

FOOLING THE GRAY SQUIRREL Curiosity the Fatal Weakness of a Generally Wise Little Beast.

FUN WITH THE EEL SPEARERS

Senator Fry's Record Trout—Slaughter of Wild Pigeons—Recalled by an Old Net.

"The gray squirrel," said a sportsman with speciality in small game, "while by no means as plentiful as formerly, is yet to be found in sufficient numbers to make the hunt interesting. It is the smartest of the squirrels and has such ways that no matter how good a shot a man may be unless he is familiar with those ways and with means of circumventing them he will go hunting many a time for the sagacious little animal before he will have squirrel potpie from material provided by his own shooting. Any one who has an idea that it is no trick to bag gray squirrels will be surprised when he goes out to get them to find how many he doesn't get. The squirrel doesn't permit our hunting squirrels until late autumn, and then they are at their best. The early morning or toward the close of day is the best time to go out after gray squirrels, which are the only squirrels now left in this latitude worth hunting, the black squirrel seemingly having disappeared from its old time haunts as completely as the wild pigeon has passed away. It is said that the only place where this squirrel, once plentiful in New York and Pennsylvania, can now be found in the deep woods districts of Arkansas.

"Either at the beginning or close of day is the feeding time of the gray squirrel, although when they are working on the young hickory nuts and the leaves are still thick on the trees they feed more or less through the day. The gray squirrel is a skillful hider in the trees it selects for its purpose and it will often long defy the skill and try the patience of the best squirrel hunter to locate it. Noise or the known presence of danger without noise doesn't often chase a gray squirrel out of its hiding place in a tree. The surest way to get your squirrel after locating the tree in which it is hiding is to sit down, keep perfectly quiet and wait.

"The gray squirrel's great weakness is curiosity. Often a squirrel discovers a hunter stealing along in the woods in its vicinity and will bark at him fiercely. If the hunter knows the ways of gray squirrels he is sure of having that one in his bag by and by.

"All the hunter has to do is to let it bark and scold, quit looking for it and let it look for him. That is, the hunter simply treats the jawing of the squirrel with indifference and seeks a hiding place himself.

"Then pretty soon the squirrel will become the hunter. It can't resist the promptings of its curiosity. It wants to know what cooking becomes of that scolding and will cease barking and scolding. Then by and by the hunter from his hiding place will see the head of the squirrel come cautiously from some place up in the tree, and never the place where he would have expected to see it appear. The squirrel will peer suspiciously about. Seeing nothing it will come out to make a more sweeping inspection of the surroundings. The man with the gun has only to do the rest.

"Some hunters go after gray squirrels with the help of dogs. Any good nosed dog will readily take the scent of a squirrel and soon get him out. The squirrel's barking started will quickly cease, and the barking of the dog will bring it to the notice of the hunter.

"If he has good eyes and knows where to direct them he may be by and by detect the wily bushytail in the very top of the tree, coddled up and watching the barking dog. The ruffed grouse is not a better hider than the gray squirrel, and is not nearly so hard to kill. Nothing of less capacity than a good charge of No. 4 shot, driven by 2 1/2 grams of powder is likely to have sufficient effect in the shooting of a gray squirrel.

"The foraging processes of the gray squirrel in its approach to the good condition the hunting season finds it in are an interesting study. It likes chestnuts best and before the time for those comes the squirrels do little or nothing toward procuring themselves with their winter supplies, but live the life of a gourmet on the delicacies the seasons provide in convenient quantities.

"First the wild cherries, of which the gray squirrel eats but the pungent pulp and rejects the pits, and the red-squirrels, which cracks the pits of the cherries to get at the meat they contain and doesn't eat the pulp. When the cherries are gone the field corn is in its tender milky stage, and the squirrels simply do not.

"The squirrels feed on the corn at night if the moon is shining, and while they are engaged thus the hungry and sharp-eyed owl is active in its noiseless quest about the fields and comes to the aid of the squirrel in its foraging.

"When the corn begins to harden in the ear the brown-shelled beechnut is filled with its sweet kernel and that provides the squirrels with toothsome forage until the young hickory nuts are ready. Then the squirrel hunter will seek his game in vain elsewhere than where the hickory trees prevail until the chestnut burrs open with the frosts and expose their rich clusters to the ever watchful squirrels. This is their chief feast of the year, and the storing time for it.

"The squirrels take to their feet to fill their nests with chestnuts and hide them by the bushes in other places against the needs of the winter.

EEL SPEARING.

A Sport That Has Begun Early This Year on the Delaware River.

"If anybody wants to have a night's sport that has vim to it and that will give the cobwebs off his brain and give his liver a wholesome rest," said a Pike county man, "let him take a run up to almost anywhere along the Delaware between now and October and go out after eels with a spear.

"The eel hunters with the spear along the Delaware are early on the trail this year. The flash and glare of their jacks may be seen now at short intervals, up and down the river, from almost any given point, from nightfall until midnight. If the night is most favorable for the

hunt it will be dark and cloudy, with good promise of rain by and by. In one of the home made, rude, flat bottomed boats that the native Delaware River fisherman prefers to the lightest and handiest on the skiff or canoe the hunting party embarks and is rowed to the grounds over which the spear fishing is to be done. When the eel hunters reach the grounds, which will be along the shore somewhere where the water is shallow enough to permit the light from the jack to penetrate to the bottom, they get out of the boat into the water. There are the torch bearer and the man with the spear, one on one side of the boat and one on the other side, and a man or two to push the boat slowly along up stream.

"The eel spearer's torch nowadays is a bright and steady torch fed by kerosene. In the good old times, when there was a lot of romance even to eel spearing, it was a jack, not a torch. It consisted of a large wickerwork bowl or cage of iron, fastened to one end of a stout hickory staff. The boat was half filled with fat pine knots—then plentiful in the Delaware Valley, now as rare there as gold nuggets.

"In order that the supply might not become exhausted during the night's spearing, and from these fires was kindled in the cage at the end of the staff.

"The light it made illuminated the water for yards around, while the cloud of pitch black smoke rising from it added to the weirdness of the scene. Sometimes the flaring jack would be lashed fast to the boat at the bow, but more frequently some stalwart fisherman would carry it aloft, wading by the side of the spearmen.

"The eels always hunt their prey close to the bottom of the stream, which is plainly visible beneath the glare of the jack. The instant the light falls upon an eel, no matter how rapidly it might be making its way along before the light strikes down as still as a stone in the water, the working of its gills and fins being the only sign that it is a thing of life. When an eel falls thus within the light of the jack the boat is stopped on signal from the man with the spear.

"The spear is three lined, the tines about four inches long and barbed, the whole fitted by means of a deep socket to a long slender hickory handle. The eel discovered and the boat stopped, the harpoon lowers the spear cautiously into the water until it is within a few inches of the eel, which he aims to strike just back of the head.

"Lack of dexterity on the part of the spearer, or the eel's inability to swim him the spear, and no matter how old hand one may be at eel spearing he will always experience painful suspense from the time he gets his eyes on the eel lying like a snake on the bottom until the spear is thrust and the spearer feels the well defined crunch that tells him the shaft went true and the game is his, and if there is thunder and lightning and squirming to the surface, yanked off the barbs and thrown into a bag among the previous victims of the hunt on the bottom of the boat.

"The eel spearing season is a favorite night a hundred pounds of eels or more. A rainy or rain threatening night is best, but if there is thunder and lightning the spear may just as well be hung up and the jack extinguished, for eels will not hunt during a thunderstorm.

"The crisp nights of later September add to the interest of the sport, and so absorbing is it then that even the novice will not feel the chill of the water or the nipping of the frosty air until the night's hunt is over.

SENATOR FRY'S BIG TROUT.

A Ten Pounder Taken With a Fly on Moosehookmugic Lake.

LEWISTON, Me., Aug. 26.—The late Senator William P. Fry was for many years an enthusiastic angler and an annual visitor to the Rangeley Lakes, where he had a bungalow on Moosehookmugic Lake. He gave the sport of fishing much study, the result being the catching of what is said to be the largest trout ever taken with an artificial fly. Here is the Senator's own description of the incident:

"There is no photograph of the fish. I have a painting of him made from figures given to the painter. I shall be obliged to give them from recollection. He was 27 1/2 inches long, about 18 inches in girth, perfectly shaped, beautiful color, with a spread of tail of about 8 inches.

"I saw him rise in the morning, but better than to trouble him before night. I prepared for the contest with a fine split bamboo rod that could not be broken, with a salmon leader tested to nine pounds and with a brown hackle fly, the best I could get, and a trout which I had made at Rangeley village before the time I saw the fish and the time I cast for him. I had my guide, Ed, with me, and he, like a gentleman, wanted to fight the motor car, but although the man is an eminent jurist not much credence has been placed in that statement.

"The fly was a good one, and I have ever before and the indication is that when the time of year comes for wolf bites there will be no lack of wolves. The fact that he comes after houndies for wolf bites does not appear to have had the number of houndies generally secured from the flies filled with stories of ravages of houndies and pigeons.

"The boldness shown by the houndies this year is attributed to the long dry stretch of the river and other small streams. The dogs run to the river and other small streams and the lowlands where they could find something to eat. The coyotes have been driven in off of the big pastures and have followed the rabbits to the timber and the coyote is naturally a coward. He avoids habitations and runs from a human being, but they are not all doing that this year. Stories are told of coyotes following children. Stories are told in the Rangeley section of a coyote killing a man and a woman and fighting with the dog, his favorite hunt of the coyote is the big pasture section in the Flat Hills. They are always thick in that locality.

CARIBOU COME BACK TO MAINE.

Small Herds Reported in the Northeastern Part of the State.

Augusta, September 26.—Boston Transcript. The Hon. John S. P. Wilson, chairman of the Maine Game and Fish Commission, states that in the head River and Moose River regions deer are more plentiful than for many years.

"Moose seem to be holding their own in the same territory, which is bounded on the east by the upper Kennebec River and Moosehead Lake and on the west by the Canada line. The information from lumbermen and forest fire fighters, as well as from guides, is to the effect that the wild animals generally secured from the forest areas which were numerous in July.

"Mr. Wilson also states that several reports have been reported to the Commission that they have recently seen a small herd of caribou in the Moosehead Lake region of northern Maine. It is more than a dozen years since a caribou is known to have been killed in Maine and it was supposed that this migratory beast had gone so far north that it might never return. This year, however, the opening of new settlements in Canada, making it harder for the animals to come into Maine by a purely wilderness route. The recent Legislature passed a law establishing a close time to caribou until October 30, 1911.

VALUE OF A TRICK IN AUCTION

MISTAKEN NOTION THAT IT'S ALL IN THE PLAY.

Finer Points of the Game Which Only the Experts Can Foresee—Planning for Finesse—Inferences as to the Lay of the Cards—Some Illustrative Hands.

There are persons who will tell you that the bidding is everything in auction and that the play of the cards does not amount to a hill of beans. One might as well say that the bid on the new subways was everything and that the carrying out of the contracts in the actual construction was of little or no importance.

As pointed out by Bedworth, a single trick may make or break a contract and a difference of 50 points on the lowest possible declaration is no small matter. The trick might be worth 44 points if the declaration were three no trumps redoubled, on the rubber game, if it is conceded that the difference between losing the rubber and winning it is 500 points.

On can understand the loss of tricks through such carelessness as forgetting that the seven is the best of a suit or through failure to lead to a guarded king instead of away from it, because such errors are apparent to the merest tyro. The subtler plays, such as establishing suits by a double finesse or making returns out of small cards, are matters requiring a keen insight to appreciate and are hardly explainable to the average player, although they should never be overlooked by one with any pretensions to the first class.

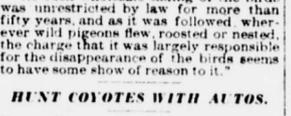
But there are situations which even those who are considered as among the best players do not seem to grasp; certain position plays, designed to pick up a single trick, which are anticipated by inference and the lead arranged for a finesse which is still several tricks away. Those who have trained themselves by the solution of bridge problems are usually quick to see into these positions and profit by them provided they have the skill to read the cards and infer the distribution.

Almost any player realizes the advantage of finessing and knows that it is based on the principle of winning tricks with cards which are not the best held in the suit nor in sequence with them. The typical example is the ace queen in one hand and small cards in the other. Any player holding the ace and queen of a suit with the dummy on his left knows that he is sure of two tricks if dummy has not the king, provided he does not lead that suit himself.

In the same way any ordinary player knows that if dummy has a suit headed by the queen, jack, and he leads a small card to the king in the other hand, and that if it holds the trick the declarer should put himself in again so as to lead from the weak hand to the strong one more and finesse the queen, after which the ace ought to drop the king.

But these are what we call ready made tenaces because they existed when the cards were dealt and there is nothing to do but to play them. It requires careful observation, which is another name for a good memory, to see that one must lead the ten to the queen and five in order to win two tricks over the ten and four, which are not yet played. These are the situations that become established in the course of play, sometimes by accident, sometimes by bad discards.

But there is still another and much more difficult tenace position, and that is one arranged by the player himself in anticipation of a distribution of the cards which he cannot see but simply infers from the drop. When one gets into the class that can work this part of the game well, it becomes a most profitable way from him through those minor mistakes which are common to the beginner. Take this situation:



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Now, if Y can make a heart trick, or can get four tricks in spades he wins the game, and he concluded to try for the spades, leading a small one from Z's hand, playing the king and returning the ten, which he covered with the queen, only to find the jack guarded against him.

If he leads the heart he may not make a trick in that suit, so he led the spade ace and another, putting B in, which led A to make two great tricks and Z's best club. This stopped Y and Z at two by cards, and although they fulfilled their contract they finally lost the rubber.

If the correct play on the spade suit especially after the spade discard by A was to arrange for a possible finesse on the third round by leading the ace first from Z's hand, putting the ten on it, not the king, A would have won the trick and would have disclosed the situation for leading through B and over-riding the device with the nine, catching both jack and seven and just going game.

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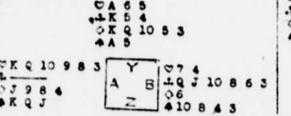
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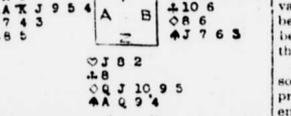
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Firefly Legends of Japan Ancient Lore and Old Poems About Fairy Lanterns.

This is the season of the firefly in Japan and thousands of Japanese find enjoyment along the rivers and in the willow thickets of marshy places in hunting the insects with the uchiwa, or firefly fan. Just as there are pilgrimages to Omori to view the famous plum blossoms in April at Omiya, near Tokio, and the River Uji, outside of Kyoto, are the firefly viewing places of renown in the empire.

So much of legend and poetic lore has been woven about the firefly that it has become part of the great native cult of the Japanese. Ancient heretics have been guided on daring missions by the lantern light of the firefly in the bamboo wilderness. Not as children chasing the insect to kill it do the grown folks of Japan seek the firefly in the meadows, but because it is beautiful and the lantern under its wings may some time light fairies down the heavenly avenues.

One of the oldest legends of the firefly tells how a Chinese scholar thousands of years ago was too poor to buy oil for his night lamp. So that he might peruse the books of the sages at night he captured fireflies in the summer and read by the glare from the snow in the winter.

About the River Uji, where the fireflies swarm thickest and their lights glow brightest in all Japan, there is a love story known to every boy and girl. It is the story of Asajiro and Asajiro. The gidayu singer who roams the streets with his lute sings this story during the season of the firefly.

Years and years ago when the fireflies swarmed in glowing clouds above the Uji Asajiro the beauty of all the Kioto neighborhood and her family drifted lazily down the river in their pleasure boat one summer night viewing the lanterns of the fairies. A boat passed them. In it was Asajiro, strongest and handsomest of the Samurai warriors. The boats drew together and Asajiro and Asajiro fell in love at first sight. They wrote love messages on their fans and exchanged them surreptitiously. The boats parted.

The next day Asajiro tried by discreet inquiry to locate the youth of the fairy night, but in vain. He had gone away to fight for his lord. When he did not return the maiden cried until she became blind. Years passed and Asajiro, true to his love, continued to mourn him. She became a traveling koto player and was desired from Kioto to Yedo and back, playing the koto for way-side travelers and the lodgers at inns. Always she sought Asajiro.

Asajiro grew old and wrinkled a wanderer minstrel. One night she played for a company at a little country inn far from the Uji River and she sang about the fireflies of the summer nights when youths and maidens floated on the river beneath their glow. One of the guests was the old lover Asajiro. He recognized in the wrinkled blind woman the fairy whom he had wooed under the fairy lantern.

Asajiro wept. He called the blind minstrel to him and asked her to tell him how she became an outcast koto singer. She then related the story of her wanderings and the constancy of her love, not realizing that at last she had found her lover. Asajiro did not reveal himself, but hurried from the inn, leaving behind him a bag of gold and a message for the blind singer.

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