

## A DAY'S FISHING IN THE MICHIGAN WOODS.



IF it should ever fall to me (says the Rev. H. D. Jenkins) to endow a new professorship in a Theological Seminary, it would be to establish an "Izaak Walton Professorship of Camping Out." And the conditions of the endowment would be that the "chair" should be the roots of a pine-tree; the school-room under the spreading boughs of an oak; and the text-book, that great volume of God's goodness and greatness which he has himself written in brooks, rocks, leaf, and flower.

And indeed I may say so with some reason. I remember the pastor of my boyhood, an excellent man, in faultless white cravat and shining black-silk gloves. He was one of the best men that a boy ever walked around an orchard to avoid or hide in a hen-house not to see. If the church had been all of such men I would not have been in a pastor's study to-day.

But happily for me there was a friend in the church, who built the fires for the prayer-meeting and led the singing in the choir, and who could show a boy more in the heart of a flower than he had ever dreamed of. And so it happened that this young disciple, who loved the birds and flowers and fields almost as much as his master, drew us lads first toward himself, and then toward One who we learned was even more gentle, and tender, and sympathetic than himself. And the lessons which we learned, the most precious lessons of life, were taught fish-pole in hand, or with gun upon the shoulder, or around the camp-fire where we rested after the day's delightful labours.

Take out your map, please, and see

where we catch these most beautiful and most gamey fish of America. Follow the line of the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad from Grand Rapids north, and you will see that it runs through the whole length of the great peninsula. From Big Rapids to Mackinac is almost as unbroken a forest as when the Pilgrims landed upon Plymouth Rock. And at the present terminus of the road (the bay and village of Petoskey), those twin camps of Israel, the Presbyterians and Methodists, have pitched their tents. And here they throw the fly and draw the troll, the one party catching fishes who bite of their own free will, and the other taking in the trout, bass, and pickerel, which were foreordained as food for good and hungry Calvinists.

Walk back with me through these woods. The very air is laden with the blended fragrance of trees, shrubs, and mosses. The ground-pine draws its graceful arabesques upon the amber background of fallen leaves and needles. The winter-green and partridge-berry shine with bright vermilion dots here and there. Pick up a bit of this Princess Pine and touch its glossy green leaves to your tongue, and you will forget two-score years and be a boy again under its magic, well-remembered flavour. Here is a bed of moss. You stoop to examine it, and close beside it do you mark in the moist earth that delicate but sharp impress of a tiny hoof? There stood a doe, not ten minutes since, I'll warrant. Over yonder comes the music of a brook. Come up to it cautiously. Put aside the bushes by the hand. Do you see where, just below, the water pours, white and sparkling, over a fallen trunk? Bring your hook carefully over this underbrush and drop it just where the current will sweep it over this minia-

ture cataract. Careful! Whisk! . . . You have him, my friend, as beautiful as a lily from Japan and as toothsome as an orange from Sorrento. He is none of your Rocky Mountain trout, with brown spots and white flesh, but with every richest colour of the dawn and sunset blended on his shining skin. It makes a man hungry already for his dinner just to look at him. But put him in your basket and come this way.

Down here, below where the brook runs into a little river, you see the clear amber-coloured water running over a bed of white sand. Out there, where it is deepest, you see something moving like a light shadow. Mark how that great upper fin waves over its back like a flag. A new tackle, my friend. Can you let it down the stream gently to his bath? Look out! Let your line run! Gracious, man, what are you doing? Away they go down the stream, man and fish and rod and line, in one whirlwind of excitement. Well, we will sit down upon the bank and wait the event, whether it be a grayling added to our dinner or one more pole to be sent home for repairs. For my part, except doing anything in the woods, there is nothing I like better than doing nothing. To lie still and hear the near barking of a squirrel overhead, or the distant drumming of a partridge, or the soft cooing of a dove—that is a vacation of itself.

Do you notice how subdued all the sounds of the forest are? There are wise city people who tell us about going to the woods to hear the birds; who believe that the robin sings in the pine and the thrush and cat-bird, our sweetest musicians, hold their concerts in the deep recesses of oak forests. John Burroughs

knows better than that. The singing birds love our orchards, our gardens, the edges by the roadside, the banks of streams and the copse that stands before the great wood itself. But in the deep shadows few birds penetrate. I have spent days in the woods hearing no voice of a bird other than the plaintive chick-a-dee. So here the one thing that most impresses us is the deep silence of the woods.

But here comes our fisherman! Blown, wet, perspiring, but radiantly happy, holding in one hand his unjointed pole and in the other a pound and a-half grayling, worthy of all his labour and the reward of all his toil. So back we go to the camp together to meet our fishermen from the lake with their tale of black bass to add. And not unworthy to lie beside the trout and grayling is this sharp biter of the lake, who knows well how to leap clear of its surface, and high in air to shake the glittering spoon out of his gaping mouth, leaving the novice to draw wonderingly in the limp line wanting its expected prey.

There is one thing that ought to be added of these railways in the North and West. They seem to enter as heartily into the spirit of the traveller's vacation as he can himself. They welcome his dogs, store away his guns, carry tents, poles, and boats even with a cheerful temper, and not infrequently furnish him and his friends with a car ready fitted up as a moving camp. Here he finds bunks, tables, stoves, ice-chests, and gun-racks; and after a day's sport the hunters or fishers can discuss the day's bag or catch over their coffee, while the camp itself is moving on swift wheels towards new fields or still more deeply-hidden lakes.

