

Knowing this, we selected Punta Gorda for our next field. Here we found an excellent hotel in a grove of orange trees on the Gulf, and were sung to sleep by the soft music of the waves kissing the sands. After a delicious rest we were up at daybreak and ready for the coming battle. The morning was occupied in preparation of boat, lines and bait. At high water, a little before noon, we slipped our moorings and sailed away.

It was a perfect day. A soft breeze was blowing; the sun looked out of a clear sky, unflecked by a single cloud; the boat rocked with the swell. Suddenly the wind rose, and we danced merrily along to the grounds. The sail was lowered, anchor dropped, hook baited with liveliest mullet, and cast made.

Soon a tug at the line awakened my hopes. Another tug. Then a heavier, and the hook went home. I felt the solid tug against the spring of the rod, and that peculiar thrill which seems to run down the line, up the arm and to the brain, a thrill that only the angler knows.

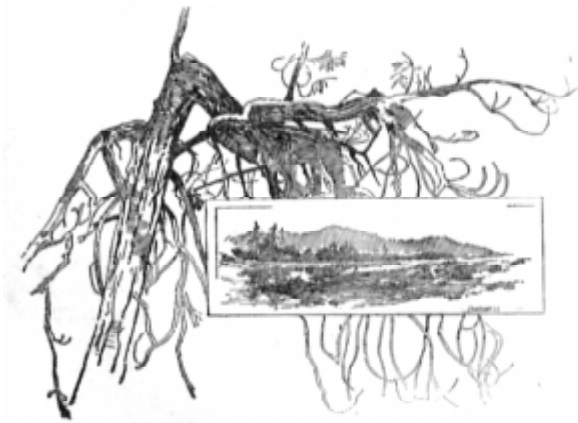
Great Neptune, how glorious! The reel fairly shrieked with joy and the

line cut the water with a whistle. Sometimes the king would leap high into the air, six, eight, ten feet, the sunlight flashed on his silver scales as on a polished mirror; then he would dive until it seemed as though the line must snap under the strain. I played him, it seemed to me, for hours.

The ejaculations, the directions, the cheers of my companions were lost upon me. The perspiration streamed from my face; my arms ached, and still he fought, fought with the fury of a viking. But while he was the king of fish, man is the king of all creation. He was armed with force and courage, man with reason and stratagem. Ere sun-down he had worn himself out, was brought close to the boat, knocked on the head and hauled on board. "A hundred-and-forty-pounder at the very lowest estimate!"

The sun rested on the amber clouds of the west as we weighed anchor, and soon drew a somber role across his face. The gray light of dusk sifted down around us, and as it darkened into night, one by one came out the lights along the shore. Our boat "hove to," the sail dropped, the chain rattled out to the dock, and the angler's tour was over.

IN THE STRONG, YOUNG SPRING.



SWAY and swing

In the winds of spring.

Bare boughs darkened by drenching rain.

Swing and sway,

The sky is gray,

But the blood of life wells up, again

In your tinted twigs that have caught a tone,

'Neath the March wind's roar that their hearts have known

In the days gone by. You are fain, full fain,

To be tangled and tossed and to rudely fling

In the wild, rough airs of the strong, young spring,

If the thrill of growth you but so regain,

O, bare boughs, darkened by drenching rain.

AURILLA FURBER.