ON THE ST. JOHN RIVER. A CANGE TRIP FROM FREDERICTON

The View of Fredericton-Dinner at the Oromocto's Mouth-Evandale, the Beautiful-Sweet Hampstead-The Perils of the Long Reach-The Cedars and St. John.

TO ST. JOHN.

New Brunswick is the sportsman's paradise: it should be the canoeist's elysium. Nowhere else on this continent can there be found, within the same limited area, such a grouping together and interconnection of magnificient rivers, lakes, and tributory streams. A conservative estimate would put the number of miles of "conveable" waterway at 3 500. The St. John itself, together with its affluents, offers 2,630 miles to the adventurous canoeist, not to speak of such rivers as the Miramichi, Restigouche, Petitcodiac and St. Croix. All this within a province whose greatest

miles. but little to the canoeist who is also a lover of nature; the dip of his paddle and the ripple of his canoe must have for accompaniment the charm of attractive scenery. feast. When he takes his paddle up for anything more than mere exercise he looks for the brightest, cheerfullest, most picturesque setting to the water upon which he floats All this New Brunswick also affords. Her rivers run to the sea through scenery that is seldom commonplace, never tiresome, oftenest picturesque, and sometimes sublime

veable river of New Brunswick. Not altogether an New Brunswick river either, since portions of it lie in Quebec and in Maine, but its best waters are exclusively New Brunswickian. After draining two million acres in Quebec and six million in Maine, it flows powerfully to the sea, carrying with it the drainage of nine million acres in New Brunswick. Floating upon such a body of water as this, the canoeist realizes at once his impotence and his strength. His craft is frailty itself, yet it rides triumphantly to the sea.

I would give my experience in a canoe on the St. John. From the headwaters of the St. John to its mouth, along the main stream, would mean a canoe run of 450 miles. That was not my programme. From Fredericton to St. John city-that in my outing. I had already, a few years ago, canoed the Upper St. John to Fredmaining 84 miles to my credit.

shamefacedness that I did not touch a padto my Indians. If any credit be mine, however, for sailing a birch canoe in moderately heavy seas, or for giving heart to my Indians when it was a risk to life to venture out in such a trail boat, I claim it in all modesty. Still I was, after all, a mere passenger in my own canoe, and I lav claim in this article to no other distinc-

Indian guides, John Paul and Joe Gabriel, at 9.30 a. m. on Wednesday, July 25th, 1894. Behind us and beside us as our bark floated out into the stream lay the quiet town with its abundance of tree-tops shivering in masses above roofs and around spires, as it giant elms and spreading beeches were the warp into which were woven the creations of human architecture. A quiet, dull, and eminently respectable little city is Fredericton, with a distinctly English tang to it. This may account for its slumberous dullness. Yet just such towns are to be found along the Susquehanna with but little in external appearance, as seen from a canoe on the river, to distinguish them from their congeners in New Brunswick. The St. John river here is a half mile in width, and is spanned by two bridges that connect Fredericton on our right with the scattered hamlets, known as St. Mary's, on our left. A glassy unbroken stretch of river lies before us as our canoe heads down stream with the morning sun first showing itself through clouds that but a hour ago threatened rain. Our course lies along the nearest shore.

Up above us on the heights. as we leave Fredericton in the distance, are scattered residences and at least one public institution, all embowered amid forest growths. As we progress this lofty bank recedes and leaves a level stretch of shore for margin to the comely river. Far away on the other monotony of a low-lying river bank. We the Indian, b gins his reminiscences. John has been married twice, and from recounting how he earned his first money carrying "edgings" in the mill we are passing, he passes by an easy transition to the subject of matrimony. His first marriage was not a lucky venture; he married a widow. John does not like widows, particularly widows that are older than their second husbands. It was his misfortune to marry such a one, and he smacked his lips and

body lies awaiting the resurrection.

"Don't never marry a widow; they know too much," he warns me, with all the earnestness of a close friend. I thank him for his good advice and promise to observe it. At the same time I remember the

bevare of viddows." ever and anou we pass rafts of logs and wooden piers that rise at equal distances on both sides of the narrowing river. John any man that he was "a real John Glasier" shore. was the highest testimony of character he

length is only 200 miles by a breath of 160 Mere waterway, however, would mean night, and tomorrow again we will have to the combers. Our canoe, though heavily particularly on our left, by that unfailing land. Here we take refuge in the lee of The true canoeist is a gormand at nature's tringe of elms and willows. Behind these the steamboat landing until we decide and now and then we pass rustic ferries lies here at the foot of Long Island, with conveying men and horses to work.

We dine at the mouth of the Oromocto, eleven miles below Fredericton. Eleven miles in two hours is not a bad rate of speed in full daylight, even though my Indian John holds that a birch canoe will The St John is par excellence, the con- travel faster by night. A very mysterious thing in some of its aspects is a birch canoe; unaccountable in its likes and dislikes; a staunch friend in time of need when you trust it and handle it aright, but often unreliable and cavortish when you least expect it to play you such pranks. Obedient to the slightest impulse of the paddle it will in the choppiest sea meet wave after wave with the lightness of a smile on a pleasant face. In the line of water craft it brings | the west shore of Spoon Island and there of navigation, except perhaps the diving much battling and battering we do, but board of the Polynesian islanders. Sitting find the water so comparatively still that in a bark canoe you are below the level of we delay not. Cross-seas are again enexperience on the Miramichi; in this | the water, and yet not in it, while its brown | countered at the foot of Spoon Island where sides bow to the birches on the shore in the twin currents conjoin, and here for the token of close relationship, and its cedar first time in a canoeing experience of years ribs rejoice in the lightness they share with I divest myself of my shoes. If we founder their fellows on the bank. None of your I want my feet free. Founder we do not, factory-built canoes for me! Brass nails but come near enough to it for comfort, and planed sides and cockpits and such yet a miss is as good as a mile. was all the canoeing I could afford to do things may be good enough for those who And now we are at Evandale. Behind like them. Give me the birchbark that us still rolls as rough and uncanny a stretch has been modelled on the lines of Indian of water as I wish to canoe in. The gaunt ericton, so that now I was to complete my tradition, whose sides have been sewed skeleton of Caseboom's decaying mill frame experience of the river by adding the re- with tough root thongs to the croon of up the river back there is indelibly photosome Indian lullaby, whose ribs have been graphed on my memory. Its weather-worn No credit, however, as a paddle-wielder | bent into proper contour by the simplest of | timbers spoke only of death and destrucdo I claim for the present trip. I confess Indian contrivances—a pair of strong arms. tion to me as I caught hasty glimpses of with not a little regret and considerable Rather this than the whirr and jagged them from our cockleshell in the trough of screech of machinery, the steaming box, the sea. dle during the entire outing. I left that and the exact mathematical accuracy of perhaps, a foul-mouthed workman.

run from Oromocto down was an ideal with farm-clearing and forest patches. canoeing experience. I recall it now as a dream of sky-reflecting water, broad, placid, a short distance inland were almost perpowerful, edged on our right by inter- pendicular and with their nestling cottages mingled glade and tree-line, on our left by needed only a hoary castle here and there that ever-recurrent bulwark of elm and willow. This is the intervale district of We left Fredericton, myself and my two the St. John. Inundated in springtime by begin to shut in the valley that the river the overflowing river, the grass on these seems a lake. Ahead of us to the westbottom-lands grows to a great height, com- ward it shows no outlet but a barrier of pletely in places shading the untroubled toppling mountains as a background. At waters from the play of the lighter winds. It was not an unusual experience both here down their shaggy forest mantle to the and on the Kennebeccasis for us to listen to the laughing of the breeze and to note the bending of the tree-tops and the wav- the valley broadens, the hills recede, cultiing of strong grass, while no breath of wind ruffled the calmness of the waters again the meadows line the sight and the around us. Doubtless had we been in mid- tall grass waves us welcome. Far inland channel such had not been our experience, but we enjoyed the sensation of sailing beneath this protecting line of intervale grass. A noteworthy characteristic, also, of the scenery on the first and second days of our outing was the bending together of treetops on the eastern shore in a rising gradient until the outline, taken with the curve that almost invariably accompanied it, was the almost perfect reproduction of the lines of a monster steamship. Generally this occurred at a bend in the river or at the foot of islands, as if nature were intent on defending her wealth of lowland against the to discover thee, sing thy praises, prettiest too eager onr-ush of winds from below.

The Grimross Canal, which led us by a short route to Gagetown, also diversified the interest. Along its bank's the farmers and for the first time I meet a white woman, were having and the song of the mowing bright, smart, good-looking, married to an machine met us at every turn.

minutes at an Indian encampment to in- story under a new form, only the binding spect a new canoe that lay on the beach. was grotesque. The Indian daudled a side a line of elms and willows breaks the Here John introduced all the Indians and papoose on his knee. Not a bad looking great river. A morning express train squaws collectively as his cousins. We Indian by any means-I have seen darker pass a mill or two on our right, and John, had met his first father-in-law—the defunct white men—but the fruit of this miscegen ex-widow's parent-at Oromocto. The rest of our journey would be divided into easy stages between the encampments of his cousins and brothers-in-law. A much related and a much married man, methinks. is my Indian John. All this before we reach our stopping-place for the night.

on the river. I had taken my breakfast at a hotel, but my Indians, who had passed the possibility of canoeing to St. John that the night at a neighboring encampment of I was not met with the dread threat of this shook his head with evident satisfaction as John's cousins, waited for theirs until we same Long Reach? "A birch canoe would reached Fox's landing a few miles below. not live in it," said one. "Only a steam-

river. Here was an opportunity for canoe- lieve some awful possibilities regarding ing. The Jemseg leads into Grand Lake, ing Salmon River we could come out somεsimilar warning of old Weller, "Samivel, where near the Northumberland Straits on Yet here we were on it, with a fairly large the eastern sea coast! With a sigh I re-We are getting down river now, and linquish the idea of such a trip, as I do within the next hour the temptation to enter Washademoak Lake from the same eastern shore. Nothing more dignified tells me that this is Glasier's boom John than two small streams, the Oaknabog and but it was sufficiently strong to take us Glasier was a lumberman on the St. John | the Otnabog, break the continuity of the river years ago. He did a large business, bank we are following. Islands are plenand his name was proverbial for honesty tiful to our left and I realize that at preand fair dealing, so much so that to say of sent all that is picturesque lies on the other We are on the sater side now, however,

for the wind is rising, and by the time we Ahead of us now are two tugboats, each reach the mouth of the Otnabog it is blowdrawing in its wake whole forests of logs. | ing a moderate gale. Wind and tide are These we pass, but they will pass us in the with us, yet we have an exciting race with run the gauntlet of their wave-making side- affreighted, behaves nobly, and we reach wheels. The country on both shores con- Hampstead without accident, thanks to the tinues level and is edged everywhere, shelter we get from the shore of Long Iswe know are farms and farmhouses, for we which of the two courses that are run besee and hear the haymakers in the fields, fore us we had better follow. Spoon Island just distance enough between them to allow the wind full sweep to the shore. Were we once on the other side of Spoon Island we should be under its lee and therefore in comparatively smooth water, but how are we to get there? A stray Indian-another of John's cousins-bids us hire a boat and tow our canoe over in safety. To this I demur. I am going down the St. John in my own canoe or sink in the attempt. My Indians take heart, and we are again among the combers. They lift us, now bow in the air, now stern, while I hold my breath, fearing lest our light craft may crack amidships from the unusual straia. Turn back we cannot; our only hope is to reach man closer to nature than any other means | camp if we can go no farther. This, after

The country through which we had just passed was no longer flat. High hills rose That night we spent at Gagetown. The on both sides of us, their slopes diversified

At Hampstead on our right the cliffs at to complete the illusion of the Rhine. So close and many are the hills which now the foot of these towering hills, which let river's edge, we race along, mere specks doubtless on the troubled waters. Again vated meresteads smile upwards to the sky. to our left we catch a glimpse of a notch in the range of hills, farm-crowned, with something about it that reminds one of a glimpse through one of the passes of the

Evandale! delightful spot, haven of refuge, what has not nature and man done for thee! Would that I could dally here a day or two to enjoy thy beauties. Would that I could delay my narrative to give thee a well deserved word of description! There is a summer hotel here and let the summer tourist, who has the good fortune spot on the St. John.

Again, a line of tents shows that we are not done with John's cousins. We land, Indian. "Why did I marry him, sir?" At Upper Gagetown we landed for a few B cause I love him." It was the old ation was a coffee-colored child.

And now we are on the Long Reach. For fifteen miles in a southwesterly direction, the river, a mile wide at its narrowest and broadening out in places to a mile and a half, flows in a straight line. This is the Long Reach, ot which in my tyro years as Next morning at seven we were again a canoeist I had felt such fear. What wonder? When had I ever inquired about

he pointed out to me the spot where her On the other shore in the distance, John boat or a flat boat can sail the Long Reach," tells us. the Jemseg empties into the main | said others; and thus I had come to becanoeing on the Long Reach. Even mine the largest lake in the province, and this | host of Evandale had advised me to take in turn is fed by Salmon River. By canoe- the river steamer at his wharf and leave to my Indians the terrors of the Long Reach. sail bellying before the wind, in midchannel and making a cross course for the eastern shore. The wind was not, indeed, so high as it had been else, we could not have lived on such a stretch of open water, along at a ten knot rate. It was, however, intermittent at times and then the Indians resumed their paddling. Hitherto we had not used the sail, because I wished to enjoy the scenery along the river, and besides, we incurred but little danger of forcible delay by reason of rough weather. The islands had broken the force of the winds. Now, however, that such a dangerful stretch as this redoubtable Long Reach lay before us it behooved us to get over it as quickly as possible. We therefore carried all the sail we could and did not suffer ourselves to be dismayed by the breaking of a wave over the gunwale now and then. After a few miles not an island showed itself to break the broad and lengthy expanse of

The same horizon of bills accompanied as on both sides. They towered up in the distance and then slanted slowly to the water. They were too far distant to give me the same sense of personal insignificance that the rocky heights at the Narrows and higher up river impressed upon me; but somehow they made me teel, out there in mid-stream, that our canon was the centre-and a very pititul centre of a magnificent panorama of water, earth and sky. This was early in our experience of the Reach; later, on the western shore, we almost felt the frown that the Devil's Back, craggy and beetling, threw

down upon us. Unfortunately at the Cedars on the last shore dwelt another of John's coulis. Thither our canoe instinctively turned. John was not steersman, but the steady flow of dysphuistic gutterals told me that his wishes were that we should land. The Maliseets and the Passmaquoddies are kinsman, and Quoddy in the stern converses with the Maliseet John in the bow. Now and then I eatch a word of English, from which I i ifer that the all-conquering Anglo-Saxon speech has affected not only the French language in New Brunswick but the Indian as well. There are whole families of Indians who now-a-days speak no other tongue than English among themselves.

It was a mistake to land on the eastern shore as we found when we came to re-embark. During our short stay the wind h d veered around to the west, and had risea considerably. Under the circumstances we could no longer tollow the course that had brought us to the Cedars, but we had either to remain where we were or make for the other side in face of a heavy sea. Indians and white men both-for there is also a summer hotel at the Cedars -urged us not to attempt to cross. "Canoe no live, loaded too heavy," was the cry of the red men. "You're fooli-h to try it," chimed in the white men, "but we'll see that you don't drown," and one of the pleasure yachts was made read; for emergencies.

It was a hard struggle and a dangerous one, that passage of ours to the other shore. Time and again the splashing of spray against our bows warned us of the risk we were running, but we were meeting the seas bow on, and I had unlimited confidence in my men. What John would have been in the stern I know not; in the bow he was all that could be desired. In the stern, ho wever, sat or rather knelt the man of the hour, and not of the hour only but of the whole trip. Taciturn, placid, unemotionable, Joe Gabriel, Quoddy by birth. Maliseet by murriage, brought to he guidance of our bark the experience for years among the breakers of Passamaquoddy Bay, and nobly did he vindicate the claims of his clan to tribal superiority with the paddle. Only once before did I meet his qual in a canoe, and that was in the p rson of the great old Quoddy chief Peol Tomah, of memory dear to the hearts of many sportsmen. Other Indians there may be on the St John as expert canoemen as Joe Gabriel, but whenever I shall again sit in a canoe his paddle shall guide

We had barely come under the protecting influence of the western riverbank when the wind as suddenly died away as it had arisen. Then for the rest of the afternoon and evening until we went ashore for the night at the mouth of the Nerepis, ensued as perfect a calm as I have ever seen on such a stretch of water. We were evidently too much in luck. I would rather nave had a little wind to carry us along, but wind, by a strange contrarity, for Long Reach we could not get. John was anxious to get as near the toot of the reach as we could, so we kept on our course until darkness warned us to land. A pleasant night in a summer boarding house at Westfield brought my day's adventure to an end.

From the bend of the river at the foot of Long Reach to the Indiantown wharf. St. John, is at least ten miles. That was the stint of work that lay before us next morning. The good fortune which had accompanied us on the Reach still followed our bark, for bright sunlight and morning ozone welcomed us as our canoe again headed down stream, while not a hint of a breeze disturbed the placedity of the again in touch with a broader civilization; the smoke of tug-boats and the loom of tactories welcomed us to the city; while the river itself, growing more sluggish, seemed loth to cast its waters into the sea. Land's End, on our left, sent down its forests and upreared its cliffs, and on the other shore was antagonized by the peaceful charm of cultivated side hills. Three tints of green did I notice in the morning sunlight as it shone on a potato patch, grass and grain field. At last a turn in the river brought us within sight of the terminus of our canoeing,—the north end of St. John city. Then our canoe was lifted daintily out of water just 48 hours after it had been launched at Fredericton. 84 miles away.

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