

Fish and Fishing.

There is certainly something in angling that tends to produce a gentleness of spirit and a pure serenity of mind.—Washington Irving.

THE PLEASURES OF ANGLING.

This is the spot, where the shadows cool
Blacken the depths of the swirling pool,
And the forest resounds with the laughing call
Of the silver tongue of the mimic fall.

Just where a great big trout would lie,
On with the best-dressed, deadliest fly—
So, so, now for a lucky cast—
Confound that branch, I'm fast!

Ha! saw you not that lightning gleam
Where yon moth but kissed the treacherous
stream?

Match me swiftly the fluttering game—
Beware the branch! Ah! try again.

Hum! that's strange. Try farther down;
I'll have him this time, I'll lay a crown.
Missed him—You know there's many a slip—
Great Scott! there goes the tip!

Never mind, there's another inside the butt,
Now, drop lightly the dainty gut
Just where that snowy mass of foam
Swings in behind yon mossy stone.

Hurrah! I have him! Careful, now—
Egad, old chap, you're mine, I vow,
Just as sure as though book of fate
Already held your length and weight.

Avaunt! ye praters of city life,
With your sickening toil and ceaseless strife,
And your doubtful pleasures that never dare
To match this fight in the healthful air,
This grand set-to in the rapid's froth
And the triumph of landing—Oh!—he's off!

MASCALLONGE FISHING.

Two Months Among the Lakes of the
Eagle River Country in Wisconsin.

BY A. H.

PART II.

Written for SPORTS AFIELD.

A FEW days after our experience with the big mascallonge on Big St. Germaine Lake, as narrated in the preceding issue, and when the catching of "whoppers" was no longer a novelty, the little log hotel in the wilderness was enlivened with the additional company of the Rev. Thomas Green of Chicago, the Rev. Mr. Taylor of Springfield, Ill., and Messrs. Cameron, Booth and one or two others from Chicago, with a full complement of reliable and manly guides.

The gentlemen came for fish, and lots of them. An occasional large one from Big St. Germaine did not suit the party, and so a trip was planned to Lost Lake—a body of water of perhaps 400 acres in extent, some seven miles away. It could only be reached by ascending a winding creek, the difficulties being so great that the lake had only been fished by two parties of whites before. Piling the camp luggage into four boats, we pulled up Lake Content to the "thoroughfare," portaged into St. Germaine, pulled two miles in a northeasterly direction and found the mouth of the creek we sought. Little trouble beyond cutting a few fallen trees was experienced, and at 3 o'clock p. m. we were encamped beneath

the spreading hemlocks on the north shore, beside a fine sulphur spring on the beach that poured forth a large volume of water. While the guides put camp in order, made tables, seats, etc., the others pulled into the lake and soon had No. 8 Skinner spoons trailing just outside the banks of reeds along the shore. I volunteered to row for Mr. C—, an angler of the old school who had taken many a thirty-pound mascallonge from the St. Lawrence in the days when such tricks were every-day affairs. It soon became evident that he was about to surpass his best record in point of numbers, though from my previous visit to these waters I was able to inform him that the fish would only run from seven to twenty pounds in weight. Mr. C— used a short lancewood rod, the strain of which no fish thereabouts could long resist. The first fish brought beside the boat was a ten-pounder, and, being exceedingly anxious to save him, Mr. C— insisted upon my using the gaff, which in this case was more than dull. Given a green stick one and a half inches in diameter and two feet long, I will guarantee to save every fish brought to the boat; but a gaff—well, I detest them; always have and hope I always shall. I did not strike hard enough and the fish got loose. Although badly disappointed, Mr. C— was too gentlemanly to condemn my awkwardness. He insisted that it was all the fault of the dull gaff and consented to the use of the "club," which proved so uniformly successful that the guides followed suit—using the oars instead. Each one of them broke an oar apiece before concluding that they had used more force than discretion.

The call for supper was disregarded. Mr. C— was out to beat his own record, and he did it—returning to camp at dark with ten mascallonge and one bass that aggregated 130 pounds. A very pleasing peculiarity about the seven bass taken at Lost Lake was the fact that each one weighed between four and a half and five pounds. The others had not done so well, though Mr. Green had eight mascallonge and claimed the championship because of a certain twenty-one-pound fish that came to camp in his boat.

The next day was to be our last at Lost Lake, and great was the strife and preparations for a record that should stand for all time. Fishing tackle was overhauled, lines tested, rods carefully inspected, etc. There was also mysterious conferences between each gentleman and his guide—the inference being that each knew more than his neighbor about matters and things in general, but particularly about the resorts of the overgrown and artful mascallonge of Lost Lake; all of which special knowledge would be divulged only on the following afternoon and by the successful boat. As I could make no use of the fish, I withdrew from the contest, loaning my light-running boat to Mr. C— and his guide and informing them of the existence of an irregularly-

shaped bar near the center of the lake that would in all probabilities prove fishy beyond their fondest hopes.

As part of the anglers had remained at Lake St. Germaine, there were only three boats to brave the discomforts of the chill and fog at daylight next morning—the understanding being that all should fish until 2 o'clock p. m., when dinner would be eaten and the return journey begun. To pass the time away I went to a little lake a mile to the westward that one of the guides told me about. It was covered with ducks, principally red-breasted mergansers, and presented many attractions to the sportsman—deer being especially numerous along its shores. There was not even an Indian trail connecting it with other lakes in the vicinity, and as it is undoubtedly filled with large fish—it being joined to Lost Lake by a small stream—it still remains an unknown quantity to be solved by some intrepid angler when adjacent waters shall have been in a measure fished out. Returning, I went out on Lost Lake and caught two mascallonge. It was not a satisfactory way of fishing, as I had to lay the rod down in the boat, and, the drag on the reel being badly worn, did not hook more than one in three. The first one hooked only weighed two pounds and jumped out of water three times before I could get hold of the rod. After catching a second one that weighed eight pounds I thought to experiment a little and put a No. 6 spoon on a fine silk line in connection with a five-ounce fly-rod. The experiment was of short duration and ended disastrously, as the first fish hooked was a big one and nearly jerked the rod out of the boat. In jumping to save it I caught the rod and line firmly above the reel and before I could raise the tip the line had snapped.

The gentlemen came in true to appointment—Mr. Cameron heading the list. In all ninety-two mascallonge and seven small-mouthed black bass had been taken, which three days later were placed on exhibition at Mr. Booth's market in Chicago and then distributed among friends.

* * * * *

Once more the Newcomers were the only guests at the hotel, and a family-party trip was planned to Plum Lake, seven miles away. Our host had had the misfortune to lose one of his horses, and saw no way out of his dilemma save that by selling fish for the wherewithal with which to buy another. We "charitably" consented to assist in the catching, and, everything having been arranged, I rowed the boat containing the luggage to a point within three miles of the lake, where Mr. C— met me with a "go devil" which we had made the day before. The women and youngsters walked on ahead, Mr. C— and myself with the remaining horse and infernal chariot bringing up the rear of the procession. I think all hands got more enjoyment out of the trip than if made with a "coach and four," for all were in high feather upon ar-

rival at the lake. My son, 12 years of age, was highly elated—he having killed a porcupine and four grouse while acting as guard in the front ranks. It was late when we arrived, but the tent was soon up and Mr. C— soon had the reflector before the fire and turned out as fine a lot of biscuit as I have ever seen.

If there be any pleasure in discomfort, we had considerable of it the first night. It rained furiously, and the tent leaked so badly that we were discussing the advisability of taking refuge in the lake when down went the tent before a blast of wind. I can mention several things that would suit the average citizen better than putting up a tent in a rain storm on a dark night when armed with only an ax, a pair of stockings and shirt and pants. But Mr. C— was not of the complaining kind, and so I forebore and worked the harder. Inquiry next morning as to how the ladies slept revealed the fact that they had “rested some,” and this and a good breakfast put all in good humor.

Well, I can't tell you just how each fish was taken that day; how many times he jumped out of the water and how many turns of the reel were made; but I will give your readers a general idea of the fishing, and if it is ever my lot to approach it again in point of excellence I shall be happy. Miss E— and Newcomer, Jr., led the grand march and struck straight across the lake, which averages one-third of a mile in width and is four miles long. The water is clear and the shores are finely wooded, and, next to Trout and Tomahawk lakes it is the most beautiful of all the lakes we visited.

We were about to embark when a great splashing was heard across the lake. Miss E— who was rowing, was seen to be making frantic efforts to reach the nearest land while the boy was rushing a large mascalonge toward the boat with a hand-line. Both were giving vent to yells of delight, which with the splashing of oars and fish made quite a commotion. As soon as possible both sprang ashore and began hauling on the line. When within a few feet of shore and in water one foot deep, the fish struck a log and was free from the hook. In an instant the boy was on top of it, and catching it up in his arms threw into the boat his first mascalonge, which later on was found to weigh nineteen and a half pounds.

“The sounding aisles of the dim woods rang” with cheers rather than hymns on that occasion, and in response to a call that we fancied would prove agreeable the treasure was brought to us for inspection. It was a fine fish, and being the largest caught during the day made the boy's eyes beam with satisfaction whenever reference was made to it. At noon sixty bass and twenty-two mascalonge were pitched from the two boats—there being both large and small-mouthed bass among the number—and then after a substantial meal fishing was resumed. As Mrs. N— decided to remain

in camp the rest of the day, I took my little daughter, aged 10, and Miss Mary and thoroughly explored the south end of the lake. Average success attended us till we entered a small bay by means of a narrow channel. There the fishing was something phenomenal. By rowing back and forth upon a gravel bar 100 yards in length the girls took thirty-two bass in as many minutes. On two occasions, while waiting for me to detach a fish, the spoon was idly dropped over the side of the boat and a bass took it while at rest.

Just over the gravel bar was a deep pool of about two acres in extent, and there we had the rare pleasure of seeing a hooked mascalonge pursued by two others of an inquiring turn of mind. From that one pool we took eight mascalonge averaging nine pounds each. It is unnecessary to state that we were “high boat” in the afternoon. While supper was being prepared Mr. C— volunteered to row me a short distance. Although Plum Lake is supposed to contain no large mascalonge, I shall always believe that I struck the father of them all on that evening. Only a few rods from camp I had a strike, but soon concluded I had fastened to a log. To detach it all the strain the rod would bear was put upon it, and then to my surprise the “log” began to move out into the lake. All efforts to turn him were unavailing, and finally the rod straightened out and the line came in slack. The spoon was literally smashed in pieces.

Cincinnati, O.

“That Mad Fish Culturist.”

Mr. Milton J. Pierce, the editor of the *Ohio Game Protector*, and a moderately well-known though drastic writer and fish culturist, has returned to the charge, and now tilts at the *American Angler* and Hon. William N. Byers, a noted Colorado journalist and angler, *in re* the question of the utility of trout culture. Mr. Pierce denies that it has any value whatever. He says, to quote one of many passages of similar import: “There is not a well-authenticated instance where trout have become more abundant by reason of artificial propagation.” This is the text, and the rest of Mr. Pierce's lucubrations are composed of personal abuse and Greek fire and divers unproven assertions. To all of which the *Angler* epigrammatically retorts in its caption: “A mad fish culturist.”

But, look you, who comes here? Why, no less a personage than that talented gentleman in charge of the angling department of our valued New York contemporary, *The Week's Sport*. Verily, to speak vulgarly, he handles our Ohio brother without gloves, as herein followeth: “Of course, Pierce is all wrong, but he is given currency and may impress the careless reader. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ*. The experience of the past twenty years, both in Europe and America, is that artificial culture of the *salmonoids* is an unqualified success. The fact is so apparent that any angler

worthy of the name can point to half a dozen streams and lakes which have been benefitted, and in some cases absolutely replenished, by planting. As well deny the existence of the atmosphere, and the very audacity of such assertions may well take one's breath away. This Bishop Berkeley amongst fish culturists denies the testimony of our senses—and in effect asserts that trout culture is not and never has been, and is the delusion of interested men—as Berkeley did about the material universe. The world do move, nevertheless, Mr. Pierce!”

The Right Sort of President.

The following letter from President Hampson shows that the Rocky Mountain Sportsmen's Association is a wide-awake organization. It is a pleasure to us to publish such a letter, and we trust that sportsmen residing in the sections referred to will lend Mr. Hampson their prompt assistance in the manner here indicated.

Editor Sports Afild: In your issue of November 6 I note a communication signed “Easy,” from Fort Collins, in which the statement is made that the law in regard to the dumping of tailings from quartz-mills into trout streams is being violated. This misdemeanor is covered by Section 1 of the fish laws.

If your correspondent will kindly furnish me with full particulars I think that there will be no difficulty in effecting a stoppage of the action complained of.

My attention is further called to the dam constructed by the North Fork Canal and Reservoir Ditch Co. in regard to which it seems that proper compliance with the existing statutes has not been observed. I shall very much appreciate to receive full information in regard to this matter also.

C. M. HAMPSON,
Denver, Colo. President R. M. S. A.

How to Cook Trout.

A well-known New York angler and *bon vivant* “airs his learning,” so to speak, for the benefit of SPORTS AFIELD's readers as follows:

Clean a few trout in the crystal waters of the stream. The trout are buttered, and seasoned with salt and pepper; then wrapped in paper or leaves and buried in the hot ashes, where they steam in their own fragrant vapor. The next best mode of cooking small trout is to clean them, rinse quickly in cold spring water, dry with a towel, and rub a little salt on the inside along the bone. Then cut into dice half a pound of the sweetest salt pork obtainable, try it out in the frying-pan, and in the pork fat, actively boiling, plunge the delicate fish. The writer is a firm believer in, and a vehement advocate of, cooking fish by steaming. Large brook trout, salmon and lake trout are delicious steamed. Butter the trout and season with salt and pepper; wrap the fish in muslin, put them in the old-fashioned steamer, place it over a pot of boiling water, and the ascending steam will do the rest. Brook trout are also excellent broiled. Very large trout may be stuffed and baked. Never remove the head, tail or fins of trout; serve them so that they may look as much as possible like their own sweet selves. If you must veil their native beauty, dredge a little yellow Indian meal, but under no circumstances cover them with batter or a thick layer of crumbs. Drawn or melted butter, thickened with freshly-grated horse-radish, forms a harmonious sauce for steamed large trout.