

Spring Kitch-iti-ki-pi

Old Files Reveal What A Visitor Thought Of The Big Spring Just 35 Years Ago

Schoolcraft county has one attraction of which it can proudly boast and that is Spring Kitch-iti-ki-pi, probably better known as The Big Spring. Tourists in large numbers are visiting the spring this year and many who have previously been there are going back.

"The road isn't any too smooth," remarked one tourist, "but one would be repaid if he had to travel over corduroy all the way." This is but one of the many expressions made by those who visit the spring.

A booklet entitled "Namesakes" has just been published by Johan G. R. Baner, of Ironwood, and in this is Spring Kitch-iti-ki-pi fully described.

The impression of a visitor to the Big Spring thirty-five years ago was written for The Tribune at that time. In looking over the old files recently we ran across the article and thought it so interesting that we are reprinting it, as follows:

The Michigan City girl who anticipated the capture of a porcupine, and the Chicago girl who expected to catch her death cold in Manistique woods, were equally disappointed Friday. Our trip to Indian Spring revealed the scarcity of animal life in this region, and the tropical welcome of Old Sol discarded jackets and overcoats. Bitter moods were softened by his benignant rays and "peace and good will" breathed in with the unadulterated ozone. "'Tis as easy here for the heart to be true,

As for grass to be green, or the skies to be blue."

At 8 a. m. the high four-seated wagon rolled away from the Ossawimamee with thirteen tourists and two young children snugly packed, the juveniles dangling their feet in childish ecstasy. A carriage containing three others accompanied the party. Over four miles of rough, stony road we rumbled, (and grumbled) through dense forests of picturesque beauty.

Here was Nature in negligee; in the wild abandon and thoughtless carelessness of a gypsy; in that "beauty which unadorned is adorned the most." As a remainder that life and death are ever near neighbors, stood tall, bare trunks, with naked branches stretched supplicatingly toward the skies; decrepit trees in their second childhood, patiently lingering eight and ten years for the death of the tenacious life roots. And all around and above, a wealth of verdure vainly tried to cover the unsightly wrecks of Father Time.

"See that bouquet of red berries on that stump," cried one, "are they good to eat?"

"I hope there are no snakes in these woods," murmured the lady from Englewood.

"Is this good farming country?" queried the practical man.

The silence of the woods was broken only by the incessant chattering in the wagon, everyone talking at once.

Arrived at Indian Lake, Captain Shaw's little steamer gave us a delightful four-mile ride.

The advice of "mine hostess" had been to take lunch at the

landing, but the enthusiasm of the company proved stronger than hunger, and row-boats were soon located and on the way to the famous water, and all were charmed with the new and startling features on every hand. Aged trees hoary with moss, bent far over the water, reminding one of the Dismal Swamp. Delicate ferns and lace-like mosses nestled at the roots of trees.

Slowly we poled our way half a mile up a winding, narrow creek, admiring exquisite mosses which carpeted the bed of the shallow stream. Through the transparent waters every object could plainly be seen, and wonderful contrasts were offered in the rich dark green and tinted reds of the mosses held by ribbons of white sand.

When finally we dipped our fingers in the icy-cold fluid, we pitied the numerous gayly striped frogs, who nevertheless sat in perfect serenity on the beds of floating moss which lined the sides of the creek. No fish were seen, no birds except two snipe, a few butterflies and on the bank of the Spring where we dined, swarms of blood-thirsty mosquitoes. Glad were we to meet them nowhere else in Manistique.

A brilliant shade of green could be seen from the creek, before we reached the point where the ground sloped off and down a dizzy distance of sixty feet or more, and the creek broadened into the round pool called Kitch-iti-ki-pi.

"Just the color of our new window blinds," exclaimed a little girl.

Drifting slowly, we gazed into silent depths, our minds filled with awe and solemn wonder at this perfect gem of the Creator. Down, down through the clear limpid waters we dizzily watched the coins turning over and over, until they reached the bottom, where we saw distinctly large round rings, from whose centers ebbed the never-failing supply. Wonderful masses resembling the craters of the moon also excited surprise.

One little boy dropped eight pennies, and in his delight forgot to regret his sacrificed marbles. A vest button was consigned to the depths, and a brass matchbox left upon the bottom to divert future visitors.

Never to be forgotten, was the picture seen in this natural mirror. Masses of bright green grass stood out in relief, against the reds and browns of the algae. Trunks of dead trees decorated with white sulphur reached from the edges of the Spring; trailing scarfs from Nature's loom. Eagerly did we drink of the icy water and were satisfied. The smell of sulphur was apparent, but not the taste.

Our banquet was the ridiculous following the sublime. We landed on the bank of the spring, walked gingerly over wet logs laid over the marsh, to terra firma, where Mr. Parker's fire soon put to flight the venomous mosquitoes, to our great relief.

On the home-stretch we visited the Indian grave-yard, secured stones from the ruins of Father Marquette's old church, and drank of the seven-year spring.