THE VICTORIA COLONIST

Field Sports at Home and Abroad

TREVOR'S SIR RICHARD

1912.

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One of the most interesting men whose acquaintance I have formed through fishing was little known outside a small circle of friends. He is no longer in the land of the living, and I am able to tell a portion of his story without restraint, and I do so because there is a good salmon in it. I was introduced to Upton Trevor on the platform of King's Cross, whence we departed by midnight express to the north. After the formal introduction he just passed the time of day, as one would say, and at first glance I reckoned him to be a quiet personneither tall nor short, handsome nor ugly. In a traveling cap and ulster with turned-up collar, and in the imperfect lighting and confusion of the bustling scene at King's Cross on the nightly departure of an important train, you do not, of course, present a definite appearance in the matter of details. In due time we were landed at our destination at breakfast time, and learned what we had to expect.

We gathered that the season was finishing up on the whole satisfactorily. It had not been a good one, the rough weather of the spring and the prolonged drought that gave an unenviable distinction to the summer spoiling sport upon all salmon rivers affected by such drawbacks. The little fishing party that assembled according to annual custom at Breda Lodge had been possessing their souls in patience week after week in the fair autumn time, hoping on with pathetic perseverance that the back-end was not after all going to betrav them, as it often has a trick of doing, through excess of water. The October record was the lowest of the present century, and November was little better. There were spates great and small, but of the kind that merely unsettles the fish. As they came up the salmon ran through the best of the fishings and were gone before they could be reckoned a steady asset for the anglers who had been so wistfully awaiting them. By general consent there were plenty of fish in the water at various times, but they were untrustworthy.

Upton Trevor interested me greatly, and by the end of the first day I had formed conclusions. He was, for example, a quiet humor-ist of a sort, a bit of a cynic charged with good nature, a listener rather than a talker, soundly informed upon a variety of subjects, a man of the world without an atom of worldliness, and suggestive of reserve force to probably any extent. He was also eccentric even for a fisherman. Here was a man worth knowing, and somehow we at once set up a mutual attraction. Of course we talked fishing without much delay, and I was now able to arrive at a more complete verdict about him. He confessed frankly that, while an ardent lover of the sport, he actually fished very little, preferring, as he said, to watch others and hear what they had to say. He held that the keen fisherman who pursued game with untiring fervor had no time for the calm observation and leisurely deductions which were essential to perfection, and instanced a clerical brother of his own who was so absorbed in his casting that he was not aware that for an hour he had been fishing in a severe thunderstorm. "You will think me a faddist, if you like," he continued, "and they laugh at me for certain whims.

We agreed, and proceeded onwards to the | Neb Rock, an outstanding natural platform in the stream reached by a natural jetty of shingle and small boulder. The boat lay in the slack water above it, and we always tried a cast from the rock before embarking.

A long fight confronted me with the salmon I hooked as soon as I had let out the full length, and had the fly in good working order. It was the real old head-and-tail rise that so many anglers hear and read about, but do not

The length of the fight is no warrant for a long-drawn story, and I will be as brief as is consistent with the circumstances. For quite a quarter of an hour I had the fish under firm and uneventful control. He played deep, and cruised pleasantly in and out, up and down, without rush or dash. At such period of development you have to be as solid as the rock you stand upon, and the muscular strain of the attitude is no fancy. After a while the fish stopped dead, jiggered most unpleasantly, seemed to rise upwards, and then suddenly set off at express speed across the river, taking off nearly the whole of my hundred yards of line, leaving, however, a margin of backing not yet demanded. I should think that forty or fifty yards had been recovered, when again came a prodigious dash across and still downwards, and then a stoppage. The line was taught, and nothing better than a dead weight at the end. Looking round, I noticed that Trevor had risen from the boulder upon which he had been throughout a smoking and silent spectator; he was posed like a pointer which had duty to do, and his eye being set outwards, I could not catch it.

It was no use waiting on the rock all day in the hope of any response to the manipula-tion that was permissible of the rod and line. The almost certainty was that the fish had escaped, and that I was hung up. The escape might have been achieved, or it might not; hung up was a staring fact. The case required decision. and "The boat, Archie!" I said with sonorous voice of command. I shall always believe that Archie wanted to say something at this crisis; yet he spoke not, just looked up at the clouds, and stood still. Fortunately, the conformation of the rock enabled me to descend without bringing the line athwart it. and Archie, ready and willing, knew how to support me, if haply I might keep rod upheld and line taught during the descent. On the little causeway between rock and sward Trevor stepped forward and put his strong arm round my shoulder, what time Archie made ready the boat and brought it round to the lower side, where I was all clear. It need not be said that I was too absorbed in my fight to think of Archie, Trevor, or boat. Oh, the delirium of that tension, for I had somehow decided that there was a chance still, and to the excitement of the fight had supervened, and with it mingled, an ecstasy of hope.

The boat grated on the shingle; Archie on the one side and Trevor on the other sustained. my trembling limbs; and, without relaxing my grim control of the position, I was at last not only in the boat, but seated. The few minutes which Archie required to hold and guide the boat as she followed the direction of my line was a precious breathing time, and as we approached the solution of the problem, one way or another. I was normally calm and steady. There would be now about twenty yards left to winch in. I drew the line right and left, to find an ever and obstinate fixedness. I was aware that Archie was watching my every movement, and by a turn of the head up stream he understood that I wished him to let me have the line straight down from my standpoint. How cleverly he did it! What a treasure of a man! Now I was free to lift the rod and try again the gentle pressure right and left, and presently (for the boat was held in the exact position with masterly skill) I felt, something. It was a frivolous thought that such an awful moment. I admit; but what I did think was, "Why; it's the twiddling of a minnow!" The rod was raised to the uttermost, and the point brought round to what must have been the lucky side, and soon there was no mistake in the decided, if faint, struggling of a hooked fish: I ventured on additional firmness, and, as if the fish was as joyful as I, the line answered to the reel, and the captive was raised free from its imprisonment. Helter skelter it went, down stream this time, and we had only to follow in the boat, and take our opportunity for the finale. That danger past and done with, a cloud of fear came over my exhilaration, lest the hold of the hook had been worn away. But it all happened well, and they helped me out of the boat with the fish on safely so far, stood by to catch me if I fell while staggering backwards in the field to play the game to a finish, and in due time Archie had the fish in the net and literally grassed. I lowered myself unceremoniously to the ground, and made a sign. With men like those a sign under the conditions meant one thing, and one only-not symbolism, not anything but-the flask. By the time my breath had been recovered from the exhaustion (and the whiskey) the two on-lookers were weighing the fish. having extracted Sir Richard and knocked the salmon on the head. "Thirty-five pounds," sain on on the nead. Finite pointes, said Archie, with the spring balance lifted a level with his eyes. "No. thirty-five pounds, six ounces," declared Trevor, who examined the machine. At that juncture J was, I fear, more interested in Sir Richard than in that noble, broad-sided, silver, sheened female salmon, and found, as in truth I expected, a bit

of touch, leathery, moss-like substance attached to the point of the hook. The evidence was, to my mind, overwhelming. The hook point had passed clean through the side of the mouth and been caught in a submerged rock, to which the salmon had been closely tethered, till I, favored by marvelous fortune, was permitted to hie to the rescue.

Trevor was a man of moods and he seemed to have plunged headlong into one of them during our walk down the path to the luncheon, but Archie had been profuse in his congratulations and expressions of pleasure. Trevor it is true nodded approval at these though with what struck me as a sad smile and a curious far off look. The only remark he made was, "Well, we don't worry you, old

chap." "You did not," I replied. "You and Archie have paid me the finest compliment a fisherman could have." I remembered then that neither had spoken or interfered during the contest, and now that I perceived the kindly consideration which inspired this most eloquent silence, I was moved and grateful indeed.

There was much excited and kindly talk about my fish that night at the Lodge, and I had to leave southwards next day. Over our pre-breakfast pipes out of doors in the morning, and towards the end of our chat. Trevor said: "Well, we shan't forget Sir Richard, eh? Do please hunt me up when you are in town. Will you. I have something to show you." I agreed. As a matter of fact, we made an engagement there and then entered by both in note book. I was to dine with him at his club, and we were to finish the evening at his rooms on Christmas Eve; and all this happened with mutual satisfaction.

The something which Trevor had to show me was verily a surprise. The study into which we went to smoke was in darkness but for the fire burning in the grate, but that was sufficient to light us into our chairs." "Just a minute," said Trevor, "and I'll turn up the lights." I took the cigar he proffered

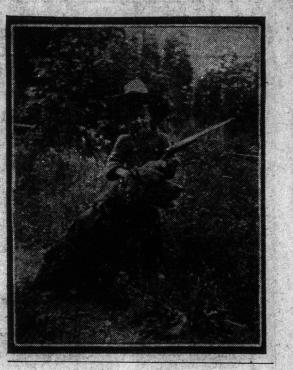
in fact some business with the host, and there was fishing. That was enough explanation for his visit. After a long interview with the sick man he walked out in the afternoon to survey the stream, and beheld his beautiful hostess, with whom he had scarcely exchanged half a dozen sentences, engaged in an unashamed altercation with a man standing at a half beached boat. She was in a terrible rage, and as Trevor advanced, snatched up a gaff and belabored her man over the head and shoulders with ungovernable fury. The gillie walked suddenly away. Trevor polite-ly asked the lady if he could be of any assistance; she explained that her boatman had taken offence at her complaints of his stupidity, rowed the boat ashore, and refused to serve her any longer. Trevor soothed her, and persuaded her to allow him to be her boatman for the remainder of the day. What happened in the fishing I will allow him to narrate in his own words; other matters need only be indicated. Trevor and that lady fell very fatally in love that day. They so remained till the husband died and for the few months during which the widow survived. It was painfully tragic. She was killed in a railway accident on a journey to London to complete arrangements for their journey to Paris and private wedding there in the course of the same week. "My wonderment and sadness that day at

and as the river was good he did not concern

himself greatly about minor matters. He had

Breda," he explained, "was due to this astonishing circumstance. In all its essential features the incidents of your catching the salmon in my presence were identical with what happened with us on that afternoon when I played gillie. There was no Neb Rock however. The fly used was Sir Richard, the fish got hung up round a rock, it was released by the same method as that which you employed, only with me at the oars instead of Archie, and the salmon was of the precise weight. That is not the least remarkable of the coincidences. You may remember I corrected Archie in giving your fish at 35 lbs.,





treme fear or distress. In order to keep them together the driver had to exercise his utmost strength, and I unfastened the gun which was bound to my trunk. Looking out I saw by the light of the moon the shadow of an animal about the size of a dog flitting over the frozen surface of a marshy pool which lay some twenty paces from us on one side of the road. No animal can travel more silently than a wolf when in search of prey, and none can attack so suddenly and unexpectedly. I was slowly raising my gun when a second wolf rose immediately in front of the horses with crest erect and green phosphorescent eyes. At the same time points of light appeared all over the mere, and the howling of wolves rang out over the wastes.

"A shot was fired; revolver in hand, Lescek, one of the Poles, stood on the driving seat of the troika. Then from the mail sleigh I discharged both barrels of my gun, and a savage howl announced that they had taken effect; two of the most daring of our assailants lay rolling in the snow. The three Poles kept firing furiously, although the attack of the wolves was directed more against our sleigh, probably because it was drawn by double the number of horses. Our driver had no other weapon than his loaded whip, but with it he dealt tremendous blows. The horses struggled madly, and tried with all their strength to break the harness. At each shot from my gun the wolves scattered, but only to collect again immediately and renew their attack on the horses. Before us their eyes gleamed everywhere, and the boldest had already torn the throats of our two leaders, when suddenly there arose a wild yell behind us. The three Poles were rolling in the snow by the side of their overturned sleigh. Lescek's badly driven horses had in their terror smashed the harness, and were careening wildly over the snow covered steppe pursued by some of the wolves. They were soon pulled down, and in the stillness of the night their death screams were terrible while the Poles wallowed about in the snow. shouting, weeping and lamenting by turns. Their situation was indeed sufficiently serious, for only Leseck had had sufficient presence of mind to seek shelter beneath the sleigh, and the mail driver and I, surrounded by wolves, could afford them no help. I looked upon them as doomed, and felt sure that we should quickly share their fate. "Suddenly our pursuers disappeared, and, although bleeding badly, the horses became gradually calmer; the gleaming eyes of the wolves were seen only here and there ont on the steppe. A shot rang out, then a volley, succeeded by yells of pain. A dozen dead wolves lay on the ground, and two huge beasts actually expired beneath the hoofs of the horses as our rescuers came up, their sleigh bills tinkling briskly. It was a landed proprietor with his servants whose solitary farm lay only a couple of versts from where we had been attacked. None of us were dangerously wounded. The wolves had treated the Poles worst, for their clothes were nearly torn from their bodies; they were bitten too, but not seriously. The following morning our host, Herr Stanski, came across the skeletons of the three troika horses scarcely half a verst from the scene of our struggle. The poor creatures were still bound together with the harness." G. L.

What, for instance, do you think of this: There are certain days in the year when I make it a tradition to try for a salmon, such as St. David's, Lady's Day, Easter, Ascension. Whitsuntide, St. Swithin's, Lammas Day, Michaelmas, Hallowmas Eve. and Old Martinmas."

"Ah!" I interposed, "and you could not mention a string of more ill-timed festivals for a salmon river." "Granted," said he, "and that is a reason for choosing them. But worse remains behind, and I am rather proud of my next whim. My fishing days are few and at. considerable intervals, but I place at the head of my list the fly with which I land my first fish of the season. I always give it the first trial, and often use nothing else. One of these days you shall see my fishing diary, and you will then notice that I have had my Jock Scott year. Wilkinson year, and so on, and this year goes down as a Sir Richard year, for on St. David's Day I killed the only clean fish that was heard of during that week, and returned a couple of kelts with that very pattern."

Then you don't believe in the hundred pattern business?" I asked. He took the joke and replied amiably: "No, I have a very simple plan. I choose my fly out of four. On the first fishing of the season I go down the pool with one, Jock Scott, two. Wilkinson, this, Blue Doctor, and four, Sir Richard, and so far scored best. In fifteen seasons that fly has been first with seven: Jock Scott and Wilkinson stand at four each, and Blue Doctor has failed utterly. I therefore have ruled the beggar out and put Durham Ranger in its place."

"The Sir Richard salmon fly is an old favorite of mine," I said, as we set out for our walk up the river to the trysting place where my boat was waiting. Trevor said he did not mean to fish, and forced me to declare my willingness that he should accompany me as odd man out. "I never go near a man with a rod without his wish." he added. "That is all right." I said. "But as to Sir Richard, I seldom see it in use nowadays, but always liked that combination of black and silver and the gallina hackle." "It's more than that," answered Trevor. "The bit of Indian crow for tippet and the touches of blue jay, and gold pheasant tail are the real points of the fly, in combination, of course, with the ostrich butt_ and black floss body girt with bold silver tinWinter Sport in Western Canada-Trolling for Grilse.

and settled down in comfort. With the click of the switch a bright illumination filled the room, and seemed to strike direct upon a handsomely framed cast of a fine salmon over the mantelpiece. It was apparently my own fish, though not quite so big perhaps as I saw from my chair. In shape, in the smallness of the head, and in its depth it was identically the same. I looked the astonishment I did not state.

"No," he said gravely. "It isn't your fish and it isn't mine, but there is such an astonishing coincidence in which you seem to play a part that I feel constrained to give you a glimpse into my past. I am going to tell you things that have never passed my lips, and they must be your secret, as long as I live. at any fate. I shall not weary you now, for I shall only say what concerns that salmon. Did you notice that day at Breda Lodge how amazed I seemed when you caught your fish?" "I did not notice that," I rejoined. "I did notice a mood of seriousness, shall I say wonderment, and perhaps sadness, during our walk to the hut.'

"Wonderment, seriousness, sadness? Yes, that is really after all how to describe it, only it was not so much mood as painful memory, and it was you that made it burn up like the flame of yonder logs, all unconsciously, of course. This is how fate takes you aback sometimes." I begged him not to court distress by any further reference, but he insisted that my accidental association with the matter rendered it a necesary duty to himself. A portion only of his story will serve, and even in that outline since there are those still living who have to be thought of.

Trevor was one of a party at a country house where the master was a confirmed invalid, and the mistress a beautiful, imperious woman whose temper was notorious. She was an accomplished salmon fisher, taciturn and cold as a hostess, and a terror to dependents. It was a duty visit on Trevor's part,

and how carefully I verified the additional ounces, for I felt that it must be so, and so it was. The material difference in the details was in the actual landing of our fish. In our case the frayed gut broke as I was slipping the net under the salmon, and as it floundered on the shallows I fell bodily upon it as it lay under the net, and brought it ashore like a child in arms. That (pointing to the case) is the cast done by Malloch, and you will notice the Sir Richard and the loop of frayed cast suspended in the corner. As I remarked just now, old chap, Fate takes us aback sometimes. Have another cigar; and a Merry Christmas to 'ye."-Red Spinner in Field.

AN ADVENTURE WITH WOLVES IN LITHUANIA

The following is an abbreviated transla-tion from the Svenska Jagare Forbundets Tidskrift of an account by a correspondent of an adventure which he had with wolves when travelling to Suvalki in Russian Lithuania: "It was a bright, frosty winter day, the snow lay deep, but the going was excellent, and the mail sleigh, in spite of its heavy weight, glided forward at great speed, a troika with three Poles in it following behind. Towards sunset we emerged from the dark pine woods upon the steppe, which stretched away in front of us as far as the eye could reach. Soon the stars made their appearance, and the moon, rose. It was bitterly cold and the snow crackled beneath the runners. The horses' breath rose in the air like thick smoke. The songs and shouts of the Poles died away, and profound silence reign-

"Suddenly one of the horses whinnied, then another, and a third shied violently, uttering at the same time that terrible cry of which the horse is capable only when in ex-

Some Trolling Hints

It is always well when trolling to avoid the use of longer line than is absolutely necessary for good fishing; if a canoe is used you may use a shorter line than when troling from the average row boat-the canoe, if skilfully paddled creates far less disturbance in the water. Have your paddler or oarsman maintain an even pace just fast enough to keep the bait playing along nicely at the proper derth.

The course of the boat should never be changed abruptly as this causes the bait to hunt bottom at once; rather make the turns in a wide semi-circle. The landing net should be used by the oarsman who, also, when a fish is struck should as soon as possible work the boat into deep water, at the same time so handling the craft that the angler may not be handicapped for room in playing his fish.

In trolling much depends upon the skill of the man at the oars or paddle. If you are wise and seriously out for results you will go it alone rather than with someone with little fishing experience. The mere fact that you yourself are to do all the fishing does not alter the case-the tenderfoot will see to it that your luck is strictly of the sort called "fisherman's."-Outing.