDING FOR BOATS" 88

IN THE TROUT DEMOCRACY AND REEFS OF CHIPPEWA HARBOR 113

A BEATIFIC ERROR AND A SECRET MISSION . 138

WE ENCOUNTER "PROFANITY PORTAGE" AND "HIS LORDSHIP" PORTAGES THE POTATOES . 161

THE PERILS OF RUNNING WHITE WATER FIND WILLIAM TEDDY'S TONGUE 182

THE TROUT OF CAT PORTAGE, THE FULFILMENT OF ELEVEN MONTHS' DREAMING . . 204

M.316704

ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

"WAGUSH TAKES US OUT TO THE TROUT REEFS" *Frontispiece*

A RESPITE FROM THE CARES OF AUTHORSHIP . 10

A RIFT AND SOME SHELTER IN THE SHORE ROCKS 20

AT LAST—DUNCAN'S COVE 28

"THEY 'RE RISING, RIGHT IN FRONT OF CAMP" 28

"A LIGHT BREEZE WAS RUFFLING THE LAKE WHEN WE HAD BREAKFASTED" 30

HE WAS LURKING AT THE RIVER-MOUTH . . 42

"THERE 'S A RARE CAMPING-SPOT AT DUNCAN'S COVE" 42

"THEN THE SAND BEACH BEGAN SWINGING OPEN LIKE A GATE" 46

JOE CADOTTE, GUIDE AND WILDERNESS-BROTHER 50

WHEN SUPERIOR BEGINS TO SULK . . . 50

POSING FOR THE LOG-KEEPER AT SQUAW HARBOR 60

"THE TRAGIC ISOLATION OF THAT LIGHTHOUSE!" 76

"JIM TALKED LITTLE AT THE CAMP-FIRE THAT NIGHT" 82

Illustrations

PAGE

"It Was the Camp-Boss, of Course, who Did it" . . . 84

A Consultation—"Wagush II." Vivisected . . . 86

"Wagush II. Hauled us along 320 Miles of Superior's Shore-Line" . . . 90

North-Bound for the Land of Vacation Dreams . . . 92

"Ninety-Foot Falls" . . . 102

"For we had Found the Place of Monster Trout" . . . 102

His Excellency, the Governor, the Central Figure, Much Prefers this to Governing . . . 104

"He Was a Little Better than Five Pounds" . . . 110

Gargantua Light Is More Hospitable than it Looks . . . 116

Abandoned by the Honorable Hudson's Bay Company . . . 116

Where the Steamer Drops you Overboard among the Trout Reefs . . . 120

"We must Travel Light" . . . 126

The New Race in the Lap of the Race that is Passing . . . 134

William Teddy Embarrassed and George André Resigned . . . 140

Illustrations

PAGE

Tommie Nish-i-shin-i-wog Mans the Frying Pan 152

"Then Came 'Beauty Lake'" . . . 174

"Something in the Way of Wild Waterways Worth While" 174

Snug Camp on Hawk Lake 176

"We Pushed off to Hunt out the Mouth of Hawk-Lake River" 180

These Rocks Are Nan-i-bou-jou and Family . 182

Of Course, We Lunched here at the Lower End of the Rapids 182

A Setting Becoming to Most any Canoe . 186

To Make Camp or to Push on—Time 6.30 p.m. . 186

Achievements and Invidious Comparisons . 190

Diary-Writing — and Manicuring — on the Portage 194

The Firesand Is "a Pretty and Compact River" 198

INTRODUCTION

HOW little and inaccurately are Lake Superior and its rocky shores and massive wilderness known! Captains of the lake freighters, skippers of schooners, hardy fishermen in their rough camps, the Chippewa Indians, generations of trappers, and a few, a very few, gentlemen-fishermen by accident or family tradition know that vast and impressive land of primitive enchantment. And that is about all. Along the South Shore from Sault de Sainte Marie to Duluth, far to the west, there are towns and cities, magically growing and ceaselessly thriving. There are many lumbering camps and even clubs of gentlemen-fishermen whose luxurious tastes may still defy the wilderness.

It is very different along the North Shore. That is the Superior country. In that expanse of rocky coast from Sault de Sainte

Marie about 150 miles northward to Michipocoten Harbor there are four fishing stations. From Michipocoten Harbor to Nepigon, roughly 220 miles, for the coast is indescribably irregular, there are but isolated lumber camps; in some rude, hidden little harbor a fishing station; three settlements of a general store each; the few isolated lonely stations of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. The fisherman, the pulp-wood hunter, and the prospector alone find profit and economic possibilities in that North Superior country. Unquestionably, it will never be otherwise. Nature there offers absolutely nothing save to him who comes to venerate her and her alone. The portage trails and the snow-shoe trails are still there and they are worn precisely as they were worn two hundred years ago. It is all rocky ridges, impenetrable thickets, archipelagoes of islands. The moose and wolf will undoubtedly ever roam those forests of pine and spruce and balsam and birch and the sacred silences will never be

desecrated, save by the scream of the gull and the eagle circling overhead. Upon the back of the Pic River there are the great-grandsons of that Indian tribe which was there when the French plundered the Hudson's Bay post in 1750. Michipocoten Island, which the hardy Alexander Henry, Esq., boasted of discovering in 1760, "peopled by snakes," brooded over by the Great Spirit, "The Island of Yellow Sands," is still the occasional home of the daring prospector, braving solitude and privation in his mad hunt for gold and copper.

It has changed not at all. It will change not at all. And the American people know the vast country and inland sea so vaguely!

Somewhere back in lakes, deep buried in the unknown wild, one hundred rivers take their source and flow down through rocky gorges, plunge over falls, and roll at last into Lake Superior. Men, coming in tugs and yachts, have named those rivers and fish for the trout where waters of river and great lake

mingle. Not a tenth of them have been explored above their first falls. Beyond those falls there are virgin fishing and terra incognita; lakes of muscallonge; deep, dark pools whose tenants have yet to distinguish between the fly that is succulent and digestible and the fly that is false and flung by death. There nature is undisturbed and man comes only, if at all, once in a decade or a half-century. The trout and salmon rivers of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and Labrador are better known than Lake Superior, even with its Agewa River and Steel River and Nepigon River, where are the largest, gamiest, mightiest trout in the world.

So, many years now the summer has led us there. From Sault de Sainte Marie, at the extreme southeastern corner of the great lake, where wilderness shrinkingly touches civilization, around that coast northward and then westward to the Hudson's Bay post at Nepigon, we have coasted in Macki-

naw boat, in canoe, and, very lately indeed and reluctantly, in gasoline cruiser. That is about 370 miles of Superior shore-line and each mile of it has multiplied itself amazingly in priceless and ineffaceable memories.

Each succeeding year the personnel of the party changed. That was inevitable. Business exigencies in the days of incomparable dreaming and preparation often reared their Medusa-heads. To many enchanted places we have not returned since death came among us and we never shall, for the memories of those places illumined with a single personality and a presiding spirit are much too exquisite.

The purpose of these little chronicles—and they have been taken from the author's diary kept throughout these years—is to present to those who know not Superior, and those who yet happily may come to know her, the trivial events of camp-life, trivial truly, yet so full of color and vitality and vast meaning to those who know the

intimacies of the rushing stream and camp-fire, gleaming in the northern twilight beside an unknown lake. Some of us, a very few, have gone through these little adventures and scenes for these successive years. It is not easy to compile incidents so that they be of interest to the impartial observer, least of all to the unlover of the wilderness. To give them sequence and cohesion one is tempted to fictionize. To give them accuracy and unity one is oppressed with their triviality. The logical compromise has seemed attainable only in humanizing them and imbuing them with the spirit of the Northland and a note of the song that then sang in our hearts. If only these little chronicles awaken one thought of the North and sound one wild, free note of the wilderness that beguiled us, the test will indeed have been met. It has been purposed for the little scenes and incidents between these covers that they be only simple, veracious, and of passing interest, all three of which qualities

are, after all, but the prime essentials of the gentleman-fisherman who hears the laugh of the waterfall in his office and whose memory stubbornly reverts to darting shadows in a deep, dark pool.

The Log of the North Shore Club

CHAPTER I

CHASING A CAMP SITE AND THE LURE OF A PERAMBULATING WATERFALL

THE offshore breeze brought the pungent odor of balsam and spruce and it was sharp with the cold of the Northland. We impressed and expectant six stood upon the bridge of the *J. C. Ford*, husky little pulp-wood barge, and breathed in the intoxicating exhalations with the quivering nostrils of the atavistic man. The brilliant stars of the north country lighted the night. Over all was the silence of the wilderness.

It was midnight, yet the afterglow of the tardy northern sun still tinted faintly the hilltops. Ahead, maybe two miles, maybe

ten miles, loomed the shadowy silhouette of land, the North Shore of Lake Superior.

"Starboard some, Paddy," said Captain Morrison, down through the trap to the wheelsman.

Then sounded three staccato whistles, then one and the engines stopped, for the first time since we left Sault Ste. Marie, twenty-four hours before, almost to the minute by the engine-room clock. Diagonally across Lake Superior we had come.

"Look at that black Titan with his head aflame," said Billy awedly. "It 's stupendous," said Mac. "The grandeur of it is actually oppressive. Where 's Gepe? He 'd rave over this."

"Say," came Gepe's voice from the blackness of amidship, "which one of you fellows took the corkscrew?"

At four o'clock that afternoon, when we were still far out on the lake, we had picked up that giant peak. It towered, we knew, from somewhere in the centre of an island

wilderness, known to the chart, the navigator, and the lumberman as the Island of St. Ignace, the second largest on Lake Superior. Lying a barrier that divides the fury of the great lake from the calm of Nepigon Bay, it stretches its massive length of inexorable granite, a huge rock twenty-five miles long and six miles wide, the home of moose and caribou, a place of almost theatric beauty and rushing brooks and leaf-canopied pools alive with trout, lurking in the shadows.

For this moment, the first moment of a long play-day, we had dreamed and pondered and conferred with the delight of a common anticipation and then packed and forgotten things and locked office-desks and travelled —almost long enough to cross the continent. This was the Moment and on the bridge we revelled in it in silence, while the *Ford* rolled upon the long, majestic swell of Lake Superior.

"I don't know about it, boys," said the Captain, thoughtfully lighting his wreck

of a briar. The inky seas raced by the sides of the ship.

"There 's quite a lump of a sea running in there and with your duffel your boats will be down to the gunwale."

"You can't get in any closer?" ventured the Camp Boss.

"There 's a hell of hungry reefs in there," said Captain Morrison, "and besides, its the landing in the surf that 'll swamp you. I can't help you there. I 'm in pretty far now."

A seventh sea, topping its contemporaries, irritably slapped the *Ford's* bows. The Captain spoke with more determination then.

"I can take you around to the Blind Channel to-night, and, if there 's no sea, you can work around to Duncan's Cove yourselves by to-morrow night—perhaps."

"And lose a day?" thought Gepe aloud, for he had but thirty days to fish.

The Camp Boss looked around at the face

of each of us six in the northern starlight. Something he saw there seemed to reassure him.

"We 'll take a chance with the surf, I guess, Captain," said the Camp Boss quietly, for the Camp Boss, having been accustomed to lead and make decisions for somebody since his senior college year, ten years ago, always spoke quietly, and the firmer his resolve, the more quietly he expressed it.

"Good," said the Captain. "I knew d—— well you would, but I wanted you to say it."

The Captain walked to the rear of the bridge and shouted into the depths of the dark and silent ship:

"Stand by there, boys, to lower away those two Mackinaws." Over the rail of the *Ford* they toppled our two eighteen-foot boats, any end up, painters alone fast to stanchions, down into the inky, ice-cold waters of Superior. They splashed and filled and a man slipped down the painter

and bailed them, as they bobbed upon each wave, leaping for an instant into the gleam of the ship's lights and then sinking into the abyss again. Then came to the rail for the lowering suit-cases and dunnage-bags, rod-cases and boxes of bacon and coffee and sugar and tea and crates of eggs, canned things in barrels; for we were tenderfeet then and knew not the economy of packing and the peril of squandered space and excess weight.

It was fast work, for the Captain thought the sea from off the lake might be rising, and it was delicate work to lower away until the man, bobbing around down there in the spray and darkness, shouted to "hold" or "let go" as he found the precise centre of his mad little cork of a craft.

The attempt to anticipate one's wants for a month in the wilderness—to foresee all one's comforts, whims for a month—is an intellectual achievement, and the accumulation of it—the pile of it—for six men makes

a shocking spectacle of selfishness, ignorance, and dependence upon truly sybaritic luxury. Of Gepe's steamer-trunk and bedroom slippers more shall be said anon.

The men down there in the boats, bobbing in the black water and the darkness, were Michael (pronounced Michelle) Cadotte and his son Joe, two full-blooded Chippewas of the Garden River reservation. Michael thinks he must be eighty years old. He may be a hundred. He does n't know. Nobody knows. By their first names he has known generations of the country's distinguished lawyers, doctors, bankers, supreme justices, statesmen, for in the perfect democracy of the wilderness there are no conventions, stiff formality, or titles. Michael has been guiding and packing fishing parties along the rugged shores of Superior and up its hundred rivers for fifty years. He knows every likely pool and every moose yard. He is the patriarch of Lake Superior guides. His teeth and memory are not so good now.

His hand trembles, too, and he sleeps between heavier blankets. His children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren have embraced the religion of the white men in the little missions and gaunt meeting-houses of the shore settlements. But Michael still looks with veneration upon "Gee-sus"—the morning sun—as it rises over the granite ridges and the tumbling waters of Superior. Michael still leaves his offerings of tobacco upon the rock knees of Nan-i-bou-jou, who sits in petrified dignity, flanked by faithful squaw, daughter, and two dogs, at that point on the shore which the imaginative French voyageurs first saw and straightway set out to puzzle posterity by confusing it with Rabelais's monster-man and called it Gargantua. A gentle old savage, raconteur of graphic and inexhaustible memory, and a friend of great heart and vast loyalty is Michael Cadotte.

When Michael and Joe had grasped all that had been lowered from above and stowed

it away, there was left even less freeboard in those Mackinaws than Captain Morrison, in things nautical omniscient, had foreseen. The last article of excess baggage to be lowered away into the depths was "Nosie," a dutiful, trustful, and exceedingly gritty pointer-pup who thus far had, not illogically, utterly failed to grasp the purposes of his bringing and the potential delights of the trip. He had shivered in the nipping northern breezes on the bridge, learned to climb a ladder timidly under the stress of a craving for human society, brawled with the cook over depredations upon the ice-box, and had a thoroughly miserable voyage, unlightened by any discernible future promise or indications of a guiding intelligence. Seized, bound by the middle with a galling rope, flung over the ship's side bodily to be dropped, apparently, to bottomless depths without redress or explanation, "Nosie" abandoned himself to an ecstacy of terror and his screams shattered the cathedral-like silence of the

northern night. "Nosie" had seen no boats lowered. How was he to know that this was friendly expediency and not blackest treachery? Promptly Joe seized him and smothered his cries and struggles beneath piles of warming duffel and "Nosie" was still.

Following "Nosie" down that rope, man by man, we shared his trepidation. It is not cheering to cling in midair, very chill, black air at that, with mountains of icy water racing beneath, to wait until a boat comes up and meets one's feet and two sinewy Indian arms reach out and drag one to a very small dancing spot of comparative safety.

Last to come over the side, bringing camera and creel and all of Gepe's tobacco and fly-books, which Gepe had, quite characteristically, forgotten, came the Camp Boss, which was quite proper and usual. And as he twined his feet about the rope Captain Morrison repeated his instructions.

"I figure," he said, "that Duncan's Cove

A Respite from the Cares of Authorship.

is just about dead-ahead as we lie now. Steer by the easterly-most star of the Dipper, the lower, big one there, and I don't think you can miss it. I 'll lay-to here until I see you wave an 'all right' signal with the lantern. Good luck to you and if they won't rise to a fly, remember the muscallonge in the lake three miles inland and keep 'Nosie' for bait."

I remember thinking, when the Camp Boss and Joe and "Nosie" and I pushed that heavily-laden Mackinaw away from the sides of the *Ford*, how fatuous and unfair and unsportsmanly had been the thought, when we first boarded the *Ford*, that she was crude in her appointments and lacking in the quasi-essential luxuries. Looking up at her there from an eighteen-foot Mackinaw headed into an unknown primitive, she looked bigger and finer and more homelike than the *Mauretania*, a lot more.

Once out of the wash of the steamer it was n't so bad. The seas were long and low.

So deep were we in the water, though, that rowing was tough. Loaves of bread and rolling cans of bacon make neither stable nor satisfying braces for one's feet, somehow. Low moans from "Nosie's" anguished soul for a while vied with the slush of the seas under the boat's deep-laden bows.

There was n't much conversation. Joe, being an Indian, speaks in grunting monosyllables when spoken to, and in a situation like this, spiced with a suggestion of danger, Joe never speaks at all. He took short but very deep and powerful strokes. It is hard for a white man to row with an Indian. He would stop every ten or fifteen minutes and drink from his cupped hand, for his mouth was dry. Joe was anxious to get ashore.

A cloud on the Superior horizon as big as a pocket-handkerchief will drive an Indian ashore. For the boisterous, often brutal and terrifying moods of Michabou (or Nan-i-bou-jou), the "Great Hare," the Great

Spirit, the god of all things, the Indians have a veneration that is much older than the Christian era.

To row silently, interminably, in the shadow of the northern midnight upon a strange sea, toward a wild shore whose forest-tipped cliffs rise dimly in the darkness, is a spooky experience. There is an unreality about it. The silence, the vague odors of the woods, the brilliant northern zenith, the rush of the stygian water, the proximity of the unknown suggest such thoughts as, materialized and given concrete expression, gave to the world the weird genius of Gustave Doré. Anyway, it galvanized the imaginations of the six of us, but two days away from steel office-buildings and the table d'hôte dinner of the club.

We rowed on, to us it may have seemed an æon or so. Actually it was about an hour. The shadowed shore seemed to come no nearer. Curious, we thought, that trees and bushes, which we had seen easily five

miles out in the lake, were now no larger. Then we knew. They were not merely trees. The silhouette was the granite wall of the lake shore, cliffs that leap stark from the water. Some are twenty-five feet, some a hundred feet. The map does n't show that Superior is a vast bath-tub, with towering Laurentian granite substituted for immaculate domestic porcelain.

"Can you see the lights of the other boat?" The Camp Boss's voice shattered the brooding silence to infinitesimal bits. Frankly, I could n't. Joe could. An Indian can see smoke where to the white man there is nothing and hear sounds for which nature has trained his tympanum alone for centuries to abnormal sensitiveness.

"They 're away from *Ford*," said Joe. "Maybe two miles, but driftin' sou. They no see us."

"Show them our lantern," said the Camp Boss. I quickly, and I thought accurately, judged that the emergency called precisely

for the "all right" signal. I waved the lantern as I had seen railroad men and surveyors convey that same satisfying intelligence. Results were prompt and eminently convincing.

Captain Morrison, by no means illogically, concluded that that "all right" signal had come from the beach; that we had safely ridden the surf and landed upon a tolerant, if not hospitable shore. Three hoarse whistles ripped to shreds the silence of the sleeping wilderness. Bedlam, piercing and disturbing, broke loose far to the right in the darkness. A vast colony of gulls on some wave-worn rock had been disturbed from their slumbers and shriekingly resented the intrusion. It was the crowning touch to the illusion of the unknown and the absurdly unreal.

"She 's putting out into the lake," said the Camp Boss. "But we can't be far offshore now."

It was an accurate prognosis. Green light

swung to port. Red light disappeared. The light on foremast described an arc. Lights of cabin astern then came into view. The old *Ford*, comfortable in the fancied assurance that she had put six tenderfeet safely ashore where the worst they could do to themselves was to hook trout-flies in one another's ears or overeat, turned majestically and steamed out into Lake Superior to resume the sordid but serious business of feeding pulp-wood to newspapers and giving "public opinion" a medium of sensational expression.

"There goes the tail of civilization," said the Camp Boss.

"Where 's dat?" and Joe peered about apprehensively. "Nosie" burst forth with an agony of hysterical repining. It is "Nosie," anyway, who should have written the intimate chronicles of this trip.

"Hear water," said Joe. "Maybe waterfall."

"It 's Duncan's Cove then," said the Boss

with unmistakable elation in his voice. "The little river empties in there and there 's quite a waterfall. It seems to be over there to the right, now."

It was "over to the right." It kept moving to the right, too. Phenomena of floating islands obtruded themselves upon my boyhood memories, but among them was absolutely no precedent for a perambulating waterfall, bent upon nocturnal depredations and cunningly scheming to lure the unsophisticated voyager to his doom. We chased that waterfall in an arc of forty-five degrees. It ran along the shore, always to the right, always singing alluringly, ever louder, and we chased it, always pressing to starboard, and tried to head it off.

Then the North Shore sprang out on us, frowning precipices, with balsams and spruces hanging dizzily over the abyss. The surf was hurling itself against the sheer wall of rock, swirling over reefs yellow-fanged, and the echo was flung back and out over the

vast reaches of Superior. This was our fugitive waterfall.

"Back water, hard!" shouted the Camp Boss. Tins of bacon, rod-cases, suit-cases gravitated forward upon "Nosie" as Joe and I buried the oars in the choppy back-wash and backed the top-heavy Mackinaw out of the gaping jaws.

"A beach over there," muttered Joe. To starboard again, beneath the black shadow of the cliffs, we rowed, the surf booming furiously at the ends of our oars. It was taking gross and wide liberties with one's long-established conception of a beach when we found it. It was not sandy and gentle and hospitable. It was a shelving shore of pebbles, wonderfully uniform in shape, quite round, worn by an eternity of storms, and in size the diameter of an adult human skull. That is the kind of beaches that Superior makes. Everything is done upon a scale so heroic that it terrifies.

"Can we land, Joe?" asked the Camp Boss.

"We must," said Joe with his usual scorn of mental reservations and hypothetical conditions.

And we did. We accumulated what headway we could. The Boss selected a place, ghostly white in the pale starlight, where the "pebbles" looked smoothest and most yielding. The combers behind us co-operated with suspicious cordiality. They picked us up and we started shoreward in long, intoxicating bounds. There was a grating noise beneath the bow. "Now!" said Joe, and he went over one side and I went over the other. Purpose, breath, my very ego were gone by the time my feet struck the uneven bottom. I was in waist-deep. The cold of Superior water is quite unbelievable. It varies less than five degrees the year round.

"Lift!" shouted Joe. The next roller was not an enemy but an ally. We three, Joe, the roller, and I, heaved together and mightily. Five feet out on the "pebbles" lunged the

Mackinaw. We hoped to do better. Another such comber would swamp us. Flour, tea, coffee, clothing, blankets would go down with the flood. Without prologue or preface Joe began unloading. He filled the air with nondescript camping outfits and assorted groceries. "Nosie" was swept up in the vortex and joined the aerial excursion of articles, describing the same graceful parabolic curve. They all landed in a neat little pile about twenty feet up the beach. I have never seen firemen, customs officers, or baggage smashers show ambition so laudable or form so flawless. I recall dimly in the transmeation of seeing "Nosie" trajected with a broiler and a diaphanous head-net snared in his chain and imparting both dignity and accuracy to his flight. When the boat was sufficiently jettisoned, we caught her and on those round stones she shot up the beach, well beyond the reach of that snarling surf.

So deeply absorbed were we in the pressing work of saving duffel and rods and "eats"

A Rift and Some Shelter in the Shore Rocks.

from the hungry waters of the most picturesque perpetual ice-cooler in the world, that the light of the second boat escaped us. Also, the boom of the surf drowned her crew's shouts of inquiry, at first eager, then, not unnaturally, irritable, even impatient. With their oars they were holding their boat with difficulty just beyond the clutch of the combers and watching our three forms dart about upon excursions, apparently, of frivolity and sheer light-heartedness. At last Gepe's stentorian voice bridged the turmoil of the waters:

"Say, what are you doing in there—dancing a quadrille or laying carpets?" We gave them minute instructions, laying particular stress upon possible improvements over our own recent methods and achievements.

"It all sounds very simple and attractive," shouted Billy, "except that jumping overboard business."

"We 'll cut that out," added Gepe. "Let her go."

Their coming was really dramatic, so full of determination and courage and confidence in our counsel. We took the lantern and lined up, four of us, Camp Boss, Joe, "Nosie," and I, on the beach to welcome them to the vibrant wilderness. Gepe stood gracefully poised in the prow, one foot on the gunwale, lantern raised high. Washington, Father Marquette, Columbus, snapped under similar circumstances, had obviously impressed their poses upon Gepe. His boat had two more men and much more duffel and bacon and Scotch whiskey than ours. So it was much heavier. It had more momentum and, with greater draught, struck the bottom sooner. Also it seemed to strike the bottom harder and stop more abruptly. Prompt and implicit obedience to physical laws was to Gepe religion. As fell from the heavens the proud Lucifer, so lantern and Gepe arose splendidly from the bow, soared, turned their zenith, and plunged theatrically into Lake Superior at our very feet. To the platitude that

"opportunity makes the man" I have been little attracted. This, however, was positively Gepe's first contact with wilderness exigencies and Lake Superior water and the manner in which his descriptive vocabulary, in the elasticity of which we had ever had the greatest confidence, arose to the occasion marked him as a man of versatility and resource. It was thrilling, splendid.

"The first wireless message," said the Camp Boss, as we salvaged Gepe. The boat, lightened of the onus of the picturesque and propelled by four oars that were vivaciously deluging the steersman, was caught by the next comber. We met her half-way. The aerial transit scene was re-enacted. Caught in the first shower of unyielding, winging cooking utensils, Gepe retired out of range to prance about and facilitate the return of his circulation.

With the light of the lantern and the myriad of highly entertained stars we took inventory of party and outfit. Gepe, wetly

demonstrative; Bill, satirically sympathetic and looking for a dry cigarette; Marv., the scientist, studying the constellations to locate Duncan's Cove; Mac, frantically upturning a chaos of duffel for his beloved Leonard rod; Michael and Joe, Indian-like, looking for firewood on the heels of a cataclysm; Camp Boss, as usual, anxious only for the safety of the outfit and the comfort of each; and I, still stunned by the first breath of adventure and the first meeting with the forces of wild nature that had ever come into an orderly and flawlessly prosaic city life—we were all there—and were ashore, which was a great deal.

To an Indian a fire is the beginning and end of all things. He sees in it, not only his bodily comfort, but his courage, his spiritual content—his Nan-i-bou-jou. Michael and Joe had a fire snapping before the air was well cleared of imprecations, flying duffel, and anxious interrogation. The Indian before the white man came knew the comforts and

joys of the fire. The white man takes to it with an amity and avidity that give evolution a fresh clue to the atavistic man.

That fire brought to us the romance, the charm, the humor of the incident and our current predicament. We rimmed it round, turning first one side and then another. We found that we could smoke and enjoy it. We found corkscrew and needful stimulant. We found that dry clothes were actually procurable in that mound of duffel. We found our blankets—dry—heaven for such bounty be thanked!

It was two o'clock by Billy's infallible timepiece when order had quite come out of chaos and the tranquillity of civilization settled down again upon this strange night scene in the wilderness.

The surf had ceased to boom so defiantly. The night was far spent. Indeed, the east was beginning to show magic colors. In the thickets somewhere the heartsore little "Canada bird" was voicing its eternal grief

in those four weird little minor notes. It was the beginning of a new day—yes, thirty new days, vacation days, days of fishing, exploring, conjecturing, maybe a little innocent dreaming of ambitions unattained and achievements and fame to come; days of most intimate confidence, perfect democracy, and purest and least selfish brotherhood—the brotherhood of the wilderness—where vanity and selfishness stand out as gaunt and chilling as the skeleton of the fire-scourged pine. Vacation days! Oh, the lure of them, the delight of their anticipation, the joys of their realization, and the sweet sanctity of their memory!

"The last man in bed puts out the light," said Billy and he rolled into his blankets upon the stones. Then we slept beneath the stars for the first time and a loon laughed maniacally far out on the lake—and dawn awakened us to look upon the wilderness—also for the first time—and life and youth and nature and God seemed very good.

CHAPTER II

DISCOVERIES, DAY-DREAMS, AND MENDACITY AT DUNCAN'S COVE

THE glare in our eyes of the morning sun, reflected upon the mirror-surface of Lake Superior, in affablest mood, awakened us. It is a curious and bewildering sensation, two days from civilization, to awaken at four o'clock upon a wilderness-shore. A gull overhead scanned us and screamed frank disapproval. On one side the dazzling waters of the lake lost themselves in a cloudless horizon, a clean stretch to the South Shore, 250 miles away. Fog, blown in from the lake, was crowning the tree-tops of the islands. On the other side there arose the bank, clad with osier, spruce, and balsam, and capped with pine and the dainty birch, "the white lady of the wood." To retrace and relive in two seconds the events of two

days is a severe mental effort. The vibrant, glorious Present arose and smote me squarely between the eyes, when, rising in my blanket, I saw that hideous mound of assorted duffel and caught the vagrant bouquet of coffee upon the nipping lake airs. Michael and Joe, of course, were exchanging intimate Chippewa confidences over the inevitable fire. Eggs and bacon spluttered. The commissary was organizing. Gepe's head emerged from a nimbus of blankets where his feet supposititiously were. The morning toilet was rudimentary. The hapless "Nosie," looking upon the fire as the first symptom of returning intelligence in his gods, hugged it shiveringly.

Then the voice of the Camp Boss hailed us. Around a rocky promontory he pulled a boat. The sun had found him awake and prepared, alone, to scout the shore-line for Duncan's Cove. He had found it, too, as we should have found it, had that siren "waterfall" not lured us from the Captain's explicit

At Last—Duncan's Cove!

"They 're Rising, Right in Front of Camp!"

course. Tin dishes are very good in the wilderness, but stone-china, retaining its heat longer, is better—though heavier and that in camping is of vital importance.

A light breeze was ruffling the lake when we had breakfasted and reloaded the boats. They were loaded to the gunwales, too, but there was as yet no sea and we spread the sails and bowled down the lowering, inexorable shore. Two miles and there opened up an indentation much the shape of the hand. Lake Superior delights in running her fingers into the shore-line. Duncan's Cove is at the extreme tip of the middle-finger. Superior was already working up her regular noonday temper, but, when we swung into the cove, there was no ripple to mar the perfect reflection of rocks and trees and rugged hillside. The silent scene was reproduced perfectly upside down.

It is snappy work and hilarious work to unload boats for that first camp in the wilderness—and hurl duffel, bread, canned

things, rods, cameras, lanterns from hand to hand, until the man up the bank, of course Gepe, is deluged, smothered, and shouts for a coadjutor.

There is a rare camping spot at Duncan's Cove. There is an ice-cold spring for butter —if you have it. There are tiny trout, too, in that spring. Few can have live trout in the refrigerator. There is a flat surface for the tents and hills tower on two sides, giving protection from the lake gales. There is a wealth of driftwood on the beach for your fire and balsam near by for your incomparable bed of boughs.

Camp was made with significant alacrity that morning. The bags and carpet-rolls were opened and blankets draped upon the bushes for airing and drying.

Then the realization of the dreams of weeks, nay months! Out came books of flies, "leader"-boxes, silken lines, and intricate reels of fabulous price. Oh, the guile and eloquence of the sporting-goods dealer and

"A Light Breeze was Ruffling the Lake when we had Breakfasted."

his insidious catalogue! The law should protect helplessly impressionable fishermen from the deadly lure of that illustrated catalogue. Trout-rods, perfunctory ones and priceless ones, were put together with trembling fingers. There was much discussion of the gastronomic tastes and epicurean whims of Superior trout, whether it should be lake flies or stream flies, Parmachenee Belle or Professor or Montreal or Silver Doctor or Coachman or the inornate but strangely reliable little Brown Hackle.

We found the little river quickly—scarcely a half-mile from camp. It was but a large and self-important sort of a brook, anyway. It came roaring out of an arch of birch and spruce and osier bushes, leaving the black shadows, and then, hurdling the beach, gushed out arrogantly into Superior. Where the gushing was going on, the Camp Boss was the first to cast. His three flies swished from the back-cast, perilously close to the waiting bushes, and settled lightly in the laughing

ripple. We had n't long to wait. A white little stomach shot out of the water for the dropper-fly. The Boss struck and his line started for the far shore. Bill, in the torrent waist-deep, netted them, two of them, after ten minutes full of fight. Three trout on three flies are not infrequent in these far-away streams. Perhaps the spectacle of a brother-trout, apparently chasing tempting entrées that seem to elude him, is irresistible.

The Boss, Gepe, and Mac whipped the shore about the brook-mouth. The rest of us pushed through the thickets for the brook's pools. At last we came upon a moose-trail, a boulevard paralleling the brook's sinuous length. O! the delight of hunting pools on an unknown trout-stream! I remember one particularly. The moose-trail led up to and over a great black boulder. When we reached the top, we saw that the boulder bathed its feet in a shadowy pool, in diameter perhaps forty feet. The sun, peeping through the interstices of branches,

made golden mosaics upon its surface. I crept up and looked down into the depths. THEY were there! Very cautiously a rod was drawn up. The flies were cautiously lowered. When they touched the water, trout seemed to rush from all directions at once. They leaped a foot clear of the water. They hooked themselves. Then the problem of raising two pounds or so of fighting trout up a ten-foot wall on a five-ounce rod! There was no possible way to net them. We caught some and we lost many.

The Duncan's Cove brook is scarcely a half-mile long. Then it finds a reedy marsh and loses itself in it. But there are two good pools and innumerable little pockets and alcoves, each with a good trout lurking and hungry always. One pool has a four-foot waterfall. It is deep and dark and the water dashes excitedly about its rocky sides like a bad-tempered little maelstrom. There is a clearing there that makes casting possible. Billy lost his heart to this pool.

At Duncan's Cove

The Camp Boss said it was recrudescence of the egotistic Narcissus and the resistless reflection. Billy fell into that pool twice and made the grand tour each time with the current, applauded by a cheering gallery, before he found his feet on the stony bottom. Maybe it was that intimacy that wrought his enchantment. I do not think that a score of gentleman-wanderers have ever fished that beloved little brook at Duncan's Cove. Nature was in a tender mood when that brook was born.

We dined on our first trout that night and most luxuriously, and before we dined the thermometer, dangling from its birch tree, as no thermometer doubtless ever dangled before, performed some astounding gymnastics. The day had been warm and in the thickets the black flies were solicitous, particularly to Gepe, who coated himself lavishly with the odoriferous "Lallakapop" and called upon heaven to witness his unmerited tribulations. The thermometer at

6.30 P.M. registered 70 degrees. The instant the sun dropped behind the high hills, that vast and self-replenishing refrigerator, Lake Superior, asserted its resistless will. Down, down went the mercury. In 35 minutes it fell 29 degrees and stopped to catch its breath for a moment at 41. We were perspiring at 6.30 P.M.—at 7.30 we were looking for a second sweater and huddling about a roaring camp-fire of dry pine logs. The after-glow was still flashing a false sunset at 10.30 when we turned in. The northern heavens are indescribably brilliant. Preparing for bed on the lake shore generally consists of removing one's boots, belt, and eye-glasses, if one wears them, and borrowing what clothes one's tent-mate professes not to need. We heard a cow moose, far off in the tangled thickets of the island, calling her forest-suitor before we reluctantly left the fire. Then a tin cup of amazingly cold water, one more look at the myriad stars, one more message from a loon, laughing idiotically

far out on the lake, and then the profound, dreamless slumber of the wilderness.

I protest that personally I had no hand in the outrage whatever. Billy and Mac were up early. They had bathed hurriedly and in relays; I mean each in a relay. The part of the body that is submerged in Superior one minute grows numb with the exquisite pain of it. Billy and Mac merely splashed themselves. I heard what each one said to himself while he was thus splashing. It was, as I remember it, very earnest and fervid sort of monologue, too, rich with spontaneous observations and scriptural references. All this was before breakfast, of course. Gepe slept soundly through the uproar of the bath. When he poked his head out of his tent Billy and Mac were wrapped in bath-towels on the beach and engaged largely in the serious business of restoring circulation. Naturally, Gepe asked the superfluous question—the situation was ripe for it—and wanted to know what Billy and Mac had been

doing. They might easily and veraciously have answered that they had been leading a cotillion or buying a touring-car. But they did n't. They wilfully and viciously deceived Gepe. Billy said: "We 've been swimming out in the lake." It 's difficult to convey an accurate idea of the craft in that retort of Billy's. Gepe fell. "Is n't it cold?" he questioned half-heartedly. "Oh, maybe it is out in the lake, away out," admitted Billy airily, "but in this shallow cove here—why, it 's almost too warm. Is n't it, Mac?" "Yes," said Mac through chattering teeth—"why, it 's hardly any fun to swim in such hot water. It 's almost enervating."

"Sounds pretty good to me," said Gepe, and he emerged from his tent, whistling, with towel on arm and soap in hand—and nothing else.

They showed him a log—on which he could "walk out to deep water and dive." At the end of the log, Gepe, more perfunc-

torily than anything else, a survival of boyhood tradition at the swimming-hole, stuck two toes into the flood. He stopped whistling. He turned and looked over his shoulder. Black suspicion, misgiving, terror were in that look. Gently they began to roll the log. First, Gepe stormed and threatened. Then he begged, oh, so piteously! Then he sprang lightly into air and disappeared. And Michael met him at the beach, with Gepe's own flask.

There is here introduced a new member of the party. It may seem an abrupt sort of an introduction, but it will be seen that the member figures prominently in subsequent events. Indeed, had it not been for this member, these chronicles would not be, which may or may not be construed as a grateful apodosis. The name of the new member is *Wagush*, which in pure Chippewa is "The Fox," and *Wagush* is a wonderfully conscientious eighteen-foot gasoline launch of hallowed memory. The *Wagush*, too, came up to us on the little

pulp-steamer, *J. C. Ford*. She took joyously to the wilderness, though the confidence with which she shattered the sacred silences with her staccato explosions, for a while put our teeth on edge. We could not have gone without the *Wagush*.

With her we found rivers Number One, Two, and Three and Squaw Harbor and Pappoose Bay and Otter Cove and the wonderful reef fishing off Richardson's Island and Caulkins's Beach. It meant circumnavigating St. Ignace Island, a two days' trip, to meet the *Ford* at "Headquarters," the lumber camp and loading station. But *Wagush* was indeed worth it. Our radius of operation was increased from about three to fifteen miles, without moving our permanent camp at Duncan's Cove.

We had heard of the reef fishing and the source of the information was spontaneous and picturesque. I once wrote a newspaper article about St. Ignace Island. I had interviewed a man who "looked timber"

there. It appealed to me. He told me about a great lake in the depths of the island, "alive with trout and muscallonge," possibly whales and ichthyosauri. As I remember, I had that lake rather thoroughly congested. Nobody but this mendacious "timber-looker" had ever seen that lake, he said. What he did n't know about that lake I did, when I got well into the production of the interview. A dear old gentleman-fisherman down in Ohio read that interview. Evidently, he saw symptoms that convinced him that I might yet be saved. He had fished and hunted St. Ignace and began his enchantment in 1884 when the Canadian Pacific Railroad was in the building along the North Shore. He spoke to me kindly, but convincingly and at length. He heaped coals of fire upon my irresponsible head by sending me charts of St. Ignace and its littoral nicely marked in red-ink to locate the wonderful reef fishing. We have drunk healths to his charity and sportsmanly

generosity and read prayers for his beatification. For we found his reefs and the trout which he had somehow overlooked.

In *Wagush* and one Mackinaw boat in tow we started before Superior had developed the daily tantrum. We had frying-pan, teapot, bread, camera, and fishing-tackle. St. Ignace is the granite centrepiece of an archipelago. There are hundreds of islands, varying in size from mere gull-rocks, half-submerged reefs, to Wilson, Simpson, Salter, and Richardson's, scarcely less imposing than St. Ignace, their big taciturn sister. Through wonderful little channels, opening up surprisingly where, a moment before, only the shore seemed to be; across silent enchanted bays and bayous; past deceptive alcoves in the shore that looked like river-mouths and were not, we skimmed that silvery morning.

Once we turned a rocky point suddenly and surprised a mother duck and her furry little brood not yet able to fly. The mother

scorned to seek the safety of her wings in the face of this hideous coughing peril and they tore away with astonishing speed over the surface of the water, a screen of whitest foam upon a field of green. We must have left that demoralized brood with conversational material for all indigenous fish-ducks' posterity.

Many times we ran in toward the shore confident that we had found a river and many times that blind shore-line laughed at us—of such infinite variety are the conformations that they are bewildering in their very monotony.

It was pure chance that we did find River Number Two at all, though we were scarcely a hundred yards from the shore when abreast of it. We had looked for rapids, perhaps a waterfall, at the very least a "riffle." There was none of these. There did n't seem to be much current. Yet it was a river, because we could trace its bed winding far inland through a valley by the lighter green

"There 's a Rare Camping-Spot at Duncan's Cove."

He was Lurking at the River-Mouth.

of the trees and bushes that lined its torturous course. Cautiously we poled launch and tow-boat to casting-range and a colony of trout rushed to their rare taste of civilization and its dissipations. Three men casting simultaneously from an eighteen-foot launch can together produce an entertainment full of life, color, and comment-provoking situations. Gepe began auspiciously by hooking himself in a place where extraction was the least convenient to Gepe. Then Marv. wrapped a back-cast deftly about the Camp Boss's neck, and the Camp Boss put a Montreal No. 3 in the exhaust pipe—of the launch-engine—of course.

As if this little exchange of amity and comity offered too little variety, Billy and Mac drifted up nonchalantly in the tow-boat and began inserting fly-hooks and festooning lines in such portions of launch and its occupants' anatomies as the crew had overlooked. We caught trout up to a pound. The sport palled and it began to look too much like

game-hogging. Then the reefs outside, snarling in foam, called to us.

It is not always that one can fish the reefs of Lake Superior. I have waited and fretted and brooded in camp for a week for those white-caps to cease their snarling over yellow-fanged rocks where the biggest trout lie. One must catch Superior in sunny humor and that is n't often; generally it is in the very early morning or as evening is closing in on a brilliant day. These reefs are everywhere along the whole Superior coast. They may mark the entrance to bay or cove or channel between islands. They may be near some little river's mouth, or they may stand out stark and isolated, a sinister splotch of snow, a white signal of great peril upon the green of the deep water, with the brown rocks of the shore completing the picture of triumphant wilderness. The only essentials for trout are that the water be comparatively shallow, ten feet at the most; and that the bottom, the size and shape and

arrangement of the rocks on the lake-floor, offer feeding places for trout. That is known generally as a "likely" reef and no other characterization is at all illuminating nor adequate. We have caught trout in water that was green in depth-color, bathing rocks on the shore that towered up two hundred feet. And we have caught them five miles from the nearest river-mouth. And they are brook-trout, *fontinalis*, a little less brilliantly colored, perhaps, and a little, a very little, more silvery—but *fontinalis* just the same. On the South Shore they are called "coasters," and it is off the reef that one gets the three, four, even five pounders—only the Nepigon, Steel, and Agawa Rivers know bigger fish.

Personally, I have found the brilliant salmon flies, such as Silver Doctor, Royal Coachman, and even Red Ibis, the best lure for reef-casting. One beloved and battered Parmachenee Belle that now, in its honorable scars of battle, looks like a last season's

picture-hat, has brought a dozen trout from elysium in the green depths. The sport of reef fishing lies, perhaps, in the length of line upon which one gets the fish, the facility for casting, and the amazing gaminess and ferocity of the fish. It appears to be the consensus of passably expert opinion among Superior fishermen that the best reef fishing of the lake is to be found off the rocks at the entrance to the Little Pic River. But, literally, everywhere there is reef fishing.

We did very well on those reefs; the official Log says so. Just how well it were immodest and unnecessary to chronicle. We did better over those reefs in another year. We had with us then a very gentle, willing, enthusiastic, lovable tenderfoot in the person of a nature-hungry Business Man. All he knew about casting or patching a birchbark canoe he had gleaned by assiduous reading of the instruction-departments of the vacation-magazines and those devilish catalogues of the sporting-goods men. It will be seen at

"Then the Sand Beach Began Swinging Open like a Gate."

a glance how intimate and intensive the Business Man's camping-erudition really was. He had a wonderful fishing outfit. He knew it was wonderful, because it had cost him $525.72. The 72 cents was for an aluminum safety-pin, "quickly, safely, and neatly" to "fasten leader-box to alligator-skin belt."

The Business Man had done lots of spectacular and delightful things before we reached the reefs, but here was his ripest achievement. We told him how to cast and, conjuring up his full, profound theoretical knowledge he did so—while his boatmates sought cover beneath the seats and stern-sheets. Trout are full of caprices. One rushed at the Business Man's fly as with it he roughly lashed the water into foam. He did n't see the fish and looked surprised when we called his attention to the pleasing incident. Another foolish trout tried to catch the fleeting vision of food, and tugged the Business Man's line. The situa-

tion was novel to him. He could n't recall what good usage demanded. So he did nothing. He explained afterward that he thought it might be the safe and courteous course to permit the trout to swallow the fly right down to his tail, if he cared to, and then deftly pull the trout inside-out, thus saving much irksome culinary labor. We expostulated with the Business Man and told him to "strike" the instant the trout took the fly, before he could bite it and learn the hollow mockery of the snare. The third trout came. The Business Man threw his whole 180 pounds into the strategy and jerked. We found on his tail-fly a tragic bit of fish-gill. We counselled, then, alacrity and force, but both in moderation.

I have often thought that the trout on the reef that day were deliberately baiting that Business Man. The fourth trout came. Possibly he was looking for an extractor of an aching or superfluous gill. The Business Man struck and the trout stuck. Came,

then, a wealth of hearty and conflicting suggestions. The Business Man reeled and gave out line, rushed over people's feet, shouted for the landing net, and implored silence and sea-room. Then panic seized him and claimed him as its own. He incontinently dropped his rod to the bottom of the boat, seized his line, and began hauling in that trout hand-over-hand in long, sweeping jerks. In about two jerks it was all over —save for the Business Man. Then he dropped his reel overboard and we had to haul in fifty yards of line before we could net it. The Business Man, however, has lived down that dark and hilarious chapter. He is now a blood-brother of the North Shore.

CHAPTER III

AT THE KNEE OF MICHAEL

YOU will not find Squaw Harbor nor Pappoose Bay on the maps of St. Ignace Island, which resolutely warns Lake Superior back from the refuge of Nepigon Bay. There is reason for that. There is really so much in Lake Superior to put on the map and the few people who are there to cut pulp-wood or run surveys or just fish are really much too busy to trifle with a topographical feature that spans less than three or four miles. There is no drug store on the island whose kindly city-directory, between the cigar case and the telephone, tells you what car line to take to Squaw Harbor and Pappoose Bay. There is no corner policeman with ponderous circumlocution, nor small boy with suspicious alacrity to

Joe Cadotte, Guide and Wilderness-Brother.

When Superior Begins to Sulk.

direct you, either. Yet Squaw Harbor and Pappoose Bay are on the southern shore of St. Ignace Island, about five and one half miles, which in the northern wilderness signifies quite nothing whatever, from Duncan's Cove. There! The secret is out. I am wilfully and nefariously violating the very canons of fishermen's ethics in telling you these places by their really, truly names and giving mileage with such wanton explicitness. There is reason, or, at least, palliation for this confidence. You could get right up to the doors of Squaw Harbor and Pappoose Bay and push the button without recognizing the neighborhood. I could give you red-inked charts and careful triangulations and landmarks and a slap on the back and you could not find Squaw Harbor or Pappoose Bay without a guide, and you could spend a month hunting around Nepigon or Rossport or Port Arthur for a guide who really knows St. Ignace Island. Occasionally, there arise those concrete situations

when honesty is not only "the best policy," but really a very showy sort of a literary expedient.

It was noontime when we found Squaw Harbor. We had fished the reefs and a sea was beginning to roll in from the old lake which made reef-casting futile and highly gymnastic. We very much wanted a place to moor the launch and build a fire for teapot and frying-pan. First, we saw a beach of wonderful flat stones. We followed this beach around. It was the left shore, evidently, of a likely-looking cove. The right shore was rocks and timber down to the very water's edge, an impenetrable wall. We stuck close to the beach, running under a check, turning always to the left, until we abruptly slid into a crystal basin, a perfect oval, perhaps fifteen feet deep; but so wondrously calm and clear was the water, that pebbles on the bottom sparkled in the chromatic reflection. We sailed slowly to the end of this enchanted pool and found that a wooded strip scarcely

twenty feet wide was all that separated us from Lake Superior, booming outside. We were back at the point where we had first found the beach, afloat in a perfect miniature harbor. Billy called it "Superior's guest-chamber." Superior has many such guest-chambers, though none so symmetrical and wholly bewitching as this.

We lunched on that beach. The launch was pulled out; the bow on the beach, the stern in fifteen feet of water in a natural bath-tub built for a Titan. The flat stones made a stove of quaint architecture but admitted efficiency. We fried the trout. We brewed the tea. What fabulous dividends would the metropolitan café pay that could specialize in fried trout, toast, tea and marmalade such as that! But no café can, for it is not the trout and toast and tea and marmalade, labor of love though they are, but the sauce of the wilderness.

With the marmalade there returned sufficient strength for the quite inevitable aca-

demic discussion. Billy spoke admiringly of the "dry-fly" casting necessary to lure the highly educated trout in the streams of English country estates. Gepe scoffed at the skill which casting of such nice accuracy and flawless technique entails. Billy bet a ten-dollar note—a sagacious wager always in the wilderness—or a package of real Turkish cigarettes, that he could keep his fly in the air until he was ready to drop it into the water and could then drop it within six inches of the spot he coveted.

They repaired to the edge of that wonderful beach. The "gallery" left the "lunch things" and went to applaud and sneer. Billy performed spectacularly. His fly winged about like a thing alive. Then he said "here goes" and aimed at a cork—Gepe's contribution—floating thirty-five feet out in the harbor. The fly alighted, softly as a snow-drop, scarcely an inch from the cork. Billy started his back-cast, for the fly must not be permitted to get wet. His rod fairly

doubled on itself. There was a swirl of water and a gutteral exclamation from Billy. In that fraction of a second that his fly had rested on the water a lunking trout had taken it and was now racing lakeward. He was brought back cautiously, only to stampede again and yet again. At last we drew him out on the beach, belly-up. Ranged along that beach, casting-distance apart, we killed a half dozen fish. I had a curious mishap. Thoughtlessly I had brought a very old book of very old flies, a heritage, I think. In a mad moment I had mixed those flies with modern and staunch ones. An old fly had insidiously worked its way to my leader. A trout, with a taste for antiques, took that treacherous relic and, just as I was about to fling him out upon the beach, the snell broke. He swam off groggily and then sank to the bottom, weary and worn, to get his wind. I presume that obese trout are short of breath. In that pellucid water we watched him and yearned for him. The

Camp Boss, attracted by the execrations and cries of anguish, came up and inaugurated a systematic course to salvage that trout. He put a sinker on his line and bumped that exhausted fish on the nose until he had a fly underneath him. Then he lifted smartly and behold! The trout was hooked and brought unresisting to his doom!

A loon led us into Pappoose Bay that same afternoon, a loon that had been to the grocery and was hastening home, purchase-laden, to her hungry brood. In shape and comparative size Pappoose Bay is a sort of third-floor-suite arrangement with reference to Squaw Harbor; a chamber for guests of, perhaps, the second magnitude. There are, too, the beach, the unrippled lagoon, the screen of living-green between it and morose Superior —and the trout, lurking in crystalline depths. We found an Indian camp in the bushes near by Pappoose Bay. Two things told us it was an Indian camp—the tepee-poles and its location in the bushes, where no human but

an Indian could for an hour live in sanity with black-flies.

That there is a decided intellectual movement—upward or downward—among the Indian indigenous to Pappoose Bay we found undeniable evidence. It was the fragment of a dime-novel, most virulent and lurid—done in English. Even the author of such turgid fiction must have a torpid conscience and I will not crush him entirely by giving his name and infamy to the world. The incident, however, offers a nice conjectural point for discussion—whether literature is regenerating or debauching the fairly "noble red man." Billy wondered what "the six best sellers" in Pappoose Bay were, anyway.

In the basin of Pappoose Bay Mac had a curious experience with a trout. I find it entered with minute detail and quite breathless gusto in the Log of that year, because it impressed me then as an incident that added a brand new chapter to ichthyological

researches. Since then the phenomenon has been repeated at least three times and I have lost the hectic flush of the discovery. A trout took Mac's tail-fly, a little Brown Hackle, rather frayed and faded, took it away with him, in fact, as if for closer scrutiny at his leisure. Mac was, of course, disconsolate. The trout grew in length and weight and beam as Mac detailed the outrage to each sympathetic member of the party in turn, until that trout, in making off with his loot, really raised a swell that inundated beach and launch like a tidal-wave. To take his mind from such depressing retrospection, Mac was urged to cast again with the hope of avenging the insult; perhaps upon the culprit's brother or some other blood relation. On the second cast, Mac got a rise and hooked his fish. With surprisingly little exertion he netted his fish and found his abducted Brown Hackle coquettishly decorating that gourmand's jaw. Clearly, then, if fish have even an elementary nervous

system, they do not permit it to interfere with their appetites.

When the Camp Boss looked significantly at his watch, it was six o'clock and we were nearly ten miles from camp. That is, the Camp Boss subsequently deduced that it was six o'clock. That watch of the Camp Boss's was a fecund source of discussion, admiration, and fatuous entertainment for four consecutive years on the North Shore. It was, I think, the only watch I ever knew that really possessed and demonstrated, with the slightest encouragement, a temperament. When the Camp Boss essayed to tell the time by that sullen and volatile computator, he followed always the same impressive ceremony. First, he looked at it searchingly, half distrustfully, rather reproachfully. Then he rapped it smartly three times in quick succession upon a friendly rock or tree or cylinder of the engine. Hurriedly, then, he 'd get the general trend of time by recalling the events of the day in chronological

order; look searchingly at the sun, if there were any; produce a pencil and paper; make a rapid but surprisingly accurate calculation, and announce the time with a ring of well-repressed triumph that always quite swept us off our feet in a tumult of applause. "Mathematics taught in camp" or "Wenley's Wonder-Working Watch, a stimulus and absorbing game for slow-witted campers!" I 've often marvelled why the sporting-goods men and their catalogues have n't commercialized that temperamental watch of the Camp Boss.

Anyhow, it was six o'clock. We stopped neither at the reefs nor the little rivers but dashed straight for camp. Even a tiny thing such as the *Wagush* and her draught of scarcely sixteen inches must look searchingly ahead in those treacherous waters. There are buried reefs and needle-pointed rocks everywhere and in the most unexpected places. Once, when at least two miles off shore, opposite Heron Bay, cruising in a

Posing for the Log-Keeper at Squaw Harbor.

dory that drew eighteen inches of water, we struck one of these church-spires stretching up, perhaps, three hundred feet from the lake-floor. So fast were we travelling, that we fairly hurdled it and stove through one-inch planking a hole, which we were able to plug.

Night was closing in as the *Wagush* sped to Duncan's Cove. Superior was "thickening up." The sun being obscured by clouds and lake-mist, it suddenly grew unbelievably cold. A choppy sea, too, was running, we found when we shot out of the shelter of the last toy-archipelago and struck straight across the considerable bay that joins Superior and Duncan's Cove. The ice-cold spray deluged and chilled us. But swinging about the last gray point in the shadow of great cliffs hurling green waves and eternal defiance back to the warring lake, we saw the glare of Michael's huge camp-fire, lighting up the whole rocky alcove; it illumined our course and suffused our

hearts with a gentle glow. "Nosie" extended a welcome as ecstatic as cramped legs would permit and reclaimed his gods, caprices, disloyalty, and all. There was warm clothing to be donned nimbly. There was a flask of "family size." There was the crackling fire of pine and fat-birch. There were Michael and Joe's dinner-preparations suspended at the very denouement for the coming of the masters—and the coming of the trout. We dined in the fire's glow.

We led Gepe away from the table (it was a table, too; resourceful Joe had fashioned it from two pine boards cast up by the seas to bleach to snowy whiteness). To be accurate, we carried Gepe from the table. Not that his incredible capacity menaced the commissary, but we cared for Gepe; cared for him much more deeply than we cared for the imminent probability of a hopelessly foundered tenderfoot on our hands. One must remember that in the first days in the wilderness. The exposure, the physical

exertion, the tonic of air and sun bring the commensurate appetite to restore the nerves and muscles and tissues before the digestive organs have time to prepare themselves for the new and extraordinary demands made upon them. The temptation to overeat is strong. The penalties are immediate and severe. Many a glorious vacation has been nipped in the bud by this indiscretion.

In the delicious reaction that, in the wilderness, comes ever with a full stomach and an emptied briar pipe, energy and ambition hand-in-hand returned to Billy and Gepe. They dared each other to deeds of agility, strength, and daring. After an exhaustive exchange of slurs and invidious comparisons, they repaired to the beach, there together to join the issue and carry to the fire the sturdiest timber that Superior had tossed upon a heaving billow. There were much grunting and muttered recrimination in the darkness. They worked for a while with taunts and maledictions upon the opposite

ends of two distinct timbers, so deeply embedded in the sand that a fish-tug could not have budged them. Having discovered this discrepancy and focused their efforts upon the same log, they returned with renewed enthusiasm to mutual accusations, and, at last, came back to the fire empty-handed, each full of descriptive adjectives for the treachery and physical subnormality of the other. Joe witnessed that thrilling duel of well-trained vocabularies and a few minutes later, grinning broadly but with never a word, he brought that timber along with four larger ones to the fire in a single armful.

Michael came out of the shadows when Joe had handed his quietus to our comedians and asked how we should like to have boiled trout on the morrow. Michael often lays neat little ambushes, more insidious and deadly than the more sanguinary ones of his forebears. I thought I scented one here. We told Michael that the suggestion of a

boiled trout filled us with poetic longing, but not having carried an iron pot 300 miles with us, and the local hardware stores unquestionably being closed for the night, we guessed we 'd have to starve on fried trout for a while. "No," said Michael indulgently. "No iron pot. I make pot to boil trout with birchbark."

That was frankly side-splitting. Michael's whimsical humor had betrayed itself at last! The spectacle of a trout simmering over a fire in a pot of birchbark, which for inflammability is a substantial improvement upon gasoline-soaked tinder, was too mirth-provoking. We laughed heartily at Michael, who did n't laugh—just smiled Michael's very gentle and sweet old smile.

The next morning Michael appeared with a birchbark pot. It was unquestionably water-tight and most ingeniously made. A very workmanly job. It had two neat little compartments. But how make it fire-proof? We stopped smiling and exchanging

clever comments. Michael first showed that water could circulate between the two compartments. Then he half-filled them. He put the trout, a good three-pounder, in one compartment. With two sticks he deftly took a stone from the ashes of the fire, white hot. Very, very slowly he immersed the stone in the water of the other birchbark compartment. When the stone was submerged, the water and the trout were boiling in the adjacent compartment. Thus we lunched upon boiled trout, boiled in a pot unscathed by fire. Since that demonstration of primitive culinary resource there have arisen many, many occasions where Michael has had the last, satisfying laugh and has always, too, laughed with an abandon and lightness of heart remarkable in the stoical red man. It was at Michael's knee in the warm shelter of Duncan's Cove that we learned first to toddle in the northern wilderness.

CHAPTER IV

EXPLORING THE HEADWATERS OF THE STEEL RIVER AND BILLY FRASER'S ANECDOTES

ALAS, the poor Nepigon! Whence have fled the sacred silences and sanctity of the wilderness? You dress for dinner now in the roar of the rapids and drop off to see a lawn-fête or a polo-game while your packers are taking your outfit over the portage. At least, the modern Nepigon is almost as bad as that. The bustle and thrift and concourse that come with judicious advertising and continuous exaggeration have entered in. Every angler, before qualifying, must do the Nepigon, precisely as the young pianist traditionally must have a whirl with *The Moonlight Sonata*, or the budding man of letters flounder in the "symbolism of Maeterlinck." Twice we have tried the Nepigon.

Once we went the forty miles, nearly to Lake Nepigon, blithely crowding the portages with fellow "tourists" (hated term) and bumping canoes as continuously as if it were a park-lagoon on "band-concert night." The second time we brawled with the drunken Indians of the guides' union for two days and gave it up when the head guide, sullenly drunk, insisted upon inventorying our commissary to assure himself that delicacies were forthcoming worthy of his station and epicurean tastes. The Nepigon has been popularized and commercialized. Either is desolation and both mean death. It is paying the dread penalty of literary distinction.

I mention these unpleasant aspects of the new Nepigon simply to show that we were literally driven to the Steel River. And for this circumstance we have always been extravagantly grateful to the plethora of pestiferous tourists and the convivial guides of the Nepigon.

To us the Steel first proffered the need-

ful hospitality of the "overflow meeting." Thereafter, it was three weeks of paradise, and then eleven months of pining and anticipation. I will not tell you where it was. That were unethical—and unnecessary. It is marvellous, is the Steel River. It is a Nepigon reduced about one third and, scenically, wilder and more gorgeous. Five miles from its cunningly concealed mouth there is a natural harbor, Jack Fish Bay, and in the harbor there is a coaling station of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. Perhaps a half dozen parties a year ascend the Steel, but only to Mountain Lake, ten miles from Lake Superior. Thirty miles beyond that it begins its mad scrambling and tumbling down from the highlands, through canyons and caverns, over falls of forty feet and rapids of chaos—and that is thirty miles of true wilderness—and virgin fishing.

We had been out for two weeks, in thirty-foot power-dory *Wagush*, and tow-boat, when, as night was closing in, with a southwest

blow coming on, too, we swung around the last rocky promontory and romped into Jack Fish Bay.

Bill Fraser was waiting for us and had been waiting for us with canoes and grub and packers and waning enthusiasm for a week. Bill Fraser keeps a hotel, the hotel, at Jack Fish. I have always suspected that Bill Fraser keeps the hotel simply to afford prodigal hospitality to every brother fisherman and insure himself an audience for his shooting and fishing narratives. Hotel and narratives are good. Bill himself weighs 160 pounds and can carry 200 pounds over the portages without interrupting his reminiscence.

We were off at sunrise. That is, we staggered from our beds at sunrise with assurance of starting up the river immediately. First an all-essential "tunk-strap," for packing, was missing and Bill Fraser found that Bill, Jr., had been using it for reins. Then a setter-pup showed symptoms of distemper

and whined for sulphur, and a fish-tug came in to coal, and the sweet-faced old lady of Jack Fish's one store must be routed out to sell us bacon and bread.

Bill Fraser has a team and wagon on the first portage, which is exceedingly good, because the portage is four miles long. However, the manner of getting team and wagon from Bill's stable to the beginning of the portage is "quite a chore," a hair-raising, nerve-shattering sort of a "chore." A granite ridge, impassable save to mountain-sheep, drops down to Lake Superior. The track of the Canadian Pacific is the only highway Bill's team knows. Walls of rock hedge in that track. There is no hope and no room for side-stepping. Bill hitches up, reduces his wagon-load to greatest sprinting-efficiency, takes a look at the time-table of regular trains, and with a whoop starts up the railroad track on his mile dash. The meeting-up with a way-freight or belated transcontinental would mean a contretemps which Bill has

now for twenty years contemplated with a grin. He has come to enjoy the sport of outguessing the Canadian Pacific.

We walked—and walked well in the rear—out of range of flying fragments. The team had scarcely slipped off the ties, down on the trail, when a freight whizzed by. The engineer shook his fist at Bill Fraser as if promising himself better luck next time. They 're grim humorists—these frontiersmen.

When we saw a dainty little Peterboro canoe and Bill's preparation to pack it on the wagon, we asked Bill frankly, perhaps sharply, if he purposed taking four men and about five hundred pounds of duffel and grub over forty miles of swift water in that cute little desk-ornament. Quickly we saw we had hurt Bill's feelings and pride. The portage problem he had solved long ago with the swift, strong sweep of the pioneer. That canoe was for the first lake only. There was another for the second lake and the two big roomy, rangey Peterboros waited at the

end of the second lake for the up-river trip.

Bill Fraser sitting astride the bottom of that canoe, a-top the wagon, careening over boulders, down gulches, and through thickets, gave an exhibition of boatmanship as thrilling as I ever saw. At the first stop we found the syrup loose in Jim's flannels and the quinine pills in the butter-jar.

Rough as it is, that country of the first four-mile portage is as beautiful as a city park. The trees are the exquisite white-birch with an occasional spruce or balsam for purely decorative purposes. We made Clear Water Lake in an hour and then in canoe loaded to the gun'ale, on both trips, we were off across a mirror-like sheet of water, perhaps a mile and a half wide. We went silently—at Bill Fraser's suggestion—and we were rewarded. A splash—carried miles in the sylvan silence—warned us that we were not quite alone. Then a prodigious splashing—and we saw, a half-mile away,

a huge bull moose race out of lily-pads and disappear in the forest as silent as a wraith.

There was no luxury of revery and polite discussion on that second portage. Bill said it was "about a mile and a quarter." But there was no wagon. That made a difference. Each and every man had to carry. Bill himself took a canoe, a couple of blanket-rolls, and the cooking utensils. He was really quite mortified when we pointed out the fact that his left ear carried no burden, and would have corrected the oversight, had we said the word. A "tunk-strap" is a vital and docile agency of transportation, if you know how to use it, to put it across your brow to steady the load which is balanced cunningly upon your back, leaving the hands free for burdens or tumbles. Jim watched Bill Fraser load up and said it was all absurdly simple. He insisted upon galloping off into the greenwood with a neat little 200-pound pack and was really quite peevish when we pruned him down to sixty. First

he began sprinkling cans of bacon and cups and other people's wardrobes and bottles of household remedies along the trail. It made trailing Jim an exciting sport and an exact science, but it was taking too much time for salvage. We secured his pack for him and heard him ask himself "how much longer the —— portage" was. Successively the "tunk-strap" dropped to his eyes, nose, mouth, and finally to his Adam's-apple, which shut off his wind and forced another interruption of the whole procession. When Jim staggered to the final opening on Mountain Lake he was carrying a frying-pan and a fishing-rod and his proud spirit and breath were entirely gone.

We struck Mountain Lake in a marsh. I 'll never quite forgive Mountain Lake for that. It was showing itself at such needless and unfair disadvantage. I think that is the only marsh on Mountain Lake and we had to flounder in the ooze and silt to load the canoes. Perhaps Mountain Lake was merely

showing sound theatrical sense in delaying the dramatic disclosure of the splendors to come. Around the first bend it burst upon us—and stunned us. Lakes George and Placid, what perfunctory millponds in your smug exquisiteness you are compared to this rugged goddess of the wilds—Mountain Lake!

An ellipse of lapis-lazuli is Mountain Lake, wonderfully blue when the sun sparkles and buried deeply in a wonderful setting of mountains. Such mountains! In some places the ascent is gradual, up heavily wooded slopes. In other places blood-red precipices rise sheer from the water. One mountain has split. Half has tumbled into the lake and the wall that remains outlines a giant, sinister Indian profile. Our Indian Joe contemplated it with visible awe. After all, the real red man is still worshipping his gods in the forest, the rocks, the winds, and the heavens.

There can be troublesome seas for a canoe on Mountain Lake. It is nine miles long and averages, perhaps, a mile and a half

"The Tragic Isolation of that Lighthouse!"

in width. The wind was rising, and a head-wind, before we had paddled the two overladen canoes a mile.

Relieved from his "spell" of paddling, the Camp Boss, never for a moment idle in the all-too-short play-day, rigged up a trolling-line and a spinning-spoon and dropped it into the blue waters in the canoe's wake.

The Camp Boss, as I recall, was pointing to a gaunt dead pine that stood sentinel alone and desolate on a far mountain-top, when he gave a muttered exclamation and threatened to go backward out of the canoe. Instinctively, though, he jerked and set the hook—in something. It was quite something, too. In a few minutes it was a conjectural point whether the something was going to tow the canoe and three men back to the portage or the canoe tow the something to the camping-place.

When the Camp Boss by exercise of sheer biceps had hauled in, hand-over-hand, about thirty feet of line, the something broke water

desperately and shook its imprisoned gill in the air and we saw that the Camp Boss had a husky namaycush of about five pounds.

It is about two and a half miles from the portage-entry to Mountain Lake to the point where the lower Steel rushes out of it Superior-ward. There we beached the canoes, climbed the high bank to a clearing, made by Bill Fraser for the purpose, and made camp in the roar of the falls. As we came ashore we saw trout—heavens such trout—leaping for flies in the oil-smooth water at the jaws of the rapids.

Camp-making was hurried and perfunctory, I confess. We slapped up three tents on poles, which had offered other parties the same excellent service. We left Indian Joe to cut balsam for our beds, and Camp Cook Arthur to rig up his tripod and dig bacon and bread and coffee from the chaos of Bill Fraser's portaging. We drew rods from cases with palsied fingers, wet leader-boxes,

and brought forth great gaudy flies, which Bill Fraser immediately and sternly rejected. He made us take staid Montreals, brown and black Hackles, demure Jenny Linds, with an infrequent Parmachenee Belle for contrast. We divided. Bill Fraser took Jim and the Camp Boss down the rapids to the "Stretch," a rioting mill-race with an occasional swirling pool in it.

Marv. and Bill and I went to the point where Mountain Lake first begins to ripple and murmur in the clutch of the falls. The first cast brought an answering gleam of a silvery, sinewy little body. Then the "strike" and the thrill that runs along the line from a hook well "set." Bill has one. Marv.'s shout of congratulation is choked by troubles of his own. There is no auxiliary hand to man the landing-net. Three men stand side by side upon the rocks and simultaneously play three fish—four fish, as a matter of fact; Bill had a double. We called it off when we had killed enough for the camp-

dinner and enough for the camp-breakfast, however the Camp Boss and Jim and Bill Fraser might be faring down the "Stretch" —for we had found the place of monster-trout and many days very golden were ahead of us.

The sun was dropping behind the mountains and Mountain Lake was a mirror of bewildering splendors when Cook Art. announced the trout and coffee and fried potatoes ready for the table. The Camp Boss and Jim and Bill Fraser had not come. Bill —who by the way was distinguished from Bill Fraser as Exotic Bill, while the latter was characterized as Indigenous Bill—volunteered to go down the trail and "hurry 'em up." As Exotic Bill had never seen the trail before, I had my doubts as to the efficacy of the hurrying-up. But Bill went.

He had been gone about ten minutes, when Camp Boss and Jim and Indigenous Bill came in—by a "short-cut." Then Jim volunteered to find Bill. He had been gone

about fifteen minutes when Bill came back quite apprehensive for the safety of the Camp Boss, Jim, and Bill Fraser. Meanwhile the trout were blackening and charring nicely and night was dropping gingerly as the north-night does drop. "You all sit on this here one," said Bill Fraser firmly, indicating Exotic Bill, "and I 'll go and snare the other. Hide-and-seek's good fun, except when you ain't had nothing to eat since sun-up." And Jim, explaining garrulously, was led in by the hand when there was little left of ten pounds of trout—but the aroma.

It was somebody's birthday that night in camp. Almost anybody would agree to have a birthday on Mountain Lake. The idea, I think, was suggested by Cook Art.'s discovery of a bottle of Scotch in the potato-sack. Nobody knew how it got there, and Bill Fraser who had carried that sack over the portage was ominously eager to find out how it got there. However, Bill Fraser has the ready adaptability and forgiveness of

the wilderness. Marv. was quite positive that it was his birthday. We gathered tin cups and spring-water and stood about the fire, conscious that it was an impressive and ceremonious sort of a *tableau vivant.* Bill Fraser insisted that each one "fill up" before he poured his own libation. We were all impressed with this pretty courtesy on Bill Fraser's part, the wilderness host, and respected his wishes. We expected a toast of unusual feeling and eloquence, or something like that. "All got a drink?" asked Bill Fraser, glancing around the expectant group. "All right—just a minute," and Indigenous Bill beamingly took at a gulp what was left in the bottle, about three hands high, I should think.

Bill Fraser explained afterward that that was what he always did when he "got wet and did n't have no extry clothes along for a change."

Exotic Bill and Jim retired to their tent, promising each other to rise with the sun.

"Jim Talked Little at the Camp-Fire that Night."

One was to "take a canoe and explore the lake before breakfast" and the other planned delightedly to spring all-rosy from his slumbers and "dive off the rocks."

At seven A.M., after ten minutes of riot and rough-house, we succeeded in hauling them from their balsam-beds.

A surprising and exasperating condition confronted us when the next morning we advanced upon falls, rapids, and pools of the Steel. The water had been abnormally high for days. Indigenous Bill had noticed and pointed it out and feared for the result. However, the voraciousness of the trout the night before had quieted Bill's fears. But now in the morning the thing had happened. The high water had brought down flies and grubs in myriads from the uplands. The trout had fed their fill. That was what they were doing last night. Now they were gorged. We were chagrined and hurt. Indigenous Bill was profane. We tried flies sober enough to appeal to the most ascetic

of trout and flies gaudy and giddy enough to delight the most frivolous trout in the whole democracy of the Steel. Nothing whatever doing. I fell a victim to despair. I waded out, waist deep, to a rock in the centre of a pool, with the maelstrom about me, and deliberately and shamelessly cast with a "spinner." The Camp Boss shouted fisherman's ethics and morals and epithets and curses from the bank—while I caught three inquisitive, betrayed trout for luncheon. I submit that the most ethical and punctilious of fishermen must eat. In the afternoon we teased, cajoled, insinuated, and bullied enough trout out of the water for dinner. And, be it to the everlasting glory of fishermanly ethics and morals and methods, it was the Camp Boss who did it. He would locate a trout and bombard him with casts, with an infinitude of flies and angles and subtle invitations, until the trout in utter exasperation would rush at the tangible evidence of his mysterious tormentor and

"It Was the Camp-Boss, of Course, who Did it."

hang himself. The rest of the camp would play draw-poker with pine-cones for an hour or so and then come back and cheer the Camp Boss.

The next morning we were ready for less epicurean trout and the upper waters of this wild river. We cached everything we should n't need for five days. We had to tear Jim's waders and bath-gown out of his hands by force. He even promised to wear them over the portages, if necessary. But we had seen Jim on a portage. Pretty nearly due north we paddled for four miles beneath frowning precipices, amid the oppressive silence of that grandeur which seems not at all to care for the presence and applause of the puniest thing in the wilderness—to wit, mere man.

Then the mouth of the upper Steel opened out suddenly. It looks much like the mouth at Lake Superior, sand and pebbles on both banks. Evidently it overflows its banks mightily in the spring and great deluges,

carrying logs and brush, come roaring down, for the trees keep their distance respectfully fifty feet from the water's edge.

As we paddled up, a caribou lifted a dripping nose from the water and dashed away silently into the dense cover. There is surprisingly little current here and, even with canoes laden with seven men and much grub, we swept along rapidly.

A stupid partridge stood upon a log and stared at us in sheer bewilderment that was quite irresistible. She went into the pot that night.

There are two portages to make, both around log-jams, one of a mile and a half and the other of a half-mile. Jim was unexpectedly temperate and unambitious.

Again the delight of the camp. We had all paddled and carried and waded that day. The roar of the upper falls smote our expectant ears after scarcely two hours' paddling next morning. Lakes, many lakes, there are beyond. And many fish, mighty fish. I

A Consultation—*Wagush II* Vivisected.

say seven-pounders firmly and with an honest thrill of achievement and proof of photographic record. Below we came upon huge rainbow trout or "hammerheads," which, I believe, never get above the first falls.

We were at the headwaters of one of Superior's mightiest rivers and the least known and wildest of them all. There is a thrill, perhaps a vainglorious and theatric sort of a thrill, in the realization that you are standing where no man, save the original owner, the Indian, has ever stood before. We were far from and high above Lake Superior and there were ahead of us the leisurely drift down smiling waters and two weeks in which to fish, laugh, dream, and drink the delights of the wilderness proffered in brimming measure only to him who, clean and light of heart, seeks them.

After all, it is much as Exotic Bill said of it:—"Journeys end in the achievement's greeting."

CHAPTER V

"NO LANDING FOR BOATS"

A GOOD deal like Sinbad carrying the Old Man of the Sea did the ambitious little steamer *Caribou* look when she got our *Wagush II* aboard. Generations of Gloucester fishermen had demonstrated the amazing sea-worth of *Wagush II.* She was twenty-eight feet long, pointed of nose, high of freeboard, and duck-like in buoyancy. Her twelve horse-power gasoline-engine gave her the strength of her convictions and a sixteen-foot Mackinaw tow-boat served to repress her youthful enthusiasm.

The shark-nose of *Wagush II* protruded from the starboard gangway of the *Caribou* and four feet of stern dangled dizzily out of the port gangway.

Superior Smiled

A captain with misgivings and a crew with rich lake-oaths had blocked her in. Thus burdened, the *Caribou* had staggered all day and all night northward, along the east shore of Lake Superior. And Superior smiled all day and all night, which was good, because had Superior frowned or bristled up or raged, *Wagush II* must have slid nose-first or propeller-first into the depths and gone to the reefs crewless and alone.

Through the starlit night the captain and we watched anxiously for clouds, for the swift, sudden winds that herald a tantrum of that capricious inland goddess. Dawn came and the smile of saturnine Superior broadened into a laugh.

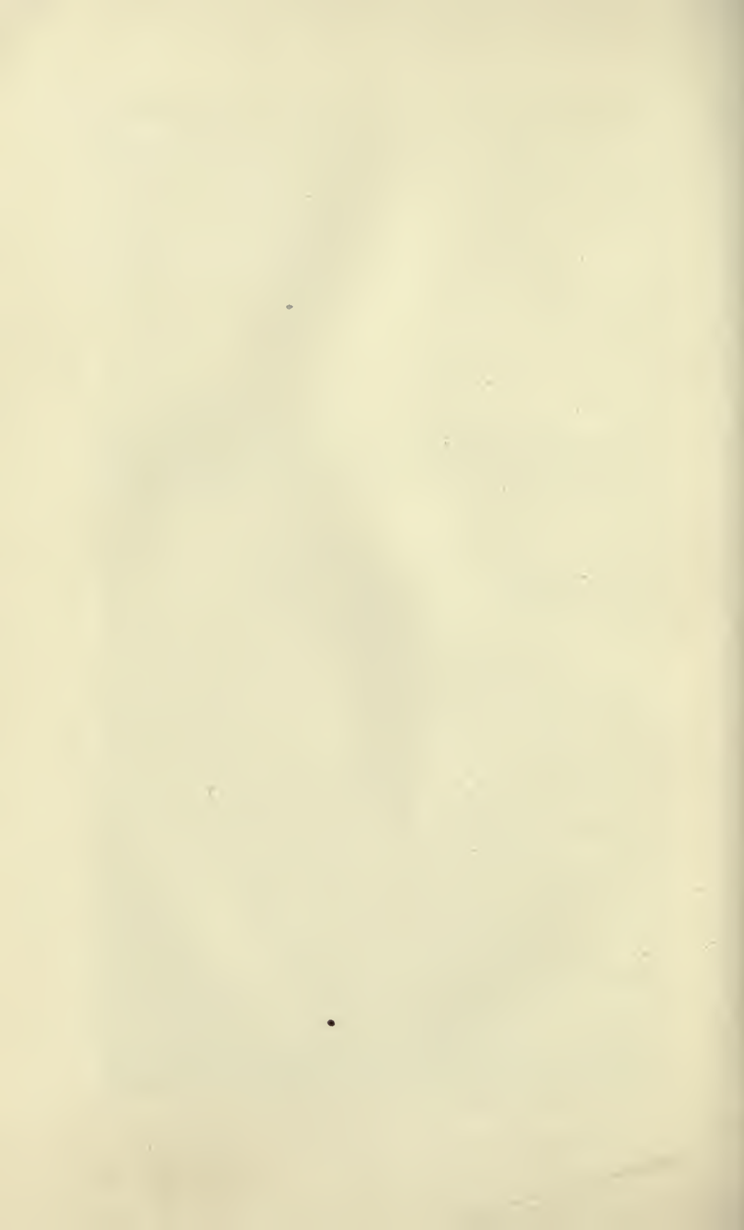
Day broke as we steamed through the gaunt portal-rocks of the harbor on Michipocoten Island. We were 130 miles north of Sault de Sainte Marie, at the granite heart of the land of vacation-dreams.

Alexander Henry, Esq., hardy and nervy old explorer, visited Michipocoten Island in

1769 and, in his book, he leaves a quaint record of his impressions. It was then Isle de Maurepas. The Indians shunned it for the soundly satisfying reason that they thought it peopled with huge snakes. Sands of gold were said to be upon its shores, hence, too, the "Island of Yellow Sands," and once, when Indians had filled their canoe with gold, a great Savage Spirit rushed out upon them, and waded fathoms-deep in pursuit, until they threw their booty into the water. Alexander Henry, Esq., himself seemed half to believe it.

If it had seemed a tussle to load *Wagush II* aboard at Sault de Sainte Marie with all the appurtenances of freight-handling, it now proved the merest romp contrasted to the work of unloading *Wagush II* on the fish-dock at Michipocoten Island. First, we found the dock too low and we built it up. Then we found the wall of the freight-house too high and we knocked it down. We had toted that dory too many hundreds of miles

"*Wagush II.* Hauled us along 320 Miles of Superior's Shore-Line."



to stop at anything so trivial as demolishing a warehouse.

We conscripted the *Caribou's* crew and the fishing-crew and the two cooks and a chambermaid and all the able-bodied passengers. The launch of a real "Dreadnought" could have been attended with popular elation no more vociferous and genuine. We were "going north"—along the shore—whither the wind listed, where the fishing was good. That was all we said—because that was all we knew—and wanted to know. We had tackle, flies, grub, gasoline, a month of liberty, and Superior was smiling. The man who would ask for more belongs not in the wilderness. We were off amid cargoes of nondescript duffel—and cheers.

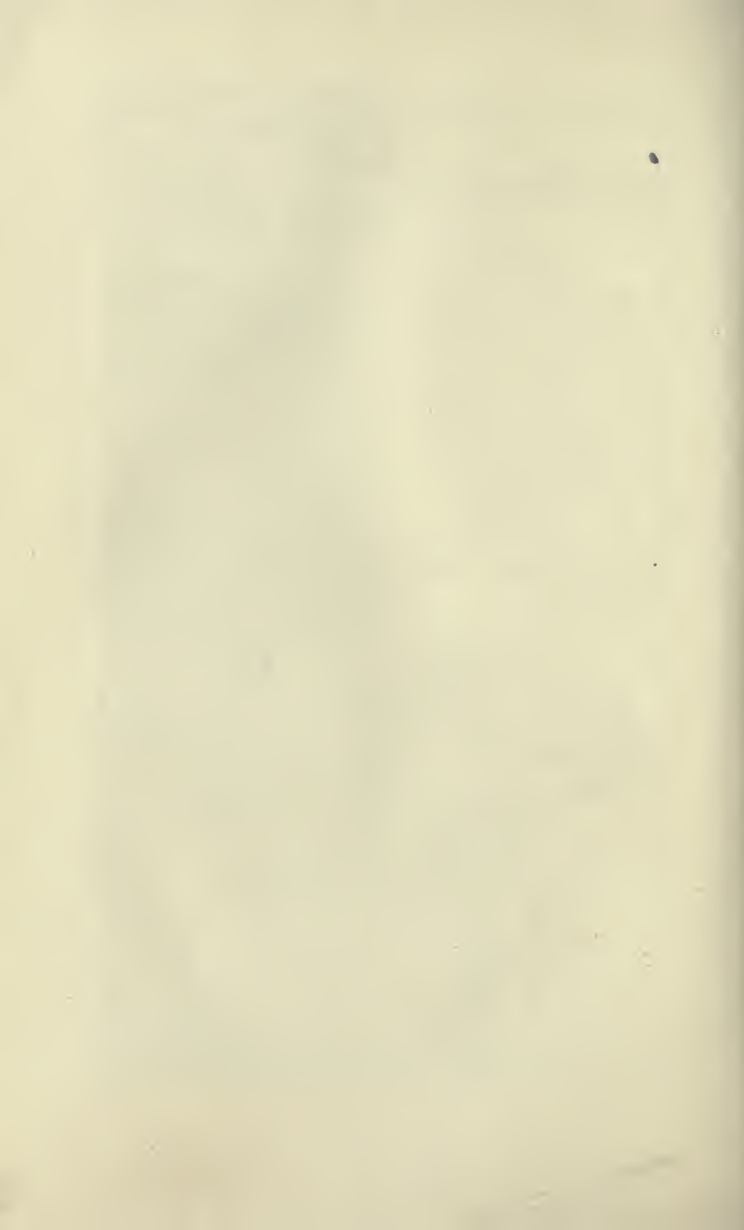
Usually, in a tale so fragmentary, the personnel brings neither distinction nor clarity; generally naught but contradictions and remorse for the author. But the personnel cannot honestly be dodged here.

The Massachusetts Institute of Tech-

nology gave us our "chief-engineer," Marv., a father-confessor of frail gasoline-engines. The Camp Boss, of course, manned the wheel. Navigating-officer, sage of the mendacious charts, was Bill. Second-engineer unanimously went to Jim, maker of automobiles and debonair in overalls. Keeper of the Log, camera, scientific data, and other men's consciences was I and I rode in the dory, at that. In the tow-boat was our red brother of the wilderness for now these many years, Joe Cadotte, Chippewa gentleman, very gentle; and, with him, Art., the camp cookee, and gallons of gasoline and huge tumuli of "eats."

The harbor cuts into the south side of Michipocoten Island, at about its middle, and the island is, approximately, fifteen miles long and eight miles wide. But we must go due north to strike the main shore of Superior and a semi-circumnavigation was the only way. Still the great lake smiled. Skirting, just missing the treacherous reefs, the south,

North-Bound for the Land of Vacation Dreams.



east, and, then, north shores of Michipocoten Island, we made the twenty-four miles and went ashore for lunch at noon. And we were "invited out to lunch," too. At the harbor, as we started, two mining engineers had come to us and asked us for a "lift." They had walked across the island the day before for their mail—think if that mail had proved to be bills and advertisements! And one had wrenched his ankle on the rough trail. They were diamond-drilling for copper—and they subsequently struck it, too, we heard. For the transportation they entertained us lavishly. We got to know these two lonely men intimately in a half-day, and then—the way of those wilderness-meetings and friendships—we waved them farewell, in all human probability never to see them again.

We had serious things to do and lots of them, to wit—make that eleven-mile dash across the strip of Lake Superior that separated us from the main shore and make it, while Superior still smiled, in time to find

shelter and make our first camp for the night. The prospectors directed us to head due north and run into Pilot Harbor, the nearest hospitable point on the rocky main shore.

We bowled along on the long, oily swell, for about five miles. *Wagush's* two cylinders sang a tuneful rhythm. Joe steered the tow-boat and Cookee Art. delved into sacks and boxes and inventoried the culinary equipment with which for four weeks he must meet the corporeal needs of six chronically ravenous men.

Then, as though a gray mantle of oblivion had been dropped over the landscape, the fog-banks blew in from Lake Superior and blotted out the shore before and behind us. True, we had the compass and the course was unmistakable—due north. But it was all like sailing for eternity upon the air. The needle held straight, but we seemed to be swinging somehow always to port. Visions of sailing out into Lake Superior with land and safety so close but screened from us oppressed

us. It seemed too long. We should have made eleven miles straightaway before this. It was unpleasant — very — and vacation-exuberance for fifteen minutes, there, went ebbing.

The Camp Boss saw a swallow in the vapor about us. Then suddenly the whole North Shore, great ridges, towering rocks, spruces and pines and birches sprang out upon us with a gaunt sentinel-rock dead-ahead and scarcely fifty feet away. Marv. jumped to the throttle. *Wagush II* checked, stopped, and backed out of the ambush and we reconnoitred. We had the North Shore, anyway, and it was a good thing to hang onto. As the navigating officer said, it was "no time to play hunches in that fog." If Pilot Harbor had any sense of fitness, it should be in "the heart of the business district" somewhere and the only discreet way to find it was to tiptoe along the coast, feeling it out inch by inch until we should find Pilot Harbor. When *Wagush* pulled

her nose out of destruction, Joe's boat came up indignantly and bumped us, but it merely up-ended Cookee Art. who had his head in the bread-tin at the moment.

It was a debatable point whether Pilot Harbor was to the right or to the left. We could n't separate. In that fog we 'd never get together again. We turned to the left—a good, sporty guess—and ran under a check. We were certainly going through an opening—maybe only a bay. No—we were leaving the lake, all right. Then an opening within an opening and a sharp turn to the right. There was n't a ripple on the water here.

"Are n't we going into a harbor?" asked Second-Engineer Jim.

"We 're going into something," said the Camp Boss, peering ahead, at the wheel. "I can't tell whether it 's a harbor or a linen-closet." Another turn and then a sand-beach! Never a sand-beach without a harbor—and we knew it! We had blundered straight into Pilot Harbor. What perils

can a mere fog hold for a launch so rich in fool's luck as that?

There is n't much in Pilot Harbor but shelter and a little of that is a great comfort when you 're coasting Lake Superior. The making of the first camp and the cooking of the first camp-meal always bring a series of panics. "There 's no bacon" or "They left out the bread" or "We can't find the kerosene for the lanterns." And in the end they all miraculously appear. Of course something is always forgotten, but generally it is Jim's hair-tonic or Billy's hot-water bottle suggested by a too-doting wife. While we napped that night, Superior quit smiling and tried to blow the tops off the everlasting hills and Pilot Harbor felt very good.

The next morning the Great Spirit, Nan-i-bou-jou, again enveloped us in fog to stay our departure. But as Superior was pond-like we packed up, and again, under check, felt our way along. We kept just the tree-tops in view and snooped cautiously in and

out of bays, until we almost ran into the open door of a cook-shanty. This time we had bumped into a pulp-wood camp. There 's a good river there, too, the Pukasaw, or Puckoso. The maps are so diffident about their spelling! Twenty-foot falls there take their last tumble into Lake Superior. While Joe and the Cookee made camp, we took a fisherman's look at some likely-looking rocks at the river mouth. We killed enough fish for dinner in fifteen minutes and as many more got away with our leaders. In reef fishing on Lake Superior there is no telling when one may cast his lines in pleasant places or a colony of whales.

The making and breaking of two camps had already brought us considerable technique. We worked in crews and worked rapidly until it came to the necessity of unpacking a whole huge bed-roll to find Jim's watch which he had left in his blankets. That 's where Jim always left his watch. It became a permanent and sacred institution

and on camp-breaking mornings Bill's first camp-task was to take Jim's watch out of Jim's blankets and tie it around Jim's neck in a double bowline knot. Our best camp-breaking record, I find in the Log, was twenty-two minutes from flapjacks to full-speed-ahead and that was the ripest achievement of three weeks' training.

Superior was again smiling and unbefogged when we put out of the Puckoso that morning. The black-flies had only just heard that succulent tenderfeet were theirs for the stinging and they chased us half a mile out in the lake. We had picked White Spruce River for the next night-camp, but we decided not to stop; rather, Superior decided that for us. A smart wind from the southwest brought a smarter sea along with it. *Wagush* was game for it and equal to it. But Joe's heavily loaded tow-boat was not, particularly the way the *Wagush* was jerking her through the seas. Richardson's Harbor loomed up opportunely. Joe, with the water to his

ankles, sighted it first and vigorously urged a landing party. If you can mentally picture a giant T cut into the solid rock of the shore-line, you can mentally picture Richardson's Harbor. When we found the harbor-mouth the seas playfully boosted us in. We coasted around this unruffled refuge. A deserted fishing-station was the only blemish on the scene and jumping herring gave us a sensation until we found them herring.

While we lunched and smoked and found moose-tracks, Superior thought we had escaped her and sullenly subsided. So we looked out of the harbor-mouth cautiously and made a dash for it.

Otter Head is precisely what the pioneer, in his keen observation and nature-lore, saw fit to call it—the head of a huge otter. You can see it for fifty miles on a clear day. We did. That is, Joe did. Joe is always seeing and hearing things first and then we pretend that we do—until we really do. Then the lighthouse—the tragic isolation of

that lone lighthouse—loomed up around the point—on Otter Island. The map promised things behind that island and the promise was kept promptly, richly.

At first, we thought it a great strip of quartz in the precipice. Then Joe shouted, "Water-fall over dere," and pointed. The "Ninety-Foot Falls" were taking their perpetual, "death-defying" leap into the lake! They are really twin-falls. The Rideau River, wearied of laughing down through gloomy canyons, just passes up the whole job—ninety feet up there on the cliff—and tells its water-children to shift for themselves. So they jump over the brink with a scream—and feed a myriad trout below. We stopped there—naturally—and fished. I will not say how many fish came gamily to the willing net. They were enough to feed us—that was all.

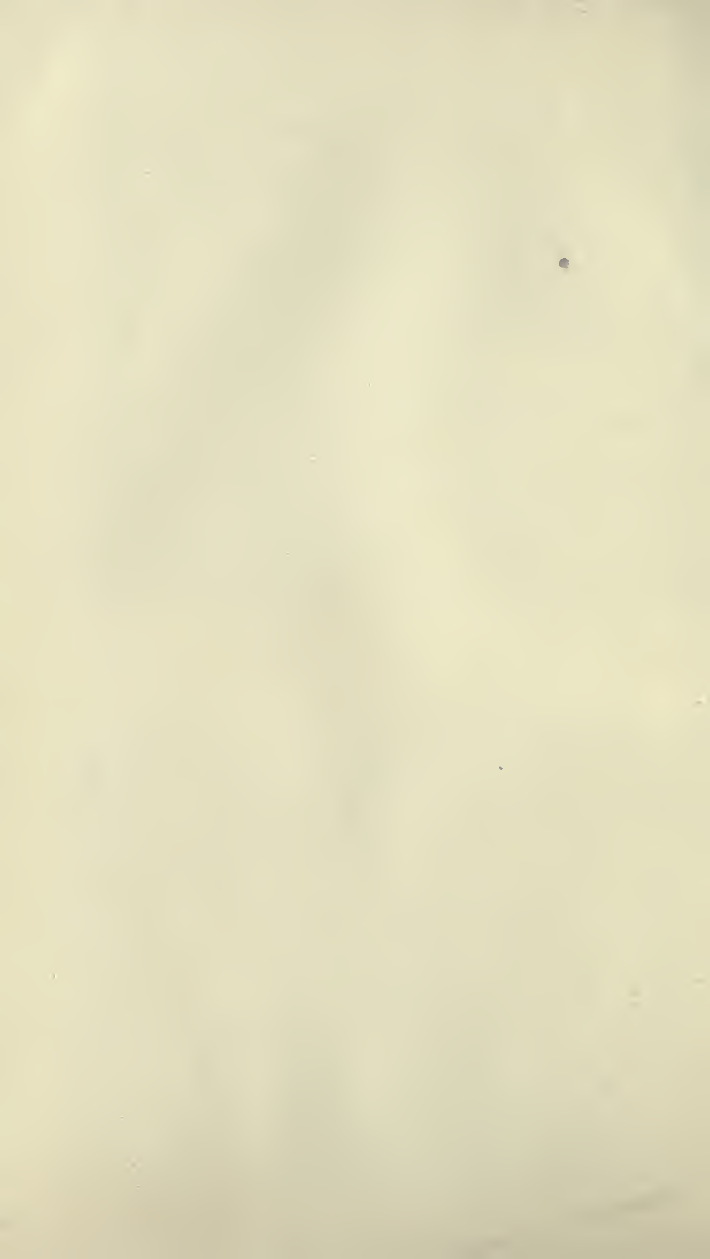
At the foot of the falls we had another call. It is curious how quickly one adapts one's self to the isolation of the wilderness.

"No Landing for Boats"

Two days out and the sight of a stranger, a sail, or even smoke on the horizon will precipitate a perfect frenzy of curiosity. I never saw a man who craved man's companionship the way Captain McMinimi, keeper of the Otter Head light, did. He had sighted us from his eyrie and came skimming across the bay in a thirty foot Mackinaw, as trim and dainty as a boat-builder's "ad." He had seen two "tourists" in two months. He asked about George Rex and Theodore Alleged-Rex and American League baseball and the Russo-Japanese treaty. It was gratifying to find an audience so avid and appreciative. We gave him salmon-flies, a box of Jim's cigars (they were "out-of-door" cigars and Jim was asleep), and a bottle of Scotch, and, in return, Captain McMinimi charted the fishing-reefs for us and, leading the way in his natty little boat, piloted us to harbor, deep down Otter Cove, where we made camp. He scarcely left us for two days. He drank in the news of the

"Ninety-Foot Falls."

"For we had Found the Place of Monster Trout!"



world and the conversation and jokes of the camp in long, luxurious draughts. His gratitude for mere human presence was pathetic. Last fall we heard again of Captain McMinimi —our host at Otter Head. It was a dispatch sent out by some lone telegraph operator in the Canadian Pacific station at Heron Bay. Captain McMinimi had set out—in that same dainty little craft—for Heron Bay to lay in his fall supplies. He never reached there. They found—a week later—a battered hull, overturned on the rocks. Inexorable Superior offers a certain grim companionship of her own.

We made the White Gravel River, twenty-five miles from Otter Head, in a half-day's run. The Swallow and White Spruce—both excellent streams for small fish—we passed up temporarily. The weather was good and the need of making time oppressed us. But there was no slighting the White Gravel. Gentlemen-fishermen, returning joyously, had told us of its pools and possibilities. The

Log and the chart warned Navigating Officer Bill that we must be abreast of it. So we checked and ran nearer shore to reconnoitre. It 's a fad of Superior rivers to hide their mouths behind sand-bars. They 're very coy about it. We 'd learned to be inquisitive. Else we had missed the White Gravel. The actual outlet was just wide and deep enough—through the riffle—to admit the *Wagush* to the good shelter of the inner basin.

We poled in cautiously, too, because we knew THEY were there. You can never mistake the river-water that is colored like wine-jelly. That means fish. While Joe and Cookee Art, cut tent-poles and balsam and a tripod, we moored the launch and stepped out upon the sandy shore of that amber-filled basin to cast. THEY, too, craved human society, even as Captain McMinimi had craved it. Jim—the Log says—caught his first trout there. He had fished for bass and pike, possibly muscallonge,

His Excellency, the Governor, the Central Figure, Much Prefers This to Governing.

and was rather inclined to be patronizing in a trouters' discussion. It was n't such a lunker—about three pounds—but Jim gave all the premonitory symptoms of apoplexy when that trout struck and broke water and he talked little and in hushed whispers at the camp-fire that night.

Two miles up the White Gravel River is a pool, circular, dark, deep, and peopled with darting shadows. We fished it in the perfunctory, impious way that men fish all pools, when they are pressed for time and "must reach the falls"—by some law of stupid impatience—up and beyond. I took a look at that font of mystery and said, "On to Hudson's Bay, if you will, mad Cook Tourists. Here I set me down and dream." So the others climbed around the falls and plunged on. Oh—insatiable god of curiosity! They had taken, maybe, a half-dozen exquisite swarthy fish from that pool. I smoked two pipes and took a picture. And the little kas-kas-ka-nig-gee bird ("my little

silver-throated friend") talked to me. Then the trout had cooled off. They thought the Great Peril had passed. They came cautiously out of their asylums in the rocks, from beneath sunken logs. They were again self-confident wild things, searching their prey. I cast carefully—where the others had not cast—and instantly the ripples took the food-news, the dinner-call, about that pool and the carnival was on. I had a little net, a spineless, maddening implement such as cunning sporting-goods men make and blundering tenderfeet buy. I got "doubles" and, twice, a "triple" and each time that net, that instrument of commercial avarice, would buckle or turn turtle. I shouted for help. But only the falls and sympathetic kas-kas-ka-nig-gee, who understood, answered me. I 'll remember that pool and the creel-full they made.

A curious phenomenon was materialized to dash our hopes when we arrived, successively, at the Big Pic and Little Pic rivers.

Little Pic and Great Chagrin

It was down the Big Pic—then the Pijitic—that the French descended from Hudson's Bay in 1750 where they had plundered and slaughtered a factory of those hardy wilderness-adventurers. We found mud, beautiful, yellow, liquid mud. The two rivers were breaking all midsummer records for high water. The reef fishing at the mouth of the Little Pic, reputed to be about the best on Lake Superior, was out of business for a month at least. Disconsolately we cranked the *Wagush* and moved on.

The Log shows 160 miles covered in *Wagush* and Joe's tow-boat in that trip up the shore, begun at Michipocoten Island. There the tyranny of the calendar showed its hydra-head and certain inquisitive telegrams from forgotten offices awaited us at the first Canadian Pacific station where we called for two-weeks-old mail. So we were coasting back along the North Shore. We had to go to Michipocoten Harbor, on the mainland, this time to catch the steamer. There is

an ore-carrying railroad there and a steam crane. We had to have that crane. It was easy enough to slide the *Wagush* into the water, but a very different matter to lift her and her good ton of avoirdupois out of the water.

It 's feasible only to name those exquisite, lonely little streams which we sighted on that return cruise and found it not in our hearts to slight. They were the White Spruce, Swallow, Pike, Ghost, Eagle, Dog, Mountain Ash, Pickerel, and a half-dozen others which the map refuses to dignify with names at all, but which, nevertheless, are peopled with trout-folk. Once the commutator-shaft went ailing. Where we went ashore to diagnose the malady there was a stream, twenty feet wide and, maybe, four feet deep. Billy, knowing little about commutator-shafts and much about trout, cast instead of tinkering. We heard his frantic shouts for a net. Of course the net was stowed beneath everything else in the launch. And

Billy, netless and single-handed, drew a four-pound trout out on the beach.

It enjoyed a highly dramatic climax, that cruise. There is a stretch of the coast, of eleven miles, between Point Isacor and Boat Harbor, which the map frankly declares to be "No landing for boats." As a matter of fact, it 's no landing for sea-gulls. The shore rises straight out of the water and towers aloft dizzily from 100 to 250 feet. Of course, we knew of that stretch and planned to get as near it as possible, wait for daylight and calm water, and make a dash for safety on the other side. Very cunning and far-sighted in her cunning, however, is Lake Superior. She pretty nearly had us—for all our caution and strategems.

We had been storm-bound for three days in Otter Cove. A gale from the southwest raved and dared us. Time for the sailing of the steamer from Michipocoten Harbor was drawing perilously near. The fourth morning we were up before dawn. The day

promised fair. There was no wind. The sea was still high, but promised to subside if the wind kept off. We planned to make Ghost River where the river-basin, we were told, would offer shelter for the launch, camp there over night, and then have a day to race past "the bad lands."

Three times that day the seas drove us ashore. Joe's boat wallowed and once was half-swamped. We would bail out, dry off and warm up about a drift-wood fire, and try it again. Steadily the sea had been rising and the weather thickening when we reached Ghost River, thirty-two miles from Otter Head, just at dusk, beneath lowering skies. Giant seas were racing in, with their crests crowned with wind-spray.

And we found Ghost River choked with sand and no shelter!

It was a nasty mess. We could n't stay here. A hard blow was coming, straight into that bay. We could n't go back ten miles or so to harbors we had passed. The

"He Was a Little Better than Five Pounds."

quartering seas would swamp us. And the eleven miles of "No landing for boats," of hungry reefs and dizzy precipices, were ahead of us. And night and a gale were hurrying along together.

We held a hurried consultation. We looked to Joe, when we had decided, and Joe said, "Let 's go on—Quick." We went "quick." When we swung out into it again, green water came into our laps in barrels and we looked anxiously astern until we saw Joe and Art. emerge hatless from the green abyss. Then for an hour and a quarter no man spoke except in sharp monosyllables; but just looked at his watch and then out lakeward whence the gale and green-mountains were coming. Twice the tow-line snapped and we rounded-to in the smother and picked up Joe's wallowing boat and its pallid crew. Marv. hovered over the gasoline engine as a mother over a sick child and watched its every breath with a mouth full of heart. Had the engine faltered in that

sea and gale beating on a rock-bound coast—But it was n't fun thinking about it.

We could scarcely make out the mouth of Boat Harbor in the blackness and the surf. We had to take a chance. It looked like a harbor. We could n't weather it much more than a half-hour longer, anyway.

"Here goes," said the Camp Boss. "Hang on—as long as you can, fellows."

And he put the wheel hard-over. Superior picked us up and smacked us down in the centre of Boat Harbor. We hurdled the harbor-mouth, that was all. We were flung into shelter and a good camp-site and warming drinks and a ten o'clock dinner. Superior had had her brutal prank with us and grown bored. The next morning Superior was smiling again and in the smile we saw the smoke of the *Caribou*. After all, smoke is about the fulfilment and the end of all earthly things—even vacation-dreams.

CHAPTER VI

IN THE TROUT DEMOCRACY AND REEFS OF CHIPPEWA HARBOR

THE very best that I can do is to say that all this happened on the east-north shore of Lake Superior within fifty miles of Gargantua, which is itself about one hundred miles north of Sault de Sainte Marie. It is unfortunate that I must be thus evasive and non-committal at the very onset, but fisherman's ethics will justify this stand. About trout-rivers and reefs you hunted out or stumbled over by yourself you can prattle all you please. They are yours and you can haunt them or tell unsympathetic editors about them or romance to dinner-parties about them and do nothing worse than make a fool or a bore of yourself. But when you are rowed to them in another man's boat, by another man's Indian, on

top of another man's breakfast, with another man's cook to fry your trout, and a flask filled with another man's appetizer in your pocket—why, then those rivers and reefs are really not yours to prattle about. You 're a camp-guest—sacred and ancient mutual obligation of the wilderness—that 's what I was—camp guest.

And such camping! Why, we had grape-fruit for breakfast and cocktails before dinner! The third morning up there the Editor was impatient because the camp-manicurist was n't on the job. Personally, I was n't accustomed to Indian-packers who run up and firmly and reproachfully take an oar or an axe out of your hands, much as the lord-chamberlain would rebuke King George for trying to crank his own runabout. It was incredibly luxurious. The capacity of camp-guest brings its compensations. Before I left I had Indians sharpening my lead-pencils for me. The greatest lesson the wilderness teaches, perhaps, is adaptability.

"A Sailor Home from the Sea"

This much I can safely tell you of that camp! Besides being pretty close to Gargantua, it is a wonderful little harbor, another four-fingers-and-thumb thrust into the shoreline of Lake Superior, and we were encamped upon the nail of the middle finger with a rocky island effectually blocking the entrance and warning back the booming surf—Call it Chippewa Harbor, if you like, and that 's pretty close, too. Beside my tent was a grave. A sailor, just a nameless sailor, had been washed up there ten years ago. The Indians found him. They put stones over him against the wolves and lynxes and a rough cross at his head. And he slept there beside me, a tired soul "home from the sea," a very quiet bunkie, and his parents, perhaps his wife and children, will never know the place where he is sleeping.

Camp was ready for us when the steamer *Caribou*, whistling blithely, hove-to and dropped us into the camp-boats which for hours had waited outside the headlands for

us. A cook in white cap and apron was frying trout—and cooling cantaloupe! It was too absurd—and intoxicating!

Our Host met us—with a whoop and a delirious waltz upon the rocky beach. That 's the way the Host always greets his guests in his camps. He has five of them—camps, not guests. They are duck-shooting camp and deer-shooting camp and prairie-chicken camp out west and quail camp in Georgia and tuna camp in California. That host, by the way, is now Governor of the Commonwealth of Michigan. There is only one man who knows the Superior country as well as our Host and that 's the Judge—but, as I said, the camp-cookie was frying trout.

There we met "Tommie," a very old and amiable Chippewa full-blood from Batchewana Bay. Tommie was just picking up my rain-coat carefully by the tail, that two pipes and a tobacco-pouch and a box of one hundred cigarettes might tumble out of the pockets into the water with the least possible re-

Gargantua Light Is More Hospitable than it Looks.

Abandoned by the Honorable Hudson's Bay Company

sistance. Our Host introduced him. He said, "This is Nish-i-shin-i-wog," which means "Friend of Men," which we all knew with the exception of the Cartoonist. He said, "If that is n't a college-yell, I did n't catch the name," and the Indian beamed delightedly and said, "Make um Tommie," which forthwith the Cartoonist did. Tommie Nish-i-shin-i-wog has a place in this narrative farther on.

It was a funny thing about Nate. He was a camp-guest, too. Back in civilization comparatively few men called him Nate and held their jobs, because he was president of a big public service corporation. Several thousand employees called him "Mister" with awe. And, because he was president of a public service corporation, the gamboge dailies called him a variety of things. But in camp he was "Nate," even to Tommie, who revelled in the rare monosyllable. Never, outside of one of Mr. Robert W. Chambers' heroes, have I seen a man piscatorially so

well equipped as Nate. His accumulated rod-cases and leader-boxes alone gave the steamer *Caribou* quite a list to port. He owned stock in several dozen trout-preserves and belonged to several thousand fishing clubs. He was accustomed to wait for a wire from a keeper that a trout had actually been seen. Then he would bump elbows with five hundred fellow-members and stalk that trout with cunning and technique. When it was caught and tipped the scale magnificently at a full half-pound, its captor would give a wine dinner and have the trout taxidermed for "the trophy room," and the club would present him with a silver dinner service.

So Nate came to the waters of four-pound brook trout with skepticism. After the first camp-dinner Tommie took Nate in the work-boat and rowed him about a quarter of a mile across the harbor to the rocks. They were gone maybe an hour. It was dark when they came back. Nate came up to

the camp-fire with a landing-net full of six fish, for the smallest was two pounds. "Think of it," he said awedly; "I was figuring it out rowing back to camp. Why, I pay about $1500 a year to catch minnows too small for bait for these whoppers." Thereafter Nate and Tommie were as Damon and Pythias. Tommie knew the holes, and than Nate I never saw a prettier fly-caster or a better, cleaner sportsman.

There is a little river flowing into Superior just where the bones of a wrecked lake-freighter lie bleaching on the reef. It was late in November when a gale from the northwest accompanied by a snow-storm and zero weather drove the vessel from her course. They had tried to make Michipocoten Harbor but the gale would have none of it. Her powerful engines were useless and the seas flung her into that cove and piled her on the rocks so close to shore that the crew made it, scarcely wetting their feet. Then, however, their real hardships began. They

had twenty miles to go over a trailless and incredibly rough country. We found a sled which they had made of wire and barrel-staves. Two of them reached Michipocoten Harbor. One died there from his exposure. The other had a frozen foot and leg amputated. Help was sent back and the rest of them were taken from the pilot-house which had washed ashore and still stands there among the balsams to bear witness to Superior's retribution when winter drops the gates and man enters at his peril.

But it was n't the wreck that interested us in that river. There were trout in it. Jim found them. Jim, you see, played first-base on the Country Club baseball team and he could n't see why he should n't keep his throwing arm in shape on a camping expedition on Lake Superior. So he brought a mit and glove and a few balls along. When he produced them we laughed derisively. Then one of the Indians proclaimed himself the short-stop of the All-Chippewa team.

Where the Steamer Drops you Overboard among the

Technique of the Judiciary

Our Host remembered he was a college-pitcher in the early-somethings and the Judge himself had a "wing" that defied the ravages of time and the sedentary tendencies of a judicial career. We had team-practice regularly after breakfast. In a quick throw to catch an imaginary runner off first, I threw perfectly to the centre of the little river. That 's how Jim discovered the trout.

One morning Jim offered to take the Judge up the river. That pleased the Judge and he let Jim take him. When Jim—that was his first trout-fishing experience in that country—heard that night at dinner that the Judge had fished that river for forty-two years and was the only white man that had seen its headwaters, Jim was actually embarrassed. But Jim was rewarded. He saw the Judge fish—with a little two-and-a-half-ounce stream-rod. I had often wondered how the Judge could follow me down a stream and double my kill day after day.

What Jim narrated that night at dinner dissolved the mystery.

It was a small river. A pound-fish in it was an achievement. It seems that the Judge got a big rise in a pool. Jim went on down the river, waited an hour for the Judge, and came back. The Judge had just changed all his flies for the sixth time. The fish was still wary. Then the Judge sat down and smoked and let the fish forget the whole incident. Then he changed his flies again and worked around to the other side of the pool, trying a new angle. Jim was making remarks by this time and the Judge urged him to go down to camp, because he, the Judge, had a mission in life and he was going to stay on the job and fulfil it.

After the third intermission and two hours and a half of actual manœuvring and strategem and patience and most finished technique, the Judge teased that fish into rising again. Then he struck him and landed him, two and a half pounds—just the weight in

ounces of his rod—of sinew and savagery and deep mahogany color.

Somewhere, about two miles back of camp, there was a lake. Camp had done no fishing for two days. We had as many fish as we could eat and no man would defy public sentiment by killing more. I thought of that lake and the possibility of seeing, perhaps photographing, a moose among its lily-pads. I took camera, Colt, compass, a steel rod and spinner and started for an old blazed trail which began a mile down the Superior shore. Our Host hailed me. He said he wanted some exercise himself, but I discerned his real reason in suspicion of my woodcraft and a pardonable propensity to lose one's self in the tamarack-swamps. Frankly, I was glad of this guide, the best woodsman in the whole north country.

We found the blaze and followed it at a pace that must have been a violation of the local speed ordinance. As we went our Host remembered that five years before he

had built and floated a raft on that little lake and thought it must be there yet—if we could find it. When we got the first glint of its waters, we slowed down and went cautiously.

"Look, look!" whispered our Host. "There 's one! There 's another and another!"

A great bull moose, a cow, and a calf—evidently they had seen or scented us—were moving off into the shadows, without a sound. That glimpse of wild life in the heart of the wilds was worth the two miles up-hill. We circumnavigated that lake—and no raft. Reeds and lily-pads fringed its heavily wooded shores. It was so still that our voices reverberated like cannon. I lighted a pipe and laid down the steel rod.

"What did you bring that for?" asked our Host.

"I thought there might be pike in the lake," I answered somewhat dubiously.

Fought it Out Fish to Fish

"There are pike," said our Host.

"And no raft," I ventured.

"Are you afraid to get wet?" suggested our Host.

Of course I was n't. I may have been a minute before. But now wading an unknown lake of unguessed depths was about the best thing I did. I was just a little nettled. With rod in right hand and the spinner dangling I plunged boldly in—I had forgotten about the silt-bottom which is about as firm and satisfying a thing to walk upon as a sidewalk of thunder-clouds. When I was down to the waist, I tossed my watch, revolver, and camera ashore. Then I found a submerged twig and stood upon it to cast. The spinner went shrieking out forty feet or so, just beyond the lily-pads. There was a splash ten feet away. A big fish had thought of something. Then a swirl and another splash and I, standing on a rotten twig, was hooked to a submarine. Of course the twig broke. I went down to

arm-pits, then to neck. Then I began swimming and that pike and I fought it out among the lily-pads, as fish to fish. At last I got close enough to shore to throw a convulsed comedian the rod and he dragged a six-pound pike out in the bushes. I needed the run home in the twilight to set up circulation and shake off the mud.

"The joke of the jokes," admitted our Host, "is the fact that I had n't the slightest suspicion there was a pike within five miles. I just wanted to see you swim." I laughed perfunctorily a chilling laugh.

All pink and glowing we were dashing tent-ward from the lake bath that morning when Tommie Nish-i-shin-i-wog interrupted us. He had just come with pails of water for Cookee. Tommie had something weighty on his mind. We could see that.

"Bear-track—big one—oh, very big!—" said Tommie, with his two hands together for purposes of graphic illustration: "Come see!" We did—and we saw—it was made

"We must Travel Light."

in the wet sand—not fifty feet from the cook-tent, not seventy feet from our own profound and virtuous slumbers. And such a track! It looked a good deal like a track such as a seven-foot, barefoot man might make—only the claws were there. We were all thrilled and pleased—save the Cartoonist. He was frankly oppressed. Several times during the day the Cartoonist went down to the beach and looked at that bear-track, spanned it with his fingers and came back ominously shaking his head. All day he talked of his hypothetical meeting with a giant bear or wolf-pack or hungry lynx family. He brooded over it. We couldn't cheer him. That evening about the camp-fire the Indians outdid one another in tales of dreadful encounters with wild beasts. Our Host showed a scar on his arm left by a wounded she-bear, he said, and the Cartoonist listened fascinated by the horror of it.

The Cartoonist and I bunked together in the tent nearest the thicket of juniper and

tag-alder that hemmed in the camp. He slept in a Jaegar sleeping-bag, a luxurious provision of our Host; I upon the softest bed in the world, balsam-boughs, and my pillow was against the rear wall of the tent. While we donned our couch-draperies the Cartoonist continued to discuss gloomily our chances of escaping the digestive organs of some hungry wood-monster. I asked him at last if he did n't know the camp was "playing horse" with him and he was genuinely relieved and grateful. In fact, for the first time in sixteen hours he forgot the bear-track.

I had n't been asleep when I first heard the sound. It came three times before I decided to speak. I thought the Cartoonist was moving in his canvas sarcophagus. I asked him why he did n't go to sleep.

"That is n't me," said the Cartoonist with the bad grammar of a genuine panic. "There 's something outside the tent trying to get in."

Something with a Snort

"What had we better do?" asked the Cartoonist.

"We might sing," I suggested.

Then it happened! The sound of our giggles moved the something-outside to action. With a snort the something began lifting the canvas directly beneath my left ear. I arose horizontally in the air and landed in a rigid kneeling position, facing the intruder. As I did so, I believe, I exclaimed fervently, "My God!"

"That 's right, old man," said the Cartoonist. "Whatever it is, let 's get the Deity on the job just as soon as we can."

"Get the lantern," I said. I heard the Cartoonist floundering and muttering. Then he said, "Say—I 'm tied in this blankety-blank thing. Sleeping-bag—hell! It 's a fire-trap. That 's what it is."

I got him out, I think, by the hair. We had just lighted the lantern with trembling fingers when the something bumped into the tent and I could see the outline of a very

bulky form. I kicked it with a socked foot and it crashed off into the bushes, making about as much noise as a neurotic milch-cow might make. Armed each with a hob-nailed boot, we sallied forth pajamaed.

"If it 's a bear I 'll give him a black-eye, anyway," said the Cartoonist.

First, I found a stout little stick about two feet long. It looked most serviceable, until I found one double the weight and length. So I gave the first stick to the Cartoonist. Rapidly he made the inevitable comparison and said:

"Here—I 've been short-changed on these sticks." We started determinedly for the outfit-tent to get my revolver and had gone maybe fifty feet down the black trail—when the lantern went out. Simultaneously there was a snort and crash in the bushes beside us. The Cartoonist and I clinched. Also we shouted—cheerily—to the rest of camp. The Editor, thrusting his head out of his tent, said things which only an irritable editor, unfamiliar

with the facts, can say. But I noticed that the Indians replenished the fires and took their guns to bed with them. As for the Cartoonist, he conscripted a rifle, two revolvers, an axe, and a hunting-knife and, on top of his sleeping-bag, laid him down to pleasant dreams.

With two men in camp so familiar with the "language, customs, and laws" of the wilderness as were our Host and the Judge, it was inevitable that there be much discussion, at table and about the fire, of the lore of lake, stream, and woods. I quite filled a note-book, writing in the glow of birch logs. The Judge had a theory, based upon forty years of observation and abundantly confirmed by practice right there in two striking incidents. The Judge contended that the big trout frequently takes a fly out of sheer belligerency. He is guarding his home-hole and resents the intrusion. That was the reason the Judge exasperated the two-and-a-half pounder up the river to rise

after haggling him for two and a half hours. It came forcibly to me, too, in a way that I shall tell.

But the "technical talk" wearied Jim. The Scourge of the Nature-Fakirs still dominated his imagination, you see. He saw too much romance and pure imagination in it. He was scornful. One day when we returned to camp Jim met us all glowing with excitement. He said he had done a little "nature-study" himself and had found a "cuckoo's nest." We assured him the north-woods was cuckooless, but he clung to it bravely. At last he consented to lead us to his find. We started next morning, Jim leading, the rest strung out in Indian-file. Over ridges, down vales, through swamps and canyons we went, Jim ostentatiously blazing trees and theatrically making observations as we went. It was almost noon when Jim came back and halted us. "Now we must go cautiously and quietly," he said, "so we won't frighten the mother-cuckoo

off the nest." Still we thought it best to humor him and tiptoed another mile or so. Then Jim crept up to a black-alder bush. With infinite care and skill he parted the branches and said dramatically: "There is your cuckoo's nest."

We peered in and beheld a cute little fig-basket with four very fresh olives in it.

But about the belligerency of old trout. The Judge and I, with Tommie Nish-i-shin-i-wog and the work-boat and a skillet and lunch, had started out straight from an early breakfast. It was my last day in the land of Vacation Dreams and I longed for an incident that might make a fitting centre-piece for the memory of the trip. I got it, all right. We rowed along the reefs for five miles. The Judge got one fish and two other rises. That was all. The surface of the water was dotted with grasshoppers. We told each other that the fish were gorged and Tommie agreed with us. We said we 'd go ashore, lunch on the Judge's fish, and look

up an old trail from Sault de Sainte Marie to Michipocoten, which the Judge thought ran close to the lake-shore at that point. We started back to camp about two in the afternoon. The grasshoppers were still holding their impromptu regatta. If anything, there were more of them. Rather perfunctorily we began to cast.

There was nothing perfunctory about the response. We had killed a dozen fish in the first mile, casting into holes full of silly bobbing grasshoppers. At last we came to a place where a mountain had split in two and half of it toppled into the lake. There were great half-submerged boulders, big as the *Caribou*, all about. Beside one of these was a hole, showing the green of depths and the shadow that the big chaps like. "There 's a likely hole, Judge," I shouted from the bow—"Try it."

"You can reach it better than I," said the Judge. "You 'll get one there."

I saw my first cast was going to fall a little

The New Race in the Lap of the Race that is Passing.

short. I tried to stop it in mid-air, but the dropper-fly just rested for an instant on the water five feet from the hole. In fact, I had started the back-cast when there was a splash that made us look at each other with bulging eyes.

"Quick—get back there," said the Judge.

I nearly got Tommie's ear, but the flies, all three of them, a gaudy Parmachenee Belle, a Montreal, and a Royal Coachman, settled directly over the hole. He had the Parmachenee before the Montreal was really wet. When I struck him with that four-ounce rod, he was so solid that I thought for a minute I had actually hooked a rock. But for just a minute. Tommie started madly for deeper water, with that great fish pacing him. The reel screamed shrilly. He took more line than I realized for when he did break water he was so far off I thought I'd lost him.

"Start him back quick, before he recovers," said the Judge. "Good Lord—what a fish!

Don't hurry him. He 'll fight you half an hour." And he did. Precisely seven times I had that old patriarch within twelve feet of the boat, Tommie praying into the net. And seven times he went away again. Each time that I snubbed him I thought it the last. I shouted, implored, stormed, and, I 'm afraid, cussed. My arms ached and my nerves were tense as piano-strings. We had drifted a mile off shore.

"I think he 'll do now," said the Judge. "Give me the net and remember I won't try it unless you can lift his head out of water."

Inch by inch he came in then, a steady desperate resistance—no more mad rushes. Twenty feet, fifteen feet, ten feet! I could see him now and I gasped.

"Steady now," whispered the Judge. "Head out—remember."

Tommie shipped his oars.

I drew a long, hot breath.

"Now," said the Judge.

There was a swish of that net—oh how skilful—a flurry of spray. He hit the gun'ale. Tommie slapped him and he tumbled into the boat—unhooked!

"Mon-ta-me-gus—hurrah!" said Tommie Nish-i-shin-i-wog.

"Tommie," said the Judge, "your unprecedented emotion is eminently justifiable. You 'll find the flask in the tin box under the second seat."

He was a little better than five pounds—and a brook trout—and there were other flasks in camp, which proves the Judge's point that big trout bite from belligerency and my point that Superior is the land of Vacation Dreams.

CHAPTER VII

A BEATIFIC ERROR AND A SECRET MISSION

WHEN a North Shore fisherman meets a brother North Shore fisherman the conversation is quite certain to gravitate to the region of the historic Michipocoten, down which the canoe-flotillas of the Hudson Bay Company once came paddling and singing from the Great Bay to Sault de Sainte Marie. They will talk about the Michipocoten's colorful and not entirely honorable history; its falls, a hundred and eighty feet high, and its miles upon miles of boiling rapids of which they have possibly heard. Then the North Shore fisherman will assume an expression of wood-wisdom quite profound and say to his brother—if his brother has n't said it first:

"Funny thing, there 're no trout in the Michipocoten."

And the brother will retort with equal gravity and finality:

"Nothing for 'em to feed on. Wrong kind of water."

The first North Shoreman says:

"Yep."

And each feels that he has, indeed, found a kindred spirit in the wilderness and an appreciator worthy of his pearls of wisdom.

I have heard that colloquy, according to statistics of the Log, 5179 times in my considerable journeys to the Lake Superior country. Before we ourselves knew anything of the Michipocoten country we used to discuss this "no-trout-in-the-Michipocoten" theme and wonder why it appealed so potently to the imagination of the average North Shore fisherman, which is not habitually morbid. It got so, that whenever we met a strange fisherman on the steamer or train or portage or at a fishing-station we'd deliberately manœuvre the conversation around to the Michipocoten and then, by a spirited

dash, try to beat him to the trite and traditional observation. But we always found him suspicious and alert. "No-trout-in-the Michipocoten" seems to be as permanent a fixture in the Lake Superior country as the Aurora Borealis or the rock of petrified Nan-i-bou-jou.

During the first three years of quite ceaseless reiteration, I accepted this slogan implicitly. I was receptive and tenderfootish. Slowly it dawned upon me that there must be something wrong with a conclusion of which 5179 gentlemen-fishermen were so cock-sure, so belligerently and unreasonably sure.

Then one day, wading up the mad little Puckoso River, I came upon the tepee of an Indian, hunting,—Mr. Maj-i-nuten. He had been a canoe-man for the Honorable H. B. C. himself. Seeking to impress and awe that Indian as I myself had been impressed and awed, I drew myself up, looking very knowing indeed, and let it go:

William Teddy Embarrassed and George Andre Resigned.

"Funny there 're no trout in the Michipocoten River."

The effect upon Maj-i-nuten, as we sat there smoking on a rock in the rapids, was most disappointing and humiliating. The hallowed observation failed entirely to impress and awe Maj-i-nuten. "He blew a whiff from his pipe and a scornful laugh laughed he." It was n't quite scornful—it was just a laugh bubbling with whole-hearted and utterly uncontrollable enjoyment. Maj-i-nuten sobered at the sight of my embarrassment and said:

"Well—you know—it's strandge t'ing 'bout dat. I guess so mebbe dat story she 's de oldest dam lie what I know."

Silently there among the spruces Maj-i-nuten and I shook hands. He gave me the particulars and the proof. It was all very simple—as I supposed it must be. Maj-i-nuten had trapped up the Michipocoten the winter before—every winter—and occasionally carried mail in the summer. He

was full of dreams that were gorgeous and preparations that were feverish. I besought Ottawa for maps, and Ottawa promptly and courteously swamped me with maps of everything in the Dominion of Canada, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the international boundary to the Arctic circle —with the exception of the Michipocoten River. I wrote back to Ottawa, grateful but insistent upon the Michipocoten River. Then Ottawa packed up and mailed me all the maps of Baffin's Bay and the Canadian Rockies that had been overlooked in the first shipment. Then, wholly by chance, I heard of an ex-newspaper man in the office of the Minister of Public Works, Toronto. My heart sings songs of praise whenever I think of that newspaper man and the generous destiny that revealed him to me. He went up into the musty attic and dug out an old map of the "Michipocoten Mining Division of the District of Algoma, Ontario, scale two miles to the inch." The engineers who

made that old map knew their job and loved their work. Subsequent events proved that map's accuracy to be remarkable.

The finding of that map inaugurated the whole ecstatic campaign of preparation. The North Shore Club tiptoed into the private dining-room of the University Club for lunch. We pulled down the shades and plugged up the keyhole and put cotton in the ears of the waiter. We organized the campaign. Four men pledged themselves to go. That meant four Indian packers—one of them a cook—and four canoes. We must have at least one man who knew the Michipocoten River. The others must be experienced canoe-men. We decided to outfit at Sault de Sainte Marie, Ontario, to save freight and duties and complications. All this meant lively and immediate correspondence. We ordered three A-tents, 7 by 9, and engaged four Peterboro canoes, each 17 feet long and capable of carrying two men and duffel. We had to get licenses

for the guides, too, from the Canadian government and fishing licenses for ourselves. The courtesy of Superintendent of Game and Fisheries Tinsley lightened very appreciably the burden of preliminary detail.

Altogether, that was a very busy though joyous lunch that the North Shore Club had that day. In fact there was little time to indulge in the delights of anticipation during those weeks before July 27th at last rolled around. We had engaged three Indians to join us at Michipocoten Harbor. The other Indian had sworn to meet me at the hotel, Sault de Sainte Marie, at three o'clock the afternoon of July 27th.

I have yet to participate in or witness the departure of a camping party that was unaccompanied by a hearty panic for all hands. That is the final hour of reckoning, too late for a remedy, when everybody remembers what he has forgotten and fearfully anticipates what probably will be forgotten. All day, on that July 26th, I had been sending

bouyant telegrams on my way up the State of Michigan, fresh from a tennis tournament, to join the North Shore Club. When I staggered off the train, lugging rod-case, camera, duffel-bags, and creel, I beamed at the thought of the riotous welcome in store for me. As a matter of record, those of the waiting North Shore Club that did not greet me with chilling languor, greeted me with open hostility.

Instead of shouting, "Here he is, boys!" and slapping me on the back and relieving me of my traps and offering to open white-labelled bottles for me and singing songs of youth's springtime and good cheer, they glared down on me and muttered:

"Well—where in h—— have you been?"

It took me some time to get to the bottom of the cataclysm which, apparently, had overwhelmed them. They had all arrived in "The Soo" about twenty-four hours ahead of me and each, according to his temperament and opportunities and tastes, had developed

the panic that best suited his purposes. The A-tents were n't ready. One of the canoes was too small; it could n't possibly be made to do. We should n't have time—just one whole day, that 's all—to buy supplies and get everything aboard the boat. Besides all that, all of them felt—largely intuitively—that the guides would disappoint us, that we should n't be able to find the boat-landing, and that it would rain, possibly snow. Destiny certainly dumped me down into a nice little family reunion of the Gloom Brothers. First, I got them all sitting around a table. It was a warm night and I called the waiter. When the waiter had made his third trip we began to see light, even a little hope ahead. We divided up into rescue-parties. Jim and Fred were to get the tents, any tents, and the four canoes, any four canoes, aboard the steamer *Caribou*—and sit upon them until the *Caribou* should be well out in Lake Superior. His Lordship—he was an English-

man, and a bully good fellow, that 's all—and I were to buy the supplies, tobacco, dish-towels, stimulants, and all, get the fishing licenses, put them aboard the *Caribou*—and sit upon them, right opposite, if possible, the place where Jim and Fred were sitting upon their cargo.

We were almost light-hearted when we went to bed in the hotel that night, so considerably had the cloud of foreboding been lifted. His Lordship even hummed a snatch of a very English hunting song and tried a very English joke as he was drawing his bath.

That brings us down to July 27th, the day of the sailing. It opened at 6.30 A.M., catching Fred between snores—with a deluge of telegrams—all for Fred. His office had to have him back right away and, to tell him all about it, his office did n't care how much it paid into the yawning coffers of the Western Union, either. Fred and his office bombarded each other spiritedly with fifty-word despatches until noon. Then Fred did a wise

thing and discrete thing. He began putting all his office's telegrams into his duffel-bag unopened. He opened them twelve hours later—fifty miles out in Lake Superior. As a result his office wired its head off for two days and then shut up—for three weeks. Every man must teach his office its place once a year or so.

By three o'clock—arrayed in all the splendors of camping-togs, all 1910 model—we had every essential and slippery article of freight and baggage aboard the *Caribou* and were sitting upon it—all save the Indian cook. I went back to the hotel to keep my "date" with him at three o'clock. Came four o'clock, then five o'clock—but never the Indian. I rushed back to the *Caribou* and jerked the North Shore Club off the baggage-piles. We organized a cook-hunt. Sailing-time was approaching and not one of us—more shame to us—had enough confidence in the others' culinary skill to trust to necessity and inspiration. We offered

a bounty of $5, then $10, then $15 per cook, dead or alive, delivered *Caribou* f. o. b. by seven P.M.

When the gang-plank of the *Caribou* was hauled aboard and the lines cast off, the North Shore Club was hanging over the rail looking longingly shoreward, cookless. The Great Hare must have heard our prayer. Joe Corbiere came up and greeted me. Joe and I have fished and hunted and bunked together for a long time now. And Joe can cook. I tried to shanghai Joe right there. But it would n't do. Joe was going up the Shore with another party. But Joe would get me a cook,—yes "I guess so mebbe"—perhaps—sure, at Batchewana Bay—yes, even though he had to beat him into insensibility with a tent-peg. Joe accepted the bounty and I knew we 'd have a cook for breakfast, albeit a battered and bruised cook. But a cook is a cook.

We were due to reach Batchewana Bay—a fishing-station and half-hearted Indian

settlement—at four A.M. I told the ship's watchman—for another bonus—to call Joe and me at 3.45 A.M. Joe met me at the gang-plank. Dawn was just breaking. We tiptoed off into the cook-country, going quietly not to flush them. We came to a shanty in the poplars and half-light. Joe threw open the door, stalked up to a sleeper, and said something in Indian that sounded like a foot-ball signal. The sleeper, an Indian, grunted, got up, grabbed for his trousers and hat, and said "all right," precisely as if this being yanked out of bed at four A.M. to go to the Arctic circle with a pack of strange, pale-faced lunatics were a lifelong custom.

And it was old Tommie Nish-i-shin-i-wog. I did n't know that Tommie could cook, but it was Joe's party and responsibility—not mine.

When we got back to the *Caribou* I made Joe a proposition to come to the big city and open an intelligence office based upon

Tommie Nish-i-shin-i-wog Mans the Frying-Pan.

just those business methods. In ten minutes he had convinced me that there 's only one way to get a "perfect jewel" for the kitchen.

The *Caribou* was an hour out of Michipocoten Harbor—we should arrive there at 3 P.M.—when four men, each in a stateroom slightly more spacious than a canary-cage, began redistributing his belongings and remaking his packs. It was uncommonly complicated business. First, we were going up the river—and would start that night. We must travel light. After the river trip we were going into permanent camp and live luxuriously on the Lake Superior shore and get the reef-fishing. That meant one pack to go and one pack to stay in the Michipocoten warehouse. Worse than that, it meant the ripping open on the boat or dock of every box of bacon, coffee, flour, every receptacle in that mound of supplies. We all wrangled over it for an hour, every man fighting for the item of diet dearest to his stomach. When a majority sentiment de-

creed that the stimulants should be reduced to a full flask per man on that river trip His Lordship broke down completely and the spectacle of his unrestrained grief unnerved us.

But George Andre was there—on the pier at Michipocoten Harbor waiting for us. He was the head guide we had engaged by correspondence. I liked George Andre the minute I grabbed his great, brown, sinewy paw. He was a full-blooded Chippewa, six feet high, lean and rangey. He looked you squarely in the eye when he talked. The first thing he did was to try the weight of one of the canoes. That seemed logical. Then he fell-to, opening boxes and separating the wheat from the chaff. He had his two sub-guides there, too. He presented them as Peter Kash and William Teddy. Pete was just a good-natured, fat Indian-cub, who laughed and ate much more easily and instinctively than he worked. If William Teddy were a younger man—he is a

well preserved fifty perhaps—I should guess his name to be a subtle compliment both to the President of the United States and our Most Public Private Citizen. Life is all an uproarious incident to William Teddy, too.

The mouth of the Michipocoten River is three miles from the harbor dock—three miles across Michipocoten Bay. The work of picking seven-day essentials out of the commissary department was progressing very slowly. The afternoon was waning. We had to get a start up the river that day; or to make camp, at least.

Providence sent us Mr. Coleman and his gasoline launch. We fell upon him and chartered him for an indefinite period on the spot. We divided the party. Jim and His Lordship stayed on the wharf to finish the work of inventory and elimination. Fred and I loaded up the *Rambler* with duffel, tents, and supplies already accepted and the *Rambler* settled down in the Superior waters

to her guards. We took George Andre, Pete, William Teddy, and Tommie, and, with the four canoes leaping and capsizing in tow astern, we cut across the bay for the river-mouth to find a camp-site. We promised to send back for Jim and His Lordship when the deep, dark hold of the *Caribou* should give up the rest of our "grub."

There is a Hudson Bay post there, where the mighty Michipocoten swings around the thousandth bend and slips at last into Superior. That is, the buildings are there—low, rambling, picturesque old structures of logs, with great beams cut by hand a century ago and little diamond window panes. There is the old house of "The Factor" and smaller houses where the *coureurs des bois* and trappers and defenders of the H. B. C. once made the northern midnight howl with epic-songs and journey-end celebrations. But these buildings are deserted now. The Hudson Bay Company has moved its post up to Missanabie. We camped in the front

yard of the silent post with the ghosts of other days.

We had put up the tents—the A-tents—and got out the blankets. George had filled the water-pail from a spring and Tommie had the pot on the fire and the potatoes peeled and the coffee and bacon ready. In the lull, waiting for Jim and His Lordship, I thought it wise to run over the map and the campaign and route with George Andre.

Right there I made a discovery that jolted me as I had n't been jolted for years. In my ignorance I had planned to start out at sunrise to-morrow with the flotilla and paddle briskly and light-heartedly right up the Michipocoten River. George put a gnarled finger on a spot of the map about fifteen miles from the rock where we were sitting and said firmly:

"Take a week to get there."

"Why?" I asked with sinking heart.

"Water swift, all rapids," said George. "Have to pole and line all the way."

"But we must get up there," I insisted, pointing to Lake Manitowick, a good sixty miles by the river, "and do it in a week, too."

"All right," said George. "We go over these lakes here, make portage, and do it in two days."

"How about the portage?" I asked fearfully.

"Seven-mile one to start with, to Lake Wa-Wa," said George.

"Do you think we are carrying a moving-van in the outfit?" I gasped.

"Mebbe I get a team—at the Mission," said George.

"One team to tote four canoes and this colossal scenic production?"

"Sure," said George. "Get wagon with rack."

"Take a canoe and get the team and the teamster," I said.

George did it. He paddled over to the Indian Mission and back and reported that

the team would be waiting for us with the morning's sun.

We had a surprise for Jim and His Lordship when they puffed into camp with another launch-load of "eats." But they did n't grumble or call me any of the things I deserved and fully expected to be called. The optimism and charity—and appetite—of the wilderness had already melted the iron in their hearts. In gratitude I opened some ox-tail soup and two cans of pork and beans. Right there Tommie's culinary genius, hidden these decades beneath a half-bushel, began declaring itself. We sang and perpetrated bad puns and capered as we spread our blankets over balsam boughs that William Teddy had cut, and sweet marsh-hay filched from the H. B. C.'s deserted barn. We rolled into those blankets, too, at the time when we should be just about finishing a huge, indigestible dinner back in the big city. The camp was very still in the stillness of the northern night,

when I took a last look at the bright northern stars and hearkened to the surf of Superior and the snores of James. I opened the flap of His Lordship's tent cautiously. He had his moustaches in curl papers and was manicuring his nails by the light of an electric lantern. I was n't sure how His Lordship was going to enjoy and last out this trip. He waved his hand at me gayly and said:

"My dear old chap, this is perfectly ripping—I say—is n't it?"

Which it certainly was. Then the pack of half-wolf Indian dogs at the Mission began howling and I dreamed that I had my eager fingers around the neck of that "no-trout-in-the-Michipocoten"-spectre and was choking it to death with the full delight of a pleasure long deferred.

CHAPTER VIII

WE ENCOUNTER "PROFANITY PORTAGE" AND "HIS LORDSHIP" PORTAGES THE POTATOES

THE surf of Superior, a mile away, was softly grumbling and the falls of the Magpie River, just around the bend, could be heard roaring, so still was the wilderness morning, when the east glowed from coral to crimson and we emerged from those A-tents to begin the day of days. The valley, wherein we and the old Hudson Bay post had been sleeping, and the broad waters of the Michipocoten, with its sand-bar capriciously thrown up at the post-gates, were still in deep shadow.

While Tommie urged along the breakfast, in its essentials virtually an echo and encore of last night's dinner, we struck the tents, did up packs, and made another substantial

cut in the unportable commissary. About two hundred pounds of tinned stuff was left with the hospitable family of Launchman Coleman.

All that which had been O. K. 'ed by four men as bed-rock and absolutely indispensable was committed to one pile and I viewed that pile with growing apprehension. His Lordship's collection of toilet articles—it would have made a tidy little nucleus for any enterprising druggist—we had to steal from His Lordship's elaborate duffel-bags or fairly tear from his clinging fingers. It was an hour of heroic sacrifices and recriminations. At the very last moment William Teddy tabooed the tent-poles and on each of the twenty-odd subsequent portages we thanked W. T. for that. I looked at the four canoes hauled out on the gravel beach and that soaring pile of duffel and feared greatly. George did it. He stowed it all away somehow. We climbed over the assorted cargoes into the canoes gingerly. Jim and Pete were

the first to swing out into the stream; then His Lordship and Billy T.; then Fred and Tommie. George and I took a last look around, for an abandoned camp-site generally yields a wealth of things forgotten. At last four canoes struggled around the sand-bar and slipped across the current toward the Mission just as the sun broke through the mountain wall to the east and streamed down a ravine upon us. Nan-i-bou-jou was bestowing godly smiles upon the expedition at its outset. I heard His Lordship complimenting the scenery to William Teddy who indulgently grunted.

With our landing came the first taste of the wealth of portaging to come. It was not more than twenty feet high, perhaps, that bank, but it rose sheer from the beach and, while we elevated the whole outfit, canoes and all, up that height, some thirty Indian dogs fought delightedly for the privilege of sniffing our commissary department most critically. Then the first forgotten essential

was remembered—pack-straps—now reposing languidly in Jim's extra duffel-bag in the warehouse. We had to rout out the keeper of the lone general-store for the pack-straps. William Teddy took advantage of the opportunity to buy for himself a bottle of "pain-killer." The Canadian government slaps into jail the merchant who sells whiskey to an Indian. So the merchant sells the Indian "pain-killer," which, taken in sufficient quantities, kills pain and dull care and consciousness as if assaulting them with a lead pipe. It is the vilest mess that cunning and avarice can possibly concoct. But it suited William Teddy.

We lashed the four canoes to the wagon-rack. Indeed, we did better than that. We managed to strap most of the outfit to that wagon. Some things of admitted decorative value, such as frying-pans and broilers and coffee-pots and a pair of His Lordship's pajamas that fell out of the pack, we tied around the horses' necks. They were a

marvel of condensed and economical loading —that team and wagon—when we were ready to start.

"Wa-Wa—next stop," shouted Fred gleefully, as he poked His Lordship smartly in the ribs. The driver, high up on the prow of the topmost canoe, cracked a villainous-looking black-snake and we were off—to the headwaters of the Michipocoten, beginning with a very husky seven-mile hike.

The first four miles was up-hill. The trail that we followed, with William Teddy leading, corkscrewed about and grand-right-and-lefted with the tote-road. We re-united with the team every once in a while to tighten up the canoe-lashings and count the bags and rods and kettles that had been shaken out and sprinkled along the trail.

When about four miles out on that road, I stopped Jim to make him a promise. I promised Jim, that the first thing I should do, when I got back to the Big City, would be to kill a certain manufacturer of "hunting

boots." Did you ever have the nails of a new pair of boots work through the soles—lots of nails in each sole—of your boots, when you were in the exact mathematical centre of a seven-mile trail? That is one of the chiefest charms and advantages of brand-new boots. For a while you try to make yourself believe you 're mistaken and there 're no nails transfixing your quivering soles at all. Then you try walking on your heels and then toes and then sides of your feet. You sit down and take off your boots while the black-flies come for miles around to coast down your nose and hold Marathon races on your glasses, and you take off those damnable boots and sympathize with your feet. That is a stupid thing to do, because the boots have to go on again and you probably don't put the nails back in the same holes they 've made in your feet. So the nails make new holes for themselves, until you know that your each sole looks like the top of a pepper-box. I ripped chunks out of the

tail of my flannel shirt and made insoles. My boots were fairly squdgey with blood at the end of that trail. His Lordship promised to go with me to the maker of "hunting boots" and give him "both barrels," in case I missed him.

Then we came to Lake Wa-Wa. It opened out suddenly at our very feet, as those impulsive northern lakes generally do. But the sight of houses, a whole town, surprised us more;—hotel, "The Balmoral"; general-store, post-office, blacksmith shop, all the urban appurtenances are there on the shores of Lake Wa-Wa. And they 're all deserted. Faded signboards and shutters are flapping in the wind. It is a ghastly, forlorn place—is Wa-Wa—when the wind whistles through the broken window-panes and telegraph wires. That was another of Mr. Clergue's splendid dreams. He built Wa-Wa in one sitting and peopled it and started it out thriving and hopeful. Having built the town and peopled it, Mr. Clergue said:

"Let 's see if we can't find a gold mine or something around here to employ and support the town." But he did n't find it and the Wa-Wa proletariat gave the keys back to Mr. Clergue and left "our beautiful city" to the wolves and bob-cats. I borrowed a machine hammer and a chisel from the phantom smithy and made over the sub-waterline of those boots to meet the needs of comfort.

We had to paddle Lake Wa-Wa from end to end, five miles of towering, heavily wooded shores. A thunder-shower came up and bathed us gently. Then the wind stirred up a sea, but wind and sea were directly astern and the four canoes were bowled along on the crest of the young day's enthusiasm. With George in the stern of my canoe, my responsibilities oppressed me not at all. He is, without exception, the best man in a canoe I ever saw. And that is not remarkable. George carries the mail between Michipocoten Harbor and Missanabie

on the Canadian Pacific. They are fifty miles apart and George, carrying a hundred-and-fifty-pound pack, runs the trails, finds and leaves a canoe on each of the half-dozen lakes, and makes the round trip twice every eight days. Why should n't George know the country and handle a canoe most masterfully?

Once during the gorgeous paddle to the head of Wa-Wa I heard a wolf howl contemplatively back among the ridges. Three flocks of duck—all teal, I believe—flew over us and surveyed us with frank and fearless curiosity.

The sun was in the zenith when the portage loomed ahead. George and I went into executive session. We decided to lunch and, while lunching, to send the Indians ahead with the canoes over the half-mile portage to the first little lake. Right there we had to do some emergency boat-repairing. The builder of those canoes had looked no farther than the polite pastimes of the park-lagoons.

There was no thwart amidships upon which to make a sling for the head of the Indian carrying the canoe. In ten minutes George and William Teddy had converted those four canoes into the bush-going craft they should be, while Jim and Fred and I stood by and gave minute instructions which were uniformly and properly disregarded. That was a boisterous and silly lunch. I look back now upon the blatant confidence and premature optimism of that hour with profoundest pity for the four of us. We all told one another:

"Say—this trip is n't so tough after all. Just enough walking and portaging to keep us in shape."

And all that sort of tenderfootish rot. And George heard it and grinned saturninely.

Then we started. The dinkey little half-mile portage just served to strengthen the illusion. We brought up on the shore of an absurd little lake, like a park-pond, and paddled across it, with our after-lunch pipes still fuming.

George said that the next portage was "quite leetle walk—yes—mebbe two mile and a half—sure—'bout dat."

We hit the tote-road again. His Lordship felt ambitious then. His lunch had nourished him and his heart was singing. He wanted to show us—particularly George Andre—that a blooming aborigine had n't anything to show him. He picked out the sack of potatoes for that portage. Potatoes in bulk stimulate neither the memory nor the imagination. There is no poetry, no inspiration, no reserve intellectual force, no response to kindness or devotion—nothing but coarse, back-breaking, soul-revolting weight in a sack of potatoes. We wondered at His Lordship's taste when he selected the potatoes and left the cameras and rod-cases. But away he went blithely out on that two-and-a-half-mile portage. Fred took a pack that quite eclipsed Fred's physical self—and he went through with it, too. George, Billy T., Tommie, and Pete had toted the canoes two miles, where the trail

breaks off from the tote-road, dropped them, and come back for another load. Somebody had to wait and see that nothing was left on the portage. The best Indian is distrait when he 's packing. So I was the last to leave the landing-place. I won't say what I carried. The first mile I was ashamed of it and glad I was last. Then I began thinking of the others' selfishness and thoughtlessness in giving me all the heavy work; until, at a mile and a half, I was just about the shiningest, groggiest little martyr that ever wandered the woodland without a harp or a halo.

But then I overtook His Lordship. He was sitting on his sack of potatoes with his face buried in his hands. I spoke lightly, cheerily, and he gasped something through his fingers. I blundered then. I offered to carry that sack of potatoes—rather to try to carry that sack of potatoes—for a while. What I received was precisely what I deserved. His Lordship arose, flung the potatoes upon his poor, tousled, steaming head,

and staggered off with them, without another word. I had blurted out my suspicion that His Lordship was a tenderfoot, a not even particularly "game" tenderfoot. Then and there I began making-over my estimate of His Lordship—because throughout that trip, whenever there was a man's work or two men's work to be done, His Lordship was camping right on the job—every minute. It simply goes to show that an expensive camping-toilet and waxed moustaches can and do disguise the kind of stuff of which wilderness-friendships and enduring admiration are made.

We finished that long portage in two relays. Then a paddle of a few hundred yards across a silent, marshy little lake. Then a portage of another few hundred yards and another lake.

We were, as usual, wholly unprepared for the horrors of "Profanity Portage." George had said it was—"Guess-mebbe 'bout a mile—sure—leetle more or less."

At first the trail was open and aboveboard and promised to be good. When it had led us into the densest sort of undergrowth and tamarack-swamps, that trail, laughing derisively, disappeared into the ground and left us scattering ourselves to the four winds on moose-trails and caribou-trails. The Indians had taken the canoes over and George came back and rounded us up and shooed us along before him. The last half-mile might have been the descent to Dante's Inferno. It was down a long hill. The bushes were up to one's ears and the ground was paved with irregular shaped rocks about twice the size of one's head. With a hundred-pound pack upon one's back, one's time was fairly evenly divided between falling down and getting up again. When we re-united, steaming and cursing, on the shores of another lake, we gathered around George and demanded more candor and precision, henceforth, in his diagnoses.

Then came "Beauty Lake." We named

"Then Came 'Beauty Lake'!"

"Something in the Way of Wild Waterways Worth While."

it—and named it "Beauty Lake," because "Magnificent Lake" or "Exquisite Lake" seemed hyperbole for the wilderness. It must have been put there for a purpose—probably to repay the man who had exhausted his body and his vocabulary stumbling over "Profanity Portage." It looked "trouty," too. But we had to make camp somewhere and it was six o'clock and the dark clouds piling up in the west looked threatening.

We portaged again—maybe twenty rods,—crossed an unclean pond of muck and slimy reeds, lugged everything up a steep hill—and pondered. There was Hawk Lake, three miles long, at our feet, and a very nasty looking thunder-storm at our backs. Then came grumblings over in the hills. It is not nice to have wet blankets one's first night on a trip of fast travelling, like this.

Should we make camp on this hill—an unpromising site—and beat out the storm—or take a chance and make a run for it—for a more level and agreeable camping

place? George put it up to me. I put it up to the North Shore Club. It seemed so much sportier to take the chance of the ducking, that no one hesitated. His Lordship—good sport—was quite jubilant over the gambling element in the situation.

As we swung out into Hawk Lake George bade me look over the side of the canoe and watch the bottom. When we came to the spot, I saw the water bubbling and there, far down in the lake's floor, I saw a gaping hole, perhaps a yard across, out of which a great spring was gushing. There is, undoubtedly, a colony of trout around that spring. But the storm was giving us a pretty race.

For awhile, the four canoes raced abreast, eight men putting their backs into every stroke of the paddles. Then George's flawless form—not mine—began to tell and we pulled away from the field inch by inch. Had there been anybody within twenty miles that evening, he would have seen all the Hawk

Snug Camp on Hawk Lake.

Lake canoe-records go bump. We had only the roar of the approaching storm to keep us pegging at it, but it served. We would reach each successive camping-spot that George had prophesied, only to find it too rocky or too bushy or too exposed or too sandy—and push on. Jim, in the last canoe with phlegmatic Pete,—thunder-storms are as nothing to native indolence such as Pete's,—began urging a speedy landing, then ordering it, then praying for it—then screaming wildly for it.

William Teddy took the situation in hand at this dramatic juncture. He had trapped bears up there the winter before. He shouted to George in flawless Chippewa and pointed—but he pointed to the extreme end of Hawk Lake, a mile and a half away. We turned and streaked for it—leaving wrathful James shouting in our wake.

Billy T.'s inspiration was worth it. Back ten yards from the broad sand beach we found a grove of birches, with the ground

carpeted with moss and plenty of room for three tents and the dining-fly. The briskness and precision with which George and Billy T. and Pete slapped up those tents was pretty to see—if we had had time to see it—which we had n't. Nan-i-bou-jou just turned that storm cloud inside-out directly over that grove of birches. We grabbed the canoes, turned them bottom-up, and thrust the bedding and perishable supplies, such as the flour and sugar, beneath them. In two minutes the setting sun and brilliant blue northern sky popped out again.

While things were sizzling over Tommie's fire and George and Billy T. were cutting balsam and filling lanterns, Jim and Fred, indefatigable fishermen, sallied forth upon the bosom of Hawk Lake with canoe and steel rod and trolling spoon to see what they should see. Fred had n't paddled ten yards from the beach, Jim casting, when first a muttered exclamation and then pandemonium broke loose. The lake was alive—not with

trout as we hoped, for it looked likely—but with big, green, hungry, villainous grass-pike. They could have filled the canoes—so delighted were those pike with the glittering novelty in the spinner—if Tommie's voice, back in the bushes, had n't heralded dinner.

I have been body- and soul-wearied on the trail, several times. But never did every bone and muscle and nerve cry aloud in agony as they did that night on Hawk Lake, when we had finished our pipes on the beach and I tried to get up to fall into my blankets. We had done twenty-five miles since sunrise and a good fifteen of it had been portaging with back-breaking packs. I craved another of George's prophecies. I could n't move, so I called him and he came out of the bushes, without a sound, and stood in the light of the fire.

"This is all right, George," I said, "as pretty a little cross-country sprint as ever broke the great heart of a college athlete. But when do we get trout?"

George looked each one of us squarely in the eye and said frankly:

"If we go fast like we did to-day, t'ree o'clock to-morrow afternoon—I show you trout—big ones—sure—mebbe two, t'ree pound."

"No metaphors now about this, George?" Fred interpolated.

"Sure—all trout," George insisted stoutly.

"If I could move two inches," I said, "I should certainly do something modest and timely as befits the occasion."

"My dear old chap," cried His Lordship, springing to his feet as agile as a freshman hurdler, "permit me. I can put my hand right on it."

And he did. He put his hand right on the biggest quart flask I ever saw—and a quart can be made to look insignificant, too, at the end of a portage.

His Lordship—bless his stout, generous, capacious heart—handed the flask first to George, who looked at it critically, then raised it smilingly:

"We Pushed off to Hunt out the Mouth of Hawk-Lake River."

"To the trout"—then diffidently—"and de best *coureurs des bois* for genteelmen—what I ever see—yet—sure, mebbe—what I ever see."

It was all very theatric and delightful. But we had sleep to get and the Great Mystery of the Michipocoten to solve with the morrow's sun—just there over the eastern ridges.

CHAPTER IX

THE PERILS OF RUNNING WHITE WATER FIND WILLIAM TEDDY'S TONGUE

WE might have been camping on Hawk Lake or Mt. McKinley or at Dr. Cook's debatable Etah, for all I knew or cared, when Fred awakened me that morning —awakened me by dribbling the contents of a pail of drinking water down into my innocent young face. Then I tried to make good my promise to wring his neck. Inasmuch as Fred used to be a college-wrestler and half-back and had never really outgrown it, I found my efforts to be diverting, but up-hill work. We effected an armistice and conceived it to be the neighborly thing to take what was left in the water pail and go and awaken Jim and His Lordship. We tiptoed across the dewy glade and peered

These Rocks Are Nan-i-bou-jou and Family.

Of Course, we Lunched here at the Lower End of the Rapids.

cautiously into—an empty tent. In a few minutes we heard shouts from the lake. They were mixing it up with those unsophisticated Hawk-Lake pickerel again.

Tommie's call to breakfast—back there in the green gloom of the birches—reminded Fred that he wanted to shave. That was a curious phenomenon provocative of much discussion, how a summons to eat always recalled to Fred the things he had intended to do before eating. He would sit around for an hour or so before mealtime, languid and care-free—then, when Tommie shouted "breakfast" or "dinner," Fred would spring up full of action and determination and rush off to take a bath or clean his gun or write a few home letters. For Fred there must have been some hidden meaning, singularly potent and suggestive, in Tommie's monosyllabic call to "grub."

When we had piled the outfit on the beach to load the four canoes, our position on the map was made clear to us graphically, yes,

even geographically. There was McVeigh's Creek rumbling into Hawk Lake scarcely a hundred yards away.

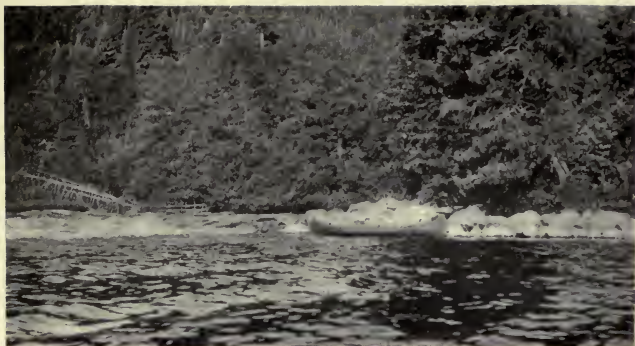
It is a curious thing that, no matter what allurements the trail may hold out just ahead, the real woodsman never leaves a snug camp without a pang of regret. And barring Tommie's fried pickerel which at breakfast we had valiantly and unsuccessfully assaulted, Hawk Lake camp was a very rollicking sort of a memory.

The gorgeous day was still an infant when the canoe-keels grated on the beach and we pushed off, George and I leading, to hunt out the mouth of Hawk Lake River. It did n't demand much hunting. We slid into it smoothly. Then followed some six hours of enchantment. Hawk Lake River is an exquisite little toy-stream, sometimes scarcely wide enough to permit two canoes to go abreast. Again, it widens out into a silent lake, four or five hundred yards across. Sometimes the canoe slips silently over deep,

dark channels. Sometimes the stream shallows up abruptly and goes giggling over pebbles scarcely awash. We were in the water much of the time, lifting the canoes over baby-rapids. For miles you glide along over moss and sunken logs in the deep shade of a leafy canopy that arches the river from shore to shore and shuts out the blue sky and morning sun from this green-flecked cathedral in which God and nature as God made it are being worshipped throughout those stupendous, silent processes of the wilderness. Sometimes a school of fish, darting out from some submarine jungle, gave us a sensation. But they were lowly and abhorred suckers, not trout. First, we portaged around a log-jam; then, around a furious stretch of the river where there were more rocks than water and portaging was easier on the trail than in the bed of the stream. Once, at the foot of some quite sizable rapids, which we ran in the canoes and would have fished, if we had had time,

we came upon a canoe and a parcel hanging from a tree. The canoe, of course, belonged to George's substitute on the mail-route, but the mystery of the parcel will always remain unsolved.

Four portages in all we made before noon, the longest about a mile and a half. On this trail, trudging along in the rear-guard to see that every pack had at least started over the portage, I came upon a most attractive and unusual exhibit for the wilderness. First I found three clean handkerchiefs of fine texture and great price. The brand of sachet lingering lovingly in their linen depths would have marked them as His Lordship's, even if the embroidered initials had not. That was a good starter, but even that left me unprepared for the lavish, almost indelicate display of intimate articles to come. After I had picked up toothbrush, pajamas, pound of pipe tobacco, case of calling cards, and a beautiful pair of bedroom slippers, the real substance and big features of the



A Setting Becoming to Most Any Canoe.

To Make Camp or to Push on—Time 6.30 P.M.

wardrobe began to show on the wabu-bushes and caribou-moss. I speedily added a pair of trousers, one boot, a flannel shirt, and a sweater to my collection. When I issued forth from the portage and joined the expedition, Fred said, "Hello—what the devil is this—the 'old-clothes man'? " The carrying of his duffel-bag wrong-end-up cost His Lordship a box of two hundred cigarettes—we never did find those.

The river quite suddenly decided to do something in the way of wild waterways worth while and spread itself out into a dainty lake. The map calls it Miller Lake, and whoever Mr. Miller is, his judgment in lakes is most admirable.

At the head of that lake we lunched. While Tommie fed us, George with Billy T. and Pete carried the canoes over the half-mile portage to Blue Lake; Jim, His Lordship, and Fred played a most boisterous rubber of "auction-bridge," and I brought the neglected Log substantially up to date.

That portage itself was an experience unique. It led through a grove of giant cedars, jack-pines, Norways, and birches. Every tree was a Titan and the country was curiously open and consequently beautiful. It reminded me of the north country as the designers of magazine-covers always think it is.

Down we plunked upon our temperamental little friend, Hawk Lake River, again. Then we came upon a shallow alcove-like pond, full of pike, sunning themselves in the shallow water, covered with lily-pads.

There were, literally, hundreds of pike. Jim was with great difficulty restrained from unlimbering his rod and spinner. Fred shot several with his little pocket power-rifle.

To be frank, I did n't at all suspect we were in Lake Manitowick, until a wave came over the bow of the canoe and cuddled cutely in my unreceptive lap. We turned a point, while I was pondering this chilling phenomenon, and the "big water" opened out before

us. His Lordship turned admiringly to William Teddy, who up to this time had declared his complete ignorance of English, and said:

"I say, old chap, now this is perfectly ripping—is n't it?"

Failing entirely to catch the really contagious spontaneity of that burst of enthusiasm, William Teddy grunted—and Fred and Jim and I just incontinently guffawed.

There were quite a wind and a choppy sea on Lake Manitowick. That was where my lap-chilling roller had come from.

It was fortunate for us that our course took us around a bend and out of the trough of the sea. Lake Manitowick is eight miles long and the foam-crested rollers that were sweeping down that eight-mile stretch made no place for a canoe. Jim and Peter made the mistake of trying to hurry the escape with full steam ahead and their canoe had shipped a good deal of water before we shouted to them to "head up into it" and take it

easier. We saw two ospreys circling about in the zenith when the shores of the lake began tapering together, preparatory to that mystic change into a river-mouth. There was the ospreys' nest in a giant jack-pine when I focused the camera upon it, but, somehow, the nest was effaced from the pine when the film was developed.

"There 's the river!" shouted George. Having implicit confidence in George, I shouted "There 's the river" to the other three canoes, but, personally, I saw nothing in the sand beach ahead, apparently unbroken for miles, to warrant this enthusiasm. Then the sand beach began swinging open like a gate and, as we moved to the left, wider grew the opening and the mouth of the Michipocoten River. Inasmuch as we had come about eight hundred miles for that moment it meant something. Its width is singularly uniform—between two and three hundred yards, perhaps. Of course, the country is rough and broken, though the banks of the

Achievements and Invidious Comparisons.

river are generally low and heavily wooded, down to the very water's edge. We were going quietly. The four canoes were strung out in single file and we were all too busy with our own thoughts to fling conversation across the waters. That made possible that which happened. George and I were close to the bank. I think George had a reason in this. We turned a long narrow point, beyond which an alcove from the river ran inland and made a little lagoon.

"Don't move too quick," said George in a whisper, "but look up there by dat big stump."

A bull moose had lifted his great head from the water. He had heard or scented something, but mistaken the direction. Every muscle and nerve in that huge body bespoke suspicion, very close to terror. He stood perfectly immovable, listening, sniffing, for, maybe, fifteen seconds. Slowly, the breeze that had carried the warning grew more candid with that monarch of the wild places.

Slowly he turned his great head in our direction, and surveyed us calmly, majestically. Then, with a snort, more of contempt than fear, he whirled about and disappeared in the thicket without a sound. The incident could have been no more graphic, yet unreal, had I been sitting in a vaudeville theatre and seen it upon a moving-picture screen.

His Lordship's canoe came up then and William Teddy and George cut loose a terrific broadside of Chippewa conversation. That annoyed Fred. He said it was cowardly to gossip like that behind the back of a decent, law-abiding bull moose and asked George if he knew what might happen if a scandal like that ever got around among the other "meese" of that congressional district.

About that time I looked at my watch. I had a purpose in it. George had promised the meeting-up with trout for three o'clock. It was then 2.30 and I had n't noticed any very conspicuous trout-emporia in the vicinity. Jim remembered it, too.

The Trout-Tryst

"How about that three o'clock date of ours, George?" Jim asked.

George grinned. "We get there all right," he said.

We heard the rapids before we saw them. Indeed, we were n't a hundred yards from Pigeon Falls when the announcement came. There is a fall of eighteen feet there in a half-mile. The whole Michipocoten River squeezes itself into a mad jumble of waters and rocks scarcely fifty feet wide and goes roaring down the slide, until the hills fling back echoes of the turmoil. We went ashore, just where the waters begin to wrinkle up and look oily in the first clutch of the maelstrom.

"Here dem trout," said George, stepping out of the canoe and waving his hand airily with a grin toward the roaring rapids. I looked at my watch. It lacked five minutes of three o'clock.

"Hand me that rod-case, Tommie," said Jim. Then began a lively scramble, putting

up rods, going down to the bottom of duffel-bags for reels and leader-boxes and fly-books. As the race grew hotter and the fever raged more fiercely in our veins, bags were incontinently dumped out on the rocks, until that portage looked like a rummage-sale. Jim and His Lordship were already casting. Fred was about to plunge into the torrent to get nearer a likely looking swirl. I was debating whether to use a Montreal or a Parmachenee Belle for the tail-fly, when I beheld George engaged in some very significant manœuvres. I ceased my trout-preparations and watched George. First, he stood up on a rock and intently scrutinized that expanse of furious water. Then he came back and examined the canoe and the paddles. Then he talked vivaciously with William Teddy and Pete. William T., it must be remembered, could n't speak English. Something in George's eye, too, was dancing.

"What are you going to do, George?" I inquired languidly.

Diary-Writing—and Manicuring—on the Portage.

"We portage the t'ings 'round rapeed here," he said.

"Yes, I know," I said, "but what are you going to do with the canoes?"

George grinned sheepishly. "Well, I guess—mebbe—I try run rapeed," he said.

"All right," I said, dropping my rod. "Let 's do that."

George's face fell. He told me it was quite out of the question. He said that his license held him responsible to the Canadian government for my personal safety and that, should the rapids gobble me down, he would be a marked man and never, never be permitted to nursemaid any more fool-tourists. Then I talked to George rather pertly, I fear. I told him I was n't a tourist, by a blankety-blank sight; that this was my party and my license and that, if the time should come that I must have a fussy chaperon clucking around me, I 'd pass up the wilderness and take my vacation feeding the goldfish in the park aquarium. George

was deeply affected, but obdurate. Then I appealed eloquently to William Teddy, who shook his head, because he could n't speak English.

I walked resolutely down to the shore and stepped into one of the canoes.

"If you can run that water, I can—and do it alone, too," I called back. For a minute I actually believed that I might have to get away with it. Frankly, I was scared. Then George yelled, "Wait, wait!" and came running down to the canoe. It was a very narrow squeak. However, George insisted upon taking William Teddy if I was determined to go. William was to take the bow-paddle, George the stern paddle, and I the amidships paddle and to paddle only when I was told. I promised. Also I told George to tell William Teddy that when Willam Teddy—because he could n't speak English—wanted me to paddle or to cease paddling, he was to shout back to George and George was to tell me. It seemed a

waste of priceless time, thus to relay this vital intelligence. But I could n't see any other way to keep straight.

I took off my heavy sweater and boots and revolver. We paddled out in front of the rapids. George stood up and took a last survey. Then we swung about and came down. I can't recall many sensations, save the overpowering impulse to stand up and yell—which of course would have been shockingly inappropriate. The curious thing about running swift water is that one is not conscious of the terrific speed, indeed of motion at all, until one looks at the shore rushing backward. George and William T. would put their paddles far out, at arm's length, and literally pull the canoe over to the submerged paddle. We grazed one rock. Then a back-wash from another rock slopped into the canoe.

William T. suddenly developed symptoms of extreme perturbation. He began clawing madly all on one side of the canoe. I could

see that he wanted to cross the rapids to the other side. He shouted something over his shoulder. I waited for George to translate it. Then William T. shouted it again. Still George was silent. Perhaps he could n't hear Billy T.'s order in the wild tumult of the boiling water. William T., anyway,—William T. who could n't speak any English,—could n't stand it another second. He whirled around on me with his black eyes flashing and yelled in my wondering ear:

"Paddle on the left side—paddle—paddle—like hell!"

We flashed by Fred and Jim and one could have knocked their eyes off their cheeks nicely with a stick. We fairly hurdled a sunken log and came to the end of the slide, a sheer drop of about three feet. I glanced over the brink as we tore down upon it and fully expected to Annette Kellermann into those crystalline depths. But William T. was ready to offer the closing exhibition of his skill. Just as we made the jump, he

The Firesand Is "a Pretty and Compact River."

gave the bow of the canoe a mighty flip off to left. Instead of hitting nose-on and diving, we smacked the lower level with an even keel and raced off into the still slack-water again.

I turned to grinning William T. and said frankly:

"Under compulsion, Billy, you can shoot bad water just as well as you can shoot good English. No more of that bunk or no more tobacco."

The miracle worked lasting wonders. The excitement that had brought profanity broke the silence of the tomb. Thereafter William T.'s English idioms were the life and joy of the camp.

Jim, meanwhile, was keeping his three-o'clock-date with those trout. Moreover, the trout behaved just as any ingenuous and single-minded trout that have n't seen a high-priced fly in about twenty years should behave. Fred brought the first bulletin from Jim. He raced down to the spot where

the duffel was piled and said Jim had hooked something in the rapids which he thought was probably a submarine and wanted three or four landing nets. We went up and found Jim standing on a rock full of optimistic estimates as to the size of the fish and blood-chilling epithets for us and our delays. George went right out into the rapids—neck-deep—for that trout. And each one that Jim or Fred or His Lordship hooked in that torrent fought his captor gloriously to the last swish of George's deadly net.

When the tents were up and we 'd bathed and put on dry clothes and His Lordship had put his moustaches to bed for the night and those trout were spluttering in Tommie's frying-pan and we made the Sign of the Wolf Track with four tin-cups grouped together and raised chin-high, we blessed our blundering benefactor who had heralded the fact that "There 're no trout in the Michipocoten."

Of course, we camped right there, at the

lower end of those rapids. I find that at this camp I made two entries in the Log to which I evidently attached tremendous importance when I made them. First, George and Tommie contrived to make some highly palatable bread in the frying-pan. Second, I caught a big wall-eyed pike below the rapids on a Parmachenee Belle. But those events, in retrospection, fail to provoke a thrill now. It is curious what a self-centred egotist a camper can become. But it 's more curious that a wall-eyed pike should rise to a fly, as this finny æsthete unquestionably did. After dinner that night Pete took a hook, about the size of a yacht's anchor, baited it with raw pork, and yanked grass-pike out of the slackwater at our front doorstep until his arm ached. That 's why we found no trout in the beautiful riffles just below the falls.

I am tired of ending these chapters with the night-enshrouded camp, the camp-fire burning low, and the north wind moaning

in the Norway-pines and everybody snoring vilely. It is symbolic and logical, perhaps, but I don't want the reader to get the impression that I can't stop writing without being put to sleep.

The next morning—there, we hurdled that alluring picture of the nocturnal wilderness—the next morning, we picked up and paddled off—across Whitefish Lake. I am not sure—neither is George—whether Whitefish Lake was so named because somebody really thought he saw a whitefish in it, or thought the map made the lake look like a whitefish. I have too much respect, even affection, for the maker of my map to be drawn into the discussion. Anyway, we trolled the whole six miles of Whitefish Lake, in the vague hope that a namaycush would become enamored of the spoon or a whitefish get side-swiped by it—with no material returns. As a matter of fact, it was full of long-necked weeds.

Then, about ten o'clock, we came to

Frenchman's Rapid, with its exquisite setting and many trout. We lunched there, and lunch, when you have His Lordship to prepare the convivial preliminaries, offers a place to halt, quite as attractive and fitting as a "night-enshrouded camp."

CHAPTER X

THE TROUT OF CAT PORTAGE, THE FULFILMENT OF ELEVEN MONTHS' DREAMING

GEORGE thought it "safe and sane" to portage the outfit a half-mile around the falls at Frenchman's Rapid. After William Teddy's triumph at Pigeon Falls, I felt competent to shoot Frenchman's Rapid—yea, shoot it blindfolded, playing a mandolin with one hand and writing my autograph with the other. Fred, too, was enthusiastic about it. As a matter of fact, Fred is always perfectly willing to take a hundred-to-one shot and play it either way. Fred's life is a hot-footed pursuit of new sensations. I am ready to bet a lace-doily against the last cigarette in camp that the first man that bumps his monoplane into an asteroid is Fred. Any expedition that holds out the slightest chance

of adventure is no place for a man who owes a duty to his family—if Fred is along. But Jim and His Lordship would n't hear of it—our shooting Frenchman's Rapid, I mean. They did n't want their trip marred by a fatality—even a fool's fatality—and that argument was too honest to be answerable so we hit the trail, while the Indians portaged.

It was a beautiful trail, candid and well-behaved. In fact it was so good that when Fred and I struck an intersecting trail that looked fresh, we were simultaneously seized with a desire to leave the portage-trail and see where the new trail led to. It looked as if it might lead to a lake. The contour of the country indicated it. We knew it would take an hour for the Indians to get the things over the portage, so we struck off on that siren trail.

It did lead to a lake, a beautiful, placid, brooding little lake, and, to our surprise, we saw an Indian tepee on the far side of it.

We walked around the lake—still on the trail—and found an Indian patching a birch-bark canoe, in front of the tepee. I recognized him as Jim Radigeau, or something like that. Anyway, it was Jim. The last time—and only time—I had seen Jim was five years ago up on St. Ignace Island, in Nepigon Bay. Then we found a pulp-wood camp just as we had decided to sleep under a spruce all night, and the next day Jim took us first to a trout-stream and then to our camp.

Jim said he had his "woman" and kids in the tepee. Fred and I went in to call and take some pictures. There were a squaw and four half or three quarter naked youngsters in that tepee. Nobody seemed to be enjoying the call. We stayed just long enough in that tepee to exchange a few half-Chippewa commonplaces and observe that all the members of Jim's family looked droopy and languid. I tried to draw one little papoose into conversation, but there was

nothing doing. When we came out I said, "Jim,—the wife and the kids don't seem to be well."

Jim said "Naw" and went right on putting pitch on the canoe-seams.

"Been sick long?" asked Fred sympathetically.

"Two, t'ree day—mebbe week or two," said Jim.

"What 's the matter with them—do you know, Jim?" I asked.

"Not much—just leetle seek, I guess—smallpox—man at Post he say."

In that dash through the brush Fred, I recall vaguely, fell three times. We took four or five baths, brushed our teeth, and rubbed ourselves thoroughly with all of His Lordship's moustache-invigorator. In fact, we took all the precautions that the limited medical-kit permitted and then promised each other to say nothing to Jim or His Lordship, for fear of alarming them needlessly, until the worst should manifest itself.

It was another eloquent lesson to "stick to the trail."

I should like very much to write five or six books about that stretch of the Michipocoten River between Frenchman's Rapid and Cat Portage. That is n't more than two miles. We should have been delighted to have found it a hundred. It is there a typical trout-stream, magnified about tenfold. The current is swift—here and there riffles—and always on one bank or the other there is a deep, dark hole. We were casting into those holes constantly—that is, as many of them as we could reach before we whizzed by in the canoes. A man would get a rise and never have the chance to give that chagrined trout an encore, if he missed, and it took a trout with a big appetite and a good eye to hit those flies as they raced past. It was a crime to fish that magnificent water in that Cook-tourist fashion and, more shame to us, we knew it.

Once, I remember, I cast in beneath the

overhanging bank, to deep, dark, amber water in the shadows. My flies hit a log—I thought I had lost the leader—and then toppled off into the water. A great trout struck, just as the fleeing canoe tightened the line. And I struck back. He was too good a fish to tow astern like a saw-log. He deserved better things. I insisted upon a landing on a sand beach. George swung in and we pulled that gorgeous little savage out on the snow-white sands. We took a half-dozen, casting from that beach over into the deep water across the river.

There was one thing we did perfect, though, during that river trip. That was the theory and technique of "inside baseball." When you wanted anything which you knew some other canoe contained, all you had to do was to yell for it—and catch it. We grew so expert that we could pick tobacco-pouches, cigarettes, tin cups, matches, map-cases, fly-books, and other sybaritic articles, capable of

a fair trajectory, out of the clear northern atmosphere with an accuracy that brought applause from George and appreciative giggles from William T. himself.

We did n't run the rapids at Cat Portage, either. I was n't conscious of the vaguest impulse to run those rapids after we had had a look at them. There is a drop there of thirty-three feet within a half-mile and the water bellows down a set of terraces, in one place taking a straight fall of ten feet. It was about two o'clock when we reached the upper end of Cat Portage, and after carrying to the lower end, we did precisely what we should not have done and might have been expected to do—namely, fish at the wrong end of the rapids. It was ideal trout-water, save for the inexplicable absence of trout. We did n't get a rise down there at the base of the falls. His Lordship said he did n't know much about the habits of trout, but if that were a good specimen of the taste and judgment of a trout of average

intelligence, he did n't care to know any more.

Fred and I sat down on a roll of blankets and discussed this palpable nature-fake on the trout's part. Suddenly Fred slapped his thigh and said:

"I 've got it!"

Eagerly I inquired for the clue.

"It is very simple," he chuckled. "The reason the trout are n't rising down here is because we 're fishing where there are n't any trout."

"Wonderful!" I applauded warmly. "Your idea, then, is to take a trout-census of these rapids, learn where the trout-population is most congested, and fish there. Fine! Where do you suggest we begin?"

"Up the rapids, of course," said Fred, ignoring my futile irony. "We 've made that mistake every time we 've struck any rapids. The trout are in the rapids, neither above nor below. Come on!"

Fred and I hit the back trail. The place

which we selected to leave the trail and work down to the rapids was excellently chosen. Evidently a tornado had also chosen that place to make a landing recently. Big cedars and pines were scattered about and piled upon one another in beautiful confusion. It was very diverting to walk along, over and under this heap of jack-straws, meanwhile carrying a trout-rod with three flies dangling and all looking for trouble.

I knew we must be getting pretty close to the rapids—the roar told us that. Fred parted the bushes at last and began capering on his log. I joined him. There was some justification for capering. At our feet, maybe ten feet below, was a deep, shadowy pool with a little private waterfall of its own. It was a sort of quiet side-street to the main thoroughfare of traffic out there beyond. The trees canopied it. Fred clung with one arm to a tree-trunk and dropped his three flies into those mysterious waters. That is, he would have done that, if the trout had n't

jumped and grabbed his flies before they reached the water.

"Oh, my boy!" said Fred, with repressed emotion. "This is simply a shame! Here I shall settle down to a contented and tranquil old age."

But we did not settle down. That 's the restless ambition of a trout-fisherman—when he hooks his first pound-trout, he 's sure life holds no other work for him. After his third pound-trout, he begins to wonder if there is n't a pound-and-a-half trout in the next pool. His first two-pounder sires the ambition to make it four pounds. Finally ambition—or greed—had driven us right out into the middle of the rapids with such a din all about us that we had to scream into each other's ears. There was a sort of granite backbone through the centre of that mad water and we fished from that, casting sometimes over into the torrent on the far side and letting the flies run down with the welter, and sometimes dropping

the flies over the brink of a precipice into the foam at the base of the falls. Sometimes you could see a lithe, orange little form shoot up above the white-caps for an instant as he rushed at your fly. But that was n't often. Generally, the first warning, an electrifying thrill, came along your line and your protesting rod would suddenly bend double. Jim joined us—to see why we were delaying the expedition's departure down the river. He came to chasten and hurry us. Jim took one cast—it was to be "just one quick one"; then Jim was lost completely to the call of duty and the flight of time. No fish we got in those two delirious hours went above two pounds. But in the swift, cold water that gave them all the rugged strength and ferocity of the wilderness and made every ounce of resistance tell, each trout was really as good as a three-pounder. Most of them we killed on Montreal-flies, although my largest took a "Willie H."—a local fly. We lost, probably, twice as many as we landed.

In that torrent, they often succeeded in tearing the hook from their mouths in the first furious rush.

His Lordship followed Jim. He came up to tell us—what Jim, some hours before, had come to tell us—that our thoughtless delay was delaying the departure of the expedition —and we had to find a camping-site. His Lordship was just as indignant and logical and entirely right in his contention as Jim had been. We pressed a rod into His Lordship's hands. Two hours later we had to lay violent hands upon His Lordship to arouse him to his duty-sense, because, this time, George had come to look for us, and it was really getting dark.

My final departure from the college-campus —one June night a considerable number of years ago now—was no more reluctant than my departure from that wild, trout-surrounded rock, the focus of the Cat Portage Rapids. We talk of it now in whispers when we meet. And I—I brazenly declare it—I

dream of it, particularly when the Big City has been grinding me with unusual brutality and my brain and body pray memory to bring just a little relief.

For three miles, then, in the twilight we ran rapids, innocent, playful little rapids for the most way—but continuous rapids. It rained, too. But as we had sent Pete and Tommie on ahead with one canoe to put up the tents and start dinner-preparations, we paddled right into luxury. Shelter and dry clothes and a roaring fire were ready for us—in a grove of huge cedars that stood on the crest of a high bank.

I observed that when we broached the topic, ever congenial, of the dinner bill-of-fare, both Tommie and George were elaborately secretive. Both of them were fairly swathed in some huge and portentous mystery. Knowing the Indian mind a little—a mind that is child-like in its simplicity and gentleness — I dropped the subject and left dinner to them as they, very evidently, longed to have me do.

When we scampered under the dining-fly, the pyrotechnic set-piece was touched off. There were two ducks! George had killed them—while we were fishing Cat Portage—and killed them with Fred's little twenty-two-calibre rifle, too. How Tommie had contrived to roast them in an hour, we shall never know. But they were good, almost as good as the expressions of beatific delight on those gentle red men's faces as they watched us fall upon the birds.

The mosquitoes came down from the swamps in large family-parties that night and dallied with us till sunrise. But it was the first time and only time on the trip and—let this be inscribed in letters large and luminous—not a dozen black-flies did we see on the Michipocoten River.

Two red squirrels, playing follow-the-leader or hare-and-hounds along the ridge-pole of my tent and using absolutely the most profane language I have ever listened to in the woods, awakened me. His Lord-

ship was on his knees in front of the tent trying to start a fire, while Jim, from an eminently safe and warm vantage-point, between his Hudson Bay blankets, was telling His Lordship minutely how to do it. To His Lordship's outspoken relief, Fred and I fell upon James and the argumentative uproar reminded George that he had n't awakened us—which he forthwith came to do.

The rain-storm had blown on, up toward the Arctic Circle, and the wilderness was all fresh and glittering when we pushed the canoes out into the stream—for the last day on the Michipocoten. Almost immediately we glided down upon wonderful trout-water, semi-rapids and deep pools beneath the slack-water that eddied about great stumps and rocks. Also, almost immediately, we began getting big rises and hooking big fish. We began making pools—gambling, not trout-pools—of a dollar a corner. Every time a man netted a fish,

Jim, in the rearmost canoe, would make an entry in the Log and re-adjust the "batting averages."

Near the mouth of the An-jo-go-mi-ni River—which is merely an indolent creek, by the way—George and I, in the first canoe, suddenly shot around a bend and found ourselves in a great granite basin. The entrance was scarcely ten yards across. The basin was, perhaps, fifty yards in diameter and at the outlet it narrowed up again as it was at the entrance. The walls of rock arose straight out of the water and towered up fifty to a hundred feet high. In there the water boiled and circled about upon itself like a cauldron. Here and there a great boulder showed its head intermittently, as the torrent raced over it and subsided for the moment. It was, indeed, a giant's chamber.

The instant the bow of the canoe cleared the entrance and I cast over near the rocks, a tremendous fish struck the drop-fly and I

set the hook in him solidly and felt the thrill of the living weight on the line. He made just one rush, straight for the canoe, and went under it, before George, ever alert, could sweep the bow around. I could no more snub that fury than I could have snubbed a street-car, hooked to a four-ounce rod. And the inevitable and most lamentable happened: the second joint of my rod snapped with a sharp report. Then, murder flared up in my heart. For about five years life had held nothing dearer to my heart than that rod—that is, nothing very much dearer. It had accompanied me along the whole coast-line of Lake Superior and it had never faltered or complained or sulked. Just before I left the Big City for this trip, the sporting-goods man who had re-wound and shellacked that dear little rod had offered me half of his store and one of the children for it—and I had laughed with a light heart at him. So George and I fought that trout-beast with clenched teeth. When George

finally netted him on a rock we shook our fists in his face and cursed him.

However, His Lordship, Fred, and Jim, successively, darting through that opening into the maelstrom and heeding my shouts to swing over into the slack-water, so as to cover that great pool, speedily began manifesting symptoms of profound agitation. At one time the three canoes were hooked-up to three big trout simultaneously and the evolutions, quite extemporaneous, of that flotilla reminded George and me of a water carnival more than anything else. However, there was nothing festal in the least suggested by the language which they used when they got their lines intermingled and chased their trout underneath one another's canoes.

George wrenched us away from that granite chamber. At Storm Hill we ran some rather ugly rapids and at noon George announced us abreast of the Firesand River. We had heard really a tremendous lot about the Firesand. On the steamer coming up the

shore a miner told us that he had camped for two weeks once on the Firesand and the trout were so plentiful and savage and pestiferous that, as I recall now, he had to set wolf-traps for them to keep them out of the grub. Naturally, we had talked a great deal and looked forward with liveliest anticipation to the Firesand River. For a time I could n't see the Firesand at all, even after George had pointed it out and assured me that it was n't fifty yards away. True, it was a pretty and compact river, just the kind that a householder would like to have to fill his bath-tub o' mornings when the pressure at the city water works is lethargic and slow. There might have been a trout in it—if the trout did n't mind close quarters, but there certainly was n't room for two. We were so disappointed that we went to the beach for lunch and something from His Lordship's flask. One of us was forced to "take it straight," too. There was n't enough water in the Firesand River for four "chasers."

A Varied Program

It took us all the afternoon to get through and around the falls of the Michipocoten. Those are the real falls of the whole great river. In three miles the river drops one hundred and eighty-four feet. The rational thing to do there is to load the canoes on a wagon—there is a power-plant there—and portage around in comfort and dignity and dryness. However, we were looking for incident and color and disinclined toward rationalism. We got the incident and color, too. For just four hours we were at it. We ran some nasty water. We portaged around sheer precipices. We cut through dense underbrush with our axes to lug the canoes. We carried the canoes over shallows. We spilled out and got in again. We were in the water to our necks. Fred himself performed a submarine feat once, when the paddle, upon which he was putting his weight, slipped off a submerged rock. The last two hundred yards of those rapids we tobogganed down an oily slide in which

the sprinter's path was marked off by jagged rocks, sometimes not more than five feet apart.

By that time it was six-thirty, growing cold and dark, and we were very wet. George had lost his hat and Jim his pipe. Jim was n't sure that he had lost his pipe. He said he thought maybe he had swallowed it during one of those tense moments when his canoe had the alternative of hurdling a boulder or going through it. There was a good place to camp right there. And yet the idea of dashing along, not stopping until we reached the old Hudson's Bay post whence we had started, and completing the whole Michipocoten River trip that night with a flourish was admittedly attractive. I quizzed George as to the distance down the river to its mouth.

"Oh, mebbe, t'ree, four mile—yes, sure, I guess, mebbe—five mile, sure, 'bout dat."

We baled out, wrung out, lighted up—and started. The sun disappeared. Then came

the brilliant afterglow of the northern heavens. Every man paddled and paddled hard, because every man was cold and there was no other way for any man to keep warm. We raced down the river. Each turn we expected to be the opening of the last mile stretch, and George would say:

"Oh, mebbe, two, t'ree mile more—sure, 'bout dat."

The waters of the river turned to silver, then gold, then purple. We passed beautiful trout-water, but we had no time to fish. We turned a bend of the river. The canoes were going silently, every man intent upon his stroke. There was a sound of rolling pebbles. There was a sand-bank, probably thirty feet high. A red deer had been drinking at the foot of it. When he heard us, or saw us, he had no choice but to scramble up that bank to safety. And how that deer did scramble! He was a big six-point buck and it took him three minutes to climb that sliding sand and burst into the thicket with a snort.

And still we paddled. We were going, probably, seven miles an hour with that slashing current and had been at it for an hour, then an hour and a half, then two hours —and still no Mission and familiar white buildings of the post. George pointed out a place where, thirty years ago, the Hudson's Bay Company had deliberately and wisely changed the bed of the river, moved it over bodily about a half-mile. Once the river described almost a closed loop there and the voyageurs did n't care for the mile portage, besides. It 's a serious-minded, precocious little corporation, that Hudson's Bay Company.

My back muscles were fairly squeaking and I could feel blisters thriving luxuriously on my poor protesting knee-caps, when I heard a dog howl. Then several dogs and a whole half-wolf pack howled. The spire of the Mission came into the brilliant sky and we smelled wood-smoke in the twilight and heard a man shout to us from the shore.

And so—at Last—

With no announcement, we glided out of the last turn upon the broad stretch of the river and there lay the deserted buildings of the post, on our left, their whitewashed clapboards and little window-panes shimmering in the white moonlight. We felt distinctly romantic and historical—particularly His Lordship. We could fairly fancy ourselves wraiths of those old voyageurs, spirits of those rare-old, fair-old days, who in their vigorous human shapes had come down through just the wild rapids and gorges and trails that we had passed—straight down through the great wilderness from James Bay—and now saw their journey's end in the lights of the post, where hospitality and money and gaudy red sashes and wine and song awaited them. Had we known a chanson—as only dear dead Henry Drummond knew them—we should have sung one as we swung up to the old landing place. But we did n't. The lights were out. We scarcely spoke to one another as each stepped

stiffly from the canoe. It really was not a nice sound to hear the grating of the canoe-keels on the beach. To be sure, it meant camp, a fire, dry clothes, a drink, and dinner. But it meant, also, the end of a tremendous chapter in our lives—a chapter never old and always green. And such a realization is always bad, the only really bad thing in the philosophy of the wilderness and the calendar of Vacation Days.

THE END.

REC'D LI
DEC 16 195

14 DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

LOAN DEPT.

This book is due on the last date stamped below, or on the date to which renewed.
Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

18Dec59RH

REC'D LD
DEC 16 1959

LD 21A-50m-4,'59
(A1724s10)476B

General Library
University of California
Berkeley

YB 20104

M316704