

HUNTING AND FISHING, HERE AND ELSEWHERE

A TRIP TO THE CHEACAMUS

(By Richard L. Pocock.)

They were talking the other day at the Anglers' Club about the one subject, and, after a few good stories of obstacles overcome and fish foxiness circumvented, someone remarked what an extraordinary thing it is the amount of hardship and discomfort a man, who has the fish fever bad, will put up with for the sake of killing a few fish; which reminded me of a trip I once took with an old friend, a genial Irishman, with the fish fever chronic from birth, one of the best and most unselfish sportsmen it was ever my good fortune to meet and fish with.

Anyone who may chance to read this simple, truthful, narrative, who knows the Cheacamus River (split on some maps Shear-mish), a tributary of the Squamish which empties into the head of Howe Sound, knows that it is a river celebrated for large trout of several species, Dolly Varden, Rainbow (so-called locally, whether rightly so or not I am not quite sure) and sea-trout, but to mention that it is a fine salmon river. He will also know, however, that it is a river, the habits and peculiarities of which the angler must know and allow for, if he wishes to make good catches of these same fat fellows. As a matter of fact, it is a river in which the season, or rather seasons for good fishing are short, but, if known and taken advantage of, very sweet to the enthusiastic angler.

When the angling season opens, the water is usually too high and discolored by the rains to be in shape for fishing, but catch it when it is clearing and before the hot summer weather begins and you can have the time of your life minnow-fishing for the giants of the trout tribe and the Dolly Varden chair.

When the warmer weather is improving the fishing on warmer waters, the glacial water begins to come down this river and make it about the color of milk, and it does not get into good shape again until past mid-summer, and then you have to make haste and get in your deadly work, if it is trout you are after, before the humpbacks and dog salmon and cohoes run up, as, once the river is full of these, you may as well give up any idea of catching trout by legitimate methods.

It will thus be seen that there are practically speaking two short seasons when fishing is good on the Cheacamus, one in the spring, when the river is clearing, after the winter rains, and the other about September, when it is again clearing, after the flood of glacial water brought down by the hot-summer sun.

Between whittles you might catch fish, but the chances are against anything like big baskets. Now my Irish friend, freshly arrived on the coast from the prairies, where for years he had to possess his impatient fisherman's soul in patience as best he could, had formed one of a party to visit this river for the spring fishing, and had returned to Vancouver, where this deponent was tied down by business duties, with a large catch and a proportionately large stock of enthusiasm over the magnificent sport he had enjoyed with all large fish.

Being, as I said, the most unselfish of sportsmen, his one thought and wish was that I, his friend, should also taste the pleasures of the magnificent sport he had himself just sampled, and, seeing the beauties he had brought back to town to back his stories, and hearing the account of his splendid battles they had put up with, I fired my enthusiasm until I was literally itching to be "up and at 'em."

During the summer we sampled several of the fishing resorts, handy to Vancouver with varying success, but his thoughts were ever turning to the river of giant trout, and the red-letter days he had enjoyed thereon, and we had it all fixed up to take a few days' holiday towards the end of the summer and spend it together at the riverside. "The best-laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley." (Pardon, Brother Scot, if the quotation is not quite accurate.)

Business unexpectedly called him back to the prairie country sooner than he had calculated, and we had either to call the trip off altogether or else make it a week or two earlier than intended. We shut our eyes to what we knew was the unpleasant truth—the river was not yet in fit condition for good fishing—and off we started on the good ship Britannia, Captain Jack Cates, master, for the head of Howe Sound and the mouth of the Squamish River.

The keeper of the store at Squamish confirmed our fears, the river was very high and discolored, and he was afraid we should not find it fishable at the Cheacamus. Irishmen are obstinate, and we were both determined to see it through and never say die till we did. I forget exactly the distance between the mouth of the Squamish and the bridge over the Cheacamus on the wagon road, but it is a long tramp, and the sun was hot and the roads heavy with dust, and, dollars not being over plentiful, packs were taken on our backs, instead of a horse and rig being hired, and we set out to brave the sun and the dust and the flies on the road, in the hope of finding the stream in better shape for fishing than in our inmost minds we knew was possible.

Packing on the back is alright when you are used to it, but it takes a lot of getting used to; in fact, few attain to this desideratum, I fancy, before death; but we were after fish, and what will not a man do to get fish? We arrived there eventually, pretty well fagged out, to find the river much as we feared; we put in a night among mosquitoes as spiteful as any ever encountered, which settled all over one's face with a sarcastic "zizz," as much as to say, "You silly sucker, you deserve to

be stung." The groceries had got somehow mixed in the packs owing to the bursting of several packages when cinched up tight, and there was a distinct flavor of sulphur matches about the morning porridge; but, nothing daunted, we sallied forth with the determination of exasperation, and put in a long day with nothing to show for it.

Almost we decided to give up and go home; but the Irishman was determined, if possible, to show me that there were such fish in the river to be caught, as oft I had dreamed of, if only it were possible to make them see a bait. While I was frying the bacon for supper, he fossicked around and caught a grass-hopper, he then found a nice little eddy where a Dolly Varden was at home, and in a few minutes that Dolly Varden (or parts of it rather) was supplementing the bacon in the frying pan.

Now don't jump to the conclusion that hereafter we caught quantities of grasshoppers and with them quantities of fish. I admit we tried to, but the water was really too opaque, and only one more came to grass, so that we were reluctantly compelled to face the fact that the river was in such condition as to be practically unfishable and to resign ourselves to the inevitable. An early start on the homeward journey was scheduled for the morning. The evening before we went for a stroll a mile or two upstream, myself without fishing-tackle, but the Hibernian enthusiast, dogged to the last, insisted on bringing a rod with him, "in case." Getting tired of walking without an object, I suggested sitting down for a smoke, but he was speedily up again, and said he would go up a little further to try just once more, while I took it easy. He came back in about half an hour with two small trout, caught in a little mountain creek which entered the river further up along the trail.

While he was away I had the pleasure of seeing a fine black bear stroll out onto a sandbar to take the evening air. Of course, I had no gun, or should not have seen him! However, the two small trout provided us with a tasty

breakfast before starting on the long pack home—fishless.

We had worked hard—pig-headedly, of course—but if you never buck against fortune, fortune will never favor you, and there is a sequel to this story. We made the return journey down Howe Sound in a row-boat, and having a day or two to spare, stopped at the mouth of every creek of any size on the way down, with the result that after all we arrived in town with a fine basket of fresh silvery sea-trout.

It has never been the good fortune of either of us to return to that river, but one of these days, if the god of fishermen so wills it, we are going up at the right season to have our revenge.

IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON

In season and out of season, our game and fish need better protection, because in season and out of season they are suffering for the want of it; therefore in season and out of season it is necessary to continually call attention to this matter, as it is of importance to all residents, whether sportsmen or not, and might well attract more notice than it does from our leading business men.

"Unorganized districts" is a convenient catchword to excuse flagrant infractions of the game laws, but it makes a poor excuse for such well-known resorts as Goldstream, Cowichan Bay and Sooke Harbor.

The daily press has been reporting the spearing of steelheads at the former place, which are said to be there in greater numbers than usual this year. Spearing spawning fish, unclean and unseasonable! Sportsmanlike, is it not? And yet the report is, I believe, quite true.

Several weeks after the shooting season was closed for everything, Indians were shooting ducks at Cowichan Bay, also netting salmon in the river. Last Sunday I was down at Sooke Harbor early in the morning, when

shots were going off for an hour or so in every direction. This is no exaggeration. I wanted to come to the most charitable conclusion possible, and supposed the inhabitants were practicing at inanimate targets, but later in the day I met two men on the road with shotgun and setnets. I ventured to suggest that the shooting season was closed, when quick as a shot the answer came: "No; not for brant."

Brant in Sooke Harbor on a hot, sunny day, with scarcely a breath of wind stirring! Ask anyone who knows anything about these birds and this country if that is likely or possible!

This at a time when the cock-grouse are hooting in the firs while their mates are nesting on the ground, and one setter can do more damage running wild in the woods than a dozen guns can do in the proper season.

There are lots of booters in the trees, and the crow of the cock-pheasant was to be frequently heard in all the districts I have been in this spring; if game is scarcer than it was, it is no difficult matter to point to the real reasons; not so much the increasing number of guns out during the season, but the indisputable fact that the game does not get fair play out of season.

WEATHER AND HUMORS OF TROUT

The handiest and most feasible excuse for a poor creel of trout is the weather. If trout do not sport on a day when we go out confidently acknowledging that no conditions could possibly be more perfect, we urge that a change is imminent, and that the fish anticipate these things better than we do. If they do sport, and our excitement grows keener as our basket grows heavier, although when we started, on a special day which we had looked forward to, appearances were unfriendly and even hostile, we credit ourselves with the deprecating opinion that "one never knows."

If the weather is settled for a week or two the experienced fisher can gauge his chances

fairly accurately; but when such changes occur as have occurred recently, there is not a fisherman living who knows the tastes and in climations of trout, even in spring. At no time in the whole of his career did a fisher ever have a more favorable opportunity of testing the humors of fish as affected by weather than during March, April and May this year. The spring which includes within four weeks a normal Easter, a bitter bleak winter, with hard frost and six inches of snow, and tropical heat with glaring sunshine, is certainly varied enough to experiment in. We are led too hastily to conclude that recuperating trout will take anything in spring, and only become fastidious when their development is complete. The fisher who laid this hypothetical unctious to his soul this year must have been most decidedly un deceived, and have learnt that periods of extreme changes are the worst periods for sport. Changes which are not to the slightest extent apparent to the fisher are anticipated by the fish, and the sportsman who wondered why trout would not take when the proper condition of soft air, westerly breezes, and thin clouds were favorable, has been given his reply five or six hours later when heavy rain fell and there was a freshet.

Here is an instance of the incomprehensibility of the tastes of trout. Years ago at Easter two of us had a day which was previously fixed for us by the owner of a stretch of well-stocked water in a river flowing from west to east. The wind was in the northwest, and blew cold and moist, threatening us as we drove over moors with snow or sleet. A more comfortless, disagreeable, unpromising day it was impossible to imagine. Passers by stared at us, equipped as we were for fishing, and doubtless concluded that it was a pity that ar-dor such as ours should be directed upon such an absurd quest. At the river the wind curled round us and swept the now frequent showers of sleet and snow down on to the surface of the water, compelling us to make the most ludicrous slashing casts conceivable. Yet never did trout rise better or give us finer sport. When the snow was heaviest and the wind hardest scarcely a cast was made without a rise, and three or four times did we get two trout on our two flies. The excitement made us warm, and we quite eagerly looked for the snow showers with the blustering wind accompanying them. That evening, as we looked at our aggregate of sixty-eight fish, we mentally resolved that, come what might in future, we would bar no conditions of snow, hail, sleet or rain, and only stay at home when there were heavy freshets and colored water.

Then what a boon to the fly fisher is a hail shower—not the furious lashing of a storm, but the pattering of hail on the surface like the big drops of April rain. How greedily the trout will rush after a March brown then! Our ears and cheeks were tingling with the onslaught of hail one showery day when we were fishing a little stream of about 10 feet in width, but we had to stop at three o'clock because we caught as many trout as we could conveniently carry. Again, a few days ago we were fishing some lovely water when the mist was so thick that we could scarcely see thirty yards, and were getting nothing. As it lifted and the sun came out the trout literally rushed after the fly. We basketed fifteen good fish within an hour. But when the mist threatened, even before it came down, the trout would have no more of the fly they were taking during the sunshine. They came up half heartedly for a short time to a half stone, and then stopped altogether.

After all, there is a good deal of pleasure in the speculative excitement attending the study of the humors of trout. An old friend in his seventy-third year, who still plays tennis and drives twelve or fourteen miles to fish, invariably picks out a bright, hot, windless day for his fishing. He does not get a big basket of trout, but he always gets a presentable number of good-sized fish, and he fishes up stream and under the opposite bushes with a very fine cast. Most of us stay at home on such days, but there are certain parts of the year, usually about the middle or end of June, when, if the weather is clear, bright, and hot, heavy toll is taken of the stock of trout in the middle of the day with the natural "fern" fly or the crowding beetle, deadly baits in the hands of those who know how to use them and care to do so. The disposition to use them is happily waning, as is the desire for any natural bait. To the artificial fly, wet or dry, we pin our faith, and if we happen, notwithstanding all the seductive persuasiveness of keen casting, to cross the moods of trout, it is "all in the day's march." Better times will come.—Noss Mayo, in The Field.

RAINBOW TROUT FIGHTING

"I was walking towards the pond on Saturday, when I saw a tremendous scrimmage going on—now a fin, now a tail out of water, and on a nearer approach found that it was two large rainbows fighting. They kept swimming round and making violent dashes at each other with wide-open mouths, and now and then I saw mouthfuls of scales flying in the water. They were so busy fighting that they simply took no notice of me, and as they got within reach I put in my stick and tried to separate them, and then I realized what big, strong fish they were; but my pushing at them had no effect at all, and the fight went on. Of course they soon got out of reach and deeper in the water, and the last I saw of them was merely a continuous boil, which showed that the fight was still going on."—Gadfly, in The Field.

The Science of Salvaging Sunken Vessels

(Copyright, 1909, by Frederic J. Haskin.)



CONVERT it into a gigantic steel air bubble and it will raise itself—such is the new theory and practice of saving the ships that go upon the rocks or to the bottom of the sea. It is a comparatively new idea, but it has worked where every other means has failed. It was tried in 1905 on the great 11,000 ton Bavarian, which went onto the rocks in the St. Lawrence River, and what the salvors could not do with an expenditure of \$50,000 the gigantic air bubble was able to do. It was next tested on the 9,000-ton Mount Temple, and it was raised. Then it was tried on the English cruiser Gladiator and the American gunboat Yankee with equal success, although the Yankee went down again owing to a collision with one of the tugs towing her. Now it is proposed to add the Republic to the list of converted air bubbles. In this case it is expected that electro-magnets will aid in the work.

The air bubble method of salvage is perhaps the cheapest yet found. The first thing to be done is for divers to go down and make the hold air-tight, leaving only room for the water to get out. Then gigantic air pumps are set to work, pumps that are some million times larger than a bicycle pump. These are valves just like there are in the bicycle tire, which will admit the air but will not allow it to escape. As the air is forced into the hold the water must get out. Through a series of trap doors the men who are accustomed to working under compressed air—corresponding to the "sandhogs" in sub-aqueous tunnels—get down into the hold and brace the ship in every conceivable way so that it can withstand the tremendous strain that is to be put upon it. If the job is not done right it will act just like a defective pneumatic tire. But if it is done right there will be no trouble. When all the water is forced out by the air that is pumped in, the ship will at once right herself, just as a hollow rubber ball will rise to the top of the water, and the towing to a haven of refuge begins.

It is a terrible strain on the new type of wrecker. He knows not the moment a storm may blow up and find him down in the hold with a dozen trap-doors between him and the top of the water. There are telephones from the wrecking tugs to the interior, and a lookout is always stationed above watching for the possible storm. But even with this precaution there is still many a race with death to the top of the water.

The first employment of the compressed air system of steamship raising was made many years ago. A small schooner had run on the rocks. After many efforts to get her off she was abandoned—or rather sold to an enterprising adventurer. He bought a lot of empty coal-oil barrels and when the tide was low filled the hold with them, first having taken care to have each one closed at the bung. He shored them down well so that they could not shift, and when the tide next came along it lifted the schooner clear of the rocks. The ingenuity of this man netted him enough to buy a good farm.

The next step in the direction of compressed air salvage as it is conducted today was the invention of the "camel." This is a large

iron or steel barrel, often a hundred feet in length by as much as ten feet in diameter. Several of these "camels" are fastened to the side of the vessel, at low tide, if it is on the rocks, or at any time if it is below the surface. The water is then forced out of them, and their lifting power becomes equal to the difference between their weight and the weight of the water they displace, which is many tons.

One of the most unusual cases of successful salvage with compressed air happened in the case of the Gladiator, which was sunk in a collision with the American steamer St. Paul. The Gladiator is a rather antiquated British cruiser, but it was desirable to raise her. She had sunk in a way that made her lay on her side. The first problem was to right her. Heavy apparatus in the shape of steam winches and other equipment was set up in concrete beds on the shore, and after many a hawser had been parted they were finally successful in getting her on an even keel. Then came the work of the divers, the sandhogs, and the air pumps. It was not long before the tale was told, and the Gladiator, sadly disfigured, but still in the game, rose to the surface and was successfully towed into port.

The St. Paul, which ran down the Gladiator, has not always gone scot-free. Some thirteen years ago she was on the beach herself, off the New Jersey coast. The task of getting her afloat again was placed in the hands of Capt. Israel Merritt, of the great Merritt-Chapman firm. It is said that this was the last piece of work of which Capt. Merritt ever took personal charge. He has been one of the most successful salvors the world has ever produced, and his ships sail many seas in their work of rescuing shipping.

Oftentimes wreckers are put to their wits end to solve the unexpected problems that arise. Some years ago the Milwaukee ran on to the rocks off the English coast. It was soon found that to get the vessel off intact was out of the question. The forward part was so damaged as to be practically worthless, so they built heavy bulkheads across the beam amidships, dynamited the forward part away and towed the after part safe to port where a new forward portion was built onto it. The same thing, almost, happened with the Sevic, another large vessel. In its case both the stem and the stern parts were saved, and it was towed into port in halves, and there made over into as perfect a looking ship as if it had never met with an accident.

One of the most peculiar accidents that ever befell a ship happened to the Austrel, in Sydney harbor some years ago. She was coaling, and the officers had neglected to close the lower port holes. During the night she listed to starboard and sank in ten fathoms of water. A coffer dam was erected around her superstructure, divers closed the port holes which were left open, and big pumps, throwing a ton of water a second, were set to pumping the water out of the hold. The ship soon rose to the surface as an empty bottle tightly corked will come to the top of the water. She was little the worse for the experience.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable examples of a ship commander making the best of the resources at hand was when the Esk collided with an iceberg. Seeing that unless he was able to lighten his ship all hands would go to the bottom, he tied up to the

berg, unloaded his cargo on it, and repaired the damaged hull. Then he transhipped his cargo back into the Esk and continued his journey.

What constitutes the brightest chapter in all wrecking history was the success of the Japanese in raising the Russian ships that had been sunk at Port Arthur. Where the United States has not been able to raise the one lone Maine in Havana harbor, the Japanese raised nearly everything at Port Arthur. Over 100,000 tons of war engines were brought up from Davy Jones' locker and added to the effective fighting strength of the Japanese navy. If the United States had raised the Maine, and all of the ships sunk in the battle of Santiago besides, it would not have constituted half the task that the Japanese successfully undertook. The fact that the ships were blown up by the Russians in such a way that they hoped they could never be raised adds to the lustre of the triumph of the Japanese in floating them. Most of them were lying in from forty to fifty feet of water.

The English are now engaged in an enterprise of more than ordinary interest. It is an attempt to rescue the treasure from the wreck of the British warship Lutin, which was sunk in 1707, and lies buried in the sands of more than a century. A large metal tube 100 feet long and about eight feet in diameter, has been constructed, on the one end of which there has been built a tiny house with water-tight windows and doors in it. The divers will go down in this and use it as the base of operations. The sand will all be sucked away from the wreck by great sand pumps, and then will begin the work of securing the treasure.

This action of the English finds a counterpart in the efforts to raise the Spanish Armada. The Dutch sailors attempted to do so several centuries ago, but their efforts at salvage all came to naught. Napoleon afterward undertook it, but with equal ill-success. Later the Spaniards undertook to raise the sunken craft, and they succeeded in getting the treasure from most of them.

The modern ship devoted to salvage and wreck-raising is an intricate and powerful machine. Its gigantic pumps, throwing a ton of water in the time it takes to say "Jack Robinson"; its equipment of pneumatic hammers, drills and riveters, which can do the work of hundreds of men in less time than they could; its great wrecking cranes which can lift hundreds of tons, all lend effective assistance in cheating Davy Jones out of his victories.

The records of the Patent Office show that Abraham Lincoln's thoughts once turned more to the sea than to watercraft. He invented a wrecking apparatus, whose principle has since come into use. He had two boats joined together by huge beams. They were intended to straddle a wreck. Cables were to be passed under the hull, while steam winches on the salvage boats were to do the lifting, the principle employed being much the same as in the great traveling cranes in big machine shops.

It has been estimated that the tonnage lost at sea is only one-sixth as great today as it was thirty years ago, although the aggregate tonnage has increased threefold. In other words, the ocean is eighteen times safer today than it was a quarter of a century ago. But even at that there are a thousand craft of one kind or another lost each year.