the championship from Cook in a game of 1000 points up, which he won by 478 points.

A DAZZLING PLAYER.

For fifteen years, until 1885, it was a moot point as to whether Cook or Roberts, jun., was the leader of the billiard profession. First impressions favoured Cook, who, after recovering the title from his most dangerous rival, made much improvement, as testified by a break of 936 from his daintily-plied cue. He resisted all the efforts of young Roberts, then a slap-dash player lacking the finer touches which were subsequently to become his speciality, and others of his contemporaries for several years. His delicate methods served as a guiding example to Roberts, and, incorporating them into his own more robust methods, he became the undisputed champion and the most determined match player the billiard-room had hitherto known. For a full fifteen years—exactly the same period he had passed through in establishing his championship claim — from 1885 to 1900, he bewitched the amateur enthusiasts with his dazzling displays, his tenure of the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, standing as a triumphant vindication of his outstanding talents. Roberts set his face against the spot stroke, urging that its monotony robbed the game of spectacular charm. At the time the spot-stroke phenomenon W. J. Peall, was at his zenith, and scoring breaks by the thousand points, with a 3304 effort as the high-water mark of all his big doings. In the eighties and nineties, the days of the Roberts ascendancy, there were two styles of game in force, namely, the "spot-barred" and the "all in." The leading light adopted the "spot-barred" code, which included the "odious push stroke," a foul backing-up of the cue-ball infringing the first principle of the play. Under these spot-barred rules Roberts scored a break of 1392 points. But with the putting forward of a revised code in 1898 that practically put the game in the shape it owns to-day, the spot and push strokes being eliminated, the dimensions of the breaks dropped in corresponding ratio, 500 points, as now, requiring the best attentions of the crack cuemen of the day.

Towards the latter end of his reign Roberts was made the subject of challenges from the then rising player, Chas. Dawson, a young Yorkshireman, who, after graduating as a spot-stroke expert, had contrived to adapt his game to the spot-barred requirements, minus the push shot. Dawson created no small sensation when offering to play Roberts on level terms for a substantial money stake and the whole of the receipts. After much pressure the champion agreed to meet him, but with the express stipulation that the championship was not called into question. Roberts won the match by somewhere about 2000 points. It proved to be his last big encounter for seven or eight years, as deciding upon a world's tour with the advent of the new century, the popular billiard idol left the field to Dawson and the younger professionals, of whom Stevenson was far and away the most promising. The Billiard Association praiseworthily inaugurated a championship to take the place of the old championship cup held by Roberts. It carried an endowment of £100 a year to the holder. For a full five years there was an intense rivalry existing between Dawson and Stevenson; the former had the best of matters for the greater part of this period. But he was standing stationary, whereas Stevenson, nearly ten years the younger, was palpably improving; and in the course of a series of matches Dawson was passed in the race for supremacy. The game which effectually set at rest the vexed question was one fraught with the most important issues. It took place in the early part of 1905. John Roberts had returned to England; and, in reply to challenges from either side, the veteran left his two most dangerous rivals to decide between themselves, on the billiard table, which of them had the right to meet him. Stevenson won the game in brilliant fashion, scoring a record break of 802 points, and qualifying to meet Roberts in a memorable match at the Caxton Hall, Westminster.

Since that event Stevenson, if losing by slightly more points than Roberts had conceded him, has been looked upon as the outstanding exponent of English billiards, both at home and abroad. He has done much to justify the exalted opinion held of his abilities, notably in the 1908-9 season, following upon his return from a tour through Australia, New Zealand, and India, during which he touched the Straits Settlements, China, and Japan. So far ahead was he of all his rivals, and with Dawson temporarily in retirement, that Stevenson, at the close of the red-lettered campaign of his career, offered to concede any of them one-third of the game start. That cartel was given forth less than eighteen months ago; and in that comparatively short space of time, as showing the extraordinary march of progress in first-class billiards, a player has been found, in Melbourne Inman, for long a minor light, who has climbed up the ladder of fame, step by step, from the very lowest rung. When it became known at the back end of last year that Inman and Reece were the only challengers to Stevenson's right to hold further the title of champion, a distinct impression of the futility of such opponents attempting to dispossess him of his honours was felt.

As events proved, however, Stevenson never found touch with his best form, and Inman, after disposing of Reece in the first round, completed the best season's work that he had ever known by putting up a great fight against the champion. For nine of the twelve days allotted to the 18,000 up there was little to choose between the holder and his challenger, after the former had early on looked like drawing right ahead. Inman, as is his wont, hung doggedly on, and when the death of Stevenson's wife occurred, and caused a sudden stoppage to a most interesting situation, the champion was less than 200 points ahead with only three further days' play to be undergone. By mutual consent the match was declared null and void, Inman displaying good sportsmanship in foregoing his undoubted right to have claimed the championship. During the summer respite the Billiards Control Club Council decided that the replay should take place at the Holborn Town Hall. Stevenson and Inman meeting over the regulation championship course of 18,000 points up.

WITH ROD AND LINE

Specially Written for the "Weekly Graphic."
By MAJOR BOYD WILSON.

THE EVENING RISE.

SPRING is merging into summer, the weather is becoming warmer, trout are fast putting on condition, and the time is at hand when the hour immediately preceding the darkness is, from the angler's point of view, the most valuable of the whole twenty-four.

Let us try and picture a typical evening of this sort. The sun is just setting behind the hills as we reach the waterside; all day he has blazed out of a cloudless firmament, and as not a breath of air has had force enough even to set the green leaves a-quiver since the early rays of dawn came shooting athwart the heavens, the noontime has indeed been hot. There is a respite now from the burning rays, and the anticipation of sport on this lovely evening makes the angler feel at peace with all the world, as he puts the split cane rod together and makes all preparations. He assures himself that he has three or four casts, each with a fly attached, at hand, in readiness to take their place on the line should any casualty occur; for the tying of eyed flies on the gut in the uncertain light of the gloaming is no easy task even for those whose eyesight is of the best.

So far the bosom of the river flows placidly on, unmarked by the concentric circles which so infallably betoken a feeding fish, but it is full early yet, and the rise of fly which must naturally precede the rise of trout has barely commenced. A few red spinners are floating down, their delicate wings standing erect, while each insect balances itself on the skin of the water and sails down the lovely smooth reach and skilfully navigates itself over the ripples caused by a gravelly spit which rises somewhat near the surface.

Faster and faster, more and more numerous, come the dainty ephemeridæ, gliding down the stream heedless of the dangers from fish and bird that surround them on all sides. It will not be long before the trout find out what a banquet is being provided for them. Then! an undoubted rise; there he is again! A good trout, too, and fairly on the feed, for as we watch he sucks down three or four flies one after the other, making the least possible disturbance on the water as he gently puts his nose up, takes in the floating fly, and, as he turns, just breaks the surface with his back.

The angler is all in readiness. Standing on the shingle a little below the rise he deftly drops his fly, just at the place where the last rise was seen. The trout, however, ignores the artificial fly, which, fished wet, must to the piscine eyes represent a drowned insect. Half-a-dozen more casts are equally futile. This trout is evidently having none of the scrap of feather and dubbing, however craftily woven together, for he continues to feed on the natural insects, and remains entirely disdainful of the angler's line. By this time other trout have discovered the feast that has been so bountifully provided, and fish after fish begins to feed, so that soon the erstwhile placid surface is a-boil with rises. Rise after rise the angler covers quite fruitlessly; the trout, although feeding on the natural insect, will not look at its drowned presentment. It is evident an entire change of tactics is necessary here, if defeat during this mad, merry hour of feeding trout is to be averted, and averted it must be at all hazards, for it is evident that the big fellows have flung caution to the winds, and are tumbling over each other to feast on the floating ephemeridæ. Entire defeat at such a moment would be heart breaking, the wet fly is unpopular, will a dry fly have a better effect? A new cast is quickly knotted on in substitution for the wet one, and at the end of it is a double winged and double hackled coachman, whose bronze peacock body and white wings may, if floated over a feeding trout, tempt him to his doom. A rising fish of goodly proportions is marked down within easy reach, a couple of false casts to try the range are swished in the air, and then the coachman is allowed to fall gently on the water. All is well, the fly settles down with the least possible disturbance about a foot above the spot where the last rise was marked, and, resting on its voluminous hackle, sails down the stream with its wings cocked as bravely as any of its living competitors. Suddenly it disappears amid a tell-tale ring, the angler gives a turn of the wrist which fixes the steel, then is one astonished pause on the part of the big trout, and next instant he is forging through the water with the speed of a steamboat, while the reel screams again, as the handle flies round, and the line glides off the spindle at lightning speed. The tackle is strong, however, and, as the angler knows that with the darkness will come the end of the rise, and consequently the finish of his sport, he does not dally long with the fish, and, although it eventually turns the scale at three pounds, he brings all the power of the split cane to bear, and, putting on severe pressure, gives him short shrift; even in less time than could be believed the gaff has done its work, and the fish is safely creeled. Three more trout, all about the same size, does the dry fly account for, and then, almost as quickly as it commenced, the rise dies away, and not a crinkle can be seen on the darkened face of the water. It is time to pack up and go, the brief hour of fast and furious sport is at an end, and, with four trout in his basket of a combined weight of over thirteen pounds, the angler is fain to turn homewards. As he wends his way under the twinkling stars he again pictures in his mind's eye all the fascinating details of the capture of each victim; the time of the rise has been brief, but many pleasurable emotions have been packed into a short space of time.

Land Office, New Plymouth.
2nd December, 1910.

NOTICE is hereby given that 11 sections in Arin, Mahoe, Kapara, Heao and Upper Waitara Survey Districts will be open for application under optional conditions at this office on or after 19th December, 1910.

Plans may be seen at Post Offices and Railway Stations and obtained on application to me.

F. SIMPSON,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

H. W. BANNISTER,
For Commissioner of Crown Lands.
2nd December, 1910.