ANGLERS' EVENINGS

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THE RIBBLE, HORTON.

ANGLERS' EVENINGS.

PAPERS BY MEMBERS OF THE MANCHESTER ANGLERS' ASSOCIATION.

THIRD SERIES.

Manchester:
ABEL HEYWOOD AND SON, 56 AND 58, OLDHAM STREET.

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INTRODUCTION.

Fifteen years ago the Manchester Anglers' Association entrusted to me the pleasant task of editing the first series of "Anglers' Evenings." They have now a second time honoured me with the same commission as regards this, the third series, and, as on the former occasion, I have been requested to vicariously make the preliminary bow to that wider circle of brothers of the angle to whom the volume is offered.

After such an interval, a tendency to somewhat dreamy retrospection is not unnatural. The book itself suggests retrospection. Some of the contributors to the first series have contributed also to the present series, but at least one is conspicuously absent. The dear old Colonel who led the way with his exhortation to us to "let patience have her perfect work," sleeps well at Irton, beside the salmon river he loved.

Things have progressed since 1879. In the first volume only one Manchester fisher—the writer on Norway—described experiences beyond the limits of Great Britain and the Isle of Man, though many wrote of Scotland. There is much of Scotland in the present volume—the Scotch are ever with us—but the

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range has been extended to Ireland, Canada, and New Zealand. May it not be that the members of the Association have discovered the true method of establishing the "union of hearts" and "Imperial Federation?" The first volume was recognised as being in its very nature a protest against river pollution and wanton destruction of natural beauty in the district from which it emanated; the Manchester Ship Canal has since been constructed, a "Joint Committee" is actively engaged in repressing the defilement of the Mersey and Irwell and their tributaries, and sea-gulls are said to be nesting at Old Trafford. Nor have the Manchester Anglers failed to advance. In wild and lonely Ribblesdale they have taken charge of miles of romantic water; there, like Caliban, they make dams for fish, and have not only built a fish-hatchery to replenish the river, but have established golf links. Lastly, even the fish appear to have moved with the times, for nearly every writer in the present volume, he of Norway not excepted, dwells on the superior education of the finny tribe of to-day.

There is one recollection not to be erased from the minds of the Manchester Anglers who look back on the tremulous anxieties and pleasures of that first appearance before the public fifteen years ago, and that is, the recollection of the appreciative reception given to their un-professional venture. The volume met with no ungenial critic amongst the many who deigned to notice it—save one, and he

was evidently a dissecting ichthyologist rather than a fisherman. Théophile Gautier said that a man only turns critic when he has discovered that he cannot be a poet, and Lord Beaconsfield elaborated this remark into a well-known phrase to the effect that the critics are persons who have failed in literature and art. The experience of the Manchester Anglers does not confirm the dictum of either of these authorities. Their critics hitherto have obviously been men accustomed to the music of the reel and able to fill their creels.

It is permissible to express a hope that the critics of the present volume will not be inferior fishermen to the critics of fifteen years ago, and that the book may receive as kindly a greeting as was accorded then.

The contributors to this volume have not consciously any very ambitious aims; like virtue, they find their reward in the pleasure of being. They seek to promote the true spirit of their craft less by preaching than by recording. Yet it may well be that the future historian, whether New Zealander or Perfected Anarchist, will give this volume a leading position amongst the progressive works of the present age. True, it does not attempt to compete with the contemporary novel with a purpose; for though traces of passion may be found in its pages, anglers are not, as a rule, perplexed by spiritual uncertainties and Gallic heart-yearnings; such troubles they have left behind with the measles. But who that peruses

these pages and learns that while one fisher, who loves the Derbyshire waters formerly fished by Walton and Cotton, prefers "small takes of good fish" to "larger numbers of smaller fish" and is satisfied with an average of 1 lb., another looks on 2 lbs. as only a respectable average, and a third condescendingly refers to 2 lbs. as "a nice little fish" will fail to perceive the relation between angling and economics? All that is needed for the solution of the economic problems of the time is an enterprising and, withal, cheerful and contented spirit, and this is the outcome of the angler's art.

While the book has been passing through the press it has had to be recorded of one of its contributors—the author of the paper on "Trout Fishing in Otago, New Zealand,"—

> "Thou thy worldly task hast done,
> Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages.

Mr. John Ord Mackenzie, who was born at Comrie in Perthshire, in 1831, died at Palmerston, New Zealand, in December, 1893. For nearly forty years a merchant in Manchester, he was also a noted fisherman, and before leaving England on his retirement from business he took the Silver Cross Championship of Scotland for trout fishing in Loch Leven. He appears to have made a home for himself in the hearts of his neighbours in the Britain of the South Pacific, as he had previously done in those of his friends and fellow anglers in the old country. The reel is now silent, and Loch Leven, the Ribble, the Shag, and the Waitaki will know him no

more. But he lives as a "gentle angler" in the memories of those who knew him, alike in Manchester and in distant Palmerston.

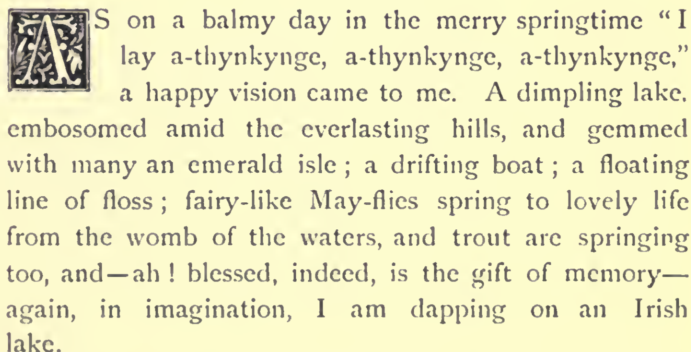
F. J. F

Manchester,
March 28th, 1894.

ANGLERS' EVENINGS.

DAPPING ON THE IRISH LAKES.

BY T. P. W.



AS on a balmy day in the merry springtime "I lay a-thynkynge, a-thynkynge, a-thynkynge," a happy vision came to me. A dimpling lake, embosomed amid the everlasting hills, and gemmed with many an emerald isle; a drifting boat; a floating line of floss; fairy-like May-flies spring to lovely life from the womb of the waters, and trout are springing too, and—ah! blessed, indeed, is the gift of memory—again, in imagination, I am dapping on an Irish lake.

Thus it comes to pass that I have chosen the title of this paper. My object is to try and give such accurate information that any angler, who determines to take what may be, to him, a new departure in angling,

may start fair, properly equipped and furnished, guarded against blunders into which I stumbled, and instructed in the best methods which a five or six years' experience has taught me.

First find your lake; for all Irish lakes are not adapted to this form of sport. What you want is a May-fly lake. Now of two lakes lying almost side by side, one may be the May-fly's haunt, whilst on the other a May-fly is never seen. I do not think that anybody can say why this is, but so it is. Nature's secrets are not easily penetrated. I know two salmon rivers which fall into the sea within a very few miles of each other, running through much the same country, subject to much the same influences; the one fishes well in March, and the other not till June. Why? It is easy, however, to find out which *are* May-fly lakes; and you will probably be influenced in your choice of water by readiness of access, by prospect of sport, and by possibilities of accommodation. The latter is a difficulty. Hotels are often distant from the scene of action, are not always good, and are generally expensive. For the fisherman who is prepared to rough it a bit the best plan is to get—if he can—accommodation in some farm-house near the lake. Cooking is, as a rule, pretty rough, but hunger is a rare good sauce, and one can always improve matters by taking stores. A round of Derby beef and a ham make a sufficiently good stand-by.

There is a fishing song in Cotton's poems (quoted *in extenso* as a note in some editions of *The Complete Angler*) beginning:—

> "Away to the brook,
> All your tackle outlook,
> Here's a day that is worth a year's wishing;
> See that all things be right,
> For 'twould be a spight
> To want tools when a man goes a fishing."

We will follow this good advice and deal first with the tools that a man wants when he goes a dapping. First, as to rods, I consider three the fewest you can do with: one for casting the artificial fly, 14 feet; one for trolling (better two), for often there are long distances to row, and there is always a chance of picking up something, and one for dapping (better two). This should be 16 or 17 feet long at least, and light, for it has to be held for hours at a stretch; but it should be fairly stiff and powerful, for big fish have to be dealt with, and it is always well to kill quickly. Anything does for a reel line that will run and not kink or break; and it is well to have from 40 to 50 yards, for a big fish will rip off a lot, and there is always the possibility of a monster. Besides, you can reel up more quickly if the barrel of the reel is well covered. To the end of the line must be joined, so that there is no doubt of its running, a length of floss silk. This should be from 15 to 20 yards long, so as to leave some on the reel when your line is at fullest extent, otherwise the heavy reel-line keeps pulling the light floss into the most annoying festoons. Your floss should be knotted every few inches, or it catches in everything, and quickly frays. Indeed, though I like floss best myself. some fishermen find it such a nuisance, requiring so much

care, that they use only a light line, similar to those used by Nottingham roach fishers. To this is attached a short length of gut, say 3 to 4 feet. You cannot be too particular in your choice of gut ; it must not be very thick, but it must be round, clear, and strong, and the knots must be well tied. Your net must be large. To get a big trout into a small net is a difficult and dangerous proceeding. Have it furnished with a long handle of bamboo or some sort of light wood, and if it be fitted with a sort of boat-hook arrangement, you will often find it a convenience. As you are to sit for hours at a time, and day by day, it is well to provide yourself with a cushion. And as, when it rains in Ireland, it *rains*, and an open boat affords but slight protection, you must be well macintoshed. The best plan is to have a thick waterproof petticoat, such as Cording supplies, to strap round the waist and reach to the boots. This, with a macintosh jacket, is first-rate for boat fishing. A hat with a good brim that will turn down is important, for the glare is very trying sometimes. The best thing for carrying your fish is a big flag basket, such as carpenters use ; get the biggest size. If you have some tongues and buckles attached you will find it a useful receptacle for boots, waders, and such like. You must also provide yourself with a basket for carrying the May-fly, technically known as "Daps." This can be procured from any tackle dealer. Have your spare tackle conveniently arranged in a box which can lie on the thwart beside you.

I think I can now allow you to step into your boat. For *that* you will have to take what the lake affords. The first boat I had on Loch Erne had been built in the time of the Crimean War, and leaked all round, in spite of its being "puttied" up with *mortar.* Some ferns were growing freely in it, which are now alive and flourishing in a Buckinghamshire garden. It was the only one I could get, and it really did very well; fishers must be contented. A much more important consideration is the boatman. Make a great effort to secure one who is willing and keen, and knows the lake well. Much depends on that, until you learn it for yourself. I should not mind his not being a fisherman himself, in fact, I should prefer it. If he is, he will want to fish, and I should recommend you to give him the opportunity only occasionally. It is all against the best method, which I will presently explain.

Well, it is, say, the 1st of June, and the first few May-flies are beginning to rise. I do not think that trout have long memories. They seem to have to learn how dainty a morsel, and how feeding, a fine fat May-fly is, and they have to learn it afresh every year. Anyhow, they always begin in a tentative fashion, and never get fairly on to it until it has been on the water some days. This, then, is the time for artificial flies, and one generally has some very pleasant days before dapping sets fairly in. One does not get the biggest fish in this way, but, certainly, I enjoy it best. I never killed a bigger fish than 5½lbs. on the artificial May-fly. I like the flies tied hackle fashion, partridge feather dyed to the

colour of the fly, and you are lucky if you can find a yellow dye that will not wash white very quickly. The usual Irish drake, as tied by local men, is winged, and, as a rule, on gut that would hold a porpoise. Do not trouble to fish deeps. Fish where you can see the bottom, and always cover a rise promptly. To that end, keep your man at the oars, so that he can put you quickly to one. And if you get a man—an Irish boatman—whose notion of covering a rise is not to put the *boat* on it, you have a rare jewel; so prize him accordingly. It is not worth while to go twice over the same drift, nor to follow another boat. The passage of a boat seems to send the fish off the shallows into deep water. You will find you kill three fish or more on the first dropper—the "hand" fly they call it—to one on the tail, and five or six times more than on the middle. That has been my invariable experience. I generally use three drakes, but sometimes try an olive on the middle or tail. Keep your hand-fly on the trickle, and, as far as you can, travelling down wind. You will find it necessary to cast well into the wind to do this; it is harder work, but it pays.

Not much about dapping yet, you will say. True, but you will find the first few days of the dapping season very pleasantly spent without dapping. You see it is in Ireland, and that makes all the difference. But now the trout are beginning to take the drake in earnest. A nice strong wind is blowing from south or south-west, creating a good, though soft wave, a great desideratum. You have provided a sufficient supply of daps by the simple

process of picking them off the shore and bushes, and you proceed to bait your hook. One would think this a simple proceeding; and so it is, but controversy rages long and loud about it. Nearly every man has his own way of putting the flies on, and each way is the very best. One will have four or five; another only one. Some put on two, one hooked in right side, one in left; some back to back; there are half-a-score of ways. I do not think the trout are particular. I know of a case where an 11lbs. trout was taken with a dap composed of eight drakes! It must have been an error of judgment on the part of the trout; he doubtless mistook it for a wasp's nest, though what he should want with that I hardly know. The following is my way, and I need not tell you that it is the very best. I place the point of the hook between the shoulders, bring it out underneath, and slide the fly up the shank a little way. I then treat a second fly in precisely the same way, and gently press them together. Then snip or pinch off the body of the top fly. Viewed from underneath, it looks pretty much like one drake, but there is more to catch the wind, and more to help it to ride featly on the water. Your dap being arranged in this or some other of the best ways, you view the lake, and you will probably find it streaked with lines of foam, running pretty well parallel, and fairly equidistant. When the trout are feeding they generally rise in these streaks, where naturally the May-fly get entangled in the foam. They feed up wind, and often at a great pace. As a rule deeps are to be avoided, though when the trout are well on the dap you may kill fish even there.

You will, then, choose a streak of foam where you can just see the bottom, say not deeper than 10 or 12 feet, and begin your drift. You let your line, which is something longer than your rod, fly away on the wind, and gently drop the dap into the water as far off as your length of line permits. The reason why I like floss is that it holds the wind better, and so bellies out beyond the dap; thus it acts as a kind of sail, drawing the dap in a natural manner down wind. A thin line does not catch the wind in the same way, and though it allows the dap to get fully extended, yet it seems to have a tendency to hold it back against the wind. A fine point, I daresay, and perhaps the gain is not sufficient to compensate for the extra trouble entailed by floss.

Take care that your dap does not get sodden and spoilt by the waves. In stormy weather it is impossible to prevent this, but it does not matter much then. Trout will often take a well-soaked dap under water with as much avidity as though it were sailing on the top.

The local way of dapping presents a very curious sight. There are, as a rule, three men in a boat, all sitting cross-wise of the thwarts, all with their elbows on their knees, all with their shoulders well up to their ears, all crouching forward at the same inclination, each with a long rod held out at an angle of 45°, the eyes of all fixed steadily on the dap as it touches the water and then flutters in the air to settle again on this side or that. In death-like silence they drift on and ever on until they are lost in space. Sometimes you see ten or a dozen

boats together. Multiply the above picture by ten or twelve, and you will realise the quaintness of the effect. You may be in one of the said boats, yet will it never occur to you that *you* are looking ludicrous—only the others. A better and more sporting method by far is not to fish in drifts, but row to rises. To this end you must have your boat to yourself and keep your man at the oars, ready *at once* to put you to a rise on either hand as you drift along. If this is promptly and properly done, as a rule you take that fish. If fish are not in the humour, then your boatman can fish a bit. It is well that his rod should be shorter than your own, for he will have to use it with one hand while he manages the boat with the other. If he should hook a fish, change rods at once, and kill it yourself. But when a real rise is on, have him at the oars, and make him put you to the big ones.

When fish are not rising, dapping is most monotonous; worse by far than watching a bob-float, for you *must* manage your dap, while a float will manage itself. The great art of dapping lies in the striking. It looks easy enough, but beginners lose fish after fish. As a rule they strike too soon, and then not in the right way. A big fish is leisurely in his movements. He turns his side and his shoulders and his heavy head like the sluggard in the song ; though, by the way, a heavy-headed trout is not exactly what one desires. Moreover, he (the fish, not the sluggard), is feeding towards you, and your boat is drifting towards him. If you strike too soon you take the fly from him ; if you wait, and then

do not strike hard enough, you do not pick up the slack, and only prick him at the best. If you strike a bit too hard, and he should be a heavy fish, you will break to a moral. It is a good rule to treat these heavy trout like salmon, and not strike until you feel them. The word *strike* is misleading. The action should not be that of striking, it should be a steady, firm, decisive *pull* on the fish. Thus you gather up your slack, and *draw* your steel into him without anything in the shape of a jerk. The main thing is to give plenty of time ; but this, like other rules, has its exceptions. It answers perfectly when the fish are well on ; but sometimes they are not feeding well, and there always comes the sad time when the drake begins to pall upon them, and they are going off. They rise, but they do not want the fly particularly, and then it is hard to hook them. And often they will rise with their mouths shut, and just roll over your dap and slap it with their tails and drown it. So you must ever be closely on the watch to detect the different sorts of rises, and nothing but experience will teach you to discriminate.

In the case of a drowned dap do not strike at all, for oftentimes the trout will turn again and rend it under water. But if you do not feel him in two or three seconds you may replace your dap, which is probably spoilt. Again, with splashy, flirty rises, I think the best way is to strike as if with the artificial. You will generally miss, but now and again you will hit. Play him carefully, for he is sure to be lightly hooked. If you wait with these, my experience is that

you never catch them. Having hooked your fish, get him round to the back of your boat as quickly as possible, so that you drift from it and not on to it. Nothing is more disconcerting and inconvenient than to get your fish under the boat. I remember once, in a heavy wind, with the boat travelling at a great rate, I rose a fish close to it. I gave him a second or so and struck. Meanwhile he had shot under the boat, and the boat had drifted over him, so that when I struck he was well behind me, and the consequence was that my top piece snapped in two like a carrot. The wind wrapped the line round the rod, and it would not run. I quickly possessed myself of the broken top, and snapping the line proceeded to play my fish with a rod reduced to about two feet. It was a queer sensation, but, after much perturbation of spirit, I managed to bring him to the net. He was nearly 3lbs., but fortunately was hooked in the tongue, and the tackle was sound and stood a strain far beyond what it was intended to bear. I rejoiced exceedingly, especially as I was in the midst of a flotilla of boats, whose occupants took much interest in the struggle; and serving out a three-finger grog to the crew, I called upon him to rejoice with me. Again, I say, get your fish killed quickly, especially if there is a rise on—loss of time is often fatal. And as to the actual killing, a whack on the back of the neck, with a club like a policeman's baton, irreverently termed "the parson," does it directly, as it ought to be done. It is difficult to hold a 5 or 6lb. fish in your hands and knock his head against a thwart. You are pretty sure either to bark your

knuckles or merely hit the fish on the snout, and a stretcher is too long to be handy. Another neat and instantly effective way is to run your penknife or a brad-awl into the back bone immediately at the back of the neck.

When you have come to the end of your drift, and fish are rising, scoot back as fast as you can ; but if they are doing little or nothing, out with a minnow on either side, row back very leisurely, and fish deep. I have found a small red phantom, say three inches long, kill best. *I* always trail my dap, letting out twenty or thirty yards of line, and I have very often picked up a fish in this way. One loses two out of three though, for one is travelling too slowly for the pace to strike them, and too quickly to let them hook themselves. This is not dapping, but it makes you feel virtuous, as one who is not wasting his time has a right to feel.

Dapping is pleasant enough when the weather is right and fish moving, but it is not all nuts and wine. Bad weather comes, when boats cannot venture out, and hot, bright days with the water like a mirror, when there is nothing for it but to lie on one's back in the boat, or lounge with a novel on an island, smoke more than is good for one, and finish the whiskey. When one's holiday is short it is not pleasant to say *Perdidi diem.* It requires all one's philosophy to meet such vexations with an equal mind. I had two consecutive days once, one excellently good, the other hopeless. I was philosophical enough to utilise some of my spare time on the second day in inditing

THE SONG OF THE DAPSTER.

Obverse.

O, the dapster's life is a lovely life,
As he rocks on the rolling wave ;
When a southerly wind
Blows freshly and kind,
And fishes feed freely and brave ;
As he puts on his dap,
He cares not a rap
For politics, party. or trade ;
And at night o'er his glass,
To his pal or his lass,
He will crack of the havoc he's made.

Reverse.

O, the dapster's life is a loathly life,
As he floats on the stilly mere ;
When the drake flies high
In a cloudless sky,
The water as crystal clear,
When there's never an air
His floss to stir,
As flat to the rod it's stuck ;
O, it must be confessed
That one so oppressed
Is to *blame* if he don't D—— his luck.

You may imagine how sorely I was exercised when I was forced to employ such a naughty, but capital letter. But even under such untoward conditions as these, the really gluttonous angler can have sport of a sort, if he be prepared to descend to circles of piscine society lower than that in which moves the aristocratic *salmo fario.* On one such day I had landed in order to stretch my legs by a bit of a walk. A native had just hauled his boat

up hard by, and I entered into conversation with him. He condoled with me on the hopelessness of the weather, but promised me, of course, a speedy change and the best of sport. He would not have been an Irishman it he had done otherwise. I asked if he had done anything. Yes, he had got a fair lot of eels, and going to his boat he showed me a squirming, inextricable tangle of slimy sinuosities, fifteen or twenty, I daresay, or more, some of considerable size. I inquired how he had managed to catch them. It appears, from his statement, that the eel is partial to warmth; that in such weather as we were then suffering under they come into somewhat shallow water and expose themselves to the heat, even as the ordinary Englishman stands with his back to the fire with his coat tails well apart, but with the difference, that the eel presents another part of his person to the comforting warmth. He lies on his back with his silvery belly turned up to the rays of the sun. The sportsman (or assassin) crouches in the bow of a boat propelled with the utmost gentleness, so as to avoid creating the slightest ripple. He is armed with a long, straight stick, to the end of which is whipped a large cod-hook. As he glides stealthily along, he peers down into the water immediately beneath him, and it appears that the basking eel is easily seen lying at the bottom like "a white shtick." The gaff is then slid gently into the water, and the wretched eel clicked with the cod hook. I fancy this is not so easy to do as it sounds, as the boat is moving, and depths vary, and the skin of the eel is tough and slippery. It must require considerable adroit-

ness and much practice to make a sure stroke. My old friend was evidently a past-master.

If you disdain such a poacher-like proceeding, you can turn your attention to perch. In the lake which I know best there are plenty, and they grow to a great size. The local way of fishing is simplicity itself. A length of strong gut, a hook, a worm, and half a soda water cork, and there you are. You fish in very shallow water, with not more than a foot to eighteen inches or so between float and hook. In addition to the above requisites, a shoal or two of perch are necessary. Perhaps I should be more accurate if, instead of shallow water, I recommend you to fish in shoal water. You may sometimes—if you have the luck to drop on the right place—catch them freely. With strong tackle one stands on no ceremony with them—they don't expect it—but just throw them into the boat. No fish seems to resent capture more than the perch. As you yoick out a pounder, and he comes hurtling through the air with his red fins distended and a-quiver, his back up, his eyes starting, mouth agape, the whole fish has an air of amazement and indignant protest almost human, and wholly comical. Every one knows that perch roam about in shoals, seeking what they may devour. In these shoals the fish are of assorted sizes. I do not think one ever sees big and little ones mixed. If, after catching a few small ones, you get a big one, you may be sure that one shoal has passed on and another taken its place. The big fellows hold themselves haughtily aloof from the smaller

fry ; they seem to observe an attitude of supercilious tolerance such as the third year man assumes towards the verdant fresher. This being so, the studious fisher of perch endeavours to fish always in that shoal where the big fish are. A friend of mine accomplished this apparently difficult feat in a very ingenious way. Finding himself among big ones he marked the shoal thus Between his float and reel line he introduced a few inches of fine silk. The next bite he had he struck, and, of course, broke, and away went the perch with the float. Wherever that float was he knew the big ones were, and by always fishing near it he had a wonderful catch—seventy perch weighing over 40lbs.—in two hours ; nothing over 2lbs. As an instance of the free biting quality of the perch, I may remark that he caught the standard-bearer himself three times.

It is good for man to be alone when he is dapping. But on still, hot, hopeless days, or when you have been driven by stress of weather to land, or to lie for hours in the lee of some island, waiting for the gale to moderate, you feel the want of a comrade, if only to quarrel with ; and, failing one, you turn to your boatman. And it is odds that you find him able to wile away these dree times and afford you entertainment if not instruction. If these men fish at all it is generally by rule of thumb, fishing as they always have done and their fathers before them, rarely exercising their powers of observation, or, if they do, observing the wrong thing, or drawing the wrong deductions. One man I had—" Wee Johnnie "—was a capital angler after a fashion. His

theory was that trout roamed about in shoals, or "bunches." For, he said, if you catch one you often catch two, or three, or more directly—the true deduction being that here you were crossing a shallow where the depth was right. These are places to mark and to remember, until you have a good working model of the lake's bottom in your head. You may not learn much from your boatman, but his queer sayings and exaggerations, anecdotes and beliefs are sure to amuse you. If he speaks of a big fish, he will probably call it "an ojous fish," or a "holy terror." Once, while I was lying by, a big fish rose some little distance out. "Did ye see him, yer honour; did ye see him now? Holy jabers—he was as big as a dog! he was as big as a big dog!! he was as big as a big *black* dog!!!" A fine climax! If he wants to tell you there is good fishing in such a river or lake, he will say, "Is it fish now? Sure the water's shtiff wid 'em;" or "Your honour's rod could stand upright in the wather, and faith, it's truth I'm telling ye."

One good friend of mine, Paddy Quin by name, told me of a monster pike he caught. After a prolonged contest he got his gaff into it, but could not lift it into the boat, as its weight brought the gunwale so low that he was afraid of swamping, so he toted round to the stern. "But faith, yer honour, when I tried to lift him, the boat fair tipped up wid me, and that's the holy truth." So he lashed the gaff to a thole pin and towed the monster home—five miles—when "by God's blessing, I dragged him on to the beach." "What weight, Paddy?" "Divil a know I know, but he was an ojous

baste." "Was that the biggest you ever saw, Paddy?" No, he had seen, but not caught, a bigger. An Enniskillen man hooked a veritable monster of the deep one day. He had fought him fair for some hours (or days, I really forget), but it broke him at last. Some few days after there arose a great storm, insomuch that this fish was washed up dead upon the shore, and people went from all parts to view him, Paddy among them. "What weight, Paddy?" "Sorra a bit I know—he was a terror." "How big, Paddy?" "Sure I can't tell to a fut or two, but a man could walk down his throat!" I suppose my face must have betrayed some incredulity, for at once he clinched the matter and silenced all controversy by adding "wid his hat on!"

After some such statement of his I asked him once, "Now Paddy, *can* you speak the truth?" "Sure and I *can* do that same," apparently implying that he preferred fiction. One day—one hopeless day of blazing sun and brazen sky—such a day as must have inspired that poet who told of the fishes breaking out into perspiration beneath the sun's perpendicular rays—I asked his opinion of the weather, and, I daresay, I manifested a certain truculence of manner as who should say "Prophesy unto me smooth things, or prepare to die the death." Paddy was quite equal to the occasion. He considered the problem gravely and then said, "Indade, yer honour, and it is hard to spake the truth." And to this day I do not know whether he meant to say it was hard to tell what the weather would be; or whether the truth would have been unbearable; or

whether his usual habits made it difficult for him to utter anything but the unveracious.

The poor boy got into trouble once and had to "do his bit." It appears he had a difference of opinion with another gentleman of his profession as to the right of fishing on a certain piece of water. The controversy waxed high and hot, and winged words flew from boat to boat. At last Paddy's temper gave way, and finding his adversary impervious to reason, he gaffed him in the neck, hauled him out of his boat, and nearly drowned him. Even in Ireland this was considered too forcible an argument, so he had to go into temporary retirement. This formed an epoch for him, and though he never cared to refer directly to his abode in Her Majesty's prison, he would often fix a date by "The year that I gaffed O'Reilly;" or "About two years after O'Reilly came out of his boat wid a gaff in him."

He was a firm believer in fairies—"sure he'd seen 'em, and seein' was believin'"—and had many tales to tell of adventures with them. Before the Franco-German war broke out, he had seen the whole matter fought out by fairies on a certain hill side, and could have predicted the issue. When I diffidently hinted that I understood that poteen was an admirable medium through which to view the tricks and manners of the good folks, he would declare, with strong asseveration, that he was "black fasting from everything but sin." Wild swans are, according to Paddy, enchanted birds; to kill one is to bring certain disaster upon yourself or anyone who becomes possessed of the body. If, in killing a fish, it

bled much, it was a sure sign of a good fishing day, and we should have great sport.

It seems to be a point of honour with this race never to drink a nip of the "cratur" without a toast. "A tight line to your honour;" "Well, here's good luck and better;" "May he come," or such like. By the way, it will be found that the Irish boatman's taste in the matter of whiskey needs cultivation. I believe they prefer poteen to the finest ten-year-old Glenlivat; if they know it is illicit I am sure they do.

One lake which I have fished divides two counties, and is dotted with islands innumerable, evidently expressly designed by nature for the practice of illicit distillation. Often have I seen at late hours the glow of fire on one or other of these islands. Doubtless the police and revenue officers see it too. But careful watch is kept, and if the enemy attacks from the right shore the distillers simply slip off to the left, where the police may not follow. One day the schoolmistress of that parish, who lodged with our landlord, was walking by the edge of the lake close by the house. Suddenly the earth appeared to open and swallow her up quick; when she had scrambled up, she looked for the cause of this catastrophe, and found that a large barrel of poteen, in its fermenting stage, had been hidden there, sunk in the ground, and covered with a sack, over which was strewn the shingle of the shore, until the whole was hidden. Mr. Kerr, our landlord, was alarmed, for, had it been found there, on his land, the revenue officers would have dropped on him. The funny thing was that he knew

quite well who the delinquent was, and sent to him humbly requesting him to remove it off his land, which the said delinquent was graciously pleased to do. I suppose it would have been as much as his life was worth to put the revenue officers upon it.

I thought I should like to taste this stuff. Paddy next day produced a bottle with much display of mystery and many a warning wink. Of the two, I prefer methylated spirits!

But I have kept you under the lee of this island long enough, and the lake is calmer now; so let us be off. How about daps? It is a great nuisance to run short, so always replenish when you can, and never throw away at night any store you may have left; they are not good for much in the morning, but they do to make a start with. Once I had arrived at the fishing ground which I intended to exploit that day, and everything looked most promising, but I had no daps. We landed to search for some. Now, I am not a jealous fisherman—one of those who like to have all the fun to themselves; so as I had to do all the hard work—all the fishing—I thought "Wee Johnnie" should have the fun of hunting for and stooping incessantly to pick up the necessary ephemeræ. Moreover, mine would be the post of danger, for I undertook to see that no one stole the boat. After a prolonged absence Johnnie returned with empty basket, and said he had searched everywhere, but "there's divil a dap to be had." I told him to go at once and search the other places, for he should see my face no more unless the daps were with him. Then I lit another pipe

and kept watch on the boat, but Johnny's phrase kept jingling in my head, and presently shaped itself thus :—

THE DAPSTER'S LAMENT.

The wind's from the southward, the sky overcast,
 The fishes are feeding like mad ;
I'm early afloat, for this day is my last,
 But divil a dap's to be had.

Charles Farlow purveyed me my tackle so fine,
 And Hardy of Alnwick my gad ;*
America sends me a patented line,
 But divil a dap's to be had.

My boat's clinker built—the sculls are the best,
 And Johnnie's a handy wee lad ;
My skill would suffice, were it put to the test—
 But divil a dap's to be had.

My basket will hold, at the least, sixty pound,
 There is whiskey to make the heart glad ;
A fisher was never more thoroughly found—
 But divil a dap's to be had.

Ah ! pity a man in so woeful a plight,
 Shed a tear o'er a fortune so sad ;
Wind, weather and water, and everything right,
 But divil a dap to be had.

This brought the luck, I think ; for wee Johnnie turned up with a plentiful supply, and I killed 14 fish.

The dapper must think less of numbers than of weight. My best day was 24 fish, weighing 47 lbs., but I have made bigger averages with fewer fish. One day I killed six fish only, which weighed 20 lbs. There was one over 7 lbs, another over 6 lbs. I have killed in my dapping experience three trout over 7 lbs., and one which

* Scotch for rod.

turned the scale at 8 lbs. and yet I am not happy, for I have seen fish that these would make a bait for, as Paddy said. I give here a record of a few takes by certain friends of mine, which I guarantee to be absolutely trustworthy as to numbers and weight:—

		Fish		lbs.
Four rods	...	42	...	86
" "	...	25	...	52
" "	...	52	...	110
" "	...	33	...	66¼
Grand total for 11 days in Jubilee year:—				
Three rods	...	397	...	609½
One rod	...	161	...	269¼
Single rod, one day:—				
—	...	32	...	51
—	...	16	...	40*
—	...	7	...	22

In 2½ hours one rod killed 13 fish, 31¼ lbs. One friend of mine has killed 3 fish between 8 and 9 lbs.

In the dapping season the lake almost invariably settles to dead calm as the sun goes down. Then the surface is seen to be covered with innumerable sloughs from which the pretty May-fly has emerged, and lots of spent drake float dead upon the water with outspread wings; often a rise will come on, and you will see them quietly engulfed in a most tantalizing manner. A friend of mine has had sport even under these circumstances, fishing the spent drake (artificial) after the Test fashion. It is difficult to do; it wants the perfection

* 5 of these weighed only 5 lbs in all.

of casting, for you must be fine and far and light as gossamer. But the striking is the crux with such fine gut and such heavy trout.

We have pretty well played this day out, so let us turn the boat's nose homeward. The quarters that formed my home were most comfortable, the people kindness and goodwill itself. The farmer who was our landlord is a young man, well connected, well educated, energetic, capable, and thriving, quite different from what one expects an Irish farmer to be. I mention him in order to relate a curious experience he had; I believe I was able to explain how it came about, and thus destroyed a promising plant of superstition which was already taking root. He was working in a field immediately above his house on the hill side. The lake below him was like a sheet of glass. As he looked upon it he saw to his amazement and terror a railway train, engine, carriages, and van all complete, slowly proceeding down the middle of the lake. He rushed to his house and called out his wife and servants, and some five or six besides himself distinctly saw this curious portent. Thinking, of course, that it was *diablerie* in some shape or form, which ought to be put a stop to, he brought out his gun to shoot it! But his wife hung on his arm and besought him not to venture upon such a deed of derring-do, and presently the train vanished from their sight. There is no doubt that this was seen; there were too many witnesses to admit of its being a mere hallucination or a case of temporary insanity, or what not. Mr. Kerr himself looked upon the incident with

much gravity, not knowing whether it presaged ruin to himself or only the end of the world. The idea prevailed that it was certainly prophetic. Within a few years the lake would be drained or otherwise dealt with, and a railway line be laid along the bottom.

My explanation may be as mistaken as theirs. On the opposite side of the lake there is a low range of hills, and at the other side of them a railway. I imagine that a train was passing along at this time (as I ascertained was probable). By an effect of mirage, owing to some peculiar atmospheric conditions, this train was mirrored in the sky, upside down, as is usual in mirage. Whether this could be seen or not would depend upon the angle at which it was regarded. It certainly was not seen by Mr. Kerr. But the absolutely calm bosom of the lake reflected the mirage, and, in doing so, of course, restored the train to its normal position. Whether this is rational or not, I really do not know. Anyhow, it sufficed to quiet my friend's alarm. I shall be glad to hear if anyone can solve the mystery in a more scientific fashion.

THE FIRST LESSON: AN ANGLER'S REMINISCENCE.

BY JOHN MOSCROP.

POSSIBLY some of you may remember John Just. He was botanical lecturer at Pine Street Medical School, Manchester, about the end of the forties. He was a thorough-going fly-fisher, tied his own flies, and selected his own horse-hair. This was, if not a pre-gut era, yet an era in which hair was the rule. I remember that he preferred the tail of a thorough-bred colt. I need scarcely remark to this audience that he was a right good fellow, loyal, gentle, and game to the backbone, as all good anglers are. Among his many accomplishments he was a fair mathematician, and of such a persevering turn that he came two hours each week to my father's house to try to drive binomials and the calculus into my thick head. I think I was one of his most distinguished failures. One evening his eye alighted on a fishing rod in the corner of the room. "Ho-ho! Master John, and so you are a fisherman." I pleaded guilty to catching perch on Saturday afternoons. "Never caught a trout with fly, John?" "Never." This was said most emphatically, for in those days I looked

on fly-fishing for trout as something too awfully divine to be hoped for. The outcome of this conversation was that my dear old friend (and very proud am I to call him such) obtained my father's consent, no doubt very gladly given, to my spending the summer holidays with him.

Where was there a happier or a prouder lad than I as I walked into Macintosh's shop in Piccadilly to be measured for a pair of waders? To this very day the smell of naphtha is to me a delightful fragrance, so powerful is the influence of old associations; and I believe that of all our senses the sense of smell is the most powerful in presenting to the mind old associations. I was fifteen or sixteen years of age; it was my first trip from home without my own people. My mother said, "John must have a portmanteau of his own;" it was duly purchased and as duly stored by her own hands with the many things necessary for a month's outing. Mr. Just provided fishing materials; a rod with rings all the way down, and a reel. Till then my line had been tied to the end of the rod. As I have said, his flies were soundly made. They would be scouted by the average angler of to-day as being too rough, and not an imitation of the natural insect; and yet, although they differed much from the spick and span shop article of the present time, my heart goes out to them yet. They had to my eyes a look as if they meant business. Their very roughness added to their value—there was method in it, as in a blot-in of Anderson Hague's—and, again, they were fished in north country streams, fished down-stream as sunk flies, and for aught I know they may

have been the truest imitation of the insect in its transition from the larva stage. Anyhow, I will contend that the rig-out, simple as it was, was not to be sneezed at even when compared with these advanced days.

Our destination was in the neighbourhood of Lower Bentham, the residence of a relative of Mr. Just's. It was a typical old farm-house half hidden by a rookery, stretching away into a grand cover of sixty or eighty acres where I had permission to shoot jays, stock-doves and rabbits, but no pheasants—"Mind, no pheasants, John." The recollection of the month spent there makes me long to be young again. We were twenty minutes' walk from the Wenning, a tributary of the Lune, and my friend had the privilege from Pudsey Dawson of fishing the Hornby water, from Tatham Bridge downwards. Our route to the water was by footpaths through the fields, and in crossing one I was led off the track to see an old friend of Mr. Just's, who lived in the corner of the field. I was quite curious, for I could see no house. "Take care, or you'll be treading on him or some one of his youngsters. Ah, there he is. Allow me to introduce Master John Moscrop to"—(here he gave the botanical name of a scarce plant whose habitat he had discovered years before)—"I always look up my old friend when I am this way to see how he is getting along, and to assure myself that he has not fallen among thieves. Only to a few would I give the privilege of acquaintance with him in his own home, but I know you are no Vandal." And then he stooped down, and had a good look at the plant, and then trod

daintily about on account of the seedlings, with an almost chivalrous reverence in his bearing. Oh, he was a grand sample of God's highest work was "Old Just," as we used to call him, and a fitting companion for either a cultivated gentleman or the young school-lad I then was.

Well, we arrived in due course at the roadside inn, by Tatham Bridge, where I donned my waders for the first time, and rigged up my rod and flies. It was decided that I should begin operations at the head of the first stream, below the bridge. After a few instructions about casting, I was left to my own resources. A few minutes only passed when there was an unmistakable pull, a tight line, a wriggle, followed by a fish flying over my head. Down went the rod on the gravel bed, and I pounced on my first catch. My enthusiasm was somewhat damped by my hearing from the next pool "Nay, nay, that sort of thing won't do, young man. Where would you have been if it had been a trout?" "It is a trout, sir, and such a beauty, all the colours of the rainbow on it;" and I took it to him so that he might see it with his own eyes, for I was very proud of my trophy, and had many a gloat over it for the next hour as it lay in my pannier. Alas! for human nature! Before the week was out I caught myself saying "Only a penk." I showed my friend the victim of my prowess.

"Why, John, man, you've caught a salmon."

"But," said I, "it isn't such a very little one," for I imagined he was poking fun at me just as if he had said I had caught a whale.

"I tell you it's a salmon, a young salmon; if it had had the luck to live a couple of years it would have been a six or seven pound grilse;" and then he pointed out the distinguishing marks of the salmon penk (the local name for parr).

"But, sir, how did you know at that distance that it was not a trout?"

"Well, you'll find out one of these days that trout have not learnt the trick of flying like a swallow, and you'll discover at the same time why you have been at the trouble of trailing that landing-net about all day long."

And so I did about the third day. I had been carefully fishing the rough stream, paying particular attention, as per instructions, to those places where there was a good-sized boulder among the gravel, with a well-worn hollow round its base, when there was a golden glint, a break on the surface, a tremendous pull returned by me with interest, in spite of instructions to be cool and gentle. Cool and gentle, indeed! A terrible but alas! only momentary struggle at the surface of the water (no flying like a bird this time); and then all was quiet, my rod straight, the snipe and yellow stretcher gone—gone to glory. The reaction was fearful. I was too old to cry, too young to take refuge in a hearty big D, and "better luck next time." I had not learnt that the satisfaction of success is equalled by the despair of disappointment, nor do I know that the knowledge of that philosophy even to-day brings with it much solace. You see it was so aggravating; it was my first trout,

and oh! such a whopper; it must have been pounds and pounds. I don't know whether any gentleman present has ever missed a "big un," but if he has done such a thing I am sure I shall have his sympathy.

That was my first engagement with a lusty trout; short, decisive, and instructive. I had had my first lesson from the best of teachers—experience; and it was thoroughly learnt. It was a negative lesson—it taught me what not to do. The second lesson was positive. One day, I heard a shout from Mr. Just. "Here, John, quick!" Down went the rod, and I was off like a greyhound. There he was with bent rod, closely following the movements of a fish he had hooked. "Is it a big one, sir?" "It's a mort," said he, "a fresh-run fish. The beginning of July is early for Wenning. I did not expect one so soon." I can now call to mind how closely he kept in attendance, the reel only giving out line when the ugly rushes were made, to be quickly recovered as he followed up, and at the end of what appeared to me hours, but was probably not more than ten or fifteen minutes, he put the net under a silvery mort of two pounds, no little feat for single hair. That practical lesson of ten minutes was worth a library of books on the subject.

It was a glorious month for me, full of intense interest, pure enjoyment, fresh air, exercise, and charming scenery, for Wenning is a model trout stream. I had a good digestion and a clear conscience. I was in bed about ten, and was not troubled with insomnia till six o'clock the following morning. Before my return I was

taught to tie my own flies, to make up my cast lines, and was fairly initiated in the thousand and one little dodges that go to make up the stock-in-trade of a fisherman, as well as in the outside incidents that are associated with the fisherman's sport. For instance, on the mort day, on our return, we made a detour in order to cross a certain pasture, for I learned that when the morts are up, the mushrooms are not far off. The end of the month left me a sworn life member of the craft, and an untold and untellable debtor to the truest gentleman I ever knew. I visited Wenning two or three times afterwards in his company, but he went on his long journey while I was yet in my teens, and I and Wenning parted company.

In October, 1889, an old gentleman and a friend were enjoying the privilege of trying for a salmon in the Lune. The quarters were at Wennington, and, as usual, the water was out of order, low and clear; plenty of fish showed themselves in the pools, but they were evidently only coming out for a lark. Saturday was to be the last day, and again, as usual, rain came; not a shower, but rain that kept it up; and before dark Lune was stirred, and looked like a salmon water for Monday. Is it a wonder that the train did not take away two disappointed anglers, but left a couple of expectant ones who requisitioned the telegraph instead of the train? On the Sunday afternoon this present "old party" might have been seen strolling along the high road towards Tatham Bridge. He called at the little roadside inn, which did not seem one bit altered

during the forty years that had passed since last he saw it. There was the identical oaken bench where I sat when I donned my waders for the first time on that memorable morning. I sat down on it again and my memory was very busy. Where was the smooth-faced lad, guileless, ingenuous, trustful, knowing no deceit and suspecting none? Were these the qualities to get through this world with? Alas, there was very little of that lad left. I could even view him in my mind's eye as some one else. I strolled on to the Bridge and looked on the stream. The course of the water was changed very little. I could pick out to within a yard or so the spot on the gravel bed whereon that unfortunate penk pitched; but the stream was overgrown with trees; I could scarcely have put a fly on it now. I leaned over the parapet, and seemed to see that young lad make his first catch. My thoughts rambled along to my dear old friend, and his horse-hair, his hackles, his cheery laugh; and to my old father who took me to Macintosh's, and to my mother and her solicitude about the "things in the portmanteau." In short, I had a reverie, not altogether sad—indeed, not sad at all—but which left me with two tear-drops trickling down.

NORWAY REVISITED.

BY ABEL HEYWOOD, JUNR.

TWENTY years ago it was an undertaking to go to Norway, and before making my first visit I made my will, as was only proper. There was a steamer from Hull then, a small one, to Bergen once a fortnight. I do not think the number of passengers carried was more than forty, and the voyage took up nearly three days. Now you may get to Bergen three times, at least, per week from Hull and Newcastle, in steamers carrying about 150 passengers, and making the passage in about 36 hours.

Nowadays, when we land at Bergen, what changes we see! In the old days, Hotel Scandinavie, perched up aloft, where it still stands, was the chief hotel of the place, and there was, I think, only one other. Now Scandinavie is nowhere in the race, but it is in a quiet part of the town, close by the points from which the best views of the place and the fjords can be got, and so, on every one of my many visits, I have stuck to Scandinavie, and I think I shall stick to it still, if I go again. It was in Scandinavie that I ventured on the first Norwegian words I ever spoke. "Et glas vand," I said when I sat down, and lo! a handy maiden brought me a glass of

water ; a thing natural enough, no doubt, but one which made me think I had found a talisman, as indeed native speech is in a foreign land. Since that day I have added bit by bit to my stock of Norwegian, and now the tongue has no terrors for me—until I hear a native speak it.

In the old days you must leave Bergen by steamer or by carriole ; now you have a little railway which will take you right into the heart of the country in four or five hours, as far as you could travel before in two days. But the two days were better than the railway ride, for the journey could not be surpassed for beauty. At Vossevangen, even in this old time, Fleischer was chief of the hotel-keepers, with a house not a quarter the size of his present magnificent establishment. Old Fleischer himself was not half his present size either, and he had not the air of business and care that now sits on his broad shoulders. He could even go a-fishing, which, if you will ask him, you will find he has not done for many a long day, and he had much more time to talk and laugh with his visitors than he has now. Then you might have half a dozen men in the house at one time ; now you may have forty or fifty, and as many ladies—more's the pity—for I would rather have the old wild Norway—free from ladies—than the new.

There were some disadvantages, though. For example, you could get no food to speak of between Voss (where even in the distant past you really could get something to eat), and Gudvangen. At Twinde there was a bit of a station where I do not think you could stay at all. At

Vinje, the next station, there were several hovels perched up far and far above the present high road, so far that modern travellers do not see or suspect the existence of the old Vinje, and in these hovels the only beds were boxes of straw, and the only food was what you brought. Here it was, on my first visit, that I saw the old hag who cooked for us, cleaning the cooking-spoon, preparatory to putting it in the milk she was boiling for us, by sticking it in her mouth and licking it. Now, in place of that primitive simplicity, you have a fine airy, pleasantly placed hotel, with nice clean little bed-rooms, and nice clean little girls to wait on and attend to you. But they don't let you go into the kitchen, and perhaps it is as well so.

I have mentioned that the old place is perched far above the new. This is a peculiarity common to the whole route we are now travelling on. Just about the time I made my first journey a reformation set in. The roads used to go, as the lemmings are said to do, *straight*; if a hill was in the way the road went right up it, and of course right down it, and on this account only, one would hardly know the roads now to be passing through the same country, everything is so level and so easy.

By this road to Vinje runs a very, very beautiful river, and twenty years ago it used to contain very fair trout, which is not the case now. You may fish at Vinje and catch trout by scores, but not one of them will weigh three ounces. Why this is I cannot say.

Vinje to Stalheim is still as of old; but the old Stalheim is gone. There *was* a bit of a place there, but now there is a huge establishment as big as a barracks. It is very nice, no doubt, but I am glad to have seen it before the barracks came. You will have to dine here, or say you won't; then go on to Gudvangen, by the road that can never change, and so reach the Sogne Fjord, or at least the branch of it called Nœro Fjord. It will be seen by those who know the country that I am skipping along pretty fast, and not attempting to expatiate on the beauties of the situation. But I am contrasting old and new, and Nœrodal old, or Nœrodal new, is, thank God, the same and for ever the same—ever the most stupendous and overwhelming landscape the eyes can look upon.

Gudvangen reached. What changes! What improvements? No; degradations. The place is full of hotels and touts and people; female tourists and male tourists; carrioles and carts, carriages and diligences, and even bicycles. Oh, it is terrible! There is a steamer too every day now, sometimes twice a day, and in the old time there was one once a fortnight *sometimes*, but not always, and my friend and I had to row in a small boat for half-a-day to get to the main fjord, and thus waylay the steamer. Perhaps that's not a sign of grand old days, and I won't argue that it is. But the fjord is not less magnificent nor less mysterious when seen from the level of the water from a little boat, than from a fast steamer with a lot of frivolous women and vapid men around you.

Just see the contrast here. Pass along that glorious fjord now, a region of grandeur and beauty so overwhelming that if you had eyes all over your head like a butterfly, every one of those eyes would be filled with wonder and amazement if you had any soul behind them. And what do you see? Travellers, female and male, pushing and "thrutching," or indulging in their wearisome gossip; reading *Comic Cuts* or some such stuff, and positively dead and stupid as to where they are and what is before them. They are even asking how long they will be on the journey, while they ought to be on their knees thanking God for the privilege of being where they are. They might just as well be at Blackpool; and why, why did they ever leave *that* happy pandemonium? That's the Nœro Fjord of to-day. Now look back through my time's telescope, and what do we see? A little boat, as I have said, slowly, slowly pulling its way along, now hugging the shore, now in the midst of the waters; every object passed at a leisurely speed, so that we have time to make its acquaintance and to *love it.* In sober earnest there is no comparison between the two methods. And then look at the company! I have said what sort of companions you often find now; see what we had then. We had one passenger, and he was our guest, but then our passenger was Björnstjerne Björnson, and for those five or six hours we had him all to ourselves. That we were not able to say much to him doesn't matter. The influence of the poet and novelist lives with one of us still, for I have read nearly all his books, which I probably should never have done

but for this meeting. And then we had the delightful adventure at Frönningen which any one who likes may read about in "Anglers' Evenings" in the first paper ever read before the Manchester Anglers' Association, always excepting the good Colonel's presidential address. Notwithstanding all this, *we* shall, next time we pass along this fjord, no doubt travel by steamer; I fancy Mr. Ruskin goes home to Brantwood by rail.

Next we come to Lærdal; not so much altered, for it was always, within my recollection, an important place; but it is bigger, of course, and rejoices in a glass-fronted hotel of really colossal size, where you will meet at dinner seventy-five ladies and twenty-five gentlemen, all dressed up in their utmost finery.

The road from Lærdal onward (there is no chance of going wrong, for there is only one way) is only to some extent as it was. It has the same ultimate tendency as before, but it goes a different way about it. It used to be up and down just like a switchback railway, but it is now very fairly on the level, at least so far as the inland rise will allow of its being. The road has certainly changed, and it enables us to see that *we* have changed somewhat too. There is more to be seen along the road than there used to be; that is, we can see more, and the natural history of Norway may be taken in at a glance in a few hours' drive along that Lærdal road. One can see now how the whole land here has been under ice; it is as clear as that some of the land is now under water. The signs of it are on every side. Here we pass along by the foot of a huge moraine almost as

fresh as when it was formed; now we mount another; now we see glacier-carried heaps on both sides of the river, sometimes high above, sometimes at the water's edge; and the first day's drive up the valley of the Lærdal will enable us to see how all this beautiful Norway has come into existence. Dr. Nansen, in his journey across Greenland, estimated that the ice-mantle covering that land is occasionally thousands of feet in thickness. If you have ever seen a glacier that is in active work, the Buarbrœ for instance, and observed how, like a huge plough, it rips and delves up everything except the solid rock that it comes in contact with, how it scrapes and gouges even the rocks, you may form some small idea of the work of a plough of this kind whose cutting edges have a weight of a few thousands of feet of ice above them. That is how the Norwegian valleys have been scooped out, how the fjords have been formed; and if you climb to the top of the hills that encompass you on either hand as you pass along the valleys, you find how it is that wherever you go in Norway you have waterfalls continually in view, sometimes three or four at a time. The great part of southern Norway is a high table-land with deep grooves scraped in it, and the fosses plunge down every here and there, because the groove has cut the river's course. All this you can see as plain as print as you drive up this valley.

By-and-bye we come to Husum, a large and important station now, but a very poor place when first I slept in it. But before we reach the place, we pass

the spot on the river where my old friend and I first threw line in a Norwegian stream. Shall I ever forget it? Every feature of that charming stretch of water is photographed on my memory; it is twenty years ago, but is just as though it were yesterday. I don't think that the fishing can be now what it was, and you will see by-and-bye that I have, from my experience of other places, some reason for this belief. At this particular place I only had that one far-away evening's fishing while the "skyds gut" waited for us, and laughed and danced, as trout after trout came out of the water. I have never had such a time as that first time, never such weather, and never such fish. We must go on to Husum, where we find a house that might hold fifty people or so. Before, three of us filled all the beds. But in the yard, as though pushed into the corner, jammed up against the rocks, there still stand two little out-houses of the "stabbur" style that are unaltered, and that show us the "Gammle Norge" my heart seems to turn to.

It is not far from Husum to Borgund, and the road is a great change from the old one—a great improvement, I am fain to confess. The old one, of course, went straight up and dropped straight down; the new follows the course of the river, often under rock ledges hanging far and far over you. What a torrent the river is! boiling and rushing and tearing, not a bit of smooth water, but every drop urging along at express speed. You can nowhere have a better view of a fine Norwegian torrent than here. Now we come in sight of the Borgund

Old Church. Mysterious building! But what changes have come about! That horribly ugly new church, that hotel, and—oh misery!—a dozen men flogging the stream. Ah, what a fishing we had that first time! Nobody else there—probably never had been. How well I remember fishing from close by that cottage door, where just within my throw a great wide stream entered a spreading pool, and the dimpling waters were all within my reach. How, without stirring a foot, fish after fish (those bright beauties which no one knows the glory of who has not seen Norwegian trout) came to my net; more than once two at a time, until I had my basket full. Ah! that time is gone for ever, and last year when I drove down to Borgund with another friend to renew our old and delightful acquaintance, we found every pool and every stream occupied; and without a trout—without trying for one—we drove back again dejected and forlorn.

We are going further up the river to the little place I met with on my first visit, and with which I have kept up an acquaintance ever since. It is not so far from Maristuen; but before we get there, let me recall my meeting with Ole Ericsen Eggum, that is to say, Ole who lives at Eggum. I picked up Ole on the first visit, and he stayed with me all day while I fished, telling me where the river was best, and rejoicing every time I got a trout. He declared he had never seen such a fisher, which I dare say was true, for he had probably never seen another. However, Ole and I became good friends, and he was with me a second, and, I think, a

third day, when I had to leave him. He told me all his history; how he had been a sailor, been to California, made a little money, had come back, and having his pick of the girls in the village had married the prettiest of them; and I promised that if ever I returned I would try to find him out. At last, fourteen or fifteen years after, I found myself fishing below Eggum, in the very pool to which Ole had introduced me. The boy who was carrying my pannier was an Ole too. "Isn't that Eggum," I asked, "and is Ole Ericsen here yet?" Yes, he was, said little Ole, should he go and find him? "Yes, do, and tell him an old friend wants to see him." So off Ole ran, and I fished away. Presently man and boy came down together, tramping through the long grass, but I had forgotten Ole's face and he had lost mine. The recalling of a few incidents of our triumphs together made him remember everything, however, and he said, "Ah, yes, and I will go up to Breistölen again with you, if you will go." I had not so many fish to give him as I used to have, though they were not a bad lot either, and then we had to say good-bye. "Well," he said, "if I never see you again, I hope we shall meet in the good place." I have not seen him since, and the poor fellow sickened soon after—and has left Eggum.

Now, let us get on to this place near Maristuen. I had written to say we were coming, four of us, and that we should arrive about midnight. I had written, too, to our friend Jonas, to meet us at Lærdal, and drive us part of the way over, and all our appointments were kept,

except that it was one o'clock before we landed, instead of twelve. As we turned Jonas' corner we saw that the valley was illuminated in our honour. There was a candle in every window, and the house stood out like a lighthouse in the twilight. Then when we drove up to the door, what excitement! How all the inhabitants welcomed us; Sylla—and Charybdis I was going to say, but I mean Kari, Jertrude, Johanna, and Knut, and all the "piges" of the place, and even the old man himself! They expected us to begin with a feast at that time of night, and were disappointed, I think, that we had to decline their hospitality. Then we chose our bed-rooms. But I am forgetting what this place near Maristuen *used* to be. Well, I think it's better now, but it's bigger and dearer—though, goodness knows, cheap enough. It used to be only that little house over the way, where they managed, at a pinch, to make up five beds. Now, at the same pinch, they might manage a dozen, I daresay; so it's not so big yet, though it is quite a fine white building, which has blossomed out with a "svale"; this is what they call the porch that runs from top to bottom, which, having a coloured lamp hung in it, and having stencilled ornaments on it to counterfeit elaborate fretwork, is quite imposing in appearance. The whole route from Lærdal to Christiania has blossomed in the same way, every "svale" being evidently produced on the same plan, and I should fancy that some enterprising builder has put up the lot at an annual charge, for the people could certainly not afford to lay down money for such ornamentation.

Now, to describe the fishings of day after day for a fortnight will entertain you no more than it would be possible for me; let me then take one day, made up, perhaps, of bits from several, and that shall summarise the way in which we four Englanders spent our time.

The first to rise in the morning are B—— and myself; we sleep in contiguous rooms, separated by boards as thin as a hat-box, so that a whisper from one chamber can be heard in the next. "Are you getting up?" says B—— at six o'clock or half-past, or on wet mornings at seven. "Yes, I've been reading and waiting for you for an hour." So up both get, slip on tennis shoes, take a towel and sponge, and without much clothing on we go downstairs, cross the yard, turn in at the gate into the field, pass the flad-bröd bakery and the wash-house, and there we are at our bath, a huge pool, swirling in a quick torrent by the rocks on which we stand. They are very convenient places these rocks—no end of little ledges to put the soap, sponge, etc., upon, and they run nicely into the water, so that you can stand up to the ankles or the knees; or, if you prefer it, you can take a header into the swirl and be just carried down to the corner, where you must at once get out, or I will not answer for the consequences. We always have this bath, B—— and I, rain or fair, and as we come into the house again, the chances are that we shall meet our G.O.M. in a long macintosh and a hat, and he will make a long round, across the bridge to the other side of the pool where no prying eye shall discover him. B—— and I are soon dressed, and till breakfast is ready

we sit, often in a glorious bath of sunshine, in the "svale," trimming our flies, chaffing Knut, or addressing playful remarks to Jertrude. Then the G.O.M. comes down, smiling an untroubled smile, but I think he is not quite so rough and unkempt as we are; then comes Sylla with "Vœr saa god," and we march into the large uncarpeted "Spise Sal" to breakfast. What an airy, delightful room that is! Clean as a pin, and completely our property while we are here. Indeed we may say we "bossed that show" altogether for that fortnight. Enter at the front door—those are all our macintoshes and landing nets; those things on the porch are our waders and socks and things; there inside are our boots; in the drawing-room our books and maps and papers are littering everything; in the "Spise Sal" our rods, which are never taken down, are all lying on the floor; and if any stranger should happen to come into the house while we are there, Sylla at once lets him see that we are proprietors, and he alone is a visitor.

Now, what will the neat-handed Sylla give us for breakfast to-day? First coffee, real good coffee, such as I, for one, never get at home; then fried trout, as well cooked by Kari as ever you had or could have them; then eggs and a bit of inferior bacon perhaps, and as many kickshaws as you like in the way of sausages of every hue and flavour, anchovies, sardines, cheese, marmalade, and so on. For bread we have white bread, rye bread and biscuits; so we don't starve here.

Breakfast over, we order "lit mad" to take with us; our boys who are going to carry our creels and water-

proofs appear, and, after the necessary arrangements, we sally forth. There are several courses open to us ; there is up-water and down-water, left bank and right bank, and nothing to choose between them. We generally go in pairs for company, and on this particular day B—— and I are going down on the opposite bank. I put in at the top of the water and B—— goes a considerable distance down. The top pool, in which we have our morning bath, used to be a fine place for fish; it isn't now. I got one there this summer, and that's all, though I fished it as far as it could be reached many a time. Downward we go, through long grass for a time, and now we are at a long swift run, three or four feet deep, but too rapid to fish. Still, walking along, and casting as I go, I raise one in the rapid water, but the force of the stream is too great and he gets away. Then the water, reduced to forty yards or so in width, makes over to my side, and is deep at the edges, running under grassy banks. Here, if I have luck, and we have not harried the water too much, I shall get one or two. After a hundred yards or so of this there comes a stream which might serve for a day's fishing; but there is a charm in moving along, so that we do not, while we stay, bring that stream to too much harm. I have got one fair fish, which the G.O.M., who is on the other side a bit lower down, has observed me engaged with, and by the time I get nearer to him he calls out, "Is it a pound?" "No; about three-quarters," I reply, but then in a moment, "but this one is; or will be, if I get him." Then he shouts something which I cannot hear, but at last I

make out that he wants to know what he'll weigh if I don't get him, to which I reply, "two pounds," and I am sorry to say that that fish *was* a two-pounder.

A little lower down there is a huge round pool, as blue as the sky, and as deep as the sea. There is an eddy below me, where the water runs the wrong way, and is deep under a steep bank; there must be a fish there; yes, there he is! away into that deep, deep pool with my fly in his cheek. There is no chance for him; in due time he is in my net, and I have got my pounder.

Just below, we pass through a sort of stile, and the river divides, part of it going straight on, but the greater portion going off at right angles for one or two hundred yards, and then turning, almost at right angles again, into a course parallel with the stream by which we are standing. It is just possible to wade over this smaller stream to the island, and to your right you have a fine long run, which, somehow, never produced me anything; but by the time it gets to the corner, before taking the turn at right angles, there is some delightful water which yielded two or three fine fish every time I got to it. This place I kept a profound secret, but the G.O.M. saw me there one day fast for about ten minutes in a fish, which I did not get, and I was no longer sole proprietor of the choicest bit of the river.

Returning to the left bank, we get a united stream again, which by-and-bye spreads out into a deep glassy water, where a ferry goes across it. There is not a puff of wind, but here I come up with friend B——, who is positively fishing this clear but heavy water, where "you

sees the fish a-swimmin'" in plenty. "You just go down there," he says, "and you'll get one sure enough," and scarcely believing such a thing possible, I do go just down to where there is a mere dimple, caused by a deep-down stone. The flies fall over the smooth water, there is a splash, and "sure enough" I have him. Get a ripple on this place, as I got it one evening when I was coming home to dinner, and you have fish and fishing indeed.

There are two or three houses on a glacier mound just here, for the accommodation of which the ferry-boat plies. We cannot keep by the river, but must mount the mound, pass the houses and skip a few hundred yards, coming down to another break in the rocky bank, where we can reach the water and are sure to get fish again. Then there is a higher hillock to climb, a rocky, tree-covered one, below which are two pools and streams that surpass belief for beauty and power of yielding fish. The lower of them is difficult to cast over on account of the trees which come close to the water's edge, but it is just shallow enough to enable you to wade along by sticking to the trees with your left hand while you fish with your right, and it will go hard if you do not, before you get to shoal water at the foot, take half-a-dozen fish. Below this there is fishing for a couple of miles or so, but I have only been down once; it was a bad day, and I only got a few trout, but there is some splendid water. There is, though, more fishing than can be got through in a day in the upper water. Dinner is at seven, and it is five now, so quite time to turn. The boy shouts out every time a fish goes into the pannier

how many he has got: femten, sexten, and so on, and by we get to "tyve" I feel at the pull of the basket and thank my stars that I have a boy to carry it. He is worth his shilling a day indeed. After a rest we go on our way, taking a cast now and then, and at last B—— comes in sight, and we have time to sit down and chat before walking home together. Is there anything more delightful in a day's work of this delightful sort than this chat and this rest? I do not think there is; there are not many of those pitying fools who "cannot stand such idle work as fishing," who ever feel the joyful lassitude that a day's hard work on the river, such as I have briefly described, produces. And that crack on the leisurely walk home; what could be pleasanter or happier? We shall be obliged to take a cast or two as we pass the choicest spots, and we shall add a fish or two to the baskets. Now we are in sight of the house, now reach the grove where the nesting field-fares attack us every time we pass. Ole and Olaf are chattering and comparing notes behind us, and so we go on, full of glee and health and happiness. Now we cross the little bridge, and at last stand in the courtyard true to time, at five or ten minutes before seven. We are all there and greet fraternally. Then comes the show up. "Give us four dishes, please," and we each pile up a great dish from our creels, and weigh in as well as we can. Then comes the grand wash in the river before our waders are removed, and at last we are ready for dinner just as the bright, good-natured Sylla comes once more with her "Vœr saa god." They feed us very well: soup, boiled

trout or salmon (the trout are best), meat of some kind, sweets, always novel and interesting because unknown, cheese, and the coffee to finish off. And all this taken in the healthiest of situations, in the best of all good company! What *could* man wish for more?

In such fashion as the above the days pass by. Sometimes it is up-water, sometimes down, then an excursion to the mountain streams 2,000 feet above us, then the lakes a few miles higher up stream, or, perhaps, a bootless journey into the snowy mountains in the south, where we are told the big ones are to be found. The days of our holiday are soon spent and our fishing is soon over.

One incident that happened to one of our friends must be told, as it has an important bearing on the difference between the present and the past in Norway. One evening, when we met at dinner, the above-mentioned gentleman told us that while he was fishing in the very pool down the water which I have more than once spoken of, an irate farmer set upon him, storming and shouting, and apparently demanding money, and ended by throwing stones at the visitor's line. This was important and sad news to hear, and next morning B—— and I drove down to interview the farmer. We soon found him, and under our skilful treatment he proved himself not such an unreasonable man as we expected. I poured out on him all the wealth of Norwegian I was possessed of, Mr. B—— helping by a timely "hear, hear" (in the Norwegian tongue) as occasion required; and Jacob was "overcame." What he advanced was

this:—That we trod down his grass, or, at any rate, our gillies did, and that we were so skilful that we should catch all the fish, and there would be none left for him. Both these views we combated successfully, pointing out that we were generally *in* the water, and that we would look well after the boys; that as to catching all the fish, that was impossible; also, that we had come a thousand miles to visit him, and deserved a bit of fishing; that we and other travellers were a benefit to the whole district, and that if we were met by incivility instead of kindness we should come no more; that I had been coming for twenty years, and had fished that place without hindrance all that time; that Ole Ericsen had himself brought me to it; and that, finally, if he wanted some fish he was welcome to them, for it was the fishing, and not the fish, that *we* wanted. That fetched him; he cared nothing about Ole Ericsen, who was away now, but he had never heard such eloquence before, and so we might fish as much as we liked. Later in the day we took him a nice dish of trout, and photographed his house, his wife, his child, and himself, and he was thoroughly pacified.

This event, I fear, marks an epoch in the history of the tourist's Norway. The peasants are learning to look on Englishmen as things to make money out of; the old simplicity of the people is waning.

And now for the final comparison between old and new. Well, the fishing was better the first time I saw this river than it is now; no doubt it will be worse still, and before my sons are my age, they may read in

"Anglers' Evenings" of angling feats quite unattainable in their time. So we agreed, as we talked over the stone-throwing incident after dinner that evening, sitting in the "svale," while the ruddy glow in the sky grew deeper; but, as the G.O.M. said of me, I have had my whack out of the river, whatever comes, and ought to be content. So I am. I would not part with my recollections of that valley and my love for it, for any price. Blessed Norway! If I live, and am able to do it, I hope that year after year I may return to experience the delights of its dancing waters; to feel the soul-inspiring influence of its lovely landscape; and to partake of the healthful life of its honest, simple people.

NOTES ON SEA FISHING.

BY STANLEY KNEALE.

LTHOUGH I do not compare sea-fishing to the more scientific pursuit of salmon, trout, or grayling, yet it has charms quite its own; the bracing sea-breezes, the glorious sunrises and sunsets throwing dark brown shadows of the rocks on the water; the waves glancing up and down, catching and reflecting all the beautiful and gorgeous colouring of the sky, the blue glare of mid-day, the quiet purple shadows of late evening. And not only to the artist, but to the sportsman, does sea-fishing make itself attractive. There is the "glorious uncertainty." When luring the lusty trout you expect to catch trout—and generally do if they are in the humour and you are an adept in the art of deception—but in sea-fishing, at least generally, you do not know what you will catch; it may be a codling, a conger, a mighty halibut, or any one of the hundreds of different species and varieties which inhabit the deep (or mostly the shallow); it may be an ounce, or it may be a fifty or sixty-pounder which makes it a question whether you have caught the fish or the fish has caught you; whether you go overboard or he comes on board. Not only in the weight and size have you variety, but in the

methods of capture, whether with rod and fly, whiffing, long-lining, bottom fishing, or even netting. One of the most beautiful scenes pictured on my mind is a still, clear moonlight night, the water just lapping the sides of the boat; in the distance the bright line of phosphorus marking the ripple made by the nets as they were slowly windlassed in (not the snorting steam windlass breaking the calm of the scene, but the hand-worked capstan revolving to some rhythmical air), and the glorious gleam and glitter of the silver-scaled herring as the nets were taken into the boat. This was not sport, but once seen it was never to be forgotten ; and, after all, fish have to be caught to feed the hungry man, and it would take a good many anglers to fill a boat with them by rod and line as was done by one sweep of the nets on that particular evening.

In Ramsey Bay, where most of my sea-fishing experience was gained, if you want a big day, long line fishing does it, especially in winter, when the cod is in its prime. You want four or five lines of about eight hundred hooks each, a smart stiff sailing-boat of about twenty-five feet keel, not too high in the gunwale, so that the lines may be taken in more easily, plenty of beam and ballast, and three or four men who know what they are doing; for, at that time of the year, you may see some nasty weather between the start to Bahama Bank (the best cod ground) about seven miles distant, and the return to harbour. As the cod-boats there are not decked, or only partially so, they require very careful handling; in rough seas very often one man steers and three bale. It

is marvellous how some of the regular fishermen manage those boats; going out in all kinds of weather, they handle them with a skill which only comes from long experience and knowledge of boats, tides, currents, and winds. They are good companions, can spin long yarns and tell good fish stories, and are always ready to instruct an amateur. There is something very fresh and exhilarating on a bright winter's morning in starting off with a nice breeze, bounding from crest to crest of the short curling waves, everything light and buoyant, dancing in the sunlight, with your lips salt with the showered spray from your boat's rude contact with some large wave.

Arrived at the bank, down comes the sail, and mast too, if there is much sea or ground swell on; and over go the lines, shooting across the tide, and buoyed at the ends. Then comes two or three hours' waiting, which can be filled in by pollack, bream or bass fishing, the tide carrying out a lightly-leaded line and trace, to which are attached flies, spinning-baits, or, best of all, sand-eels. If the fish are in the humour, and the tide right, which is the most important thing (neap tides are the best), you may have some capital sport with pollack, although they are not quite so large here as in other parts of the bay. The bass and bream are scarcer and more uncertain. Then comes the time for lifting the long lines; cod, skate, flounders, plaice, halibut, red and grey gurnet, congers, dog-fish, and many other kinds come tumbling into the boat, but, of course, principally cod. Occasionally a halibut or skate bigger than usual requires two or

three gaffs to bring him over the side. I have seen halibut five or six feet long brought in by the cod boats. Buckland mentions one caught in Ramsey Bay as among the biggest captured round the coasts of the British Isles. With two or three cwt. of fish in the bottom ot the boat, the lines neatly coiled in the baskets, off you start home again with a freshening breeze, and generally a good bit of beating, as the prevailing winds are off shore, westerly or sou'-westerly; and, unless you have a good suit of oils on, you will not have many dry garments by the time you get back to the harbour.

But from a sportsman's point of view, by far the most fascinating fishing is with rod and fly or spinning tackle, for pollack, cod-fish, codling, and, occasionally, mackerel. This sport was ably and charmingly described in the first series of "Anglers' Evenings," in a paper entitled, "Rod Fishing off the Isle of Man," where the whole art of pollack fishing is so fully discussed that there remains little to say. The most important thing is to get the right tides, weather, and time. I have always found the flood tide much the best, the fish coming in with it closer to the rocks, except when the sea is rough. Then, of course, they keep to the deeper water, are more scattered, and have to be fished for with much heavier leads. The best time for pollack fishing, as for most sea-fishing, is in the early morning about sunrise, or in the evening after sunset; they come nearer to the surface then and rise more readily to the fly. The autumn is the best season, although in some years I have known them to be very plentiful in May and June.

As in any other kind of fishing, the finer the tackle the better the sport. Single salmon gut is quite strong enough for your traces or flycasts; you may lose some flies or spinning tackle now and then (generally in the weed) but in the long run it will repay you. The tackle sold on the spot is made of twisted gut or gimp, and would pull a whale out; as a rule, the tackle used by the boat fishermen is very clumsy, but of course they do not use it with a rod, but simply a hand-line. They very rarely fish for pollack, as it is not a good eating fish and there is no market for it; and they consider you are rather idiotic to waste your time on the "kelleig," as they call them, when you might be more profitably employed long lining, bottom fishing, or mackerel fishing. Undoubtedly, the heaviest fish are taken by trolling with the sand-eel with a fairly heavy lead, say three or four ounces, so as to sink the spinning sand-eel two or three fathoms below the surface, according to the tides and time of day. The fish always lie nearer the surface in the evening.

On a fine calm night, as you are rowed in and out of the little bays, overshadowed by the great towering rocks looking dark and mysterious against the sunset sky, with the quiet dip of the oars, or a disturbed cormorant slipping into the water from his resting-place, or now and then the splash of a fish as he rushes to the surface in pursuit of some small fry, breaking the quietness of the scene—suddenly there is a tug and a splash, followed by the delightful screech of the reel, as away goes a good pollack to his home among the weed. You follow, giving him all the butt you can to prevent

his going down—their tendency is generally down; they scarcely ever rush to the surface, as salmon or trout sometimes do when first hooked, but seem to know by instinct that their safety lies in the long dark tangle, in and out of which they endeavour to thread your line. They often take eighty or ninety yards of line off your reel, and you have to follow them with the boat. I remember one day, after a long rush, following up in a boat, winding in as I came along until I got right over my fish with a big strain on all the time, as much as a strong salmon gut would bear; but not an inch would it budge; however, patience hath its reward, and knowing the sulking habits of my friends the pollack, I continued to keep a steady strain on, fearing all the time that he had fastened me in the long brown weed at the bottom. After about ten minutes I felt a slight stir, and he came to the surface quite played out; the gaff quickly transferred a good pollack of fifteen pounds into the boat. It is a fish that caves in very quickly after the first rush or two; very unlike the mackerel, which, for its size, is the hardest fighting fish I know, either in salt or fresh water. But if the fights in pollack fishing are not very hard or long they are frequent. On a good day you have not to be content with one fish, as in salmon fishing, but can count them by the dozen. Then there is the delightful pull home—if the evening is chilly you are only too pleased to take a turn at the oars; if not, comfortably settled in the stern, puffing away at your favourite pipe, a goodly array of shimmering fish lying in front of you, and, in the distance, the town and harbour

lights guiding you home to a good supper to which you feel you can do full justice, you begin to think there are many less enjoyable sports than pollack fishing. Of course there is another side to the picture, when, minus fish, a stiff wind off shore and a choppy sea making it rather difficult and dangerous work, you are glad to pull into the friendly shelter of a headland, beach your boat on one of the little gravelled bays, high and dry out of the reach of the tide, and tramp home trying to dry your soaked clothes in the five or six miles between you and a good fire and refreshment for the inner man.

When fishing for pollack along the rocks you often have some good fun by bringing a rook rifle and thinning the cormorants which line the coast. Although in the Isle of Man they are protected all the year round by the "Sea Birds Protection Act," they are of no service to the fishermen, as are the gannet and gull in guiding them to the fishing grounds; and in thinning them down you are doing good service, especially to the river fishing. On some of the Manx streams I believe they do more to destroy the salmon and trout than all the fishermen and poachers put together. In the spring I have seen dozens of them right at the entrance of the harbour, when the white trout (as they are called there) are about, destroying them wholesale. One cormorant can very quickly dispose of two or three dozen of those small fish which Mr. Day has pronounced to be young sewin. They are a greedy bird, and to use an old expression, "their eye is very often bigger than their belly," or rather throat, as up the Sulby river one day I picked up a cormorant

choked with a four-pound salmon. These birds also go up several miles inland to the fresh water, the trout and samlets having little chance against them.

The biggest day's sea-fishing, in point of numbers, that I ever had was a fine day in June, a good many summers ago, in Ramsey Bay. L——, who was not a rod fisherman, but was very keen and always worked hard and successfully with the hand lines, two cousins, myself, and the boatman made up the crew of the *Snaefel*, a small open schooner of about twenty-five feet keel; a very handy fishing boat, and much more convenient than the larger, partly-decked, sailing boats you now get there for hire. She was also a fast boat in her time, and many are the races we have had going or returning from the fishing ground with the lug-sail or cutter-rigged fishing boats. On this particular afternoon we had not much chance of trying her sailing powers, as it was almost a dead calm. Starting about three, we drifted out to the whiting ground, about a mile from the end of the pier, where the whiting come right into the bay. They are generally very numerous, although perhaps not so large as those caught off Manghold Head, which is about five miles from the harbour mouth, and, taking it all round, is much the best ground for whiting and other bottom fishing. As the tides run strong, and the water is deep, you require heavy leads, about 3lbs., to keep your line on the bottom. This evening we had not wind enough to take us out there, and since it is no joke rowing two or three tons of ballast along, we dropped our anchor in about five fathoms of water, so clear that we could see all

the fish on the sandy bottom. Whiting, unlike the pollack, are never found on a rocky bottom, and are generally enticed inshore by the sand eels or other small fry. To lower the sails and make ready the lines was the work of a very short time. The whiting lines generally used have a cross-bar of whalebone or stiff wire about a foot above the lead, to the ends of which the hooks are attached by a couple of feet of fine water cord. As the hooks and snooding are coarse, we used to put on a large trout hook, say No. 9, and a couple of strands of fairly strong gut, the greater penetrating power of the fine-wired hooks and invisibility of the gut telling a tremendous tale at the end of a day's fishing. Having our supply of fresh sand-eels on board, we cut them up in small pieces and bait our hooks, taking care to leave the point of the hook uncovered; over go the lines, and we begin in real earnest to pull in the fish. They were so thick that we very often had a couple of whiting on before the line reached the bottom. You generally find the bottom with your lead, and fish about a foot or two off, but this evening it did not seem to make much difference where, or how, we fished—up came the lines with two fish on each time, until it really became hard work lowering and drawing in. At last L——, who was very keen on a big catch, noticed that the boys' lines were down twice as long as ours. The fact was that they had got tired of bending over the gunwale pulling fish in, so they let their lines remain on the bottom, knowing that there were sure to be two fish on each line; after that L—— kept a sharp eye on them and

held them steadily at work. The bay was literally alive with fish that evening; we caught whiting, cod, skate, sand-soles, plaice, mackerel, red and grey gurnet, dog-fish, and even herrings. It is a very rare thing for the latter fish to be taken by line in Ramsey Bay; however, that evening we had about a dozen of them, and finished up by catching a fine lobster on a hook which had got entangled in its claws.

About eleven o'clock, after seven hours' fishing, the bottom of the boat was so thick with fish that it rather hampered our movements, and we thought it time to start for home. Then began the business of counting our spoils, and we found we had six hundred fish of one kind and another. The local paper referred to the catch afterwards as not the charge, but the death of the six hundred. I think it was the record catch by hand-line that season.

But, of course, there are blank days in sea-fishing as well as in river-fishing. There are many agents at work to make the day good or bad—tides, winds, fish moving in shoals over a very extended water, shoals of dog-fish chasing and frightening them out of the usual fishing grounds, and dozens of little things which make sport uncertain. But if you are on the spot and have plenty of fishing time, winter and summer, as was my good fortune some ten or eleven years ago, you are bound to find the right day sometimes and have big catches which you remember, while the blank days are forgotten. Lately, in my brief visits to the Island, I never seem to get the big days I used to have, either on the river or on

the sea. On the rivers, or rather streams, the trout are getting great epicures, and much more particular about the way the flies are presented to them, as they are more fished for; but on the sea it is harder to account for. I think the only solution is that you are not on the spot at the right time, or it may be that the continual scraping and disturbing of the breeding beds by steam dredgers and other trawlers has something to do with the scarcity of fish. Again, the beating and churning of the sea by the largely increasing number of steamers which pass in and through the bay, no doubt scares them to other feeding grounds.

Mackerel fishing is best in the months of July, August, and September. These fish vary very much in size, and round the coasts of the Isle of Man are, as a rule, much smaller than on the south coast of England and Ireland. In Ramsey Bay they are fished for almost entirely by whiffing or railling. One fisherman, sailing and managing his boat and a couple of lines with heavy leads of about 3½ lbs., often gets thirty to forty dozen of mackerel in a good morning's fishing; but, as you may imagine, it means very hard work, and non-professional anglers are, as a rule, contented with a few dozen. The biggest catch I ever had was twenty-five dozen. This kind of fishing, although very much followed and enjoyed by visitors, to me gets rather monotonous; the slow sailing through the water at about four knots an hour, and the constant heaving and drawing in of the line, with a mackerel or simply your spinning bait at the end, lacks the variety one gets, for instance, in bottom fishing.

The leads also are heavy, and the strain caused by the lines being dragged through the water often makes it difficult to decide whether one has a mackerel on or not, especially with a lumpy sea, when the motion of the boat gives the line sharp jerks very easily mistaken for the tugging of a fish. I have tried numbers of different kinds of spoon and spinning baits, but have found nothing equal to the bait generally used over there—a thin strip of skin cut with a very sharp knife from the under side of the mackerel. It is very bright, and if properly cut and put on the hook three or four dozen fish may be killed without changing the bait.

In pollack fishing in Ramsey Bay the mistake most people make is in fishing along the rocks. They are of course nearer at hand, and not so far from the harbour if bad weather comes on, and occasionally give some fair sport. But for a good evening's fishing, the weather being favourable, you should go right round the Manghold Head into Port Moar Bay, and fish along the rocks and rocky shores there. It is about seven or eight miles' pull from the harbour. The pollack are much more numerous, and larger. The south of the Island is a still better rod-fishing ground, the bottom being principally rocky. A friend of mine, while staying at Port Erin a couple of summers ago, killed from fifty to a hundred pounds of pollack and bloggan each evening, though the weather was not as fine as it might have been. Boating is very dangerous there, on account of the strong tides and currents, which frequently run five or six knots an hour.

Taking the sea-fishing of the Island generally, I believe it is much better than on other parts of the English, Scotch, Welsh, and Irish coasts, and I think anyone who is going over there would never regret taking a stiff rod of about sixteen feet, a reel with a hundred or so yards of line, spinning tackle, flies, and a good gaff. When living there I always used to land or board my pollack with an implement made of a large hoop of iron bound on to a boat-hook handle, the net being the ordinary tarred fishing net. Though not so portable as a gaff, I found it more effective, especially in rough weather, when the fish seem to have a knack of getting under the boat and sawing the line against the bottom. With a long handle and big net you can scoop them up some yards away from the boat before they have a chance of getting under it. Of course the net must be sound and strong, as with a fifteen or sixteen-pound fish there is often a big strain on it. As the trout-fishing in the summer months is indifferent, the streams generally being small, low, and clear, worse sport may be found than is yielded by a few evenings among the pollack or other kinds of fish, and the beautiful rock scenery and sunsets which are seen in such perfection from the water.

A CANADIAN EXPERIENCE: FISHING FOR THE SMALL-MOUTHED GREEN BASS.

BY HAROLD ENGELBACH.

WOULD not give the proverbial brass farthing for the heart of that fisherman who loves solitary sport from a selfish point of view; who delights in enjoyment which he does not long that others may share with him. Truly, there is enjoyment in moments of solitude to the fisherman who explores regions till then untrodden by the sportsman. Who has experienced without joy the casting upon the waters of a maiden stream? But does not the very essence of the delight and enjoyment lie in the pleasure of having gained an experience which can be imparted to less favoured friends; in the thought that it is his alone to open to his beloved fellow fishermen prospects of new pleasures; to widen the area of their happy hunting grounds? Was there ever ambition so unselfish?

I propose relating the adventures of George and myself in search of the "small-mouthed green bass," on

the Grand River, which runs from Pushlynch Lake, in Ontario, to Lake Erie:—

> "Where the wave as clear as dew,
> Sleeps beneath the light canoe,
> Which reflected there
> Looks as if it hung in air."

Let me, then, at once take you with us to the river's side, merely stopping on the way to tie our horses to some trees on the outskirts of the bush; of which more when our day's sport is over. Among our party was Colonel M——, of the Royal Canadian Artillery, our host, at whose house in Guelph George and I were being entertained by the Colonel and his hospitable wife. To be with them enabled me to appreciate at their full value the lines of Tom Moore:—

> "Ah! well may we hope when this short life is gone,
> To meet in a world of more permanent bliss;
> For a smile or a shake of the hand hastening on
> Is all we enjoy of each other in this."

Then there was the Colonel's friend, Mr. W——, an earnest sportsman. We found that we had common friends in Ceylon and other parts of the globe, and that, therefore, although we met for the first time, we were, by reason of these "acquaintances in common" (George's legal mind suggested this term), not strangers. George and myself completed the party. On reaching the river we found a rudely-made canoe hauled up on the muddy bank. Our friend W—— carried on his shoulder two paddles, and I was the bearer of a third. On our way through the bush we had suddenly stopped—guided probably by instinct—and W——, carefully looking

round to be sure that no human eye but ours was on him, had extricated these paddles from a hiding-place.

Our intention was to drop down stream and land two of our party on the further bank, which, being fairly clear, would afford the chance of a good cast, while the other two would fish from the canoe. But we had hardly put off from the shore before we realised that the chances were strongly in favour of all four making close acquaintance with the waters of the Grand River, and then whether the right or left bank or the bottom would be the destination of any one, or more, or all of us, the event alone would determine. The only thing fairly certain was that the canoe and paddles would survive, to float down to Lake Erie, and then, after shooting the Falls of Niagara and the Rapids, be swept round and round in the whirlpool for countless ages. Under these circumstances it was agreed that Mr. W—— and I should land, leaving the Colonel and George to brave the stream in the canoe. There was wisdom in this decision. Mr. W—— had an injured hand, bound up, and I was the father of a family. The Colonel was stout and calculated to float, and George, being one of the "Devil's own," was sure to be cared for. The arrangement was promptly carried out at the expense of no little ingenuity in preventing the landers from getting up to the middle in mud, and the others from being upset into the river.

I must now ask you to follow my own fortunes. Directed by Mr. W—— I made my way as best I could through the bush, always keeping as near the river as possible, till light showed me that there was an outlet to

the bank; then, making for it, I found myself in an opening which gave me an opportunity of getting a cast. After spending a couple of hours in this sort of work I laid me down to rest, when friend W—— came up. "What have you done? Anything, eh?" "Well, any sport? How many?" "None," answered I. "Oh, one wretched one," replied W——, "but it's too early yet; wait till the sun begins to go down a bit. What say you to a drop of real Irish? It won't harm either of us, I think, eh?" What similarity there is in the greeting words among fishermen all the world over, I thought, and what wonderful similarity in tastes, too! We sat down together, to give the sun a chance oi going down a bit, and began to compare notes generally. My rod was a twelve foot one. The cast was heavy; I had three flies—I do not know their names. They were an inch and a half long, with black body and hackle, and large white wings with one scarlet stripe on each wing. They looked for all the world like a bit cut out of a pair of Uncle Sam's breeches, and about as unlike any fly I ever saw as they could be. I thought of a paper in "Anglers' Evenings," where it is maintained that something in likeness to nothing ever heard of in insect life is undoubtedly taken by a trout to be a spider, and I wondered what a bass might take a pair of Uncle Sam's pants for. One thing only I knew—so far the bass had not taken them for anything.

We passed some time reclining on the bank, W—— taking the opportunity to relate how at each particular spot where we had been casting either he or a friend had

landed a four-pounder, each fish possessing a special history of its own, arising out of the process of landing. Of course on this water he had the advantage of me. He knew I had never fished there before, and I had to be silent. But was I no fisherman? Had not I fished the sweet waters of the Annamoe? Was Lough Dan not in my memory? and the Ribble with those charming pools, and the tarn, too? How about venturing just 4 lbs. with ¼ lb. added, and beating the 4 lb. bass? While we thus conversed, instructing each other, a floppy splash on the other side of the river called us to our feet. Yes, it was indeed a rise, and a good one. Soon the river seemed alive with fish—they were rising up and down stream and on both sides, except at that part of the river where we stood; there they confined themselves to the other side, and took care to rise only beyond the reach of our casting powers. These fish are, indeed, like other fish, thought I.

At last, however, one more venturesome than the others rose on my left, in the shadow thrown by an old broken tree hanging over the water. He was within reach, and, quick as lightning, my tail-fly dropped in the very centre of the circle. As the fly lighted on the water it was taken—a splash, a wriggle—then a dart to the bottom and a sulk. It took me from five to seven minutes to land him, and I had caught my first small-mouthed green bass. He fought well, and from beginning to end behaved like a thoroughly well-educated trout. He turned two lbs. on the scale. The colour, from which he derives a portion of his name, was chiefly about the

gills. These were almost emerald, the mouth a light whitish green, the colour shading off to a brownish green about the head, the scales of the body being somewhat similar in colour to the back of the brown trout, but of a duller hue. The dorsal fin was like that of a perch.

Already the shadows were beginning to lengthen, but sport was on, and not till I had landed eight fish did I reel up, regretting that in those regions twilight was so short. Our friend W—— had, with a true fisherman's politeness, left the work to me, contenting himself with landing one for form's sake.

We now made our way back to the spot where we had parted from the Colonel and George in the canoe. When at last they came paddling up the river they had some difficulty in finding the landing-place.

> "Grey the vault,
> Pure, cloudless ether; and the star of eve
> Was wanting; but inferior lights appeared
> Faintly, too faint almost for sight . . .
> . . . . ere the boat attained
> Her mooring place."

The *inferior lights*, on this occasion, were lucifer matches which we burned to guide our friends to shore, for it was now quite dark. They had fifteen fish, one of them 2½ lbs. That one had been taken with a natural fly, caught by George to see what sort of fly to put up. The Colonel put it on, and, dropping it by the side of the canoe, at once hooked his best fish. Taking the paddles with us we now began our journey home. To make your way through a Canadian bush or swamp in the heart of the backwoods would be no easy task to the uninitiated,

even by daylight; but in darkness to which "Darkest Africa" would be light, only one thoroughly accustomed to the work could venture. Keeping close together in Indian file we followed the lead of our trusty guide, replaced the paddles in their hiding place, and emerging from the bush found ourselves where we had left our horses, patiently waiting. Harnessing them as best we could in the dark, we proceeded slowly through the wood, the Colonel at the reins and friend W—— on foot, leading. On gaining the outskirts of the wood we came to a cottage, where we made a halt. We knocked, and the door was opened by a little girl. "Mrs. May, are you there?" called the Colonel. "Good evening, Mrs. May," said W——, as that lady came forward. "Oh, sir, is it you? Well now, May and I was wondering who it was was up there with them horses. We seed the horses, yer know, and 'May,' says I, 'who's them as is gone in the bush this night? They's got lost. They's lost in the swamp.' Oh, dear, and it's *you*; well, well!" "Yes, Mrs. May, and here we are, not lost, but dry, Mrs. May, dry! Have you got some water?" "Why, to be sure we have. Here, child, bring a glass of water." A glass of water was brought; in the meantime a flask had been unearthed, and some of the contents being mixed with the water, one of us refreshed. "Here, child, bring another tumbler of water," said Mrs. May. At this juncture Mr. May appeared upon the scene. "Good evening, Mr. May," said the Colonel from his seat on the box. Mr. May could not see him, and merely growled out a responsive "Good evening." "Why,

you don't know me," said the Colonel, "I'm Colonel M——. We're going to have some whiskey and water; won't you join us, Mr. May?" "Eh?" replied Mr. May, "why, yes, of course I will. Here, child, don't you hear the Colonel wants more water?" By this time Mr. May was alive to the situation, and, seeing he was to be a participator, resolved that his share of the feast should be on a liberal scale. "What are you at? What's that?" he cried, referring to a tumbler half full of water which the child had in her hand. "Bring a pail, child; bring a pail, I tell you. Don't you see they're thirsty?" A pail was brought, and all, including Mr. May, having satisfied themselves, we started off for Guelph, not, however, before Mrs. May had again and again expressed her thankfulness for our escape from the dangers of the swamp, and her hope for our safe arrival home "this terrible night." Mr. May now led the way till we reached a gate which opened on to the high road. An hour's drive and we were at the Colonel's house, to be met by Mrs. M—— and the faithful Jack (the dog). An enjoyable supper, a smoke, and a chat were then the preludes to sleep and dreams, in which the "small-mouthed green bass" were again caught in profusion, in which Mrs. May got lost in the swamp, and Mr. May harnessed the Colonel to the horses, and the horses swam the river, while George caught Mr. W—— with a natural fly, and the canoe floated over the Falls before I could get out of it, and woke me up with a bump as it reached the rapids. Bass fishing is apt to give you nightmare; at least, that is my experience.

TROUT FISHING IN OTAGO, NEW ZEALAND.

BY J. O. MACKENZIE.

IN New Zealand the first thing that strikes the angler, fresh from the home lakes and rivers, is the large average size of the trout. Here half pounders and even pounders are of small account, and although in most of the smaller streams they are plentiful enough, the capture of these small game is looked upon as a waste of time and trouble. My first trout was caught in this wise :—I was on a visit to a Mr. Kitchener, brother to the Suakin commandant, who owns a station ten miles up the Shag River Valley ; the river just skirts his garden. Seeing signs of trout about, I put up my nine-foot rod, and, hitching on a fine cast and one small spider, threw into some rough water where the stream cascaded into a rocky pool. The river was dead low, and clear as gin ; the time three p.m. in December (June at home). On my second throw I had a fellow fast, and, after some minutes' play, grassed a fine-conditioned trout scaling an ounce or two over two pounds. As the day was bright and very hot, I was content, and hied me home with my capture, which, on

sight, drew from my host the remark, "Ah! a nice little fish." Thought I—"If this is a *little* one, how about the big 'uns?"

We have two classes of rivers in New Zealand, rain-fed and snow-fed. The former, save when in flood, run clear and resemble much our Scotch and Yorkshire trout streams, some flowing placidly through cultivated valleys, their banks clothed with hawthorn, alder and willow, others careering through rocky gorges for miles in a succession of roaring torrents and deep black pools. Our snow-fed rivers are altogether different; they run lowest in winter, and are comparatively unaffected by rain, but come down in full flood during a spell of hot weather, especially one accompanied by a north-west wind. Like all glacier and snow-fed streams, they are never, so to speak, *clear*, but have always a "greenery yallery" milk-and-watery tinge, and in fishing them the strength of your tackle is of primary importance. They are, as a rule, dangerous to fish, especially in wading, as they are full of quicksands and nasty swirling eddies. The Waitaki, one of them, is a most uncanny looking stream, and it is said that more lives have been lost in it than in any other river of New Zealand. Being glacier-fed and deep, the water is deathly cold, and cramp is apt to seize the most robust swimmer. This last season I paid this river three several visits. On my first, in November, in an evening and morning's fishing, myself and friend had eleven trout which scaled an aggregate of fifty-two pounds. On a second trip, in December, in one day we had seven fish, the largest eight pounds, the smallest three. and then a

Nor-Wester brought down the river in flood. But, on my last trip in March, the sport was poor, it being too near the end of the season, and we did not average more than two fish a day.

Minnow is the favourite lure, although at Kurow, forty miles inland, I am told that fly is successfully used. This river fairly teems with big trout, and it is no unusual thing, under a favourable combination of weather and water, to secure in an evening eight or ten, averageing from four to eight pounds each. The favourite fishing ground is about two miles from the sea, at the railway crossing. The bridge is a mile long, and at each end is a station and a "pub," where the angler can be put up very comfortably. The river runs in three or four channels, which are constantly altering, and the trout are found on the edge of the current, generally within a foot or two of the bank. As the water is milky no great art is required in rising your fish, but, once hooked, they are strong and full of fight. Trout are of comparatively recent introduction in this river, and it is only within the last two seasons that they have come into angling prominence. The supply of whitebait, our minnow, is simply illimitable, so trout are bound to increase still further.

Already there are stories of monsters having been seen and hooked. One gentleman, a Christ Church angler of seventeen years' home experience in salmon fishing, reports having got into one fellow which ran out 120 yards of line, and then broke away with everything, whose weight he put down as over thirty pounds. On

my first visit in November the ostler at the inn told me that if I would walk a mile down the river he could point me out a fish over three feet long, but, added he, "you can't get at him." The best fish I have killed in the Waitaki was just under eight pounds; but on my second visit I certainly both saw and felt one of these leviathans. He came clear out of the water, jumping over my minnow, and as I struck, I hooked him in the vent. My instant thought was, "By Jove, it's true about these big fish!" Unfortunately, I had no friend then within hail, to lie prone and gaff, as the fish rooted about the bank, and to make a long story short, I played him for an hour, until at last he tore down stream right through and underneath the bridge, where I could not possibly follow. He ran out my eighty yards, and then it was a case of hold on, but, happily, the minnow came away, so I saved my line and tackle. Well, I put this fish down as from fifteen to eighteen pounds, and I had many a look at him, as seven or eight times he sprang feet out of the water trying to rid himself of that drag at his tail. Phantom and Devon minnows are chiefly used, the latter, from their weight, being specially suited to the strong currents on the Waitaki; but on the clear rain-fed rivers the natural bait is preferred, used on a spinning flight.

Our river banks are much cumbered by the *Phormium tenax*, or New Zealand flax plant, the leaves and stalks of which stand up ten feet and more; so that to negotiate them a longish rod is necessary. I have found my American built fifteen-foot cane rod

the very thing for our fishing, and use it for both fly and minnow. I have hardly once seen a landing-net since I came to the Colony, but every angler carries the indispensable gaff. The flies used are similar to our own, and I have found my own favourite partridge-spider a very sure killer. A favourite fly is body of peacock harl, dressed with a light wiry and red hackle. The Shag has been a famed trout stream, and was one of the first rivers stocked in this province, but two consecutive exceptionally dry summers, and continued "sluicing" in the upper waters have quite ruined it for the present. This last summer we turned in 15,000 yearlings, so hope it may come again. In the tidal waters good trout are still caught, but they are scarce. I got one in December which scaled seven pounds, a magnificent fish; he cut as red as a salmon. Unfortunately, it is of little use trying for these big fellows before dark, and night fishing has never been much to my taste. The sluicing is a nuisance; it causes our rivers to run thick for weeks together, and must be detrimental to the trout. The interior of this portion of Otago is a vast gold-field, and the diggers run the streams through their cradles, sending down any quantity of mud.

Trout have taken most kindly to New Zealand, and are now found in almost every river in Canterbury, Otago, and Southland. Sea-trout we have too, but I am not sanguine as to the successful acclimatisation of salmon proper; our sea-water is, I fear, too warm for them. But time will show. In some of our lakes trout grow to twenty pounds, and only an expert could tell them from

salmon, their shape and colour being almost identical. The scenery in this neighbourhood is very similar to that of the Yorkshire Wolds and Upper Clydesdale; from the coast to thirty miles inland a bare undulating country, hills grass-clad to their summits, and sheep everywhere. The lark too, singing overhead, throstles and blackbirds, finches and starlings, and sparrows of a most impudent kind, all flourish exceedingly in this new land, and are pleasant reminders of the old. Food in our rivers is very abundant, and this accounts for the rapid growth and great size of the trout. Whitebait, a little fish, very similar in appearance to the home article, begin in October to ascend our streams in myriads. They penetrate for miles up country and spawn about Christmas, returning to sea by the autumn floods in February and March. During their stay in fresh water the trout simply gorge themselves on these small fish, and can hardly be induced to look at the fly; in fact, owing to this, fly-fishing is best inland, well away from the seaboard. As at home, I find evening the best killing-time with either fly or minnow. Our summer months, November, December, and January, are pretty warm, and, in bright weather, the fish during the heat of the day seem to bask inactive and do not start feeding much before six o'clock; but the "rise" once "on" is a sight to see. Our twilight is very short; unless at full moon, you find yourself all in the dark within half-an-hour after sunset, and the banks of our New Zealand rivers are rather rough walking for night work. A box of well-scoured gentles is not an unusual adjunct to

the Otago fly-fisher's outfit, and I am told that big trout, seven and eight-pounders, who simply ignore a bare fly, are frequently entrapped by the seductive wrigglings of the impaled grub; but, reader! this is hearsay. Early prejudices coming in, I have not yet brought myself to try this particular bait. This New Zealand has been well termed "Britain of the South." There is much to remind one of the old home; English trees, shrubs, fruits, and flowers in abundance, and no scarcity of clouds, rain, and wind. Our Otago streams have many features in their surroundings all in common with Ribble and Tweed; and could we only suppress the ubiquitous flax plant, and, on yonder cliff, where stands a waving cabbage-palm, conjure up the orthodox ruin, ivy-clad and grey, all else is home-like and suggestive of Upper Ribblesdale and the Border.

Our fishing season is from the first of October until the first of April, and hereby hangs a tip. If any reader has leisure, and the desire to skip an English winter and enjoy a New Zealand summer, plus such trout fishing as we can give, let him take the direct steamer leaving Plymouth in September, which will arrive here in mid-spring, spend four to five months in the Island, and then, leaving in March, get back in due time for the May-fly at home. This would be something like an "out," and I can guarantee a good time to any brother of the angle. To the minnow fisher this is a paradise, indeed. The "brotherhood" here are good fellows all, and would extend a warm welcome to any visitor from Home.

LOCH LEVEN.

BY THE REV. C. P. ROBERTS, M.A.

ERE I a poet; or better, perhaps, a Scotchman; or, better still, a poet and a Scotchman, I might be tempted to begin with a glowing description of Loch Leven, its islands, and the surrounding country; I should, doubtless, hold you spellbound whilst I pathetically dwelt upon the imprisonment in the Island Castle of Scotland's Queen, and painted her romantic escape from its dark and gloomy dungeon. But, being neither a poet nor a Scotchman, but only a commonplace, and withal a veracious, English, practical angler, I shall confine myself to the simple story of my first introduction to it.

The thoughts of a visit to Loch Leven fired me with a good deal of angling enthusiasm, for had I not heard of the beauty of the trout, the sport they showed, the large average size to which they ran; and, moreover, had I not enviously read in the *Field* of the takes reported as falling to the rods of anglers whose names were mentioned? Had I not heard, too, that they wanted *catching*, and that a "duffer" was not much good in that anglers' paradise? In order, therefore, to get some little acquaintance with the Loch and its peculiarities, if it

had any, I determined to spend a couple of days there before the eventful Wednesday, May 23rd, 1883, on which the "National Anglers' Competition" was to be held. I was joined by Mr. Mackenzie at Stirling, and reached Kinross at about ten o'clock in the morning. Having tackled up, and duly stowed the luncheon box, away I went in charge of the two boatmen who were to be my first mentors in Loch Leven angling, and upon whose local knowledge I was dependent with regard to the choice of ground. That Monday, alas! was only the first of a succession of eight days of bad fishing weather during my stay at the Loch; but they were not all equally bad, and this was one of the least so. I found that there was not much difference between fishing in Loch Leven and in other lochs, except in the fish themselves when I had hooked and landed them. The Loch Leven trout is very lively in the water; the silvery sides of the distinctive Loch Leven species look like those of a sea trout, and the symmetry of his form as he lies a deceased captive at the bottom of the boat or your basket is perfect. But I had only seven to feast my eyes upon as the result of my first day's fishing, and my friend who joined me in the middle of the day had only two. They averaged about ¾lb., and I was not discontented with my first day's outing. Mr. Mackenzie got fifteen, scaling 13lb. 8oz., a basket which was creditable even to his skill.

Tuesday was the gathering day of the competitors, as well as a practice day for myself, on which I got six fish only, the weather being again unfavourable. In the

evening a meeting was held at the hotel to make the necessary arrangements for the following day. The chair was taken by Provost Wilson, of the West of Scotland Angling Club, and Mr. Macgregor, the secretary, was present, together with one or more representatives of each of the seventeen clubs who sent competitors. The rules, which had been printed and circulated, were read, and the conditions of the contest explained. Two gentlemen were chosen to measure the rods in case any excess over the fifteen feet allowed was suspected—a not unnecessary provision, as one of the competitors in 1882 had to cut off two inches from the butt of his rod to bring it within the prescribed limit. A gentleman, unconnected with the competition, was also chosen to weigh the fish in the presence of the president and members at the close of the day's work. Then began the process of ballotting for boats as follows :—There were eighteen boats for the thirty-six competitors. Into two hats were put papers containing respectively the names of the competitors and the names of the boats, bow and stern for each ; a ticket was drawn simultaneously from each hat, and the person drawn had to take his seat, to begin with, in the bow or stern, as the case might be, of the boat which was drawn with him. Mr. Mackenzie drew the stern of the "Sir Walter Scott," having for his companion Mr. Robert Gow, a representative of the Dundee Club, and I drew the stern of the "Bruce," having as my companion Provost Wilson, the genial commodore of the fleet. One of the rules of the competition was that the

occupants of the boats should change from bow to stern every hour, so that each might have right and left-hand casting alternately. When these preliminaries had been settled, and the scene of next year's competition and the number of clubs which should be allowed to compete had been discussed, and a committee appointed to arrange these matters, the meeting broke up.

And here let me mention that the Green Hotel is the head-quarters of the West of Scotland Anglers' Club, which annually holds three competitions on Loch Leven, the first and chief being on the Friday and Saturday next after the Wednesday on which the National Competition is held. This brought many members of the club down to Kinross, and I think it only right that I should acknowledge with gratitude the very kind hospitality which the members of the club displayed on the Tuesday and succeeding evenings towards the representatives of the Manchester Anglers' Association. They made us free of their room and free of their "mountain dew"; and exhibited in full that cordial welcome which anglers always extend to their brothers. After spending the evening in moderate conviviality, each person present retired at an hour which seemed to himself a reasonable one (there was not unanimity on this point!), all in good hopes for the morrow.

I was fishing for eight days at Loch Leven, but I really think that my best sport was on this particular night. I had the finest and strongest of tackle, and threw the lightest of casts in the most perfect of weather. I filled a basket with an aggregate which seemed bound

to win the first prize, and was just ready to land a beauty which would certainly have taken the premium for the heaviest fish, when the sport was ended by a "tap, tap, tapping at my chamber door," and I was awakened from my dream to the melancholy reality of weather anything but perfect, and a prospect of the fulfilment of the truth of the adage that "dreams go by contraries." However, I rose and made up my casts for the day's work; then joined the others at breakfast, where we made up ourselves, and then off in the machine to the pier, where all had to assemble by nine a.m., under pain of disqualification. The thirty-six competitors were all up to time, and the scene was one of bustling activity, with thirty-six men making up their rods, and thirty-six boatmen in attendance upon them, all eager for the fray. It was said that the gathering was representative of the best angling skill of the country; there were some with reputations already won, and others without reputation, who meant to win it. All the best known Scottish loch fishers were present from the West of Scotland, Kinross-shire, Dundee, Stirling, Edinburgh, Walton and Buckland, St. Mungo, Dunfermline, Clackmannanshire, Glasgow Rowbank, Dundee Walton, and Perth Clubs. The last-named sent as one of its representatives the well-known Mr. P. D. Mallock, who carried off the first prize in 1881 and 1882, and who, in the fishing tournament held at Hendon on June 11th, 1882, won the first prize in each of the amateur competitions with "single-handed fly rod in throwing fly with greatest accuracy under bushes," the fly-casting competition with double-

handed trout rod, and came in second to Reuben Wood, the American competitor, in the contest for "amateur fly-casting with single-handed trout rod" and "amateur fly-casting with salmon rod." The contingent from the southern side of the Cheviots included such crack anglers as Dr. Brunton, from London; Mr. Norledge, from Newark; and Mr. J. O. Mackenzie, from Manchester.

The wind blew stiffly from the west and south-west, the very worst direction it could possibly come from for good sport on Loch Leven, for, curiously enough, that loch fishes best in an east wind. The temperature was very low, but our spirits were high, and when the arrangements were complete, rods and tackle adjusted, and luncheon baskets stowed away, Provost Wilson gave the word for "off," and the boats started for those parts of the loch which, in the judgment of the boatmen and those of the competitors who had any local knowledge of the ground, were deemed the best. My boat, the "Bruce," was a lumbering old tub, the man-of-war of the fleet in which daily raids are made with nets upon the pike in the loch. My companion grumbled at the ill fortune which gave us so heavy a craft, with its broad beam and half-decked bow; but I blessed our fortune later on in the day, for, when changing stations, I found the half-deck a friendly shelter under which I sought protection from the bitterly cold wind, whilst I consoled myself with a pipe, and let my flies trail behind.

The nature of the day's sport will be gathered from the takes of the various competitors, which I will pre-

sently record. It was killing work—for the fishermen, not the fish—to cast and cast in the half-gale which was blowing; "March Browns," "Hechams," "Zulus," "teal wings with green bodies," and "teal wings with red," all the favourite flies, failed to lure any but the few which must have escaped from whatever aquatic institution answers to the terrestrial "asylum"—for no sane trout rose that day! However, sane or insane, each counted if you could but catch him, and if you want to catch fish you must "keep your flees in the watter and leather awa." So I "leathered awa," and I think I never had a harder day's fishing in my life. Each boat that we came near had the same tale to tell, and all exertion seemed fruitless. One gentleman ought to have won a prize, if get-up and exertion could win; he wore on his hands a pair of gloves *minus* fingers, and on his head a gear very much *plus* ear caps; round his neck was a substantial muffler, and a diminutive body was enveloped in a good deal of coat. He cast to the right of him, cast to the left of him, cast to the front of him; he fished with his arms, fished with his body, flung his head after his flies, and threw all his person into the effort, except his feet on which he stood; but all, alas! of no avail.

And so the day wore on until it was time to be making towards the pier in order to save disqualification —5-45 was the time for landing. I had six fish when we quitted the bay, and my companion had four. He thought my chance of a prize was good, considering the weather, and it was amusing to hear his report to the boats we passed—"The minister's doing it!" This was

what convinced him that the minister had *done* it. I was lying at full length in the boat, with my head and shoulders under the friendly half-deck, seeking solace in a weed; my flies were trailing behind, when *whiz* went my reel and up jumped I! I landed the fish, which scaled 1lb. 12oz. The Provost thought me sure of a prize, and felt that he could not himself beat my aggregate; so, with the unselfish generosity which always characterises a true sportsman, whose breast harbours no feeling of jealousy, he insisted on my fishing the best of the water for the remaining distance, and was more keenly anxious for my success than his own sport.

It was interesting to watch the eighteen boats gradually gathering towards the pier. All who had any fish landed punctually, and then came the weighing. Basket after basket was emptied into the scale, and all displayed such an even mediocrity that speculation was rife as to who would win a premium. A whisper went round that one Harris would have the best creel; and a certain red-bearded boatman, who had twice to be put back and told to wait his turn at the scale, at last produced what seemed a "giant amongst the pigmies:" seventeen fish scaling 13lb. 11½oz. left no doubt as to the winner of the first prize, and a murmur of applause went round when the weight was declared. After all had finished, the Provost declared the winners. There was no mention, alas! of a Manchester representative, though "the minister" had the tantalising satisfaction of coming next on the list, with seven fish weighing 5lb. 10½oz., or 1½oz. behind a prize. I thought my fish

of 1lb. 12½oz. had a good chance of the premium for the heaviest fish ; he was in splendid condition, and all that a trout should be ; but another competitor, a Scotchman, produced one with a head like a cod, and a body like an eel, weighing two ounces more than mine, and so all the seven prizes went to our Northern brothers, who were not to be beaten *that year* on their own ground.

The *Glasgow Herald* thus described the finish :—" The result tends to exemplify the proverbial uncertainty of fishing ; the favourites, except Mr. Macgregor, who won the third prize, were 'nowhere,' and the winner was a man, a good angler and true, who had no repute beyond his own club ; but the boatmen who were with him said that they had never seen a better angler, and that when a fish rose the steel was in him to a certainty. And there never was a competition in which skill was more heavily handicapped, and in which the luck of coming across fish which were unfishlike enough to rise determined the issue. It is curious to notice that the winner's companion in the boat only got four fish weighing 3lb. 3oz., against seventeen weighing 13lb. 11½oz."

All things come to an end, and this came to a good end at the hotel. Those competitors who were staying at "The Green," and some few who joined them for dinner, did ample justice to a well served repast, and cordially toasted the hero of the day, who, though unable to be present himself, had not forgotten to commission a friend to provide champagne for the consolation of his beaten but appreciative and friendly foes.

A MEMORY OF LOCH TAY.

BY C. H. NEVILL.

CRAPE, scrape, scrape,
O'er thy cold false waves, O Tay,
And I would not my tongue should utter
The thoughts that arise to-day.

Oh, sad for the Gillie who shouts
"'Tis a fish," when 'tis only a rock ;
Oh, sad for the frozen man,
Who sits in his boat on the loch.

And the weary ones row home
To the landing under the hill ;
But oh, for the rush of a goodly "fushe,"
And the sound of a reel that is still.

Scrape, scrape, scrape
By thy desolate shores, O Tay ;
The tender dream of my vanished youth
Has come, and has passed away.

IN FAR LOCHABER.

BY P. H. MULES, M.D.

AN August evening, in 1886, found one whom we will call the "Doctor" in anxious consultation with Donald Cameron over the relative merits of "scarlet bodies" *versus* "yellow bodies," "mallard wings" *versus* "teal wings," and "fly" *versus* what Donald would call the "worrum." For had it not been pouring all day, and was not the river certain to come down a full water? And with a full water coming down, salmon would be going up, and this opened possibilities for the morrow, gladdening the heart of the angler who had come three hundred miles in the hope of such a favourable opportunity.

"Ye maun try the worrum," said Donald impressively for the ninth time. Now, if a worm be permitted under certain exceptional circumstances to turn, how much more may a human being revolt at the idea of such enormities! Donald's suggestion was met with a scorn which should have withered him, and he subsided for the moment, as the door opened to admit a stout weather-beaten man who, shaking the raindrops from his plaid, enquired in the cheeriest of voices, "Weel, Toctor, an hoo are ye the nicht? Ye'll be trying for a

fush the morn." "Ah, ha! McKenzie, and how are you? You're just in time," said the Doctor. And replying to the persuasive eloquence of the hostess with "just a wee drappie, Mrs. Gow, an here's t' ye all," McKenzie tossed off his nip and settled himself to decide the respective merits of the rival flies. Scarlet body and gold twist had it, with yellow body and teal for contingencies. So a solemn content reigned over the whole party, broken only by the ghoul Donald, who, in the pawkiest manner, enquired—

"Wad ye no thenk the worrum the recht thing, Maister McKenzie——?"

With "Half-past six and raining fine!" a voice the following morning roused the Doctor. A glance at his watch assured the astonished man that the night had actually passed. Raining it was, and although the addition "fine" might be a contradiction in terms, the meaning was fully understood. "When it rains in Lochaber, it *does* rain," said a witty old Scotch divine. "This is only a wee saft; we ca' it rain when ilka' drap just fills a toddy glass." Four other anglers, as enthusiastic as themselves, had preceded Donald and the Doctor on their six miles' drive to the river. There were lovely glimpses as the rain ceased from time to time and the clouds lifted; a winding road following the Loch-side and turning almost impossible corners, twisting up steeps and down pitches at an angle, on the average, of 45°; in the distance, stretching cloudwards, the rugged snow-capped crest of grim Ben Nevis; whilst from every jutting rock and craggy knoll leapt miniature

waterfalls, streaking the hill sides with silver and transforming the wimpling burns into sturdy little rivers, tearing their busy way onwards to the sea with a "Who shall say us nay?" brief assumption of importance. Passing the little store and the Highland smithy—round which, even yet, float phantom shapes wielding targe and claymore, whilst the anvil's ring conjures up the din of arms and the shrill notes of the pibroch—we meet the moist breezes laden with peaty scents and heavy with the balmy odours of bog myrtle, whilst patches of purple heather and waving fern-fronds stretch up the glens and brae-side, giving touches of colour to the landscape. Then the track winds past the old kirkyard and the tiny kirk, about whose moss-grown walls still lingers the halo of old-world "meenisters" whose sayings and doings, delightful in their quaint wit and simplicity, form a literature of their own. The old divines have passed away; their sayings, at least the witty ones, remain, and so do the grey weather-beaten stones, rich with many coloured lichens—fit memorials of the past. Still we skirt the loch, ever and anon passing clumps of birches with silver stems and pendant graceful foliage, like leafy fountains. Then, as the mist lifts seawards, a grey motionless object seen standing in the water suddenly awakens to life, and with a heavy flap, flap, a solitary heron sails ghostlike away, only to settle two or three hundred yards further on; whilst the whistling whaup, the most wide-awake of birds, leaves the rocky shore, and uttering its railing cry swiftly skims the tossing water. A nudge from the driver, and a finger

pointing far across the current, rivets the attention of both to a round black object running up with the tide like the head of a powerful swimmer. "Seal?" says the Doctor enquiringly. "Ay," replies his companion. "Three hundred yards?" is the next query. "Just about," is the laconic response, whilst such is the absorbing nature of sport that the thoughts of both regretfully revert to the rifle hanging up at home. A further space is traversed along the winding road whose beauties, ever fresh, can scarce be hidden by the rain-storms which come sweeping adown the glens, clouding the distant hills and making them a fitting habitation for the "children of the mist." But what care our anglers? For if a southerly wind and a cloudy sky proclaim a hunting morning, a westerly breeze and a falling rain are prophetic of a full river.

Round another corner, and there on the "lip, lip," of the tide, swaggering about with inimitable impudence, are a pair of hoodie crows, their wise heads twisting this way and that, and their sharp eyes watching for unconsidered trifles brought on shore. For genuine impudence commend me to these birds. In a way they are valuable scavengers, and if only their talents were confined to this department, they would be useful adjuncts to Highland sanitation; but all is fish that comes to their net, and they welcome a healthy change of diet with the springtime. For be it young lamb, grouse-eggs, or young grouse, all is taken with equal alacrity into the omnivorous maw of Master Hoodie Crow. Then their ingenuity in robbing the grouse-

nests is almost human in conception and execution. Two hoodies agree to go egg-hunting; let us go with them, and turn bird-language into Lochaber Saxon. An exemplary mother grouse is sitting on her nest, when to her advances hoodie No. 1, the spokesman. "Hoo's a' wi' ye the day, mem?" says he in the most suave of tones. "An' hoo's yersel, honest mon?" replies she, not to be outdone in politeness; for, being doubtful of her visitors, she is anxious to propitiate and not give offence. "The gudeman's no at home the day?" says he enquiringly; for he knows the cock-grouse will show fight. "He's awa' jest the noo," says she. All this time the second crow has been working round to the rear, and at a wink from No. 1, he gives the lady a violent peck behind. Twisting rapidly round to repel this unmannerly advance, the indignant matron exposes for a brief moment some of her valued charges; and a second later an egg is pierced, and the two hoodie crows, with fiendish chuckles, are sailing to the nearest knoll to consume their ill-gotten gains.

But now the anglers near their destination, and, as a distant rushing, booming sound catches on their listening ears, Donald's eyes glisten, and he says exultingly, "The fush will just be runnin' grand." "Eh! mon!" says he again, as a moment later the never-to-be-forgotten sight of a Highland torrent in full spate bursts upon their delighted eyes, "she's waxed varra big; ye'll just try the worrum." Ten minutes later, by practised fingers, the scarlet body and gold twist

was being knotted to the cast, whilst Donald, with a weapon of home manufacture, yet serviceable withal, prepared for a campaign with the worm.

The river rises in the deer forest of Scarva, high among the hills whose sombre shadows tell of sheltering corries and mountain fastnesses, the home of the fox, the raven, and the stag; and running a short length with a rapid descent, empties itself into the sea half a mile from the first pool. The watershed is extensive, but the descent so quick that the stream is at its best during, or immediately after, a heavy rain; then it is in perfection—a series of fine falls, with swirling foam-flecked currents twisting the peat-stained water this way and that into a thousand fantastic shapes, and merging into inky-black pools of apparently bottomless depths, where the water-kelpies hide, and the cunning old salmon who has gauged all the resources of the angler's art rests on his upward way; these, again, give place to rapids, through which the foaming waters boil and surge amongst huge water-grooved rocks, to fall by another cascade, partly veiled by steamy spray, into a sullen rock-girt basin at its foot. The first pool yielded nothing, for although it teemed with fish it was difficult to work from the side on which they were. The second venture was made at the junction of the Scairg with their own stream. There a misguided trout of goodly appearance rose at the fly, and was incontinently tossed on to the bank for his pains. "Noo thin, Toctor," said Donald, "bide a wee till I get me by yon rock, and then feesh doon the pool again." A few casts over the rougher

water, and, as the fly hung for a moment in midstream, there came a pull, and the angler was fast in a fish which, fairly hooked, had little chance of escape. The pool was deep, the way was clear; and in five minutes, at the foot of a coral-clustered rowan, Donald lifted a nice grilse of 4 lbs. on to the dewy grass.

But, somehow, after this the fish rose badly. The rain ceased, and the river fell quickly; the likeliest pools were drawn blank, and the fishers met their disconsolate fellow-anglers wending their homeward way with long faces, dry flasks, and empty creels. Even Donald failed to draw a prize from the bosom of the deep, nor could sarcasm of the most biting kind shake his belief in the virtues of his bait. "Dinna fash yersel," said he, "gin they feed at a' they'll tak' worrum, an' I'll set me doon a wee." So down he sat, like a scart on a rock, to dangle his worm again in the rushing water. The Doctor travelled onwards, till a noble pool stretched before him; a perfect salmon cast, with a grand rush of water at the head and falls at the foot, spanning which and pointing far up the hillside to the lonely cot of a mountain shepherd was a primitive wooden bridge, rocking and tumbling with the fierce blows of the tumbling water. Carefully fishing down the pool, a sudden plunge came, and again was the angler fast in a fish. Twenty yards of line in half the number of seconds whizzed through the rings; then with a mad upward rush an 8lb. grilse, fresh from the sea, threw himself, a glittering mass of burnished silver, three feet into the air, to fall with a sullen plunge just over the casting line.

Here was the danger; the water was very heavy, and the fish travelled down at an alarming rate. With care the first pool might be negotiated, perhaps the second; but here all chance of a kill ended, for below the third pool was a broken water full of rocks, through which no fish could be piloted. Where! oh, where! was Donald with the gaff? A despairing look was cast around, when, to the angler's relief, a shepherd with an eye to sport plunged down the hill-side through the purple heather, scattering his fleecy charges and startling a solitary grouse, which winged rapidly away with its accustomed "kock, kock." A frantic waving hurried him on, a few words sufficed to explain the difficulty, and at full speed he set off for Donald, as the fish passed over the first fall, to lie for a moment in the second pool. Still he bore down, taking all the angler's skill, as rush after rush hurried him further and further into the strong water. With every care he was guided over the second fall and dropped into the last pool where he could be killed. A shout—and just as all hope had departed and the fish was making straight for the rapids, out of which no human skill could have turned him, Donald, breathless with haste and eagerness, bursts into view, the shepherd close at his heels. There is one chance left—a deep at the head of the broken water. All the strain the rod can bear is brought on the fish; it slowly swings for a moment within reach of the gaff; its silver side is pierced, and with a whoop from the shepherd, who tosses his blue bonnet high into the air, far on to the heathery bank

flies the coveted prize. Just then the sun burst forth, bathing the glorious hill tops in a flood of golden light, and spreading a royal mantle over the purple moorland. Even hoary Glencoe, the grim witness of the most ruthless of massacres, looked less forbidding as he reared aloft his triple crowns; and with minds at peace with all mankind, the Doctor, Donald and the shepherd pledged one another in a bumper of "mountain dew," and drank success to salmon fishing.

FISHING ABOUT BRAEMAR.

BY REV. J. M. ELVY, M.A., MINOR CANON OF MANCHESTER.

MY two visits to Braemar were made at the same time of year under diametrically opposite climatic conditions, the former being a cold and backward summer with scarcely a fine day, the latter dry and hot: the one pleasanter for excursions, the other more favourable for fishing. Braemar can be reached in three ways: by train from Aberdeen to Ballater, and thence by coach or carriage, a distance of eighteen miles; by coach from Dunkeld *via* the Spital of Glenshee, forty miles; and from Blair Athol on the Highland railway *via* Glen Tilt. The last can only be taken by hardy pedestrians without heavy luggage. I took the first. A coach runs daily between Ballater and Braemar in the season, and twice a day during the height of the season, July, August and September. The road follows the right bank of the Dee, amid scenery of the grandest description. Pine forests mingle their sombre foliage with light graceful silver birches. On the left you have Lochnagar before you the whole way, and in front from time to time you come in sight of Ben MacDhui, with other giants of the Grampian range. In June these mountains are still capped with snow,

which remains in the gullies even well on in July. About six miles on you pass Abergeldie on the opposite side of the river, and three miles further on come to Crathie and Balmoral. Here, if you are so disposed, you can pay a pilgrimage to the tomb of John Brown, which, I am told, attracts more visitors than the more exalted monuments. There is a good view of Balmoral from the road, and when the Queen is absent you can, with an order, go over the castle itself. The grounds are left very much in a wild state, which harmonises well with the surroundings, and shows the good taste of the Royal resident. The house is about equal to that of a second-rate nobleman in England. There is a noble hall, ornamented with heads of stags shot by the late Prince Consort, with date of slaughter and weight below. The carpets and curtains of many of the rooms are of tartan plaid. These are my only recollections of this favourite Royal residence, beyond the splendid hills and forests in the background—crowned in many places with monuments commemorating interesting events in the history of the Royal family—and the rushing river in front.

About five miles from Balmoral the road crosses to the left bank of the river, and shortly afterwards you come in sight of Invercauld House, the seat of the Farquharsons, who share with the Earls of Fife almost the whole of this splendid region. This is a finer mansion, and in a far grander situation than Balmoral. The late owner, Colonel Farquharson, occupied it very little, being fonder of the opera and the gaieties of

London than of salmon fishing and deer stalking. He went by the name of Piccadilly Jim, and among the most successful caricature portraits which have appeared in *Punch* was one of him dressed in full tartan, with his opera hat in his hand, standing amid the lamps of Piccadilly. After passing Invercauld you come to Braemar Castle, which stands at the junction of the Clunie with the Dee. This is a fortress of some antiquity and considerable strength, and remains much in its pristine condition. Its last military occupation was by a company of soldiers who were quartered there some hundred years ago to prevent smuggling, then common in the Highlands; its sole occupant now is old Angus, a pensioner of the Farquharsons, who knows every inch of the river, and every fish in it and how to get them out, and is always ready to impart his knowledge to those privileged to fish; a dear old fellow, who, I hope, is still in the land of the living, notwithstanding that he lived, all alone, winter and summer, in that dreary old castle.

Braemar is a straggling place, not beautiful in itself—no Scotch village towns are—but pleasantly situated on elevated ground with the Clunie rushing through it. There are two hotels there, the Invercauld and Fife Arms, which now carry on, though in a commercial spirit, the former rivalry of the two clans. These are often filled to overflowing in the season, guests being put up on chairs and sofas and the billiard table, as none can be sent away. There are plenty of lodging-houses. The usual plan is to take a house, from which the owners

retire into a shanty at the back. I hired one for £3 per week; not dear, as it accommodated all my family and servants. At the height of the season, however, it would let for £5 or £6. My advice is, don't go there in the season; go in May or June—the fishing is better then, the scenery fresher, and you get better accommodation. There are in Braemar Established and Free Kirks, a larger Roman Catholic Chapel, and the English Church, which is a very pretty building constructed of pine wood from the neighbouring forests. These Christian bodies, I am happy to say, live together in the greatest brotherly concord.

Now for the fishing. Not an inch of the Dee above Ballater is free for salmon fishing. The Invercauld water lets for some £300 for the season. The Invercauld Arms has a short length with two good pools in it, free to those staying in the house.

The Fife Arms has a capital length extending to the Linn of Dee, some six miles, which is let by the rod up to the end of May, and is free in June and afterwards to those staying in the house. Below Invercauld House the Queen comes in, and none but highly privileged persons can set their feet there. Above the Linn the fishing is in private hands, but I believe that permission for a day or two is not hard to get. The fish, however, do not go above the Linn till the end of May. Nor is trout fishing free, all the water being in the hands of the inns or of those who hire the shootings and fishings; but as trout fishing is not much accounted of, permission is easily got if sought in the right way.

My position as Chaplain of the English Church obtained me special privileges. Mr. Foggo, the factor for the Invercauld property, takes great interest in the Church, and at once gave me permission for trout fishing on all the water on the property, which includes all the best; and the landlords of the two hotels soon gave me leave for salmon on their lengths.

At first I confined myself to trout fishing. The Clunie, which is about the size of the Ribble at Horton, but more rapid and rocky, is the best trout stream. You should walk up it about two or three miles, and then fish up and down. There are plenty of fish, and you can mostly get a capital basket averaging three to the pound. The largest I caught there was ¾lb. They are not particular as to flies, but hackles do best. A few sea trout and grilse come up, and some salmon. The last are rarely caught there with fly. I got one on a March Brown when fishing for trout, and had it on some time. I should probably have killed it if it had kept to the pool, but after a time it took to the rough water below, where I could not follow it, and I lost it. I landed one with a worm of about 7lbs. The drawback to the Clunie is the multitudes of salmon parr, which, when the water is low, lie all over the stream and seize the fly as soon as it lights, and scare the trout away by their struggles.

By taking the coach for about nine miles, you reach the upper water of the Clunie, where large baskets of small trout can be taken after rain. The tributaries of the Clunie are the Callater and Baddock

burn. The former flows out of the loch of the same name, and after a course of some four miles empties itself into the Clunie, two miles from Braemar. It is a rocky stream with dark peaty water, and is good for trout with fly or worm—and with a worm there is a good chance of a salmon. You can go to and return from the Baddock burn by coach; distance six miles. You should walk up it about a mile, when you come to rocky pools and streams. Here, under favourable circumstances, you can take large quantities, but they will not average a quarter of a pound. Loch Callater, five miles from Braemar, is a fine sheet of water, amid grand scenery. Pike were introduced into it some years ago, and it is now useless for trout. There are many salmon in it, which I am told cannot be taken by fly or minnow. The shooting tenant nets it from time to time, when considerable numbers are taken. The stream before it enters the loch is good for trout. From here is the best place to make the ascent of Lochnagar.

A small mountain loch near is well worth a visit. You turn off to the left from the river Callater about four miles from Braemar, and come to it by following a stream, after a stiff pull of two miles. There you are in the midst of the wildest scenery, sacred to grouse and red deer. It is no use going there unless there is a stiff breeze from the west, the only wind which gets on the loch. It is about twice the size of Horton Tarn. I went twice, the first time catching fifteen averaging half a pound, the latter five rather heavier ; but more and larger may often be caught. The fish are fatter and

gamer than any I ever handled. I can find no mention of this loch in any book. To my south-country ears the name sounded like Vatrich, which is, I believe, the Gaelic for Patrick, though what the patron saint of Ireland can have had to do with it I do not know. There is a loch near the top of the Glenshee pass in which fish of one, two, and three pounds may be taken. The fish, however, are shy. The best plan, I was told, at midsummer, is to go in the evening, fish till dark, wait during the hour or so of darkness, and fish again as soon as light. But as the region is of the wildest, and I had no companion, I did not relish the expedition.

The Dee does not rank high as a trouting river, but I have seen it alive with rising fish. During my second stay, when other streams were too low, I used to go to it, starting about 9 p.m., and fishing till 11-30 (up to which time, at midsummer, you can see to fish), and in certain parts took some very good fish; but it is well worth a visit at other times when one is not occupied with larger game. A good excursion from Braemar is to the Derry, a shooting lodge of Lord Fife's. You turn off the Dee at the Linn, and go up Glen Lui and Glen Derry. There is a fall on the Lui which prevents the salmon going up. The Lui itself has a bright white sandy bottom and the clearest water, and I should think that a trout could see you a hundred yards off. The Derry, which runs into it, has deeper pools and darker water, and is a capital brook for trout when there is sufficient water. I went up with a party, and, during my stay there to rest the horses,

caught about forty, one large enough to break me, which I caught as I returned, with the old fly still in its mouth.

This is the best place from which to make the ascent of Ben MacDhui, the second highest mountain in Scotland. From this point you can go on to the Tarfe, but it is a fatiguing excursion and somewhat dangerous if you should lose your way or get caught by bad weather. There are other tributaries of the Dee good for fishing, the Ey, Quoich, and Garrawalt; but I did not try them.

Now, as to salmon fishing, my first experience was on Sir W. C. Brooks's length at Glen Tanner, below Ballater. Before leaving Manchester I wrote to Sir William, who in response most generously gave me permission to fish there as often as I liked, telling me that if I wrote to the gun room a fisherman should wait upon me and show me the best pools for the day, and that I might have for myself the best fish I could catch each visit. This permission he renewed to me when I went again to Braemar. The offer was too good to be neglected, so one day I took the coach to Ballater, stayed the night at the Invercauld Arms there, and went by train in the morning to Dennis, where I found the fisherman in readiness. I must confess to my brothers of the angle that I surveyed this functionary with some awe. He was a stalwart businesslike fellow of somewhat stern countenance, and appeared to be master of all that can be known in salmon fishing. I, a complete novice, was about to perform in his presence. I debated with myself what I had better do, and as I reflected that he would soon find me out for himself, I thought the best course

would be to confess my ignorance beforehand. So I unbosomed myself to him, and, though I evidently went down somewhat in his estimation, he very kindly consented to take me to the side of the river where the easiest casts could be made. I felt clumsy at first with my 16-foot rod, and even with considerable exertion could not get out much line. But I soon improved under his instruction, and in about the third pool got into a salmon which, after some fight, was gaffed and safely landed. My first salmon—you can easily understand my feelings. I drank its health, and I did not forget to invite the keeper to do so too. It was but a poor fish, between five and six pounds, but I was proud of it. I did not catch another fish that day. A keeper was fishing on the other side, and I was surprised at the marvellous line he got out. While I with difficulty covered about one-third of the river, he with apparent ease threw right across. He did not throw a clean line, but bellied the water and then whipped over. This did not, however, matter in rough water like the Dee. My friend told me that he was considered the best fisherman on the Dee, which is saying a good deal. While I watched him, he hooked and landed a splendid new run fish which weighed 14lbs.

Sir W. C. Brooks has about six miles of the Dee at Glen Tanner on both sides. It is a splendid length, full of grand pools. He had also then the Aboyne water lower down.

On my second visit I trespassed on his kindness twice, and caught one fish each time, one of which

weighed 13½lbs., the largest salmon I have caught. The Dee spring salmon do not average more than eight pounds. Lower down, heavy fish are caught in the autumn. On this visit I had what I consider a perfect gillie. His taciturnity was remarkable even for a Scotchman. When we got to a pool he showed me where to begin and end, and where the fish were most likely to lie, and then went and sat down, not rising even when I hooked a fish until it gave signs of exhaustion, but then he was on the spot, and did his business manfully.

The Invercauld Arms at Ballater, a comfortable and reasonable inn, has a splendid length of water, extending from two miles above Ballater nearly to Balmoral on the right bank, and marching with the Queen's and the Prince of Wales's fishing. It is let by the rod, fetching, in the best months, April and May, as much as £30 a month per rod. To this must be added the expense of a carriage. It is divided into three beats, which are taken in turns. In June the terms are lower, and you can go and return by the coach. In this month the fishing is often very good, and I do not know where fishing so good can be got on more reasonable terms. In July it is free to those staying in the hotel, but the fishing is not then usually of much count. In April and May the sport is often splendid, and I was told on good authority that two gentlemen the year I was there got 250 salmon in the month. They were crack hands, and took nearly all with minnow. I may here mention a circumstance that amused me. While I was at Ballater

the train which was to convey the Royal party was waiting at the station, and I, with others, went to see the carriages. An old domestic showed us over, pointed out the Queen's bed, and then turning to another he said, "and this is Beatrice's bed." I thought it illustrated the affectionate simplicity with which the Royal family are regarded by their servants.

We now return to Braemar. I tried the hotel waters once or twice for salmon, but without success. There are, however, plenty of salmon in the upper part towards the Linn, where they go with the intention of pushing up when the water is in suitable volume. The Linn is a chasm where the whole water of the Dee rushes through, contracted within the breadth of some six feet—a kind of extended Strid; a series of round swirling holes and rushing passages. In the pool at the bottom, and in these holes, you can see the salmon lying in hundreds, waiting to go up. How they accomplish the feat is a puzzle, for at the top is a fall of some feet. It is said that the fish never take bait while lying there, but they are nevertheless caught in a most unsportsmanlike manner, by means of a snap-hook and strong tackle. This, of course, is done by stealth, but, that it is attempted, proof positive was afforded some time ago. In very low water a log of wood was taken out with hooks enough in it to have set up a fish-tackle shop.

I received from Mr. Foggo one day a letter which cheered my heart. It was to the effect that the let of the Invercauld water was up at the end of June; that I was at liberty to go on it for the rest of my stay, and that if

I went to old Angus he would doubtless go with me, and would show me how to get them out if anyone could. You may be sure that I did not neglect this opportunity, for this length is undoubtedly the best on the Dee. It extends to Invercauld Bridge, about three miles. The last mile, however, is the really good water; it is all salmon pools; you are no sooner out of one than you are into another. It is always full of fish, which rest there on their way from the rough water below before they make for the Linn. The whole of it can be fished, too, without wading. I had nine days' fishing there before I left, and during that time caught twelve fish. I had one or two blank days, several days I caught two, and the last morning, fishing from eleven to two, I caught three. At this time of the year this was splendid sport. I took Angus with me the first day, and he put me up to all the good places. But after that I went alone, and gaffed all my own fish. I hate to have a man dangling at my heels. The fish are rather a serious burden, but if you are overweighted you can take the coach which passes over Invercauld Bridge. I wish those times would come again. On my second visit I could not get on this water, as the let was extended to the end of July.

With respect to tackle, a 16-foot rod is quite large enough, at anyrate for summer fishing. The best flies are Jock Scott, Butcher, Popham, Durham Ranger, black and silver Doctors, and Blue Jay. A large March Brown is said to be good, but I never did anything with it. Most of mine were caught with Jock Scott, which I varied

in size according to the state of the water and the character of the stream which I was fishing. There is a fly used early in the spring called the Yellow Eagle, which is good in heavy water and towards evening. For summer fishing the great thing is to have small flies. The prawn is a deadly bait early in the season. Old Angus told me that it was introduced there by one of the gentlemen of the Queen's household. He met him and told him that he might as well throw his hat in, but changed his mind before the gentleman had done, for though a very poor fisherman he landed eight fish. John Brown is said to have killed eighteen in one afternoon with it. I never used it, for I had none, and if I had I don't think I should have tried it, for it seems to me unsportsmanlike to employ such a slaughtering bait in a splendid river like the Dee.

ON DERBYSHIRE STREAMS.

BY J. A. H.

THOSE anglers who prefer small takes of good fish to larger numbers of smaller ones can hardly do better than turn their steps to Derbyshire. Big catches are not to be expected; one must content oneself with two or three brace of fish averaging from ½lb. to 1lb; though on a good day one ought to get five or six brace, and baskets of ten brace or more are not unheard of. A further charm lies in the fact that the inhabitants of the Derbyshire streams are not to be caught by anyone and everyone. Here are trout and grayling of education and refinement; and the smallest and neatest of flies, the most delicate gut, and absolute accuracy of casting are necessary, except on those rare occasions when the fish will rise at anything.

It may be prejudice on my part, but I would sooner catch a brace of fish on the Wye or the Dove than a dozen on some loch in the wilds of Sutherland, where the veriest duffer has nearly as good a chance as the most skilful. It was on the Wye that I first threw a trout fly, and learnt the intricacies of "fine and far off"; a liberal education, though it was long before I ventured

to call myself a fisherman. And there is this advantage in Derbyshire fishing—that if the fish are doing badly, there is lovely scenery to rest one's mind, wearied with the cares of life; the streams, too, are full of insect and animal life, in which one can always find interest to wile away the time. On a good day the fish should average about ¾lb. with a few pounders thrown in —at Bakewell the limit is 10 inches—and here and there you come across monsters. I never killed anything over 1½lbs. myself, but I saw one of 3lbs. taken with a fly, and I knew of one trout in a mill reservoir which we guessed to be between 6lb. and 8lb. Needless to say, we fished for him many a time, but in vain, although, as a last resort, we descended to night-lines and trimmers. In Dovedale there are grayling of 2lbs. and 3lbs. weight, and I saw one at Ashbourne, evidently poached, weighing 4¼lbs. The largest trout I ever saw weighed 3¾lbs., taken in the Birdsgrove Club water, on the Dove, with a worm. At Bakewell there are legends innumerable of monster trout being choked by puppies, kittens, etc., but if one is to enter into legends there will be no ending.

There are three principal rivers, the Derwent, the Wye, and the Dove; the two latter run almost entirely through limestone, which accounts for the clearness of their waters and the quantity of weed and natural food, with the result of plenty of large and well-fed fish. The upper waters of the Derwent drain from the moors between Sheffield, Glossop, and Hayfield, but the lower reaches run through the limestone district, and consequently it is not until we get down to Baslow that we

find such good fish as in the Wye and Dove. For the upper reaches there are no better quarters than the Ashopton Inn, about ten miles' drive from either Sheffield or Glossop; and here, by paying three shillings a day, one can fish about ten miles of water—the Upper Derwent, the Ashop, and the main stream after they join together. It is very pretty water and full of fish. There is also accommodation at the Snake Inn, on the Ashop, between Ashopton and Glossop, right away up on the moors.

If we follow the river down from Ashopton we come to Bamford, where the little river Noe, which runs from Castleton and Hope, joins the Derwent. This stream is full of small trout, but is in private hands. Here the character of the Derwent changes entirely ; it is no longer a brook in a narrow valley, but a river in a broad open vale. We now come to the waters of the Sheffield Fishing Club, who have done their best to improve the fishing by re-stocking with trout, their fish hatchery being close to Bamford. It is hardly necessary to say much of private water. Passing down the valley, the first open water we come to is the Chatsworth fishery, which can be fished from the Wheatsheaf or Peacock at Baslow, or from the Chatsworth Hotel at Edensor, a charming house. At the Peacock, at Rowsley, permission can be got for a few fields on the Derwent and for the Bakewell water, but not for the Chatsworth fishery. I once made the mistake of going to Rowsley to fish the Derwent, and so I had to fish the Wye instead ; curiously enough, it was one of the best

days I ever had there. Five brace of trout, with six fish each a pound and over, is more than one usually expects to get at Bakewell, especially on Saturday, when the mills shut their water down for hours. There is one mill in particular, just above Bakewell, where the water is worked in a manner most annoying to fishermen. About noon on Saturday the water is shut down for about three hours, and then suddenly the dam is run off with a flood which lasts for perhaps an hour, effectually stopping all fishing, and disturbing the fish for the rest of the afternoon. Later on the water will be again shut off for hours, leaving the river-bed dry in all but the pools. Appeals have been made to the conservators and also to the Duke of Rutland's agent, but with no effect. On the Chatsworth water there are some very nice grayling runs, and as a rule better baskets of both trout and grayling are made here than on the Wye, but the average weight is not so good. Wading, and deep wading too, is necessary, and one of the most successful fishermen on this water was generally to be seen immersed to the armpits. As the Derwent is fed mostly by surface water, it is more liable to floods than either the Wye or the Dove, the feeders of those rivers being almost entirely subterranean, so that there is a more equable flow of water. When a really heavy flood does come down, it is most annoying, for after a short time the washings from the limestone quarries and from the roads turn the water milk-white, and generally sicken the fish. In the spring of 1886 there was a most disastrous flood, which carried a lime tip at

Miller's Dale bodily into the river, and killed every fish between Miller's Dale and Bakewell. Bakewell soon recovered, but many years must pass before there is such a stock at Monsal Dale as there used to be.

At Rowsley the clear waters of the Wye are lost in the Derwent's browner stream, and the two form a fine river, which meanders through the meadows lying below the wooded hills of Darley Dale. Here the waters are preserved by a club as far as Matlock, where the beauties of the limestone scenery are at their best, though perhaps the narrower gorge-like valleys of Monsal Dale and Miller's Dale are lovelier still. Here there is a strong association which has cleared out the pike, re-stocked the river, and made what is now one of the best fisheries in Derbyshire ; it is open to visitors on a small payment. The Greyhound at Cromford is a capital place to stop at, and fairly out of the run of the "cheap-trippers." Between Cromford and Ambergate there is fishing, but it is almost entirely in private hands.

The Wye is altogether a different style of river. The trout are larger, but more wary ; as a school-inspecting friend remarked once, "These Wye trout have passed the sixth standard." The Buxton length is the first fishable water, and a small charge is made to visitors, but it is not advisable to begin fishing until you get at least two miles from the town, for until quite recently this small stream had to carry away all the Buxton sewage. However, thanks to some settling tanks, and the wonderful precipitating powers of a stream running from Axe Edge, matters are very different now, and the

effluent is reported to be as "clear as crystal," and quite fit to drink. Curiously enough, the trout in the Buxton length run large—one of 5¼lbs. was killed recently. This does not look as though ordinary sewage, in moderate proportions, were very detrimental to the trout. But in connection with this it is interesting to note that every few years there is an epidemic of horrible fungoid disease which more than decimates the inhabitants of the Wye. The Dove is very like the Wye, except that it is entirely unpolluted and has no lime quarries; and I have never heard of any diseased fish being seen in the Dove, even in 1880, when dead fish were to be picked up all along the banks of the Wye. The grayling seem to suffer more than the trout; they are much more delicate, and when the flood swept down from Miller's Dale, poisoned with lime, the grayling came floating up to the surface first, the trout being able to fight longer against its suffocating powers.

Below Bakewell we come to the Miller's Dale length, formerly in the hands of a fishing club, but now in private hands. This is one of the loveliest spots in the whole of England, and it is hard to keep one's attention concentrated on fishing, as the eye is apt to wander from the flies to the towering limestone crags with their adornment of trees and ferns. This charming spot was the scene of one of the most dastardly crimes connected with poaching. The son of the Squire one evening ran against some poachers, who first killed him, and then threw his body into the stream.

Passing down the stream we first come to Monsal Dale, then past Ashford—the beau-ideal of an English country village—and then to Bakewell. All the fishing here is in private hands, and the owners do not readily grant permission to fish ; but at Bakewell the Duke of Rutland has thrown open a long stretch on both sides of the Wye. Visitors to the Rutland Arms at Bakewell, or the Peacock at Rowsley, can fish the waters without payment; to others the charge is 2s. 6d. a day. Only fly-fishing is allowed. A lovely water it is, but the trout are the most highly educated in the North of England, and the most learned of them are said to be able to discriminate between the respective merits of different tackle shops. Any fisherman who can kill good baskets at Bakewell should not have much difficulty elsewhere, and at most times dry fly-fishing is a necessity. On Saturdays and Bank Holidays this water is apt to get crowded, but through the meadows of Haddon Hall the river winds and turns so much that there is plenty of fishing for everyone. At Fillieford Bridge, a mile below Haddon, our permission ends, but the river meanders on until it is lost in the Derwent at Rowsley. Just before it reaches the Derwent it is swelled by the united waters of the Lathkill and Bradford, which are celebrated for their swarms of fish; these, however, are reserved for the ducal owners and their intimate friends.

And now let us turn back again to Buxton, retracing our steps to the source of the Wye on Axe Edge. To the north a little streamlet forms the headwaters

of the Goyt, eventually to become the Mersey ; to the east runs the Dane ; and last, but not least, to the south flows the classic Dove. It would be difficult to find a clearer or less polluted stream than this last, at anyrate as regards its upper waters, and though the trout have perhaps not such savoury morsels to feed on as their neighbours below Buxton, they seem to thrive fairly well. The river runs nearly due south for about twenty miles through Hartington and Dovedale towards Ashbourne. This is the best of the trout water, and with a southerly wind affords perfect up-stream fishing. Just short of Ashbourne the river turns away towards the south-west to Rocester, and here the trout begin to lose their predominance over the grayling, though near Ashbourne they are rather larger and better fed than higher up. Close to Ashbourne two brooks run into the Dove—Bentley Brook and Henmore Brook—and sometimes very good fish are caught in them with the minnow, fish of two or three pounds being not uncommon. Unfortunately, pike have got into Henmore Brook, owing to the bursting of a weir higher up the stream; worse still, they are gradually increasing and also getting into the main river. I have never yet found out the correct pronunciation of the name of the Dove. Some call it the Dŏve, and others the Dōve, and it is hard to say which is right; it is at anyrate noteworthy that Charles Cotton makes it rhyme with "love," which tells in favour of the prettier name.

At Rocester the grayling predominates largely, and sometimes very good baskets of these fish are got down

the river, which runs south-east from Rocester, through Uttoxeter and Tutbury, to join the Trent below Burton; here the trout and grayling fishing ends. A little higher up, the Blythe runs into the Trent. This stream is remarkable for the quantity of green drake which make their appearance in June, and also for the fact that on its banks Ronald lived and wrote his book, one invaluable to fly-fishers in almost every part of the country. Near Rocester the Churnet joins the Dove, and it seems extraordinary that salmon manage to find their way through the Humber and up the Trent and Lower Dove as far as the weir at Rocester. No doubt they might tell some strange stories of the hosts of difficulties they have passed in the way of weirs and pollution. One catches numbers of salmon parr when fishing at Rocester. There used to be a salmon ladder up the weir across the Dove at Rocester, which, luckily, was entirely useless, as the nuisance of salmon parr when trout fishing would hardly be compensated for by getting a few unhappy fish that had toiled up the Trent.

There are some lengths open to the public near Uttoxeter, where in the autumn very good baskets of grayling are got with the fly and bottom fishing. But a good deal of the Dove is taken up by clubs. Just below Dovedale there is the Okeover Club, with three or four miles of water and about five members, who seldom fish themselves or give permission to others. It is a very pretty water and well stocked, and makes one envious of the lucky few whose lines can be cast in such pleasant places. The Norbury Club, which has a very nice length

between Ashbourne and Rocester, is very difficult to get into. Norbury lies about the centre of their water, and on the opposite side of the river is Ellaston, a pretty little village, especially interesting as the scene of "Adam Bede." Between the Norbury and Okeover Clubs lies the Birdsgrove Club, which has lately been reconstituted and promises to rival its neighbours. Mayfield, about a mile and a half from Ashbourne, lies in the centre of the water; this little village has also some literary interest, for here is the cottage in which Moore wrote "Lalla Rookh."

The highest waters of the Dove are all preserved, but at Hartington there is a very good length of water, open except in June; the charge is 2s. 6d. per day. There is a good hotel there, the Charles Cotton, which is about a twelve miles' drive from Leek, Buxton, Bakewell or Rowsley. Whoever named the Charles Cotton and Izaak Walton hotels chose most appropriate titles, as commemorating the friendship of these two brothers of the angle two hundred years ago, and reminding us of the classic ground we tread when fishing on the Dove. As the angler strolls along the banks of the Dove he has plenty of room for his imagination; perhaps, where he has caught a large trout, there Charles Cotton landed one which Izaak Walton had risen and played; or, perhaps, where he has sat down on the bank to have a talk over flies and other piscatorial matters, or to discuss some whiskey, there these two friends did the same two hundred years ago—barring the whiskey. At any rate it is recorded that Cotton had his

friend up from the south to try his hand on the wily inhabitants of the Dove. I suppose every fisherman has read the "Compleat Angler," but Charles Cotton's short chapters are not in all editions, though they are well worth reading and contain information really useful, even in these days of school boards and education both of men and fishes. I do not suppose Charles Cotton could catch fish now with the tackle he used then; he speaks of rods fifteen to eighteen feet long, and the bottom end of his cast consisted of two horsehairs. Nowadays on the Dove a ten-feet rod is long enough, and unless the angler uses the finest drawn gut he will not kill many of its inhabitants. For all that, the true principles of fly-fishing are to be found in Charles Cotton's book; and it is still true that—

> "To fish fine and far off is the first and principal rule for trout angling."

He also tells us to make the cast so that

> "Your rod and tackle will in a manner be taper from your very hand to your hook."

Unfortunately, Cotton's residence, Berisford Hall, is now in complete ruins, and only the lines of the foundation and a few stones are to be seen; but the fishing-house which he built is still standing, with its motto over the door "PISCATORIBUS SACRUM," and the initials I Z and C C intertwined. Owing to the cheap-tripper's mania for cutting and writing his name everywhere, the owner has been compelled to keep this historical little house locked up; but one can peep in through the window and wonder if ghosts frequent the place.

The Hartington length is very nice water, more especially the short length through Berisford Dale. At times fair sport is to be had here, and good fishermen can generally make decent baskets. Between Hartington and Dovedale the water is full of fish, but it is all in private hands. Still, though few anglers have the opportunity of fishing there, they benefit from this stock, both on the open water at Hartington and on the open water below at Dovedale.

I now come to my last subject—Dovedale, a fisherman's paradise; but no words of mine can describe the charming variety of the scenery of this beautiful dale. The entrance is about five miles from Ashbourne station, and they will send over to meet you from the "Izaak Walton;" but anyone objecting to the slowness of the North Stafford trains can go by train to Matlock, and then take the charming drive passing through the Via Gellia. Once at the "Izaak Walton" you will be very sorry to leave it. The river runs through a narrow gorge-like valley, which is thickly wooded almost to the water's edge, while here and there the limestone juts out in most fantastic shapes. The stream is full of trout and grayling, but they are not to be caught by everyone; still, they are not quite up to the aggravating standard of education reached by their relatives at Bakewell. Anyone thinking of going to Dovedale should read a charming little book entitled, "An Amateur Angler's Days in Dovedale." He is sure to go then, and if he goes once he will go again. Perhaps from a piscatorial point of view the beauty of Dovedale is its disadvantage, as it attracts crowds of

cheap-trippers, who persist in walking on the very brink of the river; and the trout are wary, owing to the clearness of the water and the quantity of natural food. It is easy to imagine anyone wearying of catching fish where everyone can do the same, "duffer" or not; but in Dovedale the odds are on the fish, and the greatest skill is required in fishing these romantic waters. Many hints for those who know nothing of Derbyshire fishing can be picked up from Ronald's book, or from David Foster's "Scientific Angler."

There are, of course, times when the fish are to be caught easily. One red-letter day often comes back to my memory. I had been staying at the "Izaak Walton" for a week at the end of one September. The weather was hopeless—cold east winds and occasionally snow; but the barometer began to fall, and persuaded me to extend my stay another day or two. Next morning I woke up to find the wind blowing a hurricane from the south-west, and after hurrying over my breakfast, I reached the river to find I had the whole stream to myself, and the fish rising all over the place. It was one of those days when any fly seemed the right one, and all day through I never changed one of the three different flies on my cast, except to replace those lost when the line was whirled by the wind into trees or bushes. Of the rises I got I could not have struck more than one-third, and even to this day it is unpleasant to think of those that were played and lost. Unfortunately, in the hurry of the morning, lunch, whiskey, and tobacco were all left behind; and before the afternoon was over I had

to return wet through and worn out with fighting against the storm. Never had an angler such a chance of making a record; as it was, I managed to total ten brace of trout and grayling, running from half a pound to a pound and a quarter, and weighing altogether fourteen pounds. But days like these come once in a lifetime, and the blank days and bad days are many in number. Still, in lovely spots such as Dovedale, catching fish is by no means all of fishing, and therein lies the charm of Derbyshire angling—that it is a pleasure at times to lay aside one's rod in favour of other surrounding interests.

RECOLLECTIONS OF MANY WATERS.

BY JAMES BROADBENT.

UNTIL some eighteen years ago my angling experiences were confined to fishing for coarse fish in the reservoirs near my native town in Lancashire. At this time I went to reside in the then quaint and quiet little village of Cannock (Staffordshire), which has since been considerably spoiled by the march of modern so-called improvements, though it is one of the few places where the old custom of ringing the curfew is still kept up. There I first experienced the delight of angling for trout and grayling; a delight which has deepened with increasing years, and is now a never-failing source of interest and pleasure, whether in looking back upon the many enjoyable holidays passed by the river-side in some charming valley, or in making plans for the future—that golden future—when the hope, which springs eternal in the angler's breast, of slaying a mighty "sawmun" shall become a reality. And oh! the joyful anticipations when, on a winter's evening, surrounded with fur, feather, and silk, we tie the Duns, March Browns, Red Spinners, and the endless variety of

entomological specimens (many unknown to the naturalist) which we consider necessary for our next summer's campaign.

Whilst living at Cannock one of my most intimate friends was a Scotchman—we will call him "Mac." He had been a fly-fisher from the time he was big enough to handle a rod, and was one of the most successful anglers I ever met. In a happy moment I was induced to join him in a fishing expedition to Loch Awe, Argyleshire. On our outward journey we went through Greenock and thence by boat through the charming Kyles of Bute to Ardrishaig; then we took coach to Ford, at the head of Loch Awe, and made this village our first resting place. The accommodation at the small inn was of the most primitive character—the beds were of chaff, and our fare principally trout and braxy mutton, washed down with potato whiskey; but the keen bracing air engendered an appetite that made us anything but fastidious; so long as the supply of food equalled the demand we were easily satisfied with the quality, and I question whether we should have declined "long pig" if nothing better had come in our way.

We arrived at Ford on a Saturday afternoon, and in the few hours' fishing at our disposal Mac got sufficient trout for Sunday and Monday mornings' breakfasts. There was a service in Gaelic at the little kirk on Sunday morning, at which we were *not* present. Instead, we spent a long day in exploring the country in our immediate neighbourhood. We had a lovely walk across the hills to Craignish, a small fishing village on the coast, and

obtained most charming views of sea and loch. We stayed at Ford for a few days only, and then removed to Port-in-Sherrich where we stayed another two days, and should have remained longer but that our hostess treated us rather shabbily in the matter of bedrooms. In the evening, after we had finished our day's fishing, we engaged two sturdy Hielandmen to row us down the loch to Port-Sonachan, a distance of about ten miles, where we arrived shortly after eleven o'clock. It was a rough, dark night, and I was very thankful to reach the shelter of Cameron's Hotel, which became our head-quarters during the rest of our sojourn at Loch Awe; and a more comfortable hotel it would be hard to find. After our experiences at Ford it was elysium. We found the fishing best between Ford and Port-in-Sherrich; the bays are smaller, but there are more of them. The trout there are more numerous and not so highly educated as at the lower end of the loch, owing to this part being less fished; but they do not run quite so large on the average. It was my first experience in loch fishing, and I have therefore nothing remarkable to relate in the way of big baskets, but my friend Mac had excellent sport on several days, and we were able to send some nice specimens of Loch Awe trout to our friends. I understand that Cameron has now a small steam-launch on the loch to tow the boats out to the fishing ground in the morning and fetch them back in the evening; but we had only our own and the boatman's arms to trust to, and many a long row we had at night after our day's fishing.

On our homeward journey we drove all the way from Port Sonachan to Helensburgh, staying one night at Inverary. A more delightful drive it would be difficult to find; we passed along the head of Loch Fyne and Loch Long, through Tarbert and along the shores ot Loch Lomond, passing through Luss, where we rested for a couple of hours. It was my first visit to Scotland, and was in all respects a new experience to me; to a tired man of business I cannot conceive anything more invigorating than a fortnight spent at Loch Awe at the end of April or the beginning of May. And here I would fain record my deep and lasting gratitude to my mentor, that learned Piscator, for having quickened in me the love of angling which had lain in embryo for many years, and which has since led me to follow the windings of many charming rivers and burns, and developed in me the love of nature inseparably connected with an angler's life.

My favourite river in Staffordshire was the Blythe. It is a tributary of the Trent, and not, as I have often seen stated, of the Dove. It rises near to Longton, in Staffordshire, and, after flowing through a somewhat flat country for about twenty miles, falls into the Trent at King's Bromley, a few miles north of Lichfield. It is a quick-running river, alternating in deep pools with streams rippling over a clean gravelly bottom, until a mile or so above its junction with the Trent, where it becomes very deep, with few streams, and holds more pike and coarse fish than trout and grayling. The lower reaches of the river are very open and easily

fished, but, as you ascend, the banks become considerably overhung with trees and bushes, and for successful fishing waders are necessary. The Blythe differs from its sister river the Dove, in that it does not rise in the limestone rock, and has not a rocky bottom; and perhaps this is why in the Blythe much larger flies are used, the water not being so clear. The whole of the Blythe fishing is in the hands of private individuals, but it has always been my good fortune to obtain permission to fish there whenever I could go. The first fortnight in June is the fishes' carnival in this river, as the May-fly (the drake) swarms in abundance. A week's fishing during that time is a thing to be remembered. It is then that the old trout, who spends the greater portion of his life in a snug hole well protected by overhanging bushes, and furnished below with some conveniently handy snags as a place of retreat, loses his head, and falls a victim to his insatiable appetite for that apparently delicious mouthful, the *Ephemera Danica.* It was my privilege some years ago to spend a week in this anglers' paradise when the May-fly season was at its height, and such baskets of trout as we then took were a sight to see and to long for in these degenerate days, when trout never seem to be in a humour to take what is offered to them and to be thankful for it. Can it be that even in the depths of the water the schoolmaster is abroad, and that the fishes have *their* note-book compiled by experienced old trout, containing valuable observations as to the different artificial flies which may be expected on the water at different times and seasons,

with added advice as to when it is safe to rise to a fly, and when it is wiser to remain quietly below! Who can tell?

The house at which I stayed was once the residence of Ronald, the famous entomologist and fly fisher, and near to it he built his piscatorial observatory overlooking the Blythe, in order that he might more easily pursue his observations on the habits and customs of Fario and Thymallus. The editor of a late edition of Ronald's "Fly Fisher's Entomology" says, "The Blythe, a sweet trout stream in Staffordshire, close to Creswell station, was the scene of Ronald's early experiences; on the little bridge close to the present station stood his observatory." I think he is wrong in this statement. Ronald himself says, "I built a little fishing hut or observatory of heath overhanging a part of the river Blythe near Uttoxeter in Staffordshire." Now Creswell is at least twelve miles from Uttoxeter. The place I have mentioned is only three miles distant.

One day, whilst I was there fishing with my friend Mac, we took thirty-two trout before five o'clock in the evening, and, had we fished on later, we could have increased our take considerably; but the day was hot and we were tired (for we had fished hard whilst we were at it), and we had each a good basket of fish. Above all, we had arranged to be in for dinner at six o'clock, and as it would not do to keep a lady waiting, we cried "Hold, enough!" and put up our rods. We turned out our fish on the grass in front of the house, and, the landlady bringing out her largest dish, one of the sort that would

comfortably accommodate a Christmas round of beef, we piled up the fish, with the biggest on the top, after the manner of anglers. The sight was one to gladden the heart of the most exacting fisherman—one half of the trout averaged close on a pound each; there were no small ones, as we had returned all less than eight or nine inches in length. Our landlady, who had lived at the farm for many years, said it was the finest dish of fish she had ever seen, and although I have caught more fish in one day I never caught so fine a lot in such perfect condition. I fished with only one fly the whole of the day—a Dark Mackerel, a favourite fly of Ronald's, and one which has lost none of its charm since his time. The next day, fishing with another friend, we had almost as good a basket, twenty-six fish, and in all probability should have beaten the previous day's take but for a bad breakage of one of our rods, which restricted our fishing for the rest of the day to one rod. During the greater portion of this day we fished with the artificial May-fly—sunk.

I will give the experience of one other day on this river, some miles lower down, and then pass on to the Meece. One dull, cloudy, but mild morning in November I set off, accompanied by a small boy to carry my impedimenta, as I had five miles to walk from the railway station to the river, and back again in the evening. We all know that after a long day's fishing it is no joke to have to carry waders, etc., in addition, if the fates are propitious, to a well-filled creel. It was one of my early days as a fly-fisher, and, perhaps on that account,

of all my successful days it stands out as a "bright spot in memory's waste." I began to fish about ten o'clock, and had been getting fish with tolerable regularity up to about three o'clock, when, in fishing a deep hole with a heavy stream running into it, I hooked something large. I saw the fish as he took the fly, and whether he was a big Trent trout or a small salmon I shall never know for a certainty. He made tracks up the stream as hard as he could go, until he landed me in front of a high fence, with water below me too deep for wading. I let him have as much line as I dared and then gave him the butt, in the hope of turning him, trusting that my tackle might hold ; but, alas ! it failed me, and the fish went on and on, and, for all I know, may be going yet, with the remains of a cast and three flies tacked on to him. I never saw him again, but I might say of him, "he never told his weight, but let imagination, like a germ, grow on his vanished form." The painful incident was too much for me, so to steady my nerves I settled myself down for a quiet smoke, and possibly might have taken a mouthful of "cold tea." I rigged up another cast of flies, but my friend from whom I had just parted must have spread the news that there was danger about, seeing that I took no more fish that day. When I came to turn out my creel and take stock of the day's sport, I counted up seventeen beautiful grayling, in the pink of condition, many of them close on a pound each. It was a day to be remembered by a young fisherman ; I need not say that, ever since, I have had a strong affection for the much abused grayling, and so far as my humble efforts

can avail he shall have all the protection the law can give him.

Here I would call attention to the fact that in the same river, at different times of the year, excellent baskets were made of trout and grayling respectively. For instance, in the days of June of which I have spoken there were few grayling taken, while, again, in November very few trout were taken. This shows that each of the two has his special season as a sporting fish, and is then in his most perfect condition. The flies I used on the last-mentioned day were the Hare's-ear Dun, the Cinnamon-fly, and the Ephemera-palmer, put on my cast in the order named, beginning with the dropper.

Before leaving the Blythe, I may mention that in the late autumn, in a wet season, many large salmon go up this river. They rarely go beyond the first mill, owing to the obstructions there, except in a big flood. One day I saw four salmon, all very much covered with fungus, and almost in a dying state. One, which I estimated to weigh about twenty pounds, I took out dead.

After the Blythe, the river Meece is my favourite as an angling river. It is a tributary of the Trent, rising near to Whitmore, Staffordshire, and can be seen when travelling on the L. & N. W. Railway between Crewe and Stafford, as it is frequently crossed by the line. There are no grayling, but as a trout stream it has few equals. It flows through a flat country, and is one of those oily winding streams with deep holes under the banks, which have such a "trouty" look about

them. Nearly the whole of the stream above its junction with the Sow, near to Norton Bridge, is preserved by the Meece Angling Club, consisting of twenty members, chiefly the riparian owners or their friends.

Izaak Walton, our great example, lived for many years at Shallowford, or, as it was called in his day, "Shawford," a small hamlet situate on the banks of this river. Doubtless it was while living here that the love of angling first took possession of him. In "The Angler's Wish" he says,—

> "Or with my Bryan and a book
> Loiter long days near Shawford brook."

Sir John Hawkins in his note says, "Shawford Brook, part of the river Sow, running through the very land which Walton bequeathed in his will to the Corporation of Stafford to find coals for the poor. The brook is a beautiful winding stream, and the situation such as would be likely to create admiration in a mind like Walton's."

The subscription to the Meece Angling Club is £5 a year, and there is also an entrance fee of £5. The fishing is very closely preserved, a keeper being employed all the year round. The club have no fish hatchery, but the last time I was there I noticed that they had fenced in a small runlet, with a framework of fine gauze, in which to place fry; the gauze protected the fish from birds and prevented the fry getting out into the main stream until such time as it was thought fit to liberate them. I have not heard the result of the experiment. The stream abounds in shallow gravelly

"runs," the perfection of spawning beds, so that with the limited amount of fishing over twelve miles of water, and with freedom from pollution, except such as is common to all rivers flowing through an agricultural district, there is every chance for the trout to increase and multiply. There are four or five mills on the stream, about a couple of miles distant from each other, and the pools formed by the damming up of the water at the head of these mills give food and shelter to some grand fish. And the Meece fish *are* grand, whether from a sporting or a gastronomic point of view. They cut pink when cooked, and in weight range up to about two pounds; occasionally an odd fish goes beyond this, though such fish are not frequently taken. The average is about three-quarters of a pound. The last time I fished the stream, in August, 1888, the keeper told me there had been splendid sport during the time the May-fly was on, many of the baskets weighing twenty to twenty-four pounds for as many fish.

One member of the Manchester Anglers' Association will not soon forget the sight he and I had one evening in May on a shallow below one of the mills. In a very short length of water we saw—I am speaking literally and not with the angler's reputed advantage of magnifying and multiplying spectacles—scores of grand trout making big waves as they scudded away. The water was then too low and clear to give us much chance of taking any fish, as the mill above was stopped, and there was very little water coming down, but in the earlier part of the day we had sampled them, and amongst the fish we took was one scaling nearly a pound and a half.

This river is full of food. In the autumn it is considerably overgrown with weeds in some of the stretches, and these weeds provide insect life in myriads. The local anglers rarely fish with more than one fly on their cast, the favourite being Dark Mackerel (described in Ronald's book), the Alder, March Brown, and various Palmers. The flies are dressed very large, quite as large as an ordinary sea-trout fly; occasionally they are used as large as a small salmon-fly. If you fish with small flies there the result will be small fish. The fishing during the month of June is entirely reserved for members, so that a visitor never has an opportunity of fishing the stream during the May-fly season. There are several good rules in connection with this club, one of which is that no person shall be allowed to fish the stream on two consecutive days. Such a rule as this would not answer well on an association water so far distant from the bulk of its members as is the river at Horton, but I think it might be applied with advantage to those who live within a few miles of the village. When most of the members of an association live within a walk or drive of the river it is an excellent way to prevent over-fishing. Another rule, much appreciated by outsiders, is that every member is furnished with a number of tickets, one of which is available for the use of a friend on any one day of the week for which it is issued; if the ticket is not used during that week it is valueless. These tickets are not available during the month of June, nor can they be used by any person residing within nine miles of Stafford. Visitors are restricted to the use of artificial

fly, and all fish taken under ten inches in length must be returned to the water.

Before I leave this river I must tell you the following legend of one of its members who has now joined the great majority—I do not vouch for its truth. He was a parson, and, as is often the case where the environment is favourable, an excellent fisherman. During the season there were very few days on which he did not make use of his privilege as a member to fish the stream, and rarely indeed did he go home with an empty creel; in fact such was his reputation that he had earned the sobriquet of "The Otter." On one occasion when his family, a tolerably large one, had met for the mid-day meal, and the removal of the cover displayed to view a joint of beef, the children with one voice exclaimed "Oh, ma,—meat!"

A short account of my experiences at Horton, where I spent my holidays in 1890, may be interesting. The weather was very varied, and we saw the river in many moods. The biggest water was early in the morning of the 25th August, when the river rose nearly six feet; yet by mid-day it was fishable with fly, and I heard of eight or nine trout being taken with a Blue Dun—it was between twelve and two o'clock. The fishing was, like the weather, variable, but only once had I a blank day on the river. The fish I caught were in very nice condition and the bulk of them of a good size. My best taken with fly (a small Blue Dun), weighed fourteen ounces, and gave me a good fight in the stream just below Horton Bridge. I found the Olive Dun, the Blue Dun, and the Alder the most successful flies on the river; and on the

tarn a fancy fly with silver body, black hackle, and Indian Crow tag, and a small Alexandra with a little bright red in the wing.

For an expert in spinning the natural minnow there was a splendid water many times during my visit. I met a landowner on the river one day, and he had then, about three o'clock, eleven very nice trout, all taken in this way. I heard of his getting a trout the day before I left Horton, which weighed 2lb. 3oz., and he—the trout I mean—had quite a dish of small trout in his larder; his capture will be a good riddance to the water. There is little doubt that the water is very well stocked with good fish, but except under favourable conditions they are not easily caught. I came to the conclusion that the best baskets were to be made either with the worm or by minnow-spinning, although occasionally the fly will hold its own; for instance, on one occasion a big rise of Duns came on the water about two o'clock, and in half-an-hour I caught six fish in one stream, four of which averaged half-a-pound each. I left the river to send away my "catch" by parcel post, and, sad to relate, I did not kill another fish that day. I noticed that on three consecutive days there was a good rise of Olive and Blue Duns between twelve and three o'clock; the colder the day, the later the rise. As to which part of the river is the best I scarcely dare hazard an opinion; but I agree with the keeper, Walker, in this, that if you cannot get a fish between "New Inn" Bridge and the wooden bridge below, you are not likely to get one anywhere else.

I went to the Tarn four times during my stay, and never came away blank except on the last day of my visit, when I was made to feel very small by my boy, who took three fish and lost several others, whilst I never touched one. There was rather a curious incident connected with the taking of these fish. When we were at breakfast my boy said to me: "I dreamt last night that I caught a grand basket of trout at the tarn, and I can show you the fly I caught them with." He brought his fly-book and showed me a small Alexandra; I said it looked a very likely fly and he had better try it, and see if his dream would come true. It came so far true that this fly was the only one that would stir the fish.

I must not leave Horton without saying a word for it as a health resort. Westerly winds prevailed while we were there, and it seemed as though we ought to taste the brine on our lips, the wind was so bracing and exhilarating. We had several very pleasant excursions. A capital day can be spent at Settle and Giggleswick, with a walk back to Horton by Stainforth Force and village. My boys and I walked over to Clapham one morning, and then through the caves, returning to Horton by Moughton Scars. These scars are scarcely less interesting than the caves, and are well worth a visit; the limestone formation is most peculiar, and the traces of the action of the sea are as plainly visible as though the sea had left it but a few years ago. The hart's-tongue fern grows here in great luxuriance. Of course we had a climb to the top of Pen-y-ghent, calling at Hull-pot and Hunt-pot on our way. Another pleasant

walk is from Ribblehead Station to Alum-pot, near to Selside, and then on to Horton. This Alum-pot is a fearsome place. When visiting it you should make inquiries as to whether there is a bull in the field. The farmer very often turns one in, and I understand Mr. Bull effectually prevents anyone from going near.

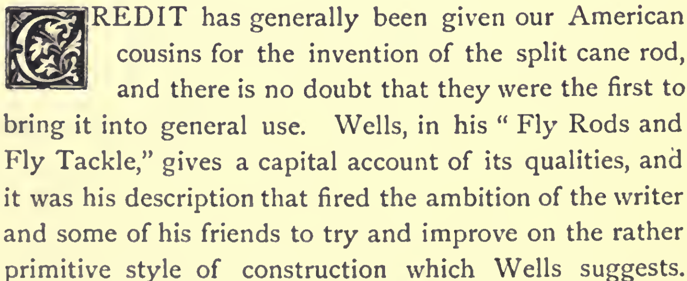
A friend and I drove over to Malham Tarn on Thursday, the 21st of August, for a day's fishing. Under ordinary circumstances the drive must open out some charming views of hill scenery, but on the day we went the clouds were resting on the hills and quite obscured the view, and it rained, and *rained*, and RAINED, till we were like drowned rats! In spite of the rain we fished hard till four o'clock, but with little success. My friend got one fish of 1lb. 5oz., and lost another. Successful fishing with fly in Malham Tarn seems to be very uncertain, the fish rising badly to fly as a rule. A few years since very large takes were made with fly, but we were told by the owner that some time ago he netted the tarn to take out the perch, and a great quantity were so taken out. Since then the fly-fishing has not been so good, and his theory is, that when there were a considerable number of perch in the tarn they, being the strongest fish, drove the trout off the best feeding ground, compelling them to seek for food on the surface. There seems a great deal to be said in favour of this theory.

To sum up the result of my visit to Horton I would say, "I have been there and still would go." It is a charming place, full of interest; the time passed all too

quickly, and it was with great regret that I took a last fond look at Pen-y-ghent as he stood there in his grandeur, a veritable "Monarch of the Glen."

THE CONSTRUCTION OF SPLIT CANE RODS.

BY E. R. AUSTIN.



CREDIT has generally been given our American cousins for the invention of the split cane rod, and there is no doubt that they were the first to bring it into general use. Wells, in his " Fly Rods and Fly Tackle," gives a capital account of its qualities, and it was his description that fired the ambition of the writer and some of his friends to try and improve on the rather primitive style of construction which Wells suggests.

Any amateur possessed of ordinary deftness of fingers and a considerable stock of patience may hope, in the light of my experience, to turn out a creditable weapon, and thus to secure to himself the feeling of pride that all anglers have in using tackle, flies, or rods made by their own hands.

The general tendency of professional makers of these rods, particularly the Americans, is to make their productions too limber; and one of the greatest difficulties the writer had with his first attempts was the production of the happy combination of lissomness and stiffness necessary to a perfect rod. It was only by repeated trials, and more than one failure, that this was accom-

plished. If the rod be made with a uniform taper from butt to tip it will be too lissom ; the cane rod should follow what are considered to be the best lines of an ordinary fly rod, namely, a slight increase in the middle of its length beyond the uniform taper. On the other hand, to follow the sizes of an ordinary rod throughout will result in the cane rod being too stiff. The tyro must get the proper scantlings from a cane rod which he finds to work properly to his mind.

That there are elements of superiority in the cane rod can easily be shown. Take a piece of cane, and it will be found, even after removing the silica, that the outside fibres are exceedingly hard, much harder than any known wood used for fly rods. It has been mathematically proved that in a beam acting as a cantilever, which is what the rod is when in action, the maximum breaking stresses are in the extreme outer fibres, in the direction of the bending strain, and decrease towards the middle to nothing.

By cutting the cane into sections and glueing them together with the rind outside, all the strongest fibres are where the strength is most required. From this it will be seen that the beneficial effect of putting steel in the core of the rod, as advocated by some makers, is purely imaginary, as at this point the bending stresses are absolutely nil. Experiments made by Hardy show that split cane is far and away of greater ultimate strength than any such woods as greenheart, mahoo, or hickory, and that it is possessed of greater resilience or power of recovery under bending strains. It is this

latter quality which, at close quarters, gives the cane rod its power over fish. From $10\frac{1}{2}$ to 11 feet is the best length for general purposes.

CANE.

Considerable care is required in the selection of cane. So far, the "Calcutta cane" is the only one that has been found generally reliable, and even this often proves deceptive. This cane, known by the black markings on a yellow ground, can be obtained in sixteen-feet lengths, but as a rule, the butt is the only really serviceable part, the upper portion being too soft. There is little in the outside appearance to guide one as to the quality of the cane, beyond the brightness of the yellow portion, a grey-looking cane generally proving unfit for use; and a good look-out must be kept that it is not spoilt by the burns. Choose, however, the heaviest canes. It is only on splitting the cane up that its real quality can be ascertained. The eyes out of which the leaves spring are on opposite sides alternately; the length should be split directly through these eyes. Then subdivide the cane, keeping for use only those portions not affected by the eyes, which, on trial, will be found to be short and rotten at these points. The rejected portions between the eyes may be used to test the quality. If, on breaking a piece across finger and thumb with the skin outside, the fracture is broom-like, the cane may be used; if it breaks short, throw it aside at once. The colour of the grain is a good

general guide; if bright and yellow it may be serviceable, but if blue it will be found rotten. It is a good plan when splitting up a number of canes to put the splints in bundles and label them, "good," "medium," and so forth. When splitting up, regard must be had to the size of section required, whether for butt joint or upper joints. It will be found a good plan to scrape off the silica before going far in trimming to shape. This trimming is best done with a knife, and, owing to the extreme hardness of the outer fibres, not many blades will stand the work. Trim the sections roughly to width and wedge-shaped, file down the projecting knots, and the splint will be ready for planing up. It may be thought that the silica is a source of strength, but this is a mistake; this covering is often scratched in the cane, and once marked can never be brought to a good finish. Besides, it is most destructive to the keen edge of a plane, and more often to the fingers, imparting an almost razor-like edge to the planed strip.

The amateur must beware of Japanese cane—the beautifully mottled and coloured kind used for flower-stands, etc. Nothing is more deceptive. Compare a piece of this with Calcutta cane. The fracture is perfect; a test of strength under bending load shows it quite the equal of the other; there is no trouble about leaf eyes, and it works perfectly in spite of the frequent knots; yet in spite of all this, for some unknown reason it will not make rods. The writer took infinite pains with a top joint, and to all appear-

ance succeeded perfectly ; that joint, however, will bend to any curve and remain so, there being apparently no resilience in the material.

PLANING TABLE.

A perfect rod must be absolutely true to shape, and only by a perfect means of planing the strips of cane true to angle and taper can this be attained. Wood is of no use for a planing table, as the moment the plane has reduced the strip to near its proper size it bites into the bed, and all possibility of making the pieces alike in shape is lost. Here we must call in the aid of the engineer to make first a wood pattern of a suitable planing table for a casting; then to plane it absolutely level on its face and cut the grooves in it. It is rarely that a joint is required more than 5 or 6 feet long. Get the casting made 6 feet long of the following section : $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches deep, cored out on the underside to reduce the weight (see Fig. 1) with cross-bars at intervals to stiffen it.

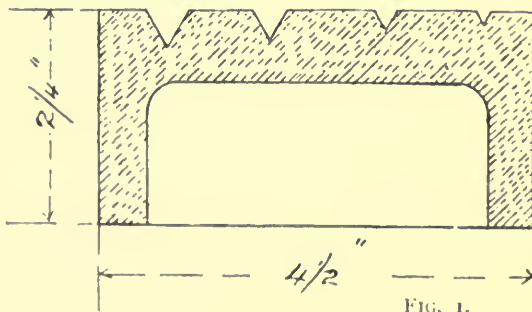


Fig. 1.

The most perfect practical form for a cane rod is a hexagon, since in it the angles of all the strips are equal, and consequently all the sides of equal width. After having

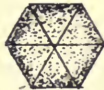


Fig. 2.

got the top surface planed smoothly, raise one end about a tenth of an inch on the bed of the planing machine, and, with a tool ground true to an angle of 60°, plane four grooves in the surface, the deepest about $\frac{5}{16}$ inch deep, and graduating in size till the least runs out to almost nothing. Great care must be exercised in keeping the planing tool ground true to angle and fixed perfectly vertical. Then follow with a sharp-pointed tool to clean out the bottom of the grooves. Nothing more is required. Each strip planed in these grooves will be absolutely true in shape and taper; and, above all, when put together, perfect glue joints will be formed without any adjustment being required. The whole virtue of the rod depends on the sides of the strips being in perfect contact through their whole length and width.

Knowing the size required for a joint of the rod, say at the bigger end, plane a short piece of soft wood as a trial piece, cut it up into lengths and tie together. If this proves too large, try another piece further up the groove until the right size is attained; then mark the place on its side as a guide for planing. Take the roughly trimmed strips, lay them in the grooves, rind uppermost,

and with a smooth file level the knots off. Sometimes there is a hollow above and below the knot, which it is best to warm and press outwards, or there will be ugly depressions on the face of the rod, marring its appearance. There is no necessity for fastening the strips down while planing; the slight roughness left by the planing tool in the metal, and the downward pressure, are quite sufficient to prevent slipping.

The only plane that will deal effectually with such hard material is the American plane, which has the bevel of cutter the reverse way of the ordinary plane, and is capable of very fine adjustment by its screw feed. It might be expected that the iron planing bed would, after very few cuts, take the edge off; but as a matter of fact, as long as the strip of cane under operation projects in the least above the surface of the bed the blade cannot come into contact with it. It is only at the final cut that it is necessary to guide the plane by the fingers travelling along the plate, to keep one part of the cutter at work on the strip, that to right and left of it naturally touching the plate. It is this certainty of each strip being cut down to the surface of the bed that makes them absolutely alike and true. Some canes will be found very troublesome to plane at the joints, the plane picking up the grain above and below in a most annoying fashion. To get over this a smooth file must be used to reduce the part of the joint first, afterwards planing up the spaces between. When you begin planing, watch must be kept over the regularity of angle, so that one side does not come out longer than the others (see Fig. 3), or

Fig 3.

the result will be a distorted hexagon and an eyesore that cannot be afterwards adjusted. A word must here be said as to the necessity of so arranging the strips, that no knot in any one comes opposite that in another. To this end cut the lengths of cane at least a foot longer than the finished joint is required, and as soon as they are trimmed up, lay the six strips side by side; there being about twelve inches from knot to knot, it is very easy to arrange for a space of two inches between.

GLUEING.

The best and strongest glue only must be used. Some fish glues are very good, but the writer has found "kid" glue answer the purpose. Only a small quantity must be melted at a time, and it must never be heated more than three times.

This is the most disagreeable and troublesome process of all. Having numbered the planed strips for the best disposition of knots, warm them before a fire, lay them on a board side by side, lay the glue liberally on straight from the fire with a wide flat brush for about one-third the length, bunch them together, and wrap spirally with some strong fine twine. It is best to secure the end of the twine at the other side of the room and turn the joint round in the hands, keeping a steady strain all the time. The glue squeezes out over the hands

and does its best to cover the fingers and string, but this cannot be avoided. As soon as wound up near to the end of glueing, and whilst still warm, straighten by the eye with finger and thumb. Then lay in more glue for another third, and proceed as before. On finishing the joint it will be found that the winding in one direction and the pull of the twine have twisted it; warm before the fire, and wind a wrapping in the opposite direction, crossing the first wrapping. This will take out most of the twist, but if any is left, lay the joint in one of the grooves of the planing plate and weight it till the glue is set. All this has to be done before the glue is set, but a little practice makes the process easy, and three lengths or a whole rod may be glued in a morning. Twenty-four hours should be allowed before unwrapping, and one anxiously scans the result the moment it is possible, for any bend or twist must now be permanent, and a source of vexation for all time to the possessor of the rod. Happy the maker if he finds nothing more than a regular bend in only one plane—a good point, as in arranging the rings the concave side can be placed uppermost to counteract the natural droop of the rod and the effect of the bending strain, mainly in one direction.

There is a better way of doing the glueing, but it requires more apparatus. The joints are glued up in halves and tied on to a perfectly true planed strip of iron having the same taper as the joint. By this means the piece cannot warp and twist. When the two halves are set, clean up the faces and glue together; it is necessary only to watch the possibility of bending in one direction,

and no twist is possible. This process requires three strips of iron of the various sizes.

HANDLES.

The simplest form of handle is that turned out of a solid piece of wood, maple or black walnut, with a ferrule let into the end (see Fig. 4), but the strongest, most

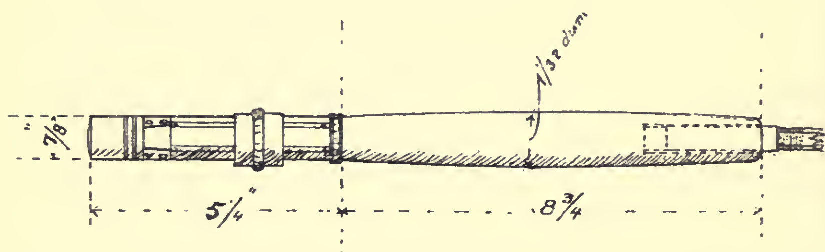


Fig. 4.

workmanlike, and best looking is that in which the strips of the butt joint are spliced into the handle. (See Fig. 5.)

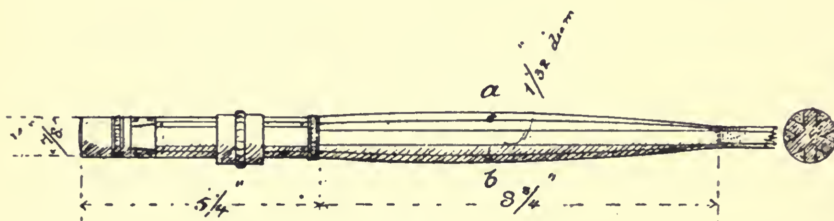


Fig. 5.

To make this perfectly a lathe is required, as great accuracy in the spacing and cutting the grooves is only attained by fixing the piece of wood between the centres

after turning to shape, and cutting the wood out by a diamond-pointed tool traversed by a slide rest, the handle being revolved one-sixth of a turn for the main cuts, and finished off by hand at the taper portions. A free working wood with straight grain, such as red cedar, is necessary, and great care is required to finish off the taper portion to a feather edge at the junction with the cane joint. Having glued the cane joint up to this point it must be warmed, and whilst hot the grooved butt must be forced in, the body of the joint being whipped round with copper wire to prevent it being wedged open. Take care to get the joint straight and true with the butt. When cold the pieces may be separated for final glueing. For choice, the cane need only be carried down to the first ring, which makes a good finish.

The handle should not be varnished with coach body varnish (so suitable for the rest of the rod), as it is always liable to be sticky to the warm hand; shellac spirit varnish is better, laid on with four or five coats as fast as they dry, an affair of a quarter of an hour. When it is well set after the final coat, rub it down first with powdered pumice and water, polish with rotten-stone and oil applied with an old silk handkerchief, and finish off with dry rotten-stone. This gives a brilliant polish; the varnish is always dry to the touch and very durable.

The most simple form of reel fitting is that composed of two narrow flat strips of brass set a suitable distance apart for the reel to lie between, and a V shaped heel-piece as shown by Figs. 4 and 5.

FERRULES.

No reliance is to be placed on the ordinary ferrules to be bought at a tackle-maker's. These are generally made with the male portion taper and depend upon their jamming when pushed home. This either results in the ferrule being jammed too fast to be separated without a good deal of force and twisting, about the worst thing for a cane rod; or after a little wear the joint works loose, and the angler is continually casting a part of his rod into the water with a great splash unless it is tied, a most miserable sort of contrivance and unworthy of this age. All that is necessary to avoid this is to make the male ferrule perfectly parallel, so that when pushed in it is in perfect contact, without shake, for its full length. When buying the ferrules, preferably of bronzed brass, select another ferrule the next size smaller and throw away the male ferrule furnished by the maker. Cut this to length and spin it in a lathe on a hard wood mandril, which for convenience may be turned in steps for the different sizes, then file and rub down with emery cloth till it is a perfect fit in the female ferrule, using the callipers freely after the tip will just enter. This ferrule requires no dowel or stringing to keep fast, and on taking down the rod the joints can be separated with the greatest ease.

A good deal has been made of bayonet joints, screws, and many other devices. None of them are necessary. I have made several rods, and none of them cast loose. A good test of a perfect fit is the pop-gun-

like sound when the joints are separated. After fitting the ferrule to your satisfaction, one end of each requires forming to a hexagon shape to fit the rod. The end of the cane joint is of course scraped perfectly round and fitted to the ferrule without distorting it; when pushed home the hexagon framed end corresponds with the body of the joint. Dowels are quite unnecessary, and in fact are a great evil, as the wood is cut away where the solidity is most required, inside the female ferrule. Above all do not put any pins through the ferrules ; this is another source of weakness and only permissible to bad workmen. For fastening the ferrules use leaf shellac warmed over a spirit lamp, first inserting a portion into the bore and making thoroughly hot, then slightly coating the end of the joint but taking care not to overheat it, and pushing on the ferrule.

WRAPPINGS, RINGS, AND VARNISHING.

These are the finishing touches. The best silk for the wrappings is a loosely-spun kind, to be bought at a fishing-tackle-maker's; but for the top joint fine sewing silk will be found best. Having laid off the spaces for the rings, increasing in distance from the tip, sub-divide them, beginning about half-an-inch apart, and likewise increasing in the spacing. The upper half of the top joint will require only about five-ply of silk, and the width of the wrapping should increase towards the butt as the size of the joint increases. It is only necessary to wax the point of the silk to prevent it slipping, and to

finish off the last ply, which should be done by the invisible knot; then lay over the wrappings with weak glue, which fills the loose pores of the silk and makes them take the varnish better. The rings, by choice, should be fixed and graduated in size. The eyed tip can be of the ordinary wire kind, which, however, may be much improved, with a view to prevention of cutting by the reel line, by working in an ordinary boot eyelet, polished smooth. Coach body varnish is the best, used fresh, thinned down with turpentine, and laid on with a stiff short hog's-hair brush. If the weather be damp, warm the piece first. Allow a few days to dry, and repeat two coats.

In this paper I have endeavoured to give the amateur the result of my experience, so that he may avoid pitfalls and unnecessary experiments in finding the best means to his end. I hope that, having succeeded in turning out his rod, he will derive as much pleasure as I myself have done in watching its behaviour under the trying circumstances which sometimes befall the angler.

THE KEEPERS, HORTON.

THE HORTON-IN-RIBBLESDALE FISHERY.

I.

TROUT BREEDING IN RIBBLESDALE.

BY ROBERT BURN.

HE upper waters of the River Ribble, for about twelve miles from its source at Ribblehead, down to Helwith Bridge, four miles north of Settle, are preserved by the Manchester Anglers' Association. At the head of the valley is Whernside, on the right hand Ingleborough, and on the left hand Pen-y-Ghent, three of the highest hills in Yorkshire. The little village of Horton-in-Ribblesdale is the headquarters of the Association; it is the most northerly parish in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and about 770 feet above the sea level.

During the construction of the Settle and Carlisle extension of the Midland Railway, which runs alongside the river, when large bodies of men were encamped for years in the valley, the water was almost depopulated by unrestrained netting and other means. Fish were taken in nets or "grappled" with the hand; they were blown up with dynamite and poisoned with lime, and in low water it was a favourite Sunday amusement for

parties of three or four men to go up the river armed with sledge hammers. Every large stone in the water likely to shelter a trout was struck violently, and the fish, stunned or lifeless, came to the surface. The river is now carefully watched by the Association, and with a view to replenishing the waters a fish-house has been erected.

When the Council of the Association decided to establish the breeding house, it required much care to find a suitable situation, as many points had to be considered. It was necessary to find a place sheltered from strong and cold winds; one which could be easily drained, so as to get the water away quickly; and, above all, one where a good and regular supply of suitable water could be obtained. These conditions were found in the site chosen on the bank of Horton Beck, close to Douk-ghyll Scar. The foundation is solid rock, with a good deep drain running into the brook. The water supply was found in a small cistern in the field close to the Scar, fed by springs which, to the knowledge of the oldest inhabitant, never went dry. The water was tested, and pronounced suitable. It is conveyed a distance of sixty-five yards through lead pipes, and as the supply cistern is some four to six feet above the level of the roof, there is plenty of pressure. It may be noted that the temperature of the water has never been above 44° in the hottest summer, nor below 40° even when the thermometer has stood at zero, in the winter. The erection of the house was entrusted to the village joiner, and he has done the work satisfactorily.

The arrangement of the house inside is as follows:—The water first enters a filter box supplied with flannel slides to catch sand and grit, and then passes into a long trough. This trough is connected with six trays, in tanks, on the left side of the house, arranged in the form of steps, over which in succession the water flows, escaping by a waste-pipe into the drain. On the right-hand side are also nine trays arranged in the form of steps, and independently supplied with a constant flow of water from the trough and with a waste pipe. The trays are furnished with glass rod grilles, on which the ova are placed; each tray holds about 1,800. As the fish are hatched, they escape through the grilles into the boxes below. Trout spawn at Horton late in November or early in December, and run for that purpose up the small brooks or becks, surmounting difficulties to an extent that seems incredible. Here they are easily taken in small nets or by the hand.

Before the close-time legislation, trout were taken, when spawning, by thousands, but now anyone taking or having trout in possession in close time, except for purposes of cultivation, is liable to prosecution, and even fish breeders must have permission from the Conservancy Board. When sufficient trout have been netted, and placed for readiness in large cans filled with water, the method of spawning is this:—In a broad shallow dish is placed a little water, then the female fish is held, the tail in the left hand, and the head and shoulders in the right hand. The right hand is passed with gentle pressure down the body of the fish towards the vent. If the fish is ripe the

ova begin to fly out singly into the dish, without any apparent pain. Should the fish not be ready, it is seen at once that pain is caused, and the fish is returned to the brook. A male fish is then taken and stroked in the same way, and the milt allowed to fall upon the ova in the dish, which is canted from side to side so that all the eggs may become impregnated. The change is something wonderful. The eggs at first are colourless, but on absorbing the milt change to a golden pink hue. The ova are easily carried for hours in a little water in a quart can with swinging handle, until it is convenient to place them on the hatching trays. As many as 3,000 to 4,000 may be so conveyed without injury. The spawning is generally done on the bank of a stream, and as each fish is done with it is returned to the water. At first it seems languid, but it is soon restored by the current, and swims to a place of concealment, not much the worse for the unnatural treatment it has received. It is said that a female trout of one pound weight will contain about 1,000 eggs, but I have never seen one that parted with so many, the largest number being 400 to 500. Perhaps we were afraid of injuring the fish by too much pressure, and many eggs were left behind which would be deposited in the stream in due time. The eggs vary in size according to the age of the fish. It was noticed that the ova from a ½lb. trout will go 32 in a row, while from a trout 1lb. to 1½lb. only 30 will lie in the same space, and from some large Malham Tarn fish 28 occupied the room.

The time required before the young fish hatches varies according to the temperature of the water and air. For the years 1885 to 1888 inclusive, the time of incubation was uniformly 104 days; but in 1889, owing to the milder weather, the first fry were hatched in 76 days. A spell of severe weather then came on, and the hatching stopped at once, and was not resumed for a fortnight. About six weeks after the eggs are placed on the trays, they begin to show signs of life. Taking one up in a glass tube and holding it to the light, the eyes first show as black specks, then the complete form of the fish can be seen coiled round inside the shell, and with a magnifying glass it is possible to see the blood vessels. When the little trout bursts its shell it has a yellow bag attached to the under side of the throat containing a glutinous substance, by the absorption of which the alevin, as it is called, subsists for a month or six weeks. At first this bag seems to overpower the fish, and it seems anxious to get into some dark corner out of sight, but in a few days it gathers strength and moves about freely. Day by day the appendage gets smaller, and the little one gradually acquires its own natural graceful form with dark back and silver belly, and darts about actively in search of food. The alevins are very sensitive to light, and it is necessary to place pieces of slate or stone in the troughs under which they can shelter. Many monstrosities are hatched, fish with two heads or two tails, or even two bodies joined together like the Siamese twins, but they never grow to any size, always dying in a few weeks. As the fry get larger they require

more water and more room, and some are removed into a larger trough with a steady supply of water falling in at one end and overflowing at the other, so as to cause a continual current. There is considerable natural food in the water, but in addition the fish are fed daily with well-boiled beef or liver, finely powdered in a mortar and passed through a fine sieve, or with a specially prepared food which is very nourishing. Outside the breeding-house is a stone cistern holding about 3,000 gallons, with a regular flow of water of twenty gallons a minute. In this some three or four thousand fry are kept until they are a year old, and then are placed in small streams, so that they may gradually work their way down to the river. At the age of one year the young trout measure from three to five inches. As there is not sufficient pond room in which to keep the whole of the fry until they are yearlings, a considerable number of the largest and strongest are placed in sundry small becks, where there is an ample supply of food and shelter. For the last nine years ending March, 1893 an average of 25,000 fry have been turned into the streams, and this must tell largely on the stock of trout in the Ribble.

Coming, as the spawning season does, in the winter, the work is at times anything but pleasant. On some days there is a keen frost, with snow thick on the ground and the nets frozen stiff when out of the running water; on others a cold, biting rain makes netting the fish, and then handling them to get the spawn, a difficult and disagreeable business. Dry clothes, a comfortable dinner in a warm room, and an "Anglers' Evening" to follow,

soon put all right again, and the Manchester Anglers look back with pleasure on many enjoyable days and evenings at Horton spent in this useful work.

II.

CREEPER FISHING AT HORTON.

BY THE REV. ST. VINCENT BEECHEY, M.A.

THE latter half of April and May and the first half of June should be the prime of the year for those who whip for trout on our North of England streams. Do not be alarmed, brother anglers; I am not going to indulge in a rhapsody on the sweet influences of the springtime at the countryside, more especially as the prevailing influences in the spring of the present year* were influenza, drought, and a persistent north-east wind. I am going to stick in a severely businesslike way to the fish and the fishing. In the month of June, just at the time when trout fishermen might be expected to be returning from the warpath, enthusiastic about the battles they had fought and the captives they had made or might have made, I made a discovery as regards our river at Horton—a discovery which seemed likely to ensure sport on the Ribble at almost any time during the period mentioned, on those frequent days when the condition of the water prevented fishing with the artificial fly. I had given Walker †

* 1891. † The Association's keeper.

instructions at the beginning of the season to send me a telegram to say when the river was in condition. The end of May had come, but no telegram. In my part of the world, which is not very far as the crow flies from Horton, this was not to be wondered at. I never remember a May so made up of drought and east wind. The "cacoethes scribendi" was nothing to the itching of my fingers to wield the rod, and the best of the season was fast slipping away. So I determined on the 1st June to go to Horton and chance it. As I came down from the station I paused on the bridge, and shook my head as I looked at the attenuated stream. At the same moment Walker's stalwart form was observed coming up the river-side. He expressed considerable surprise at seeing me, and wanted to know why I had come. But an idea had been forming in my mind—suggested by piscatorial accounts in the papers from other Yorkshire streams—and I asked him in turn whether he had seen any creepers at the river-side. He said he had come all the way up and hadn't seen one, though he had looked carefully for them. I suspected then, and had good reason afterwards to be sure, that he either did not know what a creeper was or did not know where to find them. In the evening a visit to the tarn was rewarded with three good fish, but time was also found for an examination of the stones on the river-side, which satisfactorily proved that the creepers were there, and all very much alive. So Walker was told to get a supply next morning, being instructed as to the proper place where they were to be found, namely, under the stones adjacent

to water which has at least a moderate current. Very few can be found near water that is comparatively still.

About nine a.m. on the following day he appeared, looking flushed and excited, as if he had just emerged from a bout with sheepstealers or poachers; and if no damage was visible on his limbs, injury was clearly depicted on his countenance. Looking at me reproachfully, he ejaculated, "Well, by gum! I never had sic wark i' a' my life." It is quite beyond me to reproduce in the vernacular the account of his pursuit after creepers. I wish I could. I can only give the substance of his remarks. Creepers were decidedly misnamed. Runners, or, rather, sprint runners, would be the more exact term. It was one thing to find them—quite another to catch them; and when he thought he had them safe in his fingers, they had a trick of transferring themselves to his coat sleeve, and then, unless the coat was rapidly pulled off, of wandering into more remote and less accessible parts. Between the exertion of catching the little beasts and continually half stripping himself he was dead beat. I suggested that boys should be requisitioned for the purpose; but he wouldn't have them at the river-side. I may here say that another trial at the same game induced him to alter his opinion, and think that, after all, boys ought to be utilised. We both agreed—for I had tried to supplement the somewhat meagre results of Walker's exertions by efforts of my own—that boys would be more suitable for the purpose. They were more handy, in the first place, for getting down to the stones; they were less exposed to the danger of apoplexy; their

smaller fingers were better adapted to grasping the lively quarry; while a few creepers more or less between the shirt and the skin would probably be a matter of indifference to them.

As the wind, to my surprise and delight, was blowing gently from the south, bringing a cloudy sky, I resolved, not having as yet much faith in the creeper, to try the fly in the streamy bits at Helwith Bridge. As long as these atmospheric conditions prevailed, by fishing fine and far off I was tolerably successful. But it was not long before the wind got back to the old quarter, blowing, consequently, down the river, and making it very difficult to cast up-stream, the only possible method in such low water; for, if it is difficult to cast the fly against a wind, it is quite impossible to cast the creeper, since if you whip too quickly and suddenly you simply oblige the trout with a gratuitous tasty morsel, for you inevitably whip the insect off. But those who know the Ribble will remember that there is one portion of about a quarter of a mile in length, between Crags Hill and Higher Studfold, where, owing to a sharp bend or elbow, the course is partially reversed, and consequently the wind, when it is blowing down the river, will generally be found blowing up this length. At the lower end, just before the river turns southward again, is a large pool, at the end of which is a good stream; above this is a long stretch of flat water (useless for the creeper) flowing between high banks on either side; and above this several little pools of broken water, succeeded again by a stream which, in its course, curves back into the old

direction. As the wind was favourable for this length, and the sun was now (4 p.m.) shining brightly, I determined to give the creeper a trial. I was very soon convinced that the Ribble trout fancied the creeper. Whenever the visitor was properly introduced he was eagerly welcomed. This introduction, however, was not always easily managed, owing to my inexperience in the art, and the quantity of baits employed was out of all proportion to the quantity of fish encreeled. The way those trout managed to absorb the insect without absorbing the hook was astonishing. In about an hour the sun again disappeared, and the fish stopped feeding, and, indeed, it was little use attempting to fish up beyond the topmost bend, owing to the adverse wind; so I knocked off, with ten trout weighing exactly five pounds, or an average of half a pound—not a bad take, considering the lowness of the water. Most of these had been taken with the fly, but all the biggest, averaging three-quarters oı a pound, went to the credit of the creeper.

I now determined to give a day entirely to a fair trial with the creeper, and to this end read up during the evening all the literature I could find on the subject. Ah, brother angler! you know by sad experience the difference between gaining information from angling manuals as you sit in your arm-chair with a pipe in your mouth, and trying to profit by what you have read when you come to do business at the water-side. To describe the apparatus and methods of fishing with the creeper would simply be to copy from the aforesaid manuals; the most lucid and helpful of them on this subject I

found to be "Pritt's Yorkshire Trout Flies." It is enough to say that the ordinary fly rod, line, and gut cast are suitable enough, with the addition, of course, of the special bait hook; a single No. 4 hook, armed with a bristle for the jacks or male insects, which are only about one-third the length of their better more-than-halves; and two small hooks, placed about half an inch apart, for the females. These hooks are inserted, the upper one in the thorax and the lower one in the tail-end of the insect, so that it hangs head upwards, with its legs, as it were, embracing the gut. The fish appear to take both baits equally well. By the time I had digested all the information I could glean, imagination ran riot in thoughts of the sport I should get on the morrow. Everything seemed favourable for a record in water where I knew the fish would take the bait, and where, I was told, creeper fishing was never practised. Pritt had said, "The lower and clearer the water is, the more chance of sport;" and again, "From the time you begin to find the creeper under the stones close to the water's edge, which, in warm seasons, will be about April 24th, up to the appearance of the stone-fly itself, he can distance all comers, and the fish you will get with it will, as a rule, be the largest fish you have." All the conditions, therefore, pointed to a big bag. So I rose in the morning eager for the fray; but, alas! when I turned out I found the one important condition necessary for success was wanting—the wind was contrary, blowing stiffly from the north-east. There was nothing to be done but to utilise that convenient easterly bend of the river and make the most of the few

pieces of streamy water which it contained, for the creeper is of no use in still water.

The trout did not seem to be very eager at first, and I had only taken three when I came to the upper limit of the fishable water. At this point it is bounded by a wall on either side. The water was so low that the stream at the head of the pool was divided into two parts by a large bank of stones. Wading up the middle of the water I took a good fish on the field side, and then turned my attention to the run on the further side. This was a narrow stream not more than eighteen inches wide, extending for about ten yards between the wall which carries the road and the bank of stones in the middle. As the wind was already very awkward, owing to the upward curve of the river, it was difficult casting. To get hung up either on the stones on the one side, or the grass growing in the wall on the other, would have been fatal. The extrication of the hook would have meant the dispersion of the trout. But by very careful manipulation, and working the line gradually up-stream, I managed to raise in this narrow run four large fish, three of which I got safely into the net, of course leading each one promptly down-stream, so as to avoid disturbing the water above. This was a typical place for the creeper, so I describe it in detail. I had taken from one spot, standing in the mouth of the river, four trout in perfect condition, and none under half a pound. But I had come to the end of my tether. It was most tantalising to know that the trout were well on the feed, and yet that it was utterly useless to make any further attempts

owing to the strong east wind. But for this the slaughter must have been terrific. The seven averaged nine ounces each—a small but handsome lot. Talking of averages, it is curious to note how fish of a similar size seem to rise on the same day. On consecutive days in September I whipped with fly exactly the same water, namely, from the wooden foot-bridge below the "Golden Lion" to the "New Inn" bridge, and took twelve fish each day; the first lot averaged fully seven ounces each, the last barely five ounces, and they ran very even. I need not say that I took no account of undersized fish.

The creeper, of course, changes into the stone-fly, locally termed the May-fly. On the day which I have described the creepers were already undergoing the transformation. When this is the case it does not matter which you use; the same tackle will do for both, and the fish seem to take them equally well. When, however, the stone-fly is fully out it is even more deadly than the creeper, and you never get an ill-conditioned fish with it. The only difference in using them is, that the creeper should be sunk a few inches, while the stone-fly may float nearer the surface—indeed, it is difficult to make it sink. But it should not be allowed to float nearly high and dry, as it is apt to do, for in that case the trout will seldom get hooked. Time and again I noticed the trout rise fairly to the floating insect and carry it off without giving the slightest pull. How it manages this instantaneous appropriation and evades the two hooks embedded in the body of the fly is a problem as yet unsolved.

This method of fishing may be profitably employed on those days (which are rather the rule than the exception) when the water is too low for the fly, during the period lasting from about April 24th to June 20th. It is not as artistic as fly-fishing, but it is a very good substitute for it, while the fish taken by it are always the finest, and give excellent sport after they are hooked.

I should like to make a further suggestion for improving the sporting capacities of our water at Horton, and that is, that grayling should be introduced. They could easily be obtained from the neighbouring river Yore, where the trout and grayling thrive well together; and if grayling were established they would prolong the angling season into the late autumn and even winter, and at least form an excuse for some of our anglers to slip away from the fogs of Manchester, and spend a day or two in the bracing air of Horton and unconventional ease of the "Golden Lion."

III.

A PLEA FOR THE GRAYLING.

BY J. A. H.

MOST anglers are content to take Charles Cotton's description of the grayling—"one of the deadest-hearted fishes in the world"—as correct, and judge this graceful little sporting fish accordingly. But

I think that Charles Cotton could never have fished for grayling at the right time of the year. Nor am I alone in this opinion ; I need only refer to the numerous authorities on the subject, Pritt, Senior, Walbran, Dr. Hamilton, and many others, who all bear testimony in favour of the grayling. The fact is that very few anglers have any idea what sport they might have, if, instead of hanging up their rods when September has passed, they would wend their way to the neighbouring streams of Derbyshire and Yorkshire, and cultivate a nearer acquaintance with this charming fish.

The joys of grayling fishing can only be appreciated by those who have experienced them. To my mind there is nothing more delightful than on a bright frosty day in October or November to be on the banks of a grayling stream with a fly rod in one's hand, and the fish rising all round one and refusing to be put down, pluck them as you may. They are free risers at times, but are most difficult to hook, for the smallest of flies and the finest of tackle must be used; and when once hooked they require delicate handling, for their mouths are most tender. And then the beauty of the fish when caught! Most anglers only know them in April, after they have spawned, when they often come readily to the fly; but there is as much difference between a grayling caught then, and one caught in September or October, as there is between trout taken in February and June. The open season for grayling begins on June 15th, though they do not come well to the fly until August, and the big fish are rarely caught until the end of September; but

October and November are the best months, though I have taken them with the fly in December and January. Grayling fishing has a fascination of its own, coming as it does when the glories of autumn are upon us, and the landscape is touched with the melancholy of the fading year. But at present I will regard the subject from a more practical point of view, and ask you to treat the charms of grayling fishing as an accepted fact, and to consider whether it would not therefore be adviseable to introduce these fish into the waters of the Manchester Anglers' Association in Ribblesdale.

One of the greatest arguments in favour of the grayling—especially to those who do not shoot—is that it comes in just when trout are going out. Trout fishing, as we all know, begins nominally at the beginning of February, but few anglers worthy of the name begin their fishing before March. We soon reach September, and if there are no grayling at hand our fishing is over for the year—just a short six months, during two-thirds of which the water is either too low or too high, or there is no wind or there is too much, or else there is thunder about, or something else. This does not give one many opportunities of catching fish, especially as most of us are able to go a-fishing only when we can arrange to get away from business, and not when it is the right time to go. Now, although "catching fish is not all of fishing," we like to get some sometimes, and anything which increases the possibilities of attaining this object should not be ignored. By introducing grayling into the upper Ribble we should

have more opportunities for sport during August and September, and also have four additional months added to our fishing season ; this ought to be sufficient reason for us to consider seriously whether it may not be adviseable to introduce this sporting little fish into the waters at Horton. But further than this, the very best time for grayling fishing is when the water is low, and this applies to August and September, when trout are still in season, as well as to the later months of the year, when grayling are the only fish we may angle for. How many of us there are who have started off Horton-wards full of hope, only to find on our arrival that the river was hopelessly low, and fishing out of the question! If we had had grayling in the stream, the case might have been different. I admit that they are somewhat capricious risers; so are trout, but my experience leads me to believe that the best time to catch grayling is when the water is low; which, alas! is not the case with trout. Here we admirers of the grayling have a very strong argument, and in further support of it I may mention a few days from my own experience. One day I was at Rocester on the Dove, at the latter end of August—the water was low, the sky was bright and the sun hot, and it is hardly necessary to say that, as I had been fishing for trout, when the afternoon drew on there was very little more in my creel than when I started. I was lying on the bank, smoking and basking in the sun, and wondering what I should do to pass the time until my train was due, when the keeper came up. "Have you had any sport, sir?" "Well, need you ask?—only two

small trout," was my disconsolate reply. "If I were you, sir, I should go down to the weir, and try for the grayling; there's been a good few rising there all day." I immediately "blessed" my own stupidity for not thinking of this before, for grayling are curious fish, and though not rising all over the river, will often rise steadily all day in one particular spot. I hurried away to make the most of the time, which was now only too short; for when I reached the large pool below the weir, I found my friend the keeper was right. To cut matters short, in very little over an hour I creeled seven brace of grayling weighing just seven pounds. Later on in the same year, at the end of chill October, long after the trout fishing was over, on the same water I got 9½ brace of grayling weighing 9¼ lbs., all taken with the fly.

Here is another similar experience, also on the Dove. On this occasion I was fishing higher up the river, where the trout fishing is excellent, on the Birdgrove Club water, which holds some of the largest trout in Derbyshire. I had heard that the water was hopelessly low. A bank holiday, however, and some heavy rain in Manchester,—which as I found out later carefully avoided the Dove—tempted me to go down and take my chance, with the usual result; for it was one of those days when your friends kindly advise you to "chuck your hat at them." A low river and a sky of the purest blue did not inspire me with hope, but my past experiences helped me on this occasion, and wending my way to where I thought the grayling might be rising, I was lucky enough to have my hopes rewarded. I returned home with 7½ brace of

grayling weighing 8 lbs.; but this time I worked hard, for the fish would not look at a sunk fly, and only took a small Yellow Tag fished perfectly dry. The moral I wish to draw from the foregoing is that, but for the grayling, on each occasion I might have had to toil all day for perhaps a brace of trout, or perhaps nothing; instead of which I was lucky enough to get two catches of which any angler might feel proud.

There is another point I ought not to miss, and that is the short time in which grayling attain a decent size. In "Salmonia" Sir Humphry Davy states that such fish as were hatched in May or June became nine or ten inches in length by September, and weighed from five to eight ounces, though probably in our northern streams the rate of growth would not be so rapid as in the river Teme, of which he was writing. But in any case, in a very short time one would get really takeable fish, and indeed, fish which one might take all the year round, for grayling under ½lb. are not supposed to spawn—so says the late Francis Day, the greatest authority on British *salmonidæ*.

The scene of the following experience was nearer home. One September I visited Horton, going as usual when I could get away, and expecting, with my usual luck, to find the river dead low—which I did. I fished for two days with as much result as you can imagine, and finally I bolted off in despair to Wensleydale, for there, at any rate, grayling were to be found, to say nothing of charming scenery. The water was of course low, for the Ribble and the Yore rise on much the same

watershed, and I cannot say the grayling were rising freely, but at least I got some fishing worth calling fishing, of which there did not seem much probability at Horton. On my return I met Walker on the bridge. He shook his head sadly as he looked at the river, which had now dwindled to that apology for a stream which we unfortunately know so well. "Well, and have you coort oot up yonder?" asked Walker, evidently not expecting that I had. When I turned out of my creel half a dozen nice grayling, of which the biggest was close on a pound, his face was a picture. The old boy does not like to have his ideas upset. "Dom it," he said, "whoi can't *we* have them soart o' fish?" I managed to bring Walker to my way of thinking very easily, and I wish we enthusiasts for the grayling had always as easy a task before us.

I hope I have proved that grayling may be a very desirable addition to any fishery; and I will now touch on the points likely to be raised against me. Prejudice one cannot fight, but, when a reasonable argument is brought forward, it is a duty, in advocating what some people look on as a revolution, to refute it. The most common objection is that grayling devour trout spawn, and must eventually be the means of thinning down the stock of the latter fish. In the first place, I have never seen this proved; I think the theory is not based on fact, and even if it were, it would not matter at Horton. For, curiously, grayling seldom leave the main stream, and my impression is that whatever spawn is deposited by trout in the main river at Horton does not come to

anything; the heavy floods of winter and early spring must often sweep it all away, or else bury it inches deep with stones and gravel. Further, I believe the fry and yearlings which we turn in are what mainly stock the river. In proof of this, I would call attention to the great increase in the stock at Horton compared with what there was before artificial breeding operations were begun. This is a fact to which the resident landlords have borne witness. Great credit is due to the Fishing Committee for the eminent success of the fish hatchery. I dare say that someone may object that in the Derbyshire streams the stock must be almost entirely kept up by the spawn deposited in the main rivers, as there are few, if any, tributaries for the trout to ascend for spawning purposes. But they don't have floods in Derbyshire like those in the Ribble; and further, the Derbyshire trout seem very well able to look after themselves. My own opinion is that "the boot is on the other leg;" the poor, much-abused grayling, from its habits, is compelled to deposit its spawn in the main river in April or May, when Master Trout is just beginning to pull himself together again, and I have no doubt the latter is very much on the rampage at that time, and on the look-out for the daily rise of the "grayling ova" fry. The late Francis Day states that at the end of July the fry are one to five inches long, and that in aquaria it has been observed that trout will readily eat young grayling. Perhaps my opponents will look on this as an argument in favour of their introduction, as being the means of providing additional food for the

trout. I suppose no one would contend that the grayling goes for young trout. His small mouth is hardly adapted for such food ; but certainly the trout will reap any revenge which is due to him when the small grayling hatch out.

I have also seen it stated that grayling will bully trout. Again, I think, "the boot is on the other leg." The grayling is comparatively a delicate and timid fish, whereas the trout, with all due respect, is a pugnacious rascal. Many a time have I seen small trout flying for their lives when they had ventured a little too near the haunt of one of their great-grandfathers, but I have never yet seen a grayling pursuing another fish. One of the strongest arguments I ever read was a remark by "South-West" in one of his interesting little notes in the *Field.* I think his name ought to carry weight, for he is one of the best, if not the best of fishermen in the south of England, with an experience of many years. He is speaking of the Test, and here are his words :— "It would be an evil day for Houghton if the grayling followed the example of the May-fly and grannom in deserting the river."

But the strongest point of all is the fact that with the exception of a few instances, where grayling have been introduced in modern times,—they have been living side by side with the trout for centuries. If half what is said against the grayling is true, by this time we should have very few trout left in many streams in England. "Prejudice is not proof," and those who have experienced the fascinations of grayling-fishing cannot be expected

to yield to mere prejudice. I don't lay claim to more than ordinary skill in fishing, and unfortunately my experiences are but few, but I have killed good baskets of trout in Derbyshire, and in the very same waters I have taken numbers of grayling. The same thing holds good of the rivers of the south of England, and the Shropshire streams; and I recently received a letter from Mr. F. M. Walbran telling the same story of the Yorkshire rivers. He writes as follows:—

"On June 21, 1889, on the Wharfe, I killed 44 trout weighing 21lbs. On the same water on November 21, 1889, I killed 44 grayling weighing 28lbs. Again on the Yore in December, 1890, I killed 36 grayling weighing 14lbs., and on the same water I have killed 16lbs. of trout per day. Beyond this you do not want to go and *I say without fear of contradiction that trout and grayling will thrive well together.*"

Mr. T. E. Pritt in the "Book of the Grayling" writes as follows:—

"The fish (trout and grayling) thrive equally well together in those rivers which are suited to them, and grayling must be acquitted of any tendency to diminish the number of trout, if the ordinary supply of food is fairly plentiful."

Evidently the Yorkshire fishermen have no doubts on the subject, and if we turn to the writings of southern anglers we find the same opinion. Mr. R. B. Marston writes as follows in the *Fishing Gazette*:—

"So long as there is plenty of room and food for both, I do not believe that trout are prejudicially

affected. . . . A river which contains trout and grayling in good quantities is, in my opinion, far more interesting to fish, and affords far more sport, than one stocked with trout only, and of course for a much greater portion of the year."

Again, Dr. Hamilton, also writing to the *Fishing Gazette*, uses the following words :—

"We feel sure that trout and grayling will live quite happily together."

Other similar testimony to the merits of the grayling could be given, but it is hardly necessary.

My belief is that those who argue that grayling spoil trout fishing have not hit on the real reason why their sport is not so good as it used to be. Where grayling have been introduced, or where they have been living with the trout for hundreds of years, and are supposed to be spoiling the trout fishing, it is more than probable that these rivers are suffering from the same misfortunes as many others where there are no grayling ; it may be too many fishermen, too much draining, or one of the many causes by which we fishermen try to account for the fact that we cannot make as good baskets as our forefathers did, or indeed as we used to do ourselves. I say again, let those who say grayling are spoiling their trout fishing be quite sure that their streams are the only ones where the fishing is not what it used to be.

The grayling is a fish which grows rapidly to a decent size, often to a very large size, and it is well worth introducing both for the fact that it gives us a much longer fishing season and greater possibilities of sport,

and also for its fine sporting qualities. All authorities agree that grayling and trout will do well together on one condition: you must have sufficient food for both. As regards Horton it is only necessary to turn up the stones on the river bed to see the capabilities the river has in food supplies, and in the excellent condition of the trout there is further proof of abundance. Besides this, grayling lie more in the pools and gentle runs, where trout do not as a rule lie. The introduction of this fish would increase the Ribblesdale fishing-water by fully one-half, and turn into good fishing-water what is now practically useless. As to whether the water at Horton would really suit grayling I do not feel qualified to speak; but some parts of the river seem excellently adapted for them, particularly the long pools and still runs below Horton Bridge, where one seldom thinks of fishing for trout. And surely, by judicious care, it would be possible to regulate the stock to suit the food supply; and if they were found to be too numerous it would not be difficult to net them out, for they are far more easily netted than trout. In conclusion, I can only repeat and say with old Walker "Whoi shouldn't *we* have them soart o' fish?"

NOTE ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE GRAYLING—AND ON SOME CURIOUS ERRORS BY THE AUTHORITIES.

BY J. A. H.

In Mr. Day's interesting "British Salmonidæ" there is a curious geographical blunder in reference to the various rivers where the grayling

is found, viz , " In Derbyshire and Staffordshire, the Dove, the Wye, the Trent, the Blithe, and the *Hodder*." The last mentioned stream we all know to be one of the most charming rivers of Yorkshire. It occurred to me that I had seen the same mistake before, and I presently discovered it in an article by Cholmondeley Pennell, in one oi the Badminton volumes on fishing. There, too the Hodder figures as a Staffordshire stream, and upon further investigation I was much struck by the similarity between different authors, both in their mistakes and in the wording of their sentences. The following are a few illustrative extracts, as ar as possible in chronological order; but as I have not carried my search further back than the present century, perhaps the originator of the blunder is yet to be found. The first quotation is from " Salmonia," by Sir Humphry Davy, published in 1828—" The grayling is a rare fish in England, and has never been ound in Scotland or Ireland I know of no river further west than the Avon in Hampshire. They are found in some tributary streams which rise in Wiltshire. I know of no river containing them on the north coast west of the Severn; there are very few only on the upper part of this river, and in the streams which form it in North Wales. There are a few in the Wye and its tributary streams. In the Lug, which flows through the next valley in Herefordshire,they are found, but are not common. In Derbyshire and Staffordshire, the Dove, the Wye, the Trent, and the Blithe afford grayling; in Yorkshire, on the north coast, some of the tributary streams of the Ribble ; and in the south, the Ure, the Wharfe, the Humber, the Derwent, and the streams that form it, particularly the Rye." I quote this passage to point out that it forms a sort of foundation for some later writers. Ronald quotes it in full, but acknowledges the original author It is curious to note that no mention is made of the Derbyshire Derwent, a far more important stream than the Wye. In " Fly Fishing," by Shipley and Fitzgibbon, published in 1838, we find what may be the original mistake in the following passage : —" In the southern counties of Hampshire and Wiltshire, the grayling is found in the Test and in both the Avons ; in Herefordshire in the Dove, the Lug, the Wye, and the Irvon ; in Shropshire in the Teme and the Clun ; in Staffordshire in the *Hodder*, the Trent, the Dove, the Churnet, and the Wye ; in Derbyshire in the Dove ; in Merionethshire in the Dee, between Curwen and Bala ; in Nottinghamshire in the Trent ; in Lancashire in the Ribble ; in Yorkshire in the Derwent, the Ure, the Wharfe, and the Whiske, near Northallerton Dr. Heysham says it is occasionally taken in the Eden and the Esk in Cumberland." This passage contains several mistakes. The Hodder, as was pointed out before, is a Yorkshire stream ; the Wye is in Derbyshire, not in Staffordshire ; and the Dove is as much a Staffordshire as a Derbyshire stream. As in Davy no mention is made of the Derbyshire Derwent. These mistakes are the less excusable, as

Shipley was a native of Ashbourne. Passing on to 1885, we find Pennell writing as follows in the Badminton Library:—"Of the counties producing this fish, probably Herefordshire and Shropshire contain the best, as they certainly contain the most celebrated streams. The former includes the Dove, the Lugg, the Wye, and the Ervon, and the latter the Clun and Teme. In Hampshire and Wiltshire the grayling is found in the Test, Wharfe, and both the Avons; in Staffordshire in the *Hodder*, Trent, Dove, and Wye; in Derbyshire in the Dove; in Merionethshire in the Dee, between Curleen and Bala; in Lancashire in the Ribble; in Yorkshire in the Derwent, Ure, Wharfe, and Whiske, near Northallerton; and in Cumberland in the Esk and Eden." The similarity between this and the preceding extract is almost verbatim. Curleen is no doubt meant for Corwen. At first sight this seems to be a misprint; but in a quotation rom a later book by the same author, "Sporting Fish of Great Britain, 1886," we find this mistake reprinted in another form: "In Hampshire and Wiltshire the grayling is found in the Test, the Itchen, and in both the Avons, etc.; in Herefordshire in the Teme, the Lug, the Wye, and the Arrow; in Shropshire in the Teme and the Clun; in Staffordshire in the *Hodder*, the Trent, the Dove, the Blythe, and the Wye; in Derbyshire in the Dove; in Merionethshire in the Dee between *Curlen* and Bala; in Lancashire in the Ribble; in Yorkshire in the Derwent near Scarborough, in the Yore, the Wharfe, and in the Whiske, near Northallerton; in the Rye, Swale, Costa (Yorkshire), and the Dove, near Pickering; in Berkshire in the Kennet at Hemgerford; in Cumberland, according to Heysham (but this appears doubtful), in the Esk and the Eden." Here we have practically the same thing over again with a few variations and another way of spelling Corwen. One more quotation. In "Fly Fishing" by Dr. Hamilton, published in 1884, we read:—"In England the grayling is found, according to Yarrell and others, in the following rivers: In Hampshire and Wiltshire the Test, Itchen, and Avon; in Herefordshire the Lug, the Wye, the Irvon, and the Arrow; in Shropshire the Teme, the Clun, and the Corve; in Staffordshire the Trent, the Dove, and the Wye; in Derbyshire, the Dove and the Wye; in Merionethshire in the Dee; in Yorkshire in the Derwent, the Ure, the Wharfe, and the Whiske; in Cumberland in the Eden and the Esk." This author perpetuates some of the mistakes. It is amusing to find how a mistake started fifty years ago, possibly in the last century, has been reproduced in the present day. I do not wish to disparage the valuable works of any of the above-mentioned angling writers, as I have derived much pleasure from studying their books, and have gained many useful hints from them; but it is a pity such a blot should appear upon their pages.

REMINISCENCES OF EARLY ANGLING DAYS.

BY HENRY VANNAN, M.A.

I.

"PISCATOR nascitur non fit," to alter the Latin proverb; and I think that the exceptions to this rule are not greater in proportion than they are in the case of mental and physical endowments, which, it is agreed, are in a general way transmitted by parents to their offspring. We not infrequently find that clever parents have stupid children, and often the father's gift in some special direction is conspicuous by its absence in the son. Thus I have heard of the son of an eminent mathematician, who was never able to master the simplest elements of Euclid, nor work correctly the most trifling algebraical problem, though he was by no means wanting in ability of another kind. In the case of fishing you may find instances of a similar character, but personally I have never met with a family where the father practised the gentle art without the love of the sport being developed in one or other of the junior members. It is no doubt true that circumstances tend very materially to foster the liking; as, for example,

being brought up near some river well stocked with fish. But even in this case we meet with very many who, living in the midst of everything calculated to inspire the piscatorial furor, and having every opportunity of exercising the art, will tell you that they never handled a rod or cast a line in their life. Somehow, they say, they never had any turn for it; they had not sufficient patience, and so forth.

But, my angling brother, however we may differ as to the origin of the love of fishing in ourselves or others, there is one point on which I am sure we agree, *viz.*, that the practice of the art has been to us a source of boundless delight; that its pleasures never pall, and leave no sting behind them, and that its prospective preparation and actual exercise are alike enjoyable. Whether we sit by the red glow of our "ain fireside" when the wintry storm beats furiously against the window-pane, and discuss with our friend the mysteries into which only "cunning craftsmen" can enter; or wander with the same congenial spirit, rod in hand, by the margent green of lake or stream when buds are opening, and "the time for the singing of birds is come;" or when the bright suns of summer render peculiarly delightful the grateful shade of sequestered wood and glen, or again, when laden wains are bearing home the rich treasures of a bountiful harvest—in all its circumstances and surroundings, our angling experience is full of healthful and innocent enjoyment, and its recollections, early and more recent, will abide with us as green and restful spots in our memory while life remains.

The early experiences of most anglers must necessarily have a good deal in common, and there are those whom nothing delights but the scientific discussion of the latest devices in rods, or lines, or lures: but then the true angler is highly sympathetic, though to some this may appear paradoxical. When we who began to be fishers just as far back as our memory can carry us compare notes together, it may not be without some benefit, if it be but to strengthen the influence of those associations which cluster round our favourite pastime, to amuse us by a retrospect of the slow and uphill process of study, and patient persevering practice, which brought as a reward the fair amount of skill we have attained; to make us more gentle and kind, and affable and communicative to the wandering juveniles and other tyros who cross our path, with their feet upon the first rung of the ladder of their fishing experience, and commonly a painfully apparent lack of necessary gear; and to awaken in us feelings of thankfulness that we have an amusement to fall back upon which takes us into a pure and health-giving atmosphere, and brings us into close contact with nature in her charming and ever varying moods. Though cynics may speak of the harshness and cruelty of our sport, and rail against the meanness of its artifice and deception, yet I maintain that its influences are all beneficial and humanising, that a man is a better man all round for belonging to the craft; and if I have a friend, who, in addition to the other virtues for which I respect and esteem him, adds this merit, that he is a fisher, I shall value his friendship all the more.

My earliest fishing impressions are associated with a beautiful little brook, or, as Burns would have called it, "a wimplin' burn," which flowed and still continues to flow, in unpolluted clearness, a few miles from a certain University town some distance north of the Tweed. Bubbling up from among the hills which used always to look so far away, and brought such strange, weird thoughts of terrible loneliness and boundless distance, it comes down through a charming valley, in which, covering its channel and fed by its limpid waters, are two or three large reservoirs, forming the water supply for the denizens of the neighbouring town. In this stream, and on that part less remote from home, my apprenticeship to the gentle art began, at the somewhat early age of six or seven years. The brook has a name which is neither here nor there, for with us in those early days it was sufficiently described in our own circle as "the burn," because then we knew no other. At the spot where our fishing always began, whether we went "up" or "down," there stood a "clachan," or small group of rustic houses, of as quaint and picturesque a character as you might see in a summer day, consisting of the smith's house, the "smiddy," and one or two lowly dwellings, inhabited by the hinds on the neighbouring farm.

Here the brook was crossed by an old and very rough road from the city, which marked off exactly the two portions known to us as "up the burn" and "down the burn;" these, though immediately adjoining, were as different in their aspects as can well be imagined. Above

the clachan the stream meandered for some miles through an open and undulating country, richly clad with green pastures and waving grain, but with no trees shading its banks, and few pools to afford harbourage for trout. Below the clachan, on the other hand, was a dark and silent glen, sloping upwards on each side to a considerable height, and densely wooded. Here the burn assumed a much wilder aspect, and broke into a succession of falls and pools, where the trout were large and plentiful.

But how oppressive the silence of the place! How dim the light to our childish eyes! How solemn the answering notes of the cushats croodling from among the topmost trees, whose heads, we knew, were lifted up into the daylight! And it is not wonderful that the impressions left upon our memory by these two neighbouring spots are as widely different as were their aspects. "Up the burn" all was light, brightness, and cheerfulness, and the brook flowed shallow and sparkling and noisy, through luxuriant valleys and cultivated fields. The shepherd kept us company with his collie and his flocks, or the ploughman with his team; or the sower sowed his seed; or the reaper harvested his grain. There was a sense of freedom and exhilaration in the clear crisp atmosphere, and we shouted and laughed and sang for very joy. "Down the burn," on the contrary, in the glen, that is to say, all to our youthful perception was gloom, darkness, silence, loneliness, eerieness, dreariness; spirits at zero, dark, deep shaded pools, with the witches' froth perpetually circling round them. Here, at a spot

which had been carefully cleared in order to admit the air and sunlight, stood "the big house," as it was called, grim and vacant, for the proprietor rarely visited it, and it was generally confided to the care of an old female retainer of the family.

A thorough-going "big house" it was too, with its respectable family ghost, or rather ghosts, for if I remember rightly the number was not limited to one. For the kindly consideration of the owner in never visiting the place we were, of course, profoundly grateful, as our liberty on this account was greatly increased. But alas! what did all this liberty avail so long as Mordecai the Jew sat in the king's gate? Or, to drop the language of metaphor, so long as nameless dread held us back at the very threshold, unless when we were in the company of our elders. For did not we know full well that the place was haunted; and had we not heard, and drunk in greedily, shivering as we listened, the stories current of sealed presses and locked-up apartments? into which, for reasons best known to those whom it might concern, the light of day was never allowed to enter, but which, nevertheless, contained—so those said who had heard of it from others who had themselves looked through the keyhole—I forget exactly what, but something very dreadful, as you can well imagine. This explained satisfactorily to us why the proprietor never resided there, and how it was that years afterwards, when a family took the house at a merely nominal rent, they were not able to endure their wretched existence. What with invisible beings scudding

past them on the stairs and corridors, when with trembling steps, and candle held before them, they were endeavouring to navigate their weary way to bed; what with unearthly howlings in the chimneys, strange tappings at the windows, and apparently unexplainable nocturnal whistlings in the neighbourhood of the house, servants left precipitately after a few days' service, and master and mistress and sons and daughters were fain to hurry after them. But that was not all, nor worst of all; for was it not affirmed to be a fact by those who had been eye-witnesses, and did we not therefore implicitly believe it, that once every year, on a certain night, at that dread hour when witches and warlocks were abroad for uncanny purposes, a sombre hearse, drawn by four coal-black steeds, and followed by a long train of ghostly torch-bearers, was to be seen flitting silently like a phantom through the glen? Need it be said, after this, that unless in the company of our respected seniors, and even then with feelings of modified fear, we seldom ventured within the dread precincts.

When alone, we preferred to confine our attention to that part of the brook already alluded to, which was free and open, and which abounded in minnows and beardies, the former of which we would catch by the dozen and take home, only to be thrown out or given to the cat; but for all that we discussed our relative takes with the liveliest interest, and were as proudly appreciative of a large paunchy minnow as perhaps we should now be of an unusually fine trout or salmon. I well remember a story that was current amongst us

in after years, of one of our confraternity, a veteran of eight, who caught such a splendid specimen of the minnow tribe, so broad and baggy, that he went home in high glee to prove to his father that he had caught a veritable trout at last. In vain did the experienced angler attempt to convince his boy that it was only an overgrown minnow. He had made up his mind that it was a trout, and, like many another and older angler, convinced against his will, he sturdily retained his own opinion.

This part of the brook was shallow, and had little shelter for trout save under its grassy banks, but it was a delightfully safe place for youthful anglers to learn the rudiments of their art ; and so it came to pass that we learned the difference between a minnow and a trout, by catching some of the latter, and from that time the minnow was looked upon with proper feelings of disdain, as beneath the notice of those who had on several occasions carried home fish which had actually been cooked and brought to table. A famous opportunity was afforded us here of practising that most popular mode of fishing amongst boys, called "guddling," or "gumping." I ought to mention, however, that we never resorted to this plan until we had been unsuccessful with rod and line. It was fair means with us first ; the other kind afterwards.

We were sometimes surprised at the large size of the trout we succeeded in disturbing—not necessarily catching ; though we frequently threw out a fair number. Personally I never cared much for this style of fishing.

Wading and splashing about in the cool stream on a hot summer's day was enjoyable in the extreme, and as one recalls these scenes in the days of other years, and thinks of the separations in our little band, Burns's immortal words come unbidden to our memory:—

> We twa hae run about the braes,
> And pu'd the gowans fine ;
> But we've wandered mony a weary fit
> Sin' auld lang syne.
>
> We twa hae paidl't i' the burn
> Frae mornin' sun till dine ;
> But seas between us braid hae roared,
> Sin' auld lang syne.

Wading for pleasure was always delightful, but to poke about with hands and arms, under the hollow, worn banks, dislodging fish or water-rats as the case might be, was, to say the least of it, risky, and calculated to raise feelings of hesitancy and apprehension.

A friend of mine tells how when a boy he was quite an adapt at guddling, and pursued the art successfully for a long time. A companion and he were one day busily plying their sport, the latter wading in the water doing the practical, the former giving directions from the bank. A fine trout was started and observed to dart under cover. My friend gave chase, the other meanwhile keeping an eye on the exact spot where it had disappeared. The hands and arms were cautiously inserted. "I have him now," he shouted as he seized the fish. "He's a beauty," said he on the bank. "A pound if he's an ounce," was the reply from the water. "Hold hard till

you work your thumb under his gill," said he from the bank. "Look out," said the other as he flung the prize ashore—not a trout of a pound, but a fine frog of half a pound, and his thumb had been under its *gill!* Since then he has devoted his attention exclusively to rod-fishing.

Another and more satisfactory mode of capturing fish, which I have seen practised by boys in the country districts of Scotland, is snaring or girning them. This plan seems to require a great amount of skill and dexterity. One day, in the West of Scotland, I came upon a herd laddie successfully plying this art in a considerable stream, and I stood at some distance and watched with interest the "modus operandi." The water was shallow and clear. He cautiously waded up stream, or stepped lightly from stone to stone, keeping his eyes on the water. Then he would be seen working away for some time at a particular spot, after which he generally threw a fish out on the nearest bank. When he had taken about half a dozen good trout in this way he came out to collect them and give a look to his cows. I had some conversation with him and he showed me his appliance, which was a simple loop of hair. This he managed to insert from behind under the tails of the trout lazily basking in the sun, or perhaps enjoying their after-dinner siesta, if indeed it be so that fish sleep; and, gently slipping the noose forward to the gills "he nippit them oot," to use his own expression, on to the bank. It certainly was a clever operation, and it must have been a startling one for the fish.

II.

One notable figure that stands prominently out in my recollection of these early scenes is the smith of the little clachan already referred to—"Auld Andra," as he was generally called; not, however, "a mighty man," as Longfellow describes, "with the muscles of his brawny arms as strong as iron bands." As a youth he may have been a fairly strong man, but even when I first knew him he seemed aged, though probably not sixty. He looked small, and was bent and somewhat shrunken; but for all that he kept the whip hand of his two stalwart apprentices and got through a lot of work. Andrew was remarkable for two things; the first his head-dress, an extra tall chimney-pot hat, without which he was never to be seen either in the house or the smithy. I used almost unconsciously to speculate about this ancient appendage, which continued fit for service long after the beaver was worn off and nothing remained but the stiff, straight-up-and-down framework. Andrew was a man of sense and resource, and a heavy snuffer. Most ordinary men who affect the dignity of a long hat are content to rest in the belief that its one and only purpose is for covering the head. Andrew, however, saw in the immense vacuum above his cranium a convenient depository for odds and ends, such as his pocket handkerchief and snuffbox, and very properly used it accordingly. The other circumstance by which he was distinguished was his mode of speech—almost the broadest dialect of Doric Scotch I ever heard.

The late lamented Mr. Kennedy, the Scottish vocalist, used to tell that when he was on his tour in the Far West, after an entertainment given in a place where the audience were principally Scottish emigrants, an aged woman waited to shake hands with him, and on his enquiring how she enjoyed the concert, she replied that she had been greatly pleased, but she "thocht he micht hae gi'en them 't *a wee braider*." Andrew's speech would certainly have come up to this old lady's standard. Unfortunately he was in the habit of interlarding and enforcing his remarks with sundry expletives and unnecessarily strong expressions, which, happily, in these days of progress and enlightenment, have fallen considerably into disuse, and he seemed to be much of the same opinion as the old Scotch wife whose son had been severely reproved by the minister for his profanity. She rehearsed the circumstances of the case to a neighbour, who, instead of sympathising with her as she expected, upheld the authority of the clergyman; so, feeling keenly the position of her son, she replied, in closing the argument, "Weel, weel, swearin' *may* be wrang, but for a' that, ye maun alloo' that it's a great orniment tae conversashin." It is only doing justice to the old man's memory to say that when I knew him in later years this habit was very much modified, if not entirely given up.

His wife "Mysie" was a little retiring woman, so short-sighted that she had to peer disagreeably near your face before she recognised you. She did not appear to be endowed with any great amount of thrift,

but she kept her husband pretty comfortable and did not contradict him too often—one of the chief secrets, I am informed, of getting along smoothly in the married state. The house and smithy stood side by side, and behind, entering through the latter, was Andrew's "yaird," in which he took great pride. Here, amongst his other plants, he cultivated most beautiful wallflowers, the rich dark-brown double sort, and many of them were wall-flowers in the literal sense of the term, growing as they did out of crevices in an old, low, moss-grown wall at the top of the garden. After pointing out the beauties of the place he would say, "Noo ye maun get a floor to tak' hame," and then he would gather us a rustic posy of beautiful roses, marigolds, wallflowers and violets, with tall spikes of gardeners' garter standing up in the middle and waving like banners as we walked. The strong-smelling plants seemed to have most value in his estimation. "That's the stuff," he would say, cutting a great bunch of southern-wood and mint and thyme, and our bouquet was never considered complete until it had been surrounded by a thick layer of these fragrant herbs. Close to that part where we descended by a few steps to the smithy door on our way out, there grew two very large plants of rue and thyme, and stopping at the edge of the walk, and pointing first to the one and then to the other of these, he would look waggishly at us and say, "Noo, bairns, rue an' thyme."

The smith's dwelling-house consisted of "a but and a ben," that is the kitchen or common apartment of the

household, and the "spence," or best room, which was only used on state occasions, such as the advent of friends from a far country. Then, indeed, the place, at other times rarely entered, had to be furbished up. The mahogany table and hard horse-hair chairs, and the chest of drawers—the gudewife's pride—had to be polished; cobwebs and dust in general removed, and the huge tent-bed, hung all round with blue-striped print curtains—the most conspicuous object in the room—aired and rendered habitable. The kitchen, though not the most cheerful of apartments, was, if anything, the livelier of the two; at least, if you remained long enough in it for the eyes to become accustomed to the dim light which prevailed there at all seasons, some signs of life became manifest. What light there was entered by two small windows on opposite sides of the house, each containing one pane of thick glass with a large green knot in the middle. On each side of the little passage by which you entered there was a large box or press bed, and Andrew, whose father for fifty or sixty years before him had shod the horses, and made and mended the ploughs and harrows of the neighbouring farmers, used to point out the one in which he himself was born.

A word in passing on this kind of bed. Formerly they were the only kind in use among the peasantry of Scotland, and in many respects they were most comfortable. The bed itself was generally fitted into a recess, and in front it had sliding doors, which ran in a groove, so that it might be opened or shut at pleasure. Our

modern fashion is to have the bed pretty near the floor, but this primitive couch stood very high, and a wooden board was fixed along the front considerably above the level of the bed-clothes, which afforded the occupant a sense of security and a certainty of remaining where he was, which must have added to his comfort once he was fairly in. But here lay the difficulty. At sundry times and in divers places I have occupied a bed of this description, and like most people of some little physical activity, have attempted by a standing or short running leap to reach the land of rest, but almost invariably with the result of coming an excruciating blow on the patella, or, as an old Aberdeen lady, who had no idea of leaving any of the letters of a word unsounded, once phrased it in my hearing, "getting a fearful k-nock on the k-nee." If you, my friend, in your angling peregrinations should ever be reduced to the level of a "box-bed," my advice, founded on painful experience, most decidedly is:—Attempt no gymnastic feats, but quietly betake yourself, for assistance in ascending and descending, to the nearest chair. It does not require much stretch of imagination to believe that the shepherd in his lonely shieling by the bleak and exposed hillside, with the wintry storm beating furiously against his door, and the cold, piercing wind searching for entrance at every crevice and cranny, would be fain to declare that he would not exchange his cosy crib, made after the pattern I have described, for the most approved modern bed you could find him.

But to return to the smith. His life, but for one solitary exception, had been an uneventful one. He

scarcely ever went from home save to the neighbouring town, and, according to his own account, had slept but one night out of his own house, on the occasion of his making what was probably his first and last railway journey, to a place some forty miles distant from his home. Yet though he travelled so little he would frequently remark with great unction, though, I fear, with but a very indistinct notion of the subject, when questioning us as to what we were doing at school, that "jogrifurry was the stuff." He told us that while his father was still living, and he himself a strong young fellow at his best, he was awakened one night by sounds of scuffling and cries for help. On going out he found a poor packman in the grasp of a footpad, who made off immediately on his approach. Giving chase, he succeeded in capturing him and giving him up to justice. I cannot say whether the packman had been murdered outright or only robbed and maltreated. At all events, the smith was the chief witness against his assailant, and the result was that the man was hanged. I imagine that in those times the capital sentence of the law was carried into effect at or near the place where the crime was committed. Be that as it may, I distinctly recollect that an aged thorn, which grew in a field close to the roadside, was pointed out as the spot where the criminal was executed. For a considerable time after this Andrew was in danger of his life from the man's friends, and was obliged to keep almost constantly at home. His steps were dogged if he went abroad after dark, and frequently his father's house would be surrounded at midnight by an

infuriated crowd, who demanded that he should be given up to them. The little thatched cottage, however, was very strongly built, and did not present many assailable points; the windows were few, and a blacksmith is supposed to know how to fasten his door securely. Fortunately for the occupants of the cottage, the mob never attempted to set it on fire, which, from the inflammable nature of the roof, could have been very easily done, but contented themselves with hooting and yelling, and uttering imprecations upon the head of him who had brought their quondam companion to justice. By-and-bye they ceased their nocturnal visits, but for long after he never returned from the neighbouring town, after doing business and collecting money, without depositing it for safety in his boots.

It was alleged that at the trial the robber pronounced a curse upon the smith, declaring that he should never have a son who would be able to swear away the life of a man. For the truth of this I cannot vouch. It may have been one of those inverted prophecies which are sometimes promulgated after the event has transpired which fits them. Certain it is that the smith had but one child, a son, and he a poor helpless paralytic from his birth, spared to his parents for more than forty years, but all that time paralyzed in speech and in every limb. Poor Johnny! My earliest recollections of visiting the burn are mixed up mysteriously with him. Some little token of remembrance had always to be taken to him, and this it was my duty, while the elders were putting up their rods at the door and "crackin'" with Mysie, to

deliver to him in person, going for that purpose into the dimly-lighted kitchen, where he lay on the old-fashioned sofa, across the little window. This to me, as a child, was an ordeal. The unusually large, manly-looking head, and bearded face; the dark, piercing, intelligent eyes, sparkling out of the shadowy twilight, contrasted with the diminutive, childish frame, covered with the little tartan frock which loving hands had made for him; this, and the motions of his face, vainly attempting to express his thanks—so his mother said—all combined to form a picture that impressed my imagination with awe.

I afterwards learned from his mother that he had a perfectly intelligent apprehension of right and wrong, and a strong natural aversion to anything evil. He had also great influence over his father, and the rude, untaught visitors to the smith's house knew well that no rough words nor evil conversation would be tolerated in the presence of Johnny. While their son lived, the smith and his wife seemed thriving and comfortable, and many were the kind friends who came, not empty-handed, to see him. After his death the old couple sank into poverty. What the Divine purpose of such a life is we can but dimly see. No doubt the sight of helplessness and suffering softens the rugged nature and enlists the love and sympathy and help of the strong; yet after all we can but say,

> God has His mysteries of grace,
> Ways that we cannot tell;
> He hides them deep, like the hidden sleep
> Of him He loved so well.

III.

I NEED not say that as years passed over our heads the scenes in the wooded glen began to wear a different aspect, and that we gradually made the discovery that *it* was the place where trout were to be found, and worth a hundred of the upper reaches in the open fields. There were then dozens of little pools where nice trout could be taken, and two or three considerable linns, where at times I have taken trout of more than a pound weight, but that was when I was out of my apprenticeship. In the early days it was worm-fishing we practised, with the single hook, and, I am afraid, not the finest of tackle. We never thought of preparing bait, but generally got one of the smith's apprentices to dig us some worms. This stalwart young fellow was a prime favourite with us, because of his kindly ways and the interest he displayed in our juvenile sport. One day, when the old smith had sent him as usual to get some bait, and the "gudewife" had just been administering a refresher of milk all round, I ventured on the remark that he must be pretty comfortable in his situation, and that his mistress was an uncommonly nice person. "Ou ay," said he, "she micht be waur; she's no that ill if she wadna pit sticks in oor parritch." Of course, as Scotch laddies we all had our porridge for breakfast, but what the apprentice meant by his mistress putting sticks in the porridge, or with what intention these inedible morsels were introduced, for a long time I was unable to divine. But the blacksmith's wife—honest woman—was near-

sighted to a degree, as has already been mentioned, and on more than one occasion afterwards I saw her intently examining the contents of the porridge pot by the aid of a huge blazing faggot out of the fire, and as the steam caused piece after piece of the charcoal to drop, unnoticed, into the pot, the mysterious allusion was at length explained. This, however, by the way.

Unfortunately for our success at this period, we were invariably in the habit of selecting the larger sized worms for bait, under the impression that because they filled our eye they would also find favour in the eyes of the trout; and thus many a day, after tiring ourselves, and fishing, to our thinking, in the most approved fashion, we succeeded only in frightening the fish, and returned home with empty creels. It would be about this time, and probably when I was turned twelve, that a kind friend, whose memory I bless, put into my hands a copy of Stewart's "Practical Angler." I need scarcely say that I perused it with eagerness, that I read it a second time and studied it diligently, that I became a willing and submissive convert to his opinions, and immediately and gladly adopted his modes. I must confess, however, that I had not at first much faith in his style of bait-hooks. I bought a few in a tackle shop—they were then sold at threepence each, and were therefore a not inconsiderable tax on a schoolboy's slender purse—but with these I certainly was not successful. I examined them carefully and laid them aside, satisfied that they were dressed on too large hooks, and that there were too many of them. They had been made, as Stewart allows,

with four hooks on each. I had also implicitly followed his directions for putting on the worm, with the points of the hooks protruding, which is a decided mistake. I was not long in changing my tactics. I bought no more ready-dressed hooks, but invested in a small stock of materials, and tied them for myself, using only three small hooks and baiting in a different fashion. Then, as a result of studying Stewart, two principles became fixed in my mind—to keep out of sight, and at all costs to use fine tackle; and I may say that from that day forward a substantial measure of success was ensured to me. I never met Mr. Stewart, but it is only fair to say that I acknowledge more indebtedness for practical instruction to his book than to any other, on the same subject, that I have ever read.

I remember when there used to be a great deal of prejudice against the triple hook, and even yet bait fishers are to be met who cling tenaciously to the single one. When fishing with the tackle I was once accosted by a farmer, an angler of the old school, who inquired, "What sport?" I had only begun and had nothing to show. "What kind of hook do you use?" said he. I replied that I was fishing with Stewart's tackle. As he did not know what this was, I showed it to him, when he looked at it scornfully, and broke out in the vernacular, "An' dae ye expeck tae catch fish wi' thae daft-like heuks? I'm thinkin' ye'll scawr [scare] mair than ye'll catch in this watter," and with a look of contempt he strode on. He had not gone many yards when the same "daft-like" hooks somehow got fast in a fine, frisky trout, which

began to make such a commotion in the quiet pool that my sceptical questioner was fain to turn round and wait till I had landed my fish; but he had not the grace to come back and acknowledge that his judgment was hasty and his observations rude. Many a round dozen of the glen burn trout fell victims to the improved tackle and increased skill we had acquired. We seemed to feel that we had donned the "toga virilis" of fishing life, and that all boyish modes of manipulation must thenceforth be discarded.

Personally, my status at home was considerably enhanced by the results of my newly-acquired skill. The women-folk looked with less disfavour on my carryings-on in the kitchen, when I was preparing bait, and tenderly handling, to their horror and disgust, my stock of worms, or utilising the fire and evoking therefrom fearful and wonderful odours, the effects of profound chemical researches in the preparation of stains, dyes, and varnishes, and the compounding of various medicaments we had heard of for putting on the bait to attract the fish. My rod was now allowed to remain in the corner where I placed it, instead of being knocked about by all and sundry, as "that boy's old sticks which were always in the way," and the butt and mid-piece were more rarely used at cleaning times when there was a deficiency of carpet-beaters. My pastime was regarded in a different light now. It was no longer mere boys' play, tolerated to keep me out of mischief, or frowned upon as a snare which tempted me away from lessons. I had something to show for myself now when

I returned, my fish were greatly appreciated, and I became a person of considerable importance in the household.

At that time, in addition to the sport, my greatest pleasure was to see the beautiful spotted creatures, and to this day the sight of a fine dish of newly-taken trout, whether my own catching or any other person's, causes me intense delight. I suppose this is the case with all old fishers. Since those early days I have cast a line in many a river, and seen many a different variety of trout, but, however you may explain it, I have never seen any to compare with those of the bye-gone days. It may not be true, though we all seem to think so, that the skies were brighter and the fields of deeper green in the sunny days of childhood, and it may be only a delusion for me to suppose that the trout which came out of the glen burn were more beautiful than any I have ever looked at since. But I cling to the innocent delusion all the same, and would rather not be awakened from my youthful dream. Good old Izaak says, "God never did make a more calm, quiet, innocent recreation than angling!" I am always on the side of Walton.

My friend of early and later angling reminiscences, did you never feel thankful that you had such a pastime? If you think of it, I believe you will see cause. Have you never felt mind and body refreshed and invigorated by a day of silent communion with nature among the lonely hills, while you followed the windings of the river, disclosing to you new sights and sounds at every turn, and drank in the pellucid atmosphere as from a crystal

and life-reviving spring? Did you never feel, when the heart was over-burdened with anxious care, or weighed down with grief, that a mysterious but healing virtue seemed to flow from the practice of the gentle art? The mind found an object with which it could pleasantly engross itself; care sat lighter; foreboding became less gloomy; grief was imperceptibly assuaged. You saw things in a different light, and found an open channel in Nature by which you could look up to Him who is Nature and who is yet infinitely and immeasurably above it.

I have often moralised on the discipline of fishing. Perhaps, my friend, you smile; but there *is* a discipline connected with it after all, though this is more apparent to the initiated. I have scores of times lost my best and largest fish. I have been fast to a salmon for the best part of a day, and after wetting and sweating, and fumbling and stumbling, he has gone the way of many another big one, with a smile at my futile efforts to detain him, if so be that the majestic creature ever relaxes so far. I have come home from the fishing with my creel so weighty that every mile I trudged seemed like two or three. Again, I have returned without a fin, and though I tried hard to avoid them, have been button-holed by half a dozen kind inquiring friends, and have had to explain my want of success six times over ere reaching the shelter and seclusion of my own roof, with all the time an increasing consciousness that I was but half believed, and that I was set down as a poor hand. I have walked six miles

to my fishing ground on the last available day of my holiday, and finding the water in splendid order, have discovered to my dismay that I had left the reel behind me.

But why multiply examples of discipline and disappointment common to all anglers? Enough! Wellington is said to have declared that Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton and Harrow; and I am free to believe that in the patient perseverance and frequent disappointments of our craft we may, though unconsciously, have many a time been schooled to bear the harder crosses and losses incident to the stern battle of our life.

AN ANGLER'S CONFESSIONS.

BY T. E. PRITT.

HIS it was that set me thinking. The Kilnsey keeper had delivered himself one Anglers' Evening of a memorable utterance: "I have," said he, "been on this ground over thirty year, an' I've seen a sight o' gentlemen in my time, and a deal o' fishers—good 'uns, bad 'uns, and indifferent; an' I've come to one con-clusion, an' it's this: Th' best o' men is a bit leet gi'en at times." The philosophy of the keeper extended, I fancy, to anglers only, the ways of common men being outside the range of his observation. He had that night seen half-a-dozen of us, heavy fathers, fat and growing old, playing duckstone on the highroad in front of the inn. To a man of sixteen stone weight, after a hard day's fishing and a heavy dinner, this is an exhilarating pastime, and brings out all a man's good—and bad—points. But the air of the dales is irresistible; there is life and laughter in it. Have I not myself beheld a grave judge of one of Her Majesty's minor courts making horrible grimaces in the broad highway for the delectation of the village children? Ah! yes; when the moorland breezes blow the grime of great cities off us; when the telephone bell gives place to the

whistle of the curlew and the plover's cry ; when we see the sky is still blue as it used to be, years ago,—then the angler is a boy again,

> "Just at the age, 'twixt boy and youth,
> When thought is speech, and speech is truth."

The keeper's words set me thinking. I, too, have seen a number of anglers and have noticed many things. I have observed that in a properly constituted man the desire to kill something is inherent; his quarry may be salmon, or deer, or grouse, or rats, but the tyrant man must triumph. The very housemaid exemplifies this when she comes down on the innocent black beetle with the disgusting crack that blots him out for ever. And I am satisfied that every fisherman is a poacher by instinct. Now a poacher, according to the dictionaries, is one who kills game unlawfully, and that is hardly my meaning, but no other word seems to fit the situation I have in my mind. Given a clear opportunity, and what angler can forbear taking a cast over to the far side of the river, where the trout always rise better, and where that big fish has lain so long, proof against every wile offered to him? That part of the stream belongs to Mr. Schaunt, who will allow no one to fish it, and it would be untold delight to catch his biggest trout and stuff it for a trophy—caught in our water! Men don't usually tell these things ; they think them; and only he who has closely studied the ways of anglers for a long series of years, like my friend the keeper, learns these interesting facts. I recall two instances in my own typically innocent career. Many years ago I used to fish for gold-fish

in a certain Lancashire mill lodge, where the water was warm and the fish plentiful. Ordinary tackle with a small hook, and paste for bait, were all one needed. The commercial instinct had not permeated the gold-fish market at that time, and specimens which would now realise from fourpence to tenpence each went into my boy's basket like so many gudgeon, to the number of five-and-twenty or thirty in the course of an afternoon. One fine day, after many visits, I observed that a kind of small iron bath had been put by the side of one of the lodges. In this bath, through which a stream of warm water constantly flowed, were about a dozen of the largest, the fattest, and the goldenest gold-fish that ever illuminated a boy's eye. They were selected beauties, varying from half-a-pound to three-quarters each, and were obviously the property of some avaricious connoisseur about the mill. I sighed and looked, and sighed and looked; and the old Adam was upon me. Creeping close under the mill I dropped my bait in that bath and caught every fish. Then I departed as fast as my young legs would carry me, and have never since ventured in that mill-yard. When I pass it sometimes, even now, I fancy there may be someone on the look-out for me, though it must be five-and-thirty years since this happened. There are plenty of gold-fish there yet, and I might go again some day, if only an assurance were forthcoming that the man whose fish were thus annexed was dead.

Another incident comes to mind relating to a period twenty odd years later. It was my first salmon, that is

to say, it would have been, had not another fellow caught it. We were fishing the Hodder, and had cast over every likely bit on which we had permission to fish. There was one magnificent pool in which both of us felt that a fish was certain ; but we were absolutely prohibited from fishing it. We talked it over, in our anxiety to get a salmon, and agreed that under no circumstances could we fish the forbidden water. So we arranged to try the open river again, I starting at the bottom (where we were) and working up, and he beginning at the top and coming down ; and thereupon we parted. No sooner was he out of sight than I began to covet the pool I had no right to fish. I moved and seconded a resolution that I should try it, and then proceeded to discuss the question in solemn and solitary conclave. I argued it from every point of view, and in the end concluded that it would be a dirty trick to play on my friend, with whom a binding agreement had been made, and who was, as all anglers are, a man of strict integrity, who would himself never dream of doing such a thing. Still, Eve ate the apple, and I found it impossible in the end to resist the *peal*—that being a local name for grilse, perhaps the joke may pass. Wherefore, I sneaked off, feeling unspeakably mean, keeping my rod down lest my now distant friend should catch a gleam of it going in a dubious direction, or that I should be caught *flagrante delicto* and ordered off ignominiously. Ten minutes brought me to the coveted spot, on the verge of which stood a stone building used for storing fodder. Behind this building I screened myself, put on a new

fly, and generally rigged myself out for the purpose of carrying on the nefarious plans which would unquestionably land me a fish. All being ready, I stepped out, and at the same moment the other fellow also stepped out from the other end of the building. The situation was complete—but embarrassing. It was practically identical with that of the boy who begged his father to let him go to a circus. The stern parent could not afford; the boy said he had saved a shilling and would pay for himself. The father said a circus was not respectable; it was demoralising; no decent man or woman would think of entering such a place; and his wife backed him up in this opinion. An hour later, the boy went on his own account, and was carried by a great rush of spectators into the front row of the circus gallery, and dropping into a seat, looked up at the man next him to find he was alongside his father; at the same moment the guilty father discovered his son. "Say, father," said the boy, anxious to get the first word in such an appalling situation, "Say, dad, promise you won't lick me and I'll not tell mother you were here."

Having expressed our astonishment at the depravity of mankind in general, we tossed up who should fish the pool. Of course he won, and in a few minutes was fast in a fish of 8lb.—a fish which under happier circumstances would have been mine. I am not likely to forget the glee with which I saw him in difficulties with that fish, how it led him a dance, now up, now down, the river, over sharp boulders and wire fences, into deep gullies and out again on level

land; nor shall I forgive his delight when at length I gaffed the fish and he fondly clasped the salmon in his arms, exclaiming as well as his lack of breath would allow him, "Thank Heaven there are not two of you," just as the fond father nursing his first-born, "darkly, at dead of night," thanked goodness he was not twins. So, it seems to me, my Wharfedale friend was right, and the best of anglers—at least some of them—are lightly given at times.

That sets me off on another subject. Do fish feel pain? Don't, my good reader, shut up this chapter with a sigh and a remark that now I am going to gnaw a bare bone of contention. I propose only to relate some personal experiences which leave me in a state of utter perplexity as to whether fish feel pain or not. How can we decide it? With a truly marvellous optical system, the brain and nervous organisation in fish appears to be comparatively smaller than in almost any living creature. Yet I have seen a trout at Hawnby, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, show symptoms of excitement responsive to the footfall of a woman who fed him daily in a road-side well for the best part of thirty years. Lean, black, and miserable, it seemed as if, notwithstanding, some sense of gratitude existed in the fish toward the hand that remembered him in such a hopeless situation. And if memory of one kind, even though but the memory of the cupboard, why not a far-off remembrance of the river, and the rocks, and the waterfalls? And if these things, why not—but let us look at the perplexing point.

One fine August day, when the limestone almost cracked under the heat of the sun, and the river was at its lowest, I fished a little red worm up the Wharfe from Netherside to Starbottom. Just above Kettlewell Bridge there was a tiny pool of water between two moss-covered flat rocks, and in this pool, into which a little stream of water trickled from above, lay a trout of about half-a-pound. My worm fell just in the neck of the little stream, and the instant it passed into the pool the fish took it. I struck, and lifted him out of the water a foot or so, when he slipped from the hook and fell back to his little hold. My worm fell a second time in the same spot and again the fish took it without a second's hesitation, and I basketed him. Now, was this insensibility to pain or sheer hunger? Given a mouthful of cayenne pepper, however hungry a man is, he does not yearn for more.

So much for that; now look at this. A year or two ago a man of my acquaintance living at Howtown, Ullswater, used to throw a worm to a trout that had its location in the little beck that enters the lake just at the steamboat pier in Howtown Bay. Every day at dinner time, as he crossed the bridge spanning this tributary, my friend dropped the fish a worm or two, giving him occasionally a downright good feed. The fish always took the worms readily and rarely seemed to have enough. When this kind of nodding acquaintance had existed for some months, the poaching instincts of the man asserted themselves, and in an evil moment, with a gross disregard of the laws of friendship, he

determined to catch and eat his acquaintance, and for this purpose basely offered him a worm with a hook in it. The trout took it in a moment, unsuspicious of guile, and the man lifted the fish out ; but the fates were kind, and after rising in the world a couple of feet or so, the trout fell from the hook and was safe again in the stream. How did the fish behave thereafter ? Like my Kettlewell trout, did he take another worm immediately ? Not a bit of it ; from that day henceforward no worm his old friend offered him was as much as looked at : the acquaintance was at an end. Between these cases, which are only two of many similar instances within the knowledge of old anglers, there is such a wide range for speculation, that personally, I give the question up. No angler would willingly inflict pain on any of the creatures with which his sport renders it necessary for him to deal ; it happens they are all cold blooded, or practically so, and we may believe the wise men who tell us that the senses of these inferior beings are proportionately dulled. But the gentle angler is still gentle in the best sense when he "flicks" the living minnow on the head before impaling him.

The other thing in the train of thought into which I fell, consequent on the keeper's philosophic reflection, was the constant recurrence of libels on the whole race of anglers, for which the Yankee elongator of veracity is for the most part responsible. Hear Josh Billings: "The man that ken swop horses or ketch fish and not lie about 'em is just as pious as any man ever got to be in this world." And another irreverent joker of the same

incorrigible land says, "The angler goeth out in the morning and cometh back in the evening with the smell ot whiskey upon him, but the truth is not in him." I asked myself if the keeper meant that these things are true.

You, gentle reader, or simple, whichever you think you are; you who know nothing of the mysteries of the finest sport ever discovered by man—discovered as yet only in part; you who could not, if you hooked one, land a salmon under a week with a clothes-prop and a cart-rope—do not believe these things; they are base libels on a long-suffering race of men. For "sufferance is the badge of all our tribe." The horse-dealer may be conceded, but the angler—never. The popular idea of a fisherman is, that he is a harmless kind of fellow who goes out in an atmosphere thick with fog, catarrh, and rheumatism, and, selecting some wet sod by the river-side where the wind sighs mournfully through the bare trees, sits down quietly, drops in a bit of painted cork, and waits until something happens. Sometimes it does and sometimes it does not happen, but the angler rarely molests anyone and never complains. He will watch and wait; he will come again to-morrow and begin where he left off, with courage undiminished and patience unexhausted. And remember that this is the same man who cannot be got to go to church because the pews are uncomfortable. There is no other sport like it in existence.

Ah! let the scoffer laugh his loudest, he cannot drown the voice of the singing river, the throstle in the grey dawn, or the lark at mid-day. Thank Heaven

there are still running in this best of all lands streams untouched by the polluting crafts of man, which leap, and dance, and tumble as they did when gentle Izaak trod the daisy-speckled fields and poured out his thanksgiving that he lived. No man sees so much of Nature and her moods and marvels as the fly-fisher if he does but observe, and only an observant man can ever hope to become an expert angler. What is the wonderful story that the dainty *Ephemera* has to betray to inquiring minds when it stands for a brief moment upright on the water, a miracle of beauty invisible almost to our eyes, but wonderful beyond belief under the microscope? What is its history through its processes on the bed of the river? What is its purpose in the great economy of Nature? Whence came the colour, the feathery delicacy, the ever-varying shades?

And when day is over let the lamps be lighted in the inn or the farm-house, and let old men tell for the hundredth time the mighty deeds of their youth; let the stimulating grog go round in moderation. I never yet saw a merry party round a pump.

> "An' he that scorns ale to his victual,
> Is welcome to let it alone,
> There's some can be wise wi' a little,
> An' some that are foolish with noan."

There are so few things in everyday life that are worth telling just as they occur, that it is the angler's privilege to touch up the daily incidents of his craft just as an artist gives us effects which no eye but his could see; or, as the photographer, bland and affable, produces

astounding marvels of unsuspected beauty in our oldest friends. But the truth is in these things in spite of the American jester, who speaketh but for himself.

Uncle Remus, I think, is responsible for the remark that "licker talks mighty loud when it gets loose from de jug," and it was under the aromatic influence of lemon that I not long since heard a story about Sunday fishing, which may conclude this rambling paper. Perhaps you never went fishing on the Sabbath day: I blush to say I once did, in company with four men, all well known on the Manchester Exchange. I draw a veil over the scene. It took place on the Scottish Eden, and culminated in a riot which might have ended in civil war, and which actually broke up the Local Association, and resulted in our ignominious flight by a midnight train to different parts of the land. Next week they had it in the local paper: it was a just judgment on us, but what could weak angling nature do when, after waiting a whole week for a fishable water, the river came down magnificently on Sunday morning? Ah!

But to the story. Two anglers—Sassenachs you may be sure—had waited at Loch Awe for a breeze for a whole week, and waited in vain. On the Sabbath morn—you know what kind of a morn it is in Scotland—there was a glorious ripple, the kind of ripple in which a trout rushes madly to his destruction; fish those anglers must. But the man from whom alone they could engage a boat was an elder of the kirk, and he turned up the whites of his eyes "till the strings awmost crackit again," when they suggested that he

should let them the boat for an hour or two. "He could na dae it; it was sair ineequity; sic like a thing had no been done on the loch within the memory o' man." They offered him untold bribes of silver, and then of gold, but he was obdurate until his eye rested on the sovereign held out to him, when he thus delivered himself: "Na, na, I'll no let the boat; I'm an elder o' the kirk, ye ken, and a God-fearing man, and it's no reasonable to expec' me to consent to sic like a wicked proceeding; but the boat lies there in the rushes and the oars are in her; just ye gang awa' doon and get intil her and row awa' oot into the lake, and I'll come doon and swear at ye; but ye mun jist tak' no notice of what I say, but row awa', an' I'll call for the money the morn."

FISHING IN THE RIVER ORCHY AND UPPER PART OF LOCH AWE.

BY THE REV. C. P. ROBERTS, M.A.

IN the Autumn of 1862 I met, for the first time, a somewhat eccentric old gentleman, then 70 years of age, with whom I was slightly connected by marriage. He had, in the course of an active and successful career as an American merchant, accumulated a comfortable fortune, and at the time of which I speak had retired from the active pursuit of business and devoted the greater part of the year to the active pursuit of angling. For some considerable time past he had made Dalmally, about two miles from the upper end ot Loch Awe, his headquarters in Scotland, and in the comfortable and old-fashioned inn, not then dignified by the name of "hotel," he used to spend seven months of the year, from April to October. Not having any settled residence in England or elsewhere, he used to invite his friends to this inn, and there are not a few who first made their acquaintance with the Western Highlands of Scotland, and gained their first experience of the charms of Highland angling, as his guests. A cousin of mine had

paid him a visit, and returned with glowing accounts of the beauty of the place, the excellence of the fishing, and the hospitality of his host. I often wondered whether it would ever be my luck to meet this uncle, and, if so, whether he would take to his distant "nevvy." Well, we met: it was somewhat difficult for one unaccustomed to him to understand his speech, partly from the low tone in which he spoke, and partly from the obstruction which the cigar, which he was seldom without, formed to the escape of what were meant to be words from his lips. When he departed, I thought him a nice old man, somewhat eccentric perhaps, genial and good-natured; but he had not invited me to Dalmally! However, our hostess said to me, "Well, I'm so glad you've seen Uncle T., and I'm delighted that you've got an invitation to Scotland." "Nothing of the sort," said I, "he never mentioned it." "Oh, but he did; he said that he hoped to see you there next year. You didn't understand his way of putting it. You'll be hearing from him next summer, you'll see."

I confess that I thought a good deal about that old man during the next few months. I wondered if he had really said anything about it; and, if he had, whether he would remember it. But my doubts were set at rest when, one morning in May, I received a letter asking me to go up to Dalmally in the long vacation, and study for a degree in angling. There were minute directions for the journey, and the assurance of a warm welcome at the end of it. Only one answer was possible, and it was sent. In due course I followed it, and in July, 1863,

began my connection with the Orchy and Loch Awe, which I have kept up ever since, four times as the old man's guest in the years succeeding the first, and many a time since on my own account. I trust that I may be able to continue my visits there at intervals as long as I can seek relaxation and enjoyment amidst varied and magnificent scenery, amongst a race of Highlanders as noble as the hills under which they live, and of peasant girls as fair, in some instances, as the glens in which they dwell, and amongst waters which afford sport at any time of the year that one would ordinarily fix upon for a trip to the Highlands.

It would perhaps savour of selfishness, a characteristic which ill befits and seldom marks an angler, if I were to heave a sigh over the increased and increasing facilities for travelling which have opened out, to numbers of our countrymen and countrywomen, charming spots in Scotland which formerly only the few could enjoy. But though we anglers are essentially a sociable class, we appreciate most in our fishing expeditions the society of those whose objects and interests are identical with our own; we scorn the company of those who accept the cynical definition of angling as a process carried on by "a fool at one end and a worm at the other" of a rod and line; and there is no creature whom—to put it mildly—we love less than the tourist who "just takes a walk up the river to see how that fellow who's gone a-fishing is getting on," who probably walks close by the margin of the stream as he makes his unwelcome way, and thus scares away from your favourite

pools the fish which you know were lying ready for your lure.

The tourist routes through the Western Highlands of Scotland were, of course, in the summer months, the same then as now; but it was not until June that the coaches began to run; before that month posting was the only means of travelling, and its expense deterred nearly all but anglers and artists from penetrating to glens, rivers and lochs to ply their art in spring. Railways now have changed all that. When I was at Dalmally in April, 1882, there were two or three cheap trips from Glasgow, and—much as I rejoiced as a man to see a crowd of city toilers revelling in the pure air of the country—I sighed as an angler for the former days of calm and stillness, when the fisherman's voice was the only one which woke the echoes by Kilchurn Castle. Yet even anglers have reason to bless the Caledonian Railway. The time which they are able to devote to an angling expedition is usually not unlimited; and the possibility of getting into a North-Western express at the Exchange Station at 10 a.m. and being deposited at Loch Awe at 9 p.m., or travelling by the Limited Mail at 1 a.m., and reaching Loch Awe at 11.30 a.m., may tempt some who would grudge a longer expenditure of time in travelling. To those who can afford the time and have no disinclination to a sea voyage, I would strongly recommend, especially in summer, the route by steamer from Manchester to Greenock; the boats are excellent and the *cuisine*; and if you choose a time for starting which admits of the latter part of the eighteen hours'

voyage being made in daylight, the sail up the Firth of Clyde well repays those who can appreciate the scenery. At Glasgow or Greenock you can take one of the steamers which ply regularly to various parts of the Western Coast or Salt Water Lochs which run up from the Clyde. To my thinking, the most picturesque route is that *viâ* Lochgoil Head, where you can find a conveyance to carry you over a steep intervening hill between Lochgoil and Loch Fyne. Passing through Hell's Glen on its way to St. Catherine's, crossing the head of Loch Fyne in a small ferry-steamer to Inverary, you post or coach it 14 miles through the charming Glen Aray, skirting Loch Awe during some portion of the last six miles, and obtaining at intervals some beautiful glimpses of its island gems. And if you like to ascend a small hill on your right on which stands "Duncan's Monument," erected in honour of a local bard of that name, you get a bird's-eye view far away down the twenty-six miles which Loch Awe stretches towards the south-west, and a magnificent view of many-corried Ben Cruachan across the Loch, as well as of the other mountains and hills surrounding Glen Orchy, through which the river Orchy runs past Dalmally, which, with the whitewashed tower of its church, its comfortable hotel and groups of bothies, you see nestling in the trees two miles beyond and below you.

The river Orchy, which is the main feeder of Loch Awe, comes from Loch Tulla, a small loch near to which is the Inveroran Hotel, in the well-known district of the Black Mount Deer Forest. The length of the river is

about 17 miles from source to mouth as the road runs, without taking into account the windings of the stream, which are not inconsiderable. As regards the division of the water for fishing purposes, the upper half from Orchy Bridge to the Falls is in the hands of the landlord of the Inveroran Hotel, whose guests, I believe, fish free of charge. Never having fished in this upper portion, I have nothing more to say about it. Of the lower portion I think I know every reach and every pool. Sir John Lawes, at the time I write of, rented the shooting of Glen Orchy from Lord Breadalbane, and had the right of fishing three days a week on this lower water; the other three days the landlord of Dalmally Hotel had. Sir John, however, seldom exercised his right, and when neither he nor any friend to whom he might have given permission was there, the guests at the hotel could fish every day. Another tenant now rents this shooting, and the hotel has, I believe, the right of fishing the left bank of the river every day. No charge is made for the fishing, but as the best water is seven miles away from the hotel, you have to take a "machine" to the Falls.

The salmon takes advantage of the length of the river to display those eccentricities of character and habit which we all know, but which "no fellah can understand." The fish begin in March or April to run up from Loch Etive, through the river Awe, which drains Loch Awe, through four miles of the loch, and into the Orchy; until the middle of May they seldom go beyond the falls, although there may be plenty of water to allow of their ascending, and no obstacle to impede

their progress, except their own incomprehensible instinct. After the middle of May they seldom tarry in the lower portion, but hasten into the Inveroran pools. The best time to visit Dalmally for salmon fishing is March, April and May, and to visit Inveroran, June, July, August and September. You may in later months come across a travelling fish resting on his journey upwards, but the chances are against his taking the deceptive refreshment you offer him on his halt. Another curious illustration of the instinct of the salmon in returning from the sea to the river in which they were bred, is furnished by those of the Awe and Orchy; although the Orchy-bred fish pass through the river Awe, they are seldom caught in it, and the Awe fish never ascend to the Orchy. The fish of these two rivers differ in shape somewhat, and are easily distinguishable by those who have frequent opportunities of observing each: those of the Awe are shorter and thicker than those of the Orchy. Both are occasionally caught in the loch, and in September good sport is got with them with fly from a boat on the south shore. Netting the loch for them off this shore, which was formerly regularly practised by those who had the right, is now, I believe, entirely discontinued. The best part of the Dalmally water is that which runs through a series of continuous pools for about a mile, commencing from the bridge below the falls. You could hardly wish for better water when the river is in good ply after a spate, easier to fish without either "switching," "flipping," or wading; though a wise angler will always be protected by waders, ready for emergencies

such as I myself have there experienced. The sport, too, for the extent of the water, is hard to beat when the spate happens to come on the right day of the week, or with the proper force to allow all the fish to come up from the salt-water Loch Etive, and to escape the nets at the mouth of the Awe.

On Thursday, April 20th, 1882, there had been heavy rain for two consecutive days, which had prevented the nets at the mouth of the river Awe being set, and allowed waiting fish to run up. I went up with two friends, and though the water was too high and rather discoloured, we managed to bring back six fish. On the next day, Friday, April 21st, Mr. Montague Campbell (who has a newly-built house on one of the islands of Loch Awe) had permission from Sir John Lawes to fish; he went up with a gillie (an excellent fisherman too!) at 8 a.m., and returned at 8 p.m. with the magnificent result of sixteen fish, weighing in the aggregate 242½ lbs. I noted the weights as they were scaled, and they were as follows: 18, 13½, 11½, 13½, 21½, 13, 22, 11, 13½, 13½, 13, 21, 21½, 15, 10½, 10½. Such a take in about half-a-mile of water in 9 hours (allowing for journeys to and from the falls) of bright clean-run fish, in magnificent condition, with sea-lice adhering to many, is not bad testimony to the prospects of sport in the Orchy, when the river is in good order in spring. The old gentleman of whom I spoke at first, once caught eleven to his own rod in a shorter time than this. I went up myself with two friends on two successive days; the first day yielded eleven, the second ten, to our three rods. The fish do not, as a rule,

run large ; the average size is from 12 to 14 lbs., perhaps rather over, but in shape and beauty they are hard to beat. You must not think that you are going to land a "fushe" every time you go out there : many, oh, many a blank day have I had ! But what true angler is disheartened at that ? When your stay is short and your time limited, you often go out without prospect of success on the chance of falsifying the predictions of the knowing ones, and even against your own real judgment : but then if you want a salmon you must *fish* for him. I said that the best portion of Dalmally water is seven miles up from the hotel : there are, however, several good pools, though some distance apart, in the intervening six miles. I shall ever have a lively recollection of one of these pools. I had gone that year with a friend, who was somewhat out of sorts, and had been recommended to try a trip to the Highlands to set him up. We walked up to a likely pool, out of which I had landed a fish a day or two before. I lent my friend my rod to fish over the pool with the first fly ; no fish rising, I changed it, and prepared to fish the water again after giving it a rest. The pool lies at the end of a bed of shingle, down which I waded to reach the lowest part which my friend had been unable without waders to reach. I gradually lengthened my casts, and with a long line prepared for a supreme effort; the effort was made, the result was startling, the fly had hooked something behind me; there was a crash and a shriek! the third joint of my rod was smashed into three pieces, and was dangling in the water by the rings; my friend behind me had his hand up to

his head, gathering force for the expletives which were to follow. He had somewhat changed his position whilst I fished the pool, which resulted in my fixing the point of the hook, though not the barb, into the frontal bone just outside the left eye; a quarter of an inch more and it must have pierced it. However, I think that I was the greatest sufferer; he experienced no ill effects whatever from the shock, in fact, I think it really did him good, for it supplied a "Nerve Tonic" which he had gone to Scotland to seek, though hardly perhaps at the point of a "Silver Doctor." But my rod was spoilt! I have been careful ever since to warn spectators to give a wide berth to the back cast of a salmon angler.

I should not recommend visitors to the Orchy to lay in a large stock of flies before they go; indeed, it is a mistake to lay in a large stock before you go anywhere, unless it be to some very out-of-the-way place where it is difficult to add to or replenish your stock. The gillies at Dalmally can give you the best advice as to what flies to use, and they are easily procurable there from any of the well-known tackle-makers and dealers, or perhaps even on the spot itself. The angler who is equipped with large, medium and small sizes of the Popham, Canary, Jock Scott, Thunder and Lightning, Butcher, and Doctors, will not want many more to suit the waters of the Orchy.

I have said that Loch Tulla is the source of the Orchy; it was also, alas, the source of its ruin as a trout river. The late Marquis of Breadalbane stocked this loch with pike, little thinking of the disastrous results to the Orchy and Loch Awe which would follow from the migration

of these fish. It was once possible, I believe, to make sure of a good basket of trout in the Orchy, whereas now they are seldom fished for. A friend of mine, Mr. Oliver Pemberton, of Birmingham, president of the Midland Anglers' Association, once landed six jack out of a single pool in the river; one can judge from this what the effect of the presence of these fresh-water sharks has been and is on the trout-fishing. I have whiled away the time when there was nothing better to do and no better fishing to be had, by spinning a minnow in the scours and runs and in the streams about the Island, three miles from Dalmally, and occasionally have fished for trout with the fly; but though I have caught some few, mostly good ones, from a pound to two pounds weight, the result is hardly worth the effort. I remember one old angler, however, who came from Glasgow and was staying at Dalmally with his son, who used to go out in the evening, and by worm-fishing up stream managed to bring in some good baskets. I confess that I am not an adept at worm-fishing for trout, and perhaps it was my own lack of skill in this branch of our art which made me fail where the Glasgow angler succeeded. Very few, however, fish the Orchy for trout. Similar disastrous results to trouting in the upper portion of Loch Awe have followed from the migration thither of the pike. You may get a rise or a run on your minnow near the shingle beds not far from the mouth of the Orchy, and at the confluence of the Orchy and the Strae, and also off the sand-bank which extends from the Castle promontory some distance into the loch—

but these once favourite trout casts are only whipped over as you pass by them, and offer no inducements to tarry as once they did. The large bay to the south-east of Kilchurn Castle, in which an old boatman told me that he had often seen three trouts on the cast at once, is now productive of nothing but pike and perch. It is not too much to say that the trout fishing in this upper portion of the loch is ruined; you must go at least three miles down before you have any chance of anything beyond a casual trout, which has had a marvellous escape from the enemies which have occupied his ground.

But though the pike have spoilt the trout fishing, which now has to be sought lower down, the sport which they themselves provide, at a time of year, too, when few trout are to be caught anywhere, affords no slight compensation for the damage which they have done, and helps one to forgive the sad results from the thoughtless action of the Marquis of Breadalbane. In a small bay to the north of the mouth of the river Orchy, in the large bay of Kilchurn Castle, which I mentioned before, about half a mile down from the Castle promontory, and at intervals down each shore of the loch, there are large beds of weeds, which are favourite haunts of the pike. In each of these localities I have had excellent sport with them, the best of all in September. They are more lively than any I have ever caught in English waters, making very long runs and leaping out of the water at times like a salmon; if instead of fishing for them with something like a pole and a cart-rope one were to use an ordinary salmon rod, they would give

almost as much trouble to bring to boat as a salmon does; and even with the short strong rod with stiff rings, and line and gimp trace to match, which I always use in spinning, it took me more than half an hour to secure the largest which I have ever captured, which weighed 23½lbs. We had exciting work to get that fish in. I had forgotten to take my gaff, and we only had in the boat a large sea-fishing hook which I had whipped on to a short handle as a substitute for a click; with this we had already secured two or three pike, the largest of which weighed 15lbs. On getting the big one up to the boat, I hooked my temporary gaff into his jaw, but it broke short off, the point catching, I suppose, against a bone—my victim went off for another long run, and appeared shy of again approaching the boat. However, after a bit more fighting he came again close under the gunwale; I had given the old gillie who was with me a clasp knife to open which I had in my pocket—one with a blade about five inches long, with sharp dagger-shaped point, and a spring catch which secured the blade when open. Guiding the fish into a convenient position, I stooped gently down towards him, holding the rod in such a manner that I could give him line in case he started for another run; he was too exhausted after nearly half-an-hour's fight to make off at the mere glance of his enemy, and so I succeeded in driving the blade of the knife up to the haft in a slanting direction behind his gill into what I thought would be his most vital part. I was terribly afraid that this shock to his system, coupled with the somewhat nervous state

in which I was in as I wondered whether the plan would succeed, would make him bolt off with a rush, and perhaps result in his escape, but I was gratified to see that I had fixed him properly; he gave a bit of a flap on the surface with his tail, and became a dead weight on the rod. I drew him up close, put my finger and thumb in his eyes and landed him triumphantly into the boat! He was the largest pike that had been caught for some years in the loch, and I think that there was only one up to that time—it is 15 years ago now—which beat him. We had a good haul that day: 23½, 15, 11, 9½, 8, besides smaller ones, formed a bag which ought to satisfy all but the most greedy angler. The largest pike I had seen caught there previously was taken by my friend Mr. Pemberton—it weighed 16lbs., and took the bait in a way which I should not have believed had I not witnessed it. He was spinning with a trout about 6oz. weight, and casting the bait some distance from the boat; he had gradually extended his casts to about 25 yards, and as the bait was dropping into the water, a pair of jaws were opened about a foot above the surface, and literally closed upon it in the air. To fix the steel was the work of a moment; he jumped three or four times out of the water like a salmon, and was finally secured after twenty minutes' fight.

When I lived in my native county, Warwickshire, I had good pike fishing always at my command, and pretty fair facilities for trouting; there was no lack of natural bait, too, for both kinds of fishing—I used to borrow the miller's cast net to catch gudgeon, roach and

dace for the former, and spent many pleasant hours in catching minnows with a worm and tie-line for the latter. Experience and habit have, perhaps, made me partial to the use of natural baits for spinning and trolling, and I must confess that I look upon artificial baits as only something to be used as makeshifts when the natural are only very difficult or impossible to be got. At Dalmally there is a small burn which runs into the Orchy just below the hotel, and I always supply myself from it with a stock of burn trout for spinning for pike in Loch Awe; the capture of them with a small fly or a worm itself affords sport which I by no means despise. There is to me something much more exciting in standing up in a boat and continually casting your bait and drawing it in than in lazily sitting in the stern holding the rod and waiting for a fish to take it. You can drop your bait, too, amongst openings in the weeds, and cover likely ground which by trailing behind you must miss. In spinning for trout in a loch you must, of course, trail behind, but even then I fancy the natural bait in preference to the artificial, and this natural bait I formerly used in Loch Awe. Just above the Orchy Bridge, which carries the road to Oban, there is a gravelly shallow which edges off into deep water towards the bridge. Standing in this shallow, many and many a silvery salmon parr, about the size of a very large minnow, have I in days gone by captured with the aid of a midge fly, and used for spinning in the loch for trout. The very proper restrictions now placed on taking these fry have diminished for me the interest I once had in trolling, for

neither with "phantom" nor "angel" can I get the same success I once had with the parr tail. However, many, I dare say, will not agree with me; but to those who have a preference for artificial baits, spoons and other lures, I say, "Keep them, but give me the natural."

I should exhaust your patience, which I have already tried too long, if I said much about the perch-fishing in the upper part of Loch Awe, so I will merely observe that good takes can be got if you happen to hit upon a shoal on the sand-banks at the mouth of the river, in the shallower parts of Kilchurn Bay, or in the deep water off what was formerly called "Duncan's Rock," on the north shore, where now stands the new hotel of Loch Awe; though it is probable that the latter once favourite spot has been spoiled by the steamers which ply to and from the landing place. I once anchored the boat in Kilchurn Bay, near to a submerged cairn, at its upper end. My friend and myself obtained rather over six dozen perch, eight of which weighed no less than 2lbs. each. We did not catch them all at this one anchorage, but the bulk of them, and all the largest were captured there. Little skill is required to beguile these silly fish, the slightest bit of worm is sufficient if they happen to be in a taking humour, neither do they give much sport when hooked

MANX STREAMS.

BY STANLEY KNEALE.

IN Lancashire we all know where the Isle of Man is: an island rich in history, antiquities, legends, and natural beauty, set in a sea which has been its very life from the days of the Vikings to the present matter-of-fact 19th century. To quote from one of the greatest novelists of the day, my countryman, Hall Caine, "The sea is always present with Manxmen; everything they do, everything they say gets the colour and shimmer of the sea. The sea goes into their bones; it comes out of their skins; their talk is full of it. They buy by it, they sell by it, they quarrel by it, they fight by it, they swear by it, they pray by it." So it is only natural that I should begin this paper by speaking of it.

Before I try to give you an idea of the Manx streams from an anglers' point of view, may I quote my countryman's beautiful description of the Island of Man. "Seen from the sea it is a lovely thing to look upon. It never fails to bring me a thrill of the heart as it comes out of the distance. It lies like a bird on the water. You see it from end to end, and from water's edge to topmost peak, often enshrouded in mists, a dim ghost on

a grey sea; sometimes purple against the setting sun. Then as you sail up to it, a rugged rocky coast, grand in its beetling heights on the south and west, and broken into the sweetest bays every where. The water is as clear as crystal and blue as the sky in summer; you can see the shingle and the moss through many fathoms. Then the mountains within, not in peaks, but round foreheads. The colour of the Island is green and gold; its flavour is that of the nut. Both colour and flavour come of the gorse. This covers the mountains and moorlands, for, except on the north, the Island has next to no trees. But, oh, the beauty and delight of it in the spring! Long broad stretches glittering under the sun with the gold of the gorse, and all the air full of the nutty perfume. There is nothing like it in all the world. Then the glens, such fairy spots, deep, solemn, musical, with the slumberous waters, clad in dark mosses, brightened by the red fuchsia."

Such is Man as seen by a Manxman, and in the spring. But in the summer months, when thousands of people from this county and other parts are swarming over that little Island, it is spoilt for the angler; he loves the quiet music of the streams and not the wild war cry of the irrepressible tripper, who comes driving down the glens in clouds of dust, throwing stones into your favourite pool, hurling satirical remarks at the poor angler, and chasing away the poetic and delightful halo of thoughts which surround the trout fisher.

Many are the days I have had spoilt thus; but, fortunately for me, some years ago, I was able to fish the

stream in all seasons and weathers; all day and every day that was suitable, wandering forth in the morning and spending solitary days in some of the wilder glens, among the hills; meeting no one but, perhaps, a shepherd and his dog, and the weather-beaten mountain sheep. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the rivers in the Island is the entire absence of such fresh-water fish as the pike, perch, roach, grayling, and other fish described as coarse. I suppose that, as in the Welsh rivers, the rapid nature of the streams, with gravelly or rocky bottoms, would prevent their thriving very long, even if they were introduced. However, in the lower parts of the Sulby (the most important river in the Island), where for three or four miles the river runs deep, and in nice gravelly pools and glides, grayling might be introduced with advantage, that is if they are not detrimental to trout. The latter are found in great numbers in every stream in the Island, with the exception of some few that have been poisoned by lead mining, that curse of many rivers in this country. Why a man should be allowed to poison another man's fish any more than his sheep or his cattle is difficult to understand; yet he seems to do it with the greatest audacity, and with hardly a remonstrance from the injured side.

The Sulby, which is the largest and best trout river in the island, flows into Ramsey Bay. The lower part of the water is brackish for about two miles, the salt water ascending with the spring tides nearly up to Loughen-e-Zeigh (the goose pond), about three miles from the sea.

All this lower part, and even higher up, abounds in the spring months with small white trout, as they are there called. There has been much discussion as to the species to which these fish belong; whether they are the young of the salmon sewin or white trout. A specimen of them was sent to Mr. Day, and he at once recognised it as the sewin. They appear in the river in the greatest numbers in March and April, returning to the sea in May. An old Manx saying is: "The first flood in May takes the white trout away." They are also caught near the mouths of the rivers in the autumn; though usually of a larger size they are not so numerous as in the spring. They are, for their size, decidedly "game," rising very freely and fighting hard. They generally average in the spring about seven or eight to the pound, occasionally approaching a pound each in weight. I have often filled a basket which held eight or nine pounds in a few hours, catching as many as twenty out of one pool. Some of the larger-sized require a good bit of management when hooked; they spring into the air, strike the water with their tails, and make a great commotion, until after two or three minutes play they are landed. And they certainly are most beautiful and delicious fish. They are most plentiful in the brackish pools, and in the two or three miles of deep water above the town, where the river glides along in one continuous pool, varying in depth from two or three feet to ten or twelve; the gorse-covered hedges, which in many places run along the river banks, are rather troublesome to the angler. All this three or four miles

of still water can, of course, only be fished in a breeze which has to be pretty strong to get over the high hedges and banks, and round the bends. On a suitable day in spring one is pretty sure of a basketful of fish, white or brown, on this part of the Sulby; and although the brown trout are also small, you occasionally get a half-pounder, or even larger, to quicken the pulses. You require all your skill to steer clear of the long weed, which is rather troublesome on this part of the river, and successfully land up the high bank. At one time I never used to carry a landing net, and many is the good trout I have lost through not having one. In one instance I lost a large sea trout—I mean large for the locality—perhaps about two pounds. After a desperate fight for about ten minutes (I had only a very light fly rod) I had coaxed him to the bank, played out as I thought, and was just bending over the high bank trying to get my fingers round his gills, when he made a sudden spring, nearly hitting me in the face, dropped back on the water, and floated away, hardly realizing at first that he had got half my cast; when he did, he made a bolt and disappeared, a wiser if not a happier fish.

About half-a-mile above Ramsey is a bridge, just beyond which, on your left hand as you face up-stream, the tributary Aldyn joins the Sulby. Many a basket of good trout have I had from that little stream. But lately, whenever I have visited it, the water has always been very low. Very few parts of it are suitable for fly; up-stream fishing with worm answers better, especially on the lower

part. About two miles up there are some nice little pools which contain good trout. A great many salmon run up this little stream after a freshet; I have seen the small pools quite packed with them. This was in the autumn, when they were making their way up to spawn; but very few of them get back to the sea; they get caught in the dams or small pools, and find their way into the cottagers' houses. This is the case, more or less, with all the rivers on the island. At Sulby Bridge, I have gone into numbers of cottages and seen smoked salmon hanging up, and the inmates have told me they never feel right without a bit of smoked salmon in the house. Most of these are spawning fish, and quite unfit for food. Since the Salmon and Fresh Water Fishing Act of 1882, river inspectors have been appointed, and a more strict watch is kept; rod licences are also necessary. The licence for salmon and white trout is £1, and for trout 7s. 6d. yearly; a weekly licence for trout is 2s. 6d. When first these licences were imposed, there was much indignation among the small landowners along the river, who did not see the force of having to pay for the right to fish for their own and their neighbour's fish. At Sulby they formed a "Trout Association," every member of which was bound to prosecute (for trespass) anyone fishing on his land with a licence, but it was all right if you had not one; on the other hand if you were without a licence you were liable to be prosecuted by the Fisheries Board. This caused a good deal of ill-feeling, and indeed does so yet; it almost stopped fishing for some time. I used to get over the difficulty by taking

out a licence and leaving it at home, and when I happened to be asked by one of the Association if I had a licence, saying, "I hadn't one!" taking care not to add "with me." Perhaps the method had its moral shortcomings, but I had no sympathy with an association whose members instead of agitating for a repeal of what they considered an unjust law, stopped the fishing altogether.

The Sulby above the junction of the Aldyn consists of a long deep glide, fairly wide, an easy casting distance in most places, and getting narrower as you get higher up. This water for about two miles can only be fished in a breeze; above it the water gets broken into sharp runs, and nice gravelly pools; just the place for grayling. This is not very good fly water, being covered with willows and other trees. From here to Sulby Bridge the river is more open, and there are some very nice runs and stretches of fly water. On the other side of the bridge you get to Sulby Claddagh, a flat common, covered with low gorse, bramble and bracken, through which the river runs. Here, on a bright day in spring, you are almost dazzled by the golden blaze of the gorse, the blue sky, and the sun on the white-washed cottages. There are pictures whichever way you turn; it is a paradise for artists, and is much frequented by them. The Glen Moar Inn is near and comfortable; a capital place to stay at if you intend to fish this water and the glens above. On the Claddagh there are no high trees overhanging the river, but plenty of room to get your flies clear out behind, except for low gorse bushes here and there. It used to be my favourite bit of the

river; there are broken runs and a few dams and pools; of course, as with all small streams, you want a fair quantity of water to be coming down, but especially in this part, as in the dry weather the water merely percolates through the loose stony bed. Many a good basket of trout have I taken from this part of the Sulby, considering it a poor day unless I had two or three dozen, and sometimes getting as many as five or six dozen, weighing about eight or nine pounds. This Claddagh is just at the entrance to Sulby Glen, or more properly, Glen Moar (the big glen) and is called Gob-na-Volly (the mouth of the valley.)

After entering the Glen, the river becomes more wooded, and you come to some old starch mills, not worked now. Below these there is a very good pool, which used to contain some capital trout; they seemed to fatten on the refuse from the starch making. If I did not get a few good trout out of this pool, I always knew the day would be hopeless. From this point you go up the river for about four miles, all fair fly water, rocky, with good pools here and there, which become larger and deeper and more overgrown as you go higher up to Tholt-e-Will. Here the river takes a bend to the right for about a mile, with good pools, which are rather difficult to get at. The trout in these deep and dark brown pools are much darker in colour, and are not well fed fish, but you find them up to a fair size, ¼lb. and ½lb., and even bigger. I have caught numbers of 1 lb. trout; but fish of this size are only rarely met with. After Tholt-e-Will the river bends at right-angles to the left,

and about a mile up divides into two streams of equal size, the one on the right coming down Druidale, and the one on the left from Crammag Glen, rising some three miles away between Snaefell and Benny-Phott. In this glen there are some good deep pools, and very often when the river is low you get better sport here than lower down, as it is fed more by springs. Although the river lower down is continually fed by small tributaries, its bed is broader, and the water loses itself in the loose stony bottom. It is really quite surprising what capital pools you come across by following an insignificant little stream to its source among the hills. These are the salvation of the trout in the small rapid streams of the island; but for these the fish would be swept away by the frequent floods. The scenery up these glens is most beautiful, and there are numbers of small glens where even in the summer you are not likely to meet a fellow-creature the whole day. Of course, out ot the tourist season you can have nearly the whole river to yourself. In the summer months the Sulby, from Tholt-e-Will down to Sulby Bridge, is very much over-fished; and since the road down the glen runs near the river, and is a favourite one for visitors driving over the mountains from Douglas to Ramsey, there is little enjoyment in fishing.

The first salmon I ever caught—it has not been my good fortune to catch many—was on the Sulby river, in a pool below Ellenbane. I was strolling along up-stream, fly-fishing for trout, taking a nice little fish out here and there, when I came to one of my favourite

pools, where, if the trout were in anything like a taking mood, I was always sure of a few good ones, when, in front of me, just at the edge of the eddy where the water came into the pool, I saw a swirl, and the flash of a silver side, that sent my heart into my mouth! I had only a light trout rod, and nothing but trout flies; however, selecting one of these—a large Red Palmer, with some tinsel round the body—I went down stream a few yards, walked across so as to get on the bank opposite to where my silver friend was evidently feeding, and casting across the stream, letting my fly swirl through the eddy at the head of the pool, in the second cast I felt a tug and was fast in a fish. Before I had time to realize it, a fine fresh salmon sprang out of the water. Fortunately I was fishing from the winch, otherwise he would have broken me at once. I thought he was off; but no! After many repeated springs, I began to steady myself and wind in so as to feel the fish. I had certainly hooked a salmon, but how to land him was the difficulty. Of course, he had nearly all his own way; I just kept as much strain as I thought my trout cast would bear. Very fortunately for me, the fish seemed to like the pool he was in, which was about twenty yards long, shallow at the head and with a long clear shallow at the tail which he did not seem to care about; if he had taken it into his head to rush over the shallow and down stream, I could not possibly have held him for many seconds, as the river below was so overgrown by willows and trees that it would have been impossible to follow. He began leading me up and down the pool, just as he pleased. A short

distance above the pool the river is crossed by a foot-bridge, over which there were occasionally some passers by, who seeing that I had got hold of a large fish, watched to see him landed until they grew tired of waiting. That fish seemed to me like the brook, it went on for ever, up and down the pool for upwards of two hours, and I dreading all the time that the gut would fray. Fortunately, as I afterwards found out, the fish was hooked in the lip, so there was nothing to come in contact with the gut. I had no gaff or even landing net; at last, seeing a boy passing, I hailed him, and got him to cut a willow stick which was forked; one of the ends of this he cut short and sharpened, leaving the other as a handle. With this primitive gaff I knew there must be no missing. After many attempts I managed at last to bring the fish to the side of the pool under the shelter of some floating grass, and just within reach of my willow gaff; then with a tremendous strike I dragged him up the bank, breaking my rod top in so doing. But what did it matter? There lay on the grass a beautiful salmon of seven or eight pounds. This may not seem very large to salmon-fishers, but to me in those days he appeared a perfect monster, and I was rather glad than otherwise that he would not go into my basket, but had to be carried home, a visible trophy of my skill to all passers-by. I did not at all like having that fish cooked, but setting-up was not so much in vogue in those days, so he was boiled, and pronounced excellent.

Of the rivers on the south of the island I know very little. I have caught trout on the Silverburn, which

finds its outlet in Castletown Bay, and which, like the other streams, abounds in small sewin in the spring. The streams Dhoo and Glass, which, uniting near the town of Douglas, give it its name, both contain trout. At Laxey there is a good stream, the poisoning of the lower part of which by the lead mines prevents salmon and sea trout from coming up; you can see the lead-coloured water for some distance out in the bay, of course poisoning everything with which it comes in contact. In the Glen above the mine, there are plenty of small trout, rather dark in colour. Further along the coast you come to a delightful little glen called Ballaglass, in which there are large numbers of trout. Some years ago this stream was poisoned by mining, now it is no longer so, and the trout have become as plentiful as ever. At the bottom of the Glen there has been recently erected a large building for the manufacture of bellite, but this has been stopped by the House of Keys, who think the explosive too dangerous for them to allow its manufacture to proceed. This Glen is very much wooded, and there are not many places where you can get a fly comfortably on, but down nearer the sea it gets more open. There is a large brackish pool at the junction with the sea, which generally contains any number of trout and sea trout. Last summer, when fishing there, with a good breeze to ripple the pool, in two hours I caught about forty nice trout; they were silvery, game, well-fed little fish. This beautiful glen is not much frequented, being out of the beaten track. A friend of mine fishing there, some years ago, caught a

splendid trout (brown) weighing about 2lbs. At the north-west side of the Island there is a partly natural and partly artificial trench which drains the greater portion of the flat land and meadows of the north, finding an outlet near the sea at a small hamlet called Lhen Moar, which is the Manx for "big meadow or swamp." This stream varies in width from about eight to twelve feet, and is of a uniform depth of three or four feet; it has a peaty bottom, much overgrown with weed, water-lilies, and so on, which are cleared out about twice a year when they begin to choke the stream up. The spring, when the winter frosts and floods have cleared the weeds out, is the best time to fish this water, as in summer it often gets grown over, and the places for putting a fly on are few. The Lhen Moar is about eight miles from Ramsey. There is a mill there which is a convenient place at which to put up a conveyance. From this mill down to the sea the stream is very narrow, but pretty deep, and it contains some big trout and sometimes sea trout. The best wind to fish it in is one across; you should fish straight upstream, as, standing some distance from the bank, you are out of sight of the fish. One fly is quite enough; the stream being narrow, more would be in the way. About half a mile above the mill, its trench, running along the edge of a large swamp (a capital place for snipe in the winter), is more open, and when there is a good water it flows almost level with the banks. Farther on the banks get higher, and it is very difficult to keep out of sight of the trout. Fly is the only thing you can successfully use, on account of

the bottom weed; and a good strong breeze is essential. Use one fly and a strong cast, as the trout are large, dark-coloured, and hard fighters, making a desperate splash and struggle when they feel the point of the hook. You mustn't give them an inch, but get them into your net as soon as possible, otherwise they at once get into the weed or under the overhanging bank, against which they saw your cast, and are oft at once. You lose a great many fish in this way. They are very uncertain risers, and you never know when they will be in a taking humour; but if you happen to be there on a favourable day (sometimes to all appearances the most unlikely) you will have some capital sport. On a very fine day I have killed twelve trout averaging over ¾lb., and lost as many more. They are not very particular about flies, but like them rather large and rough with a suspicion of tinsel; just such flies as we should use on the tarn at Horton. On a fine spring day this is a most delightful four miles of fishing. The white cottages which skirt the meadow, the gorse and the sweet smelling flowers which are beginning to blossom, all have a charm for the angler. But it is also a very disappointing place. I remember starting off one morning on what promised to be a good breezy day, in the early summer, and, on arriving at my destination, the mill, I found a dead calm, with a blazing sun. As there is no broken water, fishing was out of the question, so I walked down to the sea and enjoyed basking in the sun on the beach, watching the sea-birds circling over the blue water and golden sands. That was all very well, but I had come to fish, and I hate

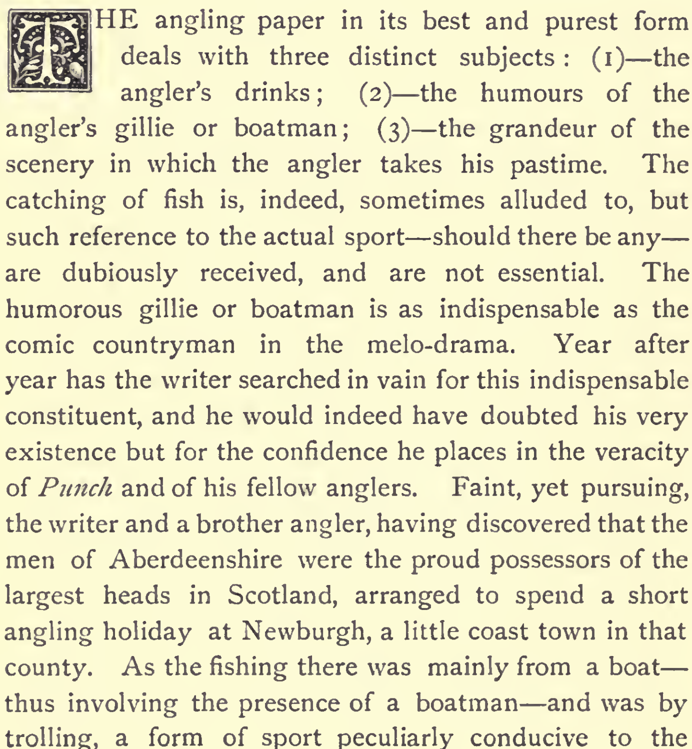
being baulked, so I thought if I could find a worm or two I might manage to hook a trout. But a worm was as difficult to get as a trout. There had been a long spell of dry weather, and the ground round the lower part of this stream is very sandy and dry; however, I managed to get a couple of small ones by digging with the spike of my rod, and creeping to a hole much overgrown so as to shelter me from the observant trout, I lowered the worm, not knowing whether it was lighting on a bramble or in the water. I suppose it must have been the latter, because I felt a tremendous tug that nearly pulled the rod out of my hand, and I was fast in a good trout. But how to get him out was the difficulty. I could not reach him with my net over the bramble; there was nothing for it but to guide my fish round a bend between many brambles and gorse bushes to a favourable spot. After fifteen minutes, I landed the finest brown trout I have ever caught in the Island, about 1½lb. Big trout always seem to lie in the most difficult places. I managed to get one or two more small ones, but worms were scarce, and I did not care much about that kind of fishing, so I had to wend my way home without having put a fly on the water; still, I was partly consoled by the thought of my big trout. There is a small stream running through Ballaugh Glen in which there are plenty of trout, but like all small streams it is difficult to fish with no width of water to get a fly on properly.

Then there is the Rhenass (the ridge of the waterfall) known to the tourist as "Glen Helen." I cannot

understand why people should change names full of association and description for utterly meaningless ones. Imagine, for instance, changing the name of a beautiful little waterfall near Ramsey called "Braid-foss" (the waterfall of the ravine), a most descriptive name, into Niagara, a name which makes it ridiculous; this is just one instance of many hundred changes of names in the Island. But to return to the Rhenass. The stream rises between the two mountains called Sart Fell and Glen Maggle, just near the source of the Sulby, but runs in a different direction for four or five miles to St. John's, where it becomes the River Neb. From the point where it is joined by the Foxdale river to the sea, it is poisoned by the Foxdale lead mines. All the stream above the junction is filled with small trout. In most of the Manx streams I think there are too many trout for the quantity of food; they rarely grow to any size, and the rivers are so scoured by big floods which rise and fall rapidly (caused by the extension of draining, not only of the arable, but also of the mountain lands) that the moss and insect life are washed away. The fishing has very much deteriorated since first I knew it, when with very little skill you could generally fill your creel. Two or three years ago 30,000 Loch Leven fry were distributed in the various streams of the Island; some were put in the reservoir of the Ramsey Water Works and in other small ponds. I have not heard of many being taken; there is no doubt it would have been better to put in yearlings, and in smaller number.

SEA-TROUT FISHING IN ABERDEENSHIRE.

BY GEO. H. NORRIS.



THE angling paper in its best and purest form deals with three distinct subjects: (1)—the angler's drinks; (2)—the humours of the angler's gillie or boatman; (3)—the grandeur of the scenery in which the angler takes his pastime. The catching of fish is, indeed, sometimes alluded to, but such reference to the actual sport—should there be any—are dubiously received, and are not essential. The humorous gillie or boatman is as indispensable as the comic countryman in the melo-drama. Year after year has the writer searched in vain for this indispensable constituent, and he would indeed have doubted his very existence but for the confidence he places in the veracity of *Punch* and of his fellow anglers. Faint, yet pursuing, the writer and a brother angler, having discovered that the men of Aberdeenshire were the proud possessors of the largest heads in Scotland, arranged to spend a short angling holiday at Newburgh, a little coast town in that county. As the fishing there was mainly from a boat—thus involving the presence of a boatman—and was by trolling, a form of sport peculiarly conducive to the

production of humour, the outlook seemed extremely encouraging. The summer in Manchester had been cold and wet, and it seemed more desirable than usual to leave that smoky old city.

To anglers, the preparations for a fishing campaign are in themselves a pleasure. It is with gleeful anticipations that they put in order their rods, flies, and trolling tackle, and "Bradshaw" itself for a time becomes a glorified volume full of interest and entertainment, quite unlike the puzzling and irritating "Bradshaw" of business. It was on Thursday, the 22nd of August, 1889, that we left the Exchange Station, Manchester. The journey is a long one, and it was not until about eleven at night that we reached Aberdeen. This is not an attractive town. Built of massive blocks of granite, it is imposing in its solidity, but is cold and grey and depressing rather than impressive It would seem hardly possible that one with lively wit could live within that granite city; but that the humorist does exist somewhere is evident from a remarkable stained glass window in the hotel, upon which is depicted, in heroic size, the Blessed Saint Andrew bearing his cross, and beneath this strange device "*Nemo me impune lacessit.*" Thus has the artist, with the intention of genius, represented that wonderful combination of the spiritual and the carnal which our countrymen North of the Tweed have so often proved to be practicable, notwithstanding all theories to the contrary.

Having discovered that there was a station about seven miles from Newburgh, we despatched a telegram

to the landlord of the Udney Arms (the anglers' hotel), to meet us there with a trap. The railway journey and drive to Newburgh were not very interesting. The country is made up of a series of low hills or undulations, and there is little wood or water to give it variety. There was just one pretty sight on the drive. At a little hamlet on the way, preparations were being made for a school pic-nic, and bands of small children were pouring in from all sides dressed in the gayest frocks, and with faces as round, rosy, and shiny as the Jersey apples in the basket of an itinerant fruit woman. We reached the Udney Arms just before lunch time. The inn is clean and comfortable, and the landlord intelligent and obliging. Of Elsie, who combined the offices of parlour-maid, house-maid, boots, stocking-mender, drier, and floral decorator,—for each guest had a buttonhole at dinner—the writer cannot speak but with feelings of the liveliest emotion.

While lunch was preparing we arranged for our boat, got out our tackle, and went down to the river to survey the scene of the coming campaign. The river Ython is tidal at Newburgh and for a considerable distance above. There are, so far as the writer knows, few places where sea-trout take freely in the salt water; Newburgh is one of these. The only other which he can at this moment recollect is the Kyle of Tongue, in the North of Sutherlandshire, where sea-trout of considerable weight are taken upon the troll. The Ython estuary forms at the mouth a narrow channel between two sand-hills, but above, at high-tide, broadens out into the dimensions of

a fairly-sized lake, and it is in the lake-like portion of the river that most of the fishing is done. On each side of the river are sandy dunes and low hills, and, although the place cannot be termed picturesque in the ordinary sense, still the river, with its little port and shipping, and its quay and old storehouses rich in their mazy garment of moss and lichen, has a peculiar and quaint attraction, and the scene in the golden evening light is full of quiet beauty.

After lunch, and before the boatman arrived, the times and mode of fishing were discussed with the landlord, who is a practical angler. The trolling is done on the flow of the tide, and the usual course is to take the boat out to the mouth, and then to come in gradually with the tide, tacking to and fro so as to cover as much water as possible, but keeping the boat's head slightly up to the tide, so as to get a proper spin on the tackle. If any angler intends to go to Newburgh, he should first enquire from the landlord how the tides are for fishing; as, during some portion of the month, the times are so awkward that it is difficult to obtain any trolling at reasonable hours of the day. When the tide has almost run out, fly-fishing from the bank begins—and very good baskets are often taken in this way. There is an old parson, hailing from the south of England, who has spent his annual holiday at Newburgh from such time as the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. He angles every day—from the bank on each week day, and from the pulpit of the local kirk on the Sabbath. This venerable

divine is a most successful fly fisher, and there exist fabulous reports of the quantity and weight of the fish he has taken. He is not, however, communicative, and seems to have an idea that by long possession he has obtained an indefeasible title to the exclusive use of the river and all its contents. But there is no doubt that the old minister is a true sportsman and worthy angler—indeed he scorns to take a fish but with a fly.

Having made up our traces—a Devon minnow at the tail and two artificial sand-eels, one white and the other red, as droppers—we started for the boat. This was reached after a walk of about a quarter of a mile across the links (for Newburgh includes golf links amongst its attractions). The boat, which was a small one, had a plank across her quarters, and upon this we took our seats, facing the stern. This arrangement is very convenient, as the angler can keep his eye upon his line and act immediately a fish strikes. The boatman pulled out from the bank and zig-zagged across and across the flowing current of the incoming tide in the broad portion of the river. About twelve sea trout were the result of the afternoon's fishing. All or nearly all of these fish were as bright as silver and sported splendidly. The largest did not weigh more than a pound —the average weight was nearly $\frac{3}{4}$lb. We were, however, able to send quite a handsome parcel of fish south. On no occasion did we bring home less than a dozen fish, and once, including the fish caught from the bank, we captured more than 30 trout. In each take were

included a certain number of bull trout, which, as fish for the table, carried away the palm, both in flavour and firmness of flesh. No large fish were taken ; the heaviest we landed weighed about 1½lbs. and the heaviest taken by any angler at the inn during our stay scaled 2lbs.

The attractions of Newburgh are not confined to fishing. The sport of mushrooming may be indulged in when the trouting is slack. There is a spot on the left bank of the river, just above the bridge, which, in a favourable season provides splendid sport for the enthusiastic mushroomer. Recreation may also be found in the curious game of semi-billiards, which flourishes in the back premises of the Udney Arms, and at which the landlord is an adept. The local golfing links have been already alluded to.

One thing alone cast a gloom upon the otherwise delightful holiday. We captured sea-trout and bull-trout galore, but failed in the attainment of the chief object of our visit—the humorous boatman still eluded pursuit. One morning, indeed, a new boatman turned up wearing a most extraordinary Tam-o'-Shanter, the work no doubt of skilful and loving hands. This Tam-o'-Shanter, was a wonderful example of the knitter's art, involving the dropping and taking up of stitches innumerable, and appearing to have broken out into no end of bobs and tassels ; it gave a ludicrous appearance to the wearer. On seeing the gillie with his comical head-gear, "Eureka!" we each mentally exclaimed. It was nothing of the sort. That gillie was an honest, God-fearing man, without a particle of

fun, except in his bonnet and a peculiar use of the diminutive termination. He lived just a "bittie" from Newburgh, and it was just for a "whilie" that he lived there.

The journey back to Manchester was rather a sad affair, and was made additionally melancholy by the temporary loss at Perth of a creel containing two French pears, two novels, three pipes, two tobacco pouches, and four specially selected cigars which had been reserved in spite of all temptations to be consumed after dinner at the Golden Lion, an excellent hotel at Stirling, where we generally console ourselves on our way south. Some days after our return the creel arrived with everything intact except those cigars. Whoever took care of that creel had a good nose for a cigar, and all honour to him.

Thus ends the paper, and the serious question arises:—how far does it conform to the theory propounded in the opening? Alas! not at all. Where are the grand descriptions of scenery and the historical allusions? You must still search for these in the pages of Murray, which is unfortunately wanting from the writer's book-shelves. Where is the humorous boatman? You must still search for him in the pages of *Punch* and the veracious narratives of other anglers. Lastly, where are the drinks?

ARUNDINES

PISCATORUM MANCUNIENSIUM.

THE BONNIE BROWN TROUT.

Air—"The Roast Beef of Old England."

WHEN hunting men dine, one is tempted to doubt
If they think other sportsmen entitled to shout,
But while I've a lung I'll be loyal to trout.
Chorus.—Here's to the trout of old England,
And here's to the bonnie brown trout.

Compared with the fox, I will venture to tell
That the trout bears the contrast remarkably well;
He has all Reynard's cunning, but none of his smell.
Chorus.—Here's, etc.

You don't go and hunt him with hound and with horn,
Breaking down all the fences and trampling the corn,
And leaving the heart of the farmer forlorn.
Chorus.—Here's, etc.

You don't find him stealing a cock or a hen,
Or abstracting a lamb or two out of the pen;
He's a soul above playing such tricks upon men.
Chorus.—Here's, etc.

His diet is modest; with glittering eyes,
He gives his attention to minnows and flies.
How patient his watch! and how graceful his rise!
Chorus.—Here's, etc.

The hunting man's sport is upset by the frost,
And he stands by the fire and swears at the cost
Of the corn that's consumed in the weeks that are lost.
Chorus.—Here's, etc.

Not so with the angler; the skies may be ill,
But his trusty old rod has no belly to fill;
His creel and his tackle are running no bill.
Chorus.—Here's, etc.

So here's to the trout, sirs, and long may he rise
To quicken our pulses and gladden our eyes;
May he tighten our lines, and fight game till he dies.
Chorus.—Here's, etc.

R. GODBY.

THE SCIENTIFIC ANGLER.*

Air—"Polly Perkins."

I'M a scientific angler, and make it my line
Observations of temperature with flies to combine;
With barometer and thermometer, and heaven knows what
not,
A vast amount of information together I've got.

Chorus.—I tabulate and I fabulate with my note-book in
hand,
As complete a scientific angler as walks on dry
land.

In the crown of my hat there's a gauge for the rain,
Anemometers revolve about the top of my brain;
With a net to catch Ephemeræ my equipment's complete,
And I'm scientifically clothed from my head to my feet.
Chorus.—I tabulate, etc.

* A few years ago the Manchester Anglers' Association sought to obtain by the observation of their members a number of facts, which they wished to tabulate, relating to temperature of air and water, direction of wind, character of stream, state of water, hatch of flies, etc., and their bearing upon sport. They issued a note-book in which to record the observations in proper order. This explanation will make Mr. Godby's lines intelligible.

Water-flies have two orders, our note-book declares :
The *Neuroptera*, or nerve-winged; the *Trichoptera* with hairs;
If an angler's bills are in arrear, the neuroptera he shuns,
For he scorns to simulate an interest in the family of Duns.

Chorus.—I tabulate, etc.

I hooked a trout one day, and so hot grew the fight
That the thread in my thermometer went clean out of sight ;
I was very parched, and, sure enough, when the fish broke
my fly,
My sympathetic old barometer had marked " very dry."

Chorus.—I tabulate, etc.

My custom is to enter up my notes every night,
And to specify what flies are on, whether " flat or upright ;"
But I often find it difficult, though I can't imagine why,
To decipher clearly in the morning the name of each fly.

Chorus.—I tabulate, etc.

An example from my note-book may serve as a guide,
But the name of this angler need not be supplied ;—
The wind and weather, fish and flies, it would seem, I've
forgot.
But the whisky's "character" was excellent, and the " state
of water "—hot.

Chorus.—I tabulate, etc.

One lesson from our note-book to heart we can lay,
Like the families of insects, we all have our day ;
We now are in the larva stage ; may we hope, like these flies,
When our time arrives for transformation, in perfection to
rise.

R. Godby.

MY ROD AND I.

MY rod and I are ancient friends,
  Long years we've held together ;
Through life's bewild'ring odds and ends,
  And most in cloudy weather.
And, angel-like, both keen and true,
  In all good service ready ;
In blustering storm or cloudless blue,
  Our friendship's firm and steady.

And oft my faithful rod and I
  Have tramped with silk and feather,
When merry birds sang in the sky,
  By woodland and by heather.
And when we part, as part we must,
  And life-long friendship sever,
Old time may turn me into dust,—
  Till then we're friends for ever.

T. E. PRITT.

HEY, HO, FOR THE TROUT!

Air—"Lancashire Morris Dance."

HEY, ho, the lively speckled trout,
A lusty trout for me O!
To rise at my fly, and to leap full high,
To rush and fling till my reel shall sing,
Ah, then I cry "none so happy as I."
Hey, ho, for the trout O!

Hey, ho, the silver grayling bright,
Yes, he's the fish for me O!
To flash in the light, in his dashing fight,
To rise and play on an autumn day,
He needs all your skill before him you kill.
Hey! the grayling for me O!

Hey, ho, the salmon is the fish,
A salmon clean for me O!
If your steel he meet, how your pulses beat,
As he tears along on your tackle strong;
How your heart doth fall as he goes with it all.
Hey! a salmon for me O!

Hey, ho, the beauty barred perch,
The prickly perch for me O!
Who bites with a will, and takes no bait ill,
A worm or a grub, minnow, dace or chub,
Whose fin's like a knife, and who fights for his life.
A red finned perch for me O!

Hey, ho, the pike's the fish for me,
A slimy pike for me O!
You troll by the weeds, where you're sure he feeds,
And he'll snatch your dace in your very face.
But then, when he's found, he's mayhap twenty pound.
Hey, ho, for the pike O!

Hey, ho, the gudgeon is the fish,
But *not* the fish for me O!
For you sit in a punt when for him you hunt,
And loll in a chair when the weather's fair,
With a worm on your bend, and a fool at t'other end.
Ah, no gudgeon for me O!

Hey, ho, the jacksharp is the fish,
Ah, well, he once was for me O!
With a worm and a thread, with no hat on my head,
Ah, happy was the day that I passed in play,
No care to annoy that dirty little boy.
Hey! the jacksharp's dear to me O!

Hey, ho, the lively speckled trout,
A lusty trout for me O!
    To rise at my fly, and to leap full high,
    To rush and fling till my reel shall sing,
    Ah, then I cry "none so happy as I."
        Hey, ho, for the trout O!

A. H.

THE CONTENTED ANGLER.

Air—Squire Bantam's Song from "*Dorothy.*"

CONTENTMENT I give you, and all that it brings
To the Angler who's fully decided
To catch what he can, and be thankful that things
Are such as his luck has provided.
Some miss a good rise, and then swear at their flies,
Ever ready to seek an excuse;
While others don't play their fish the right way,
Yet they wonder the creature breaks loose.

Chorus.—But here's to the man who is keen on his sport,
Who never lets patience or temper run short;
Contented and happy though nothing he caught,
We'll pledge him in wine, when fishermen dine.

One tries a wrong fly, and he yet wonders why
All the trout do not greedily take it,
Yet ask the same "fella" to eat your umbrella,
And note his head how he will shake it;
Then why is it right, if his own appetite
Of the proffered umbrella fights shy,
To blame the poor trout if he turns up his snout
At a wholly incongruous fly?
Chorus.—But here's, etc.

Some anglers, I fear (though I hope none are here),
Treat their sport in a manner half-hearted,
And think they should see an exact £. s. d.
For the guinea with which they have parted.
To such I would say,—"With such feelings away,
That is not the true spirit of sport,"
No sportsman is he who will measure his fee
By the price of the fish he has caught.
Chorus.—But here's, etc.

R. GODBY.

AWAY THEN TO THE BREEZY NORTH.

THE sun climbs high the azure sky
The snow hath left the hills,
The river gently murmurs by,
And music's in the rills;
The lark pours forth his matchless song,
The thrush sings in the dale,
And echoes sweet the notes prolong,
Repeating the old tale.

Chorus.—Away then to the breezy North,
Where anglers may delight
In gentle sport with spotted trout,
Or with the *Ferox* fight.

Away, then, let us haste away
To Scotland—land of song!
Whose daughters are as lovely May,
Whose sons are brave and strong;
Upon whose hills the healthy breeze
Can soothe the brow of care,
Whose verdant dales and spreading trees
Are fairest of the fair.
Chorus.—Away then, etc.

Away, then, let us haste away
To Scotland's limpid streams!
And with the early break o' day—
Sweet as a poet's dreams—
Whip pool or loch, or "wimplin' burn,"
For captives to our creel,
Until at evening we return,
Content as anglers feel.
Chorus.—Away, then, etc.

GEORGE DAVIES.

THE OLDEST OF CRAFTS.

Air—"At the Fall of the Year."

I propose to invite
Your attention to-night
To a claim that as anglers we hold,
To take the first place
In the sports of our race,
As I'll show from the records of old.
And if I've no case
I will gladly give place,
But at present I have n't a doubt
That the earliest dish
That man ate was a fish,
And, in all probability, trout.

Chorus.—Then here's to the sport,
May it never run short,
But ever have plenty of GO;
So fill up and shout,
Long life to the trout,
And the oldest of Crafts, yo, ho!
And the oldest of Crafts, yo, ho!"

Ichthyologists tell
Of a panic that fell
On the fishes some ages ago,
When with terror benumbed
Many thousands succumbed
To a sudden and terrible blow.
The professors declare,
With that sapient air
Wherein learned professors delight,
That the fossils they find
Make it clear to their mind
That this death was begotten of fright.
Chorus.—Then, here's, etc.

But, taking to task
Our professor, we ask,
"Can you tell us the cause of this fear?"
Then he looks very grave,
And his answer is suave
As he says "Well, it's not very clear;"
But the angler steps in,
And he says, with a grin,
"If you cannot explain it, I can:
'Twas some wag of a trout
That had let the cat out,
And announced the arrival of Man."
Chorus.—Then, here's, etc.

In the matter of streams,
It undoubtedly seems
That Eden was very well off;
And that angling began
With the very first man
We assert—though the critic may scoff;
For how to kill time
In that beautiful clime
Must have bothered old Adam, no doubt,
Till he hit on the plan,
Like a sensible man,
Of tickling the Paradise trout.
Chorus.—Then here's, etc.

In the days of the Ark,
When the heavens were dark,
And the waters had covered the earth,
The jolly old trout,
Who was cruising about,
Must have thought it a matter of mirth.
For there, at his ease,
In the tops of the trees,
Regaling on excellent food,
He said, "To my mind,
'Tis a very ill wind
That serves to blow nobody good."
Chorus.—Then, here's, etc.

Now the patience of Job
Is the theme of the globe,
And that he was an angler is sure ;
For he says in his book
That you can't with a hook
The wily leviathan lure.
As to Jonah's ill fate,
Though it's sad to relate
How he to the fishes was thrown,
Yet we see in this act
The remarkable fact
That ground-baiting wasn't unknown.
Chorus.—Then, here's, etc.

Then we'll drink as we ought
To so ancient a sport—
Let your glasses be filled to the brim :
What sportsman can boast
Of a heartier toast
Than "The trout, and for aye may he swim !"
May he rise in his might,
And with energy fight ;
(*dim*) And when his last struggle is o'er,
May he never regret
'Twas an angler whose net
Brought him safely at last to the shore.
Chorus.—Then, here's, etc.

R. GODBY.

WHEN SPRING FIRST DONS HER DAINTY DRESS.

WHEN Spring first dons her dainty dress,
  And decks her brow with flowers,
When birds their gentle wooing press,
  From out the budding bowers ;
We'll seek the graceful flowing stream,
  Where alder boughs entangle,
And care will vanish like a dream,
  While we enjoy our angle.

And if the speckled beauties rise,
  And sport attends our leisure,
We'll not complain of smaller size,
  Denied a larger treasure ;
For why ! as every angler knows,
  His art content hath taught him,
And as the gentle pastime grows,
  New joys are ever brought him.

Then let us sing the angler's joys,
  By lake, or loch, or river,
When free from city smoke and noise,
  His nerves in rapture quiver ;

With gentle tug of spotted trout,
Or strain of salmon fighting,
Long time before the victor's shout,
Or victor's eye delighting.

George Davies.

WE'LL NEVER SAY DIE WITH A WHINE!

Tune—"The Old Brigade."—*Odourdo Barri.*

WHERE are there joys like the anglers' true,
  When they fish by the river's side?
Wading its shallows carefully through,
  To pools which smoothly glide.
Always ready and undismayed,
  Always merry and wise;
Danger scouting, and never afraid,
  Seeking each speckled prize.

Chorus.—Then steadily, deftly, we'll handle,
    Steadily rod and line,
  Fishing along, singing this song,
    We'll never say die with a whine!

What is more sweet on a winter's night,
  When the wind bloweth loud and cold?
To sit by the fire when burning bright,
  With cronies true and old:
Talking over what we have done,
  And what we mean to do;
Of some rare sport, or of some good fun,
  And friendships warm and true.
      Chorus.—Then steadily, etc.

We feel the loss of a trusty friend
We have fished with in days gone by,
But new ones will come a hand to lend,
With willing heart and eye;
We'll share our pouch, or taste the flask
Of brothers when we meet,
With right good will of their welfare ask,
With right good will each greet.
Chorus.—Then steadily, etc.

ALL these verses to be sung only to the music of the *first* verse in "The Old Brigade."

IT would be well if the chorus after each verse were sung once through by the soloist, and a second time by the company, the soloist, of course, starting it and helping if need be.

GEORGE DAVIES.

COME BRING YOUR RODS.

Air—"John Peel."

COME, bring your rods to the sweet green fields,
O come, while the grey dawn the bright sun shields,
O come, share the joy that each streamlet yields,
And we'll all fill our creels of a morning.

Chorus.—For the day is awake and the lark overhead,
The bold trout are moving o'er each gravelly bed,
Come! Anglers, arise, ere the dewdrop be fled,
And the sun spoil the pride of the morning.

Just for to-day let us fish, while we dream
That Care is drowned in the deep, deep stream,
And Hope kills Fear with her soft sweet beam,
As we all fill our creels of a morning.
Chorus.—For the day, etc.

Down where the mill-tail gently glides,
Behold how the March-brown gaily rides,
Lo! there—a "two pounder" with silv'ry sides,
Which we'll put in our creel of a morning.
Chorus.—For the day, etc.

Our gentle craft is devoid of strife,
As a happy man and a loving wife,
And there is no boon like a quiet life,
Or a well-filled creel in the morning.
Chorus.—For the day, etc.

T. E. Pritt.

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