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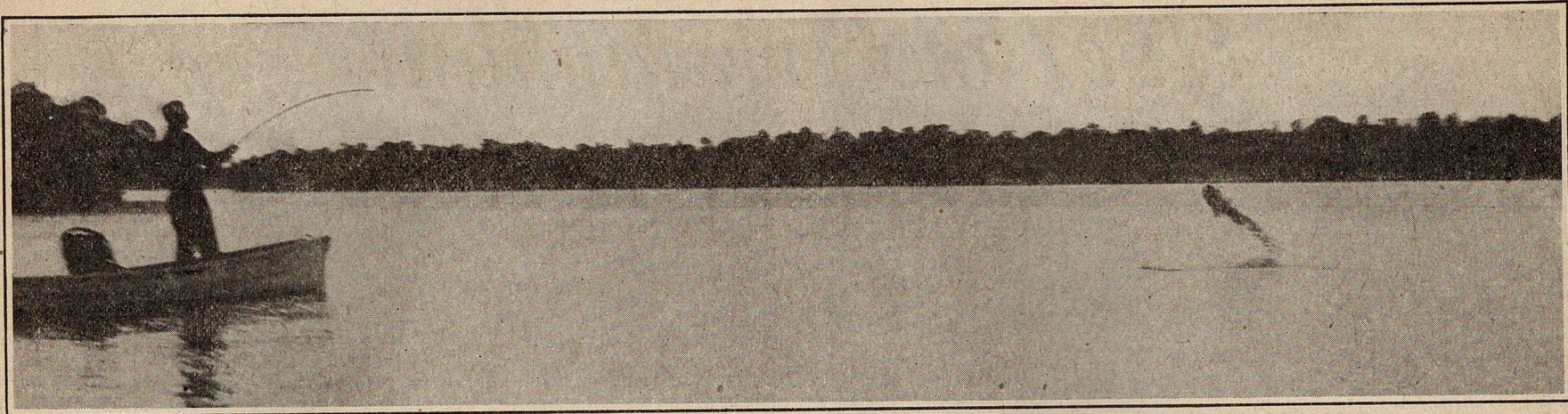
The OLDEST AGRICULTURAL MAGAZINE IN THE WORLD

Estelle Ripley
Mitchell
Iowa 13-20-24



PAINTED BY SAM BROWN

THE FEUD—By Albert Payson Terhune



THIS TARPON WAS A DOGGED FIGHTER AND GAVE R. C. ALL HE COULD DO TO HANDLE HIM

ON A MARCH morning we left the bay off the mouth of Shark River by a water route, to the north and west, and traversed meandering creeks far into the Everglades.

It was hot summer weather, even though the date said early spring. No sea breeze penetrated to these inland waters. The air was drowsy, still, humid. In a shady, narrow creek where the current glided perceptibly and the water looked deep we took to the skiff, and rowing along under the lee of one shelving bank of green we cast for black bass. They did not run large and were of the big-mouthed variety, yet they afforded welcome change and sport. Besides, fresh-water fish for the table was something new.

First we used spinners, and then a hideous red contraption with spinner and pork rind, both of which were quite fetching, especially the latter. R. C. was casting with a small light bait rod and I was using a fly rod. He handled the situation better than I, and very cheerfully acquainted me with the fact. Presently he hung his spinner over a mangrove branch, and pulling hard, broke his leader, which fact was productive of language.

Wild fowl were continually flying by and over us, some swooping up in alarm, others indifferent to our presence. I heard the squawk of crane or heron. Presently it occurred to me that I had in my box one of the Wilder-Dilg bass flies which bore my name. The genial inventors of these flies had assured me that all of them were wonderful, and particularly the one named after me. Now it chanced that I knew these gentlemen had made precisely the same claim to several other anglers, who, like me, had been honored by having flies named after them. It was very nice of Wilder and Dilg to flatter us that way, but I thought it a little fishy. Anyway, I had never tried the Zane Grey bug, and here was my opportunity. So I put it on.

WITH immense doubt and something of thrill, and a smattering of conscious pride, I made an elaborate cast. For the first time that day I cast where I had aimed. This was a shady nook, with golden depths, where a little eddy swirled.

As the fly lit on the water there came a flash, a boil and a plop. Something heavy went down and appropriated my treasured fly for himself, and with the fly part of my leader.

"Big snook!" exclaimed R. C. who had watched with interest. "Gimme one of those Z. G. bugs."

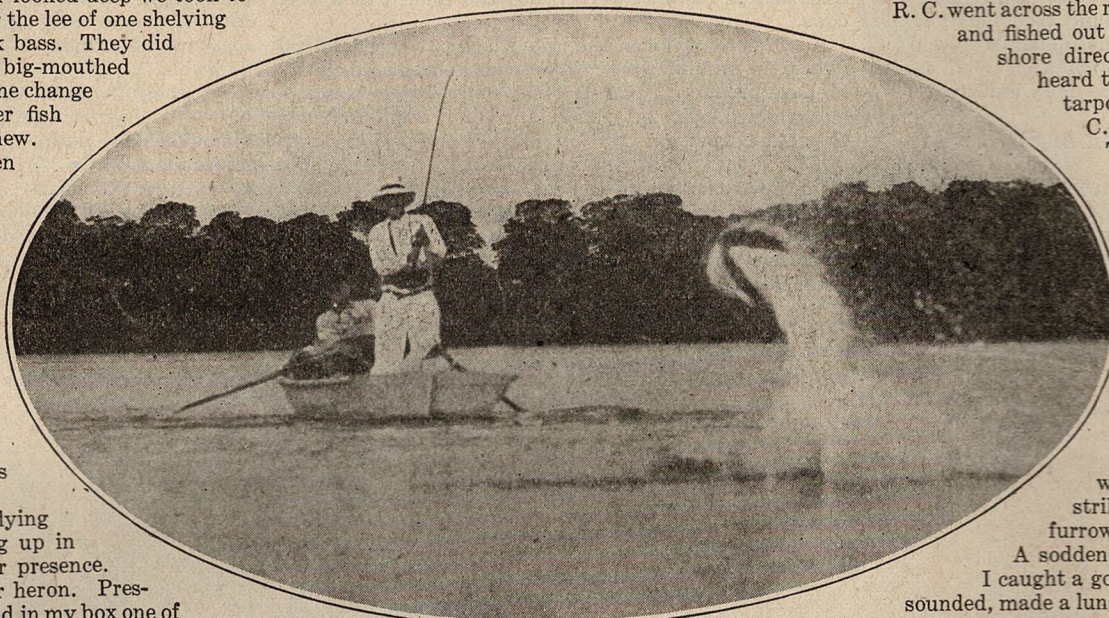
"It was the only one I had," I replied in distress.

When we quit fishing for black bass, which was owing to a sense of guilt at catching so many, we turned back on the long way to the launch. Presently Captain Thad took a side channel, where we had to push through the foliage. It opened into another of the tortuous lanes. But there was a difference in this one, in that the water was dead, like that of a pond. It was full of grass and moss and weed, likewise many fish, the only one of which I could name was a gar.

This lane of slack water ended in a wide basin that opened right into the Everglades. By using the skiff we crossed it, at least to get out and stand on that mysterious land called the glades. The grass in places was higher than my head. With some effort I wormed myself into the forks of a sapling on the bank, and was enabled to see out over the Everglades.

Fighting Fish

By ZANE GREY



THE WATER CRACKED AND UP SHOT A BEAUTIFUL TARPON, HIGH INTO THE AIR

It was a prairie of saw grass dotted by patches of trees, and in these I recognized what are named hammocks. They were round and dense, apparently growing on more elevated or at least solid ground. The color was green with a tinge of yellow. Far as eye could see stretched this waste land, this desert of grass and sedge and isolated trees. Wild fowl crossed my vision, near and far, lending color and life to the scene. Heat veils were rising, thin, transparent, yet somehow like smoke.

If I had been able to get high enough to see over that wilderness I felt the sight would have been vastly impressive. As it was I had to be content with a glimpse of the lonely glades.

When I returned to the skiff R. C. and the men were catching little alligators. I was to hear my first baby alligator grunting most vociferously for its parent. Interesting as this sound was, and the mystery of the hidden nook from whence the sound came, I was using most of my faculties to avoid meeting the youngster's mother, that Captain Thad assured us was near. Having had an education relative to alligators and crocodiles in Mexico, I repaired to the skiff, from which I watched my brother wading around in the muck, quite full of boyish glee.

WE SPENT another day at anchor in this inland bay, and then traveled with the outgoing tide down toward the sea. A channelled from Shark River into Harney River, and we traversed that, winding among islands, through narrow swift channels, at last out into the open water.

Harney River had many mouths, some of them mere leafy lanes leading from the mangroves to the sea. All along the front of the forest here were oyster beds, shallow reefs with passages cut by the tides. Perhaps owing to these reefs, which protected the mangroves, there was here no high, grim, scarred wall of trees, but a series of

billowy green islands, standing on the mangrove stilts. The groves and islets and bowers were enchanting to the eye, if one forgot about the hard nature of the mangroves and salt water.

Next morning we were off at seven o'clock, with all conditions favorable. This time Captain Thad took us up a good-sized river to a pond where it forked. Tarpon were rolling and working up the left fork, but we did not see one show in the other branch.

R. C. went across the river at the mouth of this left fork, and fished out from there. We tied up to the shore directly opposite. Now and then I heard the souse and "poff" of a rolling tarpon. They were working up on R. C.'s side.

The morning was hot and still—a very delightful opportunity for sand flies and mosquitoes, which they made the most of. I fought them with one hand while I held my rod with the other.

Almost at the start we heard R. C.'s warning whistle. All of us went through excitement and action, getting ready for a tarpon to show.

This fish, however, was a shark.

When we were all settled again to watch and wait R. C. had a real strike. I saw his line fly out, and a furrowed bulge on the water.

A sudden thumping splash followed; and I caught a good-sized tarpon halfway out. He sounded, made a lunge, and broke water again, coming out about the same as on the first break. I snapped this bit of action. Then to my chagrin the tarpon leaped swiftly, clear out, in a beautiful curve, wrestling so convulsively that we plainly heard him. He plunged out of sight. I wound my camera to another film. But he did not show again.

FOR half an hour I stood, camera in hand, waiting patiently for the fish to leap. He was a dogged fighter and gave R. C. all he could do to handle him without following him in the skiff. Sometimes he was two hundred yards down the river, and at others far up the branch. In one of his circles he came within thirty feet of us, swirling on the surface. R. C. eventually wore him out and brought him to Captain Knowles' eager hands.

"About hundred and thirty," called out Knowles. "We're pickin' a heavier one every day."

Two hours more brought no further results, and at length the tarpon ceased to roll or passed on out of sight. We went back to the houseboat.

I was glad of the fact that Knowles could make good use of all the tarpon we were likely to catch. He dressed them, and cut out choice portions, which he salted thoroughly and laid in the sun to dry. Knowles had been born and brought up among the conch fishermen and sponge fishermen of Key West; and he said they had taught him not to waste fish.

This is one reason why I think Key West will some day be renowned as a fishing resort. Another reason is that the fish are there in great numbers. Charles Frederick Holder wrote his best book, *The Log of a Sea Angler*, about waters adjacent to Key West. The Dry Tortugas, islands some sixty miles distant, offer opportunities to anglers who can stand hardships.

The next morning was warm, still, cloudy, dark, somehow threatening. How gloomy the long capes of mangroves! Impenetrable and inscrutable they seemed. In spite of the glamour of fishing and the lure of the open,

(Continued on Page 36)

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Fighting Fish

(Continued from Page 9)

this mangrove barrier and the glades beyond had fastened their repellent spell upon my mind. I began to reflect upon what strange and terrible effect this environment must have on living creatures, especially human beings.

The Everglades harbored the remnant of a remarkable race of Indians—the Seminoles; and several isolated settlements of fishermen.

We went fishing as usual, expecting a more favorable day, and better tides and clearer water. A fisherman should hope always, yet expect nothing for that particular occasion. Our favorite creek was muddy; the larger stream appeared deserted by tarpon; another place we found, a broad inland bay surrounded by islands, was full of tarpon that would not bite.

The hours dragged by. It was one of those occasions when I had to discover something new or else call it a profitless day.

About that time I had a bite. Something tugged at my line. Pesky little catfish! I paid no heed. Suddenly the line slid out swiftly, and before I could get into a position to strike, a fair-sized tarpon leaped, throwing the bait ten feet. R. C. saw this from his skiff below, and he called out tantalizingly, "April fool!" Thus I was reminded of the date.

AT DAWN we left Harney River, and making a wide detour to avoid shoals we went up the coast line to anchor at the mouth of Broad River. The low, broken forest line and the many islands gave this locality a different aspect, pleasing where the last had been forbidding.

Captain Thad's man, Bob King, an expert fisherman of the West Coast, had joined us with his boats; and he reported tarpon running thick in the channels entering Broad River. We were soon off with launches and skiffs.

Nearing the mouth of Broad River we ran in among beautiful islands. On the inside of these we found shoals and channels and little bays where tarpon were rolling. We ran the boats up on bars, and hurried preparations for fishing. The tide had just started to come in, and tarpon were lolling and rolling about, waiting for the rise of water.

"Lots of fish, an' some busters," remarked Thad. "But we're late. They won't hang here long."

"We'll hook one in five minutes," said King.

These matured men, fishermen all their lives, were eager and keen to see the sport begin. I had hardly settled back in my chair, to compose myself and really take time to sense things, when a fish took my line out steadily and evenly. When the slack was about gone I stood up, while R. C. hurriedly reeled in his bait. Suddenly my fish rushed. I put on the drag and struck. The hook caught and the line tightened. My rod was jerked down. My reel whizzed. Then the water cracked and up shot a beautiful tarpon, high into the air, turning clear over, and plunging back. He came out again—and then a third time, which leap was so spectacular as to elicit yells from all of us.

Then he plugged under the surface, giving me some trouble to keep him from getting too much line. By dint of hard pumping and winding I led him back near the boat. Soon he took another run, swifter and longer than the first, at the end of which he leaped and thrashed and plunged, tumbled out and back. I took advantage of this effort he had made, and while he was tired from his gymnastics I pumped and reeled as hard as the tackle would stand. He contested the matter with me, and for a while longer it was give and take. Half a dozen times he plunged partly out, wagging his head, spreading his gills.

At last I brought him to the boat, where Thad pronounced him over one hundred pounds.

MANY treacherous oyster reefs bar the entrance to Lossman's River. At low tide they stand out in narrow, black, ugly lines in close formation; and at high tide they are hidden—danger shoals known only to those familiar with the coast. They were like iron-toothed fences.

The main channel of the river ran out between picturesque capes, remarkable for

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a bit of open grassy land, and a winding strip of white beach so attractive to the eye otherwise repelled by scarred straight walls of mangroves. Shacks on both of these points attested to the fact that fishermen were of heroic mold and could live anywhere. One of these dwellings was made of thatched palm leaves, and set back a little way from the beach it had a primitive, almost a savage appearance.

We passed this habitation on our way to another mouth of Lossman's River, farther to the west. It was a series of rough little channels between scrubby mangrove islands; and the tide was so low we had to anchor the launch and take to the skiffs. Then it was a matter of hard rowing.

When we came to a point where our creek split round an island, R. C. and King took the right fork while Captain Thad and I continued on the left. And we were presently delighted to glide out into a sunny open stretch of amber creek, shaded along the banks by drooping foliage.

THAD saw the fin of a tarpon, and I discerned the well-known circling ripple of another. Next we ran right alongside a sleeping tarpon, just under the surface. He looked green and gold. Thad splashed at him with an oar. What a surge and roar he made! Then we saw the break of one close ahead and the wave of another farther on. We heard R. C. and King before we could see where their creek joined ours. They were splashing at a great rate. Presently they appeared round a green corner, both standing up poling with oars.

"Hey, there's tarpon here," called King. "We'll chase them down to the pool."

The water was growing shallow and stagnant. It had the color of clear hemlock water of the mountains of Pennsylvania or New York. Our companions turned in ahead of us, and at once began to point out tarpon, and to splash at one here and there. These fish passed us, swift, pale gleams.

"Hear them?" shouted Thad, "Listen. Sounds like a gunshot far off."

Just before that I had heard what certainly seemed like the report of a gun. But it was a noise made by a tarpon under the water. I listened with keener ears.

"There's some more," yelled King.

"One's a whale," yelled R. C.

I saw waves in the water ahead, and then arrowy gleams that sped by. Thrumm! Thrumm! The sound was distinct and heavy, absolutely new to me, and very thrilling.

"There's a bunch comin'," called Thad.

By peering intently down I espied one big tarpon making the swift tail movement that produced the deep hollow sound. No wonder! It had great power; and was indeed a singular flip of a fish tail. Both Captain Thad and King averred that the tarpon was the only fish which could make it. I believed, however, if other large swift fish could be met in such shallow water, they might make this thrumming sound. It would be even more interesting, to be sure, if the tarpon alone was able to do it.

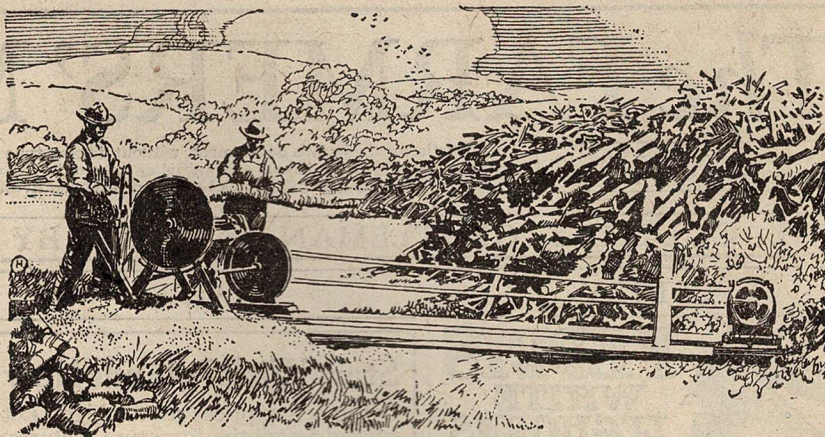
The water shoaled until it was scarcely three feet deep; and the fish our comrades frightened shot by us in plain sight. Many thirty, forty, fifty pound tarpon, and some big ones made furrows in the water as they passed. They were as quick as minnows. I had not known before this what a shy fish the tarpon was.

WE WENT as far up the creek as we could force our way under the mangrove branches; and we routed out tarpon by the score. Then we turned back, and proceeded to splash, and pound on the boat.

In due time we arrived at the turn of the creek where it widened into the large pool. Here to our great satisfaction tarpon were rolling and breaking in numbers to excite us with extravagant hopes. Taking up stations opposite each other we began to fish, assuredly with the strange fallacy that possesses fishermen.

The tarpon rolled and broke and puffed, then settled down for a while, and again rose to the surface. All around the pool and in the middle they surfaced, lazily and sluggishly. But never one of them bit! At last I gave up, more convinced than ever before that tarpon are shy, sensitive, capricious fish.

EDITOR'S NOTE—This is the third of five articles by Mr. Grey on Florida fishing. The next will appear in an early issue.



Just Common Sense

FARM electrification, like farming itself, is a matter of common sense.

Farmers do not want electricity unless they can use it profitably.

But how can they learn to use it profitably? By experiment.

That is exactly what is now being done.

A National Committee of economists and engineers has organized state groups of farmers to whom electric service is now rendered. Each state group, with the assistance of its agricultural college and farm-paper editors, applies electricity in old and new ways. It keeps accurate records of operating and producing costs for comparison with the costs of unelectrified years. Electricity is being adapted to farming, and farming to electricity.

From time to time the results of these experiments will be made known. Farmers will not have to wait years before they can throw switches and fill silos electrically.

Even those farmers who have long had electricity, because their local conditions made it profitable to apply it, will receive the benefit. For they will see how they can make even greater use of electric service.

Thus the common-sense method of gathering the facts experimentally is helping along the work of farm electrification.

The Committee in charge of the work is composed of economists and engineers representing the American Farm Bureau Federation, the Departments of Agriculture, the Interior and Commerce, the Power Farming Association of America, the American Society of Agricultural Engineers and the National Electric Light Association.

A booklet has been published by the Committee. It will be sent on request free of charge. Read it and pass it on to your neighbor. Write for it either to Dr. E. A. White, American Farm Bureau Federation, 58 E. Washington St., Chicago, Ill., or to the National Electric Light Association, at 29 West 39th Street, New York City.

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