

# Field Sports at Home and Abroad

## A FIGHT WITH A LION

(This is an account of an adventure while lion hunting in British East Africa, given to the writer by the hero of the exploit, Mr. H. Clarkson Williams.)

It was in the summer of 1909 that a small party of us, Mr. F. C. Selous, Mr. W. N. McMillan, (who had a short time before, given ex-President Roosevelt some shooting on his farm at Juja) and myself, were on a hunting expedition after lion. We had reached the vicinity of Mount Elgin, just over the Gwasin Cishu plateau, east of the Victoria Nyanza, and were looking forward to a good hunt, for we were right on the best ground.

The day after our arrival I went out to "lay down" a few hartebeestes, ready, as I fondly hoped, for the next day's kill. I never expected to see lion at once, and, therefore, my surprise can be imagined when, about four in the afternoon, a big one passed along on my right. It was but a few minutes after my first kill of hartebeeste, and he was walking about 300 yards away, in the same direction as myself.

I can best describe the country by saying that it was something like an English park land, being more or less bushy, and the beast moved slowly and easily along, now in sight and now hidden behind bushes. And though he walked leisurely, all the time his tail was switching to and fro, ample indication that his hip had been disturbed and was angry.

My two "boys" were between two or three hundred yards in my rear, and I was walking quite alone. They had my guns, and kept pace with me keeping instinctively to cover as they followed. I gave my usual signal for them to come close up, by holding up my hand, and when they reached me I exchanged the .350 which I was carrying for the .450 which one of them had. Then, with a word of warning to them to keep behind, I commenced to stalk the lion, walking roughly in the same direction as the beast, but always working away to the right, on, as it were, the diagonal line of his track, and what had been my own. I had to travel very carefully, and take what cover I could, but gradually I made way on him, until I must have gained quite 100 yards upon him.

He must have known I was after him, yet he never looked round, keeping steadily on his course, and being now, as I had walked towards him on the slant, somewhat to my right front. It was evident that he did not wish to have anything to do with me, for though I stood right up in the open occasionally to attract his attention, he refused to honor me by a single glance, or to alter his pace or direction one iota.

At last, I decided not to wait any longer, but to stop him somehow, so, standing up, I clapped the palm of one hand across the back of the other.

This brought Leo round with a jerk, for he turned and faced me squarely, and so we stood and looked at each other while a man might count ten. A frontal shot at a big lion is rarely very successful if the beast is more than eighty yards away, and therefore I did not fire at once, but endeavored to move round so as to be on the flank of my quarry, a much more satisfactory position from which to shoot.

Apparently his majesty was either nervous or contemptuous of me, for he suddenly got up, turned right round, and began to make off at a very fast walk.

I made sure that I was going to lose him, and, in my eagerness, ignored the fact that he was now with his back towards me, in a very bad position indeed so far as the chance of bringing him down was concerned, and I let him have both barrels. By quite a foot the first shot missed him, but the second was better directed, and hit him low down in the rump, causing him to squat down sharply—much as a dog does, only that his tail was stretched straight out along the ground—and to set up a dreadful bellowing.

There was a small thicket just in front of him, and before I could get in another shot, he sprang to his feet and rushed madly into this scrub. Here I could no longer see him clearly all the time, but I noticed he rolled over and over like a beast in his death agony, and I stood for a few seconds considering how best to finish him.

A badly wounded lion is not good company at close quarters, so I took count with myself before I started on anything so foolish as to rush in and finish him off. The country before me to the right, where the stricken animal was rolling about and also the country on my direct right, was, just hereabouts, densely covered, and I soon realized that to attempt to stalk him in either of these two directions would be giving him a better chance than I cared about if he wanted to be nasty. For the moment I was at fault, until I saw, a little ahead of me to the left, that the ground appeared more open and seemed to offer some prospect, if I went carefully, of my finding a spot from which I could get a real good clean shot at him.

By this time my boys had come up, and a look at the lion convinced them, as it had me, that I had to deal with a dying and dangerous beast, and it was decided that I move forward to the spot which I had noticed, the two boys remaining where they were. I told them not to move unless I shouted to them.

I had made, perhaps, three or four hundred yards of country, all the time keeping a watch-

ful eye on the patch of cover, where it was possible the lion was lying, when I got into a little clearing. I at once stood up, it being my intention to go straight in to the wounded beast, who was then about 200 yards away, and get a close shot at him.

But he settled that for me, for before I had moved a yard he was out of his cover and coming towards me like a race horse. There is no other way of describing the way he came on to attack me, because the action of a lion charging is exactly similar to the action of a horse in full gallop. It is a mistake to suppose that lions spring. They do not; they run at you.

His pace was tremendous, and the distance between us was but the matter of a few seconds to him. He came on, growling, and no-body knows, except those who have been face to face with a similar situation, how terrifying is the lion's growl when he is charging. I held back for a space, not daring to fire at once, but waiting until he was within fifty or sixty yards of me, when I let him have it. Had I not been so confident that I would get him, I should have waited until he was practically on my barrels—especially as the only .450 cartridges that I knew I had were in my rifle, those in my breast pockets being all .350.

My first shot missed his shoulder by a few inches only. I did not wait, but fired again on the instant, and this time I hit him. Unluckily it was only a flesh wound, and not a telling shot—the bullet went through the muscle of his shoulder, but did not touch any bone—and of course, it did not stop him.

body, my head being quite close to his hind legs. All the time I clung tightly on to my rifle.

The lion then picked me up by my leg and slung me first one way and then another. Then he shook me like a rat. I felt that I was a dead man. Chance of escape there was none, and such mortal fear had seized me that all other feeling seemed to have left me. I felt no pain at all, except when he actually put his teeth right into me. I felt rather like a man who was being kicked lightly on the shins—that was all.

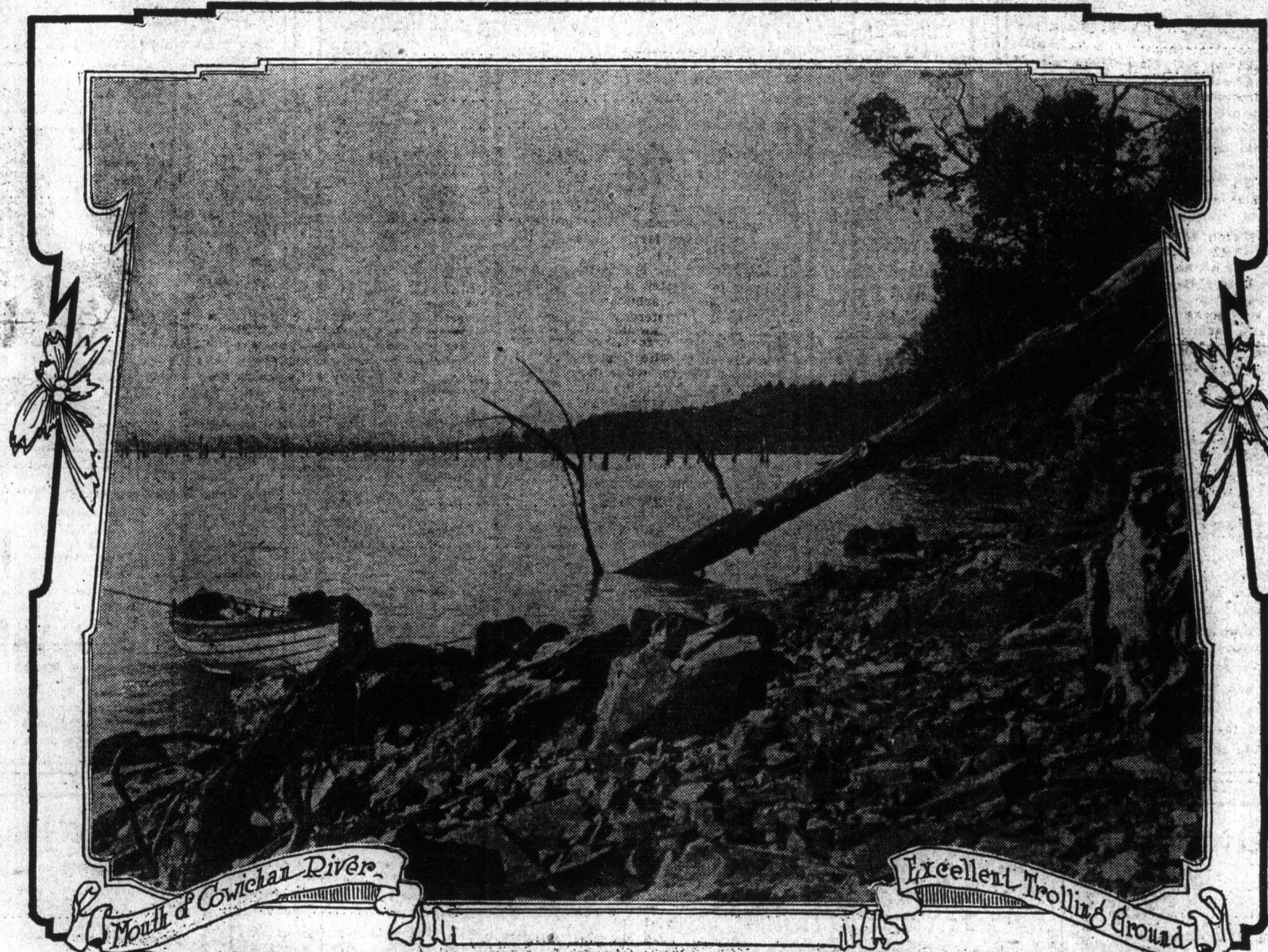
After a minute or so I heard my gun-bearer's voice over my shoulder speaking to me as I lay under the lion. He was telling me, in his dialect, that he did not know how to fire the rifle he was holding, the safety bolt being turned over. I told him to hand the rifle to me, and then I found that the weight of the lion pressing on me prevented me dropping my own rifle, which I still held with my right hand, so I had to struggle to turn the bolt for him with my left. This I at last managed to do, and the "boy" without waiting to put the rifle to his shoulder immediately fired straight in through the ribs of the lion. He evidently did not dare to take a shot further forward for fear of killing me, as the beast was still busy with my leg.

But this last dose was sufficient, though it did not kill, for the lion at once jumped off me and rolled a few yards to the right. Only half conscious of what I was doing, I put my hand to my hip pocket, and, to my surprise, found that I had two .450 cartridges there.

In February and March there is very good fishing for spring salmon and grilse here, the salmon caught at this time of year seeming to be much more lively for some reason than those which run in the fall and playing at or near the surface instead of doing quite so much sulking in the depths.

The salmon-trolling in the fall needs no very lengthy description, as, of course, at this season of the fisherman's year salmon are to be caught almost anywhere on the coast, so that it is not necessary to go so far from town merely to get good sport with the cohoes. It is, however, a noted place for the capture of heavy spring salmon, which run up the Cowichan River in great numbers, not quite such large fish as are caught at Campbell River and other well-known resorts further afield, but still more or less frequently caught of a weight of over thirty pounds. The one thing necessary to success with these fall monsters is an early rise, as, after the sun is well up, they seem to absolutely refuse to bite at a spoon. In the spring or rather late winter, however, it does not seem to be so necessary to tear oneself from the warm blankets in the semi-darkness, though, taken as a general rule, morning and evening are the best times to try for "springs."

The sea-trout fishing is at its best just at the time of year when the hot sun on the low water of the rivers makes it imperative for the river angler to catch his fish either in the early morn or else as the sun is sinking to rest, as, speaking generally, it is waste of time to



My position was now desperate. The lion was but a few yards away, and there was little time for thought. I swung hurriedly round to see if I could see anything of my first gun bearer (the other one only had a twelve bore shotgun with him) but he was not in sight. Evidently he had obeyed the instructions he had received, and stood his ground as he was told.

To run was hopeless and useless; the lion would have caught me in fifty yards. I had no more cartridges, so there was nothing for it but to face the onrushing beast, by this time within twenty yards of me, and hope for the best. I grasped my rifle tightly by the stock, meaning to hit him as hard as I could when he got up. It was of course a flash of time before he reached me, though it seemed longer waiting there, and an extraordinary and overwhelming sensation of physical fear gripped me as I stood. My arms seemed completely paralyzed, and I stared, fascinated, at the nearing lion, feeling quite helpless and empty of fight, every scrap of courage having run out of me.

So I waited until he was within two yards of me. He was making straight for my shoulders and neck, and suddenly, as I felt his hot presence upon me, the tension on my arms relaxed, and my strength came back to me to help me to fight for my life.

I hit him with all my force across the side of his head with the steel barrels. My blow did not turn him aside completely. Instead he ducked and caught hold of my right leg in his mouth, and down we went together. My head and shoulders were pinned down beneath his

instinctively I reloaded, and tried to get up that I might finish him.

The great beast was not yet dead, but was still watching me closely, and the moment I tried to raise myself to fire, he got up as if to come at me again.

Hurriedly I fired both barrels—like my boy, not waiting to get the rifle to my shoulder. The first shot I missed, but the second put him down finally. And then for the moment I completely lost my head. I was in such a state that nothing on earth would convince me just then that the beast was dead so I called to the boy who was by me and told him, if he had any cartridges left, to go on firing at the body. And this feeling held me until I was carried from the ground where all this happened.—Victor.

## WHERE TO GO FOR THE VISITING FISHERMAN

### Cowichan Bay

The safest place for an all-prize-and-black fishing resort within easy reach of town for any time of the year when either trout, or salmon, or both, are in season, is Cowichan Bay. The two specialties of this place are large sea-trout and spring salmon. From the latter end of May until the run of cohoes in the early fall there are plenty of sea-trout to be caught in the bay if you go the right way about it. At times fly-fishing is good in the lower (tidal) reaches of the river, which here enters the sea, especially at high tide, but it is never such a sure thing as the capture of the trout in the salt chuck with a little spoon.

cast flies over the river in the heat of the summer day.

From Cowichan station on the E. & N. Railway to the Bay is about two miles.

Rigs can be hired to drive from the station to the Bay by those who do not care for bicycling or walking, and it is quite possible to enjoy excellent fishing there in one day between trains.

A young Englishman at Gibson's Landing, Howe Sound, B. C., writing home to his uncle, tells of trolling for salmon: "Up to now I have been catching salmon (Cohoos or bluebacks, and a few larger spring or Tyee salmon) principally, but they are getting scarcer now, and the cod are getting more numerous. I used to work a rod out of one end of the stern of the boat and a hand line out of the other, both with a spoon bait on, and several times I have had to tussle with two on at once, both perhaps over 10 pounds. Two or three times I have caught twenty salmon in a day, mostly on the rod. Now I am catching a very game fish called a blue or green cod. Its shape and habits are more like our pike, and, like them, they are caught trolling a spoon or live bait. They put up almost as good a fight as salmon, and seem to run up to 16 pounds or so, though they average about 4 pounds. All kinds of other fish take the bait at times. I have caught skate up to 60 pounds dogfish of all sizes (horrible nuisances), red cod up to 20 pounds—a fish called a rock-cod a fish called a rat-tailed fish, an odd halibut, and a few others not worth mentioning." —Recreation

## WHAT'S DOING FOR THE SPORTSMAN?

March 26—Opening of the trout-fishing season.

Shooting season has now closed for everything on the mainland. On Vancouver Island and adjacent islands you may still shoot geese, if you can get them.

Brant geese are plentiful on the shores of Vancouver Island. Decoys are almost an absolute necessity, also a special knowledge of their haunts. Comox and Denman Island, the best known resorts for brant-shooters. Sooke, Sidney, James Island, other well-known resorts. Discovery Island sometimes affords good sport in the migrating season, a little later, while Rocky Point and similar places in the time of migration. Honkers are to be had by the persevering and lucky sportsman, but, except in a few favored localities, the man who gets honkers on the coast certainly earns them and is a friend of fortune.

Grilse, a term used roughly here for immature salmon, are now to be caught in considerable numbers by trolling in salt water—estuaries and inlets. The best known place for this fishing is Saanich Inlet, reached most easily by E. & N. Railway, 17-Mile Post Station. Boats for hire are few and should be arranged for beforehand. Sport depends a good deal on tide, a long run-out in the day generally meaning poor sport. High and flooding tides better than low and ebb.

Tackle used commonly, ordinary trolling tackle, the finer the better for good sport, with any small spoon or minnow, the local favorite now in fashion being a small Stewart spoon.

Spring Salmon are now running and may be caught in similar places with similar tackle; usually it pays to fish rather deep for springs, especially at this time of year. A deadly bait is a herring rigged with a single hook at the tail so as to give it a "wobbling" motion when trailed behind a boat.

N.B.—The "winter" springs give far better sport when hooked than the summer variety, but are not quite so numerous, or if so, not so readily caught.

Saanich Arm, Cowichan Bay and Genoa Bay, some of the best places, being sheltered water, but "springs" are found now round the shores of almost any inlet and near the kelp-beds.

Steelheads now running to the rivers, may be caught with salmon fly (favorite patterns here, Jock Scott and Silver Doctor), fished deep. Spoons and Devon minnows give good results. Best-known places handy to Victoria—Sooke River, reached by stage; Cowichan and Koksilah Rivers, by E. & N. Railway.

N.B.—Trout-fishing for any kind of trout is illegal before March 26th, in fresh water, salt water, tidal water, still water, running water or any other old water.

## THE UNATTAINABLE TROUT

I know a pool where the river,  
Sunlit and still,  
Slips by a bank of wild roses  
Down from the mill;  
There do I linger when summer makes glorious  
Valley and hill.

Somewhere the song of a skylark  
Melts into air,  
Butterflies floating through the sunshine,  
June's everywhere;  
Nature, in fact, shows an amiable jollity  
I do not share.

For in the shade of the alders,  
Scornful of flies,  
There is a trout that no cunning  
Coaxes to rise.  
"Slim" as Ulysses and doubtful as Didymus,  
Mammoth in size.

And when the May fly battalions  
Flutter and skim,  
When all the others are filling  
Baskets a-brim,  
I spend the cream of the fly-fishing carnival  
Casting at him.

Seeing in fancy my hackle  
Seized with a flounce,  
Hearing the reel pacing madly  
Under his pounce,  
Knowing at last all the pounds of his magnitude  
(Eight if an ounce!)

But of my drakes and my sedges  
None make the kill,  
None tempt him up from his fastness  
Under the mill,  
And, for I saw him as lately as Saturday,  
There he is still.

Thus do Life's triumphs elude us;  
Yet it may be  
Some afternoon, when the keeper  
Goes to his tea,  
That, if a lobworm were dropped unofficially—  
Well, we shall see.

—Punch.

"Women can not stand as much physical exertion as men."  
"Say, did you ever try going shopping with your wife?"

19, 1912

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