

Field Sports at Home and Abroad

PASSING COMMENTS

By Richard L. Pocock.

It is impossible to please everybody, but it certainly looks as if those responsible for the arrangement of the open seasons for shooting this year have done their very best to arrive at the most satisfactory conclusions in the interest of the present-day sportsman and in the interest of the game and its preservation for the benefit of the sportsman of future years. We have had an excellent breeding season this year for the birds, and reliable observers report that they have done well in all the well-known good game districts. The blue grouse have profited enormously by the delaying of the opening day until October for the last two seasons, and everyone who has observed them in their usual haunts during the last few months seems to be agreed that they are very far now from being a scarce bird in the land; it is not against the best interests of real sport to allow them to be shot this year from the middle of September, when they should (all but the weaklings, which are better out of the way) be quite ready for the gun. A day bag limit might perhaps have been a good thing, even though hard to thoroughly enforce, but it is to be hoped that no enormous bloodthirsty bags will be made now that the opening day has been advanced again half a month.

It certainly is a great pity that the willow grouse should be decreasing in numbers as seems to be the case, this being the best sporting bird we have, and, if it were possible to help them back to their strength of numbers, it would certainly be worth a sacrifice in other ways. I know from personal observation that they are still what I should call plentiful in certain districts where I used to shoot them some ten years or so ago; I cannot claim knowledge of conditions before this time, but I have a theory that where pheasants are in any numbers the willow grouse are never likely to be found very plentiful again. Mr. Cock Pheasant is an aggressive gentleman in the breeding season, and is likely to make himself an unwelcome intruder on the domestic felicity of Mr. and Mrs. Ruffed Grouse. My theory may not be correct, but in support of it I may say that I know of one island in the Gulf where formerly willow grouse were "thick" and pheasants were unknown. Then the pheasants made a trip across the water, found the island home a sanctuary from the mainland shooters, multiplied there amazingly, and the willow grouse vanished as rapidly, until now, if you see one there, you chalk it up in the diary as an event of unusual interest.

It is interesting news to hear of the intention of the authorities to introduce pheasant stock in considerable quantity, and we may congratulate ourselves on the interest now being taken by them in the preservation and improvement of our small game shooting, which is the paramount consideration of the average resident sportsman, instead of confining their efforts entirely to the big game, which is the chief attraction of tourist hunters and head collectors.

It is often a matter of wonder to me that more advantage is not taken at this season of the year of the really splendid sea trout fishing to be had all round the shores of both the Island and the Mainland. I have no intention of entering into any scientific controversy as to what is or is not a sea trout; I believe it myself to be the cut-throat well known to all coast anglers, but I would rather catch him than argue about him. One sure thing is that in the summer months, before the big run of salmon comes, he is to be found practically in all the little and big sheltered bays, and in all the estuaries of the coast, that he runs to a large average size, gives magnificent sport, and is an excellent fish in every way. In the hot days when the rivers are high from melting snow and the fly fisherman comes home with tales of disappointment, the lately hatched salmon fry are descending to the salt water in great numbers, and the trout are after them; whether they follow them from the headwaters of the rivers and lakes, or whether they come in from the sea, is another bone of contention I have no intention of picking, but what I have proved by experience at very many different places on this coast is that these big cannibal trout are to be caught in May, June and July, and sometimes well into August in the tidal reaches and out in the estuaries of any of our rivers, and give most excellent sport at a time when the middle and upper reaches of the rivers are deserted by our migratory fish.

In many of these places they will take a large fly well, and when and where they do not, which I think means when and where the small fry on which they feed for choice are very plentiful, as at the mouths of the bigger salmon rivers, there they give what is doubtless sport rather inferior to fly-fishing, but is, nevertheless, sport which is some of the very best known to fishermen, fished for with a small spoon, or artificial minnow on a light trace and without any lead to spoil the play and handicap this fighting fish in the struggle with the angler, which by no means invariably ends in the latter's favor.

There are several of these places easily reached by Victoria fishermen, and very few of them seem to take advantage of the fact. It certainly seems matter of surprise to me that anglers will journey many miles to some lake and row about energetically all day, catching hook behind a big salmon spoon deep below the surface, when, with less trouble in journeying there, they could be catching two and three-pounders on light tackle without the need of

handling anything so unpleasant as a worm, and fishing a few inches only below the surface, where the big fish are feeding on the smaller brethren. Personal successes with the rod or gun are the last things I care to write about, but as it has often struck me as strange that there should be so little fishing done here for sea trout, where the sea trout fishing is so good, I hope I may mention in corroboration of the above few remarks that fishing at the mouth of a well-known river last Sunday morning only (I quit at noon) I had sixteen trout, three of which weighed over three pounds each, the largest being three pounds ten ounces, and several of the rest being over two pounds each, and that this was not an exceptional bag for the place, as I have had a full creel of similar fish each Sunday for the last three weeks, and have wondered each time that I was out why no other anglers were doing the same. In all truth there was room enough, but on the last occasion I had the water all to myself.

THE IRISH SETTER AS A GUNDOG

As a reason for the bad work and chance results shown at the trials of the English Setter Club, which were held lately on Lord Lifford's estate in Northants, it has been said, "where scent is good for foxhounds it is not always so for pointers and setters; and where the latter can hunt well, often it has occurred that foxhounds cannot carry a fresh fox line." The same man then proceeded to make plain that he recognized no difference between the foxhound's method of hunting and that of the pointer or setter. For he said, "these pastures (Lord Lifford's) carried particularly little scent for the trials, although last year there was nothing to complain of upon the same ground, and often with the same dogs." Further, "Add to this, the birds could see the crowd from a distance and had lots of time to crouch close, long before they were approached, and thus gave no scent, or to run away and thus leave a pointable line behind them"; and so on. He, apparently, did not know that foxhounds hunt by foot scent, and that pointers and setters "sniff" the tainted gale, and that there is nothing calling for particular notice in the ability of the latter to often hunt well when hounds cannot carry a fresh fox line, while the hunting in the one case depends on scent diffused in the air and in the other on that retained by pasture or plough. If he had heard of these things, then his conclusions are disconcerting to one who has always considered that the Irish setter's fault is its tendency to hunt by foot scent. It is bad to think that this most affectionate of gun dogs may have been often wrongfully abused and smitten these many years.

There is a tradition in Ireland that the red setter of the country is remotely related to the bloodhound, and that to this relationship the tendency to hunt with the nose on the ground is due. The fault is one which does not seem open to correction. It causes trouble most noticeably in woodland shooting on the mountains, for it is the habit of a "cock" to sleep in the daytime. Where the bird alights from its nocturnal wanderings there it squats and takes its rest, as a general rule; therefore, it leaves no foot scent near its sleeping place. A red setter, working with nose to ground, is thus liable to run into the bird at any time. The dog will do this, perhaps, with one "cock" out of six. Having done it he will look over his shoulder, and, with wagging tail, apologize to the sportsman. Yet it is doubtful whether the fault would ever have come into condemnation but for this particular kind of woodland shooting. In dealing with grouse, the dog's capability for work by foot scent is a positive advantage. It is a capability of which the supremely intelligent creature knows how to make use at the into which woodland-seeking leads him. A covey of grouse will run through heather a long distance in a short time when disturbed from their mid-day siesta. A pointer and a setter, working together, stand to the scent that hangs about the place where the birds are resting. The shooters close round. No grouse takes wing. Someone moves in and finds freshly-shed feathers and other signs towards which the dogs are standing. The birds have been here quite recently. The signs are shown to the dogs, the pointer sniffs the scented air and is bewildered. The setter casts about with nose to ground for the occasion. He strikes the trail of the running birds. Creeping after them, he stands again 200 yards away, with the grouse immediately in front of him. Such a scene as this will come to the memory of many a sportsman accustomed to seeking the grouse that are sparsely scattered on Irish mountains. Through its very "fault" the Irish setter is supreme with grouse, a fact which is worth remembering by those who, with minds turning to the moors, are now looking for dogs. A pointer may be preferred for mountain work with woodcocks in the winter tie; when, too, the red setter's color is against him. In summer the red dog shows perfectly clearly against the fresh green of heather and grass.

The Irish setter is, by general consent, the most persevering and tireless of all dogs used with the gun. Against this must be set the facts that the dog is headstrong and not easily broken. Naturally enough perseverance and obstinacy are united in the same individual. Hence the breaking of a setter should be undertaken not later than the seventh month of the first year of its age. If the dog carries

a bad habit with him into his first season of independent work, he will never lose it. It has been allowed to grow up with his mind, which is unalterable. There is a man in Kerry, who, when snipe shooting in the middle of one of the vast brown bogs, is recognized by a keeper or other spectator at a distance by the forward run he invariably makes after firing a shot. He has fallen into the habit through yielding to the necessity for racing with his setter for possession of a fallen bird. The dog grew up accustomed to run in. The owner long ago abandoned a belated attempt to cure him. Enamored of the nose and ranging powers of his setter he compromises matters by running in with him. If he had used the stick—a solid baton, not the whip—from the very beginning, his dog would now be perfect in all particulars. As it is, Carlo, as he is called, is in much request by other shooters—who can run.

QUINNAT SALMON IN NEW ZEALAND

There seems little doubt that the quinnat salmon—otherwise known by the truly terrifying name of *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*—has now become well established in the southern rivers of New Zealand, and a few notes may prove interesting. The first attempts to introduce the quinnat into this country took place in the years from 1875 to 1880, but apparently had no result, and it was not until 1901 that the more methodical experiments of the New Zealand government led to success. A hatchery was erected on the Hakateramea, which is a tributary of the Waitaki, and the first consignment of eggs came from the McLeod River in California. During more recent years the work has been continued, and at last it was reported that salmon had been seen engaged in their family cares in the Waitaki and its tributary streams. The news turned out to be correct, and since 1906 the quinnat have increased, until it is possible to net a sufficient number in the Hakateramea alone to supply a stock for the hatchery.

From the probability of the fact that they were bred in the Waitaki, it is perhaps natural that most of the quinnat should return to the same river from the sea, but occasionally specimens are identified in waters farther north. Were it not that having caught a big trout of sorts the majority of our New Zealand anglers are content to eat him as such these instances might be multiplied. Quinnats are frequent of fish differing considerably from the ordinary types, but after they have "cut very red" on the table, there is not much use in seeking for authentic information. However, I have seen and heard of a number from the Rangitata, and of one or two others in the Rakia, and Mr. Shury (secretary of the Ashburton Acclimatization Society) informs me that one was caught by an angler in the Ashburton River. Also it was reported in the North Otago Times, December, 1909, that the men fishing for "tre-valli"—a small sea fish, something like a bream—in Oamaru Harbor had hooked and landed quinnat on handlines, and that others were frequently seen close in shore among the kelp. The first of these occurrences I verified as far as possible, but the latter I doubt very much, for the chief reason for supposing that the fish were salmon seems to have been that they were seen feeding and jumping near the surface.

Now that we have got the quinnat in the country, the question becomes what shall we do with him? It is a matter for regret that they will only take a spinning bait on or soon after entering fresh water, and I have not heard of a single capture with a fly, while farther up stream they lose all inclination to feed and refuse a lure of any kind; therefore it is evident they are of no great use to the angler, and the mouths of our snow rivers are not suitable for netting operations. Even if they were, it would mean that many trout would be taken with the quinnat, and in a measure legitimate sport would suffer in consequence. If the fish cannot be caught and cannot be "canned"—which, by the way, sounds paradoxical—the benefit of their presence is rather doubtful. It only remains to hope that they will in time frequent the rain rivers with wide estuaries, where the conditions are more favorable to the use of nets.

The principal run of salmon takes place during April and May, but as a rule in the latter month, and as they encounter the buffeting of the river the fish quickly change in appearance and are mottled with patches of white fungus, loathsome to behold, and presumably fatal in the end, for as far as we can ascertain, they do not long survive the visit to the spawning beds. A kelt quinnat is a horrible object—emaciated, sodden fleshed, and with fins worn to fragments by his workings in the shingle. Last year some nervous man saw a few of these fungus-bearing quinnat, and straightway a story went round that they were dying in hundreds under the bridge on the Ohau (a tributary of the Waitaki), and it was to be expected that the trout would contract the disease. So far this has not happened, and we still permit ourselves to hope for the best, but all the same the nervous man had grounds for apprehension. On June 21 I saw eleven quinnat engaged in spawning in a side stream of the Upper Rangitata which were simply covered by the white leprous growth. All of them would have weighed between 15lb. and 20lb., and it seemed impossible that any could recover. Afterwards one of them was gaffed for purposes of identification, and, in bad order as he was, weighed 18lb. On the whole, first impressions of the quinnat are not reassuring, but a company of

anglers are pledged to give the mouth of the Waitaki a thorough trial in April, and we shall then see if there is any hope that the fish will add to the sporting attractions of New Zealand.—Drummond Sharpe, in The Field.

THE TRIPID IN CAMP COOKERY

Although the Indians of our northern woods used the tripod in cooking centuries before we modern whites rediscovered Nature and began to tell others how to live in her domain, I have never seen any mention of this practical contrivance in the books and articles by experienced woodsmen I have happened to read. I make no claim to being one of these, but in the camping experience I have had, after trying every known method, I have adopted the tripod as by all means the simplest and most convenient way of cooking.

If you follow the directions given in the articles and books by "Old Woodman," it is first necessary to cut down an eight-inch tree, chop off two logs and smooth them so that when placed a few inches apart your kettles will set properly on them. Or to take the place of the logs you collect stones, which according to the illustration are always to be found near any camp ground, cut square and of uniform size by some kindly mason who has gone before. On these logs or stones you balance your fire, which has to be carefully tended with wood of the proper size to make it burn.

Did you ever have one of these long narrow fires burn at one end and go out at the other, or heat in the middle and not at the ends? Did you ever try to balance your coffee pot on stones that the mason had forgotten to square, or have part of a log burn away under it? If you haven't, your experience has been different to mine.

Another alternative is to place across the logs or stones an iron grating, which is a dirty, heavy nuisance to carry and heats red hot and succumbs when you build up your fire too much. Excepting the portable stoves, this seems to be the other method of cooking allowed to the man who would be really orthodox.

When you try a tripod it suddenly comes over you that our red brothers have learned something in their centuries of woods living. In the first place all you need to carry is a small ball of light cord—you can get along without that if necessary. On arriving at your camp ground you cut with a jack knife three poles, two about six feet and the other about eight to ten feet long; shorter ones will do if easier to get.

In trimming off the branches a small crotch should be left at the top end of each pole, which will lock them firmly together when they are set up. A lashing of a few turns of cord will hold it securely without the crotches. Put the tripod with the upper third of the long pole over the spot where you wish your fire. On this you hang your kettle, for which cut a set of hooks or hangers from the branches you have trimmed off the poles or fine elsewhere. These should have a small crotch at the lower end to support the handles of your cooking utensils and are fastened to the pole by short lengths of cord from their upper ends.

The cords should be tied by an adjustable hitch so their length can be easily varied according to the size of your fire and the heat you require for each particular utensil. Make a hook for each one and an extra to be used in lifting things away from the fire. Build your fire and begin cooking.

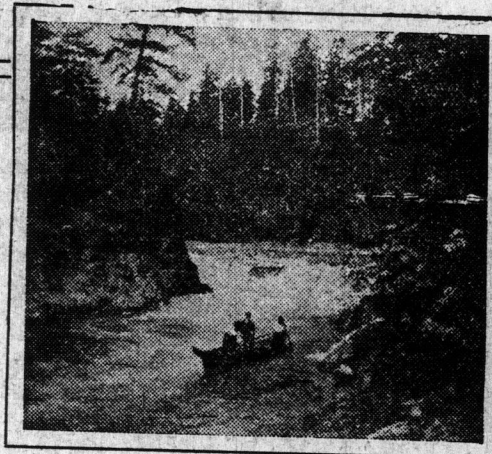
With this method you are ready to cook in ten minutes at the outside and you need no eight-inch trees or rocks—not even an axe is necessary. A tripod will stand anywhere in ordinary ground; on a smooth rock surface a pole will make it firm. You can build your fire large or small, of any kind or size of wood handy, and you can be cooking half a dozen different messes at once and give each its proper individual heat, at the same time handling a frying pan below them.

When the cereal is done you can pull it away from the fire and leave it where it will simmer properly, the coffee the same. There is no burning the dish on one side and letting it grow cold on the other as when it is set by the side of a fire to keep warm. If you wish to examine the contents of a kettle, grasp the hook and swing it away from the fire where you can investigate at your leisure. When satisfied, let go and it will swing back to its place with no trouble at all—there is no chance of tipping anything over.

While you are getting a meal, water may be heating or a pot of beans cooking and taking up no valuable part of your fire. You can leave those same beans or a stew after building up a big fire under them and find them still boiling when you return hours later. You can't do that with the "Old Woodman's" fire.

A modification of the tripod can be made by sticking a short pole into the ground with a stone or crotched stick to support it. This is convenient for the quick meal of any kind and will hold one or two kettles.

The tripod is good for either a permanent camp or when one is moving each day. In the latter case the cords and hooks can be removed and carried along easily to the next stopping place, or if left, a small ball of cord will be sufficient for dozens of camps. It is altogether the only way I cook now, and I can imagine no situation in which another would be better except where poles are not obtainable.—Frederic L. Baxter in Outing.



Sportsman's Calendar

JULY

Trout, Salmon, Grilse, Bass.
One of the two best months for sea-trout fishing in the estuaries and inlets.

FISH STORY FROM IRELAND

"Two young men named Francis and Philip M'Donagh, residing at Drumully, Clones, relate an extraordinary story of an adventure which befel them a few days ago while fishing in a small boat on the river Finn at Wattlebridge. The time was between two and three o'clock in the afternoon, and the young men were resting in the boat, when they were startled by seeing what appeared to be a fish of enormous size approaching them from the direction of Lough Erne, into which the Finn empties near this place. They could see its back above the water as it ploughed along the surface, raising great waves on each side. They quickly pulled the boat aside, but the fish gave chase, and was soon alongside, plunging on the surface at a furious rate. It appeared to be from 8 ft. to 10 ft. in length, with proportionate girth, and a very large head. So great was the splashing and commotion it made in the water that the young men were afraid of the little boat capsizing, and they pulled as hard as they could to the nearest landing place, still pursued by the fish. After rowing about 500 yards they drew the boat into shallow water amongst reeds, where the huge creature was unable to follow. It then swam rapidly up the river to a lake, in which it disappeared from view. Numbers of people have since been watching in the evenings from the river banks and from boats, hoping to see it, but it has not since made its appearance. This river and the lakes which it forms are famous for pike of a huge size, several being captured in recent years, but one can scarcely imagine a pike of the dimensions described."

HUGE AUSTRIAN TROUT

While spinning with minnow last week in the river Etsch, near Meran, South Tyrol, Herr Marsoner, of Lozen, caught and landed a trout weighing 14½ kilogrammes (32lb.), measuring in length 3½ metres (30in.) and in girth 58 centimetres (23in.). In the stomach of the fish were found two undigested trout weighing 4½lb. Six weeks previously the same fisherman caught a trout in the Etsch weighing 27lb. These are not "fisherman's tales." The 32lb. trout was exposed to view in Ottl's fish shop in Meran, and at a meeting of the Meran Fishing Club the question was discussed whether these monsters were common river trout (farlo), or if they belonged to a separate species. The Etsch trout differ considerably from the farlo in color and markings, the red spots of the ordinary river trout being wanting in the large specimens caught in the Etsch, which have a marbled appearance, seen in no other trout. The enormous size which they attain singles them out apparently as distinct from any other Austrian trout, and they more nearly resemble the trout of the river Isanzo in Italy, which, like the Etsch, falls into the Adriatic.

FISH SHOT UP A TREE

While on a fishing trip, I was asked to go inshore to get a supply of bait. I took my shotgun, and, just as I was about to land, I spied a large hawk ascending from the water with a good-sized fish in his claws. He alighted in a tree near by, and I was tempted to let him alone to see what he would do, but changed my mind and fired. The hawk dropped and also the fish. The fish had marks from the shot of it and was still alive, and when I returned to the boat I showed it and said I had shot it in a tree. A poker player offered to bet me five dollars that I had not; I produced the hawk, explained the incident, and there was no further argument.—Field and Stream.

A QUESTION OF COSTUME

The woes of the married man are not exhausted. He is liable to have his trousers not only scorched, but actually taken away from him. So the attorney-general of Kansas has ruled at any rate. The ukase was given because a widow at Oswego requested permission of the governor to wear trousers while at work in her home, she having found that costume to hamper her activities less than a skirt. Hence the decision of the attorney-general, who affirms there is no law to prevent a woman from wearing men's trousers, especially if she is the head of the house.—Philadelphia Post.