

## Kerry Wood's "The Sanctuary"

Lloyd T. Carmichael

THERE is no feeling of exhilaration comparable to that experienced by the gang, who set out on a fine spring morning to explore the hidden mysteries of the forest path, and revel in the silent grandeur of the mirror-like surface of a hidden lake.

When I was a boy in New Brunswick, the gang consisted of five—all brothers—the oldest being about seven years senior to the youngest. The suggestion for a hike was usually proceeded by the oft-repeated expression, "What would you rather do or go fishin'?"

Armed with crooked poles and a can of worms, we would strike back over the hills, and up the winding path which led in the general direction of Puddington's Lake. A brook flowing down to the Kennebecasis crossed our path. We would stop at the "Falls" and cast for a trout in the eddies below—we had all day, and there was no hurry.

The forest was carpeted with mosses of various shades of green; the path was bordered with ferns of many species. Fresh tracks of deer and moose would cause us to proceed with caution in single file—not a twig would snap as we turned the bend, hoping against hope to catch a glimpse of these wary animals. Among the spruce branches the squirrels would chatter and scold; rabbits would stand on their hind legs, peering at us through the bush. The tap, tap, tap of the woodpecker would resound clearly from the hardwood grove, through the still damp air; the Blue Jays would defend their nesting areas with shrill cries as they flew from tree to tree, like bits of the clear blue sky against a setting of green. From time to time we would pause to gather amber-like lumps of spruce gum, to examine the polypody ferns on the face of the cliff, to admire the Jack-in-the-pulpits, the Dutchman's Breeches with heads hanging pendant and nodding in the breeze, the clumps of Indian Pipe in the dim seclusion of the thick woods, the Star Flower with its golden yellow centre and the Bellwort with its graceful curving stem and

modest lily-like straw colored drooping flowers.

Each bend in the path would disclose new wonders—each bird song would add new thrills. It was not so much the fishing that made the hike worth while as the "going fishing."

All of these thoughts rushed back into my mind as I read Kerry Wood's new book, "The Sanctuary"—for it is also the story of a gang, one of which was Kerry. Their path was through the forest of Gaetz Lake Park; a 230-acre wildlife sanctuary on the outskirts of Red Deer, Alberta.

The book is beautifully written. The gangs' interest in wild flowers and birds and mammals; their concern for the lonely blind deer; the stories of fun and tragedy read from animal tracks; their horror at the destructive forces of the blazing forest, and the peacefulness of a canoe ride among the birds on the water, in the air and on the shoreline, all combine to give the reader a sense of tranquility.

Behind it all, Mr. Wood tries to point out the value of wildlife sanctuaries. He believes that every city and town and village should endeavour, before it is too late, to set aside an area where Nature, unharmed by man, may be left to work out its own balance; where boys and girls can learn their first valuable lessons of appreciation of Her gifts; and where tired men and busy housewives may find a haven where the beauty of surroundings will render them oblivious to common daily tasks.

The author writes: "We need to escape for awhile from the furious turmoil of the workaday world, and go again along the quiet trails that lead to the beautiful blessings of nature. Here the human spirit can always find happiness and peace, and reassurance of the presence of God."

(Note: This book will not be available through the stores. Only a limited supply has been published. Should readers care to get an autographed copy (\$1.50 each, post-paid) they may send direct to Mr. Kerry Wood, Red Deer, Alberta.)