

AND NOW THE CRAWFISH

PORTLAND SPORTSMEN FIND FIND DIVERSION IN GOING AFTER THE TOOTH-SOME CRUSTACEANS



SEASON IS ON

FISHERMEN FOR THE MARKET ARE SCATTERED 150 MILES UP AND DOWN THE RIVER



A BIT OF SPONTANEOUS COMEDY

WALTER WETTING

stream, fasten the rope attached to it to a pole or the limb of a convenient tree, and leave the net alone. If there are no fish in the stream they will hold the most bait, and when you pull up after allowing the bait to rest from five to ten minutes you will find it literally covered with struggling, crawling, snapping crawfish of all sizes. Swing the net to the bank and pick each fish up, taking care to grasp it just back of the fore pincers, and toss it into a receptacle at hand for that purpose. As soon as the net is cleared, toss it back in the stream and await further developments.

Of our party, Walter had the distinction of making the first catch, which is one of the points usually striven for among excursionists on an occasion of this kind. Ed succeeded in gathering the largest haul of the day by netting 23 in one haul. Walter also had the distinction of catching the largest number during the day, but as he had the assistance of Mabelia during the most of the afternoon, or after the dory was discovered and he had appropriated the same, together with the young lady, and they patrolled the stream much farther than could be reached by the rest of us, who had to confine ourselves to leaping from log to log and setting the nets in such spots as could be reached in this manner, this was not to be wondered at. In the course of our operations Fred and I succeeded in getting an involuntary ducking apiece by treading on insecure footing which gave way at inopportune moments and precipitated us into the creek. Aside from getting a trifle wet, we were none the worse for our experience. At any rate, our experiences in the bathing line furnished considerable amusement for the girls, and we took the chaffing of the men folk as good-naturedly as it was given. As Ma-

BY WILLIAM J. PETRAIN.
The crawling season is in full blast. Last Sunday probably marked the inaugural procession of excursionists to the rocky-bedded woodland streams adjacent to the metropolis where the festive crustaceans has his haunt in the deep recesses of the swiftly running water, and where the many fugitives from the heat and brain-torturing bustle of the busy city life find themselves on a Sunday with the idea of luring the crawfish from his native element. There are but few members of our city's population who are familiar with the delights attendant on an outing to any of the near-by streams on the day of rest, and while there indulging the opportunity for delving into the mysteries of the hidden depths of the brook where the crawfish

hides his slimy shell well out of sight under the boulders at the bottom of the stream.
The crawfish of Oregon has gained considerable prominence as a delicacy in recent years, principally for the reason that this specimen of the water animal is caught only in our own streams. True they are said to inhabit some streams in far-off Louisiana, but the writer is informed that the specimens caught in that locality are of an extremely small variety and never attain the size and delectable tendencies of the local product.
The history of the crawfish as a table delicacy in Portland dates back only a few years, for along about 1889 there was witnessed the first introduction of the creature as an edible. Up to that time scarcely any attention was paid to them.

So rapidly has been the progress of the crawfish into popular favor that where 15 years ago one lone fisherman supplied the local market with ease, it now requires a little army of fishermen engaged the entire year round to gather enough of the crustaceans to supply the local demand as well as the large number of orders received from Eastern cities. During the Lewis and Clark Exposition the crawfish trade had a big boom, for Eastern visitors were immediately struck with the flavor and delicacy of the new variety of fish, which so appealed to them that they have standing orders with a local firm to supply their caterers in their Eastern homes with this product of the Oregon streams.
Fishing from a commercial standpoint is carried on the entire year, and commencing about the first of June, the fishermen start on the Yamhill River,

where the best fish are obtainable, and gradually work down to the Willamette and continue along this stream, working the smaller tributaries until they strike the Columbia, which is also productive of vast numbers. The specimens caught in the Yamhill are rated as the best, for in this stream they attain the largest growth and the meat is considered excellent. The stream that produces the greatest quantity of these fish is the Tualatin, for here it is that crawfish is indulged in all the year round, while the other streams are fished only at certain periods.
During the months of September, October and November—the spawning season—the male fish are caught for market purposes, the females being returned to the stream to propagate the next season's harvest. Withal the commercial side of the crawling is worthy of some consideration; from 15,000 to 30,000 dozen are consumed here during the season, and it can be readily understood that the business possesses some magnitude.
Now to get down to the pleasure side of the crawling.
Along about the first of June many persons familiar with the delights accompanying an excursion to the various streams in our vicinity get out their nets and prepare for the regular Sunday trip to Johnson's Creek, Clackamas River, the Columbia Slough or to some other favorite camping spot, where they try their luck at luring the festive denizens of the brook from their haunts, as he later cooked to the order for the benefit of hungry appetites made keener by the exertions required in the effort to bag the fish.
Our party, which left the city last Sun-

day morning, took the 7:30 A. M. car on the Estacada line and debarked at the little station called Spanaway. Why it was named Spanaway none of the natives in the locality were able to inform us, although it is said that once upon a time, long before any of the present settlers landed there, a pioneer is said to have planted a cypress tree near the spot now occupied by the station.
The party included eight persons, and as we, with one exception, had all been out before, we were thoroughly experienced as to the requirements of the journey.
After alighting from the cars, we having on the instant of several thousand yards to the stream like wild coyotes over the prairie. Over fences we went, the girls climbing the barbed-wire enclosures with as much ease and grace as did the men folk, although it probably would have appeared less dignified than would have been approved by some of the dignified stay-at-home city folk. Over hills and down dales, through tangled underbrush, now and then following a beaten cow path, but more often striking through the untraveled paths to the Nature adorned, wildly grand spot we had chosen for our excursion, we went, and after about 30 minutes' walking we came to our old camping ground of the season before. This spot

seemed made to order, for a more ideal place for a picnic could hardly have been found. Surrounded on all sides by a dense copse of maple, with underbrush composed principally of wild cherry trees in full bloom, which added to the beauty of the wild, and with the swiftly moving creek and these attached to the middle of the regular size by the recent heavy rains, flowing at our feet, we set down the bundles and commenced baiting the nets.
Bait is an essential feature of a crawling excursion. When you contemplate a journey of the kind, see to it that you have a supply. The best morsel to tempt the crawfish is a good-sized chunk of raw meat; not too old, but with just enough of an odor to allow your nasal sensitiveness to become slightly offended by close proximity to the cuticle. Have your meat chopped into pound chunks, and these attached to the middle of the net with strong cords to hold it in place, as some of the larger fish could easily carry it off were it not tied. Next in line is the selecting of a favorable spot where-in to toss the net. Look along the banks of the stream for a dark recess which has indications of a rocky bed. When such a spot is found, drop the net into the

water, fasten the rope attached to it to a pole or the limb of a convenient tree, and leave the net alone. If there are no fish in the stream they will hold the most bait, and when you pull up after allowing the bait to rest from five to ten minutes you will find it literally covered with struggling, crawling, snapping crawfish of all sizes. Swing the net to the bank and pick each fish up, taking care to grasp it just back of the fore pincers, and toss it into a receptacle at hand for that purpose. As soon as the net is cleared, toss it back in the stream and await further developments.
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bellie said: "It all came out in the wash anyway."
When we arrived home preparations were immediately inaugurated for the cooking of our catch. Sue and Mabelia gathered together an assortment of carrots, onions, turnips, lettuce leaves and bay leaves, which were placed in a large boiler with a gallon or so of water, and after being plentifully sprinkled with prepared rock salt, cayenne pepper, other strong spices and a pinch of garlic, this was allowed to boil for two hours. While this mess was boiling the work of cleaning the fish was taken up. Crawfish must be cleaned before being cooked, for otherwise they are apt to prove poisonous; also it is essential that no dead fish be cooked. The cleaning of a crawfish is a simple affair, for all that is necessary is the disintegrating of the center of the three tail fins. When this fin is detached a long black strip will come with it, and the fish is ready for cooking. By the time we had the fish cleaned the "soup" in which they were to be boiled was ready. The vegetables were carefully strained from this, and white wine poured in, after which the fish were thrown into the boiling fluid and allowed to cook from eight to ten minutes, when they were ready for the table.

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Sounds in the Dark That Are Feared by Miners

"Tommy Knockers," the Dreaded Underground Ghosts; Mysterious Hammer and Drill That Mystify

Butte, Mont., June 19.—(Special Correspondence of The Sunday Oregonian.)—Among all the superstitions that haunt the souls of men there are none more firmly established than those which develop among the men who toil in the darkness and dampness of the mine. And of all superstitions there are none more weird than those of the "graveyard" shift. The "graveyard" shift is in the dead of night—usually between 11 P. M. and 3 A. M., and it is then that the "tommy knockers" are most often heard. Nearly all of the big mines of the West are in operation constantly during the 24 hours of every day and the seven days of every week. A great mining plant does not shut down on the Fourth of July or even at Christmas. The men are driving the drills, the "shots" are being fired, the broken ore shoveled into cars and carried out through shaft of tunnel, and the big mills are grinding, pounding and roaring for 24 days in the year. The miner who works steadily has no variation in his life. He is as far away from the world as the sailor at sea and the conditions are far more propitious for the birth and growth of superstitions.

of the time the man who drills in the breast of the tunnel, or "drift," is entirely alone—he and his flickering little candle—in the dark. If he is working in a wet mine, to the tune of the hammer as he strikes the drill he hears the accompaniment of dripping water—drip, drip, drip, incessantly. He stops to mop his face and light his pipe. Then as he sits resting and puffing for a few minutes, he looks into the black tunnel behind him. The dripping never ceases, and the man begins to wonder and to dream. Surely this is fertile soil for imagination.
He reflects upon the uncertainty of human life. Not long ago, perhaps, a man was killed in this mine. He was a driller, too, and alone in the breast of the tunnel, when suddenly throughout the mine an explosion was heard. A puff of wind blew out his candle, the air was thick with powder smoke and the dust of rock, and his body was torn and bruised so that it no longer had human form.

Sometimes one or more of the shots is not discharged; the fuse for some reason burns up close to the cap that is to explode the powder and then goes out. That one of the five or six shots in a breast of rock has not exploded may not be observed by those who are listening. The shift changes and another driller, unconscious of the presence of the "missed hole," goes to work in the tunnel. Perhaps, as he hammers merrily away, driving the hard steel into the rock, the end of his drill strikes the cap of the load that did not go off. Then there is an explosion, a cloud of smoke and dust in the darkness, a poor, mutilated dead body.

Following the Strange Noise.
The solitary driller in the graveyard shift, sitting to rest a minute and smoking, turns over in his mind the tragedies that add danger and mystery to mining. In the dead of night, he thought that his turn may come next is not comforting or exhilarating to the solitary man.
Suddenly, in the never-ceasing drip, drip, drip of the never-ceasing drip, drip, drip of the water, he hears some sound—the regular ring of a hammer not far from him. He is puzzled, for he knows that he is alone in that part of the mine. Never doubting the accuracy of his understanding, he takes his candle from the rock and tramps through the tunnel toward the sound of the drilling. He stops to listen. It seems above and he climbs up into a "raise," where ore has been taken down from above the tunnel. Holding his candle up, he searches the darkness with straining eyes.
But there is no light of another driller. The sound of the hammer seems to be a little further away. The miner descends from the "raise" and tramps again through the tunnel, his feet splashing through the mud and water. The mysterious sound deceives and eludes him.
The drilling ceases. The miner stops in surprise. He is alone, 600 feet below ground, except for this unknown companion. There is a moment of silence, intensified, it seems, by the drip, drip, drip of the water and the utter darkness.

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Ghosts of the Stain.
Miners don't laugh about the "tommy knockers." I have known men of intelligence, who have long since ceased to work "underground," solemnly aver that the "tommy knockers" invariably visit the mine where a man has been killed. The spirit comes back to the old haunts of the body. Sometimes it drills, sometimes it runs a phantom car, sometimes it only wanders aimlessly through the workings of the mine. Sometimes it is seen, but usually only heard.
To the miner who works alone in the darkness there are many sounds that may be exaggerated by imagination. Sometimes a timber that prevents the caving in of the sides of a tunnel grows rotten and breaks, and the sound rings resonantly throughout the hollow underground passageways. In some mines there are curious echoes, caused by the formation of the rock, and some loose earth in the wall of an empty chamber where ore has been taken out falls with a clatter that is heard far away. To the miner whose imagination has been stimulated by his solitude and the darkness these noises may be full of suggestion. The most natural is of the only sounds with which he is familiar in the mine—a footfall or a driller's hammer.
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spurning which came to him once, and a narrow escape from death. He was working in a mine in Montana in charge of the pumps which were kept constantly going to keep the mine from flooding with water. When each crew or "shift" of men finished work he would regularly make an inspection of the five pumps which were in operation.
The ore was lifted from this mine on an inclined shaft. The cars, which run on wheels up such a shaft, are called "skips," and it was the breaking of a "skip" which came near being fatal that night. The pump inspector had visited four of the pumps and was about to start down the shaft to the fifth, which was 500 feet below ground, when, as he tells me, he felt a peculiar feeling of fear and a voice directly over his shoulder said to him:
"Don't you go down that shaft tonight!"
The miner stopped. He seemed almost to feel the breath of the voice against his cheek. Then he told himself that he was foolish to heed any imaginings like this, and he went down to the pump. When he reached the 500-foot level he began at once his inspection of the machinery. Back in the tunnel, which extended away in the darkness, the water stood, nearly filling the passage, over a man's head in depth.
A hundred feet above an ore car filled with tons of rock was emptied into a "skip," which was started up the inclined shaft toward the surface. A moment later the man working at the pump heard a crashing, a terrific rattling sound. He realized at once that the "skip" had broken, and that the tons of rock were tumbling toward him down the shaft. Instinctively he flattened himself against the wall, and the rocks came like an aval-

anche. Most of it he escaped, but heavy pieces struck his shoulders, causing painful bruises. But that was not the worst.
Soon the air was filled with hissing steam. The load of ore in its fall had broken a steam pipe above, and the inspector knew that in a few minutes more he would be smothered. The steam was blinding. It was hot and stifling in his nostrils and his lungs. But he had little time to think. Only one course was open. He plunged into the icy water of the tunnel and swam out into the darkness.
Then the break in the steam pipe was discovered by those above. An engineer turned a valve and stopped the hot vapor's flow. The inspector, seeing that the cloud of steam was being washed away back to the shaft and rang a signal bell. A car was lowered, and he rode to the surface, weak with his bruises. And now he does not doubt the reality of what happened to him over his shoulder and said, "Don't go down the shaft tonight!"
These mines where the "tommy knockers" are, have usually been the scenes of violent deaths. The records of such mines are talked over by the miners as they gather at lunch time far under the ground to eat the contents of their dinner buckets, or as two or three of them assemble somewhere in the workings for a few minutes to loaf and smoke their pipes when the boss is out of sight. But in spite of its dangers, the isolation which it often entails, the arduous labor which it necessitates, and the fatal ailments which it breeds, no calling is so fascinating to its followers as is mining. Men who have become crippled and bent and old in their labor gladly take up their buckets, climb on to the cage and are dropped underground; and there, like some burrowing animal, they are at home and happy.

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