

HUNTING AND FISHING, HERE AND ELSEWHERE

THE OLD RELIABLE GORGE

(By R. L. Pocock.)



HERE is a good deal of truth in the old saw, "Go further and fare worse." When anglers are complaining of the scarcity of fish in a river, to reach which they have to take a railway journey of some hours, with possibly another in a rig or on a bicycle or even on foot before they can wet a line, the knowing ones suggested, "Try the Gorge." In the good old summer-time when the pleasure boats are numerous, and the picnickers, hilarious and noisy in the enjoyment of their open-air recreation, the water is too disturbed to allow the angler to ply his craft in that peace and quietness which is essential to good sport. The feeding grounds are churned by the paddle wheels of pleasure steamers, the sculls of rowing boats and the paddles of canoes; consequently the angler who wishes to take fish has few opportunities to cast a line on undisturbed water and without the fear of catching his flies in the finery of some passing dandel escorted by her swain.

Now, however, that the chill of autumn is in the evening air, the Gorge begins to lose its popularity with the crowd of outdoor pleasure-seekers and the angling enthusiast has his chance.

It may not be known to everyone, even of the old-timers, that the Gorge still holds its own as a first-class fishing ground; but that this is the case I know, as I have tried it. I do not mean to say that a man can go there any time he likes and fill a basket without any difficulty, as that is hardly the truth of the case, but, if he watches the tides and sallies forth so as to catch them at the right stages, he stands a very fair sporting chance to take home a brace or two of very useful fish, which will not average at all light in weight.

Most excellent of all, the fish there will take a fly, and take it greedily at times, though perhaps the man who is keener on getting a big basket regardless of the means of capture, may find it easier to accomplish his object with bait or spoon.

The Gorge is easily accessible, being right at the end of the car line, and, indeed, it is probably owing to this very accessibility that it is so little fished nowadays. Even as a prophet in his own country is without honor, so the bulk of the angling fraternity seem to think that they must go further afield in order to get the best trout-fishing.

The trout of the Gorge is a lusty fellow and a vicious fighter withal, and he will run in weight anywhere from one pound up to three and a half or over. The best time to catch him is when the tide is about the middle of the ebb, the next best when at the middle of the flood, but there is a sporting chance of trying conclusions with him at any time, as, when the water is undisturbed by boats, a careful watch will generally result in the spotting of a rise or two, while, occasionally, a giant among the small fry will fling himself clear from the water to alight with a splash which cannot fail to send a thrill through the watcher if he be a fisherman, and will make him vow to bring his rod the next opportunity he gets, and do his best to bring one of those patriarchs of the finny tribe to basket.

The feeling is fresh in the writer, as only this morning he kept a firm resolve to break from the fetters of sloth and rise with the early bird to try and circumvent the wiles of the Gorge trout before obeying the call of duty in a city office. Surely it needs to be an enthusiast to overcome them. Of a truth there are discomforts attending an early start in the sleepy hours. Rising from a comfortable bed at four-fifteen, it is annoying, when you are walking about in your stocking feet looking for your boots, to have the electric light suddenly cease, especially when you have not had the forethought to arrange your tackle overnight and you have to grope about in the dark, stubbing your toe at every other step, to dig up a rod in one room and a pair of boots in another. But once you are started the recollection of discomfort speedily vanishes, and is replaced by the pleasure of anticipation. There is a keenness in the morning atmosphere which is very bracing, and it is worth it all when at last you have arrived at the water's edge and are fast into a fish which will test your tackle to the utmost and leave no device untried to break it, rushing, leaping, and boring, shaking and twisting, before you can draw it exhausted above the landing net which should always be brought along when fishing here.

Sport for kings—and a splendid tonic easy to take for the jaded city slave of modern civilization. It was even more of a wrench to leave the scene than it was to emerge from the warm blankets at the start, and it came as a rude shock to be passed on the way home by a party of night birds in an auto speeding home after the night's debauch befooling the pure air of the early morning with a pestilential reek of petrol and patchouli combined.

THE TYEE SALMON—AN UNAPPRECIATED ASSET

Familiarity breeds contempt; because we have such a plenitude of splendid game fish at our very doors, we are apt to underestimate the value of the supply. Commercially, the value of the salmon of the Pacific has been recognized and utilized, of course, but, though we hear quite a lot about the value to the province of the big game of the country as an at-

traction to visiting wealthy sportsmen, the fish resources have been comparatively little emphasized.

There is a big class of wealthy folk, enthusiastic sportsmen who devote the best part of their time to the pursuit of game and fish in various lands. They are ever looking for new fields to conquer and in these days of luxurious travel distance is no bar. Other countries advertise their resources in this line but B. C. is a little slow in this respect; we are accustomed to capture all the salmon we want with very little trouble and we are apt to forget that in other lands, where they are less easy to obtain, they are more highly thought of; tell these men of the magnificent sport that awaits them in the furthest west of the British Empire, and, if you tell them a little less than the actual truth, so that they may be more likely to believe you, the expense and trouble necessary to reach the happy hunting ground will not deter them from coming from all quarters to participate in the good thing that awaits them here. In the Tyee salmon we have a drawing card of the highest importance; just now there is a discussion going on in the leading sporting paper of the Old Country regarding the record salmon, and doubts are cast on the reputed weight of several historical whoppers. Between seventy and eighty pounds seems to be the agreed weight of the heaviest fish yet known to have been caught in the Old World, and doubts are expressed that there will ever be weighed in a salmon that will kick the beam at one hundred pounds. I have myself seen a hundred-pound salmon weighed in Vancouver, caught in the gillnet of a Fraser river fisherman, but I suppose I must reconcile myself to being called a liar in polite language if I write home and say so. Still, seriously speaking, there is no doubt that as the great size and splendid fighting qualities of the Tyee salmon become more widely known among foreign sportsmen, this fish will prove a strong magnet to draw them to these waters. As proof of my contention that the Tyee salmon is even more highly regarded by outsiders than by ourselves, I reprint this week a letter to the Field, written by a visiting sportsman from Vancouver treating of the fishing at Campbell River, the best known because best advertised ground for the seeker after big game in salt water.

The Great Salmon of the Pacific

"Now that the salmon season at Campbell River is within a few days of its close, it is interesting to compare the returns of 1908 with those of previous years. No doubt the wide publicity given to the record catches of the past has attracted the attention of fishermen from all parts of the world, a fact that makes the verandah of the Campbell River hotel an interesting rendezvous for anglers when the boats come rowing home in the twilight. Mutual reminiscences of sport in many lands, interesting experiences in widely separated waters, tales of flood and field in every part of the world, are listened to with eagerness as the pipe smoke curls away amongst the giant Douglas firs that surround the picturesquely situated hotel. At the sound of a boat's keel grounding on the shingles 50 yards away, men rise and stroll shorewards to note the success or otherwise of some belated fisherman. It is all very pleasant, and very lazy work, for the fisherman sits in his boat until he hooks a fish that may take him half an hour or a couple of hours in the killing.

"One fact upon which the present Government is to be congratulated is the stern retribution inflicted on an organized gang of Japanese poachers, who for several years openly defied law and order at Campbell River and poached the salmon with every conceivable device, from dynamite to a succession of illegal-meshed nets. Public opinion, stimulated by the strongly worded complaints of many anglers who had travelled half around the world to enjoy the sport at Campbell River, at last caused the authorities to take some action, and the series of handsome fines subsequently imposed has practically checked this indiscriminate poaching since 1907. The consequent result is very gratifying, for not only has the run of big fish this season been earlier and more numerous than before, but the average size of the fish has been far higher. In the following brief notes, no mention is made of fish under 50 lb., for the 30 and 40 pounders have this season been very numerous.

The largest authenticated salmon up to date is a 64-pounder, taken by Mr. Greswolde, of New York, though a 74-pounder was reported as having been taken early in the month by a hand liner. This latter fish, however, failed to pass the jury of experts at the official scales on the beach below the hotel, so must be taken cum grano salis. The officers of H.M.S. Algerine did very well, and her crew enjoyed many a good meal off some fine 50-pounders. Colonel Appleton took several very near the record, and Mr. J. C. Millais had one of 52 lb. But for the nocturnal attentions of the hotel cat there is little doubt this specimen would have subsequently graced Mr. Millais's interesting collection at Horsham, Sussex. Messrs. Bailey, Stern, and Powell took fish up to 56 lb. Amongst the most persevering anglers this season was Sir John Rogers, who, though an ardent devotee of the fly rod, trolled successfully against the best of them, and took several bordering on the 60 lb.

"Grief from deficient tackle was even more than usually conspicuous this season, possibly the principal reason being the absolute necessity of a line of more than 100 yards in length. Immediately a 60 lb. Tyee salmon feels the hook he lashes off on one initial spurt for at

least 100 to 150 yards. It is therefore obvious that to be prepared for this invariable characteristic the fisherman must be provided with not less than a couple of hundred yards of line, or disaster will be inevitable. One fisherman early this August scorned the idea that he could not hold a 50 lb. salmon with 100 yards of line on his reel, and he started out with confidence to prove the truth of his assertion. That evening a sadder and wiser man returned minus two expensive waterproof lines, each 100 yards in length, together with their accompanying leads and spoonbait. Had these two lines been spliced into one of the full 200 yards there is no doubt disaster would have been easily averted.

"There is every probability that the hotel at Campbell River will be considerably enlarged next season to accommodate the rapidly increasing number of visitors who now make their visit an annual affair, and in this connection it would be as well to inform those who prefer less civilized surroundings than at present obtain at Campbell River, that equally good sport can be enjoyed at the Nimpkish and Salmon Rivers, a few miles further north. Camp outfit would be required at both these rivers which are, however, both very accessible. Boats and gillies would also have to be taken up from the south.

At Campbell River the gillies receive 12s. a day, which, added to the fisherman's hotel bill and incidental expenses, does not leave much change out of a round \$10 a day. The young and energetic angler is, however, strongly recommended to hire a suitable boat from one of the many boat builders in Vancouver, ship it to Campbell River, or whatever point he intends trying, on one of the coasting steamers, and then row himself. The difficulties of playing a big fish and managing a boat at the same time are by no means insurmountable, and afford a pleasant relief to the tedium of sitting hour after hour in the stern sheets of a boat propelled by an extensive and often incompetent gillie. Suitable boats can be hired for \$15 a month, freight would not exceed \$3, thus effecting a saving of not less than \$75 a month over the hotel boat and gillie. I also strongly recommend the fisherman to add a small billy or kettle to his outfit, together with a cup and the usual small etceteras. Should an angler wish to make an early start, he can with his little outfit be independent of lazy Chinese hotel cooks or yawning waitresses. There is unlimited dry tinder on the beach, and in five minutes we can be enjoying our boiled eggs and tea, while the remainder of the hotel guests are still clamouring for the blood of the tardy, drowsy Chinaman. Early starts are essential for success, so perhaps my advice may be appreciated.

Before closing these brief notes there can now be no reason for withholding the news of even finer fishing grounds at the mouth of the Kitimaat River and McCallister's Bay, at the entrance to Gardner Canal. These two points are some 400 miles further up the coast than Campbell River, and can be reached by steamer to Hartley Bay, or direct to Kitimaat, once a month. The fish at both these stations run far larger than at Campbell River, and the best time is the latter half of May and the month of June. McCallister's Bay lies fifty miles from Kitimaat, and could only be reached by launch or canoe. Kitimaat is a considerable village, and excellent accommodation could be obtained there by writing to Mr. Robinson, Kitimaat, B. C., who would make all arrangements for the hire of an Indian gillie and canoe, and quarters in the village. McCallister's Bay would necessitate the use of camping outfit, together with stores and provisions from the outside world, for houses are few and far between up the wide Gardner Canal. Fish we took in McCallister's Bay when bear hunting in May last made our Campbell River friends of August look like babies in comparison. There is no doubt whatever that a fortnight or more spent in these virgin waters would result in the authenticated capture of a salmon 100 lb. in weight. J. H. W.

Vancouver, B. C., Aug. 21.

REARING THE SILVER FOX

One of the most valuable furs in the world is that of the black variety of the American red fox, whose pelts in their best estate often exceed \$500 in worth to the trapper. The rarity of this fur combines with its extreme beauty to elevate the price to these high figures. It has therefore long been the dream of Canadians and men in the northern United States, who have observed how easily the ordinary red fox is kept, and produces young in captivity, to rear this precious dark variety for the sake of its fur. I am aware that experiments have been made at various times in this direction, but such inquiries as I have been able to make have been very unsatisfactory, largely for the reason that unsuccessful men were not anxious to advertise their failures, while the few who had succeeded were in no haste to encourage competition. Aided by the resources of the government, the United States Biological Survey, however, has had better success, and has gathered a quantity of facts which show what has been done, and how others may succeed in this novel but extremely profitable industry. To this information I have recently had access, and am able to sketch the outline of it for the Field.

The northern American fox is most often clear fulvous, except restricted black markings on the feet and ears, and the white tip of the tail. From this phase to the next the black increases in extent, until in the typical "cross" fox the black predominates on the under parts,

while fulvous overlying black covers most of the head, shoulders, and back. In another phase the fulvous entirely disappears, and the entire pelage is dark at the base and overlain with greyish-white. This is the "silver" or "silver-grey" variety. Finally—in excessively rare examples—the color is unbroken black, save the always persistent white tail tip. The pelts of these purely