

which the Catholic body takes an easy lead among the fourteen or fifteen rival creeds that vie with each other for the guidance of souls in New Westminster.

There is no mistaking the fact, in any season of the year, that New Westminster is the headquarters of the

Salmon-canning

industry of British Columbia. Look down at the banks of the Fraser: they are lined deep and far with vast timber and iron sheds that open to the river. These are the canneries. Five of them are within the city's limits, and there are (we were informed) twelve all told. Piled among them you see the crowded roofs of an automatic factory which turns out over nine million cans every year. It is worked on a principle which we saw in full activity and greater detail later on in Swift's slaughter-yards in Chicago—the sheets of block tin are fed in at one end, cut into shape, passed along on travelling links to other machines along the line of operations where the cans are rapidly shaped, fitted, the ends tilted over, dipped, and rolled in baths of solder, sorted out according to size, and sent, like Jack and Jill, tumbling down inclined planes in a constant stream to the spot just where they are wanted. John Bright loved to thrash the waters of a Scottish salmon-river. So did Millais. And to the average Britisher salmon-fishing is a royal sport, but still and ever a sport or passing relaxation. But salmon-fishing on the Fraser is a business, and a serious one at that. There is no rising to the fly, none of that exciting play of line and reel against the swift fins and lashing tail of a 'game' fifteen pounder that makes rod-fishing a thing of beauty and a joy for ever by the brown and curling waters of a Highland river. The salmon that rush up the British Columbian, Washington, and Alaskan rivers come there to spawn. That is their business, and it takes them all their time to attend to it. Some

Thousands of Millions

of others are bent upon the same affair at the same time. They all want to get up first, and so the competition is keen and the life of a salmon at spawning time a strenuous one. They do not seem to want feed as they crowd and jostle each other, fin to fin, upon the up-stream track. They will not rise to a fly, however cunningly made or cast. A story current in British Columbia tells how a British peer—member of a boundary commission—signed away the Washington territory to Uncle Sam out of contempt for the unsportsmanlike character of the salmon in the Columbia river which refused to rise to cast of fly or ghint of spinning spoon. But it is ever thus with nearly all the tube: with the massive and dainty-fleshed 'spring-salmon' (or tyhee) that sometimes turn the scale at over seventy pounds avoirdupois; with the ten to fifteen pound pink 'sock-eyes' that furnish the chief supplies of the canneries, and with the late-coming and less valuable 'humpbacks' that follow them. The 'coho' however, takes Lindy to the 'spinner' and leads the angler a sufficiently merry dance. But his flesh is pale, though edible, and even the local Indians, Chinese, and Japanese regard him with a sniff of supercilious contempt.

The information furnished to me on the spot, and confirmed then and subsequently by photographs and interviews, docket all suspicion of romance from the descriptions I had read of the salmon-fishing industry on the Fraser. In

The 'Running' Season

the salmon form a dense, almost solid mass. 'The closeness with which salmon pack themselves,' says Douglas Sladen, describing what he saw high up the Fraser, 'is marvellous; I have seen several hundreds of them in a pool that would not hold a billiard table.' In the same place, at a vast distance from the sea, he saw a column of them 'many miles long and, as far as one could judge, about ten feet wide and several feet deep'—thousands of them wounded or slain by being buffeted against the rocks of the narrow gorges by the swift and tossing rush of the masterful river. Along its banks we saw, later on, scores of the rickety stages on which the Indians stand and scoop up the packed salmon from the crowded pools with long pole-nets. Here and there in the higher reaches of the Fraser and the Thompson we were shown shallow back-waters where the white settlers simply pitch-fork the crowded fish ashore, to dry them Indian fashion, for their winter food. In the back country salmon is the order of the day winter and spring, summer and autumn: salmon boiled and salmon broiled, salmon grilled and salmon fried, salmon fresh and salmon dried, salmon steaks and salmon cutlets, week in and week out through all the rolling year. To the 'Canuck' or native it comes as natural as bread is to us. To the 'tenderfoot' from afar it grows at last into a hideous monotony. One of the victims of

British Columbian mountain hospitality (so the story runneth) was sitting disconsolate one morning in front of a generous supply of salmon—a whole fish—garnished with a pot of fiery mustard.

'Is there nothing else for breakfast?' he groaned.

The host was dumbfounded. 'Nothing else!' he cried. 'Why, there's enough salmon there for six, ain't there?'

'Yes,' responded the guest, mildly, 'but I don't care for salmon.'

'Well, then, fire into the mustard,' said the host.

There is no gentle and artistic 'playing' of individual salmon on the Fraser. They are simply

Shovelled out

of the river on as wholesale a scale as the fisher can command.

On the lower and more placid reaches of the river the numbers of the salmon are more prodigious and the facilities for catching them greater than elsewhere. During six weeks or thereabouts many thousands of persons of various nationalities—English-speaking races, Japanese, Chinese, Greeks, French, Portuguese, etc.—are feverishly busy with the salmon-harvest. Steveston, another canning town on the Fraser, has about five thousand persons of many races and creeds at work while the 'run' lasts. The wages are high, salmon are paid for at the profitable rate of ten to twelve cents (5d to 6d each), and artisans leave their benches, Japs and Chinese the sawmills and shingle-factories, and farmers their cultivated lands and turn furiously to fishing for a brief season in the turbid waters of the Fraser. The salmon get a brief respite of four-and-twenty hours a week—from 6 p.m. on Saturday to 6 p.m. on Sunday. Then the river is free for them to ascend to the spawning-grounds. But at 6 p.m. on Sunday the fleets of some two thousand fishing boats move out, each with 300 yards of gill-netting, 15 feet deep. They drop their meshy burdens into the water and thus form a series of

Long Floating Fences

against which the unlucky late-coming sockeyes strike their heads and get entangled by the gills. 'Traps' are another feature of the fisheries on the Fraser. They consist of long V-shaped wings down the hollow side of which the eager salmon hopefully 'nose' their way till they reach the apex of the V. This lies temptingly open and they rush in—they are lured into the 'trap' (or enclosure of great nets hung on tall piles). From these they are scooped out in dip-nets in a splashing silvery mass and tossed into the waiting boats. At the canneries the captured fish are piled and piled in great masses of tens of thousands until the limit is reached that can be packed for the day. Further purchasing is then declared 'off,' and the announcement often consigns endless boatloads—tons and tons—of captured fish to the manure-heap or to the waters from which they were just taken. Battalions of Indian squaws clean the salmon as by long-established right. Active Japs and phlegmatic Chinese chip off the heads, tails, and fins, and the cleaned and decapitated fish are sent in a constant stream into

Ingenious Machines

fitted with thin circular saws that cut them into lengths and heights that fit neatly into the standard salmon-tins. Numbers of the yellow men from the Far East dextrously roll the pink flesh into the tins. These are weighed, carried in a metallic procession to another machine which fits the lids neatly on. Then up and away they go tumbling down an incline to a bath of molten lead (kept hot by gas-burners), in which their tops are tilted, dipped, rolled at an angle of 45 degrees, and soldered on air-tight. Then off for a plunge in a scalding bath, where they are boiled for 70 minutes. They are next fished out, a small hole is pierced in the lid to let the imprisoned hot air and steam escape; a drop of solder then closes up the orifice; the packing is complete; and when the cans have radiated their heat away they are neatly repacked, dressed in showy labels, and packed away in wooden cases that are turned out by tens of thousands in the adjoining sawmills. And this is, in short, the true story of the tin of British Columbian salmon that many of my readers will sample on next Friday.

(To be continued)

There is at present an organised movement amongst the Corporations and other public bodies in Ireland, having for its object the return to parliamentary life of Mr Thomas Sexton. Mr Sexton entered parliament in 1880 as a member for Sligo, and he remained in the House till 1896, when he retired, owing to the differences that then prevailed in the ranks of the Irish Parliamentary Party.

RIDE "ANGLO SPECIAL" CYCLES.