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Trout Fishing

Spring is only spring to the majority of the city dwellers.

There are no more coal bills, but the little car needs a couple of new casings. We won't trade it in after all this year. There is an Easter hat and a spring suit for the wife and the old kelly will have to do another season.

The kids are playing marbles and jump rope in the street, and in the evening when the office toiler walks home from the car line he has a wordless feeling that things aren't right. He feels that he wasn't meant for this, and that somehow if things had gone differently he wouldn't be doing just this. But that doesn't last long, for shortly he is home.

To those that are beloved of the Red Gods, spring is more than that. It is the opening of the trout-fishing season.

If you are a common or garden variety of angler you have a vision of a deep, dark hole where the waters of the creek disappear in a black swirl under the bole of an overhanging tree. Someone is crouching out of sight on the bank and looping worms onto a hook. That is you. Then you gently swing the gob of worms out onto the water and lowering the tip of your rod let the bait sink into that swirl under the cedar. The line straightens with a jerk. You strike and swing the steel rod back over your head, then there is a struggle and the trout is flopping on the bank behind you.

For that kind of fishing you need an outfit that costs about nine dollars and a half. A good steel rod nine and a half feet long will set you back about five dollars. A half-dozen three-foot gut leaders will be a dollar. Twenty-five yards of excellent bait line can be purchased for another dollar. Any reel will do around two dollars as you don't need to do any casting with it. A box of number four Carlisle hooks, one hundred in a box, won't be more than a quarter.

With that outfit you are equipped for bait fishing on any type of stream that you have to "horse" the trout out of. Horsing is a technical term for that free arm motion that causes the trout to suddenly desert the stream he has been born and raised in and go for a flying trip through the air. It is the only method of landing trout in streams that are so brushy and clogged with snags that it is impossible to play them.

Worms are the bait for the early part of the season. Use plenty of them and keep your bait fresh.

Some bait fishermen will say that a leader is an affectation and tie the hook directly to the line. But a leader will mean bigger fish. A leader is invisible in the water and the old sockdologers that will barely sniff at a bait on the end of a line will hit a seemingly unattached gob of worms like a flash.

At this time of year the trout are in the holes in the smaller streams. The drains through culverts on the nearby streams often harbor the very largest trout. In the evening and in the early

morning trout will be feeding in the shallows—but the deep pools and hollows under the banks are the very best bets in the daytime.

The bait fisherman's best time is the early spring. The fly fisherman comes into his own in the later spring and summer.

Just now he is contributing to the prevailing unrest of labor owing to a vision of a certain stream that obsesses him.

It is clear and wide with a pebbly bottom and the water is the color of champagne. It makes a bend and narrows a bit and the water rushes like a millrace. Sticking up in the middle of the stream is a big boulder and the water makes a swirl at its base.

A man in hip boots with a landing net hanging under his left shoulder by an elastic cord is standing in the rushing current and studying what appears to be a big red morocco pocketbook.

The man is the fly fisherman, and what he is looking at while his fairy light wand of a rod rests straight up in the top of his hip boot is his fly book. A snipe lights on the boulder and looks inquiringly at the fly fisherman and then flies jerkily up the stream. But the fly fisherman does not see him for he is engaged in the most important thing in the world. Deciding on his cast for the first day on the stream.

Finally he bends on two flies. One on the end of the leader and one about three feet up. I'd tell you what flies they were, but every fly fisherman in Toronto would dispute the choice. With me though they are going to be a Royal Coachman and a McGinty.

The fairy rod waves back and forth and then shoots out and the flies drop at the head of the swirl by the big boulder. There is a twelve-inch flash of flame out of water, the flyfisher strikes with a wrist like a steel trap, the rod bends, and the first trout of the season is hooked.

Those are the two kinds of trout fishing. Ontario affords the very best of both kinds. I would go on and write some more. But there are too many trout fishermen in Toronto. The city would be paralyzed. Imagine the havoc in offices and families if they all left the city tomorrow.

Everything would be tied up, from the streetcars to the Parliament House.

Besides, I can't write any more just now. I'm going trout fishing.