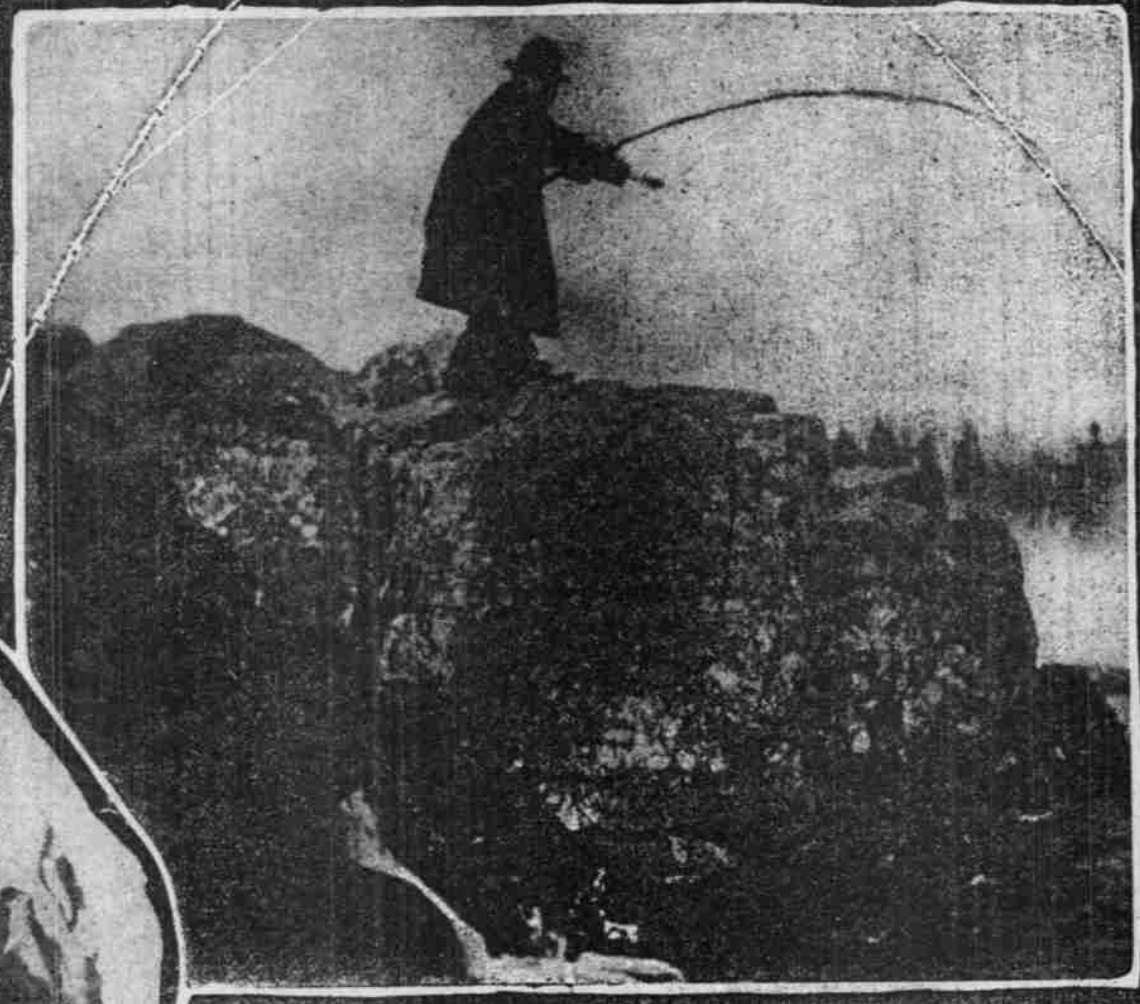




FISHING FOR SALMON at Willamette Falls...



Landing Salmon Under Difficulties.



A Good Days Catch.



Casting Spoon from Point of Rocks.



Catching Salmon Below the Falls.



Fifteen Pounder at Least

ONCE more is the season on for the royal sport of catching salmon in the falls at Oregon City. The Pacific Northwest is an angler's paradise. Its numerous mountain streams of clear, rapid water, its sylvan lakes nestled in mountain basins, its majestic rivers from glacial sources, give to it the charm, the enchantment which Nature alone can create, and the life of an angler here is a dream of happiness, a joy forever. The streams of Western Oregon and Washington present study enough for a dozen volumes, for they offer variety sufficient to cover the diversified angling possibilities of the entire Pacific Northwest, from the Columbia and Willamette, and their tributaries, to the Yukon River, in Alaska.

To be a follower of Walton in the general acceptance of the phrase, one has only to be a fisherman, content to sit on the bank of a sluggish river, stream or mill pond, with bait, bobber and Bible, and patiently await the pleasure of the dull perch or catfish or carp or sucker or chub. But to be an angler in Oregon requires the nerve and hardihood to wade and ford streams whose waters are madly rushing to the sea at the rate of 20 miles an hour, and the science to take a three-pound salmon trout, or a 10-pound steelhead salmon from off a swift rapid, or

out of a swirling pool, and land him safely on a gravelly or sandy beach. There is as much difference between a fisherman and an angler as there is between a pot-hunter and a sportsman—the former taking no chance of his game escaping, the latter always giving it a fair chance for its life.

We have few fishermen in Oregon, if we except the deep-sea fishermen, and the idlers and pluggers who may counted by the score any day in the week taking the fish from the rivers along the wharves, perhaps for the reason that few if any of our streams afford opportunities to those who are so fastidious; but the woods are full of enthusiastic anglers and genuine sportsmen, who thoroughly appreciate the swiftest streams, the clearest lakes and the gamiest trout Nature in her benign munificence ever bestowed upon any country.

The reason for the steelhead, which by the highest authority has been declared a trout, and which grows to the weight of 30 pounds, opens in April; the season for chinook opens later, or usually in May, and extends to June 30, or sometimes as late as July, depending upon the amount of headwater, and whether the salmon enter the lower river early or later in the season.

Habits of the Salmon.

From the moment the salmon enters the river, which it is sure to seek in two or three years after spawning, its progress is one of interest. It first proceeds at its leisure to the head of tidewater. Here it stops a while and seems to play about between fresh and salt water. Whether it shrinks from encountering the sudden change from salt to fresh water, which is probably the cause of its dallying, or for other causes, it usually spends two weeks or more hovering about between sea water and fresh water. When it has overcome its apparent repugnance to making the change to fresh water, it makes a rapid charge up the river for the clear, gravelly streams, which its instinct tells it to seek. Now, unreasonable as it may seem, it stops eating. If it is caught a short distance above the head of the tide, undigested remains of what it ate in salt

water are sometimes found in its stomach; but after that nothing is ever found inside the Columbia River salmon to show that it has had a particle of food in fresh water. After the salmon cross over the line into fresh water, they begin a strange and almost inexplicable journey. It is a journey which is a long fast, and ends only in death. If they could be suspected of a knowledge of what is before them, the martyrs of Christendom should be invited to "go way back and sit down" by these self-sacrificing salmon, who travel unflinchingly to inevitable death—a "hungry" death at that. When headed up stream, nothing can check their career except, to them, an insurmountable obstacle, and nothing can induce them to turn back. They dash furiously up the rapids, halting awhile usually before they enter them, to recruit their strength, and continue to rush on and on through the swiftest, shallowest and roughest places, until they reach suitable places for depositing their spawn. When they come to a waterfall they never give it up until they have proved it a hopeless case, and are completely worn out with the exertion. After the salmon have selected their spawning ground, built their nests and deposited their eggs, they do not hasten back to their native element, the salt water, where they could regain their pristine health and vigor, and, instead, hover about the vicinity of their spawn-

ing ground, growing weaker and more emaciated every day, until death comes to their relief.

How to Reach the Falls.

As a rule salmon fishermen (for sport) take the first car leaving Portland for Oregon City at 7 A. M., and proceed to the dock between the woolen mill and flouring mill, at the latter place, where "Billy" Deucher, or his assistant, awaits anglers, with a fish boat capable of carrying several persons to the island directly below the falls. Here, during the season, Billy resides, with his wife, and they are always glad to see the "boys." A plank walk extends from the lower end of the island, where we land, to the upper end, where the auger, prepares for the fight. Here he gets the full benefit of the torrent of water, wide and deep, rushing, tumbling, tearing along, in a mad race from the falls above, where at this season of the year the upper river is swollen from rains and melting snows. It is imposing, awe-in-

spiring; it must be seen to be appreciated—no mere words can describe the grandeur of the untrammeled power of nature here expressing. It was not this part of the Willamette our own poet Simpson had in mind, when he wrote: Onward ever, lovely river, Calling lightly to the sea.

For here the waters gather themselves together and thunder an exultant, triumphant overture—the grand harmony of freedom consciously attained.

The illustrations accompanying this article but faintly indicate the wildness and awful immensity of the scene. Here the tired plodder from the city senses relaxation, rest, recuperation; here he feels free of restraint, he can forget himself, his name, his identity, his troubles, and enjoy the free and the natural. The spray rising in clouds forms rain-bows in the bright sunshine, and as they chase one another, and add color and beauty to the scene, his imagination runs riot, and he realizes that he has

really been alive for one day, and he returns to his occupation in the city the next day with brighter eyes, a kinder feeling toward his fellow-men, a healthy color in his cheeks, and a lively sense of a stirring, awakening soul.

The question is sometimes asked, if a salmon refuses to eat in fresh water, why does it take a spoon hook? The question is answered by explaining that the spoon hook revolving in the water attracts the attention of the fish, and he bites at the spoon from playfulness. But this is only theory. Another theory advanced is that the spoon passing over a place where a salmon has deposited its eggs is snapped at because the salmon desires to protect the eggs from any possible danger.

Salmon's Battle for Life.

Arriving at the rocks, rods are taken from their cases, lines are tested, spoon hooks selected. If it is a bright day, brass or copper spoons are used; if cloudy, nickel spoons. Then the sport of the day is on. A description of a salmon's battle for liberty will convey to the uninitiated why salmon fishing is the finest sport in the world.

The first cast of the spoon brought up a salmon that fairly made the angler's hair curl. It jumped fully two feet out of the water, and as it glistened in the sun it resembled a flash of light from the Kohlnoor, so beautiful was the blending of the colors. The angler, an angler born, knew that in order to land that salmon, he must keep a cool head, which required as much nerve and self-possession as a mountaineer must exercise in facing a grizzly. He had long since learned that to get "rattled," meant not only ignominious defeat, but a loss of some of his tackle. He therefore spent a few moments getting a firm footing on the rocks and a taut line to head the fish up stream. Then there was a splash, a twitch of the rod, a tug and a pull on the line that started the reel whirling, and that told the story of a 15-pound fish well hooked. Instead of heading up stream it headed down stream at a terrific speed, and after it had taken all but a few feet of the 100-yard line, it found the tension on it so strong and so monotonous that it stopped running, and commenced to jump, endeavoring at each plunge into the air to shake itself loose. It fought at this distance for some time, but not succeeding in gaining any advantage, changed tactics, and swam rapidly up stream, hoping, doubtless, to gain sufficient slack in the line to enable it to cast out the hook; but the angler took in the slack as fast as it was given. Finding this old ruse of no avail, the salmon leaped again and again into the air, literally shaking with rage under the harassing tension. It then darted across the pool and headed for the upper falls, where the water was broken among the sharp jagged rocks, thinking perhaps (if salmon do think) to break the line on

the sharp rocks, but the angler headed it off here by applying the brake on the reel, realizing this to be the most dangerous maneuver the captive had attempted to execute, and remembering, at the same time, that it was in this same place he had lost many fish on previous occasions. The extra tension thus put upon the line the salmon could not overcome, and he seemed to content himself by taking a header to the bottom, and remaining there as heavy and as stubborn as though he had suddenly transformed himself into a snag.

However, a few tugs at the rod brought it up and at it again. It darted up stream right into the teeth of the rapids, then it turned suddenly, and with the momentum given it by the rushing current, started down stream, with such startling rapidity that before the angler was aware it had taken out the entire length of the line, and but for a quick application of the brake would have brought up with such a heavy and sudden force as a cable could not have withstood. After trying to extricate itself by all the ruses and maneuvers known to salmonology, and falling in them all, it became panic stricken. It darted up and across the pool and down stream again, leaped into the air, plunged back, took a header downward, returned to the surface, splashed, twined, writhed, jerked and tugged and fought, until it became exhausted. In this condition it was gradually drawn in toward the rocks, and while it was swimming on its side slowly, with its proud spirit broken, and life nearly gone, a steady, strong pull on the line with the hand brought it within reach of the gaff hook. After a few frantic death struggles it rendered up to the scientific angler its life, completely exhausted by its heroic struggle for liberty.

One of the most notable fishermen ever at the falls was Dan Howe, now in the great beyond, and if his spirit is able to visit earthly scenes, it is surely often "on the point" casting a spoon and saying, "I've got a big one—set the gaff." Poor old Dan, how we miss him.

A Fish Story.

A prominent attorney tells a story of how he hooked a salmon weighing at least 45 pounds, and tells with pride how he "played him" for an hour, and how tired his arms were, but the salmon started down stream, and he was unable to hold him. So the line parted near the reel, and the angler lost his valuable tackle. Some time after this happened, this festive angler was fishing in the Clackamas, which is situated about two miles below the falls, and hooked a large fish, and "played it," and it nearly pulled him into the water. He called for help, which at last arrived, in the shape of a professional fisherman, who secured a large, anchored the angling attorney to it with a cable, the fish meanwhile "playing on"; and at last, at last, great joy the fish was landed, and lo and behold, ye gods that look after attorneys and anglers, and angling attorneys, it was the same fish that he had hooked at the falls some time previously, and the happy angler recovered his tackle. "How was it possible the line did not fasten to a snag?" The Lord only knows—a special dispensation of kind Providence! And the story? Oh, he believes it happened. C. H. McISAAC.