

# Field Sports at Home and Abroad

## ANGLING WAYS AND BYWAYS

The phrase "It is not all of fishing to fish" is so true that it has become trite; again and again the angler employs it perforce in defense or explanation of his favorite sport as the one way of conveying to the non-angler person some vague idea of the viewpoint of the enthusiastic fisherman. Intrinsicly the mere killing of a few trout or bass is a pretty simple matter; it may be neatly and efficiently done with an alder switch, a few feet of string, and a fishhook, but it goes without saying that the genuine angler does not go about it in quite that way. Why not? Simply because the essential sport derived from angling does not wholly consist in catching fish.

Among the many underlying factors which collectively spell the sport of fishing for the sportsman-angler comes first of all—at least it would so appear, in all probability, in the preponderance of cases—the mere joy of getting outdoors. The angler is essentially an outdoor man, and his sport takes him into the open—the real, rough open, moreover, not the sleek, artificial expanse of the golf links or the bleacher-bound diamond or gridiron. It is worthy of note also that angling, and the best of angling, calls the sportsman to his favorite streams at the very finest seasons of the year, the earlier days of autumn, while still the golden and russet foliage gleams in the misty Indian-summer afternoon, and in the spring when first the trees along the trout streams begin to show pale green and the water grows warm in the sunshine.

The trout fisherman, particularly, is peculiarly fortunate in the environment of his sport; in any given region, almost without exception, the most picturesque and charming surroundings may be found along the trout streams; the typical trout stream, ever changing in character, alternating ruffle with rapid, still pools with waterfalls, is a thing of undoubted beauty, which the true blue fly fisherman would willingly follow forever. But trout fishing is not wholly a mere matter of the easy enjoyment of the beauties of nature; practically, it's hard work.

After all, the thing we "go fishing" for is largely the outdoor exercise; the healthy tramp to and from the stream; the long day passed in wading the river and breaking through the brush along its banks; or a day at the paddle on a good black bass lake;—it's "good medicine." The fly-caster's tackle—m-end-fly to butt-cap must be well tested and his clothes—and his legs—serviceable.

The sport to be derived from a day on stream or lake immeasurably depends upon the employment of good tackle; the genuine angler, as distinguished from the chance and casual fisherman, makes it his business to study and know fishing tackle—one of the most interesting of angling by-ways. Intelligent selection of tackle is imperative in every branch of angling but particularly necessary for casting the fly; the fly-caster who uses poorly adapted tackle, either by ignorant choice or chance necessity, is hopelessly handicapped. Fly-casting is a game of skill, and even an expert caster cannot do good work with an unsuitable rod and line.

The angler should be familiar with the characteristics and the good and bad qualities of the various materials employed in rod-making, split-bamboo, degama, bethabara, lancewood, and so on; he should know how split-bamboo rods are made and the practical and theoretical difference between the hexagonal and octagonal split-cane rods, those with steel centres and also the double-built rods. Also it pays to experiment with rods of various lengths and weights and degrees of pliancy.

The production of a fine split-bamboo fly-rod is a matter of the utmost manual and professional skill, but some very good rods are made by amateurs; as an angling by-way perhaps none is more fascinating or of more practical value than amateur rod-making. The amateur rod-maker may "fish" all winter if he chooses, and when the ice goes out may practically continue his sport with tools of his own making, which, in itself, is decidedly an added pleasure, even though the rod may lack in finish as compared with the professionally made article.

But the study and amateur making of tackle is by no means confined to the rod alone; every angler must possess a practical familiarity with artificial flies, and if he knows how to tie flies so much the better. The study of artificial flies and fly-making for trout, bass or salmon affords unending interest and occupation to the angler both in the open and close seasons; moreover, the fly-fisherman well educated in the matter of artificial flies, the best of the many well known patterns and the best times and places to use them, the sizes most apt to prove taking under various circumstances and conditions, and matters of like nature, is certain to be far more successful on the stream than the man who neglects this phase of his angling education.

Study of the artificial fly question at once develops the fact that flies differ materially in construction as well as in shape, pattern, and size. Concisely, we find the hackles, palmers, reversed wing flies, matched wing flies, dry or floating flies, and other less common forms; concerning all these it is well for the angler to experiment for himself and not to take any man's say-so, as final regarding their merits. Additionally there remains the question of what hook is the best, Sprout, Pennell,

O'Shaughnessy, Kirby, etc., a matter every angler, it would seem, must decide for himself for the reason that individual methods of striking a rising fish differ greatly, and, in the matter of hooks, what is one man's meat is another's poison.

Then, too, there is the question of the eyed-fly vs. the fly whipped to gut, and as regards eyed-flies the turned-down eye vs. the turned up. In fact, the field for experimentation and study along these lines is practically endless and really so wide as to prove somewhat disconcerting if not positively discouraging to the beginner; but it may be truly said that no one knows all about fly-fishing, and the only thing to do is to keep everlastingly at it with the knowledge that whatever points you may pick up will prove of distinct advantage, if not immediately, surely at some future time.

Aside from the matter of tackle, which has been merely approached herein, numerous by paths from the main travelled angling road suggest themselves, among them practice or tournament fly and bait casting. The value of practice casting, whether competitive or otherwise can hardly be overestimated. In this connection it should be emphasized that the acquirement of accuracy and delicacy is of far more importance to the practical fisher-

tackle, and tackle-handling, is of inestimable value to the angler. A few years ago the title "sportsman-naturalist" was rather more common in our outdoor literature than at present; it is true, however, that every angler and every hunter who would get the most out of his days on the stream or in the woods must become a natural historian in a small way. Success where game and game fish are plentiful is somewhat a matter of course; but success in much-hunted covers and hard-fished lakes and streams is a matter of skill plus familiarity with the habits of the quarry.

Directly in line with the study of game fish, another angling by way of a somewhat similar nature presents itself, that is, the science of entomology so far as the insect life of stream and stream side concerns the angler. This phase of angling is, of course, of interest or value to none but the enthusiastic fly fisherman; indeed since fly casting for salmon or black bass is not founded upon imitation of the natural fly by the artificial, the observation and study of the natural fly with a view to close imitation in color, size and motion by the artificial is of advantage only to the trout fly fisherman. That, in fact, it is of great value to the fly-caster for trout can hardly be controverted.

The study of the insect life of our streams

George Street, W., before the members of the Marylebone Camera Club, and, with the aid of some splendid lantern slides of his own taking, Dr. Ward showed that the title of his lecture was no empty phrase.

Dr. Ward has studied fish most minutely, and has a profound respect for them and their intelligence. He knows their "state of soul," as the French novelists have it, to the bottom; and the fiercest and most bullying pike, the mildest dace, or the most lackadaisical blenny that ever wagged a fin, cannot conceal from him the true state of their feelings. "If you observe a fish closely, you can tell what he is thinking," he said, and proceeded to prove it.

On the screen was shown the photograph of a mighty pike, basking peacefully at the bottom of the water. Everything about him shown that he is at peace with the world; the fins flabby and the muscles relaxed so that the back forms a curve. But, sh-h-h! something has happened! The back fin of the pike has shot up rigid and spiny. He is in a state of great mental agitation. What has happened? A foolish silver dace has swum into his neighborhood, and the most predatory instincts of the pike are aroused. Now the fin quivers; the agitation has increased; the back is straight as a ramrod; the pike is ready to attack. Slowly the pike is moving through the water



Fishing for Steelhead - Koksilah River, B.C.

man than distance; distance, while sometimes imperative and at all times an advantage, is not strictly necessary for resultful casting with either fly or bait.

Of all angling by-ways tournament casting receives the most publicity, and interest in the game continually increases; it is purely a game of skill, a clean game, and the best man who wins indeed knows fishing tackle and how to use it. The records attained in the distance fly and bait events are sources of amazement to the average stream fisherman, although the fact that these records are made with special tackle, differing considerably from that used in actual fishing, tends to lessen the interest of the majority of anglers.

Proficiency in casting, other things being equal, brings its sure reward on stream or lake however, a good working knowledge of the habits and habitats of game fish is rather more important. A little knowledge, reputedly, is a dangerous thing, but every experienced angler knows that at least some small degree of familiarity with the ichthyology of the game species is of great value to the fisherman. The study of the science of fishes, so far as it is practically related to sport with rod and reel, affords an interesting and particularly resultful angling by-way; in fact it would almost seem that the genuine angler is rather more interested in fish than in the sport of fishing.

The literature of angling, apart from more or less technical books about tackle and less or more accurate works of a descriptive and picturesque nature, deals almost exclusively with the game fish and their habits; the careful reading and study of the most authoritative of these works, those dealing with the natural history of game fish, as well as the books on

and lakes with a view to the exact imitation by the fly-maker of the flies upon which trout feed at times, is an angling by-path which has been little followed in this country; the greater part of our favorite flies originated in England, and those which have been first tried on this side are, in the majority of instances, in no sense simulations of any particular natural fly. In rare instances, nature has been followed after a fashion, but generally the man who uses that fly is blissfully ignorant of the fact. A great many favorite American patterns of trout flies are imitations of insects common to English trout streams; others are frankly "fancy" flies which originated both in this country and in England.

It is in dry-fly fishing that the theory of exact imitation of nature is most closely followed. In this connection it is worthy of note that Mr. F. M. Halford, a leading English writer upon angling topics and dry-fly fishing in particular, while formerly advocating a somewhat formidable catalogue of one hundred floating fly patterns, in his latest work, "The Modern Development of the Dry Fly," has reduced the number of artificials actually required, in his opinion, to thirty-three; these comprise, in some instances, exact imitations of both the male and female insects of certain species. Mr. Halford believes that he has had better success fishing these thirty-three patterns exclusively than formerly when using the longer list.—Samuel G. Camp in Outing.

## FISH THAT THINK

"The Marvels of Fish Life" was the subject of a particularly interesting lecture delivered by Dr. Francis Ward recently at 38 Upper

towards its prey, every fin aggressive, its whole body taut as piano wire. But the dace has become suspicious, and the pike knows that his only chance of successful attack is by surprise. So his whole body relaxes, and the pike hangs relaxed in the water. Then there is a sudden rush, and the pike misses. The silver dace has slipped by, and there the pike floats a picture of the greatest dejection. There is a downward curve from his mouth, every fin lies loose, and the back is in the form of a bow. As the lecturer remarked, the pike has really and truly got the hump.

"If you know how to watch fish you can tell exactly what they are going to do," said the lecturer. He showed the picture of a cottus lying supinely at the bottom. The cottus becomes alarmed or suspicious, and instantly its bristles with terrific fins, which would cut the mouth of anything that tried to swallow it. The blenny takes a 'tip' directly from this. The blenny is really the most harmless fish in the world; soft and pliable as an earthworm. But, following the example of the cottus, it puts up its fins in the same way, although they would scratch nothing. But it "comes off." The blenny, in fact, is a perfect example in Nature of "putting up a bluff."

Dr. Ward's deductions are in the best style of Sherlock Holmes. He shows a perch suffering from indigestion. How do we know? Because of the arched back, the front fin drawn down, and the minnow sticking out of its mouth—"Perfectly simple, my dear Watson!" Once he fed a rainbow trout on 100 selected earthworms, and the trout ate the lot and blinked for more. On the screen it looked exactly like a very much distended Lebaudy airship. And then the airship opened at the

## WHAT'S DOING FOR THE SPORTSMAN?

April—Trout-fishing now open everywhere on the coast.

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. Discovey 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.

end. This was the rainbow trout yawning, as it continued to do for two hours.

But in spite of its gluttony, the most triumphant proof of highly developed intelligence comes from a rainbow trout. With a camera acting at one five-hundredth of a second the lecturer showed two rainbow trout fighting in his private observation pool. The subject of dispute was a lady, and one of the rainbow trout got much the worst of it, floating up to the top of the water utterly exhausted, and faint to die. So Dr. Ward put it under the running tap for a time, and then gave it a drop of whiskey, at which the trout sat up immediately and was well again. Man could do no more.—London Standard.

## GONE NORTH

High up, where clouds in broken bars  
Drift slowly underneath the stars,  
And down the sky  
The moon behind the arras glides,  
Remote, through far, aerial tides  
The wild-geese fly.

Their tense triangle cuts the air  
While grating in the silence there,  
The leader's call,  
Harsh-heralded in honking floats  
And answering back, come gutteral notes  
That solemn fall.

Etched clean against the skye dome  
Yon phalanx seeks the northern home  
From whence it came;  
And that persistence of the flight  
Drawn like a knife-blade through the night  
Is instinct's aim.

So speed my spirit; in some Spring  
On loose-blown winds sent wandering  
As bleakly forth;  
Leaving mayhap for one to say,  
Dim-peering through the mystery grey,  
"Gone North!"

When acting as a guide last October on a moose hunt up the G. T. P., a resident of Fort William discovered two dead bull moose with horns interlocked. Their respective measurements are fifty and fifty-two and a half inches. The horns are so firmly locked together that it would be necessary to break them in order to separate them. The moose had evidently fought to the death. The point of one horn on the largest moose had penetrated to the brain through the eye socket of his less fortunate rival. The victor, unable to extricate himself from his dead opponent had miserably perished. The skulls and horns were in excellent condition but the scalps had been destroyed.