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THE BOY ANGLERS







MEXICAN JOE AND HIS BIG SHARK.



# THE BOY ANGLERS

THEIR ADVENTURES

IN THE GULF OF MEXICO, CALIFORNIA,  
THE PACIFIC AND ATLANTIC OCEANS, AND  
THE LAKES AND STREAMS OF CANADA

BY

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ADVENTURES OF TORQUA, LIFE OF LOUIS AGASSIZ, ETC.



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## PREFACE

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FEW lovers of the legitimate and manly sports and pastimes stand so near to nature as the anglers—those happy boys, old and young, who go a-fishing and match their skill, delicate rods and lines against the clever game fishes which, if the angler is a true sportsman, have all the advantage. The results to such a boy are not numbers, nor pounds, but a fair bag, the memory of charming days in the forest, hours wading down some musical stream, where the leaves rustle in the soft wind and whisper secrets which he understands; where the swirl of the waters tells its gentle story, and where the air is laden with the rich perfume of the woods. These are among the legitimate catches of the rod fisherman, and the creel full of memories is drawn upon and slowly emptied on many a winter night.

In the present volume I have told the angling stories of some real boys—not figures of the imagination—boys who have taken the tarpon, the silvery acrobat of

the Mexican Gulf; who have played the leaping tuna from one to six hours, and brought it to gaff in right royal fashion with rod and thread-like line; boys who have taken the salmon in fresh water and salt, the ouananiche, the grayling, trout, bass and ten-pounder.

Some of these boys I knew and fished with, and one I know better than all the rest, who here in grateful acknowledgment remembers the "Commodore," the old and well-loved martinet who shaped his early ideas of what constituted fair sport, and who stood for all that was honorable in the field of angling, on one of the greatest of the American fishing grounds. While this is a story of actual adventure, my young readers may read between the lines that it is also an appeal for a game that can not speak for itself, an appeal for every young angler to stand by the game laws and establish the fashion of fair play to the fishes. While the volume is in no sense a compendium on angling, I have indicated in the various chapters the methods and tackle employed by many of the most successful anglers, and have described many grounds in the Atlantic, Pacific, Gulf of Mexico and Canada where boys have found good fishing and happy days.

C. F. H.

PASADENA, CAL.



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PART I

ANGLING ON THE PACIFIC COAST





## CHAPTER I

### THE TACKLE-DEN

THERE was something in the wind—there was no question about that. It was not the perfume from the mass of heliotrope which climbed the wall, fascinating scores of humming-birds and butterflies. It was not the burden which the soft “trade” brought from the violet-beds as it swept along; indeed, no one could tell what it was, no one but an old man with a very comical red face, who stood amid a circle of roses, with head lifted like a hound scenting its game. One hand was held to his ear, as though listening; while with the other he raised a big pink-lipped conch-shell to his mouth and blew a mighty blast. Out boomed the strange sound again; and as it died away, to the relief of the countless birds of the garden, two boys, breathless and excited, rushed into the circle, almost knocking him over.

“Whist ye!” said the old man in a quaint brogue, half Scotch, half Irish; “whist!” raising his hand to command attention.

The boys stopped and listened. A mocking-bird on the roof scolded at them loudly. The house-finches

caroled and sang on, and the great eucalyptus-plumes which towered aloft, sighed and rustled in the soft wind-drowsy and gentle music—that was all.

“What is it, Robert?” cried the oldest boy. “I don’t hear anything, I don’t see anything. Why did you call?”

“D’ye know what day it is, lad?” answered the old man, not relaxing his listening attitude or the tense expression of his face.

“Why, the first of May,” was the reply.

“And what goes with the first of May?” asked the old sea-dog, for he was one, dyed in the wool and retired after many honors and experiences. “Ye give it up, eh? Well, well. Why, it’s the fishin’. Can’t ye smell it, lads? The fever’s in the air and comin’ down the wind from the sea. List to that,” and he held out the old conch; “clap yer ear to that.”

Jack took the shell and forthwith held it to his ear.

“Now, sir, what d’ye hear comin’ down the wind?”

“I hear,” replied Jack, trying to look preternaturally grave and closing his eyes, “I hear the roaring of the deep sea.”

“Aye,” said the old man; “what then?”

“I hear the moaning of the wind.”

“Aye, and what then?”

“I hear——”

“Well, blither and shakes! What d’ye hear, Mr. Jack? Sure ye’re deaf as a tailor’s goose, for I smell it; it’s in the air,” and taking the shell he again placed

it against his ear, his face becoming at once illumined with expressions comical and grave. "I hear the yaller-tails a-bitin' along shore; and bonito—yes, I'm sure that was bonito," he added, shifting the conch to the other ear. "And what's this?" pretending to catch a difficult message. "Sartin. Yer father's to take us all a-fishin' if my rheumatism's willin'; yes, that's it, if my rheumatism's willin'," and the old sailor lowered the shell and glanced at his companions, who, as he said, had shipped with him in early days and learned all they knew about fishing and sailing under his tutelage.

"You don't mean it, Robert!" and the boys rushed upon him and grasped his big horny hands.

"But I do," replied the old mariner, pulled into the circle as the boys joined hands and danced, dragging him around in a frantic ring-around-a-rosy in which he joined as far as he could, singing as he pranced, "Heave O! the gallant fishers that ye are; heave O! the gallant fishers that ye are!" stopping suddenly as he caught sight of a lady and gentleman standing by, laughing heartily.

"The fishing-fever when it comes down the wind appears to be good for the gout, Robert," said the latter.

"It does luk that way, sir," replied the old man; then aside, "them boys'll be the death of me yet."

"It's true, then, that we're to have a fishing-trip to the islands?" asked Jack.

"The Commodore is the town-crier of this ranch,"

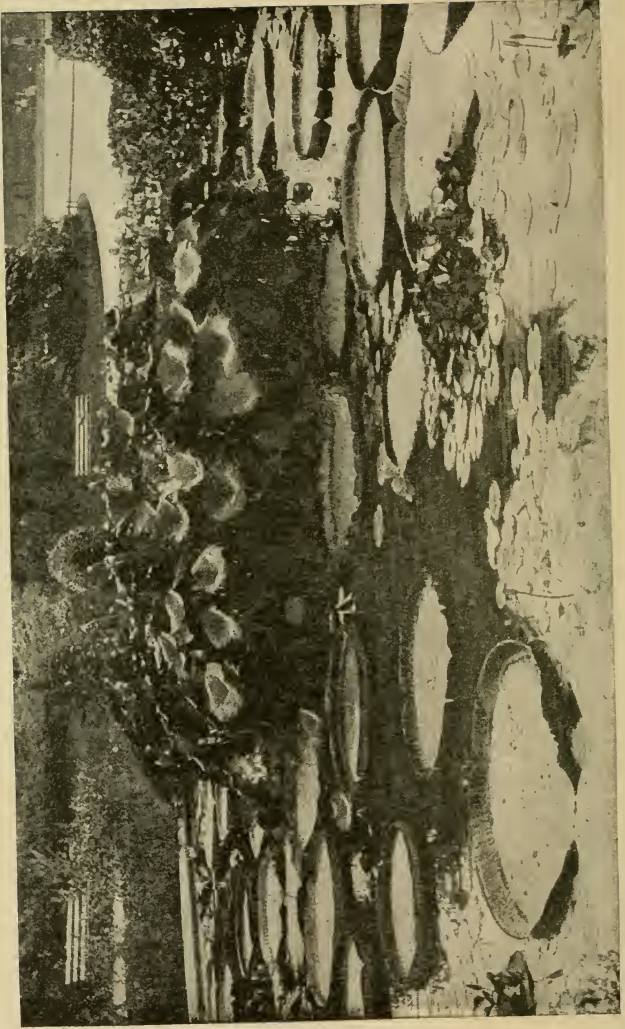
his father replied. "We go to-morrow; that is, if you can get ready."

"Get ready!" both boys exclaimed; then turning and rushing after the old sailor, who had limped into the flower-covered ranch-house to conceal his confusion at being caught dancing a hornpipe over so simple a matter as the arrival of the spring fishing.

"What'll yer lady mother think, seein' an old salt duffer the like o' me dancin' an' caracolin', an' me with a game leg at that?" he said as the boys appeared. But they were too convulsed with laughter to reply. Every year since they were very young the old man had been their companion. He had taught them all the arts of the sailor; how to sail and rig a boat; how to swim; how to use the grains; how to peg turtles; how to rig rods and lines. The secrets of the stream and lake were his as well, and few could cast a fly—wet or dry—or skitter a live bait, or wield a two-handed salmon-rod with more skill than the old boatman, whose real name was Robert Busby, and who, better known as the Commodore, taught certain boys their first lessons in the angler's and boatman's art. A marvelous tyrant at times; always insisting on an absolute man-o'-war's man-like discipline; concealing a heart as tender as a woman's beneath a rugged and often fierce exterior, he was a character who despised trickery, demanded the severest ethics in all matters of sport, as became gentlemen, and was the "Commodore" to all the boys within reach. Every spring, with great regularity, the Commodore was

taken with the fishing-fever. As he said, it generally came down the wind or over the mountains, and was so infectious that in a short time the entire household was down with it. Just exactly when it came, or how, the Commodore did not know; but he usually noticed it in Southern California when the roses were at their best; when the Gold of Ophir covered the housetops with a golden mantle, when the Banksia fell in gold and silver showers, and the air was redolent with the perfume of a thousand flowers, and the big leaves of the Amazon lily in the ranch-pond were at their best; then, as if infected by the incense of it all, the Commodore became restless, "took on a fever for the sea or mountains," as he said, the current of which was only stayed by a trip to the many fishing-grounds of the coast, an actual cure being effected only after he had landed sundry large game-fishes. The boys had noticed that the mood often came upon their companion suddenly, and had vainly endeavored to penetrate the mystery of how the fishing-fever "came down the wind."

The old sailor had a favorite seat beneath a group of two varieties of pines, and he was often observed sitting seemingly asleep but in reality listening intently. Sometimes the boys would join him. "Listen!" the old sailor would say. From far away would come a low murmur of infinite sweetness, like the chime of bells a long way off, increasing in tone and quality until it was like the roar of the sea that passed on, dying away like the clash of waves far down the beach. Then it would



In the ranch-garden.



come again, sweetly as the touch of some giant Æolian harp clanging like bells—bells in the forest, bells near by, bells over the divide, ringing, growing, coming on sweetly down the wind—always down the wind—to blend with the louder tones and melodies that swept unseen through the perfume-laden air of this Southern Californian garden. The boys firmly believed that the old man caught his fishing-fever from this source, as he claimed to understand what the sounds meant; yet it was only the trade-wind sobbing through the group of pines, making music by the clashing of their needles—sounds which were interpreted by the old sailor, as he did the message of the conch-shell, as the cry of the distant ocean or the voice of some swirling brook as it found its way along the high Sierras to be lost in the distant sea.

The Commodore was a rough old seaman and pretended to be very matter-of-fact and practical, yet he was played many tricks by a romantic, indeed poetic, strain in his nature that flowed, a big wide humanizing river, down his uneventful life.

The room into which the boys followed their companion was one to delight the eye of any boy with a love for sport. It was their den, and had grown under the direction of their father, who was an enthusiastic angler, until it was literally an angler's den, pure and simple. On the walls hung rods of all kinds—many retired old butts, broken in hard contests, gaffs that had been in the death of many a monster fish, belts, rifles, shot-guns, while creels suggested trout, and the big non-mul-

tipling reel with brass trimmings told of salmon and its kind. In a case of drawers were fly-hooks of all descriptions, one drawer containing hooks for sea fishing, from a number seven O'Shaughnessy to small fly-hooks for bait. Then there were rolls of wires for making leaders, and a vise and pincers suggested that the boys made them. A canvas bag held lead sinkers. There were round ones ranging in size from shot up to marbles, all cut so that they could be slipped on to a line at a moment's notice. Others were pipe sinkers for trolling, and various shapes and sizes suggested bottom fishing. Another drawer contained fittings in German silver for rods, rings, agate tips and leaders, silver caps for rods and pieces for fitting extra tips, so easy to break. In



A pet horned toad.

fact, in this magic and fascinating case was kept nearly everything that an angler devoted to the sport would need in a season's fishing.

The boys had a number of interesting pets. There



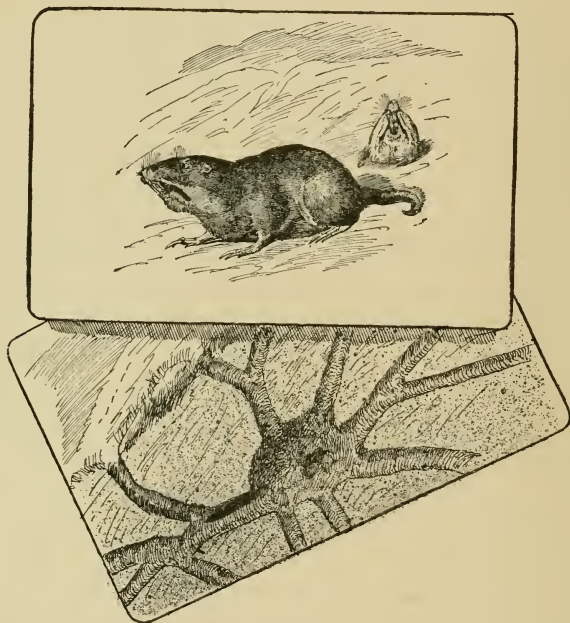
were several horned toads, or lizards, lying in the windows basking in the sun ; strange little creatures covered with spines, yet perfectly harmless ; and as Jack and Tom moved about the room they were followed by two



The pet humming-bird.

tame humming-birds that alighted on their hands or heads, came when they were called, and displayed an amount of confidence in them more than remarkable. Outside one of the windows a tame sparrow-hawk perched on a branch arranged for his comfort, with which the boys proposed to experiment with falconry ; and down by the pond, with its pond-lilies and giant leaves of *Victoria Regia*, were various birds which had been domesticated, while in the water were sticklebacks which built nests, and a school of wonderful triple-tail Japanese goldfishes, so tame that they rose and fed

from the hands of their owners. In a small enclosure Tom had a tame gopher—the pest of the California farmer and garden-maker—which he had trained after a



A gopher and his underground nest.

fashion. It had a glass house so that Tom could study the peculiar nest and tunnel it formed underground.

The old garden which the Commodore loved so well had been arranged to encourage the birds to nest there, and the boys had placed seats where with a field-glass they could watch the nest-building and the birds

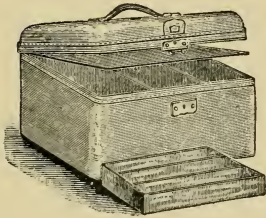
feeding their young. They provided them with cotton, strings, and various building material, as well as thread



Nest of California bushtit.

for the oriole that tried to sew up the big leaves of an Abyssinian banana. There were several nests of orioles in the garden, others of the humming-birds, and the long, soft, pendulous nest of the bushtit was an especial prize and never disturbed.

The orders were given and without waste of time the boys began their preparations. Each possessed a leather tackle-box about eighteen inches in length, made



Tackle-box.

for the purpose, compact and snug. In it was a tuna-reel, to be used also for black sea-bass and tarpon. This was of the size known as "tuna" and easily held six hundred feet of number twenty-one cuttyhunk line. The reels were of rubber and German silver, as carefully

made as a watch. This tuna-reel rested in its special leather box with a chamois lining in a compartment in the center, and by it, each in a compartment, were two other reels; one for yellowtail, holding three hundred feet of number twenty-one line—this for fishes up to fifty pounds in weight. Another held two hundred and fifty feet of number twelve, or a smaller line. This was intended for rock-bass, and was virtually a black-bass reel, though used for sea-fishes. In other compartments were various articles used in sea fishing. Among the hooks were a dozen Van Vlecks—silver-tinted tuna-hooks, with leaders of wire seven feet in length; these

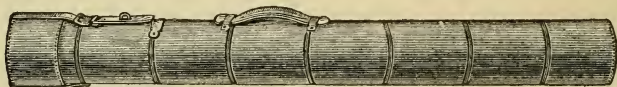
in three or more joints, each joint connected by a stout brass swivel. There were also a dozen number seven O'Shaughnessy hooks with ten-inch wire leaders and swivels for yellowtail and white sea-bass; another dozen number eight O'Shaughnessy, with shorter and finer leaders, for rock-bass, and an assortment of small hooks of various kinds for small fishes down even to those for small mackerel and minnows; a ball of fine copper wire to wind the mouth of the bait-fish to prevent it from twisting unnaturally; a spool of silk, a pair of pincers, a good serviceable knife in a leather scabbard, two extra lines, one a number twelve and one an eighteen cutty-hunk. There were no large lines in this outfit, as the Commodore held that all there is in angling consisted in taking the largest fishes with a thread of a line; in a word, it is not sportsmanlike to use a line so large that the fish will have no chance to escape. There was a convenient set of miniature tools—all of which were packed in a handle for taking the reel apart, a flat file for sharpening hooks, a patent tight oiler for hooks, reels and leaders, drinking-cup, and thumb-stalls of rubber, and cord for braking the line with the left hand, a compass and other articles, all cleverly stowed away in the fishing-box.



Drinking-cup.

Then came the rods, not expensive, but very attractive and pliable. They were mostly of greenheart, with

German silver mountings, and each boy had three. One for tuna was about seven feet long, made of noibwood—a South American greenheart; the tip about five feet long; the butt of rubber, short, mounted with German silver, with a solid German-silver reel-seat; the big trumpet-silver guides were in a double row, so that the line would run perfectly free, and the tip had a polished agate. There was nothing cheap or poorly made about this rod, and it represented the savings from allowances for many weeks. Before this the boys had used rods of their own manufacture. Rod number two was of greenheart, eight and a half feet in length, in three pieces, the



Rod-case.

rigging or equipment being the same. This was for fishes which range from ten to sixty pounds in weight, as yellowtail, white sea-bass, albacore, etc. The third rod was nine feet in length, slender and pliable, weighing twelve ounces—a little heavier than is used for black bass, and was intended for the rock-bass, white and other fishes from two to eight pounds. All these rods were finely polished, the openings plugged with cork, the joints well oiled, and the silver kept bright, as the Commodore had a regular inspection of rods once a month the year around. Each had its cloth case, and the three fitted into a leather case, or rod-trunk, upon which was



painted the name and address of the owner, so that it could be carried or checked as the case might be. Ready to be strapped to the rods was a fine hinged gaff, the hook being strong rather than fancy, its sharp point protected by a cork. With these articles went a comfortable-looking Mexican basket, used for lunch.

All these articles the boys took out and spread upon a table. The reels were carefully taken apart, each portion oiled and cleaned; the joints of the rods looked to and oiled, so that they would push together without "screwing." Hook-points were examined and touched up with the small file, and in such excellent condition were the various articles kept that the entire outfit was in readiness that evening, and when the boys' father came out to make the inspection he found everything in order. He had long before provided each of his sons with the major part of the outfit, believing it to be an admirable adjunct to his plan of physical training, with the understanding that it should be kept in the best condition and replenished out of their allowance; and with care they found that the only necessary additions in two years were hooks which in some way the big game would take.

"You are all ready, then?" said the Angler, watching the eager movements of the boys.

"Aye, aye, sir," responded the Commodore; "ready and fit, sir, ready for any game that can be taken with a rod; that is, if we have luck, sir."

"Ah, but you have your luck right here."

“Where?” asked the younger boy, looking around as though expecting to see “luck” flying in at the window.

“Good luck is merely another name for method,” replied his father, “care of tackle, good selection, and the best of everything, and what is more, strict and undivided attention. If you will point out to me the angler who is careless, a sluggard, who is indolent, I will show you the man who has poor or at least indifferent luck. At the very moment of landing, his old rusty leader breaks and the fish escapes; and it is always the biggest fellow that goes in this way. Again a fierce fish makes a terrific run. Your careless angler did not suppose so much line would be used, and that neglected knot appears; it catches on the tip and the line parts after he has played his fish half an hour. If he had cut out the knot and had joined the line by splicing, he would have landed his fish. Another day his reel, that has not been oiled for two months, refuses to work; it protests against such usage, and again the line gives way and three hundred feet goes. You will notice a chronic bend in the rod of such a man; he is too lazy to reverse his line; and so I might go on, showing that this bad luck which we hear so much about, is often due to careless methods, and good luck the result of the reverse.”

“But how is it,” queried Jack, “that when the Commodore and I have been fishing side by side with the very same tackle and bait he has often caught the most fish? He claims it as luck.”



“I cannot answer that positively,” said his father laughing, “but if I were to guess, I should say that he had the best of the situation. You were trolling and the fish were coming up astern, following the chum probably. You had seventy-five feet of line out, and I venture to say Robert, who had all the luck, or most of it, had one hundred feet out, or his bait twenty-five feet astern of you ; and it was the first to be overhauled by the fish. Make your lines and bait even, and the luck will be divided. As a rule, the longest line has the most strikes in trolling. How is that, Robert ? ” asked the Angler, a mischievous twinkle in his eye.

“I’m sorra, sir, ye gave that secret awa,” said the old sailor gravely ; “I sort o’ resarved that holt o’ the lads. It’s a vera penetratin’ angler ye are, sir, beggin’ yer pardon.”

## CHAPTER II

### THE ISLAND CAMP

EVERY one on Manzanita Ranch saw the sun rise on the following morning, and by seven o'clock, when every leaf and blossom still trembled beneath its load of moisture, when the air was heavy with perfume as yet not dissipated by the sluggish trade, the stepping-block in front of the ranch-house was heaped with luggage, suggestive of an outing—rods, guns, grips, bundles which looked like canvas hammocks, lashed man-of-war style, and behind all stood Busby, the Commodore, a trifle redder, a little jollier, a shade more comical than usual. He wore a large Panama sombrero and a complete suit of hunting canvas, the coat of which appeared to be a maze of pockets, each of which was so well filled that the Commodore's angular figure seemed lost; indeed, he appeared to be blown up like a balloon. The boys wore their fishing-clothes, woolen suits, knickerbockers, and low canvas shoes which "held" on slippery decks and could be easily kicked off if the wearer went overboard, as anglers have been known to do before now.

The boys were taking account of their luggage, Jack, at his father's request, acting as quartermaster of the trip

and having a list of everything which he checked off at the various changes. The horses now came up, followed by a small baggage-wagon, and the party, the two boys, their father and mother and the Commodore, with several fox-terriers and a greyhound, were presently on their way to the station. Manzanita Ranch was on the slope of the San Gabriel Valley, about thirty miles from the ocean, and from its highest point, twenty-five or thirty miles out to sea, could be seen the peaks of two high mountains, a range on the island of Santa Catalina—a mountain range at sea—one of a group which reaches from San Clemente Island, opposite San Juan Capistrano, to Santa Barbara. Catalina is a famous fishing-ground, the feeding and spawning ground of all the great game-fishes of the region. Here is the only spot in the world where the leaping tuna has been taken with the rod; the home of the yellowtail, the white sea-bass, and many more. The island is a maze of mountains, twenty-two miles long, and to the boys it was a wonderland, a sort of angling paradise. Everywhere the coast of the island is cut with deep cañons which come down to the sea like rivers winding down, forming little bays, often environed by lofty cliffs. Indeed, Santa Catalina appears like a mountain range that has suddenly been transported by the slave of the lamp from some mysterious land and dropped into the Pacific. It is an enigma to all who visit it, as the winter is the time when the island is rich in greens, when the wild flowers run riot, and days of sunshine follow one another in regular order.

Little wonder that the boys looked forward to the trip with anticipations of delight. The spring had come, the islands were still green, and by every sign the game was awaiting them. From Pasadena the train was taken, passing through Los Angeles to San Pedro, where the steamer for the island was boarded—a run of nearly thirty miles. At noon they glided into the little bay of Avalon with its rocky sentinels, its placid waters, its fleet of glass-bottom and fishing boats. Here they outfitted, for the party was to go into camp in the mouth of one of the cañons a few miles up the rocky coast. A launch about twenty feet in length, the *Torqua*, was chartered by the angler, and two boatmen, Mexican Joe and Johnnie Graley—good boatmen and cooks—had been secured in advance. The tents and complete outfit were arranged for in a marvelously short time from the storehouse of a tent city which took shape at Avalon in summer. The outfit required was read off by the Commodore and the men brought it out piece by piece: one tent eight by ten for the boys, flooring ready for setting, matting for floor and sides, two tin pitchers, and toilet outfit, two cots, mattresses and pillows, a mirror, in fact every article needed in a summer camp was provided, produced like magic. There was a tent and outfit for the boatmen, one large tent and appliances for Mr. and Mrs. Temple, a dining tent with table, chairs and dishes. All this was for rent, and by the middle of the afternoon it was stowed in a large flatboat and two small skiffs fast behind the *Torqua*. Mr. Temple had bought pro-

visions, hams, canned vegetables, flour, butter, bacon, and the many articles which suggested themselves to the camper, but as they were to be within an hour's run of the town their supply was limited. Nearly every day the launch would visit Avalon, where supplies could be obtained. In a word, the camp was more civilized than the boys found later in the heart of the Northern and Eastern forests.

At three o'clock the whistle of the launch sounded, the Commodore shouted gruffly, as became a commodore, "All aboard!" and Joe added "All ashore that's goin'," routing out several small boys, the young anglers with which the dock was crowded. Then Johnnie at the wheel rang the bell, the engine breathed, coughed, gasped, objecting as gasoline engines will when they are not in good humor, and the launch went foaming out of the bay along the rugged coast of the island. The cañon selected for the camp was a titanic rift eaten out of the rock by the rains of centuries. The very mountains had been washed into the sea, converted into sand until the result was a broad deep cañon which wound up to a lofty mountain 2,200 feet high, named Black Jack, a rocky sentinel that was an island mark for fifty miles away. As the cañon ascended it divided into lateral branches, and the verdure took the form of trees. At the sea it broadened out, forming a level space several hundred yards square from which the bush and shrub-covered sides of the cañon rose precipitously, walling it in. The shore of white sand and pebbles was crescent shaped,



Boy anglers of Avalon.

and afforded a good landing, while the water deepened gradually, making a good anchorage. In the center of the cañon was a spring, and on the north side a group of fine cottonwood trees, in front of which the launch was rounded to and anchored. The men and two Mexicans rowed the boat in, quickly landed the tents,



The camping place, Arch Rock Cañon.

and with amazing rapidity the camp assumed form, and before the sun went down the anglers' settlement was a thing of fact. The boys with their father's assistance raised their own tents, the latter's going up first. The uprights were raised, the canvas thrown over and pegged down, the ready-made floor carried in and the cots set up, Jack even making the beds and finishing



the tent while his mother sat and looked on, laughing at his enthusiasm.

“Jack, suppose now that you really had to make beds,” she said.

“Don’t suppose it, mother,” he replied, “I wouldn’t do it. It all depends upon the point of view. If you had to go fishing, were really obliged to camp out, you know you would never do it, but just because it is sport, or we call it pleasure, it is delightful, and it is fortunate that it is so.”

“First call for dinner!” shouted Tom, just as the moon was coming up, and offering his arm to his mother he escorted her over to the dining tent, where they found the table fairly groaning with good things. There were cold roast beef, boiled potatoes, bacon and hot cakes, which Joe was cooking on a mysterious flat piece of iron which he had brought. The table was decorated with an improvised vase containing a bunch of Mariposa lilies. The Commodore and Johnnie, each with white aprons, stood smiling and pleased as the lady expressed admiration at the wonders they had produced in so brief a time.

“What have we for dessert, Johnnie?” asked Mr. Temple.

“Tomales, sir,” was the reply.

“Tomales for dessert!” exclaimed Jack.

“Yes, sir,” said Capt. Johnnie, “it’s the fashion up this cañon.”

Tom burst into laughter at this. “Johnnie lost the



pies overboard as we were landing," he said; "that makes tomales the fashion."

After dinner Joe hauled a large log out of the bush and built a camp-fire, around which the party sat until late, listening to the stories of the men, who now and then would stop to run down the beach to catch the flying fishes that, driven in by the tunas or white sea bass, came sailing blindly onto the shore, striking heavily, and then trying to beat their way down to the sea. The boatmen were both characters in their way, and added not a little to the fun and pleasure of the island camp. Joe was an "old timer," the oldest inhabitant of the island, a Mexican of ancient lineage. It was said by some that he traced his ancestry back to the earliest inhabitants, but this doubtless was not true, as Joe had led all the government expeditions during the past twenty years to the ancient graveyards of the island, had excavated in innumerable Indian graves, and his picture may be seen in the Reports of the Government. A diligent search among the thousands of people who know Joe would not result in finding one who had ever seen him in bad humor, hence he was an ideal camper, and when it is added that he was an expert herder, vaquero, goat hunter, fisherman, cook, archaeological digger and guide who knew every foot of the island, his many virtues and his value can be appreciated, and doubtless would be certified to by his many friends all over this country and England.

Captain Johnnie acquired his title as captain of a

glass-bottom boat which he rowed up and down the mysterious Laminarian forest that made the waters along the shore a wonderland; and his wit and ready tongue had made him famous. To hear Capt. Johnnie describe the wonders of the deep to a boatload of landsmen and women was worth going some distance, and as he improvised as he sailed his craft, there was always variety. Specimens and animals changed names daily, and there was a succession of wonders, new and startling, when Capt. Johnnie was in command. He had left his glass-bottom boat to his partner's care, and was now acting as cook and handy man of the camp. An original Irish character, who, had he been born in the Orient, would have been a professional story teller, so rich was his imagination, so racy his fables.

## CHAPTER III

### A HIGH JUMPER

IT was impossible not to rise at daybreak at the Anglers' Cañon. It faced the sea, and as the sun rolled up over the distant Sierras it seemed at once to fill the cañon with a blaze of light. A few moments before its appearance the sky would be tinted a deep vermilion, then long streamers of light shot upward, and day had come. Long before it was light Johnnie Graley was up and the odor of crisp bacon, eggs, coffee and hot cakes soon permeated the tents of the campers.

"How many flying fish?" asked Mr. Temple, at the entrance of his tent, struggling with a white sweater.

"Five, sir," answered Tom, quickly, "and Jack has gone aboard the launch as he thinks there are several there."

"Good!" said his father; "we should bag at least one tuna."

A few moments later the anglers were seated at breakfast. "What are the signs, Joe?" asked Mr. Temple.

"Fine," replied Joe, piling a small lighthouse of cakes on Jack's plate, and a Martello tower of the same

on Tom's. "I jest met Vincente's man, Tony, going down and he said the tunas were as thick as flies up at Long Point."

This news had the effect of shortening the breakfast, and the fishing party hastened to the beach, each with rod in hand, and by means of the skiff were transported to the launch—a typical tuna-rigged boat found nowhere



The tuna boats of Santa Catalina.

but at Santa Catalina and built for the purpose. She was a good model, trim, yet differed from the average launch seen in the East in being wider, with more beam, and was more seaworthy, able to run against almost any sea though the waters here were invariably smooth. In the forward part was the six horse-power engine, a mast with sail, and a canvas hood which could be hauled over the bow like an umbrella, keeping off the spray in run-

ning against a seaway. Astern a plank extended across from rail to rail, and upon this were two comfortable armchairs, side by side, each having on the outer edge of the seat a socket for the butt of the rod. The flooring was covered with canvas, while a deck forward and aft afforded ample provision for carrying the big game when given its quietus. Just back of the chairs was the seat of the engineer and wheelsman, the wheel being on the side and parallel to the wall of the hull. Here were stored boxes for tackle, and there was room for gaffs and spears. Forward was a box for small fish. Such, in brief, was the Santa Catalina tuna boat. She had seats for two anglers astern and room for several spectators or passengers who did not fish; and if occasion required the chairs could be taken down and stowed away and a large awning rigged, making the launch a pleasure craft pure and simple.

“All ready, sir,” said the punctilious Commodore, touching his hat.

“Cast off!” replied the Angler. And Joe dropped the buoy over with the moorings. The Commodore gave a turn to the wheel, and the Torqua surged out into the beautiful sheet of smooth water in the lee of the island, known as the tuna-grounds—a stretch of charming coast, but three or four miles in length, the only rod-fishing grounds in the world for the leaping tuna. The boys occupied the chairs, the Angler sitting with the Commodore at the wheel, while Joe, as gaffer, took his place in the bow with Johnnie and stood, his strong In-

dian face turned seaward, on the alert for signs of game. The boys held rods about six and a half feet in length, of greenheart, each tip being five feet long with a short butt, jointed rods being too uncertain for this sport. The line was a number twenty-four cuttyhunk, six hundred feet long, the big reel being nearly full. Jack fished to the starboard, and Tom to port, and as the



Tuna bait. California flying-fish.

launch got under way they fastened leader to line with a bowline-knot, and looked at the bait to see that it was all right. Joe had baited five hooks to have them ready: the hook was a bronzed O'Shaughnessy, number seven, the leader seven feet of piano-wire in three links, each joined by a brass swivel so that the bait would run naturally. The heavy flying-fish, fourteen inches long, was

hooked upward through the lips, and the mouth had been sewed up in order that it would not catch water, the object being to make the fish run naturally and not twirl and twist.

Once clear of the rocks the launch was headed for Long Point and the bait dropped over, one to the right the other to the left, the rods pointing from the quarter so that when out, the lines would run well apart and not foul. About one hundred feet of line was unreeled, then held by the thumb brake, a leather pad fastened to the crossbar and pressed upon the line by the thumb. The left hand thumb was protected by a knitted thumbstall, used to press the line upon the reel if necessary, and the lines had been wet, hence there was no possibility of burning by friction. Every preparation had been made and the young anglers were ready for the strike.

"Plenty of company, sir," said the Commodore, pointing down the coast, and near Avalon a number of launches could be seen coming up, some near shore, others well out, all eager for this most exciting of sports.

"I don't fancy some of them chaps," said the Commodore, eyeing the boats with a glass.

"Why?" asked the Angler.

"Because, sir, they're out for blood. Some people come way out here and think they've the contract to kill all the fish in the sea. I'm only wishin' that bechune now and Sunday some big tuna'll yank some of them over. What does a mon want with more than wan fish when it weighs one hundred and fifty pounds, or more?"



When a gintleman fishes he catches enough and no more," continued the old sailor, "an' if by mistake he takes more he relases it."

"You hear, boys?" said Mr. Temple. "What Robert says is the principle which should govern every sportsman. No matter how good the fishing, stop if you have to destroy more fish than you can use."

"True, sir," said the Commodore. "I——"

"Hi-i-i!" shouted Tom, as his rod bent like a willow while the reel fairly squealed its zee-e-e-zee-e-e-, and astern a cyclonic swirl of water appeared.

"Blither and zounds! ye've missed him," cried the Commodore, who had shut off the engine at the first note and stood glaring around.

"Yes, gone," said Tom, reeling in a slack line, "and all for listening and not fishing."

"True for ye, Mr. Tom," said the Commodore. "When you're fishin' you want to 'tend strictly to business."

"Look there," interrupted Joe, as the boat got under way again.

The boys turned and witnessed a sight only to be seen when the tuna feeds. The surface of the water everywhere was perfectly smooth—a great blue disk, yet suddenly white caps appeared—without wind, the water tossed into foam so that from the boat heavy seas were apparently beating upon the Long Point rocks.

"Tunas!" shouted the boys.

"Nothing else," said the Commodore, putting on full



speed. "See, they're comin' this way. Look at the flyin'-fish; look out; heads down; down bridge!" as Joe struck wildly at a flying-fish that came soaring over the boat on a line with their heads, the Angler dodging to avoid it. The next fish Joe knocked into the boat with the gaff, and presently the air appeared to be filled with flying-fishes, which like gigantic dragon flies darted hither and yon, while not one hundred yards away was the



The leaping tuna.

school of tunas driving them on, leaping into the air after them, flinging themselves along the surface, rising out of the water like arrows, catching the game in the air, on the surface, missing it and plowing along, hurling the water aloft in silvery waves that caught the sun and hurled back a hundred tints and gleams. It was a sight to make one wave his hands aloft and shout at the very splendor of it all. The Commodore's face grew redder and redder,

and he tried to put the launch at half speed by a turn of the wheel; then the scream of Jack's reel, long continued, brought them all to their senses. The launch was stopped and all hands turned to watch the happy young angler who had hooked his first tuna. They were in the very heart of the school; several flying-fishes struck the launch and the bombardment kept them on the lookout, as to be hit by a flying-fish at full speed was not a joke. The tunas were leaping six feet or more not a dozen yards from them.

"If you land that feesh, my lad, you're lucky," whispered the Commodore. "Another tuna will cut the line."

But Jack was doing well. The tuna evidently had struck on the dead run and taken two hundred feet of line while he listened to the sound, zee-e-e-e, and the impact almost took the boy from his seat as he gently thumbed the leather brake. Jack was perfectly cool, and held his rod point well up; had the butt in the socket between his knees; his left hand grasped the upper grip of the rod, and his well-tried and hardened muscles were putting a pressure on the pad that would sooner or later tell. The Angler had taken out his watch at the strike to time him, while Tom had reeled rapidly in to give his brother the field. Joe was amidships near his gaff, looking over Jack's shoulder to prompt him if necessary, and with an oar in hand to keep the stern of the launch to the fish.

"Gently!" whispered the Commodore, as Jack ap-

peared to fairly double up as his rod's tip struck the water with a hiss. "Easy; not too much muscle; let him tire himself out; you've got three hundred feet left."

"But I don't want him to get any more line," gasped Jack, endeavoring to lift the bending rod.

The fish had made a splendid rush, Jack stopped and turned it; then down deep it plunged, taking line at every rush in jerks that made the reel fairly cry out, finding an echoing grunt in the Commodore, whose eyes seemed almost popping out of his head; now in delight at the skill the boy displayed; now in fear that he would "give it to the fish" too much.

"Hang on to him, pride o' me heart," he whispered; "easy now; ah, that's it; reel, mon, reel for your life. Ah, a bonnie feesh that. He's a thousand pounds in his bones if an ounce, and more," dancing about, fingering his gaff and talking now in Irish brogue, now in Scotch with burr broad enough to change the wind, until Jack burst into laughter, and said that if he didn't stop he'd give up.

The moments were flying; the big fish was down four hundred feet somewhere. The water here was as blue as the heavens and none knew how deep, even though the rocks were not two hundred yards distant. The rod looked like a bow hard pulled and Jack never took eyes off the tip, that was the danger point; that brilliant silver spot with its polished agate was the star of fate for him and when it bowed viciously he gave line, then reeled and gained a foot; then with a tremendous

spurt the fish would rush away and the handle of the reel would revolve so fast that he could not see it, then a foot or two would be gained. Twenty minutes had slipped away and that seeming angling miracle was being enacted—a heavy launch holding five men was being towed slowly out to sea by a line four hundred feet long, known to fame as a twenty-four thread. The tuna had taken a gait about three miles an hour, at an angler's guess, and was headed for San Pedro.

“Can't ye turn him, lad?” asked the Commodore. “Pump the life out of him.”

This was easier said than done. Jack was bracing back holding the rod with a grasp of iron, yet deep in his heart he felt a slight suspicion that this big fish was playing with him; that he, the angler, had been caught. Pump him? ah, how easy it was to the lookers on. But he buckled to his work; the fish must be raised, as of all things in the sea a sulking tuna is the most unreasonable, the most exasperating. Now then, a long breath, a slight release of the cramped fingers, then a new grip and he raises the rod up inch by inch, up, up, until the tip points to the sky, then like a flash he drops it, his right hand springs to the reel handle and whirls it around, and he braces up. Hurrah! he has gained in line the distance between the upright tip and the surface, nearly five feet, all by the angler's trick of “pumping.” Again he lifts, no one can tell how much, it may be fifty pounds, it may be two hundred, but up it comes, and the Angler's stop watch indicates three quarters of an hour, and

slowly and surely they are moving out, and are now a mile beyond the point.

“You’ll have to push the fighting, my lad,” said the Commodore. “Every time you rest the tuna rests twice. Where’s your second wind?”

“I’m afraid I’ve left it at home,” groaned Jack. “I’m about winded, but I’m going to land this fish if it takes the whole season.”

“Good!” exclaimed Joe; “that’s the talk.”

“If you can’t do it I’ll take him,” said Tom, winking at the Commodore.

Jack smiled. His face was red and great beads of perspiration ran down his cheeks. Had he not been well trained in the gymnasium and in all manly sports he would never have lasted so long, but that strange something which all boxers and runners know as the “second wind” was coming, and Jack began a series of short pumps rapidly making fifty feet of line, and, what was better, holding it. Then suddenly the line became slack—gone! The boy’s face dropped at the very thought, but he took no chances and reeled rapidly, the big multiplier eating up the line feet and yards until it came taut, and twenty feet were lost in a splendid spurt. But he had stopped the fish, turned the tuna, which now surged around in the arc of a circle, Joe forcing the stern of the launch around with an oar. Slowly the boat began to move inshore behind this marvel among fishes. The turn was made after one hour and thirty minutes. What this means no boy can realize unless he has tried it. It

means one round of an hour and a half without any "time." It means one heat during every moment of which, when the fish was not rushing or plunging, there was a strain on the rod and the left side of the angler that alone is sufficient to wear out some men in far less time.

The tuna so far had displayed no sign of weariness, and during the next half hour it made many more rushes taking one hundred feet of line which Jack regained slowly, and at the end of two hours they were four miles from where the fish was hooked and within two hundred feet of the cliffs. Jack, as the Commodore remarked later, "looked white around the gills," and if the truth were known was in bad shape. His hands were blistered from clinching the rod; the handle had mutilated three knuckles in a sudden rush, and his entire left side felt as though it had turned to stone. Jack had never been known as a "quitter" at school. Several fellows had discovered that in friendly bouts over the gloves, in polo, and following the hounds, but it was evident he had work cut out for him that tested every ounce of endurance. Long before Joe had raised a large flag with a picture of a tuna on it, which informed the fleet and all comers that they were fast to a fish, and for all boats to stand off. This did not prevent several launches, laden with tourists, from coming up astern in the direction opposite the fish and following along to watch a boy playing a game fish that some men could not land. Jack was reeling when suddenly it turned, rose to the surface, and

came rushing at the boat—a trick common to many fishes. But, the young angler had too many eyes on him to fail now. He took in the slack, standing to see the splendid play of the tuna, and was nearly jerked from his feet as the game turned and dashed away. Zee-e-e-e-e! how the reel sounded! then to Jack's surprise he stopped the fish. For the first time in all that long, weary, heart-breaking struggle had the tuna showed signs of weakening; up went the tip, down it dropped with six feet gained, up and down, like the walking beam of a steamer, gaining, ever gaining, and Joe leaning over with his gaff ready, whispering encouragement. In it came until all saw it—a glorious creature, a giant among fishes.

“Blitheration! but it's a monster. See the glint forinst it,” exclaimed the Commodore, excitedly.

Slowly Jack reeled, watching for the rush he knew would come. Then the tuna saw the boat, turned and lunged down, down twenty feet, then the rod slowly straightened and the reel flew around again. Once more it comes in, the line cutting the blue waters like a knife, up through radiant jelly-fishes, bearing off gallantly, its tail working steadily; now in plain view, a giant yet unable to gain an inch of slack, and turned once more at the quarter. No jokes now. No whispered advice, silence, not a sound but the hissing of the line and the hard breathing of the angler; then a quick turn and the tuna passed the quarter, headed for the bow, Joe's long gaff all the time sinking deeper and deeper into the water until just at the right moment, when the



end of the long leader was near the tip, he jerked the sharp steel into the throat of the game, jerked it deep and hard as the crew dodged the spray that the big fish hurled over them with its tail, writhing, twisting, as Joe, using the big pole as a lever, lifted and held the ponderous head out of water, showing the large eyes glaring, hypnotic, and the steel-blue back. Even then no one spoke and Jack's eyes never moved from the fish and rod tip, keeping his line taut ready for a possible break. All hands now leaned to starboard careening the launch, and as her gunwale went down Joe and Tom lifted and dexterously slid into the cockpit six feet of as splendid a tuna as had been landed in many a day. Then merrily they gave way, and with hats off gave Jack three times three and tigers without end; the following launch took it up, and so the deed was accomplished. There was not room for the Commodore to dance a hornpipe, but he did later that evening when relating the story to the lady of the cañon.

In the distance several boats were seen with flags up announcing that they had tunas on, and the Angler took his son's place and the Torqua, with all flags flying, ran again in the direction of Long Point.

"To tell the truth," said Jack, cutting out pieces of court-plaster for his knuckles, "about five minutes more of that work would have seen my Waterloo. I was shaking all over."

"Thrills of joy, sir," said Captain Johnnie. "D'ye mind, Joe, when I caught the record lapin' shark that



weighed nine hundred pounds with his head off, or was it eleven hundred pounds with his head on—I don't know which, I hev lapses in me mind when I'm fishin'; but anyway, I had the thrills goin' over me for a wake. Ivery time I wint on the street the tourists ridin' in the glass-bottom boats would point me out and say 'That's him.' 'Him what?' says one. 'Why, the man that took the fifteen-hundred-pound lapin' shark with a ten-ounce split bamboo.' 'Well, he don't look it,' says the other. They even made excuses to take me out to lunch to get me to spin the yarn and say 'Are you the Mr. Graley that tuk the two-thousand-pound lapin' shark with a Bathebara rod?' 'I am,' says I, swellin' perceptible. 'I wanter know,' says the tourist; 'you don't look it.' By the time I'd been told that forty times I began to think I'd never landed a three-thousand-pound lapin' shark."

"Na, an' you never see wan eighteen inches long," roared the Commodore. "I've——"

But the discussion was interrupted by the Angler giving the order to stop the launch and all hands turned to see what was in the wind. Just ahead on the smooth surface of the ocean was a triangular figure, perhaps one hundred feet long, moving slowly and regularly. It was a school of tunas swimming like a flock of ducks, one leader in front with fins just above the surface. On they came until the fishing party could see them distinctly. Mr. Temple had reeled in and now had his rod in both hands, proposing to cast into the school. As

they came he leaned back and made a heavy side cast that sent the big bait flying seventy feet through the air; it struck fairly in the school. A swirl of waters as though a maelstrom had suddenly appeared and zee-e-e-e-e-e! went the reel as the line slipped off and melted away in the blue sea. There was no stopping such a rush and three hundred and fifty feet of line went before the tuna stopped; then when its impetuous rush was over it rose to the surface and afforded the angler the gamiest play he had ever enjoyed. It never left the surface, playing like a bonito, rushing in and out, swaying to right and left, but always coming in. In less than half an hour it was brought to gaff and seen to be a small fish probably weighing not over seventy pounds. The Angler reeled it in, brought it carefully up, and Joe held it by the wire-leader with one hand and cut it away with the other.

“Mighty few tunas get away nowadays,” he remarked, as the fish shot away. “There’s a big demand for every one we can get. I reckon you’ll want the big fellow for a specimen.”

“Yes,” Jack quickly replied, “that goes in my den. I shall never get a larger one and, if I can always have Johnnie to tell the story, its weight will never grow less.”

After visiting several launches and exchanging congratulations with their owners, the launch steamed to the cañon, where the boys went ashore and displayed the catch to their mother, while Joe took the tuna to

Avalon, where it was handed over to the taxidermist, weighed, measured, and later mounted as a trophy.

That night around the camp-fire there was a remarkable exchange of opinions regarding the tuna. Johnnie Graley and Joe, as well as the Commodore, related various strange and exciting experiences, amid peals of laughter from the fun-loving Angler, with whom the boatmen were privileged characters and originals in every sense.

“D’ye remember, Joe,” said Johnnie, “the day the man-eater came swimmin’ into Avalon bay with a brown silk umbrella?”—turning the shoulder of goat he was barbecuing and pretending to hide his eyes with his hand.

“This is too much,” said Mrs. Temple, laughing, “a shark with an umbrella?”

“Sure as I’m standin’ here, ma’m, an’ not a drop o’ rain on the island for four months, and none comin’.”

“I see it myself,” said Joe, chuckling. “They hung it up and cut it open, and there was the umbrella.”

“And,” interrupted Johnnie, “you oughter have seen the horror-stricken tourists lookin’ at it, and me paid wan dollar by as fine a gintleman as ever lived—and how he loved a joke—to stand around and kape tellin’ the story, and he says, ‘Johnnie,’ says he, ‘when you git tired tellin’ it wan way tell it another,’ and so I did. Wan old man says, ‘What does it mane?’ ‘Why,’

says I, 'she's devoured, all but the umbrelly; you wouldn't expect a shark to digest that.' Then off he goes to tell his wife not to go in bathin'. I told seventeen varsons, and had all nationalities killed off. 'What's this?' says a tenderfoot. 'Young man went walkin' along the beach this mornin',' says I, 'and he's missin'; but they found the umbrelly in this shark—ye've heard o' the lapin' shark?' 'Seized him from the beach?' says he, horror creepin' into his eye. I nodded me head and wiped me eyes. And so they come. I was wonderin' what to tell a fat man when he says, 'D'ye mind buyin' me a cigar at the store yonder? Get wan yourself,' and he handed me ten cents. I don't know," continued Johnnie, laughing, "what made me, but I went, an' when I got back—well, I'd sold a good silk umbrella for ten cents—he'd walked off with it."

"Well, you had the shark left, and it served you right, Johnnie," said Tom, "for stuffing a good umbrella into a dead shark's mouth."

"Have tunas always been caught here, Joe?" asked Mr. Temple.

"Yes, sir. I've been here thirty years and have always seen them. Sometimes they come early, sometimes late, sometimes a good many, and often but a few. They live on flyin'-fish in the early season; then, I think, go to deep water an' feed on squid; anyway, we find them full of squid in August. The season generally opens the middle of May, earlier or later as the case may be. Of late years it's been about the middle of June,

an' they bite for about six weeks, then stop bitin' just as though you dropped the hat."

"So you think they change their food?" said Mr. Temple.

"Yes, sir," replied Joe. "In winter they go into deep water or further south, though they catch them on the Cortez Banks, about thirty miles to the south of here, in winter. How big do they grow? I've seen one swimmin' that I thought would weigh a thousand pounds. Fifteen-hundred-pounders have been speared in the East, I hear, an' a nine hundred pounder was seined at Monterey; but all the fish round this island seem just the size for rod fishin'—the largest ever taken weighed two hundred and fifty-one pounds."<sup>1</sup>



Record boys' catch of leaping tuna.

A typical tuna catch has been described, witnessed, and experienced by the author, on many a bright day

<sup>1</sup> This is the world's rod record of Col. C. P. Morehous, of Pasadena, Cal. The author's record was one hundred and eighty-three pounds, which held for three years. This fish towed the boat ten miles in four hours, and was fought continuously during this time.

along the Isle of Summer, and several boys have distinguished themselves by taking the splendid fish, one of the most notable catches being that of Charles Benedict Paine, of Cleveland, who played the tuna shown in this volume nearly seven hours, or, to be exact, six hours and forty minutes, before it was brought to gaff. He followed the rules of the Tuna Club in every particular, fishing with a rod and reel, the line being not larger than a twenty-four strand cuttyhunk. He received no assistance, and the catch was watched by a member of the club and a boatman, who gaffed the tuna. It was estimated that the fish towed the launch, during the contest, a distance of twenty miles in various directions. This catch gave the young angler membership in the Tuna Club, entitling him to wear the blue button of the club, showing that he had taken, unaided, in the method described, a tuna weighing over one hundred pounds.

The tuna, the king of the mackerel tribe, known as *Thynnus thunnus*, is a pelagic fish, or found in the open sea, ranging many waters on each side of the equator, but rarely coming inshore in great numbers. Very large specimens are sometimes trapped in the weirs of the Atlantic coast, where they are speared, but, as the fish here average very large ones—from one thousand to fifteen hundred pounds, and nine or ten feet in length—they are taken only with the harpoon or a shark line. Santa Catalina is the only locality where tunas of one hundred and fifty or two hundred pounds weight come

inshore in sufficient numbers to permit successful rod fishing in smooth water. The tuna can not be confused with any other fish, having a decided individuality, yet bearing a close resemblance to its cousin the mackerel.

## CHAPTER IV

### FISHING IN AN OCEAN FOREST

EVERY day was not devoted to fishing at Anglers' Cañon, and Joe said it would take Jack three or four days to "limber up." The Commodore expressed the opinion that the hero of the previous day had a "list to starboard," while Johnnie, after a critical glance, was certain that he was "hogged," all of which Jack, as the hero, took in good part. But, if the truth were told, he was stiff, sore, and lame; his backbone seemed to work roughly when he stooped; there were blisters on his hands, and several knuckles had lost their caps; in fact, Jack felt very much as he did after the first football game of the season, when he had been the under man in every rush; but all these pains were forgotten in the realization of the fact that he had landed a fish that had laid many an older angler low and that no boy had ever caught with a rod and reel. In the forenoon he took a swim in the bay; then the party went to Avalon to see how the tuna looked, and Jack received an ovation from the boatmen, who knew him well, with three times three and a tiger. Jack now knew what it is to be famous. "Dewey ain't in it with him," he overheard a small boy



say, with a suspicion of envy in his tone; and, as he walked down the street, the glass-bottom boat captains and others congratulated him, and some ladies whispered, "That's the boy who caught the tuna." Even the daily papers described the catch at length, carrying envy and despair to the boys all over Los Angeles county who could not go a-fishing.

They visited the taxidermist, and found that the gamy fish had been skinned and stretched, half of it over a plaster cast, so that a very good idea of its attractions could be obtained. The taxidermist said that he had seen many tunas, but never one so well proportioned and handsome, so it is not surprising that Jack forgot his bruises and in a day or two was in good trim.

In the meantime the camp had been completely arranged; chairs and hammocks placed under the big cottonwoods and everything gotten into running order. There was one feature that a stranger from the East would have noticed; the tents were not banked up, there were no arrangements for storm water, no umbrellas or rain coats in camp; in fact, it did not rain between May and November in this strange country. The summer was absolutely stormless; no rain, thunder, or lightning, or storms of any kind if we except an occasional stiff breeze; so that it was possible to make an engagement days and weeks ahead with the positive assurance from the weather clerk that the day would be clear and pleasant. In a word, at Santa Catalina every day was a fishing day in the broadest and happiest sense.

During the days of retirement from active work various trips were made in the bay. A glass-bottom boat came up from Avalon, and through it the party studied the kelp beds. These boats, a fleet of which made its headquarters at Avalon, ranged from large side-wheelers to small craft, and were rigged with a large glass window in the bottom which slightly magnified everything. The glass was at the bottom of a well, the rim of which was



A jelly-fish.

cushioned, and the observers leaned upon the latter, and looked down into the water made smooth by the glass. Through this ingenious device nearly every object could be distinctly seen in water nearly sixty feet deep. As they drifted over the kelp beds the scene was beautiful almost beyond description.

They could see the delicate hydrozoan colonies growing on the kelp leaves and rocks, some secreting a coralline-like growth. Jelly-fishes of the greatest delicacy drifted by like crystal ships, fairy craft that at night produced a part of the wonderful

phosphorescence for which the region is famed. In the crevices of the rocks were sea-anemones of various hues, very like flowers, throwing out delicate tentacles or clos-



Sea-anemones.

ing at the slightest alarm. The kelp beds afforded an interesting field to study the strange protective resemblances among animals. Even the crabs here were tinted the exact color of the leaf—olive green—upon which they rested, while on a rock was a hermit crab, its shell so protected by a growth of weed that it could

hardly be distinguished from the rock. As the boat drifted on, large sea-cucumbers were seen lying on the rocks like giant slugs, star fishes of various kinds, and others, all making up this strange picture of the land beneath the sea.

A few days after the capture of the tuna Johnnie Graley was routed out at half-past four in the morning by the boys, who were eager to be off on the fishing trip for bass, which had been arranged previously.



Crabs of the kelp beds.

“Ain’t no use in goin’ bass fishin’ so early,” said Johnnie, rubbing his eyes and appearing at the dining tent.

“Why?” asked Jack.

“They don’t git up so early,” replied Johnnie.

“You mean you don’t want to get up,” retorted Jack.

Sleep was impossible if fishing was in the wind, and by sunrise the fishing party had had breakfast and were off. The *Torqua* was covered with a tarpaulin at night to keep off the sea-gulls which went aboard for



Hermit-crab.

bait and the flying-fishes that sometimes flew in, and this lifted she was dry and ready for work. At the word from the Angler the mooring was cast off and they glided out into the beautiful vermilion light which filled the east as the sun came up, turned south and followed the kelp bed along the rocky shore of the island. All the islands of the Californian coast are surrounded by a growth of seaweed called kelp—a vine which grows to several hundred feet in length, with enormous leaves or fronds rising and

floating on the surface at low tide, and at all times forming a perfect maze or forest, drifting with the current and presenting a beautiful appearance. The Torqua skirted the kelp forest, the fishermen catching glimpses of its wonders, the rich colors, its fluted leaves, and the brilliant reddish-gold and blue fishes which posed among them.

“That’s where the bass live,” said Joe; “just like birds in the woods. You hook a fish offshore and he turns and puts for the woods, like a shot, an’ you have to know how to keep him out or you don’t git your Mister Bass. We uster git heaps of them right here,” continued Joe, pointing to a long fine pebble beach which the Torqua was passing, “but they caught so many an’ tossed the heads over that they jest scared the fish away and they got up an’ packed out, an’ now you have to go round by the ‘fence’ or near there.”

The “fence” was a point just back of the town of Avalon, on the south side of the island, where great masses of kelp, clustered around the rocks and offshore, formed a deep laminarian forest.

“You see,” said Joe, “the bass comes inshore in spring, and lives in the outer forest, and runs inshore to feed and spawn, an’ when he runs foul of a hook, why, he makes a break for the outer forest—you’ll see,” and Joe laughed and nodded his head.

“Tackle all ready?” asked Mr. Temple, as Johnnie gave the wheel a turn and headed the boat for Church Rock.



“Aye, aye, sir,” said the Commodore; “ready and fit.”

The rods were almost identical with those used for tuna fishing. One was a split bamboo, another a noib-wood, while others in the launch, ready for smaller game, were greenheart rods. The lines were twenty-four thread cuttyhunk, as there was sulking and lifting in the wind, and the hook was a number 10/0 O'Shaughnessy. Joe was baiting each with about six pounds of raw albacore.

“It's six of one and half a dozen of the other,” he said, straightening the seven-foot wire leader. “Half a barracuda can't be beat, or a live whitefish, or even flyin'-fish; but they are mighty fond of albacore meat; it's rich and juicy.”

The launch now rounded Church Rock, a great brown mass that rose from the sea, and in a few moments they ran in near the kelp that was lying on the surface and the anchor was dropped. Johnnie fastened it to a keg which could be cast off at the slightest warning; and when the boat swung three or four baits were tossed over; some allowed to go to the bottom, others suspended a foot or more above it, as Joe said, to take all the chances. Johnnie Graley was fishing for sheepshead for dinner, being the purveyor, and in a short time he had a fine fellow on his line and at the surface, its black head, white under-jaw and blunt face making it a singular object.

It was an attractive fishing ground; the lofty cliffs and mountains of the island rose not one hundred yards

away, the sea breaking gently at their very base. The water was smooth as glass, indeed looking as though it had been oiled as far as the eye could reach, then blending



The Portuguese man-of-war.

into distant banks of cloud or fog. The water was as clear as crystal and in its depths could be seen countless forms of jelly-fishes, while on the surface, here and there, were Portuguese men-of-war—fairy-craft—which drifted in the current colliding with the stems and branches of the laminarian trees like veritable air-ships. The current appeared to be very erratic; now at rest, again flowing up the island to turn and run in the opposite direction, due to local causes. Johnnie had just begun a wierd tale about his experiences in the Gulf of California, where the sea-bass, according to his

story, weighed one thousand pounds, when Tom's reel gave tongue. Just one cog slipped, but it gave every one in the boat a slight electric shock, at least they



thought so, then zee! it came again and again, zee! zee! and stopped.

“Crabs,” said the Commodore, his eyes fixed intently on the water.

“Crabs, nothing,” retorted Johnnie in a low sepulchral voice; “bass. Let him have it.”

Again came the click, click on Tom’s reel, and throwing off the brake he gently overran the line, which was now going over very slowly and deliberately, just as a crab might have taken it. One, two, three, six, eight feet slipped over, then five or six more, and then the line stopped. Every one was keyed up by this time to high tension, and Johnnie Graley had reeled in his line and made the float ready to cast off at the first warning.

“He come back,” said Joe; “mighty fussy fish. Sometime he pick, pick, an’ take long time to make up his mind.”

Joe was a true prophet, as, presently, the bait again moved and this time ran out ten or fifteen feet; then Joe nodded, Tom threw on the click and pressed his thumb upon the leather pad, allowing the line to come taut; as it did, he lowered the tip, and when the line was stiff he braced back, not jerking, but with a steady, powerful surge “gave the fish the butt,” and set the hook into its hard jaws. That he was not lifted out of the boat was due to Joe, who grasped his sweater as he appeared to be going, the fish making a rush that was irresistible.

“Cast off!” shouted Joe.

“Cast off it is,” answered Johnnie, and as the rod

bobbed up and down, as though bowing to the fish, Jack slipped out of his seat, giving Tom the stern, while the Commodore took the oar and forced the stern of the Torqua around to the fish. The reel now uttered a voluble protest, fighting the big fish away, down somewhere at the bottom of the sea, but Tom had stopped it and the launch was moving slowly through the water behind an unknown finny steed.

“Give it to him!” said the Angler; “remember that when you stop, he is resting also. This is a fight in which there are no heats.”

Tom redoubled his efforts, but the fish made a sudden rush and not only took all the line gained but fifty feet more.

“He’s makin’ for the kelp,” cried Joe, and slipping the oars over he and Johnnie held back, putting the rod and line to severe test as the fish made a run directly out to sea. There was no stopping it; line, rod, everything would have given way had there been any resistance beyond the click, and the long line was rapidly melting away.

“Try and stop him,” said Mr. Temple.

Tom bent over his thumb and changed the staccato shriek of the reel to a deep grinding bass; the tip of the rod dropped low as he now held on; three hundred feet of line had gotten away in that rush.

“Good boy, fine,” muttered Joe.

“You must turn him if possible, Tom,” said Mr. Temple.

Tom rallied, though the strain was terrific, turning the rod tip to the left, lifting or pumping at the same time, and succeeded in holding the fish, and with the aid of the oars heading it in another direction. By hard work he gained twenty feet or more, lifting and whirling the reel handle about when he had the opportunity. In this way almost half an hour slipped away and the launch had been towed well offshore.

"I'm sure he weighs a ton," gasped Tom, as he looked at the tremendous weight.

"Four hundred and twenty-nine pounds the record," said Joe; "you may beat it, but not that way," as the bass made a rush that swept the rod tip down into the water and sent a wail of anguish whistling through the air from the steel throat of the reel. But Tom bent over the reel, pressing his thumb upon the leather pad with all his strength, and his thumb and forefinger upon the line above the reel, and held on while the rod bent, the launch moving along—a wonderful illustration of what good tackle will stand. The bass evidently had been brought to a standstill, as it changed its tactics, running in on the line, Tom reeling as fast as he could, stopping as the big fish turned and plunged downward with a dead force that nothing could withstand. But it was stopped within twenty feet, and then slowly, laboriously pumping, the bass came slowly up. Now it seemingly would shake its head, the line fairly trembling, and Tom would be lifted from the seat to settle back and reel and reel. Suddenly the fish began to rise, com-

ing near the surface one hundred feet away, where it swam around. The angler gained rapidly at this time, making twenty feet before it plunged again. He had now been playing the bass nearly an hour and what appeared like a long struggle had evidently begun.

“How long does it generally take?” asked Tom, anxiously.

“I’ve seen one fight a man four hours and get away,” replied Joe.

“And I’ve seen one landed in ten minutes,” reassured Johnnie, as Tom groaned audibly. “It’s all a trick; you want to force the fighting.”

“I am forcing,” retorted Tom, reeling again with all his strength, “but what I need is a donkey engine; at times I can’t move him.”

“You are gaining,” said his father, laughing. “When you get the slightest chance, rush him.”

But the bass continued to rush Tom; played with him; now stealing line, now coming in, nearly pulling his arms out of their sockets; but after a quick plunge there came a sudden slacking of the line, and Tom reeled with renewed vigor, Jack shouting “Good boy; give it to him, I see him!”

“Yes, here he is, and a corker, sir. Aisy with him. By the powers! he’s as big as a whale,” and the Commodore, excited as a boy, reached for the gaff, handing it to Joe, whose fame had been built on just such struggles, and all stood breathless and watched the clever killing of a fish which weighed three times as much as the angler.

It came in slowly, circling around, and not twenty feet down its huge black and white form could be seen.

“Stand ready for a rush; it’s comin’ as soon as he sights the boat.”

Joe had hardly spoken these words when the fish turned and plunged downward, zeeee—ee—zeee—eeee! sounding in a long wail. But Tom stopped and turned it up with a clever lift and soon had the fish in sight. And what a fish it was! Little wonder that the Commodore snorted, as Jack said, like a grampus, and danced around. Little wonder that Tom was excited as into the clear water he reeled a fish so gigantic that he could not believe it possible that he had accomplished the feat with the thread of a line. Yet here was the evidence six or more feet in length, thick and as heavy as a twelve-foot shark, bulky, in fact, titanic, yet the almost perfect image of a small-mouth bass, if we can imagine one of these fishes magnified out of all proportion. Such was the fish that Tom now reeled in, and which he directed cleverly to his left and turned so that Joe could approach it with the gaff. A quick bend, and the gaff went down, and with a jerk he sank it into the throat of the monster, Joe lifting it quickly and holding it at the surface, where it rolled and thrashed, drenching them all in its struggles. A marvelous creature, at least to be caught in the manner described. How they cheered and shouted! the Commodore, not at all behind the rest, declaring that it was the cleverest catch he had ever seen, and that Tom had “done himself proud.”

In the meantime Tom, who had received at least a bucket of water in the face from the tail of the monster, held his rod ready for a rush; but Joe had the bass and he now slackened away, and Johnnie cleverly put a rope through the gills and out at the mouth of the big fish, and then it was killed with the knife and all hands took the rope and the giant was hauled on the forward deck, where Tom feasted his eyes on the game, realizing why he had almost been caught himself. Few large fishes except the Florida jewfish present so colossal an appearance as the black sea-bass of California. It is the king of the bass tribe, yet when swimming it is one of the most graceful of fishes.

Johnnie now started the engine and they ran back to the moorings, where they tied up for lunch and to discuss the catch, which had been made in less than two hours. The Commodore got out the lunch basket, the contents of which were passed around, while Joe on a portable oil-stove heated coffee.

“How big a one have you ever caught, Joe?” asked Jack.

“I can’t tell,” was the reply. “I’m a pretty husky puller, but I tackled one once that I couldn’t move; he pulled me elbow deep, and I was goin’ overboard when I took a turn with the line—a big rope—and when we hauled it in the shark-hook was straightened out. I reckon he must have weighed eight hundred or a thousand pounds!”

“Here goes for another,” said Johnnie, casting over

while Tom and his father took their light rods and in a short time were having fine sport with the bonito—a fish that ranges from five to twelve pounds, making a splendid play with the split-bamboo rod, almost always on the surface, and when it comes in displaying all the colors of the rainbow—a kaleidoscope of most beautiful tints and shades. Johnnie Graley was one of those peculiar philosophers who see no pleasure in fishing. It was work to him, as he often was obliged to earn his living in this way; and to haul in a big fish and work over it when you could hire some one to do for you, was a palpable piece of absurdity to him; but he carefully kept this opinion to himself and pretended to be an ardent angler; yet no sooner was his line over and on the bottom than Johnnie would begin to nod, his pipe, if lighted, would remain in his mouth by some special sense, and Johnnie would be far away in the land of dreams. He would sail in from the outer fishing grounds before the wind, the tiller under his arm, and he fast asleep; yet when the boat “yawned” and gave evidence of jibing Captain Johnnie always awoke just in time, changed the course and promptly fell asleep again.

To-day Johnnie sat and held his line, and slept, and the boys watched him and tried to conjure up some joke that had not been attempted before, it being difficult to trick this particular fisherman who had a way of waking up, as the Commodore said, “on the inside;” that is, he did not open his eyes when he awoke, but merely announced that he was not asleep. So Johnnie slept on,



puffing like a porpoise, a peculiar feat that soon shot out the tobacco from his pipe like a diminutive Pelée, and, as the boys had about decided to haul up his line and put on a dead albacore, something intervened, the something jerking his line so desperately that it brought him to his feet, staring wildly at the rushing line that leaped over the rail like a snake.

“Is it foul the propeller?” cried Johnnie, blinking.

“Propeller!” replied the Commodore with a great show of disgust, “why, we’re anchored, ye bilgerees. Luk out for yer legs,” he added, and Johnnie dodged a coil and danced a hornpipe to avoid the line, then sprang at it, calling to Joe to cast off the rope, which was done, Johnnie settling back as the boat swung around.

“It all comes from yer fishin’ with a hand-line. Ye’re an obstinate creature, Johnnie Graley,” said the Commodore reeling in his line. “Ye’ve got an old nine-fathom porpoise on.”

“Porpoise blazes,” responded Johnnie, red in the face to the point of apoplexy; “bass and the king.”

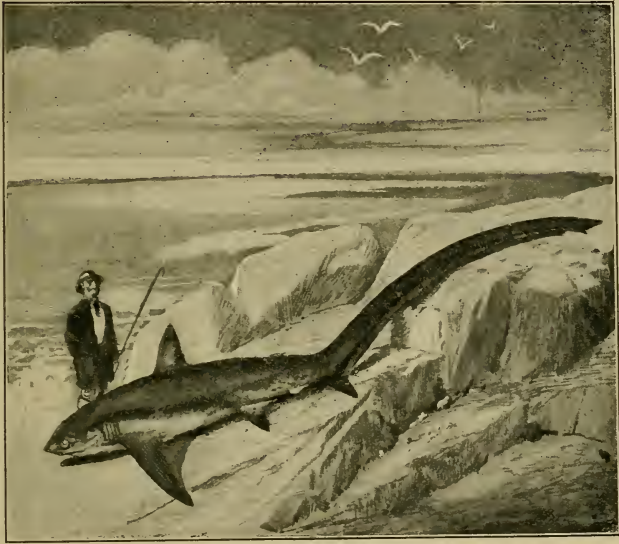
“Did ye ever see a bass bite like that, eh, Joe?” asked the Commodore.

“It’s not my fish,” replied Joe diplomatically; “but if it was, an’ I was asked, I’d say a shark.”

A shark it was, and a swivel-tail at that, as five minutes later it came to the surface, where it lashed the water with its tremendous tail and made a splendid display of strength. Johnnie, already weary, handed the line to the boys who quickly discovered what power a



large shark possesses. After plunging about it went to the bottom and set a pace for deep water, carrying them along at a four-mile rate. Down by Church Rock they passed; then, as the shark showed evidence of taking



Thresher shark.

them to sea, all hands laid on and soon had the monster at the surface where it rolled and twisted, gnashing its fierce jaws, displaying row after row of teeth—an extraordinary creature with the upper lobe of its tail lengthened out as long as its body. Finally it was brought alongside, and as the shark was a very large one it was decided

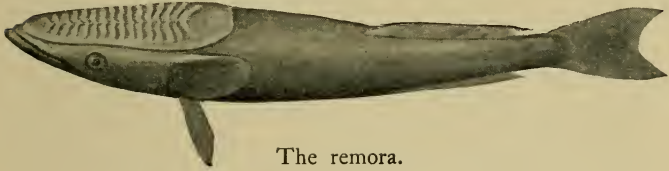
to tow it inshore and give it to an old longshoreman who collected shark liver as a business.



Lamp-shells hooked up at Santa Catalina.

As they drifted, Jack, dropping his line to the bottom in very deep water, hooked up a number of singular objects,

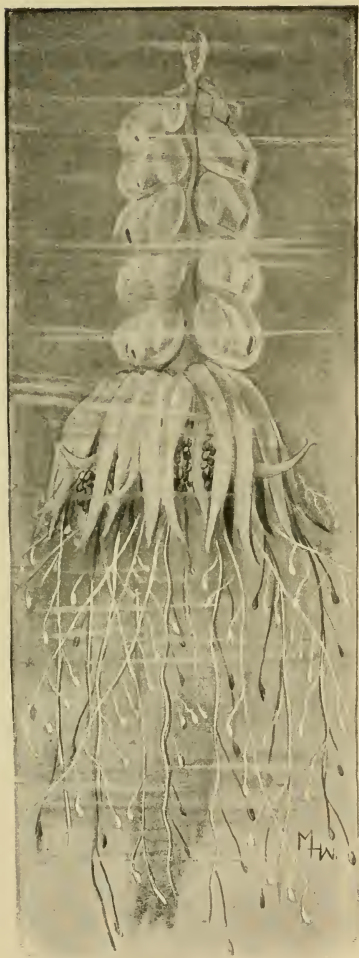
one of which proved to be the lamp shell. Joe discovered a remora or sucking fish on the shark, and pulling it off, placed it in a bucket to show how firmly it could hold by the curious sucker upon the top of its head. There was always some attraction or beautiful object in sight in these waters. Tom's line fouled a charming jellyfish, known as the Physophora, and it was lifted aboard and kept for some time that its beauties might be admired. One peculiarity was noted. It darted about in rapid flight in marked contrast to the ordinary jellies, a common one being a huge lavender form two



The remora.

feet across the disk and sometimes twenty or thirty feet in length, yet a very slow swimmer and easily captured by whales.

As they drifted Joe sighted some white sea-bass, one of the finest game fishes in the sea. They displayed no fear, coming within fifteen or twenty feet of the boat, and forming a most enticing spectacle to the anglers. Apparently, none of the bass were less than four feet in length, and as far as the boys could see down in the deep water they were in layers, slowly moving on. Tom, Jack, and their father reached for their rods, and Joe and



An active jellyfish.

Johnnie deftly changed the black sea bass leaders to a number 7/0 O'Shaughnessy hook with leaders of wire a foot in length. To this was baited a smelt, and if one had watched carefully it would have been seen that the point of the hook was put in the mouth of the bait and run through it, the hook then turned and buried in the belly of the smelt; then the mouth of the latter was fastened with a small wire and tied to the shank of the hook and the bait was ready for trolling or casting. It did not take more than a few moments to change the hooks as the latter were all baited; there being perfect system on the launch they were pre-

pared for any game all the time, and all knew that it was the unexpected that was to happen. The Angler was given the cast of honor, and with a deft motion, having his bait reeled up as far as possible, he dropped it fairly into the school fifty feet away, then reeling gently, made it simulate life. Not a bass moved, not a tail turned, and the Commodore later said that not a fish even winked. Again the Angler landed his bait, this time allowing it to lie like a dead fish, and what an enticing lure it was! shining like silver against the deep blue of the water—a fascinating object, yet disdained by this rare and splendid game.

“Joe,” said Mr. Temple, “this is certainly not my day. Try it, boys,” and out went two fresh baits, one a sardine, one a bunch of anchovies. Whish! and the water boiled as though struck by a whirlwind. A bass had charged but stopped at the bait, refusing it, and the silver fish sank into the throng, not merely without being noticed but absolutely disdained.

“This beats everything I ever see,” said the Commodore; “did ye spit on the bait, Joe?”

“Whatever d’ye take me for?” answered the latter. “Of course I did.”

“Well, it beats me,” said the old man, scratching his head as though in search of an idea.

“It don’t beat me,” Joe retorted. “Reel, Jack, and try this,” and Joe took the end of his line and fastened a fresh snood or leader with a flying fish at least a foot long, as bait. “Put it right into them,” he said, winking.



“Why, that would stampede the whole school,” answered Tom.

But Jack reeled in his line, got the big bait at the tip of his rod and cast with both hands. The bait fell with a crash and before the water cleared it seemed to break out into an eruption. Three bass had fairly leaped for it, and one had the bait plainly; then, feeling the hook, it made a rush, to so loud and musical an accompaniment on the reel that every one of the crew felt like dancing.

“O, ho! the gallant fishers that we are!” cried the Commodore. “Joe, ye’re a past master in baitin’ hooks. I’ll give in to ye there,” and he slapped the big broad back of the gaffer a sounding whack.

The bass made a clean rush of perhaps one hundred and fifty feet, then stopped, and rose to the surface with a bound, cut around two hundred feet so that Jack darted to the mast and swung around to save the line from fouling, then bearing away in such splendid form that the young angler was forced to give, inch by inch, to save his tackle.

“Good boy, Jack,” cried his father; “there’s where good judgment comes in. It is like playing a piano to press on that leather pad in just the right key, so that you will not break the line. But excuse me for speaking to you,” added Mr. Temple. “Never talk to the angler, the man behind the reel, when a fish is on, especially a large one.”

Jack played his fish like a master, as indeed he was, holding up the rod when the fish made a rush, never

giving slack; now pressing just the right force on the leather pad, now reenforcing on the upper line, then, as occasion offered, jumping the right hand from brake to reel handle, and winding feet and yards on the big multiplier, bringing the game nearer the end. Ah, the excitement of it, the splendor of the whole performance! The boat and sea were Jack's stage, and he and the big bass were the stars—matched one against the other. Now the bass was in the lead, cutting the blue water, an object of beauty, a joy forever; now threatening to break the tackle, again skilfully stopped and brought in inch by inch, a fine fighter, every pound a game fish, always on the alert, and giving the angler the play of his life. How it surged and bore away in splendid curves! How it plunged down to the music of the reel! Not a man in the boat, not a boy (they were all boys, young and old), but had a personal interest in this struggle of human skill on the one hand and a game fish on the other. Here was an illustration of true manly sport. The white sea bass had all the advantage in the duel; the line was an absurd thing, a mere thread, to hold so large a fish—a twelve-thread cuttyhunk—while the rod weighed but twelve ounces and had three joints. The slightest mistake in judgment would have terminated the contest, but the fates were with the angler, and in a few moments he brought the fish to boat. Joe gaffed it, and held it up for one happy moment, that they might see and feast their eyes on its beauties.

“Oh, that *is* sport,” said Jack, and, with extraordi-



nary magnanimity, "I wish you all could have played him!"

"Blither and zounds!" exclaimed the Commodore. "I felt every pull myself, an' didn't he put a quart of sea water doon me back? Ah, he's a bonnie feesh that, a bonnie feesh indeed," and when Joe despatched it and held it up on the scales it tipped them to the sixty-four-pound mark. Very much the shape of a salmon, well proportioned was the white sea-bass, *Cynoscion nobilis*, the cousin of the Atlantic weakfish, one of the noblest of all game fishes, and quite as difficult to take as the salmon, being very "whimsy," as the Commodore put it—sometimes biting, sometimes refusing, and appearing in numbers only from May first, or thereabouts, to July, and sometimes not at all. The fish ranges as far north as San Francisco; attains a weight of one hundred pounds, possibly more.

"We'll bake him to-night on the beach, eh?" Johnnie suggested, throwing a piece of canvas over the fish. "Baked on hot stones with potatoes and crawfish and——"

"Hold on, Johnnie," interrupted Tom; "don't encourage my appetite until we get in—I can't stand it."

As a sea was now picking up they got under way and ran around into the lee of the island, where they joined a fleet of fishing boats, each containing two anglers, their masts decorated with various strange flags. Here the water was smooth—a peculiarity of this island, the mainland of California being exposed to the prevail-

ing west wind and nearly always rough, splendid water for sailing or trolling with hand lines but not adapted to the angler with the light rod. Here, on the north and east face of this oceanic mountain range there were twenty-two miles of nooks and corners, rocky bays generally smooth, often perfectly so, the sea like a mirror, and affording a water only to be compared to the mighty St. Lawrence, where calms and clear waters form the main feature of the delights of anglers.

Tom and Jack were fortunate in being lovers of nature for nature alone. They saw something to enjoy in everything—the color of the mountains, the hue of the rocks, the blending of the neutral tints, the splendid tone and life of the ocean as its lungs seemed to rise in the ground-swell, all this had a charm, and so they always had good luck; not always in big fish, but in the fullness of nature's offerings.

Running into Avalon later the black sea-bass was taken in, and with the aid of Vincente, the head fisherman, and his men, hoisted up on Joe's stand and found to tip the scales at 270 pounds, attracting more than ordinary attention when it was noised about that this large fish had also been taken by a boy. Several boys have taken these giants of the sea in the fashion described and in the most sportsmanlike manner. The accompanying photograph shows the record boys' catch of Santa Catalina Island and the world—a bass weighing 324 pounds, taken by Henry Ellsworth Paine, of Cleveland, Ohio. The fish was caught with the rod and reel, the latter

holding a twenty-four thread or strand line; and after a fast fight which would have placed many men with un-



The record boys' catch of black sea-bass.

tried muscles *hors de combat*, he brought the fish to gaff just fifty minutes from the time he hooked it. This is, in all probability, not only the boys' record for black sea-bass, but the largest game fish of any kind taken by a boy in a sportsman-like manner, and by this is meant the tackle described and allowed by the Tuna Club of Avalon, and with absolutely no assistance from boatman or gaffer until the latter reached it with his gaff.

The extraordinary power and strength of these fishes can be realized only by those who have tried to play them. How large they grow is not known, but doubtless they attain one thousand pounds in the Gulf of California, which seems to be a favorite ground for them.

The Torqua sailed into the cañon that afternoon with colors flying, and the big flag bearing the white figure

of a bass at the fore told the story to those in camp. At night, when the camp-fire began to blaze and cast lurid shadows all about, brightening the sides of the cañon, they sat around it and again told and retold the pleasures of the day. Johnnie had early dug a hole in the beach, lining it with flat stones, forming a pit, and in this he built a fire of driftwood. After it had been burning some time he cleared it out, lined it with seaweed, and wrapping the white sea-bass in wet thick brown paper, placed it on the hot stones, then covered it with more sea-weed, putting in crayfish and potatoes as well, and as they sat by the camp-fire the savory odors came wafting up the cañon, foretelling the joys of a fish bake. Later when Johnnie and Joe passed around the baked white sea-bass and the tender young crayfish, the "bake" was pronounced a success, and fit for the gods.

"Did you ever see the flying Dutchman in your trips round the Horn?" asked Jack, as Johnnie threw another log on the fire.

"Flyin' Dutchman!" repeated Johnnie, dividing up a piece of crayfish for the greyhound and fox terrier that had joined the group. "You don't have to go to the Horn to see them, eh, Joe?"

"All the Dutchmen I know, like Pete, are too heavy to fly," said the matter-of-fact Joe.

"He manes a goost ship," explained Johnnie. "Didn't ye ever hear of the ship that bate up and down off the Cape and never rounded it?"

“No, I never did,” replied Joe.

“But you’ve heard of the ship that bates up and down this coast?” persisted Johnnie.

“Yes, I have,” Joe answered, “but what’s the use of talkin’ about it? We’re here to fish, ain’t we?”

“Let’s have it, Johnnie,” said the Commodore. “If it’s a ghost story let’s have it.”

“It’s worse nor that,” said Johnnie, looking around with a furtive air which made Joe also peer into the darkness, being just a trifle superstitious. “Ye all know,” began Johnnie, in a sepulchral tone adapted to the situation, “the Ship Rock off the northeast end of the island? We’ve fished there a hape of times, an’ ye all know that when ye look up, kind of sudden like, when a few miles away, ye see a full-rigged ship, a reg’lar old wind-jammer with everything on her and all drawin’, too. Ain’t that so, sir?” appealing to the Angler, who sat with his face in his hands looking into the coals and enjoying the scene and the talk.

“Yes, I’ve seen her many times and thought it was a ship,” was the reply.

“That’s the pint, sir; it is a ship. When yer fishin’ alongside of it it’s a rock, an’ the tide sets along there like a mill-race, an’ you see the old Ship Rock white as snow with the guano, and see the birds a-roostin’ on it; but when ye haul off, why, she gets under way. I was fishin’ there a year ago,” continued Johnnie, “with a man; an’ we kept runnin’ up and driftin’ down by the Ship Rock, an’ all at once a fog come blowin’ in’ an’ kind

o' hid it, an' I heard jest as plain as I hear that log a crackin', some one sing out, 'Weigh anchor!' then a boatswain's whistle; then I heard the capstan clankin', then more orders, then the fog lifted, and there was the old rock not two hundred feet away; we mighty nigh drifted onto it. I says to the gintleman I was rowin', 'Did ye hear anything quare, sir?' 'I thought I heard the rattlin' of a ship's sails,' says he. But that's nothin'," continued Johnnie, after a brief pause, during which no one spoke, "ye all know Donovan, that lives up beyond? One night I was sittin' in me shack at the Isthmus when I heard a wild cry like, up the coast. 'What's that?' says the man I was fishin' for, sittin' up in his bunk. Then it come again, a cry like—like the wail of a lost soul, a cry of the dead," looking at Joe. "It's a hail," says the gintleman. 'Bar the door,' says I. 'No livin' man's out sich a night as this,' blowin' as it was. 'But it may be some wan,' says he. Then we heard it again, comin' down the wind, an' something seemed to take the shack in its hands and shake it. 'Bar the door,' says I. 'Open it,' says he; 'ye're not afraid, are ye, Grayley?' says he. 'No,' says I; 'but I've the caution that goes with a long head.' With that he lept to his fate and pulls open the door, and in falls Donovan, white as a goost, and tremblin' all over. 'What's the matter?' says I; 'who's after ye?' 'Bar the door,' says Donovan, and he fell into a chair while I put the bar in. After he had some hot coffee, he says, 'Johnnie, I've seen that I've never seen before. D'ye

mind the hanted house on the hill.' 'Yes,' I says. 'It was blowin' so,' says he, 'that I ran into Bouchet's an' made up mind that I'd stay there; but the rain drove me out, an' I started down the trail for here, an' when I got to the water it was blowin' a hurricane, an' as I turned down I heard a voice comin' down the wind, "Ready about, stations for stays. Hard a lee!" then a clash of blocks an' the rattlin' of sails right by me side. I was fifty feet above the water, an' as I looked I saw a big ship lookin' like a pale flame. I see every sail, an' she had stunsails on her an' it blowin' a hurricane. I see her pay off; I see her yards square away, an' she moved down the island. D'ye mind the bar there below Johnson's rocks? not five feet under water, rocks like teeth, that no ship could cross an' not a cable's length ahead of her, so I let out a hail, "Ship ahoy! ahoy there! starboard yer helm; ship ahoy!" 'That's what we heard,' says the fisherman. 'Yes,' says Donovan; 'but on she went, a keelin' over so that her fore-yards were in the water an' the wind blowin' a hurricane. I missed the trail, fell over the rocks an' cactus, picked meself up an' come out on the pint just as she got to the reef. "Ship ahoy!" I yelled. "Hard a starboard fur yer life!" and then—"Yes, and then," says I, 'then she went clear over the reef, an' I lost sight of her; she sailed away with everything a-drawin' and never touched it.' 'Did you see any wan on deck?' says I. 'I did not,' says Donovan; 'there wasn't a soul in sight, an' I saw her as plain as I see ye, Johnnie



Grayley,'” and Johnnie stopped so suddenly that Joe started and glanced furtively at the sea, while the boys broke into peals of laughter, not so much at the yarn as at the dramatic way in which it had been told, around the dying camp-fire, and the evident effect it had upon Joe.

## CHAPTER V

### A DAY WITH YELLOWTAIL

THE day following the catch of the big bass the boys made a trip up the cañon after foxes, taking the two dogs with them—an enjoyable climb up the steep mountains which gave them a fine view of the blue channel and the snow-capped peaks of Mounts San Antonio and San Jacinto sixty miles or more distant in the Sierra Madre. They followed the sheep trail, finding much to interest them. Scurrying beneath the holly bushes and scrub oak innumerable bands of quail were seen, the males with jaunty head plumes, sounding their sweet call that was answered from others far away across the cañon. On the side of the cañon, lumbering along, Jack discovered a huge tarantula which ran quickly into its hole at his approach, and near by he found the clever nest of the trap-door spider, which was added to the collection of insects, taking the nest out carefully by digging. Under the stones some distance on several small scorpions were unearthed, and in the cañon bed where there was but a suspicion of water was caught an enormous water-bug bearing upon its back a covering of eggs which protected it like an armor, giv-

ing it a most singular appearance. Lizards scampered here and there; one, with a rich blue spot upon its breast, eying them from the rocks and lifting itself up



California quail.

quickly as though to flash its brilliant color at them. In their home the boys had a museum, and they were making collections in various departments of zoology



A giant spider.

for the purpose of study. They preserved their own specimens, and could skin and mount birds and small animals.

In this way they wandered along, occasionally climbing the low trees to look into a humming-bird's nest, or lying flat on the ground to study the trail or track of some animal or insect until they came out upon the divide overlooking the camp. As they came in sight of the latter, some one uttered a loud hail, and the boys

saw the Commodore and their father running down to the beach, shouting as they ran. A glance at the little bay told the story. Some large fish, or a school, had entered it, and the ordinarily smooth harbor appeared like a maelstrom, so covered with foam was it. Tom and Jack stood not on the order of going, but ran as best they could, burdened with specimens, back to camp; there dropping their loads and snatching up their rods they hastened to the beach to find their father casting and the Commodore, his line in a tangle, dancing about and calling down maledictions upon his luck, while Johnnie and Joe gathered up sardines which were leaping on the sands, throwing them up for bait. A school of yellowtails had chased in a school of sardines and was playing havoc with the small fry. Tom hurriedly hooked a sardine on his line, laughing at the Commodore's struggles and despair, and cast from the beach forty or fifty feet. The moment the bait struck zee-ee-ee-e-e! went the reel, and never had it made a more vigorous protest. Then Jack's reel took up the strain, while Mr. Temple's was muttering a low bass as he put on the brake. Tom's fish took him down the



Giant water-bug with  
eggs on its back.

beach in a splendid run, then charging directly out, breaking the line so cleverly that he never could explain it.

“Blither and zounds! Johnnie!” exclaimed the Commodore; “ye’ve had me rod; luk at this mess,” and he threw the tangled line upon the beach in disgust, shaking his fist at it.

Zip-ze-ee! went Jack’s reel; zip-ting-g-g! and the line went, only Mr. Temple holding his fish, and it had two hundred feet of line and was aiming to saw it off on the rocks, so he sprang into the skiff and Joe rowed him out clear of the point, where he presently landed a splendid yellowtail. Like a beam of light the yellow-tails had rushed in, and they were off as quickly, the little bay soon becoming as smooth as a lake again. Mr. Temple got aboard the launch and Johnnie rowed in after the boys and the Commodore, who now had a new line, and they all went aboard and started after the school.

“I’ve caught a lot of yellowtail,” said Joe, “but I don’t believe I ever saw such a school of big strong fellows. Yours weighs most forty pounds, sir,” and Joe held up the beautiful fish, shaped something like a salmon but with a mackerel-like tail, a vivid yellow, yellow fins and median line; its back green in the water and an iridescent blue out of it, the belly white or silver.

“I consider the yellowtail the hardest fighter among fishes,” said the Angler, “and I’ve caught almost every-

thing. If you wish to test it, boys, rig up a salmon rod—I mean a typical one nine or ten feet long, and take my old non-multiplying salmon reel and try to catch a yellowtail. I venture to say that it would take hours if you could do it at all. That is why it is necessary to have a short rod for these fish, as they are extremely powerful and you must have a rod with which you can lift a sulker.”

The rods Tom and Jack were using were about seven feet long, in two joints, and, while light, were sufficient to lift a sulking fish ranging up to fifty pounds. The lines were twelve strand, light enough to place the angler at a disadvantage, the hook a number seven O’Shaughnessy. As soon as the Torqua cleared the point the boys took their seats in the stern and began to pay out line, slacking off about seventy feet, while Johnnie Grayley put the launch at about quarter speed, and they trolled slowly along twenty feet or so outside the kelp bed, a fishing ground with every charm. High cliffs rose to the left, now breaking into a green mesa that sloped upward and merged into higher mountains. The water was of that intense blue that can only be imitated by the liberal use of pure cobalt. Hardly a ripple disturbed the surface save where a group of flying-fishes were seen playing, or a sea-bass cut the water with its dorsal fin. The launch moved in and out of little undulations of the coast in following the kelp bed, and the anglers always had this attractive garden of the sea in sight—masses of waving green laminarian vines



about which poised countless rich blue fishes or others in deep red gold tints, telling of the golden angel-fish that lived in this fishes' highway. As the launch came out of a little snug harbor Jack's reel sang the note of distress—zee-e-e-e-e-e!

“No mistaking that,” said Tom. “Go for him, Jacky; go for him!”

But something was going for Jack, as, despite his best efforts to hold up his rod, it was bowing and bending and shaking at some invisible foe in a remarkable manner, while the reel sang the music loved best by the angler.

“I believe I could sing to that,” said Tom, “and I'm going to write some words to the song of the reel some day.”

Zee-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-zip-zip! sang the reel, and the rod was fairly jerked, tip down, to the water, Jack pressing upon the leather brake with all the force he dared apply. No fish of its size and weight makes so gallant a burst of speed when hooked as the yellowtail, and Jack's fish was no exception to the rule, boring down again, rising and dashing across the field, the angler keeping the rod nodding and bending like a living thing. But Jack always met his charges; his thumb played on the brake at just the right tension, and he eased it by touching the upper line with his guarded thumb or stall. The looker-on would have seen that he was fighting the fish all the time in some way, never allowing it to get its “second wind,” which is often fatal to the prospects of the angler.

When the fish rushed, as it did repeatedly, he gave way gently. The moment it ceased, his right hand slipped to the reel and so he gained a foot or two, and then dropping his tip the young angler gave a mighty lift, raising the fish bodily, the rod bending and a terrific strain put upon the line. Up it came, the very king of sulkers, and when the rod was almost erect Jack dropped the point and quickly slipping his right hand to the reel took in six or seven feet of line, and before the yellowtail was aware what had happened down dropped the tip again; this was cleverly repeated rapidly time and again, the gamy fish being "pumped" up—the only way it could be moved. Suddenly the operation ceased; the fish ran in a foot or two, turned and plunged down with the marvelous, irresistible force for which it is famous, and loudly sang the reel—zee-e-e-e-e-e-e-e, the song that stirs the blood, the music the angler loves.

"I see him!" shouted the Commodore; "a star in the sky of the water. He's a beauty. See him sheer off, side on, makin' the fight of his life. There's a rush for ye! zeee-eee-zip! shure he almost had ye then! gallant angler that ye are!" sang and laughed the Commodore. "Wance more; ye're feeshin' almost as well as meself. Now, then, all together!"

But zip-zee-e-e! went the reel, and away went the fish, now plainly seen in the splendid burst of speed, dashing almost around the boat, taking Jack to his feet to pull him down again to his knees, all so quickly that he appeared to be waving a wand or single stick instead of

a rod. "Here he is," and fairly on the surface came the yellowtail.

"At once he darts along,  
Deep struck, and runs out all the lengthened line."

Coursing along on top of the water like a greyhound, a gallant fish, not discouraged, though almost within reach of the cruel gaff. How it bounded along! flashing yellow, gold, and green; its big eyes, bright, gleaming, a splendid creature. No "quitter" it; so far as it was concerned, the fight had just begun; but the fates were against it, and while in the very toils it made the best rush of all, tearing off the line to the wild cry of the reel whose brazen throat uttered strange and guttural protests. In it comes again to the bravos of the lookers-on; Jack's face beaming, every pore weeping, his hat off, his arms, indeed every muscle, aching in this struggle against certainly a fifty-pound fish with a mere thread. In it comes, pumped, reeled in, and Joe leans forward with the gaff as Jack cleverly gives it the butt and turns it forward. But just then Jack surrendered, and all the true sportsman's blood surged to his heart. "Hold on, Joe, no gaff!"

"What!" exclaimed Joe, amazed, as he allowed the fish to pass him.

"Grab the leader!" cried Jack.

Joe did as told and held the splendid fish while Jack handed his rod to his brother and leaped into the cockpit. "Let me have him," he said, and he took the struggling yellowtail by the leader and lifted it, to test

its weight, guessing fifty-five pounds. The fish was over four feet in length, and having taken in all its beauties for a moment, Jack dexterously cut away the hook and flung the gamy creature back into the sea.

"I'm glad to see you animated by such a spirit, Jack," said the Angler, in a pleased tone, nodding approval.

"Good for ye!" commended the Commodore, "ye're a true sportin' gentleman."

"Well," said Jack, still breathless, "I just couldn't kill a fish that fought me like that; he deserved to get away."

"Right you are," Tom retorted; "but he was a corker. I never saw so big a fellow."

"That is the true principle in fishing," said the Angler. "The sport is legitimate within limits. You are entitled to catch a certain number of fish, four or five, for sport, I would say, or more if they can be used by some one; but this killing just to see how many you can bring in, is an outrage on the rights of animals, as they have rights the same as ourselves. The yellowtail is a queer fish," continued the Angler. "I have hooked the same fish three times in a day, so I cannot think they suffer much, or any for that matter. They struggle because they are alarmed and are wild at being caught."

The Torqua now ran up the shore and Tom also caught a fish which was released. When off Long Point they stopped and drifted with the current, both fishermen casting. To the north they could see Ship Rock—a

wonderful imitation of a full-rigged ship headed for the rocks under full sail, the long line of rocky coast, and the great point which rose gradually, reaching upward to lofty hilltops which rested in the soft blue haze of the upper range.

“Such a day brings out all the poetry in a man,” said the Angler, lying back and puffing at his pipe while the boys cast their lines toward the kelp.

“Aye, aye, it do, sir,” responded the Commodore; then, in a very deep, very cracked and very ancient voice, to a very impossible tune, he began to sing:

“Oh! the gallant fisher’s life,  
It is the best of any;  
'Tis full of pleasure, void of strife,  
And 'tis beloved by many.  
Other joys  
Are but toys;  
Only this  
Lawful is.  
For our skill  
Breeds no ill,  
But content and pleasure.”

“Excellent,” said the Angler, smiling, as the Commodore concluded; “an old song, ‘The Angler,’ by John Chalkhill, a fellow angler of Spenser.”

“So?” replied the Commodore. “I heard my father sing it a-feeshin’ when I was a lad like yonder. I remember another song that goes this way:

“Of all the recreations which  
Attend on human nature,  
There’s none that’s of so high a pitch  
Or is of such a stature  
As is the subtle angler’s life  
In all men’s approbation ;  
For angling tricks do daily mix  
In every occupation.”

“Yes, I know it well,” said the Angler, upon which the Commodore began the second verse :

“Thus have I made my anglers’ trade  
To stand above defiance,  
For, like the mathematic art,  
It runs through every science.  
If with my angling song I can  
To mirth and pleasure seize you,  
I’ll bait my hook with wit again  
And angle still to please you.”

“You will find much that is good in old angling verses,” continued the Angler, “references to nature, to the charm of the sea, forest and lake, thus :

“But if we find the inmates shy  
And cautious past enduring,  
Full many a skilful trick we try  
To draw them to our luring.  
For fish, like men, full nine in ten,  
Have very strange vagaries ;  
They leap on high to catch the fly,  
Then sink to where fresh fare is.”

“Pope wrote some attractive lines on angling, especially those on ‘Windsor Forest’——”

“What’s this?” shouted Tom, interrupting the poetry and trying to lift his rod.

“Shark,” Joe answered, briefly.

Tom’s rod was bending, the reel screaming, and it continued until he had lost three hundred feet of line; then, far away on the surface, near the kelp, rose a big black head, a sea-lion.

“Blither and zounds!” exclaimed the Commodore, “what next? A regular black mermaid.”

The sea-lion was hooked, there was no doubt of it, and after a run he had been forced to the surface, where, after taking a look at the boat, he, evidently, as Johnnie Grayley said, sized up the situation and bit off the hook. A moment later they saw a large bull sea-lion crawl upon White Rock and join the rest of the herd, so they concluded it was the same one.

“I’ve caught some quare things here,” said Johnnie, “but never a sea-lion. I’ve hooked a seal, a gull, a dolphin, a sea-eagle, a whale, all trollin’.”

“Ye never caught a mermaid, I reckon,” said the Commodore.

“No, I never did,” replied Johnnie, “but I’ve caught cats on the Mississippi, with a jug, that weighed a thousand pounds.”

“The jug or the cats?” asked Jack, laughing.

“All yer big catches are made in foreign parts, I notice,” said the Commodore, sniffing; “they’re so far



off that ye can't prove it by mortal man. All that saw the catch is dead, I'll wager."

"Shure they are," retorted Johnnie, blandly, "but I'm livin'."

"Well, we'll hear it to-night," said the Commodore, reeling up his line. "In, sir?"

The Angler assented and in a few moments the Torqua had turned down the coast and was driving the flying-fishes out of the water on either side on the way home.

"We might pick up some of these for bait," said Tom, and taking his gun he sat on the fore-deck and as



Shooting flying-fish at Santa Catalina.

a flying-fish rose like a quail he brought it down quite cleverly. The Commodore put the boat alongside and Joe picked up the game with a hand-net, and in this way

two other flying-fishes were secured for tuna bait, a strange and original sport peculiar to this isle of summer.

Many boys of all ages have made fine catches of yellowtail at Santa Catalina with rod and reel in the manner described, and the bay of Avalon is frequently filled



The record boys' catch of yellowtail.

with boats of the young disciples of Walton. In the accompanying illustration is seen the catch of a boy, John Howard Paine, one of three brothers all of whom hold records as sea anglers. He took fifteen yellowtails which averaged over twenty pounds each, all of which

were used or eaten. With these were nine barracudas, shown in the upper part of the figure. The Torqua ran into the cañon just at dusk, and, later, Johnnie Grayley was induced to tell his story of the thousand-pound catfish.

“A true tale, is it, Johnnie?” asked the Commodore.

“Ain’t all my yarns true?” retorted Johnnie, at which the Commodore raised his hands and rolled his eyes upward.

Jack and Tom were cleaning their reels; Joe was making new leaders with the Commodore, and Captain Johnnie at his favorite occupation, barbecuing a shoulder of kid, while Mr. Temple and his wife sat and enjoyed the camp-fire, laughing quietly at the remarks of Johnnie and the Commodore, the two always engaging in a good-natured wrangle.

“It’s a waste of good language to tell a yarn to you, Mister Busby,” said Johnnie. “Ye have no faith, that’s the issence of fish stories; ye’ve got to have faith.”

“Blither and zounds! is that all? Go on, Mister Grayley, I’ve that faith, that I’m reekin’ with it.”

“D’ye mind the Mississippi,” began Johnnie, turning the pole and putting his hand between his face and the fire, “where it runs through Arkansas? Well, it was there I was brought up, an’ I’ll have to tell ye me father was an Irishman before he came to America. Catfish was the game fish, and sugarcane and rice the food with a few swate potaties. A great thing, sugarcane; there’s where we got sugar, and a piece to chew was a

good lunch; then when things went wrong me father used about six foot of it as a persuader, and in the winter we burned the old crushed stalks for wood. Wan spring I went fishin' for cats—juggin', we called it, as we used jugs—when I was near pulled out of me boat by a bite and lost me line. The next day I tried it again, with the same luck; the fish towed me tin miles down the river, then got away. I tuk the steamboat back and when I got there I found the whole settlement worked up; but I was bound to get that fish, so I got a big rope and a shark hook; then we fastened the line to the top of a big pine and waited."

"What bait did ye use?" interrupted the Commadore.

"Watermelons," replied Johnnie. "As I was sayin', we sat on the bank waitin', as all fishermen do—bedad, it's mostly waitin' and expectin', I'm thinkin'—whin all to wance the line ran out; it dragged four men into the river and kept goin', and then the end come and the strain on the pine, a hundred foot high, began, and, be the powers! it began to bend and bend like a fishin' rod, and there's where that cat made a mistake; if he'd kept on ten foot more he'd have broke the tree; but he was naturally curus an' he stopped to look round, and bedad! the tree flew back an' we saw something like a black cloud rise into the air and fly into the back country; then a crash come, an' an awful groan. It was an hour before a lad of us dared to stir, an' then we crept back through the bush, and what d'ye spose we

met? Nothin' more'n less than the catfish comin' back through the bush makin' for the river. He was thirty foot long and that heavy that he broke down the brush and small trees as he crawled; and his whiskers trailed behind him like snakes. We see he was fast, so we said nothin' and let him go, an' four times that cat tuk the river and four times that pine tree jerked him back, an' he finally gave up an' he got so tame that he followed us round like a dog, an' some nights he lay there in the corral an' sung a reg'ler song. But," said Johnnie, in conclusion, "he ended like all pets; the old woman caught him wan mornin' with a chicken in his mouth an' we had to kill him, and that's how I come to know his weight; he was a thousand pouns, dressed."

The Commodore generally could retaliate, but he now merely looked at Johnnie in wild-eyed bewilderment. He was trying to think of some fish story that would crush out the remembrance of this yarn of the Mississippi, but for once he was silenced—Johnnie Grayley's cat was too much for him.

*L. of C.*

## CHAPTER VI

### TOWED THREE MILES

SUNRISE generally found Tom and Jack on the beach hunting for shells which had been washed ashore. There was always something new or of interest. Perhaps it was the curious barrow-like egg of the barn-door



Sea-slugs of the kelp beds.

skate, or, if low tide, they dug out the black sea-urchins from the holes in the rocks, or cut off the various kinds of barnacles which either floated in on pieces of drift or were living on rocks and stones. Beneath the kelp leaves they collected beautiful naked snails; one es-



pecially being of a deep purple hue. In the rocks were large chitons which they had to pry out, while many of the stones along the beach had round holes through them, so perfectly smooth that they appeared artificial; yet they were made by a rock-boring shell common in these waters. The most attractive objects along the beach were the patches of tube-making marine worms that were often exposed at low tide, but when covered, bloomed out like so many brilliant flowers.

On the morning in question, the boys were delayed by the bait-catchers, whose gill nets had been



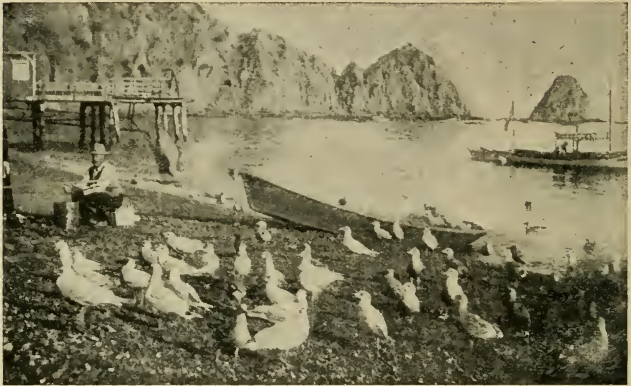
Rock-boring shells.

broken loose by some large fish; but a supply was finally obtained from the purse-seine haulers, who made a haul for sardines near the cañon, taking a ton or more in the huge net which they ran out from the vessel—a power



boat—surrounding a school and taking them literally by the ton.

“Here they come!” shouted Jack, as a boat propelled by swarthy Italians appeared around the point. They ran in upon the beach and the men were soon shoveling out the fresh shining sardines and smelt into



Tame gulls of Santa Catalina.

a box, the boys amusing themselves by feeding the brown pelicans that swam about a short distance away, and the gulls, that were so tame that Vincente, the head fisherman, said that down at Avalon he could almost pick up some of them, as they crowded around him, snatching at the fish thrown at them, and presenting a most curious spectacle. The gulls spent their winters at the island, but nearly all disappeared in the spring, going far away to nest. These birds are valuable scavengers along

this coast, as it was never necessary for the men to clear the beach of dead fish. The moment it was left dozens of gulls settled down and carried it off. If a fish was thrown over and sank it was soon found and eaten by the sea-lions which came every afternoon from the rookery hard by and cleared the waters of all impurities, so that it was excellent for bathing, although the professional fishermen sometimes cleaned their fish there. Even floating fishes out at sea or alongshore were taken by the bald eagles which had preempted many of the points and were so numerous that the boys one morning counted sixty in about ten miles of coastline. These birds were valuable scavengers, and did not hesitate to steal from the osprey and other birds and occasionally stole bait; they have been known also to dart at a troll bait and become hooked.

A good supply of bait having been secured the party went aboard the launch, which very shortly was running offshore. Joe said the albacore were running about two miles out in the channel, a particularly fine fish resembling the tuna, and they decided to devote the day to this sport. The tackle used was identical with that described for yellowtail, the fish ranging in weight up to fifty or more pounds, yet requiring a stiff rod, as it was caught in the open sea. Tom and Jack had their lines out, baited with smelt, and as it is the unexpected that often happens Tom had a strike not one hundred yards from the kelp, a strike so fierce and telling that it fairly lifted him out of his seat.

"Tuna," said Joe.

"Looks like it," the Commodore replied, as the reel screamed and raged when Jack pressed upon the brake vainly endeavoring to stay the melting line, Johnnie having stopped the engine and with Joe turning the launch with the oars.

"Can't you stop him, Jack?" asked the Angler.

Zee-eee-ee long drawn out! was the best answer, and four hundred feet of line slipped away before the fish was checked—a feat that satisfied the crew that Jack had picked up a stray tuna. The fish was taking the boat down the coast, slowly but surely, and it was some time before Jack could gain a foot, so impetuous were its rushes—plunging to the bottom, tearing away great lengths of line, rising to the surface and circling around to always return to its given direction down the coast. Time and again did Jack attempt to force the fighting, pumping and reeling, but at the end of three-quarters of an hour he was no nearer the fish than at first. At every attempt to reel the fish appeared to go into a frenzy, darting this way and that, and ending by plunging down deeper and deeper, forcing the conviction upon the anglers that it was a tuna of large size or a very gamy small fish. Jack, finding that he could make little headway, determined to try a waiting game and wear the fish out, allowing it to tow the boat. But this became monotonous, and at the end of an hour and a half the game seemed to be as lively as ever. Jack then made a "spurt" and finally succeeded in bringing it to the surface, when

Joe shouted "Albacore!" and to their amazement it was an albacore and a monster; its gleaming silver belly, its blue back and black staring eyes, but more than all, its long side fins, telling its identity. The fish fought like a tiger, repeatedly breaking away, and when it was brought to gaff, it made a gallant struggle on the hook, deluging them with spray. As Joe lifted the fish in, all gave a shout of surprise at its size. It was not very long, but compact. Later it was found to tip the scales at sixty-three pounds, the average catch being fifteen. No wonder it towed the boat three miles in the long contest, and, in proportion to its size, this fish more than equaled the play of some tunas.

The albacore is one of the most interesting of fishes, and in the Santa Catalina Channel has been taken weighing nearly one hundred pounds. It bears a close resemblance to the tuna and is a cousin of this fish or nearly related. The same small finlets are seen; the head is more pointed, and the body more rounded and spindle-like; the eyes are very large, black and white, and staring, conspicuous objects. The tail is small but powerful, and when the fish is dropped aboard it beats a marvelous tattoo upon the planks, often in a small boat conveying a peculiar and startling tremor. The pectoral fin is at least two-fifths as long as the fish, saber-like in shape, nothing like it being seen in other fishes; in a word, the albacore, or *Germo alalunga*, as it is known to science, is a type of speed, endurance and pugnacity.

“There’s one thing about the albacore,” said Joe, as he packed the fish away in the canvas after sponging it off, the fish bleeding badly, as do all the tribe, “it’s about here nearly always. They run in with the tuna when they come, and I’ve seen so many in a school feeding with tunas that you could catch nothing but albacore; they’re so much faster than the tuna that they get all the bait. I’ve caught them about every month in the year, too, but in winter, in February or January, we go out a way, or get them a mile or two off Avalon bay.”

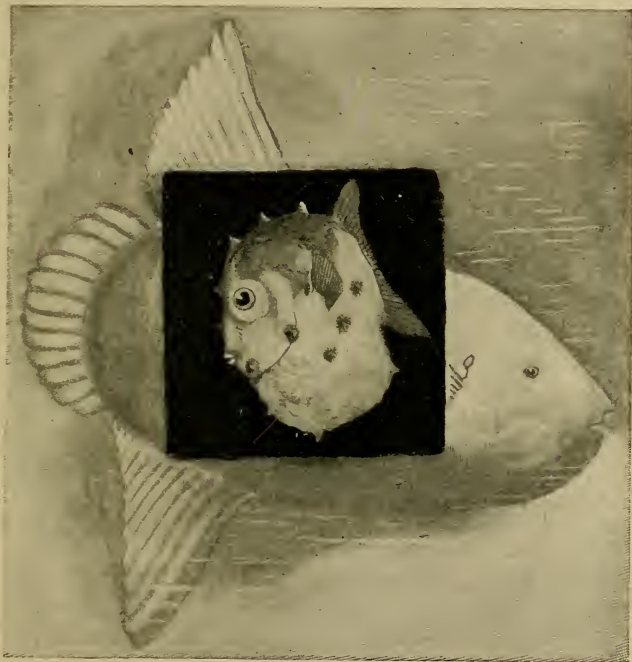
The Torqua was gotten under way again and it was not long before Tom had a strike and landed a fine skipjack—a fish almost as active as the yellowtail, and weighing twelve pounds. They had struck a school of the fine game fishes, which could be seen on the surface everywhere, so the boat was stopped and the anglers cast into them with success. Like the bonito the skipjack played well at the surface, rushing in and out, up and down, some trying to leap out of the water, others plunging deep into the channel’s blue heart, where they sulked like the salmon.

“All deep-water fishes, especially these, sulk,” said the Angler, watching Jack bring in his fish; “and you see how they turn their sides to you in coming up, to offer the most resistance possible.”

“What’s that, Joe?” said Tom, pointing to something sharp protruding from the water a short distance away.

“Looks like a shark, but I reckon it’s a big sunfish,” said Joe, “he’s so still; they lay that way.”

Johnnie turned the boat in that direction and passed by the object, which was seen to be a huge sunfish sun-



Salt-water sunfish and young.

ning itself and lying nearly flat, occasionally righting itself.

“You never see a cowboy act at sea,” I reckon, said Joe, as he picked up a heavy line, quickly making a

slip noose at the end. "Put me nearer, Johnnie," said Joe, as he went forward taking the coil in his hand. As they circled around the big fish Joe, who had been a cow-puncher and sheep-herder on the island, tossed his lariat cleverly over the huge fin of the sunfish (Mola) and with a jerk secured it. The giant, for it was one, displayed remarkable coolness, slowly righting and sinking; then, feeling the rope, it dropped quickly out of sight, creating a swirl of waters suggestive of its size, while the line creaked and hissed as it went over the side held by Joe's powerful grasp. It sank one hundred feet or more, then was stopped with difficulty, yet came up readily under the demonstration of six lusty arms, and when at the surface plunged in a fierce but elephantine fashion, tossing water over the boat and displaying a desire to sink her.

"How large do you think it is?" asked the Angler.

The Commodore pushed the oar along the side of the sunfish and made a fair estimate, showing its length to be about ten feet, while its weight was guessed at five hundred pounds.

"It's an old fellow," said Joe, "they have little or no life to them." Being of no use, the fish was cast off, after they had examined the remarkable ivory-like teeth with which it eats jellyfish, and its singular rim of a tail.

"The largest one ever seen was caught at Avalon," said Joe. "It was eleven feet long and so big that they had to cut it in sections to weigh it."



The fishing had suddenly stopped; not a fish could be seen on the clear glassy surface, and Joe expressed the opinion that either sharks or killers were around; and that he was a true prophet became evident not long after, when three enormous black fins were seen coming down the channel. Every few moments they would disappear, then the killers came up to breathe and showed a jet-black skin with a white collar back of the dorsal, a most striking object.

“When they come, tunas go,” Joe explained. “They’ll kill a whale, run it down and tear its tongue out by pieces. One was killed that way off Avalon some ten years ago, and people lay around in boats and watched the fight. There’s a whale over there now,” added Joe, pointing to where, half a mile distant, a big tail seemingly poised in the air, then sank into the sea.

“Run over that way,” said the Angler, “and Jack, get out your kodak, a photograph of a whale would be well worth the while, as it appears whales and killers of whales have driven away the fish.”

The launch was presently speeding along over the water in the direction of the whale, which again came up, rising into the air, a mountain of flesh, until it appeared to be fairly dancing on its tail, then sinking quickly into the sea.

“Playing,” said Joe.

The whale had gone down two hundred yards or so distant, and Jack took his station in the bow, kodak in hand, ready to touch the button at its reappearance.

Puff, puff! came a sound like escaping steam a short distance ahead, and the big slate-colored back of the giant was seen, but immediately sank out of sight.

"It's comin' right for us," said Joe; "look down and perhaps you'll see it."

As he finished speaking the water about them began to boil and rush upward; the enormous tail screw of the whale was almost directly beneath, grinding the water into ten thousand currents.

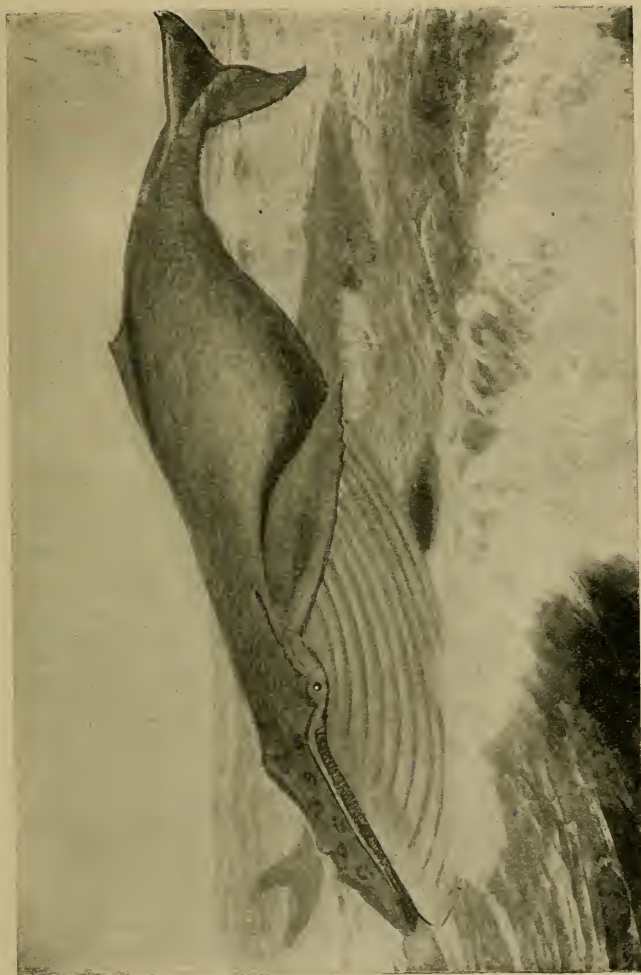
"If it would only come up now," said Jack, whirling about and watching the water intently.

"Not exactly at this moment," replied the Angler, "we might be lifted."

Johnnie was turning the launch, and presently they were following the whale, which, doubtless, was swimming but a short distance below and a little ahead, as it could not be seen. Suddenly the puff, puff-f-f-f! of escaping steam now came one hundred and fifty feet, or thereabouts, ahead. Jack pointed the kodak and obtained his first photograph of a whale at sea.

"You might say these whales are tame," said Joe; "that is, you see one or two most every time you come out in summer, and the killers too, an' they don't appear to be afraid. I never knew of one that made a move on a boat, though the steamer has killed two, run them down."

"Why should they?" said Johnnie Grayley. "They're decent folk, an' as long as ye trate them right they'll return the compliment."



The leaping whale.

"I suppose treating them right is not taking too much oil or bone, eh, Johnnie?" said Tom.

"Right, sir," said Johnnie, "but the rale reason they give up whalin' at this pint is that the whales was too ugly when harpooned. They say, sir, that the last wan hit (in 1872) is goin' yet. They smashed boats an' men, so the Portuguese give it up, and the whales has increased so that they have a reg'lar convention here some years."

No waters offer more strange creatures, large and small, than the Santa Catalina Channel, the stretch of blue water between the island of that name and the mainland, a feeding ground for whales, killers and swordfish, the basking ground for the sunfish, the summer home of the tuna and sea-bass, a vast aquarium stocked with all the marvels of the sea from corals to whales.

As the Torqua turned inshore and sped over the quiet sea the sun was tipping over the mountains, its crimson light flooding everything with its radiance, while out from the cañons crept the deep purple shadows that seemed like living things, increasing and growing, the advance guard of coming night. Tom and Jack had much to discuss over the camp-fire that evening, but it was not long before they were laughing at the Commodore and Johnnie Grayley, who had become engaged in a heated debate relating to some technical point in angling. Finally Johnnie broke out with, "Well, where did ye git yer fishin' information, I'd like to know that?"

“That’s easy told,” replied the Commodore, fishing a live coal from the fire and balancing it on his corn-cob pipe. “I got what little I know from wan of the finest



A first lesson.

gintlemen anglers in Scotland, the best hand at a rod I ever saw, and it was this way: I was fond of feeshin' from a lad. I was born with a love for it, an' was always wadin' the brooks an' streams. If me mother wanted me she'd come down to the water; there I'd be up to me knees in it, with a bit of a branch feeshin' and takin' me first lessons. Wan day I was wadin' down stream, feeshin' with a bit of a tree and a cord for a line and a bent pin for a hook, an' with this tackle I'd laid up as fine a string of trout as ye'd wish to see, one six-pounder and the rest runnin' down to half a pound, an', if I do say it, they were bonnie feesh, with their sparkle of red an' the glint of gold. Well, as I say, I was wadin' doon, cautious like, stealin' in pool after pool an' havin' jest the luck ye read of, when round the bend comes a gintleman with the finest rig ye ever see in yer life, top boots of Injy rubber, an' I in bare legs; bamboo rod, an' I with willow or worse; a bit of willow-work creel, white and shiny, an' with his name on a silver mark; reel shinin' like silver, an' I reckon' it was. He come along castin' with flies, an' when he see me he stops an' laughs and turns his creel upside doon. 'Bad luck, sir?' I says. 'Don't mention it,' says he; then he says, 'Me lad, d'ye want to sell them feesh?' 'I do,' says I; 'I want to sell them mighty bad.' 'Well,' says he, holdin' out the creel, 'lay 'em in on a bit of moss, an' here's five shillins for the feesh,' an' then he says, lookin' at me mighty hard, 'here's five more for forgettin' that ye sold 'em. D'ye mind? I want to

play a joke on some friends.' 'I've forgot it already, sir,' says I, pocketin' the ten shillins, an' he wandered off smilin' to bate the band, an' I kicked it home to tell me mother. She was wan of the old-fashion, honest kind, God bless her! an' said nothin', but the next day she says, 'Robert, have ye forgotten that ye sold the gintleman the feesh?' 'No,' says I, 'I have not'; in fac' I couldn't kape it out of me mind. 'Then,' says she, 'ye're kapin' what don't belong to ye.' I was wantin' a heap of things and them shillins burned in me trousers leg; so I tried me best to forgit the transaction; but every mornin' she'd ask me the same quistion, an' when it come the day before Sunday she says, 'Robert, ye'd better free yer conscience an' hunt the gintleman up an' return the money before ye go to kirk.' So I started doon to the village, an' as luck would have it, I found him the center of a crowd of horsemen comin' from the hunt. As he caught sight of me he laughed and stopped. 'D'ye want to see me, me lad?' says he. 'I do,' says I. 'I've done me best, sir, to forgit that I sold ye the trout, but I canno' do it; here's your five shillin', an' thank ye jist the same.'

"Well," said the Commodore, laughing at the remembrance, "ye should have heard them gintlemen shout; they roared and screamed, an' wan huntsman jest laughed himself off his horse, an' me friend he laughed louder than any. After a while he says, 'Ye're the only honest angler I ever heard of. Give me the five shillin'; that relaves yer conscience, does it?'



‘It does,’ says I, ‘at least me mither’s,’ an’ at that they all roared again. ‘Hold yer hat, lad,’ says me friend, an’ they threw silver in that about made me fortune. ‘Come and see me to-morrow,’ says he, ‘at the Cedars,’ mentionin’ a fine place in the neighborhood. I did, an’ he gave me a job, an’ I grew up to be head kaper an’ had all the feeshin’ for the askin’. So you see, Mr. Grayley, it pays to be honest,” concluded the Commodore.

“So it do,” replied Johnnie; “an’ if yer mother hadn’t been, sorra job ye’d had.”

## CHAPTER VII

### SOMETHING ABOUT FISHES

THE Angler had promised to give the boys a talk on fishes and illustrate it with a stereopticon and slides which he had brought for the purpose, it being a convenient machine for transportation and worked by kerosene; so one evening a party of young people came down from Avalon and a neighboring camp and the machine was mounted in the dining-tent, and a sheet thrown across the end, the Angler showing views of many remarkable fishes and giving a running talk as Tom ran the slides through the stereopticon.

“As we are all interested in fishing,” he began, “it is only right that we should know something about fishes. It is not necessary for our purpose to know them scientifically, the number of bones they have, or how to classify them; but I would like you to know them well enough to remember at all times that a fish is a highly developed animal, and has rights as you have, which should be respected by every boy who wishes to be a true and thorough sportsman; so I am going to begin by quoting some good words of a gentleman and angler, ex-President Grover Cleveland, one of the sea-

anglers of America, whose example as a sportsman has always been of benefit to the country." Then the Angler read the following: "At this season, when the activities of genteel fishing usually begin, it is fitting that a word should be spoken that may not only redound to our comfort and satisfaction, but may guard us against temptations that easily beset even the best of fishermen. We who claim to represent the highest fishing aspirations are sometimes inclined to complain on days when the fish refuse to bite. There can be no worse exhibition than this of an entire misconception of a wise arrangement for our benefit. If on days when we catch few or no fish we feel symptoms of disappointment, these should immediately give way to satisfaction when we remember how many spurious and discouraged fishermen are spending their time in hammocks and under trees or on golf fields instead of with fishing outfits, solely on account of just such unfavorable days.

"What has been said naturally leads to the suggestion that consistency requires those of us who are right-minded fishermen to reasonably limit ourselves as to the number of fish we should take on favorable days. On no account should edible fish be caught in such quantities as to be wasted. By restraining ourselves in this matter we discourage in our own natures the growth of greed, we prevent wicked waste, and make it easier for us to bear the fall between what we may determine upon as decent good luck and bad luck or no luck; and we make ourselves at all points better men and better fishermen.

“We ought not to forget these things as we enter upon the pleasures of our summer’s fishing. But in any event let us take with us when we go out good tackle, good bait, and plenty of patience. If the wind is in the south or west, so much the better; but let’s go, wherever the wind may be. If we catch fish we shall add zest to our recreation. If we catch none, we shall still have the outing and the recreation—more healthful and more enjoyable than can be gained in any other way.”<sup>1</sup>

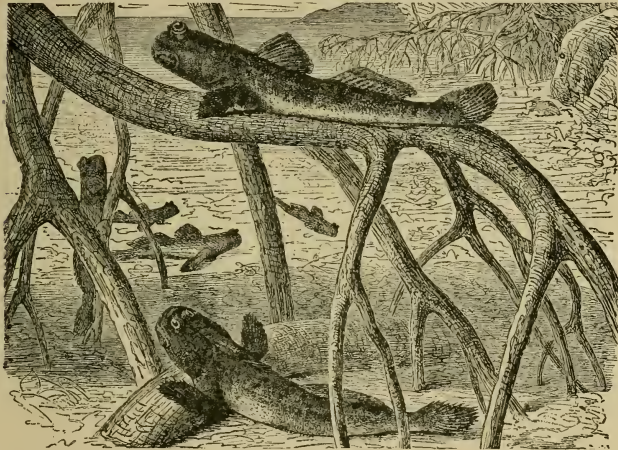
“These are good words, ‘good medicine,’” said the Angler. “The man who boasts of his large catch, who fishes for numbers and weight, is not a true sportsman. To appreciate the position of the fishes we must remember that they inhabit a world of their own beneath the sea where there are mountains, valleys, great plains, and all the surface conditions, but covered with water from a foot to five or six miles in depth and an average of possibly three miles all over the earth. The home of the fishes is often a desert plain of great sandy stretches; again it is a beautiful region abounding in coral and an abundance of life. The fishes remind us of the birds. The water is their atmosphere and through it they dart or fly in a manner recalling the birds. They migrate like them, moving in and out, up and down the coasts, according to season. Nearly all

<sup>1</sup>The author is indebted to ex-President Cleveland for his kind permission to quote the above lines originally published in an article in the *New York Independent*.



Ocean scenery.

the fishes are adapted for speed; are long and pointed so that they move through the water at the slightest effort. Looking at a typical fish it is seen to have fins of two kinds—paired and single. The top or upper ones are called the dorsals and are balancers, upper center-boards boomed out by rays or bones. In some fishes

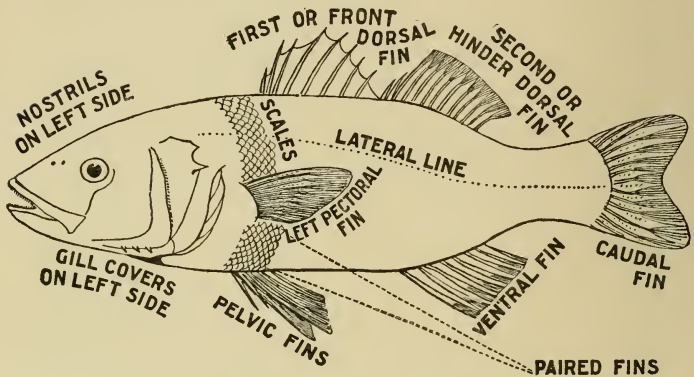


A walking fish.

this fin is of importance as a locomotive organ. The side or pectoral fins correspond to the forearms in other animals; and that they are used as such is shown in the *perioththalmus* and in the *anabas*, or climbing perch, and in some of the *gurnards*. The two ventral fins compare to the hind legs, and with the anal fin serve to support the fish when resting on the bottom, while the



latter is the balancer. The most important fin is the caudal or tail. This is the rudder, the chief locomotive organ which, with a screw-like motion, propels the fish. It enables the tuna to make the leaps we see every day, and gives the yellowtail its power of resist-



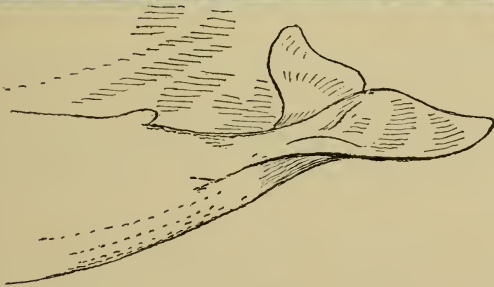
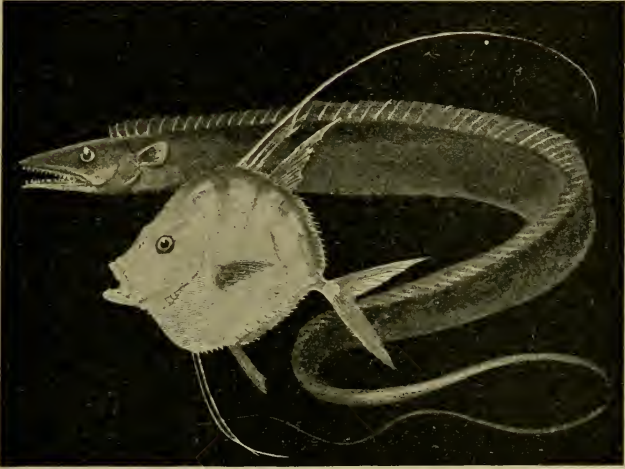
External parts of a fish.

ance and active movements. With it the flying-fish forces itself into the air, and the whale, not a fish, destroys boats.

“Tails of great variety and use are seen. Thus the sea-horse employs its tail to cling to weeds, and swims with its dorsal. In the swivel-tail shark we have caught, the upper lobe is of enormous length. In the flying-fish we use for bait the lower lobe is the longest, and in the garpike the ventral extends into the upper lobe of the tail, this being a very ancient type of fish, as the *Holoptychius* and others shown. The fishes are



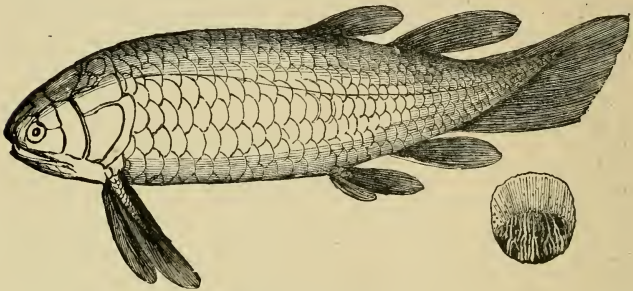
protected by scales which fit one over the other like shingles, and are found in great variety. Some fishes



Tails.

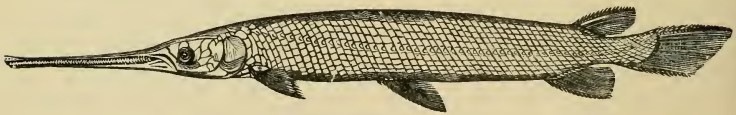
have a perfect armor, as the cowfish, only the tail and fins moving. The garpike appears to be encased in an armor of china. The little batfish is corrugated or

rough over its surface, while the porcupine fish is covered with spines, and when brought to the surface has a peculiar habit of inflating itself. In the sharks we find no scales, the skin being a shagreen. In shape there is



An ancient fish.

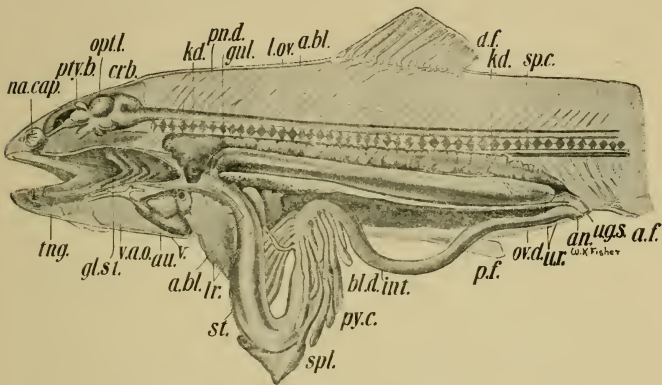
great variety, ranging from the strange and beautiful John Doree to the moonfish. In the skeleton of the fish we see how it is braced, there being apparently two back-bones; but the upper is merely the dorsal fin



Garpike.

spines. The head is a complicated mass of bones. In the tuna and nearly all the game fishes the teeth are very small, almost unnoticeable, but in the shark we all know how sharp they are, the twelve or more rows cutting a wire leader readily.

“To understand the anatomy of a fish we must dissect it. An interesting feature is the air-bladder—a silvery balloon-like object lying just beneath the back-bone, by which the fishes float in any position. Fishes breathe by gills. Lifting up the gill cover you see the blood-red leaflets where the blood is brought in contact with air in

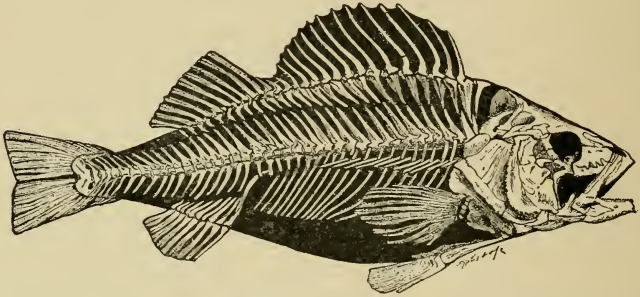


Dissection of a bony fish, the trout (*Salmo*).

*a.bl.*, air-bladder; *an.*, anal opening; *au.*, auricle; *gl.st.*, gills; *gul.*, esophagus; *int.*, intestine; *kd.*, kidney; *lr.*, liver; *l.ov.*, ovary; *opt.l.*, brain; *py.c.*, pyloric caeca; *sp.c.*, spinal cord; *spl.*, spleen; *st.*, stomach; *v.*, ventricle.

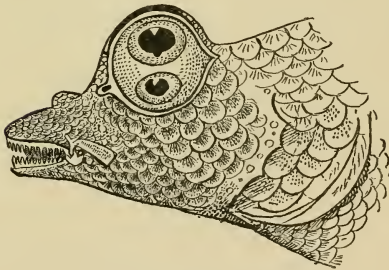
the water, oxygenizing it. The fishes are constantly opening and closing their mouths, thus taking in water and forcing it out through the gills, making an endless current passing over the red gills or lungs of the fish. The fishes have internal ears, the curious stones you cut from the head of so many fishes here being the ear-stones. Fishes have the sense of smell, and many have highly

developed organs of touch. Their eyes are often large and lustrous, and many see a long distance. Some are blind, as the interesting cave-fishes. Some forms of the



Skeleton of a fish.

deep sea are blind, while others have enormous eyes apparently for the reception of light.



The four-eyed fish.

In the eyes of the fishes, which are often beautiful, we see some strange features. In the adult flounder the eyes are upon the upper side, in the young fish they are upon each side; but as the fish grows, it

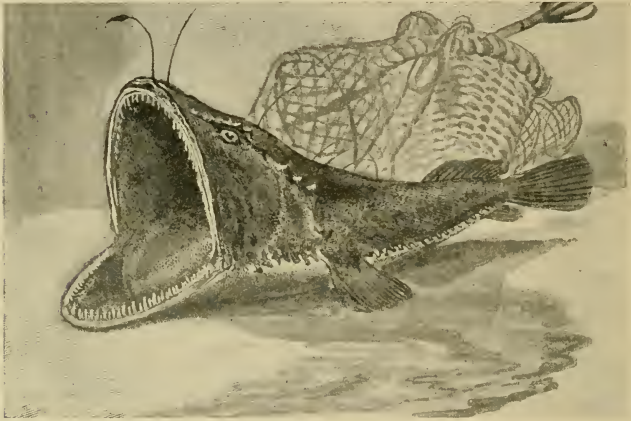
falls over upon one side and the under eye begins to pass around, the gradual changes being more than marvellous. In the singular *Anableps* the eyes are divided,



Some flat fishes.



the fish appearing to have four eyes. The upper ones are adapted to looking far away over and out of the water, while the lower ones are intended for work beneath it; so you will see they are well supplied. A few



The angler.

of the fishes are herbivorous, but the great majority are cannibals, devouring their kind and others, chasing them with the greatest ferocity. In seizing their prey they crush them in their powerful jaws, never chewing them, the prey being swallowed at once. This is why it is so easy to hook a fish. It gulps down the bait and so is often hooked in the throat. You will notice your bait crushed and mangled when you miss a tuna or yellow-tail. While the tuna leaps at its prey like a tiger, certain fishes have various appliances to enable them to secure

their victims. An interesting illustration is the angler, that has a perfect fishing-rod, the fish lying on the bottom and raising the rod with its bait-like filament until the victim is just in the right position, when the enormous mouth opens and the small fry is literally engulfed. This angler simulates the bottom and is very difficult to distinguish from a moss-covered rock. A deep-sea angler, *Corynolophus*, not only has a fishing-rod but the "bait" is



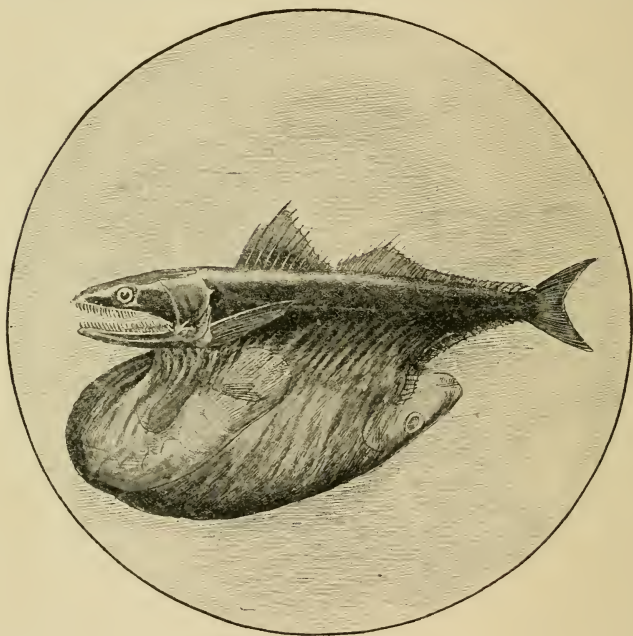
A luminous fishing-rod.

luminous. Some fishes, as the sting-rays, have serrated spines, others have horns; and a number of fishes, as the Nokee of Tahiti and the Mad Tom, have poisonous spines, while the famed torpedo has powerful batteries,



the swordfish its sword, and the sawfish a double saw with which to cut down its prey.

“Many of the deep-sea fishes are brilliantly luminous, the light in some instances being used to attract prey. These lights are found in various places. In some the entire body is luminous; in others the light is on the feelers or tail; and some fishes have lights of two

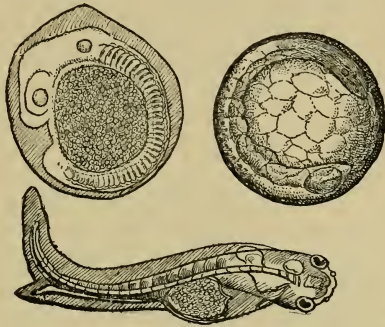


Black swallower.

or three different colors, which may have some definite meaning. The deep-sea fishes are remarkably formed to

withstand the enormous pressure, their bones being cavernous, permitting water to pass through them like sponges. One, the black swallower, can swallow a fish very much larger than itself, drawing itself over the fish like a glove. The fishes increase by eggs or spawn,

though some, as the surf fishes, the little shiners which you see so plentifully along-shore, give birth to living young. The eggs resemble very fine shot, of a light color, and are deposited in a variety of places. The tuna, mackerel, and fishes



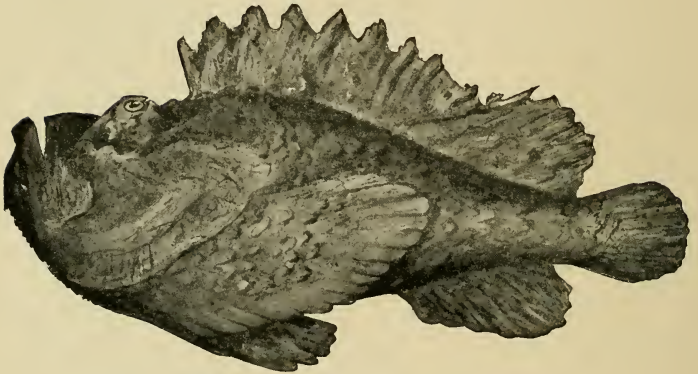
Fish-eggs and young.

of this kind deposit their eggs in the open sea, where nine-tenths of them are eaten by various animals, especially as soon as they hatch, when the water is filled with them, often millions, becoming at once the victims to others; hence the vast number is a wise provision of nature.

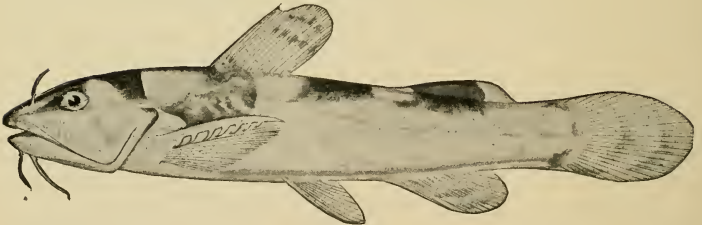
“It is an interesting fact that many fishes do not resemble their parents at first. This is particularly true of the young angler, which appears to be covered with barbels or plants, while the young of the swordfish would never be recognized as the progeny of the swordsman of the sea that plunges its sword through the oaken



Sting-ray.



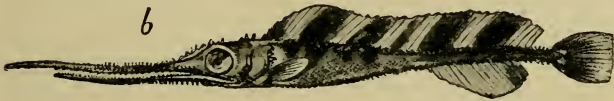
Nokee or poisonous scorpion-fish.



Mad tom.

Some poisonous fishes.

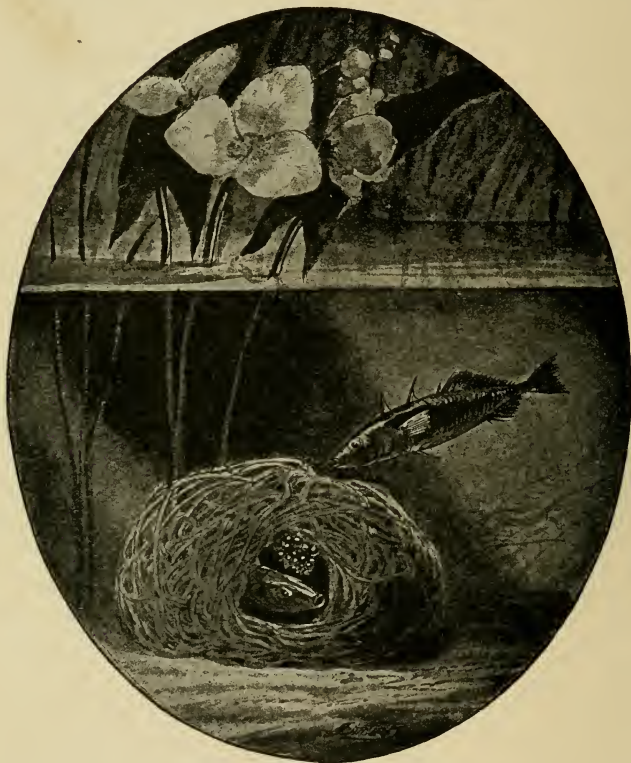
hulls of ships, and has sent many a vessel into port leaking. The few fishes that are left to grow up are a pitiable showing compared to the swarms which filled the water soon after hatching, and many of them have some special protection. Thus the stickle-back eggs are protected in a nest which the male fish weaves skilfully out of weed at the bottom. One of the suckers, espe-



Swordfishes : a, b, young ; c, adult.

cially in the St. Lawrence where I have found them, forms a nest of pebbles often four feet high and eight feet across—a marvellous structure which grows year by year. The lamprey forms a dam or nest of stones, and two or three fishes have been observed carrying one as large as half a brick. The paradise-fish forms a nest of bubbles of air which hold together. The big Anten-

narias, like fish we find here, is a nest builder and literally walks with its side fins, and a large number of fishes

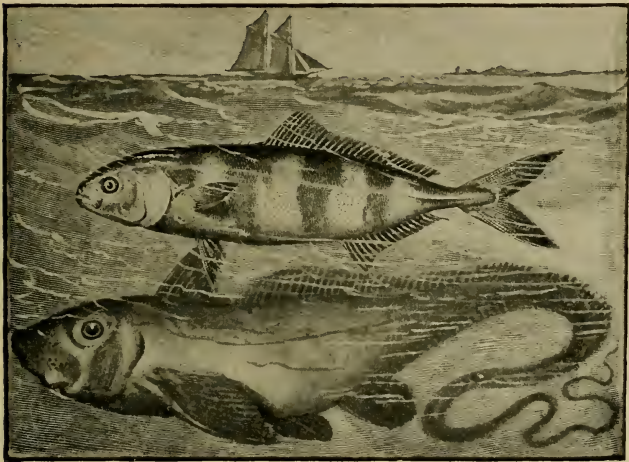


A nest-building stickle-back.

make some attempt to provide for their young, and in nearly every instance it is the male which builds the nest and cares for the young.”



“There are a number of fishes,” continued the Angler after a brief pause, “which are in a sense parasitic; that is, they attach themselves to other animals. An interesting instance is the little fierasfer, a long slender fish which lives in the intestine of the large sea-cucumber, which you may see lying on the rocks here like a slug.



Pilot-fish and chimæra.

The pilot-fish attaches itself to the shark, generally seen at its head, following it about, often darting in advance at food, and supposed to guide sharks to food; but this is a fable. The stupid pilot merely finds protection in the shadow of its gigantic comrade just as does the remora which fastens itself to it by its sucker. I have seen pilot-fishes following the drum and turtles with the re-

mora attached. Nearly all the jelly-fishes are followed by little fishes, while the beautiful Portuguese man-of-war is the home, as it were, of several small fishes that almost perfectly imitate the color of the tentacles—a rich purple. This resemblance in color is very interesting, and we find a number of fishes which escape notice by adapting their color to that of the surroundings. This is the reason why you, Jack, did not see the halibut the other day until it moved; it was lying in the sand and of its exact tint and color. So with the sculpins; they imitate the color of the rocks and seaweed and so escape notice.

“I will not weary you with the technical features of fish life, you can read that anywhere; all I wish is to impress upon you that the fishes are quite as important as the birds, even though there are not so many books written about them and clubs formed for their protection. They are as beautiful as the birds, very much more valuable from an economic standpoint, and you, as anglers, should take a stand for fair-play to the fishes. The careless and ignorant angler will say there are millions of fishes in the sea; you can't exhaust them. This is a misstatement to protect the ‘game-hog,’ as in every locality where netting and catching of fishes has gone on without rules or regulations the fisheries have either been exhausted or decreased. You, boys, will in a short time be voters and should interest yourselves in the sea fisheries, in sardines and other bait, and see that proper and intelligent rules are passed for their protection or your



grandchildren will have very poor fishing. All fishes should be protected in some way at the spawning time, and it should be made so offensive to overcatch game-fish that it should be considered rank dishonesty to 'catch for numbers or weight.' At the same time, don't condemn people before you know the facts.

"There are about twelve thousand species of fishes known in the world, and very few that are not valuable to man as assets of the nation. The sardine, salmon, halibut, bluefish, mackerel, swordfish, mossbunker, dogfish (for the livers), cod, hake, sole, flounder, sand dab, tuna, white sea-bass, rock-bass, and a score or more are all of great value to the various nations of the world and should receive protection. Many of them are game-fishes, and by this we mean a fish which fights well and to the finish and is valuable as food or a trophy. The lion, tiger, bear, and wildcat are good game because they die game, and a hunter takes his life in his hands when he meets some of them; so a game-fish is one which continues the battle until it is killed by the gaffer. The tuna and tarpon are ideal game-fishes from this standard, as they never surrender. The salmon, black-bass, trout, ounaniche are fresh-water examples. The yellowtail, bluefish, weakfish, ten-pounder, tarpon, white sea-bass are examples of sea game-fishes, while fishes which are utterly without game qualities are the fresh-water rock-bass, the flounder, the big shark-like angel-fish, and many more. The tuna is one of the most valued of fishes in Italy, where every portion is eaten, but here all

the specimens are in demand by anglers as trophies and are carried away. The tarpon is the only game-fish that is not good for food, its flesh being dry and of poor quality; hence there is no demand for its flesh, and anglers release all they catch, saving those which they wish as trophies. Never kill more fishes than you can use. Angling as sport is legitimate, but stop before you are satiated, and return all you can not use to the water. Every gentleman angler in this great country strictly observes this rule, and it is a gratifying fact that we can say that nowhere in the world is there a higher standard of sportsmanship than in America. In every community there are some men who brutalize sport, but this is because they are ignorant and know no better. Nearly all such men can be converted by having the definition of the term 'game-hog' thoroughly and forcibly explained to them."

This ended the talk on fishes, and the boys, then and there, formed a club for the protection of the sea game-fishes, from which in later days came results, good and lasting.

PART II

ANGLING IN THE GULF OF MEXICO



## CHAPTER VIII

### IN THE TARPON COUNTRY

THE days of summer passed rapidly at the Anglers' Cañon, and almost before they were aware of it July had merged into August. The Angler finally gave the word to break camp as he decided to spend August and September in the Gulf of Mexico, in the land of the Silver King, or tarpon—the most remarkable and spectacular of all the great game-fishes of the sea—so one fine morning the party sailed away from the island, waving and shouting their adieus to Johnnie Grayley and Joe, who gladly would have joined them. The objective point of the Angler was Corpus Christi, to reach which the trip was made across California, New Mexico, Arizona and Texas—a hot region in summer, yet not particularly disagreeable owing to the dryness of the atmosphere. The party changed at San Antonio, and one night shortly before ten o'clock they rolled into the little town of "Corpus," as the conductor called it, where a peculiar hot wind blew in from the Gulf.

The Commodore was always up betimes, and the following morning when the boys appeared they found a large schooner lying hard by, upon which was stowed their rods

and luggage. Two boys stood on the wharf and one asked Tom if they were going to Tarpon.

Tom replied that they were going tarpon-fishing.

“You, yourself?” asked one of the boys in a surprised tone.

“Certainly,” said Tom, laughing. “Don’t I look it?”

“Oh, yes, but it’s hard work for a man,” said the boy.

Tom took from one of his pockets a photograph of himself standing by the side of a large tuna, which he handed to the strange boy with the remark, “Four hours.”

“You mean you played the fish that long?” asked the other.

“That’s it,” replied Tom.

“Well, put it there,” said the Texan, who spoke with a peculiar but fascinating accent, extending his hand enthusiastically.

The boy shook Tom’s hand heartily, then introduced him to his brother Rad, adding, “They call me Bud, Bud Hammond. Rad,” he said, turning to his brother, “we’re not in it; he’s the boss fisherman. Say——”

“Tom’s my name, Tom Temple,” said Tom, laughing, “and this is my brother Jack. He’s something of a stayer himself.”

“Well, I was going to say, Rad and I have been coming down to this coast for four or five years, and Rad has the record for a six-foot alligator gar, and mine—what is my record, Rad?”

"I reckon it must be that onary old sting-ray," replied his brother, laughing.

"Yes, that's it," said Buddie; "but what I'm trying to say is that it never occurred to me that a boy could catch a tarpon, so I have never tried. They tell such yarns it's enough to scare you; but I notify you right away now, I'm going to take a tarpon. Ever see one? No? Well, it's the greatest living thing that swims. The minute you strike one he's out of the water and into the air from one to twelve feet, shaking his head, and sparkling like silver—that's why they're called Silver King. We go down to the Pass on the beach when they're biting and lie on the sand and see them leap—it's great fun."

"All aboard!" came from the Commodore, and Tom and Jack turned to say good-by to their new acquaintances when they found to their delight that they were all going together.

"That's our yacht," said Bud, pointing to the big schooner, "and your father is going with my father."

This was one of Mr. Temple's surprises, and a few minutes later they were on the deck of a Texan yacht, one of the most remarkable vessels to be termed a yacht that Tom and Jack had ever seen. She was a fore-and-aft schooner of about one hundred and twenty tons burden, with an enormous flush deck, and stood as high out of water as a cruiser or a ship without ballast. The most singular feature was the center-boards which were on each side and pinned to the hull, a rope being attached



to each and run through a block and called the center-board halyard, which was hauled in when the *Gar Pike*, as she was named, ran before the wind, and slackened away when she was hauled on the wind.

“A great ship this,” said the Commodore as the schooner fell away. “Ye see, she’s what they call a converted schooner, built for this shallow inland water. She draws about two feet and can sail in a light dew.”

Whatever may have been the defects of the *Gar Pike* in appearance she made it up in comfort and sailing qualities; and as she drew away from Corpus under full sail, the boys lying on deck in the hot sun, the Commodore pacing up and down with his old spy-glass under his arm, Mr. Temple and his friend sitting near the wheel puffing at their pipes, there was an atmosphere of what the Commodore called solid comfort pervading everything. The *Gar* stood out in the direction of the Pass, and the boys now learned something regarding the coast line of Texas which they had not understood before. They had reached the waters of the Gulf of Mexico, but were still far from the Gulf itself, which was at least six or eight miles away. The stretch of smooth water along which their ark-like craft was gliding was a vast lake or bay hundreds of miles long and from one to eight miles wide, and from one to fifteen feet deep. Away in the direction of the Gulf they could see something which resembled cotton floating on the water, a mirage. As they reached out from shore the cotton took shape and became a sand-bank, low and flat,

here and there blown up into dunes and showing some semblance of vegetation, but again being entirely devoid of brush of any kind, and so low and flat that the white foam of breakers far beyond could be seen, telling of the warm and restless waters of the great Gulf.

The *Gar* ran to the south several miles, always parallel with the white balls of cotton which rapidly changed into sand as the schooner approached; then the channel grew narrower and she ran in near the shore, passing a fine large building standing alone on the sand, built on piles—the Tarpon Club—and then the first glimpse was had of the little town of Tarpon. The outer barrier of the Texan coast which protects it from the seas of the Gulf at this point was a perfectly flat stretch of sand hardly a foot above the surface, forming the end of Mustang Island. Here the Gulf had broken in, forming a narrow channel known as Aransas Pass, on the south side of which, at the end of the sand-bank, known as St. Joseph's Island, was the town of Tarpon.

The *Gar* had taken a few passengers from Corpus Christi to Tarpon and now ran into a point of rocks until she struck the sand, the captain explaining that the harbor of Tarpon had filled up, and as it was decided to go ashore for the night and make arrangements for boatmen and bait, all hands passed over a plank directly into a curious cart which the boys had noticed coming down the beach before they landed.

“That's the Tarpon Inn coach,” said Rad. “It's

jolly fun and holds the record for the slowest time in Texas. You see," he continued, "it's all sand here; it's like snow. You sleep out-of-doors at night, and in some places you'll be covered up in the morning; so they have wide tires to run on the beach."

All hands with the luggage piled into the sand coach, the passengers clung to one another and the driver talked encouragingly to his mules until they finally reached the inn, an attractive little hostelry by the side of the Life-Saving Station, where the party found good cheer and many tarpon anglers, all in very light clothing and all very jolly and good-natured. The inn was a rambling series of buildings with an interior court, or gallery, as the Texan youth called it, filled with chairs and hammocks. Here the anglers gathered, and the strange occurrences of the day were told and fought over. The most remarkable feature of this out-of-door room to the boys was the wall of the main house which might have been plated with silver, it glistened so, and was found to be covered with tarpon scales, beautiful objects four inches across, which were nailed against the wall, each bearing the name of the angler who caught the fish, the length of the fish, and the date. Such a record of stupendous deeds was never seen before. Here were names of men famous in many fields far remote from fishing. If anything was needed to enthuse our anglers this accomplished it, and the Commodore stood and gazed at the speaking records, dumb amazement written on every lineament of his face, redder

than ever under the influence of the hot Gulf wind. A number of boatmen were sitting about, and three were engaged to row Mr. Temple's party and the Hammonds, all proving to be good gaffers and interesting characters.

The boatmen were on hand bright and early the morning after the arrival of the *Gar* at Tarpon. The boys watched them wade along the sands with cast-nets, throwing them gracefully into the schools of mullets, taking them by the dozen—the bait elect for tarpon. By seven o'clock the boatmen were ready. They had mullet, which resembles a sardine but larger, for tarpon; shrimp bait for Spanish mackerel. Each man had a light skiff with a chair or two rigged in the stern for the angler—an outfit far too light for safety if tuna had been the game. These were made fast behind the *Gar*, which under her big foresail was soon under way, sailing out through the narrow pass, anchoring near the jetty in shallow water as a sort of headquarters for the tarpon fishermen; in fact, she was a gigantic flat-bottom house-boat perfectly adapted for sport in the strange lagoon that forms with the outlying island the outer guard of Texas. The tide was at the flood, and the *Gar* swung in not one hundred feet from the beach, down which as far as could be seen the surf was pounding and from which rose a cloud of fog-like spume that, caught by the wind, was carried far inland over the strange sand-dunes.

A better day for sport could not be imagined.

The sky was clear, no suspicion of a storm, the Gulf smooth, and a stiff wind blowing in, which, while hot, made the conditions delightful on the fishing-ground. Already a number of anglers were fishing, and in a short time the boys, the two older anglers, and the Commadore were provided with boats and also ready for the new experience. A more peculiar fishing-ground could hardly be imagined. A long stone jetty reached out from the head of Mustang Island, formed of rocks; apparently the tarpon on coming up the coast met it and turned into the lagoon or inner bay, there finding mullets and other small game. The pass itself was the best place for the fish, ranging from ten to forty feet in depth; yet when Jean, the boatman of Tom and Jack, shoved off, he said that the best fishing was in about twenty feet of water.

“I see why the tarpon jumps,” said Tom.

“Why, sir?” asked the boatman.

“Because he can’t sulk. I believe if we could take a tuna in shallow water he would leap at the strike.”

Tom and Jack were surprised at many things on this delightful fishing-ground, perhaps the most remarkable place for tarpon in the world. The wind blew hot from the Gulf, yet was cool if one can explain the paradox, and the secret of being comfortable in this Gulf fishing was to keep in the wind, night and day, as it blows refreshingly all the time, increasing possibly as the sun goes down. The boys marveled at the boat, a light, flat-bottom skiff, but they presently found that

the outfit was well suited to the place, as the boats rarely strayed far from the jetty and were always near or in shallow water, the best fishing apparently being directly along the jetty, not thirty feet from it, and in water from fifteen to thirty feet deep. The tarpon tackle was identical with the outfit for the tuna—short, stiff rod, with one long tip, large reel, a seven-foot leader, and hook similar to those used for tuna. The bait was mullet, four inches in length, hooked upward through the lips, just as in tuna fishing. No sinker was used, and the boatman surprised his young patrons by saying, "Slack out about twenty feet."

"Only twenty feet!" exclaimed Jack; "this *is* easy," at which Jean grinned, lighted his pipe, and said, "Tarpon come right alongside, you see him all right." And just then Jack heard a queer puff-like sound, for a second, and saw hardly ten feet from the boat a broad, greenish back.

"Tarpon; look out!"

The boat had crossed the smooth channel and turned out. Jean was rowing very slowly along the jetty, so near, in fact, that the boys could have cast a bait on to the rocks. About two hundred feet astern came another boat, and outside of theirs were others, in all perhaps eight boats, all keeping a certain distance apart, so that a wild tarpon would not injure any one. Again came the puff, puff; but this time it was a large green turtle almost alongside the boys' boat. Then a shout was heard ahead, and looking around Tom and Jack both

saw a great mass of molten silver seemingly over their heads, which as it dropped struck the boatman's chair, nearly upsetting him, fell and disappeared in a swirl of waters.

"Almost had me overboard," said Jean, rubbing his back; "he hit me a biff with his tail."

Then some one ahead called out, "Beg pardon, but I couldn't hold him down," and they saw Rad's father reeling in his line and realized that it was his fish that had nearly caused a catastrophe.

"Too many boats," remarked Jean; "never know when you're going to get it. I—" But Jack's reel at that precise second broke in with a quick zee-ee, and Jack, thinking of tunas, struck on the instant with a long heavy sway, and struck well, as while Tom gave a whirl at his reel to take in his line and give his brother the field, there rose into the air that grandest of all spectacles to the eyes of the angler, a Silver King. For a moment it seemed to hover in the air like a bird, swinging its mighty tail until the boys heard the clanging of the wire leader, and the bait was hurled at them up the line like a bullet, as the big gills and mouth opened in the effort of the fish to throw out the hook. What a spectacle it was! The sun gleaming and scintillating over it, a blaze of light to the astonished anglers; then it dropped with a resounding crash, and Jack's reel gave tongue in a manner to bring the blood to the cheek and fire to the eye. Ze-e-e-e-e-e! it sounded. What melody!



“The whispering music of the sea”

gave way to the buzzing, hissing tones of the click, then three hundred feet away rose the Silver King again, sparkling like a gem. All this happened in a few seconds, and now Jack was pressing upon the leather thumb-brake as hard as he could, even trying the effect of the left hand on the line above the reel; but there was no stopping this plunger that rushed on, now deep in the pass, now appearing over a great roller on the surface. Jean was slowly backing after the tarpon, evidently amazed at the skill the young angler displayed, as when the fish leaped he whirled the reel-handle about and held the line taut, slacking when the time came, but always gaining. The tarpon plainly evinced a desire to go down the coast into the heavy surf where the boat could not live, so Jack began to force the fighting, giving the butt, holding the stalwart game that again and again leaped into the air. All the time the tarpon was taking them nearer and nearer the surf which marked the shallows on each side of Aransas Pass.

“You must stop him,” said Jean, holding the boat as well as he could; “we capsize in the surf. Don’t let him get over yonder,” nodding at the threatening sea.

So Jack held the tarpon, the rod bending to the danger point, the gamy fish rushing around in a semi-circle, Jack reeling as rapidly as possible, while Jean backed quickly. The next leap of the fish was made on the north side of the channel, beyond the jetty, in smooth water, where the tarpon went repeatedly into the

air, making a splendid display of its beauties and leaping powers.

“Now!” cried Jean, as the line slackened.

Jack reeled with all his strength and brought the incoming fish up with a round turn as it turned to break away, not twenty feet distant, and then it rose directly before their eyes, its red gills showing, each scale scintillating, a royal spectacle. The tarpon never weakened; it was fought to a finish, to use sporting parlance, and despite all its tremendous struggles Jack held it, reeled it to the tip of the leader or snood, and cried “Gaff!” as he turned it forward. It was then that he was treated to a surprise.

“I can’t gaff,” said the boatman; “we’ll have to tow him in.”

“What!” exclaimed Jack, who was dripping with perspiration and salt water, red in the face, and looking as though he had been overboard. “Tow this fish in half a mile and lose him? Oh, no. Gaff him.”

“He tip the boat over,” replied Jean, who had the double line of the leader in hand.

“No matter,” said Jack; “I want my first fish, and we can swim. We’ve been there before, eh, Tom?” and the boys laughed.

So the boatman, driven to the wall, gaffed the tarpon, held him a moment, then drew him carefully into the skiff. What happened next was best told by Rad and his brother, who were lying off in their boat watching their new friends land their first tarpon. The tarpon

seemed to double up, its tail and head touching, then it straightened out, six feet of solid scales, and the air seemed filled with boatmen, boys, tarpon, chairs, and oars. Jean dodged the first onslaught, and the boys retreated astern and back again. Jean, who was in the way, was hit below the knee, and oars and one chair were knocked overboard. That the skiff did not capsize was a miracle, as the noise the fish made was suggestive of a total wreck; but in some way Jean reached his feet, and the next time he went down it was upon the tarpon, to which he clung with a death-like grasp, preventing the fish from rising again; then slowly he hauled a tarpaulin over the fighter and partly rose with an "I told you so" expression on his face, which was irresistible. Finally he reached a big knife and despatched the fish, then took an account of stock. Rad and his brother now came up and picked up the oars, chair, and gaff which had been knocked overboard, and congratulated the fishermen, who were laughing heartily over the adventure.

"I've learned one thing," said Jack, "and that is to take the advice of your boatman in a strange place. I insisted on taking in the fish, and in this skiff of a boat he might have killed one of us. Did you see his first swing?" he asked Rad. "He just bent up so that his head and tail touched, then he straightened out like a steel spring, and I think the blow from that big solid head would have made trouble."

"It might have killed you," replied Rad. "I saw a

tarpon rise not far from here once and strike the chair of a fisherman, knocking him fairly out of the boat, eh, Jean?"

The boatman looked up and smiled, then he reached down under the sail-cloth and grasping the dead tarpon by the gills held it up.

"It's a beauty," said Rad.

"It is and no mistake," retorted Jack, proudly. "If I live a hundred years I'll never forget that short round. One tarpon against three. He would have won, and flung himself overboard if Jean hadn't fallen on him and hit him a foul blow."

Jean straightened out the boat and when everything was shipshape they began fishing again, watching the leaping tarpons on various lines, as by this time four or five fish had been landed, and the Angler and his friend could be seen playing a fish out beyond the buoy in the Gulf where the occasional glint of the sun on a mass of silver told of the tarpon's leap. The sport presently became very exciting. One angler near the boys' boat had a large jack; another a leaping shark which could hardly be told from a tarpon, so far as its leaps were concerned; while another boat was being towed by the gamy fish. There was a fascination about the sport impossible to describe. The long stretch of beach and its rising cloud-like spray; the soft mysterious wind, the musical roar of the sea which broke everywhere but in the narrow pass, and the feeling that all about were gigantic fish, sharks, green turtles, jacks, and other large game of the sea made

an impression on the boys difficult to define, and they recognized that here was a picture of nature very different from that of the Pacific. Jean rowed along the jetty, then crossed in such shallow water that the rocks on the bottom could be seen; yet Tom's reel gave tongue just as they had crossed, and as he bent back, pressing his thumb hard on the pad-brake, the tarpon went, blazing, into the air, flying, flinging itself from side to side, its gills wide open, its extraordinary mouth agape. How high it actually jumped no one could tell, but the boys all agreed that as they looked up at it, it appeared to be ten feet in air; perhaps it was only six, as who can govern the imagination at such a time? Down fell the fish, to leap into the air again; in fact, it made several leaps alongside the boat, giving a generous demonstration of its powers, then was away to the music of the screaming reel; but Tom stopped it in fifty yards, and then again into the air it went like a bird, and the Angler, whose boat was now nearby, rose and waved his sombrero and cheered them on.

This fish was of different mettle from Jack's, as suddenly it came rushing in, to turn and with a single wild run take four hundred feet of the line, again going into the air like a white bird far away on the opposite side of the pass, then disappeared while Tom felt an irresistible drag forcing him along.

"I can't hold him!" he cried, as the reel gave lusty zee-eee-ees beneath his thumb and the skiff began to slowly move ahead.

"This seems like tuna," said Jack; "we're off, gallant anglers that we are."

"And going right into the sea," finished Tom.

The tarpon was towing the skiff at a rapid rate, stern first, directly south, and was now itself in a breaking sea that would have quickly swamped the boat had the boatman not realized the situation and with a powerful swing pulled the skiff around and rowed inshore and up the channel as hard as he could.

"It's a big fish, sir, a reg'lar bounder," he said; "I can't keep him out. We go inshore and if she capsizes shark won't get us, and you can jump over and play him along the beach."

It was literally a race for shallow water. The "bounder" was still rushing down the coast; they could see him four hundred feet and more away leaping desperately in the heavy seas. Even now the boat was in the heavy swells, and the beach seemed a long distance off; but Jean pulled lustily, and finally on the top of a large roller they went dashing in. "Water only waist-deep here," said Jean, whirling the boat about where she rode a sea that just began to comb; then he pulled about again and on they went, now before seas, now heading them, until the fish had them fairly in the surf, and was still swimming on so powerfully that Tom could not stay it. Between seas Jean thrust his oar over, to show the boys that the water was a little over knee-deep; so they took off their shoes and made ready for the inevitable—which soon came; a big roller

came careening in, caught the boat, capsizing and filling it, while they all leaped into the shallow water. Tom waded inshore, while Jack held to the boat with Jean and righted it, collecting the oars and turning the skiff head



The author and a tarpon. Aransas, Texas.

to the sea while Tom reeled in his mad steed. How he wished for a good stanch launch in which they could have kept out to sea, but this fish was a clever one, and, as Jean said later, doubtless knew that the skiff would



founder in the surf. It was useless to try and follow with the skiff, so Jack hauled it in and on to the beach, then hurried after Tom, who was carried a mile down shore before he killed the tarpon, that fought to the last, and was finally gaffed by Jean in a fine flurry and dragged upon the beach; killed after a battle royal of over an hour. Jean lifted it up, six and a half feet of molten silver, a trophy to be proud of, and running a piece of drift bamboo through its gills, they started up the beach dragging the game. Reaching the boat, it was hauled aboard and the boat was gradually worked around through the surf to the pass and smooth water, the party boarding the *Gar* after one of the most exciting days in their experience.

Nearly all the boats had landed one or more tarpons, and a group of anglers could be seen on the beach measuring their fish. Rad and Buddie came aboard the *Gar* soon after, bringing their first tarpon and greatly elated; as the Commodore said, "Loaded to the guards with experiences." The Angler and his friend also joined them, and they all sat on the broad quarter-deck of the house-boat and talked over the day's sport although it was but noon.

"There's but one feature I don't like," said Rad; "this towing the fish to measure him; it's too hard work." But this was a time-honored rule at Aransas. If the angler wished to obtain a record he towed his tarpon to the beach, dragged it up, measured it, and after taking a scale to nail up in the inn or the club, then let

the fish go, no tarpon being weighed or injured, the record depending entirely upon length. So Tom and Jack established their record of five feet ten and six feet respectively, the fishes being retained for mounting. Several boys had made enviable records at Aransas Pass, notably Master Sarazan, who took several fish; but the record is held by Wilbur B. Moss, a son of Dr. Robert E. Moss, of San Antonio, Texas, who the year he was twelve years old took four tarpons, the largest measuring six feet one inch in length, the smallest four feet six inches, the others being four feet two inches and five feet six inches—a notable catch even for the strenuous man angler. All these fish were taken in true sportsman-like manner, landed on the beach and measured from tip to tip when lying flat.

As the older anglers talked, the boys listened and learned much about this marvelous fishing-ground which extends literally from Tampico to New Orleans and beyond to Cape Florida. They learned that the season is from April to November; that the catch of the town of Tarpon was over seven hundred tarpons, taken with a rod, for the season; that the record for the season was held by J. R. Wainright, of Pittsburg, with one hundred and sixty-nine tarpons up to September 15th; that the record for one day was held by J. E. Cotter with eighteen tarpons. They heard that on June 19, 1903, eighteen anglers, five of whom were ladies, caught seventy-four tarpons, and that one lady, Mrs. M. A. Hatfield, landed four large fish in one hour and thirty-five minutes;

while Miss Nora Fowler held the record for shortest time, landing her tarpon in two and a half minutes. To the boy or man not interested in angling such statistics count for little, but at Tarpon they were known to every one from the captain of the Life-Saving Station down



Mullet, tarpon bait.

to the smallest boy, and the great anglers were talked about by the boys with bated breath.

“Yes, sah,” said a black boatman, “yes, sah, I dun row Mistah Cottah long befo’ he got to be a great man an’ made his record.”

From the deck of the house-boat the boys could occasionally see the backs of tarpons, supposed to be feeding on mullet, and the anglers discussed them and their peculiar habits. One of the large fish hung from the shrouds, and the boys measured its scales, finding them to be four inches across, the fish being literally encased in silver.

“The tarpon is a curious fish,” said the owner of the Texan house-boat. “They come in here about the first of April, but the sport does not begin in earnest until

June, the fish staying until the first norther, or until November, then going south, making their winter headquarters from about the latitude of Tampico to the south, where excellent tarpon fishing is to be had all winter. They have two migrations a year, just like the birds, moving north in summer and south in winter, reaching all points of the Gulf and Florida, and some straying as far north as Cape Cod. They are supposed to spawn here, the interior lagoon presenting an ideal spawning-ground, and the young have been found in Porto Rican waters. "There is no question," added the Angler, "but that the tarpon is the greatest jumper among fishes, as a twelve-foot vertical and a thirty-foot horizontal jump has been observed. A tarpon has been known to kill a fisherman by leaping over the edge of nets, and one went through the bottom of a boat."

That afternoon the four boys watched the men fishing for tarpon from the deck, then took their guns and went several miles down the beach of Mustang Island in search of snipe and plover, coming home at night with a fair bag and scores of shells, seaweeds, and other objects washed from the Gulf by the ever-pounding swell.

## CHAPTER IX

### A TEXAS JEW FISH

THE town of Sport, opposite the mooring-grounds of the house-boat, possessed a peculiar fascination to the young anglers, as there was but one house in its corporate limits, that being the Tarpon Club, nearly a mile and a half from the Pass, the intervening stretch of sand being almost as level as a floor with here and there a heap where the sand had piled up against some object; but everywhere it was hardly a foot higher than the level of the Gulf, and across its surface ran myriads of sand rivers forced on by the endless wind, winding this way and that and visible for some distance. This vast desert piled up by the sea, then blown inland to the lagoon by the wind, was the home of thousands of white and yellow sand-crabs, which were so tame that when the boys kept perfectly quiet on the sand they would crawl out of their holes and gather about as though curious to see what manner of animals these were; but at the first alarm the crabs would disappear. The sand stretch was alive with them. They patrolled the beach in bands, being the natural scavengers, and as the boys walked along they were constantly ahead waving their

claws. They were excellent bait, and Tom, being a good shot, with a twenty-two caliber rifle picked them off cleverly, and later they were cast into the surf to lure the gamy channel bass or redfish.

One morning as the boys sat on the beach the Angler proposed a day with the jewfish. A fisherman from up the lagoon had reported that one had been caught in a net, which weighed nearly one thousand pounds. The schooner was gotten under way and sailed down to the Point of Rocks, where the curious craft was run inshore and anchored to the beach while the boys and their elders got into their boats and made ready.

“I never hear tell of a jewfish as a game fish,” said the Commodore, with a sniff of disgust. “I’ve caught ’em with a rope and wanted a donkey engine before I got through; but if some wan’ll only call sawin’ wood sport, there’ll be enough to try it.”

“You know you like it,” said Jack. “When I hook a fish you will be the first one to shout.”

The Commodore snorted, but he was fitting his rod together.

The jewfish might have weighed a ton, but it did not matter to the boys, who all approached the game armed with rods and reels—the tarpon outfit previously described, with this exception: the bait was larger, a whole Spanish mackerel, supposed to be a *bonne bouche* for the giant of the tribe. It was a peculiar fishing-ground. A few rocks jutted out from a sand-bank into deep water, that part of the day ran merrily out through

the pass, then turned and ran back, often bringing with it dark, muddy water, said to be carried down the coast from the Rio Grande, the Brazos, Red, and other rivers, the arteries of Texas. The Commodore proposed fishing from the beach, wading out, knee-deep, and cast thirty feet into the channel. The boys cast from the skiffs, the boatmen arranging them so that they could be shoved off at a moment's notice. The sun was hot, but the wind from the Gulf was refreshing. The strange sand-dunes loomed up everywhere, and in the water countless fish jumped—gars, spotted like leopards, moving along the surface; rays dashing into the air; rippling mullets flashing in the sunlight; while overhead great man-of-war hawks poised on the wind, marvelous examples of power and grace, and along the surface flew skimmers, their knife-like bills cutting the water for shrimps or small fry. The boys watched the never-ending procession of nature and listened to the stories of the boatmen. Suddenly Jack whispered, "I've a strike!"

It was not necessary to announce it; the reel did that, and something suddenly jerked a yard of line with a buzz from the reel; then the line ran slowly out, *one, two, three, four, five, six* feet, slid over the edge, and every angler was keyed up to the highest notch of excitement. Jack's boatman now said something and he dropped his thumb to the leather pad and watched the line straighten until the crystal drops flew from it; then gave the unknown the butt, throwing his rod back with



a firm, heavy sway, and for a second held hard and fast while the rod bent and bowed in a mad fashion, wig-wagging frantically. Then the line slipped and ran from the reel in as merry a caracole as one ever saw or listened to. Jean cast off, seized the oars, and backed after the fish, while a shout went up from the Commodore, who had also hooked something. As all looked on, he gave the butt to the fish with such force that he broke his rod at the joint, and losing his footing, fell floundering on his back in the warm and shallow water amid roars of laughter. The fish on Jack's line made a rush straight out into the channel, then striking the opposite shore turned and swam up the lagoon at a pace which prevented the taking of any line; yet he held it, having an advantage in the shallow water.

"The other boat's got one," said the boatman, and turning, Tom saw Rad's boat towing away. "Do they come in schools?" he queried.

"Sometimes," was the reply. "I've seen twenty taken in a day."

Jack's fish suddenly woke up, and turning quickly made a dash out the pass, taking two hundred feet of line with a scream from the reel, the boatman holding with the oars, Jack bearing upon the brake with all his force, finally stopping it; but it might have been a mad bull on the line as now it rushed in and under the boat, grounding on the flat, showing an enormous body, then rolling off and rushing away like a catapult to turn and shake its ponderous head with telling force. Jack had

it reeled in to within seventy feet, and as Jean pulled out he gained rapidly, meeting a savage run cleverly, holding the fish, forcing it to the surface until its big ugly head protruded and the huge tail came slashing over to sweep away the enemy fifty feet distant.

“Now reel!” cried Jean, and he sent the skiff whirling toward the fish, while Jack garnered in the line with whirl after whirl of the reel-handle until, with a shout, they had the game at what the Commodore, who was hard by, with a gaff, called “short commons.” How it rolled and struck out! How it plunged, a very whale! Then Jean rowed hard and Tom held the monster, a dead weight of no one could guess how many pounds, felt it coming, stopped its side rushes with the slight line, and holding it well in hand leaped overboard as the skiff grounded; held it, while the Commodore waded out and gaffed it. With a hurrah it was hauled in, rolling over, twisting the gaff almost out of the Commodore’s hands, fighting hard and constantly, and never really giving up the battle until in the toils of the shallow water, where the Commodore called for help, three boatmen being required to drag the doughty monster high and dry upon the sands, where it lay fanning with its powerful gill covers, so blinking defiance at the observers. It was a giant, there was no mistake about that. Tom stretched himself out beside it on the beach and the fish was almost a foot longer, being six feet three, while its girth was enormous. It resembled a huge grouper, something like a black bass, a bass that

one might have dreamed of, the very giant of its kind, but its head was flatter and the tail was not bass-like, filled out and rounded where the tail of the bass is cut in; indeed, the jewfish or Warsaw was a peculiar creature. It had been landed in just one hour, but the fish hooked by Buddie had taken the boat directly out of the pass and they could now be seen near the jetty, half a mile away, the boy having the finest sport he had in Texas. Jean proposed to send Jack's fish up to market, so it was covered from the sun, and the boys laid down on the beach and rested. In the meantime Mr. Temple had hooked a large fish and lost his line, and the Commodore was rigging a new rod, now determined to add to his select list of catches the vigorous jewfish. While resting, Jean told them of the habits of the jewfish; how it lived in the nooks and corners of the pass, going out at times and often coming in in schools. While talking, a shout was heard, and Buddie was seen with his boatman near the beach struggling with their game; as they looked, over went the skiff, throwing the occupants into the water. Jean quickly pushed off his skiff and rowed in that direction as fast as possible, the boys and the Commodore hurrying along the beach, as the pass had the reputation of being the roaming-ground of large sharks; but before they reached the point they saw that Buddie and the boatman were on bottom, though up to their shoulders, and were wading in, the boatman holding the rod over his head and still struggling with the game. Buddie was

swimming, but presently he obtained a foothold, and grasping his rod ran inshore shouting, "We don't know what it is, but it capsized the skiff and threw us over."

It appeared that he and his man were both standing when a sudden jerk caused them to lose their balance, and over went the skiff, throwing them into the region of the sharks. Jean picked up the skiff from his boat and towed it inshore, while Buddie, Tom, Jack and the Commodore ran down the beach to see the finish of the play, for the unknown, with at least three hundred feet of line, was swimming out the pass at no uncertain gait. The boy with the rod reeled as he ran, gaining rapidly; but there was a point a short distance ahead around which the pass ended, and the vast coast of Texas stretched away with its line of breakers and its rising cloud of spume. Unless the unknown could be deflected it would take the line, so Buddie ran at the top of his speed, turned up the beach, reeling as hard as he could, and putting all the strain upon the rod it would bear. For a few seconds it was an open question, the pass or the beach, then the line began to point to the south and the boys uttered a shout, a victorious yell; the fish was running into the surf and they had a clear field. Was there not the entire country from here to South America in which to play him? Buddie waded out into the surf and rapidly gained line, and as the Commodore came limping along, highly excited, using the gaff he had caught up as a staff, they all moved down the wide sandy beach into the spume and sea-smoke of the Gulf, that

rose high in air, swept over into the sand-dunes by the eternal wind.

“What is it, Mat?” asked Tom.

“I reckon shark,” was the reply; “perhaps it jewfish, not tarpon; anyway, he never show his head or jump; that’s why I think him big sand-shark.”

“We shall find out pretty soon, by the way Bud’s working him,” said Jack. And this was true; whatever it was, it was now seen for the first on the side of a great roller, then lost in the rush of silvery foam it bore out, making so vigorous a rush that the angler lost twenty or thirty feet; but he stopped it again, though the fish knew it was in shallow water, and endeavored to bore its way offshore without avail; there was no forcing the fighting, as the delicate twenty-one-thread line would not withstand it; so it was patient, hard work and constant labor of the reel. For half a mile this fish took the party down the coast of Mustang Island, past interminable sand-dunes, and then began to display weariness. Buddie was waist-deep in the water, the shallows extending out a long distance, affording a splendid series of breakers. He had nearly been bowled over by the sea time and again, and his boatman stood by to aid him; but he would none of it; he was, as the Commodore said, “dead game,” and proposed to land the unknown if it took all summer. Finally, a very heavy sea was seen coming in. It was copper-colored and had a threatening aspect, so much so that the boatman grasped the enthusiastic angler and forced him

inshore on the run as the sea caught the fish, and they saw it plainly for a second, then the big roller came sweeping in and shot the fish far up the beach, covering the boys with foam. As it fell back Buddie appeared, reeling for his life, and held, not a shark or a jewfish, nothing more nor less than a huge sting-ray; a spotted, beautiful, bird-like creature, with long wing-like fins and slender tail; a ray nearly nine feet across from tip to tip. Buddie was chagrined, but recovered his equanimity when the boatman agreed that it was the largest ray taken around that part of the country. "I've been trying to make a record," he said, laughing, "and I've got it, the ray record, and I can take the brush to tell the story." So the whiptail was cut off, and after a rest the party started for the house-boat, not by the beach but over the sand-dunes, led by Mat and the boatman who had lived among them for years. The beach was very wide here, but about two hundred feet from the surf the sand had piled up ten, twenty, even thirty feet in places, and under the influence of the constant wind was ever moving over in the direction of the inner lagoon. Here and there were little channels leading into the dunes, and up one of these Mat led the party, coming to a stretch of pure undulating sand. Here and there grass grew, and dead limbs of trees and even trunks and some bushes stood above it, nature's attempts to stop the devastating sand. It was like walking through snow, soft, insidious, and once in the heart of the dune, out of direct course of the wind, the heat was intense. Now

sliding down a hill, climbing others which brought small avalanches upon them, the party pressed on until the Commodore became stalled, and they halted to rest, a demoralized party. The hot sun had long since dried their clothing, but they were now wet with perspiration, with the struggle through the sliding, slippery sand. A few trees, almost covered, were now sighted, and sliding down into a runway they walked along single file, climbing again to the upper level and coming to a small house in the center of the white sand, heaped and cut into marvelous shapes. From the sand-bank across a six-foot gully a plank had been placed, leading to the cabin, over which they walked to the house of boatman Mat, where, while they rested and drank the cool water his wife brought them, they listened to the strange story of his disappearing home.

“I been here about twenty year,” began Mat; “then this place had no sand, so I like it an’ build my home, plant my garden. I have grapes, orange, lemon, olive, flowers all lak I have in my home in Italia. It very nice, I lak it; feesh all day, come home, plenty to eat, plenty children,” and Mat laughed at his brown-faced children gathered about. “But about six years ago the wind, something happen to it; it blow all the time, then all at once it change two or three points to the south, and my neighbor told me one day the sand was creep over his house. I look and see it, and see it come my way. We build a brake six feet high, but in a week it reach the top, run over and come on one, two,



a dozen rivers of sand, all flowing to my house. I spend every morning and night shoveling sand, but more blow in one night than I could keep out. It cover my garden, my trees, my flowers. I fight it night and day, so did my children; they dig, sweep, shovel, but it no good; so I put stakes under my house and raise it four feet. I put pipe in my pump, raise it four feet; bimeby my house buried, sand come in the door, and so you see me ten feet above my garden. All my trees, my flowers ten feet deep in the sand, an' all I can do is to keep lifting my house. Some day it sweep over the whole island."

The boatman's position was pathetic, and in all their travels the boys saw no more singular sight than this cabin perched on the sand-dune, that had to be lifted and raised to prevent it from being lost to sight. The shifting sand-dunes are a peculiarity of all lands; often beautiful in their flowing rivers of sand flowing on, changing the very face of the earth.

It was but a short walk from the boatman's home to the harbor, that was also being filled up, and as the deep red clouds gathered in the west, as though to receive the sun, the fishing-party reached the yacht after an exciting day's sport of varied experiences.

## CHAPTER X

### THE TEN-POUNDER

“THE Commodore has passed the word for light tackle, I wonder what the game is to be,” said Tom one morning, as the schooner rounded to at the entrance of a little inlet in Aransas Bay and dropped anchor.

“I’ll ask,” replied Jack; and going aft to the quarter-deck where his father and his friends sat, overhauling their rods, he inquired what the game for the day was.

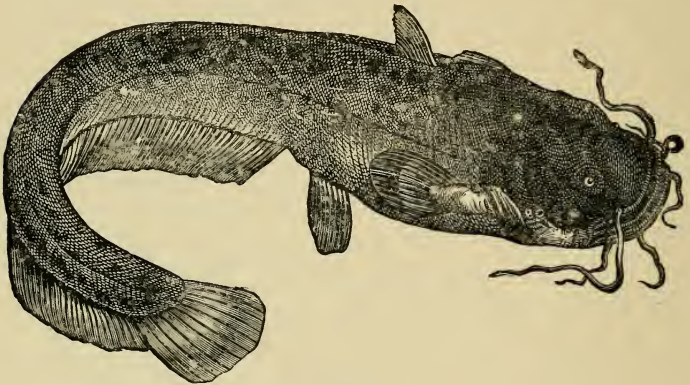
“We hope it is to be the ten-pounder,”<sup>1</sup> replied Mr. Temple, fitting a delicate bamboo joint together. “The captain tells me this is a favorite place for them, and if so, you will have some fine sport with a marvelous fish; but you will want your split bamboo black-bass rods.”

“Did you ever think,” said the Angler, when they were all seated under the awning, the boys busy with their rods and lines which were being rigged for the game, “what the evolution of the rod from a willow branch to a split bamboo means? Walton had the charming philosophy of all ages, but he did not know the delights of a split bamboo; it was not invented until 1846, being the production of Samuel Phillippi, of Easton, Pennsyl-

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<sup>1</sup> *Elops saurus.*

vania, and like many other great inventions or ideas, there are many to dispute it. But Phillippi was the first inventor of the split bamboo and a four-section rod. Dr. Henshell exhibited one of his original rods at the World's Columbian Exhibition in 1873. It was a trout-rod eleven feet four inches in length, weighing eight ounces, and all the rod-makers since owe a debt to Phillippi. It may be a matter of fancy," continued the



Catfish.

Angler, "but to my mind, the split bamboo is the ideal all-around rod. With it I have taken trout, salmon, tuna, and tarpon, and well made, it has few if any equals."

The boatman had hauled up the skiffs which had been towing in a line behind the schooner, and the six anglers were presently seated in them and being rowed to a certain spot near a little inlet, where they anchored one or two hundred feet apart and began to fish. They

used light rods suitable for black bass, with very light lines; some baited with shrimp and others with very small sardines. Tom secured the first prize, landing after a poor fight a gaff-topsail catfish, the pest of the salt-water angler on the Texan coast. As the boatman attempted to unhook it he showed the boys its eggs packed on the inside of the mouth, where they are carried until they hatch; and even the young fish are protected in this way until they can care for themselves. Each fisherman landed a gaff-topsail cat, and the Commodore remarked that it was a pity Johnnie Grayley was not there with his jugs and watermelon. So ravenous were the cats that the Angler used up all his bait and rowed over to where the boys were landing cats and tossing them back.

“The English people must have heard of Johnnie’s cat,” he said, laughing. “I remember a poem published in Punch years ago as a protest against introducing the catfish into England. It ran something like this :

“Oh, do not bring the Catfish here !  
The Catfish is a name of fear.  
Oh, spare each stream and spring,  
The Kennet Swift, the Wandle clear,  
The lake, the loch, the broad, the mere,  
From that detested thing !

“The Catfish is a hideous beast,  
A bottom-feeder that doth feast  
Upon unholy bait :

He's no addition to your meal,  
 He's rather richer than the eel,  
 And ranker than the skate.

“ His face is broad, and flat, and glum ;  
 He's like some monstrous miller's thumb ;  
 He's bearded like the pard.  
 Beholding him the grayling flee,  
 The trout take refuge in the sea,  
 The gudgeons go on guard !

“ They say the Catfish climbs the trees,  
 And robs the roosts, and down the breeze  
 Prolongs his caterwaul.  
 Ah, leave him in his western flood,  
 Where Mississippi churns the mud ;  
 Don't bring him here at all ! ”

“ It's more than likely,” said the Commodore when the Angler concluded, “ that Johnnie Grayley read the poetry and made up the yarn from it.”

Jack had just made a long cast with a small sardine when his rod bent to the danger point and the delicate but musical reel gave tongue in a fashion that told another story than gaff-topsail cats ; and then into the air rose a silvery animated streak of lightning, quivering, dancing, caracoling, bending all in a breath ; so dazzling a creature that Jack stopped reeling to gaze at it in amazement. Down it went, rushing out twenty feet of line to appear in a totally different place, literally dancing on the water ; now on head, again on tail, a fantasy in

silver, a long slender creature, the very ghost of a tarpon gone crazy.

“What is it?” cried Jack, reeling and watching with breathless apprehension his cavorting tip.

“Why, the ten-pounder, but about three pounds in this case,” answered his father; “what we are here for; the gamiest fish in the sea, at least,” he added, *sotto voce*, “to my mind.”

In the meantime Tom had a strike and he added a dancing companion to Jack’s fish. At one moment the air would apparently be full of fishes dancing on their tails, springing here and there; then it would drop to immediately spring along the surface in a splendid horizontal leap, all the while the reels buzzing, shrieking, and scolding after the fashion of their kind. The boys had caught many kinds of fish, but never had seen anything to approach this dancing vision, this light-weight tarpon that, garbed in silver, piroquetted so daintily on the surface of the lagoon. Ten-pounders by name, they were far under that in real weight; but, as the Commodore said, every inch was a pound compared to other fishes. How many jumps each fish made was impossible to determine, but Jack, who was twenty minutes landing his fish, was positive that it was in the air most of that time. In this place four ten-pounders were landed, then the gaff-topsail cats surged to the front and forced the anglers to move out into the lagoon to a hole which Jean knew, where more ten-pounders and sport incomparable were found.

“ I dislike to pass the black bass to a second place,” said the Angler as they were all bunched near the hole, making a fine cast as he spoke, “ but the ten-pounder is a delight giver, no doubt about it. I have never seen a real ten-pounder, though they have them in Florida, where they attain a length of two or three feet.”

The fishing in the lagoon proved “ werry unsartin,” as the Commodore truthfully explained, and the boatmen began to move about searching for new holes, a hole being merely a clear place in about five or six feet of water with a surrounding mass of weed in which lived gaff-topsail cats, redfish, ten-pounders, and many more. It was not long before Jack and Tom were fishing together, with the Commodore now as boatman, Jean having gone aboard the schooner to prepare lunch, as the house-boat followed them about, anchoring near them. The boys dropped anchor at a new hole. At the first cast something bent the rod like a whip, making a straight run until hooked, then completely encircled the boat in so gamy a manner that the boys were puzzled. It did not leap, so was not a ten-pounder, and they were guessing, when the fish, to the merry whistle of the reel, coursed along the surface showing the splendid gold, silver, and black markings of the Spanish mackerel; then Jack’s reel spoke in no uncertain tone, and for nearly half an hour they enjoyed the sport which these fine game-fishes can afford when the angler is equipped with light tackle. While they were fishing several eagle-rays were playing in the vicinity of the boat, repeatedly jumping



and appearing in the air like birds flapping their side wing-like fins. They were beautiful creatures, dark and spotted like a leopard, and with long, slender, whip-like tails that were dangerous weapons. Five fish were taken, and the Commodore, who had been busily engaged in baiting the hooks with shrimps, had taken Tom's rod and was playing a fine Spanish mackerel with much vigor when a shark, apparently four feet in length, leaped fairly into the boat. It struck on the rail and rolled in, giving the Commodore a sounding blow and belaboring everything within reach after the manner of sharks when out of their natural element. The Commodore started to his feet and endeavored to seize an oar, but the shark sliding down got under them and deliberately flung them high in air and overboard, the Commodore dancing a Highland fling to avoid its tail ; then slipping on a fish, he fell directly upon the shark and for a moment appeared to be riding it, the boys calling upon him to go in and win, and making other laughing requests difficult to carry out.

“ I've ridden worse things than sharks ! ” shouted the Commodore ; and taking up a heavy club or fish-killer he forced it into the fish's mouth, and as the vicious animal gripped it like a bulldog he rose and hauled it over the side, shaking it off. This extraordinary experience attracted the attention of the rest of the party, who now came alongside demanding of the Commodore how he conjured fish into the boat, and amid much laughter and joking they all pulled back to the house-yacht.

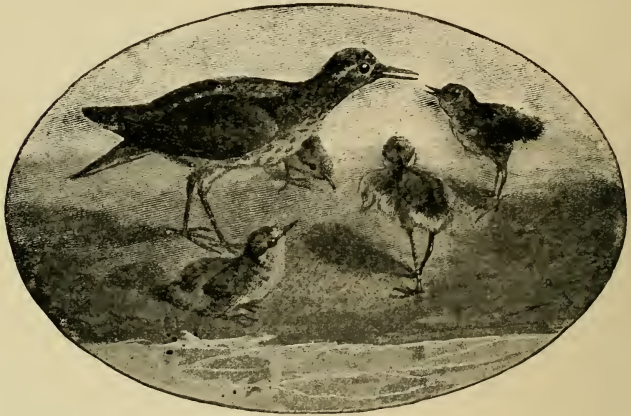
“That may seem a very remarkable experience,” said Mr. Temple, “but I know of one other case which happened on the coast of Maine at the little village of Ogunquit. A fisherman was fishing near the rocks when without warning a shark six feet long leaped fairly into the boat, nearly demoralizing the fisherman who, I fancy, was asleep. The occurrence is easily explained. The shark comes swimming along and suddenly sees the boat, and, perhaps alarmed by something behind, leaps out of the water and accidentally lands in the boat. The garfish often strikes in and about boats; and I know an instance where a large one struck the hat of an officer. An instance is given in the *Voyage of the Challenger*, by Moseley. But of all the jumps or leaps of oceanic animals that of the whale is most marvelous. The British ship *Leander*, Captain B. Hall of the British Navy, was lying in the harbor of Bermuda when a large whale came into the roads and the men were allowed to go in chase of it. It was struck, sounded and came up, possibly with a view of striking the boat, but missed it, shooting into the air, the most extraordinary sight probably ever seen, as the huge mass weighed many tons and was sixty or seventy feet in length. It passed entirely over the boat, clearing it by twenty feet, the amazed and terrified sailors looking up to see the huge creature poised over them. The fall of the animal all but sank the craft, and I doubt if any one in her ever forgot the experience.”

After lunch, Tom and Jack were sitting on deck

when they noticed a curious fin on the surface, and making out the speckled body of a garpike, forthwith began to fish for this modern representative of one of the oldest of fishes. It looked very much like its namesake, the alligator, swimming clumsily in the water and apparently not disturbed by the baits that were cast at it—small mullets and large. Tom, seeing that the gar remained on the surface, fastened a float upon his line, which presently disappeared; and acting on the suggestion of one of the boatmen, he gave it two or three minutes to fairly take the bait, then struck and had the satisfaction of catching the singular creature after a lusty but not very exciting play. It was about three feet long and had a pair of beaks armed with sharp teeth, and was encased in an armor of chinalike scales, which would have deflected a bullet and which gave the Commodore some little trouble when attempting to gaff it; indeed, he found it impossible, and fairly caught the long-beaked ugly fish in a net, where it viciously snapped at everything within reach.

That afternoon the boys went ashore on the long, wide beach, crossed it to the Gulf and bathed in the surf; then they took their shotguns and walked down the beach, finding numbers of plover and sandpipers to repay the long tramp. Gulls, pelicans, and man-of-war birds were common, and occasionally a big heron would rise and fly away with lumbering flight. By four o'clock they reached the yacht, with dinner enough for all hands and in time to see the men catch bait, which they took

in various ways. Large shrimps were very common here in shallow water, and a very fine mesh cast-net was used. The shrimps so closely mimicked the bottom that they could not be seen, hence the men merely

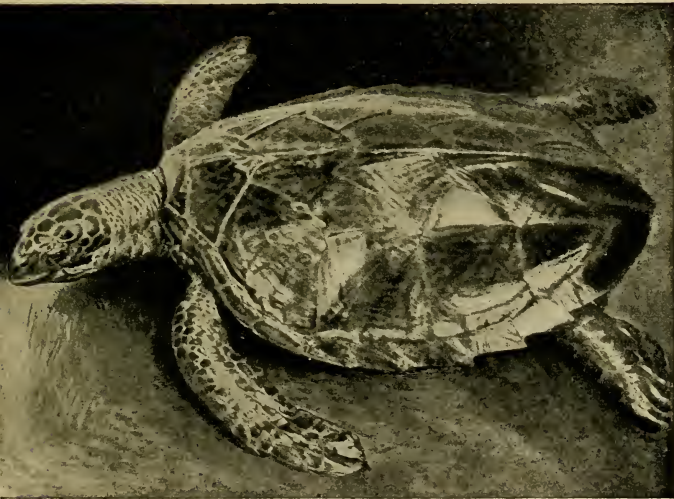


Sandpipers.

rushed into the water and hurled the net, which nearly always caught several hundred shrimps, which were shaken out on the beach—a dainty bait for many kinds of small fish of this vicinity. Worms, great sea slug-like creatures, were dug out of the sand or mud; and crabs the boys chased along the shore, skilfully knocking them over with sticks.

Just at sundown a shout was heard, and looking around, the boys saw Jean beckoning and running to the skiff. As he shoved off, he called out that there was a large turtle coming up the beach. Tom quickly put

the turtle peg in the grain pole—a three-sided peglike affair—and in a few moments the round head of a turtle appeared. It evidently was feeding in a patch of dark-green sea-grass, and Jean cautiously pulled the boat in that direction, and presently Tom made out the dark shape moving slowly along. Nearer the boat approached, and when about ten feet from the turtle he cleverly



Hawksbill turtle.

tossed the peg into it. It was not a large one, but it jerked the boat around and towed it two hundred yards before it was gotten alongside, when to Tom's delight it was seen to be a hawksbill, the kind from which tortoise-shell ornaments are made. It weighed perhaps

forty pounds and proved an interesting trophy. That night as the fishing-party sat on the quarter-deck beneath the awning listening to the waves pounding in with ominous roar, the boatman related many tales of the sea.

“This is a curious coast,” said Jean. “You see this ain’t Texas, it’s only a sand-shoal that is formed off-shore and strings along the whole coast, and it’s the lightest kind of sand that gives way like water when the sea strikes it. I had an uncle who was a boatman on just such a place. Perhaps you’ve heard of Lost Island? It had fine hotels and gardens, cottages and houses, and was the finest kind of resort; but it was on the sand just at the water’s level, and everybody knew that if they ever had a bad storm or a hurricane it would suffer; but no one had any idea that the whole thing would go, no more they did at Galveston. But one night in the middle of the season when the hotel was crowded, a hurricane struck it and whipped it into the sea—hotels, people, everything. It just went out of existence in the night. I had a brother in Galveston where the city is on just such a place as this, only higher and more of it; and to show how quick a sea works on a sand-flat when it gets going, some one asked him to go down to the beach and look at the sea; but when he got there and saw how much higher the top of the sea was than the sand, he knew that they were in for it, so he turned and ran back to get his wife and children to a safe place, but before he got to his home he had to swim; but he got



them out on the roof, and when the house went down they went sailing away and got separated. He was washed off, but caught a tree; and the next morning, after a fearful night, he saw his family all right on the housetop not far away—they had run into a telegraph pole and got jammed up, and so were saved when hundreds were drowned. Galveston will never have such another experience," added the Texan. "They have built a breakwater about it and will raise the entire city beyond any possibility of danger."

"Lightning never strikes in the same place twice," said the Angler. "Perhaps this is true of hurricanes. The West Indies is a breeder of hurricanes, and they are liable to occur anywhere and at any time. The best plan is to be ready or prepared."

So the night waned. The full moon rose and the great sand-dune was flooded with her radiance; and far away could be seen the lurid silver glare of the phosphorescent Gulf waves piling in. They could trace it down the coast, where only the sand-crabs and the life-saving patrol walked at night.





PART III  
ANGLING IN FLORIDA



## CHAPTER XI

### IN THE WAKE OF THE AMBER-FISH

“THE charm of angling does not lie altogether in the fish you catch,” said the Angler; “but in the direct contact with nature as a means of developing the powers of observation. When you find a real angler, one who loves the sport, and who uses his rod fairly and honestly, you find a man with great natural resources. Such an one can steal off alone to the forest, mesa, or ocean and find companionship in a thousand things which appeal to him. We have an illustration here. I met a man last week who said that this was the most dismal spot he had ever seen—nothing but sand; yet you boys have regaled me with the wonders and beauties of this very sand-bank. You hear music in the roar of the sea. You find beauties in the mirage which tosses the dunes into the air. You catch with the artist’s eye the ripple of the sand made by the soft wind. You study the foot-prints of sandpiper, crab, and sea-bird in the vast expanse, and learn that a sand-dune, instead of being a desert, is really an attractive place, a solace in the days when the fish are not biting. And this is as it should

be. Angling, the only sport that has given us a classic in literature, is but a means to an end, and the end is not always to kill fish. To be a good angler is to be a keen observer of nature, to obtain all there is in it, to make life happier and longer; and to be a complete angler is not only to know all about the sport of taking fish, but its literature and history. There are many charming books on the peaceful and gentle art, and, mind you, I distinguish between angling and fishing. Fishermen may go out with a big cotton line and a club rod and wooden reel and slay tarpon by the score; or they may fish for trout with a hand-line, or black bass with dynamite; but the angler is a man of another sort; he is built on other lines; he disdains to take the advantage; he must feel that his game has the better chance, as Walter Scott says,

“ No fisher  
But a well wisher  
To the game.”

He equips himself with the daintiest rod of split bamboo, and it is a pleasure to know that it cost a large sum perhaps to repay some hard worker who gives so much pleasure. The angler is essentially the man with the rod; and that he is a skilled artist you know. He places his fly by a motion of the wrist just where he wishes, and lures his game by the exercise of skill and cleverness. He is never discouraged if the wind is in the east and the game far away. All the old writers on angling

were more or less philosophers, men of peace and contentment, true lovers of nature, satisfied with their luck; whatever it was, on sea or land there was a happy day. First in the heart of the angler comes Walton and his classic, *The Complete Angler*. You may say that his methods have gone out of fashion, that they are behind the times, but that is because you have not read him from the right point of view. It is not what he caught, but what he saw and said when he went fishing that made the old angler and his friends immortal. You can not read his quaint sayings without hearing the gurgle of the brook, the sighing of the pine-needles, the gentle music of the clashing leaves, and insensibly there rises in your mind the picture of some mossy-banked brook where you have angled while the water sang sweet and low.

“It was not long ago that I fished a gentle stream,” continued the Angler, “filled with steep rocks and unsuspected pools where my companions ran quickly from pool to pool to sooner test its qualities, while I took my time lying on the rocks where the brook foamed on and was churned into silver, or resting by the great clumps of wild roses listening to the song of some forest bird. At the end of the day they doubtless had the most fish, but I had that which has lived with me ever since and always will—the charm of companionship with inanimate things.”

So talked the Angler to his boys as, stretched on the deck of a large schooner, they crossed the Mexican Gulf.

They had left Texas, a vessel affording them convenient passage to the Florida Keys, parting with their friends to try the rod among the islands which reach out from the great peninsula of the land of flowers. Mr. Temple had an old friend on one of the keys near Biscayne Bay, and one hot morning the schooner ran into the little channel, the boat was lowered, and the party was put ashore, the schooner continuing on to Key West. The owner of Queen Conch Key was an old sponger, a retired wrecker, who had lived here, renting out boats to sportsmen and tarpon anglers. He was an old acquaintance of the Commodore, who also had been in the wrecking business years before, so they were in a short time provided with quarters and boats. Captain Gagger had a yacht, a small house-boat, several small fishing-boats and a launch, and his motto appeared to be, "Keep a-laughing" and "If you don't see what you want, ask for it," these sayings being painted in vivid green on the bow of an old ship that lay hard by almost buried in the sand. And that the Captain lived up to the first was at once evident.

"I've known the old chap," said the Commodore, "nigh onto fifty year, and I never remember him sober; not laughing, I mean," seeing the look of surprise on Tom's face.

The Captain began smiling at breakfast and he kept it up with remarkable volubility all day long.

"You jest struck it, boys," he said, placing a big palm on Jack's shoulder. "We've had splendid tarpon



fishin' all summer, but I fancy it's something new you want after what I hear you've been doin' over where they raise northers, and you're jest in time for amber-jacks; they're runnin' like Spanish mackerel."

This was enough for the boys, who immediately started for their tackle-boxes, while the Captain made ready two boats and the launch. Captain Gagger was what was called on the reef a Conch—that is, he hailed from Bahama, and was originally English. His shanty was a queer makeshift, being literally the cabin of an old ship which he had propped up and fitted with sides. Around it grew pink, purple, and white passion vines. He had planted bananas and cocoanut-palms, many of the latter growing near the water. On the point a grove of cocoanuts had been planted, and up the bay numbers of planters were in the cocoanut business raising the fruit for the Northern market.

The Commodore shouted "All aboard" as they stood viewing all this, and a few moments later they were seated in comfortable yawls, the Captain supplying two tarpon guides, Captain Bob and Captain Sandy, to row them: tall, thin, sandy-haired Conchs, "spongers," well acquainted with the reef. The men indicated the rods Tom and Jack should use, the tackle being identical with that used for yellowtail in California, with twenty-one thread lines, short leaders, and No. 7|0 O'Shaughnessy hook. In point of fact, the amber-jack was a cousin of the Californian yellowtail, bearing the same generic name (*Seriola*), and resembled it very closely in shape, size, and

weight, though the men said that the amber-jack was the most difficult fish to catch on the reef. The launch came up and towed them out to the outer reef, casting them off in the rich blue water, lying by, it being a



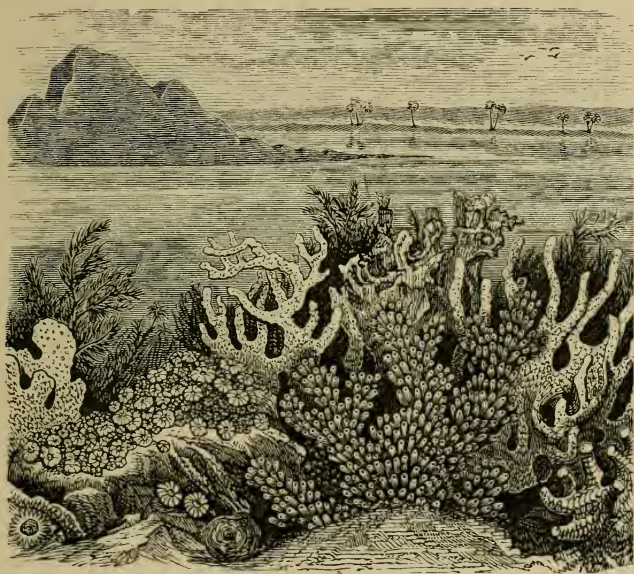
Cocoanut palms on Florida Keys.

smooth, calm day, while the boatmen rowed slowly up and down. The heat blazed down with such intensity that the very woodwork of the boat was hot, and Jack insisted that his hook hissed when it touched the water. But the water was so blue, the day so fair, the something about it all so fascinating that they did not mind it.

“Did you ever see such water? How deep is it, Captain Sandy?” asked Tom.

“Forty feet, sir,” replied the Captain, “and I can see the bottom as plain as though it were twenty.”

They were skirting the coral reef, and the bottom was a veritable garden, with gorgonias or sea-fans, tufts



A coral garden.

of deep-growing coral, plumes of yellow, brown, and purple, in which could be seen fishes of various kinds. Jack was leaning over, his face near the water, when zee-ee-ee-e-e! went his reel, a mortal cry and that was

the end of it, and he pulled in the line to find that the mullet, which was the bait, had been bitten off at the gills.

“You want to strike quick, sir,” said the boatman.

“The same old story,” replied Jack, “thinking of something else;” and he tossed over the rebaited hook, and almost at the same moment as the boatman made a turn at a break in the reef, both reels sounded. How they protested, hissed, and sang! high, low, short, and then one long blare of melody like the flash of electric light along a wire. Then one stopped—Jack had lost his fish. “Too much thumb,” he muttered. But Tom had hooked his and was clinging to his rod. How the powerful unseen fish pulled! Now rushing down deep into the blue sky of the ocean to the merry acclaim; now rising again, giving the line, rod, and angler a peculiar thrill, then coming in to turn and dash away like a tiger fiercely fighting, employing every trick it knew. Tom had in mind the Californian yellowtail and was comparing it to the famous fish; but there was something different here, something stronger, bigger, and little wonder, as the fish came to the surface and partly rolled over in its strenuous attempts to escape, showing a blaze of black, yellow, and silver—a fish at least five feet in length.

“He’s a corker, sir,” whispered the oarsman, hauling upon the port oar in an attempt to keep Tom facing the fish, which now was racing around in a circle and

making the reel fairly buzz in its remonstrance. Jack had watched the catch, and announced that time was up. "You've played him twenty minutes," he said. "That's the time for a California yellowtail."

"I can't help it," retorted Tom, giving the butt to the fish as well as he could to stop its rush. "I can't hold it with this line—I know just what it will stand."

"He's towing us like a tug," cried Jack; "can't you crowd him?"

Tom was doing his best, and certainly the fish was making a marvelous fight, taking line all the while and boring down with an intensity of purpose that defied all attempts to stop it.

"The trouble," said Tom, "is that this rod is out-classed; I ought to have my tarpon rod. If I put on another pound it will buckle at the joint. See that?" as the fish made an extraordinary lunge that fairly took Tom to his feet, the reel sounding an alarm that sounded so far away over the glassy water that the angler in the distant boat waved his hat. Tom tried to pump; in fact every expedient was attempted, but he could not gain, as he said, "for keeps" ten feet of line, and nearly an hour slipped away and the fish was still somewhere two hundred feet in the deep. But there is a limit even to amber-fish, and finally when Tom was in despair he gained a few feet, then found that the fish came steadily in and it was soon brought within twenty feet of the boat, where it circled in plain view, a splendid creature, throw-



ing itself half out of water vainly attempting to rush away. But the battle was won, though the amber-fish never surrendered, even when the boatman struck the gaff into its throat and lifted it aboard, or at least tried to, as the fish proved to be a colossus, and as it hung on the rail struck the boat sounding blows with its ponderous tail. The boatman succeeded in dragging it in and held it up with difficulty, as it weighed sixty pounds—a splendid fish in every sense and game to the last. Tom thought it closely resembled the yellowtail, being known as *Seriola lalandi*. Its color was greenish above and vivid silver beneath; the small dorsal fin dusky or dark, with a yellow band which ran through the eye, giving it a beautiful appearance, the latter being large, fiery, and flashing like that of its Californian ally. The pectoral and ventrals were yellow and dusky; all in all, a most attractive fish, well typifying the finest game-fishes of the sea.

As the sun was going down, the anglers turned into the channel and joined the launch. Mr. Temple had taken several jacks and a small amber-fish, and the boys were delighted to learn that their fish was in all probability the record fish for boys, at least so far as Captain Gagger and his men knew. As they sat on the beach that evening watching the wonderful phosphorescence of the water, the Captain related his experience with the cougars, which a few years ago swam from one key to another and carried off his pigs and routed every one.



Cougars treed by peccaries.



“They must have been starving,” said the Angler, “as in my experience in the West the mountain-lion, as it is called there, is a great coward; and down in Southern Mexico I have known them to be treed by peccaries. In one of our hunts we came upon a tree in which sat two big cougars, and around the base was a herd of peccaries that had run the game to cover.”

## CHAPTER XII

### ON THE INDIAN RIVER

THE keys reaching out from Florida seemed endless to the boys, who found them most interesting. Many were covered with mangroves—a small tree especially adapted to the work of building up land in the shallows. The trees bore a seed very similar to a cigar in shape which was found floating everywhere upright in the water. When it grounded in the mud little rootlets started and grew rapidly; then several leaves would spring forth, and the mangrove, after several trials, would appear a tree growing in the water. The branching roots formed a lodging-place for mud, and in a short time an island or land above the surface appeared, to grow, increase, and become the home of innumerable birds. The boys never wearied walking over the keys, crawling through the mangrove forests and studying the many strange birds found there. They found nests of cranes and herons, colonies of the beautiful flier, the man-of-war hawk, and many more, and by skilful climbing, posing their cameras in the trees, secured many pictures of the birds of the region in various stages. The flats

between the keys were equally prolific, abounding in animal life—sharks, sawfish, mousefish and game of various kinds. In eight or ten feet of water where old roots



Mangrove trees on Florida Keys.

abounded many strange and beautiful fishes were discovered—angels, parrot-fishes, porcupine, and cow-fishes, the singular bat-shaped malthea and others.

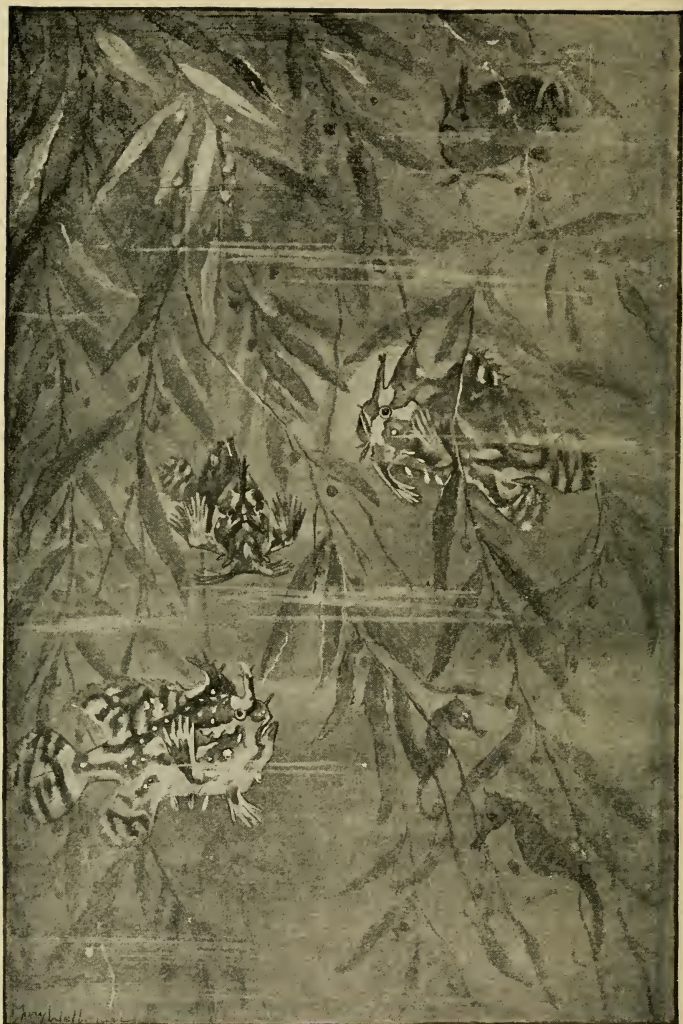
After two weeks in this anglers' paradise Mr. Temple chartered Captain Gagger's big flat-bottom schooner, and they sailed up the coast, entering the Indian River, the long stretch of shallow water formed by the outlying sand-banks on the southeast coast of Florida. Here



Captain Gagger's schooner.

in the various passes, through which they could enter the waters of the Gulf Stream, the party fished, finding sport far exceeding anything found among the keys. Here the boys had their first experience with the large crevalle (*Caranx*), the splendid fish making a remarkable fight when taken with medium weight rods.

One day while fishing at the pass Tom had a strike that nearly jerked the rod from his hands. The line hissed through the water, the reel screamed, and the rush



The mousefish.

was so vigorous that the Commodore cast off the moorings and took the oars, the fish slowly towing them out of the pass.

"Must be a shark," said Tom, breathing hard and striving to lift the rod against the plucky fish.

"Looks that way," replied the Commodore, pulling hard against the fish and trying to stop it.

"If that's the case," said Jack, "suppose we go in-shore and you can land me on the beach."

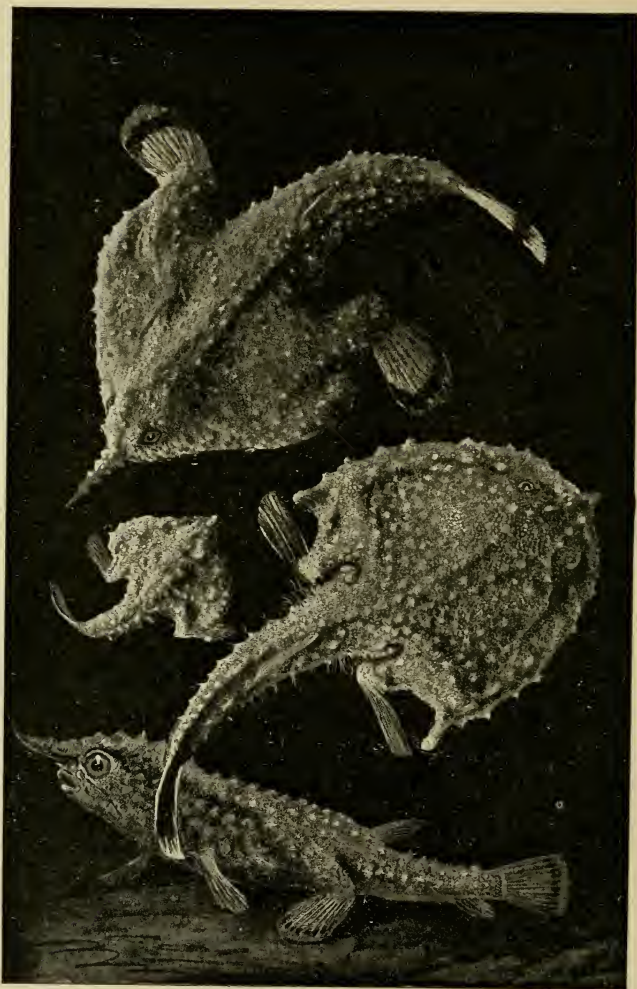
This being agreeable to Tom, the Commodore pulled in, but just then the game charged up the pass toward the land, then changing its mind it swung around in a big circle, charged up the pass toward the river, and they sat and allowed the fish to tow them in the general direction of port, the schooner being anchored off a small fishing hamlet. Reaching shallow water the game turned again, and Tom reeled with all his might, while the Commodore held the dinghy. In a few moments they saw a big, black form roll over two hundred or more feet away to plunge down out of sight.

"Porpoise!" shouted Jack, greatly excited.

"No, *sir*, if you'll excuse me, no porpoise there," retorted the Commodore, red in the face from his exertions, pulling hard on the port oar in his endeavors to keep the young angler facing the fish. "Now give it to him, *sir*," and the Commodore backed water as Tom reeled as fast as his hand could move.

"Hurrah!" shouted Jack; "I see him, a jewfish, a very whale."





Batfish.



“Yes,” said the Commodore, rising; “by the powers, a black jewfish, the verra king of the groupers! Don’t lose him.”

The fish was in the toils. By some mistake of judgment it had rushed into shallow water, and Tom had fought it to a standstill, the big creature remaining on the bottom, shaking its ponderous head from side to side in a vain effort to dislodge the hook. But the effort was useless, and before the fish could recover and make a rush they were over it. With a whirl of his reel Tom brought the fish to the surface, where it rolled and tossed the water over them in its impotent rage, presenting a remarkable appearance. The Commodore dropped the oars, and, as Tom rose and attempted to lead it forward, the long gaff reached out and caught it under the gills, and up came the enormous head out of water, the first black grouper of the size ever taken by a boy with the rod and reel, so far as known. Jack passed a rope through the gills and mouth, and the game was theirs, altogether too large to be taken aboard the dinghy, so the boys took the oars and slowly pulled to the yacht, announcing their victory by a rousing cheer. The grouper was fastened to a block and tackle and triced up, and found to weigh one hundred and forty pounds.

“He is a corker,” said the Commodore, mopping his face as he stood before the big fish.

“Nuthin’ to a grouper caught here by a Seminole in ’57,” said Captain Sandy, taking off his old straw hat and winking at the Commodore with his only eye.

“How’s that?” asked the Commodore.

“Why, they hooked onto him one morning and he towed the boat up and down the length of the Indian River for two days—couldn’t do nuthin’ with him, and thought it was a sherk. But on the third day they got him; they hauled him inshore and bent over a big tree and tied the grouper to it; then at the word let go, and the tree jest natchrally jerked the fish up into the bush.”

“Did they weigh him?” asked the Commodore.

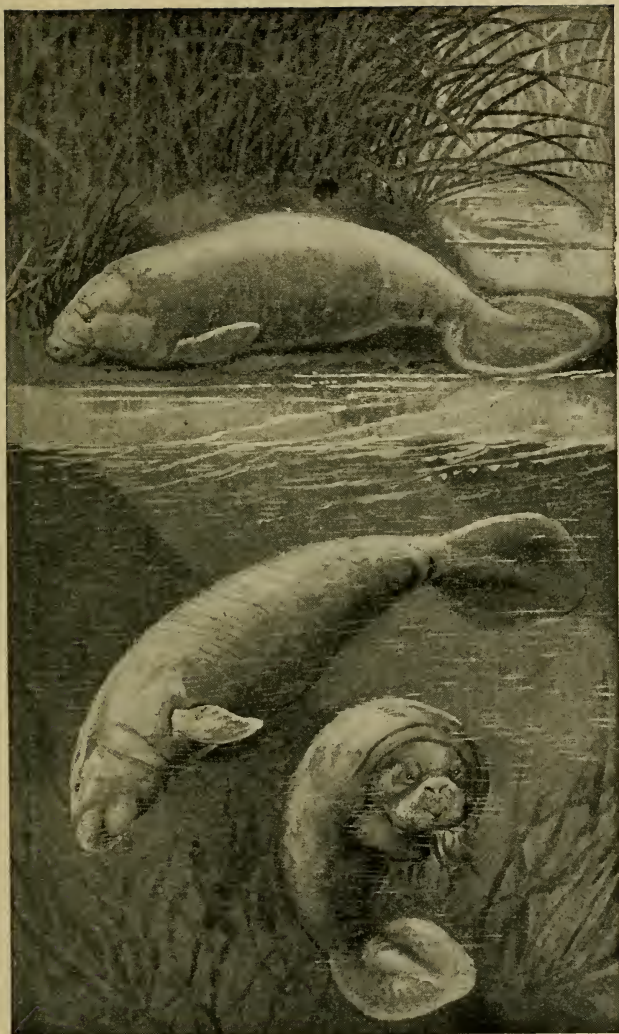
“No, they didn’t have no scales; but you kin judge of his heft and length by the fact that when he left the water the river dropped two foot.”

Captain Sandy looked very solemn while relating this veracious yarn, and it was several seconds before the boys appreciated the point and enjoyed the laugh at their expense. The Angler had been shooting jacks with his rifle from the deck of the schooner, and had secured several, which were being converted into a savory chowder by the cook, and he now sat with his boys on the deck, under the awning, trying to get cool after the hot morning in the sun.

“Captain Sandy,” he said, “your tale is a good one, but I had an experience this morning that was quite as remarkable, and true.”

“How so, sir?” asked the skipper.

“We were sailing up the little river beyond here with a free wind, just to see if we could run across a manatee, when we came to a narrow part and I saw that we were driving a school of fish ahead of us. They



Florida manatee.

fairly covered the water, and I thought they were mullets. The stream became narrower and narrower, and then the wind died down and we fell off broadside to the stream and drifted. Suddenly I noticed that the fishes were coming down-stream, and when they were within twenty or thirty feet of us they saw the boat, and evidently thinking that they were trapped began to jump and came on. Well," said the Angler after a pause, as though to think of a simile, "did you ever see men trap-shooting? They came on like the clay pigeons, apparently trying to leap over the boat. Some did, but they came with such a rush that we had to dodge. Several struck the boat and eight or more hit the sail and dropped into the cockpit. We were literally bombarded with fish, and the interesting part of it was that when they left the water they turned on their sides and offered a broad surface to the air which, doubtless, aided in carrying them along. We caught eighteen in all."

Captain Sandy smiled, but the Angler called to the cook to bring up the "bombarders," and forthwith Paublo appeared holding up a splendid string of pompanos, all taken in the manner described.

"That beats me," exclaimed Captain Sandy. "The proof of the puddin' is in the eatin' of it, and when you begin to prove your fish stories in the same way I'll take a back seat; but I'd like a front one when them pompanos is briled—they can't be beat."

"What's that?" cried Tom, as a report like the discharge of a cannon was heard. Turning, the crew

saw a mass of foam on the otherwise still water, and near it a great black shadow moving away.

"A big ray," said Captain Sandy.

"There's four or five," said one of the men, jumping into the shrouds.

"Are you with me, boys?" asked Captain Sandy.

"I am if you will let me use the grains," said Jack.

"Tumble in," replied Captain Sandy, briefly. He had the dinghy alongside in a moment. The men took the grains and rope out of the fore rigging, where it was lashed, and handed it to Jack. The Captain took the oars, Tom the stern, and they pushed off.

"Don't take any chances," called the Angler. "I've tried conclusions with those fellows; a Texan steer is nothing to one."

Jack nodded and coiled his rope in the bow, making the end fast to a small water-keg kept for the purpose, and the Captain slowly pulled toward the center of the river. The grains was a pole nine feet in length, of yellow pine, slender and pliable. One end was sharpened to a point, and over this fitted an iron cap from which extended two barbed prongs about four inches long, the barbs setting into the iron, cleverly working on a hinge. To the cap was fastened the line which led up the pole, and was held by the "grainer." In a word, the "grains" was a long two-pronged spear so rigged that the pole unshipped after action. Jack had used it before, and now stood in the bow carrying the pole lightly in both hands, holding it parallel to the

water but across the boat, his left hand about seven feet from the barbs, the right five feet higher. With this simple weapon much of the game requiring a spear is taken in Florida, from the crayfish to the big barracuda.

Captain Gagger had gone aloft to see if he could sight the ray, and he now shouted "Hard a starboard!" Captain Sandy pulled hard around to the south, and had gone about one hundred yards when "Dead ahead!" came the hail. The next moment Jack saw a black triangular-shaped fin rise not thirty feet from the dinghy. Down it went, the fish evidently swimming in a circle; and as it moved by he drew back and sent the pole quivering through the air; and then, and then— To Jack the whole bottom of the sea appeared to rise and turn over. The air was filled with spray. Something sounded like the flapping of mighty wings and looked like it, too, as a huge, birdlike fish essayed to rise into the air, then fell with a resounding crash that nearly swamped the dinghy, Jack dancing about to clear the flying line. Captain Sandy was pulling for his life, as he said later, to get the dinghy under way, but it seemed but a few seconds before the last coil went over, and Jack seized the keg and lay back in the boat flat and hung on, driving the wildest of game by a single line. The river at this point was not over twenty feet in depth, if that, yet it seemed to the two boys that the dinghy would be hauled under water, so fierce was the rush, so tremendous the power displayed. Captain Sandy jerked in his oars, handing one to Tom to steer by, and



for several moments they lay low and gazed in wonderment at the speed they were making.

“Beats a steamboat all holler,” said Captain Sandy; “when he turns, jerk her round with the scull or we’ll git left in the corner.”

“But will it turn?” asked Jack with a sort of gasp, looking up.

“It’ll turn the minute you begin to haul on the line,” replied the skipper; “leastways all that I’ve taken here have; but I’ve been dumped twict, so go easy.”

Jack was holding on to the keg with all his strength, ready to toss it over if the pace became too warm. His arms ached as though they were being pulled out, and just as it was growing unendurable Captain Sandy said they might as well take a turn; so he took the keg, then catching the line, and both began to haul. After considerable effort they gained ten feet, when the fish suddenly turned, sweeping around in a circle so rapidly that Tom found it almost impossible to pull the dinghy about before they were rushing over the back track with unabated speed.

“Heave o’ aho! now, heave o’!” shouted Captain Sandy. “Aho, ah-he!” and so on in such a queer chanty that Jack had to laugh, then joined in. “Two men pulled on a red-back whale; oh, ho! ah-he!” chanted Captain Sandy. “Now,” and they hauled as they never had before, at least so it seemed, but still two hundred feet distant from the flying game that was now tak-



ing them near the yacht, again disdaining the pass so invitingly near.

“He’s lost! if he ever finds that pass, we’re up. Two men hauled on a red-back whale; oh, he! oh, ho!” shouted Captain Sandy, and then something happened. They were rushing along very near the schooner, and could see all hands watching them and hear their shouts. Tom waved his hat and cheered, then the strain on the line suddenly ceased.

“Gone, by jingo!” cried Captain Sandy; then “Lookout! Jerk her round; round with her! Gimme that oar,” but the Captain was too late, and the next moment there came a jerk on the line that pulled the dinghy around so suddenly that she careened violently, the anglers slid to one side, and the water poured in. All three occupants leaped overboard, as the dinghy filled, and swam alongside, to see their keg rushing away up the river again. “*Adios!*” shouted Captain Sandy, waving his straw hat; then lifting the dinghy to roll some of the water out of her they took position, Tom and Jack on either side and Sandy astern, and began the wearisome task of swimming and pushing the dinghy to the yacht, a proceeding which was greeted with laughter and shouts by those on board the schooner who had witnessed the sudden ending of the big ray hunt. They had not gone far before the Commodore came out with the skiff and picked them up, and shortly after the boys were telling the story aboard, and dilating upon the strength and power of the ray.

“I’ve seen men nearly frightened to death by one of them fish,” said Captain Sandy, who had donned dry clothing. “You see, they have what are like two arms in front, and often in swimming along in shallow water they run into a pile or something of that kind and then you see fun. Some years ago a schooner was lying in the harbor of one of the keys. There wasn’t a breath of wind, in fact, it was a dead calm, and all hands, except the cook, was ashore hunting turtle-eggs, when all at once the anchor-chain gave a jerk or two, so that the links clanked and the schooner started ahead, slow at first, but gradually gaining headway and moving out of the channel with anchor-chain down. The men on the beach saw her going, and jest stood and looked; then one got his senses and yelled out ‘Schooner ahoy!’ and out of the galley came the black cook. He jest gave two or three looks around, see the sails furled and no wind, yet the schooner moving out to sea, then ran astern and jumped overboard and swam to the reef, where he waded ashore. The mate happened to be up the island a way, and when he saw her he got the men in a boat, and pulling across the shoal they overtook her. She was due to sail that afternoon, and as she was going out the right channel they let her run for three miles; then she stopped, and the men manned the capstan, took in the anchor and found a ray hooked on to it that measured over twenty feet from side to side. You see, the fish had been swimming along, and had run into the chain and thrown its clasper fins about it in fright, and

pushed on, swimming as hard as it could, easily lifting the anchor from the bottom and towing the schooner along until the point of the fluke had been forced into it. I know of this case, as I had a shipmate aboard, and I have heard of others, and in nearly every one the men were scared half out of their senses."

If the day had a charm in this region, what can be said of the night? Tom and Jack and their father remained on deck until late listening to the stories of the



Florida alligators.

men, of alligator hunts, the weird tales of the Gulf in the long ago when wrecking was the favorite calling, or when the Seminoles were in their prime. Many of the large fishes feed at night, and, while there was no wind, there was a constant commotion, leaping and splashing all about, followed in every case by marvelous displays of phosphorescence, while streamers and trails of light

could be seen here and there, telling of the passage of some large fish. The sky was wonderfully clear, and from the land came strange sounds—the calls of animals of the night, the cry of birds, and an odor of the forest, of the great swamp not so far away. When the wind hauled to the east, the soft booming of the sea on the long line of sand came down the wind, lights broke out here and there, forest fires adding to the charm of this semitropic night in the land of the fountain of eternal youth, a fountain which the boys found; at least, they discovered its secret, which was to live out of doors in close touch with the works of the great Giver of all nature.

## CHAPTER XIII

### FISHING IN THE SURF

“WHAT luck?” shouted Tom, as the Commodore came rowing down a broad river of sunlight, having gone before sunrise to some ledge he had heard of, supposed to be famous for the gray snapper.

“Great, sir,” he replied, pulling alongside.

“But where are the fish, the gray snappers for breakfast, the mullet?”

“There ye are, sir!” exclaimed the Commodore, puffing out his cheeks in indignation and dropping into a canvas chair on deck. “Is it feesh that always makes feeshin’? Na, na. I had no bite the whole mornin’, but I tell ye, Mr. Tom, I never had so happy a feeshin’-day in me life. You see, when I pulled off I sailed over a sea of purple, an’ dead ahead was a wall of deep vermilion, the like I never see, an’ when I dropped my killick off the ledge ye’d thought I was in the theater, such color on sea and sky, such blandin’, changin’ of tints an’ colors. Did ye ever think, Mr. Tom,” continued the Commodore, “that the water, sky, and heavens is a big stage, an’ there was shiftin’, changin’, an’ new scenes

comin' and goin' the like ye see nowhere else? That's what I thought this mornin'. The purple sea began to change into red, deeper and deeper, then vermilion, as the cloud-banks in the east changed, an up through them came rays and streaks of yellow fiery light. Lighter it got, an' I fancied I could hear, d'ye mind, the noise of the rumblin' of shiftin' scenes; but it was the poundin' of the sea on the outer reef, the orchestra of the show. Then the rays got bigger an' wider, an' changed to gold, yellow, an' ye'd think the heavens was afire; then up burst the sun, a globe of red gold, a-tremblin' with light, ablaze with glory. Then the purple seas an' the vermilion clouds melted, an' the sky grew blue, faint-like at first, then deep. Ah, it was a bonnie change that! I caught nothin' but the view of the sunrise, but I never see the like," and the Commodore looked so solemn that Tom did not venture to joke with him.

The old sailor was a true angler. He knew that, after all, the fish were but the means of taking the angler into the fields and groves of land or ocean, and that they were the real attractions ranking with the sport itself, charms and delights that more than compensated for poor luck in taking game, and Tom never forgot the lesson taught so crudely, perhaps, by the old boatman with a big strain of romance in his make-up.

For several days the Angler fished the various points on the river, then they sailed north, coming to anchor not far from the mouth of the St. John's, where the party were to take the boat for Jacksonville and return

home. Here they were joined by friends from the city but twenty miles away, who told Mr. Temple an inspiring tale of some fine channel bass fishing in the surf, and one morning found the fishing-party on the beach with rods on shoulder walking down the great sandy stretch of Amelia Island, one of the finest beaches in this country, hard and broad at low tide. Ahead of them flew countless snipe and plover, so tame that they almost allowed the anglers to reach them, then rising and fluttering along, turning so that one moment they appeared like a shower of silver stars against the blue, then disappeared to flash out again, as Tom said, like silver dollars or tarpon scales dropping from the sky. They walked a mile up the beach listening to the roar of the breakers and watching with gleaming eyes the silver foam as it reached away interminably, then stopped at an old wreck that, half-buried in the sand, marked the place where their friends had found the bass. It was a hot morning, and the anglers were in the lightest of costumes. The boatman laid the bait-cans of mullet on the sands, and the anglers were soon engaged in putting their rods together, shipping reels on the seats. The tackle was identical with that described for yellowtail in California, except that a short leader was used and a light sinker to keep the line from being tossed in by the surf, which was heavy—a splendid spectacle. Young mullets and sardines about four inches long were used for bait, and when all were ready the four anglers waded out into the exhilarating surf, about fifty feet apart, the boatmen with their



gaffs and the bait following. The water was warm, even hot inshore, and the beach very sloping, so they waded out some distance before it was knee-deep, then moved on cautiously, as the waves were high, and, reaching a location where the water was midway between knee and waist, began to cast.

Tom and Jack had their lines reeled up so that the leader was at the tip, then with both hands they made overcasts which sent the mullet one hundred feet out into the surf. It was exciting work, as they shortly discovered. A big wave struck the Commodore, bowling him over and over, and it was necessary to dodge them, take them side on, or jump high as they came rolling in. Every three or four waves were large, then followed a series of small ones to be followed again by larger. In a short time, by watching the waves, the boys were able to hold their own against them, the activity of which added not a little to the excitement of the sport. Jack was the lucky angler. He had made a splendid cast, one hundred and twenty-five feet, according to the Commodore, his mullet dropping into a clear spot between the breakers in water estimated at ten or twelve feet in depth. It had barely time to reach the bottom when the reel screamed like a wounded hare, and Jack was seen giving the butt to something which appeared determined to carry rod and angler out to sea. But Jack held it for a moment, then slowly backed in, giving line as he went, the splendid fish racing directly away on the surface. In water knee-deep Jack now began the play.

“Look at that!” exclaimed the Commodore, forgetting his own angling ethics as the fish flashed on the crest of a roller that came tumbling on, Jack reeling for his life. But it was for only a moment. The game plunged into the blue comber, and made the reel sing and groan as it tore off the line. It now turned up the shore, running parallel to the waves, and Jack, who had been edging in, gaining all the while, now ran along the shining sands; now holding the game, then giving line as it rushed, stopping to slip the butt into the waist-rod cap he wore, to reel and reel, only to lose as the gamy creature went directly away with a force that threatened the very life of the tackle. Shouts from below told him that some one else had hooked, and, seeing a spit running out that might endanger his chances of success, he gave the gallant fish the butt, held it to the danger point and turned it splendidly, at least so said the Commodore, who was prancing along the sands after him, gaff in hand, now wading out into the surf, now coming back excited beyond anything, and enjoying the splendid play as well as though he held the rod.

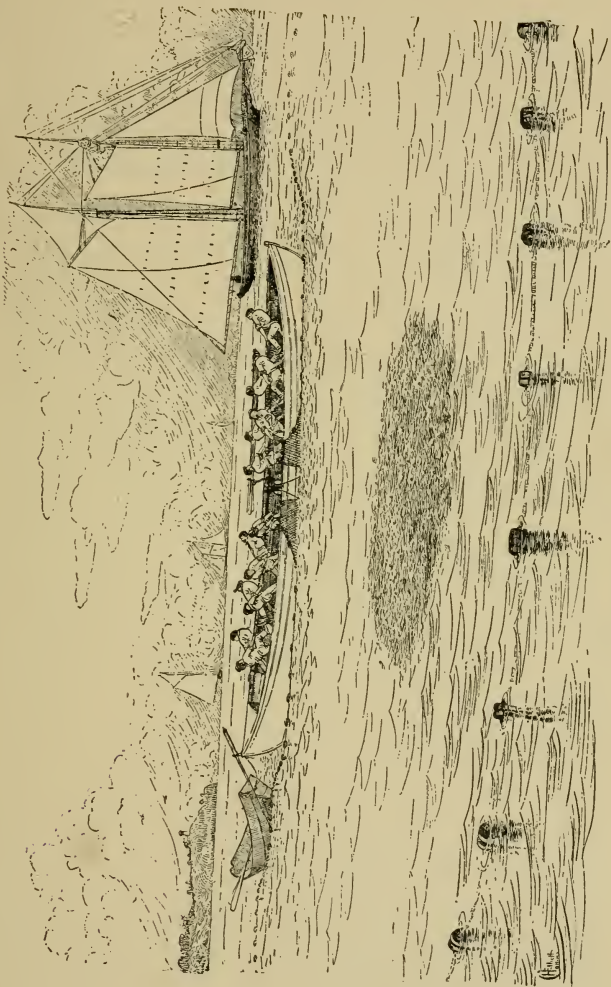
“Ye made that turn well, sir; Isaac Walton himself could na’ done better with his old gudgeons. Ah, but he’s a boonnie feesh! Look at him!” as the big bass went caracoling along, Jack running to keep up, the Commodore following as best he could, as the bass could be seen in high and beautiful relief against the green combing seas that reared themselves, until breaking into silver foam and spume as though purposely to

form a background for the fish. Down the beach they went: Jack now out in the surf with a dash, to reel and reel; then coming in, the rod bending, the fish straining every muscle, bearing off bravely; then in a flurry of breaking sea Jack turned it inshore, reeled wildly, backing in, beaten in the face by the surf, nearly overturned, but winning; reeling the bass in, ever in, until it was well within the realm of the gaffer, when the Commodore gaffed it in gallant fashion and dragged it in—he could not lift it—over the laughing waters and its silvery foam, high upon the sands.

“Good for ye!” he cried. And Jack, wet through, dripping like a fish himself, breathing hard from his exertions, lifted it up, displaying a fish four feet in length, with a curious spot on each side of its tail—the king of the game-fishes of this prolific region. The shouts of other anglers, boatmen or gaffers, dashing here and there in the surf, made a most spirited picture, and Jack hastened to rebait his hook, and insisting that the Commodore should take a rod instead of gaff, knowing well that the old man was aching to play a channel bass, he again ran into the surf and cast far out. The Angler had hooked a monster which took him so far out that he was more than once bowled from his feet by the billows, and literally fished as he swam, while his friend could be seen far down the shore slowly leading in a fish that was fighting and protesting every inch. Tom had landed a fifteen-pounder, and was back again casting and recasting. Almost every sea now went over the

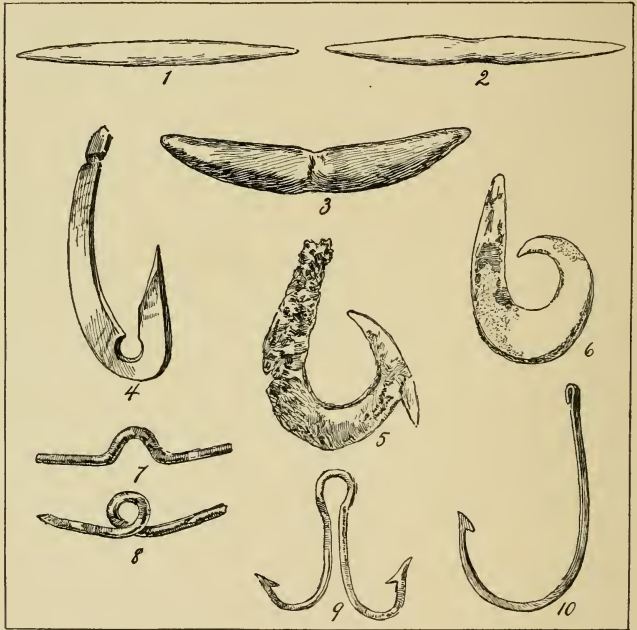
anglers or lifted them from their feet as they grew bolder, and certainly no angling could compete with it in dash, abandon, and spectacular interest. Tom threw himself on his back and rode in on a roller to rebait his hook, his rod being held aloft like a mast. In two hours the party landed eight fine bass averaging fifteen pounds, while Jack's fish certainly was the record for that particular locality and the style of fishing. The method most in vogue among the natives at this haunt of the channel bass in the surf, was to use heavy cast lines and sinkers, whirling the bait far out into the surf, wading out to the walking limit; then when a fish was hooked turn, and with line over the shoulder, run in-shore, aided by the waves, fairly rushing the fish upon the beach. On their way back the boys met several parties—Crackers, the Commodore called them—fishing in this unsportsmanlike manner, but the Angler said they were justified when the game was needed for the large family somewhere back in the bush alongshore.

The fishing-party had lunch on the sandy beach on this happy day. The men who had brought a cast-net caught some mullet, and presently had them over the fire; and lying on the sand eating fried mullet and plover and jack-snipe roasted by having a branch run through and slowly cooked over the hot coals, was conducive to a high state of enjoyment if the weather was hot. Later they fished again for bass, where a party of negroes were hauling in the splendid fish, giving them their catch. Near here a shark-catcher's camp was found,



Hauling in a large seine.

the men taking the large sand-sharks on hand-lines or ropes for the livers that were tried out in great vats, while some hauled the seine for other fish. As they passed the camp the moon was rising, and the negroes were seen sitting about singing the old melodies so



Ancient fish-hooks.

well known in the South, "The Yellow Rose of Texas," "Suwanee River," and others, the rich voices filling the air with music.

The day following the yacht ran into Pilottown and Mayport, and the boys spent the day among the sand-dunes, where they saw a fisherman's house which had been buried by the sand during his absence. At Pilot-town they dug in the old oyster-beds which lined the shore, finding quantities of old pottery telling of the ancient inhabitants; remains of old bone or shell-fish hooks, which the Angler said bore some resemblance to those found in the deposits of Switzerland, and at Santa Catalina Island. After several days' rest ashore, the fishing-tackle was packed and the party took the steamer for Jacksonville, and shortly after were on the way across the continent.





PART IV  
ON THE ST. LAWRENCE  
AND ELSEWHERE



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE DELIGHT MAKERS

IN all the lands famous for their fishing streams and lakes it would, perhaps, be difficult to find a region more delightful from nearly every point of view than that known as the Thousand Islands, extending from Clayton, New York, near Lake Ontario, down the St. Lawrence. Here the river is eight or ten miles wide, yet this is not realized, as it is filled with islands of all kinds and descriptions—big, small, long, rocky, well-wooded, barren—in fact, every possible condition or stage of an island is found here, constituting a maze of channels well calculated to confuse the navigator. Nearly all the islands are well-wooded, hilly, and picturesque, abounding in beautiful trees and vales filled with wild flowers and berries. Some are environed by masses of wild roses whose petals are a deeper pink than those found elsewhere. Some are bold and forbidding. Others abound in placid harbors, and all are ideal places for those who wish to leave the rumble and roar of great cities far behind. One island not far from Clayton is famous for its splendid grove of trees. It is two miles

long and half a mile wide, abounding in trails and walks which lead the stroller through a picturesque region, always bringing him out upon some new vista of placid waters and islands in the distance.

On the north side, opposite a beautiful bay formed by three or more islands, several cottages nestled among the trees, surrounded by wide piazzas from which one could look through the branches upon a fair stretch of water—the haunt of the black bass, the muscallonge, and pickerel. At the water's edge were two fine boat-houses, each holding several boats, the famous St. Lawrence skiffs, while near at hand swung two sailboats tugging at their lines. On the boat-house roof were inviting seats, and here sat the Commodore, Tom, and Jack listening to the Angler's old, old story how, not ten miles from where they were sitting, he had, twenty years before, seen their mother catch a five-and-a-half-pound bass, the record for a number of seasons.

The anglers had shifted the scene of their operations to Murray Isle, and were fishing the river and lakes for the great fresh-water game-fishes of the East. Yellowtail, tarpon, and tuna tackle had been left at home, and the rods spread out on the top of the boat-house told a very different story and of different game. They were of split bamboo and greenheart, and known severally as trout and black bass, muscallonge and salmon rods, and were a delight to the eye as they lay on the canvas-covered roof of the boat-house. The trout rods, delicate as whips, were of split bamboo, several of greenheart, the

latter being cheap and good in casting, though the Angler had a theory that fishing-tackle should be of the best and simplest, "good and plain." The rods might have been divided into two classes—bait rods and fly rods. The former were from eight to eight and a half feet in length, and weighed from eight to eight and a half ounces, and were intended to cast minnows, frog, or artificial baits. Then came the fly rods, whips so delicate, some of them, that it seemed impossible that a fish of any pretension should be taken on them. They were from ten to ten and a half feet in length, and weighed from six to eight ounces.

It was delightful to watch the Angler and Commodore as they discussed the merits of the rods, took them carefully from the case and joined them, putting a touch of oil on the German-silver joints here and there and pushing them directly in, not screwing; rubbing up the German-silver guides, polishing the reel seat and cap of the butt, handling them as one would a child.

"You don't want too many rods," remarked the Angler, who really had a number. "Two good ones with four or five tips each is my idea, as it is rare that you break a butt; but tips will break in the order of things, especially when you are off in the wilderness where the fish are biting. Look well to your tips; change them often so they will not become bent, and when they do, just a little heat over a lamp will, if of greenheart, straighten them. Keep the rod well varnished. Dry it always after using; in fact, give it the

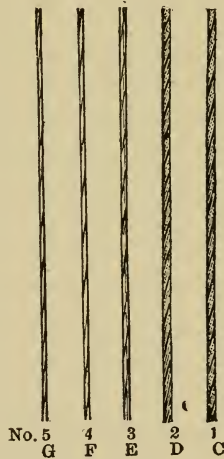
same attention you would a good watch. The subject of rods is a fascinating one," continued the Angler, "and, while it is well to know how to make a rod and repair it, it is such an art in itself that one should buy rods only from the best makers. The split bamboo stands first. A good rod can be had for from twelve to thirty dollars, and a fine one up to fifty. Machine-made split bamboos can be had for a dollar or so, but are not to be commended. If it must be a cheap rod make it lancewood or greenheart, an excellent rod being made for a small sum, say from four to ten dollars. Split bamboos cost the most because they are made up of splits, often six or more, cemented together and graded. Noib wood makes a fine rod. It is, I believe, a South American variety of greenheart. Then comes bathabara wood, good rods of this costing from six to thirteen dollars. Lancewood is the cheapest. The rods from this cost from two to ten dollars. Many anglers prefer steel rods, which range in price from five to fourteen dollars, and are good all-round rods. I have seen one which was used on trout or twenty-pound yellowtail with equal facility."

The reels were a great contrast to the huge tarpon and tuna machines. Those for the bait rods were single multipliers; that is, one turn of the handle made two revolutions, and gained twice as much line as it appeared to. It was of rubber and German silver, light, and held upon its narrow spool about two hundred feet of line. The reel was so perfect that when the click was thrown



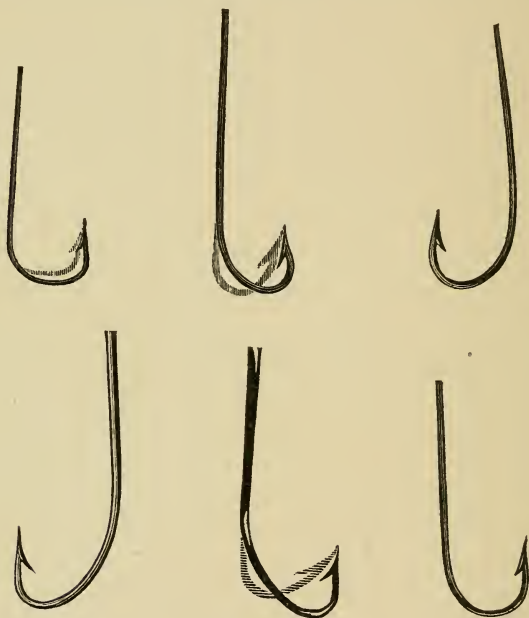
off it ran a long time, and the click of steel, not brass, had a very musical voice; in fact, the Commodore said he always picked out a reel by its tone or by the sound it made. The reels for the fly-rods were different. The Angler preferred a non-multiplier or a single-action reel with a musical click, holding about one hundred and thirty feet of line, and he gave the boys an interesting demonstration of what constitutes a well-mounted rod. He handed Jack a rod and asked him how it felt. Jack whipped it as in casting, balanced it, and pronounced it too heavy at the butt.

“Right,” said his father; “you have hit it exactly. The weight should be so well proportioned that the rod *feels* right. In some the middle joint is too heavy; again, the tip overbalances the rest; in a word, the rod should be perfectly balanced—and if you have the instincts of an angler your intuition will tell you. In this case the reel is too heavy for the rod. Try this,” and Mr. Temple changed the solid silver reel to a small rubber affair, and Jack and Tom took turns in whisking it, pronouncing it perfect, perceiving that in this lesson was half the delight in angling. Then came the matter of lines, all being enameled silk, numbers C, D, E, F,



Silk enameled lines  
showing exact sizes.

G, the latter the smallest. For casting with bait C and D were employed, and for fly-fishing G and F were the favorites. They also had braided silk lines, but the Angler advocated the enameled line, as it never became water-soaked, rarely kinked, and slipped through



Fish hooks.

the guides readily. Next came the fly-books, the leaders, and hooks—fascinating objects. The leaders were of gut, the silk of the silkworm; a long, translucent cord with their boxes—those used by the boys for fly-casting

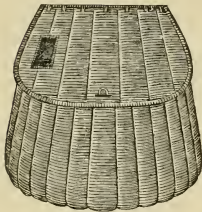
being six or seven feet long, dyed by soaking in green-tea water for twenty-four hours, making it almost invisible when in the water. The hooks were those of well-known makes, as Carlisle, Sproat, Limerick, Kirby, Aberdeen. Then came the flies and their books; and to see the Commodore exhibit an old buff-colored nondescript, which he called the None Such, named after the famous ship, with "three decks and no bottom," and hear him tell how he landed a six-pound bass with it when nothing else availed, was something worth seeing and hearing. In all this kit, as he termed it, simplicity was the rule. There were none of the fancy baits and lures, none of the thousand and one things which are to be had in the shops, only essentials, standard hooks, lines and reels, flies; in fact, the outfit was "strictly business," as the old sailor said, who claimed that one could tell the bogus from the real angler by his outfit.

The boys' fly-books had been formed on this principle. They contained about two or three dozen well-known flies, two or three of each, as White Miller, St. Patrick—the Commodore's favorite—Montreal, Seth Green, Coachman, Queen of the Waters, Grizzly King, Paramachenee Belle, Jock Scott, Brown Hackle, Ruben



A good fly.

Wood, Ferguson, Silver Doctor, Professor, John Mann, Brown Palmer, Bucktail, Scarlet Ibis, Jungle Cock, Beaver Kill, Baltimore, Yellow Sally, Governor Alvord, and several more. Both Tom and Jack knew how to make flies, and frequently on a wet day amused themselves by inventing flies, after a study of the various foods found in the stomachs of bass or trout.



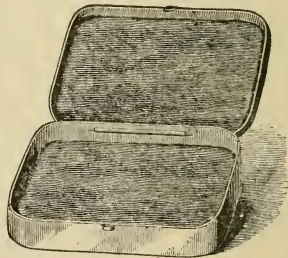
Fish basket.

“There’s only one way o’ feeshin’,” said the Commodore, “an’ that’s with the fly. D’ye mind the old song—

Up angler and off wi’ each shackle,  
 Up gad an’ gaff an’ awa’ !  
 Cry hurra’ for the canny red hackle,  
 The hackle that’s tackled them a’.

“That means,” explained the Commodore, “that the old red hackle is the killer, and so it is; an’ mony a wan I’ve made along the stream while the feesh were waitin’.”

All the tackle was contained in a box very similar to the salt-water box described, but now adapted to the requirements of fresh-water game. The coiled leaders had their special box; the spoons for



Felt-lined leader box.

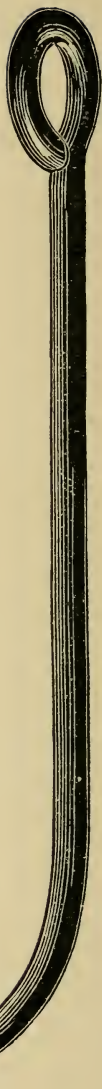
pickerel and muskallunge were packed together. Then there were creels or baskets for trout, to be slung over the shoulder, and nets for bass and trout. The creels had broad straps, and a shorter one to prevent it from swinging out of place. The landing net, so essential for trout, was a foot across at the widest portion, and two feet deep, while the staff or handle was five feet long. There were small gaffs for salmon and muskallunge, and various smaller articles completing the outfit. The costumes of the young anglers were adapted for the sport. For bass-fishing in boats they wore woolen shirts and knickerbockers, using sweaters when the weather was cool, and they were shod with rubber-soled canvas shoes. For trout-fishing, they had strong waterproof wading trousers, coming up to the armpits. The portion over the feet fitted smoothly, and over this were drawn heavy woolen stockings and thick, hobnailed shoes were worn. Such, in brief, was the equipment of the anglers, neither expensive nor particularly ornamental, but practical, and when in camp used with some variation.

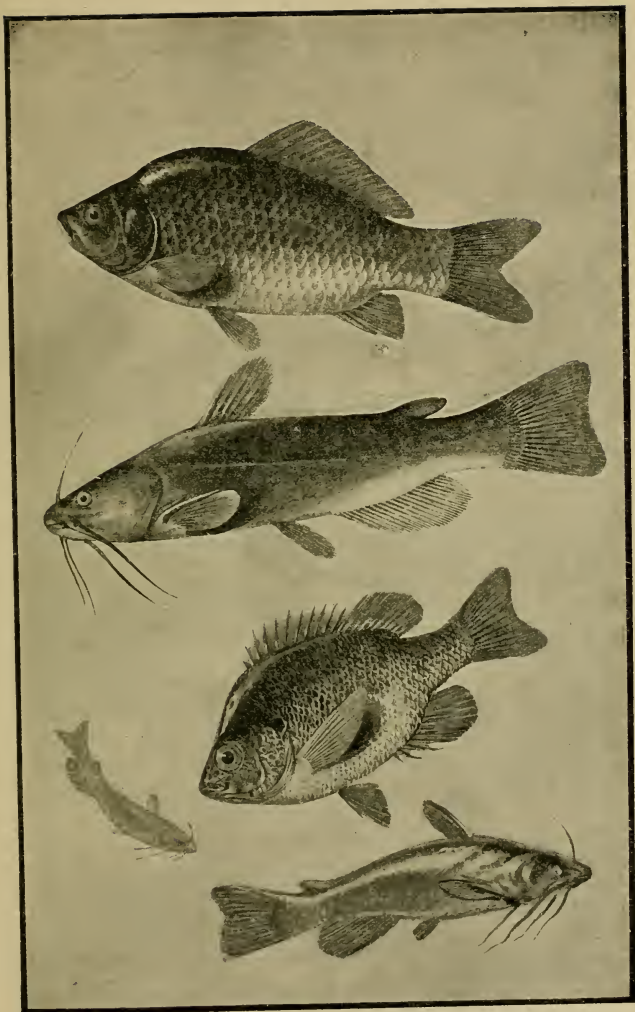
For several days the boys were engaged in fitting up their tackle, in walking about the attractive island, and sailing over the charming bays and channels of the river. Finally, one fine morning they started out on their first bass-fishing trip with two guides, Bill and Sam—delight makers, the Angler called them—who had lived all their lives on the river and knew every nook and corner of it. Their boats were typical St. Lawrence skiffs—long, slender, low, of beautiful lines, finished in natural woods,

and so light that only a touch was necessary to send them along, yet so seaworthy that they were equal to any storm of the region. Tom and Jack occupied one, the Angler and the Commodore the other, the fishermen sitting behind each other in cane-seated chairs facing the stern, the oarsman behind them. Everything was trim and shipshape in these magic craft. Rugs covered the bottom, and the nickel work gleamed like silver. Under the boatman's seat was a drawer in which the fish were packed away when caught; in brief, this fishing-boat devoted to black bass was as neat as possible. Amidships the men had minnow pails, and the hooks were baited by impaling the live two-and-a-half-inch minnow through the lips—a method which does not injure the bait or inflict much pain. Tom baited his hook with live minnow, while Jack used two baits on a leader—one a fly and the leader a minnow—and slacking out line they moved slowly up the bay, keeping about twenty feet from the



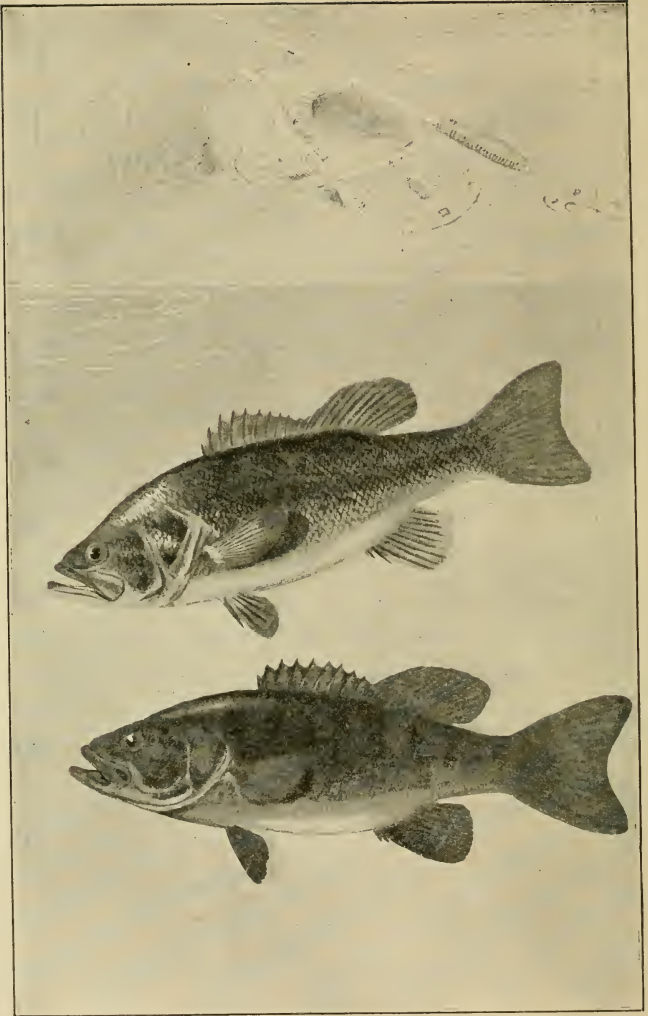
$\frac{2}{3}$  Cod hook  
used as gaff.





Some fresh-water fishes.

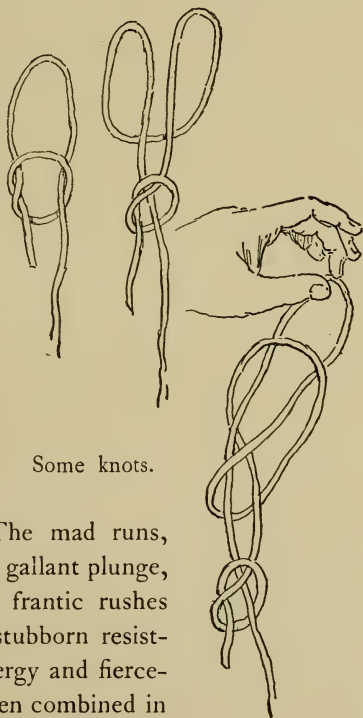




The black bass.

rocky shore. Entering a little bay, they passed into the rift, a narrow but deep channel not thirty feet wide, between Murray and Westminster islands, then coming out into Eel Bay, a wide expanse of beautiful water surrounded by islands, its surface dotted with them here and there.

Bill rowed out into the bay in the direction of a little rocky island hardly fifty feet across, and was carefully rowing around it when zeee-ee! sounded Tom's reel. A bending of the rod, a hiss of escaping line, a series of oh's, and then that splendid thing—a bass, high in air, clear of the water—shaking the sparkling spray in every direction, to fall with a crash and make the reel cry and sing, all in a breath. A delight-giver, indeed! The mad runs, the swift coming in, the gallant plunge, the repeated leaps, the frantic rushes along the surface, the stubborn resistance, as though the energy and fierceness of all fishes had been combined in



this one! Tom had reeled in quickly to give Jack the field, and was a delighted observer of the tactics of this king of game fishes. How the rod bent and careened! Now jerked deep into the water; now straightened out. How the line cut the surface with a musical hissing sound! What a wake it left behind it as it turned and challenged the rod, making it bow, nod, and caracole, while Tom's fingers flew off and on, his eyes bright and dancing following the marvelous fish, eying the rod-tip, breathing hard as the fish plunged into the warm, glad-some air, and was fanned for a second by the breeze, only to drop and plunge again.

"Oh, but he's a jim dandy!" whispered Jack. "How much do you think he'll weigh, Bill?"

"He ain't ketched yet," replied the philosophical boatman, refusing pointblank to count his chickens; "but he's a corker," he conceded.

He was a corker, no mistake, and he pulled the boat around with but little aid from Bill, who saw that the young angler was kept facing the bass. Landing a yellowtail, pumping him up and down, was heroic, a science; but this was art, the æstheticism of angling, and Tom felt it, and deep in his heart wished his splendid fish might escape, so hearty was his appreciation of its gamy fight. But in it came, dashing from side to side, circling in quick rushes, springing into the air still, though with less and less spirit, yet never giving up or indicating that it was on the point of surrender. In it came on the relentless reel; a final spring, a lightsome leap not



The leap.

Wm. S. Wood

ten feet from the boat, a splendid rush, bending the whip-like line to the danger point, and the bass darted ahead and for a second poised over the net; then in the midst of another rush came up, sparkling and gleaming, an Aphrodite of this inland sea.

“A beauty!” exclaimed Jack, turning to gaze at the fish, which the boatman cleverly despatched and held up. A beauty indeed; the perfection of a small-mouth bass of large size, clipper built, rather long and slender, yet plump, a racer and fighter, according to Bill, from “way back”—that mysterious vale from which many strange things come, but never return. Bill slipped the scale-hook beneath the gills and held the fish up while the boys eagerly watched the jumping telltale on the face of the scale. “Five pounds six ounces,” said Bill. “I guess you’ve gone and done it.”

“Done what?” asked Jack.

“Bruck the record,” answered Bill, calmly. “I never knew a boy to ketch one that size before.” At hearing this the young anglers waved their hats and cheered, upon which the Angler’s boat with Sam came alongside, and the big bass was again held up for admiration.

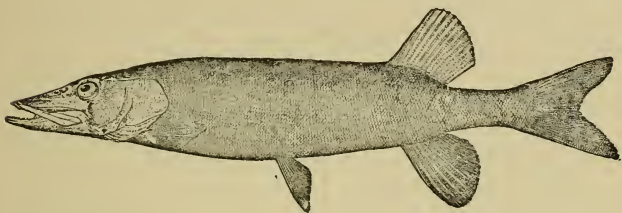
Hooks were rebaited and the boats were soon under way again. They had not proceeded far when Jack’s reel sounded a dismal, croak-like groan and his rod bent.

“Caught on the grass!” he cried. “Back up a little, Bill.”

Meantime the line was running out and Bill said sententiously: "Maybe a pickerel, heaps of 'em here; maybe grass."

"If I can't tell pickerel from grass on the strike I don't want any pickerel," said Jack, laughing and reeling. "Here it comes, a fish, too!"

Something was protesting, making the rod bob, but it came in steadily, then made a single side rush which



The pickerel.

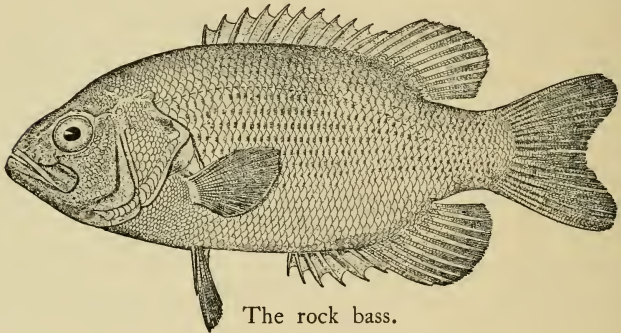
brought it fairly alongside, a goodly pickerel, gaping, blinking, with its gill covers wriggling a little at the net, coming in as complacently as possible.

"And yet they say the pickerel is a game-fish," said Tom, laughing at the happy surrender of the fish, which was over two feet in length.

"Some is game," retorted Bill, "and some jest seems to want to come in out o' the wet. About one in ten will make any kind of a play. I ain't got no use for 'em, 'cepting in the fryin'-pan. Wait till we strike a maskinonge," he added; "there's a pickerel for you. Fight? Well, my gracious!"

“Got him again!” cried Tom, giving the butt of his slender rod to something that made several good rushes. “No bass this, no jump.”

“Rock bass,” said Jack. “He’ll give up before you can reel him in on the run.” And a rock bass it was, in brown and yellow tints, shorter and thicker than the black bass. Bill reached for it with disgust and unhooked the pest, tossing it back. “Bait-eaters and no good,” he growled. “If it wasn’t for them things we’d have good



The rock bass.

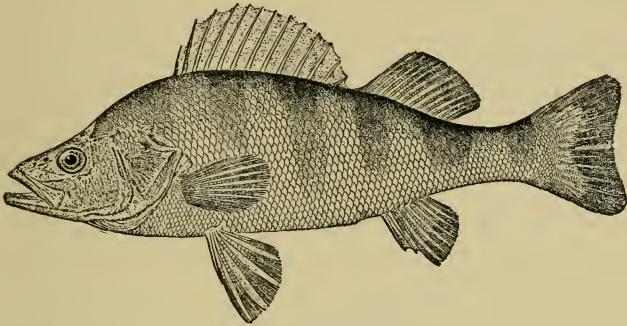
bass-fishing; but they take the bait before the bass has a chance.”

Up the shore they went, Tom taking another pickerel, which gave a fair exhibition of its game qualities; then both anglers had strikes, and, after a rapid and exciting play, two splendid golden fishes were brought in.

“Yellow perch; they’re the fish for fryin’,” said Bill, taking them off and rebaiting the hooks. “We’ve struck a school of ’em.”



This proved to be true, and the boys cast from the boat and took eight or ten of the fish, all nine or ten inches in length and weighing a pound or more. Bill now made a turn out into the bay to some sunken rocks



The yellow perch.

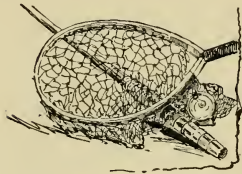
he knew, and here both Tom and Jack picked up several black bass, one a large-mouth, the gamy fishes making a fine play, jumping high and low, arousing the boys' enthusiasm.

"I tell you, Bill," said Tom, as the former netted a splendid bass, "if a big fish had the fight in him that a bass has, I mean in proportion to his size, no one could land him."

"He'd be a reg'lar whale," said Bill.

The boys fished up the bay, crossing the charming stretch of water, following along under rocky shores, breathing the incense of the forest, listening to the song of birds until noon, when Bill ran the boat into a little

bay on Grindstone Island, where they found the Angler, who had four or five bass laid out on the grass decorated with water-lilies as befitted the royal fish. The anglers compared catches while the boatmen cooked the dinner. From the brush limbs and planks were brought with



The landing net.

which a table was made and upon which the fish dinner, for which the region has long been famous, was served in a short time. Mr. Temple sat at the head, the boys on either side, while the Commodore took the foot of the table, the boatmen

serving them, and passing fried yellow perch and bass on long forks, fried potatoes, bacon, and coffee, so rich and fragrant that the Commodore affirmed that he saw pickerel bobbing up fifty feet offshore to get a sniff of it. After dinner, while the men were taking their turn, the Angler lighted his pipe and discoursed on fishes, quoting from Walton and others to prove the charm of angling.

“It is difficult to decide which is the gamiest fish,” he said. “When I am playing a ten-pounder I am sure it is it, and when I hooked a large bass this forenoon I was equally positive that it was the game of game. The black bass is the king, an interesting fish, and you find the large- and small-mouth varieties over a very wide area of country. The large-mouth ranges from the Great Lakes down into Florida, where it attains enor-

mous dimensions. The small-mouth has even a wider distribution and thrives nearly everywhere, having been planted all over the country. They are voracious, not particular as to food, eating flies, tadpoles, frogs, mice, crabs, in fact, almost anything, but preferring small fish, as minnows. They are very fanciful, crotchety. Sometimes they will take anything; again, you can not induce them to bite. I had a friend who tried them on every fly he possessed, and finally landed the largest fish with a bit of red flannel torn from his boatman's shirt. You will find a great difference of opinion among anglers regarding the two kinds. Some claim that the big-mouth is the gamiest fish, and *vice versa*. I merely give my opinion when I say that the small-mouth is the hardest fighter, and I venture to add that I can tell it long before I see the fish. In my experience, the small-mouth bass never gives up. The big-mouth fights quite as well for a time, but fails very soon and comes in beaten, not defiant. The two fish are frequently found together, but they have different fancies. The small-mouth affects rocky shoals in water of varying depth, and is a rock lover, though you often see it in the grass. But the big-mouth is like the pickerel; he loves the weeds and muddy bottom, while the small-mouth makes its so-called nest in the mud among the weeds. In winter they both take to deeper water. As the name indicates, one has a small mouth, the other a larger one; but there are other points of difference. If you compare them, side by side, you will see that the end of the upper jaw in the large-

mouth bass is back of the eye, while in the small-mouth bass it is directly beneath it. Then the scales in the large-mouth are much larger than in the small-mouth, and they have differences of color which you can rarely fail to notice.

“The small-mouth bass,” continued the Angler, “has, as you see, a golden greenish cast on back and sides and no lateral line, while the large-mouth is much darker. His back is greenish black, his sides silvery and greenish and with a decided black band on the side. But both fishes vary greatly in color at times. As to weight, the large-mouth is ahead. Specimens have been taken in the South which weighed from eight to twenty-one pounds, but in the North they rarely run over five or six pounds. Over at Kingston you will find some splendid specimens. The small-mouth averages but three pounds, the largest known is not much over twelve or thirteen pounds.”

After dinner, Tom and Jack amused themselves by casting from the beach or rocks, landing several sunfish, a sucker, and many rock bass, and finally a black bass. Then the four anglers extemporized a casting tournament, the boatmen anchoring some floats at different distances from the shore, the anglers casting for distance and accuracy with fly and bait, affording a fine exhibition of this art of the angler. Surely no more graceful



The bass leaps.

pastime exists. Jack held his light rod in his right hand, unreeling the line with his left, and with a deft motion of the wrist sent his bait just where he wished it, and amid the laughter of the others invariably hooking a provoking sunfish.

“You remember even Hiawatha objected to the sunfish,” said the Angler :

Slowly upward, wavering, gleaming  
 Rose the Ugudwash, the Sunfish ;  
 Seized the line of Hiawatha,  
 Swung with all his weight upon it.

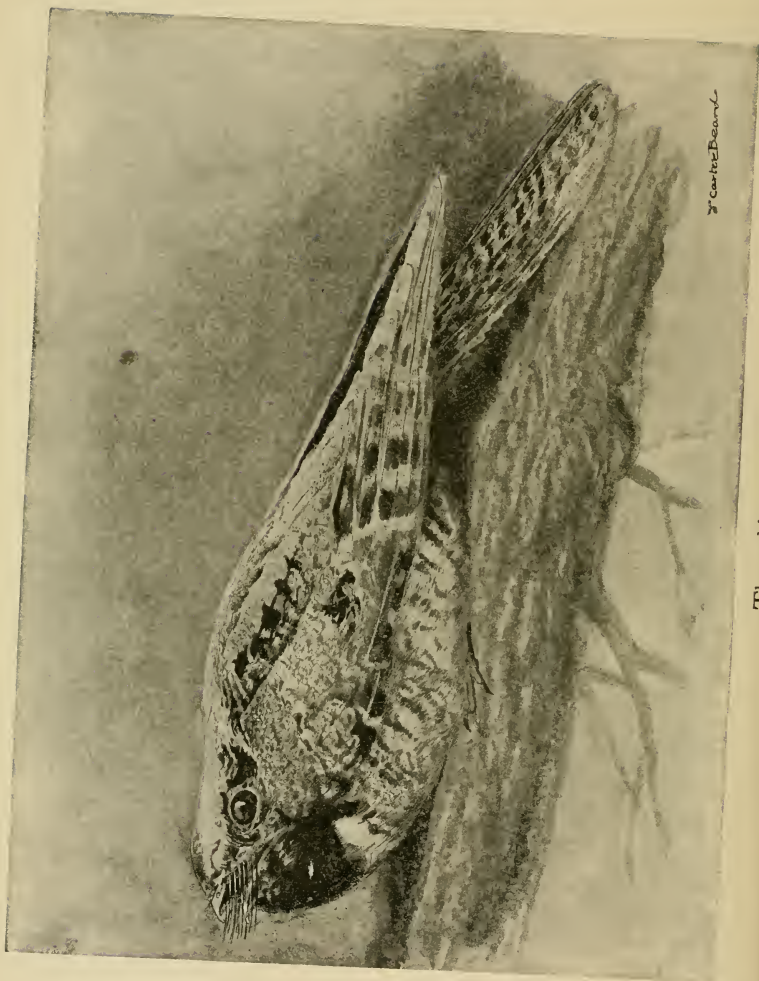
. . . . .  
 But when Hiawatha saw him  
 Slowly rising through the water,  
 Lifting up his disc refulgent,  
 Loud he shouted in derision :  
 “ Esa ! esa ! shame upon you,  
 You are Ugudwash, the Sunfish ;  
 You are not the fish I wanted ;  
 You are not the King of Fishes.”

“Casting is all in the wrist movement,” continued Mr. Temple, giving several fancy casts ; now flipping the fly, then casting underhand, again over.



Spinner and minnow.

“I think the most difficult thing to learn,” said Tom, “at least for me, was to wait until my line was



J. Carter Beards

The whippoorwill.

perfectly straight on the back cast before I made the forward cast, and as a result I generally flipped off the flies."

"That comes by practise and then by intuition," replied his father.

It was the middle of the afternoon when the Angler left this charming spot and the boats turned toward home, some of the party casting in the nooks and corners as they passed along, others trolling with spinners and having fishermen's luck in fine catches, which, as the sun sank and the May flies filled the air and the whippoorwill's note sounded, were spread out on the grass that leads up to the cottage among the trees.



## CHAPTER XV

### TAKING THE MUSKALLUNGE

WHILE the anglers were enjoying the delights of the Thousand Islands, they fished nearly every day for a fish that did not come. When Jack trolled for bass, Tom almost invariably had a heavier rod with a big spoon or spinner out; and when Tom trolled for bass, Jack handled the big spinner, and stronger and stronger grew the desire to take that king of the pickerel tribe, the muskallunge. One day while sailing down the river, a boatman appeared at the dock and held up a splendid specimen, fairly taunting them with its size and beauties; and on a neighboring island an astute angler had the heads of three or four hung on his walls, telling of his prowess and good luck. In all his experience the Angler had taken but one muskallunge, so small a fish that it did not count, and all were keenly alive to the possibilities—somewhere there was a large fish awaiting them. Every week one or more was caught, somewhere on the great river, hence all there was to do was to fish and persevere; so it came about that each day some one of the angling party fished for the elusive and

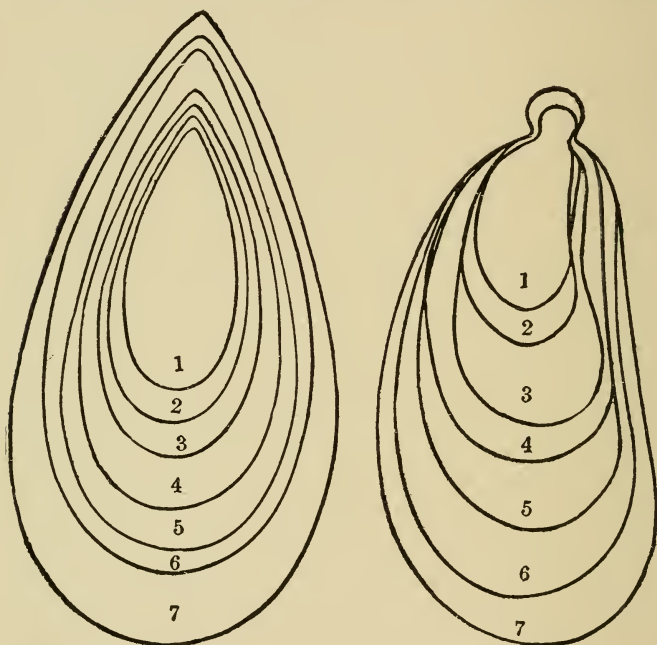
rare muskallunge. The boys tried all kinds of spinners, spoons of new design which Bill or Sam altered over, adding new attractions in red and gold. They tried fall fish, creek chub, rock bass, and big yellow perch—in fact, every bait that had ever been heard of, on or about the St. Lawrence, or wherever the word muskallunge was known. They fished early and late, day and night, but the big pike passed them by and the sole catch was innumerable pickerel ranging from two to seven pounds, which while good for the larder were unsatisfactory to the exacting anglers.



Spoon or spinner  
ready for use.

In this way the days rolled and melted away. They had delightful trips and good sport with the bass, perch, wall-eyed pike, and others, and daily the boys learned more and more about the muskallunge, the fish with the endless names, every angler they met calling it by a different name. The Angler held for muskallunge. The Commodore thought jackfish was the correct name, while Bill, the boatman, contended for maskinonge, and Sam said it should be mascalonge, as Dr. Henshall told him so, which was a very good reason the boys thought. Every day was a fishing day, and there was always the hope that the big fish would be found. Just at the south end of the island, where the channel extended through to Eel Bay, was a place which Bill stated was famous for

muskallunge. When pressed, his reason was that the conditions were right: the grass was long and afforded good cover, and the channel was deep, so that the big fish could lurk on its edge and pounce like a tiger upon



Spoons of various sizes.

small fry. And so it happened that when the boys went fishing they usually rowed up this channel and drifted along the weeds, generally catching pickerel, an occasional wall-eyed pike in deep water, and other game.

It was a region of delights. The well-wooded island, the air filled with the aroma of pine, the masses of wild rose growing down to the water's edge, all gave it a peculiar charm.

One day Tom and Jack were rowing slowly up the channel. Bill had stopped a moment to light his pipe, and Jack had just expressed the opinion that his big sucker would foul the grass when something happened. The sucker, a one-pound fish, gleaming so that it could be seen easily fifty feet astern, stopped violently, and all the blood seemed to rush into Jack's head as his reel sounded a warning note.

"Eh!" said Bill, starting.

"Strike?" whispered Tom, beginning to reel in his minnow.

"I think so," replied Jack, visibly excited. "It couldn't be grass."

"Don't strike yet," suggested Bill. "You've got a corker of a bait and it's a maskinonge——"

"Zeee-zeee-zeee-zeee!"

"Great Scott! zeee!—a musky, by gingo!"

"Look out, let him go!" cried Tom. "Ain't he a dandy? Oh, Jack, JACK, JACK!"

Tsee-tsee! Jack had struck his fish and hooked him, and was losing line at the rate of a yard a second.

"Grass? not much," cried Bill, backing the boat around with furious strokes. "We're the people, don't you forget it. That's it," and more from three wildly

excited men who rapidly became cool, determined to make no mistake or lose the game by an error of theirs.

“Slam it to him! whew!” cried Bill.

Zeee-zeee! and the gallant fish made a rush so vicious and powerful that Bill said later he saw a streak of fire and a puff of smoke rise from the reel. The tackle was so light that the splendid fish had it all its own way, and the fight it made was that struggle known only to anglers who have taken the fish. The muskallunge had sprung like a tiger out into the deeper water of the channel, and Jack's reel was nodding and bending in several directions at once, the fish rising to the surface a long way off and fairly lashing the water into foam in its efforts to escape, then plunging down out of sight, making the reel scream and scream again. Bill propelled his boat astern first after the fish to save the line, while Jack reeled and broke and gave line and reeled again, all with such rapidity that it was bewildering to the looker-on, yet not a mistake did he make; his hands, fingers, and muscles had been trained on larger game and game quite as fast. The big fish brought him new experience and sensations, and was well calculated to demoralize a cool hand; even Bill could not restrain his admiration, and in his excitement gave Jack high praise in strange and laughable words. Jack played the muskallunge fifteen minutes before it showed any signs of giving in. It rushed around in a circle, plunged deep into the channel, rising to turn and face the angler and shake its head

viciously, then came rushing in to turn and make the welkin ring to the buzzing of the reel, the burr of the thumb brake on the line, and the hard breathing of the angler. Time and again it had the tip almost under water in several rushes; more than once its cunning and sudden plunges in made the anglers think that it was off, but as the moments stole away Jack played a telling game and the big fish came in; now dashing about in circles, yet always decreasing; now beneath the boat, again far away, but always coming in. Suddenly it made a plunge at them. Jack secured the slack and held it, and for the first time saw the splendid shape of the fish, its black tiger-like spots on the silver background, its ugly jaw and ponderous head.

“Ready, Bill,” said Jack, in a low tone as the fish was caught in a rush and held, and with bending rod swam around the stern.

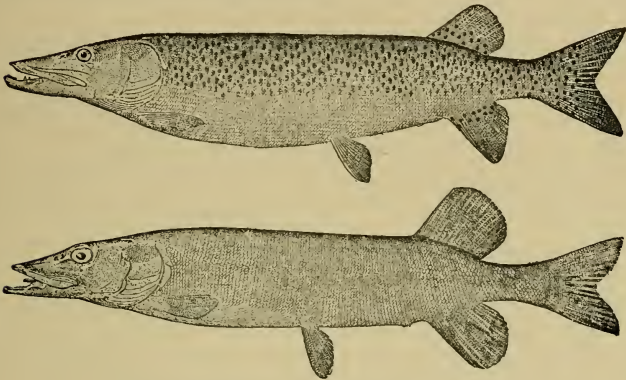
“Aye, sir. Let him come, let him come,” and Jack, holding up his rod with fingers on the reel, brought the fish on the quarter. Out stole the gaff, deep into its throat went the sharp steel, and above the water appeared the monster head. Surrender? Not he. All the fight of ten thousand pickerel seemed boiled down, concentrated in this great cousin german, swinging its powerful tail wildly, tossing the silvery drops into the sunlight, shaking the very boat, and opening its fierce jaws, snapping like a wolf. Bill made secure his footing, then raised the fish and cleverly brought it in, still more cleverly despatching it with his fish-club, then held it up,

vibrating and quivering, to the admiring gaze of the young anglers.

“Ain’t he a dandy?” cried Jack, enthusiastically, realizing the utter hopelessness of expressing his real appreciation of such a fish. Other fishes may have been “peaches” and “Jim dandies,” but a new word would certainly have to be invented to adequately describe this muskallunge, which two hours later weighed thirty-six pounds. “Run up the flag,” said Jack, as soon as the fish was safe in the canvas, and up went a white flag at the top of the sprit; then they bore away for home, Bill pulling a strong stroke, sending the skiff over the water like a bird, laughing, talking in high humor. Every boat they passed gave them a cheer and came alongside to see the fish, which Bill proudly exhibited. As one of the large river steamers went by Bill held up the muskallunge, at sight of which the passengers cheered loudly, and when they finally reached home they found a crowd gathered to view the king of the river fishes. The prize was quickly laid upon the grass and admired, measured, photographed and weighed. Reporters interviewed Jack and Bill, and the story lost nothing in the telling, you may be sure of that; indeed, Jack was amazed when he read the account in the local paper the next day. Yet there was the fish to prove the story. The only disappointment came in the notice to the effect that “while it was a fine catch, it had been beaten by a fourteen-year-old boy, son of Mr. F. L. Wanklyn, of Montreal, who, unaided, brought a thirty-seven pounder to gaff near the



Isle Perrot in 1903." The latter fish made a desperate fight, nearly upsetting the boat, breaking away from the gaff, and resisting capture with great vigor. This, in the absence of other information, may be considered the boys' record for muskallunge.



The muskallunge and pike compared.

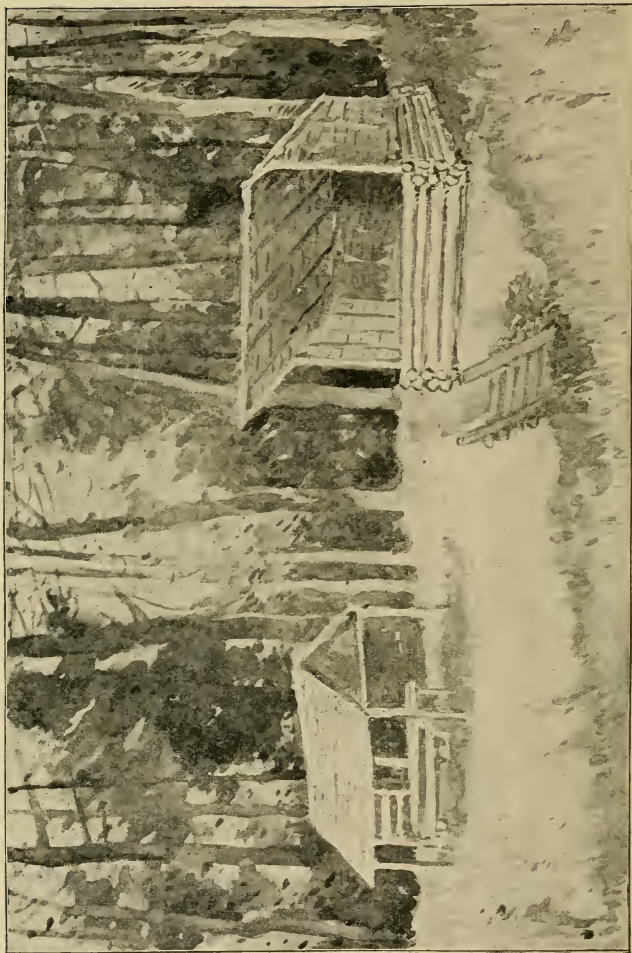
That night the catch was duly discussed by the anglers and compared with pike and pickerel, the boys learning to distinguish them. In shape the fish are very much alike, all changing according to the color of the bottom; but while there are many points of resemblance, no one can mistake the pickerel for the splendid muskallunge. The latter has leopard-like spots of black and brown merging into distinct blotches, giving the fish a distinctive appearance. But if there was any doubt about distinguishing the muskallunge from the other fish, it would be easily settled by a glance at the head.

In the pickerel and pike, the "cheek" or gill covers are covered with scales; in the muskallunge, there is but a narrow line of scales on the top of the cheek. It was agreed that this member of the tribe made up for the shortcomings of the pike and pickerel. The muskallunge is a rare fish, even in the waters that know it best, and its capture to-day on the St. Lawrence or in the northern lakes of Michigan does not fail to create a sensation.

## CHAPTER XVI

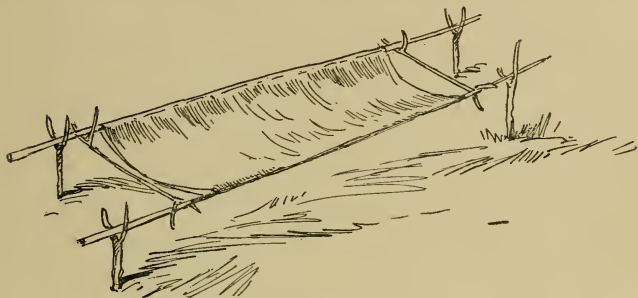
### THE OUANANICHE

A WEEK after the capture of the muskallunge, the anglers went down the river, passed the famous Rapids and Montreal on to Quebec and the splendid falls of Montmorency, then taking the Saguenay steamer and sailing down the river of rivers, the St. Lawrence, which widens out into a sea. Here the Laurentian Mountains come down to its edge colored with purple, the splendid tint moving on in elusive shadows, leading one on to the great angling country of northeastern Canada, the home of the trout, salmon and ouananiche. Up the deep and solemn Saguenay they sailed, passing titanic rocks which overhung the steamer, reaching Chicoutomi, the head of navigation, early one fine morning. From here the party went by train to Lake St. John, reaching their camp one afternoon, which Mr. Temple had arranged for in advance, preferring this to the more civilized methods. The boys were delighted to find a regular bark camp, the sleeping place entirely open on one side, the dining-room without a roof. Their beds—canvas bags—were rigged on long poles, supported by



The Canadian camp.

crotched sticks and filled with balsam boughs. Several Indians served as guides, and their picturesque canoes were hauled on the beach hard by, while over a blazing

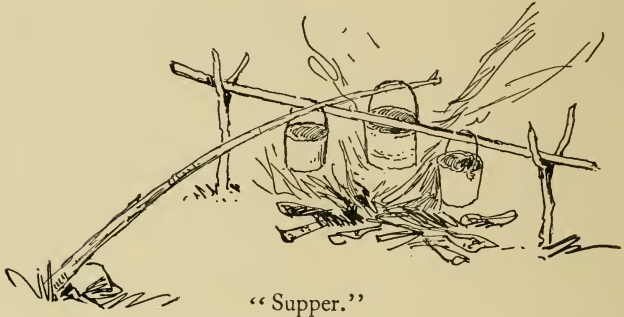


The bed.

fire hung pails and cooking appliances in camping fashion. In a word, the boys had left civilization, as it were, behind. They had long since noticed that their father was an enthusiast on angling. When fishing for yellowtail this was the "game of game," as he had said. When in the "ten-pounder" country, he considered it was the king of game fishes; and now in the land of the ouananiche, he told Tom and Jack to be prepared "for the fishing of their lives"—they were in the country of the rod and line smashers.

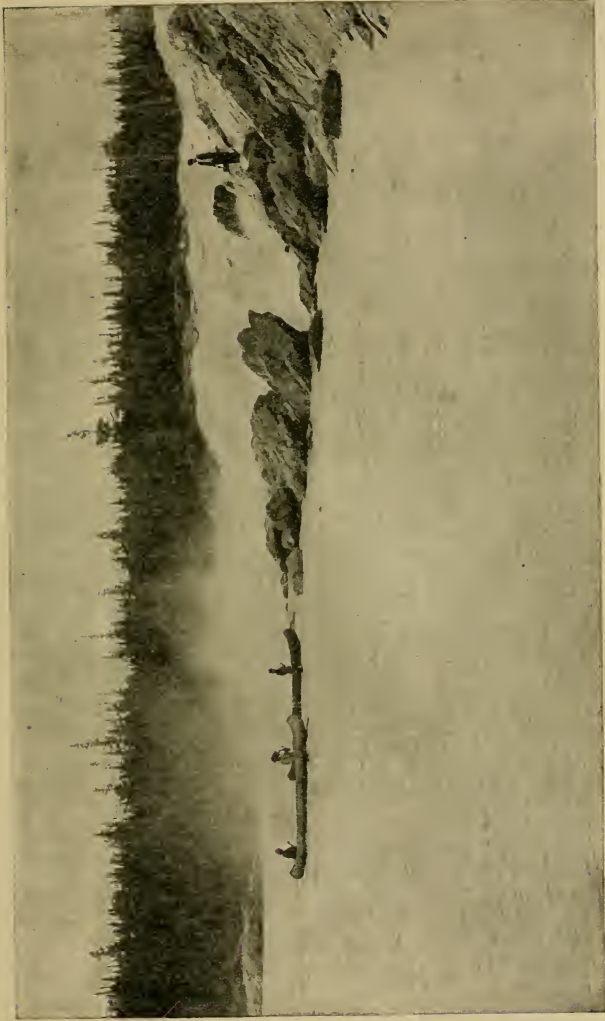
The first evening was spent in talking over the wonders of the region, its history, tales of the Décharge, the Vache Caille Rapid, and the big game taken in years gone by; then a night's sleep in the purest of air. Lake St. John is a charming body of water about twenty-

five miles long and twenty wide, shallow and fed by hundreds of streams, lakes and rivers. It is the head waters of the deep dark Saguenay, the waters finding



their way to it by La Décharge du Lac, the region abounding in many picturesque and beautiful angling stations, rocks and pools.

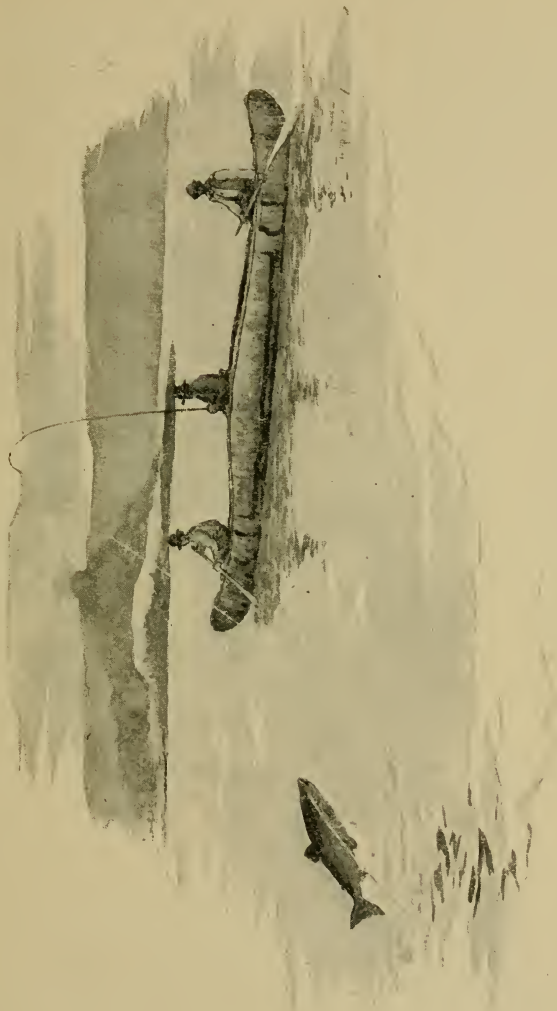
The anglers started early in the morning for their first fishing trip, each in a canoe—in itself a thing of beauty—the Angler in the center and an Indian paddler in bow and stern, who talked in Canadian French and laughed in pure English. The tackle, which the Angler had indicated, was eight-ounce split bamboo trout rods for Tom and Jack, he himself using a six-ounce rod, and about one hundred and fifty feet of enameled silk line. Each six-foot leader had a single bright-colored fly, concealing a number five hook. Swiftly the Indians carried them on, no fishing being done until they reached a certain pool at the foot of a tumultuous fall, where



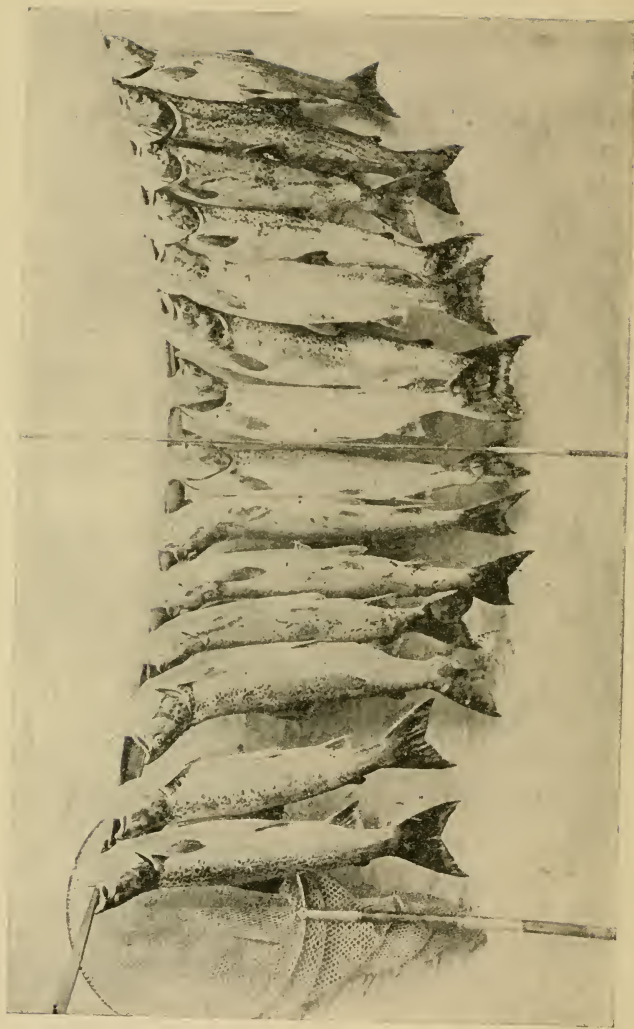
Ouananiche pool.



the water—a mass of roaring, seething silver—discharged itself. Here was the natural home of the ouananiche. The canoes were well together, and the boys were first to cast, allowing the fly to sink a few inches, disappearing in the foaming waters to be jerked several times. The Indians held the canoe as close to the rough water as possible; and suddenly as Tom dropped his resplendent fly, and as the line straightened out, something went into the air and—well, that was the end, Tom staring at the dangling line and two Indians laughing at his dismay. “Cut, eat off with hees tail,” said one. Jack had better luck. The strike came and he held his fish to the measure of the singing reel and dancing rod, hooked him, and then began that high and lofty tumbling for which the fish is famed. It dashed into the air at least two feet, then rushed directly at the boat, then, as Jack later said, “banged and hammered at the line,” then plunged down to rise and fly into the air in a splendid leap—all so quickly that many an experienced angler has gone down—rod and line—before it to total ruin. But good luck more than anything else was with the angler, though perhaps certain experience with ten-pounders had equipped him for conclusions with the ouananiche. In any event, Jack played the fish successfully, the gallant creature putting him to his very wits’ end as it darted about—now far away, now dashing around beneath the boat, and only straightened out by the vigorous work of the guides; again leaping almost alongside, a thing of beauty, a joy forever. Jack thought



It dashed into the air.



A string of ouananiche.

he counted over ten leaps in about ten minutes, and yet he could not claim any serious advantage—the fish was fighting still. In about twenty minutes, however, the gamy creature was lifted in by the man with the net—only a three-pounder, but three pounds of virility and fire.

Tom had also hooked a fish and was playing it, while the Angler, with his light rod, was putting to confusion some anglers on the rocks near by, who were fishing with stiff ten-ounce rods. It was a fishing day, and a fine catch was made in a short time, after which they went ashore for lunch, later fishing from the rocks at the various points in this region famous for ouananiche.\* Mr. Temple displayed five of these fishes, one of six pounds, and as they were spread out on the rocks to the boys, they were small salmon, and their father said they were merely landlocked salmon, *Salmo ouananiche*; indeed, the Montagnias Indian guides said it was a “little salmon” that never went down to the sea. The best authorities state that the ouananiche is a different species from the sabago or Atlantic salmon.

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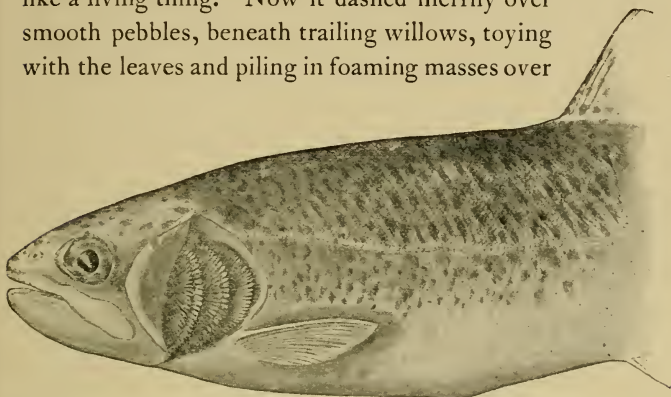
\* Pronounced Win-a-nish.

## CHAPTER XVII

### WITH THE PACIFIC COAST TROUT

A YEAR drifted away into the past, and another angling and vacation season was at hand, and found Mr. Temple and his boys working up the coast. The fishing now was all with the supple six- and eight-ounce ten-foot split bamboo, noibwood and greenheart rods, plain single action reels—reels with which the Angler did all the work—fine silk enameled lines of the “E persuasion,” as the Commodore said, leaders eight or ten feet long—no “foggy,” “bleary” leaders here, but those clear as glass, upon which the dainty flies were fastened with as many knots as there were anglers. Indeed, the outfit for this angling along the streams and rivers of California was a most attractive feature. In April they visited the Santa Ynez River, near the village of Lompoc, above Santa Barbara, where they made splendid catches of “steelheads”—a large rainbow trout. Later, the anglers camped on one of the many beautiful trout streams which reach the Pacific in central California. Its waters were icy cool, clear as crystal, and its flashes of color, its flecks of snow-white foam were

suggestive of glaciers in the highlands, that were disappearing under the summer sun. The stream came from a deep-wooded cañon in the range, bounding into the open like a living thing. Now it dashed merrily over smooth pebbles, beneath trailing willows, toying with the leaves and piling in foaming masses over



Head of rainbow trout (*Salmo irideus*) with gill cover turned back to show the breathing organs.

the great rocks; now it was burdened with verdure—pine cones from the uplands, or leaves from the fragrant bay—while ever and anon great limbs and branches of trees came sweeping down to lodge in the boulders and obstruct the plunging waters. The stream had its moods and fancies—of that the boys were certain. They first knew it in the deep cañon, where it rushed among big rocks and leaped over moss-covered precipices, a musical, exultant thing. Now it was deep in the gloom of great sycamores, foaming capriciously out into the warm sunshine that here flooded the cañon. For some dis-

tance it flowed quickly over gravel beds, hurrying around little islands of stranded brush, but soon cut its way into the mesa, where it broadened and developed, and amid green fields and nodding flowers flowed silently on to the distant sea.



Fried trout.

For miles this stream, which the boys followed from the mountain down, ran silently; then it darted beneath the cottonwoods and away into a broad laguna, where cattails flourished and the blackbird reigned supreme. The boys took their first fish among the big trees that covered the range. There deep pools were frequent at the base of huge boulders, and creeping up to one and glancing through the ferns that formed a barrier, Tom saw a trout of heroic proportions dimly outlined against the bottom. A rift of sunlight poured down through the sycamores, illumining a spot ten or more inches in length, and in this the giant lay, taking a veritable sun bath. The question was, what would it take? Tom had been using worms and a speckled fly with some success, but it occurred to him that this magnificent fellow might be capricious. His game was different



The string.



from the fish of the lowlands, where sun-burned grasshoppers missed their objective blades of grass upon the bank, and went sprawling into the stream to be snapped up. The trout of the deep pools and woods depended more upon flies, or the speckled black-and-white tree toads, perhaps, which crouched upon the rocks of the stream, mimicking them in tone and color. Tom had a peacock-blue fly (a St. Patrick), and this he managed to land a foot or more in front of the fish—a dainty, delicious object it was, a delight to the eye; and as it rose and attempted to fly away at the bidding of the tip of the split bamboo, there were few trout that would have refused it. The monarch of the pool, however, was not to be tempted. A few inches forward it moved, rising slowly, then sank back, gently vibrating tail and fins, eyeing the fly with evident scorn.

“That trout must be caught,” said Tom, “but how?” He tried a lighter fly, then a brown speckled beauty, and finally in desperation put on a frog—one of the little tree or rock varieties that were jumping about the rocks. A blaze of light, a quick, sharp, splashing report told that this was indeed the lure to its taste. The pool was not over ten feet in width, and formed an artificial basin, leading by a gentle fall to the stream below. The first rush took the line beneath the ledge, where the fish had doubtless lived for seasons undisturbed. Then out it came, and failing to rid itself of the torturing hook, took a magnificent leap over the falls to the music of the reel. How it sang, and how

nobly the great creature tried every maneuver known to the gamy tribe! That the line was not cut a score of times was something of a miracle, but Tom followed down stream, and finally landed the beauty among the brakes and ferns of the bank—the “bonniest fish,” as the Commodore said, ever taken from these waters, he was sure! but then the old man thought every fish was the best!

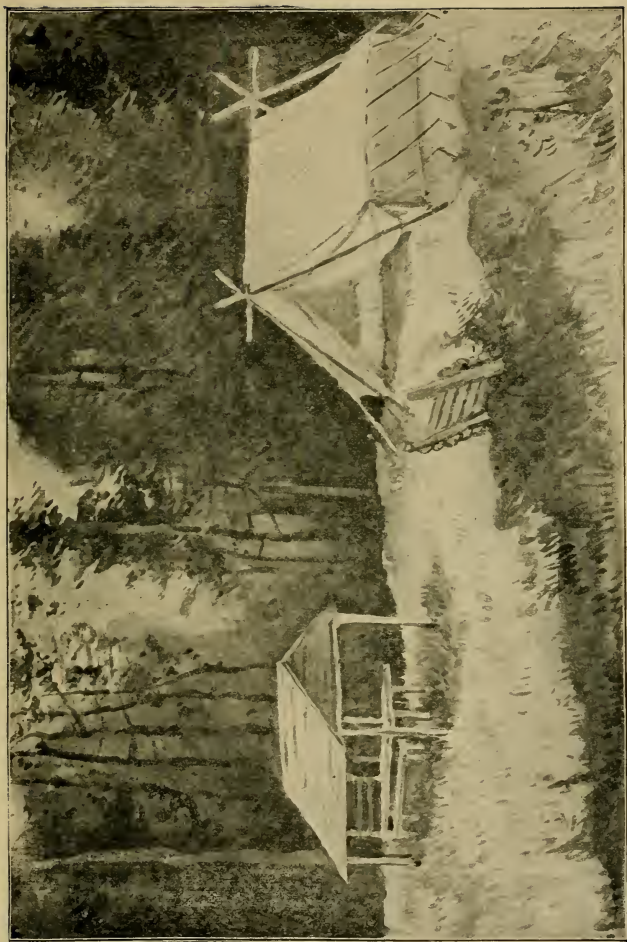


The releaser, for cutting branches.

Fishing here could not be compared to like sport in the East. The mountain streams are often difficult to follow, and the fisherman must lower himself from rock to rock; now finding pools six or eight feet deep, and anon walking over rocks that form the stepping-stones of a shallow, and beneath trees and shrubs that made a releaser a necessity. How the trout obtain a footing in some of these high basins was a mystery to the boys. In some streams they are found in pools that are entirely isolated from the stream, so far as fish migration is concerned, and the only explanation the Angler gave was that the trout have

forced their way up during floods, when a great mass of water was pouring down, forming a continuous stream.

“These streams,” he said, during one of the evening talks around the camp-fire, for the evenings were still chilly, “are not always the quiet ones they appear, and

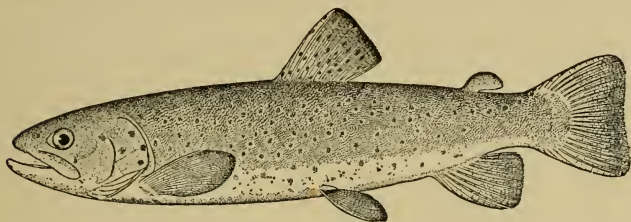


The California camp.

what astonishes me is that the fish are not entirely washed out. Some years ago I was making the trip over the mountains in winter, when I was caught in a rain-storm and camped not far from here. I thought I would be safe on a boulder, but during the night I was aroused by a terrific roaring sound, and found that the water was rising, and that the entire cañon had been transformed into a wild torrent. Fortunately there grew a large sycamore by the rock, which I reached by some wild grapevines, gaining an upper limb, and that was my camp for nearly twenty-four hours. By actual measurement the water rose ten feet above the rock."

The anglers fished this mountain stream from end to end, later finding their way into the picturesque county of Marin that reaches from the Golden Gate north along-shore for miles, a region suggestive of trout streams and wild game. The county has Tamalpais as a landmark, an isolated mountain peak whose shadow darkens the waters of the Golden Gate, and from whose sides burst springs and rivulets which make up many trout streams in Marin. The anglers entered this country up to the north by Cazadero, and worked their way down the summer streams by easy stages, literally a horseback fishing party, making the long stretches by this means, sleeping beneath the redwoods in the sweetest, purest air. Around Cazadero there are many trout streams which flow gently through a charming region. There were the redwoods in all their glory, still untouched by the vandal woodchopper, and among the giants winds one of the best

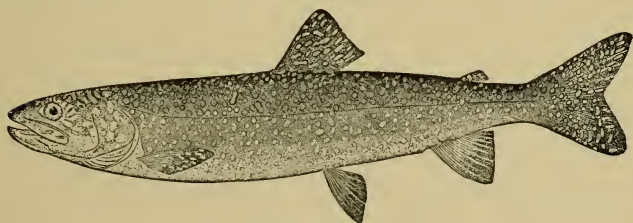
streams for trout in the vicinity. Mr. Temple suggested that they fasten their horses and take to the stream, and presently the party were wading down the stream that forces its way into the very heart of the forest. The



Brown trout.

water was like crystal, and young trout dashed here and there at every step, while their larger fellows could be seen in the rift, inviting conclusions with the fly.

Standing knee-deep in an open spot where the sunlight poured in, Tom cast his first fly in a gentle riffle

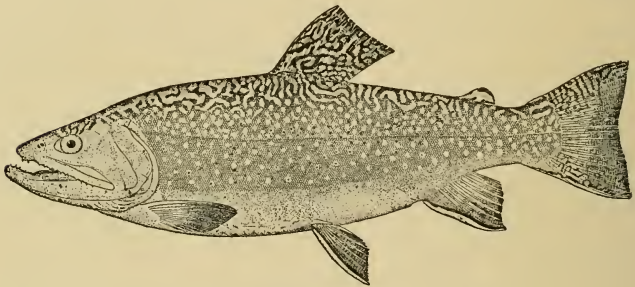


Lake trout.

down stream. A gleam of silver and gold, a dash and the melody of the reel, told of noble game. Away it rushed down a little fall, shaking golden spray all about

in a desperate effort at freedom, falling back to come up stream faster than Tom could reel, then turning, catching a glimpse of the excited angler, only to dart away again. Far down stream it ran, now hiding beneath the combing banks, then out into the sunlight, fighting hard for life, only to finally come in game to the very last, a splendid fish, which Jack photographed to send home.

Wading down stream the anglers obtained more than the enjoyment of landing gamy trout. They passed



Brook trout.

through fertile valleys with high mountains on either side; the outer Coast Range to the west formed the great barrier over which rifts of fog came, gleaming like patches of molten silver, to be broken or dissipated by the warm air rising from the valley. Here the stream crept through deep underbrush, and suddenly seemed to stop as a giant fallen redwood barred the way, the latter illustrating the peculiar growth of these trees, as from the trunk num-



bers of trees were growing, forming a little redwood fence, beneath which many a trout lurked and tempted the anglers to inglorious ventures. Not far below a tree had bridged the stream at a famous fishing point, and Tom, Jack and the Angler all cast flies from this vantage point with fair results. The stream here wound down a deep cañon or valley from which rose lofty hills clothed with pines and redwoods, so old and tall that even fierce fires that had swept over the country had not affected them. Standing among these giants of the forest,



A vista in the trout stream.



their tops seemed lost in the blue sky above, while their bases were buried deep in masses of fern and moss, the accumulation of centuries. Suddenly the boys, who were ahead, came to a leafy barrier, and saw beyond an open space into which the sun poured, illumining a sandy little beach with a flood of light in strong contrast to where they stood. There was absolute silence, except the occasional hoarse cry of a blue shrike as it dived down into the green abyss from above, or the love note of the plumed quail that came gently on the breeze. As Tom and Jack stood silently enjoying the scene, there came a soft crunch upon the gravel, and out from the brush stepped a black-tail deer, a noble fellow, with a fine pair of antlers. He stopped a moment, raised his lustrous eyes to the hillsides, expanded his nostrils, then walked boldly into the stream and drank the clear water, so near the boys that had it not been for the verdure they could have dropped a fly fairly upon his back. Not a suspicion had he, and, after drinking his fill, he waded into the stream, spoiling the fishing by cooling his hoofs along the shallows until the deep underbrush swallowed him up.

From this trout stream Mr. Temple and the boys climbed the range and looked down upon Bolinas, with its bay and long stretch of sandy beach—the blue ocean on one hand and the eternal green of the redwood forest on the other. Here a little inn crowned the summit, where good refreshments for man and beast were found, and about which grand scenery greeted the eye. The

place was so restful that the Angler proposed that they tarry several days. "What with the natural trout and those introduced," he said one evening, when Tom and Jack had been discussing the trout of the different localities they had visited in the East, "we Californians are fortunate. We have all kinds: the steelhead, the Yellowstone, the big Lake Tahoe silver trout, the spotted trout, the blue back, the speckled trout, and then the rainbow trout and its variations in Kern, the McCloud, the Nissuee, and the golden trout of Mount Whitney. I hope we can some time try them all and compare their game qualities."

"It takes a lot of skill and *finesse* to make a good trout fisherman, I think," said Jack. "I fished a stream the other day with the Commodore, and he beat me exactly six to one."

"It is in the casting," said his father. "By the time you are seventy you may be able to cast with Robert."

"But then," replied Jack, "he will by that time have gained a lot more experience."

"Aye," responded the Commodore. "I took the most feesh on account of the under castin' in the brook. But you, Mr. Jack, were born under the sign of the feesh, born to good luck. Your feesh weighed more than all mine together. Castin' is all in the wrist, and there's a lot in it. You find the man who feeshes up a stream is generally a poor hand at the cast. I'm not so set in my ways that I can not give in to others. I know

old fishermen who think it an unpardonable sin to take a trout with a worm. I'm not so sure that it is not my advice to stand by the fly as much as possible as being the fairest and most scientific way of fishing."

"That is so, Robert," said the Angler, smiling. "Your average trout does not see a bunch of angle-worms come floating down stream every day; worms



The ducks were flying south.

don't go to sea, as a rule, and few trout can resist such a lure. It is a sure thing, it is deadly; but the fly dropped gently in the water is an invitation they know all about, and fair play."

"What time are we off to-morrow?" asked Jack, as his father rose.

“ The glad trout is roaming in every clear stream,  
And the grilse and the salmon now drink the May flood,  
Then anglers be up with the sun’s early beam,  
Let your flies be trim and your tackle be good,”

quoted the Angler, “ which means early breakfast—  
broiled venison and fried trout—something to look for-  
ward to.”

The fishing party leisurely moved on into the upper  
country, whipping many of the streams from Lake Lagu-  
nitas, at the foot of Tamalpais, up into Oregon, where  
they fished the Clackamas and other streams, finding  
new enjoyments in the forests and streams of the north,  
where they camped, fishing and hunting until long after  
the ducks were flying southward.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### SALMON FISHING

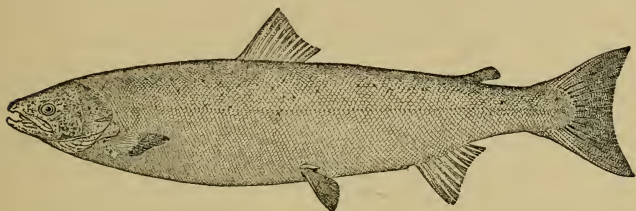
A COOL month of July on the Pacific coast found the anglers near Monterey. They fished the various streams which flowed into the ocean near here, wander-



Where the Monterey salmon gather.

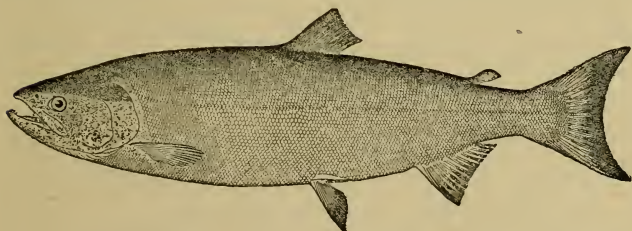
ing up and down the attractive rock-bound shores, boating in Carmel and the bay of Monterey ; then, in response

to a telegram from a Santa Cruz boatman, went to that picturesque town near the giant redwoods to find that a large school of salmon had entered the bay, anglers from the surrounding country coming from far and near for



Atlantic salmon.

the sport, the yearly incoming of these splendid fish being one of the events. The tackle was entirely different from that used on the Restigouche and other salmon streams of Canada. Here the fish was in the ocean, and



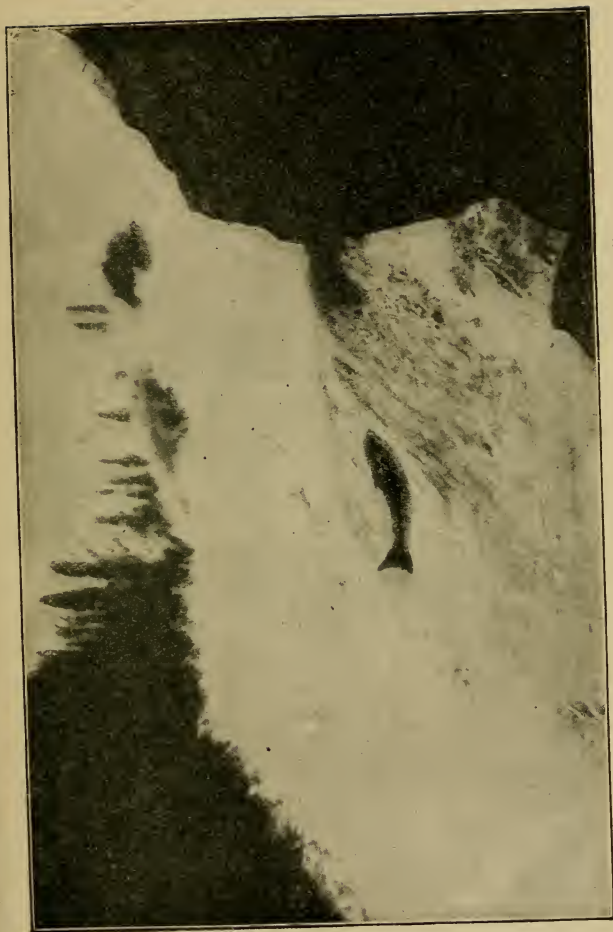
Pacific salmon.

could plunge down so deep that a long, slender bamboo rod would be useless. The boats were rigged like those of Santa Catalina, and the tackle identical with that employed for yellowtail.

The morning they pushed out from shore there were ten or fifteen boats in Santa Cruz Bay, all in search of salmon. Some contained professional fishermen, others anglers, and all were rowing slowly up and down, trolling with sixty or seventy feet of line out, using a light sinker to take the line down, as the salmon were supposed to be lying deep beneath schools of sardines. The bait was a smelt four inches in length, baited through the mouth and up through the body, as in yellowtail fishing. The Angler and Tom were in one boat, Jack and the Commodore in another, and to be sociable they kept together, the boats being one hundred and fifty feet or so apart. Several anglers had had strikes, but no fish had been taken. The boys were speculating upon the chances when Jack's voice was heard.

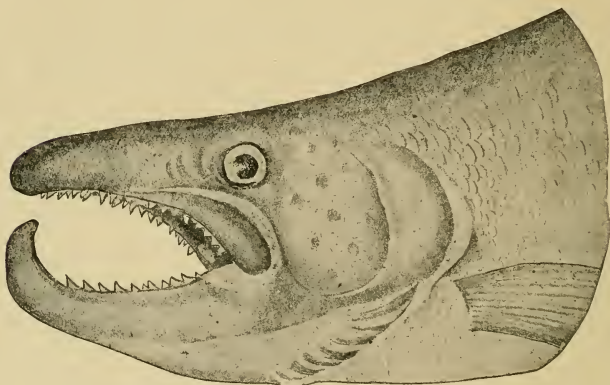
“Oh, ho, the gallant anglers that we are!” and the others saw him straighten back, his rod bending, the line firm as a line of steel, then the choked-off buzz of the reel rose on the air, and Jack had hooked his first salmon. Here was game not unlike the yellowtail rushing away at a speed that carried two hundred feet of line whirling from the reel; then he stopped it, and the salmon plunged to the bottom, and once there, or as near as it could get, it ran in a few feet, then stopped and struck the angler through the line a series of vigorous blows, then appeared to shake its head, a maneuver that was altogether new in Jack's experience. Another reel sounded, and Tom had a fish, and with the zeee! of the reels and the shouts of laughter, it was merry fishing. Jack's fish now





Labrador salmon leaping an eighteen-foot fall.

rose to the surface, encouraged by some judicious jumping, and essayed to leap, but did not clear the water, seemingly rolling over and lashing it with its tail, making a fine display for a few seconds, then plunging into the blue water, making everything, as the Commodore said, "creak and groan." Then the fish gradually rose, bending the stiff rod, making it thrill with the extreme ten-



Curved jaw of male salmon at spawning time.

sion, coming higher and higher; then the line parted and Jack sat, dismay pictured on his face. "How do you account for that?" he asked, reeling in.

"Flaw in the line, perhaps," answered the boatman; "but more likely another fish crossed it aslant and sawed it off."

This, doubtless, was the explanation, as the line was cut as smooth as though a knife had been used. In the

meantime Tom had brought his fish to gaff, his boatman gaffing it in fine style, a splendid fish, weighing thirty pounds. In a few moments Jack, with fresh hook and bait, hooked another, which he brought to the boat in twelve minutes. And so they fished until noon, taking half a dozen or so fish each, for which there was a ready market.

Several weeks later saw the anglers encamped on Vancouver's Island, where they enjoyed the same sport, though with larger fish, taking them all with bait or spoons; but, though they made the attempt, they failed completely to induce the Pacific salmon to take a fly in the rivers, where they were found in large quantities. In the course of their travels a small stream was discovered in which the salmon were so packed that it was almost possible to form a bridge over their backs, which protruded from the water.

"It is sad to contemplate the destruction of salmon," said the Angler, one day when they had witnessed hundreds of these fishes caught in nets and on wheels on the Columbia, but could not induce a fish to bite at bait or fly. The king salmon undoubtedly lives near the mouths of the great rivers or not far out to sea, and in the spawning season runs up the streams, instinct compelling them to go up to the very head waters, where they deposit their eggs and die. The Sacramento, Columbia, and Yukon are the principal salmon rivers of the coast. Previous to entering these streams the salmon congregate at the mouths or near by and bite freely;

but when they enter the rivers and begin the long swim, they have perhaps a journey of one thousand miles before them, yet they rarely feed and arrive at the spawning grounds in good condition. The male forms, what some anglers think, a nest in the gravel, but which in all probability is not, and in accomplishing this and fighting they are badly injured. When the eggs have been deposited the male covers them and the fish appear to drift down the stream, all dying, few, if any, of the vast concourse, in the estimation of expert observers, surviving.

The season was well advanced when the anglers turned their faces southward and made their way down the coast with visions of the vast Yukon and its game before their eyes, promised for another outing.

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