Catch Fish by the Ton

A black wreath of smoke drifting toward the light that was slowly breaking along the horizon would have discovered the course of the Andy Johnson to any sea-knowing eye. The Andy, a stout, broad gacked tug, was staring on its day's trail for fish, a labor that usually starts at 3 o'clock in the morning when Lake Michigan's waters are more apt to lie smooth and level than after the rising of the sun.

Smoothness of the waters is more or less of a requisite for the kind of fishing done by the Andy Johnson and the other powerful tugs that work for the great concerns that supply the west with fish. They go at the work with a vengeance, in a wholesale way that precludes sportmanship and counts its victims by the indiscriminate thousands rather than by a choice catch or two. Enormous nets, three to six feet in width and from 200 to 400 feet in length, are, as one may say, the hooks and lines that the Andy and its fellow fishermen use for lures. For two long hours the tug will pursue its marked-out course, spreading its nets as it steams and churns along.

The net, to take a glance at one of them before it goes overboard, has a long, heavy line running along its bottom, to which are attached rows of lead sinkers, while the top has a line of floats, or bobbers, made of wood and glass. This arrangement holds the entire length of what is known as the gill net vertically in the water. A buoy, from the top of which a flag waves triumphantly, is tied to one end of the gill net and serves to locate its position to the fishermen amid the waste of water.

Woven entirely out of linen, costing from $1 to $1.50 a pound, the gill nets represent in themselves quite an investment. Like most expensive articles, they receive the best of care. In the winter time it is the fishermen's duty to see that the old nets are put in fine repair as well as to weave new ones.

The term fisherman, however, may seem more or less of a misnomer when applied to men who ply their trade in such a businesslike fashion. Yet to make the Andy's daily catch, which averages from 500 to 5,000 pounds, greater knowledge of the fish, its habits, its haunts and its predilections is required than one might at first suppose. The layman, not knowing where to set his nets, might traverse the entire lake without pulling in a fish.

Moreover, the fish inhabit different parts of the lake at different seasons of the year. In the spring they prefer to stay near the shore; in warmer weather they make for the deeper waters. The bottom of the lake, being elevated at some places and depressed at others, offers inducements to the fish to seek the shoals during the cooler weather, the deep waters during the heat, and the fisherman must know the preference of his prey. Knowing these, as we shall see later on, he will spread his nets accordingly.

Early in the afternoon the Andy Johnson, again to follow its course, will return to see what plunder its nets may have found in the waters of the lake. The meshes of the net, set diagonally in diamond shape, are laden with yellow pike, whitefish, lake trout and perch. The unsuspecting fish, swimming along through their favorite haunts, stuck their heads into the meshes of the net, Then they tried to pull back but they were caught by their protruding gills and held fast.

The crew o fthe Andy, which consists of from three to ten men, lifts the nets out of the water and find the victims alive. The fish are dressed on board—that is to say, their entrails are removed. On shore they are at once packed in boxes of fine ice, each box holding 150 pounds of fish. Next they are placed in refrigerator cars and whirled by fast express through to Chicago, their destination. Thus in the hottest weather the fish reach their market perfectly fresh and hard as bones.

In the spring and the fall the Andy may vary its work and resort to fishing by pound nets. Each of these nets, which often reach a length of 3,000 feet, is spread in a funnel shape, its narrow opening set to face the shore, its wider opening, moving toward the deeper waters, ends in a boxlike arrangement that is 100 feet in depth. This box, if we may so call it, is fastened to twenty stakes, each of which is driven to the bottem of the lake though it may have to penetrate 125 feet of water to hold its burden fast.

Now it is in the nature of fish when they are prevented by any obstruction from swimming shoreward to work along the base of the obstruction. Thus striking the small end of the funnel-shaped pound net, they keep moving farther and farther along into its widening meshes until they worm their way through the hole that enters into the box, and so when they have completed their journey they find themselves trapped.

At the appointed time the crew of the Andy lifts up the side of the box net until it has forced all the fish into one corner, then they are tossed on the tug by ordinary dip nets. If the Andy Johnson has secured a ton of fish, which is not an unusual catch, from one of its pound nets, it will puff curling wreaths of smoke toward the shore contentedly.

—I. K. Friedman.

Housewives and Prosperity.

Washington Post: The Mexican Herald; surveying the United States at good perspective and from a dizzy altitude, predicts that the housewives of this country will beat the republican party to smithereens at the presidential election. They will do it on the ground of too much prosperity. Prosperity has spoiled the cooks, raised the price of food, rent, and clothing, and played hob generally with the domestic establishment. The Herald attributes the defeat of the republicans in 1892 to the same cause. Housewives were forced to ask for larger allowances, and bread-winners were unable to grant them; so the smash-up came in a great political upheaval.

There is a growl now and then against the great prosperity of this country, but we have not heard a note of protest from the feminine side. This does not mean that the better halves are not thinking. In fact, we are half inclined to suspect, from the deep and portentous silence, that "something is doing." Women, according to tradition, are not given to taciturnity. The mere fact that a policy of absolute silence seems mysteriously to have been agreed upon is in itself disquieting. What are the woman up to?

Speaker Cannon's glowing eulogy of the Dingley tariff and Secretary Shaw's knightly championship of high prices are all right, if the housewives are with them. But the stand pat managers had better look after that immense element of the voters which does not seem to get its share of the prosperity that is smothering the United States in fatness. These voters may be as happy over prosperity as anybody, but if they do not produce their share of it upon demand of the housewife, there is likely to be trouble. The housewife likes to see the evidence of good times; in fact, she desires as good evidence on this point as she possesses regarding the rie in the price of living. If it is not forthcoming, she is apt to dictate how the family vote shall be cast.

No right-minded American wants to see the prosperity of this country diminished. The times cannot be too good to suit him. All he wants is to have prosperity spread around a little more evenly. He is full of hope, and waits a long time before he becomes so impatient as to kick over everything. But he is human, and if he finds himself worsted regularly every day in pointed arguments with his wife he is likely to adopt her view that the tariff is a scheme for making other people more prosperous at his expense. Then it will have to be revised, however prosperous the country may be.

RUSTLING LIFE INSURANCE.

Not a Bad Way to See the World and to Study Human Nature.

After all is said and done, we life insurance solicitors, do not have such a hard time of it, writes one of them in the American magazine. We get a drop of appreciation now and then, which compensates for the rebuffs.

We know no boss and can go anywhere in the world we wish and work for the same company—if we are good.

We can turn our backs on hard winters and go South—we can go North where the cool lake breezes are and leave our frineds to the midsummer madness of "a hundred above."

We know how to enter a drawing room and we know how to sit in a farmer's kitchen and discuss the price of pork while the wife is trying out lard.

We know lots of things because we must, and possibly some which we ought not to know, but men, women and fate conspire to give us wisdom and we would not quarrel with the three of them for the world.

We are actors, essaying burlesque comedy sometimes and often tragic roles, but always holding ourselves in readiness to smile when we may feel like fighting and to weep when it would be easier to laugh.

Nothing can disturb us and no human being can bowl us over. It is all the same whether you call us wise or foolish, because we know how little we know, which is the beginning of isdom.

When we are glad people will know it, and if we have the blues no one is aware but ourselves—and the manager.

I have been taught a lesson these 12 strange years—that honesty is the best policy and, more than that, I have found out that the best investment is honesty for honesty's sake alone.

I have lied in writing insurance, but always found that it recoiled upon me, and if I gained thereby the little increment of commission I straightway lost a hundredfold as much.

Her Method—Caller: "Does that girl in the next flat play the piano by ear or by note?" Suffering Neighbor: "Neither: she plays by brute strength." —Exchange.

FAST GUN PLAYS.

Two Men Who Were Quick on the Trigger.

Milwaukee Sentinel: "When it comes to rapid gun plays I make just two exceptions to my old friend Bill Cummings," remarked the major, as he put a pinch of tobacco in a slip of brown paper and deftly rolled a cigarette. "And the two that I have in mind are Wild Bill Hickok and the Apache Kid.

"It was down in Tombstone. The day had been blistering hot, and we were sitting in front of the hotel enjoying the night air.

"Of course," went on the major, "there may have been others, but if so I never met up with them. Gun plays ain't fashionable nowadays, so I reckon you all don't know much about them. But it don't take no mental effort on my part to recall the time when a man had to be mighty careful what pocket he carried his tobacco in. To reach for tobacco in a hip pocket always looked suspicious and I recalls more than one man who had to quit the trail from an overdose of cold lead because of just such carelessness.

"In the old days of Abilene and Dodge a man wasn't expected to do much with his hands in a barroom outside of reachin' in his front pocket for the price of his obligation. Beyond that he was looked on with suspicion, unless, of course, he was known as a peaceful character, as was my friend, Bill Cummings, drunk or sober. Sober, Bill would sit in the corner of a dance hall and take in the proceedings with all the enjoyment of a 10-year-old kid. Somehow the music, scratchy as it was, always had a peculiar influence on Bill. He didn't want to dance, didn't want to drink and didn't care for no rough house. He just wanted to sit in an out-of-the-way corner ano soak his soul in it. And as for talkin' Bill was a second-cousin to a clam. I used to think sometimes that he was tongue tied. But he wasn't. It was just his way.

"It was the same old Bill when he was sober, except for one thing. He always imagined somebody was insulting his friends. Bill would take all sorts of insults about himself and smile 'em off in a weak-fashioned way, but the minute he imagined any of his friends were getting the worst of it, Bill's eyes would begin to glisten. Likewise you would notice that his trigger finger would get itchy. Trigger finger ain't quite appropriate in this case, maybe, because Bill didn't have any trigger on his gun. It was too slow work to have to pull a trigger, so he had that obstacle removed, leaving nothing but the hammer. You recollects that the Apache Kid got wise to that time-saving scheme some time before the sheriff caught him with his guard down. You know how it works, don't you? You merely pulls the hammer back the same time you pulls the gun, then when you get your bead you lets her flicker. And Bill's long suit was in having the hammer back before the muzzle of the gun was out of the holster.

"Bill was what you from the east would call a bad man, but he never picked a fight in his life. And as I remarked heretofore, he would go to the limit before making any resentment—especially when sober. And then if he made a gun play, nine times out of ten it was in behalf of his friends.

"Bill and me drifted into Dodge one night just about the time when the evening was getting ripe. The roundup was over and we had two months' pay in our pockets. Incidentally, we both had a wild yearning to put our lips over a glass of the villainous stuff that was supposed to cheer a man and make him forget his troubles. We ties our cayuses in front of the Green Light dance hall and straightway proceeds to let the barkeeper know that we've got coin in our jeans and wants the best liquor in the house. And as you know, barkeeps are mighty active after they sizes up a man's roll. In about fifteen minutes Bill and I had six or seven adult potions stowed away under our cartridge belts, and, personally, I wasn't avoiding no excitement. As usual, Bill was quiet, I leaves him standing at the bar while I goes over and proceeds to advance some superior and unasked-for knowledge about a faro game running directly in front of the bar on the other side of the room. I stands there fifteen or twenty minutes, making casual remarks, and I am informed quietly but earnestly by the dealer that my opinions and presence are not exactly essential to the success and pleasure of the game. At which I foolishly laughs sneeringly and allows that he ain't dealing a square game. All this time Bill is standing at the bar with his back to us talking with a friend, apparently with no interest in the doings. It was right here that he shows his dexterity with a shooting iron. No self-respecting faro dealer in those days would ever take a remark like mine without resentment, and the words were no sooner out of my mouth than I hears a click and sees the gleam of blue steel pointed in my direction. But quick as he was Bill was quicker. He had been watching proceedings from the glass behind the bar. Before Mr. Dealer's fingers could press the trigger there was a report and a puff of smoke from where Bill was standing. Then a pistol fell to the floor and a right wrist was shattered.

'Before I could realize what had happened Bill was tugging at my left arm and whispering 'vamous' in my ear. We sneaks out 'muy pronto' and mounts our cayuses. But no traill back to the outfit for us that night. We takes a round-about way over the range."

"He was sure quick with the gun, wasn't he? Whatever became of Bill?

"He's a quiet, white-haired old man now. Remember the bartender in the hotel here who waited on us just before supper?"

"Yes."

"That's him."

Negroes in the British Army.

In the so-caled British protectorate of the Dark Continent and the Isle of the Gentiles, the bulk of the true protectors is made up of dusky soldiers and trustier soldiers, when they are treated fairly, it would be hard to find. In the British colonies there has been, until within a few years, in parts of South Africa, very little of that suspicion and dislike between the races of contrasting hues that the Texas incident has emphasized the existence of in the United States. Some of the most highly prized honors awarded to military merit have been awarded to colored soldiers of the Queen. And such honors have been worn without jealousy. It would be a pity, for any reason, should there be any lasting revolt against this reign of justice and fair play. It is, however, significant to recall that the first marked violation of the happy understanding in South Africa was brought about through the visit to those colonies of an American negro called Bishop Turner.Montreal Gazette.

N. D. Fire-Brick Industry

There was a time in the history of the northwest when wheat and logs were regarded the only products of the soil worthy of mention as articles of commerce. But times have changed and are now even more rapidly changing. The saw logs have largely been converted into lumber which in turn has been used to build cities, railroads, and commodious homes that dot our immense prairies, until the latter now have the appearance of an old, lang settled country. The lumbermen of years ago did not dream of the wealth of iron ore which lay underneath the stumpage they left as a wilderness of slashings that, in their opinion, were not worth enough to pay its tax. Since the discovery of iron ore some of those slashings are now worth millions of dollars to their owners. In fact, all mineral rights in those districts are reserved when titles to the lands change hands.

This is only one instance of the changed conditions. We might refer to the many others but will only call attention to an industry which is rapidly developing in the lignite regions of North Dakota—the manufacture of fire and pressed brick from the deposits of clay which lie directly underneath the lignite. Heretofore fire bricks came from east and south, and on account of the transportation charges, were very expensive to consumers in all portions of the northwest. There is a growing demand for fire bricks and tile whereever coal is consumed in furnaces, boilers, stoves, ranges, etc. This is specially true in sections at the head of the Great Lakes where iron ore will soon be reduced in immense quantities to meet the demands for structural iron which is now taking the place of wood in buildings of all kinds.

It is said, on good authority, that the quality of North Dakota fire bricks is equal to the best obtainable in the west. The supply of clay for their manufacture is almost unlimited. This in addition to the fact that lignite deposits of enormous proportions are found with the clay, will make it possible to burn the fire bricks at loest minimum of expense. It has also been demonstrated that the clay in question will make hollow ware of superior qquality. This is in demand where corrosive acids are manufactured or handled.

The Dickinson Pressed Brick Works are now prepared to meet demands of such a trade in large or small quantities. Pressed bricks of various colors and combinations of colors are decidedly in fashion just now in the cities where they are used for outside finish on the most expensive buildings. They are handsome, durable, waterproof, and require no paint. Such qualities recommend them to all who are interested in building material. The demand must increase from year to year, for, as the country grows older and richer, the best building material is in demand, regardless of cost. With these and other equally important facts in mind, capital is now seeking investment in North Dakota, in these fire and pressed brick plants. There are immense factories at Wilton, besides the one at Hebron. All are doing a splendid business.

Nature has indeed been generous with her gifts to these North Dakota prairies. There are beautiful crops of wheat growing over the lignite deposits which had underneath them vast beds of fire brick clay. Many of these lands will be given over, wholly, to wheat growing for a time, and, possibly, to dairying later on in their history, but the mines of wealth in lignite, clay, etc., which, in many instances remain unexplored, will yield millions upon millions in revenue to coming generations. The progressive citizen will test the possibilities of these hidden treasures, rather than wait for imported capital and enterprise to do what he might do.

Florida in Summer.

How it would astonish some of those Pennsylvania editors, in whose state so many deaths from heat are recorded this summer, to learn that many south Florida farmers are busy preparing for their fall crops and yet none of the m succumb to the heat and that "heat prostration" and sunstroke are utterly unknown, and that often more people die of the heat in one day in Pittsburg or Philadelphia than have died, directly or indirectly, of heat in the whole history of this state since the day when the first white man set foot within the territory that is now Florida.

Today, and all this summer, building operations have been pushed without ceasing in this state. Big hotels are building in many places and private houses by the score in St. Petersburg, Tampa, Miami and many other south Florida and other Florida cities, all of which are growing more rapidly than almost any northern cities of the same class. There is no stoppage except for rains. An unexampled number of carpenters, most all of whom were born in the north, are working every day under the direct rays of the Florida Sun.—Times-Union.

How Pronghorns Fight.

In the Washington Zoo I repeatedly saw their manner of fighting, and was made to realize how exactly each detail of the apparently harmless horn had a purpose, offensive or defensive, for which it was highly specialized.

Two bucks were having one of their periodical struggles for the mastery. They approached with noses to the ground, and after fencing for an opening closed with a clash. As they thrust and parried, the purpose of the prong was clear. It served the antelope exactly as it does the guard on the bowie knife or a sword, for countless thrusts that would have slipped up the horn and reached the head were caught with admirable adroitness in this fork.

And the inturned, harmless looking points! I had to watch long before I saw how dangerous they might be when the right moment arrived. After several minutes of fencing one of the bucks got under his rival's guard, and, making a sudden lunge, which the other failed to catch in the fork, he brought his inturned left to bear on the unprotected throat of his opponent, who saved himself from injury by rearing quickly and throwing himself backward, though it seemed to me that such a move could scarcely have foiled a dangerous thrust if they had been fighting a dealy duel.

I find further that in their fights the wild antelope are usually struck in this way. Mr. McFadden tells me that he has seen two bucks badly ripped by a rival's horn; one in the throat, and the other in the side of the neck close to the throat.—Scribner's Magazine.

It doesn't satisfy a man's hunger when he is compelled to eat his own words.

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