

kind of a side winder on him, an' I'll astonish him so he'll forgit all about that patch o' muskrat grass he's a steerin' fur," and as the boat was yanked in the desired direction the side winder changed his course up the lake, and under a stubborn pull he was gradually worked up to within reach of the gaff.

"Ef it aint a durned snake" (one of several names for pickerel), said Ben in disgust, "but it's good enough for the Joneses, speshally when they're about out o' meat," and as he was led a little nearer a well directed stroke of the gaff lifted him in the boat, and a scientific whack with the "pickerel club," administered by Ben with a precision acquired by much practice, put an end to his "proclivities fur sunfish," as he put it. It was a handsomely marked fish of near seven pounds, but a trifle lacking in game qualities, and Ben did not feel much glorified over the capture.

Fifty yards further along the grass belt he astonished another smaller one by "unjintin' his jaw," and as he smote his head with the club he remarked gravely, "More brain food for the Joneses," and as the hook was released with a dextrous twitch, "We kin stan' a heap of it."

"Curious," he went on, as he passed his hook carefully through the jaws of a fresh live frog, threw it overboard, and let fifty or sixty feet of line run off the reel, "that some people hev an idee that eatin' plenty o' fish makes brains fur 'em. Now my notion is that sich people as them don't hev much more brains to start with than a mud turtle, an' the more fish they eat the less they know. I rassed with a fish diet myself a good many years ago till the scales begun to sprout out on me an' then I let up on it fur fear I'd turn into a suckermoojen, but I've bin eatin' more or less of 'em ever since, an' I don't see that I'm a durned bit smarter'n I was before I cornered the fish market. I eat fish now 'cause I like 'em, but I don't take any stock in 'em as brain food. An' besides," here he turned the click on his reel, laid the rod carefully down with the tip pointing over the stern, and after some difficulty in lighting the brier root, repeated, "an' besides, there's plenty o' grub that's more sustainin' than fish, sich as beans an' corned beef, an' taters an' side meat, et settery; an' speakin' o' plain vittels—that was a daisy batch o' corn bread Al baked fur us this mornin'."

After a long pause, during which he puffed meditatively at his "source o' comfort" and gazed abstractedly at the belt of bulrushes along which we were passing, he faced around with, "Whenever I eat corn bread it reminds me of a 'coincidence'—as blessed old Dick M. would say—that happened to me once away down in Texas, an' ef ye don't mind hearin' it, an'll let me spell ye awhile at the oars, I'll tell ye about it jest to kill time till we find a more fishy lookin' streak o' water than it is along here."

CINCINNATI, Ohio.

THE TROUT OF SUNAPEE LAKE.

Editor Forest and Stream.

I have been much interested in reading the letters lately published in your valuable paper regarding the large trout of Sunapee Lake, N. H., and, while I do not pretend to explain the large size or variety, would beg to say a few words in the matter. The town of New London, lying on one side of Sunapee Lake, was my birthplace and my home for some twenty-five years. I was for a time engaged in a country store at George's Mills, and quite well acquainted with many people living at Wendel Harbor, both places being at the upper end of the lake; was also acquainted with some of the people living along the lake shore, and I can well remember of hearing from parties at these places about the large trout then being taken from the lake.

The time to which I refer was now some thirty years ago. I think at that time and down the lake from George's Mills trout were taken of weight from six to ten pounds. It is quite clear to my mind that very large trout have always lived in Sunapee and also in very many of the smaller lakes, or ponds, as we used to call them in those days. A case in point. In New London and within a quarter of a mile of my home was a most beautiful sheet of water, called, and rightly, Pleasant Pond. It is about two miles long and about one mile wide. At the upper end three small brooks came down through the hills and entered the pond. These streams were at certain seasons quite well supplied with brook trout, some of very good size. We used to see sometimes up the largest of these brooks in the fall of the year some very large trout, and were told by the older people that there were in the pond and had always been, trout of immense size.

One July day while crossing the pond with a friend, the water being smooth as glass, we had got about half the way across and were resting, our attention was called to the swallows after the flies on the water, and by seeing one of the birds caught by something and taken below. I can remember that we then thought it must be a big trout that had caught the bird, and we then decided that we would before the ice broke up next spring try for trout in deep water with live bait. I well remember the day in March following, it being the day of the annual spring election. My chum and myself, instead of going to "town meeting" with all the rest, started to try for our trout. Having arrived at what we thought about the right place, we cut a hole to determine the depth of water; found it about twenty feet; put on a good lively minnow and fixed line to bush set in the ice, letting down about fifteen feet of line. We then proceeded to cut holes and set some four more lines, when on looking at the first one I saw the bush was down, and it being a warm, still day I concluded we had better see what was the matter. I went to the hole, and looking down saw the line hanging straight and no motion. Taking hold of it I found there was a heavy weight on it, drew it up carefully, and into the hole came the head of a big trout; reached down and got hold with both hands and threw him out, then threw my cap and shouted loud and long. My companion coming up we held a grand war dance around our captive, and decided to leave the lines set and go up town to show and brag about our fish, and it was something to brag about, as he weighed 5½ pounds, good honest weight, and was in every way a most splendid fish. It had so completely played itself out before I got to the line that there was not a motion made until after I had him out on the ice, and then but very little.

We left our lines until the next day, and on cutting them out took off one trout of about 2 pounds and a chub of 1½ pounds weight. I have it from those still living near the same pond that almost every season they get some trout of very large size. Now without having anything to say about the particular species of the Sunapee Lake trout under discussion, I do not doubt but that very large trout have always existed, not only in Sunapee, but in very many of the much smaller lakes and ponds in New Hampshire, and that at the proper time, with all conditions favorable, these same large 6 to 10 pound trout could have been taken in Sunapee for the last seventy years or more.

WATERTOWN, Wis.

S. S. WOODARD.

THE OPENING OF THE TROUT SEASON.

NOT within thirty years has the ice left the Adirondack lakes as early as it has this spring. Gen. R. U. Sherman reported the ice off the Bisby Chain nearly a month ago. Mr. F. A. Walters, superintendent of the Adirondack hatchery of the N. Y. Fish Commission, reports that the oldest inhabitants do not remember an earlier season. Mr. A. R. Fuller reports Meacham Lake clear of ice and fishing begun on May 1. All this may mean a longer season for good fishing, which usually begins in the Adirondacks from May 15 to June 1.

From Maine we learn from Major Lovejoy, of the hotel at Bethel, that the ice is out of Umbagog Lakes and Richardson Narrows, and will be out of the South Arm before the 10th, and that fishermen are going to Middle Dam by way of Bethel and Upton, while the steamer will move by the 4th.

Now that New York State has two opening days, one for Long Island and one for the rest of the State, there has been no customary display in the markets. The dealers all had some fish and Mr. Blackford had a few flowers and trimmings, but nothing like what he has treated the public to in previous years, when he has given up his whole business to show trout from all parts of the country and even from Europe. He had a lot of sixty live trout from a private pond on Long Island, twelve of which averaged two pounds each. At Washington Market, Messrs. Knoll & Prichard had an exhibit of trout and some paintings of fish by A. Wyderdeld. At midnight before Saturday there were 10,000 pounds of trout coming into the city by express. They were mainly from the preserves of Long Island and Rhode Island, with a few frozen Canadian fish.

The dealers in fishing tackle are very busy fitting out anglers for the woods and in filling orders for country customers, and all things point to a large catch of trout this season.

FISHING AT NIPISSING.

"C. H.," Birmingham, Conn., writes for information about fishing in vicinity of Pembroke, Ont. We were up that way last August on a fishing trip, and while we did not try the fishing there, to judge from our experience further up the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, we have no doubt that the fishing a little back from Pembroke is good. The Ottawa River is several miles wide there, and is called Allumette Lake. Pembroke are quite a lumber depot, and a place of considerable business. There are about 3,000 inhabitants, and this is about the last place that contains a bank (and postal money order office) on the C. P. line till you get to Winnipeg.

We went directly to North Bay, on Lake Nipissing, and put in part of one day fishing there. Not very successful, however, but we "sampled" the pike, bass and "pickerel," the latter being in reality pike-perch. There seem to be none of our common pickerel there, and pike-perch take that name in that locality. Nipissing is a large lake, forty to fifty miles long and fifteen to twenty wide. There is good fishing in this lake in the right season, but a guide to the best places is necessary. North Bay has five or six hundred people and is growing. The stores there are very good and campers can get almost everything requisite, and at reasonable prices. From North Bay we went back four and one-half miles to Trout Lake, where we went into camp. Trout Lake is one of the loveliest lakes I was ever on. It is twelve miles long, with very irregular shores, making innumerable bays and coves. The water is clear and deep, and there are many islands of all shapes and sizes. We engaged Dick Jessup, the only settler living on the lake, as guide, and went down the lake seven miles and camped on what is called "Big Camp Island." We came for good fishing and we found it. And why shouldn't it be good? It is the natural home of bass, trout, maskalonge, etc., and it has never been netted or fished to any extent.

We were in just the right time for black bass, and in trolling we could catch all we had a mind to. We were sure of a strike every few moments, and as one or two fish were all we could eat in a day, we called the rest "lucky dogs," and after weighing them, threw them back for some one else to catch. After a few days we did most of our trolling with a small spoon, fine silk line and fly-rod, and though more would get away, the sport was much better. With large tackle the bass would run from two to five and six pounds, and plenty of them.

Maskalonge are there, but in August you only get a stray one now and then. We caught eight, the largest fifteen pounds (forty-two inches long), the others between five and fourteen pounds. I caught two or three small maskalonge, five and six pounds, on a fly-rod (with small spoon), and it was great sport with such light tackle. We also caught pike, plenty of pickerel (pike-perch), the latter were the most plenty next to the bass.

Lake trout were plenty, but were in deep water while we were there. The largest we caught weighed ten pounds. Dick called them "salmon," and they are a beautiful fish and good eating. Brook trout were plenty in the smaller streams, but were small and darker colored than those here. We caught a number of what they call "ling," a new fish to me. They look to be a cross between a catfish and lamprey eel, a very repulsive-looking creature. These we did not eat. We enjoyed fishing for bass with a fly and live bait in a rocky river. Bass took the fly there better than anywhere else. I hooked a large size green frog through one of his hind legs and tossed him into a deep pool in this river; he sat there serenely a moment, and as I glanced away there was a rush and a swirl, the frog was gone and I had a large fish hooked. Notwithstanding I handled him with the utmost care I did not save him, for he bit the wire gimp off above the hook and was gone. I do not know what kind of fish it was as I did not see it, but it was a large one.

As for hunting, it is good in the fall; the law is off Oct. 15, I believe. Deer and moose are quite plenty. We saw places where the tracks were as thick as in a barnyard; also saw tracks and signs of bears. A few weeks before we were there some Indians were encamped on a little island near our camp, and they got two moose and three deer, probably by floating, as we saw the remains of their jack as well as the hoofs and bones of the moose and deer. They smoked the meat and "portaged" it out. We think any one going to that locality would find it a very enjoyable trip. They will find the Canadian Pacific people pleasant gentlemen, willing to give any information and to do all they can to make their journey pleasant. One of the most weighty reasons for our going to Nipissing, which is directly north of the celebrated Muskoka region, was the fact that you can reach there from New York city or almost any point in New England by losing but one business day; for instance, leave New York

city on Montreal train after business hours (4:30 P. M.) on a Saturday and arrive at Montreal about 9 Sunday morning. Leave Montreal Sunday morning about 9 and train reaches North Bay late that night and you can go into camp Tuesday. At North Bay stop at Snyder's hotel, which is the best. Do not expect too much of a town but two years old, but you will find the people jovial and pleasant. This region was all a wilderness about two years ago, and settlers are not very thick yet. R. B. Jessup, of Trout Lake (his post office is North Bay), has boats and canoes, tent blankets, etc., and could probably be engaged as guide.

B. AND H.

TARPON FISHING WITH ROD AND REEL.

Editor Forest and Stream.

The tarpon, or silver king as it is commonly called, may justly be described as a tropical fish, though found in a semi-tropical climate and waters. In substantiation of this proposition, I may state the fact, which came under my own observation, that the cold snap of last January which did so much damage throughout the South to the fruit, also killed or was the immediate cause of the death of thousands of these fish. I did not visit the scene of this devastation until about March following; but at that time I counted hundreds of the carcasses of this fish upon nearly every beach I visited, stripped of their flesh by the buzzards, hawks, coons and other animals and birds that seek the shores for their food. The tarpon are found in nearly all the waters of Southern and Southwestern Florida and the keys and waters of the Gulf of Mexico, are found in the more southerly portions thereof, where the waters are warmest, early in the spring or throughout the winter, and migrate into the more interior waters as the warm weather approaches, and in summer swarming in all the rivers and bayous of the Gulf and Florida coast.

This fish is said to grow to a very large size, though my own experience did not carry out the fables told of them as to size and weight. I had the experience of capturing some eight and of seeing nearly as many more captured by others, and of seeing and estimating for myself some ten or twelve others which I hooked but did not capture; and as a result of this observation I am led to the belief that from six to seven feet is about their maximum length and that about 150 pounds would be their maximum weight, both of which should, and probably would, be quite satisfactory to any of our expert striped-bass anglers if they could but see, as I have seen, and feel, as I have felt, them hooked on the ordinary tackle of our striped-bass fishermen.

The tarpon, though cautious and wary, is not timid, and with ordinary care can easily be induced to take the bait; and any one at all familiar with what is necessary in capturing the striped bass of our Eastern waters, can readily hook as many as he can safely take care of, provided he hooks them well, and by his skill prevents them from getting away. The object of my trip to Florida was to demonstrate if these fish could be captured with the ordinary tackle used by our Eastern club fishermen in their pursuit of the striped bass, and to see if patience, skill and perseverance could be made successful as against weight, activity, power and endurance. This I have successfully accomplished, for, while I have taken some eight of these monsters, I have used nothing but my striped-bass tackle, which is of the lightest kind used by any of the bass fishermen, consisting of Nos. 9 and 12 bass lines, the ordinary full-size bass reels, a lightsix-foot split bamboo rod weighing fourteen ounces, and 10-0 knobbed hook, increased one size for convenience, simply to accommodate an increased size bait.

The mullet used for bait are much larger than our menhaden, and are used in exactly the same way, and I made a success of chumming as in striped bass fishing, and the only drawback that I found in the capture of tarpon was in a proper and suitable snell to stand the action of their iron and shear-like jaws. Close examination shows the head of this fish to be a curiosity. The mouth, when closed, resembles the eagle's beak reversed, and one would be led to suppose that it was very small, as compared to the size of the fish; but it possesses a sort of folding power, and when fully opened it presents a monstrous cavity, quite sufficient to take in a man's head. The gills are of immense size and capable of great distention, and when the fish leaps from the water, as it always does on being hooked, it presents a spectacle at once grand and imposing, and the continuation of those efforts during the time he has the power to make them, render this fish and its capture at once an awe and delight. He leaps from the water when hooked, and with mouth open and gills distended shakes himself as I have never before seen any living object do, to rid himself of the hook, and in a majority of cases, sooner or later succeeds.

I have had them, as I supposed, securely hooked, and, after half an hour's tussle, when I thought them nearly captured, have had them make a rush and take line enough from me to get sufficient headway to leap from the water and by one of those tremendous shakes throw line, bait and hook ten feet in the air and then gracefully move away. In some cases I have had them leap from the water, from one to six feet clear, thirteen times before they lost power to do so, after which many attempts to leap would end in their getting only part way out of the water.

The brilliancy of the spectacle of this fish, with a head completely covered with a coat of the most brilliant pearl, and the sides from the gill down covered with frosty silver, leaping six feet out of the water, far enough to allow the turning of a complete somersault, and repeating this momentarily, must be seen to be appreciated, for it cannot be accurately or effectively described—it is awe-inspiring and sublime. The notion which is entertained by some English sporting journals, that to capture fish of more than two and a half pounds' weight to the pound of tensile strength of line, has in this experience been entirely exploded; for in my captures a fish weighing 125 pounds has been captured by a line having a tensile strength of less than twenty-five pounds; this is five to one instead of two and one-half to one.

Punta Rassa, Fla., and the adjacent waters of the coast of West Florida, were the field of my operations, though other waters of the Gulf abound with these fish. To reach the waters of this beautiful giant of the deep is not difficult, and the accommodations, though in most places plain, are comfortable, and where I had the good fortune to go I found the attendance good. The fishing is done from boats, and in not very deep water.

The flesh of the tarpon is good to eat, and I am informed that in some cases the beautiful scales are manufactured into very handsome and pleasing jewelry ornaments. A preserved specimen of the largest of my captures can be seen at Edward vom Hofe's, 97 Fulton street, New York.

PUNTA RASSA, Fla., April 12.

BILLY BOWLEGGS.