

THE ADIRONDACKS VERIFIED.

[THE Editors of *The Atlantic* trust that it is not too late to correct the impression, fostered by the over-scrupulosity of former explorers, that the great Northern Wilderness of New York is a tame and commonplace region; and they are happy to present the first of a series of sketches in which it will be treated as in some degree the home of romance and adventure.]

I.

HOW I KILLED A BEAR.

So many conflicting accounts have appeared about my casual encounter with an Adirondack bear, last summer, that in justice to the public, to myself, and to the bear it is necessary to make a plain statement of the facts. Besides, it is so seldom I have occasion to kill a bear that the celebration of the exploit may be excused.

The encounter was unpremeditated on both sides. I was not hunting for a bear, and I have no reason to suppose that a bear was looking for me. The fact is that we were both out blackberrying, and met by chance, the usual way. There is among the Adirondack visitors always a great deal of conversation about bears, a general expression of the wish to see one in the woods, and much speculation as to how a person would act if he or she chanced to meet one. But bears are scarce and timid, and appear only to a favored few.

It was a warm day in August, just the sort of day when an adventure of any kind seemed impossible. But it occurred to the housekeepers at our cottage — there were four of them — to send me to the clearing on the mountain back of the house to pick blackberries. It was rather a series of small clearings, running up into the forest, much overgrown with bushes and briars, and not unromantic. Cows pastured there, penetrating through

the leafy passages from one opening to another, and browsing among the bushes. I was kindly furnished with a six-quart pail, and told not to be gone long.

Not from any predatory instinct, but to save appearances, I took a gun. It adds to the manly aspect of a person with a tin pail if he also carries a gun. It was possible I might start up a partridge; though how I was to hit him if he started up instead of standing still puzzled me. Many people use a shotgun for partridges. I prefer the rifle; it makes a clean job of death, and does not prematurely stuff the bird with globules of lead. The rifle was a Sharp's, carrying a ball cartridge, ten to the pound; an excellent weapon, belonging to a friend of mine who had intended for a good many years back to kill a deer with it. He could hit a tree with it, if the wind did not blow and the atmosphere was just right and the tree was not too far off, nearly every time; of course the tree must have some size. Needless to say that I was at that time no sportsman. Years ago I killed a robin under the most humiliating circumstances. The bird was in a low cherry-tree; I loaded a big shotgun pretty full, crept up under the tree, rested the gun on the fence, with the muzzle more than ten feet from the bird, shut both eyes, and pulled the trigger. When I got up to see what had happened, the robin was scattered about under the tree in more than a thousand pieces, no one of which was big enough to enable a naturalist to decide from it to what species it belonged. This disgusted me with the life of a sportsman. I mention the incident to show that, although I went blackberrying armed, there was not much inequality between me and the bear.

In this blackberry patch bears had been seen. The summer before, our colored cook, accompanied by a little girl of the vicinage, was picking berries there one day, when a bear came out of the

woods and walked towards them. The girl took to her heels and escaped. Aunt Chloe was paralyzed with terror. Instead of attempting to run, she sat down on the ground where she was standing and began to weep and scream, giving herself up for lost. The bear was bewildered by this conduct. He approached and looked at her; he walked around and surveyed her. Probably he had never seen a colored person before, and did not know whether she would agree with him. At any rate, after watching her a few moments he turned about and went into the forest. This is an authentic instance of the delicate consideration of a bear, and is much more remarkable than the forbearance towards the African slave of the well-known lion, because the bear had no thorn in his foot.

When I had climbed the hill, I set up my rifle against a tree and began picking berries, lured on from bush to bush by the black gleam of fruit that always promises more in the distance than it realizes when you reach it; penetrating farther and farther, through leaf-shaded cow-paths flecked with sunlight, into clearing after clearing. I could hear on all sides the tinkle of bells, the cracking of sticks, and the stamping of cattle that were taking refuge in the thicket from the flies. Occasionally, as I broke through a covert, I encountered a meek cow, who stared at me stupidly for a second and then shambled off into the brush; I became accustomed to this dumb society, and picked on in silence, attributing all the wood-noises to the cattle, thinking nothing of any real bear. In point of fact, however, I was thinking all the time of a nice romantic bear, and, as I picked, was composing a story about a generous she bear who had lost her cub, and who seized a small girl in this very wood, carried her tenderly off to her cave, and brought her up on bear's milk and honey. When the girl got big enough to run away, moved by her inherited instincts, she escaped and came into the valley to her father's house (this part of the story was to be worked out, so that the child would know her father by some family resemblance, and have some

language in which to address him), and told him where the bear lived. The father took his gun, and, guided by the unfeeling daughter, went into the woods and shot the bear, who never made any resistance, and only, when dying, turned reproachful eyes upon her murderer. The moral of the tale was to be kindness to animals.

I was in the midst of this tale, when I happened to look some rods away to the other edge of the clearing, and there was a bear! He was standing on his hind legs and doing just what I was doing, — picking blackberries. With one paw he bent down the bush, while with the other he clawed the berries into his mouth, green ones and all. To say that I was astonished is inside the mark. I suddenly discovered that I did n't want to see a bear, after all. At about the same moment the bear saw me, stopped eating berries, and regarded me with a glad surprise. It is all very well to imagine what you would do under such circumstances. Probably you would n't do it; I did n't. The bear dropped down on his fore feet, and came slowly towards me. Climbing a tree was of no use with so good a climber in the rear; if I started to run, I had no doubt the bear would give chase, and although a bear cannot run downhill as fast as he can run uphill, yet I felt that he could get over this rough, brush-tangled ground faster than I could.

The bear was approaching. It suddenly occurred to me how I could divert his mind until I could fall back upon my military base. My pail was nearly full of excellent berries, — much better than the bear could pick himself. I put the pail on the ground and slowly backed away from it, keeping my eye, as beast tamers do, on the bear. The ruse succeeded.

The bear came up to the berries and stopped; not accustomed to eat out of a pail, he tipped it over and nosed about in the fruit, "gorming" (if there is such a word) it down, mixed with leaves and dirt, like a pig. The bear is a worse feeder than the pig. Whenever he disturbs a maple-sugar camp in the spring,

he always upsets the buckets of syrup and tramples round in the sticky sweets, wasting more than he eats. The bear's manners are thoroughly disagreeable.

As soon as my enemy's head was down, I started and ran. Somewhat out of breath and shaky, I reached my faithful rifle. It was not a moment too soon. I heard the bear crashing through the brush after me. Enraged at my duplicity, he was now coming on with blood in his eye. I felt that the time of one of us was probably short. The rapidity of thought at such moments of peril is well known. I thought an octavo volume, had it illustrated and published, sold fifty thousand copies, and went to Europe on the proceeds, while that bear was loping across the clearing. As I was cocking the gun, I made a hasty and unsatisfactory review of my whole life. I noted that even in such a compulsory review it is almost impossible to think of any good thing you have done. The sins come out uncommonly strong. I recollected a newspaper subscription I had delayed paying, years and years ago, until both editor and newspaper were dead; and which now never could be paid to all eternity.

The bear was coming on.

I tried to remember what I had read about encounters with bears. I could not recall an instance in which a man had run away from a bear in the woods and escaped, although I recalled plenty where the bear had run from the man and got off. I tried to think what is the best way to kill a bear with a gun, when you are not near enough to club him with the stock. My first thought was to fire at his head, to plant the ball between his eyes; but this is a dangerous experiment. The bear's brain is very small, and unless you hit that, the bear does not mind a bullet in his head, — that is, not at the time. I remembered that the instant death of the bear would follow a bullet planted just back of his fore leg and sent into his heart. This spot is also difficult to reach unless the bear stands off side towards you, like a target. I finally determined to fire at him generally.

The bear was coming on.

The contest seemed to me very different from anything at Creedmoor. I had carefully read the reports of the shooting there, but it was not easy to apply the experience I had thus acquired. I hesitated whether I had better fire lying on my stomach, or lying on my back and resting the gun on my toes. But in neither position, I reflected, could I see the bear until he was upon me. The range was too short, and the bear would not wait for me to examine the thermometer and note the direction of the wind. Trial of the Creedmoor method, therefore, had to be abandoned; and I bitterly regretted that I had not read more accounts of off-hand shooting.

For the bear was coming on.

I tried to fix my last thoughts upon my family. As my family is small, this was not difficult. Dread of displeasing my wife or hurting her feelings was uppermost in my mind. What would be her anxiety as hour after hour passed on and I did not return! What would the rest of the household think as the afternoon passed and no blackberries came! What would be her mortification when the news was brought that her husband had been eaten up by a bear? I cannot imagine anything more ignominious than to have a husband eaten by a bear! And this was not my only anxiety. The mind at such times is not under control. With the gravest fears the most whimsical ideas will occur. I looked beyond the mourning friends and thought what kind of an epitaph they would be compelled to put upon the stone. Something like this: —

HERE LIE THE REMAINS

OF

EATEN BY A BEAR

August 20, 1877.

It is a very unheroic and even disagreeable epitaph. That "eaten by a bear" is intolerable. It is grotesque. And then I thought what an inadequate language the English is for compact expression. It would not answer to put upon the stone simply "eaten," for that is indefinite and requires explanation; it

might mean eaten by a cannibal. This difficulty could not occur in the German, where *essen* signifies the act of feeding by a man and *fressen* by a beast. How simple the thing would be in German:—

HIER LIEGT
HOCHWOHLGEBOREN
HEER ———, ———
GEFRESSEN

August 20, 1877.

That explains itself. The well-born one was eaten by a beast, and presumably by a bear, which animal has a bad reputation since the days of Elisha.

The bear was coming on. He had in fact come on. I judged that he could see the whites of my eyes. All my subsequent reflections were confused. I raised the gun covered the bear's breast with the sight, and let drive. Then, I turned and ran like a deer. I did not hear the bear pursuing. I looked back. The bear had stopped. He was lying down. I then remembered that the best thing to do after having fired your gun is to reload it. I slipped in a charge, keeping my eyes on the bear. He never stirred. I walked back suspiciously. There was a quiver in the hind legs, but no other motion. Still, he might be shamming. Bears often sham. To make sure, I approached and put a ball into his head. He did n't mind it now; he minded nothing. Death had come to him with a merciful suddenness. He was calm in death. In order that he might remain so, I blew his brains out, and then started for home. I had killed a bear!

Notwithstanding my excitement, I managed to saunter into the house with an unconcerned air. There was a chorus of voices:—

"Where are your blackberries?"

"Why were you gone so long?"

"Where 's your pail?"

"I left the pail."

"Left the pail! What for?"

"A bear wanted it."

"Oh, nonsense!"

"Well, the last I saw of it, a bear had it."

"Oh, come! You did n't really see a bear?"

"Yes, but I did really see a real bear."

"Did he run?"

"Yes; he ran after me."

"I don't believe a word of it. What did you do?"

"Oh, nothing particular, except kill the bear."

Cries of "Gammon," "Don't believe it," "Where 's the bear?"

"If you want to see the bear, you must go up into the woods. I could n't bring him down alone."

Having satisfied the household that something extraordinary had occurred, and excited the posthumous fear of some of them for my own safety, I went down into the valley to get help. The great bear hunter, who keeps one of the summer boarding-houses, received my story with a smile of incredulity, and the incredulity spread to the other inhabitants and to the boarders as soon as the story was known. However, as I insisted in all soberness, and offered to lead them to the bear, a party of forty or fifty people at last started off with me to bring the bear in. Nobody believed there was any bear in the case, but everybody who could get a gun carried one, and we went into the woods armed with guns, pistols, pitchforks, and sticks, against all contingencies or surprises,—a crowd made up mostly of scoffers and jeerers.

But when I led the way to the fatal spot, and pointed out the bear, lying peacefully wrapped in his own skin, something like terror seized the boarders, and genuine excitement the natives. It was a no mistake bear, by George; and the hero of the fight—well, I will not insist upon that. But what a procession that was, carrying the bear home, and what a congregation was speedily gathered in the valley to see the bear! Our best preacher up there never drew anything like it on Sunday.

And I must say that my particular friends, who were sportsmen, behaved very well, on the whole. They did n't deny that it was a bear, although they said it was small for a bear. Mr. Deane, who is equally good with a rifle and a rod, admitted that it was a very fair

shot. He is probably the best salmon-fisher in the United States, and he is an equally good hunter. I suppose there is no person in America who is more desirous to kill a moose than he. But he needlessly remarked, after he had ex-

amined the wound in the bear, that he had seen that kind of a shot made by a cow's horn. This sort of talk affected me not. When I went to sleep that night my last delicious thought was, "I've killed a bear."

Chalres Dudley Warner.

A LITTLE TOUR IN FRANCE.

It was a very little tour; but the charm of the three or four old towns and monuments that it embraced, the beauty of the brilliant autumn weather, the pleasure of reminding one's self how much of the interest, the strength, and dignity of France is outside of that huge, pretentious caravansary called Paris (a reminder often needed), — these things have given me a very grateful memory of it. I went down to Rheims to see the famous cathedral, and to reach Rheims I traveled through the early morning hours along the charming valley of the Marne. The Marne is a pretty little green river, the vegetation upon whose banks, otherwise unadorned, had begun to blush with the early frosts in a manner that suggested the autumnal tints of American scenery. The trees and bushes were positively scarlet and orange; the light was splendid and a trifle harsh; I could have fancied myself in the midst of a Western October, if at intervals some gray old large-towered church had not lifted a sculptured front above a railway station to dispel the fond illusion. One of these church fronts — I saw it only from the train — is particularly impressive: the little cathedral of Meaux, of which the great Bossuet was bishop, and along whose frigid nave he set his eloquence a-rolling with an impetus which it has not wholly lost to this day. It was entertaining, moreover, to enter the champagne country; for Rheims is in the ancient province whose later fame is syllabled, the world over, in popping

corks. A land of vineyards is not usually accounted picturesque; but the country about Epernay seemed to me to have a charm of its own. It stretched away in soft undulations that were pricked all over with little stakes muffled in leaves. The effect at a distance was that of vast surfaces — long, subdued billows — of pincushion; and yet it was very pretty. The deep blue sky was over the scene; the undulations were half in sun and half in shade; and here and there, among their myriad little bristles, were groups of vintagers, who, though they are in reality, doubtless, a prosaic and mercenary body of laborers, yet assumed, to a fancy that glanced at them in the cursory manner permitted by railway traveling, the appearance of joyous and disinterested votaries of Bacchus. The blouses of the men, the white caps of the women, were gleaming in the sunshine; they moved about crookedly among the tiny vine-poles. I thought them full of a charming suggestiveness. Of all the delightful gifts of France to the world, this was one of the most agreeable, — the keen, sweet liquid in which the finest flower of sociability is religiously dipped. It came from these sunny places; this little maze of curling-sticks supplied the world with half the world's gayety. I call it little only in relation to the immense number of bottles with gilded necks in which this gayety is annually stored up. The champagne country seemed to me, in fact, of great extent;

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II.

LOST IN THE WOODS.

It ought to be said, by way of explanation, that my being lost in the woods was not premeditated. Nothing could have been more informal. This apology can be necessary only to those who are familiar with the Adirondack literature. Any person not familiar with it would see the absurdity of one going to the Northern Wilderness with the deliberate purpose of writing about himself as a lost man. It may be true that a book about this wild tract would not be recognized as complete without a lost-man story in it, since it is almost as easy for a stranger to get lost in the Adirondacks as in Boston. I merely desire to say that my unimportant adventure is not narrated in answer to the popular demand; and I do not wish to be held responsible for its variation from the typical character of such experiences.

We had been in camp a week, on the Upper Ausable Lake. This is a gem, emerald or turquoise as the light changes it, set in the virgin forest. It is not a large body of water, is irregular in form, and about a mile and a half in length; but in the sweep of its wooded shores and the lovely contour of the lofty mountains that guard it, the lake is probably the most charming in America. Why the young ladies and gentlemen who camp there occasionally vex the days and nights with hooting and singing sentimental songs is a mystery even to the laughing loon.

I left my companions there one Saturday morning, to return to Keene Valley, intending to fish down the Ausable River. The Upper Lake discharges itself into the Lower by a brook which winds through a mile and a half of swamp and woods. Out of the north end of the Lower Lake, which is a huge sink in the mountains and mirrors the savage precipices,

the Ausable breaks its rocky barriers and flows through a wild gorge, several miles, to the valley below. Between the Lower Lake and the settlements is an extensive forest, traversed by a cart-path admirably constructed of loose stones, roots of trees, decayed logs, slippery rocks, and mud; the gorge of the river forms its western boundary. I followed this caricature of a road a mile or more, then gave my luggage to the guide to carry home, and struck off through the forest, by compass, to the river. I promised myself an exciting scramble down this little-frequented cañon, and a creel full of trout. There was no difficulty in finding the river or in descending the steep precipice to its bed; getting into a scrape is usually the easiest part of it. The river is strewn with boulders, big and little, through which the amber water rushes with an unceasing thunderous roar, now plunging down in white falls, then swirling round in dark pools. The day, already past meridian, was delightful, — at least the blue strip of it I could see overhead.

Better pools and rapids for trout never were, I thought, as I concealed myself behind a boulder and made the first cast. There is nothing like the thrill of expectation over the first throw in unfamiliar waters. Fishing is like gambling, in that failure only excites hope of a fortunate throw next time. There was no rise to the "leader" on the first cast nor on the twenty-first, and I cautiously worked my way down stream, throwing right and left. When I had gone half a mile, my opinion of the character of the pools was unchanged; never were there such places for trout; but the trout were out of their places. Perhaps they didn't care for the fly; some trout seem to be so unsophisticated as to prefer the worm. I replaced the fly with a baited hook; the worm squirmed, the waters rushed and roared, a cloud sailed across the blue; no trout rose to the lonesome opportu-

nity. There is a certain companionship in the presence of trout, especially when you can feel them flopping in your fish-basket; but it became evident that there were no trout in this wilderness, and a sense of isolation for the first time came over me. There was no living thing near. The river had by this time entered a deeper gorge; walls of rocks rose perpendicularly on either side,—picturesque rocks, painted many colors by the oxide of iron. It was not possible to climb out of the gorge; it was impossible to find a way by the side of the river; and getting down the bed, over the falls and through the flumes, was not easy and consumed time.

Was that thunder? Very likely. But thunder-showers are always brewing in these mountain fortresses, and it did not occur to me that there was anything personal in it. Very soon, however, the hole in the sky closed in, and the rain dashed down. It seemed a providential time to eat my luncheon, and I took shelter under a scraggy pine that had rooted itself in the edge of the rocky slope. The shower soon passed, and I continued my journey, creeping over the slippery rocks and continuing to show my confidence in the unresponsive trout. The way grew wilder and more gruesome. The thunder began again, rolling along over the tops of the mountains and reverberating in sharp concussions in the gorge; the lightning also darted down into the darkening passage, and then the rain. Every enlightened being, even if he is in a fisherman's dress of shirt and pantaloons, hates to get wet; and I ignominiously crept under the edge of a sloping boulder. It was all very well at first, until streams of water began to crawl along the face of the rock and trickle down the back of my neck. This was refined misery, unheroic and humiliating, as suffering always is when unaccompanied by resignation.

A longer time than I knew was consumed in this and repeated efforts to wait for the slackening and renewing storm to pass away. In the intervals of calm I still fished, and even descended to what a sportsman considers incredible

baseness: I put a "sinker" on my line. It is the practice of the country folk, whose only object is to get fish, to use a good deal of bait, sink the hook to the bottom of the pools, and wait the slow appetite of the summer trout. I tried this also. I might as well have fished in a pork barrel. It is true that in one deep, black, round pool I lured a small trout from the bottom and deposited him in the creel, but it was an accident; though I sat there in the awful silence—the roar of water and thunder only emphasized the stillness—full half an hour, I was not encouraged by another nibble. Hope, however, did not die; I always expected to find the trout in the next flume, and so I toiled slowly on, unconscious of the passing time. At each turn of the stream I expected to see the end; and at each turn I saw a long, narrow stretch of rocks and foaming water. Climbing out of the ravine was in most places simply impossible, and I began to look with interest for a slide, where bushes rooted in the scant earth would enable me to scale the precipice. I did not doubt that I was nearly through the gorge. I could at length see the huge form of the Giant of the Valley, scarred with avalanches, at the end of the vista; and it seemed not far off. But it kept its distance, as only a mountain can, while I stumbled and slid down the rocky way. The rain had now set in with persistence, and suddenly I became aware that it was growing dark; and I said to myself, If you don't wish to spend the night in this horrible chasm, you'd better escape speedily. Fortunately I reached a place where the face of the precipice was bush-grown, and with considerable labor scrambled up it.

Having no doubt that I was within half a mile, perhaps within a few rods, of the house above the entrance of the gorge, and that in any event I should fall into the cart-path in a few minutes, I struck boldly into the forest, congratulating myself on having escaped out of the river. So sure was I of my whereabouts that I did not note the bend of the river nor look at my compass. The

one trout in my basket was no burden, and I stepped lightly out.

The forest was of hard wood, and open, except for a thick undergrowth of moose-bush. It was raining; in fact, it had been raining, more or less, for a month, and the woods were soaked. This moose-bush is most annoying stuff to travel through in a rain, for the broad leaves slap one in the face and sop him with wet. The way grew every moment more dingy. The heavy clouds above the thick foliage brought night on prematurely. It was decidedly premature to a near-sighted man, whose glasses the rain rendered useless. Such a person ought to be at home early. On leaving the river bank, I had borne to the left, so as to be sure to strike either the clearing or the road, and not wander off into the measureless forest. I confidently pursued this course, and went gayly on by the left flank. That I did not come to any opening or path only showed that I had slightly mistaken the distance; I was going in the right direction.

I was so certain of this that I quickened my pace, and got up with alacrity every time I tumbled down, amid the slippery leaves and catching roots, and hurried on. And I kept to the left; it even occurred to me that I was turning to the left so much that I might come back to the river again. It grew more dusky and rained more violently, but there was nothing alarming in the situation, since I knew exactly where I was. It was a little mortifying that I had miscalculated the distance, yet so far was I from feeling any uneasiness about this that I quickened my pace again, and, before I knew it, was in a full run,—that is, as full a run as a person can indulge in in the dusk, with so many trees in the way. No nervousness, but simply a reasonable desire to get there. I desired to look upon myself as the person “not lost but gone before.” As time passed and darkness fell, and no clearing or road appeared, I ran a little faster. It did not seem possible that the people had moved, or the road been changed, and yet I was sure of my di-

rection. I went on with an energy increased by the ridiculousness of the situation, the danger that an experienced woodsman was in of getting home late for supper,—the lateness of the meal being nothing to the gibes of the unlost. How long I kept this course and how far I went on I do not know, but suddenly I stumbled against an ill-placed tree and sat down on the soaked ground, a trifle out of breath. It then occurred to me that I had better verify my course by the compass. There was scarcely light enough to distinguish the black end of the needle. To my amazement the compass, which was made near Greenwich, was wrong! Allowing for the natural variation of the needle, it was absurdly wrong. It made out that I was going south when I was going north. It intimated that instead of turning to the left I had been making a circuit to the right. According to the compass, the Lord only knew where I was.

The inclination of persons in the woods to travel in a circle is unexplained. I suppose it arises from the sympathy of the legs with the brain. Most people reason in a circle; their minds go round and round, always in the same track. For the last half hour I had been saying over a sentence that started itself: “I wonder where that *road* is?” I had said it over till it had lost all meaning. I kept going round on it. And yet I could not believe that my body had been traveling in a circle. Not being able to recognize any tracks, I have no evidence that I had so traveled, except the general testimony of lost men.

The compass annoyed me. I’ve known experienced guides utterly discredit it. It could not be that I was to turn about and go the way I had come. Nevertheless, I said to myself, You’d better keep a cool head, my boy, or you are in for a night of it. Better listen to science than to spunk. And I resolved to heed the impartial needle. I was a little weary of the rough tramping, but it was necessary to be moving, for with wet clothes and the night air I was decidedly chilly. I turned towards the north, and slipped and stumbled along. A more

uninviting forest to pass the night in I never saw. Everything was soaked. If I became exhausted, it would be necessary to build a fire; and, as I walked on, I could n't find a dry bit of wood. Even if a little punk were discovered in a rotten log, I had no hatchet to cut fuel. I thought it all over calmly. I had the usual three matches in my pocket. I knew exactly what would happen if I tried to build a fire. The first match would prove to be wet. The second match, when struck, would shine, and smell, and fizz a little, and then go out. There would be only one match left. Death would ensue if it failed. I should get close to the log, crawl under my hat, strike the match, see it catch, flicker, almost go out (the reader painfully excited by this time), blaze up, nearly expire, and finally fire the punk—thank God! And I said to myself, The public don't want any more of this thing; it is played out. Either have a box of matches, or let the first one catch fire.

In this gloomy mood I plunged along. The prospect was cheerless; for apart from the comfort that a fire would give, it is necessary at night to keep off the wild beasts. I fancied I could hear the tread of the stealthy brutes following their prey. But there was one source of profound satisfaction. The catamount had been killed! Mr. Colvin, the triangulating surveyor of the Adirondacks, killed him in his last official report to the State. Whether he dispatched him with a theodolite or a barometer does not matter; he is officially dead, and none of the travelers can kill him any more. Yet he has served them a good turn.

I knew that catamount well. One night, when we lay in the bogs of the South Beaver Meadow, under a canopy of mosquitoes, the serene midnight was parted by a wild and human-like cry from a neighboring mountain. "That's a cat," said the guide. I felt in a moment that it was the voice of "modern cultchah." "Modern culture," says Mr. Joseph Cook, in a most impressive period, "modern culture is a child crying in the wilderness, and with no voice but a cry." That describes the cat-

amount exactly. The next day, when we ascended the mountain, we came upon the traces of this brute, a spot where he had stood and cried in the night; and I confess that my hair rose with the consciousness of his recent presence, as it is said to do when a spirit passes by.

Whatever consolation the absence of catamount in a dark, drenched, and howling wilderness can impart, that I experienced; but I thought what a satire upon my present condition was modern culture, with its plain thinking and high living. It was impossible to get much satisfaction out of the real and the ideal, the me and the not-me. At this time, what impressed me most was the absurdity of my position, looked at in the light of modern civilization and all my advantages and acquirements. It seemed pitiful that society could do absolutely nothing for me. It was in fact humiliating to reflect that it would now be profitable to exchange all my possessions for the woods instinct of the most unlettered guide. I began to doubt the value of the "culture" that blunts the natural instincts.

It began to be a question whether I could hold out to walk all night; for I must travel or perish. And now I imagined that a spectre was walking by my side. This was Famine. To be sure I had only recently eaten a hearty luncheon, but the pangs of hunger got hold on me when I thought that I should have no supper, no breakfast; and as the procession of unattainable meals stretched before me, I grew hungrier and hungrier. I could feel that I was becoming gaunt and wasting away. Already I seemed to be emaciated. It is astonishing how speedily a jocund, well-conditioned human being can be transformed into a spectacle of poverty and want. Lose a man in the woods, drench him, tear his pantaloons, get his imagination running on his lost supper and the cheerful fireside that is expecting him, and he will become haggard in an hour. I am not dwelling upon these things to excite the reader's sympathy, but only to advise him, if he contemplates an adventure of this kind, to provide himself with match-

es, kindling wood, something more to eat than one raw trout, and not to select a rainy night for it.

Nature is so pitiless, so unresponsive, to a person in trouble! I had read of the soothing companionship of the forest, the pleasure of the pathless woods. But I thought, as I stumbled along in the dismal actuality, that if I ever got out of it I would write a letter to the newspapers exposing the whole thing. There is an impassive, stolid brutality about the woods that has never been enough insisted on. I tried to keep my mind fixed upon the fact of man's superiority to Nature, his ability to dominate and outwit her. My situation was an amusing satire on this theory. I fancied that I could feel a sneer in the woods at my detected conceit. There was something personal in it. The down-pour of the rain and the slipperiness of the ground were elements of discomfort, but there was besides these a kind of terror in the very character of the forest itself. I think this arose not more from its immensity than from the kind of stolidity to which I have alluded. It seemed to me that it would be a sort of relief to kick the trees. I don't wonder that the bears fall to, occasionally, and scratch the bark off the great pines and maples, tearing it angrily away. One must have some vent to his feelings. It is a common experience of people lost in the woods to lose their heads, and even the woodsmen themselves are not free from this panic, when some accident has thrown them out of their reckoning. Fright unsettles the judgment; the oppressive silence of the woods is a vacuum in which the mind goes astray. It's a hollow sham, this pantheism, I said; being "one with nature" is all humbug; I should like to see somebody. Man, to be sure, is of very little account, and soon gets beyond his depth; but the society of the least human being is better than this gigantic indifference. The "rapture on the lonely shore" is agreeable only when you know you can at any moment go home.

I had now given up all expectation of

finding the road, and was steering my way as well as I could northward towards the valley. In my haste, I made slow progress. Probably the distance I traveled was short, and the time consumed not long; but I seemed to be adding mile to mile and hour to hour. I had time to review the incidents of the Russo-Turkish war, and to forecast the entire Eastern Question; I outlined the characters of all my companions left in camp, and sketched in a sort of comedy the sympathetic and disparaging observations they would make on my adventure; I repeated something like a thousand times, without contradiction, "What a fool you were to leave the river;" I stopped twenty times, thinking I heard its loud roar, always deceived by the wind in the tree-tops; I began to entertain serious doubts about the compass; when, suddenly, I became aware that I was no longer on level ground; I was descending a slope; I was actually in a ravine. In a moment more I was in a brook, newly formed by the rain. Thank Heaven, I cried, this I shall follow, whatever conscience or the compass says. In this region all streams go, sooner or later, into the valley. This ravine, this stream, no doubt, led to the river. I splashed and tumbled along down it, in mud and water. Down hill we went together, the fall showing that I must have wandered to high ground. When I guessed that I must be close to the river I suddenly stepped into mud up to my ankles. It was the road! Running, of course, the wrong way, but still the blessed road. It was a mere canal of liquid mud, but man had made it and it would take me home. I was at least three miles from the point I supposed I was near at sunset, and I had before me a toilsome walk of six or seven miles, most of the way in a ditch. But it is truth to say that I enjoyed every step of it. I was safe; I knew where I was; and I could have walked till morning. The mind had again got the upper-hand of the body, and began to plume itself on its superiority. It was even disposed to doubt whether it had been "lost" at all.

Charles Dudley Warner.

Marmontel sincerely inculcates the advantage of having, in all circumstances, a good and kind heart and a sober judgment: light husbands and wives are shown the folly of being fools, and

young ladies are strongly counseled to marry the young men of just sentiments and sensible behavior, and not the fops who will be sure to make their lives wretched.

W. D. Howells.

THE ADIRONDACKS VERIFIED.

III.

A FIGHT WITH A TROUT.

TROUT-FISHING in the Adirondacks would be a more attractive pastime than it is, but for the popular notion of its danger. The trout is a retiring and harmless animal, except when he is aroused and forced into a combat, and then his agility, fierceness, and vindictiveness become apparent. No one who has studied the excellent pictures representing men in an open boat exposed to the assaults of long, enraged trout, flying at them through the air with open mouth, ever ventures with his rod upon the lonely lakes of the forest without a certain terror, or ever reads of the exploits of daring fishermen without a feeling of admiration for their heroism. Most of their adventures are thrilling, and all of them are in narration more or less unjust to the trout; in fact, the object of them seems to be to exhibit, at the expense of the trout, the shrewdness, the skill, and the muscular power of the sportsman. My own simple story has few of these recommendations.

We had built our bark camp one summer, and were staying on one of the popular lakes of the Saranac region. It would be a very pretty region if it were not so flat; and if the margins of the lakes had not been flooded by dams at the outlets, which have killed the trees and left a rim of ghastly dead-wood — like the swamps of the under-world pictured by Doré's bizarre pencil; and if

the pianos at the hotels were in tune. It would be an excellent sporting region also (for there is water enough) if the fish commissioners would stock the waters; and if previous hunters had not pulled all the hair and skin off from the deer's tails. Formerly sportsmen had a habit of catching the deer by the tails and of being dragged, in mere wantonness, round and round the shores. It is well known that if you seize a deer by this "holt," the skin will slip off like the peel from a banana. This reprehensible practice was carried so far that the traveler is now hourly pained by the sight of peeled-tailed deer mournfully sneaking about the woods.

We had been hearing for weeks of a small lake in the heart of the virgin forest, some ten miles from our camp, which was alive with trout, unsophisticated, hungry trout; the inlet to it was described as *stiff* with them. In my imagination I saw them lying there in ranks and rows, each a foot long, three tiers deep, a solid mass. The lake had never been visited, except by stray sable-hunters in the winter, and was known as the Unknown Pond. I determined to explore it, fully expecting, however, that it would prove to be a delusion, as such mysterious haunts of the trout usually are. Confiding my purpose to Luke, we secretly made our preparations, and stole away from the shanty one morning at day-break. Each of us carried a boat, a pair of blankets, a sack of bread, pork, and maple-sugar; while I had my case of rods, creel, and

book of flies; and Luke had an axe and the kitchen utensils. We think nothing of loads of this sort in the woods.

Five miles, through a tamarack swamp, brought us to the inlet of Unknown Pond, upon which we embarked our fleet, and paddled down its vagrant waters. They were at first sluggish, winding among *triste* fir-trees, but gradually developed a strong current. At the end of three miles a loud roar ahead warned us that we were approaching rapids, falls, and cascades. We paused. The danger was unknown. We had our choice of shouldering our loads and making a *détour* through the woods, or of "shooting the rapids." Naturally we chose the more dangerous course. Shooting the rapids has often been described, and I will not repeat the description here. It is needless to say that I drove my frail bark through the boiling rapids, over the successive water-falls, amid rocks and vicious eddies, and landed, half a mile below, with whitened hair and a boat half full of water; and that the guide was upset, and boat, contents, and man were strewn along the shore.

After this common experience we went quickly on our journey, and a couple of hours before sundown reached the lake. If I live to my dying day, I never shall forget its appearance. The lake is almost an exact circle, about a quarter of a mile in diameter. The forest about it was untouched by axe, and unkilld by artificial flooding. The azure water had a perfect setting of evergreens, in which all the shades of the fir, the balsam, the pine, and the spruce were perfectly blended, and at intervals on the shore in the emerald rim blazed the ruby of the cardinal flower. It was at once evident that the unruffled waters had never been vexed by the keel of a boat. But what chiefly attracted my attention and amused me was the boiling of the water, the bubbling and breaking as if the lake were a vast kettle, with a fire underneath. A tyro would have been astonished at this common phenomenon, but sportsmen will at once understand me when I say that the water *boiled* with

the breaking trout. I studied the surface for some time to see upon what sort of flies they were feeding, in order to suit my cast to their appetites; but they seemed to be at play rather than feeding, leaping high in the air in graceful curves and tumbling about each other as we see them in the Adirondack pictures.

It is well known that no person who regards his reputation will ever kill a trout with anything but a fly. It requires some training on the part of the trout to take to this method. The uncultivated, unsophisticated trout, in unfrequented waters, prefers the bait; and the rural people, whose sole object in going a-fishing appears to be to catch fish, indulge them in their primitive taste for the worm. No sportsman, however, will use anything but a fly, except he happens to be alone.

While Luke launched my boat and arranged his seat in the stern, I prepared my rod and line. The rod is a bamboo, weighing seven ounces, which has to be spliced with a winding of silk thread every time it is used; this is a tedious process, but by fastening the joints in this way a uniform spring is secured in the rod; no one devoted to high art would think of using a socket joint. My line was forty yards of untwisted silk upon a multiplying reel. The "leader" — I am very particular about my leaders — had been made to order from a domestic animal with which I had been acquainted. The fisherman requires as good a cat-gut as the violinist. The interior of the house cat, it is well known, is exceedingly sensitive; but it may not be so well known that the reason why some cats leave the room in distress when a piano-forte is played is because the two instruments are not in the same key, and the vibration of the chords of the one are in discord with the cat-gut of the other. On six feet of this superior article I fixed three artificial flies: a simple brown hackle, a gray body with scarlet wings, and one of my own invention, which I thought would be new to the most experienced fly-catcher. The trout-fly does not resemble any known species of insect. It

is a "conventionalized" creation, as we say of ornamentation. The theory is that fly-fishing being a high art, the fly must not be a tame imitation of nature, but an artistic suggestion of it. It requires an artist to construct one; and not every bungler can take a bit of red flannel, a peacock's feather, a flash of tinsel thread, a cock's plume, a section of a hen's wing, and fabricate a tiny object that will not look like any fly, but still will suggest the universal conventional fly.

I took my stand in the centre of the tipsy boat, and Luke shoved off and slowly paddled towards some lily pads, while I began casting, unlimbering my tools as it were. The fish had all disappeared. I got out perhaps fifty feet of line, with no response, and gradually increased it to one hundred. It is not difficult to learn to cast, but it is difficult to learn not to snap off the flies at every throw. Of this, however, we will not speak. I continued casting for some moments, until I became satisfied that there had been a miscalculation. Either the trout were too green to know what I was at, or they were dissatisfied with my offers. I reeled in, and changed the flies (that is, the fly that was not snapped off). After studying the color of the sky, of the water, and of the foliage, and the moderated light of the afternoon, I put on a series of beguilers, all of a subdued brilliancy, in harmony with the approach of evening. At the second cast, which was a short one, I saw a splash where the leader fell, and gave an excited jerk. The next instant I perceived the game, and did not need the unfeigned "dam" of Luke to convince me that I had snatched his felt hat from his head and deposited it among the lilies. Discouraged by this, we whirled about and paddled over to the inlet, where a little ripple was visible in the tinted light. At the very first cast I saw that the hour had come. Three trout leaped into the air. The danger of this manœuvre all fishermen understand; it is one of the commonest in the woods; three heavy trout taking hold at once, rushing in different direc-

tions, smash the tackle into flinders. I evaded this catch, and threw again. I recall the moment. A hermit thrush on the tip of a balsam uttered his long, liquid, evening note. Happening to look over my shoulder I saw the peak of Marcy gleam rosy in the sky (I can't help it that Marcy is fifty miles off, and cannot be seen from this region; these incidental touches are always used). The hundred feet of silk swished through the air, and the tail fly fell as lightly on the water as a three-cent piece (which no slamming will give the weight of a ten) drops upon the contribution plate. Instantly there was a rush, a swirl; I struck; and "Got him by—!" Never mind what Luke said I got him by. "Out on a fly!" continued that irreverent guide, but I told him to back water and make for the centre of the lake. The trout, as soon as he felt the prick of the hook, was off like a shot, and took out the whole of the line with a rapidity that made it smoke. "Give him the butt!" shouted Luke. It is the usual remark in such an emergency. I gave him the butt, and, recognizing the fact and my spirit, the trout at once sunk to the bottom and sulked. It is the most dangerous mood of a trout, for you cannot tell what he will do next. We reeled up a little, and waited five minutes for him to reflect. A tightening of the line enraged him, and he soon developed his tactics. Coming to the surface, he made straight for the boat, faster than I could reel in, and evidently with hostile intentions. "Look out for him!" cried Luke, as he came flying in the air. I evaded him by dropping flat in the bottom of the boat, and when I picked my traps up he was spinning across the lake as if he had a new idea; but the line was still fast. He did not run far. I gave him the butt again, a thing he seemed to hate, even as a gift; in a moment the evil-minded fish, lashing the water in his rage, was coming back again, making straight for the boat as before. Luke, who was used to these encounters, having read of them in the writings of travelers he had accompanied, raised his paddle in

self-defense. The trout left the water about ten feet from the boat and came directly at me, with fiery eyes, his speckled sides flashing like a meteor. I dodged, as he whisked by with a vicious slap of his bifurcated tail, and nearly upset the boat. The line was of course slack, and the danger was that he would entangle it about me and carry away a leg. This was evidently his game. But I untangled it, and only lost a breast button or two by the swiftly moving string. The trout plunged into the water with a hissing sound, and went away again with all the line on the reel. More butt. More indignation on the part of the captive. The contest had now been going on for half an hour, and I was getting exhausted. We had been back and forth across the lake, and round and round the lake; what I feared was that the trout would start up the inlet and wreck us in the bushes. But he had a new fancy, and began the execution of a manœuvre which I had never read of. Instead of coming straight towards me he took a large circle, swimming rapidly and *gradually contracting his orbit*. I reeled in, and kept my eye on him. Round and round he went, narrowing his circle. I began to

suspect the game, which was to twist my head off. When he had reduced the radius of his circle to about twenty-five feet, he struck a tremendous pace through the water. It would be false modesty in a sportsman to say that I was not equal to the occasion. Instead of turning round with him as he expected, I stepped to the bow, braced myself, and let the boat swing. Round went the fish, and round we went like a top. I saw a line of Mt. Marcy's all round the horizon. The rosy tint in the west made a broad band of pink along the sky above the tree-tops. The evening star was a perfect circle of light, a hoop of gold in the heavens. We whirled and reeled, and reeled and whirled. I was willing to give the malicious beast butt and line and all, if he would only go the other way for a change.

When I came to myself, Luke was gaffing the trout at the boat-side. After we had got him in and dressed him, he weighed three-quarters of a pound. Fish always lose by being "got in and dressed." It is best to weigh them while they are in the water. The only really large one I ever caught got away with my leader when I first struck him. He weighed ten pounds.

Charles Dudley Warner.

WINTER.

THE circling hills with snow are white:
The dark woods on their sides
Stand leafless in the low gray light,
The brown cloud o'er them glides.

The low sun chills, the cold moon stares
From out the icy east;
The young folk go, in muffled pairs,
To dancing and to feast;
And rising from the snowy roof
Into a passing fold,
The dun smoke weaves its clouded woof
Within the warp of cold.

are apt to take a very liberal view of their privileges.

The reforms here suggested would be not only greatly in the interest of claimants, but also a protection to members of Congress. There is probably no position in the world so disagreeable to a man of delicacy and sense of justice as that on a committee of Congress before which claims against the government are being actively pressed. He is a member of a court which is at once a legislative and a judicial body. It must adjudicate the claim in favor of the claimant, or against him, and it must report a bill providing the means for its settlement. It is a body of judges who are interested in the decision of the case. If he has

an acquaintance with the claimant, he is naturally afraid that a disposition to do him a kindness may interfere with a fair judgment. If he has a strong desire to reduce the outlay of the government, he is anxious lest this inclination, proper in itself, may lead him to do injustice to the claimant. His interests, prejudices, passions, all tend to interfere with a calm and dispassionate judgment; and he, if he is the man we have assumed him to be, is fully aware of this fact. Hence he is placed in a position in which settled rules of procedure are a godsend. Behind them he may take refuge against the importunity of claimants. To them he may point when his advice or vote is asked.

Arthur G. Sedgwick.

THE ADIRONDACKS VERIFIED.

IV.

A-HUNTING OF THE DEER.

If civilization owes a debt of gratitude to the self-sacrificing sportsmen who have cleared the Adirondack regions of catamounts and savage trout, what shall be said of the army which has so nobly relieved them of the terror of the deer? The deer-slayers have somewhat celebrated their exploits in print, but I think that justice has never been done them.

The American deer in the wilderness, left to himself, leads a comparatively harmless, but rather stupid life, with only such excitement as his own timid fancy raises. It was very seldom that one of his tribe was eaten by the North American tiger. For a wild animal, he is very domestic: simple in his tastes, regular in his habits, affectionate in his family. Unfortunately for his repose, his haunch is as tender as his heart. Of all wild creatures he is one of the most

graceful in action, and he poses with the skill of an experienced model. I have seen the goats on Mt. Pentelicus scatter at the approach of a stranger, climb to the sharp points of projecting rocks, and attitudinize in the most self-conscious manner, striking at once those picturesque postures against the sky with which Oriental pictures have made us and them familiar. But the whole proceeding was theatrical. Greece is the home of art, and it is rare to find anything there natural and unstudied. I presume that these goats have no nonsense about them when they are alone with the goat-herds, any more than the goat-herds have, except when they come to pose in the studio; but the long ages of culture, the presence always to the eye of the best models and the forms of immortal beauty, the heroic friezes of the Temple of Theseus, the marble processions of sacrificial animals, have had a steady molding, educating influence equal to a society of decorative art upon the people and the animals who have

dwelt in this artistic atmosphere. The Attic goat has become an artificially artistic being, though of course he is not now what he was, as a poser, in the days of Polycletus. There is opportunity for a very instructive essay by Mr. E. A. Freeman on the decadence of the Attic goat under the influence of the Ottoman Turk.

The American deer in the free atmosphere of our country, and as yet untouched by our decorative art, is without self-consciousness, and all his attitudes are free and unstudied. The favorite position of the deer—his forefeet in the shallow margin of the lake among the lily-pads, his antlers thrown back and his nose in the air at the moment he hears the stealthy breaking of a twig in the forest—is still spirited and graceful, and wholly unaffected by the pictures of him which the artists have put upon canvas.

Wherever you go in the Northern forest, you will find deer paths; so plainly marked and well trodden are they that it is easy to mistake them for trails made by hunters; but he who follows one of them is soon in difficulties; he may find himself climbing, through cedar thickets, an almost inaccessible cliff, or immersed in the intricacies of a marsh. The "run," in one direction, will lead to water; but in the other it climbs the highest hills, to which the deer retires for safety and repose in impenetrable thickets. The hunters, in winter, find them congregated in "yards," where they can be surrounded and shot as easily as our troops shoot Comanche women and children in their winter villages. These little paths are full of pitfalls among the roots and stones, and nimble as the deer is, he sometimes breaks one of his slender legs in them. Yet he knows how to treat himself without a surgeon. I knew of a tame deer in a settlement in the edge of the forest who had the misfortune to break her leg. She immediately disappeared, with a delicacy rare in an invalid, and was not seen for two weeks. Her friends had given her up, supposing that she had dragged herself away into the depths of

the woods and died of starvation; when one day she returned, cured of lameness, but thin as a virgin shadow. She had the sense to shun the doctor, to lie down in some safe place, and patiently wait for her leg to heal. I have observed in many of the more refined animals this sort of shyness and reluctance to give trouble which excite our admiration when noticed in mankind.

The deer is called a timid animal, and taunted with possessing courage only when he is "at bay;" the stag will fight when he can no longer flee, and the doe will defend her young in the face of murderous enemies. The deer gets little credit for this eleventh-hour bravery. But I think that in any truly Christian condition of society the deer would not be conspicuous for cowardice. I suppose that if the American girl, even as she is described in foreign romances, were pursued by bull-dogs and fired at from behind fences every time she ventured out-doors, she would become timid and reluctant to go abroad. When that golden era comes which the poets think is behind us and the prophets declare is about to be ushered in by the opening of the "vials" and the killing of everybody who does not believe as those nations believe which have the most cannon; when we all live in real concord, perhaps the gentle-hearted deer will be respected, and will find that men are not more savage to the weak than are the cougars and panthers. If the little spotted fawn can think, it must seem to her a queer world, in which the advent of innocence is hailed by the baying of fierce hounds and the "ping" of the rifle.

Hunting the deer in the Adirondacks is conducted in the most manly fashion. There are several methods, and in none of them is a fair chance to the deer considered. A favorite method with the natives is practiced in winter, and is called by them "still hunting." My idea of still hunting is for one man to go alone into the forest, look about for a deer, put his wits fairly against the wits of the keen-scented animal, and kill his deer or get lost in the attempt. There

seems to be a sort of fairness about this. It is private assassination, tempered with a little uncertainty about finding your man. The still hunting of the natives has all the romance and danger attending the slaughter of sheep in an *abattoir*. As the snow gets deep, many deer congregate together in the depths of the forest, and keep a place trodden down, which grows larger as they tramp down the snow in search of food. In time this refuge becomes a sort of "yard," surrounded by unbroken snowbanks. The hunters then make their way to this retreat on snow-shoes, and from the top of the banks pick off the deer at leisure with their rifles, and haul them away to market, until the inclosure is pretty much emptied. This is one of the surest methods of exterminating the deer. It is also one of the most merciful; and being the plan adopted by our government for civilizing the Indian, it ought to be popular. The only people who object to it are the summer sportsmen. They naturally want some pleasure out of the death of the deer.

Some of our best sportsmen, who desire to protract the pleasure of slaying deer through as many seasons as possible, object to the practice of the hunters, who make it their chief business to slaughter as many deer in a camping season as they can. Their own rule, they say, is to kill a deer only when they need venison to eat. Their excuse is specious. What right have these sophists to put themselves into a desert place, out of the reach of provisions, and then ground a right to slay deer on their own improvidence? If it is necessary for these people to have anything to eat, which I doubt, it is not necessary that they should have the luxury of venison.

One of the most picturesque methods of hunting the poor deer is called "floating." The person, with murder in his heart, chooses a cloudy night, seats himself, rifle in hand, in a canoe, which is noiselessly paddled by the guide, and explores the shore of the lake or the dark inlet. In the bow of the boat is a light in a "jack," the rays of which

are shielded from the boat and its occupants. A deer comes down to feed upon the lily-pads. The boat approaches him. He looks up, and stands a moment terrified or fascinated by the bright flames. In that moment the sportsman is supposed to shoot the deer. As an historical fact, his hand usually shakes so that he misses the animal, or only wounds him, and the stag limps away to die after days of suffering. Usually, however, the hunters remain out all night, get stiff from cold and the cramped position in the boat, and, when they return in the morning to camp, cloud their future existence by the assertion that they "heard a big buck" moving along the shore, but the people in camp made so much noise that he was frightened off.

By all odds, the favorite and prevalent mode is hunting with dogs. The dogs do the hunting, the men the killing. The hounds are sent into the forest to rouse the deer and drive him from his cover; they climb the mountains, strike the trails, and go baying and yelping on the track of the poor beast. The deer have their established runways, as I said, and when they are disturbed in their retreat they are certain to attempt to escape by following one which invariably leads to some lake or stream. All that the hunter has to do is to seat himself by one of these runways, or sit in a boat on the lake, and wait the coming of the pursued deer. The frightened beast, fleeing from the unreasoning brutality of the hounds, will often seek the open country, with a mistaken confidence in the humanity of man. To kill a deer when he suddenly passes one on a run-way demands presence of mind and quickness of aim; to shoot him from the boat, after he has plunged panting into the lake, requires the rare ability to hit a moving object the size of a deer's head a few rods distant. Either exploit is sufficient to make a hero of a common man. To paddle up to the swimming deer and cut his throat is a sure means of getting venison, and has its charms for some. Even women and doctors of divinity

have enjoyed this exquisite pleasure. It cannot be denied that we are so constituted, by a wise Creator, as to feel a delight in killing a wild animal which we do not experience in killing a tame one.

The pleasurable excitement of a deer hunt has never, I believe, been regarded from the deer's point of view. I happen to be in a position, by reason of a lucky Adirondack experience, to present it in that light. I am sorry if this introduction to my little story has seemed long to the reader; it is too late now to stop it, but he can "recoup" himself by omitting the story.

Early on the morning of the 23d of August, 1877, a doe was feeding on Basin Mountain. The night had been warm and showery, and the morning opened in an undecided way. The wind was southerly; it is what the deer call a dog wind, having come to know quite well the meaning of "a southerly wind and a cloudy sky." The sole companion of the doe was her only child, a charming little fawn, whose brown coat was just beginning to be mottled with the beautiful spots which make this young creature as lovely as the gazelle. The buck, its father, had been that night on a long tramp across the mountain to Clear Pond, and had not yet returned; he went ostensibly to feed on the succulent lily-pads there. "He feedeth among the lilies until the day break and the shadows flee away, and he should be here by this hour; but he cometh not," she said, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. Clear Pond was too far off for the young mother to go with her fawn, for a night's pleasure. It was a fashionable watering-place at this season among the deer; and the doe may have remembered, not without uneasiness, the moonlight meetings of a frivolous society there. But the buck did not come; he was very likely sleeping under one of the ledges on Tight Nippin. Was he alone? "I charge you, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not nor awake my love, till he please."

The doe was feeding, daintily cropping the tender leaves of the young

shoots, and turning from time to time to regard her offspring. The fawn had taken his morning meal, and now lay curled up on a bed of moss, watching contentedly, with his large, soft, brown eyes, every movement of his mother. The great eyes followed her with an alert entreaty, and if the mother stepped a pace or two further away in feeding, the fawn made a half movement as if to rise and follow her. You see, she was his sole dependence in all the world. But he was quickly reassured when she turned her gaze on him; and if, in alarm, he uttered a plaintive cry, she bounded to him at once, and, with every demonstration of affection, licked his mottled skin till it shone again.

It was a pretty picture, — maternal love on the one part, and happy trust on the other. The doe was a beauty, and would have been so considered anywhere; as graceful and winning a creature as the sun that day shone on. Slender limbs, not too heavy flanks, round body, and aristocratic head, with small ears and luminous, intelligent, affectionate eyes. How alert, supple, free, she was! What untaught grace in every movement! What a charming pose, when she lifted her head and turned it to regard her child! You would have had a companion picture if you had seen, as I saw, that morning, a baby kicking about among the dry pine needles on a ledge above the Ausable, in the valley below, while its young mother sat near, with an easel before her, touching in the color of a reluctant landscape, giving a quick look at the sky and the outline of the Twin Mountains, and bestowing every third glance upon the laughing boy. Art in its infancy.

The doe lifted her head a little, with a quick motion, and turned her ear to the south. Had she heard something? Probably it was only the south wind in the balsams. There was silence all about in the forest. If the doe had heard anything, it was one of the distant noises of the world. There are in the woods occasional moanings, premonitions of change, which are inaudible to the dull ears of men, but which I have no doubt

the forest folk hear and understand. If the doe's suspicions were excited for an instant, they were gone as soon. With an affectionate glance at her fawn, she continued picking up her breakfast.

But suddenly she started; head erect, eyes dilated, a tremor in her limbs. She took a step; she turned her head to the south; she listened intently. There was a sound,—a distant, prolonged note, bell-toned, pervading the air, shaking the air in smooth vibrations. It was repeated. The doe had no doubt now. She shook like the sensitive mimosa when a foot-step approaches. It was the baying of a hound! It was far off, at the foot of the mountain. Time enough to fly. Time enough to put miles between her and the hound, before he should come upon her fresh trail. Time enough to escape away through the dense forest, and hide in the recesses of Panther Gorge. Yes, time enough. But there was the fawn! The cry of the hound was repeated, more distinct this time. The mother instinctively bounded away a few paces; the fawn started up, with an anxious bleat; the doe turned; she came back; she could n't leave it. She bent over it and licked it, and seemed to say, Come, my child, we are pursued; we must go. She walked away towards the west, and the little thing skipped after her. It was slow going for the slender legs, over the fallen logs and through the rasping bushes. The doe bounded in advance, and waited; the fawn scrambled after her, slipping and tumbling along, very groggy yet on its legs, and whining a good deal because its mother kept always moving away from it. The fawn evidently did not hear the hound; the little innocent would even have looked sweetly at the dog and tried to make friends with it, if the brute had been rushing upon him. By all the means at her command the doe urged her young one on, but it was slow work. She might have been a mile away while they were making a few rods. Whenever the fawn caught up, he was quite content to frisk about; he wanted more breakfast, for one thing, and his mother would n't stand still; she moved on continually, and his weak legs

were tangled in the roots of the narrow deer path.

Shortly came a sound that threw the doe into a panic of terror,—a short, sharp yelp followed by a prolonged howl, caught up and reëchoed by other bayings along the mountain side. The doe knew what that meant. One hound had caught her trail, and the whole pack responded to the "view-halloo." The danger was certain now; it was near. She could not crawl on in this way; the dogs would soon be upon them. She turned again for flight; the fawn, scrambling after her, tumbled over and bleated piteously. The baying, emphasized now by the yelp of certainty, came nearer. Flight with the fawn was impossible. The doe returned and stood by it, head erect and nostrils distended. She stood perfectly still, but trembling. Perhaps she was thinking. The fawn took advantage of the situation, and began to draw his luncheon ration. The doe seemed to have made up her mind. She let him finish. The fawn, having taken all he wanted, lay down contentedly, and the doe licked him for a moment. Then, with the swiftness of a bird, she dashed away, and in a moment was lost in the forest. She went in the direction of the hounds!

According to all human calculations she was going into the jaws of death. So she was; all human calculations are selfish. She kept straight on, hearing the baying every moment more distinctly; she descended the slope of the mountain until she reached the more open forest of hard wood; it was freer going here, and the cry of the pack echoed more resoundingly in the great spaces. She was going due east, when, judging by the sound the hounds were not far off, though they were still hidden by a ridge, she turned short away to the north, and kept on at a good pace. In five minutes more she heard the sharp, exultant yelp of discovery, and then the deep-mouthed howl of pursuit. The hounds had struck her trail where she turned, and the fawn was safe.

The doe was in good running condition, the ground was not bad, and she felt

the exhilaration of the chase. For the moment fear left her, and she bounded on with the exaltation of triumph. For a quarter of an hour she went on at a slapping pace, clearing the moose bushes with bound after bound, flying over the fallen logs, pausing neither for brook nor ravine. The baying of the hounds grew fainter behind her. But she struck a bad piece of going, a dead-wood slash. It was marvelous to see her skim over it, leaping among its intricacies and not breaking her slender legs; no other living animal could do it. But it was killing work; she began to pant fearfully; she lost ground; the baying of the hounds was nearer. She climbed the hard-wood hill at a slower gait; but once on more level, free ground, her breath came back to her, and she stretched away with new courage, and may be a sort of contempt of her heavy pursuers.

After running at high speed perhaps half a mile further, it occurred to her that it would be safe now to turn to the west, and by a wide circuit seek her fawn. But at the moment she heard a sound that chilled her heart. It was the cry of a hound to the west of her. The crafty brute had made the circuit of the slash, and cut off her retreat. There was nothing to do but to keep on; and on she went, still to the north, with the noise of the pack behind her. In five minutes more she had passed into a hill-side clearing; cows and young steers were grazing there; she heard a tinkle of bells. Below her, down the mountain slope, were other clearings, broken by patches of woods; fences intervened, and a mile or two down lay the valley, the shining Ausable, and the peaceful farm-houses. That way also her hereditary enemies were. Not a merciful heart in all that lovely valley. She hesitated; it was only for an instant; she must cross the Slide Brook Valley, if possible, and gain the mountain opposite. She bounded on; she stopped. What was that? From the valley ahead came the cry of a searching hound! All the devils were loose this morning. Every way was closed but one, and that led straight down the mountain to the cluster of houses.

Conspicuous among them was a slender white wooden spire. The doe did not know that it was the spire of a Christian chapel. But perhaps she thought that human pity dwelt there, and would be more merciful than the teeth of the hounds.

"The hounds are baying on my track,
O white man, will you send me back?"

In a panic frightened animals will always flee to human kind from the danger of more savage foes. They always make a mistake in doing so; perhaps the trait is the survival of an era of peace on earth; perhaps it is a prophecy of the golden age of the future. The business of this age is murder; the slaughter of animals, the slaughter of fellow-men, by the wholesale. Hilarious poets who have never fired a gun write hunting songs, — *Ti ra la*; the good bishops write war songs, — *Ave the Czar*.

The hunted doe went down the "open," clearing the fences splendidly, flying along the stony path. It was a beautiful sight. But consider what a shot it was! If the deer, now, could only have been caught. No doubt there were tender-hearted people in the valley who would have spared her life, shut her up in a stable, and petted her. Was there one who would have let her go back to her waiting fawn? It is the business of civilization to tame or kill.

The doe went on; she left the saw-mill on John's Brook to her right; she turned into a wood path; as she approached Slide Brook she saw a boy standing by a tree, with a raised rifle. The dogs were not in sight, but she could hear them coming down the hill; there was no time for hesitation; with a tremendous burst of speed she cleared the stream, and as she touched the bank heard the "ping" of a rifle bullet in the air above her. The cruel sound gave wings to the poor thing. In a moment more she was in the opening; she leaped into the traveled road. Which way? Below her in the wood was a load of hay; a man and a boy with pitchforks in their hands were running towards her. She turned south, and flew along the street. The town was up; women and children ran to the doors

and windows; men snatched their rifles; shots were fired; at the big boarding-houses the summer boarders, who never have anything to do, came out and cheered; a camp-stool was thrown from a veranda; some young fellows, shooting at a mark in the meadow, saw the flying deer, and popped away at her; but they were accustomed to a mark that stood still. It was all so sudden; there were twenty people who were just going to shoot her, when the doe leaped the road fence and went away across a marsh toward the foot-hills. It was a fearful gauntlet to run. But nobody except the deer considered it in that light. Everybody told what he was just going to do; everybody who had seen the performance was a kind of hero,—everybody except the deer. For days and days it was the subject of conversation; and the summer boarders kept their guns at hand, expecting another deer would come to be shot at.

The doe went away to the foot-hills, going now slower, and evidently fatigued if not frightened half to death. Nothing is so appalling to a recluse as half a mile of summer boarders. As the deer entered the thin woods she saw a rabble of people start across the meadow in pursuit; by this time the dogs, panting and lolling out their tongues, came swinging along, keeping the trail, like stupid, and consequently losing ground when the deer doubled. But when the doe had got into the timber, she heard the savage brutes howling across the meadow. (It is well enough, perhaps, to say that nobody offered to shoot the dogs.)

The courage of the panting fugitive was not gone; she was game to the tip of her high-bred ears; but the fearful pace at which she had just been going told on her. Her legs trembled, and her heart beat like a trip hammer. She slowed her speed perforce, but still fled industriously up the right bank of the stream. When she had gone a couple of miles and the dogs were evidently gaining again, she crossed the broad, deep brook, climbed the steep left bank, and fled on in the direction of the Mt. Marcy trail. The fording of the river threw the hounds

off for a time; she knew by their uncertain yelping, up and down the opposite bank, that she had a little respite; she used it, however, to push on until the baying was faint in her ears, and then she dropped exhausted upon the ground.

This rest, brief as it was, saved her life. Roused again by the baying pack, she leaped forward with better speed, though without that keen feeling of exhilarating flight that she had in the morning. It was still a race for life, but the odds were in her favor, she thought. She did not appreciate the dogged persistence of the hound, nor had any inspiration told her that the race is not to the swift. She was a little confused in her mind where to go, but an instinct kept her course to the left, and consequently further away from her fawn. Going now slower and now faster, as the pursuit seemed more distant or nearer, she kept to the southwest, crossed the stream again, left Panther Gorge on her right, and ran on by Haystack and Skylight in the direction of the Upper Ausable Pond. I do not know her exact course through this maze of mountains, swamps, ravines, and frightful wildernesses. I only know that the poor thing worked her way along painfully, with sinking heart and unsteady limbs; lying down "dead beat" at intervals, and then spurred on by the cry of the remorseless dogs, until late in the afternoon she staggered down the shoulder of Bartlett, and stood upon the shore of the lake. If she could put that piece of water between her and her pursuers, she would be safe. Had she strength to swim it?

At her first step into the water she saw a sight that sent her back with a bound. There was a boat mid-lake; two men were in it; one was rowing, the other had a gun in his hand; they were looking towards her; they had seen her. (She did not know that they had heard the baying of hounds on the mountains, and had been lying in wait for her an hour.) What should she do? The hounds were drawing near. No escape that way, even if she could still run. With only a moment's hesitation she plunged into the lake, and struck obliquely across. Her

tired legs could not propel the tired body rapidly. She saw the boat headed for her. She turned toward the centre of the lake. The boat turned. She could hear the rattle of the oar-locks. It was gaining on her. Then there was a silence. Then there was a splash of the water just ahead of her, followed by a roar round the lake, the words "Confound it all," and a rattle of the oars again. The doe saw the boat nearing her; she turned irresolutely to the shore whence she came; the dogs were lapping the water and howling there; she turned again to the centre of the lake.

The brave, pretty creature was quite exhausted now. In a moment more, with a rush of water, the boat was on her, and the man at the oars had leaned over and caught her by the tail.

"Knock her on the head with that paddle!" he shouted to the gentleman in the stern.

The gentleman *was* a gentleman, with a kind, smooth-shaven face, and might have been a minister of some sort of everlasting gospel. He took the paddle in his hand. Just then the doe turned her head and looked at him with her great, appealing eyes.

"I can't do it. My soul, I can't do it," and he dropped the paddle. "Oh, let her go!"

"Let H. go!" was the only response of the guide, as he slung the deer round, whipped out his hunting knife, and made a pass that severed her jugular.

And the gentleman ate that night of the venison.

The buck returned about the middle of the afternoon. The fawn was bleating piteously, hungry and lonesome. The buck was surprised. He looked about in the forest. He took a circuit and came back. His doe was nowhere to be seen. He looked down at the fawn in a helpless sort of way. The fawn appealed for his supper. The buck had nothing whatever to give his child, nothing but his sympathy. If he said anything, this is what he said: "I'm the head of this family; but really, this is a novel case. I've nothing whatever for you. I don't know what to do. I've the feelings of a father; but you can't live on *them*. Let us travel."

The buck walked away; the little one toddled after him; they disappeared in the forest.

Charles Dudley Warner.

OPEN LETTERS FROM NEW YORK.

IV.

If you choose to go up the staircase with me to the eleventh annual exhibition of the Water-Color Society at the National Academy of Design, you will mount with a person who cannot tell you the justness of the prices in the catalogue; who is scarcely so sure of every name on the instant as to know whether it is that of one whose works are to be darted at with rapture, or passed by with self-respecting contempt; who has not a fund of reminiscences from every

previous exhibition in the world; and who has even had the ill luck to miss by absence more than one of this very series. But what then? All the world cannot be connoisseurs, and the regular critics have had their say in the regular channels. We can still respect each other. We can still deposit our umbrellas, if we have a taste for this kind of recreation, — I confess for myself I find it hard to keep out of a picture-gallery if there be any way of getting in, — and go up and look about us, in some lull of the courts, the coal stocks, or

THE ADIRONDACKS VERIFIED.

V.

A CHARACTER STUDY.

THERE has been a lively inquiry after the Primeval Man. Wanted, a man who would satisfy the conditions of the Miocene environment and yet would be good enough for an ancestor. We are not particular about our ancestors, if they are sufficiently remote, but we must have something. Failing to apprehend the Primeval Man, science has sought the Primitive Man where he exists as a survival in present savage races. He is at best only a mushroom growth of the Recent period, — came in probably with the general raft of mammalian fauna, — but he possesses yet some rudimentary traits that may be studied.

It is a good mental exercise to try to fix the mind on the Primitive Man divested of all the attributes he has acquired in his struggles with the other mammalian fauna. Fix the mind on an orange, — the ordinary occupation of the metaphysician; take from it (without eating it) odor, color, weight, form, substance, and peel. Then let the mind still dwell on it as an orange. The experiment is perfectly successful; only at the end of it you have n't any mind. Better still, consider the telephone. Take away from it the metallic disk and the magnetized iron and the connecting wire, and then let the mind run abroad on the telephone. The mind won't come back. I have tried by this sort of process to get a conception of the Primitive Man. I let the mind roam away back over the vast geologic spaces, and sometimes fancy I see a dim image of him stalking across the Terrace epoch of the Quaternary period.

But this is an unsatisfying pleasure. The best results are obtained by studying the Primitive Man as he is left here and there in our era, a witness of what has been. And I find him most to my

mind in the Adirondack system of what geologists call the Champlain epoch. I suppose the Primitive Man is one who owes more to nature than to the forces of civilization; what we seek in him are the primal and original traits, unmingled with the sophistications of society and unimpaired by the refinements of an artificial culture. He would retain the primitive instincts, which are cultivated out of the ordinary, commonplace man. I should expect to find him, by reason of an unrelinquished kinship, enjoying a special communion with nature, admitted to its mysteries, understanding its moods, and able to predict its vagaries. He would be a kind of test to us of what we have lost by our gregarious acquisitions. On the one hand, there would be the sharpness of the senses, the keen instincts, which the fox and the beaver still possess; the ability to find one's way in the pathless forest, to follow a trail, to circumvent the wild denizens of the woods; and, on the other hand, there would be the philosophy of life which the Primitive Man, with little external aid, would evolve from original observation and cogitation. It is our good fortune to know such a man, but it is difficult to present him to a scientific and caviling generation. He emigrated from somewhat limited conditions in Vermont at an early age, nearly half a century ago, and sought freedom for his natural development backwards in the wilds of the Adirondacks. Sometimes it is a love of adventure and freedom that sends men out of the more civilized conditions into the less; sometimes it is a constitutional physical lassitude which leads them to prefer the rod to the hoe, the trap to the sickle, and the society of bears to town-meetings and taxes. I think that Old Mountain Phelps had merely the instincts of the Primitive Man, and never any hostile civilizing intent as to the wilderness into which he plunged. Why should he want to slash

away the forest and plow up the ancient mold, when it is infinitely pleasanter to roam about in the leafy solitudes, or sit upon a mossy log and listen to the chatter of birds and the stir of beasts? Are there not trout in the streams, gum exuding from the spruce, sugar in the maples, honey in the hollow trees, fur on the sables, warmth in hickory logs? Will not a few days' planting and scratching in the "open" yield potatoes and rye? and if there is steadier diet needed than venison and bear, is the pig an expensive animal? If Old Phelps bowed to the prejudice or fashion of his age (since we have come out of the Tertiary state of things), and reared a family, built a frame-house in a secluded nook by a cold spring, planted about it some apple-trees and a rudimentary garden, and installed a group of flaming sunflowers by the door, I am convinced that it was a concession that did not touch his radical character. That is to say, it did not impair his reluctance to split oven-wood.

He was a true citizen of the wilderness. Thoreau would have liked him as he liked Indians and woodchucks and the smell of pine forests; and if Old Phelps had seen Thoreau he would probably have said to him, "Why on airth, Mr. Thoreau, don't you live accordin to your preachin'?" You might be misled by the shaggy suggestion of Old Phelps's given name — Orson — into the notion that he was a mighty hunter, with the fierce spirit of the Berserkers in his veins. Nothing could be further from the truth. The hirsute and grizzly sound of Orson expresses only his entire affinity with the untamed and the natural, an uncouth but gentle passion for the freedom and wildness of the forest. Orson Phelps has only those unconventional and humorous qualities of the bear which make the animal so beloved in literature, and one does not think of Old Phelps so much as a lover of nature — to use the sentimental slang of the period — as a part of nature itself.

His appearance at the time when as a "guide" he began to come into public notice fostered this impression: a

sturdy figure, with long body and short legs, clad in a woolen shirt and butter-nut-colored trousers repaired to the point of picturesqueness; his head surmounted by a limp, light-brown felt hat, frayed away at the top, so that his yellowish hair grew out of it like some nameless fern out of a pot. His tawny hair was long and tangled, matted now many years past the possibility of being entered by a comb. His features were small and delicate and set in the frame of a reddish beard, the razor having mowed away a clearing about the sensitive mouth, which was not seldom wreathed with a child-like and charming smile. Out of this hirsute environment looked the small gray eyes, set near together; eyes keen to observe, and quick to express change of thought; eyes that made you believe instinct can grow into philosophic judgment. His feet and hands were of aristocratic smallness, although the latter were not worn away by ablutions; in fact, they assisted his toilet to give you the impression that here was a man who had just come out of the ground, — a real son of the soil, whose appearance was partially explained by his humorous relation to soap. "Soap is a thing," he said, "that I hain't no kinder use for." His clothes seemed to have been put on him, once for all, like the bark of a tree, a long time ago. The observant stranger was sure to be puzzled by the contrast of this realistic and uncouth exterior with the internal fineness, amounting to refinement and culture, that shone through it all. What communion had supplied the place of our artificial breeding to this man?

Perhaps his most characteristic attitude was sitting on a log, with a short pipe in his mouth. If ever man was formed to sit on a log it was Old Phelps. He was essentially a contemplative person. Walking on a country road or anywhere in the "open" was irksome to him; he had a shambling, loose-jointed gait, not unlike that of the bear; his short legs bowed out, as if they had been more in the habit of climbing trees than of walking. On land, if we may use

that expression, he was something like a sailor; but once in the rugged trail or the unmarked route of his native forest, he was a different person, and few pedestrians could compete with him. The vulgar estimate of his contemporaries that reckoned Old Phelps "lazy" was simply a failure to comprehend the conditions of his being. It is the unjustness of civilization that it sets up uniform and artificial standards for all persons; the primitive man suffers by them much as the contemplative philosopher does, when one happens to arrive in this busy, fussy world.

If the appearance of Old Phelps attracts attention, his voice, when first heard, invariably startles the listener. A small, high-pitched, half-querulous voice, it easily rises into the shrillest falsetto, and it has a quality in it that makes it audible in all the tempests of the forest or the roar of rapids, like the piping of a boatswain's whistle at sea in a gale. He has a way of letting it rise as his sentence goes on, or when he is opposed in argument, or wishes to mount above other voices in the conversation, until it dominates everything. Heard in the depths of the woods, quavering aloft, it is felt to be as much a part of nature, an original force, as the north-west wind or the scream of the hawk. When he is pottering about the camp-fire, trying to light his pipe with a twig held in the flame, he is apt to begin some philosophical observation in a small, slow, stumbling voice, which seems about to end in defeat, when he puts on some unsuspected force, and the sentence ends in an insistent shriek. Horace Greeley had such a voice, and could regulate it in the same manner. But Phelps's voice is not seldom plaintive, as if touched by the dreamy sadness of the woods themselves.

When Old Mountain Phelps was discovered, he was, as the reader has already guessed, not understood by his contemporaries. His neighbors, farmers in the secluded valley, had many of them grown thrifty and prosperous, cultivating the fertile meadows and vigorously attacking the timbered mountains; while

Phelps, with not much more faculty of acquiring property than the roaming deer, had pursued the even tenor of the life in the forest on which he set out. They would have been surprised to be told that Old Phelps owned more of what makes the value of the Adirondacks than all of them put together; but it was true. This woodsman, this trapper, this hunter, this fisherman, this sitter on a log and philosopher, was the real proprietor of the region over which he was ready to guide the stranger. It is true that he had not a monopoly of its geography or its topography (though his knowledge was superior in these respects); there were other trappers and more deadly hunters and as intrepid guides; but Old Phelps was the discoverer of the beauties and sublimities of the mountains, and when city strangers broke into the region he monopolized the appreciation of these delights and wonders of nature. I suppose that in all that country he alone had noticed the sunsets and observed the delightful processes of the seasons; taken pleasure in the woods for themselves, and climbed mountains solely for the sake of the prospect. He alone understood what was meant by "scenery." In the eyes of his neighbors, who did not know that he was a poet and a philosopher, I dare say he appeared to be a slack provider, a rather shiftless trapper and fisherman; and his passionate love of the forest and the mountains, if it was noticed, was accounted to him for idleness. When the appreciative tourist arrived, Phelps was ready, as guide, to open to him all the wonders of his possessions; he for the first time found an outlet for his enthusiasm and a response to his own passion. It then became known what manner of man this was who had grown up here in the companionship of forests, mountains, and wild animals; that these scenes had highly developed in him the love of beauty, the æsthetic sense, delicacy of appreciation, refinement of feeling; and that in his solitary wanderings and musings the primitive man, self-taught, had evolved for himself a philosophy and a system of things. And it

was a sufficient system so long as it was not disturbed by external skepticism. When the outer world came to him, perhaps he had about as much to give to it as to receive from it; probably more in his own estimation, for there is no conceit like that of isolation.

Phelps loved his mountains. He was the discoverer of Marcy, and caused the first trail to be cut to its summit, so that others could enjoy the noble views from its round and rocky top. To him it was in noble symmetry and beauty the chief mountain of the globe; to stand on it gave him, as he said, "a feeling of heaven up-l'isted-ness." He heard with impatience that Mount Washington was a thousand feet higher, and he had a child-like incredulity about the surpassing sublimity of the Alps. Praise of any other elevation he seemed to consider a slight to Mount Marcy, and did not willingly hear it, any more than a lover hears the laudation of the beauty of another woman than the one he loves. When he showed us scenery he loved, it made him melancholy to have us speak of scenery elsewhere that was finer. And yet there was this delicacy about him, that he never overpraised what he brought us to see, any more than one would overpraise a friend of whom he was fond. I remember that when, for the first time, after a toilsome journey through the forest, the splendors of the Lower Ausable Pond broke upon our vision, — that low-lying silver lake imprisoned by the precipices which it reflected in its bosom, — he made no outward response to our burst of admiration; only a quiet gleam of the eye showed the pleasure our appreciation gave him; as some one said, it was as if his friend had been admired, — a friend about whom he was unwilling to say much himself, but well pleased to have others praise.

Thus far we have considered Old Phelps as simply the product of the Adirondacks; not so much a self-made man (as the doubtful phrase has it) as a natural growth amid primal forces. But our study is interrupted by another influence, which complicates the problem but increases its interest, No scien-

tific observer, so far as we know, has ever been able to watch the development of the primitive man played upon and fashioned by the hebdomadal iteration of "Greeley's Weekly Tri-bune." Old Phelps educated by the woods is a fascinating study; educated by the woods *and* the Tri-bune, he is a phenomenon. No one at this day can reasonably conceive exactly what this newspaper was to such a mountain valley as Keene. If it was not a Providence, it was a Bible. It was no doubt owing to it that democrats became as scarce as moose in the Adirondacks. But it is not of its political aspect that I speak. I suppose that the most cultivated and best informed portion of the earth's surface, — the Western Reserve of Ohio, — as free from conceit as it is from a suspicion that it lacks anything, owes its preëminence solely to this comprehensive journal. It received from it everything except a collegiate and a classical education, — things not to be desired, since they interfere with the self-manufacture of man. If Greek had been in this curriculum, its best known dictum would have been translated, "Make thyself." This journal carried to the community that fed on it not only a complete education in all departments of human practice and theorizing, but the more valuable and satisfying assurance that there was nothing more to be gleaned in the universe worth the attention of man. This panoplied its readers in completeness. Politics, literature, arts, sciences, universal brotherhood and sisterhood, — nothing was omitted: neither the poetry of Tennyson nor the philosophy of Margaret Fuller; neither the virtues of Association nor of unbolted wheat; the laws of political economy and trade were laid down as positively and clearly as the best way to bake beans, and the saving truth that the millennium would come, and come only, when every foot of the earth was subsoiled.

I do not say that Orson Phelps was the product of Nature and the Tri-bune, but he cannot be explained without considering these two factors. To him Greeley was the Tri-bune, and the Tri-bune

was Greeley; and yet I think he conceived of Horace Greeley as something greater than his newspaper, and perhaps capable of producing another journal equal to it in another part of the universe. At any rate, so completely did Phelps absorb this paper and this personality that he was popularly known as "Greeley" in the region where he lived. Perhaps a fancied resemblance of the two men, in the popular mind, had something to do with this transfer of name. There is no doubt that Horace Greeley owed his vast influence in the country to his genius, nor much doubt that he owed his popularity in the rural districts to James Gordon Bennett, — that is, to the personality of the man which the ingenious Bennett impressed upon the country. That he despised the conventionalities of society and was a sloven in his toilet was firmly believed, and the belief endeared him to the hearts of the people. To them the "old white coat" — an antique garment of unrenewed immortality — was as much a subject of idolatry as the *redingote grise* to the soldiers of the first Napoleon, who had seen it by the camp fires on the Po and on the Borysthenes, and believed that he would come again in it to lead them against the enemies of France. The Greeley of the popular heart was clad as Bennett said he was clad. It was in vain, even pathetically in vain, that he published in his newspaper the full bill of his fashionable tailor (the fact that it was receipted may have excited the animosity of some of his contemporaries), to show that he wore the best broadcloth and that the folds of his trousers followed the city fashion of falling outside his boots. If this revelation was believed, it made no sort of impression in the country. The rural readers were not to be wheedled out of their cherished conception of the personal appearance of the philosopher of the Tri-bune.

That the Tri-bune taught old Phelps to be more Phelps than he would have been without it was part of the independence-teaching mission of Greeley's paper; the subscribers were an army in which every man was a general. And I

am not surprised to find Old Phelps lately rising to the audacity of criticising his exemplar. In some recently published observations by Phelps upon the philosophy of reading is laid down this definition: "If I understand the necessity or use of reading, it is to reproduce again what has been said or proclaimed before. Hence, letters, characters, etc., are arranged in all the perfection they possibly can be, to show how certain language has been spoken by the original author. Now, to reproduce by reading, the reading should be so perfectly like the original that no one, standing out of sight, could tell the reading from the first time the language was spoken."

This is illustrated by the highest authority at hand: "I have heard as good readers read and as poor readers as almost any one in this region. If I have not heard as many, I have had a chance to hear nearly the extreme in variety. Horace Greeley ought to have been a good reader. Certainly but few, if any, ever knew every word of the English language at a glance more readily than he did, or knew the meaning of every mark of punctuation more clearly, but he could not read proper. But how do you know? says one. From the fact, I heard him in the same lecture deliver or produce remarks in his own particular way, that if they had been published properly in print a proper reader would have reproduced them again the same way. In the midst of those remarks Mr. Greeley took up a paper to reproduce by reading part of a speech that some one else had made, and his reading did not sound much more like the man that first read or made the speech than the clatter of a nail factory sounds like a well-delivered speech. Now, the fault was not because Mr. Greeley did not know how to read as well as almost any man that ever lived, if not quite; but in his youth he learned to read wrong, and as it is ten times harder to unlearn anything than it is to learn it, he, like thousands of others, could never stop to unlearn it, but carried it on through his whole life."

Whether a reader would be thanked for reproducing one of Horace Greeley's

lectures as he delivered it is a question that cannot detain us here; but the teaching that he ought to do so I think would please Mr. Greeley.

The first driblets of professional tourists and summer boarders who arrived among the Adirondack Mountains a few years ago found Old Phelps the chief and best guide of the region. Those who were eager to throw off the usages of civilization, and tramp and camp in the wilderness, could not but be well satisfied with the aboriginal appearance of this guide; and when he led off into the woods, axe in hand and a huge canvas sack upon his shoulders, they seemed to be following the Wandering Jew. The contents of this sack would have furnished a modern industrial exhibition, — provisions cooked and raw, blankets, maple sugar, tin-ware, clothing, pork, Indian meal, flour, coffee, tea, etc. Phelps was the ideal guide: he knew every foot of the pathless forest; he knew all woodcraft, all the signs of the weather, — or, what is the same thing, how to make a Delphic prediction about it; he was fisherman and hunter, and had been the comrade of sportsmen and explorers; and his enthusiasm for the beauty and sublimity of the region, and for its untamable wildness, amounted to a passion. He loved his profession, and yet it very soon appeared that he exercised it with reluctance for those who had neither ideality nor love for the woods. Their presence was a profanation amid the scenery he loved. To guide into his private and secret haunts a party that had no appreciation of their loveliness disgusted him. It was a waste of his time to conduct flip-pant young men and giddy girls, who made a noisy and irreverent lark of the expedition. And, for their part, they did not appreciate the benefit of being accompanied by a poet and a philosopher. They neither understood nor valued his special knowledge and his shrewd observations; they did n't even like his shrill voice; his quaint talk bored them. It was true that, at this period, Phelps had lost something of the activity of his youth, and the habit of contemplative sitting on a log and talking in-

creased with the infirmities induced by the hard life of the woodsman. Perhaps he would rather talk, either about the woods-life or the various problems of existence, than cut wood or busy himself in the drudgery of the camp. His critics went so far as to say, "Old Phelps is a fraud." They would have said the same of Socrates. Xantippe, who never appreciated the world in which Socrates lived, thought he was lazy. Probably Socrates could cook no better than Old Phelps, and no doubt went "gumming" about Athens with very little care of what was in the pot for dinner.

If the summer visitors measured Old Phelps, he also measured them by his own standards. He used to write out what he called "short-faced descriptions" of his comrades in the woods, which were never so flattering as true. It was curious to see how the various qualities which are esteemed in society appeared in his eyes, looked at merely in their relation to the limited world he knew, and judged by their adaptation to the primitive life. It was a much subtler comparison than that of the ordinary guide, who rates his traveler by his ability to endure on a march, to carry a pack, use an oar, hit a mark, or sing a song. Phelps brought his people to a test of their naturalness and sincerity, tried by contact with the verities of the woods. If a person failed to appreciate the woods, Phelps had no opinion of him or his culture; and yet, although he was perfectly satisfied with his own philosophy of life, worked out by close observation of nature and study of the Tribune, he was always eager for converse with superior minds, with those who had the advantage of travel and much reading, and above all with those who had any original "speckerlation." Of all the society he was ever permitted to enjoy, I think he prized most that of Dr. Bushnell. The doctor enjoyed the quaint and first-hand observations of the old woodsman, and Phelps found new worlds open to him in the wide ranges of the doctor's mind. They talked by the hour upon all sorts of themes, — the growth of the tree, the habits of wild animals, the

migration of seeds, the succession of oak and pine, not to mention theology and the mysteries of the supernatural.

I recall the bearing of Old Phelps when, several years ago, he conducted a party to the summit of Mount Marcy by the way he had "bushed out." This was his mountain, and he had a peculiar sense of ownership in it. In a way, it was holy ground, and he would rather no one should go on it who did not feel its sanctity. Perhaps it was a sense of some divine relation in it that made him always speak of it as "Mercy;" to him this ridiculously dubbed Mount Marcy was always "Mount Mercy." By a like effort to soften the personal offensiveness of the nomenclature of this region, he invariably spoke of Dix's Peak, one of the southern peaks of the range, as "Dixie." It was some time since Phelps himself had visited his mountain, and as he pushed on through the miles of forest we noticed a kind of eagerness in the old man, as of a lover going to a rendezvous. Along the foot of the mountain flows a clear trout stream, secluded and undisturbed in those awful solitudes, which is the "Mercy Brook" of the old woodsman. That day when he crossed it, in advance of his company, he was heard to say in a low voice, as if greeting some object of which he was shyly fond, "So, little brook, do I meet you once more?" And when we were well up the mountain, and emerged from the last stunted fringe of vegetation upon the rock-bound slope, I saw Old Phelps, who was still foremost, cast himself upon the ground, and heard him cry, with an enthusiasm that was intended for no mortal ear, "I'm with you once again!" His great passion very rarely found expression in any such theatrical burst. The bare summit that day was swept by a fierce, cold wind, and lost in an occasional chilling cloud. Some of the party, exhausted by the climb and shivering in the rude wind, wanted a fire kindled and a cup of tea made, and thought this the guide's business. Fire and tea were far enough from his thought. He had withdrawn himself quite apart, and, wrapped in a ragged blanket, still and silent as the

rock he stood on, was gazing out upon the wilderness of peaks. The view from Marcy is peculiar. It is without softness or relief. The narrow valleys are only dark shadows; the lakes are bits of broken mirror. From horizon to horizon there is a tumultuous sea of billows turned to stone. You stand upon the highest billow; you command the situation; you have surprised nature in a high creative act; the mighty primal energy has only just become repose. This was a supreme hour to Old Phelps. Tea! I believe the boys succeeded in kindling a fire; but the enthusiastic stoic had no reason to complain of want of appreciation in the rest of the party. When we were descending he told us, with mingled humor and scorn, of a party of ladies he once led to the top of the mountain on a still day, who began immediately to talk about the fashions! As he related the scene, stopping and facing us in the trail, his mild, far-in eyes came to the front, and his voice rose with his language to a kind of scream: "Why, there they were, right before the greatest view they ever saw, — talkin' about the fashions!" Impossible to convey the accent of contempt in which he pronounced the word "fashions;" and then added, with a sort of regretful bitterness, "I was a great mind to come down and leave 'em there!"

In common with the Greeks, Old Phelps personified the woods, mountains, and streams. They had not only personality, but distinctions of sex. It was something beyond the characterization of the hunter, which appeared, for instance, when he related a fight with a panther, in such expressions as "Then Mr. Panther thought he would see what he could do," etc. He was in "imaginative sympathy" with all wild things. The afternoon we descended Marcy we went away to the west, through the primeval forests, towards Avalanche and Colden, and followed the course of the charming Opalescent. When we reached the leaping stream, Phelps exclaimed, "Here's little Miss Opalescent!" "Why don't you say Mr. Opalescent?" some one asked. "Oh, she's too pret-

ty!" And too pretty she was, with her foam-white and rainbow dress, and her downfalls and fountain-like uprisings; a bewitching young person we found her all that summer afternoon.

This sylph-like person had little in common with a monstrous lady whose adventures in the wilderness Phelps was fond of relating. She was built something on the plan of the mountains, and her ambition to explore was equal to her size. Phelps and the other guides once succeeded in raising her to the top of Marcy, but the feat of getting a hog-head of molasses up there would have been easier. In attempting to give us an idea of her magnitude that night, as we sat in the forest camp, Phelps hesitated a moment, while he cast his eye around the woods: "Waal, there *ain't* no tree!"

It is only by recalling fragmentary remarks and incidents that I can put the reader in possession of the peculiarities of my subject; and this involves the wrenching of things out of their natural order and continuity, and introducing them abruptly, — an abruptness illustrated by the remark of "Old Man Hoskins" (which Phelps liked to quote) when one day he suddenly slipped down a bank into a thicket and seated himself in a wasps' nest: "I hain't no business here, but here I be!"

The first time we went into camp on the Upper Ausable Pond, — which has been justly celebrated as the most prettily set sheet of water in the region, — we were disposed to build our shanty on the south side, so that we could have in full view the Gothics and that loveliest of mountain contours. To our surprise Old Phelps, whose sentimental weakness for these mountains we knew, opposed this. His favorite camping-ground was on the north side, a pretty site in itself, but with no special view; in order to enjoy the lovely mountains we should be obliged to row out into the lake; we wanted them always before our eyes, at sunrise and sunset and in the blaze of noon. With deliberate speech, as if weighing our arguments and disposing of them, he replied, "Waal, now, them

Gothics ain't the kinder scenery you want ter *hog down!*"

It was on quiet Sundays in the woods, or in talks by the camp-fire, that Phelps came out as the philosopher, and commonly contributed the light of his observations. Unfortunate marriages and marriages in general were on one occasion the subject of discussion, and a good deal of darkness had been cast on it by various speakers, when Phelps suddenly piped up, from a log where he had sat silent, almost invisible, in the shadow and smoke: "Waal, now, when you've said all there is to be said, marriage is mostly for discipline." Discipline, certainly, the old man had, in one way or another, and years of solitary communing in the forest had given him perhaps a child-like insight into spiritual concerns. Whether he had formulated any creed, or what faith he had, I never knew; Keene Valley had a reputation of not ripening Christians any more successfully than maize, — the season there being short; and on our first visit it was said to contain but one Bible Christian, though I think an accurate census disclosed three. Old Phelps, who sometimes made abrupt remarks in trying situations, was not included in this census; but he was the disciple of supernaturalism in a most charming form. I have heard of his opening his inmost thoughts to a lady, one Sunday, after a noble sermon of Robertson's had been read, in the cathedral stillness of the forest. His experience was entirely first-hand, and related with unconsciousness that it was not common to all. There was nothing of the mystic or the sentimentalist, only a vivid realism, in that nearness of God of which he spoke, — "as near sometimes as those trees," — and of the holy voice that, in a time of inward struggle, had seemed to him to come from the depths of the forest, saying, "Poor soul, I am the way."

In later years there was a "revival" in Keene Valley, the result of which was a number of young "converts," whom Phelps seemed to regard as a veteran might raw recruits, and to have his doubts what sort of soldiers they would

make. "Waal, Jimmy," he said to one of them, "you 've kindled a pretty good fire with light wood. That 's what we do of a dark night in the woods, you know; but we do it just so as we can look around and find the solid wood. So, now put on your solid wood." In the Sunday Bible-classes of the period, Phelps was a perpetual anxiety to the others, who followed closely the printed Lessons and beheld with alarm his discursive efforts to get into freer air and light. His remarks were the most refreshing part of the exercises, but were outside of the safe path into which the others thought it necessary to win him from his "speckerlations." The class were one day on the verses concerning "God's word" being "written on the heart," and were keeping close to the shore, under the guidance of Barnes's Notes, when Old Phelps made a dive to the bottom, and remarked that he had "thought a good deal about the expression 'God's word written on the heart,' and had been asking himself how that was to be done; and suddenly it occurred to him (having been much interested lately in watching the work of a photographer) that when a photograph is going to be taken all that has to be done is to put the object in position, and the sun makes the picture; and so he rather thought that all we had got to do was to put our hearts in place, and God would do the writin'."

Phelps's theology, like his science, is first-hand. In the woods, one day, talk ran on the Trinity as being nowhere asserted as a doctrine in the Bible, and some one suggested that the attempt to pack these great and fluent mysteries into one word must always be more or less unsatisfactory. "Ye-es," droned Phelps, "I never could see much speckleration in that expression the *Trinity*. Why, they 'd a good deal better say *Legion*."

The sentiment of the man about nature, or his poetic sensibility, was frequently not to be distinguished from a natural religion, and was always tinged with the devoutness of Wordsworth's verse. Climbing slowly, one day, up

the Balcony,—he was more than usually calm and slow,—he espied an exquisite fragile flower in the crevice of a rock, in a very lonely spot. "It seems as if," he said, or rather dreamed out, "it seems as if the Creator had kept something just to look at himself." To a lady whom he had taken to Chapel Pond,—a retired but rather uninteresting spot,—and who expressed a little disappointment at its tameness, saying, "Why, Mr. Phelps, the principal charm of this place seems to be its loneliness," "Yes," he replied, in gentle and lingering tones, "and its *nativeness*. It lies here just where it was born." Rest and quiet had infinite attractions for him. A secluded opening in the woods was a "calm spot." He told of seeing once, or rather being *in*, a circular rainbow. He stood on Indian Head, overlooking the Lower Lake, so that he saw the whole bow in the sky and the lake, and seemed to be in the midst of it, "only at one place there was an indentation in it where it rested on the lake, just enough to keep it from rolling off." This "resting" of the sphere seemed to give him great comfort.

One Indian summer morning in October, some ladies found the old man sitting on his doorstep, smoking a short pipe. He gave no sign of recognition of their approach except a twinkle of the eye, being evidently quite in harmony with the peaceful day. They stood there a full minute before he opened his mouth; then he did not rise, but slowly took his pipe from his mouth and said, in a dreamy way, pointing towards the brook, "Do you see that tree?" indicating a maple almost denuded of leaves which lay like a yellow garment cast at its feet. "I've been watching that tree all the morning. There hain't been a breath of wind, but for hours the leaves have been falling, falling, just as you see them now, and at last it 's pretty much bare." And, after a pause, pensively, "Waal, I suppose its hour had come." This contemplative habit of Old Phelps is wholly unappreciated by his neighbors, but it has been indulged in no inconsiderable part of his life. Rising, after a

time, he said, "Now, I want you to go with me and see my *golden city*, I've talked so much about." He led the way to a hill-outlook, when suddenly, emerging from the forest, the spectators saw revealed the winding valley and its stream. He said, quietly, "There is my golden city." Far below, at their feet, they saw that vast assemblage of birches and "poppels," yellow as gold in the brooding noonday, and slender spires rising out of the glowing mass. Without another word, Phelps sat a long time in silent content; it was to him, as Bunyan says, "a place desirous to be in."

Is this philosopher contented with what life has brought him? Speaking of money one day, when we had asked him if he should do differently if he had his life to live over again, he said, "Yes, but not about money. To have had hours such as I have had in these mountains, and with such men as Dr. Bushnell and Dr. Shaw and Mr. Twichell, and others I could name, is worth all the money the world could give." He read character very well, and took in accurately the boy nature. "Tom," — an irrepressible, rather overdone specimen, — "Tom's a nice kind of a boy, but he's got to come up against a snubbin'-post one of these days." "Boys!" he once said, "you can't git boys to take any kinder notice of scenery. I never yet saw a boy that would look a second time at a sunset. Now a girl will, *sometimes*; but even then it's instantaneous, — comes and goes like the sunset. As for me," still speaking of scenery, "these mountains about here, that I see every day, are no more to me, in one sense, than a man's farm is to him. What mostly interests me now is when I see some new freak or shape in the face of nature."

In literature it may be said that Old Phelps prefers the best, in the very limited range that has been open to him. Tennyson is his favorite among poets; an affinity explained by the fact that they are both lotus-eaters. Speaking of a lecture-room talk of Mr. Beecher's, which he had read, he said, "It filled my cup about as full as I callerate to

have it; there was a good deal of truth in it, and some poetry, — waal, and a little spice, too. We've got to have the spice, you know." He admired, for different reasons, a lecture by Greeley that he once heard, into which so much knowledge of various kinds was crowded that he said he "made a reg'lar gobble of it." He was not without discrimination, which he exercised upon the local preaching when nothing better offered. Of one sermon he said, "The man began way back at the creation, and just preached right along down, and he did n't say nothing after all. It just seemed to me as if he was tryin' to git up a kind of a fix-up."

Old Phelps used words sometimes like algebraic signs, and had a habit of making one do duty for a season together, for all occasions. "Speckerlation" and "callerlation" and "fix-up" are specimens of words that were prolific in expression. An unusual expression, or an unusual article, would be characterized as a "kind of a scientific literary git-up."

"What is the programme for to-morrow?" I once asked him. "Waal, I callerate, if they rig up the callerlation they callerate on, we'll go to the Boreas." Starting out for a day's tramp in the woods, he would ask whether we wanted to take a "reg'lar walk, or a random scoot," — the latter being a plunge into the pathless forest. When he was on such an expedition and became entangled in dense brush, and may be a network of "slash" and swamp, he was like an old wizard, as he looked here and there, seeking a way, peering into the tangle, or withdrawing from a thicket and muttering to himself, "There ain't no speckerlation there." And when the way became altogether inscrutable, "Waal, this is a reg'lar random scoot of a rigmarole." As some one remarked, "The dictionary in his hands is like clay in the hands of the potter." A petrification was a "kind of a hard-wood chemical git-up."

There is no conceit, we are apt to say, like that born of isolation from the world, and there are no such conceited people

as those who have lived all their lives in the woods. Phelps was, however, unsophisticated in his until the advent of strangers into his life, who brought in literature and various other disturbing influences. I am sorry to say that the effect has been to take off something of the bloom of his simplicity, and to elevate him into an oracle. I suppose this is inevitable as soon as one goes into print; and Phelps has gone into print in the local papers. He has been bitten with the literary "git-up." Justly regarding most of the Adirondack literature as a "perfect fizzle," he has himself projected a work and written much on the natural history of his region. Long ago he made a large map of the mountain country, and until recent surveys it was the only one that could lay any claim to accuracy. His history is no doubt original in form and unconventional in expression. Like most of the writers of the seventeenth century, and the court ladies and gentlemen of the eighteenth century, he is an independent speller. Writing of his work on the Adirondacks he says: "If I should ever live to get this wonderful thing written I expect it will show one thing if no more, and that is that everything has an opposite. I expect to show in this that literature has an opposite if I do not show anything else. We could not enjoy the blessings and happiness of riteousness if we did not know innicity was in the world; in fact there would be no riteousness without innicity." Writing also of his great enjoyment of being in the woods, especially since he has had the society there of some people he names, he adds, "And since I have Literature Science and Art all spread about

on the green moss of the mountain woods or the gravel banks of a cristle stream it seems like finding roses honeysuckles and violets on a crisp brown cliff in December. You know I don't believe much in the religion of seramony, but any riteous thing that has life and spirit in it is food for me." I must not neglect to mention an essay, continued in several numbers of his local paper, on *The Growth of the Tree*, in which he demolishes the theory of Mr. Greeley, whom he calls "one of the best vegetable philosophers," about "growth without seed." He treats of the office of sap,— "all trees have some kind of sap and some kind of operation of sap flowing in their season,"—the dissemination of seeds, the processes of growth, the power of healing wounds, the proportion of roots to branches, etc. Speaking of the latter he says: "I have thought it would be one of the greatest curiosities on earth to see a thrifty growing maple or elm that had grown on a deep soil interval to be two feet in diameter to be raised clear into the air with every root and fibre down to the minutest thread all entirely cleared of soil so that every particle could be seen in its natural position. I think it would astonish even the wise ones." From his instinctive sympathy with nature he often credits vegetable organism with "instinctive judgment." "Observation teaches us that a tree is given powerful instincts which would almost appear to amount to judgment in some cases to provide for its own wants and necessities."

Here our study must cease. When the primitive man comes into literature, he is no longer primitive.

Charles Dudley Warner.

Victorious calm those holy tones afforded
 Unto my soul; whose outcry, in disgrace,
 Changed to low music, leading to the place
 Where, though well armed, with futile use awarded,
 My past lay dead. "Wars are of earth!" he cried;
 "Endurance only breathes immortal air;
 Courage eternal, by a world defied,
 Still wears the front of patience, smooth and fair."
 Are wars so futile, and is courage peace?
 Take, then, my soul, thus gently thy release!

Rose Hawthorne Lathrop.

THE ADIRONDACKS VERIFIED.

VI.

CAMPING OUT.

It seems to be agreed that civilization is kept up only by a constant effort. Nature claims its own speedily when the effort is relaxed. If you clear a patch of fertile ground in the forest, uproot the stumps, and plant it, year after year, in potatoes and maize, you say you have subdued it. But if you leave it for a season or two a kind of barbarism seems to steal out upon it from the circling woods: coarse grass and brambles cover it; bushes spring up in a wild tangle; the raspberry and the blackberry flower and fruit, and the humorous bear feeds upon them. The last state of that ground is worse than the first.

Perhaps the cleared spot is called Ephesus. There is a splendid city on the plain; there are temples and theatres on the hills; the commerce of the world seeks its port; the luxury of the Orient flows through its marble streets. You are there one day when the sea has receded: the plain is a pestilent marsh; the temples, the theatres, the lofty gates, have sunken and crumbled, and the wild brier runs over them; and as you grow pensive in the most desolate place in the world, a bandit lounges out of a tomb and offers to relieve you of all that which

creates artificial distinctions in society. The higher the civilization has risen, the more abject is the desolation of barbarism that ensues. The most melancholy spot in the Adirondacks is not a tamarack swamp, where the traveler wades in moss and mire, and the atmosphere is composed of equal active parts of black-flies, mosquitoes, and midges. It is the village of the Adirondack Iron Works, where the streets of gaunt houses are falling to pieces, tenantless, the factory wheels have stopped, the furnaces are in ruins, the iron and wooden machinery is strewn about in helpless detachment, and heaps of charcoal, ore, and slag proclaim an arrested industry. Beside this deserted village even Calamity Pond, shallow, sedgy, with its ragged shores of stunted firs and its melancholy shaft that marks the spot where the proprietor of the iron works accidentally shot himself, is cheerful.

The instinct of barbarism that leads people periodically to throw aside the habits of civilization and seek the freedom and discomfort of the woods is explicable enough. But it is not so easy to understand why this passion should be strongest in those who are most refined and most trained in intellectual and social fastidiousness. Philistinism and shoddy do not like the woods, unless it becomes fashionable to do so, and then

as speedily as possible they introduce their artificial luxuries, and reduce the life in the wilderness to the vulgarity of a well-fed picnic. It is they who have strewn the Adirondacks with paper collars and tin cans. The real enjoyment of camping and tramping in the woods lies in a return to primitive conditions of lodging, dress, and food, — in as total an escape as may be from the requirements of civilization. And it remains to be explained why this is enjoyed most by those who are most highly civilized. It is wonderful to see how easily the restraints of society fall off. Of course, it is not true that courtesy depends upon clothes with the best people, but with others behavior hangs almost entirely upon dress. Many good habits are easily got rid of in the woods. Doubt sometimes seems to be felt whether Sunday is a legal holiday there. It becomes a question of casuistry with a clergyman whether he may shoot at a mark on Sunday if none of his congregation are present. He intends no harm; he only gratifies a curiosity to see if he can hit the mark. Where shall he draw the line? Doubtless he might throw a stone at a chipmunk, or shout at a loon. Might he fire at a mark with an air-gun that makes no noise? He will not fish or hunt on Sunday, — although he is no more likely to catch anything that day than on any other, — but may he eat trout that the guide has caught on Sunday, if the guide swears he caught them Saturday night? Is there such a thing as a vacation in religion? How much of our virtue do we owe to inherited habits?

I am not at all sure whether this desire to camp outside of civilization is creditable to human nature or otherwise. We hear sometimes that the Turk has been merely camping for four centuries in Europe. I suspect that many of us are, after all, really camping temporarily in civilized conditions, and that going into the wilderness is an escape, longed for, into our natural and preferred state. Consider what this "camping out" is that is confessedly so agreeable to people most delicately reared. I have no desire to exaggerate its delights.

The Adirondack wilderness is essentially unbroken: a few bad roads that penetrate it, a few jolting wagons that traverse them, a few barn-like boarding-houses on the edge of the forest, where the boarders are soothed by patent coffee, and stimulated to unnatural gaiety by Japan tea, and experimented on by unique cookery, do little to destroy the savage fascination of the region. In half an hour, at any point, one can put himself into solitude and every desirable discomfort. The party that covets the experience of the camp comes down to primitive conditions of dress and equipment. There are guides and porters to carry the blankets for beds, the raw provisions, and the camp equipage; and the motley party of the temporarily de-civilized files into the woods and begins, perhaps by a road, perhaps on a trail, its exhilarating and weary march. The exhilaration arises partly from the casting aside of restraint, partly from the adventure of exploration; and the weariness from the interminable toil of bad walking, a heavy pack, and the grim monotony of trees and bushes that shut out all prospect except an occasional glimpse of the sky. Mountains are painfully climbed, streams forded, lonesome lakes paddled over, long and muddy "carries" traversed. Fancy this party the victim of political exile, banished by the law, and a more sorrowful march could not be imagined. But the voluntary hardship becomes pleasure, and it is undeniable that the spirits of the party rise as the difficulties increase.

For this straggling and stumbling band the world is young again. It has come to the beginning of things, it has cut loose from tradition, and is free to make a home anywhere; the movement has all the promise of a revolution. All this virginal freshness invites the primitive instincts of play and disorder. The free range of the forests suggests endless possibilities of exploration and possession. Perhaps we are treading where man since the creation never trod before; perhaps the waters of this bubbling spring, which we deepen by scraping out the decayed leaves and the black earth, have

never been tasted before except by the wild denizens of these woods. We cross the trails of lurking animals, — paths that heighten our sense of seclusion from the world. The hammering of the infrequent woodpecker, the call of the lonely bird, the drumming of the solitary partridge, — all these sounds do but emphasize the lonesomeness of nature. The roar of the mountain brook, dashing over its bed of pebbles, rising out of the ravine and spreading, as it were, a mist of sound through all the forest, — continuous beating waves that have the rhythm of eternity in them, — and the fitful movement of the air tides through the balsams and firs and the giant pines, how these grand symphonies shut out the little exasperations of our vexed life! It seems easy to begin life over again on the simplest terms. Probably it is not so much the desire of the congregation to escape from the preacher, or of the preacher to escape from himself, that drives sophisticated people into the wilderness as it is the unconquered craving for primitive simplicity, the revolt against the everlasting dress-parade of our civilization. From this monstrous pomposity, even the artificial rusticity of a Petit Trianon is a relief. It was only human nature that the jaded Frenchman of the Regency should run away to the New World and live in a forest hut with an Indian squaw; although he found little satisfaction in his act of heroism unless it was talked about at Versailles.

When our trampers come, late in the afternoon, to the bank of a lovely lake where they purpose to enter the primitive life, everything is waiting for them in virgin expectation. There is a little promontory jutting into the lake and sloping down to a sandy beach on which the waters idly lapse, and shoals of red-fins and shiners come to greet the stranger. The forest is untouched by the axe; the tender green sweeps the water's edge. Ranks of slender firs are marshaled by the shore; clumps of white birch stems shine in satin purity among the evergreens; the boles of giant spruces, maples and oaks, lifting high their crowns of foliage, stretch away in endless gal-

leries and arcades. Through the shifting leaves the sunshine falls upon the brown earth; overhead are fragments of blue sky; under the boughs and in chance openings appear the bluer lake and the outline of the gracious mountains. The discoverers of this paradise, which they have entered to destroy, note the babbling of the brook that flows close at hand; they hear the splash of the leaping fish; they listen to the sweet, metallic song of the evening thrush, and the chatter of the red squirrel, who angrily challenges their right to be there. But the moment of sentiment passes. This party has come here to eat and to sleep, and not to encourage nature in her poetic attitudinizing.

The spot for a shanty is selected: this side shall be its opening, towards the lake, and in front of it the fire, so that the smoke shall drift into the hut and discourage the mosquitoes; yonder shall be the cook's fire and the path to the spring. The whole colony bestir themselves in the foundation of a new home, — an enterprise that has all the fascination and none of the danger of a veritable new settlement in the wilderness. The axes of the guides resound in the echoing spaces; great trunks fall with a crash; vistas are opened towards the lake and the mountains. The spot for the shanty is cleared of underbrush; forked stakes are driven into the ground, cross-pieces are laid on them, and poles sloping back to the ground. In an incredible space of time there is the skeleton of a house, which is entirely open in front. The roof and sides must be covered. For this purpose the trunks of great spruces are skinned. The woodman rims the bark near the foot of the tree, and again six feet above, and slashes it perpendicularly; then, with a blunt stick, he crowds off this thick hide, exactly as an ox is skinned. It needs but a few of these skins to cover the roof, and they make a perfectly water-tight roof, except when it rains. Meantime, busy hands have gathered boughs of the spruce and the feathery balsam, and shingled the ground underneath the shanty for a bed. It is an aromatic bed; in theory it is elastic

and consoling. Upon it are spread the blankets. The sleepers, of all sexes and ages, are to lie there in a row, their feet to the fire and their heads under the edge of the sloping roof. Nothing could be better contrived. The fire is in front; it is not a fire, but a conflagration, a vast heap of green logs, set on fire of pitch and split dead-wood and crackling balsams, raging and roaring. By the time twilight falls the cook has prepared supper. Everything has been cooked in a tin pail and a skillet, — potatoes, tea, pork, mutton, slapjacks. You wonder how everything could have been prepared in so few utensils. When you eat the wonder ceases; everything might have been cooked in one pail. It is a noble meal, and nobly is it disposed of by these amateur savages sitting about upon logs and roots of trees. Never were there such potatoes; never beans that seemed to have more of the bean in them; never such curly pork; never trout with more Indian meal on them; never mutton more distinctly sheepy; and the tea, drunk out of a tin cup, with a lump of maple sugar dissolved in it, — it is the sort of tea that takes hold, lifts the hair, and disposes the drinker to anecdote and hilarity. There is no deception about it; it tastes of tannin and spruce and creosote. Everything, in short, has the flavor of the wilderness and a free life. It is idyllic. And yet, with all our sentimentality, there is nothing feeble about the cooking. The slapjacks are a solid job of work, made to last, and not go to pieces in a person's stomach like a trivial bun; we might record on them, in cuneiform characters, our incipient civilization, and future generations would doubtless turn them up as Acadian bricks. Good, robust victuals are what the primitive man wants.

Darkness falls suddenly. Outside the ring of light from our conflagration, the woods are black. There is a tremendous impression of isolation and lonesomeness in our situation. We are the prisoners of the night. The woods never seemed so vast and mysterious. The trees are gigantic. There are noises that we do not understand, mysterious winds pass-

ing overhead and rambling in the great galleries, tree trunks grinding against each other, undefinable stirrings and uneasinesses. The shapes of those who pass into the dimness are outlined in monstrous proportions. The spectres, seated about in the glare of the fire, talk about appearances and presentiments and religion; the guides cheer the night with bear-fights, and catamount encounters, and frozen-to-death experiences, and simple tales of great prolixity and no point, and jokes of primitive lucidity. We hear catamounts, and the stealthy tread of things in the leaves, and the hooting of owls, and when the moon rises the laughter of the loon. Everything is strange, spectral, fascinating.

By and by we get our positions in the shanty for the night, and arrange the row of sleepers. The shanty has become a smoke-house by this time: waves of smoke roll into it from the fire; it is only by lying down and getting the head well under the eaves that one can breathe. No one can find her "things;" nobody has a pillow. At length the row is laid out, with the solemn protestation of intention to sleep. The wind shifting drives away the smoke; good night is said a hundred times; positions are readjusted; more last words; new shifting about; final remarks; it is all so comfortable and romantic, and then silence. Silence continues for a minute. The fire flashes up; all the row of heads is lifted up simultaneously to watch it; showers of sparks sail aloft into the blue night; the vast vault of greenery is a fairy spectacle. How the sparks mount, and twinkle, and disappear like tropical fire-flies! and all the leaves murmur and clap their hands. Some of the sparks do not go out; we see them flaming in the sky, when the flame of the fire has died down. Well, good night, — good night; more folding of the arms to sleep; more grumbling about the hardness of a hand-bag or the insufficiency of a pocket-handkerchief for a pillow, — good night. Was that a remark? — something about a root, a stub in the ground sticking into the back. "You could n't lie along a hair?" "Well, no; here's another

stub." It needs but a moment for the conversation to become general,—about roots under the shoulder, stubs in the back, a ridge on which it is impossible for the sleeper to balance, the non-elasticity of boughs, the hardness of the ground, the heat, the smoke, the chilly air; subjects of remark multiply. The whole camp is awake and chattering like an aviary. The owl is also awake, but the guides who are asleep outside make more noise than the owls. Water is wanted, and is handed about in a dipper. Everybody is yawning; everybody is now determined to go to sleep in good earnest. A last good night. There is an appalling silence. It is interrupted in the most natural way in the world. Somebody has got the start and gone to sleep. He proclaims the fact. He seems to have been brought up on the sea-shore, and to know how to make all the deep-toned noises of the restless ocean; he is also like a war-horse,—or, it is suggested, like a saw-horse. How malignantly he snorts, and breaks off short, and at once begins again in another key! One head is raised after another.

"Who is that?"

"Somebody punch him."

"Turn him over."

"Reason with him."

The sleeper is turned over. The turn was a mistake. He was before, it appears, on his most agreeable side. The camp rises in indignation. The sleeper sits up in bewilderment. Before he can go off again, two or three others have preceded him. They are all alike. You never can judge what a person is when he is awake. There are here half a dozen disturbers of the peace, who should be put in solitary confinement. At midnight, when a philosopher crawls out to sit on a log by the fire and smoke a pipe, a duet in tenor and mezzo-soprano is going on in the shanty, with a chorus always coming in at the wrong time. Those who are not asleep want to know why the smoker does not go to bed. He is requested to get some water, to throw on another log, to see what time it is, to note whether it looks like rain. A buzz of conversation arises. She is sure

she heard something behind the shanty. He says it is all nonsense. "Perhaps, however, it might be a mouse."

"Mercy! Are there mice?"

"Plenty."

"Then, that's what I heard nibbling by my head. I shan't sleep a wink. Do they bite?"

"No, they nibble; scarcely ever take a full bite out."

"It's horrid."

Towards morning it grows chilly; the guides have let the fire go out; the blankets will slip down. Anxiety begins to be expressed about the dawn.

"What time does the sun rise?"

"Awful early. Did you sleep?"

"Not a wink. And you?"

"In spots. I'm going to dig up this root as soon as it is light enough."

"See that mist on the lake, and the light just coming on the Gothics. I'd no idea it was so cold; all the first part of the night I was roasted."

"What were they talking about all night?"

When the party crawls out to the early breakfast, after it has washed its faces in the lake, it is disorganized but cheerful. Nobody admits much sleep; but everybody is refreshed and declares it delightful. It is the fresh air all night that invigorates, or may be it is the tea, or the slappjacks. The guides have erected a table of spruce bark, with benches at the sides, so that breakfast is taken in form. It is served on tin plates and oak chips. After breakfast begins the day's work. It may be a mountain-climbing expedition, or rowing and angling in the lake, or fishing for trout in some stream two or three miles distant. Nobody can stir far from camp without a guide. Hammocks are swung, bowers are built, novel-reading begins, worsted work appears, cards are shuffled and dealt. The day passes in absolute freedom from responsibility to one's self. At night, when the expeditions return, the camp resumes its animation. Adventures are recounted, every statement of the narrator being disputed and argued. Everybody has become an adept in wood-craft, but nobody credits

his neighbor with like instinct. Society getting resolved into its elements, confidence is gone.

Whilst the hilarious party are at supper, a drop or two of rain falls. The head guide is appealed to. Is it going to rain? He says it does rain. But will it be a rainy night? The guide goes down to the lake, looks at the sky, and concludes that if the wind shifts a point more there is no telling what sort of weather we shall have. Meantime the drops patter thicker on the leaves overhead, and the leaves in turn pass the water down to the table; the sky darkens, the wind rises, there is a kind of shiver in the woods, and we scud away into the shanty, taking the remains of our supper and eating it as best we can. The rain increases. The fire sputters and fumes. All the trees are dripping, dripping, and the ground is wet. We cannot step out-doors without getting a drenching. Like sheep we are penned in the little hut, where no one can stand erect. The rain swirls into the open front and wets the bottom of the blankets; the smoke drives in; we curl up and enjoy ourselves. The guides at length conclude that it is going to be damp. The dismal situation sets us all into good spirits, and it is later than the night before when we crawl under our blankets, sure this time of a sound sleep, lulled by the storm and the rain resounding on the bark roof. How much better off we are than many a shelterless wretch! We are as snug as dry herrings. At the moment, however, of dropping off to sleep, somebody unfortunately notes a drop of water on his face; this is followed by another drop; in an instant a stream is established. He moves his head to a dry place. Scarcely has he done so, when he feels a dampness in his back. Reaching his hand outside, he finds a puddle of water soaking through his blanket. By this time somebody inquires if it is possible that the roof leaks. One man has a stream of water under him; another says it is coming into his ear. The roof appears to be a discriminating sieve. Those who are dry see no need of such a fuss. The man in the

corner spreads his umbrella, and the protective measure is resented by his neighbor. In the darkness there is re-creation. One of the guides, who is summoned, suggests that the rubber blankets be passed out and spread over the roof. The inmates dislike the proposal, saying that a shower-bath is no worse than a tub-bath. The rain continues to soak down. The fire is only half-alive. The bedding is damp. Some sit up, if they can find a dry spot to sit on, and smoke. Heartless observations are made. A few sleep. And the night wears on. The morning opens cheerless. The sky is still leaking, and so is the shanty. The guides bring in a half-cooked breakfast. The roof is patched up. There are reviving signs of breaking away — delusive signs that create momentary exhilaration. Even if the storm clears, the woods are soaked. There is no chance of stirring. The world is only ten feet square.

This life, without responsibility or clean clothes, may continue as long as the reader desires. There are those who would like to live in this free fashion forever, taking rain and sun as Heaven pleases; and there are some souls so constituted that they cannot exist more than three days without their worldly baggage. Taking the party altogether, from one cause or another it is likely to strike camp sooner than was intended. And the stricken camp is a melancholy sight. The woods have been despoiled; the stumps are ugly; the bushes are scorched; the pine-leaf-strewn earth is trodden into mire; the landing looks like a cattle-ford; the ground is littered with all the unsightly *debris* of a hand-to-hand life; the dismantled shanty is a shabby object; the charred and blackened logs, where the fire blazed, suggest the extinction of family life. Man has wrought his usual wrong upon nature, and he can save his self-respect only by moving on to virgin forests.

And move to them he will, the next season if not this. For he who has once experienced the fascination of the woods life never escapes its enticement; in the memory nothing remains but its charm.

Charles Dudley Warner.