

HUNTING AND FISHING, HERE AND ELSEWHERE

CAMP CHATTER

(By) Richard L. Pocock.



THE opening days of the deer-hunting season have come and gone, and, as remarked last week, the woods have been full of sportsmen and "others with guns." The great topic of discussion has of course been the arrests made for the having in possession fawns of less than one year. At the time of writing the cases stand adjourned, and the result of the prosecutions is as yet in uncertainty, but it certainly is an extraordinary thing that anyone calling himself a sportsman and taking to the woods to hunt for sport and not because he is in the position of being unable to obtain butcher's meat should kill these poor little weaklings which, even though it may possibly be difficult to prove them legally to be under the age of twelve months, are nevertheless undoubtedly so small as to be a cause for ridicule rather than congratulation to the "sports" who brought them in.

It is rather hard to give credence to the rumors that there were others who escaped the game warden by bringing in deer which they were ashamed to shew cut up in pieces and rolled up in their blankets.

There is no doubt that the majority of the hunters who live in Victoria are good sportsmen and in sympathy with the efforts that are being made to have the game laws respected in the common interest, and it was a good-natured crowd which submitted to the searching of the warden on the E. & N. trains, and more than one was heard to remark that he was glad to see it done. Unfortunately the result of the search showed that not all are equally good sportsmen. To snoot a fawn, which ninety-nine times out of a hundred will not run from the hounds, is rather like hitting a woman.

The holidays provided good sport for the numbers who left town to try their luck with gun or rod; anyone who doubts that this is still a good game country need only to have been at the station to witness the arrival of Monday evening's train. Twenty-six deer were brought down on that train alone, and several good bags of wild pigeons were in evidence, while the fishing enthusiasts had very fair success with the trout and some big spring salmon were brought into town captured at Cowichan Bay. All the hunters spoken to reported seeing plenty of blue grouse, so that the statement that they are as plentiful as ever this year may well be believed.

One sportsman had rather a surprise at Shawigan Lake. He had slain a good buck in the hills and had packed it as far as the lake shore, where he proceeded to clean it and throw the offal into the water, when he noticed a number of big cat-fish attracted by the feast. After cleaning his deer, he rigged up a hook and dropped it in to try and hook a few of these undesirable, when to his surprise, the bait was immediately seized by a large trout, which was successfully hooked and landed. The following attempts brought nothing better than cat-fish, which were clubbed, while the large trout, caught so unexpectedly in a part of the lake where there were supposed to be none, was taken home to make an appetizing first course for a venison dinner.

I suggested once before in these notes, that an excellent place for a game reserve to give the blues a sanctuary would be the strip of country beyond Goldstream on the E. & N. line between the railway track and the shore of Saanich Arm, as the grouse breed there in considerable numbers, and it would act as a feeder for the neighboring country. It could be easily patrolled and watched, and would probably be found to give excellent results in helping to keep up the supply of grouse. I have been asked to mention this again, as others are of the same opinion, and, if sportsmen in favor of it were to give expression to their opinion, I understand that there would be a very good chance of its being made a reserve. Expressions of opinion for or against are invited.

Some steelheads have been caught lately up the Koksilah river, but the gentlemen who made one catch informed me that the fish gave very little sport. This is explained by the fact that they were spent fish entirely out of condition. If the same sportsmen had caught the same fish in the spring, they would have had a different account to give. Fresh from the sea the steelheads give excellent sport, but they are not in condition now, and though easier to catch, are best left alone.

Whether or not deer should be hunted with dogs is an old, old subject of controversy, and has been argued over and over again. One thing is certain that as long as the law says that they shall not be hunted with dogs, all good sportsmen should strictly observe it, and help to see that others do also. On the coast, deer invariably make for the water when pursued by dogs, and to kill them in the water calls for the exercise of no skill whatever. The word "sport" becomes a misnomer when the quarry has no chance for its life.

I have seen deer shipped to Vancouver in dozens by the Indians, the majority of which never had a gunshot wound, but had been hit on the head with an axe by Indians in canoes after they had been run by dogs.

TRAPPING IN EAST KOOTENAY

The Western Field contains a very interesting interview with a hunter and trapper of

Eastern Kootenay, that fine game country, which we reproduce in full, as follows:

"Bob" Huggart, trapper, hunter and guide in the East Kootenay district, north of Spokane, has just returned to civilization from the head waters of St. Mary's river, which backs into the mountain fastnesses of the snow-capped Selkirk in Southeastern British Columbia. He had what he terms "a pretty tolerably fair" season with marten, though, he says, the fur runs lighter in color and the catch was below the average of the early days. This he attributes to an epidemic among the snowshoe rabbits in the spring of 1907.

"Bob," as he is lovingly called by his friends and companions in the north country, told of the wholesale destruction of the caribou by cougar over his trapping lines. Cougar are numerous in the St. Mary's valley, so thick, in fact, he said, that he counted the remains of more than fifty caribou along the trails and in the immediate vicinity of his cabin in the mountains. Deer, too, he said, suffered severely from the havoc wrought by the cats.

A small band of black-tailed deer frequented a bottom near "Bill" Meachen's ranch in the main valley of the St. Mary's country last winter. A cougar or two began to kill them off until the four or five survivors boldly took shelter in Meachen's paddock, within a few yards of his door, seeming to recognize that the big cats would not dare to come close to the abode of man. These deer became tame and continued feeding almost within touch of where their protector was cutting his firewood or feeding his stock.

Huggart maintains that the present bounty of \$15 by the Provincial authorities is far from being a sufficient inducement for a man to hunt cougars, since successful pursuit of the animals is impossible without employing dogs. "Bob" does not care for big dogs as used by President Roosevelt in his Wyoming expedition, but prefers the rough, red, Irish terrier as the ideal animal for sport with either cougar or bear.

"If your terrier (let him be not more than 24 pounds in weight, cat-footed, well ribbed up and especially provided with brains) takes to the game of bear baiting, he and a companion of his own quality will make it highly interesting for the most savage grizzly," he said. "If Ursus horribilis be around, the dog will pick up the trail easily enough, and then in due time you are likely to hear the hunting bark of those little four-footed dare-devils and the loud roars of ungovernable rage from the gray, surly monarch of the waste places. If your dogs know their business, you need be in no hurry, for they will hold their beasts in a space not much bigger than a circus ring."

"The bear is the star clown performer of that aggregation," continued Huggart in telling of the work of his two dogs, called Patsey and Nettie. "Patsey delivers a rear attack and round swings the bear to protect his southern frontiers. Nettie is there to give him a shrewd nip in his most tender susceptibilities, and so continues a genial, hilarious continuation of the healthy exercise. A few minutes of this circular evolution makes the bear's head swim and then he naturally goes staring, raving, ripping mad the whole way through from his nose to his rudimentary stump of a tail. Patsey and Nettie positively laugh in keen enjoyment of the perilous sport and bark sharply, as much as to say: 'Hurry up, up! We have him, have him, have him! And he's mad. We're attending to his south and going north. Hurry up!'"

"Never will they if they value their lives, attempt a frontal attack until your bullet crashes through the brain of your quarry, and then both pile on to separate ears and shake with all the valor of their mighty, gallant, plucky little souls."

"Scott Thornberg, of Kaslo, B. C., had a couple of wire-haired kennel terriers that held up as many as twenty-five silver tips in their day and never got a scratch worth mentioning. To small, active dogs that understand the game, the worst-kind of bear is easy work, but with the cougar it is entirely different. There are times when the smallest cur will make a mountain lion climb the tallest tree in the vicinity, when the hunter can kill the brute with a shotgun, but when one of the breed is fairly cornered it will fight like a doped devil. No matter how quick or clever the dogs may be some of them is bound to get ripped or dismembered. Fifteen dollars will not induce a man to risk the lives of his little friends for the sake of a panther's hide, and head, and unless the bounty is increased materially Mr. Felis Concolor will continue to increase and the deer and caribou to decrease proportionally."

"Just to give you an instance of the cheek of those skulking cats, I'll tell you what happened the other day. I don't usually pack a gun when I'm making a round of my traps, as every ounce counts in the mountains, especially when you are on snowshoes. Well, one day in April I was making for the high ground when a cougar started to follow me in plain sight. A cougar will never attack a human being if it is not cornered. But this fellow stalked me for about six miles. I didn't like the style of his actions and flung a few rocks at him. He sheered off at that and I saw no more of him. Likely enough he followed me back to the cabin, but kept out of my sight. That is their mode of stealthy pursuit, though it never ends in an attack."

Huggart says that the St. Mary's country is never hunted by either Indians or white men, as the ground toward the summits is rough and dangerous; but goats are plentiful and afford good sport for anyone who likes

that kind. There are also plenty of sheep on the main range across the valley of the Kootenay river. Huggart, like most of his class, is an observer of natural phenomena. He says that the epidemic which spread among the snowshoe rabbits early in 1907 is evidence that the pest had increased until their numbers overpassed the limits of the food supply, and owing to weakness were attacked by an insect similar to a woodtick, but larger, which not alone killed them by slow degrees, but also renders their flesh highly poisonous. These parasites affect a lodgment during the late summer and early fall, and the animals attacked do not change color like their healthy companions during the winter. By this cruel device nature maintains her equipoise between the preys and the preyed upon. Biologists might, if they studied the parasite, find in it a solution for the rabbit plague in Australia. At any rate, it works an inconvenience to the marten by reducing its larger supplies for the time being, and consequently depreciating the value and richness of the pelt, which though handled in the British northwest as marten, becomes "Russian sable" by the time it is through the hands of the English furriers.—Western Field.

SECRET OF SUCCESSFUL FISHING

"To fish successfully, with pleasure to yourself, and with justice to the water, you must come out prepared for every possible contingency," said Piscator, in the smokeroom after dinner, as he carefully screwed an Improved Line Dryer on the table, and proceeded to unwind his reel.

"That is so," agreed the London man, cordially; "I had the lesson brought home to me yesterday. I had walked a mile and a half up towards the river, carrying my rod made up, when I woke to the staggering fact that I had forgotten my flask. I walked back to the hotel for it, and then returned to the river, which I had almost reached when I was stunned to discover that I had left my rod at the inn. The mental distress which this lamentable experience created spoiled my touch all day; and I lost three remarkably fine fish."

"For myself," I said, "I throw myself, generally, into the hands of my friends; they nearly always have the casts and traces I forget, and the flies I have never had time to provide myself with."

Piscator sighed: "I was talking about angling," he remarked wearily. Of course, if one does not take angling seriously, there are other games, such as dominoes or diabolos. Any new poets coming out just now? I have been fishing since we started the early lochs in spring, and haven't seen the 'Athenaeum' for months."

The irony of Piscator is unpleasantly subtle. We had wounded him in his tenderest part, and the only way to restore his good humour was to manifest an instant and enthusiastic interest in his angling gear.

Tackle

"What would you consider adequate preparation for all possible contingencies?" I asked.

"It calls for absurdly little," he replied; "I have it almost all here in this little box," and he indicated an oak polished rod case six and a half feet long, containing two 18-foot salmon and two trout rods, which to the most casual glance had obviously cost a considerable deal of money.

"Of course there's the tackle too," I remarked with idiotic facility.

"Quite so," said Piscator; "tackle is nearly always used now, though one hears even yet of wonderful sport with a gaff. I ventured to think that the existence of a modest supply of tackle would naturally be presumed in my case. . . . I suppose you'll be going up to assist at the Young Women's Guild Bazaar tomorrow. I hear the woolen-work stall is very interesting."

I never met a touchier man than Piscator; it was necessary to begin all over again.

"You might show us your tackle, please," we suggested hurriedly, and he languidly pointed to a pile of bags and boxes in a corner.

"Of course one doesn't take everything here with one," he said; "merely as much as one knows will be required in this particular district." He perfunctorily opened a bag, and extracted half a dozen jannet fly-boxes. "A few lures," he said, diffidently; and revealed a staggering series of eyed trout flies, arranged in the jannet boxes with the geometrical precision of a moth collection. There were hundreds of them—it looked like a bargain day at Farlow's, Malloch's, or Robertson's.

"If I had so many flies, and got them arranged to look like that," said the London man, "I would be content to stay all the year in the Temple and feast my eyes on them. Surely you don't require all these?"

Piscator looked closely at his collection, taking up one box after another. "There is not a single fly there," he said, "that I could afford to come without to this district. Not one! Otherwise I should not be doing justice to myself. Besides, it would scarcely be fair to the waters. One has to consider that." He picked up another large jannet box, and flicked it open. "Sea trout," he said simply, fondly stroking an Alexandra, by no means the gayest lure in a dazzling series that ran to incredible numbers. "Over here— and he picked up an even larger box—"Over here, salmon flies"—and he opened the lid upon a collection carefully arranged in tier on tier of trays, each hook neatly clipped in its position. "And yet some people talk about Whist-

ler's picture's!" remarked the London Man, enraptured at the spectacle.

A Wonderful Collection

"I begin to think I shall have to buy a few flies," I said reflectively. "For some time back I have been fancying that a few Red-and-Teals and a Cockybondu slightly frayed are scarcely adequate."

Piscator smiled sardonically. "It depends," he said, "on one's ideal. I seem to recall that I got great satisfaction out of a bent pin and a bit of paste when I was thirty years younger. But I bore you. Shall we go out and see the sunset?"

We protested that sunsets were silly things, and demanded more of the Tackle Exposition.

"These here," he said, opening another box, "are tubes, demons and flies of fantastic character for places like the Dee, the Don, the Ythan, the Kyles of Sutherland, or the Harris lochs. I find them useful for whiting, sea-trout, or finnock. These others are tandem spinners. Here—"and he delicately opened two or three small boxes—"are dry flies for the English chalk streams," and he picked out a few singularly minute ones with the aid of a pair of tweezers magnetised at the point.

"With them one requires this line greaser for fattening the reel line, this little tube of red deer fat, which will float the line a considerable distance, a fly oil bottle, and this thing—it is called a vaporiser, with which you can spray globules of oil into every part of a dry fly without saturating it as a brush does. I think that's all."

A Few Minnows

"But minnows; you'll have minnows?" I remarked, now infected with the London Man's enthusiasm.

"Ah," said Piscator, "I forgot. Of course I have a few." And he rang the bell for Boots to bring in the minnows. They came in a bag, from which Piscator extracted a fairly substantial box, which appeared to contain every design of phantom that might be expected to deceive sea-trout or salmon. There were not only minnows, but spinners, Devons, and spoons, of every conceivable character and size. "This, of course, is only my subsidiary box," said Piscator, "each morning I make my selection for it from this main box"—and he produced a jannet casket which the London Man subsequently designated Suit Case No. 2. It had niched trays in tiers, and every compartment of every tray was snugly occupied by a minnow.

"There is hardly a minnow there," said Piscator, "that has not paid for itself in the last ten years; this one I have had re-dressed three times; it's as little as one can do for a 'trusty' old friend. I like particularly the set of the wings; it is, I think, unique in its perfection as a spinner."

"Where do you get your casts?" the London Man asked, taking up a handful of superb gut in coils.

"H'm," said Piscator, "I have a Private Source for gut; to get it really good you must know where to go for it. There is at least £12 worth there in your hand."

"Twelve pounds' worth!" exclaimed the London Man, dropping it in his astonishment. "No, I'm wrong, about £15 worth; those top ones cost 7s. 3d. per yard, as the particular quality of gut is only to be got in limited quantities."

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed, remembering what I paid for gut; but Piscator kindly covered my confusion by turning out his reels, of which the least abnormal in size and appearance had, he admitted, cost him four guineas. "You can't do without it, though," he said, "not if you are fishing conscientiously. With the brake off it, you could cast across the county of Kinross."

"Might I venture to ask what you approximately value all this tackle at?" asked the London Man, when his rhapsodies over the reels had subsided.

"Off and on about £120 to £130," said the astounding Piscator, dreamily; and we have since learned on the best authority that he had rather underestimated than otherwise.—Glasgow Herald.

SPORT IN WESTERN CANADA

There are many people who, no doubt, think that hunting in the backwoods of Western Canada is easy work and a very pleasant holiday pastime. To those who think so, I would say "Try it." If you are not a born hunter, you will be sick and tired of the whole business, and find that it is nothing but the hardest work without any of the romance you read of. But to the born hunter things are entirely different. What are a few hardships to him? A little thirst or hunger? Why they are nothing at all, because he does not think of such inconveniences. He is nothing if not a man of infinite resource. He only experiences the delight and romance; and when the hunt is over, he and his comrades gather round the camp fire and go point by point over the whole adventure again.

Then they are really happy, for their hearts are filled with a joy which only the true huntsman knows. All around is the sublime silence of the backwoods, disturbed only by the crackling of the camp fire and the murmuring of the men of the ready rifle and hunting knife. The smoke from their pipes curls lazily upwards, and over all is cast that strange halo of indescribable peace of which the dwellers in teeming cities know nothing. If the hunter has his hardships, he also has his compensations, and he soon discovers that there is a primitive happiness about life in the backwoods, particularly when it is associated with the chase, that he would not exchange for any-

thing else in the wide world. But to my story.

I was resting one Saturday night, after an unusually hard week's work, and was contemplating with the utmost satisfaction my day's respite on the morrow, when suddenly the door burst open and in strode my friend Tex, booted, gun in hand, and all ready for a hunt. "I hear there are two bears worrying the sheep on Seth Jackson's ranch," he said, without more ado. "Come along, and we'll just be in time for some sport, so get your traps and hustle." Well, I "hustled," and Tex fished out my Winchester while I pulled on my boots, strapped on my bandolier and knife, and reached for my flask. We were soon on the way, and without any untoward adventures reached Seth's all right. Seth gave us a hearty welcome and a good meal, of which I need hardly say, we stood in need after our journey. We turned in early, and were up almost before sunrise.

What a pleasant sensation it is to the hunter to be up betimes, with everything fresh and health-giving about him, and the dogs lively and ready for sport. We first took our bearings from the compasses which each of us carried, and then plunged into the woods. We kept steadily on for two or three miles, scrambling over tree trunks and crawling through brush; the dogs taking up the scent, and every fifty yards or so looking round and waiting if we were not close up. We had seen numerous tracks by this time of the bears, so we knew we were on the right track, while you may be sure the dogs did. At last once my retriever King stood and pointed. In a second we were all down in the brush, creeping silently in the direction indicated. Nor were we disappointed. We saw movements that could only be made by a big animal. The three of us then surrounded in such a way that we could all fire without any of the others being in danger. All was quiet as we advanced.

The next thing I heard was the crack of a rifle, which I knew to be Seth's. Immediately afterwards I heard Tex's go bang. Then I got ready. In less than no time a big black bear came into view, with nasty temper written large all over his face. Crack! I had let fly, but my aim was too high. Again, but it was too much to the left. Then with my third I caught him fair and square, full in the heart. He dropped at once, and gave never a bit more trouble. He was a very fine specimen. Tex and Seth I found had also been successful in getting one between them. That was all. Two very fine bears. Our work was over, and we returned, tired and hungry, but with a satisfied feeling of having accomplished something worth the effort and the expense.

But the memories of the day's sport will ever linger. Even now I can smell the sweet perfume of the pines and firs, and sometimes the rank exhalation of decayed vegetation. All these things are sweet to the heart and mind of the born hunter, and when the day's sport is over the remembrance lingers with him and is never eclipsed—until his next adventure, which may be better still.—M. A. M. S.

EATING "BILED OWL"

I told the guides that it would be better to begin supper right away, in order that we might not get too hungry before the owl was done. I thought them slow in their preparations for the meal. It was curious, too, for I had promised them they should have a piece of the bird. Del was generous. He said he would give his to Charles. That he never really cared much for birds, anyhow. Why, once, he said, he shot a partridge and gave it away, and he was hungry, too. He gave it to a boy that happened along just then, and when another partridge flew up he didn't even offer to shoot it. We didn't take much stock in that story until it dawned on us that he had shot the bird out of season, and the boy had happened along just in time to be incriminated by accepting it as a present. It was better to have him as a partner than a witness.

Wood was gathered then, and the fire blazed. The owl's breast—fat and fine it looked—was in the broiler, and on the fire. There it cooked—and cooked. Then it cooked some more and sent up an appetizing smell. Now and then, I said I thought the time for it had come, but there was a burden of opinion that more cooking would benefit the owl. Meantime, we had eaten a pan or two of trout and a few other things—the bird of course being later in the bill of fare. At most dinners I have attended this course is contemplated with joy. It did not seem to be, on this occasion. Eddie agreed with Del that he had never cared much for bird, anyway, and urged me to take his share. I refused to deprive him of it. Then he said he didn't feel well, and thought he really ought not to eat anything more. I said grimly that possibly this was true, but that he would eat the owl.

It was served then, fairly divided and distributed, as food is when men are on short rations. I took the first taste—I was always venturesome—a little one. Then, immediately, I wished I had accepted Eddie's piece. But meantime he had tasted, too—a miserly taste—and then I couldn't have got the rest of it for money.

For there was never anything so good as that breast of young owl. It was tender, it was juicy, it was as delicately flavored as partridge almost. Certainly it was a dainty morsel to us who had of late dealt so largely in fish diet. Had we known where the rest of that brood of owls had flown to we should have started after them, then and there.—From "The Tent Dwellers," by Albert Bigelow Paine in *Outing Magazine* for September.

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