

the sweet voiced quail make music and the ring-necked pheasant calls with raucous note. 'Carrup, car-up,' scream the brant. The hosts of gulls call wildly. The odd sea duck, the Old Squaw, cries 'Kla-how-yah,' for all the world as though a native Indian were saluting you in the coast jargon called chinook. Now the great blackfish swims past the river—let us go up it.



"The Forest Receding" From a Sooke Home

"Here is a typical island river—the Sooke—a brawling, rushing torrent in the rainy season—a thing of clean, blue waters and pebbly beds and dry reaches in the summer. Up through these transparent pools a mighty host of coho and dog salmon and steelhead trout are running. All the months of September and October and November this innumerable throng urge their way up. In the year of 1909 I would safely estimate that a quarter of a million fish swam up the Sooke river to deposit some billion and a half of eggs. These hosts have come from the unknown feeding grounds of the Pacific to exude their eggs and milt in, or near, the river that first gave them birth. On, ever on, the leaping masses urge—up swift current, over dry reaches, flapping, really sliding on their bellies over the shallows, wearing away fins and tails and scale and skin, fighting ever upward to complete the final act of their four years of life—to spawn and then to die. I have seen tiny lads spear a hundredweight an hour; my assistant has been almost thrown down, narrowly escaping wetting the camera, by the rush of disturbed salmon. At last the journey is ended, the spawning place is reached. A 'nest' is 'flapped' out and the big red eggs are discharged. In a few days the spawning act is complete, the now weakened fish drifts with the current, finally she lands on a pebbly bar, and her lord and master, that so often followed her swiftly moving shapely form, is dismayed by her strange actions. Her primal grace is gone, her powers have waned. For hours he swims about her still form, then the current dislodges her and she sinks, submerged, on her side, and down the brawling stream the dead fish and her faithful dying mate swiftly disappear—and the Story of the Salmon is ended."