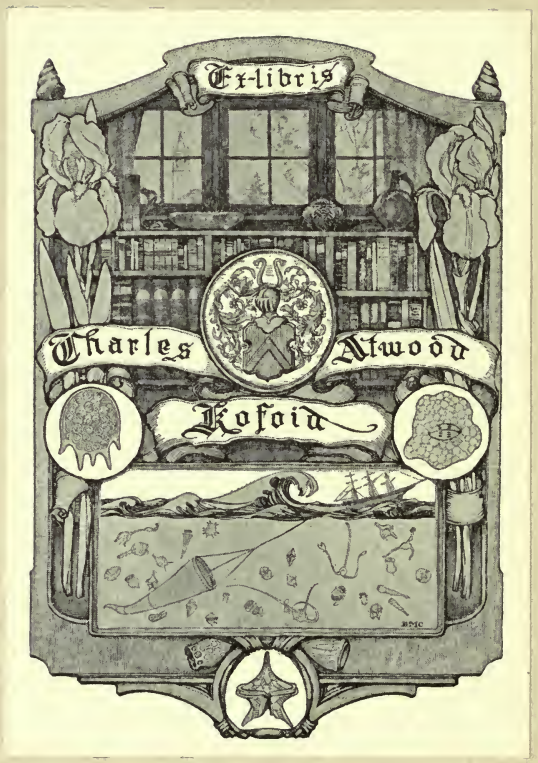
BROWN WATERS

and other Sketches

Blake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BY

W. H. BLAKE

"*All pleasures but the angler's bring,*
I' th' tail, repentance like a sting."

—THO. WEAVER.

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With acknowledgments to the *University Magazine,* where some of these sketches have appeared.

To

the Companion who knows how to go light and fare hard, who is friendly with the rain, and finds no road too long.

Malbaie, May, 1915.

BROWN WATERS
AND OTHER SKETCHES

BROWN WATERS

MIST-WREATHED lakes, with the white throat piercing the dawn; or dark under the noon-day breeze; or flaming to the western sky: the many-noted murmur of water running swiftly over little stones: dim thunder of rapid, swelling and dying: sweet breath of a clean and wholesome world. These kind memory brings to us,—with the very feel of the air, the wind's caress, the sound of its going in the trees.

Beneath the snows of full thirty winters, but not buried too deeply for a swift resurrection, lies that evening when you fished on and on, till the glow faded above the northern hills and the river lost shore-lines in the dusk. How

chill it was as you waded over knee to reach the middle of the pool! How cheerily the camp-fire lighted up the tent, and the group at the door whose calls to sup you heeded not! Your dogged fly fell farther and farther, revealing itself where the surface still held a remnant of light, till, when hope was perishing, came the answer that awoke the pulse,—the strike of something huge and invisible,—the slow retreat with cautious heel sounding the way,—hails for help which left the frying-pan deserted in a scurry for landing nets,—a sudden flaming of birchen torches to aid in play and gaffing,—the triumphal progress up the bank with your first six-pounder!

The kind old uncle, excited as yourself, harks back to unregenerate boyhood with his " 'Fore God, Bill, he's as big as a pig!" The man of science and slow speech weighs him on every scale in camp, measures length and depth and

girth, works out an equation, undistressed by cube-roots, and at last confides to his pipe the awaited word, "That . . . is the . . . largest trout . . . I ever saw."

God bless all kind uncles who take small boys fishing! I suspect that their own young hearts once thumped with delight at such invitations, and that they do but repay debts to an earlier generation. It is not a small thing to a lad that he feels himself at the whim of his elders. They suppose him not to "understand" the whys and wherefores of things, but in truth he does understand, and very well indeed, that he is often invited to content himself with mere shifts and evasions. Slights to his intelligence must he endure, for convention denies him the right of equal speech. It would be too dreadfully subversive of authority were he permitted free utterance to his discontent. Suppose that he should venture to brighten

up a controversy by tumbling into it a few modern ideas, as thus—"You take advantage of your age, measuring it in your convenient way by years alone. It is true that you are forty and I fourteen, but, so far as I can discover, intellectual development ceased with you a quarter of a century ago. Come then, let us reason together as contemporaries. If your added years have brought you anything more valuable than a certain perfectness of low cunning,—the adroitness in attaining ends and avoiding consequences of the old dog-fox, you will be the better able to explain and support the course of action that you propose for me. To both of us alike the interior angles of a triangle are neither more nor less than two right angles, also two and two make four, so you may proceed on the assumption that I possess a competent apparatus for criticism. I promise you an attentive, and even a sympathetic hearing. On your part I

desire an assurance that my autonomy will be respected"! It is to be feared that the sounder the psychology and logic, the surer the licking! Perhaps things are better as now they are ordered, but at least it cannot be amiss to recall with gratitude the warmth which suffuses a boy at being talked to and treated as a reasonable being,—delivery for him from a bondage that makes "the happy days of childhood" not the least miserable we spend in a world scarcely overflowing with joyousness.

But memory is able to respond to still greater demands. Do you not recall the middle joint and tip of an old bait rod, fitted with a cross-piece of wood in lieu of reel, and the July day when it jerked ashore two dozen fingerlings? There was one tremendous chap who weighed nearly quarter of a pound, with such a yellow belly. He came from a hole under the bank where the water must have

been two feet deep, and the wonder of it was that the uncle missed him. When the fish were unbent,—for they stiffen into the oddest curves in one's pocket,—and were packed in grass and ferns, his place was not at the top of the uncle's basket, but at the very bottom, that amazement and delight might be the greater on the part of the women-folk. Long afterwards (you will remember) three little corpses made themselves known in your waistcoat, where they had lingered overlooked when coat and trouser pockets were emptied of their spoil.

At the age of nine (*circa*) you had taken a full pass and honour course in the finding, choosing, feeding and caring for worms, and the manner of impaling them with economy and effect. Post-graduate research had revealed where lively and excellent ones may be secured under the right kind of stones along the edge of a stream, when the

home supply fails. A page of writing would not convey this knowledge. Every student must discover for himself just what the stones that form the roof of a worm's house look like. They are generally so big that one can barely move them, and you have to be pretty nippy when your stone is overturned, for the beasts love to deny you as much of themselves as they can, fairly dashing into their tunnels and getting a purchase there with heads or tails, and nothing can be more annoying than to lose the half of a good worm.

There was a sunshiny day on a larger stream when the water lay cool and dark under the apron of a dam, and you found that a lad could insinuate himself behind the flow at the expense of a brief shower-bath. Among the trout lying there in the shadow was a veritable half-pounder, who showed the craftiness of his years in stripping the hook three times before you had him fast. This

brave fellow made a compelling rush for the pool,—you following in such a commotion of fish and boy that you were reproved for conduct unbecoming a fisherman. The reproof was worse than the ducking, but its bitterness was tempered by the knowledge that the fish was your sure prize did you but lie upon it till life was extinct.

Another mountain brook of the bait fishing days has a short and merry life. The sea awaits it eighteen hundred feet below, and but ten miles from its birthplace: so does it hasten to the meeting. In three leaps, one after other, the white water falls two hundred feet to dark pools, where the masses of eddying froth look like that unfilling pudding confected of white of egg and apples and air. At the first plunge a pot has been hollowed out in the granite with high sheer sides, unbroken save at the narrow gateway where the stream passes out to the next descent.

This virgin spot was left unfished, for the bed of the cataract was the only path to it, but the idea of attempting an assault was too enticing to be abandoned. On a day of low water a narrow and sloping ledge disclosed itself which seemed to be accessible from above. One who did not decline any posture, or regard himself as barred of any hold, might pass along this to a point where a cautious drop would land him on reasonable scrambling ground. So much for getting down. The return was not greatly considered, because someone would be sure to come with a rope if you were stuck below.

Circling mist continually refreshed the ferns and mosses that found foothold on the wet walls. Stray drops from the fall stung like shot. The chasm was thunderous with vibrations that made one feel dizzy and insecure. Far overhead the birches, fringing the blue round of sky, waved in an unfelt wind.

It was good to win back to the sunlight, knowing that the thing had been done,—a heavy basket to prove the wetting of a line in those coveted waters.

Bait fishing merged into fly fishing days. The "ram's horn," a two handed greenheart with a double warp in the second joint, passed on as a fit weapon for a boy of fourteen; a brass reel that went complainingly and by jerks; flies of many sizes, the outcasts from many fly-books: such the equipment, and only zeal to make up for its deficiencies and for lack of skill. In those days the boy of the party had a place firmly assured to him in the background, where he was much encouraged to adorn himself with modesty and silence, yet was he never denied the activities of paddling canoes or poling rafts while his betters fished: —capacities in which, by the way, it was none too easy to give satisfaction. A "plop" of the paddle, a bang on the side of the canoe, a swing of the craft

towards or away from a risen fish, and he would not be disappointed of a suitable commentary upon his splendid, unfailing endowment of stupidity. This abounding quality had a chance to disclose itself also in the netting of fish. What can be more annoying than to lose a good trout after you have hooked him with difficulty, played him carefully, and brought him exhausted to the side of the canoe? Your part is performed, your duty done; all further responsibility rests upon the boy, whom you will assist in his task with a stream of counsel. Should he fail through precipitancy or undue slowness, or through attempting to net by the tail instead of the head, or by the head when it was an obvious case for the tail exception, or if he touches the line, or doesn't touch it when anyone but a fool would have seen that it was the right thing to do,—why there and then and in every event you have your boy, and you must indeed be a per-

son of little ingenuity if you cannot fasten the whole black crime upon his little soul.

But there are times, in the heat of the day, when a boy is invited to link together the morning and the evening rises, and very early hours when his elders unaccountably fail to carry out the overnight programme of "up at four," and leave him free of the lake. Then the old ram's horn hurtled out a fly to port and starboard which might deceive a few unsuspicious trout. Little green dog-eared note-books record in an unformed hand catches of a dozen here, a dozen there, with remarks as to wind and weather, height of water, stage of the moon and flies that found favour. The yellow pages give crude plans of lakes, with crosses to mark the good, and double crosses the very good places.

Now and then, and doubtless as often as deserved, someone who was once a boy himself and remembered how it felt

lent you a better rod, and his advice upon the management of it. When the line cracked like a whiplash it was he who taught you to count "one" for the forward cast, "two and" for the back cast, so that the fly might have time to straighten out,—to use the wrist and spare the arm, to make the rod work by checking it near the perpendicular, to strike reel down and play reel up, to cast above and not at the water, how to outmanœuvre a wind or get line away with trees behind you, to coax a short-rising fish, to tie a fly and make a fisherman's bend, that haste is of the devil and does not make for speed, why science as well as humanity bids you kill your fish when taken. "Taught," did I say: rather put you in the way of learning, for a lifetime is not likely to exhaust the theory and practice of fishing.

The days came when you were on your own, and the chase of the fabulous trout began. What planning, scheming

and bargaining for expeditions to some remote lake which rumour filled with expectant fish the length of one's arm! How much less the pleasure of it had you been able to command all to your liking, magnificently, with a wave of the hand! It was well for you then to learn and lay to heart that the money we do not spend buys for us the choicest of our possessions. An easy economy was to walk rather than drive over such roads as led towards, but never to your destination. A haycart carried *impedimenta* and canoe so far as mortal wheels could go; thenceforward you were your own guide, motive power and maid-of-all-work. The dunnage was packed in bags to keep it dry and render it portable by strap on head, and the frugal camper may like to know that a flour sack, anointed with boiled linseed oil, makes a better waterproof bag than the shops supply at five times the price; take you care, however, to give it some

days of air and sun after oiling, or the risk is run of spontaneous fire. Only the indispensables went with you, for there is no better corrective of the tendency to add those things which "may come in handy," than the knowledge that they will travel on your own back, sustained by your own legs.

Sometimes the lake was found; sometimes the forest kept its secret; seldom did the fabled waters yield even a three-pound trout; never were the toils regretted. Who goes out into the wilderness goes not in vain if he see naught but a reed shaken by the wind. Do not the keener disappointments of life flow from attainment rather than failure?

No case of a fisherman striking for a shorter day, or objecting to overtime work, is discoverable in labour statistics. He knows not the hours, nor concerns himself with the devices that measure them. At sunrise he sallies out to fish till breakfast, and suddenly it is

ten o'clock. The evening rise holds him till his flies cannot be seen, but only the broken reflections where they fall: an expanse of time has slipped away which would have served to carry him, on leaden wing, through a penitential round of duties,—calls, teas, a family dinner,—he has not noted its passage. In the first keenness of the opening season, and where the trout were always coming, it seemed to us but a small affair to stand on a raft from rising till setting sun, but I remember the happening of a strange thing afterwards. One of two stumbled ashore and fell: where he fell there he lay.

"Why seek your ease, friend, with fish to clean and balsam to gather?"

"Because my absurd legs refuse any longer to do my bidding!"

The science of fishing can be had from books, the art is learned by the catching and the losing of fish. Some knowledge of the science adds immeas-

urably to the pleasure of the sport, but the practitioner is the man to back for score. Between the skilled and the very unskilled fisherman there is the widest discrepancy. Of two rafts, each with two rods aboard, that covered the same ground for the same length of time, one returned with six trout, the other with eighteen dozen! Therefore, in forming an opinion of a water from description, the rating of the observer is not the least important thing to have in mind.

A much-fished lake near Murray Bay has yielded good catches for at least half a century, but, being deep, it is capricious during the heats of summer. Those who encounter disappointment sometimes fancy that they have missed the lucky spot where others had better fortune. One fair fisherwoman, losing patience, demanded in plain terms to be taken to the *place de Monsieur X*——. The old *gardien* met the request by shaking his grizzled head, gravely, cour-

teously:—*"Mademoiselle, la place de Monsieur X——— se trouve dans sa poignée!"*

The water of this lake is so clear that you can see the fish stir, well below the surface, and it is plain that the motions of rod and arm are visible to them, for unless at dusk or in windy weather, they will only rise to a far-thrown fly that falls with some delicacy. In another lake, of such marvellous translucency that the pebbles on the bottom can be counted as you float five fathoms over them, it is scarcely worth while attempting to fish in the daytime. Those who have studied the caprices of its herring-like trout, recommend the uncomfortable hour of two o'clock in the morning as the best in the twenty-four.

Lakes like these are exceptions in a country whose waters take colour from the peaty soil, from the mere tinge that gives a dusky uncertainty in the deeper places, running through many shades to

the profoundest blackness. Sometimes, again, you will find a quality of dark transparency through which the gleam of a fish's side may be seen as he turns, and sometimes an opacity which the eye cannot at all penetrate. But dearest to the fisherman's heart is the honest brown water, natural and proper home of the trout,—turning the sands beneath to gold, of patterns that ever change and fleet when the sun strikes through the ripple.

The wisdom of many fishermen as to weather has been garnered into a book; the sum of it, as one reverently admits, is very wise indeed. Hearing, grow wise also, so will you not be without guidance in cold or heat, rain wind or snow, when the flesh protests and the spirit wavers. *The weather for catching fish is that weather, and no other, in which fish are caught.*

It seemed against reason to desert the fireside when a northerly gale was bitter

with stinging rain, but on such a day, in a punt hardly forced by two men against wind and sea, the white water thrashed with a scant dozen feet of line, we fell upon the fish in mid-lake, where never a great trout had been risen before, and killed eight that ran from two to five pounds, in such time as was needed to play them.

Another afternoon I recall, when it blew so strongly out of the north that the waves of a tiny lake again and again nearly swamped us, when not the thinnest wisp of cloud showed upon the arch of blue throughout the long summer day, and everywhere the trout rose as if they were never to see fly again,—great fellows that ran and fought and leaped till the wrist was tired with the playing of them.

A famous pool, that has filled many a page of a record book, is in best fettle when the weather, as runs the old saw, is "good for neither man nor beast,"

and I have known trout rise merrily in the white smother of May and September snowstorms.

The fact is that they may come at any hour of the day or night, without wind or with it, and that from any airt, in heat or frost or thunder; or they may deny you when every circumstance seems to be most propitious. Nothing so absurd is intended as that one kind of weather is not better than another. Certain conditions are generally good, and others are generally bad, but much of the interest of the sport depends upon those exceptions to rule which permit hope and impose unresting vigilance. Prolonged types of weather tend to make fish lethargic, and a change, even for the worse, is likely to render them active. Where they have become *blasés* and uninterested, sunshine after lowering skies, coolness after heat, a change in the level of the water, anything that breaks the monotony of their lives will stir them.

Not speaking absolutely (as who would dare to do on such a subject?), it may be said that trout are ready to feed where and when experience tells them food is to be had, if nothing hints that danger is afoot. The fisherman himself they do not fear, but his movements probably suggest the presence of their known enemies of the air or the land,—ospreys, gulls, loons, kingfishers, bear, otter, pekan. There is a discoverable cause for their place and disposition at any time, a cause based upon the facts of their existence, but the difficulty is to find and follow the clue.

Sometimes the process of reasoning, or instinct if you prefer it, seems plain enough; for example, every spring trout re-educate themselves, and rather slowly, to the taking of food on the surface. It is a week or more after the hatch begins before there is anything like a free rise at flies or their imitations. As though remembering the icy barrier

that has confined them for half the year, they hesitate to launch into the air, and make but timid essays. A little later they will leap with boldness a foot out of water to seize their chief dainty, the May-fly. Conversely this habit of feeding asserts itself, but only occasionally, after the reason for it no longer exists. The fish are then in a lower stratum of water, intent on other food; something must happen to direct their attention again to the surface. Later still, when on the shallows spawning, the fly is easily forced upon their notice and they will take it greedily, but the poor, lifeless creatures are then unworthy of being caught or eaten.

Extremely sensitive to vibrations, even a slight earthquake will put the trout down more quickly and surely than thunder. Though the observations only extend to two instances, the conclusion is in accord with the fact noted by Mr. Seth Green that fish in an aquar-

ium, while not affected by the loudest noise, are disturbed and alarmed by a mere tap on the glass.

Association with men who catch fish for a living, without any great particularity as to the means, introduces one to the dodges of the poacher,—the deadly "otter" and the manner of its use, the nefarious "devil," how to sink the fly and what to sink it with, the virtues of a well-adjusted fin, the way to guddle a trout or land him without a net, how to discover whether big fish are present that will not show themselves for the fly. There is a certain bait that no trout can resist for a moment, that must fill a basket when every other allurement fails. It is,—but I think that perhaps it would be going just a little too far to tell. I don't use it, and as an honest man, neither would you. The information is then of no practical value, unless you are in need of yet another temptation, that your moral fibre may be strengthened by resisting it.

Killing trout easily, without exercise of wits, is but a dull business. Soon you grow to appreciate the fish that have cost you something;—the brace of three-pounders that came at the end of long casting over untried waters; the great fellow that was the sole reward of a two days' paddle; the coy monster for whom you changed the fly seven times,—resting him like a salmon betweenwhiles; the one well-shaped and vigorous fish from the lake placed, or rather misplaced, by tradition in a fold of the hills, which it took three days to find; the dozen of feeding fish that you managed to get a quick line over; yes, even the immense unknown that followed in your deliberate fly for thirty feet, with the wave of a submarine above his nose, turned slowly, majestically, and disappeared forever!

There is nothing novel in the observation that the ways of women are strange. Timid-bold: hardy cowards: angels

rushing in where fools fear to tread. So is it of fish. Terrified by the least movement of the arm, shadow of rod and line, an incautious footfall, touch of paddle on gunwale. In another mood alarmed by none of these, and perhaps seeking shelter from the sun under your very canoe. Where a cold mountain brook mingles with a river is the pool of Les Erables. Fishing at the meeting of the waters, from a canoe held in midstream, certain great trout were stirred but would take none of the flies offered them. Kneeling there and covering the surface methodically, the idea slowly emerged above the plane of consciousness that something was touching my left hand which lay in the water beside the canoe,—a bit of smooth drift-wood perhaps, gently agitated by the current. After a little time some animation in the movement led me to bend over and look. Believe it or not as you will, but one of the big fellows that I was trying

to lure to the fly forty feet away was nuzzling my thumb in the friendliest manner. If the hand had been slipped quietly back to the gill he could have been gripped and lifted out by one willing to abuse his confidence so shabbily, but, at so surprising a sight, the arm was raised and the fish sank. I go some way towards proving the truth of the story by refusing to round it to the perfection of which it is obviously capable.

I remember casting long over a salmon that lay in four feet of water, and either was asleep or of a very churlish disposition, for he did not show the civility of the slightest acknowledgment. Tired of changing the fly, I waded out with the half-formed idea of kicking him, and got far enough for the purpose, but found that it would be unwise to attempt this when standing nearly waist deep in a stiff current. As the fly dragged in from a farther cast he took it, almost between my legs, and a very pretty

twenty-two pounder he was in spite of his lack of manners.

Certainly fish are sometimes encouraged by disturbances. A companion once improved his sport remarkably by upsetting himself, canoe, gaffman, rod, basket and landing net, into the middle of a quiet pool, and I recall a superb trout of nearly seven pounds weight that rose immediately after a young lady, with surprising aim, had hurled a sardine can into the most sacred spot on the river. It might be found effective to pelt indifferent fish with stones as the practice is in Scotland, but it may be that the Canadian sense of humour is insufficiently developed for this.

A very distinguished sportsman was having a day on the Jupiter river in Anticosti. Salmon were there and in plenty, but the air was still and the sky cloudless. The fisherman had been pegging away long and fruitlessly in the blazing sun when his host arrived.

"Je crois, Monsieur, qu'il ne vaut pas la peine de continuer."

"Mais oui, Excellence, on vous fera une brise artificielle."

Two men were sent across the river to cut young spruces, and with these they proceeded to agitate the water rhythmically till a very pretty ripple covered the pool. The counterfeit was accepted: forthwith the salmon began to rise as though Nature herself had interposed a screen between them and the sun: the day was redeemed.

Fishing everywhere and always, you will not go without reward. At the end of long dead-waters a river turns sharply and gathers for a plunge of a mile through the confining hills. My friend was taking his turn on the beautiful stretch of water above, where the large trout are commonly found, and I was working down from boulder to boulder towards the beginning of the rapid. Neither experience nor Indian tradi-

tion, which is trustworthy within certain limits, held out hope in that quarter. Trout of size, unlike salmon, do not commonly harbour in the swift draw at the tail of a pool, where exertion is needed to maintain their position. Casting a little perfunctorily, it is to be feared, and often glancing up stream for the returning canoe, I was only killing time till they came to ferry me over to camp. At an awkward corner, where one would have to take to the steep bank and force a way through undergrowth, I hesitated. There was but one short cast left above the broken water, darkness was falling, hunger gnawed, clearly it was not worth the uncomfortable scramble, so—I went.

A rise! Again, and the barb went home in something that gave as little to the strike as though the fly were fast in the bottom of the river. Instantly he was off,—the weight of the stream behind him, the reel pitching the highest

note in its gamut. Before the run could be checked he was in the grip of the rapid with the reel nearly bare, and tackle was tried to the uttermost to hold him, and work him into easier water. When a little line had been won back he leaped clear, made another dash down river, and all was to be done again. No trout of his weight—within an ounce or two of five pounds—ever made a freer, bolder fight. This fish and seven others were only part of the recompense awarded to chuckle-headed persistency, for the spot remains worthy of a visit at a certain stage of the water, and no other I have seen gives so fit a setting to the capture of a trout. Here it was, in a later year, that one larger by a quarter of a pound, and as full of activity and resource, died most gallantly after taking his full twenty minutes by the watch. . . . On many a summer day the river will run as then, flawed by the wind, carrying in its bosom reflections

of mountain-peak and cloud, but she who sat, head in hands, making part of it all has gone to the far folk, and one more gentle ghost fills a place by the camp-fire where they sit who have lived.

When the sparks go up what songs and stories do the trees crowd closer to hear! What debate on old themes ever new! From the habits of fish, their dispositions anadromous or katadromous, one slips easily to the destiny of our race, for who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?

"Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate;
Fix'd fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute."

Strike in where you will and thresh away till the red logs fall asunder, and someone, rolling into his blanket, gives the signal to knock out pipes and take a last drink from the pail.

The hooting of an owl, as he draws nearer and nearer, curious at the fire, the changeful murmuring of brown waters, these but make profounder the peace of the hills.

FONTINALIS

To THE north of Quebec and at three thousand feet above sea level the September nights are bitter cold, and a collapsible stove, weighing perhaps four or five pounds, is a necessity in camp. The tent which without it would be a damp and freezing cavern, becomes a most cheerful and comfortable lodging, an ambulatory home in the wilderness where shelter and dryness and warmth await one.

While the fire crackles, and the stove grows red-hot, the three *messieurs* of the party on their *sapin* couches smoke and talk endlessly of fish and fishing. By how many camp-fires are the same questions propounded, and who shall

solve them? Do the Laurentian waters contain more than one species of *fontinalis,* or may all the variations in colour, form and size be accounted for by differences of environment? Are the heavy fish with underhung jaw, which the *habitants* call *becs croches,* merely old trout, and at what age and why did they begin to leave their fellows behind in point of stature? How comes it that in one water the fish never exceed a certain size, while in another, where the conditions appear to be no more favourable, a certain small proportion grow indefinitely? May it be that the half-pound trout and the five-pounder, which you take in two consecutive casts, are of the same age, and simply represent different degrees of ichthyic prosperity? Granting that one fish comes into the world better fitted than another for the struggle of life, is the only other element of importance the quantity and quality of available food? Is the very large

trout one that has begun life with a superior mental and physical equipment, has been favoured by fortune, has made the most of his opportunities, and has early learned to prey upon his kind? Given such conditions how long will this lord of his tribe continue to grow, and what size will he attain?

The very word "trout" is one that cannot be used without apology and explanation. It is commonly known that the brook trout of North America, *salvelinus fontinalis,* is of the charr and not of the trout family, but the name is probably too firmly fixed to be dislodged. More unfortunately still the word is ignorantly or carelessly used to cover all the native charrs, including among others the salmon trout, *namaycush* and *siscowet,* the different species of *salvelinus,* and the true indigenous trout of the west, *irideus.* To complicate the matter further a host of local names are in use, so that where fishermen from dif-

ferent parts of the country meet and compare notes, the first step must be to settle upon a meaning for the terms employed. How embarrassing then for the sportsman, familiar with the proper application of these names beyond seas, who finds charr called "trout," salmon-trout "salmon," bison "buffalo," wapiti "elk," and ruffed grouse "partridge"!

The North American brook trout does not seem to have prospered in European waters, and more the pity, as he is a beautiful fish and a game one. The writer may be unfair to the brown trout, but he ventures the opinion that *fontinalis* takes the fly better, fights harder, is more resourceful, and must be given preference on the table. Many instances come to mind of fish that played for half an hour or longer, and fully occupied the angler's attention for every moment of the time.

Upon the difficult questions of growth and maturity some guesses may be

hazarded. Where trout are supplied with all the food they can assimilate and every condition is favourable, they will attain a weight of three pounds in as many years, but what takes place in captivity gives little or no clue to the rate of increase when they have to fend for themselves. An instance may be recorded that shows what are the possibilities of growth. Among the thousands of lakes in the Laurentian country, there are few indeed that do not carry trout. One lake there was which seemed to be absolutely barren, although it contained plenty of food, and the reason for this unusual condition of affairs was a very obvious one. The small stream which flowed out of it fell abruptly two hundred feet, and fish could not ascend it, nor were there any communicating waters above. The owner of this preserve caused a number of small trout to be carried up from below and liberated. The age of these transplanted fish is a

matter of conjecture, but in point of size they perhaps averaged nine or ten inches. Two years later three-pound trout were taken from the water thus stocked. The sequel is interesting. In the following season the fish had fallen off in weight and were in very poor condition, and examination showed that the feed was exhausted. It will be noted that, unlike their equals in neighbouring waters, these fish were not provided with an unlimited number of their smaller brethren when other supplies failed, and the rapid increase and subsequent decrease in size of the members of this colony seem to be fully accounted for by the unusual situation in which they found themselves.

For many months in the year, as I believe, almost the only item on the bill-of-fare of the large trout is small trout *au naturel*. A fish having the good luck to attain a size which enables him to practise cannibalism soon puts himself

out of danger of being eaten. The pounder is safe from the attacks of the larger members of his family, and you find him in their company, but the little fellows seek to keep out of the way. When casting in water which generally holds great trout, the free rising of small trout is regarded as an almost sure indication of the absence of larger fish. Conversely, the advent of a great trout is often notified by the small fry leaping into the air to avoid capture. Not seldom too, when a little trout is being brought in, a large one will follow him and perhaps even contend with you for his possession. I recollect a fisherman being so irritated at the disregard of his fly, and at the persistence of a big fellow in this course of action, that he baited with a six-inch trout, worked him towards the hover of the monster, and then laid down the rod and took out his watch. The line at once began to run out slowly, but the inclination to take the rod in

hand was resisted until the time that custom allows in the case of a pike had expired; then the bait had been gorged, and the fish was played and landed.

Great trout there are, indeed, that scorn every fly at all times, and in some waters other lures must be used. Even the Nepigon yields its best fish only to the spinner or artificial minnow. Yet, as you shall presently see, large *fontinalis* sometimes take the fly, and take it readily. Tradition has it that some fifty or sixty years ago a brook trout was caught in the Rangeley Lakes, in the State of Maine, which weighed thirteen and a quarter pounds, but this I find it impossible to verify. What appear to be trustworthy records from the same quarter, in the sixties, show fish of ten pounds weight, but at the present day a five-pounder is accounted a large trout.

Of the Nepigon wonderful stories are told, and the books of the Hudson Bay post at the mouth of the river contain

entries of the capture of trout of eight pounds weight. I have seen two fish said to have been taken in that region many years ago. Mounted they are respectively twenty-eight, and twenty-seven and a quarter inches in length, and six and a half, and six inches in depth. The weights are given as twelve, and ten and three-quarter pounds, but it is difficult to believe that the larger of the two exceeded nine pounds when caught. If it did, there has been an extraordinary shrinkage, and experience shows that in the process of mounting the tendency is for skins to gain in length and lose in breadth. Making allowance on the basis of other observations, the original dimensions of the first fish would be, approximately, twenty-six and a half by seven and a half inches, a size which appears to indicate a weight a little in excess of eight pounds. The scales and markings of these fish suggested the idea that they were a cross between the

brook trout and one of the salmon trouts, and opinion favours such a possibility. Of true trout exceeding eight pounds in weight I can only speak with personal knowledge in a single instance, and whatever prizes anglers of the past may have secured, nowadays a five-pound fish is rare enough, and one must go far and fare hard for him.

The steady decrease in the average weight of trout taken in waters naturally stocked and systematically fished seems to be very significant. In a certain river where record is kept of all catches over a pound in weight, the average of such trout in twenty-five years has fallen from three pounds to one and three-quarter pounds, although about the same number of "record" fish are taken annually. In this water trout of five, or even four pounds weight have become uncommon, and six-pounders, which were often met with in the early days, chiefly exist as fish which the ang-

ler reports that he hooked but failed to bring to net. Can the conclusions be avoided that large trout are old trout, that trout live to great age, and that after a certain point growth is very slow? I am inclined to say that they escape the common fate of mortals, and do not die of old age. Certainly in some forty years of fishing I cannot recall seeing a dead or dying trout whose condition could not be accounted for by disease or injury. So great an authority as Professor Agassiz said with regard to the *fontinalis* of the Rangeley Lakes that "no man living knows whether these six and eight pound trout are ten or two hundred years old." If age claimed its annual toll could one fail from time to time to see dead trout in waters frequently traversed, where countless thousands of the creatures live? Other fish, notably carp, are known to live indefinitely, and why not trout? A way of escape from this con-

clusion may be sought in the suggestion that the mortality of trout from old age takes place only in the winter, when the conditions of existence are the hardest. In that case their mortal tenements might be disposed of and disappear under the ice or during the spring freshets. There is no evidence, however, to support such a view. It is a sobering thought that the great trout may be far older than the middle-aged fisherman who seeks to outwit him, and that time will sooner replace the angler than his quarry. Definite proof may possibly be secured, as in the case of the Pacific salmon, by observing the annual growth of the ear-bone, but, failing this, there appears to be no way of arriving at the facts but by marking trout and noting their growth over a long period.

Many pipes were smoked, and the stove burned cheerfully, died down, and was more than once refilled, while the talk pursued an even more devious way

than do these rambling notes, but ever kept returning to the original theme. Meantime echoes of debate, drifting to us from the men's tent, told that they too were talking of fishing, and were at the moment concerning themselves chiefly with the practical questions of tackle and methods. To a race of facile speakers, it might be almost said of orators, one subject serves as well as another for discussion, and a very fury of controversy can be aroused as to the best way to make pancakes, or to stop a leak in a canoe.

It appeared that Mesgil—so I seek to render phonetically the approved contraction of the good fellow's baptismal name, Hermenegilde—had made report on a certain little rod which he had watched being taken out of its case and equipped for action. The delicate politeness of the French Canadian forbade any expression of adverse opinion in the presence of *les messieurs,* but he

had looked doubtful as to the ability of this pretty four and a quarter ounce toy to *lutter avec une grosse truite.* Now, under his own canvas roof, and with his associates, criticism was unconfined, and the rod was verily on trial for its life. The body of opinion was evidently to the effect that while it might be fitted for the capture of *les petites,* or even *les moyennes,* one were better armed with a man's weapon when the affair was with trout longer than one's arm,—trout moreover that had lived their lives in, and fought their way up so swift and strong a stream. Had not Dr. S. taken two hours and a quarter to bring a four and an eighth pound trout to net in quieter waters across the divide! Two hours and a quarter on a six ounce rod, and where to seek for a better fisherman! Figure it out for yourselves my friends —this trifle of cane and glue and silk, pitted against a fish weighing perhaps two pounds for its every ounce. Would

it stand the strain, and if so how long might the struggle last? So waged the dispute, till the clamour drowned the rush of the stream over bar and boulder, and nervous loons on the great water to the south of us woke up and talked to one another at the top of their voices across the lake.

After a twelve-hour day on portage and with paddle, sleep falls upon you like an armed man, but on comparing notes in the morning it appeared that every one had been awakened about midnight by the dismal cry of a lynx from a mountain side a mile away. The repose of the woods though refreshing is seldom profound, and one rises quickly to the surface of consciousness.

At five o'clock we broke camp, and embarked breakfastless for the two hour paddle to the other end of the lake. No prudent navigator makes a crossing between eight in the morning and four in the afternoon, as in the day-time the

winds sweep over the barrens and through the mountain gorges with great force, and render canoeing on the broader waters dangerous. Sometimes too a whirlwind, in the speech of the country a *sorcier,* appears unannounced even in fine weather, and although the disturbance is very local, it is violent enough to upset the canoe that encounters it. The sandy margin which bore our tracks of the night before, and which the moose and caribou had made their highway before we disturbed them, was frozen, so that every footprint of man and animal seemed to be cut there in stone. A dense and chilly mist lay over the water, and the drops from the paddles froze on the gunwale. However beautiful were the slow revelations of islands and wooded promontories, and the glow of the early sun on rising mist-wreath and hillside splendid with autumn colours, it was pleasant to land, to straighten out cramped knees and

warm numbed fingers while the preparations for breakfast were going forward. Simple but satisfying meal! Porridge, with a little grated maple sugar to take the place of cream, a half ration of bacon and almost the last of our bread. Tea of course there was, for to us in the woods the humblest fare with tea is a *repas,* while an ample provision of food ungraced by tea is no more than a *bouchée.* With canoes, tents, blankets, rifles and other impedimenta to carry over long portages through a difficult country, it had been necessary to come in light; which means that the dunnage bags contained only bread, flour, oatmeal, pork, bacon, tea and sugar, salt and pepper. Given a sufficiency of these no one need complain of his fare, but in making a close calculation of quantities we had counted upon the addition of game and fish, and after a week of wandering nothing had fallen to our rifles, even fish had been

scarce. Something akin to starvation was lurking not very far away, and every member of the party had a keen personal interest in the replenishment of the larder.

We made camp where the river, flowing out of the lake, begins a turbulent career of thirty leagues to the St. Lawrence. For a mile or two the current is not too rapid for canoeing, and here, at this season, great trout assemble on their annual migration to the spawning beds in the lake and the streams that feed it. This at least was the somewhat vague information upon which we were going, and the expedition was conceived for the purpose of testing the statement that trout of fabulous size had been seen or taken in the upper reaches of the river. It is not so easy as one might think to discover where the great trout lie, or how best to fish for them, but it is incomparably more interesting to attack

the problem in this way than to be guided to a spot and bidden to cast there.

When the tents were up and all was snug we set forth pursued by rather more fervent good wishes than usual. "*Bonne chance*" was to-day something beyond an expression of polite desire that *les messieurs* would have good sport. Careful fishing at the foot of the first gentle rapid yielded nothing, and a good pool below this was equally barren of results. When another fine stretch of water had been tried without a warrantable fish being raised, we began to wonder whether we were not on the chase of such a phantom as had lured us into the wilds on many another occasion. As food must be had, it was resolved that we should part company, and that the occupants of the first canoe should try for a shot at moose, caribou or bear. There were many fresh tracks of these animals; it was plainly their habit to range along the banks and cross

the river from point to point. Moreover a fresh breeze blowing up stream would give an easy approach if game were sighted. Mesgil and the writer were left to explore at leisure—a task be it said quite as much to their liking as that of their companions. The pool to which we next dropped down looked well, though it was scarcely so large as the one which had just been drawn blank. The river came into it with a strong though quiet current, and was thrown against the right bank by a reef of gravel and boulders. As the canoe drifted through without stroke of paddle, the angler, who was covering as much water as possible, kept lengthening cast towards the bend, where oily eddies circled just beyond the reach of his flies. Some influence felt but not to be defined was drawing towards this little bay, and Mesgil seemed to feel it too, for he responded with a turn of the paddle to the *"à terre un peu,"* almost as soon as

the words were spoken, and the instant the fly fell over the coveted spot, there was a heavy lunge at it. Mesgil can always be trusted to do the right thing in a canoe; very silently and skilfully he backed the craft to the bar of gravel, where, after perhaps ten minutes of varying fortunes, he had the satisfaction of netting a trout of three and a quarter pounds in the literal pink of condition. This was rapidly followed by one of two and a quarter, one of three and three-quarters, and one of five pounds. The last fish fought with great determination, and came clear of the water after a salmon-like rush. More than once have I seen it affirmed in print that the brook trout does not jump after being hooked. This is probably true of small fish, but trout of two pounds weight and upward not infrequently leave the water when on the fly. During a season when attention was particularly directed to the point it was observed

that one great fish in three jumped after being hooked. An extraordinary leap I recall, which, to my eye and that of a friend who was looking on, appeared to measure not less than eight feet from the point where the trout left the water to the point where he returned to it. On rare occasions, too, these fish will come clear, or almost clear of the water to take the fly, but for the most part they do not show on the surface and take much after the manner of salmon.

Such sport as I write of was too good to be enjoyed alone, and with these four splendid fellows lying side by side in the bottom of the canoe and clad like the autumn woods in scarlet and gold, I reeled in and took up the paddle. A few strokes brought us to the lower end of the pool where the water shoals and the bottom becomes visible. It was then that Mesgil's sharper eyes caught sight of some monstrous gray shadows a few yards away on the starboard bow, and

his *"O sacré bateau, regardez les truites!"* sent my glance to the spot. I can only swear to two, though Mesgil affirmed that he saw a dozen. Having very definitely determined to fish no more, what happened in the next few beats of the pulse was done without conscious volition. One hand laid the paddle down, the other picked up the rod. The tail fly swung loose from the cross-bar of the reel, and was despatched with one motion in the proper direction. The smaller of the two fish rose, was hooked, and Mesgil had his wish to see the little rod *lutter avec une grosse.* From the first moment there was no doubt that this was a strong and unusually heavy trout, and he played after the fashion of his kind. Mesgil delicately and quietly worked the canoe to shore, and held it steady during the awkward business of disembarking while a fish was running. By this time our trout had gained an immense length of line,

and was feeling the advantage of the current below the pool. He had to be worked into quieter water, and then stubbornly contested every inch of the return journey. Again and again did he take the fly to the farthest limits of the pool, but he neither bored nor sulked. For many a year of free and strenuous life his swiftness and dexterity in stemming rapid streams, in pursuing prey, in avoiding the attacks of enemies had been the things that counted, and in this, his final struggle, he used the arts which had availed him. After what seemed to be a very long time, but was not and could not be measured by the watch, the rushes became shorter, and we caught a glimpse of a side glorious with red and orange; then did we first know, of a surety, that here at last was the fish worth toiling and waiting for,—the fish of dreams. Fighting to the end, under the utmost pressure of tackle, he came slowly to the bank, where Mesgil

performed to admiration the task of netting. One breathless moment there was when it seemed that the capacious landing net would not receive him, but his day had come, the last impulse of his powerful tail sent him home and in he swung to meet the *coup de grâce.*

Passing from the glamour of pursuit and capture to the chill realm of figures, let me conjure up a pale wraith of the fish that lay between us on the grass. Weight, eight and a quarter pounds; length, twenty-five and three-quarter inches; depth, eight and one-eighth inches. The girth can scarcely have been less than twenty inches, as his back was very broad and he was in superb condition, but this I carelessly neglected to measure. Mesgil and I, taking off our hats, bowed low to the largest trout we had ever seen, and the occasion being a solemn one we recognized it by filling our pipes from one another's pouches.

How different this from the pursuit

of the sophisticated trout of the British Isles! No laborious stalking and dry fly casting. No hair-fine tackle or tiny lures. A variant of the Parmachenee Belle on a No. 4 hook was this great fellow's undoing, and he rose within twenty feet of the canoe on a bright day!

It may interest brothers of the angle under other skies to contrast the conditions under which their favourite sport is pursued. As against the tedious waiting for a favourable day, and the wary approach to the feeding trout, we have the voyage into a wild untravelled country, where transportation of that exiguous provision which it is possible to make for life and comfort is always a serious affair. The indispensable canoe, although the lightest of its kind, is no mean burden on portages of three or four hours between canoeable waters. Then are there the fascinating uncertainties of finding the fish in miles of river, or in lakes of such a size that it

would take many days of steady casting to cover them with a fly. While small trout are found almost everywhere, the large ones may easily be overlooked in some few square yards of water which they occupy to-day and desert to-morrow, and there is room for exercise of wits in discovering and attracting them. I admit freely that extreme delicacy in casting is not essential, and, so far as I am aware, dry-fly fishing is not practised in Canada. Not only is there no necessity for it, but I doubt whether an exponent of that graceful art would meet with much success. The most effective work is done with the drowned fly, and it appears to present the strongest allurement when brought through the water with a series of quick and almost jerky motions,—suggesting to the trout, as I think, the movements of the tail or fin of a small fish near the surface. To complete the comparison, I allow that our heavier

casting lines and larger flies give a better chance of bringing trout to net, though, on the other hand, we use lighter rods which are incapable of putting a very severe strain on a fish. While it is useful to be able to command a long cast, few trout are raised and effectively struck with a longer line than fifty or sixty feet from the reel.

Late in the afternoon, when the shadow of the high western bank was falling across the pool, we returned to it to find the fish still there and in the same humour. What "record" might have been made I cannot say, but when all the trout had been secured that nine men and a dog could dispose of, the time had come to stop. A little more than two hours of fishing gave us twenty trout that weighed seventy-two and a quarter pounds. The second best fish turned the scale at seven and a half pounds, while a brace weighing two and three-

quarters and two pounds on the same cast brought both nets into requisition.

When the canoes discharged their cargoes before the tents there was very sincere rejoicing, and it was not long before trout rolled in wet paper and buried in the embers were being cooked in the woodland style. To these the men added a dish of boiled heads, a favourite *plat* with them, and one that tastes much better than it sounds. The dog who shared our fortunes, after such a meal as he was wont to dream of, lost the pinched and anxious expression which he had worn for many days.

Under the stars that night there was great talk of things in the heavens above, and the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth,—but chiefly of the latter; and the little rod, declared to have justified its existence, was restored to its case as straight as a lance, with never a winding started, in the enjoyment of an established reputation.

THE WING-FOOTED OR SHINING ONE

THE worse the going, the better for the horse. This paradox of the road is true within its proper limits, and one should not ask more of a paradox; but as the saying seems obscure it may be well to expound it. You readily grant me it is the pace that kills. Never was animal foundered at four miles an hour on the longest course between daylight and dark; look to him well, though, if you urge him over the distance in half the time. Speed is impossible where ruts are axle-deep, bridges rotten, hills like the bouldered channels of a water-course, but the sorer your own sides the safer your horse will be. The humane

man does well to snatch at such compensation as this, for there is little of mere physical delight in a day's travel on those roads which *le bon Dieu arrange*.

The happy phrase, for which I am indebted to a philosopher of the highway, does not always apply, for the government is apt to interfere with the processes of nature on the eve of an election. At the moment, I do not call to mind any other useful by-product of those political spasms which lead to so much job and place hunting, and cause such bitterness even in a quiet countryside; but it is at least something that the honest fisherman travels more comfortably.

Unfortunately for us, no recent need had arisen to educate the minds of the electors upon those great questions which divide the Ins and the Outs, and every one of our forty-seven miles demanded full credit for each constituent rod and furlong. When, with twelve

good leagues behind us, we labour up the Grande Passe, and a thousand feet nearer the hurrying clouds get a last glimpse of the St. Lawrence, the late afternoon sun is casting shadows over the fertile valley of the Gouffre. A few miles of deeply rutted road carry us by the immense granite cliffs where eagles nest undisturbed, and the steep defile of the second pass gives the Coq more stiff collar-work, even with his passengers afoot. The summit attained, walking is still to be preferred to driving in the rolling and pitching buckboard, so do we trudge through the sloughs of the Cabane à Yves, and past the four crossings of the Ruisseau des Chasseurs, judging ourselves fortunate when we sink only to the ankle.

If there be a horse in the province of Quebec competent to conduct four wheels intelligently and discreetly over such a track, it is our long-legged, uncomely gray, but the stream of admoni-

tion, entreaty, encouragement and reproach from his driver ceases not. Between any two telegraph poles on this highway of the King, but which His Majesty in all and every executive manifestation leaves a Higher Power to arrange, such discourse as this meets the ear: — *" Coq-Coq-Coq-Coq-Coq-Coqé-Coqé-Coqê! Ho donc-arriè-arriè! Marche! Fais attention! Mangeur, sacré mangeur, paresseux-Coq! N'aie pas peur-arrête! Hue-hue-hue! Coq! Passe donc par là-avance-Coq! Marche—toi! Ho - arrié - regarde bien-Coq-Coq-Coq-Coq-Coq-Coqé-Coqé-Coqé! Marche!"*

Parhaps instruments of precision might disclose a relation between these commands and the movements of the Coq; it is not apparent to the unassisted eye. Yet one does not like to think of this excellent conversation as wasted: it may in some indefinable way create a sentiment, and have its use, like sermons, and editorials, and magazine articles.

At length do we emerge from the *savanes* to a region of gravel and sand twenty-six hundred feet above sea-level. Here, by reason of the nature of the ground, and not because of human intervention, the travelling is better; our eyes can be spared to see that on these heights the spring has barely arrived; tamaracks are budding; birches, aspens, and alders begin to show leaf; cherry and Indian pear are in bloom; Labrador tea and laurel hint at the flowers to come. Mid-June is a month behind the St. Lawrence littoral in plant and insect life, and the fresh foliage of the spruces is quite untouched by the pest of caterpillars which is browning the hillsides below. It is not the least lovely spring-coming to one whose happy fortune it has been to welcome the season three times before, in Devon, Yorkshire, and Murray Bay.

This lateness of trees and flowers promises ill for us in our quest of the

Shining Ones, who only make holiday in the air and sunshine when summoned to the surface of the water by the manna which the skies afford. No figure of speech this, or at any rate none of mine. The May-flies which swarm in such countless numbers that the fish grow fat on them, are here called *les mannes,* and M. Sylva Clapin supplies me with the meaning of the word. The conditions which are favourable to the birth of the black-fly, sand-fly, horse-fly and mosquito, govern the coming of the May-fly as well, and it is sadly the fact that he who would pursue the gamest and most beautiful of the charrs must make up his mind to face the fourth plague of Pharaoh.

The present moment is as good as another to explain the alternative title to this paper. Wise men are arrayed in two camps as to the proper name of the fish we are seeking,—some declaring for *salvelinus nitidus,* and some for *salve-*

linus alipes: there are again who suggest that further research will show the two sub-species to be identical. Richardson in his "Fauna Boreali Americana" (1835) pictures both, and on the basis of a comparison of specimens with these plates, the authorities of the Smithsonian Institute give decision in favour of *nitidus.* To the untrained eye, attracted too much perhaps by form and colour, they appear to resemble *alipes,*—a long and peculiarly graceful fish without spots,—rather than *nitidus,* which is stockier and strikingly spotted. It is fair to observe, however, that Richardson's observations were made upon dried skins, and we all know how rapidly the life-hues of the charrs change and fade. One is almost open to form his own opinion upon the question, for a scientific description discloses as the only evident differences the somewhat longer dorsal and pectoral fins of *alipes.* All are agreed that we have here a vari-

ety of the widely distributed Alpine charr, and that the home of this stranger is Greenland and Boothia Felix.

The thing that amazes and fascinates one is that the wanderer should be discovered in a lakelet forty miles from the St. Lawrence and two thousand feet above it, at so great a distance from his true range. Two other lakes a dozen miles away, and on a higher level, are supposed to contain these fish, but only a few have been taken and they have never been properly identified. The Lac de Marbre trout or *marstoni,* which ichthyologists do not class under *alpinus,* have points of resemblance, but also variations greater than can be accounted for on the basis of mere environment. The Sunapee trout, a sub-species of *alpinus,* also show a family likeness, and have taken to themselves the title *aureolus,* which one would have wished to confer on our wing-footed ones if the field were open. It is evident that there is a good

deal of work for biologists before the species and sub-species already mentioned are sorted out and placed in their proper relation with *arcturus* and *stagnalis*. To attempt this is far beyond the writer's abilities, nor would the reader have patience with minute descriptions of gill-rakers, opercles, and preopercles. For the present purpose it suffices to say that we have to do with a new game fish hitherto only found in the far north, and brought here, as the song runs—"How, you nor I nor nobody knows."

Other discoveries of these fish in neighbouring waters adapted for them would be by no means surprising. The lake we are all too slowly approaching, though it lies within a few yards of a highway in constant use for over fifty years, has always been regarded as barren of fish, but it may be explained by the fact that these creatures only reveal themselves for a few days every year, at a time when not many fishermen venture

into the woods, and all who can do so leave them. After the hatch of the May-fly, and at least until the spawning season, it is impossible to get a rise or see a fish moving; and they appear to take neither spoon nor minnow.

The Esquimaux have a generic name covering the northern charrs,—*eekalook peedeook,* and a specific name for *nitidus,—angmalook.* These, which may be deemed euphonious under the Arctic Circle, seem ugly mouthfuls to apply to our beautiful and graceful aliped. "Golden trout" suggests itself, and nothing could be more descriptive, but the name is already bespoken. The Latin term is apt, for he is in very truth a "shining one," but the translation would scarcely answer for everyday use. Until a better name be given I take the liberty of calling him "Malbaie trout" from the lake where he is found.

By this time the Coq is breathed, and we must press on to the camp at Lac à

la Galette, where one is sure of a pleasant welcome, a comfortable bed, and the best of country fare. Not an easy commissariat this to sustain, for chickens, eggs, and even hay must be brought from our host's farm at St. Urbain, eighteen miles down the road we have just travelled. Yonder disconsolate cow, that has learned to eat many things besides grass, is probably thinking of the cold journey over the snow she will make on a *traineau* in February to her stable in the valley, or perhaps she mourns the companion that wandered too far from the house, and, as Madame tells us, was *"dévorée par les ours."*

In "The Forest," Stewart Edward White has written of the "Jumping-off place." I am not for trying to follow lamely in his footsteps. Let his pen paint for you the outpost in touch, faintly and intermittently it may be, but still in touch with London and Paris and New York, with politics, stock-markets,

courts, theatres, clubs,—the whole apparatus of the town-dweller's life, but where one step beyond severs you instantly and completely from all of these. By more or less regular means of conveyance you approach the jumping-off place. Boats and trains abide their appointed times. Horses ply on roads beside which runs a telegraph line. The day has still twenty-four hours, the hour sixty minutes. But now these slavish subdivisions of time disappear. The evening and the morning are the first and every following day. Distance is measured no longer by miles but by the sun's ascension and declension, the ebb of physical strength, the primitive needs of food and repose. Things that filled the whole horizon dwindle and vanish; what was of no consequence becomes serious and vital. Arms, and legs, and lungs begin to matter, and money loses its purchasing power.

Somewhere in all this lies the magic, not in the slaying of beasts and fishes,—the magic that conjures up at sight of this solitary house the vision of lakes innumerable,—the tiny beginnings of rivers,—far-stretching barrens lonely as the sea,—mountain-tops from which all earth and sky are possessed as your own. Plain and broad before you lies the trail that will carry you onward, that will fork, and fork again, flicker out and die at the Rivière du Chemin de Canot, le Petit Lac Derrière la Cabane de Médée, Lac des Neiges and Lac du Sault, in the desolations of the Enfer and the swamps of the Grande Savane, or where lakes Trois Loups Cerviers, Sans Oreilles and Couchée des Femmes lie very silent in their encircling hills.

For this indeed is one of the chief gateways into that great tract which the province of Quebec, with high wisdom and foresight, set apart near twenty years ago "as a forest reservation, fish

and game preserve, public park and pleasure ground." Administered as it always has been, there is no reason why the furthest generation should not continue here to find and enjoy what must become rarer and more precious with the years; nor can one think of any legacy so unique and priceless to be handed on whole and unwasted in perpetual inheritance. So the founders intended, for the Article reads:

"No person shall, except under lease, license, or permit, locate, settle upon, use or occupy any portion of the said park, nor shall any lease, license or permit be made, granted, or issued which will in any way impair the usefulness of the park."

With no little regret does one record the passing of an Order-in-Council, in July, 1912, authorizing a Pulp and Power Company to build and maintain a dam at the very heart of the park and in perhaps the best game country to be found within its borders,—the country chosen for a visit of the Governor-

General of Canada in the season of 1911. The government will receive a rental of a hundred and fifty dollars a year, and, not to take very high ground, will probably lose more than this amount annually in shooting licenses alone. The assigned reason for permitting this invasion is that an industry established at the mouth of a river which has its source in the park finds, through miscalculation or lack of calculation, it has not at all seasons an adequate supply of water. Engineers admit that the proposed dam will, at best, give only very trifling assistance. There are men, and no doubt very worthy and honest men, who think that when they have said "commerce before sport" the last and only word on the subject has been uttered. One would wish to suggest to them that sport has a commercial side, and one of great present and future importance. Nor at this hour should it be necessary to draw their attention to

the fact that not only is there a commercial side to sport, but a very desperately sporting side to commerce.

Twelve miles of yet more villainous road remain, which a *planche,* if it survive, will traverse in four hours, and which may be done in less time on foot with greater comfort and safety. Neither the steep pitches of the Côte des Mouches, nor grievous alternations of rut and boulder, nor trembling bridges have terrors for the Coq or his master, but the latter is seriously perturbed by the prospect of meeting a certain dog of very evil reputation at the journey's end. We learn much of this animal from Pommereau, how useless are attempts to placate, how kindness is interpreted as masked guile, how perilous in his presence it is either to advance, stand still, or retire, and how safety from his horrid fangs can only be won by remaining in the buckboard until he is tied up. Borrowing a useful word where he finds

it, Pommereau adds,—"*et il ne faut pas le laisser loose.*"

The programme is indeed carried out. The great brindled beast is made fast to a comfortably stout post, whence he regards us with bloodshot eye and twitching jowl. Sorrowing as it seems that a disposition should be so perverted, in a tone judicial and devoid of anger, Pommereau addresses the poor ugly creature who counts all mankind his enemy,—"*A—a—h, mon cr—r—riminel!*"

Here then are we at the Petit Lac Malbaie, but do not be too sure of the spot, for at least three other lakes also bear the name. Soon shall be revealed to us the truth about the stranger fish that first made this their home some hundreds of thousands of years ago, when the last glacier that graved these hill-tops and delved these hollows disappeared, and the Laurentians were two thousand feet lower than they are to-day. What impertinence for the par-

venu Man to beguile, examine, and eat the descendants of this so ancient race. May this, and other things, be pardoned unto him.

The lake lies under a June sky of softest blue. Diffused through the air, and dulling the sun's light and heat, is a haze so delicate that sometimes we thought it vapour and sometimes smoke. Not yet were we to know at what cost to many an unfortunate soul this lovely veil was cast over the little Fujiyama rising in perfect outline across the water. By the lake-edge wild cherry is in flower, and the birches are sketching out their new summer dresses. White spruces, wearing the lovely green of springtime, draw prim skirts about their modest feet. Again we "hear lake water lapping," and click of reel, and swish of line: our hearts are exceeding glad.

No trout this, coming to the fly like a bar of sunlight and instantly gone: never did trout rise so swiftly or show

such colours. The stranger cannot be mistaken, and you must be quick indeed, if the barb is to be driven home. A strike which would snatch the fly away from the slower moving *fontinalis* is barely fast enough for the Malbaie trout; moreover, he gives you one chance and only one. More alert at the next rise, the fish is struck, and now other differences are revealed. The struggle is one of rapid, baffling turns, of taut line and sounding reel, of prodigious runs and unexpected jumps. There are no moments of quiet tugging, no dogged soundings nor sullen head-shakings. To keep a steady and an even strain upon this creature flashing hither and thither in water or air, occupies you continuously and engrossingly. Nor is the battle soon over; with greater power and speed he has also more endurance than the brook trout, and outlasts him, weight for weight. Opportunity for comparison is at hand, since the lake contains as

fine trout as ever rose to a fly. Three years ago a few score of fingerlings taken from a neighbouring river were placed in this water, then supposed to be uninhabited. They came of a famous breed, for the trout of the river run to eight pounds and fight to the death. In these new quarters they prospered on the best of feed, and averaging to-day nearly a pound and a half, are fat, lusty, and in prime condition. They take the fly with dash, play long and hard, and are a very pretty handful for the fisherman; still their distant cousins from the far north are the bonnier fighters.

Let me now attempt to describe the first Malbaie trout which the landing-net brought in, as it lies before us on the thwart. The scales, though small, are quite visible, and each one looks like a flake of gold,—pale gold, in which perhaps there is some admixture of silver. The colour is uniform, except that on the back the gold predominates and on

the belly the silver. The characteristic spots of *fontinalis* seem to be entirely lacking, nor is there any trace of vermiculation. The lateral line is strongly marked, so that the creature's resplendent garment appears to be made in two pieces joined at the sides by the cunning art of the goldsmith. The tail is forked, but not very deeply, and in a gentle curve. Dorsal, pectoral and ventral fins are long, and they, with the tail, suggest power and swiftness. In comparison, the trout looks under-finned. The head is small, and the body long and shapely. Without the depth of the trout, there is almost equal weight for length, by reason of a roundness of modelling, which, especially towards the tail, recalls the mackerel.

The Malbaie trout, in this environment at least, are not anadromous. Spawning in the shallows of the open lake, they do not frequent the streams which feed it or flow from it, nor are

their young found therein. The brook trout, which dwell in apparent harmony with them, go down the *décharge* to spawn, and at that season absolutely desert the lake, but none of the stranger fish are found among them. Not the slightest evidence of cross-breeding was noted, and this in a water barely a mile long and not half a mile wide.

The specimen we have been examining was a female. Two or three times a male gave us a vision of a side adorned, as the eye caught it, with a band of vivid scarlet two fingers broad running the whole length of the fish below the lateral line. The only one hooked beat the angler fairly and got away. It is a simple fact of natural history that the gentler sex, whether you have to do with trout, mosquitos, or suffragettes, bite more freely than the males.

A few of the gauzy-winged May-flies were fluttering through the air, and a few of the Malbaie trout were on the

lookout for them. This was only an advance guard, and it was not until the time of the *gros coup de mouches,* five days later, that the surface of the lake was everywhere broken by feeding fish. One would like to know whether the Malbaie trout have developed a new habit of thus occasionally leaving the depths under a new set of conditions, or are merely following the custom of their ancestors at Regent's Inlet.

Evening falls while we are at the foot of the lake. A huge cow moose completes the wilderness picture by swimming across the bay where we are fishing, taking the land a few yards away, and gazing at us long in stolid, stupid unconcern.

Next day the Malbaie trout rose rather more freely, and always in the same swift, dainty fashion; their vivacious movements frequently bringing to mind the rapid tactics of grilse fresh from the sea. The fish, well scattered

over the lake, were picked up here and there, now a Malbaie, now a brook trout, and both yielding to the butt only at the end of an honourable contest. Such sport makes one forget fatigues, and fills a pleasant page for memory to turn of a winter evening. . . .

Time reluctantly to depart, but first the reckoning: "We are much in your debt, Monsieur, and for more than lodging and food: for these what do we owe you?"

"You speak of what you owe me?"

"Of that precisely, Monsieur."

"But, Monsieur, you owe me nothing."

"It is not reasonable: you have brought eggs and milk and bread a long thirty miles for our better entertainment, and you yourself were on the lake before sunrise and for ten hours have paddled us in your *chaland.*"

"You are good enough, Monsieur, to say that you have been pleased: pray be

assured that this was still more pleasant for me. I must entreat you not to spoil it." And so it had to be.

Here and there the ancient virtue of hospitality survives,—in stately hall, in cabin of hewn logs, but whether administered by peer or peasant it is one and the same thing, nor can the quality of it be mistaken.

While the woods held us many things were happening in the world of men, but nature remained singularly unstirred. Our neighbours to the south, in the choosing of a presidential candidate, had once again exhibited the simplicity and dignity of Republican institutions; Arnold Bennett was delivered of a fresh masterpiece. Yet no echo troubled the solitudes. Only had been announced in the sky the burning of unhappy Chicoutimi.

THE LAURENTIDES NATIONAL PARK

Less than forty miles from the oldest city on this continent north of Mexico, one may shoot or photograph bear, moose and caribou, catch trout that no ordinary fishing-basket will contain, observe beaver, otter, mink, and foxes going in peace about their daily avocations, watch eagles and other bird-fishers plying their trade, and march through leagues of breezy highlands where the print of a human foot would bring to the face that look of amazement that one remembers in the old wood-cuts of Robinson Crusoe at the first intrusion on his island domain. The purposes of this article are to explain how such

things can be in this much commercialized world, to express appreciation and gratitude to the government of the province of Quebec for making them possible, and strive to strengthen the sentiment for their continuance and extension.

No one who has read Colonel Wood's plea for the creation of animal and bird sanctuaries can fail to have been moved by his words, spoken from the very heart, as to the cruel and reckless slaughter of our "little brothers" who people and make interesting the great out-of-doors. Those who wish him success in his humane endeavour should not need to be persuaded that what has been already gained in this direction ought to be most firmly held. Interests, however powerful financially and politically, should not be allowed any foothold in those reservations now set apart for the health and pleasure of men and the well-being of animals. What might appear

to be a harmless concession to dam a river's headwaters would have very injurious and far-reaching consequences on both fish and game, and would, in effect, defeat the purposes for which the Park was brought into existence. One invasion would assuredly be followed by another, for here as ever *il n'y a que le premier pas qui coûte.*

It was in the year 1895 that the idea took form of setting apart some two thousand five hundred square miles of the wild and mountainous country north of Quebec and south of Lake St. John, as "a forest reservation, fish and game preserve, public park and pleasure ground." At a later date the area was increased, until now some three thousand seven hundred square miles are removed from sale or settlement.

An important, though indirect, object was the maintenance of water-level in the dozen or more rivers which take their rise in the high-lying plateau

forming the heart of the Park. A very breeding-ground of streams this is, and a good walker may visit the birth-places of half their number in a day's tramp. His way for the most part will lie ankle-deep through saturated moss, intersected in all directions by game trails, where the stoutest boot or moccasin that the wit of man has devised will fail to exclude the universal element. Here, in their infancy, rivers run north which ultimately turn and flow into the St. Lawrence, and others flow south whose waters, at the last, Lake St. John will receive. Only a few yards and no great elevation divide streams that are to be a hundred miles apart when the great river takes them to itself, nor is there any man who knows what fortunes befall them through the whole course of their short but stormy lives. Though the assertion may appear to be almost ridiculous, there is work for the explorer in this region. Blank spaces on

the map invite, which may yield discoveries in the way of game and fish, of mountains that no foot has trodden, of waters that no paddle has stirred and where no fly has fallen, of forests untouched by the axe.

The true range of the Laurentians is distant from the shore of the St. Lawrence some twenty miles, and of those who spend their summers at watering-places on the north shore not one in a thousand spares time from the amusements of society to make its acquaintance. The nearer and gentler slopes shut out the great mountain masses that march sou'-west and nor'-east from Quebec to the Saguenay, so that one who does not go out to seek for them might easily be ignorant of their existence. Those who commit themselves to the sea, and adventure so far as Ha Ha Bay, get some glimpse of the range in the Saguenay's wonderful chasm, but there it is sinking to a lower level. They do

not guess that the Murray descends through a still grander and more beautiful gorge on its wild way to the sea. A mere handful of people have thought it worth while to push back forty miles from Murray Bay to see the tremendous rock walls of this canyon, the stupendous and unscalable precipices where the Décharge de la Mine d'Argent falls hundreds of feet from the rim, like silver poured from a crucible, pauses and falls again.

As to the heights of these mountains one searches in vain for authentic figures. Eboulements and Ste. Anne, both near the shore of the St. Lawrence, rise over two thousand five hundred feet, and one peak in the valley of the Gouffre is credited with a height of three thousand two hundred feet, but these elevations are greatly exceeded as one journeys inland. Observations with several aneroids show that the St. Ur-

bain road, the only highway that crosses the mountains, is three thousand feet above the sea at a point some thirty-five miles from Baie St. Paul, while the surrounding hills might be credited with another fifteen hundred feet. It seems to be within bounds to place the altitude of a series of mountain-tops in the country of Charlevoix at from four thousand to four thousand five hundred feet, to assign a height of two thousand five hundred feet to the interior plateau, and to say that most of the rivers rise about three thousand feet above the sea. As these assertions are not in accord with prevailing impressions, it would be interesting to have a more accurate determination than can be made with a pocket barometer.

The outlines of these ancient hills have been flattened and rounded by the age-long grinding and chiselling of glaciers, which have also built up huge moraines, and strewn the country with

boulders. One such moraine I recall, which runs for a mile, as level and straight as a forty-foot railway embankment through a land of muskeg and fallen timber, giving the only good footing that is to be found on an old Indian portage.

The last of the Montagnais Indians vanished from this place about twenty years ago, but one finds here and there traces of their camps and caches, and may still follow, though with difficulty, their winding, nearly obliterated trails. If he is possessed by the demon of speed, which ceases not to whisper "faster, faster" in our ears, he may be disappointed to find that a full day's march in this country only means such a distance as his motor, without police interference, would accomplish in a quarter of an hour. Haply though he may be able to appreciate the spirit of the old Connaughtman's comment on the racing-cars whirling past the door of his

cabin: "Sure sor, if ye was to go as fast as that ye'd be gettin' there too soon." So dispositioned he may understand the charm of travelling where there is leisure for observation, and where the sun and his stomach are clocks enough for all reasonable and necessary purposes.

If the way lies along a *chemin débarrassé* there will be no trees to block the passage of a canoe, but nothing is cut that can by any possibility be stepped over. As board and lodging must be carried on the back, two miles an hour, not including stops, is an excellent rate of progress, nor will there likely be quarrel with the woodland custom of halting for five minutes or so twice in the hour. Indeed, unless somewhat hardened to the trail, he may have to cry for mercy before the end of the *bauche* is reached. This local word does not seem translatable, unless indeed it can be rendered by "jag."

The unit for rapid travel is three men in a light canvas-covered canoe, and everything but actual necessaries must be sternly rejected if the party is to go straight forward without doubling at the portages. The order of march is, one man for the canoe, one for the tent, provisions, and cooking outfit, and the "Monsieur" going light, with personal baggage, blanket and such other trifles as rifle, glasses, rod and camera. Travelling in a northerly or southerly direction there are waterways which may be more or less utilized, and it is much easier to go from the St. Lawrence to Lake St. John than it is to cross the Park from west to east, although the distance, as the loon flies, is about the same. A rather careful estimate of the time required for the latter trip was fifteen days, and it would be fifteen days of exceedingly arduous work, with every kind of hard going that the wildest and wettest country can afford, and without

the assistance even of a blazed trail. The sixty miles stretch out to one hundred and fifty by the devious route which would have to be followed.

This seems rather a forbidding picture of a tract that the government has set apart as a "public park and pleasure ground," but that is only at the first glance and to the faint-hearted one. Were it not for the outworks that nature has built to guard her citadel, were it not for the difficulties that have to be overcome in the old-fashioned way by strength and skill of hand and foot, these wild places would be overrun by board-floor and cocktail campers, by men with automatic rifles who shoot everything, including their companions, on sight, or take, for a record, fish that they cannot use, and by tourists who think it amusing to set on fire a noble birch or moss-draped spruce to make a "forest torch." Thank the gods that be, no motor-roads conduct to this

paradise, no easy canoe-route offers, but he who would enter must win his way thither in the manner of his fathers,—and so may it be to the end of time.

The dead-waters in the upper reaches of the rivers are sometimes navigable, and the lakes that lie in one's path give a few welcome miles of paddling, nor should it be understood that all of the walking is bad. Here and there are stretches of dry, moss-covered barren where the foot falls soft and silently, with scarcely bush, stone, or tree compelling one to step aside, or slacken the round three miles an hour.

The Grand Jardin des Ours, perhaps the largest and certainly the best known of these barrens, is hardly less than a hundred square miles in extent, and when the ice takes in early November the caribou make it their great rallying-ground, attracted thither by the moss upon which they subsist in the winter time. Even within the last few years

bands running into the hundreds have been seen on the snowy mountain-sides, and, without much difficulty, have been approached and photographed. These animals, so wary in summer and in the early autumn, appear to gain confidence by their numbers, and are easily stalked, and all too easily shot. It is to be feared that too great an annual toll is taken, and that the herd is being diminished by more than the amount of its natural increase. At the same time it must be remembered that for fifty or sixty years, and perhaps for a much longer time, sportsmen from every quarter of the globe have visited this famous "Jardin," and have seldom failed to carry away a good head; also that in the days when this was everyman's land, and scarcely any restrictions were enforced as to season or amount of game, the slaughter must have been much greater than it is to-day. Perhaps, then, there is no cause for immediate alarm, but the

situation deserves to be carefully watched so that a remedy may be applied in time. Slightly more stringent regulations, the allowance of one caribou instead of two, the forbidding of shooting in December and January when the bulls have lost their horns would ensure excellent sport in this region so long as the Park exists and is administered as it is to-day.

There is, however, very serious menace to the caribou in the unfortunate fact that the great timber-wolf has at last discovered this happy hunting-ground, and has taken up his abode there. These murderous creatures do not kill for food alone, but appear to slay for the love of slaying, and if man is to be able to gratify his primitive instincts of a like kind in this place he will have to find means to rid himself of these rivals. So swift and cunning is the wolf that it is regarded as impossible to shoot or trap him, and his habit of

feeding only upon his own fresh kill makes poisoning extremely difficult. Already it would seem that there are fewer caribou in and about the "Grand Jardin," but the marked increase in the number of moose may be one cause of this. Moose and caribou do not dwell together in amity, and the latter, the most inveterate wanderers that the earth knows, are possibly seeking other pastures in some remote part of the Park which the moose do not frequent, and where it would be difficult for man to follow them.

Before the days of the Park the moose were almost exterminated throughout this region, but a few must have escaped slaughter in some inaccessible fastness, and under a careful and intelligent system of protection they have multiplied exceedingly. At the present time it is not uncommon to encounter three or four cows in the course of a day's walk, and these lumbering creatures scarcely

take pains to keep out of your way. Man may not shoot them, and only unprotected calves have anything to dread from the wolves, so that they are in the happy position of having no enemies. Whatever the fate of the caribou may be, it seems probable that in a few years' time there will be as good moose-shooting here as in any part of New Brunswick, nor is there the slightest fear that, under reasonable exercise, it will ever be exhausted. This branch of sport is new to the country, and the art of calling has not been developed, so that tedious watching and hard stalking are the only means of securing a head. No horns have been brought out yet which rival the New Brunswick antlers, much less those of the Alaskan *alces gigas*. Anything over fifty-five inches is an unusually good *panache* for Quebec, that is to say, ten inches less than a fine New Brunswick head, and twenty inches less than the prodigious antlers of the West.

I am tempted at this point to give two narratives from eye-witnesses which exhibit in how different a spirit men may go into the woods after game. The hero of the first episode on sighting a band of six caribou bade his man sit down to give him a rest for his rifle. He then fired, and continued firing till all were killed. When his companion made to walk towards the animals, Sir ——— said to him roughly:—

"Where are you going?"

"To cut up the caribou."

" . . . I don't want them."

This is, but should not be, the end of the first story. The other is pleasanter to hear. A gentleman from the United States wished to add a caribou head to his collection, and after the usual hunting vicissitudes and disappointments succeeded in doing so. On the way out he and his man almost ran into a moose which carried very fine horns. The license permitted him to shoot, and the

rifle was pressed into his hand with an urgent request to fire. "No, I have a moose and don't want another; give me the camera," and he actually succeeded in "snapping" the dazed creature twice, at a range of thirty feet.

If one were to assert that there are fifteen hundred lakes in the Park there is none that could gainsay him, and reasoning from the known to the unknown this does not appear to be a very extravagant estimate. Of course many of these are mere ponds and beaver dams, but there are not a few of six or eight miles in length, upon which it is wise to be very cautions in anything but the most settled weather. Squalls drop from the mountain-tops with sudden astonishing violence; the "old hand" skirting the shore and taking no chances often makes a quicker crossing than he who ventures on the direct line.

Very few of these lakes do not carry trout, and in addition to trout at least

two species of Alpine charr have been identified, while the tourilli is also found. Here, then, is diversion for every man who can throw a fly,—no other fishing is allowed,—nor is there any reason why it should not endure *in æternum*. The only quarrel that the fisherman is likely to have with the sport is that his fish may come too easily. It is no extraordinary feat to take five or six dozen trout in an hour, but it is to be hoped that a very few experiences of this kind will satisfy. When it comes to be a question of three and four pounders, with reasonably light tackle, the angler has a very pretty struggle on his hands for ten minutes or longer, and will carry away a picture of taut line and singing reel, of swirling brown water and gray rocks set in solemn green and roofed with blue and white, which he may summon back at will to muse over when the winter fire burns.

Nowhere in the world do the *fontinalis* grow to a larger size than in these waters. Dr. Henry writes of a seventeen-pound trout "in very poor condition," which he took in the Jacques Cartier river some eighty years ago (surely the king of his tribe!), and this river yields trout of eight or nine pounds weight to-day. All the streams that rise in the Park contain heavy fish, and many of the lakes as well, but in the latter they generally refuse the fly, or keep themselves out of reach of its temptations. Stories told by André this, or Moïse that, of great fellows *longue de même et large comme ça*, taken from some lake that he wishes you to visit, are generally found to be based on winter catches made through the ice. It is an odd fact that success in this winter fishing can only be expected in fine and bright weather. We city folk, who have trained ourselves to pay as little attention as possible to the influences of sun-

shine, humidity, barometric pressure and east wind, would laugh at him who made practical application of the wise old saw, "Do business with a man when the wind is in the north-west." Animals and fish are delicately sensitive to meteorological conditions, while there only remains to most of us an uneasy consciousness of these which we cannot turn to useful account. Yet are we not without some disappearing trace of the sense which foretells weather: Helen Keller, seated by her fireside, and lacking the guidance of hearing, smell or sight, is aware of impending changes and announces the arrival of the rain.

The countless, or uncounted, lakes and streams of the Park are ministered to by a very heavy rainfall. Perhaps there are two inches in the highlands for one on the shores of the St. Lawrence; certainly it is the saying of the countryside that a foot of snow *dans les paroisses* means two feet in the mountains. In

winter the snow smooths out your way through the woods, for all the fallen timber, stones, and underbrush are deeply buried. Should you follow in summer such a winter trail, you must look for the blazes eight or ten feet above the ground. Even in the summer-time the extremes of temperature are very great. Snow falls occasionally in July and August, and almost any clear still night there may be frost. It is astonishing to observe a thermometric range of sixty or seventy degrees on a perfectly fine day, but at this height above sea-level, and with no blanket of humidity to shield from the sun by day or keep in the warmth by night, you may pass from ten or twelve below freezing at five in the morning to ninety in the shade at eleven. More marvellous still is it that the human frame adapts itself quickly and easily to such variations, and that in so pure and fine an air, with plenty of hard work and a spare wood-

land diet, a whole series of minor ills which afflict the townsman are absent.

Here may we learn some of the secrets of right-living from our countrymen of French Canada, and the way to healthier, happier, and longer lives. Would you care to try conclusions on a forest trail with one of these dried-up, unmuscular-looking fellows who will never see fifty again! It is true that in heel-and-toe walking on the highway you might give him a mile in five, but through and over fallen timber, in muskeg and alder-swamp, up the rough hillsides and across streams on slippery logs, he will have you beaten, though he carries twice your load. Perhaps early hardships kill off the weaklings, and only the fittest survive, but, however this may be, here are men nearing fourscore who can do an amazing day's work. Such a one, after driving forty-two miles over bad and hilly roads with a heavy load, turned his horse home-

ward late in the afternoon; another thirteen miles covered, he found that the doctor was needed, and drove twenty miles to fetch him,—seventy-five miles between eight in the morning and one the next morning for a man well over seventy and a horse rising seventeen. To this pious soul the reason is very plain why he and his horse are never sick nor sorry, and he will tell you reverently that one who has not been stayed by his own affairs, by fatigue, or winter storms from helping a neighbour in time of need shall neither lack health nor a sound horse; for so will the good God order it.

A sturdy little beast twenty-one years of age has been known to cover this same forty-two miles in five hours, and a gaunt long-legged gray that was bowling in at a good pace had, as I found, put one hundred and eighty miles behind him in four days,—twice pulling his buckboard up three thousand feet of

hills over what the reader might sometimes hesitate to call a road. A friend of eighty, still of sound mind and memory, was a grown man when his great-grandfather died at the age of one hundred and five, and this ancestor came as a child to La Nouvelle France. It may be that as a boy he looked out wonderingly over the St. Lawrence on that June morning when the great fleet of one hundred and forty-one ships of the line and transports passed up on the tide bearing Wolfe to his triumph and death. A "link with the past" indeed, that a living man should remember the accounts of an eye-witness concerning events which took place before the fall of Quebec!

To this same old friend I once put some questions about an aged woman who was picking up sticks by the roadside. With a shade of reluctance, due doubtless to the fact that there was not after all many years between them, he

admitted that she was *"pas mal vieille,"* which was no more than the truth, as she was eighty-four. "Poor old thing," said I, "and where does she live?" He pointed with his whip to a little cottage on the hillside. "And does she live there all alone?" "But, no, she tends her mother." And true it was.

Nicolas Aubin in the full strength of manhood felled, trimmed, sawed, split, and piled three and a half cords of birch a day for six consecutive days, and had time left to help an old companion to complete his tale. Thomas Fortin, having driven an axe clean through his foot, *hopped* fifty miles home through the wilderness and the March snows, humming old world songs when the pain kept him sleepless at night that he might not distress his companion by groaning. So one might continue to recount Homeric deeds, if much did not remain to be told about the Park itself.

election in favour of virtue. Thus he becomes a faithful servant both of the government and his employer, and a really effective unit in the protection of the Park. The lessee, in turn, will neither practise nor tolerate any infringement of the laws which would imperil his lease or deplete of fish and game a country which he intends to revisit. He might not be actuated by these motives if he entered the Park casually, and considered nothing but his own sport or pleasure.

The plan adopted ranges together in identity of interest all those concerned in conservation, and though better and higher reasons exist for obedience to law and for moderation in sport, is it not well to enlist selfish considerations if they make for the object it is desired to attain? It may be added that the lessee has reasonable assurance of the extension of his privileges if they are not abused, and he knows that he will be

moderate areas to individuals and to clubs. The first requirement of these grants is that the lessee shall appoint a guardian, approved by the department, and shall cause the conceded territories to be protected in an adequate and satisfactory manner. Having a direct and personal interest in the results, he is careful to see that the guardian does not fail in his duty, and he is able to form a very correct judgement upon the point from his observation of conditions from year to year. The guardian, for his part, is immediately answerable to an individual who pays his salary and controls expenditures for building camps, cutting trails, making punts and supplying firewood. Perquisites of this kind are likely to depend to a large extent upon his own honesty and diligence; he contrasts his former precarious living as trapper or *braconnier* with the assured competence which he now earns more easily, and makes his

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The plan adopted ranges together in identity of interest all those concerned in conservation, and though better and higher reasons exist for obedience to law and for moderation in sport, is it not well to enlist selfish considerations if they make for the object it is desired to attain? It may be added that the lessee has reasonable assurance of the extension of his privileges if they are not abused, and he knows that he will be

compensated for moneys properly expended, if the government sees fit not to renew his term.

When the Park came into existence the eastern part of it was much exposed to attacks by poachers, who spared neither fish nor game; a few years longer and it would have been beyond saving. One by one clubs came into existence, until to-day seven of them form a *cordon* stretching along and guarding the boundary, with a result which has more than justified their formation, and the privileges which have been accorded to them. The guardians coöperate with one another under the general guidance of a most competent inspector, and the striking increase in fish, fur, and feather, is apparent not only in the region immediately protected, and in the interior of the Park, but also outside its boundaries. Trappers who fought bitterly against being excluded from this part of the public domain have become

reconciled, as they find that the overflow of wild life into the surrounding country enables them to bring more pelts to market than they did in the old days. Guardians, gillies, carters, porters, and canoemen live in whole or part on providing fishing and shooting for about one hundred persons, who leave each year not less than ten thousand dollars in their hands. Under no other arrangement could the conceded territory afford sport, and a living, to so many people, and in no other way would the balance between resources, and their use for legitimate purposes, be so nicely maintained.

On the western border of the Park the same system has been adopted, with, as it is said, the same excellent results, but of this I am not able to speak from personal knowledge and observation. Twenty years ago bear had nearly disappeared; now they are plentiful. Beaver were almost exterminated; they

have become a nuisance. A dam or lodge was a curiosity worth walking several miles to visit; to-day the animals may be seen at work on every stream. The numerous dams present a series of impassable obstacles to trout moving to and from their spawning-beds. They have also raised the level of many lakes, drowning the timber and destroying the feeding grounds of the large game. Beyond any question their presence in such numbers injures the fishing and shooting, does damage to the forest and makes the country wetter and more difficult to traverse. Where one finds several hundred yards of a familiar trail under water, and is obliged to make a *détour* through the thick woods, his admiration for the sagacity, diligence, and pertinacity of the beaver sensibly wanes, — these excellent virtues are sometimes uncomfortable to live with. The administration would do well for the Park were it to keep the beaver

within reasonable bounds, and might easily derive a handsome revenue from this source.

In this high-lying country the timber is too small to attract the lumbermen, and even as pulpwood it probably has but little value. Where the growth is slow the annual rings are close together and the wood is hard, resinous, and unsuitable for the mill. The few spruces of any size that exist are much scattered and are situated in such remote places that it would not pay to take them out. A very large part of the wooding is small deciduous timber of no present or prospective value where it stands. It does not seem too much to hope that the forest will long be spared, and certainly the loss and gain should be carefully measured before the axeman is given his will of it. The government is in a position to enforce additional and strict regulations with regard to any cutting that may be permitted; how desirable

this would be appears by the considered opinion of a man whose qualifications to make a statement on the subject are absolute,—that for every dollar's worth of lumber brought to market in Canada twenty dollars' worth are destroyed by fire.

It is probable that the whole country-side was burned over many years ago,—perhaps at the time of the great Saguenay fire, and that in the barrens already spoken of the soil itself was consumed. An Indian trapper of great age, who died a generation ago, affirmed that these were *en bois vert* in his youth. If his story is true it gives convincing proof that a century does little or nothing towards repairing the damage to the *humus*. The moss with which the barrens are now covered burns like tinder in dry weather, nor is it replaced in twenty-five years. Spare a moment then to extinguish your camp-fire, and see that the match with which you have

lighted your pipe is out before you throw it down. A little carelessness when the conditions are ripe would make of these plains and hillsides a blackened desolation, which the caribou, deprived of their winter pastures, would be forced to desert.

Nothing can surpass the September colours of this moss-country. The moss itself,—ivory-white, gray, lavender, and in the swales green and rusty red, is divided into parterres by the mountain laurel, Labrador tea and blueberry, every leaf of which becomes a perfect crimson flame. Wild currants and gooseberries are dressed in copper and bronze. Upon the luminous yellow of the birches it seems as if the sun were always shining, while here and there among them an aspen shows translucently green. The little solitary white spruces, despising change, satisfy themselves with a flawless symmetry of outline which makes their sombre black sis-

ters in the background look still more ragged and unkempt. Blue, deepening to purple, covers the distant and yet more distant ranges.

Yet a very little while and the scene will change. On the long slopes where the moose browse, the dwarfed red birches will stand a-shiver, their garments at their feet; with the coming of the snow all colour but the darkening green of spruce and balsam departs out of the land. Then the silence will fall,—not the mere lessened noise which we are accustomed to call silence, but an utter and all-enveloping soundlessness, without rustle of leaf, twitter of bird, or murmur of water, that fairly appals the soul. He who has stood solitary, and strained his ear in vain for some faint vibration of the air, will not think it strange that panic fear may descend on one who finds himself alone in this great stillness. So it happened to Johnny Morin in the old days when

the winter mails were carried sixty miles over the snow to the Lake St. John settlements. The regular postman Onésime Savard fell sick, and Johnny, as stout a walker as ever slipped on a snowshoe, took his place. Long before daylight, with pack on back, he left the last habitation behind him; by noon, with half his journey done, he was nearly thirty miles from the nearest human being. Has the reader ever been five miles, one mile, half-a-mile, from his next neighbour? A horror of loneliness and silence fell upon him, and he fled back in his own tracks for twenty miles to a little *cabane* built by himself for trapping where he rested, and cooked a pancake of flour and pork. Heartened by the food, and fearful of ridicule should he return without accomplishing his errand, Johnny steeled his heart, tightened his belt, and turning north again covered his second fifty miles without halt.

Providence be thanked, we are not as yet a people overmuch given to luxury and *gourmandise*. May the time be long deferred when this can be charged against us! If we prize the good things of life in their place and season, we are yet able for a greater gain to shed superfluities with cheerfulness, and like the philosopher to wear either fine clothes or rags. All that the gods give us they sell us, nor can we hope to get the better of this economic law. If you would appreciate herrings and boiled potatoes, be discriminating with champagne and *foie gras*. If you are to enjoy a twenty-five mile walk after the age of fifty, shun the insidious tram-car, and resist the fascinations of your own, or your friends', motors. Burgundy is a noble and heartsome drink, and long may the vines flourish that yield it, but see that you keep your taste for spring water unimpaired.

May one introduce at this point a reflection on the virtues of temperance? Wine makes glad the heart of man, but it plays the mischief with his wind, and destroys the delicate adjustment between hand and eye upon which his comfort and perhaps his life depend. I have yet to meet a thoroughly good man in the woods, white, red, or half-bred, who would touch alcohol until his day's work was done.

The voyager who attempts to assimilate his life in tents to his life in town fails rather miserably and misses the charm of both. If he is not ready to pay the price, it were better for him to remain within striking distance of modern means of transport, soft beds, and *entrées*. Let it not be thought, however, that the Park bill of fare is always a Spartan document. There are woodland dishes that might give new ideas to a Brillat-Savarin. Where can you find a better bird than the ruffed grouse,

though a black-duck in condition runs it close? Bear steaks are apt to make a man forget prudence; caribou tongue, caribou liver and bacon, and caribou saddle add not a little to the sum of human joy. Moose soup has a distinction and flavour that no other soup possesses. A great trout enveloped in wet paper and cooked in the ashes creates a profound impression on persons of taste and sensibility, while the same creature lightly smoked, and prepared for the table *à la* Finnan haddie, almost causes one to overlook the absence of eggs and bacon at breakfast. If you weary of trout from the frying-pan, try them boiled in the company of an onion, or cunningly made into a *ragoût* with potatoes, biscuits, and pork. The consumption of the vegetable at once most loved and most dreaded is attended in this happy land with no regrets, and glancing at him in this oblique manner, associated perhaps with a hard-tack for

luncheon, it were well to leave the subject rather than pursue it to what must be anti-climax.

Some years ago the government conveyed a small herd of wapiti to a suitable place, and there released them. Being strong, healthy creatures it was supposed that they would readily adapt themselves to their environment, and would be an interesting addition to the *fauna* of the Park, but the experiment wholly failed, as these superb deer, bred in captivity, refused to become wild again or to do for themselves. After a year in the woods they showed no fear of man, but only a certain graceful timidity which did not prevent them from taking food out of the hand. During the summer they prospered and grew fat, but in winter they were very helpless, and would have starved had they not been supplied with fodder. Wandering at length out to the settlements, they did such damage to crops that the finest

bull was slaughtered by an indignant *habitant,* and the rest of the herd had to be taken back whence it came. It appears that all the members of the deer tribe can be easily tamed, and being tamed, that they can scarcely be restored to the point of view of the wild creature, —a process, by the way, for which the English language lacks a word.

The Park can be approached on the west by the Lake St. John railway, on the south by the old Jacques Cartier road, and on the east by the St. Urbain road, but were it not for what the government has done to assist those who wish to visit it, an individual equipment of tents and canoes would be necessary in every case. Much in expense and labour is saved by the fact that the administration has erected and maintains lodges and rest houses where accommodation may be had at moderate charge, and an outfit obtained for more distant excursions. Thus it has been

made possible, without any great preparation, to shoot and fish within this preserve, or travel through it for the pure joy of seeing the myriad lakes, the untamed rivers, the far-stretching barrens girt about with granite hills that were old when the world was young.

The wise man will see to it that nothing that is not of indispensable daily use goes into his dunnage-bag. He will know that tinned *delicatessen* are better left on the grocer's shelves, and that an overcoat is as useless in the woods as a silk hat. Others it is vain to attempt to teach,—they must go to school at the feet of experience.

The first step of one who desires to enter the Park should be to communicate with the superintendent, Mr. W. C. J. Hall, at Quebec. Mr. Hall, to whom every sportsman must feel indebted for years of unsparing work spent in the organization and administration of this reserve, will assign to the applicant time

and place for his visit. As there are nearly three thousand square miles of unleased territory to choose from and exclusive but limited rights are conferred, there will be no possibility of being made the mark of another's rifle. Should the eastern side of the Park be selected, the chief inspector, Monsieur Thomas Fortin, will be instructed to engage men and arrange all the details of the *shikari*. How a sportsman may expect to fare in his hands will appear by Earl Grey's entry made in the visitors' book at La Roche on September 9th, 1911, which I take the liberty of copying: "I desire to thank the provincial government of Quebec for having given me the opportunity of visiting, as their guest, the Laurentides National Park, and to acknowledge the great pleasure which I have derived from all I have seen and done; and my regret that I cannot stay here longer. I also desire to congratulate the government on their good for-

tune in securing as their Chief Ranger Thomas Fortin, whose attractive character, unrivalled experience, and personal charm make him a delightful companion. I would like also to congratulate them on the wisdom of their policy in establishing so large a reserve, as a protection for various breeds of wild animals which would otherwise be in danger of extinction, and as a place of rest, refreshment, and recreation for those who love the quiet of the 'Wilds.' "

It is upon the intelligence and honesty of such men that the preservation of the Park, and the realization of the ideas which brought it into existence, must chiefly depend; but every Canadian who loves the free life out-of-doors, who desires to see the creatures of the woods and waters protected, who places these things before the getting of dollars by the immediate and destructive exploitation of our every natural resource, has

an interest for himself and his children in keeping these great pleasure-grounds inviolate, and a duty to exert such ability and influence as he may possess to that end.

A TALE OF THE GRAND JARDIN

His story comes back to me in sharp and vivid outline, though I look across years not a few to the telling of it, and to our little tent pitched high and lonely in the Grand Jardin des Ours. Who can say what share time and place, the wild August storm, and my friend's emotion, had in etching the picture so deeply on memory? Perhaps the impression is not communicable; perhaps it may be caught, if you will consent to make camp with us in those great barrens that lie far-stretching and desolate among the Laurentian Mountains.

We had been fishing the upper reaches of one of the little rivers that rise in the heart of the hills, quickly gather volume

from many streams and lakes, loiter for a few miles in dead-waters where a canoe will float, and then plunge two thousand feet, through amazing gorges, to the St. Lawrence and the sea. An evening rare and memorable, when the great trout were mad for the fly; more than a dozen of these splendid fellows, a man's full load, lay on the bank, where they rivalled the autumn foliage in crimson, orange and bronze. This first good luck came after many barren days, the smoke-house of bark was still unfilled,—so it happened that we did not leave the river till the darkness, and the thunder of an oncoming storm put down the fish. From the towering cumulus that overhung us immense drops plumped into the water like pebbles, and the steady roar of the advancing squall warned us to hasten. Gathering up the trout we dashed for the tent, to find it well-nigh beaten to the ground by the weight of the wind and the rain. Though

a clump of stunted spruces to windward gave a little shelter, we had much ado to keep the friendly canvas roof over our heads by anchoring it with stones.

After putting on dry clothes we explored the provision sack, discovering nothing more inviting than pork and crumbled biscuit. Tea there was, but even an old hand could not boil a kettle, or cook fish, in such a tumult of rain and wind. Three weeks of wandering had brought us to the lowest ebb, and our men, who had departed in the morning for an outpost of civilization where supplies could be obtained, would scarcely return in such weather. We guessed, and rightly as it turned out, that they had chosen to spend the night at La Galette, the nerve-extremity, responding faintly to impulses from the world of men, where the gossip of the countryside awaited them.

So were we two alone in one of the loneliest places this wide earth knows.

Mile upon mile of gray moss; weathered granite clad in ash-coloured lichen; old *brûlé,*—the trees here fallen in windrows, there standing bleached and lifeless, making the hilltops look barer, like the sparse white hairs of age. Only in the gullies a little greenness,—dwarfed larches, gnarled birches, tiny firs a hundred years old,—and always moss, softer than Persian rug,—moss to the ankle, moss to the knee, great boulders covered with it, the very quagmires mossed over so that a careless step plunges one into the sucking black ooze below.

Through the door of the tent the lightning showed this endless desolation, and a glimpse of the river forcing its angry way through a defile.

When the sorry meal was over we smoked, by turns supporting the tent pole in the heavier gusts. My companion was absent-minded and restless; he seemed to have no heart for the small

talk of the woods, and to be listening for something. Breaking into an attempt of mine at conversation, he asked abruptly:—

"Did you ever hear about the disappearance of Paul Duchêne?"

The name came back to me in a misty way, and with some tragic association, but the man himself I had never known. Any sort of a yarn was welcome that would take one's mind off the eeriness and discomfort of our situation, and H——required no urging. He spoke like a man who has a tale that must be told, and I try to give you neither more nor less than what he said:—

"Duchêne was in camp with me years ago, in fact it was he that brought me into this country in the old days before trails were cut, and when no one came here but himself and his brothers, and a few wandering Montagnais Indians. The Duchênes were trappers, and they guarded the secrets of the place very

jealously, which was natural enough as it yielded them game and fur in plenty. Though he showed me good sport, it was quite plain that he never told all that he knew. The paths he followed, if indeed they were paths, were not blazed. He seemed to steer by a sense of direction, and from a general knowledge of the lie of the mountains, valleys and rivers. Seldom did we return by the way that had taken us to the feeding-grounds of moose or caribou. Duchêne was contemptuous of easy walking, and almost seemed to choose the roughest going, but he jogged along in marvellous fashion through swamps and windfalls, with a cruel load on his back. The fellow was simply hard as nails, and, measured by my abilities, was tireless.

"Looking back to that autumn, it strikes me that there was something demonic in his energy. Food and rest did not matter to him. He was always ready to go anywhere,—leaving me to follow

as best I could; and though I was a pretty stout walker, and carried but little compared to him, it was only shame that kept me from begging for mercy on the long portages.

"Only a few weeks after our trip together Duchêne went out of his mind, and took to the woods. For ten days he wandered in the mountains without food, gun or matches, but he appears to have partially regained his senses, and made for La Galette, where he arrived in a very distressing condition. Under his father's roof he fell into a harmless, half-witted existence, which lasted for several months. With the spring the fit came upon him again and he disappeared. The brothers followed his trail for days, but lost it finally in the valley of the Enfer, nor were they ever able to discover further trace of him. No man knows what end he made, nor where in this great wilderness his bones are bleaching.

"You have heard, perhaps, the belief of the Montagnais,—strange medley of Paganism and Christianity, that those who die insane without the blessing of a priest become wendigos,—werewolves, with nothing human but their form, soulless beings of diabolic strength and cunning, that wander for all time seeking only to harm whomever comes their way. A black superstitious race these Indians are, and horribly sincere in their faith. They shot down a young girl with the beads of her rosary, because her mind was weakening, and they thought thus to avert the fate from her, and themselves. You would not doubt the truth of this, had you seen the look in the eyes of the man who told me that he had been a helpless witness of the murder.

"I have never spoken of what happened to me the following summer, because one does not like to be disbelieved: perhaps to-night, with the storm-hags

abroad and the voices of the sky filling our ears, you will understand. Our tent is pitched so near that infernal spot,—the whole thing takes possession of me again. I keep listening—

"You know the Rivière à l'Enfer, but you have not seen its head-waters, and never will if you are wise. A queer lot of tales old and new, but all pointing to prodigious trout, took me past the mouth of the canyon that gives the river its name. A bold man might follow this cleft in the mountain, but he would go in peril of his life; the precipitous ascent on the left side is safer, if not easier.

"Duchêne would not guide me there, but he gave an extraordinary account of the fishing in the lake which is the source of the river. There is an Indian tradition, and these traditions usually have a foundation of some kind, that it contains trout of tremendous size. Duchêne asserted that stout lines he had set

through the ice, in the morning were found broken. Trying again, with the heaviest gear, his tackle was smashed as easily. Heaven knows what the lake holds; nothing came to my fly but half a dozen ink-black trout a few inches long.

"Very little over a hundred years ago it was firmly believed that an active volcano existed not far from here, and this lake, at the very summit of one of the hills to the northwest of us, fills to the brim what looks like an old crater.

"The good fellows who were with me did not seem to like this fancy of mine to push to the source of the stream, but I cannot say whether this was due to the uncanny reputation of the place, or to the fact that we had nothing but Duchêne's vague description, and the flow of the water to guide us. It was a heavy task to get a canoe up to the lake through that difficult country, and it is very safe to say that mine was the first

craft ever launched on its gloomy surface.

"I began fishing at once, but nothing stirred; this was what one might expect in water without a ripple, beneath a cloudless sky; there could be no fair trial under such conditions, before the time of the evening rise. I made some soundings, but my two lines together did not fetch bottom a hundred feet from the shore. The slope under water is very steep, and huge fragments of stone hanging there, seem ready, at a touch, to plunge into the depths. It is hard to describe the colour of the water; like neither the clear brown of the river we fished to-day, nor the opaque blackness of the swamp rivulets;—transparent ink comes nearest to it.

"No stream feeds the lake, but there must be powerful springs below, for the *décharge* flows strongly through a channel of boulders, with water weed moving in the current like something snaky and

alive. The tent was pitched on a patch of black sand at the farther shore, the only level spot we could find, and, climbing a few feet higher, I looked out over the bleakest prospect of crag and valley, of moss and granite, till the eye met and welcomed the line of the horizon, and the blue above. Beside me three dead whitened firs, the height of a man, were held in a cleft of the rock, and some fantastic turn of the mind made of the place a wild and dreary Calvary.

"The sea is old and the wind is old, but they are also eternally young. Of the elements it is only earth that speaks of the never hasting never resting passage from life to death,—where the years of a man are an unregarded moment in the march of all things toward that end which may be the beginning. Here on this peak of the world's most ancient hills it seemed to me as though creation had long passed the flood, and was ebbing to its final low tide.

"There fell upon me that afternoon one of those oppressions of the spirit that never weigh so heavily as when they visit you in the full tide of health, under the wide and kindly sky. How shall one account for the apprehensions that crowd upon you, and seem not to have their birth within? In what subtle way does the universe convey the knowledge that it has ceased to be friendly? Even in the full sunlight, the idea of spending a night there alone was unwelcome.

"Soon after arriving I had despatched my men to La Galette for supplies, as we did to-day, but the distance is shorter by the old Chemin de Canot trail, and they should easily return before sunset. Although knowing this well, and that nothing but serious mischance would detain them, it was with a very definite sense of uneasiness that I watched the canoe cross the lake, saw them disembark, and in a few seconds disappear.

"The afternoon wore away in little occupations about the camp, and in fishing along the shore; later on I intended to scramble around the edge of the lake to the canoe, and try casting in the middle. Out there, quite beyond the reach of my flies, one tremendous rise showed that Duchêne's stories were not wholly fables, and when evening fell there might be a chance to prove them true. But this fortune was not for me; another must discover the secrets of that mysterious water.

"Already the barometer had shown that a swift change of weather was at hand; gradually, and scarcely perceptibly, the ever thickening veil of cirrus mist dimmed the brightness of the sun, until, pale and lifeless, it disappeared in tumultuous clouds that rose to meet it. As the storm came rapidly on, it seemed to me, in the utter stillness, that I could hear the rush of the vapours writhing overhead. Then with a roar

that fairly cowed the soul, the wind, leaping up the mountain side, fell upon the little habitation, and would have carried it away had my whole weight not been thrown against the tent-pole. In the darkness that drew like a curtain across the sky I waited miserably, dreading I knew not what, beyond the gale and the javelins of the lightning.

"Sitting with an arm around the pole I heard, through the wind and the rain, a cry. Even answering it, I doubted that it was human; when it came again I tried to think that some solitary loon was calling to his familiar spirits of the storm. Never have I passed such an hour under canvas. The wind had the note you hear in a gale of sea. Lightning showed the surface of the lake torn into spindrift that was swept across it like rank on rank of sheeted ghosts. The thunder seemed to have its dwelling-place in both earth and sky.

"In a lull to gather force for a fresh assault, the cry again: again, and nearer, when the wind burst upon the mountain-top, as though released from some mighty dam in the heavens. This was not voice of beast or bird, and courage fell from me like a garment. The numbness of terror possessed me; I sat with nails digging into the wood, saying over and over some silly rhyme. Close at hand the cry;—heart-breaking, dreadful, unbearable . . .

"Wrenching myself free, as from the grip of a nightmare, I leaped to the door of the tent; five paces away in the howling blackness stood something in the form of a man, and in one stricken moment the lightning revealed what I would give much that is dear to blot from memory. As the creature sprang, with its hellish voice filling my ears, I flung into the water, diving far and deep. Swimming with frantic strokes for the farther shore, I did not, in the

greater fear, bethink me that this indeed was the Lake of Hell. The pursuing cry, rising ever and anon above all other sounds, kept nerve and muscle strung in the agony of the desire to escape. Crawling out exhausted and breathless, but stopping no instant, I plunged down the mountain-side;—staggering, falling, clutching, somehow I reached the bottom, and pitched into a bed of moss, like an animal shot through the neck.

"When I could breathe and feel and hear again, my ears caught only the sounds of the retreating storm and of a rapid on the river. Stumbling painfully towards it, I saw with inexpressible joy the light of a fire, where my men had camped when overtaken by darkness and the tempest.

"The next day I went out of the woods, the men returning to bring in tent and canoe. They met with nothing,

but I don't believe that their heart was in the search."

"And what in God's name was it?"

"Pray Him it was not poor Duchêne in the flesh."

BULLETS AND THEIR BILLETS

THE man whose purpose in carrying a rifle through the woods begins and ends with the death of an animal, will resent the introduction of matters irrelevant, and is advised to leave these pages to him who counts the antlers but an item in a very various bag. Before the latter I expose such divers spoils of the chase as memory has chosen to bear homeward to her modest hall, attempting no apology for divagations beyond the limits which my title would seem to impose.

Fitting it is, at the outset, to pay one's humble duty to the great goddess of fortune, for surely no one will deny indebtedness to her in all that concerns the

pursuit of large game,—in weather, in time, in the manner of shot that offers and in the shot itself. It is only the fool that hath said in his heart there is no such thing as luck. What say you to a bullet from a rifle aimed at a moose a mile away, accomplishing its errand? Here is the story, from a source that commonly flows clear of mis-statement and exaggeration. Two young men, in the course of a long canoe trip through northern Ontario, broke camp early one autumn morning. Paddling across a lake of some size, they descried a log shanty, and put ashore with the idea of procuring some variation from their monotonous diet of beans and bacon. An Indian opened the door to their knock, grunted "*Bojou,*" and before answering their question as to fresh meat scanned the other side of the lake with attention. His eyes fixed upon a dark object, no more than a speck, which the canoemen had not noticed, and reaching back

into the cabin he drew out a battered Winchester, squatted behind a stump whereon he rested his rifle, elevated the muzzle far beyond the range of the sights, and fired. Through the clear morning air they saw a great splash, and the speck disappeared from sight. It took two pairs of sturdy arms nearly twenty minutes to reach the place where a moose lay dead at the water's edge with a bullet through his heart, and a little later they went their way with as much tough steak as they cared to carry.

Neither you nor I saw the shot, but then we never saw a drive from the tee find the hole three hundred yards away, and both things, if unlikely, are still conceivable.

A third of this distance is probably the usual limit of effective shooting; indeed it is seldom decent or sportsmanlike to pull trigger at such a range, for you can but hope to cripple a beast that

there will be very slender chance of following up and finishing.

Yet, at six hundred yards, an unscrupulous rifleman (I will not say sportsman) exterminated a band of six caribou which he left to rot on the mountain-side. Though he shot from a rest, and was aided by telescopic sights, it was a remarkable performance, and one that may remain a record for accurate marksmanship and cynical brutality.

Even the broadside of a moose, five hundred yards away, is a mark that few men are able to hold on with any assurance. The difficulty of sighting at this distance under varying conditions is extreme, although the rifle may be of high power and low trajectory, but I have heard of a clean and satisfactory kill with the second shot, where the first bullet gave absolute indications as to windage and elevation.

On the western plains, and in mountain stalking, long chances are no doubt legitimately taken, but in the heavily-wooded and difficult country of Quebec and northern Ontario it is rarely permissible to attempt shots beyond three hundred and fifty or four hundred yards. Occasionally a long shot succeeds, but the spirit which restrains a man from burning powder, unless there is a reasonable prospect of success, is more to be commended than one of mere unthinking optimism.

A good glass is invaluable for determining whether an animal carries a warrantable head,—it is not only "cows in the distance" that "have long horns"! Regrets and apologies are often heard for a too hasty shot, where antlers prove to be small or ill-formed. Time and opportunity are generally given for that careful inspection which would prevent a life being taken without justification, and preserve the tak-

er's self-respect. There is usually this excuse for precipitate shooting, that Indian and French Canadian gillies are far too ready with their "*tirez, tirez,*"—a suggestion difficult to resist. In theory it is easy to say "bring me in sight of game, and then fall behind and keep still," but this puts rather a cruel strain on men whose speech centres are easily excited, and who may not have perfect confidence in your ability to judge, and accept, the favourable instant.

A glass not only discovers animals which would escape even the trained eye of the woodsman, but often saves you a long stalk; moreover it gives you many an interesting half-hour with moose feeding in the water-lilies, bear gathering berries or digging for ants, smaller creatures carrying on the affairs of their daily lives, or caribou playing quaintly and solemnly together in some marshy meadow.

It is pleasant to refer to an exhibition of coolness, of sportsmanship, and of self-restraint. After days of toil and disappointment, a caribou with heavy antlers was stalked to within a couple of hundred yards, and stood, unalarmed, while its points were deliberately counted through the glass and found to total twenty-eight. Once again were they gone carefully over with the same result; as this lacked one of the number borne by a head already adorning my friend's hall, he allowed the fine creature to depart in peace.

One bitter cold morning in September, a canoe was being forced up a Laurentian lake against wind and sea. Sleet stung the face; two stout paddlers were put to it to make way against the gale which chilled the thinly clad passenger. He envied the canoemen the exercise which kept them warm, and their advantage in kneeling, and not sitting, in the water which slopped over

the gunwale from time to time. In such weather one would scarcely hope to see anything carrying horns; sensible beasts would keep the shelter of the woods. However, as the canoe slowly advanced, freezing fingers held the glass on lake edge and mountain side. Where the lake narrowed towards the middle, something on the opposite side caught the eye,—something which looked like the roots of a spruce overturned by the wind close to the shore,—roots curiously symmetrical in their arrangement. At six hundred yards the observer's mind, after swinging from doubt to certainty and back again, settled to conviction. A moose lay there, the body entirely concealed, showing only a stately head, with horns still in velvet. Yet he hesitated to speak, knowing how disconcertingly the keen-eyed *chasseur* resolves your discovery into stump or stone. The slow, noiseless progress continued, and at five hundred yards indubitable ears were

apparent. No longer could words be withheld: *"Je vois un orignal avec une panache magnifique."* The men looked, and looked in vain. Natural politeness forbade dissent, but it was none the less evident that assent was withheld. The canoe crept along the opposite side,—one pair of eyes, aided by the Zeiss binocular, intent upon the antlers, endeavouring to appraise their spread, conformation and palmation, two others scanning the shore line intently. Four hundred yards, three hundred and fifty, three hundred: and now the bowman says in the muffled voice of the woods, *"Ah, entre les deux epinettes."* What now to do? Shooting from the canoe was impossible, with such a sea running. A retreat, followed by an approach up wind in full view of the animal, was a manœuvre which could scarcely be conducted without alarming him, and inviting his quiet departure to convenient cover, but one could not fire at horns

and ears. There was nothing for it but a shot across the lake when he should see fit to arise, and as a few seconds would carry him to shelter, *Monsieur* did not even dare to turn and scramble up the steep bank beside which the canoe was lying. Accordingly he steps into the icy water to the knee, and feeling the chill penetrate his marrow, suggests the firing of a shot to bring the creature to his feet. Not to be thought of! While still pondering how long a human being could stand thus and remain able to shoot, the moose raises his huge bulk, and slowly turning, offers a fine broadside chance. A lucky bullet finds him behind the shoulder, his knees give, the Frenchmen chorus *"Vous l'avez,"* after a few heavy steps he falls, and never moves again. Fifty-six inches in the span,—no extraordinary breadth it is true, even for Quebec, but with an unusually graceful conformation, a perfect balance and three tines on each brow beam.

Consider the good fortune involved in every phase of the occurrence! Eight o'clock in the morning of the first lawful day. But for a conspiracy of happy chances the record would have been of an uncomfortable, unrewarded chase, with the added chagrin of seeing a fine head disappear, when to shoot or approach were alike impossible. The attitude that such an incident should engender is one of thankfulness and humility; the obvious lesson is to carry a glass, and be vigilant in the use of it.

Failure to do this may lead to worse than disappointment. In our broad Canadian solitudes there is but little danger of shooting at one's fellow-creatures,—a danger which the use of a glass almost entirely eliminates, but none the less strange and awkward mistakes occur. The telling about one may perhaps save some unfortunate the expense of purchasing the experience.

At the head-waters of a Laurentian river lies a lake six miles long, which is much frequented by the larger inhabitants of the wilderness. On a stormy September afternoon, *Monsieur* and his guide struck into the heavy country at the foot of the lake, the Zeiss being left behind as even this slight encumbrance would make a difference when forcing a way through the very dense growth. Emerging upon the shore at a point some miles from camp, after a long *détour,* they came upon the freshest traces of a large and a small bear. The prints were sharp in the wet sand, even changing colour: the animals must be close at hand. It was easy to follow their leisurely course along the beach, and as a stiff gale was blowing, there seemed to be fair prospect of surprising the pair behind some wooded point. But a few hundred yards had been covered when André, walking on the outside, said "*Voilà votre ours.*" Five hundred yards

away, on a sand-spit running out into the lake, he saw in the failing light the characteristic heavy bodies, the short legs and low-swinging heads. At four hundred yards, as the animals had turned and were making slowly for the woods, there seemed nothing for it but to take the chance. The first shot went low, but the second got home, and in such time as weary men may do a quarter-mile over sand, stones and fallen timber, the couple came up with—a two year old cow moose! One glance through the glass would have shown that, instead of two bears on a sandbar, two moose were standing in the water beyond it,—cut off at mid-leg by the intervening ridge, and presenting with quite diabolical deceptiveness the appearances described. The government of Quebec does not permit war to be waged against women, so the effect of the unhappy bullet was to secure a supply of meat (much needed by the way) at some two dollars

a pound, if the penalty were exacted. The incident was of course reported, but the circumstances were judged to be so extenuating that the fine was remitted.

What irritating bungles may be made, even by those used to fire-arms, and not subject to buck-fever! Here is a story as I have heard it told. The teller was tramping after caribou through the heavy snows of early January, and late in the afternoon, on rounding the spruce-covered point of a lake, two were seen within easy shot,—scarcely more than a hundred yards away. A cartridge was thrown from magazine to barrel, careful aim was taken at the larger animal, and the comment of Moïse on a clean miss was *"dessus."* Another shot, another miss, and the same remark. The bewildered creature scarcely changed position while five deliberate attempts were made to take its life, and each time did Moïse, with sorrowful politeness, announce the shot too high. At this

moment a bargain seeker might have purchased a rifle, with the owner thrown in, at a sacrificial discount from list prices! The magazine now being empty, the rifle was brought down from the shoulder, that a sixth cartridge might be slipped into the barrel. The sight was at three hundred yards! Many hours before, a companion, who was to have the first shot, had come upon a small band of caribou lying in the midst of a snowy expanse, and, as their bodies were not in sight, had suggested that the protagonist of this tale should fire at three hundred yards, to bring them to their feet. Then was the sight elevated, and so it had remained.

If the little narrative has any interest for the reader, he may care to hear the sequel or sequels. As to the caribou first seen other counsels prevailed, and two of them were accounted for by two clever shots; while the animal who had so gallantly stood the fusillade fell to

the sixth bullet, after the sight was lowered, as did also his mate, who happened to move into line at the instant of firing.

The handling of a rifle must become as automatic as the manipulation of a knife and fork, or some misadventure will sooner or later befall. Were there not sad necessity for it, one would scarcely venture the observation that under no conceivable circumstances should the barrel be allowed to cover a human being. The boy ought to be taught that to forget this for a moment, with any weapon, even when it has been taken to pieces and is in process of cleaning, is an unpardonable breach of etiquette, to be followed inexorably by a hiding.

Unless this is well learned, a hair-trigger adds a new danger to the use of firearms, and the following incident leads one to question whether this device confers an advantage commensurate with the risk it involves.

Two sportsmen of mature experience descried a bear five or six hundred yards away. They were obliged to make a *détour* in order to approach it, and left their men on a knoll to signal the movements of the animal. Overshooting their mark, the presence of the bear was first notified to them by a crashing of branches sixty or seventy yards to the left and rear. Both wheeled suddenly, finger on trigger, and both rifles went off before they were brought to the shoulder. The bear departed hastily without any ceremonies of leave-taking, while his pursuers looked blankly at the woods which received him, and then at each other. In sitting down on a log, and breaking into inextinguishable laughter, they probably took their discomfiture in the best possible spirit, but afterwards it was remembered that, as they swung round, one had been covered for an instant by a rifle with a hair-trigger, and with a finger on that trigger which

might just as easily have exploded the charge a fraction of a second earlier.

The experience, if an annoying one, was certainly pleasanter than that of an old French trapper who was attacked by a she-bear. Females with cubs sometimes forget the timidity which characterizes the species, and may become very ugly and dangerous. My friend, having no better weapon than a sheath-knife, put in practice a trick which saved his life, but left him with a badly mauled arm and shoulder that showed deep scars to the day of his death. Snatching a branch of balsam with the left hand, Morin threatened the bear with it, thus diverting attention to his left side; while this was being cruelly torn and bitten, he kept striking stoutly with the knife in his right hand till, at length, he reached the heart. They fell together,—the bear dead, the man unconscious, and each soaked in the other's blood. On reviving he staggered to camp, where,

tended by a companion, he lay many days on his *sapin* couch before the wounds healed, and strength returned. This method of securing a carriage-rug demands unusual nerve, — it is not recommended to amateurs.

Speaking of the recovery of Morin, who nearly bled to death, reminds one that woodland remedies are singularly efficacious. Joe Villeneuve gave himself a bad axe-cut on the foot, made nothing of it with his usual pluck, and continued for two or three days to tramp under his load. When Sunday came, he proceeded to treat the nasty inflamed gash in the following fashion. First he hobbled to neighbouring trees collecting spruce-gum, he then warmed water and thoroughly washed the foot, the next step was to melt the gum in an iron spoon, and pour the boiling stuff into the wound! There was never a flinch nor a grunt, but his face grew drawn and white with the pain. This is effective

antiseptic surgery, but one is glad now to substitute less heroic treatment, with the aid of a simple outfit of drugs and bandages.

Shots at moving animals over two hundred yards away are seldom effective, yet I have seen three bullets out of four hit a galloping caribou at two hundred and fifty yards. None were immediately fatal; it was not till the last was fired that the animal showed signs of being struck.

A note of satisfaction was discernible in the voice of a man who summed up his autumn shooting thus,—"One very large caribou, but so old that the horns had gone back,—killed him off-hand while moving through the trees,—sight at three hundred yards, — broke his neck,—carried the rifle a hundred and fifty miles and only pulled trigger once." Well enough, but perhaps he would have been entitled to a higher place in regard had he refused so doubtful a chance.

We have dropped from a mile, to ranges of a couple of hundred yards, where still there are a good many quite forgivable misses; what shall one say, however, of utter failures at the distance of a pistol shot? When twenty-two futile bullets are despatched at a pair of caribou but thirty yards away, so engrossed in a private battle as to be oblivious of the firing, and this by a marksman who would ordinarily put a bullet in a hat at a hundred paces, some explanation must be looked for. Again, shooting from a canoe is far from easy, but one cartridge, out of a magazine-full, should get home in such a mark as the side of a moose presents at sixty yards; yet one recollects hopelessly misdirected shots, where many seconds were at disposal for bringing the rifle quietly to bear. There is of course no real aiming when this happens,—no actual alignment of the sights with the target, and one is driven to suppose that

the powerful nervous excitation due to finding game after days of tense expectation, sets up a rush of efferent activity which cannot be stayed or controlled. As a blow leads to a blow without interval of conscious thought, so the sudden stimulus sends rifle to shoulder, and finger to trigger, without that moment of deliberation upon which success depends. In every game of skill there is perhaps an instant and a situation analogous to this experience, and the cure lies in some appropriate inhibition (in golf, "slow back"),—but the lesson is difficult to learn.

It has always seemed an interesting thing, that the woodsman who hears the reports of a rifle in the distance, seldom errs in his conclusion as to whether the shots have been successful. When they follow one another rapidly, the comment will be "*Il a mal tiré,*" but where a reasonable time elapses between them he will say "*Il l'a tué, il a bien tiré.*" Ex-

perience tells him that a certain interval indicates the absence of undue haste, and of the pernicious incidents that attend it. Thus these untutored people can gauge, with very fair accuracy, the psychological state of a person two miles away!

By what right indeed one calls them untutored I do not know, for they have been all their lives at the best school in the world. They have learned to see with their eyes and hear with their ears, a touch tells them the age of a footprint, taste approves or rejects food and water, and the sense of smell is strikingly developed. All their knowledge is co-ordinated, and available when wanted: muscle and eye have been taught to work in harmonious relation.

The *habitant,* — not the city but the country dweller, is a man of his hands. Give him the simplest tools, the roughest material, and he will fashion you boat, house, cart or violin. A broken shaft or

smashed canoe will cause you but little delay on your journey: something will be devised of almost laughable simplicity to meet the emergency.

On a certain arduous voyage, where it was necessary to go very light indeed, the only tin pail developed a hole in the bottom of so nicely calculated a size that, at the moment when the water came to the boil, it had all run out. No tea in the woods: condition unendurable! Many cures were tried, — while the half-breed watched his masters' futilities with something like a twinkle in his solemn eye. When everyone had had a hand at the tinkering, and matters were worse rather than better, he took the vessel, neatly rounded the hole, shaved down a rifle bullet, delicately rivetted it in place, and *voilà,* a teapot that performed its functions quite perfectly.

The way in which the wood folk use their eyes excites admiration, mingled

perhaps with chagrin at our own blindness,—blindness of the mind rather than of the organ itself. Returning to camp after a day's fishing in the upper reaches of a North Shore river, the path carried us beside a pool that was on a friend's beat. My companion was plodding along in the rear with bowed head, five salmon on his back. As we came out on the stretch of sand that lay between the river and the high wooded bank, I made one of those purposeless remarks that pass for conversation. "I wonder if Mr. ——— got anything here?" The reply—"He got two salmon here," brought me to a standstill. All day long we had been together, on pools some miles above. We had seen no one, no sound could have carried the distance, and yet without delaying, glancing around, or even raising his head the gaffman made this announcement in his quiet even tones.

"In the name of wonder, Comeau, how do you know?—— Surely you are joking."

"I am not joking, Sir, nor do I know, but I think that Mr.——— took two salmon here."

"Stop then, and set down your bag: let me try to work this out."

The day was fair, nor had a drop of rain fallen during the two weeks in which we had daily visited and fished the pool. The little beach of fine gray sand was covered with confused footprints—mere formless depressions. The boulders by the river were dry, and gave no clue. The grass along the edge of the forest showed no trace of fish having been laid down there. Five minutes of intent examination left me no wiser, and a little piqued at being unable even to guess what thing it was, there before us, that told my companion the story, I gave the riddle up, and asked humbly for the answer. The

mild brown eyes, that seemed always to be looking at something remote, something below the surface, turned to me. The gentle voice was without hint of pity or superiority.

"You see those footprints?"

"Of course; every inch of the sand has been walked over again and again, and in all directions."

"Yes, but I mean that line of footprints."

Patiently a series of impressions was indicated, which it seemed just possible to sort out of the intricate pattern. They led to the water from a point perhaps ten paces distant from it.

"And which way was the man walking who left those traces?"

"How should I know, the sand flows in when the foot leaves it, so that no one could say with assurance where the heel rested or where the toe."

"But was he walking forward or backward?"

The reader's quicker intuition has doubtless enabled him to solve the mystery. A line of footprints there was, and close beside it another. These were slightly deeper towards the woods, and away from the river: also the steps had been short: such steps as one would take who had played a salmon at the river's edge, was backing slowly to bring it to gaff, and digging his heels in firmly as he retreated. On the first glance at this page of woodland script, so obscure to the eye of the townsman, it had been deciphered, and as inquiry showed, with perfect accuracy.

Comeau, whose modesty is not the least delightful of his characteristics, is fond of telling how his worst shot was his best, how with his rifle he missed a loon, and killed not only the bird he aimed at but another. Holding on what appeared to be the larger of two loons, the bullet went wide, passed through the head of the other, which was really the

nearer, was deflected, and decapitated the mate on the *ricochet*. The story, and much else that is interesting, will be found in his "Life and Sport on the North Shore." The chief defect of this fascinating book is persistent understatement of the author's personal exploits!

While Comeau's own five senses are trained to a marvellous pitch of fineness, I have heard him assert that Indians, or at any rate some Indians, possess a sense he lacks. Not otherwise could he explain the ease and swiftness with which they are able to traverse the woods at night, where an experienced white man is almost helpless. An Indian with this faculty will make a night march through a trackless country, of as many leagues as he is able to compass in the daytime, and apparently with no greater difficulty nor fatigue. This must involve in the first place a sense of the north,—a rare gift that few white men

possess, and also a perception of things otherwise than by sight and touch.

Many opportunities occur of testing faculties that have not been dulled, or atrophied, by the life of civilization. I note a recent one. The season of 1912 was in many ways remarkable. Early in the summer, abnormal conditions developed, and even when the sky was absolutely cloudless, the sun did not give its usual heat. At noon the eye could glance at it without discomfort. The days were cold: the clear nights were relatively warm. High in the upper air some impalpable veil shielded the earth from the sun's rays, and, conversely, prevented the radiation of heat at night. It was not water vapour, for there were none of the attendant manifestations in the way of solar or lunar haloes. If the gentlemen at Washington and Toronto, who bind and loose the four winds for us, noticed these conditions they did not, so far as I am aware, communicate their

knowledge, or advance any theory to account for something which was affecting profoundly the inhabitants of the globe. Not until the very close of the year did little paragraphs begin to appear in the papers. These appearances had been noted in several European countries, the deficiency in the sun's heat measured, the different celestial phenomena collated, and the hypothesis of volcanic dust advanced to account for them. Day after day, in the heart of the woods, Indians and Frenchmen were perfectly aware that all was not right; the sun was *malade,* the moon *blême,* the sunset sky showed no colours, the great besom of the northwest wind continually failed to sweep the heavens to pure intense blueness. Wherefore the crops did not ripen, the oats were gathered green, and the people in northern Quebec practically lost their season's labour in the fields. They knew not of the eruption in the Alaskan islands which pro-

jected vast quantities of dust into the atmosphere, but the effects of this were very plain to senses almost as alert and keen as those of the creatures they pursue.

The attitude of modern science is not to dismiss things as incredible, but to hold judgment in reserve, awaiting proof and the examination of evidence. Were it not so, I would scarcely dare to drag within the four corners of a discursive paper this Indian camp-fire story.

The narrator is a man of the highest integrity and truthfulness, moreover, like Comeau, he is a careful and accurate observer. However you may explain the incident, the character of the man compels one to put aside the theory of intentional falsification. In the years of his strenuous youth Bastien was chosen to accompany a party engaged upon government survey duty in the Labrador peninsula. The summer's

work had been extended as long into the autumn as the Chief dared; now they were hurrying back, by forced marches, to gain the coast before the freezing up of the lakes and rivers. Breaking camp one morning at sunrise, a portage of five miles was made to navigable water, and there Bastien discovered that his sheath-knife, indispensable companion of such journeyings, had been left at the last sleeping-place. Time was far too precious to allow him to return, so after searching to see if it had not been stowed somewhere in the scanty packs, he was compelled to embark without it. A long day of travelling advanced the party fifty miles, bringing them to the junction of the stream they had been descending with a larger river. Here they found a band of Indians encamped, on the way to winter hunting-grounds. After the custom of the race, a member of the band was "making medicine" to discover whither they should direct

their course for game. A lodge had been built, and the naked medicine man was proceeding with his incantations, and wrestling with the spirits he had invoked. Half in jest, half in earnest,—for Bastien is himself an Indian, he appealed to the conjurer to recover the knife, the latter agreed to attempt it. From time to time groans, and agonized voices, reached the ears of those outside. "O it is far—it is far—the way is rough—I am tired—I am tired—the mountains are high." Then for a long time there was silence. At length the conjurer crept forth exhausted, foaming at the mouth, covered with sweat.

"Look to-morrow in the third spruce tree, on the right side of the trail,—there you will find your knife." It was more curiosity than conviction that led Bastien next morning to go a few yards along the trail. In the third spruce tree to the right his knife was sticking.

Comeau speaks French and English with a copious vocabulary, and no trace of accent,—a much rarer acquirement than is generally supposed. He knows several dialects of Indian, has shot everything on four legs from the Rockies to Ungava, is an expert telegrapher, and the only doctor and midwife in a great stretch of country on the North Shore. It may be interesting to record that his idea of the finest and most dangerous sport that our continent affords, is the harpooning of horse-mackerel from an open boat, and few have so wide and varied an experience upon which to base an opinion. He and two others, a great doctor and a great lawyer,—wonder-workers all three by the standard of common men, have the same dreamy brown eyes, that effortlessly, with an effect of laziness, seem to penetrate what arrests the ordinary vision, and concern themselves with the sub-obvious.

Acknowledging indebtedness again to this remarkable man, I offer the reader this psychological riddle. Persons lost in the woods walk in a circle from right to left, and to this there appears to be no exception. In winter the snow has many times revealed such a tragedy,—the first hesitation of the mind uncertain of direction, wanderings at random to every point of the compass, the impulse to the left which finally asserts itself, a returning curve, bringing the unfortunate back to his own path, eager acceptance of this as a track that will lead to safety, the broadening trail, as the circuit is made again and again, till fatigue and cold bring the end. The common explanation is that the stronger right leg is responsible, but it is not satisfying, as the right leg is not actually stronger than the left. What happens on the water, in a fog, contradicts the accepted theory, and suggests another. Indians rowing their wooden canoes up

the North Shore, cut across the deep bays when the weather is calm. They may be, and often are, enveloped in fog at a distance from land; and in a windless fog it is practically impossible to hold a true course without a compass. Now observe the situation: they are facing down the river, and the right arm, which is undeniably stronger than the left, might be expected to pull the boat round towards the land. This is not what happens; the boat describes the right to left circle of the man who is lost ashore, and sometimes the circle is large enough to carry it to the land miles below the original starting point. Perhaps then it is not the muscles, but the brain that is responsible Does the master-lobe impel to the left, when means of holding direction are lacking? What mental principle is involved, and what is the law of its operation?

A CHRISTMAS JAUNT

It has become impossible to picture Quebec to one's self without the "Frontenac," and indeed there may be a few slow-going, old-fashioned people who harbour the idea in a corner of their minds that Quebec has too much "Frontenac" in its cosmos,—that it was something of a pity to make of the old, gray battlemented town a mere background for an inn. Even such folk as I write of are glad enough to pass at a step from the night, and the bitter snow-laden air into warmth, and light, and spacious comfort. That jewel, consistency, is not so precious that a man is bound to part with all he has to possess it. The Donegal lad who carried our bags to a room

liked "the counthry," but I think that sometimes the cold hard silhouette of Mont Ste. Anne on the sky-line melts to the softer outline of Muckish or Errigal in his vision. He lingers not only for his tip, but for a friendly word with the strangers who know and love his land.

Day broke in a tempest of snow that would have anchored to the hotel any one who was possessed of a spark of prudence, if a spark there may be of so dull a virtue, but lacking this, and having some faith in the old saw "short notice soon past," we went forth into the tumult, and once embarked on the Intercolonial train across the river it was too late to retreat. After all the weather *may* clear, the ferry *may* cross to the North Shore, and if the worst befalls the spirit can endeavour to find solace in the inductive truth that "there will be another day to-morrow."

Two seats before us in the crowded car were packed a dozen convent-freed

girls on their way home for the Jour de l'An. The leader of the party was an honest-faced, dimpled, laughing little baggage who was never still and never silent. When the good-looking newsboy plied his arts upon the group, as he did most persistently, this fearless young person, in the *rôle* of natural champion of the party, took and gave the chaff. Ten-cent pieces emerged from grubby little purses; prize packages acquired were opened and their amazing contents distributed; eyes sparkled, tongues wagged, hands gesticulated, eager young faces flushed with excitement and yet, will you credit it, no shriek, no loud word or other girlish demonstration interfered with the comfort of the other occupants of the car. Some one with a turn for epigram describes a lady as "a woman who talks in a low tone and thinks in a high one," and these lively children had learned the first part at least of the definition. One could not

help contrasting the result of convent training with the manners taught, or the bad manners uncorrected, in our public and private schools, where the fashion of entering or sustaining a conversation is to out-scream other participants. Surely if our girls knew how they could win to the heart by sheer charm of voice, —a charm that will endure when others fail, they would try to make their own the beauty of our English speech when fitly spoken, with pure intonation, in measure to the occasion. It has been my lot to see half-a-dozen golfers who only desired to eat their meat in peace, deaved by the clamour of a group of young ladies at the other end of a club dining-room, driven forth to their own sanctuary, at which haven arriving one by one each sighed an independent and fervent "thank God."

The "People's Railway," as one might expect, accommodates itself to the public. An irritated traveller who had

just missed the daily train to Dublin, may have been comforted by the porter's sympathetic remark that "the punctuality of that thrain, sor, is mighty onconvanient to the people of Limerick." It seems to be the effort of the Intercolonial to annoy its patrons as little as possible in this way. Arriving about an hour late after a run of seventy miles, we were encouraged to find that the wind had abated and the snow was falling less heavily. Fortune seemed to favour the imprudent, for the little train that is hand-maiden to the ferry had steam up, nor was there any announcement that the daily trip from and to the North Shore would be abandoned. The thirty passengers who were awaiting the *Champlain's* pleasure, besieged the operator with questions which were kindly, courteously, and unsatisfactorily answered in two languages. An hour slipped away. Where was the ferry? Could no word be had? Yes, one might

telephone to Murray Bay *viâ* Quebec, but the government would not undertake this expense; it must be a matter of private enterprise. At an outlay therefore of ninety cents, the polite and efficient agent at Murray Bay wharf was communicated with. He was told of the plight of the thirty marooned at Rivière Ouelle, that the wind was falling, the snow had almost ceased, and we had an horizon of several miles on our side of the river. He promised to urge the captain to set forth, and hopes were high as the train carried us to the wharf whence we were able to see half way across the St. Lawrence. The river was free of ice, the east wind had died away, the storm was over. No reason there appeared to be why the *Champlain* should linger, and yet she came not. For one hour, for two hours, we walked up and down among the snow drifts, scanning at every turn the wintry river where cold shiny seals were making the best of

an unattractive life. No smoke-cloud showed, the North Shore spoke not by telegraph or telephone, bilingual criticism of the government and its economic ways flowed freely. About half-past three a passenger was permitted, at his sole charge, to gather tidings from the other side. The long-deferred blow fell heavily; it was still snowing, and moreover, was now too late; the boat would not start. Of a truth the captain of this high-powered and well-found craft, which in her time crossed the Atlantic, wore that day no cuirass of triple brass.

The obliging train received and bore us back without further payment to the main line, where thirty people more than exhausted the accommodations of the two small lodging-houses. Having on former journeys gathered some experience of these at their best, we threw ourselves into the arms of a certain

Madame Menier, who rose hospitably and handsomely to the occasion.

Next day the Intercolonial arrived with its usual punctual lateness, but the ferry waited for it, and the crossing was duly achieved in the teeth of a clearing gale from the north-west. A hundred miles of coast line from the Saguenay to the Capes was visible, while range on range of stark, snowy mountains carried the eye back to the wild highlands of the interior.

Even from the South Shore we heard the booming of blasts where the new railway, the railway that is to bring wealth to the countryside, is in construction. May it indeed be so, as the price is heavy enough. Dynamite has rent the familiar outline of Pointe à Pic; the beach where generations of children have played has become a railway yard; all the dear familiar spots along the shore are profaned and desolated; three times within a mile does the line cross

the quiet village street; the Murray River,—once in a land of salmon-streams called in preëminence "La Rivière Saumonais,"—is dammed for pulp and power, and a farcical fish way, as useful for its purposes as an attic stair, pretends compliance with the law. And all this for what? The country produces and is able to produce little or nothing for export but wood and its products. Can these sustain a railway which is said to be costing nearly forty thousand dollars a mile, which must compete in summer with water-carriage, and in winter will be operated with difficulty and at great cost? Wild talk there is of building through the mountains, crossing the Saguenay and marching down the Labrador to a winter port, hundreds of miles through a barren land where no man is. One must ask leave to doubt that any promoter competent to form an opinion honestly holds the view that such a road could possibly succeed.

These settlements have prospered by supplying land, houses, services, and food to summer migrants who have gone there seeking tranquillity, and will flee before the shriek of the locomotive. Thoughtful villagers are beginning to see that alluring promises of *"de l'ouvrage pour tout le monde"* have meant little and will mean less to them, while the imported regiment of foreign railway navvies has brought with it crimes of violence that were unheard of in this law-abiding place. They realize what they are like to lose, and are coming to doubt that prosperity is a commodity which may be carried at will to any point in freight cars.

The wharf at Pointe à Pic was a cheerless place that we were glad to escape from, to the warmth and welcome of Johnny Gagnon's; and how surpassingly good were the soup and partridges, the pastry and feather-light *croquignoles,* the home-made jam, re-

luctant cream and tea? It was pleasant to stroll up the village street, meeting and greeting old friends, paying visits here and there, and always receiving the courtesy, the hospitality, the kind enquiries and seasonable compliments in well-turned phrase which never fail among these amiable people.

Evening brought a long gossip with our good hostess about the difficulties of life under modern conditions. With eggs and beef, wood and poultry at city prices, and the wages of chits of girls who had to be looked after from morning to night at such a preposterous figure, how could one's *pensionnaires* be accommodated to the satisfaction of both stomach and pocket? Before the subject of house-keeping was exhausted we were both committed to the attitude of praisers of days gone by, and filled with distrust of the future, its disturbing tendencies and varied perplexities. However, Madame's piety

and humour enabled her to appreciate the kindness of Providence in not burdening our feeble shoulders with the ordering of the affairs of the universe to the end of time, and soon we slipped on to pleasanter subjects,—her large family and their fortunes, the grandchildren in Montreal, who could not speak their native language *"pas un seul mot je vous assure, Monsieur."*

Pommereau did not keep us waiting next morning. Before eight o'clock he and Le Coq,—gaunt, dirty gray, rough-coated but willing, drove up in a whirlwind of drifting snow from which they were fain to shelter under the lee of the house while we made ready. With heavy robes and hot bricks wrapped in sacking the tiny *cariole* was very comfortable, though the north wind blew fiercely, snatching away one's breath with its violence, and driving the fine hard snow like a sand-blast against the face. The gale that sprang up afresh in

the night had done, and was doing, its work. The easterly and westerly roads, wherever exposed, were drifted fence high with hard packed snow, through which only an experienced horse could force a way. A town-trained animal would have gone wild with fear, and exhausted itself with futile plunging and struggling in a few hundred yards, but to steady-going old Coq, whose patient soul is imbued with his master's philosophy that *"nous sommes dans la vie pour rencontrer des obstacles,"* this was all in the day's work.

For those unfortunate enough not to know this same philosopher, now floundering to his middle in the drifts behind the sleigh, it may be said that not for nothing do his features resemble those of the traditional Socrates. Sixty-odd years of age, the father of twenty-two children, three of whom are a burden through ill-health, the husband of a bedridden wife, a landless man who has

never known anything but bitter toil since childhood, and, conceive of it my discontented millionaire, no weeping, but a laughing philosopher. A wage of fifty cents a day for the work of a man and horse from long before daybreak to sunset is not affluence to the parent of such a family, and yet this was all his reward through many a long winter. I hope that he will forgive me for betraying a confidence when I set down here his statement to me that at one time he "regulated his affairs" upon a hundred and fifty dollars a year. This was all the cash that he "touched," and what came further in kind was no great matter. Yet he has no quarrel with the scheme of things; if it is foul to-day it will be fair to-morrow, if misfortunes befall *"c'est la vie."* The good God knows best and sends what is fit. After it all will there not be the long, untroubled sleep *"sur la Montagne"?* Pommereau is no surname or name of

baptism. In the dark past some forgotten "Monsieur" gave his horse this *soubriquet* which was transferred by a mysterious process to the owner and has survived to the obscuring of his legal designation.

The climb out of the valley of the Murray was slow, nor was it easy to keep our vehicle at an angle of safety. When it careened, the driver, standing always, flung himself to port or starboard as occasion demanded, the passengers aiding him in his equilibrations to the extent which their bundled-up condition and narrow quarters allowed. It was a stormy passage, where a sleigh with high runners would have been capsized a dozen times, but the craft of the country is built so that after sinking but a little distance it rests on the bottom and can weather almost anything in the way of drifts.

Two hours driving brought us to the heights that overlook the Petit Lac,

whence one gets the first view of the mountains of the hinterland, — uninhabited I had almost written, forgetful at the moment that the moose and the caribou are wandering and browsing there, and all the lesser creatures of the silent snowy woods are there at home, living lives simpler than ours but just as important to them, loving and hating much as we do.

We draw up before the little cabin of an old and dear friend to find, alas, that another Visitor is expected. Through the very mists of dissolution the dim eyes try in vain to see; slowly, slowly, the tones of familiar voices reach the dull ear; the face set for a journey and other greetings lights up—*"Ils sont venus me voir. Ils sont venus—me—voir!"* . . .God rest the gentle soul of Augustin Belley! Honest as the sunlight, faithful as the stars to the sky, ever considerate for others and to himself unsparing, filled with kindliness and charity as

the tides of the great river he looked out on for eighty years fill its bed. What he leaves behind him will raise no marble palace, no memorial tomb, but none the less will his legacy to mankind live when these have crumbled to dust, for verily it is the things not seen that are eternal.

Crossing the broad expanse of the Grand Lac, Coq's rusty tail streamed out to leeward, for the wind was again blowing sharply from the north, and on the other side of the lake the drifts between the fences were higher than ever. The way was unbroken, as the country-folk neither travel nor attempt to make the road passable opposite their farms while snow is falling or drifting. Very soon it was clear that if we were to get forward another horse must be chartered, so overtures were made to a strapping young fellow who had seemingly planned out a day of leisure for himself, but whose good-nature at length prevailed. With his *berlot* in the lead and

the weight divided, we made good weather of it, sometimes, however, leaving the highway for a mile or more and taking to the fields. Experience has shown at what places the snow will lodge and the roads become impassable, and there it is the winter custom to establish a line of travel through the long farms characteristic of the country, marking these ways of necessity every fifty feet with little spruce trees set alternately to right and left. Without these *balises* the track, beaten only to the bare width of a cariole, could not be followed, but with their assistance the horses navigate the hills and dales surely and safely as the mariner does a buoyed channel. It is peculiarly pleasant to journey thus over ploughed fields and pastures, across bridgeless and invisible streams, through swales where alder and swamp willow give a little shelter from the insistent wind.

But a few miles accomplished, and being then nowhere in particular, our new charioteer suddenly turned round and shot at us *"J'ai l'idée de virer ici."* On it being suggested to him that from our point of view this was neither a logical nor a convenient stopping-place, with equal promptness and great cheerfulness he declared his willingness to proceed. Arrived at the house of a substantial farmer where a fresh horse could be had, we parted company with mutual compliments and wishes for good fortune on the road. A fine type of countryman this,—polite, obliging, competent, and perfectly independent.

Our next driver had in his stable no less than three stout horses, which, the week before, had hauled I forget just how many hundred pounds of miscellaneous farm produce to Quebec in two days. Entering his well-built dwelling to warm up, we found the fortnightly baking at that anxious stage when the

clay oven is ready for the bread and the bread is not quite ready for the oven. Even with this on her mind, and the senses of smell, taste, and touch alert to determine the proper instant of transference, the goodwife was most politely interested in our wayfarings. She pointed with pride to an enormous goose hanging from the rafters in process of being thawed out, and destined to take the chief place on the board at the great festival of the New Year. Without consulting his wife as to the proposed journey, the husband began to make his preparations; this was a man's affair upon which a woman's opinion was neither invited nor expected. No adieus passed between the spouses though the distance to be covered was not a short one, and bad weather might easily delay return until the following day. This was quite in accord with the conventions of these people, who, though affection-

ate, make but little public display in greeting and parting.

The new mare bore the brunt of the drifts, in which at times she almost disappeared, while Coq, gratefully accepting the advantage of second place, may have revolved in his philosophic mind this new application of the adage, "First in a bush, last in a bog." Past Pousse-pioche, Crac-Crac, Main Sale and Cache-toi-bien, along the Miscoutime, through Chicago, La Chiguière and Tremblants, with the poor little clachans of La Mort and La Misère just distinguishable from the rocks to which they cling;—nothing between us and the boldest mountains of Charlevoix on the other side of the Gouffre valley but three leagues of icy air. Then, at the last, down a thousand feet of hills to the most hospitable of homes and the kindliest of welcomes.

Would your town resources enable you to prepare a repast of caribou steak,

ragout of hare, eggs and bacon, jam and tea, or the equivalent of such a meal, on half an hour's notice at three o'clock in the afternoon, and, candidly, what would your attitude be to hungry unexpected guests who tumbled in on you thus? If she thought it a nuisance to stable and care for two horses, heat up stoves, prepare the best room and feed four people, Madame's fine courtesy was equal to concealing it. I would prefer to believe, however, that her yet finer courtesy made but a pleasure of these labours and distractions.

Fed and warmed, there was talk at large on many subjects, — with the father concerning the wolves' depredations among the caribou, and the invasions that human commercial wolves threaten against the "public park and pleasure ground," of which he is chief guardian; with Madame, of the children and their schooling; with Antonio, the eldest son, of crops and prices; with

Thomas Louis, of onslaughts upon the ubiquitous beaver; and with Victor, aged fourteen, of his first caribou just accounted for very neatly at *"cent et un verges, monsieur."*

Pommereau, and Coq the indefatigable, turned homeward to make a stage of their thirty-mile drive before nightfall, and a little later, overcoming with difficulty most pressing invitations to linger, we departed for Baie St. Paul under a shower of good wishes for the New Year. Antonio with his spirited horse convoyed us, and the last nine miles were all too short, for the air was still, though sharp with frost, and the naked winter moon hung over the valley flooding it with white light to the silvered summits of the hills.

The inn-keeper at Baie St. Paul had fought in South Africa, but his little daughter was never further afield than Les Eboulements, and had no yearning to broaden her knowledge of the world.

With the convent and duties at home, her day was very full and very happy. What could one do but commend the wisdom so early and easily acquired? Sure it is that if the chances of life take her to other lands, her heart will not cease to cry out for this the home of her childhood,—the happiest place on the broad earth.

Eight o'clock the next morning saw us climbing away from sea level behind a clever tandem. It was pretty to see the team-work as for two hours we mounted the long hills. The shaft horse never made the mistake of putting in weight until his mate had tightened the traces, and never failed at that precise instant to move forward; on the descents the leader cantered free, keeping neatly out of his companion's way. As with many halts we worked up from one raised-beach plateau to another, there were ever widening views of the valley we had left, the northern mountains

through which the St. Urbain road finds a difficult passage, the heights of Les Eboulements, the St. Lawrence and Isle aux Coudres far beneath us, half hidden in ragged vapours gilded by the heatless beams of the low sun.

Practically all the way to La Barrière it was an ascent through an increasing depth of snow which tried the horses, and made the passing of other vehicles rather a ticklish business. Some one must give way and leave the narrow track; light yields to loaded, a single horse to two, two to three,—the etiquette of the road is well settled, and debate only arises where conditions are equal. With six feet or more of unpacked snow, as often there is at this elevation later in the winter, the horse is unharnessed, the driver steps off and is submerged to his neck, he tramps down some square yards and perhaps adds his robes and blankets to give a foothold, the horse is coaxed into the hole thus

prepared for him, the empty *cariole* is pulled out of the way, the other party passes and then the animal must be extricated from his snowy cavern and harnessed. So tedious and fatiguing are these crossings, that drivers who travel this road frequently make their journeys at night to avoid them, and will wait at some convenient spot for half an hour or longer when they hear of vehicles on the way. Though we were never compelled to resort to the manœuvre pictured, it was sometimes a delicate affair to get by without upsetting when the road had to be conceded.

The boy who drove us was born at the little hamlet of Mille Vaches far down the North Shore, but had been brought up in the States, where he had learned to speak indifferent but fluent French and English. This ability was standing him in good stead with the travelling public, as his master had only made the usual early steps in the alien tongue of

learning a few of its more striking expletives. On the first opportunity the lad found his way back to Canada, and had no yearning for riches at the expense of further exile. Gazing for a long time at a fairly earned tip he enquired what the money was for; when the nature of the transaction was made clear to him he showed the emotions of one who encounters a delightful experience for the first time.

La Barrière, the half-way house, set in the midst of some leagues of unbroken forest, is the highest point on the road, and can scarcely be less than two thousand feet above the sea. It resembles Port Said, not, let me hasten to say, in eclectic iniquity, but as a port of call where all who pass this way, on business or pleasure bent, must meet and foregather,—a halting place that you cannot evade on one of the world's routes of travel. Having said so much one must admit that the resemblance of this little

cluster of log houses and stables, perched solitary among snows that do not fail it for nine months in the year, to the wickedest town on earth with its sands and torrid heat, ceases utterly.

A fresh tandem took us rapidly onward through the woods where the snow, though deep, was undrifted; the little spruces and balsams by the roadside were solid pyramids of white where neither branch nor twig appeared,—their tops sometimes bent over with a burden of snow which the wind had fashioned into the likeness of strange birds and beasts. We whirled down the long slopes of the Côte Maclean through an avenue of these glittering, fantastic sculptures, toiled up the other side of the deep ravine, and at a turn in the road found ourselves in the cleared uplands above St. Tite des Caps, whence, at night, one can see the lights of Quebec, still more than thirty miles distant.

Here, once more, the drifts rose to the tops of the fence-posts, but a day of fine weather had made it the duty of the farmers to turn out with their shovels and home-made snow ploughs, while earlier travellers had done us good service in beating down the road. The snow creaked and whined in a cold far below zero, rime gathered thick on the shaggy winter coats of the horses; the eye penetrated to the uttermost limits of the horizon through vapourless crystalline air that spared nothing, concealed nothing, drew no veil of distance and mystery over the remotest hills.

Our *charretier* promised to do the last eighteen miles in less than three hours, and was much better than his word. The rush down steep, winding hills to the St. Lawrence was a mad and exhilarating progress, giving scant time for speculation on the upshot should a cantering horse lose his footing or take a curve too sharply. No motor car in its best flight

could so fill the imagination with the idea of swift and rhythmic motion,—of sheer space-annihilating speed. Dull mechanical devices are uninspiring beside the strenuous, free action of the living creature. If this be deplorable conservatism, then pray range us with those who are hopelessly and happily unprogressive.

LE LONG DU SENTIER

No highway, may it please you; naught but an ill-blazed trail, devious and uncertain. Leading whither? Verily I know not. Even if you have patience to follow, the chances are that it will carry us to different destinations.

Those who deny to an old book its ancient place of authority, allow that it contains many shrewd and useful hints for the guidance of mankind,—among them, the first command laid by the Creator upon things created, and upon man. "Be fruitful and multiply." "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." There are who qualify the injunction in theory and in practice: the French-born citizen of the

Province of Quebec is not among them. Skirting discreetly the tangle of controversy that lies in our way, let us leave others,—so minded, to reconcile or contrast the views of the Almighty and Mr. Malthus. I only propose for myself a couple of non-polemical observations with respect to an existing situation and its necessary sequel. In the command, a sequence appears, the ideas march logically, their order is not haphazard. Nothing can be vainer than for a race to contemplate the subdual of the earth, or even the holding of a place won in it, if the precedent condition be not complied with. Accumulating wealth will not avail if men decay.

The mind can scarcely frame a better wish for Canada, than that its people of divers kindred should learn mutual comprehension, — how to appreciate qualities they lack, and find excuse for the defects of those qualities,—cultivating steadfastly that facility for willing

compromise which Stevenson regarded as the first requisite for happiness in the married state. It is a long road; as yet all may not travel it, but the less prolific race might at any rate recognize its handicap, and the futility of attempting to stay the advance of the tide by any spell of mere words.

Point for a second remark may be borrowed from the same source. "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate." The Psalmist's observation does not seem to have been made the subject of scientific estimate, though humanity would gain by a study of (say) Priam's household in terms of well-being. Happiness is an evasive thing to place your finger upon, and set down with reference to a decimal point, but an untrained observer may be allowed to express the opinion that the ratio of

increase, if not geometrical, is better than arithmetical.

Pierre ——— falls a long way behind Priam in the matter of family, but, in a degenerate age, I am fain to refer to him as leading case. All being said, thirty-one is a very pretty total; moreover, as my figures were gathered some years ago, I may easily fail to credit him with an odd child or two, but the question does not turn on trifles. Some little inaccuracy too may be forgiven in the case of a mere acquaintance, where an affectionate father is not sure, on the instant, as to numbers, sexes and names. It was not Pierre, but another whose household was only a little more than two-thirds of Pierre's, who was tendering one of his junior offspring for hire. He had a very good general idea of the boy's age, appearance and qualifications, but the name escaped him. Quite properly he regarded this as a detail that should not embarrass the negotia-

tion, it being capable of definite ascertainment,—probably the mother would know offhand. G——— is a man of great resource, and on the spur of the moment he suggested, or invented, a nickname that would serve in the discussion as a symbol for the unknown boy.

Joseph ———, and his wife Marie, may have had such a perplexity in mind when they called their six boys "Joseph," and their six girls "Marie." These were not left to the generic names alone, but were distinguished by further prenomens of a severe classicality; and this suggests an interesting speculation, which I cannot illuminate, as to the source of the "Telesphores," "Polyeuctes," "Anastases," "Polydores," "Narcisses," "Epiphanises," to which we find so many bare-footed, ragged-breeched urchins answering. Names piously selected doubtless, and piously

bestowed; in better taste perhaps than many of our sentimentalities.

If increasing and multiplying brings a definite resultant of happiness, it might be thought that the tendency would be reversed when a family was broken up through accident or misfortune. Yet this is not clear. Coming out of the woods to a tiny settlement where the people were very poor, it was plainly to be seen that a sorrow had fallen on the community. The usual cheery greetings were subdued, groups stood about in sober talk, rusty mourning was carried by those who had it, the work of field and farmyard was abandoned. Madame, questioned, told us of a neighbour's sudden passing. He had taken out of the world with him all that the family had to depend on—his power to labour. When debts were paid there would be nothing, less than nothing.

"There are children?"

"Ah yes, sir, nine of them."

"And their age?"

"The eldest thirteen, a girl."

"What will become of them, Madame?"

"As to that there is no anxiety: all are provided for."

"But how; I do not understand; there is neither land nor money?"

"It is true, quite true; we take one—no, we are not relatives,—and a brother, two; a cousin, one; and so on—all, all well placed, the little ones will not encounter *la misère.*"

A matter of course, a mere commonplace of life!

Is it that the finest charity is thus spontaneous, unreasoning, unconscious of its own quality?

Only by accident does one discover what passes in money or in kind, what willing service is rendered by man to man. Wastrels and professional beggars may ask for alms: others endure privations rather than lose their self-respect. It was for sympathy and ad-

vice, I feel sure, and not with the idea of receiving help, that P ——— called on a friend at the close of a lean summer. The situation was unfortunately a common one, for these people place the Christian before the Pagan virtues, Faith and Hope often shoulder out chill Prudence. Discounting the future too light-heartedly, he had bought a horse in June on the usual terms,—a small down-payment, balance in September, the animal to remain the property of the seller, and possession to revert to him if the last penny were not forthcoming. A hundred and thirty-six dollars had been paid, twenty dollars remained. Money and horse were gone unless the *étranger* who had engaged him, and had suddenly departed, should be mindful of a promise, or a half promise or some vague intimation of good will. The old *charretier* knew not where to turn; his harvest was past; no more could be gathered in. P ——— sat there looking

all of his sixty-five years,—back bent, hands deformed with the ceaseless labour that had been his portion from childhood; weather-beaten with facing suns, and frosts, and all the winds of Heaven; lined and wrinkled with anxieties which, at the beginning of old age, left this money an unattainable sum. . .

"It is not much, P ———, between old friends."

For a moment it was as though he did not hear, or could not understand; then he broke down as does a little child,—utterly, helplessly. Sobs shook him, tears forced their way through the crooked fingers, speech was not to be attempted; he rushed from the room, from the house. No word of thanks passed then or later, nor was it needed.

Yes, chill Prudence, and austere Temperance, are inadequately cultivated by these countrymen of ours.

They have better reason than most of us for seeking to forget the hardships

and the dullness of existence, but the national vodka gives oblivion at a terrible cost. The Church strives to stay the traffic, licit and illicit, but like all churches, in all lands, it is losing its power;—not yet perhaps in a purely religious aspect, but in the paternal control which, in general, it has most beneficently exercised over the people. The question as to what will take its place is a vast and troubling one. It will not be another church, in any sense in which that word is used to-day.

Here and elsewhere I am venturing opinions in unqualified form—opinions that I know to be violently dissented from. It may be that they have some value as coming from one without religious or political affiliations,—or this may at once deprive them of all value. They are honestly held, and no apology is offered, but it is fair to say that they are limited by observation, and that observation has been directed to the

country and its folk, rather than to the more sophisticated town-dweller.

There occurred a trifling incident not long ago, which showed a *curé* in the relation of a true father to his flock. A lad committed an offence of so grave a nature that it could not be overlooked. Were the secular arm invoked, he must have been punished by imprisonment. Those concerned feared for the future of a boy that the law had set its mark upon, and thought it well to lay the whole affair before the priest. What passed between the shepherd and the small black sheep is not known to them, but the next day they were called upon to receive a broken-hearted little creature, in his Sunday best, whose apologies were scarcely intelligible through the manifestations of his grief. A true, and let us hope a godly, sorrow gave excellent promise of amendment.

Do you envy simple faith, condemn it as superstitious, or merely smile at it

from a superior height? B——'s horse went lame. Bleeding worked no improvement,—the remedy seems as universal and as useless for horses, as it was for human beings a hundred years ago. When the leg swelled and stiffened, B——'s mistress gave him money wherewith to buy liniment, and charged him straitly as to the use of it. Two days afterwards, on a Monday, the horse trotted up to the door with four sound legs under him.

"I knew the liniment would cure him."

"But, Madame,——

"What! did you not buy the liniment?"

"But no, Madame,——

"How is it then that the horse is well; what did you do to him?"

"Madame, I will tell you. Doubtless the liniment is good,—very good, for ordinary troubles, but the case was a grave one, and not to be trifled with;

therefore I took the money you were kind enough to give me and gave it to have a mass said. Behold!"

A well-nigh forgotten writer, whom I must quote from memory, among other thoughtful sayings has this:—"He who, in the defence of his religion, forgets charity, abandons the citadel for the sake of the outworks." The citadel abandoned, is anything left worth defending? And if the citadel be held, are the outworks a matter of any great concern? Approach Quebec with a tolerant and unbigoted mind; you need not journey far to discover the living principle that animates any religion worth the having,—that fruit of the tree whereby ye shall know it.

Join me as we light our after-breakfast pipes on a pleasant Sunday morning in the woods. We are back in the brave old days when a new lake lies beyond every range, and the spirit will not rest until it is found. A long tramp

of exploration is planned; presently, when all are ready, we shall tighten our belts and be off. A few yards away, our half dozen Frenchmen are washing up by the fire, with much clattering of tongues and tinware. The chores attended to, they will sing a woodland mass, and enjoy a day of idleness. The parson of our party suggests a short service, but it is late and we have far to go; so by way of compromise or concession a hymn is proposed. At the first words we remove our hats, but the line is not completed before one of the Frenchmen nudges another, he another, the word passes. Instantly they are uncovered,—the work abandoned, standing silent and bowed till the last of the old cadences dies, and the voice of the rapid again fills the air. The words they do not understand, the tune is not familiar, but they discern an intention to approach the great Power above us all,

and mutely, reverently, join with us in that approach.

Over against this I set a page from a travel note-book.

Palm Sunday in St. Peter's—"O, say, there he is! I've lost him three times," and with a scarce subdued view-halloo, she lopes through the crowd before the high altar, while the great music of the Passion, sweeping down from the choir, tears at the heart.

A ragged country lad gray with dust, as is the branch of olive he carries, looks after her, with wide eyes.

A sweet-faced nun, under a cap that spreads like a seagull's spotless opened wings, flushes with distress. Can she find excuse in her gentle mind, for the girl who thinks alone of the spectacle, and her friend?

The old priest, in threadbare *soutane,* whispers to his neighbour: "She forgets that this is to us a holy place, and the very House of God."

A German delivers himself slowly, impassively, to his English companion:

"Curious beoble! Now zat young lady who gafe ze exhibition is probably a modest und devout girl in her own country, but she beliefs in ze tribal God of ze Americans, und zat she is now oud of his jurisdiction."

Those who have been educated to believe that a too-unquestioning obedience

is rendered to the Roman Catholic church in Quebec, that the priests spiritually dragoon their people in thought and action, are inclined to forget certain manifestations of a very healthy and downright independence. Rather marked political instances could be cited: mine has to do with a lesser group of interests.

From time to time an officer is elected who has important lay duties in connection with the church of the parish. It is very convenient for the *curé,* that this individual should be of one mind with him upon all questions that relate to church management, and it is not strange that he should use influence to secure the man of his choice. A sharp division of opinion developed in an important country parish about (as I recall it) the acquisition of a new, and the disposition of an old graveyard. The *curé* made no secret of his wish in the matter, in fact he worked openly and

strenuously to carry his views, and, incidently, for the election of his nominee, but was not able to bring him in. On the evening of the New Year's Day when the election took place, there was a sort of mild triumph over the people's victory, and the *curé's* discomfiture. The visitors who dropped in to give the season's greetings were in high good humour with themselves, but another sentiment showed itself very plainly, to wit, one of sturdy resentment at any meddling with what they conceived to be their proper affairs.

The Anglo-Saxon, whatever his advantages of birth and education, need not fear that his courtesy will be of too fine a quality for the peasants of the field to appreciate. Nay, he may find himself outdone in swiftness of comprehension, and readiness of tact. One who had not learned this lesson sufficiently, felt a little uneasy as to taking ladies into the wilds, in the company of rough

carters and woodsmen who could not possibly be familiar with the amenities of feminine existence, but the doubts were dissipated, at once and forever. Politeness that erred neither in defect nor excess, eager and intelligent anticipation of what might be pleasing to the ladies, — these disclosed themselves as native and abounding qualities. The good fellows vied with one another to smooth the way for unaccustomed feet, to improvise shelter in a shower, to give the comfort of a fire or a smudge, to provide balsam beds of unheard of depth and softness, and warm water for morning ablutions. In the chill hours before the dawn a blaze was kindled before the ladies' tent, dry wood was always at their hand, berries were gathered for their behoof and the rough table of split logs blossomed with flowers. Supererogatory acts like these must be the outcome of truly gentle

natures; the teachings not of convention, but of the heart.

There is no gain without loss; our scale of more complex ratios gives discords that are not so easily resolved, and it is hard for us to understand how rapid and how sure are the responses of those who still vibrate to the simple harmonies of life. Even the word to record an intuition is chosen out of all other words, and slipped delicately into its place. After the departure of a guest whom all delighted to honour; who placed himself, effortlessly, in just relation with everyone in the camp by smile or nod, friendly word or little act of consideration (gentle and simple ever find common ground) our cook was inditing of the matter. In a muse he cleared the table, and swept away the crumbs; absent manner and furrowed brow showed that he was troubled by processes of thought. Presently he stopped, dish-cloth to breast, his other hand leaning on

the board, leg crossed, head on one side; —the idea was ready for the birth.

"Ce Monsieur là est très gentil, très aimable." This was mere generality; he halted for the expression which would convey a further shade of meaning, a more definite characterization, the result of nicer analysis. *"Il me parait que ce Monsieur là est—bien posé."*

"Bien posé"! If this was not the *mot juste,* the phrase fitting his idea as your pint flask fits the precious pint it holds, then indeed is language but a vain thing!

It is continual pleasure to do with men who are, as the Scotch say, quick at the uptak, to whom a word is as good as a lecture. On a shooting trip, one member of the party had failed to kill his animal, when, journeying homeward, a last chance presented itself. The caribou was on a bare hillside, across a ravine, where he could not get away without offering several chances, but the

shot was no easy one. The gentleman fired once and again, while the creature kept moving off, and at length someone else took a hand, till a bullet from one rifle or the other finished the business. Off went the men to the gralloching, and as they were ploughing through the heavy snow, the interferer called after them, "I think you will find that Monsieur —— got him with the third shot." (The rifles were of very different calibres.) On returning they confirmed this theory,—there was but the one bullet hole, and it was clear who had fired the shot, for they had found the bullet. So were all happy and content. Just a day later, when driving in with the carcasses, there was a sudden and most irrelevant burst of laughter from the gillie. Having conquered this to the point of being able to speak, he told how the cue had been taken, and the little farce planned and played. "One bullet hole, assuredly, yes, only one, but *not*

from the first rifle. How disappointing that *Monsieur* should have nothing but misses to remember; better so,—but it is sacredly amusing!''

Wishing to try for moose at the end of rather a large lake, we embarked one September afternoon to face a paddle through wind and sea. It was not judged prudent to attempt a crossing to the sheltered side, so we were on a lee shore all the way,—keeping as near to land as might be, in case of being swamped. Médée, in the stern, was so accomplished a canoeman that the risk did not seem excessive, and the man in the bow knew his job nearly as well. It was the prettiest kind of performance, — making way when the water allowed it, and to the last instant of safety,—bearing up to ride a wave or two,—watching the chance to fall off and gain a dozen yards, —driving, steadying, humouring the canoe as occasion required. These two, who had never before met, worked in

such harmony that it seemed as though a single brain were in charge of the craft, though not a word was exchanged throughout an anxious two hours. I was amused at the dry compliments that passed between two very wet men when we made the end of the lake. Bow said to Médée—"It crossed my mind, once or twice, as we came along that this was perhaps not your first experience in a canoe." To which, Médée—"It is an odd thing, but rounding the big point, the thought came to me that possibly you had handled a paddle before."

It has been said that an education may be acquired in the spearing of eels: assuredly school and college may fail to impart it. Eel-spearing and the calculus are occasions and not causes, for man is endogenous, and the process of unfolding bears no necessary relation to the mass of his information. The *habitant* of the elder generation can seldom read, write or cipher. Much of what we

call common knowledge is beyond his ken. (An intelligent man, of sound judgment, once said to me in a hesitating, interrogative tone,—"*Nous sommes sous le Roi d'Angleterre, n'est-ce pas, Monsieur.*") England and France alike are unknown lands, very far away,—names that awaken the vaguest of sentiments, or none. There is but one country near, and incomparably dear, to his heart. For it, and for the religion, the language, and the laws assured to the uttermost generation of his blood, no sacrifice would be deemed excessive. Does this not point the road to those who would readjust political relations within the Empire? When they make it clear that their proposals are for the advantage of Canada, the ardent patriotism of the French Canadian, will be instantly aroused. But here my modest path crosses a highway beaten by many feet, which it is not our business to fol-

low. Taking up the trail on the further side, let us saunter on.

Though the simple peasant may have to rely upon you as to the denomination of the bill that passes between you, though he may not be able to read the face of a watch, or tell in what year of grace he lives, though his system of chronology may be founded on the age and fortunes of his successive horses, yet is he of quick wit and good understanding. On the long roads, in the hours of waiting for game, when pipes are lit and the camp-fire blazes, you may have as profitable discourse with him about religion and politics, life and death, and the heart of man, as you are like to encounter across the walnut and the wine. One omission you will note, for to these clean-minded people aught of sculduddery is odious. Their club, the church, teaches better things.

The speech and idiom their fathers brought from northern France have

been very strikingly preserved. Though Anglicisms creep in, as must be the case, the language has changed but little, and contains a whole vocabulary of which the Parisian has lost touch. Those who cannot read, transmit words as they hear them, and are not led astray by their appearance on the printed page: illiteracy is a preservative, and semi-literacy a destructive force.

Honesty being so much a matter of convention, it is difficult to find a common measure of it among the nations. To many French Canadians the government is a fair mark to shoot at;—a deplorable point of view which other provinces spare no pains to reform, in every way, save by example. Their attitude is likewise reprehended towards natural resources, particularly fish, game and timber. These are depleted very wastefully, and of course there must be a reckoning, but one might suggest in extenuation that the cause may be found in

the very bountifulness of the woods and the waters. Where it has been the custom for generations to take when the need arose, it is not easy to instil sudden respect for a line in an Act of Parliament, or an imaginary line (disregarded by birds and beasts) dividing two tracts of forest. Even a fence, where no fence was, is resented as an attempt to withdraw from the common store things that have been free as air from time of memory. The *habitant* who gathers a crop of half grown partridges from his mountain side, is encouraged in breaking the law a second time by those who buy them for the table. After offering a well nigh irresistible inducement to illegality, such abettors are heard to complain that some favourite spruce or birch has disappeared from their enclosed grounds, and are not consoled by knowing that it has gone into the foundation of a house, or the shafts of a cart. Notwithstanding such evil example, the

process of education is going forward, and it is coming to be understood that even game laws are framed for the good of the people, and impose an obligation.

Your *habitant* will bargain shrewdly for his own or his horse's services. Most cheerfully will he ask you double what they are worth; but, the bargain struck, he will abide by it. Our plan of making an easy agreement, and doing the other party in the performance of it, seems to him dishonourable; which shows, of course, how hopelessly the moral sense may be warped.

An old carter, to whom ten dollars was a very great sum, once handed me a bill which he had found when renewing the balsam couch for a gentleman whom he had taken fishing. He knew that we had visited the lake a week before, and though nothing had been said about the loss, thought that the money might belong to some member of our party. I doubt that the idea of keeping

it ever occurred to him. In more years of going into the woods than one cares to acknowledge, where ammunition, flies, tools, and many little things of value are left lying about, I have never known the most trivial article to disappear. Even the open bottle of whiskey in the corner of the tent is sacred.

Following the course of his duty, a government guardian found himself obliged to kill a score of beaver that could not be dissuaded from building dams where they interfered with the passage of trout. Beyond question he was entitled to the skins as his own property, and to the eighty dollars which they brought when sold. This was a man with many demands upon him, and knowing what good use he had for the money, I expressed satisfaction that the little windfall had come his way. Hesitation in his reply led to further questions, but the matter had to be pressed, almost to the point of rudeness, before

he was willing to make a clean breast of it.

"I would not have you believe that I kept this. It was not possible that I should permit myself thus to make profit from an office, beyond the salary. This, at least, no one shall say of me."

"But it was yours, man, to do what you pleased with!"

"That is true."

"Tell me then, of what folly have you been guilty?"

"No folly, one would venture to hope; *Monsieur le curé* has it, for the poor of his parish."

The gift was not diminished by the cost of the powder and shot expended!

It is pleasant to deal with those who do not grudge their services. Never have I heard grumble or complaint at our day beginning too early, or ending too late (some virtue perhaps resides in the pronoun). Here was one little trial of faith. We had been going, laden to

capacity, for twelve steady hours; at six o'clock we staggered out on the shore of a long lake. Nepton—then incurably ill, poor chap, though we did not know it, dropped his immense pack with a sigh of relief, and cast his practised eye about for tent poles, firewood, balsam.

"Hold on, Nepton, the lake is calm, to-morrow we may not be able to cross it; two hours' paddle and we will reach a better camp-ground."

"Is it not then your intention—I thought—*Hoorah, mes garçons, Monsieur dit que nous allons camper là bas. Embarquez! Embarquez!*"

Very welcome was the news that no power would stir us from the spot, and even this ill-timed jest was not denied its laugh.

Services are given which money cannot buy, and are offered without thought of reward. A drive of forty miles—long hills, hard roads, rotten bridges,—was in prospect, with a *charretier* who was

nearing four score. A friend, younger by a dozen years, dropped in the day before the one fixed for departure, and launched upon a discourse as to the difficulties and dangers of the *voyage*. With cunning oratory he created an atmosphere before developing his theme. "Our old friend B ———is getting on in years, that we must admit, though with the very greatest regret, but it is not to be hinted that he should abandon the trip, if he is willing to go,—he must not lose *sa place*. Consider, though, if some mischance were to happen as he returns alone,—the roads, such as they are, — a broken bridge, or what you please,—he there, without the strength to set it right—the thought distresses me, I cannot rest for thinking of it. Now, as it happens, my own affairs are not at the moment pressing. Permit me then to accompany you and take the baggage,—that will serve for an excuse. You do not misunderstand me,—noth-

ing to pay—most assuredly nothing,—the *dépenses du voyage* if you will."

Two days' driving, merely that he might be on hand should anything befall an old companion of the road!

Talking of highways, one is reminded how awkward it is where logic is too strictly applied; the Anglo-Saxon habit of mind with its make-shifts, expedients, and magnificent illogicality has certain practical advantages. Arriving at a place where a bridge was wont to span a stream, the familiar structure had wholly disappeared. It had been condemned as out of repair, and the *corvée* had gathered to build a new one; with strict regard to the order of events in time, they had demolished and removed rails, flooring, beams and piers, and then had taken to the woods for three days to procure materials for another bridge! Those who know the French Canadian horse, and its driver, will readily understand that this did not halt

progress for more than a few moments. It was only necessary to find a place where the bank was not absolutely perpendicular, and a horse could keep its feet in the rapid water. These animals are at a loss as seldom as their masters. It is interesting to see one cross a bridge, where every second log is rotten. The driver bids him "regard well," flicks him with the whip to stimulate attention, and generally leaves the reins loose! The beast picks his way, judges the soundness of the foothold with eye and hoof, and holds his balance so that it can be recovered if a foot breaks through.

I bid adieu to my fellow-countryman at the happiest season of his year, the *Jour de l'An,*—when old friendships are renewed, and old grudges forgotten. Entering his house you are always sure of the best he can offer, but at this time of good will, he prepares himself for a very bounteous hospitality. If you are

instructed in the ways of the country, you will know that the girls expect a kiss; etiquette demands, however, that Madame and the baby should enjoy the first of your salutes. To overlook a friend at the New Year is to fail in courtesy; for three days pleasant visits are interchanged, and every acquaintance, for many a league, has received and given his good wishes. Christmas is the feast of the church; this is the feast of the home, and nothing that can be overcome is allowed to keep the members of a family apart. Once, in brutal ignorance, I held my men in the woods over the first of January, yet I was not made aware in any way of their disappointment, or of my own grave mistake. To find excuse for this, and conceal its consequences has always seemed to me a crowning courtesy.

You will travel far to find a people who bear greater goodwill to their fellow men, or are readier to show it in

speech and act. It is no form of empty words when they wish you *une bonne et heureuse année.*