

FEBRUARY, 1926

25 CENTS

Field & Stream

AMERICA'S MAGAZINE FOR THE OUTDOORSMAN

In This Issue

ZANE GREY

"Rocky Riffle on the Rogue River"

A Story of Steelhead Trout



FIELD AND STREAM PUBLISHING CO.

Ray P. Holland, Editor



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FIELD AND STREAM PUBLISHING CO. Publisher—ELTINGE F. WARNER
45 WEST 45th STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.

New England Advertising Office, 194 Boylston St., Boston, Mass. Western Advertising Office, Wrigley Building, Chicago, Ill.

Issued Monthly. Yearly Subscription \$2.50 in advance. Single Copies, 25c. Foreign Postage, \$1.00. Canadian Postage, 50c.

ELTINGE F. WARNER, President
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Entered at the New York Post-Office as Second-Class Matter, March 25, 1898, under act of March 3, 1879.

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Field & Stream

DONT FIGHT YOUR FISH AND GAME
GIVE THEM A FIGHTING CHANCE

FEBRUARY



1926

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

WHERE fishermen, both expert and novice, angle for that trout of trouts, the steelhead. Beginning Zane Grey's best fishing story—a tale of fighting fish and fast water

THAT old adage, "the third time is the charm," worked truthfully for me on my 1924 trip to Oregon. It was a wonderful fishing experience, beginning disastrously for me, wearing on through the most miserable and inexplicable bad luck, and winding up gloriously.

It had been the driest of seven successive dry seasons. Mount Shasta was bare of snow, a remarkable evidence of a lack of precipitation in that region, and the Oregon peaks shone naked in the sunlight. The forests were as dry as tinder. At Medford we learned the Rogue was nearly two feet lower than for many years. R. C. and I hailed this information with satisfaction, as we had not forgotten that formidable river of swift currents, treacherous rocks and deep, icy waters.

Also, and what was even more gratifying, we learned that an unprecedented run of steelhead trout was on. Fine catches were being made by anglers all the way from Medford to Grants Pass. Most of these fish were being taken on spinners, which lures R. C. and I were averse to, unless as a last resource.

AT Grants Pass, however, Mr. Wharton, the genial sporting-goods man of that town and also an expert angler, informed us the fly-fishing for steelhead was the best he had experienced in all his years there. He could not account for this remarkable fact, especially as a low river was not supposed to yield good fishing. Steelhead come up from the sea, in two runs, usually in July and September, the latter being considered the best.

We purchased about all the waders, flies and lines Mr. Wharton had in stock, besides a goodly supply of other tackle; and with a truck full of camping

essentials and food, we made haste to the place I called Rocky Riffle. No doubt it had other names, but I never heard them.

It was on September 23rd that we pitched our tents on a high, open bank

Zane Grey—fisherman

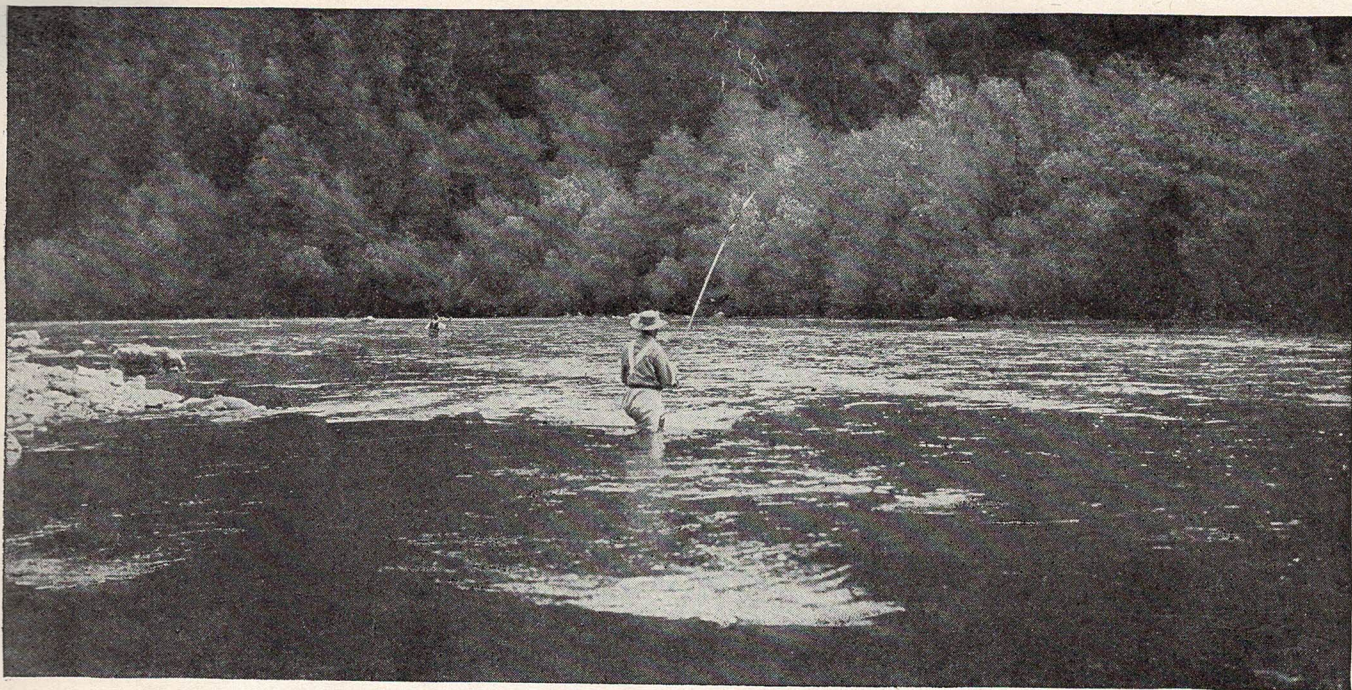


above the Rogue. We calculated on getting the morning sun and afternoon shade, always a desirable arrangement for a camping trip. The day was hot and work pleasant. A smoky haze of Indian summer filled the winding valley. High mountains, densely wooded, sloped up from the green and white river. In fact, the river valley was V-shaped, with high banks and benches at the base of the mountains.

Behind our camp rose the dark green wall of the forest. Great fir trees lorded it over the pines, oaks and maples. The gold and red and purple of autumn contrasted beautifully with the rich green. In several places we could look up through a notch between high slopes to see wild, black-fringed peaks, sharp against the blue sky. Just below us the river made a wide bend, full of rapids, from which an incessant and murmurous melody came.

THIS delightful camp site had one bad drawback, and that was the river road which skirted the base of the mountains. Fortunately, we could not see it and were aware of it only when the hum of a motor car sounded above the roar of the river. If there is anything I abominate on a hunting or fishing trip, it is sight or sound of an automobile. In a case like this, however, there did not seem to be an alternative, and I had to swallow my resentment.

This trip, R. C. and Takahashi, long uncomplaining subjects for my writing proclivities, had been reinforced by new comrades, Ed and Ken, my drivers, and Chester, one of the camera boys. Altogether they bade fair to fulfill my exacting expectations for sport and fun. Chester cared only to fish with a camera, but Ken and Ed, having had some little trout fishing, were keen as whips to see something



R.C. and I separated, waded in up to our hips, and began casting

of the wonderful steelhead. R. C., remembering his failure to achieve success on our two former trips, was eager and determined.

And lastly Takahashi, the great little Japanese man who had helped make so many adventures profitable for me, seemed to present the best possibilities for an inquiring story-teller. George had fished some for salt-water fish at Avalon and he had showed signs of obsession. But the kind of fishing we expected to do on the Rogue was Greek to him.

I had provided him with some good tackle and was ready to give him instructions. Now George never took kindly to instruction. Sometimes he would ask for information or advice, though not often. I knew how to inspire him, and at once began dropping judicious remarks to that end. He was remarkably intelligent, could lay his hand to anything and was exceedingly skilful.

George had more patience, persistence and ambition than any man I had ever encountered. Physically he was a marvel, but his small stature would handicap him tremendously in the wading necessary to fish the Rogue River. George was not much over four feet high. He would be lost in a man's size set of waders.

SO what with the delicacy of manipulation in casting a fly, and George's inordinate assurance, and the tremendous handicap under which he must labor, I anticipated immense fun out of him. In fact, my calculations regarding all my comrades seemed tinglingly full of thrills.

By four o'clock we had our tasks of making camp complete, and George was getting early supper. Owing to the high mountain in the west the sunset fell quickly, and with the shade and shadows came cool air that gave our camp fire an added charm. George was burning dead oak, a hard wood that makes a wonderful fire. The smoke was not so bad for the eyes as that from pine or cottonwood or cedar.

"Oak wood fine for burn," said George, "but aspen wood more better."

How pleasant and restful the camp! It afforded me an immense relief. For three months I had endured the glare of the

sea, the blaze of the sun, the strange enmity of the vast water wastes. Two months at Avalon fishing for swordfish, and one in Nova Scotia fishing for tuna, and then the travel, had tired me out more than I had realized. How good to be here, in the green dark cool mountains, near a ruddy camp fire, with loneliness and beauty of nature at hand, and in my ears the music of a murmuring stream!

After a bounteous supper, which included apple sauce made from Oregon apples—than which no more luscious dessert could be made for me—I undertook the pleasant task of talking to the boys.

"This Rogue is a dangerous river. The rocks are slippery and deceiving," I held forth, "the current is strong and swift, and the water cold as ice. You simply must not lose your balance and slip at a bad place. If you do, it is all day with you. Hob-nailed boots are necessary, and waders, too. That is why it is so dangerous to fall in. I, for one, couldn't swim weighted down. But I can't stand this ice-water without waders. It's a good idea for two fellows to fish close together, so in case of accident one can help the other."

"Now as to fishing for these steelhead, try fly casting. Practice casting until you can place a fly forty or fifty feet. If you can't catch them on a fly, try a spinner. But if you ever do catch a steelhead on a fly, you will not care for any other method."

"You must learn where to look for steelhead. They favor swift water at the head of rapids or at the foot. They like eddies behind rocks, and deep places under ledges, and clean gravelly bars. The matter of finding them is something you will have to learn."

ALTHOUGH I talked with assurance, I knew perfectly well that I had a great deal to learn myself. I had fished with Wharton and Adair, the Grants Pass anglers; and most of my instruction had come personally from Fred Burnham and Mr. Carlon, both wonderful exponents of the highest class fly-fishing. I knew enough to realize that the Rogue River steelhead had no equal in fresh water for speed, strength, cunning and endurance.

Why these trout are peculiarly savage and game, infinitely more so than other species, even than steelhead in other rivers, I cannot say. Theories have been advanced for this remarkable fact, but are scarcely convincing to me. The one thing that I lean to as an explanation is the ice-cold water. The Rogue, no doubt, has its source under the cold depths of Crater Lake.

THE boys were enthusiastic, and got out their tackle and began to cast in the open glade before our camp. They were all amusing, but George Takahashi was the funniest. If he had not been so deadly serious, I would have laughed as he tried to follow my casting instructions. Ed and Ken were born rivals, just as R. C. and I had been as boys, and were still.

It occurred to me that it might be well for me to rig up my own tackle and make a few casts before dark. While at home in Altadena I had practiced faithfully, and I could do fairly well, as casting goes. Of course, I had fished for years in the East, using a fly for both trout and bass. But I measured my abilities by the marvelous casting of Burnham and Carlon, and had no illusions about myself.

Still I could attain sixty feet, sometimes at rare intervals better than that. Such distance, however, in my opinion, was far from enough in the Rogue River. I had pinned my faith on an 8-ounce Cosmic fly-rod, one of the marvelous old rods not made any more. It was heavy, and tired me when I practiced; but I imagined I could use it.

On the occasion of my fishing trip to the Rogue the year before, Burnham had used a 7¾-ounce rod, and Carlon one almost the same. So I thought I was on the right track. I had given the boys 7½-ounce rods, and R. C.'s was 7. The idea of trying to whip these desperately fighting steelhead on a light rod had not occurred to me as possible. And, it seemed, on this evening my preliminary casting left nothing to be desired.

Twilight had begun to steal down the valley. I went through the trees to the bank of the river, to have a look at the rapids and to be alone before night set in.

Rocky Riffle on the Rogue River



Just below our camp the river made a wide bend, full of rapids. The place I called Rocky Riffle

The bank was high and densely wooded, and thick with deep grass and vines. I found a huge, fallen fir tree, fully 200 feet long, that projected out over the bank, beyond the foliage, and almost to the water. It slanted at a rather precarious angle, but I walked down the trunk until I reached the branches, and from there found safe going until I got out over the water. Here I took a comfortable seat.

The Rogue made a big bend at this point, and all that bend was rapid water, some of it white. On my side the bank sheered down straight, dark and green with timber. Across the river, a wide gravel bar led to a bold red bluff, spotted with pines and oaks, and this in turn led the eye to the black, towering mountain beyond. On the moment an eagle sailed across the purpling sky.

THE air seemed filled with rush and roar of water. No other sound was distinguishable. I could see where the wide stream, gliding from round the bend above, grew swifter with a glancing smooth current, and divided its hurrying volume over a gravel bar on the far side and dark deep channels between brown ledges on my side. Below these, the water broke into a most alluring ripple, and then went on into swift massed volume, to pour white and roaring over a ledge into a rough pool, and from that over another and lesser fall into a narrow curved channel which soon glided, spotted with foam, round another bend.

The beauty and melody of this river bend quite hindered for some moments the thought of fishing there. Finally, when that did occur to me, it gave me a thrill, and at the same instant a sensation of dismay. For if any of us did succeed in hooking one of these fighting trout at the head of that rapid, how in the world would we ever catch him? No doubt about the fish rushing down the glancing incline, into the heavy current, over the roaring fall, and on through—assuredly to freedom!

Nevertheless, the idea of such adventure was alluring. And I soliloquized: "A fellow might get out on the bank and chase the steelhead downstream."

After that calculation, I spent a quiet half hour there above the murmuring stream, into which reverie dreams of fish did not enter. The place was lonely, beautiful, wild; melancholy, too, with the autumn colors and the imminence of night. I was surprised to find the air only pleasantly cool, despite the lateness of the season. It seemed like a summer evening in the mountains. In fact, the atmosphere felt a little as if it presaged rain.

Finally the darkening shadows warned me to make an ascent of the fallen tree before it was too late to see. This I did, and soon espied a bright red camp fire through the foliage.

Like the Indians, I had pitched my tepee with the door facing the east, so that I would be awakened by the sun. But this morning it was a rustling patter of rain that roused me from peaceful slumber.

The valley was full of gray cloud; only the lower part of the timbered slopes could be seen, and a warm showery rain was falling. Rain to a camper is not usually welcome, but in this case we were all thankful for it. Oregon was as dry as tinder. There were some forest fires, and all the remote wooded districts were threatened.

"Let it rain! We got here first!" quoth R. C., surprisingly facetious for him, considering the early hour and his antipathy for any weather except California sunshine.

AFTER breakfast, R. C. and I donned waders and rubber coats, and sallied forth valorously to meet certain defeat. We had been there before. And the boys, equipped to suit their particular fancies, started off with the air of conquerors.

R. C. and I had been told to cross the river below the fall, and fish the rapids beyond the bend. Whereupon we took a trail leading down through the woods and eventually found an old flat-bottom skiff, half full of water. Sight of it recalled our many years of bass fishing on the Delaware. What R. C. and I did not know about flat-bottom skiffs and rocky rifts was hardly worth learning. And in fact the Rogue resembled the Delaware, only it was deeper, narrower, swifter, and

marked more by rapids and high mountains, and lonely wild stretches.

We bailed out the boat with tin cans, and in place of oars we used a couple of boards as paddles. I did not quite like the idea of trusting this old scow in the deep swift current we had to cross, especially as it led into rapids a hundred yards below. But fishermen incur risks, and perhaps Providence has more care of them than of hunters. By paddling strenuously we crossed safely.

THEN we went downstream round the bend, where we saw a goodly stretch of fast water leading into a widening riffle. The day was dark, with lowering clouds and drizzling rain—quite an ideal day for steelhead, though I did not fully appreciate it then. At the head of this rapid, big rocks split the current, and little grassy islands helped to make the spot an attractive and difficult place to fish.

R. C. and I separated, and waded in up to our hips, and began casting. Alas for thrilling expectations and vain assurances! I could not reach the places where I was sure the steelhead lay. The rocks and grass behind me, and willows on the bank, at once interfered with my back cast. Half the time I was snagged and the other half was devoted to freeing myself.

I moved slowly downstream, and came at length to a part of the shallow water and bank clear of high obstructions. Once or twice on the back cast my fly ticked something. I got it out fairly well and tinglingly watched it float down to disappear. But nothing happened in the way of a strike. Often I glanced downstream to see what R. C. was doing. He was casting laboriously and having his troubles wading over the slippery rocks.

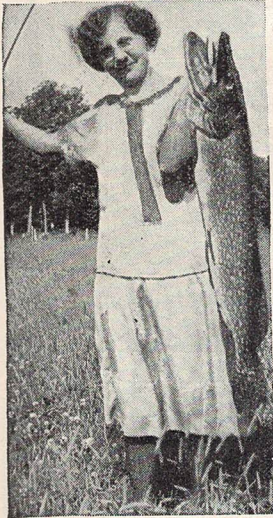
The exercise was little short of strenuous. Encumbered with the heavy rubber coat, I became uncomfortably warm. I took it off. The rain had a habit of showering profusely and then letting up for a while. Besides, it was not a cold rain. In fact, it appeared pleasant, wetting face and hands.

After casting for a long time, I happened to look at my fly. The point of the hook

(Continued on page 68)

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OLD HULDY

(Continued from page 59)

them all—28's, 20's, 16's, 12's and 10's. I have two gun cabinets filled to overflowing with as pretty doubles as you'd care to see. I'm gun-poor, and still I occasionally acquire another. But when I go shooting, it's old Huldy that goes along.

We're pals. She's been rejuvenated with new works on three different occasions. One of the first slide-action pumps on the market, she's been true and faithful. When my hand closed over the sliding forearm, I felt better. A self-satisfaction came over me, a feeling of confidence that certain geese were in an awfully bad way.

I commenced to recount in my mind different times when old Huldy had messed up a flock of this size beyond recognition. I lay there and watched a sight few gunners ever see. I watched these birds feed, unconscious that I was within thirty yards of them. I watched them argue and quarrel with each other.

AND then I gave them the surprise of their lives. With one movement I was on my feet. Old Huldy was in my hands. Really, it was a cinch. Four of those geese were as good as dead—good, clean kills. Did they bounce in the air? Ask any goose hunter what they did.

Just as they reached the top of that bounce I cut down the bird that was farthest from me, with the intention of working back as the birds flew away. Then it happened. Huldy failed me. She jammed. I did my best to work the action, but she was stuck. Not only grass but sand had clogged her inside workings. Surely I must have been rolling over on her during my nap. She had never treated me this way before, and probably she will never do it again.

But they were gone. I watched them until they were a fading V headed for the Mississippi. Who cares? I got the thrill and a great big 12-pound gander. Bill was still shooting quail. I could hear the pop of his gun, and occasionally when the wind drifted just right I could hear him saying gentle things to his beloved dogs. He was happy, and so was I.

ROCKY RIFFLE ON THE ROGUE RIVER

(Continued from page 13)

had been broken off. Whereupon I sat down to meditate. I had been fishing all the time with a barbless hook. Slowly the old associations awakened in my memory. This kind of accident had been the bane of my fly-fishing on former trips.

As I changed my fly I had a queer mental reaction. "Well," I ejaculated soberly, "I bet I have a time getting on to this steelhead game!"

Somehow I just felt that way. Both former trips to the Rogue had only acquainted me with the fascination and difficulty of catching these steelhead on a fly. I would be extremely fortunate if I succeeded in taking even some small ones. So that incident struck a rather discordant note, which I could not dispel. Perhaps a fisherman is superstitious. Assuredly he is moved by many illogical fancies.

"I've a hunch it's a bad start," I concluded, standing up and wading out.

Yet even on the moment I realized how perfectly foolish that was. I wondered how many anglers would ridicule this attitude and how many would understand.



HILDEBRANDT BAITs

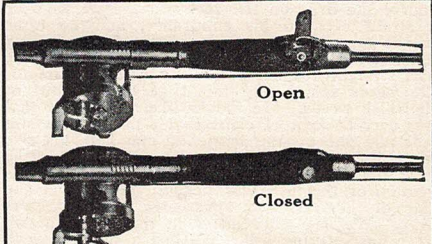
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Thousands of fishing excursions had started badly for me. It seemed on retrospection that they had all started so. It was a fatality. I was beset by a bad-luck complex. There was nothing to do then but fling defiance to the gods of the fishes and, whatever befell, make this present fishing trip turn out well.

I spent hours wading, casting, then resting a moment, and going on. I never had a strike or saw a fish. Rain fell intermittently. The clouds lightened and darkened. The Rogue rolled on melodiously, with its babble and gurgle, and roar. Wild-fowl winged swift flight up and down the river. Time passed, and at length R. C.'s voice hailed me from the bank. I waded out to where he sat on a rock.

"Raise any steelhead?" he inquired.

"I don't believe there's a fish of any kind in this river," I replied, wearily.

"I HAD two strikes and saw one trout," he said, reflectively. "I couldn't get my fly where I wanted it. . . . I'm tired. It sure is hard work. Let's mosey back to camp."

To my amaze, it was near three o'clock when we got there. The boys were all back and I observed they appeared partial to the camp fire. Light, misty rain was falling. Ken and Ed reported that they had tried fishing from the bank at various places. The hip boots I had given them were worse than none at all, they said. They slipped at every step.

"Awful river!" concluded Ed. "I'm going to wade without boots, so when I fall in I won't drown. We saw fish jump. I'll bet there's lots of them. George Takahashi broke his tackle on one."

My eager interrogation of George elicited a smiling reply from him. "Sure had big one on," he said. "I fish while with fly. No good. Then I use spoon. Right down by camp where water all swift. I throw spoon long time. Then I have bite. He pull awful hard. Run far. My! he run all line off reel. I try go along bank. But he swim fast an' break my leader."

"Well!" I exclaimed, with a thrill. "Did you see the fish?"

"Sure. He jump first thing. Great big white fish all pink. He jump lots. An' shake himself like dog."

"Steelhead," said R. C. "Too bad, George. You must run down-stream after these fish."

"I run fast. But no good. Awful bad place. Fish take line all off. I fall down. He give hard jerk. Bust!"

"George," I replied, with a laugh, "you have given an eloquent and exact prophecy of what is going to happen to me."

(To be continued)

THE WEB-FEET OF MATTA-MUSKEET

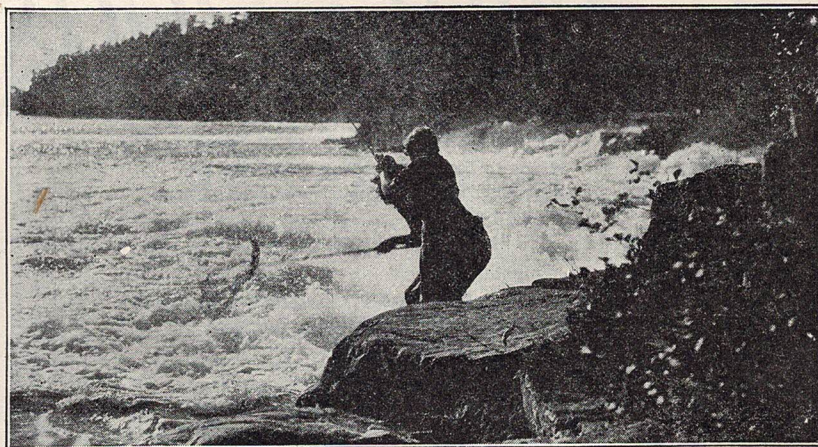
(Continued from page 20)

sense of surrender that we turned to lunch at ten o'clock, for by noon we would have to go in.

Foreshadowed disappointment did not prevent the coffee and sandwiches from tasting very good, however, and we had quite switched our attention to eating when suddenly we heard our geese start talking. Instantly we swept the white lunch wrappings out of sight and froze to the bottom of our blind, nearly dislocating our necks in a frantic effort to look every way at once and locate the flock the decoys had seen. There they were—still far away but coming, and a goodly number, twelve at least.

Our geese, lonely and bored from three

RICHARDSON STEEL RODS



At French River . . . Photograph courtesy Canadian Pacific

A perfect casting action . . .

Richardson Steel Rods bring to fishermen a perfect casting action . . . a balance, a "feel", a flexibility and strength rarely found heretofore. Richardson Rods are light . . . and cast with the ease of a tournament rod. Developed by specialists . . . tested in action . . . praised by Ozark Ripley, Bob Becker, and others who know.

An extra value . . . at popular prices

With your Richardson Steel Rod you are master of the situation all the way. When the big fellow hits . . . the alert flexibility of your Richardson Rod instantly telegraphs the strike to your hand. You set the hook almost automatically. Then play him as you will. The hook won't tear out of his mouth. No fear for the strength or the "give and take" of your rod. You can handle the big fellow to perfection.

Richardson Steel Rods are made with an ideal . . . a determination to produce the best steel fishing rods. Every Richardson Rod goes through 26 separate inspections before its final test. Then a "make-or-break" test to insure its absolute perfection. That's why Richardson pays a 22% premium for steel . . . a special tempered spring steel of extraordinary tensile strength and flexibility. Dollar for dollar Richardson Steel

Rods, at moderate prices, offer extra value. A value made possible only by large production. A quality safeguarded by extra manufacturing care and the most minute inspection.

More than 500,000 Richardson Rods are in service today. Handsome in appearance as well as perfect in action.

Write for Free Illustrated Catalog

Full and detailed descriptions in our 24-page catalog. Study Richardson patented features. Open the season ready for record catches and a season of thrills. Harrimac Landing Nets also made by Richardson . . . and featured in our catalog. Send for your copy today. We'll tell you, too, where you can examine Richardson Steel Rods . . . and judge their superb quality yourself.



\$100.00 for a Name

for this Wiggling Spoon! A New Wonderful Fish Getter!

Length of body 2 3/4 in.
Weight 3/4 oz.
Price \$1.00
Made of brass—highly nickel-plated.
No. S-1 equipped with feathered treble at end.
No. S-2 equipped with hook for attaching pork rind.

THIS new 1926 Wiggling Spoon wants to be rechristened! There's nothing else like it! Does not revolve or twist line! Has natural minnow-like swimming movement—like other Creek Chub Lures! And a guaranteed Fish Getter!

It is not necessary for contestants to purchase this lure

SEE this Wiggling Spoon at your dealers—or order one direct from us! Try it out and see for yourself how it acts in the water! Contest closes July 31st, 1926! The officers of this company will be the judges. Winner's name will be announced in September, 1926, issue of this magazine. Address all names and paragraphs to Contest Manager,

CREEK CHUB BAIT COMPANY
1132 So. Randolph Street, Garrett, Ind.

WE will pay \$100 to the person sending us the best name and the best description of this lure—and why every fisherman should use it! Try to keep descriptive paragraph within fifty words! In case of tie, the paragraph submitted will be deciding factor!