

FIGHTING FOREST FIRES

BY WALDON FAWCETT



Battling with a Forest Fire



Forest Fire in California



Hot Work



Fighting with Shovels

The calendar year of 1908 is likely to become memorable as the most disastrous 12 months in history in point of the destructiveness of forest fires in the United States. It is estimated that the ordinary years the average annual loss through forest fires in this country is not less than \$50,000,000, but great as is this loss under what might be termed normal conditions, it appears almost insignificant by comparison with the record-breaking waste of the present period, when the aggregate loss will probably amount to several times the usual \$50,000,000. For a considerable interval this autumn, when the forest fires have been at their height, the flames were doing damage to the amount of \$1,000,000 a day.

A sequel to this year's fires that will not appear in connection with any of the statistics of loss at first hand from forest fires. As readers of the newspapers have had good cause to realize, the fire this year have not been confined as is often the case, largely to the densely wooded and sparsely populated areas, but have invaded many populous districts, laying waste towns of considerable size and driving great numbers of people from their homes. As a result of the suffering and exposure thus entailed, there will probably be much invalidism and many deaths that, not being immediately attributable to the forest fires, will not be included in the statistics that will constitute the chronicle of this year's fire record.

Another unusual feature of the forest fires of 1908 is found in the wide range of territory visited by the flames. In the Maine woods and in the Adirondacks of Northern New York; throughout the State of Pennsylvania; in Michigan, Wisconsin and Wisconsin and other territory adjacent to the Great Lakes the forest fires have been raging simultaneously and even on the Pacific Coast the menace has been present, threatening among other things the destruction of one of the finest groves of the prized big trees. Moreover, the forest fires this year have been unusually difficult to conquer, and in many instances the owners of magnificent private forests or hunting preserves provided with the best private fire-fighting systems have found themselves unable to cope with the rapidly traveling flames and have been obliged to appeal to nearby municipalities for aid.

The recent forest fires have had their severity emphasized by reason of the fact that during the three or four years prior to the present one the annual loss from forest fires has been unusually small, thanks to favorable climatic conditions. However, this season's unparalleled record has given the country an unpleasant object lesson as to what may happen any year and has aroused everybody concerned to a realization of the need of some better system of fighting and preventing this immense yearly loss. Not only have private individuals and corporations owing timber lands been stirred to action by the spectacle of the past few weeks, but the United States government has inaugurated a country-wide campaign that it is believed will point a way to prevent many forest fires and to control those that, despite precautions, gain a start.

As a first step the national government has had one of the most efficient agencies of its forest service, Mr. Raymond W. Powell, travel over the burned areas and collect detailed statistics that will be of value in urging congressional action on the subject, but also taking notes as to the physical characteristics of the fires and all details that might lead to a better understanding of this destructive element and the best means to circumvent it.

At the same time the national authorities have detailed an expert on forestry, Mr. Paul G. Redington, to make an investigation of the whole broad subject of forest fires and to devise ways and means for an improvement of conditions in future. In speaking of the line of action to be taken by the government in enlisting cooperation for the common cause Mr. Redington said recently: "What is wanted is organized effort on the part of the government, the states, corporations and individuals. There should be adequate fire laws in every state where any forests are located. There laws should provide for the appointment of fire wardens, who should have authority and the power to enforce such and to call upon the services of citizens in fighting forest fires which occur. The law should provide for a penalty to be imposed upon any man who refuses to give his services in time of need."

It is realized that the railroads through their spark-emitting locomotives constitute one of the chief sources of forest fires and consequently one of the first moves which has been made by Uncle Sam in the present undertaking was to invite the railroads to make common cause with the federal government against the forest fire menace. Within the past few weeks there have been prepared articles of agreement for a co-operative working arrangement between the government and those railroads whose lines traverse the national forests of the West and this is believed to be but the beginning of a better understanding between some of the parties most concerned.

Of the thousands of men and women who have taken up photography either as a pastime or professionally, there is only a very small proportion—those who have mastered the art of snapshotting, or are to use a technical term, manipulators of the rapid shutter. Of the hundreds of professional and amateur camera knights in Greater New York those who have become expert in the rapid fire work of snapshotting are counted on the fingers of one hand. When one pauses to consider that every daily newspaper magazine and pictorial periodical published in Greater New York maintains a staff of expert photographers, to say nothing of the scores of news agencies and concerns whose business it is to make pictures for and sell them to the newspapers, the foregoing statement might be regarded as an exaggeration, but it is nevertheless true. One man in Greater New York, who stands head and shoulders above all other competitors in the snapshot field, tells a remarkable story of his achievements and the qualifications of his work. This artist, C. C. Cook, is the official photographer for a well-known sporting publication and is the maker of the pictures used in illustrating this article, and in discussing his work does so with so much modesty that those who hear him relate the many hairbreadth escapes he has had on the track and steeplechase course while "chasing a picture" marvel at the nerve he is so often called upon to display.

Mr. Cook says, while hundreds are using a rapid-butler camera, very few of them get beyond the easy stages—the usual daily newspaper stunt—the photographing of athletes, automobiles, the harness horse, fish jumping, and many other objects that do not require unusual skill. But when they tackle the fast-moving racehorses or the falling steeplechaser they know in photography; and that so few two or three who are following it successfully.

In discussing his work Mr. Cook has this to say: "Just how and why I have been successful is rather hard to say; but the greatest requirements I find necessary are the cool, steady nerve and quick eye. One must become absolutely oblivious to his every surrounding, regardless of how horrible it all may be. I never permit my mind to wander from my work, and no matter what is coming off, whether it is a Suburban, a selling race or a steeplechase horse and jockey tumbling end over end, I keep my wits about me, never allowing myself to become too excited; for the instant nervousness he might just as well throw the camera away, as far as getting good results goes."

In taking his many steeplechase accident pictures—and he has more than a hundred—Mr. Cook remained as cool as the traditional cucumber, and with his camera working to perfection, backed by his quick eye, he declares it was easy, and fails to see just why everyone pronounces his work so marvelous. To the quick eye more than anything else he attributes this success, for in the ability to see the particular picture of each accident and in being able to snap the camera at that particular instant lie the secrets of success.

These accidents occur and are over with in such a remarkably short time that there is not the fraction of a second to lose in the taking of them. One must get the focus and likewise be very careful to get them on the plate, for this indeed is most essential. Getting the focus is probably the most difficult task, for one never knows just when and where a horse is going to fall; sometimes he is within eight or ten feet

and again 50 feet of the camera, yet the focus must be sharp, and when one takes into consideration all the things necessary to do toward making a successful picture he must think fast and work still faster. The human machine must be working like a clock, the camera must be perfect and the photographic plate must be the best, and there is a slip in any of the three, imperfect picture, or no picture at all will be the result. The quickest bit snapshot work on record had to do with the tumble of Woodside at New Orleans last winter, as pictured here, which the photographer describes as follows: "The race in question was a hurdle race and there was no place for me to stand alongside the inside rail and through the opening in the fence. The horse fell within eight feet of me, the instant he landed into the plate had a snap, for he was on and off in the twinkling of an eye. When the horse was developed, horse and rider came falling, there being not more than a quarter of an inch to spare at the bottom of the plate. The focus might have been a bit better, but I was too occupied getting the horse on the plate to do so."

In selecting a jump where he falls is liable to occur the photo does not always pick the same o-

Snapshotting as a Fine Art

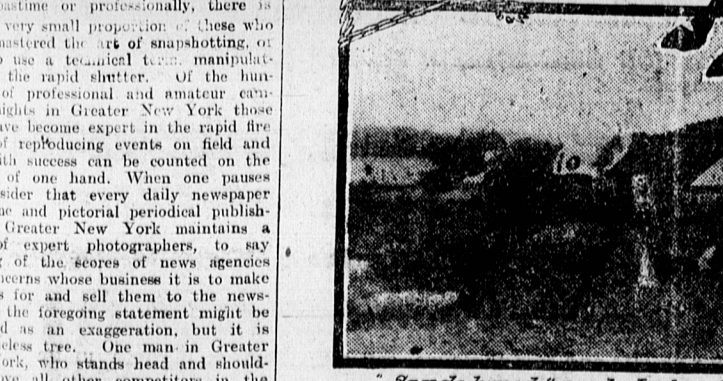
BY A. R. PARK HURST



Gravesend Mr. O'Brien Riding Fall at Gravesend Neither Hurt



Thisledale and Jockey Stone Fall at Aqueduct Neither Hurt



Sandalwood and Jockey Stone Fall at Gravesend Neither Hurt



Cozzens and Jockey Stone Fall at City Park New Orleans, Jockey Injured, Horse Not Hurt



Woodside and Jockey Stone Fall at City Park New Orleans, Jockey Injured for Life, Horse Not Hurt

earth not more than one-fifth of a second elapsed. During that brief interval the picture could have been taken in most any position. A twenty-fifth of a second later Stone would have been on the ground and the same fraction sooner he would have been photographed diving over the horse's head in the usual fashion.

The most potent factor in the success of snapshot picture making is the great headway made within the past 5 years in the manufacture of plates. Less than a decade ago the complaint was general among photographers that no plate had made its appearance that was considered sufficiently fast. Now all is changed and as good an action picture can be taken on a dark, gloomy day as at noon on the brightest day of summer. In fact on very sunny days, photographers complain, strange to say, that the plate works faster than the shutter and he can scarcely give a short enough exposure. With rapid shutter work revolutionized to this extent it can be readily seen what a burden has been lifted from the artist's mind. With a plate absolutely reliable for speed and perfection, with a camera that never fails, fitted with the best lenses made, the success of the picture alone depends upon the alertness of the man behind the gun.

NOT HIS BROTHER

"Up in the Adirondacks, four weeks ago," said the salesman who had been on his vacation, "I found a settler who lived in a log cabin 10 miles from anywhere. There were six in the family and they were an ignorant, shackley lot. The man didn't know who was governor or President, and when we had talked politics a bit and he had asked me who the presidential candidates were I answered that they were Smith and Jones.

"Is that so?" he drawled. "Why, my name is Smith."

"Yes?"

"And there was Jim that Joe besides me."

"Then it may be one of them who is running."

"Just as like as not. Huh! That would be funny. It would give this family a boost if it was so, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, if he were elected."

"And we could get out of this?"

"Yes."

"And kinder swell around a bit?"

"Yes."

"I guess it's Jim or Joe, but I'd like to make sure. The old woman will know. You stop here while I go in and ask her."

"He was gone about five minutes, and he came out looking with discouraged and said:

"Can't be either Jim or Joe, stranger. I haven't kept much track of 'em myself, but the old woman has, and she says Jim's been dead two years, and Joe's in state prison for life. My darned luck is allus peterin' out this way!"