

FISHING ON CALEDONIA CREEK.

A PLACE WHERE THERE IS THE FINEST SPORT FOR THE MOST EXPERT ANGLER.

"I spent a day on Caledonia Creek last week," said a well-known sportsman of this city, "and I don't believe there is another stream in the country with such peculiar characteristics. It starts right in the village of Caledonia from a spring as clear as crystal, covering four acres of boiling white sand. The resources of that spring may be imagined from the fact that the creek flows from it in a volume of water from 50 to 100 feet wide. It never changes its temperature Winter or Summer. For this reason flies hatch in its water all the year round, and the fisherman that is smart enough to catch trout at all in the creek will find them in just as good condition in March and April as they are in June. The Caledonia Creek trout are different in this respect from the trout in any stream I ever knew in this country, and will take the fly better in February, March, and April than in any other months. The creek is so very clear and so prolific in trout food that it requires not only the most expert angler, but also the finest of fine tackle to capture them. The trout in this stream do not commence to spawn for two months after fish in other streams, and they do not get through until April. The trout are plenty in the creek, as wild as the California mountain trout in its native waters, and as gamey as the salmon. I'd rather have a bout with a half-pound Caledonia Creek trout than with one twice the weight in any stream I ever fished yet. The creek is but slightly affected by the Spring or Autumn rain, and is as full of water in the driest August as it is in the Spring. This stream seems to have been especially adapted to the purpose for which it has been utilized by the State Fish Commission in the propagation of fish.

"I was permitted at the hatchery to try the mettle of the California mountain trout in the big pool below the dam. The pool is alive with them and the native trout, as well as land-locked salmon. The California trout are, some of them, the direct production of the 500 spawn brought by Seth Green from that State in 1875, and are monsters. From those 500 spawn something like 3,000,000 young fry have been produced and distributed to the different waters of the State. Some of those now at the fish-ponds weigh 4 pounds and over. I was not permitted to fish with barbed hooks, but with a 'needle hook,' which does not injure the fish, but which requires more skill to handle. The first cast I made with these small flies, I got a rise from a native trout, a land-locked salmon, and a California trout. As they were all big fish, they made the water boil, and my bamboo assumed a threatening curvilinear. Finally, one after the other, the salmon and this native trout broke loose, and I had a splendid struggle with the California fish. I never had hold of so game a fish before for one of its size, and he succeeded also in getting free from the hook, after several high leaps from the water after the manner of the black bass. With almost every movement his color seemed to change like iridescent glass.

"There is in the pool a brook trout that has for years made his home beneath a log at the bottom, and now must weigh five pounds. No one has ever yet been able to tempt him with fly or bait of any kind, although he has been known to rise all around the most cunningly devised artificial flies and take the natural insect it exactly imitated. He makes many a meal of the other fish in the pond, and has been seen to pursue and capture a two-pound land-locked salmon for his supper. He never makes his appearance until sundown, and then he makes things lively in the pool.

"Another peculiarity about Caledonia Creek native trout is the fact that they will not notice minnows, bugs, or any kind of bait. They can only be taken with a fly, and their taste as to them is exceedingly epicurean. About three years ago, noticing that in certain water-courses in the State the brook trout that had been placed there did not thrive, the Fish Commissioners came to the conclusion that the reason for this was the absence of natural food for the fish. Investigation was made by entomologists and botanists, and the important discovery made that certain plants, mosses, and shrubs attract and nurture insects which are the trouts' natural food. Caledonia Creek was found to be wonderfully productive of these plants, and experiments in reproducing them in other streams proved highly successful, and the problem of how to raise trout in barren streams was solved. The vegetation once planted in the streams rapidly increased, and the animalcula followed it. Caledonia Creek became not only the producer of the fish to restock other portions of the State, but also the provider of the food to sustain them."