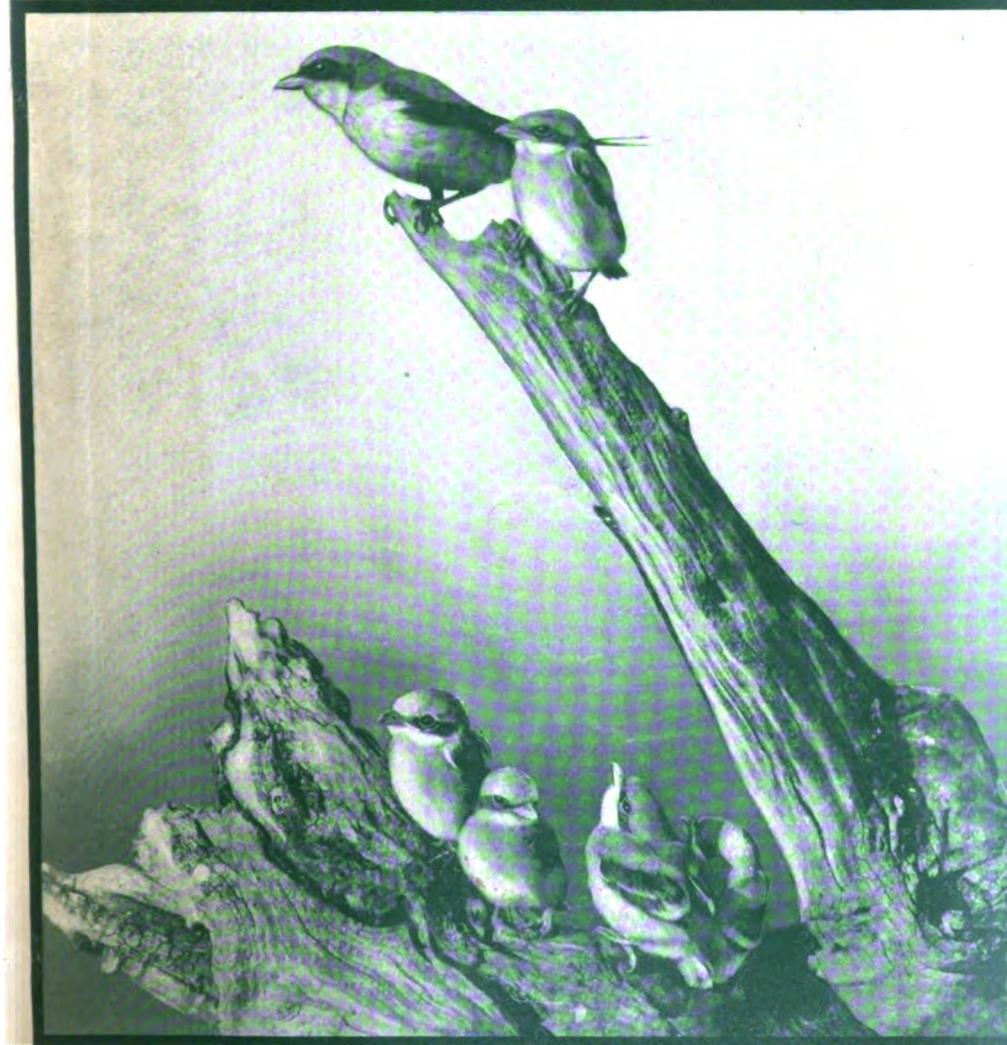


VOLUME IV.
NUMBER 1. 1900 DEC 29

JANUARY, 1907

31.50 A TPS
15c. A COB

SHIELDS' MAGAZINE



PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE GAME PROTECTION CO., 1269 BROADWAY, NEW YORK

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OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN SPORTSMEN

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BIRCHING IN THE BIG WOODS.

G. O. SHIELDS.

III.

We laid the big trout on the dock in front of our camp the night we caught him, and in the morning, when we arose, we were puzzled to find that he was gone. We soon found him, however, some 10 feet away, with part of his head eaten off. A pesky mink had dragged him away and made a supper off the head. We set a dead-fall for the mink, and when we looked out the next morning we found that he had taken the bait from the trap, but had not thrown it. We set it again, and when we returned from our bathing expedition, in the afternoon, he was found fairly mashed under the weight.

On the morning of the 18th we left Thousand Island lake, and the rifle, the axe, and the rubber coat. We ran down the outlet the same way we came in, and up Fishtrap creek into Cedar lake, across it and up its outlet into Big lake. This is a handsome sheet of water, with several pretty islands, and it is as large as its name indicates—possibly a little larger. It depends on how vivid one's imagination is.

The lake is three miles long and two miles wide. Its water is pure and of fair color. William Patterson, of Chicago, told me this water contained black bass, pike and pickerel. He said you could make a fire, put on your frying pan, get the grease hot, then run out into B'g lake, catch a fish and fry him while he was kicking. He said he would guarantee to do this all day for nothing, and, of course, Patterson wouldn't lie about a little thing like catching a fish.

The State line runs through Big lake. We crossed th's when neither of the governors was looking, went back into Wisconsin without a permit, cruised around the lake awhile, and then continued our journey to the Westward.

From Big lake there is a good trail,

half a mile long, through a section of hardwood timber to Lost Creek lake. Here we put out the trolling spoon, picked up two good sized black bass, and lunched on the farther shore. From there another walk of 80 rods took us out on another large, handsome lake that had never been named, and we called it Birch Bottom. It has several islands and a number of deep bays running back into the forests between high bluffs. A thoroughfare a mile long connects this with a still larger lake of similar shape that has four large islands. It was also nameless, and we christened it Lake Whitcomb.

From there we had one of the most enjoyable runs of the whole voyage. It was down Beaverhouse creek, a wonderfully crooked stream. It winds about so intricately that sometimes we scarcely knew whether we were going down stream or up. There are considerable areas of savannah or meadow along the creek, on which blue grass grows higher than a man's head, and so thick that a black snake could scarcely crawl through it. Two tons of hay could be cut on each acre of these meadows. We named this creek Beaverhouse, from the fact that several families of beavers had taken up homesteads along it, and built their houses, and when we were there, the busy animals were engaged in getting up their winter wood.

Clark—the heathen—told me he intended to come back later and dynamite them, and I suppose he has done so ere this, though I told him in plain English what I thought of any man who would do such a thing.

Beaverhouse creek empties into a rather muddy lake that has two islands—both twins—so we wrote it down on the map as Twin Island lake.

About the longest portage on the whole trip is between this lake and the

next one West. The guide called it three-quarters of a mile, but it seemed to me three miles. There is some down timber and one big cedar swamp to cross, and when a fellow pounds through half a mile of this kind of stuff with a 50-pound pack on his back, and both hands full of axes, fishing rods, photographic tools and a gun, he thinks he has been going some.

At one place in this swamp I walked over a bridge of cedar roots. I didn't know they were there at first, because they were covered with thick moss, but I found out all about it when my foot went through, and I sank up to my knee. I pitched forward with my load with such force that I supposed, of course, my leg was broken. By some streak of luck, however, it didn't break, and I got out alive.

I had gone but a few steps farther when my foot caught under another cedar root that was anchored at both ends, and this time I stood squarely on my head before I could stop. The

axe caromed on my leg, and cut a small hole in my trousers. It is a great wonder it did not cut my leg half off.

We were next introduced to still another anonymous lake large enough and old enough to be named, so we baptized it Lone Pine, because, on its West shore, in a jungle of underbrush and other rubbish, there stands a tall, solitary pine. This tree reminds one, by its isolated condition and distant surroundings, of how an honest man would probably feel if he should happen to be sent to Congress. But that is not likely to occur, so no man need waste time feeling lonesome in advance.

We camped on the West shore of this lake, not because we wanted to, but because the sun was about ready to retire for the night, and because Clark said there was no other good camp ground near. Furthermore, we had traveled 25 miles and were tired, hungry and sleepy.

(To be continued.)



AMATEUR PHOTO BY EDW. FISCHER.

NATURE'S EFFORT TO REPAIR DAMAGES.

See Page 62.

"Darling," said the bride, "I had a terrible feeling of sadness come over me this afternoon—a sort of feeling that you were doing something that would break my heart if I knew of it. Think, sweet, what were you doing, now, this afternoon at 4 o'clock?"

"Dearest," replied the husband tenderly and reassuringly, "at that hour I was licking stamps and pasting them on envelopes."—*Ladies' Home Journal.*

"Do you intend to inaugurate any great reforms this year, Senator?" asked the beautiful girl.

"No," replied the statesman. "My present term will not expire until 1909."—*Chicago Record-Herald.*

Of modern philosophy
Here is a peep:
Beauty is oftentimes
Only clothes deep!
—Exchange.