

PHASANTS ARE PLENTIFUL
Likelihood of Good Bags For All
When Season Opens

In a few days the hearts of the sportsmen of Vancouver Island will be beating with hope for success in the hunt with the pheasants—the season opening on October 1st. This class of game is reported very plentiful in the districts adjacent to Victoria, the dry spring and summer weather which has prevailed during the past season being considered especially favorable to the growth and development of the young chicks.

Respecting pheasants, the provincial game warden in his last report, says: "Considering the enormous increase of sportsmen, the number of pheasants bagged cannot be complained of. In some places the quantity of birds has more than doubled this year, while in a few spots the number has not been up to the average. The question of opening a part of the season for shooting pheasants has been greatly discussed, and while a number favored the idea before the season commenced, the majority of them came to the conclusion later on that it would be inadvisable. That there are too many pheasants in some places cannot be denied, but, then, again, in other places it is equally certain that there are too few, and to level the property on the matter would necessitate a change one way or the other every few miles, which would be impracticable, and even if it were possible, the only result would be that the young hens would be shot, and the old hens that should be shot would escape."

Whether it would be possible to adopt the happy medium of having the season open for hens and cocks at the same time, and depend upon our sportsmen to pick out only the best birds, is problematical; but if such could be done, it would meet the present difficulty. Unfortunately, other than true sportsmen have to be reckoned with.

Farmers from Saanich districts and even as far up the line as Duncan, say that in no previous season have they seen pheasants more plentiful. Those observed were all of good size, and in prime condition, so it is believed that the pheasants will have little to complain of this year in respect to opportunity for "getting a shot."

THE CRIMSON SALMON

Habits of Species in Waters of
Vancouver Island

At the very first mouthful one of the ladies turned pale, gasped, and hurried into the bush. The second lady who had also taken a mouthful, followed her immediately.

"What in the world's the matter with them?" asked Kelly.
"I who by this time had tasted the meat," exclaimed, "Why, the pork's hair—Did the reader ever taste fishy pork? If you have, I pity your sensations. If you have not, don't—D. W. Higgins, in The Mystic Spring."

I was reading the above-mentioned collection of graphic stories, with a British Columbian setting, one winter's day when I had met with a mishap almost as bad as that of the ladies with the pork. My comrade and I were seated in a rough log hut upon the banks of a fine river, and we were very, very hungry. Around us in every direction could be seen clinging the tiny feathers and fluff of wild ducks, while in the bushes outside in the snow lay an assortment of mallard's feathers and golden-eye's feathers, likewise the feathers of merganser, and the bluebill. Beyond them all, where we had cast it in disgust, could be discerned the cooked body of a plump bluebill, from whose breast but two tiny slices had been carved—not to be swallowed, however. For, alas, the ducks were one and all of them fishy, and we had passed an hour or two in plucking them, in vain hoping to get one at least that had not been feeding on dead salmon. Not the faintest smell of fish had we discovered in the bluebill, even by resorting to the practice of smelling its beak, until it was roasted, and then—but have tasted worse. The great misfortune of the inhabitants of many parts of British Columbia is to live, as it were, in the midst of plenty for the whole of the winter months, and yet, owing to the salmon, to be deprived of the use of the food with which, like manna of old, the air is filled each dusk and dawn. For the peculiarity of the salmon of British Columbia is that the vast majority of them seem to die after spawning, when the fowls will alike prey upon their bodies in the rivers or tiny brooks, or on the land where they lie decaying when left by the flood. Within a few days of writing these lines I have seen a coon, captured in an otter trap, which smelt strongly of fish, and a black bear of which the head was so offensive that it had to be thrown away by its slayer. He preferred to spoil the skin, which was in first-class condition, rather than carry that evil-smelling bear's head a yard.

By the beginning of October, while the fishing for rainbow trout, and the thrush is still at its best, the rivers of Vancouver Island are chock full of salmon of all kinds, and their numbers increase daily.

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With Rod and Gun at Points Adjacent to This City, Which Are the
Favorite Haunts of Sportsmen—Two Especially Inter-
esting Articles by Colonel Haggard

ures, with marble-white patches upon back and tails, begin to show up here and there—brutes with a leprous appearance that are by no means pleasant to behold. One of these occasionally swim slowly in right to the side by the watcher's very feet. To gaff it, had he a mind, would be but child's play. These, so one is generally told, are "dog salmon." But other fish are also called dogsalmon, and I well remember my first acquaintance with them. While watching a large quantity of salmon in some strong, swift water at the head of a rapid I suddenly observed a fish which looked to me as if it was red—not red in the sense of a salmon which has been a long time in the fresh water of the British Isles, but real crimson in hue. Presently the fish, which was strong and vigorous, made a dash into a smooth eddy at my feet. There could now be no doubt

and, although silver-sided fish will be seen at first, gradually no other salmon will be seen but red ones, or those with the leprous appearance. The large spring salmon seem to keep to the main rivers, and it is my belief that all of the salmon that run late up the brooks are what are called "dog" salmon at various stages of their career. While so fearless of man that one can stand within a few feet of them without their being disturbed if one remains motionless, the males now become most ferocious, and fight each other in the very shallowest water. I have seen them pursuing one another open mouthed in shallow water only half covering their sides, and occasionally taking great bites out of their antagonists. One salmon a friend and I watched for a long time in a brook had had a huge mouthful bitten out of his belly just above the vent. In spite of this it was working on the

ner) I have, however, seen a perfectly clean-looking fish of this species in a river in January. By the way, can nobody with paramount authority rightly decide what the steelhead really is—trout or salmon? Mr. J. B. Babcock, Provincial Fishery Commissioner of British Columbia, has recently ruled that steelhead salmon are trout, and are subject to the close season regulations governing trout. Professor Prince, however, a great authority on fishes, rules to the contrary. Of Salmo gairdneri he says: "If you pay attention to Pacific use of terms, the steelhead is not a salmon at all, because it differs so markedly from all Pacific salmon. If you take account, on the other hand, of the use of the word trout in the Dominion of Canada generally, it is a salmon—Salmo gairdneri, or Gairdner's salmon. Its anatomy and structure show it to be a true salmon, and the Fishman-

water, only to see after landing, the tell-tale sore, or possibly two, on the trout's side where the lampreys had been getting in their fine work. The result is, however, to weaken the fish for a time, nevertheless they constantly rid themselves of the pests by rubbing themselves against the stones. It is a comparatively rare thing for a rainbow or cut-throat to be caught with the lampreys actually hanging on, but on the very day on which I received my Field of June 22, such an event happened. Some ladies came to tell me that on that hot July day they saw a considerable disturbance on the surface of the river by the boathouse of the Riverside Inn on the Cowichan river. Going down to the water, they observed a large trout apparently being eaten by little snakes. The fish was in great distress, at times turning over, and swimming belly upmost. When very exhausted it got under a log in the shallow water, from which

under stone walls along the bank sides. Repeatedly I found these eels, often of small size, to have one or two good-sized troutings in their gullets. When the streams were reduced to a mere trickle, the voracious brutes found not the slightest difficulty in catching as many trout as they liked in the crevices between the stones. How excessively voracious eels are is evident from their cannibalistic propensities. I once, for over half an hour, watched an eel in a burn in the Shetland Islands which was engaged in swallowing head first another eel of nearly its own size. The wriggles, contortions, and convulsions of the pair were something to witness. At last I got them into a landing-net when the larger one threw up the three-quarters length of the other which it had swallowed, and the victim departed rejoicing as if nothing unusual had happened.—Col. Andrew Haggard, D.S.O., in "Field," July 27th, 1907.

canners understand this so well that they regulate their catch as far as possible to prevent a glut one year and a shortage the next.

The first intelligence that the fish are heading shorewards comes from the west coast of Vancouver Island. There their movements as they leave the ocean on the first leg of their race for the Fraser are carefully noted by Indians and traders, and the news sent to Victoria. A few days later comes a report from the light-keeper at Carmanah Point, an entrance to the Straits of Juan de Fuca. The light-keeper's attention is first attracted by the swarms of sharks, dolphins, and other predatory sea-dwellers who are the camp followers of the school. A closer scrutiny of the water reveals the presence of millions of salmon crowding shoreward in an instinctive movement to spawn. From this point on the fish become the prey of enemies by land and sea. The Indians first exploit the shoals, and of late years salmon traps have been installed along the southern coast of Vancouver Island, from which the fish are lifted by tons on a schooner and conveyed to the canneries. A lot of one of these traps, with its myriads of splendid salmon, is a sight never to be forgotten, but one not sportsman's sport is what we are now discussing.

Meanwhile a vigilant patrol is being maintained along the beach at Beacon Hill Park by boys of the city, for the run is always during the summer vacation. Daily, in their dugouts and boats, they sound the waters of the straits as a diver does for bottom. It needs no town crier to announce the movement of the fish. A few hours afterwards the cry is on the lips of everyone: "The salmon are running."

Thereafter, throughout the duration of the run, perhaps two weeks, there is a regular pilgrimage, night and morning, to the water. Workmen come to the water bearing not an apology, but an eight or ten pound salmon for "the boss." But one can have too much of even such a good thing as salmon, and they soon become a drug on the market. No one thinks of offering them for sale, excepting the natives, the Siwash, and they charge but ten or twenty cents for a twelve-pounder.

The sport is superb. It is not for children, for there is no gamer fish swims the sea, than the variety in question. The salmon is an aristocrat, flitting the battle of his species against net and trap, and hook; and when he gets in fair water with one of the latter in his handsome jaws, he flings like a champion in the lists. The natorial art holds few deeper delights than a fifteen-minute's engagement with one of these splendid things. Sometimes he carries off both hook and spoon. When landed with the gaff he flails the boat in a gallant attempt to regain his liberty—in fact, fights with the last ounce of strength in his graceful, quivering body.

The rewards for the fishermen are prodigal, with handsome considerations for those whose luck is indifferent. It is not unusual to take thirty to a boat, and each of these will range from five to fifteen pounds.

The fish are in beautiful condition, not having matured, and they do not come from fresh water, nor is their flesh torn as is often the case in their upward struggle to the headwaters and the spawning grounds.

Not the least alluring portion of the sport is its setting and environment. The sight from the flagstaff of Beacon Hill Park in the grey of early morning, when boats can be described for several miles until lost in the smother which hangs over the Straits at daybreak in the early fall, is as pretty in some respects as that of the Fraser river fleet off the mouth of the world's greatest salmon stream.

CAMPING WITH AN AUTO

There is nothing conventional about a camping trip into the wilderness by automobile; it is an innovation, every way you view it.

That is why a few sportsmen who own automobiles have given up the time-honored way of going. They have found that in addition to the great saving of time and the added comfort accruing from the use of the motor car, they are for once permitted to direct each move of the expedition. On the orthodox camping trip the sportsman is at the mercy of the head guide, that autocrat of the backwoods who will not permit a horse to be saddled unless he so directs. Each day the head guide is the one man in command, and the sportsman from the city, mayhap a man of large affairs and accustomed to directing an army of assistants, must follow where his backwoods boss leads or else turn back. But the automobile has changed all this.

Start with a little white tent with camp fire before and a fine buck deer suspended by the gambrels at one side; the guides getting supper, the sportsman seated, resting in the leather-upholstered seat of his own automobile hard by, and over all the evening hush of the forest primeval. The sportsman has driven there from his own doorstep without any worries about his baggage, without successively changing from cab to train, from train to boat, from boat to buckboard or canoe or from "backbone" to the hurrying deck of a treacherous schooner. It has been his own expedition from start to finish. He has travelled by his own schedule. The sportsman may have perished some in getting to car across certain fords, may have worked "like a horse" crossing a boggy piece of "road" here and there and had more than one man's share of axe-play, clearing away fallen timber that obstructed the way, but always he has been the man in authority, because he is the skipper of his own machine, and with the mercy of no man save the benighted country storekeeper who has no gasoline. As for having acquired hard muscles and calloused hands, that is just what he needs to equip him for the battles of business when he returns to his desk in the city. He will go back to his business with a clear brain, a bright eye and enough "backbone" to carry him safely through almost any business emergency. And he has been having a good time, has been in the most pleasant places that he never could have visited in any other way, and has succeeded admirably in getting away from the world for a time.



A Day's Showing With Dog and Gun in Woods Near Victoria.

of the matter; its sides were of a vivid scarlet or vermillion. Being much excited at the appearance of this strange creature, I asked questions of a native, who replied that he expected that the salmon apparently died; but it is in the main rivers that the rotting carcasses are chiefly to be found. The forest animals either clear up most of the fish, alive or dead, in the creeks, or they get back to the bigger streams to die. To a bear catching salmon is easy; he simply scoops them out with his paw, and so fearlessly do the black bears become while thus occupied that in the neighborhood of Cowichan Lake one ventured into the garden of an hotel to catch them in this way in a tiny stream: it was no more than a ditch in fact. This was in the beginning of December, 1906; but I have noticed that but few salmon run up the little streams after the middle of that month, while even in the main rivers there are but few left at the commencement of January. One related to me that he saw a fish splashing all by himself up a gravelly stream at the beginning of February. The water being low, owing to frost, this fish forced its way up under a bridge where the bottom of its belly was the only portion not uncovered. Among the fish running up the creeks I have observed no steelheads (Salmo gaird-

gers' company, London, who confiscated a shipment of steelheads as trout, liberated them, on seeing my report. He adds that, scientifically, there are no real salmon or trout on the Pacific coast, but that the steelhead is a true member of the group Salmo, closely allied to Salmo solar, and far removed from the false salmon, quinnat, sockeye, etc. It really is time that this important question was decided once and for all.—Col. Andrew Haggard, D. S. O.

A STUDY OF TROUT

How They Are Attacked by Lampreys and Other Enemies

In the Field of June 22 "Rifleman," in an article on Dapping on Lough Derg, mentions the fact of a large trout being captured with a lamprey attached. In an editorial note is suggested that the lamprey "most readily attacks fish which are weak and out of condition already." In the rivers and lakes of Vancouver Island the lamprey—a small species—attacks the rainbow trout to a large extent, especially in the summer when the waters become warm. Nor do they attack only weak fish; for over and over again have I and other anglers landed great vigorous fellows, after a long fight in rapids

with the aid of a pole and a landing net they contrived to extricate it. The ladies now found that what they had taken for snoring were two small lampreys, 8 in. or 9 in. long, which both came to the surface clinging to the fish. One let go as the net was lifted from the water, but the other was landed with the trout, a rainbow of 2-1/2 lb. in weight and seemingly in good condition. A Chinaman working on the river was very glad to accept it as a present; indeed, Chinamen are by no means the only people who will eat trout which have been attacked in this way. As I have never seen either lampreys or lampreys—"seven eyes," as the latter used to be called in Essex, where I used to see them in the smallest running brooklets in either the river or the small streams feeding it. I imagine that these creatures attack the trout in the lake. The afflicted fish then run down to the river to try to free themselves from their tormentors among the rocks and logs. Eels are also very fatal to young trout. In a recent Field I saw some remarks to the effect that such was probably the case, and I can verify them from personal experience. A year or two ago I was living in the lake district in England, and in the summer time, when the becks or burns were very low, made a practice of damming up the water in order to scoop the eels from

RUN OF THE SALMON

Enthusiast Describes "The Great Day at Vancouver Island"

"Canada" (London) in its issue of August 31st, has the following, which is illustrated with two photographs: "At the end of August, Victoria, B. C., passes through an annual experience which gives her a unique position, in a sporting sense, among the cities of the world. Every year there sweeps past her doors one of the most engrossingly interesting of the phenomena of nature—the run of salmon. Time was when the knowledge of this fact was confined to residents of the city. That is rapidly changing, as a result, perhaps, of the great movement of tourists in this direction, and now travellers come from all points of the compass to share in the glorious sport which angling for this kind of fish affords. The run itself, which has often been described, usually occurs at the same time of the year, although the stages of the tides, the prevailing winds, or other causes, more or less local, serve to retard the movement of the schools. The run reaches its height every fourth year, the catch of the other seasons being on a descending scale, the last of the four being a very poor one. The