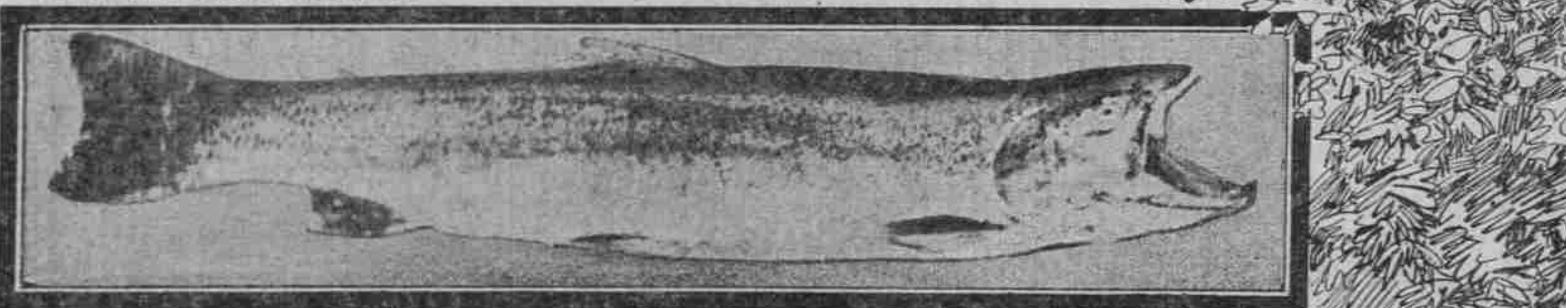
FISHING WITH A FLY IN ROGUE RIVER

No place for a novice; but for an expert, gee whiz! it's a paradise.

A FAIR AFTERNOON'S CATCH



A RAINBOW TROUT

"JUST AS I WAS POISED HALF-WAY OVER, I HEARD A SHORT STARTLED GRUNT."

BY WALTER P. BACKUS.

HAVING heard so much of the Rogue River and its wonderful fly fishing, I decided to give it a trial a few weeks ago, and found myself on the river at Trail, 25 miles from Medford, ready to tackle anything with fins. And I was not disappointed, for there are big fish in the Rogue, lots of them, and it was my good fortune to break all my previous records for size of fish taken with a fly.

But I want to say right here: Don't come to the Rogue expecting to catch a basketful in the first good-looking pool you reach, for it takes hard work and lots of it to get the big ones. A knowledge of the stream, and above all, the ability to cast a long line, are two requirements absolutely necessary. One soon learns where to look for the big fellows, but to increase your best cast 20 feet is quite another matter. Many a time I was obliged reluctantly to pass up a good riffle because I could not get out the extra 10 or 15 feet.

The Rogue is a good-sized stream, averaging 150 feet in width, and the fish nearly always lie out in the middle of the stream. To anyone familiar with casting tournament records, this would seem like smooth sailing, but it is one matter to cast 75 feet from a tournament platform, and quite a different and more difficult one to get out the same distance on a stream with all sorts of conditions against you. Very often an angler on an open stream, with his cast going out well, will confidently imagine himself to be casting 80 or 90 feet, whereas an actual measurement would show about 60 feet. Even this is a very respectable distance in actual fishing, and the man who, with a standard fly rod, can touch 75 feet on all kinds of water, is "going some."

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At any rate, get a good fly rod with plenty of backbone and be sure you are its master, before leaving for the Rogue. A 9½ or 10-foot rod, weighing six to seven ounces, will handle the fish to your liking. Most of the local fishermen use long bamboo cane poles, and usually "hist" the fish ashore without much ceremony. A strong reel of simple construction, one which will carry 200 feet of silk casting line, will fill the bill. Leaders should be six feet long, of heavy single gut, with but one extra loop. No. 4 flies are the favorites for all-around fishing. During September, Coachman's and Professors are the best killers, while a little earlier, March Brown and Yellow-bodied Grey Hackles are both taken readily.

Just what species the big fish are is a subject of considerable discussion. A good many claim they are all Rainbows, and they look the part, but the majority of anglers speak of them as steel-heads, or steel-head trout. They look a good deal like the Rainbow trout in our neighboring streams, and have a peculiar shade of steel-blue on top of the head—hence the name.

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In their habits they are quite different from our trout. The steel-head likes a fairly swift riffle, with the water from six to eight feet deep, and either bedrock bottom or a profusion of large boulders. The smooth, sandy-bottom eddies which look so good to the angler, seldom, if ever, contain any steel-heads. In fishing, the angler casts his fly out toward mid-stream and lets it drift quietly over the fish, which seldom show themselves when taking the fly. In fact, I can recall but two cases where I saw a fish strike my fly, and in both instances, only the fish's head showed above the water. Usually the fly will be floating quietly down the pool, when suddenly a vicious tug will be felt, more like the strike of a salmon, and the angler will find that the big steel-head has taken his fly, and is apparently trying to borrow all the rest of the tackle. Upon feeling the hook the fish usually takes several hurried views of the surrounding scenery, and then starts down stream full speed, with a highly excited angler trying frantically to keep from being distanced.

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I will never forget my last day's fishing on the river near Trail. I had become quite familiar with the stream by this time, and I had selected a stretch of fine "steelhead" water two miles down stream for the final tussle. The day was rather unfavorable, cloudy and threatening, and rather cold. Up till noon, I had only two fish of about a pound each, but in the afternoon things changed. I reached the finest steelhead pool I had yet seen on the Rogue. The stream here was a trifle wider than usual—solid bedrock bottom from shore to shore, with a string of big brown boulders down the middle. In short, it is an ideal steelhead water and like most of its kind, rather hard to reach. It was necessary to get the fly clear across the current in order that it might drift over the fish properly.

Time and again, I would put forth my best efforts, only to have the fly fall short by five or ten feet, but when my No. 4 Coachman did go clear across, I was almost certain to be rewarded with a heavy plunging strike. It wasn't long before I had several four-pounders on the bank, and began to wish for something bigger.

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I had just succeeded in making the Coachman fly a little farther than usual, and thought I detected a swirl in the water near it. The next instant I was sure of it, and the shock that came to me over the line, told quite plainly that I had a really big one. As soon as he was hooked, I started for shore, and so did the fish, but he selected the opposite side, so that when I finally got out, I found my reel so bare that I was almost ashamed to look at it—but there was the fish still going down stream, and strenuously demanding more line, which I didn't have. There was nothing left but to chase him, which I did.

Sprinting down the river bank, I came to a fence extending clear to the water's edge. Holding the rod high in my left hand, I vaulted clear over it—and the fish was still on. Fifty yards down, there was another fence of the old rail type, and I started to clear this in a similar manner. Just as I was poised half-way over, I heard a short startled grunt and, looking down, saw a large fat sow slowly raising herself. It seems the rattle of the dry fence bars had disturbed her peaceful slumber, and here I was just about to fall all over her.

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Anglers often argue over what they consider the most critical moment in fishing—the first fierce strike—the mad struggle in midstream—or the final scoop of the landing net. They all have their theories, but I can safely assure you that the critical moment of this particular struggle was just when I heard the startled whoof of that old sow.

A collision meant the loss of my fish and perhaps a broken rod, but luck was with me that day. I missed the hog by a scant inch and covered the next 20 feet in nothing flat. By this time the fish was nearly exhausted, and after a short struggle in the shallow water, I got the net under him. He weighed seven pounds, the best fish on the trip.

To one used to catching the average trout near Portland, such fishing with the fly may sound rather strong, but I am giving the plain facts just as I found them, and another thing, nearly every fisherman I meet, remarks that this had been an exceptionally poor year for steelheads—that the river had 10 fish last year for every one this year.

Well, the next time I will pick out a good year, and I dread to think of what will happen.

Natural History on the Roof of the Barn

Beautiful Studies by a Man Who Has the Love of Nature in His Heart.

AFTER the first frost came the change, and now the ember days are with us. The Autumn fairies strive to bring back the faded Summer, flinging over woodland and field a ruddy mantle of many colors—purple and crimson and deep gold. They hover about the ripe corn and weave it into shining bundles. They still the little, quarrelsome winds and bid the brown leaves cease their whirling. They scatter mist-wreaths through the woods, and leave a purple halo of smoke along the far horizons and above the brooding trees. But all this tender beauty is but a faint reminder of days that are dead, and have more than a hint of sadness in their long and pensive hours.

In the garden the marigolds lie black and straggling, nipped by the sudden frost. The late morning-glories are shriveled. The sweet pea vines lie forlorn and dead. The melon patch is black, the tomato vines shriveled. All the asters and salvias, so gracious and glowing, so happy in their blossoming, turned their faces to the earth, and died amid their withering leaves. The only lively place about the farm is the barn. In these dull days it seems the very center of animal life, the happy home of all our humble friends, the little dumb brothers of humanity, the pets of the children, the strong and willing workers for the family.

On the sharp-pitched roof I see a merry flock of sparrows playing like lively children. These are the little winged friends who never leave us. Even in the dead of Winter we often hear their twitter "from the straw-built shed," or see them fluttering about the water trough, where the cattle are drinking. In the very coldest weather they are, perhaps, silent, but let a warm wind blow even for a day and they begin to chirp. Bless their merry hearts, they are not long sulking over hard luck! On the first hint of Spring they start the chorus. Their tune is a simple one, and a very short song is the one they sing for us, but still it is musical and merry. There is no place about the house where they will not try to build—under the eaves, on the roof, under the tiles or in the deserted nests of other birds. But as Spring advances they leave the housetops for the green wheat or sprouting corn, where they settle in great crowds and gather in vast crops.

Town folks may despise the humble sparrow—they may call him bad names, black and dirty and regular nuisance, but in the country we love him, and there he is clean and sweet as a pink. "Sparrows are so easily tamed," says an English writer. "The French people are fond of playing with them. I remember a man, in the great park of Paris, who would be perfectly surrounded by these gay little birds—some perching on his shoulders, some fluttering in the air up and down before his face, some settling on the ground like a tribe of followers, others resting on the marble seats. He jerked a crumb of bread into the air, a sparrow seized it as he would a flying insect. He put a crumb between his lips, a sparrow took it out, and fed from his mouth, all the while keeping up a constant chirping. He walked on, giving a little whistle, they followed him along the path and settled in a perfect cloud about his shoulders, others flying from shrub to shrub, then perching and following again."

On the barn roof are many swallows. The word swallow means "a porch bird," and for centuries these brown-winged creatures have placed their nests in closest proximity to man. We might well call them "man's bird," so attached are they to the human race. Jeffries is the laureate of the swallow in these modern days. Of them he says: "The greatest ornament a house can have is the nest of the eave-swallow under the farmhouse eaves. There is no ornament upon the barn like a swallow's nest upon the roof, the humble home of the tiny messenger between man and the blue heavens, between us and the sunlight, and all the promise of the sky." The joy of life, the highest and tenderest feelings. "Pure thoughts that soar on swallow's wings" come to that round nest under the barn roof. Not only for today, not only the hopes of future years, but all the memories of the past dwell there. The swallow is the genius of good to the house where it builds.

Year after year these generations of swallows have been associated with our homes, and all the events of family life have taken place under their watchful eyes. You can not repulse these friendly birds. The swallow does not understand being driven out, but comes right back again. How often does the careful housewife destroy the little nest above the front door, or high up on the cornice of her porch, only to find it rebuilt in the shortest possible space of time. The robin must be coaxed to live near us, the sparrow is shy and wary and suspicious, but the dear and unsuspecting swallow cannot believe that you would be without it. He has no fear of human kind, he flies close to the window, under the eaves, or on the beams of the kitchen porch, no matter who is looking on. No other bird will do this; it seems to have the perfect instinct of confidence and is thus our dearest roof tenant.

The chimney swallow is the forerunner of the house swallow. Perhaps no fact in natural history has been so much studied as the migration of these domestic favorites. In Summer no bird is so common, and while they seem to leave us in the Fall there is never a time when we are without them. The deepest thinkers have spent hours and hours in considering the problem of the swallow, its going and coming, its flight, its habits of every sort. Great poets have loved it, great artists and art writers have curiously studied it. There is no nation without its swallow lore, its swallow literature, myth and fable. Many and beautiful are the swallow songs of the world, both for instrument and voice. Like the nightingale beloved of Keats, its song is one of the "immortal things that were not born to die."

The barn roof has a natural history of its own, it has a regular round of seasons, a crowd of residents that have chosen it out of all the world, a constant stream of migrants coming and going from year to year. Robins and wrens have their own dates for taking up residence in this elevated land. They are always there in Summer time, and often in Winter, especially if the roof is old. They know right well where to look for the small creeping things that hide in the decaying wood or straw. Finches sometimes fly upon the roof if shrubberies are near, but they cannot be classed as regular roof birds. Wagtails make their nests in the ivy or ampelopsis that covers the walls. They seem to feel quite at home and perch on the ridge poles in a most free-and-easy fashion.

Tits of various species, titmouse and blue-tit, love the thatched roof, but can not do much with the hard surface of the tiled or wooden kind. Goat suckers, fern owls and small hawks come close to the eaves in the dusk of evening hunting for the moths so thickly settled there. The white owl, too, is a roof bird, but always chooses a deserted house or barn.

A barn in Winter time is a fortress, a place of refuge from the enemies of cold and hunger. Into its warm shelter come the cows and horses, the sheep and pigs and all the mixed and motley crew that make up the happy family of the farm home. And away up above the contented lowing and neighing and baaing and squealing of these four-footed folks sounds the singing and calling and chirping and cooing of the little winged creatures that are happy and lively in their airy home on the barn roof.—E. A. Matthews, in St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

The Cooking Hour.

New York Mail.

(Time, any evening between 5 and 7; place any large apartment building.)

Between the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations
That is known as the cooking hour.

I catch in th' apartment above me
The odor of frying meat.
The fragrance of liver and onions
And cabbage, fresh and sweet.

From my alcove I sense in the gaslight
A redolent, perfumed group
Of carrots, and leeks, and I'm certain
That somebody's cooking soup.

A sudden gust from the doorway,
A waft from the flat below,
Through windows left unbolted,
On every breeze they blow.

They climb up onto the ceiling,
They curl around on my chair;
If I try to escape they surround me;
They seem to be everywhere.

And the odors will stay forever,
Yes, forever and a day,
Till the building shall crumble to ruin
And molder in dust away!

Catholic Church on Wheels

Unique House of Worship in a Pullman Car.

Philadelphia Record.

HUNDREDS of people visited the Pennsylvania Railroad siding at Thirty-second and Market streets yesterday to see the most unique church in the United States, St. Anthony's Chapel car—a Catholic Church on wheels. It arrived here yesterday morning attached to the Harrisburg express, and quite a crowd welcomed it. During the day it was a constant source of wonder to those who inspected it. Every necessary part of a Catholic church is included in its equipment.

The car is a Pullman and from the outside it looks like every other parlor car except that at the top it bears the inscriptions, "The Catholic Church Extension Society of America," and below it, "St. Anthony's Chapel Car." The inside, however, is fitted up like a little church. At one end is an altar, behind which is a sacristy, where the vestments and sacred vessels are kept. There are two rows of wooden pews extending the whole length of the car, with kneeling benches in front. Around the car are the pictures of the stations of the cross. At the entrance is a holy water font.

A porter was the only attendant in the car when it arrived yesterday. Rev. A. P. Landry, who is its chaplain, came on ahead, but will be with it today. The car will remain here until Thursday and will be open for inspection every day. Catholics from all over the city are expected to visit it.

This church on wheels was built a little over a year ago by the society whose headquarters are in Chicago. Its mission is to go into the sparsely settled sections of the West, where churches are far out of the reach of the inhabitants. Wherever rails run the car goes. As it arrives in a section the news is spread and Catholics of the neighborhood go to attend mass, make their confessions and receive the sacrament. Since its construction it has traveled all over the West and visited hundreds of places. Eastern people hearing of it, desired to see it, so the society took it away from its circuit for two weeks and sent it east. It has already visited all the Middle Western states and after leaving Philadelphia will go to New York, Baltimore and Washington.

The Catholic Church Extension Society was established three years ago to give assistance to missionaries in out of the way places. A million dollar endowment fund has been started and some of the most prominent Catholics in the country are helping it. Two members of the board of governors live in Philadelphia—Martin Maloney and Anthony A. Hirst. The officers of the society are the Archbishop of Chicago, chairman board of governors Rev. Francis C. Kelly, president; Rev. E. B. Ledvina, general secretary; William P. Breen, treasurer; M. A. Fanning, secretary of the board of governors; George C. Hennessey, assistant secretary the Archbishop of Chicago, the president of the society, W. A. Carter, Michigan; Ambrose Petry, New York; Richmond Dean, Chicago; R. J. Cudahy, New York executive board.