



THE ROD AND LURE IN MARCH.

The well-contained angler, in his eagerness to be a-stream, and with sufficient courage to get there, is apt to commence his angling season in the tempestuous month of March; and does not hesitate to engage in his first bout with his quarry even on St. Patrick's Day, when the weather is generally so storm-disturbed that if there were any snakes alive and afield, in Ireland or any other land, they would freeze unto death. But if the angler, despite any environment on land or water, wishes to fish for trout merely for the pleasure it gives him to kill them, he will find a few States the laws of which permit him to do so in the month of March. They are: Ohio (March 15), Iowa, New York (only on Long Island, from March 29), Montana, North Carolina, West Virginia, Arkansas and Nebraska. As a rule, in all other sections the trout season opens in the month of April.

The angler must be in touch with the "open seasons," and, therefore, he must "ware" the killing of a blackbass in any of the States north of the latitudinal line of the Potomac River and east of the Rocky Mountains, for this game fish is well protected in that section until June 1st. Although the privilege to fish for black bass is accorded in March in many of the Southern States, the angler will find only the large-mouthed variety of this exceptionally fine game fish, a species which lacks the acrobatic qualities, dash and strength of the small-mouthed variety. The anglers of the Northwest, particularly in Minnesota and Northern Wisconsin, dispute the fact that the big-mouthed is inferior in gameness to his brother, the small-mouthed; and even angling tourists, returning from Florida and other Southern States, have asserted that the large-mouths taken in the South have exhibited all the fighting traits of their smaller-jawed brethren of the North. But the consensus of experience and opinion among anglers is exactly the reverse. While there cannot be a doubt as to the greater gameness of the big-mouths of the extreme North than is shown by their sluggish congeners of the South, it is unfortunately an open question as to the accuracy of determination of species, as reported by correspondents, who write all aglow over the discovery of the fact that no difference exists between the two species of black bass in their fighting qualities. Though they are all the time rejoicing over their delightful experience with a big-mouth they are sometimes boating or grassing a small-mouth, for in many waters north of the Ohio and Potomac rivers, the two species live harmoniously in the same pools, and spawn on adjacent beds

and at the same time. This latter fact has led many anglers to believe, not without reason, that the two species living in the same waters are interbreeding. If any of our Eastern anglers will observe closely the markings, particularly the position of the eyes, of the Greenwood Lake (N. Y.) black bass, they will find it somewhat difficult to recognize at sight the species to which the specimens under examination belong, particularly those running from three to five pounds in weight.

The early spring angler who fishes east of the Rocky Mountains will find but few species of fish worthy of the rod. On the Pacific Coast the sea fishing is grand through all the months of the year; the trout are protected but as a rule until April and in Oregon until May. Those who fish east of the eastern slope of the Rockies can essay a few coarse fish in the fresh waters, and can take flounders, striped bass and tomcods in the ocean, the first and last named being two of the most delicious of table fish, if cooked soon after they are caught. We question if the much-talked-of flavor of the English turbot surpasses the delicacy and sweetness of a freshly killed flounder that weighs not over a pound. By the bye, and in this connection, what has become of the plant of adult English turbot made some years ago on the ocean side of Coney Island? They have never been seen, and the market fishermen have been, every season since the plant, anxiously looking for them, for in these days British turbots would command famine prices.

The striped bass, which spawns in the early spring, at least so our fish savants tell us, is now preparing to ascend the rivers in search of food in the fresh waters; but he lingers until May and sometimes June; around the shallows, broken meadow-banks and rocky shores where the tide sweeps, feeding upon salt-water crustacea and sandworms. Wherever these conditions exist the angler will find striped bass in the month of March in the bays and estuaries of the New York and New Jersey coast-line. In the Chesapeake they come in from the Gulf Stream a month or more earlier, and still sooner to North and South Carolina waters. In March and April the most successful method of luring them is by trolling, using a No. 3 or 4 spoon and removing the usual triple gang of hooks and inserting in their place a single hook which is attached to a three-inch snood. On this rig the single hooks will be three or four inches behind the rear end of the flange of the spoon, the whirl of which attracts the fish to the hook; this is baited with an eel-tail or two, or two or three large white worms, which are sold in all the cities of the Eastern Coast at about twenty cents per dozen. The above described device was invented only a few years ago, and it is the most successful of all the lures for striped bass. We do not doubt that it would be equally killing in the Pacific Coast waters, where the striped bass are increasing very rapidly and growing to a large size, particularly in the lower Sacramento River.

It would be well for anglers of that section to try this trolling device for other fish, particularly the tuna and yellowtail; a No. 8 spoon, with a wire snood four inches long, and hook baited with a small fish would insure more frequent strikes, as the whirling spoon is even more

attractive to salt-water fish than it is to fresh-water species. This fact is so well known to Eastern salt-water fishermen that, when still-fishing and the run of fish cease, the spoon is often used to find new feeding grounds. It is trolled behind until several strikes are felt, and then down goes the anchor and still-fishing is resumed—and very generally with success. In still-fishing the most attractive lure is a piece of the “shedder” or “peeler” crab, and the bait is kept about two feet from the bottom; in trolling, the spoon is allowed to sink about a foot or two below the surface of the water.

Fishing for flounders is done with very small hooks—Nos. 6 to 8 sroat are good sizes, as the flounder has a small mouth; the best bait is a small piece of hard-shell clam. When “fluke” are running, hooks are used adapted to the size and weight of the fish, but 1-0 sroat will, as a rule, be large enough. “Fluke” is a local name in New York waters for a large-size flounder of three to ten pounds; the average seldom reaching more than one pound.

SPRING SHOOTING.

There is in the air, without doubt, a movement tending toward the restriction of spring shooting. Of course there are pros and cons, and sturdy advocates upon both sides of the question, but the sentiment of the best sportsmen is veering in many States toward invoking the strong hand of the law to restrict the spring shooting, if not to entirely abolish it. The fate of the larger quadruped game and of the larger winged game, even in the once abundant waters of Currituck and the South, is more and more pointed out as a warning as to the fate of other birds, notably that delight to the gunner, the snipe: The last published report of the New York Commissioners of Fisheries, Game and Forests points out that the effect of meeting the arrival of this one-time abundant bird with a spring fusillade has been to drive it beyond the United States, to breed and lay its eggs in the lonely marshes of Canada. It is not to be expected that so radical a movement will take effect in law at once, but the growth of a better knowledge may restrain somewhat, voluntarily, the hand of the destroyer. The following sentence of the report, with which the discussion of the subject concludes, deserves a wider circulation than its official publication will give it: “Most gunners who have fairly considered the subject will agree, I think, that if we are to continue to have any snipe shooting, the season in all the States should close on the first of January. In the Northern States that would mean that snipe shooting, like that of other game birds, should be confined to the autumn months; and that when they arrive in the spring and are already mated the birds should not be disturbed, but allowed to continue their journey unmolested or to breed with us. The faith in the necessity of putting an end to spring shooting, if we are to continue to have any snipe or wild fowl, is growing slowly, and will before long become general; and until this further limit is set on the use of the gun, ducks and snipe will continue to diminish in number. Perhaps nine-tenths of the shooting done to-day is at inanimate targets, and unless some earnest steps are taken to preserve our game birds, those who

care for field shooting may have to put away their guns for all time.” It is not necessary to entirely agree with the very sweeping conclusions of the report to recognize that it opens up a subject of serious concern to all true sportsmen.

THE BIRDS OF NEW YORK.

The director of the New York State Museum is seeking co-operation for an object with which sportsmen will be entirely in accord; and no class of the community can give him so much assistance as those who go afield with rod and gun. It is the purpose of the authorities to publish a bulletin on the birds of the State as soon as a thorough biologic survey can be made. As the area of the State is so large it is impossible to secure the necessary observations without the assistance of those interested in the ornithology of the different counties of the State: and all interested in making this report as complete and of as much value to the public as possible are asked to co-operate with Frederick J. H. Merrill, the director. The information desired consists of complete lists of birds found in the various sections of the State, with notes on the comparative abundance of the different species, dates of arrival, times of nesting, singing periods, facts relating to local distribution, effect of storms and severe weather on bird life, and the wet and dry season on the reproduction of species; also notes on the food of birds at different seasons of the year and under different conditions, to determine the comparative benefit and injury done through the destruction of insects, etc. This is an appeal that will commend itself to all sportsmen and naturalists, and those who have hitherto neglected somewhat their “field notes by the way” will be spurred to mend their ways and help along the good work. The pleasure of days afield is enhanced by a closer observation of the habits and habitats of our feathered friends.

SPORTSMEN'S SHOWS.

The Boston Sportsmen's Show will be in the middle of its career when this issue reaches our readers, and the New York show on the eve of opening its doors. Each of these events has developed into an educational exhibit of great interest, and at each OUTING will add its quota.

THE BOSTON SHOW.

The Boston show opened at the Mechanics' Building on the 22d February, and will remain open until the 10th March. Maine, Quebec and the Adirondacks have each characteristic and attractive exhibits of their respective regions. Maine's Fish and Game Commissioners, through their Chief Warden, C. C. Nichols, have gathered live moose, caribou, deer, bears, foxes, woodchucks, muskrats, wild cats, mink, 'coons and owls for exhibition, and these are supplemented by splendid stuffed specimens. To these are added a fish-pond stocked with large trout. The Provincial Government of Quebec make a big exhibit of moose, deer, bears, beavers, raccoons, otters, mink, hares, wild geese and ducks. The Adirondack exhibit gives an excellent representation of the game life of that important district. The fish exhibit is very complete, comprising a

complete hatchery and tanks of several hundred trout of many varieties.

THE NEW YORK SHOW.

This show, at Madison Square Garden, from the 1st to the 17th March, will contain exhibits of the leading railway lines of transport to the game sections of the country, from Maine to Florida, and from Virginia to the prairies beyond the Mississippi. The State of Maine, which last year made so important a contribution, will this year exceed past efforts. The Adirondacks will be no whit behind in bring-

ing before sportsmen their claims of the North Woods; Florida's game resources will be done full justice to, and the scenery of the Indian and Oklawaha rivers reproduced; Mr. Oscar Nesse, of Red Bank, will exploit Barnegat Bay. The revolver and rifle competitions, always a feature of the metropolitan show, will be increased in extent and managed by able experts; and well-deserved prominence will be given to the sport of canoeing and to all that contributes to the comfort and pleasure of the canoeist both on the water and in camp.

KENNEL.

THE WESTMINSTER KENNEL SHOW.

YEAR by year the increasing interest in the Metropolitan Show of the Westminster Kennel Club indicates the extension of the love of the dog, and, what is more to the point, the love of the dog of good breed. Blood tells just as much in the dog as in the horse, and the wider this is recognized the wider, deeper and broader becomes the foundation on which the various breeds of the dog rest. This discrimination is good for the owner as well as for the dog, for in the breeding and training of the thoroughbred there are called into action in man attributes of patience, observation and perseverance that are of solid value as a mental acquisition.

Nothing could be a better example of the growing interest than the fact that dog lovers are doing more to make the great Westminster Show a success each year, from a competitive point of view. This year's schedule provides more prize money than any previous show, but a point of even greater interest is the wonderful number of special prizes which are being donated by lovers of various breeds. Almost daily since the premium list appeared some new addition in the form of a special has been added to the already long list of cups provided.

The show will be held in Madison Square Garden on February 20th, 21st, 22d and 23d, and there is little doubt that, with so excellent a premium list, such numerous specials, and a manager with such wide knowledge in show matters as James Mortimer, the twenty-fourth annual will in all respects outclass its predecessors.

UNITED STATES FIELD TRIAL CLUB.

The ninth annual trials of the United States Field Trial Club, were held at Grand Junction, Tenn., January 22d to 26th. The trials were to have been held at West Point, Miss., but an epidemic of smallpox having broken out it was found advisable to move the trials to other quarters. The club had the good fortune to find suitable grounds at Grand Junction, and the supply of birds during the week averaged out very well; almost all the dogs put down had a good showing on game.

The weather was pleasant throughout, the attendance good, and the dogs worked admirably.

The Pointer Derby, for pointers whelped on or after January 1, 1898, was held on the first day, and brought out ten entries as follows: Dr.

J. R. Daniel's Sams Hale; Charlottesville Field Trial Kennel's Khartoum and Dervish; Dr. N. F. Rogers' Brann; R. B. Morgan's Captain Dupee; Dr. O. W. Ferguson's Drillmaster; J. S. Crane's Dot's Daisy, D. H. Moore's Jingo's Pearl; J. C. Porterfield's Teddy Roosevelt, and A. O. Pitcher's Pitcher's Beauty.

The judges were: H. B. Duryea, J. D. King and W. B. Hamilton.

Khartoum won first, Drillmaster, second, and Dot's Daisy and Teddy Roosevelt were placed equal third.

The Setter Derby, for setters whelped on or after January 1, 1898, was run on January 23d.

The judges for this event were: W. B. Hamilton, J. D. King and E. C. Buck.

The following dogs were entered: H. Ames' Bona; P. Lorillard, Jr.'s, Geneva; J. M. Morgan's Lona; Avent and Duryea's Pontiac, Sioux and Victor; Dr. C. I. Shoop's Count Hunter and Harwick's Boy, and R. B. Morgan's Rosa.

Geneva won first, Count Hunter, second, and Sioux, third. The work of the first and second prize-winners was very even, and it was a hard task to pick the winner.

The All-Age Stake for pointers and setters that had never won a first prize in Eastern, Continental or United States field trials, was undoubtedly the event of the meet. A field of twenty-two starters was drawn together, and the event covered the best part of three days. The dogs entered were as follows: W. P. Austin's Lad of Jingo, P. Lorillard, Jr.'s Geneva, Roland and Jack, J. L. Breeze's Bang III., Maj. J. B. Downing's Fayette Vanguard, J. D. Law's Lady's Count, G. G. Williamson's Lady's Count Gladstone, Avent and Duryea's Lady Rachel, Prime Minister, Roysterer, Ned B. and Sioux; Charlottesville Kennel's Young Jingo and Ranée; W. B. Will's Selkirk Dan, H. K. Devereaux's Uncle B.; H. S. Bevan's Enoch Arden, H. Parson's Domotoe, D. H. Moor's Count's Nellie, and R. V. Fox's Dave Earl.

Shortly after 10 A. M. on the last day of the trials the first brace in the third series were cast off; these were Uncle B. and Jack. After fifty minutes they were taken up with the advantage in Uncle B.'s favor. The next pair, Geneva and Lady's Count Gladstone, started off their race at fairly even terms with a slight advantage for Geneva, but toward the finish she made some bad breaks which put her out of winning a place. The winnings resulted as follows: 1st, Lady Rachel (setter); 2d, Lady's Count Gladstone (setter); and 3d, Uncle B. (setter).