The Autobiography of a Steel Trap

By George B. Foster.

I am a steel trap. I have two strong steel jaws, controlled by two stiff steel springs. I was made in a great shop where steel traps were made. After I had been tempered and tested I was put in a great store to be sold. One day a man came into the store and bought me. I heard some one say that he was a trapper and that he had an iron constitution and a steel heart.

The next day he took me way off in the woods and stopped beside a stream of water. He then fastened me by a chain to a stake driven in the ground, opened my jaws, covered me carefully with dry leaves, hung a bait over me and went off and left me.

I had been accustomed to so much noise in the shop where I was made, and in the store, that I felt a little lonesome there all alone in the silent woods, but I had plenty of excitement later on.

Pretty soon I saw a beautiful animal coming toward me. I learned afterwards that he was a collie dog. He had soft, silky, yellow hair and beautiful brown eyes. He came sniffing along the ground and almost put his nose between my jaws. Just then he stepped squarely on my trencher, when snap went my jaws and I held him fast by one of his front paws. Well, such a time as we did have. He whined and barked and howled. He reared up and rolled over on the ground. He bit his foot and bit my jaws and bit the ground. But I just held on. It is my business to hold on. I am a steel trap.

He then laid down and just moaned with pain and looked at me with those beautiful brown eyes with the most beseeching expression as much as to say, "Won't you please let me go?" I have seen so much suffering since that day, that I have lost all pity now, but that was my first experience and I did feel sorry for the poor dog, for he suffered so, but I just held on. It is my business to just hold on.

In a few minutes a man came running up. He seemed to know the dog and called him by name and the dog jumped up and kissed him.

The man then put his feet on my springs, opened my jaws and took out the dog's foot and the dog with a grateful caress for his master ran limping away. The man said some very uncomplimentary things about the people who set traps, then caught me by the jaws, pulled up the stake and held me and threw me, stake and all, into a deep pool in the stream and told me to stay there and rust out my life in uselessness, and I thought my uefulness, if I ever had any, was at an end.

The next morning I saw my master, the trapper, coming. I could see him but he couldn't see me at first. He finally spied me at the bottom of the deep pool, and got a long pole and fished me out and said some uncomplimentary things about people who throw away steel traps. My master, the trapper, then took me a long way off in the woods and set me again by the side of a lake.

That night it was bright moonlight and I saw a little animal coming toward me. It was a slim, trim little creature with dark brown fur and bright, black eyes. I found out afterwards that he was a mink. He smelled the bait that was hung over me and reached up to get it when snap went my jaws and caught him by one of his feet. He squealed and moaned with pain for several hours and pulled as hard as he could to get away, but I held on. Pretty soon I heard a grating, gnawing sound. It lasted for a little while and then all was still and I didn't hear him or feel him any more.

When my master, the trapper, came to visit me the next day, I heard him say: "Ha! the little rascal gnawed off his foot. There is a good mink skin gone, but I will catch him again some day."

The trapper then set me again and went off and left me. The next night was a terribly cold night. I shall never forget it. The wind blew the snow over me and my jaws were white with frost and ice and I could hear the ice in the lake cracking and groaning. About midnight I saw a beautiful animal coming toward me. I thought at first that it was the collie dog, but as he came nearer I saw that he was different. He was about the same color as the collie dog, but he was smaller and had a big bushy tail and keen bright eyes.

He reached for the bait that hung over me and stepped squarely on my trencher when snap went my jaws and I caught him by one of his front legs. Well, we had a desperate struggle there in the ice and snow, but I held on. As the hours passed, I noticed that he didn't pull as hard as he did at first and pretty soon he didn't pull at all and then he was still.

When my master, the trapper, came next day, I heard him say, "Well! that is a fine fox. Froze to death, didn't he?"

Well, these are just a few of the experiences that I have had. If I had the time to tell you and you had the time to listen, I could tell you of hundreds of other experiences that I have had. I and the thousands of other traps like me have been the cause of untold sufferings and our jaws are dyed with the life blood of millions of innocent, harmless little creatures who have just as good a right to live as you have.

"Cruel steel trap!" do you say? Don't call me cruel. Call the trapper that sets me, cruel, and the man who buys the furs and animals that I catch and the men and the women who wear the furs. I just hold on because I am compelled to do so and have no choice in the matter, but they do it from choice.

I am a steel trap. I just hold on, because I can't open by own jaws and release the poor suffering animal as I would like to do.

Won't you please make laws which will put me out of business, for I am not willingly cruel. I hold on because I can't let go. I am a steel trap.

The King's Jewel House in London is Restored.

Scaffolding and tarpaulin shrouding an ancient building behind Westminster Abbey mark where restoration is in progress at the King's Jewel House, commonly known as the Jewel Tower of Westminster.

The tower once stood in the garden of the Abbot of Westminster, but is now so hemmed in by buildings that the visitor has to go through a mews to see it. It was built towards the end of the 14th century, in the reign of Richard II. In early times the King's jewels were kept there; down to 70 years ago it was the store-chamber for Acts of Parliament; and now it is used by the standards department of the board of trade and contains some of their heavier testing machines.

The pressure of the vaults from the interior has caused large fractures and fissures on the outer surface.

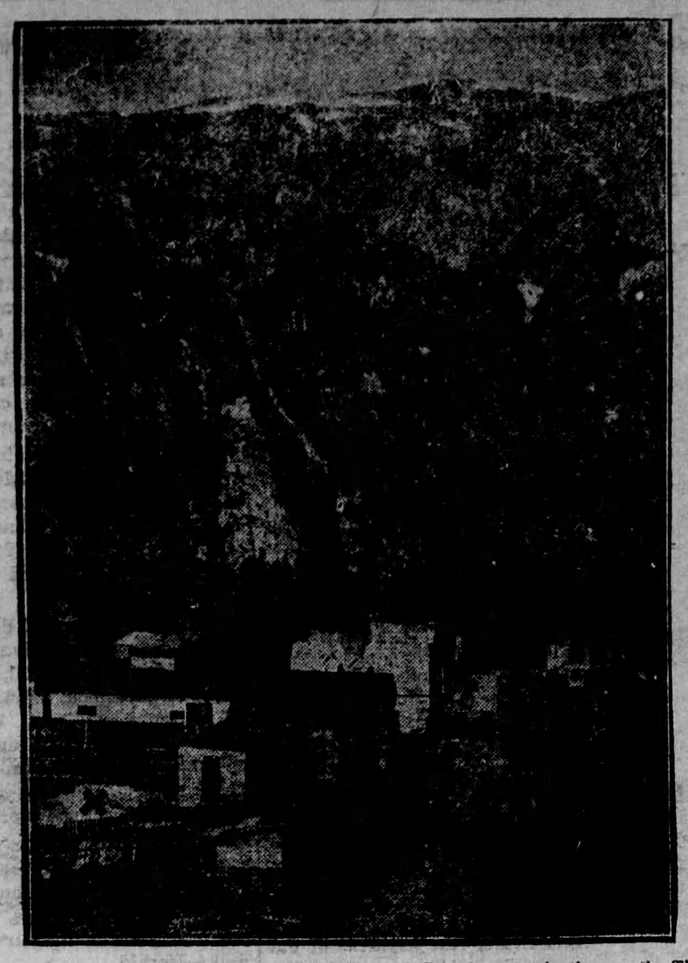
The roof timbers are seriously decayed, principally by the wood-boring insect Xestobium Tessellatum, which caused so much damage in Westminster Hall.

A Century of Glass-Making.

The name of Chance is met with in scientific work all over the world, in connection with microscopes, telescopes, laboratory ware, and, in fact, wherever glass of high quality is employed. This great British firm, which celebrates its hundred years of existence this year, has a romantic record in glass-making. The Crystal Palace, originally erected in Hyde Park, was glazed with 100,000 square feet of Chance's sheet glass. Until the war they were the only British manufacturers of optical glass, and the large astronomical telescopes of many of the world's biggest observatories are fitted with their lenses. Lighthouses, too, on all the coasts of the world flash their beams from prisms produced at the well-known Smethwick works.

Harvest of Barnacles.

Thirteen ton of barnacles were taken from the bottom of a ship after a voyage of six months from Bombay to Liverpool.



At Ayder, Alaska, the United States and Canada meet in the north. The cross marks the boundary post. Towards the mountain is the U.S., and on the side near the camera is Canada.

Autumn.

The falling leaf is at the door;
The autumn wind is on the hill;
Footsteps I have heard before
Loiter at my cabin sill.

The mysterious autumn haze
Steals across the blue ravine,
Like an Indian ghost that strays
Through his olden lost demense.

Yes, by every trace and sign
The good roving days are here.
Mountain peak and river line
Float the scarlet of the year.

Lovelier than ever now
Is the world I love so well,
Running water, waving bough,
And the bright wind's magic spell.

Rouse the taint of migrant blood,
With the fever of the road—
Impulse older than the flood
Lurking in its last abode.

Now the yellow of the leaf
Bids away by hill and plain,
I shall say good-bye to grief,
Wayfellow with joy again.

—Bliss Carman.

School Plays Forbidden.

Student plays have been banned in all middle schools, colleges and universities in Japan by order of the Minister of Education on the ground that they promote promiscuous love affairs and are injurious to the public morals.

In response to a storm of protests from language schools that contended that plays furnished one of the best means of promoting foreign language conversation, the Minister finally consented to modify his ruling slightly. He will allow student plays in boys' schools with the stipulation that there be no female impersonations and plays may be produced in the girls' schools if there are no male roles enacted. He first stipulated that the plays for boys' schools should have none but male parts and those for girls none but female parts, but eventually consented in special instances to permit acting of both male and female roles if the men taking female roles wore male costume and the girls impersonating male parts did not attempt to make their costumes fit the part.

Making Homes Homelike on the Prairie.

Excellent results are being s by the Tree Planting Division Interior Department with the p of conifers in Western Canad inspection of the plantings sho of the several varieties, a ve percentage have succeeded in es ing themselves. The species sults are as follows:

White spruce, planted 1916, h ft., 98 per cent. living; Lodgepo planted 1916, height 7 ft. 2 in., cent. living; White spruce, pla 1918, height 5 ft., 97 per cent. Scotch pine, planted 1918, heig 4 in., 94 per cent. living; White planted 1922, 96 per cent. living pine, planted 1922, 93 per cent. Scotch pine, planted 1922, 94 pe living.

Undoubtedly these hardy ever are particularly suited to prairie ing, and, once established, se withstand all kinds of neglect, they respond readily to cultivat

We Live in Deeds.

We live in deeds, not year
thoughts, not breaths—
In feelings, not in figures on a
We should count time by heart-
He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the n
acts the best.

—

Landmarks of London Make Way for Progress.

The changes of time and the steady blows of the pick-axe have sent another London landmark to destruction in a cloud of dust, says a London dispatch. This was the building at 34 Cockspur Street which for generations housed the establishment of a famous London clockmaker.

Affixed to the front of this building was a great white-faced clock surmounted by a time-ball, and very old Londoners recall that riding to the War Office of a morning from his home in Piccadilly, the Duke of Wellington would draw rein to correct his timepiece by the one which hung out high over the street. And now the old clock with its time-ball, which became a landmark to Londoners of a succeeding generation who, on foot or on busses, could view it from the far side of Trafalgar Square, has disappeared with the demolition of the building of which it was so long a part.

The passage of time has brought strange changes to this part of London which became known as Charing Cross after King Edward I. erected a Gothic cross there to mark the spot where his Queen's coffin rested in the thirteenth century, when the royal funeral procession halted on its way to Westminster Abbey.

Why Cockspur Street came to be so named no antiquary appears to be able to say for certain. Conjecture has it that it was because of a fancied connection with the mews adjoining the celebrated "Cock Tavern" where Samuel Pepys, who described it in his diary as "a great ordinary mightily cried up," dined Mrs. Turner, Betty and Talbot Pepys, Sir Dennis Gauden, and Gibson, and they were "mighty merry, this house being famous for meat and particularly pease porridge."

In later days Tobias Smollett was in the habit of frequenting "a small tavern in the corner of Cockspur Street" called the Golden Ball, "where we had a frugal supper and a little punch, as the finances of none of the company were in very good order."

His Excuse.

Mother's face wore an exasperated look as she rapped her little son smartly on the knuckles. It was at dinner-time, and everyone who has a son aged six knows how difficult it is to teach the little fellow table manners that will pass in good company.

Johnny would persist in putting the food ino his mouth with his knife instead of his fork [illegible]

REPLENISHING INLAND FISHERIES

Importance of Work of Dominion Fish Cultural Service—Methods of Propagating.

As the fisheries of Canada are one of its chief natural resources and fill such an important place in its commercial life the Department of Marine and Fisheries operates no less than 41 fish hatcheries, which are located at strategical points between the Atlantic and the Pacific, for the purpose of replenishing the rivers and other inland waters.

Fish culture or Aquaculture holds a somewhat similar place with regard to the water as agriculture does with regard to land. The former aims at the largest annual crop of fish of the most valuable kinds that the respective waters will produce.

During the spawning season the ripe females are skillfully manipulated by trained employees and their eggs are extruded by a gentle pressure into pans where they are carefully fertilized with the "milt" of the male fish. The fertilized eggs are carried in jars and trays in running water in the hatcheries until the young fish or "fry" hatch out. During this period they are safe from injury from freshets which would scour out the spawning beds; from receding waters, which would leave them exposed; from severe frosts, which would kill them; as well as from the ravages of fish, egg-eating birds and many other natural enemies. In Canada the eggs of the fish that spawn in the autumn hatch out in the following spring, or in a period of from five to six months, while the eggs of the spring spawning species hatch in from four to six weeks.

When the "fry" are first hatched they subsist upon the contents of a yolk or food sac and when this is practically consumed and they begin to rise from the bottoms of the troughs in search of other food they are transferred as speedily as possible in cans, or scow, to the waters that it is desired to stock. The absorption of the food sac takes from three to four weeks, but this as well as the hatching period is affected by the temperature of the water. Warm water gives quicker results than cold water.

As the vitality of the little fish increases rapidly as they grow older, the facilities available at the various hatcheries for feeding and rearing the fry so that they may be carried until they reach the "fingerling" stage are being developed and last year the distribution of "fingerlings" and older fish from the Dominion Government hatcheries was increased twenty per cent. to a total of thirty-five and a half million. So far as is feasible the distribution is arranged on a "standard" basis. Streams and lakes are examined and classified according to their physical condition, the extent to which they are fished, and their general value from a fish-producing standpoint.

Since its inception the Canadian Fish Cultural Service has given almost its whole attention to the propagation of the more important food fishes such as Atlantic Salmon in the eastern provinces; whitefish, salmon trout, and pickerel in Ontario and the Prairie Provinces, and Pacific salmon in British Columbia, while the demands of anglers has resulted in the recent inclusion of such game fish as speckled, rainbow, cutthroat, and kamloops trout. Some of these species are also becoming established in water to which they are not indigenous. Pacific spring salmon are being caught in lake Ontario, and eastern whitefish, black bass, and Atlantic salmon are being taken in British Columbia lakes and rivers. Rainbow trout are being introduced into streams on the eastern slope of the Rockies in Alberta; and experimental plants of the same species are being made in Nova Scotia, of Brown and Loch Leven trout in New Brunswick, and of lake Ontario and lake Superior herring in alkaline lakes in Saskatchewan.

That the fisheries of the country have been maintained and increased in all waters that have been systematically stocked with hatching fry, while similar waters that have not been so assisted have become depleted are well-known facts. For instance in 1895 whitefish had become so scarce in lake Ontario that there was practically no commercial fishing whereas by 1917 the commercial catch amounted to 12,034 cwt. and in 1922 to 21,020 cwt. This improvement is credited by those directly interested to the hatcheries on both sides of the lake.

Harbor Lights.

When ships sail softly into port
And hail the setting sun,
Contentment holds the voyagers
To know the journey done;
To greet the friendly harbor lights
That signal, one by one.

For lights that glow at door and sill
Reflected in the heart.
And weary men, at close of day
Returning from the mart,
Greet, each, the light that shines for them
As sacred and apart.

For lights that glow at door and sill;
Are nearer than a star,
And stand for holy, blessed things
Wherever mortals are;
To reach their welcome once again
No road's too hard or far.

—Faith Baldwin.

Nature Lover.

I have found kindness in friendly hearts . . . .
But peace on a fragrant lane,
That laughed in the shower of leaves,
That dreamed in the pour of rain.

I love the light that dwells in hearts,
But I must lonely be
In the quiet fields at twilight hush
To find eternity.

—W. H. Melvin.

Why She Looked.

The city girl boarding in the country spoke to the farmer about the savage way in which the cow regarded her.

"Well," said the farmer, "it must be on account of you wearing your red waist."

"Dear me!" cried the girl. "Of course I know it's terribly out of style, but I had no idea that a cow would notice it."

Discovered by Accident.

Sheffield plate was discovered by accident in 1742 by Thomas Boisover, a Sheffield mechanic.

It is said that he was repairing the handle of a pocket-knife composed partly of silver and partly of copper, and in making his repairs accidentally fused the two metals. He at once conceived the idea of uniting these two metals and using this as a substitute for making articles which hitherto had been made of sterling silver only.

He seems to have specialized in making small articles such as buckles, buttons, snuff-boxes, and patch-boxes, some of which were only half an inch in diameter. He did not appreciate how important his discovery was, and consequently did not reap the full results from his remarkable invention.

$2,500 for an Egg.

The most valued egg in the world is that of the great auk, a bird once common in the regions of the North Atlantic, but now extinct. The last auk egg sold realized about $2,500.

The auk was a diving bird about the size of a duck, but was unable to fly because of its small wings. It laid one egg at a time. The birds and their eggs were used largely for food among seafaring folk. So many of them were killed that the species has entirely disappeared.

Reforestry in France.

France began systematic tree-planting along its national roads in the reign of Francis I., more than 300 years ago. When a contract is let for a new state road in France the specifications include the trees to be set out, and the contractor is responsible for his trees for two years after he sets them out.

This charming portrait is the latest study of Mrs. Stanley Baldwin, wife of the Conservative leader, who is now premier of Great Britain.

h of Alwar was the most picturesque person conference, his appearance giving a welcome herings.