

# Field Sports at Home and Abroad



## Sportsman's Calendar

OCTOBER

Oct. 1.—Pheasant (cocks only) and quail shooting opens for Esquimalt, Cowichan, Saanich and Islands Electoral District.  
Pheasant shooting (cocks only) opens on Hornby and Denman Islands.  
Game Now in Season—Deer, pheasant, grouse (except in Saanich) quail, also ducks, geese and snipe.  
N.B.—Municipal regulations of both North and South Saanich require written permits from both owners of land on which it is desired to shoot and Reeves of the municipalities.  
Trout-fishing now excellent, also Salmon-trotting. Tyees at their best at Alberni this month.

### WOODS AND WATER EXPLOITS

By Ernest McGaffey, Author of "Poems of Gun and Rod," etc.

#### The Buck Coon of Shadow Lake

As soon as I heard that the ducks had begun to come in I packed my grip for Sowers' and sent Dib Sowers a telegram. That night I reached his farm, and the next night we were at camp. Everything was ready, feed and caulked, plenty of wood for the old-fashioned fire-place in the camp shanty, shells loaded, and general preparations complete for a ten-days shoot. I had taken a 44-caliber old-style cap and ball revolver into the timber with me that fall, just because I was charmed with its phenomenal accuracy. It would throw a bullet exactly where you held it, and loaded with a pinch of powder only it did not nor throw up as so many revolvers do. I had a notion I would take a turn in the woods after fox squirrels with it if the duck shooting was so poor as to warrant it, or so good that it would get monotonous.

Early the next morning I skipped out by myself to try a few ducks before we got things settled down so as to hunt together, and I found a likely-looking spot among the willows after paddling a couple of miles from camp. I rowed in to some drift and built up a little "blind," and had my duck "call" handy. The live decoys splashed and dove for smartweed and pretty soon a pair of mallards came over and saw them. They sailed around a couple of times over the willows and then came in grand. I salted both of them. After that I didn't see anything for a couple of hours but a few flocked away to the north. Thanks to myself, I'll pull up and get into camp, and we'll lay out our campaign for tomorrow. It was a warm, bright day, and the ducks weren't stirring around much. There was a big log about 30 feet from the "blind" that ran out from the butt of a half-sunk sycamore. This sycamore was a whooping tree, and was connected with the shore on one side by a catch of drift-wood. Well, I heard a noise, and turned around towards that log, pecking quiet out of the "blind," and there on that log sat the biggest raccoon I ever laid my eyes on.

He was squatting there listening. I took the 44, slipped it through a crack in the willows, and aimed for the juncture of his neck and shoulders. I touched the trigger and the coon melted off that log like a dew-drop from a lily pad. I got out and went around the log and there he laid as dead as Pharaoh. I paddled back to camp, and Dib had gone back to his place for a fish-net he'd forgotten, according to a note he left. Along about sundown he showed up, and I had the ducks done to a turn by that time and some corn-meal doggers hot on the pan, and black coffee plenty.

"Did you kill that one, Dib?" said I.  
"No; but he came pretty near killing me," was Dib's response.  
"How was it, Dib?" says I. "There must be a story to that coon somewhere."  
"Well," says Dib, "I reckon there was a sort of tale to it. It'll kill a little time, and I don't mind telling you about it."

"You recollect old man Parrott? The man I introduced you to down at the depot last fall. Heavy-set fellow, big brown eyes, nose hooked like a chicken-hawk's beak, all the time smiling. Well, old Wib is the boss coon hunter anywhere along these bottoms. At that time he had the most surprising coon dog that'd ever hit these parts. He got him from Kaintucky, though the pup's daddy was from Georgia, original. This here dog, Leander, was about the purest strain of a dog that could be had. On his daddy's side, I mean. The bitch that dropped him, though, was half wolf and half bulldog, I heard old Wib say, and wasn't that pizenous mixture?"

"But the old man he allowed it was just the cross he wanted. Pure hound for the scent and following the trail, part wolf for cunning, and bull for hold-on. When that pup was only a few weeks old he came swimmin' after a skiff the old man and a fellow from Saint Joseph was in, and the fellow says, 'What's his name?' And old Wib says 'I hain't named him yet.' Call him Leander, says this here fellow. It seemed like a good mouth-fillin' name and so Wib christened him Leander. The fellow told him Leander was the best swimmer that ever hapened before he got drowned."

"Well, they was a monster coon down on Shadow lake that had whipped all the dogs that was ever brought against him. He wasn't no ordinary coon, but nearly as big as a young bear, and every ounce bone and muscle. He'd get out into a little pond or piece of marsh and when a dog'd tackle him he'd sense the dog's head under water a few times, 'contributin' a few bites at the same time to make it binding, and after about baptism number four there wasn't any dog they had that would go in after him again. Nobody'd get out this coon, for they was all waiting to see some dog that could lick him in a fair fight. They called him buck coon."

"Well, Wib hears of this coon, and he comes to see for me, and a big crowd of us goes down on Shadow lake one moonlight night. Well, we know that country. Ducker-brush, amp-hows, briars, dead logs, the worst though, for he used to prow around Hogeye bend most of the time, and in almost half an hour Leander barked 'treed.' 'Now we'll get him,' says old Wib, 'Leander walk his log for him.'

"When we got to where it was, the coon had got out on an old basswood that stood in a little pond where we couldn't well use the axes, and we could see him away up and out on a big limb that slanted across this here pond. I allowed I'd climb up and shake him down, and one of the boys gave me a hist and up I went. When I got out to where he was I couldn't jar him loose. If I'd had pap's old horse-pistol with a good jag of powder in it and a cupful of buckshot, I reckon I'd spoiled his grin, some, but he held on in spite of all my shaking."

"But finally all of a sudden he clawed loose from the limb and down he went into grape-vine and splinters around him, and the pond with about a bushel of bark and minute he lit, Leander and some more of the dogs flew out to where he was. I squirms around on my perch, about 40 foot from the water, to get a look at the fight, and just as the buck coon and Leander has arranged to ketch bolts, whack goes my limb and down I come before I could holler, 'Look out below!'"

"Well, the best thing me and the limb could do was to come ka-whallop right across old Leander and bury him down in the mud at the bottom of this shallow pond. Two of his ribs was stove in, and he was otherwise damaged, includin' brakin' his back. I reckon I might have kicked the coon in the face with one of my spare feet as I lit, but ain't certain about that. Of course I was knocked senseless as the boys run in and got me out on the bank and poured vinegar into me and finally brought me to again. Old Wib had left me cold as soon as he sensed how bad Leander was hurt, and at last I get my bearings again, shakes myself and find I'm all right, no bones broke, and just jarred some. Leander and the water had busted the force of the fall, you see."

"I goes over to where the boys had built a fire, and, say, I was plumb sorry for old Wib. This here Leander was layin' out on his belly and every once in a while he'd let out a yelp. I says to the old man, 'I'm terrible sorry, Wib,' and he says, 'I don't blame you, Dib, it was that blasted limb.' He didn't cuss any, for old Wib was a church member. He says, 'What is to be happens. Put him out of his misery, boys, I can't do it.' So Dad Oliverly, wisin' an ax, and I don't reckon old Leander knowed what hit him."

"Put him in the sack," says Wib, 'I'll give him a Christian burial, coffin and all. There's all that's left of the best hound that ever nosed a trail or h'isted a bristle.' It was a mighty solemn thing to old Wib, lemme tell you. The Lord gives, and the Lord He takes away,' says the old man, 'blest be the name of the Lord.' Why they said around Slabtown that he thought as much of that Leander dog as he did of his own wife and family, and he was a good husband and father, too."

Dib paused and snaked a live coal out of the fireplace with the end of a shovel, and deftly shunted it into the bowl of his pipe with a segment of hickory chip. Then he puffed reminiscently.

"What became of the buck coon, Dib?" was my query. Dib stretched his massive legs out so as to get the full blaze of the logs on them and said: "Oh! that pesky critter? Why he just naturally got away durin' the excitement."

#### A LADY'S BIG SALMON

We arrived one August evening in 1885 at Torresdal, our fishing quarters (lent to us by a friend) on the famous Namsen River. We had come in carriages from Namsen, on the coast, a distance of forty-five miles. The road was good, and the brisk little Norwegian ponies did their work well. Towards the end of our drive we were told to leave the road and turn down a steep, grass-grown woodland track. After a few minutes' rough driving we came to a clearing in the forest, and found three little wooden houses perched on the high banks of the river. We left our carriages and stood shivering in the pouring rain till the arrival of our fisherman with the keys. We had brought a cook with us from Trondhjem with provisions for four weeks. We hoped for a plentiful supply of fish, and we expected to get milk and butter from a farm. For fruit, the forest gave us an abundance of wild strawberries and raspberries and the delicious yellow molteberry.

Our fishing ran close up to the Fiskum Foss, beyond which the salmon cannot get. Near the foss the Namsen banks are high, the river deep, swift, and full of whirlpools; lower down the river the rapids and shallows have a pebbly, gravelly bottom. The fishing at Torresdal is done from a boat, mostly by trolling. Our fisherman, Iver Ursted, was a fair-haired Norwegian giant, quick of eye, slow of speech, full of a natural simple dignity. He was always ready to take the boat out, except on Sundays; he spent these days on the banks of the river watching for salmon to jump. Sometimes we counted six or seven big fish jumping straight up as if for a fly. For one brief moment we could see the whole fish from nose to tail, his silver sides flashing in the sun. Our four weeks' fishing on the whole gave us a fair total and keen sport.

One cloudy morning I got my rod, a light one, made for a woman, and perfect in every way, and went in the salmon boat alone with Iver. We kept in mid-stream in the swift, broad part of the river. Eventually we rowed right under the foss. I did not like it much. The roar of the foss, the spray wetting one through, the swirling of the river, the tossing of the little boat, the great rocks sticking up

everywhere—all these things made me quite nervous! I had no luck, so we went again into mid-stream. Iver never allowed the boat to be still, but gently rowed up and down, keeping in mid-stream, near and close over some deep pools, where the river was a dark oily brown. I trolled with a fairly long line "atte lengthe," as Izaak Walton says, using a fly with a dark body whipped round with gold and a tiny silver thread, the wings grey with a mixture of brown, orange, and scarlet—a gaudy fly, but not too bright for the dark pools of the Namsen. I have the fly by me as I write, and its colors, after twenty-five years, are still distinct and gay.

I kept the fly in constant motion in the water, now drawn with the stream and then against it. Still I had no luck; when suddenly my rod was nearly wrenched out of my hands. I managed to give a firm strike, and felt I had hooked something. There was a furious tugging and commotion in the water, and away we raced down stream. The sleeves of my dress and jacket were torn out, my hair was down, and I must have been a fit subject for a post-impressionist! Nothing seemed to matter except the fish. Iver said gruffly, "Big fish. Keep rod up." No other words were spoken, no sounds heard but the waters of the foss, the play of the reel, and the occasional splash of the angry fish. When we neared the shallow water of the rapids the fish turned and headed for the foss and the deep pools. In our mad race we once or twice caught sight of the fish, and saw that he was very big. He never again went for the rapids.

For nearly two hours I played him. Being big and heavy, he had been exhausted by his furious rushes, and he once or twice lay quite still and quiet. If it had not been for these quiet moments I could not have held out, for I was growing exhausted too. Suddenly, after a final struggle, there was a dead calm; the fish sank to the bottom behind a rock near the shore. We got the boat as near to the shore as we could. By degrees I gently drew him nearer and nearer in. At last, with a great effort, Iver bent over the side of the boat and firmly gaffed him. We slipped the net under him, and soon had him lying full length on the green grass. He was a male fish, with a tremendous hooked jaw, a mighty tail, a fine head, and weighed 57½ lb. He measured over 4 ft. from nose to the tip of his tail, and his thickest girth was about 2 ft. 2 in. He looked enormous as he lay there, and very noble. We admired the beauty of the blackish spots on his silver sides and the fine lines of his shape. I was filled with a great wonder at my capture, but when I remembered his fierce and gallant struggle for life I wished him back again—a king—in the Namsen River.

We made a drawing of him on the wooden dado of the fishing house, and then we laid him on some sheets of newspaper joined together and cut out his size and shape. I still have this rough memento and the hook with which he was caught. In the end we gave him to the fishermen to cut up for "lax," and the last I saw of our huge friend he was in a sack tied round a fisherman's neck, and was thus ignominiously trailed through the long grass to his bitter end.

When our time came for leaving "Arcadie," as we drove down to the coast the river men in the little villages turned out to shake hands with the Englishwoman who had caught the big fish. In remembering these dear, delightful days of long ago, this I think, pleases me most of all.

Thus ended the capture of the big fish, many men, pipe in mouth, have bent over the paper slip and talked to me of my luck, but most fishers in Norwegian waters will probably agree with me in thinking that an active salmon of, say 16 lb., gives more real sport and needs greater skill than the capture of the big fish I have described. This simple account may interest those who care for the "pleasant curiosity of fish and fishing." In these days of motors and politics, can anyone do better than "be quiet and go a-angling"?—Hannah Covington.

#### THE ANGLER

(By Charles Bradford)

"Anglers . . . men of mild, and sweet, and peaceful spirits. Moses and the Prophet Amos were both Anglers."—Izaak Walton

The Angler represents the highest order of fisherman.

All anglers are fishermen, but all fishermen are not anglers.

There is the same distinction in the angler and the fisherman as there is in the horseman and the jockey, and the yachtsman and the sailor.

As some one has said before, there is no commercial side to angling.

It is a noble, recreative pastime, indulged in by those who value the pursuit as much as they value the game.

The angler never judges his day by the size of his creel, while the mere fisherman always does so. It's quality with the angler, quantity with the ordinary fisherman.

There are many kinds of anglers and many kinds of angling; so are there many kinds of fishermen and many ways to go fishing, but, setting aside the savage who fishes with a spear and the Japanese who have birds (cormorants) fish for them, generally speaking, there are but two common forms of fishing and three kinds of fishermen.

There are three general classes of fishermen as represented in the angler, the net fisherman and the hand-line fisher—the angler, the fisherman and the fisher.

The angler fishes with gentle tackle—appropriate rod, reel, line and hook—for the natural pleasure he finds in the day and pursuit as well as in the capture of the fish; the fisherman drags his net for his living, and the fisher plys his hand-line for the pure love of slaughter, or because he imagines praise in fishing is acquired by the biggest basket.

The net fisherman is not as noble as the angler because his present-day pursuit depletes the waters, while the angler, though he, too, takes fishes, protects and multiplies the finny tribes; but this same net fisherman is no worse than the ungentle hand-line fisher, who brags of his tubful and barrelful, and, in the opinion of many wise judges, of the two, the fisher is the more destructive.

Net fishing and the net fisherman have not always been in contempt. It is only in these days of glory in the greed for gold that the pursuit has been degraded, and, with the fast-multiplying laws of restriction and man's awakening to the necessity of protecting and propagating our food fishes, it is quite probable that net fishing will be so regulated as to command praise in place of reproach for the netter.

There are many net fishermen and market-fish dealers who are foremost in the effort to mend the ways and means of the trade—highly respected gentlemen and honest business men whose voices are as loud against destructive methods and whose assistance toward protection and propagation is as great as any anti-netting class in the world.

Remember ye:

The Old Testament teaches fishing with both seine and line.

The best of the Apostles—Peter, Andrew, James and John—were fishermen.

And Jesus loved fishermen, and associated with them more than with any other class of men.

"He began to teach by the seaside."

"He entered into a boat."

"He was in the stern of the boat, asleep."

"His disciples were fishermen."

"His best friends were fishermen."

"His pulpit was a fishing boat, or the shore of a lake."

"He fed the people on fish when they were hungry."

"He was always near the water to cheer and comfort those who followed it."

The first authentic mention of the angler is in the Book of Job, B.C. 1520 (xii., 1 and 2).

Archimedes built a house boat or fallery for Hiero of Syracuse which had a fish pond in the bow, from which the owner and his guests could take live fishes.

Izaak Walton tells of the angling exploits of Marc Antony and Cleopatra, and Sir Humphrey Davy declares Trojan was an angler.

Plutarch's account of Antony's fishing and description of the numerous paintings on the walls of the houses of Pompeii, and Oppian's book on fishing attest the antiquity of the angler.

Fly-fishing was first mentioned by Elian, who flourished A.D. 225. He describes a species of trout and the dressing of an artificial fly.

In 1496, Wynkyn de Worde, assistant to William Caxton, the first printer of a book in England, added the printed treatise on "Fysshing with an Angle" to the second edition of "The Book of St. Albans" by Dame Juliana Barnes, who is by many writers credited with the authorship, but the writer of this treatise is really unknown.

Since these days of old the angler and angling have been favorite subjects of the most famous poets, painters and philosophers, and the world's greatest men have been proud to be numbered among the craft.

Frank Forester declared the angler "could not possibly be of an unkind, ungentle, or unmanly nature," and years and men have proven this to be true.

Shakespeare, our greatest poet, was an angler.

Izaak Walton, one of the world's most religious thinkers, wrote "The Compleat Angler," a single first-edition volume of which was sold recently for six thousand dollars.

Daniel Webster, John James Audubon, Henry D. Thoreau, Alexander Wilson, Henry William Herbert, and thousands of other noble men, including George Washington, the father of our country, gently "dropped their lines in pleasant places," and,—"go thou and do likewise," brother.—Outdoor Life.

#### A LAST DAY.

I sometimes think that the best omen for a good fishing day is a bad beginning. All too often have I found that a big fish caught at the first cast or so returns home companionless in the basket, while a black morning or lost monster are the prelude of later success. I do not attempt to explain such strange things; very likely they do not occur to anyone else, but in the fishing world what is, is, and there is no more to be said about it.

On the day in question I began by breaking the top joint of my rod; incidentally, I knew I was going to, because I had not another with me, and I was two miles from home. I have never broken a top joint when I have been close to the house, or when I have had a spare one in the case. Fortunately, an amateur gillie who accompanied me volunteered to fetch

me another; he had not been gone five minutes before I discovered a carpenter working in an old mill hard by, who mended my rod for me. One does not usually find carpenters frequenting a trout stream, but this is only another instance of "the unexpected in fishing." My gillie did not quite see it in that light when he returned, not from his tramp, with rod No. 2, and found me busily engaged in playing a half-pounder, which was returned. However, after he had cooled down he realized with me that, according to all my laws of angling, I was in for some pretty sport. "Pretty" I have used not without thought, for it would be difficult to picture a more ideal spot than the old mill pool on the banks of which the first and last 5:32 in this little reminiscence were enacted. It has figured on canvas in the Royal Academy, but all its natural beauties were enhanced for me on this grey morning, late in August, by the sight of a lovely fish lying aigh in the green water just off the sluice or gate. I can see him now as he came slowly up to my Wickham. I can feel the pang of disappointment that he caused by slowly sinking again after a careful but disdainful inspection.

But he was not scared, and though I agreed with my gillie that it was a hundred to one against the fly now, he took it at the fourth cast with a will; and he played well in that deep water, with one or two fierce rushes, but to the net at last—a picture of a fish, in perfect condition, of 1 lb. 7 oz. I would have liked to have stayed by the mill all day long, and I should have done well; but I was in that delightful position of having plenty of good water ahead of me, and so I went on. I will pass over the doings of the rest of the morning and the afternoon; I will touch but lightly on the fact that I caught exactly a dozen more fish, only three of which I kept. The other nine I did dismiss, and will once more do so, in the hope that we meet again next year, for they fought bravely, and only just escaped the join. I will pass still more quickly over the fish my clumsiness lost me or put down, and I will get back to my mill pond, as I did that evening, for the tail-end of the evening rise. I started once more inauspiciously there, putting down three good fish with my Coachman—a trick the fly sometimes has, or is it the man behind it?—and then, swiftly changing to a large Wickham, I killed a nice little fish, three-quarters of a pound. A bigger fellow was rising close to where I hooked the morning's victim, but I am ashamed to say how often I missed him, or he me, in the gloom. But at last he was on, boring and fighting as a fish three times his weight might have done, and though I gave him the butt with a little mercy as I dared, he never broke the water for quite two minutes, and when he did so he was down again in a flash, and twice more he repeated the manoeuvre. When the right moment came I could only just see to land him in the dark, and I was thankful when he was fluttering on the grass at last, 1 lb. 4 1-2 oz. he weighed, and with his companion made as nice a brace of fish as one could wish for. They were all worth a broken top joint by themselves, without reckoning the other thirteen, most of which may yet live to fracture rod No. 2.—Alan R. Higgin Brown

A well-known amateur yachtsman of New York tells this joke against himself. With a few friends he started on a cruise by way of Island Sound. They kept close to the shore, and owing to the lack of wind and to the slowness of their boat they were still drifting by familiar country a week or so after they left Gotham. At one point of land they passed a solemn individual sat fishing. For some hours the boat made virtually no progress, and after a while the fisherman roused himself sufficiently to ask, "Where are ye folks from?" "New York." "How long out?" "Since July 1st." Then, after a pause, the man asked, "What year?"