

A CANOE TRIP TO RAINY LAKE.

HARRY SILVER.

Gold-bearing quartz was discovered in Northern Minnesota in the summer of 1893, though it was really known to a few hunters 20 years earlier. It was never fully investigated, owing to the lack of railway facilities, and to the country being broken by lakes and water-courses, so that getting in and out was accomplished with difficulty. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, many a hardy prospector traveled through the region North of Rainy lake, and washed "colors" from pounded rock.

The last discoveries were on the shore of Rainy lake and along Rainy Lake river, the Northern boundary of Minnesota. The only way to this new Eldorado was by a land-and-water route from Duluth, or a water route from the Lake of the Woods, up the Rainy river. As both ways were roundabout we decided, when the trip was planned, to make our way across from Fosston, Minnesota, to Rainy Lake city, and add the exploring of an undeveloped region to the pleasures of an outing.

Early in the spring of '94, W. J. Hilligoss, a veteran cruiser of Northern Minnesota, Fred Ayers and I, left Fosston by team for Red lake, 65 miles distant. Red Lake Agency was reached the next day, just in time to get the Captain of the steamer to delay starting until we could arrange for canoes, guides, etc. With the assistance of the merchant at the Agency, who spoke Chippewa, we engaged 2 Indians to show us an old trail and portage from the head waters of the Tamarac to the Sturgeon. We bought a birch-bark canoe and some supplies, and loaded all on the steamer.

A ride of 40 miles to the Northeast end of the lake brought us near the mouth of Tamarac river, where we were landed about midnight. We at once turned in and slept till sunrise.

Our canoes were soon loaded for the long voyage. The canoe of the guides was made to carry all that could be put into it. They watched the loads, and as the pile in theirs grew larger, and the pile on shore diminished, they showed such signs of displeasure we had to let them go; though when we came to load our canoe, and 3 of us got into it, we found it too heavily laden.

The bank where we embarked sloped abruptly into 15 or 20 feet of water, so it was with shaky feeling that we pushed off. No accident happened, however. We paddled steadily until about 3 p. m., when we stopped for lunch. Hungry enough we were. For 3 hours we had been looking for the dry landing place our guides kept telling us was just ahead, but finally getting disgusted with their idea of distance, we

pushed our canoe to the driest looking shore we could see. It may have been dry at one time, but now 2 feet of water covered it while dry grass, matted above, gave it the appearance of land. By hanging the tea-pot on a limb, and building a fire of grass and twigs, we soon had tea, which, with our cold meats and baker's bread, made us forget we had had an unusually hard half-day's work.

The journey was continued until sundown. Then, for want of a better place, we camped in a tamarac swamp and swung our hammocks to the trees.

The next day at noon we reached the portage. Here our supplies were done up into packs, suitable for carrying on the back. We made one for each of the Indians, who were under agreement to do all the packing. They sat by and watched us. When all was ready to make the start at the portage, they got up and walked back to their canoes and took the homeward route. The work before them was too much. We saw no more of them; but as they were to be paid when we reached the Sturgeon, we were not out anything. Their departure was not regretted, although we were at the beginning of a portage we knew nothing about.

We began packing along the trail, over trees and stumps, through dense undergrowth, and swampy places in which we sank to the knees at every step. Six trips were made, before sunset, to a point about a quarter of a mile from the starting place. Here also we were obliged to swing our hammocks, as water stood all about. This being the second experience in fastening our hammocks, we missed some of the excitement of the night before, when Hilligoss had stood up in his hammock, balancing himself on one leg while pulling the boot off the other. You can imagine the result; no bucking broncho ever landed his rider in better style.

The hard work of this part of the portage started the veteran out early next morning, along the trail, to find how far it was across to the Sturgeon, and in what condition the trail might be. In the meantime, the rest of us moved the supplies another notch along the route. About noon our friend returned with the information that it was 4½ miles to the river, and that he had met some acquaintances, land hunters, who would help us.

With 3 hardy fellows added to our party, we made good headway. Camp was pitched that night in 2 feet of water; dry land could not be found. By cutting a large number of small jack pines, we built a crib above

the water. Covering this with pine boughs, we made a comfortable resting place. The night was warm and the mosquitoes were out in force; so we slept with screens over our heads.

Breakfast was prepared with the stove placed on a pile of moss, while the cook waded knee-deep in water.

The trail for the next mile was open, and the water deep enough to pull the canoe along with all the supplies.

In this way we dragged our load, taking frequent rests and alternately helping each other out of a hole. Sometimes one would go waist-deep into the soft moss and water, which in places seemingly had no bottom. Only by grabbing a tree could one extricate himself. Many laughable scenes were witnessed, and in spite of the disagreeable features, we appreciated all accidents. About 4 o'clock we landed at the Sturgeon. I doubt if any weary band of explorers ever hailed more heartily a long looked for water-course than we did that small stream, scarcely 15 feet across. We now had a down-stream ride the rest of the way, and we turned in early, well satisfied with the day's work.

Camp was aroused a little later by some of our hunters attempting to get sight of a moose that splashed through the water close by, but the night was too dark.

By 10 o'clock next day we had said good-bye to the men who helped us in making the portage. Soon after we were afloat. The banks of the stream showed signs of moose all along, and of course we were on the lookout, for we wanted a good shot for our camera. Indian signs of moose-killing were seen. A pole sticking up in the bank, with a bone or piece of rawhide fastened to it, or a meat-drying rack, were the usual methods of marking the spot. Their hunting is done at all seasons, and large numbers of these noble animals are slain. The Indians are not restricted on or off their reservations, and although they are subject to the same laws as the white man, these laws are not enforced.

The river broadened as we left the tamarac swamp, and rapids were frequent, helping us a little faster on our way and making the ride pleasant and interesting. On we went, through a forest of oak, birch, poplar and pine, growing to the water's edge, inhabited by moose, caribou, deer and smaller game, but enjoyed by only shiftless Indians, who have never appreciated its possession.

Lunch was had afloat, for we wanted to get to the Big Fork river that evening. Night overtook us about 3 miles above, where we camped. The Big Fork was reached next morning about 9 o'clock. Here we stayed long enough to exchange a few words with an old settler, who had made his home at the forks of the rivers, thinking the water-power at the rapids

above would make his land valuable for mill and townsite purposes. He now lived by fishing; sturgeon being his principal catch, the bladders of which he dried and sold.

The Big Fork, down which we paddled 5 or 6 miles an hour, is a broad, rapid stream, having its source near Lake Winnebogoshish, and winding its way through a country of great possibilities. The vast amount of timber to be cut and marketed; the almost endless extent of land, which when cleared and cultivated, will be rich and productive, the many opportunities for water-power; and the fact that iron and coal exist there, will one day make this portion of Minnesota resound with the hum of trade and industry.

The day's trip was one to delight the heart of any lover of canoeing. Taking things easy, we moved along, enjoying the fine scenery and fresh warmth of the June day. Straggling crews of loggers were passed, and an occasional batteau-driver, as he poled his heavily-loaded boat along the shore.

The high, dry banks were pleasing after being so many nights in the swamps. We selected a good camping-spot in a pine grove and stopped early. Hilligoss, being an expert at making balsam-bough beds, was assigned this work; while the others straightened out the baggage and prepared supper.

The ride to Rainy Lake river was without incident. We reached the North side of the Rainy about dark, and camped on the bank near the landing-place of the steamer. The next morning we boarded her, bound for Fort Francis.

The boat went down stream a short distance to unload some merchandise marked for Hannaford, which we found on a map to be the destined metropolis of Northern Minnesota, but which at that time was a clearing of about 5 acres, covered with stumps, and not a building in sight.

Forty miles up the Rainy river, from the mouth of the Big Fork, brought us to Fort Francis; a small Canadian village, so slow and easy-going that when a mail arrived, the inhabitants were told of it by a flag on a mast in front of the post-office. The attraction here was the falls, which we photographed from several directions.

We took passage on a small steamboat that ran daily to Rainy Lake City, and were soon in the midst of a country of islands and water, which continued until the Gold City was reached.

This mushroom town, scarcely 4 months old, looked prosperous; having 30 or 40 buildings, ranging from the bachelor's cabin to substantial story-and-a-half frame houses. Most of the inhabitants were busy making boats, and preparing for prospecting among the surrounding islands.

We sailed over to the island on which the Little American mine is located; then re-

turned to the city and were soon on our way back to Fort Francis. We were obliged to wait 48 hours for the steamer, bound for the Lake of the Woods and Rat Portage.

The trip by boat from Rainy lake down

the Rainy river, and across Lake of the Woods, will some day become a favorite one for pleasure seekers.

Rainy lake may not rival the Thousand Islands, but for natural scenery it is all one can wish.

THE KING OF THE GAULIES.

MARK T. LEONARD.

Many of the sportsmen of Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Maryland will recognize, in the above cut, "The King of Gaulie Mountains" whom so many have



THE KING OF THE GAULIES.

followed through the wilds of West Virginia, in the region about the head waters of the Elk and the Gaulie rivers.

Harmer Sharp is one of the best known hunters and guides in that state. His services will not soon be forgotten by those who have been with him through the Gaulie, South, Middle, and Leather-bark mountains.

His training, from youth, in the science of woodcraft in these remote regions, has made him a most skilled, cautious and valuable aid to hunters going into these vast, unbroken forests.

It is not generally known that such wild, uninhabited regions still exist, within the boundary of the old colonial states, as is this domain of the Gaulie King.

Mr. Sharp lives at the foot of the Gaulie mountains, near the junction of Slaty fork and Elk rivers, where he owns a comfortable little home and 1,000 acres of land, on the Northern edge of this mountain wilderness.

During the hunting season he guides hunters to and from the mountains, where many deer and bear are killed each year. He is an expert marksman; and when his old 45 Winchester sends the echoes ringing from hill to hill it generally means one more antlered monarch down. "Crockett" speaks of him as being one of the best shots in the state of West Virginia.

It was Mr. D. C. Braden, the champion one-armed wing shot of the world, who crowned and dubbed Sharp "King of the Gaulies"; and by this name he has since become familiarly known among sportsmen who visit this district.

Uniontown, Pa.

"Where can I get good country board?"
 "Well, I should say in the oil regions,
 That's the best bored country I know of."