

MARCH, 1926

"Rocky Riffle on the Rogue River" by ZANE GREY

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Field & Stream

AMERICA'S MAGAZINE FOR THE OUTDOORSMAN

PRIZE WINNING FISH
With Weights and Where Caught
15th FIELD and STREAM
FISHING CONTEST



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MARCH, 1926

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THEY CALL THEM LITTLE TARPON

Taking these fish on light tackle.

EDITORIAL

SASKATCHEWANING

Prairie chicken and ducks, ruffed grouse, and more ducks.

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A little humor helps.

SELL OLE DAN?

BIG MIKE

A tale of a muskalonge.

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A charm that brought a moose and success.

ROCKY RIFFLE ON THE ROGUE RIVER—PART II

Steelhead trout and fast water.

DO BEARS REMEMBER?

The remarkable memory of an Alaskan grizzly.

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A DAY ON THE COLORADO PRAIRIES

Coyote coursing with hounds.

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Field sports in South America.

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A trip through the sheep country of Mexico.

TALES OF RECORD FISH AND FISHING

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CAMPING HINTS

KENNEL DEPARTMENT

AMONG THE GUN DOGS

FOX RANCH AND FUR-BEARERS

ACKERMANN GALLERIES

HAROLD McCracken 9

JOHN KABEL 10

ARCHIBALD RUTLEDGE 11

BEN C. ROBINSON 14

DR. GEORGE BIRD GRINNELL 17

RAY P. HOLLAND 18

CECIL MORRISON BASKETT 21

NASH BUCKINGHAM 21

CLARENCE SNYDER 22

CAPT. PAUL A. CURTIS 24

ZANE GREY 26

ORVILLE D. ADAMS 29

ROBERT PAGE LINCOLN 30

ALFRED M. BAILEY 32

ASHLEY C. HEWITT 34

CAPT. J. F. R. SCOTT 36

Edited by LADD PLUMLEY 39

CARLOS AVERY 40

CAPT. PAUL A. CURTIS 44

LADD PLUMLEY 66

FRANK E. BRIMMER 92

ELON JESSUP 104

FREEMAN LLOYD 116

JOHN B. THOMPSON (Ozark Ripley) 122

FREDERICK HAVERFORD 125

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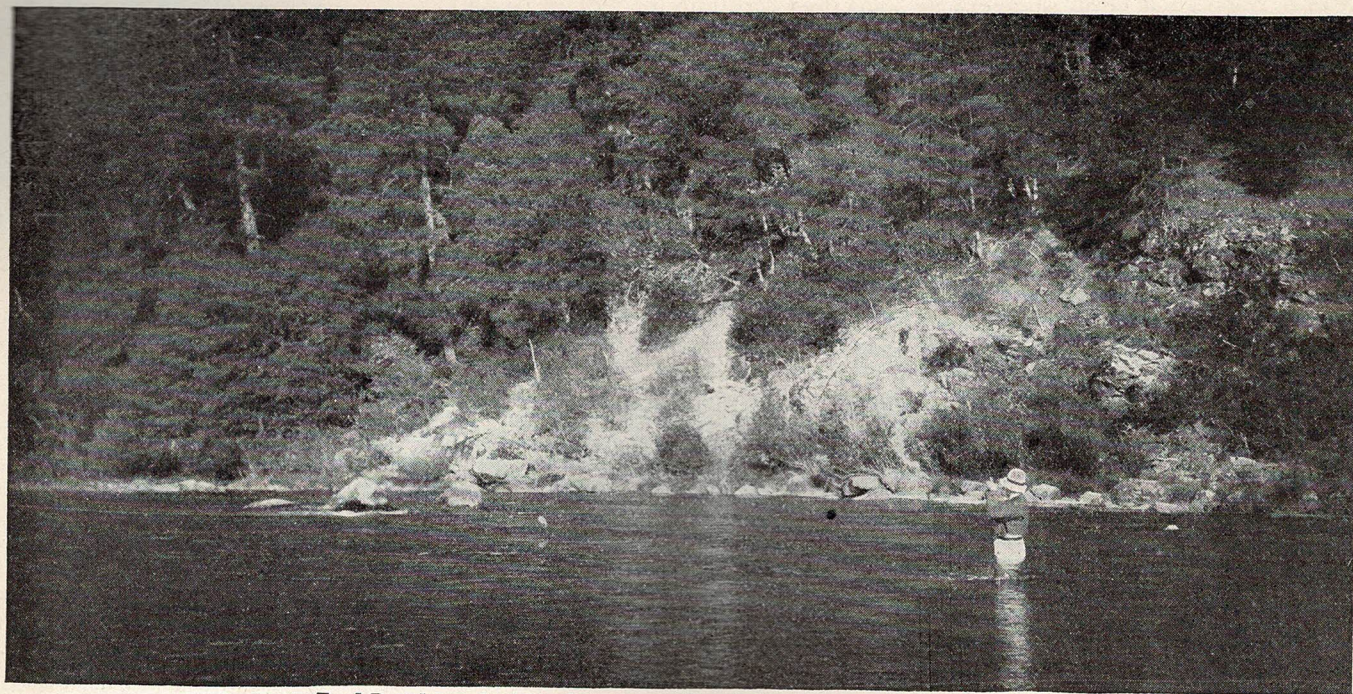
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Fred Burnham playing a leaping steelhead. He is a past master at the art

ROCKY RIFFLE *on the* By ZANE GREY *Rogue River*

"He took me through the rapids. I had to swim the river twice. And after fighting him over an hour, I lost him a mile below where I hooked him"

SYNOPSIS

The party consisted of Zane Grey; his brother, R. C.; Ed and Ken, fishing chauffeurs; Chester, a camera man, and little George, the Japanese cook. Everyone they met reported the steelhead fishing the best in years. Excitement runs high in anticipation. The first morning in camp all go fishing and all fail miserably. George Takahashi hooks a big one which breaks up his tackle. From his graphic description, this fish was the world's greatest aerial acrobat. The story goes on from here.

PART II

NEXT day was cloudy and rainy also, though it showed indications of clearing weather. But as it had rained hard in the early morning, we had chosen to let the fishing go and attend to gathering firewood, and other necessary camp tasks.

About noon we had visitors in shape of Wiborn, of Lone Angler fame, and Fred Burnham, who had motored down to stay at a farm house along the road and have a try for steelhead on Rocky Riffle.

"You ought to be out fishing," said Burnham. "The river is full of steelhead. Never saw the like before! It's been that way for a month. They're taking dark flies best. March Brown is

good. Golden Pheasant better. It's a grand run of big savage steelhead. And this is the kind of a day I've been wishing for. It's been too dry. Jump into your waders and come on."

"Well, you're most encouraging," I replied. "Last night I was convinced there were no fish in the river. I'll try a while along toward evening."

Scarcely more than two hours later, while we were having dinner, we heard Burnham coming back up the road in his car. He stopped at a point opposite our camp. Presently he emerged from the green, wagging along with two enormous steelhead, one in each hand. He strode into camp and laid them down on the grass. To say that I had a thrill would be putting it mildly. I had never seen such steelhead.

"Ten and a half pounds and nine and three-quarters," announced the angler. "You don't often see a brace to beat this. . . . I caught five in one hole. First fish I hooked cleaned me out. He didn't jump, so I don't know how big he was. But twelve pounds easy. . . . They're taking dark flies here, same as up Medford way. You want a No. 4, dark, with a bit of yellow."

Burnham's talk had a singular effect on me. Not only was it thrilling and inspiring but likewise dismaying. I felt helpless and yearning before those two wonderful steelhead. They were long, broad,

wide, thick, all muscle, with a great spread of tail and the small snub-nosed head of the gamy trout. They resembled salmon to me.

"How long did it take you to land the bigger one?" I queried.

"Not very long. But I was a half hour on the other one. He was sure a fighter. I had to follow him."

"Do you often hook fish like these?" I went on, curiously.

"Every day. And often I hook bigger ones," he returned. "Last week I raised a whale of a steelhead. He would float up and look at my fly, and refuse it. I changed flies I don't know how many times. Finally he took one—same as I used today—and I nailed him. That steelhead beat any fish I ever hooked. Fast! Why he was like a flash. And strong! I couldn't do a thing with him. He took me through the rapids. I had to swim the river twice. And after fighting him over an hour, I lost him a mile below where I hooked him."

"**GOODNIGHT!**" ejaculated R. C., in wonder.

"My goodnish!" exclaimed Takahashi, who was an attentive listener.

The other boys exclaimed, "What do you know about that!"

But my feelings were not provocative of expression. Fortunately Burnham asked me about my tuna of 758 pounds,

Rocky Riffle on the Rogue River

which I had caught in Nova Scotia some weeks before, and that liberated my speech. I told him about the hooking of the great bluefin and the battle. It afforded me some little satisfaction to see that my narrative stirred Burnham in some degree as his had me. Fishermen are all alike. Lastly I got out some pictures of the tuna. Burnham gazed at them spellbound. His tanned face expressed delight, awe, incredulity.

"Good heavens, what a fish!" he exclaimed. "There isn't such an animal! . . . Say, boy, but wouldn't I like to hook one like this!"

"No more than I would the steelhead you had such a battle with," I replied. "Fishermen are never satisfied. There's always an unattainable fish. I don't believe I'll ever catch a big steelhead, though I swear I shall. This is my third trip to the Rogue. And yesterday I cast a whole hour with a broken hook."

"It's nothing to do that," he said, with a smile. "I break hooks often. The thing to do is watch your back cast and if you tick anything, reel in and look at your fly. These big hooks catch on the rocks and break. Sometimes you can scarcely hear the snap. Waded out far, and in bad places make a false cast in the clear, then cast again where you want your fly to light. Practice. You'll hook some steelhead and catch some, too. That'll not be hard. But to me it's a grand game because there are always steelhead too big and fast and strong to catch."

"That applies to all fishes in all waters," I rejoined, "though I can appreciate how it holds true with steelhead to a far greater extent."

Late that afternoon, R. C. and I went down to try our luck again. We crossed the river at the same place. I fancied the water was not quite so clear as it had been the day before. But as the sky was overcast and light not strong I could not be certain.

THIS time we went upstream to the head of the rapids. The usual difficulty presented itself. We could not reach the likely runs and channels and eddies, and as the current ran like a mill-race we dared not wade in deeper than half-way to our hips. Nevertheless we cast persistently and with boundless hope all the way down that rapid. It seemed a fishless river.

I found that to wield my eight-ounce rod for half an hour was extremely fatiguing. I had to rest my arm. We went on down to the lower riffle and tried again. I decorated the willow bushes with three perfectly good flies, and noted, to my secret delight, that my brother did almost as well.

Along about twilight I gave up for the day and strolled along the shore watching R. C. Presently he abandoned his fly rod for a bait casting rod he had brought with him. Putting a good-sized spinner and a small sinker on his leader, he waded back with the grim remark: "I'll bet I can reach where I want to with this."

R. C. and I had never used the casting plugs so much in vogue with modern anglers, but we had spent years casting black bass and bonefish baits. R. C. had a long, sweeping, graceful left-handed cast. The very first time he

placed the spinner far across the river, close to a dark ledge of rock, where the water ran deep. Smash! The water burst and foamed.

"Wow!" yelled R. C. with swift, sharp upsweep of rod. His reel gave forth a screech and the rod bent double. He had hooked a steelhead. It ran downstream fifty yards without a break on the surface.

R. C. waded out and strode down the shore. I followed. The fish scurried and threshed half out of the water; then he ran upstream against the swift current, and hung there for a long time, doggedly plugging to free himself. Eventually he turned back and worked down the river, with shortening runs, until finally he gave up. R. C. beached his first fish of the trip, a five-pounder that shone even in the dusk with a beautiful effulgence.

"**L**OOK how I had him hooked," said R. C. "These gang hooks on spoons are not fair. No chance at all! Yet he sure fooled me. I believe these steelhead are extraordinary fish. We've got something coming."

R. C. made a few more casts without a rise; and then, as darkness was settling down, we turned campward. Arriving there, we found a warm supper, bright fire

and several very disgruntled fishermen. Their usual cheerful responsiveness was entirely wanting. Takahashi winked at me, which had the effect of silencing my good-natured queries. R. C. gave me an amused and knowing glance. When I had gotten out of my waders and into warm clothes, Takahashi accosted me in a stage whisper. "Ed an' Ken must have hell of time.

Come back camp all wet an' mad. I say nothin' but I watch sharp. I see busted leaders all same like mine. No feesh!"

Manifestly the boys had taken ill luck to heart. They were novices in the art of angling and this was the hardest kind of a game. They reminded me of my boy Romer, whose enthusiasm for fishing often ended in grief. A hot supper, such as Takahashi excels in getting, and a little time round the genial glow of the campfire gradually worked on Ed and Ken. Then a sympathetic query or two brought forth a bewildering and remarkable narrative of angling misfortune.

It was with extreme difficulty that I arrived at several facts. They had lost all the leaders, flies, spinners which I had given them. How these were lost did not appear clear, but I gathered an impression that a school of steelhead had attacked the boys. Ed managed several times to repeat a rational statement.

"I'd cast out anything. Bingo! Up comes a steelhead!"

What happened after these occurrences he did not seem able to explain. Ed tried to tell what had happened to Ken, and Ken just as excitedly endeavored to give us some inkling of the marvelous things that had happened to Ed.

"Ken cast out a spinner," quoth Ed. "Bingo! Up comes a big steelhead. He jumped way out. Then he ran and bingo! up he jumps again, right into the middle of that little grass island. Ken, the darn fool, went tryin' to wade across that deep, swift channel where he'd hooked the fish. He'd drowned sure. I pulls him back. An' he was goin' to punch me because he lost the steelhead."

"**A**W, Ed's out of his head," declared Ken, with most earnest disdain. "It didn't happen that way at all. . . . I wasn't casting in the swift place. I was wading down, letting my fly float. Sure a steelhead grabbed it. He jumped a mile high. Say, you should have seen him. Then he ran. Then he jumped clear over the little grass island. My line caught in the grass. I was going to wade in far enough to free it, when Ed stopped me. We were tussling there when the fish got away."

"I saved your life," declared Ed, vociferously. "Next time you can drown. . . . An' your steelhead is layin' right now on that grass island."

"Well, boys, don't quarrel," I replied. "Looks like we're all in for some excitement."

Further inquiry elicited the opinion that it was impossible to wade the Rogue safely in rubber boots. I certainly sustained this, and I emptied my duffle-bag to see what might be left in the way of waders to give the boys. I found one long pair of waders that reached well up round the waist, and one short pair. These I donated to Ken and George, respectively, as suitable for

They are wonderful fish, equal to the Atlantic salmon of like weight



their height. To Ed I gave all that was left—a pair of heavy rubber waders with rubber boots attached. These were abominable and had nearly drowned me more than once. Ed, however, took them eagerly, and proceeded to pound hobnails in the soles. George and Ken likewise hobnailed their heavy shoes, which were to be worn over the waders. Altogether we were that night a serious and speculative group of anglers.

Before I went to my tent I saw the clouds breaking away and stars white in the blue sky. The air was cooler. Next morning when I got up, a thick fog obscured the upper half of the mountains. It was not cloud, for it had that deep blue tinge which characterizes the morning mist in the mountains. It presaged a fine day.

PRESENTLY a silver blaze lightened the fog. That was the sun rising over the mountains. It soon dispelled the mist. We were not long in getting ready for fishing. R. C. and I found the river a foot higher and somewhat discolored. We attributed this to the rain. We tried fishing with spinners for a while, to no avail.

Then we returned to camp. Warm sunshine had dried grass and trees and tents. I observed that the rain had heightened the autumn colors. Gold and red and purple contrasted vividly with the massed green. The air was fragrant with the tang of the mountains and the odor of wood smoke. Birds were singing in the trees. Camp was indeed a beautiful and delightful place.

Chester had gone deer hunting. The other boys, one by one, came back from the river, minus fish. We idled away the day, except for those inspired intervals when I could get everybody to practice casting. Takahashi was the most industrious, but he could not get the knack of it.

We learned that the rise in the river was not all due to the rain, but to the opening of the dam above Grants Pass. Naturally, we expected the high and roily water to subside quickly; and at different times we all took stock of the river. Toward evening R. C. reported the water falling and clearing. Burnham and Wihorn called on us, and added to a pleasant hour round the campfire.

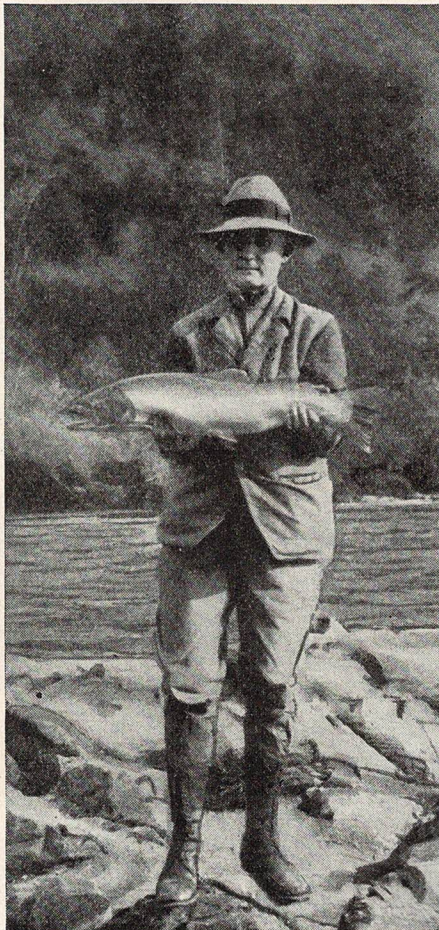
"River ought to be clear and low again tomorrow," announced Burnham, in reply to eager query. "Queer river this year. Have you noticed that the steelhead and salmon are not jumping, playing on the surface, as usual during their run? Perhaps that's on account of low water. Early morning is not good. At this time of year steelhead do not rise until the sun burns away the mist rising from the water. From nine till four is best. Wade downstream, and cast quar-terly across. Try to make your fly light first on the water. Let it float till your line straightens out below you. Then cast again. Make a few casts over one spot, then wade down a few yards. When you get as far down the river as you want, go back and fish the water over again. Sometimes I raise steelhead on the third or fourth trip."

Like all really great anglers, Burnham was generous and kindly, taking keen interest in our tackle, equipment and fishing. He seemed particularly anxious to have me appreciate what a wonderful river the Rogue was and how incomparable the steelhead fishing.

"Well, as to that, I think I'm already convinced," I told him. "Anyone can see that the Rogue is in a class by itself.

And what you have told me about steelhead is certainly enough for me to place them equal, maybe superior, to the Atlantic salmon of like weight. But I'm afraid if I write anything about my own fishing it will be only a record of awkwardness and bad luck."

Chester returned at dark, tired out and hungry. He had tramped thirty miles. He had seen several deer and heard many breaking through the brush. The nature of the country, densely wooded canyons



R.C. and a beauty which he took from the Rogue

and sharp mountain ridges, made stalking deer exceedingly difficult. He had also seen quail and grouse, and some fresh bear sign.

That night the moon cast fantastic shadows on my tent; the pine needles rustled down, pattering like light rain; the crickets chirped their lonely night refrain; a fox barked raucously from the bluff opposite; and always the stream made melody, murmurous and melancholy, pervading even my dreams.

AT six o'clock next morning I was up in the silver gray of dawn, ringing the ax on an oak log. This was my way—sometimes—of awakening my comrades. I heard Takahashi say to R. C., whose tent he shared: "My goodnish! Chief up choppin' wood. He early bird!"

I made note of the fact that my chopping called forth only George and Chester. Whereupon I visited the tents. R. C. said he was sick or something; Ed answered sleepily and Ken roared like a mad bull. Later Ed confided to me, with great gravity, the fact that Ken hated to wake up in the morning. "You mustn't wake him," avowed Ed. "He might kill some of us."

Despite all this we had an early breakfast and reached the lower rapid, which I called Rocky Riffle, before the sun had dissolved the mist. It was indeed a glorious morning. The silver veils of mist lifted from the purple canyons; the blue sky appeared; the sun blazed white over the fringed mountain tops; and the river was a thing of swiftly moving joy and beauty.

Along that mile stretch we separated, R. C. leaving us first. The river had returned to its former stage. I took casual note of the wide, shallow place where R. C. waded in. Narrow, deep channels showed far on the other side. That particular part of the river did not strike me as especially auspicious.

Ken started in several hundred yards below, and I did not look twice at the section of river he chose. George disappeared somewhere, but as he was so diminutive in stature I did not think anything of that. Ed with rod and Chester with camera trudged on ahead of me.

Presently I arrived at a swift break in this riffle, where shallow water ran into deep, and the river narrowed, with gravelly bar on my side and rocky shelf on the other. As I rigged up my rod I had a vague sensation of the sweetness, peace and beauty of time and place. Something haunting and faraway attended my mental state. I waded in and began to cast as best I could.

IT was not that I was conscientious or determined. Mind and eye and muscle merely answered to a dreamy instinct. I was fishing. All was well with the world and forgotten. I did not expect to catch a fish and did not care whether I did or not. I waded down my quarter-mile stretch, cast my fly a thousand times, more or less, went back to repeat the performance, and then again.

The sun rose high and warm; the river murmured and flowed on; the enchantment of day and place strengthened rather than lost its hold on me. For all I knew, there might not have been a fish in that part of Oregon. But I did find that my arm gave out. Wielding the heavy eight-ounce rod for hours was harder, at least on that arm, than pulling at a swordfish. So I sat down to rest.

Naturally, then I remembered my comrades. Far below me Ed appeared to be imitating the evolutions of a tight-wire performer. His rod was a balancing pole. Midway between him and me perched Chester, high on a rock, camera in hand, waiting for us to give him some action to photograph.

In the other direction I espied Ken standing knee-deep in swift water close to the opposite shore. He appeared to be precisely where he had started for, upon leaving us. I watched him cast, and then leave his fly in the water a long time as if it were a bait. He had been there so long, and he had such an air of patience and expectation that I wondered what had happened to him.

Presently R. C. emerged from the willows close by. He carried a steelhead dangling from a string—a shiny fish between five and six pounds in weight. When he reached my side I made note of his beaming face and bright eyes, and the unmistakable pride that emanated from him.

"Any strikes?" he queried cheerfully. "Nary one. Reckon this particular stretch of river is devoid of steelhead," I replied nonchalantly. "Don't tell me you caught yours on a fly, for I'll not believe you."

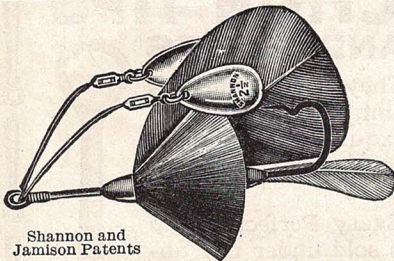
(Continued on page 86)

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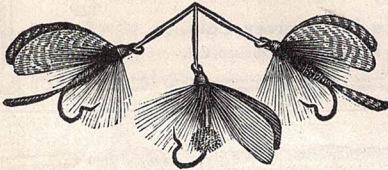
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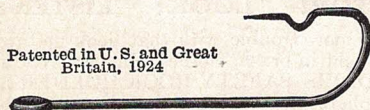
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opening—there! Do you want him? Make up your mind—he looks pretty good!"

"Cecil, I have walked far enough," was my answer, and I raised the old meat-in-the-pot. The ivory bead rested on his withers, so I thought, and a racking report smashed out on the still forest. The black spot I had shot at remained; the little bootjack and the eight-pointer circled about to the left and stood gazing and snorting at us in amazement, whilst the rack-rack of a large pair of antlers swishing through the alders was plainly audible as a big one undiscovered put distance between us.

Quickly I worked the bolt and drove another shot at my mark, and the head came into view again as he crashed to the ground. He wore a right good crown; so we propped his head up and photographed him. I don't believe I want to kill another moose; seven—or is it eight—should be enough for one man. So I will leave them for others, I hope, unless there should be a chance offered for one of those mighty heads of Alaska.

The moral of this story is: don't go between the rut and permanent snow; and if you do, for the love of Mike hunt for a rabbit's foot first.

HUNTING AROUND PINACATE

(Continued from page 38)

were unloaded, the cars packed and we headed for the United States again, reaching Ajo that night.

Since taking this trip I have met in Tucson a gentleman who has made ten or more trips to Pinacate, frequently using the same Papagoes we had. He has loaned me a most excellent map of that country and I find from it that there are but three tanks on or around the mountain on which we can rely. This gentleman showed me several very fine sheep heads gotten in that country and invited me to join him in another trip in the same vicinity next fall. And in spite of having sworn that I would never again crawl over the sharp rocks and cut my feet to pieces on the lava of that depressing and desolate mountain, I surely am going back again to Pinacate if I am in this neighborhood next fall. The sheep over there do not appear anxious to make my acquaintance, and the only thing to do is stay until they surrender.

ROCKY RIFFLE ON THE ROGUE RIVER

(Continued from page 28)

"But I did, by jingo! My first steelhead on a fly! . . . And I'm tell you, Brother, that it was some sport. I waded out on the gravel bar up there to where it drops off into deep water with submerged rocks making riffles and eddies. I had no more than forty feet to cast. And, I'm a son-of-a-gun if I didn't raise a steelhead the very first cast. Saw him! But he missed the fly. I cast again and again. I let my fly float down and was just about to whip it back when 'bingo!' as Ed says, I had a hard jerk. It sure made me tingle. But I wasn't ready. After that I settled down to mind my business. And a little below that place I hooked this bird. He shot up five feet out of that swift water. Leap! Say, these steelheads are wonders. This one came out five times while running downstream a hundred yards or more. He made the best fight any small fish ever gave me."

"Well, that's fine. I'll take back what I said and believe you," I replied.

"Did you hear Ken yell? I looked and saw his rod bent double, and a smash on

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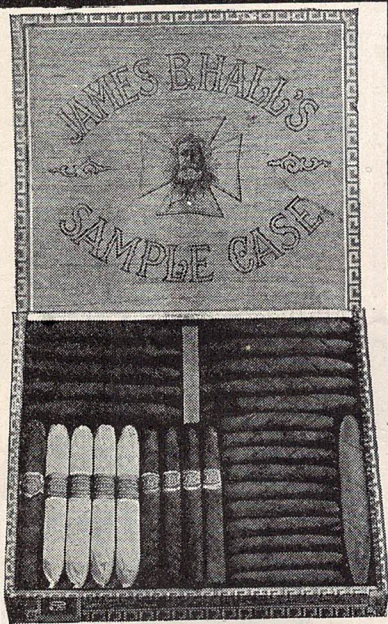


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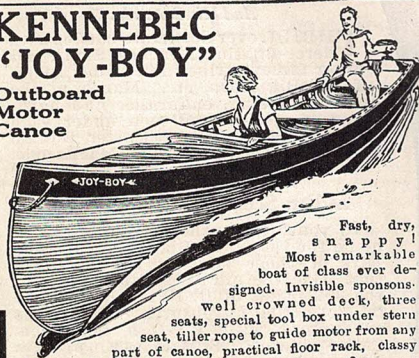
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the water. He had a big one on. But the darn fool pointed his rod right at it and pulled even when the fish was running. He forgot to run downstream. But that's a bad place where he is. Maybe he couldn't. He had the fish on only ten seconds. When it broke off, Ken nearly lost his balance. And he's been there ever since."

"Looks as if Ken and Ed, and George Takahashi too, were going to get dippy over this Rogue River fishing," I said, with amusement.

"Who wouldn't?" declared my erstwhile practical and unemotional brother. "I've fallen for it with a dull thud. It's just getting under my skin. I begin to understand Burnham's coming here for so many years. And I know as well as I'm alive that you will pronounce fly-fishing for steelhead on the Rogue just what Burnham thinks it is. You see, the fly makes the difference. I can't explain what that is. Hard as steelhead fight on a bait-rod and spinner, it is nothing to what they do when hooked on a fly. It's simply great. Just you wait!"

(To be continued)

CRISTIVOMER NAMAYCUSH

(Continued from page 31)

ern lakes, lake trout can be caught by the hundreds at such times. A No. 3 spinner with a pork rind strip of the bottled sort attached to the single hook also proves alluring. But, in the case of casting the No. 3 spinner or spoon and the rind attachment, use a light bait rod and a bait casting line of the twelve-pound test type with a sinker up ahead on the line, a matter of sixteen to eighteen inches, the sinker being of the long kind with a wire ring in either end—a sinker of the ordinary sort, in other words.

Or you will have better results by taking common strip lead and twisting this along the line to give it sufficient heft to bring it down. You can make your own strip lead by shaving a lead pipe. Wrap on a sufficient amount of this, covering a distance of four feet or so to bring the line down to the level desired. Strip lead, by the way, is far better than a sinker, owing to the fact that it is distributed over a certain space equally and does not hang in one spot, pulling the line sheer down as a result and making trolling more or less unnatural.

THERE are several types of the wobbling and darting spoons that are exceedingly "catchy" at this season of the year. One type of spoon, at least, is heavy enough so that it will sink of its own weight and still retain its gyrating motion or dart this way and that in the water, which is meant to give it the illusion of a disabled fish. An enthusiastic lake trout fisherman has stated there is one peculiarity about the wobbling spoon: it seems more perfectly fitted for catching lake trout than any other artificial lure.

There seems to be something about a wobbling spoon which a member of this fish species will willingly commit suicide on, although he will hang aloof from the regulation spoonhook affair. Because of its especially successful career in the lake trout field, the autumn angler for this fish would be wise who forthwith stocks up before he goes forth in his quest.

A live lure always proves interesting to the lake trout at any season of the year, but certainly when all fish are feeding heavy and the competition is great. A minnow of four or five inches in length

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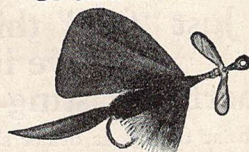
THE season's coming on—be here almost before you know it. So let's write a bit back and forth—pick out some fly tackle things now. It's good fun to open up the packages ahead of time—and we want to be well acquainted before the season is in full swing. For instance:—

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