ILLINOIS WILDFOWL.—Aurora, Ill., Sept. 28.—Prairie chicken shooting I think has been better than an average. There are a good many birds left for next year. There will not be many more shot this season. They are wild and rise out of range. Some of my friends report quail quite plenty. English snipe (*Scolopax wilsonii*) have begun to put in an appearance, but are not very plenty, owing, I presume, to its being so dry. Blue and green-winged teal are in some numbers, with a few young mallards, but then a person will have to know where to look to find them. I shot four young mallards last Wednesday, the first I have seen. By the way, it is about time to think of loading shells for the fall shooting, and while doing so a good many will want to know where they are going to look for good duck shooting. I will describe one place where a friend and myself spent a week of as good shooting as one would care to enjoy. It was on the Kankakee River above Momence, on west side, about twenty miles from the town. You will have to take your own tent with you. Can get a team to take you out, and if it is not a very wet fall, you will not require a boat. The best shooting is back from the river about a mile or so, that is during the morning and evening shooting, but in the middle of the day the river is the place. I would advise any one going there to take along a good rifle, and if it gets very blustery hire a team and driver and go to Little Beaver Lake. They will find a good many geese there, with some swan. The writer shot one while there, as fine a specimen as I ever saw. One will have no trouble in finding this lake, as by inquiring most any one that lives in that section can direct him to it. We took along two dozen decoys, and parties going there should do the same, although good shooting will be had without them. If this letter is not explicit enough I will take pleasure in answering any inquiries that are addressed to me.—L. A. HOYT.

NEW YORK.—Candor, Tioga County.—Ruffed grouse and woodcock never so scarce here; have been out several times, and seen none.—J. O. F.

INDIANA.—Indianapolis, Ind., Sept. 25.—We are all patiently waiting for Oct. 16—the 15th comes on Sunday. Prospects good.—S.

Camp Fire Flickerings.

"That reminds me."

THE story of the clergyman, the fish and the small boy told in your issue of Sept. 14, reminds me of an occasion when an Elizabeth, N. J., minister was disconcerted in a somewhat similar way. He was illustrating some point by the loading and discharge of a gun. Describing the process, he accompanied his words by a highly realistic pantomime performance, pouring into the muzzle of his imaginary gun first the powder, then a wad, the shot, and wads again "ramming her home" every time, then withdrawing the ramrod, he put on the cap, raised the gun to his shoulder, sighted along the barrels, and, turning suddenly to his audience, exclaimed, "And now, what do I do next?"

"Pull the trigger!" shouted a small boy in a front pew.

"I'll pull *your* trigger for you, you little wretch," said the disconcerted clergyman, dropping his arms and shaking his finger threateningly at the offending urchin.

Your story of the Hartford clergyman and the fish recalls an incident which once happened in a city less than a thousand miles from Pawtucket, R. I. There is nothing about fish nor game in it; if classified it would probably come under the head of the vegetable kingdom. It was the young clergyman's first service in the church. In a front pew sat an elderly deacon. The minister gave out, among other notices, one of a meeting to be "held as usual on Wednesday evening." "You are mistaken," said the deacon, rising in his pew, "the meeting will be held on Thursday evening." "Ah, yes," said the young minister, in a loud voice to correct his error, "Thursday evening;" then *sub voce* and confidentially to the deacon, "Right, brother; I acknowledge the corn."

Not long afterward the congregation raised a liberal sum and sent the young man off to brush up in Europe, where your genial correspondent "Pisco" may perchance run across him.

"Talking of preachers," said Caleb Parker, "reminds me of a story they tell of Uncle Cephas Bascom, of North Haven. Uncle Cephas was a shoemaker, and he never went to sea much, only to anchor his skiff in the Narrows abreast of his house and catch a mess of scup, or to pole a load of salt hay from Sanquit Island. But he used to visit his married daughter, in Tremont, and up there they knew he came from the seaboard, and they used to call him 'Captain Bascom.' So, one time when he was there, they had a Sabbath-school concert, and nothing would do but 'Captain Bascomb' must talk to the boys, and tell a sea-yarn, and draw a moral. Well, Uncle Cephas was rather pleased with his name of 'Captain Bascomb,' and he didn't like to go back on it, and so he flaxed round to get up something. It seems he had heard a summer boarder talk in Sabbath-school at Northhaven; he told how a poor boy minded his mother and then got to tend store, and then keep store himself, and then he jumped it on them; 'That poor boy,' says he, 'now stands before you.' So Uncle Cephas thought him up a similar yarn. Well, he had never spoke in meeting before, and he hemmed and hawed some, but he got on quite well while he was telling about a certain poor boy, and all that, and how the boy, when he grew up, was out at sea in an open boat, and saw a great swordfish making for the boat. Hail Columbia, and bound to stave right through her and sink her; and how this man he took an oar and give it a swing and broke the critter's sword square off; and then Uncle Cephas—he'd begun to get a little flustered—he stopped short, and waved his arms, and, says he, 'Boys, what do you think! That swordfish now stands before you.' I call'ate that brought the house down."—*October Century.*

DOGSKIN JACKETS, windproof, flannel lined, pliable and indestructible, are imported and manufactured at Oak Hall, where sales last season were nearly one thousand at retail. This season Oak Hall has manufactured largely for the trade, and there is no knowing how many will be sold. One thing is certain, a dogskin jacket is indispensable to a sportsman and to all who drive or are exposed to the weather.—*Adv.*

SOMETHING THAT EVERY SPORTSMAN NEEDS.—One of the Eclipse pocket re-cappers, de-cappers, loaders, etc. Manufactured by C. L. MORSE & CO., Hamden, Conn. See advertisement.—*Adv.*

Sea and River Fishing.

OPEN SEASONS.—*See table of open seasons for game and fish in issue of July 20.*

It may be laid down as a position which will seldom deceive, that when a man cannot bear his own company, there is something wrong.—*Dr. Johnson.*

FOREST AND STREAM ANGLERS' TOURNAMENT.

Notice of the first annual FOREST AND STREAM Anglers' Tournament will be found in our editorial columns.

THE TILEFISH IS NOT FOUND.

OUR readers will remember that the tilefish, *Lophiolatilus chamaeleonticeps*, which was a newly discovered food fish dug up in great quantities in deep water by the U. S. Fish Commission, suffered severely last year from some unknown cause. The miles on miles of dead fish reported by incoming vessels were supposed to be largely composed of this fish. It was a question whether the species was exterminated or not, and if not, then the fishermen should be learned to take them for market and the people should become familiar with them. With this end in view, Mr. Blackford chartered a vessel for Prof. Baird and they went in search of the tilefish. Although this fish was not found they discovered a new species. Mr. Barnet Philips of the editorial staff of the N. Y. *Times* and secretary of the American Fishcultural Association, accompanied the expedition and gives the following account of his trip, dated Gloucester, Mass. Sept. 26:

Take a little craft of forty-five tons, sail for some 120 miles out into the Atlantic, and with a good southwesterly breeze the green waters will roll, and the vessel will have the liveliest of motions. Sometimes she may duck her bowsprit under, or her boom may graze the crest of a surging sea; but staunch she is and trim, and if, as in that poetical language which sailors use, "she is in good tune"—ballast all right—and is not too low by the head, she will ride along most gallantly, and despite the heaving seas and their impact will, as she spins out her eight knots, be as safe as the biggest ship that ever sailed. Just such a craft as this is the Josie Reeves, a well-known smack, that has made her weekly trips all through the summer from the lobster grounds of Menemsha Bight, on the Vineyard, to Fulton Market. Because Capt. Redmond presented one of the best types of the American fisherman, and was master of the Josie Reeves, captain and smack was chartered by Mr. E. G. Blackford for the United States Fish Commission, to take a trip off the coast in search of the tilefish. The little expedition was under the direction of Capt. J. W. Collins, attached to the United States Fish Commission. This officer, who for many years has had in charge fishing vessels going out of Gloucester in search of halibut and cod, is absolutely familiar with all kinds of fishing gear, the methods of securing fish, and from his thorough practical acquaintance with the details of this perilous business is singularly fitted for the position he occupies. A man of this kind must be able to take the wheel, be ready for any emergency, and at the same time possess a very considerable amount of scientific knowledge in regard to the various kinds of fish he catches. At the Berlin Fish Exhibition Capt. Collins was one of our commissioners, and visited the German and English coasts in order to understand their various methods of fishing.

We left Greenport, L. I., on the 19th, and it was just before sundown that, with a pleasant breeze, all sails set, the Josie Reeves slid through the water, and by 8 o'clock, with an increasing wind, Montauk Point was passed, and keeping well clear of Shag-a-wam Reef, bowling merrily along, we made out for the sea, steering well eastward at first, and then working southerly.

That the tilefish had been very abundant before in exactly the localities where the dead fish were found was very certain, because the Fish Hawk, the steamer attached to the commission, rarely went to these tile-fish grounds without taking quite a number. But this year the Fish Hawk, having gone to the same places, could not find any, if, then, the United States Fish Commission could not find the tilefish this summer, would the Josie Reeves be more fortunate? Used to the business of trawling, with a thoroughly seaworthy boat, ably commanded, with a good and willing crew, provided with the most perfect apparatus, having an exact knowledge of where the ground was situated, having on record all the localities where the fish had been found in 1879, 1880, and 1881, the chances were that a load of tilefish would be secured. Capt. Kirby, in May, 1879, had secured on only a part of a single trawl 2,500 pounds of the fish. On Thursday, with a whole-sail breeze, the Josie Reeves arrived at the exact locality. By observation, we were at 40.03deg. 70.28min. west, and by dead reckoning and careful soundings just where the tilefish should abound. The soundings are of a somewhat peculiar character. The water south of Long Island shallows very slowly at first, with a gradual slope, somewhat more than a fathom to the mile, until sixty-eight or seventy fathoms are met, when, all of a sudden, down goes the sea bottom, and from 140 to 200 fathoms are struck. Following this ridge, which extends some 100 miles south of Long Island, on the deep soundings, trending somewhat irregularly to the southward, the fishing was done. Take a lead of eighteen pounds and plumb the depths some 150 fathoms and try to get it up the 900 feet, and with the weight of water it is a good half-hour of work.

Being in the exact locality, the trawls, which had been baited early in the morning, were made ready.

It is time now to haul up the trawls. The dory is lowered, the two men in oilers and heavy boots take flying leaps into the boat, and, with a few vigorous strokes of the oars, are fast to the buoy keg. Then the strain and pull begins. The two men haul all they can. As the dory rises with the wave crest they take advantage of the natural heave, and let go just when they would be hauled overboard. Inch by inch they fight for the mastery. At last the first anchor is up, put in the boat, and they are running over the ground line which has the hooks on it. We put in close to them. A reward has been offered for the first tilefish. We see from the jumping deck of the Josie Reeves an occasional silvery-looking fish come from the hooks, but the golden gleam of the tilefish is not here. These are commonplace hake. All day the men set their trawls—two sets of them at a time—and work with the vim of donkey engines, and there is a never a *Lophiolatilus*. Capt. Redmond is in one of the dories. As he pulls in at nightfall he says: "I haven't a tilefish, nothing but hake; but here are some handsome fish. I never saw their like before. Wouldn't Blackford like to have one? Red as can be, and here they are," and four beautiful red fish, some smaller than a blackfish, some very much larger, are tossed on the deck. If we have not found the tilefish, maybe we have stumbled on something else. Capt. Collins examines them carefully. He has never seen the like before. It is a very beautiful fish, with warm red lustre and black and cream-colored mottlings. It looks faintly in general build like *Tautoga onitis*, but it is a lustier fish, and its pectorals are blood red and of very great breadth and sweep. Have we hit the duck and missed the drake? to commit an ichthyological bull. Still, we had hoped for the tilefish, but unlike the colored fisherman, who, when fishing for catfish, caught a striped bass and was disgusted, we are not without hope.

The weather still continuing fine, we prepared for another day's trawling. Everything being made snug for the night, we went westward, making considerable southing. For two more days we fished, persistently, indefatigably. On Friday we took some dozen more of these handsome red fish, some very much larger than the first, but of *Lophiolatilus* not a sign. Of hake there were plenty with skates galore, and dogfish, and a *Lophius*, too, the ugliest of all fish, that animated carpethag.

Three days were we at it. It might blow all it pleased; so that the small boats could be worked the men were willing. But the tilefish would not come. Then we looked again at the red fish. They had been, with the whole of the catch, put on ice. They looked so tempting. The specimen misers of the Fish Commission might want them all to stow away in alcohol. What if we should brave them? We were at sea, beyond the chance of a telegraphic dispatch. Then there was a member of the Ichthyophagons aboard. That red fish had to be eaten. What was a dry scientific jumble of voiners, palatines, snouts, opercles, dorsals, anals, scales, to him? There never would come such a chance again. The fish might never be caught again. To Capt. Collins might accrue the honor of having discovered a new fish, but to the member of the Ichthyophagous would come the delight of being the first human being who should eat it. The proposition was made by the gustatory iconoclast "to have just one fried," and he did it in cold blood. Capt. Collins, touched perhaps by the eloquent appeal of the fish-eater, consented, and the cook had two of the fish given him. At night it was eaten, and proved to be the most delicious of fish, in fact, a fish which every gourmand and epicure would want to taste and tell about. It had a firm flesh, yet it was crisp, with a delicate, crabby flavor. On Saturday, the 23d of September, after having fished all day, the seas increasing somewhat and the sky to windward looking angry, the barometer falling, it was thought wiser to seek a harbor and so close the cruise. Specimens having been secured, as instructions had been given to be both general and special in collecting—everything, in fact, found in God's great seas, from a whale to a tiny parasite, being within the requirements of the United States Fish Commission—at sundown we took a northeasterly course and made for Block Island.

It blew a fresh breeze, and the Josie Reeves made Block Island on Sunday at 2 A. M., the light showing clear some ten miles west. By daybreak the long range of small islands forming the right-hand side breakwater of Buzzard's Bay was made, and by 10, just as thick weather was threatening, the anchor was dropped at Wood's Hole, within ten yards of the Fish Hawk.

The particular fish having been handed over to the ichthyologists of the commission, it was declared to be a new member of the family of *Scorpaena*, first described by Jordan in 1880. Such of the *Scorpaena* as have been before described have been only some three inches in length. The fish taken in this cruise are over a foot in length. There are differences in the markings, and very probably on examination some other specific variations will be discoverable.*

"Are we to be forgiven for having eaten two of these fish?" we inquired rather anxiously of the Commissioner.

"Oh, certainly; you did precisely right. Scientific research is one thing, but to turn what we may find into use is the great practical bent of the Fish Commission. I believe I can congratulate Capt. Collins on having found what I believe to be a new fish, and what is more, to have been among the first to eat it, and if there were only enough of them, I should very much like to try one too; but I must send the best of the fish at once to Washington to have casts of them, and the rest are now in alcohol and will form material for careful study."

As to why the *Lophiolatilus* was not caught on the trip of the Josie Reeves we are not prepared to state. As to what killed the fish, or whether all the fish were destroyed this year, no one can hazard an opinion. The solution of these curious problems will require much additional study.

* Prof. Goode has since identified the fish as *Scorpaena dactylopterus.*

THE HENSHALL ROD.

I HAVE read with no little interest the numerous essays on fishing rods, and wonder if that subject will be settled at all. The only solution that I can see to the problem is that every angler use just the kind, pattern, size, length, weight and material of rod that he likes best; then don't let anybody disparage him about his rod and thus destroy his happiness. His own way suits him best.

When in Florida last winter with my friend Dr. Henshall, I had only one rod. It was what he styled the "coming bass rod"—with ash butt and lance-wood second joint and tip. I think it weighs about eight ounces, but have not weighed it. I used that rod all the time while there, and have it now in as good condition as the day I got it, nor did I use but one tip during the time. This being the first and only jointed rod that I ever had or used, therefore would not be a proper critic as to light or heavy rods, as we at the South always, "'fo 'mancipation," used cane poles without reels. As to the holding qualities of this rod, its "give and take," its perpetual elasticity, I don't think can be surpassed on earth.

The bass that we took in that country are simply enormous, and an eight-ounce rod that will master those eight to ten-pound fellows is certainly good enough for the most obstinate stickler. I thought that if this rod was a fraction stiffer it would be better for such large bass, but for anything under six-pound bass I would not have it changed. A half hour is too long to fight one bass, and so if the rod was a third stiffer it would curtail the fight say to twenty minutes or fifteen.

One evening I was alone on a beautiful stream in my canvas boat. I had half grown "bream" for bait, which were so heavy (eight-ounce bait) that I could cast them only thirty or forty feet, yet I took seven bass, of which the smallest weighed four pounds and the largest ten pounds; average