

## THE TROUT OF SUNAPEE LAKE.

*Editor Forest and Stream:*

Mr. Livingston Stone, whose name is well-known to all your readers, called to my notice a day or two since, a letter from Dr. C. A. Kingsbury, of Philadelphia, in which he pronounces my suggestion, that if they be Oquassa trout, which have been lately discovered in the Sunapee Lake, they may be the descendants of the plant of 4,000 fry of that variety made by Mr. A. H. Powers in June, 1879, when we were both members of the N. H. Fish Commission, as "quite improbable, if not absolutely impossible." Also another letter from Mr. John D. Quackenboss, of New York, who has had for a dozen years a summer cottage on the shore of the lake and is well versed in its inhabitants and who warmly indorses my suggestion, for which I hereby return him my thanks.

Now, Mr. Kingsbury's statement as to the impossibility of my suggestion, seems to be rather an ex-cathedra assumption inasmuch as the landlocked salmon from the Schoodic eggs have increased in weight from two to twelve pounds by the same change of habitation, and as I now believe that what I first suggested as a possibility is extremely probable. I will give my reasons for such faith.

In the first place, let me premise that I was born and brought up in this village within thirty miles of Lake Sunapee, and although I went away from here, when seventeen years old, more than forty years since, I have always when practicable made an annual visit of more or less duration to my birthplace. When a boy I was familiar with the Sunapee trout, and have seen them of three or four pounds weight, which was considered very large and was, I think, as large as they used to grow in those days. When Mr. Stone handed me these papers, he asked me, "to what cause do you attribute this abnormal growth of these fish in Sunapee Lake?"

"To the abundance of smelt food," I answered, and he then asked me when the smelt spawned and what was their size. I told him early in April or as soon as the ice was out of the lake, and their ova were not much larger than a mustard seed or a No. 8 shot. "They are small enough then," said he, "for the young trout just planted in May or June to swallow?"

I told him that they were, that a young trout could easily dispose of half a dozen of them.

"Then," said Mr. Stone, "I think this may account for the increased size of the trout, if they are those which you planted in 1879, for I have noticed in my experience in fish-culture that the size of the fish depended very much on the quantity of food which they could obtain during the first six months of their existence, and if these young trout just planted in the lake, could obtain an unlimited supply of young smelt for food, I do not see why they should not have grown to this unusual size."

Mr. Stone has promised me to give you his own opinions on the matter, and I will not forestall him any further, but simply say, that the growth of the land-locked salmon in Sunapee has been surpassed by that of the plant of the same date in Squam, where one was taken last year that weighed sixteen pounds from the same lot of Schoodic eggs, and that in both these cases the lakes are well stocked with fresh-water smelt, as is also the case with Sebago Lake, where the great size of the land-locked salmon has long been known.

This plant of Oquassa trout referred to was part of a lot of eggs, 20,000 in number, which were divided between Sunapee Lake in the west, New-Flood and Squam lakes in the center, and Cook's Pond in Brookfield and Lovewell's Pond in Wakefield, in the east of the State.

The first possible discovery of them is that of Mr. Hodge, when on the spawning beds in Sunapee last October; but it will be interesting to ascertain if they can be found in the other waters the coming autumn, and I shall urge the present Commission to examine them.

If they can be found of equal size in Squam, it will give some additional ground to the smelt food theory, and it will then become desirable to stock all trout waters with smelt also, for they are a very prolific fish.

I will say no more for the present, except that if any extraordinary variety of trout had existed in Sunapee Lake forty years ago I should have been as likely to have known it as any one, and I am very sure that the swarm of poachers who have infested the lake would have found them out and stripped the spawning beds, as they have those of the lake trout in Winnipegesaukee long ago, and by lake trout I mean *Salmo namaycush*, for the dwellers around all these waters call their fish lake trout, even to little Dublin Pond, which has been rechristened Lake Monadnock.

SAMUEL WEBBER.

CHARLESTOWN, N. H., March 30.

*Editor Forest and Stream:*

Ten pounds in six years is certainly a phenomenal growth for a trout, but is it impossible or only phenomenal? The capacity of a young trout for digesting and assimilating food is so great that it is hardly safe to set a limit to it anywhere. When a trout breeder has six boxes of young trout fry to feed, the first lot is hungry and ready to feed again by the time the sixth lot has been fed, so that the breeder could keep going the rounds of the six boxes all day without finding a single fish that had had enough food to satisfy it.

This digestive power of a trout is something marvellous and it so rapidly destroys the animal tissues that have been taken into its stomach as food that, as Col. Lyman suggested, its operation more resembles that of fire than anything one would expect from any kind of organic action.

Now, the more the fish eat, the faster they grow. Indeed their amount of growth seems to be in direct ratio to their amount of food, other things being equal, and this is particularly true, or rather particularly noticeable in the first few months of their lives, when their capacity for taking and disposing of food is so enormous.

In fact the difference in size between well fed young trout and poorly fed ones is sometimes so great as to be almost incredible, and I can testify from personal experience that I have seen many a well fed yearling trout that could and would eat for his breakfast a dozen poorly fed trout, such as I have also seen, of his own age.

Now to bring my remarks to a point. Do we really know that it is impossible for an Oquassa trout to get a ten pound growth in six years? May it not be possible after all that with a trout's prodigious capacity for eating and growing, there may be favorable circumstances which would enable the fish to accomplish this growth in the time given. My friend, Col. Webber, to whom New Hampshire fish-culture is so much indebted and whose efforts to improve the fish of Sunapee Lake are so well known, has told me of something which has certainly prepared the way in Sunapee Lake

for this extraordinary growth of ten pounds in six years and has made it possible, if anything can make it possible. Col. Webber says that fresh-water smelts have been plentifully planted in Sunapee Lake. This being the case and the introduction of smelts being supposed to be a success, I can hardly imagine anything more likely to furnish for the trout just the right kind of food to give them a rapid and extraordinary growth. The smelts hatch out just enough later than the trout and are just enough smaller to provide the trout in their infancy and early life with the very best growing food that they could possibly have. This must increase their ultimate growth immensely, for this depends more upon the feed and growth they get during the first six or eight months than during any other similar periods of their lives. If after this they have all the food they want, and if smelts are abundant in the lake, I do not see why they should not. Then I cannot help thinking that it is still an open question about the extraordinary growth that is claimed for the Oquassa plant. At all events I do not think that any positive evidence in favor of the Oquassa theory should be set aside, or would be even much weakened by any *a priori* argument based on the supposed impossibility of the alleged growth, it being generally conceded, I believe, that *a priori* arguments are at best extremely hazardous and fragile weapons against evidence resting on established facts.

Some day it may be proved that Oquassa cannot grow ten pounds in six years, but it has not been proved yet and it does not seem to me that the alleged impossibility can be fairly used yet in the present state of this good-natured controversy against the advocates of the Oquassa explanation of the appearance of the new fish.

On the other hand there appears to be, from Mr. Hodge's statements, conclusive proof in his possession against the Oquassa theory, viz., evidence that the fish was caught in the lake before the Oquassa were put in in 1879. The establishment of this fact would settle the question forever in Mr. Hodge's favor, and it now seems to be in order for Mr. Hodge to produce this evidence.

CHARLESTOWN, N. H.

LIVINGSTON STONE.

## A TROUT ANGLER'S FIRST SALMON.

I HAVE been a trout fisherman for many years, but have always had an ambition to try salmon fishing, and last summer was able for the first time to gratify that ambition.

My friend B. and I are members of the Sainte Marguerite Salmon Club, and on our arrival at the river last summer found ourselves assigned to the home pool as our station on the stream. We arrived at the pretty little cottage, which was to be our home for some time, on Sunday afternoon, July 5. After inspecting our very pleasant quarters and resting from our four-mile tramp over the portage, we went to look at the lower pool, which is just in front of the cottage, and found it an ideal place to hook and play a large fish. At the upper end the water comes rolling and tumbling from the heavy rapids above, and all through the pool it is swift and boisterous in mid-stream, with comparatively smooth water on either side. While watching the water, out in the middle of the pool a large salmon came handsomely out of the water, showing his bright silvery sides, and fell back with a splash, "like a Frenchman falling off a wharf," as one of the old Oswegatchie guides used to say. It was a sight to make a fisherman's heart beat a little quicker than usual, and make him look around for his tackle; but it was Sunday, and the Canadian game laws are strict, and we felt it was best to observe them, although it was hard work to sit still and not just try those new rods for a few casts on that water where we knew there were such good fish.

Monday morning bright and early found us stirring, and after a hurried breakfast we carefully examined our rods, lines, leaders and flies, which had been made ready the night before, and started to kill our first salmon.

The lower pool fell to me for the morning's fishing, and with my pulse beating rather more rapidly than usual, I began casting from the shingle beach at the head of the pool. At the third cast one of the Frenchmen stopped me, and on reeling up showed me my beautiful Jock Scott broken off at the head of the hook. Not being accustomed to a rod sixteen feet long and weighing over twenty ounces, I had struck the fly against the stones behind me and the quick-eyed Frenchman had immediately noticed it. Putting on another Jock Scott, I began casting again, and at the third or fourth cast saw a fish come up out of the rushing, surging water, not over thirty feet away, that looked to me—a trout fisherman—as large as a porpoise. As he turned to go down, in my excitement I struck hard enough to have broken something if he had taken the fly, but fortunately he missed it.

I sat down and rested him for the orthodox five minutes, and then when the fly reached the spot where he rose before, up he came again, only to disappoint me once more.

After another rest, as the fly went over him he came up with a rush, throwing himself out of the water and taking the fly back with him, and started with a fierce rush across the pool. It was my first experience of the rush of a salmon when first hooked, and I found it something simply magnificent. It seemed almost impossible to get the rod up straight enough to give the fish the spring necessary to keep him from breaking line or leader, and the rod in my hand felt as though I had hooked a "limited" express train. He went straight across the river, and when within twenty feet of the opposite bank threw himself out of the water fully six feet. I dropped the tip of the rod quickly, as I had been so solemnly warned to do by all the old salmon fishermen, and he returned to the water still on the hook, and nothing parted. After a run of twenty feet out he came again, and as the sun struck him he looked like a bar of burnished silver. By this time my heart was beating like a trip-hammer against my ribs, and the excitement was intense. After some lively rushes about the upper part of the pool he started for the rapids below, I making quick time over the rocks, but just as he reached a point where I should have had to take to the canoe the men had ready for me, he changed his plans and rushing up stream faster than I could follow to the point he first rose from, he went to the bottom and sulked. This gave me time to fill and light my pipe, which tended to quiet my rather excited nerves. When at last he started, it was to rush to the surface and throw himself out at very close quarters—not over thirty feet away—and it startled me tremendously, and I am afraid the rod was not lowered as quickly as it should have been, but the tackle was new and strong, and as he started off I found he was still "thar," and I began to feel easier. After a few more circles about the pool he began to show he was not as fresh as when he was first hooked, and as the line was reeled in he finally showed himself not over fifteen feet from the shore, where it was quite shoal. One of the men stole into the water with the gaff, but before he was within reach the fish saw him

and made a last desperate dash out to the middle of the river. My hands and arms by this time had become fairly sore from the long strain, and it was really hard work to reel him in again across that strong current. But this time Pete was successful, and as he thrust the gaff in the water, bubbles and blood came up and the pressure was taken off the rod. He raised the struggling fish from the water, and I would not let him stop until he had taken the salmon full twenty feet from the shore. And now I had killed my first salmon! Time fifty minutes from strike to gaff. The scales were brought out and the fish found to weigh twenty-four and a half pounds.

I took my salmon over to the shade of a tree and told the men I had had all the fishing I wanted for that morning, although it was then only half past seven. I lighted my pipe, and throwing myself on the grass, "visited" with my beautiful prize until I knew every inch of him from head to tail, and if I had been an artist could have drawn his portrait from memory.

On the trip I struck altogether 23 fish, saving 19 of them; the largest weighed 33 pounds, the smallest 8, and the average was 17 pounds. I made up my mind that a trout fisherman could readily learn to kill salmon, even on such a rushing, tumbling stream as the Sainte Marguerite is the whole forty miles from Upper Forks to the Sagunay.

OSWEGO, N. Y., March, 1886.

## DEATH OF IRA WOOD.

WE are pained to chronicle the death of our friend and companion of boyhood, Ira Wood, the well-known angler and genial sportsman. Mr. Wood died very suddenly of bilious colic at Albany, N. Y., on Tuesday last. He was born at Greenbush, opposite Albany, about the year 1833, and was consequently close to his fifty-third year. While yet a boy his family moved to Syracuse, where for a long time Ira was chief of the fire department of that city. He served with credit during the war, and a few years ago returned to Albany, where he was in the employ of a large house dealing in stoves. Within a month he opened a store for the sale of fishing tackle, and hardly a week ago he was in our office, cheery as ever, and with bright hopes for the future. Those who met him at the recent fly-casting tournaments in this city were impressed with his manly, straight-forward way, and the unselfishness with which he coached amateurs and helped his opponents when their lines became tangled.

Mr. Wood was a brother to the late Reuben Wood, so renowned as an angler. He leaves a family.

To a FIRM in Gloucester, Mass., who have named a new schooner in his honor, Mr. Whittier has sent a note in which he writes: "I have always been interested in the New England fisheries, and am glad you have honored me by giving one of your schooners my name. I thank you for the compliment, and send you my unasked-for autograph on the sheet inclosed." On the sheet inclosed he had written:

Luck to the craft that bears this name of mine,  
Good fortune follow with the golden spoon.  
The glazed hat, and tarry pantaloons;  
And whoso'er her keel shall cut the brine,  
God, hake and mackerel quarrel for her line,  
Shipped with her crew, whatever wind may blow,  
Or tides delay, my wish with her shall go,  
Fishing by proxy. Would that it might show  
At need her course, in lack of sun and star,  
Where icebergs threaten, and the sharp reefs are;  
Lift the blind fogs on Anticosti's lee  
And Avalon's rocks; make populous the sea  
Round Grand Manan with eager funny swarms,  
Break the long calms, and charm away the storms.  
JOHN G. WHITTIER.

OAK KNOLL, 3d MD., 1886.

WHAT FISH HAS THIS HABIT?—*Editor Forest and Stream:* For several years, in my fishing tours around Montauk Point, Oyster Bay, Sea Cliff, and several places about Long Island Sound, I have noticed in small fishing that I would catch two fish on one hook, the cause of which I attributed to their being frightened by larger fish of prey. So last season I determined to find out, in order to be sure that this statement would be right. I was accompanied by an angler, and by careful watching came to the conclusion that, seeing one of their school taken in an opposite direction, they take hold of the unfortunate's tail to keep him back from a supposed current, as they are used to this habit in streams of opposite currents; and after being out of water, exhaustion causes them to tighten the bite, thus enabling the angler to land them. I would like older anglers than myself to publish their experience of this.—E. FRANK ROSS.

MASKINONGE.—*Editor Forest and Stream:* I see that I am quoted as using the spelling "muscollonge," but in the manuscript of my article mentioned (see FOREST AND STREAM, Vol. XX., page 490), I certainly wrote maskinonge, but the printer made it read muscollonge. In the Province of Quebec there is a Maskinonge county, also several villages, rivers and lakes by the same name, and as it is to be supposed that they there have the correct pronunciation of the word, its glossic is as follows: M-a-u-s+k-i-n-o-n-g-e. (the sign + stands for the glide from the sound of a letter to the next following). Some years ago I attempted to learn the origin of the above word, and after most diligent inquiries among the best informed habitants, I could only learn that it was the Indian name for the largest of the pike family, *Esox nobilior*.—STANSTEAD (Sackville, N. B.).

BASS FLIES.—Will Mr. Holberton give a little information about the dressing of the bass flies he mentions as taking ones in a late issue of FOREST AND STREAM, if it is not asking too much, so that we will know what to purchase or how to tie? He speaks of a "bass grizzly" and a "bass miller." Are these any wise different from the regular grizzly king or white miller, save that they are tied on hooks of a size suitable for bass? And wherein does a "match-wing ibis" differ from the red ibis, so well known? And will he give the tying of these flies that he mentions—Holberton, post jungle, St. Patrick and Lottie? These may be common species, but there is such a woeful looseness in fly nomenclature, that they, in name at least, are new to me.—PERCYVAL.

AN UNIQUE ANGLING WORK.—For the past three years Mr. Wakeman Holberton, well-known as an accomplished angler and artist, has been engaged in writing a book on his favorite sport. The volume is entirely engrossed by Mr. Holberton's pen on vellum. The illustrations are in pen and ink and in water colors, while the initial letters are illuminated in mediæval style. It is calculated that three more years will be required to finish this volume, which will be a treat to those who are so fortunate as to see it.